

family not touched by the genocide, and while there are some survivors still with us, it is imperative that we record their stories. Through the Armenian Genocide Congressional Record Project, I hope to document the harrowing stories of the survivors in an effort to preserve their accounts and to help educate the Members of Congress now and in the future of the necessity of recognizing the Armenian Genocide.

This is one of those stories:

(By Sarkis DerTavitian)

My grandfather Nazareth Der Tavitian was born in Malatya, Turkey. His family consisted of his wife, three sons and two daughters. The eldest child, my aunt was born in 1900. My father followed as the eldest son; he was born in 1903. Next in line was the youngest of the daughters and she was born in 1907, followed by my uncle Kevork in 1910. The youngest son, Hampartsoum was born in 1913.

My grandfather was a successful merchant in Malatya, Turkey. His wealth included large tobacco and opium fields, as well as the export of various goods such as leather, and dried fruits to Europe and America. He often traveled to Aleppo and Istanbul in order to conduct his business. At the brink of WWI in 1914, a Turkish friend of my grandfather informed him that the situation was not looking good for Turkish-Armenians, he advised that he, along with his eldest son—my father make a temporary move to Istanbul, in hopes that the move would keep them safe until the situation had calmed within the provinces. My grandfather, uncomfortable with the idea of leaving the rest of the family during precarious times, conveyed these worries to a dear friend, who at the time was the military general of Malatya. The general assured him that as long as he remained in his position, no Turkish citizen or official could bring harm to him or his family. As the war progressed and the Young Turks solidified their power they ordered the replacement of all leading generals in the provinces, including Malatya—the aim being to break the power of the provisional leaders. My grandfather's dear friend was soon replaced. The alteration of leadership happened abruptly, therefore the opportunity to migrate was infeasible to all those who resided in Malatya.

As soon as my grandfather's friend was replaced as the military general of Malatya, my grandfather was arrested and taken into custody. He had been imprisoned for two weeks when the chief of police gave him an ultimatum—abandon your religion or go under the sword. My grandfather refused to renounce his religion therefore he was murdered instantly. (This story was conveyed to my father by those who were jailed with my grandfather, they had converted in order to save their lives).

Having been one of the more successful residents of Malatya, my grandfather had an apprentice whom he regarded both as a friend and apprentice. It was his way of giving back to the community, which until the Genocide had offered him and his family the utmost comfort and good. This friend was aware of the wealth that was kept in my grandfather's home. He came to see if assistance was needed, as he was not a Turkish-Armenian, but rather a Turk by heritage. To his surprise he found that my grandfather had already been taken into custody, and my grandmother was in hiding in the basement of the family home, she had escaped the mandatory deportation of Malatya. He as-

sured them that he would be back once he can figure out how he could best be of service. Comforted by his statement, the family continued to stay in hiding as they eagerly awaited his return.

Unfortunately, the loyalty of my grandfather's apprentice was not to be trusted. Upon leaving my father's family home, he went to the local police and informed them that my grandmother, along with the children were in hiding and had escaped the mandatory deportation. He provided the local police with the proper address and location, as well as the background information pertaining to my family.

My grandmother had taken precautions and had told my father along with the eldest of the daughters where the family fortune was hidden. Having heard and seen the horrific experience of mass murder and deportation my grandmother was well aware that her family would not stay intact. In the likely chance that she would be taken into arrest, she had hoped that the large amount of family savings would either help the children sustain themselves or buy their safety.

Soon thereafter, my grandmother was taken into exile. My father recalls her carrying a child as the police forced her out of the home; leaving the remaining children orphaned. My grandmother was never to be heard from again. The fate of my grandmother and her infant remains unknown. That was the last they saw or heard of their mother. The children were not sent into exile. They continued to hide in the basement of the family home.

After my grandmother was taken away my grandfather's apprentice rushed to the house. Seeing the children, distraught, alone and in tears he assured them that he would find their mother and return her to safety. He left only to return in a couple of days. We concluded that the two-day absence would assure that no other family member was present to care for the children. Upon his return, he lied to the children and told them that he was able to find their mother that she was well, but in need of their help. He told the children that their mother asked that they gather the hidden family wealth, in order to bail her out of jail. Their father's apprentice would take care of the procedure. The eldest child my aunt, obliged in trust and showed my grandfather's apprentice where the wealth was hidden. The family wealth amounted to two barrels of 20,000 gold coins. The average yearly salary in Malatya at the time of the Armenian Genocide was two gold coins—the salary of 10,000 Turkish workers. As the children eagerly awaited their mother's return, my grandfather's apprentice enjoyed the sudden lavishness of wealth. Out of immense guilt, my aunt, the eldest child of Nazareth DerTavitian became severely ill. She died at the age of 15.

