

Arab Americans are grocers and governors, physicians and farmers, Indy 500 champs and taxicab drivers, financiers and factory workers, bakers and bankers, salesmen and senators, TV stars and TV repairmen, teachers and preachers, Heisman Trophy-winning quarterbacks and neighborhood sandlot heroes. Name it, and an Arab-American has probably done it.

We've all heard this quote before:

"Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country"... a famous quote by an Irish American President — John F. Kennedy — words that inspired an entire generation. These words were first written by, among others, the Arab-American author of *The Prophet*, Kahlil Gibran. And that sentiment, so beautifully expressed by Gibran more than 60 years ago, has inspired Americans of *all* heritages.

WE ARAB AMERICANS AND OUR FAMILIES ARE PROUD OF OUR HERITAGE AND PROUD TO BE AMERICANS.

It's this pride that keeps us all asking, "What can we do for our country?" — the good old U.S.A.



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Arab Americans: Making a Difference



By Casey Kasem



T here are about 3 million

Arab Americans, and as a community, we've been demonstrating our loyalty, inventiveness, and courage on behalf of the United States for over 100 years. Here are just a few of the more famous ones — people you may know!

You talk about courage —

how about America's and the world's first jet ace? He was the Korean War hero, U.S. Air Force Col. **James Jabara**. In World War II, Army officers like **Maj. Gen. Fred Safay** fought alongside Gen. Patton, and **Brig. Gen. Elias Stevens** served on Gen. Eisenhower's staff. And in 1944, one of our Navy's ships, the destroyer escort *USS Naifeh*, was named in honor of an Arab-American hero — Navy Lt. **Alfred Naifeh** of Oklahoma.

Some of us work in our nation's capital, like U.S. Senate Majority Leader **George Mitchell** (D-ME), veteran Congressman from West Virginia, **Nick Joe Rahall II**, and Congresswoman **Pat Danner** from Missouri. Today, the first Arab American ever appointed to a U.S. Cabinet position is the Secretary of Health and Human Services, **Donna Shalala**.

On TV, one of CNN's political commentators is the former White House Chief of Staff and Governor of New Hampshire, **John Sununu**. Then there's America's longest-serving White House chief of protocol, Ambassador **Selwa Roosevelt Thomas A. Nassif**, her assistant, also served as U.S. Ambassador to Morocco. A special Presidential envoy was the late Ambassador **Philip Habib**. A 50-year veteran with United Press International is the dean of the White House press



George Mitchell
Senate Majority
Leader



Donna Shalala
Secretary of
Health & Human
Services



Nick Joe Rahall II
Veteran
Congressman from
West Virginia



John Sununu
Former New
Hampshire
Governor and
White House
Chief of Staff

corps — feisty **Helen Thomas**, who's covered eight Presidents since 1961.

Others who have served in high elective office include former U.S. Senators **James Abourezk** and **James Abdnor**, both of South Dakota; former Congressional members **Mary Rose Oaker** of Ohio, **George Kasem** of California, **Abraham Kazen, Jr.** of Texas, and **Toby Moffett** of Connecticut. **Victor Atiyeh** was the popular governor of Oregon.



Helen Thomas
Dean of White
House Press Corps

The Heisman Trophy-winner

who threw the "miracle touchdown" pass for Boston College some years back was **Doug Flutie**, more recently the Canadian Football League's Most Valuable Player. And Flutie is no fluke! There's also quarterback **Jeff George** of the Atlanta Falcons, and Philadelphia Eagles coach **Rich Kotite**. Don't forget former linebacker for the Chicago Bears and an NFL Hall of Famer, **Bill George**, or former Cleveland Brown **Abe Gibran**.

In pro basketball, there's **Rony Seikaly** of the Miami Heat — and in college basketball, UCLA's fiery coach, **Jim Harrick**. And **George Maloof, Sr.** owned basketball's Houston Rockets.

The former owner of the Miami Dolphins has a football stadium named after him — **Joe Robbie**. And **Fred Saigh** once owned baseball's St. Louis Cardinals.

In auto racing, **Bobby Rahal** won the Indy 500 in 1986 and is the all-time earnings champ among Indy car racers. Major League baseball player **Joe Lehoud** played with the Boston Red Sox. The founder of the Professional Bowlers Association is **Eddie Elias**. In the ring, **Petey Sarron** won the world featherweight championship in 1936-1937; while **Zuhair "Steve" Mansour** was weightlifting's Grandmaster of the World in 1990. And a U.S. National Chess Champion is Seattle's **Yasser Seirawan**.



