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SUSAN PIPONNIAU, AS BEAUTIFUL TODAY AS GLAMOROUS IN HER YOUTH

By Debbie Avedian

Susan Piponniau was born in Istanbul on March 4, 1927, to Armenian Genocide survivors, Emastouhi and Arshag Egikian, originally from Sepastia, Turkey. Susan lost her

father at the tender age of six and was raised by her maternal grandparents, Manase and Eugenie Sultanian. Mr. Sultanian was a well-known educator in Istanbul, where he served as principal of Esayan School, professor of Armenian language and Mathematics at Getronagan Armenian High School, and founder of Sultanian School in the city's Kadiköy district. As such, he instilled in Susan the value of education.

In 1947, Susan moved to New York to live with her paternal uncle and attend Rhodes Preparatory School in Manhattan, where she studied literature and aspired to be an actress. Her acting tutor recognized her potential and facilitated her introduction to the infamous Dominican motion picture actress, Maria Montez. Impressed with her talents, Ms. Montez encouraged Susan to audition for a role in the play, *The Human Comedy*, based on William Saroyan's novel. She was cast as the twelve-year-old boy, Homer Macauley.

In 1953, Susan attended a masquerade ball, where she met and fell in love with her future husband Pierre Piponniau, who at the time, was employed as a chef for Air France. Susan and Pierre married in 1954. Using her Turkish language skills, she worked as an executive secretary for an import-export company and supported her husband while he completed his engineering degree.

Susan and Pierre moved to Los Angeles in 1960, where Pierre worked for several aerospace and defense contractor companies, including Lockheed, Boeing and Northrop, and Susan studied and became a licensed electrologist. Their family expanded when, in 1956, they were blessed with a son, Pierre Jr., and then a daughter,



Susan Piponniau with Rev. Fr. Haroutioun Tachejian, Pastor of St. James Armenian Church, where Susan was once actively involved

Nadia, in 1962. Susan passed on to her children the value of education, which her grandfather had taught her.

Susan is extremely proud of her children and their families as evidenced by wedding and family pictures and other sentimental items filling her room at Ararat Home. Her son Pierre Jr. obtained a Master of Business Administration degree and currently works for Morgan Stanley as a certified financial advisor and a licensed real estate broker. His wife Linda is, as Susan describes, "extremely gifted, capable and dedicated to helping promote better healthcare in Armenia." In her capacity as a Registered Nurse and Certified Clinical Transplant Coordinator at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, Linda joined a team of doctors from the Heart Transplant Unit in delivering vital equipment and conducting trainings for doctors in Armenia. Pierre and Linda have a lovely daughter Jennifer, who is presently pursuing graduate studies at the University of Southern California.

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Susan and Pierre Piponniau

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Susan Pignonniau, as beautiful today as she was glamorous in her youth

Susan's daughter Nadia is an internationally celebrated ballroom dancer. In 1983, she partnered with her future husband Johan Eftedal and eventually relocated to London, where the couple studied under Mr. Walter Laird, who is considered to be "the greatest of all dance teachers." Together, Nadia and Johan competed internationally in Standard and Latin styles and won many prestigious titles. They retired in 1994 and moved to California, where Nadia trains top competitive couples and represents the United States as an adjudicator in numerous world professional and amateur championships.

When Susan lost her husband of 57 years in July 2012, she moved into a beautiful suite at Ararat Home's Assisted Living Facility in Mission Hills. She spends her days socializing and playing cards, tavloo and bingo. When asked how she feels about living at Ararat Home, she responds: "The service is excellent, and the workers and assistants are friendly and helpful." In particular, she praises the leadership of Administrator Rita Noravian and Chief Operating Officer Derik Ghookasian. Susan has demonstrated her appreciation of the wonderful care she receives here by making several generous donations to Ararat Home and to the Ararat Home Valley Guild. During *Kef Time* on Friday afternoons, you can find her merrily singing her favorite songs.

ARARAT-ESKIJIAN MUSEUM Hosts an International Conference "Honoring Those Who Helped Rescue a Generation of Armenian Survivors" (1915-1930)

Ararat-Eskijian Museum hosted a very successful conference on March 22, 2014, titled "Honoring Those Who Helped Rescue a Generation of Armenian Survivors." Organized by Museum Director

and rehabilitated survivors in the Arab Near East. The role of American and European missionaries was also discussed, as they became eyewitnesses to the atrocities and rescued thousands of children from a tragic fate.



Governor George Deukmejian with Deputy Consul General of Greece, Australian Deputy Consulate-General and Honorary Consul of Norway

Recently discovered materials related to the story of survival were also presented at the conference. A patchwork of garment, called the "Orphan Dress", belonging to an Armenian deportee child and an unfinished rug woven by orphan girls in Hadjin were unveiled publicly for the first time; they are currently on display in Ararat-Eskijian Museum. New footage from the silent film *Ravished Armenia*, the first movie about the Armenian Genocide, which was based on Aurora Mardiganian's memoirs of survival, was discussed.

