St. Vartanants Day
By Avak Sbarabed Steven R. Adams

In 1916, 12 dedicated men came together and bound themselves in an oath to help save the remnants of our people escaping the Genocide at the hands of the Ottoman Turks. One of the first things they did was to come up with a name for themselves. They chose the name of our valiant hero Vartan Mamikonian. What was the tie between the 1915 genocide and a battle that took place 1570 years ago and what is the relevance of that tie today? Just think how desperate and despondent those 12 men felt in 1916, seeing their people being exterminated from their homeland. Most probably the same desperate feeling the Armenians in 451 felt, seeing their valiant general and many of his warriors killed on that battlefield of Avarayr. Little did Vartan know that 30 years later a treaty would be signed to save the Christian faith of the Armenians. Little did those who escaped the Genocide in 1915 and who witnessed the destruction of their homeland realize that 76 years later a newly independent Armenia would come to fruition.

The history of the Armenian people has never been a picture of peace and tranquility, yet somehow we still exist today. Would there have been a battle at Avarayr in 451 if the Armenians simply converted their religion? Would a genocide have taken place if we were all Muslims living in Turkey? We are persecuted and driven from our lands because of our Christian faith. We are different because of our faith. This is the same persecution we have witnessed today in the Armenian homeland in Artsakh. Don't kid yourselves, Azerbaijan knows full well that Artsakh is the historical homeland of the Armenians. Turkey is also fully aware of this. Any talk of them reclaiming their lands is just propaganda hiding their underlying motives. The same motives that caused us to defend our faith in 451 on the battle field of Avarayr and the same motives that drove us from our historical homelands in 1915. So what do we learn today from our history, from the battle of Avarayr that we commemorate today? It's simple my brothers and sisters, it is perseverance and the determination to recommit ourselves to our Christian faith. There are many things that are of importance to our homeland today. The need to protect our borders. The need to build our economy and education, but on top of all of this is our determination to strengthen ourselves in our Christian faith. Thank you for being here today. We look forward to coming together in person at our 2022 commemoration of the Battle of Avarayr.
The Avak Tivan is pleased to announce the formation of a new 501c3 corporation called the Knights of Vartan Charities Inc. This new fund will allow the Avak Tivan to accept donations that require a 501c3 status. A new board has already been appointed and the members of that board will be ratified at the next Grand Lodge.

The Knights of Vartan Charities Inc. has already received its first donation. Through the efforts of Daron Lodge in San Francisco, a $100,000 donation was received earmarked for humanitarian efforts in Armenia. At the first board meeting of the KV Charities it was approved to donate $50,000 to the Paros Foundation and $50,000 to the Armenian Wounded Heroes Fund in accordance with the wishes of the anonymous donor.

This was a grand start to the new Knights of Vartan Charities. It is hoped that others will see the Knights of Vartan as an organization that offers them a conduit to help our homeland along with other causes that fall within the mission of the Knights of Vartan.

Our New KV Communications Office in Yerevan at the Armenia Marriott Hotel
The Knights and Daughters of Vartan, Davros Lodge and Shakeh Otyag, located in Troy, New York, are pleased and proud to announce that almost $40,000 has been donated over the last few years to support various international, as well as local humanitarian projects, including ongoing programs to aid homeless and needy people in Armenia who are victims of the recent Artsakh war.

On an international level, our organization has sent funds to the All Armenia Hayasdan Fund in support of the Artsakh war, the Diaspora for Front Line Families Fund (DFFF), the Lebanon Relief Fund and the Women’s Support Center in Armenia. In addition, donations have been made to the Sewing Machine Project in the Tavush region of Armenia, the American University of Armenia, the Syrian Armenian Relief Fund and the Children of Armenia Fund. As well, toys were collected and donated for the Christmas Gift Drive for underprivileged children in Armenia.

Recently, Davros Lodge and Shakeh Otyag sponsored 2 families in Armenia who needed coats and warm sweaters for their 8 children. It is hoped that a direct network will be set up to assist more needy families in Armenia. The members of Davros Lodge and Shakeh Otyag are working diligently to gather names, pictures and personal information of these families, and it is our hope that interested members in our Armenian community will sponsor a family who need our services and financial support.

In 2012, through the collective efforts of Davros Lodge and Shakeh Otyag, an Armenian Monument was erected at the Riverfront Park in Troy, New York. The monument was “Dedicated to the victims of the Armenian Genocide of 1915 and their descendants who settled in and around the City of Troy”. In the upcoming summer of 2021, an addition will be installed to the original monument. Black granite “wings” will showcase Armenian quotations and illustrations.

Davros Lodge and Shakeh Otyag have also been involved in numerous local projects. Donations were made to St. Peter and Holy Cross Armenian Churches for assistance during the pandemic shutdown. Likewise, a donation was made to the Menands Junior Baseball League. Other local projects include, Disney pillow cases, puzzles and activity books donated to the Bernard & Millie Duker Children’s Hospital at Albany Medical Hospital, as well as toiletries to the Women’s Shelter in Albany, NY. In addition, 100 chicken dinners were provided to the Albany City Mission and the Menands homeless shelter, and a donation was made to the Armenian Heritage Park in Boston.

Davros Lodge Lodge and Shakeh Otyag are proud to be part of the Knights and Daughters organization and will continue to support our Armenian brothers and sisters.

Pictures below from Berd Vocational school were the sewing machines were sent.
Medical Containers from Nareg-Shavarshan

Nareg-Shavarshan Lodge #6 has been working on a Medical Aid to Armenia project for the last seven months, sending 40-foot containers filled with various medical supplies and equipment.

Nareg-Shavarshan Lodge, in partnership with the Paros Foundation and sponsors, have sent two 40-foot containers containing medical supplies and equipment to Armenia on September 14th and October 4, 2020, having a total net value of $1,086,480 dollars.

The project has been kept very confidential to minimize the potential of any action impeding its safe arrival in Armenia. Only after a container’s safe arrival is the Tivan and the general membership of the Lodge informed.

Container #2, sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. Herman Hintiryan and by the Cultural Association of Armenians from Istanbul (CSAI), arrived successfully on Sunday, January 31, 2021, some 88 days after it began its journey.

Without the assistance of the Paros Foundation, this project may not have come to fruition as they have played a very critical role in preparing and delivering the needed documentation to the Georgian Port Authorities, arranging for a trucking company and

L to R: Herman Hintiryan, Dr. George Samson and Sb. Kazar Terterian, $10,000 Check being turned over to Dr. George Samson, WMR CEO. Photos below: the container before shipment and being unloaded in Armenia.
MR. KAZAR P. TERTERIAN,
COMMANDER OF "NAREG-SHAVARSHAN LODGE
KNIGHTS OF VARTAN", INC.

Dear Mr. Terterian,

On behalf of Mr. Nikol Pashinyan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and the Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs, we would like to extend sincere greetings to you for the New Year.

2020 has been an extremely difficult year for all of us, but we believe that in the current year we will have more opportunities to overcome existing challenges and to build a better tomorrow. During these difficult days that our nation is experiencing, the “Knights of Vartan Nareg-Shavarshian Lodge” has accepted the very major role of an operator for humanitarian aid by organizing the transportation of essential medical equipment and supplies to Armenia.

