

Dr. Farouk Shami Joins LE•O Board of Directors



Farouk Shami, a Palestinian American inventor, educator, and entrepreneur commented on his recent appointment to the Leonard Education Organization (LE•O) Board of Directors: “I joined the board of LE•O because the organization believes that education and intercultural exchange is the essential path to peace, stability, and development, and I cannot agree more.”

Shami arrived in America in 1965 and through education and determination achieved the American dream. In 1986, he invented the first ammonia-free hair care system, which secured his first patent. His mission became the creation of an environmentally responsible company that promotes education and adheres to the highest ethical standards of product development to ensure the health and safety of hairdressers and their clients.

Farouk Systems, Inc. employs over 2,000 people and exports CHI and BioSilk hair and skin products to more than 150 countries worldwide. Shami collaborated with NASA scientists to produce ceramic thermal tools, hairdryers with low electromagnetic fields, and a line of hair care tools that features nano silver (believed to eliminate multiple forms of bacteria). In partnership with LG Electronics, Shami is developing a new technology that takes the guesswork out of hair

coloring. He holds 14 US patents and 10 international patents and has 23 more pending.

Shami has lectured at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government Latino Leadership Initiative, as well as the University of Texas and the University of Houston. He has delivered commencement speeches at the University of Houston Downtown, Sam Houston State University, North American College, and the American Friends School, Ramallah. His outstanding achievements and invaluable contributions to the academic and cultural development of the worldwide beauty industry earned him an honorary Doctorate of Beauty Art from the Council of Graduate Schools at Seo Kyeong University. He connected Seo Kyeong University with the University of Jerusalem where a new department for Beauty Art will begin this spring. Shami starred on *Celebrity Apprentice* and has judged Miss USA and Miss Universe pageants.

In memory of his late father, Sheik Mohammed Shami, Farouk founded a school specializing in science and technology to educate young Palestinian women. In honor of his late brother, Dr. Jamil Shami, he has established scholarship funds for gifted Palestinian students in financial need. He has made contributions to Beir Zeit University’s School of Business and the

American Friends School. He partnered with the US Agency for International Development (USAID) to put street lights in his hometown village of Beit Ur al Tahta.

Shami's board appointments include the National Defense University Foundation, the Greater Houston Partnership, Houston's Better Business Bureau, the American Task Force on Palestine, and the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee. He is the recipient of numerous awards: Legend Award from the International Salon/Spa Business Network; Beauty Maker Award; Arrival Award from the University of Houston Law Center; Entrepreneur of the Year from Newt Gingrich; Apollo Award for being green; Ameristar Award; Businessman of the Year from the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, the Arab-American Cultural and Community Center, and the American Task Force on Palestine. He has also been honored by St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and the American Heart Association.

The Shami family has enjoyed a lifelong lasting relationship with the Leonard family since 1955. Farouk and his family shared a home with Dr. Graham Leonard in Ramallah. Dr. Leonard was the Pastor of the Friends Quaker Meeting and a teacher of History at the Friends Girl School. His home was across the street of the Boy School making it easy for Farouk and his brother Jamil to attend classes. During these years of shared meals and experiences, the families bonded and are very close to this day.



Dr. Farouk Shami, Deya Leonard Dresner, and Mohammad Salboot, LEO Board Member

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