



# ARMENIAN BAR

**The East Coast Post**

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## Message from the Chairman: Gerard V. Kassabian

A double rainbow stretched its colorful ribbons from Mt. Ararat to Mardakert during the historic week of May 28, 2018, the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the first Republic of Armenia in 1918. History, which has over the centuries been stingy with its smile on the Armenian nation, this time outdid itself in magical fashion. We, more than 50 of our Armenian members from around the world, were there to witness the resurrection of the first Republic's miracle of existence into the new Armenia's promise of life, liberty, and justice for all.

The continuation of that sacred line of duty also found reflection in the Armenian Bar Association as my colleagues, while assembled in Shushi, Artsakh, conferred upon me the position and responsibility of Chairman of the Association's Board of Governors. There, on that holy land, I was handed the torch that my esteemed predecessors entrusted upon me to illuminate the proverbial path, the mission of our Armenian Bar Association. This torch has been held high by many accomplished attorneys and together we remain determined to fearlessly and fiercely defend and uphold the rights of our compatriots wherever they may be.

During our annual plenary meetings in Shushi, we met the President of the Republic of Artsakh, Supreme Court Justices and their staff, the Chief Prosecutor and his cadre of civil servants, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and his top command, numerous Parliament members, various government officials, Artsakh State University professors, law students and members of the general public. To a person, they all genuinely celebrated our presence in Artsakh and encouraged us to keep up the good work. We continued our meetings in Yerevan with the Minister of Justice and President of the Chamber of Advocates of Armenia (state bar equivalent). Finally, our last official meeting was that of our Board of Governors with the newly-elected Board and our Executive Committee, which took place, in honor of the heroes of 1918, on May 28, 2018, in the Marriott Hotel conference center. After the Board meeting, we stepped outside to join a massive and joyful public concert in the Republic Square to share with our fellow Hyes the triumphant Battle of Sardarabad which helped liberate and launch the independent country of Armenia on May 28, 1918 and set the foundation of our current Republic of Armenia, established in 1991, just two years after our Armenian Bar Association was established in 1989. Needless to say, our entire group will forever cherish this epic trip which broadened our minds and opened our hearts toward and deep into our homeland.

While enjoying the ancient allure and modern attractions of our homeland, we did not forget the massive amount of work that lies ahead. Of course, we are comforted and appreciative that we have the support of our army of students, lawyers, attorneys, professors and judges worldwide who have chosen to support our mission. Our projects span from elementary school introductory legal education programs and high school mock trial programs to law school mentorship programs and post-law school graduate support programs. They range from academic scholarships to the work of the Armenian Rights Watch Committee and its published articles that shine a spotlight on some very challenging, contemporary legal issues. We are proud of our newly established Artsakh Law Initiative Committee (ALIC), which boasts a pro-bono legal clinic in the Republic of Artsakh as well as an internship at the office of the Artsakh Human Rights Defender. In addition, our Armenian Genocide Reparations Committee (AGRC) is revving its engines as it prepares to fire out of the pit in the name of all that who were lost, all that was taken from us 103 years ago. Also, our pro-bono legal clinic in Glendale, California continues to offer free legal assistance to the general public. These are just a few of the projects of the Armenian Bar Association.

I would like to thank every single one of our members for their dedication and trust in our Armenian Bar Association and its Board of Governors. Our members are our source of energy and reassurance that we can fulfill the promises we have made to enhance our collective future. Our projects are many and they demand from our entire membership all of our skills, time and energy for us to be effective and provide worthwhile services for our intended recipients.

Our organization is very agile and entirely able even with its limited resources. We have been very careful and cautious in our steps to ensure that we thoughtfully use our gifted resources for meaningful and impactful endeavors. I call on each of us to accept the challenge to help us grow by welcoming new members into our family. Our new members will further enable us to continue the good work of the Armenian Bar Association worldwide while contributing to our new and cutting-edge projects in the near future. Together, we are the Armenian Bar Association!



**Gerard Kassabian**

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**NEXT EVENT: ARMENIAN PROFESSIONALS ROOFTOP**  
**HAPPY HOUR—SOLD OUT!**



Details: AESA, AAHPO, and the ArmenBar bring you a night to remember. Join us for our rooftop happy hour and mingle with other Armenian Professionals in the New York, New Jersey and Connecticut area! ArmenBar members will come by and grab a drink and take in the breathtaking views of Rooftop93. We have the entire rooftop reserved just for us.

