Commemoration
105th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide

Photo from Karapet Sahakyan’s FB page
Genocide Memorial, Yerevan, April 24, 2020

February - April 2020
After our election as the Avak Sbarabed of the Knights of Vartan, one of my very first thoughts was attending the April 24th Armenian Genocide commemoration in Times Square. I have always heard so much about it but have never had the chance to attend. This was going to be my first. A number of our Avak tivan members along with their wives were also planning on attending. Never in my wildest thoughts would I have imagined the situation we are in today. Not only being unable to commemorate but sheltered in our homes in isolation. The committee in preparing this year had already done a lot of work and I was anxious to attend, but now we must do our remembrances and commemorations online.

It’s hard to imagine that 105 years ago a government turned on its own people and sought to eliminate them from their ancestral home land. The world turned a blind eye to the tragedy of our people. It was in those years that the Knights of Vartan was founded to come to the aid of the remnants of our people that had been scattered throughout the world as a result of this genocide of our people. My family was one of the luckier ones, my grandmother was born in this country in 1895. I used to ask her if she still had family in her village of perchanj after her parents came to the US and she said she used to write letters to her grandmother. I said what happened to her. She said the letters just stopped. In the history of the Armenian people 1915 will be frozen in time. We had survived a battle for our Christianity in 451. We had survived conquering empires sweeping through our homeland, but 1915 saw our history almost wiped out. The villages of our ancestors are now devoid of their people. Our ancient churches now sit in rubble, but the most devastating act is the continual denial of the truth of Genocide. The republic of Turkey is still in a state of genocidal denial. Healing from this wound on the Republic of Turkey can never be achieved without acceptance of the truth. We will continue to commemorate we will continue to remember, we will celebrate the lives of our saints who died in the faith. While we commemorate on line this year, we pray that we will all be together next April in Times Square.

Speakers of the online meeting, photo left to right, top row: Avak Sbarabed Steven Adams; Vartan Abdo, Director of the Armenian Radio Hour of NJ who facilitated the recording Organizer, Hirant Gulian, Chairman Emeritus, Times Square Armenian Genocide Commemoration; below row: Primate of Diocese of Armenian Church of America (Eastern) Bishop Daniel Findikyan; Zaven Khanjian, Executive Director, AMAA; Prelate of Eastern Prelacy Archbishop Anoushavan Tanielian. Most Reverent Kerabayzar Mikael Mouradian; Armenian Catholic Eparch.
Remembering Armenian Genocide

In 1915, when the Turks massacred 1 ½ million Armenians, they thought they were going to wipe us off the earth. Our women, who suffered untold experiences, stayed strong. They plowed ahead, protecting whatever & whomever they could, moving forward thinking about the future. Now we are 11,000,000 strong worldwide; with 1.5 million in the United States; approx. 3 million in Armenia and 7 million throughout the diaspora. And I believe it was that stubborn strength in the Armenian woman that helped get us here; the belief in God, in keeping the faith and in keeping the home life as safe and strong as much as possible. I remember back to when I was a young teen. My family had just moved to Pasadena and we were living with my grandmother whom I am guessing was probably in her early 70s. We had a small television set and my grandmother used to sit in a chair with a rounded back that I always called the barrel chair. One of her favorite shows seemed to be the wrestling matches. She would sit cross legged on that chair and pound her fists against the arms of the chair as she shouted at the wrestlers fighting on the mat on the tv. At the time I thought it was very funny for my very proper grandmother to get so agitated and angry and involved with the wrestlers.

Now, when I think back, knowing many of the stories of the genocide survivors, I wonder. My grandmother and parents never talked about what they had endured. But over time my family learned a little. About my grandfathers being killed, about my father’s brothers being conscripted into the Turkish army, about how my father escaped to America, about my grandmother traveling through the desert with two small children to get to Beirut. Now I wonder…when my grandmother was sitting in that chair, hitting the arms of that chair, yelling at those men she was watching on television….who was she really seeing; who was she really screaming at; what was she reliving. But she, like so many others, managed somehow to, not only survive, but to work and make sure her children were able to grow, to be educated and to eventually be together in the United States of America. This is the story of so many. And finally, after years of trying, in 2019 both houses of congress of these United States recognized the atrocities the Armenians suffered and passed resolutions and called it what it was – a genocide of the Armenian people by the Turkish Ottoman Empire.

We are a loving, caring people. I was taught the when we had visitors, they must always have the best chair, the biggest piece of pie, the tastiest coffee and the cup must never be empty. And when they were finished, it was up to me to clear away the used dishes and make sure all was clean. We must be respectful towards others, tolerant if they make mistakes, and helpful if it is needed. We Armenians still think about others, while caring for our own. We make good neighbors, wonderful friends and the best of families. And this is why we are Knights and Daughters of Vartan. This is where we find our comfort. This is where we laugh, cry and take care of each other. Because we care… because we love each other as brothers and sisters. We will keep our faith. We will be well. We will be happy and we will continue to serve the Knights and Daughters of Vartan.

Respectfully and with love,

Alice Kalustian, Avak Dirouhie
April 24, Yerevan, Tsitsernakaberd

This year, first time since 1967 our nation was not able to visit Genocide Memorial on April 24th for commemoration. It was due to COVID19 to keep the nation’s safety. At the same time this year was the most extraordinary as any Armenian had opportunity to join virtually and spark his/her name on columns of the memorial. Extraordinary light show of memorial was initiated and organized by C-squared Company in Yerevan. The light show started at 9pm on April 23 and continued from 10pm April 24th till 6am on April 25th.

Pictures from facebook public profiles shared widely on April 24, 2020
In 1965, the Soviet Armenian population demanded that a Genocide memorial monument be constructed. On April 24th, massive demonstrations were organized in Yerevan and other cities of the Soviet Armenia. Encouraged by public demand, on March 16, 1965 the Soviet-Armenian Government decided to build a monument eternalizing the memory of the victims of the Genocide. The efforts of people like Yakov Zaroubyan (First Secretary), who made every attempt possible to sway Moscow’s resistance, was made evident by the approval of the project.

In April 1965, a nation-wide competition was announced in Armenia to create the best and most representative memorial design. The obelisk must embody the creative Armenian nation’s life that has been full of struggle, its inexhaustible vitality to survive, the progress it has made as well as representing its present and the bright future while eternalizing the memory of millions of victims of the Genocide of 1915. The architects were Arthur Tarkhanyan and Sashur Kalashyan. Chief builder was Artavazd Ordukhanyan. The ceremonial opening of the obelisk, which took place on November 29, 1967. Since then every April 24th thousands of people visited memorial. This year we all visited the memorial again, this time virtually!
So yes, I have seen my share of dark days, and if I am able to stand here before you today it is thanks to a great many people who have been there for me. While I struggled in the face of political and physical attacks, there were always those beside me whose help and support allowed me to continue my work. I could not possibly name them all tonight but they all have my sincere gratitude.

