

Special Sadat Forum
Remembering Jehan Sadat (1933-2021)
Thursday October 28, 2021

Welcoming remarks by **President Darryll Pines** of the University of Maryland
President Jimmy Carter and Mrs. Rosalynn Carter,
Message read by **Gregory Ball**, Dean of the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences
Opening remarks by **Ambassador Motaz Zahran**, Egypt's Ambassador to the United States

A conversation with:

Noha El-Sadat, Daughter of Jehan and President Anwar Sadat
Sherif Marei, Eldest Grandson of Jehan and President Anwar Sadat
Sarah Marei, Granddaughter of Jehan and President Anwar Sadat
Zahi Hawass, Renowned Archeologist, Former Minister, and Friend of Jehan Sadat
Mervat Tallawy, Former President of the National Council for Women, Former Minister, and Friend of Jehan Sadat
William Kirwan, Former President of the University of Maryland and Friend of Jehan Sadat
Moderated by **Shibley Telhami**, The Anwar Sadat Professor for Peace and Development

President Darryll Pines: Good afternoon distinguished guests, former Chancellor Kirwan, Ambassador Zahran, and members of the Sadat family. Welcome to this momentous occasion remembering Jehan Sadat. I would like to start our ceremony today with a quote from Ms. Jehan Sadat. "I never again want to see the face of a starving child or hear the weeping of a mother, who has lost her son to war. Peace, this is what my husband gave his life for, and I want the world to know that he did not die in vain. Peace, this is what will make me very happy."

So it's my privilege and my honor to begin this tribute to Dr Jehan Sadat, who left behind a lasting legacy that will undoubtedly be remembered well into the future. Her legacy is food and water to a world hungry for peace and social justice. Certainly during her time as the first lady of Egypt and after she lost her husband President Anwar Sadat, she dedicated herself to supporting and advancing his struggle for peace and justice. But in the process, she established her own path, her own legacy, especially advancing women's rights in a world that desperately needs more equal rights for women. I welcome our panel today that includes those who knew Dr. Sadat very well, who worked with her closely and who loved her the best, members of her family and distinguished friends who will be introduced later by our own moderator, Dr. Shibley Telhami, Anwar Sadat Professor for Peace and Development. For over a quarter century, Dr. Sadat was a fellow at the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences at the University of Maryland. Twelve years ago she wrote these words: "Peace, this word, this idea, this goal is the defining theme of my life. I am always hoping and praying for peace.

Today we face challenges that remind us how closely connected we are by our shared humanity, the struggle to contain a worldwide pandemic, the long standing fight for racial and social justice. Many around the world have called on the Taliban to respect women's and girls'

rights and access to education, as they took power in war-torn Afghanistan. Already the Taliban are taking steps to restrict them, including making certain subjects off-limits to female students. Racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, senseless murders fueled by hatred, racial and social inequities are all too common in our society today, sometimes even occurring right here on our very campus. American history has given us abundant proof that even as society makes significant gains in gender equality and anti-racism, misogyny, white supremacy, anti-blackness and racism can still increase. How do we as scholars, students, advocates and leaders address these forces that threaten to undo the progress that's been made by leaders like President Sadat and Jehan Sadat. Progress that people have sacrificed their lives trying to defend.

It is in that spirit that the Sadat Chair for Peace and Development was established at the University of Maryland a quarter of a century ago, with the active support of Dr. Sadat, and the help of the leader of our university at the time, one of our panelists today, Dr. William Kirwan, who also recruited Professor Telhami, a world renowned scholar of foreign policy in the Middle East, away from Cornell University to lead the effort. Through the research and public policy efforts of the chair, the mission of social justice, peace and development continues unabated. Through research, writing and public opinion polls on issues of social justice and conflict apiece, the journey continues. Over the years, the Chair has brought extraordinary world leaders to campus, including Nelson Mandela, Mary Robinson, Kofi Annan, Jimmy Carter and the Dalai Lama. And at the end of this remembrance, we will watch together a slideshow of Dr. Sadat's moments at Maryland, especially those moments when the Chair hosted international luminaries.

We can look to the shining example of Dr. Jehan Sadat's commitment to peace and try to follow in her very large footsteps. She was a champion of social justice and women's rights in Egypt, before and after the assassination of her husband. She micro-financed small projects and economically empowered women. She led the Egyptian delegations to international conferences on women. She spearheaded efforts to change laws, to improve the divorce status of women and their representation in the Egyptian Parliament. She mounted exhibitions to show women how to sell their work. She realized that if women are economically empowered, then they will also be politically empowered. She used love, she used her life partnership with President Sadat, to propel her forward with courage to seize the moment to face her fears to fight for justice, on behalf of women, children, all people who need peace and justice. Dr. Sadat embodied our university's mantra: fearless ideas solve grand challenges. Let us use Dr. Jehan Sadat's life as inspiration and impetus to make a difference in our world. Thank you.

Dr. Shibley Telhami: Dean Ball.

