



**AMERICAN  
UNIVERSITY  
OF BEIRUT**

**OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **American University of Beirut Medal honors the late Trustee Emeritus Ali Ghandour**

The American University of Beirut held a memorial ceremony to bestow the University Medal upon the late Trustee Emeritus Ali Ghandour. The ceremony celebrated the life and achievements of trustee Ghandour in the presence of the Ghandour family and the university administration and community.

A former student of the American University of Beirut, Ali Ghandour earned his BS in aeronautical engineering from New York University in 1954 before returning to Lebanon. He started his career in 1954 and became an entrepreneur and visionary businessman; co-founder, chairman, and president of the Royal Jordanian Airways; and started numerous other international airlines and organizations.

“With the university medal, the Board of Trustees and the university's entire community salute and recognize Ali Ghandour's distinguished and meritorious service to the American University of Beirut,” said Dr. Fadlo Khuri, president of the university. “He worked in concert with lifelong friends and fellow trustees Dick Debs, Nicola Khuri, and Kamal Shair, to save the American University of Beirut when the university was in peril during the Lebanese Civil War, and then he worked tirelessly to restore—and grow it—after the war was over. His wise and candid counsel and expertise contributed greatly to the persistence and success of this institution, which he cherished so much.”

Trustee Ali Ghandour was a philanthropic donor who supported educational, humanitarian, and cultural causes, he was one of the university's major supporters and established the Ali Ghandour Endowed Scholarship and the Ali Ghandour Reading Room

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at the university's Jafet Library. He is a founder of the American University of Beirut Zaki Nassif Music Program and was a member of the American University of Beirut President's Club.

Daughter of the late Ali Ghandour, Amal Ghandour, paid tribute to the legacy, wisdom, and values of her late father. "My father loved this Arab world and its limitless possibilities. He loved Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Palestine, and Iraq as one. He also loved IC and AUB (the American University of Beirut) because they are where our Arab youth of every corner, religion, sect, and rank come to mix, to learn, to laugh, to love, to aspire, and to hope."

Trustee Leila Bissat spoke about the awardee's belief in educating and enabling the youth as well as his generous support to related initiatives. "Mr. Ghandour committed himself to the furthering of the Zaki Nassif Program for Music by creating the Friends Association," she said. "He worked on its structure, rallying his well-positioned friends and AUBites to its cause. Mr. Ghandour's broad vision led to the creation of our Oriental Music and Choir Ensemble, a step forward in asserting the importance of authentic Arabic music in building identity and preserving heritage."

After a video was screened celebrating the life of Ali Ghandour, President Fadlo Khuri awarded him the University Medal and presented it to the Ghandour family.

The ceremony concluded with a concert performed by the Arabic Ensemble of the Zaki Nassif Program for Music, much valued by its never forgotten founder, Ali Ghandour.

**ENDS**

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#### 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 800 full-time faculty members and a student body of over 8000 students. AUB currently offers more than 120 programs leading to 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 365-bed hospital.

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