

## **AUA Gala Keynote Speaker Ruben Vardanyan Featured in Forbes as a Leading Global Philanthropist**

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***Los Angeles*--The American University of Armenia (AUA) is honored to have Ruben Vardanyan deliver the keynote address at its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala being held at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel on November 19, 2016. Mr. Vardanyan's extensive philanthropic work was recently featured in Forbes Magazine, which referred to him as "one of the three most powerful philanthropists in the world." Forbes sheds light on Mr. Vardanyan's humanitarian efforts and professional achievements.**

Ruben Vardanyan and his wife, Veronika Zonabend, have been staunch supporters of the American University of Armenia; recently joining the exclusive group of benefactors belonging to the *100 Pillars of AUA*, a campaign launched in honor of the institution's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. Dozens of AUA Pillars have demonstrated their support for the University with unrestricted gifts of \$50,000 distributed over the course of five years.



AUA's year-end goal is to secure 100 pillars committed to supporting the University's pledge to provide students with contemporary teaching and learning practices. Over the past 25 years, AUA has successfully created a nurturing and ethical learning environment for thousands of students who have become beacons of hope for the country. The generosity of individuals like Ruben Vardanyan and Veronika Zonabend allow AUA to continue to produce highly educated generations dedicated to building a thriving Armenia.

Both Ruben and Veronika have a deep history of bringing about positive social change in the Republic of Armenia and the Russian Federation. Their non-profit organization, RVVZ Foundation, has launched numerous projects aimed at global education, development, advancement of social entrepreneurship and philanthropic infrastructure in former Soviet countries. Together, they have founded the United World College (UWC) Dilijan in Armenia, helping put Armenia on the map for international students interested in pursuing a two-year pre-university

education abroad.

The IDeA Foundation (Initiatives for the Development of Armenia), also established by the couple, has carried out important projects such as the restoration of the Tatev Monastery located in southern Armenia, including the construction of a cableway leading to the site. Another major IDeA Foundation initiative has been the 100 LIVES project launched last year in conjunction with the centennial of the Armenian Genocide. 100 LIVES spawned the coveted *Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity*, granted annually to an individual whose actions have had an exceptional impact on preserving human life and advancing humanitarian causes.

Veronika Zonabend currently serves on the Board of Trustees of the American University of Armenia (AUA). Both she and Ruben Vardanyan will be in Los Angeles for the University's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel on November 19, where Mr. Vardanyan will speak to guests about the power to make change in Armenia.

The special evening will pay tribute to AUA founders - Mihran & Elizabeth Agbabian, Armen & Nelly Der Kiureghian, Stepan (in memoriam) & Seta Karamardian, as well as the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), the Government of the Republic of Armenia, and the University of California (UC).

Longtime AUA supporters and board members Zaven P. Akian and Sinan Sinanian are co-chairing the event. Highlights will include a performance by world-renowned soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian, an appearance by former U.S. ambassador to Armenia John M. Evans, as well as a special presentation by Eric Esrailian, producer for Kirk Kerkorian's production company, Survival Pictures, who will take the stage to present guests with a behind-the-scenes look at the company's first film, *The Promise*.

The AUA 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala Benefactors include Mr. & Mrs. Vigen & Houry Ghazarian, Mr. & Mrs. Albert & Terry Bezjian, Mr. & Mrs. Gerald and Patricia Turpanjian and Ms. Louise Manoogian Simone. The evening's Visionary Patrons include Mr. & Mrs. Adam and Rita Kablanian, Mr. & Mrs. Zaven and Sonia Akian, and Mr. & Mrs. Sinan and Angele Sinanian. Corporate sponsors such Rubicon Point Partners, Umpqua Bank, Golden State Bank, and Glendale Adventist Medical Center have also shown their support for the Gala.

Net proceeds from the AUA 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala will support critical scholarship programs. For additional information regarding gala tickets and AUA sponsorship opportunities, please contact Matt at [development@aua.am](mailto:development@aua.am) or [\(510\) 925-4282](tel:(510)925-4282) or visit <https://25th.aua.am/donate/>

**Join Us in celebrating 25 Years of Delivering  
World-Class Education in Armenia**



CELEBRATING THE 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF  
THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ARMENIA

# Gala

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2016**

6:30 PM RECEPTION • 7:30 PM DINNER

BEVERLY WILSHIRE • GRAND BALLROOM

**GALA CO-CHAIRS**

Zaven P. Akian • Sinan Sinanian

**HONORING THE  
VISIONARY FOUNDERS**

Mihran & Elizabeth Agbabian  
Armen & Nelly Der Kiureghian  
Stepan & Seta Karamardian

AND

Armenian General Benevolent Union  
Government of the Republic of Armenia  
University of California

**SPECIAL RECOGNITION**

Yuri Sargsyan, *Academic*

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

Ruben Vardanyan, *Entrepreneur & Philanthropist*

**SPECIAL PERFORMANCE BY**

Isabel Bayrakdarian, *Soprano*

**SPECIAL APPEARANCE BY**

John Marshall Evans,  
*Former US Ambassador to Armenia*

Eric Esrailian, *Gastroenterologist / Film Producer*  
*Featuring a special presentation from the*  
*upcoming motion picture "The Promise"*

For tickets and sponsorship opportunities:

[development@aua.am](mailto:development@aua.am)

510.925.4282

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