We are very excited about our upcoming annual meeting which shall take place in Glendale, California from the 18th through the 20th of May this year. I want to congratulate the honoree of our annual banquet, the editor-in-chief of HETQ online magazine in Armenia, Edik Baghidasaryan. We will present him with our coveted Hrant Dink Freedom of Speech Award and thank him for making a difference in peoples’ lives in Armenia.

As my tenure comes to an end, completing my second term as chair of this great organization, I owe a great debt of gratitude to so many individual Armenian Bar members who positively responded to my calls to service, as well as to an excellent board of directors, a hardworking superbly-talented executive director and a selfless, always-reliable administrative assistant.

We have continued to grow and prosper with the continued, active participation of a greater number of members who constitute a broad coalition of lawyers, judges, legal scholars and elected officials. We did our best to tackle the most pressing legal issues for the Armenian nation, both in the diaspora as well the republic of Armenia. We have also sponsored CLE programs, organized pro bono legal clinics to inform and assist the underprivileged with regard to a variety of legal rights, and provided scholarships to deserving law students.

Above, the fountain at the latest shopping and dining destination in Glendale, the Americana at Brand. Photo copyright Hollywood Hotel

Who's Who of local and state jurists, lawyers and politicians. The keynote speaker at the gala banquet will be Los Angeles City Council President Eric Garcetti.

Annual meeting weekends are known and remembered as much for their camaraderie and friendliness as they are for their interesting topics of discussion. That warmth and good cheer gets an early start on Friday night at the authentic and highly-acclaimed Phoenicia Restaurant in the heart of Glendale, walking distance from the Hilton. There, members and friends will enjoy, in a truly enchanting atmosphere, some of these inter-active discussions will be complemented by a bevy of convivial activities culminating in a grand and lavish dinner banquet on Saturday, May 19th, which will feature a

See Message from the Chair, pg. 26

See Annual Meeting Preview, pg. 18
The Armenian Bar Association convened its Mid-Year Meeting in Detroit, Michigan from September 22 - 24, 2011. The meeting began with a Friday night reception at the firm of Miller Canfield. In addition to a delicious Middle Eastern dinner, participants enjoyed continuous entertainment provided by the Les Williams Trio playing Motown favorites and jazz violinist Harry Hovakimian offering sweet Armenian melodies. Some members and guests danced the night away! Beautiful views of the Detroit River and Windsor, Ontario, Canada were available from the 25th floor balcony.

On Saturday, the business meeting was held at the Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center. Located on the Detroit River, the Renaissance Center is also General Motors World Headquarters. After Acting Chair Garo Ghazarian conducted a brief business meeting, the first panel addressed “Corporate Compliance and the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act”. The distinguished panelists were the Honorable Richard Hartunian, United States Attorney for the Northern District of New York, Joseph Papelian, Deputy General Counsel, Delphi Corporation and Thomas Cranmer, Principal and Managing Director, Miller Canfield. This engaging group of speakers offered varying perspectives, from the corporate, prosecutorial and defense side on this important topic.

The second panel discussed “The...
Glendale, California – U.S. Congressman Adam B. Schiff (D-CA) and Glendale City Council Member Rafi Manoukian were honored by the Armenian Bar Association for their principled and effective advocacy of critical causes to Armenian-Americans in California and across the United States.

The evening program was a showcase of appreciation for those who have demonstrated a proven track record in advancing the rights of the Armenian community on local and national levels. Both Schiff and Manoukian were noted for their stellar support of issues of long-standing and current significance, beginning with the seminal priority of Genocide recognition and education, to overcoming recent legal challenges affecting the ability to pursue life insurers which have wrongfully denied the claims of the survivors and those of their families.

While the tone of the evening was about celebrating the successes that have been achieved through the exemplary work of Congressman Schiff and Council Member Manoukian, the recent decision by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in the Movsesian case, which frustrates the ability of Armenian-Americans from obtaining the return of insurance assets from the Armenian Genocide-era, was fresh on the minds of many attendees.

Edvin Minassian, the Chairman of the Armenian Bar Association, expressed sentiments of praise and urgency as part of his welcoming speech to the attendees. He stated, “We will look toward our national government … our representatives in Washington . . . to be more vigilant and more courageous when it comes to issues involving the Armenian Cause.” He then spoke directly to Congressman Schiff as he avowed that the Armenian Bar Association, and Armenian-Americans across the country, would look to him to be the leader in the cause of justice related to the Genocide. Notably,
Las Vegas, Nevada-The recently renovated, elegant Tropicana Hotel and Casino was the venue, as the Armenian Bar Association (ArmenBar) presented an outstanding group of legal experts on January 14, 2012. Garo Mardirossian, past Chair-man of the Consumer Attorneys of Los Angeles, who has gained acclaimed notoriety as a civil litigator received special recognition at a luncheon in his honor. Vicken Simonian, past Chair-man, was awarded the first ever Chair-man Emeritus designation, for his years of service as a member of the Board of Governors.

The panel discussion dealing with the European Court of Human Rights focused on the case filed by Turkish national and chairman of Armenian Genocide Studies at Clark University, Professor Taner Akçam. The case is entitled Taner Akçam vs. Republic of Turkey. A ruling was rendered on October 25, 2011 declaring article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code to be a violation of human rights.

On June 21, 2007, Professor Taner Akçam submitted an Application against the Republic of Turkey for violations of Articles 7, 10 and 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights (“ECHR”). The application arose from the effective criminalization under Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code of historical scholarship and public discourse relating to the 1915-17 destruction of Ottoman Turkey’s Armenian population.

Professor Akçam was investigated under Article 301 for “insulting Turkishness” on account of an Editorial Opinion in AGOS newspaper in which he defended his close friend and colleague Hrant Dink, a prominent Istanbul based Armenian journalist and editor of AGOS, prosecuted under Article 301 for alleged use of the term “Genocide” in describing the events of 1915-17. On January 19, 2007, an assailant, Ögün Samast, murdered Hrant Dink in Istanbul and justified his act by claiming that Dink considered “Turkish blood is dirty”. It is widely believed that the murder resulted from Dink’s stigmatization under Article 301.

Appearing on behalf of Mr. Akçam, McGill University Law Professor Payam Akhavan, Associate Legal Officer Sheila Paylan and Armenian Bar Vice Chair-man, Harry Dikranian, argued that the Turkish Court has been wholly indifferent not only to the violation to freedom of speech and the principle of non-discrimination, but also to the right to life, liberty and security of the person.

The Turkish Court has in effect stated that any person that uses the term “Genocide” in relation to the 1915-17 destruction of Armenians, is inciting
Members in the News and on the Move

Dennis Krolian has been elected to serve on the Common Council of White Plains, NY. The last Armenian elected official was Republican Mayor Edwin Michaeilian who later became Westchester County Executive. He served during the 1950s-1970s. There is a very active Armenian Church in White Plains, St Gregory the Enlightener. Mr. Krolian ran on the Democratic line and also the Independence and Working Families Party lines.

