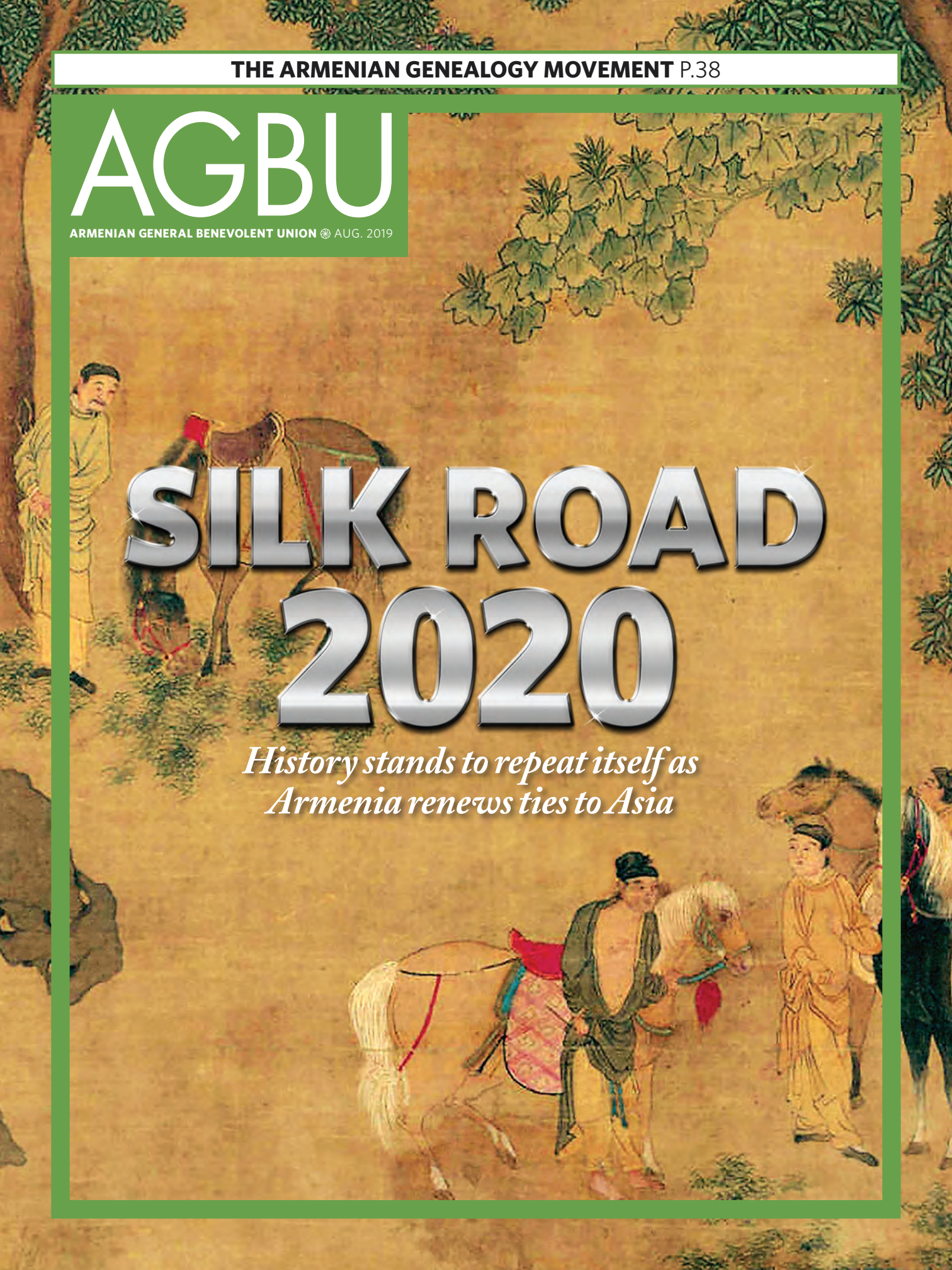


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SILK ROAD 2020

*History stands to repeat itself as
Armenia renews ties to Asia*





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Mission

To promote the prosperity and well-being of all Armenians through educational, cultural, humanitarian, and social and economic development programs, projects and initiatives.

Annual International Budget

Forty-six million dollars (USD)

Education

24 primary, secondary, preparatory and Saturday schools; scholarships; alternative educational resources (apps, e-books, AGBU WebTalks and more); American University of Armenia (AUA); AUA Extension-AGBU Artsakh Program; Armenian Virtual College (AVC); TUMO x AGBU

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AGBU News Magazine; the AGBU Humanitarian Emergency Relief Fund for Syrian Armenians; athletics; camps; choral groups; concerts; dance; films; lectures; library research centers; medical centers; mentorships; music competitions; publications; radio; scouts; summer internships; theater; youth trips to Armenia. **Armenia:** Holy Etchmiadzin; AGBU Children's Centers (Arapkir, Malatya, Nork), and Senior Dining Centers; Hye Geen Women's Centers; Sevan Theological Seminary; Ultrasound Center. **Republic of Artsakh:** Artsakh Chamber Orchestra

Districts, Chapters, Young Professionals, Centers and Offices

Argentina: Buenos Aires, Córdoba; **Armenia:** Charentsavan, Gyumri, Talin, Vanadzor, Yeghvard, Yerevan; **Artsakh:** Stepanakert; **Australia:** Melbourne, Sydney; **Austria:** Vienna; **Belgium:** Brussels; **Brazil:** São Paulo; **Bulgaria:** Burgas, Dobrich, Haskovo, Plovdiv, Russe, Sliven, Sofia, Yambol; **Canada:** Montréal, Toronto; **Cyprus:** Larnaca, Nicosia; **Egypt:** Alexandria, Cairo; **Ethiopia:** Addis Ababa; **France:** Lyon-Rhône Alpes, Marseille, Nice, Paris, Valence, Vienne; **Germany:** Frankfurt; **Greece:** Athens, Thessaloniki; **Iraq:** Baghdad; **Italy:** Milan; **Lebanon:** Amanos, Antelias, Beirut, Sin el-Fil, Zahlé; **The Netherlands:** Almelo, Amsterdam; **Russia:** Moscow; **South Korea:** Seoul; **Spain:** Barcelona; **Switzerland:** Geneva; **Syria:** Aleppo, Damascus, Kamishli, Kessab, Latakia, Yacoubieh; **Turkey:** Istanbul; **Uruguay:** Montevideo; **UAE:** Dubai; **United Kingdom:** London; **United States:** Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Fresno, Greater New York, Glendale, Houston, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Orange County, Pasadena, Philadelphia, San Fernando Valley, San Francisco, Scottsdale, Silicon Valley, Washington, D.C.

Editorial

The impact of Asia as a global economic power has not been lost on Armenia. As China, India, and other nations of the Asia-Pacific spread their influence in the Caucasus, the potentials and pitfalls of new foreign players in Armenia's neighborhood must factor into any serious conversation about the homeland's future in a geopolitically entangled world.

First and foremost, with China on the move with a game-changing project called the Belt and Road Initiative, history is about to repeat itself. This broad-sweeping system of futuristic roads, railways, and ports follows much of the same path of the original Silk Road, the economic driver of medieval Armenia's glory days.

With Armenia still standing at the crossroads of East and West, it raises the question: how will it leverage new opportunities for re-engagement with Asia to its best advantage?

This issue of *AGBU News Magazine* surveys the possibilities, from the proactive steps taken by Armenia's leaders to reestablish ties and pursue mutually beneficial interests to the new generation of Armenian expats in Asia serving as good-will ambassadors of Armenian know-how and culture. These emerging diasporas are also working to preserve and promote the legacy of the once-thriving Armenian communities of centuries past, reminding us of the high regard and social standing Armenians in Asia once enjoyed even as a minority group of a different faith and culture.

While an expanded field of foreign players is about to make

Armenia's next strategic moves all the more complex, life is becoming more simplified for Armenians the world over.

The speed and accessibility of digital information is helping us define our Armenian identity, as we lay claim to our ancestral riches on demand—a much-needed counterweight to the inevitability of assimilation.

Technology and science are already helping to enhance our personal Armenian identities through digital breakthroughs in tracing our family trees, helping to solve longstanding mysteries about the many shoulders upon which we stand triumphant today as resilient, proud Armenians. Moreover, to put these family insights into broader context, we can connect to our national identity through electronic tools and online resources that are instantly available to anyone.

These advances are highlighted as we explore the growing movement in Armenian genealogy, as well as the launch of our new signature alternative learning tool called *ATLAS by AGBU*. It puts a wealth of electronically based Armenian-related content in one convenient place, allowing new generations

to experience their Armenian-ness on their own terms.

Keeping our readers aware of the role that our rapidly changing world plays in the course of Armenian affairs, and, in turn, AGBU's strategies and priorities, is vital to our collective success as one Armenian nation. We hope you will use the information and inspiration contained within these pages to stay an active member in your community and an engaged, informed citizen of the world. ■



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'B. Setrakian'.

Berge Setrakian
President



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A Chinese tourist at the Geghard Monastery.

The Asia Effect

*The master chess game of regional geopolitics puts
Armenia's strategic prowess to the test*

By **GEVORG MNATSAKANYAN**





Asia is experiencing tectonic shifts that are sending ripples far beyond its borders with a potential to upset the established world order.

Leading the way is China. Over the past four years, the Chinese economy has grown 10 times faster than that of the United States. Moreover, China now leads the world in the number of homeowners, college graduates, Internet users, and billionaires. In the wake of this shifting balance of global power, many geopolitical stakeholders predict the 21st century will belong to China.

But the People's Republic doesn't hold all the keys to the Asian realm. Japan, conceding to China's ranking as the second largest economy after the United States, remains a key player in regional and international politics as a major source of global capital and credit and is one of the world's most active foreign aid donors. Other rising economies such as Vietnam and Singapore are also positioned to have more sway in the shaping of regional affairs.

In Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent is looking to strengthen its economy to rival that of China, while aiming for the moon with the Chandrayaan-2 mission.

As Asia continues to develop at such breakneck speed, outpacing the West by three-to-four percentage points in real GDP according to the International Monetary Fund, Armenia, advantageously positioned at the junction of East and West, is watching carefully, thinking strategically, and acting promptly to leverage the opportunities, manage the sensitivities, and come out ahead of the game over the next critical years.

By forging new ties with Asia today, Yerevan is expanding the playing field on which to maneuver itself among the key global players—the U.S., Europe, Russia, and Iran. And with Asia's star continuing to rise in the Caucasus and beyond, Armenia gains a second chance to prosper and thrive.

New Silk Road 2020

In recent years, China has initiated a string of new projects designed to position itself at the center of global commerce and increase its stake in world

affairs. Most notable is its flagship Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), unveiled by President Xi Jinping in September 2013. The initiative aims to connect Asia with Africa and Europe through a complex network of highways, rail and shipping routes along the original Silk Road in a bid to stimulate economic integration and cultural exchange across the region and “embrace a brighter future together,” according to China's government.

Such ambitious aspirations have put China further at odds with the U.S. superpower, who is looking to curb China's ascent in the region. In the meantime, Russia has taken an ambiguous *quid pro quo* approach based on its mutual interests.

Armenia's neighbor Iran is also looking to China to mitigate the crippling effects of an American oil embargo and other economic sanctions on its already bleeding economy. The launch in May 2019 of a new freight train connection is destined to accelerate trade between Bayannur in China's Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region and the Iranian capital, Tehran—the latest indication of a growing rapprochement between the two countries.

Meanwhile, smaller states in the region continue to foster closer relations with the People's Republic for assistance in their own economic and infrastructural development—Armenia among them.

While Armenia may visibly be excluded from the overland routes of the BRI, it remains integral to the Silk Road Economic Belt, which, together with the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road, comprises the BRI enterprise. Armenia's deputy foreign minister Avet Adonts points out that “Armenia can also benefit from cooperation in environmental protection and climate change, as well as people-to-people contacts, educational, and cultural exchange. Even the visa facilitation regime signed between Armenia and China in recent months can be viewed in the logic of BRI.”

As for involvement in transport systems, the deputy minister adds: “Once completed, the long-delayed North-South Road Corridor stretching from Armenia's southernmost city of Agarak to Gyumri and onto the Georgian border will also be used for transport communication with the whole region to the benefit of multiple beneficiaries, including our partners in the Asia-Pacific.”

Launched in 2012, the 550-kilometer, \$1.5 billion USD highway will connect to

Left: Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and his spouse Anna Hakobyan arrive in the People's Republic of China for their first official visit on May 14, 2019.

Georgia's East-West Highway that leads to the port cities of Poti and Batumi on the Black Sea, providing Armenian cargo trucks faster and safer access to seaports linking to Europe, Russia, and Turkey. The corridor is also part of both the Asian Highway Network of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and the EU's TEN-T extended network.

With Armenia once again at the center of the Eurasian geopolitical chessboard, this may be the country's quintessential challenge, calling upon it to step up its game even further to prevail in what has become a very crowded playing field.

Strategic Moves for China

With Armenia's longstanding focus on Russia and the European Union, the rise of China is increasingly prompting Yerevan to turn its gaze eastward. Armenia's leaders are particularly keen on promoting closer economic and political ties with China, which would provide access to much-needed investment and low-rate financial assistance from Chinese banks, as well as diversify its foreign policy, reducing its dependence on other power centers to achieve its political and national security goals. It also understands the importance of cultural exchange in supporting and promoting opportunities

A map showing the expanse of the BRI with its planned and existing railroads, ports, and pipelines.



in education, business, and the arts to fortify cross-cultural engagement.

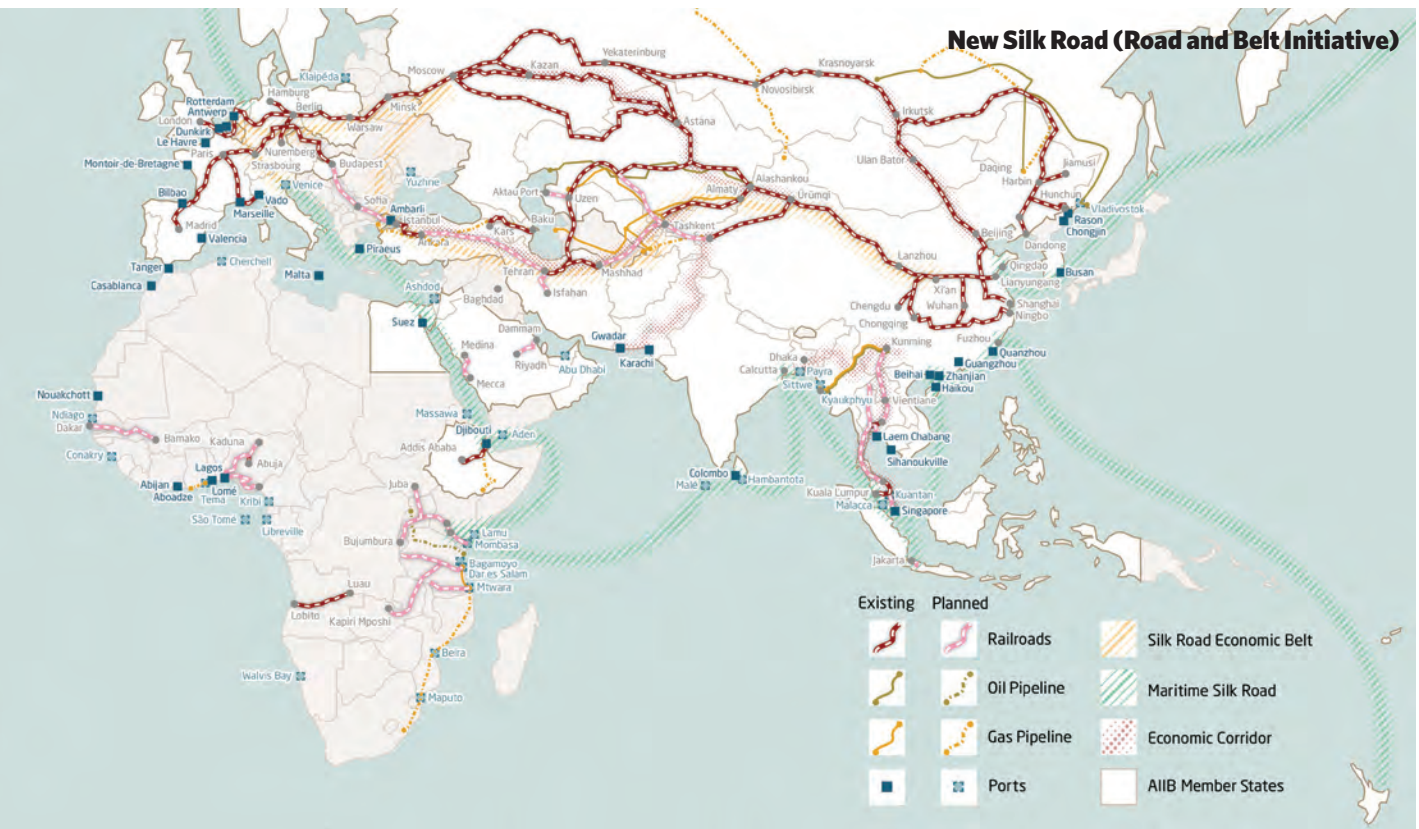
Foreign Policy

The forced Sovietization of Armenia under the imminent threat of Turkish invasion in 1920 brought Sino-Armenian historical exchanges to a virtual standstill. Less than 30 years later, the formation of the People's Republic of China in 1949 completed the mass exodus of Armenians from the newly formed socialist country that began with Japan's invasion of China some 12 years prior, with most Armenians migrating mainly to the U.S. and Australia. Much of their legacy, including the Armenian Church in Harbin, was later demolished during China's Cultural Revolution in 1966.

Beijing recently donated to Armenia 200 ambulances outfitted with modern medical equipment.

Diplomatic relations between the two countries resumed only with the coming of Armenia's independence. In April 1992, Armenia and China signed a joint communiqué on the establishment of diplomatic relations that paved the way for the opening, in July 1992, of the Chinese Embassy in Yerevan and an Armenian Embassy in Beijing in August 1996.

In his first-ever visit to the People's Republic on May 14, 2019, upon invitation from President Xi, Prime Minister Pashinyan reiterated that China is among Armenia's foreign-policy priorities and expressed renewed interest in furthering



bilateral relations in trade and other areas like transportation, energy, and information technologies.

In the Armenian capital, symbols of China's growing interest in the Caucasus are increasingly apparent. Construction of a sprawling new 40,000 square meter Chinese embassy compound is well-underway and, when finished, will be the second largest Chinese diplomatic mission in the former Soviet Union. Beijing also recently donated 200 ambulances outfitted with modern medical equipment as part of its continued economic assistance to Armenia, which has totaled \$50 million USD since 2012.

But China's expanding political and economic engagement with Armenia and the Caucasus has also brought it into close proximity with the geopolitical ills of the region, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict among them. And while the BRI has forced President Xi and the ruling Communist Party to adopt a more active stance vis-à-vis conflict mediation to protect its interests and citizens along the New Silk Road, the nation's leadership has maintained a traditionally neutral stance on the status of Nagorno-Karabakh.

In a recent visit to Armenia that closely followed Prime Minister Pashinyan's earlier visit to China, its state councillor and foreign minister Wang Yi reasserted that his government believes in the exclusively peaceful resolution of the nearly 30-year-old conflict within the existing format of international mediation sponsored by the OSCE Minsk Group.

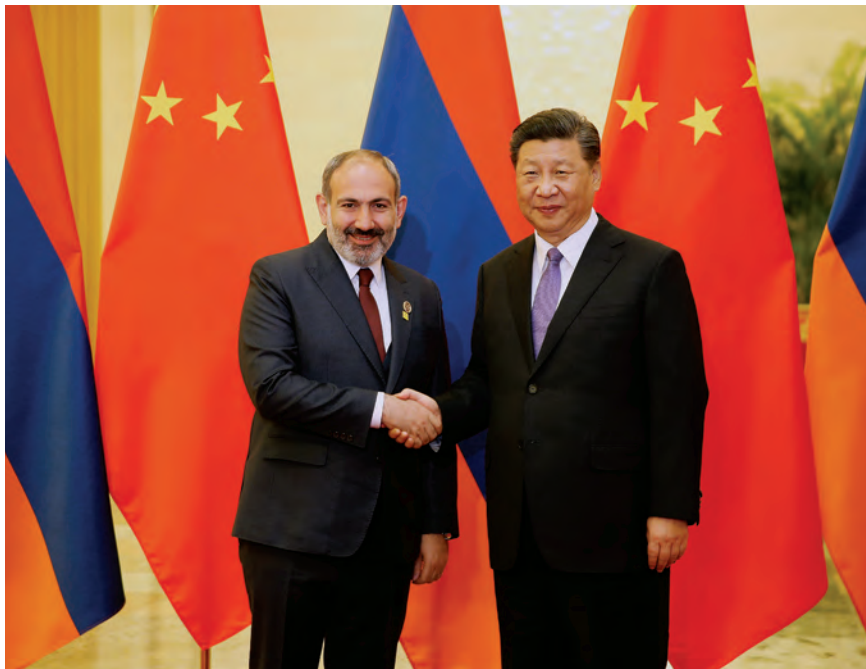
Trade and Finance

On the economic front, China quickly became one of newly independent Armenia's first trade partners with a trade agreement between Yerevan and Beijing in the early days of 1992. This was quickly followed by the creation of a Sino-Armenian intergovernmental trade commission a few years later. By 2010, China was Armenia's third largest trading partner behind the Eurasian Economic Union and the European Union, with a 29.3% increase in trade turnover compared to the previous year, according to Armenia's ministry of economy.

And although Chinese foreign direct investment in Armenia still trails behind the hundreds of millions invested in Georgia and Azerbaijan, the significant shift in Armenia's way of doing business after the Velvet Revolution has prompted



Above: Medical students from India at a group study session at Yerevan State Medical University (YSMU). **Below:** Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan with President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping.



the first-ever Chinese company, New Yida, to invest \$5 million USD in a new mineral water production and bottling factory in the country's Gegharkunik region.

As for finance, Arshaluys Margaryan, head of the Public Debt Management Department of the Ministry of Finance, reports that, as of February 2019, Armenia's debt to China was just over \$23 million USD dollars—a mere 0.33% of Armenia's total public debt. The purpose of the single loan, transacted in 2015, is to help Armenia modernize its technologies and equipment used for customs inspections.

Armenia will begin repaying the loan in 2020 at a fixed rate of 2%, considered favorable when compared with the average 2.39% interest rate on foreign loans. The average term to maturity of the loan is 16 years, twice that of the typical 9.62 years average term of other foreign government loans to Armenia. For these reasons, the Ministry is optimistic that the debt can be serviced at minimum risk.

Cultural Exchange

Chinese interest in Armenia transcends the political and economic spheres. In August 2018, Chinese officials

China is Armenia's Third Largest Trading Partner

A snapshot of China-Armenia trade in 2018

Trade Turnover

US DOLLARS

\$771.1 million

+29.3% total increase over previous year.

Exports from Armenia to China

US DOLLARS

\$107.2 million

-9.5% total decrease from previous year.

Imports from China to Armenia

US DOLLARS

\$663.86 million

+39.0% total increase over previous year.



Armenian Exports to China 2018

- Copper ores and concentrates
- Alcoholic beverages
- Chocolate

China Imports to Armenia 2018

- Telephone equipment
- Computers and computer components
- Cars
- Footwear
- Rubber tires
- Cyanide and cyanide oxide



formally opened the Chinese-Armenian Friendship School, a \$12 million USD, state-of-the-art facility where up to 500 Armenian children will learn Mandarin and study Chinese culture in addition to the regular Armenian curriculum.

During the official opening ceremony, Prime Minister Pashinyan affirmed that the Friendship School represented a new page in Chinese-Armenian relations marked by many common interests. "This school will become a channel through which Armenians will gain more in-depth knowledge of the enormous influence which China and Chinese civilization have had on the development of human-kind," said Pashinyan.

The new school joins a growing list of teaching institutes and centers in Yerevan

dedicated to the promotion of Chinese language and culture, including the Confucius Institute of Yerevan State University of Languages and Social Sciences, established in 2009. The school's Armenian director Gor Sargsyan described the center as "a platform for the promotion of Chinese-Armenian mutual understanding, friendship, and communication," while his Chinese counterpart Yan Meihua claimed that the Institute helps Armenians "understand, identify with, and eventually love China."

The first of its kind in the region, the institute has attracted nearly 300 students—a 60-fold increase from its five students in 2009. It is part of a network of non-profit learning institutions headquartered in Beijing and financed by the

Chinese Ministry of Education-affiliated Office of Chinese Language Council International.

Casting a Wider Net

With China standing center stage in the region, there are other primary actors with valuable potentials for Armenia. The "Big Three" economies of India, Japan, and South Korea each have an interest in Armenia, whether for its human capital, educational resources, or tourist attractions.

India

The signing in 2017 of a visa facilitation agreement between India and Armenia has since caused a spike in Indian visitors to Armenia—a remarkable 169% increase, according to Armenia's Tourism Committee.

Yogeshwar Sangwan, who was India's Ambassador to Armenia for the past three years, explains that many of his compatriots who visit Armenia come to stay to explore business opportunities and study, chiefly medicine. More than 6,000 Indians have today established permanent residence in Armenia. "Because of a similar mindset, Indians feel at home in Armenia," said Sangwan.

But a greater Indian presence in Armenia has also had a surprisingly positive effect on the number of Armenians residing in India, explains Armen Martirosyan, Armenia's Ambassador to India.

He explains that, in the 17th century, India boasted a small, but wealthy community of Armenian merchants and tradesmen who had migrated there from the Iranian city of Isfahan. But two world wars, India's independence, and the consolidation of the Armenian Diaspora in Europe, Australia, and the U.S. in the 20th century led to the exodus of Armenians from India, leaving behind only historical monuments as manifestations of bygone wealth and prosperity. A spike in the number of mixed marriages in recent times, with many Indians returning home with Armenian spouses after completing their studies in the country, has begun to revitalize the dwindling settlements of Armenians in India.

And while Armenians continue to remain relatively absent from the landscape of present-day India, according to Martirosyan, the current state of bilateral political relations and prospects for collaborations in such areas as artificial intelligence, telecommunications, pharma-



Asian tourists visit the Arch of Charents in Yoghjaberd while on vacation in Armenia.

ceuticals, and genetics, along with talks of direct flights between Yerevan and New Delhi will enable Armenia to more effectively explore the potential of this rising economic power and “revive the erstwhile high profile of Armenians in this beautiful country.”

Japan and South Korea

In the Pacific Ocean, Armenia draws on its booming IT sector and national treasures as the legendary composer Komitas and the classical music virtuosos produced in current-day Armenia. Since its opening in 2010, the Armenian Embassy in Tokyo has sponsored performances of Armenian classical greats such as Sergey Khachatryan (violin) and Narek Hakhnazaryan (cello), and has helped establish the Komitas Music Society of Japan, presided over by Japanese pianist Takahiro Akiba, who has since become the ambassador of Armenian music in Japan.

In Armenia, Japan has become synonymous with development assistance, affording over half a billion US dollars in grant aids, technical assistance, and low-interest yen loans for large and medium-scale

development programs after Armenia gained independence and was included in the Official Development Assistance programs of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). During his recent visit to Armenia—the first by a sitting Japanese foreign minister, Taro Kono also announced the launch of Caucasus Initiative, a two-way program aimed at human resource development for state building, infrastructure, and business environment improvement in Armenia.

The new initiative comes on the heels of two separate all-inclusive investment liberalization, promotion, and protection

agreements signed in 2018 between Armenia and Japan, and Armenia, and South Korea, and provides for political and judicial development assistance, something Japan had traditionally shied away from according to Japan’s ambassador to Armenia Jun Yamada.

In Seoul, South Korea, a small group of Yerevan State University students and young tech-wizards from Armenia study in top Korean universities and work with tech giants such as Samsung and others to bolster their professional skills, while promoting Armenia as “a country strong in IT and rich in young talent,” according to

Asian Tourism in Armenia

FEATURED IN THE latest lists of must-see travel destinations, Armenia hasn’t escaped the attention of a growing base of Asian tourists increasingly eager to see the world. An official survey conducted by the Tourism Committee of the Ministry of Economy of Armenia between 2012 and 2018 concluded that just under 10,000 Chinese tourists visited the country last year, representing

a 60% increase compared to 2017.

Despite their growing numbers, the Chinese still trail behind Indian and Filipino visitors who numbered around 30,000 and 20,000, respectively, in 2018, though many of the latter, who travel to Armenia for vacation, reside and work in countries of the Persian Gulf rather than the Philippines, explains Armenia’s Foreign Ministry.





President Armen Sarkissian speaking at the XVI Eurasian Media Forum in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Grant Pogosyan, the Ambassador of Armenia to Japan and South Korea.

Enter Vietnam and Singapore

Beyond the Big Three Asian countries, Armenia is also reinvigorating ties with partners of a bygone era. Prime Minister Pashinyan, during his first state visit to Vietnam and Singapore this July, talked about “new, more dynamic relations”

to Armenia to discuss investment opportunities and stimulate trade between the two nations.

Extended negotiations between the Armenian and Vietnamese delegations produced cooperation agreements in education and tourism, with a view to cultivating additional agreements to exclude double taxation and set up a facilitated visa program in October.

A raft of similar agreements was signed two days later between the Armenian and Singaporean governments to do away with double taxation and combat tax eva-

Singaporean hosts during the state dinner on July 8, he boasted of “no barriers for the activities of foreign companies” and vouchsafed for the necessary legal conditions for the protection and stimulation of foreign investment in Armenia, going so far as to say that “Armenia no longer suffers from the ills that plague other post-Soviet countries.”

Through the Eurasian Lens

Shortly before the Velvet Revolution, then President-elect Armen Sarkissian held an open dialogue with the Armenian community of New York on the prospects of Armenia’s economic growth in the divided framework of East and West. He explained what it means to have access to the financial support, liquidity, and technology from relations with Europe, applying those inputs to Armenian talent and ingenuity, and selling that output to the custom free market of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) over which Armenia now presides. “We are the only country in the region that has good relations with both the European Union and Eurasia. It’s a fantastic opportunity and if we are smart, we will use it.”

This perspective was reiterated in his speech to foreign dignitaries from across Asia and Europe attending the XVI

It is well known that our geographical location has predisposed us to be open to various regional cooperation formats and engagements. In this sense our strategy is anchored in an approach that accommodates different interests in our region without creating fault lines and minimizing the influence of conflicting interests. The same is true of our relations with our partners in Asia-Pacific.

between Armenia and its Asian counterparts, eyeing collaboration prospects in trade, education, health, tourism, IT, and other sectors.

In Vietnam, Armenia’s prime minister and his counterpart Nguyễn Xuân Phúc, highlighted the efforts of the Armenian-Vietnamese Intergovernmental Commission on Economic, Scientific, and Technical Cooperation in furthering relations in these key areas and revealed that an Armenia-Vietnam Business Forum would be held in Yerevan together with the Commission’s next session later this October. The forum will bring high-ranking government officials and representatives of Vietnam’s business world

sion, as well as strengthen cooperation in tourism, culture, and education.

The Armenian delegation also met with other members of Singapore’s political elite, in addition to the city-state’s Economic Development Board and Business Council to discuss investment opportunities, including in engineering education, which aligns with Armenia’s priority to grow an economy driven by the IT sector.

And while trade turnover with Vietnam and Singapore remains below the one million mark in exported goods, Prime Minister Pashinyan is confident that the qualitative transformation of Armenia’s economic and investment environment will soon upset that trend. Talking to his

Eurasian Media Forum in Almaty, Kazakhstan in May 2019. This time, President Sarkissian characterized Armenia as “a small country, but a global nation,” which has learned to work with everyone. He urged the international community to take advantage of Armenia’s relations with the European Union on the one hand, and its proximity to Russia and Eurasia on the other to explore new economic and trade opportunities.

Many in the East have already taken heed of the President’s words, for whom Armenia represents a vital commercial corridor to lucrative markets in Europe, Russia, and Iran, with the Middle East not far behind.

Free Trade Opportunities

According to its Ministry of Economy, Armenia benefits from the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) of the United States, Canada, Switzerland, Japan, and Norway, and the Generalised System of Preferences Plus (GSP+) of the European Union, which reduce export duties from thousands of Armenian products traveling to these countries. The GSP+ scheme also lets foreign investors, including those from Asia, set up shop in Armenia and export locally made products to the 500 million consumer market of the EU.

At the same time, Armenia's unrestricted access to the 170-million strong common market of the EAEU, which joins Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia into one common economic area, means that it enjoys the right to the duty-free import of raw materials from these countries, while Asian investors can use Armenia to access the new market more easily, explains the ministry. It also cited Armenia's tax-free economic zones as potential new platforms for cooperation.

Under Armenia's current presidency of the EAEU, a temporary, three-year free trade agreement (FTA) with Iran was ratified, opening up increased trade with the Middle East via the Armenian-Iranian border. Likewise, Singapore and Vietnam are also now betting on Armenia to sign or expand on existing FTAs with the Union to promote

Prime Minister Pashinyan and his Vietnamese counterpart Nguyễn Xuân Phúc in Hanoi last July.

economic integration in the wider region. Vietnam was the first country to sign an FTA with the EAEU in 2015.

In his official speech to the visiting delegation from Armenia, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong of Singapore said, "We appreciate Armenia's strong support for the FTA [between Singapore and the EAEU] and hope to be able to conclude it as soon as possible to catalyze business and economic relations between our two countries." Vietnam's Nguyễn Xuân Phúc also



Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia Avet Adonts and Senior Minister of Defense and Foreign Affairs of Singapore Maliki Osman exchange memorandums of understanding.

referred to the Vietnam-EAEU FTA as key to Armenian-Vietnamese relations.

Endgame

In May 2019, Prime Minister Pashinyan, speaking at the Conference on Dialogue of Asian Civilizations in Beijing, China,

declared, "Armenia sees its path toward progress in close collaboration with all regional and global players."

Whether this announcement signals Armenia's intent to draw back from its strategic alliance with Russia in favor of a more diversified partnership portfolio remains an open question. But the foreign influences, both old and new, will test Armenia on ever more challenging and sophisticated levels of diplomacy, always with an eye toward its ultimate win: To live in peace with all its neighbors along a 21st-century Silk Road, engaging in trade, cultural exchange, and political alliances.

"Armenia is fully aware of the complex and potentially conflicting interplay of interests between these players," states Armenia's deputy foreign minister Adonts. "It is well known that our geographical location has predisposed us to be open to various regional cooperation formats and engagements. In this sense, our strategy is anchored in an approach that accommodates different interests in our region without creating fault lines and minimizing the influence of conflicting interests. The same is true of our relations with our partners in Asia-Pacific."

Armenia's citizens, in concert with the worldwide Armenian Diaspora, must also be aligned with these new realities, working in tandem to ensure that the homeland retains its independence and distinctive national characteristics, burnishing its modern image at home and abroad. As Asia rises or falls over the coming decades, Armenia must both follow its own North Star while mastering the geopolitical dynamics that have long contributed to its trials and triumphs. ■





Legend

- Point of Origin In New Julfa
- Sir Catchick Paul Chater
- Diana Apcar
- Michael Joseph Martin

All Roads Lead Back to New Julfa

The origins of a legendary tycoon, a daring diplomat, and a dedicated community leader tell the story of early Armenian diasporas in Asia

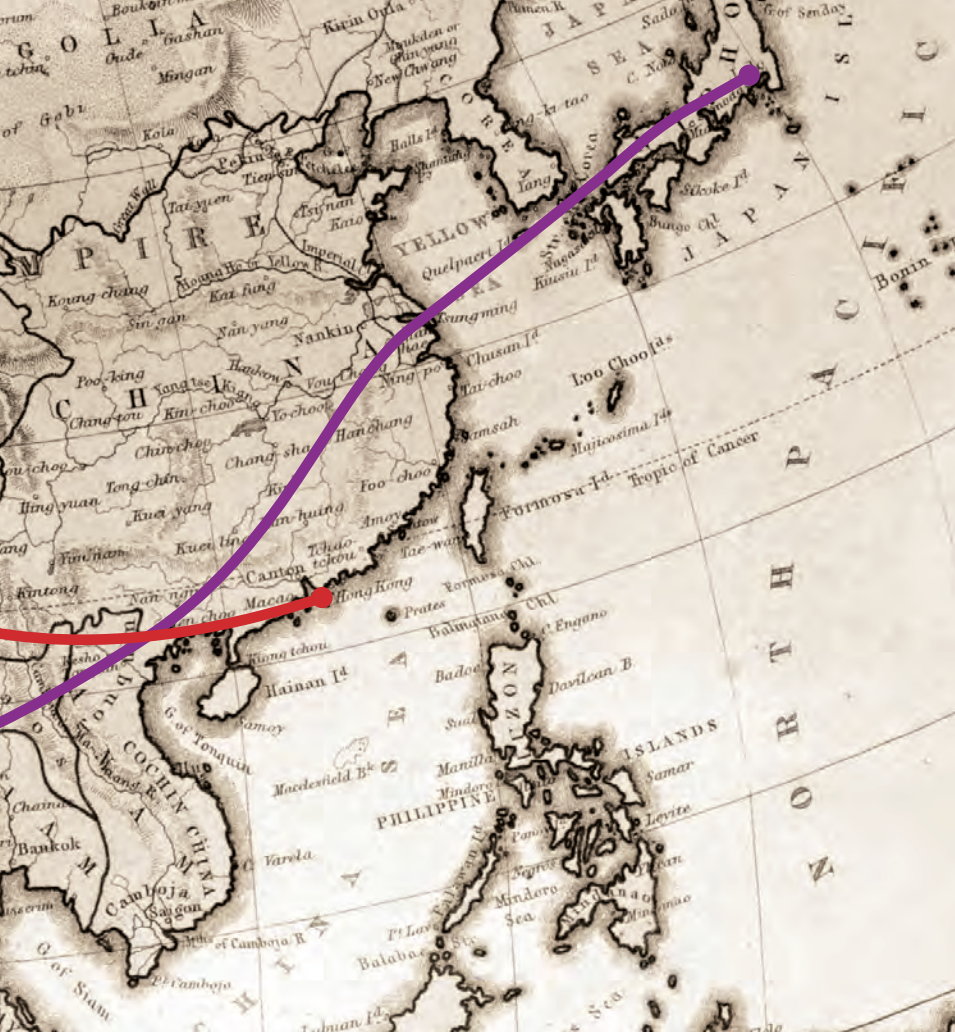
By **LIZ CHATER** and **NANA SHAKHNAZARYAN**

When the Silk Road reigned supreme with its vast network of trade routes stretching from the Far East to parts of Europe, the ancient Persian capital city of Isfahan figured prominently in the story of the first Armenian settlers in Asia.

