The 2008 Annual Meeting will take place in New York City, where attendees can visit many famous tourist attractions including the Empire State Building. Photo courtesy Britannica.


John Marshall Evans, the former U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Armenia, will join several legal scholars, judges and lawyers from throughout the United States, Canada, France and Armenia, as the Armenian Bar Association (ArmenBar) returns to New York City for its 19th Annual National Meeting the weekend of May 2-4, 2008.

The conference will be punctuated by legal seminars, receptions and a meeting of the Board of Governors. In keeping with the tradition of alternating the annual meeting to each coast of the United States, the 19th installment of the gathering will be an East Coast affair, following the memorable meeting in Santa Monica, California in April, 2007.

Evans, who has had a distinguished 35-year career as a diplomat, gained notoriety in 2005 when he publicly used the word Genocide in correctly describing The University of Pittsburgh School of Law solicited an article from Frank Zerunyan on the issue of the House Resolution on Armenian Genocide. The following article was published in November 2007.

“...The People’s House of the United States of America must follow its tradition and uphold the truth above all else. The speaker of the House of Representatives must bring HR106 to a floor vote because the resolution is morally, intellectually, historically and legally consistent with our American values. We Americans

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the fate of Armenians killed during World War I by the Government of Turkey. His use of the word Genocide was in contradiction to the policy of the Bush Administration, and, as a result, Evans was dismissed from his post as Ambassador to Armenia, and forced into early retirement. He will be the keynote luncheon speaker at the conference.

"Ambassador Evans’ principled stand on the use of the word Genocide deserves recognition and praise from not only Armenians, but from all who cherish the truth and freedom of speech," said Gary Moomjian, past Chairman of ArmenBar, and the co-chairman of the annual meeting organizing committee. "Evans risked his livelihood because he could not stay silent about the issue of Genocide recognition. We are honored to have a person of such principle and conviction as our guest speaker," said Moomjian.

Prior to his post as Ambassador to Armenia, Evans served diplomatic posts in Tehran, Prague, Moscow, Brussels, St. Petersburg and Washington, D.C. He was a guest speaker at a recent legal symposium on Genocide reparations presented by the USC Institute of Armenian Studies, and co-sponsored by the Armenian Bar Association. The symposium was held on the USC campus.

The New York meeting will be presided over by ArmenBar Chairman Frank Zerunyan, the mayor of the City of Rolling Hills Estates, California. "I am excited about the program our brothers and sisters in New York have in store for our membership, and encourage all to join us in the city that never sleeps. I am confident that it will be a worthwhile event for all who attend," said Zerunyan.

As usual, those in attendance will earn up to five continuing education credits, as ArmenBar is an approved provider of CLE and MCLE credits in several states, including California, New York and Pennsylvania. Also, attendees will have the opportunity to experience all of the attractions that New York has to offer, including Times Square, the Empire State Building, Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, Wall Street, Central Park and much more. The meeting will be held at the New York City Bar Association building in Manhattan.

To find out more about the 19th Annual Meeting, visit the ArmenBar web site at www.Armenianbar.org.

Armenian Bar Honors Retiring Judge Alice Altoon and Hosts “Meet The Armenian Mayors” Reception in Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES - The Armenian Bar Association hosted a post-holiday reception at the elegant “Life” restaurant on Wilshire Boulevard in the Miracle Mile district, on January 17, 2008. The event served as a “Meet the Armenian Mayors” affair and included the Honorable Mayors James Bozajian of Calabasas, Ara Najarian of Glendale and Frank Zerunyan of Rolling Hills Estates.

The reception also served as an opportunity for ArmenBar to honor Alice Altoon, who recently retired from the Los Angeles County Superior Court bench, where she served with distinction for 20 years. More than 110 members and guests attended the event.

“We are extremely proud to have three local mayors of Armenian descent within our group, and are equally proud to acknowledge our Board member and colleague Alice Altoon on her retirement from the bench,” said Betty Jamgotchian, Executive Director of ArmenBar. “We had a great turnout of judges, attorneys and community members in what proved to be a warm and special evening,” said Jamgotchian.

Zerunyan is the Chairman of the Armenian Bar Association, the largest group of attorneys of Armenian descent in the world, and is currently serving his second term in that capacity. He was appointed mayor in December, 2007, and has been on the City Council since 2003. Najarian was appointed mayor in April, 2007 and has been on the City Council since 2005. Glendale has the highest concentration of inhabitants of Armenian descent of any city in the world outside of the Republic of Armenia. Bozajian was appointed mayor in 2007 by his fellow City Council members, and has the distinction of being mayor of Calabasas three times since 1997. Altoon is an Honorary Member of ArmenBar, and has served on the Board of Governors for several

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years. She served most of her career on the bench as a criminal trial judge, but transferred to the civil court in 2005, sitting at the Stanley Mosk courthouse in downtown Los Angeles. She is currently sitting on assignment handling criminal and civil matters.

"Life" restaurant is located on the ground floor of the law office building of Mardirossian and Associates. Garo Mardirossian, a former "Trial Lawyer of the Year," and his wife Kathy, also an attorney, were gracious hosts for the evening. Mardirossian is the Vice-Chairman of the Consumer Attorneys Association of Los Angeles (CAALA), and CAALA provided a generous donation of $1,000.00 to co-sponsor the event.

Former ArmenBar Chairman Vicken Simonian served as Master of Ceremonies, and each honored guest received a special introduction. Mayor Najarian was introduced by Garo Mardirossian, who also happens to be his first cousin. Mayor Zerunyan was introduced by ArmenBar Treasurer Edvin Minassian, and Zerunyan gave a nice introduction of Mayor Bozajian.

Judge Altoon was presented by her long-time friend and colleague Robert Philibosian. Philibosian is the former head of the Los Angeles District Attorney’s office. Altoon gave a heartwarming speech thanking the Armenian Bar Association for the recognition and confirming her commitment to the community and her profession.

