Federal Judge Samuel Der-Yeghiayan to be Honored at Armenian Bar Association’s Annual Meeting in Chicago, May 14-16, 2010

The historic skyline of Chicago is pictured above. The 21st Annual National Meeting of the Armenian Bar Association will be held at the regal Union League Club, in the Downtown Financial District.

Samuel Der-Yeghiayan, the first Armenian immigrant to be appointed to the Federal bench in the United States, will be an honored guest at the Armenian Bar Association’s 21st Annual National Meeting in Chicago, the weekend of May 14, 2010. Der-Yeghiayan has been a United States District Court Judge for the Northern District of Illinois since 2003, having been nominated for the position by President George W. Bush.

Those in attendance will be treated to a number of activities, including a tour of the Federal Court Building with an in-chambers meeting with Judge Der-Yeghiayan, a tour of the new Modern Art Wing at the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago architectural river boat cruise, and a Chicago Cubs baseball game at Wrigley Field.

The meeting will be punctuated by legal seminars featuring outstanding speakers on topics of interest to the Armenian legal community. Protection of Armenian Cultural Heritage Worldwide is a topic which will include panelists Rachel Goshgarian, Director of the Zohrab Center, Bedross Der Matossian, a professor of Middle Eastern studies at M.I.T, and Karnig Kerkonian, Esq., the managing partner of Kerkonian, LLC.

See Annual National Meeting in Chicago, pg. 2

We have accomplished much in the past two years!

Since May, 2008, the financial well-being of this organization has improved, with increased funds received from membership dues, sponsorships, and contributions to the Babayan Fund.

The website has been upgraded, although it is always a “work-in-progress.” You have to admit this new one is a definite improvement over our old website! Thanks to Armen Margarian, and our chair, Martha Mensioan and vice-chair Hovanes Margarian, for all of their ongoing work.

Some strategic planning has begun, with our thoughts turning to how to position the organization for growth, both in membership and in leadership, and how to position it as a relevant, vibrant organization.

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A panel on Electronic Discovery and Privacy Issues on the Internet will include Jim Nahkian, Principal of Nahkian Global Intellectual Property and Technology Law Group and Gregory Hoogasian, Vice President of Regulatory Affairs for the Chicago Stock Exchange.

An Armenia update will be presented by Sara Anjargolian, Esq. who will discuss economic, sociologic and legal perspectives. The lecture will include a presentation of many of Ms. Anjargolian’s critically acclaimed photos documenting life in Armenia.

Rick Hartunian, a newly appointed U.S. Attorney from Albany, New York, will be another guest speaker and honoree at the meeting.

The Union League Club of Chicago, located in the heart of the downtown financial district with a 130-year history of assistance to the cultural, political and social growth of Chicago, will be the venue for the meeting. The outstanding meeting facility is within walking distance of many of the city’s attractions. The meeting will include legal seminars, a meeting of the Board of Governors, receptions with local dignitaries, and other interesting activities.

The mere mention of the name Chicago conjures up images of the Sears Tower, The Magnificent Mile, John Hancock Center, Navy Pier, Millennium Park, Civic Opera Center, Shedd Aquarium, Buckingham Fountains and many other attractions. Chicago also has a reputation for fine dining, including the world famous deep-dish pizza. Those in attendance will be able to enjoy all that the city has to offer.

“We are delighted to return to Chicago for our 2010 Annual Meeting, and hope to attract numerous Armenian attorneys from throughout the country to participate,” said Sonya Nersessian, Chairman of ArmenBar. “Our goal is to energize our constituency area, help facilitate the interaction of our members and exchange of ideas, and honor those at the top of our profession,” said Nersessian.

Prior to being appointed to the Federal bench, Der-Yeghiayan had a distinguished career as a trial attorney, district counsel and district director handling immigration matters. He received many awards during his legal career including the Frank J. McGarr award of the Federal Bar Association as the Outstanding Federal Government Attorney in Chicago and the District Counsel of the Year Award from the Commissioner of the INS and Attorney General Janet Reno in 1998. Der-Yeghiayan will be the meeting luncheon keynote speaker. In a special ceremony, he will receive a plaque acknowledging his years of service to the community.

ArmenBar’s last meeting in Chicago was in 2004. Board member Amy Hoogasian, who was a guest speaker at that meeting, is the organizing committee chairperson for 2010. Hoogasian has assembled an excellent group of attorneys and law professors to coordinate the event. That group includes Ann Louise, a professor at the John Marshall Law School and the only three-term Chair of ArmenBar along with former Chair Lisa Essayan, a partner in the prestigious law firm of Kirkland and Ellis.

As is customary, the meeting will feature legal seminars offering valuable continuing legal education units. ArmenBar is a preferred provider of MCLE credits in California, Illinois, New York and Pennsylvania.

The meeting will be presided over by Nersessian, from Boston, Massachusetts, who is in her second term as chair of the organization. The meeting will provide an opportunity for the Board of Governors to meet, set the agenda of the organization, update the membership on recent activities and accomplishments, and vote on issues of importance to the organization.

A Friday evening reception will be held at the Union League Club, and a Saturday evening dinner reception will take place at the Armenian owned and award winning NAHA Restaurant. For more information about the event, visit the Armenian Bar website at: www.armenianbar.org.

Samuel Der-Yeghiayan, the first Armenian immigrant to be appointed to the Federal Bench in the United States, will be an honored guest at the Armenian Bar Association’s 21st Annual National Meeting in Chicago, the weekend of May 14, 2010.

BEVERLY HILLS - Decorated trial attorney Garo Mardirossian was sworn in as President of the Consumer Attorneys Association of California Supreme Court Justice Baxter during the organization’s 61th Annual Installation and Awards Dinner at the posh Beverly Wilshire Hotel on January 23, 2010.

