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VAROUJAN YEDALIAN "A TRUE GENTLEMAN"

By Debbie Avedian

Varoujan Yedalian was born in Beirut, Lebanon, on March 31, 1940 to parents Sahak and Ossana Yedalian. He was educated in Beirut and utilized his artistic talents in crafting fine custom-built and skillfully carved furniture. On July 23, 1973 he married Zevart Demirjian, a native of Aleppo, Syria. Yedalian was an active member of the Armenian community in Beirut where he served as an executive member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, an executive member of the Armenian Youth Federation for nearly ten years, and volunteered as an administrator at the Armenian library. In 1979, the right-wing Lebanese Christian militias known as "the Phalange" kidnapped him. When he was finally released in an official prisoners exchange, he found it necessary to emigrate from war-torn Beirut with his wife and 6-year-old son, Chant. In their new home in Los Angeles, the Yedalians were blessed with the birth of their second son, Hrag.

An active and devoted participant in the Armenian community in Beirut, Zevart Yedalian continued her commitment to help improve the lives of Armenians by participating in the Armenian Relief Society of Los Angeles. She proudly worked at Rose and Alex Pilibos, Mary



Varoujan and Zevart Yedalian

Postoian Armenian Preschool as director until she passed away in 1998.

Varoujan Yedalian arrived at the Ararat Home in 2009 and rapidly adapted to his new environment. As months passed and his medical condition improved, he began demonstrating a keen sensitivity to the needs of others, embraced residents' life stories, and effectively communicated with Ararat staff.

When asked by Executive Director of Skilled Nursing Facility, Margo Babikian, to chair the Resident Council as President, he accepted her request wholeheartedly. Mrs. Babikian describes Mr. Yedalian as being "a true gentleman, polite, courteous, always positive and supportive. Residents feel very comfortable to discuss issues with him." She continued to state, "Baron Varoujan came to Ararat Nursing Home to live his 'Sunset Years'. I am delighted to say that not only he lives, but also he lives well, doing the things he likes most, helping people, listening and encouraging. Baron Varoujan is truly a genuine ambassador of our Home. He shares his positive feelings and experiences unabashedly with the public." Mrs. Babikian concluded by saying, "It is a privilege to

take care of Baron Varoujan at Ararat Nursing Home. It is a privilege to know his family. All have been very supportive of the Home."

Mr. Yedalian confided that he had read articles regarding the excellence of Ararat Home while living in Beirut and is now very pleased to be able to help the Home in any possible way. He said, "Guests are astonished by the organization and cleanliness of the Home. Workers are not just good but very good." In reference to Mrs. Babikian, "Everyone respects Mrs. Babikian. All her words are taken seriously because she does what she does with love." He continued, "All who work and volunteer for Ararat Home are doing God's work."



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Nazar H. Ashjian, Jr., Margo Babikian, Chant Yedalian, Varoujan Yedalian

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Although Mr. Yedalian did not have formal educational opportunities, he is the proud father of two very fine children who were able to make his dreams come true. Chant is a successful lawyer and Hrag is a successful filmmaker. His goal in life was to have his two sons attain higher education and be involved in the Armenian community. He feels that with his hard work and sacrifice his children were successful in achieving their goals. Chant is an active member of Ararat Home and serves as an advisor to the Board of Trustees, and Hrag has directed and produced an award-winning Armenian documentary.

His Holiness Aram I Visits Skilled Nursing & Assisted Living Residents, Sheen Chapel, and Ararat-Eskijian Museum

By Phyllis Hamo

On Monday, October 17, 2011 residents of the Ararat Home excitedly awaited the arrival of His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia of the Armenian Apostolic Church and spiritual leader of the Armenian Diaspora communities in the Middle East, Europe,



Left Center Western Prelate Archbishop Moushegh Mardirossian, His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia of the Armenian Apostolic Church with Ararat Board of Trustees and members of the Prelacy's Executive Council

and North and South America. This was his fourth Pontifical visit to Western United States since his consecration as Catholicos of Antelias, Lebanon in 1995. The Pontiff's entourage included Western Prelate Archbishop Moushegh Mardirossian, His Eminence Archbishop Yeprem Tabakian, devout clergymen of the Western Prelacy, members of the Prelacy's Executive Council, and members of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Prelacy.

