



Ahmad El-Nemr

AUC's Desert Development Center is helping to establish desert communities **Page 18**

FEATURES

- 7 FACING THE FUTURE**
Snapshots of the graduates as they prepare for a major milestone in their lives.
- 10 A QUEST TO UNRAVEL**
Egyptology Professor Salima Ikram completes an initiative she spearheaded to unveil and revive the animal mummies at the Egyptian National Museum.
- 14 CUTTING EDGE**
Alumni share their stories of getting to the top of the IT industry and staying there.
- 18 GREEN OASIS**
The Desert Development Center's training program works with local farmers to reclaim the desert.
- 20 EDUCATING WOMEN: THE PATH TO PROGRESS**
The story of five Palestinian students, their experience in Cairo and their aspirations.
- 26 IN SEARCH OF AN IDENTITY**
Forced Migration and Refugee Studies Director Fateh Azzam melds a love of theater, a history of activism and a shared experience with refugees.
- 30 THEIR DAY IN COURT**
International law students head to Washington D.C. to compete in the prestigious Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition.
- 32 FROM THE WASHINGTON POST TO THE CARAVAN**
Former Cairo bureau chief for *The Post*, Howard Schneider teaches students the art of journalism.

On the cover: Five recipients of the Nashua Taher Arab Women Scholarship, photographed by Arnaud du Boistesselin

DEPARTMENTS

- 3 AUSCENES**
Mubarak launches Peace Matters series, faculty spotlight, former intern wins MacArthur Genius Award
- ALUMNI PROFILES**
- 13** Khaled Dawoud '89, '90 rises to the top of *Al-Ahram*
- 29** Tarek Amer '80, deputy governor of Egypt's Central Bank, reflects on the challenges he has faced
- 34 ALUMNI NEWS**
Distinguished Alumni Awards, receptions and gatherings around the world, 25th class reunion
- 38 CLASS NOTES**
Class updates, weddings and deaths
- 40 AKHER KALAM**
Roshanak Taghavi, presidential intern, shares her views on life in Cairo

Editor's Notes

Speaking at the master's degree commencement in June, Egypt's Minister of Youth Ali Hillal emphasized the inseparable link between education and development. "Education is the key to sustainable development, democracy and peace within and among countries," he said. Through education, asserted Hillal, people learn to "interact in society in the spirit of participation, equality and tolerance."

Our cover story this issue, "Educating Women: The Path to Progress," highlights a unique initiative that goes to the heart of Hillal's words. In the drive toward development and reform, the pivotal role women play in advancing their communities and countries cannot be overstated. Understanding the region's need for women empowered through education, Nashwa Taher established an Arab Women Scholarship at AUC last year.

While each year AUC welcomes recipients of a variety of scholarships, this is the first one to specifically target women from the Arab world. The article presents the stories of the five Palestinian women whose lives have been transformed through the contributions of one woman. In the article, each of the students discusses the transition to life in Cairo, the bond with her homeland and what she hopes the future will bring.

Also in this issue, the "Cutting Edge" profiles several alumni working in the Egyptian IT industry. With phenomenal growth in the industry and an increasing number of graduates working in IT-related fields, we asked our alumni their top four secrets to staying in the lead.

From our faculty, "A Quest to Unravel," looks at the recent work of Egyptology Professor Salima Ikram and the initiative she led to restore the animal mummy collection at the Egyptian museum. Another article profiles Forced Migration and Refugee Studies Director Fateh Azzam. "In Search of an Identity," tells of Azzam's personal story and how through theater, human rights work and time spent in his Palestinian homeland, he has found a purpose in helping refugees.

Lastly, as you look to the contents page, you will notice an unlikely debut of a cow with her young calf amid the green fields surrounding AUC's Desert Development Center (DDC). "Green Oasis" is the story of college graduates who set out, with the help of the DDC, to cultivate the desert lands allocated to them as part of the Mubarak National Project for Settling Young University Graduates in Newly Reclaimed Desert Lands.

We hope you enjoy this issue of *AUCToday*.



Dina Abulfotuh

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The American University in Cairo is a non-profit private institution devoted to providing English-language liberal arts education to serve Egypt and the Middle East.

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Mexican Researchers Track Venus Transit From AUC's Science Garden



Researcher helps a passerby view the transit through his telescope

As tourists began flocking to Egypt at the start of the summer, AUC hosted Mexican researchers who traveled to Cairo to observe the 2004 Venus Transit.

"I'm really excited to be here to witness this. Cairo is one of the best places in the world to observe the transit because of its cloudless skies and desert weather," said Ernesto Davis, aeronautical engineer and astronomer for the Instituto Politecnico Nacional in Mexico, as he helped a curious passerby look through the microscope.

The camp was set up in the normally quiet Science Garden that was bustling with people hovering around telescopes to take a glimpse of the mole-like Venus against the backdrop of the sun.

A streamed video broadcast provided a live transmission from the garden on AUC's Web site with commentary in both Spanish and English during the six-hour event.

Mubarak's Peace Movement Fosters the Role of Women as Peacemakers

The inaugural lecture of the Peace Matters Series, sponsored by the newly formed Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement, was held on campus.

Egypt's First Lady Suzanne Mubarak '77, '82, who heads the movement, referred to mounting political tensions, stressing: "It is in times like these that we should not relinquish all hope. We have an even greater responsibility to work harder still."

Mubarak asserted that peace is a basic human right encompassing "freedom from want, freedom from fear and freedom of future generations to inherit a healthy natural environment."

The keynote speaker, Swanee Hunt, former US ambassador to Austria and founder and chair of the Women Waging Peace organization, delivered



Mubarak and Hunt call for engendering peace negotiations and an expanded role for women in the political arena



an informative and often witty account of the role women can play in building peace.

Hunt, a specialist on the role of women in post-communist Europe, called for "a shift of our foreign policy paradigm to include women."

Because of natural differences between the genders, women, argued Hunt, bring four additional assets to

the table. They are "highly invested in stopping conflict," she said, adding that women tend to think very carefully before "sending their children to kill other people's children." They are also "adept at building bridges," have their "fingers on the pulse of their communities" and tend to be innovative in their approach to problem solving.

Nadia Younes Memorial Fund Established



The 16th Cairo International Model United Nations was dedicated to the memory of the late Nadia Younes, the United Nations administrator who died last August during the bombing of the UN headquarters in Iraq.

In her name, AUC has established the Nadia Younes Memorial Fund. Contributions to the fund will be used to establish an annual lecture and an award for public and humanitarian service, in addition to naming a conference and meeting room in the Model United Nations Center on AUC's new campus.

Younes's brother, Fouad Younes, said he is "very pleased that AUC took this initiative. It's a very good way of commemorating Nadia, and it reflects all the things she held important," he said.

"Nadia was a very dedicated, independent woman who was passionate about the UN and who got very involved in humanitarian activities, not just international politics," he said. "She was also a real problem solver."

Zewail Relays Vision of the Arab World

AUC Trustee and Nobel Laureate Ahmed Zewail delivered a lecture at AUC about his visionary outlook on the future of the Arab and Islamic world. "Building the future in the Arab world requires a strong educational, scientific and technological foundation," he said. "We have to work toward a distinctive and clearly defined goal."

In his lecture, titled "Vision of the Future of the Arab and Islamic World," Zewail highlighted the importance of science and technology in the progress of nations.

"In order for any nation to be put on the 21st century map, it has to have a clear vision for the role of science and technology," he said, adding that despite any obstacles, the region must look to the future with optimism and a willingness to work hard to achieve a leap forward in science and technology.



In 1993, AUC awarded Zewail an honorary doctorate of science, and in 1999, he was elected as a member of the Board of Trustees. In 2001, he established the Ahmed Zewail prize for excellence in the sciences and humanities. The following year, AUC Press published his autobiography, *Voyage Through Time: Walks of Life to the Nobel Prize*.

Donald Shaw on Agenda Setting Theory of the Media



A man whose name is closely associated with the agenda setting theory of the media, Donald Shaw, spoke to a packed AUC audience about the changing role of the media in shaping public opinion.

Shaw, communications professor at the University of North Carolina, and Charles McKenzie, a doctoral fellow at the same university, contended that the rapid pace of change in

communications technology has made it impossible for the mass media to set all aspects of the public's agenda.

According to McKenzie, the media can be thought of as either "vertical media," which refers to the traditional mass media, or "horizontal media" that encompasses specialty magazines, the Internet and cellular phones.

Shaw argued that today, agenda setting theory has been transformed into agenda melding theory.

"In agenda setting, the media is important not in telling you what to think, but in telling you what to think about. However, the news and events are really framed in horizontal media such as magazines and most recently cellular phone and Internet communications. That is agenda melding," explained Shaw.

Harb Receives CASA'S Teaching Excellence Award



Nadia Harb, senior Arabic language teacher at the Arabic Language Institute, is the recipient of the 2004 Excellence in Language

Teaching Award of the Center for Arabic Studies Abroad (CASA).

"Teaching in CASA is a continuous challenge because you have to constantly look for new material since you're teaching postgraduate students who have different interests," said Harb. "It's great to be awarded for doing what you enjoy. It's really motivating."

Harb's selection was based on student nominations, course evaluations and her contributions to CASA.

Faculty Spotlight

Hanna Awarded for Excellence in Research



Nelly Hanna, chair of the Arabic studies department at AUC, was given AUC's Excellence in Research Award for her pioneering research on Mamluk and Ottoman social and economic life.

The award recognizes outstanding achievements in research and consists of a certificate and cash prize to be used in support of the recipient's scholarly activities. "AUC always encourages research among faculty, and I have greatly benefited from the facilities offered to me," Hanna said.

Abaza Receives Excellence in Teaching Award



The Parents Association Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching was presented to Maged Abaza, visiting lecturer in management, during the June commencement.

The award, which is based on student,

faculty, alumni and parent nominations, recognizes outstanding teaching skills and an ongoing dedication to the development of students.

"As a sportsman and businessman, I have sampled success and been recognized before. However, after joining AUC and coming to respect my peers and love my students, this award comes as the highlight of my life, giving me a great sense of satisfaction," said Abaza.

In addition to his duties as a faculty member, Abaza supervises and mentors four major student activities.

Professor to Serve on Academic Integrity Board

Mohamed Abou-Zeid, associate professor of construction engineering, became the first non-American to serve on the board of directors of the Center for Academic Integrity at Duke University.

Abou-Zeid, who heads AUC's Task Force on Academic Integrity, said that his appointment would create opportunities for exchanging experiences with numerous institutions that are also trying

to foster academic integrity, allowing AUC to play a leading regional role in this domain.

"We hope that we can make use of fellowships and research grants offered by the center and its member institutes in the field of academic integrity and its academic and societal impacts. This may also open doors for joint international research," said Abou-Zeid.



ElBaradei Discusses Nuclear Applications



Focusing on “improving human law to have a more peaceful and secure world,” Mohamed ElBaradei, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), spoke at AUC about peaceful applications of nuclear energy.

In his lecture, ElBaradei said that there is more to nuclear energy than defense applications. The IAEA, he explained, helps governments using nuclear energy as an alternative energy supply.

Touching on the slow process of disarmament in the world, ElBaradei noted, “As long as you have countries that keep nuclear weapons, we can’t tell people not to create them and say that we choose to keep ours for security purposes. We need to build a security system based on our understanding of the human race. What we really have together is much more than what separates us as humans.”

Former Intern Wins MacArthur Genius Award

Evie Troutt Powell, associate professor of history at the University of Georgia (UGA) and a former presidential intern at AUC, won the prestigious MacArthur Genius Award of \$500,000 for her research on Egypt and the Middle East.

The US-based award is granted to individuals who are selected for the originality and creativity of their work. The money comes with no restrictions on how it can be spent. Powell plans to use the money to continue her field research in Egypt and the Middle East.