Their destiny was inextricably tied to the commercial ambitions of one particular 16th-century Persian king Shah Abbas, who put them on a journey to the far corners of the East, ultimately leaving a trail of clues to their once strong presence and impressive image in the region.

It began with an elite group of Armenian traders living in historic Armenia under

Ottoman rule. When their mercantile prowess caught the attention of the Shah, he decided to arrange for their relocation from their ancestral homes to serve his realm as the backbone of its economy. While his intentions were self-serving, the Armenians received something valuable in return: protection from Ottoman oppression and its constant threat of danger.



HONG KONG Sir Catchick Paul Chater

In the latter half of the 19th century, an ambitious young Armenian from Kolkata, India arrived in Hong Kong, looking to seek his fortune in a city brimming with opportunity.

Born in Kolkata in 1846 to Armenian parents, Catchick Boghos Asvadzador was one of 13 children of Chater Paul Chater, a member of the British India civil service, and his wife Miriam. Young Catchick was only seven when he and his siblings were orphaned in 1853 when Miriam passed away at age 44.

Chater went on to be educated at La Marinière School Kolkata between 1854 and 1864. Upon graduation, he decided to visit Hong Kong and stay with his eldest sister Anna and her family. Seeing the limitless potential of the city, he quickly found employment as a bank clerk and decided to settle in Hong Kong.

Over the next few decades, Chater, a visionary with sharp negotiating skills, singlehandedly transformed the city into an economic powerhouse. He founded a string of successful companies and owned a wharf, iron and coal mining enterprises, as well as cotton-spinning factories. He collected valuable Chinese art worth millions of dollars in today's valuations. He was the quintessential representative of Armenians in 19th-century Asia, known for his business acumen, his philanthropy, and his global perspective.

In 1889, the Praya Reclamation

As a ready royal army of seasoned merchants and trustworthy negotiators, the Armenians enjoyed the favor and preferential treatment of their Persian rulers, enabling them to form a thriving community in the outskirts of Isfahan called New Julfa (corresponding to the Old Julfa

The Vank Cathedral, built in 1606, is located in New Julfa and is a dazzling fusion of Armenian and Islamic architecture.



of the Ottoman Empire, ultimately destroyed by the Persians).

There, they built up a solid base of wealth by which to erect magnificent Armenian churches and palatial mansions, as well as take up a brilliant tradition of decorative arts embellished with authentic Armenian motifs. Such splendor has been the object of awe by visitors and travelers to the region for centuries. And, through it all, this gem of a Christian Armenian suburb somehow remained exempt from the harsh treatment dealt to other minorities well into the 21st century.

Therefore it is no wonder that the family origins of three of Asia's most notable and esteemed Armenian figures of the 19th and 20th centuries would be rooted in these enterprising, outward-looking forebears, who ventured eastward and decided to resettle and raise families in outposts as far from home as India, Myanmar, and China. Little did they know that their legacy of Armenian pride and global perspective would resurface in the fascinating life stories of Catchick Paul Chater of China, Diana Apar of Japan, and Michael Martin of Bangladesh.



Sir Catchick Paul Chater



scheme, a large-scale land reclamation project of the Hongkong Land company in colonial Hong Kong was carried out by Chater and James Johnstone Keswick, laying the foundations of the financial hub of the Central Hong Kong of today. Chater also owned prime real estate in key locations in Canton (present day Guangzhou) and Macau, in addition to a large tranche of valuable waterfront property in Singapore for which he had big plans to develop. In 1896, he was appointed as one of the first of two unofficial members of the Executive Council of Hong Kong.

During this same period, Chater and his business partner H.N. Mody formed the Société Française des Charbonnages du Tonkin, which developed coal mines in

North Vietnam—all with the intention of supplying coal to his own company Hong Kong Electric. It was described as one of the only truly successful commercial undertakings in the entire history of then-French Indochina. In October 1891, a grateful French government awarded Chater the prestigious Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur.



In 1899, Chater adroitly negotiated a deal in which the government of Hong Kong would donate a public space to the tune of 67,000 square feet and Chater would finance the construction of the St. Andrews Church in Kowloon. The foundation stone was laid in 1905. The church continues to

thrive to this day.

A generous philanthropist, Chater also donated to the University of Hong Kong, St. John's Cathedral, and other churches. A section of Hong Kong still bears the Chater name, including streets, squares, and houses, such as Catchick Street, Chater Road, and Chater Garden.

Sir Catchick Paul Chater was knighted

From Catchick Street to Chater Garden, numerous buildings, landmarks, and street signs are adorned with the Chater name.

in 1902. He passed away at age 79 in Hong Kong, survived by his wife Maria Christine Pearson and his nephews. He bequeathed his mansion Marble Hall and its entire contents, including his unique collection of porcelain and paintings, to Hong Kong. The remainder of his estate went to the Armenian Church of the Holy Nazareth in Kolkata, which runs a home for Armenian elderly named the Sir Catchick Paul Chater Home. He was interred at the Hong Kong Cemetery.

BY LIZ CHATER

JAPAN Diana Apcar

It's a little known fact that Sir Paul Chater and Diana Apcar were cousins. Their common ancestor was Catchick Arrakiel, Sir Paul being his great grandson and Diana being his 2X great granddaughter.

Possibly the first woman to ever be appointed to any diplomatic post—certainly the first in the 20th century—Diana Apcar was a zealous advocate for the oppressed, an indefatigable crusader for human rights, and a champion of the Armenian people. Her convictions were expressed in a letter she wrote to then U.S. President Howard Taft during the height of the refugee crisis resulting from the Armenian Genocide of 1915.

“The annals on that presidential chair on which you sit are clear and bright as the noonday sun,” she wrote, “turning over the pages of their brightness, I am encouraged to address you.” Dedicated to saving

Inset: Chater was awarded the Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur in 1891. **Below:** Chater financed the construction of the St. Andrew's Church, which opened in 1906 in Kowloon, Hong Kong.



her people and desperately seeking to alleviate suffering, Apcar refused to let her distance from Armenia translate into apathy. “You will agree with me that the meanest and humblest of God’s creatures has a right to speak the truth,” she reasoned with Taft, “and greatest is the right to speak the truth, when it is spoken in the cause of murdered, outraged, and misery-stricken humanity.”

She was born Diana Gayane Agabeg in Yangon, Myanmar (formerly Rangoon, Burma), on October 12, 1859. Her father was born in Kolkata, and her mother born in Yangon. She came of age in Kolkata, the youngest of seven children. Her marriage to Apcar Michael Apcar in 1889 would introduce her to the global business the Apcar family had built over generations—involved in shipping, import/export enterprises, and rice farming throughout South Asia and the Far East. Apcar & Company would motivate the young couple to settle in Yokohama, Japan soon after the birth of their first child.

When Apcar arrived in Japan, she was an aspiring writer, already fluent in Armenian, English, and Hindustani. Settling in Yokohama, she mastered Japanese. Though the city was alive with opportunity for the new family, a series of tragedies befell the Apcars. Of the five children the family was blessed with, only three survived childhood. After two bankruptcies, Michael Apcar suddenly died in

Born in 1859 in Yangon, Myanmar, Diana Apcar would later move to Yokohama, Japan, with her husband Michael.



Diana and Michael Apcar on their honeymoon in Japan, 1890.

1906, leaving his wife with three young children in a foreign land.

Assuming the burden of restoring the family business while raising her children, Apcar proved herself a clever and versatile negotiator. When her son was old enough to inherit the business, she focused her attention on her passions: literature and diplomacy. Publishing writings both domestically and internationally, in all of the languages she wielded, Apcar’s political articles, literature, and poetry were printed in various journals, such as the *Japan Advertiser*, the *Japan Gazette*, *Far East*, and *New Armenia*. She cultivated a voice of solidarity with the oppressed people of the world, acutely aware of the violence besieging Armenians in the crumbling Ottoman Empire. By 1920, Apcar published over nine books focused on international relations, namely the scourge of imperialism, the potential for world peace, and the responsibility of those in power to act judiciously. She took up the Armenian cause fervently.

Apcar did not just espouse lofty political ideologies of peace, she wrote to everyone and anyone in a position of power—presidents, prime ministers, ambassadors, humanitarians—who could do something to stop the massacre of Armenians and provide aid to survivors. Her words translated to work as she tirelessly endeavored to appeal for safe haven on behalf of thousands of refugees all over the world. Her support for the Near East Relief was particularly notable.

Apcar’s relentless efforts led Japan to become one of the first nations to recognize the independence of the newly formed Armenian Republic in 1920. The same year, Diana Apcar was appointed Honorary Consul to Japan by Hamo Ohanjanian, the Republic’s foreign minister, making her the first Armenian woman

diplomat, and the first woman diplomat in the 20th century.

While her tenure concluded with the sovietization of Armenia, her activism and diplomacy on behalf of her people never did. Though she lived out her life in Yokohama, Japan, a resourceful diplomat, a prolific literary figure, and a woman of insurmountable faith a century ahead of her time, Apcar remained devoted to a free, prosperous Armenia.

BY NANA SHAKHNAZARYAN

BANGLADESH

Michael Joseph Martin

Though there is no consensus on when the first Armenian came to Dhaka, Michael Joseph Martin was certainly known as the last Armenian to leave it. Officially becoming the caretaker of the Armenian Apostolic Church of Holy Resurrection in 1986, Martin is credited with protecting the Armenian Church in Dhaka through three often tumultuous decades in Bangladeshi history. “Without him,” Martin’s successor Armen Arslanian explains, “Armenians would have lost this historic place of worship, this vital connection to our ancestors, indefinitely.”

The youngest of nine children, Michael Joseph Martin was born Mikel Housep Martirosian in Yangon, Myanmar, in 1930, when it was still the Burmese capital of Rangoon. The Martins had invested heavily in the city, operating a lucrative trade business, and so they, like many other Armenian families in Burma at the time, were integrated into the fabric of Rangoon. Coming of age in a large family, Martin enjoyed a relatively peaceful childhood in a city that would soon be swallowed by war.

December 1941 marked the end of an era in Rangoon. As imperial powers wrestled for control throughout the world,



Diana Apcar



Michael Joseph Martin shown outside the gates of the Armenian College in Kolkata in 1946.

the city was center stage in the South-East Asian Theater of World War II. Before the Japanese officially occupied the city, bombs rained on Rangoon. Because the Martins owned property adjacent to an important part of the city's railway system, a site known for transporting munitions to China, Japanese planes would fly low looking to disrupt the cargo. Just 11 years old at the time, Martin still remembers how Burmese government officials came to visit his father after a bomb destroyed their home tennis court. "They said it was the third largest bomb dropped in Burma at the time," he recalls. "The crater created was so deep, and there was shrapnel everywhere. We were instructed to leave."

As Japanese attacks on the city escalated, the family made plans to evacuate to India, where some of the Martin clan had already settled. The journey from Rangoon to Kolkata by ship was treacherous—Martin recalls the crew painting the vessel with camouflage as they sailed on the high sea—but five days later, starved yet relieved, they docked in the Bay of Bengal. The Martin family reassembled in Kolkata and their youngest son continued with his schooling at the Armenian College, where he became known for both his musical and athletic talent.

With a childhood split between two cities, Martin became adept at negotiating and followed his father into the family firm in Kolkata, Martin & Sons. Soon venturing out on his own, he departed from the family trade business to pursue the jute industry, working his way through the ranks at various companies and developing

Martin protected the Church of Holy Resurrection from foreign investors and helped restore it to its past glory.

himself as a versatile businessman. Martin even dabbled in the restaurant business, opening Cafe Stadium, which routinely catered to government officials and international traders. It was his hunger for bigger and better opportunities that would take him to East Pakistan in the early 60s, where he would meet his wife Veronica Gonsalves and start his family in the soon-to-be-declared democracy of Bangladesh.

Though the family settled in Kolkata, Bangladesh would continue to call to Martin. In 1986, as a congregant of the Armenian Church in Kolkata, he was made aware of the perilous state the Armenian Church in Dhaka was in. In the hands of an indifferent, non-Armenian caretaker, the church had been neglected



A photo of Martin taken in 1948. Prior to moving to Dhaka, Martin showed off his business acumen by opening a restaurant in Kolkata called Cafe Stadium.

for years. With its community gone, infrastructure crumbling and centuries-old graves left unprotected, the church was abandoned, neighboring an unofficial dumping ground that channeled raw

sewage and waste onto its grounds. When the caretakers of the Armenian Church in Kolkata were notified that a group of foreign investors were looking to take control of the property, they asked Martin to go to Dhaka and protect the church grounds. This experience would transform him into the fiercest advocate the church had ever seen in Bangladesh.

Successfully pushing out the foreign investors with his diplomatic connections, Martin began massive efforts to renovate and restore the church to its former glory. Because the jaded former caretaker prohibited local laborers from working on the church, Martin contracted labor from Khulna to build, paint, and plaster. Though threatened with force, and often with local curses, he refused to abandon the church and relocated to the city with his family. "I took over the care and responsibility of the Armenian Church in Dhaka because I considered it my duty," Martin explains. "The blessings, guidance, and protection I received along the way convinced me I had chosen the right path."

On January 6, 1987, Christmas Service enlivened the Armenian Church in Dhaka for the first time in decades. Delivered by a priest from the Church of England and attended by a mixed congregation of both locals and foreigners, the service was evidence that Michael Joseph Martin succeeded in saving so much more than just the church grounds. With his dedication to restoring the spirit of the Armenian Apostolic Church of Holy Resurrection, Martin salvaged a priceless piece of both Armenian and Bangladeshi history.

In 2014, Michael Martin relinquished his responsibilities as caretaker to Armen Arslanian. For his decades of service, the last Armenian in Dhaka was recognized with the St. Nerses Shnorhali Medal by Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II. ❧

BY NANA SHAKHNAZARYAN





Soft Diplomacy

How today's new diasporas are promoting the Armenian image in Asia

For centuries, an innate entrepreneurial spirit and outward looking sense of adventure spurred Armenians to travel beyond their ancestral lands seeking fame and fortune in faraway lands. Along the Great Silk Road, enterprising Armenian traders and merchants left their mark on history, shaping the development of world civilization through commerce. Their well-traveled footprint throughout the capital cities and trading hubs of Asia has largely been overlooked in the West, leaving a precious part of history to wither in obscurity.

Over the last decade, however, a new generation of intrepid Armenians,

inspired by a pioneering spirit or propelled by changes in the world order, have begun to revive the centuries-old Armenian leaning to the East.

As the Republic of Armenia sets the tone for a new era of engagement with Asian countries through a recent spate of summits, treaties, and official state visits, it is left to a new generation of Armenians now living and working in Asia to conduct the soft diplomacy so essential to an effective Asia-Armenian strategy.

As employees, students, artists, and business people from all parts of the Armenian world, these expats are working together and apart to serve as unofficial representatives of the global

Above: A yearly street party held on Armenian Street in Singapore.

Armenian identity—one defined by the same outward-looking perspective of those who came before. At the same time, they are working to preserve and promote the substantial legacy these predecessors left behind, both for Armenians and Asian society at large.

The stories to follow profile some of the people, places, and projects that are putting Armenians back on the Asian map. In turn, the first hand exposures of these cultural ambassadors stand to bring back valuable insight, experience, perspective to help promote mutual interests and understanding. **■**



Brethren of Bangladesh

Armenians maintain a presence in Dhaka through community service

By **NANA SHAKHNAZARYAN**

Though heavy traffic runs through the Old City, just past the gates of the Armenian Apostolic Church of Holy Resurrection, the clamor and chaos of the Bangladeshi capital evaporate. A city of almost 19 million, Dhaka has no known, living Armenians, yet the heritage of an influential Armenian diaspora and a part of Bangladeshi history is rooted in the revival of its 238-year-old Armenian church.

“The Armenians of Dhaka were active in the social, political, and economic development of the city,” church caretaker Armen Arslanian notes. “The Armenians on this side of the world, those who immigrated throughout Southeast Asia, were not refugees. They were following the routes of business.” Arslanian himself was doing the same when he came to Bangladesh for the first time in 2008.

The child of Armenian Genocide survivors from Cilicia, he grew up in

Argentina, and it was on a business trip to Dhaka that he strolled through Armanitola, Bangladesh’s Armenian Quarter, and found the Church of Holy Resurrection. In 2014, Arslanian inherited the post of church caretaker from Michael Joseph Martin, Dhaka’s “last Armenian” and a passionate man who had preserved and protected the Armenian Church since 1986, through some of Bangladesh’s most tumultuous years as a young democracy. Unlike Martin did



during his tenure, Arslanian does not live in Dhaka but he visits the church every few weeks. Since becoming caretaker, he has made it his mission to redefine the ways in which the local community interacts with the church as both an active house of worship and a historic site.

In Communion

“We have an unwavering commitment to the people of this land,” Arslanian explains. “Out of respect for the community, of which we are certainly a part, out of gratitude for the way our forefathers were welcomed to live in Dhaka, we are committed to sharing the resources we have.” As a thriving house of worship, the church is aligned with the Armenian Apostolic tradition of Etchmiadzin yet, Christians of all denominations are welcome and routinely hold services for their

Church caretaker Armen Arslanian distributes food packages at the weekly Mr. Michael Martin Food Assistance Program.

congregants. Catholics, Anglicans, and Protestants worship alongside one another, and even Muslims find a place of refuge to pray on church grounds. Because of its proximity to the Mitford Hospital, the church welcomes all in their time of need and it’s this vital integration into daily community life of which Arslanian is most proud.

The Old City in which Armanitola is situated represents one of the poorer districts in the capital; food insecurity and lack of access to medical care are crippling problems for the Bangladeshis who neighbor the church. Recognizing that these are social ills that could be partially alleviated, Arslanian piloted the Mr. Michael Martin Food Assistance Program in honor of his predecessor. Initially devised as a monthly endeavor, the local demand transformed it into a weekly initiative in 2016. A Bangladeshi favorite, biryani, is prepared on the church grounds and served to 550 adults and 200 children weekly. Milk for younger children is also distributed. Like almost all else in the church, the initiative to bring these services to Armanitola is completely interfaith. From the Armenian Christians on the board of the church raising funds to the Muslim and Hindu church employees cooking and distributing food, everyone plays a role. In addition to food services, the church has begun a monthly medical clinic in partnership with local charitable organizations, bringing physicians to the community to provide vital care free of cost. Currently, the church board is trying to expand the clinic on a weekly schedule as well. To empower the youth in the community, the board is also working to create a robust scholarship program for the dedicated students of both the Armanitola Government High School and the Pogose Laboratory School and College—established as the first private school in Bangladesh by the Armenian merchant and zamindar (landowner) Nicolas Pogose in 1848.

“Through our church and our Christian faith, we hope to continue the legacy of our ancestors here,” Arslanian explains. The head of an impressive assembly of international Diaspora Armenians, he is joined on the church board by Haig and Hagop Didizian from the United Kingdom, Henri Arslanian from Hong Kong, and Pierre

Hennes from Singapore. Despite the lack of an explicitly Armenian community in Dhaka, the church is profoundly connected to the Bangladeshi community, serving its neighbors more consistently than many other Armenian churches throughout the Diaspora. The goal of the food assistance programs, medical clinics, and academic scholarships is to empower people directly, without pretense nor prejudice. Some of the side benefits are the positive reputation and interest in Armenians by the Bangladeshi people.

Hearth of History

A monument to a bygone era and a testament of the unwavering faith of a community, the Armenian Apostolic Church of Holy Resurrection was built in 1781 in the then-thriving business district. The Armenians that would found a tight-knit community in Dhaka were already of a diaspora, descendants of Armenians deported from Old Julfa to the New Julfa of Isfahan, by the Safavid monarch Shah Abbas during the Safavid-Ottoman Wars of 1603-1605.

Negotiating their identities between



Above: A statue with an Armenian inscription that sits upon the grave of Catchick Thomas. **Below:** A plaque commemorating the date the church was built.





The Armenian Apostolic Church of Holy Resurrection located in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

empires for centuries, the Armenians of New Julfa established themselves as versatile merchants, skilled in the textile and silk trade. They would later engage in the trade of salt, betel nut, and saltpeter (used for gunpowder) but ultimately, they would become known for pioneering the

beckoning its Armenian traders to settle for business. Under the promise of safety and relative sovereignty, they did just that. In the late 18th century, when British private traders monopolized the textile business in the region, Armenians turned to landholding, acquiring real estate and becoming zamindars in Dhaka.

Popularizing tea-drinking and introducing Western-style “department stores”

community, the construction of the church is evidence that the once-nomadic Armenian traders found a home in Dhaka. So much so, that when floods, fires, and famine devastated the city in 1787, the wealthy Armenian zamindars took it upon themselves to feed thousands of their neighbors daily. People would come from all over Dhaka to Armanitola for help.

Developing a Dialogue for Diplomacy

“The story of our church, the story of the Armenians who lived in Dhaka and died in Dhaka—it’s not just Armenian history,” Arslanian asserts, “It’s Bangladeshi history.” Though the Armenians of Dhaka never numbered over 300 at one time, they left an indelible mark on the Bangladeshi capital. Not yet 50-years old, the People’s Republic of Bangladesh is now remembering a history to guide their future, looking to the past to incorporate the narratives of the many communities that once thrived on their land. To that end, the initiative to include the Armenian Apostolic Church of Holy Resurrection in UNESCO’s World Heritage List has been spearheaded by the Armenian Ambassador to India and Bangladesh Armen Martirosyan and the Church board. Meetings between Ambassador Martirosyan and Bangladesh’s cultural affairs minister Asaduzzaman Noor could mean that a once forgotten church in Dhaka is the diplomatic tie that two young democracies need to strengthen relations. 🇦🇲

“Out of respect for the community, of which we are certainly a part, out of gratitude for the way our forefathers were welcomed to live in Dhaka, we are committed to sharing the resources we have.”

jute trade. It was the burgeoning business in Dhaka that pulled them ever further east and, by the second half of the 17th century, their status as indispensable mediators made them valuable assets for the British Crown governing the region.

“Whenever 40 or more of the Armenian Nation shall become inhabitants in any of the Garrisons, Cities or Towns belonging to the Company in the East Indies, the said Armenians shall not only have and enjoy the free use and exercise of their Religion, but there shall also be allotted to them a parcel of Ground to erect a Church thereon...” reads the 1688 edict issued by the English East India Company,

for European products in Bengal, Armenians integrated into Dhaka’s civic life while bolstering the local economy. Armenians also introduced the *ticcagarry*, or horse carriage, to the city, which would remain the main mode of transportation in Dhaka until the 1910s.

In 1781, the Armenian Church that now stands in Dhaka was completed, built upon the small chapel and cemetery that was in use since early Armenian settlement. With its impressive arches and ornate basilica, the church was almost certainly constructed by local Muslims and Hindus, though the primary architect remains unknown. The center of the Armenian



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Rise and Shine

An active Armenian community in Hong Kong is making its mark across Asia

By **DAN HALTON** and **LAURA L. CONSTANTINE**

"Many Armenians are not aware of the fact that we have a very active and fast growing Armenian community in China," says Henri Arslanian, co-founder and president of ChinaHay, the Armenian community of China and Hong Kong organization. A native born Canadian-Armenian financial services professional from Montreal, Arslanian is leading the charge behind an Armenian renaissance in Asia.

With more than 800 members, the Armenian community in China is the most prominent among Armenian communities in Asia with vary in size in Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia, India, Bangladesh, and Myanmar. These Armenians are connected to ChinaHay members by virtue of its mission to reach out to Armenians all across Asia.

ChinaHay's diverse members hail from Armenia, Argentina, Canada, France, Russia, South Africa, and the United States. They represent diverse industries and include artists, banking and finance professionals, jewelers, manufacturers, traders, and others. Although most have come as part of a temporary work stint, some are choosing to settle in Asia permanently, marrying and raising families.

Despite their varied backgrounds and professions, they are bound by their cultural heritage and a shared sense of adventure that impelled them to travel thousands of miles in search of new and exciting opportunities, retracing a path paved by their ancestors centuries ago.

"What amazes me the most is the out-sized impact that the Armenians have had," says Arslanian. "Armenians played a disproportionately large role not just in Hong Kong, but in many cities from Yangon to Dhaka to Singapore where they were very prominent. That is very impressive and inspiring. Unfortunately, that is a part of our history that many are not aware of and those who are don't celebrate enough." Arslanian is intent on changing that.

Building on the Armenian Legacy

The Armenian presence in China dates to the early 13th century when the first Armenian colonies appeared in Guangzhou in the aftermath of the Mongol invasions of Armenia. Between the 17th and 19th centuries, Armenian merchants established communities in Guangzhou, Hong Kong, and even Tibet.

As trade increased, the stature and influence of Armenians in the region rose. They opened up successful businesses and

Above: ChinaHay co-founder and president Henri Arslanian (second from right) with ChinaHay members, after a flashmob Armenian circle dance of Kochari on the beach in Hong Kong, 2019.

earned the respect and admiration of their Chinese hosts. Armenian academic and linguist Hrachya Acharyan wrote: "China has always kept its doors closed to foreigners, especially Christians. But the Armenians were an exception and had absolute freedom."

At the end of the 19th century, hundreds more Armenians continued to journey east in search of opportunity not only in Hong Kong, but Shanghai, Macau, Manchuria, and Harbin, where construction of the Chinese Eastern Railway began under Imperial Russia in 1898, attracting Armenian workers from Russia, Syunik, and Artsakh. Eventually nearly 400 families settled in Harbin.

Columbia University lecturer Khatchig Mouradian is one of the few scholars who have researched this little-known chapter of Armenian history in Asia. "Many of these Armenians coupled their personal success with a dedication to community life," he wrote. "Despite conflicts, war, and foreign occupation that beset the history of

China in the first half of the 20th century, they built a church [Harbin], community centers [Harbin and Shanghai], and established relief organizations, choirs, language schools, and women's groups."

These communities served as an important refuge for Armenians during the Genocide. "For several decades, hundreds of Genocide survivors called China home," Mouradian also noted, "helping build communities that celebrated heritage and culture across the globe from the Armenian homeland."

The formation of the People's Republic of China in 1949 led to a mass exodus of Armenians from the country, with most migrating again mainly to the United States and Australia. Much of the Armenian presence was eradicated by Chairman Mao Zedong during the Cultural Revolution in 1996. Even the Armenian Church in Harbin was demolished.

With this in mind, ChinaHay has made the preservation of the early Armenian's legacy a central part of its mission and to share with the world the remarkable history of Armenians in Asia. Working closely with other Armenian communities across Asia and with the Armenian government, the organization successfully saved a centuries-old Armenian church in Myanmar from destruction by an unscrupulous developer and is currently working with Sir Paul Catchik Chater's descendent Liz Chater to restore a 200-year old church in Dhaka that was once the focal point of the historic Armenian mercantile community in Bangladesh. In so doing, the community is able to reconstruct the history, recount the family stories, and resurrect the influential role played by Armenians in the development of Asia.

"I believe that it is our moral duty to preserve and restore our Armenian heritage," says Arslanian. "I think of the community leaders living in current day Myanmar, Singapore, or Bangladesh in the 18th or 19th century who spent much of energy and money building the churches and historical venues that we still have today. They probably hoped that there would be individuals who would continue their mission in the 21st century in the same way I hope that others will leverage and build upon the work we are undertaking today, for centuries to come."

To help accomplish that goal, the Armenians of China act as a bridge between Armenia and China, fostering closer ties between the two cultures. Among several ongoing projects and



In the early 1900s, Armenian communities with thriving businesses were established, like the Tchakalian Brothers pastry shop in Shanghai, 1939.

initiatives, the organization promotes Armenian tourism, offers Armenian language courses, and recently launched a scholarship program, together with the American University of Armenia (AUA) to sponsor Chinese students to pursue their graduate studies in Armenia.

In 2013, the Jack and Julie Maxian Armenian Center in Hong Kong opened its doors, and has since partnered with the Gulbenkian Foundation to create an ongoing fellowship to support Armenian and Chinese academics researching Armenian history in China.

Cross Cultural Ties

Jack Maxian is a striking example of how diasporans in Asia manage to retain and express their Armenian identity while fully integrating into mainstream Asian society.

Maxian is a transplant from an earlier generation whose first trip to Asia was in 1976. A businessman from Beirut, Lebanon, which was in the throes of a civil war, he had been touring the Asian countries with associates from the Middle East and was especially impressed with Hong Kong. "I saw the possibilities to do

business," he recounted. "I wanted to live in a safe place and do business. I thought it would just be temporary until the war ended. I am still here."

There are two good reasons. First, Maxian's expertise in the textile industry made China and Hong Kong ideal for his purposes: "To manufacture textiles in the mainland and export them to Arab countries, while living in then-British governed Hong Kong society. It was the best of both worlds. Because Hong Kong is a place for those who want to make contact with China, this city is a first step for them," explains Jack.

But the best reason for Jack to stay was falling in love with Julie, a native of Hong Kong and now his wife of 40 years. As it turned out, Julie became an invaluable asset to the business, accompanying him on his visits to the mainland and helping out at the office.

When asked about her perspective on Armenians, Julie Maxian observes: "What I see about Armenians is that they like to be together. Even though they come here, like Jack did, to invest in their future, they want to stay connected to their past, their heritage, just as my husband does. His heart is always leaning toward Armenia. That's why we founded the Armenian Center, so all the Armenians can gather here, like a home away from home, enjoying their own food, speaking their own language."

In reflecting on how they've managed to fuse the two cultures as a married couple, the Maxians noted some important shared values: "The Chinese and the Armenians have a respect for their parents and value the elderly, and both cultures are very old." Julie also playfully adds that "after 40 years, Jack has brainwashed me." ■

(From left) Jack Maxian, His Holiness Karekin II, Julie Maxian, and H.E. Armen Sargsyan, Armenian Ambassador to China, at the opening of the Jack and Julie Maxian Armenian Center in Hong Kong, 2013.



Seoul Search

How YP South Korea is uniting Armenian expats a long way from home

By **NANA SHAKHNAZARYAN**

On a lazy Sunday morning in Seoul's Yeouido Hangang Park, a group of young professionals have gathered to catch up on life and discuss literature. Thousands of miles away from home, a unique lingua

the first Armenian organization in South Korea, have made the vibrant global city their home. After Tokyo, New York, and Los Angeles, Seoul has the world's largest metropolitan economy, with a GDP of over \$630 billion—unsurprising,

Approximately 70 Armenians now live in the country, some having just recently arrived and others settled for decades.

Open Doors

With a booming technology industry, Korean companies like Samsung, LG, and SK Hynix make Seoul fertile ground for a new generation of Armenia's engineers looking for original opportunities. Ogsen Galstyan's career is a prime example. Galstyan arrived in South Korea in 2012, invited by Sogang University as a researcher in their Microwave Photonics Lab. A graduate of the Institute of Radiophysics and Electronics in Armenia, he was hired as an engineer for SEMES, a subsidiary of Samsung and Korea's largest semiconductor equipment manufacturing

AGBUYP Seoul is the first Armenian organization in South Korea.

“As soon as somebody from Armenia decides to study or work here, our network reaches out. Even before they come, we prepare to welcome them and provide our insights and resources to guide them.”

franca unites them: Armenian, with a few Korean words here or there.

In one of the world's most densely populated cities, a steadily growing Armenian Diaspora is starting a new chapter in history. The members of AGBU YP Seoul,

for the fact that it's the global headquarters of 15 *Fortune* Global 500 companies. Since diplomatic relations between South Korea and Armenia were first established in 1992, Armenians have been traveling to the capital city for work and study.



company. Author of seven research papers and six patent applications, Galstyan finished his doctorate through both universities and continues to work in research and development of plasma etchers for Samsung.

“Interestingly, it was my work in the semiconductor industry that connected me to Armenians in Seoul,” Galstyan recalls. Though the Armenian community in South Korea had been organizing since 2011, it was recognized by the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in March 2015, with an official letter issued to the Armenian Embassy in Japan, which serves both communities. In 2017, at SEMICON Korea, the largest global conference in the industry, Galstyan met Dr. Yervant Zorian.

Chief architect of Synopsys, a semiconductor technology firm headquartered in Silicon Valley that works closely with Samsung, Zorian took an interest in Galstyan’s story. “To me, his journey represented the fruitful partnership between Armenia and South Korea, and I knew Ogsen was not the only young Armenian professional in Seoul,” Zorian remembers. “During my periodic interactions, I had noticed that the Armenians of the city were linked to each other socially and to Armenia on a personal basis, but they lacked the organized Diaspora community features locally and globally. I thought introducing the worldwide AGBU YP experience would complement the excellent attributes that already existed and turn Seoul into an exemplary node in the global Armenian network.” On the AGBU Board since 2008, Zorian proposed and facilitated the launch of AGBU YP Seoul in November 2018.

“Our community is a family,” Narine Haroyan, Chair of YP Seoul, says. Responsible for uniting Armenians from all industries, those studying and those working, together, Haroyan plans events that range from ghapama-making competitions to book clubs. YP Seoul provides a safety net for Armenians in South Korea, making sure they feel supported with resources and insights. Expats who have lived in the city for longer offer advice and guidance, helping new arrivals adjust. Haroyan is at the helm of this knowledge sharing.

First coming to Seoul in 2012 through the Korean government scholarship program, she completed a three-year language intensive along with her master’s degree in international commerce.



After graduation, she briefly returned to Armenia before coming back in 2016 to work for DA Technology, one of the main secondary battery assembly equipment manufacturing companies in the country. As a business development and sales specialist for US and European markets, Haroyan navigates life in Seoul, having experienced the city as both a student and a working professional. Like many Armenians in her community, she does plan to return to Armenia. “Something that characterizes our members here seems to be our plans to go back,” Haroyan explains. “Especially after the Velvet Revolution, we see that we can use the skills and expertise we have honed here and impact Armenia positively.”

Members of AGBU YP Seoul at a literature event at Yeouido Hangang Park, Seoul.

Narine Haroyan is the Chair of YP Seoul, which acts as a safety net for Armenians living in South Korea.

Managing Culture Shock

Living in Seoul is not always easy. Most in the community will admit that the cultural differences between Koreans and Armenians are significant. Culturally more effusive and emotive, some Armenians initially struggle with the distance kept by their Korean colleagues. Negotiating hierarchy and honorifics, and a place in society as foreigners, is also notoriously tricky.

After the destruction of the Korean War, the country rushed to build an effective economy, relying on workers to expend enormous effort to give South Korea a chance to catch up to the rest of the developed world. Decades of





Mushegh Aslikyan arrived in South Korea in 2011 and studies at the University of Seoul.

degree in transportation engineering at the University of Seoul, he will have spent eight years in South Korea.

Instrumental in bringing Armenians together so far from home, Aslikyan is most proud of how organized and receptive the Korean Armenian community is. “As soon as somebody from Armenia decides to study or work here, our network reaches out,” he explains. “Even before they arrive, we prepare to welcome them and provide our insights and resources to guide them.” Enjoying a strong relationship with the Armenian embassy in Japan, the community in South Korea is also notified when notable Armenians, be they musicians or ministers, are traveling through.

