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LAHC Marks 22 Years of Supporting Education at Annual Arab American Scholarship Foundation Gala...

Dearborn, Michigan – The Lebanese American Heritage Club’s (LAHC) Arab American Scholarship Foundation (AASF), marked 22 years of providing assistance and encouraging the pursuance of higher education at their 22nd Annual Arab American Scholarship Foundation Banquet at the Hyatt Regency Hotel on Friday, May 7, 2010.

Over 1200 of Metro Detroit’s most influential community members, business professionals, and corporate executives came to honor students of high academic distinction as they received scholarships from the organization, each in the amount of \$1,000.

The LAHC, a non-profit cultural and social organization and since its inception, the organization has developed to encompass programs of all types including athletics, cultural, social, and educational activities open to all community members and families, no matter their national origin.

Established in 1988, the AASF began with the giving of one scholarship and has expanded to provide over 1,000 students in Michigan with over \$1.5 million in scholarship funds over the past 22 years. The AASF is one of the largest ethnic based scholarship programs in the nation.

The keynote speaker, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Wal-Mart U.S.A, Mr. Bill Simon, was introduced by Wayne County Executive, the Honorable Robert Ficano. Mr. Simon spoke on his experiences growing up with parents of Lebanese descent and the importance of working hard to achieve your goals in life.

Receiving laughter from the crowd, Mr. Simon told the crowd, “I grew up going to school in America with Kibbee in my batman lunchbox, which was not very cool.” He then went on to mention that when he had traveled to his parent’s native Lebanon, that going to school in Lebanon with a Peanut Butter sandwich in his lunchbox put him in the same situation.

In a position of great influence and stature, Mr. Simon expressed the significance of working to make a difference in people's lives, the importance of having dedication and a strong work ethic; acknowledging that he had learned this skill from his grandfather, which helped him to get to where he is, today.

The LAHC honored several members of the greater Arab American and Middle Eastern community for their efforts to advance Arab Americans in this nation.

LAHC Award for Outstanding Leadership and Service in Education: Mrs. Nawal Hamadeh; CEO and Superintendent, Hamadeh Educational Services, Star International Academy, Universal International Academy and Universal Learning Academy; introduced by Dr. Stanley Henderson of the University of Michigan-Dearborn.

LAHC Award for Innovative Film & Media Initiatives: Mr. Wissam Bazzi; AscentIV and Director of independent film, "RockBottom"; introduced by Mr. Mike Mosallam, Wayne County Director of Film Initiatives

LAHC Award for Excellence and Great Achievements in the Arts: Mr. Ragheb Alama; Internationally recognized Lebanese Musical Artist; U.N. Goodwill Ambassador for Green for the Climate Change Initiative; introduced by Mr. Ali Jawad, Founder of the LAHC.

An internationally recognized recording artist and humanitarian, Mr. Alama spoke briefly, addressing the importance of such efforts to bring communities together and encouraging the students to continue in pursuance of their endeavors.

"With all the bad things we see in this world, it is very important that we keep peace and love in our hearts...It is amazing that people from all over the world can come together like this, in a peaceful way...this is what the world community needs to see. And to the students...dream big, as I did, and keep passion in your hearts when you pursue your goals because it is that passion which will help you to be successful in life."

Remarks were delivered by Executive Director, Mr. Wassim Mahfouz; LAHC President, Mr. Salem Salamey; Central Intelligence Agency's Sherman Kent School for Intelligence Analysis Associate Dean, Mr. Dale Avery, LAHC 1st Vice President, Miss Suehaila Amen and scholarship recipient, Hachem Hachem.

Mr. Ron Savage, anchor with Fox 2 Detroit served as the Master of Ceremonies while the National anthems of the United States of America and Independent Republic of Lebanon were performed by renowned Opera Soprano, Ms. Sophia Benedetti of Atlanta, Georgia. The invocation was delivered by Father Rani Abdel-Masih and Imam Mohammed Mardini.

To learn more about the LAHC-AASF, visit www.lahc.org



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