



from the office of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America

# news!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
March 3, 1986

## ACYOA TO CELEBRATE 40th ANNIVERSARY

This year the Diocese of the Armenian Church will be celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (ACYOA). As part of the various parish and regional observances throughout the year, committees are being formed in three regions to host anniversary galas in the Fall.

A committee in the Mid-Atlantic region was formed in January and has already begun plans for a gala celebration to take place at the Diocesan Center in New York City on Saturday, November 29. The committee is planning to invite former ACYOAers from New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Washington and Virginia.

Heading the anniversary committee, which consists of ACYOA alumni and current members from parishes in the New York and New Jersey area, are executive officers Rose Mekenian, Chairperson; Joseph Kalemkerian, Vice Chairperson; Shake Ajemian, Recording Secretary; Lori Kalemkerian, Corresponding Secretary; and Leon Hojekian, Treasurer. Also working with the committee has been the Vicar General of the Diocese, Fr. Khajag Barsamian and ACYOA Juniors Director, Nancy Basmajian.

Chairperson Rose Mekenian, who is very enthusiastic about the November observance and who promises some surprises, said, "The ACYOA has meant so much to so many of us through the years that we welcome this opportunity to spotlight the organization and its many accomplishments.

She is especially pleased with the fact that Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan will be honored at the Gala as the founder of the ACYOA in 1946 during his term as Primate of the Diocese.

Anyone interested in working on the committee is urged to call Rose Mekenian at (201) 871-4377.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

ACYOA 40TH ANNIVERSARY GALA CELEBRATION

PLANNED

This year marks the 40th Anniversary of the ACYOA. In the Mid-Atlantic Region of our Diocese there will be a Gala Celebration with a dinner-dance on Saturday, November 29, 1986, at the Cathedral Complex in New York. Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan will be honored as the founding Primate and Archbishop Torkom Manoogian will preside.

The 40th Anniversary Celebration Committee of the Mid-Atlantic Region is requesting your cooperation in submitting slides and photographs of ACYOA activities over the last four decades to use in connection with the celebration.

Also, an Anniversary Booklet is being prepared for this special occasion. Those who wish to participate may purchase ads ranging from \$25 to \$200.

For further information and deadline dates please contact (please fill in name of your local ACYOA Chairperson or designated representatives.)

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Contact: Christopher H. Zakian  
(212) 686-0710

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE W/ PHOTO

**ACYOA CELEBRATES 45TH ANNIVERSARY IN BOCA RATON**

The 45th anniversary of the Armenian Church Youth Organization was celebrated in grand style on January 24-26, in Boca Raton, FL. Members and alumni from throughout the Diocese joined in the festivities.

The highlight of the weekend was the Anniversary Ball, held on Saturday evening, at the Mardigian Hall of the St. David Armenian Church. Prior to the dinner and dance, a hrashapar service led by His Eminence Bishop Khajag Barsamian was held. This marked the first time that the Primate presided over a service at the St. David Church. Other participants included His Eminence Archbishop Sion Manoogian, the Very Reverend Father Vasken Tatoyan, and the Rev. Dr. Zaven Arzoumanian. Following the Service a cocktail party was given for all the banquet attendees. More than 250 attended the banquet, while an additional 150 arrived for the dance.

During the program, welcoming remarks were delivered by Anniversary Ball Co-Chair Rena Jebejian, Anniversary Ball Treasurer Melanie Mikaelian, and Rev. Fr. Arzoumanian, pastor of the St. David Church. Mr. Khachador Kazarian—an ACYOA alumnus—was master of ceremonies. Central Council Chair Lisa Manookian acknowledged the accomplishments of the ACYOA during the past 45 years. She also thanked Edward and Helen Mardigian for their great love and support of the organization. She then presented to them a gift on behalf of all ACYOA members: a Tiffany emerald-cut crystal paperweight, which was inscribed "Mr. and Mrs. Edward Mardigian—Jewels of the ACYOA."

In addition to the speakers, musical selections in Armenian and English were performed by Shami Arslanian and Steve Weisbert and the Karatsayn Singers. The Roger Krikorian Ensemble performed during the dance, with Shami and Steve belting out top hits from the 50's to the 90's at intermission.

