

Commencement 2003
Haigazian University
July 3, 2003

President's Word of Welcome

This is a moment of pride and humility.

It is a moment of pride because of our day of an annual completion and fulfillment. Our students are ready, really ready to graduate, and they have deserved it.

It is a moment of pride for the parents or the guardians of the graduates who have stood behind them for many years.

Therefore, I would like to recognize all those parents who are with us today by inviting them to stand.

I would also remember all those students who do not enjoy the presence of a parent today.

It is a moment of pride for Lebanon, because it continues to produce a host of human treasures, brains, and professionals. It is a pride for HU that a good number of students have already signed contracts for good jobs in this country even before graduation.

It is a moment of pride for our University that keeps challenging the realities that tempt our people to believe that respect, self-respect and other respect are alien to our lands; that success is in the numbers; that job security is in the connections; that other-hatred is the norm; that all truth is subject to personal interest; that faith is a characteristic of the cultural past; that serving others is a weakness of the self; that responsible freedom is an impossible fact.

It is a pride for Haigazian to keep repeating its motto and try to live up to it.

This is also a moment of humility.

Today we also remember that we have a long way to go. For a university to uplift the morale of the youth is quite a challenge. For us to match our services exactly with the needs of our community is another challenge. For a country to totally recover from its wars and tense inter-community feelings is not a quick fix. For universities to elevate themselves beyond the competition of the educational market needs courage and a sense of internal security, professionalism, and ethics.

Yet, with confidence and humble prayer we approach the 50th anniversary of Haigazian University, and I declare here that the year 2005 will, with God's grace, be a year of celebration.

I welcome you all, especially our distinguished guests, especially the ones who are with us from the USA, in particular the president of Mashdots College in Glendale, CA, Dr. Garbis Der Yeghiayan. We thank you all for your support and friendship and look forward to growing links with you all. I invite you to enjoy this commencement and to rejoice with us in the special day of our academic family.

Now to our main guests, Dr. and Mrs. Haroutune & Sona Armenian.

Our distinguished commencement speaker today is the President of a sister institution, the American University of Armenia, Dr. Haroutune Armenian.

As always, to present a person of many titles, positions, talents, interests, services and awards is a challenge. Dr. Armenian is not only the president of a University in Armenia but also a professor of Epidemiology at the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore since 1988.

Previously, he has been Director of the Master of Public Health Program in the School of Hygiene and Public Health at Johns Hopkins;

Professor of Epidemiology at the AUB;

Coordinator of the Interfaculty Research project for the study of the Status of Children in Lebanon;

Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the AUB;

Coordinator of the In-Service Development with the Ministry of Public Health in the State of Qatar;

Commissioning Officer of Health Centers with the Ministry of Health, State of Bahrain.

Dr. Armenian has received the Movses Khorentasi Presidential Medal of Service and Accomplishments in the Republic of Armenia 2001; and in the same year, a Fellow at the royal College of Physicians in London.

From 1992-1999, he has been editor of the American Journal of Epidemiology. He has authored, edited, co-authored a few hundreds of works that you may research later.

By having Dr. Armenian as our speaker today, Haigazian University is making many statements at the same time:

- Valuing his background in both Lebanon and the Armenian community as well as his professional experience;
- Extending a hand of fellowship to the AUA and Armenia in general;
- Highlighting the American type of liberal arts education that we share;
- And last but not least, by giving our podium to a person who works with devotion of heart, focus of mind, depth of imagination, and width of human concern, we are remaining true to the vision of the Armenian Evangelical founders of Haigazian University.

Ladies and Gentlemen, please welcome Dr. Armenian.