

ARARAT

H Y E L I G H T S

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Summer 2017

Gohar Papouchian: Making the Most of Life

Gohar Papouchian was born in Baghdad, Iraq, in 1932, as the youngest of four children of genocide survivors, Sarkis and Dznount. From her parents, Gohar acquired the characteristics of

school, Gohar was exceptionally bright and became the only female student in her class to pass the baccalaureate in both Armenian and Arabic. She continued her studies at an American school in Baghdad and aspired to be a pilot, a bold choice for a young lady at that time.

In 1947, Gohar's family repatriated to Armenia. A difficult adjustment for a 15-year old, Gohar made a willful decision to focus on her studies and worked hard to achieve her academic and professional goals. After obtaining a degree in mechanical engineering, she began work at Mergelyan Institute of Mathematical Machines, a scientific research institute in Yerevan.

As challenging as the transition to a new life in post-World War II Soviet Armenia was for Gohar, she says that she is happy her family made that decision, as she met her husband Mardiros there. Mardiros was a repatriate from Lebanon who studied and worked as a chemical engineer. The two were part of a social circle of friends that all shared an interest in ballroom dancing. "We met while dancing and built a happy life together," she says.

In 1980, with the help of her sister Takouhi who had remained in Baghdad with her husband, Gohar and Mardiros emigrated from Armenia with the youngest of their three daughters. After spending three months in Italy, they eventually settled in Los Angeles. In her usual poised and self-assured way, she says, "Mardiros and I were both hard working and ambitious individuals, and so we were able to build a new life for ourselves here." Mardiros worked with a manufacturing company building circuit boards for personal computers. Gohar enrolled in a one-year course studying computerized accounting and then worked with an accounting firm for 15 years until her retirement. In the meantime, they were undergoing the arduous process of filing immigration papers for their two older daughters, who had remained in Armenia with their own families. After seven years of effort, they were all reunited in Los Angeles.

Gohar speaks with immense love and pride about her three daughters and their accomplishments as well as her three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Her eldest daughter Arous Dabagyan works as Development Manager at a company providing



technology solutions for financial services. Her second daughter Annie Safoian is the co-founder and Chief Financial Officer of SADA Systems, a business and technology consulting firm that provides information technology solutions and managed services. And, her youngest daughter Armine Papouchian works as Vice-President of Provider Contracting for a major health insurance company.

Besides work and time spent with family, Gohar established an active social life in Los Angeles similar to what she enjoyed throughout her life in Baghdad and Yerevan. She volunteered with several organizations including the Valley Guild of Ararat Home, played cards with her circle of friends, and participated in social round-table groups discussing women's issues. She says, "I've always been outspoken about my views and never shied away from expressing my opinions." Additionally, until his passing ten years ago, Gohar and Mardiros enjoyed making the most of opportunities to travel the world.

Among her many fascinating stories, Gohar shares one about a moment when her "life came full circle". A year ago, she received a surprise telephone call from a woman in Canada who had been searching for her. When she confirmed that she was indeed "that" Gohar from Baghdad, the woman revealed her identity. Two best friends, who had shared their childhoods together in Baghdad and then had become separated at the age of 15 to have no further contact, reunited 70 years later!



Assisted Living Facility
Resident Gohar Papouchian

perseverance that enabled her, as she says, "to make the most of my life."

Her father Sarkis was born in Bursa, Turkey, and survived the death marches by cooking and selling *khosh* (stew) on his long journey to Baghdad; there, he began working in the postal service and later opened and operated a hotel. Her mother Dznount, at the age of 12, was forced to flee her home in a village near Izmir, Turkey, along with her parents; after surviving the march through the desert of Deir ez-Zor, they settled in Baghdad, where they reunited with her brother, who had been separated after being drafted into the Turkish military.

Sarkis and Dznount provided a comfortable home for their family until Sarkis' death in 1934, when Gohar was the tender age of two. To support the family, Dznount worked hard as a seamstress sewing school uniforms, while Gohar's older sister Takouhi worked as a nurse. In

IN THIS ISSUE

Gohar Papouchian: Making the Most of Life	1
Nursing Facility Receives Prestigious Award	2
A Day of Altruism and Appreciation	2
Giving Opportunities:	3
Assisted Living Facility New Wing	
Ararat Home Appreciates Its Wonderful Volunteers	3
Trustees Answer the Question:	4
What Does Ararat Home Mean to You?	
Save the Dates	4

NURSING FACILITY

RECEIVES A PRESTIGIOUS NATIONAL AWARD

We are very proud to report that the Nursing Facility has been recognized as a 2017 recipient of the *Bronze - Commitment to Quality Award* for its dedication to improving the lives of residents through quality care and performance excellence.