Nurses and employees who lined up with Executive Director, Margo Babikian at the entrance of the Skilled Nursing Facility would have been satisfied just to catch a glimpse of the Pontiff, but he graciously stopped to shake their hands and sincerely thanked them for their dedicated services. Speaking to the residents in the dining room, the Pontiff declared, "the Home is not for old people, it's for youthful people." He

spoke about the excellent care the residents receive in a happy, healthy, and comfortable environment. The singing of "Hayr Mer" brought tears to the eyes of many and "Giligia" was joyfully sung in unison. He described the home as a place where the spiritual and medical come together, and said he was pleased that "our spiritual community is in touch with our mothers and fathers."

After meeting and greeting residents of the Assisted Living Facility headed by Administrator, Rita Noravian, the Pontiff conducted a prayer service in the Sheen Memorial Chapel, and then visited the Ararat-Eskijian Museum. His Holiness presented the museum with a reproduction of a manuscript page of the gospel of St. Luke (the original having been printed in 1248 in Cilicia), one of the very few ancient manuscripts that was saved during the Armenian Genocide and taken to the Holy See of Cilicia. Museum chairman Martin Eskijian and museum director Maggie Goschin gifted Vehapar with a beautiful volume of photographs and inscriptions of religious textiles having great historic and artistic value entitled *Pageantry/Textile Treasures from the Armenian Orthodox Churches of Istanbul*. His Holiness signed the museum's guest book which instantly became a museum artifact.

During the luncheon, remarks were offered by Ararat Trustees Chairman Nazar H. Ashjian, Jr. who thanked the Prelate for visiting the home on a regular basis, "bringing joy and care to our residents." Ararat Home Board Member, Joseph Kanimian and Western Prelacy Central Executive Council member, Vahe Yacoubian also addressed the audience. Clergymen of the Western Prelacy visit the Ararat Home residents every month to celebrate the Divine Liturgy and offer prayers.

The Pontiff extended his appreciation to Mr. Ashjian, the Board of Trustees, volunteers, staff, and "the inhabitants of this house." "We must embrace our people without discrimination." He commended the Ararat Home which is non-profit, non-political, and non-denominational, declaring "This house is a *model*, with a sense of belonging to each other and a common cause."

Ararat Home Construction Grounds Blessed

By Cindy Kaloostian

Revered clergy from the Southern California Armenian Community came together on Sunday afternoon, October 2, 2011 to bless the grounds of Ararat Home Skilled Nursing Facility's newest construction project. Known as "Phase III," the project will provide an additional 58 beds to the 198 beds already in service at the Mission Hills campus. Western Diocese Primate, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Western Prelacy Primate, Archbishop Moushegh Mardirossian, Armenian Catholic priest Armenak Bedrosian and Minister to the Armenian Evangelical Union, Rev. Joseph Matossian took part in the ceremony.

Co-Chairmen of the Construction Fund Raising Committee, Ron Nazeley and Berj Shahbazian welcomed the 40 attendees and provided details of the project. Ararat Home Board Chairman, Nazar H. Ashjian,



Jr. who also serves as Co-Chairman of the Construction Committee with Joseph Kanimian, commented, "Ararat Home is for the whole community and is open to everyone." Following the blessing of the ground, a reception took place in the Trustees conference room.

We are very proud to announce that Skilled Nursing Facility's newest construction project, which will add an additional 58 beds, is well on its way and is scheduled to be completed by fall of 2012. Please review the insert and help the Home by making your donation to the building fund and become a benefactor. More than ever we need your support for this project in order to expand services to our elderly community. For additional information, please contact Beatrice Malkhasian at (818) 838-4860 or email at boardbea@ararathome.org.



Jr. Trex Brother, Patrick Kevorkian and Picnic Chairman, Michael Surmeian



Game Booths – an afternoon of amusement for children

ARARAT HOME ★PICNIC★

By Lucy Melkonian



Ladies Auxiliary volunteers serving delicious desserts



Members of Ara Dance Group entertain the crowd



Attendees zealously dance to music of Najarian Ensemble



Armenian Urn Dance



Triple X Brothers Barbequing lamb

Ararat Home held its 59th Annual Picnic on September 25, 2011 at the beautiful grounds of the Home. Trustee Michael Surmeian, Picnic Chairman for three consecutive years, enthusiastically mobilized a small army of volunteers, numbering more than 175. These volunteers were mostly comprised of members and families of the Los Angeles Triple X and Junior Triple X Fraternities. Ararat Home thanks the William H. Hannon Foundation for once again granting the fund for our first prize trip for two to Hawaii. We are also grateful for the generous donations and support of the following organizations for the success of our Picnic: Armenian American Middle East Club, Triple X Fraternities of Los Angeles, Palm Desert an Orange County, Jr. Triple X, Knights of Vartan Sevan Lodge, Ardaz Lodge and Ghevont Lodge, Hye Benefit Circle, and many other individuals and corporations.

