

For Immediate Release



Anthony Shadid, passionate journalist and AUB honorary degree recipient, dies on the front lines

Beirut, Lebanon- 17/02/2012 - Anthony Shadid, the two-time Pulitzer-prize winning journalist and gifted writer who had a special affiliation with the American University of Beirut, died on February 16, reportedly of an asthma attack while on an assignment in Syria. He was 43.

Shadid, who was, most recently, the New York Times' Beirut bureau chief, had taken a year off from reporting in 2008 to become the first fellow and writer-in-residence at AUB's Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs. During that year he gave a number of lectures on campus and used his stay at AUB to research and write a book.

On accepting the fellowship, Shadid said: "I am especially pleased to have this opportunity to be based at the Issam Fares Institute at AUB. These two unique institutions reflect the best tradition of mutually constructive Arab interaction with the world. I look forward to drawing on the rich resources of AUB, and to contributing as I can to the institute and the university."

The American University of Beirut granted Shadid an honorary doctorate in 2011 for his "enduring contributions" to journalism and "his unparalleled reporting on the Middle East for more than 15 years."

"As an Arabic-speaking Lebanese-American, he has an immediate empathy with ordinary people whose daily pain and whose wounds, both psychological and physical, he has covered with extraordinary sensitivity and courage—and not without risk," AUB President Peter Dorman said while introducing Shadid at the ceremony. "Never an "embedded" journalist while reporting from front-line positions, Shadid has been able to embed his readers in the lives of the individuals he describes."

In his acceptance speech, Shadid spoke of his narrow escapes with death while covering the Middle East, including the latest Arab uprisings. He also shared his indignation for the brutality brought on by Arab dictatorships and his passion for helping bring justice to this region through journalistic truth.

"Someone has to be held accountable for the brutality and vulgarity that decades of dictatorship have inflicted on our proud societies that never deserved what was delivered. Someone has to be sanctioned for wrecking the vision of so many people," he said.

But he hung onto hope and believed in the change that would bring better times to the region. "Our Arab world will never be the same, nor should it," he told AUB graduates during the commencement exercises in June 2011. "In your lifetime, occupations will end, struggles

will lose their cynicism, legitimacy will come through the voices that you raise. There is hope today, a hope that can be inspired by an ability to imagine something more.”

Over his 15-year journalistic career, Shadid had reported for the Washington Post, the Boston Globe and the Associated Press, serving in Washington, Cairo, Los Angeles, Baghdad, and Beirut. Last year, he became the NY Times’ Beirut bureau chief and would spend a significant part of his time in this city whenever he was not reporting from the front lines. He had developed friendships with many members of the AUB community, including IFI Executive Director Rami Khouri.

“For those of us left behind, we owe it to the person and the profession to recall what made him so special,” wrote Khouri, after news of Shadid’s death. “The answer from my perspective is short and easy: humility. I saw it in him every time we met, whether chatting over a coffee or meal, or in the field working, covering an event we both attended or chatting with a person who would provide useful facts or analysis.”

This humility, Khouri argued, is what allowed Shadid to focus on the ordinary people in his trademark reporting style. “In his encounters with ordinary people or experts and public figures, he constantly asked questions to learn about the world he was covering, and more importantly, he listened to the answers with obvious and genuine sincerity.”

For his reporting on the uprisings and the change sweeping the region, The NY Times nominated him, along with a team of his colleagues, for the 2012 Pulitzer in international reporting.

Shadid is the author of two books, *Legacy of the Prophet: Despots, Democrats and the New Politics of Islam*, published by Westview Press in December 2000. His second book, *Night Draws Near: Iraq’s People in the Shadow of America’s War*, was published in September 2005 by Henry Holt. His third book, *House of Stone: A Memoir of Home, Family and a Lost Middle East*, will be published in spring 2012 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. His upcoming book focuses on his family’s hometown Marjayoun, in south Lebanon, where Shadid owns a house. He was born in Oklahoma City on Sept. 26, 1968.

Of death Shadid had said in his signature literary writing style, during the AUB honorary doctorates ceremony: “There is nothing exhilarating about escaping death. Its very prospect felt to me like a poison, spreading through your body. It lingers far longer than the bruises, and it lasts long after the memories fade of hands and legs bound by wire.”

Survivors include his second wife, NY Times journalist Nada Bakri; their son, Malik; a daughter, Laila, from his first marriage; his parents Rhonda and Buddy Shadid; a sister, Shannon, of Denver; and a brother, Damon, of Seattle.

ENDS

For more information please contact:

Maha Al-Azar, Assistant Director for Media Relations, ma110@aub.edu.lb, 01-353 228

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.

Stay up to date on AUB news and events. Follow us on:

Website: www.aub.edu.lb

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/aub.edu.lb>

Twitter: http://twitter.com/AUB_Lebanon