This national award is presented annually by the American Health Care Association and National Center for Assisted Living, the leading association for long-term and post-acute care that represents more than 13,000 care facilities. The National Quality Award Program has three progressive levels: Bronze, Silver and Gold. The awards recognize those member facilities that demonstrate a strong commitment to delivering ever-improving value to residents as well as families and to improving overall organizational performance.

As a Bronze Award recipient, the Nursing Facility has clearly demonstrated its commitment to implementing a rigorous, comprehensive quality improvement program. This is the first step on a pathway to achieving excellence by developing systematic, sustainable, and person-centered care and services. "We are honored to be recognized for our continuous commitment to delivering quality care," said Nursing Facility Executive Director Margarita Kechichian. She expressed pride in the entire Nursing Facility team for its ongoing, daily efforts in quality improvement that yielded the recognition of this award.

Ararat Home Board of Trustees Chair Michael Surmeian congratulated the entire Nursing Facility staff for this outstanding accomplishment. He noted that this was another great achievement for the Home following the same recognition Ararat Convalescent Hospital received in 2015. He said, "The Board is truly grateful to all staff, volunteers and supporters for such unparalleled devotion to Ararat Home's mission of care."



A DAY OF ALTRUISM AND APPRECIATION

June 27th was a busy day at Ararat Home...

Mission Hills campus

For the third consecutive year, we partnered with the American Red Cross to organize a blood drive on our campus. The drive was an overall success with the participation of 50 Ararat Home staff members, residents, family members and friends. Among our employees, past donors as well as transfusion recipients were encouraging potential new donors, and so a steady stream of participants kept the Red Cross staff busy all day. Many noted that their participation was a "feel good" experience and they are looking forward to next year's drive.



On that same day, the Home's administration organized an Employee Appreciation Lunch to say THANK YOU to all staff members for their continuous hard work and commitment to delivering quality care to our residents.

Assisted Living Facility and Nursing Facility staff enjoy lunch following their blood drive participation



Eagle Rock campus

As June is Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month, the Convalescent Hospital staff marked the occasion with an annual walk. Dressed in purple, the official color of the awareness movement, they walked for several blocks despite the high temperatures of the day. "They did it with



Alzheimer's Awareness Walk

lots of enthusiasm and heart," said Administrator Varsenik Keshishyan of her staff, "showing their love, especially for our residents with dementia."

During the Employee Appreciation Lunch, Certified Nursing Assistant Victoria Kevorkian was recognized for her 35 years of service to the Home. After so many years, Victoria still enjoys her work tremendously, which is evident by how much the residents adore her.

Victoria Kevorkian: 35 years of dedicated service



Giving Opportunities:

ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY NEW WING

Since its establishment in 1949, Ararat Home has grown and been sustained by the generous gifts of individuals and families who have considered the mission of caring for the elderly in our community to be a noble cause. The invaluable support provided by *FRIENDS OF ARARATHOME* has helped ensure that the Home remains a treasured asset in our community.

Today, Ararat Home needs an increased level of that support. With almost 70% of construction completed at the end of June, we are pleased to announce that the *final* phase of expansion on our Mission Hills campus is nearing its end. We are, therefore, appealing to our supporters' spirit of generosity and giving to help us achieve this new milestone in our history.



We have identified *OPPORTUNITIES FOR GIVING* in the new wing of our Assisted Living Facility. We look forward to discussing them with you whether you prefer that an Opportunity for Giving becomes part of your legacy or the living memory of a loved one. As always, Ararat Home is truly grateful for your support.

For more information on giving opportunities, please contact Executive Secretary Ani Dikranian at (818) 365-3000 or info@ararathome.org.

ARARAT HOME APPRECIATES ITS WONDERFUL VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers comprise one of the essential wheels that keeps Ararat Home running and on track. Without this remarkable group of individuals, the organization would be unable to sustain its noble mission of care.

