History & Hertiage
Our Story

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In 1919 Greek refugees Stephanos and Evangelia Constantinides settled in St. Louis and opened the Progressive Dry Cleaners in the northern part of the city. Their oldest daughter, Olympia, worked as a seamstress until it closed in 2006 and passed onto her granddaughter and namesake Olympia (Lia) Glynias a love for style and dressing.

“There are few things I remember more vividly than playing dress-up in grandma’s closet,” remarked Glynias. “And in high school I spent hours in the attic with my parent’s old clothes—ties, dresses, a leather duster from the 70s. Dressing was an opportunity to express and to play. I remember my grandmother telling us over and over that how we look when we leave the house is how the world will see us and treat us. And I wanted to use how I dressed to launch me to where I wanted to be.”

Where she wanted to be was New York City, the garment district in the center of Manhattan to be exact.

An opportunity with GAP moved her there and Glynias spent the next 12 years advancing from Manager, to National Sales & Marketing Director, and eventually designer and Private Label Director with brands Roni Rabl & Bombshell Accessories. She traveled to Europe for fashion shows and across the USA to work with buyers and retailers as varied as Nordstrom and Neiman Marcus to Fred Segal and Hot Topic.

“I had a rare & lucky moment: I was young, Midwestern, with an immigrant work ethic and a European sense of style, and I was living on my own which gave me freedom to travel. Dallas, Atlanta, and Chicago were all centers for the apparel industry outside of NYC & LA and in the back of my mind I wanted that for St. Louis.”

In 2014 the call to return to St. Louis became stronger. Olympia Glynias, the seamstress, moved to assisted living as her battle with Alzheimer’s Disease advanced and granddaughter Lia knew it was time to come home. Her return meant that the newly incorporated company, LAUNCH, would come with her which was providing import and design services for international designers at the time.

After moving to The Hill in 2015, Glynias began a relationship with designer Nina Ganci from Skif Int'l that would prove to be fortuitous. "Nina is a generous person by nature," remarked Glynias as she recounted being invited by Ganci to show her lines at a St. Louis Fashion Week Shopping event and later expand into a pop-up shop in a building owned by the designer.

"I was amazed by the response of the women here. I knew no one was selling Nieman Marcus style at J Crew prices; it was a new idea and I didn't have a big budget for advertising or a local professional network—I had just moved back. But what I found was an amazing clientele."

LAUNCH Clothing & Accessories formally opened it's doors at 2008 Marconi Avenue in June of 2016 carrying both local and international designer clothing. Since then the brand has participated in a number of events including St. Louis Fashion Week, The Factory Fashion Show, The Feminine Cartel, and Wonderland Runway and has been featured in the Riverfront Times, EQ Magazine and Show Me St. Louis. In 2017 LAUNCH Clothing & Accessories expanded online as www.love-launch.com and added a social media presence of more than 2k followers by 2018.

"St. Louis is going through an incredible time right now, and there is opportunity to shape the next 50 years. LAUNCH is part of that--leading, innovating and accelerating through fashion, which will affect culture. I won't bring something I don't love into the store. I won't bring something common or easy to find everywhere. My job is to be the first to buy the best and share that with anyone who wants to do the same."