



# The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research

## Transition into the Virtual Sphere in 2020

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, NAASR closed its headquarters to the public in mid-March 2020. At that time, NAASR transitioned activities smoothly to a virtual space. This was possible because NAASR had moved all of its files to the cloud as part of its capital building campaign, so that staff members are able to work from home and access materials in the cloud. Staff, at times, work in the building, maintain appropriate social dis-



Participants in July 30, 2020, webinar "Cultural Destruction, Cultural Memory: The Heritage of the Khachkars of Julgha (Old Julfa)"

tancing, wear masks, and wipe down surfaces.

During this time, NAASR created four new features to engage members and a worldwide audience during the pandemic:

**1. Live Webinars.** NAASR has continued its programming by going online through Zoom and broadcast live to NAASR's YouTube channel, reaching thousands of people from throughout the U.S and every continent except Antarctica. All events are archived on YouTube and remain accessible.

**2. Treasures of the Mardiagian Library.** NAASR highlights important and often little-known holdings in its 31,000 volume, rare book Mardiagian Library. As of December 2020, 14 "Treasures" have been posted. see TRANSITION, page 24

## NAASR Celebrates New Headquarters with Gratitude and in Grand Style

By Pauline Getzoyan

An historic weekend was celebrated by the National Association of Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), beginning on November 1, 2019, with the much-anticipated ribbon cutting ceremony at its new

(PHOTO: KEN MARTIN)



NAASR Vartan Gregorian Building on Concord Avenue, Belmont, MA, on the day of its ribbon cutting

Belmont headquarters.

Over 300 people attended the afternoon event on Concord Avenue, including Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian and MA State Represen-



(PHOTO: KEN MARTIN)

Yervant Chekijian, Vartan Gregorian, Edward Avedisian, and Stepan Piligian (with giant scissors)

tative David Muradian. The building, now the NAASR Vartan Gregorian Building, was designed by the SMMA Architecture, Engineering, Interior Design and Site Design Firm, led by President Ara Krafian. "The NAASR headquarters is a very special place," said Krafian. "It's informed by 3,000 years of history to inspire contemporary scholars. It's a building that can call itself Armenian."

see CELEBRATION, page 2

## NAASR Gala Celebrates New Building and Its Mission

By Aram Arkun

The atmosphere was giddy at the 65th anniversary gala of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) at the Royal Sonesta Boston hotel's Grand Ballroom. Almost five hundred guests from Boston, many other parts of the U.S., and beyond were celebrating the completion of NAASR's new state-of-the-art headquarters in Belmont and looking forward to what will come next.

The guests, in addition to prominent philanthropists, intellectuals and longtime supporters of NAASR, included diplomats such as Armenia's Ambassador to the U.S. Varuzhan Nersesyan and Armenia's UN Ambassador Mher Margaryan. Befitting the educational and cultural nature of NAASR, there was present an impressive roster of current university presidents, such as Dr. Joseph Aoun of Northeastern University, Dr.

(PHOTO: KEN MARTIN)



Vartan Gregorian with Edele Hovnanian



(PHOTO: KEN MARTIN)

The sold-out gala at the Royal Sonesta Boston

Lawrence Bacow of Harvard University, and Dr. Mary Papazian of San Jose State University, and past presidents Dr. Aram Chobanian of Boston University, Dr. Bruce Boghosian of the American University of Armenia, and Dr. Vartan Gregorian of Brown University.

see GALA, page 4





A big crowd on Concord Ave. for the ribbon-cutting ceremony

## NAASR Celebrates New Headquarters with Gratitude and in Grand Style

CELEBRATION, from page 1

NAASR Executive Director Sarah Ignatius stressed that everyone in the community is a part of the building and the focus of its design. “Look at these spaces and think of them as your own,” said Ignatius. “NAASR’s mission, as you know, is to advance Armenian studies and to build a worldwide community around Armenian culture, history and identity. You don’t have to be Armenian to do that. Think of this as your destination and a place where you can come at any time.”

Gracing the exterior of the building is a magnificent sculpture by famed artist Michael Aram. “I was very inspired by the idea of eternity and how it related to NAASR’s mission to safeguard and preserve our culture, perhaps, we can say, for time and all eternity.” Aram’s sculpture begins with the circle as a reflection of eternity and includes peacocks, feathers, vines and laurel leaves, all designed to symbolize eternal life. In the center is “a simple flower...the petals tilting slightly clockwise to the future, representing

progression and growth.” Aram concluded, “In contemplating what eternity meant for me, my realization is that love is eternal, and if we can agree that God is love and that God is all things, then we can agree that the sum of all things is eternity.”

The excitement of the ribbon cutting ceremony continued at the elegant banquet the following day at the Royal Sonesta Boston. The ballroom was humming with the energy of a sold-out event, and the theme for the evening seemed to echo the previous day’s with numerous expressions of gratitude and cause for celebration.

“Constructing a building is a gift from the past and present to the future,” said emcee David Ignatius, associate editor and columnist for the *Washington Post*. Ignatius acknowledged several honored guests and dignitaries present, including H.E. Varuzhan Nersesyan, Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to the U.S., Mher Margaryan, Armenia’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Northeastern University

president Dr. Joseph Aoun, Harvard University president Dr. Lawrence Bacow, San Jose State University president Dr. Mary A. Papazian, former Boston University president Dr. Aram Chobanian, former American University of Armenia president Dr. Bruce Boghosian and honoree Dr. Vartan Gregorian, former president of Brown University.

Ignatius called NAASR’s new headquarters “a place where we can bring our children, our grandchildren, and their children, if we live that long, to understand the culture and history of our Armenian heritage.”

This sentiment was echoed by the chairman of NAASR’s board, Yervant Chekijian, who proceeded to thank everyone in attendance for their generosity and support for the association’s 65th anniversary and inauguration of the new building. Chekijian acknowledged Edward and Pamela Avedisian as the principal donors of the building and “for naming the building, not after themselves, but after one of the most





distinguished intellectuals in the world, Vartan Gregorian.” Through the support of many, NAASR raised \$6.5 million, with the final cost of the building \$7.2 million. Chekjian expressed his hope that by January 2020 there would be no mortgage on the building.

The theme of gratitude continued with his presentation of the NAASR Leadership Award to past chairpersons Nancy Kolligian and Raffi Yeghiayan in appreciation for their outstanding commitment and decades of extraordinary dedication and service to NAASR’s mission. Chekjian stressed the new era for NAASR and the next generation while discussing the modern features of the new building. However, he said, “The building only has meaning because of the people who inhabit it. The building is not an end in itself. It is only a platform for all the people who will come together to continue NAASR’s mission. That is where the real future of NAASR is. It’s the people who will inhabit the space to study, collaborate, write and explore our precious heritage.”

NAASR’s mission includes supporting students in their educational and research pursuits. In that vein, the association held an essay contest on the transformative power of education. Students were asked to write about a teacher or a professor who left a positive influence on their lives. Contest winners Lillian Avedian, a senior at the University of California at Berkeley (UC Berkeley) and Gurgun Tadevosyan, a senior at New York University (NYU), traveled long distances to attend the banquet—Avedian from Santiago, Chile, and Tadevosyan from Abu Dhabi. Each student eloquently delivered their essays for an appreciative audience.

(PHOTO: KEN MARTIN)



Former Secretary of the Navy Paul Ignatius with NAASR Executive Director Sarah Ignatius

“When I envision a powerful Armenian woman, I see a teacher,” said Avedian. After feeling stifled by her Armenian heritage as a young woman, Avedian had the good fortune to take a class with Dr. Myrna Douzjian at UC Berkeley in her sophomore year where she was introduced to modern Armenian feminist poet Violet Grigoryan. “For me, she placed Armenian literature in front of me as a mirror in which I could see myself reflected for the first time,” recalled Avedian. She began to write voraciously, for the first time feeling as if she could authentically express herself in Armenian. Expressing her admiration of Dr. Douzjian, Avedian said, “I have found my voice, and that voice is indisputably that of a proud, powerful Armenian woman. I owe this immense lifelong gift to Prof. Douzjian for standing in front of a

classroom and asserting her own voice, for daring to suggest that Armenian women deserve to be heard, and that when provided the platform, they may transform literary landscapes.”

A student of political theory at NYU, Tadevosyan spoke about his experiences as an Armenian from Yerevan with Prof. Nancy Rosenblum. He expressed it as the “manifestation of intimidating admiration.” Through the study of David Thoreau’s account on his refusal to pay taxes, Tadevosyan drew a parallel to the civil disobed-

(PHOTO: KEN MARTIN)



Shushan Teager; Nancy Kolligian, Christopher Young, Armen Young, Adrina (Young) Gobbi, Mariah Gobbi, and Roxanne Etmekjian after the unveiling of the Manoog S. Young memorial at the NAASR opening

dience in Armenia and was inspired to study politics and become a teacher in his homeland. Rosenblum taught him to respect and fight for freedom, particularly in Armenia where he could have the most impact. Tadevosyan concluded, “She helped me realize that being an Armenian from Yerevan is what makes me special – I can use my identity to connect the western political thought to what Armenians do subconsciously. She changed my worldview and my future; the way I perceive myself as a thinker and how I want to change my community. I am still intimidated by her. But it is not because I am scared but rather because of how much I admire her.”

A highlight of the evening was a spectacular performance by world-renowned operatic sensation, Isabel Bayrakdarian, who was accompanied by the illustrious Borromeo String Quartet. Bayrakdarian sang several selections by Gomidas on the year marking the 150th anniversary of his birth. “I think the work Gomidas did was to preserve the Armenian soul,” said Bayrakdarian. “These songs are vessels of history, of culture and identity. He created a mu-

sical link to our past, which was meant to be completely annihilated.”

Capping off the memorable evening was Edward Avedisian’s introduction of the evening’s honored guest, Dr. Vartan Gregorian. Avedisian, a board director for the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), highlighted Gregorian’s storied background, including his refusal to accept the presidency at Columbia University while president of Brown University because “he had given his word that he wouldn’t leave until he raised their endowment to over one billion dollars.”

Gregorian, president of the Carnegie Corporation, called Avedisian “a stubborn philanthropist” due to his insistence on having Gregorian as the namesake of NAASR’s new headquarters. Gregorian expressed his hopes for Armenia after a recent visit, during which he visited the Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian K-12

(PHOTO: KEN MARTIN)



An even bigger crowd filled Vartan Gregorian Building

School and Community Center in Yerevan and was heartened because he “saw the Armenian youth, eager to learn, eager to become and eager to be.” Gregorian concluded his remarks with appreciation for NAASR’s continuing mission and celebrating the new headquarters by stating, “This institution itself is the manifestation of the unity of Armenian efforts.”

(Armenian Weekly, November 7, 2019)



# NAASR Gala Celebrates New Building and Its Mission

(PHOTO: KEN MARTIN)

GALA, from page 1

David Ignatius, columnist of the *Washington Post* and a novelist, served as master of ceremonies and introduced himself in the context of the evening as primarily a brother and a son. A proud brother of Sarah Ignatius, NAASR executive director, he is the son of former US Navy Secretary Paul Ignatius, who was in the audience and would turn 99-years old the following week. David Ignatius noted in connection to the new NAASR headquarters, “Constructing a building is a gift from the past and present to the future.”

(PHOTO: KEN MARTIN)



David Ignatius

A series of brief videos were screened at different points in the program featuring Dr. Lisa Gulesserian, lecturer on Armenian language and culture at Harvard University, Dr. Khatchig Mouradian, at Columbia University, and Dr. Laure Astourian, assistant professor of French at Bentley University, all younger scholars speaking in appreciation of NAASR’s support of scholarship and Armenian culture.

## NAASR Gives Thanks

Yervant Chekjian, chairman of NAASR’s board of directors since 2016 and chair of the fundraising for the new building, expressed his gratitude to the donors, especially primary patrons Edward and Pamela Avedisian, who humbly named the building not after themselves but after Vartan Gregorian. Chekjian thanked the gala committee led by Sarah Ignatius and Stepan Piligian, the NAASR board of directors, and all those involved in the project. Chekjian revealed that 6.5 million dollars has been raised for the building, with only 700,000 dollars more needed to cover its total cost.

