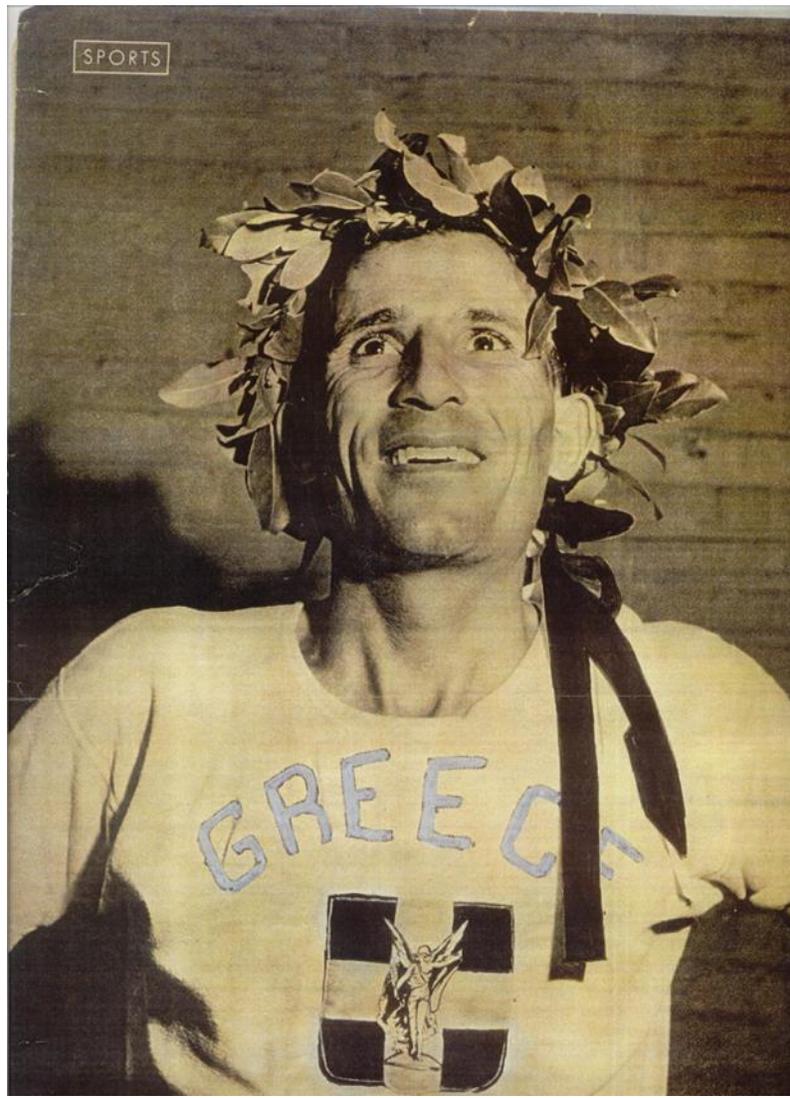


# STYLIANOS KYRIAKIDES



MARATHON CHAMPION, PATRIOT, HUMANITARIAN.

# **STÝLLANOS (STELIOS) KYRIAKIDES**



**“RUNNING FOR THE HUMAN RACE”**

**Written by Dimitris Kyriakides in 2018**



**Boston 1946 – Winner in 2:29:27**

**Best time in the world for 1946 and European and national record**

**First long distance runner in the world to :**

1. Train with his coach by correspondence in 1934-35 and 1945 (Greece to Cyprus)
2. That uses wrist stopwatch for pace – 1934
3. That used stretching before warm up - 1935
4. That follows streaked diet - 1935
5. That runs for CHARITY (for Greece) – Boston 1946
6. That runs for a special cause – Boston 1947 (To collect money and athletic equipment so that the Greek team can go to the 1948 London Olympics)
7. First non American or Canadian to win Boston
8. First that is featured in an American comic book

**No 7 – His lucky number**

**He was 1.72 tall, Won Boston wearing bib 77, his time was 2:29:27, died at the age of 77 in 1987, 1946 was the 7<sup>th</sup> time that Boston was run on the 19<sup>th</sup> instead of the usual 20<sup>th</sup> of April, won on a Saturday the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the week, and he was the 35<sup>th</sup> individual winner (5x7=35)**

## STYLIANOS (STELIOS) KYRIAKIDES – ATHLETIC RECORD

There are many other international and local races that we have found no records

Date	Event	Distance	time	Place	Remark
1932, Limassol					In a medical checkup the Dr Cheverton tells him he can be a good long distance runner
1932	Pan Cyprian games				Postponed for 1933
1933, 9 April	Γ.Σ.Ο				Games to decide team for Pan Cyprian games. SK did not participate No results available
1933, 20-23 April	Pan Cyprian games	10000 m	37'26.0"	1 <sup>st</sup>	
	Ditto	5000 m	17"28.0"	1 <sup>st</sup>	
1933, 23-24 Sept.	Athens pre Balkan games	10000 m	34'34.4"	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Cyprus sends 3 athletes to take part in the Pre Balkan games
1933, 8 Oct.	Athens national and Balkan games	marathon	3.03'05" Only 24 secs behind winner	1 <sup>st</sup> or 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Hot day. 1 <sup>st</sup> for Greek championship and 2 <sup>nd</sup> for Balkan games, A spectator through cold water on him and he froze. Could have been winner
1934, March 11	First Pan Pafian games In 3 days	400 m	59.8"	1 <sup>st</sup>	In Pafos - SK running for first time for the Statos team, <u>in 3 days 4 wins</u>
	Ditto	800 m	2'11.0"	1 <sup>st</sup>	In Pafos
	Ditto	1500 m	4'52.0"	1 <sup>st</sup>	In Geroskipou
	Ditto	5000 m	17'30.0"	1 <sup>st</sup>	In Statos
1934, 5 April	Γ.Σ.Ο. games	5000 m	16'44.5"	1 <sup>st</sup>	Limassol, Cypriot record
1934, 4-23 April	Cyprus	-----	-----	-----	Otto Simitchek visits Cyprus to train athletes and select member for the National team

1934, 12-15 April	Pan Cyprian games Limassol	10000 m 1 <sup>st</sup> day	34'47.0"	1 <sup>st</sup>	Cyprus record <u>In 4 days, 3 wins</u> Simitchek present
	Ditto	5000 m 3 <sup>rd</sup> day	16'20.4"	1 <sup>st</sup>	Cyprus record
	Ditto	1500 m 4 <sup>th</sup> day	4'21.4"	1 <sup>st</sup>	
1934, 12 May					SK and other Cypriot athletes leave by boat to go to Greece for the national games
1934, 25-28 May	Greek national games	5000 m	16'12.0"	1 <sup>st</sup>	Athens
	Ditto	10000 m	34'53.6"	1 <sup>st</sup>	
1934, 8-15 Oct.	Balkan games, Zagreb	marathon	2.49'42"	1 <sup>st</sup>	Greek record
	Ditto	10000 m	33'49.2"	1 <sup>st</sup>	
1935, 25 March	Greece	20000 m	1.10'22"	1 <sup>st</sup>	Greek record
1935, 2-5 May	Pan Cyprian games, Nicosia	10000 m 1 <sup>st</sup> day	35'25.0"	1 <sup>st</sup>	<u>4 days 3 wins and a 2nd</u>
	Ditto	5000 m 2 <sup>nd</sup> day	16'02"	1 <sup>st</sup>	Cyprus record
	Ditto	1500 m 3 <sup>rd</sup> day	4'17.8"	2 <sup>nd</sup>	
	Ditto	20000 m 4 <sup>th</sup> day	1.08'06"	1 <sup>st</sup>	
1935, 12-13 May	London AAA championship	marathon	3.3'20"	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Only 4 of 39 runners finished, due to high humidity.
1935, June	Greek national games	5000 m	15'45"	1 <sup>st</sup>	<u>In 4 days 3 wins</u> Greek record
	Ditto	10000 m	32'52.4"	1 <sup>st</sup>	Greek record
	Ditto	Marathon	3.06'30"	1 <sup>st</sup>	
1935, 1-2 Sept.	Amiantos games	1 mile		1 <sup>st</sup>	Also took part English army runners
		5000 m	15'31.5"	1 <sup>st</sup>	Greek record
1935, 20 Sept	Pre Balkan games	10000 m	32'28"	1 <sup>st</sup>	Greek record
1935, 26 May	Balkan games Athens	marathon	3.08'07"	2 <sup>nd</sup>	SK not allowed to run so he started 2 minutes behind but finishes 27 secs behind winner
1935, November	Greece	One hour	17430 m	1 <sup>st</sup>	Greek record