Marvin Baxter, the second most senior Associate Justice of the California Supreme Court, was on hand to administer the oath to the incoming Board of Governors of CAALA. In what can only be described as an extremely proud moment for the Armenian legal community, Mardirossian acknowledged his Armenian background, the struggle of his parents and grandparents to survive the Genocide, and his commitment to his community and the organization he will now head. He introduced Baxter, pointing out that in addition to being the highest ranking judicial officer of Armenian descent in the United States, that both share their ancestry from the region of Kharpert.

Baxter praised the great work and mission of CAALA, and emphasized that it was a special honor to swear in the Board, specifically Mardirossian. Baxter also pointed out that his lineage extended from Khohk, a village in the Kharpert region of Western Armenia. He reminded the audience of the struggle the Armenians endured, and what a tremendous accomplishment Mardirossian’s elevation to the presidency of CAALA is in light of those challenges.

Also joining the Board of Governors of CAALA for the 2010 term were fellow Armenians Carney Shegerian and Armen Tashjian. In attendance to support Mardirossian were several Board members of the Armenian Bar Association, including Vice-Chairman Edwin Minassian, Treasurer Sara Bedirian, Federal Magistrate Judge Jacqueline Chooljian, Garo Ghazarian, Dean of the People’s College of Law, John Lulejian, Hovanes Margarian, Nikol Manoukian, Past Chairmen Armen Hovannisian, Vicken Simonian, and Judge Zaven Sinanian, past Treasurer Saro Kerkonian and Judge Gregory Keosian.

On many occasions, Mardirossian has been a special guest speaker at Armenian Bar meetings and seminars. CAALA (formerly known as the Los Angeles Trial Lawyers Association) was formed in 1949, and with nearly 3,000 members is the largest association of plaintiffs’ lawyers in the United States. Among its many goals, the influential group is active in the promotion of legislation intended to protect the rights and interests of consumers of the State of California.

Several members of the California judiciary were in attendance, including Baxter, Carlos Moreno, a fellow Associate Justice of the California Supreme Court, two justices from the California Courts of Appeal, and Federal Magistrate Judge Chooljian. Forty-five judges from the Los Angeles County court system were also present, including Presiding Judge Charles McCoy, Assistant Presiding Judge Lee Edmon, Judge Sinanian, who sits at the Stanley Mosk Courthouse in Downtown Los Angeles and Judge Keosian, who sits in the Van Nuys courthouse in the San Fernando Valley.

At the meeting, the influential organization in light of those challenges.

Joining Garo Mardirossian (middle) at the CAALA installation were, from left: Edwin Minassian, Armen Hovannisian, U.S. Magistrate Judge Jacqueline Chooljian, Judge Zaven Sinanian, Mardirossian, Judge Gregory Keosian, Saro Kerkonian, Nikol Manoukian and John Lulejian.

In 2000 Mardirossian was sworn in as the President of the Consumer Attorneys Association of Los Angeles by California Supreme Court Justice Baxter during his legal career including the Frank J. McGarr award of the California Courts of Appeal, and Federal Magistrate Judge Chooljian. Forty-five judges from the Los Angeles County court system were also present, including Presiding Judge Charles McCoy, Assistant Presiding Judge Lee Edmon, Judge Sinanian, who sits at the Stanley Mosk Courthouse in Downtown Los Angeles and Judge Keosian, who sits in the Van Nuys courthouse in the San Fernando Valley.

Also in attendance were numerous politicians including California Secretary of State Debra Bowen, California State Controller John Chiang, seven California State Senators and 18 members of the California State Assembly. Ara Najarian, Los Angeles County Supervisor and Mayor of Glendale, was also in attendance. Najarian and Mardirossian are first cousins.

In 2000 Mardirossian was voted CAALA’s “Trial Lawyer of the Year.” He has been on the Board of Governors for 16 years, and is the first person of Armenian descent ever to become president of the prestigious organization. Mardirossian and his wife Kathy have been married for 23 years. Their daughter Ani is a junior at UCLA, Garo’s alma mater. Daughter Nora is a sophomore at UCSB, and their son Kevork is in the fourth grade. Ani and Nora are both exceptional student athletes, achieving numerous awards while attending Marymount High School in West Los Angeles. As a
Members in the News and on the Move

Katrina Abrahamian, recently married to fellow attorney George Woolverton, sang “God Bless America” at the Kings v. Bruins game on January 16, 2010. Visit YouTube to hear Katrina sing. Just search “katrinasmusic1” to find the video. Congratulations to Katrina and her proud mom, Mania Abrahamian, also an Armenian Bar member. Katrina can be reached at katrina@woolverton.com.

Ara A. Babaian, with Ervin Cohen & Jessup LLP in Beverly Hills, was quoted in an article on GreenGoPost.com using about using the Internet to do a private placement. Please see it here: http://greengoipost.com/looking-for-the-green-money/. He also wrote an article in Business & Corporate Law Reporter about key issues to consider in preparing a business for a major transaction—apropos for the New Year. “Business Topics: Part I - Key Issues to Consider in Anticipation of a Major Transaction,” can be read here: http://www.ecjlaw.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/2009-12BCLR-Babaian.pdf. And finally, below is an article Ara wrote on September 21, 2009 for a website called The Directive. Ara Babaian can be reached at ababaian@ecjlaw.com.

