

Remarks Delivered
By
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on the Occasion of the Farewell Dinner for
His Excellency Mr. Massoud Malouf
Ambassador of Lebanon to Canada

Saint Elias Antiochian Community Centre
November 5, 2009

Excellencies, Your Worship, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and
Gentlemen

I am delighted and truly honoured to have been asked by the National
Capital Region - Canadian Lebanese Community to say a few words on
this very special evening, honoring the contributions of H.E. Mr.
Massoud Malouf as Lebanon's Ambassador to Canada.

As we all know, H.E. Mr. Malouf has had a long and very successful
diplomatic career that started when he graduated from St-Joseph's
University in 1969 – with postings around the world – including Nigeria,
Tunisia, Montreal, Washington, Chile, Poland and back to Canada in July
2007 as Lebanon's Ambassador to Canada.

As you know, there is a special relationship between Lebanon and the
University of Ottawa. I take great pride in saying that the University of
Ottawa has been the university of choice for many Lebanese Canadians
in the National Capital Region. Today, more than 225 Lebanese-born

students are registered at the University of Ottawa while several hundred more Lebanese Canadians attend the University.

We are also very proud of our Lebanese-Canadian faculty members and support staff who have contributed tremendously to the development of the University of Ottawa over the years. In fact, as Past President of the University of Ottawa I take great pride in the success of our program in Arab language and culture, headed by professor Abdallah Obeid, Chair in Arabic Studies. I am also very proud of having had the wisdom of hiring Dr. Mona Nemer as Vice-President Research – as you know your Excellency Dr. Nemer would have been here this evening were it not for her visit to Lebanon.

The special relationship between Lebanon and the University of Ottawa goes back many years. In fact, I remember fondly the honorary doctorate that we gave the late Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in 1997 – as an engineer, I was impressed by the vision, energy and ambitions of this inspiring man. In fact, I had the pleasure and good fortune to meet privately with Prime Minister Hariri in June 1998 when I visited Lebanon.

C'est durant cette visite, en juin 1998 que j'ai découvert la beauté et les saveurs extraordinaires du Liban. J'ai eu le plaisir de visiter quelques uns de nos partenaires – i.e., l'Université Balamand non loin de Tripoli et l'Université américaine du Liban (LAU) à Byblos.

It is also during this visit in June 1998 that I discovered how closely connected the Ottawa - Canadian Lebanese community is. [We were staying at Byblos sur Mer – a very nice hotel by the Mediterranean – one morning, I was not feeling – I had probably over indulged in the fine Lebanese cuisine the night before, I rejoined the group at noon and

thought nothing of it. As soon as I got back to Canada, my secretary said “I gather you were not feeling ”. The word had gotten out throughout the entire Ottawa Lebanese community that the VP had been sick - the rumors had travelled far and wide! **I was impressed by how much the community cared about my well being.]**

Your Excellency, over the years through the efforts of your office and of our Lebano-Canadian faculty members and staff, we have developed some exciting partnerships between Lebanese universities and the uOttawa including student mobility programs, and research collaborations.

Your first year Lebanon’s Ambassador to Canada was my last year as President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ottawa. However, during that short period of time we were able to launch a very exciting program. In an effort to foster and promote student and faculty mobility, the University of Ottawa has approved 10 doctoral scholarships for Lebanese students wishing to undertake a PhD program in science, engineering or medicine at the University of Ottawa. This is an important element in reinforcing the research partnership between universities in Lebanon and the University of Ottawa.

Monsieur l’ambassadeur, au nom de tous mes collègues à l’Université d’Ottawa, je tiens à vous remercier pour votre amitié, pour votre leadership et pour votre appui indéfectible. Je vous souhaite beaucoup de joie, de bonheur et de satisfaction dans vos nouveaux défis.