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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Stephen Feinstein, Genocide Scholar, Passes Away



Steve in his element with students in the GHRUP classroom

Toronto, Canada—It was with shock and great sadness that we at the Zoryan Institute learned of the passing yesterday of our colleague and friend, Stephen Charles Feinstein. His departure marks the loss of an important scholar, great educator, active associate of this institute, and strong friend of the Armenian people. His death, while speaking at a local Jewish Film Festival, caught everyone by surprise, as, aged only 65, he seemed robust and full of energy. He was taken to hospital where he died of an aortic aneurism that resulted in cardiac arrest. His wife Susan was with him the entire time.

In the words of Vahakn N. Dadrian, Zoryan's Director of Genocide Research, "His selfless and very effective involvement in the promotion of studies that went beyond focused Holocaust themes and incorporated, in particular, the Armenian Genocide, was a monument to his sublime humanity. We will all sorely miss him."

As a Holocaust specialist, Steve was quick to appreciate the significance of the interconnections between the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide. He worked energetically to introduce the Armenian Genocide into the curriculum and public programs of the University of Minnesota, creating, among other things, a very useful teacher's resource kit and producing in conjunction with Minnesota Public Television an award-winning documentary film, "The Armenian Genocide: 90 Years Later." Under his supervision, the CHGS's web site (www.chgs.umn.edu) became a rich and valuable source of reliable information on all aspects of the Holocaust and genocide.

Prof. Feinstein was the Director of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies since 1999, as well as an Adjunct Professor of History at the University of Minnesota. Previously, he had taught in the Dept. of History at University of Wisconsin-River Falls for thirty years until retirement. He had received a Ph.D. in Russian and European History from New York University in 1971, and an MA in European History and Art from there in 1966.

Steve had a scholarly interest in the artistic representation of genocide. He wrote and lectured about it, organized art exhibits, and his site provides a rare showcase for the art of Jewish, Armenian, and other genocides.



Steve with some students from the GHRUP

In 2003, he helped organize a partnership between the University of Minnesota and the International Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies (A Division of the Zoryan Institute) to run the highly regarded annual Genocide and Human Rights University Program simultaneously in Minneapolis and Toronto. The partnership provided official accreditation to the program in both locations. He served both as Co-Director of the program and taught in it at both locations.

"In all my dealings with Steve, I found him to be both visionary in seeing the benefits of collaboration between our two organizations, as well as eminently practical in helping to overcome the inevitable obstacles to such undertakings. He will be missed not only for his vision and his scholarship, but also for his leadership in field of genocide studies as a master educator," said Greg Sarkissian, Zoryan's President.

Stephen sought to foster scholarly research and increase public knowledge about the history and politics of ethnic and national conflict in the eastern Mediterranean, with the hope that the knowledge developed would contribute to reconciliation among the diverse peoples of the region. In this respect, he collaborated through the CHGS with scholars such as Eric Weitz and Taner Akçam on several research projects with various other institutions around the world, including the Zoryan Institute.

Always a man of conviction in the defence of truth, Stephen Feinstein was one of the prominent signatories to the famous statement of 126 Holocaust scholars at the Thirtieth Conference on the Holocaust and the Churches in 2000 "affirming that the World War I Armenian Genocide is an

incontestable historical fact and accordingly urge the governments of Western Democracies to recognize it as such.”

Roger W. Smith, Chair of Zoryan’s Academic Board, in remembering his late colleague, stated that “Steve, whom I knew for many years and worked with in many contexts, was one of the finest persons I have ever known: he had integrity, intellect, generosity, and a universal perspective that included all peoples. He knew a great deal about tragedy and suffering, but transcended them with humanity and that ever present sense of humour.”



From left to right: Houry Koolian, Sonia Bal, Greg Sarkissian, Stephen Feinstein, Roger Smith

“Steve was well known for his numerous contributions to the field, through his own research, teaching, public lecturing, organizing conferences and publishing, and particularly through the help and support he provided to countless students and scholars in their respective efforts,” commented George Shirinian, Executive Director of

the Zoryan Institute. “He was outstanding for his countless efforts at outreach and networking with others in the field. His collaboration, irrepressible humour, benevolence and warm friendship will be greatly missed by all of us at the Zoryan Institute.”

Steve leaves his wife Susan, two children, and two grandchildren. The funeral will be held at Temple Beth-El in Saint Louis Park, Minnesota, Friday afternoon at 2:00 PM. The family has requested that any memorial donations be directed to the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies. The information is at: <http://www.chgs.umn.edu>.