



MY JERUSALEM

SIMON **KOUBA**

Born in Jerusalem in 1961, Simon Kouba grew up in the Old City and graduated from the Collège des Frères in 1978. He was passionate about his city, always becoming a co-leader of the various groups he attended for culture and sports, such as the youth club of the Melkite Church and the school basketball team. Simon obtained his MS in architecture at the Metsovion National Polytechnic University of Athens, Greece, where he was active in the Palestinian student union and local Greek cultural centers. He returned home a few weeks before the start of the first Intifada and was given the chance to work at the YMCA, where he felt at home, given that he had been a member since his youth.

In 1992, having mastered the very difficult licensing process in the Jerusalem Municipality, Simon opened an architectural office that aims to facilitate the obtaining of building licenses for Jerusalemites who are frequently denied these permits. His office has been able to upgrade the level of architecture in the city, and Simon introduced the idea of housing projects, building the first such project in East Jerusalem. He has since provided many community housing units that are ideal for young couples. One of the leading architects in the city today, he is responsible for several important strategic projects.

Simon is involved as a volunteer in all sectors of Jerusalem, giving his utmost attention to culture, sports, and empowering Palestinian youth. He was among the first local businessmen to advocate giving donations to local organizations, and he currently supports the Collège des Frères, the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music, and the YMCA, where he is the board chairperson. He has been elected twice to the executive committee of the World Alliance and is now running for vice president.

Building Jerusalem is the logo of Simon's company. He believes that this starts with building the souls and spirits of the people, then proceeds to stones and structures, and returns again to souls and spirits. His favorite saying? "I can't tolerate a one-way ticket for youth. You are here to get old in your country!"

Simon is married to Marlene and is the proud father of four.