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## Former American Farm School President: Bruce Lansdale



**“Greece is our country and people of the American  
Farm School our family”  
Bruce Lansdale, Metamorphosis**

Bruce Lansdale served the American Farm School for 43 years, and was its President from 1955 until his retirement in 1990. Under Bruce’s leadership, the School became a multifaceted institution dedicated to quality “hands-on” education and innovation in agriculture. Through specialized short courses and community development projects, as well as international training programs for agricultural educators from throughout the world, he also ensured the School’s commitment to providing lifelong learning of the highest caliber.

Born in 1925 in Worcester, Massachusetts, he was raised in Thessaloniki where his father was one of the early directors of the YMCA. He earned a B.Sc. in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Rochester and a M.Sc. in Rural Sociology from Cornell University. In 1949, he got married to his fellow student Elizabeth (Tad) Krihak and moved

back to Thessaloniki. Together, they had four children and eleven grandchildren.

Following retirement, Bruce and Tad devoted themselves to conducting leadership seminars in Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Nepal, Nigeria, Malawi, Tanzania, India and Honduras. Bruce demonstrated his remarkable ability to communicate and inspire people of all nationalities, cultures and walks of life to appreciate and serve one another.

The many honors bestowed on Bruce during his lifetime included an honorary Ph.D. from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and a Rochester Outstanding Alumnus Award. He was an honorary citizen of Greece and of the City of Thessaloniki and the Greek Government awarded him with the Commander of Order of Honor, and with the Royal Order of King George.

Bruce's books, *Master Farmer* and *Cultivating Inspired Leaders*, were translated into several languages and became popular tools for global work in sustainable development. His long autobiographical poem, *Metamorphosis: Why Do I Love Greece?* touches the hearts of all who have read it and who have been privileged to know him.

He passed away quietly after a long illness, Monday, February 2nd 2009 at his daughter's home in Thessaloniki, near the School he led so devotedly for 35 years.

Aggelos Aggelidis

*Metamorphosis* (2004 – Enaretos Press)

*Why do I love Greece?  
Because in Greece  
Your friends become family  
Just as your family become friends.  
I feel that way about my associates  
At the Farm School  
Just as I feel about our teachers  
And our alumni spread out in Greece.  
They, too, are part of the Farm School family  
Their pain was our pain  
Just as I feel our pain was their pain.  
"Shared pain is half the pain," they say  
"Just as shared happiness  
Is twice the happiness."  
And goodness knows  
We shared our pain  
Just as we shared our happiness  
All those years.  
We lived thither  
Worked together  
Laughed together  
Cried together  
And shared each other's  
Children, grandchildren, friends  
As part of the Farm School family  
To which we belonged  
And will continue to belong.*





Bruce Lansdale talking to students at San Francisco, 1961



With the Trustees 1990

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## Perrotis College Alumni: Miltos Roidis and Konstantinos Oroilidis (Class of 2017)

Miltos and Konstantinos are two recent bright examples of Perrotis College graduates. They met in College, graduated from the B.Sc. program, went on to fulfill their military obligations and they are now both pursuing their M.Sc. degrees at Wageningen University in Netherlands, in the fields of Geo-Information Studies and Business and Economics respectively.

Miltos first came to the American Farm School at a very young age as a participant of the “Summer Camp” educational program for Elementary School students and then went on to graduate from the AFS High School. Konstantinos was introduced to the School through his father and knew from the very beginning that this was his chance for a successful future.

Inspired by their teachers and professors, they worked with determination and dedication to achieve their academic goals. Their memories are countless but they both recall their favorite one: Miltos graduating from High School as the Valedictorian and Konstantinos seeing his father shed proud tears during his speech in honor of Mrs. Aliko Perroti at the Perrotis College Commencement Ceremony.

Miltos and Konstantinos may live abroad now but they still visit the campus whenever they can or seek advice from their professors on many occasions. The School feels like home for both of them; a beacon guiding them in their journey.



*Humans of AFS*

Zoe Vergou



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## Association of Friends member: Kostas Economou

The American Farm School drew Kostas Economou's attention for the first time at the annual "Dance under the Stars" benefit many years ago. Ever since, he has been supporting the School's mission and vision, along with his wife Katerina, as member of the Association of Friends and its Board.

