

ARARAT

H Y E L I G H T S

A Publication of Ararat Home of Los Angeles, Inc.®

Winter 2016

Isabella (Bella) Sarkissian

The Interminable Nurse

Born in 1928, Isabella (Bella) Sarkissian was the only child of highly educated parents Mariam and Sarkis Sarkissian, a physician and a chemist. Bella grew up in Rostov, Russia, until the age of ten, when her family moved to Tehran, Iran, where she would live for the next 50 years. Reflecting on her life now at the age of 88, Bella says that although she has faced many hardships, she has lived a good, productive life.

Education has been an important focus for Bella throughout her life. Upon completing high school, she pursued higher education graduating from Reza Shah University (currently Mazandaran University) and then obtaining a degree in nursing from Pahlavi University (currently Shiraz University). Thus began her career in nursing, which Bella officially ended about 30 years ago, but from which she has yet to retire!



Shortly after receiving her nursing degree, Bella began working in the prestigious Bank Melli Iran (National Bank of Iran) affiliated hospital, which primarily served the approximately 25,000 bank employees. When the bank completed construction on its second hospital, the Shah officiated over its opening ceremony. Bella was one of the individuals selected to receive the Shah on his official visit, and she was charged with answering any questions he might ask regarding the hospital's operations. On seeing her name tag "Isabella", the Shah asked her if she was French. Bella proudly replied that she was indeed a product of Iran. Pleased with her response, she was asked to stand behind the Shah as he signed the official opening papers.



Bella watches as Mohammad Reza Shah authorizes the hospital's opening

Bella made a very good impression on the Shah during his visit, such that he encouraged her to travel to the United States to further her

education. With the bank's sponsorship, Bella enrolled in the hospital management graduate program at the University of Oklahoma. At the age of 56 and as the only foreign student in her program, Bella obtained her Master's degree. She returned to Tehran, and for ten years, she headed the financial administration of the bank's two hospitals.

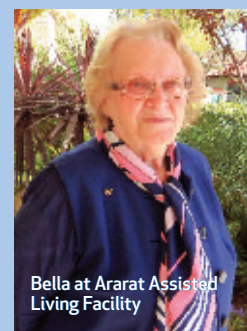
Bella advanced her education and career all while raising her children and supporting her family. In 1947, she married Nikola Sarkissian and had two sons, Sarkis and George. After some time, however, she and her husband separated,

and Bella took on the responsibilities of a single parent. She worked hard and made sacrifices to ensure that her sons would be able to pursue their educational goals. And so, after graduating from high school, Sarkis moved to Florence, Italy, to study architecture, and George moved to the United States and studied project management engineering in New York. Today, Sarkis lives in Milan with his wife Nina and daughters Arlena and Arletta, and George lives with his wife Anita and daughter Ani in New York. Bella is proud of her sons and praises her daughters-in-law for their love and dedication to their families.

Bella eventually remarried and lived happily with her husband Varoujan Kuyoumjian for 25 years until his death. They immigrated to Los Angeles in 1988, where many of their friends and extended family lived. Bella created a new social life for herself and, in no time, was again reaching out to those whom she could help; something she has been doing both professionally and personally her entire life.

Before moving to Ararat Home, Bella lived in an apartment building in Burbank, which had over 100 other Armenian residents. Bella's personable, compassionate, energetic, caring and helpful nature impressed others, and she was selected to lead the resident council. She assisted with translations, organized activities and outings, planned game days and parties, and financially aided whoever appealed to her for help. She worked to create a community, and her neighbors called her "our Bella, our angel!"

Now, Ararat Home calls her "our Bella", because her optimism is so endearing. Whether it is the attention she pays another resident who is feeling



Bella at Ararat Assisted Living Facility

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Thanksgiving day at ARARAT HOME

As with every holiday, Ararat Home staff put forth extra effort to make Thanksgiving Day truly notable for our residents. And, thanks to some special visitors, it was a very memorable day this year!

Hye Riders and Archbishop Hovnan Derderian visit Ararat Home Mission Hills campus



Hye Riders visit with residents



Members of Hye Riders and Arch. Derderian at the Nursing Facility



Thanksgiving blessings



Arch. Derderian visits with residents



Thanksgiving lunch at the Assisted Living Facility



Hye Riders share Thanksgiving lunch with Assisted Living Facility residents



Assisted Living Facility resident Filip Asatourian bids farewell to members of the Hye Riders



Every year, in true Thanksgiving spirit, the Assisted Living Facility prepares and delivers a Thanksgiving meal (turkeys and trimmings) to the nearby fire station. In addition, the Home lends tables and chairs to the firehouse for firefighters to enjoy holiday meals with their families in attendance. We have continued this tradition for over 20 years, as it is an opportunity for us to express our appreciation to our local first responders for the work they do throughout the year.

Assisted Living Facility kitchen staff prepares turkeys for local fire station



Assisted Living Facility Administrator and staff at Fire Station 75



ARARAT-ESKIJIAN MUSEUM GROWS ITS COLLECTION AND HITS A MILESTONE

We are elated that Ararat-Eskijian Museum will soon open a new exhibition featuring its most recent acquisition of 105 copper and

The Memoirs of Naim Bey and Talat Pasha's Telegrams. "Stay tuned" for more information on upcoming events in 2017, like the conference and exhibition in February highlighting the community and culture of Hadjin.

Furthermore, we are proud to report an additional success. Ararat-Eskijian Museum very recently completed the digitization of Professor Vahakn Dadrian's archives. Professor Dadrian is a foremost scholar on the Armenian Genocide, and the museum will soon make his collection of documents available online as a great resource for researchers around the world studying issues related to the genocide.

