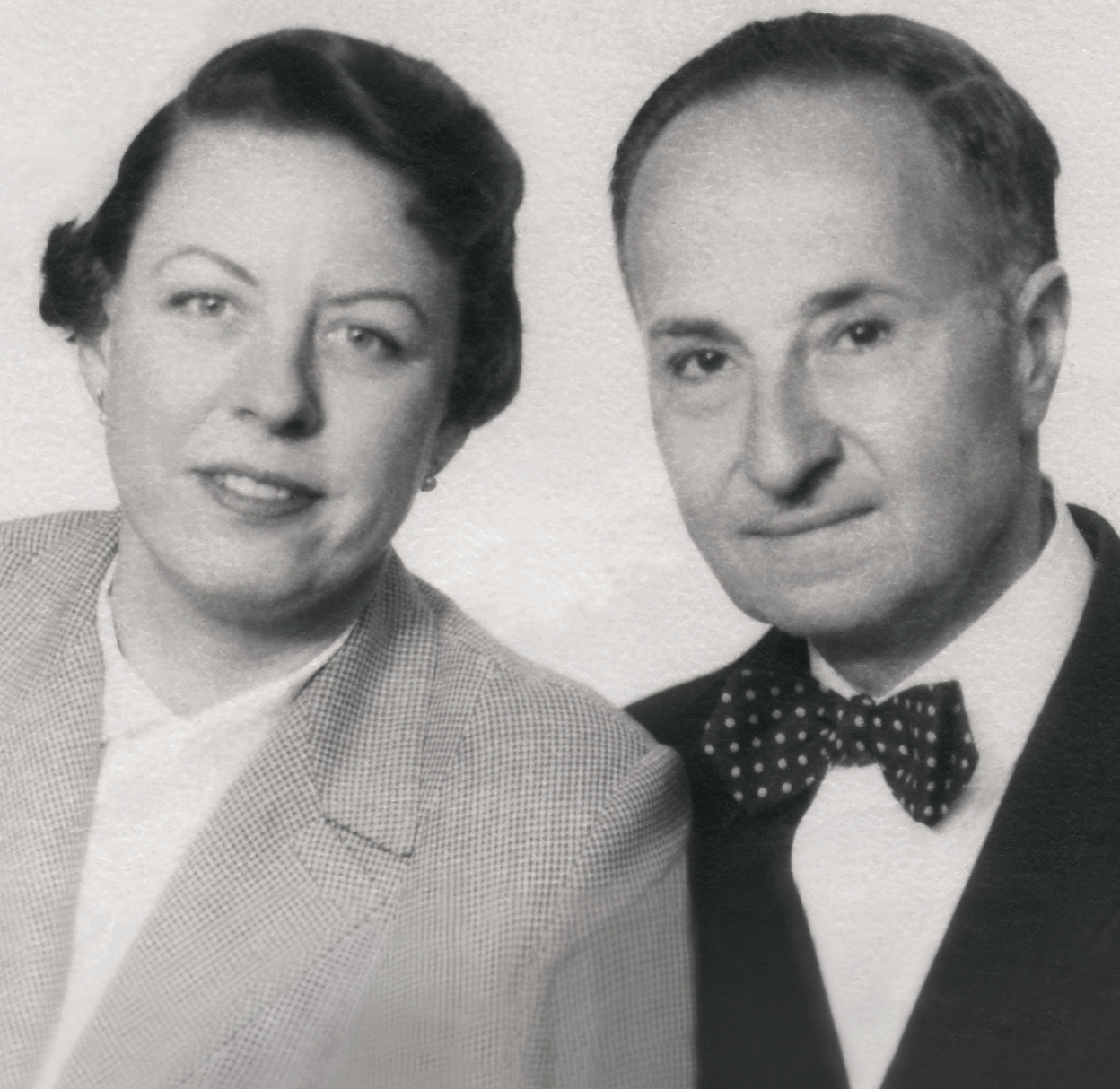




Living Legacies

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THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY



A Shared Commitment to Science and Humanity

Dr. **Fouad M. Al Akl** (1903–1971) dedicated his life to medicine, innovation, and the betterment of society. A distinguished surgeon, author, poet, and art collector, Fouad epitomized the spirit of a true global citizen. Born in Egypt to a Lebanese family, Fouad embraced family tradition to pursue a career in medicine. He graduated from the American University of Beirut (AUB) Medical School in 1924, where he served as President of the Students' Medical Society, and his postgraduate training spanned London, Paris, and Vienna before joining a medical expedition to China that included time at the Rockefeller Medical College in Peking.

Settling in New York City in the 1930s, Fouad established a private practice and served as an associate attending surgeon at Kings County Hospital in Brooklyn. Known for his profound commitment to his patients, he began a cooperative healthcare practice and offered financial aid options during the Great Depression to help families with limited means afford treatment. On one occasion, he even donated his own blood to save a patient's life. Beyond the operating room, Fouad was a prolific writer and poet, contributing significantly to medical literature, and a generous philanthropist, founding the Murad Al-Akl Award at AUB to recognize noteworthy acts of service.

Fouad's wife, **Margaret "Peggy" Al Akl** (1925–2020), shared her husband's intellectual curiosity and dedication to helping others. As a young student, Peggy excelled academically and aspired to a career in medicine. While societal norms of the 1940s steered her to nursing school instead, she thrived as a Registered Nurse at Kings County Hospital, where she met Fouad. Peggy's career as a nurse evolved into psychiatric social work,

and after earning a graduate degree from Fordham, she devoted her career to counseling troubled youth in New York City's public schools. Her empathetic approach left a lasting impact, with former students returning years later to express their gratitude for her guidance.

True citizens of the world, Fouad and Peggy traveled extensively, nurturing a shared passion for understanding diverse cultures. Through their journeys, the couple amassed a collection of rare textiles, including a 19th-century Turkoman Yomud rug that they later donated to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

With no children of their own, Fouad and Peggy focused their legacy on supporting an institution that reflected their ideals. After attending scientific lectures and concerts at Rockefeller in the 1960s, they were deeply impressed by the University's dedication to scientific excellence, its dynamic network of international scholars, and its mission to improve human health through advancements in biomedicine. Following Fouad's passing in 1971, Peggy remained devoted to their shared vision and made the decision to bequeath the majority of her estate to Rockefeller, establishing the F. M. Al Akl, M.D. and Margaret Al Akl Professorship. This testamentary gift stands as a lasting tribute to Fouad and Peggy's lifelong commitment to science, knowledge, and service to humanity, and it exemplifies their unwavering belief in Rockefeller's mission.

Dr. Thomas Tuschl, head of the university's Laboratory of RNA Molecular Biology, was appointed the inaugural Al Akl Professor in 2023.

Living Legacies is a periodic series highlighting benefactors who made the enormously helpful decision to include The Rockefeller University in their estate plans. In sharing what they have done, we hope to honor their dedication, and also to demonstrate how planned gifts can have a transformative impact on biomedical research at Rockefeller.

Scan the QR code below to learn about the university's planned giving options.



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