	Greece National games	marathon	3.06.03"	1st	
1936, 1-16 Aug.	Olympic games, Berlin		2.43'.20"	11 <sup>th</sup>	
1936, 20 Sept.	Athens	10000 m	32'28.0"	1 <sup>st</sup>	
1936, 7 June	Athens national championship	marathon	3.06'30"	1 <sup>st</sup>	<b><u>In 4 days 3 wins</u></b>
	Ditto	10000 m	32'52.4"	1 <sup>st</sup>	
	Ditto	5000 m	15'45.0"	1 <sup>st</sup>	
1936, 6 Oct.	Athens, Balkan games	marathon	2.49'10"	1 <sup>st</sup>	
	Ditto	10000 m	33'05.8"		
1937, 4-11 May	Greek national games	5000 m	15'35.0"	1st	<b><u>In 4 days 2 wins and a 4<sup>th</sup> Greek record</u></b>
	Ditto	10000 m	32'52.0"	1 <sup>st</sup>	
	Ditto	1500 m	4'15.6"	4 <sup>th</sup>	
1937, 17 <sup>th</sup> July	London AAA championship	marathon	2.40'20.0"	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Greek record
1937, 5-12 Sept.	Balkan games	10000 m	33'06".02	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Bucharest
	ditto	marathon	2.49'10"	1 <sup>st</sup>	
1938, 19 April	Boston	marathon	-----	-----	Dropped out because of blisters on mile 21
1938, 26 June	Athens national championship	5000 m	15'46.5"	1 <sup>st</sup>	
	ditto	10000 m	32'56.5"	1 <sup>st</sup>	
1938, 8 Sept.	Balkan games	marathon	2.32'20"	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Belgrade - short distance Ragazos wins in 2.30'38"
1939, 12-15 April	Pan Cyprian games Limassol	10000 m 1 <sup>st</sup> day	32'45.1"	1st	<b><u>In 4 days 4 wins</u></b>  Cyprus record
	Ditto	1500 m 2 <sup>nd</sup> day	4'19.9"	1 <sup>st</sup>	
	Ditto	5000 m 3 <sup>rd</sup> day	15'57.1"	1st	Cyprus record
	Ditto	20000 m 4 <sup>th</sup> day	1.11'15.0"	1 <sup>st</sup>	
1939, , 18 July	Internal games Athens	5000 m	15'42.8"	1 <sup>st</sup>	
1939, 8 Oct.	Athens	marathon	2.52'.07"	1 <sup>st</sup>	Balkan games
	Ditto	10000 m	33'50.8"	3rd	Balkan games
1939,	Athens national	10000 m	33'59.0"	2nd	<b><u>In 3 days 2 wins</u></b>

	championship				
	Ditto	5000 m	16'11.1"	2nd	
	Ditto	10000 m	32'51.4"	2nd	Cross county
1940, Istanbul	Balkan games	Marathon	2.46'43"	3rd	That race was after his wife's death
1946, 6 or 13 April	Boston	Cathedral 10 miles handicap	51'40"	5 <sup>th</sup>	This was a training run for SK to see where he stands He had set a time of 53'
1946, 19 April	Boston	marathon	2.29'27"	1 <sup>st</sup>	Greek and European record, best time in the world that year.
1946, 22-25 Aug.	Oslo, European games	marathon	-----	-----	Dropped out because of severe cramps
1947, 20 April	Boston	Cathedral 10 miles handicap			???????
1947, 20 April	Boston	marathon	2.39.13"	10 <sup>th</sup>	181 entries
1948, 29 July – 14 Aug.	London Olympic games	marathon	2.49'00"	18 <sup>th</sup>	41 starters 30 finished because of high humidity
1948, Sept.					Stops active Athletic career
1950, Feb.					Becomes member of SEGAS until his death in 1987
1956, July					Open Filothee track and athletic club

## Starts to train for the first time in 1932 in Limassol

Won the Pan Cyprian games in 1500, 5000, 10000 and 20000 many times

Won the Greek national championship 12 times in 5000m. 1934 (16.12.0), 1936 (15.45.0), 1937 (15.35.0), 1938 (15.46.5)

In 10000m. 1934 (32.53.6), 1936 (32.52.4), 1937 (32.52.0),

the marathon 1933 (3.06.05), 1934 (2.49.42), 1936 (3.06.30) and 1939 (2.52.07)

Balkan Champion : 1<sup>st</sup> 2 times in 10000m 1934 (33.49.2), 1936 (33.05.8), And the marathon 4 times 1934 (2.49.42), 1936 (2.49.10), 1937 (2.57.22), 1939 (2.52.07)

Was 2<sup>nd</sup> in 10000m 1937 (32.06.5), and marathon 1933 (3.03.05), to 1938 (2.31.30),

Was 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 10000m 1939 (33.50.8) and the marathon 1940 (2.46.43)

Twice 2<sup>nd</sup> in the marathon of the AAA British championship : 1935 (3.03.20) and 1937 (2.40.06)

Boston marathon : in 1938 he drops out on mile 21 from severe blisters cause by the new unbroken shoes, not wearing socks and the hard cement surface of the road but returns in 1946 to win in 2.29.27 which was a European record and the best time in the world for 1946), he runs again in 1947 and finishes 10<sup>th</sup> (2.39.13)

In the 10 mile Cathedral race in Boston in he finishes 5<sup>th</sup> (51.40), and in 1947 4<sup>th</sup>

In the 1946 European games in Oslo drops out because of severe cramps

Olympic games : 1936 Berlin 11<sup>th</sup> (2.43.20), and 1948 London 18<sup>th</sup> (2.49.00)

Several times broke the National Greek and Cyprus records : in 1500, 5000, 10000, 20000 meters, 3 and 5 miles, one hour and the marathon

Broke the Balkan records in the 10000m and the marathon

European record in marathon : Boston 1946

Best time in the world in marathon in the year April 1946

Holder of the marathon national record for 34 years and 6 months

THE MEMBERS OF THE GREEK “DREAM TEAM” OF THE 30s WERE :

Sprints : Frangoudis and Sakelariou and Miss Lanitou,

400-800m : Georgakopoulos, Misailidis, Mantikas, Pasi, Tsoukalas

1500m : Georgakopoulos, Verkopoulos, Arvanitis

5000 – 10000m : Kyriakides, Arvanitis, Nanos, Ragazos, Vartzakis, Kousidis, Tsouostas, Blachos, Bekiaris

Marathon : Kyriakides, Ragazos, Arvanitis, Vartzakis, Tsiponis, Tsamis

Hurdles : Mantikas, Skiadas, Miropoulos

Jumps : Labrakis, Nafpliotis, Palamiotis, Paterakis, Simeonidis

Juvelin : Papageorgiou

High jump : Paterakis

Pole vault : Thanow, Lekatsas, Travlos

Shot put and Discus : Silas, Stefanakis, Tomaras

## The life of Stylianos (Stelios) Kyriakides and his achievements

from 1910 to 1987

Born on the 4<sup>th</sup> of May 1910, in the mountain village of Statos, in the province of Pafos of Cyprus. His father John, born in 1869 and his mother Eleni Iliia, were farmers.

Today the village of Statos is abandoned after it was destroyed in severe rainfalls between 1964 and 66 and in 1969 it was moved to a new location 2k distance a little higher altitude.

The village was located about 31k from Ktima (Pafos) in an altitude of 1000m on a slope that had the views of Pafos and the Mediterranean sea

I had about 30 houses in the village all were made from stone, and the Kyriakides house was located in the middle of the village. It had 2 small rooms upstairs and the kitchen and the stables downstairs.

Stelios was the youngest of 5 children, 4 boys and one girl. Born 2 months premature and very thin.

His brothers were Chrysostomos (1898), Dimitris, Ilias and Charithea. Chrysostomos and Dimitris around 1934 moved to Greece and settled in the city of Messini in the Peloponese. Charithea had 10 children, Ilias 6 and Chrysostomos and Dimitris total of 8, and Stelios3, all big families

When he was 5 years old, he fell while running in the fields, cutting his forehead deeply. In order to stop the blood he took some animal manure and put it on the wound. This wound left a permanent scar on his forehead.

As a young boy he had to do chores for the family, including going to Ktima with his father and brothers or the nearby villages, something very usual those days.

He attended the village grammar school, 6 classes all in one room and finished when he was 14. He liked playing and running around the village and later swimming when he moved to Limassol.

He helped his father with the animals, goats, chickens, rabbits and took the food to his brothers in the fields about 2-4K away.

The old village fortuneteller Mrs Sophia, when he was 2 years old, after looking at his palm she said to his mother that Stelios will do something big in his life.

In 1924 at the age of 14 and after finishing the village school, his father send him to Limassol to work and earn a living, in order to help the family. His first job was at his Uncles Socrates Charalambous bakery. This was a very hard and demanding work for a young boy. One has to remember that preparation for baking bread was all done by hand those days, standing up and being awake for hours.