We would like to thank you, all people and associations, particularly World Medical Relief, Cultural Society of Armenians from Istanbul, and Mr. and Mrs. Hintiryan who made a great contribution to this action of solidarity and generosity.

The cooperation with “Knights of Vartan Nareg-Shavarshian Lodge” has been strengthened more and more through the passing years, and we know that we can always count on your loyalty.

We wish you success in your future endeavors and, in the meantime, would like to reiterate our gratitude to you and our desire always to welcome you in Armenia.

Best Regards,

ZAREH SINANYAN

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A TRIBUTE TO JIM MOURADICK AND THE ARMENIAN ARTISTS PROJECT (AAP)

It took a great idea and good-hearted, generous people to start an essential, beautiful mission: the Armenian Artists Project.

The idea for this not-for-profit was born in May of 2016, outside of the studio of artist Kamsar (Kamo) Sahakyan, and his city’s Regional Museum in Yeghegnadzor, Armenia. Three second-generation Armenian-American diasporans had just visited the museum proper with their Armenian tour guide. One of the three, the late Jim Mouradick, the son of Cy Mouradick (Sahag Takvorian), wandered off to explore the second floor of the museum building to explore the powerful artworks of Kamo. An idea was brewing in his mind and heart.

What ensued in the two-hour car ride back to Yerevan was a four-way brainstorming session as to how to be able to market affordable, original Armenian artworks outside of Armenia to the diaspora in the USA, as well as bolster Armenia’s overall struggling economy, specifically in regards to infrastructure as it related to rebuilding schools, health centers, housing, community centers and public water projects, most of which were in horrible condition. Ideally, these new dollars would eventually lead to new jobs and would help play a significant role in reducing Armenia’s poverty level (about 34%). Lastly, these new jobs would eventually lead to an increased standard of living that is currently 1/20th of the USA.

Since that day in May 2016, the idea of creating an online art gallery and providing Armenian Artists an opportunity to exhibit, promote and sell their original art never left Jim Mouradick, a successful businessman, philanthropist, and good friend of the Knights of Vartan. He worked tirelessly to make it a reality.

Born in Fresno to Armenian parents and a graduate of USC, Jim fell in love with art in middle school and even more so in college, when a friend helped him understand “how to feel art and let it speak to me,” as Jim often shared. He spent his early part-time earnings as a college student buying small original artworks, beginning his extensive journey of art collecting that would last a lifetime. Jim focused on “mostly unknown artists, but whose works touched my heart and my brain,” he once said. He made his first trip to Armenia in 2007, collecting more original artwork from Armenian artists, and would visit several more times before his untimely passing in late 2020.
Fueled by his passion for art and for his homeland, Jim continued the communication about developing the Armenian Artists Project idea into fruition in 2016, on his trips to Armenia and in meetings and presentations in the US. With the volunteer involvement of Gomidas Lodge and Talar Otyag members in San Diego, and many others, a non-profit organization was founded in San Diego, CA in 2018.

AAP operates an online art gallery (www.armenianartistsproject.org) to support Armenian artists living and working in Armenia by providing them with a platform to promote, exhibit and sell their original artworks to a wide international market.

Additionally, the AAP contributes a matching amount of what the artists receive back into Armenia’s economy to help rebuild schools, health centers, housing, community centers, water projects and infrastructure. The balance of art sales revenue will be used for direct operational costs of the AAP website, thus allowing the art buyers almost a 60% income tax deduction of their art purchases.

What sets the AAP apart from other art websites, besides dealing solely with Armenian art?

• The AAP sells only original, one-of-a-kind Armenian art. There are no reproductions, prints, copies, photographic images, computer-generated images, or limited/open editions.

• The purchase of original artworks from this website allows the buyer/collector a personal income tax deduction of nearly 60% of the purchase price.

• All artists are individually vetted by a jury of three professional artists/art experts from the USA, who conduct a “blind” vote on three different sample art pieces (thus, a total of 9 individual votes on each artist) to determine if there is credible artistic value in the individual pieces being examined. Five or more approval votes must be awarded before the artist is allowed to exhibit their original works exhibited on our website.

• This project is ensuring a new income stream for Armenian artists and helping to re-establish Armenia as an artistic nation.

What has become a “forgotten country” will allow Armenia to be reborn again, by promoting the noble cause of the arts. This was Jim’s ultimate goal in establishing the Armenian Artists Project.

Narine Kochar, Project Manager of the Armenian Artists Project in Armenia since 2018, shared her thoughts on Jim and the Project:

“I’ve been delighted to work on such an amazing project since the very first day, and Armenian Artists Project has become an inseparable part of my life. I’m blessed and honored to have known Jim, an incredibly generous, kind-hearted and wise man, and grateful for having the chance to work with him and learn a lot from him.

Our team consists of devoted and patriotic diaspora Armenians, who are so eager to support Armenia. We will be doing our best to develop and grow this charitable project to accomplish our mission: promoting Armenian art and artists all over the world, boosting the sales of Armenian art, supporting the artists, contributing the revenue to the charities in Armenia, impacting the growth of the Armenian economy.

Because this is the vision and direction Jim Mouradick left for us as his legacy.”

Currently more than 1,000 artworks from over 100 different artists are currently exhibited in a wide variety of styles, from classical to contemporary, as well as a variety of categories including painting, drawing and sculpture.

To date, in a little over a six-month period, around 30 paintings and sculptures have been sold and shipped to the USA, generating over $30,000, from which $17,000 (matched by the Armenian Assembly of America) has been donated to the All Armenian Fund for humanitarian aid during the Artsakh War of 2020. This is an essential project helping Armenians and Armenia in many ways.

Something Jim often shared about his father certainly applies to Jim as well, especially now:

“Somewhere in heaven he is proudly smiling; he is the most charitable human I have ever known—regardless of the persons race, religion, status in life and human condition.”

May he rest in peace.

To view the online gallery and to purchase pieces of beautiful original art from talented Armenian Artists, please visit https://armenianartistsproject.org, or visit them on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, and LinkedIn.
As this year unfolds for those of us here in Armenia, and with the tragedy of the 44-day war still fresh in our minds and hearts, the people of our nation now have but one obligation; to continue living and to help others to live. The government of Armenia and numerous local and international NGOs have set up projects aimed at providing aid. This aid includes supporting wounded heroes and the families of martyred soldiers and relocating families from Shushi, Hadrut, Kashatagh, and Karavachar. It does, however, take time for institutions to make decisions and act. In the meantime, we are fortunate to have individual donors offering direct support to the families.

One of those donors is Erebouni Lodge, which gave $2,500 to help the affected families. KV Liaison Gohar Palyan ran the project in Armenia. She determined which families would receive the donated funds and then made sure that the money was distributed to them.

The sources: Connections were formed using dedicated special social media groups and the local church community. During her research, our liaison discovered that the group that needed the funds the most were soldiers who, despite not being disabled, could not work because of their need for long-term medical care. The soldiers need to travel to receive medical care and buy medication while still supporting their families.

The families from Hadrut, Kashatagh, and Karvajar had to leave their homes without any of their belongings or some took very little. While still in Artsakh, these families worked in agriculture and had to leave behind their homes, land, cattle, and machinery. There were no opportunities for the family members to begin new jobs with local farmers because the cold season was already upon them when they arrived.

