

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE5672

Siddique, Rabia

(1971 -)

Born 1 January, 1971, Perth Western Australia Australia

Occupation Barrister, Human rights lawyer, Lawyer, Military lawyer, Public speaker, Solicitor

Summary

Rabia Siddique is a criminal and human rights lawyer, a retired British Army officer, a former terrorism and war crimes prosecutor, a professional speaker, trainer, MC, facilitator and published author.

In 2006 she was awarded a Queen's commendation for her human rights work in Iraq and in 2009 was the Runner Up for Australian Woman of the Year UK.

More recently Rabia was named as one of the 2014 Telstra Business Women's Award Finalists and one of the 100 most influential women in Australia by Westpac and the Australian Financial Review. She was also announced as a finalist for the 2016 Australian of the Year Awards.

After starting life as a criminal defence lawyer and youngest ever Federal prosecutor in Western Australia, Rabia moved to the UK in 1998 where she eventually commissioned as a Legal Officer in the British Army in 2001.

In a terrifying ordeal that garnered worldwide attention, along with a male colleague, Rabia assisted with the rescue of two Special Forces soldiers from Iraqi insurgents in Basra. Her male colleague received a Military Cross for outstanding bravery, while Rabia's part in the incident was covered up by the British Army and Government. In a fight for justice she brought a landmark discrimination case against the UK Ministry of Defence, and won. She went on to become a Crown Advocate in the British Counter Terrorism Division, which saw her prosecuting Al Qaeda terrorists, hate crimes and advising on war crimes prosecutions in The Hague.

Please click on 'Details' below to read an essay written by Rabia Siddique for the Trailblazing Women and the Law Project.

Details

The following additional information was provided by Rabia Siddique and is reproduced with permission in its entirety.

Rabia Siddique was born in Perth, Australia in 1971 and spent the first five years of her life in India. She is the eldest child of an Indian Muslim father and an Australian mother. In 1976 her family migrated to Perth where she then grew up, was educated and remained until her mid twenties.

Rabia's first experiences of social inequality and injustice were at a young age when she witnessed first-hand the difficulties and discrimination faced by migrants in conservative 1970s suburban Australia. At the tender and vulnerable age of nine she also experienced abuse for the first time, which quickly robbed her of her childhood and her innocence. These experiences undoubtedly informed decisions and choices Rabia later made in life.

Rabia obtained a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws degrees from the University of Western Australia and started her legal career at Legal Aid WA, where she practised predominantly as a criminal defence lawyer. She then moved to the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions, where she became one of the youngest federal prosecutors in Australia.

In 1998 Rabia moved to the United Kingdom with the intention of expanding her legal practice to the fields of International Humanitarian Law and International Criminal Law.

In September 2001, after re-qualifying as Solicitor Advocate of England and Wales and travelling through Eastern Africa, Europe and South America, Rabia commissioned as a Legal Officer in the British Army, a rather unexpected career choice! Her career in the Army took her to England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Germany, Italy and the Middle East.

Rabia later became the Army's recruitment 'poster girl' by promoting equality and diversity within the British Armed Forces. In a terrifying ordeal, whilst deployed to Iraq in 2005 Rabia, along with a male colleague, assisted with the rescue of two Special Forces soldiers from Iraqi insurgents during a hostage situation that garnered worldwide attention.

After the Iraq hostage incident Rabia's male colleague was awarded a Military cross for outstanding bravery for his part in the incident, while Rabia's involvement was covered up by the British Army and Tony Blair's Government. In her fight for justice she brought a successful landmark race and sex discrimination case against the UK Ministry of Defence.

In 2008 Rabia left the British Armed Forces and went on to become a Crown Advocate in the British Counter Terrorism Division of the Crown Prosecution Service, which involved working on some of the most high profile terrorism and hate crime prosecutions, as well as advising on war crimes cases. This role also took Rabia to the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

In 2008 Rabia and her husband welcomed their precious triplet sons into the world. Parenting triplets was to become Rabia's biggest and most rewarding challenge yet!

In 2011 Rabia decided to move to back to Australia in order to provide her family with a safe, balanced and healthy lifestyle. So far the return to Australia has not disappointed! Rabia worked as a Senior Government Lawyer and inHouse Counsel for both the Corruption and Crime Commission of WA and more recently Legal Counsel to the Commissioner of WA Police, whilst also juggling tutoring and guest lecturing commitments at the University of WA.

In 2014 Rabia transitioned from a part-time to full time professional speaker and facilitator, following the publication of her best-selling book, 'Equal Justice'. In a relatively short period of time Rabia has gained an International reputation as a passionate human rights advocate and inspiring motivational speaker. She has appeared in various television, print and radio interviews in Australia, New Zealand and the UK, and the focus of her career is now on promoting Women in Leadership, resilience, values based leadership, equality and diversity in our workplaces and communities. She is passionate about the transformative effect of education, particular for girls, and sees education as the vaccine against oppression, violence and ignorance.

Rabia speaks English, French (conversational), Spanish (poorly) and Arabic (worse)! She has run the London marathon and walked a one and a half marathon for charity, undertaken human rights and community aid work in the Middle East, South America, South East Asia and Australia, was awarded a Queen's Commendation for her humanitarian work in Iraq in 2006 and was Runner Up Australian Woman of the Year UK in 2009.

In 2014 Rabia was a finalist in the Telstra Australian Business Women's Awards and was named as one of Australia's 100 most influential women. In October last year Rabia received a standing ovation from 1700 people at her TEDx talk entitled 'Courage Under Fire' where she spoke about the power we all have as individuals to create the change we wish to see in this world. In March 2015 Rabia was nominated for the WA Women Lawyer of the Year Award and the work she has done in the area of equality and diversity was used as a case study at the most recent UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York.

Rabia is a member of the Australian and British Red Cross, UN Women Australia, Law Society of Western Australia Equal Opportunities and Human Rights Committee, an Associate Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management (WA) and a member of the International Institute for Humanitarian Law. She is also an Ambassador of a number of Women and Children's based charities and a Board Member of Wesley College, Perth.

Rabia was recently appointed as a Director of the International Foundation of Non-Violence.

Published resources

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Book

Equal Justice: My Journey As A Woman, A Soldier And A Muslim, Siddique, Rabia, 2013

Site Exhibition

Australian Women Lawyers as Active Citizens, Trailblazing Women Lawyers Project Team, 2016,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/lawyers>

Author Details

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Digital resources



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