Time to be a Knight

By Avak Sbarabed  Steven R. Adams

It’s the day after the Zoom Avak Tahlij meeting and I am slowly cleaning off all of my computer connections from the dining room table. I must congratulate all of the delegates to the 102nd Avak Tahlij. It was a great meeting, almost 7 hours across two days. We got a lot accomplished, but something was missing. I couldn’t shake the hands of my brother Knights. I couldn’t greet all of you personally. Yes, we accomplished a lot, but it wasn’t the same. What is strange to me is that it seems like just yesterday we were in Las Vegas at the Grand Convocation. What happened to the year? What happened to the time? It seems like we were just getting started and I look back and a whole year is gone. How fast did that go? No, wait! This COVID crisis seems like it’s been going on forever. Everything closed, can’t get a hair cut for seems like forever. What is going on with time? Seems like yesterday on one hand and seems like forever on the other. How can time be two different things at the same time? I know for sure we are all moving at the same rate so relativistic time dilation (my physics background creeping in). Time is indeed a strange phenomenon. It seems to move slow, it seems to move fast. Wasn’t it just yesterday that I was carrying my son on my shoulders, but I turn around and now he is a grown man. When we took office a little over a year ago, we were looking forward and it seemed as though we had all the time in the world to achieve our goals for the Knights of Vartan and now we look back and say, “Where did the year go?” Looking forward it seems like lots of time, looking back it seems like we didn’t have enough time. Must be some sort of doppler effect with time (sorry did it again). As a brotherhood in spite of the COVID crisis we still accomplished a lot, but there is never enough time.

Time is truly a strange commodity, moving too fast, sometimes it seems things will never end, but there is one thing I know for certain…time marches on! Even though my perception of time seems distorted, I know that a second is a second, a day is a day, and a year is a year. I can’t stop time and I can’t make it go any faster, it is what it is. A fact of life that I do know is that I can’t control time, but I CAN control what I do in that time. I choose what I want to do in the time that is given to me. I can choose to waste it or I can choose to do something meaningful. When I was young I served on church youth groups, why, because I knew the time would come when I could no longer do that because I would no longer be a youth. We do what we can today because tomorrow we may no longer have a chance to do it.

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Time slips away, and we look back and think, what did we accomplish?
As we look forward to the upcoming year, we can see what looks like plenty of time to accomplish our goals, but we know that when another year has come and gone, it will seem that we didn’t have enough time. What do we want to accomplish this year? As a Brotherhood, we want to be there for our brother Knights. We want to continue to support our Armenian communities both in Armenia and in our local towns. To do these things we must remain strong as an organization and we do that through strong and active members. The Knights of Vartan is not some mythical organization. It consists of individual brother knights. It is their hands and feet that give life to our brotherhood. Every year we lose members who have served so diligently during their lifetimes. It is up to us to continue to supply our organization with new and strong members to take their place. Last year we lost almost 60 members. Why not refill our ranks with 100 new ones! How about 200! Do you think that is possible? Let me tell you, anything is possible, and everything is possible if you want it! I choose what I do with my time. I could waste my time watching meaningless YouTube videos of power washers cleaning concrete or I could put my time to use for my organization. All things are possible if we really want it. Then again, if you think 100 or 200 new members is not possible, then it won’t happen (and you can stop reading here). I can choose to call my Sbarabed and tell him I have a new member, maybe my son, grandson, brother, nephew or just a young man who would make a good member. I can challenge my fellow brothers to do the same. If we want it and want it badly enough, then we get it, but it doesn’t happen by forming a committee. It doesn’t happen by appointing a membership chairman. We appoint committees, so we don’t get blamed. It happens because every Knight who reads this article, says I can do my part. I can choose to make a difference. If you believe in the good works of the Knights of Vartan, then you must put that belief to work. Time moves too quickly but what I do in that time is up to me. Brothers let’s dedicate our time to the fulfillment of the bonds of our brotherhood. Let the light of Vartanantz shine in each of us as we embark on a new year.
The Daughters of Vartan held their 80th Kerakouyn Zhoghov on July 22-25, 2020 on Zoom.

The Nakhgin Avak Dirouhies met on Wednesday. Later that same day the Grand District Reps met. On Thursday we met with the Dirouhies and on Friday we held the business meeting including all the officers and the delegates, approximately 70 sisters.

NAD Sara Der Matoian, AY Armine Liberatore and soloist Sister Marian Derderian conducted a very touching Memorial Service honoring the 23 sisters that we lost this past year. NAD Yvonne Korkoian conducted the installation ritual and NAD Diana Tookmanian said the prayer as the present Avak Khorhourt was re-installed for another term.

Was it the same as previous years? Absolutely not. But under the present circumstances, with the COVID 19 pandemic still active, it went as well as we could have wished for.

We certainly missed the fellowship, the ability to hug a sister and to enjoy the events that the convention committee had been planning for months for our enjoyment. Absolutely not the same. But we continued forward and by adapting to our present situation, we did accomplish some of the necessary business of the Daughters of Vartan.

Thank you to all the Sisters. We can all be proud that most are being very innovative in finding ways to conduct the meetings and even some socials.

We pray that this too will end and that we will all be together next July in Glendale making up for this year along with celebrating in 2021.

Please remember your brothers and sisters in the Tavush area of Armenia and in Lebanon who are in the midst of much turmoil from outside sources again. Will it ever stop? Keep them in your prayers and give them support if you are able.

And so we move forward, having no idea what this year will bring. We will continue to do the best we can as Daughters of Vartan. We pray that all stay safe, stay healthy and that we will be together in person soon.
Gomidas Lodge and Talar Otyag Members Among Godfathers of the New Sanctuary

On Sunday, May 31, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America, officiated the blessing of the foundation of the new sanctuary in San Diego. Very Rev. Pakrad Berjekian, Archpriest Manoug Markarian, and Archpriest Datev Tatoulian also took part in this joyous ceremony.

Sixteen godfathers placed the stones at the 16 pillars of the founda-
Vahan Lodge #44, Orange County, CA Raises Funds To Support Fuller Center for Housing Armenia

The Knights of Vartan Vahan Lodge #44, Orange County California, recently completed a fundraising activity specifically for the purpose of making a contribution to the mission of the Fuller Center for Housing in Armenia. The fundraising activity, a raffle with cash prizes for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places, culminated in a raffle drawing held on May 3, in the presence of a large majority of the Vahan Lodge Tivan members, including Commander Anton Markarian; of course, all were fully compliant with social distancing criteria and personal health safety guidelines!

