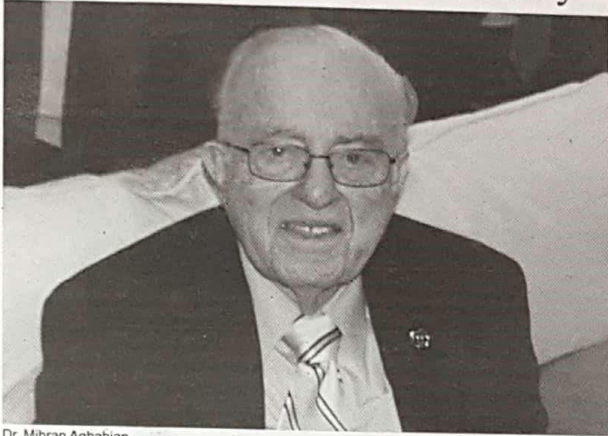


Educator and Activist Dr. Mihran Agbabian Passes Away



Dr. Mihran Agbabian

A founding member of the American University of Armenia, where he was President Emeritus; and life-long community activist and educator, Dr. Mihran Agbabian, passed away on Tuesday in Los Angeles.

Agbabian was born in Cyprus in 1923 and he grew up in Aleppo, Syria, before moving to Beirut, Lebanon to study at the American University of Beirut. He received a Bachelor's degree in Physics (1944) and Bachelor's degree in engineering (1947), and he came to the United States in 1947 to continue his education at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) where he received his Master's degree. He completed his studies at the University of California at Berkeley where he received his Ph.D. in Civil Engineering in 1951.

After working as a structural engineer at several engineering companies, he co-founded the engineering consulting company, Agbabian Associates, in 1963.

In 1984, Dr. Agbabian was appointed as the Fred Champion Professor of Engineering at the University of Southern California. He served as Chairman of the Civil Engineering Department and Director of the Environmental Engineering program from 1984 to 1992.

He is the founding president of the American University of Armenia in Yerevan which started its operation on September 23, 1991, the same day when Armenia declared its independence. The University, known to all as AUA, is affiliated with the University of California system and is sponsored by the Armenian General Benevolent Union. The university is a graduate school and has graduated more than 2000 persons with Master's degrees in Business Management, Industrial and Earthquake Engineering, Political Science and International Relations, Public Health, Law, and Information Technology, most of whom are employed in Armenia. It also has a University Extension program and it offers special courses in English and Environmental Management.

After serving AUA in the capacity of founding president, he retired in 1997, and he was appointed by the Board of Trustees as President Emeritus, working on special

assignments for the growth of the university.

Dr. Agbabian was married to Elizabeth Apkarian who has worked with him serving their community. They have three sons, Paul (married to Kate Nyberg); Bryan (married to Valina Ghoukassian); and Michael; as well as three granddaughters, Sabrina, Erika, Lori, and a grandson, Arman.

He was elected Member of the US National Academy of Engineering (1982), the Armenian National Academy of Sciences (1990), and the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences (1995). He has received the University of California at Berkeley Distinguished Engineering Alumnus Citation and the Caltech Distinguished Alumnus Award.

He has an Honorary Doctor of Science degree from Yerevan State University and he is Honorary Member of the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute and its Past President, and he is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. In 1955 he received the Ellis Island Medal of Honor from the National Ethnic Coalition Organization of New York for outstanding contributions as an immigrant.

Agbabian received the Movses Khorenatzi Medal (2001) from the President of the Republic of Armenia for exceptional achievement in educational development. The Armenian Church has recognized Dr. Agbabian. He has received the Sahag-Mesrob Medal from His Holiness Catholicos Karekin I, the St. Mesrob Medal from His Holiness Catholicos Aram I, and the St. Vartan Medal from His Holiness Catholicos John Bedros XVIII.

Dr. Agbabian has served the Armenian community in a number of organizations. He was member of the Central Board of the Armenian General Benevolent Union, a founding member of the Armenian Film Foundation, vice president of the Armenian Missionary Association of America, vice-chairman of the Board of Haigazian College, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Armenian Assembly of America, and General Chairman of the First Congress of the Armenian Engineers and Scientists of America.