

## **Η ΖΩΗ ΤΟΥ ΣΤΕΛΙΟΥ ΚΥΡΙΑΚΙΔΗ**

### **The life of Stelios Kyriakides**

**1910 – He was born on May 5, 1910, in the mountain village of Statos, altitude 1000 meters, in the province of Pafos. His father John born in 1969 and his mother Eleni (family name Ilias) were farmers.**

**Stylianos had a scar on his forehead which he got it when he fell when he was running fast one day in the mountain at the age of 5. The wound was bleeding hard and not knowing how to stop the blood he took some fresh manure that he found near by and put it on top to stop the blood.**

**He was the youngest of the 5 children, 4 boys and one girl. He was born two months premature a very small baby. The other 4 were Chrysostomos (1898), Dimitris, Ilias and Charithea.**

**Statos about 35 km from Pafos, ( is now a deserted village after the heavy land slides in the 60's) was a village consisting of about 30 small houses made of stone on the side of a mountain looking south towards the sea and Pafos. It had a “kafenio” coffee house in the middle of the village that was run by his uncle and where every male gathered at the end of the day. The women stayed at the house cooking and looking after the children. They also waived and made the cloths, shoes and other house and clothing essentials. The Kyriakides house was in the middle of the village in a privileged location and consisted of two rooms, kitchen and in the basement was the stables for the animals. Donkies, goats, chickens and rabbits.**

**As a young boy he had to run the distance (same day) quite often to Pafos for various family chores**

**He went to the village elementary school, one class room 6 classes (grades)**

**He like the continuous movement, running everywhere, day trips with his father, and later when he went to Limassol, swimming**

**He helped his father tending the animals, the donkey, goats, chickens and rubbits, and took the food to his brothers who worked in the near by family fields.**

**When he was 2, the local fortune tellers, Mrs Sophia (translated wisdom), looking at his palm she said the “he would do something grand in his life and would go through a big doors”**

**1924 – age 14 and after completing the elementary school, he left home with the blessing of his parents to go to “the big city” of Limassol to “find his fortune”. As he later said himself his father could not afford to feed all the mouths in the family, because the village was small, and the incomes very low. So he first went to work at his uncles Socrates Charalambous, bakery. Work was very hard however for the young boy with many hours of preparing the dough and working near the hot ovens, standing all the time.**

**As SK use to say, his father could not support all the family, because the villagers were poor and lifewas hard. So his parents decided to send him to Limassol to earn a living and help the family**

**1925 - At the end of 1925 he decides to change his job and go to work in a nearby restaurant washing dishes and pots. Because he was too young they would not allow him to serve fearing that he had no strength to hold the full plates. So in ...**

**1926 - Being ambitious and wanting to go forward in his life he changes jobs again at the start of 1927 and goes to work in the best “pantopolio” (supermarket) of Kontopoulos in Limassol. There he has the opportunity to be outside delivering the orders to the big houses of the city, and meeting the elite locals and the British families of Limassol. Being a nice, polite and hard working young man, he becomes every bodies favorite delivery boy. He stays there for 3 years where he becomes very good friends with Augustus Alexiou a boy two years older than him, from a near by village of Statos called Panagia (Virgin Mary). They share rooms and keep close company. (After Kyriakides went to Greece later on, they loose touch with each other. Augustus becomes a seaman and eventually settles in London where he opens up a very well known Greek restaurant the “Unity” – named after his wish for the unification of Greece and Cyprus - on Kings road in Chelsea. They meet again in 1948 when Augustus reads in the London papers that Stylianos Kyriakides, his old friend, is one of the favorites to win the Olympic marathon in 1948. He surprises Kyriakides when he does to see him at the Olympic village. The friendship re blossoms and they remain in very close touch until Kyriakides death in 1987.)**

**1929 – Eager to improve his English he finds work as a gardener at the Browns house, the Chief Judge in Limassol, so that he can practise his English.**

**1931 – Being small in structure he suddenly starts gaining high and has the growing pains in his knees. Not knowing what it is the Browns send him to Dr. Cheverton, a GP, and an amateur long distance runner himself, who had run in the Athens marathon a few years earlier. After examining him he realizes that with his lean structure and his low hard beat rate he can be a good long distance runner. Kyriakides is enthusiastic to hear that Dr. Cheverton is willing to train him and teach him the first steps of being an athlete.**

