

Eric English, MD

Class of '79

Life is short,
Art is long,
Opportunity fugitive,
Experience delusive,
Judgment difficult.



The OWL

JAN 2021 in review



A portrait of a middle-aged man with light hair, smiling, wearing a blue t-shirt and a dark baseball cap. He is standing outdoors with green foliage in the foreground and a mountain range in the background. The text "IN HIS OWN WORDS" is overlaid in large white letters, and "Biography of Eric M. English M.D." is overlaid in smaller white letters below it.

IN HIS OWN WORDS

Biography of Eric M. English M.D.

In the heart of my life I hold dear the people that cared and nurtured me. It is an honor to contribute a biography to the ACS alumni magazine as a way to give thanks to the many teachers, staff and classmates that helped me form my life. It is also a way to thank my parents that gave me a chance to live my first eighteen years in an international community. I am grateful for the breadth of education received at ACS to help make me a well rounded person and sustain me as an engaged citizen, husband, father, physician - a person of integrity, compassion and creativity. I will share some of my experiences as an emergency physician in the COVID-19 pandemic because I believe we must not live in fear and we must all bravely do our part. Doctor in Greek (δόκτορας) means "to teach," and am privileged to share what I can with you my experiences at ACS and briefly of my life thereafter.

My experiences growing up on the shores of the Aegean Sea, steeped in the roots of Western

Civilization, developed my love of adventure in science, history and the outdoors shaping my development. My parents were from the Midwest though my father was born in Izmir, Turkey. I was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico in 1961 where my father was working. Within months we moved to Izmir where he joined his father in the tobacco export business. I went to a department of defense elementary school and most of my friends that were around for two years corresponding to their father's tour of duty. My parents were avid tourists of ruins such as Ephesus, Pamukale, Troy, Cappadocia, Istanbul and various Hittite sites, and about a hundred museums and churches. A trip to Pergamum was noteworthy as we visited a hospital of Asclepius and I put my palm on the pedestal carved with a caduceus theatrically imagining I was joining the ancient lineage of healers. We also joked as we sat on the public latrines and I developed an understanding of the importance of public health and sanitation. My grandfather brought me coastal cruising on his boat

and I learned to love the sea. He and my father also duck hunted and I was allowed to go out on the boats but I never developed a fondness for it. We had an annual home leave which centered around my maternal grandmother in Milwaukee and we had the opportunity to visit various parts of the US and Europe.

We moved to Ekali when I was eleven years old and my father continued in the tobacco business. There we had an active social life that felt almost normal as I finally had friends that would last often for many years as opposed to the military dependents who might last a year. John and David Marder and Corey Brayton were some of my first friends. My brother, Michael was two years behind me. My sister, Elizabeth was 6 years behind. I think my most formative teacher in terms of science was the fairly strict and precise, Ms. Boviatsis in quantitative chemistry in whose class I found personal excellence. I played baseball and football though I never excelled at sports. My band class with a trumpet was short lived, probably due to lack of talent and patience for practice. I played a few roles in drama. My favorite memories during middle school were traveling throughout Greece including to Kerkyra, Thessaloniki, Paros and in high school, beach parties at Marathon. I very much enjoyed the ruins and museums of Attica. After a few years we moved to Politea and I was able to walk up and down the steep hill to the American Youth Club and the metro station in Kifissia.

High school was more memorable as I was able to take more classes in science and loved their power and challenging mysteries. I wasn't very good in Spanish and had to repeat Spanish II but Mr. Voudouris was a patient and encouraging teacher. Biology didn't seem to be that interesting at the time perhaps due to the rote memorization required. I focused on Chemistry and Physics for a presumed career in chemistry or engineering. My other favorite teacher was Mr. Demos (photography) but many others still are thought of fondly but I have mislaid my yearbooks and regret I cannot name them all! My father accurately opined that A.C.S. was an excellent institution with highly educated teachers, many with doctorates that US public schools did not often have. The Boy Scouts got me started camping and soon was backpacking alone or with friends when "do it yourself" seemed to be the order of the 70's. Car camping and back packing/ferry boat trips with friends were some of my favorite times. My best high school friends were Brian Ekis, Troy Hartenstine and Mel Farisi. I had my heart broken by a few girlfriends-I broke a few too, regrettably. I had too many acquaintances to name but have enjoyed connecting with new friends through Facebook decades later and it is a joy to see most thriving! I graduated in the middle of my class in 1979. My eight years in Greece at A.C.S. were an excellent preparatory education by superior teachers, immersion in the history of Greece and modern Greek culture, teenage angst, and experimentation typical of the times - a partially misspent youth!

