



Geneva, August 6, 2014

## AJF TO AWARD EDUCATIONAL GRANTS TO FIVE YOUNG ARMENIAN PROFESSIONALS

### Syriahay Repatriates and Diasporans Invited to Apply

The Armenian Jewellers Foundation (AJF) will award scholarships to five professionals seeking qualification in Diamond Grading in Armenia.

AJF has concluded an agreement with the Armenian Gemological Laboratory and Academy (AGLA) to support students enrolled in its Diamond Grading/Classification Certificate Program.



Scholarship applications are now being accepted for candidates in the following regional categories:

- 1) Yerevan
- 2) Provinces
- 3) Artsakh
- 4) Syriahay Repatriates in Armenia
- 5) Diasporan Communities

Applicants must be Armenian with a strong allegiance to traditions, customs and legacies. Completed applications must be received by August 29, 2014. All submissions should be made electronically. Application form and guidelines may be requested in writing to AJF and AGLA.

"We are very pleased to launch our scholarship program available to Armenian candidates living both in the homeland and the Diaspora," said the AJF Trustee in charge of scholarships Aram Shishmanian. "Parallel to our research of the past, we are looking into ways to promote the next generation of internationally renown Armenian jewellery designers, gemologists and jewellery crafters."

"I have known Artur Zanginyan, GIA Graduate Gemologist, for many years, and have admired his dedication to the field of gemology," said former Gemological Institute of America President and AJF Trustee Bill Boyajian. "Artur established the ZANG laboratory in Yerevan in 1997, and launched his academic program in 2001 through the AGLA. He is the ideal person to partner with AJF in providing scholarships to deserving Armenian students."



Interested candidates should secure admission in the AGLA program prior to applying. Information can be obtained by writing to [info@gemology.am](mailto:info@gemology.am). Applicants will be required to submit a letter of interest and a curriculum vitae. Space is very limited and only those who are qualified will be considered.

Director of GIA Moscow Dr. Y. Solodova presenting diploma to first AGLA graduate

The Armenian Jewellers Foundation (AJF) was created to advance the heritage of Armenians in jewellery. AJF's mission is to undertake historical research, document present-day success stories and ensure the transfer of knowledge to a new generation of industry leaders. The present scholarship program promotes new expertise in the jewellery and diamond manufacturing sector in Armenia.

For more information, [click here](#)

## AJF BOARD OF TRUSTEES HOLDS FIRST RETREAT



Pierre Akkelian, Sylvain Cordier Montreal Museum of Fine Arts Curator of Early Decorative Arts, Aram Shishmanian, Diane Charbonneau MMFACurator of Decorative Arts, Habib Malo, Bill Boyajian, Hratch Kaspar

AJF held a Board retreat from June 13-14, 2014, in Montreal to develop its strategic approach.

A private tour of the new exhibit *Faberge: Jewellers to the Czar* was organized on this occasion by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. AJA International Board Member and AJA Montreal Chairman Habib Malo joined the trustees during the tour and first day deliberations.

Key issues related to the foundation's development were discussed, including governance, communication, fundraising, scholarships, publications, strategic partnerships, short term plans and monitoring. The Board approved a number of ongoing initiatives, decided to launch its scholarships program, and prioritize fundraising.

The objectives of AJF were re-defined: to create awareness of our jewellery heritage and document present-day success stories through publications and other means, as well as to create future industry leaders by transferring knowledge and promoting leadership through scholarships, internships, competitions, and other initiatives.

The following mission statement was adopted: **To Advance the Heritage of Armenians in Jewellery.**

## AJF EMBARKS ON HISTORY MISSION



UCLA Prof. Sebouh Aslanian and Hratch Kaspar inspect jewellery-mixed art at the medieval Sourp Khatch Church, Venice  
(photo courtesy of Scout Tufankjian)



Dr. Rev. Nerses Vrej Nersessian, former  
Director of the Oriental Dept. at the British  
Natural Library

To advance its heritage research program, AJF undertook a targeted academic mission to meet with stakeholders in May. AJF met with over 30 academics and researchers, and visited a number of institutions. Discussions focused on the development of scholarship related to Armenian jewellery history, including the trading activities of Modern Era Armenians, and the promotion of knowledge exchange in the study of Armenian trades.

This opportunity allowed AJF to present its objectives, as well as receive valuable insight about ongoing research into trade networks and jewellery artifacts held in collections around the world. A proposed research approach or a roadmap was formulated in consultation with academics, including professors Dickran Kouymjian of Fresno State,

Sebouh Aslanian of UCLA, Claude Mutafian of Sorbonne, Patricia Boisson of INALCO, Fr. Levon Boghos Zekian of Venice U., Baykar Sivazilyan of Politecnico di Milano, Armen Tokatlian of Paris, Fr. Haroutiun Bezdikian of Paris, and others (see photos).

A list of prospective joint initiatives is being developed with academic counterparts, as well as a possible exchange forum in the near future is being planned.

Discussions were also held on the documentation effort of present-day achievers and success-stories. In particular, meetings were held with documentary producers Avedisque and renowned photojournalist and best-selling author Scout Tufankjian, who is now completing her well-known Armenian Diaspora Project.



Claude Mutafian of Sorbonne University and Fr. Haroutiun Bezdikian of the Mechitarist College of Paris discussing  
AJF

During the mission, the rich Mechitarist library and archives in Venice were used to conduct preliminary searches for materials, and the fathers were consulted and thanked for their generous support and guidance.