Rowan Alexander Marashlian is the second child and first boy of Armenian bar member Jonathan Soukis Marashlian. Weighing in at 8lbs, 11ozs, he came in at exactly the same weight as his daddy, almost 40 years ago. Rowan joined daddy Jonathan and mom, Erin Gumm-Marashlian, on January 29, 2012.

Ara Babaian started his own law practice in November 2011 under the name of Encore Law Group, representing clients in their business law needs. Ara’s goal is to help entrepreneurs start businesses and to help companies expand and be part of the economic recovery. He also strives to protect the interests of his clients so that they can avoid losing the rights and assets they currently have. For over 10 years, Ara has advised startup and mid-market clients on business and legal matters, including entity formation, stock and LLC offerings, mergers & acquisitions, intellectual property licensing, commercial transactions, employment matters, and risk management. He often acts as outside general counsel for companies in various industries, including Entertainment, Technology, Financial Services, Health Care, Manufacturing & Distribution, Professional Services, Real Estate, and Restaurant & Hospitality. Formerly, Ara was a partner at Ervin Cohen & Jessup LLP in Beverly Hills. He can be reached at (310) 400-5661 or by e-mail at ara@encorelaw.com.

Laura Karabulut, a member of the ABA’s Board of Directors in Toronto, Ontario, was admitted to partnership with her firm, Filion Wakely Thorup Angeletti LLP, effective March 1, 2012. Laura represents management in all aspects of labour and employment law, including labour board matters, employment standards, wrongful dismissal litigation and human rights. Laura started with the firm as an articling student in 2004 and practiced with the firm as an associate from 2005 to her appointment to partnership. Laura has been a member of the Armenian Bar since 2006 and is currently on the Scholarship Committee.

In mid-January 2012, Laura visited the Los Angeles area, enjoying the summer-like weather. While in Glendale, she met with other Armenian Bar members for dinner at Katuyua at the Americana.
Legal Scholar and Armenian Bar Vice-Chairman Garo Ghazarian Appointed To Glendale Civil Service Commission

Glendale, Calif. - The City Council of Glendale, California has unanimously confirmed the nomination of law school dean and professor Garo Ghazarian to the City’s Civil Service Commission.

In making the nomination, Glendale City Council Member and two-time former mayor of Glendale, Rafi Manoukian, referred his Council colleagues to Mr. Ghazarian's vast array of relevant legal experience and to his significant community involvement. The nomination was seconded by Council Member Frank Quintero, who had this to say about Ghazarian, “He’s a great nominee and he’s going to do a very good job on the Civil Service Commission.”

Council Member Ara Najarian, a past Glendale mayor, added “I support Mr. Ghazarian. I’ve known him for many years. He is a very active member of the community, the law enforcement community and the local bar associations. Garo Ghazarian is not afraid to speak his mind, and does so with due respect.” Laura Friedman, Glendale's presiding mayor, remarked that though she does not personally know Mr. Ghazarian, “Looking at his resume, I thought to myself, wow, what a catch!” With that, the mayor concluded by saying, “I am very happy to support the nomination.”

Newly-appointed Commissioner Ghazarian, having taken the oath of office, attended his first Civil Service Commission hearing on December 14, 2011. From the dais, he thanked Council Member Manoukian for the nomination, and the City Council for the appointment. He also congratulated his predecessor, Mr. Ara Hatamian, for a job well done during his tenure.

Besides his commitment to the City of Glendale for the next four years as one of its five Civil Service Commissioners, Mr. Ghazarian continues to serve as the Dean of the Peoples College of Law in Los Angeles, where for the past 17 years he has been a professor of criminal law. In addition, he is the Vice-Chair of the Armenian Bar Association, Co-Chair of its pro-bono committee, a board member of MABA-PAC (Mexican-American Bar Association, Political Action Committee), a board member of Yerevan-based think tank A.C.N.I.S. (Armenian Center for National & International Studies), and a regular legal commentator on national and international news networks, including CNN, Headline News, and Al Jazeera English TV.

“Garo Ghazarian is an indispensable member of the Armenian Bar Association,” said Armenian Bar Chairman Edvin Minassian. “His service to the community is vital and well documented. His appointment to the Glendale Civil Service Commission confirms his great commitment to serving his community.”

The Civil Service Commission establishes the rules and policies under which Glendale’s merit
The Armenian Bar Association, in conjunction with the Armenian National Committee of Glendale (ANCG), conducted its fifth pro bono legal clinic on financial-related matters on December 14, 2011. More than sixty members of the public were able to consult with volunteer attorneys regarding issues dealing with foreclosures, wills and trusts, estate planning, mortgages, short sales, and bankruptcy.

“One of the critical public service roles for the Armenian Bar Association is to provide legal guidance and education to the rank and file members of the Armenian community,” stated Armenian Bar Chairman Edvin Minassian. He continued, “This legal clinic gave us a unique opportunity to provide financial-related legal information to individuals on a pro bono basis. The Association’s efforts were strengthened through the ANCG’s program participation, a major factor in our success of reaching a wider audience.” Executive Director Jacklin Boyadjian underscored the benefits of cooperative synergy with other organizations. “We are thrilled to continue our partnership with the Armenian National Committee of Glendale to provide the much-needed services and guidance to the Armenian community.”

The volunteer attorneys included Aris Artounians, Lucy Avedisian, Sara Bedirian, Art Kalantarian, Saro Kerkonian, Nick Lambajian, Hovanes Margarian, Edvin Minassian, Henrik Mosei, and Aram Ordubegian—several of whom had past clinic experience. Armenian Bar Vice Chairman Garo Ghazarian and Executive Director Jacklin Boyadjian, along with ANCG’s Executive Director Elen Asatryan, appeared on local Armenian television programs to promote the event.

A substantial majority of the community participants had benefited from earlier Armenian Bar pro bono clinics. Past clinics covered the spectrum of civil, criminal and immigration-related issues. Attendees brought to the clinic documentation pertaining to their legal issues such as agreements or contracts, written regulations and policies, court orders, and specific paperwork related to their particular predicaments.

Armenian Bar extends a special thanks to Horizon and ARTN-TV whose publicity efforts extended the reach and effectiveness of the event. And, of course, a special thanks is in order for past Armenian Bar chair Vicken I. Simonian who rallied the support of the volunteer attorneys assuring that our supply of attorneys met the demands of the public. Mr. Simonian is both a founding member of Armenian Bar and of its integral pro bono committee.

The mechanics of the pro bono clinics are straightforward. After screening, each participant meets with and discusses his or her issue with an attorney having special expertise in that area of the law. Volunteer attorneys restrict themselves to information and assistance and refrain from establishing, either implicitly or expressly, an attorney-client relationship with those with whom they consult. §
As part of its continuing legal education program, the Armenian Bar Association hosted a seminar program on intellectual property and social media—basics and current trends. The program venue was the law offices of Zuber & Taillieu in downtown Los Angeles, on December 8, 2011. A special invitation was extended to members of the Mexican American and Asian American Bar Associations.

