

For Immediate Release



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## **AUB mourns the loss of Trustee Emeritus Ali Ghandour**

The American University of Beirut (AUB) community mourns former trustee Ali Ghandour, who passed away on August 29, 2020. A devoted supporter of AUB, Ghandour served as trustee (1979-2008) and was named trustee emeritus in 2008.

Business leader Ali Ghandour started his education at AUB and earned his BS in aeronautical engineering from New York University in 1954 before returning to Lebanon. He started his career in 1954 as engineer and then head of aviation safety at the Lebanese Civil Aviation Authority. He then worked for the Directorate General of Civil Aviation in Kuwait. In 1963, he co-founded the Royal Jordanian Airways, Alia at the time, and became its chairman and president. He had also been involved in the founding of several airlines and organizations, namely: Royal Wings and Arab Wings (Jordan), Arab Air Cargo, the Royal Jordanian Academy of Aeronautics in Amman, Arab Wings Amman, the Royal Jordanian Falcons, and Sierra Leone Airline, and was a board member of Jet Airways, India.

Ghandour was an advisor to His Majesty the late King Hussein of Jordan on civil aviation, civil air transport, and tourism. He served on the boards of multiple corporations and universities including ARAM International Investments, Jordan Tourism Resorts Company, and Georgetown University. In 1982, Ghandour co-founded Aramex, Jordan, of which he was a former director. He served as president of ARAM Trading and Technology and as co-chairman of Aviation Pioneers and Consultants in Lebanon.

He received many awards in his lifetime, among which are Grand Cordons of the Order of Al Nahda of Jordan; Grand Decoration of Honor in Silver with Sash for service to the Republic of Austria; Tanda Kehormatan, Indonesia; Commandeur de l'Ordre National du Merite de la Legion d'Honneur, France; Commendatore dell-Ordine Al Merito della Repubblica Italiana, Italy; the National Order of the Cedars, Lebanon; the 2014 WAAAUB Distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award; and the shield of the International College. He was a board member of the

Queen Noor Al-Hussein Foundation, the Royal Endowment for Culture and Education, and the Royal Society of Fine Arts.

Ghandour has been associated with several charitable organizations including Reaching Hearts for Kids (Maryland, USA), Royal Society of Fine Arts and the Royal Endowment for Culture and Education (Amman, Jordan), the American Center of Oriental Research, Arab Thought Forum, Saadeh Cultural Foundation, and the World Aerospace Foundation Organization.

A philanthropic donor who supported educational, humanitarian, and cultural causes, he was one of AUB's major supporters and established the Ali Ghandour Endowed Scholarship and the Ali Ghandour Reading Room at AUB's Jafet Library. He is a founder of the AUB Zaki Nassif Music Program and was a member of the AUB President's Club.

AUB President Dr. Fadlo R. Khuri said Ghandour would always be remembered as "a great among a remarkable generation of Arab institution builders that came to the fore in the 1960s and 70s, who blended enterprising vision with unstinting service to their communities."

"Having attained success in business, Ali devoted his life to upholding and growing the mission of his alma mater. He worked in concert with lifelong friends and fellow trustees Dick Debs, Nicola Khuri, and Kamal Shair, to save AUB when the university was in peril during the Lebanese civil war and to restore it after 1991. We shall all miss his wise counsel, and I shall personally miss the many frank and candid conversations we had, always focused on the institution he loved and cherished, AUB."

AUB Board Chair Dr. Philip S. Khoury, who knew Ali Ghandour well and served with him on the Board over several decades stated sadly, "It is hard to believe that Ali is gone. His devotion to his alma mater was tremendous and he stood by it tall and strong in its worst moments, some of which were endless. He loved our Board and community, and he served it and the university faithfully for so very long."

Ali Ghandour is the father of a family of AUB supporters, including former AUB trustee (2013-19) and world-renowned entrepreneur Fadi Ghandour, Raghida, Amal, and Iman, and stepdaughter Asma el-Zein.

**ENDS**

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**Note to Editors**

### **About AUB**

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 900 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 9,100 students. AUB currently offers more than 120 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 420-bed hospital.

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