



SHERIFF RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD IN NEW YORK CITY

Peter J. Koutoujian, Sheriff of Middlesex County, was among the outstanding American leaders honored on Saturday May 7, 2011 with the Ellis Island Medal of Honor from the **National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations (NECO)**. The Ellis Island Medal of Honor ranks among the nation's most prestigious awards. Past recipients include six US Presidents, Supreme Court Justices, US Secretaries of State, US Attorneys General, artists, actors, Olympic athletes, and world renowned journalists. The medal presentation ceremony took place on Ellis Island in New York City.

Established in 1986, NECO's mission is to honor diversity and to foster tolerance, respect and understanding among religious and ethnic groups. NECO's Ellis Island Medal of Honor is awarded annually to outstanding American citizens from all walks of life who have distinguished themselves through significant contributions to this country. Each recipient of this honor embodies the very essence of the American dream and the patriotic values of our nation.

Koutoujian, the grandson of Armenian and Irish immigrants, has been recognized throughout the Commonwealth for his community service work, especially on behalf of the immigrant community. As State Representative he sponsored a petition in the Massachusetts House of Representatives to have the events of 1915 in Armenia accurately described as genocide, and continues to lobby Washington D.C to recognize the genocide. Each April he honored the survivors of the Armenian Genocide by coordinating and hosting the Massachusetts State House's Armenian Genocide Commemoration, a solemn occasion typically attended by over 200 members of the Armenian-American community from around the Commonwealth.

For almost a decade he spearheaded efforts to have a park dedicated to genocide survivors. In 2010, ground was broken on Armenian Heritage Park in a ceremony presided over by Governor Deval Patrick, Congressman Michael Capuano, and His Holiness Karekin II, the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians. Located in Boston on the Rose Kennedy Fitzgerald Greenway, the park is a gift to the City of Boston and the Commonwealth from Massachusetts Armenian-Americans for all to enjoy. The Park is consistent with key themes of the Greenway: to acknowledge the history of Boston as a port of entry for immigrants worldwide, and to celebrate those who have migrated to Massachusetts shores and contributed to the richness of American life and culture.

As the newly appointed Sheriff of Middlesex County, Peter J. Koutoujian continues to be a vocal advocate for all traditions and values we hold dear and encourages the patriotism represented by the Ellis Island Medal. He is the highest elected Armenian official in the Commonwealth and serves as the top law enforcement official in Middlesex County.

Photo Attached: Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian receives Ellis Island Medal of Honor in New York City

For more information please contact:

Michael Hartigan - Public Information Officer
Middlesex Sheriff's Office: 781-960-2800
mhartigan@sdm.state.ma.us

####