



## **AUB's Top Alumni Literary Stars Celebrated at Launch of Inaugural Alumni Literary Festival**

Monday March 29, 2010

Beirut, Lebanon - The American University of Beirut and its worldwide alumni association, WAAAUB, kicked off a two-day celebration of its alumni authors on Thursday, March 25 with a ceremony honoring key contributors to the literary world.

Eleven alumni authors were recognized at the event in West Hall which was attended by Lebanon's Minister of Education, Hassan Mneimneh and Minister of Information, Tarek Mitri. AUB's President Peter Dorman and WAAAUB President Ambassador Khalil Makkawi, addressed the capacity crowd.

The following were singled out for their notable achievements:

Sadiq Jalal Al-Azm (BA `57), Ameen Al-Rihani (BA `65, MA`71), Samir Khalaf (BA `55, MA `57), Elias Khoury (former student), Raymond Khoury (MA`83), Sami Makarem (BA`54, MA `57), Marwan Muasher (former student), Emily Nasrallah (NA `58), Kamal Sulieman Salibi (BA `49), Ghada Samman (MA `65), and Ghassan Tueni (BA `45).

Al-Azmi, Al-Rihani, Khalaf, Makarem and Nasrallah were on hand in person to participate in the ceremony.

President Dorman offered his congratulations to the authors and noted, "Higher education seeks to provide an understanding of the ways in which the human mind has inquired – and continues to inquire – into its own self-awareness. These alumni represent much of what we hope to accomplish at AUB: to cultivate creative thinkers, producers of knowledge, and active contributors to society."

Ambassador Makkawi added that, "It is a testament to AUB that it counts so many remarkable authors among its alumni. These eleven men and women represent the values and experiences that all AUB alumni—authors and non-authors alike—share. We are proud to have the opportunity to honor their contributions."

Director of the Carnegie Middle East Center Paul Salem, AUB faculty member Roseanne Khalaf and alumna and WAAAUB leadership Ghada Rihani presided over the event, at which the honorees were presented with plaques commemorating the occasion.

The Literary Festival continued on Friday, March 26 with several panel discussions and a poetry session. One panel of authors engaged in a lively debate about the writing process, while the second dealt with the vital topic of educating children with special needs. Alumni, students and faculty were treated to a poetry reading by alumni poets on Friday evening which closed out the Festival.

Around fifty-five authors from overseas and the region attended the Festival where their books could be found on exhibit in a colorful display in the Common Room of AUB's West Hall.

Another dozen authors presented their work in absentia. Literary works covered a wide range of subjects in Arabic, English and French. Literary buffs had the opportunity to purchase authors' books during the ceremony. A booklet featuring the biographies of some 250 authors, published especially for the Festival, was also made available.

The Worldwide Alumni Association of AUB (WAAAUB) organized this Festival in collaboration with Lebanon's Ministry of Culture after UNESCO named Beirut World Book Capital 2009. WAAAUB intends to set a trend with this Festival, making it the launching pad for other worldwide celebrations of AUB alumni authors in their countries of residence.