

At the End of the Line, Michael Dukakis Still Wants to Connect

TNH Staff

What drives former Massachusetts Governor and 1988 Democratic Presidential candidate Michael Dukakis – and drives him nuts – is a 1.5-mile stretch between Boston's North and South railway stations that hasn't been built for more than a century, the missing link from Maine to Washington, DC.

It's an obsession, a bit of an angry one really, that he had to concede not building it as part of a deal to get then-President Ronald Reagan to support the 16-year-long \$24.3 billion Big Dig that tore down a central artery through Boston to ease congestion, with new tunnels and bridges being built as well.

A 1.5-mile stretch between Boston's North and South railway stations is the missing link from Maine to Washington, DC.

But the North Station-South Station connection wasn't included, the kind of issue that has defined the life and career of a technocrat policy wonk, a political geek if you will, who, at 84, still won't stop talking about the link or campaigning for it.

"It would be transformative," he gushed to writer Robert Huber in a Boston magazine feature on his long career from a state legislator to an admittedly failed and unfocused Presidential campaign he was leading over Republican George H.W. Bush before being portrayed – without fighting back – as soft on crime, and too small to fill the White House chair.

He almost doesn't care anymore, even though the undying image that helped do him in was the silly photo of his helmeted head sticking out of a tank, a campaign gimmick that backfired spectacularly even though he had been in the military during the Korean War era.

"It was a winnable election and I lost it." Does he still think about it? "Not these days. Good God! At some point you move on. If you lose, you lose. Suck it up and move on," he told the magazine.

Teaching at Boston's Northeastern University, to which he makes the two-mile walk from his home in nearby Brookline, Dukakis is still a public transportation freak, remembered as well for his broken stretches as governor – he lost one bid to a longshot Republican in 1978 – for riding the MBTA, the T as it's called, Boston's ancient subway system to the Golden Dome Statehouse.

What he cares about – what he's obsessive about still – is that unfinished rail link between the stations, getting people out of cars as much as possible and the lost humanity of our times, right down to his peccadillos, like carrying a bag to pick up litter when he walks.

The piece was called Michael Dukakis' Last Stand, and while these days he doesn't have many causes left that will rally people and as more than a generation has come and gone since he hoped to be the first Greek-American to become president, he's still standing, if a little stooped.

His political hero was John F. Kennedy, a man about whom Dukakis said hasn't had a charismatic successor apart from Bill Clinton, who Dukakis characterized having a "deep flaw," in his personal life – without mention-



Kitty and Michael Dukakis, the former Governor of Massachusetts and Democratic Presidential candidate, is still determined to see the link between Maine and Washington, DC completed.

EUROKINISSI

ing the kind of womanizing that has become the cause celebre of victimized women today, but has left Clinton still untouched. The three politicians were driven by the same kind of ideals liberal Democrats chase all their lives, for the most part.

There's no scandal in Dukakis' life, a man even his staff at the Statehouse said was driven by work and idealism and so inattentive to bling and glitz he could wear tie shoes with Bermuda shorts and put some to sleep with ceaseless policy talk. But he's still putting one tie shoe in front of the other, walking on a road he hopes will become a rail link and trying to tie together the loose ends of contemporary American politics during a fractured and divisive

time in the era of President Trump, a man he calls "a walking personality disorder," and dysfunctional.

KEEP ON

"Maybe Dukakis is passé to outsiders, but he's still charging hard here: still pushing, 60 years in, to give his city and state what he is utterly certain they need," is how the article put his drive, with no plans to retire.

It came from his parents and upbringing. His mother, Euterpe, who campaigned for him nationally in 1988 – at the age of 85 – came to the United States in 1913 at age nine and was the first Greek-American woman to go off to college unescorted; she graduated from Bates, in Maine.

His father, Panos, came to America in 1912 at 15 without speaking a word of English and 12 years later was graduated from Harvard Medical School and practiced seven days a week for 50 years, the kind of work ethic Dukakis has emulated.

He and his wife, Kitty, have been married more than 50 years and she became a very public figure during and after his campaign when alcoholism and depression overwhelmed her, leading her eventually to seek Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT), which they believe saved her life, a treatment she still gets and espouses for others in her state, becoming a tireless spokeswoman.

The story noted that Dukakis' liberalism was stoked by his

mother as he and she were opposed to the war in Vietnam, while his dad was not.

When he went to Swarthmore, a prestigious critical thinking Quaker college outside Philadelphia, in the early 1950s and took up cutting the hair of black students when local barbers wouldn't. "Don't ask me why I was instinctively outraged," he says. "But I was."

MR. MASS TRANSIT

As a first-term state legislator in the 1960s, he worked to kill the state's highway plan that would have cut through Boston neighborhoods, an idea anathema to the champion of mass transit. As Governor, Dukakis used \$3 billion in federal money that had been allotted for highways to fix the T instead.

Fred Salvucci, who was Dukakis' Transportation Secretary for all three of his terms as Governor, said Dukakis was successful because he paid attention to details.

"The fact that he took the Green Line to the State House—no police car, no bodyguard—because he believes in public transportation. He practiced what he preached, which is very unusual. And inspiring," said Salvucci.

Dukakis isn't letting up. He's been trying since the Reagan compromise to convince the state's political leaders, and now Gov. Charlie Baker, a Republican, to press for the North Station-South Station link that's been missing for 103 years.

"It's so painful," he said. "I don't even want to recount it. We had to back off on the rail component because it was taking one precious highway lane. Jesus!"

He had put it more succinctly: "We never got the connection. Crazy? Yeah." But he's still trying.



