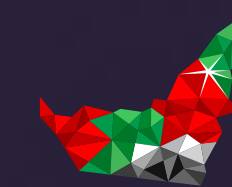


CELEBRATING WOMEN OF DISTINCTION IN THE UAE

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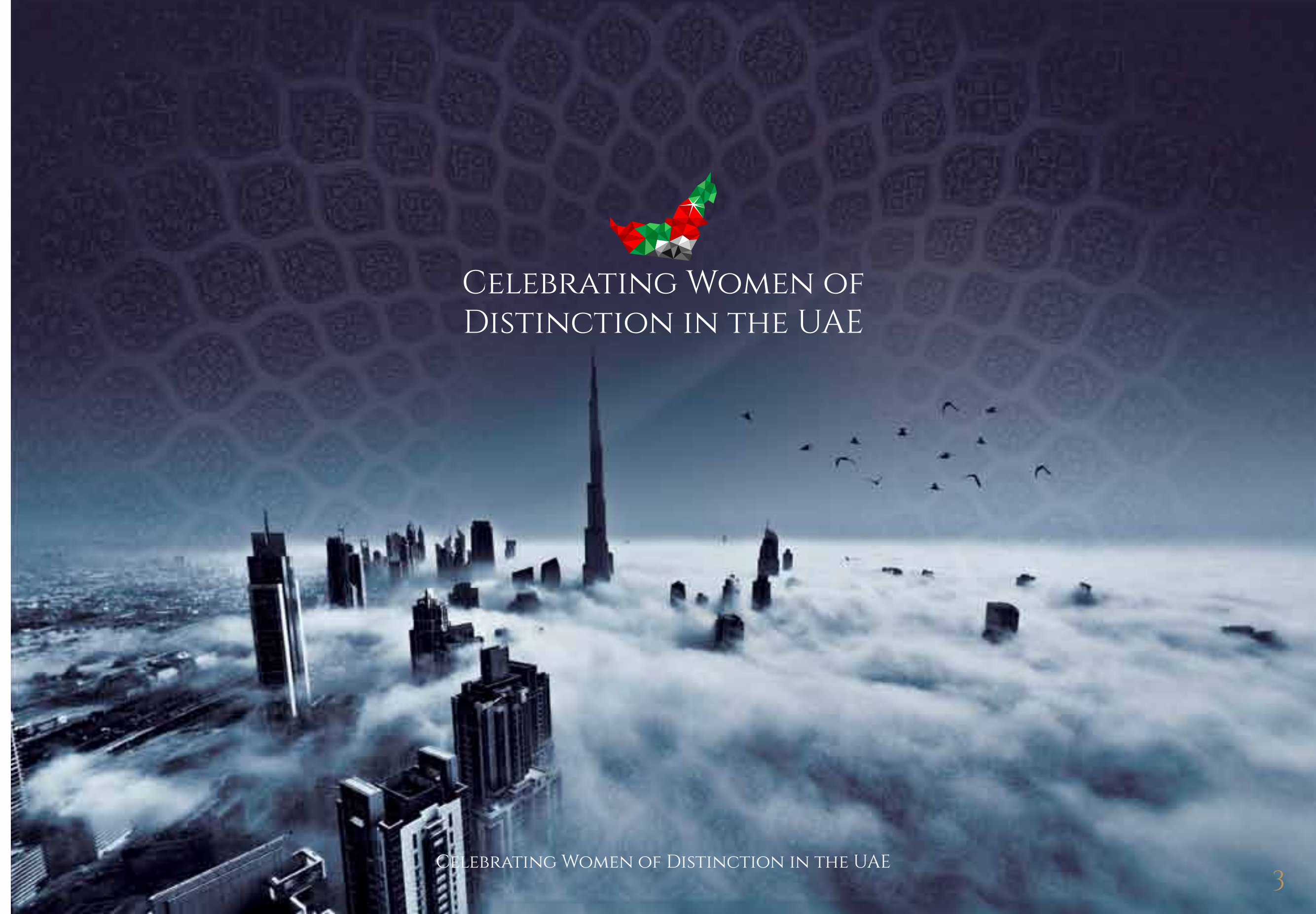
A SPECIAL TRIBUTE PUBLICATION INDEPENDENTLY PRODUCED
IN HONOUR OF THE WOMEN OF DISTINCTION IN THE UAE

A BROOKLANDS NEW MEDIA SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE PUBLICATION



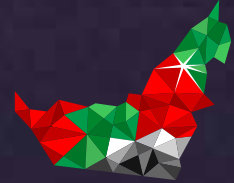
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THE LEADERS OF THE UAE HAVE MADE GENDER EQUALITY A PRIORITY SINCE THE COUNTRY'S INDEPENDENCE IN 1971. TODAY, GIRLS HAVE ACCESS TO EXCELLENT SCHOOLS, WOMEN CAN STUDY A VARIETY OF SUBJECTS AT UNIVERSITY, AND GO ON TO SATISFYING CAREERS IN A WIDE RANGE OF FIELDS. WOMEN IN THE UAE HAVE BECOME GOVERNMENT MINISTERS, CEOs AND SCIENTISTS. FEW COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD HAVE DONE SO MUCH FOR WOMEN IN SUCH A SHORT TIME, AND THE IMPRESSIVE BIOGRAPHIES IN THIS VOLUME ATTEST TO THAT FACT.

The most influential woman in the nation's recent history is Her Highness Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak, who was married to the founder of the UAE: the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan. As chairperson of the General Women's Union, Sheikha Fatima is a champion of women's rights and is dedicated to tackling issues that affect women and children, and supporting the empowerment of women through various initiatives.

One of the most prominent women in Emirati politics is Sheikha Lubna Al Qasimi who is the minister of state for tolerance. She is the country's first female minister and the first Emirati to win the Clinton Global Citizen Award, which she received in 2015. Other leading female political figures include Reem Al Hashimy, Noura Al Kaabi and Amal Al Qubaisi, all of whom hold high-ranking positions and have made valuable contributions to the UAE's socio-economic development.

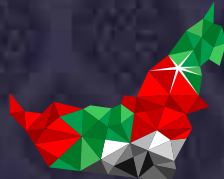
Among the UAE's most successful businesswomen are TECOM Group's CEO Dr Amina Al Rustamani, property management and marketing expert Zainab Mohammed, construction industry leader Fatima Al Jaber, real estate investment manager Majida Ali

Rashid and highly acclaimed businesswoman Raja Al Gurg. The achievements of these women have been recognised locally and internationally.

The UAE's first female fighter pilot, Mariam Al Mansouri, has received worldwide acclaim for her groundbreaking accomplishments. The UAE also boasts a number of world-class sportswomen, including Olympians Sheikha Maitha bint Mohammed Al Maktoum and Sheikha Latifa bint Ahmed Al Maktoum, who competed in Beijing in 2008 in taekwondo and show-jumping, respectively.

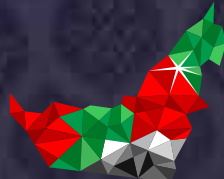
This independently produced, commemorative publication celebrates the contributions of visionary and courageous women who have achieved prominence in such fields as culture, politics and business. Each one of their stories is unique, but they all share the qualities of persistence, intelligence and deep love of their country and fellow Emiratis. These women serve as excellent role models for the next generation, and as sources of inspiration for all.





CELEBRATING WOMEN OF DISTINCTION IN THE UAE

- 01** MOTHER OF THE NATION:
HER HIGHNESS SHEIKHA FATIMA BINT MUBARAK
- 02** FORMER MINISTER OF TOLERANCE:
SHEIKHA LUBNA AL QASIMI
- 03** MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION:
REEM AL HASHIMY
- 04** MINISTER OF CULTURE AND KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT:
NOURA AL KAABI
- 05** PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL NATIONAL COUNCIL:
DR AMAL AL QUBAISI



CELEBRATING WOMEN OF DISTINCTION IN THE UAE

- 06** FORMER TECOM GROUP CEO:
DR AMINA AL RUSTAMANI
- 07** CEO PROPERTY MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING,
WASL PROPERTIES: ZAINAB MOHAMMED
- 08** AL JABER GROUP CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER:
FATIMA AL JABER
- 09** ASSISTANT DIRECTOR GENERAL OF DUBAI LAND DEPARTMENT:
MAJIDA ALI RASHID
- 10** EASA SALEH AL GURG GROUP MANAGING DIRECTOR:
RAJA AL GURG



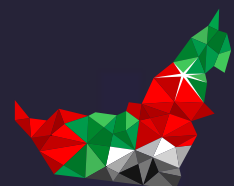
CELEBRATING WOMEN OF DISTINCTION IN THE UAE

- 11** AIR FORCE FIGHTER PILOT:
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- 12** OLYMPIC MARTIAL ARTIST AND POLO PLAYER:
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DR MARYAM MATAR
- 21** LEADING PLASTIC SURGEON: DR BUTHAINAH AL SHUNNAR
- 22** EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AFFAIRS,
EXECUTIVE AFFAIRS AUTHORITY: REEM YOUSIF AL SHEMARI



CELEBRATING WOMEN OF
DISTINCTION IN THE UAE



MOTHER OF THE NATION:
HER HIGHNESS SHEIKHA
FATIMA BINT MUBARAK



MOTHER OF THE NATION: HER HIGHNESS SHEIKHA FATIMA BINT MUBARAK

TODAY, WOMEN IN THE UAE CAN ATTAIN THEIR HIGHEST ASPIRATIONS THANKS TO DECADES OF WORK ON THEIR BEHALF BY HER HIGHNESS SHEIKHA FATIMA BINT MUBARAK. SHE HAS BEEN A TIRELESS ADVOCATE FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN, EXPANDING THEIR EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, OPENING CAREER PATHS IN GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR, AND ESTABLISHING DOZENS OF ORGANISATIONS, PROGRAMMES AND AWARDS TO ENCOURAGE AND REWARD EXCELLENCE IN ALL THEIR ENDEAVOURS. SHE HAS BEEN A STALWART LEADER, AN INFLUENTIAL VOICE, AN INSPIRING ROLE MODEL – TRULY THE MOTHER OF THE NATION.





The advanced status of women in the UAE has received international recognition, and the important role played by Sheikhha Fatima is always mentioned first. For example, at the 2017 Global Summit of Women in Tokyo, Dr Maytha bint Salem Al Shamsi, minister of state, noted Sheikhha Fatima's crucial leadership roles, as chairwoman of the General Women's Union, supreme chairwoman of the Family Development Foundation and president of the Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood.

'Women have always been partners to men in contributing to the progress of nations,' said Sheikhha Fatima in a 2015 interview. 'Promoting their role and status in society is among the major drivers of social renaissance and development. We could even go as far as to say that the non-involvement of women represents backwardness in itself.'

Sheikha Fatima has noted that advancing the role of women involves balancing old and new, and that the UAE has succeeded in preserving 'the traditions and customs that were forged over its long history' while ensuring everyone plays a part in society. 'This idea is precisely what has made the UAE stand tall in the field of women's empowerment,' she said, adding: 'The UAE is proud of the contributing role women play in its development. Emirati women are cognisant that preserving customs and traditions facilitates, rather than hinders, their empowerment in the different work fields.'

Right from the establishment of the UAE in 1971, the country's girls and women have had a strong advocate in Sheikhha Fatima, who had the full support of her husband, the founding ruler of the UAE, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan. Every Tuesday and Saturday, Sheikhha Fatima welcomed the women of Abu Dhabi to a majlis she hosted in one of the ruler's two palaces in the capital. Here, lively discussions were held among women of different ages and backgrounds, each with their own questions, suggestions and requests for Sheikhha Fatima.

It soon became clear to Sheikhha Fatima that this informal venue was not enough to meet the growing needs of the women of the capital. Therefore, in 1973 she founded the Abu Dhabi Women's Association, the first group of its kind in the country. Its aim was to provide a venue where women could continue the discussions that had been carried on in the majlis.



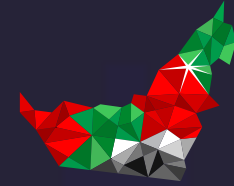
An even more ambitious organisation began operations two years later: the General Women's Union (GWU). This group has a nationwide scope, serving as an umbrella organisation for all women's organisations in the country. The GWU serves as a dynamic catalyst, supporting women by focusing on eight key areas: drawing up policies; capacity-building; research and publication; reform of laws and regulations; formulating and implementing national strategies; supporting women's organisations; increasing representation in local, regional and international forums; and building partnerships in the UAE, other Arab countries and around the world. A survey of the UAE today shows that the GWU has been tremendously successful, from the thousands of girls receiving high-quality education, to the hundreds of women holding high positions in government, business and non-governmental organisations.

A continuation and expansion of the GWU's work took the form, under the leadership of Sheikhha Fatima, of the National Strategy for UAE Women's Development, a detailed plan released in 2002. Its aim is to increase the participation of women in such fields as politics, education, health and the media by removing barriers and providing incentives.

Sheikha Fatima has noted: 'The UAE opened all closed doors to women and left them free to choose. Our reality proves that there are no barriers of any kind to the efficiency and giving ability of both women and men. Efficiency is the only standard and requirement for progress for both sexes.' She added: 'Our reality also shows, that women in our country have already occupied a prominent place in the world of work.'

In addition to her many achievements in the UAE, Sheikhha Fatima has been involved in improving the lives of women in the region and the world, working with a number of organisations, including those affiliated with the United Nations. Her awards and accolades are far too numerous to name. She has received more than 500 awards, 30 from the UN alone. The Mother of the Nation has lived up to her title, making the UAE one of the best countries in the world for women and girls to live their dreams.





