Thank you!

It’s a special honor and privilege to be in this room and to see it finally named. I first sat in the back row in 1971 when my father was giving a lecture, and then noted one year later the very earnest young man who was shaking the hand of every one of his teachers, probably the only member of that class that I think I met as an, not yet nine year old boy was, Ismail Khalil who went out of his way to thank every one of his teachers after he graduated. And so, the next time I was in this room, that I can recall, in 1997 when Samir Atweh and George Freiha invited me to give a lecture, and I had to cover up for the absence of primary data within abundance of negative trials, I tried to focus on the friendly face that I had known for so many years, who while he’d been twice, I think the chair of surgery by then, alls remained a kind and gentle, scholar, educator, and mentor to so many people; to Nabil Fuleihan, Jamal Hubballah, Pierre Sfeir, a generation of surgeons. And I remembered while I was giving that lecture, someone anxiously, to stay focused on this kind individual before Samir and my other friends could flay my presentation as it deserved. In 2001 Kamal Badr invited me on a very propitious date in history as it turned out September 11th, 2001, by now I had more data, maybe too much data as Kamal remarked at the time, and again Ismail was here, always magnanimous, always generous, always the model of humility, kindness, and knowledge. But this time I had more data, and he was not willing to let me take a free pass, so he asked me not one but couple of tough questions, which I tried to answer. And when I think of this room, I think of this as the room that not only has brought generations of medical students forward, but it has also led to the development of confidence among individuals from medical students who are sitting in the audience all the way to attending staff and outside experts. But it always had an ungainly room SB101, the room now looks much better as the Ismail Khalil Auditorium then it did SB101, it holds a great name of an individual whose name has been associated with this university for five decades, and a name but I think we can all agree will stand in perpetuity not only out of generosity, not only out of timeliness - because it’s a perfect time – as Kamal and Moe had mentioned with the new curriculum, but out of distinguished servant leadership. I thank Ismail today, I say thank you, to you, to Mirna, to the family, for generations of devotion and of absolute giving in every way in leadership, in scholarship, in patient care, and yes in service to humanity. Its gifts such as this that can help change things for AUB as really the pre-eminent leader in liberal thought in patient care and in higher education and research in the Middle East. Today you give back to your Alma Matter as you have for generations, once more and as I am sure you’ll do, with Hassan El-Solh here in your other part time role as deputy chief of staff for as long as we can possibly cajole you to continue to do so. But it’s a day of celebration for those of us who’ve known you for generations, and those of us who’ve known you shorter, and to say thank you to a man who has been a great Mua’lem for generations. And please the floor is yours, thank you Ismail.