So at the end of 1926 he decided to leave and get a job as a dish washer in a restaurant. His dream was to serve the customers, but because he was young the owner did not let him do it. The money was very little for this work.

So he decided to change job again and go to work as a delivery boy in the well-known Kontopoulos mini market. His job was to take the orders to the customers houses by bike. All day loading, unloading and cycling, took its toll and he developed aches and pains in the waist. The good thing about this job was that he had the opportunity to meet the British families and in 1929 he goes to work as a house boy for Dr. Cheverton the District Medical Officer. He worked there in the house and the garden and had the opportunity to learn English.

In 1931 he suddenly starts to gain height and he develops knee and waist pains. Dr. Cheverton examines him tells him the problem but he also tells him that he has the potential to become a good long distance runner because of his low heart rate. It is worth mentioning here that Dr. Cheverton was a long distance runner himself and had run the Athens marathon in 1929

Under the encouragement of Dr. Cheverton in late 1931, he starts running late at night, along the Limassol beach, wearing his work cloths, stopping every time he saw people, so that they would say that he was crazy.

He stays with Dr. Cheverton from June 1929 until end of 1931, when the doctor goes back to England for further training. At the end of 1931 he goes to work for a hotel in Platres resort in the mountain of Troodos.

When Dr. Cheverton was back in England, he sends him two running shirts and a pair of running shoes and as Stelios says in an interview “that was the beginning” to start to train seriously.

When he was in Platres, he heard one day some girls in the spring of 1932, strong supporters of the team AEL, talking about some upcoming athletic event. He tells themd them that his dream is to become an athlete, and that he will join the club ARIS and he will win in some events. The girls laughed at him, but this did not bother him

After this athletic event was over, he studies carefully the results and based on them he starts training in the mountain making plans.

In January of 1933 he comes back to Limassol and finds a job as a house boy, in the house of Mr. Green who was the Chief Justice. The Greens give him permission to train, and he starts to run near the coast, late at night again, so that people don’t see him and make fun with him saying that he is crazy.

Many of his friends try to discourage him saying “how can you be an athlete since nobody in your village was an athlete before”

Late one night, with the stadium closed, he climbs over the fence of the Olympia club stadium and starts running around the truck, throwing stones on the hat he had left at the start, so as not to lose the count of the rounds.

The night watchman of the stadium, sees him running and goes to him asking him what he is doing? and how many rounds of the truck he had completed? When Kyriakides tell him that I have done 30 rounds, the night watchman is impressed and tell him to come next day to see the couch Pavlos Aggelinidis. But Stelios does go immediately because he had no free time.

On February 1933, the Pan Cyprian games are announced. Kyriakides reads the news in the newspaper PROINI. He decides to go to the stadium of Olympia club for the first time during day time.

The reception from the other athletes was not good. They were telling him that he cannot be a good athlete. However coach Mr. Angelinides and his assistant Mr Travas, pay attention to him and they start showing him some training routines, and Kyriakides starts to train seriously in all his free time day or night.

He decides to take part in the upcoming games, but 20 days before they start, he hurts his leg. But he does not give up and he says that “even if I have to run with one leg I am going to win”

Just before the PanCyprian games he takes part in some internal races of Olympia club and he qualifies to run for the club.

He asks permission from the Greens to take part in the games that were being held in Famagusta and he wins the 5K in 17’28”and the 10K in 37’26”

He is sent to Greece to take part in the National championship and the PreBalkan races in September 1933 and he comes 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 10K in 34’34”. Vlachos was the winner in 34’14” and Nanos was 3<sup>rd</sup> . He also wins the marathon in 3.05’00” breaking the Greek national record for the 42.195m of Saras that was standing from October 1932

From that moment Kyriakides held the National Greek record for the marathon until April 1968, a total of 34 years and 6 months, probably the longest national record held by one man (according to the GUINNESS BOOK of MARATHON). In April 1968 Dimitris Vouros broke Kyriakides record.

The same year in the Balkan games he comes second in the marathon with 3.03’05” a new Greek national record

He returns to Cyprus but keeps in touch with Simitchek and starts training by correspondence. The first athlete in the world to do this. There are letters in his archive to substantiate that. He trains in the winter of 1933 – 34 in the stadium of the Larnaka Athletic club but returns often to the village to see his family.

In April 1934 Otto Simitchek comes to Cyprus to train the Cypriot Athletes and at the same time see the PanCyprian games. In 3 days, with a rest day in the middle Kyriakides wins the 1500m in 4’21” the 5000m in 16’20”, the 10000m in 34’47” and the 20000m in 1.11’9”.4

Simichek is impressed and invites him to take part in the Greek National games later that year where he wins the 5000m and the 10000m with 16' 12" and 34' 53"

He finds his first second hand stop watch, and starts training and running based on time. He can be therefore considered as one of the first long distance runners to do that. We have evidence from many photos that show him using the stop watch at the start and finish of a race.

If one searches in the internet he will not see any other of the famous European or American long distance runners using a stop watch until the early 80's!!!! Maybe with Bill Rogers being one of the first. Kyriakides explains in many interviews the use of the hand stop watch.

As a human being and an athlete Kyriakides is persistent, hardworking and with definite plans and goals in his life. For him nothing is impossible. One can see that in all his later life until he died.

For the Greek national games he travelled to Greece using a "pass" document, so after the games he goes back to Cyprus to get his first passport.

Coming back from Greece in one interview he says that "unfortunately in Greece the local amateur coaches of the big clubs, interfere in Simichek's work with negative effects".

This happened because when Simichek arrived in Greece he was only 21 the top graduate from the Royal School of Physical Training of Budapest and later did a post graduate degree in Berlin. The older Greek coaches who were just Gymnasts would not accept him.

So it is important to note that even as a inexperienced youngster of 24 years, he could notice something so important. One has to know that Simichek had graduated from the famous Hungarian coaching academies and was brought to Greece in 1929 to build a strong "track and field" team.

Kyriakides and Simichek developed a special bond, until he died, because they were the same age and also Kyriakides good nature and hardworking and obedient character, and also important was that they could communicate with him directly in English.

Because Kyriakides belonged to Olympia club of Cyprus he did not have a local coach in Greece to interfere so his only coach was Simitcek. It was a bond like two good friends with Kyriakides realizing how much his coach knew.

In October 1934 he takes part in the Balkan games in Zagreb, Yugoslavia.

He runs against Gal (Rom), Sporn, Starman, bellas, Koren Tsezlak and 2 more from Yugoslavia, Anastasiades from Albania and others from Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey

Gal from Romania was the favorite to win. On the way there by train his friends the other athletes tease him that “Gal is after you”

Simichek tells him to run “smart” and not to follow the other athletes. They check the course together using the car of the Greek Ambassador, and he “tries deferent paces” using his stop watch. In an interview in the papers after the race he describes how they planned the race.

When the race starts in cold weather with rain the Yugoslavs go fast, but Stelios does not follow. Half way in the race he is 500m behind the leaders. Kyriakides follows the plan looking at his stop watch. On the 23K he increases the pace and goes at the front. He passes the 30K in 2 hours an average of 4 minute per K pace, but the last two K were near 3 minute pace. He wins the race in 2.49’3” 5/10 a new national record again and one of the best times in Europe during that period. 2<sup>nd</sup> was Sporn in 2.59’57”, 3<sup>rd</sup> Starman 3.5’13” 4<sup>th</sup> Gal 3.7’17”

He also wins the 10K in 33’ 49.2” new Balkan record, with Arvanitis (Gr) 2<sup>nd</sup> in 33’50”. The two running with one plan “break” the others to get the one two for Greece (max 11 points)

Early in the morning before the 10K race he goes to the ESPLANAND park to relax

Greece wins the Balkan games over Yugoslavia who were the favorites.

Returning to Greece he visits Spyridon Luis, the winner of the first Olympic marathon in 1896, of whom he better his time. (of course Luis had only run 40K in 2. 56’.00”

He is given a temporary job in the city of Athens, and sends 500 drachmas to his family every month. He lives in a room in the Panathinaic Stadium changing area, with Simitchek in the next room. Conditions are not good.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> October in the Greece – Hungary event he beats Calambos (the great Hungarian long distance runner, 4<sup>th</sup> in the 1934 European games marathon one month before) and wins the 30K in 1.56'35" in an under 4 minute average pace.

For some unknown reason SEGAS does not include him in the team for 1<sup>st</sup> European games in Torino that took place in the Benito Mussolini stadium in September.

