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NEWS RELEASE

At The Helm - John Hadjipateras

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John Hadjipateras
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Who were some important mentors or role models for you?

Both my grandfathers were Captains and Shipowners. I was exposed from an early age to people who understood that shipping is ultimately a business built on hard work, perseverance, relationships, reputation, and long-term

thinking.

I was lucky to have met many of the all-time greats yet I'm still learning, and some of the most valuable lessons are from people who do not have a high visibility; they might be working on a ship or in a store and they are distinguished by their dedication to family values, and the pursuit of excellence in their work.

Do you remember your first leadership role? How has your view of leadership evolved over time?

I began working in shipping about fifty-five years ago and became Managing Director of a family owned firm before the age of 23. Managing people who are much older is a challenge requiring humility but also resolve and always leading by example.

Shipping has a way of reminding you that you cannot control everything. Markets change, geopolitical circumstances change, and unexpected events occur. Good leadership requires listening, being prepared, making decisions with the information available, and having the discipline to adjust when circumstances change and always adhering to your values.

What is your view on the impact of organizational culture in individual and company performance?

There is no greater influence on an organization's performance than the shared values that drive individual initiatives and responses in critical situations.

My great-grandfather, who was orphaned at the age of twelve, wrote that when he started trading on his own, doors were opened for him by people who had dealt with and respected his father for his honesty and reliability. There is no greater asset than reputation.

Warren Buffett recently said of his successor as Chairman of Berkshire Hathaway:

"He will guard its culture and its values–both worth more than anything on our balance sheet".

What advice would you give someone who is beginning a career in the maritime industry? How do you hire? What do you seek in a candidate?

Welcome to an industry that is necessary and enduring.

If you're intellectually curious, dedicated to continuous learning, if you're willing to set high standards and respect

the sea, you are in for a very interesting career. It can take you all over the world and you will meet people from all nationalities and different backgrounds who are bound together by a love for what they do, be it at sea or ashore, be it in operations, finance, innovation, insurance, engineering, manufacturing or any other aspect.

And like them, you too, will be a Citizen of the Sea.

In a candidate, I'm looking for intellectual curiosity, respect for the value and work of others, and willingness to persevere in learning and in dealing with problems.

What is the role of innovation in your work?

In my lifetime I have dealt with ships propelled by reciprocating engines, steam turbines, and internal combustion engines, fueled by heavy fuel oil and LPG.

The current transition toward cleaner energy and more efficient ships creates challenges and opportunities.

I started work at a time when most business was conducted in shipping centers like New York, London and Piraeus where on a stroll round the block you invariably ran into insurance people, charterers, brokers, bankers, and owners. So much was done in person and it was easy to develop relationships.

Technology has changed the way we interact with people, operate ships, analyze markets, manage risk, and make investment decisions.

And we are at the threshold of a new era, AI and AGI will accelerate change, hopefully for the better.

What inspires you?

I am inspired by people who love what they do and who continue to learn throughout their careers. Also by people who have made sacrifices while adhering to high values.

I am inspired by people who have invented, created, maintained, contributed and shared, who though they may be successful, are always humble.

Is there something else you'd like to say?

Supporting SCI and organizations like it is an imperative value.

I am grateful to the many people who devote their lives to helping others. And for the many whose life's work

involves preservation of nature’s biodiversity and cultural heritage.

It is never too late, or too early, to notice those who are tirelessly devoted to doing good in our universe of shipping.

Respect those who support and care for our seafarers and the sea.

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