All of the mayors and Judge Altoon were presented with signature Siroon Yeretsian Armenian paintings with special inscriptions for each honoree. Each of the mayors also gave thanks to the organization and updated the guests about their cities and their involvement with the Armenian community.

In attendance were Armand Arabian, Associate Justice of the California Supreme Court (retired), J. Stephen Czuleger, Presiding Judge of the Los Angeles Superior Court, Los Angeles Superior Court Judges Greg Keosian and Zaven Sinanian (former Chairman of ArmenBar) and Steven Lubell, Los Angeles Superior Court Commissioner.

Mayor James Bozajian of Calabasas and Mayor Frank Zerunyan of Rolling Hills Estates at the Armenian Bar Association’s “Meet the Armenian Mayors” Reception in Los Angeles earlier this year.

From left, Vicken Simonian, Garo Mardirossian, Kathy Mardirossian, Judge Alice Altoon, Mayor Ara Najarian and Mayor Frank Zerunyan at the reception in Los Angeles.
Armenian Bar Association Strengthens Bonds with Armenian Lawyers in France and Armenia at its Midyear Meeting Sept. 27 - Oct. 7, 2007

Fulfilling a promise to His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of the Holy See of Etchmiadzin, a strong contingent of Armenian lawyers and judges flew to Paris, then Yerevan to hold the Armenian Bar Association's (ArmenBar) 2007 Midyear Meeting at both locations between September 27 and October 7, 2007.

The trip served many purposes, including honoring Karekin II's invitation to visit Goshavank, the ancient church named after the father of Armenia law, Mekhitar Gosh. Gosh was an Armenian intellectual and legal scholar of the late 12th and early 13th centuries, whose works include the codification of Armenian law. The church is located in the Dilijan region of Armenia, and in addition to the beautifully restored structure, the residence of Mekhitar Gosh with some of his personal belongings remain as a tribute to the historic Armenian leader.

Reconnecting with French and Armenian counterparts of ArmenBar was another goal which was realized at the Midyear Meeting. The group flew first to Paris to meet with the French Armenian Lawyers' Association. On the second leg of the trip, the group met in Yerevan where they had an audience with the Armenian Chamber of Advocates.

The trip served to solidify ArmenBar's reputation as a truly international association of Armenian attorneys. Led by Chairman Frank Zerunyan, the group established a better line of communication with the French and Armenian lawyers' associations, gaining many new members in the process.

"We had a wonderful group of members attend this historic Midyear Meeting, and all served as goodwill ambassadors for our brothers and sisters in Paris and Yerevan," said Zerunyan, the Mayor of the City of Rolling Hills Estates in Southern California.

The first leg of the trip was a 3-day stay in Paris. Members and guests were treated to a traditional Armenian luncheon at the Armenian-owned Yans Club.
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The Yans Club also served as the venue for the meeting of the Board of Governors, which was followed by a legal symposium.

Zerunyan presided over the meeting of the Board, then introduced the group to a large contingent of French Armenian lawyers who were on hand to participate in the festivities. A graduate of Samuel Murat College in Paris, Zerunyan conducted the ceremonies in both English and French. The President of the French Lawyers Association, Alexandre Armen Couyoumdjian, Avocat a La Cour, welcomed ArmenBar members to Paris, discussed some of the group’s activities and vowed to work closely with ArmenBar toward achieving common goals.

French attorney and scholar, Astrig Bourmayan, Avocat a La Cour, then provided a book review of the compelling text entitled “The Legal Aspects of the Armenian Genocide” written by J.B. Racine. She was followed by Jacque Menendian, Avocat a La Cour, who discussed the topic of “Genocide Reparations: Actions Performed by the Collective 2015.”

Raymond Yezeguelian, a member of the Board of Directors of the Yans Club, treated ArmenBar members to the luncheon, which featured Nelly Tarvidier-Henrot, Commissaire Generale, appointee of former French President Jacques Chirac and the Director of the world famous Louvre Museum. Tarvidier-Henrot was responsible for organizing an exhibit entitled “Armenie Mon Amie, Annee de L’Armenie en France” or “Armenia My Friend and The Year of Armenia in France” and included several priceless pieces of Armenian art, cultural and religious artifacts. Tarvidier-Henrot spoke about the exhibit, and the positive influence it had on France and visitors from throughout the world.

Among the items included in the exhibit were several khachkars (stone-carved holy crosses), “Geghard” the spear of destiny, a petrified piece of wood recovered from Mt. Ararat, said to be a piece of Noah’s Ark, and ancient manuscripts.

Ms. Tarvidier-Henrot and the French Armenian lawyers were presented with gifts from ArmenBar, including a glass paperweight, travel wallet and signature Armenian painting. The paperweight and wallet included the ArmenBar logo.

Olivier Roumelian was the organizer of the Paris meeting and served as master of ceremonies for the day. Following the meeting, members were able to take in all of the sights of Paris, including the Eiffel Tower, Arc De Triomphe the Cathedral of Notre Dame, Tomb of Napoleon and many more. The weather was perfect, and those with additional time toured the Palace at Versailles.

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Tchin! Tchin! Wintertime Hobnobbing and Networking at Montreal’s Fasken Martineau Law Firm

MONTREAL, CANADA - Canadian members of the Armenian Bar Association enjoyed a sumptuous cocktail buffet on Tuesday, February 12 at the offices of one of Canada’s leading international business law and litigation firms, Fasken Martineau. The venue was fitting since Fasken Martineau is the only Canadian law firm that can proudly boast having five rising stars of Armenian heritage.

The key organizer, Henri Arslanian, from Fasken, managed the evening with a welcoming aplomb and style to make everyone feel at home.

Among the 45 attendees was the most senior Quebec Bar member, Senator Raymond Setlakwe (1957). Now retired, Senator Setlakwe is the Armenian senator, originally from Mardin, Turkey, credited for having ensured the passage of the Armenian Genocide Motion 44 in the Canadian Senate, in 2002.

