

**Welcome address on the occasion of the conferment of
Honorary Citizenship of the Universität Stuttgart upon Her
Excellency Suzanne Mubarak**

on Friday, 26.11.2004, at 5 p.m., Haus der Wirtschaft, König-Karl-Halle

[I. Introductory welcoming remarks]

Your Excellency Mrs Mubarak,

Mrs Mohn,

Dr. Schuster,

Minister Müller,

Your Excellencies,

Your Magnificences,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you all to today's ceremony, at which the Universität Stuttgart will celebrate the inauguration of a new Honorary Citizen of the University, Her Excellency Mrs Suzanne Mubarak. It is a great joy and privilege for me to be able to welcome you, Your Excellency Mrs Mubarak, on behalf of the Universität Stuttgart, to this

ceremony on the occasion of your receiving this award here in Stuttgart.

Let me furthermore bear a warm welcome to our guests from the Egyptian government who accompany Mrs Mubarak on this special occasion as well as to German politicians:

Prof. El-Deen, Egyptian Minister of Health,
Prof. Salama, Egyptian Minister of Education,

we feel privileged to have you as our guests at this ceremony.

Excellency Al-Orabi, Egyptian Ambassador in Germany,
Excellency Zekry, Egyptian Ambassador in Switzerland,
Excellency Kobler, German Ambassador in Egypt,
General Consul Mourad,

we are honoured to welcome you here in Stuttgart.

Mr Fuchtel, Member of the German Bundestag,

Herzlich willkommen!

We have just heard the third movement of a piano quintet by Anton Dvorák played by the Paolina Quintet consisting of members of the Universität Stuttgart's Academic Orchestra in honour of you, Your Excellency Mrs Mubarak. The music has put us in a festive mood. It provides a fitting setting for today's ceremony, which is dedicated to a remarkable person.

[II. The Universität Stuttgart's tradition of Honorary Citizenship]

On 4 February 1994 the Universität Stuttgart rekindled a tradition that had not been honoured since the 1960s: it decided to reinstitute the practice of making outstanding public figures Honorary Citizens of the Universität Stuttgart. Back then, in February 1994, the Universität Stuttgart appointed an Honorary Doctor, Professor Hans L. Merkle, an Honorary Citizen of the university. Professor Merkle had been the managing director of Robert Bosch Industrietreuhand KG until 1993. It was a deliberately felicitous choice for the Universität Stuttgart in that the renewal of this tradition, marked by conferring an Honorary Citizenship on Professor Merkle, went hand in hand with the long-standing links between the Universität Stuttgart and the Bosch company, as Bosch have felt a special commitment to the Universität

Stuttgart for many decades – to be precise, since the establishment of the Association of Friends of the Universität Stuttgart by Robert Bosch himself.

On 14 July this year, the Vice-Chancellor and the Senate of the Universität Stuttgart unanimously decided to make Her Excellency Mrs Suzanne Mubarak, First Lady of the Arab Republic of Egypt, an Honorary Citizen of the Universität Stuttgart. In their explanatory statement, they testify to the fact that Her Excellency Mrs Mubarak has rendered exemplary services to the welfare of society in many ways, in particular through her commitment at an international level to supporting vocational training for young people and to the rights of children and women.

Yet why would an institution whose main task is to conduct research and teaching make a public figure who has shown great dedication to social concerns an Honorary Citizen?

A university confers the academic award of Honorary *Doctorate* in recognition of outstanding *academic, artistic or entrepreneurial* achievements.

The Universität Stuttgart bestows the award of Honorary *Senator* on deserving public figures whose commitment to the university, its students, and to research and teaching is exemplary in every respect. We appoint these figures Members of the Academic Senate.

But an Honorary *Citizen* (In German: Ehrenbuerger) is totally different.

The award of Honorary Citizen (Ehrenbuerger) is only given to public figures whose work sets an example for all to follow, whose dedication to the welfare of society is unique. You, Excellency, have set a unique standard in visions and missions for your country, resulting in remarkable and outstanding projects. You will get the award in recognition of your manifold commitment for the well-being of your country, for encouraging the education of youth and for securing the rights of women and children as well as for your efforts in establishing the German University in Cairo. You have recognized the chances of communication and education in the course of world changes. The outcome of your work is indeed remarkable: there is a clear process of elimination illiteracy in Egypt as well as a very positive sign in the preparation of children and the young women for a schooling

path. Thank you for your unrelenting commitment for your country and for the Egyptian society. You are a great example for courage, women's strength, visions and missions to design innovative social projects.

III. Honorary Citizenship for Suzanne Mubarak]

By calling upon Her Excellency Suzanne Mubarak to accept the award of Honorary Citizenship of the Universität Stuttgart – a title we confer very rarely and only upon outstanding public figures – the last awardee was the former Federal President Richard von Weizsäcker ten years ago – in my eyes we were also and above all asking her to be a role model for us. We wish her to be an example for us to follow, not in an academic or entrepreneurial sense, but in her striving for social justice, in her commitment for equality of opportunity and in her fight for tolerance – in short, as a paragon of humanity.