Left to right: Eric English, Costas Antzoulides, Tom Sfikas, Sebastian Daniels, James Kotsonis. John Demos center.





"Executive meeting of United Barber's Association."

Our family moved to Richmond, Virginia in 1979 immediately after high school graduation where my father continued in the tobacco business. My half hearted high school scholastic performance came home to roost as I required seven years to matriculate from college. I feel I suffered from culture shock, or more accurately, simply a maladjustment to adult life. I had a few false starts at various Virginia colleges, and received a technical drafting degree. I had a summer job as a carpenter at my sister's horse stable and literally met the farmer's daughter there and fell in love with my future wife, Coleen. We spent three years together at the St. Andrews Presbyterian College in North Carolina, now named St. Andrews University. I initially was interested in civil engineering as I liked architecture and physics. During a sophomore psychology class I dissected a sheep brain and found it fascinating as most of the anatomical features were Greek and Latin and fit into the "DNA" of my formative years. I also developed an easy familiarity with rote memorization.

I realized that I could be a healer, a little worn for wear, but felt ambitious enough to try. I changed to a pre-med curriculum and achieved a dual degree, a B.S. in Biology and Chemistry. My "plan" B was a career in Biochemistry. I was fortunate to have some observational rotations and volunteer positions in various hospitals and appreciate the persons that volunteered their time to get me those valuable spots. I recall one wisened "ER doc", Dr McClosky, who taught me, "Listen to your patients because they will tell you what's wrong with them!" Later, a medical school teacher would advance the maxim

"Discovery comes to the prepared mind!" I have always tried to live up to these maxims.

I graduated cum laude in 1986 and I couldn't have been more surprised. Coleen and I were married shortly after graduation by our college pastor and settled in Richmond. I recall the minute and day I was accepted into the Virginia Commonwealth Medical College of Virginia! My fellow students and I were educated sometimes in the Egyptian Style building and was delighted to find a bust of Hippocrates on campus, a gift from the Virginians of Greek Ancestry. On the pedestal is inscribed a quote in English and Greek, "Life is short, Art is long, Opportunity fugitive, Experience delusive, Judgment difficult."

I think of his wisdom often. I struggled to stay in the middle of my class standing and felt privileged to have received another excellent education, also steeped in history and formed by Western Civilization. I initially chose the Family Practice specialty as it seemed to be the of area of the most need for the public. It would be exciting as skills in the entire breadth of medicine would be required. I could develop long term relationships with patients. I graduated from medical school in 1990 and went into the world with the Hippocratic oath ringing in my ears. I did my internship and residency also in Richmond. I shared the "Intern of the Year" award with a much more brilliant physician.

However, I switched my career goal to Emergency Medicine after moonlighting in ERs and loving the excitement and tempo and un-encumbered time off.

Family Practice, while enjoyable initially was not a good fit for me but has served as a bridge into working with community physicians. "Continuity of care" became one of my important maxims and I endeavored to communicate with local primary care physicians. I obtained Board Certification in Emergency Medicine after the Residency in Family Practice. I have worked in Richmond area Emergency Departments for 27 years. I enjoyed training a variety of healthcare trainees by the Socratic method. I was very privileged to serve my home community and received "Top Doc" Awards in the ER category in Richmond Magazine voted on by my physician peers!

A wonderful family life came to being with our two sons, James and Anderson, now both independent as an attorney and a nuclear engineer, respectively. James is engaged to an elementary teacher and hopes for a wedding next fall. My brother, Michael, lives nearby and my sister, Elizabeth, lives in Connecticut. I've been privileged to serve on several charity medical missions to Haiti and volunteer at local free clinics. It's been nice to settle down in one place and make long term friends and be close to most of my family! My wife took over her parent's horse stable and we built our dream home there. After thirty-four years of a wonderful marriage I recently got my own horse to ride with my wife. My former hobbies included back packing, mountaineering and sailing. About a decade ago I switched to fly fishing for trout and salt water fish.