On Sunday, His Eminence Bishop Barsamian celebrated the Divine Liturgy, during which he ordained three seminarians—Dikran Bohajian, Robert Boyajian, and Krikor Doudoukjian—to the rank of Subdeacon. The church was filled to capacity. Following services, a delicious Farewell Brunch was served.

PHOTO CAPTION: Revellers take a break from the festivities of the  
ACYOA 45th Anniversary Ball in Boca Raton, FL.



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# news:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

Contact: Nina Marson

New York, NY

September 11, 1986

MARILYNN MARDIGIAN VARBEDIAN RECEIVES PRIMATE'S ACYOA ALUMNI AWARD

His Eminence, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, presented Marilynn Mardigian Varbedian with the Primate's ACYOA Alumni Award at the ACYOA Sports Weekend Banquet on August 30th in Wynnewood, Pennsylvania. The award recipient, chosen by the Primate, is selected from ACYOA alumni as a person who has shown accomplishments in his or her profession and has also served outside of work above and beyond the call of duty. In the words of the Primate, "The award recipient is a person ACYOA members should want to follow as an example." This is the second year since the establishment of this award. The first year's recipient was the Honorable Judge John K. Najarian from Providence, Rhode Island. This year His Eminence wished a lady to be the recipient.

Present at the banquet were Ms. Varbedian's parents, Helen and Edward Mardigian, her husband, Dr. Thomas G. Varbedian and two of her three daughters, Susan and Molly.

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Born to Helen and Edward Mardigian on April 2, 1939, Ms. Varbedian graduated from The Liggett School, an independent school for girls, in June 1956. In June of 1958, she graduated from Pine Manor College in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts after which she attended Great Lakes College (School of Medical Technology) and the University of Detroit. In November of 1959, she married Dr. Thomas G. Varbedian. They currently live in Bloomfield Hills and have three daughters; Susan Leigh Varbedian, age 25, Nancy Varbedian Ryan, age 24, and Molly Ann Varbedian, age 19.

Even from as far back as elementary school, Marilynn has shown ambition and initiative. At the Brookside School in Cranbrook, Michigan, a co-educational, independent elementary school, she was Grade Representative and Recording Secretary of the Parents' Council as well as a fundraiser. She continued this work at the Kingswood School, an independent school for girls, grades 7 through 12, also in Cranbrook, but added the job of Newsletter Editor to her credits and responsibilities. At present, Ms. Varbedian is the Detroit area Alumnae Representative for Pine Manor College as well as the Class Agent and Class Secretary. She is an active member of the Junior League of Birmingham, Michigan and a member of the Cranbrook Auxiliary. A former ACYOA member for six years, her other affiliations with the St. John's Armenian Church of Greater Detroit have included Sunday School student, member of the church choir and a Sunday School teacher. She is also a member of the Christ Church of Cranbrook where she is a member of the Episcopal Churchwomen and a volunteer for the bi-annual Rummage Sale. After having been elected Mayor in April of 1984 and serving as a member to a dozen committees and boards, Ms. Varbedian is currently serving her third term as City Commissioner. As an elected official, she is the Commissioner Liaison to the Department of Public Safety, member of the City Planning Commission, Coordinator of the City's 50th Anniversary Celebration, member of the Zoning

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Board of Appeals, initiator and editor of the triannual newsletter to all city residents, Liaison to the local public library, secretary to the city commission, initiator of the City Beautification Program and a member of the League of Women Voters.

It is hard to believe with all of these activities, Ms. Varbedian would have extra time to volunteer in other capacities. For two years she was on the P.T.A. Board as the Ways & Means Chairperson and Secretary as well as Room Mother at the local public elementary school. With the County Medical Society Auxiliary, she spent nine years on the Board of Directors and was an active volunteer for both the St. Joseph Mercy Hospital and the Village Women's Club.

In her acceptance speech at the ACYOA Banquet, Ms. Varbedian expressed her appreciation for the foundation established at an early age by her experiences as a member of the ACYOA. She learned the importance of working for her church and her heritage and enjoyed working together with her peers towards a common goal. She ended by congratulating the ACYOA on their 40th Anniversary and wishing them continuing success.

