

HYE SHARZHOOM

Armenian Action

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41st Year

October 2019

Vol. 41, No. 1 (147)

Ethnic Supplement to The Collegian

Dr. La Porta Appointed New Interim Associate Dean of CAH



Dr. Sergio La Porta
CLAIRE KASAIAN
STAFF WRITER

Haig & Isabel Berberian Professor of Armenian Studies, Dr. Sergio La Porta has accepted a new position, effective August 19, 2019, as Interim Dean of the College of Arts of Humanities for the 2019-2020 academic year.

When asked how he feels about this new position, Dr. La Porta stated, “I feel very honored and excited to be the new Interim Associate Dean.” For Dr. La Porta, the most exciting part about becoming the Interim Associate Dean is having a greater ability to help the students reach their maximum potential. “I also enjoy working with all the departments on campus, seeing the different projects they are undertaking, and learning about their future plans.

Dr. La Porta was appointed as the Haig & Isabel Berberian Chair of Armenian Studies in

2009. “I did not ever see myself in this position [Interim Associate Dean],” stated Dr. La Porta. “This is really something I only thought of because of the leadership of Provost Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval and the Interim Dean, Dr. Honora Chapman. Their vision for the College and the University is one I share and I feel very fortunate to be working with them.”

Dr. La Porta’s goals for the College of Arts and Humanities will benefit the university and the college in many ways. These goals have been inspired by his own love of travel and his interest in supporting student success.

Dr. La Porta would like to increase student participation in the Study Abroad Program, which would allow students to experience life overseas and also create opportunities for possible jobs and internships. This would demonstrate to students how their degrees could impact their lives, and how the skills they learned to get their degree can help them in the workforce.

Dr. La Porta also wants to increase the supplemental instruction and tutoring available to the students as well as increase the College’s interaction with

SEE [LA PORTA](#) PAGE 2

ASO Executive Officers Elected for 2019-2020 Academic Year



ASO 2019-2020 Executives, left to right: Matthew Mugrdechian, Vice-President; Suzanna Ekmekchyan, President; Andrew Hagopian, Public Affairs; Ariana Garabedian, Treasurer; and Dustin Vartanian, Secretary.

ANDREW HAGOPIAN
EDITOR

To kick off the Fall Semester, the Armenian Students Organization (ASO) at Fresno State held its first General Meeting of the semester on Tuesday, September 10, 2019.

Five new student executive officers were elected: Suzanna Ekmekchyan, President; Matthew Mugrdechian, Vice President; Dustin Vartanian, Secretary; Ariana Garabedian, Treasurer;

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Fourteen Students Participate in Ninth Armenia Summer Study Trip Organized by the ASP in 2019



The Armenian Studies Program Summer Study Trip 2019 took place May 29-June 14, 2019. Students traveled throughout the country, including a stop at the historic Khor Virap.

ANDREW HAGOPIAN
EDITOR

From Tom Bradley International Airport in Los Angeles to Yerevan, Armenia, a group of 14 Armenian Studies Program students embarked on a two-week trip touring the various regions of

modern day Armenia. The group was led by Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian and Prof. Sergio La Porta. The trip marked the ninth group of students since 1988 that Prof. Der Mugrdechian has had the privilege of reintroducing to their Armenian roots and homeland.

During the trip to Armenia,

May 29-June 14, the group stayed at the Ani Plaza Hotel which was perfectly located in the heart of Yerevan. It was within walking distance of the Cascade, Opera House, and Northern Avenue. The mission of this trip was to connect

SEE [ARMENIA](#) PAGE 8

Clara Bedrosian Establishes \$50,000 Endowment

STAFF REPORT

The Armenian Studies Program is pleased to announce that a \$50,000 endowment has been established at Fresno State through a generous donation from Clara Bousian Bedrosian of Fowler, California.

The Clara Bousian Bedrosian Endowed Fund will benefit the Armenian Studies Program in two ways: by supporting qualified students studying in the Armenian Studies Program with scholarships and by supporting the Armenian Studies Program Lecture Series.

ASP Coordinator Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian thanked Mrs. Bousian Bedrosian at a gathering held at her home in Fowler, in the presence of family members.

“This endowment will benefit generations of Fresno State students and enhances the Armenian Studies Program,” said Der Mugrdechian. “Mrs. Bedrosian’s gift is important

\$25,000 Scholarship Fund Set by Peterson Family

STAFF REPORT

The Armenian Studies Program announces the establishment of the Simon D. and Haiganoosh Peterson Family



Seated, left, Clara Bousian Bedrosian, with Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian. Standing, left, Kenneth Bedrosian and Moon-Ja Yunnouye. Mrs. Bedrosian is a 1958 graduate of Fresno State.

in highlighting the partnership between the Program, the

community, and Fresno State. We thank her for her generosity.”

Memorial Endowed Scholarship Fund at Fresno State. The \$25,000 endowment will support annual scholarships to be awarded to students enrolled in Armenian Studies Program courses at Fresno State. The Scholarship

Fund was established in loving memory of Simon, Haiganoosh, Helen, Virginia, Paul, and Jae Peterson. Patricia Peterson Hansen of Sacramento, California, generously contributed to establish the Fund.

Armenian Studies Program
Book/Video/CD Archival Gifts

Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Prof. Sergio La Porta, and the Armenian Studies Program would like to thank the donors, authors, and publishers for the following books, periodicals, videos, and archival gifts, either offered personally, or to the Program.

Bill & Shirley Armbruster, Clovis, for a donation of books on Armenian literature and history.

Rev. Nerses and Sevan Balabanian, Fresno, for a copy of *The Stormy and Calm Days of My Life: Sarkis Balabanian “Balaban Khoja”*: *Educator, Rescuer, Survivor* (Pasadena, CA, 2019), 198pp., in English. This is the memoir of Sarkis Balabanian (Balaban Khoja), originally published in Armenian by Dr. Toros Toranian, and translated into English by Rev. Vatche Ekmekjian. The memoir covers the period of the 1880’s to 1923, and his personal experience before, during, and after the Armenian Genocide.

Astrig Antreassian Dedeyan, Chaville, France, for copies of her CDs. Dedeyan is a noted opera singer and daughter of the late writer Antranig Antreassian.

Dr. Aghop Der-Karabetian, Rancho Cucamonga, California, for a copy of his book *Armenian Ethnic Identity in Context: Empirical and Psychosocial Perspective* (Haigazian University Press, 2018), 269pp., in English. A collection of Dr. Der-Karabetian’s four-decades long work on Armenian identity issues in different countries including Lebanon, the United States, Turkey, and Canada.

Matthew Karanian, Los Angeles, California, for the donation of his new book *The Armenian Highland: Western Armenia and the First Republic of Armenia* (Stone Garden Press, 2019), 312pp., in English, with photographs. Author Matthew Karanian has traveled through the Armenian highland and brings it alive through a masterful combination of story-telling, historic maps, and more than 200 photographs—both modern and ancient. The result is a book that proudly showcases an Armenia that has rarely been seen since 1915.

Aram and Virginia Kerovpyan, Paris, France for a DVD, *Singing in Exile*, the inspiring story of how the Kerovpyans transmit an ancestral tradition of chant to a group of European actors; for the book *Tzayn Hanabadi* (Voices in the Desert) (Paris: Akn Association, 2017), 288pp., in Armenian, with French and English abstracts; and *Roori*, Armenian lullabies to sleep and to put to sleep by Virginia and Aram Kerovpyan (including CD and songs).

