

**THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR
ARMENIAN STUDIES AND RESEARCH**



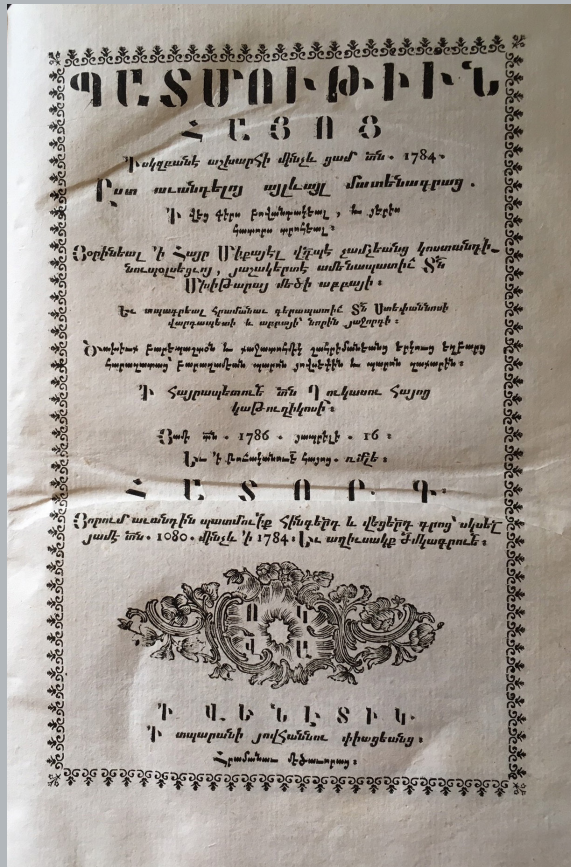
ANEWERA
*Building on
Our Legacy*

NAASR: A GLOBAL LEADER ADVANCING ARMENIAN STUDIES AND BUILDING COMMUNITY WORLDWIDE

The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research was launched in 1955 to pursue a bold vision of advancing Armenian Studies by supporting the creation and dissemination of scholarly work on Armenian history, culture, and contemporary issues.

Within a few short years, NAASR achieved the ambitious goal of establishing the first chair in Armenian Studies at Harvard University in 1959. A second successful initiative—the establishment of a chair at the University of California, Los Angeles—commenced not long afterward, and following from NAASR’s pioneering efforts there are currently 13 endowed positions throughout the country as well as several non-endowed programs and lectureships.

Today, NAASR is known as a global leader advancing Armenian Studies and has become one of the world’s leading Armenian Studies centers, promoting knowledge of Armenian culture, history, and identity, and connecting scholars with a broad public worldwide to build a global community.



Highlights of NAASR's activities include:

- housing in a climate-controlled environment one of the premier rare book Armenian libraries in the diaspora open to the public;
- presenting over 50 first-class educational programs each year throughout the country;
- offering one of the largest English-language book stores on Armenian topics; and
- serving as a hub for Armenian Studies, connecting scholars and researchers with each other and with the public to advance knowledge of modern-day Armenia, its history, people, and rich 3,000 year-old culture, as well as the factual foundation upon which recognition of the Armenian Genocide rests.

NAASR's rare-book Armenian library, one of the top five open to the public in the diaspora, will soon total 40,000 books, with holdings dating to the 1600s, and thousands of periodicals dating to the 1800s. NAASR's Mardigian Library also includes special collections—personal archives and papers from over 25 prominent scholars, genocide survivors, religious figures, and early immigrants to the U.S., among others.

Sixty-five years of success have led to a new generation of scholars and historians, who rely on NAASR for academic research and global connections, and who offer glowing testimonials, among them Prof. Taner Akçam, the Kaloosdian-Mugar Chair in Armenian Genocide Studies at Clark University, who urges all of his students to conduct their research at NAASR: "NAASR is the leading institution in promoting Armenian Studies in North America. I cannot count the important contributions of NAASR in the creation of a solid foundation in the U.S. for Armenian Studies."



BRICK BY BRICK: PRESERVING THE DIASPORA NAASR VARTAN GREGORIAN BUILDING

As shared by SMMA Architecture, Engineering, Interior Design and Site Design Firm

Cultural preservation has a unique meaning for a nation whose people are scattered across the globe. For the Armenian diaspora, their rich, 3,000-year-old history is both a foundation for cultural unity and a gateway for cultural evolution. Over the past six decades, the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) has advanced this cultural project by encouraging scholars and the Armenian community to explore the narratives informing their heritage, many of which are housed in the headquarters' renowned library.

The modern-day importance of the library's ancient texts is a reminder that Armenian heritage is not isolated in the past; instead, it permeates the cultural present and enriches its future. Due to their growing collection of texts, community events, and expanding outreach efforts, NAASR chose to renovate their headquarters to ensure that their already-established global hub of cultural activity would have the flexibility to adapt over time and the increased visibility to continue to protect the tangible aspects of Armenian cultural identity. Both through the building design and the narratives it shelters, NAASR will invite modern users to connect with their past while finding inspiration for their next steps.





ENGAGING WITH ANCIENT TEXTS

Central to the project is the headquarters' Mardigian Library: a celebrated library for the diaspora. Armenia's rich scholarly history—which dates back to the inception of the Armenian alphabet—is reflected in the library's literature and research.

Just as the alphabet gave early Armenians access to scholarly studies, so too does the library welcome scholarly engagement as it marries the old with the new. Community members and visitors, regardless of age, can explore over thousands of titles of rare and ancient texts across the expanded three-story building.

WELCOMING A NEW GENERATION

The history-laden space also connects generations. A stone lobby with tile floor, accented wall, and wood ceilings greets new visitors. Upon further exploring the space, they find an alluring bookstore display with a new lounge café. Both new and tenured scholars benefit from an expanded study and research space. The books themselves allow different generations to partake in cultural meaning-making: each visitor reads them differently depending on the context in which they live. As readers, we inform the texts' meaning as much as the texts inform our cultural knowledge. Ultimately, the new headquarters is a building that both tells and protects stories, stories of an evolving culture built upon a rich and explorative history. The intangibility of cultural identity—so often reliant on oral traditions, rituals and events—suddenly becomes tangible, and thus available to all ages of curious future visitors.



MICHAEL ARAM, AWARD-WINNING ARTIST



Michael Aram is an award-winning Armenian-American artist who has dedicated his career to craft-based design. Inspired by a trip to India at age 25, he established a second home and workshop there, where he continues to draw creative inspiration. Although best known for his work in metal, Michael works across all materials with a focus on objects made by hand. Trained as a painter, sculptor, and art historian, Michael has neatly applied his creative background to objects ranging from the fine and decorative arts to jewelry. His often lyrical work is inspired by nature, his biggest muse, as well

as his love of the making process. Michael crafts pieces that have a personal connection to him and which speak to his love of symbolism, nature, narrative storytelling, and objects made by hand. Today, over 200 skilled artisans work alongside Michael at his India workshop, with hundreds more around the world. Whether from his studio in India or New York City, Michael's attention to detail and creative passion is constant whether he is creating a one of a kind sculpture, a piece of jewelry, or a decorative object. He feels there is a 'vibration' in objects made by hand that is expressed through the immediacy of the making process. Organic shapes made by hand create 'perfectly imperfect' pieces, which Michael maintains are a reflection of our humanity.

MELS YEGHIAZARYAN, MASTER CRAFTSMAN



Mels Yeghiazaryan, the master craftsman who carved the front door of NAASR's new 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 in Armenia and abroad for over fifty years. His 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. 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. He currently resides in Armavir, Armenia, and offers apprenticeships in woodcarving and traditional Armenian calligraphy.

BUILDING ON OUR LEGACY

In 1955, a group of 60 Armenian-Americans and scholars came together to establish the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, united by the goal of advancing Armenian Studies by establishing endowed chairs at some of the foremost universities in the United States.