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# news:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE WITH PHOTOGRAPHS Contact: Nina Marson

New York, NY

December 19, 1986

ACYOA CELEBRATES 40TH ANNIVERSARY: HONORS FOUNDER ABP. NERSOYAN

More than 300 alumni, members and friends of the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America gathered at the Diocese of the Armenian Church in New York City on Saturday evening, November 29, 1986, to attend a joyous event - the Gala 40th Anniversary Celebration of the ACYOA honoring the founding Primate, His Eminence Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan.

The site of this Mid-Atlantic Region Dinner-Dance was the Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium, which was attractively decorated in purple and yellow, the organization's traditional colors. Special ACYOA Story Books, anniversary pens, and a commemorative booklet were distributed to all present.

The festivities began with a Reunion Hour during which guests of various generations renewed their friendships and also viewed an impressive collection of ACYOA memorabilia on display in the adjacent G-Hall. Celebration Committee Vice-Chairman Joseph Kalemkerian then announced that the dinner would commence with the processional entrance of honored guests, followed by the group singing of the "Star-Spangled Banner" accompanied by Susan Shamamian at the piano.

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His Eminence Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, then led the recitation of the ACYOA Prayer and pronounced the invocation. Nancy Basmajian, Director of the ACYOA Juniors, proposed a toast to Archbishop Tiran, to the organization's alumni and to the future of the ACYOA.

Anniversary Celebration General Chairman Rose Mekenian began her welcoming remarks with the introduction of New Jersey Assemblyman Garabed "Chuck" Haytaian, who expressed his pride at having been a former member of the New York Holy Cross Church ACYOA.

Mrs. Mekenian thanked all those present for attending the celebration. She acknowledged with gratitude the Mid-Atlantic Anniversary Planning Committee, Diocesan staff members, parish representatives and donors to the commemorative booklet, which had been designed and assembled by Joseph Kalemkerian.

#### Anniversary Cake

An elaborate cake-cutting ceremony followed, led by the Primate and Archbishop Tiran. Participants included past and present ACYOA Central Council Chairmen and members, Directors and Executive Secretaries, who were invited by Mrs. Mekenian to the stage, where they placed lit candles on five anniversary cakes that spelled out ACYOA. This touching segment of the program concluded with the jubilant group singing of "Happy Anniversary".

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Rose Mekenian then introduced former Central Council Chairmen Michael Simonian and Arda Nazerian, who served as Master and Mistress of Ceremonies. Following his introductory remarks, Mr. Simonian called upon Zaven Hovsepian, the first and five-time Central Council Chairman, to address the guests. Mr. Hovsepian recalled how Archbishop Nersoyan had conceived the ACYOA, believed in our young people, and achieved his vision, creating an organization that has adapted to change and lived for two generations. He pointed out that during the next 40 years, the ACYOA can be a vehicle for expanding and developing many programs, and that like the U.S. Marines, "Once you're in it, you're in it!".

Arda Nazarian subsequently called off the names of the clergymen and other special guests present at the dinner and invited Archbishop Torkom to lead a prayer in memory of deceased ACYOA members. She then introduced recent Central Council Chairman Shake Ajamian, who noted that the organization's purpose had been to use the Church's precious resource, its young people. Miss Ajamian added that the ACYOA has grown, changed and succeeded in setting Christian goals that have been a lifeline of the community.

The final and youngest guest speaker was high-school senior Sarkis Jebejian, grandnephew of Archbishop Tiran and past Chairman of the New York-New Jersey Regional Juniors. In a combination of articulate Armenian and English, Sarkis recalled that Archbishop Tiran had been a tremendous influence on him and a source of spiritual strength. He pointed out that the ACYOA had played an important role in his life, both spiritually and socially, and that it has been a "dynamic and inspiring organization founded by a truly dynamic and inspiring man." Archbishop Tiran's sister, Diramayr Mariam

Jebejian, and other members of his family, were present for the occasion.

Special Messages

Anthony Barsamian, current Acting Executive Secretary of the ACYOA Seniors, followed next on the program, suggesting that like Archbishop Tiran, we must give of ourselves. "Each of us must make a commitment to find our young people, be their mentors and their teachers; then the Armenian Church will have a future," he insisted.

Judge Vincent Gurahian, Diocesan Council Chairman, congratulated the ACYOA and predicted that those who are in the organization today will hold roles of importance in the Armenian Church in the future.

