

**Over \$1.5 Million Raised
for Vital Scholarships
at AUA 25th Anniversary Gala in Beverly Hills**

Colleges Named in Honor of Benefactors



Nelly Der Kiureghian, Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian, Dr. Mihran Agbabian, Elizabeth Agbabian, and Seta Karamardian being honored at the Gala for founding AUA

BEVERLY HILLS— The American University of Armenia (AUA) celebrated its 25th anniversary with a spectacular gala held at the landmark Beverly Wilshire on November 19, with over \$1.5 million being raised to benefit AUA's scholarship funds. Co-chairs Zaven P. Akian and Sinan Sinanian were among the 680 guests who represented a broad and diverse spectrum of the Armenian-American

community of Los Angeles.

In his opening remarks, former U.S. Ambassador to Armenia John Marshall Evans stated that the founding and fostering of AUA is the single most important endeavor the Armenian-American community and the U.S. government have implemented together in the Republic of Armenia.

AUA founders Dr. & Mrs. Mihran and Elizabeth Agbabian, Dr. & Mrs. Armen and Nelly Der Kiureghian, Dr. & Mrs. Stepan (in memoriam) and Seta Karamardian, and Mrs. Louise Manoogian Simone were recognized by Dr. Lawrence H. Pitts, chair of AUA's board of trustees. Speaking on behalf of the honorees was Dr. Agbabian, who stated he was fortunate to take part in the challenge of establishing an American university in Armenia 25 years ago and did what he considered was the right thing to do at the time. Also recognized were three entities, the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), the University of California (UC) and the Armenian government, for their integral roles in establishing AUA in 1991.



Adam Kablanian, Chairman of the AUA Development Committee, thanked the evening's sponsors and donors and recognized Mr. & Mrs. Sarkis and Ruth Bedevian, who had recently established a \$400,000 endowment for the University. Mr. Kablanian also acknowledged the 30 AUA Pillars present that evening for their support of the University with unrestricted gifts of \$50,000 distributed over the course of five years. The 100 Pillars of AUA, a campaign launched in honor of the institution's 25th anniversary this year, aims to secure 100 pillars committed to supporting the University's pledge to provide students with a high quality education.

Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian, President of AUA, reported on the accomplishments of the University during the past 25 years and its goals for the future, including the establishment of new programs and expansion of the campus. He emphasized the

University's goal to help make Armenia a global destination for high-quality education and research. The President went on to make three special announcements. First, he recognized Mrs. Louise Manoogian Simone for her decisive role in the founding of AUA and her extraordinary generosity towards the University since its inception. The President then announced that effective immediately, the AUA College of Business and Economics was officially named The Manoogian Simone College of Business and Economics in recognition of a special endowment that Mrs. Simone has established to support the College.

A second dedication was announced in recognition of the generous support provided to AUA over the years by benefactors Mr. & Mrs. Zaven and Sonia Akian. The couple has established scholarships for hundreds of students and provided crucial support for constructing and furnishing the Akian Art Gallery at AUA, as well as numerous other projects. The AUA College of Science and Engineering was named The Zaven P. Akian College of Science and Engineering in appreciation of all the support demonstrated by the Akians, along with a special endowment they established for the College.



Zaven P. Akian (Gala Co-Chair and AUA Benefactor)

The final announcement made by Dr. Der Kiureghian was with regard to the vital support given to AUA by Mr. & Mrs. Gerald and Patricia Turpanjian, which includes scholarships to over 3,000 students, support for the Turpanjian Center for Policy Analysis, and the establishment of the Turpanjian Rural Development Program. The President announced the naming of AUA's School of Public Health as The Gerald and Patricia Turpanjian School of Public Health in recognition of a special endowment established by the Turpanjians for the School.

