



The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research



Manoog S. Young

NAASR Founding
Chairman (1917-2012)

Manoog Soghomon Young, the Founding Chairman of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) and its chairman until 2001, passed away on Tuesday, July 3, 2012, at the age of 94. He is survived by his wife of 49 years Barbara (Johnson) Young, children Armen Young of Littleton, MA, and Adrina Young Gobbi of North Billerica, MA, and grandchildren Jake and Mariah Gobbi and Christopher and Lauren Young.

see *MANOOG*, page 12

Manoog Young during his World War II service



Manoog S. Young and the Birth of the Armenian Studies Movement in America

Adapted from a longer work in progress on the development of Armenian Studies in the U.S. and offered in honor of Manoog Young, in particular, but also in tribute to all who have worked towards the same goal.

By Marc A. Mamigonian

NAASR Director of Academic Affairs

The development of Armenian Studies from a near non-entity to a robust field over the past six decades is not attributable to one person or to one organization. Many men and women have made vital contributions. One of these individuals is Manoog S. Young, Founding Chairman and longtime head of NAASR, whose vision, commitment, and energy helped to impel the organization and the movement that succeeded, where others had failed, in

establishing Armenian Studies as a permanent discipline at leading American universities.

What we call Armenian Studies has been established in Europe since the time of Napoleon. But it came much later to the U.S. Pursued sporadically by individual scholars from the late 19th century on and with several unsuccessful attempts to establish permanent programs, in the middle of the twentieth century Armenian Studies was mostly where it had been throughout the previous 50 years.

see *BIRTH*, page 2



Left to right: Members of the NAASR Board of Directors, 1956: Richard Malkasian, Arra Avakian, Gregory Adamian, Manoog Young, G. John Gregory, Haig Der Manuelian, J. Mark Kolligian

Manoog S. Young and the Birth of the Armenian Studies Movement in America

BIRTH, from page 1

In 1954, Manoog S. Young was working on his MA thesis at Clark University and serving as chairman of the Program Committee of the Boston branch of the Armenian Students' Association (ASA). He invited Prof. Richard N. Frye of Harvard to address the Boston group on April 9. Frye's talk was entitled "The Study of Armenian History, Language, and Culture—Its Need and Importance," and in it he declared that "Armenian needs to be an established and respected discipline in the universities and should receive the same status and recognition as Arabic and Persian" and called for the elimination of Armenian-Americans' "ghetto mentality."

Following Prof. Frye's talk, spurred by his remarks, Young had conversations with Arra Avakian and Thomas Amirian about how best to achieve the goals Frye had outlined. At the same time, Young encountered Van Aroian, today a long-serving member of NAASR's Board of Directors, at Frye's office where he, too, had spoken with Frye about the need for establishing a permanent Armenian program after hearing the young professor's inspiring words. Clearly, Frye's speech had made an impact on its listeners.

Thus the NAASR group of three founders—Young, Amirian, and Avakian—came together and Young sent Frye a lengthy memo describing a possible course of action towards the establishment of a chair or



Manoog Young handing a check to Harvard President Nathan Pusey while Rouben Mamoulian looks on, at the Harvard Chair "Victory Banquet," May 16, 1959.

program in Armenian Studies at a university such as Harvard. Young also undertook an assessment and cataloguing of what courses were being offered at what schools; the results were published in the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* in September 1954.

Young then wrote a lengthy report entitled "On Armenian Courses, Studies, Scholarships" that appeared in the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* on November 20, 1954. The report followed up on and provided additional supplementary information to Young's earlier reports. Additionally, he called for "the establishment of an endowed professorship or chair of Armenian studies at a leading university where a complete program of Armenian studies can be offered under the guidance of a world-renown[ed] Armenian scholar and teacher. Under such a set-up students can be trained in Armenian studies and the other academic disciplines on a graduate level. As a result they can be ready to teach, carry on research, or write on Armenian affairs and subjects in addition to being prepared for their principal professional pursuits."

Young stated that the "logical place" for such a chair is "Harvard with its outstanding scholars, research and library facilities,

and long record of interest and activities in the Armenian field" and to confide that "a movement is afoot to initiate steps to bring about the realization of such an urgent need."

By this point, a small group had already come together in order to achieve the goals set forth by Young. A group of nine (Amirian, Avakian, and Young were joined by Richard Malkasian, Jack Guveyan, James Etmekjian, Eghishe Chrakian, Haig Der Manuelian, and Richard Frye) met throughout 1954 and early 1955, and by the time of NAASR's public launch in March 1955 some sixty Armenian-Americans and academics had joined, among them notable members of the Harvard faculty such as Prof. Roman Jakobson, Prof. Michael Karpovich, and Prof. William L. Langer, then the Director of Harvard's Center for Middle Eastern Studies.

