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Playwright Maria Lampadaridou-Pothou receives hug from professor Rhoda Kaufman.

Photo by Lance Nishihira
courtesy of University Advancement

Campus hosts major premiere

Greek playwright and dignitaries visit for Antigone's U.S. opening at CSUH theatre

By Stephanie Wright
A & E Editor

Famed Greek writer Maria Lampadaridou-Pothou attended a reception in her honor Friday evening to celebrate the American premiere and CSUH production of her play *Antigone or The Nostalgia of Tragedy* at the University Theatre.

Overcome with emotion and clutching a bouquet of flowers, Lampadaridou-Pothou spoke before opening night theatergoers as they sipped Greek wine and sampled hors d'oeuvres.

"I must now unite the pieces of my heart to be able to speak. Thank you very much. I am very happy. I am deeply moved. It is a great honor to be with you, to be accepted and to be invited to this distinguished university for the premiere

of my play," Lampadaridou-Pothou said.

Lampadaridou-Pothou credited Rhoda Kaufman, associate professor of theater and dance, for bringing *Antigone* to Cal State Hayward through her initiative and hard work.

The two met years ago when Lampadaridou-Pothou spoke at an international women's playwright convention in Toronto, Canada.

"At the opening events of that gathering, a small, frail, gentle woman stood in front of us all and spoke about her country and her love of her land and the power that it gave her," Kaufman said. "And she wanted to bring to us, the woman writers, poets and playwrights of the world, her friend, her sister, Antigone."

"She told us about Antigone, a woman on whose heart she had built her work. She talked about walking the streets, streets where Sophocles had walked. And she

blessed us, she blessed our congregation, our gathering of women playwrights in the name of Greece, and the heart of the poet and the spirit of love that she thought her *Antigone* gave to us all. And I was very moved by her and then she sat down in front of me."

Despite Kaufman not speaking Greek at the time and Lampadaridou-Pothous not speaking much English, the two women became friends. The author and playwright offered to send Kaufman several of her plays. When Kaufman received them, they were all in Greek. The playwright's husband Minos translated them into English. "Because it is his poetry, his understanding of Maria's heart and spirit," Kaufman said, "that makes this production possible."

Also speaking in honor of Lampadaridou-Pothous was Constantine Tritaris, Greek Consul General for Northern California.

"I feel very honored being among all of you here tonight and I cannot hide my

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