NAASR FOUNDERS

Peter Airasian	Dr. Kenneth A. Kazanjian
Dr. James Ajemian	Anahid Kechichian
Thomas T. Amirian	Dr. Albert Y. Kevorkian
Harry H. Arkelyan	J. Mark Kolligian
Rev. Arten Ashjian	Charles Lachinian
Agop Atamian	Prof. William L. Langer
Dr. Arra S. Avakian	Araxie Le Vin
Shogher Baghdoyan	Rev. Papken Maksoudian
Edna Bogosian	Richard Malkasian
John H. Boole	Matthew Matteosian
Dickran H. Boyajian	John Mirak
K. Merton Bozoian	Thomas Moranian
Prof. H.H. Chakmakjian	Rev. Dr. Y.D. Mugrditchian
Prof. Elisha B. Chrakian	Dr. M.G. Odian
John Der Hovanesian	Helen A. Sahagian
Haig Der Manuelian	Rev. Dr. William Sahakian
Dr. James Etmekjian	Prof. Hrand Saxenian
Prof. Richard N. Frye	Dr. Joseph Skinner
Aram Gavoor	Garbed H. Sulahian
Rouben Gregorian	Zabelle D. Tahmizian
Dr. Elizabeth A. Gregory	Zareh Thomajan
G. John Gregory	Samuel H. Toumayan
Jack Guveyan	Elissa Touzjian
Rev. Dr. Yervant H. Hadidian	George J. Tutunjian
Hamasdegh-Gelenian	V.C. Vahan
Harry J. Healer	Dr. Isabelle Valadian
Dr. Agnes Israelian	Jacob Yagjian
Prof. Roman Jakobson	Osia Yeramian
Prof. Michael Karpovich	Manoog S. Young
Dr. Karl D. Kasparian	Gen. Sarkis M. Zartarian

After 65 years of pioneering efforts, NAASR has received tremendous support from across the Armenian community to launch a beautiful, new, state-of-the-art reserach center and gathering place; the NAASR Vartan Gregorian Building. At this pivotal moment in its history, NAASR thanks all who contributed to making this vision a reality and presents the following profiles.



VARTAN GREGORIAN, PhD

Admired and Respected, His Name Graces NAASR's New Headquarters

Vartan Gregorian, PhD, arrived in the U.S. from Beirut, Lebanon, in 1956, prepared to attend Stanford University. He had heard of NAASR, which was founded one year earlier. "NAASR was a daring dream," says Dr. Gregorian. "While there were many Armenian publications and cultural organizations in America, none attempted to transcend the divisions around Armenian culture and scholarship."

Within a few years, Dr. Gregorian was invited to speak at NAASR. He graduated from Stanford in only two years and was already on the faculty of San Francisco State College, as well as a prolific writer. "I had written more than 100 articles for Armenian publications on different issues before I came to the U.S.," he notes.

NAASR was on its own fast track, having already established its first endowed chair at Harvard University. "What Manoog Young did was to create a neutral place," Dr. Gregorian says, in reference to NAASR's first Board Chair. "Still, I don't think many people thought NAASR would be successful. But there's nothing that determined people can't do."

Few individuals can say that with such credibility. Dr. Gregorian was born in Tabriz, Iran, in a home with two books: an Armenian bible and an American history book. "I love books," he says. "As a boy they were my helicopters; they took me everywhere." Once he arrived in the U.S., he had to quickly adjust to a new, somewhat overwhelming culture. But he saw the opportunities before him.

In his highly regarded autobiography, *The Road to Home*, Dr. Gregorian described his dream of going to America: "For me, America itself was a fantasy built and rebuilt in my mind and psyche. I had lived it through scores of cowboy movies." But after earning a PhD in history and humanities from Stanford, he described himself differently: "A poor boy, yearning for knowledge . . . who became an educated man."

Dr. Gregorian went on to teach at the University of California at Los Angeles and the University of Texas at Austin before joining the University of Pennsylvania faculty as the Tarzian Professor of Armenian and Caucasian History. Within two years, he was named Founding Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and then recruited other faculty who specialized in Armenian Studies. Four years later, he became the school's Provost.

After two decades in academia, Dr. Gregorian served as President of The New York Public Library—a network that includes four research libraries and 83 branch libraries.

He is credited with restoring the library's status as a financially sound cultural landmark. Dr. Gregorian has written eloquently about the power of libraries. "A library is a legacy," he wrote. "A library is a mirror to the past and a window to the future."

In 1989, he was appointed President of Brown University, where he brought the institution's endowment past the \$1 billion mark and oversaw the establishment of several new academic departments. In 1997, he accepted the presidency of one of the country's oldest grant-making foundations, the Carnegie Corporation of New York. His philanthropic legacy and scholarly accomplishments have been recognized with more than 70 honorary degrees and dozens of significant awards, including the National Humanities Medal and the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civil award.

"OUR HISTORY IS A GREAT SOURCE OF COMFORT"

Dr. Gregorian has never lost touch with his origins, and he is quick to acknowledge the role kindness has played in his life. "So many mentors, friends and strangers have guided me along the way," he wrote.

He often speaks at ceremonies where new American citizens are sworn in, and he shares his experience. "I realized that becoming an American did not mean discarding my culture, my faith and my identity," he told the gathering at the JFK Library last year. "I came to be a part of America, not apart from America. I was glad to be included in America."

He hailed the importance of history. "Our history is a great source of comfort," he said. "Studying it will help us recognize the difference between wisdom and ignorance, between the light at the end of a tunnel and the dangers of an incoming train."

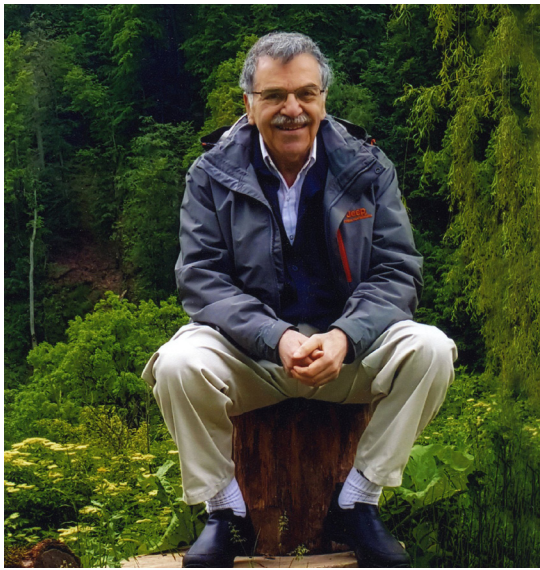
When Dr. Gregorian was asked to consider having NAASR's new headquarters named after him, he hesitated. "I tried to persuade Ed to name the building after other Armenian scholars or after himself," he says, in reference to Edward Avedisian, principal donor for NAASR's successful campaign. But Mr. Avedisian made it a condition of his gift that the building be named after Dr. Gregorian.

"Then my staff at Carnegie Corporation told me if I turned down this honor and prevented the completion of the project, I would be a selfish man," says Dr. Gregorian. "I decided to accept—provided that Ed Avedisian was acknowledged for his generous gift."

He appreciates how far NAASR has come. "Manoog and the founders of NAASR would be proud of the organization's success, including all of the endowed chairs," he says.

As always, Dr. Gregorian's perspective is expansive. "The completion of this building comes at an auspicious time. Now that Armenia is independent, many political and religious factions in the diaspora are determined to transcend their divisions," he notes. "And NAASR is emerging into a new era at a time when Armenian culture and identity are converging."





EDWARD AVEDISIAN

His Gift Named NAASR's Building, with the Goal of Inspiring All

Like many people, Edward Avedisian first knew NAASR as a destination for books. "I visited the bookstore over the years," he says. "They had the books you couldn't find elsewhere."

His interest increased, along with his commitment, when he joined the NAASR board in 2016. His friend, Yervant Chekijian, was the Board Chair, and planning for the new building had begun. "Yervant is impressive, both as a person and in terms of his ability as a CEO," says Mr. Avedisian. "He knows the boardroom."

NAASR's new mission—to expand its reach and influence globally—appeals to Mr. Avedisian. "It's attainable," he insists. "Today NAASR isn't just about collecting books. We need to digitize everything in our library, be more accessible and communicate with other Armenian organizations worldwide."

Mr. Avedisian, a world-class clarinetist who performed with the Boston Pops for 30 years and the Boston Ballet Orchestra for 43 seasons, among other orchestras, including in Armenia, is effusive about the new building's design. "From the wall of volcanic stone to the lace-pattern windows, it conveys the culture of Armenia," he says. "I believe it will become a tourist attraction for its design, as well as what is inside."