CELEBRATING WOMEN OF
DISTINCTION IN THE UAE



FORMER MINISTER OF TOLERANCE:
SHEIKHA LUBNA AL QASIMI



FORMER MINISTER OF TOLERANCE: SHEIKHA LUBNA AL QASIMI

A COUNTRY'S VALUES ARE REFLECTED IN THOSE MATTERS ITS LEADERS CONSIDER IMPORTANT. THE UAE IS RARE IN THE WORLD IN DEVOTING CONSIDERABLE RESOURCES TO ENSURING NOT ONLY THE MATERIAL WELL-BEING OF ITS CITIZENS, BUT ALSO THE EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING. WHILE MINISTER OF TOLERANCE BETWEEN FEBRUARY 2016 AND OCTOBER 2017, SHEIKHA LUBNA AL QASIMI PLAYED A LEADING ROLE IN PROMOTING VALUES THAT STRENGTHENED HER COUNTRY'S VARIED POPULATION AND ADVANCED THE UAE'S ROLE IN AN INCREASINGLY INTERCONNECTED WORLD.





Sheikha Lubna has had an exemplary career, characterised by a constant striving for excellence and the betterment of the UAE's society and economy. In 1981 she earned a bachelor's degree in computer science from California State University, Chico. She earned an executive master's degree in business administration from the American University of Sharjah in 2002. Her devotion to academia and her many professional accomplishments have been recognised by universities awarding her honorary doctorates, including one in science from Chico, in law from the University of Exeter, UK, in humane letters from the Lebanese American University, Lebanon, and in economics from the Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in South Korea.

Sheikha Lubna was appointed minister of economy in 2004, becoming the first female minister in the UAE. She was minister of trade between 2008 and 2013, and then minister of international cooperation and development from 2013 to 2016. Under her leadership, the UAE's foreign aid contributions rose from US\$1.6 billion in 2012 to US\$5.4 in 2013.

She was named minister of tolerance in 2016 and in the same year became chairperson of the board of trustees of the newly created International Institute of Tolerance, an organisation established by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum as a way to promote the values of inclusion, tolerance and coexistence in the UAE and the region.

The strong push to promote tolerance came in response to the rise of inflammatory rhetoric, discrimination and sectarianism in the region. The leaders of the UAE want to provide the youth of the country a positive, constructive vision of the world, leading to a peaceful path to the future. Sheikha Lubna described this effort in a 2017 speech: 'If we don't get back to the values we have, the youth may start thinking about something different elsewhere. So it's very important for the UAE and for all countries to focus on this – to give a sense of belonging to future generations and instil tolerance in them, to ensure they steer clear from hatred.'

She added that the ministry was established in order to promote intellectual development that could stand in opposition to negative religious and cultural influences around the world. Therefore it is important to have institutions like the ministry and institute to

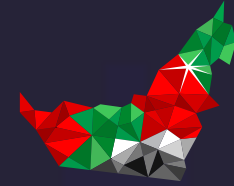
provide guidance and support for peaceful coexistence, since the UAE plays host to people from about 200 countries. As Sheikha Lubna said, 'The UAE is a land of opportunities for everyone, irrespective of your nationality, culture, religion, gender, or ethnicity.'

The UAE has long been a model for welcoming people of widely varying backgrounds. And today, thanks to the efforts of Sheikha Lubna and other leaders, this atmosphere of openness and tolerance is growing. There are places of worship around the country where people of different religions can gather in peace. The cultural scene is vibrant and varied, and the role of women is valued and continues to expand.

Sheikha Lubna, through her exemplary career and her strong advocacy, has been not only a role model but also an influential voice speaking on behalf of women. 'I am a firm believer that the true progress of a society or a nation can be determined by the way it treats women,' she has said. 'Progressive thinking and economic prosperity are meaningless unless women are given the respect and honour they deserve; women should always be considered equal to their male counterparts. This is another area where the UAE is setting a fine example for regional countries. In the UAE today, women have proved their worth in every domain, be it medicine, engineering, media, sports, finance, or politics.'

As president of Zayed University, Sheikha Lubna is also a leader in the field of education. From this prominent platform, she is sending important messages to the youth of the UAE, promoting the importance of tolerance, happiness and positivity, as well as the need for students to participate in the development of the country by volunteering and becoming involved in civic and social activities.

Sheikha Lubna has throughout her life demonstrated that she lives the values she promotes. From being one of the first Emirati women to earn a university degree in a technology field to her extensive work in government and higher education, she has shown that women in the UAE can attain their most ambitious goals, and that everyone can thrive in a society that is open, peaceful and tolerant.



CELEBRATING WOMEN OF
DISTINCTION IN THE UAE



MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION:
REEM AL HASHIMY



MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION: REEM AL HASHIMY

IN ROLES RANGING FROM DIPLOMAT TO GOVERNMENT MINISTER, REEM AL HASHIMY HAS DEVOTED MUCH OF HER IMPRESSIVE CAREER TO BRINGING THE UAE TO THE WORLD AND BRINGING THE WORLD TO THE UAE. WITH HER DEEP KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE, SHE HELPS THE UAE ACHIEVE ITS AMBITIOUS DEVELOPMENT GOALS BY LINKING EAST AND WEST. MS AL HASHIMY EARNED A BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND FRENCH FROM TUFTS UNIVERSITY IN 1999, AND A MASTER'S FROM HARVARD IN 2002.





She served as a commercial attaché in the UAE diplomatic corps, and rose to become deputy chief of mission at one of the country's most prestigious and important offices: the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Washington, DC.

In 2008, she was named minister of state, a position which had her continuing her foreign relations focus. She also played a vital role in Dubai's bid to be the site of World Expo 2020. In 2013, her leadership of the campaign to win this highly sought-after honour bore fruit when the majority of the member states of the Bureau International Des Expositions, the governing body of world expos, voted in favour of the Dubai proposal. In 2020, the world will be coming to Dubai.

The theme of the expo is 'Connecting Minds, Creating the Future', which reflects the ambitious development plans of the UAE. 'The ultimate goal of the UAE Vision 2021 is to place the nation among the best in the world,' Ms Al Hashimy said. 'Achieving this will involve creating a competitive knowledge economy, as well as promoting a sustainable approach to the environment and infrastructure, which fits well with the themes of the Expo.'

In addition, Ms Al Hashimy noted, 'Expo 2020 will support the ongoing development, diversification and long-term success of the UAE's economy.' She added, 'Naturally there will be a significant quantity of economic activity directly and indirectly stimulated in the course of the design, build and operational phases of the event – all of which will provide opportunities for private and foreign investors.'

Shortly after Dubai's winning bid was announced, Ms Al Hashimy led the way to ensure this ambitious dream would become a reality. Construction is well underway on the massive projects connected with the expo, with heavy equipment moving mountains of earth to make way for a project the size of an ultra-modern city. It will have access to an airport and other transportation facilities plus its own infrastructure, residential accommodation and commercial establishments, and of course many exhibition spaces. 'This whole undertaking,' said Ms Al Hashimy, 'along with the airport and other developments, will form the heart of Dubai South, a new 145-sq-km city-scale development under way near the location of the Al Maktoum International Airport.'



Once completed, the facilities built for Expo 2020 Dubai will be able to handle an estimated 25 million visits, 70 per cent of which are expected to come from abroad. 'These people will have to be accommodated and entertained by hotels and businesses that need to be funded and built,' said Ms Al Hashimy. 'What is vitally important is ensuring a sustainable economic legacy that continues after the event closes its gates. This goes beyond the tangible elements of the buildings and businesses on site, to the sorts of people who will be working there and across Dubai – the human capital and knowledge economy that we hope will be this Expo's true dividend.'

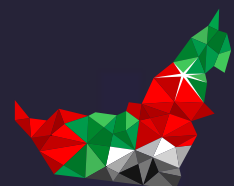
Looking forward towards a prosperous and sustainable future has been a hallmark of the leaders of the UAE, and Ms Al Hashimy is prominent among these. She has said, for example, that growth in the region will be driven by 'forces of entrepreneurship and innovation, which together create goods, services and, above all, opportunities for the young.' This is why Expo 2020 Dubai is seen as such an integral part of the UAE's overall future plan.

The event will serve as an important catalyst, said Ms Al Hashimy, 'for the conversion of financial and intellectual capital into human capital'. Investing in the people of the UAE, then, is the soundest way of investing in the future of the country. 'Our plans embody this by giving individuals the tools they require to create and capitalise on opportunities and, in doing so, make a meaningful contribution to social mobility as part of an economically sustainable future for all.'

Ms Al Hashimy is also an influential leader in the UAE's philanthropic community. As chairperson of Dubai Cares, she oversees a major organisation whose aim is to provide quality education to children in developing countries. Dubai Cares does this by building and renovating schools, ensuring the supply of clean water and sanitation, training teachers, promoting literacy and numeracy, and supporting early childhood education programmes. In addition Ms Al Hashimy is chairperson of the Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority.

As the people of the UAE look towards 2020 and beyond, the vision of people like Ms Al Hashimy is shaping a bright tomorrow that holds the promise of rewarding new jobs, liveable communities and a country that is successfully bridging the past and the future as well as East and West.





CELEBRATING WOMEN OF
DISTINCTION IN THE UAE



MINISTER OF CULTURE AND KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT:
NOURA AL KAABI



MINISTER OF CULTURE AND KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT: NOURA AL KAABI

AS THE LEADERS OF THE UAE GUIDE THE COUNTRY TOWARDS A KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY, NEW AVENUES OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ARE OPENING UP IN DRAMATIC WAYS. NOURA AL KAABI HAS BEEN AT THE FOREFRONT OF MEDIA EXPANSION IN ABU DHABI AND HAS HELD CABINET MINISTER POSITIONS SINCE 2016, FIRSTLY AS MINISTER OF FEDERAL NATIONAL COUNCIL AFFAIRS, A POSITION WHICH ALLOWED HER TO ADVANCE THE DEVELOPMENT GOALS OF THE COUNTRY BY EMPLOYING HER CONSIDERABLE EXPERTISE, AND SECONDLY AS MINISTER OF CULTURE AND KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT.





Ms Al Kaabi received a bachelor's degree in management information systems in 2001 from UAE University, and completed the Executive Leadership Programme at the London Business School in 2011. She has since made her mark in many areas, most notably as chairwoman of the Media Zone Authority – Abu Dhabi (MZA), which was established in 2007 in order to create a fertile environment for the growth of media enterprises in the emirate. MZA operates twofour54, a free zone where media companies and the professionals who work for them can thrive. The free zone, whose name comes from Abu Dhabi's geographical coordinates, has facilities for training and production, and excellent services and infrastructure.

The MZA and twofour54 perfectly mesh with the emirate's long-term development plan, Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030. As Ms Al Kaabi has noted, a key pillar of the plan 'is creating a sustainable media industry as one alternative source of economic activity'. She added, 'twofour54 is helping the emirate to become a media and production hub and is a catalyst for content creation in the region. When we look at the industry, we look at how we can develop it commercially, rather than simply being a zone where companies can set up an office.'

Changing the media landscape in the UAE is one of Ms Al Kaabi's top priorities. Throughout her life, she has seen the types of programmes change. For example, she recalls that when she was a child there were mainly just cartoons on local television. 'Then we started to see other content coming from the West, mainly, or Bollywood,' she says. Now, there are programmes from other sources, and there is a growing demand for Arabic dramas.

In order to meet this demand, twofour54 offers economic incentives to production companies that film in Abu Dhabi. In addition, the zone provides training to residents wishing to work in the media industry. In order to help the emirate become a hub of production, Ms Al Kaabi encourages partnerships between Bollywood and Hollywood. A sister company called Image Nation Abu Dhabi focuses on locally filmed dramas. She is proud to note, in addition, that a number of Bollywood productions have been filmed in Abu Dhabi, as well as international television series and scenes from such blockbuster motion picture franchises as 'Star Wars' and 'Fast and Furious'.



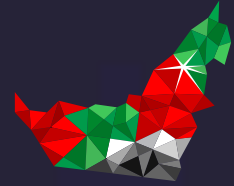
The demand for local content that takes into consideration Arab culture and values is being met by the companies operating in twofour54. 'The MENA [Middle East and North Africa] region,' said Ms Al Kaabi, 'is currently underserved in Arabic content across TV, radio, print and digital platforms, primarily due to lack of investment in media production infrastructure and development of media talent.' Abu Dhabi's thriving media free zone is filling this gap, especially in the production of digital media and audio-visual products, she added.

Thanks to the innovative and energetic leadership of Ms Al Kaabi, the efforts of MZA and twofour54 to develop the media sector have included major promotion of the national film industry. This has involved instituting the Abu Dhabi Film Festival, the Abu Dhabi Film Commission, the Abu Dhabi Media Summit and TROPFEST Arabia, part of the world's largest festival of short films.

In addition to these positions, Ms Al Kaabi is on the board of the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce, the UAE National Media Council, Abu Dhabi Media, the Abu Dhabi Sports Council and UAE University. She has received many awards and other recognitions for her achievements. For example, Forbes Middle East named her among the 30 Most Influential Women in Government in 2014. She was also named Media CEO of the Year in 2012 by Arabian Business magazine, Female CEO of the Year in the same year by CEO Middle East magazine and was named one of the 100 Most Powerful Arab Women by Arabian Business in 2011 and 2012.

