



Haidar: wide renown.

'Prince of Poets' Jawdat Haidar passes away at 102

BEIRUT: Jawdat Haidar, the Arab League's "Prince of Poets," passed away earlier this week at the age of 102.

Haidar was born an Ottoman subject to a large Baalbek family of wealthy landlords, Arab nationalists and intellectuals. Their Arabist leanings got Haidar's immediate family deported to Anatolia in the years before World War I.

After graduating from Beirut's International College, Haidar traveled to France and

America for a university education. He graduated from North Texas State University with a degree in Education and returned to Lebanon in 1928.

Over the next 50 years he worked in the oil industry, trade and agriculture and dabbled in Lebanese politics. He wrote poetry too, emulating poets like Gibran Khalil Gibran, Amin Rihani and Mikhail Naimy who composed in English. After an adult life of writing in English, Haidar began writing poetry in

Arabic following his wife's death in 1982.

Jawdat Haidar has four books of poetry to his name. "Voices" (1980) was published in the US. "Echoes" (1986) and "Shadows" (1999) were both published in Lebanon. "101 Selected Poems," his last book, was published earlier this year by Vantage Press.

Haidar received a papal medal from from Pope John XXIII, the French Republic awarded him the Medal la

Croix de Grand Officier, while the Lebanese Republic gave him the Gold Medal of Merit and the Order of the Cedars.

"He's been terribly concerned with the dialogue between civilizations," recalls his granddaughter, Khatoun Haidar. "When he went to America it was still the home of the free, you see. He's been distressed about everything that's been happening in recent years."

Regrettably, Haidar's concerns outlived him.