Though most of the Armenians in Seoul plan to return to Armenia, using their education and experience in South Korea to fortify their home country’s infrastructure, they make a tight-knit, passionate family that is always looking to welcome others adventurous enough to join them. At FOCUS 2019, Narine Haroyan represented YP Seoul in a pitch battle initiated by the Nourbar Nazarian YP Innovators Fund. Hoping to provide another channel for Armenians to come to Seoul, the group designed a program that would shepherd young professionals through their experiences in South Korea, providing homestays and training opportunities. They are continuing to develop this program that stands to provide more overseas employment opportunities in this booming Asian capital. ■

dependence on a dedicated labor force cultivated a culture in which commitment to work is sacred, often coming before family. “If your team is working and everyone is still in the office after hours, it’s not even a question that you will stay behind,” Galstyan explains, “The concept of working hours does not exist but working hard together on a team definitely creates a strong bond between employees.” Though the work culture is demanding, the opportunities to celebrate successes with colleagues are rewarding—mastering karaoke and keeping up with Koreans on a night out is a sure way to make friends.

When Mushegh Aslikyan arrived in South Korea in 2011, a graduate from the National Polytechnic University of Armenia, he first enrolled in a Korean language course at Yonsei University and then pursued his bachelor’s degree in mathematics at the University of Seoul. In order to support his studies, he worked in cafes, bars, and even a post office in the

city, mastering the language and getting perspectives of Korean life outside of work and school. “At first, what surprised me most was that Koreans like to sit on the floor and don’t phone even their friends after 10 p.m.” Aslikyan recalls earnestly. “Having had so many different opportunities to meet people and speak with them in their language, I feel like I can call Seoul home.” In August 2019, when Aslikyan completes his master’s



Ogsen Galstyan arrived in Seoul in 2012. Currently he works for SEMES, the country’s largest semiconductor equipment manufacturing company.

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The Kolkata Connection

A small diaspora in India makes a big impact abroad

By **NANA SHAKHNAZARYAN**

From Delhi to Mumbai, Agra to Surat, traces of Armenian communities can be found in almost every major Indian city. If lucrative trade routes snaked through a place with enough opportunity, chances are Armenians settled there. Though the fate of these communities differed, Kolkata was once the hub of Armenian life in India. Today only approximately 150 Armenians remain. Yet this small diasporan community is making a big difference in the lives of Armenians across the world.

A First-class, Free Education

As generations of nomadic Armenian merchants set down their roots throughout modern-day India in the 18th century, they invested heavily in the schooling

of their children, founding religious and educational institutions grounded in Armenian heritage, but with global perspectives. Three centuries later, one institution, the Armenian College and Philanthropic Academy in Kolkata, honors the legacy of its founders and benefactors by providing free education to Armenian youth around the world. With its longstanding reputation as a high-quality center of Armenian education, the school acts as a nexus for young diasporans seeking a brighter future.

Officially established in Kolkata in 1821, from an informal school set up in 1798, the Armenian College and Philanthropic Academy came to be through the work of two Armenians from New Julfa—Astvatsator Muradghanian

and Mnatsakan Vardanian. They envisioned an educationally rigorous environment for the future leaders in their community, understanding that Kolkata was becoming the seat of a thriving Armenian community throughout Asia.

Over time, the community dwindled along with the changing fortunes of the city. Yet despite the changing demographics, the school stands today as a bastion of Armenian pride and purpose in India. In 1922, another branch, the Davidian Girls' School, was added to the Armenian College, empowering women to advance in life.

Though not many Armenians from Kolkata are matriculated, the college's international students thrive with the help of a diverse faculty, a challenging

Armenian students of the of the Armenian College and Philanthropic Academy of Kolkata, early 2000s.

academic plan, and access to a range of extracurricular activities. The school follows a standard syllabus approved by the Indian government but also provides Armenian and English language courses to all students. In fact, because many students arrive without a standardized education and proficiency in English, an intensive six-month English language course is a pre-requisite for joining peers in their respective grades. The school reports that after the remedial language classes, the students are ready to tackle Shakespeare within a year.

The Chater Legacy

The school doors have remained open, despite the tumult of history in the city and the region, because of the vision and generosity of one man: none other than the Kolkata-born Sir Catchick Paul Chater, the legendary Armenian philanthropist of Hong Kong. Orphaned at age seven, he was able to continue his own education through a scholarship. It is with this personal insight into the needs of worthy students without the means to pursue their dreams that he endowed some of his fortune to the Armenian College. Today, over 200 deserving

Students of the academy with their teacher celebrating St. Vartan's Day, in 2001.



Armenian students have been plucked from their struggling circumstances in troubled areas of the world to enjoy a high quality education and a stable environment. The nationalities of the students is the result of regional unrest or economic hardship, so the school boasts alumni from Armenia, Myanmar, Kuwait, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Russia, Turkey and even Azerbaijan. In the aftermath of the Genocide, hundreds of refugee children from uprooted families were provided a safe haven and sense of normalcy. The multitude of alumni narratives also speaks to the significance that this experience has made in transforming their lives.

With tuition, room and board, and all other expenses paid through Chater's largesse, students are encouraged and to attend some of India's most competitive universities. And while the hardscrabble conditions of Kolkata often necessitate moving away for greener professional pastures, these Armenians remain loyal to the community that cultivated them.

With each successive generation of college graduates, many performing on an impressive global scale, the Armenian image throughout Southeast Asia gains stature, building on the legacy of visionaries like Muradghanian, Vardanian, and Chater.

Reaching Out to the Homeland

Though small in size, the Armenians in today's Kolkata remain just as committed to enhancing the lives of Armenians



Gabrielyan in Kolkata during his prosthetic treatment.

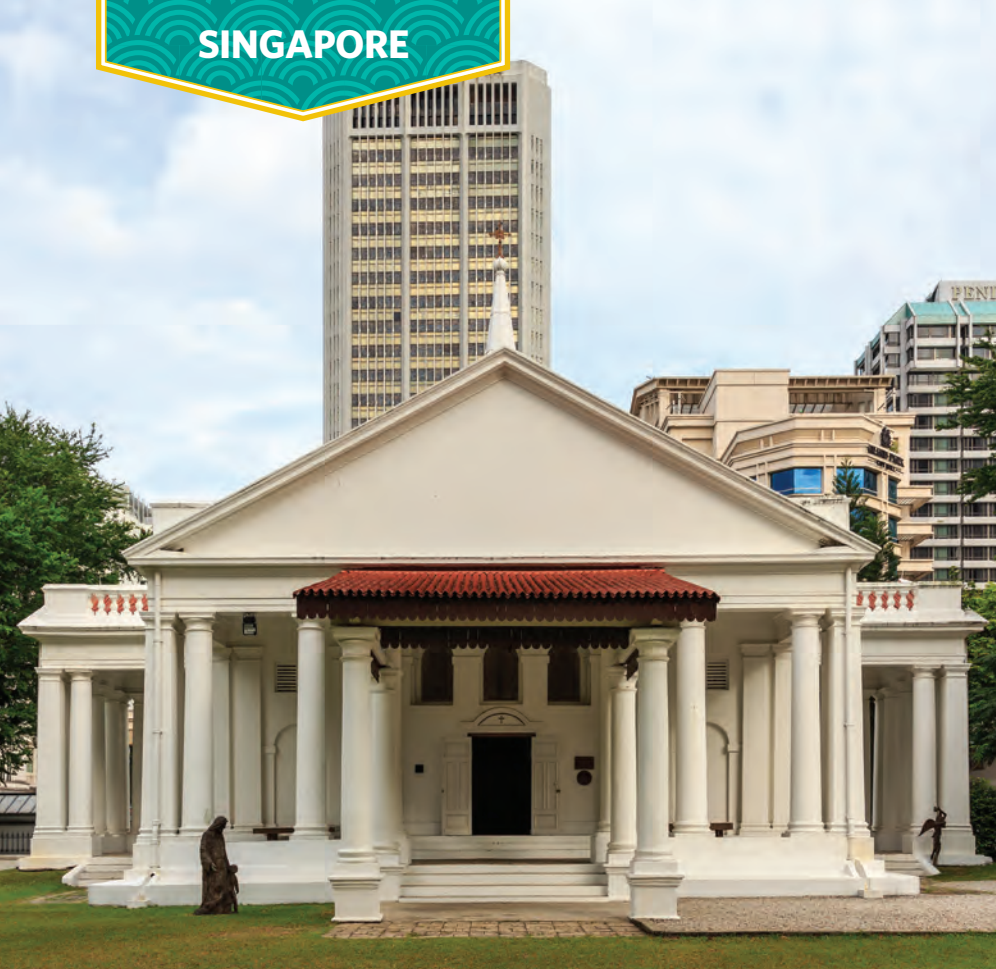
around the world. When violence on the Artsakh border broke out in 2016, the global Armenian nation rallied behind its soldiers and their families.

Leveraging the attention the short-lived war received in the region, servicemen in the Armenian military Hayk Mnatsakanyan and Vahan Martirosyan decided to mobilize their connections to help one of their own—Lieutenant Sargis Gabrielyan, who, in 2015, lost his arm during a diversion mission in Yeghnikner.

“We knew if we could gather the funds, we could help Sargis gain access to a prosthetic treatment and rehabilitation,” Mnatsakanyan explains. “The immediacy of the support we received surprised us all.”

While the soldiers planned to reach out to their connections in Europe and North America, some friends introduced them to members of the Kolkata community as well. No sooner did they explain the circumstances of Lieutenant Gabrielyan, than the donations started pouring in from India.

“The Armenian community in Kolkata reacted instantly,” Mnatsakanyan recalls. “Without hesitation, without a second thought, they were invested. Their response was immediately organized.” Not only did they donate \$100,000 USD to support Gabrielyan's rehabilitation, but with the help of the community, he and his sister were able to travel to Kolkata for the treatment. For three months, the Gabrielyans were hosted in a homestay, surrounded by the support and hospitality of a caring community. **AV**



A Showcase in Singapore

The Armenian church and gallery spotlight Armenian contributions to Asia

By **RIC GAZARIAN**

Singapore was founded by Brit Sir Stamford Raffles, in 1819 as a trading port. Armenian merchants, who traced their roots from Julfa soon followed, with 16 accounted for in the 1824 census. At the

Singaporean Sandra Basmadjian gives a tour of the Armenian Heritage Gallery.



heart of the Armenian community is St. Gregory the Illuminator Church, built in 1835. It is the oldest church in Singapore.

Today, that church is a Singaporean national landmark and serves as a hub for the approximately 80 Armenians who make their home in this gleaming, bustling, cosmopolitan city-state. The parish is comprised of two types of Armenians: those who trace their roots to the founding families who settled in Singapore in the 19th century; and the more recent arrivals, mostly from the Republic of Armenia.

Not only is the church used to celebrate Armenian Christmas, Easter, and Armenian Independence Day but also it is the channel by which to introduce Singaporeans and tourists to the Armenian role in Singapore's economic success story. Over 100 public events are held each year on church premises.

Above left: *The St. Gregory the Illuminator Church was built in 1835. Above right:* *The Armenian Heritage Gallery in Singapore opened its doors in June 2018.*

An Armenian Museum in Asia

With this disproportionately big impact a point of curiosity, the Armenian Heritage Gallery was opened on the grounds of the church in 2018. It is the first of its kind in Asia and follows the migration of Armenians from Persia, first over to India, then throughout Southeast Asia.

"As a multi-ethnic society, Singapore is promoting diversity and cooperation internally and the Armenians are part of that discussion," said Pierre Hennes, a trustee of the church, who arrived in Singapore in 2003.

Located adjacent to the Singapore Armenian Church, the gallery offers



a comprehensive, interactive learning experience that explores the journey and achievements of the Armenian communities in Singapore and Asia from the early days of settlement through to the present day.

In addition to the museum, it features a library and a small gift shop, as well as rare artifacts, books, photos, and other historical items collected from the various community archives in Singapore, Asia, Armenia and worldwide. It is also a destination on the Singapore Government's Heritage Trail.

The Armenian Heritage Gallery is a

collaboration between the Singapore Armenian Community and Armenian communities worldwide, and enjoys support under the National Heritage Board's Heritage Project Grant.

A Hub for Global Armenians

To understand the mindset of the new Armenian Diaspora of Singapore is to follow the journeys of two Armenians whose lives intersected through the St. Gregory Church. One left his native Armenia to expand his horizons while the other took his international upbringing in the opposite direction by focusing on Armenia.

Gevorg Sargsyan is another trustee overseeing the church, and a proud member of the wider community of Singapore representing a new generation of Armenians. A prodigy, he was born in Yerevan to a musical family during the waning days of the Soviet Union.

Today, he is the conductor of the Chinese Girls' School String Ensemble in Singapore, the single non-Asian among 24 young performers.

He and his violinist wife Ani Umedyan, an accomplished and admired musician in her own right, were content with their lives in Armenia but, as Sargsyan tells it, "Armenians are very global people, so we don't really see Armenia as the only place we can live to pursue our music. So when my wife was offered a teaching position in Singapore, the idea of moving to a very global community intrigued us."

Contrasting the homogeneous makeup of Armenia's population to that of Singapore, Sargsyan says, "In Armenia, we aren't regularly exposed to different cultures and people whereas Singapore is a melting pot of nationalities and colors—and that is a good thing. We enjoy having friends from all walks of life

and places like India to Japan—even Argentina." He also agrees that, with frequent visits to Armenia and involvement on the church board, he still has a connection to his homeland and Armenian identity—perhaps the best of all worlds for Armenians of the global age.

The same perspective describes Sargsyan's fellow trustee member Peter Hennes. Half German and half Armenian, he has lived, studied, and traveled all over the world, from the Caucasus and Iran to the United States and Russia. After arriving in Singapore 16 years ago, he co-founded Upstream Ventures, a venture capital fund. Impressed by the Armenian movers and shakers who preceded him, Hennes became active in the Armenian community while building his company.

In 2011, Hennes capitalized on his success and experience in Singapore



A trustee of the St. Gregory Church, Pierre Hennes is a supporter of the Armenian Heritage Gallery.

and directed his energies to Armenia with "a successful example of a transfer of knowledge from Singapore to Armenia." Granatus Ventures, based in Yerevan, is investing in the future of Armenia by providing capital to promising local businesses. For example, it is one of the supporters of GG Taxi (the Uber of Armenia). Hennes has decided to spend more of his time in Armenia to ensure the success of his venture. So, despite years of pushing east, Hennes is finally pointing his compass back to his ancestral land. ■

Gevorg Sargsyan is the conductor of the Chinese Girls' School String Ensemble in Singapore, as well as a trustee of the St. Gregory Church.



Puzzle Pieces to the Past

Historical facts, finds, and figures that bring the Armenian legacy in Asia to life

By **LIZ CHATER**

Any Armenian today visiting the Asian world may be surprised to stumble upon clues and signs pointing to the presence of a once-prosperous and influential Diaspora that existed long before the dispersion of Armenian survivors after the Genocide of 1915.

These oft-forgotten communities, built by wealthy merchants

who resettled in Asia during the Silk Road period of the 16th and 17th centuries, left artifacts, ruins, documents, and other historical residue to describe the power and respect they once enjoyed in mainstream society, while remaining true to their Armenian identity and Christian faith. Later settlers to the region also made an indelible mark in business, culture and civic life.

Street Signs

Whether by coincidence or design, there are three Armenian churches in India—Kolkata, Dhaka and Chennai—with the same address of No.2 Armenian Street. This suggests the presence of Little Armenias in big cities of Southeast Asia. Each church was erected on the site of an Armenian cemetery.



Sir Paul's Prized Portrait

In the 1920s Sir Paul Chater attempted to purchase the miniature portrait of King George III that had been presented to his great-grandfather Agha Catchick Arrakiel in recognition of his philanthropic good deed. Unfortunately Sir Paul died before he could secure the painting. It is now in the possession of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

Prison Reform

In 1789, Catchick Arrakiel famously released a total of 157 prisoners in debtors' jail in Kolkata by paying all their outstanding debts. It was a grand gesture to celebrate the good news that England's King George III had recovered from his insanity.



The Araratian Library

Located at the Armenian College and Philanthropic Academy in Kolkata, the Library was founded in April 1828. By 1843, its archives had grown significantly, containing over 1,000 precious and rare Armenian manuscripts.



Lost Church of Myanmar

Hidden in the rubble of a church ruin is perhaps the most obscure sign of the Armenian presence dating back to the 18th century—the long abandoned and forgotten Catholic church in Thanlyin, Myanmar. Inside the ruin is a single Armenian tombstone. Dedicated to the Virgin Mary, the church was commissioned by a wealthy Armenian merchant Nikoghosi de Aguilar and his wife Margaret in memory of their son Agatt who passed away in 1750. The church was erected in 1749-50 A.D. by Monseigneur Nerini under the auspices of the second Vicar Apostolic of the cities of Ava and Pegu. He was member of the Barnabite Mission, a Catholic brotherhood that worked in Pegu in the 1800's.



Dispossessed Treasures

While the official stone of the Armenian Holy Nazareth Church in Kolkata, India was laid in 1707, the church registers only start at 1793 due to a power struggle among three church wardens of the Kolkata church. One of them took the earlier pre 1793 registers home and they were never recovered. Moreover, when the church in Surat closed for good in 1861, due to a dwindling community, the Wardens of Bombay took possession of all the Surat church's sacred books, vessels, and vestments that were transported to Bombay for preservation. Among them was a manuscript of an Armenian-language bible written in Surat in 1658, as well as an old chasuble (shoorjar) belonging to the church. The year 1782 is beautifully embroidered on it in gold thread.



National Flower

Singapore's national flower was bred by horticulturalist Agnes Joaquim. Born Ashkhen Hovakimian to a family of Armenian merchants, Joaquim hybridized the Singapore orchid in the 1880s. Known for its resilience, *Vanda Miss Joaquim* was the world's first cultivated orchid hybrid and is now found all over other tropical countries, especially popular in Hawaii. For her pioneering work, Agnes Joaquim was inducted into the Singapore Women's Hall of Fame in 2015. Hovakimian's family was well-known in Singapore. Her maternal grandfather, Isaiah Zachariah, was one of the members of Singapore's first Chamber of Commerce, formed in 1837.

Raffles Hotel

The Sarkies Brothers, illustrious Armenian hoteliers, opened the Raffles Hotel in 1887. Named for the British founder of Singapore Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, it is the oldest and most iconic hotel in the country. Among its famous guests: Charlie Chaplin; Jean Harlow; Rudyard Kipling; Joseph Conrad; and Elizabeth Taylor to name a few. On its centennial in 1987, the hotel was declared a national monument.

EASTERN AND ORIENTAL HOTEL, PENANG.



Armenian Churches Lost and Found

The evidence of Armenian life across the Silk Road regions can be found in the many churches that were built by wealthy Armenian families for the sake of Armenian settlers or for their own personal use. Some have long disappeared, others stand in ruins, and a few survive today, long after the communities have vanished.

Church Location

Agra	Built
Surat	1562
Lahore	1579
Saidabad*	1656
Chinsurah*	1665
Holy Nazareth Church, Kolkata*	1695
Chennai*	1707
Delhi	1712
Dhaka*	1713
Bombay*	1781
Gwalior	1796
Batavia (Djakarta)	1825
Singapore*	1831
Rangoon*	1835
Holy Trinity Church Tangra, Kolkata*	1862
St. Gregory the Illuminator, Kolkata*	1867
Harbin, China	1906
Soerabaia	1923
	1927

* Still standing



Surat, 1579

Two Sheriffs of Kolkata

During the 19th century, two Armenians were appointed to the post of Sheriff in the large city of Kolkata, India. The first non-European to be appointed Sheriff of Kolkata in 1866 was Seth Arratoon Aparcar, a son of the founder of the shipping firm Aparcar & Co of Bombay and Kolkata. The Aparcars had migrated to India from Isfahan in 1795.

The second was Phillipus Astwa Chatoor Cavorke, appointed in 1869. Known more commonly as P.A. Chater, he also served as a regular magistrate and justice of the peace, in addition to being a court interpreter. He translated documents from Bengali, Portuguese, and Armenian to English for admission to court proceedings.

Armenian Translates First Bible in Chinese

In 1822, Professor Hovhannes Ghazarian, an Armenian born and educated in Macau, became the first person to translate the Holy Bible to Chinese. His translations are widely recognized as the first known complete Chinese print version of the Holy Scriptures.



The Straits Times

One of the oldest and most widely read newspaper in Singapore, *The Straits Times* was founded by Armenian merchant Catchick Moses (Movsessian). When a fellow Armenian Martyrose Aparcar ran into financial trouble after ordering a printing press from England to launch a newspaper, Moses stepped in and the first edition of *The Straits Times* came out on July 15, 1845.



St. Raphael's Roman Catholic Church

The Indian-Armenian British MP

Alexander Raphael Esq., was a Catholic Armenian from Chennai, India who served as the first Roman Catholic Sheriff of London. In 1847, he was elected to British Parliament—the first Armenian ever to hold the title of British MP, representing St. Albans in Hertfordshire, England. He is credited as the creator and builder of the town of Surbiton in Surrey, in which he built the St. Raphael's Roman Catholic Church in Kingston Surrey as his personal chapel on the vast estate at Thames Ditton. For all his Britishness, Raphael's Coat of Arms depicted Mt. Ararat in the crest, an insignia still in use by the Savile family today.



1



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5

Telltale Tombs

1 Son of Julfa: The inscription of this 17th-century Armenian's tomb at Surat says: *This is the tomb of Kalandar, the son of Phanoos Kalandar of Julfa, who departed this life on Saturday, the 6th day of March 1695.*

2 Sookias' Wife: Perhaps the most well known of the oldest Christian tombstones is situated at the Armenian Church in Kolkata. A modern-day plaque in English placed there in 1971 rests upon an 18th-century intricately carved stone, bearing an inscription and date of 1630. *"This is the tomb of Rezabeebeh, the wife of the late charitable Sookias, who departed from this world to life eternal on the 21st day of Nakha in the year 15."*

Rezabeebah's tombstone uses the Calendar of Azaria, also known as the "small" calendar, which is based on the 21st day of Nakha (March). It was invented by Catholicos Azaria (of Old Julfa) in the 16th century and formally instituted in 1616 to replace the traditional Greater Armenian Calendar which began in 552 CE. To compute Azaria dates, one adds 1615 to the Azaria year for all dates after March 21 (the beginning of the year) and 1616 to dates before March 21. Thus Azaria year 75 would correspond to 1690 (1615 + 75). It should be noted that Julfan merchants, and, especially priests, often employed both calendars.

3 Armenian Cemetery Markers: Inside the Roman Catholic church of Our Lady of Rosary, at Tejgaon, two and half miles from Dhaka, on the Dhaka-Mymensingh Road, built in 1677, there are some old graves of Armenians who died in Dhaka between 1714 and 1795. The oldest of these markers has an inscription in Armenian characters, which translates: *"1714 This is the tomb of repose where the merchant Avetis son of Ghazar of Yerevan is interred. May Christ make him worthy of his sight upon his second coming. In the year 1163 [+551=1714] and of the small calendar 99 [+1615=1714] on the fifth day of the month of Ghamar [July 23]."*

4 Khojah's Milestone: Described by some as a milestone in shape, this tombstone of Khojah Margar, dated 1663, is one in a handful of the oldest Armenian graves in Chennai, India. It sits at the foot of a large flight of stone steps leading to the Little Mount Catholic Church of Our Lady of Good Health.

5 The Mausoleum of Agra: In his writings, Mesrobp Seth described the Martyrose Chapel as "... not built of marble, like the world-famed Taj, [it] is nevertheless the oldest Christian structure in Northern India. It was erected in 1611 at the old Armenian Cemetery."

Irish-built Armenian Church

The first Christian church in Singapore built in 1835 with funds raised by the Armenian communities in Singapore, Kolkata, and Java, the Armenian Apostolic Church of St. Gregory the Illuminator was designed by Irish architect George D. Coleman. The church was recognized as a national monument by the Singapore National Heritage Board in 1973.





Branching Out

How the digital revolution is regrowing our Armenian family trees

By **PAUL VARTAN SOOKIASIAN**

In 2013, the trajectory of the life of Kansas City resident Tracy Keeney would forever change when she discovered an old shoebox hiding in the back of her late grandmother's closet. Armenian on her mother's side, Keeney never lived in, nor even near, an Armenian community. All she really knew about her heritage revolved around her great-grandparents being the sole Genocide survivors in their families. Though her mother attempted to trace her family tree over the years, she never found anything useful. The photo in the shoebox changed all that.

Peering into the box for the first time together, mother and daughter carefully pulled out a collection of photographs that appeared to be from the late 19th or early 20th century, based on the traditional Armenian clothes some of the subjects were wearing. Keeney asked her mother if she recognized any of the people. One "I don't know" followed another. The nameless ancestors captivated Keeney. Who could they have been? Did they survive the Genocide? And how, after so much time and so many miles from home, could their names be known again?

One photograph in particular caught Keeney's attention. A family portrait seemingly taken in the 1920s, possibly in

the United States, pictured two sharply dressed parents and their six beautiful children. "To this day, I still can't really put into words what I felt," says Keeney, "but the way that picture seemed to draw me in, it was as if the mother's eyes were calling to me—"Find me."

And so she set off to do just that.

The human preoccupation with blood lineage is as fundamental as the Old Testament's Book of Genesis, in which successive generations of ancestors of the Bible's main characters are exhaustively accounted for, thus setting the founda-

tion of society with family at its core. As such, it should come as no surprise that the advent of the digital age has ignited a global revival in the search for one's roots—otherwise known as genealogy,

the study of family trees.

With instant online access to detailed records from archives dating back centuries, the questions of "Who am I and how did I get here?" have never been more relevant or urgent. This is all the more so for persons and groups whose family portraits have been torn to pieces due to wars, natural disasters, mass migrations, genocide, and dispersions, as well as destruction of official documents by governments intent on misappropriating privately owned land and other property.

Curious Armenians like Keeney have many questions about their ancestral past. Often, quietly from their own homes,



Inset: *Armenian Christian illustrated manuscript showing the genealogy of Jesus Christ, 14th century.*

Keeney at her Kansas City, MO, home with the intriguing family photo she discovered in 2013, setting her off on the journey of a lifetime.

painstaking process as each leaf is reattached to its rightful branch, filling in the foliage of our family trees, the home of our roots. Simply put, reconstructing a family tree to include the generations before these Genocide survivors can be challenging, even in the digital age.

For Armenians with roots in the United States around the time of the Genocide, online genealogical databases such as the Ancestry.com or the free FamilySearch.org can be a helpful first step. These web sites, along with advanced Google searches, helped Keeney use the names of her great-grandparents' siblings to find their marriage announcements and obituaries, which named not only their children, but also their grandchildren.

Simply entering a last name might bring up everything from the original ship manifest that brought one's ancestor to the U.S, military enlistment records from World War I and II, and census records of all Americans through 1940 to birth and death records. Even for those with an existing family tree passed down through the generations, primary resources such as these will very likely add an impressive level of detail to one's information, even revealing previously unknown ancestors.

For searches outside of the United States, especially in countries in the Middle East, Europe, and Armenia, FamilySearch.org offers many collections of images taken from archives that can reveal important information. For example, the database contains thousands of



they are not only deciphering their family histories, but also creating the networks and organizing the resources by which other Armenians can establish connections with their long-lost family members. Some are even uncovering a storied heritage they never knew existed. Through technological advances unthinkable mere decades ago, the veil concealing Armenian family histories is being lifted, revealing information with compelling implications for the future.

For the Armenian Nation, the genealogical movement is driven largely by the work of Armenian hobbyists, scientists, amateur sleuths, and dogged detectives, as well as the curious and reawakened worldwide. The quest to retrace family bloodlines in the information age presents a unique opportunity to restore the torn pages of the long and winding story of the Armenian people.

"Not long ago, we assumed the ability to find lost relatives had disappeared forever with time and the deaths of our ancestors, many whose stories died with them. However, technology has made reclaiming our past possible in ways we never imagined," remarked George Aghjayan, one of the most active thought

leaders in the Armenian genealogy community. "The key to unlocking these lost relationships has been within us the whole time."

Leaves in the Wind

For many Armenians, there is another important question in mind: Who came before 1915? The profound understanding of the scale of destruction brought on by the Genocide of 1915 that unraveled

"Not long ago we assumed the ability to find lost relatives had disappeared forever with time and the deaths of our ancestors, many whose stories died with them. However, technology has made reclaiming our past possible in ways we never imagined."

—GEORGE AGHJAYAN

indigenous communities across historical Armenia and Ottoman Turkey can be at once haunting and daunting. With Armenia divided between three empires at war, searching for these ancestors and identifying their names can be a

records from the Armenian National Archives, including photos of Armenians who repatriated to Soviet Armenia during the 1920s-1940s. One particularly interesting list details Armenian Genocide survivors from the village of Arabkir in



DNA testing companies such as 23andMe regularly update their algorithms to identify Armenians more accurately.

Turkey who sought refuge in Soviet Armenia, forming a community on the outskirts of Yerevan called Nor Arabkir—now part of Yerevan's Komitas district. Many from this village also immigrated to the United States, but, due to the Iron Curtain, communications between the two communities were rare. Such records bridge the gap by almost a century.

The Armenian Genome

Luckily, with the advent of commercial DNA testing, one vial of saliva or a quick cheek swab can unlock secrets lost to time, violence, and political repression. Though this technology is still in its relative infancy, and there are many misconceptions surrounding what it can and cannot do, it has proven to be a useful tool in reaching past the Genocide, resulting in reuniting family members.

While advertising campaigns famously herald these tests as a way to determine the exact ethnic profile of an individual, that is actually their least useful feature for genealogists. Calculations made to assign ethnicities are based on algorithms of previous DNA research, which in the case of Armenians, is very limited. Major websites such as AncestryDNA and 23andMe continue to update their algorithms to identify Armenians more accurately. Until very recently, an Armenian's DNA report would not only trace back ancestors from the Caucasus and Middle East, but often inaccurately report a percentage of ancestors from Greece, Italy, and locations in Europe with populations of Ashkenazi Jews.

What is less publicized is that these tests also reveal how closely someone is related to others in their database, going back hundreds of years. Such data is far more helpful to genealogists but, again, the data has to exist to be matched.

Due to the loss and destruction of untold volumes of documents detailing Armenian life before the Genocide, and given that most official Ottoman censuses remain classified by the Turkish government, many Armenians hit dead ends within a generation or two prior to the Genocide. But with the state of technology advancing at an ever faster pace, there's no telling what the future

will hold in revealing our ancestral past.

Until then, finding out whose shoulders we stand on as descendants of an ancient nation requires time, patience, and a special calling, which a handful of individuals and groups are providing to the public as volunteers. Armed with an arsenal of digitized documents, personal stories, and DNA matches, Armenians are growing a branch of genealogy all their own.



Texas Homecoming

One of the least likely places one would expect to find multiple generations of Armenian ancestry is rural Texas. Yet a long line of native-born Texans turn out to be descendants of an Armenian named Hachadoor Donigian, who migrated to America in 1882 from Geyve (Orta Koy) in the kaza of Ismet. Thanks to social media and genealogy technology, members of the Donigian family tree have been able to explore their ethnic roots, learn more about their ancestor's journey, and connect with their Armenian identity.

According to descendant Ava Henry, Hachadoor Donigian was the patriarch of the first complete Armenian family unit to immigrate to the U.S., where he promptly started a chain of migration to Texas. These Armenians were offered free or cheap land. They became farmers, cotton ginnermen, merchants, and leaders of the community.

Many of their ancestors settled in Waller County, in southern Texas,

learned English, made their fortunes, then migrated to other regions of the country where other successful Armenians resided.

In July 2017, 120 descendants of Donigian attended their first "Armenian Homecoming" event. In April 2019 (above), they held a second reunion, this time open to all Armenians looking to celebrate their ancestors and heritage.

Henry stressed that the Armenian Genealogy Facebook group, and especially Mark Arslan's Armenian Immigration Project, have been invaluable in revealing this remarkable ancestral immigration story. Several family members had their DNA tested to further discover far-flung relations. Ancestry and FamilySearch have helped in identifying descendants of the ancestors that had left Waller County for opportunities elsewhere. Some of these new leaves in the Donigian family tree attended the 2019 event, extending the ties that bind.



Digital Detectives

The new generation of Armenian genealogists

At the forefront of today's Armenian genealogical movement are many unsung heroes who have taken it upon themselves to collect and transcribe historical Armenian records and deliver them to the masses. Most are hobbyists with other professions and volunteers who have made it their life's work to give Armenian family history access, accuracy, and meaning to successive generations. While not all of the leaders and innovators involved in solving the mysteries of our family histories are accounted for in this survey, the profiles herein are instructive as to how genealogy can change our understanding of ourselves, our families, and the stories that write the wider history of Armenians through time. With every breakthrough, connection, and discovery, they enrich the Armenian identity, both personally and collectively.



The Technovator

Mark Arslan
Cary, North Carolina
Armenian Immigration Project

Some of the most curious and determined researchers of family trees are

those who are of mixed ancestry. Mark Arslan is one such enthusiast, a second generation Armenian-American (one quarter Armenian through his paternal grandfather), who began his journey at age 11 to become one of the leading pioneers of Armenian genealogy in the digital age. There is poetic symmetry in the fact that someone so dedicated to cultivating family trees coincidentally earned a degree in forestry from Oregon State University.

His enchantment with genealogy began at age 16, when Arslan took a self-study computer programming course and realized that this technology could be used to organize his data. Arslan, who went on to enjoy a successful 35-year career as an IBM sales executive, created his first piece of genealogy software in 1973, which allowed him to research projects of his own. He studied

microfilm reels of old census records and wrote letters to elderly relatives to learn of his own family history.

By the 1990s, the internet gave Arslan the impetus to engage with newly emerging web resources; in particular, early online forums revolutionized how he could connect with people and exchange information at a speed never before seen. About a decade later, the online integration of the Ellis Island ship manifests proved to be a breakthrough for him. After finding his own relatives in these records—his grandfather had arrived in the United States from Keghi, Erzurum in 1906—he expanded to researching all immigrants from Keghi and uploaded spreadsheets of information from which others could benefit. This was the modest start of something huge.

By the mid-2000s, as the internet's capabilities grew, he broadened his scope from Keghi to include all Armenian immigrants to the U.S. and Canada prior to 1930, inspired by Robert Mirak's and Isabel Kaprielian Churchill's works on Armenian immigration to the two countries. Far beyond Ellis Island, there were over a dozen active seaports processing Armenians at the time, so Arslan created his own online portal with data captured from these ship manifest images. Going live with 20,000 entries, the Armenian Immigration Project was launched in 2011.

Today, the website goes beyond immigration. It integrates numerous other primary sources, including naturalization records, censuses, military and vital records such as births, deaths, and marriages, even transcriptions of post-Genocide newspaper listings of survivors searching for lost relatives in hopes of reuniting with them at the end of World War I. The project includes abstracts with citations of over 133,000 primary records with 1,000 to 2,000 more added each month.

While mainly useful to American-Armenians, the data is so expansive it also accounts for persons from every corner of historical Armenia. Other ingenious functions are the grouping of surnames with variations in spelling and the ability to sort records by many variables, including birth place, destination address, and surname of the person being joined in America. As a result, a researcher with ancestry from Sivas (Sepastia) for example, can search the

database for every immigrant born there. This cannot be done through the Ellis Island database nor any other website.

Today, Arslan is a main figure in the Armenian Genealogy Facebook group, using his database to assist members with their family history questions and to support them in their search. He has helped uncover entire lineages, identifying previously unknown half-siblings

would stumble upon a great-great-great-great-grandfather with an Armenian name. It turned out Liz Chater was Armenian.

That fortuitous first trip would serve as the catalyst for nearly two decades of intensive research into the rich, unexpected and often unexplored Armenian history of Southeast Asia. Having pieced together her family tree and solved the

“Before starting my search, I was in no-man’s land. Doing this work, I discovered family, a way of life, a country, a people I didn’t know about.”

—LIZ CHATER

and even tracking down biological parents. He is hopeful that he has inspired a community that will grow and evolve in the future, with an intimate understanding of their ethnic past.



The Researcher

Liz Chater

London, United Kingdom

Chater Genealogy

In a quiet hall of the British Library in early 2000, Liz Chater sat mesmerized by the thin, time-stained cursive of Armenian letters at her fingertips. She was eager to trace back some of her family history, armed with the little information her mother could give her and her father's mysterious surname. “There was nothing in my world at the time that indicated to me that I was anything but British,” Chater admitted. Yet, on that first trip, she would trace back five generations of Chaters to Dhaka, Bangladesh—and, soon after,

mystery of her Chater ancestry, she has used her curiosity to help others in their search. From Mumbai to Agra, Chennai to Kolkata, she has delved into the annals of each city, following the Armenians that made their way ever further east through the centuries.

