

*Interview transcript*

**Nour El-Afandi**

**Rawya El Hagim**

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My interviewee's name is Rawya El-Hagim, she was born in 21/7/1967 in Al Giza, Egypt. She is the wife of DR. Amr Ayad, and the mother of three children. She got her political science degree from The American University in Cairo (AUC) in 1986, and currently she is unemployed.

The point of the interview is to get some idea about the students' life at The American University in Cairo (AUC) a few decades ago, to be able to compare it to the student's current life at AUC. Accordingly I chose my interviewee, as she went to the AUC herself back in the 1980s, and she has three kids who went and still go to The AUC. Through the interview, Mrs. Hagim talked about the academic life at AUC, the extra curriculum activities and the opportunities of students to have a year or a semester abroad.

Afandi: Hi, How are you?

Hagim: Fine thank you

Afandi: Would you please tell us a bit about yourself?

Hagim: Yes, My name is Rawya Al Hagim, I graduated from AUC in 1986, major political science, and I'm a housewife and I have three children.

Afandi: Who happen to go to the AUC as well.

Hagim: Yeah, the three of them go to the AUC.

Afandi: About your college years, what is the one experience or the one memory that you will never forget?

Hagim: Actually I can't recall a certain experience or a certain memory, but the whole memory, the whole college years were great really, the atmosphere was great, it was these days The AUC was small, everybody knew each other, all the professors, you know, knew us by name. It was much different than now, so the whole experience was a good experience, which I remember very well.

Afandi: You still have friends from college.

Hagim: Yes a lot of friends from college yes.

Afandi: Okay, and what is the one thing that you regret the most or what would you do differently if you go back in time?

Hagim: Yes, I was not very active, I mean we had a great social life, a lot of friends, but I was not active. There were clubs these days, the Student Union, The MAL [Model Arab League], and so for, there were some clubs, not a lot like these days, but there were many activities, but I was not active in activities. I regret, afterwards I regretted

that I was not really active, I did not involve myself more in, you know, social work and clubs, I think I missed that.

Afandi: Okay, and about the academic life, nowadays we have like this website or this Facebook group, it's called AUC Rate professors, where students rate the professors and ask one another if they recommend taking a certain course with this professor, if he is an easy grader or tough grader, and so on. In your days how did you pick the professor or the course?

Hagim, No we did not have of course websites, and it was very different those days we did not have computers, nothing of that sort, but we, it was word of mouth, you know, the students ask and they tell each other only take with this professor or this one is an easy grader.

Afandi: So you did have tough graders.

Hagim: We did have this attitude, yeah yeah of course, and students are students everywhere at all times, you know. But if you are a serious student you want the good professor, the really combative professor whether he is a tough grader or easy grader, but that was, a lot of students, you know, went for course for the easy grader like these days.

Afandi: Yeah I see, and as I mentioned you do have three kids, or teenagers who went to AUC.

Hagim: Yes yes

Afandi: what do you think is the difference between your experience and their experience?

Hagim: I think in my experience, the positive thing was that the AUC was smaller as I told you before, and of course closer to everywhere, and it was easy to go, and for example if you have a gap you can go home and come back again, we all knew each other, but I think their experience is better in certain sense, they are more outgoing they are more exposed to everything, they do more activities, my three children, they are active, you know, in different clubs, they like to be very active, they have more freedom of expression, if they do not like something they say it, in our days you know we were more conservative. So these days, you know, there is more freedom.

Afandi: And I heard that your daughter is travelling a year abroad.

Hagim: Yes yes, this too is a great experience which was not, it was, I really do not know if there were people who went, there were students who travel abroad, went to courses abroad

Afandi: It was not that come.

Hagim: I really do not know, cause I never thought about it but even if it was, it was on a very small scale, but nowadays I think this is one of the great experiences for students. You know my two sons, each of them, went a year abroad, and they went to Los Anglos for summer courses, and my daughter too is going to Washington next year for a year, I think this is a very enriching experience.

Afandi: So you are happy about it.

Hagim: Yeah I am happy about it, it was not common in our days, it is one of the positive things now.

Afandi: Okay one last question, what is your advice to current AUCians.

Hagim: I advise them to take their academics more seriously, I mean they are more expressive, they are more active, they are in many ways, they are better than we were, but I advice them to be more serious about their academics.

Afandi: Okay thank you

Hagim: You are welcomed.