He is pleased that the name of Vartan Gregorian, PhD, President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, will grace the building's exterior—the result of Mr. Avedisian's thoughtful, unselfish gift. "Because of his life, what he has accomplished and his influence on education, I felt Dr. Gregorian's name needed to be on the building. He is part of Armenian history, as is NAASR."

Mr. Avedisian's philanthropy is well known in the U.S. and in Armenia. He founded and served as principal benefactor for the Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian K-12 School and Community Center in Yerevan, named for his parents. He is a trustee of the American University of Armenia and principal benefactor of the new AUA Paramaz Avedisian Building, named for his late brother. He also honored his brother by making a transformative gift to the Rhode Island College of Pharmacy and recently was presented with an honorary doctorate from the University of Rhode Island.

His success as a private investor—mainly in technology startups—put Mr. Avedisian in the position to support numerous organizations. "I'd be running to catch planes to perform with an orchestra and pick up a *Wall Street Journal*," he explains. "I read about new technology, invested and plowed the earnings back into my investments."

"I'm a risk-taker. Going into music was risky, and investments are risky. But you live, prepare and learn."

He learned a great deal during his childhood in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. "We lived in an immigrant neighborhood, so you got an education on the street, combined with a formal education. I wouldn't change a thing. My parents encouraged me. I knew that education was the ticket."

Once he picked up his brother's clarinet, there was no turning back. Mr. Avedisian was given a scholarship to Boston University to study music.

Today, he is the principal donor for NAASR's spectacular headquarters. "I believe the new building will honor the past and be a catalyst for the future," he says. "We will advance our culture, encourage scholars and inform the public. All will be welcome in this beautiful building."



GREGORY H. ADAMIAN, PhD, AND DEBORAH M. ADAMIAN

He Was Larger Than Life and Deeply Devoted to NAASR

Those who were fortunate enough to know Gregory Adamian, PhD, either as an acquaintance or because they had the opportunity to work with him, agree that he had many fine qualities, including intelligence, energy and a big heart. NAASR lost a good friend when he passed away in 2015.

“Greg was larger than life, and he contributed to so many organizations,” says Deborah Adamian, his wife. “NAASR meant a great deal to him.” Dr. Adamian was a charter member of NAASR and served on its Board for more than 50 years, from 1956-2010.

“I remember all those 11:00 pm calls Greg had with Manoog Young,” she says, referring to NAASR’s first Board Chair. “NAASR was Manoog’s night job, and Greg often worked late into the evening.” In the early days, the two men collaborated on NAASR’s mission of raising funds to endow a chair in Armenian Studies at Harvard University.

“He was so proud of that Harvard Chair,” recalls Mrs. Adamian, who served as Vice President at Arthur D. Little, Inc. “Everyone at NAASR knew it was worth the time and investment. It would be great for Armenian scholarship.”

By then, Dr. Adamian was a professor of business law at Bentley College and had a law practice in Cambridge. In 1970, he was named President of the school, which became Bentley University. Under his leadership, the school was transformed. The faculty grew from 42 to 350, its endowment experienced exponential growth, and the campus relocated from Boston to Waltham. After he retired, Bentley named the Adamian Academic Center after their respected, charismatic President.

When he passed away, a profile about him in the Bentley University magazine emphasized his talent as a storyteller. “Greg Adamian knew the power of a good story. An account rich in detail, wit and humor—delivered with impeccable timing—could instruct and inspire, disarm and unite, move and persuade.”

As someone who was exceptionally proud of his Armenian heritage and was an educator and a successful attorney, Dr. Adamian had much to offer NAASR, including his opinions and perspective—always with the goal of helping the organization. He even provided NAASR staff with space in his office building, free of charge.

“When I took on the role of Chair, with Greg’s support, we spoke often,” notes Nancy Kolligian, who became NAASR Board Chair in 2001. “Greg was intelligent, warm and engaging. I am so grateful to have called him a friend and mentor during those years when I served as Chair.”

Dr. Adamian was active in a number of Armenian organizations. He served on the Central Board of the Armenian General Benevolent Union for many years and as a trustee of the Armenian Assembly of America. The Adamians made a generous donation to NAASR that will go toward two Visiting Scholars’ Offices and a Computer Study Area.

“How do we use our lives?” asks Mrs. Adamian. “I told Greg that he deserved a ‘use your life award’ because he provided so much advice and assistance—to individuals and organizations. The fact is, people listened to Greg for what he had to say, not just because he was such a good storyteller.”



MARGARET AND LEON ATAMIAN

Two Lifetimes of Caring Deeply About Armenian Causes

Leon and Margaret Atamian each grew up in the Boston area—Leon, a bit south in Dorchester; Margaret somewhat north in Medford. As children during the Depression, they were encouraged to work hard and become involved with both the Armenian church and community organizations.

“Both my parents were from Marash,” says Mr. Atamian. “A large group of Armenians from Marash settled in Dorchester. My parents belonged to the Union of Marash Armenians, and I was a member of the UMA Juniors, as well as the Young People’s Society of Christian Endeavor.”

He recalls the charitable efforts made on behalf of family members. “My mother’s sisters lived in Aleppo, and at least once a year a large supply of used, but wearable, clothing was placed in a sack and mailed to them,” says Mr. Atamian.

Ms. Atamian says her parents set an example by their involvement in the church and other Armenian organizations in the area. She sang in the choir and later followed her mother’s example by joining the Women’s Guild.

The couple met at a party through Armenian friends, and then each completed service in the U.S. Navy. Ms. Atamian joined the Naval Reserves. “A lot of our work was done at the naval facility in Chelsea, but we also left the Boston area for training each summer,” she says. She then held positions in manufacturing companies where she specialized in finance before raising their family.

After attending Tufts University as part of the NROTC scholarship program, Mr. Atamian received a commission as an ensign. “I became a naval aviator and was assigned to an early-warning squadron using radar detection,” he says. His engineering degree and Navy experience provided a strong foundation for his professional life as a research engineer and sales engineer.

After the earthquake in 1988, Ms. Atamian traveled to Armenia. “We were in areas where there was no water, no electricity,” she says. “I visited orphanages. It was so sad.”

She served as Chairman of the Women’s Guild Central Council for the Eastern Diocese. “In 2000, we formed CASP—Children of Armenia Sponsorship Program—which is part of the Fund for Armenian Relief,” she explains. “The goal is to help eradicate child poverty in Armenia, so we sponsor individual orphans; \$200 a year has a huge impact on their lives.” The Women’s Guild also prepares and ships school bags containing supplies to students in Armenia.

The couple learned of NAASR years ago, and Ms. Atamian became more familiar with the organization by attending a lecture. “Once our son, Douglas, became interested in NAASR’s bookstore, he started bringing books to the house,” says Mr. Atamian. “He’d say ‘Dad, read this one.’” Douglas Atamian has been a NAASR member since 2013.

The Atamians’ tradition of generosity and devotion to Armenian causes led them to make a significant gift that has been directed to a prominent and welcoming feature of NAASR’s new headquarters—the Garden Atrium. “We heard about NAASR’s building campaign, and that was all the motivation we needed,” says Mr. Atamian. “That building is going to attract a lot of people to learn more about Armenian history and culture.”



MARTA BATMASIAN

Successful Businesswoman Is Proud to Be Part of NAASR's New Era

Marta Batmasian left Istanbul at age 20 to seek an education and opportunity. She found both in Boston. “I came to the U.S. by myself, worked as an *au pair* and went to school,” she says.

Ms. Batmasian completed her English degree at Emerson College and kept going, completing masters and PhD degrees from Brandeis University and, later, an MBA from Barry University in Miami. She met James Batmasian, who was on a similar educational track—attending Harvard University’s schools of law and business.

“My introduction to NAASR was through my husband,” she notes. “He knew I was raised in a home where we spoke Armenian. Jim said to me: ‘You’ll be interested in NAASR because of your knowledge of literature and history.’” He was right.

Ms. Batmasian attended NAASR lectures and group meetings while a college student. “After Armenian Studies courses were established at the University of Massachusetts-Boston, I taught Armenian history, language and literature there for eight years.” She opened a real estate, travel and insurance agency in Cambridge at this time, while also raising two young sons.

The Batmasians moved to Boca Raton to be near his parents. “In the early 1980s, it was a sleepy little town,” Ms. Batmasian recalls. Not for long: the couple established Investments Limited and were soon purchasing shopping centers, offices and apartments.

