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“Sweet Memories” Offers A Taste Of Greek Traditions
NHM hosts a special evening of sweets and nostalgia on July 21

CHICAGO, IL – “Here, have a taste!” Sometimes a simple bite of pastry or sweets can transport you back to your childhood and suddenly you’re back standing in your grandmother’s kitchen or helping out behind the counter in your father’s diner.

Join us on Thursday, July 21, from 6pm to 8pm on the rooftop of the National Hellenic Museum for a free celebration of our “Sweet Memories” featuring samples from the PanHellenic Pastry Shop and stories about the ways in which pastries and sweets play a role in family traditions.

For some, it’s a creamy, custard-filled pastry, while for others it might be the taste of thyme honey over fresh Greek yogurt. If you grew up in Chicago, it might be a towering banana split.

“I remember spending afternoons after school in the restaurant standing on top of a chair mixing any and every ingredient I could find, thinking I was creating my own masterpiece,” said Museum Education and Public Programs Manager, Dimitra Georgouses, whose father, John, owned several Chicago area restaurants while she was growing up. “The cooks would leave me space to cook and I would try to force feed anyone who was willing to sample it.”

John Georgouses says some of his sweetest memories revolve around the community that was created at the local Greek-owned diners that were once ubiquitous in Chicago. “The open kitchen with the counter out front, you could see how they cook, there was a connection there,” said Georgouses. “If the

waiters were busy, the cooks would give the food straight to the customers. In the old days you used to know everyone.”

James Manolakos, owner of the PanHellenic Pastry Shop in Chicago’s Greektown neighborhood, says it’s the taste of his father’s chocolate macaroons that transport him back to his childhood. “I would ride my tricycle and would spin around the store,” he remembers. “My sister, Athena, had a playpen and the regulars would come in to play with her.”

“Sweet Memories” is free and open to the public. “Come taste the sweets and hear some wonderful stories,” said Rena Lee, Director of Museum Experience. “Bring a friend, share a recipe, or tell a story and help us to pass along family traditions.”

Guests will also have access to *Sweet Home Chicago: The History of America’s Candy Making Capital*, an exhibit of Chicago’s candy-making history created by the Elmhurst Historical Museum.

“Sweet Memories” is part of a year-long project by the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, called “Making the West Side: Community Conversations on Neighborhood Change,” and funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Register at www.nationalhellenicmuseum.org.

Photo 1: Penny candy in 1965. Courtesy of the Elmhurst Historical Museum.



Photo 2: James Papageorge, founder of Gayety's Chocolates and Ice Cream in South Chicago, 1982. Courtesy of the National Hellenic Museum.



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Located in Chicago's Greektown, the sleek 40,000-square-foot National Hellenic Museum at 333. S. Halsted St. is both contemporary and timeless, connecting all generations—past, present and future—to the rich heritage of Greek history, culture, art and the Greek American experience. The National Hellenic Museum, previously known as the Hellenic Museum and Cultural Center, has been fulfilling this mission since 1983.

For more information, visit <http://www.nationalhellenicmuseum.org> or call 312-655-1234.

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