A year after the murder of my grandfather and grandmother, the Turkish police came to the family home and took my father, his two brothers and his sister into government headquarters. They demanded that they convert to Islam or their fate would resemble that of their parents. My father, now being the eldest spoke for the entire family. He decided that the safety of his brothers and sister was of the utmost importance. They all converted to Islam and circumcised in accordance to Muslim tradition. They now held new identities, a new religion and new names. My father Kevork became Baker. They continued to live in Malatya in hopes of regaining the ownership of their father's land. They thought that that hopeful day

had come when Mustafa Kemal Ataturk ratified a law in which whoever held the certificate to the land on which they resided could claim ownership of that land. My father was able to find the necessary certificates to the family home and took them to the provincial government of Malatya. To my father's devastation they would not allow him to have ownership of his land, because he himself was not Nazaret Der Tavitian. By statute, the lands could not be claimed by the living children of the deceased. Under this new law my father along with his siblings was left homeless. They would either live on the streets of Malatya or leave Turkey and start a new life in Aleppo, a safe haven for Armenian refugees. Their obstacles were many. In addition to having limited amount of resources, a law of conversion hindered the arduous road ahead. Converted persons were not allowed to leave Turkey; therefore they had to risk their physical safety by escaping out of the country. The family was separated in order to secure a safe departure. Riding on mules they individually reached Aleppo, around 1924. They were reunited in the refugee camps of Aleppo.

In 1959, when I was barely 16 years old, the sister of a dear friend of my father's came to visit her brother from Malatya. I, along with my parents went to welcome her. There, I overheard her recall to my father that his father's three story home was still standing and had been converted into an orphanage. The elaborate Damascene hand woven wooden front door, which was the mark of the DerTavitian household, was still standing.

This story, which I just relayed to you, is but one story in the devastating events of the Armenian genocide. The price of which we continue to pay. My father passed 34 years ago. He led an incredibly difficult life. The events of 1915 continued to haunt him. He was unable to surrender the thoughts, emotions and images that followed him throughout his life. I believe that if my father was alive today, his one desire would be to assure that no other peoples or nation suffer under the same fate that he had seen and experienced. I hope that this testimony will play a small, yet significant part of our most basic human quest, that of human rights.

I thank you for taking on this endeavor. Through your actions, you assure that your character is great. For you not only honor and love justice, but rather, work towards its fulfillment.

HONORING 100 YEARS OF SCOUTING

HON. W. TODD AKIN

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 29, 2010

Mr. AKIN. Madam Speaker, this year marks the 100th anniversary of the Boy Scouts of America. As Scouts from across America gather this week for their 2010 National Scout Jamboree, I rise to congratulate them on their long-standing success, and thank the Scouts for all the work they have done over the years to build our young men into upstanding and trustworthy citizens.

Over the past century, the Boy Scouts of America has become one of the brightest and far-reaching youth-development organizations in our Nation with over four million youth members in its age-related divisions. Indeed, the Boy Scouts of America has become part of our national heritage. Since its founding in 1910, more than 110 million Americans have been members of the Boy Scouts of America.

Committed to teaching traditional values of trustworthiness, good citizenship, and outdoors skills through a wide range of challenging, participation-based activities and educational programs, the BSA's goal is to train youth in responsible citizenship, character development, and self-reliance. President Gerald Ford, a former Boy Scout himself once said, "I can say without hesitation, because of Scout-ing principles, I know I was a better athlete, I was a better naval officer, I was a better Congressman, and I was a better prepared President."

Part of the reason the Boy Scouts are so successful is because they live by a law and an oath that bind them to the quest for morality and brotherhood. Indeed, the Boy Scout Law is one we can all live by, "A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent."

Today we can all say for certain that the Boy Scouts of America have made our country stronger, braver, and more optimistic, as many of its politicians, astronauts, businessmen and other hard-working citizens grew up in the organization—including my own sons.

It is a sincere pleasure to stand with the Boy Scouts today, and recite an Oath which for 100 years has marked our Nation:

"On my honor, I will do my best
To do my duty to God and my country;
To obey the Scout Law;
To help other people at all times;
To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake and morally straight."
Congratulations, Gentlemen!

LORENA GONZALEZ HONORED AS
2010 LABOR LEADER OF THE YEAR!

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 29, 2010

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize a very hard worker and devout labor leader in southern California.

Lorena Gonzalez will be honored as the 2010 Labor Leader of the Year at the 28th Annual John S. Lyons Memorial Banquet in San Diego on September 11, 2010.