Senator Setlakwe’s more junior colleagues also included the sartorially elegant and entertaining raconteur maritime attorney Marc Deman (1974), immigration guru Hrair Djianian (1978) and the Honourable Judge Chahi-Philippe Arslanian (1979) of the Quebec Administrative Tribunal.

These and other senior luminaries were surrounded by the true stars of the evening. The majority were young attorneys called to the Quebec Bar after “Y2K,” in private practice and in firms of all sizes. Also in attendance were rising crown prosecutors; immigration officers; in-house corporate lawyers from various corporations like Deloitte & Touche, Bombardier and Pfizer, up and coming and established Quebec notaries and a handful of students from McGill University and Université de Montréal, both top Montreal law schools.

After formally welcoming the guests, Henri invited Canadian Bar Liaison and business litigator Harry Dikranian to address his colleagues.

Harry expressed his thanks to Henri and Fasken’s for their generosity as the evening’s gracious hosts. He then gave a rundown on the history of the Armenian Bar and the different committees available to serve the community.

Harry spoke of ArmenBar’s readiness to accept new members and volunteers: “As attorneys we

Guests enjoy cocktails at the Armenian Bar Association’s mixer at the Montreal offices of Fasken Martineau (from top, left to right): Sylvia Avedis, Harry Dikranian, Henri Arslanian and Marc Deman; and Sandra Chiossone, Dalita Kassardjian, Jerry Devletian, Haig Basmadjian and Karen Abugaber.

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are extremely fortunate. We derive a great deal of intellectual and financial rewards from our profession.”

“The Armenian Bar is our opportunity to give back, whether through the student committees, pro bono, Armenian rights or in any one of our choices” were the points he emphasized. That’s only a part of the picture since there is also “the fun of participating in annual and mid-year meetings in incredible locales from as far flung as Paris, Yerevan or San Diego to the closer to home Toronto, Chicago and most of all, not to miss, New York city next May.”

The Armenian legal community in Montreal has expanded considerably in the last few years. There are currently more than 96 lawyers and notaries working in a wide variety of fields and close to 20 students presently studying in law schools across the province. Eighty-four of these lawyers are in Quebec and the remaining 12 practice in Ontario and Vancouver, with the others practicing outside Canada, in New York, Massachusetts, California, London, Dubai, Beirut and even one at the International Criminal Court for the former Yugoslavia at The Hague, in the Netherlands.

With the expanding numbers, there is now a phenomenal drive to grow the ranks of ArmenBar and become even more active. Some suggested starting a full Canadian division, with more local activities. Senior partner, and Lapointe Rosenstein’s international corporate lawyer, Seti Hamalian volunteered setting up a regional mentorship program.

In sum, the February 12 cocktail at Fasken’s was a great Montreal winter evening with terrific company and the momentum for ArmenBar to continue and enlarge its excellent 20 year tradition.

Harry Dikranian, hd@skm.ca
Sternthal Katznelson Montigny
and Canadian Liaison, Armenian Bar Association
New York City’s Annual Fall Mixer Draws Members and Friends

NEW YORK CITY - On November 13, 2007, more than 40 attorneys and other professionals from the metropolitan New York area gathered at Metro 53 in New York City for the Armenian Bar Association’s annual fall mixer. Metro 53, a popular after-work lounge, lent itself to a relaxed and familiar atmosphere for ArmenBar members and prospective members to network and mingle with one another.

Those in attendance enjoyed catching up with old friends and acquaintances while also meeting new ones. The bi-annual metro area mixers have helped the Armenian Bar Association heighten awareness to the Armenian legal community in the tri-state area of all of the wonderful programs and networking opportunities provided by ArmenBar.

The highlight of the evening was the announcement of the Armenian Bar Association’s annual meeting which will be held in New York from May 2-4, 2008. The annual meeting will feature interesting and informative CLE programs, a keynote address by former US Ambassador to Armenia John Evans, terrific opportunities to explore New York City, and much more. Many thanks to Gary Moomjian, Betty Jamgotchian, Lisa Boyadjian and Lori Hatem for all of their help.

Diana Demirdjan

ArmenBar members and friends at the New York City fall mixer at Metro 53.
Armenian Bar Members Offer Free Legal Clinic in Hollywood/Little Armenia Nov. 14, 2007

LOS ANGELES – The law firm of Martin & Martin, LLP, in cooperation with the Armenian Bar Association and the Little Armenia Chamber of Commerce Chapter, co-sponsored a Free Legal Clinic in the Little Armenia section of Hollywood on Wednesday, November 14, 2007.

Attorneys were on hand to meet with community members one-on-one and answer questions – in English or Armenian – about a wide range of legal topics, including employment issues (such as discrimination, harassment, and wrongful termination); landlord-tenant disputes; small business matters; family law and trusts and estates.

“Some members of the Little Armenia community do not have access to legal representation or may not be able to afford consultation fees,” stated Aram Kouyoumdjian, a senior litigation attorney at Martin & Martin and member of the Armenian Bar Pro Bono Committee. “This pro bono legal clinic is meant to ensure that they can discuss their legal rights and obligations with licensed professionals without having to worry about any charges.”

“We are very grateful to Martin & Martin, a leading minority-owned firm in Los Angeles for helping organize this legal clinic pursuant to the firm’s “Advocates for All” program (a roaming clinic serving different geographic areas), stated Betty Jamgotchian, Executive Director of the Armenian Bar. The Armenian Bar Association is planning a similar community program in the Glendale area for Spring 2008.

Armenian Bar Members offering their services at the Free Legal Clinic were (from left): Karen Chorbajian, contracts coordinator with Verizon; Ana Barsegian, family law; and Aram Kouyoumdjian, an employment lawyer with Martin & Martin, LLP.

Boston Region Holds Inaugural Membership Event at Suffolk University Law School

BOSTON, MA - The Armenian Bar Association’s Boston Region held its inaugural event on Thursday, September 13, 2007.