The first person I want to mention is the late Professor Vahakn Dadrian. From our first acquaintance in 1991 until his recent death, he served as my academic mentor, and also facilitated my coming to America. Dennis and Marie Papazian invited me to the United States and opened their home to me. Professor Müge Göçek and Greg Sarkissian provided me with support in my first years in the States. Stephen Feinstein and my dear friend Eric Weitz did everything in their power to help me remain in Minnesota for six years. In the end, I was fortunate to secure a different endowed chair. I have held the Robert Aram and Marianne Kaloosdian and Stephen and Marian Mugar Chair since 2008. I am thankful to those who created this chair and also to my dear friends and colleagues Mary Jane Rhein and Thomas Kuehne who are with me this evening, who created a perfect work environment for me at Clark University.

They say that “there’s a helper behind every successful person”. If I am considered successful, then the helpers—no, the heroes—behind me are you, the Armenian people, named and unnamed, who have demonstrated such unflagging support for my work, both here and in Turkey. The greatest impetus for me to keep going has been the boundless love and support of the Armenian community. Your words of support at conferences, and even more importantly, the fact that I can see in your eyes the value you place on my contributions: these have energized me over the years. If not for my many, many friends in Turkey—whose names I won’t mention for the sake of their safety—I would never have written any of this. To these anonymous helpers I owe a debt of gratitude that cannot be repaid.

A sterling example of this has been the help I received in recent years in publishing the Guerguerian archives. If it weren’t for Eduard Guerguerian, who meticulously preserved the archive over the years and Hrant Gulian and “Uncle Nazar” and Mrs. Artemis Nazarian this project would have never come to fruition. And if not for various organizations, first and foremost the Gulbenkian Foundation, but also the NAASR, the AGBU, the Knights of Vartan, Jirair Nishanian Foundation, and others I could not have published my research. My doctoral students at the Strassler Center at Clark University have also made valuable scholarly and organizational contributions to this project over the years.

Among my otherwise unnamed friends in Turkey there is one whose name I must highlight: my “brother”, the late Hrant Dink. I did not know Hrant when I began this journey, but our paths quickly crossed. We agreed that our greatest obligation as human beings was to stand up to injustice. What Hrant ultimately wanted was very simple: he wanted to live in Turkey as an Armenian, but as a fully equal and free citizen alongside and within the Turkish Muslim majority. For this to happen, it was first necessary to confront the crimes and injustices in the country’s history and to acknowledge the truth of the Armenian Genocide. Only after establishing the truth about Turkey’s past and securing
some measure of justice would it be possible to create a shared future where an Armenian like him could live securely and freely within Turkey.

Those who murdered Hrant did so because he was an Armenian and because he spoke the truth. Now, more than a decade after his death, the task remains with us to realize his vision, to make his dream a reality. He often said to me the following statement: The genocide was perpetrated on the soils of Anatolia, and any resolution of the issue will also have to be found there.

Since his murder I often ponder how to bring about the tomorrow that Hrant desired. The biggest obstacle to realizing his vision is the ongoing, century-long denialist policies of the Turkish regime, which has continually bombarded its population with ideological propaganda in an attempt to keep them in the dark. It is upon all of us to illuminate these dark places in our search for truth and justice. As an academic my duty is to wage a “war of enlightenment” against this darkness, but this is not a war that can be won by individuals. What is necessary is the creation of institutions.

As I mentioned: there is a huge “denialist industry” being operated by the Turkish government. This industry exploits universities and even individual university courses in the United States. As is often the case, the side of truth is badly under-funded. And in this regard, the lack of Armenian genocide research centers is one of the central deficits. The establishment of such centers is prerequisite to defeating the denialist industry. If the truth is to prevail, if we truly wish to achieve justice for the victims of the genocide, this is the next step. There are so many chairs and programs on Armenian history; we have an excellent Holocaust and Genocide studies program at Clark and I can train students in Armenian Genocide. But there is not a single Armenian Genocide Research Institute at any North American university. If we compare this to the roughly 250 Holocaust programs and institutes—some of which are pure research institutes, we begin to see the scale of the problem. When I say “genocide” here I’m not simply referring to the events of 1915-1918. Rather, I am referring to late Ottoman and Russian-Caucasian history, the post-genocidal period down to our day and the Armenian diaspora. An effective institutionalization of Armenian genocide research would include serious academic research in all of these areas.

We will certainly never defeat denialism with scholarly work alone. It can only be defeated politically and legally. But no such battle can be won without a sufficient accumulation of knowledge, which is the fundamental power here. Control over knowledge is what is most necessary, and the power of this knowledge will open the way to greater control in the fields of both politics and law. Simply invoking the abstract notions of justice and truth will do little, since all sides lay claim to the same language. Denialism has its own “facts” and “truth” and it can only be fought by large, well-funded institutions that regularly and systematically “produce knowledge”.

As I conclude, I would like to once again express my gratitude for your honoring me with this award. But if you find my work commendable, then I ask you to help me in this effort. Let us work together to institutionalize the Armenian genocide research. If we are serious about bringing the truth of the Armenian genocide to the greater public, about winning the political struggle and the war for truth, then we must advance and create those institutions that will be our greatest support in this struggle. In doing this you would merely honor my work, but that of those pathbreakers who came before me, giants like Vahakn Dadrian and Richard Hovanissian.

I am but one foot-soldier in the battle. And I know the recognition of an historic injustice is not important only for Armenians, it is important for Turkey’s democracy and for peace and stability in the region. The Armenians’ search for truth and justice is a part of the larger search for such on the part of humanity as a whole. So; let us “gird our loins” once again and lay the foundations for victory in this struggle.

I thank you again from the bottom of my heart for the inexhaustible faith and confidence that you have shown me over the years.

And thank you to those—above all, Hrant Gulian—for putting together this wonderful evening.
Armenian Genocide Monuments in the USA Built or Supported by the Knights and Daughters of Vartan

- Armenian Genocide Memorial at Fresno State University, Fresno, CA
- Armenian Heritage Park in Boston, MA
- Armenian Genocide Memorial at Fresno State University, Fresno, CA
- Armenian Heritage Park in Boston, MA
- St. Vartan Cathedral, NY
- Mt. Davidson Cross, San Francisco, CA
- Young Meher - Philadelphia, PA
- Genocide Monument Montebello, CA
- Armenian Genocide Monument Montebello, CA
- Armenian Martyrs' Monument Providence, RI
- Armenian Martyrs Monument Phoenix, AZ
- Armenian Genocide Monument in Boca Raton, FL
- Armenian Genocide Monument in Boca Raton, FL
- Armenian Genocide Memorial in Boca Raton, FL
- Armenian Martyrs Memorial Bergen County Courthouse in Hackensack, NJ
- Armenian Martyrs Monument Hudson Riverfront Park, Troy, NY
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Fighting COVID19:
Asbeds in Frontline

Dr. John Arek Kileci, a member of the Knights of Vartan, has been on the frontlines helping battle the coronavirus at NYU Langone Health in midtown Manhattan. He has been assigned to 19 patients who tested positive for COVID-19 and likens the pandemic to a “war zone.”