Preparing Your Business for a Major Transaction: Seven Key Issues to Consider

Are you considering a major transaction for your business, such as a sale, merger, private placement or debt financing? These types of deals are very important to the stakeholders in your company and to the future success of the business, and they are often time-consuming and costly. Below are seven key issues that often arise in these deals, and any one of them can become a major obstacle to closing your deal. In addition, in a major transaction, the business owners will be asked to make certain representations and warranties about the business that can make them personally liable for any breaches. Addressing these issues in advance can prevent them from becoming pitfalls.

Maintain reliable financial information. It is critical to work with your in-house financial staff or your CPA to prepare financial information that you and other decision-makers can rely upon. Developing effective audit and internal control procedures is an integral part of this effort. Doing this will allow you to gauge how your business is performing and demonstrate its value to other participants in the deal. Further, it will show that your business is organized and well-managed.

Keep your employees through the transaction. Often a company’s value is closely tied with the individuals whom the company employs. Because a certain amount of confusion and uncertainty is involved with a major corporate transaction, it is critical to retain these employees. One way to do that is by incentivizing them with equity incentive plans such as stock option or other equity plans, so that the employees are motivated to remain employed by the company to the end of the deal and beyond.

Document your relationships. Depending on the industry you are in, some or all of your business relationships may not be documented—whether those relationships are with your suppliers, customers, contractors or others. However, to the extent practical, it is important to document those relationships. Doing so will help preserve the value in your company and support the due diligence review of your business that any investor likely will undertake.

Manage your partners. If your business has more than one owner, it is important to make sure that your partners are all on board with respect to any decisions regarding the deal. A buy-sell agreement, shareholders’ agreement or management agreement (if your company is a limited liability company) can help you do this by imposing restrictions on the transferability of the shares and providing for other management and decision-making mechanisms.

Maintain your corporate records. Maintaining and updating the corporate records of your business on a regular basis saves a lot of time and prevents confusion during a major transaction. Worrying about these details in the midst of a complex deal will take away resources from the business and the deal itself.

Protect your intellectual property (IP). It is critical to protect your company’s IP (patents, copyrights, trademarks and trade secrets). The actions that need to be taken depend on the type of IP that is important to your business. For example, you may need to file for a patent, or register a trademark or copyright. To protect trade secrets, you want to make sure that your trade secrets are shared only with people who have a “need to know” and who sign a non-disclosure agreement. Your employees and contractors also should sign an inventions or “work for hire” agreement to make sure that the sole owner of the IP is your company and that employees or contractors do not acquire rights in the IP.

Review your lease and environmental matters. If you are considering a major deal, it is important to ensure that the lease for your business (1) is appropriate for the future needs of the business, (2) is assignable in the context of your deal and (3) has acceptable terms such as rent amount and term. In addition, a myriad of environmental and zoning laws may apply to your business, and it is necessary from time to time to evaluate these laws to determine their impact on the deal.

Complex corporate transactions present many challenges and use up a lot of resources. Addressing the issues presented above, along with any particular issues that face your business and the deal itself, will be a good start to smoothing the path for a successful business venture.

Raffi Kassabian was featured in an Armenian Chronicles blog post, discussing his return to UCLA for a third time, not as a student, but as a lecturer in the Communication Studies Department, where he will be teaching his very own course titled Communication Studies 168: Free Speech in Advertising. Read the entire post at http://thearmenianchronicles.blogspot.com/2009/12/raffi-kassabian-leader-litigator.html. Raffi can be reached at raffi.kassab@gmail.com.

There is with great pride that the Armenian Bar Association congratulates member and seminar speaker Catherine Kessedjian on her Légion d’Honneur Award, France’s highest award, given to her on Feb. 4, 2010.

More Member News continued from pg. 4

Please send your job announcements, press releases, articles and info. about appointments and/or noteworthy cases for publication to:

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Armenian Bar members in Glendale, CA had the opportunity to greet Lisa Esayian during her visit to the Southland. Ms. Esayian was Past President of the Armenian Bar Association in 2001-2002. She is a Partner with Kirkland & Ellis LLP in Illinois. Attending a dinner at Phoenixia Restaurant were Armenian Bar members (Standing L-R): Deputy Los Angeles City Attorney Michael Amerian; ArmenBar Past President, Assistant Treasurer, and Pro Bono Co-Chair, Vicken Simonian; Administrative Assistant Lisa Boyadjian; Assistant US Attorney, Board of Governors member and Newsletter Co-Chair John Lulejian. (Seated L-R): ArmenBar Executive Director Betty Jamgotchian; Lisa Esayian; Armenian Rights Watch Chair, Saro Kerkenian; Vice Chair Edvin Minassian; and Glendale Sr. Assistant Attorney, Glendale Bar President and past Executive Director, Lucy Varpetian.

More Member News, pg. 5

See More Member News, pg. 10
As Ann Lousin put it, “Now that’s got to be a record!”

Professor Lousin will concentrate on ALI’s new project, “Principles of Government Ethics.” “I am delighted because I think any discussion of government ethics requires the participation of an Illinoisan because we have had so much experience with the lack thereof,” said Professor Lousin.

The following is an announcement from Dean John E. Corkery of John Marshall regarding Professor Lousin’s election:

To all JMLS faculty, staff, and students:

I am happy to announce that Professor Ann Lousin was elected a member of The American Law Institute on December 3, 2009. The ALI, as it is commonly known, is one of the premier think tanks in the country. As it is commonly known, is one of the nation’s most important legal communities.

Professor Ann Lousin of The John Marshall Law School was punctuated by legal seminars, especially Sales Transactions. She plans on participating in the ALI’s work with commercial law. As those of you who have been watching or reading her media interviews this past year know, she is also an expert on the Illinois constitution and Illinois state government. Her column on “Law and Public Policy” appears regularly in The Chicago Daily Law Bulletin.

