

Gülen Institute's 'International Dallas' Day

Welcome

Hello, and welcome to the Gülen Institute Luncheon Forum. My name is Steve Eagar. I am an anchor with KDFW Fox 4 News and it is my pleasure to serve as your host today.

As a newsman, I see many headlines through the course of a day. They are of local, regional, statewide, national and international importance. The notion of our living in a “global village” is so much more true today than it was when that concept was popularized in 1964 by Marshall McLuhan. It is an interconnectedness that demands our attention. It is why I was intrigued by this forum’s topic: “International Dallas.”

And there is no better entity to guide us in this consideration today than the Gülen Institute. The Gülen Institute was established in 2007 as a non-profit organization and a joint initiative of the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work and the Institute of Interfaith Dialog.

The perspectives of the institute are inspired by the life and works of the distinguished contemporary scholar and civic leader Fethullah Gülen. A Turkish Muslim scholar, thinker, author, poet, opinion leader, and educational activist, who now resides in the U.S., Gülen has been recognized for his stances for interfaith and intercultural dialogue, for science, democracy and spirituality, and against violence, and turning religion into a political ideology. He is noted for his pro-democracy, pro-science, pro-dialogue and non-violence stances in critical junctures of the history of his society. In July 2008, Gülen was listed among the top 100 public intellectuals in the world by *Foreign Policy* magazine.

The Gülen Institute Luncheon Forum series is designed to bring together national and local leaders from both civic and governmental organizations to discuss important issues that affect the local and global communities, and to seek solutions.

Toward these goals, the Institute organizes academic and public events, such as symposia, conferences, luncheon forums and seminars; publishes scientific and popular works; provides student scholarships and faculty research grants; and supports visiting scholar programs, and cultural exchange trips.

Gülen’s “Turkey Dialogue Trips” gives U.S. leaders from areas of government, business, culture and religion the chance to interface with their counterparts in major cities in Turkey to, once again, encourage the interconnectedness of the human race.

As for the Luncheon Forums, previous speakers have included two former Secretaries of State, the Honorable Madeleine Albright, and the Honorable James Baker III; John Hofmeister, former CEO and President of Shell Oil’s U.S. operations; Dr. David

Leebron, president of Rice University; and the Honorable Paul Lynch, Consul General of the United Kingdom.

You will want to note that a future luncheon forum to be held in Houston will feature Kofi Annan, Nobel Prize winner and former Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Recognitions

Let me take a moment to recognize some distinguished guests:

- State representatives _____
- Metroplex mayors and council members _____

- County judges _____

- Presidents and deans of area colleges _____

- Business leaders of note _____

- Representative of Gülen Institute for the DFW Area -- Alp Yaradanakul [pronounced *Ya-ra-dana-kuul*] received his undergraduate degree from Bosphorus University, which today is a Turkish university, but was originally founded in 1876 as the very first American college established outside U.S. territories. He also holds a PhD in electrical engineering from Southern Methodist University. A researcher and educator, Dr. Yaradanakul has served on the faculty at Texas A&M University as an instructor of mechanical engineering, and for the last 7 years, his role has been as senior research scientist and instructor at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center's Physiology Department.

LUNCH

Introduction of Mayor Tom Leppert

In the true spirit of progress for our corner of the "global village," the city of Dallas, and the North Texas region, I can think of few who best exhibit the principles of the Gülen Institute than Dallas' own Mayor Tom Leppert.

Since taking office in 2007, Mayor Leppert and the City Council have pursued policies that have dramatically improved the quality of life in Dallas. Together, they have seen the crime rate drop by double digits, have attracted new business and new development to Dallas, and have bolstered the effectiveness of educating our youth. The Mayor's Intern Fellows program just completed its second year placing high school students from challenged schools in corporate offices for the summer. The Ready to Read pre-literacy program has reached thousands of children and the Mayor's Chesapeake Energy Scholarships continue to provide financial support for students. In fact, Mayor Leppert donates all of his mayoral salary to scholarships.

Additionally, with his background in construction, financial services and real estate, the Mayor has led a successful initiative to create green commercial and residential building codes, and has helped move Dallas closer to being one of the top sustainable cities in the country.

His work for the sake of an "International Dallas" are also noteworthy. The Mayor has pursued a strong trade agenda, leading delegations to China, Taiwan, Mexico and Canada.

A lifelong community volunteer, the Mayor has served numerous community groups and charitable organizations on both the local and national levels.

Mayor Leppert holds an M.B.A. with Distinction from Harvard Business School and graduated cum laude from Claremont McKenna College. He serves on the Executive Committee for the US Conference of Mayors, and recently served on the White House Fellows Commission.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Mayor Tom Leppert.

Q & A

Final Remarks

Thank you, Mayor Leppert. And may I say a word of thanks, too, to the Gülen Institute for making this interesting forum and nourishing lunch possible.