Seminar panelists were Christy Susman (in-house senior attorney for intellectual property issues at Brown Forman—the owner of the Jack Daniels brand), Raffi Zerounian (Zuber & Taillieu), and Robert Cannuscio (Drinker Biddle & Reath and Armenian Bar Board Member). The event was moderated by Ara A. Babaian (Encore Law Group and Armenian Bar Board Member).

Armenian Bar Board of Directors member and past chairman Armen Hovannisian described the proceedings as “engaging, thought-provoking, and downright interesting especially in light of the break-neck speed at which information dissemination and use are evolving.” On a more personal note, at the close of the colloquium, seminar panelist Raffi Zerounian said of a fellow panel member, “It was a distinct pleasure to have my friend and client Christy Susman join us on the panel. As an in-house attorney with over a decade of experience representing immediately-recognizable brands, Christy offered a wealth of information and a unique insider’s perspective to our discussion.”

Christy Susman serves as senior attorney (trademarks) at Brown-Forman, one of the nation’s leading distillers and distributors of alcoholic beverages. She is a graduate of the University of California’s Hastings College of the Law. For the past two decades, Susman has specialized in intellectual property rights and their preservation. Raffi Zerounian’s practice is centered on intellectual property litigation and commercial
The Armenian Bar Association (ArmenBar), as part of its continuing legal education program, hosted a seminar program on practical issues in Chapter 7 and Chapter 11 bankruptcy cases. The very well-attended program took place at Loyola Law School’s Fritz B. Burns Academic Center, in Los Angeles, on October 27, 2011. Seminar participants were eligible for 1.5 hours of continuing legal education credit.

Seminar panelists were Aram Ordubegian (Arent Fox), Varand Gourjian (Gourjian Law Group), and Mark Horoupian (Sulmeyer Kupetz). Assistant United States Attorney Tamar Kouyoumjian served as colloquium moderator. In his post-seminar remarks, Armenian Bar Chairman Edvin Minassian stated that colloquia such as those conducted at the Loyola Law School “reinforce the Association’s ongoing commitment both to exacting professional standards and assurances that the public receives the best legal advice and support that is its due.”

At the conclusion of the event, panelist Ordubegian remarked that he was “particularly elated that the seminar had attracted so many participants and, further, that their interest in the workings of the sometimes arcane aspects of bankruptcy litigation and procedure underscores the value of the Armenian Bar Association’s commitment to Continuing Legal Education.”

Aram Ordubegian, a partner in Arent Fox’s bankruptcy and financial restructuring group, is considered one of the premier legal specialists in the intricacies of insolvency matter resolution, both in California in particular and the nation at large. Since graduat-
Armenian Bar Brings On The Holiday Cheer

The Armenian Bar Association celebrated the Christmas season at Neat Bar in Glendale, California, with well over 100 members and friends in attendance. It was a wonderful night, with a steady stream of high spirits and warm exchanges shared by so many energized and eclectic people. Joyful laughs and pleasant discussions filled the place to capacity.

With the New Year around the corner, the members of the Armenian Bar raised their glasses toasting to the success of 2011 and to the promise that 2012 would be even more fruitful. §

Armenian Bar Association Members Partake in Fordham University Mentoring Event

On Friday evening, February 17, 2012, members of the Armenian Bar Association and other Armenian professionals descended upon Fordham University’s Manhattan campus to mentor Armenian students from throughout the New York Tri-State area. The event, exceeding expectations, drew over 100 people, including 35 mentors. In addition to legal, professionals from healthcare, science, finance, engineering, computer science/IT, architecture and education spoke to an attentive student audience. After a short reception, complete with food and beverages, each mentor spoke for one to three minutes, describing the preparation necessary for their profession as well as life within that profession. On behalf of the Armenian Bar Association, the mentors included Denise Darmanian of Gallo and Darmanian (international law), Gary Moomjian of Moomjian, Waite & Coleman, LLP (corporate and securities law), Mark Movsesian, Frederick A. Whitney Professor of Contract Law and the Director of the Center for Law and Religion at St. John’s University School of Law, and Claire Kedeshian, Assistant U.S. Attorney. After the engaging presentations, the speakers remained for nearly two hours relating one-on-one with interested students. The forum was moderated by Professor Vahan Talal and hosted by the Fordham Organizational Leadership program and the Fordham Armenian Society, in cooperation with Armenian professional organizations in the Tri-State area. In addition to Armenian Bar, participating professional organizations included Armenian American Health Professionals Organization (AAHPO), Armenian Engineers and Scientists of America and Armenians in Finance and Banking.

The New York-based Armenian Bar members are busy formulating future events. On the horizon is an educational/recreational weekend for legal and health professionals. AAHPO and Armenian Bar have tentatively decided upon a June 1-3, 2012 weekend in Atlantic City. A midtown Manhattan mixer in the not-too-distant future is contemplated as well. Stay tuned. §
Dear Fellow Armenian Bar Member,

On Tuesday, October 25, 2011 the European Court of Human Rights granted an application by Turkish national and chairman of Armenian Genocide Studies at Clark University Professor Taner Akçam in the case of Taner Akçam vs. Republic of Turkey.

On June 21, 2007, Professor Taner Akçam submitted an Application against the Republic of Turkey for violations of Articles 7, 10 and 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights (“ECHR”). The application arose from the effective criminalization under Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code of historical scholarship and public discourse relating to the 1915-17 destruction of Ottoman Turkey’s Armenian population.

Professor Akçam was investigated under Article 301 for “insulting Turkishness” on account of an Editorial Opinion in AGOS newspaper in which he defended his close friend and colleague Hrant Dink, a prominent Turkish journalist of Armenian descent and editor of AGOS, prosecuted under Article 301 for alleged use of the term “genocide” in describing the events of 1915-17. On 19 January 2007, an assailant Ogün Samast murdered Hrant Dink in Istanbul and justified his act by claiming that Dink considers “Turkish blood is dirty”. It is widely believed that the murder resulted from Dink’s stigmatization under Article 301.

Appearing on behalf of Professor Akçam, McGill University Law Professor Payam Akhavan, Attorneys Sheila Paylan, Vrouyr Makalian and Harry Dikranian (Vice Chair Armenian Bar Association) argued that the Turkish Court has been wholly indifferent not only to the violation to freedom of speech and the principle of non-discrimination, but also to the right to life, liberty and security of the person.

The Turkish Court has in effect stated that any person that uses the term “genocide,” in relation to the 1915-17 destruction of Armenians, is inciting violence against himself.

The fact that the Turkish Court on its own initiative and without any justification whatsoever declares Taner Akçam a criminal pursuant to Article 301 and orders the initiation of a prosecution, was said to be a deliberate attempt to stigmatize Professor Akçam with the foreseeable consequence that he may suffer the same fate as his close friend and colleague Hrant Dink.