Painstaking as it is to transcribe 17th-century wills or photograph hundreds of ancient graves, Chater pored over these records in an effort to reconstruct the lives of little-known Armenian diasporas by documenting and publishing her findings online. With no formal academic background as a historian, she pursues countless individual stories at a time, occasionally relying on the insights of a network of dedicated scholars, researchers, and hobbyists. Her mantra breaks through any walls she hits along the way: “If this were easy,” she smiles, “someone would have already done it.”

Fate scattered Chater's Armenian ancestors so far east they managed to avoid the Ottoman tyranny that would culminate in the Armenian Genocide. The knowledge of the diasporas they represent diversifies the Armenian experience, and the individual genealogical research that Chater performs chips away at the monolithic conception of Armenian history and identity. A stateless people for centuries, Armenians thrived in every civilization they settled in. Now, these histories are being recovered, along with much more.

“Before starting my search, I was in no-man's land,” Chater reflects. “Doing this work, I discovered family, a way of life, a country, a people I didn't know about.”



The Redeemer

George Aghjayan
Worcester, Massachusetts
Hidden Armenians

While DNA testing might seem like a fun way to learn whether you are more English or Swedish, or if those old family stories about a Native American ancestor are true, the stakes and possibilities go far beyond what those ubiquitous TV commercials might lead one to believe. For Armenians, it has, in the words of George Aghjayan, one of the leading proponents of Armenian DNA testing, the possibility to “bring ancestors back from the dead.”

Like most Armenians, Aghjayan’s family lost numerous relatives to the Genocide or was separated during the deportation caravans sent out in waves across the Ottoman Empire. Even those who might have left as a group were subject to kidnapping and other means of separation, never to be seen again by their surviving relatives and presumed dead. In reality, not all of these lost relatives had actually perished, as the phenomenon of “hidden Armenians” surfacing in modern-day Turkey shows.

Aghjayan would make frequent trips to the region known as Western Armenia, and meet these “remnants of the sword” as they have long been called in Turkey, despite Turkish government denials that such mass killings ever took place. Those aware of relatives that survived over 100 years ago rarely knew more than their Armenian ancestors’ first names, making identification impossible. Thus, Aghjayan became involved with the Armenian DNA Project through FamilyTreeDNA, appreciating its capacity to make connections via genetic markers. How much

DNA is shared between two people can determine their approximate relationship, so the more Armenians in the database, the more sets of data by which to find potential matches. Aghjayan hoped that this new technology might reconnect Armenians that had long been denied their true identities. What he didn’t expect is just how close to home it would reach.

Just about every Armenian who joins

was clear, “another sister” referred to a lost sister of his great-grandmother who had survived the Genocide unbeknownst to his family, likely the mother of his DNA match.

He and the match eagerly reconnected, sharing photos and family stories and making plans to meet in person. As Aghjayan sums up: “The people in this story remain victims of genocide, but they no longer are tallied amongst

“Family trees help preserve Armenian life and culture. Every Armenian is a piece of one huge jigsaw puzzle, which we now have the tools to solve together.”

—JANET ACHOUKIAN ANDREPOULOS

the DNA Project will immediately match with at least some fourth or fifth cousins, people who share a common ancestor seven or eight generations back, which is further than most Armenians can trace their families. While this information is intriguing at face value, it is not as helpful in rebuilding a family tree when it is impossible to make specific connections. Aghjayan was in the same position until 2015, when a month after receiving his DNA results, the surprise he was waiting for arrived—a match with a first or second cousin.

Not only that, Aghjayan’s possible cousin was living in Turkey, someone obviously unknown to his family. So Aghjayan e-mailed him immediately. The reply was shocking.

The mother of the DNA match was born Armenian in the village of Maden, the same town as Aghjayan’s great-grandmother. The newfound cousin recounted the story: Two sisters were on the deportation march when a cavalry officer decided to marry the older one. She agreed on the condition that her younger sister could live with them as well. This sister would later marry a Muslim man, and one of her sons was Aghjayan’s DNA match. The story rang all too true because the names of the parents of these orphaned girls matched those of Aghjayan’s father’s great-grandparents. They were on to something.

Reviewing his notes from conversations with relatives 25 years prior about his great-grandmother Nevart, two words Aghjayan had jotted down stood out: “another sister.” The DNA evidence

the dead. The 1.5 million has been reduced by two.”

In subsequent travels to the region, Aghjayan arranged for other hidden Armenians to be tested to add them to the database, an initiative he plans to continue. Says Aghjayan, “Every reconnection is a reclamation of what was lost.



The Reuniter

Janet Achoukian Andreopoulos
Phoenix, Arizona
Armenian DNA Project

Janet Achoukian Andreopoulos was introduced to DNA testing through the Armenian DNA Project, founded by Mark Arslan and co-administered by Peter Hrechdakian, a businessman from Belgium and Hovann Simonian, a political scientist from Switzerland. The site recognizes the lack of Armenian participation in commercial genetic databases and solicits

Armenians to submit their DNA to build a robust sample size. Not only did she urge her father to take the test to help expand the site's database of Armenian DNA but she also started a campaign encouraging others to take the test. She was particularly interested in finding people with roots from her ancestral village of Evereg, having already created a traditional family tree of everyone she could find from there. Using DNA, she was able to validate some of those known connections while discovering new ones. For example, two of her childhood Armenian friends had grown up together in New York but had no idea they were related until taking the test.

Andreopoulos, despite the responsibilities of a full-time job and mothering two teenage sons, volunteered to serve as a co-administrator at the Armenian DNA Project, helping others learn their genetic history and discover long-lost relatives. Like the other volunteer genealogists profiled, Andreopoulos spends numerous hours a week through platforms such as the Armenian Genealogy Facebook group helping others looking to solve family mysteries or to piece together their family story.

Sometimes, an American or European will come to Andreopoulos with their DNA test results saying they had no idea they were Armenian, thus creating a whole new category of "hidden Armenians" beyond those in Turkey. Due to a variety of reasons, such as being adopted, being the child of an adoptee, or numerous other cases of hidden or mistaken paternity, DNA tests are revealing their Armenian identity and all the questions that come with this new information. Besides helping them discover their biological families, Andreopoulos has also helped these new-found Armenians connect with their ethnicity. One such woman whom she helped connect with newly discovered Armenian relatives signed up for Armenian language classes. Another woman was able to reunite with her biological father and they attended Armenian church services together.

One such case is that of Catie Webster. Her mother, who was adopted at birth, had long suspected that she was Armenian based on her features, but never had confirmation until taking a DNA test. When the results came back, it confirmed her intuition, but there were also biological Armenian relatives with whom they could potentially establish a line of communication. Eventually, Webster connected with Andreopoulos, who was able to put her in touch with close biological relatives.

"This effort is part of our identity as Armenians," says Andreopoulos. "Family trees help preserve Armenian life and culture. Every Armenian is a piece of one huge jigsaw puzzle, which we now have the tools to solve together."



The Networker

Tracy Keeney
Kansas City, Missouri
Armenian Genealogy Facebook Group

As described in the introduction to this article, Tracy Keeney's story deeply resonates with a unique group of Armenians—those have been effectively isolated from their Armenian pasts, who then suddenly discover a connection that spurs them into action to explore their ethnic identity by connecting with family members.

Keeney, whose mother is Armenian, was well aware of her Armenian heritage, but, growing up in a military family, the

constant relocations across the United States prevented exposure to Armenian community life. Nevertheless, after finding a mysterious photo in her grandmother's closet, her curiosity led her to find 97 names to pursue further, reaching out to as many as she could with the photograph. In less than 10 days, Keeney's phone began to ring off the hook. Among the first callers was a woman who had grown up with the same family portrait displayed in her home. One of the children depicted was the caller's father. She also recognized the others as her grandparents, aunts, and uncles. The caller turned out to be the granddaughter of Keeney's great grandmother's older brother.

Today, Keeney is the founder and administrator of the largest Facebook Group on Armenian genealogy—with over 10,000 members from across the globe actively engaged in collaborating with fellow members to solve mysteries of their familial past. Keeney founded the group in late 2013, starting with just her friends and family. She soon found herself spending hours a day sorting through the stories of hundreds more seeking to join. "It was wonderfully strange how so many of us who had felt so isolated, like we were the only branch of our families that survived, were discovering that we weren't the only ones. Our families were much bigger than we knew," remarks Keeney.

Online dialogues sparked the next step: organizing a global conference offline, so that genealogy enthusiasts could gather in person, become acquainted, swap stories, and guide others to break down those

Forerunners of Armenian Genealogy

Two decades before the internet, three pioneering Armenian-Americans—Nephi K. Kezerian, George Aposhian, and Audrey Megerian—began an odyssey motivated by their close proximity to the largest genealogical family history archive in the world, the LDS Library in Salt Lake City, Utah. Established in 1894 by the Church of Latter Day Saints (aka Mormons), by 1938 the Library had amassed over 1.5 million rolls of microfilm from across the planet with an International Genealogical Index listing millions of persons of all ethnicities with birth, christening, marriage, and death certificates, as well as

Federal census and Social Security death records.

With this treasure trove of data at hand, the three Armenians launched the Armenian Genealogical Society, a non-profit intent on locating and preserving both official and unofficial Armenian records, all of which they copied to microfilm when permitted. In the 1990s, they traveled to Armenia's National Archives to find previously inaccessible data. They had covered 24 countries and collected over 238 reels of microfilm by the time they closed their doors, passing the torch to a new generation of tech-savvy, family-tree enthusiasts.

brick walls in their family sagas. The first conference was held in Watertown, Massachusetts, in April 2016; while the organizers had estimated 80 people would attend, over 300 arrived, from as far as California and the United Kingdom. It is now an annual event, held in Detroit, Michigan, in 2017, and Ramapo, New Jersey, in 2018. The 2019 conference will be held this autumn in Los Angeles, while smaller workshops are also held periodically in other parts of the country. As Keeney reflects, “Even though it’s generations later, the impact of finding family members, even those you didn’t even know existed before, is something that can only be truly understood by those who’ve experienced it.”



The Scientist

Prof. Levon Yepiskoposyan
Yerevan, Armenia
The ArmGenia Project

One of the pre-eminent names in Armenian DNA studies, Prof. Levon Yepiskoposyan, is an academic from the Institute of Molecular Biology at the Armenian Academy of Sciences whose passion for Armenian genealogy has taken on new dimensions in its application. Through his leadership, the ArmGenia project was established to study Armenians around the world, based on their origins in historical Armenia and Ottoman Turkey. From this perspective, the mission has implications for national security.

“By collecting someone’s DNA, we are also gathering that of their ancestors. It’s a common misperception that Armenians are relative newcomers to the region, which is exploited to disenfranchise us of our historical claim to these lands. We need physical evidence to refute this with

internationally verified studies to demonstrate the presence of Armenians in this region. If and when the DNA is very similar, it proves that Armenians are ancient inhabitants of the land and not recent invaders as Azerbaijan falsely asserts in order to invalidate the Armenian claim to

no more than 50–100 kilometers distance from each other,” Prof. Yepiskoposyan points out.

To this end, ArmGenia has charged supporters from the Diaspora, such as Kevork Khrimian of New York, with the specific task of collecting samples from

“If and when the DNA is very similar, it proves that Armenians are ancient inhabitants of the land and not recent invaders as Azerbaijan falsely asserts in order to invalidate the Armenian claim to it.”

—PROF. LEVON YEPISKOPOSYAN

it,” Yepiskoposyan notes, referring specifically to the Artsakh question. In fact, this longstanding issue gave him the impetus to organize an archeological dig there to find traces of ancient Armenian DNA.

Prof. Yepiskoposyan goes on to say that the participation of all Armenians is essential. “The more Armenians who provide their DNA samples, the more precise the results will be. With each generation we lose this original genetic information as it becomes more and more mixed, so we need to act now. We are preserving this DNA data for future generations of scientists who will have more powerful equipment to extract even more information from these samples.

He also notes that “current research shows that Armenian DNA was isolated to itself for 4,000 years, so we can test if any of the many invaders through the region left genetic traces in our gene pool over that period. So far, there appears to be very little of this. It has very profound ethnic and psychological meaning for us.”

The project, while based in Armenia, has an international scope. The professor explains: “We need the DNA of western as well as eastern Armenians, and to test westerners you must go to the Diaspora, specifically the elderly, who can trace their bloodline to just one village. Their testimonies and their DNA samples are urgent, as time is obviously running out.”

To date, most of the data has been collected within Armenia. Unlike with other genealogy projects, those who provide DNA samples do not receive reports; they are just populating the database. “What we call mapping is simply collecting data from individuals whose ancestry is traced to a relatively small location within the Armenian homeland—focusing on areas

Armenian clusters along the New England-Mid-Atlantic corridor of the United States. “Most of this segment of the community are in their 80s and typically born in the U.S., but their parents often came from the same cluster of villages in areas such as Sepastia, Kharpert, or Dikranagerd. This population of DNA is quickly being lost as subsequent generations are mixed with Armenians from other areas or non-Armenians, and so we are losing our ability to know the genetic makeup of Armenians from specific villages. The reason why we’re collecting from the U.S. is that western Armenians in a regionally pure form are rare in Armenia, though there are still populations in Armenia which come from places like Van, Mush, and Sassoon, but no further west into the original Armenian homeland.”

ArmGenia aims to map the entire Armenian homeland. “Many people don’t realize that more than half of Armenia’s population are descendants of post-Genocide refugees from places mentioned like Van and Taron. Another large group are the descendants of repatriates from Persia after the Russian conquest of Armenia in the early 1800s. As a result, the population here in Armenia is quite mixed today, just as it is with the younger generations of the Armenian-American population,” says Prof. Yepiskoposyan. “This makes it difficult to get a clear sense of the DNA makeup from most provinces of modern-day Armenia.”

The ultimate goal of ArmGenia is to draw a genetic atlas of historical Armenia to reproduce the rich spatial mosaic of the Armenian gene pool, which originated and flourished for several millennia in the expanse of the Armenian Highland. ■

INTERVIEWS AND PROFILES BY PAUL VARTAN SOOKIASIAN

Starter Guide to Tracing Armenian Family Trees



Searchable Websites

These database websites can be used to start a personalized search by different variables and categories of data, depending on the scope of the searchable content. Some sites are free; others subscription based.*

Free Global Databases

FamilySearch

familysearch.org

Find a Grave

findagrave.com

Subscription or Fee-based Databases with DNA Testing Services

23andMe*

23andme.com

AncestryDNA*

ancestrydna.com

FamilyTreeDNA*

familytreedna.com

MyHeritage*

myheritage.com

Free Armenian-related Databases

Armenian Immigration Project

markarslan.org/ArmenianImmigrants/shiplists.html

Armenian DNA Project of FamilyTreeDNA.org

familytreedna.com/groups/armeniadnaproject/about/background

Chater Genealogy

chater-genealogy.com

Western Armenians

westernarmenia.weebly.com



Networking Opportunities

Collaboration is an important facet of original family-tree research and joining or participating in these networks can yield surprising results through shared stories, exchanging research tips, and finding helpers such as translators.

Armenian Genealogy Facebook Group

facebook.com/groups/armeniangenealogy

Armenian Genealogy Conference

armeniangenealogyconference.com



Contextual Research

These resources offer the genealogical researcher a wealth of contextual background about Armenian life in the pre-genocide period, adding color, nuance, and perspective to one's family stories. In some cases, clues to unsolved family mysteries can be found through archives, oral testimonies, books, photos and newspaper ads, provincial dress and folk crafts, surname derivations, and other cultural items collected, curated, and managed by dedicated specialists.

AGBU Nubar Library

agbu.org/education/library-research-center

Armeniapedia

armeniapedia.org

Armenian National Institute

www.armenian-genocide.org

Dictionary of Armenian Surnames

www.armeniapedia.org/wiki/Introduction_to_Dictionary_of_Armenian_Surnames

Gomidas Institute

www.gomidas.org

Houshamadyan: Ottoman Armenians Project

houshamadyan.org

National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR)

www.naasr.org

Project SAVE

projectsave.org

Zoryan Institute

zoryaninstitute.org



Scientific Projects

The science of Armenian genealogy through DNA testing and innovative research methods can add new dimension to understanding Armenian history, migration patterns, ancient DNA, biology and diseases, and other facets of identity formation and genetics.

ArmGenia

armgenia.am

David Reich Lab/Harvard Medical School

reich.bms.harvard.edu

* AGBU neither endorses nor seeks to promote any subscription-based resources listed herein.



The Roots of Positive Self-Image

The transformative power of family histories

By **NANA SHAKHNAZARYAN**

With the democratization of genealogy research in the digital age, once nameless ancestors suddenly add color and shade to our family portraits. For the first time, this access is allowing us to reimagine our ancestral past beyond the collective experiences of shared traditions, institutions, and an epochal story of national survival. And while the jury may still be out on whether retracing our family trees is an exciting hobby at least or a life-changing personal journey at best, studies over the past decade suggest that knowing our

roots has a profound impact on how we see ourselves and how we live our lives.

Psycho-Social Benefits of Family Stories

“Knowing family history provides a sense of strength and resilience. Even knowing difficult stories can provide strength through a sense of perseverance and community,” says Dr. Robyn Fivush, professor of psychology and associate vice-provost for academic innovation at Emory College in Atlanta, Georgia. “Adolescents who know more stories about their families and know these stories in more elaborate detail show higher levels of self-esteem and fewer behavior

problems than adolescents who know both fewer stories and less detailed stories.”

In her studies, Prof. Fivush focuses on the social construction of autobiographical memory and how certain narratives impact identity and coping. In 2010, she published the study “Do You Know...” *The Power of Family History in Adolescent Identity and Wellbeing*, detailing how knowing a variety of stories about a familial past affects adolescents’ emotional health. Her research substantiates what many have known for generations about sharing family history and grounding the youngest generations with stories of their past.



The Ancestor Effect

Research around genealogy's beneficial effect on those who delve deep into the past and find themselves within its narratives has been reproduced not just with adolescents, but with older subjects. Dr. Peter Fischer and his colleagues at the Universities of Graz, Berlin, and Munich have observed what they have dubbed the "ancestor effect." In their studies, they found that asking subjects to think or write about their recent or distant ancestors led them to perform better on a range of intelligence tests, including both verbal and spatial tasks. Furthermore, they found

that subjects who thought of their ancestors operated more confidently, attempting more answers. The researchers even tested against the hypothesis that positive results were seen in subjects because they were thinking of people in their lives that elicit positive emotions. Subjects in control conditions who were tasked with writing about themselves or close friends before the tests did not display the observable benefits. Interestingly enough, it did not even seem to matter if students were asked to consider negative aspects of their ancestors—the ancestor effect still proved beneficial. "Normally, our ancestors managed to overcome a multitude of personal and societal problems, such as severe illnesses, wars, loss of loved ones, or severe economic declines," Dr. Fischer explains. "When we think about them, we are reminded that humans who are genetically similar to us can successfully overcome a multitude of problems and adversities."

Ancestry.com, the largest for-profit genealogy company in the world with sales to date of 14 million DNA kits globally, refers to research findings like these to appeal to its customers. "Passing down stories about family triumphs and struggles not only has the potential to strengthen a family's bond, it yields so many other benefits," representatives explain. "It turns out, when children learn about their families, they tend to be more self-assured, they experience less anxiety, and they are more resilient."

The Cousin Connection

Whether one goes through a website or does the digging through primary resources

themselves, researching family trees often leads to connecting with living relatives. After all, the deeper the roots reach, the greater the tree grows; the further back generationally one manages to research, the bigger the network of breathing descendants one will find.

Anecdotally, from the innumerable reviews on forums and blogs online, this historical exercise seems to breed interconnectivity, unity, and solidarity; knowing more about ancestors, their cultures, and migrations often redefines family, identity, and community. Newfound relatives can fill in the gaps that tracing known relatives creates. Though some of the stories people uncover are less inspiring than others—finding out an ancestor was particularly cruel as opposed to finding out that they were impressively magnanimous—the diversity of stories cultivates a nuanced understanding of one's ancestry and builds a cohesive family narrative.

For many Armenians, cohesion is a painful affair. One year seems to have a monopoly on the Armenian story: 1915. Tales of sole survivors, orphaned grandparents with adopted surnames, and lineages lost to time still dominate Armenian narratives. "Many second- and even third-generation descendants of survivors themselves feel like orphans: no roots, no relatives, no uncles and great aunts—not by choice, but by force," Dr. Ani Kalayjian, psychotherapist and professor of psychology at Columbia University, asserts. In her decades of extensive research on massive trauma, particularly in relation to the Armenian Diaspora, Kalayjian identifies a non-nuclear family structure as a part of a

*"Adolescents who know
more stories about their families
and know these stories in
more elaborate detail show higher
levels of self-esteem ..."*

—DR. ROBYN FIVUSH

unique inheritance many Armenians recognize in their communities.

Valuing Extended Family

Identifying distant relatives as immediate family, and accepting cousins as siblings, is consistent with the organization of the pre-Genocide patriarchal *gerdastan* (extended family). From research based on the recall of Armenian survivors, Armenian families were organized into multigenerational communal groups of often more than 30 people under one roof. “The pre-Genocide Armenian family structure was formed through generations of family interactions in adaptation to historical conditions of oppression,” Kalayjian explains. “It provided shielding against periodic raids and persecutions, and was often the only available method to maximize the likelihood of a given individual’s survival.” Though the

primary coping methods. “Their emotional links to the family, maintained if and when possible, were other ways Armenians survived, and gained strength and continuity in the midst of the chaos that transpired.”

Though generations separate Armenians from the traumas of the turn of the 20th century, finding family through genealogical research still provides that continuity across generations of ancestors.

In Search of Roots

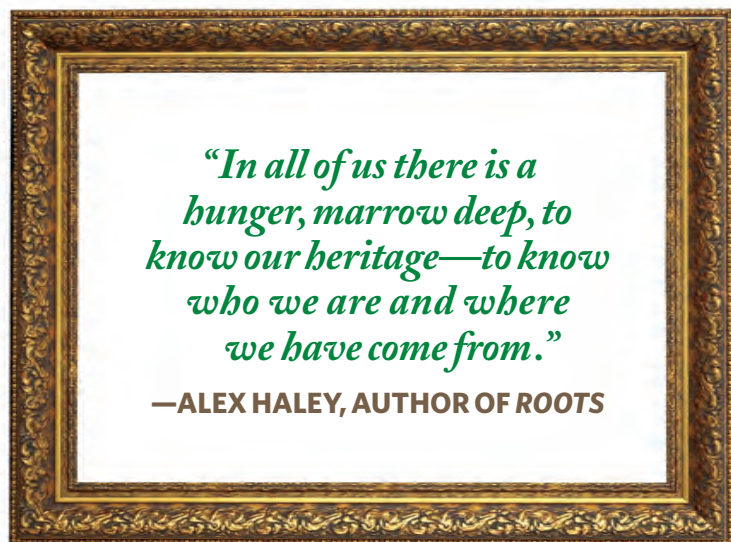
“In all of us there is a hunger, marrow deep to know our heritage—to know who we are and where we have come from,” wrote Alex Haley, author of *Roots: The Saga of an American Family*. “Without this enriching knowledge, there is a hollow yearning. No matter what our attainment in life, there is still a vacuum, an emptiness, and the most disquieting loneliness.” When Haley’s monumental novel was

imagination. “Almost overnight, the tracing of bloodlines, once seen as the privilege of the rich, was suddenly in vogue,” explains historian Barbara Maranzani. “Americans took advantage of many of the tools Haley had used; libraries across the country noted a significant uptick in visitors across all racial and ethnic lines and inquiries for genealogical records at the National Archives increased by a staggering 300 percent.” For millions of Black Americans, *Roots* and Haley’s research offered evidence that tracing ancestry was possible, that access to indigenous African identities was not entirely lost, and that family histories could be contextualized in a larger narrative.

More than four decades after *Roots*, Haley’s words ring true as more and more people look back through generations of ancestors, searching for their heritage. The long-running weekly PBS series “Finding Your Roots” with Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates has also fueled the movement, revealing the family trees of high-profile figures and celebrities from all ethnicities.

The fact that a century after the Armenian Genocide, in locations and generations far from the scene of the crime, the urge to know if someone is from Van or Marash, Sepastia or Dikranagerd, illustrates the yearning to be seen, to be contextualized in a larger narrative, to grieve collectively. “Working with the psychological impact of trauma as a group can restore a sense of reality, a catalyst exploring feelings, and challenging one’s emotions and beliefs,” Dr. Kalayjian asserts. “Groups give an opportunity to talk about and bear witness to the trauma, to grieve, to restructure the assumptive world, and to restore trust.”

Though many Armenians have grown up fiercely proud of their new voices, founding thriving Diaspora communities on almost every continent, the dearth of stories from before the 20th century has created a deafening silence. Yet, over the past two decades, that silence is being disrupted through genealogical research. As records once thought forever lost are being retrieved within seconds and the convenience of DNA testing is connecting long-lost relatives, the Armenian story is becoming ever more specific and nuanced. Details and observations of our family histories erase the emptiness, and, in the process, re-stitch the vast and varied tapestry that is the story of the Armenian people. ■



Genocide ravaged these family units, this structure was internalized and traveled with survivors into the diaspora.

When genealogy research uncovers long-lost relatives, family members that might have once lived under the same roof in the *gerdastan* are united. Not only do new cousins bring new perspectives and nuances to the family narrative, they have the potential to restore a family structure that has long been known to provide emotional and psychological support.

In their study *Recollections of Aged Armenian Survivors of the Ottoman Turkish Genocide*, Dr. Ani Kalayjian and Dr. Siroon Shahinian noted that survivors’ significant reliance on their social context, their families and communities, comprised their

adapted to screen and broadcast across the United States in 1977, it drew an unprecedented estimated 140 million viewers, the largest audience ever for a televised miniseries at the time. A national moment of reckoning, the program was the first time the story of many Black Americans was illustrated in detail, depicting the brutal American history of slavery through one family’s generational experiences.

To write the novel that started it all, Haley visited countless libraries and archives around the world, dedicating more than a decade to researching his own family history. The story he was able to trace inspired a movement, a collective interest in genealogy in the American

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Overview of ancient to modern geography & resources

www.agbu.org/armenia/travel

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An Atlas for the Digital Age

AGBU makes the search for Armenian e-learning tools faster and easier than ever

By LAURA L. CONSTANTINE

The need for speed and connectivity is revolutionizing how Armenians are discovering and enriching their national identity (inclusive of language, history, culture, and heritage). New generations of natively digital beings find their comfort zones in cyberspace, from websites and apps to podcasts, videos, and e-books, not to mention social media.

When AGBU peered into the not-so-distant future of Armenian education, it viewed a world in which multiple generations—from late Boomers down to Generation Alpha or iGeneration (born from 2011-2026)—make sense of their world on phones, tablets, watches, and virtual assistants. And looming over the educational landscape was the prospect of artificial intelligence, with its vast potential to reinvent society by imitating human thought and performing self-learned tasks.

ATLAS by AGBU Maps New Paths to Armenian Education

In parallel, innovative technologies are accelerating growing economies such as in Armenia, infusing perspectives on the Armenian experience with new expression, meaning, and relevance. The challenge was clear: to create a new roadmap for those on an expedition to Armenian heritage by way of cyberspace.

In June 2019, AGBU Central Board

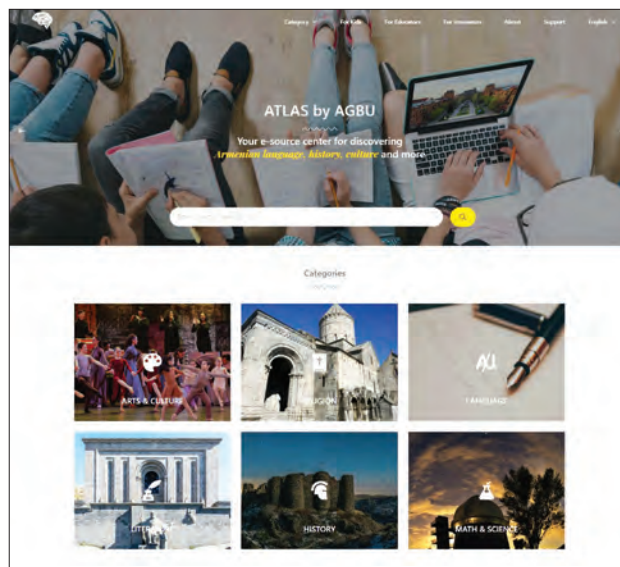
Member and Education Task Force chair Lena Sarkissian of Canada and AGBU Director of Alternative Education Natalie Gabrelian unveiled the result: *ATLAS by AGBU*—the first and only online aggregator dedicated to delivering high-quality e-learning tools relevant to the Armenian experience. Targeted for educators, parents, children, and Armenian enthusiasts at large, the innovative online digital library

AGBU's seminal goals—to uphold the Armenian heritage and provide opportunities for new expressions of identity in every generation. Whether it's embracing all the markers of heritage or only facets, such as music, literature or history, *ATLAS by AGBU* serves up a menu of options.

ATLAS for Educators

At the recent reveal of *ATLAS* at a town hall mostly attended by young representatives of the Armenian community in Montreal, the enthusiasm was palpable as questions were brought to the floor on possible ways *ATLAS* could enhance their Armenian studies curriculum and experiential programs. Benefits such as saving trips to the library, streamlining Google searches among random unvetted sources, or avoiding the temptation of using low-hanging fruit like Wikipedia to frame themes for assignments were just some of the advantages mentioned.

AGBU Alex Manoogian School principal Chahé Tanachian, who is also chair of the AGBU Montreal chapter, weighs in: “Brick and mortar schools worldwide are in a race to upgrade their learning and teaching methods to accommodate natively digitally literate students. *ATLAS by AGBU* is helping us reach the finish line by not only aggregating these e-learning tools



will feature apps, e-books, videos, podcasts, online courses, and websites.

“No doubt the digital revolution has enabled Armenians to better function as one global nation,” explains Sarkissian. “AGBU is democratizing Armenian knowledge so that anyone in the world who identifies as Armenian or celebrates its culture can learn, share, and promote relevant content from one trusted source.” That has big implications for two of

The homepage for ATLAS by AGBU allows users to select from six categories of interests.





Gayane Manukyan (right) has found ATLAS to be an invaluable resource for teaching Armenian language and history to youth and adults.

for quick search results but also ensuring that the content comes from reliable, reputable sources. This allows us to continue meeting the high academic standards on which all AGBU schools stake their reputations.”

Educators can also share their teaching methods and lesson plans with colleagues, parents, and caregivers around the world, downloading teaching e-tools and post-

find to prepare the lesson can be followed up by the student during the week, even while they’re on the go. Sure, we could do it with traditional textbooks. However, since a textbook is just one tool in teaching, and no textbook is ideal, it is important for

“AGBU is democratizing Armenian knowledge so that anyone in the world who identifies as Armenian or celebrates its culture can learn, share, and promote relevant content from one trusted source.”

ing ideas on the dedicated blog that is building a virtual *ATLAS* community “For Educators” to exchange tips on technology, best practices, and novel teaching experiences.

“*ATLAS* really complements the classroom model,” notes Gayane Manukyan, who teaches Armenian language and history to adults and youngsters at St. Gregory the Enlightener Armenian Church in White Plains, NY. “Whatever e-tools I

teachers not to over-rely on textbooks and consider other aids and supplementary materials for the classroom. Moreover, textbooks are going the way of typewriters and landlines, especially for busy, working adults who lead digitally connected lifestyles,” she quips. “By exploring the History section, for example, my students can step back in time with electronic resources focused on fascinating events and historic figures of Armenia.”

ATLAS for Parents and Kids

In a dedicated section “For Kids” users can explore a variety of fun and exciting digital resources catering to the young (and young at heart). The featured e-tools hand-picked from across the Armenian universe make it easy for parents to custom design an Armenian exposure program for their child, perhaps to enhance their formal education at a day, one-day, or Sunday school. Or, for those unable to physically connect with a nearby Armenian church, school, or community center, e-tools can go a long way in home-schooling or enhancing playdates, making learning and playing informative, engaging, and fun, especially for the young Glass Generation, whose glass-fronted devices will be their main medium of communication.

Tamar Hovsepian of New York City was born and raised in Yerevan and is the mother of a four-year-old. “My husband and I are determined to instill a strong Armenian identity in our son. Even though we try to speak only Armenian in the house, we know it’s inevitable that he will fully assimilate before we know it. So every day, after pre-school, I would make a point of teaching him the Armenian language, using flash cards and stickers, reading him hardcover picture books and playing board games we found at Armenian bookstores and Amazon,” explains Hovsepian. “Some engaged him better than others; it was hit or miss.”

Hovsepian adds: “But as soon I downloaded the *Gus on the Go* app I discovered on *ATLAS*, he found his stride and could learn independently. Clearly, he’s a natural on digital so *ATLAS* cuts through the clutter and leads me to choices that I know will

ATLAS will transport the classroom to “The Armenian Highland.”



enhance his exposure to his Armenian heritage. Now it's the first place I turn to find other reliable resources to keep him stimulated with Armenian content."

ATLAS for Innovators

AGBU Director of Alternative Education Natalie Gabrelian, who directs the day-to-day management of the *ATLAS* platform, notes another unique feature of the website. "As technology advances, so do the innovations for spreading quality knowledge in creative and engaging ways. *ATLAS* was purposely designed to welcome a community of contributors to help it expand and grow in capacity, scope and breadth."

Such a strategy calls upon tech companies, pedagogical thought leaders, digital and video creatives, as well as product developers to submit their innovations to *ATLAS* for review. Those cleared for reliability enjoy a free showcase for bringing their product to market and gaining visibility among highly motivated and pre-disposed audiences. Not a developer? *ATLAS* invites professionals, educators, parents, and users at large to submit their favorite educational e-sources for consideration.

Your Trusted Destination for Educational eResources

ATLAS strives to be the go-to destination for e-learning opportunities, and as such, brings together the most innovative technology from reputable and reliable Armenian and non-Armenian names such as the American University of Armenia (AUA), the Eastern and Western Dioceses of the Armenian Church, the Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church, the USC Shoah Foundation, the Near East Foundation, and the Hamazkayin Armenian Educational & Cultural Society.

"We're so excited to have our apps featured on *ATLAS* and to be able to share useful how-to tips with our global community of learners," says Arin Kalousdian, executive manager of the Hamazkayin Central Executive Board's Office in Beirut and project manager for their popular *Lala & Ara* series of apps for children.

Most all featured tools are free of charge and everything housed on the user-friendly platform has been curated by the same alternative learning experts at AGBU that brought such signature firsts as the *Armenian Virtual College (AVC)* for remote language, history, and chess

ATLAS at a Glance

www.agbuatlas.org

With the one-stop online educational resource center that is *ATLAS by AGBU*, the Armenian world in all its dimensions is neatly and intuitively organized for easy navigation. Suitable for all ages, the site can be viewed in English, Eastern Armenian, and Western Armenian.

Access an Array of eTools

- Apps
- e-Books
- Podcasts and Audio Files
- Videos
- Websites and Online Courses


Find Content in Various Languages


- Eastern Armenian (Արմ)
- Western Armenian (Արա)
- English (Eng)
- French (Fra)
- German (Deu)
- Portuguese (Por)
- Russian (Pyc)
- Spanish (Esp)
- Turkish (Tür)


Explore and Share by Visitor Type

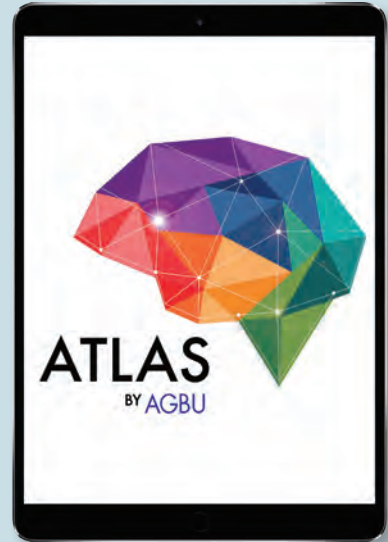
For Kids, For Educators, For Innovators


Search by Category


 **Arts & Culture:** Explore Armenia's rich and unique cultural heritage through music, art, cuisine, holidays, and more!


 **History:** Step back in time with electronic resources focused on fascinating events and historic figures of Armenia.

 **Language:** Take your linguistic skills to the next level with online courses, vocabulary games, dictionaries, and more!



 **Literature:** Find poetry, novels, short stories and other great works from your favorite Armenian authors!

 **Religion:** Learn about Armenian faith through its sacraments, saints, religious holidays, and customs.

 **Math & Science:** Enhance your analytical skills in Armenian with comprehensive electronic math and science resources.

courses, *AVC* multimedia e-books on a wide variety of Armenian themes, and three multilingual signature apps: *Gus on the Go* for teaching children basic Armenian language, *Im Armenia* that introduces the land and historical sites of Armenia to tourists of all ages, and *Armenian Holidays & Traditions* which, in addition to explaining the origins and meaning of religious and national holidays, includes recipes, music, and formal greetings. "It's the ultimate global collaboration that *ATLAS by AGBU* is able to facilitate," notes Gabrelian.

