



## *Class of 1962 Reunion*

[Home](#)   [Attendees](#)   [Recap](#)   [Photos](#)   [1961](#)   [1962](#)   [1963](#)   [Submit Info](#)

[Home](#) » [David Kurani](#)

### David Kurani

Was born in Virginia but grew up in Lebanon and spent most of his childhood years in Ras Beirut. His father, Dr. Habib Kurani, was the American University of Beirut's first Registrar and Chairman of the Education Department. His mother, Mrs. Esther Kurani, was co-founder of the AUB Folk Dance Festival.

While still a boy, David was enrolled in the 1956 Children's Art Seminars run by Maryette Charleton of the AUB Fine Arts Section where he was in contact with the progressive coaching of Prof. Charleton aided by Aida Moukhaiber and John Carswell. Later art classes came in ACS under Barbara Behrns-Yawkey and Ray Rheul; all of which preceded his university art training (AUB 1962 – 66) under Professor Arthur Frick, Tracy Montminy, Robert Gronendyke, Fay Frick, and John Carswell, with class visits by ceramist Jeremy Leech and artist David Hockney. During those years, he won several prestigious prizes in group shows, most notably first prize in Drawing in the Tri-University Art contest between AUB, LAU (then BCW) and ALBA in 1965.

In England at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School (1966-68) while concentrating in acting and directing, he also studied stage design, costuming,

and art in visits to the Royal Academy of the West and the Theatre Department of the University of Bristol. Many gallery and museum visits also exposed him to the grand tradition of English portraiture and landscape art, especially in watercolor.

On his return to Lebanon 1968 he taught both art and theatre at the American University of Beirut alongside former teachers Frick and Carswell as well as Joseph Tannous, Noha El Radi and Helen Khal. He was on the founding committee of the notable Open Air Shows (1969 – 71) inaugurated on the IC steps.

With the onset of the 16 year civil war in Lebanon, through which David sustained his teaching and theatrical activities, he found his own art practice growing even though the Department of Fine Arts at the university was disbanded (He was last Acting Chair when the department folded in 1976). For six years he worked tirelessly to reinstate fine arts as a department and in 2004 finally succeeded- the newly named Department of Fine Arts and Art History became official with David as Acting Chair and then Chair.

He has been featured in six solo exhibits and over 30 group art shows and art contests. He has directed over 20 stage productions and designed and/or produced over 40. Presently, he divides his art practice between stage design, watercolor landscapes and portraiture with occasional forays into surrealism, cartooning and filming.

He is married, has three sons, and lives in Lebanon

He is also a published playwright, book illustrator and composer.

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