

Dear Colleagues & Friends,

The EIU Annuitants Association Scholarship, the Beginning of a Legacy

During my 38 years' experience in higher education academic administration, I have experienced and followed the tangible and intangible impact of awards and scholarships on the educational experiences of our students' success. I have witnessed the excitement and joy of students, as well as their parents, grandparents, and friends as they received their awards. I have followed the progress of scholarship recipients as they continued for advanced studies, many of them, all the way to their doctorates. I feel certain that these women and men, whom we support, will make significant contributions to our society, country, and those around them.

The Annuitants' Scholarship that EIU Annuitants Association established in 2006 for the offspring of any EIU annuitant or employee, will light a torch that will burn for the entire lives of the recipients, generate confidence, and unleash immense amounts of energy. The bonus for those of us who help to endow & enhance this scholarship is that its positive impact remains in the memories of the recipients, for what we hope will be eternity. Our children, grandchildren, and their offspring will proudly remember that there were once visionaries and generous people who touched them in the early journey of their lives; a noble legacy.

It is a privilege for me to share a personal story that vividly demonstrates this. I was born in a family of very modest means, in a dictatorship system, surrounded by fundamentalist, religious people, that prescribed every aspect of our lives - where to go, what to read, listen to, think, and career path to choose. There was no opportunity for individual initiatives, planning short or long-range goals and, consequently, no hope. Disobeying any of the government decrees resulted in severe physical and mental punishment and even death. When I went to bed at night I would listen to the Voice of America on my short wave radio, hearing the events and news coming from the most advanced and dynamic civilization in the world describing the lives of their people. In the morning, I would walk to school not knowing whether I would come back, be arrested, and never see my family again. The contrast between what I heard on the radio and how I lived was immense. I often dreamed what it would be like to live in this country I heard about on the Voice of America. The only possible chance for me was to do well academically, pass the entrance exams to the University of Tehran, and then, win a scholarship upon graduation. I never lost hope that this dream, no matter how remote, would one day become a reality. I graduated as the valedictorian of the College of Sciences and received a scholarship to study abroad.

I landed in New York City on November 16, 1960 on a clear, pleasant fall day. My eyes were full of tears as I looked at the silhouette of the city. I couldn't believe it was real - not a dream. I experienced what thousands before me did as I landed on the shore of the most magnificent country - leaving behind persecution, intimidation, isolation, and poverty. Soon, I learned that while I was well prepared for the academic vigor of American higher education, I lacked the experience to handle the freedom and the concept that you are in control and responsible for your actions and success. Fortunately, after one year to the day, I met Carlene, my wife, who guided, advised, and helped me to use my newfound opportunities effectively. I received my MS in Geophysics from the University of Oklahoma and my Ph.D. in Geochemistry from the University of Tulsa.

Here I am, the luckiest man in the world, with a successful, rewarding career, family life,

and wonderful friends, all due to the awarding of a scholarship that made it possible for me to continue my education and even my life.

The EIUAA members contributed the original \$5,000 to establish this scholarship & gradually increased it to about \$10,000. We are appealing to individuals and groups to further endow the monetary value of the Annuitants' Scholarship so that we may continue to award \$500 & possibly more to the recipient. We will gratefully acknowledge the donors' generosity. Please consider donating any amount to continue support for this scholarship. Make your check out to the *EIU Foundation*. On the description line write: *Annuitant's Scholarship*. Take or send your check to the EIU Foundation (Neal Welcome Center), 860 West Lincoln Avenue, Charleston, IL 61920-2425

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