

For Immediate Release



## Memorial Tablet of 32 World War I AUB Medical Martyrs back to original location after nearly nine decades

Beirut, Lebanon- 2/11/2012 - The Lebanese Armenian Heritage Club at the American University of Beirut, together with the University Student Faculty Committee, commemorated AUB Medical Alumni, who lost their lives in service during WWI, during an unveiling ceremony of their newly restored commemorative tablet at West Hall on Thursday November 1, 2012.

“After spending over a year on research, I feel proud that this event is taking place,” said Hratch Kestenian, an AUB student who was behind this initiative. “It shocked me that the tablet was forgotten and I felt deeply obliged to revive and restore AUB martyrs’ memory.”

In the early evening of June 26, 1923, a congregation of doctors and pharmacists gathered in the upper foyer of West Hall to witness the unveiling of a tablet inscribed with the names of fellow AUB medical alumni who perished in the course of World War I. Dr. Yusuf Hitti, President of AUB Medical Alumni, presided over the ceremony, calling upon Acting President Edward Nickoley and Dr. Harry Dorman, dean of AUB Medical School, to unveil the tablet and read the list of names inscribed. Two addresses in Arabic followed, one by Dr. Yusuf Azuri and another by Mr. Anis Sidawi, an instructor in Arabic and English.

This tablet, a temporary construction of walnut wood, was replaced three years later with a permanent bronze memorial. During the second installation ceremony, held on Feb 9, 1926, Dr. Najib Ardadi, Clinical Professor of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, and Dr. E. St. John Ward, dean of the Medical School, gave a compelling speech on the spirit of devotion and self-sacrifice that the departed alumni had demonstrated through the course of their medical careers and in their military service.

During the Lebanese civil strife in 1976, the bronze memorial tablet was moved to the university’s College Hall to protect it from damage and the possibility of theft. In 1991, when a bomb was detonated, College Hall was leveled and the tablet was lost. Today, 36 years after its removal from West Hall, a reconstructed tablet was permanently installed and displayed in its original home in commemoration of AUB medical doctors who gave their lives so others can live life more in a more just and peaceful world.

Of the 32 names listed, 17 were Armenians, 12 Lebanese and 3 were Jews.

“This tablet is not just an ordinary engraved bronze memorial; it is a unique symbol of a forgotten history,” Kestonian said. “It shows the role of AUB as a place where people from all backgrounds come to pursue knowledge and to create a better society.”

“It also shows the noble sacrifice of AUB medical graduates, and the role played by the Armenian community, particularly in the medical department of AUB during that era,” he added.

“This ceremony highlights the AUB family broader values that go beyond offering classroom education to instilling social values and civic responsibilities in the minds and hearts of our students,” said AUB president Peter Dorman. “The names who we see today are people who answered their own call to duty and paid the price with their lives.”

Dorman highlighted the AUB’s survival and renewal ability through two world wars, the Lebanese civil war and numerous other trials, all the while providing the finest education to all from different backgrounds and various geographical locations.

“This is the best example of AUB’s mission and goals,” he added.

Following a short musical interlude, the tablet was unveiled by Dorman and MP Hagop Pakradouni, and all present partook in a cocktail reception.

ENDS

**For more information please contact:**

Maha Al-Azar, Associate Director for Media Relations, [ma110@aub.edu.lb](mailto: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](http://www.aub.edu.lb)

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

Twitter: [http://twitter.com/AUB\\_Lebanon](http://twitter.com/AUB_Lebanon)