He recalled the first NAASR chairman and founder, Manoog Young, who worked tirelessly for decades, and his successors Nancy Kolligian

(PHOTO: KEN MARTIN)



Yervant Chekjian

and Raffi Yeghiayan. Chekjian invited his two predecessors to come up to the stage to each receive the NAASR Leadership Award.

Chekjian reminisced about his connection with NAASR. He was a teenager at the banquet where NAASR announced the first chair in Armenian studies at Harvard University in 1959. He said he was even prouder of the new generation of Armenians, many of whom were in the audience that night. After ticking off all of the technological advantages of the new NAASR building, he said the building is only a platform for people to come together and continue NAASR’s mission, to study collaborate write and explore the Armenian heritage, in a new era. “I know the future looks bright. I know we are guaranteeing that the future is secure,” he confidently said.

## The Transformative Power of Education—And Music!

Chekjian then called on Sarah Ignatius to address the audience. She said that she had meant to retire but instead found a much better calling as NAASR’s executive director. She reported that NAASR ran an essay contest for undergraduates on the transformative power of education. That is the principle at the core of NAASR’s mission, she said, and of Vartan Gregorian’s life. The students wrote about professors or teachers who had a meaningful impact on their lives. There were two first-place winners, who had to fly in specially to speak at the banquet: Lillian Avedian, a University of California Berkeley senior who at present is studying in Santiago, Chile, and Gurgun Tadevosyan, a senior at New York University (NYU) who flew in from Abu Dhabi.

(PHOTO: KEN MARTIN)



Sarah Ignatius

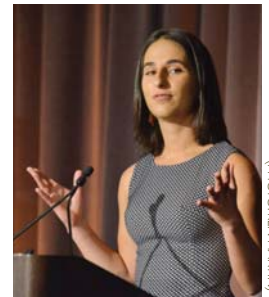
Avedian praised her professor, Myrna Douzjian, and said that in her hands, Armenian literature is young, dynamic, free and ultimately, personal. Avedian said she grew up feeling stifled by Armenian culture, uncomfortable as a woman due to various constraints. She thought there was something inherently wrong with her-



Nancy Kolligian and Raffi Yeghiayan

self, and left the Armenian community.

Yet she felt something missing in her life, so she took a chance on the Armenian language class offered by Douzjian. Douzjian showed that feminism was not incompatible with Armenian culture, and allowed Avedian to engage with radical, daring Armenian poets and feel that she could embody their power. Now Avedian said, she writes constantly in Armenian periodicals and asserts her own voice, while embracing her heritage fully, thanks to the “role model of courage, intellect and power” provided by Douzjian.



(PHOTO: KEN MARTIN)

Lillian Avedian

Gurgun Tadevosyan, originally from Yerevan, spoke in a combination of awe and admiration of his professor, Nancy Rosenblum, at NYU, who is often called a superstar of political theory. He realized in her class that he wanted to teach politics in Armenia, giving his students tools to explain the values of freedom, introduce them to American ways of thinking about politics, why I should love freedom, why I should fight for it. Rosenblum helped Tadevosyan realize he can use his identity to connect Armenians to western political thought.



(PHOTO: KEN MARTIN)

Gurgun Tadevosyan

Between the talks, opera singer Isabel Bayrakdarian, soprano, gave a wonderful performance of works by Gomidas and Sayat Nova which contributed to the uplifting and celebratory at-

mosphere of the evening. Bayrakdarian was accompanied by the Borromeo String Quartet (Nicholas Kitchen, violin; Kristopher Tong, violin; Mai Motobuchi, viola; and Yeesun Kim, cello, <http://www.borromeoquartet.org/>), which is in residence at the New England Conservatory.

### Philanthropists and Educators

Ignatius introduced clarinetist and investor Edward Avedisian, who laid the foundations, quite literally, of the NAASR building as a result of his generous philanthropy, and gave him as a memento a framed picture of the building. Avedisian said that in the building, “I see a nucleus of much more to come.”

Avedisian had insisted that the building be named after Vartan Gregorian, and now had the opportunity to show the assembled audience what Gregorian did to inspire this. Avedisian began by



Edward Avedisian

pointing out the roles played by the two most important women in Gregorian’s life. Grandmother Voski taught Gregorian life lessons: most importantly, that one’s integrity is not for sale.

For example, while president at Brown University, Gregorian was offered the presidency of Columbia University. Though he wanted to take it, he had to refuse in order to keep the promise he made to raise the former’s endowment to over one billion dollars, which he went on to accomplish. His word was always his bond, Avedisian said.

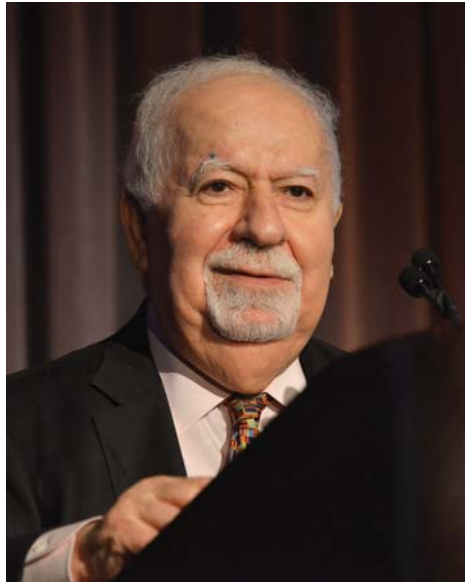
Gregorian’s wife, Clare Russell, challenged him to accomplish more in life even after every great achievement, and consequently, over the many decades of their marriage, shared in all his many successes. From an old Yankee family, she became an ABC (Armenian By Choice), learning to speak, read and write Armenian.

Beyond their influence, Avedisian said, there was also that of the two lions at the entrance of the New York Public Library in Manhattan (Gregorian served as its president for eight years), named Passion and Fortitude.

Avedisian related an interesting anecdote about Gregorian, who kept the honor of the Armenians high on various occasions. Franz Werfel, who did so much for the Armenian cause by writing the novel *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*, was not really recognized for these efforts by the Armenians. Gregorian took it upon himself to correct that, by having Werfel’s body exhumed from its grave in Los Angeles and reburied in Vienna alongside many other Austrian luminaries.

An additional twist to the story is that Werfel was a non-practicing Jew who embraced Catholicism without formally converting, so special arrangements had to be made for prayers. The Armenian archbishop in Vienna agreed to do it,

(PHOTO: KEN MARTIN)



Vartan Gregorian

but needed a deacon. As it happened, Gregorian learned by heart the entire liturgy as a child, so he ended up carrying out the deacon’s role.

The cofounding of the Aurora Prize as an act of gratitude symbolically to those who saved Armenian lives during the Genocide sprang no doubt from the same wellspring as the Werfel story.

Gregorian took the stage and responded by noting that Avedisian, “a stubborn philanthropist,” did not mention how he was a great challenge to Gregorian. The latter rejected all attempts at naming the NAASR building after himself, but Avedisian would not give up. Eventually Gregorian’s staff tipped the balance, calling Gregorian selfish to deny the donor his wish.

Gregorian agreed, but with one condition, that

(PHOTO: KEN MARTIN)



Isabel Bayrakdarian

Avedisian’s name would appear on the building. “Guess what!” Gregorian exclaimed. “His name does not appear on the building...at least not yet.”

Gregorian thanked all those associated with NAASR for the honor, and confessed that in the beginning, he did not believe the Armenians could create such an organization. He congratulated Manoog Young, posthumously, for his vision and accomplishments.

Gregorian extolled the values of Armenian culture, which even celebrates two saints for their role in the creation of the Armenian alphabet. He said, “Being Armenian means that you are original.”

He spoke of regional, religious and political divisions among Armenians, but concluded that when the Ottoman Turks tried to annihilate the Armenians, they did not see them as Protestant, Catholic or Apostolic Armenians. Instead, he said, “Today we have a nation, independent Armenia, and we have to get used to it. For the first time — I have lived long enough now to say this, I have seen unity among Armenians which I have never seen.” NAASR with its new building, he said, is a manifestation of the unity of Armenian efforts.

Gregorian recently visited Armenia, and said he was very heartened. He saw that the Armenian youth were eager to learn (among other places, he visited the Avedisian School, where all expenses are paid for students in one of the poorest places in Armenia). He saw that Carolyn Mugar has planted 6 million trees in Armenia over 25 years through the Armenian Tree Project. He saw his partners Ruben Vardanyan and his wife Veronika and Noubar and Anna Afeyan, who “have provided an infrastructure for Armenia’s reconstruction.” They have helped, he said, to gather forces to make Armenia a center for tourism, banking, industry and education.

He said, “My hope is that as we do the Aurora Prize, another thing which Ruben and Noubar started and I joined, we recognize that the time has come for us as Armenians in America to pay back what America did for us.” Americans of all faiths contributed to one of the largest humanitarian aid commitments, of over 100 million dollars, in the World War I period and its aftermath. Americans also helped Armenians stranded in the wake of World War II during the beginnings of the Cold War.

Now he said, it is time for Armenians to invest in those who are not doing well around the world, and that is what the Aurora Prize does. In this way, he said, Armenians would act as leaders and not as followers. He said, “We were there when nobody spoke. Now, we speak when nobody speaks.” He asked that Armenians support the Ararat Challenge fundraiser.

Gregorian concluded, “It gives great pride to me to be associated with NAASR’s building and NAASR’s mission because having a library means we are here to stay. We are here to contribute as equals. We are not here as recipients. We are also contributors. ... God bless all the heroes of Armenia who have fought for this...God bless all of you and God bless Armenia.”



# NAASR Holds 66th Annual Assembly of Members Online

Originally scheduled as an in-person event in May 2020, NAASR's 66th Annual Assembly of Members had to be postponed due to the pandemic and was successfully held as NAASR's first virtual assembly on October 3 as an online Zoom meeting. Short of the traditional luncheon, all of the usual necessary components of the assembly were present; and in addition, the participation of members around the U.S. as well as overseas was facilitated by the online format.

After calling the meeting to order, Chairman Yervant Chekijian declared a quorum was virtually present and requested a moment of silence in memory of the Armenian victims of the unprovoked attacks by Azerbaijan and Turkey beginning on September 27. Chairman Chekijian then proceeded to give his report.

The Chairman's report included enthusiastic comments on the trailblazing opening of NAASR's new Vartan Gregorian building on November 1, 2019. He thanked the architects and contractors who worked long and hard on the project and stated that there is only \$200,000 left to raise on the \$7.2m project. Chekijian recognized and thanked the NAASR staff, board members, and volunteers for their dedication, as well as the membership for providing their support to advancing Armenian Studies.

Chairman Chekijian especially emphasized the introduction of regular online events which, despite the challenges involved, has led to the further expansion of NAASR's programming and audiences. Zoom and YouTube have proven to be a game changer, and to that point 15 online programs on diverse topics had taken place since April 2020. These events have been enhanced by NAASR's collaborations with many groups and entities including but not limited to Society for Armenian Studies, St. Leon Armenian Church, Ararat-Eskijian Museum, Promise Armenian Institute at UCLA, Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State, Columbia University Armenian Center, Gulbenkian Chair in Armenian Studies at Oxford, Armenian Centre (London), Research on Armenian Architecture (RAA), Harvard University, Tufts University, Project SAVE Armenian Photograph Archives, Zoravik, AGBU, and more.

Finally, Chekijian noted that membership in the NAASR Leadership Circle has been an important income source, helping make possible much of the growth of the organization, and that the Leadership Circle must continue to grow to allow NAASR to continue its expansion.

In place of the usual lecture, this year's assembly featured a discussion under the title "Dynamism Worldwide in Armenian Studies Today" featuring Dr. Bedross Der Matossian and Dr. Valentina Calzolari with NAASR Director of Academic Affairs Marc Mamigonian as moderator. Dr. Der Matossian is a NAASR board member and a faculty member of the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. He is president of the Society of Armenian Studies (SAS). Dr. Calzolari is a faculty member in Armenian Studies at the University of Geneva and the president of the Association Internationale des Études Arméniennes (AIEA). Both are members of the NAASR Academic Advisory Committee.

Dr. Calzolari traced the development of Armenian Studies over the last 25 years at the University of Geneva and its influence in Europe. She highlighted the advancement of the curriculum and expansion of disciplines. She also reviewed the evolution of student interest in Armenian Studies by offering Armenian classes to students from several academic backgrounds.