Arda Nazerian read messages from New York Governor Mario Cuomo and former ACYOA Executive Secretaries Rev. Karekin Kasparian and Deacon Megerditch Mouradian, who were unable to attend.

Miss Nazerian then called on Rose Mekenian, "the driving force behind this event," whose extensive involvement in the Armenian Church began years ago in her home parish of Cleveland, Ohio. Joseph Kelemkerian added that Mrs. Mekenian had worked tirelessly on the planning of this celebration for the past eight months, and presented her with a bouquet of roses on behalf of the Mid-Atlantic Region 40th Anniversary Committee.

Mrs. Mekenian graciously expressed her thanks and noted that it had been a special privilege to head the committee because of the mixed generations involved. "Archbishop Tiran

has always been an inspiration to me," she stated, and presented His Eminence with two special gifts - a video cassette recorder and a specially inscribed commemorative plaque.

PRIMATE'S ADDRESS

Archbishop Torkom then addressed the guests, emphasizing the importance of leadership. "Every member of the ACYOA must act as a leader by their words, attitudes, actions and life," he noted. "We must study the past to prepare for the years ahead." The Primate pointed out Archbishop Tiran's steadfast devotion to the Church and its members and said, "We recall with gratitude the work of Archbishop Tiran, who worked so diligently to bring about the first ACYOA Constitutional Assembly ... We think of him with much admiration and much respect."

Archbishop Torkom concluded his remarks with the presentation of a gift from all ACYOAers - a beautiful portrait of Archbishop Tiran by painter Soss Melik, which will be displayed in the Tahlij of the diocesan headquarters.

Deeply touched, Archbishop Tiran responded with eloquent words of appreciation for the gifts and said, "I thank you very much from the bottom of my heart for recalling the part I had in the founding of the ACYOA". He congratulated the organization's members through the four decades and acknowledged the efforts of Archbishop Torkom, who had worked with him since 1946 as a close associate in the ACYOA endeavor.

"The youth are our future," Archbishop Tiran continued. "I'm really moved by the love you have shown me ... there's nothing sweeter or more uplifting than to come together with this love," he concluded.

The program came to a close with the Benediction and Closing Prayer led by Archbishop Tiran. The final portion of the celebration then began with dancing to the music of the John Vartan Ensemble and D.J. Ron.

It was a truly glorious reunion and a fitting tribute to Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan as well as to the youth who have been the organization through the years.

ACYOA Central Council past Chairmen present at the Celebration in addition to those previously mentioned were Manoog Heditsian, Casey Kazanjian, Max Boudakian, Missak Aprahamian, Leon Hojegian, Mark Kazanjian, and present Chairman, Scott Najarian. Several of them as well as other Central Council members had traveled considerable distances to attend. Past Central Council members participating were Mary Shalakian (also first Executive Secretary), Haig Serabian, Mary Azarian Zotian, Arax Selvinazian, Betty Ekmanian, Rose Bannaian Mekenian, Arpena Tavitian Sbarbaro, Alex Dadourian, Ann Dadaian, Joseph and Louise Kalemkerian (both past Executive Secretaries), Penie Allalemdjian Papazian, Carol Der Boghosian, Robert Doramajian, Sona Yazijian, and current member Gregory Saraydarian.

Members of the ACYOA Mid-Atlantic Region 40th Anniversary Celebration Committee were as follows: Most Rev. Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Primate; Very Rev. Fr. Khajag Barsamian, Advisor; Nancy Basmajian, Advisor; Rose Mekenian, General Chairman; Joseph Kalemkerian, Vice Chairman/Booklet; Lori Kalemkerian, Corresponding Secretary/Booklet Ads; Shaké Ajamian, Recording Secretary; Ann Dadaian, Assistant Secretary; Leon Hojegian, Treasurer; Arda Nazerian, Publicity; Arpena Sbarbaro, Dinner; Michael Simonian, Program; Mary Selvinazian, Reservations; Marge Ajamian, Decorations; Gregory Saraydarian, Lighting; Gregory Doudoukjian, Dance; John Nersesian, Dance; Carol Der Boghosian, Photographer; Suzie Ashjian, Hotel Information; Missak Aprahamian and Avedis Sakalian, Members. |

Susan Shamamian