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PHOTOS: TNH/ELENI SAKELLIS



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1. Left to right: Evi Giannakakou, Nikos Giannakakos, raffle winner Vicki Vasilopoulos, and Maria Kosmidou.

2. Fashion Targets Breast Cancer Hellas at 120 Wooster Street in New York's SoHo featured remarkable designs in clothing, shoes, and jewelry for a worthy cause.

3. Fashion Design Lab presented the event Fashion Targets Breast Cancer Hellas with A.G.A.P.W., and the law office of Pardalis & Nohavicka at Dreams on Air in New York's SoHo.

4. Fashion event in SoHo raises funds to fight breast cancer in Greece.



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New York City Fashion Event Helps Save Lives of Women in Greece

By Stephanie Nikolopoulos and Eleni Sakellis

NEW YORK – 'Tis the season to dress to impress, and Fashion Design Lab (FDL)'s Fashion Targets Breast Cancer Hellas holiday party brought together Greek New York's fashion-forward community to shop for a good cause at Dreams on Air on December 7.

Celebrating friendship and entrepreneurship, the event was a joint holiday party that involved the Association of Greek

American Professional Women (AGAPW) and the law office of Pardalis & Nohavicka to raise money for the Greek chapter of the Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA)'s initiative Fashion Targets Breast Cancer. Ten percent of the proceeds from the event went to provide healthcare to low-income women in Greece. FDL's Evi Giannakakou, Nikos Giannakakos, and Maria Kosmidou welcomed everyone to the event for such a worthy cause. Also in attendance were Georgios Michai-

lidis- Head of the Greek Trade Office at the Consulate General of Greece in New York, AGAPW Founder and President Olga Alexakos, Dora Trogadi- Press Attaché for the Press and Communication Office of the Permanent Mission of Greece to the UN, Maria Pardalis, Artemis Kostas, Yiannis Kaminis, Anastasia Baker, and many members of the community interested in fashion and philanthropy.

The event showcased eye-popping designs by some of the hottest up-and-coming Greek designers on the market right now. We're talking luxe materials and bold cuts, classic with a daring twist. These are the designs to be seen in this season. Take, for instance, the black-and-white striped blouse from Liana Camba: while the length of the collared shirt features horizontal lines, its built-in necktie brings in vertical stripes that give it a more modern edge. Established in 1987, Liana Camba's designs are wardrobe essentials for sophisticated career women.

Then there's MY, designed by Maria Yeroula, a label typified as "wearable art statements." Taking inspiration from her native Greece as well as global travels, the designer cuts natural fabrics into eccentric forms and stitches into them compasses

and the phrase "Some things are not important." 8Clothing's 2017-18 line embraces the "gender-flexible" trend with minimalist looks. You'll find coats and sweatshirts in organic materials in a neutral color palette of grey, black, and wheat.

Shoppers walked away with beautiful pieces, knowing they also helped the fight against breast cancer in Greece.

Texture is all the rage right now. Last year was all about the straw bag. This year, Greek designers are pointing the way toward crochet. These crochet bags aren't your yiayia's creation, though. They are bold-hued and glam, designed by V&R, the company owned by husband and wife Vasilis and Roxani Borsis.

Everyone needs a bold piece of jewelry for the holidays and beyond, and Vanile on the Rock (VoR) has you covered with metal fashioning that is all about accentuating a woman's curves. Vanessa Geroulanos, a Fine Arts graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design, looks toward the organic shapes found in nature when she sculp-

tures her designs but they have an urban aesthetic perfect for the city girl.

Everyone knows that no look is complete without the right pair of shoes, and when it comes to Greek shoes that will stop you in your tracks, look no further than Sorelle. Though the brand name comes from the Italian word for "sisters," the dynamic duo in question, Arista and Valia Anastopoulos, are third-generation shoemakers whose products are handmade in Athens. Their gorgeous creations are 100% pure leather for the soles and upper linings and combine everything from Swarovski crystals to metal.

Carefully curating each piece, FDL's roots are in the ancient city of Athens but the company has found its home in the postmodern city of New York, making it "a portal that brings the most talented Greek and European designers to the US market." FDL is inspired by science and technology, seeking to push the boundaries of fashion. Dreams on Air is a 2600-square-foot retail, marketing, and PR showroom for luxury designers, located at 120 Wooster Street, in the fashionable SoHo district.

While shopping and mingling, guests were treated to a delicious spread of Greek appetizers. Kellari Taverna, a Greek

restaurant in Midtown, provided plates of spanikopita, cheese and olives, and fresh veggies and fruits. Roots Hummus, the self-proclaimed "microbrew of hummus" that was founded in Asheville, NC, offered its diverse selection of hummus, ranging from Mango Sriracha to Thai Coconut Curry and Lima Bean. Amethystos Wine kept libations flowing with its velvety wines.

At the end of the evening, Vicki Vasilopoulos was the lucky winner of the raffle prize: a three-night stay at the luxury Coconut Hotel on the Greek island of Santorini. Vasilopoulos, who previously worked in menswear fashion, now is a documentary filmmaker.

Shoppers walked away with pieces that will make them look like they just stepped out of a heart-pounding display window and had the added bonus of knowing they were helping to make a difference in the lives of their sisters in Greece. After years of economic crisis in Greece, the country's healthcare has faced slashed budgets. This means life-saving screenings for breast cancer are often put off until the disease has already reached late stages. Philanthropic events like Fashion Targets Breast Cancer Hellas holiday party give Greek women a fighting chance.

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