Professors Taner Akcam, Payam Akhavan and Attorney Harry Dikranian will be on our panel regarding the issues involved in this case and the implications of the ruling, during our Winter Meeting in Las Vegas on January 14th.

With my best regards,

Edvin Minassian, Chairman

Please visit the Armenian Bar Association website at www.armenianbar.com to read the entire judgment.
New York, NY: On January 27, 2012, close to 300 Armenian-Americans of the NY/NJ community gathered at St. Leon Armenian Church in Fairlawn, NJ to participate in the first serious conversation about the deplorable state of corruption and human rights in Armenia. The organizer’s stated purpose was to raise awareness, share information, consider the consequences of inaction, and begin the process of exploring solutions.

The forum, entitled Truth or Consequences: Challenges to Human Rights and Rule of Law in Armenia, was moderated by Arda Haratunian, a strategic communications and crisis management professional from New York. In her opening comments, Arda addressed Armenia’s documented problems with human rights and the rule of law, but emphasized that it’s much easier to address a problem than a crisis, and that the Diaspora can and must be aware, engaged and involved. She pointed to the cornerstones of any democracy: free and transparent elections; a free press; economic opportunity; and a functioning judicial system. “Clearly, credible and objective concerns have been raised about all of these in Armenia,” she said.

First up on the podium was the guest speaker, Simon Payaslian, Ph.D, holder of the Charles K. and Elizabeth M. Kenosian chair in Modern Armenian History and Literature at Boston University. Dr. Payaslian’s presentation, largely based on his new book, The Political Economy of Human Rights in Armenia; Authoritarianism and Democracy in a Former Soviet Republic (I.B.Tauris, 2011) was intended to create some historical context and perspective from which to launch the panel discussion and generate audience questions.

Joining Mr. Payaslian as panelists were three individuals coming from very different experiences and perspectives. They included Karen Hakobian a musician, researcher, human rights advocate/trainer from Armenia, who is also president of Huis (Hope), a human rights NGO; Aram Hamparian, executive director of the ANCA in Washington, DC; and Garo Yegnukian, an entrepreneur, business owner, attorney and human rights activist from New York who moved to Armenia two years ago. He is currently a Senior Fellow at the Policy Forum Armenia.

The main theme of Dr. Payaslian’s presentation was that, in modern history, the Armenian nation has very little experience with the concept or practice of human rights and rule of law. This is primarily due to its long history of subjugation by imperial powers. Most references to human rights by Armenian intellectuals are in the context of human rights and liberation from outside powers. In the absence of Armenian statehood, Armenians did not have an opportunity to develop political institutions that could promote modern human rights standards.

The professor also presented a series of slides showing various indicators of Armenia’s democratic status versus other nations. These rankings only underscored the reality of Armenia’s dismal human rights standing according to international human rights standards. He also described how the systemic corruption of the Armenian judiciary makes a mockery of the nation’s own Constitution.

Garo Yegnukian focused on how government corruption impacts the business sector and economy, noting that because of corruption in tax, customs collection and public procurement expenditures, there is a budgetary loss of a quarter billion dollars a year. He urged the leaders in the Armenian government to pay more than lip service to its anti-corruption stance and actively root out the violators.

Garo also suggested that one way for Armenia’s youth to gain exposure to democratic perspectives could be through kibbutz-like models, organized by the government in partnership with an organization such as Birthright Armenia. He further proposed that 20,000 Diasporan-Armenian business leaders should “invade” Armenia with business plans and investments. This would create an economic force to be reckoned with and help drive out corrupt oligarchs.

Karen Hakobian began his presentation citing the massive
Seventeenth Annual Bar Association Fair Proves a Huge Success

The Armenian Bar Association was prominent among the legal organizations that participated in the Southwestern Law School’s Seventeenth Annual Bar Association Fair in February. A yearly venture, the fair provides a venue where graduating Southwestern law students can meet with members of local bar associations in an engaging atmosphere. Among the participating organizations were the Consumer Attorneys of California, the Italian-American Bar Association, and the Beverly Hills Bar Association. Armenian Bar’s Chairman, Edvin Minassian, underscored the importance of this event and others like them. “For many graduating law students, this is the first real opportunity that they will have to meet and interact in a meaningful manner with practicing attorneys. In the classroom, the law often takes on an abstract quality. At bar association fairs such as this one, the more human side of the law is on full display.”

Armenian Bar’s Executive Director Jacklin Boyadjian expressed her appreciation for the administrative support that Southwestern provided in order to make the fair the success that it proved to be. “All too often we take the efforts of host organizations for granted. However, without the unstinting efforts of such organizations—and Southwestern Law School is an excellent example—gatherings such as the Annual Bar Association Fair would have little prospect of achieving their goals.”

The Armenian Bar table attracted over two dozen Southwestern students. While many, no doubt, were attracted by the freebies—ABA pens, t-shirts, and mugs—a total of 17 students became new members of Armenian Bar. Southwestern Law School has in its student body the highest concentration of persons of Armenian descent of any such school in southern California. This in itself puts a premium on Armenian Bar’s participation in the annual Southwestern event. Armenian Bar’s Chairman Emeritus Vicken Simonian, who has been making assessments of fledgling attorneys for a number of decades, pronounced this year’s crop to be “as good as I have ever met, men and women who will assuredly be a credit to the legal profession in years to come.”

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Armenian Bar’s Executive Director Jacklin Boyadjian organized and coordinated the various aspects of the gathering. She expressed a particular appreciation for the support provided by Zuber & Taillieu staff. “With their across-the-board assistance, the evening’s program enjoyed enormous success.”

Ghazarian Appointed continued from pg.6

system operates, ensuring continuation of Glendale’s reputation as a city whose employees attain and keep their positions on the basis of ability, training and experience, rather than on unwarranted considerations and affiliations. It also serves as a quasi-judicial body in hearing employee appeals against disciplinary actions such as suspension, reduction or removal.

Intellectual Property & Social Media Seminar continued from pg.8

litigation in Zuber & Taillieu’s Litigation Department. In that capacity he has focused on trademark enforcement, clearance, counseling, and domestic and international prosecution, copyright prosecution and counseling, and internet name disputes. Robert Cannuscio is a partner in Philadelphia-based Drinker Biddle, serving as vice chairman of the firm’s intellectual property practice group. Somewhat unusual among attorneys, he is also a licensed professional engineer, thus able to bring substantial technical expertise to his legal practice. Before his graduation from Pace University School of Law, Cannuscio spent ten years as a professional engineer, designing aircraft structures, propulsion systems, and flight controls. Seminar moderator Ara Babaian, a graduate of Loyola Law School (Los Angeles) has practiced intellectual property law for the past decade.

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The MDA Muscle walk was held on a sunny and brisk morning on February 4, 2012, at the CBS Studios Lot in Los Angeles. Approximately 500 people participated in the event, which raised more than $105,000 to provide much-needed services for people afflicted with muscle-related diseases. It felt wonderful for members of the Armenian Bar Association to be able to donate and to participate in this great walk, alongside hundreds of children, parents, grandparents, and corporate teams, with colorful banners and balloons and music that created a purely positive and uplifting environment and allowed all of the participants and contributors to express their love and support for people facing some of life’s most daunting challenges.