Raffle ticket sales started at the December 2019 Christmas party; at that time, the raffle drawing was planned for a joint Otyag/Lodge Valentine’s Day celebration. Due in large part to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic restrictions on large group gatherings, the raffle drawing had to be postponed twice, until the decision was made to hold it in May, in the presence of a very small group. Despite the rough patches along the way, the outcome was fruitful in that Vahan Lodge was able to raise sufficient funds to support a home renovation project; thus, supporting the Fuller Center’s work in community development in the Republic of Armenia by assisting in building and renovating simple, decent, and affordable homes as well as advocating the right to a decent shelter as a matter of conscience and action.

The fundraiser was authorized by the Vahan Lodge Tivan, and the raffle preparations were chaired by Lt. Commander Haig Balian. Many of our Asbed Brothers, Otyag Sisters, friends, family members, and others in the community supported the effort by helping in the preparations, and by purchasing or selling raffle tickets. As a result of these collective efforts, including Treasurer Brian Der Matoian’s meticulous and timely accounting, the Lodge achieved its original goal and mailed a check to the Fuller Center on May 5.

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Among the Godfathers of the new Armenian Church in San Diego where four Knights and Daughters of Vartan members, examples of service to the Armenian people: Godfather of the Church NAS Steve and NAD Lisa Kradjian, Godfather of the Church Asbed Armen Derderian (Past Avak Argughagal) and his wife Sevan Derderian, Godfather of the Church (deceased) Asbed Jack Hachigian, with his son Asbed Garo Hachigian, and daughter Nina Hachigian; and Godfather of the Altar Asbed Jack Kalaydjian and his wife Maro Kalaydjian.

When completed, in about a year, this beautiful campus will feature a sanctuary designed to resemble St. Hripsime in Echmiadzin, elegant social hall, youth center and gymnasium, education and cultural building with classrooms and a library, Armenian Heritage Park, picnic and meditation spaces, and abundant parking.
Sister Olivia Jamgotchian establishes the Armenia Support Fund, awards first grants to small businesses in the homeland.

This is a time like no other in our history – and like no other time in our brotherhood and sisterhood. But one of the Daughters of Vartan’s young professional members is turning challenges into victories by making new opportunities happen for small businesses in Armenia which have been hit hard during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sister Olivia Jamgotchian of Gayane Otyag #22, San Fernando Valley, CA, established The Armenia Support Fund (ASF) in April 2020, to give grants to small businesses in Armenia who pass a strong vetting process. ASF has already raised more than $30,000 for their grant program.

Olivia’s background, culturally and educationally, is deep and wide, and very impressive. She is a graduate of USC’s Marshall School of Business and is Director of Sales Operations at Ticketmaster. Olivia says that her family describes her as “driven,” which is clear to see. Her passion put into action is already achieving great results.

Olivia has a lot to say about her new venture:

What do you love about being Armenian and how were you raised with your culture?

Being part of such a rich culture that so strongly promotes community, family and religious values has been a great gift in my life. I am proud to be Armenian and honored to have a chance to give back to our community through the efforts of the Armenia Support Fund.

Growing up, my brothers and I were always surrounded by our Armenian family and friends. The warmth, hospitality and vibrancy of our culture shaped who we are. Since birth, so much of my identity and feeling of belonging in this world has been tied closely to being Armenian and a part of such a resilient people. I’m incredibly proud of who we are and who we are becoming.
What does the Knights and Daughters of Vartan mean to you and why do you want them to get involved?

I myself have been a Daughter of Vartan for several years and have thoroughly enjoyed participating in the sisterhood alongside my mom, Marie Jamgotchian, Nakhgin Diroohie, Gayane Otyag. My father, David Jamgotchian, Tbrabed of Sevan Tahlil, is also a Knight of Vartan. Both my parents have been active members of the Knights and Daughters of Vartan for many years now.

The mission of the Armenia Support Fund is to support economic development in Armenia while also promoting unity amongst Armenians around the world – bringing our minds and hearts together to pursue strategic projects that will directly benefit the Armenian community. This mission has many synergies with the mission and overall essence of the Knights and Daughters of Vartan. Together we can do so much more than apart!

What prompted you to start ASF and help the Armenian people in this particular way?

I founded the Armenia Support Fund earlier this year in direct response to the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Back in March when it was announced that all international travel was suspended due to COVID-19, my Mom and I were forced to cancel our trip to Armenia that had been planned for this summer. In doing so, we not only canceled our flights, but also all the hotels and various other activities we had planned for our trip. All the business owners were gracious in providing us with full refunds, but it broke my heart to think off all the businesses that were being hit hard by the pandemic.

For every Armenian I know, each of them knows another two to three people who have had to also cancel their trips to Armenia this year. That is a huge loss in tourism revenue and production for the country! Last year, Armenia had a record-breaking year, with 1.9M tourists visiting the country and positively contributing to the country’s impressive 2019 GDP growth. I was inspired to do something to help small businesses survive this crisis and ensure that there is a vibrant Armenia or Armenians in Armenia and all over the world.

Today, our organization has already raised more than $30,000 towards our $50,000 project goal to help small, family-owned businesses in Armenia survive this global crisis. We have built a team of ten board members, advisors and interns to help us support our mission and have mobilized quickly to reach our goal of providing financial grants to Armenia based businesses in need.

Have you ever been to Armenia?

Unfortunately, I have not! This year would have been my first time visiting the homeland. I had planned to go to attend the Armenian International Women’s Association (AIWA) conference just outside of Yerevan with my mom.

What businesses have benefited from your grants so far?

This week we announced our first grants!

The Edge of the World Bed and Breakfast in Tavush: This guest house has been impacted by the conflict in the region. Funds will go toward purchasing materials to build an outdoor social and dining area for guests. This area will also be used to host events for locals such as weddings and birthdays.

The Terracotta Studio Children’s Art Center in Yerevan: The studio has four locations and employs eight teachers. COVID has made it hard to keep up with rents and salaries. The ASF grant is going to go towards ensuring they can keep the lights on and their staff employed during this time.

ASF plans on awarding several more grants in the coming weeks and will continue to raise funds in order to help as many businesses as possible.

How are you getting the word out about ASF?

News of the Armenia Support Fund’s mission has spread quickly. We launched our fundraising efforts on Instagram and Facebook about a month ago and within a week raised almost $10,000. The following week, Kim Kardashian posted about the ASF Armenia COVID-19 Small Business Support Initiative on her social media accounts and we quickly grew our following to over a thousand followers and raised another $6,000 in less than 24 hours. Since then, news of our activities has been picked up by several prominent Armenian media outlets (see list on page 8). Armenia’s Minister of the Economy and his team also reached out to us to meet and partner closely on this initiative. News of that meeting was announced in the Armenian press.

