

Dr. Diane Shammass from the University of Southern California visits LERC

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Reported by Elie Nabhan

Dr. Diane Shammass received her PhD in International and Urban Higher Education, with a specialization in Arab American and Muslim American studies, in 2009, from the Rossier School of Education, University of Southern California. Her dissertation on the topic of inter-ethnic relations, campus racial climates and institutional sense of belonging among Arab and Muslim community college students was nominated for the dissertation of the year award for 2008-2009.

Dr. Shammass is of Lebanese ancestry. On her paternal side, her grandparents emigrated to the United States in 1912 from the northern Lebanese villages of Amyoun and Bishmezzine.

In her biography Dr. Shammass explained that her father, Nickolas Nasim Shammass, “was a civic leader who built substantial coalitions with the African American and Mexican American communities. He became the first president of the Los Angeles chapter of the World Lebanese Cultural Union and in 1980 was honored as “Man of the Year” by the Lebanon-Syrian American Society of Greater Los Angeles”.

She attributes her interest in Middle Eastern politics to her father and her inspiration to Souheil Chammas, his cousin, and his “dedicated diplomatic service as an ambassador and leader of the Lebanese delegation to the 1992 Madrid talks”.



Dr. D. Shammass pictured at the Lebanon Migration Museum at NDU (Feb 2011).

Dr. Shammaas visited LERC and met with LERC's Director Ms. Guita Hourani and LERC's Acting Director, Dr. George Abdelnoor, regarding her interest in teaching in Lebanon.

Dr. Shammaas was then shown the vast array of materials collected in LERC's electronic archives and taken on a tour of the Lebanon Migration Museum at NDU, both of which she described as a "a treasure trove" and "so interesting for emigrants all over."