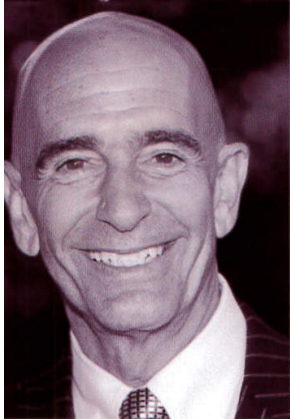
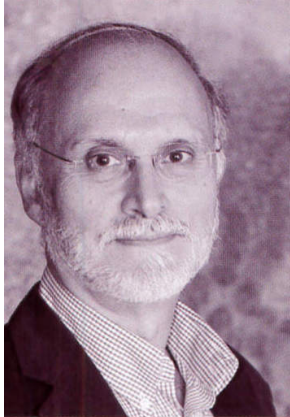


THE  
“100”

MEET 100  
INFLUENTIAL  
LEBANESE FIGURES  
AROUND THE GLOBE



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## A word from THE GROUP PUBLICATIONS DIRECTOR

**"God uses good people to do great things."**

It has been an honor to participate in this amazing edition. Thank you to every person who accepted to share their journey. Thank you for being outstanding people who use their life to serve, who refuse to give up, who confront the world with every hope in succeeding to make a difference. Your dedication and professionalism have moved and inspired our communities and youth, and that's why we want the whole world to know about it. Working on the edition and getting to know each figure, made me believe more in our Lebanon, in our brilliant minds and in our potential. We will continue our quest... there will be more editions, more discoveries... nothing ends here, it is only the beginning

SIMONA EL KHOURY HARFOUSH



## A word from THE PROJECT MANAGER

There's always that drive that makes you want to become a better person, that passion that takes you into the unknown. From the Middle East and Europe to the United States and Australia, each destination has given me an overwhelming amount of experience and inspiration. Throughout my enjoyable journey of bringing this book to life, I found out that successful sources of influence, like these special Lebanese figures in our book, have focused on achieving their dream and vision through a true passion in their interests and an undeniable enthusiasm to make the world a better place. Their life stories are examples of what my generation and future generations should learn from and put into practice.

I received a tremendous amount of support throughout this project from the Lebanese of the world. A huge thank you to all those who motivated me and gave me the courage to not give up and to truly believe that within us there's an inner greatness which is often left undiscovered until we're forced to test our limits.

**"Don't count on luck, take notes and get ready to fly"**

SARAH LEE AMRO

## A word from THE EDITOR IN CHIEF

**"Courage doesn't always roar, sometimes it's that quiet voice at the end of the day that says, 'I will try again tomorrow'".** If there's anything I learned while writing 100 stories of the world's most successful Lebanese people, it's that determination and drive all begin with courage.

Whether innate or acquired, the presence of courage is essential. Some of our most influential figures lived through the horrors of war only to rise from the ashes with courage they never knew they had. Others faced different forms of hurdles and hardships, and in a quiet stance overcame all odds with a fearless determination. No matter how, each one of you changed the world in one way or another and proved that being Lebanese somehow goes hand in hand with being courageous, fearless. A huge thank you for allowing us to delve into your world – it was an enormous privilege to translate your journey into words

SABINE ALPHONSE



# Introduction

*"March on. Do not tarry. To go forward is to move toward perfection. March on, and fear not the thorns, or the sharp stones on life's path." – Gibran Khalil Gibran*

With this in mind, we would like to introduce our readers to some of the finest and brightest Lebanese.

From surgeons and engineers to philanthropists and artists, from entrepreneurs and musicians to innovators and celebrities, the Lebanese, from all walks of life, have made us proud in one way or another. Interviewing and writing about the 100 most influential Lebanese around the world has taught us lessons in humility, perseverance, determination and above all, strength.

The names you see within our pages are only 100 of numerous splendid Lebanese achievers worldwide, which we hope to write about in future volumes.

Emerging from differing fields, each person has his/her own success story and has affected the lives of many. It is in this spirit that we have listed them in alphabetical order, regardless of title or stature, and we have only referred to the individuals in medicine as Dr.

Each personality is unique and we value their trust in allowing us to portray them in our book.

As for our readers, especially the rising generation, we published this book with you in mind. Despite the difficult times this country has gone through, despite the tragedies we have witnessed and the hardships we have encountered, it is evident that we are survivors. Flip through our pages, discover each person's story and you will undoubtedly see a little bit of yourself in each. They are an encouragement, they are proof that you can also overcome any hurdle, they are our torch in the dark and with their stories, they have become an inspiration to us all.

Take your cues from the stories of some of the most successful and influential Lebanese around the world. We have delved into their lives, learned some life lessons ourselves and have put them into this book to share with you. Whether they live in Lebanon, or have traveled long and far, whether they were born here or in places like the United States, Africa or Brazil, whether they are citizens of the world or simply citizens of Lebanon, they all have one thing in common: every one of them still proudly calls Lebanon home.