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Are there certain sectors that are suffering more in Armenia than others? Do you target those in any way?

Yes! Armenia’s Minister of the Economy, Mr. Tigran Khachatryan, shared with the Armenia Support Fund that the food and beverage, hospitality and tourism sectors have been hit the hardest, reporting an up to 75% reduction in production. With no end to COVID-19 in sight, we expect downward pressure on revenue and production to continue to affect businesses in Armenia negatively through the end of the year.

Armenia Support Fund is committed to helping as many small, family-owned businesses in Armenia survive with a focus on tourism and peripherally impacted businesses.

You talk about a strict vetting process on the website – what is that process?

The Armenia Support Fund, in partnership with the Paros Foundation, has asked small businesses in Armenia who are suffering to apply via our online application. Businesses that are properly registered and who have not yet received government funding as part of the Ministry’s anti-crisis program are eligible to be shortlisted for additional review. We have asked that all businesses present to us a specific business need for which financial assistance funds will be allocated. Small businesses who meet our criteria and can prove a legitimate need are then interviewed by a member of the Paros team in Armenia and their case is presented to the ASF board for review and final approval. Businesses who are approved will be awarded financial assistance funds in the form of a grant (distributed in-person by the Paros team in Armenia).

You also mention volunteer opportunities – what are some ways people can get involved?

We have many specific needs for individuals who are looking to get involved. We are looking for Armenian translators, journalists, public relations help and those who are willing to make calls to potential donors. More information regarding volunteer opportunities can be found on our website as well.

How did the partnership with The Paros Foundation come about?

Since 2006, The Paros Foundation and its donors have partnered to implement humanitarian, educational, cultural and development projects. In their almost 15 years of service, Paros has completed over 200 successful projects in Armenia and has raised over $7 million. I was introduced to Peter Abajian, the Executive Director of the Paros Foundation, by a good friend and long-time mentor of mine. He is also a Knights of Vartan Asbed. Very quickly it became apparent that Paros and Armenia Support Fund share a similar mission and that there were clear opportunities for partnership. As our 501c3 vehicle, Paros is covering all of the administrative costs associated with this project, thereby ensuring 100% of donor funds are tax deductible and allocated directly to small businesses in Armenia.

It is because of Paros’ long history of success, that ASF had no qualms in choosing to partner with this wonderful organization.

In addition to the Paros Foundation, what other organizations does ASF partner with?

We are proud to partner with the Armenian Professional Society, Armenian Professional Network, All-Armenian Students Association, Armenian Public Service Employees Association and ANCA – Professional Network, to encourage enterprising young professionals to get involved in supporting our homeland.

Anything else you want to add?

Though the Armenia Support Fund was founded in response to the COVID-19 economic impacts, our organization’s mission and long-term goals span far past just the struggles this pandemic has presented. In the future, the Armenia Support Fund aspires to help promote economic development in Armenia through education and e-commerce. Some ideas that have been discussed by the board include continuing adult education and certificate programs in business and technical related skills as well as the launch of an e-commerce platform dedicated to expanding the global market potential for Armenian made goods.

Olive is an example of a member who is not sitting still during this pandemic — she is more active than ever in helping Armenia grow and thrive in new and exciting ways.

— Naghkin Avak Dirouhie Lisa Kradjian
Zabelle Otyag 2020 Merit Scholarship Recipients

By ND Gloria Korkoian

Zabelle Otyag’s Daughters of Vartan Merit Scholarship Program is in its 19th year. They have awarded 60 Merit Scholarships totaling $56,700.00 and have been successful due to the generosity of the Detroit Sisters, Brothers and friends.

The Merit Scholarship Program is open to the children, grandchildren and great grandchildren of Detroit, Michigan’s Knights and Daughters of Vartan Nareg-Shavarshan Tahlij #6 and Zabelle Otyag #12 members.

The Daughter of Vartan value the importance of recognizing the academic accomplishments of Armenian college students. This year they awarded the Merit Scholarship for an undergraduate student to Tigran Terterian and a Merit Scholarship for a graduate student to Emily Rose Torossian. The Daughters of Vartan were unable to honor them at their annual June dinner, because it was cancelled due to Covid-19. They will honor them at a special dinner and introduce them to the membership when they can once again assemble safely. In the meantime, the Daughters of Vartan Zabelle Otyag would like to introduce the Merit Scholarship Recipients to you.

Tigran Terterian is the son of Sbarabed Kazar and Marina Terterian and the grandson of the late Asbed brother Kevork Terterian. He is a student at the University of Michigan pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology. Mr. Terterian’s goal is to further his education with a PhD and work in research.

In addition to maintaining high academic standards, Tigran has an extensive work experience to his credit. These include; his Eagle Scout Project (raising money for an orphanage in Gyumri, Armenia), Hye Camp Counselor, Research Assistant, and Shift Leader at Little Caesar’s.

Tigran’s parents taught him about being Armenian through language, food, culture and religion. He is proud to be Armenian but still he needed to feel comfortable outside the Armenian community. He solved this issue in a mature manner. Tigran simply educated his friends about Armenian life and they embraced his heritage.

Emily Rose Torossian is the daughter of Elaine Torossian and granddaughter of the late Asbed Brother Edward and late Sister Rosalie Torossian. She is pursuing a career in Social Work and is a graduate student at the University of Michigan. Emily received her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Michigan State University.

Putting her passion into action is evident in her work experiences. These include volunteering in assisting building huts in a remote village in Thailand, facilitating English classes in Vietnam, Legal and Client Advocate Intern at a domestic abuse shelter EVE (End Violent Encounters), Clinical Resource Specialist (New Oakland Family Centers) and Medical Social Work Intern (Michigan Medicine Hospital).

It became apparent to her professor Debra Mattison how Emily felt about her Armenian roots. “Emily developed her awareness and rooted commitment to advocacy from the example of her grandmother who was herself a strong supporter of the preservation of the Armenian culture and Armenian charities in America.” Emily Torossian had a close relationship with her maternal grandparents who not only cared for her after school, but also showed her what it is to “be an exemplary Armenian.” Emily states, “I have heard the stories of trauma, loss and sacrifice that my great grandparents and great-great grandparents and many other Armenians endured. I want to honor their legacy through how I live my life and contribute to and have a positive impact on society.”
Garmir Vartan’s Engraved Image

By NS Nishan Dulgerian

Almost all of us immediately recognize the bust length profile image in black and white of Sbarabed Vartan Mamigonian. For most of us that burly image of Sbarabed Vartan has been ingrained in our memory banks since our childhood. The engraving summons various names describing the sainted hero of the Knights of Vartan fraternal order, like “Kach Vartan,” Vartan the Brave for his bravery on record; “Vartan Zoravar,” Vartan the Commander for him having been in charge of the Armenian forces in the Battle of Avarayr; or “Garmir Vartan”, in reference to his reddish beard and hair.

