

PRESIDENT'S INTRODUCTION OF HONORARY DOCTORATE RECIPIENTS COMMENCEMENT 2022

HONORARY DOCTORATE AND GRADUATE COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY – JUNE 9, 2022

AWARDING OF HONORARY DOCTORATES

I now have the great pleasure to confer the honorary degree of doctor of humane letters—AUB's highest honor—on five exceptional individuals.

They have been selected in recognition of their outstanding contributions—as thinkers, changemakers, activists, innovators, and philanthropists.

The five personalities we honor today symbolize AUB's mission and values that it was founded on and adheres to, serving as a beacon of hope and a bastion of liberal thought; as a champion of transformative, inclusive, and holistic learning; and as an advocate of engaged citizenship and servant leadership.

Our honorands have stayed true to their values and continued to serve despite countless challenges: They have innovated solutions; and boldly sought and expressed the truth; and they have harnessed knowledge for the betterment of mankind.

Through their leadership, innovation, and service, these distinguished individuals inspire us and contribute to a more humane, inclusive, educated, and peaceful global society.

As we welcome these inspirational leaders to the AUB family of recipients of the doctorate degree *honoris causa*, we hold them up as paragons of engaged citizenship who exemplify our belief in the power of knowledge and citizen leadership to advance the public good.

I would like to invite Nobel Laureate, leader for peace, philanthropist, and one of the most influential businesswomen in Africa today, Ouided Bouchamaoui, to the rostrum.

Ouided Bouchamaoui: Winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2015, honored by world leaders, and named Best Businesswoman of the Arab World in 2013.

With your vision and leadership, you have seen the suffering of your country, Tunisia, and have taken it upon yourself to decisively steer it away from a socio-political crisis. You impacted a national transformation as a key co-collaborator of the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet, and you skillfully demonstrated that there is always room for dialogue and stability. The result was the historic peaceful building of pluralistic democracy in the wake of the 2011 revolution.

Through your vision and leadership, you have worked unremittingly to move your country from a potential civil war to a more pluralistic, transparent, and collaborative democracy, one continuing the long difficult march to shared governance. Thank you for continuing to show us,

ever more meaningful in today's circumstances to see, that change is always possible, peace is always in everyone's best interest, and it is indeed everyone's responsibility to find solutions to emerging and amassing problems.

BY VIRTUE OF THE AUTHORITY VESTED IN ME BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, I HEREBY CONFER UPON YOU, **Ouided Bouchamaoui**, THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF HUMANE LETTERS, WITH ALL THE RIGHTS, PRIVILEGES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES PERTAINING THERETO.

May I ask pre-eminent philosopher, scientist, and educator, Dr. Daniel Dennett, to please step forward.

Daniel Dennett: Cognitive scientist, and author of numerous foundational books.

Your groundbreaking contributions to fields ranging from philosophy to neuroscience, cognitive psychology, and artificial intelligence, have revolutionized thought in the most complex and perplexing issues of our time. Holding fast to the concept that the work of philosophy is contiguous with the work of natural sciences, you use science as the foundation for exploring the biggest philosophical concepts and you advance knowledge and enhance understanding in what it means to be human. You have educated legions, inspired academics, and mentored leaders. As you boldly question fundamental assumptions in areas such as consciousness, evolution, faith, and freewill and as you relentlessly pursue fundamental truths for a deeper comprehension of human existence, you embody critical inquiry, curiosity, and knowledge-seeking.

BY VIRTUE OF THE AUTHORITY VESTED IN ME BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, I HEREBY CONFER UPON YOU, **Daniel Dennett**, THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF HUMANE LETTERS, WITH ALL THE RIGHTS, PRIVILEGES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES PERTAINING THERETO.

Dr. Vagelos could not be with us today and will be awarded at the Annual Alumni Event in October.

Pindaros Roy Vagelos: Prominent physician, biomedical scientist, business leader, and currently chairman of the board at Regeneron, a leading biotechnology firm working on innovative medicines.

With his profound belief in the power of science to improve people's lives, he has been committed to excellence in both science and philanthropy. A committed teacher, mentor, a matchless leader and a stellar, celebrated scientist, he mentored a generation of basic and translational scientists, five of whom were elected to the National Academy of Sciences. He has excelled as a physician, researcher, mentor, academic scientist, and leader, even before he propelled Merck & Co. to global success and through them saved the sight of millions.