Dr. Harutyun Marutyan, Director, Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, Yerevan, Armenia for copies of the *Journal of Genocide Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1 and No. 2 (2018). The *Journal* is published in Armenian with English and Russian summaries.

Armen Melikian, Pioneertown, CA, for a copy of Նոր Նարեկ: Ոգեշնչում Բաղդասարի (Nor Narek: Vogeshnchum Baghdasari), (Los Angeles: Mets yev Hayki Katoghikosoutean Yertzka Hradarakchutiun, 2019), 131 pp., in Armenian.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, for a copy of the catalogue *Armenia: Art, Religion, and Trade in the Middle Ages*, edited by Helen C. Evans (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2018), 352pp., with map, glossary, bibliography, and index. The catalogue was produced in conjunction with the exhibit Armenia! held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, September 22, 2018-January 13, 2019. This is the first major exhibition to explore the remarkable artistic and cultural achievements of the Armenian people in a global context over fourteen centuries—from the fourth century, when the Armenians converted to Christianity in their homeland at the base of Mount Ararat, to the seventeenth century, when Armenian control of global trade routes first brought books printed in Armenian into the region.

Edward and Jackie Sarkisian, Fresno, for a collection of Armenian records.

Dr. Jonathan Varjabedian, Palm Springs, CA, for a copy of his new book *My Dear Son Garabed: I Read Your Letter, I Cried, I Laughed* (Istanbul, Histor Press, 2018), translated by H. Şükrü Ilıcak, 428pp., in English, Turkish, and Armenian. The book is a collection of letters, translated from Turkish using Armenian letters, from Efkere between the years 1912 and 1915. They are all that is left of the family of Garabed Kojaian and his father Haroutiun, who immigrated from Efkere/Kaiseri to America in 1912 and 1913. Dr. Varjabedian is Garabed Kojaian’s grandson.

LA PORTA, FROM PAGE 1

the community and local high schools.

The biggest goal, however, is to promote the College’s capital campaign to build a Performing Arts Center. This center will have a Concert Hall as well as have gallery space, and faculty offices.

The Center would also include a space for an Armenian Studies Center. A Performing Arts Center will give students a place to showcase their talents to the

community.

“I believe the College of Arts and Humanities is the most important part of Fresno State. I see the college as the intellectual and creative glue that keeps the rest of the university together and ensures that our students, regardless of their major, are educated individuals who will continue to ask questions and learn throughout their lives,” concluded Dr. La Porta.

California State University, Fresno

Armenian Studies Program

Spring 2020 Schedule of Courses

Course	Units	Time	Day	Instructor
General Education-Breadth, Humanities, Area C2				
• Arm 1B-Elementary Armenian (Class #32262)	4	10:00A-11:50A	MW	B. Der Mugrdechian
General Education-Breadth, Arts, Area C1				
• ArmS 20-Arts of Armenia (Class #333214)	3	11:00A-12:15P	TuTh	B. Der Mugrdechian
General Education-Breadth, Area D3				
• ArmS 10-Intro Arm Studies (Class #33526)	3	09:00A-09:50A	MWF	H. Ohanessian
General Education-Integration, Area IC				
• Arm 148-Mastrpcs Arm Cult (Class #33296)	3	2:00P-3:15P	MW	H. Ohanessian
• Arm 148-Mastrpcs Arm Cult (Class #33706)	3	2:00P-3:15P	TuTh	H. Ohanessian
Upper Division Armenian Studies Course				
• ArmS 108B-Arm History II (Class #32261)	3	9:30A-10:45A	TuTh	B. Der Mugrdechian
• ArmS 120T-Arm Ottom Emp (Class #36896)	3	2:00P-3:15P	MW	Kazan Visiting Prof.

Get a Minor in Armenian Studies.

For more information call the Armenian Studies Program at 278-2669.

Check on requirements for the Minor in Armenian Studies in the current catalog.

<http://www.fresnostate.edu/catalog/subjects/armenian-studies/armenia-mn.html>

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Give Your Way to the Armenian Studies Program

There are many ways to support the Armenian Studies Program.

1) A gift today could come through the donation of cash, stock, or goods.

2) The Armenian Studies Program can also be supported in the future in estate plans.

Hye Sharzhoom is an ethnic supplement of *The Collegian* and is the newspaper of the Fresno State Armenian Students Organization and the Armenian Studies Program and is funded by the Associated Students. Articles may be reprinted provided *Hye Sharzhoom* is acknowledged. *Hye Sharzhoom* welcomes prose, poetry, articles and other material from its student readers. For further information concerning the newspaper or the Armenian Studies Program contact us at:

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“Western Armenian in the 21st Century” Focus of Discussion by Four Scholars at Presentation



Participants in the “Western Armenian in the 21st Century” panel and students after the lecture.

Photo: David Safrazian

CHRISTINE PAMBUKYAN
STAFF WRITER

After the Armenian Genocide displaced many Armenians from the Ottoman occupied regions of their homeland in 1915, Modern Western Armenian became a language of the Diaspora. As time went on, some Armenians began to forget their native language and assimilated to English, French, German, or other dominant languages of the countries they moved to in order to escape persecution and become successful and well-educated.

In February of 2010, Western Armenian was added to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization’s list of endangered languages, which deemed the language as “definitely endangered” in its “Atlas of World’s Languages in Danger.”

On Friday, September 7, 2019, at 7:30PM, four scholars spoke about their contributions to a recently published book, *Western Armenian in the 21st Century: Challenges and New Approaches*. *Western Armenian* was co-edited by Bedross Der Matossian and Barlow Der Mugrdechian and published by the Society for Armenian Studies and the Armenian Series of The Press at California State University, Fresno in 2018.

Dr. Hagop Gulludjian, professor of Modern Western Armenian at UCLA, began the evening by discussing the subjects of language vitality of Eastern and Western Armenian and creative literacy within the diaspora. Through his research, Dr. Gulludjian found that only 5.4 percent of the 122,000 Armenians in California are learning Armenian, although many more Armenians have the financial means to go to Armenian schools. This statistic pales in comparison to the Jewish community, where 48 percent of the student population attends Jewish school.

Dr. Gulludjian then explained the rubric used to deem Western Armenian as endangered. Based on his research, he found that for the seven factors of the Language Vitality Test, Armenian fell low on the scale, receiving “endangered,” “dwindling domains,” or “forced assimilation.” Part of the reason for Western Armenian’s endangerment roots back to

1980, when the priority of the diaspora shifted from cultural survival to genocide recognition and assistance of their homeland. At this time, language policies disappeared, and schools began to focus on regulations and standards instead of what kind of scholar they wished to create through their programs. Dr. Gulludjian believes that in order to keep Western Armenian from becoming extinct, we must teach scholars literacy in Armenian, allowing them to produce Armenian works themselves.

Next, Dr. Shushan Karapetian, Deputy Director of the USC Institute of Armenian Studies, discussed her award-winning dissertation of 2015 titled, “Eastern Armenian Speakers as Potential Western Armenian Learners: Reflections on Second Dialect Acquisition,” where she conducted a case study on the Armenians of Los Angeles, California. In her research, Dr. Karapetian found that there is a growing population of non-heritage speakers that are educated and dominant in English and often seek higher knowledge of Armenian in college. She also found that when Armenians learn a new dialect, they go through the acquisitional approach of lexical learning, where they either learn words for the same referent or learn different referents for a known word.