Attendees at the reception at Suffolk University Law School in Boston, learned about the Armenian Bar Association and its initiative to form a regional group as a means to enable attorneys in the Boston area to get directly involved with the organization.

Attendees included attorneys from private practice, including law firms and in-house counsel, as well as the public sectors. Law students were also in the attendance.

The Boston Region will be organizing future events, including speakers, networking, and other functions relevant to the interests of the organization.

For more information about the Armenian Bar Association’s Boston Region, or if you would like to be added to the distribution list for future events, please email BostonABA@nexuslab.com.
Armenian Bar Association Co-Sponsors MCLE Lecture Featuring USC Professor Richard Dekmejian

ArmenBar members joined USC Professor Richard Dekmejian (seated-left) who lectured on the topic of International Law and Foreign Policy.

GLENDALE, CA – Richard Dekmejian, a political science professor at the University of Southern California (USC) and the director of the USC Institute of Armenian Studies, was the guest speaker at a continuing education lecture presented by the Arab American Lawyers Association (AALA). The dinner reception was held at the trendy Phoenicia restaurant in Glendale, California on November 8, 2007, and was co-sponsored by the Armenian Bar Association (ArmenBar) and the Iranian American Lawyers Association.

Several ArmenBar members joined their Arab and Iranian counterparts at the reception supporting Professor Dekmejian, whose work with the USC Institute has included collaborative legal seminars at the USC campus. Dekmejian, an expert in history and political science, with a focus on the Middle East, spoke on the subjects of “International Law and U.S. Foreign Policy: Human Rights, Genocide and Middle East Politics.”

His lecture was informative and engaging, and covered diverse topics including the United States activities in Iraq, current events in Pakistan, Iran and the Middle East, the Armenian Genocide and the current genocide in Darfur, Sudan. The presentation was followed by vigorous questions from the audience.

Dekmejian has often appeared on national television to offer commentary on political crises in the Middle East. He has authored many books, and his most recent text, Spectrum of Terror, which deals with the context of political violence, was published in March, 2007.

ArmenBar members on hand included Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Ronald Sohigian and Executive Director Betty Jamgotchian. All were treated to a delicious array of Armenian and Lebanese delicacies presented by Phoenicia owner Ara Kalfayan.

Alia Haddad, President of AALA, acted as master of ceremonies and thanked the diverse group of guests for participating in the event. Haddad, along with AALA secretary Nashwa Eisner, whose daughter is a former student of Professor Dekmejian, presented him with a commemorative plaque.

“We support our colleagues of the Arab American and Iranian American Bars, and always promote coordinated participation with other bar association functions,” said Jamgotchian. “Some of the members of the other bar associations present this evening are members of our organization, and we believe it is important to show our support for quality events like this one,” she said.

“We will continue to support other ethnic bar associations by participating in their events, with the goal of combining forces for the good of the legal community,” said Jamgotchian.
International Law and the Armenian Genocide Discussed at Symposium at USC, Co-Sponsored by Armenian Bar Association

LOS ANGELES - The Armenian Bar Association, in conjunction with the University of Southern California (USC) Institute of Armenian Studies, co-sponsored a symposium on the topic of International Law & the Armenian Genocide: Recognition, Responsibility and Restitution on September 8, 2007. The symposium was held at the Davidson Conference Center on the USC campus and featured numerous scholars and guests, including special guest speaker Ambassador John Marshall Evans.

The event was attended by over 400 attorneys, students, and members of the public. The distinguished panelists included Payam Akhavan of McGill University, Michael Bazyler of Whittier Law School, Sarkis Bezelgues of Freie Universitat in Berlin, David Nersessian of Harvard Law School, Alison Renteln of USC and John Torpey of City University of New York.

Welcoming remarks were given by Howard Gillman, Dean of the USC College of Letters and Sciences, and the luncheon speaker was renowned attorney Mark Geragos, one of the lead attorneys in the recent Genocide claims against New York Life and AXA insurance companies. Professor Richard Hrair Dekmejian, the Director of the USC Institute of Armenian Studies, gave opening remarks and chaired the symposium.

Bezelgues began the discussions with his presentation of international liability and State succession: the responsibility of the Turkish Republic for the Armenian Genocide. He was followed by Bazyler, who discussed litigation for restitution-comparative analysis of Armenians and other groups. Nersessian provided an overview of human rights litigation in US Federal courts, while Akhavan discussed criminalizing historical truth: Article 301 of the Turkish penal code and the Armenian Genocide.

Charles Gaillian, Chair of the Institute’s Leadership Council, introduced Ambassador Evans, who gave a speech entitled “The Armenian Genocide: The International Political and Diplomatic Context of Recognition and Redress.”

The afternoon session included Renteln speaking on the subject of Holocaust denial litigation: a comparative analysis, followed by Torpey, who discussed “Beyond Recognition: Truth, Reparations and the Armenian Genocide.” Harut Sassounian, Senior Vice President of the Lincy Foundation and publisher of the California Courier, read a paper authored by Alfred De Zayas of the Institut Universitaire de Hautes Etudes Internationales, Geneve, entitled “The Armenian Genocide in the light of the Genocide Convention.”

The Armenian Bar Association has worked closely with the USC Institute of Armenian Studies to provide legal topics of interest to the community. The symposium was another successful collaboration between the two organizations.

All in attendance were treated to complimentary lunch and refreshments at the Davidson Conference Center. Lawyers who attended the forum received five units of MCLE credits.
Members in the News and On the Move

Rita Bojalian has accepted a position as House Counsel to St. Jude Medical CRMD located at 15900 Valley View Court, Sylmar, CA 91342. Bojalian may be reached at rbojalian@yahoo.com

Paul Hokokian announces the opening of his law office in Fresno. Hokokian, former chair of the California State Bar’s Regulation, Admission and Discipline Committee, is available to represent fellow California lawyers facing State Bar discipline charges or seeking re-instatement of their bar license. He will also consult on ethics issues. Hokokian is a member of the Association of Professional Liability Lawyers and the American Bar Association Center for Professional Responsibility.