THE TEAM

# Dr. George **BITAR**

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*Founder of the Bitar Cosmetic Surgery Institute in Virginia*

DR. GEORGE JOHN BITAR, A LEBANESE AMERICAN BOARD CERTIFIED PLASTIC SURGEON, IS THE MEDICAL DIRECTOR AND FOUNDER OF THE BITAR COSMETIC SURGERY INSTITUTE. OVER THE YEARS, THE BITAR COSMETIC SURGERY INSTITUTE HAS BEEN ONE OF THE TOP COSMETIC PRACTICES IN AMERICA. HIS PARENTS AND BROTHER, ALL WHO IMMIGRATED FROM LEBANON TOGETHER IN 1985, LIVE A FEW MINUTES AWAY FROM HIM, MAINTAINING VERY CLOSE FAMILY TIES. HE IS MARRIED TO A LEBANESE WOMAN, DR. RIMA BITAR, WHO RECEIVED HER DOCTORATE OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING AT UCLA. THEY HAVE TWO BEAUTIFUL CHILDREN. A SEVEN-YEAR-OLD SON NAMED JOHN AND A FOUR-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER NAMED GABRIELLA.

“ Allow those  
around you to  
reach their full  
potential because  
only then can you  
reach yours. ”



Photo © : Jad Tahtah

**D**r. Bitar was born in Beirut, Lebanon in 1968. His father, Dr. John Bitar, was a clinical professor of pediatrics at the American University of Beirut. His father founded the Lebanese Civil Defense, a public emergency medical service of Lebanon during the civil war. His mother, Lily, a teacher by training and a homemaker, taught him the love of helping others in need, especially in the midst of the civil war.

As he was growing up, Dr. Bitar was very close to his uncle, Michael Bitar, a professional artist, who taught George the love and respect of art with different media. During the war in Lebanon in the 70's and early 80's, Dr. Bitar would go with his father to the emergency room and see children

who were injured by bullets and bomb shrapnel. Those experiences, coupled with times he spent helping his father at his pediatric clinic, made Dr. Bitar certain that he wanted to become a doctor when he grew up. His love of art led him to also want to somehow incorporate art in his future profession.

At age 16, George immigrated to America with his family. He finished his undergraduate degree at George Mason University on the Dean's Honor Roll. He went to Medical School at George Washington University, and during Medical School spent an elective at the American University of Beirut – a time that made him reconnect with his friends and family back home. He also did some medical research

Dr. George **BITAR**  
Founder of the Bitar Cosmetic Surgery Institute in Virginia

**TOP:**

Dr. George Bitar with the team at the Bitar Cosmetic Surgery Institute on the red carpet at the Institute's 2015 holiday party



**BOTTOM:**

Dr. George Bitar's state of the art clinic in Fairfax Virginia

at the prestigious National Institutes of Health, in Bethesda, Maryland.

Dr. Bitar completed an advanced cosmetic fellowship in Charlotte, North Carolina with ten board certified plastic surgeons with the goal of becoming the best cosmetic surgeon that he could be, but felt that was not enough. Internationally, he trained with some very prominent cosmetic surgeons, and learned the techniques of Dr. Ivo Pitanguy, the father of Brazilian cosmetic surgery, in Rio de Janeiro, Dr. Marchac, in Paris, Dr. Mendelson in Melbourne, Dr. Widgerow in Johannesburg, and Dr. Ellenbogen in Beverly Hills. With this international training, Dr. Bitar has assimilated the secrets of these prominent cosmetic surgeons in offering each patient an individualized treatment



plan by learning the subtle nuances as cosmetic surgery relates to different cultures and ethnic backgrounds – a subject he has lectured on extensively. "I think that the understanding of a patient's needs comes in context with their culture and their physical appearance. This is a very important thing for a cosmetic surgeon to understand."

Dr. Bitar enjoys plastic surgery in all its aspects, but rhinoplasty has to be his favorite. "Every nose is different. It's artistic, challenging, in the middle of the face, and there's no

room for error," he said. But to say that errors and complications do not exist, would be a lie.

"There are two types of surgeons who don't have complications: the ones who don't operate and the ones who lie about it," he said.

Dr. Bitar established the Bitar Cosmetic Surgery Institute in 2002 with the goal to provide his patients a place where they can get educated and have procedures done from the least invasive to the most sophisticated surgeries, in a warm and friendly atmosphere ded-

icated exclusively to high end cosmetic procedures. Besides providing the best cosmetic medicine has to offer, the second goal was to be a charitable institute that gives back to the community both in the United States and in Lebanon. The third goal is to have an open door education and mentorship policy where medical students, residents and plastic surgeons come to learn. As the institute grew, the impact it had on its community grew. Dr. Bitar established an internship at the Bitar Cosmetic Surgery Institute for medical stu-



*Drs. George and Rima Bitar with their children John and Gabriella*

dents to spend a summer and learn about cosmetic surgery.