Ms Al Kaabi has demonstrated imagination and leadership in the fields of business, government, media and entertainment, helping to create a thriving network that brings together multinational media stars like CNN, Thomson Reuters, Bloomberg and Sky News with Abu Dhabi companies and media professionals. The result is a blossoming sector of the economy that can only prosper as the years pass.





CELEBRATING WOMEN OF
DISTINCTION IN THE UAE



PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL NATIONAL COUNCIL:
DR AMAL AL QUBAISI



PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL NATIONAL COUNCIL: DR AMAL AL QUBAISI

IN NOVEMBER 2015, DR AMAL AL QUBAISI WAS APPOINTED THE FIRST WOMEN PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL NATIONAL COUNCIL (FNC), THE UAE'S HIGHEST REPRESENTATIVE BODY. DURING HER IMPRESSIVE CAREER, DR AL QUBAISI HAS HAD AN INFLUENTIAL VOICE IN MANY FIELDS, INCLUDING POLITICS. ONE IMPORTANT MESSAGE THAT IS SENT BY THE ATTAINMENT OF HER CURRENT POSITION IS THAT YOUNG WOMEN IN THE UAE CAN AIM HIGH IN THE SERVICE OF THEIR FELLOW CITIZENS.





The inauguration of the 16th session of the FNC was an especially auspicious event. It was presided over by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE vice president and ruler of Dubai. Also in attendance were rulers of other emirates, crown princes, cabinet members and ambassadors of 80 countries. Sheikh Mohammed addressed the members of the FNC: ‘Today your service to the UAE people has become a responsibility.’ He added, ‘It is an obligation in front of Allah and the people of the UAE. Brothers and sisters, your council is held today and our country has become stronger, and our people more intertwined with their leaders.’

As she took on her new role, Dr Al Qubaisi said, ‘I am proud to take this seat for the first time as a woman in the Arab world. I dedicate this achievement to the great women of the UAE, and to the Mother of the Nation, Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak.’ She added, that the UAE must compete with the best countries in the world, and that the council has great responsibilities, requiring its members to give their all in strengthening the country and advancing it politically. ‘I ask you to represent the UAE and its vision,’ she said, ‘and to continue to allow the UAE to thrive.’

Not only was Dr Al Qubaisi’s achievement a first in the UAE, it was also the first time that a woman took on the role of parliamentary leader in the Arab world. In 2006, she had made history when she became the first woman in the FNC, and in 2011 she was the first woman to be the body’s deputy speaker. In 2013, she became the first woman to chair a meeting of the council. But these impressive milestones were merely a continuation of a career filled with similar achievements.

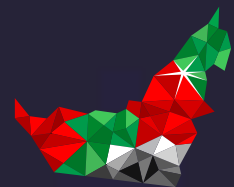
Dr Al Qubaisi had been director general of the Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) before joining the FNC. ADEC was established in 2005 with the aim to improve education by introducing innovative policies and programmes that support teachers, administrators, staff and students in their quest to attain the highest international standards. Thanks to the energetic and inspiring leadership of Dr Al Qubaisi, the government of Abu Dhabi presented ADEC with excellence in government performance awards in the Best Knowledge Management and Best Improvement in Performance categories.

As director general of ADEC, Dr Al Qubaisi had a seat on the Abu Dhabi Executive Council, the emirate’s highest executive body. Leaders of all major government bodies gather on the council in order to assist the ruler in the task of governing. Dr Al Qubaisi was the first woman on the council, and served as chair of its Social Development Committee.

Dr Al Qubaisi’s exemplary career has often been recognised with awards and other distinctions. In 2014, upon her election to the FNC, Sheikh Mohammed presented her with the UAE Pioneers Award. The Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, presented her with the Federation Personality award for her many political achievements. In 2009 she was awarded the Abu Dhabi Medal of Honor, and in the previous year she received the Middle East Excellence Award of Women in Leadership and the Abu Dhabi Award 2008.

Dr Al Qubaisi earned a doctorate in architectural engineering with honours from the University of Sheffield, UK. This led her to an early career in academia, teaching and carrying out research. She is an expert in the architectural heritage of the UAE, and has been an influential advocate for its preservation at home and abroad. For example, she has represented the UAE abroad at the UNESCO World Heritage Center and at the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

In 2016, Sheffield University recognised Dr Al Qubaisi for the broad range of her activities with an honorary doctorate. The university’s chancellor expressed pride in this accomplished graduate, and summarised her work, saying that this honour was granted in light of Dr Al Qubaisi’s achievements and ‘advancement of parliamentary, social and cultural issues with global and humanitarian dimensions to contribute towards developing the community, empowering youth and women as well as protecting human heritage.’



CELEBRATING WOMEN OF
DISTINCTION IN THE UAE



FORMER TECOM GROUP CEO:
DR AMINA AL RUSTAMANI



FORMER TECOM GROUP CEO:
DR AMINA AL RUSTAMANI

DUBAI HAS BECOME A FLOURISHING HUB FOR THE UAE'S INNOVATION-LED ECONOMY BECAUSE ITS LEADERS HAVE CREATED AN ENVIRONMENT THAT HELPS BRIGHT, AMBITIOUS AND CREATIVE PEOPLE TO FLOURISH. DR AMINA AL RUSTAMANI HAS ALL THESE QUALITIES AND MORE, AND SHE HAS BECOME A LEADING FIGURE NOT ONLY ON DUBAI'S CUTTING-EDGE TECH SCENE, BUT ALSO IN THE FIELDS OF DESIGN, FASHION AND MEDIA.



CELEBRATING WOMEN OF DISTINCTION IN THE UAE



Dr Al Rustamani earned a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering at The George Washington University in Washington DC in 1993. She then went on to earn a master's (1996) and doctorate (2001) in the same discipline at the same institution. Her academic expertise is in the area of wireless technologies, and she has published in academic journals about this topic. Immediately after earning her doctorate, she joined TECOM as a project manager in the firm's satellite telecommunications division, then rose to become CEO of TECOM Business Parks in 2008, before becoming Group CEO.

Dr Al Rustamani was TECOM Group CEO until February 2018, and is widely recognised as an influential business leader. While CEO she noted that TECOM Group 'has successfully established 11 vibrant, collaborative business communities across Dubai' adding that they had become 'full-fledged ecosystems dedicated to non-oil business sectors, including: information technology, design, media, education, science, trade and manufacturing.'

Technology and business are not the only areas of Dr Al Rustamani's expertise and passion. She was one of the prime movers behind the setting up of the Dubai Design District (d3), established in 2013 as a major creative hub for Dubai, the UAE and the region. d3 fills a need in the region for a welcoming place for creative people to live, work, interact and thrive. The d3 ethos is to provide all the requirements of the creative community, and then let the magic happen.

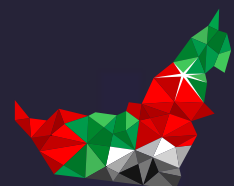
Dr Al Rustamani has said the purpose of d3 is to 'inspire, engage and enable collaboration, with the ultimate ambition of gaining more global recognition and interest in the Arab design scene.' She added that while the district is still in its infancy, it has achieved much already and is 'well on the way to being the region's leading design destination.'

Dr Al Rustamani is also chairperson of the Dubai Design and Fashion Council, the government entity that nurtures the development of the national design industry by helping it make fruitful connections with government and private partners in the UAE and around the world. She also sits on the boards of the National Media Council, Dubai Media Incorporated, Dubai Healthcare City Authority and Emirates Central Cooling Systems Corporation.

In March 2017 Dr Al Rustamani was appointed as the president of the new organisation Dubai Institute of Design and Innovation (DIDI), the first university in the Middle East dedicated to the study of design. 'Having championed the launch and driven the growth of d3, I'm looking forward to dedicating myself even further to nurturing the next generation of young talents and the development of design in the region through DIDI,' said Dr Al Rustamani. The university's first intake is scheduled for autumn 2018.

The many achievements of Dr Al Rustamani have been recognised by organisations and publications near and far. For example, in 2017 Forbes Middle East ranked her number 50 on its list of the 100 Most Powerful Arab Businesswomen. Arabian Business named her one of the 100 Most Powerful Arab Women in 2015, 2016 and 2017. In Gulf Business, she was listed among the 100 Most Powerful Arabs in 2015 and 2017.

Dr Al Rustamani's many achievements and accolades attest to a career that has combined sharp intellect, keen business sense, a flair for creativity and an abiding passion to make Dubai and the UAE models for intelligent and sustainable development.



CELEBRATING WOMEN OF
DISTINCTION IN THE UAE



CEO PROPERTY MANAGEMENT
AND MARKETING, WASL PROPERTIES:
ZAINAB MOHAMMED



CEO PROPERTY MANAGEMENT
AND MARKETING, WASL PROPERTIES:
ZAINAB MOHAMMED

ZAINAB MOHAMMED'S MESSAGE TO THE WOMEN OF THE UAE IS THAT THERE ARE NO LIMITS TO WHAT THEY CAN ACHIEVE. HER CAREER AS A LEADER IN THE DYNAMIC WORLD OF DUBAI'S BOOMING REAL ESTATE MARKET IS AMPLE TESTAMENT TO THE VIEW THAT WITH HARD WORK, DETERMINATION AND SELF-CONFIDENCE ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE.





As she was growing up, Ms Mohammed's family played a major role in her attitude towards life and achieving her goals. She said that they were 'key to instilling a level of confidence that encouraged me to reach the very top'. She added, 'They were firm believers in equality and taught me since I was a child that I could do whatever I wanted. I just needed to be single-minded and never give up.'

Ms Mohammed earned a master's degree in strategic project management at Heriot-Watt University. In 2001, she began working at a major property developer in Dubai, getting involved with all aspects of the firm's operations and climbing the corporate ladder. In 2007 she joined wasl, which became wasl properties in 2008, a subsidiary of wasl Asset Management Group, also established in 2008. With more than 25,000 residential and commercial properties located all over the emirate of Dubai, wasl properties plays a leading role in the emirate's real estate market.

Ms Mohammed's first position at wasl was general manager of property management, marketing and corporate communications. Immediately she took on major tasks, including restructuring the firm in order to increase efficiency and cut costs. She later worked to improve many other aspects of wasl's operations and was promoted to CEO of property management and marketing. In this role, Ms Mohammed has many important tasks, including supervising more than 150 staff in more than ten divisions of the firm involved with such functions as revenue control, strategic planning, business development, tenant management and support, collections, legal affairs, sales and marketing, and corporate communications.

Like other areas of the business world, real estate has long been a male-dominated domain. Ms Mohammed attributes her success not only to her own influences but to the overall social environment of the UAE, from the top leaders to her managers and colleagues. She said, 'Women in Dubai are blessed in having the support of Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, who continuously speaks out about the value of women in the workplace.'

She noted that the ruler has said that 70 per cent of students in government tertiary-level institutions are women, 65 per cent of public sector roles are held by women, of which around 30 per cent hold positions of responsibility. In addition, according to a 2014 survey, the UAE was ranked first worldwide for treating women with respect. 'On



a personal level,' added Ms Mohammed, 'I can say that the management and colleagues I have encountered during my career journey have never discriminated between male and female employees. This attitude is what has promoted the equal participation of women in all fields in the UAE.'

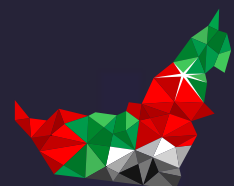
Dubai has become world-famous for the way its leaders, government officials, investors and business community have made the emirate a centre of innovative and grand projects. Ms Mohammed noted that Dubai Marina, The Palm and Atlantis are the sorts of developments that show how 'Dubai has the ability to convert dreams to reality'. 'We now have the world's tallest tower,' she said, 'the world's biggest mall, and the region's longest driverless metro system — spectacular achievements that sit alongside numerous other firsts.'

In order for this sort of massive growth to take place, there must be a close working relationship among all involved. Ms Mohammed's part in the Dubai success story has involved keeping in contact with consultants, contractors, business leaders, investors and property managers. Through these numerous interactions, Ms Mohammed learned valuable lessons in how to make a good business better. For example, her insight that customer service was crucial to success was incorporated into her firm's business model. Consequently, wasl properties makes customer satisfaction a top priority, with the goal being to benefit all parties through strong relationships.

Ms Mohammed's leadership and innovative approach has earned her much acclaim. In 2015, she was number ten on Arabian Business magazine's list of the Top 100 Most Powerful Arab Women. In the previous year, she received the Emirates Women Award from the Dubai Quality Group for her strong record of leadership.

The path to such success is not easy. For Ms Mohammed it involved discipline and hard work. For her fellow Emirati women she offers the same counsel, advising them to 'establish a personal programme of continuous education and professional development, as this will enable them to acquire more skills to tackle the challenges arising from change'. In addition, she encourages them to 'stand up for their principles in the workplace and to continuously set themselves targets'. In this way, more women in the UAE can follow the successful path of women like Ms Mohammed and then be in a position to lead and offer advice for the next generation.





CELEBRATING WOMEN OF
DISTINCTION IN THE UAE



AL JABER GROUP CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER:
FATIMA AL JABER



AL JABER GROUP CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER: FATIMA AL JABER

IT WOULD NOT BE AN EXAGGERATION TO SAY THAT THE AL JABER GROUP HAS PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN BUILDING MODERN ABU DHABI AND, AS CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, FATIMA AL JABER HAS PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN THE GROUP'S SUCCESS. NOT ONLY HAS SHE DEMONSTRATED SHARP BUSINESS ACUMEN AND INSPIRING LEADERSHIP, MS AL JABER HAS BEEN AN ADVOCATE IN THE BROADER COMMUNITY, HELPING MANY WOMEN ATTAIN SUCCESS BY EXPANDING THEIR OPPORTUNITIES IN THE WORLD OF BUSINESS.