By June 1955 membership in the organization had grown to more than 250 members. Young, initially the acting Board Chairman, was formally chosen to fill that position. In October 1955, the Association had its kickoff banquet at the Harvard Club in Boston. Among those speaking at the banquet were Harvard President Nathan Pusey, Lt. Governor Sumner G. Whittier, and author William Saroyan. Young presented pledges totaling \$30,000 to Harvard Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences McGeorge Bundy, and the effort to establish the first permanent, endowed position in Armenian Studies in the U.S. was well under way.

In the several years ahead, Young, as well as other NAASR Board Members and interested individuals, crisscrossed the U.S., attending gatherings, giving speeches, meeting with wealthy individuals, and in general striving to convey to the Armenian-American community the importance of NAASR's undertaking. With the creation of a West Coast section under the direction of J. Michael Hagopian, efforts spanned the

country and the groundwork was laid for subsequent efforts at UCLA.

Fundraising had reached a point by 1957 that Avedis K. Sanjian could be appointed research fellow in Armenian Studies at Harvard, the first time that a scholar held a position solely devoted to Armenian Studies in the U.S.

Also during this period, in 1955 and 1956, NAASR organized the first conferences or symposia focusing on the nascent field of Armenian Studies in the U.S.: "Armenian Studies and Research: Problems and Needs" in 1955 and "Searchlight on Armenian Studies: Conference on Problems and Areas of Research" in 1956.

Fundraising continued throughout the next several years, and by spring 1959 the goal of \$300,000 was in sight. In May 1959, thanks to a large contribution from the Gulbenkian Foundation, the total raised surpassed the necessary \$300,000, and a "Victory Banquet" attended by more than 1,000 people was held at Harvard's Memorial Hall on May 16, 1959.

It is difficult today to appreciate the impact of the establishment of the Harvard chair in 1959. An editorial in the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* hailed the achievement: "This interest has been evident for de-



Left to right: Manoog Young, Zareh Thomajan, Avedis Sanjian, William Langer, Stephen Mugar

acades but the interest in such study is not enough to bring a cohesive program into being. Money was necessary and the community responded. The establishment of the chair reiterates the desires of scholars in kindred fields for the establishment of such a chair. As an Armenian, you should rejoice in your present accomplishment just as an Armenian you must clearly realize the effort necessary to carry on the multitude of projects which NAASR will indulge in now that their first goal has been reached. A lamentable void has been filled and NAASR's role in the filling of this lamentable void is to be hailed by every single scholar today, let alone every Armenian in the world today."

Thus NAASR was able to succeed relatively quickly—within five years of its founding—in achieving its first major goal, the funding of an endowed chair in Armenian Studies at Harvard University. As the campaign neared its close, Sir Hamilton A. R. Gibb, then the Director of Harvard's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, wrote to Manoog Young that "It will be, I believe, the first chair to be founded in this way in America, and that fact itself gives to the chair additional—and piercing—significance."

* * * * *

The triumph of the establishment of the Harvard Chair is, of course, not the end of the story; rather, it is only the beginning. Over the following decades, as the field of Armenian Studies grew and evolved, so too did NAASR with Young continuing as Chairman until 2001. The organization and the field both developed in ways that could not have been foreseen at their inception, and there would be successes, disappointments, expansion, conflict, continuity, and change.

Young remarked many times in his later years that "none of us could have imagined it would lead to all of this." On the one hand this is certainly true; yet, on the other hand, one imagines that he and others knew that great things would come of their efforts.

On the occasion of the celebration of Manoog Young's 90th birthday at NAASR, he offered these comments to the audience. It seems only appropriate to give Manoog the last word.

"Thank you for all the years of your support. We could never have come so far without the support of the community. All of you must take pride in what happened, because you are responsible for it. I was one small cog in the whole thing ... I'd like to be here a hundred years from now and see all that has transpired."



Manoog Young, Hamilton A. R. Gibb, Avedis Sanjian, Richard Frye

Manoog Young Remembered

by Robert W. Thomson

I wish to recall and honor the man whose vision revolutionized the study of Armenian history and culture. Until the formation of NAASR, and the establishment of permanent positions in Armenian Studies in the USA, Armenian hardly featured in the public, or even the academic consciousness. Certainly, there had been the occasional individual scholar who was familiar with Armenian. But the important point is that none of these was a professor of Armenian, they did not establish regular courses in the language or culture, and they could not devote themselves full time to Armenian Studies, though of course, like all good scholars they encouraged their individual students and guided some towards Armenia.