The evening's musical segment featured a dazzling performance by world-renowned soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian, accompanied on the piano by husband Serouj Kradjian. The Grammy Award-nominated singer's repertoire included pieces by Komitas and Gioachino Rossini. The filmmakers from the motion picture *The Promise* – Eric Esrailian, Terry George, and Mike Medavoy - also took the stage after a screening of an exclusive behind the scenes clip from the movie. They spoke of the significance of having a UC-affiliated American university in Armenia and touched upon their film's responsibility to share with the world the historical truth of the Armenian Genocide. The trio called upon members of the Armenian-American community to show their unwavering support for the film, especially in response to lobbying efforts to tarnish its credibility.

The evening's keynote address was delivered by entrepreneur/philanthropist Ruben Vardanyan, whose wife Veronika Zonabend serves on the AUA board of trustees. Mr. Vardanyan underscored how fortunate Armenia is to have an institution like AUA – a university that is committed to high standards, open and transparent communication, academic freedom, and which promotes critical thinking and entrepreneurship among its students and faculty. He stressed how the key factor for the success of any country in today's world lies in the education of its people. In his words, Armenia, with its long heritage of innovation and business, has a competitive advantage in the potential of its human capital and the

availability of an extensive network thanks to the Armenian Diaspora.



Ruben Vardanyan (Gala Keynote Speaker and AUA Benefactor), Veronika Zonabend (AUA Board of Trustees and AUA Benefactor), Gagik Adibekyan

Mr. Vardanyan concluded by announcing a special scholarship fund he will establish for non-Armenian Syrian, Lebanese and Iraqi students who wish to pursue an education at AUA. The fund is in appreciation of the help provided by Arab families to Armenian Genocide survivors who settled in their countries 100 years ago. Mr. Vardanyan stated his belief that bringing international students to Armenia will be a key to the country's success, allowing it to integrate globally and become a regional hub.

AUA's 2016 valedictorian Setrag Hovsepien, who had traveled from Yerevan for the special occasion, spoke about how AUA changed his life when he arrived in Armenia from war-torn Syria. Setrag reiterated how the new generation in Armenia wants to help build their homeland and that AUA plays a pivotal role in preparing them for that goal. He then introduced longtime AUA supporter and gala co-chair

Zaven P. Akian, who had provided a scholarship for Setrag to complete his education. Mr. Akian expressed concern about Diasporan Armenians having the perception that assistance to their homeland is unappreciated and is expected as an obligation. He stressed how his experience as an AUA benefactor had been otherwise with a tremendous amount of appreciation expressed by his scholarship recipients.

Closing remarks were made by AUA Vice President of Development and Gala Chair Lorraine Alexander who thanked the 25th Anniversary Gala Committee members - Linda Kay Abdulian, Elizabeth Agbabian, Arsho Aghjayan, Diane Cabraloff, Flora Dunaian, Hermine Janoyan, Adam Kablanian, Grace Kurkjian, Margaret Mgrublian, Lori Muncherian, Marissa Nadjarian, Alice Navasargian, Arsine Phillips, Arpi Sarkissian, Raffi Senekeremian, Hayde Torosyan, Savey Tufenkian, Aida Yeghiazarian, and Dzovig Zetlian. She also called upon guests to continue their support for AUA – one of the Diaspora's most important investments in Armenia.

Gala benefactors included Mr. & Mrs. Albert and Terry Bezjian, Mr. & Mrs. Vigen and Houry Ghazarian, the Jack Munushian Charitable Trust, Mr. & Mrs. Gerald and Patricia Turpanjian and Ms. Louise Manoogian Simone. The evening's Visionary Patrons included The Agbabian Family, Mr. & Mrs. Zaven and Sonia Akian, Mr. & Mrs. Adam and Rita Kablanian, Alice Navasargian, and Mr. & Mrs. Sinan and Angele Sinanian. Gala Platinum donors were Edward & Pamela Avedisian, James and Claire Kagan, Vahe Karapetian and Veronique Monique, Frederic Martin and Cynthia Cwik. Corporate sponsors included Rubicon Point Partners, Umpqua Bank, Golden State Bank, and Glendale Adventist Medical Center.



