

Making a Difference

Mrs. Mamdouha Bobst Provides Leadership in Health Care

Last year, Mrs. Mamdouha Bobst (BA '47), member of AUB's International Advisory Council, funded the purchase of a new state-of-the-art breast cancer diagnostic and treatment machine at AUB. "There are only three such machines in the world," said Mrs. Bobst, "and I wanted one at AUB."

Although the equipment gift was a generous \$400,000, Mrs. Bobst gave an additional \$50,000 to fund treatment for women who could not afford it. "Now they can have it," she said. This second gift also supported a community-based breast cancer education and treatment program.

Housed in the Burj El-Barajneh Center for Social Services and Development at AUBMC, Dr. Najla Lakkis, a family medicine resident, launched the breast cancer education campaign for needy Lebanese women funded by Mrs. Bobst last May. All

women received a mammogram and were educated about breast cancer, the importance of self-exams, and the necessity of routine mammography. Those women who needed biopsies were treated because of Mrs. Bobst's generosity. "Follow-up is extremely important," Mrs. Bobst said. "You cannot leave anyone without treatment."

As a public health expert and benefactor, Mrs. Bobst has committed much of her life to making a difference in people's lives. A native of Tripoli, Lebanon, Mrs. Bobst graduated with a degree in Arabic from AUB; completed postgraduate work at the University of Birmingham, England; and received a master's degree in public health from the University of California, Berkeley. She then began a distinguished career in public health, working for the World Health Organization in Libya, where she founded a school of nursing and, at the request of the Ministry of Public Health,

established a public health program for the entire country. She was the first woman and the youngest delegate appointed to the Lebanese mission to the United Nations.

Throughout her life she has shown an abiding concern for public health and medical research. She is an honorary life trustee of the American Cancer Society (ACS), served as a member of the Cancer Control Program at the National Institutes of Health and as board member of the Royal Society of Medicine. She is a trustee of New York University and NYU Medical School; vice-chairman and benefactor of The Elmer and Mamdouha Bobst Hospital of the Animal Medical Center in New York; a member of the board of trustees of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Hospital and St. Mary's Good Samaritan Hospital in Palm Beach, Florida. As president of the Bobst Foundation, she has supported many institutions, such as The Elmer and Mamdouha Bobst Medical Sciences Building of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, The Elmer and Mamdouha Bobst Hospital at the Animal Medical Center, and the Elmer and Mamdouha Bobst Chemistry Center and endowed scholarship for women from Tripoli at AUB. Mrs. Bobst remains devoted to her birthplace, Tripoli, and helps a number of health care institutions there annually. This fall there will be two dedications in her name: The Center of Mamdouha Bobst for Peace and Justice at Princeton University and the International Education Museum at the Elmer Bobst Library at NYU.

Mrs. Bobst also carries out the work started by her late husband, Mr. Elmer H. Bobst, the pharmaceutical pioneer and executive who is credited with reshaping the American Cancer Society (ACS) into the largest voluntary health organization in the world. In the late 1990s, Mrs. Bobst gave ACS \$1,250,000 to train qualified doctors, nurses, public health educators, and social workers from the Middle East in the field of international cancer education and prevention at ACS workshops in the United States. AUB has been an active participant in this project. In April, the University will participate in an ACS-sponsored workshop in New York on building and strengthening health outreach organizations. Another project Mrs. Bobst is involved with is an American Cancer Society anti-tobacco training session that will be held on AUB's campus and attended by scholars in the region this October. "Discussions will focus on how to lower smoking rates in these countries, advocacy, and how to deal with press, government, and the big tobacco companies who work under a different guise in these countries," said George Barker, vice president of international programs, ACS. "Through Mamdouha's encouragement and recommendation, ACS has been working with AUB closely over the years. She is responsible for sending health professionals from the Middle East to various ACS programs."

As an advocate for public health, improving health care in the Middle East has been a priority for Mrs. Bobst. She remains a strong supporter of AUB's mission and its programs. "The University carries with it a torch of education and hope for the region," she said.



Mrs. Mamdouha Bobst