



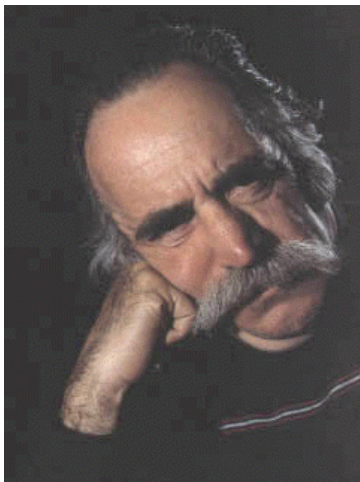
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Homenetmen Glendale Ararat Chapter
Cultural Division

Get to Know...

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WILLIAM SAROIAN

August 31, 1908 – May 18, 1981

Born in 1908 in Fresno California, William Saroian was one of the top writers of the mid twentieth century. An incredibly talented writer, Saroian tried his hand successfully at almost everything. Novels, plays, songs, and short stories all grace this writer's resume. His father died when he was three years old, after which he was sent to an orphanage for four years. He left school at the age of 15 and decided to become a writer. This decision was based partly on his own father's attempts at writing. His experience with death at such a young age, his time spent in the orphanage, and in later years, his formal schooling, created the "joyous sorrow" which characterizes Saroian's works.

By 1920, Saroian was able to live off of his writing, though mainstream recognition was only given after 1934's short story "The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze". In 1939 *My Heart's in the Highlands* opened to critical acclaim. His next big step came with the play *Time of Your Life* later in the same year, which was given the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, though he refused the prize for himself on grounds that art should not be given awards, especially by the rich who had no understanding of such things. However, he did accept the Drama Critic's Circle Award in that same year. Shortly after, in 1940, he again established himself in the genre of short stories with his collection titled *My Name is Aram*. 1940 also found Saroian at MGM filming *The Human Comedy*. This novel-turned movie won the Academy Award for best picture and original story for the screenplay.

Saroian joined the Army during World War II. His absence from Broadway during the war would prove damaging to his career as a playwright. After the war, public interest in his work was quickly declining due to changes in opinion and taste.

He married socialite Carol Marcus in 1943. They had two children, Aram and Lucy, and divorced after six years.

Though They were to remarry, the union was one doomed to failure. They divorced for the second and final time two years later.

Saroian died in 1981 in his birthplace of Fresno, California, a hero of Armenian-American people.

Half his ashes were shipped to Armenia for burial.

