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DR. RAFFY HOVANESSIAN RECEIVES SOORP NERSESS SHNORHALI AWARD

For his more than 30 years of devoted service to his Church, community and nation, Dr. Raffy Hovanessian was recently honored with the St. Nersess Shnorhali medal and encyclical from His Holiness Vasken I, Catholicos of All Armenians.

The official presentation was made at the tenth anniversary banquet of the Sts. Joachim and Anne Armenian Church in Palos Heights, ILL, by Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church. Paying tribute to the devoted service of both Rev. Father Diran Papazian, the Church's Pastor, and Dr. Raffy Hovanessian, the Primate in his address to the parishioners, emphasized that the young people are fortunate to have the wonderful examples set by these two leaders.

Dr. Hovanessian's dedication to his people is well known throughout the Armenian community. Born in Jerusalem 55 years ago, he has been deeply involved in Armenian activities from his earliest days as a student of medicine at the American University of Beirut, founding the Armenian University Students' Association of Beirut which is still active today. Emigrating to the United States in 1965 with his family, he studied at Johns Hopkins Medical School, and served in the U.S. military service.

For the last 23 years, this devoted son of the Armenian people has given dedicated service and been a generous benefactor to the Chicago Armenian community. He has been intimately involved with the Sts. Joachim and Anne Armenian Church from its inception, donating generous contributions to its construction, including its Hovanessian Hall A Diocesan delegate for 15 years, he has served as Chairman of the Diocesan Assembly for two years, and as a board member of the Armenian Church Endowment Fund as well as the St. Nersess Armenian Seminary. Dr. Hovanessian's concern for his homeland has been just as extensive. He has served as a leader for fundraising efforts for the victims of the Armenian earthquake, for Karabagh and for the Winter Rescue program. His long list of activities also include being a member of NAASR, the Knights of Vartan, the Armenian Missionary Association, the AGBU International Board, and the Armenian Assembly Board of Trustees. He has worked on Armenian issues with several members of Congress, and encouraged his close friend Senator Paul Simon to assist the Armenian University of Armenia.

In his specialty of internal medicine, Dr. Hovanessian also has made a name for himself. . He is a member of the Medial Honor Society, and sits on several professional committees and boards. His brother, Dr. Ara Hovanessian is a world famous pioneer in AIDS research.

In addition to being honored with the St. Nersess Shnorhali Medal and gontag, Dr. Hovanessian was named in 1983 a Prince of the House of Cilicia by Catholicos Karekin II of Cilicia.., and that same year was awarded the Golden Heritage Award by the NAACP.

Dr. Hovanessian 's family includes his wife, Vicky who in her own right has given extensive and exemplary service to her church, community and nation. The Hovanessians have three children, Armen who is studying to continue the family tradition and become a doctor; Ani who is doing postgraduate work in international law; and, Eileen, a student at Tufts University.

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