I am especially delighted at Ann’s election because she is the first member of the JMLS faculty to be elected to the ALI. She joins distinguished legal scholars, judges, and practitioners from around the country in their efforts to improve the law in a very practical way. While this election is a great honor for Ann, it also reflects well on John Marshall.

Please join me in congratulating her for her many contributions, including election to the ALI, and for the national recognition she brings to our fine law school.

Professor Mark L. Movsesian, Frederick A. Whitney Professor of Contract Law, decided to follow in the footsteps of his professors at Harvard Law School and pursue a career in teaching after finishing his clerkship with Supreme Court Justice David H. Souter.

Born and raised in Queens, New York, Professor Movsesian grew up very close to St. John’s Queens campus. Although he remembers the University from his high school days, he believes teaching at St. John’s School of Law is more than just a return to his roots; it is an opportunity to be a part of one of the nation’s most important legal communities.

There’s something very exciting about the classroom, about the opportunity to give of yourself and influence the way other people see the world,” said Professor Movsesian.

At the end of my clerkship, I had to decide between teaching and practicing law in DC. Around that time, I was reading Robert Bolt’s play, A Man for All Seasons. In the play, Sir Thomas More advises an ambitious young lawyer that he should forget politics and take up teaching. Teaching, he says, allows you to have an impact on those you really care about. It sounds funny, I guess, but I took the advice as applying to me, and I chose academics. As it turns out, I now teach at a university with a church on campus dedicated to Thomas More. I must’ve made the right choice!”

The Armenian Bar Association (ArmenBar) made a triumphant return to Canada for its Mid-Year Meeting, on the weekend of October 2-4, 2009 in Toronto. The meeting was held at the elegant Hilton Hotel, and marked the third time in ArmenBar’s history that it has held a meeting in Canada. Vartkes Yeghiayan, respected attorney, author and the architect of the New York Life and other Genocide reparation cases, was the keynote luncheon speaker.

“Our hosts from Canada put on a wonderful meeting. In addition to being able to reconnect with friends, and experience first-rate lectures, the Board of Governors accomplished much during two sessions,” said Sonya Nersessian, A.F.A. of ArmenBar.

“Special thanks go to meeting organizers Robert Adourian and Harry Dikranian.”

Toronto is Canada’s cultural, educational, financial, high-tech, commercial, industrial and entertainment center. Its skyline boasts the CN Tower, the tallest structure in North American, and formerly the tallest structure in the world. The meeting headquarters at the Hilton is walking distance from the CN Tower, as well as other popular attractions, including the Canadian Opera, Rodgers Centre, Air Canada Centre and Eaton Centre. Those in attendance were able to take full advantage of the treasures Toronto has to offer, including dinner at Armenian-owned Barberian Zagat-rated restaurant, which boasts a spectacular wine cellar.

As is customary, the event drew numerous legal scholars, law professors, historians, judges, lawyers, law students and politicians from throughout the United States, Canada, France and Armenia. The conference was punctuated by legal seminars, receptions, and a meeting of the Board of Governors. Attorneys attending the meeting received continuing legal education credits for an interesting and informative series of lectures, including “Research on Genocide Reparations.”

Yeghiayan was the keynote luncheon speaker, and gave a summary of over $52.5 million that has been recovered thus far in Genocide era claims against New York Life Insurance Company and AXA Insurance. The current pending case against Deutsche Bank was also covered in his remarks.

In addition to Yeghiayan, the list of guest speakers included attorney and author Michael Bobelian, immigration law specialists Chantal Desloges, Caroline Mouralian and Alice Yardum-Hunter along with law professors Katherine Kessedjian and David Nersessian.

The panel on Genocide Reparations featured Harvard Law Professor David Nersessian and Catherine Kessedjian, Professor at the University of Paris II, Pantheon-Assas, France. Nersessian and Kessedjian have been involved in extensive research on methods to achieve re懂 for the Armenian Genocide in international courts and tribunals. The panel showcased new avenues for the Armenian community in its efforts to achieve retribution from Turkey including international arbitration forums.

Bobelian, an attorney and journalist, recently published his latest text entitled “Children of Armenia, a Forgotten Genocide and the Century-Long Struggle for Justice.” He discussed the critically-acclaimed book and research which went into its publication. Chroniced in the book is the story of Gourgen Yanikian, who in 1973 killed the Turkish Consul General and Vice Consul from Los Angeles. He stated that the purpose of the killings was to demand justice for the Armenian Genocide. The act sparked a wave of protest.

See Mid-Year Meeting Recap, pg. 8
Mid-Year Meeting Recap continued from pg. 7

of attacks against Turkish diplomats throughout the world in the 1970’s and 1980’s. Yeghiayan’s two-decade quest to bring the New York Life class action lawsuit to light is also covered in the book. Yeghiayan gave a warm introduction of the author.

Desloges, Mouralian and Yardum-Hunter are all experts in the area of immigration law. Desloges is the founder of the immigration and refugee law free advice clinic in Ontario. Mouralian has offices in Quebec and Lebanon, and has assisted hundreds of Armenians in the immigration process. Yardum-Hunter has been an immigration specialist for 30 years. She has written and lectured extensively on the subject, and has been recognized as a “Super Lawyer.” The lecture dealt with the hot topic issue of cross border immigration in North America, immigrant visas and other issues.

The meeting was be presided over by ArmenBar Chair Sonya Nersessian from Boston, Massachusetts. A Friday evening welcome reception allowed the hosts to welcome everyone to the meeting, and allow friends and colleagues to reconnect. The Board of Governors met twice during the weekend, and among many decisions made, the Board resolved that the 2010 Mid-Year Meeting will be held in Athens, Greece, Sept. 16-19, 2010.