A brief portion of the documentary *Orphans of the Genocide* was screened, and a beautiful new arrangement of the works of Gomidas was performed.

The story of survival was brought to the present day with discussions of the ongoing work of the Near East Foundation in the Middle East and Armenia as well as of the recurring accounts of massacres on Syrian soil in a comparison of the 1915 Genocide and the current Syrian catastrophe. The conference concluded with former Governor of California George Deukmejian presenting diplomatic representatives from Australia, Greece and Norway with replicas of "Mother Armenia" as a symbol of deep gratitude for the role their countries played in helping the survival of the Armenian nation.



Martin Eskijian, representing the Eskijian family, addresses the legacy of his grandparents, Rev. and Mrs. Hovhannes and Gulenia Eskijian, who labored to save Armenians in Aleppo, Syria from 1915 to 1916

Maggie Mangassarian-Goschin, the conference had invited leading scholars from around the world to help pay tribute to countries, individuals and organizations that had sacrificed so much to aid a perishing nation. The assistance provided to survivors of the Genocide became the 20th century's first major international humanitarian effort – an unprecedented global endeavor from 1915 to 1930.

The conference highlighted two organizations instrumental in this undertaking: the Near East Relief, which "quite literally kept an entire nation alive" by helping orphans maintain their heritage and reintegrate into society; and, the American Red Cross, which rescued



Nancy Eskijian, Esq., Maggie Mangassarian-Goschin and Board Chairman Joseph Kanimian, Esq.

Ararat Home Board of Trustees Elects its Executive Committee

By Ani Dikranian

The Ararat Home Board of Trustees re-elected its executive committee officers for another year of dedicated service on March 27, 2014, in Mission Hills, California. Among those entrusted to guide the organization through another outstanding year of growth is Chairman Joseph Kanimian. Attorney Kanimian was elected as Chairman of the Board of Trustees last year and, along with members of the Building Committee co-chaired by Nazar H. Ashjian Jr., CPA, successfully oversaw the completion and opening of the Avakian Wing, the addition of a 58-bed unit in Ararat Nursing Facility. Trustees expressed their appreciation of Chairman Kanimian's commitment to the mission of Ararat Home and conveyed their trust in his leadership and vision. The other officers of the Board of Trustees who were re-elected include: Nazar Ashjian Jr., CPA, as 1st Vice Chair, Nora Hampar as 2nd Vice Chair, Nadya Verabian as Secretary, Debbie Avedian as Assistant Secretary, Michael Surmeian, CPA, as Treasurer and Ron Nazeley as Assistant Treasurer. Past Chairman Armen Hampar will continue to serve as advisor to the Executive Committee.

Upon re-election as chairman, Mr. Kanimian stated: "I would like to express my gratitude to the Board for its confidence in my leadership. I am truly blessed to be surrounded by dedicated individuals who do their utmost for the Home. I am also thankful to our employees, volunteers, guild and auxiliary members, and contributors for their unparalleled support of Ararat Home." Reflecting on the challenges ahead, Chairman Kanimian states that the principle objective of the Board is ensuring the well-being of "our elders." To that end, the Board will be planning new projects and striving for new levels of success in the coming months.

Ararat Home of Los Angeles has been recognized many times for the



ARARAT HOME BOARD OF TRUSTEES EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Sitting, left to right: Debbie Avedian (Assistant Secretary), Nora Hampar (2nd Vice Chair), Joseph Kanimian, Esq. (Chairman), Nazar H. Ashjian Jr., CPA (1st Vice Chair), Nadya Verabian (Secretary)
Standing, left to right: Armen Hampar (Past Chairman), Ron Nazeley (Assistant Treasurer)
Not pictured: Michael Surmeian, CPA (Treasurer)

exemplary service and care it provides for over 300 residents. The Assisted Living Facility has received zero-deficiency ratings for seven consecutive years from the California Department of Social Services for meeting all standards and having no violations. Similarly, Ararat Nursing Home and Ararat Convalescent Hospital continue to hold five-star ratings from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which is the highest rating given to such facilities.

ARARAT HOME ANNUAL PICNIC: BRING THE WHOLE FAMILY

By Cindy Kaloostian

Circle the date! Sunday, September 28, 2014, means fun! The Ararat Home Annual Picnic is set to go! The Picnic continues to be one of the most anticipated events each year thanks to the loyal and hard-working members of the Los Angeles Chapter of the Triple X Fraternity. The Annual Picnic will feature games and prizes for children, live Armenian music by award-winning



Ara Dance Group

Chookasian
Armenian Folk
Ensemble

prize of a fabulous "Hawaiian Trip for Two" donated by the William H. Hannon Foundation. Generous donations by Triple X Fraternity chapters, Hai Benefit Circle, Knights of Vartan lodges and individual friends and supporters of Ararat Home help ensure the Annual Picnic's great success.

