

Stavros Bellos – Benefactor

By all accounts, Stavros Bellos was a simple man.

He was born in the village of Tsamanta, Greece, in 1917.

The poverty of his hometown, located near the Greek-Albanian border, forced him to immigrate to the United States in 1939.

He settled in Worcester, living modestly in an apartment at the former Bancroft Hotel and became a short order cook.

Mr. Bellos, who loved wearing a fedora, never married and it seemed his only indulgence in life was to satiate his love of reading by visiting the Worcester Public Library almost daily.

He died on Jan. 5, 1999, at the age of 85.

And that's when members of the local Greek community learned about another side of the quiet, humble Greek immigrant.

Over the years, Mr. Bellos played the stock and bond markets and at the time of his death he was worth about \$2 million.

But the story doesn't end there.

According to his wishes, the stock shares were cashed in and redeposited into three accounts at a brokerage house to benefit his old village, the Tsamantas Society, and St. Spyridon Greek Orthodox Cathedral where he worshiped.

Half the estate went to the folks in Tsamanta and a quarter each to the society and the cathedral.

Under the terms of the will, the recipients could only draw off the interest. After 20 years, they could benefit from the principal.

The money is already aiding those it was intended to help.

In Tsamanta, funds have been used to expand the local aqueduct and to construct a road.

At St. Spyridon, some of the money has been used for maintenance programs.

"He was a loner and a quiet guy," said Steve Zoulas, a longtime friend. "Nobody but nobody knew he had that kind of money."

This Sunday, the St. Spyridon community will mark the fifth anniversary of Mr. Bellos' death at the 11 a.m. service. A plaque honoring him will be unveiled after the service.

"He deserves it," said Mr. Zoulas.