In January of 2008, Lorena Gonzalez became the secretary-treasurer and CEO for the San Diego and Imperial Counties Labor Council, AFL-CIO. The Labor Council is a coalition of 129 local unions that represent more than 192,000 working families in the region. Upon her election, Lorena became the first woman and first person of color to serve as head of the Labor Council since the organization's inception in 1902.

The daughter of an immigrant farm worker and a nurse, Lorena learned the value of hard work and determination at an early age. After graduating from Vista High School in North San Diego County, she earned a bachelor's

degree from Stanford University, a Master's degree from Georgetown University and a law degree from UCLA.

Prior to coming to the Labor Council, Lorena worked as the Senior Advisor to the office of the Lieutenant Governor of California. She served as a consultant to the Commission on Economic Development, and was the Lt. Governor's principal advisor on policy issues dealing with labor, the environment, energy, and infrastructure.

A member of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local 36, Lorena worked as the Labor Council's Political Director before being elected Secretary-Treasurer. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for the California League of Conservation Voters San Diego, the Center for Policy Initiatives, the Environmental Health Coalition, and the United Way of San Diego. Lorena also serves on the Executive Council of the state California Labor Federation as a Vice President and on the AFL-CIO Central Labor Council/California Federation's Advisory Board.

Nonetheless, Lorena's most cherished title is that of mother. She lives in Pacific Beach with her two children—Tierra and Antonio.

RECOGNIZING 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 26, 2010

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, today marks 20 years since the historic Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law. It is one of the most important pieces of civil rights legislation of the last quarter century. Passage of this groundbreaking law came as a result of the efforts of legions of activists. I want to recognize two individuals, in particular, who made ADA possible. The late Justin Dart, a true civil rights leader, was instrumental in the fight to pass the law that made discrimination against people with disabilities illegal. He showed us the path, and we continue to look to his lessons as we chart new ground. His spirit is with us on this anniversary and every day that we fight for justice for all.

I also want to recognize Marca Bristo, who has been an unflagging national leader in the fight for people living with disabilities. I am lucky to call her a friend but Bristo has also been a teacher. She has educated untold numbers of people, including me, by opening our eyes to the barriers standing in the way of people with disabilities. Bristo has been at the helm of Access Living of Metropolitan Chicago for decades. As an organizer in the critical work of disability rights years before the ADA was passed in Congress, she, too, was incredibly influential in creating and shepherding the law to passage.

Since ADA's passage, we have taken many steps to build on its foundation—and we've accomplished many of our goals in recent years. This includes a historic health care bill that will prevent insurance companies from denying coverage, dropping coverage, setting discriminatory annual or lifetime limits on benefits, or charging higher premiums to people with disabilities. We have passed mental

health parity legislation. And we are providing more home- and community-based options for care.

Yet, we cannot sit back and become comfortable with what we have achieved with—and since—passage of the ADA. We know we have much more left to do. Every person must be guaranteed full access to safe housing, good jobs, educational opportunities, quality health care, cutting edge technology, and economic prosperity. Our great country can be made even greater by providing every person with the opportunity to contribute and live comfortably in their community.

We must work to enforce the ADA, not reward those who disobey it. There is simply no excuse for anyone who violates the Americans with Disabilities Act; laws that protect the rights those living with disabilities are no less important and no different from any other legal protection.

We have to make sure that the Community Choice Act is passed and implemented, to further expand the infrastructure so individuals can get convenient, quality care in the settings that everyone prefers: at home and in our own communities.

We must expand opportunities for independence. That is why I am the sponsor of H.R. 1408, the Inclusive Home Design Act, to require that new, single-family homes that get federal assistance meet minimum standards so those with disabilities can come and go freely and seniors can age in place. This is a common sense solution that ensures livability as well as sound economics. Building new homes that are accessible from the start cost several hundred dollars, while retrofitting can cost several thousand dollars or more—forcing some people to move into a nursing home.

We must also expand the realms of access for people living with disabilities—especially to new technologies that did not exist at ADA's inception. Therefore, I am also a sponsor of H.R. 4533, the Technology Bill of Rights for the Blind Act, to require that consumer products like home appliances and office equipment are manufactured so that they are fully accessible to blind consumers.

On this 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, I wholeheartedly thank the countless individuals who worked tirelessly to lay the groundwork for ADA in the decades that preceded its passage. Without their passion and activism, we would not be celebrating today. I also thank those who continue the fight, and I look forward to helping to build upon the enormous successes of the ADA—in this Congress and in those to come.

HONORING DR. RICHARD BURNEY ON HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 29, 2010

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Richard Burney, who will be retiring from the University of Michigan after 25 years of distinguished teaching. Dr. Burney has provided exemplary service to the citizens of the State of Michigan through his tireless dedication both to treating acutely injured patients and to training physicians in trauma care