

****PRESS RELEASE****

At National Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide Centennial Banquet, 29 Heroes Recognized for Contributions to the Armenian Community

*Presidents Wilson and Reagan, The American Red Cross, The New York Times and
Numerous Foreign Governments among Recipients*

WASHINGTON, D.C., May 9, 2015 – Twenty-nine individuals and organizations were given Hero Awards today in a show of gratitude from the Armenian community to those who helped save hundreds of thousands of lives during the Armenian Genocide from 1915 to 1923 and have worked for its recognition thereafter.

At a banquet sponsored by the U.S. National Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide Centennial (NCAGC), descendants of genocide survivors and many others gathered to honor the nearly 1.5 million lives lost during the Genocide and thank those whose selfless and heroic actions enabled the Armenian community to survive and thrive today.

“If not for the actions of these men, women, groups and governments, the Armenian community as it is today would not exist,” said Noubar Afeyan, NCAGC Chair, who is himself the descendant of a Genocide survivor.

“While this centennial is a solemn commemoration of the tragic events 100 years ago, we owe an enormous debt of gratitude to those saviors whose brave actions helped us survive,” he continued. “We must now unite and work together to forge a more peaceful future free of genocides.”

The evening first welcomed guests at a reception featuring exhibitions on the history of the Genocide, musicians playing Armenian music, and displays of Armenian artwork. Guests gathered in the banquet hall for the formal dinner, which included remarks by former Secretary of the Navy Paul Ignatius, former U.S. Ambassador Edward Djerejian and journalist Lara Setrakian.

At the ceremony, a diverse group of awardees—including representatives of the United States Congress, former U.S. Presidents and numerous foreign governments and institutions—were honored for their contributions to the survival and rebuilding of Armenian life over the past 100 years. John Heubusch, Executive Director of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation, accepted the award on behalf of the late 40th US President and last commander in chief to recognize the Genocide formally while in office.

“On behalf of our Foundation, I am truly honored to accept this award for President Reagan,” said Heubusch. “The President cared deeply about these issues and was proud to lend his voice to the Armenian community. He was proud to have acknowledged what occurred 100 years ago was, in fact, a genocide.”

Saturday’s banquet concludes a three-day weekend of commemorative events marking the Genocide’s centennial. With a focus on promoting awareness, gratitude and unity among participants, the NCAGC led

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a series of events that included an ecumenical service at the National Cathedral led by Popes of the Armenian Church, performances by renowned Armenian musicians at the Strathmore, a Divine Liturgy at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception and various other cultural exhibitions.

“Tonight, we gather for this final event in Washington to commemorate the tragedy that occurred 100 years ago and to honor the heroes who emerged,” said Afeyan. “But tomorrow we look forward to the next 100 years,” he said. “It is not enough for Armenians to survive. We must dare to be alive, dare to thrive and come together to commit to a future free of genocide.”

Photography, videos and press release for media use: <http://edelman.isebox.net/agc100dc>

NOTES TO EDITORS

About the National Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide Centennial

The National Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide Centennial (NCAGC) began with the united efforts of the Diocese and Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Churches of America, East and West coasts. The NCAGC provides a unique opportunity to bring Armenians together from across the country and Canada to join in remembering and honoring those lost in the Genocide 100 years ago. Showing a unity of spirit and purpose, the events also serve to raise awareness of the Genocide and thank the institutions and individuals who have helped Armenians to survive and thrive.

For a complete list of awardees, please see infographic attached to this press release.

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