Mr. Surmeian's principle assistants, William Kevorkian, Steve Hampar, Richard Jebejian and Galen Petoyan prepared detailed plans to ensure a pleasant afternoon for all attendees. Included among the delicious Armenian food and delicacies served were dinners with Lamb & Chicken Kebab, Pilaf,

and Salad along with Lahmajoun, Sou Beoreg, Yalanchi and Kufra. Mouth watering sweets prepared by Ararat's Ladies Auxiliary under the leadership of Dianne Ohanesian included delicious Paklava, Choreg, Simid, Kata and of course, attendees enjoyed the infamous Cream and Walnut Kadayif. Irene Andreadis and Debbie Avedian treated guests with "made to order" Armenian coffee. This was such a hit that it will continue to be an Ararat Home Picnic tradition, and maybe next year, we may even have a fortune reader to read the Armenian coffee cups.

To help work off some of the delicious food, there was toe-tapping Armenian music for dancing provided by Najarian Ensemble. A special Armenian Cultural Dance Performers, from the famous local ARA Dance Studio of Reseda, entertained and dazzled the audience.

This was a truly memorable picnic for the entire family, which also included games and prizes for the kids. Those who attended enjoyed great food, fun and fellowship. Ararat Home is proud to receive support from the entire Armenian Community. We all look forward to seeing you at next year's 60th Annual Picnic.

Eighth Annual Casino Night a Great Success

By Cindy Kaloostian

Our theme for year number eight, "Get Out From Behind the Eight Ball," caught the spirit of Ararat Home's annual night of fun on Saturday evening, November 19, 2011. Deukmejian Grand Ballroom was festive and full of smiling supporters gathered to eat fabulous mezza and dinner, enjoy each other's company, learn and play new and old games, win terrific prizes and most importantly, support Ararat Home in providing excellent care for our elderly.

Event Chairman, Gary Kaloostian thanked his veteran committee as well as Ararat Board Executive Secretary Beatrice Malkhasian for their hard work, commitment and vital assistance in making the event a great success, both financially and socially.

Grand Casino Sponsors Hank and Louise Arklin as well as a record number of gaming table sponsors and prize donors were appreciated. An added perk for the attendees

was the availability of two "chip hostesses" who ably assisted the patrons to purchase additional chips and cocktails from the bar (manned by Jr. Trex volunteers) without having to leave their lucky seats at the tables. And, WOW!! Complementary valet parking!

As the last guests left the ballroom from Casino Night Eight, committee members began thinking about Casino Night Nine, always looking forward to continue the roll... We hope you will join us next year.



Primate and Diocese Clergy Celebrate Armenian Cultural Month at Ararat Home

Debbie Avedian

The Armenian communities in Armenia and the Diaspora celebrate Armenian Cultural Month in October. As a tribute to "All Translators' Day" or "Tarkmanchatz Don" and in honor of the creator of the Armenian alphabet, Mesrob Mashdots, the month of October is filled with celebrations of Armenian culture, language, literature, poetry, music, dance, and traditions.

On October 4, 2011 Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, accompanied by a group of Diocesan clergy, arrived at the Deukmejian Hall of the Ararat Home in Mission Hills to celebrate Armenian Cultural Month with Ararat Home residents and guests attending the monthly Auxiliary luncheon. Archbishop Derderian was instrumental in providing a glorious program for the day.

The Primate and clergy presented a special service with songs and prayers. Residents and guests were treated to the magnificent traditional Armenian music of Mamikon Harutyunyan of The Hayastan Trio with their striking Armenian folk costumes. Manik Manukyan, choir director of St. James Church also performed and entertained attendees with beautiful Armenian songs.



The Hayastan Trio



Manik Manukyan



Trustee Harold Mgrublian, Archbishop Derderian, and Margaret Mgrublian

ARARAT HIGHLIGHTS

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