It can be as important as a student in specialized Armenian Studies. This interdisciplinary approach has significantly affected Armenian Studies. The number of publications and conferences continues to increase in Europe. In her role as president of the AIEA, the relationship has grown with Armenia and its academic community.

Dr. Der Matossian focused on the development of the SAS as an organization. It was founded in 1974 to bring scholars together to support Armenian Studies as an academic discipline. The core mission is to promote an interdisciplinary approach to Armenian Studies, raise the level of academic scholarship and support graduate students. Cooperation and collaborations are critical to overall success. They have initiated a podcast series in multiple languages by graduate students. Grants are offered to graduate students and are supported by collaborative relationships with Armenian Studies chairs, centers, and entities such as NAASR. Membership is increasing globally, and the SAS has also increased their book publications, while the *Journal of the Society of Armenian Studies* will be published by Brill, an association that increases the prestige of the journal.

A brief discussion took place on the role of scholars with the Artsakh conflict. Engagement, the scholars emphasized, does not compromise scholarly integrity but rather can enhance it. Much of the discussion looked at the biggest challenge facing Armenian Studies, namely funding, which impacts grants, research, and employment.

Following the panel, the assembly's business session and voting took place. Chairman Chekijian recognized with gratitude 25, 50, 60, and 65-year members. All deserve recognition for their devotion to NAASR and its goals.

25 years (since 1995): Marita and Sarkis Nazarian, David Toomey; 50 years (since 1970): Cristina and Raymond Ajemian, Dr. Lucy Der Manu-

eliam, Edna Hovagimian, Dr. Aram S. Karakashian; 60 years (since 1960): Arthur P. Alexander, Dr. Joyce and Dr. Paul Barsam, Nancy Kasarjian, Anna Medzorian, Gladys Medzorian, Alma Sahagian, Raffi Yeghiayan; 65 years (since 1955): Barbara Bousian, Sahag Dakessian, Virginia Deranian, Dr. Ara Dostourian, Lillian Etmekjian, Dr. Jeannette Hovsepian Frenster, Dr. Barbara Merguerian, Edward Minasian, Drs. Mary and Dennis Papazian, Audrey Pilibosian, Joseph Topjian.

Finally, Chekijian acknowledged

the passing of dedicated Board and Executive Committee member Jack Medzorian. He announced that Margaret Mgrublian of Pasadena, CA, had previously been elected to complete Jack Medzorian's term.

Whereas in previous years Board elections took place with physically present filling out ballots, Nominating Committee chair Nancy Kolligian pointed out that each assembly registrant would receive a ballot via email. The candidates for each region were announced and there were no nominations from the floor.

After the assembly, the votes were tabulated with the following re-elected to three-year terms Ara Araz (Franklin Lakes, NJ), Michael Bobelian (Cold Spring Harbor, NY), Yervant Chekijian (Watertown, MA), Roxanne Etmekjian (West Newton, MA), Dr. Gregory Ketabgian (La Canada, CA), Stephen Kurkjian (Manomet, MA), Dr. Jesse Matossian (Woodland Hills, CA), Dr. Armineh Mirzabegian (Wellesley, MA), and Judith Saryan (Cambridge, MA).

Following the election, the assembly heard reports from Treasurer Judith Saryan who gave details on the organization's finances, Executive Director Sarah Ignatius, and Director of Academic Affairs Marc Mamigonian.

The final portion of the assembly included a report by the Constitution and Rules Committee, represented by Roxanne Etmekjian and Ara Araz. The committee had the initial task, in the months before the rescheduled assembly, to determine whether an electronic meeting violated our constitution. The result was that it did not. The second and larger task was to create a new and updated set of bylaws. The Committee is well under way on this effort. Any changes would require the approval of the Board and membership.



In 2020 the Annual Assembly was online only, but we hope to welcome our members to the Vartan Gregorian Building for next year's Assembly.

# SMMA Wins Engineering Excellence Award for NAASR Vartan Gregorian Building

The American Council of Engineering Companies of Massachusetts (ACEC/MA) has named SMMA as a winner of their 2020 Bronze Engineering Excellence Award for their work on the National Association for Armenian Studies & Research (NAASR) Vartan Gregorian Building in Belmont, MA.

The 2020 Engineering Excellence Awards were recently announced and will be celebrated at the 2021 ACEC/MA Engineering Excellence and Awards Gala. The awards celebrate innovation, ingenuity, and excellence in engineering achievement.

The new NAASR Vartan Gregorian Building protects its renowned library of ancient and rare texts to preserve culture. Driven by the domestic and foreign challenges facing Armenians from the Diaspora, the project's goal is to establish a cultural hub of global activity to pass down to future generations. The 15,000 sq. ft. headquarters incorporates specialized engineering systems to ensure the safety of its most precious archives, with an aesthetic that encourages observation and learning, and inspiring imagination. SMMA extensively studied Armenian architecture and craft for the new headquarters, incorporating cultural elements such as a large wooden door, hand-carved in the homeland by a master craftsman, and precast panels enriched with authentic Armenian designs.

Since 1955, SMMA has balanced architecture, engineering, interiors, and site design to afford clients the agility of a single source of creative



and technical expertise. They are an employee-owned firm with locations in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Providence, Rhode Island.

"The Engineering Excellence Awards program recognizes engineering firms for projects that demonstrate a high degree of achievement, value and ingenuity," said Jenn Howe, President of the

American Council of Engineering Companies of Massachusetts and Principal and Vice President at SMMA, Symmes Maini & McKee Associates. "Entrants are rated by an independent panel of judges from the architectural community, the construction industry, academia, the media, and the public sector on the basis of uniqueness and originality; future value to the profession and perception by the public; social, economic and sustainable development considerations; complexity; and successful fulfillment of the client/owner's need, including schedule and budget. We congratulate them and thank them for their contributions to improving the quality of our everyday lives."

(Source: <https://www.apnnews.com/acec-ma-announces-smma-as-2020-winner-of-bronze-engineering-excellence-award-for-their-work-on-the-naasr-vartan-gregorian-armenian-center/>)



Panorama of the Shahinian Solarium at NAASR

## NAASR Raises Over \$314,000 for Armenia Fund

The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) has raised \$314,625 for the Armenia Fund to address the overwhelming need for humanitarian and educational relief in Artsakh and Armenia arising from the devastation of the all-out war launched against Artsakh on September 27, 2020. NAASR reached this total through a generous matching campaign from the NAASR Board of Directors.

"NAASR Board members responded im-



mediately to the urgent humanitarian crisis and pledged generously," said Yervant Chekijian, Chairman of NAASR's Board of Directors, "The Board's commitment meant people

could double the impact of their donations." The funds are designated for educational humanitarian relief in line with NAASR's educational mission.

The community response to the matching campaign was overwhelming. "We are extremely grateful to the many people who responded right away with very generous donations," said Judith Saryan, NAASR Treasurer. The campaign ran through November 20, 2020.



# NAASR's Front Door:



*Created  
by Master  
Craftsman  
Mels  
Yeghiazaryan*

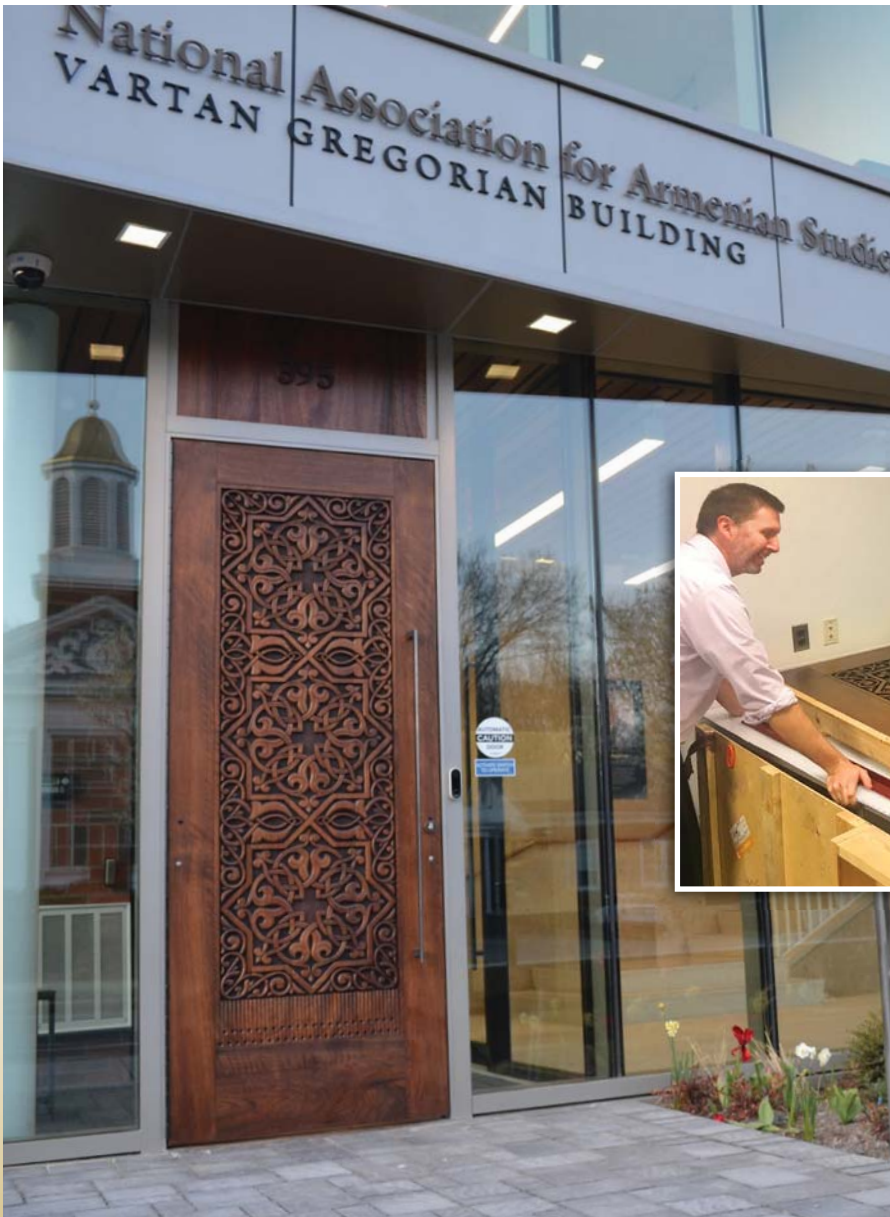
**I**T IS ONE of the first things you see when approaching NAASR's new Vartan Gregorian Building, and it is striking.

Hand carved in high relief, in dark walnut from Yeghegnadzor, Armenia, and standing just over 8 feet in height, NAASR's exterior front door features artist Mels Yeghiazaryan's interpretations of traditional Armenian decorative motifs in meticulous detail. This stunning work of art, gift of K. George and Carolann S. Najarian, MD, invites one to open the door to learning and community.

Mels Yeghiazaryan explains that the ornamentation and designs incorporated in NAASR's front door are derived from biological and geometrical elements that have inspired the development and blossoming of the old Armenian miniature art that reached its peak in the 13th and 14th centuries. The centerpiece is comprised of three central modules that are stylized, intertwine with and embellish the equilateral cross (origins of the cross are from 6th century) in the middle. The symbolism behind the cross is to enlighten and reinforce the wisdom and power of the mind and spirit over the material world. During the 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries the regions in Armenia that produced the most amount of miniature art were Vaspurakan region's Vostan village, towns of Archel, Artske and Berkri, as well as Artsakh-Utik regions.

Mels Yeghiazaryan, the master craftsman who carved the stunning front door of NAASR's new Vartan Gregorian Building, is a vital link in the chain of Armenian master woodcarvers, venturing into new stylistic territory while preserving the traditional techniques of his craft. His innovative approach has kept him artistically relevant at home and abroad for over fifty years.

Mels' carvings range from traditional Armenian khachkars to ornate wooden gates, mirrors and cabinets. He served as head designer for various public art projects in Armenia, including the interior of Posi Theater in Yerevan, the Writers Union Building in Tsaghkadzor, and the gates of the newly built Central Church of Armavir. His works have been gifted to visiting foreign dignitaries by Armenian presidents. The La Scala Theater in Milan and the National Opera House of Armenia each house one of his pieces.