“Many people are dying including young ones,” said pulmonologist Dr. Kileci during a brief interview, noting that the Intensive Care Units are full and there are a lack of ventilators. “As an ICU doctor, I wish all the strength and luck to all my healthcare colleagues and workers.”

The quickly spreading pandemic has already infected over one million people worldwide with no signs of slowing down. In the United States, New York City has rapidly become the epicenter of the coronavirus, with almost 60,000 cases and the loss of 2,000 lives. “Our entire Brotherhood, from coast to coast, are very grateful to all the doctors and nurses during these challenging times,” said Hirant Gulian, Chairman Emeritus of the Knights of Vartan. “We thank Dr. Kileci for his dedication and devotion to mankind.”

Matching Campaign for COVID19 Emergency Fund

The Knights of Vartan is collaborating with long time partner Fund for Armenian Relief’s Ayo! Program through a $10,000 matching campaign, $5,000 of which has been pledged by NAS Nigoghos and Mrs. Roset Atinizian.

Our donations will support people in Tavush region.

Matching available during May.

Please join and/or share this opportunity with others.

To make online secure donation please visit https://weareayo.org and follow COVID19 Donate link.
Knights of Vartan Inc. Nareg-Shavarshan Lodge in Greater Detroit is continuing to make improvements at the Knight of Vartan #106 School in Yerevan, Armenia. Since 2018, the Lodge will have raised $61,500 for renovation projects at this school. The Knights of Vartan, in 1993, initiated the “Adopt A School Project (AASP)” to financially assist public schools in the Republic of Armenia. During the early years of Armenia’s independence, the new Republic did not have the resources to adequately fund the needs of its public school system. With inadequate teacher salaries, deteriorated conditions of school facilities and a lack of school supplies, helping schools in Armenia was a worthwhile endeavor for the organization.

It was at this time the Knights of Vartan made significant improvements to School #106 in Nor Nork, Yerevan. After a few years of cooperation the school was renamed Knights of Vartan School #106 and Past Grand Commander (PGC) Everett Berberian and PGC Arra Avakian traveled to Armenia on April 5, 1995 to attend the ceremony marking this event. For a few years the Knights of Vartan (KV) implemented additional projects in the school, built in the 1960’s, through the Armenian Social Investment Fund (ASIF). Some of the major renovations after Armenia’s independence at this time included installing a new central heating system, replacing the roof and many of the windows and doors and what was supposed to be renovation of the gymnasium. However, the windows installed in the 1960s remained in place in the gymnasium hence one could easily see broken windows, warped wooden floors placed over the ground (dirt) and peeling plaster on the walls due to excessive humidity from poor drainage and air circulation.

In 2016 the Knights of Vartan Inc. celebrated the 100th Anniversary of its founding in Yerevan. The Grand Commander that year, Steven Kradjian, reestablished a relationship with the Knights of Vartan School #106 Principal, Mrs. Marine Vardanyan, and invited her to attend the organization’s official event. Coincidently she was a graduate of the same school and her mother was one of the first teachers there. This facility is not just a job for Mrs. Vardanyan but rather she considers it her identity. Because of her exemplary administrative skills and intellectual insight, she has raised the standard level of education which has resulted in the doubling of the number of students attending the school. In addition, she formed a club to stage plays and perform recitals and created a singing and dancing group. Even with scarce resources available, Mrs. Vardanyan

Since 2018, Nareg-Shavarshan Lodge will have raised $61,500 for renovation projects at KV #106 school.
was able to purchase new desks and replace some of the windows and doors, but large amounts of money would be needed to complete the required number of necessary improvements.

The next project in support of the Knights of Vartan School #106 was initiated by then Grand Commander Dr. Gary Zamanigian while on one of the organization’s “Back to Homeland” Mission Trips in 2017. Appalled by the deplorable condition of the gymnasium, he was inspired and determined to make certain it would be renovated in 2018. He said recently “I couldn’t believe my eyes when I actually saw the condition of the gym; at that moment I felt nothing is going to stop me from acquiring the necessary funds to refurbish the gym”. During one calendar year $30,000 was raised by Nareg-Shavarshan Lodge members to complete the project. Additionally, $2,600 was donated by Arshavir Lodge in Worcester to purchase new gym equipment which was available for use when the students returned to school in September 2019. The Paros Foundation was contracted by the Detroit Lodge to implement the project and they did so in a manner far beyond the expectation of all who were able to see the end result.

The renovation included replacing the old windows throughout the 284 square meter gym, installing new vinyl gym flooring on cement with proper drainage, installing new electrical wiring, 21 light switches and plugs, repairing the heating system, restoring the plaster and painting the walls and the ceiling, installing new ceramic tiles in the locker rooms, installation of new netting over the windows to protect them from damage and installation of new basketball backboards, rims and nets. In September 2019, the Knights of Vartan “Back to the Homeland” group, led by Grand Commander Steven Adams, attended the ribbon cutting ceremony officially opening the fully renovated gymnasium. The school’s younger children presented a beautiful program with dancing and acrobatics and the play “Vartanank” was preformed by upper grade students.

In the past, Mrs. Vardanyan had created a list of much needed renovations by priority. It included replacing the remaining old windows and doors of classrooms, changing all the outdated electric wires from the 1960s and a total renovation of the auditorium with a gradual incline of the floors for easy viewing.

Nareg-Shavarshan Lodge once again, with PGC Dr. Gary Zamanigian as the initiator, pledged to raise the needed funds for the final renovation. Gomidas Lodge in San Diego having been informed of the project has already made a much appreciated monetary contribution proving that in the Knights of Vartan “brothers help brothers”.

In the future additional improvements will be made as needed and they will continue to be implemented by the excellent work of the Paros Foundation.
Gifts for Poor Families sent from Erebouni Lodge and Friends

Members of Erebouni Lodge #45 in Las Vegas, NV under the leadership of Sbarabed Mesrop Khachikyan and their friends raised $2,000 to make sure four destitute families in Armenia would have a truly “Merry Christmas” in 2019. With the help of KDV partner organizations in Armenia, KV Communications Office Liaison Gohar Palyan carefully selected the beneficiaries for the lodge’s benevolent project.