Hokokian served two terms (six years) on the State Bar Board of Governors. He is also a former president of both the Fresno County Bar Association and the Fresno County Prosecutors Association. A lieutenant colonel, he serves as a JAG officer in the Air Force Reserve.

Hokokian can be reached at the Fresno Station Business Center, 1713 Tulare Street, Ste. 204, Fresno, CA 93721; Office: 559-268-1177; Fax: 559-268-1177; Cell: 559-355-9647; Toll free: 888-268-1177, email: phokokian@sbcglobal.net.

Garo Mardirian was installed as the First Vice President of the Consumer Attorneys Association of Los Angeles on Jan. 19, 2008. The Association is the nation’s largest local association of plaintiffs’ attorneys with nearly 3000 members.

Appeals Court Nominee Confirmed (from State House News Service, Boston, MA)

Gabrielle Wolhojjan, an attorney at Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr, was approved for Appeals Court judgeship December 5, 2007 by the Governor’s Council. Wolhojjan was unanimously approved.

The confirmed judge will replace a retiree on the Appeals Court, the second highest court in the commonwealth. Wolhojjan was an associate independent counsel in the Whitewater investigation that consumed much of Bill Clinton’s presidency. She has also defended pharmaceutical giant Wyeth in over 2,600 liability cases in Massachusetts regarding the use of diet drugs.

Wolhojjan clerked for U.S District Court Judge Rya Zobel and the federal First Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Bailey Aldrich. She also is a performing member of the Boston Civic Symphony and the Boston Bar Orchestra.

Julian Haroutiun Zinner

Sarah Leah Whitson’s third baby made his arrival Jan. 14, 2008. She is home happily on maternity leave. Whitson is presently the Executive Director of the Middle East & North Africa Division of Human Rights Watch, 350 5th Avenue, 34th Floor, New York, NY 10118. You may reach her at whitso@hrw.org

Zoe Verma presents her twin siblings, Dylan Rajiv and Lucy Rose who are the new arrivals of ArmenBar Vice-Chair Melineh Verma

Photo Courtesy Ruth David, R David Original Photography, 2007

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Former California Gov. George Deukmejian Honored as the Armenian Bar Association Sponsors the Southern California Leadership Network’s Visionaries Awards, Dec. 4, 2007

LOS ANGELES – The Southern California Leadership Network, a partner with the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, presented its annual “Southern California Visionaries” awards on December 4, 2007, at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in Downtown Los Angeles. The Armenian Bar Association was a sponsor of the event.

Receiving the “Lifetime Achievement Award” was former California Governor and Honorary ArmenBar member George Deukmejian. Several hundred people were on hand including dignitaries from the judiciary, elected officials and members of the private sector. Deukmejian served two terms as California Governor from 1983 to 1991. He currently serves as a legal advisor to the Criminal Justice Legal Foundation.

ArmenBar members in attendance included Judge Alice Altoon of the Los Angeles Superior Court (retired), former Los Angeles District Attorney Robert Philibosian as well as Executive Director Betty Jamgotchian.

“We were very proud to help sponsor an event recognizing the vast achievements of one of our most inspirational members, Governor Deukmejian” said Jamgotchian. “We believe it is important to show our support for members of our organization who are recognized by groups outside of the Armenian community,” she said.

Deukmejian was one of five recipients honored by the network. Others included Thomas Priselac, President and CEO of Cedars-Sinai Health System, who received the “Leader of the Year” award; the Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard, a Congresswoman who received the “Elected Leader of the Year” award; Shelly Freeman, Regional President of Wells Fargo Bank, who received the “Excellence in Civic Leadership” award; and Karen Baker, Executive Director of California Volunteers, who received the “Graduate of the Year” award.

The Southern California Leadership Network’s mission is to develop a productive network of exemplary and diverse leaders in business, government and community sectors who are capable of addressing the critical challenges facing the Southern California region.

Armenian Bar Association members at the luncheon honoring Gov. George Deukmejian. Clockwise from left: Michael Sohigian, Lena Mardirossian, Robert A. Crook, Lucille Boston, Robert Philibosian, Janet Philibosian, Saro Kerkonian, Vicken Simonian and Betty Jamgotchian.

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Armenian Bar Association Chairman Frank Zerunyan
Elected Mayor of Rolling Hills Estates

ROLLING HILLS ESTATES
Frank Vram Zerunyan, currently serving his second term as Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Armenian Bar Association, was recently elected Mayor of Rolling Hills Estates by his fellow City Council members. In a ceremony on December 11, 2007 at the council chambers of city hall, Zerunyan took the oath of office, and gave a heartwarming acceptance speech acknowledging his Armenian heritage, parents and family, vowing to continue to serve his constituents to the best of his ability, pointing out the injustice to minorities that still exists in Turkey, the country of his birth, while praising the United States, the country whose laws have given him the chance to pursue public office. The ceremony was held in front of a packed city council chambers and a television audience.

On hand to honor Zerunyan on the special occasion were L.A. City Councilwoman Janice Hahn and Michael Amerian, a city attorney who appeared on behalf of Los Angeles City Council President Eric Garcetti. Amerian’s father, the late Richard Amerian, a former California appellate justice, was a mentor to Zerunyan. Both Hahn and Amerian presented Zerunyan with congratulatory plaques. The Honorable Mike Gin, Mayor of Redondo Beach, represented County Supervisor Don Knabe and Captain Ronene Anda of the Lomita Sheriff’s station represented Sheriff Lee Baca.

Former Mayor Susan Seamans offered words of praise for her successor. Judy Mitchell was elected Mayor Pro Tem, to serve along-side Zerunyan for the coming year. As a special treat, the audience witnessed the local Armenian Arakatz Chapter of the Homenetmen Scouts present the colors and the pledge of allegiance. Several members of the Armenian Bar, including Executive Director Betty Jamgotchian were on hand to celebrate the happy occasion.