The door prior to installation, viewed with amazement by SMMA architect Michael Pardek, Sarah Ignatius, Yervant Chekijian, and SMMA President Ara Krafian

He worked as the head designer for Enkeboll Designs for nearly a decade, a Los Angeles-based firm specializing in custom architectural woodcarving, where his designs continue to be reproduced.

Mels Yeghiazaryan currently resides in Armavir, Armenia, and offers apprenticeships in woodcarving and traditional Armenian calligraphy.



# The Eternity Sculpture: Created and Donated by Acclaimed Artist Michael Aram



Have you wondered about the meaning of the exquisite Eternity sculpture created by acclaimed artist Michael Aram and featured in the Eternity Garden in front of NAASR's new building? Cast and fabricated in bronze, this site-specific 7 foot by 7 foot sculpture was a gift of the artist on the occasion of the opening of the NAASR Vartan Gregorian Building in November 2019.

The Eternity sculpture is Michael Aram's interpretation of a traditional Armenian symbol of eternity as manifested in ancient Armenian architecture, sculpture, and manuscripts. The "Arevkhatch" or "solar cross" has been prevalent in Armenian culture since medieval times, and represents the concept of everlasting celestial life. The symbol is closely associated with Christian ideals of eternal life and salvation. Individual elements in the sculpture have various ancient symbolism which are favored by the artist.

Peacocks are early Christian symbols of immortality and resurrection as it was believed that their flesh did not decompose. As corner details, they also reference illustrated manuscripts. Intertwining vines form figure-eight shapes which are symbolic of the idea of the cycle of life, death, and regeneration while evergreen laurel leaves symbolize peace, victory, and eternity. The central flower is Aram's interpretation of the Armenian wheel of eternity, which symbolizes the progressive movement of life, well-being, and divine light.



Michael Aram at the NAASR Grand Opening



# In 2020, All Eyes on Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh)

Beginning in the summer of 2020 with the July flare-up along the Armenia-Azerbaijan border, and intensifying with the attack launched by Azerbaijan against Artsakh on September 27, NAASR made necessary shifts in its programming to organize and collaborate on numerous timely and informative online webinar events focusing on developments in Armenia and Artsakh, as well as their historical context. Most of these programs were held within the framework of the NAASR/Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues.

“Armenia Report: Flare-up on the Armenia-Azerbaijan Border,” on July 23, 2020, took place only days after the largest-scale fighting since 2016 had broken out, and featured panelists Dr. Antranig Kasbarian of the Foundation, Arsen Kharatyan of AliQ Media, Maria Titizian of EVN Report, and was moderated by Prof. Anna Ohanian of Stonehill College. (See accompanying



Armenian volunteer fighters in Artsakh (photo by Aris Messinis [AFP]; source, rferl.org)

article, “Scholars, Journalists Focus on Armenia-Azerbaijan Clashes During NAASR Panel,” by Lillian Avedian.)

A subsequent program organized by the Society for Armenian Studies and co-sponsored by the NAASR/Gulbenkian Series, “Transition Tremors: Armenia Two Years After the Velvet Revolution,” on August 22, of necessity had to take into consideration the recent outbreak of fighting.

The all-out war that began on September 27 and lasting for 6 weeks demanded the attention of the worldwide Armenian community and many more. NAASR collaborated with Zoravik Activist Collective for “The Karabakh War: History, Context, Implications,” with Prof. Anna Ohanian and Prof. Stephan Astourian of UC Berkeley on Wednesday, October 7. (Zoravik continued to organize extremely valuable regular updates by Prof. Astourian throughout the war and its immediate aftermath.)

NAASR joined with the Harvard Law School Armenian Students Association and the Harvard Armenian Students Association to present “Crisis in the Caucasus: Nagorno-Karabakh Under Siege,” on October 12, with the participation of Prof. Astourian, Amb. John Evans, and David Phillips of the Peace-Building and Human Rights Program at Columbia University, and with UCLA’s

Richard Hovannisian Endowed Chair in Modern Armenian History, UCLA Promise Institute for Human Rights, UCLA Luskin Center for History and Policy, UCLA Center for Near Eastern Studies, and the Society for Armenian Studies for the one-day conference “Nagorno Karabakh/Artsakh

co-sponsored by the Tufts University Dadian-Oztemel Professor of Armenian Art & Architecture, the Society for Armenian Studies, and NAASR.

Following the end of fighting on November 10, NAASR with the co-sponsorship of the Society for Armenian Studies organized “Artsakh



Participants in “Conflict, Displacement and COVID-19” on Dec. 3, 2020

and the Palimpsests of Conflict, Violence, and Memory,” organized by Prof. Sebouh Aslanian, and held on October 31.

The focus turned to “Nagorno-Karabakh/Artsakh in the Media: Perspectives from Around the Globe” on November 10, with scholars Dr. Maria Armoudian, Prof. Stephan Astourian, Ayda Er-

(Nagorno-Karabakh): The Ceasefire and What Comes Next” on November 22, with Dr. Antranig Kasbarian, Prof. Anna Ohanian, and Robert Avetisyan, the Permanent Representative of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic to the United States.

The program “Conflict, Displacement and COVID-19” on December 3 looked at the impact

of the coronavirus pandemic on regions affected by war, conflict, and displacement in the Middle East, Africa, and the South Caucasus. This unique event was organized by the Armenian Center at Columbia University with the co-sponsorship of the Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons, The Programs in Global Health, Columbia University Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies (MESAAS), the Institute for the Study of Human Rights (ISHR), and the NAASR / Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues. Finally, Dr. Ara Sanjian’s December 10 lecture “The Armenian Church in Nagorno Karabakh/Artsakh in Modern Times,” held jointly by



The medieval monastery Dadivank, now under the control of Azerbaijan (source, raa-am.com)

NAASR and the Armenian Center at Columbia University, looked at this important institution over the course of the past century. The war and its repercussions have deeply affected all of us, and its profound impact and its lessons will be the subject of discussions for a long time. NAASR will continue to strive to provide informative and academically solid programming to inform and educate our audiences.

NAASR and the Armenian Center at Columbia University, looked at this important institution over the course of the past century.

The war and its repercussions have deeply affected all of us, and its profound impact and its lessons will be the subject of discussions for a long time. NAASR will continue to strive to provide informative and academically solid programming to inform and educate our audiences.



# Scholars, Journalists Focus on Armenia-Azerbaijan Clashes During NAASR Panel

By Lillian Avedian

Much has already been said and written about the increasing tensions along Armenia's international border with Azerbaijan since deadly assaults on the region of Tavush began just over two weeks ago. In an attempt to lend to the discourse surrounding the regional implications of the deadly flare-up, the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues hosted an online forum to examine the motivating factors behind the escalation of aggression, the significance of democratization in Armenia, domestic and global media coverage of the events, and the geopolitical roles played by Turkey and Russia.

The July 23, 2020, discussion was moderated by Anna Ohanyan, Richard B. Finnegan Distinguished Professor of Political Science and International Relations at Stonehill College. Panelists included former *Armenian Weekly* editor Antranig Kasbarian (Director of Development at Tufenkian Foundation), Arsen Kharatyan (Founder and Editor-in-Chief at AliQ Media) and Maria Titizian (Editor-in-Chief of EVN Report).

The panelists agreed that the recent attacks represent both a continuation and departure from past practice on behalf of Azerbaijan, noting the novelty of the incursion into internationally recognized territory of Armenia.

"More than ever, in all countries, wars are being fought simultaneously for domestic consumption and for international gain," stated Kasbarian, referring to the Aliyev administration's interests in diverting attention from domestic strife and the increasing promotion of anti-Armenian racism and hate speech.

In the immediate aftermath of the assault that was instigated by Azeri forces, mass pro-war demonstrations broke out in Baku, which Kharatyan believes were orchestrated by the state to turn the attention of the public to the conflict, a strategy that backfired when people took advantage of the temporary easing of pandemic restrictions on free assembly and free speech to assert their discontent with the Aliyev regime and demand domestic changes.

"That reflected the general environment in Azerbaijan, and that is not prioritizing Karabakh as much as it is prioritizing their own freedoms, prioritizing their problems with democracy, the kleptocratic regime that Aliyev has there and the fatigue of not bringing about a change," argued Kharatyan.

The panelists agreed about the significance of democratization for Armenia's national security, yet disagreed about its exact function.

Kharatyan stated that while Armenia does not have a lot of oil and gas to export, it could effectively export its Velvet Revolution. "This is not just a territorial or ethnic war. This is a war against democracy. This is a war against human rights," he said. "This is a war against our aspiration to build a strong democratic country, which some countries in the neighborhood do not like, because if we are successful, that means the same thing can happen in their own case."

Yet Kasbarian warned about the quixotism of going too far with this line of thinking. "It sounds nice rhetorically, but it worries me in practice," he contended. "I don't know how our large neighbor to the north would take to an Armenia with ambitions of exporting its democratic revolution elsewhere," said Kasbarian, referring to Russian influence.

Nonetheless, the panelists recognized the multitudinous benefits of promoting democracy in all domestic realms, including supporting the media,

human rights groups, local non-governmental organizations and civil society groups at large.

"Deepening Armenia's democracy, consolidating it, has an enormous strategic value for the country, particularly in regard to addressing the conflict," Ohanyan stressed.

Titizian, who has been leading EVN Report's relentless coverage of the ongoing developments to the minute, attested to the necessity of investing in the media in Armenia by elevating the quality of journalism, particularly in terms of conflict-sensitive reporting. "Not always believing what the Defense Ministry says... does not make you a traitor. It makes you an honest journalist," she upheld. "When you try to do that, you are framed as a traitor to the nation. When you say, 'escalation of clashes,' well, no, you need to be hung out in Republic Square, because you have to say 'attacked by the enemy.'"

Titizian partially attributed the international media's incomplete and uninformed coverage of the recent flare-up to the failure of Armenian news outlets to develop good relations with global media outlets and "present their side of the story."

All of the panelists agreed that the false equivalence established between Armenia and Azerbaijan by the international media is unacceptable and detrimental to conflict resolution.

"This false parity is a disservice to the peace process," said Titizian. "Because when you're not calling out the aggressor, when you're not calling out the person who instigates the escalation, then you're just compounding the problem even further."

The panelists also deliberated the respective responses by Turkey and Russia to the escalation of aggression by Azerbaijan, contrasting Turkey's immediate declaration of support of Azerbaijan and incendiary rhetoric with Russia's explicit neutrality and backdoor diplomacy.

Ohanyan explained that Russia behaved characteristically as an imperial power in selecting not to

take sides in a conflict among its peripheral states. "I think this signature move really shows how far-sighted Russia as an imperial power is, relative to Turkey, which has narrowed its foreign policy to nationalism and to working purely with the Azerbaijani side," she upheld.

"For Turkey to come out and talk about how they're willing to support, whether militarily or otherwise, is just showing how disingenuous it is to talk about Turkey's possible involvement as a mediator in this process," Kharatyan assented. "I see Turkey as a patron of Azerbaijan that can be viewed as an equal party."

"I sense that Turkey is still in a long process of realigning itself, and it's testing out all directions to see where it can maximally leverage its influence," Kasbarian argued, speaking to the future of the conflict. "I think not only our preparedness, that is the Armenian side's preparedness, but also Russia's preparedness to defend its southern flank, will ultimately be the deciding factor in how far Turkey can go."

All of the panelists agreed that the recent violence indicates the supreme importance of calling for ceasefire monitoring at the border and the line of contact.

The panelists ended the discussion by encouraging viewers to develop a sense of media literacy and rely on dependable sources of information on the conflict, suggesting Civilnet, EVN Report, the *Armenian Weekly* and Hetq as resources to continue to stay engaged.

(*Armenian Weekly*, July 29, 2020)



# NAASR Becomes Visual History Archive Full Access Site

The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) will feature full access to the public of the USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive (VHA) of over 54,000 testimonies. One of the world's leading Armenian Studies centers, NAASR advances education and scholarship through supporting and connecting scholars globally and providing outstanding programming to the general public. NAASR plans to conduct outreach with schools, colleges, libraries, and other institutions in order to spread awareness about the availability of the VHA at NAASR's headquarters.

