

# Kalaidjians of Monaco Establish Million Dollar AUA Endowed Scholarship Fund

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## Philanthropist Stresses Importance of Supporting AUA in the Process of Building Armenia

OAKLAND, Calif.— The American University of Armenia (AUA) has received a gift of \$1 million from Monaco-based philanthropists Berj and Sonia Kalaidjian. An endowed scholarship fund has been created through this generous contribution, allowing the University to continue its policy of ensuring deserving students the opportunity to study at AUA, regardless of their financial standing. AUA, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, is currently undergoing a period of tremendous growth. The establishment of such endowed scholarship funds will allow the University to direct its general funds towards the expansion of programs of study and development of infrastructure.



AUA has received a gift of \$1 million from Monaco-based philanthropists Berj and Sonia Kalaidjian.

“Helping Armenia was always on my mind, however I didn’t know what I could do to make a real and lasting impact on the country,” said Berj Kalaidjian. “When I visited AUA during the summer of 2015, I was impressed with what I saw. This was my second visit to the University since 2001, and [what I saw in 2001] was the miniature version of what I witnessed later. I thought- they have made it, they have grown, they must be good. I made my decision with assurance that this was what I should support! What else if not creating opportunities for the intelligent young Armenian minds to pursue their dreams? They are the future of Armenia!”

“If I could give advice to the students that will become the recipients of our named scholarship, and other students as well, it would be to take in everything you can at AUA; use your greatest potential in the process of learning, and, when you have the right tools, build your own success and, most importantly, do that in your motherland. Armenia needs you and the only place you can keep your true identity is in your own land- Armenia!”

Mr. Kalaidjian has emphasized the fact that AUA is carrying out 50 percent of the work needed to transform Armenia. In his words, “AUA educates the bright minds and produces skilled and intelligent cadre who are empowered to make positive changes in the homeland. The remaining 50 percent is in the hands of Armenia’s leaders. I truly hope that they will put every effort to keep the brightest minds in the country by creating employment opportunities for them, supporting the innovative ideas that they may have, and creating incentives for foreign organizations to come to Armenia and utilize the skills and knowledge of the talented workforce that AUA will continually produce. It is an important partnership if we want to see the Armenia that we all have dreamt about.”

Born and raised in Jerusalem, Berj Kalaidjian launched a highly successful contracting company, ACMECON (Associated Civil and Mechanical Engineering Contractors), in partnership with a classmate and colleague in Saudi Arabia in 1969. In 1976, he moved to London with his family while continuing to head his company in Saudi Arabia. ACMECON was dissolved in 1982, and in 1985 he relocated to Monaco, where he currently resides. Mr. Kalaidjian holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering from the American University of Beirut.