“I feel wonderful about receiving the MacArthur Fellowship, honored and very grateful,” Powell said. “It’s very important to me as a professor

of Middle Eastern history, a field under siege right now in the United States, where Arabs and Muslims have never been as frighteningly vilified as they are in these post 9/11 days.”

Powell’s story with the Middle East started after she graduated from Harvard with a B.A. in history and literature and then came to AUC as an intern in 1983. That year was a turning point for her.

“My experience at AUC totally changed the way I looked at the world and how I wanted to live my life,” she said. “I came to Cairo after graduating from Harvard, where I was sure I had gotten a wonderful education. But nothing in my classes prepared me for the complexity or beauty of Egypt and modern Egyptian history ... That year at AUC convinced me that any future career I was to have had to be one where I could travel back and forth to Egypt, and one that helped me learn more, and eventually teach more, about the Middle East.”

Intrigued by Egypt and the Middle East, Powell decided to pursue graduate studies at Harvard in Middle Eastern studies. After acquiring her doctorate in 1995, she joined UGA and has been teaching there ever since.

Powell has been conducting research on Egypt since the 1990s. “I chose Egypt in particular for my research because the issue of nationalism resonated with me and because the country has so much soul,” she said. Powell is author of *A Different Shade of Colonialism: Egypt, Great Britain and the Mastery of the Sudan* and co-editor of *The African Diaspora in the Mediterranean Lands of Islam*.

Powell is currently spending the summer with her family in Cairo, where she is studying Arabic at AUC’s Center for Arabic Studies Abroad.





FACING THE FUTURE

Photos by Ahmad El-Nemr

At the 2004 commencement ceremonies, graduates express feelings of joy and accomplishment, coupled with a sense of optimism and a hope of shaping the future





“In the world of globalization, not only ideological, political and economic, but also cultural factors are dividing people. Peoples and nations are struggling to respond to the most fundamental of all questions: who are we?”

*Ali Hillal, minister of youth
graduate commencement speaker*



“The world today is filled with countless new opportunities, challenges, risks and discoveries. In the midst of important and rapid developments taking place worldwide, only one thing can ensure our future success and personal development: a high quality education.”

*Tamim Khallaf,
graduate class representative*

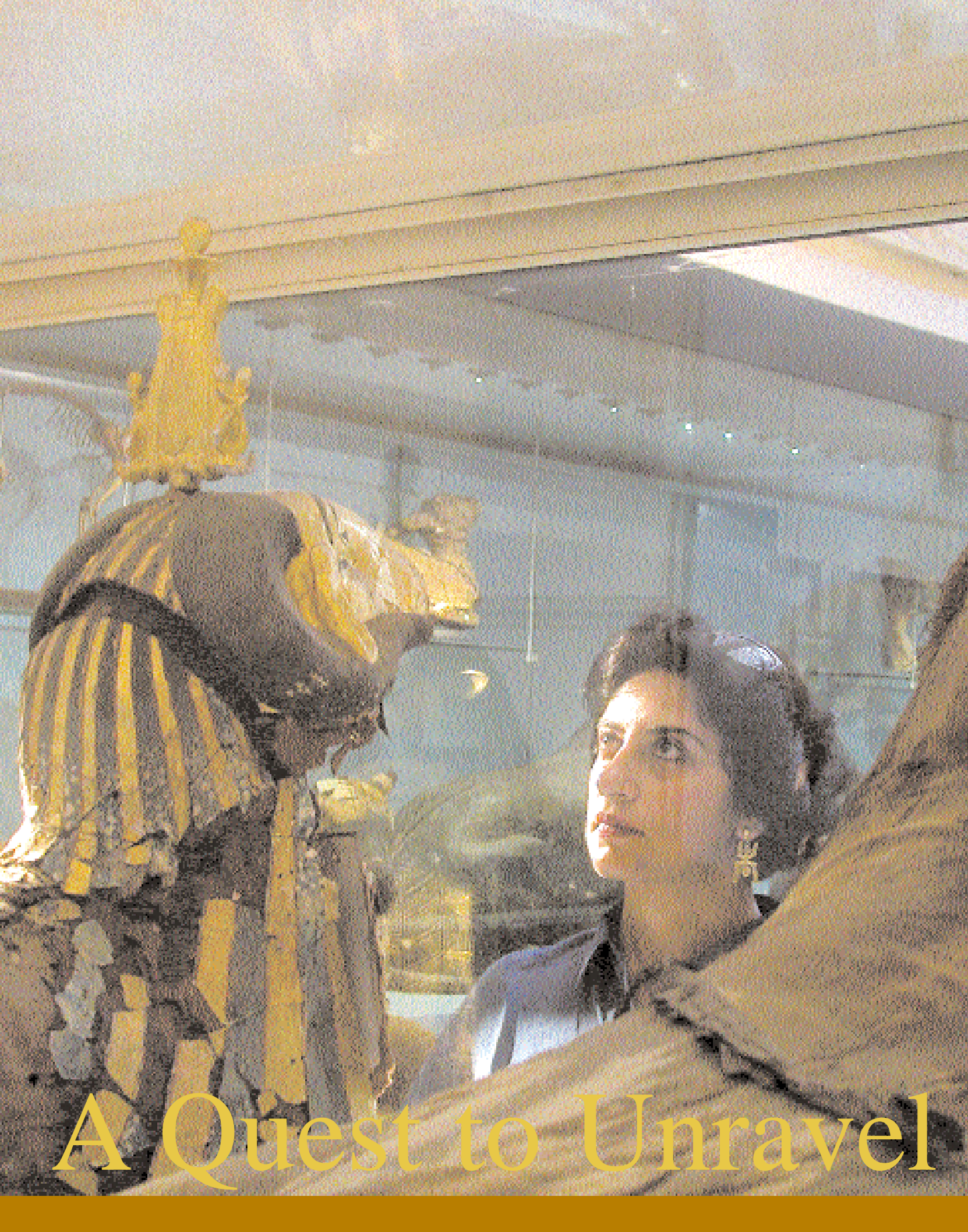




“We look upon you as a generation of hope,
change and reform and we want you to
continue to seek knowledge.”

*Farouk El-Baz, undergraduate
commencement speaker
and honorary doctorate recipient*





A Quest to Unravel

Salima Ikram is Egyptology professor and protector of all things ancient

In the animal mummy room inside the Egyptian National Museum, Salima Ikram (YAB '85), associate Egyptology professor at AUC, eyes the tourists as they examine her mummies with awe and admiration. The fruit of more than five years of hard work has finally materialized, she thinks to herself.

Born and raised in Pakistan, Ikram developed an interest in Egyptology when she was 9. "I was interested in ancient history since I was a child," she said. "On my eighth birthday, I was given a book on Egypt and was very taken by it. When I was 9, we visited Cairo and I fell in love with it. At that point, I decided to become an ancient historian or Egyptologist."

Acquiring a bachelor's in classical and Near Eastern archeology and history from Bryn Mawr College, Ikram was on the path to realizing her dream. She went on to receive a master's in Egyptian archeology and museum techniques and a doctorate in Egyptian archaeology from Cambridge University.

Ikram first came to AUC 19 years ago as a year-abroad student. Exploring sites and examining ancient Egyptian material with prominent Egyptologists such as Kent Weeks and Fayza Heikal made her determined to return to Egypt. Today, Ikram is an active Egyptologist and heads AUC's Egyptology unit. Her projects have her constantly in the field, digging for ancient Egyptian artifacts and surveying archeological sites.

Her most recent work, the animal mummy project, had her at the Egyptian museum for weeks on end, examining and cataloging unstudied mummies. The culmination was a rare display of ancient Egyptian animal mummies, the first-of-its-kind at the museum and in Egypt.

It all started in 1998 when Ikram decided that the museum's 90-year-old

collection of animal mummies needed refurbishment. "The mummies were in a sad state, and I felt that no one was interested in them," she said. "Some of the animal mummies were unwrapped; others had been inaccurately identified and somewhat neglected in a room for several years. Mummies are very fragile. If not carefully handled, they deteriorate, fall prey to insects, disintegrate and turn to dust."

So Ikram took the initiative and contacted the museum's Director Mohammed Saleh and its Chief Conservator Nasri Iskander, who both welcomed the project.

Ikram first poured over the museum records to discover when and where each mummy was found, who collected it and any other recorded information. "That was not always easy," she said.

The next step was X-raying the mummies. In the museum's special X-ray labs, Ikram studied each mummy thoroughly and recorded her observations on data sheets. "X-raying the mummies allowed us to see what bones remained inside the mummy wrappings, the species, the approximate age of the animal, whether it suffered any diseases or accidents and how it might have died. It was an exhilarating experience!" she said, adding that ancient Egypt never failed to fascinate her.

"The ancient Egyptians were the most interesting to me of all the ancient peoples," she said. "Their art is the most aesthetically pleasing, and the Egyptian mode of representation speaks to me as I find I see things in a similar way."

The animal mummies were also photographed for future identification and reference and then cataloged for display. This is when Ikram brought her students in.

"Examining, measuring and X-raying

Ikram spearheaded the initiative of uncovering and restoring ancient Egyptian animal mummies and displaying them at the Egyptian Museum

the mummies is a very delicate process that has to be handled by professionals,” Ikram said. “But the display of the mummies required a lot of research, cataloging and referencing, and I thought that would be a fruitful learning experience for my students studying museology.”

Ikram and her students wrote labels and catalog entries for each mummy, painted the modern cases that would house the mummies and translated hieroglyphic material. They also developed a children’s worksheet and thought of educational activities associated with the exhibition.

“For the students, it was an excellent grounding in basic museology,” Ikram said. “They got hands-on experience in setting up museum exhibitions and all the research it involves.”

The animal mummy exhibit opened to the public in the fall of 2003. With a climate-controlled room, purpose-built glass cases and climate and pest-controlled storage areas, the animal

mummies are eternally protected.

“The ancient Egyptians preserved their pets and sacred animals for 3,000 years; it is our obligation to protect them and ensure that these unique cultural treasures survive for another few millennia,” Ikram affirmed.

