



# Community News

## Washington, DC Councilmember Charles Allen Led ANC-DC-backed Measure Emphasizing Armenian Genocide Education

WASHINGTON — For the first time since its initial recognition in 2019, the Council of Washington, D.C., unanimously recognized the Armenian Genocide, emphasizing the importance of educating D.C. residents about the crime. The ceremonial resolution, led by Ward 6 Councilmember Charles Allen, was adopted by unanimous consent, 12-0.

In the resolution, the Council recognized the deaths of over 1.5 million Armenians from 1915 through 1923 as Genocide and noted the unique role that the District of Columbia had in alleviating the mass suffering perpetrated by Ottoman Turkish authorities. This included having the third largest Near East Relief Committee in the nation at the time, as well as having a storied and active Armenian American community.

“From the bottom of our hearts, we thank Councilmember Allen for leading this initiative and the entire D.C. Council for its unanimous adoption. This is yet another example of



ANC of D.C. members Gabriel Harutounian, Jake Bournazian and Talia Tehlirian thanked D.C. Councilmember Charles Allen (third from left) for spearheading the Armenian Genocide resolution, which was adopted unanimously

D.C. standing on the right side of history,” stated ANC of Washington D.C. Chair Matthew Girardi. “As a global human rights city, we must continue to recognize genocide and ensure that our public schools teach it properly. That is exactly why we have launched an initiative to ensure our Superintendent takes Armenian Genocide education seriously.”

Notably, the resolution not only reaffirms D.C.’s recognition of the Armenian Genocide and designates April 24 as Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day, but it also stresses the need for informing citizens about the horrors. Community advocates present in the room were thrilled. As such, the resolution will immediately be transmitted to the executive branch, including the Mayor, Chancellor of Public Schools and Superintendent of Education.

The ANC of Washington had launched an action just two weeks earlier, urging the District’s Superintendent of Education to uphold the letter and spirit of the resolution by ensuring a comprehensive genocide education curriculum is taught to DCPS students, including the 1915 Armenian Genocide and 2023 Artsakh Genocide.



Dr. Harold Takooshian, PhD, and Dr. Ani Kalayjian, EdD, receive special honors in their respective fields (see related story at right)

## 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Mentoring Program Connects and Inspires

By Stephan S. Nigohosian

NEW YORK — Armenian students, professionals and others exploring career changes converged on March 28 at the 14th Annual Mentoring Forum, a conference-style business networking event for Armenian professionals. The free event, held at Fordham University, empowered attendees with practical insights and guidance to advance their careers. It was organized by the Armenian American Health Professionals Organization (AAHPO) and the Armenian Engineers and Scientists of America Northeastern Section (AESA-NE) and was co-hosted by a consortium of 15 Armenian organizations.

The Mentoring Forum began with a panel discussion focused on effective networking for employment. Panelists shared their knowledge and suggestions for professional growth with attendees and answered questions submitted prior to the event. The panel, moderated by Karen Dilsizian, College Readiness Director at New City Kids, featured Samuel Armen, MA, MS, ELA teacher at Brooklyn Tech, adjunct lecturer of psychology at Hunter College; Aram Babikian, head of Xtrackers Sales, US Wealth at DWS Group; Peter Bonjuklian, Managing Partner, National Staffing Leader; and Nazo Haroutunian, senior manager, Talent Acquisition, Samsung.

“The panel shed light on many hot topics within recruiting, interviewing, and career management, which can often be confusing for young professionals,” said Dilsizian. “The panelists’ insight and wealth of experience within their respective fields helped to reduce anxiety, and attendees walked away feeling supported by a strong network of Armenians across multiple disciplines.”

Following the panel discussion, participants divided into small breakout sessions focused on detailed, field-specific content. Each group was led by see MENTORING, page 8



Event participants in one of several small breakout sessions led by experienced career guidance professionals

## Dr. Ani Kalayjian Receives Highest Teacher Award at Columbia University

NEW YORK — Veteran nurse and educator Dr. Ani Kalayjian in March received the 2025 R. Louise McManus Medal from the Nursing Education Alumni Association at the Teachers College at Columbia University, the highest medal at the university.

The letter to Kalayjian announcing the medal and the NEAA’s reasons noted, “The McManus Medal is created by Teachers College (TC), Columbia University in 1964 to honor Dr. McManus’ world-wide achievements in Nursing. Dr. McManus remains one of nursing’s earliest leaders and one of TC’s most distinguished faculty members and chairs and to our knowledge the first nurse to receive a doctorate at TC. The McManus Medal is the highest award given by Teachers College. It is given to a person in recognition of distinguished and sustained contributions to the nursing profession & mental health education.