Dr. Karapetian believes that when teachers and family members poke fun at or alienate students when they make mistakes, it speeds up the shift to English in the Diaspora and pushes Western Armenian into extinction. We should be encouraging and inclusive instead.

Jesse Siragan Arlen, a Western Armenian teacher at a Los Angeles Sunday school, and also a poet and a doctoral student, introduced the “Where are Your Keys?” method of teaching language as a tool for Western Armenian. This interactive method, developed by Evan Gardner in 2005, helped revive endangered languages of

the Native Americans and Latin. It involves using only sign language and the language being learned within an inclusive environment. Arlen used this approach to teach Armenian to his Sunday school students and found that their confidence increased, and they accomplished more than they did in previous classes. Arlen encourages teachers to learn and use the “Where are Your Keys?” method, in order to make learning Armenian a more positive, productive, and encouraging experience.

UCLA graduate and Armenian poet and author Elizabeth Mkhitarian discussed her study of creative writing in heritage and language instruction titled, “While I make a poem, I’m being made by poetry.” As she studied for her bachelor’s degree in Armenian studies, she took a class that taught Armenian through the “Hagop Gulludjian Method” of creating poetry to learn a language. For her study, she had a qualitative approach when interviewing students about their experiences in Armenian language classes and how it has affected their self-esteem and fluency in Armenian. Mkhitarian found that because some teachers could be dismissive when their students spoke a dialect other than Eastern Armenian, some students felt discouraged and came to the conclusion that Armenian, their native language, was not for them. She also found that students who were encouraged to create in order to learn Armenian had a more successful and enjoyable experience.

After listening to this lecture, I realized how lucky I am to have Professor Barlow Der Mugrdechian as an Armenian language and Armenian Studies professor. He is encouraging, understanding, and patient. He accommodates for all learning styles while teaching Modern Western Armenian with consideration of students who have a background of Modern Eastern Armenian and other dialects.

Professor Der Mugrdechian always has a reassuring and inclusive attitude during his language classes. Due to his efforts toward keeping Modern Western Armenian alive in Fresno, I am able to express myself in my native language and hopefully pass on what I have learned to my children one day.

Attendees of the lecture were able to purchase copies of the book as they interacted with the contributors of the publication and enjoyed delicious hors d’oeuvres after the lecture. The book itself is written in both English and Modern Western Armenian and is available for purchase through Amazon.

Visit the Armenian Studies Program

Online Library and Photo Archive

The site can be accessed at
<http://www.fresnostate.edu/artshum/armenianstudies/library/index.html>

Armenian Church Explored in September 13-14 Weekend Class



Armenian Church class participants in St. Paul Armenian Church. The class was held Friday, September 13 and Saturday, September 14, and was led by Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian of the Armenian Studies Program.

Photo: Andrew Hagopian

DUSTIN VARTANIAN
STAFF WRITER

On Friday afternoon, September 13, I walked into a classroom with the other students enrolled in Armenian Studies 120T-The Armenian Church weekend class. For most of us, participation in this class would help us understand the Church in more depth, since some already had general knowledge of how the Church operates.

We walked in feeling fairly confident about what the class would consist of the next couple of days. We mostly thought this would be a refresher or reminder of things we learned in the past. However, these feelings abruptly stopped when Professor Barlow Der Mugrdechian handed us a quiz to test our knowledge of the Armenian Church. A strong wave of silence hit the classroom with the exception of a few faint pencil sounds from those filling in a portion of the answers. Within a short couple of minutes, the pencil sounds became silent and Prof. Der Mugrdechian assumed we were all out of answers. It turns out the majority of the classroom could not give some kind of answer to even half of the questions on the quiz. We then realized there was plenty more to learn about the Armenian Church. However, if the quiz was given at the end of the class it would have been a completely different story.

The brief two-day, one-unit course covered several aspects of the Armenian Church. We learned about its history and how Armenians were introduced to Christianity by the Apostles St. Thaddeus and St. Bartholomew. We learned about the beginning of the Church and how St. Gregory became the first Catholicos of all Armenians.

We learned about the services, structure, and current challenges of the Armenian Church. Most importantly every student in our class was able ask and receive answers to any questions they had. It was a unique opportunity to have class time allocated to questions related to the Armenian Church. There were many thoughtful questions asked that benefited the class with new knowledge. These questions generated discussion between

all of us. Some brought up their past experiences, while others made comparisons between non-Armenian Apostolic churches. These two days of class was densely filled with information on the many topics we covered during class.

The most exciting part of the weekend course occurred when the entire class took a field trip to St. Paul Armenian Apostolic Church in Fresno. There we all observed the architecture of the church both inside and out. As we entered the church my senses were filled with the aroma of the church incense. The stained-glass windows were gleaming with beautiful multicolor light. The pews were all empty and quiet which created such a peaceful atmosphere.

The main focus was the altar which was dimly lit, and vacant of any altar servers. It was a unique sight to all of us because many of us never witness the feeling of standing inside of an empty and serene church.

After all of us took in the atmosphere of the stunning church, we then learned about the layout of the church and how Armenian churches are built with specific features. Prof. Der Mugrdechian explained the significance of certain artifacts around the church such as all of the crosses and religious objects up on the altar. He also explained unique things about St. Paul, such as the meanings of the stained-glass windows and the murals on the walls. Altogether it was great to take what we learned in the classroom and be able to observe it in person.

The weekend course based on the Armenian Church was a memorable experience for all of us. It was a fantastic opportunity to learn about things that interested the entire class.

My classmates and I enrolled in the course because we all had a desire to learn about the Church. Also, it was great to get students involved in the Armenian Studies Program in one classroom. As a whole, our class enjoyed its time together. It felt like more of a gathering of friends than taking a class; however, each of us learned a great amount about the Armenian Church.

Pianist Sofya Melikyan Performs in “Young Armenian Talent” Series



Pianist Sofya Melikyan, left, with Keyboard Concert Series Director Andreas Werz, after the September 27 concert.

Photo: Veronique Parker

YERVAND BOYAJYAN

STAFF WRITER

Music is a medium through which thoughts and feelings can be communicated without a single word being spoken. On Friday evening, September 27, 2019, the Philip Lorenz International Keyboard Series and the Fresno State Armenian Studies Program organized a concert by a talented pianist, Sofya Melikyan, and gave us another reason to believe that music is more than notes on a page. Melikyan’s concert was part of the “Young Armenian Talent” series of the Keyboard Concerts.

The audience waited patiently but anxiously as Melikyan walked across the concert floor and prepared to begin what would be a magnificent performance of classical and modern works. She began with one of my personal favorite pieces, *Nocturne in C minor, Op. 48 No. 1* by Frederic Chopin. Chopin is known for his mysterious yet beautiful compositions. Usually one can expect a lot of surprises within his pieces that might sound awkward or wrong but do not be fooled, it’s just what he does.

