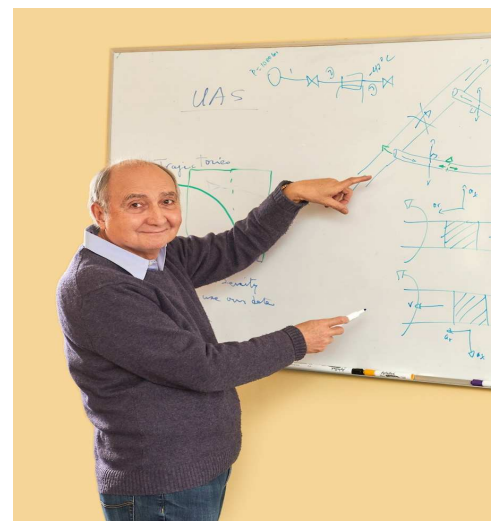


Albert Moussa, Winchester Jumelage Board member, was featured in the March 2022 issue of *Winchester Living Magazine*.



Growing up in Cairo, Egypt, Dr. Albert Moussa had his mind set on becoming an astronaut. At 17, Moussa came to the United States for that reason, only to discover that Stanford University offered aero/astro degrees at the graduate level, so he had to start as an undergraduate in mechanical engineering. As he explored different areas of study, Moussa became interested in air pollution, combustion and then fire, the field where he would make a name for himself, eventually starting BlazeTech Corporation, a fire and explosion protection consulting company with clients in the aerospace, defense and chemical industries. Since then, the ever-resourceful Moussa has come full circle; he might not have made it to space himself, but his groundbreaking research will help those who do.

After graduating from Stanford, Moussa intended to continue studying automobile pollution at MIT, where he received his M.S. and Sc.D. However, fate intervened, and when Moussa was asked to start a fire research program, he accepted with the mindset that it's "more interesting to start a program than become involved in an existing one." This was Moussa's first step toward what would develop into a remarkable 40-year (and counting) career.

In 1977, Moussa accepted what would be his first and last job working for a company other than his own as the in-house expert on fire and explosion for Cambridge international consulting firm Arthur D. Little, Inc. However, after a very productive decade at Arthur D. Little, Moussa had grown tired of its intense internal competitive environment and left to build a company where employees would not feel such pressure to compete against each other. Teased by co-workers who questioned why Moussa would leave the largest international consulting firm at that time to start a company from scratch, BlazeTech is a testament to Moussa's sharp business instincts and pioneering spirit. While Arthur D. Little declared bankruptcy in 2002, BlazeTech, with its approach to developing practical solutions to one-of-a-kind problems in safety, environment and energy, has only flourished under the leadership of Moussa. The big issue on Moussa's mind now is succession.

As a book author responsible for over 200 publications, presentations and reports, Moussa is a highly sought-after lecturer and the recipient of many awards, including the SAE/AIAA William Lockwood Memorial Lecture Award. His unique professional course on how to protect aircraft systems against fire is in such demand that people come from all over to attend the class offered once a year in the U.S., France and Australia.

Moussa has also consulted for the Air Force, Navy and major firms such as Boeing, GE, Northrop Grumman and Parker Hannifin, and has served on national advisory committees.

Moussa's consulting work on major national and international aircraft fire and explosion accidents bring us to the TWA800 and Concorde disasters for which Moussa received much attention in the U.S. and European media, including interviews with Dan Rather and the BBC. These tragedies are memorable for Moussa not in the way he would like, but as a reminder of what may have been prevented had his forewarnings of aircraft fuel system vulnerabilities received attention before those disasters occurred.

Remembering his own challenges in starting BlazeTech three and a half decades ago, Moussa likes to do his own bit in assisting today's startups by advising and occasionally financing them. "I want to help people who want to do something worthwhile," says Moussa. "I have my own thinking about how to start a company, which is not the classical way, but I think it still has its place."

Moussa grew up bilingual, Arabic and French, with the latter coming in handy when communicating with Winchester's French sister city, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, as a board member of Jumelage. He has also been on the board of Friends of the Fells, MIT Club of Boston and the Griffin Museum of Photography, among many others, but with all that Moussa brings to the table, it's best not to expect him to stay too long on any one board. "You get stale and the board gets stale. It's always good to have new blood come in," says Moussa.

With the little spare time he has, Moussa enjoys playing tennis and hiking in the Middlesex Fells, a hidden jewel that abuts his adopted hometown



Dr. Albert Moussa representing BlazeTech Corporation

where he has lived for almost 40 years. His decision to move to Winchester was made while driving along Mystic Lake after leaving the Winchester home of an Arthur D. Little colleague. Describing it as a very nice ride, Moussa's central thought on the drive back to Cambridge was "I want to live in that town."

him well throughout his life. He even suggests it as a method to deal with serious issues like climate change, which has always been an interest of Moussa's, along with pollution mitigation. "It doesn't mean we have to stop doing what we're doing, but we may want to be more realistic in our expectations and then go from there." In climate change, the official name for that is adaptation.

One area in which Moussa is not so positive is social media. He avoids all contact with this media outlet that he categorizes

As a result of the pandemic, Moussa has missed his annual hikes in the Fells leading the MIT Club of Boston but is optimistic they will soon resume. Fortunately, BlazeTech's office, located in Woburn, has stayed open as it is spacious enough to allow for plenty of distance between co-workers, even though business travel is on a hiatus. It is another activity missed by Moussa, who has been to all the continents except Antarctica, but he feels fortunate for all the places he has been instead of what he is currently missing out on. This ability to adapt is a core part of Moussa's personality and has served

as one of the many things that are done "because we can, not because we should." Moussa refers to social media as a "big polluter," not only in how its computer servers use up as much electricity as an entire city but also in how it pollutes society's minds. Moussa considers it a perfect example of something that is done without regard for its social implications.

If one thing is clear, Albert Moussa likes to keep his focus on what can be done for the greater good. These days, that means working on an innovative dust filter that can be used on Mars and the moon. It has attracted the commercialization interest of a large aerospace company, which brings Moussa much satisfaction. It comes as little surprise that the ambitious boy who wanted to be an astronaut would grow into a man capable of creating his own path to space. Perhaps, all these years later, the boy's dreams and the man's accomplishments are not so far apart.