“Plans were under way to build an Armenian church,” says Ms. Batmasian. “We don’t have an organization like NAASR in Florida, so the church is a magnet for the Armenian community.” She joined the church building committee and recently became Chairman of the parish council at St. David’s Armenian Church.

She was a “small fish” in Boston. “In moving to Boca, I could have a bigger impact. I served as Chair of the Palm Beach County Cultural Council and established a hands-on science museum for children.”

Ms. Batmasian remained connected with NAASR. “When [Board Chair] Nancy Kolligian approached me to join the board, I saw that NAASR had come a long way. When Yervant Chekijian became Chair, there were discussions about the future needs of the building, and my ears perked up. Being in real estate, I know that there is a point when repeated renovations don’t work.”

Her generous gift was directed to NAASR’s new Assembly Hall. “It takes a village to complete an ambitious fundraising campaign. NAASR has a tremendously supportive group of people.”

The Batmasians’ generosity extends to Armenia, where they are opening a three-building complex for young adults with disabilities. “At age 18, they leave orphanages and are in the street,” Ms. Batmasian explains. “Our center will provide housing, rehabilitation and vocational training.” In Florida, the couple co-founded People Reaching Out to Provide Education and Leadership, which provides young people with food relief and scholarships. She is proud to have received the Ellis Island Award in 2018.

Her ties to NAASR and the Boston area are strong. “I love Boston,” says Ms. Batmasian. “We still have an office near Harvard Square.”

“In NAASR, I see dedicated people who show tenacity. They may not all be academics themselves, but they believe in the mission and in this cause. I’m so proud to be part of NAASR’s new era.”



YERVANT CHEKIJIAN

His Leadership Has Guided NAASR into a New Era

It takes vision—described clearly and eloquently—for an organization to carry out a transformational plan for the future that requires a major fundraising campaign. Yervant Chekijian, Board Chair since 2016, provided precisely that for NAASR.

“First I had to articulate our need for the new building to the board,” says Mr. Chekijian, a NAASR member for more than 50 years. “We were 60 years old, but we needed to see the next 60 years and what was required for the mission to continue. Many of us won’t be here, but we all agreed that we can’t have a facility that is run down.”

At a dinner meeting, Mr. Chekijian announced the “Building on Our Legacy” campaign. “Our board members came forth and made their pledges,” he says. “I’m extremely pleased with their response and that of the wider community—all the individuals who came forward with their donations. They’ve shown confidence in NAASR and our future.”

He emphasizes that a building is only a building. “It houses our rare books and allows us to hold our lectures, but what about the content for the future?” he asks. “We are all working on it. I believe NAASR’s mission is perhaps even more relevant today than when NAASR was founded.”

Mr. Chekijian recalls the early mission. “I was a teenager and had just immigrated from Jerusalem when I attended the victory banquet celebrating NAASR’s successful campaign to endow the first chair in Armenian Studies at Harvard,” he recalls. “I was amazed at how excited everyone was that day. Memorial Hall at Harvard was full.”

It was just the beginning. “Visionaries like Manoog Young and Gregory Adamian did the work to establish that Harvard professorship at a time when there were almost no scholars of Armenian history and culture,” he notes. “Today there are dozens. NAASR led the way by endowing chairs at Harvard and UCLA and supporting efforts at Columbia and other prestigious universities, where there are now 13 endowed chairs.”

After graduating from Boston University and the Thunderbird School of Global Management, Mr. Chekijian quickly established himself in the hotel industry. He served as General Manager of the Parker House, a Boston landmark and the oldest continuously operating hotel in the United States. A Harvard Business School case study described how, after falling into decline, the Parker House regained its stature during his tenure. Mr. Chekijian went on to serve as President of Omni International Hotels and Founder and President of Berkeley Hotels Management, Inc.

After leadership and success in the hotel industry, his focus now is NAASR. “I’m giving my time to my heritage and my people,” he says. He made a generous gift, along with his sister, Hermine Chekijian Adamian, to support the headquarters’ Seminar Room. “I look forward to having scholars from all over the world come for vibrant discussions about Armenian history and contemporary issues at the forefront.

“We held more than 60 programs last year. We must attract the next generation, so we also hold NAASR programs at a number of universities.”

Mr. Chekijian has been the driving force for NAASR’s transformation and is optimistic about the future. “Every generation has to improve over the previous one,” he says. “We are moving this vibrant organization forward in a way that continues the mission.”



ANNE ELBRECHT

Her Goal Was to Preserve the Legacy of Historic Armenia

When Anne Elbrecht first saw the churches of historic Armenia in 1987, she was fascinated by their architectural beauty. She became immediately concerned that earthquakes and the natural process of aging would cause these magnificent churches to disappear.

Ms. Elbrecht, who became a NAASR member in 1992 and served on the NAASR Board from 2007-2014, was not a typical tourist. She made ten visits to eastern Turkey with her husband, Richard Elbrecht, to document the churches they found in cities and villages—some built as early as the seventh century.

These churches included the Church of the Holy Cross on Aghtamar Island in Lake Van, which was built by an Armenian king in the tenth century. The church is in the classic tetraconch (four shells) design, and its exterior walls are carved with scenes from the Bible and Armenian history. Once, the Elbrechts even befriended a Kurdish chief who provided his village's tractor, which Mr. Elbrecht rode over rocky terrain with his camera mounted on the fender. The destination was worth it: the seventh-century church of Mren, southeast of Ani, proved to be intact.

The churches that Anne and Richard Elbrecht found beautifully convey the story of how Armenian Christianity first took root. Their detailed photographs, taken with large-format cameras, resulted in an exhibition, "Churches of Historic Armenia: A Legacy for the World," presented in 17 venues throughout California. They donated their photo archives to the Armenian Studies Program at California State University, Fresno. (These 157 photos are available to scholars and the public at armenianstudies.csufresno.edu.)

Anne Elizabeth Elbrecht was from Philadelphia. After graduating from Wheaton College in Illinois, she became a social worker and met her future husband, an Armenian who inspired her deep interest in Armenia and the Middle East. Although the marriage did not last, Ms. Elbrecht proceeded to devote time, energy and scholarship to Armenian history and culture.

After attaining a degree in library science at the University of California-Berkeley, Ms. Elbrecht joined the Peace Corps—work that took her to the Republic of Ghana. Later on, she earned a law degree at McGeorge School of Law, completed a master's degree in history at California State University, Sacramento, and wrote her thesis on the Armenian Genocide.

Ms. Elbrecht then expanded her thesis into a book, *Telling the Story: The Armenian Genocide in The New York Times and Missionary Herald, 1914-1918*, which described how the two newspapers provided contrasting coverage of the Genocide and how the American public reacted. In 2012, Ms. Elbrecht was invited to NAASR to deliver a lecture based on her book. As a NAASR Board member with degrees in library science and history and her devotion to Armenian studies, she focused on preserving the rare books in NAASR's library for future generations. The building's condition was always on her mind. After she passed away in 2014, her estate directed a donation to relaunch NAASR's website. More recently, Ms. Elbrecht's estate underwrote the new building's elevator with another generous donation.

Ms. Elbrecht left her own legacy: her love for Armenia, her dedication to scholarship and her generosity.



HIRAIR AND EDELE HOVNANIAN

The Hovnanian Foundation's Gift Conveys Admiration and Respect

The Hovnanian name is well known in the United States and in Armenia, thanks to the work undertaken by Hirair Hovnanian, who is regarded as a pioneer in land and housing development. In 1963, Mr. Hovnanian founded Hovsons Inc. in New Jersey and had a successful career building residential communities there and throughout Florida and California.

He has given generously and worked tirelessly for the Armenian community worldwide. Mr. Hovnanian served on the Armenian Assembly of America's Board of Trustees for decades, and in 1986, he established the Hirair and Anna Hovnanian Foundation, believed to be one of the largest private foundations dedicated to Armenians.

Mr. Hovnanian's influence is widely acknowledged, as is his humanity, which was described in a 2011 profile that appeared in *The Armenian Mirror-Spectator*: "One of Hirair's remarkable accomplishments is his ability to instill love, caring and involvement towards all Armenian affairs here in America, as well as in the homeland. . . . Needless to say, every member of Hirair's family is loved and admired here in the homeland."

