



Greek Australian Figure Dimitris Tsigkris Tragically Passes

Former Greek Community President of New South Wales Dimitris Tsigkris will be buried in Australia. Dimitris Tsigkris died in Greece when a car knocked him down and injured him seriously at the age of 76.

Dimitris Tsigkris studied theology in Greece. He continued his studies in Australia. Aside from being President of the Greek Community of New South Wales, he was also President of the Union of Greek Authors and Artists and was a candidate of the Labor Party.



Greek students to study in Russia

Ten Greek students have awarded grants for studying at Moscow State University and the People's Friendship University of Russia on a free-of-charge basis.

A ceremony to this effect was held on Saturday in the Russian Center for Science and Education in Athens, with a group of Greek citizens separately getting international certificates of Russian language specialists.

This will add significantly to their push for entering Greece-based higher educational establishments, organizers said.

Article from the Voice of Russia

Greek island lovers star in taboo-breaking documentary

ATHENS — A taboo-breaking documentary has exposed the seedier side of vacations in Greece with a focus on a once-legendary army of lovers that courted -- and bedded -- thousands of tourists two decades ago.

Titled "Colossi of Love", the documentary highlights the halcyon days of the kamaki (Greek for harpoon) suitors in the 70s and 80s when droves of women from mainly Scandinavia, Germany and Britain flocked to the Greek islands.

"Wherever we went, they would hit on us," says Tarja, a Finnish woman who first visited the island of Rhodes in 1980, met her future husband on her first night out -- and eventually settled down to start a family.

The women landed in a country that had just shaken off a seven-year military dictatorship and where courtship between Greeks was tightly regulated by strict tradition that still kept unmarried girls inside the home.

"The girls were more groovy than us, and certainly more groovy than Greek women," remembered Yiannis Klouvas, 55, co-owner of Rhodes' most famous discotheque of the era, the Hi Way, which was modeled on London's Hippodrome.

"Greek women wouldn't leave the house. Our sisters had no chance of going out, although we were out every single day," he tells the one-hour documentary by Greek filmmakers XYZ Productions, made with backing from state broadcaster ERT and Franco-German Arte channel.

"Today we regret things like that," Klouvas conceded.

"We ourselves did not want a sexual relationship with a Greek woman be-



cause we didn't want to get into trouble," admits George, the club's former bouncer who later emigrated to Denmark in pursuit of a girlfriend.

"I went out with a Greek woman for a year and a half, but I never touched her. I went no further than a kiss."

Eccentrically dressed in open-necked shirts, gold chains and tight trousers, the swarthy, afro-haired kamakis formed a class of their own, even forming associations that established rules of conduct.

On Rhodes, the unwritten code established that any girl with a local boyfriend was off-limits to other kamakis for a week.

"You felt safe," Tarja said. "It was like having 20 bodyguards."

In the southern town of Nafplio, which was very popular with French tourists, the rules forbade stealing and encouraged kamakis to show their charges around local sites before the evening heated up.

Klouvas said the kamakis even developed tricks for spotting the most

promising catches.

"The boys would normally go for women that hadn't tanned yet," he says.

"When one was a bit suntanned, it meant she had been around for some time. The 'fresh stuff' would have been more vulnerable."

Some plied their trade on beaches while others haunted tavernas and clubs where they would try to outdo other kamakis on the dance floor.

"We were like princes," reminisces Bruno, a middle-aged kamaki who claims he's given sex lessons during a "career" that embraced nearly 4,500 women.

"I used to make love on the beach, in the water, on the rocks, everywhere. For me, making love is living."

At the time, the kamakis' brash antics were considered too extreme for respectable television.

Some of the documentary footage, showing kamakis wooing tourists on the island of Crete over 20 years ago, comes from a state TV news programme that was yanked off air in 1983, documentary director Nikos Mistriotis told AFP.

"It was deemed insulting to Greeks at the time," he said.

Many kamakis were not above exploiting women for free meals and gifts, and frequently lied about their backgrounds.

"Normally doing kamaki was the only job they had," says Tarja.

But against the odds, many of the trysts led to commitment and some 4,000 mixed nationality marriages were recorded on Rhodes and nearby islands between 1980 and 1990, Mistriotis said.

Some also argue that the practice boosted tourism as many of the seduced women would return with friends or relatives.

But the rise of AIDS would eventually bring the carefree era to an end, leaving a bittersweet taste among the dwindling ranks of the kamaki.

"We all have a fear about that period of our life," says Klouvas. "You fear that one day a 35-year-old might show up and call you 'dad'."

Article from AFP - John Hadoulis



Stars of the "Colossi of Love" documentary are featured on a poster



Sunbathers line a beach on the Greek island of Rhodes in a scene from "Colossi of Love"