

## FOUNDERS' DAY

Haigazian University

Monday, October 17, 2011

Twelve Noon

### **PRESIDENT'S WORD**

Most of who we call founders do not realize at an early stage that they were really founders. People start projects based on needs and dreams. Then they take a step of faith and move on.

There are four FOUNDERS' names we give tribute to today: Stephen Mehagian; Stephen Philibosian; Rev. Puzant Kalfayan; Rev. Hovhannes Aharonian, and of course, many others who assisted in one way or another.

Stephen Philibosian was 17 when he arrived in the USA to work with his uncle and make money and return to his Armenian home in Cilicia. The Massacres of Adana took place in 1909 so he never returned.

Stephen Mehagian had earned a BA in Tarsus but then jailed by the Turkish authorities, escaped through bribing his captors and deported. He passed through Syria, Lebanon and Egypt before he arrived at UCLA to continue his education and return home to Cilicia and serve his people. While away he received news of the massacres that reached his family (parents and three sisters we killed).

So, two men, who saw disasters, but succeeded in life and then turned into serving the future generations! These people of financial success in the USA were also people of faith and dedication and turned disaster into new life and opportunity. Their financial commitment brought about the establishment of HU, but it was also Rev. Aharonian in Beirut, and Rev. Kalfayan in NY, who provided the institutional and church backing for the realization of a dream we all benefit from today, 56 years later.

Now, a new academic year has started. We are already attending classes and labs, teaching and administering, planning and organizing activities. Our first focus as students is on changing our world, strengthening our skills and attaining our education and our degree. At the same time, we may or may not realize that each of us has an impact on others already and now. We influence each other for the better or the worse. Beyond serving ourselves, we already have a mission for the betterment of our world: our friends and families, community and country.

Young people are given the gift of critical thinking and high expectations. Ideals will move you forward. This includes self-critical thinking as well. What you want others to do to you, and to do for you, Do the same for others and to them. We hear the young saying, our society will never change. In education, we want to say the future is already on, I am already changing for the good now, and I will and can grow and learn and give more good fruit in the future.

If each one of us focuses on his or her role and the good benefit they can bring, the world, and Lebanon, will become a much better place.

Institutions and establishments such as HU have the gift of reaching out to many at the same time and for long years. We have done 56 years of it.

Our attention today, however, also turns into another establishment that has been serving our society for 50 years already just one block away for our campus, the National News Agency *الوكالة الوطنية للاعلام*.

Today, Haigazian University chose to highlight the role this Agency plays in disseminating much information about what goes on in our world. Just imagine what would have been missed without their coordinated and centralized work. The media plays such a central role in our modern world that we should only appreciate and encourage those who dedicate their life and time to making the daily realities of our society accessible, trustworthy, and clear. A huge ideal, a challenge. There is much therefore a university shares with a news agency, and the Haigazian motto of Truth, Freedom and Service is a reality and a challenge to both the university and the News Agency.

It is my honor therefore, to welcome Mrs. Laure Sleiman Saab to Haigazian University, who brings young enthusiasm, and a will to develop and modernize the NNA's work into her office. Her Lebanese University education in Documentation, and experience in the Lebanese Radio Station and Voice of Lebanon, in newspapers, news agencies, and syndicates, and membership in numerous organizations all make her a resourceful person from whom Lebanon benefits today and we will benefit at this hour.

Now, I would like to invite Mrs. Laure Sleiman Saab to the podium for her word,

*Rev. Paul Haidostian, Ph.D.*

*President*

*Haigazian University*