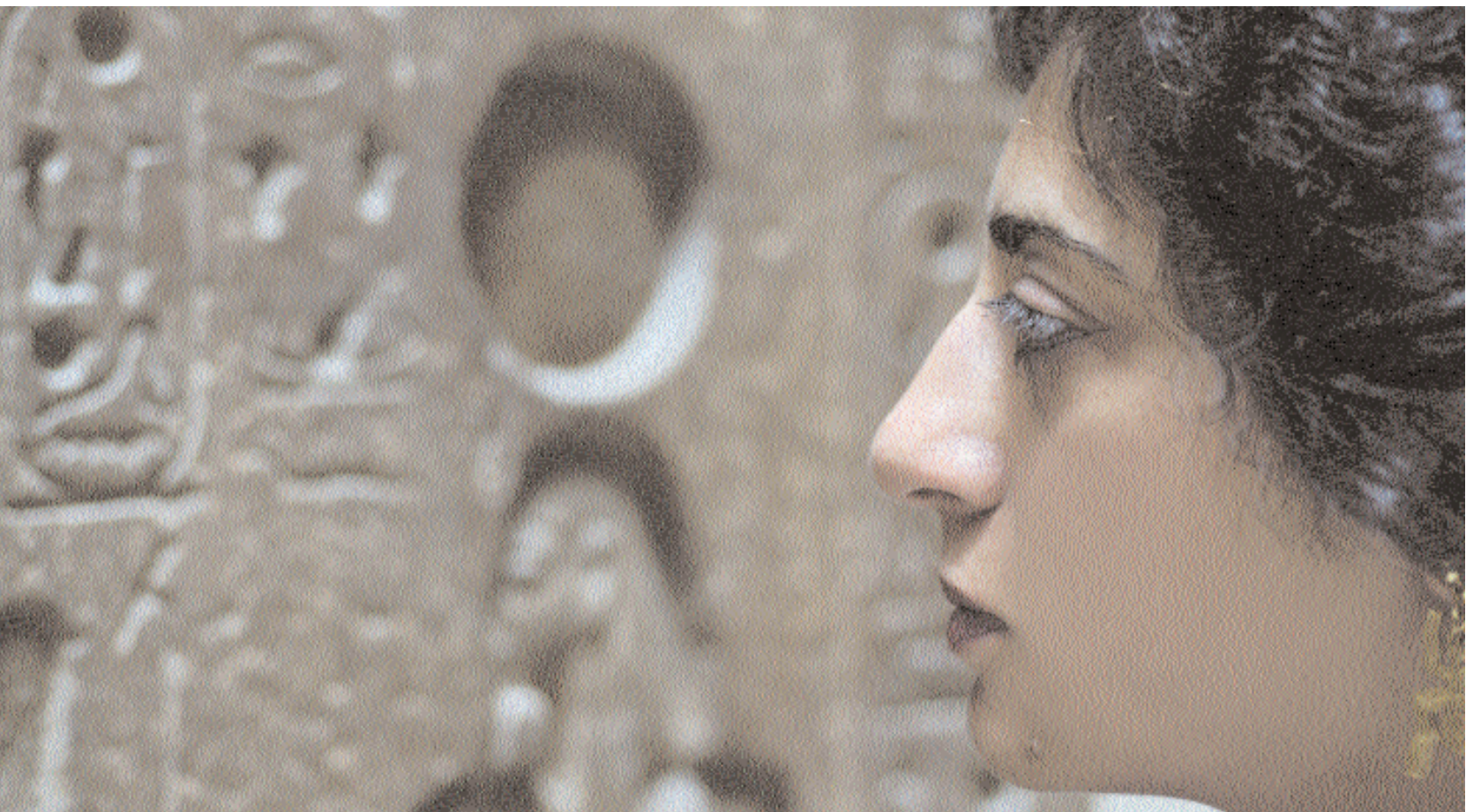
Never seeming to tire of the constant activity in her life, Ikram has other projects lined up. She currently co-directs the North Kharga Oasis Survey, now in its fourth season. The project, she explained, aims to officially map the Kharga Oasis, one of Egypt’s richest but unexplored archeological sites. “The fieldwork is challenging but stimulating,” she said. This year, the team discovered a new king whose name has never been recorded previously. King AA (Great One) is the earliest Egyptian ruler to be active in the Western Desert.

Ikram will also soon take on a project of clearing a tomb in Sakkara and recording it. In addition, she plans to publish a book about the Gayer-

Anderson House Museum’s pharaonic collection, which she has been helping to catalog. The display of these artifacts is planned for the future.

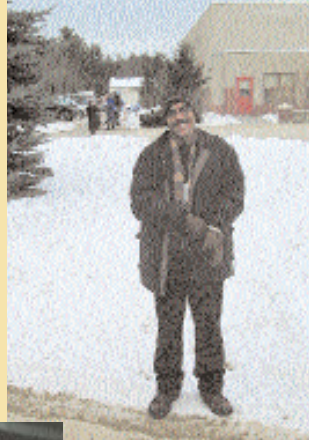
“My work is fun,” she said with genuine enthusiasm. “I suppose it is part of the childhood desire to grub in the dirt and find things that one has never gotten over. I am rarely bored, as there is always the thrill of potential discovery. Also, most sites in Egypt are lovely, and it is a pleasure and an honor to work there.”

Ikram is married to Nicholas Warner, a Cambridge classmate. Also interested in ancient history, Warner works as an architect on the history of Cairo and the restoration of the Gayer-Anderson House Museum in Cairo, as well as constructing new conservation labs and an outdoor theater there. “We have no children, but I have enough students and projects requiring my time,” Ikram said smiling. Together, the couple is dedicated to preserving the ancient in what is today’s modern Cairo. □



From Local to International News at *Al-Ahram*

Khaled Dawoud '89, '90 climbs to the top of Egypt's leading daily



Ahmad El-Nemr

Top-right: Dawoud amidst roving reporters in Palestine; Center: In front of a polling station in Manchester, New Hampshire while covering US presidential primaries last January; Bottom-left: Dawoud inside the *Al-Ahram* newsroom

With bachelor's and master's degrees in mass communication from AUC and a second master's in Middle East politics from the University of London, Khaled Dawoud '89, '90 set forth on a path that would lead him to become one of Egypt's most prominent journalists. Starting his career with well-known names such as Reuters, the Associated Press and Deutsche Presse-Agentur enriched Dawoud's professional experience and paved the way for him to join *Al-Ahram Weekly*, an English-language newspaper, as a full-time reporter in 1997. Several years later, he started writing Arabic articles for *Al-Ahram*, Egypt's leading daily newspaper.

"As a reporter, I wanted to have a connection with the Egyptian reader. *Al-Ahram* gave me that opportunity," he said.

Recounting one of his latest experiences in the field before leaving to Washington D.C., Dawoud spoke with enthusiasm about his coverage of what is known as Operation Defensive Shield in the West Bank in March 2002. "It was a real war, with tanks, shootings, exploding gas bombs and helicopters on top of our heads. We had to move in groups, for Israeli soldiers might shoot one journalist alone but not a group of 30. I was with a group of journalists when we came under heavy Israeli shelling and shooting. None of us thought we would survive because the shooting was very close, and we had to remain lying on our stomachs in the street for nearly two hours."

Moving from a reporter covering local Egyptian news to *Al-Ahram's* regional editor and finally becoming the newspaper's Washington bureau chief in late 2002, Dawoud enjoys the dynamic nature of the job, although he does not spend as much time in the field. "Coordinating between correspondents in different countries, traveling around the globe and being up-to-date with what's happening in the world is only part of the fun," he declared. "What's more fun is the vibrant and pulsating life you lead. I love my job."

Believing that journalists carry the honorable mission of uncovering the truth to readers, Dawoud noted, "Journalists' ultimate aim is to make readers know what is actually going on in other parts of the world. My aim is to become a respected journalist whose views readers trust." □

"As a reporter, I wanted to have a connection with the Egyptian reader. *Al-Ahram* gave me that opportunity."

By Dalia Al Nimr

Cutting Edge

By Lamyia Tawfik
Photos by Ahmad El-Nemr



Karim Ramadan

Sitting in his office in Microsoft's spectacular glass building in Egypt's Smart Village on the Cairo-Alexandria desert road, Karim Ramadan '88 is realizing his vision of becoming a part of the IT revolution in Egypt. A graduate of economics, Ramadan joined Microsoft six years ago, working throughout the Gulf before finally returning to Egypt to head the company's regional office.

"I wanted to be part of the success story of the development of the IT sector in Egypt, so I came back," said Ramadan, admitting that the "nationalist" inside is what brought him back.

At Microsoft, Ramadan's team includes a significant number of AUCians, who also hold positions in the company's offices throughout the region and especially in its corporate headquarters in Seattle.

During Ramadan's tenure, Microsoft has worked closely with the Egyptian government in developing the usage and spread of technology through government-led initiatives like the Egyptian e-government project, the Ministry of Education's School Agreement, the Microsoft Partner Academy and the student and home PC initiatives.

Prior to joining Microsoft, Ramadan worked for IBM and Oracle in both the United States and the Middle East. His strong belief in the power of technology and its importance to education and development drive Ramadan's efforts to see a thriving IT industry in Egypt and the region.

Knowing the "how" of staying in the lead of Egypt's IT industry

The IT industry in Egypt has grown phenomenally over the past 20 years. Starting from a handful of IT development firms and Internet Service Providers (ISP) in the '90s, today the industry is booming. With the backing of the newly formed Egyptian Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, initiatives to bring a PC into every home, quicker Internet connections and a rapidly expanding number of users, experts anticipate continued growth for the industry.

Currently, there are more than 400 alumni working in IT, many of them graduates of computer science — the only program outside the United States accredited by the Computer Science Accreditation Board. From software developers, Web designers to network specialists, AUCians have proven their technical capability and talent in the high-speed, customer-driven world of IT. Talking with alumni at the top of prominent IT companies in Egypt, *AUCToday* found out the four most important features critical to success in their field.

Serving People Not Machines

Working with computer hardware, complicated systems and programming languages, it is easy to forget the human on the receiving end of this technology. Industry experts warn of the danger of losing sight of the

customer whose needs must drive the technology, not the other way around.

Mohammad Nawawy '92, chairman and managing director of TE Data, says that being "customer centric" is paramount when it comes to staying competitive. "You have to thoroughly understand the industry, be focused on the services you offer and always make sure you know what the customer's needs are," said Nawawy.

Coupled with understanding customer needs is providing a level of service that meets and exceeds expectations, explained Khaled Bichara '93, president and chief executive officer of LINKdotNET. "Serving our customers should be a priority. Always put yourself in the customer's shoes and ask: What does he want from this software?"

Speaking about a service-oriented culture, Akram Farag '89, chairman and managing director of Digital Systems Middle East, noted that countries in South Asia and India have "a strong aptitude to serve, which is a major advantage that we still do not seem to have in Egypt."

An Innovative Approach

In an industry where processing speeds are doubled every 18 months and new software is introduced by the day, falling behind means losing customers and going out of business.

Tarek Sakr '98, the founder and chief executive officer of Kinematechs, started his business by finding an innovative approach to meeting the needs of engineers. Sakr believes that creativity and dedication cannot be overemphasized. Sakr hires AUCians almost exclusively to write software for his company because of their ability to be innovative. "I am not just looking for technical abilities, which can usually be learned fairly easily,"

"Serving our customers should be a priority. Always put yourself in the customer's shoes and ask: What does he want from this software?"

Khaled Bichara



Tarek Sakr

Early on, Tarek Sakr '98, a construction engineering major and computer science minor, decided that long hours and all the concrete and steel at construction sites were not for him. Instead, Sakr set out to make the lives of fellow engineers a little bit easier.

He developed Bidder, a software program that allows engineers to calculate quantity takeoffs straight from the AutoCad models, rather than the traditional method of calculating quantities manually using spreadsheets.

"It was my hobby for a long time to develop software. And the more I studied construction engineering, the more I felt the need to develop tools for it," said Sakr. "The calculations of quantity takeoffs, which are an essential part before the start of any project, were extremely tedious."

In the early stages of its development, Bidder was extensively researched with university professors and construction companies in Egypt and the United Arab Emirates. Bidder is now a mature product currently used by several construction firms.

Today, Kinematechs, the company Sakr founded, is working on developing additional software for engineers.

"There's a real challenge in Egypt to market new software because when you say that it's made in Egypt there's an immediate sense of mistrust. On the other hand, one of the main drawbacks of Egyptian software products is that the user interfaces fall far behind the accepted international standards," he said.



Khaled Bichara

Having received his bachelor's in computer science nearly a decade ago, Khaled Bichara '93 currently heads LINKdotNET — the largest private ISP in the Middle East.

Bichara instituted many firsts in the Internet business, which garnered LINKdotNet numerous prestigious awards such as Best ISP by Aberdeen Group, Best MCIS Integrator, Microsoft Gold Certified Partner and Microsoft Certified Media Service Provider for two years in a row.

In a short time, Bichara took the company from an ISP to a full-fledged Internet presence that boasts leadership in Internet connectivity, online content, Web and e-commerce services, as well as wireless applications.

The 2003 *Business Today's* Young Executive of the Year, Bichara values his undergraduate years as a computer science student at AUC. "Those were definitely great years in terms of the experiences and learning; not just technical, but teamwork and problem solving," said Bichara.

explained Sakr. "It's a way of thinking that we're looking for."

