

## Ex-Constitutional Council head Mallat dies

By The Daily Star

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BEIRUT: The former head of the Constitutional Council, Wajdi Mallat, has passed away at the age of 90, following a life dedicated to the law and public service.

Mallat headed the newly created Constitutional Council between 1994 and 1997, but resigned over his convictions the body wasn't able to halt meddling in parliamentary elections.

In a rare television interview, he commented his decision by saying "the Constitutional Council came to Lebanon 25 years later before its time."

Originating from Baabda, Mallat was born on November 22, 1919 to a leading Arab poet, Chibli Mallat, while his mother Marie Checrallah came from a family of physicians. Another relative, Tamer Mallat, was a celebrated Ottoman-era poet and judge.

The Jesuit-educated Mallat obtained an advanced degree in Latin and a Masters in Law from Universite Saint-Joseph. In 1964, Mallat was appointed social affairs minister by President Charles Helou, only to resign one year later in protest over the arbitrary dismissal of leading judges under the pretext of combating corruption.

Mallat was elected to head the Beirut Bar Association in 1972, and helped found the first Arab organization for human rights two years later

During his later years, he published several books, including a reference compendium on the impact of his father on contemporary Arab poetry, "The Poet of the Cedars: School of National Identity."

Last year, Mallat published a collection of hitherto unknown poetry by his grand uncle Tamer, including poems to Nasib Jumblatt, a Mount Lebanon political leader in the second half of the 19th century.

Mallat remained extremely private through his career as jurist, man of letters, and politician. During his tenure as the most powerful judge in the country, he refused all invitations to social functions. – **The Daily Star**