The impetus for a more serious approach came from Manoog Young, active in university and community circles, who keenly felt the lack of coherence and permanence in the teaching of Armenian at the university level, as well as the lack of support for scholarship and research. He had a really revolutionary idea—to engage the Armenian community with a university in order to establish a permanent position dedicated to Armenian Studies. Not to support a particular individual, but to found a permanent chair that would enable the continuation of teaching and research over the generations. Many academics would certainly have said that Armenian Studies were a “good thing,” that they were valuable for their own sake, and also valuable for their relevance to the study of all those peoples and cultures that came into contact with Armenia over the last three thousand years. But they did not come up with a scheme to put ideas into practice. It was the particular genius of Manoog to identify the solution to a need experienced by many, and articulated at Harvard in particular by Richard Frye: Armenian is no less worthy of study than the other languages and cultures of the Middle East. However, without that push from the outside and the infu-

sion of financial support from the community, there would never have been a chair of Armenian Studies at Harvard. Manoog provided not only the spark that brought together a few like-minded people, but more significantly, he had the stamina and the effort to bring the idea to reality.

I first heard of NAASR from Avedis Sanjian when I made a brief visit to Harvard in the spring of 1961. It was not until two years later that I met Manoog himself. On Friday, September 13, 1963, Judith and I sailed from England for Boston. Despite the date it was an auspicious voyage, to my first real job as Instructor in Classical Armenian. Avedis, who was then an Assistant Professor in the Department of Near Eastern Languages, introduced us to Manoog at a large gathering of NAASR in the Harvard Faculty Club. There we met many others who were to play a role in our lives for the next thirty years. Gradually, we learned fuller details of the founding of NAASR, the enthusiasm of the community for establishing a permanent chair in the university, and the great efforts made by Manoog and a core of helpers to bring that about, with the cooperation of Dick Frye in whose department I was now a junior member. Two years later Avedis left for UCLA, where also NAASR had been playing a role, to become the first Narekatsi Professor. Judith and I still remember the kindness of Avedis and Helen, not least their hospitality and the marvellous Armenian dishes prepared by Helen and her mother.

In those days the NAASR office was a cramped space in an office block in Harvard Square. Not until the house on Mount Auburn Street was acquired do I remember extensive conversations with Manoog in more spacious surroundings. We would discuss a wide range of issues involving Armenian Studies, and as a member of NAASR’s Academic Committee I was able to share my own concerns and have some input into the activities of NAASR. Of particular importance

was the first international conference of Armenian Studies, organized by NAASR in June of 1964. For the first time scholars, junior and senior, from different parts of the world, gathered to make mutual contact and share research interests. NAASR sponsored many conferences after that, but the first time is always the most memorable. It was on that occasion in 1964 that I first met many of those who are now household names (or if they are not, then they should be): Nina Garsoian, Richard Hovannisian, Dickran Kouymjian, Ronald Suny (then still a student), and several others.

Naturally, my appointment as the first Mashtots Professor of Armenian Studies was a significant stage in the realization of NAASR’s purpose; not the

culmination of NAASR’s role, but a stage in the wider development of Armenian Studies in the USA. With the support of NAASR and its members across the country other positions in Armenian Studies were established; and prompted by that example, individual donors also contributed to the expansion of the field. The position of Armenian Studies today bears no resemblance to the state of affairs fifty



Robert Thomson (right) with Manoog Young and NELC Chairman William Moran, 1970



Left to right, Martin Martinian, Robert Thomson, Avedis Sanjian, Manoog Young, Robert Godel, ca. 1964

years ago, when Sirarpie Der Nersessian encouraged me to devote more energy to Armenian. Programs of Armenian Studies are expanding like ripples in a pool, but the stone that caused those ripples was cast by Manoog Young. And these ever-widening ripples are now reaching successive generations. As we pay honor to Manoog and his original associates, as well as to all those who contributed to the effort to endow a position at Harvard, we can never say that the task is finished. But we can say that, thanks to NAASR, more and more people in the USA, as well as the wider world, have learned to honor and respect the manifold achievements of the Armenian people.

Elizabeth Gregory, Robert Thomson, Helen Sahagian, Manoog Young, 1992



Let's Honor Manoog Young by Continuing His Quest

by Marc A. Mamigonian
NAASR Director of Academic Affairs

(Ed. note: The following is a slightly edited version of a piece that appeared in the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* on Sept. 29, 2012)

As NAASR's Director of Academic Affairs, I acknowledge that I am not necessarily an objective voice on Manoog Young. He hired me back in 1998, for which I remain grateful. I worked directly for him for four years: I regard that as no small accomplishment, since he was, famously, not the easiest person in the world to work for. Some who read this will understand what this means; others can work it out for themselves.

Whether or not Manoog was easy to work for or with, there is no question of his unswerving dedication to the ideals and the goals of NAASR. These ideals and goals can be summarized as: Armenian history and culture in all its forms are subjects worthy of study not only by Armenians but also by the larger scholarly world; this work should be carried out at leading universities and colleges by top-level scholars; and that there is a need to support and disseminate to the wider public scholarship in Armenian Studies.

