

COMMUNITY

Thousand Oaks-Spitak Sister City Remembers William Saroyan

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More than 100 enthusiastic members of the community gathered at the Westlake Village Hyatt Hotel, April 21, to pay tribute to world-renowned Armenian writer and playwright, William Saroyan.

Organized and put together by the Thousand Oaks-Spitak Sister City Committee, the afternoon affair showcased photographs of William Saroyan taken by noted Armenian photographer, Paul Kalinian, and was highlighted by the screening of Kalinian's documentary film on the life and times of Saroyan entitled, "William Saroyan, The Man, The Playwright."

A finalist at the 1994 27th Houston International Film Festival, and winner of four other international film festival honors, Kalinian's hour-long documentary presented Saroyan's life from his childhood days in Fresno to his final visits to Armenia, and included home movie clips, interviews, a book-by-book chronology of Saroyan's work, an original music score and authentic photos of Fresno, past and present.

"William Saroyan touched and entertained hundreds of thousands of readers



Aram Saroyan

around the world," said Nora Sahagian, who chaired the committee that made the afternoon tribute possible. "Saroyan continues to entertain readers even today, and we are delighted to be able to look back on his life."

Kalinian, after years of pursuing Saroyan to no avail, was finally allowed to photograph the writer on March 26, 1976, and his images taken that afternoon were later honored in 1991, when a commemorative stamp featuring Saroyan's likeness was released in Yerevan and Fresno.

"On behalf of my wife and children, I am happy that you all have found the time to be here this afternoon to watch my film," Kalinian said. "William Saroyan touched so many people, and I was truly lucky to have been given the time I was with him."

Saroyan's son, Aram Saroyan, was the guest of honor at the afternoon affair, and rose to address the audience, thanking Kalinian for the moving documentary, and quoting from the preface of a book written on the elder Saroyan.

"That was a very touching documentary, really nice," said Saroyan.

"I want to thank Paul (Kalinian) for putting it all together."