Edele Hovnanian, his daughter, joined the family firm in 1986 and worked for two decades by her father's side. For the past 15 years, she has overseen the family's companies and philanthropic endeavors. "I want our foundation to run as professionally and efficiently as our companies," she notes. "And as my final contribution to the family, I want to set up the foundation's systems and guidelines to be run effectively by future generations."

The Hovnanian Foundation will adhere to its commitment to Armenian causes and institutions. "To fulfill our philanthropic obligation, we not only have had to incubate a number of new initiatives. We also are interested in supporting important American organizations here in the United States that are devoted to Armenians."

"I know Yervant and Sharon well and respect them," she says in reference to NAASR's Board Chair, Yervant Chekijian, and his daughter, Sharon Chekijian. "NAASR is a credible institution that has proven itself in terms of staying power. I respect institutions that become multi-generational, make successful transitions in leadership and update their vision and mission. I recognize how challenging that is. A place like NAASR is worth supporting."

The Hovnanian Foundation made a gift that has been directed to the new building's Atrium Overlook—a feature that enhances the open, spacious and welcoming architecture.

Ms. Hovnanian has established several non-profit programs in Armenia, including HIVE, which invests in tech start-ups, and Birthright Armenia, which provides long-term internships, host family stays and language training.

Two years ago, Ms. Hovnanian established Hike Armenia, an organization that built and marked trails through rural areas of Armenia. Its goal is to attract more people to appreciate the country's history and beauty and bring economic development to the rural areas, which have not benefitted much from the recent boom in tourism in Armenia. "We need to help drive employment there," she says.

From her vantage point in New Jersey, Ms. Hovnanian sees NAASR—and Boston—as important destinations. "Boston has an amazing, close network of people who are supportive of each other," she says. "There's no other place like it."



JOAN E. KOLLIGIAN

Her Generosity Honors Family Members

Joan E. Kolligian says she was well aware of NAASR as a child growing up in Arlington, MA. The adults in her life made sure of it. “I have a big familial connection to NAASR,” she explains. “My uncle, Mark Kolligian, was a founding member, and my aunt, Irene Kolligian, was one of the first female members of the NAASR Board of Directors.”

As a young adult, Miss Kolligian developed her own interest in the organization—initially by attending lectures at NAASR and then, at the urging of her cousin, Nancy Kolligian, becoming increasingly engaged in forwarding NAASR’s mission. Since joining the Board in 2015, she has been involved in planning for the new building.

“It’s a true milestone for NAASR,” says Miss Kolligian, an attorney at McGrath & Kane in Boston. “Our building is the face of NAASR, and this new headquarters is critical if we are going to securely house our rare materials in a climate-controlled setting and attract scholars to NAASR where they can access these treasures and interact with other scholars and the public.”

She admires the role Yervant Chekijian, NAASR Board Chair, has played. “He has been the driving force,” she says. “Board members all shared the vision, but Yervant met one-on-one with our benefactors to be sure the support was there. He is a seasoned businessman, and he brought the new building into reality.

“The building will be attractive,” Miss Kolligian adds, “and the Armenian design features take it to another level.”

Her generous support for the expanded NAASR headquarters reflects her love of family. One gift, made in memory of her uncle and aunt, K. Albert and Veronica Paretchan, is directed to the Music and AV Listening Room. “They enjoyed Armenian music, of which the Mardigian Library has a substantial collection,” she notes. “My uncle and aunt were very good to me.”

A second gift honors her parents, George and A. Elizabeth Kolligian, by supporting various history sections throughout the library. “My father was an Armenian legionnaire—a gamavor—who fought in World War I,” says Miss Kolligian. “He was very patriotic. In fact, he lied about his age in order to join the Armenian Legion. My father was well educated in Armenian history.”

Another family member provided her with a bit of inspiration: to attend law school. Charles Garabedian, her uncle, taught at Suffolk University Law School, where Miss Kolligian obtained her law degree. “I established an annual NAASR lecture in his memory,” she says. She is included in *Boston Magazine’s* listing of New England Super Lawyers, the Top Women of Law and Best Lawyers in America and served on the New England Baptist Hospital Board of Trustees for 12 years.

When she recalls the NAASR she first knew, Miss Kolligian is struck by the exponential growth that has occurred. “A lot has happened in the last two decades. Membership has increased, and NAASR has developed a national presence. Marc Mamigonian [Director of Academic Affairs] has done a great job setting up programs, including overseas, and attracting incredible scholars from around the country.

“NAASR has always been known for its intellectual and academic credibility,” Miss Kolligian notes. “In the 21st century, NAASR is retaining that, but also becoming more social. I believe that will help attract young people to become involved.”



NANCY R. KOLLIGIAN

She Served as NAASR's Second Board Chair, with Impressive Results

NAASR made an important transition from its founding years to becoming a modern organization when Nancy Kolligian was voted in as the Board Chair. It was 2001, and Manoog Young had served as Chair for 47 years, since NAASR's founding.

He had first contacted Ms. Kolligian 15 years earlier. "I received a call from Manoog—I remember hearing his distinctive voice," she says. "He asked me to run for the board. I had joined NAASR a few years out of college; my family had a history of giving back to the Armenian community. I was impressed that NAASR was non-sectarian and non-political. It had one goal: to preserve and perpetuate knowledge of Armenian history and culture. The foresight of the founding members was admirable."

That phone call from Mr. Young was memorable, but Ms. Kolligian readily recalls her proudest moment. "It was when my fellow board members showed their confidence in me by voting for me to serve as Board Chair," she says. "Following Manoog, I knew I had big shoes to fill." She proceeded to focus on modernizing NAASR's operations for future growth and success.

"We streamlined the financial systems while also expanding the library and bookstore," she notes. "We organized more lectures, including in California, where I traveled to meet with our West Coast partners. We also sent books to Yerevan State University." She is grateful to Sandra Jurigian, former Administrative Director, and Marc Mamigonian, Director of Academic Affairs, for their help and enthusiasm.

In turning to Ms. Kolligian for leadership, NAASR found an individual with roots that travel back to the organization's founding. Her great-uncle, J. Mark Kolligian, was one of the founding members. NAASR benefited from her impressive experience as CEO of Distributor Corporation of New England (DCNE), her family's successful business. "DCNE was established in 1963 by my late father, Gregory Archie Kolligian, and his brother, Jack Kolligian. I joined the company in 1986."

Her gift to NAASR's campaign was directed to the Bookstore. "When NAASR was established in 1955, there were fewer than 100 books in English on Armenian subjects," she notes. "Today there are more than 2,000 titles in the bookstore."

Now serving as Board Vice-Chair, Ms. Kolligian remains engaged and proud of what NAASR has become. "The Boston area has been a hub for Armenian organizations. As NAASR has grown, it has become an even more important mecca for scholars. The NAASR Board has encouraged this by increasing the number of grants provided to students at various universities globally."

Ms. Kolligian served as Chair during an important milestone period: NAASR's 50th anniversary. "That was a jubilant and significant celebration. I was especially gratified that both Manoog Young and Greg Adamian were honored that special evening."

The ribbon-cutting for the new headquarters represents another milestone. She has watched the current Board, led by Chair Yervant Chekijian, direct their skill and energy on behalf of NAASR. "Both Yervant and our very dedicated Executive Director, Sarah Ignatius, have done a remarkable job during this critical phase in NAASR's history."

The new building will house the evolved NAASR of the 21st century—a vibrant, well-run organization that has every reason to feel optimistic. Ms. Kolligian played an important role in its evolution and achievement.



EDWARD MARDIGIAN, JR.

Family Foundation Has Supported NAASR's World-Class Library

Edward Mardigian, Sr., arrived in the U.S. at age six with a thirst for knowledge that led to a successful professional life as a mechanical engineer and wide admiration for his philanthropy. With his wife, Helen, he established the Helen and Edward Mardigian Foundation.

The couple settled in Michigan and were major benefactors to NAASR, including the early fundraising campaign to establish an endowed chair at Harvard University. They also served on its Board of Directors—Mr. Mardigian, who was a NAASR Charter Member, from 1956-1961 and Mrs. Mardigian from 1991-2004. NAASR's Mardigian Library, which houses rare books, manuscripts and personal archives of prominent scholars, was named for them in recognition of their generous support.

