



The Documentary Film of

WILLIAM SAROYAN The Man The Writer

St. Mary, FL – A documentary film depicting the life and works of internationally renowned American-Armenian writer, William Saroyan was presented by Fresno based well-known photographer and documentary film-maker, Paul Kalinian and his daughter, Dr. Susie Kalinian, the producer, in the Davitian Hall of St. Mary Armenian Church of South Florida. Fr. Vartan Joulfayan, pastor of St. Mary's Church, invited the director and the producer of the film to give an opportunity to all South Florida Armenians and non-Armenians to come and enjoy the film and learn more about the American-Armenian Great Writer. It took ten years for determined father and daughter to write, direct and produce the movie dedicated to William Saroyan. The film presents the resettlement of Saroyan's parents in the United States after fleeing the Turkish persecutions in Bitlis, Turkey in the early 20th century, portrays of the childhood years of Saroyan in the suburbs of Fresno, and also depicts very sensitive and remarkable moments in Saroyan's life, as a teenager, young man and famous author.

Saroyan's career began in 1930's when he became the author of hundreds of stories, novels, plays and memoirs. Millions of people around the world were astonished by Saroyan's writings. According to the director of the film, "His first successful Broadway play was My Heart's in the Highlands in 1939, and in the same year, Saroyan was the first American writer to win both the Drama Critic's Circle Award and the Pulitzer Prize for his play, The Time of Your Life. He refused to accept the Pulitzer Prize on the grounds that, "*Commerce should not patronize art.... adding, It is no more great or good than anything else I have written.*"

Saroyan's inspiration led him to write, My Name is Aram in 1940, and The Human Comedy in 1943, both of which won the Book-of-the-Month award. The latter, which was dedicated to his mother, also won him an Academy Award for Best Writing Original Screen Story. During his lifetime, Saroyan authored and published over sixty books.

The writer and director, Paul Kalinian, learned

photography in his teenage years in Lebanon and later he pursued and completed his education in New York at the New York Institute of Photography. Mr. Kalinian settled in Fresno, California and opened his studio in 1972. He has photographed several eminent personalities and his works have been published in many books. Mr. Kalinian "has photographed a variety of characteristic portraits of Saroyan, one of which was selected by the USA/USSR Postal Services for their Commemorative Stamps, as a humanitarian symbol of the friendship between the two superpowers. The first-day-issue ceremonies took place simultaneously on May 22, 1991 in Fresno, California, and in Yerevan, Armenia."

The producer, Dr. Susie Kalinian graduated with honors from the California State University of Fresno, majoring in Biophysiology and Armenian studies and Chemistry. She later received her D. M. D. degree from Tufts University, School of Dental Medicine in Boston, MA in 2002. She received her academic and artistic education at Holland Project Talent Performing Arts Junior High School and Roosevelt Performing Arts High School, graduating in 1987 with honors.

After the death of William Saroyan in 1981, Mr. Kalinian and his daughter combined their efforts, talents and expertise and, through their determined and unfading enthusiasm, they created the exceptional documentary film, William Saroyan: The Man, The Writer.

The film has won 6 international Film Festival Awards; five for the film makers and one for the music composer, including the Gold Award, for Best Documentary Film, from the Philadelphia International Film Festival. ■



Director, Mr. Paul Kalinian, Producer, Dr. Susie Kalinian, Yn. Gayane & Fr. Vartan Joulfayan, Pastor of St. Mary.