The 1st International Day for Women and Girls in Science

FATIMA AL FIHRI AND THE OLDEST UNIVERSITY OF AL QUARAOUYINE

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According to Dr. Abdelhadi Tazi, a national historian, Fatima dedicated her wealth with the approval of the Idrissi king Yahya I to build the mosque and the “Madarsa”. As a pious Muslim woman, Fatima made an oath to stay fasting until completing the development of the mosque and made her first prayer within the mosque in gratitude to Allah. The Mosque and “Madarsa” were achieved two years later. It’s said that the XIIth century cartographer Mohammad Al-Idrissi, whose maps helped European exploration in the Renaissance, lived sometime in Fez, suggesting that he may have worked or studied at Al Quaraouiyine. The Quaraouiyine has produced renewed scholars who influenced the academic history of the Muslim world. Among these are Ibn Rushayd al-Sabti (d. 1321), Mohammed Ibn al-Hajj al-Abdari al-Fasi (d. 1336), Abu Imran al-Fasi (d. 1015), the theorist of Maliki Islamic jurisprudence and the famous explorer Leo Africanus. Pioneer scholars like Al-Idrissi, Ibn al-Arabi, Ibn Khaldun, Ibn al-Khatib and Al-Bitruiji were either students or lecturers in the Qurawiyyine University. The Belgian Nicolas Cleynaerts, Dutchman Golius and Pope Sylvester II were among Christian scholars visiting Al Quaraouiyine. In 1947, under protectorate, the “madarsa” was considered as a part of the state educational system, and in 1963, it was finally transformed by a Royal decree after independence into an institution under the supervision of the Ministry of education. Modern textbooks were introduced and the professional training of the teachers improved. Following the reforms, Al Quaraouiyine was officially renamed “University of Al Quaraouiyine” in 1965.
The most admirable thing about Fatima Al Fihriya is undoubtedly her vision. She decided to use her wealth in a way that would benefit the society in the long term. She died in 880 CE leaving to Morocco, the Muslim world and all the Humanity one of the leading religious and educational centers. Al Quaraouiyine University is still in operation and is one of the highly appreciated universities in Morocco. It had made the reputation of the imperial city of Fez worldwide, as a cultural and traditional Moroccan city.

REFERENCES
1 http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/oldest-university