

Auburn Alumnus Endows Study Abroad Scholarship

Auburn alumnus Paul Kardous recently donated to the Office of International Programs for an annual \$1,000 study abroad scholarship. The Mr. Kal Kardous & Dr. Marie-Claire Marroum Kardous Endowed Study Abroad scholarship will be awarded for the first time in the summer.

Currently an architectural designer specializing in urban planning and writing as an Architect in New York, Kardous earned his Bachelor's of Architecture from Auburn's College of Architecture, Design & Construction in 2005. He served as Online Editor of the Auburn Plainsman from 1998-2003 before entering the Rural Studio program for his thesis and finding his way to London.

While discussing what might have inspired such generosity, Kardous spoke of his parents after whom the scholarship is named, his fondness for Auburn and his own transformative experiences abroad.

"When we were signing the papers to make everything official, they called it the Paul Kardous Scholarship, and I said whoa, that doesn't sound right," he said. "I didn't want it to be about me, and then I thought about naming it after my parents because they kind of instilled the travel bug in me. They always tried to expose me to new cultures and new people and always encouraged me to be inquisitive about the world around me. So, this was a way, a very small way, to sort of thank them."

Kardous studied abroad as both an undergraduate and graduate student in Auburn's College of Architecture Design and Construction, and his experiences were such that he is compelled to share them by encouraging others to travel abroad. His first excursion through Europe was fairly standard, albeit enlightening, and went as planned, but his second stint during grad school was truly life altering.

"I did a 9-week study abroad program with CADC the first time," he said. "We traveled all over Europe: Amsterdam, Paris, Lyon, Barcelona, Rome, Venice, Verona, Florence, Vienna, Prague, Berlin, Copenhagen, and some other places. I had tons of fun and learned an incredible amount. It made me want to travel more and live overseas and experience more new things. So later when I did the Rural Studio program, I chose to go to London for my second year. It was meant to be a year, but I ended up staying and working in London for 7 and a half years."

While he doesn't believe every student who travels abroad will eventually live overseas, given his own experience, he does appreciate the possibility. Kardous touched on such possibilities when he discussed why studying and traveling in new places is so important.

"It opens your eyes to different people and different cultures, and just what's out there in the world to experience," he explained. "I think a lot of Auburn people just kind of graduate and end up in Birmingham, Houston, or Atlanta – not that that's a bad thing at all. But then people who study abroad may graduate and be more likely to think, why don't I apply for something

overseas? Even if they don't work abroad, they will have a more world-oriented perspective, have more knowledge of what is out there."

When discussing what he hopes students gain from learning abroad, however, it seems Kardous not only values how travel broadens horizons, but also how it invites collaborative and adaptive growth. "People do things different ways in different places," he shared. "And if someone studies abroad, maybe they can bring things back to Auburn, to Alabama, to America, and maybe make things better by bringing along the knowledge they gained overseas."