

Melina Kanakaredes

Heritage Greece Award 2011

Melina Kanakaredes is a multi-talented actor, philanthropist, director and writer and has earned critical acclaim for her work on television, film and Broadway. She is currently combining all her talents as writer, director and actor by producing various projects for both the small and big screen.

For Six seasons, Melina starred in the internationally popular television series *CSI: NY*. She also began writing for the series in 2009. In February 2010 she appeared in Fox 2000's fantasy adaptation-adventure feature film *Percy Jackson*, in which she portrayed the goddess Athena. Other film credits include: *15 Minutes*, co-starring opposite Robert De Niro, *Rounders*, *Dangerous Beauty* and *The Long Kiss Goodnight*.

Prior to *CSI: NY*, Ms. Kanakaredes starred for five seasons on the critically acclaimed TV series *Providence*. For her performance, she received the 2000 TV Guide Award for Favorite Actress in a Drama and was nominated again in 2001. In 2003 she took to the stage in the Broadway musical *Cabaret* and shot the indie film *Into the Fire*.

Ms. Kanakaredes' previous television credits include a starring role on *The Guiding Light* (for which she received two Emmy nominations) and a recurring role in *NYPD Blue*. She starred in the drama series *New York News* and *Leaving LA*, and guest-starred on *The Practice* and *Oz*.

Philanthropy is a word that defines Melina's life. From her early involvement in the Greek American community and Greek Orthodox Church, her commitment to philanthropy is evident by the time, talent and energy she devotes to her causes. Melina's philanthropic causes are as diverse as her talents, from Breast Cancer to Children with aids, she is someone who wants and needs to be involved. She is particularly passionate about supporting education—especially for women. Her commitment to spreading the wealth of knowledge to all women around the world was ignited when she was asked to speak at the United Nations on the subject.

Ms. Kanakaredes is a second-generation Greek-American who was born and raised in Akron, Ohio. She attributes her grandparents and family for instilling in her an intense pride of her heritage. From countless interviews where she speaks about being a Greek American to the simple fact that no one in Hollywood could convince her to change her name—her love for her Greek heritage is evident.

Ms. Kanakaredes graduated magna cum laude from Point Park College in Pittsburgh with a BFA in musical theater. In 2003 Point Park honored her with a Doctorate of Humane Letters.

Melina has also taught Master Classes at Point Park College, Salve Regina University and Ohio State University.

She is married to businessman Peter Constantinides and they have two daughters, Zoe and Karina Eleni.