The winner in the marathon was the Fin Taivonen in 2.52'29" but running 42,750 meters. 2<sup>nd</sup> was Enochsson of Sweden in 2.54'36" , 3<sup>rd</sup> was Genghini of Italy in 2.55'04" and 4<sup>th</sup> Calambos Zozsef in 2.55'14"

With his time in the Balkan games of 2.49'31" Kyriakides could have been if not a winner for sure could have finished in the first 3 places

Kyriakides is generally very disappointed with the Greek hospitality and treatment, also not being given a permanent job and returns to Cyprus.

He starts working for the city of Limassol from the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1935 and stays there until 22<sup>nd</sup> of February 1936 as a general office employee.

In the 25<sup>th</sup> of March he wins in Greece the 20000 m in 1.10'22" in a Greek record

In May 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> in the Pan Cyprian games in Nicosia he wins on the 1<sup>st</sup> day the 10000 m in 35'25.0", the 2<sup>nd</sup> day the 5000 m in 16'02" Cyprus record, the 3<sup>rd</sup> day he is 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 1500 m in 4'17.8" and wins the 20000 m on the 4<sup>th</sup> day in 1.08'06"

In June in the Greek national games he wins the 5000 m in 15'45" a Greek record, the 10000m in 32'52.4" also a Greek record and the marathon in 3.06'30"

On 26<sup>th</sup> May 1935 in the Balkan games in Istanbul he is not allowed to take part, because the Yugoslavs protested (they had started the protests from the Balkan games of 1934) and claiming that he is not Greek but British. Foolishly SEGAS accepts the claim. However Kyriakides is allowed to run in the marathon race, starting 2 minutes behind the runners and in any case not allowed to count in the points.

He finishes 2nd in 3.08'07" only 50 meters behind the winner the Romanian Gal.

On the 15th of July 1935 he travels to England 3 weeks ahead of the British Championship where the best athletes from Europe and even the USA are participating (athletes from 22 from 8 countries)

He runs the marathon where there are 39 entries including the Hungarian Calambos, and comes 2nd in 3.03'29" with Norris being the winner in 3.2'57"

Because of the high temperature and humidity only 4 out of the 39 starters finished. This time was the slowest in history of the AAA championship.

England asks him to run for then in the 1936 Olympics and a correspondence starts between Kyriakides and the AAA. Kyriakides is in favor of the idea because of the bad treatment he has from the Greeks

While in England he buys a new hand stop watch and a KODAK camera. He also buys two books on training and diet published by WEBSTER. From that time he starts stretching and long stride slow running for warm up and feeds on a very streaked athletic diet. First long distance runner in the world to do so.

He returns to Cyprus and continues to work for the city of Limassol.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of Sept. in the Amiantos games in Cyprus he wins the 1 mile and the 5000m in 15'31.5" a Greek record. Several English army runners took part

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of Sept in the Pre Balkan games he wins the 10000m in 32'28" a Greek record

In November he wins a One hour race where he covered 17430m, a Greek record

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of June 1936, in The Greek national championship he wins the marathon in 3.06'30" the 10000m in 32'52.4" and the 5000m in 15'45.0"

On the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> of August he is in Berlin Olympics where on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August he finishes 11<sup>th</sup> in the marathon in 2.43'20" Johnny Kelly is 18<sup>th</sup> Kelly invites Kyriakides to come run in

The newspaper KATHIMERINI offers the Olympic game organizers an ancient bronze warriors helmet as a trophy for the winner of the Olympic marathon. Kyriakides as the team leader delivers the helmet on arrival to the organizers, but when the Korean (running for Japan) Shon-KeeChang, gets his gold medal he is not given the helmet.

Many years later Kyriakides gets in touch with the German Athletic Federation and tells them the story. A few years later the helmet is found and in a special ceremony in Berlin it is handed to Shon.

From that time Stelios and Shon become friends and Shon sends SK a Christmas card. The helmet is now in the Seoul Olympic museum.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> September 1936, in Athens he wins a 10000m race in 32'28.0" and in on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October in the Pre Balkan games he wins the marathon in 2.49'10" and the 10000m in 33'05.8"

During the 10000m race he broke 3 national records, the 5 miles in 26' 07', the 10000m in 32'28" and the one hour covering 9203 meters. He also wins the 5000m in 15'57.2"

In October 1936, in the Balkan games in Athens he wins the marathon in 2.49'10" which was a Balkan and national record, with Gal 2<sup>nd</sup> and Ragazos 3<sup>rd</sup> and also wins the 10000m in 33'05.8" that was a Greek national record.

The 2.49'10" was also the record time for the Classic course. According to the papers of the time the previous best was held by Canadian Shering in 2.53'00" according to the papers of the times.

Between May 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> 1937, in the Greek national games he wins the 5000m in 15'35.0" that was Greek national record the 10000m in 32'52.0" and was 4<sup>th</sup> in the 1500 m in 4'15.6"

On July 7<sup>th</sup> he runs in the British national championship again and comes once more 2<sup>nd</sup> in the marathon in marathon in 2.40'20.0" which was a Greek national record, one of the best times in Europe at the time.

Between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of Sept. in the Balkan games in Bucharest he was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 10000m in 33'06.22" and wins the marathon in 2.49'10"

The same year he meets Fanouria Maina from the island of Santorini and they get engaged on the 27<sup>th</sup> of November. Her uncle was a carpenter and cabinet maker and he later did all the furniture of Kyriakides house including the 90 degree trophy cupboard. Her cousin Manolis later became one of the very famous house decorator and had a big furniture factory. He decorated the best houses in Athens and London Greeks as well as the presidential offices, the Karamanlis archive museum in Filothei and the house of Kostantinos Karamanlis

In 1938 he decides to accept Johnny Kelly's invitation to run in Boston and starts preparing. He travels with the ocean liner Bremen from Southampton and arrives in New York on April 1<sup>st</sup>.

He is received by the NY Greek Americans Messers Nik Giannakopoulos, Frank Vasilopoulos, Theo Matsoukis and the president of the Athenian club Mr Giadopoulos.

He visits the offices of the ATLANTIS newspaper and stays at the St. Moritz hotel

He then travels by train to Boston where he is received by George Demeter the judge and politician, and stays in his hotel MINERVA. He meets the Boston Globe sports editor Jerry Nason and they become friends

He takes part in the Boston marathon on the 19<sup>th</sup> of April "patriots day" but although in good shape and feeling good, he drops out on mile 21 (34K) being the group of the first 6 runners because of painful blisters that are oozing blood. The blisters developed for 3 reasons. One the new "unbroken" shoes he used, present of the Greek Americans, the fact that he did not use socks and third because of the hard cement surface of the road that he was not used to.

The weather was "summery hot" with high humidity and according to the papers more than 200 runners started and only about 100 finished the race. Leslie Pawson is the winner with 2.35'34 8/10". The first 4 are under 2.40'.00"

At that time there were not special cars to pick up the runners that dropped out. So Kyriakides had to flag a passing bus that took him somewhere near the finish line and then a cab to reach the finish. Fortunately both driver did not ask him for money

Until 1946 the Boston course was full of official cars, puffing dirty fumes and making the life of the runners very uncomfortable. After many complaints the cars were very much limited after 1947.

Maik Dukakis was a young boy, and in his biography writes that he was watching the race and how disappointed he was when Kyriakides dropped out. Later as an adult Dukakis run Boston himself

In 1938 in the Balkan games in Belgrade he finishes 2<sup>nd</sup> in the marathon in 2.31.20 1938, with Ragazos winning in 2.31.20. The distance was short and Kyriakides instructions was to tire the Yugoslaves so that the Greeks can finish 1-2 and the Yugoslavs not to finish in first 6 so that Greece will win the Balkan competition. This was achieved and Greece won maximum points to win the Balkan games

After being tired in the marathon he can only finish 4<sup>th</sup> in the 10000m in 33' 45.4''

Between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of April 1939, in the Pan Cyprian games in Limassol in the first day he wins four events in 4 days, the 10000m in 32'45.1'' which was a Cyprus record the second day the 1500m in 4'19.9'' the 3<sup>rd</sup> day the 5000m in 15'57.1'' which was also a Cyprus record and the 4<sup>th</sup> day the 20000m in 1.11'15.0''

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of July in some local games in Athens he wins the 5000m in 15'42.8''

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September England and France declare war against Germany.

In the September in the Greek Athens national championship he is 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 10000m in 33'59.0'' also the 5000m in 16'11.1'' and in the 10000m cross country in 32'51.4''

On October 8<sup>th</sup> 1939 in the Balkan games in Athens he wins the marathon in 2.52'.07'' and he is 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 10000m in 33'50.8''

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November he joins the Greek army as a volunteer.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of December 1939 he marries with Fanouria. Everybody wishes him the best. Unfortunately when he took Fanouria to introduce her to his brothers in the city of Messini in Peloponese, Fanouria is injured trying to go through a barbed wire fence and she dies from tetanus 9 months later in September 1940 while pregnant. Stelios is devastated.

