

May 2, 2017

Dear Members of the AUB Community,

The American University of Beirut (AUB) is greatly saddened by the recent loss of trustee and alumnus Maroun Semaan, whose memory will live on at this University for his transformative philanthropy and illustrious service.

“Maroun was a genuinely great and humble man, whose work and whose impact will resonate through the ages,” said AUB President Fadlo R. Khuri. “We will carry on his wishes through our revised curriculum in the faculty he graduated from and which will now forever hold his name. We will carry on his good work in other important ways as well, along our own determined common path, and seek to be always worthy of his profound trust.”

In 2017, AUB named one of its largest and most successful faculties after this visionary partner and friend of the University—The Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture—following a transformative gift from the Semaan Foundation which is the largest donation ever received by AUB.

An influential entrepreneur and incredibly successful businessman, Maroun Semaan was also a true civic leader and engaged citizen. His inspired philanthropy has touched innumerable lives. Mr. Semaan and the Semaan Foundation, which he founded in 2011, have provided much-needed support in the fields of education, hospitalization, and social welfare, focusing on the Middle East.

In 2013, Maroun Semaan was elected to the AUB Board of Trustees and served his alma mater with distinction and true dedication, bringing his business acumen and great love for AUB to help the University as it pursues its lofty ambitions for an even more impactful and engaged future.

AUB Board Chair Philip Khoury stated: "The university today mourns the loss of its student, alumnus, trustee, role model and philanthropist Maroun Semaan. Maroun believed deeply in the power of education and its role in preparing the citizen leader. His love for and service to AUB knew no bounds. Fittingly, his legacy will endure through the ages, as generations of engineers and architects will graduate from the school that he did, and which now most fittingly bears his name."

A true believer in the transformative power of education, Mr. Semaan was himself the recipient of a scholarship allowing him to study at the American University of Beirut. He graduated in 1977 with a Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering and, with the tools that AUB helped him hone, moved to the Gulf to pursue his career.

After graduation, Mr. Semaan held numerous leadership positions in the fields of oil and gas, infrastructure, and civic works. Then, in 1991, he joined Petrofac and helped grow this small company into an international powerhouse in the oil and gas engineering industry. Mr. Semaan was also a founding member of the Arab Forum for Environment and Development (AFED) and served on the Board of the American University of Sharjah.

After serving in many leadership positions at Petrofac International, including on the Board of Directors and as president, Maroun Semaan retired from the company in 2013 and focused on entrepreneurial endeavors in renewable energy, telecommunications, and real estate.

Mr. Semaan's generosity to AUB has been extraordinary, supporting student scholarships, PhD fellowships, and innovative research over the years. In addition, the Semaan Foundation was one of the Strategic Partners for AUB's 150th Anniversary and made a major gift to the American University of Beirut Medical Center to name the Outpatient Surgery Center after Mr. Semaan's parents, the late Tanios and Souraya Semaan.

On January 16, 2017, at the launch of BOLDLY AUB: The Campaign to Lead, Innovate, and Serve, Maroun Semaan's daughter Nour spoke about his belief in the power and necessity of serving humanity through purposeful philanthropy.

"He always wondered how someone with means could rest his head on his pillow while a neighbor of his, near or far, is unable to make ends meet," said Nour Semaan. "His primary objective is providing a suitable environment for students and seekers of knowledge. His ambition is to ensure the availability of medical care, and to encourage development projects wherever there is need, as his contribution in lighting a candle in the darkness of the Middle East."

Upon hearing the news of his passing, faculty and students from the Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture gathered to pay tribute to this towering figure, who will continue to inspire this and future generations with his legacy of profound and beneficent leadership.

With sincere sympathy,

Fadlo R. Khuri, MD
President