Karim Ramadan '88, regional manager of Microsoft, places such a high value on thinking and problem-solving skills that he has incorporated it into his interviews of job applicants. "One of the main things that I look for when I interview people is their ability to think out of the box," said Ramadan. "I give them questions like, if the sky were raining tennis balls and you had to collect the largest number of balls, what would you do?"

Technical Training

Perhaps the only thing outstripping the rate of growth of Egypt's IT industry is the number of IT training institutes which have sprouted in nearly every area. Offering what Farag calls the "fast food" approach to training, these institutes typically provide short courses on an assortment of IT-related topics.

"I'd rather that agencies invest in training 500 trainees per year rather than 3000. If I have a big chunk of money dedicated to train one person then it's better because the job market will not be able to employ all those trainees," said Farag. "Many will leave to work abroad and that's how we have a brain drain."

Mohammad Nawawy

After graduation, Mohammad Nawawy '92 and two computer science classmates founded InTouch Communications Services.

Today, Nawawy is the chairman and managing director of TE Data, Egypt's largest IP-based data communications carrier.

Comparing the IT industry in Egypt from when he first graduated to what it is today, Nawawy sees tremendous progress. "Telecommunications since its

start, and up until a few years ago, was centrally planned and executed mostly by the government," said Nawawy.

"Only recently did the private sector get involved. My partners and myself have been lucky to have been in the center of these events and have enjoyed the challenge of adapting and learning from our customers and working with bright people during this technological and regulatory boom," he added.

Eight years after founding InTouch, Nawawy and his partners sold the

company. He went on to provide consulting services for various organizations including the Telecom Regulatory Authority in Egypt and the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology. During that time, he helped co-develop the regulatory framework currently in effect for ISP and managed data services in Egypt.

Established by Telecom Egypt, TE Data acts as the company's data communications and Internet arm.

Not only is a four-year degree a must, agree the experts, but so too is hands-on training. “Make it a point to study and train while at college and make use of internships,” is the advice that Farag gives computer science students, emphasizing the importance of going from fictitious problems to real industry concerns.

Internships are also a valuable training tool, explained Ramadan. “There needs to be more involvement with the industry and sponsorship of projects by companies that build strong links between computer science graduates and the industry.”

Drawing an example from India’s success in the IT industry, Bichara noted that IT professionals in India join training institutes even before they attend college. “They plan ahead,” he explained. “There needs to be energy and excitement about the field at a young age.”

Staying Ahead

The right training, creative thinking and being customer-driven are all critical to working in the IT industry, but long-term success requires a continuous ability to learn and adapt.

Ramadan quantified professional commitment to the field in terms of “the number of waking hours spent getting updated on the technological advancement in our field.” Ramadan believes that a certain passion for technology is what drives IT professionals to seek the latest.

“The ability to research and adapt to new developments is important, and that’s why AUCians are more able to manage on their own with less input,” explained Bichara. “They know how to find and learn information.” □

“I give them questions like, if the sky were raining tennis balls and you had to collect the largest number of balls, what would you do?”

Karim Ramadan



Akram Farag

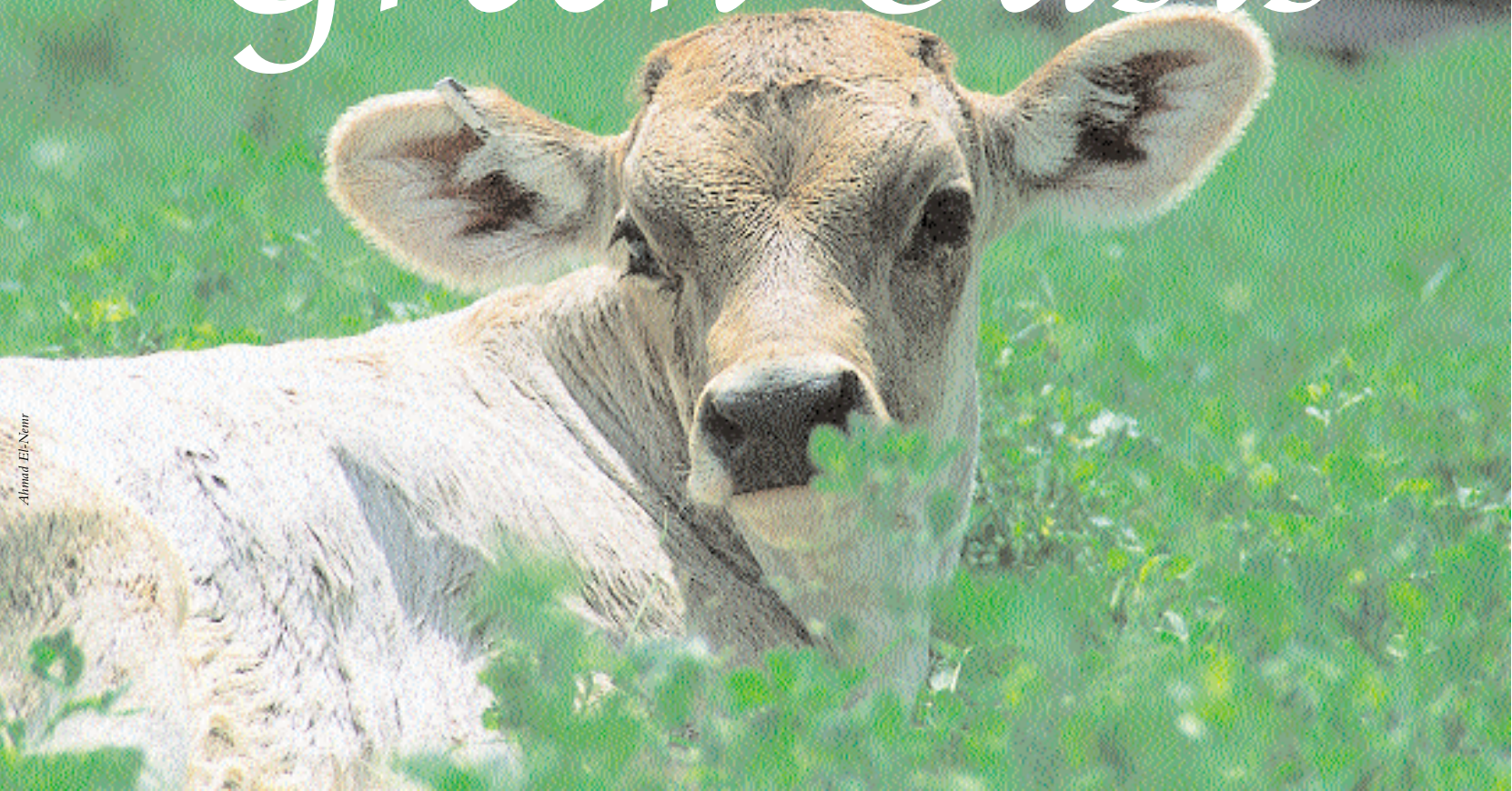
Since his graduation with a bachelor’s degree in computer science in 1989, Akram Farag ’89 has pioneered several IT ventures, which he sold off to start other companies. In 1992, he co-founded InTouch Communications Services, one of Egypt’s first Internet Service Providers. Then in 1999 he co-founded Smart Village Company and in 2000 he founded MagicWorx Enterprises Corporation, which is the first regional firm offering hotel entertainment systems such as pay-per-view movies, Internet connectivity in guest rooms as well as media and content provisioning.

In 1993, Farag founded Digital Systems Middle East, the company he currently heads. The company integrates and distributes digital systems, especially communications solutions in North Africa and the Middle East.

It is the quick pace of change in the industry that attracted Farag to it. “This field is so dynamic,” he said. “It’s difficult for it to ever become boring. There is always something new coming, so I have to spend a lot of time constantly updating myself.”

Farag is currently a member of the board of the Arab Business Forum for Information and Communications Technology and the vice chairman of the International Telecommunications Union Private Sector Task Force for the Arab Region. He is also a founding member of the Internet Society of Egypt and an active member of the International Internet Society and the American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt.

Green Oasis



The DDC provides high-grade livestock to local farmers

AUC's Desert Development Center Helps Farmers Achieve Independence

As the hot desert sun beats down on him, Ragab Al Fishawy strolls onto the premises of Ahmad Al Gharabawy's land and starts picking clover. Smiling meekly at Al Gharabawy, Al Fishawy offers an explanation, "My wife said she'd kill me if I don't come back with clover." With a nod, Al Gharabawy returns the smile.

Al Fishawy and Al Gharabawy have the kind of friendship that evolves between people who have shared the same struggle and experienced the same triumph. More than 10 years ago, as fresh university graduates, the Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) gave them each five acres of land.

Along with the other farmers in the area, they faced the turmoil of anxiously waiting for the desert land to turn green as they honed their agricultural skills through a training program organized by AUC's Desert Development Center (DDC).

"We started here from zero," said Al Fishawy while puffing on his cigarette and proudly showing off a new irrigation system that was installed "with my own hands," he is quick to add.

A sense of satisfaction and achievement permeates the conversation with the farmers, who have now formed a little village in the desert. Many of the farmers moved there together and worked hard at making this part of the Sahara green.

Today, with a diverse range of crops and livestock, the village has reached a state of near self-sufficiency, often relying on bartering. "This man finished all my mandarins," joked Al Gharabawy, pointing to a fellow farmer. "His kids snack on them all day."

Ibrahim gleefully shows off his DDC certificate



In the late '80s, the MOA attempted to reduce the impact of unemployment and encourage agriculture by launching the Mubarak National Project for Settling Young University Graduates in Newly Reclaimed Desert Lands. In addition to five acres of land, the graduates were given a home and the opportunity to enroll in the DDC's Training University Graduates in Desert Development program.

"In 1992, the MOA gave the DDC funds to build a training center and provide technical support to the new landowners. The DDC has been active since the 1970s and was studying desert soil at the time, which made it a good choice for training the farmers," said Mahmoud Badran, a senior accountant at the DDC.

In the first phase from 1993 to 1998, the program focused largely on pre-settlement and was designed to give the graduates hands-on training in desert farming.

In the village of Abdul Meniem Ryad, located near the DDC center in South Tahrir, former DDC graduates enjoy their work and are appreciative of the expertise they gained. "We know the value of land; we are *fellaheen* (farmers)," said Al Fishawy, father of four and a philosophy graduate, standing amid a field of trees loaded with blushing nearly ripe apples.

Another farmer who received training at the DDC, Al Sayed Ibrahim grows grapes and peaches. Despite being an agriculture graduate, Ibrahim still found the hands-on approach at the DDC helpful and speaks fondly of his experience. "I've learned a lot and I am happy living here among other graduates. We're just like one big family," he said, showing off the certificate he received from the DDC after completing the training program.

So far, the program has trained more than 4000 landowners, many of whom are now well-established and employ a small staff of workers to farm their land. Reflecting on his humble beginnings, Al Gharabawy boasts of how far he has come. "I have three buffaloes, two cows and an apiary with 70 beehives. I can't take care of this land by myself because I have to tend to my other businesses," said Al Gharabawy, waist-deep in a sea of golden wheat stalks.

"When we came here these were all dry lands, a desert. Together we worked at bringing it to life," Al Gharabawy said, remembering the sessions at the DDC where they had the chance to swap stories and learn new techniques.

The DDC has a training facility that offers full accommodation for almost 100 trainees at a time, a restaurant, lecture halls and separate residential blocks for men and women. "The facility is strategically located in the midst of DDC-owned land, thus allowing graduates the rare opportunity to become fully immersed in the program with on-site accommodation," said Mohsen Nawara, manager of the South Tahrir DDC station.

