



Cora: a woman's success story

Description

Women's Canadian Club welcomes the creator of a popular breakfast franchise

By **Byron Toben**

Cora Tsoufidou, founder of **Cora's Restaurants**, was the featured speaker at the November monthly meeting of the **Women's Canadian Club of Montreal** at Westmount's Victoria Hall.

That club, founded on December 12, 1907, has a long history of bringing distinguished speakers from government, literature and public affairs to the nostrum.

... Cora breakfast and lunch franchises have grown to 130 locations across Canada. In the process, she has won a host of awards from restaurant, franchise, business and women's groups.

Introduced by communications committee member **Verona Sorensen**, Ms. Tsoufidou narrated her beginnings in classical studies, intending to become a writer even though her father disparaged that goal as impractical. "Writers only shovel clouds", said he.

Life intervened. A broken marriage left her as a single mom with three children. Buying a small diner on a meagre budget in 1987, she decided to focus on a single niche... breakfasts.



Cora Tsoufidou (left) and daughter Gigi Tsouflidis

She honed her people to people skills by listening empathetically and attentively to her customers and developed a popular and distinctive menu.

That single diner grew to two then three and she studied the legal and economic aspects of further growing by franchising her name, menus and experience to others.

Today, Cora breakfast and lunch franchises have grown to 130 locations across Canada. In the process, she has won a host of awards from restaurant, franchise, business and women's groups.

Cora's sense of humour was evidenced in her presentation with amusing anecdotes.

Her son, **Nicholas Tsouflidis**, has taken over the helm of this ship since 2008. Her daughter, **Gigi Tsouflidis**, who also grew up working in the business, attested about how Cora was an inspiration, instilling a "deep sense of empowerment".

The next meeting of the WCCM on December 10 will coincide (almost) with the 112th anniversary of its founding.

Visit womenscanadianclubofmontreal.ca

Feature image: left to right, Kim Cavener (president of the WCCM), Cora Tsoufidou and Andrea T. Bobkowicz (Cora's financial advisor and friend)

All images courtesy of the WCCM

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Byron Toben, a past president of *The Montreal Press Club*, has been *WestmountMag.ca*'s theatre reviewer since July 2015. Previously, he wrote for since terminated web sites *Rover Arts* and *Charlebois Post*, print weekly *The Downtowner* and print monthly *The Senior Times*. He also is an expert consultant on U.S. work permits for Canadians.



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