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## **Prince Philip & Princess Ameerah Open Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Centre of Islamic Studies at the University of Cambridge**

### **£8 Million Endowment to Cambridge University From Alwaleed Foundation**

### **Prince Philip presents Princess Ameerah with an 800th Anniversary Medal for Outstanding Philanthropy on behalf of Prince Alwaleed**

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HH Princess Ameerah Al-Taweel Vice Chairwoman of Alwaleed Bin Talal Foundation that is chaired by HRH Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Bin Abdulaziz Alsaud and HRH Prince Philip Duke of Edinburgh who is Chancellor of the University of Cambridge and the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz, formally opened the HRH Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Centre of Islamic Studies at the University of Cambridge. The Princess was accompanied by a delegation from Alwaleed Bin Talal Foundation.

During the opening ceremony the Chancellor Prince Philip presented Her Highness with an 800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Medal for Outstanding Philanthropy that she accepted on behalf of Prince Alwaleed.

Speaking at the opening ceremony Her Highness Princess Ameerah said: “The mission of the Alwaleed Bin Talal Foundations, which His Royal Highness Prince Alwaleed and I co-chair, is to help address some of the most pressing issues of our time around the world. We believe in commitment without boundaries, regardless to religion, geography or economic status. Furthermore, we share a sincere ambition to build bridges among peoples, nations and faiths, as the world is filled with individuals and communities who share far more similarities than differences.”

Her Highness also added: “Establishing the Alwaleed Centres at the leading universities in the West AND in the East will facilitate dialogue among some of the world's leading scholars and foster greater mutual understanding. This is based on Prince Alwaleed’s passionate belief that every individual should strive



to bridge the gaps between faiths and cultures especially because of globalization and unavoidable interaction. Fortunately, across our Centers we find the young people leading the way. The Centre of Islamic Studies here in Cambridge organized a 12-week student visit of UK and Afghani students in Cairo. As you can imagine, at the beginning of the program, the Afghani students sat together on one side of the room, while the UK students sat on the other. By the end of the trip you could not separate the two groups from each other. The melting away of boundaries was visible in only 12 short weeks! It is this kind of interaction that promotes peace in the world.”

The two main programs of current research at the Centre consider Muslim identities in the UK and Europe, looking at notions of citizenship, ethnicity and religious values, and will explore how Islam and Muslims are represented in the British and European media. ‘These are new areas of research for Cambridge and yet they build on a bed-rock of expertise and scholarship in Islamic Studies,’ said the Centre’s Director Professor Suleiman.

The Centre also runs various public programs, such as public lectures, conferences and summer schools. Policy-makers and other public figures will be invited to become visiting fellows at the Centre and take part in its research programs.

In 2008, Alwaleed Bin Talal Foundation made an £8 million endowment to fund the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Centre of Islamic Studies at Cambridge University with a signing ceremony that was formalized at Buckingham Palace.

A second centre in the UK is based at the University of Edinburgh that also received an £8 million endowment from the Alwaleed Bin Talal Foundation and was inaugurated by the Duke of Edinburgh and Prince Alwaleed. The Foundation has also established centres in the US and the Arab world with a \$20 million donation to Harvard University to create the University-wide Islamic Studies Program, a \$20 million donation to Georgetown University to create the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, a \$20 million donation to the Louvre in support of its collection of Islamic art. In 2004 Prince Alwaleed also made a \$5 million donation to establish the Center for American Studies and Research (CASAR) at the American University in Beirut (AUB) and donated \$10 million to finance both the construction of the Humanities and Social Sciences (HUSS) building in the new campus of the American University in Cairo (AUC), and the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter, UK, received a €1 million endowment from the Prince in 2003.