"The relationship with the trainees doesn't end when they receive their certificates. We're always there for them and feel that their success is ours," said Mamdouh Hegazy, DDC training manager. "For me, it's not just about training farmers; it's about building long-term relationships and watching people become independent and learn to stand on their own two feet." □

By Lamyia Taufik

What is the Desert Development Center?

The DDC was established in 1979. The center prides itself on providing services to the Egyptian community through improving the social and economic well-being of people living in desert communities by developing financially and ecologically sustainable rural livelihoods.

Its activities include agricultural and socioeconomic research, training programs and community outreach services. The DDC's main research areas include desert farming, renewable energy, resource management as well as the development of desert communities.

The DDC began providing training services in 1986 with short courses covering the basic concepts of desert agriculture and technology, renewable energy and the socioeconomic aspects of desert farming. Today, the DDC's training programs have grown to include a three-week residential program, a one-week summer program for university students, a two-to-three week technical program and a series of day-long seminars.

With locations in South Tahrir and Sadat city, in the heart of the desert communities of which it is a part, the DDC works on establishing lasting relationships with the farmers and villages it serves.



Almad El-Nemr

Al Gharabawy says he's come a long way

Educating Women: **The Path to Progress**

By Dalia Al Nimr

Photos by Arnaud du Boistesselin

Through the Nashwa Taher Arab Women Scholarship, five Palestinian students journey to Cairo, discover their potential and dream of their homeland

In the summer of 2002, in the war-torn city of Ramallah, 17-year-old Dalia Othman sat studying for her final school exams amidst the sound of firing bullets. Outside her home, Israeli tanks packed the streets and the weeklong curfew meant that nobody was allowed to leave home — not even to go to school. Despite the obstacles facing her, Othman dreamed of the day when she would attend college and be able to contribute positively to her country's affairs.

Today, two years later, Othman's dream is becoming a reality. A journalism and mass communication sophomore at AUC, Othman is among five Palestinian students who have received the Nashwa A. H. Taher Arab Women Scholarship to study at the university. The scholarship is granted to five female undergraduate students based on their outstanding academic performance and financial need. It aims to empower women and equip them with the knowledge and skills to participate actively in their community.

Nashwa Taher is a shareholder and board member of several Saudi corporations. A philanthropist and member of the Businesswomen Committee in Jeddah, Taher studied for several years at the University of California in Santa Barbara before completing her bachelor's at King Abdul Aziz University in Saudi Arabia.

"It is imperative for women to empower themselves through education and knowledge," said Taher. "Arab women in particular need to have a voice and should be able to present their culture and heritage to the world. Investing in women's education is key if nations are to progress and develop."

Through this scholarship, Taher hopes to give a voice to Arab women and contribute to the establishment of strong Arab women role models who can represent their region and heritage to the world. This year's recipients are all Palestinian.



Almad El-Nimr

Nashwa Taher (third from left) during a visit to campus to meet the five Palestinian recipients of the scholarships she established

"Arab women in particular need to have a voice and should be able to present their culture and heritage to the world. Investing in women's education is key if nations are to progress and develop."

Finding a Voice

Born and raised in Cyprus, Dalia Othman was an active student, taking part in theater and ballet performances, sports events, swimming championships and photography workshops. As a child, she was constantly following news of her homeland. “I didn’t want to be alienated from the situation in Palestine,” she said.

When her family moved to Palestine in 1995 after the Oslo Accords, Othman, who was 11 years old then, knew that this was the place she wanted to be. “I always had a beautiful image of Palestine and I got to see it right before my eyes. I instantly felt a special bond with the place,” she said.

As a teenager in Palestine, Othman continued to be active, participating in music concerts, theater performances and swimming competitions. However, after the breakout of the first Intifada in 1988, cultural life in Palestine came to a standstill, and Othman — living through the hardships of the war — became a different person.

“Living through the Intifada and all the bombings, shootings and killings changed me a lot. It made me more in touch with my land and made me realize what I want to do in life,” she said.

It also made her relentless in pursuit of her goals.

Recounting an incident that almost got her imprisoned last winter, Othman noted how she was keen on attending an Israeli-Palestinian peace conference held in Jerusalem but was denied a permit into the city by the Israeli military. Refusing to succumb, she jumped over a brick wall in front of Israeli guards and attended the conference anyway.

“Nothing was going to stop me from attending that event,” she said. “I ran the risk of being thrown in jail, but that’s the way we live in Palestine — taking risks and not giving up.”

For Othman, moving to Cairo was an overwhelming experience, not only in terms of lifestyle but also in terms of place. “Ramallah is only the size of Zamalek,” she remarked. “Cairo is really big!”

Grateful for the opportunity to study at AUC, Othman noted, “Without this scholarship, I would have had to attend a university in Palestine, which means having to deal with checkpoints, closures and cancelled classes. I applied to universities in the States, but they are very expensive. That’s why I consider being admitted to AUC a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.”



Othman in the control room working as a stage manager for the student play Suleiman Al-Halabi

An active student, Othman supplements her university studies with theater. Working as a stage manager at AUC, Othman says it is nearly a full-time job. “It takes up most of my time, but I love it,” she said passionately. “I find in theater an avenue for self-expression.”

After graduation, Othman aspires to become a broadcast journalist and “tell the world the true story of Palestine, with no biases or misrepresentations.”

“I think about Palestine all the time,” she said with tears in her eyes. “I love it here, but I can’t wait to go back home. I miss the valleys and mountains of Ramallah and the greenery and olive trees. The Palestinian landscape is always going to be a part of me.”

Telling a Story

“Education is my first target,” asserted Maha Assaly, with determination in her eyes. “As a Palestinian, I might not be able to attack with weaponry but I can definitely attack with education.”

During her school years, Assaly depended on herself for much of her academic life. Her teachers, she explained, journeyed daily from Ramallah to Jerusalem and were often stopped at checkpoints and prevented from reaching school. “Our classes were often cancelled, and we had to learn to cope and rely on our own research to get going,” she said.

But education is not just confined to the classroom, as Assaly came to know.

Meeting students from different nationalities at her school — German, American and Korean — Assaly learned the meaning of constructive dialogue and conversing with the other. “I always engaged in discussions with my foreign schoolmates about the situation in Palestine and how it could be rectified,” she said. “In the process, I learned how to listen to others’ opinions and convey my opinion in a respectable and decent manner. I consider that in itself a form of education.”

And that’s what she values most about Cairo. With “endless” places to visit, Assaly always has the chance to meet people and make new friends. Whether it is horseback riding at the Pyramids, shopping at *Khan El Khalili* or gathering with friends at coffee shops, Assaly enjoys mingling with people.

“I’m very social by nature,” she said. “At the dorms where I stay, I’ve made a lot of friends — Arab and non-Arab. They often ask me about Palestine and my family there, and I like to answer them because it



Assaly's favorite pastime is horseback riding at the Pyramids

gives me a chance to show what Palestinians are really like.”

Currently in her second year as an accounting major, Assaly is a member of Al Quds, a student club dedicated to raising awareness about Palestinian culture and history. She has taken part in Palestinian *dabka* dances and helped set up the Palestinian booth on International Day.

“It’s a way of bringing back memories of Palestine and reviving its culture and traditions,” she said.

Searching for Independence

Ruba Kharbutli chose to come to AUC because she wanted to travel out of Palestine and be exposed to a new setting and culture. “I wanted to see different people and be able to do things on my own. I wanted to live alone and gain a sense of independence,” she said.

Kharbutli was born and raised in Jerusalem as the youngest of five brothers and sisters.

Living in Cairo, Kharbutli values the safety and peace of mind, which stands in stark contrast to the stressful and turbulent life she led in war-bound Palestine. “We always feel psychologically strained in Palestine with machine guns and war tanks constantly around us,” she said.

Recounting an incident she will never forget, Kharbutli told of how her father and brother were trapped for nine hours inside Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem when Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon — accompanied by 1,000 Israeli troops and paramilitary police — marched into the mosque in the year 2000.

“We were worried sick,” she said. “But in Palestine, you have to expect anything to happen any minute.”

Kharbutli is currently studying integrated marketing at AUC and finds the experience “challenging and stimulating.”

She lives at the AUC hostel, where she is able to mingle with international students. “What I like most about university life is the chance to meet people from different countries, not just Palestinians,” said the 19-year-old. “It’s good to meet others who are different from you and understand the way they think and feel.”

Kharbutli has also gone on hostel-sponsored trips to different parts of Egypt, including El Gouna, Ain El Sukhna and Alexandria. “I have to make the most out of my stay,” she said.

Despite her enjoyment of the independent and



Kharbutli enjoys the safety and peace of mind in Cairo



Dmeiri plans to use her education to develop her Palestinian homeland

carefree life she leads in Cairo, Kharbutli is adamant about returning to Palestine after graduation. "I owe it to my country to make it benefit from the education I've gained," she said. "Who else will help invigorate the Palestinian economy?"

New Beginnings

"When I first arrived in Cairo, the crowded streets and the constant flurry of activity made me feel like I was in New York. People here are free to go on outings, meet each other and live life to the fullest," said Reem Dmeiri, an accounting sophomore.

Dmeiri, the youngest of three sisters, was born in the United Arab Emirates and spent her early childhood there before moving to Jerusalem with her family at the age of 9.

In Jerusalem, Dmeiri lives next to an Israeli checkpoint. Passing through that checkpoint everyday on her way to and from school became a normal part of her life. Curfews confined her to the house for days, making her unable to meet friends or participate in any social activities.

"Being in Cairo made me feel that we were not living in Palestine; we were barely surviving," she said, comparing her life now to what it used to be.

For that reason, coming to AUC was a turning point for Dmeiri. "It completely changed my life for the better," she said.

Dmeiri applied to AUC during her final year in high school after a friend informed her of Palestinian scholarship opportunities at the university. Both Dmeiri and her friend applied, but only Dmeiri was accepted because of her outstanding school record.

Had she been turned down, Dmeiri's only alternative would have been to apply to Birzeit University or the Hebrew University in Palestine, neither of which were secure options for her.

"I was very excited to know I had been accepted at AUC. It was a unique opportunity; one doesn't get a scholarship everyday!" she said happily, adding that "AUC is known to be an expensive school with an excellent reputation, and it seemed like a far-fetched dream to be one of its students. Words cannot begin to describe how honored I am to be chosen."

Despite her "demanding" coursework, Dmeiri is keen on taking part in extracurricular activities at AUC. She is currently vice-president of the Al Quds club and a member of Hand in Hand, a student club providing support to the elderly. She enjoys the range of extracurricular activities at AUC because, as she



Halawani aspires to accomplish a huge feat in software engineering

puts it, they create awareness about important issues, promote leadership and develop strength of character in their members.

“I didn’t come here just to study,” she said with enthusiasm. “I want to join as many activities as possible and enjoy my experience at AUC.”

Like Kharbutli, Dmeiri aspires to return to Palestine. “If we all leave, we’ll abandon our own land,” she said. “I want to arm myself with education and go back to develop my homeland and make it thrive. It is a mission I set out for myself.”

Looking Ahead

Iman Al Halawani is the youngest child in her family with three older brothers. Born in Egypt to a Palestinian father and an Egyptian mother, she spent her entire life in her mother’s homeland and has never been to Palestine. Her paternal relatives, however, all live there. “I never got the chance to meet them,” she said.

Al Halawani graduated from her school with an outstanding score of 107 percent. Upon joining AUC, she wanted to major in business but quickly shifted to computer science. “I’ve always loved working with computers,” she said. “It’s a practical field that is based on comprehension rather than memorization.”

Currently in her senior year at AUC and an active member of the Academic Computing Machinery student chapter, Al Halawani reflects on her university years with satisfaction and pride. “I’ve learned a lot at AUC,” she said. “I’ve learned the value of time management and teamwork and the importance of working hard to achieve your goals.”