Manoog Young was not the first person to recognize these ideals or pursue these goals, nor was he alone in creating an entity, NAASR, that would lead to their institutionalization. The names of Richard N. Frye, who more than anyone else provided the catalyst to the creation of NAASR in the first place, and those of Thomas T. Amirian and Arra S. Avakian, who joined with Manoog as the first three founders of NAASR, especially must be remembered, as well as the other men and women who became founding members in 1955, not to mention all who served as volunteers, Board members and staff through the decades. But I think it was Manoog's tenacity that led to NAASR's success, the creation of the Harvard Chair in Armenian Studies and the establishment of other Armenian Studies chairs and programs in the U.S. Prof. Robert W. Thomson, who in 1969 became the first occupant of Harvard's Mashtots Chair, wrote recently: "Programs of Armenian Studies are expanding like ripples in a pool, but the stone that caused those ripples was cast by Manoog Young. And these ever-widening ripples are now reaching successive generations."

Unfortunately, but inevitably, time passes and people forget things. (One might say it



Manoog Young in action at Harvard, 1961

is precisely for that reason that there was a need for NAASR in the first place.) Manoog has passed on now. NAASR has existed for nearly 60 years. Numerous other Armenian chairs and programs have been established by various entities and philanthropic individuals. There are no longer so many people who remember that things have not always been as they are—that not so long ago there were no more than a handful of worthwhile books on Armenian subjects in English, that there were no Armenian chairs, there were not regular lectures by scholars and writers, there were not places to carry out research.

Manoog lived a long life: long enough to see NAASR make the transition to new leadership and the institution as well as the field of Armenian Studies develop and mature in ways that could not have been foreseen; and long enough to see the almost unimaginable achievements hoped for in NAASR's early days become facts of life and, indeed, taken for granted.

It may be that all that came to pass would have happened without Manoog Young. Maybe, but I doubt it. We are all beneficiaries of his hard work and dedication, and we all owe him and the other farsighted men and women who worked with him, an enormous debt. The debt cannot be repaid but by one way: by remembering and by carrying on the work.



NAASR's first three Founders in 1980, Thomas T. Amirian, Manoog S. Young, Arra S. Avakian



Marc Mamigonian and Manoog Young in 2009



Founding Members Hrand Saxenian, Richard Frye, and Haig Der Manuelian, with Chairman Raffi Yeghiayan and portrait of Manoog Young

Manoog Young Remembered at NAASR Event

A full house of NAASR members and friends gathered on October 4, 2012, for “An Evening of Commemoration and Tribute to NAASR Founding Chairman Manoog S. Young.”

The evening featured short presentations by several individuals who worked closely with Young across more than five decades: Dr. Gregory H. Adamian, President Emeritus and Chancellor, Bentley University; Prof. Richard N. Frye, Aga Khan Professor Emeritus of Iranian History, Harvard University; Prof. James R. Russell, Mashtots Professor of Armenian Studies, Harvard University; past and present NAASR Chairmen Nancy R. Kolligian and Raffi P. Yeghiayan; and NAASR Director of Academic Affairs Marc A. Mamigonian. In addition, a slide show and



Portrait of Manoog Young with, at left, his son Armen Young and wife Barbara Young; and at right, Arra Avakian and Adrienne Amirian, son and daughter of fellow NAASR original Founders Arra S. Avakian and Thomas T. Amirian.



Seated, left to right: Gregory Adamian, Barbara Young, Nancy Kolligian, Raffi Yeghiayan; standing, Marc Mamigonian, James Russell

audio and video of Young were presented. Manoog’s wife of nearly 50 years, Barbara Young, offered her own heartfelt comments, and NAASR Founding Member Haig Der Manuelian gave spontaneous, witty, and moving reminiscences of Manoog and the early days of NAASR.

At the end of the evening, Chairman Raffi Yeghiayan unveiled a framed photographic portrait of Young, which has been mounted in the NAASR lecture and meeting room, as a permanent reminder of Manoog Young’s unique and irreplaceable role in the development of NAASR.

Manoog S. Young

REMEMBERED

Following Manoog Young’s death, we received a number of warm remembrances from scholars, associates, former NAASR Board Members, and others with whom Manoog interacted for decades. We wish to share some of them with readers.

