

ARMENIAN EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

Will Honor Ralph Tufenkian and Hacop Baghdassarian



Ralph Tufenkian

Longtime community activist and public servant Ralph Tufenkian will receive the AEF Legacy Award at the Armenian Educational Foundation's 65th Anniversary Gala to be held on January 31, 2016 at the Beverly Hills Hotel. Mr. Tufenkian will be given the award for his decades of service to the Armenian community and dedication to the Armenian Educational Foundation.

Ralph Tufenkian was born and raised in Los Angeles, California, in a neighborhood filled with Armenian families. Ralph has been a true American Armenian – proud of both heritages. His greatest desire, and what always brings him the greatest joy, is to help enhance the education of Armenian youth both here in the United States and in Armenia.

As a young man Ralph joined the U.S. Army where he served in the Pacific theater. Later, he joined the U.S. Air Force where he was a B-29 Turbo-supercharger Specialist. He married Savey Shirvanian – his lifelong friend and partner in 1958. Together they worked hard and created a family with 3 children and 6 grandchildren, whom they love greatly.

Tragically, Ralph and Savey lost their eldest son Richard in 1990. Instead of accepting defeat, Ralph and Savey embarked on a new and very important part of their life, providing for and helping Armenian children.

In memory of Richard, they set up an educational endowment with the Armenian Educational Foundation (AEF), they funded three schools, and set up additional funds

and endowments with the Armenian Assembly of America, Armenian Missionary Association, and recently with the USC Institute of Armenian Studies. The three schools funded are: the Richard Tufenkian St. Mary's Armenian Church Pre-School in Glendale, California; the Richard Tufenkian School #5 in Stepanakert, Nagorno Karabakh, funded through the AEF; and the Richard Tufenkian School #3 in Gyumri, Armenia in partnership with the AEF. Through their AEF endowment, Ralph and Savey have given over 200 scholarships to Armenian students across Armenia and the Armenian diaspora. Ralph is always extremely proud to meet the past recipients of the scholarships and to learn of their accomplishments.

Ralph has been a member of the Armenian Educational Foundation for over 25 years and a board member for 15 years.

Over the years, Ralph has served the community in the following capacities: Board Member, Armenian Educational Foundation; Director, Whittier National Bank; Commissioner, Water & Power Department, City of Glendale, California; President, Ani Plaza Hotel, Armenia; Board Member, Armenian Assembly of America; Trustee, United Armenian Congregational Church; Supportive Father & Parent Armenian Mesrobian School.

Ralph has been presented with the following honorary medals: Prince of Cilicia Medal in 1993 from His Holiness Karekin I, Catholicos of All Armenians; St. Gregory's Medal 2003 from His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians; and Recognition Medal from Arkady Ghokassyan President of Nagorno Karabakh Republic.

Ralph has travelled to Armenia more than 30 times. During each trip he visits and extends his help to the Armenian students and the various schools. During his most recent visit to AEF's renovated Darbas Village School's opening, Ralph was compelled to give out four-year university scholarships to high school seniors in the school. He was especially moved by one of the young girls who reminded him of his granddaughters. He has always been a humble, consistent, and steady supporter of young Armenian students and of the Armenian cause.



Hacop Baghdassarian

Longtime community activist and public servant Hacop Baghdassarian will receive the Lifetime Service Award at the Armenian Educational Foundation's 65th Anniversary Gala to be held on January 31, 2016 at the Beverly Hills Hotel. Mr. Baghdassarian will be given the award for his decades of service to the Armenian community and dedication to the Armenian Educational Foundation.

Currently, Mr. Baghdassarian serves on the board of the Armenian Education Foundation and works with several Armenian organizations including Homenetmen, Armenian Relief Society, The United Armenian Fund, and the Armenian Eye Care Project, among a number of other community organizations. In support of the AEF School Renovation Program, Mr. Baghdassarian often travels to the rural villages in Armenia to review plans and evaluate the need for the reconstruction of these dilapidated schools. To date, Mr. Baghdassarian has sponsored the construction or renovation of numerous schools in Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Javakhk.

In 2005, Mr. Baghdassarian's philanthropy and dedication were officially recognized when he was awarded with "Yerakhtagitutiun" or "Gratitude" medal from the then President of Nagorno-Karabakh Republic Arkady Ghoukasyan. In 2006, Mr. Baghdassarian was named Armenian Businessman of the year by the Armenian-American Chamber of Commerce. In March 2010, he was honored by the Armenian Relief Society's "Javakhk Fund" Committee for his work raising contributions supporting many worthy projects including the sponsorship of the renovations of eight schools. In 2010, the highest honor for any Armenian was bestowed upon Mr. Baghdassarian when His Holiness Catholicos Aram I of the Great House of Cilicia presented Mr. Baghdassarian with the Knight of Cilicia Medal.

In 2014, Hacop and his wife, Hilda, made a donation in the amount of \$250,000 to Chamlian Armenian School for the construction of the school's new gymnasium. In honor of this generous donation, the Chamlian School Board dedicated the gym in the

benefactors' names and designated it as the "Hacop and Hilda Baghdassarian Gymnasium."

Above all, Hacop Baghdassarian is driven to help others, whether they be family or complete strangers in need. The central tenets in Mr. Baghdassarian's life are his family, abiding faith and dedication to the Armenian American community. Now in the second half of his life, Mr. Baghdassarian's greatest joy is taking time out of his busy schedule to spend time with his five grandchildren.

Since 1950, the Armenian Educational Foundation, Inc. (AEF) has been a cornerstone of the Armenian educational movement around the world. It has lent a helping hand to thousands of students and to hundreds of schools in numerous nations. Through its many years of giving, it has proven to be one of the most enduring and productive organizations in the Diaspora.

AEF's fundamental aim has always been the advancement of the Armenian heritage through the support of education. Its great successes have earned the organization widespread respect, recognition and appreciation. Over the past 65 years, the AEF has grown into a thriving organization with a diverse membership of dedicated individuals. AEF welcomes to its fold anyone who shares the commitment of its founding members and who will bring to the organization new energy and fresh ideas.

As it looks with optimism toward the future, the AEF hopes to be of even greater assistance to young Armenians pursuing all levels of education, as well as to continue providing financial help to institutions in Armenia, the United States and around the world.

Armenian Educational Foundation is a non-partisan, non-profit, tax-exempt organization based in Glendale, California.

For more information, sponsorship opportunities or tickets, please contact AEF office at (818)242-4154 or email aef@aefweb.org.