A designated room in NAASR's brand new headquarters—NAASR's Vartan Gregorian Building in Belmont, Massachusetts—will have access to all of the testimonies in USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive. These testimonies are from survivors and witnesses to the Holocaust, the Armenian Genocide, the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, the Nanjing Massacre, Guatemalan Genocide, Anti-Rohingya Mass Violence, and Cambodian Genocide, along with testimonies of survivors of the South Sudan Civil War and Central African Republic Conflict.

"As the collections in VHA continue to grow, especially with its current collection of more than 1,000 testimonies by Richard G. Hovannisian, it is imperative that new avenues in scholarship and education make use of these rich and previously unused resources," said Stephen D.



Stephen Smith and Richard Hovannisian (from sfi.usc.edu)

Smith, PhD, Finci-Viterbi executive director of USC Shoah Foundation and UNESCO chair on genocide education. "NAASR's obtaining access has done just that. Our goal is always to elevate these materials through collaboration."

NAASR created this special space in its new headquarters so researchers, family members of survivors, and the public could view these mov-



ing, eye-witness testimonies, study their historical contexts, and contribute to the goal of preventing future genocides.

"Fortunately, two inspiring donor families came forward to make the room a reality and to provide permanent access to this vast archive with a perpetual subscription through ProQuest," said Sarah Ignatius, Executive Director of NAASR. "We are extremely grateful to them for their vision and their generosity."

"As the family of Armenian Genocide survivor Andranik Vartanian," said Susan Vartanian Barba, who donated the perpetual subscription to the Visual History Archive in honor of Andranik and his wife Nvart, "we are pleased that his testimony and those of other survivors will be accessible in perpetuity, not only to genocide scholars, but to the general public. Access to the Visual History Archive opens the door to researchers, educators, students, and scholars to study a contextualized history through primary source testimony. In addition, future generations of Armenians will be able to connect with their ancestral past through the voices and memories of survivors, deepening their empathy, understanding, and respect for humanity."

On behalf of the Ajemian family, Lucille Ajemian donated the archive viewing room in

memory of her mother Helen Paloian, her husband Gerald Ajemian, and her son John Gerald Ajemian.

"My mother was a genocide survivor who immigrated to this country as a teenager," said Lucille Ajemian, "my husband was a WWII veteran and a first-generation businessman, and my son, an M.B.A. They had a deep commitment to scholarly research and a thirst for continued learning. It is our hope that this view-

ing room serves as a resource to use the lessons from the past to point towards a better future."

This marks the culmination of more than ten years of conversations and planning at NAASR. In 2009, J. Michael Hagopian, the founder of the Armenian Film Foundation (AFF) as well as



Manoog Young with Michael Hagopian in 2004

NAASR's first West Coast board member in the late 1950s, was working toward having copies of the Armenian Genocide survivor testimonies he had filmed years before digitized and integrated into USC Shoah Foundation's VHA. He expressed his hope to NAASR's leadership that one day there would be a place where this material could be accessed. The idea continued to stay alive in ongoing discussions with the AFF's new leadership, Carla Garapedian and Jerry Papazian. It's also noteworthy that survivor Andranik Vartanian's testimony, whose name is honored by perpetual access, lives in the VHA as part of the AFF's collection.

(Source: sfi.usc.edu)





# Armenian Center at Columbia University and NAASR Strengthen Ties

NAASR has a long history of ties to Armenian Studies at Columbia University, and in 2020 this productive partnership was elevated through a substantial grant from the Armenian Center to NAASR to expand and deepen the highly successful, ongoing relationship that NAASR and the Armenian Center at Columbia University have developed. This collaboration will advance the support, development, and enrichment of Armenian Studies programming at Columbia University.

NAASR has committed to assist the Armenian Center in organizing several programs, lectures, conferences, and other academically focused projects to support Armenian Studies at Columbia University over a three-year period, encompassing the 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23 academic years.


This close relationship dates to 1965 when Nina Garsoian became assistant professor at Columbia, and NAASR's support of the Armenian Studies program began with a contribution of \$30,000, followed by additional support from the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU),




thus allowing the Armenian program to exist on a full-time basis. (See *NAASR Newsletter* 2011-2012, "NAASR and Armenian Studies at Columbia: Then and Now.")




In recent years, NAASR has partnered with the Armenian Center at Columbia University on many lectures and seminars, mainly organized and coordinated by Dr. Khatchig Mouradian of the Department of Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African studies (MESAAS).

To date, the ongoing relationship between NAASR and the Armenian Center has led to high quality excellence in programming, lectures, conferences, and other academically focused projects, which this collaboration will deepen and expand upon. The dynamic programming resulting from this relationship has generated tremendous interest among undergraduates, graduate students, and academics in the University community as well as a variety of people in surrounding communities off campus, and this collaboration will achieve expanded interest to an even larger audience beyond these various groups.



## PLANNING YOUR ESTATE WITH NAASR IN MIND



There are many ways you can help NAASR and its programs to advance Armenian Studies. One of the most significant is to include NAASR in your estate planning.

You can contact Sarah Ignatius at NAASR to discuss possibilities and ask for NAASR's estate planning booklet at 617-489-1610, or e-mail us at [hq@naasr.org](mailto:hq@naasr.org).



# NAASR and the Knights of Vartan Issue Grants in 2019–2020



During the second half of 2019, NAASR and the Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies received the largest ever number of requests and issued the most grants to scholars around the world since the beginning of their partnership in 2007. (In 2019 as a whole, the organizations issued 39 grants combined.) In 2020, particularly from March onwards, the quantity of grant applications has diminished, with, for instance, travel for research and to attend conferences virtually at a halt; needless to say, we expect this to rebound once the pandemic comes under control.

The following recipients received grants during this period (July-December 2019).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Onnik Kiremitlian**, PhD student, Oriental Institute of the Catholic University of Louvain, travel grant to participate in the 18th International Conference on Patristic Studies, Oxford, August 19-23, 2019, presenting paper relating to



Participants of the Armenian-Syriac Workshop, Univ. of Oxford, Aug. 2019. Left to right: Dr. Andy Hilken, Julia Hintlian, Prof. Emilio Bonfiglio, Yervant Kuchukian, and Onnik Kiremitlian

Armenian-Syriac cultural relations, “Newly Discovered Gems from Syriac Literature: Armenian Translations of Syriac Works by Marutha of Tagrit.” Grant issued by Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies.

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

**Dr. Khatchig Mouradian**, lecturer, Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies Department (MESAAS), Columbia University, travel grant for research trip to Paris and Beirut for a project on doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and the Armenian Genocide for conference paper and article. Grant issued by Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies.

**Sona Nersisyan** and **Lusine Tanajyan**, researchers and PhD students, Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of The National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia (NAS RA), travel grant to present joint paper “Diasporic Identity and Cross-Cultural Issues” at 17th International Polish Sociological Congress, September 2019 in Wroclaw, Poland. Grant issued by NAASR.

**Dr. Milena Oganessian**, Research Associate, Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, Smith-

sonian Institution, Washington, D.C., travel grant to conduct research in Los Angeles for publication project on American theater and film director Rouben Mamoulian’s Armenian heritage as it relates to his art. Grant issued by Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies.



Milena Oganessian at the American Film Institute

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

**Dr. Hayk Paronyan**, Associate Professor, Regional Autonomous University of the Andes (UNIANDES), Ecuador, travel grant to participate in Central Eurasian Studies Society 20th Annual Conference, George Washington University, Washington, D.C., Oct. 2019, to present paper “Political Crisis in Armenia in 2018: Reasons and Consequences.” Grant issued by Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies.

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

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

**Dr. Alvard Semirjyan**, Associate Professor, Faculty of Armenian Philology-Chair of Theory of Literature and Literary Criticism, Yerevan



State University, travel grant to participate in Surrealisms 2019 (2nd Conference of the International Society for the Study of Surrealism [ISSS]), University of Exeter, August 2019, to present paper "Surrealism in Contemporary Armenian Art and Literature." Grant issued by NAASR.

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

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

**Sipana Tchakerian**, PhD candidate in archaeology, University of Paris 1–Panthéon Sorbonne, Labex RESMED, and University Aix-Marseille, travel grant to carry out field research in Armenia and Georgia for thesis "Les monuments Crucifères à Stèle Quadrilatère d'Arménie et d'Ibérie Orientale de l'Antiquité Tardive au Haut Moyen-Age." Grant issued by Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies.

The following grants were issued or were approved and are pending disbursement during 2020.

**Dr. Ana Ruiz Gutiérrez**, Associate Professor, Department of Art History, Granada University, Spain, research grant to support work towards publication project on Armenian merchants in Andalusia and their connection with overseas Hispanic territories in the early modern era. Grant issued by NAASR and Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies.

**Dr. Edgar Hovhannisyan**, Dean of the Faculty of History and Jurisprudence of the Armenian State Pedagogical University after Khachatur Abovyan, travel grant to conduct research in Antilias on "The Armenian Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia and its activities in 1920-1930s." Grant issued by NAASR and Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies.

**Dr. Taner Akçam**, Kaloosdian-Mugar Professor of Armenian Genocide Studies, Clark University, grant to support continuation of research project on "Cemal Pasha and His Role in the Armenian Genocide." Grant issued by Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies.

**Maral Aktokmakyan** (translator) and **Nora Lessersohn** (editor), publication grant in support of English translation from Armeno-Turkish of *Akabi Hikâyesi* (The Story of Akabi, 1851). Grant issued by NAASR and Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies.

**Dr. Kate Franklin**, Lecturer in Medieval History, Birkbeck, Univ. of London, grant to support the Open Access publication of *Everyday Cosmopolitanisms: Living the Silk Road in Medieval Armenia* (Univ. of Calif. Press). Grant issued by

NAASR and Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies.

**Aram Ghoogasian**, PhD student in Near Eastern Studies, Princeton University, grant to support doctoral project on the history of Armenian readers in the mid-nineteenth century (the first decades of the *ashkharhapar* periodical press), focusing primarily on newspapers and their networks of circulation around the world. Grant issued by NAASR.

**Dr. Meryem Kalayci**, Director and Co-Founder of the Oxford Network for Armenian Genocide Research, and British Academy Newton International Fellow at the Faculty of History at the University of Oxford and Junior Research Fellowship at Pembroke College Oxford, grant in support of the translation of the book *Dark Times: An Armenian Memoir of the 20th Century* by Harutyun Alboyadjian, and related research trips to Armenia and France. Grant issued by NAASR.

**Dr. Umit Kurt**, The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, Polonsky Academy for Advanced Studies Department, grant to support creation of a detailed index for *The Armenians of Aintab: The Economics of Genocide in an Ottoman Province* (forthcoming Harvard Univ. Press). Grant issued by NAASR and Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies.

**Evangeline McGlynn**, PhD Candidate in Geography, University of California, Berkeley, grant to support work on doctoral thesis "The Destruction of Space: Spitak Earthquake Recovery in Peace and War 1988-2018." Grant issued by NAASR.

**Garine Palandjian**, PhD Candidate, Educational Policy and Evaluation Doctoral Program, Arizona State University, grant to support transcriptions of interviews conducted during fieldwork for thesis, "Rethinking Borders and Identities in Armenian Education." Grant issued by NAASR.

**Dr. Michael Pifer**, Lecturer in Armenian Studies, Department of Middle Eastern Studies, University of Michigan, publication grant in support of his book *Kindred Voices: A Literary History of Medieval Anatolia*, forthcoming from Yale University Press. Grant issued by Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies.

**Dr. Davit Poghosyan**, Khachatur Abovyan Armenian State Pedagogical University, Chair of Museology, Library Studies, Bibliography, grant to support creation of digital textbook *Theoretical Museology [Museum Studies] and Armenian Museological Thought* that will be used by the Armenian State Pedagogical University Scientific Board as an educational handbook. Grant issued by NAASR.

**Emil Sanamyan**, freelance writer and editor, travel grant to present paper "Finding an Organic Narrative: The April War and the Armenian Revolution" at the conference entitled "Nationalist Historiography in Post-Communist South Caucasus," hosted by the Central European University in Budapest, Hungary on February 15-16, 2020. Grant issued by NAASR and Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies.

**Konrad Siekierski**, PhD Research Pro-

gramme in Theology and Religious Studies, King's College London, Department of Theology and Religious Studies, grant to cover costs associated with doctoral fieldwork for "Gospel Books as Home Saints: Between Vernacular Christianity and Armenian National Heritage." Grant issued by NAASR and Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies.