Family has played a major role in Ms Al Jaber's life. She says that her decision to study architectural engineering was influenced by the fact that her father had long been in the construction business. She graduated with a BA from UAE University in 1987, and has since worked in both the private and public sectors. Between 1998 and 2005, she held several positions including undersecretary assistant technical services in the Public Works Department of Abu Dhabi.

She joined the Al Jaber Group at the end of 2006 and was named chief operating officer in early 2007. 'My responsibility was to oversee the operations of the group and the different companies within it,' she said, 'as we have more than 40 companies in the construction, oil and gas, logistics, trading and manufacturing sectors.' She added, 'It was a diversified position, and an interesting experience for me as a woman, and a member of the family.' Her position had her managing all contracts, and supervising those of the group's companies that dealt with construction, transportation, trade, logistics, manufacturing, investment and real estate development.

Today, Al Jaber Group is the country's largest private sector employer, with 50,000 on payroll and some US\$5 billion in assets. It is a brand that is synonymous with quality, integrity and dependability. Ms Al Jaber is employing her years of experience by offering strategic counsel on the group's board of directors.

Throughout her career Ms Al Jaber has sought ways to help women benefit from her expertise and advice. Her first major move in this direction was in 2006, when she established Al Bashayer Investment Company to serve the needs of women investors in the UAE and the Gulf. Ms Al Jaber said that she started the company because she felt the needs of women investors were not being met, with men making most of the financial decisions on their behalf. 'I wanted to change that,' she said, 'in a way that women could explore their own investment environment and understand where they need to invest as well as learn about the best investment tools.'



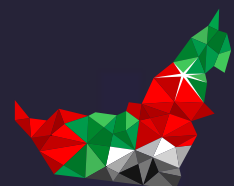
As chairperson of the company's board, Ms Al Jaber has created a 'woman friendly' environment for the region's high net worth investors. And women play a major role in the company's operations. 'I also wanted to have women as majority shareholders in this company,' she said. So there are four women on the board, and the company has become one of the top investment firms in the UAE – a true success story. It is licensed and regulated by the country's central bank, and is backed by prominent business groups and financial institutions.

In 2009, Ms Al Jaber set her sights on the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry. She decided it was time to have more women in leadership positions in the chambers and set about the task. 'I had a goal and I worked hard to fulfill it,' she said. 'Personally, I plan and work hard to achieve my goals. Nothing is guaranteed in life, but if you work hard towards your goal and push for it, then you will most probably achieve it.' In 2010 she became the first Emirati woman elected to the board of directors of the chamber.

Women interested in the business world have also been helped by the Abu Dhabi Businesswomen Council and the UAE Businesswomen Council, both of which have been chaired by Ms Al Jaber. 'Through the councils,' she said, 'we work with the chambers of commerce ... to come up with initiatives that empower women and focus on their activities as well as support women entrepreneurs.' She added that the two councils also build awareness of the role of women in society. Women are doing their part, leading businesses, 'so we encourage them to network, share experiences, knowledge and work together to penetrate the world of business.'

Ms Al Jaber has won much acclaim for her efforts, locally and on the world stage. For example, in 2014 she was named 94th on the Forbes International list of the 100 Most Powerful Women in the World. More important than accolades such as these, though, has been her influence on generations of women, who have found their own voices and paths to success thanks to her example, inspiration and mentoring.





CELEBRATING WOMEN OF
DISTINCTION IN THE UAE



ASSISTANT DIRECTOR GENERAL OF DUBAI LAND DEPARTMENT:
MAJIDA ALI RASHID



ASSISTANT DIRECTOR GENERAL OF DUBAI LAND DEPARTMENT:
MAJIDA ALI RASHID

DUBAI HAS BECOME FAMOUS AROUND THE WORLD FOR BEING A PLACE WHERE THE MOST AMBITIOUS DREAMS CAN BE REALISED, WHERE FOR MANY YEARS A SPECIAL ECONOMIC ALCHEMY HAS BEEN PERFORMED: TURNING DRY DESERT LAND INTO GOLD. MAJIDA ALI RASHID HAS BECOME WELL RESPECTED FOR HER ABILITY TO FACILITATE THIS PROCESS BY CONNECTING INVESTORS WITH PRIME LOCATIONS TO CREATE BEAUTIFUL NEIGHBOURHOODS, MAJESTIC SKYSCRAPERS AND PROSPEROUS ENTERPRISES.





Ms Rashid is a prime example of the benefits of encouraging women to contribute to UAE society in all fields, from education and medicine to government and the private sector. As assistant director general of the Dubai Land Department (DLD) she has played a major role in the emirate's economic boom. And the business world has taken notice. For example, in 2015 Arabian Business magazine ranked her number 24 on their list of the World's 100 Most Powerful Arab Women. She joined an impressive field of female achievers from the arts, law, media, technology, the armed forces, banking and entertainment.

'Joining this prestigious list,' said Ms Rashid, 'was the result of the continuous encouragement of the wise rulers of the UAE who push for Emirati women to obtain higher degrees and enrollment in a cross-section of industries. This is part of their visionary strategy to grow the national economy in order for the UAE to remain a leader in the region and the world.'

The awards and accolades recognise all aspects of Ms Rashid's many duties. For example in 2014 she was named Female CEO of the Year at the CEO Middle East Awards. In addition to her role at the DLD, she is also head of the department's Real Estate Investment Management and Promotion Center, which promotes the benefits of real estate investment by local and foreign businesses. Ms Rashid was recognised for her energetic and imaginative efforts to carry the message around the world that Dubai is a sure bet when it comes to investing in real estate.

Energy and innovation are the hallmarks of Ms Rashid's professional career, and she has raised Dubai's profile around the world; wherever people with dreams are seeking a place where those dreams can be made real. China has become a leading source of investment in Dubai, and in 2017 Ms Rashid was the leading voice for the DLD as it participated in a large investment event at the Shanghai World Expo Exhibition and Convention Center.

Ms Rashid said that the exhibition, under the banner of 'Dubai, Your Ideal Investment Destination', came on the heels of successful shows in other cities with investors interested in Dubai: Mumbai, London and Hong Kong. She added that she was confident that these events would help the department achieve its objectives 'by highlighting Dubai as a



leading destination that attracts Chinese investors. Our participation at the event reflects our commitment to supporting the developers and all professionals working in this sector to achieve our vision of making Dubai the world's first destination for innovation, trust and happiness.'

Ms Rashid's message in the UAE and around the world is that Dubai has much to offer, and that the DLD is the perfect way for investors to find and take advantage of opportunities. The DLD has been successful because it works closely with the private sector to promote opportunities. For example, at the Shanghai exhibition there were 25 UAE firms from the fields of real estate development, consulting, management and other related fields taking part in the effort to woo Chinese investors. Such teamwork is what has made Dubai a regional leader in commercial, financial and tourism investment ventures.

Ms Rashid is as keen on working with local investors as she is with those from abroad. One way is by employing the most advanced digital platforms to carry out the DLD's mission. For example, the department's online portal is a model of high-tech efficiency and everyday practicality. The top three tabs on the homepage neatly summarise why Dubai is the place to invest: 'Innovation', 'Happiness', and 'Confidence'.

In addition, Ms Rashid takes a proactive approach to interactions with the business community. She said, 'We have an extensive agenda that includes several periodic meetings, held in collaboration with a number of real estate development companies across the Emirate. Every year, we hold a number of forums and workshops for our partners, to inform them of our future real estate promotional plans, gain insights from their respective areas of expertise and to align our efforts with their expectations.'

This constant dialogue ensures satisfaction on all sides. Thanks to the efforts of Ms Rashid and her professional colleagues, the emirate of Dubai has become a model for successful investment, a place where the DLD works hand-in-glove with private sector partners. From these fruitful interactions, countless buildings have sprung from the land, turning the emirate into a modern, thriving and happy place to live, work and prosper.





CELEBRATING WOMEN OF DISTINCTION IN THE UAE



EASA SALEH AL GURG GROUP MANAGING DIRECTOR: RAJA AL GURG



EASA SALEH AL GURG GROUP MANAGING DIRECTOR:
RAJA AL GURG

RAJA AL GURG'S MANY ACHIEVEMENTS EXEMPLIFY THE SAYING: 'IF YOU WANT TO GET SOMETHING DONE, ASK A BUSY PERSON.' THE VARIETY AND NUMBER OF HER ACTIVITIES IS DIZZYING. IN ADDITION TO BEING A PILLAR OF THE UAE BUSINESS COMMUNITY, SHE HAS DEVOTED A GREAT DEAL OF TIME TO CHARITABLE, SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL CAUSES AND TO A NUMBER OF ORGANISATIONS THAT PROMOTE WOMEN IN THE BUSINESS WORLD.





Thanks to her impressive accomplishments she has received many well-earned accolades and awards, not to mention the admiration of her fellow citizens.

When Mrs Al Gurg earned a bachelor's degree in English literature from Kuwait University in 1977, she had no idea what direction her career would take. 'At first I never thought I wanted to go into business,' she said. 'But when I took a role in my father's company, I had to prove that I could be successful regardless of the fact that I am a woman or chosen by my father. It is crucial that all women push their own boundaries and have the will to succeed.'

In 1989, Mrs Al Gurg became a member of the board of directors at Easa Saleh Al Gurg Group (ESAG). Today, as the firm's managing director, she oversees day-to-day operations and business development. In order to help her carry out her growing responsibilities, she attended advanced courses in management, sales and marketing, human resources and personnel development.

The firm was established in 1960 and was instrumental in the very early years of the UAE's economic transformation. Led by His Excellency Easa Saleh Al Gurg, Mrs Al Gurg's father, ESAG has become a conglomerate with 27 companies involved in such sectors as construction, retail, trade, manufacturing and real estate. It has companies in every corner of the UAE as well as in Oman, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Qatar. In addition, ESAG has dealings around the world.

Mrs Al Gurg's business acumen and passion for excellence have been hallmarks of her leadership style. Today, ESAG has companies and partners whose products and services touch the lives of almost everyone in the UAE. From paints, tyres and furniture to the most modern fashions, ESAG companies have made their mark by meeting the growing needs of the UAE's consumers and clients in business and government.

A track record of innovation and success has gained Mrs Al Gurg a reputation as a business leader whose advice is widely sought. For example, she was the first Emirati woman to be named a member of the board of HSBC Bank Middle East Ltd. She is also on the advisory board of Coutts Bank, the wealth division of the Royal Bank of Scotland Group.



In addition, Mrs Al Gurg is head of the auditing committee and board member of the UAE's Federal Customs Authority.

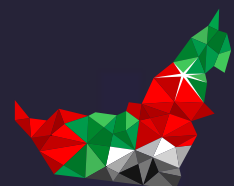
Mrs Al Gurg has done a great deal to help other Emirati women follow in her footsteps on the path towards success in the world of business. As president of the Dubai Business Women Council (DBWC) of the Dubai Chamber of Commerce, she oversees a wide range of programmes and events. For example, the council holds a monthly Network Majlis during which members gather in an informal atmosphere to learn about businesses or services run by women. More experienced members of the council share their knowledge with those starting in mentoring programmes. And the DBWC holds a number of events where members can meet with business leaders, government officials and experts from all over the UAE, the region and the world.

Mrs Al Gurg advocates for the expanding role of women in forums at home and abroad. At the DBWC's Best Practices Forum in 2017, she delivered a keynote address that emphasised the need for gender equality. For businesses, she said, 'Equality and diversity should be perceived as a means to engagement, better performance and innovation.' She added, 'This is not a "nice to have", but an absolutely must have.'

Mrs Al Gurg is deeply involved in efforts to improve the health and educational spheres in the UAE. She is chairperson of the board of directors of the Al Jalila Foundation, a non-profit organisation that supports medical research and education. At the ESAG Charity Foundation, she participates in helping society's most needy and vulnerable by supporting: day-care centres, orphanages, low-income housing and homes for the aged. The foundation also provides assistance to institutions of learning and research, libraries and religious institutions.

Her awards and honours are too numerous to detail and attest to the esteem with which she is held at home and abroad. For example, Forbes named her among the World's 100 Most Powerful Women in 2015 and 2016, and in 2014 Amity University in New Delhi conferred on her an honorary doctorate. In the worlds of business, philanthropy and women's empowerment, Mrs Al Gurg is a leader who has left an impressive mark.





CELEBRATING WOMEN OF
DISTINCTION IN THE UAE



AIR FORCE FIGHTER PILOT:
MAJOR MARIAM AL MANSOURI



AIR FORCE FIGHTER PILOT: MAJOR MARIAM AL MANSOURI

FLYING ONE OF THE MOST ADVANCED FIGHTER JETS IN THE WORLD TAKES A SPECIAL BLEND OF SKILL, STAMINA, COURAGE AND KNOWLEDGE. IT IS A MILITARY ROLE THAT DEMANDS THE BEST. MARIAM AL MANSOURI HAS NOT ONLY RISEN TO THIS DIFFICULT CHALLENGE AS THE UAE'S FIRST WOMAN FIGHTER PILOT, BUT HAS EXCELLED.





As a teenager, Ms Al Mansouri looked to the skies and imagined defending her country in the cockpit of a fighter. An Abu Dhabi native, she was an exceptional student, graduating from high school with a 93 per cent grade point average. At UAE University, Ms Al Mansouri earned a bachelor's degree in English literature. Although her parents supported her dream to one day become a pilot, women were not allowed to fly when she graduated. So she worked for the UAE armed forces in other capacities, including at the General Command for several years.

