

New Greek culture center opens in Gallery 210's former Lucas Hall space



Mike Sherwin/ *The Current*

Professor Diane Toullatos speaks with Chancellor Emeritus Blanche Touhill at the opening reception for the Nicholas and Theodora Matsakis Hellenic Culture Center in 210 Lucas Hall.

BY JAVIER NADAL

Staff Writer

The Nicholas and Theodora Matsakis Hellenic Culture Center, the new Greek center at UM-St. Louis, was inaugurated Nov. 18 during a reception called "Exploring the Greek Cultural History of St. Louis and Beyond."

This new center is intended to be a point of reunion for those who want to dip into Greek culture through discussion, art, history books or films. The Center, located at 210 Lucas Hall, is a comfortable place, well-designed and divided into two parts.

The first part is bigger, and includes a library and a collection of Greek art. Nicholas Karakas, chairman of the advisory board of Greek Studies at UM-St. Louis, donated the library, which contains numerous pieces about Greek history, art and

tradition. This part also serves as a meeting room for discussions and other events. The second part will serve as a movie theater for films and documentaries related to Greek culture.

Nicholas Matsakis lectured at the inauguration about the Greek culture and his efforts to spread his knowledge about Greeks during his life. Matsakis received an award from Karakas during the inauguration in recognition of his entire career.

Chancellor Thomas George attended to speak about how proud he was of this new Center and to announce that this was only the beginning, as plans have been made to expand the Center.

Theodora Matsakis and her sons and daughter talked with emotion and even told jokes about their experiences as Greeks in the United States.

see **GREEK CENTER**, page 3

GREEK CENTER OPENS, from page 1

She also spoke about how Nicholas Matsakis always tried to teach his family Greek home culture even though they were far away from Greece.

Michael Cosmopoulos, Hellenic Government-Karakas Family Foundation professor of Greek Studies and professor of archaeology, gave technical information about the Center, describing its facilities and visions for

new projects in the future.

Although the new Greek Center is not large, it was full of people during the inauguration. Greek food was served at the end of the presentation, providing a moment for people to meet and talk with the Matsakis family.

Greek and English could be heard in the new center as two different cultures now have a new place to meet.