Six families have already been supported, along with the possibility of a seventh. Neither the soldiers nor relocated families wish to be labeled as “needy people.” Some families have asked that their photographs and information not be posted. A few of the families told our liaison during interviews that they had either already received support or that their situation was not dire and that others needed assistance more than they did. So these families were not included in this project.

Here are just a few of the people and families whom the donation from Erebouni Lodge was distributed. 32-year-old Erik Khachatryan from Stepanakert had volunteered and joined the army. He is still not fully recovered due to several medical issues. He lives in Stepanakert with his mother, along with a sister and two children who had lost their home in Shushi. The funds from Erebouni Lodge have helped him pay for his medical exams and medicine.

Also wounded while fighting in Artsakh is Eric Zhamharyan from Aygepar in Tavush Province. Our donation has made it possible for him to travel to Yerevan for medical treatment. Eric may return to active duty in the army once he makes a full recovery.

The two soldiers that we have profiled have asked that their photographs not be shared with anyone, except those who donated to their care.

This winter has been challenging for the family of Nona Algachiyan, whom Ani Lodge in Washington D.C. has been supporting for the past 18 months by helping with rent payments. Additional support has been forthcoming following the illness of Nona’s youngest son. The condition sent the child to the hospital’s intensive care unit, which shook the family psychologically and financially. Although medical care is free for children, there were still other expenses that our funds helped to meet.

Knarik Grigoryan’s family is from Kashatagh, Yeritsvank. She owned a home and some land with her husband, and they kept busy in agriculture. Their daughter, Mariam Grigoryan, had lost her husband some years ago and was raising her two boys alone in the same village where her parents lived. Their town was lost during the war,
and the entire family fled to Artashat, where they rented a home. They are unable to work and therefore cannot pay their expenses. To make matters worse, Knarik herself has medical needs. Erebouni Lodge’s financial support assists those medical expenses and the rent for the home.

Erebouni Lodge is also assisting Gayane and Hrachya Arakelyan and their two children, who are also from Kashatagh, Yeritsvank. They also had to flee without any household items. Compassionate landlords had even delayed their rent payments and covered their utilities, hoping the parents would find work and pay them back. Thanks to Erebouni Lodge’s generosity, the Arakelyan family is now able to pay for their rent.

For Tehmine Ohanyan, fitting a family of 8 into a two-bedroom apartment in Jrvezh, Yerevan, is no easy task. They homeowners, 3 people, live in the same house. She told our liaison that she makes it work by having mattresses right on the floor. This summer, she’s expecting her fifth child. In Artsakh, the family earned a living by cultivating land and then selling the crops. Now, they have no home, no land, and no machinery. Thanks to the donation by Erebouni Lodge, however, the family has hope.

Hayk had grown up in Moscow since the age of 4. He studied at the University and became a lawyer. In 2018, Hayk and his parents returned to their homeland. After working for a while, Hayk decided to join the army at the age of 27. His enlistment occurred just months before the war. He was injured in both his hand and in one leg. He can move around now but tires quickly. There are still metal fixates in his hand. Recovery is still many months away, but the family’s money problems are here and now. Hayk’s parents are Russian citizens whose stipend was suspended due to their not being back during the past year because of the COVID pandemic. Thus, the family has no income, but expenses have increased. He told our liaison, “I came to live in my homeland and have a profession. I will be patient during my recovery. I want to start working and have my own family and kids.”

We might not be able to help everyone, but our support does make a big difference in these families’ daily lives.
Over the past several months we have experienced many groups throughout the diaspora helping both raise awareness and funds due to the war in Artsakh. These groups have been innovative in putting together products or offering their talents to help support fund-raising that will go towards humanitarian needs for all Armenians affected by the war.

We have seen many different industry sectors pull efforts together on these fronts. For example, the medical industry bonded together to pull medical supplies to send to Armenians in need. The arts and cultural world has also played a pivotal role from mainstream artists like Serj Tankian (who raised over $600k for Artsakh) to actresses/performers like Cher and Kim Kardashian.

Now it's the traditional/folk musicians' turn to offer their talents to raise awareness and funds to aid Artsakh. Charles Kalajian, a musician and educator, spearheaded the idea of creating a virtual concert featuring an impressive list of musicians from the East coast to West coast. This 90-minute concert premiered online on December 12, 2020 and can be viewed on Facebook and YouTube.

"My dad's extensive career in music has inspired me to continue his teaching of the heritage and bond of music. Even though many who are performing in the concert are professionally trained musicians, we all learned Armenian music “knee to knee”, that is listening to each other, letting the music fill our souls which is how we created the concert. This concert was done with no rehearsal. There were COVID restrictions, so to perform with those who had a chemistry was important for us to capture the spirit and emotion" said Charles Kalajian.

Certainly influenced by his father, Charles is immersed into the musical community. As an educator he is currently part of the music faculty of Rhode Island College, Community College of Rhode Island, Percussion faculty at the Rhode Island Philharmonic Music School. He has also launched Maestro Music Professionals (online music school) with his brother John Kalajian which is an online music school. "... bringing the joy of music to students goes beyond a job description. The way I carry myself is with passion and compassion and that carries that into my teaching. My students see how enthusiastic I am about what I do for a career, and it fuels their eagerness to learn” said Kalajian.

Under the auspices of the Knights of Vartan, Arax Lodge in Rhode Island, Charles approached the organization who fully embraced the idea. The Knights of Vartan is a non-sectarian, non-political and non-denominational fraternal organization.

Charles' father, veteran guitarist Ken Kalajian, contacted fellow musicians, all of whom donated their time and talent to the creation of this livestream.

All funds raised are donated to aid our brethren in Armenia and Artsakh affected by the war. I also want this...
concert to create awareness throughout the country so that people are not blinded or look away to what is happening. The point of history is to learn from our mistakes and make sure bad events do not happen again. If we just look away then we are again repeating our cultural history” said Kalajian.

The musicians included (east coast): Leon Janikian (clarinet), Mal Barsamian (oud & clarinet), Harry Bedrossian (keyboard), Mher Mnatsakanyan (duduk), Ken Kalajian (guitar), Gary Kashmanian (doumbeg) and Charles Kalajian (percussion & doumbeg) and the west coast, Richard Hagopian (oud), Andrew Hagopian (kanun) Armen Hagopian (clarinet), and Philip Hagopian (doumbeg).

“This concert is particularly more important because through our music we collect money to help our sacred land Artsakh to blossom again” said Mher Mnatsakanyan. “Through the music of my duduk, I disconnect myself from this world and picture myself somewhere invisible while performing”.

Along with the musical program, the livestream highlights words of inspiration from the faithful clergy in Rhode Island as well as leaders from the Knights of Vartan. Sonya Taraian, host of the Armenian Radio Hour of Rhode Island serves as host for the event as we create a cultural solidarity of identity and purpose.

Ardashad Tahlij and Shoushanig Otyag are hosting a Virtual Comedy Show featuring the world famous Kev Orkian, on Saturday, February 27.
The net proceeds will support the Artsakh refugees in Armenia.

