**A Note to my Classmates**

First, thanks to our Class Secretary, Bob Murphy, for requesting a note from me to our classmates in conjunction with the feature story in the upcoming Jan/Feb Alumni Magazine. Reflecting back to the three years 1962/1965 I spent at Dartmouth, I consider that time-period as the happiest of my life-time in terms of human friendship and support I found and developed at Dartmouth, the knowledge I gained there and possibly the change I brought in Malcolm X , to believe , after his pilgrimage to Mecca, in the brotherhood of all races irrespective of color and origin. It was that changeover that drove me to facilitate his invitation to Dartmouth, eulogize him at his funeral against all odds and miss my timely-graduation to accompany his widow to the hajj to have her experience the same rituals of human brotherhood as did her husband.

Many of you may wonder what on earth brought this Nubian African to Hanover. I first came to the States in 1960 to represent my country, the Sudan, in the New York Herald Tribune World Youth Forum. The Forum was founded in 1947 following the World War II out of a conviction that the best way to promote world peace was to bring young people from around the world to get to know each other and their counterparts in America. It was also hoped that the U.S. would eventually benefit when these delegates eventually assume leadership positions in their countries. Delegates were selected by their Ministries of Education based on an essay competition on a topic related to “**The World We Want**” and personal interviews of the finalists. We were hosted by American families and the high schools in their neighborhoods who treated us no different than their own if not better.

On my return I was admitted to the Law School at the University of Khartoum, but I wanted to pursue my education abroad. Bypassing the scholarships available from Russia and the communist countries I applied to Brandies and Dartmouth. Brandeis offered me a full scholarship while Dartmouth offered a tuition-only scholarship. I was tempted to accept Brandeis’ offer when the Class of 1956 stepped in with its first full scholarship for a foreign student until graduation including a caveat of hosting the awardee by the families of the class during vacations. Thus, I was honored to belong to two classes, ’65 and ’56.

After graduate school at Harvard and Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, I returned to Dartmouth to teach and direct its Foreign Study Program in West Africa-1974/1976. Thereafter, I moved overseas to work in the development field with Islamic Development Bank in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait Development Fund in Kuwait. The work was very satisfying in seeing projects completed in various sectors in more than thirty countries in Africa and South-east Asia. But that state of affaires looked like a dream when in August 1990 Kuwait was overrun overnight by Iraq. A week later I drove my family across the desert to Saudi Arabia leaving everything behind including my graduation ring, a gift from the Class of 1956

We were hoping to return to Kuwait after its liberation, but the Ruler of Kuwait decreed that citizens of countries that did not support American involvement in its liberation were not welcome back. The fact that I never worked for my government or country but served for eight years as economic advisor to Kuwait Development Fund and that three of my children were born in Kuwait did not help. We thought it was best to return to the U.S. where I had permanent residency and reapply for citizenship. Within three months I was awarded my citizenship and so did my children who benefited from President Clinton’s decree to award American citizenship to children under 18 years if either of the parents holds American citizenship.

I and my family are grateful and proud for the opportunities we have had in education and employment in the U.S. in pursuit of our happiness. My two daughters Selma and Sara work for Harrison Foundation and USAID, respectively while Omer woks for Google, Siddig in architecture and Mohamed in photography and my wife Sohair in education. I only regret that none of my children made it to Dartmouth but certainly my grandson Karim with his Ukrainian lineage and love of sports would love to make it to Dartmouth and be a champion of Dartmouth ski club.

Stay Safe and Pursue Your Happiness.