Algachiyan Nora, 6 People, Yerevan

Nora is a 33-year old mother of five children ranging in age from 11 months to 13 years old. She lost her parents at a relatively young age and she subsequently married upon graduating from high school. Soon after the birth of her fifth child, Nora and her children were abandoned by her husband. In order to feed children, she has worked not only in Armenia but in Russia too. Currently (till COVID19 shut down) she is a waitress at a fast food restaurant in Yerevan. Her dream is to go back to school and become a nurse following in the footsteps of her mother. Her daughter Elen would also like to become a nurse but for now she must take care of her siblings after school because her mother is at work. The funds from Erebouni Lodge arrived at precisely the moment in time. The rent was due for Nora which she would not have been able to pay had it not been for Erebouni Lodge. After learning about Nona’s story and hardship, Ani Lodge committed and started helping to pay Nona’s rent for up to September. Hopefully COVID19 will be over soon and she can get back to her work.

A Family of 4 from Yeghvard, Kotayk Marz (the family has requested anonymity)

Three sisters age 12 to 19 years old from Yeghvard town lost their parents due to illness when they...
were very young. They are under the guardianship of their aunt who is in poor health. The house they live in is an unfinished structure. Their father began building it years ago but because of financial problems he was not able to complete it. The first floor was intended to be for storage but now serves as their main living area. It is humid and does not get enough sunlight. Girls get sick very often. With the help of different organizations a separate bathroom and kitchen has been added on the main floor. The elder sister Perjouhy is a first year student at The Brusov Foreign Language University. Her tuition fee is waived because she is an orphan. The two younger sisters are in middle school. All of them are very smart and have good academic grades. No one works in the family and they survive with the little financial aid provided by the government and various organizations.

Family of Stepanyan Gayane
4 People, Yerevan

Gayane is a 65 year old retired woman living in Avan District of Yerevan. She has had a troubled life; moved to Poland with her children in the 1990s. With one of her sons, Sevak, she returned to Yerevan. Sevak married and had a child but shortly thereafter his wife decided to place their newborn in an orphanage and start a new life. The child grew up in the orphanage until his grandmother, Gayane, took him back to her home. Today, 6th grader

Narek calls grandma both his mother and father.

Family of Petrosyan Narine
9 People (Masis, Ararat Region)

Narine is a mother of 8 children, where the youngest is 6 months and the eldest is 20 years old. Her husband is in a prison for theft. The elder son is in prison for using illicit drugs. The family has had a troubled life. Four children are included in different social support projects and they attend a special boarding school, and returning home on weekends. They lost their previous home due to financial problems a number of years ago. With the help of supporters the family built their current home.
NAASR/KV Grant Recipients
July - December 2019

During the second half of 2019, NAASR and the Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies received the largest ever number of requests and issued the most grants to scholars around the world since the beginning of their partnership in 2007. The following recipients received grants during this period.

Nora Bairamian, graduate student, Columbia University, Department of Middle Eastern, South Asian and African Studies, Columbia University, travel grant to conduct research for MA thesis, “Reassessing the Legacy of Mkrtich Khrimian.” Grant issued by NAASR.

Sargis Baldaryan, Ph.D. student, Armenian History Chair, Yerevan State University, travel grant to access manuscripts for preparation of critical text of 17th century trade manuals of Constant of Julfa. Grant issued by Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies.

Emre Can Daglioglu, Ph.D. student, History Department, Stanford University, travel grant to conduct archival research for doctoral thesis “Unintended Fatalities: Armenian Victims of the Pontian Genocide.” Grant issued by NAASR.

Prof. Salah Mahgoub Edris, Faculty of Arts, Dept. of Oriental Languages, Cairo University, travel grant to conduct research for research/translation project on the Armenian-language version of the Story of the Seven Sages and Sinbad, known in Armenian as Patmutiwn kaysern Pontsianosis ew knoijn ew ordwoy norin Diokghetianosi ew eotn imastasirats. Grant issued by Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies.

Dr. Danny Fittante, visiting scholar, Center for Advanced Studies in Sofia (CAS), grant to support fieldwork for research project “Armenian Mobilization/Intermediation in Contemporary Romania.” Grant issued by Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies.

Stas Gorelik, Ph.D. student, Department of Political Science, George Washington University, travel grant to conduct focus groups in Armenia for dissertation covering comparative analysis of Armenia's Velvet Revolution, Moldova's anti-corruption protests in 2015-16, and Ukraine's Euromaidan. Grant issued by NAASR.

Khachik Grigoryan, Managing Director, Ankyunacar Publishing (Yerevan), grant to support compilation, translation, and publication of the Armenian full text of “Commentary on the Epistle to Hebrews” by Cyril of Alexandria. Grant issued by NAASR.

Onnik Kiremitlian, PhD student, Oriental Institute of the Catholic University of Louvain, travel grant to participate in the 18th International Conference on Patristic Studies, Oxford, August 19-23, 2019, presenting paper relating to Armenian-Syriac cultural relations, “Newly-discovered gems from Syriac literature: Armenian translations of Syriac works by Marutha of Tagrit.” Grant issued by Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies.

Dr. Sergio LaPorta, Haig and Isabel Berberian Chair of Armenian Studies, CSU Fresno, and Dr. Allison Vaccia, Associate Professor of History, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, grant to support inclusion of maps in forthcoming new English translation and edition with an introduction and commentary of the Historical Discourse (Patmabanutiwn) of Lewond, to be published by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. Grant issued by NAASR and Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies.

Dr. Khatchig Mouradian, lecturer, Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies Department (ME-SAAS), Columbia University, travel grant to participate in the 2019 Special Session of “Lessons and Legacies” conference in Munich, Nov. 4-7, 2019, to present paper “Unarmed and Dangerous: Resistance
in Holocaust and Genocide Scholarship." Grant issued by Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies.

Sona Nersisyan and Lusine Tanajyan, researchers and PhD students, Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of The National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia (NAS RA), travel grant to present joint paper “Diasporic Identity and Cross Cultural Issues” at 17th International Polish Sociological Congress, 11-14 September in Wroclaw, Poland. Grant issued by NAASR.

Dr. Milena Oganesyan, Research Associate, Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., travel grant to conduct research in Los Angeles for publication project on American theater and film director Rouben Mamoulian’s Armenian heritage as it relates to his art. Grant issued by Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies.

Dr. Janice Okoomian, Assistant Professor of Gender and Women’s Studies, Rhode Island College, grant to support translation and transliteration of interviews with staff and clients of women’s resource centers in Yerevan and other areas for planned academic publication. Grant issued by NAASR.


James Robins, author and journalist, grant request to support travel and source material acquisition for forthcoming book project “When We Dead Awaken: Australia, New Zealand, and the Armenian Genocide.” Grant issued by NAASR.