Zerunyan’s election as mayor is the latest in a long list of accomplishments for the principal and general counsel to Public-Private Community Development, LLC, a policy-driven, redevelopment company building California communities for the next generation. Zerunyan has had an exemplary legal career and is a former partner in the prestigious law firm of Sulmeyer Kupetz in Los Angeles.

A rising star in California politics, Zerunyan was appointed to the Division of Medical Quality (Medical Board of California) by Gov. Schwarzenegger in 2006 and was unanimously confirmed by the California Senate in 2007. He was first elected to the City Council of Rolling Hills Estates in 2003. He is on the Board of the Palos Verdes Peninsula Transit Authority and chaired several committees. He served on policy committees at the

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League of California Cities and Southern California Association of Governments. As mayor, he will now serve on the Boards of the Regional Law Enforcement and Sanitation District. He will be a member of the National Conference of Mayors and is a member of the executive board of the California Contract Cities Association. He will soon serve as president of that organization which serves 78 cities with more than eight million residents.

"I am honored that my fellow council members have the faith in me to lead our great city," said Zerunyan. "As mayor, my commitment to the City of Rolling Hills Estates and our Palos Verdes Peninsula Community are unwavering. I am dedicated to the future of our city and the residents who live within its boundaries," he said.

Zerunyan is the first person of Armenian heritage to be elected mayor of Rolling Hills Estates. When he is installed as President of the California Contract Cities Association, he will be the first Armenian to lead that organization.

He received his Juris Doctorate degree from Western State University in Fullerton, California and his advanced law certificate in corporate taxation from the University of Southern California. He has published and lectured extensively.

Robert H. Philibosian was named “Person of the Year” by Metropolitan News-Enterprise on January 25, 2008 in Los Angeles. Philibosian is a Civil Practitioner and former District Attorney.

Professor Ann Lousin presents a diploma to her niece Elizabeth Mirza Al-Dajani at the JMLS graduation on January 27 with Liz’s son, 3 1/2 year old Muhsen in his first “big boy” suit. Congratulations, Ann, Leona, Liz and Muhsen (According to Great-Aunt Ann, Muhsen wants to be an engineer and doesn’t know why he doesn’t have a driver’s license yet).
Retired Superior Court Judge Kehiayan Dead at 80

Article originally appeared in Metropolitan News-Enterprise on December 27, 2007.

Retired Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Haig Kehiayan has died at age 80.

Kehiayan, a longtime resident of the Santa Clarita Valley, died Tuesday, Dec. 25.

A longtime Republican, Kehiayan was appointed to the bench by Gov. George Deukmejian in 1988. He was elected in 1990 and reelected in 1996, and he continued to hear cases by assignment after his retirement in 1998.

Attorney Lee Kanon Alpert, a friend who had known Kehiayan for 30 years, said that he would be missed terribly. Alpert called Kehiayan a “good lawyer,” and a “great judge,” and said that he had a no-nonsense style that made him very effective. Alpert said these characteristics carried over from Kehiayan’s days as a litigator.

“He had an incredible sense of humor,” Alpert said. “He was a great strategist and was tough as a trial attorney and a litigator, but always with a smile and a gentlemanly way.”

Retired California Supreme Court Justice Armand Arabian, who swore Kehiayan in as a judge, agreed.

“He was the sweetest human being,” Arabian said. “I never heard a bad word about him, and never heard him utter a bad word about anyone else.”

“Haig was truly a prince among men,” former Los Angeles District Attorney Robert H. Philobosian said.

“This is a great loss to the community. He was always unselfish and thinking of others. He was a loyal friend to many of us in the Armenian American community and among the judges and lawyers.”

Kehiayan graduated from Los Angeles High School in 1945, and then joined the U.S. Navy during World War II, rising from the rank of seaman 2nd class to seaman 1st class and receiving the Victory Medal World War II.

After the war, he attended college at USC where he engaged in private real estate sales and various part-time employment while a student. Upon graduating with a degree in public administration in 1950, he served as right of way agent for the California State Division of Highways, Los Angeles, until 1956.

During this time Kehiayan also attended Southwestern Law School, where he graduated cum laude in 1955, and was admitted the State Bar of California in 1955. He also engaged in post-graduate studies in medical-legal anatomy at the College of Osteopathic Physicians & Surgeons, part of USC Medical Center, from 1958 to 1959.

Kehiayan began his legal practice in Los Angeles in 1956, practicing first as a sole practitioner and then with the law firm of Kehiayan, Herman & Stromwirth from 1963 to 1965. He then practiced with the firm of Kehiayan & Herman from 1965 until 1970 when he became partner in the firm of Oliver, Sloan, Kehiayan & Vargas.

In 1969, he began practicing in Mission Hills, where he engaged in general practice. He became partner in the law firm of Kehiayan & Herman in 1978, and then in 1986 became president of Haig Kehiayan ALC, specializing in real estate small business, and probate until his appointment as a judge.

Prior to his appointment, he was a member of the American Arbitration Association from 1962 to 1988, serving as an arbitrator for the Los Angeles Superior Court and the San Fernando Valley Arbitration Program from 1979 to 1988.

Kehiayan was a member of the American Bar Association, the Los Angeles County Bar Association, and the San Fernando Valley Bar Association, where he served as president from 1986 to 1987.

Entire article can be found at www.metnews.com.
Midyear Meeting
continued from pg. 5

On October 1, 2007, the group flew to Yerevan for the second leg of the trip. Most were amazed by the level of progress and advancement Armenia has attained since ArmenBar last held meetings there in 1994 and 2001. Most notable was the brand new terminal at Zvartnots airport, opened just five months prior to the group's arrival, and the massive amount of construction taking place in Yerevan.

