



Alumni of the Month

October 2019

## Mona Karoghlanian

*Central Council Secretary Nick Tashjian, interviews Mona Karoghlanian, of St. Gregory of Narek Church in Cleveland, OH about her life growing up in the Church and involvement in the ACYOA.*

**Nick Tashjian: How did you first get involved in the ACYOA?**

**Mona Karoghlanian:** I couldn't wait until I was old enough to be in the ACYOA, and I joined as soon as I became of age! Growing up in Cleveland back in the day, there was a small group of kids my age. At that time, our group was too small to have a separate ACYOA Juniors Chapter. I got involved in ACYOA as a natural progression of my childhood life at St. Gregory of Narek Church. I attended Sunday School and Armenian School. I think I served every position on the ACYOA Executive Committee at one time or another.

**NT: What impact has the ACYOA had on your life?**

**MK:** The ACYOA was a great foundation for my service to the church! My experience serving the ACYOA has allowed me to be involved in many different levels of leadership at my parish.

**NT: What are some of your favorite memories being involved in the ACYOA?**

**MK:** There are so many ACYOA moments that flood my memory! But at the heart of all those memories are friendships, friendships, and more friendships! These friendships are everlasting, and no matter how much time has elapsed, we pick up right where we left off. The success of the ACYOA can certainly be measured at a Diocesan Assembly when the clergy (led by our Primate), Diocesan Council, Board of Trustees, Diocesan Delegates, and Parish leadership come together and can be heard going down ACYOA Memory Lane.

**NT: What have been some of your influences in your Christian life?**

**MK:** I have been influenced in so many positive ways, all of which have molded my Christian life and spirituality. First and foremost, my family and especially my mom, Florence Karoghlanian, who taught me early on that attending church and supporting the church should be a top priority in my life. Having lived with my grandparents, their dream of building an Armenian Church ever since their arrival in Cleveland was impactful beyond words. Although it took 40 years, St. Gregory of Narek was consecrated on April 12, 1964. The Church stands as a testament of our faith, and that with God's presence in our lives, all things are possible! Other influences have been the St. Nersess Summer Studies Conferences and the many clergy of our Diocese. The ACYOA ASP trip was a life changing experience, and I believe it drives me to this day! Additionally, this past January, I visited the Holy Land. It was a trip that must be experienced by all Christians, as mere words nor pictures cannot do the experience justice.

**NT: Are you still involved in your parish community?**

**MK:** Yes, yes, and yes! I am currently the Parish Council Chairperson. The St. Gregory of Narek Parish is a very close-knit church family, so close to the point if something good happens to one of us, it happens to all of us. If someone experiences something unfortunate in their lives, we rally around to help, pray, and share their troubles. I can't imagine not being active in my parish.

**NT: Any advice for current and future ACYOA members?**

**MK:** Remember to always be yourself and surround yourself with people who have the same values as you. Embrace your faith-filled friends. Most importantly, allow the love and light of our Lord Jesus Christ to fill your mind and soul and guide you in all you do for the glory of God.