

ELLIS ISLAND
MEDAL OF HONOR
ALEX MANOOGIAN



FRIDAY, MAY 17, 1991



Today we honor a distinguished American who represents the very essence of the American way of life, having greatly contributed to the American identity while preserving the distinct values and heritage of his ancestors.

The Ellis Island Medal of Honor has been aptly named, for the Island is a symbol of the diversity of America's people—a people whose genius, culture, artistry and thought have joined to form a single mosaic of many cultures and ancestral backgrounds. It is from this diversity that the United States is still a beacon of hope for so many and the greatest democracy the world has ever known.

So this day is a celebration of not only the outstanding accomplishments of Mr. Manoogian, but also an acknowledgment of the spirit, hard work, and values of our immigrant ancestors ...those who took the "American dream" from just a hope, and made it a reality.





When Alex Manoogian walked through the portals of Ellis Island as an immigrant lad from Smyrna, no one could have prophesized the extraordinary impact he would have on the country he was about to adopt as his own. Nor upon his fellow Armenian-Americans.

In the decades to come, Alex Manoogian made an indelible mark upon the fields of American business, industry, education and philanthropy. In the Armenian American community and throughout the world, Alex Manoogian contributed to the welfare of his people by building schools and churches, giving scholarships, and granting generous sums to humanitarian services. Some of his benefactions came from his own Manoogian Foundation and Manoogian Cultural Fund, which contributed enormously to a great variety of Armenian needs and to the arts.

In recognition of Mr. Manoogian's unique contributions to America, the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations awarded him the Ellis Island Medal of Honor last December. Because he was unable to accept the decoration at that time, the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America created tonight's occasion for a proper bestowal of the award. Life President of the Armenian General Benevolent Union for 58 years and the most distinguished secular Armenian leader in recent history, Mr. Manoogian enjoyed the gratitude and affection of thousands among his people in his adopted country and globally.

—Armine Dikijian

THE ELLIS ISLAND MEDAL OF HONOR
ALEX MANOOGIAN TRIBUTE DINNER

Suren Fesjian
Honorary Chairman

John Hoplamazian
Chairman

Committee

The Very Reverend Father Haigazoun Najarian

The Very Reverend Father Papken Anoushian

The Reverend Father Arten Ashjian

Yeretzgin Mary Ashjian *Invitations*

Sona Boghosian *Invitations*

Lucy Dabagian *Reservations*

Armine Dikijian *Publicity*

Lionel Galstaun *Secretary*

Hrant Gulian *Dinner*

Berj Khachadourian *Booklet*

Roy Kelegian *Program*

Sossi Kelegian *Decorations*

Helen Misk *Reception*

Vera Setrakian *Decorations*

Dovie Tilbian *Reservations*

Arpi Vartivarian *Program*

Hagop Vartivarian *Treasurer*

*We are grateful for the generosity of Mr. John Hoplamazian
who provided the flowers for the evening,
and of Mr. Berj Khachadourian who made this booklet possible.*

PROGRAM

National Anthem

Invocation

*The Right Reverend Bishop Papken Varjabedian
Diocesan Legate*

Toast

Suren Fesjian, Honorary Chairman

Welcome

John Hoplamazian, Chairman

Master of Ceremonies

*Armen Avedisian, Chairman Emeritus
Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Centennial Commission*

Presentation

*William Dennis Fugazy, Chairman
NY Statue of Liberty Centennial Commission*

Address

*Gregory P. Peterson, Supervisor
Town of Hempstead*

Musical Offering

*Ani Kavafian, Violin
Shahan Arzruni, Piano*

Message

*The Right Reverend Bishop Khajag Barsamian
Primate*

Guest of Honor

Alex Manoogian

Benediction

The Primate

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REMEMBERING ELLIS ISLAND

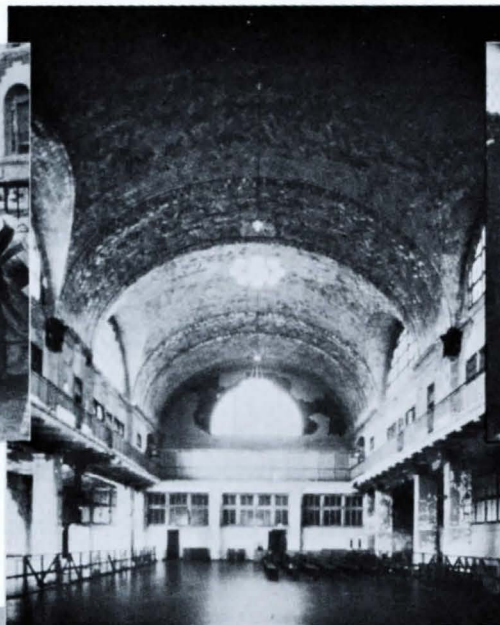
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Some 17 million people passed through the portals of Ellis Island's immigration center between 1897 and 1954, when the landmark monument closed its doors. Almost half of the people in America today are descendants of those 17 million, who braved hardship, hard work and the unknown to make a new life for themselves on America's shores.





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ALEX MANOOGIAN

Mr. Alex Manoogian, considered to be among the chief Armenian community leaders in Detroit, the United States and throughout the diaspora, was born in the region of Smyrna (Izmir), a seaport on the coast of Asia Minor, in 1901. Under the supervision of his parents, Tacvor and Tacoohie Manoogian, Alex received his primary and secondary education in local Armenian schools.

World War I left economic chaos, political confusion and personal insecurity for the Armenians in Turkey, so young Alex decided to leave his business in 1920 to come to America—just two years before the destruction of Smyrna by the Turks.