Over the years, the Bitar Cosmetic Surgery Institute has grown, with two state-of-the-art locations, an ever growing staff and a highly selective clientele from the metropolitan Washington D.C. area and from over a 100 countries worldwide who fly in for cosmetic surgery by Dr. Bitar.

Dr. Bitar enjoys giving back whether by mentoring students, putting together fundraisers for charities, going back to Lebanon to give talks and conferences, or volunteering with the National Arab American Medical Association (NAAMA). When he is not in the operating room, Dr. Bitar has volunteered with organizations such as the free clinic of Northern Virginia's INO-

VA's Fairfax Hospital to treat children with facial deformities. Dr. Bitar was also proud to create a lot of awareness for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society in memory of his grandmother who died from lymphoma. After putting together nine fundraisers and being part of a campaign that raised seven million dollars for the charity, Dr. Bitar was named the Leukemia and Lymphoma's Man of the Year in 2006.

Dr. Bitar has authored and co-authored numerous articles in peer reviewed plastic surgery journals and chapters in books on various topics in cosmetic surgery, such as his minimally invasive neck lifts, breast enhancement and nonsurgical rhinoplasties. He has presented his research at numerous plastic surgery national and

## IN ONE WORD

| **LEBANON** |  
Beauty

| **SELF-IMAGE** |  
Confidence

| **SUCCESS** |  
Big heart

| **HAPPINESS** |  
Doing the right thing

| **PASSION** |  
Intensity

| **MUSIC** |  
Happiness

| **FOOD** |  
Satisfaction

| **BOOKS** |  
Knowledge

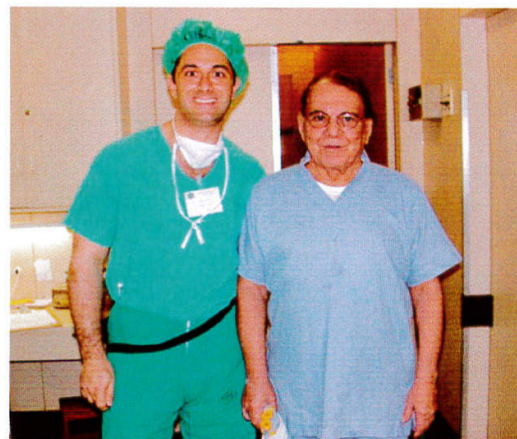
| **BEST  
CHARACTERISTIC** |  
Big heart

| **INFLUENTIAL  
FIGURE FROM  
WORLD HISTORY** |  
Jesus Christ

| **MOST WATCHED  
TV SHOW** |  
House of Cards

international conferences as a guest speaker and has been voted among the best plastic surgeons in the Washington DC area by various publications, and among the top plastic surgeons in the United

*Dr. George Bitar in the operating room with his mentor, world famous plastic surgeon Ivo Piliangny.*



States, winning numerous awards. He is one of the founding members of the Association of Plastic Surgeons of Lebanese Descent. He has enjoyed going back to Lebanon because it gives him a sense of purpose and satisfaction, especially to have academic interactions with his fellow Lebanese.

Dr. Bitar believes his wife, Rima Khalaf Bitar PhD, and his two children, John and Gabriella, play a huge part in his life. "My wife has been the executive director of the Bitar Cosmetic Surgery Institute since 2010 and is a big part of mine and the institute's success," he concluded •

*George Bitar*



# Letter from THE CEO

I am pleased and proud to introduce 100 of Lebanon's most influential figures in this book, which hopefully becomes a permanent addition to your library.

The individuals featured come from all walks of life, whether residing here or are within the Lebanese diaspora. We have personally interviewed all the Lebanese personalities mentioned, for their remarkable achievements and for the difference they have made in their field of work. You will also note that most of these individuals that can contribute to Lebanon's prosperity and share their best practices, reside abroad.

It is my hope that you are as excited as we are about this book and the future volumes to follow. We have only selected 100 out of thousands more outstanding individuals in Lebanon and around the world, who have held Lebanon's name up high. I hope every page inspires, encourages and reassures you. Despite the constant chaos we live in, there is always a glimmer of hope with the stories of luminaries you will be reading about in the next pages.

Lebanon has managed to survive despite constant exposure to pressure, whether social, political or economic. I see no other country with such a unique ability to blend people, religions and nationalities. I may sound idealistic, but I sincerely hope that one-day, every single Lebanese expatriate can return to his or her homeland and that I see more of our young, brilliant minds making global headlines out of Lebanon •

GHASSAN EL OMEIRA