



C & E MERDINIAN ARMENIAN EVANGELICAL SCHOOL

13330 Riverside Drive, Sherman Oaks, CA 91423 - Phone: (818) 907-8149

For Immediate Release

Date

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 22, 2020

Public Relations Contact:
Gareen Darakjian
gareend@gmail.com

C. & E. Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School Announces New Board Chair and Executive Committee

SHERMAN OAKS, CA — C. & E. Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School has appointed Dr. Tzoler Oukayan-Sagherian as the new chair of its Board of Directors. Oukayan-Sagherian, dean of student affairs at Glendale Community College (GCC), succeeds Dr. Vahe Nalbandian, who served on the Merdinian School board as chair for 10 years and will continue to serve as an officer of the board in the role of treasurer and chair of the building committee.

Additionally, the Merdinian School board elected Vatche Terzian, assistant principal at Reseda Charter High School, as the new vice chair of the Board of Directors and chair of the personnel committee. As executive officers of the Board of Directors, Oukayan-Sagherian and Terzian will guide the direction of the school and shape policy that nurtures the rigorous academics and close-knit Armenian Christian community that Merdinian is known for.

Also elected as officers of the board are Nerses Aposhian, associate treasurer and chair of the finance committee, and Helen Haig, recording secretary. In addition, the board has appointed new committee chairs Chris Cofer (safety), Gareen Darakjian (public relations), and Manny Saghbazarian (curriculum).

Oukayan-Sagherian has worked in post-secondary education for 13 years. After earning a bachelor of arts in sociology from the University of California, Los Angeles, she held a teaching role at Rose and Alex Pilibos Armenian School before returning to GCC to serve in various leadership capacities, including student activities coordinator and program manager of student outreach services. Oukayan-Sagherian is engaged throughout the Armenian-American community, serving in various programs within the AGBU Western District, including scouts and Generation Next. She earned her master of public administration in 2010 and in August 2020 completed a doctoral degree in educational leadership from the University of Southern California.

Terzian has served as a high school administrator, instructional technology advisor, mathematics specialist, and teacher for the Los Angeles Unified School District. Born and raised in the Armenian Evangelical community, Terzian has served in many capacities in the areas of Christian education and school administration throughout his life, including as chair of the education committee at Holy Martyrs Ferrahian High School and as a member of the Merdinian School board for the past 18 years. At Merdinian he has served on the technology and safety committees as well as the Merdinian Reopening Taskforce. He holds three master's degrees in mathematics education, educational instructional leadership, and educational administration.

Nalbandian is a retired former executive with ExxonMobil Corp and former assistant professor of industrial management at the Georgia Institute of Technology. Nalbandian earned his PhD in business administration from the University of Chicago. He presently serves on the boards of

the Armenian Missionary Association of America and Armenian Evangelical Union of North America and has previously served on the board of Haigazian University in Beirut, Lebanon.

Aposhian is a commercial real estate associate for IDS Real Estate Group's Corporate Services division, assisting clients with leasing, buying, and developing industrial, office, and retail real estate. Aposhian attended the University of Southern California and Loyola Law School for his undergraduate and graduate studies, respectively. He was born and raised in Los Angeles and attended Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School for 11 years.

Haig is founder of the Haig Group, a boutique management consulting company offering services in communications, strategic planning, and leadership and policy development. Prior to her current role, she served as deputy director for policy under Governor George Deukmejian, where her work included environmental affairs, economic development, and education issues. Haig also worked on economic development with the Bush (41) White House. She holds a master of arts in linguistics, specializing in Armenian, from the University of California, Los Angeles, where she also taught communications. She graduated from Occidental College with a bachelor of arts in communications and theater, Phi Beta Kappa. Haig is active in the community and has received awards for her service, including the Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition. Haig is the daughter of Alice Jernazian Haig, founding chair of Merdinian.

