

Michael J. DeVries  
Supervisor

Edward J. Robinette  
Clerk

David A. Van Dyke  
Treasurer



Lee VanPopering  
Trustee  
David M. Pierangeli  
Trustee  
Philip D. Yeiter  
Trustee  
Vasiliki Christopoulos  
Trustee

The Grand Rapids Charter Township Board recently appointed Vasiliki Christopoulos to replace Trustee Beverly Wall, who died in June. Most who know the newest township official, call her - Vas - because it is easier to remember how to say it correctly.

She explains why her name didn't get changed like so many others do. Tradition dictates that children in the Greek culture are named after a grandparent, but while that still happens, many children are also given Americanized names.

"When my mother brought me to first grade, she told the teacher, 'If her name is too difficult for you to pronounce, you may call her whatever you want'. But she chose to call me Vasiliki and it just stuck," said Vas.

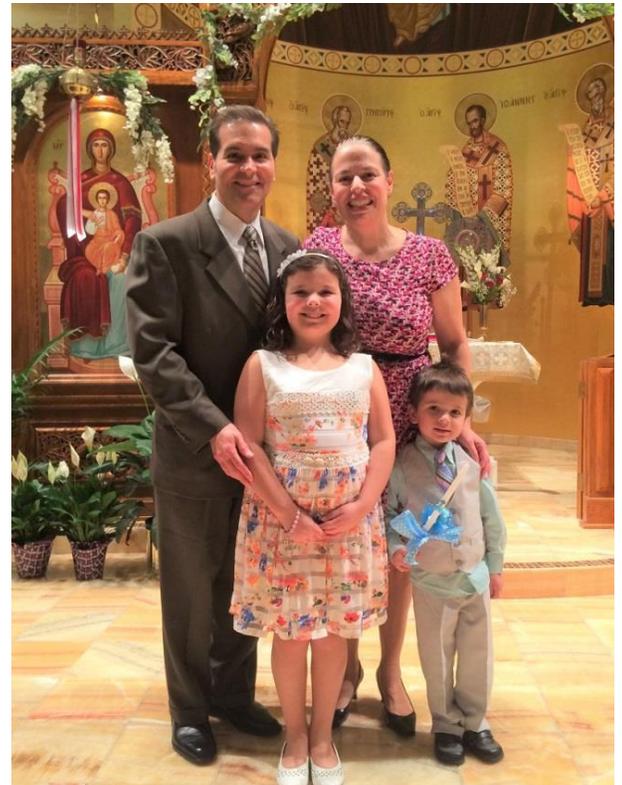
In addition to raising her children, Maria, 9, and Peter, 5, with her husband Jimmy, Vas is active in the community.

Exceptionally proud of her Greek heritage, she is particularly drawn to Greek dance. She and two other parishioners from Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church run the youth dance group. "I love teaching Greek dance," she said. "And I love that there are so many young people who want to learn about the culture." The dance group regularly has about 60 participants, she said.

The group performs annually at the Yassou Greek Festival and on the Calder stage at the Festival of the Arts in downtown Grand Rapids. Both Vas and her husband serve with one other person as the Greek booth chairs for the Festival of the Arts. In fact, Jimmy danced with the group on the Calder stage when he was part of the youth group.

It was close ties with Jimmy's family that brought Vas to West Michigan about a decade ago. She grew up in New Hampshire and graduated from Dartmouth with a degree in government.

Her first summer job as a teenager was in a manufacturing office answering phones and greeting visitors. After college and before coming to Grand Rapids, she worked for 15 years in the United States Senate in Washington, DC.



*Vas with her husband, Jimmy,  
and two children, Maria (9) and Peter (5)*

She loves living in Grand Rapids Township - most particularly because "not only is it accessible to so many great places, it is such a beautiful place." She enjoys the opportunities for walking and enjoying nature and the township parks. She is excited to be part of the board and so far, has been impressed with "style and attention to detail before making any decisions."

Her favorite thing to - other than taking care of her family - is to read newspapers, magazines and anything else she can get her hands on. "I really can't read enough on current events," she said.

Someday she would love to take her family to visit relatives in Greece and have some fun while she is there, but for right now, she is content in Grand Rapids Township.