The Mardigian Foundation has provided grants to support the library, including a recent, profound gift that assures the library, which was described as “one of the top five Armenian libraries open to the public in the diaspora,” will continue to safeguard its precious collection. “When I heard about the reconstruction of NAASR's headquarters, I knew we wanted to support it,” says Edward Mardigian, Jr., who has directed his family's foundation for the past 28 years. “It is in memory of my parents.”

They cared deeply about books and education. “Gifts made by our foundation established libraries at the University of Michigan-Dearborn and on the grounds of our church, St. John's Armenian Church,” notes Mr. Mardigian, who never loses sight of his father's achievements.

“He was a remarkable person who arrived from Istanbul, began selling newspapers, enrolled in the Ford Motor Co. trade school at age 15 and climbed up the ladder,” he says. His father continued to ascend at Ford before moving to Chrysler and ultimately establishing the Mardigian Corporation. He served as President of the Armenian General Benevolent Union in the U.S. and helped assure the future of the Armenian Assembly of America.

“My parents' focus was on the U.S.,” says Mr. Mardigian. “When I visited Armenia for the first time 12 years ago, I saw the great need there. We work with FAR [Fund for Armenian Relief], and we built a children's center in Yerevan.” He is especially proud of the role played by the Mardigian Foundation in the reconstruction of the Octet Music School in Gyumri, which was destroyed by the earthquake in 1988.

“We're making the right decisions and making a difference,” he says. “In Armenia, many people have nothing. You can change lives by providing them with a tractor to plow their land.”

Mr. Mardigian is proud of NAASR's library, which bears his family's name. These days, his mind is also on another building: the Edward and Helen Mardigian Museum of Armenian Art and History of Jerusalem. “My parents established the museum in 1979, and we're undertaking a complete renovation,” he explains. Inspired by his parents, he is focused on engaging the next generation. “I'm getting my children involved in the foundation. They've been to Armenia.”

The needs are vast, both in Armenia and the U.S. “I am glad to see NAASR doing so well,” says Mr. Mardigian. “I am running our foundation in the tradition of my parents with the goal of keeping their wishes alive.”



CAROLANN NAJARIAN, MD, AND GEORGE NAJARIAN

They Applaud NAASR's Outreach to Young People

When Carolann Najarian, MD, and George Najarian learned that they could direct their gift in support of NAASR's expanded, redesigned building to the magnificent front door, they were thrilled. The intricately carved door was created by master artist Mels Yeghiazaryan in Armenia. "I remember saying: 'George, what's better than the front door!'" recalls Dr. Najarian. "We don't generally give to bricks and mortar, but this was different. We broke that rule for NAASR. The door serves as the entrance to a beautiful building that people will look at and come to know."

They especially hope young people increasingly will "come to know" NAASR, much as they did. Mr. Najarian, a Cambridge native, was already familiar with NAASR by the time the couple met. "He was part of the community—and very community-minded," says Dr. Najarian, who met him at an Armenian Student Association convention. The couple married a year later, and she subsequently attended Boston University School of Medicine.

"It was the bookstore that first attracted us to NAASR," she says. "We started buying Christmas gifts and children's books there. Before long, we moved on to discover the library."

Soon after that, the Najarians joined NAASR, began stopping in to talk with Marc Mamigonian [Director of Academic Affairs] and became donors. "We made our recent gift specifically because of NAASR's outreach to youth through programs that engage and stimulate them," says Dr. Najarian. "NAASR has such an intellectual appreciation for the culture.

"Places like NAASR elevate Armenian Studies, language and culture, which is important," she notes. "The world is a mosaic; part of our identity is how we contribute to that mosaic. We know how unique we are."

The Najarians know Armenia well. After the 1988 earthquake and when the war with Azerbaijan was underway, they made more than 50 trips during a 15-year period to bring donated medical supplies and provide assistance and teaching. Dr. Najarian established The Armenian Health Alliance in 1989 in response to the extensive needs she observed throughout the country.

"In 1994, we established the first primary care clinic in Gyumri, and we created a nutrition feeding program for pregnant women in Artsakh," she says. Dr. Najarian also was a founding member of the Armenian Bone Marrow Registry Trust.

She wrote about her experiences in *A Call from Home: Armenia and Karabagh, My Journal*, for which Mr. Najarian provided photographs. The couple, who reside in Lincoln, made a happy return to Armenia in the spring of 2019. "The door is now wide open again in Armenia," Dr. Najarian notes.

Their commitment in the Boston area includes the Najarian Human Rights Lecture, which they have endowed and is held each year at Faneuil Hall in conjunction with the Armenian Heritage Foundation and Park. NAASR also means a great deal to them.

"We feel that NAASR's reputation has grown in recent years," says Dr. Najarian. "In fact, it has really blossomed. I see NAASR as an important spoke in a big wheel that keeps our Armenian heritage not only alive, but lively—and intellectually relevant."



PETER PALANDJIAN

Tennis Pro Turned CEO Is Proud of His Family and Armenian Roots

Growing up in Belmont and Watertown, Peter Palandjian knew about NAASR. More recently, he enthusiastically agreed to sponsor a couple of NAASR programs in the Boston area. Then, in 2016, Mr. Palandjian became aware of the campaign to build a new NAASR headquarters thanks to friends like Ara Krafian, CEO of SMMA, the architecture firm that designed the building, and Stephen Kurkjian, author and former *Boston Globe* reporter, a NAASR Board Member.

Mr. Palandjian has an interesting connection with Vartan Gregorian, PhD, President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, for whom the new headquarters is named. “My great-grandfather, Vartan Afrikian, was his schoolteacher in a village just outside Yerevan,” Mr. Palandjian explains. His grandfather also became Mayor. His father, Petros Palandjian, was from Iran and arrived in the U.S. around the same time as Dr. Gregorian. His father established a construction company that evolved to become Intercontinental Real Estate Corporation.

Today, Peter Palandjian serves as Chairman and CEO of the successful real estate investment firm. He looks back at his late father with admiration. “I am grateful to have had a strong father, in terms of emotional support and love,” he says.

His father encouraged him to pursue his goals. After majoring in English and American Literature at Harvard University, Mr. Palandjian became a tennis pro. “Hockey was my first love,” he notes. “I was on skates at age four. My parents encouraged us to play sports.”

When his father bought a tennis club on Cape Cod, he got serious about the sport. “I knew I had to choose between hockey and tennis,” says Mr. Palandjian. He did, was captain of the Harvard team and turned pro at 22. He competed in the French Open, Wimbledon Championships and US Open.

“I signed good contracts and saw the world, including much of the U.S. and dozens of countries,” says Mr. Palandjian of his brief, but eventful, tennis career. He then turned his attention to a business career and held positions at Bain & Company and Staples before obtaining an MBA at Harvard Business School. At that point, he joined the family business.

In overseeing Intercontinental since 1993, Mr. Palandjian is inspired by his father, who established a supportive culture. He is proud of the real estate negotiations he has undertaken, including Winthrop Park in Harvard Square, which involved a host of players—the City of Cambridge, the Cambridge Historical Commission, the planning board and nearby businesses.

As it turned out, Mr. Palandjian was the right person to manage the complex development negotiations that defined the oldest open space in Harvard Square. “There was an Armenian Catholic church on the corner, and we made purchasing the church part of the deal,” he explains. “I met with Bernard Cardinal Law, and the exarchate from New York flew in to bless the arrangement. We built a new church, assured it would be financially secure, and I named it in my father’s memory. That meant a lot to me.”

Mr. Palandjian, who is married to the actress Eliza Dushku, made a generous gift to NAASR that was directed to the Scholars’ Conference Room. “My parents taught us to give back,” he says. “In making this gift to NAASR, I am honoring my roots, my Dad and my grandparents.”



JUDITH SARYAN AND VICTOR ZAROUGIAN

Alphabet Wall Reflects Their Bond Over Words and Literature

Like many who make a strong connection with NAASR, Judith Saryan was influenced by her family. “My father had an interest in Armenian linguistics, and he became a NAASR member early on,” she recalls. “That made me want to go there.”

When Ms. Saryan, who grew up in Wilmington, Delaware, attended Wellesley College, she got her opportunity. Around that time, she met Victor Zarougian at an Armenian dance. The couple married and became enthusiastic NAASR members and generous supporters. She has served on the NAASR board since 2014 and is now its Treasurer. Together, they appreciate how much NAASR has grown and developed.