When the Air Force began accepting women recruits, Ms Al Mansouri was first in line. In 2007 she graduated from Khalifa bin Zayed Air College, the UAE's flight school, in Al Ain. Through hard work and perseverance, she rose through the ranks and honed her flying skills. She has paid tribute to the support she received from government officials, flight instructors and colleagues, but as is the case for women around the world, old ways of thinking sometimes got in the way.

'I had to prove myself to my male colleagues by just being determined,' she said, 'and showing that I can perform as skillfully as the males in this field.' She added, 'As in every culture, whenever a woman enters a male-dominated field, they find the same hesitation, same prejudice and same stereotypical thinking.' One way she used to succeed was to compete against herself as opposed to competing against her male colleagues. 'Competing with oneself,' she said, 'is conducive to continued learning.' She said she received no special treatment during her training, and that 'everybody is required to have the same high level of combat competence.'

Her hard work led to promotion to the rank of major and to combat missions flying the F-16 Block 60, one of the most advanced fighters in the world. Then, thanks to social media, Major Al Mansouri became a worldwide celebrity.

On the night of 22 September 2014, Major Al Mansouri led a mission against ISIS targets in Syria. The following day, she was all over Twitter, with her fellow Emiratis praising her role, and people around the world joining in the chorus of good wishes and congratulations. On 25 September, the UAE officially confirmed Major Al Mansouri's role in the mission through an announcement on an American news programme by Yousef Al Otaibi, the UAE's ambassador to the US.

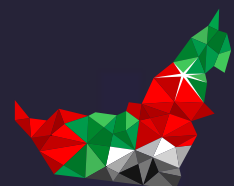
'She is a fully qualified, highly trained, combat-ready pilot,' said Al Otaibi, 'and she led the mission.' He added that as the squadron was returning to its base Major Al Mansouri had to have her aircraft refuelled from an American tanker. When the tanker's crew heard her voice over the radio, there was a long silence. They did not expect a woman to be flying a UAE F-16 over the Arabian Gulf.

Major Al Mansouri has received a number of awards, in addition to the international acclaim that has resulted from her groundbreaking military career. For example, in 2014, she received the Mohammed bin Rashid Award the Pride of the Emirates Medal, which is given to individuals and government entities as recognition of outstanding service.

In 2015, Major Al Mansouri was a recipient of the Game Changer Award from the Asia Society. The society is the leading educational organisation that promotes understanding and connections between Asia and the US. The awards ceremony was held at UN headquarters in New York City, and the UAE's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Lana Nusseibeh, was there to offer her congratulations to Major Al Mansouri.

Ambassador Nusseibeh not only offered praise for Major Al Mansouri's accomplishments, she also placed the UAE fighter pilot into the context of the turbulent political situations of the Middle East and other regions of the world. In a speech before the UN Security Council, the ambassador said there is no better counter to the destructive narrative of ISIS than the example provided by Major Al Mansouri 'of the role and impact of women, peace and security in a moderate, tolerant Muslim nation'.

The UAE has successfully built a society in which the role of women is valued, and their participation in every aspect of the country's workforce is encouraged. Major Al Mansouri is just one shining example of how high a woman in the UAE can go if she follows her dreams with persistence and courage.



CELEBRATING WOMEN OF
DISTINCTION IN THE UAE



OLYMPIC MARTIAL ARTIST AND POLO PLAYER:
SHEIKHA MAITHA BINT
MOHAMMED AL MAKTOUM



OLYMPIC MARTIAL ARTIST AND POLO PLAYER:
SHEIKHA MAITHA BINT
MOHAMMED AL MAKTOUM

IT WAS A DREAM COME TRUE FOR HER HIGHNESS SHEIKHA MAITHA BINT MOHAMMED AL MAKTOUM TO BE PART OF THE UAE OLYMPIC TEAM AT THE 2008 SUMMER OLYMPIC GAMES, HELD IN BEIJING. AT THE ELABORATE OPENING CEREMONIES SHE WAS THE ONE WHO HELD HER COUNTRY'S FLAG HIGH AS HER TEAMMATES SMILED AND WAVED BEHIND HER. THE UAE'S OLYMPIANS PROCEEDED PAST THOUSANDS OF SPECTATORS IN THE STADIUM WHILE MILLIONS AROUND THE WORLD, INCLUDING PROUD VIEWERS IN THE UAE, WATCHED THE BROADCAST SPECTACLE UNFOLD.





For any athlete, the path to the Olympics is long and difficult, and sometimes takes unexpected turns. It was no different for Sheikha Maitha. A tall, strong and good-natured young woman who loved sports, she spent her teenage years riding horses, with an eye towards racing. At 17, Sheikha Maitha had a go at polo at the suggestion of one of her friends. Although she enjoyed the sport, she did not take it up. Later, a riding injury forced the young athlete to give up horses, and she turned to martial arts to help with her physical rehabilitation.

Sheikha Maitha took up karate at age 20 and became so proficient that she began to compete on the international level, winning the silver medal in the event at the 2006 Asian Games in Doha. Then she began to compete in taekwondo, and began to seriously consider aiming for the Olympics. In 2008 the dream became a reality, and Sheikha Maitha commenced a rigorous training regimen, sparring with some of the best taekwondo athletes in the world.

In her Olympic debut, Sheikha Maitha performed with her typical energy and courage, but in the end lost to an opponent who had twice been the female taekwondo world champion. When asked about the sharp blow to the head she received during the match, Sheikha Maitha responded, 'I'm pretty hard-headed. It doesn't bother me at all. I'm pretty used to it. I'm a tough girl. Don't worry.' She added, 'Participating in the Olympics... it's a dream and a nightmare at the same time. I couldn't wait until it was going to happen. And now I can't believe it's over.'

After Beijing, Sheikha Maitha began to set her sights on the 2012 Summer Olympic Games in London. However, in 2011 she was injured in a bout and had to give up that dream. More physical rehabilitation was called for, and this time she returned to riding as part of her recovery routine. In December of that year, Shaikha Maitha began playing polo, this time in earnest. 'I had had no clue what I was doing,' she said of her plunge into the challenging sport, 'but I think that having a riding background, being an accomplished equestrian, made it so much easier just to be able to play. Once I started, I was hooked!'

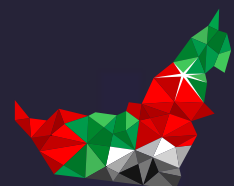
When someone as determined and passionate as Sheikha Maitha decides on a course of action, there can be no doubt of the result. So when she was told not to enter the all-women polo team that she had assembled in a small local tournament because they would lose and 'hate it', she went ahead anyway. And of course won. 'And it felt really good,' she said.

From then on, there was no turning back. Representatives of Ralph Lauren were watching the match and suggested putting together a women's tournament, a concept they had already been thinking about. Thus was born the Ralph Lauren International Ladies Polo Tournament, held in Dubai for the first time in 2013.

When it was over, Team UAE, led by Sheikha Maitha came in first, defeating Europe's Team A in a hard-fought match. This would be the first of many victories for Sheikha Maitha on the polo grounds, her love of horses and love of sport combining in a winning passion.

Another passion is helping others. Sheikha Maitha has worked tirelessly on behalf of Dubai Cares, which was a sponsor of the Ralph Lauren tournament. The charitable organisation is close to her heart, and she has contributed a great deal of her time to the cause. On a trip to Sudan she said, 'Dubai Cares believes in every child's right [to] education and is committed to ensuring that no child is denied an education. I wanted to tell the children we are here to help them.'

As daughter of the ruler of Dubai, Sheikha Maitha has many roles besides world-class athlete, and she is aware that many young women in the UAE look up to her. 'It's a lot of pressure,' she said, because 'first of all I want to represent my family, my country, the title. If I can inspire someone and motivate someone, that's basically the kind of role I like to take – the role of big sister, encouraging and nurturing. That's been basically my attitude towards the youth and trying to be there for them.'



CELEBRATING WOMEN OF DISTINCTION IN THE UAE



OLYMPIC SHOW-JUMPER: SHEIKHA LATIFA BINT AHMED AL MAKTOUM



OLYMPIC SHOW-JUMPER:
SHEIKHA LATIFA BINT AHMED
AL MAKTOUM

ONLY ATHLETES WITH COURAGE, YEARS OF TRAINING AND STRENGTH OF MIND AND BODY CAN HOPE TO BECOME CHAMPIONS. IN 2008, HER HIGHNESS SHEIKHA LATIFA BINT AHMED AL MAKTOUM JOINED THIS ELITE GROUP, BRINGING JOY TO HER MANY SUPPORTERS IN THE UAE AND ADDING TO HER LONG STRING OF EQUESTRIAN SUCCESSES.





Sheikha Latifa has said that qualifying for the Olympics was her most cherished achievement, but it almost didn't happen. In the qualifying competition in Qatar in 2007, she dropped three rails in the first two rounds, forcing a jump-off with other riders. A Jordanian rider went into the lead when he finished the course in a fast time without knocking down a rail. Sheikha Latifa felt the pressure mount but she and her horse rose to the challenge, making a clear run a whole three seconds faster than her rival. The path to her first Olympics was clear.

The Games of the XXIX Olympiad were held in Beijing in 2008, and in the festive opening ceremony, Sheikha Latifa was among those marching proudly behind the UAE flag in front of the cheering crowds in Beijing National Stadium, world-renowned for its unique 'bird's nest' design. While the UAE equestrian team did not finish with any medals, they gained valuable experience for future competitions.

Success was not long in coming. At the 2010 Asian Games, held in Guangzhou, China, Sheikha Latifa and her UAE equestrian teammates made a very strong showing. In the team jumping event, the UAE riders won the silver medal, with Sheikha Latifa being joined on the medals platform by Sheikh Rashid Al Maktoum, Sheikh Majid Al Qassimi and Ahmed Al Junaibi.

Three days after this impressive performance, Sheikha Latifa competed in the individual show jumping event, and once again faced tough opponents. In the deciding jump-off for the gold, Sheikha Latifa faced Ramzi Hamad Al Duhami, a Saudi rider. She and her mount completed the 10-hurdle course clearing all the rails, and so did Al Duhami. But the gold went to the Saudi because he finished the course ahead by the razor-thin margin of only 0.15 seconds. Still, Sheikha Latifa could return home with pride carrying two silver medals.

Taleb Dhaher Al Muhairi, secretary general of the Emirates Equestrian Federation, had nothing but high praise for the talented young rider. 'I'm at a loss for words to express my happiness over this tremendous achievement by Sheikha Latifa,' he said. 'She put up a brave show and fought for her silver with world-class jumpers. Our efforts have borne fruits.' He added that the victory showed 'the meticulous training and planning by the



Emirati riders who have now become a team to reckon with in the international equestrian scene.'

Such success never comes overnight. Sheikha Latifa has been competing for many years, taking instruction from the best riders in the world. For her Asian Games' success, for example, she could look to her trainer of many years, Eric Levallois, as part of her winning formula. Levallois had been a world champion jumper for France until a car accident forced him to give up competitions.

Sheikha Latifa's training and competition schedule is hectic and takes her around the world. She spends about half the year in Normandy, France, at the stables run by Levallois. Connection between horse and rider is a crucial component of show jumping, so it is no surprise that Levallois had ridden the father, mother and grandfather of one of Sheikha Latifa's horses, Kalaska de Semilly.

Having ridden Kalaska for many years, in many competitions, Sheikha Latifa speaks of the horse fondly, and affectionately calls him 'the boss', whose quirky habits she has come to know so well. 'This guy wakes up, eats half of his food, then takes a nap, then wakes up to finish the rest of his food,' she said in an interview. 'And I have to wait for him to finish all his rituals. But Kalaska has been with me to the Olympics, to the World Equestrian Games, everywhere. The boss can do whatever he wants.'

Sheikha Latifa explained that to attain success in the sport is not easy or quick. 'It's a long process,' she said, 'and you have to do the work. You can't just get a horse that's ready. You have to ride the horse and put in the hours.' And while winning in competitions has its moments, it is not why she spends the long hours in the stables and the training grounds.

'I don't compete in this sport in order to achieve a certain big goal or win a specific competition,' she said. 'I just love to ride every day. I love to compete. I love going through the process of bringing up a horse. Going up the classes with them. These aren't just my horses. They're my babies.' It is clear that this philosophy has carried Sheikha Latifa a long way, and will continue to do so in the years to come.





CELEBRATING WOMEN OF
DISTINCTION IN THE UAE



FASHION DESIGNER:
FATEMA AL FARDAN



FASHION DESIGNER:
FATEMA AL FARDAN

C OLOURS, PATTERNS, TEXTURES — THESE ARE THE THINGS THAT CAPTURED THE IMAGINATION OF FATEMA AL FARDAN AS SHE WAS GROWING UP IN THE UAE. HER LEBANESE MOTHER AND EMIRATI FATHER GAVE HER A FOOTHOLD IN TWO VIBRANT ARAB SOCIETIES, AND THESE INFLUENCED HER WORK AS SHE BECAME ONE OF THE UAE'S TOP FASHION DESIGNERS.





With her eyes set on the world of fashion, there was never any doubt about what Ms Al Fardan would study, or what her career would be. When she was nine years old, Ms Al Fardan would let her fashion ideas flow through her pencil, sketching dresses, tops and skirts in the margins of her school textbooks. She attended the American Intercontinental University's (AIU) London campus and graduated with a first degree with honours in fashion design and marketing. In 2011, she was awarded the Most Outstanding Student Award at AIU's Fashion Show competition.