It is worth noting that Stelios and later his 2<sup>nd</sup> wife Ifigenia keep close contact with Fanourias family. Ifigenia used to say to us that she could not be jealous, because Stelios was a very good husband.

In the Balkan games of 1940 in Istanbul after Fanourias death, Kyriakides comes 3<sup>rd</sup> in the marathon in in 2.47'43". Ragazos is the winner

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of October 1940, Greece enters the war as the Italian army enter from the north.

From that time and until 1945 Kyriakides stops anything to do with running trying from him and his family to survive the terrible years of war and the cruel German occupation so he loses the best years in a long distance runners life from 30 to 35

As an Electricity Company electric bill delivery man and collector of the money, he notices in his rounds Ifigenia Katsarelou, the oldest daughter of a Greek national bank employ, pretty lady and very domesticated. He asks her neighbor Elsa Bakatselou to talk to her father, and the marriage is arranged. They marry on the 28<sup>th</sup> of December 1940 and immediately have a family. Eleni is born on the the 4<sup>th</sup> of December 1942 and Dimitri on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December 1944. Mary is born on August 1948

During the occupation he assists the resistance by passing messages to different groups. This was easy but of course dangerous because his work allowed him to pass easily the German army blocks

Furthermore using short wave hidden valves, he could listen to the BBC on his short wave radio that he had bought in Boston in 1938, passing the "other side news" to the people to give them courage. The ordinary people could only listen to the German propaganda in their radios

Early in 1943, one day that he was out with his wife taking their young baby for a walk, he was arrested by the Germans, who took him to the main square in Chalandri where he lived, and together with another 49 people, they would kill them by hanging. That was as a punishment because the resistance had killed some German soldiers a few days before.

When Kyriakides was asked for his ID, he showed to the German officer, his Berlin Olympics ID. The German was very surprised and asked him how he got it. Kyriakides explained the story, and it so happened the German officer was a long distance runner himself. So he allows him to walk away.

Unfortunately the other 49 were hanged on Pendelis Avenue nearby. This incident stayed deeply in his mind, and probably it was one more reason for his later decision to run in Boston in 1946. A few days later the same German officer visits his house to see his trophies and gives the order that this house will not be visited by the German patrols. This was a good opportunity for Kyriakides to hide Allied Pilots that had parachuted from their damaged planes, in his basement for a day or two before the resistance could arrange for their trip by submarine to Egypt.

On October 10<sup>th</sup> 1944 the Germans start retreating from Athens and on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December the second child, Dimitris, is born.

At the start of January 1945, in the confusion of the war and civil war, a bomb lands outside the bedroom where the children are sleeping but fortunately it does not explode. So all the family that was in the house at the time are saved.

Boston was always in Kyriakides mind. Sometime in early 1945 he decides to go and run. However conditions in Greece are not good for preparation and training, so he takes the family in April 1945 to Cyprus where he gets a job and starts his preparations

At that time the Greek Federation is penniless and can not assist him with the necessary funds. Kyriakides sales some of the furniture and the Electricity company (British Owned) where at the start of 1946 he rejoined when he went back to Greece, give him the rest of the money, for a single air ticket to go to Boston.

He travels with TWA on the first transatlantic flight from Athens, in a super constellation 4 prop engine airplane. The trip takes 3 days via Rome, Paris and Shannon before arriving in NY

He is met again by the NY Greek Americans before going to Boston to be taken care again by his friend and benefactor George Demeter.

15 days before the marathon he takes part in the Cathedral 10mile handicap race and finishes 4<sup>th</sup> in 51'40" a good time. He is happy because he realizes that he is in a good shape

In the 14<sup>th</sup> of April, one week before the race, it is the Greek Easter and he goes to the Greek Church together with the local Greek community. The then bishop later Archbishop Iakovos, invites him on the Saturday midnight mass to receive the light of the resurrection and pass it to the people.

That year the Boston s put back a day to the 20<sup>th</sup> of April. Kyriakides wins in dramatic race in 2.29'27" a Greek and a European record and the best time in the world for that year. The distance of the course is correct at 42.195m 116 runners participated in the race.

On the 36k he stops to drink water and Kelly gets away by 50 meters but by the 38K they are back together. On the 40K Kyriakides is ahead of Kelly and Nason goes near him and tells him that Kelly is tired and he will win

In his memoirs Kelly says that that year he lost because he run a "broken pace" where as Kyriakides run with a plan

Mike Dukakis is there again to watch the race. In his memoirs he says that "Kyriakides win inspired him to succeed in his later life, because nothing is impossible if you believe in yourself"

Kyriakides remains in the US for one month after his victory, going around the cities with big Greek American communities like Chicago, Philadelphia, NY and he used the newspapers and speeches to make the people aware of the situation in Greece.

At that time a new marathon started much harder that the one he had just finished, but Kyriakides was ready for it both mentally and psychologically.

He asks help for Greece and the Greeks. He is invited by Senator Peters to go to the white House where he explains the plight of the Greek people. According to the records, Johnny Kelly is present when meeting president Truman.

The US government authorizes a special assistance to be sent to Greece called the "KYRIAKIDES AID PACKAGE" consisting of grain, medicine, blankets, tents, tinned food, cloths etc and Kyriakides also brings some cows and bull given by farms near by Boston

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May 1946 he returns to Athens and receives a heroes welcome by almost one million Greeks from all over the country. He is met at the airport by many government and sports officials and rides on the open limousine of the King. The ceremonial stops of welcome in the suburbs of Elliniko, Kalamaki, Paleo Faliro, Nea Smirni, the pillars of the Zeus at the entrance of Athens, the tomb of the unknown soldier, then the senate house, the Athens Mayor's office before going to Filothei to the community offices and finally his house where friends and relatives are waiting took 8 hours. This was normally a 40 minute ride.

That night was the first night since the start of the war that the Parthenon was lit up in his honor. In the NBC documentary, Petros Linardos the well known historian says that "in 1946 Kyriakides was Greece".

Kyriakides gave hope to the Greek people. Where ever he spoke he asked the Greeks to forget their differences end the civil war and live in peace for the benefit of all.

Everybody wanted to meet him. And all this fame and glory did not changed him. He remained that same humble, hard working person that he always was.

The National Bank of Greece gave him a plot of land in Filothei to build a house, and the newspaper EMBROS, starts a fund to collect money, so they are given to his daughter as dowry to build a house. Thousands of ordinary Greeks give money to the fund. This was a big thank you from a nation and its people. The house started being built in 1947, with many factories and producers of building materials offering their products to him free of charge. Kyriakides never forgot this.

Many poems, sketches, funny stories in the social columns of the time, are written and drawn at the time and also later.

The same year he travels to Oslo to take part in the first European games after the war. 17 runners start and 14 finish. Kyriakides drops out because of severe cramps in his legs. His friend Ragazos finishes 9<sup>th</sup> in 2.32'58". Winner is the Fin Mikko Chiatanen in 2.24'55"

In April 1947, 37 years old he returns to Boston to run for a new cause. The Greek economy is devastated and the Federation is without money or athletic equipment. So he wants to ask the Americans again for help. He wants to collect USD 50,000 and bring back athletic cloths and equipment so that the Greek team can train to go to the first Olympic games after the war in London in 1948.

He also brings with him his friend Ragazos. They run and Ragazos is 6<sup>th</sup> in 2.35'34" and Kyriakides 10<sup>th</sup> in 2.39'13". Winner is a Korean. Ragazos is also 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Cathedral handicap run.

Again he is invited to go to the White House to tell his story and he is again successful in his new venture to find the money and second had equipment from Universities and the Greek team manages to attend the 1948 Olympics with a team of 20 athletes. Many American Greeks and Cypriots respond also with money donations.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of March 1947 because to the big publicity of the plight of Greece was given by Kyriakides, the American Government decides to authorize an advance payment of USD 400 million from the Marshall plan to be given to Greece. Greece was the only European Country to receive an advance. The total amount that was allocated to Greece from the Marshall plan was USD 1.377 billion.

Kyriakides has decided to retire from running after the 1948 Olympics at the age of 38. In London he runs the marathon and finishes 18<sup>th</sup> in 2.49'00".

The conditions are very bad with high temperature and humidity, and out of the 41 starters only 30 finish. The finish is dramatic with the Belgian Geily entering the stadium first totally dehydrated, only to be passed in front of the amazed public, by Cabrera from Argentina who was the final winner in 2.34'51.6" and the Englishman Richards. Kyriakides friend Ragazos also has to drop out because of dehydration.