**Dr. Talin Suciyan**, Assoc. Prof., Ludwig Maximilian University, grant to support Russian-language translation of her book *The Armenians in Modern Turkey: Post-genocide Society and Politics* (orig. published in English in 2016). Grant



Talin Suciyan's *The Armenians in Modern Turkey: Post-genocide Society and Politics*, already translated into Turkish, will now be translated into Russian.

issued by NAASR and Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies.

**Dr. Benik Vardanyan** (project director), Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, National Academy of Sciences, Rep. of Armenia, grant to support study of the ancient landscape of Larnakert (Shirak). Grant issued by NAASR and Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies.

**Dr. Tasha Vorderstrasse**, University and Continuing Education Program Coordinator, Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, grant to support publication of Catalog for Oriental Institute Museum Exhibition: *Antoin Sevruguin: Past and Present* (September 2020–March 2021). Grant issued by Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies.

### Grant Deadlines and Academic Committee

All relevant grant proposals are reviewed four times per year (March 15, June 15, September 15, and December 15) by NAASR's Director of Academic Affairs Marc A. Mamigonian and the NAASR Academic Advisory Committee, currently consisting of Prof. Kevork Bardakjian, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; Prof. Valentina Calzolari, University of Geneva; Prof. Michael J. Connolly, Boston College; Prof. Bedross Der Matossian, University of Nebraska; and Prof. Christina Maranci, Tufts University.

Guidelines for potential applicants are available online at <https://naasr.org/pages/grants-academic-outreach>. Questions and inquiries can be directed to Marc Mamigonian at [marc@naasr.org](mailto:marc@naasr.org).

# NAASR Announces 2019 Sona Aronian Armenian Studies Book Prizes

The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) is pleased to announce the winners of the 2019 Dr. Sona Aronian Book Prizes for Excellence in Armenian Studies: Prof. Tamar M. Boyadjian for *The City Lament: Jerusalem Across the Medieval Mediterranean* (Cornell Univ. Press) and Prof. Jennifer M. Dixon for *Dark Pasts: Changing the State's Story in Turkey and Japan* (Cornell Univ. Press); and Prof. Peter Balakian and Aram Arkun for the translation of Krikor Balakian's *The Ruins of Ani* (Rutgers Univ. Press).

NAASR's Aronian Book Prizes were established in 2014 by the late Dr. Aronian and Dr. Geoffrey Gibbs, to be awarded annually to outstanding scholarly works in the English language in the field of Armenian Studies and translations from Armenian into English. The 2019 awards are for books published in 2018.



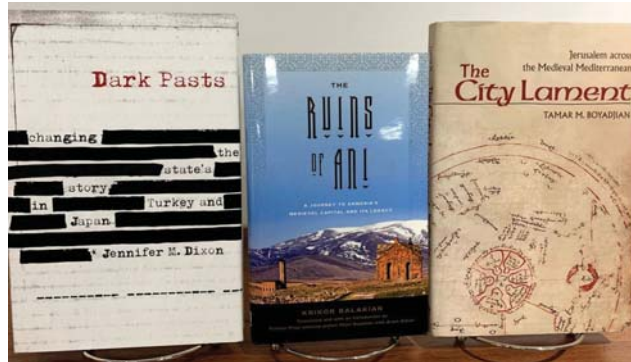
Tamar Boyadjian

Boyadjian, Assistant Professor of Medieval Literature at Michigan State University, and Dixon, Associate Professor of Political Science at Villanova University, were named as co-winners for their monographs, each of which, coincidentally, was published by Cornell University Press.

Dixon's *Dark Pasts* analyzes the trajectories over the past sixty years of Turkey's narrative of the Armenian Genocide and Japan's narrative of the Nanjing Massacre, while Boyadjian's *The City Lament* focuses on elegies and other expressions of loss that address the spiritual and strategic objective of the early Crusades—i.e., Jerusalem—through readings of city laments in the English, French, Latin, Arabic, and Armenian literary traditions.

Via email, Prof. Dixon commented: "I am thrilled and honored to have my book recognized as a co-recipient of the 2019 Dr. Sona Aronian Book Prize for Excellence in Armenian Studies. I am deeply grateful for the recognition of my work by NAASR, and I am happy that, in spite of its comparative nature, my book is being recognized for its contribution to Armenian Studies. I am particularly appreciative of Marc Mamigonian's long interest in and encouragement of my work, and of the feedback, insights, and connections gleaned from NAASR, where I presented an early version of my work and attended academic talks during the three years I was a fellow at the Kennedy School. I benefitted from the interactions and feedback at NAASR, so it is especially gratifying to have my book honored with this award."

Prof. Boyadjian conveyed that she is "deeply honored by the 2019 Dr. Sona Aronian NAASR book prize in excellence in Armenian Studies," and explained that "for over a decade the subject of medieval lamentation has been on my mind. The idea for this book came from the desire to understand how other cultures translated the loss of their land and spaces deemed sacred to them. As someone whose grandparents survived the Armenian Genocide, and who along with my parents were forcefully deported from their homes, I started to examine more closely what it meant in the medieval Mediterranean world to mourn the loss of fallen cities—to lose the place one called 'home.' I came to find that despite differences, many ethno-religious groups reflected on this matter in similar ways in their literary traditions. I am indebted to the continuous support and encouragement of my family, friends,



and colleagues, without whom this book would not be possible."

Balakian, the Donald M. and Constance H. Rebar Professor of the Humanities at Colgate University, and Arkun, Executive Director of the Tekeyan Cultural Association and assistant editor at the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, were recognized for their efforts as editor and translator of *The Ruins of Ani*, which was first published in 1910 in Armenian as *Nkara-grut'iw'n Anii aweraknerun*. *The Ruins of Ani* combines the genres of history, art criticism, and travel memoir in

looking at the medieval Armenian capital of Ani almost on the eve of the Armenian Genocide; more than a century later, the city's history has been falsified in its presentation by the Turkish government as part of its campaign of denial and erasure of Armenian history.



Aram Arkun

book prizes matter because they remind the wider world that artistic and intellectual work matter, that books and works of imagination are the center of any culture's communal life. Without literature, art productions, and scholarship there is no glue to keep a culture cohesive and vital, to keep a culture—a culture." Aram Arkun observed that "NAASR and the Aronian Prize are playing an important role in supporting intellectual work in a period where social media seem to have taken first place in the attention of many in the West and in the Armenian community as well. The extended work of research and writing on Armenian history and culture must continue so that there is a reliable and perpetually renewed foundation for popularized transmission of knowledge."

In announcing the Aronian Awards, NAASR Director of Academic Affairs Marc A. Mamigonian noted that Boyadjian's and Dixon's books, while not focusing solely on Armenian subject matter, "both serve to help extend the parameters of what Armenian Studies can be, and do so in ways that are, I think, consistent with what we might call the best traditions of the field." He added that "it was very much the hope of the late Dr. Aronian that the prize will serve as an encouragement to translators making available works of Armenian literature and scholarship for an English-language readership, and Balakian and Arkun have performed a great service in making Bishop Balakian's work accessible to non-Armenian readers."

Prof. Balakian remarked that "it's an honor to receive the Aronian Prize given by NAASR—

Prof. Balakian remarked that "it's an honor to receive the Aronian Prize given by NAASR—



Peter Balakian



Jennifer Dixon



# Mardigian Library Grows Thanks to Your Donations

In late 2019 and early 2020, NAASR's precious Mardigian Library was returned to us after a year and a half in safe archival storage. Since then, a huge amount of important work has been ongoing in the library, even when we were required to work remotely due to the pandemic. We look forward to the time when we can welcome back researchers and readers.

Library Curator Ani Babaian continues her work cataloguing materials, including recently donated items, and the process of carefully checking each book on each shelf to ascertain if it is in the correct location and is properly catalogued is nearing its completion. As of December 1, 2020, the library holds 31,282 catalogued books and the migration of our list of periodicals into

our general catalogue is under way.

The following donors have contributed items to NAASR's Edward and Helen Mardigian Library from August 1, 2019, through December 1, 2020. Donations to the Mardigian Library from our members and friends have been instrumental in making the library what it is today, and continue to be the most important source for the growth of our holdings.

If you have materials in any language on Armenian and related subjects that you wish to consider donating to NAASR, please contact Director of Academic Affairs Marc A. Mamigonian at [marc@naasr.org](mailto:marc@naasr.org) or 617-489-1610. Due to space limitations we cannot accept all items; we can only take items that we need to expand our collection.



Lexington High School students browsing in the Mardigian Library, February 2020. We can't wait to welcome everyone back to make use of our library.

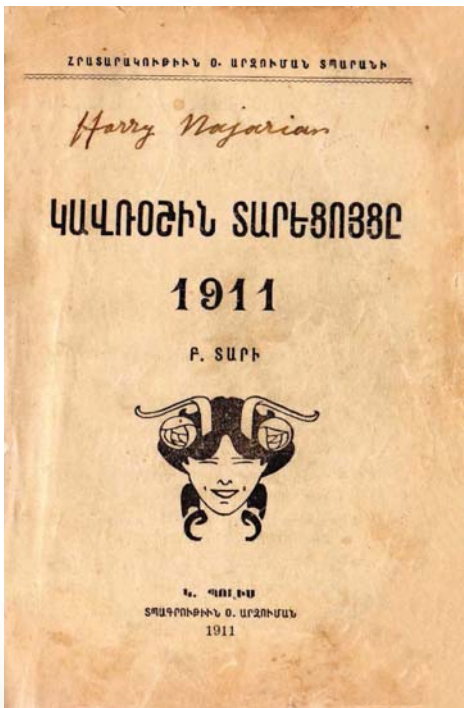
George & Joyce Aghjayan, Westminster, MA  
 Linda Aintablian, Andover, MA  
 Arlene Saryan Alexander, Washington, D.C.  
 Adrienne Alexanian, New York, NY  
 Armenian Cultural Foundation, Arlington, MA  
 Van Aroian, Worcester, MA  
 Archie Arpiarian, Cambridge, MA  
 Karekin & Paula Arzoomanian, New York, NY  
 Ani Babaian, Burlington, MA  
 Mikle Babayan, Yerevan, Armenia  
 Mardiros Balayan, Heliopolis, Egypt  
 Susan V. Barba, New Vernon, NJ  
 Dr. Levon Bastajian, Belmont, MA  
 Michael & Edina Bobelian, Cold Spring Harbor, NY  
 Eric Bogosian, New York, NY  
 Azat Bozoyan, Yerevan, Armenia  
 Catholicosate of Armenia Major & Armenia Minor, Pioneertown, CA  
 Karen Cizek, Glendale, AZ  
 Joseph Dagdigian, Harvard, MA  
 Janet Demirjian, Discovery Bay, CA  
 Dr. Hayk Demoyan, Yerevan, Armenia  
 Virginia Deranian, Shrewsbury, MA  
 Dr. Heratch & Sonya Doumanian, Chicago, IL  
 Dr. Nora Dudwick, Bethesda, MD  
 Stephen & Angele Dulgarian, Chelmsford, MA  
 Roxanne Etmekjian, West Newton, MA  
 Loretta Gelenian, North Chelmsford, MA  
 Dr. Vatche & Barbara Ghazarian, Portsmouth, RI  
 Lisa Giragosian, Durham, NC  
 Katrina & Harry Glorikian, Lexington, MA  
 Dr. Vartan Gregorian, New York, NY  
 Gina Ann Hablanian, Watertown, MA  
 Artoun & Narine Hamalian, River Edge, NJ  
 Sharon Hekimian, Watertown, MA  
 Paul & Sandra Kalemkarian, Arcadia, CA

Manya Kapikian, Ayer, MA  
 Lerna Karakutuk, Istanbul, Turkey  
 Karina Khachatorian, North Hollywood, CA  
 Nancy R. Kolligian, Watertown, MA  
 Arpine Konyalian Grenier, Los Angeles, CA  
 Ara & Heather Krafian, Belmont, MA  
 Nancy Kricorian, New York, NY  
 Marc A. Mamigonian, Belmont, MA  
 Vaagn Manucharyan, Granada Hills, CA  
 Marlene Markarian, Paxton, MA  
 Dr. Vartan Matiossian, Cliffs Park, NJ  
 Sossy & Megerdich Megerdichian, Watertown, MA  
 Markar Melkonian, Chatsworth, CA  
 Paul Murad, Vienna, VA  
 Dr. Carolann & K. George Najarian, Orleans, MA  
 Linda & Karnig Ostayan, Belmont, MA  
 Harry & Hripsime Parsekian, Watertown, MA  
 Sylvia Parsons, Bethesda, MD  
 Dr. Susan Pattie, London, UK  
 Dr. Rubina Peroomian, Glendale, CA  
 Stepan & Susan Piligian, Westford, MA  
 Ellen Sarkisian Chesnut, Alameda, CA  
 Hagop Sarkissian, Watertown, MA  
 Todd & Jennifer Shaphren, Kirkland, WA  
 Lorne Shirinian, Toronto, ON  
 David Slavitt, Cambridge, MA  
 Gonca Sönmez-Poole, Watertown, MA  
 Joyce & Joe Stein, Indian Wells, CA  
 Vincent Taft, Bloomfield Hills, MI  
 Dr. Hratch Tchilingirian, London, UK  
 Dr. Haig Utidjian, Prague, Czech Republic  
 Zara Yalenezian, Marlborough, MA  
 Laura Yardumian, Malden, MA  
 Sarkis Zerounian, West Newton, MA

# NAASR Begins Digitization of Selected Library Holdings

In 2020, NAASR began digitizing some of its rarest materials in the Mardigian Library with the goal of preserving these priceless resources for generations to come. Starting with NAASR's rare periodicals, digitization will help to preserve and make available some of the richest details of Armenian daily life experiences and political and personal reactions to major historical events and tumultuous times, beginning in the 1800s, as well as literary works and essays not available outside of NAASR's collection. Due to the fragile, brittle condition of these materials, digitization is essential before they crumble and disappear completely.