Ms Al Fardan pursued further studies, in such subjects as textile design and fashion marketing, at the prestigious London College of Fashion and Central Saint Martins, which are part of the University of the Arts London. She has worked with London-based fashion designers Bora Aksu and Tata Naka, who had also attended Central Saint Martins. She has also interned with Louis Vuitton in the Middle East. Exposure to the varied influences available on the London fashion scene have found expression in Ms Al Fardan's designs, which blend an international vision with local sensibilities.

Back in the UAE, Ms Al Fardan has established herself as a designer with a unique sense of colour and cut combined with an impressive grasp of craftsmanship. Her creations bear the mark of a designer who has mastered not only the art of drawing and cutting patterns, but also designing textiles, adding embroidered elements, and putting together a finished product that is impeccably tailored.

After unveiling her ready-to-wear label in Dubai, Ms Al Fardan obtained the plum assignment to dress actress Eva Longoria, who appeared at the Dubai International Film Festival in 2014. Every designer hopes to be the answer to the red-carpet question: 'Who are you wearing?' In this case, Ms Longoria's stylist had been taken by a particular dress in Ms Al Fardan's first collection, a floral pink chiffon dress expertly tailored with diagonal patterns across the front.

Ms Al Fardan said that the actress 'was lovely, very down-to-earth and a pleasure to work with'. She added, 'When you look at her, you see both strength and softness. She's a philanthropist, actress and business women as well, and symbolises a lot of aspects of my brand.'

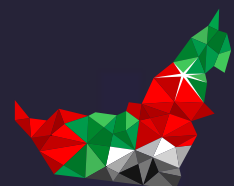
Every winter, the fashion world turns its attention to Manhattan, where New York Fashion Week brings the top designers, stylists, models and brands together for a whirlwind of runway shows, receptions and press events. In 2015, Ms Al Fardan took the plunge into this fashion extravaganza.

In order to showcase her Fall/Winter 2015-16 collection, she took over an up-and-coming gallery in Soho, filling two large walls with fresh flowers, mirroring the parts of the collection that had a floral theme. The show was attended by members of the fashion media as well as A-list celebrities. 'I think people were very curious because I was the first Emirati designer to showcase in New York,' said Ms Al Fardan. 'I was exotic and they wondered who I was. They said that they liked the collection and the ambiance.'

'The reason why I went to New York is because I felt that when I started people were not taking me seriously,' said Ms Al Fardan. 'Therefore, I wanted to show them that I am very serious about what I am presenting and about the way I present it.' The New York experience brought Ms Al Fardan wide exposure and credibility as a fashion force to be reckoned with, but afterward she decided that she would focus on building her brand at home. 'Right now, I want to be stronger in my region,' she said.

In order to express her strong regional influences, Ms Al Fardan draws from her family and from her country. 'My next collection is very personal,' she said. 'It is about the UAE, my heritage and my culture.' Thus, there were very local themes, motifs and materials interwoven through her Spring/Summer 2016 collection, called Remembrance of the Water. 'I want to pay homage to all those souls who ventured into the sea, day after day, for their families, for their country, and for their heritage,' said Ms Al Fardan. And so this line of elegant and inspired clothing employs the bright blues of the Gulf's waters and the shimmering monochromatic tones of pearls.

Ms Al Fardan's work is a testament to her creativity, connection to her roots and meticulous care in crafting garments of the highest quality. She reflects the vibrant crossroads that is the UAE, open to the wide world's influences, but cherishing the traditions and values that make it home.



CELEBRATING WOMEN OF
DISTINCTION IN THE UAE



ARTIST AND ENTREPRENEUR:
SUMAYYAH AL SUWAIDI



ARTIST AND ENTREPRENEUR: SUMAYYAH AL SUWAIDI

THE WORLD OF ART IN THE UAE IS VARIED, VIBRANT AND GROWING RAPIDLY. ARTISTS ARE RECEIVING REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION, AND THE ART SCENE SEES THE ARRIVAL OF NEW GALLERIES, MUSEUMS AND PROGRAMMES AT A DIZZYING PACE. AT THE CENTRE OF THIS CREATIVE FLOWERING ARE PEOPLE LIKE SUMAYYAH AL SUWAIDI. SHE BEGAN HER CAREER AS A DIGITAL ARTIST, BUT HAS HELPED HER COUNTRY'S CULTURAL SPHERE THRIVE BY CURATING MANY EXHIBITS, EXPANDING HER CREATIVE VISION TO THE WORLD OF FASHION AND MARKETING, AND ENCOURAGING YOUNG ARTISTS TO DEVELOP AND SHARE THEIR GIFTS. A FONT OF TALENT AND ENERGY, MS AL SUWAIDI IS A ONE-WOMAN SHOW.





She credits her current passion to her aunt, an early influence. ‘She took me under her wing,’ said Ms Al Suwaidi in an interview. ‘She was a fashionista herself and she used to design my dresses. She used to paint, she used to draw. She used to help me with my art projects in school. And then she would take me around with her to the markets to choose some fabric. And while she was designing the dress I would be next to her. So I was always inspired by her and I was always fascinated by her world of creativity.’

Ms Al Suwaidi was energised in another way when she was 16, in 1996, and her cousin introduced her to graphic design. After that, she simply had to have a computer with Photoshop, which she taught herself to use. And the rest is history. Her hours of ‘playing around’ with images and techniques evolved into a career as a serious and respected artist.

She attended Abu Dhabi Women’s College as an undergraduate and then earned a master’s degree from the Higher Colleges of Technology in Culture and Creative Industries. While she gained expertise during her formal studies, Ms Al Suwaidi also continued to educate herself on her own, watching video tutorials from the web and reading books and magazines. She moved on from graphic design, which she felt was too limiting, to techniques such as digital painting and digital photomanipulation.

She drew early artistic inspiration from the rulers of Abu Dhabi, especially the country’s founder, Sheikh Zayed. Thus her first public collection of works, completed in 2001, were portraits of Sheikh Zayed. After they sold out, the artist said she was ‘really, really happy,’ and surprised. Her early success convinced her: ‘Maybe this is a different career for me, or path that I should take.’

Other collections of works followed, these focusing on the emotional journeys of her everyday life. She has said that ‘each artwork touches the viewer in a certain way. It reminds them of a situation that happened with a friend or family member, or even with a loved one. So I can say my work is so close to the heart.’

Indeed, at the centre of many of her digital portraits is a beautiful woman whose large eyes express emotions ranging from longing to sadness to joy. The colours can be peacock-



bright or as gauzy and subdued as a foggy day. The images evoke dreamlike surrealism at one turn and lighthearted whimsy in the next, with an emotional and creative range that is dizzying.

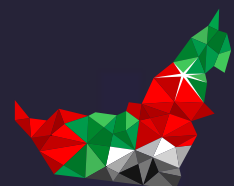
Ms Al Suwaidi’s works were first exhibited in 2003 in Abu Dhabi, and have since been seen, in solo shows and alongside other artists’ works, throughout the country and in galleries in London, France, Germany, the US, Morocco and Kuwait.

In 2009, Ms Al Suwaidi’s creative direction took a new turn. She decided to turn Grafika, a gift shop she opened in 2005, into a boutique featuring a variety of fashion brands. Then in 2011 she started her own line of women’s clothing, called Seen. Her abayas, caftans and dresses take traditional forms to new places, using colour and cut in imaginative ways. ‘I never make the same outfit twice,’ she says, ‘so no two women will have the same piece of clothing.’ She added that her pieces are also special due to their affordable price range.

After attaining success on the local and international art and fashion scene, Ms Al Suwaidi decided that it was time to help those just starting out, offering mentoring and other help she did not have when she was starting out. Ms Al Suwaidi curated her own exhibition in 2007, and then began doing the same for other artists, inviting not only emerging talents but also established artists who had already made their mark. She established an open-call exhibition called 30x30, which is held twice a year. It brings art into communities, so more people can have access to it.

Ms Al Suwaidi also established the Ramadan Art Bazaar, which seeks to make original works of art affordable to all. The idea is to have a place where no piece of art costs more than 4000 dirhams. In this way, she has helped many artists connect with a new group of enthusiasts. In many ways, Ms Al Suwaidi has helped art and artists flourish in the UAE – through her own works, by encouraging the next generation, and by spreading the fruits of her country’s creativity around the world.





CELEBRATING WOMEN OF
DISTINCTION IN THE UAE



FILMMAKER AND ENTREPRENEUR:
NAYLA AL KHAJA



FILMMAKER AND ENTREPRENEUR:
NAYLA AL KHAJA

WHEN NAYLA AL KHAJA WAS GROWING UP SHE WATCHED FILMS, HUNDREDS OF THEM. HER FATHER WAS A FILM BUFF WITH A COLLECTION OF 700 TITLES FROM AROUND THE WORLD. LOOKING BACK, SHE SAW IT AS INEVITABLE THAT SHE WOULD BECOME A FILMMAKER. TODAY, SHE IS AN ACCOMPLISHED PRODUCER AND DIRECTOR WITH MANY AWARDS TO HER CREDIT, AND AMBITIOUS PLANS TO MAKE THE UAE A REGIONAL CENTRE OF CINEMA.





A burning desire to tell stories through moving pictures has propelled Ms Al Khaja from childhood on, despite the many obstacles she faced along the way because of her gender. ‘I’m extremely ambitious,’ she said in a TEDx Abu Dhabi talk in 2012. ‘So ambitious that every day it’s like a huge burst of universes going on inside. I just want to do everything, all the time.’ For other women who have big desires, she has this advice: ‘If you really love something and you wake up every morning thinking of that one thing that you can’t live without, then make sure you get it.’

Remarkably, Ms Al Khaja has managed to do just that. She graduated from Dubai Women’s College in 1999 with a degree in mass communication. When she received a government scholarship to study at Ryerson University in Toronto, it was a dream come true since the university is renowned for its film studies curriculum. But Ms Al Khaja’s parents had other ideas. They said she could only accept the offer if she got married. So she did. At Ryerson, she took film courses taught by the top instructors in Canada. Because of her particular fondness for horror movies, she did her thesis on ‘The Exorcist’ and graduated in 2005 with a bachelor’s in image studies – film.

Upon her return to the UAE, Ms Al Khaja wasted no time in getting on with her life’s ambition. She wrote and directed her first short film, ‘Arabana’, which was released in 2006. It tells the story of a young girl living in a large house with parents who are too preoccupied with their own concerns to pay attention to her. Consequently, the girl wanders away from the house one day, and into a disturbing encounter.

In her second film, ‘Once’, released in 2009, Ms Al Khaja shows how difficult the search for love can be for a young Emirati woman who chafes at her society’s strict norms and her father’s traditional ways. In 2010, ‘Malal’ continues the writer/director’s exploration of relationships. The short film is the first Emirati production shot in India’s Kerala province and it depicts an Emirati couple on their honeymoon as they face the challenges of an arranged marriage.

In the 2013 production, ‘The Neighbor’, a window is opened on a common feature of life in the UAE: the many complicated interactions between Emiratis and the large expatriate community. Ms Al Khaja returns to the theme of parental neglect in 2016’s ‘Animal’. With



a sociopathic and narcissistic father and a mother who is both selfish and weak, a seven-year-old must find a way to cope, with only the flamboyant house cook to provide comic relief.

Ms Al Khaja’s impressive body of work, seen in more than 40 film festivals, has garnered awards and accolades around the globe. At the Dubai International Film Festival in 2007, she was named Best Emirati Filmmaker for ‘Arabana’. ‘Malal’ and ‘The Neighbor’ also received awards. In addition, in 2005 Ms Al Khaja was named Emirates Woman of the Year by Emirates Woman magazine and Youngest Entrepreneur of the Year at the Global Businesswoman and Leaders Summit Awards. In 2009 she was an official juror for the feature film programme headed by Abbas Kiarostami at the Middle Festival in 2009. The following year, she was a member of the jury for the International Emmy Awards.

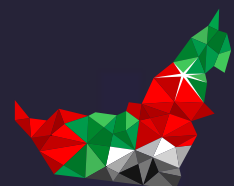
Ms Al Khaja’s ambitions reach beyond her creative endeavours. She has also been a driving force in the UAE’s film industry, establishing D-SEVEN Motion Pictures. This production company makes short films, documentaries, television commercials and corporate videos. D-SEVEN counts among its clients such prestigious brands as Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Vogue, Nike, Nivea, Gucci, LG and Discovery Studios.

Her stature in the world of film was recognised when she was named ambassador for Canon Middle East. She has also been named one of the Top Most Powerful Personalities in Arab Cinema, one of the 100 Most Powerful Arabs Under 40 by Arabian Business magazine, and Visionary of the Year at the 2011 Arabian Business Awards.

Ms Al Khaja has promoted the appreciation of film among others in the UAE by establishing The Scene Club in Dubai in 2007. From just 50 members in its first year the club’s membership has climbed to more than 10,000, with planned branches in Abu Dhabi and Sharjah.

A burning ambition and a flair for storytelling and getting things done has made Ms Al Khaja the most notable woman in the UAE’s growing film industry. She has told difficult stories with a sense of honesty and courage that has earned her awards, admirers and a well-deserved reputation as a rising star.





