



**Reflections on Four Decades of Practice of Medicine, Medical Aid in the Aftermath of the Spitak Earthquake and from the Front Lines of the Artsakh Liberation War, an Interview with Dr. Vartiter Kotcholosian Hovannisian.**

**Dr. Hovannisian** specialized in Internal Medicine with the Southern California Kaiser-Permanente Medical Group and Hospital for more than 40 years beginning in 1963. Vartiter and her sister Nazik are the children of genocide survivors from Erzerum and Ordu (Hovakim and Khnkouhi) who began their lives anew in Kharkov in the Ukraine. The family was caught up in World War II as their city was on the front lines of the German and Soviet armies for a long time and changed hands twice in a few months. In 1942, the family, with many others, was taken to Germany for work in the war industries. After the end of the war in 1945, several thousand uprooted Armenians gravitated to an Armenian Displaced Persons camp established on the outskirts of Stuttgart, Germany. The camp operated like a mini-state, with its own administration, school, churches, and organizations. Starting in 1949, the DPs were brought to America with the assistance of the American National Committee for Homeless Armenians (ANCHA). The Kotcholosian family arrived in Fresno, California, in September, 1949, and immediately integrated into the Armenian community. After a year in Sanger High School, Vartiter went on to Fresno State and then to UC San Francisco in 1954, at a time when few women were accepted into schools of medicine. She was awarded the M.D. degree in 1958, a year after her marriage to Richard Hovannisian, and then completed her internship and residency in internal medicine in the Fresno County General Hospital. She is the mother of

Raffi, Armen, Ani, and Garo Hovannisian, and the grandmother of fourteen youngsters. Vartiter has been active in various community and professional organizations, and at the time of the great earthquake in Armenia in 1988 was among the first volunteers on the ground. She also went on several missions to Mountainous Karabagh/Artsakh in the heat of the conflict, helping to care for the wounded and accompanying some of them by helicopter back to Yerevan. She has been a modest heroic warrior, who has never sought attention, publicity, or personal gain. She takes pride in the accomplishments of the Armenian people individually and collectively, but feels sharply the unhealed wounds of the Armenian Genocide and its continuing ramifications.

---

"Your Health" host Dr. Vicken Sepilian is a current board member and Past President of the Armenian American Medical Society. He is board-certified in Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility, as well as Obstetrics and Gynecology. He completed his residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology at Drexel University College of Medicine in Philadelphia and his fellowship in Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility at the University of Texas. Dr. Sepilian currently practices in Los Angeles and in Glendale.

Featuring physicians and health care professionals whose areas of practice cover the entire spectrum of allied health care, "Your Health" is a dynamic resource for viewers interested in improving their health. The program emphasizes the importance of preventative care, and focuses on how people can maintain a healthful lifestyle. The program provides an opportunity for the Armenian community to address their concerns with the counsel of bi-lingual health care professionals. The program also provides viewers with information about the AAMS and our activities in California and Armenia. The AAMS encourages individuals to contact local social workers to learn whether they are eligible for health insurance. AAMS doctors and nurses encourage their patients to get the insurance they deserve, and to see a physician regularly for the care that they need.