My first encounter with this image happened early during my elementary school years in Istanbul’s Mekhitaryan Catholic School for Boys. Sbarabed’s image was labeled Garmir Vartan and a short story of the Battle of Avarayr was presented to us in a pocket-sized booklet called “History of Christianity and Saints of the Armenian Church.” Since teaching Armenian History was prohibited in Armenian schools of Istanbul, the catholic fathers of the Mekhitaryan Order had to devise this pocket-sized booklet to teach Armenian History under the pretext of teaching Christian Religion.

Not knowing much about our people’s history, we had to be content with little wishing for more to read. These booklets were distributed to us free by our instructor, an Armenian catholic priest educated at the Surp Ghazar Monastery on the tiny island of San Lazaro degli Armeni in the Venetian lagoon. They were printed at monastery’s Mekhitaryan Press around the turn of the 20th century, so the booklet’s contents had to have been prepared, researched and written during the latter part of the 19th century, most probably by a resident monk of the Order like Father Ghevont Alishan, the famous abbot, a historian and a teacher. Whoever it was, he must have had tomes of authoritative reference material at his disposal in the monastery’s legendary library which included original paintings, engravings, etchings and photographs of historic value.

I remember gazing at this image frequently and picturing Garmir Vartan like a Roman centurion in charge of legions of fighters against the large Persian army of the Sassanid Empire. The narrative of the Battle of Avarayr fought on the Avarayr Plain in Vaspuragan by the Deghmud River was presented to us as Christendom’s first battle fought to keep Armenia’s Christian identity. The story I was told conjured up ferocious battle scenes in my young mind’s eye. There was another image in the booklet showing Garmir Vartan being fatally wounded with the spear of a moribund Persian soldier who had fallen wounded. I concluded Zoravar Vartan did not die during a hand-to-hand combat on the battlefield but was fatally wounded while spectating from a hill. I hated that Persian soldier!

The copy of Zoravar Vartan’s image I have is in a slightly larger format than what usually is printed in brochures and booklets where engraver’s artistry is discernible in detail. The sketch illustrates a warrior of stature wearing a tunic overflowing with folds of cloth, secured near his left shoulder clavicle with an ornamental brooch. Under this tunic one notices part of Vartan’s body armor of iron scales riveted onto a breastplate of formed hide, his right hand grasping the ornate ivory hilt of his spathae, long-bladed battle sword, with an image of the cross embossed upon it. What steals one’s gaze is this ranking officer’s ornate helmet reminiscent of the 3rd and 4th century Roman Centurion’s battlefield head gear. Very noticeable also are a beautifully crafted ram’s head figure affixed to helmet’s temple on both sides, an undecorated cheek and neck protective piece of thick hide covering his nape, and the large plume of horsehair topping his cask, emphasizing wearer’s military ranking.

Legend has it, our patron saint, Garmir Vartan, sported a red beard and a similarly tinted mane. We all have seen colorful renditions of Sbarabed Vartan Mamigonian’s image in full regalia drawn by relatively recent period artists who depicted the Sbarabed attired in a Roman centurion’s battle gear: a uniform of chest armor, battle sword, a red tunic and a big red plume on top of the helmet as indications of high military rank.
This monochrome sketch dates to a period when such images were produced by master engravers of brass and copper who were commissioned by government authorities or church officials of the 18th and 19th century Europe, or by rich patrons. In the absence of an in-vivo painting of the subject to study, how did this artist create a powerful image of Vartan, sight unseen? May there be any clues of the artist's identity hidden in the folds of Garmir Vartan's presumably red tunic?

Portraiture or landscape artists traditionally sign their name in the lower right corner of their creations or inscribe it in an inconspicuous spot of the gravure they created. Hunting for such hidden clues results in puzzling situations as the answer is not easily noticeable by naked eyes. On impulse, I focused my sight to the bottom of Vartan's body armor for a hint. Soon a few capital letters bunched by the edge of Vartan's sword became noticeable. Looking at it again with a magnifying glass, I noticed a few capital letters grouped together spelling C GIONI, presumably an Italian engraver's name. These letters are faintly discernible within the red circled area on the attached figure originally captioned Garmir Vartan in capital Armenian letters.

Who was this C GIONI anyway? Who commissioned him to produce this engraved sketch which we came to know as Sbarabed Vartan Mamigonian's classic image? What sort of information C GIONI had, or was provided with, to create the image of someone who lived centuries before his time? It is highly probable that this engraving was also commissioned by Father Alishan as he had done in the case of Battle of Avarayr tableau, the oil painting on canvass by Leonardo Gavanin. With volumes of archival records at his disposal, Father Alishan may well have researched and identified physical attributes of Zoravar Vartan including his stature and facial features. What the artist C GIONI added to this description was the military garb modeled after a Roman centurion as described before. Like all engravers who first draw the image of their model on paper before transferring it onto a copper or steel plate to be engraved, C GIONI must have conceived Garmir Vartan's image fitting Father Alishan's description and enhanced by his own artistic interpretation.

Ever since C GIONI's simple yet powerful creation of Zoravar Vartan's engraved image, numerous artists created colorful renditions for videography or photo-novel and made them available online. Yet none imparts the tenor explicit in the classic bust length image with its marvelously ornate folds of tunic, head gear, and expression.
A National Treasure: Udi Richard Hagopian

By NS Nishan Dulgerian, photo by Asbed David Medzorian

Even those who are unfamiliar with the Knights and Daughters of Vartan to know about Udi Richard Hagopian, master of the musical instrument known as the ‘oud,’ also known as the “queen of the Near Eastern musical instruments.” Listening to his music makes us feel good – we have been dancing to his music all our lives, the same music our parents and grandparents listened to. It is an ongoing tradition.

The Knights of Vartan and Daughters of Vartan, know Richard as one of their own. He holds the administrative titles of Nakhgin Sbarabed and has served on the Avak Tivan as Avak Ter-Sbarabed. Richard most justly carries the title “Udi,” which precedes his name, signifying his mastery of playing the oud. Udi is an honorary designation that was conferred upon him and four other American-born masters of Oud, in 1969. He received this honor from none-other than by Udi Hrant Kankulyan of Istanbul, the legendary performer of this pear-shaped musical instrument, known as the grandfather of the baroque lute.