CELEBRATING WOMEN OF
DISTINCTION IN THE UAE



TAWA BAKERY FOUNDER:
REEM AL SHEMARI



TAWA BAKERY FOUNDER: REEM AL SHEMARI

THE MOST BASIC ELEMENT OF UAE CUISINE IS BREAD, OR 'AYSH' IN COLLOQUIAL ARABIC, A WORD THAT ALSO MEANS LIFE. SO IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT REEM AL SHEMARI CHOSE TO MAKE BREAD THE CENTRE OF HER COMMERCIAL ENDEAVOUR: A BAKERY THAT IS ENTIRELY GLUTEN-FREE. SHE'S A PRIME EXAMPLE OF THE TYPE OF ENTREPRENEUR WHO IS CHANGING THE FACE OF THE BUSINESS WORLD OF THE UAE: YOUNG, ENERGETIC AND WILLING TO EXPAND INTO NEW AREAS OF COMMERCE. SHE IS A SHINING EXAMPLE OF THE BUSINESSWOMAN OF TOMORROW, WILLING TO HAVE BIG DREAMS AND WORKING HARD TO MAKE THEM COME TRUE.





As founder and proprietor of Tawa Bakery in Abu Dhabi, Ms Al Shemari joins a long line of other women who have followed their hopes and dreams, and she gives credit to the country's leaders for creating an environment where women can thrive. 'I'm proud to be an Emirati woman,' she said, 'because I was given a lot of priceless opportunities that I would never have dreamt of. I'm lucky to be living in this "miracle" country that was brought to life by an extraordinary visionary man: the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan. And it continues to be led by exceptional leadership.'

She adds that the country's leaders empower and motivate women, resulting in the rise, year after year, of more women into leadership positions. And yet, she says, there is more to achieve. 'There are many untapped opportunities to be explored and many "firsts" awaiting to be acquired by ambitious women out here.'

Becoming a successful entrepreneur is not easy. Ms Al Shemari says her achievement was made possible by strong support at home. She's grateful for her family's backing from the time she was a child. 'Without the continuous encouragement and faith from my parents, and specifically my father, I wouldn't be where I am today,' she says.

Tawa Bakery came about because it filled a gap on the Abu Dhabi food scene, which lacked a 100 per cent gluten-free eatery until Ms Al Shemari arrived. She had been diagnosed with coeliac disease, which causes adverse effects when foods containing gluten are consumed. Although Ms Al Shemari knew she had to change her diet, she did not want to miss out on the joys of delicious food.

People often think that if something is gluten-free, it must not taste good. Ms Al Shemari wanted to dispel that notion. 'Gluten-free food is very misunderstood,' she says. 'I love food and don't believe a single calorie should be wasted, so even after being diagnosed with coeliac disease I wasn't going to sacrifice taste. I started cooking gluten-free food and my friends thought it was so delicious!' In order to share her tasty gluten-free offerings, a new bakery was born.

Tawa Bakery open its doors in March 2016, the news appropriately announced on the establishment's new Instagram account. Located on Al Muneera Island, Tawa Bakery



offers visitors a bright, tastefully decorated space where they can choose from a large selection of baked goods, or sit at a table and enjoy a variety of meals. Ms Al Shemari has created a place where every item on the menu is delicious and gluten-free.

Culinary influences, like the population of Abu Dhabi, come from East and West. In the baked goods section, one can find baguettes and Arabic bread, cupcakes, pies and sweets familiar to visitors from around the world. On Tawa Bakery's handsomely curated Instagram feed, the baking skills and artistic mastery of the pastry chefs are on full display, with bespoke cakes made in many shapes, including luxury automobiles, cartoon characters and the symbols of beloved English football teams.

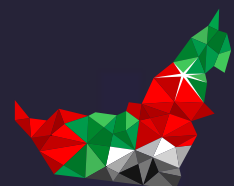
The dining menu is equally tempting and filled with offerings reflecting the cuisines of Europe, America and the Middle East. For breakfast, the offerings include French toast, Belgian waffles, huevos rancheros, Emirati eggs and zaatar manaeesh.

Lunch and dinner choices also span the globe, with a healthy dose of pastas, pizzas, paninis and starters paying homage to Italian cuisine. There are burgers, sandwiches and salads, but every dish is elevated with a top chef's attention to fresh ingredients, careful preparation and sophisticated flavours. There are such unconventional gourmet treats as truffle fries, wild mushroom soup and a cooling watermelon salad than can refresh the soul on the hottest of Gulf summer days.

And who can forget dessert? In addition to the wealth of sweets at the bakery counter, the menu offers a local Emirati favourite: legaymat. Dough balls that have been infused with cardamom and saffron are fried and then tossed in date syrup and sprinkled with sesame seeds, resulting in an irresistible combination of flavours and textures.

Ms Al Shemari's vision was to introduce the people of the capital to the wonderfully delicious possibilities of a gluten-free menu, and the many satisfied customers of Tawa Bakery attest to her success.





CELEBRATING WOMEN OF
DISTINCTION IN THE UAE



CONSULTANT MEDICAL PHYSICIST FOR DUBAI HEALTH AUTHORITY:
DR JAMILA AL SUWAIDI



CONSULTANT MEDICAL PHYSICIST FOR DUBAI HEALTH AUTHORITY:
DR JAMILA AL SUWAIDI

THE NUMBER OF WOMEN WORKING IN SCIENTIFIC FIELDS IS GROWING AROUND THE WORLD, AND DR JAMILA AL SUWAIDI IS ON THE CREST OF THIS WAVE OF SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE UAE. HER IMPRESSIVE EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND, STRONG RECORD OF RESEARCH AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS HAVE GREATLY BENEFITTED THE COUNTRY'S EDUCATIONAL AND MEDICAL SYSTEMS.





As a medical physicist, Dr Al Suwaidi's work involves her with the complex field of medicine in which nuclear physics and human biology intersect. As consultant medical physicist for the Dubai Health Authority (DHA), her expertise is employed to guide the organisation's training of personnel, establishment of treatment protocols and caring for patients.

Medical physicists like Dr Al Suwaidi work in a cutting-edge field in which specialised knowledge is required. Radiation in the field of medicine is used in a number of ways. For example, cancer patients undergoing radiation treatment must be given precise doses, whether from a directed external source or from internally administered ones. Dr Al Suwaidi was at the centre of introducing radioactive iodine treatment to patients in Dubai.

In 2000, Dr Al Suwaidi established the Radiation Protection Unit at Dubai Hospital, and in 2002 she was among those who drafted the UAE's first federal radiation protection law. She was also involved in the creation of a blood radio labelling laboratory employing international standards, the first of its kind in the region. Her work has also involved establishing radiation protection and safety programmes, and quality control programmes in medical imaging and radioiodine therapy for the DHA. Nuclear medicine employs various imaging methods using radioactive materials administered to patients to help physicians observe crucial internal biological functions so that the correct treatment can be prescribed. Medical physicists also work in the field of diagnostic radiology, which uses such tools as x-rays and CT scans to provide images of patients that can be used in diagnosis and treatment of medical conditions.

Dr Al Suwaidi's career in medicine has been long and distinguished. It began when she earned a BSc from UAE University, and an MSc and PhD from Surrey University, UK. She joined the DHA in 1984, and has had a lasting impact on the medical system in Dubai and the UAE through her tireless efforts in education, training, research and administration. She was instrumental in creating the Nuclear Medicine Department and radioiodine therapy service at Dubai Hospital, one of the main facilities of the DHA. In addition, she established the radiation protection and quality control programmes for the radiology and nuclear medicine departments of the DHA.



Dr Al Suwaidi's influence as an educator has been extensive and she has widely shared her expertise in the field of medical physics. She worked alongside others to create the medical physics undergraduate track at her alma mater, UAE University. In addition, she was a guest lecturer in physics there from 2001 to 2004. She was a clinical instructor at the Higher College of Technology (HCT), Dubai Women's College in the field of medical imaging from 1997 to 2003.

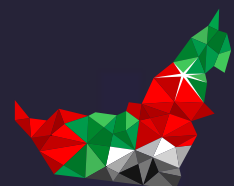
As a top expert in her field in the UAE, she has been one of the country's key representatives in its relations with United Nations agencies, including the World Health Organisation and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which deals with the peaceful use of atomic energy worldwide. In recognition of her work on many initiatives involving radiation safety with the agency, Dr Al Suwaidi was awarded the IAEA Certificate of Merit in 2011.

This is just one of the many awards and honours bestowed on Dr Al Suwaidi. In 1989 and 1995 she received the Sheikh Rashid Award for Sciences from the Dubai government. In 2008 she was part of the team that won Best Technical Project from the Dubai Government Excellence Award Programme. In 2012 she received the UAE Presidential Award for Sciences, and for the 2013–2014 term she won one of the Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum Awards for Medical Sciences.

Dr Al Suwaidi has been active as a researcher in her field, publishing many articles in scientific and medical journals, often collaborating with colleagues in other countries, and participating in conferences and meetings. The focus of her research has been radiation protection and patient radiation dosimetry. She has also helped to organise and host many events, in which her UAE colleagues have had the opportunity to exchange their findings with experts from the region and the rest of the world.

Harnessing the beneficial powers of radioactive elements has been the life's work of Dr Al Suwaidi. She has contributed to her country and her people in many ways: by pressing for advances in nuclear medicine, promoting safety, encouraging international cooperation, teaching a new generation of Emiratis and performing basic research that has the potential to save lives.





CELEBRATING WOMEN OF
DISTINCTION IN THE UAE



PRESIDENT OF THE DUBAI WOMEN ESTABLISHMENT:
SHEIKHA MANAL BINT
MOHAMMED AL MAKTOUM



PRESIDENT OF THE DUBAI WOMEN ESTABLISHMENT:
SHEIKHA MANAL BINT
MOHAMMED AL MAKTOUM

THE PATH TO SUCCESS HAS BEEN THROUGH ART FOR HER HIGHNESS SHEIKHA MANAL BINT MOHAMMED AL MAKTOUM. HER QUEST FOR CREATIVE EXPRESSION HAS HAD HER PLAY MANY ROLES – ARTIST, PATRON, EDUCATION AMBASSADOR AND CHAMPION OF WOMEN IN THE UAE. THROUGH HER EFFORTS, NEW MODES OF EXPRESSION AND ROADS TOWARDS PROFESSIONAL FULFILMENT HAVE BEEN OPENED UP IN HER COUNTRY, AND SHE HAS MADE A NAME FOR HERSELF AS THE MOST PROMINENT PATRON OF THE ARTS IN THE COUNTRY.





As a young girl, Sheikha Manal knew she loved to express herself through art, experimenting in a number of media, including painting and sculpture. The love of art inspired her to encourage others, and in 2006 Sheikha Manal established the Young Artists Award. Attracting entries from around the country, the award has been wildly successful in promoting artistic expression among young people. As a measure of the programme's success, in its tenth year the number of finalists was increased from 50 to 100. In addition, architecture was added to the categories in the awards programme, which also included fine art, photography, multimedia and design. In order to promote creative expression from even younger children, Sheikha Manal established the 'Little Artists Award' in 2012.

On the occasion of the 2016 event, Sheikha Manal said, 'We are pleased to witness the next generation joining numerous 'Young Artist Award' participants who have gone on to become renowned artists in their fields and key contributors to the UAE's ambition to establish itself as a global hub for creative thinking and culture.'

Another way Sheikha Manal promotes art among young people is through her art exchange programme. Through this ambitious endeavour, talented UAE artists have an opportunity to travel abroad to reach out to the world in an exchange of creativity. Many UAE artists have benefitted from this golden opportunity to show their works to international audiences and to receive inspiration from the works of others in galleries, museums and art fairs around the world. The programme is also a tool for fostering intercultural exchange and understanding between the people of the UAE and the rest of the world.

However, Sheikha Manal's leadership is felt far beyond the world of art. She was instrumental in the establishment of the Dubai Women Establishment (DWE) in 2006, and has been its president since that time. Sheikha Manal has noted that the UAE's leaders have paved the way through their wise policies for Emirati women to play a role in the country's development in such areas as civil aviation, security and justice, the diplomatic corps and in business.

The DWE accomplishes its ambitious goals by conducting programmes, holding interactive seminars and training sessions, and presenting forums showing women how they can join

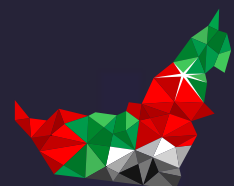
the workforce while honing their skills to fulfil their roles as wives and mothers. Sheikha Manal says that the DWE 'strives to help Emirati women balance stimulating careers with a satisfying family life through the endorsement of appropriate gender-equality policies and initiatives, providing life-long opportunities for training and work and promoting greater participation of women in the economic and political sphere.'

Under Sheikha Manal's leadership, the DWE has established a number of successful projects and initiatives. For example, the Global Women's Forum Dubai is the first international women's forum in the Middle East. It brings together leaders in the public and private sectors with the aim of increasing the participation of women in socio-economic development. The theme of the 2016 forum was 'Let's Innovate!' and it provided a dynamic platform for women from the UAE and the region to network, share ideas and develop strategies for continuing success.

The DWE also initiated a women's majlis in order to offer a means for leaders, decision-makers and potential leaders to discuss pressing topics of the day that relate to working women and the role they can play in their communities. The majlis has always been an important social and political institution in the region, and this new iteration helps women play a larger and more effective role in the fields of work and politics.

The Women Leadership Exchange Program is an innovative endeavour that links women in the UAE with counterparts in Sweden in a mutually beneficial exchange. This cooperative effort aims to utilise the talents in both countries to explore ways to encourage innovation, and promote new avenues of research in the areas of leadership, cross-cultural communication and sustainability. The programme also offers opportunities for mentoring and capacity building, and offers business development support.

Sheikha Manal is the daughter of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, vice president and prime minister of the UAE and ruler of Dubai. She has benefitted under his tutelage and has come into her own, successfully implementing his vision of a country where the full potential of women and girls is needed to attain the highest goals of national development.