After living in several cities, he made Detroit his home in 1924. First working in an auto parts manufacturing plant to gain experience, he then founded his own company in 1928, which was to grow into the multi-national Masco Corporation. Although the depression years were hard, by 1936 Mr. Manoogian's company was large enough to be listed on the stock exchange. It was the first company owned by an Armenian to be so listed.

In 1931 he married Marie Tatian in New York, and soon their union was blessed with two children—Louise and Richard. The Manoogians now have six grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Mrs. Marie Manoogian has been a constant companion and helpmate to her active and industrious husband.

Mr. Manoogian had joined the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) and the Knights of Vartan in the 1930's. By 1940 he was elected *Avak Sbarabed* (National Commander) of the Knights; and in 1943 he was elected to the Central Board of Directors of the AGBU.

He became a true knight of Vartan through his vision and charity. Through his ambitious leadership he was able to fulfill basic tenets of the Knights of Vartan Brotherhood. He was also instrumental in establishing an endowment fund for the Brotherhood. Under his leadership the Brotherhood became the preeminent organization in the community, extending its services to the Church and other charitable, cultural and educational organizations.

In 1953 Alex Manoogian was elected International President of the AGBU, a post which he has occupied with honor for thirty-six years. After seventeen years of successful leadership—during which time AGBU capital funds were raised from eight million to over twenty million dollars, resulting in tremendous expansion of its world-wide activities—Mr. Manoogian was voted Life President in 1970 by a grateful General Assembly. In 1989 he was elected Honorary Life President, and was succeeded by his daughter, Mrs. Louise Manoogian Simone.

In 1968 the AGBU Alex Manoogian Cultural Fund was established with an initial endowment of one million dollars; since then the endowment has multiplied manifold by its generous benefactor. The Fund has supported the publication of many scholarly and literary works, cultural activities, and has provided assistance to needy Armenian intellectuals and educators throughout the world.

As a grateful citizen of the United States, Mr. Manoogian has contributed generously to American hospitals, museums, libraries, universities, schools and other charitable and cultural organizations. He donated his former mansion to the City of Detroit as an official residence for the Mayor.

Thanks to his magnanimous contributions, a number of Armenian institutions have come into existence throughout the diaspora: the Marie Manoogian Center in Buenos Aires, Argentina; the Alex Manoogian Center in Cordoba, Argentina; the Alex Manoogian School in Montevideo, Uruguay; the Marie Manoogian School in Canoga Park, California; the Alex Manoogian Center in Toronto, Canada; the Alex Manoogian School in Montreal, Canada; the Alex Manoogian Center in Beirut, Lebanon; the Alex Manoogian Center in Zahleh, Lebanon; the Marie Manoogian School in Tehran, Iran all were founded under the auspices of the AGBU.

The Armenian Community Center in Almelo, Holland; the Alex and Marie Manoogian Seminary in Jerusalem; the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum at the Cathedral of Holy Etchmiadzin in Armenia all similarly owe their existence to Mr. Manoogian.

He has been a major contributor to the American Armenian International College at LaVerne, California; the Armenian Church in Amsterdam, Holland; the Dickranian School in Hollywood, California and the AGBU Alex Alexandra School in Sidney, Australia.

Closer to home he has built the Tacvor and Tacohie Manoogian Manor for the Aged; the AGBU Alex Manoogian School; and the Alex Manoogian Museum; and he has contributed substantially towards St. John's Armenian Church and cultural complex in Southfield, Michigan. In appreciation of his magnanimous contributions Wayne State University in Detroit has named its Ethnic Heritage Center "Alex Manoogian Hall."

He has contributed close to three million dollars to the University of Michigan to support the Gerald R. Ford Library and to establish two chairs dedicated to Armenian Studies: the Alex Manoogian Chair for Modern Armenian History, and the Marie Manoogian Chair for Armenian Language and Literature. He has contributed regularly and substantially to Armenian studies programs and chairs at UCLA, Columbia University, New York University, the University of Massachusetts, the University of Boston, UC Berkley, the University of Southern California, Bentley College, and other educational and cultural institutions.

To date, Mr. and Mrs. Manoogian have contributed over sixty million dollars to charitable, religious, cultural and educational causes. In recognition of his international philanthropy, Mr. Manoogian was awarded the Cross of St. Gregory the Illuminator First Degree by His Holiness Vasken I, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians. He was also awarded the First Degree Order of the Cedars by the President of Lebanon; the Cross of St. James by His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem; and the 50th Anniversary Medal by the Prime Minister of Armenia.

Mr. Manoogian has also received honorary Doctorate degrees from Lawrence Technological University, in Southfield, Michigan; from Wayne State University in Detroit, and from the American Armenian International College in LaVerne, California.

REMEMBERING ELLIS ISLAND

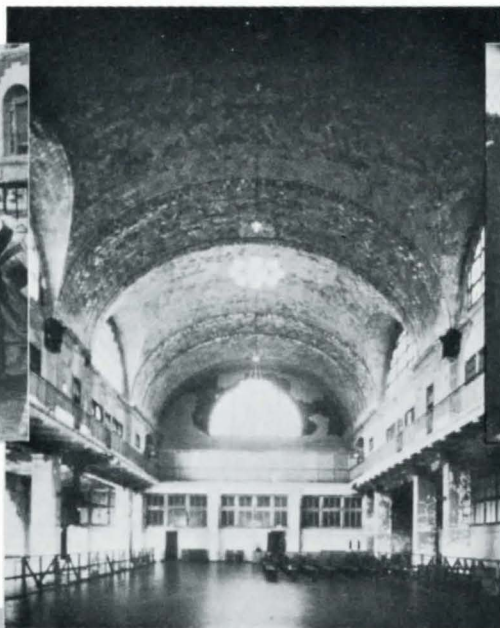
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