

Commencement 2006

President Waterbury's opening remarks

Saturday June 24, 2006

Environment Minister Yacoub Sarraf representing President Emile Lahoud;
Speaker Nabih Berri; Minister for Administrative Development Jean
Hogasapian representing Prime Minister Fouad Seniora, trustees of AUB,
faculty members, parents, and graduating students...

Not all who leave AUB are students, nor are graduating students the only
AUBites to enjoy new beginnings, a commencement. Today the AUB family
salutes three individuals, all great citizens of this great university. After I
introduce them, I would like each to rise to acknowledge our thanks for a job
well done.

John Bernson has been Vice President for Finance since 1999. He came to
AUB after a long career in banking. He was in the Beirut in the middle
1970s with Citicorp and despite the growing turbulence of those years, he
never lost his love for Beirut and Lebanon and for the many friends he made
at that time. It was not hard to convince John to come back. It is hard to let

him go. John, his wife Sheila and his son Jake have become part of our family. They will return to the US where John will take over the finances of Sarah Lawrence College. We hope the Bernsons will be frequent visitors to our campus.

Professor Nuhad Dagher has been Dean of the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences since 1995. He led FAFS out of the years of civil war, rebuilt its faculty, relaunched its commitment to research, and put it in a position to remake its identity in the 21st century. I know for all graduating students in FAFS it will be a very special honor to receive their diplomas from Nuhad Dagher's hands. We wish Nuhad and Mona all the best in their commencement.

We all know the old saying, last but not least. With respect to George Tomey it is last but most. George Tomey has been VP for Administration since 1987 and has worked for AUB for over thirty years. As VP for Administration all the crucial non academic units in this university were in his hands. He somehow kept everything functioning from the power plant to the hospital, and he began the modernization of our infrastructure even before the violence stopped. Because he occupied such a strategic position,

he was the target of threats including that of death. He and Katia lived through terrible times and together made sure AUB came through unscathed. They will not be far from us in the future, but they will be profoundly missed. We owe George and Katia a special debt of gratitude.

On behalf of AUB I would also like to salute another outstanding servant of this great University. Last July Dr. Thomas Q. Morris, a member of the Board of Trustees for some twenty years, became Chairman of the Board. Dr. Morris has visited AUB three or four times a year, beginning with his first visit in 1982. He has been an invaluable mentor to the Faculty of Medicine and to the AUBMC. He now brings all his experience and his devotion to AUB to bear on leadership of the Board. I would ask Dr. Morris to rise.

Today our speaker is a very special graduate of AUB, Rima Khalaf. Dr. Khalaf Hunaidi graduated from AUB in 1976 having majored in economics. She was here during a turbulent time on campus, but I am sure that she did nothing to make the life of then-president Samuel Kirkwood difficult.

After AUB Dr. Khalaf went on to take an MA in Economics and a PhD in Systems Science at Portland State University in the United States.

In 1985, she was appointed Director of the Planning and Research Department of the Ministry of Planning in Amman. Between 1990 and 1993 she held successively the posts of Director- General, Jordan Export Development and Commercial Centers Corporation and Director-General for the Investment Promotion Department in Amman.

She has held high ranking government positions in Jordan, including Minister of Industry and Trade (1993-1995), Minister of Planning (1995-1998) and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Planning (1999-2000). During her tenure as head of the ministerial economic team, Dr. Khalaf succeeded in pushing forward the drive for economic reform while simultaneously spearheading the effort for poverty alleviation and strengthening the social safety net.

Beginning in 2002 and until a few months ago, she was Assistant Secretary General and Director of the Regional Bureau for Arab States, of the UNDP. From that position she led the team effort to produce the path-breaking editions of the Arab Human Development Report. AUB is proud to claim Dr. Khalaf Hunaidi as an alumnus and as member of our Board of Trustees. We are equally proud to salute her for her professional achievements which should inspire all of you who are graduating.

I would like now to introduce our student speaker who is Mohamad
ElFakhani, IV year medical student

Musical interlude