Armenian bar board member, Michael Amerian, organized the participation of ArmenBar members, and has been involved with supporting the worthy cause for several years. The MDA Muscle Walk has taken on new meaning for the Armenian Bar since past Chairman, Vicken Simonian was diagnosed with ALS, commonly known as Lou Gehrig’s disease. The condition involves the gradual deterioration of the nervous system and muscles. Participating members walked with Vicken’s name on their participants number.
Southwestern University Law School and Armenia Ministry of Justice Initiate Unique Legal Fellowship

Southwestern University School of Law, with support from the Armenian Bar Association, has partnered with the Republic of Armenia’s Ministry of Justice to create an opportunity for an American-trained lawyer to spend a year working directly with the Ministry to cultivate Armenia’s legal system. The inaugural Southwestern Armenia Fellow will be selected for the fall of 2012.

Consul General Grigor Hovhannisian

"A stable legal system is key to Armenia’s continued growth and development, and having the cooperation of Southwestern Law School in our endeavor is truly inspired as well as inspirational," said the Hon. Grigor Hovhannisian, Consul General to the Republic of Armenia. "I hope that our Diaspora community will also be inspired and lend its generous support to the Southwestern Armenia Fellowship with Armenia's Ministry of Justice." The Armenian Bar Association is also supporting the Fellowship and has designated a representative, Mr. Armen Hovannisian, to work with Southwestern on this project.

Justice Minister Hrayer Tovmasyan

The Southwestern Armenia Fellowship was created in response to a call by Hon. Hrayer Tovmasyan, Armenia’s Minister of Justice, who recently asked the Armenian legal community in the Diaspora to have American-trained legal professionals help in the development of Armenia’s legal system. Upon finalizing the agreement with Southwestern to establish the Fellowship, he said, “Armenia’s Ministry of Justice is delighted to have this unprecedented cooperation between the Ministry and Southwestern Law School for advancing the rule of law in Armenia.”

Southwestern embraces the opportunity to serve a developing country and its people who are important to many within the law school community. A large contingent of Southwestern alumni are of Armenian heritage, and the Armenian Law Students’ Association is one of the most active on campus. According to Dean Bryant Garth, “Not only is this a nice opportunity to contribute to the justice system in Armenia, but it is also an opportunity to develop a cadre of Southwestern graduates skilled and experienced in promoting the rule of law.”

A kick-off reception to announce the unique partnership was hosted in February by Southwestern alumnus and Armenian Bar member Gerard Kassabian. It was a tremendous success in garnering immediate interest, enthusiasm and support for this new venture. The goal of the Armenia Fellowship Executive Committee is to raise $300,000 to sustain the Fellowship for at least five years. The committee is seeking substantial multi-year pledges to help secure the Fellowship’s launch next fall as well as its long-term success.

The Southwestern Armenia Fellow will serve in Yerevan, Armenia, and will work directly with the Ministry for a one-year, full-time position. Among other areas, the Fellow’s work for 2012-13 will involve one or more of the following:

• Revising the Civil Procedure Code, including in the areas of due process and adjudication time limits
• Redrafting the Civil Code and drafting corresponding legislation, in such areas as lease agreements and mortgages
• Reforming the criminal justice system in the areas of sentencing, incarceration, and reintegration
• Reforming the penitentiary system, in conformity with international human rights standards

See Legal Fellowship pg. 22
The Armenian Bar Association, the Armenian American Medical Society (AAMS), and the Armenian American Chamber of Commerce jointly co-hosted the Second Annual Spring CME conference on March 10, 2012 at the Glendale Hilton. These events provide a forum for the presentation of developments of interest to medical practitioners, their implications for members of the legal community, and for the community at large. AAMS President Vicken Sepilian, a Los Angeles-area specialist in obstetrics/gynecology, served as event moderator. Qualified Armenian Bar attendees were eligible for three Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credits.

Among the speakers were Armenian Bar Chairman Edvin Minassian, Vice-Chairman (and Dean of Peoples College of Law) Garo Ghazarian, Armenian Bar members Gerard Kassabian and Tina Odjaghian, Grace Jamra, and Annie Markarian. Workers’ compensation law and litigation in California has become an increasingly complex thicket, one in which such disparate factors as patient medical needs, medical staff adequacy and performance, the related workings of litigation, the meaning of the law, and even the current and prospective financial condition of the state have their various impacts.

In his opening remarks, AAMS President Sepilian touched on examples of legal considerations in the practice of medicine. “We are very proud of the success of the AAMS’ 2nd Annual Spring CME Conference with a Symposium on the Business of Medicine where approximately 200 individuals participated. We are thankful for the collaboration and the participation of the Armenian Bar Association and the Armenian American Chamber of Commerce. We look forward to building upon our collaborative efforts and to many more joint events in the future.”

In his remarks, Armenian Bar Chairman Minassian, a certified specialist in workers’ compensation and one of California’s leading authorities on the application of that body of law, after first pointing to the ‘healthy tension’ that brings competing factors into an ethical balance, continued that “application of workers’ compensation laws must always take into consideration the needs of the victim-patient, evaluated in the context of the specifics of the untoward event that precipitated the accident.”

Vice-Chairman Ghazarian, a prominent criminal defense attorney who has represented his fair share of medical doctors, chiropractors, pharmacists, nurses, physical therapists, as well as medical clinic owners and operators, directed his remarks to the physician attendees. He described the recent tendency of aggressive litigants to argue for the criminalization of medical decision-making, largely driven by collateral efforts to secure
On Saturday February 11, 2012, the Armenian Bar Association and Southwestern Law School jointly hosted a unique panel presentation and networking event tailored to educate, inform and empower the future generation of Armenian attorneys. The event was attended by over fifty law school students and thirty attorneys.

The program consisted of brief presentations by a panel of fifteen attorneys from various fields of legal practice including, but not limited to, prosecution/criminal defense, government, corporate/in-house, entertainment, family, civil litigation, public interest and the judiciary. Among the panelists were the Honorable Jacqueline Chooljian, U.S. Federal Magistrate Judge, the Honorable Zaven Sinanian, Los Angeles Superior Court, and Armenian Bar Board of Governors Members John Lulejian, Assistant United States Attorney, and Michael Amerian, Deputy Los Angeles City Attorney. The event was co-chaired by Hovanes Margarian, Armenian Bar Executive Committee Member of the Board of Governors, and Professor Anahid Gharakhanian of Southwestern Law School.

Following the panel presentations students had a unique opportunity to interact with all of the panelists and practicing attorneys in attendance through a series of seven minute speed-networking sessions. “Our aim was to foster mentorship and employment opportunities among our student and attorney members,” stated Hovanes Margarian. “Learning about different career opportunities and networking with established attorneys and judicial officers provides an invaluable learning opportunity for our students,” stated Professor Anahid Gharakhanian.

