March 28, 2008

It is with sorrow and sadness that the Faculty of Medicine and the Medical Center of the American University of Beirut and particularly, the Department of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine announce the passing of Dr. Salim Firzli on Thursday March 27, 2008.

Dr. Firzli was born in Beirut on August 29, 1922. He graduated Medical School in 1947, and after two years of training in the department of pediatrics, he traveled to London for further training on a British Council scholarship. In 1956, he obtained a Rockefeller Foundation scholarship to train in pediatric hematology which allowed him to complete a fellowship in Hematology in the Department of Pediatrics at the Children's Hospital of Detroit (Michigan) 1956-1957 In 1957 he was appointed at AUB as Assistant Professor in the Department of Pediatrics and rose to the rank of Professor in 1980. Dr. Firzli was the Acting Chairman of the Department 1986-1992. He became an Emeritus Professor in 2002.

Dr. Firzli was one of the fathers of Pediatrics in Lebanon and the Father of the specialty of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology in Lebanon and in the region. He was the first pediatrician who specialized in Pediatric Hematology/Oncology and pioneered in the establishment of this service at AUB, in Lebanon and the region. Over time he established a comprehensive service at AUBMC for the care of children with cancer and blood disorders. Over the years he trained several generations of Pediatrcians and Pediatric Hematologist/Oncologists who became leaders in their fields in Lebanon and in the region as well as in North America. He is well published in his field. His article on tumors in children that appeared in 1952 was the 1st study that identified and classified tumors of children in Lebanon.

In his role as Chairman of the Department during the difficult years (1986-1992), he kept the tradition of the department going and even started new programs at a time when most professionals had to leave the country and the institution. Even after retirement and as Professor Emeritus he continued to participate in conferences and departmental activities and to eagerly transmit his vast experience insight and thoughtfulness to the new generations.

As a person Dr. Firzli was a very dedicated and empathic person who would take personal interest in his students and would not settle but for the best for his patients. He also had an amazing love of life, a "Joie de vivre" that he transmitted to all people around him

Dr. Firzli was a founding and active member of multiple national and international
societies. To name a few the Lebanese Society of Hematology and the Lebanese Society of Pediatrics as well as the Secretary General of the Union of the Middle Eastern Mediterranean Pediatric Societies and Organizer of its meetings in 1963.

He is the recipient of many honors and awards from the Department of Pediatrics, the American University of Beirut, The AUB Alumni, the National and International Societies he contributed to and from the Lebanese Government. To name two: The Cedars Medal from the President of the Republic of Lebanon and the Gold Medal from the Lebanese Order of Physicians.

Dr. Firzli has left an indelible mark in AUBMC, in Lebanon and in his specialty as a leading physician. He will be sorely missed by all those who knew him, staff, colleagues, and patients alike.

Dr. Firzli is survived by his wife Mrs. Nabila Milki-Firzli, his sons Nabil and Elie and Mounir.

Funeral Services took place on Sunday March 30, 2008 in Virgin Mary (Al Saydeh) Church, Makhoul Street, Ras Beirut. Condolences will be received on Monday March 31, 2008 and Tuesday April 1, 2008 at the same Church.

May he rest in peace.

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