KEV ORKIAN RETURNS!
Saturday, February 27 @ 3 PM(Zoom link will be privately shared with paying guests)
Visit phillykov.com or call 610-389-4633 for tickets! Net proceeds will support relocated families from Artsakh.
NAS Nigoghos Atinizian Visits Berd Town, Armenia

The COVID 19 pandemic had, in effect, shut down the world. Ever since last spring, traveling has been either exceedingly difficult or impossible, especially foreign travel to countries such as Armenia. In December, once the restrictions began to ease, NAS Nigoghos Atinizian flew to Yerevan. His visit was not however, limited to our capital. He knew that it was now more important than ever to visit Armenia’s border region. NAS Nigoghos traveled to Berd in Tavush Province, a town he has visited often during his many trips to Armenia. He checked on the status of various projects, both old and new, in the area. He also discussed the various projects with his friend, Fr. Aram Mirzoyan, the Pastor of St. Hovhaness Armenian Church and a beloved community leader. NAS Nigoghos’ most important task while in Berd was to speak directly to its citizens. He let them know that they were not alone during these difficult times. Armenia continues to remain strong, protecting its borders and supporting its people.

In the picture: L to R. Fr. Aram Mirzoyan and NAS Nigoghos Atinizian at the Knights of Vartan Sport Center in Verin Karmiraghbyur, Tavush.

Time to Do 10 Times More - Sb. Tigran Sahakyan

“Now we need to do ten times more.” That is the slogan that Sbarabed Tigran Sahakian of Mamigonian Tahlij uses as he announces plans this year to renovate School # 102 in Yerevan. Sbarabed Tigran attended and graduated from School # 102 during the 1990s. During that time, the school’s roof was renovated as one of the first such projects undertaken by the ASSP (Armenian School Support Project.) Sbarabed Tigran says that now is the time to give back to the school and give back ten times more. Renovations have just begun on the school’s third floor, which includes ten classrooms and a hallway. Upon completing work on the third floor, renovations to other areas of the school will begin.

The Knights and Daughters of Vartan’s dedication to the people of Berd in Tavush Province began decades ago and continues today. Eight schools are now benefitting from the After School Program in Tavush. The program allows some 310 students to remain after school to receive a hot and nutritious meal at the school’s canteen. Tutors are also there to help students with their homework. In addition to creating 25 new jobs for people living in the villages, the After School Program has been essential in this border region and extremely helpful to working parents. Sbarabed Tigran will sponsor the After School Program through the end of this school year in June and then hopefully resume his sponsorship in September.

The schools included in this project are Chinary, Aygedzor, Choratan, Nerkin Karmir Aghbyur, Tavush, Aygepar, Movses and Chinchin villages near by Berd town. Total 310 children attend the after school project, enjoy hot nutritious meal a day and under teachers’ guidance prepare homework. Thanks to the project 36 new jobs were opened.

Sbarabed Tigran Sahakyan’s list of sponsorships also includes his alma mater, Yerevan Brusov State University of Languages and Social Sciences. In 2020, he oversaw the renovation of the school’s Startup Entrepreneur Center. Following a series of training sessions, including one by Sbarabed Tigran himself, he announced a funding grant for students and/or staff and alumni. The grant
recipients will be chosen in March. A Research for Endowment Fund was also announced, and eleven students applied. Finally, Sbarabed Tigran is sponsoring one alumnus from the university, allowing him to continue his education in Poland.

Also in Tavush Province is the Knights of Vartan Sports and Cultural Center in Verin Karmiraghbyur. The center offers free sports training and cultural activities to seven neighboring border villages with a total population of 20 thousand: Verin Karmiraghbyur, Norashen, Movses, Artsvaberd, Aygedzor, and Chinary. The center, which broke ground in 2016, features a swimming pool, soccer fields, and even an outdoor movie theater. Sbarabed Tigran Sahakyan of Mamigonian Tahlij has pledged to continue supporting the center. If anyone is interested in joining Sbarabed Tigran in supporting this important local resource, please contact him at gatabstract@gmail.com.

*Children’s pictures from Verin Karmiraghbyur’s After School Project and classroom photos from #102 school, Yerevan. Example of a door before and after renovation.*
Scholarships for Students from Tavush Region

The Knights and Daughters of Vartan have always had a place in their hearts for the people of Tavush border Province. Recently, hope was given to over a dozen students in the Tavush Region. ND Eva Medzorian personally took it upon herself to help 13 students from Tavush receive scholarships covering their school tuition for the January to June academic term of 2021.

Our longtime partner Fr. Aram Mirzoyan, the pastor of St. Hovhannes Church in Berd Town, selected the scholarship recipients. The students, who range in age from 18 to 22, are attending various universities in Yerevan and Ijevan cities and pursuing either Bachelors or Masters Degrees. This fine group of students are future lawyers, interpreters, teachers, journalists, programmers, and managers. Their general grade at the university is among the highest.

On January 6, 2021, the students attended St. Hovhannes Church for Armenian Christmas Service. After the service Fr. Aram Mirzoyan organized a special ceremony where the scholarships were distributed. At this special event was also present military unit commander, Colonel Sargis Titanyan.

The gift was a blessing for these scholarship recipients as they begin a challenging year. It is a true light in the darkness.

Besides Avak Tivan or Lodge/Otyag projects, our members carry on their own charity projects in Armenia. This sets a great example of what a true Knight and Daughter can be.

Many thanks and blessings to ND Eva Medzorian.

1. Sveta Melikbekyan, Berd Town, studies at the Pedagogical University
2. Ani Makaryan, Chinary Village, European University
3. Olya Hovakimyan, Chinary Village, Yerevan State University
4. Ani Hayrapetyan, Paravakar Village, Yerevan State University
5. Armen Danielyan, Itsakar Village, State Management Academy
6. Artur Danielyan, Itsakar Village, Yerevan State University
7. Marianna Udumyan, Choratan Village, Pedagogical University
8. Mariam Vanesyan, Verin Karmiraghbyur Village, Pedagogical University
9. Lilit Badalyan, Berd Town, Medical University
10. Christine Khalatyan, Verin Tsaghkavan Village, Yerevan State University-Ijevan branch
11. Sofya Mardanyan, Navur Village, French University in Yerevan
12. Ashot Grigoryan, Norashen Village, Yerevan State University
13. Elen Aghasyan, Chinary Village, Yerevan Brusov State University of Languages and Social Sciences

Thanks to a very generous donation from ND Eva Medzorian, boxes of necessities and sweets were delivered for our soldiers in Tavush border posts on Army Day - January 28th.

In the picture is Fr. Aram Mirzoyan with soldiers.
Edward S. Medzian was born on August 26, 1920, on a farm in Fresno, California to Sahag and Hanum Medzian (formerly Medzadourian). Both of his parents were survivors of the Armenian genocide who fled to the United States via Ellis Island from Kharupert, Turkey, settled in Massachusetts and then later in Fresno. Edward had four older siblings, Rose, Stanley, Marge, and Roxie.