Location: Rooftop93, 93 Bowery Wyndham Garden Chinatown, 18th Floor, New York, NY

When: Wednesday, July 18

Time: 6:00pm—9:00pm

**Tickets are Sold Out!**

## Volunteers

### Needed

The Armenian Bar Association is looking for volunteers to assist in a number of different committees! The following are looking for participation:

### Genocide Reparations

### Rights Watch

### Continuing Legal Education

### Development/ Fundraising

### Grants & Scholarship

### Membership Development

### Newsletter

### Pro Bono

### Social Media

### Student Affairs

The contact information for joining can be accessed through the hyperlink:

<https://armenianbar.org/committees/>

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT MARSHA KAZAROSIAN



Marsha Kazarosian is a top-rated and award-winning lawyer and legal scholar, and former president of the Massachusetts Bar Association. She has earned several Governor appointments to serve on committees in Massachusetts in her career and is currently a partner at Kazarosian Costello Law. Read more about Ms. Kazarosian here: <http://kazcolaw.com/marsha.html> )

#### **Q: How did you decide you wanted to be a lawyer?**

A: All I ever wanted to be since I was young was to be a lawyer just like my father. My father was a litigator who tried criminal and civil cases and was an amazing trial attorney. Around the time I began law school, he started taking on transactional work.

#### **Q: Where did you begin your career?**

A: I went to Suffolk University Law School in Boston. I actually graduated law school midway through the year because I took a semester off to teach racquetball. By the time I graduated, my father was working in real estate and he had me starting out doing title work and real estate closings, but I really wanted to work in the courtroom. I ended up joining the bar advocate program.

Clients began to call me to work on probate and family cases since there were not a lot of female litigators at that time. A lot of my early opportunities felt like they occurred by chance. But once you get your name out there, people reach out. Eventually, I had an opportunity to work some high-profile cases. I was able to create my own path and take on certain cases that I may not have had an opportunity to work on if I was working at a big firm.

#### **Q: How has the legal field changed since you entered it?**

A: The development of technology helped change the legal field. I am a small-town lawyer, and when I began practicing it was tough for me to compete with big firms that have more resources. In those days only the bigger firms had the technology, so having to do research with books in a library and typing pleadings on a electric typewriter or word processor made it difficult.

Also, when I began practicing it was different for women lawyers. There were few women in litigation, and those few were mostly practicing in probate and family law. I remember taking a trial advocacy course where one of the instructors recommended that women wear high heels in the courtroom because “judges do not want to see short women.” (Answer continued)

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## **MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: MARSHA KAZAROSIAN (continued from 3)**

A: In those days, we also had the motion session in Massachusetts, and that is gone today. But it was a wonderful opportunity to be in court on a regular basis and hear great lawyers (and also some not so great lawyers) argue motions. It was also an opportunity to meet other lawyers and learn from their advocacy styles. In Massachusetts, there are not regular motion sessions because the rules emphasize more of a practice on the pleadings.

**Q: Can you speak about the Haverhill Golf and Country Club case and why the case is so important?**

A: The case involved a club in my own hometown and was about a group of women who were discriminated against when they applied for a full membership to the Haverhill Golf and Country Club. The women who applied were put on a waiting list, but men who had applied after them were being admitted to membership over the women. I met with about twenty women, and ultimately there were nine plaintiffs in the case. I started working on the case in 1995, it went to trial in 1999, and was finalized in 2003.

The case received significant press and when the verdict in favor of the plaintiffs came down, I heard from country clubs from all over the country, and even a club in England. Other clubs were inquiring about bylaws and the permissibility of certain practices. When the case began I did not know what to expect, and frankly, until after the verdict, I did not realize the impact it would have. The case was about stopping women from being treated as second class citizens.

**Q: What is one challenge you faced in your career and how did it make you a better attorney?**

A: My goal was to litigate like a big firm litigator despite being a small-town lawyer. I also wanted to be able to approach each case the same way – whether it was a big or small case. The challenge was, in those days, to be confident as a female in a primarily male arena. I wanted to be accepted into that arena, not as a female litigator, but just a litigator. When you feel more confident, that is 90% of the battle, and even when you are not confident you should act like you are. Also, if you are not a little worried or scared – get out – because something will go wrong.

**Q: What is the best advice you ever received regarding the practice of law, and what advice would you, in turn offer to new practitioners?**

A: My father always gave me the best advice. I remember whenever I had to go into his office to discuss a matter, he would say to me “I am from Missouri, show me!” He taught me to be prepared before approaching a situation. And that would be the same advice I would tell someone nowadays.

**Q: What legal organizations did you get involved with, and how did serving in leadership roles in those organizations contribute to your professional growth?**

A: My father encouraged me to join as many organizations as I could. Joining legal organizations gives you an opportunity to meet a lot of people who may be able to help you and answer questions. If you establish rapport with other attorneys or opposing counsel you can get more done effectively. I originally became involved on the Essex County bar leadership team eventually becoming its President, then became President of the Massachusetts Academy of Trial Attorneys, and then served as President of the Massachusetts Bar Association. I do not know how any lawyer can make it through this profession without getting involved and expanding your network – you make contacts, find clients, and learn from others.