1949 is the official date of his retirement, having run in many big races and many countries such as USA, England, Norway, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey, Yugoslavia, Germany, Poland and Egypt.

The same year the Greek civil war ends at last after 4.5 year of bloody fighting.

During his career he has won races from 400m to marathon, broken many records and very important he was a long distance runner 50 years ahead of his time, in training, diet, pacing and running with a plan.

He held the Greek record for marathon for 34 years and 6 months, one of the longest in the sport. ( from October 1933 until the 6<sup>th</sup> of April 1969)

Despite the fact that his running career was totally interrupted by the WWII from 1940 to 1945, between the ages of 30 to 35 the best years in a runner's life at that time, because of his strong character he comes back at the age of 36 and wins the biggest marathon in the world at the time with a record time of 2.29'27"

When Kyriakides retired in late 1948 early 1949, his active running career ends but a new big chapter in his life starts. This chapter is no bigger than the first is definitely equal in importance but in a different aspect.

The story and many of the details of Kyriakides' victory in Boston on the 20<sup>th</sup> of April 1946, and what he achieved with his victory by bringing the KYRIAKIDES AID PACKAGE back is known to a lot of people.

The details of how this "miracle" happened, in very difficult times in the middle of WWII, occupation and the civil war afterwards, that brought great hardship, starvation, illness and deaths to many people in Greece, by a man that only thought of "what he do for his country and its people and never of what he can gain for himself", is a long and very interesting story that can be studied, if one searches through the Kyriakides collection material, that later became an well-organized and much expanded archive, that he left behind in two big cardboard boxes.

Kyriakides never told anybody about its existence or its importance. He was a man of low profile that never boasted about what he did. He was a man that only talked about what is the next thing that must done.

In 1994, (7 years after his death – another 7 in the life of SK) I found the boxes in the loft of the house where we lived and after getting a glimpse of the treasures inside, I decided that I must put it in order. I stopped work and travelling and for 6 months I spend 18 hours a day, seven days a week, working on the content and trying to put it in order.

Inside the boxes were his Boston cloths, bib and shoes, the dinner jacket he wore in the official dinners, photos, letters, hole newspapers and newspaper clippings, poems, sketches, restaurant menus, ID cards, invitation letters and so many other things. All this was starting from 1931.

Since then the archive has been enriched with material I have found and is kept open at all times and being updated.

Because of the newspapers the archive is good for research by students that are interested not only for the Kyriakides story, but also the history of Greek and Cyprus sport, the politics, advertising, prices, social events of the times.

Reading through the many newspaper interviews in Cyprus, Greece and Boston you can hear Kyriakides talking about his life, his thoughts and his beliefs and you suddenly realize that this young village boy with limited education, had a great open mind, a strong will, a positive and very likable personality that always thinks about “WE” and not “I”. Most of all he is very low profile.

In later life everywhere he went he was the most popular person and everybody wanted to talk with him. He never said no. When I was a young boy, every time we went to Athens together, we had to stop very often in the street because strangers want to shake his hand and say “thank for what you did”

The original archive was given to the University of Cyprus for their new library, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December 2017. Other memorabilia from the Kyriakides archive and collection have been given to the MUSEUM OF MARATHON in the city of Marathon, the Museum of the Cyprus Olympic Committee, the Berlin marathon Museum, the Cyprus Sports Federation, His old running club Olympia, the Museum of his birth place Stalos-Agios Fotios

There are many articles, many interviews, 3 books, a children's book, short Bios written and about 10 Documentaries as well as many TV presentations made by various people for Stelios Kyriakides.

It must be emphasized here that Stylianos Kyriakides, was not only one of the best long distance runners in the world between 1934 and 1948 with great victories and performances, he was also an athlete far ahead of his time, in training and planning for a race.

He was the first long distance/marathon runner to

1. Train with his coach Otto Simitsek by correspondence every time he was in Cyprus. This took place in 1934, in 1935 and in 1945.
2. The first marathon runner from 1934 to ALWAYS wear and use a proper wrist stop watch to pace his running and know his interval times. Searching the internet one can see that the next runner to use wrist stop watch is in the Bill Rodgers generation in the early eighties. In 1938 the Americans are intrigued by his training schedule, his streaked diet, his race plan and the wrist stop watch. There are many newspaper articles on that.
3. The first to use stretching exercises and long slow strides, for his warm up from 1935
4. The first to use streaked diet – He bought special books in England in 1935
5. The first to run for “Charity” – For Greece in 1946
6. The first to run “for a cause” in Boston 1947 – To collect money and athletic equipment and clothing so that Greece can take part in the 1948 Olympics in London

However what is not very well known to the great public is the big and extensive work he did for sports, humanity and the community, after his retirement and until his death.

It is very important to talk and analyze this part of his life because the span of 37 years is bigger in time than the athletic part.

To be a big champion is not easy, but is not hard either. If you have the talent and the dedication you can succeed. There are many champions around the world. What is important is, how you use your talent and your fame, to benefit your community and the world. It is important also to have in mind that all this athletic and humanitarian achievements were done in very difficult times of WWII, the German occupation, the civil war and the rebuilding of a nation from scratch.

Greece went through very difficult times from 1940 to 1960 and maybe a little after. A big part of the population immigrated to the US, Australia, Germany, Brazil and Argentina to find work. And yet Kyriakides had the chance to escape and stay in the USA where he could have had a bright future.

It is interesting to note here that after his victory in 1946 he was offered good contracts to turn professional in the US and even MGM offered a 10 year contract of USD 400,000 to be an actor. He was after all a handsome man very attractive to the ladies.

But Kyriakides was never a man who thought “what is in it for me” but always thought “how we can all benefit together”

The later part of his life, is a good lesson for us in modern times, especially for the younger generation that is the future of this world.

When in 2004 the Greek football national team came back with the European championship trophy, and a million people were in the streets to welcome the team, the

## **THE SOCIAL AND HUMANETARIAN WORK.**

According to the newspapers of the time as soon as he retired, he started helping local communities to organize races long distance running events in order to revive Greek running. He has seen what the WWII and the civil war have done to Greek athletics and sports in general and he feels it is his duty to do something about it.

In 1951 he is officially voted as a member of the technical committee of the Greek Athletic Federation, SEGAS, where he remains as a member until his death, helping, without any financial benefit, Greek Athletics and sports in general.

As a member of SEGAS he started officiating in local and international truck and field events.

In 1952 he has the idea to build from scratch a stadium and an athletic club in Filothei, where he lives. He knew that the Greek truck and field, in order to revive there must be the first basic facilities to bring the young people to train and follow a healthy life.

After a lot of difficulties with the local people, who had other ideas in their mind, he manages to convince them to give him a plot of land, that nobody wanted to buy because it was flooding during the rain season and starts the construction, using local labor, who come to work free of charge for him, after their normal working hours.

He approached companies for donations of cement, bricks, sand, tiles, coal dust and all other necessary materials. They all responded happily remembering what he did for them in 1946. So the Filothei stadium was built with minimum cost. Today the stadium is named after him. The stadium and the running club was officially opened in 1956.

In 1952 Greek truck field is disorganized and dying. Only the old generation of good runners are allowed to go and train in the stadiums. The “professor” Takis Skoulis one of the most respected long distance runners in Greece, and the first man to complete the Pheidipides run from Athens to Sparta in 1992, talks in his biography about these times. He says that the Filothei club that Kyriakides founded in 1956 was one of the most “progressive and best organized clubs” in the 60s. He wanted to join it, but the big club that he was member, would not let him go.

Between 1956 and 1981 Kyriakides spends all his free time to make sure that the stadium and the athletic club is run well. He selects good coaches and all other personnel and makes sure that there is a family atmosphere, and that the club is open to all people. People from all the surrounding suburbs come to join and train and soon Filothei is the champion club in the 2nd division. The nearby American collage helps in many ways since she had the means and the young students that were already training in the college stadium.

In the next years the club develops top class athletes that win World, European, Mediterranean, Balkan and even Olympic gold medals, but on purpose stays small so as not to lose the family atmosphere. (Katerina Stefanidi the World, European champion and Olympic gold medalist in pole vault is one example)

They also develop a very good basketball team that win the second division championship.

In September 1955, the newspaper VRADINI announces that they will start organizing long distance races so that new marathon runners can emerge, for the Olympic games in Melbourne in 1956. Kyriakides is invited by the newspaper to give training advice to the runners.

The same year SEGAS in conjunction with VRADINI, decides to organize THE ATHENS INTERNATIONAL MARATHON, to take place every two years and Kyriakides is given the task to organize it. We can find in Kyriakides archive the hand written notes of how he did it. We find in there, the race rules and regulations, how he measured the distance, where he based the supply stations, about the cars and buses for the officials and runners etc.

