

President John Waterbury's remarks  
to the Dubai and Northern Emirates Alumni Chapter,  
May 13, 2004

Your Excellencies, AUB graduates, Ladies and Gentlemen

I am not going to speak to you tonight about AUB. Suffice it to say that AUB is doing very well. I hope you all have a chance to read my "State of the University" address that is on the AUB web site. You can be proud of your university. It is still setting the educational standards for this region.

Tonight I have an even greater pleasure than talking about AUB. I have the pleasure of talking about a very special person in a very special place. That special place is Dubai.

There must be something in the air here that stimulates creativity and bold initiatives. There is certainly something in the leadership of Dubai that takes entrepreneurship and daring to new heights. Although Lebanon is celebrated for thousands of years of entrepreneurship and daring, it could use some inspiration from Dubai right now.

What has Dubai meant to AUB? It has meant unequalled alumni support. It has meant good jobs for our graduates and I hope that through its health city, its internet city, and its education city, it will mean mutually beneficial collaboration in areas where AUB is academically strong.

Now energy, daring, and entrepreneurship are all well and good, but at the end of the day there has to be a catalyst, a magic spark that makes things happen in Dubai and in the AUB Alumni Association of Dubai and Northern Emirates. That magic spark has a name, and the name is Najat Zarour.

I have been AUB's president for over six years. I admire our alumni leadership everywhere in the world. AUB is grateful to all of its alumni chapters and their leaders for the support of our alma mater. But I am here tonight to honor Najat because her service to AUB, her tireless efforts on behalf of the University here in Dubai, are simply without equal.

Since 1987, the association has provided AUB with over \$1.2 million- more than \$1 million of that has been raised since Najat became president of this chapter in 1998.

Najat, will you join me here so that I may present to you the President's Medal for Voluntary Service?