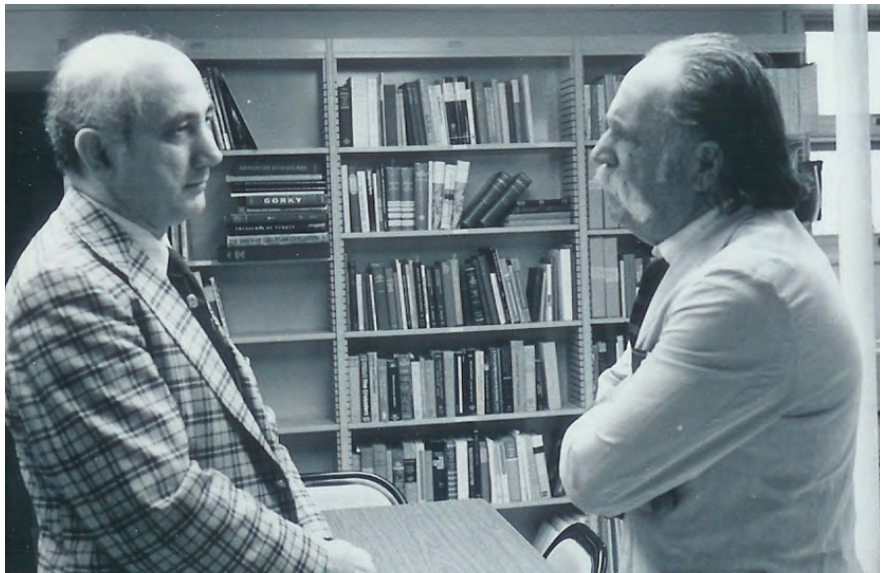
We historians don’t like the question “what if.” We hate to answer this question because we only write about what was actually lived. I would like to set aside this rule for Manoog Young. Since I met him some years ago, and could observe NAASR and its work, I always asked the question, and today I am repeating it: “What if he hadn’t worked so hard to establish NAASR and create the programs dealing with Armenian culture, history, and genocide?” If we ask the question “what if,” we can understand the enormity, the greatness of his success. He must be considered a hero of the institutionalization of the Armenian resurrection here in the United States. Manoog and his work are unforgettable for us historians and his legacy will continue to live not only among Armenians but also among those who do work related to Armenian culture and history. Please accept my condolences.

Dr. Taner Akçam,
Kaloosdian/Mugar
Professor of Modern
Armenian History and
Armenian Genocide
Studies, Clark
University



Manoog more than any other person was instrumental for me in understanding the pride which comes to all of us who are Armenian. I consulted with him in the early 1990s after I took my trip with my father and Armen Aroyan back to Historic Armenia and even before I completed my magazine piece for *The Boston Globe*—“Roots of Sorrow”—Manoog arranged for me to speak to a large group at NAASR.

Stephen Kurkjian,
Boston Globe—
NAASR Board
Member,
2003-present



With deepest sorrow I have read about the passing of NAASR founding Chairman, Mr. Manoog Young.

He was a man of duty and commitment. He had an important vision of organizing the Armenian community’s efforts for establishing an Armenian studies and research center in the U.S., and he realized that vision successfully.

It is already more than a half century that the organization that he founded, NAASR, is making progress in the Armenological realm. It means that the foundation and the basis he has set are strong and effective.

While meeting Mr. Young personally in 2004, though in his 80s, he was still wisely engaged in the NAASR activities.

Today the NAASR Board and its devoted members are continuing the traditions that Mr. Young established, and here is also the success of NAASR activities.

Let him rest in peace, for he has accomplished a wonderful mission during his life time. God Bless His Soul!

Dr. Knarik Avakian,
Senior Researcher, Department of Armenian
Communities and Diaspora, Institute of History,
National Academy of Sciences, Armenia



After having lived for 15 years in New York, I relocated back to Boston in the middle 80s and met Manoog on the steps of St. James Church. Over the course of a year or two, Manoog would almost corner me against the railing on the steps after church, and ask me again and again, what was I doing that was so important that I could not get more involved with NAASR? If your generation does not get involved, how is NAASR to survive? If NAASR cannot attract people with your education and interests, what hope is there for the future of our people?

Manoog's insistent inquiries and comments on the importance of NAASR eventually reached its desired objective and I began to attend more of NAASR's events and learned more about NAASR's mission. Most importantly, I loved the fellowship NAASR generated at its meetings. I loved listening to people like Tom Amirian who inevitably would start his questions of the evening's speaker with something like this "as a survivor of Van, or as a citizen of Van, or as a proud Vanetsi, I have to ask you this question."

Through my attendance at NAASR lectures in Cambridge, and later in Belmont, I felt

that by learning more about my Armenian heritage, history, and culture, I was becoming more Armenian and more proud of being Armenian. NAASR helped my self-identity and gave me greater confidence in explaining the Armenian history and viewpoint to my American friends. After a few years of attending meetings and having more discussions with me, usually on the steps of St. James, Manoog asked me in the late 80s, if I would stand for election to the Board.

In the twelve or so years I was on the Board, I observed how Manoog would drive the agenda with a personal and strong point of view, with close attention to minutia and with always a challenging and inquiring mind. Manoog did not hesitate to ask the awkward follow up question when the initial answer from a Board member was not to his liking.

It was not unusual for me to hear him discuss his academic background and prior work experiences to NAASR, what he gave up in his own professional career and academia, his personal sacrifices to keep NAASR going. After these conversations, and through many years of direct and personal observation, I had a clear sense of the man, a tremendous sense



of personal direction whose whole life was NAASR to the sacrifice of all other aspects of this life.

