



#INTHEAIREVERYWHERE



A large graphic with a light beige background. On the left is a portrait of Issa Baluch, a man with a shaved head, wearing a dark suit, a light blue shirt, and a patterned tie. He is also wearing a blue lanyard with 'Azyra' and 'EMT' logos. To the right of the portrait, the text 'WHY ISSA BALUCH INTO TIACA HALL OF FAME MATTERS' is written in large, bold, blue, sans-serif capital letters. The entire graphic is framed by a thick blue border at the bottom.

Issa Baluch is being honored this week in Budapest, Hungary. Mr. Baluch is being inducted into The International Air Cargo Association (TIACA) Hall of Fame.

“I am honored, humbled,” Issa said, “and mighty grateful for this recognition.

“Family and friends are equally joyed and to me this is a testament to the many teams and individuals that have worked side by side with me to excel, be it in the logistics world, or in Corporate Social Responsibility,” Issa concluded.



Ram Menen



Bill Boesch



Jacques Ancher



Robert Arendal



Richard Malkin

Twenty Two Years Of Hall Of Fame

TIACA has been naming people into their Hall of Fame now for 22 years.

But to our mind, 2019 can be remembered as exceptional.

Issa will join an honor roll that includes Jacques Ancher, Bill Boesch, Ram Menen, Richard Malkin and Robert Arendal.

Bob Arendal, it can be remembered, was the first person in the modern era to be named to the Hall of Fame in 1997.

The award will be presented at a dinner in Budapest at 1900 Hours Wednesday November 20th.

Sarah Baluch Accepting

Issa who is overwhelmingly busy these days (keep reading) has asked his daughter Sarah (right) to accept the award on his behalf.

Sarah is apropos, we think.

She is smart and beautiful and brings a certain air of lyrical elegance to the fore.



Like Father Like Daughter

“Sarah is a dedicated teacher of music at her own school for children in Dubai called Kindermusik,” Issa said

“Her objectives are quite similar to mine, in similar angles, except she is charged with developing young minds starting from utero to 8 years of age – in cognitive & language development, using the power of music.

“Sarah’s 20 years of active engagement in teaching music, whether voice, instruments such as piano, flute, viola, violin and trumpet just to name a few, are revealing.

“The transfer & development of social skills & bonding features through music can be helpful in renewing the art of talking and listening abilities that are becoming more demanding in today’s social and family settings,” Issa notes.

Hall Of Fame Awaits First Woman

Sarah’s presence front and center at a TIACA event brings to mind that across 22 years, since the aforementioned first award in 1997, no woman in air cargo has been invited into The Hall of Fame.

The World of Issa Baluch

We caught up with Issa last weekend and asked him what was on his mind.

As usual, he was upfront and full of ideas.

“Whether agribusiness, aqua-culture or developing of commercial zones in Somalia, the new generation needs to understand the relevance of the logistics sector.

“Farms grow produce, but we move it to consumer markets.

“The youth of today think clicking is enough and things move from there onwards.