Generations of Armenians and non-Armenians alike have heard Richard as a performer of Near Eastern music with ‘kef time’ (party) bands, playing traditional music and singing renditions of lovey songs from various regions of the Near East historically inhabited by Armenians. Besides being an instrumentalist, Richard is a recording artist, music teacher, and goodwill ambassador introducing traditional music of Armenians’ ancestral lands in the Anatolian peninsula to diaspora communities all over the United States.

Born into a musical family near Fresno, California, Richard demonstrated his musical interests and talents of teaching himself how to play various musical instruments early in his life. He first studied the violin and clarinet at age nine. A year later, mesmerized with the sound of oud he heard over a 72-rpm disc his father was playing, he decided to learn playing the oud but did not have one to practice with. We know how it goes among Armenian families; word of mouth, from keri to khenami, friend of the family, eventually landed him a previously owned oud of his father’s friend from Erzurum. In a recent podcast interview with Asbed David Medzorian (Talking Vartan Podcast #15), Richard says, “I used to listen to my father’s records when I was eight or nine years old and taught myself playing oud by imitating the sounds I heard in those records being played on our family’s crank phonograph.”
Richard fondly remembers when he was 13 years old, Udi Hrant was visiting Fresno for a concert. Recognizing his son's talents and burning desire to play oud, Richard's father surprised him by buying Udi Hrant's oud after the concert. Even though Richard formally studied oud with the renowned Armenian artist Kanuni Garbis Bakırcıyan, another master instrumentalist from Istanbul, he maintained contact with Udi Hrant until in the 1960's. They played together in several events, alternating their instruments between oud, kanun, and the violin, exchanging valuable knowledge of modes, makams, and techniques of Middle Eastern improvisations, taksim, trademarks of a master instrumental artists' creativeness. Richard first studied the violin, a non-fretted instrument which involves mastery of sliding technique of violinist's digits over the fingerboard. The oud is another non-fretted instrument like the violin but with multitude of strings: five double strings and a single bass string, compared to four single strings of a violin made of gut, nylon, and wire strings. The artistry of playing oud depends upon the agility the player's digits slide upon the oud's neck to generate ¼-toned modes, known as makams, by plucking them with a plectrum (pic), frequently referred to as mızrap, in Armenian and in Turkish. In a recent conversation I had with Richard, he explained that traditional fabrication of mızrap used the shaft of an eagle feather, or a plastic cable tie, sculpted flat to be held firmly between a player's thumb and index finger.

There is plethora of taksim styles, too numerous to list here. Richard's repertoire of taksims includes the works of one of the most famous instrumentalists and composers of the Ottoman era music, Kemani Taytos Ekserciyan (1858-1913). When you find yourself listening to Richard performing such music and he asks you what you want to hear next, please say “anything from the works of Kemani Taytos.” Do not be surprised when you start feeling overwhelmed listening to the highly interpretive music our forefathers listened to in Istanbul and the enclaves of immigrant-Armenian communities in the diaspora. Richard takes the ride readily and makes you feel you are part of the trip.

As artist in residence, he has taught at California State University, Fresno, performed throughout the country, and presented a master class at the Manhattan School of Music. Among other honors, Richard has been a recipient of a “Meet the Composer” grant from the New York State Council of the Arts and was awarded in 1989 the National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Fellowship, the nation's highest honor awarded in traditional folk arts.

Richard has passed along his art to his son Harold, a graduate of the Julliard School of Music in violin, and to his grandsons Philip and Andrew. They all accompany him on various instruments when the family plays at several Armenian events throughout the country. We, as the beneficiaries of Richard’s art, are proud to call him one of us. Vartsgt gadar dear brother Richard, you are indeed a national treasure.

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**A New Car for Martuni Vocational School, Artsakh**

NS GDR Jake Bournazian has been supporting the Martuni Vocational School in Artsakh. Last year, he donated some much needed equipment for the school. This year, a new training car for drivers' classes has been obtained in collaboration with the Ministry of Education of Artsakh.
Ani Lodge and Dikranouhie Otyag During the First Phase of COVID-19 Pandemic

By NS Kevork Marashlian

Washington, D.C. The last full member activity of the Knights of Vartan Ani lodge and Daughters of Vartan Dikranouhie Otyag of Washington D.C. was an audiovisual presentation of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem by St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church Parish Priest Rev. Father Hovsep Karapetyan (on the left) and Dr. Ara Avedisian, Sentinel of Ani Lodge and Sister Dr. Maggie Avedisian (below).

Der Hovsep and brother Ara gave a complete history of the Armenian Quarter of Jerusalem with photos of the people, businesses and holy sites of Armenian Jerusalem. They valued the spirit of the Armenians still living there and protecting our cultural sites along with St. James Brotherhood clergy and Patriarchate. During a Q/A section they answered all questions encouraging the audience present to go and see and feel the atmosphere and spirit of the Armenian Jerusalem at least once in their lives. The guest speakers were presented by Dirouhie Malvina Brown.

The COVID-19 Pandemic halted all the activities of the world and Avak Sbarabed (on the right) and Avak Dirouhie ordered all lodges and Otyags to meet virtually through Zoom.

During the month of April, Avak Sbarabed Steve Adams was invited to do a “visitation” of ANI lodge virtually. Graciously, Avak Sbarabed participated and provided a recap of efforts underway in light of the COVID19 challenges. He announced that April 24 event in NYC was cancelled, Armenia trip in September was uncertain to take place, informed that TAR (Annual reports) were now electronically available online in PDF format. It was also condensed and streamlined. Avak Sbarabed Adams described the Avak Tivan and other lodge attempts at holding alternative meetings, they suggest Zoom as an easy option. The Avak Tivan and district representatives had a successful zoom meeting about three weeks earlier with 40 attendees.

A Zoom meeting is being considered for the Grand Convocation in lieu of meeting in Los Angeles. It will take place in August. There would not be an installation since the current Avak Tivan would be running again.

Therefore it had been agreed by the Avak Tivan to postpone the 2020 Grand Convocation to be hosted by the Tri-Lodge/Los Angeles in 2021.
During the month of June, Ani Lodge and Dikranouhie Otyag presented to the eight high School graduates of the community with congratulatory certificates and donated $100 to each graduate.

On June 27 Dikranouhie Otyag organized virtual ‘Wine & Cheese Zoom” get together directed by Dirouhie Malvina Brown. Sister, psychologist Dr. Maggie Avedisian shared wonderful tips and advice on how to get back to a normal routine after the pandemic from the perspective of our Armenian faith and fellowship with others and keep healthy by eating well, exercising and praying. Brother Dr. Ara Avedisian, as an expert chiropractor gave instructions what to do and what not to do during this pandemic. Pokh Dirouhie Svetlana Hovan-nisyan reviewed the book “Family Portrait” written by sister Naira Babayan about her life from Armenia to the United States in English, which is on sale at Amazon. We encourage every sister and brother to get a copy of the book. At the end of the program, Babayan, who is a mu-

sicologist, played Armenian songs on the piano, to the pleasure of the audience, while each one was enjoying wine and cheese on their own.

