

Re-Dedication of Penrose Hall

September 3, 2019

Remarks by President Fadlo R. Khuri

This is a wonderful occasion for our university—the re-dedication of Penrose Hall, a truly state-of-the-art facility—a term that is used too often but is appropriate in this case. Those of us who remember the old Penrose Hall will agree: it has been transformed!

But before I go on to speak about the building itself, I want to first say what a pleasure it is to have Dr. Penrose’s daughter, Margaret Penrose Harrell; his son, Stephen Penrose, III; and granddaughter, Katherine Penrose with us for this occasion.

Like all of you, I know the Penrose name well. President Penrose was a man of great courage, tireless dedication, and extraordinary commitment—to this institution and to the Arab world. He led our university from 1948 to 1954 and took on enormous challenges, leaving this institution much stronger when he died at the tragically young age of 45 than when he took office. His legacy as AUB president will not be forgotten. Penrose is the name of this residence hall, and also of the most prestigious student award that we bestow each year. The Penrose Award is given to a graduating student in each faculty in recognition not only of outstanding scholarship, but also character, leadership, and contribution to university life. I know we have many Penrose Award recipients with us today. I am proud to say that my father was also a member of this select group having received the Penrose Award on two occasions: when he earned his undergraduate degree in 1955 and again in 1959 when he received his MD degree.

Now, to the building that we are here to celebrate. The eight-story Penrose Hall includes 106 rooms for 266 students, including six rooms that are ADA compliant for students with special needs. There are wonderful shared spaces scattered throughout the building—the types of spaces that are so important to supporting student life on campus. These include study areas, TV lounges, outside gardens, and some stunning landscaping.

The major renovation upgrade, however, was making Penrose Hall a “green” building with LEED Gold certification that is environmentally friendly and includes important sustainability features. We are especially proud—as we should be—that we are expecting to receive LEED Gold standard certification for Penrose Hall. For those of you who are not familiar with LEED standards, these are the set of standards that have been developed by the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, the most widely used green building rating system in the world, which “provides a framework to create healthy, highly efficient and cost-saving green buildings. LEED

certification is a globally recognized symbol of sustainability achievement.” It is not easy to achieve this standard, especially for a renovated building.

So, what does LEED Gold standard mean? I’ll give you just a few examples: we have installed reflective materials on the roof and interior passages to reduce the heat island effect and minimize the building’s impact on microclimate and human and wildlife habitat; we anticipate a 29.4 percent reduction in total energy cost for this building thanks to the use of glazing and construction materials that have special thermal properties, efficient VAC systems, and lighting fixtures; and we project an increase in the self-supply of renewable energy by sourcing a quarter (23.59 percent) of total energy by cost from renewable energy.

In this and so many other ways, the new Penrose Hall is not just a wonderful place for our students to live and work, but also a powerful demonstration of our university’s commitment to be more environmentally friendly and energy efficient. I want to invite you now to watch a video that FPDU has prepared that will provide us with some insight on how we ended up with the wonderful building that stands before us. At the conclusion of the video, Dr. Penrose will make some brief remarks.