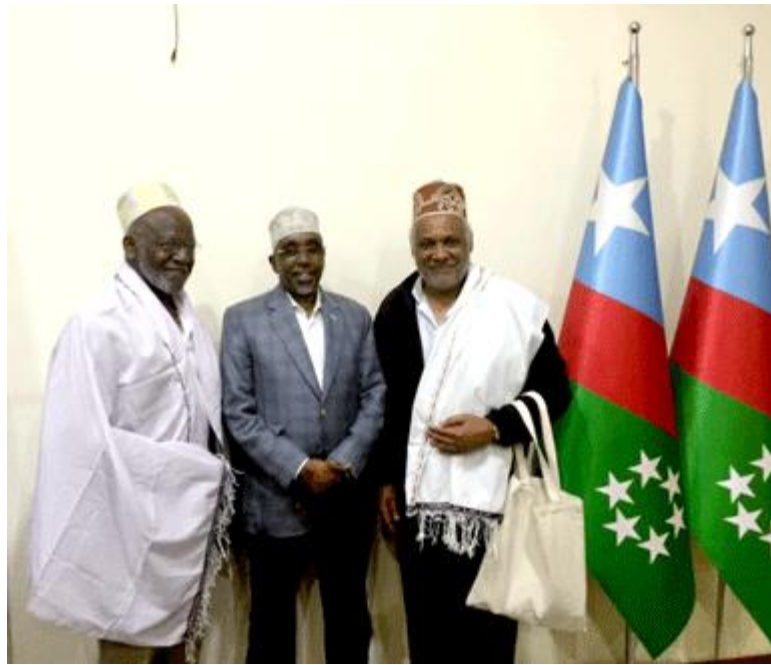
“My messaging – the niche I found in my life, is simply to convey to this generation across many frontiers that D-printing, robotics, artificial intelligence etc., do not at this time, initiate beaming.

“As long as man is unable to beam cargo from one location to another – we still have to move goods and material physically.

“So our sector of logistics will continue as the “wheels of commerce.”

“Easy to understand,” Issa smiles, “but difficult to implement.

“These days because of my teaching and crossing many sectors in my travels to Africa and around the world I now have many followers – students, kids, interns that also have become friends.



From left to right—Professor Wesley Harris, Charles Stark Draper Professor and Head, Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; The Hon. Sharif Hassan Sheik Aden, President of the South West State of Somalia and Issa Baluch, Senior Advanced Leadership Fellow at Harvard University, Chairman, FIATA Logistics Academy.

Training Program In Somalia

“My latest project in affiliation with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) is to train Somali refugees based in Kenya—in preparation for them to head back and resettle in their country Somalia.

“Designated commercial zones are being planned and am currently assisting by make frequent trips to that country.”

Issa Out Of Africa

Issa Baluch was born in 1952 in East Africa.

Ethnically of Omani and African mix, Baluch left East Africa in the 1970s and took up residency in Dubai, where he launched his career as a tally clerk at the Swedish-owned Gulf Agency Company in 1973.

He was general manager of the supply chain department where he helped initiate sea-air multimodal transport between Asia, Europe, and North America before he established his own business Swift Group in 1989.

A Vision Ahead of Time

The Issa Baluch vision was to take advantage of the African market –a place he still considered home –and his position in Dubai gave Baluch a great advantage positioning his

firm at the midway point between Asia and Africa.

The sea-air multimodal transportation method was designed so that goods from Asia could be shipped by sea to Dubai, and then transferred by air to West African countries, saving time and money.

Business grew very fast in part due to Dubai's pro-business government, free seaports, and open skies.

Over time, Mr. Baluch began adding value through light assembly and packaging.

Swift Sold To Barloworld

By 2008, when Issa sold Swift Group to South African-owned Barloworld Logistics and retired, Swift Group had expanded to 24 countries –16 in Africa –and 49 branches.

Mr. Baluch had also among other things served as the founding President of the first Freight Logistics Association formed on the Arabian Gulf Peninsula in Dubai, the National Association of Freight Logistics (NAFL).



Issa enjoying an evening in a Cape Town winery with FIATA colleague, Keshav Tanna.



FIATA Past President Babar Badat in deep conversation with Issa.

Links Beyond The Golf Course

“In 2011 after having moved to North Carolina and a relaxed retirement and frankly tiring of playing golf every day, I was accepted by Harvard University to become a Fellow in their new program, called Advanced Leadership Initiative (ALI).

“The following year, I became a senior Fellow and Associate of Science, Technology, and Globalization at The Harvard Kennedy School,” Issa said.

“At present, I am considered as a visiting Senior Fellow.