His dedication and passion to helping others is further embodied by his widespread philanthropy and unwavering support for education. Understanding the transformative power of

philanthropy, he and his wife Diana have generously supported numerous worthy causes, particularly empowering the next generation through education, ensuring that thousands of the best and brightest will graduate debt free.

May I now invite to the rostrum, renowned pediatrician and social justice champion: Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, who will also be our first commencement speaker today.

Mona Hanna-Attisha: Award-winning scientist, activist, and author.

As a champion of children’s health and global leader in the fight against environmental injustice, you demonstrated the vital role of evidence-based scientific research in protecting those most vulnerable. You investigated the previously unquestioned levels of lead in Flint, Michigan’s drinking water. Despite attempts to silence and intimidate you, you were relentless in exposing the man-made crisis, at great risk to your career. Your outspoken national advocacy has led to policy change and led recovery efforts. As founding donor of the Flint Child Health and Development Fund and founder and director of the Michigan State University and Hurley Children’s Hospital Pediatric Public Health Initiative, you have taken your battle onward and upward.

Selected as one of the world’s most influential and America’s most outstanding personalities, your dedication to attaining and telling the truth are indeed an inspiration to all knowledge seekers and providers.

BY VIRTUE OF THE AUTHORITY VESTED IN ME BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, I HEREBY CONFER UPON YOU, **Mona Hanna-Attisha**, THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF HUMANE LETTERS, WITH ALL THE RIGHTS, PRIVILEGES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES PERTAINING THERETO.

May I ask the long-time president of Birzeit University and our second commencement speaker for this evening, Dr. Hanna Nasir, to please step forward.

Hanna Nasir: Son of the American University of Beirut, academic and political figure who directed the transition of Birzeit University from a community college to an accredited, world-renowned university while in exile from Palestine and in the face of much persecution and resistance.

As the university’s first and long-time president, you cajoled, drove and willed Birzeit University to become one of the region’s best universities. Despite the formidable obstacles that you, your university, and your country had placed in your way over the years, you materialized your untiring vision to create a model refuge for Palestinian students to study in their homeland. You adopted innovative mechanisms and recruited, fostered, and protected a devoted faculty with a strong commitment to teaching and to the development and future of the Palestinian people.

A role model and warrior for the right to equal opportunity, inclusion, and access to education, you have rightly been recognized worldwide for championing the advancement of Birzeit University and supporting the Palestinian community.

BY VIRTUE OF THE AUTHORITY VESTED IN ME BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, I HEREBY CONFER UPON YOU, **Hanna Nasir**, THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF HUMANE LETTERS, WITH ALL THE RIGHTS, PRIVILEGES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES PERTAINING THERETO.

COMMENCEMENT DAY – June 10, 2022:

It is my distinct pleasure to introduce your keynote speaker and one of the recipients of this year's honorary doctorate degrees, world-renowned philosopher, author, and scholar, Dr. Daniel Dennett.

Daniel Dennett has made groundbreaking contributions to fields ranging from philosophy to neuroscience, cognitive psychology, and artificial intelligence. The author of numerous foundational books, he has contemplated and pursued some of the most complex and perplexing issues of our time—tackling consciousness, evolution, faith, and free will— and questioned assumptions through a relentless pursuit of fundamental truths and a deeper comprehension of human existence.

COMMENCEMENT DAY – June 11, 2022:

It is now my pleasure to introduce your keynote speaker and one of the recipients of this year's honorary doctorate degrees Nobel Laureate, leader for peace, and one of the most influential businesswomen in Africa today, Ouided Bouchamaoui.

Ouided Bouchamaoui is a Nobel Laureate who played a defining role as co-collaborator within the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet, decisively saving Tunisia from a socio-political crisis. She initiated negotiations that resulted in the peaceful building of pluralistic democracy in the wake of the 2011 revolution. "If we believe in our country, we can succeed," was entrancing and became her motto. Ouided shows us that change is always possible, peace is always in everyone's best interest, and it is indeed everyone's responsibility to find solutions to emerging and amassing problems.