Annual Picnic Committee Chairman Mike Surmeian welcomes everyone to come spend a glorious day of meeting old and new friends while enjoying delicious Armenian food and wonderful entertainment. See you all there!

Chookasian Armenian Folk Ensemble, and Armenian cultural dances performed in traditional costumes by Ara Dance Group. The picnic raffle includes several cash prizes as well as a grand

Don't miss THIS year's
WORLD FAMOUS PICNIC!

ARARAT HOME ANNUAL PICNIC



KEF TIME

Games ★ Music ★ Dancing
DELICIOUS Food

Sunday, Sept. 28, 2014

11:30 am - 6:00 pm

FREE ADMISSION | FREE PARKING



ARARAT BOARD SHOWS APPRECIATION

By Cindy Kaloostian



Ararat Home Trustees with Ararat Convalescent Hospital staff members recognized for 5 to 25 years of service. From Left: Arthur Zabounian (Trustee), Laura Margaryan (Dietary Assistant), Souzi Djeredjian (Dietary Supervisor), Tatevik Mavian (CNA), Nadya Verabian (Trustee), Joseph Kanimian (Chairman), Varsenik Keshishyan (Administrator), Aida Yeghiayan (Director of Nursing), Margush Kyaramyan (Environmental Assistant), Peter Darakjian (Trustee), Gary Kaloostian (Trustee), Derik Ghookasian (Chief Operating Officer), and Debbie Avedian (Trustee)

It's no secret that perhaps the most valuable asset Ararat Home has is a fabulous team of employees. As individuals and as a group, Ararat Home's team is excellent in every way. Professionalism, enthusiasm and LOVE: these attributes are evident at each Ararat Home facility. Because the Ararat Home Board of Trustees feels that those who serve so well deserve to be served in turn, the Board was delighted to be the "wait staff" at two appreciation luncheons this spring. (You might remember that Ararat Nursing Facility staff enjoyed a similar luncheon as reported in the last issue of *Ararat Hyelights*).

On March 12, 2014, the Assisted Living Facility staff, ably led by Administrator Rita Noravian, was invited to a catered luncheon hosted by the Board. Highlights of the day included a delightful song and slide show prepared by Activities Assistant Ruzanna Sargsyan with help from Resident Care Supervisor Vicky Tumikyan and Payroll Personnel Coordinator Salpy Sagherian. Board Chairman Joseph Kanimian made complimentary remarks, and Administrator

Noravian emphasized the Assisted Living Facility's superior safety record. In appreciation for employees' years of service to the Home, each received a reusable shopping bag bearing Ararat Home's Logo.

Similarly, in Ararat Convalescent Hospital's cozy setting, on May 13, 2014, Trustees hosted a delicious luncheon, which they served with a smile to the staff. Administrator Varsenik Keshishyan awarded pins and



Aida Yeghiayan awarded for 20 years of service at Ararat Convalescent Hospital. From Left: Joseph Kanimian (Chairman), Aida Yeghiayan (Director of Nursing), and Varsenik Keshishyan (Administrator)



Board of Trustees ready to serve



Administrator Rita Noravian with some staff members

certificates to 11 employees for their various milestone years of service ranging from 5 and 25 years. Certified Nursing Assistant Lidia Sarkisova recited a lovely poem she had written about the Convalescent Hospital "family". In his appreciatory remarks to the staff, Chairman Kanimian commented, "All the supporters and encouragers of the Ararat Home family join with the Board in thanking all of you. You bring pride to us all!"

SAVE THE DATES

"ARARAT HOME ANNUAL PICNIC" SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

"CASINO NIGHT XI" SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1

"LADIES AUXILIARY" MONTHLY LUNCHEONS
FIRST TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH, 11:00 A.M.
Ararat Home Deukmejian Ballroom

"MASSIS GUILD" SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18, 11:00 A.M.
Massis Family 50's Diner
Rio Hondo Event Center
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7, 12:00 P.M.
Christmas Lunch and Installation
Rio Hondo Event Center
CONTACT: Allise Arakelian Hart 626-688-2358

"SAN GABRIEL VALLEY GUILD" SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14, 12:30 P.M.
Christmas Luncheon
Embassy Suites, Arcadia
CONTACT: Cindy Kaloostian 626-792-4479

"VALLEY GUILD" MONTHLY LUNCHEONS
FOURTH MONDAY OF EACH MONTH, 11:30 A.M.
Ararat Home Board Room
CONTACT: Lucy Melkonian 818-708-7769

"WESTSIDE GUILD" SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6, 11:00 A.M.
Christmas Luncheon
Beverly Hills Hotel
CONTACT: Liliana Youssoufian 818-700-1402

ARARAT HYEIGHTS

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