

Good evening!

Having listened to all the speakers this evening, I'd like to take a moment to share with you a couple of personal insights on Jawdat Haidar the family patriarch and my grand father.

My grandfather was a man who saw and experienced the phenomenal changes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century first hand and was able to constantly adapt, adopt, enjoy and ponder as to what and how these changes would better serve us all.

Jawdat Sr's essence was embracing the roller coaster ride called 'life'.

One of my fondest memories is of how much he loved the land and wildlife that lived in it; plants in particular. His relationship with nature being a constant throughout his 100 years and something, he was always proud to talk about. Referring to the fifty or so 30m trees he hand planted, nurtured and watched grow into his 1st Oasis of colour and tranquility in Baalbeck this amidst a sea of grey and uncertainty in which he was living.

During his retirement and at the height of his writings, when it wasn't the garden nor his family preoccupying him, his time was spent in the seclusion of his library, his 2<sup>nd</sup> self made Oasis. Here his World and works, similar to his contemporaries Rihani, Naimi and Gibran, were centered and influenced by his Middle Eastern roots, heritage and culture – albeit in an era of un-abating conflict and strife – he managed to maintain an open and impartial view of the tumultuous situations surrounding him never letting them overwhelm and bias him in his reflections and his life long quest to better understand the riddles of man.

His 3<sup>rd</sup> Oasis to retreat to was his family; his daily life and close interactions with us were key in sustaining, replenishing and motivating him to continue writing about all that mattered to him; whether it was something new or old, near or far and which he held dear to him, regardless of what took place around him. In retrospect, his charisma evoked in us all a drive to better ourselves through education, taking on and overcoming the challenges presented to us and to learn and experience from them.

The list is endless so I'd like to finish by sharing with you all one of my favourite quotes from his 2<sup>nd</sup> book Echoes, it being....'should I win my spurs today I'll cross the frontiers of time to write my name on the walls of tomorrow....' So I would like to think that he has earned his spurs and that his journey towards the end of time has begun.

Thank you very much.