

## **Women Leadership Digital Storytelling Project**



**Text by Nahla Kaoutar. Photos provided by the interviewee, Siham Garoid**

This story is part of the Women Leadership Digital Storytelling Project led by the Stevens Initiative in collaboration with the Faculty of Arts and Humanities BenM'sik, Hassan II University, Casablanca, and Kennesaw State University, Atlanta.

Nahla kaoutar is a third-year University student. She is pursuing a BA in English Studies at the University of Hassan II, Casablanca, Morocco. She intends to join a Master's degree in Moroccan-American Studies.

## **Siham Garoid: From a Law Degree to Arabic Calligraphy.**



Mrs. Siham Garoid was born and raised in Casablanca, Morocco. After being conferred a law degree in 2013, she decided to study the art of Arabic Calligraphy in the Academy of Traditional Arts. Mrs. Siham Garoid is currently working at Hassan II Mosque Foundation as a teacher of Arabic Calligraphy for children and adults. She says that her love and passion for Arabic Calligraphy is developing every day. Mrs. Siham Garoid describes herself as someone who seeks to express love, promote peace, and encourage positive thoughts through art.



Mrs. Siham Garoid maintains that her work conditions have greatly changed because of the pandemic. She states that the art of calligraphy requires organizing face-to-face workshops and meetings that she has not been able to do. She adds that although women in this domain have increased in recent years, men still dominate. Mrs. Siham Garoid asserts that she has organised exhibitions and training courses to both girls and women who desire to study and forge a career in the art of calligraphy. Her love for the Arabic script calligraphy and her ambition to develop her professional career have helped her to launch a design business brand called Calli Design.



Understatement is one of the most prominent challenges that she faces as a woman. However, she emphasizes that having determination and ambition is vital to impose herself as a single woman in the art and business of calligraphic design. Even though she still considers herself a novice in the business, she thinks that she has started to accomplish some of her dreams: independence and aesthetic style. She has been trying to retrieve it from the world of painting. She says that her family is her biggest supporter, but this does not imply that she has not faced opposition from them, as she says, “Freedom is not given- it’s taken”.