Acclaimed author, Nobel Peace Prize nominee to speak at OHIO on Nov. 19

Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish to present Kennedy Lecture Series speech as the keynote remarks for International Education Week

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From staff reports

Nobel Peace Prize nominee and internationally-acclaimed author Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish, MD, MPH, will speak at Ohio University on Wednesday, Nov. 19, as part of the University’s International Education Week and in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Center for International Studies. The speech is also part of Ohio University’s Kennedy Lecture Series.

International Education Week will be held Nov. 15 -20 at Ohio University and Abuelaish will present the keynote speech for the week, beginning at 7:30 p.m. on Nov. 19 in Templeton-Blackburn Alumni Memorial Auditorium.

A Palestinian medical doctor who was born and raised in Jabalia Refugee Camp in the Gaza Strip, Abuelaish has had the opportunity during his career to experience the impacts of conflict in countries like Palestine, Egypt, Israel, Uganda, Yemen, Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia. He has been an important figure in Israeli-Palestinian relations for years, working in Israeli hospitals and treating Israeli and Palestinian patients with the full belief that health is an engine for the journey to peace.

Abuelaish has overcome many personal hardships, including poverty, violence and the horrific tragedy of his three daughters’ and niece’s deaths in the 2009 Gaza War. He is now one of the most outspoken, prominent and beloved researchers, educators and public speakers on human rights, women’s roles, education, peace and development in the Middle East. Despite his personal losses, his doctrine is that hate is not a response to war. Rather, open communication, understanding, hope and compassion are the tools to bridge the divide between Israeli and Palestinian interests.

Abuelaish’s impact on peace-seeking communities is exceptional. He has been invited to give speeches at the Canadian House of Commons, the U.S. Congress, the Chilean Senate and Parliament, the European Parliament at Place Du Luxembourg in Brussels, Belgium, the State Department, and Forum 2000 in Prague. He has been interviewed by major media outlets and personalities in dozens of countries, including interviews with Christiane Amanpour, Anderson Cooper, Sir David Frost, Zeinab Badawi on BBC News Hard Talk, Fox News Channel, Al Arabiya

He has also received a number of awards and nominations in recognition of his promotion of human rights, health and peace, and has been given honorary degrees from the University of Manitoba, Queens University, the University of Western Ontario, Victoria University, the University of Saskatchewan, McMaster University and Sault College. He is the recipient of the Stavros Niarchos Prize for Survivorship, and was also nominated for the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought. Since 2010, Abuelaish has also been named one of the 500 Most Influential Muslims by the Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre in Amman, Jordan, for three consecutive years, and was the first-ever recipient of the Mahatma Gandhi Peace Prize, in addition to many other awards.

In addition, many influential figures within the diplomatic community have spoken very highly of Abuelaish’s work. In nominating Abuelaish for the Nobel Peace Prize, the Belgian Parliament named him the “Martin Luther King of the Middle East,” and in his nomination for the Sakharov Prize, Dr. David Naylor, then president of the University of Toronto, called Abuelaish a remarkable ambassador for peace and an exemplar of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Even President Barack Obama referred to him as an example of strength and reconciliation in his address on May 19, 2011, when he discussed the possibility of peace within the Middle East.

Abuelaish’s book, “I Shall Not Hate: A Gaza Doctor’s Journey,” an autobiography of his loss and transformation, has achieved critical acclaim. Published in 2010, it has become an international best-seller and was inspired by the loss of his three daughters, Bessan, Mayar and Aya, and their cousin Noor to Israeli shelling on Jan. 16, 2009. The book has become a testament to his commitment to forgiveness as the solution to conflict, and the catalyst toward peace.

Abuelaish is currently an associate professor at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto.

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