As Sofya Melikyan began calmly striking the keys, the piece was slowly beginning to speak. Less than a few moments into the piece, a sense of relaxation and relief immediately took over the hall. But of course, halfway through the piece, the tempo picked up and minor chords, which by nature are dark and mysterious, began dominating the piece creating a sense of discomfort giving it its true Chopin touch. The ending of the piece brought the audience back into this state of relaxation ending with beautiful, and in a way, satisfying chords. She did a wonderful job encapsulating the true essence of a Chopin composition.

After thunderous applause, Melikyan followed with Federico Mompou’s *Variations on a Theme of Chopin*. A “Variations” piece summarizes up the main melodies of a composer and presents them in an altered form that is totally up to the new composer. Mompou did this with his take on Chopin’s main melodies.

As before, Melikyan stunned

the audience with her virtuosic playing once again. It was clear that the music was demanding, but that is where her experience comes in.

Sofya Melikyan began playing piano at a young age in Yerevan, Armenia. She attended the Tchaikovsky Special School of Yerevan and later trained at the Royal Conservatory of Madrid and numerous other conservatories.

Melikyan is world-renowned, having performed in over ten different countries. She has also won numerous prestigious awards at international piano competitions and toured with some of the best ensembles in the world. There is no doubt that she is one of the premiere performers in the world.

Melikyan concluded the first half of the concert with another one of Chopin’s masterpieces, the *Fantaisie-Improvisation in C-Sharp minor, Op. 66*.

Following the intermission, while the audience returned to their seats, Melikyan thanked everyone for attending the concert and expressed her gratitude in having the opportunity to perform in such a wonderful hall.

Melikyan began the second half of the concert with a piece called *Five Dances* by Komitas. Komitas is the founder of the Armenian National School of Music and wrote many melodies that are still performed today in different variations. Melikyan’s performance of Komitas’ work spoke differently to the Armenian people in the audience. Most people connect differently with music that is more familiar. Komitas’ melodies are incorporated heavily in Armenian culture and I think that is why it felt different. Melikyan’s expressive playing really made it worthwhile, especially after she performed *Armenian Bas-Reliefs* by Geghuni Chitchyan. Chitchyan’s work borrowed many themes and melodies from Komitas, which was no surprise and provided a proper end to the fantastic and long-awaited performance by Sofya Melikyan.

Melikyan really made the music speak to each and every member in the audience, and I think this is the power that only music possesses.

Armenian Studies Program Enjoying Record Number of Students Pursuing a Minor

SOSSE BALOIAN

STAFF WRITER

The Armenian Studies Program Minor at Fresno State requires students to complete six to seven courses in Armenian language, art, culture, literature, and history. In the Fall of 2019 more than 30 students, an all-time high, have registered to complete their Minor in Armenian Studies.



Dustin Vartanian
Business Management

What does pursuing a Minor in Armenian Studies mean to you?

It means that I have spent time and effort learning about my heritage. It makes me even more proud to be an Armenian. Also, the knowledge that people receive when they complete this Minor is important to me.

Why would you encourage students to Minor?

I would encourage other students to minor in Armenian Studies because the program is excellent. You actually learn something. All of the professors are awesome. Plus, you build a tight bond with others minoring in Armenian Studies.

What made you decide to Minor?

I have always wanted to speak the language and learn more about my heritage. I realized this is probably the best opportunity I will get to accomplish those things.

How does a Minor in Armenian Studies contribute to your career goals?

Being involved in the Armenian Studies Program has helped me make several connections with people. Connections are always important, no matter which career path I choose.

What have you learned about Armenian culture before taking Armenian Studies classes?

I have learned a lot and I could talk forever about all the new things I have learned.



Michaela Zepure Walkup
Landscape Architecture Design

What does pursuing a Minor mean to you?

This Minor connects me to my heritage more than I could have anticipated. I have been able to connect a bit more to the older generation of my family now that I have more knowledge of Armenian history, language, and public figures. Each class gives me an opportunity to demonstrate what I have learned.

Why would you encourage students to Minor?

If an individual is Armenian, I would definitely encourage pursuing the minor. We are fortunate enough to be students of a university that offers the Minor and the opportunity to learn more about our heritage.

What made you decide to Minor?

Originally, I decided to Minor for the financial benefits. I was awarded a scholarship my first semester at Fresno State and found out that those who Minor in the Program are more likely to win additional scholarships in future semesters. Towards the end of my first semester, I grew really fond of the classes I was taking and I was happy with my decision.

What have you learned about Armenian culture that you did not know before taking Armenian Studies classes?

The noteworthy subjects for me were the Armenian language courses. My Western Armenian is limited, but it is leaps and bounds better now in comparison prior to my enrollment at Fresno State. I can genuinely understand my family members when they are conversing in small talk.



Marina Chardukian
Liberal Studies

What does pursuing a Minor in Armenian Studies mean to you?

Completing my Armenian Studies Minor means that I have a deeper understanding of my Armenian culture, and learning about everything it entails such as the church, the language, and the traditions have all been passed down from generation to generation. Now I am able to fully value our rich culture and understand not only the Armenians in the Central Valley, but all over the world.

Why would you encourage students to Minor in Armenian Studies?

As Armenians, we need to educate ourselves on the Armenian language, history, and culture. At Fresno State, we are so lucky to have a whole department devoted to teaching students about the rough and beautiful history of

how we got to where we are now. **What made you decide to Minor?**

When I started at Fresno State, my sister was more than halfway done with her degree and she was working towards getting her Minor in Armenian Studies, so it made sense for me to do it too. By taking Armenian Studies classes, it has helped me sharpen my understanding of my place in the world.

How does a Minor contribute to your career goals?

Since I’m working to become an elementary school teacher, completing a Minor in Armenian Studies has made me more culturally aware. I am Armenian, but I have come to appreciate my own culture as well as others like it.

What have you learned about Armenian culture before taking Armenian Studies classes?

I knew bits and pieces from what I learned as a kid in Sunday school about the early Christian Armenians. Taking classes at Fresno State was amazing.



Yervand Boyajian
Philosophy - Pre-Law

What does pursuing a Minor in Armenian Studies mean to you?

It is a way for me learn about my heritage and my people’s history. Before I didn’t know much Armenian history or culture.

Why would you encourage students to Minor?

I have told a lot of my Armenian friends coming to Fresno State to look into it because I feel like they could learn a lot about their culture. Being Armenian, I know they do not know as much as they should. Also, there are numerous scholarships offered at Fresno State through the Armenian Studies Program.

What made you decide to Minor?

I was born in Yerevan, Armenia and left for the United States at six years old. Even though I was born in the Republic of Armenia, I knew too little. I did not really go to school there, so I did not know how to read or write well. I thought taking Armenian language courses would help me with that. I was going to take an Armenian Studies class every semester anyways, so Professor Barlow Der Mugardehian encouraged me to Minor.

How does a completing a Minor in Armenian Studies contribute to your career goals?

I want to be a lawyer and join the

James L. Melikian & LA Brothers Scholarship Fund Established



James L. Melikian, right, presenting a check for \$5,100 to Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian of the Armenian Studies Program to establish a new scholarship fund.

STAFF REPORT

Photo: Andrew Hagopian

Armenian Studies Program Director Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian announced that the James L. Melikian & L.A. Brothers Scholarship fund has been newly established at Fresno State. A donation of \$5,100 established the Scholarship, which will be awarded to deserving students studying in the Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State.

