

Fall 2014

Fall 2014, UNH Alumni Around the World Focus on international alumni

Meryem Ray

University of New Hampshire, Durham

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholars.unh.edu/international_news

Recommended Citation

Ray, Meryem, "Fall 2014, UNH Alumni Around the World Focus on international alumni" (2014). *International Educator: the Newsletter of the UNH Global Engagement Editorial Board*. 193.
https://scholars.unh.edu/international_news/193

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Global Education Center at University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in UNH International Educator Newsletter by an authorized administrator of University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository. For more information, please contact nicole.hentz@unh.edu.

University of
New Hampshire[current issue](#)[archive](#)[Search](#)

International Educator

The Newsletter of UNH Global Engagement

Fall 2014

UNH ALUMNI AROUND THE WORLD *FOCUS ON INTERNATIONAL ALUMNI*

[Back to index page](#)[Subscribe](#)[Center for International
Education Home](#)

Contributed by Meryem Ray '08 (Communication)

Mohamed El Marzouki and Meryem Ray are two Moroccan students who graduated in May 2008 with BAs in Communication. They came to the United States under the auspices of the Partnership for Learning Undergraduate Studies (PLUS) program. This program was administered by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The program aimed at creating cultural and academic exchange to enhance the reciprocal understanding between people of the U.S. and people of North Africa, Middle East, and South Asia. Delegate associations in many countries of those regions carefully selected students and granted them scholarships to obtain their Bachelor's degrees in different majors from different universities across the U.S. Below is an update from Meryem.



Mohamed El Marzouki and Meryem Ray

Mohamed and I met on August 22nd, 2008 and were the only Moroccan students at the University of New Hampshire. We shared a lot of commonalities like culture (Moroccan), our major (Communication), our UNH advisor (Dr. Patrick Daley who designed the same courses for us), our birth date (April 14th), the number of siblings (three), our hometown (Fes), and our ambition (PhD and the great job of being a University professor).

After the first year, despite our very different personalities and character, we became very good friends and helped each other excel academically. We realized that we were in love only after we went back to Morocco. Unfortunately, our togetherness did not last long, as Mohamed had to go to England for his Master's degree in

Communication from Goldsmiths, University of London. I stayed in Morocco and worked as a teacher at the Cambridge International Center in Tangier. Then I moved to Fes to work as a teacher of English at the American Language Center and as a Housing Coordinator at the Arabic Language Institute in Fes for the following year.

By the end of 2009, Mohamed got his Master's with distinction and managed to get a Lecturer position at Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco. I applied to the International Studies and Diplomacy master's program at the same university and got accepted. After receiving my letter of admission, he talked to his family and they all came to ask for my hand.

Both families were happy to know each other and finally the reunion happened. We got married on August 13th, 2010, and I started school on the 27th of the same month. We had our wedding after about one year and many friends from New Hampshire

managed to come, including Leila Paje-Manalo, the Director of the Office of International Students and Scholars, and her family. It was a very happy celebration, one that we still love to share with new friends through pictures, stories, and videos.

A year and a half later, our little prince, Jad, arrived to make us the happiest parents ever. I wrote my Master's thesis when he was born, and graduated when he was five months old. As soon as I graduated, we packed and travelled back to the United States for Mohamed's Ph.D. in Communication at Indiana University. Mohamed is now Editorial Assistant of the International Communication Association's flagship journal, *Communication Culture and Critique*. As for me, besides taking care of little Jad, I am preparing to apply for a Ph.D. next year in the Political Science Department as well as a program in the Law Department.

We like Bloomington; however, we do not think that anybody who visits Durham and UNH will ever like other places better. We feel very nostalgic every time we remember UNH and hope to visit as soon as we can. We made the best friends there, met each other there, and have the sweetest memories with people and places there. Besides, our undergraduate years spent in New Hampshire were the happiest and most carefree years of our lives. We can never thank our professors, friends, and OISS staff enough for the support and help they have always and are still offering. We would love to thank Leila Paje-Manalo and our professors, Dr. Beverly James, Dr. Sheila McNamee, Dr. Patrick Daley, and Dr. John Lannamann.



PLUS students (l. to r.) Mohamed El Marzouki (Morocco), Meryem Ray (Morocco), Sharmistha Mitra (India), Leila Paje-Manalo (center), Mohammad Nazmul Islam (Bangladesh), Rakska Kini (India), Rami Abo Zarad (Syria)