Cofer is an adjunct professor of political science at Los Angeles City and Los Angeles Mission Colleges. He holds a master of public policy and administration degree from Baylor University and a bachelor of arts from California State University, Northridge. He also serves on the executive board of the Los Angeles College Faculty Guild and is a member of the higher education committee of the California Federation of Teachers. Cofer is associated with the United Armenian Congregational Church and the Armenian Cilicia Evangelical Church.

Darakjian is senior managing editor at Pepperdine University in Malibu, California. For nearly 10 years she has guided the strategic storytelling that celebrates Pepperdine's commitment to the highest standards of academic excellence and Christian values. Darakjian attended Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School for seven years and considers her time at the school to be a critical part of her development as a young person. She holds a master of arts in mass communication and journalism from California State University, Northridge, and a bachelor of arts in English from the University of California, Los Angeles.

Saghbazarian holds a master of arts in education and has nearly 20 years of experience as an educator and administrator in the public school system. Saghbazarian has had the opportunity to serve students in many different grade levels and disciplines and currently serves as a teacher on special assignment with the Long Beach Unified School District. Manny and his wife, Mary, are the parents of two Merdinian School students, Lena and Lori, and chose Merdinian for its commitment to develop young students into future Armenian Christian leaders.

The Merdinian School Board of Directors is composed of a diverse and collaborative group of business and community leaders that develops policies and strategies that strengthen the school and lay the foundation for its future growth. In recent months, the board has been focused on guiding the school's reopening and ensuring the health and safety of students, parents, faculty, and staff through the challenging coronavirus pandemic.

Members of the Board of Directors additionally include Lina Arslanian, principal of Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School; Varoujan Baghdassarian, vice president of TV programming and production for an international entertainment and media company; Harold DeMirjian, one of the

founding members of Merdinian School and retired executive of Chevron Corporation; Levon Filian, former principal of Sahag-Mesrob Armenian Christian School and former AMAA executive and west coast director; Louisa Janbazian, PR/publications coordinator and associate editor for the Armenian Missionary Association of America and co-chair of the Merdinian Women's Auxiliary; Diana Mangioglu, director of finance/city treasurer for the City of Los Angeles and co-chair of the Merdinian Parent Teacher Organization; Dr. Hrag Marganian, a retired pathologist who formerly practiced at the Kaiser Permanente Anaheim Medical Center and currently serves on the Haigazian University Board of Trustees and the AMAA Near East subcommittee; Rev. Serop Megerditchian, senior pastor of the Armenian Cilicia Evangelical Church of Pasadena; Dr. Mariet Shanazarian, children's ministries director at the United Armenian Congregational Church; and Ovsanna Takvoryan, Esq., chair of the Bankruptcy & Financial Restructuring Practice Group of Tharpe & Howell, LLP.

The Board of Directors also wishes to recognize its two departing members, Juliette Abdulian and Rita Meneshian, who both served the board with distinction for decades. Abdulian, an avid supporter and promoter of the school, served on the Merdinian School board and on the Women's Auxiliary for many years. She was instrumental in securing grants for the school totaling \$1.8 million, which were used for the construction of the Bezjian Family Building and major renovations and upgrades to the school's buildings, grounds, and infrastructure. Both she and her husband, Dr. Daniel Abdulian, have personally supported the school for many years.

Meneshian, a former Merdinian School mathematics teacher, served the Board of Directors in the capacity of vice chair and personnel committee chair. Beyond her experience as an educator, Meneshian was instrumental in the drafting of the school curriculum. She wrote the science, math, health, and physical education curricula when the school was preparing for its first accreditation in 1999 and served as coordinator for all accreditations in the years following. She has also provided mentorship and served in an advisory capacity to the school's principal and many Merdinian teachers throughout her tenure.

Established in 1982, the C. & E. Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School is the only Armenian Evangelical School in the United States. The school offers a broad-based curriculum that fosters academic excellence, high moral values, and spiritual enrichment in the Armenian Evangelical tradition. The school strives to create a safe and nurturing environment where every student receives personal attention to become a successful and responsible individual. For more information, please contact Principal Arslanian at 818.907.8149.