

Commencement Valedictory Speech
by Magda Aghababian, MBA Graduate 1995

AUA Large Auditorium

October 8, 1995

Honored guests, ladies and gentlemen.

This is a special day for the American University of Armenia. Today, we - the third class of AUA students - are graduating and taking the results of two years with us. We are excited by the importance of this day. We are grateful to you for participating in our Graduation ceremony and for sharing our happiness and joy with us.

Also, we are grateful to the AGBU, the Government of Armenia, and USAID for the establishment and their continuous support of the American University of Armenia. AUA has become a catalyst for many positive changes taking place in Armenia today. But AUA could not succeed without the dedication and the effort of its Administration and staff. Special thanks to our professors. They left their English-speaking students and more comfortable living conditions in the US, and came to Armenia to share with us their knowledge and experience. **Thanks to all of you!!**

Moreover, I cannot miss this opportunity to express our gratitude to all those people who patiently supported us during these two years. I mean our families: parents, husbands, wives, and children. It was due to your understanding that we are now here. **Thanks for your "silent" encouragement!!**

Year after year, AUA added new programs and now more than one hundred young specialists are ready to share their AUA-acquired knowledge with the development of Armenia. You may ask yourself: "Why do we need this knowledge? Is this knowledge applicable to Armenia?" We

are not going to apply directly the American experience, but rather, we will adapt this experience to reality in Armenia today. I would like to assure you that, in reconstructing our country, we need to learn from the positive experiences of other nations, so that there will be no need to constantly "reinvent the wheel". With this thought in mind, I would like to appeal to ministries and non-governmental organizations, private businesses, and state-owned enterprises. You have the opportunity to employ highly-qualified AUA-specialists, who have both a local and a western education, and who can help you to improve the productivity of your organization. Please, don't miss the chance to employ this valuable asset, that has traditionally been the pride of Armenia - very intelligent, well-trained graduates.

I am really sad that my University years have ended. AUA gave us a great opportunity to become familiar with Western, especially American, styles of education and business. These two years changed our lives dramatically. Believe me, it was not easy to pass through all the difficulties on our way to Graduation. Classes at the University are very intensive and demanding. Sometimes, in order to learn and succeed, we went without sleep. I didn't realize it before, but because of the AUA experience, I am now used to intense, hard work, and can more easily adapt to the harsh realities of contemporary business life.

As an MBA student, I was taught the basic qualifications needed for managers such as: time management and competitiveness. It should not surprise you that being "on-time" to classes was one of the hardest things to get used to. The other thing that was completely unknown to the MBA class was "competitiveness". For two years, our professors' efforts were geared towards waking up the competitive spirit among their MBA students. But, they were only partially successful. We - students combined competitiveness with a traditional Armenian feature - "cooperation" and eventually, we became "team work"-oriented. But, it was not easy to compete against some of one's best friends.

And now, using this opportunity , I would like to congratulate all my classmates in the MBA program on their graduation, and hope that we will continue to support and help each other in the future. I would also like to congratulate the AUA graduates from the other programs!! We went through this hard time together, and now, when almost everything is over, we will often remember AUA years, when our only social life was meeting each other in the Cafeteria or in the Library. **Congratulations!!!**

In conclusion, I wish the AUA graduates good luck and every success, and hope that they will put all their efforts and knowledge into creating a bright future for Armenia.

Thank you.