

AUB announces this year's honorary doctorate recipients: Walid Khalidi, Eric Rouleau, and Duraid Lahham

Friday, May 28, 2010



The American University of Beirut announced today the names of three Honorary Degree candidates who will receive honorary doctorates of humane letters in a ceremony in the Assembly Hall at noon on Commencement Day, June 26, 2010.

Two of the honorands are active supporters of the rights of the Palestinian people—Professor Walid Khalidi and journalist Eric Rouleau; the other, Duraid Lahham, is a much-loved Syrian actor, who performed in socially committed drama as well as comedies.

When Professor Walid Khalidi resigned his teaching post at Oxford University in 1956 in protest over the British role in the invasion of Suez, he joined the Department of Political Studies and Public Administration at AUB, where he taught until 1982, when he joined Harvard University as senior research fellow in the Center for Middle Eastern studies, a position he held until his retirement in 1997. Professor Khalidi continues to this day the unswerving support for the Palestinian cause he has shown throughout a more than sixty year career of lecturing, writing articles, and editing and writing books. Through his scholarship, activism, and role in developing such institutions as the Institute for Palestine Studies, Khalidi has been credited with helping restore Palestinian identity.

Eric Rouleau, a French journalist born in Egypt, has been also author, diplomat, professor, and political commentator, editorializing for the French daily, *Le Monde* for more than three decades. Having served as French ambassador to Libya, Tunisia, and Turkey, Rouleau has focused much of his writing on the Arab states in the Middle East and North Africa as well as on such regional countries as Iran, Israel, Turkey, Greece, and Cyprus. Known for his sharp criticism and realistic assessment of United States policy in the Middle East, Rouleau wrote with knowledge, depth, and authority in his many editorials, articles, and books on the region.

Billed as the most famous actor in Syria since the 1960s and one of the most famous in the Arab world, Duraid Lahham, in a team act with Nihad Qali, for years dominated Syrian comedy on stage and television. Their humorous performances soon earned them comparisons with Laurel & Hardy. Later, teaming up with political playwright Mohammad al-Maghout, Lahham moved

away from pure comedy to social criticism and what he called “nationalist commentary.” Lahham combined his passion for the theater with serious concern for the rights of children, and served as UNICEF Ambassador for Childhood in the Middle East and North Africa.