



ABDULLAH &
LAILA MARAFI

KUWAITI ALUMNUS HONORS HIS FATHER

Recent IE alum funds a multidisciplinary research space in Grissom Hall.

The School of Industrial Engineering soon will be expanding its research capabilities, thanks to a \$275,000 gift from a recent graduate.

Abdullah Marafi (BSIE '07, MSIE '08) and his wife, Laila, provided the gift to fund an area in the newly renovated Grissom Hall. The Marafi Research Center is named in memory of Marafi's father, Abbas Mohammad Rafie Husain Marafi, who passed away in 2009.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

"We plan to use the space as an incubator for new research and collaborative endeavors between faculty and students," says Abhijit Deshmukh, the James J. Solberg Head and Professor of Industrial Engineering. The research projects in the Marafi Research Center will run sequentially so that, over time, multiple groups may use it. "We envision research teams will change every few years."

Certainly Marafi's father would be honored by his son's gift. He held degrees in nuclear engineering and mechanical engineering and was the dean of the College of Engineering at Kuwait University. Marafi's mother is a graduate of the American University of Beirut and worked for both the Central Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait University.

PROUD SON AND PURDUE STUDENT

Marafi is proud of the time he spent on the West Lafayette campus and credits his late father for directing him toward Purdue. "My father pushed me toward top-tier schools," Marafi says, adding that the

Purdue Engineering reputation and rankings were major selling points.

The Institute of International Education's Open Doors Report lists Purdue No. 3 in international student enrollment among U.S. public institutions. In 2017, *U.S. News & World Report* ranked Purdue's undergraduate engineering programs No. 9 and the Industrial Engineering undergraduate program No. 3 in the nation.

Marafi says Purdue taught him important skills. "I learned how to think outside of the box, how to work under pressure and how to model complex real-life problems into mathematical problems."

Marafi views the gift as an apt way to honor his father. "He motivated me, pushed me to success and mentored me throughout my years at Purdue. He was so passionate about education.

"Being an international student at Purdue was great. Purdue is very diverse, and the culture of knowledge and learning made adapting very easy. I made lifelong friends at Purdue from many countries."

Deshmukh is grateful that Marafi believes in IE and its endeavors. "It's wonderful to see young alumni giving back," Deshmukh says. "He knows what's going on at the school, understands our goals. His gift is a vote of confidence in our research.

"It's critical to have lifelong relationships with our alums and to have them engaged in our school." Deshmukh says input from professionally practicing engineers is vital, and the advice and experienced guidance they share with students is invaluable.

The upgraded facility, designed for multidisciplinary

teams, fulfills a key aspect of the College's Strategic Growth Initiative: encouraging cross-disciplinary collaboration in research. The Grissom Hall revitalization also is a key element in President Mitch Daniels' Purdue Moves effort, which counts expansion of Purdue Engineering as a major priority.

INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCE

Born in Kuwait, Marafi is fluent in both English and Arabic. He earned a scholarship from the Kuwaiti Ministry of Higher Education to study engineering in the United States.

Marafi, a natural entrepreneur, has co-founded many companies, including Moqawalat.com, Kuwait's largest contracting platform. He has worked as an industrial project manager and production engineer. Currently, Marafi is pursuing a master's degree in real estate development from Columbia University in New York. He plans to graduate in 2017.

"One of the most valuable components of our college education is what we learn from the people around us," he says. "And international students are an important factor in creating a strong worldwide alumni network, which benefits all Boilermakers."

To support research or other initiatives in the School of Industrial Engineering, contact Jerry Alberts, director of development, at 765-496-6192 or JLAlberts@prf.org.