Eric's Family: sons James and Anderson, and wife Coleen



"I took up my long term goal of learning to watercolor during my recuperation. I was eventually able to return to ER work and wade my beloved mountain streams."

Detail of watercolor by Eric English

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My life was severely interrupted by a car crash nearly ten years ago that permanently damaged one foot, required two surgeries and nearly a year recovering out of work. I took up my long term goal of learning to watercolor during my recuperation. I was eventually able to return to ER work and wade my beloved mountain streams. Due to this near death experience I reset my priorities to choose a slower pace of work and I changed to travel medicine (locums tenens) in rural ERs that include Virginia, New Mexico and mostly Montana. They are all known for their excellent fly fishing-and I get paid to travel there! I also enjoy meeting the people of those communities and know I am appreciated coming to serve their rural communities. I make the time to be home horse riding with my wife, keeping up with my sons and friends and doing various carpentry projects on the farm. I've had the chance to travel to Turkey and Italy and look forward to a visit back to Greece as soon as circumstances allow. I live in the best world of having a home and a wife of great forbearance who doesn't mind modest amounts of time away. I am able to take time to visit the truly Wild West and satisfy a bit of a wanderlust that was inculcated growing up on the shores of the Aegean Sea.

The Pandemic

My formative life of good training has prepared me to serve as a front line ER provider with courage and hope. I know the history of plagues and pandemics from my studies at ACS and medical school. I learned how the fear and ignorance that humanity leveled at them but recognize how social isolation was an effective and reasonable method of survival. What I didn't realize how social isolation could adversely effect home and economic life. I was interested to learn that the Spanish Flu epidemic in 1918 had its share of "anti-maskers!" I was taught to serve and honor my commitment as an Emergency physician despite the risk to myself and my family and did my best to continue to work in ERs. I do fear at times for my family, friends and myself and sometimes despair of the ignorance and risk taking behavior that humanity takes with its generous level of civic and economic freedom. I have made a few mistakes in maintaining social isolation (usually due to peer pressure), "not practicing what I preach" and have had to quarantine myself at home and swallow the bitter pill of humility which helps me be more patient with my patients and family.

At work in the ER, I grieve with those families over sick and lost loved ones, fortifying my belief that

people are not statistics to be sacrificed for economic gain. I take extra time to comfort my infected patients, call their families who cannot visit, and try to give them all a message of hope, whether it's a good prognosis or one needing comfort care with morphine and oxygen. Physicians (leaders and humans in general) are divided on the correct course of action but most physicians have the consistent message of hope and patience that our profession holds inviolate, such as "Do no harm." We all must be kind to ourselves and others. We must assist those that struggle economically and those that care for children and the vulnerable. As we wait for effective and safe vaccination program we should not share any unnecessary air. Teach your children and loved ones to do the same by your own grace and patient example! Do not fear, as others have prevailed in similar times.

My dear mother, Judy, passed away at home, at the beginning of the pandemic from multiple health problems at the age of 84. Our family is waiting for a chance for a proper public burial. My father, Richard, needs help with activities of daily living but I enjoy his company and the satisfaction of returning the favor of service for all the grey hairs I gave him in my youth.

Healthcare workers have been designated as the first recipients of the new vaccines and I thank the public for this great privilege. I wish I could give mine instead first to one of my sons who has risk factors for severe disease. It is impossible to do that but I will accept the vaccine as a duty and hope for the best for my family with fortitude. We are going to have such a feast of good company and creativity when this pandemic is over and I cannot wait to hear your stories of hope and courage. In the meantime, between tough ER shifts, I will be washing away the stress in cool mountain streams, taking a horse ride with my wife, having long talks with my family and bracing myself for the next round of shifts I have a few more years of my career and, with the blessing, hope to be providing a valued service as long as I am able. Stay well my friends and support the children, teachers and educational establishments who will bring up the next generation of physicians and leaders!