“NAASR’s original goal was to establish endowed professorships,” Ms. Saryan notes. “That was successful. The goal now is to expand the field of Armenian Studies by bringing in academics, scholars and the general public to further engage people in Armenian history and culture.”

Mr. Zarougian, who moved to the U.S. from Egypt at age 12 and went on to a successful career in real estate management and development, applauds NAASR for its efforts to attract young people to its mission. “It’s not easy, but they are finding a way to do that,” he says.

The organization provides grant support to talented young scholars who are involved in Armenian Studies. “In some cases, these scholars identify an important subject that hasn’t yet been investigated,” says Ms. Saryan. “This is helping to create a renaissance of interest in Armenian Studies.” Ms. Saryan, who retired after many years in the financial sector and served as Vice President of Eaton Vance Investment Managers, found a subject of her own—one that became important to her—while viewing a documentary at NAASR. She was in the audience when “Finding Zabel Yessayan” was presented. “That lit the fire in me,” she recalls. Ms. Saryan has co-edited three translations of Yessayan’s books, is working on a fourth and commissioning a play.

“Zabel Yessayan, an advocate for social justice and women’s rights in Ottoman Armenian society, has universal appeal because she resisted oppression,” says Ms. Saryan. “Most people had never heard of her. Now, in Armenia and around the world, people are reading her books.”

Ms. Saryan and Mr. Zarougian made a generous gift to NAASR that supported the creation of something that can’t be missed by those who visit the new headquarters: the distinctive Alphabet Wall along the stairway to the third floor. “The alphabet plays an important role in the history and survival of the Armenian nation,” Mr. Zarougian explains. “We liked the fact that the alphabet would be so visible. It’s a powerful image—a message of determination. With the new building, the message is that NAASR is moving forward.”

The alphabet wall reflects something the couple shares with each other and with NAASR, says Ms. Saryan. “Victor and I bonded over words and literature,” she says. “This connects us with NAASR, which is largely about books and ideas.”

The couple is optimistic about NAASR’s future. “Sarah Ignatius’s leadership has changed the trajectory of NAASR reaching out to the wider community and putting global into NAASR’s future,” says Ms. Saryan. “Increasingly, Belmont is a destination for Armenian and non-Armenian people. The story of NAASR reflects the story of the Armenians.”



DEAN SHAHINIAN

He Has Appreciated NAASR Since His College Years

Dean Shahinian says his family instilled in him a love for Armenian culture from an early age. “My mother sent friends Christmas cards bearing copies of Toros Roslin manuscript illuminations,” he recalls. “My aunt, Lily Jelalian, had English language books on Armenian art. Our family belonged to the Armenian Church.”

While an undergraduate at Yale University, he heard about NAASR’s bookstore and discovered many titles on Armenian subjects written in English. As a graduate student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he attended a seminar at NAASR. “I listened to professors of Armenian Studies from several universities give interesting talks about their research and discuss the importance of Armenian chairs at universities,” he says. This experience convinced him to become a NAASR member.

Mr. Shahinian obtained his law degree from the University of Virginia School of Law and practiced in Washington, D.C. His successful career was capped by 16 years serving as Senior Counsel and Chief Securities Policy Adviser for the U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs. He was a major drafter of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, the Dodd-Frank Act and other significant securities and banking laws. He staffed more than 100 committee hearings for the chairmen.

Despite his demanding professional life, Mr. Shahinian has provided his energy and enthusiasm to the Armenian Church, in which he has held leadership positions. He was elected a Representative to the Armenian Church National Ecclesiastical Assemblies to vote for the Catholicos of All Armenians in 1995 and 1999; elected to the Diocesan Council, where he served on the Executive Committee; and to the Diocesan Auditing Committee, where he served as Chairman. The Catholicos awarded him with the St. Nersess Shnorhali Medal.

He also chaired the Alexandria-Gyumri Sister Cities Committee, emceed the annual Alexandria Armenian Festivals, served on the board of the Armenian Students Association and served as Executive Director of the Ararat Foundation, which promotes Christian faith and Armenian culture.

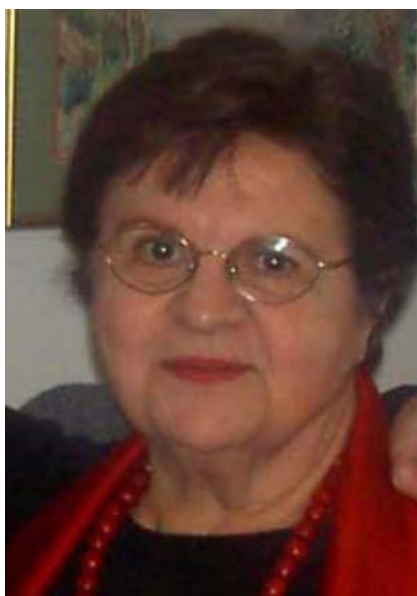
It is 40 years since Mr. Shahinian discovered NAASR and began purchasing books there. But he did not lose contact. “Some friends have joined the NAASR board,” he says. He became aware that NAASR sponsors regional educational programs. “They held one at Georgetown University, which I attended.

“NAASR has access to Armenian leaders and scholars with whom they can collaborate to build a global intellectual community,” he observes. “They have great potential to accomplish this.”

The plan to rebuild NAASR headquarters captured his interest. “Constructing a new building is important for community morale, particularly after recent failures of other Armenian-American projects. I’m glad that the plan to build has been realized.”

His generous donation is being directed to the Solarium. “My gift was made out of gratitude to my parents, Dr. Paul and Mrs. Grace Jelalian Shahinian, my aunt and our family, for their love and for teaching me about all things Armenian,” says Mr. Shahinian. “The gift is also a token of thanks to the Armenian community of Boston, with whom I have made friends through the Armenian Church, and to Armenian scholars whose work has taught me about our heritage.

“Finally, it is intended to benefit NAASR, an organization I respect and whose work benefits the community.”



GRACE YENI-KOMSHIAN, PhD

Her First Visit to NAASR Had a Lasting Impact

Grace Yeni-Komshian, PhD, recalls the strong impression the organization made on her when she first visited NAASR. “It was in the 1960s, and I was visiting my sister, Shushan Teager, who is currently a member of the NAASR board,” says Dr. Yeni-Komshian. “She took me to NAASR. I was delighted to find a place that focused on the intellectual achievements of Armenians, rather than their misfortunes.”

Dr. Yeni-Komshian has been a generous supporter of NAASR’s academic activities and information technology. This ties directly to her many years on the faculty of the University of Maryland, where she is Professor Emerita in the Department of Hearing and Speech Sciences. After moving to the U.S. from Lebanon at age 22, she continued her education at Cornell and McGill Universities and later settled in the Washington, D.C., area. “I loved all the opportunities that were available to me in the States,” she says, adding that she pursued her studies in psychology, which had begun at the American University of Beirut. “I was not interested in the clinical aspects of psychology; rather, I was drawn to what goes on in our brains when we use language to communicate.”

Her research has focused on auditory neurophysiology, acoustic analysis of speech, brain mechanisms involved in speech processing, speech perception and first and second language acquisition. She has published numerous articles in these areas.

Before joining the University of Maryland, Dr. Yeni-Komshian worked at Johns Hopkins University, School of Medicine, and was a Health Scientist Administrator at the National Institutes of Health.

When she learned of the campaign to renovate and expand NAASR, she responded with a significant gift that reflects her interests while addressing NAASR’s specific needs: half was directed to Advanced Audio-Visual Technology, and the other half to the Library Reading Area. She cares deeply about NAASR’s mission of building a global community.

“NAASR sponsors interesting lectures by scholars who come to its Belmont headquarters from locations around the country and the world,” Dr. Yeni-Komshian notes. “I would love to see all of them streamed so that they are available to a larger audience.” She sees information technology as a way to extend NAASR’s influence while also attracting young people. “We have to find ways to get them interested. Electronic outreach is the best way.”

Her academic side can’t help but admire—and want access to—NAASR’s bookstore, which is online, as well as its impressive Mardigian Library, which has expanded in size and the number of volumes thanks to the renovation. “Could NAASR scan every book and make it available worldwide?” she asks. “Maybe not in my lifetime, but I hope someday.”

That first impression of NAASR linked Dr. Yeni-Komshian to an organization whose work continues to be meaningful. “I support NAASR because it is apolitical and committed to highlighting the cultural and artistic contributions of Armenians. We have achieved so much.

