SIX RECEIVE ANC SERVICE AWARD

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Category: Opinions

Tom Vartabedian, Haverhill MA, 10 December 2015

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(L-R) David Boyajian, James Milinazzo and Daniel Varoujan Hejinian

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To say that Milinazzo was a good friend of the Armenians is putting it mildly --- probably the best friend you could have.

No other community throughout the United States has such a monument on city-owned territory, much to the joy and credit of the Merrimack Valley Armenian National Committee.

“It was the right thing to do,” said Milinazzo, after being awarded an ANC Freedom Award. “After what the Armenians went through 100 years ago with their genocide and how they shaped our city with industry, education and culture, they are a population worthy of applause. The memorial they've erected by City Hall is a reminder of resiliency and pride. Our city acknowledges their accomplishments.”

Joining the former mayor were two other Freedom Award honorees: Daniel Varoujan Hejinian and David Boyajian.

Hejinian is founder and president of Peace of Art, Inc., a non-profit educational organization which uses the universal language of art to bring awareness to the human condition and promote peaceful solutions to conflict.

The billboards he has erected throughout Greater Boston over the past two decades are yet another medium to foster genocide awareness and bring justice to the Armenian people.

Boyajian is a freelance journalist and political activist whose ancestral roots lie in Kharpert province of Western Armenia. He is a syndicated contributor to the Armenian press throughout the United States, Europe, Armenia and Artsakh, along with non-Armenian media, particularly for exposing the Anti-Defamation League's denials of the Armenian Genocide and its efforts to prevent that genocide's acknowledgement by United States Congress.

(L-R) Kathy Cryan-Hicks, Jennifer Doak and Kendall Wallace

Three others were presented Community Service Awards:

The Lowell Sun --- for remaining vigilant in promoting Armenian issues, from a simple forum letter to coverage of local genocide commemorations.

Kathy Cryan-Hicks --- Chelmsford Library's assistant director of community relations and programs, for using the library's vast resources to create and manage a wide range of educational and culturally-enriching programs for the general community. The itinerary called for everything from two public presentations and a cooking class to a month-long photo exhibit on Armenia, an appearance by Author Chris Bohjalian and vast coverage on Chelmsford Community Television.

Jennifer Doak --- A Social Studies teacher at Chelmsford High School who has taught "Holocaust and Genocide Studies" for the past 15 years, creatively using a wide range of resources from "Facing History and Ourselves," along with speakers from the Armenian Genocide Education Committee of Merrimack Valley. World History students not only learned about the Armenian genocide but human rights and the respect of other culture groups within their society.

"Members of the Armenian community have persevered in reaching out to our schools and legislative leaders in keeping their heritage and culture alive," said Kendall Wallace, a former publisher who accepted the Lowell Sun award. "The coverage that's been given is well justified and earned. Our role as a newspaper is keeping the public informed, whether it's the Armenians or any other ethnic group. On behalf of my colleagues at the paper, we are grateful for this honor."

Citations were also awarded to the honorees from U.S. Congresswoman Niki Tsongas and Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian. Serving as mistress of ceremonies was Tsoleen Sarian, former aide to Koutoujian going back to his days as State Representative. Sarian is now Associate Director of Project SAVE.

Each recipient also received an enlarged photograph of Armenia donated by Tom Vartabedian.

Entertainment was provided by young oud virtuoso Datev Gevorkian, an eighth-grader at the John Glenn Middle School in Bedford. He is the son of Allan & Sona Gevorkian and grandson of Stephen & Angele Dulgarian, all prominent members of the community.

Recognized for 50 years service to the organization were: Stephen Dulgarian, Joseph Dagdigian, Aram Jeknavorian and Tom Vartabedian, the newest inductee.

(L-R) Aram Jeknavorian, Stephen Dulgarian, Tom Vartabedian and Joseph Dagdigian

In his remarks, ARF Central Committeeman Levon Attarian commended the Lowell Gomideh for its venerable service in the pursuit of justice for the Armenian people, their nation and cause.

“Today, the ARF is facing many issues: the political system, social rights and emigration from Armenia, together with relief efforts to Syrian-Armenians facing a horrific civil war,” Attarian pointed out. “We will continue to serve as the backbone and hope for all Armenians throughout the world. When there isn’t an answer, there will always be the ARF.”

Prayers were offered by Rev. Father Khachatur Kesablyan, pastor, Sts. Vartanantz Church, Chelmsford, and Rev. Father Stephan Baljian, pastor, St. Gregory Church, North Andover.