

MY FAMILY TREASURE is a little reddish brown leather Greek-English/English-Greek dictionary. My grandmother, Evangelia Kilakos-Bountounis, owns the dictionary. It never belonged to anyone else.

This little dictionary is so special because my beautiful grandmother used it throughout her life to help herself, her family and her community. My grandmother was born in Greece. She is the eldest of four children. When she was ten years old her father passed away. When she was nineteen years old my courageous grandmother immigrated to Canada. She arrived on April 5, 1954, all by herself. She was a young girl in a new country with no family and didn't speak the English language very well. She spoke Greek and had learned French in school back in Greece. She learned English in Canada. My grandmother bought this little dictionary to help herself. A lot of the new Greek immigrants would ask her for help when they needed translating done for them. She worked very hard at different jobs. She worked at the Royal Victoria Hospital as a nurse. She also worked at Shillers fabric store on Sherbrooke Street and later on at Coorsh. Shillers was the first store to advertise on the Greek radio station that they had someone to serve them in Greek and English. My grandmother was that sales person. She saved her money and brought her brother, sister and her mother to Canada. One of her brothers stayed in Greece. Later on, she met my grandfather Panagiotti Bountounis. They had two little girls named Eleni and Panagiota. They raised their loving family together. My grandmother helped her daughters through their elementary school, high school, CEGEP and university with this little dictionary.

This little treasure symbolizes to my family the strength, hard work, struggle, dedication, and success of a young girl.

Everybody tells me that I remind them of my grandmother, Evangelia. She is a strong, intelligent and caring person who loves her family more than anything in this world. This family treasure is a part of her. It reminds me of where my roots come from and who I am. I am very proud of my grandmother and my heritage.

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First prize winner