“The Armenian Bar Association encourages and urges all attorney and student members to attend such event in the future. By having a strong attendance we can assure the future generation of our commitment to guide them through their legal careers. The legal profession has many obstacles which, especially in today’s economy, present an even greater challenge to the next generation of attorneys. Through early development of a support system the association aims to be a resource and an asset for its future members and eventual leaders,” stated Chairman Edvin Minassian.

We welcome all law school students to become involved with the Armenian Bar Association through volunteering on upcoming projects and attending events. Together we can ensure a healthy and prosperous future both for our members and our beloved organization. Those interested in volunteering may contact our Chairman of the Board of Governors, Edvin Minassian at edvinminas@aol.com or to our Executive Committee Member of the Board of Governors and Student Affairs Committee Chair, Hovanes Margarian at hovanes@margarianlaw.com.
the most delicious dishes harkening back to the aromatic kitchens of our mothers and grandmothers.

The substance of the Saturday morning and afternoon panel discussions will be reflective of two of the organization’s important cornerstones, with each topic allotted two hours for in-depth discussion and dialog. The first deals with initiatives to embed the respect and rule of law in the Republic of Armenia and the second concerns efforts to protect and uphold constitutional rights in the United States.

On the first topic, since its inception more than twenty years ago, a primary focus of Armenian Bar’s work efforts has been the establishment and institutionalization of the rule of law and the respect of individual rights in Armenia. To that end, we have partnered with Armenia’s governmental, professional, and educational sectors in bringing to fruition on-the-ground projects aimed at helping to build and maintain civil society.

“The mission of this organization, which I have had the honor of leading for the last two years, includes the rededication of our talents and expertise to our Homeland and its citizens. But, in fact, it is we—the volunteer lawyers and judges of the Armenian Bar Association—who are the real beneficiaries of our outreach efforts. Little compares to the satisfaction that comes from knowing that our programs have touched even a single life and have opened new possibilities for a better collective future,” stated Armenian Bar Chairperson Edvin Minassian.

The Saturday morning panel, entitled “Human Rights, Civil Liberties and Social Movements in Armenia”, will feature prominent investigative journalist Edik Baghdasaryan who is known for his stories exposing government corruption in Armenia. Former U.S. Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch recently conferred the “Defender of Armenia Freedom” award on Mr. Baghdasaryan who serves as Hetq Online Chief Editor and President of the Investigative Journalists NGO. Ambassador Yovanovitch noted, “Due to the unprecedented work of Edik Baghdasaryan, it has been possible to uncover cases of corruption, human rights violations and human trafficking, today’s version of slavery.”

Receiving the award, Mr. Baghdasaryan commented that he would have preferred not to have earned it and would like, instead, to see a world where such awards didn’t exist “since it is extremely difficult to sit and ponder the fact that people are being persecuted and arrested in your own country merely for their political convictions, when you reflect that 30% of children are malnourished and go to bed hungry…Sadly, in Armenia today, the same situation holds true when it comes to other rights as well, starting from environmental rights to the right to a decent education.”

Joining Mr. Baghdasaryan on the morning panel will be Sara Anjargolian, a Los Angeles-based attorney and photographer who has lived and worked in Armenia and has been engaged in recent civic activism movements including those addressing unaccounted for killings of young conscripts in Armenia’s armed forces and the ruination of precious forests and the resulting environmental disasters; Ursula Kazarian, Esq., president and founder of Armenian Environmental Network, who for nearly ten years has worked to increase public awareness and to encourage civil discourse about urgent environmental issues pertaining to public health, human rights, and civil society strengthening projects in the water, energy, and forestry sectors; and Dr. Antranig Kasbarian, Executive Director of the Tufenkian Foundation which works in Armenia to combat poverty, foster education, protect the natural environment and renew national, civic, cultural and religious values, and works in Karabagh to promote resettlement, infrastructure, health care and other development projects to repopulate these areas, giving local communities a stake in building a future on these lands.

The second topic for discussion on Saturday afternoon harks back to another of Armenian Bar’s central and defining characteristics: the protection of the interests of Diasporan communities, by providing pro bono and educational services and, more recently, by weighing in on federal and state court proceedings in which Genocide-related rights and interests have been seriously, and unfortunately sometimes successfully, challenged.

Armenian Bar Vice Chair Garo Ghazarian, who has been at the forefront of the Association’s efforts to safeguard against the violation of the civil liberties of the local community and its members, underscored the importance of legal activism to protect fundamental rights, “The deepening of our relationships and influence with various law enforcement and public agencies has helped to turn back the tide of the disparate and disparaging treatment of Armenians. When the tide returns, as it does from time to time, we will be there to turn it right back around.”

Mr. Ghazarian continued, “And when the esteemed courts of our own country sometimes get it wrong and issue decisions denying the descendants of Genocide victims a United States judicial forum to pursue rightful claims against insurance compa-
Use of Economic Experts in Litigation”. Panelists Mick Kahayian, Director of Stout Risius presented the expert perspective and attorney Brian Akkashian, Partner, Paesano Akkashian, PC, offered the litigator perspective on the topic.

The last panel of the day focused on “Birthright Armenia”, a non-profit organization that offers diasporan young adults opportunities for true cultural-immersion in Armenia. Panelists Linda Yepoyan, Executive Director of Birthright Armenia, informed the audience about the work of this worthwhile organization and Mandy Ani Messer, a 2009 participant in the program from Metro Detroit shared many slides depicting her actual experience in Armenia.

Members and guests enjoyed a fabulous Saturday night dinner at Fishbones in Detroit’s Greektown. While in the Motor City, members and guests were also able to enjoy some optional activities, including a Detroit Tigers game from Miller Canfield’s Comerica Park suite, the Ford Rouge Factory Tour, where we witnessed F-150 Trucks being assembled in a state-of-the-art (yet historic) plant and even some stops at Detroit’s famous Coney Island restaurants. An unforgettable moment occurred Saturday evening at midnight when a dozen members gathered at the Armenian Genocide Memorial (Gomidas Statue) on Jefferson Avenue in downtown Detroit, held hands and sang the “Hayr Mer”

If you missed the Mid-Year Meeting in Detroit, don’t miss out on the Annual Meeting in Glendale and this year’s Mid-Year Meeting in Montreal, October 19-21, 2012 §
violence against himself.

The fact that the Turkish Court on its own initiative and without any justification whatsoever declares Taner Akçam a criminal pursuant to Article 301 and orders the initiation of a prosecution, was said to be a deliberate attempt to stigmatize Professor Akçam with the foreseeable consequence that he may suffer the same fate as his close friend and colleague Hrant Dink.

The panel focused on the history of the case, article 301 and the ruling rendered by the ECHR. Attorneys attending the lecture received 2.5 units of continuing legal education credits.