And so, on May 7th, as an expression of sincere gratitude for the tireless efforts of so many active and dedicated



volunteers, Ararat Home organized a Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon. Guests enjoyed the Spanish-themed event and the fabulous flamenco entertainment.

For members of the extended Ararat Home family, who generously contribute their time and talents in so many ways to the various arms of the organization, the luncheon was an opportunity to come together in fellowship.

TRUSTEES ANSWER THE QUESTION:

What Does Ararat Home Mean to You?

NORA HAMPAR

My love for Ararat Home began in 1985, when my late husband Herb Tertzag became Chairman of the Board of Trustees. I have been a trustee for over 25 years and am honored to serve the Home in this capacity. Having been heavily involved in fundraising activities for so many years, I have a unique perspective on the extraordinary role the Home plays in our community in providing compassionate and comprehensive care to the elderly.

VAHE VARTANIAN

Ararat Home has always been a place where the traditions of the Armenian heritage intertwine with outstanding care to provide our elderly a nurturing environment conducive to their well-being. The name is synonymous with a pride in our history, which inspires the peace of mind we provide our residents and their families. In the tradition of excellence, Ararat Home holds an indelible place in our community as a beacon of hope. I cannot help but feel an air of absolute serenity when crossing the threshold of Ararat Home, and I am honored to serve as a trustee.

— Save the Dates —



*Saturday, October 21;
5:30pm - 10:00pm
Deukmejian Grand Ballroom*

ARARAT-ESKIJIAN MUSEUM

Contact: Maggie Mangassarian-Goschin
(747) 500-7585

• "ROUSTAM: NAPOLEON'S ARMENIAN BODYGUARD" by ARA GHAZARIANS

Friday, September 1; 7:30pm
Sheen Memorial Chapel

• PRESENTATION OF THE HISTORY, COLLECTION & ARCHIVES OF AGBU NUBAR LIBRARY IN PARIS by DR. BORIS ADJEMIAN

Saturday, October 7; 6:00pm
Sheen Memorial Chapel

• PRESENTATION OF THE ARMENIAN COLLECTION & UPCOMING EXHIBITION AT THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART IN NEW YORK by HELEN C. EVANS

Sunday, October 22; 4:00pm
Sheen Memorial Chapel

LADIES AUXILIARY

Contact: Alice Kavaldjian (818) 466-9389

• MONTHLY LUNCHEONS

First Tuesday of Each Month; 11:00am – 2:00pm

Ararat Home Deukmejian Grand Ballroom

• ALOHA HULA HAWAIIAN LUAU

Saturday, August 19; 7:00pm – 10:00pm
Ararat Home Heritage Courtyard

MASSIS GUILD (Montebello)

Contact: Anita Tokatlian (626) 422-0002

• LUNCH & BINGO

Saturday, July 29; 11:30am
Hye Cuisine, Montebello

• BEESHEE BREAKFAST

Saturday, August 26; 9:00am – 12:00pm
Montebello Armenian Center

• MASSIS FASHION SHOW & LUNCHEON

Sunday, October 15; 11:00am – 3:00pm
Friendly Hills Country Club, Whittier

ORANGE COUNTY GUILD

Contact: Sona Simsarian (949) 733-1243

• CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Monday, December 11; 11:00am
Ruth's Chris Steakhouse, Irvine

SAN GABRIEL VALLEY GUILD

Contact: Vicky Parian (626) 303-2023

• CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Sunday, December 10
Raffi's Catering & Banquet, Pasadena

WESTSIDE GUILD

Contact: Lynnette Amerian (818) 389-2500;
Gerri Chuchian (310) 274-1694

• CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Saturday, December 9
Beverly Hills Hotel

ARARAT HYLIGHTS

CO-EDITORS

DEBBIE AVEDIAN
ANI DIKRANIAN

PHOTOGRAPHY

ANI DIKRANIAN
DIANA MHERIAN

DESIGN/PRINTING

DOCTORIAN PRODUCTIONS



ARARAT HOME OF LOS ANGELES, INC.

15105 Mission Hills Road
Mission Hills, CA 91345

(818) 365-3000
info@ararathome.org
ararathome.org

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