

# In Memoriam: Ardavast Unjian

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Arda Unjian lived a long, rich, and wonderful life. He was blessed with 101 years of energy, enthusiasm, and faith.

Born of Armenian parents in Istanbul in the Ottoman Empire, he was raised by his loving mother in his devoted uncle's home as his own father passed away when Arda was a very young boy. Educated at Robert's College in Istanbul, he then made his way to Detroit as a young man to establish himself as an architect and engineer. And establish himself he did! He founded Arda Engineering, which was commissioned to build many large complexes, including hospitals, churches, and other industrial sites.

Very early on, he was passionate about his hobbies. He was an avid photographer, taking movies of friends and family long before home movie cameras were very accessible. He always had the latest photography equipment, snapping Polaroids when everyone else had the long wait necessary with Kodaks. He was also a yachtsman and had a cabin cruiser and other types of boats docked and at the ready. He competed and won countless precision boat races on Lake St. Clair.

Always physically active, he first got interested in ballroom dancing in Detroit. And like all his hobbies, this one he pursued with determination and skill. He got even more serious about his dancing after moving to Florida, where St. Petersburg became his home. His ballroom dancing led him to competitions and demonstrations, and he would approach this with all the professionalism he had previously devoted to his career. He and his dance partners would wear coordinated ballroom costumes, and he was often featured in the newspaper, with full color photos.

Arda had a sharp sense of humor. He was always ready with a quick comeback, and everyone around him was charmed. Arda's Armenian heritage and culture were very important to him. He designed an Armenian Church in Florida. He was also a man of great religious faith, and attending Church on Sundays was an essential part of his life.

Arda was kind and loving, and always smiling and happy. His disposition drew people to him, and he leaves many dear friends behind. For the past few years, he was devoted to Arlene Wilbur, and she to him. Whether attending events together or just sitting quietly, they brought joy to one another.

Arda lived his life fully, and with no regrets. We are all so grateful he went peacefully, and know he will be welcomed at the pearly gates. Arda, we will all miss your smile, your sweetness, and your love.

## **Arda leaves behind a loving family:**

### **Nieces:**

Audrey Kouyoumdjian and partner Carol Pasternak  
and grand-nieces Nicole, Tania, and Gabi  
Wendy Walters and husband Clyde

Chris Papazian and husband Gerard and grand-nephews  
and niece, Mark, Paul and Marilyn  
Gweneth Horasan and Shayda Horasan

### **Nephew:**

Vaughan Horasan Jr.

### **Cousin:**

Vaughan Horasan Sr.