

My Life Journey

From the Holy City of Nazareth
To Atlanta, Georgia

The Beginning

- ▶ I was born in Nazareth, 4 years after the Palestinian Nakba (Catastrophe of 1948) to a Palestinian Father who was a true Nazarene born in Nazareth and refused to become a refugee And a Palestinian Mother who became an internal refugee after the Zionist paramilitary gangs totally destroyed her parents beautiful village of al-Mujaydel about 5 Kilometers SW of Nazareth.
- ▶ My Mom, her Mom (my maternal grandmother) and her sister-in-law and her infant niece and nephew ran for their life from al-Mujaydel to Nazareth, where she met and married my Dad!
- ▶ My Mom and Grandma told us that the invading gangsters gathered most of the young men in the village squared and executed then in cold blood. Then they told the elderly, the women and children to run on foot to Nazareth And never come back to their homes and land if they wanted to survive!

Early Years of my Journey

- ▶ Since I was born in newly created Israel (in what used to be Palestine), I automatically became an Israeli citizen but in my Israeli Identity card, it was noted that I was an Arab.
- ▶ At the Age of 4, our parents told us that the Israeli Police murdered about 60 Palestinian Arab citizen of Israel outside the town of Kufer Kasim near Tel-Aviv while returning from their work in the fields for no reason other than some arbitrary curfew the Israeli Military imposed on all Arab villages and town in the country! The civilians were not aware of the imposed curfew! They were lined up on the side of the road and murdered in cold blood! Israeli military court found the killers guilty but instead of punishing them, it let them go and some of them received promotions!
- ▶ At the age of 6, I started my education in 1st grade. Initially we learned Arabic, and Arithmetic

Schooling Years

- ▶ In third grade we started learning Hebrew
- ▶ In fifth grade we started learning English, History, and light Civics
- ▶ In eighth grade we had to pass tests in Arabic, Hebrew, English, History, Geography, Civics and Math in order to qualify to move into High School
- ▶ In 9th and 10th grades, we studied the 3 languages, Math, History, Civics, Chemistry and Physics!
- ▶ In 11th and 12th grades we continued learning the 3 languages, Civics and I specialized in Math, Physics and Chemistry
- ▶ In order to graduate we were required to pass the Israeli High School Matriculation Exams (Bagrut Exams) in the above 7 subjects in order to qualify for acceptance into college!

Passage to Higher Education Abroad

- ▶ I passed the tough and comprehensive 7 Exams (4-hr each) on my first try
- ▶ I chose to take a year off and work at a Home Appliances Store in the city of Haifa And save some money before starting my College Education in Paris
- ▶ I left Israel to Paris, France where I childhood friend already been working and living in the city of lights
- ▶ I spent the first 6 months seriously studying French at the Alliance Francaise in Paris and worked part time as Vieller de Nuit (night shift) at a local hotel in the Quarier Latin in the heart of Paris
- ▶ After passing all six levels of French language required prior to enrolling at the Universite de Paris VI of the Sorbonne, I got accepted for my first year (freshman) in Mathematics and Physics

College Studies and Cultural Experience

- ▶ I completed my first year and started thinking about transferring to study in the USA
- ▶ I was awarded a full scholarship to study at Jacksonville State University and live at the International House on campus where 20 International and 20 American students lived. Each International student shared a room with an American student (mini United Nations)
- ▶ This experience taught me Almost everything I always wanted to know about American culture including Confederate/Union/Civil War history, American Sports, Holidays, Movies, Partying, Dating, etc.
- ▶ I majored in Math, Physics, and minored in French and graduate in 3 years with B.S. and B.A.

The Big Career/Graduate School Move to Atlanta...

- ▶ At end of 1976, I graduated with two undergrad degrees in Math, Physics and a minor in French. I packed my modest belongings in a tiny Honda Civic and drove the 2-hour drive to Atlanta!
- ▶ I enrolled at GA State as graduate student in the Math Dept with a major in Statistics and found myself a part time weekend job
- ▶ Soon after I met my lovely future wife who was studying Information Systems at GSU
- ▶ We were crazy about each other and decided to get married in Summer 1978
- ▶ I graduated in Summer 1980 with M.S. in Statistics and was offered an attractive job with the Labor Dept in D.C. but we loved Atlanta and decided to stay in the sunny South!