## Alexander Miller's Authentic Armenian Jewellery Revealed



Authentic items from the Miller Collection

Concurrently, AJF and the Museum of Ethnography of Saint Petersburg have made considerable advances in their joint project to publish Miller's Armenian treasures. The collection, which resulted from a scientific expedition in the midst of the Genocide in 1916, had been stored away for almost 100 years, and only recently rediscovered. In April 2015, it will be entirely exhibited for the first time and the catalogue will be presented thanks to AJF's commitment to pay tribute to the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide on behalf of Armenian jewellers worldwide.

Recently, the scientific analyses and cataloguing efforts of the project have been completed. Thanks to AJF's effort lead by Regional Director Aza Babayan, professional photographic documentation and virtual presentations of the artifacts have also been completed. Project curators are now in the editing and design conceptualization phases.

Thanks to the research undertaken, it has become clear that Miller's collection is not a chance acquisition like most collections, but rather an all-encompassing representation of Western Armenian society. Indeed, all artifacts were chosen based on their authenticity (versus fashion) by the expedition team, which consisted of highly regarded ethnographers who used rigorous scientific approach. Another important fact that was revealed is that the expedition journal itself provides critical clues and photos on facts and locations.

An agreement has been reached with the head curator of the Miller collection to present an independent study of the jewellery artifacts from the collection, which represents a significant portion, from the point of view of their designs and traditional use.



## AJF ATTENDS JCK 2014 AND PROMOTES ITS MISSION



Berge Abajian, Hagop Momjian, Pierre Akkelian, Hratch Kaspar



Hratch Kaspar, Gagik Gevorkyan, Pierre Akkelian, Bill Boyajian

The 2014 JCK Show in Las Vegas also served as AJF's platform for networking and raising awareness of its mandate. Pierre Akkelian, Gagik Gevorkyan, Bill Boyajian and Hratch Kaspar held various meetings to discuss opportunities and promote the objectives of the foundation.



Bill Boyajian, Zohrab Istamboulian, Hratch Kaspar, Henri Istamboulian, Liza Istamboulian, Lucy Kilislian

Introductory meetings were held at JCK, Luxury, and at the Antique Jewellery and Watch Show.

Guests at the AJA annual cocktail on June 1st, 2014, also had a chance to learn about AJF's programs and received the Foundation's latest pamphlets.

During the event, AJF Chairman Pierre Akkelian publicly thanked the AJA Western USA Chapter for their fundraising effort in 2013, briefly explained AJF's initiatives and presented the new Director for Strategic Development, Hratch Kaspar.

AJF attended conferences held at JCK by AJF trustee Bill Boyajian and registered gemologist appraiser Jack Ghazalian. The Armenian jewellery community was also invited to gather at the local Saint Garabed Armenian Church. AJF had the opportunity to meet with the parish priest Rev. Arsen Kassabian, parish council president Garo Bedirian, and other community members. Several targeted meetings were held with Mr. Ghazalian and other certified appraisers to support AJF's historical research and teaching efforts.



Tomas Rodriguez with Hratch Kaspar and Jack Ghazalian



Having heard of the heritage research project at the JCK Show, AJF's team was approached by Mr. Arshag Bohdjalian who recounted the story of an antique item from Armenia. "I would like to see it in its rightful place in history and appreciated for its cultural significance," he said.

The story is about a silver watch manufactured in the 1870's at Le Locle, Switzerland, by the founder of Zenith, George Favre Jacot. In fact, Zenith is currently conducting a study to determine the exact age of the watch. Master silversmiths from Van are believed to have delicately engraved the cover with a portrait of Khrimian Hayrik, one of the most beloved figures in Armenian history, using colored enamel that still shines today.

The artifact belonged to a Dersim Armenian by the name of Sarkis Sarkissian who was murdered by the Agha Ibrahim in 1915. Years later, the latter sold the stolen watch to the son-in-law of the rightful owner Hovnatan Hovagimian whose family has kept it safely to this day. AJF will conduct a thorough interview to document the item in its virtual library, which will be opened for researchers in the future.

As part of the campaign to present AJF's mission to various jewellery communities, AJF's Pierre Akkelian visited Mr. Laurence Tufenkjian in Beirut, and Hratch Kaspar met with Robert Tateossian in London.



Harout Missirian, Pierre Akkelian,  
Laurence Tufenkjian



Robert Tateossian and Hratch Kaspar

## AJF ELITE PATRONS CLUB CONTINUES TO GROW

AJF's elite Patrons Club continues to grow as an increasing number of philanthropists learn and appreciate the mission and activities of the organization.



Aza Babayan, Gagik Gevorkyan, Hovhannes Jalayan, Ruben Kotanchyan

Moscow-based banker Hovhannes Jalalyan is the latest patron to join the club. A special ceremony was held on July 25, 2014, to mark the occasion. AJA President and AJF Trustee and Treasurer Mr. Gagik Gevorkyan, AJA Russia Chairman Ruben Kotanchyan, and AJF Regional Director Ms. Aza Babayan welcomed Mr. Jalalyan to AJF.

During the ceremony, Mr. Gevorkyan presented him with the special-edition Franck Muller gold watch inscribed with the Armenian Alphabet as a token of appreciation for his princely contribution. Mr. Jalalyan also received a special invitation to visit Watchland in Geneva, the remarkable and world famous manufacturing site of Franck Muller, and the Yerevan Show in October 2014.

If you are interested in joining our elite Patrons Club or know someone who would appreciate an exclusive Armenian Franck Muller edition timepiece, [click here](#) to reserve.