ATLAS by AGBU is the latest in AGBU's Education Innovation, and as one young town-hall audience member Lara Kollokian, a graduate of the Alex Manoogian School and second-year software engineering student at McGill University who also runs the AGBU school's extracurricular robotics program, sums it up best: "After seeing for myself what *ATLAS* has to offer, I think it's a very exciting time to be a young Armenian."

To get started on your digital journey, go to agbuatlas.org. ■



Thinking Big in Brazil

AGBU FOCUS 2019 challenges young Armenian professionals to think globally, serve locally, and lead boldly

By **LAURAL L. CONSTANTINE**

From July 18-21, the Brazilian city of São Paulo was transformed into a hub for the most internationally diverse group of Armenian young professionals ever to attend the AGBU FOCUS summit, a global gathering held in a different destination city every two years.

The group of young innovators and community leaders, along with hundreds of members and friends from the worldwide AGBU Young Professionals (YP) groups, hailed from such unlikely places as South

Korea, Lithuania, Chile, and Cyprus, joining counterparts from North and South America, the European Union, the Middle East, Australia, and Armenia. Representing 26 countries in all, together they created a vibrant presence to match the dynamic tempo and colorful dimensions of São Paulo, Brazil's most populous metropolis with a thriving cosmopolitan cultural life and distinctive architectural tradition.

"We are here to celebrate the friendship, legacy, and values of AGBU," said Haig Apovian, chair of AGBU Brazil. "We see FOCUS as our vehicle to reinvigorate our

Above: Young Professionals from as many as 30 countries gather at São Paulo's Pullman Hotel for an all-day conference

communities not just in Brazil or South America, but all over the world."

The attendees had much to experience during the event-filled four-day affair, orchestrated by AGBU Central Office and AGBU YP Brazil group. The organizers' aim was to encourage this special segment of Armenians to explore their Armenian identity in the global age, broaden their social and professional



Above: Perspectives panelists. (From left) Mikael Djanian (Armenia/Brazil), Natasha Der Avedissian (Cyprus), Sarkis Semerdjian (Brazil); and Solange Merdinian (Argentina/United States). **Below:** YP participants from around the world: Argentina; Australia; Brazil; Cyprus; Lithuania; Russia; Spain; Syria; USA.



who gathered in São Paulo's eclectic Museu da Casa Brasileira, an impressive structure in the city center flanked with AGBU pennants, for a forum called *Perspectives*. The panel focused on the future of Armenian identity, moderated by Opera Mundi journalist and former adviser to the Permanent Mission of Brazil to the UN, Patrícia Dichtchekian and featured diverse discussants: Natasha Der Avedissian, an event coordinator for the Institute for the Future at the University of Nicosia (Cyprus); Mikael Djanian, associate partner at McKinsey & Company (Brazil); Solange Merdinian, soprano and artistic director of New Docta (USA); and Sarkis Semerdjian, architect and owner of Pascali Semerdjian Architetos (Brazil). Among the themes explored were the realities of assimilation, the prospects of repatriation to the homeland, as well as preserving the Armenian heritage and keeping it relevant to the times.

"Being Armenian is a choice," Der Avedissian asserted. "Reconnecting, getting involved with YP, being part of something greater than me is a choice I made to stay grounded in an identity that is otherwise sometimes fleeting."

2019 Conference and Competition

The following day, attendees had the opportunity to participate in an interactive conference designed to facilitate action, based on the insights and ideas presented during *Perspectives*. This activity

networks, and unite behind a worthy cause through a global fundraising effort. This time around, it was the women of Armenia who stood to benefit from AGBU Women Entrepreneurs (W.E.)—an economic development program providing qualified women in rural and urban Armenia with the tools and support to start or grow a micro-enterprise or home business.

YP Leadership Kickoff

The weekend officially began with an assembly of 37 leaders in the YP network, who gathered not only to reflect on their accomplishments but also to consider the challenges of mobilizing their communities at home. To that end, they participated in skill-building exercises in leadership and exchanged ideas and information on local strategies.

"This was a chance for so many of our community organizers to put faces to names," Heghine Musayelyan, the coordinator of the AGBU Young Professionals, explained. "It was a way to compare and

contrast respective experiences in local communities." Through sharing stories of success and challenges, these YP representatives empowered one another to pursue new avenues for strengthening their YP networks. Particularly benefitting from these candid exchanges were participants from prospective YP groups in Santiago, Chile and Montevideo, Uruguay.

Perspectives Panel Discussion

Later that evening, conversations were extended to the general FOCUS attendees,



Participants in "Building for the Future" Workshop present new program ideas.



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follows a tradition set at FOCUS 2017 in Beirut in which brainstorming and collaboration result in creating tangible proposals for new programs that speak to the theme, “Building for the Future.”

“These group activities are uniquely effective in acquainting participants with existing AGBU programs and involving them in rallying support among their peers,” observed Rafael Balukian, the treasurer of AGBU São Paulo and one of the key organizers of the weekend. “In order to energize and grow our communities, we need to build on what we already have and make them even stronger.”

The conference also set the stage for the highly anticipated Nour Nazarian YP Innovators’ Fund Pitch Competition, presented by Nazarian’s own grandsons Serge Kassardjian and Carl Balouzian. Celebrating Nazarian’s leadership in AGBU Lebanon and his special efforts to encourage youth participation and leadership, his family created the eponymous fund to help support innovative young Armenian entrepreneurs.

The prize of \$20,000 was at stake for the three finalists: Anna Vartapetian (United Kingdom); Narine Haroyan (South Korea); and Robin Koulaksezian (France). They had only minutes to pitch their projects to their peers before the electronic vote. From Internet security combating hate speech and creating an Armenian fellowship program in South Korea to compiling an online discovery tour of Armenian diasporas throughout the world, the concepts could not have been more diverse. Before the conference concluded, votes were cast with the winner to be announced at the FOCUS gala.

FOCUS on Art through Music

As much as the weekend was dedicated to

❶ *Nour Nazarian YP Innovators’ Fund Pitch Competition finalists with Nazarian’s grandsons. (From left) Anna Vartapetian (United Kingdom); Serge Kassardjian, Robin Koulaksezian (France); Narine Haroyan (South Korea); and Carl Balouzian.*

❷ *FOCUS on Art night featuring music of Armenia and Latin America.* ❸ *FOCUS 2019 organizers from AGBU Central Office and the YP Brazil committee.* ❹ *Dancers with the Brazilian Samba School Rosas de Ouro celebrate Armenian culture with a rendition of their 2019 Carnival performance at the Gala.* ❺ *São Paulo’s Museu da Casa Brasileira welcomes participants to Perspectives panel with vibrant AGBU banners.*

professional development and networking, social and cultural opportunities were also on the agenda. After a fruitful day of conferencing, all were invited to enjoy a night on the town at Sutton Club before gathering the following day for the FOCUS on Art performance in São Paulo’s posh neighborhood Itaim Bibi. Live music from Armenia and Latin America was performed by Caio Simonian (drums), Daniel Simonian (guitar), José Carlos Keremian Simonian (saxophone and flute), Ará Kedikian (double bass) and Michael Sarian (trumpet).



FOCUS 2019 committee co-chair Aram Apovian addresses the audience at the Gala.

Tour and Taste Excursion

At every gathering, Brazilian Armenian hospitality was on full display. The Tour and Taste São Paulo option included a private lunch and tour of Sourp Kevork Armenian Church, built by Genocide survivors. Hosted by Surpazan Nareg Berberian longtime AGBU community leader Monica Nalbandian, the visit gave the guests an opportunity to reflect on the legacy guiding them beyond just the FOCUS weekend.

Gala and Major Announcements

FOCUS 2019 culminated at the Saturday evening Gala, held at the city’s historic Jockey Club. AGBU FOCUS São Paulo’s committee co-chairs Natália Hazarian and Aram Apovian announced the results of the fundraising campaign for AGBU W.E., with funds generated from donors worldwide as well as the international Cycle4Women campaign, comprised of

spinning events in local YP networks. A total of \$120,000—the most money raised in FOCUS history—was raised, allowing more of Armenia’s women to receive a one-year cycle of support including entrepreneurship classes, mini-grants, mentoring, networking, and follow-up sessions.

“Everyone in this room can look to a strong woman in their lives to inspire them to go a few steps further toward an empowered life,” Hazarian said. “But for every exemplary woman we do know, surely there are others who never had the opportunity to shine because of gender inequality. AGBU W.E. will help create more positive female role models in Armenia.”

Before attentions turned to dining and dancing, Nazarian’s grandsons Kassardjian and Balouzian announced the winner of the YP Innovators’ Fund. Robin Koulaksezian’s *Little Armenias* took the prize. This will enable him to publish his online catalog with an interactive search dimension that enables users to tap into a one-stop resource for maps, landmarks, churches, guided tours, restaurant offers, and other points of interest in each community, along with videos and photo albums.

Farewell Brunch

As the weekend dwindled into a farewell Sunday brunch, one question on everyone’s mind was: *Where to next?* Ani Darbinyan, a third-time FOCUS participant from Los Angeles, couldn’t help but quote the renowned 20th-century Armenian poet, literary critic, and translator Paruyr Sevak: “We are few, but we call ourselves Armenian.” She went on to say, “No matter what part of the world we meet in 2021, this sense of community is guaranteed.”

In summing up the highlights of the weekend, FOCUS 2019 committee co-chair Aram Apovian expressed both satisfaction and appreciation for a highly successful event, saying, “If anything can encourage young professionals to go back to their communities inspired to make a difference in the world as Armenians, this year’s FOCUS has given them the momentum to serve with pride, purpose, and a more globally inclusive perspective.”

To date, AGBU FOCUS has connected over 3,000 young professionals in eight global cities: New York (2001, 2007), Montreal (2003), Miami (2005), Chicago (2009), Paris (2011), San Francisco (2013), Toronto (2015), Beirut (2017), and São Paulo (2019). ❧

AGBU Endowments 1910-2018

Since 1906, AGBU endowments have been the backbone of our organization. We owe a world of gratitude to all our donors and benefactors whose extraordinary generosity is helping to provide a steady stream of annual income to support our diverse programs and initiatives.

These supporters have demonstrated their trust in AGBU to positively impact the lives of over 500,000 Armenians in 33 countries annually through education, culture, and identity, humanitarian relief and socio-economic development.

Whether a family foundation, an individual bequest or a gift made to honor or memorialize a loved one, endowments enable us to plan and provide quality results for diverse beneficiaries—from campers, students, and young professionals to parents, seniors, victims of war and disaster, and many more.

The following list of endowments denotes the date of inception for each fund in its original amount; accrued interest is not reflected. New or additional donations are highlighted in red. ■

Endowments as of December 31, 2018.

1910	Setrag Tavitian Memorial	\$ 802.48	1937	Peter Hovanessian Memorial	\$ 2,050.85
1911	His Holiness Sahag II Khabayan Memorial	2,523.93	1937	Megerditch Pavletzian Memorial	360.00
1912	Kevork Sarkissian Memorial	18,363.75	1938	Peter M. Crete Memorial	6,884.85
1913	Msgr. Nerses Danielian Memorial	6,088.85	1938	Avedis G. Epikian Memorial	22,616.88
1913	Hagop Kirkyasharian Memorial	24,280.35	1939	Mardiros M. Apcar Memorial	27,084.65
1913	Samuel Topalian Memorial	833.65	1939	Avedis Ekmanian Memorial	700.00
1914	Arakel Berberian Memorial	1,021.40	1939	Oussoumnassiratz Society	1,559.90
1915	Mardiros Kazandjian Memorial	7,161.53	1940	Stephen Berberian Memorial	19,520.46
1918	Mirza Marcar Memorial	2,677.00	1940	Bedros Gumuchian Memorial	23,970.38
1919	Devlett Dadrian Memorial	9,590.86	1942	Serop Verdanian Movsesian Memorial	16,708.45
1920	Gadarineh Limongelli Memorial	60,980.80	1943	Garabed Hekimian Memorial	11,230.00
1921	Tarouhi Agopian Memorial	238,150.02	1943	Bedros H. Markarian Memorial	509,321.40
1921	Mikael Samuelian Memorial	18,100.00	1943	Haik Vemian Memorial	17,965.19
1922	Krikor Boghosian Memorial	16,012.50	1945	Moses H. Lucinian Memorial	10,500.00
1922	Raphael Margossian Foundation	627,325.30	1945	Sophie & Zaruhi Manissalian Memorial	16,393.22
1924	Dr. John Arschagouni Memorial	6,794.24	1946	AGBU Milk Fund	81,542.38
1924	Nigoghos Mordjikian Memorial	12,592.50	1946	Haroutiun G. Balakian Memorial	35,067.80
1924	Boghos Nubar Memorial	84,800.00	1946	Dr. Joseph Johns Memorial	4,392.50
1924	Marie Nubar Memorial	89,942.08	1946	Aram Schahinian Memorial	308,171.98
1925	Meguerditch Allahverdi Memorial	17,116.34	1948	Simon & Eranouhi Kaiserlian Memorial	1,576,203.18
1925	Nishan Kazazian Memorial	8,936.50	1949	Napoleon Hantzian Memorial	151,583.31
1925	Garabed & Krikor Melkonian Memorial	4,647,020.63	1950	Hagop & Arousiak Avakian Memorial	4,305.00
1926	Noemi Capamadjian Memorial	565,780.00	1950	Archbishop Matheos Indjeian Memorial	5,503.47
1926	Atanik Eknayan Memorial	38,838.86	1951	Hagop Hamalian Memorial	725.00
1926	Leon V. Semerdjian Memorial	11,209.57	1951	Dr. Vartkes Migrdichian Memorial	1,104,652.98
1927	Gabriel Boyadjian Memorial	1,612.64	1951	Kevork Moonedig Memorial	1,811.57
1929	Marthe Bonaime Memorial	2,500.00	1952	Charles G. Aramian Memorial	19,928.16
1929	Akabi Cheridjian Memorial	11,419.54	1952	Arakel M. Julian Memorial	6,387.73
1929	Paul Esmerian Memorial	138,350.00	1952	Zareh Nubar Memorial	49,978.65
1929	Adrienne Oundjian Memorial	38,758.52	1953	Hagop Atchabashian Memorial	20,082.41
1929	Hagop A. Sarraf Memorial	10,000.00	1953	Mardiros & Makrouhi Bulbulian Memorial	38,000.00
1930	M. Leon Roman Dundess Memorial	13,995.20	1953	Peter Kazarian Memorial	45,000.00
1930	Serope Sevadjian Memorial	147,439.00	1953	Assadour Maniassian Memorial	4,457.78
1932	Manoug Aslanian Memorial	10,000.00	1954	AGBU Educational Endowment	2,151,299.29
1932	Rev. Khoren Lazarian Memorial	8,813.65	1954	Haig & Annik Lemonjian	10,551.70
1932	Rev. Dirair Marcarian Memorial	5,822.85	1954	Hrant & Violet Lemonjian	10,551.70
1933	Aroussiag Der Zakarian Memorial	14,059.71	1954	Stephen I. Mouradian Memorial	3,613.31
1933	Takouhi Djanikian Memorial	22,891.70	1954	Albert Serabian Memorial	7,500.00
1934	Agopjan & Ohanik Bondjoukian Memorial	48,067.36	1954	Dr. Nerses Tullian	5,275.86
1934	Hetoum Setian Memorial	237,000.00	1954	Walter H. Vartan	10,300.00
1936	Stepan Kargodorian Memorial	1,600.00	1955	Haig Boyajohn Memorial	7,000.00
1936	Vagharchag Topalian Memorial	95,000.00	1955	Dikran & Haiganoush Diradourian Memorial	269,556.50
1936	Rev. Arsen Torossian Memorial	10,270.17	1955	Antranik & Alice Gurdjian	256,388.61

1955	Hovannes & Repega Issacoulian Memorial	\$ 13,000.00	1968	M. H. Aram Memorial	\$ 151,000.00
1955	Garabed Kazarossian Memorial	25,000.00	1968	Nushan & Victoria Asadorian Memorial	10,000.00
1955	Elizabeth Khantzian Memorial	10,268.41	1968	Violet Jebejian Memorial	2,398.08
1956	Karnig & Arto Funduklian Memorial	47,655.00	1968	Armen R. Manougian Memorial	25,000.00
1956	Serpouhi A. Karagheusian Memorial	100,000.00	1968	Ourfa Ladies Union of Aleppo	2,877.70
1956	George Shamlian Memorial	1,000.00	1968	Maksoud Sarkissian Memorial	94,827.74
1956	Hagop G. Topalian Memorial	31,019.01	1968	Yorganjian Foundation	120,514.25
1957	Aristakes Habeshian Memorial	6,000.00	1969	Dicran & Ardem Atamian Memorial	26,450.00
1957	Aram A. Handjian Memorial	1,482,887.84	1969	Richard K.Gregory & Alice Karakashian Memorial	132,069.47
1957	Dr. Moses & Mrs. Makrouhie Housepian Memorial	101,594.43	1969	Makrouhie Jedidian Memorial	16,700.00
1957	Aram H. Mugardichian Memorial	15,051.73	1969	Aram Jerahian Memorial	2,000.00
1957	Avedis K. Sarafian Memorial	8,552.51	1969	Aram N. Karagheusian Memorial	53,853.00
1958	Hagop Chopourian Memorial	7,512.70	1969	Sam Saroyan Memorial	4,386.65
1959	Asadoor Der Bedrossian Memorial	24,720.79	1969	Arshague & Evelyn Toprahanian Memorial	231,035.39
1959	Garabed & Haiganoush Ohanian Memorial	11,748.33	1969	Ghazar Yesseian Memorial	34,474.13
1960	AGBU Intellectuals & Teachers	16,570.00	1970	Puzant Beshgeturian Memorial	11,164.13
1960	John H. Balian Memorial	4,249.49	1970	Aghaeg & Elizabeth Dagavarian Memorial	190,700.19
1960	Seth H. Vakas Memorial	13,442.98	1970	Nishan & Mildred Dagavarian Memorial	317,385.15
1960	Haiganoush Varzhabedian Memorial	4,756.88	1970	Kevork Nalbandian Memorial	21,700.00
1960	Hermine Zohrab Memorial	10,034.44	1970	Vosgian Zegelian Memorial	15,400.00
1961	Vahan Bedrossian	10,000.00	1971	Gaidzag & Mihran Chapien Memorial	251,415.79
1961	Nazareth Boyajian Memorial	6,612.92	1971	Hagop Jamjian Memorial	20,000.00
1961	Mateos Mouradian Memorial	1,500.00	1971	Arshavir Nersessian Memorial	10,432.37
1961	Peter J. Tarzian Memorial	14,244.57	1971	Massis N. Thomason Memorial	7,270.00
1962	Stephen G. Clarkson (Yazijian) & Heghia Yazigian Memorial	20,930.80	1971	Leon Toutgalian Memorial	48,976.23
1962	Parsegh Karamanian Memorial	5,143.84	1971	Nvart Zahimen Memorial	8,745.40
1962	Paul Klajian Memorial	59,108.26	1972	Suren & Virginia Fesjian Memorial	433,552.00
1962	Bedros Sahag Merakian Memorial	60,000.00	1972	Mike Garabedian Memorial	4,500.00
1962	Meguerditch Torossian Memorial	37,450.00	1972	Harry Katcherian Memorial	41,785.15
1963	Boghos & Nazlie Jafarian Memorial	5,700.00	1972	Missak & Arpine Kouyoumdjian Memorial	1,085,404.81
1963	Hagop Nalbandian Memorial	5,000.00	1972	Eliza Melkon Memorial	196,790.12
1964	Melkon & Negdar Aijian Memorial	70,000.00	1972	Aram & Rose Mendikian Memorial	10,000.00
1964	Stepan Hagop Astardjian Memorial	25,000.00	1972	Levon & Satenig Nazarian Memorial	1,936,526.24
1964	Agop Ohan Couyoumdjian Memorial	14,558.58	1972	Armen & Vartanoush Soultanian Memorial	82,325.00
1964	Setrak & Azniv Der Bagdasarian Memorial	5,000.00	1972	Hovnan & Edward N. Tashian Memorial	448,009.24
1964	Avedis Garabedian Memorial	71,953.51	1972	Yenofkian Brothers Memorial	455,011.20
1964	Setrak Iskenderian Memorial	51,413.83	1973	Anonymous "MM"	95,588.71
1964	Mourad M. Kazarian Memorial	47,638.86	1973	Mourad & Elizabeth Bedrosian, Krikor & Marina Egoian Memorial	11,845.00
1964	Diran & Eugenie Patapanian Memorial	18,650.77	1973	Nicholas & Berj Der Manuelian Memorial	12,151.00
1964	Khatchig H. Tertsagian Memorial	176,466.49	1973	Harry Hairabedian Memorial	20,678.00
1965	Leon Handjian Memorial	148,987.50	1973	Yervant Hussissian Memorial	500,000.00
1965	Souren Hanessian Memorial	724,541.00	1973	Gadarine Kulhanjian Memorial	18,795.30
1965	Haig & Haigouhi Kashian Memorial	20,000.00	1973	Sarkis Melikian Memorial	25,000.00
1965	Krikor H. Koutnouyan Memorial	309,595.28	1973	Mard & Rose Peloian Memorial	200,000.00
1965	John Mooradian Memorial	21,000.00	1973	Hovannes Telian Memorial	52,700.00
1965	Raymont Paul	26,800.74	1973	Kissak Vrouyr Memorial	20,012.41
1966	Steven Avyan Memorial	121,906.00	1974	Grant V. Athanas Memorial	20,000.00
1966	Haik Demir Memorial	39,927.22	1974	Hrant Bardoony Memorial	108,325.08
1966	Araxie Dilsizian Memorial	10,123.13	1974	Haig Berberian Memorial	258,520.13
1966	Aznive & Astra Funduklian Memorial	53,653.00	1974	Alan Fenner Memorial	125,868.20
1967	Andon Andonian Memorial	15,800.64	1974	Nazar D. Funduklian Memorial	56,155.00
1967	Siran Dilsizian Memorial	6,000.00	1974	Krikor Hurmuzian Memorial	23,400.00
1967	Aghavni Soghikian Memorial	28,894.73	1974	Nazareth Jedidian Memorial	57,825.90
1967	Levon Tashdjian Memorial	1,033,204.00	1974	Zabel & Elmast Movsessian Memorial	74,655.44
1967	Hagop & Madeleine Tchavouchian Memorial	35,823.32	1974	Minni Pap Papazian Memorial	17,044.90
1967	Zkon Tchavouchian Memorial	39,837.00	1974	Edward H. Touloukian Foundation	571,813.55

AGBU Endowments 1910-2018

1975	Hagop B. Barsamian Memorial	\$ 17,081.97	1979	Mihran & Parantzem Sherbetian Memorial	\$ 110,194.64
1975	Joseph Bastian Memorial	29,443.97	1980	Vahram Abdalian Memorial	88,550.73
1975	Hampartsoum S. Kaloyan Memorial	10,580.00	1980	Dr. Gregory H. Adamian	21,862.44
1975	George Marderosian Memorial	8,487.89	1980	Clark Dinjian Memorial	11,100.00
1975	Louis N. & Aznif Melikian Memorial	35,043.82	1980	Avedis Don & Armine Donelian Memorial	21,680.00
1975	John Gregory Moskoffian Memorial	18,986.24	1980	Haroutiun Gasparian Memorial	47,600.00
1975	Esther Solakian Memorial	54,313.56	1980	Haig Ghazarossian Memorial	725,000.00
1975	Hovanes & Vartouhie Ter Hovanesian Memorial	261,600.00	1980	Beatrice Krikorian Memorial	10,568.00
1976	Hagop & Mariam Arzoumanian Memorial	1,601,162.79	1980	Harry & Ethel Mangurian Memorial	93,980.84
1976	Garabed Avedikian Memorial	54,650.00	1980	Edward & Helen Mardigian	270,000.00
1976	Karnik & Sirarpi Babayan Memorial	12,000.00	1980	Minas Missak Memorial	1,361,724.65
1976	Sirouhi Benlian Memorial	19,141.26	1980	Dikran Missirlian Foundation	19,292.17
1976	Kazar Chutjian Memorial	54,200.00	1980	Alice & George Philibosian	20,000.00
1976	Hovhannes & Yeghisapet Doudouyan Memorial	60,000.00	1981	Krikor Aivazian Memorial	11,987.56
1976	Mardiros & Haiganoush Hagopian Memorial	26,741.86	1981	Arthur & Eliza Avedian	13,058.84
1976	Gabriel Hamparzoomian Memorial	109,700.00	1981	Anita Bishop	3,900.00
1976	Ardashes Lajikian Memorial	4,052.30	1981	Thomas O. & Alice Dakessian Memorial	557,370.37
1976	Louis Mugerdichian Memorial	512,912.63	1981	Esther Eksouzian Memorial	6,000.00
1976	Mary A. Neghosian Memorial	38,246.98	1981	Charles Garjian Memorial	33,360.96
1976	Edward G. Nishan Memorial	50,000.00	1981	Harry Kurkian	5,000.00
1976	Mariam Baltaian Sarkissian Memorial	10,250.00	1981	Mihran & Mary Melekian Memorial	29,283.59
1977	AGBU Alumni "Sanootz"	61,364.67	1981	Krikor N. Roupenian Memorial	583,848.82
1977	Anonymous "V"	1,683,951.95	1981	Hmayak & Mayda Semerjian Memorial	113,555.00
1977	Michael & Marion Avsharian	11,000.00	1981	David B. & Lois Shakarian	263,364.62
1977	Mihran Exerjian Memorial	10,000.00	1981	Nerses Zohrab Memorial	61,282.95
1977	Mathew O. Najarian Memorial	5,200.00	1982	AGBU Friends of Alex & Marie Manoogian School	17,558.50
1977	Satenik & Adom K. Ourian Memorial	51,500.00	1982	AGBU Friends of Camp Nubar	372,164.82
1977	Nerses Papazian Memorial	57,782.98	1982	Aintab Union	53,145.24
1977	Victoria Tchertchian Memorial	39,787.00	1982	Napoleon S. Alajaian Memorial	306,613.92
1978	Hagop & Mary Booloozian Memorial	481,177.18	1982	Arsen Artinian Memorial	25,480.63
1978	Marderos Chebolian Memorial	13,815.29	1982	Harry V. Babaian	50,250.00
1978	Edward & Larry Egavian Memorial	20,000.00	1982	Silas Bozigian Memorial	50,000.00
1978	Garabed Ehikian Memorial	8,411.00	1982	Aznive Georgian & Hagop Kaprielian Memorial	8,200.00
1978	Sarkis Fereshetian Memorial	5,000.00	1982	Hirair & Anna Hovnanian	110,000.00
1978	Garabed & Ara Hodaghian Memorial	47,900.00	1982	Mourad Karaguesian Memorial	7,500.00
1978	Gulbenk & Nver Juknavorian Memorial	17,411.86	1982	Hovhannes, Zartar, Hagop & Makrouhi Koushian	60,526.47
1978	Hovannes & Hnazant Khashkhashian Memorial	20,000.00	1982	Marie Kupelian Memorial	6,813.00
1978	Haigaz Mekhalian Memorial	5,000.00	1982	Norma Kurkjian Memorial	341,032.25
1978	Manoog & Mary Aharonian Savajian Memorial	40,200.00	1982	Paul C. Manoogian Memorial	5,000.00
1978	Edward & Marguerite Shabazian Memorial	8,825.00	1982	Marshall H. Medzorian Memorial	10,000.00
1978	Charles & Arshalous Shukloian Memorial	5,000.00	1982	Maryam Moutafian Memorial	134,556.00
1978	Stephen G. Svajian & Haroutun Najarian Memorial	16,697.30	1982	Zabelle Aram Panosian Memorial	756,939.45
1978	Tashjian & Lamson Memorial	111,047.71	1982	Hovhannes Sheohmelian Memorial	137,340.00
1978	Haigaz & Flora Tombouljian Memorial	72,208.95	1982	Joseph Tahmazian Memorial	27,000.00
1979	Vahan Beloian Memorial	16,075.93	1982	Sone Torosian Memorial	4,770.00
1979	Dr. Avedis M. Casparian	819,982.02	1982	Armenouhi Boyajian Yeretzian Memorial	87,712.01
1979	Zareh & Koharig Davuloglu Memorial	15,000.00	1982	Lucy & Garabed Zartarian Memorial	120,000.00
1979	Dickran K. Deyrmanjian Memorial	398,310.45	1983	AGBU District Of France	413,544.00
1979	Mannig Ghazarossian Memorial	28,000.00	1983	Garabed Ohanes Berberian Memorial	140,603.41
1979	Haroutune K. Goekjian Memorial	85,671.03	1983	Cayane Boyajian Memorial	34,458.00
1979	Vahan & Srpouhi Jirian Memorial	5,000.00	1983	Gabriel & Eugenie Chakarian Memorial	69,300.00
1979	Panos & Katherine Killabian Memorial	32,317.84	1983	Chunkoosh Compatriotic Union	11,898.52
1979	Stephen Hakemian Mathews Memorial	145,137.55	1983	Yervant & Alice Demirdjian Memorial	57,571.16
1979	Nevart Mavian Memorial	58,800.00	1983	Garabed & Eugenie Der Stepanian	4,744.61
1979	Manuel Melikian Memorial	14,142.57	1983	Vahe G. Funduklian Memorial	513,150.00
1979	Arsene Papazian Memorial	377,000.00	1983	Rev. Nuchan & Mrs. Gladys Hachian Memorial	52,070.56
1979	John & Araxie Samelian Memorial	14,878.95	1983	Takvor & Zabelle Kafesjian	20,575.00

1983	Manuel Khatchadourian Memorial	\$ 3,894.19	1984	John Ayvazian Memorial	\$ 40,500.00
1983	Nishan M. Minassian Memorial	22,618.46	1984	Martin & Newart Baloyan Memorial	36,443.51
1983	Hagop Mukhjian Memorial	44,078.00	1984	Peter Marcus Boghosian Memorial	50,000.00
1983	Vahan Jacques Pascal Memorial	42,710.77	1984	Sarkis M. Casparian Memorial	250,783.39
1983	Nigoghos & Mary Tekian	36,710.50	1984	Leon & Matilda Giridlian Memorial	15,417.00
1983	Harutune & Kohar Topalian Memorial	12,948.57	1984	Edward & Mary Jerjian	25,176.63
1983	Sisag Varjabedian Memorial	33,306.53	1984	Krikor Kasabian Memorial	109,662.12
1984	Edward N. Alexanian Memorial	25,000.00	1984	Sarkis & Vava Katchadourian Memorial	102,170.40
1984	Haig & Syrvart Artan	13,035.00	1984	Nevart & Hasmig Krikorian Memorial	307,920.00

DR. GEORGE AND ODETTE BANNAYAN

Partners in Serving Others

In 1979, Dr. George Bannayan, a tenured professor of pathology at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, decided to take a sabbatical. Only this time, it wasn't to conduct research or write a book as is the norm in academia. Instead, he was headed for war-torn Beirut, volunteering to teach almost the entire pathology course at the American University of Beirut (AUB) on his own for the year. 1979 marked the height of the Lebanese Civil War and with the country rocked by violence daily, professors were hard to come by at AUB. "I felt that the students should not suffer for something they could not control," Dr. Bannayan reflects. "The opportunity to teach for those terms is one of the periods I am most proud of in my career."

But he was not alone. Odette Bannayan (née Shoushanian) who has always been by her husband's side is just as committed. "Access to education is at the forefront of our philanthropy," she explains. "Education empowers beyond an individual student—it can change the world."

True to that sentiment, she didn't hesitate to join him in Beirut, despite the risks and uncertainties. In fact, the couple have shared many such proud moments since Dr. Bannayan received his medical degree in 1957 from the American University of Beirut.

Born to Armenian parents in different cities and worlds apart, Dr. Bannayan in Jerusalem, and Mrs. Bannayan in Beirut, met at the American University of Beirut. At the time, his future wife was doing secretarial work on campus, while he pursued medicine. Despite their shared heritage, they came from distinct backgrounds. Dr. Bannayan belonged to one of the oldest Armenian families of the Armenian Quarter in Jerusalem but immigrated to Amman, Jordan, in 1948 with his family before studying in Beirut two years later. Mrs. Bannayan was born and raised in Beirut, the daughter of survivors of the Armenian Genocide. Despite the differences in their Armenian experiences, both recognized AGBU as a unifying organization in their communities. "Growing up, I became aware of the many great AGBU

philanthropic deeds," Mrs. Bannayan recalls. Committed not only to education, but also to programs that promote the Armenian heritage worldwide, the Bannayans have been generous AGBU supporters for almost four decades.

It was Dr. Bannayan's career that took the family across the Atlantic to the United States. In 1966, the Bannayans left the Middle East with their daughter and settled first in Colorado, then Maryland, followed by New York, and finally in Texas. In each state, his leadership heralded the success of the institutions he served, being known for his dedication to his patients, students, and teams of researchers. A renowned physician and

researcher of anatomic and clinical pathology, with an expertise in kidney and solid organ transplantation, Dr. Bannayan published a study in 1971 in the journal of Archives of Pathology, that isolated a previously undescribed syndrome. In 1982, it was named the Bannayan Syndrome, also known as the Bannayan-Riley-Ruvalcaba Syndrome. For his countless contributions as a medical director, professor, researcher and physician, Dr. Bannayan was honored with the Gift of Life Award from the National Kidney Foundation in 2003. Then, in 2016, he was awarded the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, which recognizes native or naturalized American citizens who have

made a significant impact on their communities through a life of service and celebrates honorees' ethnic ancestry as well as American values.