**Dr. Cheverton Gives him his first running shoes and shorts and tells him to start running to condition himself.**

**1932 – at the start of 1932 he is working in a hotel at the summer mountain resort of Platres where he is serving food and drinks. He hears four young girls in the hotel talking about the upcoming track and field games. He tells the girls that his dream is to become an athlete, and that he will join ARIS ATHLETIC CLUB and that he will win. The girls laugh and make fun with him. He does not pay attention. He waits until the games are finished and studies the results, and starts to train.**

**1933 – In January 1933 he returns from Troodos back to Limassol. He finds work at the Greens house (Chief Judge) as a house boy. He asks permission to train and gets it. He starts to run near the river at night after work. Sometimes he jumps over the fence of the near by track and runs round and round throwing stones to count the rounds. People look at him training in a funny way. They think he is crazy and ask him “who has ever been an athlete from your village?”**

**He trains I all his spare time**

**In February 1933 the Pan Cyprian games are announced. He reads that in the newspaper MORNING NEWS. He decides to go and join the OLYMPIA ATHLETIC CLUB. First time he goes there in day time. The reception he has is not very good. They tell him that he can not be very good.**

**Finally the trainer Mr Paul Angelinides and assistant coach Travas, start paying attention to him. They show him some exercises and tell him some things about running  
He applies to run in the OAC qualification games, but 20 days before the games he hurts his foot. He does not give up. Even with one leg I am going to run and I am going to win he said to himself.  
He takes part in the internal qualification games of OLYMPIA club and qualifies for the team**

**He asks permission from the Greens to run. He wins the 5000 m and the 10000 m of the pan Cyprian games**

**He comes to Greece as Pan Cyprian champion to participate in the Balkan qualification games (sept. 1933) and finishes 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 10000 with 34 min and 34 secs, Winner is Vlachos with 34 min 14 secs**

**In the Balkan games in Athens he finishes 2<sup>nd</sup> in the marathon with 3 h 3 min 5 secs**

**He returns to Cyprus but keeps contact with Simitsek about his training**

**He trains in the winter of 1933 and spring of 1934 in the track of Larnaka athletic club.**

**He uses stop watch to time his runs**

**1934 – He takes part in the Pan Cyprian games (april) and in two days he wins 1500 m (4' 21'') and 5000 m 16' 20'' and the next day 10000 (34'47'') and 20000 m (1 h 11' 9.4'') – Simitsek comes to Cyprus to watch SK**

**He comes to Greece with special pass and in the Pan Hellenic games he wins the 5000 m (16'12'') and 10000 m (34'53'')**

**He returns to Cyprus to get a passport – He buys a hand stop watch – first runner in the world to use hand stop watch to check his pace**

**On the way to Zagreb for the Balkan games – Silas and Mantikas and Georgakopoulos tease him since he is the youngest in the team (24)**

**Simitsek advises him to run smartly according to the time plan and not to get carried away by the other runners**

**The Yugoslavs make fun with the Greek team intimidating them**

**Team chief is Mr Karambatis and Rinopoulos from SEGAS**

**Greece wins the games on points**

**In the 1934 Balkan games SK wins the marathon in 2h 49' 31'' (2<sup>nd</sup> sept.) (new Greek and European record breaking Luis record from 1896)**

**Other runners are Gal –Roumania, Sporn and Spartan from Yugoslavia, Bellas, Korren, Tseslak, two more Yugoslavs and Anastasiades from Albania.**

**The weather is cold, and cloudy ready for rain**

**SK runs 4 min per km**

**In the end of the race there is rain and he covers the last few km in 3 min per km**

He also wins the 10k on the 26<sup>th</sup> of August in 33 m 49.2' new Balkan record Arvanitis is second Manea and Bousan (Yug) 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> SK and Arvanitis run a smart race for the 1-2

Before the marathon race he and Simitsek check the course using the Greek consul general's car

He tries various paces in some parts of the race

The Yugoslavs start fast to break the Greeks but SK does not follow –

He uses the stop watch to pace himself.

Half way in the race he is 500 m behind the leaders

He paces 30m in 2 h

He is very moved after his victory.

There is an incident with the Yugoslavs with the relay and they become aggressive

On his return to Athens he goes to meet old Luis and pay his respects

He gets a job in the city of Athens municipality office and earns 3000 drachmas a month (little money) and lives in the dormitory of the stadium. Living conditions are not very good.