I would be happy to communicate with students, teachers and friends via my email at fishbaydoc@gmail.com.





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PEGGY PELONIS, Ed. D.
PRESIDENT

AMERICAN
COMMUNITY
SCHOOLS
OF ATHENS

Let me begin by wishing all of you a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year!

It was incredibly heartwarming to see so many of you at the December Alumni Virtual House gatherings. Most heartwarming, however, were the different decades represented by many of you and hearing your stories as well the connecting highlights of your time at ACS Athens.

Thank you for taking time to connect and reconnect and for planting the seeds to collaborations and further events; some of you are already collaborating with some of the ACS Athens projects. We look forward to continuing partnerships with you; our alumni, in different ways, including mentoring our students and offering them the opportunity to learn from professionals such as yourselves.

As we carry on building the ACS Athens Global platform, we continue to be grateful to Belina Koroivessis for keeping everyone connected and look forward to more such alumni events in the near future. I hope to see you soon virtually and perhaps face to face in the near future.

Until then, keep connected with ACS Athens through our website and through ACS Athens Global.

Stay well, stay safe.

Sincerely,
Peggy Pelonis, Ed.D
President



ACS Athens
American Community Schools

www.greecetravel.com



Photography courtesy of www.greecetravel.com and Matt Barrett

Anyone who has done any dreaming of Greece online will have come across the name of Matt Barrett. His Greece Travel Guides sites have informed and served travelers for 25 years. The Athens Survival Guide (www.athensguide.com) is so comprehensive even resident Athenians use it: it has helped countless travelers who visit better understand and enjoy the city as more than the Acropolis. Matt's History of Greece (www.ahistoryofgreece.com) is a thorough, colorful deep dive into Greek history, carrying the threads from ancient times through to present day Greece. He has showcased lesser known islands like Sifnos to Americans and other followers world wide, providing local color, flavor, and a wealth of insider information. Planning a trip to Greece? Treat yourself first to some virtual Greece on Matt's compendious website. **A taste:**



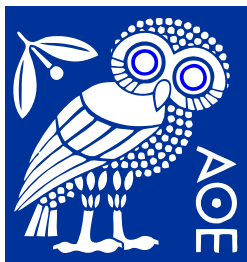
SYROS

Lovers of the elusive 'real Greece' pretty much all agree that the island of Syros is a special place.



The town of Hermoupolis is the capital of the Cyclades and one of the most architecturally fascinating ports in the Mediterranean, a living museum with some of the most beautiful 19th Century buildings in Greece. It is also one of the most cosmopolitan towns in the Greek islands. Seaside villages like Kini offer low-key holidays on beautiful beaches without the lines of beach chairs and umbrellas, nor the throbbing endless disco beat you will find blasting at the over-exploited beaches on some of the more popular islands. Syros is a real Greek Island, fun to visit any time of the year.

MORE HERE



ACS ATHENS GREECE ALL-CLASS REUNION TARPON SPRINGS, FL September 17-19, 2021

Guess what time it is?

IT'S TIME TO BOOK YOUR HOTEL ROOM IN TARPON SPRINGS!

Right now, we are holding a block of 50 rooms (\$89/night + tax and fees), 10 suites (\$109/night+tax and fees), and 2 accessible rooms—one specifically for the Akiki Family.

The hotel only has 80 rooms, so HURRY UP AND MAKE YOUR RESERVATION! FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED! **On your mark, get set, GOOOOOOOOO!**

Hotel:

39284 US HWY 19 N

Tarpon springs, FL 34689

Reservations: 727.945.7755

Group Name: ACS Athens Reunion

Group Code: ACS

We're holding the group rate for:

- Arrival Date: 13-Sep-2021
- Departure Date: 22-Sep-2021
- Standard: \$89
- Accessible: \$89
- Suite: \$109



THE HOTEL WILL ONLY HOLD OUR BLOCK UNTIL MAY 1, 2021, AND THERE ARE ONLY 80 ROOMS IN THE ENTIRE HOTEL, SO WE SUGGEST YOU PLEASE BOOK ASAP! (They will hold your room with a credit card. No penalty nor cc charge if you have to cancel within 48 hours of check-in. Nice folk).

