

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR ARMENIAN STUDIES AND RESEARCH

1430 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE

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CAMBRIDGE 38, MASSACHUSETTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ARMENIAN STUDIES PROGRAM

TO BEGIN IN FALL AT HARVARD

Endowment Fund Set Up With

\$30,000 Raised at Boston Banquet

BOSTON, MASS. -- Harvard University will begin a limited program for the advancement of Armenian studies and research at its Center for Middle Eastern Studies in the fall of 1956, it was disclosed on November 5 in a joint announcement by Board Chairman Manoog S. Young of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research and Dean McGeorge Bundy of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences of Harvard University.

Initial Endowment Fund

This followed less than a week after the successful fund-raising banquet of October 30 at the Harvard Club of Boston attended by Harvard President Nathan M. Pusey, author-playwright William Saroyan of California, Lt.-Governor Sumner Whittier of Massachusetts, and other notables. Held under the auspices of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, the banquet was the kick-off of a nationwide campaign to raise \$300,000 in three years in order to endow a Chair of Armenian Studies at Harvard University. Over 400 attended from New England and other states.

The limited program for Armenian studies is an interim program until the chair is established. It will be above and beyond that which Harvard already offers in Armenian. This expanded program has been made possible as a result of an initial sum of \$30,000 raised at the banquet to set up an endowed Armenian Studies Fund for the establishment of a Chair of Armenian Studies at Harvard.

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The extent of the program will be dependent on the amount of yield available from the invested funds for Armenian studies by September, 1956, and may encompass a graduate school tuition scholarship, publication subsidies, and/or library purchases of books and periodicals.

Pusey and Saroyan Speak

Dr. Pusey, in his speech at the banquet, expressed appreciation for the Association's desire to establish the first Chair of Armenian Studies in America at Harvard. He said such a chair would help to fill in a large void in our knowledge of the Middle East and of an important national culture that has contributed much to world civilization. An endowed professorship in Armenian history and language will be of everlasting value because it will give Armenian studies continuity, high scholarly standards, and permanence, he added.

The furtherance of Armenian studies, Dr. Pusey emphasized, is important because Armenian culture is "permeated with profound religious and literary values." He assured the audience that Harvard would be proud to have a Chair of Armenian Studies and would do its utmost to help in the early fulfillment of this program to create at Harvard a veritable and unparalleled center of Armenian learning and research in the Western world.

Author-playwright Saroyan said that the program for the advancement of Armenian studies, as outlined by the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, is the best thing that has come along in generations in the American-Armenian community and is worthy of everyone's whole-hearted support regardless of their religious, political, or other differences. The success of this program will bring to an end "the helpless longing of the human heart for an orderly truth," he maintained.

"Necessity, Not Luxury"

Stressing that this job of establishing an Armenian Chair at Harvard must be undertaken and completed by the Armenians themselves, Reverend A. A. Bedikian, pastor-emeritus of the Armenian Evangelical Church of New York, called for a

spirit of dedication and sacrifice so that this project will have an early realization. He said that it was important for the Armenians' self-respect and the perpetuation of their heritage as well as to provide an authoritative and unbiased source of information on the Armenians for the rest of the world. Rather than a luxury, he declared that it was a most urgent necessity.

First Harvard Armenian Course in 1927

Other speakers included NAASR Board Chairman Young, who outlined the Association's broad nationwide program for Armenian studies and brought out the fact that Harvard first started offering courses in Armenian in 1927 under the late Professor Robert Pierpont Blake. Prof. Richard N. Frye of Harvard reiterated the value and urgency of this program for Armenian studies for scholars in other fields. Commissioner of Education Dr. John J. Desmond, Jr., of Massachusetts, Prof. Emmanuel P. Varandyan of Ohio State University, and NAASR Board Treasurer J. Mark Kolligian also spoke on various aspects of the need and importance of this project. Serving as toastmaster for the evening was G. John Gregory of the Massachusetts Board of Education and of the Association's Board of Directors. Dr. Arta S. Avakian, NAASR first vice-chairman, opened up the evening's proceedings.

"An Important Contribution"

It.--Governor Whittier in his speech stressed that America is a nation of many nationalities, each of whom has brought its singular and important contribution to the American way of life. The American-Armenians are represented in all fields of endeavor by worthy sons and daughters. The establishment of a center of learning and research in Armenian history, culture, and language at Harvard will be a highly valuable contribution by the Armenians to a better understanding of the peoples of the world, he said.

Others at the head table were Sir Hamilton A. R. Gibb, recently Laudian Professor of Arabic at Oxford University in England and now all-University professor at Harvard; Prof. Marc Raeff of the Department of History and International Relations at Clark University in Worcester; and NAASR Board members

Prof. M. G. Sevag of the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, and General Sarkis M. Zartarian. From the clergy there were Reverends Papken Maksoudian, Arten Ashjian, and Yervant Hadidian. The musical portion of the evening's program was provided by the noted concert, radio and TV artists, Maro and Anahid Ajemian.

"Best Man Will Be Sought"

Dean Bundy, in accepting the pledges on behalf of the University, expressed his pleasure at the excellent beginning in setting up an endowed fund for Armenian studies at Harvard. He stated that the limited program in Armenian studies would probably commence with a scholarship or, if possible, a fellowship in Armenian history. He promised further that, when the Chair of Armenian Studies is established, the best man in this field would be sought by Harvard for the position.

Board Chairman Young also revealed that the money raised in the name of the Harvard Armenian Chair would go directly into the University's endowed fund designated for Armenian studies. The yield from this fund would be used each year in setting up increasingly larger programs in Armenian studies and research until the chair itself can be established with the necessary \$300,000. The University's own contribution towards the success of this program, he revealed, would probably equal this in amount or kind.

Gifts Go Direct to Harvard

Gifts to this fund can be sent to the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research at 1430 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge 38, Mass. Checks, however, should be made out to "Harvard University Armenian Studies Fund." Acknowledgements will come directly from Harvard University. Further information on this program or the Association will be supplied on request. For those who wish to make "name fund" donations of \$15,000 or more the Association can arrange to put them in direct contact with Harvard officials.

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