Executive Director Betty Jangotchian was an excellent organizer and guide, and made sure that the group had access to daily tours to historical sites in Armenia. Those sights included Garni, Geghard, Madenataran (library which houses ancient manuscripts), Dzidzernagapert (Genocide Memorial), Lake Sevan, and the churches at Etchmiadzin, Goshavank, Hagharden, Hripsime, and Zvartnots.

The group met with the Chamber of Advocates, the Armenian equivalent of the State Bar where Zerunyan and his counterpart Ruben A. Sahakyan exchanged information about their respective organizations, discussed ways the two groups could work together toward common goals and gave each other gifts. Sahakyan spoke about the work of the Chamber, its supporting role for the new Public Defender's office, and its goals to develop attorney disciplinary measures. Also in attendance were past Chairs Armen Hovannisian, Ann Louin, Gary Moomjian, Tom Samuelian, Zaven Sinanian and Vicken Simonian.

Members at the Armenina-owned Yans Club in Paris (from left): Judge Ruth Essegian, Raymond Yezeguelian, Lucille Boston and Linda Berberian.

At the invitation of Sahakyan, renowned Los Angeles criminal defense attorney Garo Ghazarian met with members of the Chamber of Advocates and lectured on the topic of representing those accused of crime in the United States.

The meeting was followed by a champagne and wine reception in the halls of the Armenian Constitutional Court. Notable members of Armenia's legal community socialized with ArmenBar members. Zerunyan thanked Chief Justice Gagik Harutyunyan for inviting ArmenBar to the court, and Justice Harutyunyan warmly welcomed ArmenBar to Armenia. The reception was held in a hall of the court named after ArmenBar Honorary Member Armand Arabian, Associate Justice of the California Supreme Court (ret). Arabian underwrote the renovation of the hall several years ago. In addition to the pride of holding the meeting at such a meaningful location, members were able to meet the first two recipients of ArmenBar's scholarship fund, Karine Aghababyan (Class of 2007) and Armen Zrvandyan (Class of 2006).

On October 5, Samuelian, who is the Dean of the Law School at the American University of Armenia, and Vahan Bournazian, Associate Dean of the Law School, and the Armenia Programs Chairman, presented an excellent continuing education seminar.

Samuelian started the program by welcoming everyone to Yerevan and discussing the unique aspects of practicing law in Armenia. Topics included an introduction to Armenia's legal foundations, landmark legislation since independence, the division of labor between attorneys and other professionals in Armenia, practice tips and a review of Armenia's future legal challenges.

This was followed by Anna Maralayan, an AUA alum and President of the Alphabet of Rights NGO, who gave a passionate lecture about Mekhitar Gosh. The talk included Gosh's innovative, medieval law code, the Datastanagirk. Maralayan discussed the life of Mekhitar Gosh, his writing
Midyear Meeting
continued from pg. 17

of fables to teach morality, and the
important legal contributions of his
Dastanagirk.

Following the lecture, those
in attendance were able to view a
practice session of the AUA Law’s
Moot Court team. The students were
presented with a case to argue, and
the panel of judges was composed of
ArmenBar members Lousin, Judges
Arjuna Saraydarian and Sinanian.

Criminal Defense attorney
Garo Ghazarian and Zerunyan
served as faculty advisors for
each team in the competition. The
expense for the Stetson competition
has been funded by ArmenBar and
donations from members of the
group. Everyone was pleased with
the progress being made at AUA
Law in its efforts to develop the
next generation of creative thinking
lawyers in Armenia.

On the last day of the trip,
Zerunyan met with Yerevan Mayor
Yervand Zakharyan at the newly-
built Yerevan government office.
The two mayors discussed ways
ArmenBar could help the Republic of

Armenia and vowed to keep the line
of communication open. Zerunyan
presented Mayor Zakharyan with
two plaques, one from his own City
of Rolling Hills Estates, and the other
from the California Contract Cities
Association (CCCA) a consortium
of 76 California cities representing
over eight million Californians.
Zerunyan serves in leadership of
the CCCA and is about to become
president of the organization.

Most of the group stayed at
the Golden Tulip, a five star hotel
Abovyan Avenue, walking dist
from the Republic Square. Loc
on the north side of the sq
is Armenia’s National His
Museum, which had all of
items back from the French ex
Members were able to see
historic items, and take part in
evening ritual of beautiful Arme
music being played in the sq
while the enormous water foun
d in front of the museum dance
the music and laser lights.

Members were also abl
take in the ever-popular Verniss
the local weekend arts and c
market adjacent to the Rept
Square, and bring back gifts of
Mayr Hayastan. Speaking for
group, Zerunyan proclaimed “we
was our third, but definitely not
last trip to Armenia. Going into
Annual Meeting in New York
will use the momentum we
gained from this historic trip
redouble our efforts to serve
community and our profession.”

Justice Gagik Harutyunyan speaks to members at the Constitutional
Court, Armand Arabian Reception Hall.
Stetson Competition Report From the Team

In their own words:

The fall of 2008 was the one we will remember for a long time. It was a term of discoveries, preparation and really hard work. The event we were preparing for was the 12th annual international environmental moot court competition hosted by the Stetson University College of Law. And the event itself, which took place on November 9-10, was worth our efforts and time spent. Despite the fact that we had had a 17-hour flight from Yerevan to Tampa, we somehow found a way to gather up for the competition. Much thanks to our coach Sarkis Knyazyan for his great efforts to keep us motivated.

The competition was a very well-organized, interesting, motivated and professional lawyers acting as judges, and with very bright participants from different parts of the world. This was the first moot court we were participating in. Indeed, we had done a lot of practice, a lot of research and we had very strong arguments, but we lacked the experience, which other teams had due at least to their successful participation in the regional rounds of the competition. One of the lessons we learned from the competition was that the way you present your arguments to judges is much more important than how good and strong your arguments are. Certainly, our coach, other instructors and some of the members of the Armenian Bar Association had told us about this. We remember the Brazilian team, which was defeated in the semifinals, told us that 80% of the success is how you present the case and answer the questions, and only the other 20% or less is how strong or prevailing your arguments are.

