

Debutante Handbook



The Debutante Ball
Saturday, January 30, 2027
Beverly Wilshire Hotel

Dear Prospective Debutantes and Mothers,

We are honored that you are considering participating in the 2027 Debutante Ball. For generations, this special event has brought families together to celebrate the accomplishments and achievements of our young women while honoring our shared Armenian heritage, fostering lasting friendships, and creating treasured memories that will last a lifetime.

Please review the information included in this Debutante Handbook, and feel free to contact any member of our committee if you have questions. We are here to guide you through every step of this memorable experience.

If you have friends or relatives who may be interested in participating as a Debutante or Escort this year or in the future, we would love to hear from you. Please share their names with us so we can extend an invitation.

Again, we are delighted to welcome you and your family and look forward to seeing you soon.

Sincerely,

*Cindy Norian
Chair, Ladies Auxiliary of the Western Diocese*

*Audrey Matoesian
Chair, Debutante Ball*

Debutante Information

Gowns

We ask that you contact Laura Estephanian with your selection before ordering your dress. Laura's cell phone number is 626-524-3212, and her email is lestephanian@yahoo.com.

It is mandatory that you forward a photograph and information about the dress you are considering prior to purchase. This is to avoid duplications and to confirm that your dress complies with our guidelines.

Because each Debutante will be formally presented before the Archbishop, clergy, family, and guests, gowns should reflect the dignity and tradition of the occasion.

Gowns should be pure white, floor length, and full-skirted. Ecru and ivory gowns are not permitted. We request that all gowns be modest and age appropriate. Beading should be kept to a minimum. A few seed pearls may be acceptable. No colored trim, colored beads, rhinestones, or jeweled belts are allowed.

Dresses should preferably cover the shoulders and be of a style that does not reveal cleavage. If you choose a strapless style, plan to have straps of at least 1½ inches wide added for the presentation. These straps may be removed after the presentation. Halter-top dresses may be selected, provided they are not overly low cut.

It is suggested that you wear a long slip. The spotlights tend to make many fabrics, even layers of fabric, translucent.

Not Acceptable

Mermaid or sheath dresses, heavy beading, low-cut décolletage, backless dresses, slit skirts, trains, jeweled belts, colored trim, colored beads, or rhinestones.

Shoes

Shoes should be white but may be of any style you feel is appropriate with your dress. Pumps are preferred but sandals are acceptable. Heels should be no more than 3 inches high. Please no rhinestones or sequins that might catch on to your dress as you descend the stairs during the presentation.

We ask that you bring your shoes to rehearsals and wear them while practicing. This will ensure you'll feel comfortable in them the night of the Ball.

Gloves

For the presentation, gloves of pure white solid material covering the entire hand must be worn. Glove length is determined by the sleeve length:

Long or full length gloves (above the elbow) for short sleeved dresses

Elbow length for mid length sleeved dresses.

Hair, Make-up, and Accessories

Hair may be worn as you wish. No hair ornaments such as flowers, tiaras, or fancy hair clips are permitted during the presentation. The spotlights tend to fade facial features; therefore, some blush and a complimentary shade of lipstick should be worn.

Jewelry is limited to small earrings such as pearls or studs. No necklaces are to be worn during the presentation since you will be receiving a cross from your father/presenter.

Please wear the shoes and undergarments you plan to wear the night of the Ball when having your gown altered, so the fit and length are accurate.

Any questions should be directed to Laura Estephanian: 626-524-3212 or lestephanian@yahoo.com

Fathers' or Presenters' Attire

Each father or presenter is required to wear a traditional black tuxedo, either single- or double-breasted, with a white dress shirt, black bow tie, black cummerbund or vest, and black dress shoes with black socks.

Shirts should be plain white, with no colored trim.

Reservations and Hotel Rooms

A reservation insert will be included with your invitation. Please complete the insert with the names of your guests and their entrée selections, and mail it in as directed.

