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

Abdullah Marafie (BSE '97, MSE '00) and his wife, Laila, provided the gift to fund an area in the newly renovated Grissom Hall. The Marafie Research Center is named in memory of Marafie’s father, Abbas Mohammed Raad Marafie, 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 Marafie Research Center will run sequentially so that, over time, multiple groups may use it. “We envision research teams will change every few years.”

Marafie’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. Marafie’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

Marafie 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,” Marafie 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.

“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.”

Marafie views the gift as an honor 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.”

Marafie 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.”

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Deshmukh says input from professionally practicing engineers is vital, and the advice and experienced guidance they share with students is invaluable.

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.