

For Immediate Release



AUB's Dr. Ghazi Zaatari receives prestigious Asper Award for international medical education

Beirut, Lebanon- 15/07/2011 - Dr. Ghazi S. Zaatari, chairman of the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at the American University of Beirut, has received this year's Samuel P. Asper Award for Achievement in Advancing International Medical Education from the Johns Hopkins Medical and Surgical Association.

Dr. Zaatari, who is also the associate dean for faculty affairs at AUB's Faculty of Medicine, received his residency training at Johns Hopkins in the late 1970s.

In his letter to Dr. Zaatari, informing him of his selection for the award, Dr. William A. Crawley, president of the Johns Hopkins Medical and Surgical Association, called him "one of the most prominent academic pathologists and medical educators in the Arab countries and the Middle East."

"Your leadership of local, regional and international organizations has given rise to dozens, if not hundreds of other advances for your home country," Crawley added in his letter.

The presentation of the award to Dr. Zaatari was made during the 36th Biennial Meeting of The Johns Hopkins Medical and Surgical Association and the School of Medicine's Reunion Weekend in June 2011.

Many dignitaries from the US medical field were present, along with senior personalities from Johns Hopkins University, including President Ronald J. Daniels; Dr. Edward Miller, dean of the School of Medicine; William A. Crawley and others. The award carries the name of Dr. Samuel P. Asper (1916 - 1999), professor of internal medicine at Johns Hopkins, who was highly involved in international medical education and who served as dean of the Faculty of Medicine at AUB (1973-1978).

Dr. Zaatari was the only one among honorees to be given the floor to deliver a speech.

In his stirring acceptance speech, he recalled his service as a young intern at AUBMC during the gruesome early months of the civil war in Lebanon. He described how one morning Dr. Asper, at the time dean of medicine at AUB, conveyed to him the good news that he had been accepted at Johns Hopkins. Eventually both men frequently met there and Dr. Asper "was keen on checking on the well-being of his student in his new environment."

Dr. Zaatari also recalled Dr. Asper's advice: "In anything you do, think in which ways you can help others. While your scientific zeal will make you pursue developing new laboratory tests, make sure the effort will go to help the largest number of people possible and at the most affordable prices." He said these words have remained a driving force in his work, especially after relocating back to Lebanon some 16 years ago.

Dr. Zaatari went on to thank all those who nominated him for this distinguished award and said that he was honored for being nominated by his pathology colleagues at Johns Hopkins, calling it "the greatest honor a person can hope for". He also said that he was honored for what the award represents in recognizing international medical education, "something that AUB and Johns Hopkins had cherished over the decades and collaborated on." Third, he said, he was honored to receive an award that carries the name of one of his earliest mentors, Sam Asper, "who embodied optimism and hope in an environment of despair".

Dr. Zaatari concluded by saying that he remained committed to enhancing medical education. Inspired by his ancestors, the Phoenicians who exported to the world the alphabet, Zaatari gave the dean of Johns Hopkins School of Medicine a plaque of the Phoenician alphabet, and gave the Department of Pathology a plaque depicting *Tawq Al-Hamama* (The Ring of the Dove), a poetic love manuscript by Ibn Hazm, Andalusian Muslim philosopher and theologian.

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Note to Editors

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 600 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 8,000 students. AUB currently offers more than 100 programs leading to the bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full service 420-bed hospital.

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