Simitsek also lives there and has an office. He sends 500 drachmas a month to his family.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of October there are Greek- Hungarian games, SK wins the 30k in 1h 56' 35'' and beats the good Hungarian runner Kalambus.

He is very disappointed with the living conditions and the broken promises from the Greek federation about work etc and he returns to Cyprus

1935 – The Yugoslavs protest about his British nationality and SK is not allowed to participate with the Greek team

He runs as non competitive athlete and starts 2minutes behind the other runners.

He finishes 2<sup>nd</sup> only 50 meters (20 secs) behind the winner Gal of Romania

He goes to England (15<sup>th</sup> July 35) 3 weeks before the British championship where more than 10 countries participate.

**He runs in the marathon and finishes 2<sup>nd</sup> behind Norris in 3 h 3 min 29 secs – 39 of the best runners in the world take part  
The heat and humidity is unbearable and only 4 of the 39 runners manage to finish**

**Britain ask him to run for them in the 1936 Olympic games and SK because of his disappointment with the Greek Fedearition starts talks with the British**

**He repairs the hand stop watch he had bought in Cyprus.**

**SK buys training and diet books in London and starts reading them to help with his training.**

**He returns to Cyprus and gets a job and a park supervisor for the municipality of Limassol  
He starts to train for the Berlin Olympics**

**1936 – In the pre Balkan qualifying games he breaks 3 Greek records – 5 miles in 26' 07.4", 10k 32'28" and one hour 19203 meters and wins the 5000 meters in 15' 57.2"**

**He takes part in the Berlin 1936 Olympics and on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August he finishes 11<sup>th</sup> in the marathon in 2h 43' 20.8" in a very difficult race where 1/3 of the athletes do not finish. Johny Kelly is 18<sup>th</sup>  
He is the captain of the truck and field team**

**In the 1936 Balkan games in Athens (October) he wins in the marathon 2h 49' 10", Gal is second and Ragazos 3<sup>rd</sup>  
He also wins the 10000 m in 33' 05.8" (Greek record)**

**The ancient Greek warriors helmet that he takes with him for the marathon winner after is handed in to the organizers disappears and the winner SON from Korea running for Japan does not receive it  
SK finds it in the 1950's and in a special ceremony in Germany it is given to Son**

**He meets Kelly for the first time in the Olympic village and learns about Boston.  
Kelly invites him to come and run**

**1937 – In the Balkan games in Bucharest he wins the marathon 2h 57' 22'' and comes 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 10k with 33' 6.5''  
In the Pan Hellenic games he wins the 5000 m the 10000 m and the marathon**

**In the British Championship he comes again second in 2h 40' 20.6''**

**1938 - He meets Fanouria Maina and get engaged on the 27<sup>th</sup> November 1938  
Fanourias family come from the island of Santorini  
Her father has a taverna and her uncle is a carpenter**

**1938 - He decides to go to Boston with the liner Bremmen arrives in NY on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April and run in the Boston marathon on the 19<sup>th</sup> of April**

**He drops out on mile 21 (he was 6<sup>th</sup> at the time in the leading group) because of severe blisters in his feet due to the new running shoes (unbroken), not wearing socks and the hard cement surface of the Boston course roads.**

**He has to get a bus – he had no money to pay the fare – and gets off to get a taxi to get to the finish line where Demeter pays the taxi driver**

**There are too many official cars during the race interfering with the athletes**

**Weather very hot**

**In New York he is met by the Greek merican athletes Nik Gianakopoulos, Frank Vasilopoulos, Theo Matsoukis as well as the president of the Athenians club Giadopoulos. He visits the ATLANTIS NEWSPARER office**

**He stays at the st. Moritz hotel**

**In Boston He is met by George Demeter who introduces him to Jerry Nason at the Boston Globe offices.**

**Maik Doukakis is watching the race as a kid and is disappointed to see SK dropping out.**

**1938 – In the Balkan games he comes 2<sup>nd</sup> in the marathon in 2h 41' 20'' behind Ragazos and 4<sup>th</sup> in the 10k with 33m 45.4'**

**His mission in the marathon was to tire the Yugoslavs and make sure that they do not finish in the first 6 so that Greece can win the games. He managed to do that but the result was to come second**