The ATHENS INTERNATIONAL MARATHON lasted until 1979, when the race changed hands to a private organizer for a year or two, until SEGAS took over again. Many of the top runners of the time including Bekila Abebe the Ethiopian Olympic winner in 1960 and 1964, top Finns, Yugoslavs, Turks, British, Hungarian and other runners, took part in this marathons.

In April 1955, Payton Jordan, the famous US track and field coach comes to Greece to train the Greek coaches over a period of 2-3 months. Kyriakides is with him 24/7 and they become very close friends. Later Jordan talks very warmly about his friend in the

2004 NBC documentary “**Stylianos Kyriakides, the journey of a warrior**” that won the EMMY award that year. (search in U-Tube)

In the 50s and 60s many people remember him riding his famous bicycle around Filothei. Kyriakides had bought that bike in Oslo in 1946 when he went for the European games. It was of a very advanced design for Greek standards. Unfortunately one day around 1970 the bike disappeared from outside the Filothei stadium where he always left it. I remember how sad he was to lose his beloved bicycle.

From 1952 to 1987, he is the pillar of a local community in all its activities. He started the boy scouts and the girl guides in Filothei, organizes functions and festivities and he assists the local schools in their events. In 1960 in one of these functions in order to raise more money for a cause, he managed to bring to the event Jayne Mansfield and her husband Mickey Hargitay. Jane was in Greece filming at the time the film “it happened in Athens”.

Of course he supports the surrounding suburbs every time they ask him. Do not forget that he was a celebrity and because of his low profile character and the very warm personality everybody wanted to have him around. In addition he was a very organized person and there was never a door closed for him, so everybody asked for his help. As long as it was for a good cause he never refused.

In the middle of the 50s three of Kyriakides relatives, came to Athens a young priests from the famous KYKOS monastery, to study theology at the University of Athens. The oldest one was Chrysostomos, who later became Archbishop of Cyprus and Grigorios who became the Bishop of Kiriania. They were at our house every Sunday after church for lunch. Chrysostomos used to chase me around to make me study my homework.

The 50s and the 60s were very difficult years for all people in Greece. The economy was suffering and there was a lot of unemployment around. Food was in short supply. The Kyriakides family depended on his salary and overtime work he did.

So Kyriakides always a good gardener from his work in Limassol as a house boy, he had the one acre garden of the house, where he planted different vegetables and 10 different fruit trees. We also had chickens and rabbits for meat in the garden.

As in his own life, he tried to teach the three of us responsibility and discipline so we all had our daily jobs to do. But cleaning the chicken house was the boys job.

Not having the opportunity to have higher education his aim was to give his 3 children the best. Using his name and connections, he got scholarships for us to go to the best schools and later he send us all to study in England using his contacts there. The two girls went to good secretarial schools in London and I got my Masters degree in Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering.

Despite the family hardships, Kyriakides was always ready to share with the less fortunate the little we had. He used to bring from time to time to the house orphans from the street, take care of them for a few days and then find them a government sponsored school to study. The story of Alekos Filipides made head lines in 1963

At that time our house was like a job finding office. People who did not know him and had no jobs came to the house and asked him if he can find a job for them. People knew that if Kyriakides asked for such a favor from his privileged connections, they will not say no to him.

During the 60s and 70s he travels many times abroad as a leader of the Greek team of athletes or runners that compete abroad, and at the same time he receives the foreign famous athletes and VIPs invited by SEGAS and are visiting Greece, because of his good command of English and he well known personality.

OLYMPIA RUNNING CLUB of Cyprus, was the club that he joined in 1933 and where he remained a member until he died. Many top clubs in Greece wanted him to join them but Kyriakides was adamant about this issue. He always said that “I will never leave the club where I started running”. After he stopped running he became the official representative of the club in SEGAS and Greece. Whenever Cypriot runners from his club came to Greece he would take care of them.

From 1960 to 1980 he was the first contact of many of Cypriots that came to Athens. In fact if a Cypriot went to his Embassy for something and they could not help him they would say to them “We advise you to go to Kyriakides to solve your problem”.

In 1960, the King of Greece, awards him the GOLD CROSS OF THE PHOENIX MEDAL, the highest award off Greece for “services to the country”.

1960-1970. In 1936 as the athletes leader of the Greek team in the Berlin Olympics he took with him an ancient bronze helmet of a warrior to be given to the winner of the Olympic marathon. At the winners marathon ceremony the helmet is not given to the winner Sohn Kee-chung a Korean who ran at that time for Japan (Japan occupied Korea in 1936). In the 60s in one meeting with German Athletic Federation officials, he tells them the story. Years later the helmet is found and in a special ceremony in Berlin where Sohn and Kyriakides are invited the helmet is handed over to the rightful owner. Sohn and Kyriakides become friends and Sohn sends every year Christmas cards to Kyriakides. The helmet is now at the Olympic museum in Seoul

In 1968 the ROAD RUNNERS CLUB of England inducted him as a member because of his services to marathon running.

In April 1968 Dimitris Vouros breaks his Greek marathon record that he held for 34 years and 6 months. One of the longest in the world.

In April 1969, he accompanies Vouros to run in Boston and meets again his two friends, Johnny Kelley and Jerry Nason

In 1981 Freddy Germanos who has a weekly program on Greek TV "FRONT PAGE" invites Kyriakides to be interviewed and during the interview he gives him a cup saying "Stelios this cup is from 9,000,000 Greeks" In that program you can hear Kyriakides taking live about his career and the Boston victory

In October 1981, politics get in between sports and the new socialist government decides to sack Kyriakides from the Filothey stadium committee, without prior notice and replace him with one of their "own" people. Kyriakides is devastated. The newspapers and the opposition politician's run a riot and the government realizing their mistake, they apologize and ask him to tell them what position he wants to be given. Kyriakides is so hurt that he answers to them, "thank you very much but I do not want anything. I have served my country and the sport for 50 years. Now it is your time to do the same." From that day on, he never went to the stadium again until he died, but he continued to serve Greek sport as a member of the Federation.

In 1986 he gives his Boston vest, his 77 bib and his shoes as well as some other memorabilia to the museum of the Cyprus Olympic Committee. The Olympic Committee of Cyprus have named the main reception room in their offices in his name.

During all his late life he is honored by many athletic clubs, committees and organizations for his services to the country and the sport.

In 1996 two Greek American decide to write his biography and in October 2001 the book “RUNNING WITH PHEIDIPIDES” written by Nick Tsiotos and Andy Dabilis and published by Syracuse University, is presented together with a special exhibit at the BOSTON SPORTS MUSEUM. A special small documentary is also produced for the event. A permanent exhibit for Kyriakides is at the same museum.

The book was translated in Greek “BORN A WINNER” and was presented at the Deere college together with a big exhibit of his memorabilia.

The same year an big exhibition is opened at the official opening of the new Bissell library of Anatolia college in the city of Salonika Greece. The exhibition was so successful that it stayed open for 6 months.

In September 2003 NBC decides to make a documentary about Kyriakides to be ready and presented at the Athens Olympic games of 2004. The documentary was shown worldwide after the marathon race and before the closing ceremony started. In 2004 the documentary wins the EMMY award. In this documentary, Mike Dukakis and Payton Jordan talk about him. Petros Linardos the famous Greek historian says that “in 1946 Kyriakides was Greece”

A full future film to be distributed by DISNEY and produced by 1821 PICTURES is under production. (search [www.1821media.com](http://www.1821media.com) – films under production)

From 1987 to today more than 50 exhibitions, conferences and events have been organized in his memory and more that 10 documentaries and TV interviews have been produced, in the USA, Greece, Cyprus, Germany and South Africa, promoting his legacy.

In 2007 almost all the athletic memorabilia of Kyriakides were lent to the city of Marathon, so that the Olympic marathons photo gallery can become a MUSEUM OF MARATHON RUN.

From 2010 wreaths for the winners of Boston, Marine Corps, Cape Town, Panjin, and Cyprus marathons have been given in his memory.

As from 2010 the 26.6 FOUNDATION in Hopkinton Massachusetts has Kyriakides as its symbol. [www.26.2-org.com](http://www.26.2-org.com)

In 2014 a brief Bio in Greek, English and Chinese was published and is distributed free, detailing all his life together with the athletic and humanitarian achievements.

In 2016 the book “THE SPIRIT OF MARATHON” about Kyriakides, is published in Chinese with all the money going to Charity. More than 10,000 books have been sold.

Four sculptures of Kyriakides have been unveiled up to now. The first in Filothei in 1998, the 2<sup>nd</sup> in Marathon in 2004, the 3<sup>rd</sup> in Boston in 2006 and the 4<sup>th</sup> in Statos, Cyprus in 2010. There are also three memorial plaques in Pyrgos village main square, where he is buried, in Filothei stadium and in Pafos main stadium all unveiled in 2017, because all these three locations bear his name. The connection of these 3 places is important. Pafos is the place where he was born, Filothei the place where he spend most of his life and Pyrgos the place where he is buried. The triangle of life

The Filothei stadium and the main stadium in Pafos now bear his name.