Although he retired in 2015, Dr. Bannayan worked as part-time faculty in the Department of Pathology at the University of Texas Health Science Center until 2017. In the face of all of his success, his countless publications and honors, the generations of students he impacted with his scholarship and dedication, the year 1979 in Beirut with Mrs. Bannayan stands out most. "I think of the students, and I smile knowing that my education did not just serve me, but was multiplied among them." ■



AGBU Endowments 1910-2018

1984	Garabed Ovanesian Memorial	\$ 40,959.08	1988	AGBU Detroit Women's Chapter	\$ 50,000.00
1984	Harry Papelian Memorial	20,791.65	1988	AGBU Hovagimian-Manougian School/Ara Topdjian	65,045.81
1984	Hrand Vakilian Memorial	13,569.33	1988	Mildred Dagavarian Memorial	95,030.10
1984	Arshag Vassilian Memorial	28,836.99	1988	Hovannes Gulbenkian Memorial	66,800.00
1985	AGBU Detroit Men's Chapter	13,050.00	1988	Dikranouhi & Karnig Hajinlian Memorial	149,157.98
1985	Garabed, Hagop & Artine Agopian Memorial	100,000.00	1988	Sam Hakemian Memorial	75,000.00
1985	Mr. & Mrs. Souren Aprahamian	5,000.00	1988	Rouben & Achkhen Iguidbashian Memorial	35,090.00
1985	Madeline Cashian Memorial	9,434.60	1988	Arthur Janigian Memorial	25,000.00
1985	Margaret Gayzagian Memorial	196,397.84	1988	Kevork Keklikian Janigian Memorial	10,000.00
1985	Lucas & Rose Gregory	20,928.00	1989	Martin & Varsenig Apkarian	17,150.00
1985	Mardiros & Margaret Hatcherian	10,000.00	1989	Agop Azarian	10,000.00
1985	Mihran & Rosemary Hoplamazian	52,350.00	1989	Mr. & Mrs. Karnig Bahadurian Memorial	10,000.00
1985	Dickran Kelekian Memorial	329,100.00	1989	Henry Bahlavooni Memorial	84,500.00
1985	Alice Krikorian Memorial	189,315.80	1989	Walter Baronian Memorial	30,000.00
1985	Dikranouhi Maronian Memorial	44,500.00	1989	Avedis O. Boyajian & Rev. Arsen A. Georgizian Memorials	2,257.00
1985	Mr. & Mrs. Albert Papoyans	5,000.00	1989	Rose Yessaian & Christopher Costa Memorial	14,952.50
1985	Sahag & Satenig Sahagian Memorial	100,561.27	1989	Anna Der Vartanian Memorial	21,223.72
1985	Mushegh & Arshaloos Shamalian Memorial	181,302.26	1989	Levon Hagopian Memorial	41,087.13
1985	George & Ivy Sharigian Memorial	12,000.00	1989	Ronald Jameson Memorial	7,525.00
1985	Takouhi Torigian Memorial	9,576.00	1989	Haig Kasbarian Memorial	127,686.00
1986	Anonymous "BP"	96,702.10	1989	Krikor & Neouver Keldjian	179,860.50
1986	Kevork & Verjin Arslanian	15,000.00	1989	Mirjan Kirian Memorial	20,020.00
1986	Ashod Badmakrian Memorial	33,126.78	1989	Leon Kirk Memorial	15,000.00
1986	Caesarian Benevolent Association Inc.	18,489.55	1989	Charles H. Kouzoujian	20,000.00
1986	Sarkis & Beatrice Chekerdjian Memorial	354,525.29	1989	Sarkis Mekjian Memorial	37,898.14
1986	Aram Hejinian Memorial	2,443.81	1989	Melkonian Memorial Fund	119,444.44
1986	Dikranouhi Hoplamazian Memorial	5,102.50	1989	Krikor Meutemedian Memorial	1,560.82
1986	Serope Kardash Memorial	5,596.00	1989	George & Gula Mutevalian Memorial	23,277.49
1986	Sarkis Kassabian Memorial	70,600.00	1989	Michael Nazarian Memorial	30,300.10
1986	Kegham Y. & Dickranouhi M. Koltoukdjian Memorial	436,300.00	1989	Mihran Nazarian Memorial	51,780.62
1986	Parantzem Margosian Memorial	14,009.79	1989	Alice Pakrad Memorial	165,650.00
1986	Hemayak & Rahan Mateosian	30,000.00	1989	Antranik & Angele Poladian Memorial	259,900.00
1986	Matilda Nakkashian Memorial	24,890.64	1989	Dorothy A. Poladian Memorial	41,970.62
1986	Nigoghos A. Nigosian Memorial	194,147.90	1989	Oksin Sinamian Memorial	45,011.27
1986	Garbis Papazian	56,920.00	1989	Karl & Emma Sogioan	15,000.00
1986	Mihran Toumajan Memorial	24,426.67	1989	Onnig & Peruze Tabibian Memorial	13,000.00
1986	Noubar Vartian Memorial	50,000.00	1989	Yesayan Foundation	1,340.00
1986	Zakeyan & Dumanian Family Memorial	101,424.15	1989	Victoria Zamanigian Memorial	25,032.50
1987	AGBU Friends of Ararat Magazine	52,540.85	1990	AGBU Women's Central Committee	13,000.00
1987	Ghevont & Siranoush Bakalian Memorial	347,234.55	1990	Anonymous "HAG"	653,308.82
1987	Vartkess & Rita Balian	450,000.00	1990	Anonymous "KI"	323,984.00
1987	Dicran Berberian Memorial	40,220.05	1990	Baidzar & Haroot H. Arootian Memorial	12,510.64
1987	Arthur Dadian Memorial	130,000.00	1990	Yenova Betian	7,603.00
1987	Bedros Hintlian Memorial	10,000.00	1990	Harry Demerjian Memorial	25,000.00
1987	Boghos P. Jehebjan Memorial	698,905.00	1990	Vahe, Nerses & Mary Gulesserian Memorial	498,263.88
1987	Ena Berjouhy Kenadjian Memorial	23,545.00	1990	Gabriel Injejikian	100,000.00
1987	Arthur Kradjian	10,000.00	1990	Onnig & Hrant Isbenjian Memorial	1,005,326.63
1987	Hagop Krikorian Memorial	130,000.00	1990	Krikor Kasarjian	1,200.00
1987	Vartouhi, Asadour, Armen & Aram Mirjanian Memorial	14,000.00	1990	Lucille Kasbarian Memorial	120,235.34
1987	Parsek K. Parsekian Memorial	387,932.63	1990	Arshag & Azniv Kirazian Memorial	591,586.00
1987	Louise Salverian Memorial	53,005.93	1990	George & John Kurkjian	4,709.00
1987	Rose Shafer Memorial	6,050.00	1990	G & K Melkonian Memorial	197,867.84
1987	Mihran M. Simidian Memorial	643,018.30	1990	Arthur Moorad Memorial	72,350.90
1987	Wilhelmina Souren Memorial	259,976.06	1990	Esther K. Parseghian Memorial	96,320.97
1987	Haroutun Tchertchian Memorial	14,050.00	1990	Nishan & Mary Shimshirian Memorial	56,494.59
1988	AGBU Athletic Games	75,000.00	1990	Saruhi Vartian	10,000.00
1988	AGBU Chicago Chapter	343,335.00	1990	Stephen & Chouchane Yeghiayan Memorial	50,000.00

1991	Mihran & Elizabeth Agbabian	\$ 55,000.00	1993	Nerses Tamamian Memorial	\$ 58,193.27
1991	AGBU Melkonian Alumni	112,660.30	1993	Hagop Dirane Topalian Memorial	12,335,902.00
1991	Yervant Minas & Patricia Aghajanian Memorial	715,388.94	1993	Ovsanna K. Vartivarian Memorial	3,188.76
1991	Arsilia Akian Memorial	654,786.00	1993	Ohanes Vekilian Memorial	23,500.18
1991	Fimi Avedisyan Memorial	10,712.18	1993	Haig B. Yardumian Memorial	10,000.00
1991	Astghig Nassibian Balikian Memorial	25,000.00	1993	Satenig Yardumian Memorial	10,000.00
1991	Antranik Demirdjian Memorial	35,549.00	1994	AGBU President's Club Summer Intern Program	402,895.00
1991	Armen & Nelly Der Kiureghian	12,000.00	1994	Garabed Andonian Memorial	474,873.00
1991	Simon Derderian Memorial	14,795.00	1994	Armenag Arabian Memorial	95,449.00
1991	Keghanoush Douzaklian & Leon Bedighian Memorial	69,181.89	1994	Harold A. Arsenian Memorial	55,487.50
1991	Armen & Salpie Haroutunian	54,296.28	1994	Susan Avakian Memorial	148,800.61
1991	Arshalouis Tavrejian Hartune Memorial	320,276.87	1994	Mary Aydenian Memorial	257,777.36
1991	Dick & Mary Horigian Memorial	100,154.85	1994	Dickranouhi & Armen P. Baltian Memorial	120,790.11
1991	Artemis Karagheusian Memorial	20,456.99	1994	Dickran S. Chobanian Memorial	10,000.00
1991	Albert H. Mouradian Memorial	7,409.47	1994	Chouljian/Zovickian Memorial	10,000.00
1991	Barkev Nalbandian Memorial	10,185.00	1994	Gregory Mark Gargarian, Ph.D. Memorial	25,500.00
1991	Simon Arman & Pinna Papazian Memorial	1,000,000.00	1994	Gaspar A. Goshgarian	100,100.00
1991	Margaret Simonian Memorial	32,740.00	1994	George Gurdjian Memorial	350,000.00
1991	Ara Solickian Memorial	11,333.64	1994	Seda Voskanian Haroutunian Memorial	59,158.45
1991	Armen L. Tertsagian Memorial	10,000.00	1994	Vicki & Raffy Hovanessian	20,000.00
1991	Helen & Hagop Zakarian Memorial	6,700.00	1994	Peter Hiak Jacobson Memorial	100,000.00
1992	AGBU AYA Lebanon	176,133.79	1994	Albert H. Jamentz Memorial	50,000.00
1992	David Asher Memorial	54,378.00	1994	Loosazine Kazanjian Memorial	11,690.00
1992	Edmond Azadian	10,000.00	1994	Gerald A. Kearns	449,677.06
1992	Michel Baghdassarian Memorial	91,149.00	1994	George Makinisian Memorial	76,427.00
1992	Yvonne Kashian Banks Memorial	17,677.82	1994	Manoogian Manor	1,000,000.00
1992	Nevart Couyoumjian Memorial	45,000.00	1994	Manoogian Simone Foundation	2,950,000.00
1992	Sarkis & Seta Demirdjian	253,147.30	1994	Valentine Mazloumian Memorial	10,000.00
1992	Hagop S. Derderian Memorial	100,000.00	1994	Mr. & Mrs. John C. Nicholls, Jr.	50,948.66
1992	Levon Donigian	5,370.18	1994	Mrgditch Papazian Memorial	143,769.00
1992	Flora & Diane Galoostian Memorial	45,000.00	1995	Krikor Aghegian Memorial	59,112.00
1992	Karakashian Family	892,447.25	1995	Francois S. & Suzy Antounian	17,040.00
1992	Adrine A. Kenadjian Memorial	10,000.01	1995	John Aranosian Family	48,500.00
1992	Kegham & Haigouhi Kradjian Memorial	27,870.00	1995	Armenouhi Bagdasarian Memorial	39,700.00
1992	Haig Mardirian Memorial	58,718.14	1995	Leo & Elaine Bakalian Memorial	10,115.00
1992	Hrant Melikian Memorial	10,000.00	1995	Dickran Barsam	14,000.00
1992	Nazar & Artemis Nazarian	10,100,000.00	1995	Melkon & Soorpoochi Chiefgian Memorial	1,000.00
1992	Armand O. & Marylin Norehad	10,000.00	1995	Sarkis & Nora Dadourian Memorial	113,500.00
1992	Prof. Parounag & Angele Tomassian Memorial	25,162.44	1995	Digranaguerd Reconstruction Union	31,923.61
1992	Barry & Margaret A. Zorthian Memorial	34,753.95	1995	Epram & Alice Djirdjirian Memorial	324,245.00
1993	Altounian Brothers Memorial	907,742.83	1995	George K. & Lucy L. Eguinlian Memorial	358,696.55
1993	Ruben & Marion Barsamian	6,100.00	1995	Arthur K. & Araxse Enjaian Memorial	49,080.38
1993	Krikor & Sylvia Galbedian Memorial	68,224.04	1995	Eugene A. Gargaro Jr.	85,000.00
1993	Nerses Galbedian Memorial	34,112.02	1995	Dr. & Mrs. Samuel Haig Jameson	151,287.07
1993	Aram Hashashian Memorial	11,241.48	1995	Nishan & Arshalous Janigian Memorial	3,000.00
1993	Stepan & Haiganoush Kabasakalian Memorial	28,650.87	1995	Dickran & Haigouhi Kashian Memorial	201,401.97
1993	Haig Kanjian Memorial	100,000.00	1995	Khachadourian Brothers Memorial	746,811.13
1993	Alice Nemzar Khashmanian Memorial	80,409.00	1995	Anthony Kushigian Memorial	3,203,776.45
1993	Dr. Levon Kurkjian Memorial	35,325.00	1995	Dolores Zohrab Liebmann Memorial	457,727.47
1993	Marie Manoogian Memorial	257,622.40	1995	Wayne B. Lyon	150,000.00
1993	Leon S. Peters Foundation	240,000.00	1995	Khosrof & Varsene Mansourian Memorial	25,000.00
1993	Rev. Toros Sahagian Memorial	10,000.00	1995	Puzant & Marie Markarian Memorial	76,940.00
1993	Osep & Nadya Sarafian	30,000.00	1995	Victor Menayan	100,000.00
1993	Garabed Sarian Memorial	11,696.00	1995	Merrill Lynch & Co. Foundation, Inc.	20,000.00
1993	Mannig Simidian Memorial	10,000.00	1995	Richard G. Mosteller	150,000.00
1993	James B. & Mary Sinclair	26,400.00	1995	Gregory M. & Maritza M. Mugar	12,000.00
1993	Abraham Soghigian Memorial	226,411.06	1995	Nevart R. Najarian Memorial	10,000.00

AGBU Endowments 1910-2018

1995	Agop Jirair Ovanessian Family	\$ 56,000.00	1997	Dr. Assadour Gulvartian Memorial	\$ 11,151.87
1995	Rouben & Nina Terzian	25,000.00	1997	Roxie Hagopian Memorial	261,216.26
1995	Jack S. Torosian	125,000.00	1997	Rev. Fr. Carnig A. Hallajian	319,591.63
1995	Samuel Valenti III	150,000.00	1997	Sarkis Hovagimian Memorial	255,138.60
1995	Mr. & Mrs. Hagop Vanerian	8,786.32	1997	Col. Manuel Hovnanian Memorial	23,800.00
1995	Esteban & Sada Zarikian	125,500.00	1997	Avedis V. & Yerchanig Janjigian Memorial	27,110.00
1995	Zartarian Foundation	9,500.00	1997	Noubar & Anita Jessourian Memorial	279,536.97
1996	Mr. & Mrs. Sarkis Acopian	2,045,000.00	1997	Garabed & Tourvanda Jooharigian Memorial	5,000.00
1996	AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School	183,526.51	1997	Mark & Rose Kandarian Memorial	100,837.09
1996	AGBU Noubar Nazarian YP Inovators Fund	100,000.00	1997	Kazazian Family	73,539.21
1996	Amar Murad Andranigian Memorial	384,042.25	1997	Boghos Kerbeykian Memorial	36,340.00
1996	Antranig Berberian	132,500.00	1997	Varujan & Sirpuhi Kesenci	2,500.00
1996	Zaven P. Berberian	85,045.23	1997	Elizabeth Kondazian Memorial	664,159.49
1996	Artine & Rose Boyajian Memorial	9,905.00	1997	Hagopos & Imasd Kurkjian Memorial	10,821.68
1996	Nelly Boyajian Memorial	7,732.50	1997	Yeranouhie Mamourian Memorial	15,000.00
1996	Leon Chahinian	105,000.00	1997	Hagop & Takouhy Mangerian Memorial	122,075.00
1996	Mr. & Mrs. Shavarsh Demirdjian	25,000.00	1997	George & Marge Manoogian	69,521.05
1996	Donchian, Hajeian & Chirkinian Memorial	85,500.00	1997	Meghriqian Family Scholarship	100,000.00
1996	Peter B. Gabrielian Memorial	500,000.00	1997	Hagop Mendikian & Rose Mendik Meschke Memorial	412,119.55
1996	Richard & Beatrice Hagopian Memorial	100,000.00	1997	Anush Nazarian & Suzanne Toufayan	28,399.94
1996	Christophe H. Hatchikoff Memorial	250,000.00	1997	Satenig Ouzounian Memorial	54,652.70
1996	Melkiset & Isgouhi Jamgotch Family Memorial	160,693.91	1997	Soukias & Koogas Ovagimian,	
1996	Dirouhi B. Jingoian Memorial	244,305.26		Khachadour N. Magarian Memorial	10,000.00
1996	Girar K. & Hasmik Kaprelian	39,151.00	1997	Avedis H. & Azadouhie and	
1996	Alice Kashian Memorial	10,000.00		Hagop Piandarian Memorial	22,500.00
1996	Mac John Lucas Memorial	302,428.00	1997	Grace & Charles Pinajian	140,000.00
1996	Alex Manoogian Memorial	1,014,465.78	1997	John S. & Mariam Rahanian Memorial	10,000.00
1996	Masco Corporation	60,000.00	1997	Dorothy Sahroian Robinson Memorial	112,600.60
1996	Richard Nalbandian Memorial	29,535.00	1997	Varujan & Silva Sahakyan Memorial	3,128,365.06
1996	Vahe Nishanian Memorial	50,125.00	1997	Elmas M. Saraf Memorial	9,587.47
1996	Astrid Papazian	15,000.00	1997	Dr. & Mrs. Sarkis M. Shaghalian	50,000.00
1996	Elizabeth Phillian Memorial	6,357.87	1997	Iva Shaljian Memorial	2,954,266.36
1996	Aram Sander Memorial	35,000.00	1997	Queen P. Essayan Silva Memorial	10,000.00
1996	Boghos & Arusiag Sanoian Memorial	10,000.00	1997	David & Louise Simone	72,500.00
1996	Henry P. Sanoian & Nancy Manoogian	25,000.00	1997	Zabel and Tavit S. Soultanian and	
1996	Sam & Sylva Simonian	112,000.00		Zallakian Family Memorial	21,727.50
1996	Leon & Shake Tokatlian	10,000.00	1997	Leon & Zarmig Surmelian Memorial	3,538,649.81
1996	Charles G. Uligian	75,294.33	1997	Berge Tatian	29,249.94
1996	G. S. Ani Vapurciyan	11,766.23	1997	Kevork & Pamela Toroyan	7,200.00
1997	AGBU Detroit Chapter	6,000.00	1997	Loussentak Vartanian Memorial	22,490.00
1997	AGBU Friends of AUA	471,450.52	1997	Vartkes Yeghiayan Memorial	4,008.21
1997	AGBU Orange County Chapter	3,000.00	1997	Zeronian Family Memorial	148,488.21
1997	Grace Alexanian Memorial	25,000.00	1997	Israel & Vartouhi Zokian Memorial	13,815.00
1997	Mable V. Altoonian Memorial	20,000.00	1998	Dr. & Mrs. Daniel H. Abdulian	28,500.00
1997	Arabkir Union Inc.	487,314.19	1998	AGBU General Fund	477,187.02
1997	AUA Dr. Mihran Agbabian	311,400.00	1998	Norair M. & Elizabeth M. Ajamian Memorial	198,908.40
1997	John J. Bandeian Memorial	263,382.61	1998	Yervant & Marie Akian	10,000.00
1997	Johnny O. Barber Memorial	70,000.00	1998	Nvart H. Alexanian Memorial	174,494.65
1997	Joseph L. & Jacqueline S. Basralian	155,200.00	1998	Hrant Altunian Memorial	10,000.00
1997	Akhayeg Bedrosian Memorial	11,000.00	1998	Mr. & Mrs. Robert Apelian	33,125.00
1997	Antranik & Sheny Bobelian	29,475.00	1998	Kaspar, Soultan, Paul & Johann Apkarian	50,000.00
1997	Eli Y. & Zavart Demirdjian Bogosian Memorial	8,745.00	1998	Armand P. Avakian	5,000.00
1997	Budakian Family	20,918.72	1998	Aram & Berjoughie Balekjian Memorial	10,775.00
1997	Cafesjian Family Foundation	635,000.00	1998	Dr. & Mrs. George Bannayan	72,500.00
1997	Harry T. Chouljian Memorial	80,000.00	1998	Sarkis & Ruth Bedevian	2,820,500.00
1997	Vahe & Aline Donikian Memorial	7,625.00	1998	Rev. Fr. & Mrs. Bob J. Bethoney	2,000.00
1997	Kevork B. Garmirian Memorial	37,300.00	1998	Sarkis Bogosian Memorial	206,066.67

1998	Jack O. Charshafian Memorial	\$ 11,935.00	1998	Maria Jinishian Memorial	\$ 10,000.00
1998	Hagop & Hranoush Dabanian Memorial	10,000.00	1998	Charley Kademian Memorial	56,641.30
1998	Mr. & Mrs. Zaven Dadekian	20,000.00	1998	Hagop & Anna Kalaydjian Memorial	6,798.12
1998	Fredrick Danelian	43,072.00	1998	Shahan Karakash Memorial	50,000.00
1998	Vagharshag Danielian Memorial	38,000.00	1998	Dr. & Mrs. Artine Kokshanian	15,650.00
1998	Art Darian Memorial	144,035.00	1998	John & Theresa Korenian	20,056.03
1998	Kerop & Amalia Der Avedisian	10,000.00	1998	Terenik & Rita Koujakian	12,000.00
1998	Kevork & Nazeni Deukmedjian Memorial	9,855.00	1998	Kurdian-Manoukian	33,640.36
1998	Garos N. Dorian	5,389.85	1998	Azniv A. Malootian Memorial	57,534.69
1998	Dr. Pauline Goodian Memorial	974,106.92	1998	Ruby Markarian	10,000.00
1998	Dr. Pauline Goodian & Dr. Yervant Harrian Memorial	324,687.12	1998	Hagop Maxian	26,000.00
1998	Mariam & Boghos Goodian Memorial	324,687.12	1998	Jeffery & Mary Parsigian	60,000.00
1998	Arshalouys Goudian Memorial	2,000,000.00	1998	Daniel Saglamian	222,636.00
1998	Ashod Hadjian	70,000.00	1998	Mr. & Mrs. Antranig Sarkissian	9,000.00
1998	Michael & Katherine Halebian	105,000.00	1998	Sarkis Soultanian Memorial	14,815.00
1998	Norair Hovaghimian Memorial	25,000.00	1998	Sarkis Spanjian Memorial Scholarship	40,000.00
1998	Mr. & Mrs. Krikor Istanbuli	90,000.00	1998	Vartan G. Telian Memorial	40,000.00

ANNABELLE AND ALBERT DARAKJIAN

Two Lives, Four Loves

They were passionate about their Armenian heritage, its music, its young people, and most of all, one another. Together, Annabelle and Albert Darakjian wrote the background score to a long and beautiful life story that brought joy to others through the arts and a shared faith.

From his earliest years, Albert was exposed to the distinctive melodies of Armenian folk music. His mother would say that, as early as three years old, Albert would put on his favorite Armenian recording, filling their home with the echoes of their ancestors.

After retiring from teaching in the Los Angeles City School system, Albert turned his attention to his real passion, music and composing. He prayed for the inspiration to create music for the Armenian people; a prayer that was answered when he went on to compose his most beloved suite *Armenian Symphonic Dances*.

Another highlight of Albert's musical career was when his composition *Flight of the Eagle* was performed at the Los Angeles Music Center's Dorothy Chandler Pavilion by the Glendale Symphony, conducted by maestro Lalo Schiffrin. His music was also featured by the Sister City Committee of Thousand Oaks' concert, which raised funds for victims of the Armenian earthquake in Spitak, Armenia in 1988.

On one of Albert's CDs, he expresses his thoughts and feelings on his work. He said, "From my earliest years, I was exposed to the characteristic beauty of Armenian folk music. There is a certain Armenian element in my music suggesting

that I was strongly conscious of my ancestral folk heritage, and frequently drew upon it as a source for creative expression. However, the true creative inspiration for this work and all my musical endeavors has been the person of the Lord Himself, for I firmly believe that all my music is God's purpose for my life and without His guidance and help, it could not have been accomplished. The glory is for God alone."

Annabelle also loved the arts, from music, to dance, theater, and artwork. After she and Albert moved to Westlake Village, she was elected to the board of the Arts Commission Westlake Village, which she served from 1993 until October 2009. During this time, she chaired a committee called the "Healing Power of Music," which brought the transcending properties of music to mentally disabled adults.

The Darakjians were married for 58 years before Albert's passing in 2013. They were deeply in love and committed to one another. As Annabelle's niece Laureen Mgrdichian described their relationship, "You would have to

search high and low to find a couple more devoted to one another than they were. He pampered her and relished in her successes, just as she did in his." Annabelle joined her husband in 2015.

With no children of their own, both Annabelle and Albert took special interest in youth, particularly those of Armenian descent, which, combined with their love for music, inspired their generous gift to AGBU for music scholarships. ■



AGBU Endowments 1910-2018

1998	Hagop Tellalian Memorial	\$ 315,200.00	2000	Adrienne G. Alexanian	\$ 25,000.00
1998	Arshag & Isgouhi Barsamian Topalian Memorial	14,025.00	2000	Araxie C. Anjoorian Memorial	10,000.00
1998	Marie Veledian	175,320.00	2000	Anonymous "OC"	10,000.00
1999	AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian Student Council	5,000.00	2000	Hoseeb & Lilly Arathoon Trust	205,146.12
1999	Noubar & Maro Agopian	30,094.20	2000	Ardemis, Arpy & Armenoohy Arsenian Memorial	79,141.28
1999	Jane M. Alexanian Memorial	74,930.51	2000	Yervantouhi, Khoren & Michael Asdoorian	112,199.48
1999	Zauvart Alexanian	20,000.00	2000	Mr. & Mrs. Jim Avakian	97,285.00
1999	Anonymous "K"	47,579.38	2000	Nourhan Balian	2,000.00
1999	Marie K. Ansourian Memorial	20,730.00	2000	Ara & Georgette Boyajian	16,122.56
1999	Noubar & Anna Ashjian Memorial	130,067.97	2000	Dickran Bozajian Memorial	25,000.00
1999	Haratune & Avedis Avedisian Memorial	5,000.00	2000	Gosdan Bozajian	25,000.00
1999	Bedros & Nvat Ayyazian Memorial	184,866.54	2000	Kevork Cachaznoui Memorial	112,633.35
1999	Aram & Arpina Aznavorian Memorial	335,776.81	2000	Aram & Sarkis Chapian Memorial	59,400.00
1999	Oskey Balderian Memorial	58,096.13	2000	Ara & Valerie Cherchian	47,350.46
1999	Albert & Tove Boyajian	110,000.00	2000	N. Dedeyan	11,205.00
1999	Fred R. & Hazel W. Carstensen Memorial	13,000.00	2000	Nazaret & Meline Demirjian Memorial	42,000.00
1999	Mr. & Mrs. Levon Cepkinian	5,000.00	2000	John & Stella Eshkonian, Krikor & Mariam Eshkonian, Mary Eshkon Magmer Memorial	50,000.00
1999	Armenette A. Christie Memorial	105,608.50	2000	Drs. Garabed & Peter Fattal, Nora Gibbs, Corinne Farrell	42,519.40
1999	Gesaria Compatriotic Benevolent Assoc.	5,000.00	2000	Loulou Fermanian Memorial	10,250.00
1999	Dr. & Mrs. Vicken Gulvartian	5,136.11	2000	Sarkis Gabrellian Memorial	10,000.00
1999	Edouard Yervant Gureghian	26,800.36	2000	Flora & Valarshak Mackertich Galoostian Memorial	50,000.00
1999	Kaspar & Kohar Hagopian Family	111,293.08	2000	Murad Guchigian Memorial	26,500.00
1999	Raymond & Mildred Hagopian	18,000.00	2000	Beatrice A. & Burgess Charles Harpoot Memorial	10,000.00
1999	Arshavir & Arpik Jagaspanian Memorial	10,000.00	2000	Isabelle Aranosian Hodgson	5,000.00
1999	Dr. Aram Janigian Memorial	200,281.69	2000	Clara Ignatius Memorial	10,000.00
1999	Haroutune Kenadjian Memorial	131,809.74	2000	Hagop Daniel Janoyan Memorial	10,400.00
1999	Richard & Jane Manoogian Foundation	400,000.00	2000	Dikranouhi Jernukian Memorial	5,000.00
1999	Hagop & Iroura Manuelian	32,169.57	2000	Berj B. Kalaidjian	7,000.00
1999	Margos & Elizabeth, Andranic, Knaric Clara & Grace Margossian	120,000.00	2000	Arpcase Kilerjian Memorial	71,841.90
1999	Serop & Vartoohe Mashikian Memorial	25,000.00	2000	Thomas A. Kooyumjian Family Foundation	80,435.00
1999	Mr. & Mrs. Varto Mazmanian	7,838.42	2000	Bartloff Kosroffian Memorial	348,071.02
1999	Dr. Diran O. Mikaelian	47,148.97	2000	Novart & Arsen Markarian Memorial	10,266.78
1999	Suzy Minassian Memorial	5,119.96	2000	John & Paris Minosion Memorial	83,591.25
1999	Arthur Musurlian	4,522.72	2000	Noubar & Dikranouhi Mkhsi-Kevorkian	10,000.00
1999	Mr. & Mrs. Edward Nahabet	5,000.00	2000	Dertad Y. Mooradian Memorial	25,000.00
1999	Harry Orbelian	2,000.00	2000	Leon A. Najarian Memorial	7,500.00
1999	Togo Pachaian	111,976.00	2000	Ohannes & Zabel Najarian Memorial	26,500.00
1999	Lucy J. Parsek Memorial	10,000.00	2000	James & Servart (Guregian) Parechian Memorial	55,755.00
1999	Mr. & Mrs. Edward Peters	12,000.00	2000	Asdine & Barkev Sagatelian Memorial	642,085.65
1999	Vera Roopenian Memorial	121,484.44	2000	Linda Shahinian	5,000.00
1999	Nubar Sayarman Memorial	53,609.98	2001	AGBU Montreal Educ Aid	6,540.00
1999	Leon & Victoria Shaldjian Foundation	2,400,686.60	2001	Armenag Aprahamian Memorial	143,633.00
1999	Minas Shirvanian Memorial	7,095.49	2001	Vartan A. Arkanian Memorial	164,929.06
1999	Knarik & Sirarpi Sislian	22,000.00	2001	Azniv Arslanian	7,412.40
1999	Dr. Krikor Soghikian Memorial	25,000.00	2001	Sarkis & Susan Arzoumanian	10,000.00
1999	Nishan Tamezian	27,000.00	2001	Mr. & Mrs. Ara Barmakian	19,000.00
1999	Avedis & Loussazine Tcheurekdjian	25,000.00	2001	Norma Der Mugrdechian Memorial	18,300.00
1999	Berj Topjian Memorial	30,534.00	2001	Dr. & Mrs. Heratch Doumanian	35,000.00
1999	Sarkis & Zarouhi Touloukian, Arsine Selian Memorials	197,717.87	2001	Educational Society of Malatia	50,403.14
1999	Astine Vartanian Memorial	10,975.00	2001	Seroon Egavian Memorial	52,454.00
1999	Haiganoush Agnes & Haig R. Yazjian Memorial	1,006,921.46	2001	Paris, Garbis, George & Jerry Essayian, Rose B. Vereen, Agnes B. Solline Memorial	80,744.00
1999	Souren, Ara, Tzolak Yeramian Memorial	360,300.00	2001	Katherina Ghazarian Memorial	336,249.50
1999	Krikor Youredjian	6,223.53	2001	Armenak & Iskoochi Andrias Ghoukassian Memorial	10,000.00
2000	AGBU Friends of Children's Centers	368,068.28	2001	Toros & Zabelle Gosyan Memorial	376,563.40
2000	AGBU Southern California Youth Activities	69,505.00			
2000	Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Ajamian	81,997.06			

2001	David M. Horne Memorial	\$ 5,000.00
2001	Buck Hovsepian Memorial	775,476.53
2001	Howard Family Philanthropic Fund	15,000.00
2001	Mardo & Seta Kaprealian	10,000.00
2001	Sculptor Bruce Sanoian Kueffer Memorial	5,000.00
2001	Madeline Manoogian Memorial	5,000.00
2001	Yvonne & Andre Manoukian Memorial	659,414.54
2001	Katherine & Avedis Miridjanian Memorial	42,000.00
2001	Hagop J. Nazerian Memorial	21,714.75
2001	John & Grace Brady Nicoll Memorial	36,701.97
2001	Angelina Ohanian Memorial	5,000.00
2001	Arpeen Mangerian Sullivan	51,434.00
2001	Jorge Tchinnosian	5,000.00
2001	Aspet & Zevart Vartenissian Memorial	513,056.96
2001	Christina & Araxie Zorian Memorial	32,631.79
2002	AGBU YP	180,849.00
2002	Jack & Ani Anserian	37,500.00
2002	Yertvart Arzumanyan Memorial	727,170.74
2002	Alexan Attarian Memorial	5,490.00
2002	Hratchia & Adrine Chamlian Memorial	10,000.00
2002	Simon A. Cholakian Memorial	115,921.62
2002	Mr. & Mrs. Vartan Hartounian	11,000.00
2002	Jeffrey S. Kerbeykian Memorial	10,052.00
2002	Boghos Mekhedjian Memorial	7,400.00
2002	Maritza Parechanian Mousaian Memorial	10,200.00
2002	Narthooe Nahigian Poloshian Memorial	14,499.91
2002	George H. Shahbazian	4,000.00
2002	Anahid & Kourkin Stepanian Memorial	177,054.00
2002	Vartkes & Berjouhi Tamzarian	50,000.00
2002	Bishop Papken Varjabedian Memorial	60,033.00
2002	Jacqueline Yedibalian	5,000.00
2002	Victor Zarougian & Judith A. Saryan	171,050.00
2003	Marie-Louise Le Roy Agabekian	2,135,643.00
2003	AGBU Friends of Armenia Education	82,941.92
2003	Souren Aghajanian Memorial	3,919.46
2003	Anonymous "AK", NY	3,000.00
2003	Nevart Balekjian Memorial	10,000.00
2003	Rafi H. & Zela K. Balouzian	18,500.00
2003	Bart G. Baron Memorial	2,250.00
2003	Zadour Berberian	44,555.00
2003	Arshalouys Chakrian Memorial	10,000.00
2003	Enkrid Chemkerten	3,560.00
2003	Chomaklou Compatriotic Society Inc.	60,000.00
2003	Simone Djarikian	179,414.00
2003	Leah Garabedian Memorial	25,000.00
2003	Paul & Rose Hachigian	200,380.00
2003	Hairapetian & Hairapetian	80,000.00
2003	Dr. Leo Hamalian Memorial	6,075.00
2003	Armen & Gloria Hampar Family	75,000.00
2003	Arsen B. Haroutunian Memorial	5,000.00
2003	Mardiros Iskenderian Memorial	20,045.00
2003	Puzant H. Jeryan Memorial	6,241,428.28
2003	George V. & Aznive Kaplan Memorial	20,000.00
2003	Roupen & Verjine Karakhanian Memorial	27,000.00
2003	Krikor & Nevart Kiladjian Memorial	2,215.00
2003	Harry & Suzanne Mangoian	11,565.62
2003	George Mekjian	20,000.00

2003	Karekin Melidonian Memorial	\$ 24,530.00
2003	Mike Partayan	144,000.00
2003	Mugerditch & Marie Selvian Memorial	25,000.00
2003	Stephan Ter-Poghossian Memorial	30,000.00
2003	Peter G. & Elizabeth Torosian Foundation	10,000.00
2003	Drs. Yervant & Rita Zorian	11,500.00
2004	AGBU District Committee of France	103,504.00
2004	Haiganoosh Mengushian Ajemian Memorial	594,332.68
2004	Dorothy B. Avakian	20,000.00
2004	Ohannes & Veron Aznavoorian Memorial	25,000.00
2004	Parsegh Balekdjian Memorial	107,220.00
2004	John Basmajian Memorial	363,404.21
2004	Carl B. & Gladys L. Dockmejian Memorial	97,997.83
2004	Greta M. & Drs. John H. & Leo R. Doumanian	10,000.00
2004	George & Mary Esajian Memorial	10,000.00
2004	Krikor & Aghavni Geogorian Memorial	5,000.00
2004	Raffi George Memorial	13,000.00
2004	B. Hekimian & Melkonian Memorial	137,000.00
2004	Kirkor Imirzian Memorial	12,595.00
2004	Roy G. Kelegian Memorial	5,995.00
2004	Richard R. Markarian Memorial	100,000.00
2004	Andon & Vartanoush Noraian Memorial	5,000.00
2004	George & Agnes Noraian	7,000.00
2004	Vicki, Gary & Nora Noraian	5,000.00
2004	Garnik & Hilda Ohanian	9,500.00
2004	Mary Mangerian Onanian Memorial	91,597.06
2004	Mary Mangerian Onanian & George Mangerian Memorial	70,000.00
2004	Hampartzum & Turvanda Kurkjian Parechanian Memorial	5,555.00
2004	Sahin Satin	30,157.00
2004	Olympia Jamgochian Shahbaz Memorial	5,000.00
2004	Anahid & Tony Diran Memorial Tevrizian	60,060.02
2004	Earl & Charlotte Van Hise, Albert French Memorial	12,500.00
2004	Daniff Yazjian Memorial	32,793.70
2005	Rose Agajan Memorial	10,200.00
2005	AGBU Friends of Armenia & Karabakh	50,287.69
2005	Anonymous "A & T"	10,000.00
2005	Anonymous "AM"	357,659.68
2005	Anonymous "BG"	100,000.00
2005	John & Rose Apalakian Memorial	17,763.00
2005	Paul & Grace Arslanian Memorial	104,814.77
2005	Ervand & Dshkhui Arutunian Memorial	50,000.00
2005	Helen Arutunian Memorial	50,000.00
2005	Kazaros Arutunian & Nina Kazaroff Memorial	50,000.00
2005	Sevan Aslanyan	6,000.00
2005	Alexander Jirayr & Isabella Lori Balikian	5,575.00
2005	Ari Balouzian	11,950.00
2005	Shoghig Bardakjian Memorial	29,265.00
2005	Harold R. & Betty G. Battersby	25,000.00
2005	Jeffrey Stephen Berliner & Karen Shahbazian Berliner	5,250.00
2005	Haig Milton Boyajohn & Frances Boyajohn Cuniberti Family Memorial	1,084,365.89
2005	Karekin & Arousiag Demirjian Memorial	5,000.00
2005	Louise Doumanian Memorial	15,000.00
2005	Armen, Ann & Arden Giligian	31,612.06
2005	John & Bessie Kazanjian Guregian & Gerald Guregian Memorial	13,160.82