“I want NAASR’s success to continue,” she adds. “I wish I had a NAASR in my neighborhood.”

Thanks to Dr. Yeni-Komshian’s gift for advanced audio-video technology, NAASR’s lectures will reach far beyond its Belmont headquarters.

NAASR: VISION FOR THE FUTURE

NAASR looks toward the next generation, engaging audiences of all ages, advancing Armenian Studies and building a global community:

GLOBAL GATHERING PLACE. NAASR's building transformation is only the beginning as NAASR becomes a destination for students, professionals, researchers, scholars and the public, near and far, to collaborate, explore, network, conduct research and develop innovative ideas and projects relating to Armenian history, culture and identity. Collaboration, already an integral aspect of NAASR's approach, will only increase as NAASR expands its partnerships with academic institutions around the world as well as with organizations and people involved with Armenian Studies, and continues to broaden its actively engaged membership nationally and internationally.

WORLDWIDE ELECTRONIC ACCESS TO NAASR'S RESOURCES. At the same time that NAASR's headquarters becomes a destination, NAASR is moving beyond the boundaries of geography to offer global electronic access to its programming and resources through advanced AV technology, a searchable online library catalogue of its rare book Mardigian Library through NAASR's website and online viewing of programs through NAASR's YouTube channel Armenian Studies.

DIGITIZATION. In 2020, NAASR will begin digitizing some of its rarest materials 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 periodicals, digitization is essential before they crumble and disappear completely.

PRESERVATION OF WORLD-CLASS, RARE BOOK LIBRARY. Preservation of the priceless holdings in NAASR's world-class, rare book Mardigian Library of nearly 30,000 books, some dating to the 1600s, and hard-to-find periodicals and unique special collections will now be possible in the climate-controlled environment of NAASR's new headquarters with space specifically allocated for ongoing conservation work.

WELCOMING BOOKSTORE. NAASR's bookstore, one of the top distributors of books in English on Armenian topics, will be a welcoming center for book groups, author talks and informal conversation. At the same time, NAASR will offer its entire catalogue of more than 1,000 titles for sale online through its website.

INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMING. NAASR will continue to offer more than 50 outstanding programs around the country each year and will expand their global reach through modern AV technology, linking participants near and far, as well as holding programs in cities outside the United States.

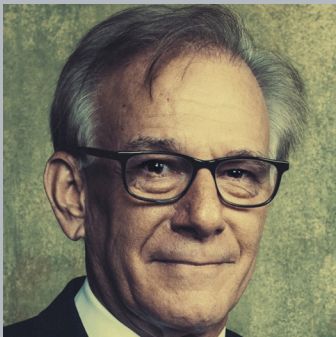
CONNECTIONS TO ARMENIA. NAASR will specifically work to deepen its connections to Armenia through supporting scholars in Armenia with research grants, developing fellowships, working with the National Library of Armenia on digitization and developing other institutional relationships.

SCHOLAR GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS. NAASR will increase its support for Armenian Studies scholars with research assistance and grants, and launch a fellowship program at NAASR and educational institutions in the United States, Armenia and elsewhere. NAASR will continue its strong partnership in its Scholar Grants Program with the Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies.

YOUTH PROGRAMMING AND GENEALOGY. From grade school on up, NAASR will welcome the next generation to touch and turn the pages of rare books over 100 years old, to study, side by side, books written in a variety of languages, such as Armenian, Arabic, Persian and English from NAASR's collection, and to deepen their knowledge of their own family history and genealogy.

GENOCIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION. NAASR's new headquarters will have permanent access to the entire USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, containing more than 55,000 video testimonies of eye-witnesses and survivors of genocide, including the Holocaust, the Armenian genocide, the Rwandan genocide, the Nanjing massacres, the Guatemalan genocide, the Cambodian genocide, and South Sudanese and Rohingya testimonies. Researchers, students and the public will be able to search these source documents, deepen their understanding of the causes of genocide and develop strategies for prevention.

65th ANNIVERSARY GALA SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2019



DAVID IGNATIUS, EVENING EMCEE

David Ignatius is an associate editor and columnist for the *Washington Post*, writing on global politics, economics and international affairs. He is also the author of ten spy novels, including *Body of Lies*, which was made into a feature film starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Russell Crowe. He joined the *Washington Post* in 1986 and began writing his column in 1998, which he continued while executive editor of the *International Herald Tribune* in Paris. Earlier in his career, Ignatius was a reporter for the *Wall Street Journal*. He graduated from Harvard College *magna cum laude*, and received a degree from Kings College, Cambridge. He is a Senior Fellow to the Future of Diplomacy Program at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He is also a frequent commentator on MSNBC and has received numerous international journalism awards and the Legion of Honor from the French Republic.



*Nicholas Kitchen, Violin
Kristopher Tong, Violin
Mai Motobuchi, Viola
Yeesun Kim, Cello*

BORROMEO STRING QUARTET

Admired for both its fresh interpretations of the classical music canon and its championing of works by 20th and 21st century composers, the Borromeo String Quartet is one of the most important ensembles of our time. Hailed for its “edge-of-the-seat performances,” by the *Boston Globe*, which called it “simply the best,” it has been ensemble-in-residence at the New England Conservatory and Taos School of Music, both for 25 years, as well as at the Heifetz International Music Institute. The quartet was also in residence at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum for more than two decades, where it continues to appear regularly, and has worked extensively as performers and educators with the Library of Congress and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. The Quartet has received numerous awards throughout its illustrious career, including Lincoln Center’s Avery Fisher Career Grant and Martin E. Segal Award.



ISABEL BAYRAKDARIAN, SOPRANO

It's not every prima donna who can boast a degree in biomedical engineering, but then, Isabel Bayrakdarian isn't your average prima donna. In a career still in its second decade, an eagerly anticipated visitor to opera houses and concert halls the world over, she's become as celebrated for her beauty, presence, and style as for a strikingly multihued voice that's wholly in sync with the rest of her.

A winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions—Ms. Bayrakdarian thereafter found her career taking rapid wing. She scored a notable success in the Lyric Opera of Chicago's world premiere production of William Bolcom's *A View from the Bridge*; the following year, she walked away from Plácido Domingo's prestigious Operalia competition with first prize. More debuts followed, including her San Francisco Opera debut, as Valencienne in *The Merry Widow*, and her Metropolitan Opera debut, in the New York premiere of Bolcom's opera; a season later, she won plaudits as Teresa in the Met premiere of Berlioz's *Benvenuto Cellini*. Mozart became a specialty: Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* (New York, Houston, Salzburg), Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro* (Los Angeles, London), and Pamina in *The Magic Flute* (New York, Toronto). Her roles at Toronto's Canadian Opera Company range from Gluck's Euridice to Debussy's Mélisande to Poulenc's Blanche in *Dialogues des Carmélites*; and away from Canada, she has shone as Monteverdi's Poppea in Barcelona, Handel's Romilda (*Serse*) in Dresden, and Janáček's Vixen in New York, Florence, and the Saito Kinen Festival in Matsumoto, Japan.

She has appeared with the premier orchestras of the world under the baton of such eminent conductors as Seiji Ozawa, James Conlon, David Zinman, Michael Tilson Thomas, and Alan Gilbert. Her versatility is also reflected in being the featured vocalist on the Grammy-award winning soundtrack of the blockbuster film *The Two Towers* from *The Lord of The Rings* trilogy and on the soundtrack of Atom Egoyan's *Ararat*. A trance music collaboration with the electronica band Delerium garnered yet another Grammy nomination. She sings on the BBC-produced short film *HOLOCAUST - A Music Memorial Film from Auschwitz*, as well as her Gemini-nominated film *Long Journey Home*, documenting her first visit to her ancestral homeland Armenia.

Bayrakdarian is the winner of four consecutive Juno Awards for Best Classical Album, and her latest recording, *Mother of Light*, was nominated for a 2018 Juno Award. She is also the recipient of many other awards, including the Marilyn Horne Foundation Competition Award, Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee and the Diamond Jubilee Medals, the Arbor Award from the University of Toronto, the George London Foundation Award, Canada Council's Virginia Parker Prize, and the Republic of Armenia's "Komitas Medal." Most recently, she was awarded the "Movses Khorenatsi" medal, the Republic of Armenia's highest cultural award.

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