Michele Chalfant will handle all ticket and table reservations on a first-come, first-served basis. Please make your reservations early.

Student tickets may be purchased for guests who are 21 years of age or younger.

As an accommodation, children 12 and under may order chicken tenders in place of the adult entrée. Please indicate any children's meal requests on the reservation insert.

The hotel usually offers a limited number of rooms at a reduced rate. We may reserve a block of up to 10 rooms. If more than 10 rooms are needed, the reduced rate may not apply.

If you plan to stay at the hotel on the night of the Ball, or for the entire weekend, please make your room reservation early.

Application, Biography, and Publicity

Please complete the Debutante Application and the Debutante Biography and Activities Form online at wddebball.com.

On the Debutante Application, please enter your name, as well as the names of your parents and grandparents, exactly as you would like them to appear in all publicity materials and in the keepsake booklet.

The Debutante Biography and Activities Form will ask for additional information, including your school, grade level, activities, future educational and career plans, church affiliation, and interests. Please also submit your biography through this online form. The biography should be 250 words or less. If you list an activity that is specific to your school, please include a brief explanation.

The Debutante Ball will be publicized primarily online through church, Diocese, and community websites, email announcements, social media, Armenian news outlets, and the Western Diocese Newsletter. Since Armenian community newspapers are no longer widely available in print, our publicity efforts will focus on digital outreach to help reach families and the broader Armenian community.

In the weeks leading up to the Ball, press releases may include each Debutante's photo and biographical information. Please submit an appropriate headshot for this purpose. If there are additional online publications or community outlets you would like us to consider, please provide their contact information.

During her presentation, a brief summary of each Debutante's biography and activities will be read. Our goal is to capture each Debutante in a personal and meaningful way and to celebrate her accomplishments, interests, and future plans. The full biography will be printed in the keepsake booklet. The committee reserves the right to edit biographies as needed, and each Debutante will receive her final biography for approval before publication.

Keepsake Booklet

Each year, we prepare a keepsake booklet for the evening that includes professional portraits and biographies of the Debutantes, as well as photos of the Escorts and Cross Bearers.

Families will have the opportunity to place congratulatory messages in the booklet in honor of their Debutante. These messages may be submitted by parents, grandparents, relatives, friends, godparents, or others who would like to celebrate her participation in the Ball.

We ask for your help in encouraging family and friends to participate by placing a personal tribute or congratulatory message in the booklet. Several page sizes and message options will be available to choose from. A booklet message form will be included in your invitation suite. Completed messages should be emailed to Janet@RobertsMarketing.com.

Net proceeds from the booklet messages will go directly to the Hye Camp Building Fund.

Photography

Our photography chairwoman, Gerri Day, will arrange a date for booklet portraits to be taken before one of our rehearsals in early January. We hope your dress will be fitted by that time. However, if your seamstress has not completed the final adjustments, you may arrange to pick up your dress for the photo date. Pins will not show in the portrait.

On the day of the Ball, a professional photographer will take group photos of the Debutantes, Escorts, and Cross Bearers with the Archbishop. Additional photos will be taken during the presentation, the Father-Daughter Dance, and other notable moments throughout the evening. A video of the presentation will also be recorded.

These photos and the video will be given to each Debutante, Escort, and Cross Bearer as a gift from the Ladies Auxiliary.

Debutante family photos will also be taken. You will be asked to sign up for a specific time for your family photos.

Invitations

Formal invitations will be available at the Family Luncheon in November for you to send to family and friends. Invitations will be available in packets of 10.

Rehearsals

There will be five rehearsals (the dates, times, and location will be announced at a later date).

1. Debutantes Only
2. Debs and Escorts
3. Debs and Escorts
4. Debs, Fathers/Presenters, and Escorts
5. All Participants at the hotel or alternative location.

All Debutantes are required to attend each rehearsal. Regular attendance is important and helps ensure a polished presentation that you will be proud of on the night of the Ball.

