

STREET NAMED FOR 51-YEAR ROTARIAN ARCHIE AVEDISIAN

By Kenneth D. Weiss

Archie Avedisian Way. That's now the name of the street that leads from North Frederick Avenue in Gaithersburg, Maryland to the Boys and Girls Club building. The new street name was inaugurated after a luncheon on July 26, 2019.

Also, at the luncheon, Archie received a very nice proclamation from the County Executive. Then, the learning center in the building was named, "Archie's Place" and was decorated with a caricature of the man himself.

Archie Avedisian has been a Rotarian for 51 years in Seattle Washington and Washington D.C., the Friendship Heights Rotary Club in Washington D.C., where he served as President, and the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Rotary Club. Now, at age 91, he is an active member of the Rotary Club of Gaithersburg, Maryland. He has been a District 7620 Lane Chairman,

received numerous awards from his clubs, and became a Paul Harris Fellow in 1983. Archie can always be counted on to use his contacts with businesses to obtain silent auction prizes, funding for projects, and other support.

For many years, he has been a leader and promotor of an auto mechanics training program of the Washington Area New Automobile Dealers Association, WANADA. This is a free, fully certified 2-year program

servicing young people who want to learn the automotive repair trade. There is no cost to the students, men and women, but there are serious requirements to get in and to stay in the program. First, a student must be hired by a dealer (the program arranges interviews). He/she is hired full-time, with benefits. The student's work includes time studying in Montgomery College and completing an auto mechanics training program.

Each trainee receives a set of Snap-on Tools valued at \$2,000, and those

Physical Director of the Jamestown Boys Club and then Program Director of the Flatbush Boys Club. He continued his career as Executive Director of the Boys Clubs of East St. Louis, Illinois, which he integrated in 1956, when the Civil Rights Movement was in its infancy. Later, he led clubs in San Francisco California, Santa Rosa California and Seattle Washington.

In 1972, Archie became Chief Executive Officer of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Washington, bringing about ten-fold increases in

the organization's income, employment, number of clubs and numbers of young men and women served. He played large roles in diversifying the gender make-up and the racial composition of these clubs.

In his many years of community service, Archie has been involved in other causes, especially prevention of drug

and alcohol abuse. He was married for many years to Gloria Ann Rogers, with whom he had two children. Both a book and a video about his life are now being prepared.

If you drive up North Frederick Avenue from Gaithersburg, Maryland, just past Middlebrook Parkway you can see a sign for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Washington, Germantown Branch. Beside that is a normal street sign for "Archie Avedisian Way."



who complete the program can keep their tools. To date, 537 young men and women, over 90% of those who started in the program, have been employed.

Over the years, Archie has obtained funding for the WANADA training program from numerous Rotary Clubs in Districts 7620 and 7621.

Archie's strong connection with the Boys and Girls Clubs began 68 years ago in New York State, where he was