Dr. Lusine Sargsyan, Junior Researcher, Matenadaran (Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts), and visiting lecturer at Chair of Armenian Art History and Theory, Yerevan State University, travel grant to participate in 12th International Congress of South-East European Studies, September 2019, in Bucharest, Romania, presenting paper on the codicological, paleographic, iconographic and stylistic analysis of the Armenian Gospel, copied in 1354 in Surkhat’ (Crimea), in the session entitled “From Ani to Romania: History, Tradition and Iconography.” Grant issued by NAASR.

Dr. Alvard Semirjyan, Associate Professor, Faculty of Armenian Philology-Chair of Theory of Literature and Literary Criticism, Yerevan State University, travel grant to participate in Surrealisms 2019 (2nd Conference of the International Society for the Study of Surrealism [ISSS]), University of Exeter, August 2019, to present paper “Surrealism in Contemporary Armenian Art and Literature.” Grant issued by NAASR.

Dr. Ani Shahnazaryan, Senior Researcher, Matenadaran (Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts), travel grant to participate in Digital Armenian Conference at the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, Paris, October 2019, to present paper on “A digital critical edition of Aghvesagirk.” Grant issued by Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies.

Dr. Khachatur Stepanyan, Chair of History of Armenia, Armenian State Pedagogical University after Kh. Abovyan, travel grant to conduct research in the ARF archives in Watertown, MA, fall 2019, for project “The Activity of the ARF in Soviet Armenia, 1921-1933.” Grant issued by NAASR.

Sipana Tchakerian, PhD candidate in archaeology, University of Paris 1–Panthéon Sorbonne, Labex RESMED, and University Aix-Marseille, travel grant to carry out field research in Armenia and Georgia for thesis “Les monuments crucifères à stèle quadrilatère d’Arménie et d’Ibérie orientale de l’Antiquité tardive au haut Moyen-Age.” Grant issued by Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies.
Memorializing NS John Poochigian, MD

A Lifetime of Service to Others

Submitted by NS Nishan Dulgerian

On Saturday February 8, 2020 the Armenian community of Orange County, California and members from the Knights and Daughters of Vartan service organization chapters in Southwestern and Northwestern Districts in attendance memorialized recently deceased NS John Poochigian during a solemn ceremony held at St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church, Costa Mesa, CA. The procession of Asbeds, Sbarabeds, Nakhgin Sbarabeds and two Nakhgin Avak Sbarabeds, led by Sbarbed of Vahan Tahlij Anton Markarian, entered the sanctuary and placed white roses of remembrance in front of John's image set on a tripod in front of the church's bema. Sbarabed's homage to John was followed by the former Vahan Tahlij Yeretz, Avak Kahana Moushegh Tashjian's requiem service assisted by Dn. Dennis Takessian, Sbarabed of Ghevont Tahlij, Pasadena.

John's nephew Daniel Poochigian provided an inspirational eulogy of his uncle and spoke about their common interest in history, art and Armenian culture.

Invited by John's widow, Sister Christine Avakoff-Poochigian, M.D., and members of John's immediate family, those in the sanctuary proceeded to attend John's memorial meal, an Armenian Hokejush, served in Church's Fesjian Hall. Many of John's friends, cousins, classmates, schoolmates and colleagues from medical centers where he served expressed their heartfelt remembrances of him often peppered with anecdotes from times spent together and vivid examples of John's joyful personality and friendly disposition towards his fellow human beings.

There were tearful moments of recollection, but John's life was celebrated in a cheerful mode with the participation of many guests including one cousin who steered the flow of speakers like John's brother Mark and son Daniel Poochigian, cousin Emile Lahoud, classmate Dean Ng from USC's School of Pharmacy, a USC schoolmate of early 1970s, NS Nishan Dulgerian, NS Souren Toumanian and wife ND Izzy Toumanian from Vahan Tahlij and Anoush Otyag respectively from Orange County. Brief but emotionally charged moments were shared when the Toumanians mentioned that John and Christine attended their daughter's wedding in New York the year before despite John's acute health condition. John did his benevolent work quietly and shied away from receiving accolades which he deserved. The now famous story about his subsidy of purchasing a large bus to transport Aparan City's college students to university campuses in the capital city Yerevan was a nice reminder of his dedication to the betterment of his people in Armenia. Many examples were cited of John and Christine Poochigian's benevolence in the medical field in Armenia.

Letters of condolences sent to Christine included one that describes John and Christine, as some of us were privileged to know, read as follows: “…I feel blessed to meet you and John. You are the relatives or parents; I wish I had. Your help, guidance, advice and encouragement in the few short years I have known you has made an enormous footprint in my heart. Your selfless and giving heart has set an example for me to live up to. Even with John gone now, he will always stay in our hearts and minds.”

Let’s sum our celebration of John’s lifetime of service to others with a few kind words of compassion we receive from Colossians 3:12, “Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.”
KV Supporting Aparan #2 School

In 2019 Knights of Vartan’s Veratarts Hayrenik delegates visited Aparan city within the busy week schedule. Aparan #2 School Principal Ms. Naira Ghazaryan invited Knights to visit and learn about needs of their School. The school was built in 1985. Currently it has over 500 students. Last year the old canteen of the school was renovated with the help of other donors. But the essential items was not provided for operation. Around 250 pupils of 1-4 grades should receive lunch in canteen. The much needed equipment were utensils, plates, cups, pans, pods, containers, mops, dustbins, mixer, kettles, chopping boards, towels, automatic hand dryer, bread baskets, can openers, carts, buckets, uniforms for kitchen workers, gloves, kitchen combine, vacuum cleaner, etc. total 44 different items from 1 to 300 of each item.

Knights of Vartan three lodges: Gomidas, Bakradouny and Etchmiadzin together collected $3,000 and donated for the much needed equipment to obtain for the canteen.

Now the canteen has all the needed items. Currently the school is close due to COVID19 but we received some pictures from the purchase. “Aparan city’s Hambartsum Voskanyan #2 school, the principal N. Ghazaryan and entire staff would like to express their gratitude to Knight of Varatn Inc., especially Gomidas, Bakradouny and Etchmiadzin lodges. With your financial support the canteen of the school obtained new equipment and utensils necessary for the operation. Dear Knights of Vartan, one more time with your action you approved that school-building, dedication and love to homeland is priority for you, truly knightly attitude. Therefor, from the name of all 500 students and 40 teachers of Aparan’s Hambartsum Voskanyan #2 school we extend our thanks and gratitudes to you” wrote the principal in her gratitude letter.
Medzorian Family Donation to St. Hovhannes Church in Berd Town

If you had asked NS Jack Medzorian of Boston’s Ararat Lodge No. 1 what part of Armenia meant the most to him after some one hundred visits over nearly fifty years, his answer would have the town of Berd in the Tavush Province. NS Jack passed away at his home in Winchester, Massachusetts on April 2nd, but his love for Berd, and particularly for St. Hovhaness Armenian Apostolic Church will continue to be felt for a long time thanks to his loved ones. In Mid-April, the Medzorian family donated fifteen thousand dollars to St. Hovhannes Church in Berd, Tavush in NS Jack’s memory. The money will be used to fund the church’s annual operating budget, as well as the purchase of a new piano and new uniforms for the children’s choir named in honor of NS Jack and his wife ND Eva Medzorian of Arpie Otyag No. 9.

