GEORGE PAPANICOLAOU
(1883-1962)
George Papanikolaou was a Greek pioneer in cytopathology, early cancer detection and inventor of the "Pap test".
Early Life

Born in 1883 in Kyme, Greece, Dr. George Papanicolaou attended school there and at the age of 21 obtained the Doctor of Medicine degree from the University of Athens.
In an effort to further his studies, he went to Germany to study the philosophy of biologic sciences.

After a brief period of studying with August Weisman, Papanicolaou went to Munich.
After his studies in Munich, he returned to Greece where he met Andromachque Mavroyeni, later known as Mary Papanicolaou or Mrs Pap. She became his lifelong companion and a great source of support for him.
In 1913 he emigrated to the U.S. in order to work in the New York Hospital and the Department of Anatomy at the world renowned Cornell University. His wife, Mary, also worked there as his technician. Dr. Papanicolaou worked at Cornell from 1913 until a few months before his death.
Later years

In 1961 he moved to Miami, Florida, to develop the Papanicolaou Cancer Research Institute at the University of Miami, but died prior to its opening.

Dr. Papanicolaou died on February 18, 1962 of heart failure and pulmonary edema and is buried in New Jersey.
Dr Papanicolaou first reported that uterine cancer could be diagnosed by means of a vaginal smear in 1928.

That year Papanikolaou told an incredulous audience of physicians about the non-invasive technique of the preparation of vaginal and cervical smears to detect physiologic and cytologic changes during the menstrual cycle as a way to identify cervical cancer.

However, the importance of his work was not recognized until the publication, of ‘Diagnosis of Uterine Cancer by the Vaginal Smear’ in 1943.
He thus became known for his invention of the Papanicolaou test, commonly known as the *Pap smear* or *Pap test*, which is used worldwide for *the detection and prevention of cervical cancer* and other cytological diseases of the female reproductive system.

According to statistics, the *incidence of death due to cancer of the uterus* decreased by 70% after the implementation of the Pap smear.
Papanicolaou was the recipient of the *Albert Lasker Award for Clinical Medical Research* in 1950.

He was proposed for the Nobel Prize twice. The Committee refused the proposal, since it could not award a method for treating, but only its discovery.

What can they now say about the man who "gave life to women of the whole world?"
Posthumous honours

Papanikolaou's portrait appeared on the obverse of the Greek 10,000-drachma **banknote** of 1995, prior to its replacement by the Euro.

In 1975 and 1978 respectively, the Greek and U.S. Postal Services honored George Papanicolaou with **commemorative stamps** for early cancer detection.
Millions of women have received the Pap test and deaths from cancer of the uterus have been greatly reduced because of his test. It was predominantly through Dr. Papanicolaou’s efforts that cytology became accepted as a basis for diagnosis.
Be Brave!

- Story 1
- Story 2
“Millions of women around the world have been saved from the Pap Test”

“Us women of the world thank our great benefactor”