

OBITUARY

Khalil Abu Feisal, MD

Professor Khalil Abu Feisal died in Bahrain on 27 September 1994 after a long illness with a myeloproliferative disorder. He was 61 and was survived by his wife and two daughters.

Khalil Abu Feisal was born in Talya, Lebanon, and received all his education in the same country. After graduation from the Medical School of the American University of Beirut in 1956, he accepted a position at the Department of Physiology taking special interest in pulmonary functions particularly arterial circulation and gaseous exchange. In 1963, he joined the Department of Medicine and remained within this academic institution occasionally holding a visiting posts at the University of Iowa College of Medicine, USA. He was promoted to Professor of Medicine in 1979, and appointed Chairman of the Department in 1981. He came to Bahrain in 1987 and worked as a Consultant Physician and Chairman of the Department of Medicine at the Salmaniya Medical Centre. He also accepted a joint appointment as Professor of Medicine at the College of Medicine and Medical Sciences of the Arabian Gulf University in Bahrain.

Dr Abu Feisal was an active member of many regional and international scientific groups and organizations. He has more than 40 published scientific research papers to his credit. His research covered areas in cardiovascular and pulmonary pathophysiology. He is also an Officer of the Lebanese Order of the Cedars.

The Bahrain Medical Bulletin requested Dr Ali Mohammed Matar, Consultant Psychiatrist and a long time friend of Professor Abu Feisal to write a short obituary. He offered this open letter.

The Editor
Bahrain Medical Bulletin

Dear Khalil,

I still can't believe you left us for ever. With all your presence everywhere you have been, energy and livelihood, I just can't believe it happened. Early on Tuesday September 27, 1994, when your life partner, Nadira called me to tell me you have fainted, I thought you were just tired, but her second call rushed me to your house only to help Nadira resuscitate you. With all our calls to you, you refused to come back. I never thought I would ever witness this moment in my life. Why did you do that, Khalil? Was it because you did not want to leave Bahrain volitionally? Do you remember when in 1987, you told me that you loved Bahrain and its people so much that you wanted to retire and die here? You left a big vacuum behind you. I have lost a teacher, a colleague, a friend and, I can say, a student. Do you remember when you wanted to become acquainted with our system of education at the College of Medicine and Medical Sciences of the Arabian Gulf University in Bahrain. You insisted on attending my tutorial classes with my students to learn from me, your student. I felt very flattered and proud to have you as a student after I had you as a teacher, friend and colleague.

We became friends before we became colleagues teaching at the same medical school. We were about to become colleagues before we became close friends (and brothers as you always called us) when I offered my help to teach Psychiatry because of shortage in staff at our ALMA MATER during the years of civil war in Lebanon. You, as chairman of the Department of Medicine then, refused to let me come to Lebanon before it was safe for me in Beirut. That was an example of how much you cared for your friends.

I was very happy to be one reason why you accepted the chairmanship of the Department of Medicine at Salmaniya Medical Centre (of course, Usama Al-Khalidi and Farid Fuleihan, being in Bahrain, were other reasons). My knowledge of your love for teaching prompted me to offer you an appointment at the College when I was sitting in the chair of the deanship. We were privileged with your acceptance. In Bahrain, you always wanted the medical services to be a model for the whole world. You had your vision which I shared with you, but unfortunately, not many people around us shared or understood this vision. As a result, you had your frustrations, but you never gave up. You continued to preach the Gospel. We used to philosophize and talk about that when we gathered in the evenings with Nadira and Dana (my wife). We also talked about life, poetry, politics, religion and many other topics. Being with you was always interesting, stimulating and utmost pleasure. I thought that would never end in my life time. But it did. Khalil, I feel betrayed you left us that soon unexpectedly. Was it really because you did not want to leave Bahrain alive?

I will always miss you and for ever remember you, and so will all your friends, students and patients in Beirut, Bahrain, Iowa City, Philadelphia and everywhere you had been. We will have consolation in having Nadira, Maya and Nada around, but things will never be the same without you. I am still looking forward to our get togethers. How long will it be before we have them?

Until we meet, Khalil, rest in peace, and may God be with us here to help us with our life, ambitions and frustrations. May be by then, some of our dreams will have been realised.

Ali Mohammed Matar, MD, MPH

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