But perhaps her most treasured moments are those spent with her classmates. “As computer science students, we often spend long nights at the lab, finishing projects and finalizing coursework. This close interaction created a special bond between us ... We all feel like part of one family,” she said with a warm smile.

Ready to soon go out into the real world, Al Halawani wishes to become a successful software engineer. “I want to accomplish a huge feat in the field,” she said. “I want to be a source of pride for my family, my university and my country.” □

To learn more about scholarships at AUC, please visit www.aucegypt.edu/support/campaign/students.html



It's been a year since Fateh Azzam, director of the Forced Migration and Refugee Studies (FMRS) program, joined AUC. With olive skin, deep brown eyes, a heavy white beard and a welcoming *ahlein*, Azzam invites his guests to sample the platter of cashews and almonds on his desk — a distinctly Arabian greeting. Magazines and publications on Palestine are scattered on a nearby table. Interrupted by a long-distance call from Ramallah, a delighted Azzam responds with a flawless Palestinian dialect indicative of the years he spent in Palestine. As he puts the phone down, he smiles with nostalgia, remembering the time he spent in his homeland.

"Living in Palestine for 11 years transformed my life and gave it real meaning and essence," he said. "For the first time, I began to have a sense of belonging, identity and purpose. It was like putting pieces of a puzzle together."

Born to Palestinian refugees, Azzam grew up in Syria and Lebanon before immigrating to the United States at the age of 16. There, he acquired a bachelor's degree in community planning from the University of Massachusetts. But the start of his career was in the world of theater, where he worked for 12 years as a

Ahmad El-Namr

In Search of an Identity

Fateh Azzam, AUC's director of the Forced Migration and Refugee Studies program, brings personal experience to the job



Above: Azzam indulges in his long-time hobby of playing the oud; Right: Azzam with his family in Palestine in the early '90s

professional choreographer, performer, director and teacher.

In 1985, Azzam went to Palestine with his American wife and became director of the first Palestinian theater center in Jerusalem. His initial entry into human rights work was with the Palestinian Organization for Human Rights, Al Haq, for which he served as director for eight years. Intrigued by the field, Azzam acquired an L.L.M. in international human rights law in 1992 from the University of Essex.

In 1997, Azzam moved to the Ford Foundation, where he served for seven years as program officer for human rights. His work had him traveling to different parts of the globe, from Africa and the Arab world to Latin America and Southeast Asia. After serving at the Ford Foundation for seven years, Azzam joined AUC as FMRS director.

"I had supported FMRS as a donor while I was with the Ford Foundation and found the work it was doing extremely important," he said, explaining why he chose FMRS in particular. "In addition, I only knew about refugee issues as a Palestinian refugee and in general terms of refugee law as an aspect of human rights. I wanted to learn a lot more than that."

"Human rights is a fascinating field," he said with enthusiasm, "and the link between human rights and refugees needs to be strengthened. Refugees have long been neglected as an area of study and assistance ... This area of work has to be promoted and expanded."

And that is what Azzam hopes to do at AUC. "My aim is to consolidate research on the situation of refugees and their families to help human rights organizations defend the rights of refugees. People should come out of the FMRS program with adequate

knowledge and skills on how to build a better situation for refugees worldwide," he said.

Building on his relationships with human rights organizations, Azzam routinely invites prominent speakers to the university, works to foster students' hands-on experience with refugees and tries to increase the participation of other departments in the program. "Refugee studies are multidisciplinary in nature," he said. "Students need to look at the real-life situation of refugees with all its ramifications."

Azzam said that although he has never lived in refugee camps, he still considers himself a refugee. "I've always felt a sense of exile knowing that my land is lost," he said. "I grew up knowing that I am a Palestinian refugee and that has always shaped everything in my life."

After the first two years of college, Azzam felt "lost and confused," not knowing what to do with his life. He eventually met an artist who believed Azzam had natural talent. That was his door into the world of theater.

"Theater is in my blood," he asserted. "It allows you to make change in the world by reaching people's hearts. It also makes you think, feel and experience different things about life, history, culture and society."

Using theater as a venue for self-expression, Azzam still directs and writes political plays on the search for justice in a world marred by social injustice. "One way to fight the enemy is through theater, poetry and creative art," he said. "It's a responsibility I owe to my country to carry its history forward."

Azzam's latest play, *Baggage*, was performed by AUC students last summer. A previous play, *Ansar*, tells the true story of the "dehumanizing" experience a Palestinian prisoner



Azzam welcomes refugees during World Refugee Day celebrations held on campus

"Theater is in my blood. It allows you to make change in the world by reaching people's hearts. It also makes you think, feel and experience different things about life, history, culture and society."



Azzam and wife Mary, son Rami and daughter Haneen; Below: Azzam and his son Rami walk amid the fields in Palestine

“I began to realize who I am, what my role in life is and what my dreams are. I felt part of a movement for social change and part of a community working together to recreate Palestinian life.”



went through in Israeli military detention camps and how, despite the hardships, he never let go of his identity and history.

“My main message,” Azzam explained, “is that humans will never accept being dehumanized, and nobody can keep down the human spirit. What connects us all is the human experience, and the power of theater is to show that your particular problem is a universal problem that people need to understand through their human experience. That’s the beauty of the universality of art.”

Though Azzam was successful in his theater career in the United States, he always felt that something was missing. “I felt a sense of schizophrenia carrying a Palestinian identity but never having been to Palestine,” he said. “I decided to go for a visit in an effort to bring different pieces of my life together and have them make sense.”

Azzam’s visit prolonged into an 11-year stay. He went there as an American citizen with his wife, a ceramic artist, and gradually began to

participate in Palestinian community-building projects: setting up neighborhood tutoring classes, planting food for self-sufficiency and engaging in solidarity movements with fellow Palestinians. In addition, his wife started an art program in Palestinian schools.

“My life suddenly began to make sense,” Azzam said. “I began to realize who I am, what my role in life is and what my dreams are. I felt part of a movement for social change and part of a community working together to recreate Palestinian life. I was happy that both my children were born and raised in Palestine because that connected them to the land ... Palestine became home for us.”

It was not until 1996 that Azzam felt it was time to move on and leave Palestine. “It wasn’t a choice to leave as much as it was to go and meet other needs,” he said. “I found myself in my mid-40s with no money whatsoever and nothing saved for the future or for my children’s education.”

But it was also a deeper realization on Azzam’s part that prompted him to go. “I began to develop an understanding that human rights is not only about Palestinian rights, and I wanted the experience of working on other human rights issues,” he said. “I felt that we Palestinians needed to learn other struggles in order to strengthen our own struggle for human rights.”

Nonetheless, the experience left a lasting imprint on Azzam.

“Each of us is a unique blend of history and experiences, and we all find our way one way or another,” he said. “Being part of a community effort to make life better for me, my family and my nation has made all the difference in my life.” □

By Dalia Al Nimr

Holding his first job at the age of 16, when he began working to manage his father's land, Tarek Amer '80, deputy governor of Egypt's Central Bank, has welcomed challenges throughout his life.

"If I don't have a challenge, I don't feel good about myself," he asserted.

Amer, the father of four, walked a tightrope as he balanced studying at AUC and working. "I started working early in my life. I got used to struggling through difficult situations early on, which helped me very much throughout my life. My father used to work for the government and lost his job for political reasons. I used to help him in managing my grandfather's land. This was the beginning of my experience in life," said Amer.

While he enjoys his work, Amer is adamant about the importance of family life. "I don't like to work very long hours. I prefer to work a reasonable number of hours, but focused and concentrated. I like to have a balanced life, and I'm eager to go home everyday to spend time with my family," said Amer, who has been in his post for almost six months.

In addition to a bachelor's in economics and management, Amer has a black belt in karate and was part of Egypt's karate team during his college days. He also enjoys playing tennis and golf when he has the time.

Today Amer, who has 20 years of international banking experience under his belt, says that his current challenge is fulfilling his dream of developing and enhancing the banking sector in Egypt.

"I want to see banks more developed in the way they conduct their business, manage their human resources and introduce more advanced banking products available in other markets," he said.

Looking to the future of the Egyptian banking sector, Amer is optimistic. "We are aiming for a brighter future and investing lots of effort. Egyptians are very bright and learn very fast. I think if we're able to consistently lead in the right direction, we're going to achieve good results."

Amer has worked in more than 10 countries in the Middle East. The positions he has held include the vice chairman of the board of Banque Misr in Egypt, the General Manager of Banks of Bahrain and Kuwait, as well as holding several managerial positions in Citibank, Egyptian American Bank, Bank of America and Bank of Credit and Commerce. □

By Lamyia Tawfik



Ahmad El-Nemr

Rising to the Challenge

**Tarek Amer '80 reflects
on his post as the
deputy governor of
Egypt's Central Bank**

“It is the contention of the respondent that the facts of the case leave no room for doubt that there are reasonable grounds to believe that Dr. West has committed the crime of public and direct incitement to genocide, having satisfied the requisite *actus reus* and *mens rea* of the crime,” resonates Mohamed Helal’s deep voice, as he stands towering over the podium.

With a steady confidence, Helal eloquently argues his case and is quick to rebut the interjections from the panel of judges seated like a firing squad.

In a tiny room on a late Tuesday evening, Helal, an international law graduate student, is honing his skills along with his fellow team members who would together journey to the US Capitol to represent AUC in the prestigious Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition.

Arguing a fictitious case, international law students from top universities around the world flock to Washington D.C., to test their advocacy skills. In the competition — a simulation of the International Court of Justice in the Hague, Netherlands — students research and argue a

hypothetical case on international law through oral presentations and a written brief.

This year’s case dealt with ethnic conflicts and the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. It involved issues of genocide, elements of crime and the role of the media.

“The case itself was a piece of art. It was complicated, yet well written to fit the body of law that exists. There was no way a team could win the argument. It depended on how well you presented your case,” explained Helal.

Preparing for the competition meant many hours of research, an untold number of drafts and night after night of practice sessions. In the end all the hard work paid off. The AUC team of international law students — Kari Kammel, Nema Milaninia, Tarek Mohanna, Mohamed Helal and Mariam Polding — ranked 38 in the face off with 94 teams of students from some of the best law schools around the world including Harvard, Duke and Georgetown. As for Helal, his performance earned him third place in the best oralist competition.

Nema Milaninia, one of the team’s members, found the

Their Day in Court



competition an extraordinary opportunity to meet law students and lawyers from around the world. “The amazing thing about Jessup is the number of contacts one can make in one week. The competition coincides with the American Society of International Law’s annual meeting, so most of the top scholars and practitioners in international law are present or judging,” he said.

“The presence of prominent international judges and lawyers on the judging panels adds an extra element of pressure to the competition,” said Heba Morayef, who was a participant last year and assistant coach this time around. “Having that caliber of judges and participants means that the team needs to practice constantly in order to make their arguments more sophisticated and solid,” she said.

It is hardly enough for the students to be able to memorize or recite the law. Advocacy skills are paramount, asserted Kate Rose-Sender, political science assistant professor and the team’s faculty adviser.

“The competition is designed to test written and oral skills of international legal teams of students. During our practice sessions, we tried to focus on advocacy skills, which is a

point of strength for the students from law schools. The students’ ability to respond under pressure is key to winning the Jessup,” added Rose-Sender.

After months of training, the AUC team surprised itself with its performance. “I was ecstatic to win the third place among the oralists. Soon after, people attending were interested in what my academic plans were. The Jessup truly brings attention to you and it’s the most valuable legal experience I’ve had. Simply pure law that’s very sophisticated,” said Helal.