Edward was a World II veteran, having served as a Captain in the 296th Regiment Infantry of the United States Army. An exemplary student, he joined ROTC while in high school in Fresno. On August 15, 1942, Edward enthusiastically enlisted in the United States Army in support of the war and his country. As an officer, he travelled around the United States and abroad, serving as a medic and training his troops in various forms of warfare. He also helped to recruit women into the military. Edward was a true patriot. When asked about his perspective on what it meant to serve his country during World War II, he responded: “duty, responsibility, and love of country.”

In 1943, Edward met the love of his life, Gloria Boyajian, when he visited the Armenian Congregational Church of Detroit, Michigan, where Gloria was a Sunday School teacher. At the time, Edward was stationed at Fort Custer in Battlecreek, Michigan, and Edward knew immediately that he would marry her. In July 1944, they married in a military camp church in Abilene, Texas.

After the war, Edward and Gloria first settled in San Francisco for a few years, where their daughter Barbara was born. The young family moved to Hillsborough in 1957 because they wanted a country atmosphere in close proximity to San Francisco.

Edward graduated from pharmacy school at the University of California in 1942 just before he enlisted in the Army. After the war, along with his brother, the late Stanley Medzian, who was also a Hillsborough resident, Edward opened the Sir Francis Drake Pharmacy located in the Sir Francis Drake Hotel in San Francisco. Later in his career, Edward obtained his real estate broker’s license and owned and managed properties throughout the Bay Area. Edward also had an antique business with his wife Gloria and daughter Barbara at the Collective Antiques in downtown San Mateo until 2012.

Devoted to his faith, Edward had leadership roles in his church and other organizations locally and nationally. He served two terms as the national head of an Armenian service organization called the Knights of Vartan, and as moderator of Calvary Armenian Congregational Church in San Francisco for many years. A true Renaissance man, he pursued many interests including international travel, gardening, fishing, reading, antique and model train collecting, raising backyard chickens and playing backgammon.

Family was the center of Edward’s life for 100 years, and Edward often said that “faith and love of family” were his guiding principles. Edward and Gloria were married for 72 years before her passing in 2016. They had a close extended family, made many lifelong friends, and enjoyed a very active social and philanthropic life in Hillsborough. Edward is survived by his daughter Barbara Medzian, two granddaughters Michelle Kezirian (d. Peter), Nicole Simonian (Andrew), and two great grandchildren Alexander and Ashley Simonian.

Edward was very proud of the fact he was born on the day women were formally given the right to vote nationally. He was a champion for women and was thrilled when both of his granddaughters became attorneys. He survived a century through the Depression, World War II and the present Covid pandemic. His love of country never wavered.
NAD Mary Tateosian (1926 - 2020)

Mary was born on October 21, 1926 to parents Zabelle & Harry in Elmhurst, IL, outside of Chicago. She would go on to live a life epitomized by traditional mid-western values, even after moving to California. As a young girl, she was a serious student & studied piano, living up to the high expectations set by her mother, a teacher & her father, an engraver. She had dreams of becoming a surgeon, even at a time when options for women were limited. After her graduation from Northwestern University in Chicago, the family moved out West, living for a time in Southern California where she followed her dream of a career in medicine, working at Huntington Hospital in Pasadena. The family eventually moved to the Bay Area where they bought a home in Redwood City and for a time Mary was even pursuing a pre-med course of study at Stanford. She worked as a phlebotomist at Mills Hospital in San Mateo, a career she thoroughly enjoyed and would continue for many years.

But Mary’s true path would ultimately be a more traditional one of that era, becoming the very best wife & mother. After meeting her husband Charles through the Armenian General Benevolent Union & marrying at Stanford Chapel, they raised their family in San Francisco for almost 20 years. Mary was disenchanted with the persistent fog of the Outer Sunset and moved the family to Walnut Creek in 1974. There she would live out the majority of her life in the sunshine, and ultimately entered into eternal rest on December 7, 2020.

She was an active member of St. John Armenian Church in San Francisco, serving in the Sunday School as teacher & superintendent, in the choir as both singer & organist, as a member in the Ladies Society and Mr & Mrs Club, and in any other capacity where she felt she could contribute. Her faith in God was unshakable and gave her strength at all times.

She was a member of the Daughters of Vartan Lodge, serving as head of her local chapter, and then as national leader. She & her husband Charles made many philanthropic trips to Armenia in support of schools there. Through her church & lodge participation, Mary formed many lifelong friendships.

She volunteered at John Muir Hospital in Walnut Creek for 32 years, and said it was one of the things she enjoyed most in her life. She also contributed her fine skills as a seamstress working on costumes for local theater productions, as well as ushering at the Lesher Center for the Arts.

Mary was absolutely devoted to her children & husband. And further, outside of her home, to her community: church, schools, organizations; always participating. She was always the Mom who went on field trips, who volunteered her house for the Girl Scout Cookie drive, who participated in the School Bake Sale (usually with the tastiest item on the table!). Her generosity was endless, had no limits, and was done in an absolute heartfelt way without thinking twice. She was selflessly devoted to others, and shied away from recognition; It was just part of who she was.

Her talents were limitless—an excellent seamstress, an exceptional cook, known for her legendary baking skills, a superb crafter and extraordinary gardener. She transformed the family’s 1-acre property in Walnut Creek into an oasis that included fruit trees & her prized roses. She would spend endless hours tending to her masterpiece which gave her so much joy, often referring to it as her therapy! Her daughter often said, “She was Martha Stewart even before Martha Stewart was Martha Stewart.”

She loved to travel, and visited many states in America as well as countries around the world, including Armenia, Italy, France, Germany, England, Austria, Switzerland, Netherlands, Mexico, Panama, Canada & Japan. She was an agreeable & enthusiastic travel partner, always curious and up for any new adventures.

She leaves behind an inspiring legacy and a great hole that will easily be filled with gratitude for all she did and a mountain of happy memories she helped make. Mary wrote in a journal 13 years ago: “If I have been of help, comfort, friend, or otherwise a good companion, then I have done the best I could.”

She was preceded in death this year by her husband of almost 65 years, NAS Charles J. Tateosian.
Michael Devejian (1934-2020)

Michael Devejian was born in Aleppo, Syria, in July 1934, to Minas and Nectar (nee Odabashian) Devejian. Both of his parents were orphaned survivors of the Armenian Genocide. He was their first born.

The family soon moved to Beirut, Lebanon, where Michael began an apprenticeship, learning how to install, maintain and repair commercial and industrial refrigeration, heating, venting and air conditioning equipment.

As a single young man, Michael loved watching movies and would often spend his free time on the weekends at one of Beirut’s famous cinema houses. He fell in love with the United States from watching old westerns, mysteries, dramas and matinees.

Michael was not born in America, but America was born in him. So perhaps it was inevitable that Michael moved to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1964, and as he once said, “my life finally started.” In Philadelphia, his Aunt Zabel provided a temporary home for Michael, from where he began to fulfill his American dream.

Michael quickly found employment, and for the rest of his career was known as a dependable, trustworthy and conscientious employee.

Michael and Yeran married in December 1968 at Holy Trinity Armenian Church, in Cheltenham, Pennsylvania. Their son, Armen, was born in 1969, and daughter, Sonia in 1972. He loved his family unconditionally, and no sacrifice was too much for him to bear.

