
Profile



BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF DR. ELIAS A. ZERHOUNI

A Contemporary Muslim Scientist

National Institutes of Health Director, Elias A. Zerhouni, M.D., leads the nation's medical research agency and oversees the NIH's 27 institutes and centers with more than 17,000 employees and a fiscal year 2004 budget of \$28 billion. Dr. Zerhouni, a well-respected leader in the fields of Radiology and Medicine, has spent his career providing clinical, scientific, and administrative leadership. President George W. Bush appointed Dr. Zerhouni to serve as the 15th Director of the National Institutes of Health in May 2002.

Prior to joining the NIH, Dr. Zerhouni served as Executive Vice Dean of Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Chair of the Russell H. Morgan Department of Radiology and Radiological Science, Martin Donner Professor of Radiology, and Professor of Biomedical Engineering. Before that, he was Vice Dean for research at Johns Hopkins.

Dr. Zerhouni was born in Nedroma, Algeria and came to the United States at age 24, hav-

ing earned his medical degree at the University of Algiers School of Medicine in 1975. After completing his residency in Diagnostic Radiology at Johns Hopkins in 1978 as Chief Resident, he served as Assistant Professor in 1979 and Associate Professor in 1985. Between 1981 and 1985 he was in the Department of Radiology at Eastern Virginia Medical School and its affiliate DePaul Hospital. In 1988, Dr. Zerhouni returned to Johns Hopkins where he was appointed Director of the MRI Division, and then was appointed Full Professor in 1992, becoming the Chairman of the Radiology Department in January 1996.

In 1985, Dr. Zerhouni was a consultant to the White House under President Ronald Reagan. In 1988, he was a consultant to the World Health Organization. He served on the National Cancer Institute's Board of Scientific Advisors from 1998-2002. Since 2000, Dr. Zerhouni has been a member of the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine.

A resident of Baltimore, he has won several awards for his research, including a Gold Medal from the American Roentgen Ray Society for CT

research and two Paul Lauterbur Awards for MRI research. His research in imaging led to advances in Computerized Axial Tomography (CAT scanning) and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) that resulted in 157 peer-reviewed publications and eight patents. Dr. Zerhouni received the honorary title Doctor Emeritus of the University of Algiers in 2005.

In His Own Words

I was one of eight children born in the small mountain town of Nedroma, which is located on the western border of French Algeria. Early on, my father taught me mathematics and physics. I became very interested in Medicine because I had an uncle who was a radiologist. I attended medical school at the University of Algiers, and came to the United States when I was 24 to pursue a residency in Radiology at the Johns Hopkins University Hospital.

I have practiced Medicine for about 30 years, most of which was spent at Johns Hopkins. In time, I became Head of the Department of Radiology and Executive Vice Dean of the School of Medicine. In 2002, President Bush nominated me to the position of Director of the National Institutes of Health, part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. I was confirmed by the U.S. Senate in May 2002.

As a practicing Muslim, I believe in the teachings of the Quran, for example, that through knowledge you can improve not just medicine, but the lot of man. The mission of the National Institutes of Health is to advance knowledge about medical care and diseases that affect people across the world.

I feel my work in Medicine and at NIH is profoundly connected to my belief in Islam, and continues the honorable tradition of contributions to medical science by Muslim scholars like Abu Bakr Mohammad Ibn Zakariya al-Razi (also known as Rhazes, 864-930 AD). Twelve years ago, I became a U.S. citizen. When I first arrived in the United States as an immigrant, everyone told me, "We're all immigrants here; we're all from different places, and we all meld together." I loved that enthusiasm and heartfelt sharing. I have felt totally supported and embraced by the people here.

I don't think there is any country in the world like the United States where different people from different countries are accepted and welcomed as members of a society and as good citizens. The tolerance and support I have received is a continuing inspiration for me, both as an American and as a Muslim.

The Islamic Center of Long Island in Westbury, New York, honored Dr. Elias Zerhouni in 2003 with its award of "Rising to The Extraordinary" in the field of Medicine. The above message was sent by Dr. Zerhouni on that occasion.

Dr. Zerhouni has participated in the annual Islamic Medical Association convention in Washington and its flagship journal *JIMA* is pleased to present this profile of Dr. Elias Zerhouni.

Submitted by Dr. Faroque Ahmed Khan, Professor of Medicine, State University of New York, Stony Brook; Master, American College of Physicians; member, IMANA Board of Regents; member, Majlis Al-Shura, Islamic Society of North America; President, Islamic Center of Long Island; Associate Editor, *JIMA*