

Passion for Justice



Arezo Yazd

Awarded '03, '04, '06, '07, '08



I am Kurdish. I am a Muslim.

And I am a Woman.

The first weeks of my life were spent in jail with my mother who was rounded up with other secular political activists by the Ayatollah Khomeini's police. We immigrated to the US when I was three and started over.

Being a politically active Muslim woman was as dangerous then as it is now. *My Kurdish heritage has helped me know who I am, where I come from and who I want to be.*

My mother's relentless courage has always inspired me. I am the first woman in my family to go to college.

As a UC Berkeley undergraduate and as a Berkeley law student my commitment has been *to relieve the oppression of the Kurds, women in the Islamic world and minorities globally.*

I volunteered for Survivors International, the East Bay Sanctuary and the Kurdish Youth Forum. I was a fellow for U.S. Women Without Borders assisting victims of sex trafficking who sought asylum here. I was executive editor of the Berkeley Journal of International Law and editor in chief of the Middle East and Islamic Law Journal. I served as an extern for Senator Feingold on the Senate Judiciary Committee, did grassroots voter registration in Texas and North Carolina last year, *and am now working at Human Rights Watch in Washington D.C..*