

EDWIN MICHAELIAN

Class of 1924

Inducted 1998

For 30 years after the end of World War II, Edwin Michaelian, Class of 1924, was the region's most influential government leader. He died in September 1983. Mr. Michaelian's lasting legacies as Mayor of White Plains and County Executive of Westchester in the 40s, 50s, and 60s include the White Plains urban renewal program, the presence of major corporations in the county, the upgrade of the commuter train lines and much of the county's parkland.

Following White Plains High School he graduated from Yale in 1929, earning Phi Beta Kappa honors. He was associated with the wholesale importing firm of Michaelian & Kohlberg, was president of the Spinning Wheel Rugs Company and the Oriental Rug Importers Association. He served as a naval officer in World War II. Mr. Michaelian was elected as Councilman in White Plains in 1943 and won the first of four terms as Mayor in 1949. In White Plains he served as vice- chairman of the Planning Board and as chairman of the City's Parking Authority, the first such organization in the world.

He was elected County Executive in 1957, and, during his 16 years in that capacity, continued the successful efforts he had started as mayor to attract major corporations, such as General Foods, IBM, Nestle, Pepsico, Texaco and AT&T, to Westchester. He also acquired 4,000 acres of parkland, including Mountain Lakes and Muscoot Park, persuaded the county to build a medical center to replace Grasslands Hospital, and was instrumental in the development of Westchester Community College.

His welcoming and all-inclusive style brought people from all walks of life into government and he served as a regional and national spokesperson for the suburbs. The Michaelian Institute for Public Policy & Management at Pace University in White Plains, which he helped found, bears his name.