At this point I wish quite deliberately to describe the achievements of Her Excellency Suzanne Mubarak as *virtues*, as *the reason why* virtues become what they are is that they serve society as a whole.

Although the fact that Her Excellency Suzanne Mubarak has accepted the award of Honorary Citizenship is indeed a tribute to our university as a whole, this does not mean that we think of ourselves as *being* something special. Instead, we hope that Her Excellency Suzanne Mubarak's example will guide our actions and thoughts, and, spurred on by the model of our Honorary Citizen, we wish to *become* something special.

This means: We have offered Her Excellency Suzanne Mubarak Honorary Citizenship because we wish to make her – like the Honorary Citizens of our university Hans Lutz Merkle and Richard von Weizsäcker before her – an outstanding member of our university.

The motto of the Universität Stuttgart is: "*Technology, knowledge and education for people*". Through her commitment to training girls and boys in Egypt, she has followed this very maxim.

[IV. Suzanne Mubarak's achievements]

Her Excellency Suzanne Mubarak is a champion of the rights of women and children. She fights to eradicate illiteracy in her country, supports numerous health initiatives for mothers and children, and is a vigorous advocate of equality of opportunity in vocational training for girls and boys in Egypt.

She was a pioneer in recognising the possibilities offered by communication technology and education in a changing world, and has made this the basis of her commitment to providing training for children. Her efforts have brought about substantial progress in reading and writing abilities in Egypt, as well as in preparing children, especially young women, for a school career. She has ensured that all children under 16 are guaranteed free access to teaching and learning materials, and that children have social insurance schemes.

As early as 1977 Her Excellency Suzanne Mubarak founded the "Integrated Care Societies", non-profit aid organisations that support social and cultural activities and health care in Egypt at a local community level.

Her Excellency Suzanne Mubarak is the founder and President of numerous other organisations that are dedicated to

education, health care and equal opportunities for boys and girls throughout the world.

At an anniversary celebration of the *International Board on Books for Young People*, Her Excellency Mrs Mubarak summarised her aims and motivation in the following words:

"Our joint mission continues to inspire and motivate all those who believe in the great value of children's books, the act of reading and learning in shaping a better future. Indeed, we must never underestimate the power of the word. It is through words and images that people have shared their thoughts and feelings, their fears and aspirations – and their dreams to create a better future, that is what the International Board on Books for Young People is all about – shaping a better tomorrow."

Suzanne Mubarak is also a Technical Advisor for the "National Council for Motherhood and Childhood" in Egypt. The aims of this institution include strengthening the role of women and improving their position in society, tackling and solving the problems faced by women in Egypt, monitoring vocational training schemes for children, and creating improved health and living standards for children.

The list of Her Excellency Suzanne Mubarak's accomplishments is varied and includes awards such as the "International Tolerance Prize" of the European Academy for Arts and Sciences, the "Health for All Gold Medal" of the World Health Organisation in recognition of her achievements in improving the quality of life of women and children, the "Honorary Fulbright Award" for her dedication to education, and the "International Book Committee, International Book Award" for her work to improve literacy in Egypt.

In 2003 she received the prestigious American "Making a Difference" Award from the International Education and Resource Network. This is a global non-profit network that uses internet technology to bring together young people in community education projects. The network covers 15,000 schools in 100 countries with 1 million students, who meet daily in the internet to work on joint community projects. The projects are intended to promote critical thinking, support and provide experience of working with new technologies, and to encourage young people to think about and discuss social issues. They thus serve the dual purpose of sup-

porting progress and improving the situation of young people all over the world.

Her Excellency Suzanne Mubarak's commitment to the social welfare of young people throughout the globe is exemplary. When the Arab Republic of Egypt decided to establish a German university in Egypt, the *German University in Cairo*, in cooperation with the German universities of Ulm and Stuttgart, Her Excellency Mrs Mubarak took over the patronage of the German weeks during the inauguration of the GUC in October 2003. She is also a permanent advisor to the GUC, thus supporting the work of our university and that of the University of Ulm at the GUC.

[V. Conclusion]

Your Excellency Mrs Mubarak,

Hans Lutz Merkle, an Honorary Citizen of the Universität Stuttgart, who passed away in the year 2000, saw "entrepreneurship as an integral aspect of our culture". Through his sustained commitment to supporting research and development, he showed that, as an entrepreneur himself, his main concern was the welfare of society as a whole.

Through *your* dedication to the welfare of society, *you* embody the *social* aspect of our culture in an exemplary fashion. In a time of internationalisation and globalisation, we need figures who remind us of the value of concepts such as justice, liberty, tolerance and charity.

In you, Your Excellency Mrs Mubarak, the Universität Stuttgart is able to honour a figure who is more than worthy of joining the ranks of its Honorary Citizens.

Egypt is a very fascinating country having a great potential for further developments in many respects. Egypt is playing a major role for stable political relationships in the Middle East Region. Let us altogether help Egypt to fulfill its role and to offer support as much as we can. I wish Her Excellency, Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak all the best and further success in her missions and projects. We, Universität Stuttgart feel honored having you as member of our university. Thank you very much for visiting us, we will support you wherever we can.

Thank you for having accepted the award of „Ehrenbürger“ of Universität Stuttgart.