The one word that perhaps best describes Michael’s relationship with his wife and children was tenderness. Michael’s role in the Armenian Community of Philadelphia included serving on the Board of Directors for the Armenian Sisters Academy, in the Ardashad Lodge of the Knights of Vartan fraternal organization, the Mesrob Mashtots Society, and the Boy Scouts of America.

Life in Philadelphia was like the Wonder Years for Michael’s family, but Michael wasn’t quite done yet with his American dream. In 1976, Michael, Yeran and the kids traveled to California for the first time, for a summer vacation. Soon afterwards, Michael announced to the family that they were all moving to Fresno, California, and in 1981, they did.

Michael and Yeran’s home was the center of the social life of his children and their friends. Michael and Yeran were also active parents in their children’s growth in their faith, regularly volunteering to chaperone, drive and supervise countless church youth group outings for more than a decade.

Over the next twenty years, Michael worked banking industry, traveling throughout the State of California, often taking Yeran and Sonia with him – from San Diego in the south all the way to Eureka in the north.

In retirement, Michael and Yeran also discovered the pleasure of cruising, and traveled to a number of distant and exotic ports. Michael’s most memorable trips, however, were his three trips to an independent and free Armenia, following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

As his retirement years passed, and especially following several heart surgeries and beating prostate cancer, Michael began to slow down. He had been in declining health for the past few years, and endured an especially difficult and painful time since October 2019. Yeran personally cared for him through the best of times and the worst of times. She was at his side through it all, and nurtured him until the very end. Fortunately, Michael never felt alone or lonely in the final weeks and days of his life – Yeran and Sonia were constantly at his side, providing him with exceptional care and patient love.

Michael entered his eternal rest on Tuesday, June 16, 2020. He died at home, peacefully of natural causes.

May God accept the soul of our husband, father, grandfather and friend into his heavenly kingdom, and not tire too quickly from hearing the same dad jokes over and over again.
NS Martin Krikorian (1929-2020)

On Nov 28, 2020, Martin H. Krikorian, went to be with his Lord and Savior. Martin was born on the family farm in Fresno on July 8, 1929, to Hagop and Aghavnie Krikorian. He was preceded in death by his siblings, Oscar Krikorian, and Madelyn Markarian.

Martin received his Bachelor’s and Master’s degree from Fresno State in Industrial Technology. He taught industrial arts in Fresno for over 40 years, ending his career as a Master Teacher. He was ahead of his time educating teachers using computers for architectural drawing and design, and also being awarded Outstanding Industrial Arts Teacher, Fresno Unified. In 1952 he married Christine Orphan, of Fowler, having two sons and a daughter.

Martin had a generous and caring spirit, and was a leader in his work, church and community. He went out of his way to create learning experiences for his students, and they loved and respected him. Martin had a passion for fixing and was a meticulous craftsman. He was a collector and had an eye for buying the unusual. He had an antique business and sold at flea markets with his family and friends for many years. He loved attending yard sales with his dog, Mei Mei and his friend Mel Mazman. Martin loved the negotiation of buying and selling, always having a smile and a twinkle in his eye.

Even though Martin left the farm, he was a continual farmer. He and his wife would always share their harvests with others. Martin held many positions in the Knights of Vartan Lodge, sat on and lead many committees at church and also taught Sunday School.

Martin and Chris loved to travel, making their way to many countries, loved their cabin at Bass Lake and the last few years enjoying the central coast.

Martin is survived by his wife of 68 years, Christine, his son Marty and wife Susan, his daughter Carrie Zulewski and husband Stan, son James and wife Susan, grandchildren David Krikorian, Alli Davis and husband Nick, Katie Zulewski, Gabriel Krikorian, great-grandchildren Dean and Demi Davis. He is also survived by nephews Scott and Allen Markarian, nieces Debbie Summers and Cheryl Scolori and their families and many cousins and wonderful friends.

NS Martin was a dedicated 64 year member of Yeprad Tahlij, having joined in 1954. He served as Sbarabed 1970-1971. He was also a longtime member of the Yeprad Degree Team.

NS Arthur Satian (1965-2020)

On Tuesday, Dec 8, 2020, NS Arthur Sarkis Satian, loving son, devoted husband and supportive father of three girls passed away at age 55, after a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer.

He was born on October 26, 1965 in Fairfax, Virginia to NS Sarkis and SEGDR Margie Satian. He was an accomplished entrepreneur and a successful local builder and developer.

Arto had a passion for his family, sports cars, all kinds of music and many other pursuits. One of his greatest gifts was his ability to build and create and draw beauty out of everything he touched. He was known for his quick wit, his infectious smile, and his kind and compassionate spirit. With his awesome sense of humor and talent for accents, he kept his friends and family smiling.

He was proud of his Armenian heritage and served his community from youth through his entire life. He was a member of The Knights of Vartan, ANI Lodge, since 1995, and served as its Sbarabed from 1997 to 1999. In 2018 he was entrusted with the Avak Tahlig 20 year service medal.

He is survived by his wife Suleima Satian, former wife, Sylva Satian, his three daughters, Taleen, Nicole, and Allison, his moth-
er, GDR Margie Satian, father, NS Sarkis Satian, his step-mother Mary Satian, his sister, Rosemary, and his best friend who is like brother NS Varoujan Varoujanian, his step-siblings Heather, Holly and Heath, along with many loving cousins, nephews and nieces.

Due to the current Covid Pandemic, a private funeral service was held on Saturday, December 12, 2020 at St. Mary Armenian Church, Washington DC. Knights of Vartan members Kevork Marashlian, Jake Bournazian and Dr. Ara Avedisian initiated a very short funeral service to their early departed brother. His sister, Rosemary delivered very emotional eulogy. Rev. Fr. Hovsep Karapetyan, pastor of St. Mary Church presided over the funeral services and internment.

Sarkis Sam Kouzoujian (1933-2020)

Sarkis Sam Kouzoujian
April 18, 1933 – December 25, 2020

Sarkis Kouzoujian of Belmont, California was born in “The Bronx,” New York on April 18, 1933 to Harry and Var touhy Kouzoujian, survivors of the Armenian Genocide. Sarkis joined them in God’s kingdom on Christmas Day, December 25, 2020, from complications due to COVID19. He is survived by his loving wife of 62 years, Seda, son Van, daughter Karen, and grandson Jack.

Early on, Sarkis realized his passion for technology. He attended Samuel Gompers Technical High School where he excelled in the emerging field of radio and television technology and design. This would form the foundation for his future in the evolving field of data processing and the birth of micro-computers. Sarkis’ desire for lifelong learning fostered an open mindset and was the backbone to his positive and optimistic nature, and a belief that anything is possible. Contrary to prevailing workplace practices at that time, as more women entered the field of technology, Sarkis was an innovator in demanding equal pay for the women in his department.

Through his active involvement in the greater New York Armenian community, Sarkis met the love of his life, Seda Katchouny. They married in 1957 and established their home in Flushing, NY. Shortly after the arrival of their children, Van and Karen, Sarkis pursued his academic degree in Engineering from Farleigh Dickinson University, working during the day, going to school at nights. He was selected to be a member of an elite group that designed the depository trust system for the NY Stock Exchange. In 1973, this led to an opportunity in San Francisco to work for the Pacific Stock Exchange. The entire family moved, including his mother and mother-in-law, to the San Francisco Bay Area to start a new life in California.