The effort to establish the scholarship was led by Fresno State alumnus James L. Melikian, who annually hosts a gathering of friends at his home to raise funds for charitable purposes. Melikian established his company, “The Popcorn Man,” in 1977. “The Popcorn Man” provides school districts in California and other states with healthy, nutritious items for the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program, the Child Care Program as well as the After School Snack Program.

In 2014 Melikian was a recipient of the Fresno State “Top Dog” award, recognizing outstanding alumni and he has been an active supporter of both the Armenian Studies Program and the Department of Media, Communications, and Journalism at Fresno State. He is also an Alumni Association Life Member and a Bulldog Foundation supporter.

Melikian graduated from Fresno State in 1969 with a degree in Mass Communication and Journalism, and was President of the Hye Society organization. A highlight of the Hye Society activities was when noted author William Saroyan came to Fresno State to speak to the Armenian students. Melikian is also active in the community and in state and national politics.

The Armenian Studies Program appreciates the establishment of the new scholarship that will benefit students at Fresno State.

ASP Awarded GRAMMY Grant



STAFF REPORT

The GRAMMY Museum® Grant Program announced that the Armenian Studies Program was awarded a \$5,000 grant for 2019-2020.

The Armenian Studies Program was one of 15 recipients in the United States to receive a grant to help facilitate a range of research on a variety of subjects, as well as support a number of archiving and preservation programs.

The Armenian Studies Program project, “Preservation of 78-rpm recordings from the Armenian-American Diaspora, 1908-1960,” will focus on the inventory and cataloging of nearly 1,500 recordings on 78-rpm discs from the Armenian-

American diaspora. The locally produced records document the early history of Armenians in the United States.

The collection represents the voices of musicians whose social, economic, and political status forced them out of their homeland. It was thus only in the emerging cosmopolitan American music scene that most of these artists were first able to be heard. The records were collected over more than forty years.

Generously funded by the Recording Academy, the GRAMMY Museum Grant Program provides funding annually to organizations and individuals to support efforts that advance the archiving and preservation of the recorded sound heritage of the Americas for future generations, in addition to research projects related to the impact of music on the human condition.

The grant will also provide for public lectures to present the results of the inventory.

Fresno State Graduate Dr. Zhanna Sahatjian Returns to Teach in Department of Management

ARSHAK ABELYAN
STAFF WRITER

“Having been a student here in my late teens and early childhood, I’ve spent my life at Fresno State, which has shaped me as a person, a student, and as a professional,” said Dr. Zhanna Bagdasarov Sahatjian.

As an immigrant to the United States in 1995 from Uzbekistan, Dr. Sahatjian came directly to the city of Fresno where she was destined to become an academic. “I knew that I wanted to teach. I always did—I wanted the life of an academic,” stated Dr. Sahatjian.

With those aspirations, Dr. Sahatjian first completed her bachelor’s degree in Psychology with an Armenian Studies Minor and then earned a master’s degree in Experimental Psychology at Fresno State. Dr. Sahatjian then was accepted into Ph.D. program in Industrial and Organizational Psychology at the University of Oklahoma, completing her doctorate in 2014. She now teaches various courses and conducts research in the Management Department of the Craig School of Business.

As a student, Dr. Sahatjian took many Armenian Studies courses, covered various campus and community events as both a writer and editor for *Hye Sharzhoom*, and participated in a number of Armenian Students Organization (ASO) events that allowed her to meet new people and develop her Armenian identity.

“These programs really helped develop my Armenian identity. I didn’t know much, but there were things that my parents and my grandparents would emphasize, such as the Armenian Genocide. At Fresno State, I learned things about my culture that went beyond the Genocide; history, art, language, and more was revealed to me from speaking with and



Photo: Cary Edmondson, University Photographer

Dr. Zhanna Sahatjian

working with the faculty,” said Dr. Sahatjian.

One class that has changed how Dr. Sahatjian has looked at Armenian history was through the Arts of Armenia course (Armenian Studies 20). Dr. Dickran Kouymjian, then Director of the Armenian Studies Program, taught the course. She describes him as “the Armenian art guru. I learned so much about Armenian architecture, artists, and history that I still remember from his class taken over 15 years ago. I still talk about those things to friends that took that class with me. It was a very transformative course for me.” It couldn’t be stressed enough how impactful Dr. Kouymjian was for her. “Dr. Kouymjian was a strong educator and was really dynamic in the way he taught. He would tell us to go read and never stop reading because it was so important. I was a freshman at that time, so everything was new and exciting for me. He opened my eyes to just how much I did not know about my culture.”

While Dr. Sahatjian may be a fairly new faculty member at Fresno State, she has already begun to develop herself as a stronger educator. Whether that is through improving the ways that she teaches or in the methods to

relate to the students, she has felt that transformation over the last five years she has been teaching at Fresno State. The skills that she developed as a student involved with the Armenian Students Organization and *Hye Sharzhoom* have tremendously influenced her career.

“I see former students that are now supporting first time freshmen, or sophomores, and helping them and pushing them in choosing certain courses, providing internships, and creating opportunities,” said Dr. Sahatjian. It is the continuity of her work that has helped fuel success for her former students.

When asked about what she would recommend future students to do when entering Fresno State, she answered by saying, “My biggest advice for future students would be to get involved and do things while you’re here, rather than being a passive onlooker and idly sitting by in a classroom every semester.”

It is clear that Dr. Sahatjian’s involvement under the mentorship of several important faculty members at Fresno State has been crucial in opening many gateways and opportunities that would otherwise not have opened.

Lights!Camera!Saroyan! Film Screened in Scottsdale, Arizona



Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, center, with Fr. Zacharia Saribekyan, pastor of St. Apkar Armenian Church, right, and Church secretary Eleni Smiaris.

Photo: ASP Archive

STAFF REPORT

Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Member of the Board of the Saroyan House Museum, was invited to introduce the film *Lights!Camera!Saroyan!* to the

St. Apkar Church community on July 25, 2019. Following the showing of the movie, community members expressed their interest in the Saroyan House Museum in Fresno.

Have you moved?
Please let us know of any change in address.
Call us at 278-2669
or email: barlow@csufresno.edu

MINORS, FROM PAGE 4

Armenian Bar Association. One of the main things I want to look into are Armenian international problems. A lot of Armenians are opening up cases against the Turkish government to try and get their land back, land their ancestors owned. I am motivated by these cases because my great grandfather also has land back in what was historical Armenia.

What have you learned about Armenian culture, that you did not know before taking classes in the Program?

I learned a lot about the churches in Armenian Studies 20-Arts of Armenia and about the famous Armenian writers in Armenian 148-Masterpieces of Armenian Culture.

I learned about what these authors wrote and their view points in terms of what was going on historically. I also took a class with Dr. Ümit Kurt, a Turkish Genocide scholar, who offered an interesting perspective on the Armenian Genocide.

Classical Armenian Institute Holds June Classes in Yerevan



Participants in the Fresno Institute for Classical Armenian Translation Summer Institute (FICAT), held June 15-29 in Yerevan. Classes were held at the Matenadaran.

STAFF REPORT

Photo: ASP Archive

This year marked the second Fresno Institute for Classical Armenian Translation Summer Institute (FICAT). Following upon the success of last year’s FICAT institute held at Fresno State, the directors, Drs. Sergio La Porta and Michael Pifer, decided to lead students to work at the Matenadaran (the Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts) in Yerevan, Armenia this summer.

