

## Nicholas M. Athans

June 16, 1930 - August 9, 2020

On August 9, 2020 Nicholas M. Athans fell asleep peacefully at his home in North Miami, FL. after his battle with Multiple Myeloma.

He was born on June 16, 1930 in the beautiful seaside village of Sigri on the Greek Island of Lesvos.

His parents Menelaos and Vasiliki were displaced from Turkey during the exchange in 1922 and came to Lesvos to start a new life. His father Menelaos was a cargo ship owner and ship captain who travelled the Aegean.

After receiving high grades in school in Mytilene, Lesvos he was accepted to the esteemed Pantios University in Athens. His initial university education was suddenly ended with his draft into the Greek Navy, where he served for 3 years.

Never giving up on his dreams for continuing his higher education and succeeding in his life, Nicholas came to the USA in 1955 to attend the University of Miami where he earned his Bachelor Degree in Business, specializing in Airline Administration. At the University of Miami he met his wife Thalia (Vgeros). They married in 1959.

Nicholas Athans was a pioneer in the travel industry who opened the door for

thousands of people to travel the world. He started his career with Northeast Airlines in Miami, and then went to New York in 1962 to work in the Greek travel industry. He saw the need in 1963, while in New York, to create mass travel to Greece, and sent the first non-stop flight from the USA (New York) directly to Greece. It was a chartered TWA plane and by doing so opened the USA travel industry to Greece in grand style.

He paved his way to open his own company, Tourlite International on Fifth Avenue, NYC. It became the largest and most successful Greek tour company from the USA to Greece.

He was definitely a risk taker and considered by all to be the “Gentleman of the Greek travel industry”.

After his tremendous success with travel from the USA to Greece, he expanded and added flights to other European cities, and to the Eastern Mediterranean countries of Turkey, Israel and Egypt, and then expanded to South and Central America countries, all at affordable prices. His incredible foresight led him to the charter airline industry where he then started his own charter airline, Arista International Airlines in 1982. This complimented his whole tour operation.

He was a highly respected businessman and very loyal to his partners in the industry. He was featured in the "New York Times" Travel Section and on the cover of a very respected travel magazine "Travel Agent", as well as, numerous other trade publications. He was also on the Board of Directors of a New York Bank, Interbank. He was president for many years of the American Hellenic Tour Operators Assoc. (AHTOA) and Brazilian American Tour Operators Assoc. (BATA).

He was a past board member and active member of the church he came to love in North Miami, the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation.

Nicholas was a wonderful husband and adoring father and grandfather, always generous and full of life. He travelled the world, was a wonderful dancer and singer.

His happiest days were spent at his waterside birth home in the Village of Sigris and at the helm of his boats cruising the Mediterranean and South Florida.

Always eloquent charming, adventurous and poetic, it was of no surprise that on a very recent day he said to us ...”I am making plans for our next flight”

Nicholas is survived by his wife, Thalia of 61 years, daughter Valerie and husband Ioannis Papaioannou, with son Niko, and daughter Maro and husband Dr. James Doundoulakis with children Thalia and James and sister Aglaia. He was predeceased by his brother, Spiro.

He was our guiding light and we are all better for having known him.

The funeral will be held on Thursday, August 13 at 11am, with viewing from 10-11am, at the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation, 12250 NW 2nd Ave, North Miami, FL 33168.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in his memory to the church.

# Cemetery Details

## **Caballero Rivero Woodlawn North**

3260 SW 8th St  
miami, FL 33135

# Tribute Wall

CA

“ *Carolina sent a virtual gift in memory of Nicholas M. Athans*



Carolina - May 10, 2022 at 05:16 PM

CA

“ *I'm in shock, and very sad I was his girlfriend in Costa Rica we travel to Panamá and to many hotels in Costa Rica I lost contact with him and couldn't find him now it's too late!!!*



Carolina - May 10, 2022 at 05:02 PM

IK

“ *Dear Thalia, Valery, Maro and family  
It was a great shock to hear about Nick's passing!!!!!!!  
Nick will always be in my thoughts and in my heart as a wonderful friend and a special person Nick and my late husband Tony, had a long friendship and through that friendship I had the chance to meet Nick and his exceptional family  
HAVE A GREAT TRIP TO HAVEN  
With all my love Ioanna Karamanlakis and sistr Mitza*

Ioanna Karamanlakis - August 18, 2020 at 03:21 PM

VA

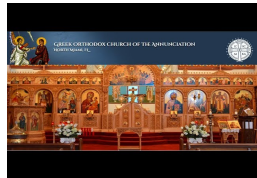
“ 2 files added to the album Memorial Program



Valerie - August 16, 2020 at 12:48 PM

TF

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



The Athans Family - August 14, 2020 at 03:44 PM

CL

“ Our prayers go out to Thalia, Valerie, Yianni, Niko, Maro, Jim, Thalia and James.

We share in your sorrow. We loved Nick and are honored to have had him in our lives.

Themis and Chrissy Leontis

In Nick's honor we have made a contribution to Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation.

We are grateful for the live video feed of the funeral that the Church provided.