Meeting attendees enjoyed a Saturday evening five-star dinner at Reds restaurant, followed by a walk in the downtown area to observe and participate in the Nuit Blanche, a massive participatory celebration of contemporary art.

ArmenBar will next meet in Chicago, the weekend of May 14-16, 2010 for its 21st Annual National Meeting.

Scenes from Toronto Mid-Year Meeting continued from pg. 8

possible precursor to following in her father’s footsteps, Nora is a member of a law fraternity and competed in moot court. In 2009, Kevork was named in a select group of “Athletes of the Year” in the Palisadscan Post, the Pacific Palisades local newspaper, for his feats in football and basketball.


Garo Mardirossian
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See Scenes from Toronto Mid-Year Meeting.

Luncheon keynote speaker
Vartkes Yeghiayan

From left: Raffi Akelian, Alex C. Kolandjian, Evelyn Perez Youssoufian, Harry Dikranian, Robert Adourian, Sonya Nersessian and Ara Arzoumanian.

Followed by a walk in the downtown area to observe and participate in the Nuit Blanche, a massive participatory celebration of contemporary art.

Salpy Akaragian.

“I am honored to lead this great organization of trial lawyers,” said Mardirossian. “During my term as President, I will work with the Board of Governors to continue our efforts to increase our membership, form liaisons with other Bar Associations and defend the rights of the citizens of California against special interests seeking to erode the rights of the consumers of this great State,” he said. Randy Mc Murray of the Cochran Law Firm the outgoing President of CAALA introduced Mardirossian at the reception.

Several awards were presented by CAALA at the banquet, and included: Justice Laurenace Rubin, Appellate Justice of the Year; Bruce Minto, Trial Judge of the Year; Arash Honampour, Trial Lawyer of the Year; Sharon Arkin, Appellate Lawyer of the Year; Amy Solomon, Ted Horn Memorial Award for significant contributions to the organization.

As a special treat, and in light of Mardirossian’s avid support of UCLA and its athletic program, the UCLA Marching Band was on hand to perform several numbers, including “The Mighty Bruins.”
Professor Ann Lousin
Lousin's Speech continued from pg. 10

the draft, and the voters rejected it wholeheartedly.

In the next half-century those who sought constitutional revision in Illinois learned from these experiences. By the time the sixth constitutional convention met on December 8, 1969, some observers were saying that it was "pure dumb luck" that Illinois had another constitutional convention.

But "luck" should be defined as what happens when preparation meets opportunity. I don't believe that any state can hold a successful constitutional convention unless it has the enthusiastic support of its voters. Illinois is in a period of change, and the voters were ready to consider a new constitution.

Some were willing to consider the Illinois Constitution. By this time, the population of Illinois had spread north and there was already a city called Chicago on Lake Michigan. The 1848 delegates had to compromise among themselves and produce a new constitution that would make it easier to live together.

For various reasons, the system broke down in the 1890's. It became clear that no amendment could be made without some serious efforts to revise the Illinois Constitution. The voters were ready to consider a new constitution that would make it easier to live together.

The breakthrough came in 1964, when a federal decision on redistricting state legislatures forced the Illinois House of Representatives to run a draft supported by the voters. The convention to succeed. They knew this was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. For example, they made the election of delegates a bi-partisan group, had just a few more successes, notably in restructuring the judiciary.

As I recall, most of the delegates also understood these lessons. They understood that the new constitution must reflect careful compromise among the leaders of both the Republican and Democratic parties. The few legislators who were actively opposed the call. The Illinois constitutional convention met in 1969, and the voters rejected it decisively. The Illinois Constitution would not make it easier to live together.

One way the delegates resolved issues was to delay the effective dates for several key provisions. For example, the convention abolished the much-hated ad valorem tax on personal property, but it was mindful of the difficulty local governments and school districts would have in adjusting to the loss of revenue. Therefore, it delayed the effective date of the abolition until 1979.

What does the Illinois experience mean for California? I think you would have to reflect carefully before holding a convention. Specifically, all of the players, including the citizens of California, will have to consider which basic problems in the state's constitutional structure really need to be addressed. In Illinois, during the 20th century, that huge issue was the tug and pull between the giant city of Chicago, with its expanding urban area, and the rest of the state.

From what I can gather, the comparable problem in California might be what I call your "tri-cameral government." Most states have a bicameral legislative process: the Senate and the House. Through your extensive initiative, California also has a city called Chicago, with its expanding urban area, and the rest of the state.

When she died suddenly in 1966, her colleagues searched for a way to honor her memory. Partly to honor her and partly to settle the issue, the legislature voted almost unanimously to put the question of a call for a convention on the ballot in November, 1968.

This was the opportunity that the reformers had been seeking. Although many legislators thought the issue would not pass, few actually wanted the call. The leaders of both political parties and most civic and bar leaders supported the call. The call passed: preparation had met opportunity.

The few legislators who were actively involved in shaping the statutes governing the election of delegates and the organization of the convention really wanted the convention to succeed. They knew this was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. For example, they made the election of delegates a bi-partisan group, had just a few more successes, notably in restructuring the judiciary.

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the voters, who regularly initiate and enact legislation outside of the California legislature. I could make observations on how I think that has affected your legislative process, your constitutional amending process, and your discourse on public policy issues. But I won’t. That is a decision for Californians alone.

As you make your decisions, I ask you to remember these four points that you could take from the Illinois experience: First, consider which basic problems in the California constitutional structure really need to be addressed. Second, prepare for a convention carefully by commissioning studies, determining what the key players and the citizens would like or at least accept.