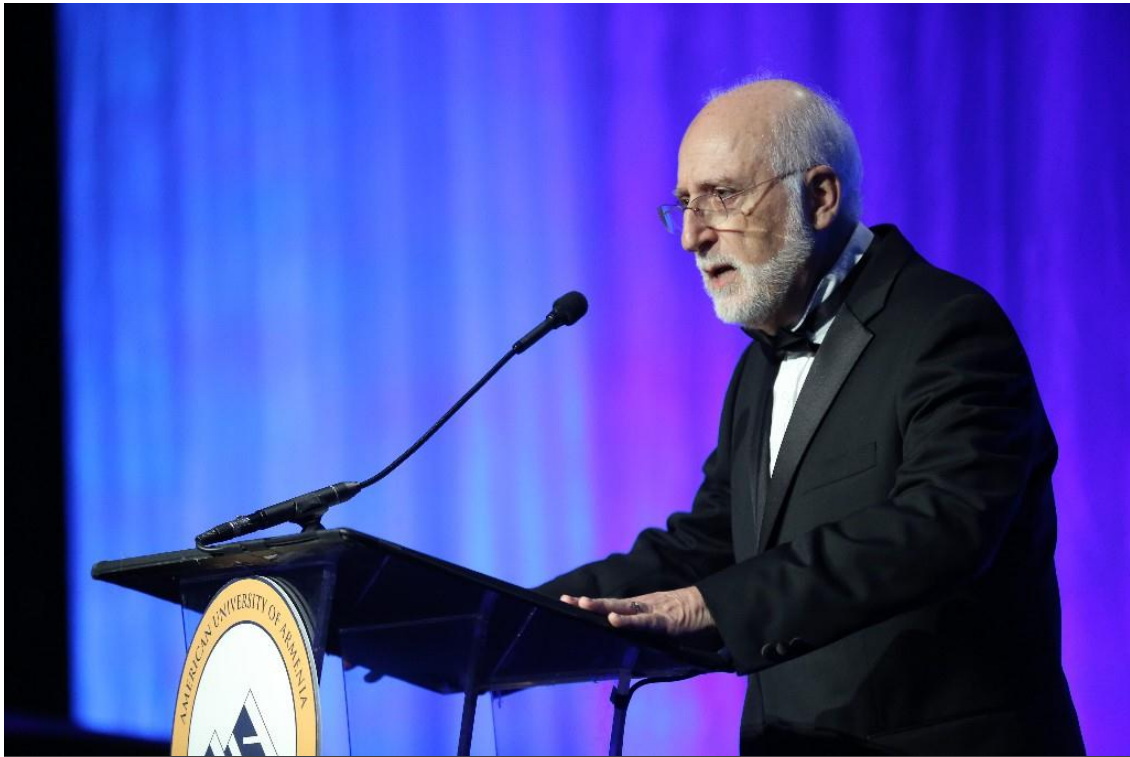
Net proceeds from the AUA 25th Anniversary Gala will support critical scholarship programs. If you would like to make a gift to the AUA scholarship program, please contact Gaiane Khachatryan at development@ua.am or (510) 925-4282.

The American University of Armenia appreciates your generosity and support. Please visit <http://giving.ua.am/> to learn about ways in which you help make a difference.



Founded in 1991, the American University of Armenia (AUA) is a private, independent university located in Yerevan, Armenia and affiliated with the University of California. AUA provides US-style education in Armenia and the region, offering high-quality, graduate and undergraduate studies, encouraging civic engagement, and promoting public service and democratic values.

Photo & Video Gallery at <http://25th.aua.am/media/>



Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian (AUA President and Co-Founder)



Dr. Mihran Agbabian (AUA Co-founder and former President), Elizabeth Agbabian (Gala Committee), John Marshall Evans (former US Ambassador to Armenia)



Adam Kablanian (Chairman of AUA Development Committee and Gala Visionary Patron), Rita Kablanian, Alex Kablanian



Gala Committee Members



The AUA US Team