



Thomas Bahumian

September 23, 1939 - December 3, 2023

Thomas Vrezh Bahumian, 84, a retired federal petroleum engineer, passed away at home on Sunday, December 3, 2023, after a long battle with Parkinson's Disease and Parkinson's Dementia. He was a longtime resident of Falls Church, Virginia. He was a well-regarded expert in oil and natural gas storage for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in his long federal career.

Thomas Vrezh Bahumian is survived by his beloved wife of 54 years, Roslyn Bahumian (Boroughs); daughter Michelle Bahumian and son-in-law Brandon Benitez, of Annandale, VA; son Kevin Bahumian and daughter-in-law Catherine (Wickens,) of Vienna, VA; grandsons Jackson, Logan, and Aidan; brother Henry, of La Cañada, CA; brother Nejdeh "Ned," of Arlington, VA; sister Scarlet, of Arlington, VA; by three sisters-in-law; four brothers-in-law; 15 nieces and nephews; and by cousins in California, Australia, and Sweden. He was predeceased by his parents, Khatchator "Khachik" and Vartuhi, both of Glendale, CA; by multiple aunts and uncles; and by three sisters-in-law.

He was born in Bandar-Shahpour (now Bandar-es-Khomeini,) Khuzestan Province, Iran, a city on the coast of the Persian Gulf where it would get hot enough in summer for the asphalt to melt.

His parents, Khatchator and Vartuhi (Noravian) were part of the Armenian

Christian minority community there, and he always identified as Armenian first and foremost. The name Vrezh, his original given name, is Armenian for “revenge” or “vengeance.” After he became an American citizen and took the name Thomas (after an ancestor by that name) family members still called him Vrezh.

Armenian was his first language, Farsi his second, and he learned Arabic and English in school. Because he primarily grew up writing in Farsi, which is written right to left, his writing leaned to the left.

He started working full-time at night at age 14 to help support his family. He dropped out of school for a year but then he went back and graduated. He would go to school during the day and then go to the dockyard to work all night. He also had a side hustle, buying things from sailors to sell in town, and selling other things to sailors. Somehow during this time period he also found the time to start weightlifting and boxing. He had amazing arm strength until the end of his life.

When he finished high school he took a competitive entrance exam to enter technical school so he could work in the oil fields. He worked at an oil field in the mountains until he was 25, sending money home and saving some for himself. Then he applied for college and a student visa in the United States. His family filled his suitcase with pistachios, which he lived off of for awhile after arriving in the U.S.

He first came to Boston, which he found too cold and the people too unfriendly. In addition to starting college, he got a job at a local restaurant. His friend Herand from the old country had gone to college at Berry College in Rome, Georgia, and suggested he transfer, which he did that same academic year.

After he started at Berry College, he took a job at the dining hall, where he first saw his future wife Roslyn, and winked at her. She was 17 and he was 26. Their mutual friend Herand set them up on a date, and they were together ever since. They married on June 6, 1969, in a small ceremony at the chapel at Berry College, with mostly family in attendance.

When he was in college, he worked every summer and made enough money to pay for the following year. One year he worked with a combine crew, harvesting grain across the heartland. One year, he sold Bibles door-to-door in North Carolina and was hostilely approached by the KKK, who gave him a threatening card he retained until the end of his life. He also worked full-time while a full-time student during his college career.

As a college student, he was recruited to play soccer by his English professor. He had the choice of playing soccer or reading Shakespeare aloud in class, so he chose the easier option. Later in life, he coached his son's soccer team for four years.

He graduated college in 1970, with a degree in math and minor in physics, following which both he and Roslyn went to graduate school at West Virginia University, where he got a master's degree in petroleum engineering. He became an American citizen in 1973.

Very shortly after he became a citizen, he got his job with FERC, where he worked as a subject matter expert in oil and natural gas storage until he retired. In that capacity, he often testified in court for the Commission. He continued working part time as a consultant the first few years of his retirement. His opinion was highly sought after by both oil companies and foreign governments.

He and Roslyn settled in Woodbridge, VA, where daughter Michelle was born. Two years later, they had moved to a house in Alexandria, where son Kevin was born. In 1979 they moved to their house in Falls Church, where their children grew up. After moving to Falls Church, he became part of a car pool that lasted for 30 years and provided some of his closest friends.

His hobbies were going on walks, working out at the gym, and doing yard work. He and Roslyn were do-it-yourselfers who built their own deck and put down their own flooring. He kept the cars in good shape, doing his own oil changes. He enjoyed taking the family on weeklong beach vacations every year. In later life, he and Roslyn enjoyed square dancing for a time, and later, enjoyed going on cruises in the Caribbean.

Most of all, he enjoyed spending time with his wife, children, grandchildren, and his sister and brothers. He enjoyed it when extended family on both sides would come to visit.

His favorite saying was, "Trust everyone one percent. The rest they have to earn." Other sayings of his were:

'That donkey's the same donkey, even if you put a new saddle on it'—his version of 'The leopard doesn't change his spots.'

'When the camel comes to your door, you have to ride it.'—his version of 'Opportunity knocks.'

It is safe to say that he did indeed ride that camel.

He will be deeply missed by all. May his memory be eternal.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

JAN 13. 1:00 PM (ET)

St. Mark Orthodox Church
7124 River Rd
Bethesda, MD 20817-4770
(301) 229-6300

Tribute Wall



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Thomas Bahumian.* ”



December 23, 2023 at 06:00 PM