

On August 16, 2013, AJA founding fathers Pierre Akkelian (Canadian Gem/Nishi Pearls), Vartkess Knadjian (Backes & Strauss), and AJA President Gagik Gevorkyan attended the scheduled AJF founding meeting at the law offices of Python & Peter in Geneva, Switzerland.

During the meeting, the Foundation Charter was reviewed and signed after the following board trustees and officers were elected:

Chairman – Pierre Akkelian (Canada)

Vice-Chairman – Vartkess Knadjian (Switzerland)

Treasurer – Gagik Gevorkyan (Russia)

Secretary – Aram William Shishmanian (United Kingdom)

Trustee – William Edward Boyadjian (USA)



Subsequent meetings were held over the next 2 days between Mr. Akkelian, Mr. Knadjian and Mr. Gevorkyan, during which other AJF related matters were discussed and ideas submitted to create a business plan for the Foundation.



The idea to create an AJA Foundation originally begun in Geneva in 2010. Mr. Akkelian and then president of AJA Mr. Knadjian planned to raise funds to finance a mission to inform the world about the immense contribution that Armenians have made to the art of jewellery making throughout history. Mr. Akkelian and Knadjian also wished to start a scholarship fund to assist talented youth to pursue their studies at the leading design schools of the world in order to perpetuate and maintain Armenian leadership role in a rapidly changing landscape.

To help finance the project, AJA founding member and the president of Franck Muller watches Vartan Sirmakes generously offered to create 38 rose gold and stainless steel limited edition watches featuring the Armenian alphabet. AJF founding members met Mr. Sirmakes at Franck Muller watchland to thank him for his support and held constructive discussions regarding future plans for Armenian jewellers.



To date, there are over a dozen proud owners of this unique Franck Muller watch, one of whom is Mr. Nihar Parikh. An executive of one of India's most prominent diamond-jewelry companies, who visited Franck Muller factory with Mr. Akkelian to pick up his exclusive watch. Mr. Parikh is the first non-Armenian to support AJF's efforts!