Third, the convention must produce a document that the majority of the delegates can support. And fourth, the convention must produce a document that the majority of California voters will approve.

AND, if you do hold a convention, I’ll be happy to come back and share some thoughts with you, based on my experiences. I am available as a consultant.

GLENDALE, CA - Newly-elected Los Angeles City Attorney Carmen Trutanich was the guest of honor as the Armenian Bar Association (ArmenBar) hosted a reception at the elegant Phoenicia Restaurant on October 21, 2009. Also recognized were a new crop of attorneys of Armenian descent recently admitted to the California State Bar. Over 120 judges, lawyers, law students and members of the public were in attendance.

Trutanich was elected on May 19, 2009, defeating Jack Weiss, and replaced Rocky Delgadillo as the Los Angeles City Attorney. Joining Trutanich at the reception as guests of ArmenBar were Los Angeles District Attorney Steve Cooley, former District Attorney Robert Philibosian, Michael Judge, Chief Public Defender for the County of Los Angeles, Acting County Counsel Robert Kalunian, Los Angeles County Superior Court Presiding Judge Charles McCoy, Grigor Hovanesian, the Consul General from the Republic of Armenia to Los Angeles and ArmenBar Founder Raffi Hovannisian, a member of Parliament of the Republic of Armenia.

Philibosian, was co-master of ceremonies with ArmenBar Board member and Dean of the People’s College of Law, Garo Ghazarian. Ghazarian offered welcoming remarks, introduced the judges in attendance and presented the proud new attorneys, encouraging them to distinguish themselves in the legal community. Philibosian introduced the honored guests, pointing out that the top officials of the criminal and civil justice system of greater Los Angeles were all in attendance. He then introduced Cooley, currently serving a third term as District Attorney, who presented Trutanich. The new City Attorney thanked Philibosian for his extensive assistance during his campaign, and for being the head of his transition team. Trutanich also thanked Cooley for encouraging him to run for the office, and being a mentor in the process.

Trutanich updated the audience on his efforts to improve the City of Los Angeles through programs and initiatives instituted since his election. He supervises over 700 attorneys handling both civil and criminal cases.

“We are proud to have hosted a reception with so many distinguished guests in attendance,” said Edwin Minassian, Vice-Chairman of ArmenBar. “We also will make an annual effort to acknowledge the bright new members of the Armenian legal community.”

ArmenBar members present a plaque to L.A. City Attorney Carmen Trutanich. From left: Edwin Minassian, Garo Ghazarian, Carmen Trutanich and Robert Philibosian.
WASHINGTON, D.C. - On October 21, 2009, at the DAR Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C., Attorney General Eric Holder, Jr. recognized employees of the United States Department of Justice for their distinguished public service at the 57th Annual Attorney General Awards Ceremony. Among the recipients was John J. Lulejian, who received the Attorney General’s Award for Distinguished Service, the Department of Justice’s second highest award for employee performance.

“It is my privilege to honor these recipients for their outstanding service and commitment to our country,” Attorney General Holder said. “Each of these dedicated servants has carried out the important mission of the Department of Justice and has done so with excellence and distinction. Their varied accomplishments have advanced the interests of justice on behalf of the American people, and I’m proud to call them my colleagues.”

The Department of Justice honored Mr. Lulejian and his colleagues for their dedication and outstanding performance in the investigation and prosecution of Michael Joseph Pepe, a United States citizen who traveled to Cambodia and purchased young girls, ages 9 to 13 years, from their impoverished parents, then drugged, gagged, bound, beat, and raped the children over the course of ten months at his compound in Phnom Penh. Through the efforts of the prosecution team, Mr. Pepe was arrested and returned to Los Angeles for a three-week trial in the United States District Court, during which the seven non-English speaking Cambodian child victims testified through interpreters. A Los Angeles jury convicted Mr. Pepe of all seven counts of Engaging in Illicit Sexual Conduct in Foreign Places in just one and a half hours.

Mr. Lulejian is an Assistant United States Attorney with the United States Attorney’s Office for the Central District of California, where he specializes in prosecuting violent and organized crime. He also was an Assistant United States Attorney in the Western District of Washington, where he prosecuted international drug trafficking and money laundering organizations in addition to persons who sexually exploited children. While he was in Washington, Mr. Lulejian prosecuted the first American charged under a 2003 statute that made it illegal for United States citizens and permanent residents to travel to foreign countries and sexually exploit children. He has traveled to Cambodia three times for the Department of Justice.

Mr. Lulejian is a member of the Board of Governors of the Armenian Bar Association and is active in several local and national bar associations. Aside from his professional activities, he is an active member of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church, the Knights of Vartan, and the Triple X Fraternity. He also serves as the Vice President of the Harvey Mudd College Alumni Association Board of Governors.
Supreme Court Justices Marvin Baxter and Carlos Moreno Honored at Reception in Los Angeles by ArmenBar and Latino Comp

LOS ANGELES - The Armenian Bar Association, in conjunction with Latino Comp, hosted a dinner reception honoring California Supreme Court Associate Justices Marvin Baxter and Carlos Moreno at the regal Los Angeles Athletic Club in Downtown Los Angeles on October 6, 2009. The reception was attended by over 70 attorneys and community members.

The event was a collaboration between ArmenBar and Latino Comp, an organization of workers’ compensation specialists of Hispanic descent. Vice-Chairman Edvin Minassian and Rights Watch Chair Saro Kerkonian were co-masters of ceremonies, along with Ed Ortega of Latino Comp. Kerkonian provided a heartwarming introduction of Justice Moreno, while Ortega introduced Justice Baxter.