On July 24 and 25, our brothers and sisters participated and helped St. Mary Armenian Church’s “Mini Food Festival Carry Out Edition”, which brought much needed income to the church.
“The family is an important unit in our culture. Strong families mean a strong country and a better future for the nation. Therefore, we try our best to support families in particular. This year, we became connected with Nona Algachiyan’s family. Her story was featured in the previous Avarayr. The article described how Erebouni lodge members and their friends supported four disadvantaged families, including Nona’s family, through the Christmas holiday. Beginning in February, Ani lodge “adopted” Nona’s family and has been helping them by paying the rent for their home. The rent money is wired very month and paid in a timely manner. This support was God given in that ever since the spring, COVID-19 has affected not only Nona’s family, but all of Armenia and the entire world. To make matters worse, Nona had lost her job at a local restaurant at a time when the family had no home and no savings. The silver lining amongst all this bad news is that Nora’s husband has returned and is now reunited with his family. Their children, who range in age from 20 months to 14 years old, now have both parents to look after their needs.

At the same time, we carried on with more projects. With Nora’s husband back and funds still tight, their rented flat seemed too small (one room with 7 people) and expensive. Nona’s husband Karen (Karen is a male name in Armenia) found another home, farther away, with three bedrooms and has a yard. This was at the edge of Yerevan, around the newly built neighborhood of Noragavit. The home had a minimal amount of furniture. This is not the first time that Armenians have reached out to one another during a time of need. The COVID lockdown encouraged those who were more fortunate to reach out to those who needed help. With a Facebook post, we were able to find a netbook (small laptop) so the children could participate in online classes. We collected all the needed furniture for the family, including a sofa, wardrobe, baby bed, and three nice beds that arrived from Sisian city (south of Armenia). The owners of Basen Hotel & Tours reupholstered their furniture and found a great reason to donate the furniture which although used, is still in excellent condition. Once the driver who transported the furniture to Yerevan learned that it was for a needy family, he generously refused payment for his services.

Our main concern was to generate some sort of income for the family while they continued looking for work. Although there have been a few successful temporary offers, the search for full time work continues. The gen-

By Gohar Palyan

In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak.” We remember the words the Lord Jesus himself spoke: “It is more blessed to give than to receive”. The Bible, Acts 20:35

Thanks to Ani Lodge, a Family with Five Children Goes from Surviving to Thriving

By Gohar Palyan

In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak.” We remember the words the Lord Jesus himself spoke: “It is more blessed to give than to receive”. The Bible, Acts 20:35
erosity of others has also been helpful to Nona’s family. A donation of $300 was made by Beth Broussalian, a friend of both our Liaison and the San Diego Daughters of Vartan. The Daughters themselves donated $100, while other supporters in Armenia also gave donations. The landlord was kind to allow the family to use his barn. With these donated funds, we purchased 4 young pigs and enough fodder to feed them for a few months. Karen has had experience raising animals and the landlord is sharing his vast knowledge in this area to help them out. For Nona and her family, this is not only the start of a family farm, it is the start of sustainability.

Since February, Asbeds from Ani lodge have paid the rent for Nona’s family and say they will continue to do so for the next few more months. This will give the family time to increase their own finances, allowing them to stand strong and on their own.

NS Joe Vartabedian. “Thanks to Gohar, reaching out to us all this past Christmas with the photo of Nona and her 5 beautiful children, explaining they were being evicted if not for the donation from Erebouni lodge. Our asbeds and one daughter from Dikranou otyag committed enough funds to pay her rent, if necessary, through the remainder of the year.

During this last visit, the younger boy was staying with relatives.
COVID-19 Relief: The Knights of Vartan and AYO Program of FAR Team Up

By Gohar Palyan

The Knights and Daughters of Vartan share the concern of helping to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and with Past Grand Commander Nigoghos Atinizian and Mrs. Roset Atinizian’s matching fund of $5,000 joined Ayo program of FAR and raised far over $10,000 for food and everyday necessities for people in the Tavush border region of Armenia.

COVID-19 is spreading, and all cautions are needed to prevent it. For this purpose, the lock down in Armenia has left scores of people with either limited income or no income at all. They needed our help more than ever. Knights of Vartan Past Grand Commander Nigoghos Atinizian initiated a matching fund. He and his wife, Roset donated $5,000 to be matched by funds raised by the Knights and Daughters of Vartan and friends.

“People in Tavush region are hardworking and I have met many of them during my frequent visits to Armenia. We know the pandemic is temporary and one day we will overcome it. But there are families who need our urgent support now and we would like to stand by their side during this needed time” said Past Grand Commander Nigoghos Atinizian.

Just one week after announcing the matching fund drive to the Knights and Daughters of Vartan community across the United States, over $10,000 was raised for COVID-19 relief in the Tavush region.

The Tavush region has the longest geographical border with Azerbaijan. The region is a strategic location and for decades the Knights and Daughters of Vartan and its members have been involved in numerous charitable projects to help support its people. Among those efforts is the COVID-19 Relief project with Ayo. It is essential given the current pandemic that now spreads in Armenia and in the world.

During the last several weeks, and using the money raised during the matching fundraising drive, the Ayo program staff has distributed 400 packages to some 400 families in the Tavush region. The packages include basic necessities as well as food. We know that along with receiving their package of food, these families also receive emotional support. They realize that they are not alone and that during these difficult times, their brothers and sisters across the border and around the world have them in their thoughts.

There are several other projects that the Knights and Daughters of Vartan have undertaken as members continue to show their support for their brothers and sisters in Armenia.

Grand Commander Steven Adams said, “We are so thankful to Past Grand Commander Nigoghos and Roset Atinizian for their generous donation and to the members of the Knights of Vartan who rose to the occasion to help our homeland. As members of the Knights of Vartan we are committed to helping our homeland along with our communities in the diaspora.”

Ayo! is a fundraising platform of Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR). By providing a vehicle to raise money for local development projects, it allows the people of Armenia to make positive changes in their society. Please visit www.weareayo.org for more info.
Knights of Vartan Charitable Fund

Present's..

KofV School #106 Yerevan Armenia Raffle

*1st PRIZE AIRFARE FOR 2 TO ARMENIA!

2nd Prize $1,000 CA$H
3rd Prize $500 CA$H
4th Prize $500 CA$H

Drawing December 6, 2020 St John Armenian Church

NEED NOT BE PRESENT TO WIN

Only 300 tickets to be sold!