You may also book online through Hilton.



Booking Link: <http://group.hamptoninn.com/f872j>



BizNET Alum NEWS

PROFESSIONAL NOTES

ACS Athens Alum AJ Ginnis, Class of 2012, makes history!



Greek-American alpine ski racer AJ Ginnis made history at the 2021 Alpine Skiing FIS World Cup in Flachau, Austria, as the first skier representing Greece to register World Cup points.

"Wow what a day for me and Greece in Flachau! First ever WC points by a Greek skier and a huge PB for me with an 11th place. I cannot thank my sponsors enough for continuing to believe in me and for my team for making it all happen!" AJ Ginnis posted on Instagram. "Thank you all for all your kind words and messages, and sorry for giving some of you a heart attack at the end there."



Instagram



PROFESSIONAL NOTES



Maastricht UMC+ Heart+Vascular Center



Greg Pattakos, Co-Moderator of the Second Maastricht Mitral Masters Webinar,

featuring live surgery of advanced, complex and re-do mitral valve repair. Greg will co-moderate, with Dr Chitwood, and discuss with a leading panel of the world's foremost valve experts including Drs Borger, David (inventor of the "David" operation), Kofidis, Lee, Lamelas, Mack, Modine, Streukens, Toda and Vainer.



Booking.com Traveller Review Awards 2021

9,9
out of 10

SV Acropolis Residence

Congratulations Andreas Kambanis!

On your third consecutive year of maintaining our 9,9 review score. SV Acropolis Residence is located in a neoclassical building, just 400 metres from the New Acropolis Museum, and offers 2 independent self-catering apartments with free WiFi access.

Andreas' comments:

"Quite proud actually. Many thanks to our guests and our partners!"

Click here for guest photos, map, and more information:





Anastasi Sharp Blog/Podcast

My new #blogpost about life, education at ACS Athens (American Community Schools), and reasons to hope in these extraordinary times. What gives you hope?

Read or listen here:



George Katranzos

Enjoy George's next article on the new dining reality.



Alums Dino and Eddy Checrist

Owned by alums Dino and Eddy Checrist, who invite you to stay at your dream villa on the beautiful island of Santorini. When travel becomes possible again!



Alex Hamel

Enjoy Alex Hamel's cover of Elton John's Tiny Dancer.





Nick Kassanis, PE. Congratulations!

Nick Kassanis has been appointed President of Sustainable Investment Group (SIG). As a licensed Professional Engineer, former president of the ASHRAE Atlanta Chapter, SIG Technical Services Department Manager, Commissioning Authority, and experienced Energy Modeler, Nick brings 11 years of experience to this new role. SIG is proud to announce Nick as our new President, and looks forward to continuing to grow, adapt, and evolve under his experienced leadership.



Joanne Pappas Nottage

"Check this out! Our house in SF has been totally remodeled and is now for sale. Please share with anyone you know that might be looking for a lovely home 2 blocks from the beach in San Francisco. Views, the sound of the waves, gorgeous new kitchen and appliances, new bathrooms, beautiful red oak hardwood floors and more!"



Christina Hudson

"You need to know these four overlooked gems of the Aegean."



ACS Athens NEWS



ACS Athens is excited to present its newest publication, the President's Newsletter, a new way of sharing school news and events with the ACS Athens community, talking about all the amazing things happening at school. Download and enjoy!



ACS Athens senior Jason Stavros Somoglou and the Greek Robotics team win Gold Medal

Congratulations to Jason Somoglou, ACS Athens senior student, whose coaching skills helped the Greek Robotics Team "Plaisiobots" win first place and a gold medal!

The team represented Greece at the International Robotics Olympiad (IRO) in South Korea, winning the gold medal for "Robot: The Future Transport".

Plaisiobots won first place for building "Buddy the Cane", a robotic cane, designed to help visually impaired people. and features a BlueTooth tracking application.

The Plaisiobots team was welcomed by the Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, who enjoyed a demonstration from the team and congratulated everyone, commenting that "you make us all, extremely proud".

Congratulations to the team and coach, and of course to our very own Jason - for making us all, indeed, extremely proud!