Manoog Young's intellectual talent, physical contribution, and emotional stamina to drive NAASR forward regardless of the obstacle, made him the one incalculable force of nature, with the iron will, whose shoulders we stand on today. Have no doubt, Manoog was a godfather of our community, whose life was dedicated to NAASR's and without that dedication of his life there would be no NAASR today. For that we all have to be eternally grateful.

Paul T. Boghosian,
NAASR Board Member, 1990-2001

It is very difficult to imagine that Mr. Manoog Young is not with us anymore. Mr. Manoog Young was a dedicated supporter of Armenian studies and culture. He initiated NAASR. This center was for him a base for the accumulation of Armenian historical memory and provided the possibility for visitors to educate themselves about Armenian culture and identity. He collected books and historical documents thus encouraging the other Armenians to do the same thing. He was happy to see that more and more people came to the lectures organized at NAASR and more people were interested in supporting it.



The establishment of NAASR is his immortal exclusive contribution and investment in the national identity and future of Armenians, an ideal example of serving the Armenian community. He was a visionary and dedicated leader who understood his responsibility before the Armenian community. Today, when Mr. Manoog Young is with the Lord, we hope that the work started by him will always attract and find other enthusiastic people who will expand or support NAASR, and that due to those new leaders the center will continue to flourish. The death of Mr. Manoog Young is a great loss for the Armenian community not only in Massachusetts but in the Armenian Diaspora generally speaking. As a dedicated Armenian leader he will always live in the memory of all those people who had a chance to know him.

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Dr. Levon Chookaszian, UNESCO Chair of Armenian Art History,
Yerevan State University

I remember our first meeting. It was in the mid seventies, I had just gotten a job in Cleveland, and was asked to speak in England. It was around 1976. I asked NAASR for plane fare, and you provided it. Later I spoke to NAASR, on a linguistic topic. The speech was not a success; I couldn't reach my audience, but everybody there was very polite, I remember. You did so much.

Dr. John A. C. Greppin,
Cleveland State University



Manoog S. Young as the first chairman of NAASR has been cited by an earlier NAASR office worker as being too meticulous in requiring that a postage stamp be attached to any envelope going out of the NAASR office be placed in a particular manner.

What Manoog was doing echoed Jesus' declaration: "Whoever is faithful in small matters will be faithful in large ones" (Luke 16:10).

NAASR's birth in 1955 and the establishment in 1959 of chairs in Armenian Studies at Harvard University and other American universities is a testimony to Manoog Young's quality as a visionary leader and organizer. He set for himself a goal and inspired numerous individuals to pursue in a cooperative manner.

Postage stamps by necessity remain small, yet NAASR, Manoog Young's and his co-workers' child, has grown to a promising big, mature level.

Fr. Arten Ashjian,
former pastor of St. James Armenian Church
(Watertown, MA); NAASR Founding Member



Sincere condolences on the passing away of Manoog S. Young. He was a very great figure in Armenian Studies, and a personal friend of mine, ever since the foundational NAASR Conference of Fall 1971 [International Conference on Authority and Democracy in Armenian Society], which I was privileged to attend.

Christopher J. Walker, London, U.K.

Like other old-timers, I have distinct memories of what a unique fellow Manoog Young was. I recall the conference where I met him in 1986 [National Conference on Identity and Assimilation], my first visit to Harvard, to speak on Armenian immigration. What inspiring passion Manoog expressed, that energized all of us younger researchers. Manoog and NAASR were one. NAASR is now reaching new heights nationally with its multi-city activities—building on Manoog’s pre-internet efforts.



**Dr. Harold Takooshian,
Fordham University**

The passing of Manoog S. Young marks the end of an era, an era of struggle to establish Armenian Studies in the United States and the Western world.

Not that the Europeans of over a century ago were not well-versed in Armenian studies, it is just that Armenian Studies had slowly atrophied and almost disappeared after the genocide.

Manoog and a fine group of young Armenian intellectuals and a few academics founded NAASR with the intention of establishing a chair of Armenian Studies at Harvard University, perhaps the most outstanding university in the United States and certainly one of the great universities of the world. Establishing a chair at Harvard would symbolize our intention of reestablishing Armenian Studies at the highest level.

Manoog was a driving force, and as with all great driving forces he sometimes stepped on toes or el-



Manoog Young was the true pioneer of the institutionalized and professionalized field of Armenian studies, at least in the United States. All of us—whether practitioners of the field, on its margins or its beneficiaries—owe much to Manoog’s vision and hard labor, a vision made possible by the unwavering support he was given for decades by his life companion Barbara and their children. His memory is enshrined in every chair that is established, every conference that is convened and every new publication in the field.