**1939 – In the Balkan games he is first in the marathon in 2h 52' 07'' and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 10k in 33' 50.8''  
On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September England and France declare war on Germany**

**He joins the army as a volunteer (he had British passport) but he is let out of the army in 1940**

**SK marries Fanouria on the 26<sup>th</sup> December, among the clouds of War**

**Fanouria dies in September 1940, six months pregnant from tetanus from a scratch she received from barbed wire, while visiting SK's brothers farms in Messina in south Peloponnese**

**He gives back the house that was given as Fanourias dowry but keeps the furniture**

**He keeps close contact with the Maina family**

**He joins the army as a volunteer on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1939 because he feels it is his duty but later because of his British passport he is allowed to leave.**

**1940 – In the Balkan games in Istanbul in bad shape due to his wife's death he comes 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Marathon with Ragazos 1<sup>st</sup> in 2h 47' 43''**

**28<sup>th</sup> October – Greece enter WWII**

**1940 to 1945 – Sk's athletic career is interrupted due to war – the best years in the long distance runners' life (30-35)  
Until 1946**

**4<sup>th</sup> April 1941 The German army enter Greece**

**He meets Ifigenia Katsarelou who he meets in his rounds a bill collector**

**Ifigenias family consisting of one younger sister and two younger brothers lives in Filothei**

**Father (Dimitri), Mother (Maria) Older brother (Kostas) then brother (Thanasis) then sister (Panagiota)**

**1944 – 10<sup>th</sup> of October the Germans start pulling out of Athens**



**In December we have the first signs of fighting in the civil war**

**End of 1945 decides to run in Boston and starts training again**

**He does not have physical contact with his wife for 6 months to conserve all energy**

**He takes the family to Cyprus where conditions are much better to continue his training**

**He lives in Limassol.**

**1946 – March he comes back from Cyprus to get ready for the Boston trip**

**1946 - He sells some of the house furniture to get money for the trip.**

**The rest of the money for his ticket comes from the British power company where he works**

**Big supporter is the company head Mr. Kemp**

**He takes the first flight between Athens and NY**

**He flies a TWA super constellation with 4 turbo props**

**It takes three days to arrive via Rome, Paris, Shannon and NY**

**In the race about 150 very good runners took part**

**During the race in the 36 km he takes fluids and Kelly goes about 50 meters ahead but SK reaches Kelly again in the 38 km.**

**In km 40 SK goes ahead and Jerry Nayson shouts to him that he is the winner of the day.**

**Maik Doukakis as a kid he is one of the people watching the race, and what he sees leaves a lasting impression the rest of his life**

**After the race Sk stays in the US for about one month going around various big cities where there are big Greek communities asking for help for Greece. The American people respond and he collects USD 250,000 and live cattle for his destroyed country.**

**For this he is assisted by his new paper friend the Sports editor of Boston Globe Jerry Nayson**

**President Truman hear about the story and invites SK to the white house.**

**When the officials hear his story they order a special assistance to be sent to Greece called the “Kyriakides aid passage” comprising of grain, flour, tinned food, medicine, blankets, tents, second hand clothing and other essential goods.**

**This assistance is sent to Greece in two Liberty cargo ships of the Livanos shipping family**

**1946 – He takes part in the Oslo European championship but pulls out in the 30k due to stomach pains**

**1947 – He goes back to Boston to run at the age of 37. There are two reasons for this trip. First to go and ask for money again so that the Greek national team can go to the 1948 Olympic games. He collects USD 50,000 and athletic equipment, running shoes and uniforms. This was the reason why the Greek team managed to go to the Olympics. He takes with him the new young Greek runner Ragazos, who comes 6<sup>th</sup> with SK 10<sup>th</sup>**

**1947 – The American government because of the Kyriakides story of 1946 advances to Greece USD 400 million as part of the Marshall plan. Greece was the only European country that got an advance so early**

**1948 - He takes part in the London Olympics, age 38, and finishes 18<sup>th</sup> in a very difficult race where most athletes dropped out because of the heat wave that day**

**1949 – He retires from active athletics**

**1950 – He is elected as member of the Greek amateur athletic federation. He retires in 1981 to concentrate on the Filothei athletic club that he founded in 1956**

**1987 – December 10<sup>th</sup> he dies at the age of 77 the number he had chosen to run in Boston**