Dean Gregory Ball: Thank you. Good afternoon, and thank you for this special remembrance of Dr. Jehan Sadat, who contributed a great deal to our college and university over a period of three decades. We are grateful for all that she has done and will always remember her fondly through the work of the Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace and Development housed in the Department of Government and Politics in our College of Behavioral and Social Sciences. But

first, it is my honor and pleasure to read a message from President and Mrs Jimmy Carter written for this occasion.

From President Carter: "Rosalynn and I are sorry that we could not be with you today to celebrate the life of Dr. Jehan Sadat. We have been deeply saddened by her passing and we join you in mourning the passing of an extraordinary woman. Throughout her remarkable life, she has been a blessing to countless people, and we are proud to have called her our friend. We first met Dr. Sadat in April of 1977 at the White House. After the assassination of her husband, Rosalynn and I attended the funeral and I later wrote in my book, *Keeping Faith*, "Jehan was superb. She was beautiful in her sorrow and in the strength and dignity with which she faced the large group that filled her sitting room. She made it clear to us that Sadat had given his life for the Middle East peace that he and Menachem Begin and I had consummated, and that she and Mubarak were ready to give their lives for the same goal." We are grateful for having been personally touched by her leadership and kindness. Her ongoing commitment to education and peace will be an inspiration for generations to come. Please know that you are in our hearts and prayers. We hope your warm memories and the love and prayers of family and friends will be comfort to you in the days ahead. Sincerely, Jimmy Carter."

Now, allow me to introduce Ambassador Motaz Zahran, the ambassador of Egypt to the United States, to offer some remarks.

Ambassador Motaz Zahran: Thank you, Dr. Ball and Dr. Telhami and President Pines, Dr. Hawass, Ambassador Tallawy, Dr. Kirwan and, of course, the esteemed members of the family. I would like to start by extending gratitude to the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences and the Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace and Development for organizing this forum and for giving me the opportunity to contribute to the conversation of the legacy of an iconic lady who has always been a source of inspiration to successive generations and a true ambassador of Egypt in the absolute sense and meaning of the title, namely late Mrs. Jehan Sadat. Mrs. Sadat was a unique character. She succeeded in positioning herself as a role model for women, not only in Egypt, but across the world; a vivid testament is our current virtual gathering today. Undoubtedly everyone's life eventually ends, but it is the details of how they live that distinguish one person from another. Mrs. Sadat has lived like a candle in the wind, and certainly thousands or even millions of candles can be lit from a single candle. That's why millions of Egyptian women have been inspired by Mrs. Sadat and will always mourn in our departure but cherish her legacy. I and others who had not the privilege of knowing in person Mrs. Sadat and her glowing and glittering persona, can speak at length about Mrs. Sadat's illustrious role as one of the leading personalities who shaped the course of history in modern Egypt. So just imagine what those who had the honor and the privilege of knowing her up close and personal.

Now such, allow me to focus very, very briefly, based on her must-read autobiography and the testimonies of her close circle, on Mrs. Sadat as a wife, as a staunch advocate for women's rights and charitable action, and as a steadfast defender of peace. Mrs. Sadat has set an example of a wife who supports her husband during drastic, delicate, telling and testing times. She stood vigorously and firmly behind Mr. Sadat, when he was an ambitious young military

officer during pivotal crossroads in Egypt's history, and later on when he naturally and seamlessly climbed slowly but surely the hierarchical ladder until he became Vice President, and then President, in fact, a visionary one.

As a devoted advocate for charity and women's empowerment, Mrs. Sadat spearheaded changes to Egypt's civil laws, which paved the way to grant women the right to alimony and custody of children in case of divorce. She continued persistently in sailing against the wind, by tackling precarious and delicate issues that were perceived as taboos in society by certain segments in Egypt. In this context, Egyptians who lived through President Sadat's tenure remember with pride that Mrs. Sadat was vocal and proactive in condemning female genital mutilation, as well as helping local women to become economically independent from their husbands and equal opportunities to education and healthcare and opportunities for jobs. She engaged as well in numerous initiatives, including the establishment of the charity organization to benefit veterans and civilians, as well as her significant and substantive involvements with the Egyptian Red Crescent, and the Egyptian Society for Cancer Patients.

We remember with pride that Mrs. Sadat was a staunch defender of peace like her beloved husband. And nothing can attest to that better than her own words which President Pines quoted in the very beginning in his introduction, and let me just say because of these are considered to be words of wisdom, they are worthy of repeating. Quote: "Never again would I want to see the face of a starving child, a starving child or hear the weeping of a mother, who has lost her son in war. Peace, this is what my husband gave his life for, and I want to work to know that he did not die in vain. Peace is what I and we'll make, and aspire to be as happy as we can," unquote. Now I would like to conclude by affirming that maybe the most valuable tribute to someone who passed away is not grief, but in fact gratitude. We will always be grateful, appreciative, and yes forever indebted to Mrs. Sadat for being such an illustrious personality of stellar and splendid qualities. This was merely a glimpse of her living legacy. Let this everlasting legacy guide us all in all our endeavors and everything we do. Thank you very much.

