



Sameh Awaideh '03, ME'05 (l) and Ghaith Hammouri '03, ME '04 (r) visited President Harrison in his office this summer.

WALT'S OBSERVATIONS

what I would describe as a “serial entrepreneur,” having a hand in starting two companies in the security industry, one here and one in Jordan. When I asked him what he would do next, he said, “I love to teach and do research, but my real passion is entrepreneurship. I think I have some other companies to start!”

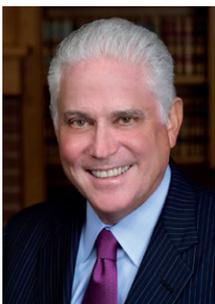
Sameh also earned a bachelor of science and master's degree in engineering at Hartford and then a PhD in electrical and computer engineering in Saudi Arabia. He taught at a university in that country but, like Ghaith, has now

returned to the United States. Asked the same question about his professional future, he said: “I also see the draw of industry, but I think my future lies in academics.”

More than just telling me about their professional success, they spent a good deal of time telling me how much Dianne and I had played a part in their lives. “You were our American parents,” Sameh said. They also described how much their experience at the University had formed them as people. We feel both Jordanian and American, they said. We feel equally at home in both countries and, in some ways, citizens of the world.

When we kicked off a fundraising campaign for these scholarships in 2001, Queen Noor visited the University and received an honorary degree. During her remarks, she envisioned how this scholarship and other programs between schools and universities could help frame the future of both Jordan and the United States. I so wish she could have been in my office this summer when Ghaith and Sameh visited. I think she would be proud of how the scholarship program, named for her late husband, has fulfilled her vision for a more cooperative and understanding world.

Walter Harrison
President



As I begin my final academic year as president before retiring, I'm thinking about how to answer a most-frequently asked question: what are you most proud of accomplishing during your nineteen

years as president? While I am proud of the restoration of our campus and our financial stability, two areas that others have singled out as exemplars of my leadership, I am most proud of what we have done directly for students. I want to focus on one of those programs, the King Hussein Scholars Program.

In January of 1999, during my first academic year as president, my wife Dianne and I traveled to London and Paris to meet some of our international alumni. Among those we met in London was Hussein al Rifai, '86 who was working in the Jordanian embassy in London then and had previously served as Queen Noor's press secretary.

During a dinner conversation I asked him what we could do to increase our international student numbers generally and our Jordanian students particularly. He told me that one of King Hussein and Queen Noor's personal projects was the Jubilee School, an English-speaking high school for gifted and talented Jordanian

students, and he suggested we might start a scholarship for graduates of that school. Since I had been a great admirer of King Hussein, who was very ill at the time, I thought this was fitting, and after a subsequent trip to Jordan to see the school and meet Queen Noor, we began a scholarship that would bring one student a year from the Jubilee School to the University of Hartford. Now, eighteen years later, the program continues to flourish. King Hussein Scholars have succeeded at the University and gone on to remarkable achievements after graduation. Almost all of them have earned master's degrees here or elsewhere, and many have earned PhDs in engineering or other STEM fields.

I would love to recount the successes of each of them—many now professors, engineers, or graduate students. One is an architect. I could go on and on, mentioning each by name with their accomplishments, but I think they will all understand if I focus on the first two King Hussein Scholars, Ghaith Hammouri '03, ME '04, and Sameh Awaideh '03, ME '05, who came to visit me this summer. I was so very pleased to see them, thrilled to catch up with them, and proud of their fond recollections of their days as students here.

Ghaith earned a bachelor of science and master's degree in engineering at Hartford, and then went on to earn a PhD in cryptography at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. He has become