AGBU Endowments 1910-2018

2005	Harry & Armine Hagopian Memorial	\$ 195,811.49	2007	Hemanyag Mangerian Memorial	\$ 10,000.00
2005	John H. Hagopian Memorial	25,000.00	2007	Oscar & Irene Mazmanian Memorial	10,000.00
2005	Sarkis Kaloustian Memorial	10,000.00	2007	Gerald McKay	12,250.00
2005	Nehmat Y. Kilajian Memorial	37,000.00	2007	Sukias N. & Haigouhi Arukian Mooradian Memorial	10,000.00
2005	Levon & Vartoohi Menasian Kouyoumjian Memorial	14,780.00	2007	Berge & Evelyn Papazian	16,300.00
2005	Garabed & Aghavni Kouzoujian Memorial	71,550.00	2007	Anahid Ann Pridjian Memorial	419,100.00
2005	Varteres Maroukian Memorial	29,394.45	2007	Michel Khandjian Sabbagh	36,750.00
2005	Harry, Lucy & Alice Mooradian Memorial	25,300.00	2007	Shnorhig (Grace) Tahmazian Memorial	569,407.83
2005	Naomi Pekmezian Memorial	212,866.03	2007	Hratch & Suzanne Toufayan	2,428,525.00
2005	Jirair Sarian Memorial	25,000.00	2007	Gary & Nina Turpanjian	10,750.00
2005	Paris Terzian Memorial	51,973.28	2008	AGBU Focus 2007 NYSIP Scholarship	55,000.00
2006	AAIC Endowment Fund	2,000,000.00	2008	AGBU France	500,000.00
2006	AGBU Nork Children's Center	120,362.05	2008	Margaret Ajemian Ahnert	37,000.00
2006	Mr. & Mrs. Manoog Altoonian Memorial	213,041.34	2008	Anonymous "HN"	1,352,227.72
2006	George & Sybille Aprahamian	25,000.00	2008	Michael & Rose Assarian	5,000.00
2006	Maral Ani Avakian Memorial	36,570.00	2008	Garo & Margaret Gazurian Memorial	7,417.86
2006	Tokmun & Lucy Bakalian, Leo & Elaine Bakalian Memorial	241,001.85	2008	Green & Gedigian Family	10,000.00
2006	Hasmig Barsoumian Memorial	40,670.00	2008	Florence Lee Hampartz Memorial	27,211.52
2006	Elise Basmadjian	65,000.00	2008	Chavarche Aida & André Hartounians Memorial	5,492,989.40
2006	Takoochie (Queenie) J. & Delemak A. Basmajian Memorial	13,980.00	2008	Kalfayan Orphanage Foundation	254,692.97
2006	Gordon & Virginia (Kazanjian) Bedrosian & Kazanjian Families of Lowell, MA Memorial	35,643.50	2008	Delemak & Eugenie Kurkjian Memorial	811,223.21
2006	Viken & Nora Bedrossian	13,000.00	2008	Hovanes Lalikian Memorial	11,350.00
2006	Joseph Chalmers Memorial	13,217.46	2008	Toros & Gacia Mangassarian	300,000.00
2006	Ohannes Donelian	38,132.00	2008	Donald S. & Carolyn C. Michaelian	5,900.00
2006	Ethel J. Duffett Memorial	399,600.00	2008	Ned J. & Corinne Parsekian & Family	9,000.00
2006	Haton & Hachadoor Erganian Family	123,032.98	2008	Nishan & Lucy Paul Memorial	91,750.00
2006	Daniel Janeves Memorial	179,499.54	2008	Dr. Nubar & Aida Sethian	10,000.00
2006	Peter & Clare G. Kalustian Memorial	24,986.07	2008	Agnes Tarpinian Memorial	10,626.72
2006	Ashot Kazaroff Memorial	50,000.00	2008	Onnig Torossian Memorial	494,000.00
2006	Keuleyan/Miguan	267,799.00	2008	Carnig & Virginia Tususian Memorial	50,000.00
2006	Berdj & Margaret Kiladjian	30,000.00	2008	Helena & Mikael Yadegarov	408,132.60
2006	Jerry Kouyoumjian Memorial	2,535,112.27	2009	Sahag & Rose Akgulian Memorial	10,000.00
2006	The Harry T. Mangurian Jr. Foundation Inc.	360,000.00	2009	Haig Allahverdian Memorial	234,835.96
2006	Berj & Lusine Mikaelian	7,025.00	2009	Vartkess M. Balian Memorial	9,500.00
2006	Ann Mooradian Memorial	830,237.04	2009	Leon Richard Caprielian Memorial	226,927.25
2006	Mullian Family Memorial	6,043,066.52	2009	Albert Jr. Demirjian Memorial	1,099,648.56
2006	Dr. Robert M. Nalbandian Memorial	6,100.00	2009	Dr. Arshavir Gundjian	30,455.00
2006	Joseph & Jenny Oughourlian	62,500.00	2009	Rose Kalajian Memorial	10,000.00
2006	Varsenig Z. Pasternak Memorial	523,537.30	2009	Sarkis H. Kashkashian Memorial	10,000.00
2006	Armineh Simon & Hagop Elmayan Memorial	5,000.00	2009	Margaret H. Merguerian Memorial	93,385.02
2006	Meguerditch Miguel Tchavoushian Memorial	20,000.00	2009	Gerald G. Norian Memorial	11,881.97
2006	Artin & Yeghisapet Toorinjian Memorial	11,000.00	2009	Berj & Beatrice Sandruny Educational Trust	90,886.00
2006	Turpanjian Family	250,000.00	2009	Krikor & Ovssana Soghomonian Memorial	100,000.00
2006	Harry Zekian Memorial	8,000.00	2009	Rusan Sysoyev Memorial	665,697.11
2007	Z. Paul & Sonia Akian	10,000.00	2009	Dr. Elizabeth Boghossian Weller Memorial	24,500.00
2007	Anais Bagdassarian	81,332.00	2009	Garnik Yefremian Memorial	5,455.00
2007	Sarkis Chakardjian	117,600.00	2010	H. Hrant & Alidz Agbabian	50,000.00
2007	Dr. Peter H. & Joachim H. Yesek Darpin	41,470.12	2010	Puzant & Zartoohy Ajemian Memorial	31,000.00
2007	Arsen & Varteni Diran Family Memorial	2,832,588.30	2010	Dr. Ellie Andreassian	9,515.00
2007	George Hovanesian Memorial	10,000.00	2010	Harry Haroutioun Artinian Memorial Fund	150,686.57
2007	Garos Hussenjian Memorial	11,500.00	2010	Yervant & Seran Shamlan Bajakian Memorial	10,000.00
2007	Dikran & Marie Iskenderian	6,900.00	2010	Haig Barigian	74,596.00
2007	George & Flora Manavian Memorial	25,000.00	2010	Albert & Terry Bezjian	5,000.00
2007	Haik Mangerian Memorial	5,656.00	2010	Ohaness Dellakian Memorial	10,000.00
			2010	Levon & Angele Dermenjian Memorial	15,000.00
			2010	Robert K. & Agnes Devejian Memorial	999,886.29
			2010	Helen Hajinian Memorial	12,149.18

2010	Jerry Jemelyan Memorial	\$ 27,745.07
2010	Carl B. Melikian Memorial	35,645.60
2010	John & Patricia W. Merchant Memorial	20,000.00
2010	Anthony Mooradian Memorial	3,000.00
2010	Artemis Agnes Odjakjian Memorial	10,000.00
2010	Margaret Ohanian Memorial	124,611.58
2010	Stephan Tatusian	26,000.00
2011	Walter V. Abbey Memorial	215,770.19
2011	Anonymous "HK"	361,529.65
2011	Anonymous "PAP"	801,069.78
2011	Dr. Gerard Balakian Memorial	50,000.00
2011	Rose Eliazarian Memorial	24,095.88
2011	Lucia Kalfaian Family	100,000.00
2011	Mary M. Mast Memorial	179,025.14
2011	Alice & Stefan Ourlian	48,500.00
2011	Harry S. Sarkisian Memorial	12,476.71
2011	Haig & Nounia Sirooni Memorial	279,115.83
2011	Ani Vapurciyan Memorial	236,387.01
2011	Giragos Vapurciyan Memorial	709,161.02
2012	Hagop Avedisian Memorial	10,100.00
2012	Shant Kamer Basmajian Memorial	46,612.89
2012	Paul Arakel & Margaret Bogigian Memorial	12,010.00
2012	Haig & Elza Didizian	100,000.00
2012	Ayda Ihmalian Memorial	69,015.63
2012	Arsine Kassakhian Memorial	18,000.00
2012	John Kazanjian Family Foundation	210,738.52
2012	Charlotte A. Koomjohn Memorial	17,430.04
2012	Azad & George Melkonian Memorial	50,000.00
2012	Frances Poloshian Memorial	46,335.68
2012	Krikor & Anna Sarafian Memorial	53,773.88
2012	Arsen S. Sayan	50,000.00
2012	Arine Tchertchian Memorial	23,419.00
2012	Helen Movesian Vartanian Memorial	786,196.16
2013	Gladys Z. Ashjian Memorial	947,874.20
2013	Khosrov & Siranoosh Dabbaghian Memorial	25,000.00
2013	Pergruhi & Garabet Hamparian Memorial	10,050.00
2013	Jeannette Kouyoumjian Ilanjan	10,005.00
2013	Peter Kayajanian Memorial	109,792.54
2013	Bobby & Virginia Akkashian Kazaroff Memorial	50,000.00
2013	Shmavon & Seranoosh Manoogian Memorial	200,778.58
2013	Martha Mirigian Memorial	1,442,051.00
2013	Nazar Norsigian Memorial	22,828.26
2013	Haroutioun Nerses Ohanian Memorial	70,000.00
2013	Aram A. & Luz Papasian Memorial	2,883,922.21
2013	Berge & Vera Setrakian	200,000.00
2013	Adrienne Simonian Memorial	12,361.83
2013	John Varjabedian	50,000.00
2014	Anonymous "BM"	1,993,000.00
2014	Anonymous "T"	1,000,000.00
2014	Barbara Apisson Testamentary Trust	345,000.00
2014	Jamil M. & Marie J. Arslanian Memorial	24,306.23
2014	Anne Balemian Memorial	219,054.97
2014	Dr. Zareh N. Demirjian Memorial	54,845.00
2014	Yervant & Melissa Demirjian	100,000.00
2014	Francis T. Devian Memorial	100,000.00
2014	Dr. John & Alina Doumanian	6,000.00
2014	Harry & Satenig Gray Family	100,000.00

2014	Armenouhi A. Isbirian Memorial	\$ 10,000.00
2014	Arax & Satenig Karagosian Memorial	93,566.72
2014	The Simon Kechechian Trust	893,807.28
2014	Hagop & Erancia Kouyoumdjian	100,000.00
2014	Haig & Sunya B. Ksayian Memorial	93,204.28
2014	Lucille Makarov Memorial	16,088.86
2014	Vatche & Tamar Manoukian	2,500,000.00
2014	Therese Ohanian	400,000.00
2014	Okutan Varjabedian Family	19,500.00
2014	Estate of Edith Santourian	19,179.56
2014	Hemayak Setrakian Memorial	100,000.00
2014	Joseph, Esther, Richard & Rose Tashjian Memorial	818,791.32
2014	Berjoohie Zakarian Memorial	10,843.67
2015	Michael Amirkhanian	20,000.00
2015	Dr. Vahram & Mrs. Rose Bakamjian	14,500.00
2015	Ghugasian, Seferian, Kalfayan Memorial	100,000.00
2015	Shnork Gregory Kasparian Memorial	580,867.58
2015	Samuel & Victoria Magzanian Memorial	15,300.00
2015	Garbis & Arek Nazarian	100,000.00
2015	Hovannes Haroutioun Ohanian Memorial	60,000.00
2015	Astor & Veronica Naman Sarkisian Memorial	27,000.00
2016	Judge Y. Gladys Barsamian	40,000.01
2016	Garabed Djeghelian Memorial	40,700.00
2016	Annie & Vasken Kassabian	78,126.73
2016	George Andrew Krikorian Memorial	1,284,757.83
2016	Sam Jr. Mardian Memorial	10,000.00
2016	Flora Mirzaian Memorial	100,100.00
2016	Grace Paregian Memorial	343,487.96
2016	Annette Anaide Tcholakian Memorial	97,730.93
2016	Elizabeth M. Toomajian Memorial	95,335.58
2016	Isabel Toomajian Memorial	303,986.73
2016	Guirguis Manoushi Zada Memorial	29,058.34
2017	Armenian-American Veterans of Greater Boston	500,000.00
2017	Professor Vahé Baladouni Memorial	30,000.00
2017	Charles Joseph Churukian Memorial	100,000.00
2017	Woodrow Michael, Victoria & Megerdich Kehyaian Memorial	500,200.00
2017	Meleke Ohanian Memorial	50,000.00
2017	Katherine P. Tayian Memorial	101,193.02
2018	Roxy A. Balian Memorial	25,000.00
2018	Zachary J. Balian Sr. Memorial	190,250.69
2018	Bedik & Muran Foundation	25,000.00
2018	Avedis & Kohar Caroglanian Memorial	36,594.16
2018	Diran Chakelian	32,800.00
2018	Arthur Ekizian Memorial	46,465.30
2018	Haroutioun Gurunian Memorial	25,000.00
2018	Alice E. Hoogasian Memorial	25,000.00
2018	Garabed & Rose Keoshian Memorial	125,000.00
2018	Dr. Kevork B. Keshishian Memorial	37,293.00
2018	Mesrop & Esgooshe Kevorkian Memorial	93,356.29
2018	Souren Khatchadourian Memorial	53,091.66
2018	Gulbenk Shirvanian Memorial	7,515.00
2018	Noubar & Hourig Tcheurekdjian	25,000.00

We sincerely apologize if there are any omissions or errors in the list. If your name has been misspelled, please call 212-319-6383 and we will correct it in our next issue.



PARIS, FRANCE

AGBU Nubar Library Co-Organizes International Conference on the Power of Video Testimony in Scholarly Research

Victim testimony as a source for the study of genocide and mass violence has been the subject of longstanding debate in the social sciences and humanities, especially among historians.

To explore the subject in greater depth, AGBU Nubar Library co-organized an international interdisciplinary conference at the American University of Paris in June 2019 in conjunction with the George and Irina Schaeffer Center for the Study of Genocide, Human Rights and Conflict Prevention (American University of Paris), Yahad-In Unum (Paris), and the University of Southern California (USC) Shoah Foundation Center for Advanced Genocide Research (Los Angeles).

Entitled *Comparative Lenses: Video Testimonies of Survivors and Eyewitnesses on Genocide and Mass Violence*, the panel

discussion examined the value of gathering video testimonies of victims, survivors, eyewitnesses, and perpetrators from the late 1970s up to the present-day and the role these on-camera accounts play in understanding genocides, such as the Holocaust, the Armenian Genocide, the Tutsi genocide, and other mass atrocities.

Major collections, such as the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies (University of Yale), the Oral History Archive of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the Visual History Archive of the USC Shoah Foundation, are now being increasingly searched and analyzed. Since the 2000s, new collections of video testimonies of genocide and mass violence survivors have been created. Several video testimony projects have been undertaken outside the United States as well, as in Eastern Europe,

Rwanda, Cambodia, Guatemala, etc. The origin, methodology, goals, and potential uses of such new collections of video testimonies were particularly addressed by the discussants.

Following introductory remarks by Celeste Schenck, president of the American University of Paris, and Brian Schiff, director of the Schaeffer Center, several video archives were presented: Gerard Libaridian for the video and audio testimonies on the Armenian Genocide; Stephen Naron for the Fortunoff Video Archive; Wolf Gruner for the Visual History Archive; Claver Irakoze for the Audio-Visual Testimony Collection of Genocide Archive of Rwanda; and Michal Chojak for the Yahad-In Unum video testimonies.

More specialized papers were delivered by 23 participants on various themes such as documenting genocides, evaluating the



From left: Patrice Bensimon, Yabad-In Unum; Ari Joskowicz, Vanderbilt University; Estelle Tarica, University of California, Berkeley; and Noah Shenker, Monash University.

relevance of the video medium to document mass violence, analyzing the Holocaust as a paradigm in video testimony, and considering ethics and challenges of video documenting mass violence. Examples of innovative uses of video testimonies were



taken from various countries and events, including studying sexual assaults and violence during the Holocaust in Ukraine or in Cambodia, interviewing eyewitnesses on the very place of mass crimes in Belarus, using courtroom video testimonies as a source after the civil war in Yugoslavia, interrogating Romani testimonies after World War II, rethinking Holocaust and Maya testimonies in post-genocide Guatemala, interviewing perpetrators of mass violence in Syria, etc.

In his concluding remarks, the director of the Shaeffer Center, Brian Schiff, stressed that this conference was “the best one that we organized on this theme” in collaboration with other institutions.

For Boris Adjemian, its director, “the participation of the AGBU Nubar Library in such an academic conference confirms the importance of our institution for the Armenian Diaspora and for the global research on genocide studies.” He expressed gratitude for the American University of Paris George and Irina Schaeffer Center for the Study of Genocide, Human Rights and Conflict Prevention, and to the other co-organizers, for having initiated this forum and making it possible.

The George and Irina Schaeffer Center is dedicated to addressing some such timely issues as understanding the social, historical, and cultural dimensions that lead to the systematic destruction of human groups and devising innovative strategies for resolving and deterring mass violence and the violation of human rights. The center boasts access to the complete Visual History Archive, which it makes available to researchers, students and public.

In turn, Yahad-In Unum identifies the execution sites of Jews during World War II and records and films the testimonies from witnesses of these massacres across eight countries (the Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Poland, Romania, Moldova, Lithuania, and the Republic of Macedonia). Following its original interview methodology for the Holocaust, Yahad now collects testimonies of Maya victims of the armed conflict in Guatemala as well as Yazidi victims of ISIS in Iraq and Syria.

Brian Schiff, director of the George and Irina Schaeffer Center for the Study of Genocide, Human Rights and Conflict Prevention, of the American University of Paris.

The USC Shoah Foundation Center for Advanced Genocide Research is dedicated to advancing new areas of interdisciplinary research on the Holocaust and other genocides, while promoting the scholarly use of the 55,000 video testimonies of the Holocaust, the Armenian, Guatemalan, Rwandan and Cambodian genocides, the Nanjing massacres, and other historical and current mass atrocities in its Visual History Archive. ■

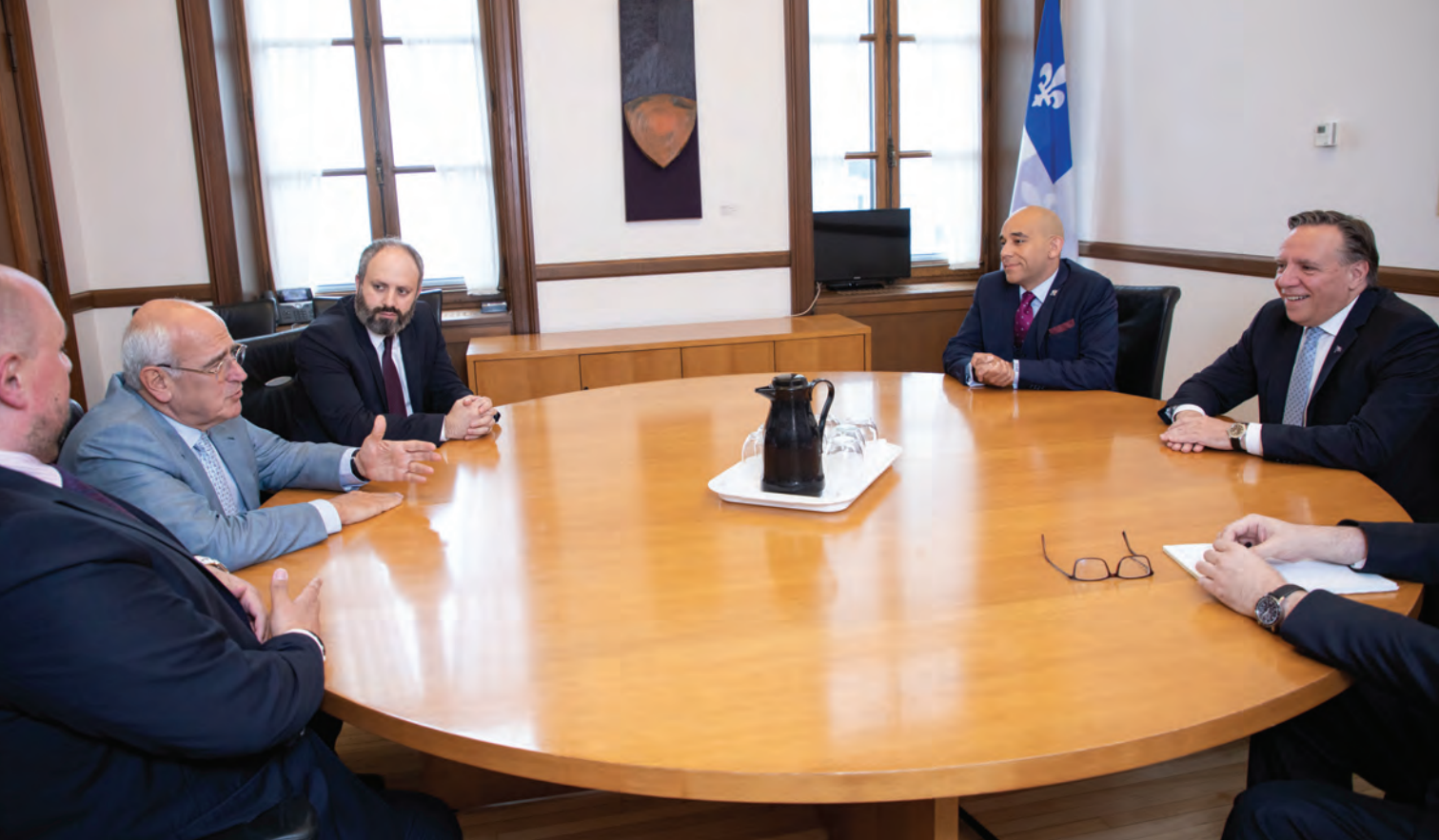


Aram Andonian

AGBU Nubar Library

The AGBU Nubar Library was founded in Paris in 1928. Its first director, Aram Andonian, had been one of the few survivors among the leading Armenian intellectuals and notables arrested by the Ottoman authorities on April 24, 1915. He dedicated the rest of his life to documenting the Armenian Genocide, by gathering a great number of materials into a major archive. Conceived as a home for Armenian and Oriental studies, in a context marked by the destruction and dispersal of the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire after the Genocide, the Nubar Library has been assigned the role of preserving the memory and heritage of Ottoman Armenians and has made a major contribution to the historiography of the Armenian Genocide.

The library, the sole Armenian major archive in Europe of its type, contributes to the shedding of light on the 19th- and 20th-century Armenian experience and serves as a hub providing unfettered access to researchers, academics, and others.



MONTREAL, CANADA

AGBU Central Board Members Visit Québec to Promote Cross-Cultural Education

Coinciding with their board meeting in Montreal over the weekend of June 20-22, AGBU President Berge Setrakian, along with central board members from around the world and representatives of the organization, completed a full agenda of public engagements—starting with a private meeting with the premier of Québec, followed by a town hall, with Canadian-Armenian youth and concluding with a cocktail reception for board members and the community. The predominant theme of the tour focused on cross-cultural education, a clear reflection of the nearly 35,000 Canadian Armenians residing in the Francophone province of Québec.

Meeting with Premier of Québec

On June 20, Setrakian met with the Premier of Québec François Legault at his government offices to discuss ways to promote La Francophonie in Armenia and strengthen Québec-Armenia relations through mutual efforts to safeguard language and identity in the global age.

Premier Legault reaffirmed his stance that education is one of the top priorities of his government and was gratified to know that AGBU shared the same conviction, observing, “The Armenian community in Québec is a great model of integration. Every day Armenians contribute to the prosperity of our society.”

AGBU Cross-Cultural Initiatives

Evidence of AGBU’s expertise in education was highlighted throughout the weekend, citing such shining examples as AGBU Alex Manoogian School’s highly effective curriculum for orienting newly arrived students from war-torn countries such as Syria into the Canadian community—a model program that has been adopted city wide.

Moreover, just a day prior to the meeting with the premier, AGBU school principal Chahé Tanachian signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Québec Chess Federation for the purpose of promoting and teaching chess through coursework, tournaments, and workshops via AGBU Armenian Virtual College (AVC).

From left: Hagop Arslanian, AGBU Canada Executive Committee member; Berge Setrakian, AGBU President; Chahé Tanachian, Chair of AGBU Montreal chapter; Christopher Skeete, member of the National Assembly of Québec for Sainte-Rose; François Legault, Premier of Québec

Both entities committed to submit a detailed plan to the Québec Education Department for its approval to make chess mandatory in schools. The project was inspired by the Republic of Armenia, which, in 2011, made chess part of its core curriculum.

“It’s a very special day for our school,” stated Tanachian. “Studies clearly show that playing chess has many benefits for children, such as better concentration, memory, creativity, and logic.”

Richard Bérubé, director of the Québec Chess Federation, agreed, saying, “We are thrilled by the opportunity of bringing chess to the everyday school program of the Alex Manoogian School. Playing chess starting at a young age can become the difference maker in a child’s development.”

Adding to these impressive initiatives is Montreal's framework agreement with the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF), a global network of French-language universities and research institutions. Under the agreement, AUF will award scholarships to four recipients and AGBU will coordinate the selection of candidates and help assist in settling in and easing their transition to a new community. The first doctoral students from Armenia will be arriving in Québec in January 2020.

Canadian Armenian Youth Town Hall

On June 21, a town hall attended by over 200 members of the Armenian community featured a distinguished panel moderated by retired Canadian Ambassador to Lebanon and Libya Haig Sarafian with opening and closing remarks by chair of AGBU Montreal chapter Chahé Tanachian, the current principal and alumnus of AGBU Alex Manoogian School. Presenters and discussants included AGBU central board members Arda Haratunian, Sarkis Jebejian, and Lena Sarkissian, along with director of AGBU's Department of Alternative Education Natalie Gabrelian.

Sarkissian and Gabrelian demonstrated how AGBU has been a force for education throughout its century old

Left: A member of the audience asks a question during the Q&A session with Armenian youth. **Right:** Panel moderated by retired Canadian Ambassador to Lebanon and Libya, Haig Sarafian, with AGBU central board members Arda Haratunian, Sarkis Jebejian, and Lena Sarkissian.



history. Their presentation covered the broad range of learning opportunities from traditional and experiential to innovative alternatives in e-learning and after-school programs.

Central board member and assistant secretary Arda Haratunian described the array of AGBU programs and projects focusing on other pillars of the AGBU mission, namely Identity/Culture, Humanitarian Relief and Socioeconomic Development.

During the Q&A session with Armenian youth, topics ranged from providing programs for children with special needs, a new e-tool called *ATLAS* by AGBU that curates and aggregates online resources in Armenian Education, and other alternative learning products that complement traditional formats. Other questions touched upon the changes in Armenia since the Velvet Revolution in 2018 and how AGBU is fostering self-empowerment among the

AGBU President Berge Setrakian and chair of AGBU Montreal chapter Chahé Tanachian surrounded by AGBU Montreal scouts.

women of Armenia through its Women's Entrepreneurs (W.E.) program.

In his closing remarks, Setrakian commented on how the world has changed: "Everything is more universal. The youth of today are fully integrated in their respective countries, but they are also proud of their Armenian identity."

Closing Reception for Board Members

The weekend came to a festive close on Saturday evening as over 200 guests gathered at the waterside venue Centre des Sciences in Montreal to meet and interact with members of AGBU's highest governing body and thank them for a productive visit that will help set the stage for a dynamic era in cross-cultural exchange between Armenians and the Francophone world. 🇸🇰





STEPANAKERT, ARTSAKH

AGBU Redoubles Efforts to Revitalize the Economy and People of Artsakh

In June 2019, the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) organized a formal press conference at the Vallex Garden Hotel in Stepanakert Artsakh to formally announce a major push behind its AGBU Fund for Artsakh, a four-way strategy for sustainable socio-economic growth in Artsakh centered around programs in education, culture, humanitarian relief, and socio-economic development.

In addition to the presence of AGBU's senior leadership, Grigori Martirosyan, the state minister of Artsakh and Jorge Del Aguila-Eurnekian, representing Fruitful Armenia and Converse Bank, were invited to make brief remarks to the cross section of attendees from the local community, including public servants, representatives of major companies in Artsakh, as well as existing and prospective beneficiaries of fund programs.

According to AGBU President Berge Setrakian, a sustainable growth economy for Artsakh is as indispensable to its survival as negotiating a just peace and defending the right to self-determination. "Along with providing a better life for the people, a strong economy also means a stronger military and eventually a safer homeland," he stated.

Building on the organization's decades of support for humanitarian and socio-economic initiatives in the war-stricken enclave, AGBU Fund for Artsakh was officially launched in 2018 as an umbrella entity to better reflect the interdependence among programs to achieve optimal

national renewal—from providing emergency medical support in response to the April 2016 four-day war, educating the next generation of innovators through collaboration with the TUMO Center for Creative Technologies, helping advance deserving students with university scholarships, and supporting military officer education for both on and off the battlefield. On the cultural front, the fund continues to support the Artsakh Chamber Orchestra that it helped found in 2004. The orchestra has since toured the world, and thanks to its global success, has paved the way for a new music school in Artsakh.

Two new agriculture-based initiatives were added to the fund in 2018—AGBU Fields of Hope and AGBU Olive Tree Orchards. Both are designed to empower farmers, including Syrian-Armenian refugee settlers, to transform Artsakh into a cornucopia of produce to sustain the populace and open new markets for regional trade.

In concert with announcing accelerated efforts behind the fund, AGBU introduced two new ambitious programs aimed at stimulating economic activity and reducing poverty: AGBU Women Entrepreneurs (W.E.); and AGBU Learn to Earn Artsakh Program (LEAP).

AGBU LEAP is a professional development initiative that helps locals with different educational backgrounds and skill sets to create more sustainable and remunerative sources of income through self-employment and enhanced employability. The program also aims to support public

Speakers at the AGBU Fund for Artsakh press conference. From left: AGBU Armenia Executive Director Talar Kazanjian; AGBU Armenia President Vasken Yacoubian; AGBU President Berge Setrakian; and State Minister of Artsakh Grigori Martirosyan.

servants in their professional development, as well as to cultivate a more supportive environment for small and medium-size enterprises in Artsakh.

Selected entrepreneurs will enroll for a course in business administration from the American University of Armenia Extension Program. Upon completion, they will have the opportunity to compete for mini-grants and benefit from year-long handholding from experts in relevant fields.

Other beneficiaries will also receive English language training and a non-degree certificate in tourism and hospitality management upon completion of at least five of AUA Extension's 12-course program.

AGBU Learn to Earn Artsakh Program also commits to strengthen capabilities among officers employed in the public sector through professional development courses and exchange visits with Armenian counterparts. The program will help the Artsakh government develop action plans to resolve policy gaps and improve the business climate for small and medium enterprises.

AGBU Women Entrepreneurs (W.E.) in Artsakh is implemented together with Fruitful Armenia Charity Foundation to boost the entrepreneurial skills of women in Stepanakert and the regions and help them succeed in the world of business. The project is part of the AGBU Women Empowerment Program which began in Armenia in 2017 to help promote human rights and equal opportunity for women in Armenia.

"The establishment of enterprises, the creation of new jobs, and the promotion of exports are all key to economic development. This is why we are joining AGBU in supporting women entrepreneurs in Artsakh by helping them expand their knowledge of finance and entrepreneurship and to be more effectively involved in the development of the country's economy," noted Jorge Del Aguila-Eurnekian, board member of Fruitful Armenia Foundation and Converse Bank. ■



YEREVAN, ARMENIA

AGBU Leadership Briefs Armenia's Prime Minister on Current Strategic Goals

In June 2019, on the heels of their official visit to Artsakh in support of the AGBU Fund for Artsakh, AGBU President Berge Setrakian, along with AGBU Armenia President Vasken Yacoubian, and AGBU Armenia Director Talar Kazanjian, had the opportunity to meet with Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan and staff members at the government building to brief them on AGBU's successful Artsakh visit, present the organization's strategy for accelerating socio-economic development in the war-torn republic, and update progress on its many initiatives throughout Armenia, since their first official meeting with Pashinyan last year, shortly after the Velvet Revolution.

Now, a year later, with the New Armenia Agenda under way, areas of mutual interest could be explored with greater substance and specificity with an understanding that the work of AGBU in Armenia is driven by a conviction that a strong, vibrant, democratic Armenia is the key to preserving and enhancing the global Armenian identity in the 21st century.

The prime minister expressed the

Armenian government's appreciation of AGBU's growing presence in the country and its ability to address pressing needs of the people on multiple fronts, assuring AGBU leadership of its desire to cooperate and assist, where appropriate, in meeting the organization's strategic goals and programmatic needs.

After the one-hour meeting, Setrakian noted that there are many areas of alignment, citing such examples as the AGBU Women's Entrepreneurs program (W.E.) designed to uplift the status of women in Armenia through financial independence,

Prime Minister Pashinyan greets AGBU President Berge Setrakian at the Armenian government building.

and its efforts to build capacity among civil society organizations in Armenia through its Bridge for CSOs program, aimed at promoting an open and trusting relationship between citizens and their government. Both programs involve Diaspora participation, which adds another important dimension to the much needed reset in Armenia-Diaspora relations.

"Anything that AGBU can do to help the people of Armenia succeed in their personal lives and as citizens of a country with so much human potential will help keep the entire Armenian Nation moving in a positive direction," Setrakian observed. "In these times, what happens in Armenia does not stay in Armenia. Its trials and triumphs, its place in the world, and its image as a distinct living culture, has, to one degree or another, tangibly or psychologically, an impact on Armenians everywhere."

The parties agreed to continue an open dialogue in the months ahead to ensure optimal outcomes for shared goals. During his stay in Yerevan, Setrakian also met with President of Armenia Armen Sarkissian to discuss the highlights of his official visits. ■

Seated left, front to back: AGBU Armenia President Vasken Yacoubian; AGBU President Berge Setrakian; AGBU Armenia Executive Director Talar Kazanjian. Seated right, front to back: Assistant to PM Hratch Tashchyan; PM Nikol Pashinyan; PM spokesperson Vladimir Karapetyan.





YEREVAN, ARMENIA

AGBU Hosts Welcome Dinner for Incoming President of American University of Armenia

Prior to her official welcome by the American University of Armenia (AUA), its new president Dr. Karin Markides was the guest of honor at a private dinner hosted by AGBU President Berge Setrakian and his wife Vera Setrakian at Yerevan's Salon Restaurant on June 6, 2019.

AGBU Armenia President Vasken Yacoubian was also in attendance to greet the gathering of notable figures from both educational, governmental, and non-profit circles, including members of the AUA senior leadership, several former university presidents and vice presidents, as well as foreign ambassadors and local business leaders. They gathered to pay tribute to the outgoing president, congratulate Dr. Markides as the university's fifth president, and introduce her to the international community of Yerevan of which she is a part, given her Swedish background and wide exposure to learning institutions around the world.

"Dr. Markides comes to the post with the right world view for the times," said



Berge Setrakian and Karin Markides



President Armen Sarkissian

AGBU President Setrakian. "Her international perspective is not only good for students of AUA but also for Armenia itself, as it continues to enhance its image as a global Armenian nation."

Dr. Markides, who most recently served as the president and CEO of Chalmers University of Technology in Sweden, is the first non-Armenian AUA president since the institution was founded in 1991 with significant support from AGBU. She is also first woman to run the university, with its elevated stature and expanded scope, developed over three decades.

Remarking on the appointment of his successor, outgoing president Armen Der-Kiureghian described the unique attributes Dr. Markides brings to the top post. "As I contemplate my retirement as the president of AUA, I am certain that the university will be in good and capable hands with Dr. Markides at the helm. As the first non-Armenian and female president of the university, she will open new directions for the university's advancement. I congratulate her on her appointment and express my readi-


Dr. Karin Markides

Dr. Karin Markides completed her doctorate in analytical chemistry at Stockholm University in 1984, after which she started her research career at Brigham Young University in Utah as a postdoctoral fellow, followed by positions as a research assistant and associate director. She also served as a visiting professor at Stanford University. In 1990, she returned to Sweden as a chair professor and dean of chemistry and chemical engineering at Uppsala University. In 2004, she became vice director general of Vnnova, the Swedish innovation agency. Subsequently, in 2015, Dr. Markides accepted the post of president of Chalmers University of Technology and also serves as the chair of the Scientific Council for Sustainable Development under the Swedish government. She is a member of the Nobel Prize nomination committee and author of numerous articles and monographs.

ness to assist her in any way that I can.”

Addressing the guests in attendance, including Armenia’s President Armen Sarkissian, Armenia’s foreign minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, AUA Board of Trustees chairman Dr. Lawrence Pitts, among many others distinguished community members, Dr. Markides stressed themes of trust and unity among stakeholders in order to work together toward common goals.

“I have a strong network across the world and I will invite people who could inspire future development,” Markides emphasized, adding, “I’m going to work on increasing trust between different groups. Because I think that’s the key to really make this move forward.”