In 2000 Mardirossian was voted CAALA's "Trial Lawyer of the Year". He has been on the Board of Governors for 17 years, and is the first person of Armenian descent ever to be president of the prestigious organization when he was appointed in 2009.

Mardirossian is the managing partner of Mardirossian and Associates, a five-lawyer boutique personal injury firm, where Mardirossian has achieved multi-million dollar jury verdicts in several cases over his 28 year career. Notably, a $24.85 million judgment rendered in the case of Dole v. County of Los Angeles in 1995 remains the largest police brutality verdict ever achieved in California. As recently as May, 2009, Mardirossian obtained a judgment of $ 25.28 million in the case of Pannu v. Land Rover North America, Inc. In that case, Mardirossian proved that a defective design in the Land Rover resulted in an accident causing his client to become paralyzed. Armen Akaragian, Mardirossian’s nephew, and an associate in the firm, assisted in trying the Pannu case.

Mardirossian currently represents the family of Kelly Thomas, a homeless man who was beaten to death by members of the Fullerton Police Department. The case has received national attention.

Simonian has been a member since the founding of Armenian Bar, and served for twelve years on the Board of Governors, eleven years as treasurer, and one year as Chairman. Since the inception of Armenian Bar, Simonian has been involved with every aspect of the day to day operations of the organization and served as committee chair for numerous committees.

Simonian has been dealing with the devastating illness, ALS, commonly known as Lou Gehrig’s Disease. The Board decided to award him with the first ever Chairman Emeritus designation. In a touching ceremony, he was presented with an original Seeroon Yeretzian artwork and a diamond studded Chairman’s pin. Simonian expressed his gratitude to the organization and the support of all of his friends within the group.

"We were extremely proud to present such a distinguished group of legal scholars to our membership, to honor one of the nation’s leading attorneys, and bestow a well deserved honor to our past Chairman, Vicken Simonian for his many years of service to our organization," said Edvin Minassian, Chairman of Armenian Bar. §
depopulation of the country since independence, mainly due to the inequities and corruption that deny opportunity. Then he presented various cases of egregious human rights abuses, especially within the Armenian military.

Karen described how Armenia’s soldiers are often compelled to pay for “protection” by their superior officers. Those who can’t afford it are literally abused or tortured to death and then reported as suicides. Some innocent soldiers are coerced into confessing to the killings and thrown in prison. A group of mothers has been protesting these injustices for years, gathering every day in front of the government building to raise awareness of their sons’ plight. The audience was visibly disturbed to learn of such gross injustices against Armenia’s first-line defenders and the wider implications they pose for national security.

Aram Hamparian made various points and counterpoints throughout the evening, among them that for the Diaspora to promote human rights and rule of law in Armenia, unity and organization are essential. He also refuted the argument that, given the Diaspora’s limited resources, it must prioritize causes and issues. Aram contended that fighting for human rights over genocide recognition was a false choice; both are worthy pursuits.

Vartan Abdo, director of the Armenian Radio Hour of NJ and a vocal advocate on these issues, made several observations about the proceedings. "It was a mentally stimulating and ambitious program which covered a plethora of topics. But due to lack of time, most of the topics were not discussed in detail."

He also pointed out that, “What sparked the organization of Truth or Consequences was the news of the illegal arrest in Armenia of Nareg Hartounian. The reaction of the entire Diaspora to Nareg’s case is a clear barometer of the concern of Diasporans of what transpired in Armenia. The Diasporans sent a clear message to the oligarchs, patriarchs, matriarchs, and others that there is just so much we can accept."

The discussion ended with an impromptu message from Saro Hartounian, Nareg's brother, who is also a target of judicial abuses by Armenian authorities. He reported that many of the Hartounian family’s company employees have been threatened and coerced into signing false statements about his family’s tax and business practices. Saro was emphatic that the evidence proving the Hartounians’ innocence would stand up in any court of law—in the U.S., Armenian and international courts. He expressed grave concerns, however, about the prospects of receiving a fair trial in Armenia.

The event was co-sponsored by a diverse group of organizations, sending a signal to the community that a public discussion of such issues is both vital and urgent. The list includes: Armenian Bar Association; Armenian Engineers and Scientists Association (ASEA) Of NY/NJ; Armenian Human Rights Advocates; Armenian National Committee (ANC) OF NJ; Armenian Society of Columbia University; Knights of Vartan; New York Armenian Students Association (ASA); Policy Forum Armenia; Rutgers Armenian Club; Tekeyan Cultural Association; and the Tufenkian Foundation.

The person at the front and center of the panel discussion and aware of the challenges in putting such an evening together was moderator Arda Haratunian. She concluded the evening by pointing out that, “To bring about positive change in any situation you need three things: first, you need answers which we do not have yet; second, you need courage to take on the status quo; and third, you need to be able to communicate your message to the people who can help bring about change.” Her final point was that democracy is a constantly evolving process, even here in America. “Diasporans have an obligation to help Armenia in this process,” said Arda.

The following Sunday, Arda was interviewed by the Armenian Radio Hour of NJ. Asked for her thoughts on the evening, she stated that, “The evening was absolutely a positive one. The sheer number of people who showed up was the first positive. I don't think anyone of us can remember when 300 people have shown up on a Friday night for a serious discussion like the one we had.”
Legal Fellowship

- Developing alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, including arbitration and mediation
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Serving on the Southwestern Armenia Fellowship Executive Committee are:

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An overview of the Southwestern Armenia Fellowship is available online at [www.swlaw.edu/armeniafellowship](http://www.swlaw.edu/armeniafellowship). Tax deductible donations to the new Fellowship fund can also be made online (select Armenia Fellowship under Gift Designation) or by calling Associate Dean Debra Leathers in the Institutional Advancement Office. §

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Armenian Bar Association Newsletter

Bankruptcy Seminar
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From Loyola Law School (Los Angeles) in 1996, he has served in increasingly responsible legal capacities. His litigation experience extends to representations in cases at the appellate level in both California and Federal courts. Ordubegian’s reports and analyses of developments in bankruptcy law and court holdings have appeared in such prestigious publications as California Bankruptcy Journal and Bankruptcy Litigation Journal. He currently serves as co-chairman of the American Bar Association’s Bankruptcy Subcommittee. He was recently recognized by Armenian Bar as one of its “20 under 40” Rising Stars.

Mark Horoupian is a partner at Sulmeyer Kupetz, specializing in bankruptcy litigation. For almost two decades he has represented a spectrum of interested parties in the insolvency process, including such participants as creditors, debtors in possession, and chapter 7 and 11 trustees. He has served as lead counsel on several successful chapter 11 reorganizations. He and his firm have on many occasions hosted meetings and receptions for members of the Armenian Bar Association.

Varand Gourjian is the founding partner of Gourjian Law Group, a firm representing a variety of clients, ranging from Fortune 500 companies to federal court receivers and bankruptcy trustees and from large institutional lenders to individual unsecured creditors. As a component of his overall business law practice, Gourjian serves as outside general counsel to various large companies with revenues exceeding hundreds of millions of dollars. In addition to its bankruptcy practice, Gourjian Law Group also represents developers, investors, and real estate professionals through the many stages of real estate transactions.

