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Arab success stories celebrated at TAKREEM awards

By Camille Dupire - Nov 26,2017 - Last updated at Nov 26,2017



Her Majesty Queen Noor with the laureates of the 2017 TAKREEM awards in Amman on Saturday (Photo courtesy of TAKREEM)

AMMAN — His Majesty the late King Hussein on Saturday was awarded the “Legacy Award” at the TAKREEM awards ceremony, honouring “the father of Jordan who guided his country through strife and turmoil to become an oasis of peace, stability and moderation in the Middle East”.

Founded in 2009 to celebrate the accomplishments of Arabs in the fields of science, culture, environment, education, humanitarian aid and economy, according to its founder Ricardo Karam, TAKREEM held its 8th award ceremony in Amman, gathering noted Arab personalities from the region in the presence of Her Majesty Queen Noor and members of the Royal family.

Along with King Hussein’s posthumous recognition, the ceremony also awarded several laureates for their achievements under the categories of young entrepreneur, scientific and technological achievement, cultural excellence, environmental development and sustainability, outstanding Arab woman, excellence in education, humanitarian and civic services, corporate leadership and international contribution to Arab society.

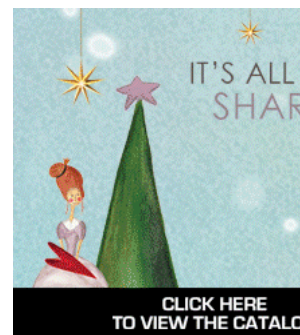
Stressing the role of the award in “empowering, motivating and pushing new generations to go forward with their ideas”, Karam honoured 15-year-old Ghanim Al Muftah, a young Qatari entrepreneur born with Caudal Regression Syndrome, a rare disorder that impairs the development of the lower spine.

As the youngest entrepreneur in Qatar, he runs six branches of an ice cream company, operated by 60 employees. Also a swimmer, an ice skater, a professional scuba diver and a mountain climber, Ghanim, which means “winner” in Arabic, aspires to be a future Paralympian, according to a TAKREEM statement.

Represented by its Director Devon Akmon, an American of Lebanese origin, the Arab American National Museum received the award for Cultural Excellence.

“We are a ‘living museum’ that constantly strives to tell the stories and diversity of the Arab community in the US,” Akmon told The Jordan Times at the event, adding that “we want to share our culture because we are proud of it, and it is essential to spread knowledge about the positive aspects of the Arab culture and traditions in this critical time.”

A museum built “for and by Arab Americans” over 12 years ago, the venue has grown to foster cohesion within the Arab American community and



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Another US based institution, Al Bustan Seeds of Culture was recognised for its international contribution to the Arab society. "Al Bustan embodies the vision of TAKREEM to promote a positive message about the Arabs through creative, educational programmes," said Laila Al Shaikhli, the master of ceremony at the event.

For her part, Sarah Toumi, a French national born to a Tunisian father, was awarded for her work in environmental development and sustainability through her project "Acacias for All".

Aimed at addressing desertification in one of the regions of the world that suffers the most from water scarcity, Toumi has been teaching local farmers sustainable techniques, with a special focus on underprivileged women.

"I wanted to give something back to my country. I focused on women as they are the very first victims of the desertification issue and this project helps them to be economically sustainable and resilient through the sale of the extracted gum and oil from the trees," she told The Jordan Times.

"There are so many environmental issues that can be turned into positive social initiatives, which can also help tackle poverty, unemployment and so on," she stressed, thanking TAKREEM for recognising her work and voicing hope that "the award will help scale up the project and raise awareness."

Other laureates included Zohair Al Halees from Saudi Arabia, given the Scientific and Technological Achievement Award, Maali Alasousi from Kuwait, for the Outstanding Arab Woman Award, Lebanese dietician Nahla Hwalla for the Excellence in Education Award.

The Syrian NGO Jusoor was honoured for its humanitarian and civic services while Raymond Debbané received the Corporate Leadership Award. Special recognitions were given to Saudi Prince Sultan Bin Salman and Melek El Nimer from Turkey.

Lebanese Maroun Semaan was also posthumously bestowed a lifetime achievement award.

"The Arab world is alive. We want people to see stories of Arab successes that are a source of pride for all of us to broadcast the message that the Arab world is a place of initiative, creativity, positive thinking, entrepreneurship, and the sanctity of youth," Karam concluded.


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