The justices thanked both groups for their generous remarks and praise. They answered questions from the audience, mainly related to recent decisions effecting the area of workers’ compensation law. They provided insightful advice, while fielding the questions presented.

“We are truly fortunate to have such distinguished justices such as Baxter and Moreno, who are willing to devote their time, energy and wisdom for the benefit of our organizations,” said Minassian, a certified specialist in workers comp law.

Justice Baxter was appointed to the California Supreme Court in 1991. Prior to his appointment, he served as the appointments secretary for Governor George Deukmejian and an Associate Justice of the California Court of Appeal for the fifth district. He is an Honorary Member of ArmenBar, and mentioned that he was very proud to have that distinction. He praised the Mexican American legal community for its advocacy of qualified candidates to the bench in California.

Justice Moreno was appointed to the California Supreme Court in 2001. Prior to his appointment, he served as a Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge and a Federal Court judge. He was the keynote lunchtime speaker at the ArmenBar Annual Meeting in 2007 in Santa Monica, and is the former president of the Mexican American Bar Association.

“We plan to continue our involvement with other ethnic bar associations, to present and honor worthy speakers to our members,” said Minassian.

ArmenBar members, including Judge Zaven Sinanian and his daughter Lori, get a copy of Michael Bobelian’s book signed by the author at a special event co-sponsored by ArmenBar.

Chronicled in the book is the story of Gourgen Yanikian, who in 1973 killed the Turkish Counsel General and the Vice Counsel from Los Angeles. Yanikian stated that the purpose of the killings was to demand justice for the Armenian Genocide. The act sparked a wave of attacks against Turkish diplomats throughout the world in the 1970’s and 1980’s.

Also chronicled in the book is the two-decade quest of attorney Vartkes Yeghiayan to bring light Genocide era insurance claims against New York Life Insurance and other companies. Yeghiayan gave warm introductory comments about Bobelian at the event.

Bobelian was a guest speaker at the Armenian Bar Association’s Midyear Meeting in Toronto on October 2, 2009, again discussing the book using a power point presentation. The author was well received at both events, and took time to sign books and answer questions.

ArmenBar members attend a special book signing for Michael Bobelian (second from left). From left: Judge Zaven Sinanian, Michael Bobelian, Vicken Simonian, Lucy Varpetian, Vartkes Yeghiayan and Rita Yeghiayan.

ArmenBar members attend a reception in L.A. for Supreme Court Justices Marvin Baxter (second from left) and Carlos Moreno. From left: Sara Bedirian, Justice Baxter, Edvin Minassian and Saro Kerkonian.

From left: Mario Cruz, Edvin Minassian, Ed Ortega, Justice Marvin Baxter, Justice Carlos Moreno and Saro Kerkonian.
Message from the Chair continued from pg. 1

fulfilling its mission and assisting its members.

Regarding the leadership of the organization, we have modified our nominations process and are considering nominations for Board positions from outside of the United States.

Regarding the growth of the organization, a membership drive in United States, Canada and the Republic of Armenia has started. For those of you who are new members of the Bar, we welcome you to join us. For those of you who are longstanding attorneys, perhaps dues-paying members in the past but not in the present, please take another look at this organization and consider joining our ranks. Our dues remain $125 per year, with first-year attorneys having the gift of membership at no cost for their first year as an attorney.

Under the conscientious chairmanship of Saro Kerkenian, the Armenia Rights Watch Committee has been extremely active. It has overseen the filing of not one but two amicus briefs for cases on appeal, one in the case of Movsesian v. Versicherung A.G. in the Ninth Circuit in California, and one in the case of Griswold v. Driscoll in the First Circuit in Massachusetts. If you are interested in reading the briefs, you can find them on the website. The Massachusetts appeal will be argued on March 16-19 in your calendars. The Athens Planning Committee, chaired by the indefatigable Amy Hoogasian, has been working hard to showcase the best that Chicago can offer. The annual meeting will feature legal luminaries from the Chicago area and some very impressive panels. Plans for dinner at the noted Naha restaurant, and side events including an architectural tour and perhaps a Cubs game are also being considered. This has all the signs of a meeting you will not want to miss!

And for those of you who are planning to be present at the Mid-Year Meeting in Athens, Greece, please mark the dates of September 16-19 in your calendars. The Athens Planning Committee, chaired by Edwin Minassian, is already busy with arrangements for that meeting. You will be hearing more about the details soon.

It has been my privilege to be the Chair of this organization for the past two years. I want to thank the Executive Board: Edwin Minassian, Sara Bedirian, Christine Engustian, and Frank Zerunyan, for all of their wise counsel and support. And I want to thank the members of the Board of Governors for all of their hard work, much of it behind the scenes, their support and continued commitment to the organization. Thanks also to the Committee Chairs who enthusiastically set goals and diligently completed their tasks – you know who you are. A special thanks to Vicken Simonian who crafts our Newsletter year after year. Lastly, my thanks to Betty Jamgotchian, our Executive Secretary, and Lisa Boyajian, who make this organization function smoothly.

I wish the Armenian Bar Association the best in the years to come!
Sona Nersessian, Chair

Armenian Bar Association to Award Graduate Scholarships in Law

The Armenian Bar Association is pleased to announce that it is accepting applications for its Fifth Annual Scholarship Program. The Program is designed to support meritorious students of Armenian descent attending, or accepted for admission to, an approved law school in the United States, Armenia or elsewhere. Recipients must demonstrate an outstanding academic record as well as a strong commitment to the Armenian community, particularly in humanitarian and/or law-related endeavors.

Students interested in applying for an ArmenianBar scholarship should use the application available on this website. Deadline for submitting the application and supporting documents is March 31, 2010.