Tamar Kouyoumjian, currently serving as an Assistant United States Attorney, received her juris doctorate in 2007. A graduate of the Thomas M. Cooley Law School in Lansing, MI, Kouyoumjian has been instrumental in the planning and preparation of many Armenian Bar meetings and events.

Armenian Bar Executive Director, Jacklin Boyadjian, who supervised overall seminar functioning, noted that the colloquium participants were “incisive in their questions to panelists, indicative of the effectiveness of the professional presentations and the interest that the Association’s CLE program has raised in the Los Angeles area legal community.”

Annual Meeting Preview
continued from pg. 18

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Congressman Schiff was introduced by Walter Karabian, who moved the audience to laughter with his inimitable wit and then to studious appreciation of his institutional knowledge of California politics. Since leaving the California legislature in the 1970s, after having served as its majority leader, Mr. Karabian has been a leader of many Armenian community initiatives and a mentor to many young professionals.

Garo Ghazarian, the Vice-Chairman of the Armenian Bar Association, Dean of Peoples College of Law, and a member of the Glendale Civil Service Commission, explained that the “facts of the events of the Armenian Genocide in 1915 have properly been declared by historians, journalists and indeed countless nations and the citizenry of conscientious countries in Europe and around the world.” However, rather than viewing the setback as the end of the fight to seek justice for those Armenians who were harmed in the Genocide, Ghazarian noted that the ruling of the 9th Circuit was an indication that more work is needed. “We are empowered by the problematic decision in the Movsesian case . . . we rededicate our efforts in light of the court’s unfortunate holding,” Ghazarian said.

Armenian Bar Executive Director, Jacklin Boyadjian, succinctly stated why Schiff and Manoukian were being honored: “Both of these men have been forces for shining a light on the concerns of Armenian-Americans in California and across the United States.”

Boyadjian also stated that the efforts of Congressman Schiff and Council Member Manoukian “have helped to generate greater interest in Armenian issues, and to encourage others to learn more about the Armenian community within the

Members of the Board of Governors with Armenian Bar Honorees Schiff and Manoukian (center)
A wonderful and refreshing highlight of the evening came when a very talented group of 7th and 8th grade students from the Armenian Sisters’ Academy was recognized by the Association for its outstanding performance in the middle school division of the Constitutional Rights Foundation’s Mock Trial Program. Thirty-six schools participated in the competition, with the Sisters’ Academy being the only Armenian school in the division. After only its third year in the competition, the Sisters’ Academy reached the playoffs and placed in the top 6 of 36 schools. Principal Sister Lucia Al-Haik, coaches attorney Ani Papirian and English teacher William Bassett, and the parents were each commended for their outstanding leadership, commitment and devotion to inspiring the young students and encouraging them to strive for excellence.

In attendance was a full roster of judicial leaders and law enforcement brass on both the federal and state levels, elected officials, as well as a wide spectrum of leaders and representatives from the Armenian community, including Los Angeles County Sheriff Leroy Baca and Los Angeles City Attorney Carmen Trutanich, both of whom addressed the guests, as well as U.S. Magistrate Judge Jacqueline Chooljian. Los Angeles County Superior Court Judges in attendance included Site Supervising Judge of Los Angeles County Superior Court in the city of Glendale, Fred Rotenberg, and Armenian Bar past Chairman Zaven Sinanian.

Also in attendance were Israel Deputy Consul General Gil Artyzel, Deputy Consul General Mesrop Shaboyan from the Republic of Armenia in Los Angeles, Ara Najarian, Glendale City Council Member, Scott Ochoa, the City Manager of Glendale, Michael Garcia, the City Attorney of Glendale, Gary Schram, Chief of the Los Angeles City Attorney’s Bureau of Investigation and President of the California Police Officers’ Memorial Fund, Curt Livesay, Chief Deputy City Attorney for the city of Los Angeles, Sergeant Thomas Lorenz, Adjutant to the Glendale Chief of Police, Sergeant John Gilkerson, Captain Todd Stokes, Captain Carl Povilatis, and Captain Mike Rock of the Glendale Police Department, Felipe Plascencia, Former President of the Mexican American Bar Association’s Political Action Committee, and Greg Krikorian, Board Member of the Glendale Unified School District.
higher monetary awards. “This has had the practical effect of turning the prosecutor who has a statutory--indeed constitutional--responsibility to remain a disinterested administrator and enforcer of the law—into an interested party in legal outcomes.” Taken to an extreme, this amounts to “a perversion of the law.”

We continue to promote programs that facilitate interaction between judges and lawyers as well as between seasoned specialists and rising stars in the legal field. We work with diverse bar associations to promote dialogue, inclusion and cooperation. We assist and support qualified judicial candidates of Armenian origin. Troubling issues such as selective law enforcement in the city of Glendale is always on our radar screen while we monitor such conduct and raise our voice to preserve access to justice in light of the serious fiscal challenges facing the courts.

We continue to defend the legal interests of the Armenian nation where we can. Our amicus brief, with the generous pro bono assistance of David Balabanian and his law firm Bingham, was joined by many sister organizations in the Movsesian case. While disappointed by the Ninth Circuit’s en banc ruling in Movsesian, we continue our work with renewed vigor and are ready to assist where we can should the plaintiffs file a petition with the supreme court of the United States. We will never be deterred in our quest for historical justice and the pursuit of legal remedies for the crime of genocide, stolen properties and lands.

We find ourselves in the unique and challenging position to be the general counsel to the Armenian nation, and that occasionally conflicts with quick and simple solutions. Our goals can only be achieved through hard work, honest debate and meaningful legal policy development. Our work is not done but will succeed only if more fellow lawyers accept their professional responsibility to engage in voluntarism by donating their time and expertise. As Plato has said “the price of apathy towards public affairs is to be ruled by evil men.” We must commit to achieving the noble goals of our organization together. We must walk hand-in-hand even if we don’t always see eye to eye.

In honoring Edik Baghdasaryan we renew our commitment to human rights, the rule of law and democracy in Armenia. Those three are interlinked in such a way where civil and political rights are needed to support economic rights. A system that protects entrepreneurs from arbitrary expropriation by the government facilitates economic growth, which leads to a strong middle class promoting democracy. It is our strong belief that democracy is the best political system to protect human rights. An independent judiciary, equally adjudicating laws that are also consistent with international human rights norms and standards, is what the Armenian bar association will continue to work towards in Armenia. We plan to move towards those goals with even greater commitment and a permanent presence.

As I will pass the torch to a new chair, I will do so with pride in this organization and full confidence that the fire will keep burning ever more intensely as we are blessed with an abundant supply of what those ancient flames symbolize: freedom, reason and creativity.

Thank you for the honor of having allowed me to serve as your chairman.

Sincerely,
Edvin Minassian §
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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.

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