There are two 10K races named after him. In Pyrgos since 1988 and in Filothei since 1989 and there are two marathons run in his memory. Cyprus and Alexander the Great marathons since 2015

As a father he was one of the best. Together with our mother, who was the pillar of the family they taught us about love, respect, hard work, discipline, commitment, fellowship, teamwork compassion and so many other positive qualities that helps later in life.

Kyriakides was harder with me than my two sisters, but I always followed him wherever he went when I was around. He never pushed me to do sports, but I loved middle distance running and later I tried about 20 different types of sports and had a lot of fun. After training he would do massage to me with special creams

My mother Ifigenia (an ancient Greek name) as I already said, was the pillar of the house. Coming from the city of Smyrna in Asia Minor (Now Turkey) she was a great cook, very clean and tidy. A very good mother. My father used to say to her “Ifigenia when you die I am going to put a mop on your grave”. Of course he never did that because he left life before her.

Although my mother was a great cook, during Christmas and Easter, the kitchen belonged to my father. Great roast beef and Turkey with stuffing, lamb on the spit, the Cyprus flaunes and seftalies and a he was a Master Chef at barbeque.

Every time, that money was in “short supply” in the house, something that happened often, Kyriakides use to say to us “don’t worry God will take care of things”. He was religious man without ever imposing his Christian beliefs to others. Every Sunday he went to Church and tried to sing standing near the choir.

He had incredible energy. He could not sit still for one minute and he also walked very fast. He was a man with very positive personality and aura. Everybody wanted to be near him. Although the athletic club had a couch, the athletes always wanted to know “Mr. Stelios” opinion.

In 1984 when I bought house and piece of land in the mountain village of Pyrgos in Peloponese, when my father came to visit the first time, he had tears in his eyes. When I asked why, he said “this place reminds me of Statos where I was born. When I die you must bury me hear” his wish was granted. Ifigenia is lying next to him. Pyrgos and Statos are mountain villages at 1000m height, producing fruit, and looking down at the sea.

At the 10K Kyriakidia event every year before the race, the athletes lay a wreath in his grave.

Number 7 dominated his life

He was 1.72 tall, Won Boston wearing bib 77, his time was 2:29:27, died at the age of 77 in 1987, 1946 was the 7th time that Boston was run on the 19<sup>th</sup> instead of the usual 20<sup>th</sup> of April, won on a Saturday the 7th day of the week, and he was the 35th individual winner (5x7=35) and also his passport had the 7 in it

Stelios Kyriakides has inspired many runners who promote his legacy. Many runners say that during a marathon race, when they have problems they think of him to get courage.

In 1994 a running club was formed in Limassol and later moved to Pafos. The name of the club is “STELIOS KYRIAKIDES RUNNING CLUB”

Although he was in good health, suddenly in the late summer of 1987 he started feeling tired and without energy. After thorough examinations in IGIA hospital it was found that he suffered for myeloma which is a cancer of plasma cells. He entered the hospital on the 26<sup>th</sup> of October (my name day) and died 6 weeks later on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December (my birthday).

When I went to the hospital accounts department to settle the “big” bill, I was surprised when they told me that the hospital management in a special meeting had decided “**that there will be no charge for Stelios Kyriakides. We owe him a lot.**”

He left behind his wife, three children and five grandchildren and was buried initially at the main cemetery in Athens with all expenses paid by the Greek Government and later we moved him to Pyrgos, the resting place of his choice.

### List of Honors

- THE GOLD CROSS OF THE PHOINIX by the King of Greece in 1960 for his services to the country.
- CITIES that have awarded him their highest honor : Boston, Athens, Piraeus, Nea Smirni, Paleo Faliro, Nikea, Patra, Limassol, Filothei, Republic of Cyprus,
- ORGANIZATIONS :
  - Greek Senate
  - Greek Athletic Federation, SEGAS
  - Greek ministry of defence
  - Army Academy
  - Greek Ministry of Education
  - Athletic clubs of : Panathinaikos, Olympiakos, Panionios Ethnikos. Panelinios, Olympia Cyprus, Filothei Athletic club any many others
  - Rotary clubs of : Athens, Nikaia, Limassol

- Organizations : Kalsberg and Lanitis Cyprus
- Cyprus Olympic committee
- President of Republic of Cyprus
- Cyprus Athletic Federation
- GUINNESS BOOK OF MARATHONS : Mentions Kyriakides in 3 places

#### ATHLETIC ACHIVEMENTS :

Won the Pan Cyprian games in 1500, 5000, 10000 and 20000 many times

Won the Greek national championship 12 times in 5000m. 1934 (16'12"0), 1936 (15'45"0), 1937 (15'35"0), 1938 (15'46"5)

In 10000m. 1934 (32'53".6), 1936 (32'52"04), 1937 (32'52"),

the marathon 1933 (3.06'05"), 1934 (2.49'42"), 1936 (3.06'30")

Balkan Champion : 1st 2 times in 10000m 1934 (33'49".2), 1936 (33'05".8), and 4 times in the marathon 1934 (2.49'42"), 1936 (2.49'10"), 1937 (2.57'22") and 1939 (2.52'07")

Was 2nd in 10000m 1937 (32'06".5), and marathon 1933 (3.03'05"), to 1938 (2.31'30"),

Was 3rd in the 10000m 1939 (33'50"8) and the marathon 1940 (2.46'43")

Twice 2nd in the marathon of the AAA British championship : 1935 (3.03'20") and 1937 (2.40'06")

Boston marathon : in 1938 he drops out on mile 21 from severe blisters cause by the new unbroken shoes, not wearing socks and the hard cement surface of the road but returns in 1946 to win in 2.29'27" which was a European record and the best time in the world for 1946), he runs again in 1947 and finishes 10th (2.39'13")

In the 10 mile Cathedral race in Boston in he finishes 5th (51'40"), and in 1947 4th

In the 1946 European games in Oslo drops out because of severe cramps

Olympic games : 1936 Berlin 11th (2.43'20"), and 1948 London 18th (2.49'00")

Several times broke the National Greek and Cyprus records : in 1500, 5000, 10000, 20000 meters, 3 and 5 miles, one hour and the marathon

Broke the Balkan records in the 10000m and the marathon

European record in marathon : Boston 1946, 2.29'27"

Best time in the world in marathon in that year April 1946, 2.29'27"

Holder of the marathon national Greek record for 34 years and 6 months

#### DOCUMENTARIES :

1946 – PATHE NEWS

1981 – PROTI SELIDA - FREDDY GERMANOS Greek ET1

2001 – BOSTON for book presentation

2003 – TRUE STORIES - Greek ET3

2003 – INTERNATIONAL - ET1

2004 – NBC “STYLIANOS KYRIAKIDES THE JOURNEY OF A WARRIOR” –  
EMMY AWARD

2015 – RIK Cyprus

2017 – KOA Cyprus

INTERVIEWS on TV : ET1 1975, RIK 1985, ET1 1987 (these are the ones we know off.)

FILMS : Under production by DISNEY the “Kyriakides story”

BOOKS :

2001 – RUNNING WITH PHEIDIIDES – Nick Tsiotos and Andy Dabilis. Syracuse university Press

2003 – ΓΕΝΝΗΜΕΝΟΣ ΝΙΚΗΤΗΣ – Translation in Greek

2014 – MARATHON SPIRIT – In China

2014 – STELIOS KYRIKIDES – Children's book

2014 and 2018 – Short BIO in English, Greek and Chinese

ARTICLES in magazines: Many articles written in magazines and the internet, In English, Greek, Chinese and German

POEMS and SKETCHES : since 1946 more than 20 poems and sketches

EXHIBITIONS for Kyriakides were held In Boston, China, South Africa, Cyprus, in Greece – Psychiko, Salonika, Agia Paraskevi, Xanthi, Syro, Piraeus, Preveza, Salonika,

MUSEUMS : His memorabilia are in the museums of Marathon, Berlin, Olympic Committee,

STATUES : His statues are in Filothei Greece (1998), Marathon (2004), Boston (2006), Statos Cyprus (2010)

PLAQUES : Memorial marble plaques are in Pyrgos, Peloponnese, Filothei Greece and Pafos Cyprus (all in 2017)

STADIUMS : Stadiums named after him are in Filothei Greece and Pafos Cyprus

**All the information contained in this article has been checked and verified through my personal experience with my father, the newspapers and other material found in the Kyriakides archive and finally with information obtained through the internet**