Two days later, when Dr. Markides was welcomed by the AUA community at an official reception in AUA’s Akian Art Gallery, she continued to outline her vision for the university’s future.

“We can work together with other actors to build upon the nation’s strengths throughout all regions,” she stated. “There are many possibilities to make an impact and to ensure that more of our students stay in the country and develop it.” She went on to say, “We will work to create impact. We have the right students and faculty and we have expertise in the areas that are important to develop, from public health to science and technology... It’s a big challenge but I feel we can take steps in that direction.”

She also noted the recent appointment of AUA and AGBU to serve jointly as advisers to the Armenian government on the development of the country’s technology sector, citing it as an opportunity for collaboration among entities to support the socio-economic development of Armenia.

AUA now offers undergraduate degrees in diverse subjects from business, English and communications to the computer, engineering and data sciences, plus nine graduate degrees: business administration; industrial engineering and systems management; computer and information science; political science and international affairs; public health; law; teaching English as a second language; and strategic management. The total University student body is currently 1,800 strong, with nearly 4,500 alumni.

In addition, AUA currently houses nine research centers that attract a range of privately and publically funded research projects, as well as the AGBU Papazian Library, the richest English-language library in the region, boasting 40,500 volumes of books, 235,000 e-books and journals, and 13,400 members from both the AUA community and the general public. AUA and the Zoryan Institute also teamed up to launch a new center for oral history, creating a rich resource for Genocide studies in the region. ■



AGBU and AUA Co-Found Research Group to Study Armenia’s Tech Sector

Earlier this year, a research group was established by the American University of Armenia and AGBU to study opportunities for developing Armenia’s tech industry. In June, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan met with members of the group, including the Minister of High-Tech Industry of Armenia Hakob Arshakyan, former AUA president Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian, AUA President Karin Markides, AUA Board of Trustees chair Lawrence Pitts, AGBU Armenia President Vazgen Yacoubian, Synopsys Armenia President and AGBU Central Board member Yervant Zorian, and Armenian Technology Research Program executive director Arthur Khalatyan, among other stakeholders.

During the meeting, experts from authoritative international educational institutions presented their findings to date, assessing Armenia’s educational, economic and technological sectors as they relate to its industry competitiveness.

“The promise of a thriving high tech industry in Armenia must be rooted in realities and objective analysis of our national assets. This research group is the first step to formulating the strategies that will unleash Armenia’s competitiveness in the high-tech space.”



PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

AGBU Hye Geen Marks 25th Anniversary with Conference on Parenting in the Digital Age

Ever striving to find ways to improve the lives of Armenian families with programs that address issues facing women and mothers, AGBU Hye Geen chose “Parenting in the Digital Age” as a timely subject for celebrating its 25 years of service. The event took place at AGBU Vatche & Tamar Manoukian Center’s newly opened theater complex on March 23.

The 13th Annual Hye Geen Conference focused on the growing concern about the over-attachment to smartphones by today’s youth, a phenomenon experienced both at home and in schools, which Sona Yacoubian outlined in her opening remarks, along with a concise history of AGBU Hye Geen and its accomplishments over the past quarter century.

Shakeh Yegavian, with over 20 years’ experience at the Glen Robert’s Child Study Center and now in private practice, opened the discussion to a panel of two teenagers and a mother. Yegavian compared her own experience growing up and raising her two daughters in the pre-digital age. She asked the panelists whether today’s youth think they are more or less productive with their smartphones and how their electronic devices have affected their personal relationships. She also posed questions related to how social media has led young people to increasingly compare themselves to others, much to their emotional detriment. She asked the adult panelist what ways parents

could minimize the use of smart technology and whether she herself uses technology for disciplinary purposes.

The second round of discussions began with Dr. Armine Movsisyan, an educator and past principal of AGBU Vatche & Tamar Manoukian High School, who earned her education doctorate from the University of Southern California, was



Sona Yacoubian, Hye Geen Founder. Since 2002, AGBU Hye Geen has established six Pregnant Women’s Centers throughout Armenia, having served more than 5,000 underserved pregnant women and babies

trained in leadership at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and earned her administrator credentials at UC Berkley. She is currently the director of curriculum, instruction, learning, and innovation, as well as the superintendent at

Intellectual Virtues Academy. She asked the audience to express their vision for technology at home and in school; then steered the conversation to addiction to social media, acknowledging a recommendation to prepare youth to use technology responsibly and acknowledging the inevitable impact of new technology in the coming years.

Nora Chitilian-Kelesian joined the discussion in her various capacities in the field of counseling. She has a private practice in Glendale, is an independent contractor at the Glendale Unified School District, works as a school-based counselor at various private Armenian schools, serves on the board of Richard Tufenkian Armenian Preschool, is one of the founders of the Armenian Autism Outreach Project, as well as a co-founder of Camp Zavarian, where she also teaches social skills. She began her talk with a statistic many audience members found shocking—one out of seven teens deal with some form of anxiety.

She emphasized how technology has fueled the rise of anxiety among teens, more specifically social media, and highlighted key factors to keep in mind when parenting in the digital age. For example, if a parent expects their child to not use their phone at the dinner table, then neither should the parent. Another pointer was goal-oriented parenting as a tool to enhance the parent-child relationship.

Following lunch, Dr. Edrick Dorian, a board-certified clinical and police psychologist with the Los Angeles Police Department in private practice in Encino, spoke about cyberbullying, expanding the definition of the word and explaining how, in some extreme cases, cyberbullying can be considered a criminal act. He posited that a digital device can be as powerful as a firearm, with a great level of responsibility on the user and raised the issue of the influence of video games and online videos on youth mentalities, citing the Christchurch mosque shooting in New Zealand. He compared video games with the actual video streamed by the accused perpetrator.

Both sessions included an open Q&A session in which many questions were asked, such as the role of fathers in this issue, the recommended age for the youth to have phones, and the consequences of phone addiction on academic performance. ■



BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

AGBU Europe's Goriz Cultivates New Generation of Social and Economic Influencers

As modern societies undergo multiple, simultaneous, and continuous phases of rapid change, the new industries of the future are redefining human capital. Leaders of tomorrow will need an expanded world view and possess such qualities as flexibility, resilience, and courage. They also need to be comfortable with uncertainty and have a high threshold for ambiguity.

Given these new realities, AGBU Europe's 10-year old flagship program *Goriz* (which means the pit of the apricot fruit—a cultural symbol of Armenia) is facilitating the developmental journey of highly motivated and talented young adults.

The Goriz cohort is composed of 30 participants ages 23-35 who set off on a six-month Leadership Development journey involving lectures, experiential workshops, real-life projects, and fun activities for social bonding. The group is exposed to world-class leaders who are engaged with their Armenian identity. What makes this program distinctively different are the group dynamic with peers, meaningful conversation in a safe and trusted environment with fellow

Armenians, hands-on involvement on a project in Armenia through the Together4Armenia talent matching program, world-class speakers, and seminar locations that speak to the Armenian experience. Currently, there are more than 100 alumni from the AGBU global network of peers and young professionals.

The first seminar for the 2019 session was held in Brussels in April. Hosted by the Boghossian Foundation in its magnificent venue, the seminar included two lectures on leadership delivered by Pierre Gurdjian, former McKinsey country director of Belgium and current president of the Free University of Brussels (ULB). The following session featured Armen Ovanessoff, head of the think tank representing Accenture in Davos, G20, and other global platforms.

The two lecturers addressed topics such as alignment of purpose and meaning and the distinctive qualities of leadership in the age of artificial intelligence and corporate social responsibility. Goriz participants were organized into pairs or groups for experiential workshops on *positive framing* and *meaning*, including exercises on self-reflection.

Goriz participants and lecturers assemble at the Boghossian Foundation in Brussels for the first seminar of the 2019 session.

One participant described the experience this way: "All practical exercises were extremely helpful to identify patterns and define fields to work on; speakers were very high-level; it was an incredible opportunity to learn from them; great to have the materials with all the exercises so that one can go through them again at home. There was great energy in the room from fellow participants. It was an amazing opportunity to network, be inspired and motivated by others."

At the conclusion of the sessions, each participant was matched to an ongoing project in service to the Armenian nation, fulfilling the mission of the program to apply the knowledge learned during the seminar to on-the-ground, real world situations. Through the Together4Armenia platform, 17 participants committed to be actively engaged in an AGBU-driven project in Armenia. The rest will use skills they acquired to continue to projects in which they are already involved, such companies as IT is Armenia, ASK Football Academy, Yerevan Marathon, and others.

Ultimately, the Goriz Leadership Program will serve as a magnet to attract, identify, select, educate, and help talented leaders of Armenian origin serve a purpose greater than themselves. **▲**

AGBU Young Professionals

The AGBU YP is a dynamic and growing network of like-minded young leaders between the ages 22 and 40 who serve their local communities and collaborate globally to uphold Armenian heritage. The YP movement began in 1995 with the first group in Los Angeles. Since then, the network has expanded to include chapters and partnerships in North America, South America, Europe, and the Middle East. Today, there are 36 YP groups across the globe, including our two newest in Frankfurt, Germany, and Seoul, South Korea.



WORLDWIDE

AGBU YP CARES: #Cycle4Women Raises over \$50,000

On International Women's Day 2019, the AGBU YP Network made a bold commitment to FOCUS 2019's fundraising cause with AGBU YP CARES: #Cycle4Women. The global campaign was designed to rally hundreds of riders and their supporters to generate funds for AGBU Women Entrepreneurs (W.E.) and raise awareness about the program aimed at helping the women of Armenia break the cycle of poverty by starting or scaling up a micro-enterprise or home business.

Harnessing the strength and breadth of the next generation of Armenian leaders, 500 riders from 16 cities around the world

united behind the effort, raising a total of \$50,000—nearly one third of the final tally announced at the FOCUS 2019 Gala in São Paulo, Brazil.

Among the most enthusiastic participants, YP Los Angeles raised \$13,000 through its local community networks. “YP Cares is one of the best ways for young professionals to exercise their leadership skills,” said Carin Kellzi, co-chair of YPLA. “Such an effort not only involves teamwork and physical stamina, but also organizing, reaching out to others, and enlisting their support. It’s a great learning experience in how to make a difference globally while acting locally.”

YP groups from all over the world

engaged with their cities at large through campaigns that not only generated impressive funds but garnered attention for the W.E. program. Mobilizing media all across Armenia, YP Yerevan worked to communicate how much impact this AGBU program could have throughout the country. “This initiative was an opportunity for YP Yerevan to delve deeper into our resources and utilize our network in Armenia,” explained Haykaz Nahapetyan, YP Yerevan chair. “We know the W.E. program will change the lives of Armenian women and as the community that will see the success of this program on the ground, we wanted to support our fellow YPs in a unique way.”



YP Yerevan



YP Buenos Aires



YP Philadelphia



YP Arizona



YP Boston



YP Detroit



YP London



YP Montreal

AGBU Young Professionals



YP Paris



YP New York



YP Lyon



YP Luxembourg



YP Toronto



YP Northern California

AGBU Districts, Chapters, and Schools



NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Şahan Arzruni Celebrates His 75th Birthday with a Solo Piano Concert

On April 5, admirers and friends gathered at Florence Gould Hall for the Şahan Arzruni 75th Anniversary Concert, organized with the cooperation of multiple organizations of the Greater New York area, including AGBU, the Armenian Apostolic Church of America (Eastern Prelacy), Armenian Radio Hour of New Jersey, Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, Direct Help for Armenian People, and the Fund for Armenian Relief.

The renowned pianist, composer, ethnomusicologist, teacher, and scholar performed on the occasion of his milestone birthday, captivating the audience with original compositions, as well as works by musical giants Aram Khachaturian, Alan Hovhanness, and Edvard Mirzoyan. His varied repertoire was interspersed with anecdotes about some of the composers whose work he performed, such as longtime friends and role models Hovhanness and Mirzoyan.

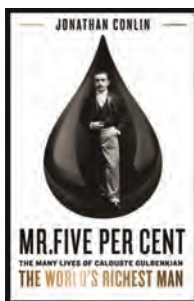
The concert was followed by a private reception at the AGBU Central Office in New York—a fitting venue, given Arzruni's involvement with AGBU since 1964, which saw him receive an AGBU scholarship in 1966 to pursue his musical studies. “Şahan is an icon,” AGBU President Berge Setrakian observed. “We are always trying to inspire the next generation and give them role models of whom they can be proud.”



NEW YORK, NEW YORK

AGBU Central Office Holds Public Screening of Motherland

On April 17, coming straight from the Full Frame Documentary Film Festival in Durham, NC, co-directors Emily Mkrtichian and Jesse Soursourian presented their cinematic chronicle of Armenian female de-miners in Artsakh to a packed audience at the AGBU Central Office. With over 400 civilian casualties to date, Artsakh is still considered to have one of the worst land-mine problems in the world. *Motherland* explores the challenges and aspirations of brave women working to ensure a safe future in a frozen conflict zone and how they are gaining a sense of independence both personally and economically in the process. The lively Q&A that followed also touched upon larger issues of the struggles of Armenian women in the region. The short film was produced, in part, through the AGBU Young Visionaries Mini-Grant Program.



NEW YORK, NEW YORK

AGBU Co-Sponsors Book Presentation on Calouste Gulbenkian

On April 9, the AGBU Central Office in New York, in conjunction with the Zohrab Information Center organized a presentation of the widely heralded biography *Mr. Five Percent: The Many Lives of Calouste Gulbenkian, the World's Richest Man*. The presentation, followed by a book signing with the author Dr. Jonathan Conlin, a British historian and professor at the University of Southampton was accompanied by an illustrated talk. The event was held at the Armenian Diocese and attended by a full capacity audience of Armenians and non-Armenians curious about the life and times of one of the richest men on earth whose grip on the oil industry impacted the world's 20th-century economy and the shaping of geopolitics. The presentation was followed by a Q&A.



NEW YORK, NEW YORK AGBU Hosts Luncheon with Anna Hakobyan

On April 13, Anna Hakobyan, founder and leader of two new charitable foundations in Armenia and spouse of Armenia's prime minister, was the guest of honor at a luncheon with Armenian-American women in New York City, organized by AGBU. Her visit to New York was the last stop of her 17-day US tour, the main goal of which was to raise awareness for the My Step and City of Smile foundations.

Hakobyan expressed her gratitude for the support of Armenians and non-Armenians and spoke of the need for culture change in Armenia. Fielding questions about the New Armenia, peace in Artsakh, women's rights, domestic violence, and educational reforms, Hakobyan engaged guests with her perspectives on the Armenian government's agenda and upcoming projects.

NEW YORK, NEW YORK Collectif Medz Bazar Concert

On March 19, the Collectif Medz Bazar performed at DROM in Manhattan's Lower East Side. Songs in Armenian, Turkish, French, and English were showcased representing the different cultures of the band members. The concert, presented by AGBU Performing Arts and Dayl'Ayl Productions, marked the ensemble's first performance in New York City since their formation seven years ago.



CANOGA PARK, CALIFORNIA AGBU MDS Students Create Lightning Splitter and LitBulb

On April 5, AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian school entrepreneurship students participated in the Junior Achievement SoCal Entrepreneurship Challenge. They represented the school with two teams, Lightning Splitter and LitBulb. Lightning Splitter is a solution to charging your phone and using your headphones at the same time and Lit Bulb is a color-changing light bulb that responds to music through Bluetooth. The Lightning Splitter team won the Fan Favorite Award, Best Exhibit Award, Best Commercial Award, and second place for Company of the Year.



CANOGA PARK, CALIFORNIA

AGBU 113th Anniversary Celebration

AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian and AGBU Vatche and Tamar Manoukian schools came together on April 11, to celebrate the 113th anniversary of AGBU. Over 1,200 students, teachers, staff, and parents attended the opening ceremony in the Nazarian gymnasium. The students laid flowers at the miniature Tsitsernakaberd Monument and held a moment of silence to honor the lives lost during the Genocide of 1915. Students from both schools competed in friendly athletic games, chiefly basketball, volleyball, and soccer, as Armenian music played throughout the school.



BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

AGBU Organizes Concert Series in Brussels to Benefit Rising Talents in Armenia

Over the weekend of May 24, three concerts were performed in the city of Brussels, Belgium, featuring Armenian musicians of various backgrounds. The concert series, organized by the AGBU Performing Arts Department (PAD) of France/Europe, took place in two successive venues: at the Boghossian Foundation, with its magnificent art deco venue the Villa Empain; and the Armenian Cultural Center of the Armenian community of Belgium.

Duduk legend Lévon Minassian performed on Friday evening at the Villa Empain. The following evening, Diana Adamyan performed works by Bach, Beethoven, Saint-Saëns, Kreisler and Komitas. The musical weekend concluded on Sunday at the Armenian Cultural Center with a special presentation of the works of Hayrik Mouradian, followed by a concert of the Lisbon-based Dellalian Trio.

True to the AGBU mission to expand educational and cultural horizons for Armenians worldwide, the concert series helped support the PAD Musical Instruments Fund in collaboration with Musicians for Musicians, an association led by well-known cello player and friend of AGBU, Sevak Avanesyan.

AGBU Districts, Chapters, and Schools



MONTEVIDEO, URUGUAY

#UGABTalks with Photographer Norair Chahinian

On June 14, the AGBU community in Montevideo welcomed Brazilian Armenian photographer and architect Norair Chahinian, who photographed Turkey in four years of extensive travels, to discuss contemporary Armenian-Turkish relations. As part of the second installment of #UGABTalks, the event considered how peace and justice could be achieved through open dialogue between individual people, asking participants to consider the nuances of identities, the evolving realities of minorities living in Turkey, and the future of the Armenian heritage still surviving in historic Armenia.

Chahinian presented his photography, animating each of his works with anecdotes. Some of his new-found friends, a young, mixed Armenian-Turkish family, joined him to speak about their experiences navigating a brutal, complex history while raising a child together.

CYPRUS, NICOSIA

Classical Vocalist Sose Krikorian Performs in Nicosia

Music lovers from all over Nicosia gathered at the AGBU Center in Cyprus to enjoy a performance by celebrated classical vocalist Sose Krikorian on June 26. Recognized for her musical talent by the Ministry of Diaspora of Armenia, Krikorian, who is originally from Jerusalem and a graduate of its Academy of Music and Dance, has competed in international competitions in Armenia. Specializing in Jewish and Arabic jazz, she brought her Armenian heritage to the forefront of her performance. The audience was treated to her unique renditions of works by composers Sayat Nova and Komitas. Between Krikorian's interpretations of songs such as "Nazani" and "Hov Arek," she delved into the history of both artists, as well as the poetry and significance of their work through music.



SOFIA & VARNA, BULGARIA

A Cultural Exchange with Armenia and Bulgaria

AGBU Varna and AGBU Sofia Parekordzagan collaborated with the Bulgarian Ministry of Culture to organize *Armenia and Bulgaria—Colors and Forms*, a traveling art exhibition featuring 29 distinguished Armenian and Bulgarian artists. On July 1, the National Palace of Culture in Sofia hosted the exhibition, followed by another show on July 9 at the Archaeological Museum in Varna. The vibrant cultural exchange brought together diverse voices across heritages. Art historian Olympia Nikolova guided conversations about the artworks. The exhibitions presented an opportunity for audiences to consider the intersections of identity, shared history and art practices between artists from distinct traditions



MILAN, ITALY

AGBU Milan Book Presentation

On March 23, AGBU Milan organized a presentation of Vera Yemenidjian Astourian's recent book, *Il Diario Incopiuto e Viaggio Nei Ricordi* [*The Unfinished Diary and Journey Through Memories*] at Casa Armena, the Armenian Cultural Center of Milan. The book was published in November 2018. The author writes about her memories of her grandfather Stepan Depanian, who was born in 1888 in Rodosto, Turkey, and survived the Armenian Genocide.

PLOVDIV, BULGARIA

AGBU Plovdiv Holds a Spring Fundraiser

On March 16, the AGBU Plovdiv's Ladies Club held a fundraiser for three of its dance groups—Asthigner, Yerazank, and Nreni. During the event, Rupen Chavushian, the president of the Charity Union awarded Araksi Mugurdichian, Mari Stambolian, and Beatris Babikian with a Certificate of Honorary Membership, and Asthig Shahinian, Meri Tutian, Alvard Badvagianian, Lusona Cherchian-Radoslavova, Mari Mahmuzian, and Silva Dolmaian with a diploma for their hard work in preserving the Armenian identity in the modern world.



March 31



April 21



May 26

SOFIA, BULGARIA

AGBU Sofia Concert Series

AGBU Sofia Chamber Orchestra opened the spring concert season on March 31, with *The Soul of Armenia*, conducted by maestro Levon Manukyan. Vocalist and musician Eteri Hovanisyan from Armenia performed compositions by Komitas and Avesian on a kanoun, an ancient string instrument. On Easter Sunday, April 21, the orchestra performed a concert dedicated to the 150th birthday of Komitas, featuring soloist Aude Reichart-Demirdzhishian, a soprano from France. Especially impressive were the three Komitas masterpieces: "Krunk," "Dele Yaman," and "Der Vorghormya" from the Armenian Liturgy. On May 26, the orchestra presented a jazz concert at the Central Military Club. Gordon, Brent, Chaplin, and Legrand, as well as arrangements of works by Komitas, Sayat Nova, and Babajanian were performed.



VARNA, BULGARIA

AGBU Varna Organizes First Concert

In celebration of the AGBU's 113th anniversary, the Varna chapter organized a concert at the Boris Georgiev City Art in May 2019, attracting 300 guests. Hasmik Harutyunyan, accompanied by tenor Simeon Pilibosyan and the AGBU Varna Chamber Orchestra conducted by maestro Leon Pilibosyan, delivered an impressive program of Armenian music. "This event is the first of many that will enrich the cultural life in Varna and deepen the relationship between Bulgaria and Armenia," stated Kevork Krikoryan, the chapter chairman.

VARNA, BULGARIA

AGBU Varna Jazz Concert

In June 2019, hundreds gathered at the city art gallery for a sold-out concert featuring jazz giants from Armenia Nara Arakelyan and Yervand Margaryan. They performed two solos, accompanied by the AGBU Chamber Orchestra, under the direction of maestro Levon Manukyan. The performers integrated classic music and jazz with strands of familiar Armenian themes, thereby creating an emotionally charged connection with the audience.

Also on the program were the works of Charlie Chaplin, Irwin Gordon, M. Denis, Earl Brent, in addition to Armenian folk pieces by composers Komitas, Sayat Nova, A. Hovhanness—all through the prism of jazz. Other highlights of the evening included the music of Arno Babajanian, performed by 17-year old rising-star trumpeter Garabed Kazasyan and Yervand Margaryan's rendition of *You Must Believe in Spring* by legendary French-Armenian Michel Legrand. The infusion of multiple styles succeeded in captivating the audience. The concert was organized at the invitation of AGBU Sofia as part of the AGBU Varna cultural calendar. The concert also enjoyed the patronage of the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia in Bulgaria.



BEIRUT, LEBANON

AGBU-AYA Vahram Papazian Theater Comedy Show

From March 23-31, the AGBU-Antranik Youth Association's Vahram Papazian Theater Group under the patronage of the AGBU-AYA Central Committee, staged its annual comedy show *Agama Sedakhose*, directed by Harout Kntouny. The play was presented at the H. Der Melkonian Theater.

Among the attendees were members of the AGBU Lebanon District Committee, members of the AGBU-AYA Central Committee, as well as representatives of various political, educational, cultural, and sports organizations.

BEIRUT, LEBANON

AGBU Lebanon Ladies Auxiliary Mid-Lent Luncheon 2019

Drawing more than 150 attendees, the Traditional Mid-Lent luncheon organized by the AGBU Lebanon Ladies Auxiliary was held on March 27 at Le Mythe. The ladies enjoyed mingling with their friends while unwinding to music and savoring popular European dishes.

The artistic portion of the event included an art exhibition presenting work of Armenian artists Vahan Roumelyan, Edik Pertyan, Suren and David, and eclectic music played live by Dzovag Tashjian on saxophone.



BEIRUT, LEBANON

AGBU-AYA Inaugurates New Field with Youth Festival

On May 25, AGBU-AYA, under the patronage of the AGBU District Committee of Lebanon, inaugurated its newly renovated football field during a vibrant youth festival. Over 1,000 AGBU scouts, students, athletes, and musicians gathered to celebrate the impact AGBU-AYA has had on generations of Armenians, cultivating youth leadership for decades through its varied programs. During the celebration, the AGBU-AYA Marching Band played the Lebanese, Armenian, AGBU, and AYA anthems. Distinguished community leaders, ambassadors, clergy, politicians, and benefactors joined 1,500 attendees to open the field not only to the Armenian community, but the broader Lebanese community.



BEIRUT, LEBANON

AGBU Lebanon Pays Tribute to Lebanese-Armenian Vice Governor of the Central Bank of Lebanon Joseph Oughourlian

On March 29, AGBU Lebanon—in collaboration with the Embassy of Armenia in Lebanon and under the patronage of the Minister of Culture—organized a lecture entitled: “Joseph Oughourlian: First Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Lebanon (1964-1985),” as a tribute to the late leader in the Lebanese financial sector, Joseph Oughourlian.

Oughourlian empowered generations of Armenians, elevating the reputation of the Armenian community in Lebanese civil society. “It was inspiring for my generation to witness the success of the son of the people who had just started to stand on their feet in the aftermath of the Genocide,” AGBU President Berge Setrakian explained. “Oughourlian was a master of balancing his patriotism for Lebanon and his devotion to his national origins.”

The lecture was one in a series of Francophonie events celebrating the important contributions of renowned French-speaking Lebanese-Armenian pioneers, artists, and architects.

AGBU Districts, Chapters, and Schools

STEPANAKERT, ARTSAKH

Artsakh State Chamber Orchestra Celebrates 15 Years of Music

On April 11, the political elite of Armenia and Artsakh gathered in Stepanakert, Artsakh, alongside local classical music enthusiasts to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the Artsakh State Chamber Orchestra. Performing to the masterful wand of artistic director and principal conductor Gevorg Muradyan, the orchestra congratulated itself with the beloved works of Armenian musical contemporaries Aram Khachaturian, Arno Babajanian, and Tigran Mansurian. The eternal music of Johann Sebastian Bach concluded the concert.

“It is with special joy that we celebrate the proud jubilee of this orchestra, which the Armenian General Benevolent Union helped found together with the Government of Artsakh, and whose activities it has consistently supported for the past 15 years,” wrote AGBU President Berge Setrakian in his congratulatory letter to maestro Muradyan. Founded in 2004, the orchestra began as a small group of 12 musicians from Yerevan who had chosen to resettle in Stepanakert to revive Artsakh’s classical scene. They were soon joined by six other local musicians. Fifteen of the orchestra’s 17 performers are now from Artsakh, including many from the younger generation. Over the past 15 years, the orchestra has performed on international stages across Norway, Russia, and the U.S., alongside famed Armenian and foreign classical artists, and has played a pivotal role in the cultural rebirth and development of Artsakh, paving the way for a new music school in the process.



SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

AGBU Sydney Welcomes Dr. Yervant Zorian

On May 5, Dr. Yervant Zorian, AGBU Central Board member and founder of Armenian Virtual College (AVC), was received by Archbishop Haygazoun Najarian at the Diocesan Center in Sydney. Dr. Zorian was also welcomed by the newly elected premier of New South Wales, Australia, Gladys Berejiklian. Diocesan chair Sarkis DerBedrossian, Chancellor Nishan Basmajian, AGBU Sydney chairman Mihran Lepejian, and Dr. Rita Zorian were also present. They discussed the global programs of AGBU, particularly the use of AVC in Australia. Dr. Zorian also lectured at AGBU Sydney Alex Manoogian Saturday School and AGBU Alexander School at Duffys Forest.

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

AGBU Melbourne Harmony Day

On March 3, AGBU Melbourne held its Harmony Day at the newly established AGBU Center. The event was dedicated to showcasing Armenian culture and heritage to the wider community. With over 1,000 people in attendance, Harmony Day celebrated many facets of Armenian traditions. Throughout the day guests enjoyed performances and recitals from the Armenian Aginian School and the Azad Gharibian Dance Group. “Harmony invites unity and unity is strength,” said Harmony Day coordinator Gloria Hotakorzian. Harmony Day also included cooking demonstrations, food stalls featuring a variety of traditional savorys and sweets, as well as various activities and games for children.



Check Out a Few of Our Favorite Children Selections

My First Armenian Songbook

Item Number: 038 \$35.00



In this unique songbook, English-language songs are presented along with their Armenian translations in order to celebrate both traditions. This comprehensive edition includes original translations of traditional songs from English to Armenian and one from Armenian to English. The book is ideal for children who are learning Armenian or are being exposed to Armenian culture. The rich English texts and the colorful original illustrations make it appealing to children of all backgrounds.

Author: Karenn Chutjian Presti

Publisher: Natabella Press

Format: Paperback With CD

My Book of Armenian Words—2 Issues

Item Number: 259, 259A \$18.00 Each



My First Book of Armenian Words:

A wonderful way for children to learn Armenian. Colorful pictures accompany each word with English, Armenian, and English transliteration letters. *My Second*

Book of Armenian Words: This book, a follow-up to *My First Book of Armenian Words*, has streamlined pronunciation guides and covers words associated with everyday activities.

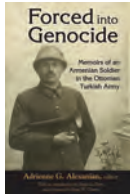
Author: Ani Gigarjian, Linda Avedikian

Publisher: Gigarjian, Avedikian Publishing

Format: Hardcover

Forced into Genocide

Item Number: 037 \$35.00



Alexanian was forced to become an onlooker while he watched the atrocities unfold. His story of resourceful action and fateful turns is a suspenseful insider's account of a Genocide survivor. From his singular position, Alexanian was able to document the tragedy of his people in his journals and diaries, but he also offers us a behind-the-scenes look into the motivations and actions of Turkish military officials as they committed the atrocities. His story continues after the war as we follow the trail of his journey through Europe and finally to America, where he found solace and was able to start anew with fellow survivors.

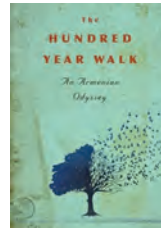
Editor: Adrienne G. Alexanian

Publisher: Transaction/Routledge

Format: Hardcover

The Hundred Year Walk—An Armenian Odyssey

Item Number: 022 \$25.00



Nominated for the Dayton Literary Peace Prize, *The Hundred Year Walk* alternates between Stepan's saga and another journey that takes place a century later. Reading this rare first-hand account, his granddaughter Dawn MacKeen finds herself first drawn into the colorful bazaars before the war and then into the horrors Stepan later endured. Inspired to retrace his steps, she sets out alone to Turkey and Syria, shadowing her resourceful, resilient grandfather across a landscape still rife with tension.

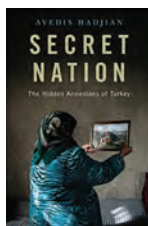
Author: Dawn Anahid MacKeen

Publisher: Mariner Books

Format: Paperback

Secret Nation: The Hidden Armenians of Turkey

Item Number: AVE1 \$35.00



It has long been assumed that no Armenian presence remained in eastern Turkey after the 1915 massacres. As a result of what has come to be called the Armenian Genocide, those who survived in Anatolia were assimilated as Muslims, with most losing all traces of their Christian identity. In recent years, a growing number of "secret Armenians" have begun to emerge from the shadows. Avedis Hadjian has travelled to the towns and villages once densely populated by Armenians, recording stories of survival and discovery from those who remain in a region that is deemed unsafe for the people who once lived there.

Editor: Avedis Hadjian

Publisher: I. B. Tauris

Format: Hardcover

Unmailed Letters

Item Number: 322 \$25.00



With the fall of the Soviet Union came the rise of a select few bold leaders, the founders of the Karabakh Committee, who were determined to reunify Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia and to protect the constitutional rights of its people. Among them was prolific writer and politician Hambardzum Galstyan, whose activism forever shaped the Armenian national consciousness.

Unmailed Letters, now available for the first time in English, compiles Galstyan's first-hand accounts from Moscow's notorious Butyrka prison, where he served a six-month sentence between 1988 and 1989. Part memoir, part manifesto, Galstyan's voice rings clearly through every page.

Author: Hambardzum Galstyan

Publisher: Gomidas Institute

Format: Paperback

Home Again: Armenian Recipes from the Ottoman Empire

Item Number: **MAR1** \$45.00



Home Again combines a collection of Armenian recipes from the Ottoman Empire with a memoir of a family of immigrants who kept certain recipes close to their hearts as a means of preserving their cultural heritage. The author examines the relationship between history and cuisine, between displacement and memory, between the individual and their ancestors.

Author: **Mari A. Firkatian**

Publisher: **CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform**

Format: **Paperback**

Historic Armenia After 100 Years: Ani, Kars and the Six Provinces of Western Armenia

Item Number: **O10** \$40.00



Author Matthew Karanian celebrates the Armenia that has avoided destruction: its monuments, churches, and people—the hidden Armenians who have persevered in the face of persecution. For the first time since the Armenian

Genocide, the cultural wealth of the Armenian nation in Western Armenia is presented in one readable and beautifully illustrated volume.

Author: **Matthew Karanian**

Publisher: **Stone Garden Productions**

Format: **Paperback**

A Concise History of the Armenian People

Item Number: **258** \$35.00



This revised seventh edition is a concise survey of the political history of the Armenian people from their origins to 2018. Included are specially designed historical maps, timelines, illustrations, new photographs, and bibliographical guides.

Author: **George A. Bournoutian**

Publisher: **Mazda Publishers**

Format: **Paperback**

BEST SELLER

Treasured Armenian Recipes

Item Number: **101** \$20.00



Arranged according to categories, from appetizers to desserts, these recipes will conjure up memories for many while awakening others to the pleasures of Armenian cooking.

Author: **Marie Manoogian**

Publisher: **AGBU**

Format: **Paperback**

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IN MEMORIAM

AGBU Remembers Two Distinguished Central Board Members

Two guiding forces of the AGBU mission passed away within the last two years, leaving their unique imprint on the organization. We honor their dedicated service and inspired stories.

Dr. Kevork Keshishian, M.D. dedicated his leadership skills and tenacity to the AGBU Central Board from 1982 to 1998 and continued to be active in the global Armenian community throughout his life. He was often



Kevork Keshishian, M.D. 1931-2018

described as generous, affable and always spirited. A highly respected physician, Dr. Keshishian demonstrated a lifetime commitment to AGBU, serving in various roles, including: president of the AGBU University Students' Association; secretary for the AGBU Armenian Youth Association of the Middle East; and later, chairman of the AGBU-AYA Central Cultural Committee. An avid and prolific writer, he published four medical books for the public, was a co-founder of the independent Armenian weekly paper in Lebanon, *Spurk*,

and a frequent contributor to *Pejishkk*, *Zartonk*, *Nayiri*, *Baikar*, *Nor Or*, and *Shirag*. He empowered his community by sharing his wealth of knowledge and expertise.

"Kevork Keshishian was a true gentleman with a kind heart and wonderful sense of humor," said Berge Setrakian, AGBU President. "He cared deeply for his community and led with genuine compassion and devotion. His decades of service to AGBU and the Armenian community shall not be forgotten."

Dr. Keshishian was a member of the central committee of the ADL organization for over a decade, the founder and chairman of The Friends of *The Armenian Mirror Spectator*, and president and life member on the board of directors of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of America.

He passed away in November 2018 at the age of 87.

Dr. Mihran Agbabian, Ph.D was a transformative figure in the field of higher education. He selflessly served AGBU with distinction as a Central Board member from 1989 to 1999.

"These were critical years for the AGBU in responding to such monumental events as the devastating earthquake in Armenia and the challenging early years of independence," noted President Setrakian. "At a time when national institutions were collapsing all around the homeland, Dr. Agbabian played a vital role in establishing the American University of Armenia to keep the light of intellectual and academic pursuit burning brightly for Armenia's best and brightest." Mr. Setrakian went on to say: "Fortunately, he was blessed with the longevity to witness the success of multiple generations of AUA students.

Dr. Agbabian owned a consulting

engineering firm, Agbabian Associates, for 20 years before joining the faculty of USC as chairman of the civil and environmental engineering department until his retirement. During his tenure as AUA's first president, he continued to serve as an AGBU Central Board member. Agbabian was also engaged in the lasting partnership between the AUA and AGBU that continues to this day through AGBU scholarships, grants, and support for various initiatives.



Mihran Agbabian, Ph.D 1923-2019

Dr. Agbabian served the Armenian community in a number of organizations. He was vice president of the Armenian Missionary Association of America; vice-chairman of the Board of Haigazian College; chairman of the board of directors of the Armenian Assembly of America; a founding member of the Armenian Film Foundation; and general chairman of the first congress of the Armenian Engineers and Scientists of America.

Dr. Mihran Agbabian passed away in February 2019. He was 96 years old. ■



Members of the St. Gregory The Illuminator Church, Singapore, 1917
Singapore Armenian Church

AGBU

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