Adawia A. Alousi, PhD

Dr. Adawia Amina Alousi was born in Baghdad, Iraq in 1931 into a tight-knit family who valued education. She was the youngest girl in a family of seven children which included 3 sisters and 3 brothers. Her father Amin Alousi was a hydraulic engineer by trade and insisted each child, regardless of sex, receive a college education. Prior to his death he left explicit instructions to the oldest male, Adawia's brother Majid, that he ensure each of his youngest siblings attend and graduate from college before marrying; a request which was honored. Adawia gravitated toward science and graduated from University of Baghdad with a degree in pharmacology. In 1958, Adawia's brother Majid (now a physician attending Harvard School of Public Health on scholarship) respecting the wishes of his late father, arranged for and supported Adawia to come for advanced studies in the United States. She graduated with a Master's Degree from the University of Michigan in 1959 and then entered a PhD program in pharmacology from State University of New York (SUNY). Upon graduation from SUNY she was a post-doctoral fellow at Harvard Medical School. Upon completion of her studies she took a job as a research scientist in a pharmaceutical company, Sterling-Winthrop Research Institute in New York, where she would progress to the lead scientist developing a class of cardiac drugs, referred to as inotropes, which work to increase contractility of the heart muscle in patients with congestive heart failure. The aim of this work was to advance the limited treatment that these patients had through discovery of potent, non-toxic, orally effective drugs that would serve to increase heart contractility without detrimental effects. Her research was highly praised and reflected in the body of papers in esteemed medical journals including the *New England Journal of Medicine, Circulation, and American Journal of Physiology*. She was the lead scientist in the development of the drug Milrinone which was the first drug in its class to be FDA approved in the early 1980's; this was such a significant accomplishment that it was highlighted on the national news. Adawia was recognized in 1986 with a woman of achievement award from New York City's chapter of the YWCA.

Dr. Alousi was a leader in an era when very few women were recognized for their accomplishments, let alone a foreign-born Arab woman. She was a vocal proponent that women in science receive recognition for their work in an era when male colleagues would often take the credit. She was a firm believer in equal pay for equal work, and made sure that her contributions were recognized and awarded. While she devoted her life to her research, seeing her life as one dimensional would miss the true beauty in which she lived her life. She was a second mother to her 15 nieces and nephews, and a second grandmother to their children; always generous in her time and money to ensure they were able to pursue their life's passions. She loved to travel and was often accompanied on her journeys with her "*sisters in science",* life- long friends she met while studying at SUNY and Harvard. Other times she would take one of her nieces and instill in them the excitement of meeting new people, cultures and arts. Her travels took her throughout Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East (including her life changing trip to Mecca and her never forgotten home of Baghdad, Iraq). She was a supporter of local artists and the arts and music in the communities she resided. She loved music, especially classical and opera as well as the French singer, Edith Piaf. She was an avid collector of art and the walls of her home were adorned with her favorite Native American, Japanese and African artists along with modern works of Miro. She built her first home in the forest on the outskirts of Albany, New York where she could

often be found tending to her garden, chopping her own firewood or taking long hikes in the woods. She loved to entertain and was a wonderful cook, often making elaborate French or Arabic meals.

Upon retiring from Sterling-Winthrop (which was acquired by Eastman Kodak) she took appointments at Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla, California and the Hopkins Marine Station of Stanford in Pacific Grove, California. While at the Hopkins Marine Station, she would apply her expertise in sodium-potassium channels and calcium induced cellular functions acquired through years of human cardiac research to understanding these preserved systems in invertebrate species. While at Hopkins Marine Station she built her home in Carmel, CA where she would spend her final years surrounded by her passions; her nieces and nephews, her art, her garden and the teachings of Islam. She loved quiet mornings in her home with the only sounds being the Downey Woodpeckers outside and afternoons tending to her rose and vegetable garden along with a small orchard of lemon trees. Adawia passed away from complications of Parkinson's Disease in her home in Carmel, CA on December 27th, 2010.

It is the wish of the Adawia Alousi trust that her money be devoted to carrying on the accomplishments of this remarkable woman. In a time when self-appointed experts (usually male) attempt to define the face of the modern Muslim woman, Dr. Alousi's life reminds us it is only Muslim women who can speak about their lives, careers and choices with true authority. She would be honored to welcome you into the sisterhood of Scientists (and other STEM careers) and would remind you to be much more; be curious, be learned, be passionate, be vocal and be generous. If you wish to be considered as an Adawia Alousi scholar, please submit a short essay describing your career, educational and life aspirations.