

## In Memoriam: AUA Remembers Mr. Sarkis Acopian

YEREVAN - A memorial ceremony commemorating the life of the great friend and supporter of the American University of Armenia, Mr. Sarkis Acopian (1926-2007), was held on March 14, 2007, at the University.

Speakers during the ceremony included His Holiness Karekin II, the Catholicos of all Armenians, AUA President Haroutune Armenian, Dr. Martin Adamyan, author of "A Field Guide to Birds of Armenia," and Mr. Karen Aghababyan, Coordinator of the Environmental and Conservation Research Center at AUA.

Dr. Haroutune Armenian began the memorial with a talk in which he described Sarkis Acopian as a person deeply concerned about environmental conservation and environmental education and as an initiator of many important industrial and scientific projects, a benefactor of the Armenian Apostolic Church, and as a generous supporter of a variety of development activities in the United States and Armenia. "Mr. Acopian's goal, which he obtained so brilliantly, was to achieve the highest international standards in all his work. He was an ingenious person, entrepreneurial, hard working, diligent, and a man with the highest levels of integrity. His standards were so impeccable that we can use his profile as a model for our students at AUA to encourage them to emulate his approach to life. He was a model of strong moral and ethical principles and it was a great pleasure to know such a man," continued Dr. Armenian.

Karen Aghababyan, remembered Mr. Sarkis Acopian



Mr. Sarkis Acopian

with a slide presentation that covered the major activities of Mr. Acopian's life with a special focus on his generous contributions in Armenia in a variety of areas from environmental protection to the building of new churches.

His Holiness Karekin II, the Catholicos of all Armenians delivered the eulogy in remembrance of Mr. Acopian, a person devoted to the Armenian Church and the community at large for a very long time. "We praise with our respect and gratitude the highly devoted Armenian son, Sarkis Acopian. We have today the opportunity to live through once again those beautiful moments and times which we enjoyed with happiness together with Mr. Acopian and to share his ideals and his very humane and God loving devotion to his motherland."

Sarkis Acopian made numerous donations to national

and international causes including the environmental education program at the American University of Armenia and the Florida Institute of Technology. Other major philanthropic endeavors included the Nature Conservancy Acopian Bog Turtle Preserve, and the St. Sarkis Armenian Apostolic Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, built in memory of his beloved mother, Dr. Arax Acopian. Other important donations have included gifts to the Armenian General Benevolent Union, the Embassy of Armenia in Ottawa Canada, the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, the Armenian Apostolic Church of America, the Armenian Assembly of America, the Children's Home of Easton and the building of two churches in Armenia, St. Hakop and St. Mesrob. His great sense of gratitude to his adopted country played a major part in his being the largest individual donor to the World War II Memorial in Washington, DC.

He received the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, the St. Gregory the Illuminator Medal, and an honorary Doctor of Science degree from Muhlenberg College.