“As noted by your primary sponsor Dr. Diane Mancino, you have been recognized by many significant organizations for ‘continually challenging the status quo and are known as a true risk taker for the betterment of humanity.’ Dr. Marianne Jeffreys stated in her letter of support that you have been internationally recognized for your ‘long-time commitment and significant contributions in improving and optimizing public health outcomes, policy, and human rights for various populations (particularly those victimized, marginalized, and vulnerable populations).’ There was no doubt after reviewing your credentials, significant body of work,



Dr. Ani Kalayjian at the Columbia awards ceremony

and sponsoring letters that you met the criteria for this coveted award! We are indeed fortunate as a profession and alumni association to have you as our representative of the nursing community, and we are so very proud that you are internationally recognized for your work at the United Nations. You received Honorary Doctor of Science Degree from Long Island University, Lifetime Achievement Award from APA Trauma Society, Human Rights Award from ANA, and many more.”

Kalayjian is a Board Certified Expert in Traumatic Stress; a Fellow at the New York Academy of Medicine, an adjunct Professor of Psychology at Teachers College, Columbia University, president of the Association for Trauma Outreach & Prevention and a Meaningful World Representative to DGC at United Nations.



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Mentoring Program Connects and Inspires

MENTORING, from page 7  
experienced career guidance professionals who shared their combined experience in career placement and corporate talent recruitment. Participants moved freely between discipline-specific breakout rooms, where they met with mentors and asked questions to explore different professional fields.

“The Mentoring Forum illustrates the strength and camaraderie of our global Armenian community,” said AAHPO President and Mentoring Forum Co-Chair Larry Najarian, MD. “It is very rewarding to see so many of our mentors volunteer their time to help guide the next generation in their career decisions.” AESA President and Mentoring Forum Co-Chair Raffi Jamgotchian added: “Seeing the Forum’s positive impact on the careers of Armenian professionals, as well as the number of participating organizations and attendees grow each year, is a testament to its importance.”

Silva Keohulian, an upper school math educator, said she appreciated the forum’s mix of educational, social and cultural experiences. “I left with valuable tips and great wisdom from industry professionals, along with some new Armenian friends,” she said. “The event was very well-organized and inspired attendees to use networking as an effective means for career advancement.”



Mentors and attendees celebrating at the conclusion of another successful mentoring event

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Andrew Halajian, currently an undergraduate computer science and statistics student at Cornell University, attended the Mentoring Forum in preparation for his upcoming job search. “Following graduation this Spring, I will use the connections and

networking tips that I learned at the Mentoring Forum to help me secure a position in the software engineering industry.” He also plans on continuing to foster the professional relationships made at the Mentoring Forum throughout his career.

One of the highlights of the evening occurred when the group surprised Dr. Harold Takooshian, PhD, and Dr. Ani Kalayjian, EdD, with a salute for receiving special honors in their respective fields. Dr. Takooshian received a Faculty Award for Teaching from Fordham University and Dr. Kalayjian received a Lifetime Achievement Award in the field of trauma psychology. “I am touched by your thoughtful recognition this year,” said Dr. Takooshian, who has been part of the organizing committee for years and helped secure the meeting space at Fordham. “Upon my retirement this August, 50 years after joining Fordham’s faculty, I leave on a high note and with gratitude.”

The Mentoring and Networking Forum began in 2009, when AESA Founder Vahan Tanal and AAHPO Board member Garbis Baydar, MD, saw a need for Armenian professionals to guide and mentor Armenian youth with their career choices. What began with twenty students and five mentors from the healthcare and engineering fields has now grown to attract large numbers of people of all ages and encompass a wide spectrum of professional disciplines.

The organizations who co-chaired this year’s event included: Armenian Engineers & Scientists of America - Northeast Section; Armenian American Health Professionals Organization (AAHPO); Armenian General Benevolent Union; Armenian Bar Association; Armenian International Women’s Association (AIWA) Greater NY Affiliate; Meaningful World; Armenian Behavioral Science Association; Armenian Assembly of America, Inc.; Children of Armenia Fund (COAF); Armenian Students Association; Armenian Network of Greater NY; Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA); Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church; The Knights and Daughters of Vartan; Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA Inc.); Armenian Banking and Finance and Fund For Armenian Relief.

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Mentoring Forum Moderator, Karen Dilsizian, provides career advice to attendees during a session break

## Saint James Armenian Church Elects New Parish Council

WATERTOWN — The St. James Armenian Church recently held its Parish Council elections. The 11 members are elected to two-year terms.

They are pictured below.

Front row (L to R) are: Hagop Toghramadjian (Secretary), Scott Kapilian (Vice Chair), Dn. Adam Bullock, Pastoral Intern, Fr. Arakel Aljalian, Pastor, Gail Boroyan (Chair), Melissa Pogharian (Treasurer); Back row (L to R) are: Vardan Tenekedzhyan, Haig Seferian (Assistant Treasurer), Vasken Babigian, Vartan Babikyan (Assistant Secretary), Ed Kazanjian, Aram Shrestinian, and Hnazant Tagessian.



**James “Jack” Giragosian, CPC**

**Mark J. Giragosian**

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