NAASR extends its gratitude to the trustees



1911 *Kavrōshin Taretsyoys*, published in Constantinople

of the SJS Charitable Trust for its generous support over a two-year period for digitization of NAASR's rare periodicals. This grant will result in digitization of more than 100 rare and fascinating "yearbooks" or *taregirk/darekirk* (Տարեգիրք) and *taretsyoys/daretsyoys* (Տարեցոյց), most dating from the 1800s to the 1920s and comprising tens of thousands of pages, published in Aleppo, Boston, Cairo, Constantinople, Lyon, Paris, Tehran, and elsewhere. NAASR has one of the most complete collections of these "yearbooks" outside of academic universities, where collections are not

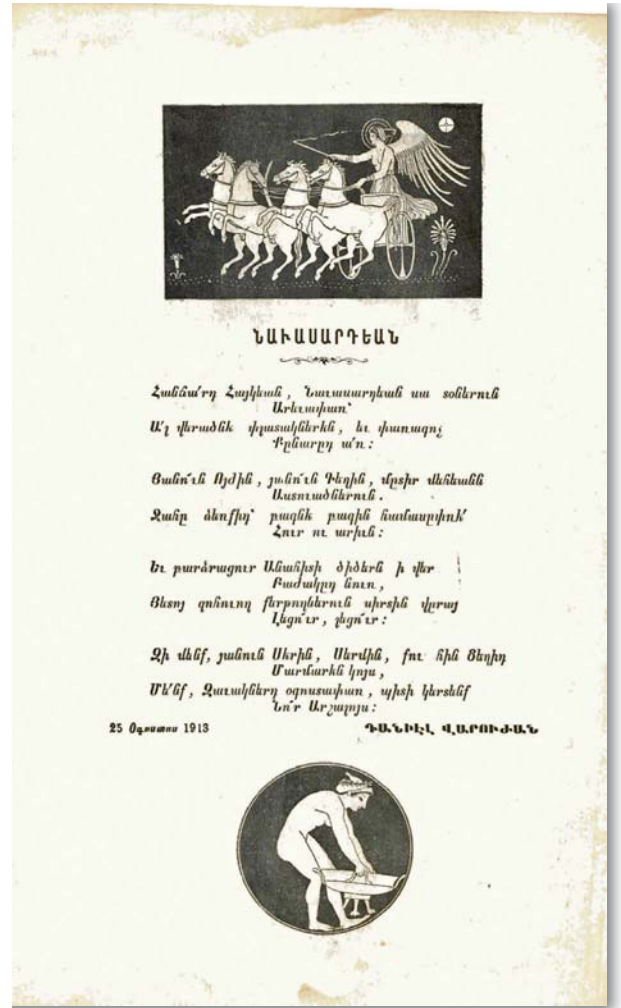
generally available to the public. NAASR selected these as priorities because they are among the highlights of NAASR's collection and hold broad appeal to scholars, researchers in a variety of disciplines, and the general public.

The word "yearbook" does not fully capture their significance in that they are invaluable sources of information on the current affairs of particular communities at the time, notable events or notable people in a given year, and literary writings and paintings not otherwise available anywhere. Some focus on a single topic, like health and medicine, or include a variety of events that happened in the Armenian world that year. They are a treasure trove of reliable information, written to inform Armenians at the time about what was going on in their communities or in literature or art. These yearbooks are invaluable resources for any scholar or member of the public looking into a particular time and place in Armenian history.

Very few of these yearbooks are currently available online, even those published later in the 20th century. For example, Teodik's *Amenun Taretsyoysē* (Everybody's Almanac) was published in Constantinople, Paris, and Venice from 1906 through 1929, and NAASR has a complete set. NAASR also has an extremely rare yearbook *Kamenits*, a yearbook of Armenians in Poland and Romania, published in 1896 in San Lazzaro, Venice, for which no pdf version exists. Due to the richness and rarity of these yearbooks, NAASR is digitizing its entire collection of yearbooks. Digitization will not only preserve these priceless treasures but make them searchable through optical character recognition so that these literary writings, essays, artwork, and information will come to light.

### A Case in Point: *Navasard*

*Navasard* is a volume NAASR digitized in 2020 that reveals the immense breadth, depth, and value of these yearbooks. *Navasard*, named for the first month in the ancient Armenian calendar, starting on 11 August, and a time of social gatherings, festivals and celebrations, was a yearbook of literary and fine arts, considered



Poem by Daniel Varoujan, "Nawasardean," from *Navasard*

quite modern or avant-garde at the time, published in Constantinople in 1914 by the O. Arzuman Printing House. The editors were Daniel Varoujan (1884-1915) and Hagop Siruni (1890-1973). It contains three parts across 342 pages:

1. Literature. This part includes poems, essays and a play, from 27 poets and 23 writers of prose, including: Tlgadintsi (1860-1915), Vahan Tekeyan (1878-1945), Constant Zarian (1885-1969), Rouben Zardarian (1874-1915), Siamanto (1878-1915), Ervand Odian (1869-1926), and others. In addition, twelve of the authors are female, including Sibil (Zabel Asadour) (1863-1934), Vittoria Aganoor (1855-1910), Anayis (1872-1950), Haykanush Mark (1880-1966), Zabel Yesayan (1878-1943), Shushanik Kurghinian (1876-1927), and others. This part also contains translations into Armenian of works





Portrait of "Bitlistsi Mike," from 1925 *Meghu Shnorhali* ("Bee Gracious") *Zuartapatum Taretsoytsë* (Satirical Yearbook), published in Boston by Hairenik Press

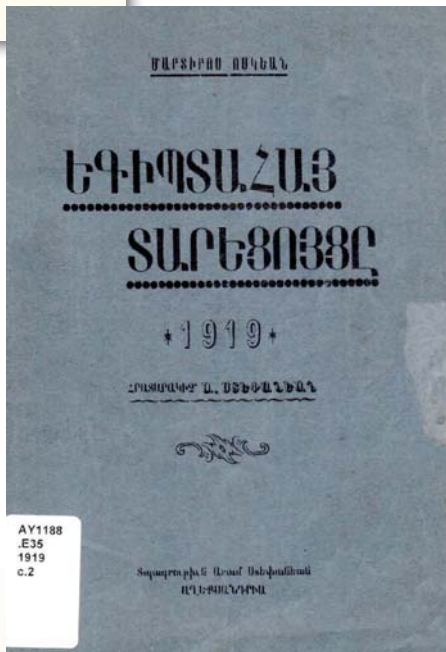
by Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949), Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), and Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1855).

2. Literary Criticism. This part has articles, books of the year, literature, and art of the year, including four articles about literature: "Toward the Source of Light" (about poetry) by Hagop Siruni; "Love Songs of the Medieval Era" by Hovhannes Gazanchian (1870-1915); "Folklore-Antuni" by Hakob Guyumchian (1904-1961); and "Art" by Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), translated by S. H. Galionchian. The section on "Books of the Year" introduces seven books, with brief descriptions. It also contains general reviews of literature and art in Constantinople, the Caucasus (Tiflis and Eastern Armenia), anniversaries, and news about theater, exhibitions of paintings, and music. It specifically references the 1500th anniversary of the invention of the Armenian alphabet, the 400th anniversary of Armenian printing, and the 25th anniversary of acting by the theater actor Araksian.

3. Art. This part includes four articles, one memoir, and one report from Art Salons in Paris. An article by Komitas Vardapet (1869-1935) on "Song of the Plough" is an important research

study of Armenian folk songs. Interspersed are photos of paintings by Armenian and European artists, such as Edgar Chahine (1874-1947), Panos Terlemezian (1865-1941), Ervand Kazazian, and other European artists. There are also photos of four Armenian theater actors. For many of these paintings, the photos are the only known evidence of their existence, so although the photos are black and white, they are extremely valuable sources.

"From the Editors," on the last page, announces that the next volume will have more pages, topics, and authors, and sets the deadline for submission of materials by the end of June 1914. Materials were ready for printing in 1915, but because of the Genocide they



1919 *Egiptahay Taretsoytsë* (Egyptian-Armenian Almanac), published in Alexandria by Aram Stepanian

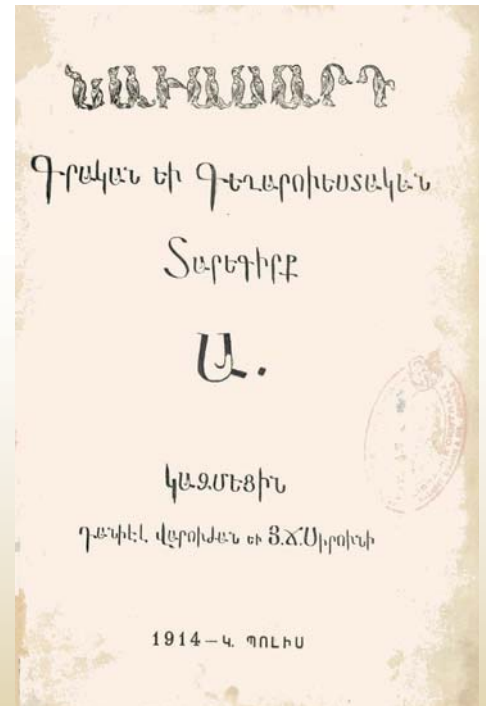
materials, as well as frequent access to fresh air due to the degraded and dusty condition of these materials. Most will need cleaning and further conservation, which she will also undertake, such as re-attaching pages, repairing and re-attaching covers, restoring page fragments, stabilizing them in archival boxes, and performing other restoration work, with the oldest and rarest first. This is the first time NAASR has undertaken professional conservation at this level to preserve these treasures for future generations, and NAASR has a Rare Book Conservation Room dedicated to this purpose in the new headquarters.



1926 *Amerikahay hanragitak taregirk* (Armenian-American Encyclopedic Yearbook) published by Hairenik Press, Boston

were lost forever.

NAASR's Library Curator Ani Babaian has also worked to prepare some of the oldest periodicals for cleaning prior to scanning, requiring use of a mask, gloves, and cleaning



Title page of *Nawasard grakan ew gegharuestaken taregirk*, published in Constantinople by O. Arzuman in 1914



## Treasures of NAASR's Mardigian Library

# Recently Donated Maps Add to NAASR Library Holdings

Over the years, NAASR's *Newsletter* has often featured interesting and important holdings in its Mardigian Library. Out of these has evolved the online "Treasures of NAASR's Mardigian Library" features; we augment that series here with a special piece highlighting noteworthy maps donated to NAASR during the past year.