CELEBRATING WOMEN OF
DISTINCTION IN THE UAE



FORMER DIRECTOR GENERAL, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY:
DR MARYAM MATAR



FORMER DIRECTOR GENERAL, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY:
DR MARYAM MATAR

IN EACH OF HER MANY ROLES, DR MARYAM MATAR HAS BEEN A GROUNDBREAKING PROFESSIONAL. SHE HAS SHOWN THAT FOR AN INTELLIGENT AND AMBITIOUS WOMAN IN THE UAE WHO WISHES TO BECOME A LEADER IN THE FIELDS OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE, THE SKY IS THE LIMIT. THROUGH HER WORK AND THE ORGANISATIONS SHE HAS ESTABLISHED, DR MATAR HAS MADE THE UAE A HEALTHIER PLACE TO LIVE.





Dr Matar received a BA in Medicine and Surgery in 1998 from Dubai Medical College. She went on to pursue a one-year Family Medicine Residency at Rashid Hospital. Two weeks before her final exams, she was looking forward to joining the medical care system of her country. Then tragedy struck. Her father died suddenly of a blocked artery, a condition, she would later say that 'could have been prevented with proper medical care'. In her grief, Dr Matar contemplated not taking her exams, but her colleagues convinced her of the importance of family physicians to those they treat.

'The death of my father,' said Dr Matar, 'was a turning point in my life, following which I discovered the importance of taking the initiative and pushing for change on all levels, mostly at individual but also social, political and regulatory [levels].' Consequently, Dr Matar has become an influential leader on the national level of her country's health and social welfare system.

Dr Matar has devoted a large portion of her time to become a leader in the field of genetic diseases, which are very prevalent in the UAE and other Gulf countries. In order to address this serious public health challenge, she established and directed two major non-profit organisations: the UAE Down's Syndrome Association (UAEDSA) and the UAE Genetic Diseases Association (UAEFDA).

UAEDSA was established in 2006 by ministerial decree to serve people with Down's syndrome in the UAE. The association has a wide-ranging programme to promote and facilitate the inclusion and empowerment of people with Down's syndrome by maximising their skills and general health. To accomplish these objectives, UAEDSA runs a number of awareness-raising initiatives, oversees programmes that offer assistance to families, and operates rehabilitation projects. In 2009, the association opened a rehabilitation centre aimed at improving communication and movement skills so that people with Down's syndrome of all ages can better take part in educational, social and vocational spheres.

UAEFDA was also established in 2006. The association seeks to prevent and control genetic disorders. It has an extensive programme to raise awareness, aimed in particular at school-age Emiratis. In addition, UAEFDA offers screening for genetic blood disorders, health education, genetic testing for couples who wish to marry and public screening

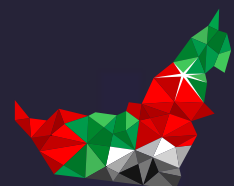
using highly trained experts and cutting-edge technology. Dr Matar and her colleagues have spent much time and energy educating the public about genetic diseases, visiting schools, workplaces and conferences.

Dr Matar's message is that genetic diseases are a serious health issue, but people in the UAE can combat them by educating themselves, getting screened and making healthy lifestyle choices. UAEFDA has established laboratories around the country to help in this daunting endeavour. Dr Matar has ensured that the highest quality is ensured by conforming to the standards of international organisations, and having laboratories overseen by top experts. In 2008, the association under the leadership of Dr Matar launched a campaign to eliminate Thalassaemia in the country. This is an inherited disease that causes abnormalities in the blood, including anaemia.

Dr Matar serves as deputy chairperson for Dubai Cares, a philanthropic organisation which helps children around the world attain access to quality education. She is also a board member of the Marriage Fund, the Awqaf and Minors Affairs Foundation, Dubai Women Establishment, Damas International Limited and the Canadian University of Dubai.

In 2008, Dr Matar became director general of the Dubai government's Community Development Authority (CDA), a position that she held until November 2016, which is tasked with implementing the social development goals of the emirate's Strategic Plan 2015. At the time of her appointment, Dr Matar said that through the organisations set up by the CDA 'we aim to create a strong social safety net for everyone living in Dubai and enhance social cohesion between different nationalities and groups as well as promote our national identity'.

Dr Matar was the first Emirati woman to hold the post of undersecretary to the minister of health. In addition, she has received many awards and accolades during the course of her impressive career. Dr Matar is not only a respected and effective leader in her field. She is also an accomplished role model for the many talented young Emirati girls who hope to make a difference in the field of public health and social welfare.



CELEBRATING WOMEN OF
DISTINCTION IN THE UAE



LEADING PLASTIC SURGEON:
DR BUTHAINAH AL SHUNNAR



LEADING PLASTIC SURGEON:
DR BUTHAINAH AL SHUNNAR

IN THE UAE THERE ARE NOTABLE WOMEN IN MANY FIELDS, DEMONSTRATING THAT SUCCESS DEPENDS NOT ON ONE'S GENDER, BUT ON ONE'S WILLINGNESS TO WORK HARD AND ACHIEVE A HIGH LEVEL OF SKILL AND KNOWLEDGE. DR BUTHAINAH AL SHUNNAR IS A LEADER IN HER FIELD. SHE IS THE FIRST FEMALE EMIRATI PLASTIC SURGEON AND THE ONLY PLASTIC SURGEON IN THE UAE WHO IS CERTIFIED BY THE AMERICAN BOARD OF PLASTIC SURGERY. SHE BRINGS TO THE PRACTICE OF PLASTIC SURGERY NOT ONLY THE TRAINING TO TRANSFORM THE BODY, BUT ALSO THE EMOTIONAL INSIGHT AND EMPATHY TO BE MINDFUL OF THE HEART.





Medical practitioners in all fields are learning that people are complex, and that healing and prevention of disease must involve not only the body but also the mind. This is the type of holistic, personal approach employed by Dr Al Shunnar. In describing the work of her plastic surgery practice, she says: 'Our goal is to provide you with the highest level of surgical skills and artistry, combined with a warm and compassionate environment. Our entire staff is devoted to helping you achieve your goals from both an aesthetic and personal perspective.'

Dr Al Shunnar's training and experience set her apart in this difficult field. She graduated in 1991 with honours from the Royal College of Surgeons in Dublin, and received five years of general surgery training at the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, US, and the George Washington University Hospital in Washington DC. She then completed specialised training in plastic surgery at the Johns Hopkins Hospital, ranked by US News & World Report as the best overall hospital in America for 21 consecutive years (1991–2011). After working as a consultant plastic surgeon and as an instructor at a medical college for several years in the US, she returned to the UAE.

After devoting two years as a consultant plastic surgeon at Sheikh Khalifa Medical City in Abu Dhabi, Dr Al Shunnar founded her Dubai clinic in 2005. Here she performs cosmetic and reconstructive surgery, with special expertise in breast surgery, facial surgery, body sculpting, hand surgery, microsurgery and cancer reconstruction. The practice also contains a medical spa, which offers patients medical-grade anti-ageing treatments, products and counselling to help them establish a scientifically-based regimen to follow in their everyday lives.

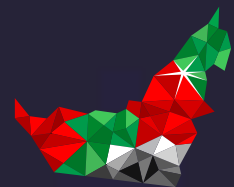
Dr Al Shunnar is certified by both the American Board of Plastic Surgery and the American Board of Surgery. In addition, she is a fellow of the American College of Surgeons and a member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons and the American Medical Association. She was also elected to Alpha Omega Alpha, the national medical honour society of the US.

In addition to her qualifications and experience, Dr Al Shunnar shows leadership in her field by publishing articles in respected journals, attending professional conferences and holding membership of several professional organisations. She is a board member of the Emirates Plastic Surgery Society and acts as a voice of experience and compassion in her community.

Practicing in Dubai has its challenges. According to one estimate, there are more than 1000 plastic surgery practitioners in the region resulting in intense competition and featuring a wide range of qualifications and motivations. What sets Dr Al Shunnar apart are the values she holds. These mean that she provides unique and customised services based on a holistic analysis of the patients' needs, lifestyle and future goals; restores dignity to those affected by diseases such as breast cancer by providing the best options and services for reconstruction in a warm, friendly, confidential environment; and ensures patients are offered consultations and services based on what is best for them.

Overall, Dr Al Shunnar demonstrates empathy and emotional insight and believes plastic surgery can be a useful tool not only for aesthetic enhancement but also for restoring dignity for those who have been affected by unfortunate circumstances. She has performed many reconstructive procedures for patients who have been affected by cancer. And in the past, during her training, she helped disfigured children gain hope and confidence.

Fluent in English, Arabic and Urdu, Dr Al Shunnar is able to offer her expert care to a broad range of Dubai's diverse population. She has won professional accolades from her peers and the gratitude of her many patients, who have benefitted from her sharp mind, skilful hands and warm heart.



CELEBRATING WOMEN OF
DISTINCTION IN THE UAE



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AFFAIRS,
EXECUTIVE AFFAIRS AUTHORITY:
REEM YOUSIF AL SHEMARI



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AFFAIRS,
EXECUTIVE AFFAIRS AUTHORITY:
REEM YOUSIF AL SHEMARI

AS PEOPLE EVERYWHERE SPEND EVER MORE TIME IN THE DIGITAL WORLD, COMMUNICATING IN THIS OFTEN CROWDED AND CONFUSING ENVIRONMENT BECOMES MORE CHALLENGING BUT ALSO MUCH MORE IMPORTANT. REEM YOUSIF AL SHEMARI HAS BECOME A LEADER IN BRANDING AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS, HELPING ABU DHABI CREATE A DISTINCTIVE IDENTITY AND A COMPELLING MESSAGE THAT RESONATES WITH EMIRATIS AND PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD.



Ms Al Shemari has long experience in government and communications. At Zayed University, she earned a bachelor's degree in business marketing and an executive master's degree in business administration. Her first position after she finished her studies was as researcher in the Socio-Economic Centre of Zayed University. Afterwards, she moved to the communications department of Mubadala, the Abu Dhabi government's leading strategic investment company. She was the organisation's first female Emirati employee, thus paving the way for others.

As executive director of strategic communications affairs for the Executive Affairs Authority (EAA), Ms Al Shemari is in charge of messaging strategies and campaigns that further the goals of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, chairman of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council, crown prince and deputy supreme commander of the UAE Armed Forces.

The EAA provides in-depth analysis and high-level policy advice in a number of areas important to Sheikh Mohammed in his role as executive council chairman. Under Ms Al Shemari's direction, the Strategic Communications Affairs (SCA) unit of the EAA helps transform complex matters of policy into clear and concise narratives.

For example, the SCA unit has played a primary role in producing not only major planning and policy documents for Abu Dhabi, but also for the UAE as a whole. These have included the Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030 plan and the Policy of the United Arab Emirates for the Evaluation and Potential Development of Peaceful Nuclear Energy. In the area of foreign affairs, the unit coordinates with several government agencies as it designs and implements international diplomatic initiatives, such as Sheikh Mohammed's impressive work with the United Nations on combating human trafficking. The unit has also shared its expertise with Abu Dhabi Motorsports Management, the Abu Dhabi Urban Planning Council and the Emirates Nuclear Energy Corporation.

In 2007, Ms Al Shemari played a leading role in creating and promoting Abu Dhabi's brand. The SCA unit established the Office of the Brand of Abu Dhabi (OBAD) in order to create a fresh and compelling symbol and message to promote the values that characterise the UAE's capital, and Ms Al Shemari served as its general manager. Under her leadership,

OBAD went on to create brands for the 40th UAE National Day Celebrations, Yas Marina Circuit, FIFA Club World Cup 2009 and 2010, the UAE President's Cup for Arabian Horses series and the Abu Dhabi Art Festival.

Ms Al Shemari's leadership at OBAD also resulted in the creation of Abu Dhabi Events, an online portal that organises happenings in the capital. Visitors can click on different categories to find time, place and other information. Categories include arts, culture, music, sports and business. She also helped with the communications strategy for the annual 'Abu Dhabi Through Your Eyes' photography competition. In 2012, OBAD was folded into the General Secretariat of the Executive Council of the Government of Abu Dhabi.

Indeed, Ms Al Shemari has been involved in the success of almost all the high-profile events that have raised the reputation of Abu Dhabi over the last decade. She has contributed her expertise to the branding of the Abu Dhabi Awards, an annual event that presents individuals with the emirate's highest civilian honour. Ms Al Shemari helps promote Abu Dhabi's cultural heritage by overseeing the Qasr Al Hosn Festival, which celebrates the capital's oldest fort and the ancestral home of the Al Nahyan ruling family.

Ms Al Shemari's experience and expertise is sought by a number of organisations whose boards she sits on, including the Media Zone Authority Abu Dhabi, twofour54, Emirates Red Crescent and Emirates Foundation for Youth Development. She also serves on the advisory boards of the Abu Dhabi Music and Arts Foundation and Flash Entertainment. She is a member of the Qasr Al Hosn Executive Committee, the UAE National Day Official Ceremony Committee, the Sheikh Zayed Memorial Committee and the Zayed University National Advisory Board for the College of Business Sciences.

The face that Abu Dhabi shows to the world is welcoming, tolerant, respectful and dynamic, a brand shaped in large part by the creative vision of Ms Al Shemari. She has marshalled the eye of an artist, the storytelling skills of a writer and the keen economic sense of an entrepreneur to make brands and messages that tell the story of the emirate with intelligence and compelling narrative force.

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