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JAMAICA PLAIN

Proclamations presented to survivors of Armenian Genocide at center in Jamaica Plain

Posted by Matt Rocheleau June 18, 2013 02:57 PM

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(Jirair Hovsepian)

Lalig Musserian, back left, with Sen. Will Brownsberger, Rep. Jonathan Hecht, Rep. Dave Rogers, and

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

Three local legislators visited the Armenian Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Jamaica Plain to present proclamations to five residents there who are survivors of the Armenian Genocide.

The special meeting last week was arranged after the 29th annual Massachusetts State House Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide of 1915, which had been scheduled for April 19, was cancelled due to the Boston Marathon bombings days earlier, according to a press release.

"We are so touched by their visit," said a statement from Lalg Musserian of Belmont, who helped coordinate the meeting. "The friendship and support of the Armenian community was very evident in the time these legislators took to visit the ANRC, which is a warm and loving home away from home for so many of our seniors."

On June 10, State Senator William Brownsberger of Belmont and State Representatives Jonathan Hecht of Watertown and Dave Rogers of Cambridge read and presented proclamations to survivors Naomi Armen, Agnes Aznavorian, Armine Bagdikian, Azadouhi Donabedian, and Vasgen Hovanesian, officials said.

"I was so pleasantly surprised when the senator and the representatives stayed for so long to talk with the residents and staff at the reception following the presentation," said a statement from Siran Salibian, director of activities at the nursing home. "I thought they would come and leave quickly, but it was wonderful to see them visiting with our residents, shaking hands and offering kind words and congratulations."

"It was wonderful to meet the legislators and hear from them directly why it was so important for them to come to us to present the proclamations to the five survivors," added Karla Fleming, the center's executive director.

Last month, Brownsberger and Hecht presented a proclamation to survivor Siran Kassabian during the May 12 Mother's Day Divine Liturgy at St. James Armenian Church in Watertown, officials said.

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"The Armenian Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Jamaica Plain is a very special place. It was a privilege and a pleasure to meet such wonderful senior citizens – people with deep history to share," said a statement from Brownsberger.

"It was an absolute honor to meet and recognize these five individuals," added Hecht. "They endured unspeakable pain during and after the Armenian Genocide, but through their strength and courage they have contributed richly to the fabric of Massachusetts, including by educating subsequent generations about the truth of the genocide."

A proclamation was also presented in May to Nellie Nazarian by Jirair Hovsepian of Belmont, who travelled to Haverhill to deliver the proclamation in her home, officials said.

"Of all the honors I have experienced so far as a public official, none equal the chance to pay tribute to these courageous individuals," Rogers said in a statement. "Their perseverance in the face of tragedy is a great testament to the dignity of the human spirit."

To see a photo gallery created by Hovsepian, [click here](#).

E-mail Matt Rocheleau at mjrochele@gmail.com.

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