During the period of 2019 when NAASR was preparing to move into its new headquarters building, and throughout the time since we have been fully operational in the Vartan Gregorian Building, we have continued to receive important donations to our Mardigian Library. (See list of donors since last *Newsletter* on page 17) Among these have been a number of



Adrienne Alexanian presents the 1720 map to Sarah Ignatius and Marc Mamigonian, Jan. 2020

interesting and significant maps.

In January 2020, Adrienne Alexanian of New York City donated an impressive framed map from 1720 of Armenia and region by Christoph Weigel, printed in Nuremberg. Alexanian presented the gift to NAASR Director of Academic Affairs Marc Mamigonian and Executive Director Sarah Ignatius during a visit to NAASR, and it is currently displayed in the library reading area. Alexanian remarked that "I feel very good about the map finding a home at NAASR," and without question NAASR feels good about having such a treasure.

In the summer of 2020, Kim Bardakian of Oakland, CA, helped facilitate the donation of a collection of books and maps that had belonged to the late Richard Demirjian, whose daughter Janet was seeking a suitable home for father's materials. Richard, who passed away in January 2020 at age 92, was a distinguished veteran and the author of *Armenian-American/Canadian Who's Who of Outstanding Athletes, Triumph and Glory: Armenian World War II Heroes*, and *The Faces of Courage: Armenian World War 2nd, Korea, and Vietnam Heroes*, among other works. Kim Bardakian's grandparents Edward and Ann Nahigian of Belmont, MA, were longtime supporters of NAASR.

Among the maps were three unusually interesting items. The 1849 map *Hayastan ashkharh*, printed in Venice, in very fine condition, was a new addition to NAASR's collection. Similarly, the 1918 *Carte de Cilicie et ses environs*, created by K.J. Basmadjian and printed in Paris, is a valuable addition to our holdings.

The third map, which exists as four separate sheets which collectively constitute a single map, *Hayastani Sotsialistakan Khorhdayin Hanrapetutyun kartz*, is important as well as visually impressive. The map as a whole, created by Kh. Avdalbegyan, includes notes, a statistical table of sub-divisions of the Armenian S.S.R., an inset of Yerevan city (with index to points-of-interest), an inset of the South Caucasus republics (with statistical table), color illustrations of mountain heights (with graph), and the Soviet Armenian coat-of-arms. It is probably the most detailed map created in early Soviet Armenia.

Although NAASR had previously received an-



Copy of *Hayastani Sotsialistakan Khorhdayin Hanrapetutyun kartz* mounted on cloth



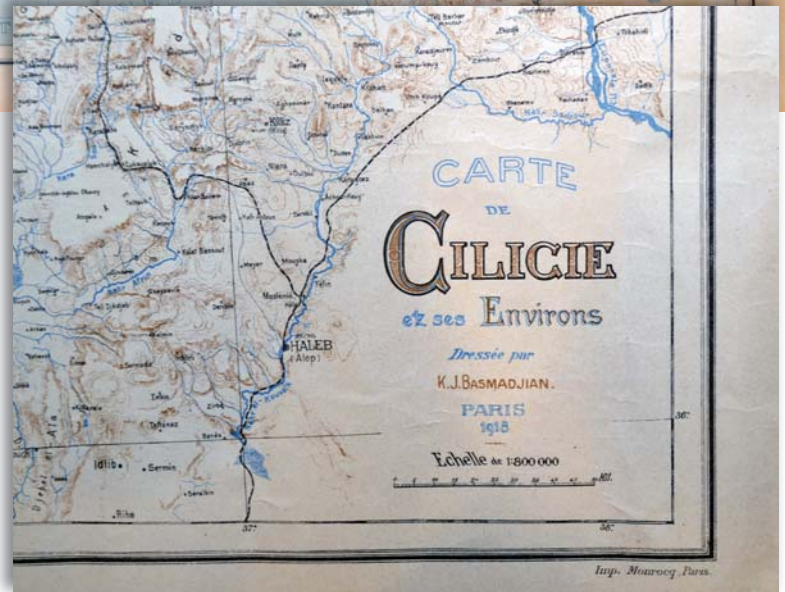


Carte de Cilcie et ses Environs (Paris, 1918)

other copy of this map with the collection of materials belonging to the late Haigazn Ghazarian, we were thrilled to receive such a well-preserved copy.

Coincidentally, not long after these maps arrived, we were given another copy of the 1932 map, donated by Mr. Vincent Taft “in appreciation of Manooq Young,” NAASR’s late founding chairman. Although this copy is not in pristine condition, it is unusual in that the sheets were all mounted together on a cloth backing and hung from a rod: clearly this version of the map was used for display purposes. In this respect it is similar to the copy held by the Library of Congress; see <https://www.loc.gov/item/2014585716/>.

Each of these maps is a valuable source of information as well as a striking work of art, and NAASR is privileged to receive them, care for them, and make them available to researchers as well as to showcase them as permanent or on rotating display.



Carte de Cilcie et ses Environs, detail



A section of Hayastani Sotsialistakan Khorhdayin Hanrapetutyán kartzé (Yerevan, 1932)



Hayastan ashkharh (Venice, 1849)



IN MEMORIAM

# Jack M. Medzorian

## NAASR Board Member and Community Benefactor

Long-serving NAASR Board Member Jack M. Medzorian of Winchester, MA, passed away on April 2, 2020, at the age of 93. A ceaseless worker for Armenians throughout the diaspora and in the Republic and a dedicated family man, Jack was a stalwart member of the NAASR Board since 1995, serving on the Executive Committee for most of those years and remaining an active part of NAASR until his death.

NAASR Board Chairman Yervant Chekjian remarked with sadness that “We lost the wise man of our organization, and the Armenian nation lost a dedicated and devoted man. He was selfless in his work towards establishing strong relations between Armenia and the Diaspora. We can all learn from his life. May God bless his memory.”

A 1944 graduate of Arlington High School, Jack served in the U.S. Army before a long and distinguished career of more than 40 years with Baird Corporation, of which he ultimately became the CEO.

Any attempt to summarize Jack’s contributions to the worldwide Armenian community can only be partial. In addition to his long service to NAASR, he was an energetic leader in other organizations including the Knights of Vartan, of which he was a Past Commander of the Ararat Lodge No. 1 in Boston; the Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association; the AGBU; Cpl. Paul Marsoubian AMVETS Post 41; he was a Former President of the Council of Armenian Executives; Co-chairman of the Armenia School Aid Project; Director of U.S. State Department Grants for Armenia; and served for many years as Superintendent of St. James Armenian Apostolic Church Sunday School.

With dozens of trips to Armenia over the decades, Jack and Eva Medzorian undertook countless projects that led to better lives for Armenians throughout the Republic. Both a practical man as well as a man of vision, Jack was respected and admired in all circles, from the government of the Republic of Armenia to the villages on whose behalf he and Eva worked so hard, to each and all of the organizations he served and enriched through his involvement.

Jack’s involvement with many organizations led him always to seek ways and means of collaboration among groups when they had common goals and purposes. This was typical of his forward thinking and dedication to maximizing the impact of multiple organizations, and it was one of his greatest gifts to NAASR and to the Armenian community in general.



Many examples of this collaborative spirit may be cited. Jack played a vital role in the ongoing collaboration (since 2007) between NAASR and the Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies on administering research grants. Along with other key individuals such as Prof. Kevork Bardakjian, Jack recognized that two groups working towards the identical goal of providing research grants to scholars could do better together than separately, eliminating redundancy and at the same time strengthening the bonds between the two organizations and better serving the academic community.

In recent years, even as he crossed over into his 90s, he remained deeply involved in key aspects of NAASR’s major initiative to raise funds for the Vartan Gregorian Building. As a member of the working committee for the new building, Jack brought his insight and vigor to the process of selecting the general contractor, negotiating terms of NAASR’s contract with the builders, fundraising, and other important decision-making processes. His years of experience in business, his extraordinary intelligence, and his commitment to getting the best possible outcome for NAASR and for the Armenian community made him an irreplaceable part of the team that made the new building a reality.



Jack Medzorian (far right) with Van Aroian (with hat). The two senior members of NAASR’s Board at the ribbon cutting for the Vartan Gregorian Building on November 1, 2019.





## IN MEMORIAM

# Rouben Shougarian

NAASR joins with all Armenians and many others in the worlds of diplomacy, academia, and elsewhere in mourning the untimely death of Amb. Rouben Shougarian on April 20, 2020.



Amb. Shougarian speaking at the NAASR Annual Assembly of Members in 2016.

Shougarian was named Armenia's first ambassador to the United States in 1993, where he served until 1999. He also served as Armenia's Deputy Foreign Minister (1999-2005), and Ambassador to Italy, Spain, and Portugal (2005-2008), before taking a position at Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

A deeply respected diplomat, teacher, and scholar, Amb. Shougarian first visited NAASR in 1993 as the newly appointed ambassador, and in recent years made

important contributions to several programs focusing on recent developments in Armenia, in particular at the time of and in the aftermath of the "Four-Day War" of April 2016. He will be missed by all who knew him.

"Amb. Shougarian was an insightful analyst of Armenia and the region," remarked NAASR Director of Academic Affairs Marc A. Mamigonian. "He was a man of genuine integrity who brought incredible knowledge grounded in his experience and his studies. He was able to be both an

objective observer and critic while also deeply committed to Armenia's well-being and freedom. And in his vital role with the Tavitian Scholars Program at the Fletcher School at Tufts, he made a lasting contribution to Armenia's future."

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said in a statement that Shougarian, whom he knew well and admired, "embodied the best features of an Armenian intellectual, with a broad worldview, an active civic attitude, patriotism and firmness in his beliefs."



Amb. Shougarian and his wife, Lilit Karapetian-Shougarian, with NAASR Chairman Manoog S. Young at NAASR in 1993.

## Vahakn N. Dadrian

### Pioneering Scholar of Genocide

Renowned genocide researcher and author Vahakn Dadrian passed away on August 2, 2019. He was 93 years old.

Vahakn Norair Dadrian was born on May 26, 1926, in Istanbul, Turkey. "Vahakn Dadrian was born ten years after the Armenian Genocide," noted Armenian President Armen Sarkissian in his condolence letter to the Dadrian family. "It is, probably, no accident that he dedicated the major part of his life to genocide and especially the Armenian Genocide studies, making a great contribution to the internalization and the fight against denial of the Genocide through his valuable monographies and publications," wrote Sarkissian.



Vahakn Dadrian at a NAASR lecture in 1996

Over the course of his lifetime, Dadrian achieved degrees in mathematics, philosophy, international law and sociology, studying at the University of Berlin, University of Vienna, University of Zurich and University of Chicago, respectively. His interdisciplinary background coupled with his impressive mastery of six languages (Armenian, English, French, German, Turkish and Ottoman Turkish) supported his expertise of comparative genocide studies.

Director of Genocide Research at the Zoryan Institute, Dadrian was known for his voluminous writings on the Armenian Genocide including his 1995 work, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic*

*Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus*. Istanbul-Armenian member of the Turkish Grand National Assembly Garo Paylan tweeted in Armenian and Turkish that Dadrian's book "played an important role in the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide."

In 2011, he co-authored *Judgment at Istanbul: The Armenian Genocide Trials* with Clark University professor and historian Taner Akçam. In his somber reflection on Facebook, Akçam recalled his formal remarks during a 2005 event in New York City honoring his late friend and invaluable, lifelong mentor. "There is no doubt that whatever discussion we'll have [in the Armenian Genocide research field], it will be built on the body of knowledge that Dadrian has provided for us," expressed Akçam.

There has been an outpouring of support and sympathy from admirers and fellow scholars since Dadrian's passing. He was a true trailblazer. "More than anyone else at the time, Dadrian raised the study of the Armenian Genocide to the academic level, and everyone who has come after him is indebted to his work—even those who disagree with him," said Marc Mamigonian, National Association of Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) Director of Academic Affairs. "When we look at the remarkable development of Armenian Genocide scholarship in the past two decades, it must be understood that this was made possible by the foundation created by Dadrian's groundbreaking work."

As Akçam put it, this "is a big loss for Armenians and humanity." Arguably the most influential authority figure in Armenian Genocide research, Dadrian was "the master of us all whose hearts beat for justice and humanity."

(*Armenian Weekly*, Aug. 7, 2019)

