**AWARD SPEECH**

**FOR**

**BORIS BAGDASARIAN**

Hello everyone! It is so wonderful to be here to celebrate one another, our culture, our history, and the depth of our shared friendship, our deep sense of community, and our indomitable spirit as Armenians. To be recognized by you as a “distinguished” graduate of the Armenian Mesrobian School means more to me than you can imagine. While I am deeply honored to be the recipient of this year’s Alumni Achievement Award, I want to be sure I don’t sound too “formal” because let’s face it, whether we know each other or not, and **I KNOW A LOT OF YOU** (**You can say this with a little exaggeration and wait for the laugh**), we are **FAMILY**. We are a family that spans generations and transcends borders and oceans. We are a family that learns from one another, teaches each other, and sees to it that we honor those that have preceded us as we prepare our children for the future. We are here thanks to the heart and soul and grit and diligence of our parents, grandparents, and **THEIR** parents, and no matter what struggles and trials and dangers they had to face, they instilled in us resilience, curiosity, and the will to overcome and succeed.... whatever that might be to each one of us.

This school is a symbol to all of us. It signifies the importance of education to our Armenian community, and along with the churches and monuments we have built to celebrate and memorialize our proud and resilient culture, Mesrobian stands for so much more. It is our beacon of optimism and purpose as Armenians, and it is a living testament to all of those we honor every day... our family members, friends, and neighbors that survived as DP’s during World War II to come to America and build a better life for us, their children, grandchildren and descendants.

I am so proud of all of you that have found your way in spite of the hardships and struggles endured by your families in the camps of Stuttgart. There’s a saying that tells us, “Living well is the best revenge” and we are all constant, thriving proof of that! Over fifty years ago, our families arrived to this area and were determined to build a home for all of us, and in that home, of course, there was a priority for knowledge. As students of Mesrobian, we received quality education that provided diverse and practical foundations for all of us, its students. When I think of the challenges my (**Name your relatives- grandparents? Parents?**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ faced in the DP camps, I am humbled by the opportunities I was afforded... in their name and in their memory.

I am honored to be a physician serving our community and hopefully setting an example for future generations to continue to honor and serve our collective family, friends and neighbors. I have to say that my Armenian pride runs through and through... and pardon the pun, that pride? **It’s in my blood** .... yes, please excuse the hematology joke.... (**Say this sort of seriously and wait for the laugh**).

(**If there is anyone in particular to acknowledge, like event organizers and family, you can do that here**). I would like to acknowledge and thank \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for your generosity and graciousness in recognizing me for this award. I would also like to thank my family- (**Name your relatives from the DP camp**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to my (**Name your immediate family - wife? Children? Parents?**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, who make all of this worthwhile and meaningful, thank you all!!!