Chrissy Leontis - August 13, 2020 at 12:31 PM



“ *Blue & White Sympathy Floor Basket was purchased for the family of Nicholas M. Athans.*



August 13, 2020 at 11:46 AM



“ *Blue & White Sympathy Basket was purchased for the family of Nicholas M. Athans.*



August 12, 2020 at 03:23 PM



“ *Stathis N Zambas & family. purchased the Blue & White Sympathy Basket for the family of Nicholas M. Athans.*



**Stathis N Zambas & family.** - August 12, 2020 at 02:44 PM



“ *Woubi, Nate and Alem purchased the Peace, Prayers & Blessings - Blue and White for the family of Nicholas M. Athans.*



**Woubi, Nate and Alem** - August 12, 2020 at 02:24 PM

SS

“ Dearest Athans Family!!!

*It is very difficult to find words to express the feeling of great loss the passing of Nick Athans has meant!! I can only be very grateful for having had the wonderful experience of having Nick and Thalia in my life, more than friends ,they are family. Forever grateful for all those extraordinary memories of all these beautiful moments that we shared!! Nick will always be remembered for his kindness, wit, and that special unique philosophy on life. Sagapo, Adriana*

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**Silvia Adriana Schumann** - August 12, 2020 at 02:09 PM

HK

“ Dearest Thalia and family,  
*You have my deepest sympathy for the passing of the head of your family. May god rest his soul and may he rip. He was a very nice person and will be missed. Helen klepak*

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**helen klepak** - August 12, 2020 at 01:47 PM



“ *In His Honor Pedestal Arrangement was purchased for the family of Nicholas M. Athans.*



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August 12, 2020 at 09:34 AM



“ *Dish Garden with Fresh Cut Flowers was purchased for the family of Nicholas M. Athans.*



August 12, 2020 at 09:29 AM



“ *Menelaos Tina purchased the Blue & White Sympathy Floor Basket for the family of Nicholas M. Athans.*



**Menelaos Tina** - August 12, 2020 at 02:17 AM



“ *Blue & White Sympathy Floor Basket was purchased for the family of Nicholas M. Athans.*



August 11, 2020 at 06:27 PM



“ *1 file added to the album Memories Album*



**Chrissy Leontis** - August 11, 2020 at 05:00 PM

JP

“ *May he Rest In Peace, with all my love Jimmy Poulos!* 🙏

jimmy poulos - August 11, 2020 at 04:52 PM

CL

“ *1 file added to the album Memories Album*



Chrissy Leontis - August 11, 2020 at 03:25 PM



“ *White Standing Spray was purchased for the family of Nicholas M. Athans.*



August 11, 2020 at 12:58 PM

EG

“ *I was deeply saddened to read about Nick's passing. I remember Nick & Thalia since we moved to Miami when I was a teenager. I admired them as such a stunning & beautiful couple. My family & I always used Turlite for all our travels. Nick was not only a handsome man, but very successful and always a gentleman. Nick will be greatly missed by his dear family and many friends. May his memory be eternal.*

*With love and deepest sympathy,  
Effie ( Zamanis Peters ) George & Anthony George*

Effie George - August 11, 2020 at 11:08 AM

NK

“ I’m deeply saddened to hear of Mr. Athans’ passing. To Mrs. Thalia, Valerie, Maro and your families, please accept the most sincere condolences from our family. My life is enriched by having been a recipient of his quiet, dignified and caring mentorship while a member of his organization.

*It was one of my life’s best professional decisions to join the Tournalite family and I’ll be forever grateful to Nick Athans for the opportunity. May his memory be everlasting and a friendly wind gently guiding his sails. Καλό ταξίδι.*

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**Nick Koutsis** - August 11, 2020 at 01:08 AM

GV

“ My fondest memories of Nick was his love of his yacht VAL MAR (named after his daughters Valerie and Maro ). He loved entertaining his family and friends with infinite cruises of local So. Florida waters. I often acted as 1st mate on those trips. He was quite the professional Captain, very strict but accommodating. My sister always providing the tastiest of food and fare along the way. RHIP Nick, with love your brother-in-law, George Vgeros.

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**George Vgeros** - August 11, 2020 at 12:08 AM

TK

*Dear Nick have a peaceful journey in the beautiful Gods world. May your memory be internal. You had a wonderful wife and wonderful children as well a beautiful and successful life. GOD BLESS*

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**Tula Kourtoglou** - August 14, 2020 at 12:48 PM

SL

“ 3 files added to the tribute wall



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**sheri Lubin** - August 10, 2020 at 09:13 PM

CL

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



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**Chrissy Leontis** - August 10, 2020 at 08:46 PM

CL

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



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**Chrissy Leontis** - August 10, 2020 at 08:41 PM

CL

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Chrissy Leontis - August 10, 2020 at 08:36 PM

CL

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Chrissy Leontis - August 10, 2020 at 08:28 PM

CL

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Chrissy Leontis - August 10, 2020 at 08:25 PM

CL

“ 0 file added to the tribute wall

Chrissy Leontis - August 10, 2020 at 05:43 PM



“ 10 files added to the album Memories Album



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**St. Forts Funeral Home - August 10, 2020 at 05:12 PM**