

## Representatives of the HALFA Visit LERC

**January 14, 2014**

**Jasmin Lilian Diab, LERC**

The Lebanese Emigration Research Center (LERC) at Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) received representatives of Hommes d’Affaires Libanais de France Association (HALFA), or the Lebanese Businessmen Association of France. The HALFA representatives were Mr. Antoine Menassa, President, and Mr. Mansour Khoury, Secretary-General.

HALFA is an association created within the World Lebanese Cultural Union (WLCU) to promote networking among its members and with Lebanon. The WLCU is an international, secular, non-denominational, non-profit organization sponsored by the Government of Lebanon but working independently in cooperation with Lebanese emigrants and their descendants. It strives to “unite descendants of Lebanese origin and friends of Lebanon into one worldwide organization or union with the aim to promote and preserve Lebanese culture and heritage and to ensure its spirit for generations to come.”

The LERC team first escorted Mr. Menassa and Mr. Khoury to the Lebanon and Migration Nucleus Museum where Ms. Liliane Haddad, Chief Archivist and Indexer, gave them a guided tour of the exhibited collections.



*From left: Mr. Mansour Khoury, Mr. Antoine Menassa, and Ms. Liliane Haddad at the Lebanon Migration Nucleus Museum (NDU/LERC January 2014)*

Following the visit to the Museum, Mr. Menassa and Mr. Khoury were then escorted to the LERC premises and Ms. Haddad gave them a visual tour of LERC's Lebanese Emigration Archive and Database (LEAD).



*From left: Ms. Haddad, Mr. Khoury, Dr. Hourani, and Mr. Menassa (NDU/LERC January 2014)*

In the Gold Book, Mr. Khoury wrote, “We were honored to visit this great institution, which holds the history and the conscience of the Lebanese diaspora. The Museum and the Center at this prestigious University are the result of the efforts and the perseverance of people of our homeland of whom we are so proud.”

Mr. Menassa, who was born in Senegal and now lives in France, wrote, “My heart is pounding reliving the period of my childhood through the invaluable documentation gathered at the Lebanese Emigration Research Center... I hope to revisit the Museum with my son, Antoine, who holds three different passports — Lebanese, Mexican and French — and is considered a citizen of the world... Thank you for ensuring the continuity of our existence in our motherland through this work.”

The two men expressed admiration for the LERC's accomplishments and expressed interest in donating material from their own personal collections to further enrich the Museum's holding.

It should be noted that the WLCU and LERC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2010 to cooperate on all matters related to the Lebanese diaspora.