“I’ve taken part in the Arab Court of Justice in the Model Arab League and the African Moot Court Competition but this is more competitive,” he said, adding that the responsibility of representing his country was always on his mind. “If you mess up, it’s the Egyptian team that messed up,” he explained. □

By Lamyia Tawfik

To learn more about how you can contribute to the Jessup Moot Fund, please visit www.aucegypt.edu/support/support.html

Milania, Mohanna and Helal outside the Smithsonian Institute; Rose-Sender (center) with faculty members serving as judges during practice sessions; AUC’s Jessup team after the competition and Kamel rehearsing her oral presentation



AUC’s international law students head to the US Capitol to test their advocacy skills

From *The Washington*

Post reporter Howard Schneider brings real-world experience to the *Caravan's* newsroom

It is the end of the week, and the *Caravan* newsroom is bustling with activity. Copy editors are making final changes to the paper before it goes to print. The editor in chief is discussing the final layout with the *Caravan's* faculty adviser Howard Schneider. He suggests some changes and commends the *Caravan* staff on the weekly edition.

Schneider came to AUC last year from *The Washington Post*, where he worked for 14 years as a reporter; four of those years were in Cairo as *The Post's* bureau chief. He joined AUC as lecturer in the journalism and mass communication department and also served as adviser for the student newspaper *Caravan* after obtaining a leave of absence from *The Post*. Having spent two years at AUC, Schneider is now ready to go back to the United States and resume his career as a journalist.

During his stay at the university, Schneider was quick to gain popularity among students. Walking into his office, one cannot help but notice his welcoming attitude with them and the way he never tires of their questions. That is perhaps why many of them are disappointed to see him go.

"He is the best thing that has ever happened to the *Caravan*," said Sara Hussein, journalism and mass communication senior and the newspaper's editor in chief. "He

instilled in us a sense of professionalism and what it's like to be independent, real-life journalists. I will miss his professional guidance, dedication and sense of humor."

Reflecting on being a first-time professor, Schneider said, "On the whole, it was a very invigorating

"I wanted them to understand how their local AUC community works and explain it to people in a stimulating way that they can react to. That way, they might induce change in their community."

experience. It was a chance to meet young Egyptians and understand the way they think and feel. On the personal front, it allowed me to spend more time with my family whom I didn't get to see often because I'm always on the road."

It was also a peaceful time for Schneider away from the dangers and turbulence of journalistic reporting. "At least I didn't have to jump onto a plane

in the middle of the night," he said.

On the academic front, however, the experience was a mix of good and bad. In dealing with students, Schneider was disappointed to see many of them primarily concerned, not with education, but with finding a job after graduation. "Everything is filtered through graduation," he said in astonishment. "Are we educating people to think or educating them only to work?"

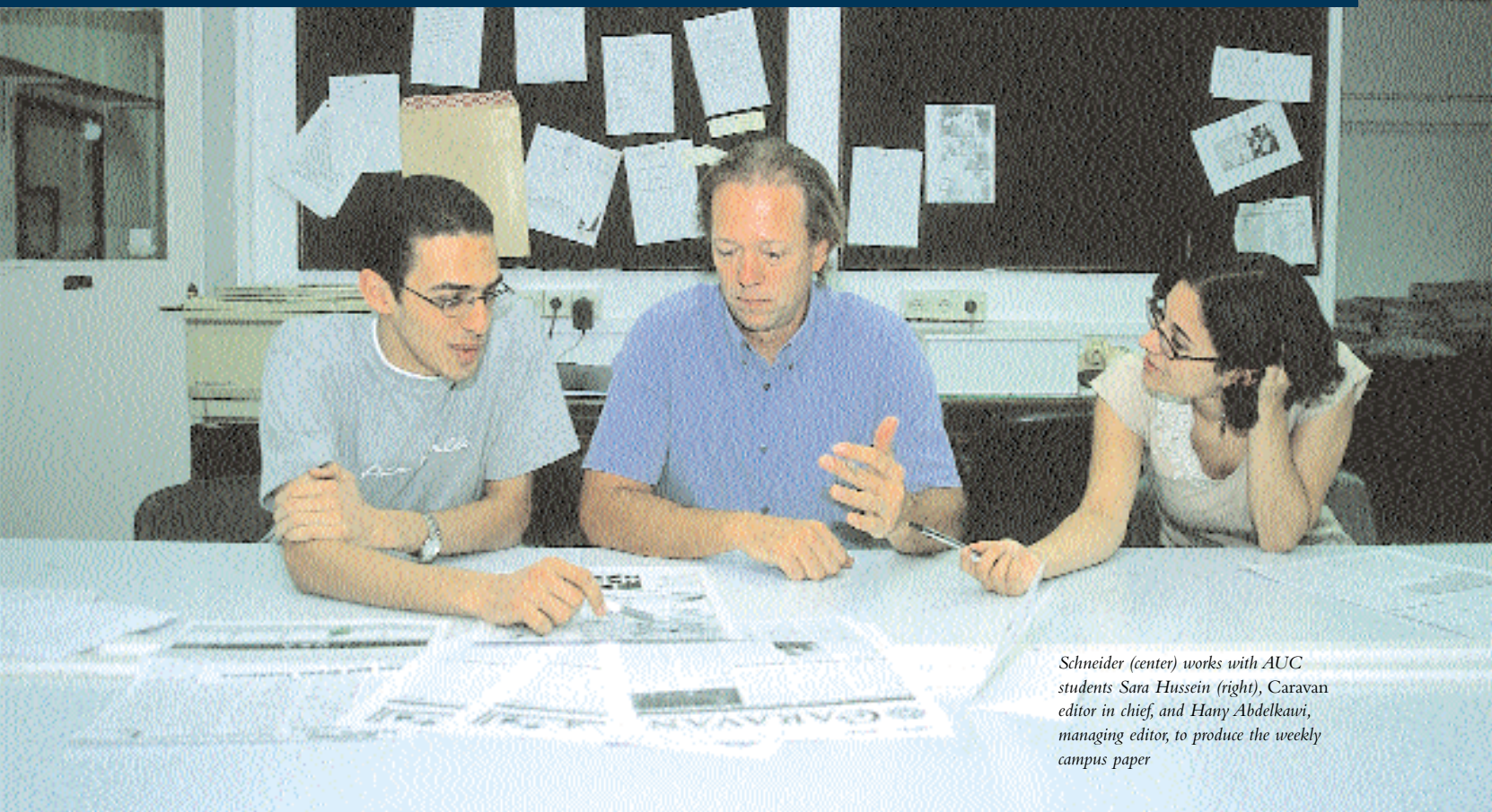
Yet there were always the more serious students whom Schneider was happy to teach, students who "have inherent curiosity and an analytic ability that enables them to think, criticize and make decisions," he said.

Aside from lecturing, Schneider spent most of his time in the *Caravan's* newsroom, working with students to produce the weekly paper. "Working in the *Caravan* is like working in a small local newspaper — quite different from my work as an international correspondent covering foreign news," he said. "With local news, you have people reading and engaging in discourse on the events you write about."

And that he did. For the past two years, the *Caravan* was a hotbed of controversy, tackling issues from safety standards at AUC to the prohibition of face veiling on campus grounds.

"The main thrust was not only to engage in healthy debate about various university issues, but to put

Post to the Caravan



Schneider (center) works with AUC students Sara Hussein (right), Caravan editor in chief, and Hany Abdelkawi, managing editor, to produce the weekly campus paper

these issues into a wider context and look at them from all sides,” he noted. “My aim was for students working in the *Caravan* to develop accountability and a sense of mission. I wanted them to understand how their local AUC community works and explain it to people in a stimulating way that they can react to. That way, they might induce change in their community.”

Grooming his students into professional journalists, Schneider’s classes were centered on students brainstorming their own story ideas and reporting on them. His role, he said, was to help and advise.

“I tried to move further offstage as the students’ work improved,” he said.

“I wanted their sense of journalism to shape what is in the *Caravan*. The more choice and freedom you give people, the more they invest in what they do.”

But Schneider set his standards high. He expected his students to yield to professional standards of content and quality, to critically examine issues and to take responsibility for what they write. “I can’t protect them from criticism — it’s part of being a journalist,” he said.

As Sara Hussein put it, “The thing I treasure most is that he taught us how to rely on ourselves and not be told what to do all the time. Consequently, we developed the ability to think

quickly and take control of situations.”

Schneider’s teaching experience has left its impact not only on his students, but on him as well. Now that he is returning to *The Washington Post*, he no longer wants to be a roving reporter but wants to work as an assignments editor, coordinating between reporters and becoming their main point of contact.

“Managing a group of students at AUC and engaging with them intellectually has made me want to move from actual reporting to guiding and advising on how to do it properly,” he said. “My two years at AUC have refreshed my view of journalism.” □

By Dalia Al Nimr

Alumni Meet Worldwide

Egypt

Alumni in Banking Reception

More than 90 alumni working in the banking field gathered on campus to hear a lecture on “Good Business Practice in the Banking Industry” by Tarek Amer '80, deputy governor of the Central Bank of Egypt. The lecture was followed by an open discussion and reception in the garden.



Twenty-fifth Reunion

In May, alumni from the class of '79 gathered in the Science Garden to celebrate their 25th reunion. The event included a briefing on the new campus, songs by Rula Zaki and a dinner in the garden. Aboud Abdel Azim '79 came from the United States and Amr Kadry '80 flew in from Bahrain to attend.



Saudi Arabia

Throughout the Kingdom, AUC's alumni, parents and friends met at several gatherings and receptions.



Above: Bandar Adham, President David Arnold, Sheikh Faisal Adham, Mary Iskander '76 and AUC Trustee Moataz Al-Alfi; Pictured left: Sherry Arnold, Nashwa Taher, Mahmoud Al Maeina, President David Arnold and Abdulhadi Taher at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Mahmoud Al Maeina (Nashwa Taher)

AUC Trustee Suad Juffali, with the help of Souhail El Farouki '68 and Abba Leheta El Farouki '69, hosted an AUC alumni dinner reception at the Help Center in Jeddah. More than 100 alumni, parents and friends in Saudi Arabia reunited at the event.



Alumni at the Jeddah gathering



Nada El Maghraby, Abba El Farouki '69, Mr. and Mrs. Mohamed El Ayouty (Dalia El Sewedy '92) and Mr. and Mrs. Seifallah Sharbatly '96



Mary Iskander, El Farouki and President David Arnold

Serving AUC

Abba El Farouki '69 was awarded the Distinguished Alumni Volunteer Award, which recognizes alumni who have demonstrated outstanding volunteer service to AUC and alumni-related activities.

El Farouki obtained her bachelor's in economics and political science. She has given generously of her time to AUC, spending countless hours gathering alumni and keeping them in close contact by opening her home to alumni events, coordinating AUC delegation visits and updating alumni information.



Souhail El Farouki '68, AUC Trustee Suad Juffali, Sherry Arnold, Abba El Farouki '69 and President David Arnold at the alumni dinner hosted by Suad Juffali

Honoring a Diplomat



President Arnold and Shihabi

Ambassador Samir Shihabi '47 received the Distinguished Alumni Award, which is given

to individuals who have demonstrated remarkable achievement in their careers and a genuine contribution of time and effort toward the advancement of their countries.

Shihabi received a bachelor's degree in political science and economics before studying law at Yale and Cambridge universities. In 1949, he joined Saudi Arabia's Foreign Service and was decorated twice, receiving the King Abdul Aziz Decoration and the Sitara-E-Pakistan.

In 1992, AUC awarded him an honorary degree for his service to his country and region. In 1993, Shihabi became an advisory trustee on AUC's Board of Trustees.



Sherry Arnold and Sheikh Abdulrahman Hayel Saeed '68



United States

Los Angeles

AUC Trustee Bruce Ludwig and Carolyn Ludwig hosted an alumni reception for Los Angeles area alums.