Doug Flutie
Heisman Trophy
Winner



Rony Seikaly
NBA Basketball
Star



Bobby Rahal
Race Car Champion

Among America's activists,

can you think of two people who have saved more lives than the founder of MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving), **Candy Lightner**, and America's — and probably the *world's* — foremost consumer advocate, **Ralph Nader**?

Among business leaders is the founder of an international, billion-dollar engineering firm, Jacobs Engineering Group, **Dr. Joseph Jacobs**. A former chemist with dozens of patents became Armand Hammer's successor as Chairman of the Board, President and Chief Executive Officer of Occidental Petroleum — **Dr. Ray Irani**. **Najeeb Halaby**, former head of the Federal Aeronautics Authority, was CEO of Pan-American Airlines. And an internationally respected financial expert and economic forecaster is **Dr. Ray Jallow**. **Paul Orfalea** founded the world's biggest international chain of copying service stores, Kinko's, while **Waleed** and **Malik Ali** founded MPI, world's largest home-video distributor of documentaries.

Entrepreneur **Tony Ismail** founded the Alamo Flag Company in Dallas and built it into the largest retailer of flags and related items in the U.S. today. Wood-working furniture maker **Sam Maloof**, whose quality pieces are in demand, has had many of his creations exhibited in museums.

Turning to law, the Texas lawyer who won the biggest settlement in U.S. history, on behalf of Pennzoil (\$10 billion dollars!), is one of this country's most successful attorneys, **Joseph D. Jamail**.

In entertainment,

singer-songwriter **Paul Anka** was one of America's first pop teen idols. Ukelele-plucking, falsetto-singing



Paul Anka
Singer and
Songwriter

Herbert Khaury became famous as "Tiny Tim." And in the world of rock, there was the late, legendary **Frank Zappa**. One of today's superstars is singer-dancer **Paula Abdul**. And the first teenage singer ever to have her first two singles hit Number One is **Tiffany**.

Speaking of music, two of America's landmark shows on radio were created by two Arab-

Americans, **Don Bustany** and yours truly — "American Top 40" and "American Country Countdown." Recently, I added "Casey's Top 40" and "Casey's Countdown."

On Broadway, playwright **Fred Saidy** wrote two classics, *Finian's Rainbow* and *Bloomer Girls*. Opera prima donna **Rosalind Elias** hit the high notes at the Met. And, for avant-garde "Dancer of the Year" in 1992, *The New York Times* picked a 20-year male Broadway veteran with the Paul Taylor Company, **Elie Chaib**.

Turning to television, **Lucie Salhany**, chair of Fox Broadcasting Co., is the first woman to head a television network.

Among TV directors, two Arab Americans have each helmed over 300 episodes for the networks. **Assad Kelada** has done numerous pilots for series like "Family Ties" and episodes of "The Facts of Life," "Who's the Boss?," "WKRP in Cincinnati," etc. After directing Broadway hits like "Sweet Charity," "Mame," and "The Unsinkable Molly Brown," **John Bowab** switched to TV and has directed "Soap," "Benson," "Bosom Buddies," "The Facts of Life," and the last season and a half of "The Cosby Show."

SUPER-FACT: Did you know that the highest-rated episode in television history was the last episode of "M*A*S*H"? And who played the role of not-so-crazy Corporal Klinger for its entire 11-year run? A talented Arab American from Toledo, Ohio, **Jamie Farr**.

On NBC-TV, "Saturday Night Live's" bandleader is **G.E. Smith**. (His family's Lebanese name, *Haddad*, means 'blacksmith'!)

The best known Lebanese in America was also the founder of St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital — the late, great comedian and actor **Danny Thomas**. His daughter is Emmy Award-winning actress **Marlo Thomas**, and his son is a television and film producer and multi-E Emmy winner



Lucie Salhany
First Woman to
Head a TV
Network: Fox



Jamie Farr
Corporal Klinger
on "M*A*S*H"



Danny Thomas
Comedian, Actor,
and Humanitarian



Marlo Thomas
Award-winning
Actress



Michael Nouri
Actor (Flashdance
and "Love & War")



Vic Tayback
Mel on "Alice"

was portrayed by the late **Vic Tayback**. One of the co-stars of the series "Empty Nest" was **Kristy McNichol**. A star of TV's "Head of the Class" was picked by *People* magazine as one of the "50 most beautiful people in the U.S." — **Khrystyne Haje**.