The FICAT program is financially supported by the Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State, through the M. Victoria Khanzadian Kazan Fund for Armenian Studies.

Eight students participated in a two-week intensive introduction to working with Armenian manuscripts from June 15-June 29. Students enjoyed the gracious accommodations of the Yerevan State University Guesthouse.

At the beginning of their stay, all of the students received reading cards and met with the Director of the Matenadaran, Dr. Vahan Ter-Ghevondyan. While there, the students examined manuscripts either related to their theses or for new publications.

Student Erin Piñon of Princeton University “was able to lay the groundwork for my dissertation research, by becoming familiar with the collection and seeing manuscripts that will form key parts of my study.”

While according to student Kayla Dang of Yale University, “we all settled into a routine of research and fellowship, and had the chance to meet important scholars—not only those based at the Matenadaran in Yerevan, but also those who visit there from academic institutions around the world in order to do their own research in the summers.”

In order to facilitate interactions between the students and scholars in Armenia, they attended three lectures by the faculty of the Matenadaran on different

subjects. Dr. Gohar Muradyan spoke on the making of Armenian manuscripts and the history of the Matenadaran’s collection; Dr. Lusine Sargsyan provided an introduction to Armenian illuminated manuscripts; and Dr. Garnik Harutyunyan described the development of the Armenian lawcode and its significance for Armenian ecclesiastical history.

For South Korean researcher, Dr. Seonyoung Kim, “the lectures from experts, covering the fields of the study of manuscripts, miniatures, and Armenian Canon law were also quite helpful to enhance my understanding of Armenian manuscript/miniature studies and theology.”

In addition to learning about Armenian manuscripts and the challenges and opportunities working with them presents, FICAT students were exposed to everyday life in the Republic of Armenia as well as to historic places such as Khor Virap, Dilijan, Tat’ev, and Lake Sevan.

Michael Burling, a doctoral candidate at the University of Birmingham, said that “I also took the opportunity to visit some of the sites with which I had become familiar through my research; a personal highlight for me was visiting Zvart’nots’.”

The directors considered the trip a tremendous success. Dr. La Porta said that “it is a terrific feeling to introduce students to Armenia for the first time and witness their excitement. Dr. Michael Pifer and myself both experienced how much the students progressed in their Classical Armenian through working at the Matenadaran; we are excited to see how their research will emerge in their dissertations and published articles.”

According to Dr. La Porta, the group is currently discussing plans for their next meeting in the summer of 2020.

Kerovpyans Present Premiere of “Singing in Exile”

DAVID SAFRAZIAN
STAFF WRITER

“Each time we sing a song, though it has been sung before, it is new,” said Aram Kerovpyan. Armenian church music was nearly completely torn away from its homeland since the Armenian Genocide in 1915.

Musicologists Aram and Virginia Kerovpyan visited Fresno State on Wednesday, May 1, to present a new film, *Singing in Exile*, a prize-winning documentary by Nathalie Rossetti & Turi Finocchiaro.

The film follows the journey of Aram and Virginia Kerovpyan through historic Armenia, where the culture of Armenian liturgical songs was born. Accompanying them on this journey were Jarosław Fred and actors from Theatre Zar in Wrocław, who were researching a new play on the Armenian Genocide.

“Singing in Exile” presents the fragile transmission of an ancient, critically endangered singing tradition. The actors learned about the presence of the rich Armenian culture where singing and church hymns were a major part of the culture.

Armenians still exist today due to the survival of the Armenian Church, which allows the hymns to be sung and sung again throughout the diaspora.

The Kerovpyans visited historic Armenia and discovered many ruined churches that were destroyed in the Genocide, and they discussed the survival of the Armenians. “How can you assimilate to something that’s not your culture?”, Aram said. “Falsify your identity.” Armenians are always true to their ethnic roots. “If you go to



Photo: Andrew Hagopian

Virginia and Aram Kerovpyan, center, at the conclusion of the presentation of the film, “Singing in Exile.”

Armenia today, you will hear ghosts singing,” said Kerovpyan in the film. The sounds of music create stories and memories that are able to connect the past to the present.

The story of slain journalist Hrant Dink was woven into the story as the Kerovpyan’s traveled to Istanbul, where they engaged in discussions about identity and the Genocide. “Everything I couldn’t experience in my youth I can experience now when I return to Turkey.” Kerovpyan spent many years in Istanbul.

“Traditional Armenian church singing is threatened because it was torn away from its land. It was forced to live on different lands, in lands of adoption,” said Kerovpyan.

Near the end of the film, Theatre Zar performs elements from their play among the ruins of an Armenian church.

Aram Kerovpyan said that he plans to make a project dedicated to the Armenian Genocide. As Aram and Virginia were traveling to different villages, they would talk to the locals to get their

perspectives on the Genocide. Though Armenians have lost their homeland and church traditions, this film shows that there is hope that these traditions can be taught to the new generations.

Virginia Pattie Kerovpyan was born in Washington, D.C. and moved to Paris in the 1970’s. She has performed and recorded with various early music ensembles, as well as contemporary music. Soloist of the Kotchnak and Akn ensembles, she has specialized in Armenian song since 1980.

Aram Kerovpyan was born in Istanbul, Turkey and learned to play the *kanoun* and studied the Near Eastern music system with Master musician Sadeddin Öktenay.

Moving to Paris, Kerovpyan joined the Kotchnak ensemble, performing Armenian folk and troubadour music and in 1985, established the Akn ensemble specializing in Armenian liturgical chant. He holds a Ph.D. in musicology and publishes about modal theory and history of Armenian liturgical music.

ASO, FROM PAGE 1

and Andrew Hagopian, Public Relations Officer. Each of the executives were asked questions about their involvement in ASO.

SUZANNA EKMEKCHYAN-
PRESIDENT

Why did you join ASO?

I joined to feel a strong connection with Armenian students and to plan amazing events that will make our college experience more memorable, and to develop a strong sense of friendship.

How has being an ASO member connected you to the Armenian community?

It has exposed me to more members of the community, which I am extremely grateful for. Being involved and active in community events has also been a great addition to being a member of ASO.

What would you like to accomplish as an officer?

As President, I would like to encourage the involvement of even more members. I would also like to utilize our team effort to give back to our community.

MATTHEW MUGRDECHIAN-
VICE PRESIDENT
Why did you join ASO?

I wanted to get more connected to the Armenian community in Fresno and meet new people.

What would you like to accomplish as an officer?

I would like to make sure that everyone is involved and having fun.

ARIANA GARABEDIAN-TREASURER

Why did you join ASO?

I joined because I enjoy being very involved in my culture and want to add to my experience at Fresno State.

How has being an ASO member connected you to the Armenian community?

It has opened my eyes to new opportunities.

What would you like to accomplish as an ASO Executive officer?

I would like to get to know other Armenians at Fresno State through this opportunity as well as to become more involved in the Armenian community.

DUSTIN VARTANIAN-SECRETARY

Why did you join ASO?

I joined so that I would be able to meet a new group of friends. How has being an ASO member connected you to the Armenian community?

ASO connected me to a new

group of Armenians. I always thought I was connected, but ASO made me realize how large the Armenian community is here within and outside of Fresno.