The application must either be postmarked by March 31, 2010 or if e-mailed, it should be received no later than midnight (PST) of March 31, 2010.

Armenian Bar Association Participates in Southwestern Law School “Bar Association Fair”

LOS ANGELES - Betty Jamgotchian, Executive Director of the Armenian Bar Association, along with Board Executive Secretary Sara Bedirian and Past Chairman Vicken Simonian, were on hand to meet, greet and encourage law students at Southwestern University School of Law to become members at the schools annual “Bar Association Fair” on February 10, 2010.

Approximately 50 bar associations participated in the event on a beautiful, sunny Southern California day. A little known fact is that the event was the brainchild of Lucy Varpetian, former Executive Director of ArmenianBar. Varpetian is a graduate of the prestigious law school, and convinced the university to initiate the annual event in 1997 while a student there.

Southwestern Law School has an Armenian student population of 62, and several attended the event. Students signing up for membership were given a coffee cup and pen with the ArmenBar logo, as well as a recent copy of the ArmenianBar newsletter and other goodies.

“We were very pleased with the turnout at our table at the fair,” said Jamgotchian. “The law students we met were bright and engaging, and we had a good response.”

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Lucille Boston has just published a book entitled, “Preventing Real Estate Theft.” The book covers protection of real estate rights in the USA and Mexico. A second novel is pending based on Ms. Boston’s personal experience with identity theft. Ms. Boston can be reached at servicesunlimited@earthlink.net.

Mark Fleming of the Boston office of Wilmer Hale and one of the authors of the Amicus Curiae brief in the First Circuit case of Griswold v. Driscoll, was a speaker at the Zoryan Institute Conference held at the University of St. Thomas School of Law in Minneapolis on Feb. 5, 2010. Fleming spoke on the subject of “Griswold v. Driscoll: The Massachusetts Board of Education Lawsuit and the Armenian Genocide.” The conference was organized as a partnership by The University of St. Thomas Journal of Law and Public Policy and The International Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies (a Division of the Zoryan Institute). This conference featured such distinguished scholars as M. Cherif Bassiouni, Vahakn N. Dadrian, William A. Schabas, and Roger W. Smith. The papers presented at the conference will be published in a special issue of the law school’s journal in May 2010. Fleming can be reached at Mark.Fleming@WilmerHale.com.
we were happy that all were willing to join our organization. We don’t like to brag, but the Armenian Bar table seemed to have the most to offer,” said Jamgotchian.

Stella Pogosyan, the President of the Southwestern Law School Armenian Law Student Association (ALSA), was in attendance and helped with introductions between students and the ArmenBar representatives. On behalf of the ALSA, Pogosyan pledged to work with ArmenBar to organize future events connecting the two groups.

Members of the Armenian Student Association of Southwestern Law School, including President Stella Pogosyan (far right), visited the Armenian Bar table at Southwestern’s Bar Association Fair.

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On April 28, 2009, lawyers from the Chicago area met with Armenian Bar Association Chair Sonya Nersessian for a luncheon at the Sayat Nova restaurant. The primary purpose of the meeting was to honor longtime Armenian Bar Association member Professor Ann M. Lousin, of the John Marshall Law School, who was announced as the soon-to-be recipient of the Armenian Bar Association Lifetime Achievement Award. Local attorneys and others attended including: Amy Hoogasian, Claudia Hoogasian, Greta Doumanian, Rudy Minasian, Raffi Sarrafian, Zaven Peter Tokatlian, and Leona Lousin Mirza.

Since the meeting in April, Chicago now has representation on the Armenian Bar Association Board of Governors as Amy Hoogasian was elected to a three-year term at the Armenian Bar Association’s 20th Annual Meeting, which occurred on May 8-10 in Glendale, California.

The Annual Meeting site for 2010 was also decided upon: Chicago will host the 21st Annual Meeting of the Armenian Bar Association in the spring of 2010.

On July 2, 2009, Armenian Bar Association Chair Sonya Nersessian met with members of the Armenian Bar Association and others in New York. At the luncheon were Board of Governors members Taline Festekjian and Martha Mendoza.

In Washington, D.C., from left: Dean Shahinian, a law student from the Republic of Armenia, Jacob Bournazian, Sonya Nersessian, Talin Haroutunian, Rick Nishanian and Susan Karamanian.

Member and Past Chair Attorney Gary Moomjian of Moomjian and Waite; Attorneys Chris Parnagian, of O’Hare Parnagian; Grace Kuriyan, of McCarter English; Denise Darmanian, of Gallo & Darmanian; and Arsineh Kazazian of Wiggin & Dana.

Meetings were also held with Board of Governors members Taline Festekjian and Martha Mendoza.

Above, in New York: Arsineh Kazazian, Chris Parnagian, Gary Moomjian, Sonya Nersessian, Grace Kuriyan, and Denise Darmanian.

Left, in Chicago: Claudia Hoogasian, Rudy Minasian, Amy Hoogasian, Greta Doumanian, Leona Mirza, Raffi Sarrafian, Sonya Nersessian, Zaven Peter Tokatlian, and Ann Lousin.
The Armenian Bar Association is a non-profit, non-partisan organization, formed in 1989 to enable attorneys of Armenian heritage 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.

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
- Newsletter
- Membership Directory
- Amicus Curiae Submission on Issues of Interest
- Topical and Regional Practice Groups
- Cooperation with other bar associations and lawyers’ societies

The Armenian Bar Association Newsletter is published periodically by the Armenian Bar Association. Members and friends of the Association receive a subscription to the Newsletter as part of their membership. Opinions expressed in the Newsletter are those of the authors of the articles and/or the editors of the Newsletter and do not necessarily represent the views of the Armenian Bar Association.

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