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Rajaâ Cherkaoui El Moursli, an exceptional scientific career that started in Grenoble

on the March 18, 2015

Research, International

Five exceptional women scientists awarded by the L'Oréal-UNESCO Foundation

**Five exceptional women scientists from five different continents received the L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Award on March 18th, 2015 in Paris. One of them, Professor Rajaâ Cherkaoui El Moursli, started her scientific career in Grenoble. The University of Grenoble was the springboard to her exceptional scientific career!**

Rajaâ Cherkaoui El Moursli pursued her graduate studies leading to a PhD in Physical Sciences at the Joseph Fourier University in Grenoble. These early research work within the context of her PhD was conducted on heavy ion physics in the LPSC ("*Laboratoire de Physique subatomique et cosmologie*") research laboratory of Grenoble.

Rajaâ Cherkaoui El Moursli is being honoured for her key contribution to one of the greatest discoveries in physics: proof of the existence of the Higgs Boson, the particle responsible for the creation of mass in the universe.

A true pioneer, Rajaâ Cherkaoui El Moursli had to overcome a number of daunting obstacles to pursue a career in science. "*The first challenge was to convince my father to allow me to go to France, to Grenoble, for graduate studies. At that time, Moroccan society was still quite conservative, and most girls didn't leave home until they got married.*" Fortunately for science, two factors fuelled her determination to follow her dream: a dedicated high school teacher who encouraged her and Neil Armstrong's first steps on the moon, a scientific wonder, which filled her with awe.

Nicknamed the "research activist", she dedicates much of her time and energy to raising the level of scientific research in her country and has been instrumental in improving Moroccan healthcare by creating the 1st master's degree in medical physics.



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