The digitization project, which was started in 2014 by Edward Marghoosian, was completed by our new museum associate Bardig Kouyoumdjian. Bardig is from Paris and has spent several months here working on various museum projects. He is a Certified Expert in Adobe Photoshop as well as an award-winning photographer whose works have been published and exhibited internationally. We are very grateful for his efforts in advancing the mission of the museum.



A portion of the Keshishian collection



Museum Director Maggie Mangassarian-Goschin with Professor Taner Akcam

Prof. Akcam presents his latest work which authenticates various telegrams and documents from the early 20th century that disprove Turkish denials of genocide



Full crowd in Sheen Memorial Chapel for Prof. Akcam's presentation



Bardig Kouyoumdjian

nielloed silver items. These heirloom pieces dating from the 19th through 20th centuries belonged to Sarkis and Varvara Keshishian, who gradually built their collection by searching for and purchasing Armenian handcrafts left behind from the massacres and deportations of Armenians in the various regions of eastern Turkey. The collection was generously donated to the museum by their daughter Nadia Barsamian in order to preserve and promote the rich artistic heritage of Armenians. The collection will form part of the museum's permanent exhibition and will be available for viewing in February.

The museum hit a milestone on November 20 as it hosted its 250th event since beginning its cultural-educational program in 1999. The event was a fascinating lecture by Turkish historian, Professor Taner Akcam, who presented his latest publication,

MUSEUM HOURS:

Sat. & Sun. 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.
1st Tues. of month 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
or by appointment

Open to the public; free admission
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TRUSTEES ANSWER THE QUESTION: *What Does Ararat Home Mean to You?*

ROY MARTINIAN, D.D.S.

Our Ararat Home is the result of the endeavor of many visionary, dedicated and able individuals. Their unwavering spirit and love has created a sanctuary for our elderly and put Ararat Home on the map for operating top-ranked nursing and assisted living facilities. As the year comes to a close, I would like to give thanks to all our wonderful administrators, staff, volunteers and supporters who very often go far beyond their expected roles in serving our beloved residents. May God bless Ararat Home for generations to come!

RON NAZELEY

Founded by visionaries, Ararat Home is a perfect example of an Armenian organization that serves its community with care and devotion. The Home has grown over the years to accommodate the ever-increasing demand in our community for elder care. Our facilities receive high ratings by state agencies year-after-year; and, it is no wonder since the administrators are focused on quality care and employees are instilled with love and affection toward residents. I am proud to be associated with an institution that admits elders without regard to political affiliation, religious preference or country of origin. Ararat Home is truly a place for all Armenian elderly. "Pari Yegak!" ("Welcome!")

MAJOR FUNDRAISING EVENTS YIELD MAJOR ENJOYMENT

By Cindy Kaloostian

Ararat Home's Annual Picnic on the last Sunday of September was a great success. Thanks to the efforts of Ararat Home staff and volunteers and with special assistance from the members of the Triple X Fraternity Los Angeles chapter, the large crowd enjoyed every bit of the day with delicious food and pastries, entertainment, and fun for all ages.



Casino Night XIII on November 12 was also a great success with nearly 200 in attendance. It was gratifying to see the newly renovated (almost complete) Deukmejian Grand



Ballroom full of supporters sharing a fun evening together. Besides great prizes, the organizing committee planned a special \$1,000 door prize just in time for the holidays. When the winner's ticket was called, he jumped for joy and pumped his fist...we think "13" is now his lucky number!

We sincerely thank our generous sponsors and supporters who help us continue the Home's mission of care.



CONSTRUCTION HAS COMMENCED

We are delighted to report that construction of the three-story expansion of our Assisted Living Facility began in October. The presence of heavy machinery and workers in hard hats is welcomed



by staff and residents alike who curiously follow the progression of the building project. The new 44-room wing, which is anticipated to be completed in late 2017, will add 56 beds to the current capacity of the facility.

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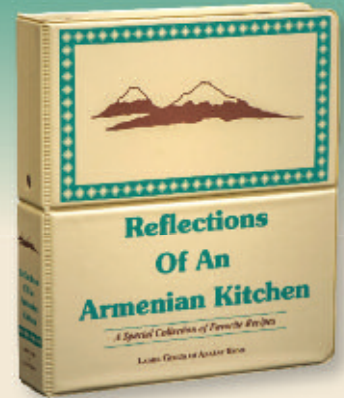
Isabella (Bella) Sarkissian

The Interminable Nurse

unwell, the friendly "hello" and chat she shares, the encouraging words she expresses, the positive energy she exudes, the enthusiasm with which she participates in activities, or the gratitude she communicates to staff, she is the interminable nurse whose nurturing and caring spirit still shines bright. Bella says that she has felt loved wherever she has been involved and with whomever she has interacted, and she notes that good deeds are certainly not forgotten.

Her fellow resident Arax Hovanesian attests to that. Upon being admitted to Ararat Assisted Living Facility, Arax was apprehensive about having a randomly assigned roommate. However, when her new roommate arrived several days afterwards and the two were introduced to each other, Arax was exhilarated. Having worked for 30 years as a typist at Bank Melli Iran, Arax immediately remembered Bella as that hard-working, fast-moving, dedicated nurse at the Bank Melli hospital! The two women who had shared an experience decades ago in Tehran crossed paths again at Ararat Home; and now they have formed a deeper relationship as members of a larger, second family.

ARARAT HOME COOKBOOK IN ITS 8TH EDITION



We are pleased to announce that the eighth reprinting of the Ararat Home cookbook, *Reflections of an Armenian Kitchen*, has been completed thanks to a grant from Susie Vahanian and Walter Shubin. Our cookbook was first published in 1995, and has been very well-regarded since then. Cookbooks are on sale for \$30 in the Ararat Home Gift Shop or can be ordered by writing to info@ararathome.org or calling (818) 365-3000.

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