

INTERVIEW WITH ALL-STARS COLLEGE STUDENT LUBNA AHMAD

By Ayesha Ali

Lubna Ahmed was among the top 20 USA TODAY 2004 College Academic All-Stars students.

She is majoring in Biomedical engineering at Arizona State University. Her GPA is 4.0 A high school valedictorian at 16, Lubna invented and has applied for a patent on a non-invasive breath sensor for medical applications such as diabetes management. She has received Goldwater Scholarship, the nation's highest undergraduate award in science, mathematics and engineering. She is also a vice president, Biomedical Engineering Society; mosque volunteer and Arthritis Foundation volunteer.

Lubna resides in Chandler, Arizona with her parents (Jalil Ahmed and Seema Munir, M.D.) and three siblings. She is a Muhajabah (one who wears hijab).

Q What were your feelings upon receiving this recognition from USA Today?

When USA Today notified me of the recognition that I was selected to receive, I was amazed and thrilled. I had imagined they contacted me only to request more information or clarification to my application, but it was actually to notify me of the award that I was receiving. I was truly honored to have the privilege of receiving such recognition. I am very thankful and I owe my gratitude to my family for all their support in my life, my professors and colleagues who helped me to reach my academic success, and most importantly to Allah (SWT) who has been the cause of my success and happiness.

Q What role does religion play in your life and how has it helped you on your path and goals?

I strongly feel that religion is an important aspect of life. If I had to identify the two driving forces in my life, it is, without doubt, my family and my faith. I believe that Allah is the Overseer of all things and events, and to Him belongs all the praise of our success

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in life. There are many qualities of Islam that have helped me to develop a positive and close relationship with Allah. Prayer has been one key aspect through which I am able to connect with Him and it has been the inspiration for me as I face new challenges and frontiers in my life.

Q What projects and activities are you involved in?

The hijab was almost like the next step in me reaching the next degree of Iman (Faith). It was a gradual process and I always had the desire to wear the hijab. No one pressured me or forced me into it.

I am a third year student at Arizona State University majoring in Biomedical Engineering. I am the Vice President of the Biomedical Engineering Society at ASU where I also am involved in research. Here, I designed and created a medical device, a non-invasive breath sensor, for the treatment and management of patients with diabetes. It is currently in testing right now and I hope to perfect it as a tool of technology designed to help people with medical ailments. Using academics as my foundation, I designed a curriculum for underprivileged high school girls to help foster an understanding and



appreciation for math and science through the use of robotic engineering. I also play the piano and take occasional opportunities to teach others.

Q What factors helped you to decide this choice of projects and activities?

The reasons for choosing to pursue these activities are such to help build a bridge between the knowledge of science and serving the community. I undertook the responsibility of organizing the MSA conference is to get an opportunity to interact with other Muslims and directly serve the Muslim society. As a teacher for several years at a weekend Islamic school gave me the background

to get involved in this project. Secondly, I wished to use my knowledge of science to help others, hence developing the medical device and serving as a volunteer in for high school students helped me to build that connection. Also, involving in these secular activities as a Muslim helped me to expose and educate others to Islam.

Q When did you start practicing hijab and what were your feelings at the time?

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