

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF
EMMANUEL ELEFThERIOS VELIVASAKIS, P.E., LEED.AP, F.ASCE

It was said of the great English builder and designer Sir Christopher Wrenn, “*If you seek his monument, look around you.*” One can find monuments to the engineering contributions of Emmanuel Velivasakis in places far and near. From the restoration of the United States Capitol Dome in Washington, D.C. to the World’s tallest buildings, the *Petronas Twin Towers* in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, to yet another of World’s tallest towers *The Taipei Financial Center*, in Taipei, Taiwan, to his work at the ruins of the 1999 Istanbul earthquake in Turkey, and those of the World Trade Center disaster site after the 9/11/01 terrorist attack.



One can also find monuments less physically tangible, but no less important, in his work to bring and educate young people into the engineering and architectural fields. As notable as his contributions to creation of structures and the development of careers, Manolis Velivasakis has led many of the nation’s major forensic investigations, adding to the sum of the professional knowledge and assuring continued progress in the prevention of disaster.

EDUCATION: Born in Crete, he received his primary and secondary education in the island. After serving the Greek Army, he went to the United States for university studies, receiving his Bachelor’s and Master’s Degrees in Civil/Structural Engineering from the *City College of the City University of New York* with high Honors.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER: Mr. Velivasakis is a *licensed Structural Engineer* practicing in the United States and around the world. He is a Managing Principal of *The Thornton-Tomasetti Group*, an internationally acclaimed Architectural-Engineering Design firm and has served as President of its *Technology Division*.

His design-firm has completed the structural design the World’s tallest building, the *451-meters* tall *Petronas twin-Towers* in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, as well as several other high-rise buildings in Asia, Europe and in the USA. He was personally involved with the structural design of another of World’s tallest buildings, the *520-meters* high *Taipei Financial Center* building in Taipei, Twain. Currently he is participating of yet another of World’s tallest the *1000+ meter Kingdom Tower* in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Velivasakis was in charge of the structural design for the seismic modernization of the Ataturk airport in Istanbul, Turkey. While in Istanbul during the aftermath of the 1999 quake, he had visited at the Ecumenical Patriarchate and several of the Greek Orthodox Churches in the region, where he volunteered his professional services for seismic damage evaluation.

The Architect of the US Capitol selected Velivasakis’s design firm to lead the Engineering effort for the Engineering evaluation and rehab design of the *Dome of the U.S. Capitol Building* in Washington, D.C. This prestigious assignment involving the most notable symbol of our Nation represented a tremendous honor, for Manolis and his engineering team. An award-winning article on the Structural Analysis and Evaluation of the U.S. Capitol Dome was featured on the cover-page of the prestigious *Civil Engineering* magazine in 1999.

In the aftermath of the September 11th terrorist attack of the WTC, Velivasakis’s firm was summoned by the City of New York to lead the technical effort to provide technical assistance to the search and rescue teams at “*Ground-Zero*”. He personally directed the multi-disciplinary WTC team or nearly 300

engineers, in the first critical weeks after the terrorist attack. In addition to his engineering duties, while at Ground Zero, he was the host of many high-level Government and Church officials, including the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and the Prime Minister of Greece.

ACADEMIC CAREER: Manolis has served as an adjunct professor of Architectural Engineering at the *New York Institute of Technology*. Currently is an adjunct professor of Structural Design at the *Institute of Design and Construction*, in Brooklyn NY, where he teaches graduate-level courses to Architects and other Construction professionals. Over the years, he has also lectured in several other colleges and universities, including Pratt Institute, Columbia University and California Polytechnic Institute. Since 2005, he serves on the Advisory Board of the CCNY School of Engineering, which advises the Dean of Engineering and the Civil Engineering Dept. on curriculum and other industry-related and liaison issues.

STEWARDSHIP WITH LOCAL PARISH: With his local Parish at *The Greek Orthodox Church of our Saviour in Rye, NY*, Manolis has been actively involved with its Parish Council for nearly 30 years. He has served as *President, Vice President* and *Chairman* of the Hellenic School. Lastly, he enjoys chanting at his Parish's *Psaltery* where he serves as an amateur *Chantor*.

CIVIC ACTIVITIES: His love for the land of his birth Greece, and particularly Crete, is evidenced by his active involvement with various Cretan-American Organizations since his early college days. He has served in many capacities and positions both at the local and national level. Manolis has been heavily involved with the *Pancretan Endowment Fund (PEF) for the Universities of Crete* since 1986 and has served as its *Chairman for 8 years*. Among PEF's programs are: the establishment and support of the *Crete University Press*, *DIAS summer-courses, internships and seminars* for Greek-American youth at the University and the Polytechnic School of Crete. The PEF also supports the *Botanical Park for the Preservation of the Flora and Fauna* organized and overseen by the Polytechnic School of Crete in Chania. Finally, Mr. Velivasakis has served as President of the *Pancretan Association* for two consecutive terms 2005 to 2009. During his term, the Pancretan organized a hugely successful Cruise-Convention in Crete and Alexandria, Egypt. Lastly, Mr. Velivasakis has served as Executive Vice President and President of the *Hellenic American National Council*, an umbrella organization of some 35 Associations of the Hellenic American Omogenia.

HONORS AND AWARDS:

For his active involvement and leadership with the Greek Orthodox Community in the USA:

- The offikion of *Archon Eftaxias* of the Great Church of Christ. Bestowed upon him by His All Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, 2001
- *The Gold Cross of the Order of the Phoenix* by the President of the Republic of Greece the Hon. Constantine Stephanopoulos, 2004
- *The Gold Medal* of the Polytechnic University of Crete, 1999
- *Certificate of Appreciation* by the City of New York for his service at Ground Zero, 2002
- *The Silver Medal* of the Foundation for Research and Technology of Crete (FORTH) for his contributions towards the establishment of the *Crete University Press*. 1998
- *The "Gold Cross of the Order of the St. Mark"* bestowed upon him by His Beatitude the Patriarch and Pope of Alexandria and all Africa Theodore II., 2009

For his professional accomplishments, he has been awarded numerous awards of excellence, including:

- *Diamond Award*, of the US Consulting Engineers Council for the Istanbul Airport Seismic Modernization project. (2001)
- *Diamond Award*, of the US Consulting Engineers Council for the Engineering Response Organized for the World Trade Center 9/11 disaster. (2002)
- *Silver Award* of the James F. Lincoln Arc Welding Foundation.

- City College of New York *Alumni Award for Engineering Excellence*.
- *Fellow of the American Society of Civil Engineers*.
- City of New York *Certificate of Appreciation and Medal* for his service at Ground Zero.
- Greek Foreign Ministry's *Silver Cup* for his WTC role at the *Megaron Mousikis* in Athens.
- City of Athens, *Silver Cup*, awarded by the then Mayor Avramopoulos at Ground Zero.
- The *Eupalinos Award* by the Dept. of Civil Engineering of the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki, 2010

CLOSING REMARKS: Manolis and his wife of 37-years Orsa, along with their two sons, Lefteris 32 and George, 27 years of age respectively, make their home in Scarsdale, New York. In between his professional, civic and academic schedules, as well as his responsibilities at the local Parish and National Pancretan level, Manolis enjoys a good game of golf and always a good CD of authentic Byzantine and/or Cretan music.