



JOHN CABOT UNIVERSITY



NAME*: Elham

LASTNAME*: Ahmed Alshejni

CLASS OF*: 1988

MAJOR*: BA in Business Administration

NOW I AM*: Counselor for the League of Arab States – Social Affairs Sector in Cairo

What was your career path after graduating from JCU?

After graduation I went back to my home country, Yemen, where I worked in the marketing department of the national air carrier, Yemen Airways. When my late father, previously the Ambassador to Italy, was appointed Ambassador to Egypt, I applied to the American University of Cairo. I received a Masters degree there and subsequently joined the League of Arab States.

Tell us a little about your work.

Over the last seven years, I served as a member of the cabinet of the Secretary General of the League of Arab States, His Excellency Amre Moussa, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and one of the most renowned Egyptian diplomats. I handled regional security as well as multilateral and disarmament issues. It was an incredible opportunity to learn from such a distinguished public figure, to get to know and interact with government officials, and to gain an insight into international and regional affairs in action. More recently, I served as a support member for the International Fact Finding Committee commissioned by the League to Gaza, investigating the impact of the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip during the period of 27 December 2008 to 18 January 2009.

What is it like living in Cairo?

Cairo is the "melting pot" of the Arab world and its gateway. It is a strange city that gradually grows on you. It is busy, noisy and crowded at any time of day or night, but it also offers almost everything if you know where to look... history, fine cuisine, culture, and romance.

The fields/questions with the red star (*) are compulsory for the completion of your profile



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If you could live anywhere in the world, where would that be?

The Eternal City. Why? Rome represents a beautiful period in my life, a time where I was evolving and was full of joy, hope and expectations. It is a blessing to live in a city that is rich in history. In every direction you look, there is a monument flaunting itself at you. What more could a person wish for than to live in a city with warm people, exquisite cuisine, beautiful scenery, and a musical language?

What was the last good book you read?

Out of Place, a memoir by the celebrated cultural critic Edward Said. It offers an extraordinary insight into the earlier life of one of my favorite thinkers with captivating details of his school years, friendships, and the perplexing struggle of growing up in Palestine, Egypt, and Lebanon – all places I identify with.

What was John Cabot like when you attended?

John Cabot was located in a small building on Via Massua, but it was a vast world inside. Although we were not a large student body (around 150), we represented more than 20 nationalities. One can only imagine the level and depth of cross-cultural interaction that took place, in addition to the exchange of ideas and views.

Who were your mentors?

Among my mentors were Dr. Christopher Neenan, Prof. Petritsi, and Dr. Moneta. I learned from them much more than the curriculum they taught. Dr. Neenan taught me how to compose my thoughts and express them in beautiful language. Prof. Petritsi taught me that human beings are beautiful complex creatures that should not be taken at face value. Prof. Moneta taught me that nurturing the mind and soul is essential to being a balanced person.

What advice would you give to students attending JCU today?

Keep your minds, eyes, and ears open without prejudice to any ideas, people, or cultures. Appreciate and make the best of this opportunity you are being given to enrich yourself on an educational and a personal level. And enjoy everything Rome has to offer.