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## **MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: MARSHA KAZAROSIAN (End)**

**Q: Who are your role models and how have they inspired you?**

A: My father is my number one role model in this profession, and everyday I aspire to be like him. My father was proud to be a lawyer every second of his life. I remember watching one of his last trials. He was such a natural and he knew how to relate to people, and thus the jury. He helped people and that is what I wanted to do.

**Q: What role does the Armenian Bar Association play in the advancement of the legal profession and in the community at large?**

A: The Armenian Bar Association creates a community voice and that allows others to take notice. When I started practicing, there were not a whole lot of Armenian trial lawyers who were women. Technology has allowed us to connect and network with Armenian lawyers around the county. The Armenian Bar Association advances not only the legal profession, but the Armenian community as a whole, and you cannot do that without a cohesive organization.

**Q: How far back do you trace your roots when asked “where are you from?”**

A: I know just by the oral history of my family because a lot of the records were lost. I remember when I was a child we recorded my grandparents talking about their parents and families. We sort of trace our roots back to the early 1800’s. My grandparents came here to escape the massacres. One of my grandfathers literally escaped on foot with one of his sisters and a nephew after seeing members of his family killed. It took him four years to make it to America.

**Q: What does being Armenian mean to you?**

A: Just being Armenian completely defines me and I grew up with the utmost pride in my heritage. Armenians have a rich and ancient history. As Armenians, we look out for one another.



This interview was conducted by Gregoire Ucuz who is a fourth-year evening student at Suffolk University Law School in Boston, Massachusetts

## **ArmenBar Young Lawyers Committee Hosts Inaugural “Coast-To-Coast” Event**

By Seta Eskanian, Esq.

On Saturday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, Armenian Bar members and friends gathered together in Boston and Los Angeles for the Young Lawyers Committee’s inaugural event. Over a hundred joined in welcoming the newly formed group organized by Armenian Bar members from across the country, who are dedicated to providing entrees into public service and stepping stones towards professional development. The Young Lawyers Committee's overarching efforts include connecting members from coast to coast, planning networking conferences, continuing legal education workshops and panel discussions of interest to the Armenian community.

Several gathered together to mingle with our dynamic group of attorneys and local dignitaries, including our keynote speaker, Marsha Kazarosian and special guest, State Senator Joseph Boncore of the First Suffolk and Middlesex District. Ms. Kazarosian, a nationally-recognized attorney from Massachusetts who is notable for handling high profile cases, including the precedent-setting multimillion-dollar gender discrimination verdict closely watched across the country against a prestigious country club in Massachusetts, addressed our members in person in Boston and live on webcam in Los Angeles. As she mentioned during her speech, that was the quickest she ever got to California. Ms. Kazarosian spoke about her bar involvement with the Armenian Bar Association, her former role as president of the Massachusetts Bar Association, Massachusetts Academy of Trial Attorneys and the Essex County Bar Association, and how it shaped her into the attorney she is today. She explained how bar association resources provide guidance, services and benefits that enhance one’s practice and enriches people’s experiences in the legal field. Senator Boncore discussed how coming out of law school he joined many law associations and his involvement helped him find his way as a public defender and later learned that he was motivated to tackle criminal justice reform from a different position as State Senator. That is when he took a chance in 2016 and ran in the special election for the open First Suffolk and Middlesex state senate seat and beat seven other candidates. He attributes his success to the many connections, resources and benefits his bar memberships provided him.

On a Saturday night, Senator Boncore explained that our attendees could have been anywhere else, but instead they were networking, connecting and expanding their horizons by attending this event. Ms. Kazarosian was impressed with the turnout and mingled with a room full of young professionals she says are destined for extraordinary things. The Young Lawyers Committee encourages law students and attorneys in their initial stages of their legal careers to join the Association and become active and engaged in its upcoming events. Their plan is to keep the momentum going and to continue to host events from coast to coast.

Once again, we would like to thank our speakers who generously accepted our requests to address our attendees at our inaugural event. Thank you to our Young Lawyers Committee Chair, Grant Petrosyan, for taking the initiative to gather members from across the country and form the committee. Thank you Saro Kerkonian, Chairman of the Board of the Armenian Bar Association, Lucy Varpetian and Armen Hovannisian, Board Members at Large, for your invaluable contributions towards the committee’s success. Thank you to our Event Chair of the Los Angeles event, Allen Haroutounian, and planning sub-committee members for the Boston event, George Bahnan and Gregoire Ucuz, for helping put this successful inaugural event together. Lastly, thank you to our wonderful event sponsors CMBG3 Law Firm; ADLI Law Group, PC, and Marina Manoukian for your generous donations. We hope to see you all again soon at our next event.