“Harvard encourages all ALI Fellows to initiate a social impact project, and so, as one of the investors in a 10,000-hectare farm (Africa Atlantic Farms) on the Afram plains alongside Lake Volta (the world’s largest water reservoir) in Ghana, West Africa, we studied the prospects of planting a Knowledge Center as a depository of skills and experiences gained from the commercial farm and the African Agribusiness Knowledge and Innovation Leadership Initiative (AKILI) was born.”

How To Spell Wisdom?

It is not coincidental in this project for Africa that “AKILI” is the Swahili word for wisdom.

“Sharing knowledge and wisdom lies at the heart of our mission,” Issa Baluch said.

Doing The Most Good

“This project,” Issa explains, “picked up momentum and we formally launched the Africa Agribusiness Knowledge Centres (AAKC), where I was appointed Chairman.

“The effort, one of a kind was supported by Harvard Kennedy School’s Science, Technology, and Globalization Project Department, MIT, Masdar Institute of Abu Dhabi, and most recently, the D.C.-based Corporate Council on Africa (CCA).”



Issa Baluch, (second from right) with his African forwarder colleagues at the FIATA World Congress in Dublin, October 2016.

Master Plan For Progress

“A master plan developed via a charrette, (a brainstorming technique from the early 1800s) was completed by MIT.

“The complete project design includes an airport, logistics and cool chain centers, and the AAKC facility, among others.

“A 27-course curriculum was created to offer youth, farm workers, and all participants up-to-the-minute technology to improve farm production.

“My own contribution is logistics and work experience in Africa, particularly in distribution—the entire project is driven from a demand angle and food security is a big ticket item locally, regionally, and internationally.

“The stakeholders of this project are committed to a vision of scaling this model across the continent of Africa.”

Call For Help Goes Continental

In 2015 as the pilot program at the Africa Atlantic farm in Ghana neared completion, word spread of the project to train small-scale farmers for commercial success. The project excited representatives from several African countries, who attempted to persuade Baluch to establish AKILI divisions in their country.

Free Trade Agreement Out of Africa

“The Tripartite Free Trade Area Agreement (TFTA), has brought together member and partner states of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the East African Community (EAC),” Issa said.

“The Southern African Development Community (SADC)[1], was signed in Sharm-el-Sheikh, Egypt, on June 10, 2015, by representatives of most of the 26 countries covered by the deal.

“Today the 26 countries represent 48 percent of the African Union membership, 51 percent of continental GDP, and a combined population of 632 million.

“If the TFTA countries were one country, it would be the thirteenth largest economy in the world.”

Hope & Change

Issa Baluch brightens considerably when he declares:

“Innovation needs to be identified and youth must be served.

“For example, FIATA amongst other efforts, most recently conducted their biggest annual global event, the FIATA World Congress in Cape Town this year.

“So part of the challenge is to uncover and empower the intellect out there and work to

coordinate talent anywhere in the world for the good of everyone's future to get things done. "It's all hands on deck for the future now," Issa Baluch declared.



The Baluch clan, a true rainbow family spread across the globe: two kids in Dubai, one in Australia, the remainder in the U.S. Front row, wife Shelley holding daughter Aviya, clan chief Issa, and daughter Tirzah. Second Row, daughter Vashti holding granddaughter Aaliyah and daughter Iman. Last Row, son-in-law Jassim, daughter Sarah and sons, Zein, Arif and Adam. Missing in photo is son Faisal.

FIATA Baluch

Finally, it should be mentioned that Issa serves on the Board of Directors of the International Federation of Freight Forwarders' Associations (FIATA), where he was president from 2003 to 2005.

Issa has authored two books on transport logistics namely, "*Transport Logistics: Past, Present and Predictions*", and "*Transport Logistics: The Wheel of Commerce*".

Issa Baluch is truly a great man; a brilliant, successful, decent human being who not only has made it in the business and social world but also with his wife Shelley has shepherded nine children into the next generation.

Congratulations, Issa.

Every good wish to you, always.

Geoffrey