What would you like to accomplish as an officer?

I would like to help create a stronger bond between all Armenians here at Fresno State and those enrolled in Armenian Studies courses.

ANDREW HAGOPIAN-
PUBLIC RELATIONS

Why did you join ASO?

I joined because I wanted to become a part of the Armenian scene at Fresno State and grow closer with my fellow Armenian students.

How has being an ASO member connected you to the Armenian community?

ASO has connected me with so many Armenians within the Armenian community through various Armenian Studies Program events and fundraisers.

What would you like to accomplish as an officer?

I would like see an increase in the number of members in the ASO and keep all members entertained and motivated to embrace their culture and traditional values.

Hye Oozh

Saturdays • 9:00AM - Noon

Fresno State’s Armenian Radio Show

90.7 FM-KFSR

Thank You Annual Fund Donors
(received as of October 4, 2019)

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Cadence Ensemble Performs in
Keyboard Concert at Fresno State



Left to right: Dr. Hagop Ohanessian, Andreas Werz, Hakob Jaghatspanyan, Merouzhan Yeganyan, Varazdat Khachumyan, Sofi Mikayelyan, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, and Nika Babayan.

Photo: Andrew Hagopian

CHRISTINE PAMBUKYAN
STAFF WRITER

Combining musical energy and beautiful rhythms, the Cadence Ensemble performed in the Fresno State Concert Hall on Friday, April 26, as part of their celebration of the 150th anniversary of the birth of Armenia’s noted composer Komitas Vardapet.

The Cadence Ensemble performance was part of the World Music Series of the Keyboard Concert Series and was co-sponsored by the Armenian Studies Program, the Thomas A. Kooyumjian Family Foundation, the Armenian General Benevolent Union, Fresno Chapter, and Orpheus.

The Yerevan, Armenia based-Cadence Ensemble is composed of five musicians: Varazdat Khachumyan, violin; Hakob Jaghatspanyan, guitar; Meruzhan

Yeganyan, accordion; Sofi Mikayelyan, piano; and Gurgen Ameriyan, contrabass, who was unable to participate in the concert.

Armenian priest, musicologist, composer, arranger, singer, and choirmaster Komitas, Soghomon Soghomonian, was an Armenian priest who spent his days observing and recording Armenian songs and traditions of families living in the Armenian countryside. Komitas passed away in a French sanatorium in 1935, unable to forget the tragedies he had witnessed during the Armenian Genocide.

Throughout the performance, the Cadence Ensemble exuded great vitality. Audience members were dancing and singing along to the Armenian folk songs and, despite someone’s phone going off in the middle of the concert, the ensemble shared our enthusiasm. Hakop Jaghatspanyan, the

Obituary-Armen S. Kouymjian (1936-2019)

Armen Sahag Kouymjian
(1936 Tulcea, Romania –
2019 Pasadena)

Armen Kouymjian was the third and last child of Zabelle Calusdian Kouymjian and Toros Kouymjian. He was born an American citizen while his father, mother and older brother Dickran were visiting his father’s parents in Romania where they had fled after the Kemalist’s burning of Izmir (Smyrna) in 1922. His mother’s family was from Samson, whence she and her brother Archavir (Archie) were orphaned, the only survivors of a large family. They were discovered at the Qadi Köy orphanage by their uncle Levon in Chicago who saw their names on published lists of orphans and brought them to America. His father Toros had left home as a young man before the Izmir massacres making his way to Chicago where he began to work for one of the large Armenian oriental carpet companies. His parents met at an Armenian ball, fell in love, and quickly had their first child Janie, who they took on their first trip to Bucharest in the late 1920s to meet her paternal grandparents. Tragically, Janie died in Chicago of pneumonia and shortly after to ease their sorrow, the couple returned to Rumania where their first son Dickran was born, followed by Armen two years later. When WWII broke out, the American Consulate in Rumania advised the Kouymjians to return to America immediately. The family of four arrived in Chicago in the fall of 1939 and started all over.

The first years were difficult but happy with Armen and his brother going to public school, concentrating with the help of their mother on learning good English. Their father picked up where he left off in the Oriental rug business. But fate was unkind to Armen. During a banal appendix operation performed by their close friend Dr. Hampartzoum Kelekian, ether was accidentally administered to Armen’s brain putting him in a coma. After six weeks in an oxygen tent, he survived, but it soon became apparent he suffered from total amnesia. The young boy was forced to learn everything again like a new-born child: to recognize and identify his surrounding and those around him, to eat, and to speak. With

guitarist of the ensemble, smiled at the interruption and played his own ringtone in response.

The Cadence Ensemble did not simply play their instruments, they moved with the passion and emotions they conveyed through the melodies and harmonies of Armenian composers Sayat Nova, Khachatur Avetisyan, Komitas, Edward Baghdasaryan, Aram Khachaturyan, and Tigran Grigoryan, and Argentinian composers Astor Piazzolla, Alberto A.M. Herrera, Richard Halliano, and A. G. Villaldo Arroyo.

Violinist Khachumyan moved with passion; pianist Mikayelyan made eye contact



Photo: ASP Archive

Armen S. Kouymjian

the heroic effort of his family and private tutors, after a few years he learned to speak.

In 1950 with his family Armen moved north to Racine, Wisconsin where there was an Armenian community who knew the Kouymjians. There he went to special classes at a vocational school, eventually learning the rudiments of reading and writing. They lived close to Lake Michigan, where he would go with father, brother, and sometimes mother line-fishing on the stone piers jetting out into the lake.

Racine was a highly industrial town, and eventually Armen got a fulltime job working on the furnaces of a steel smelting company. Some years after the untimely death of his father, a pillar of St. Hagop’s Armenian Church and their choir director, he and mother Zabelle decided to move to Pasadena to be close to cousin Flora Calusdian Dunaians, the daughter of Zabelle’s brother Archie. During those wonderful California years, Armen started working in shipping and receiving at Western Medical Supply, owned by Flora and George Dunaians. After his mother died 1983, Armen lived alone, going to work five days a week while being guided by his cousins.

A few years ago, he was hit by a car and was unable to work any

longer. Eventually he moved into the Pasadena Wellness Center, where he was loved. Earlier this year he suffered kidney failure coupled with an infection which took his life.

All of those who knew Armen loved him for his joyfulness, curiosity, perfect manners, and a willingness to help whenever he could. As his cousin Karnic Kouyoumdjian, son of his father’s older brother living in New Jersey put it:

“Armen was a courageous individual and did the best he could with the hand he was dealt; he never made people feel sorry for him, on the contrary he had a positive attitude and, I would call it, an angelic smile. He is now, I feel, next to the people that loved him most, aunty Zabelle and uncle Toros. I pray that he is also happy to be there.”

Armen is survived by his brother Dickran and his sister-in-law Angèle, both living in Paris and his maternal cousin Flora Dunaians and children Gigi and Suzi and their families, and paternal cousins Karnic and Hagop Kouyoumdjian and their children and families.