## **Building Trust In New Armenia**

By Grant Petrosyan, Esq.

This is an exciting time for Armenia. Armenians around the world have been following the news and reading articles about the “New” Armenia. My intent is not to address what has been sufficiently covered already such as the peaceful revolution that took place two months or the election of a new prime minister. The purpose of this article is to discuss critical next steps. The newly-elected Prime Minister, Nikol Pashinyan, and his newly appointed Cabinet have a very challenging road ahead. With this article, I want to highlight one of the most important areas on which the new administration must focus their efforts: the promotion and enforcement of antitrust laws (also known as competition laws).

Antitrust laws play an integral role in any democratic society. They are meant to promote and protect competition in the marketplace. In any healthy economy, there must be robust competition where sellers of goods and services compete against each other for customers. The idea is that competition will force sellers to offer their goods or services at competitive prices. Also, to stay in business, sellers will be compelled to maintain the quality of their products and make improvements over time. Otherwise, their customers will shop elsewhere for less expensive and/or higher quality products.

Without antitrust laws or, equally detrimental, without the enforcement of antitrust laws, as has been the case in Armenia, the entire society is adversely impacted. In a nation where the government does not regulate the marketplace and enforce competition, monopolies and oligopolies inevitably will emerge. These are market structures where there is very limited or no competition and, thus, either one firm or a few firms dominate the relevant market. As a result, sellers have no incentive to (i) offer their goods or services at competitive rates, (ii) improve the quality of their products, or (iii) innovate new products and ideas. In such scenarios, they are the “only game in town” and consumers are forced to purchase their needs from them at artificially high prices.

In addition to the economic harm to consumers vis-a-vis supracompetitive prices and lower product quality, the failure of a government to enforce the country’s antitrust laws harms smaller businesses. Monopolistic firms have dominant control in their respective markets and can create significant barriers to entry for competing businesses. Such barriers will exclude new rivals, undermine the expansion of any existing competitors, and ultimately allow the monopolistic firm to increase prices and offer substandard goods or services.

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## **Building Trust In New Armenia**

To be clear, there are antitrust laws in Armenia today. The government passed the Law on Protection of Economic Competition (“LPEC”) in December 2000. The State Commission for Protection of Economic Competition (“SCPEC”) is tasked with protecting and promoting economic competition and consumer protection, ensuring a fair and free economic marketplace and preventing anticompetitive practices. However, as mentioned above, the lack of strict enforcement of antitrust laws is equally harmful to both businesses and consumers as the absence of such laws.

The new administration needs to ensure that antitrust laws are strictly enforced in every industry in the country. The days of monopolies and oligopolies should be put in the past, and with the help of antitrust authorities and private litigants, each industry should see a rise in competition among businesses. Additionally, the government must demonopolize imports of essential goods to Armenia. This is an important step toward free and open markets where competing businesses can not only survive but thrive. This will subsequently result in competitive prices for goods and services sold in the country and lead to a favorable domestic business environment, which is crucial not only for local businesses but, also, to attract foreign investments.

As stated above, Mr. Pashinyan faces many challenges in his new role as prime minister. Armenians, in Armenia and in the Diaspora, have very high expectations of Mr. Pashinyan and the actions he will take during his tenure. The overhaul of the antitrust system in the country is one of the most critical steps that Mr. Pashinyan, in coordination with the SCPEC and Ministry of Economy, need to prioritize in order to promote market competition and improve the state of the economy and general consumer welfare.

*Grant Petrosyan is an antitrust attorney at the New York office of Constantine Cannon LLP. Grant is also the Chair of the Young Lawyers Committee of the Armenian Bar Association. To learn more about YLC, please contact him at [gpetrosyan11@gmail.com](mailto:gpetrosyan11@gmail.com).*

*The opinions expressed are those of the author and do not reflect the views of the firm or its clients. This article is for general information purposes and is not intended to be and should not be taken as legal advice.*

### **Meet the Chapter Chairs and Vice-Chairs**

Denise Darmanian, Co-Chair -  
*Gallo & Darmanian, Esqs.,  
Partner*

Gary Moomjian, Co-Chair -  
*Moomjian, Waite & Coleman,  
LLP, Partner*

Souren Israelyan, Vice-Chair -  
*Law Office of Souren Israelyan,  
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Scott Ohnegian, Vice-Chair -  
*Riker Danzig Scherer Hyland  
Perretti, Partner*

**Visit us on the web for more information and to become a member**

<https://armenianbar.org/>

### **Contact Us**

E-mail us for more information regarding the Armenian Bar Association. Also, contact us if you are interested in contributing to the East Coast Post.

Please e-mail Armenian Bar Association Chairman Gerard Kassabian or East Coast Post Editor Steve Gokberk for more info:

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