

Chairman's Message

I am humbled and honored to have been elected to lead one of the most prominent bar associations in the world. In 1989, as a "baby lawyer," I had the privilege of sitting around the table with several visionaries who would ultimately build the foundation of this fine Bar Association. From Marina Del Rey, California, we have come a long way in establishing a fine legacy and maintaining a high level of achievement. I have often said that the caliber of an organization directly correlates to the caliber of its members. I am proud to say that not many organizations have among their ranks honorary members and members who are former governors, former foreign ministers, retired or sitting California Supreme Court Justices, sitting Federal judges and Magistrates, former and current members of Congress, former members of the California Assembly, current members of the California Senate (and a soon to be elected, I hope, Attorney General of the state of California), local elected City Council Members, school board members (one soon to become a member of the California Assembly), dozens of appellate justices and trial judges, Federal Prosecutors, District Attorneys, City Attorneys, national television commentators, managing partners of top 100 firms, and distinguished practitioners throughout the world. As an International Association, we have had and continue to have members from four different continents in the world. Need I say more about the caliber of our organization?

In the seventeen year history of our Association, we have established a tradition of trust and camaraderie among our brothers and sisters. We have focused on the rule of law and democratization of the independent Republic of Armenia. We have created a forum in which attorneys with different backgrounds and at different stages of their careers share their expertise and insight. Such an exchange of experience and knowledge forms the backbone of the Association's dual goals of professional growth and community advancement. These efforts also take the form of pro bono assistance and legal education seminars geared toward raising community awareness of rights and responsibilities. Through our prominent Armenian Rights Watch Committee, we have been instrumental in shaping law, policy and education regarding the first Genocide of the 20th Century. The recognition of the Armenian Genocide as a cause of International Justice remains one of the primary focus of our Armenian Rights Watch Committee.

My dear brothers and sisters, my colleagues on our very able Board of Governors and I need your assistance to preserve our tradition and expand on our achievements. While your financial support of the Association is always appreciated, there is no support better than your personal involvement and sense of pride in your Association. I am therefore asking each and every one of you to come to Philadelphia in October 2006 and to Santa Monica, California in April of 2007 to join your brothers and sisters and to bring renewed energy and dedication to your proud Armenian Bar Association. As your Chair, I have established the following goals for myself and the Association for the upcoming year: 1) Double or better our membership in the United States and abroad (all I ask is for each member to bring in at least two new members this year); 2) Expand our outreach by translating our web site to French and Armenian to bring our brothers and sisters in Europe and Armenia closer to the Association; 3) Organize events in Europe and Armenia in conjunction with our events here in the United States; and 4) Expand the list of our annual sponsors and increase our fund raising activities. These are aggressive goals, but very attainable with hard work and dedication. I am confident that with your help we will achieve them all. Remember: THINK BIG!

Finally, I want to acknowledge the dedication and expertise of our staff, who day in and day out help us implement our goals for our beloved Association. Our Executive Director, Betty Jamgotchian and her assistant, Lisa Boyadjian, are here to assist you with any questions that you may have regarding membership, fund raising, committee assignments and upcoming events. Feel free to call or email them with your inquiries. Please keep in touch and keep me informed of your progress. See you all in Philadelphia! God bless you all!

Frank Vram Zerunyan
Chairman