Two other fine movie and television actors who also starred in popular TV dramas are **James Stacy**, who played the title role in "Laramie," and **Michael Ansara**, who played Cochise in "Broken Arrow."



Kathy Najimy
Award-winning
Actress-Comedian
(Sister Act)

Among the many other performers, an award-winning comic actress from San Diego recently scored a hit as a fun-loving nun in the *Sister Act* films, **Kathy Najimy**.

The head of Carolco Pictures, handling the *Rocky*, *Rambo*, and *Terminator* films, among others, is "billion-dollar producer," **Mario**

Kassar.

The producer who presented the epics *The Message: The Story of Islam* (a biography of Mohammed) and *Lion of the Desert*, not to mention all the blockbuster *Halloween* chillers, is **Moustapha Akkad**. The co-writer-director of the loony comedy hit *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective* is **Tom Shadyac**.

The cinematographer who designed Cinemobile—the first customized van for filming on locations—while working on the TV series "I Spy," was **Fouad Said**. One of show business's legendary talent managers was **George "Bullets" Durgom**, who, through the years, managed Jackie Gleason, Sammy Davis, Jr., and Marilyn Monroe, to mention a few.

Among Oscar winners: Best Actor for the movie *Amadeus* — **F. Murray Abraham**. Winner for Best Screenplay Adapted From Another Medium — his novel, *The Exorcist* — **William Peter Blatty**. The first woman to receive an Oscar for Best Original Screenplay — for *Thelma and Louise* — **Callie Khouri**. For Best Song — "Last Dance" from *Thank God, It's Friday* — composer **Paul Jabara**. And set decorator **Emile Kuri**, nominated for films like *Mary Poppins*, won the Oscar twice — for *The Heiress* and Disney's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*.

for "The Golden Girls" and other TV shows — **Tony Thomas**.

The leading man who starred in the movie *Flashdance* was **Michael Nouri**, more recently seen in TV's "Love and War" sitcom. Actor **Antoine Shalhoub** currently plays Antonio in "Wings." Crusty but soft-hearted Mel in TV's "Alice"

In the world of fashion,

the prestigious CFDA Menswear Designer of the Year Award for 1990 and 1991 went to Arab-American **Joseph Abboud**. He's the only designer to win the award two years in a row.

Staying with apparel a moment, **J.M. Hagggar** of Hagggar Slacks manufactures more men's slacks than anyone in the world. In addition, **Farah Brothers** manufactures men's and women's slacks; and **Maloo Brothers** manufactured Mod-O-Day women's dresses.

For an inspiring success story, try that of writer-lecturer on business and success, **Nido Qubein!** When he came to the United States as a teenager, he could barely speak English. He went on to become president of the National Speakers' Association and the youngest member inducted into the International Speakers' Hall of Fame.

In education, **Jack Shaheen**, Emeritus Professor of Mass Communications at Southern Illinois University, is also a film critic and author of books like *The TV Arab*. Columbia professor **Edward Said** is a well-known literary and social critic, as well as a respected music reviewer whose column appears in *The Nation*. **David Adamany** is President of Wayne State University in Detroit. The 1990 Pulitzer Prize for biography (*Jackson Pollock: An American Saga*) went to the author of three other national bestsellers as well — writer-publisher **Steven Naifeh** of South Carolina.

In science and medicine, one of America's most famous pioneers is Houston heart surgeon, **Dr. Michael DeBakey**, who invented the heart pump. Today he's Chancellor of Baylor University's College of Medicine. The winner of the 1990 Nobel Prize for Chemistry is Harvard's **Dr. Elias Corey**. Geologist **George A. Doumani's** explorations helped prove the theory of continental drift; he has a mountain peak named after him in Antarctica. Another American geologist, **Farouk el-Baz**, born in Egypt, helped plan all the Apollo moon landings and later pioneered the use of space photography to study the Earth.

Finally, the courageous astronauts who lost their lives aboard the space shuttle *Challenger* included several racial and ethnic groups: African-American, Asian-American, Hispanic-American, Anglo-American, Jewish-American — and an Arab-American: a school-teacher, **Christa McAuliffe**.



Edward Said
Literature and
Music Critic
and Author