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OBITUARIES



Aram Arakelian
1947-2017

Aram Arakelian, born November 12, 1947, passed away on Monday November 27, 2017, at his home in Covina, California, after suffering a sudden heart attack. His passing was unexpected and the immense void he leaves behind is deeply felt by his loved ones.

Born in Stuttgart, Germany, Aram's family immigrated to New York City when he was two years old. The family lived in Brooklyn, New York for two years and then moved to the Bronx, where he started his education at Franz Sigel Public School, P.S. 35. Shortly after, his family moved to Richmond

Hill, New York, where he continued his education at Robert Van Wyck Junior High School, P.S. 217. Aram attended Thomas Edison High School, where he graduated with honors and as valedictorian of his graduating class. He met the love of his life, Carol, during his sophomore year of high school and they have been inseparable, ever since. His college years took him to Farmingdale State College, where he pursued an electrical engineering degree. After two years, he changed his major and went on to graduate at New York City College, with a degree in Construction Management.

Aram began his career in New York City, as a facilities engineer for the New York Telephone Company. However, he soon began a career in general contracting, which spanned over 40 years. In 1973, he relocated his family to Los Angeles, and joined the Interiors Division of Turner Construction Company. In 1977, Aram joined Kajima International in an executive position and successfully helped the firm grow to one of the top 400 Contractors in the United States.

Aram's plan to launch his own contracting firm was realized in 1984 with the establishment of Environmental Contracting. Another dream was realized in 2002, when Environmental designed and built its own building on the corner of First and Vignes, in Downtown Los Angeles. Over the years, Aram has been a continual driving force in raising the levels of interior construction in Los Angeles and Orange Counties. The pre-construction budgeting process he created to assist designers, brokers and clients has become an industry standard, among many other industry firsts. His award-winning projects have been featured in Interior Design Magazine, Contract Magazine, and have won numerous IIDA Southern California Calibre Design Awards.

In 1992, driven from a passion to support the future of our industry, Aram established the student scholarship fund for the International Interior Design Association (IIDA) Southern California Chapter. This self-sustaining fund now helps interior design students throughout the Greater Los Angeles and Orange County areas achieve a quality design education. As a result, he was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award by IIDA for his contribution to education in 1999. The Los Angeles Area Council Boy Scouts of America honored Aram with a Distinguished Good Scout Tribute in 1992, as recognition of his service, patriotism and example to the youth of our country. In 1994, Pepperdine University awarded Aram with a Doctorate in Philanthropy.

Aram loved traveling with his family. In particular, he enjoyed visiting New York City in the winter. In New York, he loved people watching while enjoying a Sabrett hot dog, New York pizza or rice pudding. He loved discovering small "hole in the wall" places and directing travel activities with his friends and family.

Aram was a passionate man with two main loves – his work and his family. Everyone who knew Aram admired his intellect, work ethic, and most of all, his compassion and willingness to help friends and colleagues in any way he could.

In 1977, Aram completed a James Dean Monument – It was one of his favorite projects. On the monument reads: "Death is the one inevitable, undeniable truth. Beyond it, through immortality, the only hope." While his passing was sudden, Aram would love his friends, family and colleagues to celebrate his life and legacy by continuing to pursue excellence, integrity, quality and philanthropy.

Aram is survived by his wife Carol; his daughters Angela, Tina and son Jim; daughter in law, Anna and beautiful grandson and granddaughter, little Aram and Sophia; his sisters Lucy and Susie, and Mike his brother-in-law.

In lieu of flowers, donations are requested for the IIDA Southern California Student Scholarship Awards. Please send donation checks to Environmental Contracting, ATTN: Jack Jibilian, 880 East 1st Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Make checks payable to: IIDA Southern California Chapter Fund, Memo – Aram Arakelian.

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— Warren Buffett

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