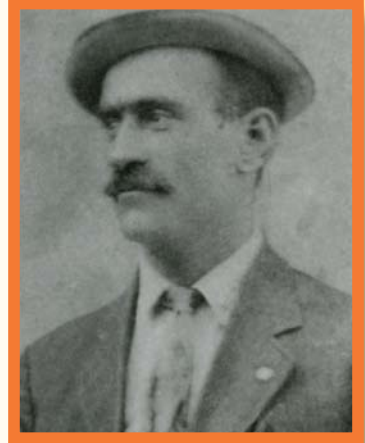


# Compassion Leads to Friendship

By Richard Awid

Dr. Lila Fahlman passed away on May 13, 2006. Her father Sied Ameen Ganam Kadri came to Canada in 1901 from present-day Lebanon, and she was always fond of telling stories about him.

One day I was sitting with Lila at a restaurant and we started to tell stories about our families. One she remembered quite vividly showed her father's compassion even toward his competitors. In the 1930's during the Depression, Sied was the owner of a grocery store in a small Saskatchewan town. Competition for sales was very tough. About a block away was another grocery store, a little smaller and older. By the end of his first week as owner of his store Sied decided to go and see his competitor, an elderly Jewish woman.



*Mr. Said Ganam*

He introduced himself to his new neighbour but didn't realize at first that the store was not open because it was Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, when work is prohibited. However, she invited him in and offered him a chair and tea. A conversation took place, and Sied soon noticed that it was a little chilly in the store. He walked over to the stove and realized it was ice-cold, also due to the Jewish prohibition against lighting a fire on the Sabbath. Without saying a word he gathered some kindling and newspaper, lit a fire and put some left-over food into a pot to warm up. The heat soon filled the room and the woman thanked Sied for what he had done. He came to know her well and talked to her on many occasions.

When he returned home that day he told his son Saleem that in the future he must go to the lady's store and help her out in any way he could. Sied was undoubtedly a firm believer that compassion should always be shown to others.