With Phase One completed, The Knights of Vartan Detroit continues to build on their pledge to renovate School 106 in Yerevan. Your help is needed in completing Phase Two - updating windows, electrical system and remodeling the auditorium. The KofV and children thank you for your support!

Please Mail & Make Checks Payable To..

Knights of Vartan Charitable Fund
2530 Wildbrook Run, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304-1446

For Further Information Please Contact Vaughn Masropian 248.376.0996

*1st PRIZE Cash Option $2,500 - Airfare not to exceed cash option value.

*1st PRIZE Shall be FIRST ticket drawn, then 2nd, 3rd, 4th.
Avak Tivan Supporting Arevik Kindergarten to Fix the Damaged Security System

By Gohar Palyan

When in need, Armenians turn to their families first. (No American insurance system is working here yet, just the Armenian style).

2020 was a year of many surprises for the world and Armenia as well. Among the surprises was a snow and ice storm that struck Gyumri on July 12th, causing severe damage on the roof of the Arevik Kindergarten. The damage sent water over the kindergarten’s walls and destroyed the school’s security system.

Security at the school is essential, given both the COVID19 pandemic and the fact that teachers and students were on vacation.

Principal Gayane Khachatryan turned to us with hopes of assistance. Upon hearing of the school’s needs, Avak Sbarabed Steven Adams requested the funds from the Avak Tivan. The principal’s request, the wiring of the funds, and the repairs to the security system all took less than a week.

Our partners know they can trust us when in need!

Daron Lodge Supporting Tsitsernak Kindergarten With New Bed Linen and Table Games

Once we begin a project with our partners in Armenia, we make sure to stay in touch. Our partners know that if they are again in dire need, they can reach out to the Knights and Daughters of Vartan.

Members of Daron Lodge and Araxi Otyag visited Tsitsernak (swallow) kindergarten in Charentsavan town, Armenia, in June of 2018. Accompanying them was a large group of supporters, including NS Anto Cingoz, ND Hasmig Cingoz, and NS Joseph Bezdjian. It was a time of celebration as they came to help renovate the kindergarten in cooperation with the ATDF (Armenian Territorial Development Fund.) The support for the kindergarten was made in loving memory of the late ND Araxi Bezdjian of Araxi Otyag, the wife of NS Joseph Bezdjian. One wing of the building had already been fully renovated.

The kindergarten welcomes over 250 children, and that number is growing.

Still, there are other things in need. The kindergarten does not have an adequate budget, and there is always something that needs to be purchased or renovated. The children are on vacation until September. The principal, Karine Melik-Mushkambaryan, reached out to the Knights and Daughters of Vartan, seeking a donation to purchase linens for forty new beds and 13 new table-top development games.

The request was seen as an excellent opportunity to reach this lovely niche of sweet kids in Charentsavan. NS Joseph Bezdjian, upon hearing the appeal, immediately sent the money to purchase the needed items.

Thanks to NS Bezdjian’s generosity, one more group in the kindergarten will have brand new bed linens and development games when they return in September.
Varujan Ganjian (1934 - 2020)

Varujan Ganjian of Belmont, Massachusetts passed away peacefully at home surrounded by his family on March 22, 2020 after a brief illness, he was 85 years old. Varujan was born on May 7, 1934 in Istanbul, Turkey to the late Berge and Armenouhi Ganjian.

Varujan graduated from Mhitarstyani High School in Istanbul and was a graduate of Istanbul Technical University. After moving to Boston he attended Northeastern University to get his Master's Degree in Civil Engineering. Varujan worked for Bechtel Engineering in Montreal, Canada and Stone and Webster for over 20 years after moving to Boston. Also, he worked for Badger and Sharw Engineering Companies until 2017.

He was a longtime active member and past treasurer of Knights of Vartan Ararat Lodge. He always looked forward to the lodge’s monthly meetings and fellowship.

He is survived by his beloved wife Elizabeth (Imirze) Ganjian. He was the devoted father of Victor Ganjian and his wife Nancy of Belmont, and Linda Ganjian and her husband Jesse Lambert of Jackson Heights, NY. He was also blessed by 3 grandchildren.

Karnig Torosian (1927 - 2020)

Karnig Torosian, 93, of Fresno CA passed away on August 1, 2020 while in the company of family. He was born to parents Toros and Siranoush Torosian on May 24, 1927 and graduated from Central High School in 1945 where he was a multi-sport athlete and participated in theatre arts. He was married to Mary Serimian of Selma, CA in 1955 and they celebrated 65 years of loving devotion to one another on June 25 of this year. Karnig is survived by his wife Mary, son Dr. Kevin Torosian, daughter Kim Kezirian and her husband Gary. Karnig was predeceased by his parents, his sister Violet Herbekian, and brother Willie Torosian.

Karnig worked over 40 years as a salesman for Berberian Bros. in Fresno, CA. Idle in retirement, he returned to the work force, first with the Raisin Administrative Committee, and then with Yost and Webb Funeral Home. Asked once by a stranger at a gala event if he was wealthy, Karnig immediately responded, “Yes, I have lots of friends”. Always armed with a joke or “story”, he got great pleasure from putting a smile on the face of others. His love for God and his church were exemplified by his singing in the church choir for the better part of seven decades, as well as serving as a parish councilman and member of the church men’s organization. A fan of classical music and opera, he also loved sports where he was a devoted supporter of Fresno St athletics and gave of his time coaching Little League baseball and church league youth basketball. He was also a member of the Knights of Vartan Lodge and Kiwanis.
Raffi Hovhannisian (1938-2020)

Dr. Raffy Hovanessian was born to Arakel and Dirouhie Hovannessian, both survivors of the Armenian Genocide who had settled in Jerusalem. At the outset of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the family relocated to Aleppo, where the young Raffy attended Sunday School and went with his family to church on Sundays.

Raffy began to teach Sunday School in Aleppo, and attended college there before moving to Lebanon to begin medical studies at the American University of Beirut.

Dr. Hovanessian met his future bride, Vicki Shoghag, at church on Sts. Vartanantz Day, and sensed in her the same drive to reach out to others that he felt in himself. Soon the two got married. Shoghag was his partner and inspiration in every activity for 55 years. The two were inseparable, and complemented each other in every way. Whenever there was a need in our community—whether to help the earthquake victims, St. Nersess Seminary, their local parish, or some person or family—Raffy and Shoghag would respond to that call together.

The couple moved to the United States so he could continue his medical education. Dr. Hovanessian began sub-specialization at Hackensack University Medical Center in New Jersey, and later continued his work at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Maryland.