Atlanta Continued

- ▶ At suggestion of my wife, I accepted a Math/Programming teaching job at the Marist School for a year and then at the Lovett School plus coached JV team for augment my income while my wife was finishing her degree at GSU
- ▶ While teaching & coaching at the Lovett School, I networked with the HR VP at Coke and asked for interview in the IT division, I got offered a programming job immediately
- ▶ I started as a System Programmer, then System Analyst, IT Operational Manager, Project Manager, Director of Field Systems globally. Spent almost 24 years at Coke, traveled to Asia, Europe, South America and Canada. Also covered all 50 States!
- ▶ In the early years at Coke, I enrolled at Georgia Tech and earned M.S. in Industrial and Systems Engineering
- ▶ After Coke, I got hired as PMO Director at a startup IT company in Buckhead where we developed language algorithms to instantly translate languages to other languages

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- ▶ I worked over two years as IT Program Manager at GTA for the State of GA government
- ▶ Got hired by ACS, large IT enterprise which was acquired by the Xerox Company
- ▶ Our Healthcare System Development group was merged into Cognizant Technology Solutions
- ▶ In 2018 I joined Northside Kiwanis Club and was elected as President of the Club for Two Terms
- ▶ I also was Elected as President of ADC GA Chapter for Two Years 2019-2021
- ▶ In 2021, I established Friends of Mariam Foundation in the US, to solely support Mariam Foundation in the Holy Land to fight cancer and provide support to cancer patients at all stages

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- ▶ I'm on the Advisory Board of Villa International on the Campus of Emory University - Villa provides a family like setting for Scientists and Healthcare Scholars from around the World who come to Emory School of Public Health and the CDC to further their expertise and return to their countries to help improve the health of their people
- ▶ Also I lead a planning committee to plan the 75th Anniversary of the International House at Jacksonville State University in northwest Alabama (my undergraduate alma mater)

Why Do I Give Back to Our Communities?

- ▶ With Kiwanis are re dedicated to improving the lives of children so they're ready to learn
- ▶ And ready to lead
- ▶ We Kiwanians focus on causes that can be addressed on local and global levels
- ▶ 1. Health and Nutrition
- ▶ 2. Education and Literacy
- ▶ 3. Youth Leadership Development
- ▶ Above three causes together form a continuum of impact
- ▶ The work we do in each one helps provide a head start on success for the next
- ▶ Making sure kids are ready to learn and ready to lead
- ▶ By focusing on these three causes, we can make a difference in children's lives because we've seen it happen

Leading Friends of Mariam Foundation USA

- ▶ Mariam Foundation for Fighting Cancer and Supporting Cancer Patients and their Families was established in Nazareth, the Holy Land in 2012.
- ▶ www.mariamf.org
- ▶ I started Friends of Mariam Foundation USA in Feb 2021 for the sole reason of helping and supporting the Mariam Foundation in Nazareth
- ▶ www.friendsofmariam.org
- ▶ Saving lives of cancer patients in the Holy Land is the primary objective of both Mariam Foundation and Friends of Mariam

Standing for Civil Rights and Justice for All

- ▶ I'm the current President of ADC (American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee) Georgia Chapter since 2019
- ▶ ADC is a civil rights organization committed to defending the rights of people of Arab descent and promoting their rich cultural heritage
- ▶ ADC was founded by former U.S. Senator James Abourezk in 1980. Today, ADC is the largest Arab American grassroots organization in the U.S.
- ▶ ADC supports the human and civil rights of all people and opposes racism and bigotry in any form

ADC's Objectives Are To:

1. Defend and promote human rights, civil rights, and liberties of Arab Americans and other persons of Arab heritage.
2. Combat stereotypes and discrimination against and affecting the Arab-American community in the United States.
3. Serve as a public voice for the Arab American community in the United States on domestic and foreign policy issues.
4. Educate the American public in order to promote greater understanding of Arab history and culture.
5. Advance the cause for transnational social justice with communities of color and oppressed peoples domestically and internationally.

Who Can Join ADC?

- ▶ ADC welcomes the participation and support of people of all ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds

You are invited to join us on Nov 14, 6 - 8 pm
at the Alif Institute to learn about ADC and to
enjoy a delicious/fresh Med Grill Dinner!

ADC Advocates
Connect
Azerbaijan, ADC
and Azerbaijan Committee

ADC-GEORGIA INVITES YOU TO
THE ADC-GA ANNUAL BANQUET

WHY ADC?
40+ YEARS OF ADVOCACY & EMPOWERMENT


With Guest Speaker,
ADC National Organizer, **Jinan Shbat**

DATE: SUNDAY NOVEMBER 14, 2021
TIME: 6:00 PM

PLACE:
ALIF INSTITUTE,
3288 MARJAN DR. ATLANTA, GA 30340

PRICE:
\$15.00/ADULT (CASH OR CHECK)
\$5.00/ STUDENTS & CHILDREN UNDER 12

To RSVP:
Contact Rev. Fahed Abuakel via
text or email by Nov 8th
(404) 441-2702
fabuakel@gmail.com



Jinan Shbat
ADC National Organizer