Manoog always gave more than he asked anyone to give, his steady leadership will remain a source of inspiration, and his healthy skepticism a guarantee for excellence. We will miss him.

**Dr. Jirair Libaridian,
Alex Manoogian Professor of Modern Armenian History,
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor**

bowed others out of the way. It was his way, or the highway. His intentions, however, were always pure and his dedication unblemished. NAASR became his second career, and in some ways his first career.

He made a difference. Many entered the fray because of Manoog’s leadership, and others for the same reason looked for other pastures. So in a way we can say Manoog was not only the father of NAASR but in some ways the godfather of ALMA and the Armenian Assembly of America.

There is no denying he was a unique personality, quaint in some ways and exasperating in other ways, but there is absolutely no way to deny his seminal contribution to Armenian Studies in America and his total and pure dedication to a cause which we all value highly.

**Dr. Dennis R. Papazian,
Professor Emeritus and Founder
of Armenian Research Center,
University of Michigan, Dearborn;
NAASR Board Member, 1973-1990**

A death foretold, as the phrase goes, comes after a long life of extraordinary and visionary labor in the service of the Armenian people and of human scholarship, and it is very hard to bear. Manoog's leadership was vigorous but he was always around, and one more pillar is gone. You look at your shoulders and tell yourself, I'm not his equal and may never be, but I'll do my best. We all will, together.

It is not just that we have him to thank for the very existence of university chairs in Armenian studies in this country. He is a part of American-Armenian history itself, and as it's now almost a hundred years on from the Genocide and dispersion, the history of Armenians in this country is a very important part of Armenian history.

Manoog was a supporter and friend to me when I was very young and vulnerable; and when I moved to Boston, NAASR became more and more my second home and second school. The longer I've lived the more it teaches me. I have never been as optimistic about NAASR's future as I am now. May God help our labor together, and may He rest Manoog's good soul in everlasting peace. Though I suspect that Manoog and the Lord are having some serious talks right now about Heaven's plans for lectures, fundraising, and publications...

**Dr. James Russell,
Mashtots Professor of Armenian
Studies, Harvard University**



I was particularly showered by Manoog's thoughtfulness and generosity. Back in the early 1960s, when I was a graduate student in history at Harvard and well onto my way to writing a thesis about an obscure 18th century American colonial minister, Manoog went ahead on his own to suggest to Professor Oscar Handlin, then and for many years the towering figure in Harvard's History Department, that a young graduate student—yours truly—should undertake a study of the Armenian American community.

Well, Oscar Handlin agreed to direct my thesis, I took up the challenge (writing about our community was certainly much closer to me than the 18th century) and I became, after many years, a published author of our community's history (*Torn Between Two Lands*).

And this, though the greatest, was one of many kindnesses Manoog extended to me. I certainly will miss him.

**Dr. Robert Mirak, President,
Armenian Cultural Foundation,
NAASR Board Member, 1968-1970**



In 1973, I co-founded with Margot Strom the teacher training program, "Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior," which eventually included a study of the Armenian Genocide. But even though my colleagues and I held degrees that focused on the fields of history and education, we knew almost nothing about two thousand years of Armenian history or the Genocide.

The organization we turned to for resources and experts to develop our understanding of the Genocide was NAASR. I can remember my first visit, and wondering as I walked up the front steps of a big house set back from the Charles River, "Is this really their headquarters?" But from the moment Manoog Young opened the wide front door, I thought of the old cliché, "Don't judge a book by its cover!"

In the decades that followed I continually turned to Manoog as my resource guru for books and scholarly papers on Armenian history and culture. More importantly, it was the way Manoog helped me learn about this unfamiliar history that I have always appreciated. His style was not to lecture me or "preach" to me when it came to complex issues. Instead he would give a slight grin and say, "I've got a book for you to read."

Manoog was incredibly focused on building and maintaining the stature of NAASR. He once told me that if an organization loses its stature and authenticity, it's difficult to regain it. A few weeks after we had this discussion, he asked me to facilitate a teacher workshop at NAASR to try out some of our curriculum ideas. It was new content for me, and I was worried about making a historical mistake. At one point in the workshop, I was referring to Michael Arlen's book and I called it "Passage to *Arafat*." I knew it did not sound right, and all I could think about was authenticity crumbling. Manoog shifted his posture, grinned, and calmly said, "Bill is still on a journey with us. He meant to say *Ararat*."

I will remember Manoog as a tireless, selfless, and focused leader whose compassion was as deep as his dedication to intellectual and historical truth.

**William S. Parsons,
Chief of Staff, United States
Holocaust Memorial Museum;
Co-founder, Facing History and
Ourselves, NAASR Board Member,
2012-**



His life was so exemplary! He was an unsung hero for me and for Facing History and Ourselves. His deep commitment to preserving the history and legacy of the Armenian Genocide for future generations was inspiring and a critical part of Facing History's work.