In any case this was a great experience and a great opportunity of learning to do research and of developing and demonstrating appellate advocacy skills. But above all this we are very glad that with our participation in this prestigious competition a tradition of moot court was established in the Law Department of the American University of Armenia. Since the goal of the AUA is to prepare competitive professionals, and since it is impossible to overestimate the role of moot courts in preparing professional lawyers, we are hopeful that AUA Law will make moot courts a separate direction in its programs. At the end we would like to thank once more Dean Samuelian, our coach, other people who instructed us, and our special thanks to the Armenian Bar Association for this great opportunity and for its continuing contribution to Armenian students and the thankful work of raising the quality of education in Armenia.
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Message from the Chair continued from pg. 1

must insist that our leaders promote truth, justice and the rule of law. We have a long tradition of accepting human dignity as an inalienable right and as the basis of our jurisprudence. No one could have described it better than Alexander Hamilton when he said “The sacred rights of mankind are not to be rummaged for, among the old parchments, or musty records. They are written, as with a sun beam in the whole volume of human nature, by the hand of divinity itself; and can never be erased or obstructed by mortal power.”

“Never again” to Armenians, Jews, Cambodians, Rwandans, Darfurians is not just a slogan in the context of the human rights debate in the world; it is a call to meaningful action to eradicate genocide from the world. Experts and scholars confirm that each perpetrator has used previous crimes against humanity with impunity. Indeed Adolph Hitler himself in 1939, before the invasion of Poland, reminded his commanding officers in a passionate speech “who still talks now days of the extermination of the Armenians?” Denial is part of and a completion of this crime against humanity. Our values simply do not permit us to be co-conspirators to the commission of or to the completion of the crime of genocide.

At stake today in Washington DC, of course, is the question of whether the United States House of Representatives should offend Turkey by voting on a resolution condemning the Armenian Genocide of 1915. All actors in this debate are playing the roles they have played for decades. Turkish generals and ministers are threatening our military ties, the closure of our bases, air space and logistics routes. Ironically however, even before any word of this resolution, those routes were already closed to our sons and daughters when our nation went to war to liberate Iraq. There is also a new threat by our own government: “radical Islam.” Most if not all credible experts will agree that this threat is simply not credible as the Republic of Turkey will never choose this form of a regime over the great and overwhelming legacy of its founding father Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. Moreover, such a threat completely undermines contemporary Turkish identity.

While the Republic of Turkey may react negatively in the short term (I think to their own detriment), recognition of the Armenian Genocide is warranted for several reasons. First, the HR106 declares the truth; a truth that 23 other countries, 40 American states and countless counties and cities have already recognized. Second, no one discusses or even mentions our influence and the basis of our influence over the Republic of Turkey. The truth is that we brought Turkey into the NATO Alliance without which Turkey’s security could not be guaranteed. We support Turkey’s membership into the European Union; an economic “must” for the survival of Turkey into the 21st century and beyond. We granted Turkey a most-favored nation trading status resulting in more than $7 billion in annual trade and $2 billion in US investments in Turkey. Only Israel and Egypt outrank Turkey as recipient US foreign assistance. Third, inconceivable that even back the days when the US prized Germany as a buffer and det against the Soviet Union. Americans would have ref from condemning The Shoal Holocaust) at Germany’s behe

Finally and more impor to this American of Arm descent, it brings finality and cl bringing back human digni humanity lost almost a century. I assume most of you know eternal resting grounds of your grandfathers and grandparents. My ancestors formed th Christian nation in the world A.D.) only to become the inv Christians in unmarked graves early stages of the 20th Centu

I am the great gran of a victim and the grandsurvivor. Ironically, I live tod the direct result of the kindn a Turkish gentleman (Effendi had the humanity to shelter grandfather. I applaud his hun and encourage our leaders to f in his footsteps.”

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Fax

E-mail

Law School

Year of Graduation

Admitted to Bar
(Jurisdiction/Year)

Areas of Practice (List no more than three)

Interest in Committees
☐ Armenia Programs
☐ Membership
☐ Armenian Rights Watch
☐ Newsletter
☐ Genocide Project
☐ Pro Bono
☐ Legal Education
☐ Grants
☐ Student Affairs

Enclosed please find my check for:
☒ $1,000 2008 Annual Sponsor
☒ $125 Attorney/Judge Membership
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Signature

Date

Please detach this application and send with your check to:
Armenian Bar Association
P.O. Box 29111
Los Angeles, CA 90029
(323) 666-6288, info@armenianbar.org
AIMS AND STRUCTURE

The Armenian Bar Association is a non-profit, non-partisan organization, formed in 1989 to enable attorneys of Armenian heritage and other interested individuals to better serve the law, the legal profession, and the Armenian community.

The Association provides pro bono services and legal education in Armenian communities across the country and sponsors programs to promote democracy and the rule of law in the Republic of Armenia.

Coming together socially and professionally, members from around the world have the opportunity to learn from one another as they join their different backgrounds and experiences in Association activities.

The Association is a democratic organization. It is supported and directed by its members, who approve its bylaws, elect its Board of Governors, nominate prominent jurists as honorary members, and set the Association’s annual goals and policies.

The Armenian Bar Association is committed to serving the profession of law, addressing the legal concerns of the Armenian community and fostering respect for human and civil rights.

ACTIVITIES AND BENEFITS

Some of the Association’s operations include:

- Worldwide Network of Attorneys
- Continuing Legal Education, Seminars & Workshops
- Pro Bono Program
- Rule of Law Projects in the Republic of Armenia
- Armenian Rights Watch
- Annual National Meeting
- Quarterly Newsletter
- Membership Directory
- Amicus Curiae Submission on Issues of Community Interest
- Topical and Regional Practice Groups
- Cooperation with other bar associations and lawyers’ societies

COMMITTED TO SERVE

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