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Lebanese family making the move to America

By **Jacque Crouse**
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As a child in Lebanon, Kamil Jbeily dreamed of coming to the United States. He achieved his dream and a whole lot more.

Thursday, the college chemistry professor and leader in science education from Austin spoke to a crowd of new citizens that included his 72-year-old mother, Chukrieh "Grace" Assaad Jbeily.

"Congratulations to you new citizens, and congratulations to my mother, who is also earning this honor today," he told a crowd of more than 200 new Americans who gathered in the Institute of Texan Cultures, where U.S. Magistrate Judge John Primomo presided over naturalization ceremonies.

His mother joined a growing group of family members including several of her nine children, her husband, grandchildren and daughters-in-law, who became American citizens after Kamil in 1987. Her daughter Mona is the latest Jbeily to embark on the road to citizenship. She received her resident alien card, commonly known as a "green card," just days before Thursday's ceremony.

The family matriarch became an American citizen at her own insistence.

"I did it because I love the United States," she said in Lebanese. "I want to live here with my children and grandchildren for as long as God is willing."

Kamil Jbeily, a chemistry professor at Austin Community College and director of Texas Regional Collaboratives for Excellence in Science Teaching at the University of Texas at Austin, came to Austin to gain his doctorate in the 1980s.

His wife, Sana; father, Assad; and several brothers have become citizens since.

On Thursday, his brother Jamil Jbeily and his son, Rabih, were in San Antonio to watch the naturalization.

"We live in Australia, but we are applying to become United States citizens," Rabih said.

Why?

Kamil Jbeily, a walking, talking advertisement for the American dream, said nowhere else in the world do people find such an abundance of rights and privileges.

"What makes America so great? The answer is deceptively simple," he told the gathering. **"Opportunity. Opportunity for everyone to grow, develop, achieve their goals and realize their dreams. Opportunity for all to enjoy liberty and justice. Opportunity to be protected by the law from oppression and illegitimate execution."**

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