Mr. and Mrs. Richard Pedersen (Nelda), President David Arnold, AUC Trustee Bruce Ludwig; (seated) Carolyn Ludwig and Sherry Arnold at the LA meeting

A True Star

After receiving his bachelor's degree in English literature, Asaad Kelada '61 moved to the United States to pursue graduate studies at Yale University's School of Drama.

Kelada, who has been extensively involved in theater, directing, singing, music and acting, received the Distinguished Alumni Award for his outstanding contributions to his field.

He has directed major productions around the United States at prominent theaters including: the Old Globe Theater in San Diego, Seattle Repertory Theater, the Met, the Tiffany Theaters and the El Portal Center for the Arts in Los Angeles.

He has also directed more than 400 episodes of top-rated television series including: "The Facts of Life," "Who's the Boss?" "Sister, Sister," "Sabrina," "Everybody Loves Raymond," "Dharma and Greg" and "Good Morning, Miami."



President David and Sherry Arnold with Kelada

As a performer, singer and musician Kelada appeared extensively in concerts and clubs in Cairo.

As an actor, Kelada was featured in the classic Arabic film *Bab el Hadid* directed by acclaimed Egyptian film director Youssef Chahine.

Seattle

Microsoft Corporation hosted a reception for alumni working at the corporation.





San Francisco

Alumni gathered at the Bankers Club for a reception, which was also attended by AUC Trustee John Treat and Barbara Treat.

Canada

Magdy Meimari '79, Jocelyne Tawaf-Assaf '77 and Teresa Attallah-Ducasse '73 are working to keep Canadian alums connected and have organized several events in Montreal and Toronto.



After attending the Montreal alumni gathering, Alia Kotb '97 wrote to AUCToday:

My trip has come to an end as I sit in Montreal's Gare Centrale waiting for my train to take me back to Toronto.

I had decided to make the five-hour journey not sure if I will meet anyone I know. But something felt right about attending the annual AUC reunion.

Whoever said that one's best years in life are those spent at university was right on the mark. This reunion had graduates from the '60s, '70s and '80s who came cherishing AUC in their hearts and minds as if they had never left.

I thought I would not come across a familiar face, little did I know. Sherry Yacoub-Mikhail '94 and Rania Moheeb-Hassanein '94 walked into the authentic Moroccan room of the Old Montreal restaurant. The surprise was actually meeting a fellow classmate Shamel Addas '97.

I arrived at my little hotel moments before 2 a.m., having not expected the evening to last that long. But I guess some Egyptian traditions will stay with Egyptians no matter where they are around the world.

The sweet voice of Dido's *White Flag* hovers over my head as I read AUC's *President's Report* waiting for my train's boarding call. The nostalgia to Cairo and AUC has taken over me. I silently think: I had said my adieus, but definitely not my goodbyes because I would make this same trip in a heartbeat anytime.

"I am in love," she sings.

I sing along "and always will be."

Class Notes

'82

Heba Hagrass (MA '98) is pursuing a Ph.D. at the University of Leeds in England on the improvement of the employment market for disabled people in Egypt. She hopes that her research will be used to benefit people with disabilities in Egypt.

'87

Sofia Cotis is a music and math teacher at the Greek Spastic Society in Athens. She recently started publishing books with creative activities for children and adults. This year, she is active in the preparations for the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens.

'88

Raji Muhanna has been promoted to customer service and quality assurance manager at Al-Zamil Plastics Industries Ltd. in Al-Khobar, Saudi Arabia.

'91

Iman El Abd enjoyed performing



Umra this year. She has two boys and a girl: Mahmoud, fourth grade; Moustafa, first grade and Maya, preschool.

'93

Jawad Abbassi worked in Jordan after graduation. In 1998, he received a scholarship from the British Council to pursue a master's degree in international systems from the London School of Economics. He worked as a telecommunications and IT marketing consultant in Boston from 1998 until

2001. Currently, he owns a research company, The Arab Advisors Group, in Jordan. He got married in 2002 and now has a 1-year-old baby boy.

'94

Hanan El Fendy is one of the founders of the American division of the Orouba Language Schools established three years ago. This year marks the graduation of the first high school class. El Fendy graduated from Misr American College and is proud of the quality of education they offer.

Inas Ismail received her Ph.D. in environmental engineering from the University of California in Berkeley in August 2003. Ismail recently



moved to London where she will start pursuing a career in education and research of sustainable and environmentally-friendly development.

'95

Nidal Asser was blessed with a baby girl named Tia, 11 months.

'96

Nabila Al Iskandarani (MA '01)



teaches economics at AUC. She is a jazz performer, teacher and choreographer. Her recent works include *Numb* in the French Cultural

Center and the Alexandria Library, *Extravaganza* in El-Hanager Theatre and *Maamat*. She is also a member of Tonsi Co. and a gymnastics teacher.

Weddings



Maha Eid '98, '03 and **Amr Soliman**, assistant IT manager at El-Gezirah Sheraton, were married on February 2, 2004 at the Movenpick Airport Hotel

Eman El-Nouhy '96, '01 was married to **Ahmed Zaki** at the Movenpick Hotel on October 12, 2001



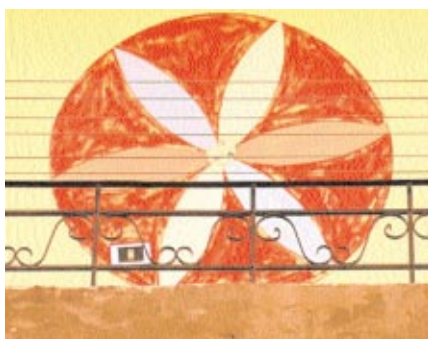
Ahmed Galal '99 and **Sherine Mounir '01** were married at Mena House Oberoi Hotel

Wael Orban (MA '98) is a chartered financial analyst. He received his master's degree in finance and investment from the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom. He is currently there pursuing his Ph.D. in the same field. He was the manager of the research department at Concord International Investments for five years before leaving to complete his doctoral studies.

'97

Nadine Sika (MA '00), export manager at Sika Modern Farm, has two children: Tamer, 4, and Celine, 1.

Rana El Nemr, a professional photographer and instructor, was recently awarded the bronze prize at the Canon Digital Creators Contest for 2003 in Tokyo. The winning work, which is a collage of Cairo balconies, started its tour of major cities in Europe, Asia and the United States in April 2004.



'98

Marwan Kamel is the first Egyptian to win a boxing world championship in the world. He played last summer in Las Vegas, Nevada and was ranked third in the world. His name is recorded in the Guinness Book of World Records. He



is currently negotiating with one of the major boxing clubs in the States in an effort to start a professional career with the American National Boxing Team. Kamel is in the process of opening the first professional boxing gym in Egypt, which will be sponsored by Everlast sports wear.

'99

Sherif Hafez is project engineer at Master Foods Middle East in Dubai. He is married to Alia Ibrahim '00.

Special Programs

Lars Berger (YAB '01) received his master's degree in political science at Friedrich Schiller University Jena in Germany. In 2002, he was selected to participate in the Congressional Fellowship Program. As a fellow, he worked for US Representative Jim McDermott. After spending a year in Washington D.C., he returned to Germany to pursue a Ph.D. and teach courses on Middle East and US politics.

In Memoriam

Aida Gindy '43 graduated with a degree in sociology and went on to receive her master's at Bryn Mawr in the United States. From 1952 to 1984, she served in various posts in the United Nations including chief of the Social Welfare Division. Gindy was the first woman to serve as regional director for UNICEF in Africa and Europe. After her retirement in 1984, Gindy continued to work as an international development consultant and was a member of numerous commissions and councils on women and population development.

Isis El Mallakh (née Kelada) '50 died on February 4, 2004. She was the head of the alumni chapter in Alexandria, organizing numerous events and gatherings. After graduating from AUC, she worked as an English

language teacher and as a guide in the tourist industry. El Mallakh dedicated much of her time to volunteer work that included collecting books and clothes for students and the elderly, helping children with special needs and purchasing equipment for the Delinquency Institute and the Cultural and Social Rehabilitation Center for the Blind. She was the chairperson of the day care center at Alexandria's YMCA and actively participated in their fundraising activities. She is survived by her daughter Shahira and son Bassem.

Raed Attar '54, deputy editor of *Al-Ahram* newspaper, died on April 18, 2004. Formerly, he was the editor in chief of *Dar Al-Ta'oun* and also the managing editor of *Al-Gomhuria* newspaper.

Samira Hanna '58 died on April 18, 2004. She joined the research section at *Al-Ahram* newspaper in 1958, after graduating with a degree in journalism. The doctors and the pharmacists syndicates gave her gold medals in appreciation of her work.

Vanya Exerjian '84 died on March 15, 2004 in a tragic accident. Active in theater, she was dubbed "theater princess" by her friends. The space she occupied both on stage and in her friends' hearts cannot be filled. Whether as princess in her favorite play *Sweet Bird of Youth*, as a performer in *Minya* or as a member of *El-Warsha*, she will always be remembered by her colleagues and friends.

Sahar Helal '92 died in April 2004 in a tragic accident. She was married to Nasser Adnan '87.

Shereen Ghaly '96 died on January 31, 2004. She was married to Ahmed Ramadan '96, ex-Student Union president.

Nadine Khalil '01 died last year in a tragic accident. She graduated with honors, majoring in economics.

Experiencing Egypt

I always feel a happy tingle in my stomach when I walk through the streets of Cairo during prayer time. I love how the street activity continues after the imam has finished the call to prayer. Traffic seems to get heavier, businesses remain open, and the *farashin* continue to take and deliver orders for tea and coffee. If I happen to be in my apartment when the prayer begins, I open my window wider to hear it more clearly. The call is a joyful symbol of everyday Egyptian life, and hearing it always makes me think about how lucky I am to have had the opportunity to live here.

I decided to move to Egypt because I felt that truly experiencing and understanding its culture and politics entailed more than just a simple visit. One had to live here in order to really appreciate Egyptian history, literature and society. It was my hope that living and working here would teach me more about the developing world and help me clarify what I wanted to do in the future.

As an Iranian-American, I was also determined to gain a more well rounded understanding of Iranian and American politics, and sought to learn how one country's political, social and economic concerns could affect the formation of public and foreign policy in the other. I soon discovered, however, that neither country formulated its policies without considering its relations with other countries within the Middle East and the impact their strategies would have on the entire region. Thus in order to thoroughly understand how one country's internal affairs influenced the development of policy in the other, I would have to learn about relations within the region as a whole.

AUC's Presidential Internship Program offered the best introduction to Egypt and the Middle East because it threw me into the country's social, educational and political scene from the moment of my arrival. I studied colloquial Egyptian Arabic,



Taghavi: I am lucky to have had the opportunity to live here

met and worked with prominent Egyptian intellectuals, and gained a deeper understanding of the influence politics and religion have over a country's social and economic development. I also had the opportunity to research and write about Iranian-American relations and internal Iranian affairs.

The unique opportunities I have had and the diverse network of friends I have made as an intern, student and writer in Cairo have given me a more thoughtful perspective on Egypt, the Middle East and the developing world. I am now sure that I would ultimately like to do development work in Africa and the Middle East and also plan to pursue a career as a writer and journalist.

I will be sad to leave Egypt, but know that her beauty, along with Cairo's unique charm, will one day call me back. □

Roshanak Taghavi served as a presidential intern at AUC last year. Taghavi received her bachelor's in business and economics from Boston College.

Akher Kalam is an open forum for members of the AUC community. We invite you to share your thoughts on any topic of your choice. Submissions should be sent to auctoday@aucegypt.edu and may be edited for length and clarity.