**Margot Strom,
Co-founder and Executive
Director, Facing History and
Ourselves**

Manoog S. Young

NAASR Founding Chairman (1917-2012)

MANOOG, from page 1

Manoog S. Young was born in Boston, MA, in 1917 to Soghomon and Aghavni Malyemezian Young. Both parents were born in Kharpert, in the Ottoman Empire, and emigrated to the U.S. prior to the 1915 Armenian Genocide. Young was raised in Boston's South End. He received a B.S. in Mathematics and Physics from Northeastern University and a M.A. in History and International Relations from Clark University, where he wrote a thesis entitled "Russia and the Armenians, 1700-1923: Growth of Russian Interest in Armenia, its Character and its Relation to the Straits Question." He also took courses at MIT, Boston University, and the London School of Economics. During World War II, Young served in the 8th and 9th Air Forces in Europe.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Young taught Physics and Applied Mechanics at the University of Massachusetts; taught International Relations at Northeastern University and History and Government at Brookline High School. In the early 1950s he worked as an editorial assistant at the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* newspaper. He served as Business Manager and Bursar at the Franklin Institute in Boston for more than 27 years.

AFFILIATIONS AND HONORS

Young's many affiliations include the following: Founding Member, Chairman of the Board of Directors, and Honorary Life Member, NAASR; Member, Board of Trustees, Facing History and Ourselves National Foundation; Honorary Board Member, Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association; Chairman, AGBU Elementary School Board, Watertown, MA; Chairman, American Veterans Committee Council of Massachusetts; Founding Chairman, London School of Economics Foundation of America; Co-Chairman, United Armenian Observance Committee of Greater Boston for the 55th and 60th Anniversaries of the Armenian Genocide; Member, Armenian Students' Association of America; Member, Society for Armenian Studies.

Among the many honors bestowed upon Young are the St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Medal from His Holiness, Catholicos Vazken I, for outstanding service to the Armenian Community and Leadership in Promoting Armenian Studies (1986), and the Arthur H. Dadian Armenian Heritage Award given by the Armenian Students' Association in "recognition of his outstanding contribution to the preservation of the rich Armenian heritage."

Remembered by His Successors



Raffi P. Yeghiayan, NAASR Chairman 2010-present

Today is a sad day for NAASR as we grieve the loss of its visionary leader Manoog S. Young. As the principal founder of NAASR, and the perennial Chairman of the Board for its initial forty-plus years, Manoog guided the development of Armenian Studies with the highest academic standards and instigated the establishment of a multitude of endowed chairs at top universities.

The Armenian community in the United States, and indeed worldwide, owes a great debt of gratitude to Manoog for the advancement of Armenian Studies. The achievements he accomplished are ongoing and will continue to flourish, a testimonial to his legacy.

Nancy R. Kolligian, NAASR Chairman 2001-2010



History is often created by individuals with vision, dedication, and commitment to the cause they are advancing. Manoog S. Young was one such individual, and his death at the age of 94 truly marks the passing of an era.

The Armenian community, not only in this country, but worldwide, will always be indebted to him as the driving force behind the creation of an organization in the United States which was essential in order to promote our rich Armenian culture and history. He and his colleagues worked tirelessly to advance this virtually non-existent field at the university level by helping to establish endowed chairs in recognized and respected universities. The first chair in Armenian Studies was established in 1959, a mere four years after the establishment of NAASR. That achievement would not have been possible were it not for the vision and endless devotion and energy of Manoog S. Young.

On a personal level, it was an honor to have known him and I mourn Manoog. We worked together for over 25 years—he was a clear thinker and always dedicated to the success and growth of the organization and its mission to promote this rich and growing field of Armenian Studies in the United States.

Today's recognition of and respect for the importance of Armenian history and culture within the landscape of world history is due in no small part to Manoog S. Young and the role he played in making that a reality. We are grateful for the legacy he left all of us, and may God rest his soul.



CONTRIBUTE

to the Manoog S. Young Fund for Armenian Studies

We hope that you will consider honoring the life and legacy of Manoog S. Young, who gave so much of himself for NAASR and for the field of Armenian Studies, by making a contribution to the Manoog S. Young Fund for Armenian Studies at NAASR. Your contribution will help us to expand our capacity to provide much-needed funds to important and worthwhile research, publications, and programs.

The Armenian community in the United States, and indeed worldwide, owes a great debt of gratitude to Manoog Young for the advancement of Armenian Studies.

The achievements realized through his efforts are ongoing and will continue to flourish. He leaves behind a rich legacy of which we are all the beneficiaries as well as the caretakers.

No one understood more clearly than Manoog that Armenian Studies would only come into being through hard work and dedication; but also no one understood more clearly that NAASR's important work to advance Armenian studies and research carries with it real costs.

Your tax-deductible contribution can be sent to NAASR, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont, MA, 02478.