Please wear comfortable clothing for rehearsals and bring the shoes you plan to wear for the Ball, or shoes of a similar height, so you can practice walking and dancing comfortably.

Rehearsals will be approximately 2½ hours. Please arrive on time.
Refreshments will be served following rehearsals.

Final Rehearsal

The final rehearsal will be held at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel, pending availability. If the hotel is not available, an alternate location will be arranged.

All Participants are required to attend the final rehearsal, including Debutantes, Escorts, Fathers/Presenters, Cross Bearers, and the Master of Ceremonies. Musicians, lighting technicians, and sound engineers will also be present.

If you are unable to attend any rehearsal, please contact Susie Simonian at (562) 754-4999 as soon as possible.

The Day of the Ball

The hotel will provide rooms for the Debutantes to use on the afternoon of the Ball. Each Debutante should arrive with everything she will need for the evening, including her gown, slip, gloves, shoes, undergarments, makeup, and any other personal items.

If an after-party is planned, please also bring a change of clothes.

Because many people will be using the rooms throughout the afternoon and evening, they will not be secure. Please do not leave valuables or personal belongings unattended.

Debutantes should eat lunch before arriving at the hotel. Light snacks and water will be provided.

Parties

Debutante families are welcome to host parties, barbecues, dinners, or other gatherings for the Debutantes and Escorts.

The Ladies Auxiliary asks that a parent be present at all such gatherings. These events are planned privately by the families, and the Ladies Auxiliary does not accept responsibility for them.

Contact information for the Debutantes and Escorts will be distributed. We kindly ask that all Debutantes and Escorts be included in any group gatherings.

After the Ball

Parents of the Participants often organize an after-party, either at a home or at an appropriate restaurant. This can be a nice way for the Debutantes and Escorts to end a very memorable evening together.

The Ladies Auxiliary does not plan the after-party and does not accept responsibility for the event.

In past years, parents have also arranged transportation for the Debutantes and Escorts to and from the after-party.

Sample Gowns





Debutante Ball Committee

Ladies Auxiliary Chair

Cindy Norian 310-277-4490 cnorian@aol.com

Debutante Ball Chair

Audrey Matoesian 818-269-4438 amatoesian@gmail.com

Debutantes

Sandi Hampar 818-640-0412 Sandihampar@gmail.com

Escorts

Adrineh Ghookasian 818-640-7771 adrinehghookasian@gmail.com

Laura Surmeian 818-621-9697 LLSurmeian@gmail.com

Carla Simonian 818- 216-4267 cmcsimonian@gmail.com

Website & Publicity

Renée Missakian 818-282-6363 rmissakian@gmail.com

Gowns

Laura Estephanian 626-524-3212 lestephanian@yahoo.com

Reservations

Michele Chalfant 323-449-3769 chalkidsmom@gmail.com

Jeanine Ash 310-753-1786 krikorianj@gmail.com

Choreography & Music

Susie Simonian 562-754-4999 babrewn@aol.com

Tina Barsam Fuentes 213-700-2412 tbarsam@aol.com

Keepsake Booklet

Janet Roberts 949-500-1367 Janet@RobertsMarketing.com

Gina Eskigian 310-989-2848 gina.eskigian@gmail.com

Invitations

Audrey Matoesian 818-269-4438 amatoesian@gmail.com

Debutantes Script and Bios

Silva Katchiguian 951-203-1078 Skatchiguian@gmail.com

Photography

Gerri Day 818-378-9676 gerriday@gmail.com

Anahid Karahagopian 818-426-2604 Akarahagopian@gmail.com

Cross Bearers

Diane Barsam 949-705-7714 Dianebarsam@gmail.com

Flowers

Natalie Tarkanian Bailey 858-735-8208 nataliebailey3@gmail.com

Rehearsal Refreshments & Events

Araxie Boyamian 818-404-1662 araxie.boyamian@gmail.com

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2025 Debutantes, Escorts & Cross Bearers



2025 Debutante Ball Committee