His extroversion and lively personality led to yearlong friendships within the Association that triggered his sense for volunteerism in many ways. He enjoys donating his time for the organization of the School's fundraising and other events. He becomes very emotional when speaking about the annual "In memory Tree Planting" or the Commencement Ceremonies of both the High School and Perrotis College, as he is filled with pride for being a member of this unique family.

He vividly remembers Bruce Lansdale and his enlightening vision, which made him an even greater believer of the institution. He also admired the work of teacher Pelagia Voutsas and Vice President Tasos Apostolides.



Humans of AFS

For Kostas Economou, the American Farm School brightens the city of Thessaloniki and its educational community. He believes that its curriculum should be used as a basis for all vocational training schools in the country and he would have been truly happy if his son had been among its graduates.

Zoe Vergou



## Perrotis College Faculty: Dr. Athanasios Gertsis



*Humans of AFS*

Dr. Athanasios Gertsis is a Professor of Precision Agriculture at Perrotis College and the Director of the College's "Krinos" Olive Center. He started teaching at the School in 1996 following a recommendation by Dr. Evangelos Vergos who was the College's Director at the time.

He thinks of the School as a place where people can fulfil their dreams because of his personal experience: he was given the opportunity to teach at an institution that is unique in Greece and to discover new professional horizons. But beyond that, he gained experiences that led to his personal growth and met people, throughout the years, that have become his second family.

Reminiscing his years at the College, his mind goes back to two important moments: Bruce Lansdale calling him a "missionary" of the School and being

awarded by Former President of the Hellenic Republic Mr. Karolos Papoulias for his contribution to the agricultural sector of Greece. The people who have influenced and continue to influence him are Dr. Evangelos Vergos, a fellow "contemporary missionary" as he puts it and a dear friend, and President Dr. Kanellis, whose vision inspires him to reach new professional heights.

Zoe Vergou



Dr. Gertsis with Bruce and Tad Lansdale

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## AFS Faculty: Despina Theodoridou



Humans of AFS

For Despina Theodoridou the American Farm School is her second home; “a family that is continuously growing and welcoming in new people who keep us on the move.”

She has been working at the School for more than two decades. It was back in 1998 when she first passed the School’s gates to leave her resume for a job opening and she remembers being amazed by the surroundings. A few days later she was called in for an interview for a position related to fish farming, an endeavor that the School was contemplating taking on. Despina was offered the position as she had prior experience managing a fish breeding station. For the first 12 years, she worked on adult education and training programs

implemented all over Greece. In 2010, Dr. Kanellis offered her the position of Human Resources Officer, a position she serves to this day.

Despina says the School gave her the opportunity to work on interesting projects, meet people from all over the world, to travel and work with wonderful colleagues. She vividly remembers a tour of the Tower of Ouranoupolis, during which Mrs. Loch told them how she was helping refugee women from Asia Minor stand on their feet making profit from carpeting.

Over the last 20 years, Despina has come close to many people at the School, some of whom she considers family. Her professionalism and nature of her work at human resources avert her from naming the ones closest to her, but Despina is, for sure, the favorite colleague for many of us.

Aggelos Aggelidis

## History trivia

### Before Google Earth: Then and Now

On the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the American Farm School, the former Royal couple of Greece, King Paul and Queen Frederica were welcomed on campus by President Bruce Lansdale. They were shown a diorama representing the evolution of the School from 1904 to 1956: a mosaic of solid buildings and cultivated land stretching over an area of over 1,000 acres. The Queen was so amazed by the model that she promised to offer Bruce Lansdale a portable diorama for his trips to the United States. In fact, the United States Information Service (USIS) issued a press release on that.

As a result of that generous offer and even before Google Earth and the new technologies, Americans were able to get a visual idea of School. The diorama has been maintained in excellent condition and is exposed at the entrance of the library. It is a pole of interest for our students, the staff and visitors, while it serves as a teaching aid for the Urban Design class at both the Elementary and Vocational High School.

