

Mexican-Lebanese Castellanos Family visit LERC to donate book from Martha Díaz de Kuri

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Reported by Elie Nabhan

Mr. José María Castellanos Elías, a third-generation Mexican of Lebanese descent whose mother Martha Rafful Jaber was an early immigrant to Mexico, paid a visit to the Lebanese Emigration Research Center at NDU.

The primary purpose of the visit of Mr. Castellanos was to donate to LERC the latest book by the academic Dr. Martha Diaz de Kuri titled *Familia Aboumrads*. The book is illustrated and deals with the origin and the migration history of the Abou Mrad family, their genealogy and their family tree.

The author documents the history of the Abou Mrads, their family members, their business and their philanthropy in Mexico. The Abou Mrads were founders of the Abou Mrad Bank, one of the earliest banks in Mexico.

In her dedication to her old friend LERC's Director Ms. Guita Hourani, Dr. Díaz de Kuri said that she is still maintaining her passion for documenting what she calls "Lebanese matters."

Dr. Díaz de Kuri has previously visited LERC and donated two books to the Center titled *De Libano a Mexico: La vida alrededor de le mesa*, published in 2002, and *De Libano a Mexico: cronica de un pueblo emigrante*, which was published in 1999. The two books deal with the history of the Lebanese in Mexico and their immigration/emigration experiences.

Mr. Castellanos Elías was accompanied on his visit to LERC by his daughter Ms. Bárbara Castellanos Rafful, and his son Aníbal Castellanos Rafful.

The family came to Lebanon as part of a group of Mexican-Lebanese tourists who stayed in Beirut. They assigned a day to LERC outside their full schedule of touring Lebanon.

After they had officially presented the book to LERC, the Castellanos family were given a presentation of LERC's electronic archives and taken on a tour of the Lebanon Migration Nucleus Museum at NDU.

While leaving, the Castellanos family stated their pleasure in learning "about the impressive work that LERC is doing and for being interested in our past." They promised to do their utmost to help the Center by sending any material and information that the family might have about their ancestry once they were back in Mexico.



LERC with the Castellanos Family at the Museum; (from left to right) LERC's Mr. E. Nabhan, Mr. A. Castellanos Rafful, Mr. J M. Castellanos Elías, Ms. B. Castellanos Rafful and LERC's Mrs. L. Haddad (Oct 2011).