With an entrepreneurial spirit and a keen awareness of the dawning of the micro-computer era, Sarkis followed his dream and opened one of the nation’s first personal computer stores, ComputerLand, in 1978, with additional stores to follow. Recognized as a pioneer in the industry, Sarkis was asked to participate on the advisory boards of both IBM and Apple Computer. After the sale of the business in 1986, Sarkis leveraged his decades of expertise by providing consulting and advisory services to businesses on implementing their computer systems.

Sarkis was a very spiritual man and gave back to his Armenian community and church. He was a member of the Knights of Vartan, an Armenian philanthropic fraternal organization, where he was honored as “Man of the Year,” served as Commander of the local chapter, and was a member of the national executive board.

Sarkis also served on the parish council of St. John Armenian Apostolic Church in San Francisco, on the executive board of NorCal Senior Services, and was actively involved with the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU).

Sarkis valued his family and friends above all else and was loved by all who knew him. He would always make himself available to individuals or organizations needing any of his wide range of skills. He will forever be known for his loving and giving nature, warm and broad smile, the twinkle in his eyes, and his roaring sense of humor. He had a passion and love for travel, crossword puzzles, and exploring the unknown.
NS Gary Koltookian (1933-2020)

Gary Charles Koltookian, a longtime Chelmsford, MA resident, passed away peacefully on Saturday, November 28, 2020 at Lahey Hospital and Medical Center, Burlington, MA surrounded by his loving family. He was the beloved husband of Beverly A. (Peloian) Koltookian with whom he shared 61 years of marriage. Gary was born on May 6, 1933, in Lowell, MA, and was a son of the late Hagop and Sara (Bezdighian) Koltookian, both from Hoghe Armenia. Gary's mother was a Genocide survivor. He was a graduate of Lowell High School, Bridgewater State in 1954 and received a Master's degree from Fitchburg State in 1959, and a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study from Boston University 1965. A career-long educator, Gary worked as a school teacher in the towns of Billerica, Chelmsford, and at the Marshall Simons Middle School in Burlington retiring in 1990. He was a longtime and active member of Saints Vartanantz Armenian Church in Chelmsford where he served on the Parish Council, sang in the Church Choir, taught Sunday School, and was a member of the Men's Club. He was an avid bottle collector and was a member of the Merrimack Valley Antique Bottle Club for over 50 years. His calling card read "Bottle Gary." That's how collectors around the Merrimack Valley knew him. During his involvement he was editor of the club newspaper and was known to have one of the best collections of Lowell and Chelmsford bottles and memorabilia. He did many Bottle shows in the New England region and beyond. He was a member of the Lowell Historical Society and through his research of area bottles discovered a Civil War sailor of Armenian descent from Lowell. He then went further to enable the placement of a gravesite monument in recognition of his service. He was a proud and active 51 year member of the Knights of Vartan, Arakadz Tahlj #35, serving multiple terms as Sb, advisor to several Tivans and as a delegate to the Grand Convocation for many years. He was always ready and willing to serve on many cultural, educational and community fund-raising programs. He had a major role in the creation of the Mother's Hand Armenian Genocide monument placed on the Lowell City Hall plaza. He had a sense of good humor and especially enjoyed his role of "the designated roaster" at many of the lodge's Past commander banquets. Both Gary and his wife Nakhgin Avak Garkabedouhie Beverly (2011-2012) were dedicated members of the Knights and Daughters of Vartan. He will always be remembered for his leadership, dedication, service and be sadly missed by all his brother asbeds. Most of all he cherished time spent with his family and friends as well as traveling the world. He and Bev traveled across the U.S. with extended stays in OH, CA, HI and FL as well as Armenia, Russia, England, Australia, China, So. America and several European countries. As an amateur horticulturist Gary enjoyed gardening, both flowers and vegetables and sharing his harvest with family and friends. In addition to his loving wife, Gary leaves his children; Leslie Bagdasarian and her husband Ara of Solon, Ohio, Lynne Koltookian of Chelmsford, and Gary Koltookian and his wife Ming of Mission Viejo, CA, his grandchildren; Julie and Alex Bagdasarian of Solon, Ohio, and his sister, Rose Kludjian of Wilmington, MA. He also leaves many nieces, nephews, and cousins. Sadly, Gary is predeceased by his sister Alice Bogosian formerly of Methuen.

Lazarus A. Pahigian (1931-2021)

Lazarus A. “Larry” Pahigian, 89, of North Andover, MA, passed away January 14, 2021, at Lawrence General Hospital after a brief illness. He was born in Lawrence, MA, and was the son of the late Ashod and Pilo (Gulian) Pahigian. Raised in Lawrence, Larry was a graduate of Lawrence High School and Northeastern Universi-
Larry was involved in numerous community and service organizations such as past president of the North Andover Lions Club, the Masons, Armenian Pharmacists Association, and as an active member of the Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe. He dedicated himself to defending and advocating for the special needs community, their rights, and prosperity. In addition to time with his family, Larry also enjoyed golf and was a 45-year member at Andover Country Club, and most recently at Portsmouth, NH Country Club, and Cypress Lake Golf Club in Ft. Myers, FL.

Walter V. Ohanian (1943-2021)

Walter V. Ohanian, 77, of North Andover, passed away Friday, January 22, 2021, at Mass General Hospital, Boston with his loving wife, daughter, and son by his side.

He was born in Methuen, March 1, 1943, son of the late John V. and Maritza (Goshgarian) Ohanian.

Educated in the Methuen school system, Mr. Ohanian graduated from Methuen High School and Bryant MacIntosh Business School. He earned his degree from Manchester College of Accounting and also attended Lowell University.

He served in the United States Army Reserves for over six years.

Mr. Ohanian was one of the first Nursing Home Administrators licensed by the State of Massachusetts, holding license number 75. He was employed for 25 years by The Hillhaven Corporation where he was Vice President. More recently Mr. Ohanian was the Administrator at Christopher House of Worcester, for 17 years until his retirement in 2015.

A lifetime member of the Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe, Mr. Ohanian was a 40-year member of the Knights of Vartan. He was also a longtime member of Massachusetts Senior Care Association and the American College of Health Care Administrators.

Mr. Ohanian was immensely proud of his gardening skills which are evident in the many hours spent beautifully landscaping his homes in North Andover and Ogunquit, Maine.

Bruce David Esajian (1942-2021)

Bruce David Esajian was born on July 27, 1942 and passed away on January 24, 2021 in La Jolla, California - What do you say about a man, who could keep a secret, was loyal to his friends, always took care of his family, and loved his wife…..nothing.

Bruce was born in 1942 to Sirun Esajian, family matriarch with a smile and plate of Mazza for everyone, and Dick Esajian, a Farmer, Entrepreneur, admired by all. The 2nd of 4 children, Bruce grew up and was raised in Los Angeles, CA. before moving to Fresno for High School.

A man of few words, but when he spoke, he garnered respect. “Bruce was Cool”.