It was ND Eva who first visited Berd on a fact-finding mission just two months after the devastating 1988 earthquake. At the time, she was New England District Manager for the Armenian General Benevolent Union. Her mission was to separate fact from fiction regarding the plight of Armenians in the border regions at a time when tensions with Azerbaijan were dangerously high. ND Eva videotaped interviews with local women, many of whom described losing loved ones to Azeri shelling and sniper fire. She also spoke with young men who were guarding the town and who told her that it was their duty to protect their motherland. ND Eva said those same young men later lifted a glass and offered a toast to peace. It was the courage and fortitude of Medzorian Family
Donated $15,000 to St. Hovhannes Church in Berd in memory of NS Jack Medzorian

Veratarts Hayrenik 2018 delegates in St. Hovhannes church with Children’s Choir and Fr. Aram
those women from Berd that gave ND Eva the idea of forming an organization that would encourage and empower Armenian women throughout the world. In 1991, ND Eva and two friends formed the Armenian International Women’s Association.

NS Jack Medzorian made his first visit to Berd a few years later and like his wife, became instantly attached to the community and its people. The Medzorians would continue their visits to Tavush province for the next twenty-five years. On some occasions, ND Eva would travel to Berd on her own, while on others, NS Jack would accompany her.

In 2008, the pair would meet a man who would become one of their closest friends in Armenia, Fr. Aram Mirzoyan, who would one day become pastor of St. Hovhannes Armenian Apostolic Church. ND Eva remembers sitting with her husband and Fr. Aram in a café and talking about the trials and tribulations the people of Berd have endured through the years. She described the Fr. Aram as a bright light for the future. NS Jack and ND Eva would become Godparents of St. Hovhannes Church, which was consecrated by His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of all Armenians on September 14th, 2014. The Medzorians would continue to visit the region and in 2017, ND Eva took her daughter, Sister Ruth Falletti, also of Arpie Otyag, and her two granddaughters, Angelina and Eva Maria, to Berd. There they were the guests of Fr. Aram, his wife Yeretzgin Alina and their three young sons. In September of 2018, NS Jack and ND Eva joined their fellow Knights and Daughters of Vartan in Berd as part of Veratarts Hayrenik III. It would be NS Jack’s last visit to Armenia.

During that visit, the clergy and parishioners of St. Hovhannes Church said thank you to the Medzorians for their continuing support of the church by renaming the Sunday School Children’s Choir in their honor. The newly named Medzorian Children’s Choir of Berd City performed a mini concert for their honored guests. NS Jack and ND Eva were then presented with a citation and a tee shirt with the choir’s name inscribed on the front. NS Jack would have one more opportunity to see the choir named for him and his wife. At a gala dinner in NS Jack’s honor last November that was hosted by Ararat Lodge and Arpie Otyag, a video of the Medzorian Children’s Choir was shown along with a personal message from Fr. Aram. The children performed a medley of Armenian songs and then concluded with a rendition in English of “Happy Birthday to You” in honor of NS Jack’s 93rd birthday. During NS Jack’s final months, he and ND Eva remained in close touch with Fr. Aram. In what would be their last video chat only days before his death, NS Jack listened as Fr. Aram brought him up to date on what was happening in Berd and how he and his parish were dealing with the shutdowns and restrictions due to the Covid-19 virus.

Asbed David Medzorian was at his father’s side as he spoke to Der Aram. He remembered, “Dad had a huge smile on his face throughout their entire conversation. He was so touched that Der Aram called in the middle of the night in Armenia just to see how he was doing.”

Asbed David says this most recent donation to St. Hovhannes Church in NS Jack’s honor is only the latest and that his family’s support of the church and its choir will continue. He plans to visit Berd at the invitation of Fr. Aram during his month-long trip to Armenia this September. If foreign travel restrictions remain in place at that time, Asbed David says he will visit as soon as it is allowed. “Berd and its people meant so much to my parents, “Asbed David said. “I want to see its beauty and meet its people and I will be thinking of Dad the entire time, wishing he and my mother were there to see it with me.”
NAS Charles J. Tateosian (1922- 2020)

NAS Charles J. Tateosian was born in Reedley, California on July 21, 1922 and grew up on the family farm at the base of Mt. Campbell, later moving to Selma, California. The son of John and Rebecca Tateosian, Charlie was the second of three children. Charlie passed away on March 31, 2020.

When World War II broke out in 1941, Charlie interrupted his college education and enlisted in the US Navy in 1942, serving as a Lieutenant (jg) first in the Atlantic and then the Pacific. After graduating from UC Berkeley in 1947 and joining the ranks of the Cal Bear Alumni, Charlie then began a 40 year career with Pacific Gas & Electric playing a key role in one of PG&E’s great endeavors - bringing natural gas from the Southwest and Canada to serve a growing California. After retiring in 1987 as the Manager of Gas Systems Design, Charlie started his second career as a consultant through Gas System Engineering. Charlie was a California Registered Professional Engineer (Mechanical) and served on the American Society of Mechanical Engineers B31.8 Code Committee for natural gas piping systems, retiring a few years ago as their longest serving member.

Charlie was heavily involved in the Bay Area and California Armenian community, serving on the Building Committee and Parish Council for St. John’s Armenian Apostolic Church in San Francisco, as well as the Western Diocese Diocesan Council and Foundation. Charlie was also very active in the Knights of Vartan, an Armenian fraternal organization. He joined Knights of Vartan Inc. Daron Lodge in 1953. Being an active member he served as the Commander of Daron lodge in 1959-1960, Grand Recorder in 1993-1995, Grand Commander in 1995-1997, and Grand Recorder again in 1999-2000. He was chosen as the Man of the Year of the Knights of Vartan in 2005.

In 1991, Armenia became a free and independent country again and Charlie with his wife Mary undertook many trips to Armenia to support the Knights and Daughters of Vartan school projects, the Bay Area Friends of Armenia soup kitchens, as well as advising on the development of Armenia’s own natural gas infrastructure.

In April 7, 1995 then Grand Recorder Charlie Tateosian joined Past Grand Commanders Everett Berberian and Ara Avakian to the event of renaming the Knights of Vartan school #106 (then #1).

In addition to travel to Armenia, Charlie and Mary traveled throughout the United States, Mexico, Europe, Japan, and South America. Charlie’s hobbies included photography, Armenian history, and technology.

