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**GEORGE P. KOKALIS, L100 FOUNDER AND PAST CHAIRMAN,
DIES WITHIN WEEKS OF 99TH BIRTHDAY**

Phoenix, AZ – George P. Kokalis, a Founding Member of Leadership 100 and its dynamic Chairman from 1996 to 2000, died suddenly yesterday, within weeks of a planned celebration of his 99th birthday on July 20.

A noted philanthropist and business entrepreneur, Kokalis left his native village of Kalavitra in Greece for America at 11 years of age, achieving early success in the produce business in Chicago where he later started his own supermarket chain, Sure Safe, which he sold in 1961. He then devoted his life to philanthropic support of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, Hellenic College and Holy Cross School of Theology, parishes in Chicago and Phoenix, where he had moved his family, and especially Leadership 100 which he had founded with the late Archbishop Iakovos and other leading members of the Greek Orthodox Church, becoming its Chairman in 1996.

Archbishop Demetrios of America upon hearing of the news, said: “The death of George Kokalis is more than the passing of a pioneer of our Holy Archdioceses; it is the loss of a true faithful servant of the Church. George Kokalis’ vision as one of the founders of Leadership 100, and his generosity as a great benefactor of his local parish, Hellenic College and Holy Cross and the Archdiocese as a whole, bear witness to his devotion, love and dedication to God and to His Church and to his fellow Greek Orthodox. All of us who had the privilege to know him will sorely miss him. May God rest George’s soul in His Kingdom. Eternal be his memory!”

In extending condolences to George’s son, Peter G. Kokalis and the Kokalis Family, Stephen G. Yeonas, Chairman of Leadership 100, said, “George was a sterling example of an exceptional human being and Christian who truly loved his Church, family and fellow man. Leadership 100 has reached its high level of success because of his untiring efforts and capable leadership. In his capacity as a Founder and past Chairman, George was always there to lead the way. He will be remembered as a Founder who faithfully stood by the side of our Beloved Archbishop Iakovos of Blessed Memory and helped make his dream and vision a reality.”

One of George Kokalis’ first gifts upon selling his business was establishing the first library in the Greek Community in America, at St. Demetrios Church in Chicago. When he moved to Phoenix,

he donated his own funds but challenged others to acquire prime real estate and build Holy Trinity Church and Community Center, which became Holy Trinity Cathedral in 1988.

He served on the Archdiocesan Council for a record 34 years. When he served as Chairman of Leadership 100, he urged whole families to join and chaired the effort to fulfill pledges, which brought fulfilled memberships to 300. He enlisted five fulfilled members of his own family.

Next to his beloved Church and his unstinting support of Hellenic College-Holy Cross School of Theology was his support of the Banner Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center in Phoenix where he established the Good Samaritan Chapel and endowed the Clinical Pastoral Education Chaplaincy Program for all faiths.

A recipient of the Ellis Island Medal of Honor and a Doctorate of Humanity from Holy Cross School of Theology, he described himself as a simple man who followed the Faith and Values instilled in him, believing that philanthropy is part of spiritual growth, that giving comes back five-fold, ten-fold in Blessings. "You can't count high enough," he once said.