DICKRAN KOUYMJIAN
HAIG & ISABEL BERBERIAN
PROFESSOR OF ARMENIAN STUDIES,
EMERITUS

In lieu of flowers donations can be made to the:

Armenian Studies Program

Armenian Studies Program
5245 N. Backer Ave. PB4
Fresno CA 93740

Memo Line: Armen S. Kouymjian Memorial Fund

Donations will be acknowledged in *Hye Sharzhoom*

with the audience and smiled at each climax of her solos; Jaghatspanyan was creative with his guitar, often using it as a drum; and accordionist Yeganyan moved his fingers and arms so gracefully that I found myself watching his every move.

The Ensemble was able to bring the audience to their feet after each song with standing ovations and even after the Ensemble performed the “Sabre Dance” from Aram Khachaturian’s “Gayane” Ballet as part of their encore performance, the audience was still wanting more.

After the concert, audience members were able to purchase a recording of the Cadence

Ensemble performing in the Aram Khachaturian Concert Hall of Yerevan, Armenia, as they drank wine, enjoyed hors d’oeuvres, and met the talented musicians.

The Cadence Ensemble established fifteen years ago, in 2004, initially performed the works of Astor Piazzolla. After the ensemble became one of the most popular groups of Armenia, they began to include contemporary Armenian, European, Russian, and American composers in their repertoire.

Since their first international tour in 2005, the Cadence Ensemble has performed across the world.

Fresno State Students Enjoy Study Trip to Armenia



Students visited the Armenian Genocide Memorial and Museum at Tsitsernakapert.

Photo: Barlow Der Mugrdechian

ARMENIA, FROM PAGE 1

students to their Motherland Armenia and educate them on the history and culture of Armenia.

Participating in the Armenia Summer Study Group 2019 were: Chandler Baladjanian, Mari Danielyan, Lucas Der Mugrdechian, Suzanna Ekmekchyan, Amanda Esquivel, Liana Gasparyan, Stephen Gonzalez, Andrew Hagopian, Arthur Khatchatrian, Kristina Melikyan, Matthew Mugrdechian, David Safrastian, Kara Statler, and Mitchel Statler.

On the first full morning in Armenia, we were given a detailed walking tour of the inner city by Prof. Der Mugrdechian. The walk began at the Ani Plaza Hotel, stopping at the historic Katoghike Church, went through Opera Square to the Cascade, and then down Abovian Street to Republic Square where Prof. Der Mugrdechian discussed and reflected upon Armenia's Velvet Revolution which had taken place May of 2018. The Velvet Revolution was a series of anti-government protests which took place in Armenia from April to May 2018, and which culminated with the election of a new Prime Minister, Nikol Pashinyan.

Student participant Stephen Gonzalez added his insight to those events. "I witnessed the revolution the previous year while studying at the American University of Armenia. I hope the will of the people and the outside support for the government will

be enough to secure Armenia's future in the world. My feelings about Armenia and the Armenian people is that they are both incredible and there is something there that I cannot describe. Maybe it's being in a land that is not American or maybe it is just reading about Armenian history and how many times the cruel hand of time has given them a bad hand, but there is a calm about the country and the people."

While walking the streets of Armenia, we noticed that everything and everyone was Armenian. The people there were so gracious and welcoming. We would walk by stores and they would invite us in to either look at the products they were selling or to try different types of food or drinks prepared by them. Everywhere I went, I felt as though I had a personal connection with everyone we came in contact with.

"There were times when it did not feel like we were so far from home. The Armenians there, mainly the ones we met and interacted with, made us feel at home. As one of the few on the trip who couldn't understand Armenian, I did not feel left out. The language barrier was difficult at times however I always felt included in all the activities throughout the trip," said Amanda Esquivel.

Matthew Mugrdechian reflected upon the attitude that the Armenian people showed towards the group. "The people were

polite and some of the waiters and employees throughout our tour of the city would have fun with us in various ways. For example, one of the hotel lobby workers line-danced with us, while another member of our group performed Armenian songs on the piano."

During their time in Armenia, the group visited Mer Hooys-House of Hope on multiple occasions. Mer Hooys' mission is provide opportunities to girls from disadvantaged lifestyles in Armenia so they may achieve a productive and secure future. Prof. Der Mugrdechian is a Vice-President of the Board of Mer Hooys.

The Program provides qualified girls with a comfortable and safe home, a family environment, psychological and educational support. The girls receive instruction in languages, social skills, community relations, arts, religion, health and life skills, and job skills training. The girls were so excited to get to know each and every one in our group and put on a variety of performances during the visits. We also played a variety of games with them, including dodgeball.

"I was immediately captivated by their mission of providing a safe and nurturing environment for Armenian children who are orphaned. The owners and workers were especially committed to providing a quality education for each of the girls, including lessons of the English language," state Liana

Gasparyan. She further explained that the Mer Hooys staff strongly encouraged the girls to find a passion either through music, dance, art, or sports.

"The girls took me in and included me in all of their dances and games. I genuinely had an amazing time playing with them and to see the smiles on their faces made my day that much better," said Suzanna Ekmekchyan. She hopes to return to Mer Hooys and build stronger relationships with the girls that will hopefully last a lifetime.

My main purpose in traveling to Armenia was to get a sense of their way of everyday living, lifestyle, clothing trends, and foods.

However, I found myself taken with all the churches we visited through the course of the two weeks starting with the Katoghike Church. The architectural style of this church was that of a modern Armenian church built in the 17th century. The relief work was absolutely beautiful on the outside of this church, representing traditional Armenian craftsmanship as well as modern day Armenian influence.

During our stay in Yerevan, we visited many Armenian churches, historical sites and various sites including Mother Armenia statue, Victory Park, the 50th Anniversary of WWII monument, the Mashtots Matenadaran (Library of Ancient Manuscripts), Yerevan State University, the Armenian Genocide Monument and Museum, the American University of Armenia, and the

Megerian Carpet Factory.

The study trip included significant outings throughout the country of Armenia, including visits to Areni Winery, Noravank Monastery, Khor Virap, Gyumri, and much more.

What can be said about good food? It is not so often that you come across food that you absolutely love all the time, however in Armenia, one is guaranteed that each meal will leave you loosening your belt one notch.

"As it was my first time visiting Armenia, there was definitely a cultural shock as an American. I was able to see first-hand the poverty that some Armenians face in the country, but also the kindness and hospitality that so many displayed," said Chandler Baladjanian.

"The nightlife was nothing compared to what I am used to in Fresno and I always was able to keep myself entertained by learning more about Armenia," said Kristina Melikyan.

David Safrastian shared that "When I go to Armenia, I feel as I am home again. I can't quite explain the feeling, but I am happier to be there and indulge myself in the culture."

"One of the most significant impact of the trip to Armenia was realizing how much I love my country, to my nationality, culture, and people," exclaimed Mari Danielyan.

"I will be forever grateful to everyone who helped make my experience in Armenia so unforgettable and I hope to return with them by my side one day," concluded Suzanna Ekmekchyan.

"Everyone we met and interacted with during our trip was so welcoming and warm. They made sure we were treated nicely and with respect. In terms of all the places we went to, they were all surreal and beautiful," said Arthur Khatchatrian.

I am so grateful and feel so blessed I went and returned safely to and from Yerevan under the outstanding guidance of Professor Barlow Der Mugrdechian.

I feel that I saw everything I wanted to see for my first time going and cannot wait for my return visit to Armenia.



Photo: Barlow Der Mugrdechian

Students visited the statue of the Armenian folk hero David of Sassoon. It is the work of sculptor Yervand Kochar.

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