Charlie is survived by his wife Mary Tateosian, sister Ruby Topoozian and her husband Joe of Selma, children Cathy Tateosian of Arcata, Lisa Tateosian of Oakland, and David Tateosian and his wife Mae Go and their son Harrison Tateosian of Martinez.

NS Jack Medzorian (1926- 2020)

A resident of Winchester, Massachusetts, NS Jack Medzorian was born in Boston, Massachusetts on November 15, 1926. He was the son of Marshall Hagop Medzorian and Skynig Marderosian Medzorian. NS Jack had one sister, Alma Rose Medzorian, who passed away in 2003. Jack Medzorian passed away on Thursday, April 2, 2020, at the age of 93.

Jack attended Arlington High School where he was edi-
tor of the school newspaper. He was the commencement speaker at his graduation which occurred on D-Day, June 6, 1944. Following his graduation, NS Jack enlisted in the United States Army where he served until his discharge in 1946. On April 13, 1945, he served as an honor guard as the funeral train of President Franklin D. Roosevelt passed through Spartanburg, South Carolina. He attended Norwich University in Vermont, The University of North Carolina and Boston University, where he graduated with a master’s degree in Business Administration. In 1951, NS Jack Medzorian joined Baird-Atomic of Cambridge as a junior accountant. In 1965, he became Vice-President and Treasurer and remained with the company as an executive until his retirement in 1991. His later years were spent in the humanitarian service of Armenia, the land of his ancestors, and the Armenian community in America. He was the last founding member and Past Commander of the Armenian-American Veterans of Greater Boston, formerly known as AMVETS Post. No. 41.

NS Medzorian was also the longest-serving Sunday School Superintendent of the Saint James Armenian Apostolic Church Sunday School and helped to develop the school’s curriculum. He was a member of the Council of Armenian Executives and a past member of the Armenian General Benevolent Union New England Executive Committee. In 1984, NS Jack was named Chairman of the AGBU National Convention. He joined the Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association in the late 1980s and became the first Vice-President of the Board of Trustees, later becoming President. With CYSCA, NS Jack and his wife ND Eva directed the State Department Armenia Youth Exchange / School Partnership Program and brought twelve groups of students to the United States. They also co-founded the Armenia School Aid Project in 1994 and directed 20 U.S. Government training programs for professionals from Armenia.

The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research also benefitted from NS Jack Medzorian’s expertise. A member since 1995, NS Jack spent the last years of his life on NAASR’S Executive Board, coordinating investments in the NAASR Endowment Fund. Most recently, he represented the Knights of Vartan in its partnership with NAASR in awarding grants to qualified scholars.

NS J. Medzorian’s service to The Knights of Vartan began in 1986 when he was recruited by his friend Ardashes Der Ananian of Ararat Lodge No. 1. One year later, he became Grand Treasurer during the tenure of Grand Commander Martin Martinian. NS Jack twice served as Commander of Ararat Lodge during the 1990s. He directed the Armenia Medical Aid Program and founded the Knights of Vartan School Support Program. NS Jack Medzorian also served as chair of the Board of Trustees for the Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies and most recently gave his support to the Women’s Resource Center of Armenia, which works for equal rights for women in Armenia and the promotion of women’s issues. Along with his wife ND Eva, NS Jack Medzorian made over one hundred trips to Armenia since 1972. The pair brought with them medical equipment, school supplies, and other materials to help support hospitals and schools in the border regions of the country. His last trip to Armenia was in September of 2018 when he and ND Eva joined their fellow Knights and Daughters of Vartan during Veratarts Hayrenik III. ND Jack’s love and dedication to The Knights of Vartan were inspiring, so inspiring that both his son David and daughter Ruth joined the Knights and Daughters of Vartan respectively.

When it came to being part of a great team, NS Jack and ND Eva Medzorian were a tough act to follow. The two met while he was Superintendent of the Saint James Sunday School and she was a choir member. They married in 1955 and had four children and five grandchildren. ND Eva was as committed to helping the Armenian people as NS Jack was, and together they undertook efforts and forged new programs that continue to bear fruit. They were the happiest when they were together, each supporting the other and their love and respect for one another only grew as the years passed.

NS J. Medzorian was not, however, all work and no play. He had a life-long love of tennis. He began playing at the age of thirteen and continued to play into his eighties. NS Jack became an avid Red Sox fan late in life and always wanted to be kept up to date on a game, even if he could not watch or listen. His son, Asbed David Medzorian, said that as soon as an Ararat Lodge meeting came to an end, his father would nudge him to look at his phone and tell him how the Red Sox were doing. He enjoyed traveling with his wife Eva and in addition to their many trips to Armenia, the pair also visited Europe, Russia, The Far East, and the Caribbean. Their last trip together was in July of 2019 when they joined their son, Asbed David in Las Vegas for the Knights and Daughters of Vartan Grand Convocation.

NS Jack Medzorian is survived by his wife, ND Eva Medzorian and their four children, Asbed David Medzorian, Sister Ruth Falletti, John Medzorian, and Mark Medzorian. He is also survived by his five grandchildren, Alexander Medzorian, Jack Medzorian, Eva Maria Medzorian, Kevin Medzorian, and Angelina Falletti.
NAD Agnes Sahagian (1932-2020)

NAD Agnes (Bizdikian) Sahagian, daughter of the late Nishan and Armenuhi (Kasparian) Bizdikian, passed away on Friday, January 10, 2020 surrounded by her children. She was 87 years old.

Agnes was born in Rutland, Vermont on October 6, 1932. She was the wife of the late Stephen Robert Sahagian for 47 years and also of the late Sahag Sahagian for 5 years. Agnes leaves her daughter Diana Johnson and sons Michael and his wife Laurie and Robert and his wife Leslie, 7 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren.

Agnes attended Rutland High School and graduated in 1950 with high honors. For 25 years Agnes worked for the Massachusetts Public Welfare and Social Services as the administrative secretary. Later in life, she was a certified personal care nurse.

Agnes was a devoted member of the Armenian Church of our Saviour and served in many forms over the decades. Some of her past duties within the church included Parish Council member, Women’s Guild Chairwoman, Diocesan delegate and member of the Endowment Committee. Recently, Agnes formed a Friendship Guild for some members of the parish.

Agnes was an active member of the Daughters of Vartan organization and was elected as the Grand Matron in 2011.

She was an avid knitter and dancer; she was happiest playing poker and bingo with her friends and spending time with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Stephen Kalemkarian (1931-2020)

Stephen Albert Kalemkarian was born on June 18, 1931, in Medford, New Jersey to Charles Garabed Kalemkarian and Nuver Grace Shanlian Kalemkarian. He passed away in Fresno, California on February 13, 2020, at the age of eighty-eight years old. His two siblings, George and Gracie, predeceased him.

