

Eleni Cubitt, an extraordinary woman with a passion

"Imagine how wonderful it would be to create unity for the sculptures from the Parthenon and be able to celebrate this unity, whilst we still can."

Eleni Cubitt

This dream of Eleni Cubitt came abruptly to an end when she passed away peacefully, last Wednesday afternoon, April 8, at the age of 95. The International Association for the Reunification of the Parthenon Sculptures (IARPS) and the 21 National Committees campaigning worldwide for the reunification of the surviving fragments of the Parthenon Sculptures in the Acropolis Museum in Athens are deeply saddened by this news.



Eleni Cubitt, founding member and honorary secretary of the British Committee for the Reunification of the Parthenon Marbles (BCRPM), was born in Thessaloniki, but grew up in Athens and was educated at the American College for Girls in Greece.

In 1948 she married British diplomat Douglas Collard who was appointed Consul in Patras, subsequently she lived in 7 countries over 15 years. The marriage broke down in 1964 and Eleni settled in London where she started a career as film maker. Her most recent film was "The War That Never Ends" in 1991 for which she was the executive producer. In 1968 Eleni married the British architect James Cubitt.

In 1975, after the fall of the Junta in Greece, Eleni was asked to join the Greek Embassy in London and to set up a new Cultural Department. Here she worked until 1982.

In 1982 Eleni and her husband James Cubitt met Melina Mercouri and discussed the founding of a British Committee for the Restitution of the Parthenon Marbles, a name that later changed into the British Committee for the Reunification of the Parthenon Marbles. The British

Committee was officially set up in London by James Cubitt in 1983, Eleni became general secretary. Sadly her husband passed away shortly afterwards. Eleni ran the secretariat until the summer of 2010.

Since 1983 Eleni worked tirelessly for the repatriation and the reunification of the Parthenon Sculptures and did so up to June 2012. In the early years much of Eleni's effort was dedicated to informing and influencing British politicians, the media and the public about the plight of the Sculptures. She worked alongside three formidable Chairmen of BCRPM: Robert Browning, Graham Binns and Anthony Snodgrass with the help of Vice-Chair Christopher Price.

From 1999 Eleni enlisted the help of Marlen Godwin's PR city-based company for a number of projects, including Chris Stockdale's swim for the Marbles from Delos to Paros in 2000, contacting MP's on the matter of the reunification, the launch of the Acropolis Museum project in London, Chris Stockdale's bicycle ride from the British Museum to the Acropolis in 2005, protests at the British Museum and on the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square, working with Marbles Reunited on newsletters

and a London taxi campaign, the launch of the third edition of Christopher Hitchens' book "The Parthenon Marbles, The Case for the Reunification" at Chatham House, the opening of the New Acropolis Museum in 2009, re-designing the BCRPM web site, and archiving BCRPM material at King's College London.

In March 2009, at the 12th annual ceremony honouring "Ambassadors of Hellenism" which took place at the *Megaron* Concert Hall in Athens, Professor Anthony Snodgrass, Christopher Price and Eleni Cubitt as representing BCRPM were each awarded for their work for the reunification of the Parthenon Sculptures. In the same period, Eleni met with George Papandreou to discuss the Parthenon Sculptures and she asked, on behalf of BCRPM, that a cross-party agreement be set up so that all political parties in Greece would make work together on the matter of the reunification, as BCRPM felt it was imperative that any changes in political regime did not affect the campaign for the return of the Sculptures to Greece.

In 2011 Eleni Cubitt received the "Maria West Lifetime Achievement Award" from the American College of Greece. In June 2012, at the International Conference for the Reunification of the Parthenon Marbles, held in London's Hellenic Centre, Professor Judith Herrin paid a more than well earned tribute to Eleni.

This overview shows that for about 30 years Eleni Cubitt was one of the most important persons who turned the wish for the Sculptures to return home into a lifetime cause. Campaigning without relief for the repatriation and reunification of the Parthenon Sculptures in Athens, she was the spirit and the driving force of the movement that developed and expanded globally, picking up and continuing the crusade initiated by Melina Mercouri. With Eleni, Greece and IARPS lose a formidable protagonist. We are going to miss her deeply, but she will remain our source of inspiration. We will keep going on until the day Melina's and Eleni's dream comes true: the Parthenon Sculptures reunited in the Acropolis Museum.

The Executive Board of IARPS and all the National Committees in Australia (2), Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Russia, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom (2) and the United States of America extend their deepest and most sincere condolences to the family and the many friends of Eleni. Thank you Eleni Cubitt, "XAIPE"!

Dr Christiane Tytgat

President of the International Association for the Reunification of the Parthenon Sculptures