Conflict in the Middle East prevented the Hovanessians from returning to Beirut, and they decided to settle permanently in the United States.

As a physician, Dr. Hovanessian was highly esteemed by colleagues and patients alike, acknowledged around the world as a leader in his field. But his choice of profession, as a healer, revealed something even deeper in Raffy’s character: his native desire to care for people. It was a virtue he learned at the feet of his parents Arakel and Dirouhie, both Genocide survivors, from Raffy’s earliest days in Aleppo and Beirut.

Dr. Hovanessian went on to become a man of national and international standing in the Armenian world. When leaders of our community from around the globe gathered in Armenia to choose the new Catholicos of All Armenians, they chose Raffy to be the vice-chair of the National Ecclesiastical Assembly. Serving in that capacity even once would be a highpoint of any person’s public life. Raffy did it twice, in 1995 and 1999.

In 2014, Dr. Hovanessian was honored by the Eastern Diocese as its “Armenian Church Member of the Year,” at the Diocesan Assembly held at St. Vartan Cathedral in New York. On that occasion the Diocese issued a retrospective on his life, which we are featuring below, with modest emendation.

As the decade progressed, the Hovanessians’ service extended beyond the Midwest to aid the people of Armenia in the wake of the devastating earthquake that struck Spitak and Gyumri. The couple would recall hearing the terrible news on the radio as they drove home on the evening of December 7, 1988.

“Both of us are children of Genocide survivors. My family grew up poor, and I know what it means for people to be in need,” Dr. Hovanessian said. “There was no way we could sit on the sidelines and do nothing.”

Outside the Armenian Church, the Hovanessians have been active in the AGBU, Knights of Vartan, National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, Armenian Missionary Association, the Armenian American Health Professionals Organization, and the Armenian Assembly of America, among other organizations. They are both recipients of the “Ellis Island Medal of Honor,” bestowed on individuals whose achievements have benefited their communities and helped build bridges between their ethnic groups and the broader society.

Dr. Hovanessian served on the St. Nersess Seminary board, and also on the Diocesan Board of Trustees. In a 2014 interview, looking back on a life filled with accomplishment, he said that he was most proud of his family—his children Armen, Ani, and Aileen—and his seven grandchildren. Together the Hovanessians instilled in them a love for the Armenian culture and faith.
Carl Kapikian (1927-2020)

Carl Kaloust Kapikian passed away on Friday, April 17, 2020, at the age of 93. He is survived by his wife Stella Kapikian (nee Boodaghian), three daughters Roxanne (Raffi) Panosian, Alexis Lowe, and Carla (Dr. Chahan) Yeretzian, five grandchildren Dr. Alison and Melanie Panosian, Philip Lowe, and Liana and Michael Yeretzian. He is also survived by his brother-in-law and sisters-in-law Arthur and Dorothy Boodaghian, and Catherine Kapikian, and four nephews Albert, Thomas (Lisa), and Gregory (Shelley) Kapikian, and James Boodaghian. He was predeceased by his brother Dr. Albert Kapikian.

Carl was born in the Bronx to Zareh and Baidzar (nee Bazikian) Kapikian, both Armenian Genocide survivors. As a young boy, his family lived in Astoria, moving to the family home in Bayside where he graduated from Bayside High School in February 1945, and developed close friendships that lasted his lifetime. One month after graduation, he started basic training at Sampson Naval Training Base in NY, followed by a 10-week Medical Corps School at San Diego Naval Base. At the end of 1945, he was transferred to Fort Eustice, VA where he worked in the medical corps dispensary unit on the military base. He continued to serve at the US Naval Training Center in Bainbridge, MD until his discharge in December 1946.

His first jobs after the war were with Eagle Photoengraving and then Embassy and Quality Photoengraving, where with his eagle eyes, he expertly produced the printing plates that impressed all his superiors (and never needed glasses his entire life). At the same time, he attended New York University at night, receiving his bachelor’s degree in business in 1953. Ultimately, he joined PDI, a division of Time Inc. in 1965, where the printing technology migrated to computer processing; Carl was ready for the challenge and climbed the corporate ladder to become the night foreman. With his business acumen, he entered the world of real estate, first as a salesperson to learn the industry, later as a real estate broker. Carl became the owner of Harvey Craw Real Estate Inc. in 1978, and ran a successful real estate business for several decades in Manhasset, NY.

Some enchanted evening, Carl met the love of his life Stella in 1950 at an Armenian General Athletic Union meeting that was presided by President Carl, married a year later and enjoyed a wonderful life together for the next 68 years. They were original members of Holy Martyrs Armenian Church in Bayside, NY; Carl was a president of Mr. and Mrs. Club and an active member of the Men’s Club and the Knights of Vartan, Etchmiadzin Lodge. Carl and Stella enjoyed travelling; their favorite trips were to Europe and Armenia, and their yearly trips to Disney World! His fondness for the ocean led him to Jupiter, FL, where he and Stella spent the winters for many years.

Carl was a people person. His jovial and social disposition put everyone around him immediately at ease. He will be remembered as a raconteur, sharing his stories always with a good amount of humor and his love of a well-timed quip. Carl was definitely multi-talented. His skill as a carpenter was exemplified in the finished basement and built-in furniture throughout the first family home. Most notably, Carl was a great athlete. From a young age, he played baseball with the St. Mel’s team in Queens, and continued on to play ice hockey, basketball, tennis and bowling. Carl was known for his pitching prowess during his time with the Manhasset All Stars, a softball team of men half his age; he played until he was over 70 years old. He picked up golf in his later years and continued the sport until two years ago, winning many tournaments and proud of achieving two holes in one. Carl also depended on his iphone, ipad, and laptop, to share articles and opinions with family and friends daily.

Last but not least, Carl was a great husband, father, grandfather, and friend. He was part of the Greatest Generation, always ready to help and always putting his family first, and treating his friends like they too were his family.
HELP LEBANON

Dear Knights and Daughters Vartan, dear friends,

The Knights of Vartan has undertaken a fundraising campaign to assist those effected by the disaster in Beirut Lebanon. Donations will be split equally between the AGBU, AMAA, and ARS. It will be used for Food Distribution, Emergency Response and Medical Assistance.

To make a secure donation please visit http://kofv.org/helplebanon

To mail a check, please add “Help Lebanon” in the memo line and mail it to Avak Argughagal Garo Istanboulian’s address:
5211 N. 1st Street
Fresno, CA 93710

Avarayr
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DEADLINE FOR MATERIALS:
To be included in the next Avarayr, September – November 2020, please submit materials (text and pictures) by November 10, 2020.

Email materials to:
KnightsOfVartan@gmail.com