His father Charles and many of the family had escaped or survived the Armenian genocide in Turkey from 1914 until the end of WWI and worked hard to find their way to America through the 1920s. Stephen attended elementary and high schools in the Fresno metropolitan area and graduated from high school in 1949. He attended Fresno State University from 1949-1954, majoring in political science, and graduated in January 1954, with a Bachelor of Arts degree. Stephen subsequently returned to Fresno State University and completed the necessary graduate work to obtain a General Secondary Credential, which he received in 1958. He started teaching in the Fresno Unified School District in September 1959, and taught there for a four-year period, through June 1963. During this time, Stephen met the love of his life, Peggy, who had recently come to the United States as a nurse from her native Beirut, Lebanon. After a whirlwind courtship lasting all of three months, the two were married on June 18, 1960 (on Steve’s birthday), and had two children in short order—Debbie in 1961 and David in 1962. Not long thereafter, Stephen decided to resign his teaching position in order to attend law school. Stephen received his Juris Doctorate degree from the University of California, School of Law, at Berkeley, having attended there from 1963 to 1966. He then returned to Fresno, California, and practiced law in Fresno until his retirement in 2007, specializing in family law since 1974. He practiced law as a sole practitioner from 1968 to 1972, at which time he joined the firm of Mardikian, Kelso & Kalemkarian, later becoming Kelso & Kalemkarian, from 1974 to 1981. He then practiced primarily as a sole practitioner, as an employee of his professional corporation, from 1981 until 2007, when he retired. Stephen’s legal specialty was in the area of Family Law. Stephen served as a member of the Board of Directors of the Fresno County Bar Association for a three-year term; he was the chairman of the Family Law Section of the Fresno County Bar Association for two one-year terms, and he routinely served as Judge Pro Tem for the Fresno County Family Court Department on an as-needed basis. The highlight of his career, perhaps, was the three successive three-year terms he served on the Executive Committee of the Family Law Section of the State Bar of California, from 1980 until 1988. Stephen also was a member of numerous continuing education panels on family law sponsored by the Continuing Education of the Bar, the Rutter Group, and the State Bar of California. Near the end of his life, numerous medical professionals expressed the opinion that he had lived a long, full life, and that he should just give up to end his suffering. But he wasn’t having it. As he said, and this is using less colorful language than Stephen used, “an awful life is better than no life.” Another favorite saying of his was, “I’m driving the car, and He was a fighter until the end and relished every moment he had on this earth. He definitely went out on his own terms, a job well done. Stephen joined the Knights of Vartan in 1995 and had been a member for 25 years.
Richard Samuelian (1927-2020)

Richard could find something to talk about with anyone, and truly had a genuine interest in the people he met. Faith, family, and building friendships were priorities that he modeled well. He loved boating, waterskiing and fishing at Huntington Lake, and played the trumpet for nearly 80 years. He had a mechanical mind like few others. There wasn't anything he couldn't "modify". He married the love of his life and made her laugh every day.

Born to Armenian immigrants, Richard lived his life in Fresno, joining with his dad and brothers Morris and Harold to run Sams Luggage. He is survived by Merlene, his wife of 58 years, his sons Richard and Ronnie, their wives Helen and Kelli, and 6 grandchildren who were his pride and joy. Funeral services were held at First Presbyterian Church Fresno. Richard joined Yeprad lodge in 1975 a member for 44 years.

NS Richard Demirjian (1927-2020)

Richard N. Demirjian was born on April 11, 1927 on a farm near Byron, Michigan. His father Sarkis Demirjian was born in Talas, Gesaria (Kayseri), Turkish Armenia. His mother was Kaden (née Tekian) Demirjian and she was born in Talas, Gesaria (Kayseri), Turkish Armenia.

Upon graduation from Southeastern High School in Detroit, Michigan, he entered the army undergoing basic training at Fort McClellen, Alabama. Thereafter, he was sent to Paris, France in 1946 where he served with the 583d Quartermaster, Western Base Section, SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces). In January of 1947, he was honorably discharged with the rank of sergeant. He received a direct commission as a second lieutenant in the army reserves and on October 17, 1949 he received his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Business Administration in 1952.

He married “Dotty” Satenig (née Vahratian) in 1952. The couple moved to Oakland, California in 1960 where Demirjian opened Scientific Platers, Inc., a division of Scientific Platers, Inc., of Alhambra, California. He also became a member of St. Vartan Armenian Church of Oakland, California and joined Knight of Vartan’s Daron Lodge in San Francisco. Richard served as Sbarbed in 1962 and received Asbed of the Year Award in 2014. His interest in athletics and Armenians led him to co-found the Western Armenian Athletic Association (WAAA) with close friend Ben Morjig. The WAAA, also known as the Armenian Summer Games held its first games in 1969. As an offshoot of this activity, he authored a book titled Armenian-American/Canadian WHO’S WHO of outstanding Athletes Coaches and Sports Personalities, 1906–1989.

NS Charles Shahe Guleserian (1936-2020)

Charles Guleserian from Arlington Massachusetts and Cape Cod Massachusetts passed away on April 21, 2020. He was the beloved husband for 60 years to Joyce Kachadorian Guleserian and devoted father of three sons. Charles was the son of the late Papken and Arshulous Guleserian.

Charles graduated from Belmont schools and was a graduate of Wentworth Institute with a Bachelor of Science in Architectural Engineering and a graduate of Northeastern University with a Bachelor of Science in Structural Engineering. Charles owned his own business MGM Contracting named after his three sons. He worked right up until his illness for over 50 years as a Commercial Real Estate Developer in Belmont and Cambridge Massachusetts.

Charles was very active in his community and especially at St. James Armenian Church in Watertown. He served on the Parish Council for many years and was a Diocesan Delegate for over 23 years, as well as being on the Board of Trustees. On December 2013 he was honored Parishioner of the year. Close to his heart was being Co-Founder and Co-Vice President for the Armenian Heritage Park Foundation at the Rose Kennedy Greenway. He was a member and Past President of the Armenian Council of Executives. He was a member of Knights of Vartan Ararat Lodge No. 1 and Past Commander in 2003. He was named Man of the Year in 2014. He also was President of the Rotary Club of Belmont and received an award for his leadership in raising sums for a hospital in Armenia for testing and prevention of Prostate Cancer in Men.
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Clovis, CA 93619
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Official Chronicle of
The Knights of Vartan Brotherhood
Governing Board: Avak Tivan - Avak Khorhouri
Correspondents: Lodge and Otyag Councils
Production: Gohar Palyan, Liaison
Published Quarterly and uploaded to official website of the brotherhood www.KofV.org

Deadline to submit materials for next Avarayr (covering February - April 2020)

15 July 2020
Email: KnightsOfVartan@gmail.com