Bruce was a loving husband and father who touched the lives of many, and always had a quick wit and sense of humor. He cared deeply for his friends and family, especially his grandchildren who always put a smile on his face.
Barbara Haroutunian (1939 - 2021)

Barbara (nee Zamanigian) Haroutunian passed away peacefully on January 12, 2021. She was the wife of the late John Haroutunian and the daughter of the late Leo and Victoria Zamanigian. Barbara received her Bachelor of Science and Master of Education Degrees from Wayne State University, taught Elementary School and became a Principal in the Detroit Public School System.

She was an active member of St. John Armenian Church in Southfield, Michigan beginning with Sunday School and the ACYOA. During her college years she sang in the St. John Church Komitas Choir and years later became Chairman of the church’s Women’s Guild. Barbara subsequently was elected to serve several terms on the Women’s Guild Central Council of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church.

Shortly after retirement, Barbara was called upon by the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem to restructure the curriculum of the well known St. Tarkmanchatz School there. Taking with her, from the United States, specialists in Elementary Education, she accomplished the task and won the hearts of Jerusalem’s Armenian Community.

After numerous trips to Armenia, she was asked to teach English as a second language in the town of Ichevan which she did for several years without hesitation. While at the school, Barbara observed that many of the classrooms were in dire need of repair. She singlehandedly, in one year, raised $25,000 which was sufficient to completely renovate many of the rooms in the school much to the delight of the teachers and the residents of Ichevan.

More recently, Barbara was asked to join a committee of international Armenian women, chaired by the wife of the President of Nagorno-Karabakh, to assist in the region’s reconstruction.

Barbara was also active in many Armenian organizations; she was, in the past, a member of the Board of Education of the AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian Day School in Southfield, Michigan; she was a Past Matron of the Daughters of Vartan Zabelle Otyag of Detroit and also served on the Grand Council of the organization from 1994-1996 and 2002-2005. In addition, she was a proud member of the Armenian Heritage Cruise Committee for many years.

She will be missed by many people.

Armen Safilian (1925 - 2021)

Born February 10, 1925 to Jack (Hagop) and Ruby Safilian in Detroit, Michigan. He had one brother, the late Aram Safilian. He attended Cass Technical High School graduating with honors in 1943 and receiving a full scholarship to Michigan Mining & Engineering University. During his time at Wayne State University, Armen joined the Army Air Force serving with the 316th Troop Carrier Group, 9th Air Force 45th Squadron in France, Morocco, Hawaii, Trinidad, Tunisia and England. He was Honorable Discharged in 1945.

Armen joined the Armenian Youth Group (AYA) serving on the Board and chairing several events. At one of them he met and eventually married his wife Alice (Gocharian). They enjoyed social functions and bowling at the famed Dexter Bowling Drone. They were married at St. John Armenian Church on Oakman Boulevard in Detroit, Michigan. They were blessed with three children: Charles Armand, Gail Lynn and Steven John.

Armen worked at Automotive Fabricators Company and he had a special talent for specifications and tube bending. After learning the trade, Armen with the help of his brother Aram and another engineer from school, George Noetzel, started the Milford Fabricating Company. It eventually merged with the Budd Company.

After his retirement, he and Alice spent their winters in Florida. The family toured famous landmarks throughout the United States while vacationing.

In 1971, Armen joined the Knights of Vartan, Shavarshan Tahlij #6, and served a Sbarabed in 1979-1980. He enjoyed the camaraderie with his Brothers and served in many capacities until he became ill.
Judy Cristiano (1942 - 2021)

On April 1, 1942, after 11 years of marriage, on what is known as April Fool’s Day, Genocide survivors, Reteos “Raymond” Kemish and Serpouhi “Sarah” Kemish, had a surprise one-month early birth, and their premature beautiful baby girl made her debut. Judy grew up in Southwest Detroit, attending Harms Elementary School, Wilson Middle School and Western High School. She was active in the church with ACYOA, going to dances, taking trips, and constantly talking about all the memories she made with her lifelong friends, Suzanne Nazoyan and ND Sylvia Aglamishian, who to this day were also like sisters to her. She attended Wayne State University for a couple of years and ended working as a secretary for a law firm in Detroit for ten years. She then went to work for Ford Motor Company in 1973 in the legal department for 12 years. When she first started at Ford, Suzanne suggested to her that she meet her cousin Dan Cristiano, a newly separated young father who happened to also work for Ford and could possibly help give her insight into working there. So one night, they both met at Suzanne’s and talked about Ford, but Judy decided to cut the evening short and went home early. As luck would it, roughly a week later, as Suzanne and Judy were bowling on their league one night, in walked Dan, who came to watch his buddy who happened to be in the same league, and Judy and Dan ended up talking for hours, even after the other bowlers went home. Dan did most of the talking, and he loved the fact that she was such a good listener, even though that was probably the only night he got a word in with her edgewise.

After a courtship of two years, Dan finally popped the question. On April 20, 1975 they were joined in holy matrimony, Judy became a stepmother to almost 6-year-old Kelly, and 2 ½ years later, they were blessed with Danielle. For a long time, Kelly would visit on the weekends, but when she was 16 years old, she came to live with them. Judy instantly became the mother of a teenager, butting heads regularly as all mothers and teenage daughters do, but paving the way for Danielle years later, which to this day, Danielle regularly thanks Kelly for her sacrifice. In 1985, Judy decided to officially retire from Ford and become a stay-at-home mom for both girls. For about ten years, Dan and Judy watched with so much love and pride as Kelly and Danielle graduated high school and went on to college. During this time, Kelly met the love of her life, Sean, who ironically became the love of Judy’s life, and whom the family still jokes about how he was her favorite child. They had such a special bond, he could always make her blush and giggle, and she lovingly referred to him as her “Seanie.” There was no better man for her daughter, and she constantly would brag about him. Her family was perfect in her eyes, but little did she know that it would not stop there. After they got married, and what seemed like an eternity, Dan and Judy got word that they were going to become grandparents. On June 23, 2000 a healthy grandson named Logan was born, and Judy was ecstatic. Not only was she a mom, but now she was officially known as “Yaya,” which is Greek for grandma, and what Kelly had always called her grandmother. On February 7, 2002 another healthy grandson named Brady entered the family, and Judy again was over the moon. Her family was now complete, and forever would be her pride and joy.

As Dan was a member of the Knights of Vartan, he finally convinced Judy to join Zabelle Otyag in 2002. During the next 18 years, Judy was active in the Otyag. She helped at all the functions and was always available if something was needed for an event. She will be greatly missed by her Sisters in Zabelle Otyag.

Over the years, Dan and Judy traveled to multiple states across the country to visit Kelly, Sean and the boys. As hard as it was to watch them all grow from afar, they always felt blessed that when they came together, they made the very most out of their visits and never ended up taking each other for granted. They watched Danielle graduate from college, buy a condo, and helped her become an independent woman who got her mom’s looks and humor, but as Judy would tell you, her father’s patience. If Judy were here at this moment, she would say she lived such a good life. That she was the luckiest woman on earth. That her family she helped to create was the absolute best. That she adored her friends she made along the way, and even more so the memories she made with them. And then she would say it’s been one heck of a ride, put on her lipstick, and tell us to pull it together. She is missed by so many.
Save the Date

Veratarts Hayrenik V
September 18 - 26, 2021