Dr. Shibley Telhami: Well, thank you very much Ambassador for these lovely words to honor and celebrate the life of this great woman that we all counted as our friend. Now I'm pleased to introduce the panel to get a little more glimpse of this woman, this extraordinary woman of Egypt's life. People who knew her best, people who were close to her, people who loved her, people who worked with her. And start-let me introduce them briefly, and then we'll have- we'll start a conversation. We have three family members, and other family members, by the way, are joining or watching us now as well, but let me start with Noha Sadat, who is the daughter Jehan and Anwar Sadat. Noha, I know that many people here on this panel had known Mrs. Sadat for decades. I've personally known her for over a quarter century. But no one obviously here knows her better than Noha, and Noha not only knew her throughout her life, but she was- she had been very close to her and toward the end she spent so much time with her in her final days and can give us a wonderful window into her life. So thank you Noha for joining us, we really are honored to have you, appreciate you joining us.

And then we have two grandchildren. Let me start with Sherif Marei. And Sherif is the eldest grandchild of Jehan and Anwar Sadat. He- because he's the oldest, as you know that's tradition in the Middle East that the eldest, well everywhere, gets a little more attention. He certainly got a lot of attention from his grandparents and spent a lot of time with them and traveled even with them, while President Sadat was still alive and he was very close to both his grandfather and later his grandmother. He is in agri-business and owns Arabian horses. And it's been a- it's really wonderful to have you join us Sherif, to tell us more. And then we also have Sarah Marei, who is the granddaughter of President Jehan Sadat, she's the mother of two children and she is an Egyptologist so we have two Egyptologists on this panel, one a young and aspiring one- not really an aspiring one she's already involved she's- including working in the Egyptian museum, excavating at the Pyramids of Giza.

But, obviously we also have another Egyptologist, who is a great one, which is Dr. Zahi Hawass. Dr. Zahi is world renowned, most of you may have heard of him or seen him or seen pictures of him with his hat that is hard to miss most of the time. But he is one of the great archaeologists in the world, and certainly the leading Egyptologist. He has also been Minister of Antiquities. He had- he has a doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania, he's written many academic articles, he's director of excavations at Giza, Saqqara and the Valley of the Kings. He's led many discoveries and I could tell you, those of us who had the privilege of hearing him or having him show us some of these antiquities, that is something to- not to be missed because I've been one of the beneficiaries of being in a small group that he accompanied. But more important for our event today, is that he knew Dr. Jehan Sadat very well, and he had multiple events with her and I'd love to hear him on that.

And next is Ambassador Mervat Tallawy, she's an extraordinary woman in her own right. Obviously we- we're celebrating an extraordinary woman today, the life of an extraordinary woman, but Dr. Tallawy is a truly accomplished woman who has led on women's rights both within Egypt and globally. She's the former President of the National Council for Women and former Egyptian minister, she was the deputy director of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute, and she spent a good amount of time working with Mrs. Sadat early on, on women's issues which I would love to hear from her about today.

And last but not least is our own extraordinary academic leader, William Brett Kirwan. Dr. Kirwan, you know is nationally and internationally known as one of the great academic leaders. He was the president of our university when Dr. Sadat was brought to the University of Maryland and he was extremely instrumental in establishing the Sadat Chair. He later, by the way, became also President at the Ohio State University, he became the Chancellor of the University System of Maryland, he held many other national positions. But for our purpose, he was the one at Maryland who- one of the early people to have encountered Jehan Sadat, to be impressed with her. I'd love to hear about it. He was of course not alone when she was brought in. I should also mention the work of the late Dean Irv Goldstein from, who who was very instrumental, his able associate Stuart Edelstein and and then the chair of the Government

Department at that time Jon Wilkenfeld. And one other person I want to single out for helping to establish and particularly support the Sadat Chair and support the effort of Dr. Jehan Sadat on campus was a proud Egyptian-American from Hollywood Frank Agrama who was extremely helpful to Mrs. Sadat and the Sadat Chair early on, when Dr. Kirwan worked hard to make this happen.

So let me start by moderating a conversation, and the first person I want to ask is Noha. Noha, I want- I'm trying to- you know, I've known this great lady for over a quarter century now. And I've been close enough to her to know her strengths and to understand what moves her up to a point, but I still when I review her life, I still cannot capture, what is the driving force, where is the strength coming from that animates the history that is highly unusual, especially in our in the Middle East region. And I mean you look at this lady, she marries very young, to a man who is much older. A man who was a revolutionary- unemployed revolutionary. This was a gamble in a way that already sheds some light about what drives her. A man who had just served in prison because he worked hard to bring freedom and independence for his own people. And so, she gambles on him right away, and within just three years he becomes one of the most important people in Egypt, when the Egyptian revolution takes place. And he becomes a central figure in the ruling elite, even long before he became President, and she becomes a central player as a partner with the President. Not marginalized, but very actively involved with him along the way, in a way that as Ambassador Zahran said, alienated people who are not used to that. But she certainly was with him all the way. Obviously it showed his strength in allowing that in a traditional area, despite the criticism, but here is a person who moves through and then she rises as the first lady of Egypt, at a time when Anwar Sadat was propelled into stardom, particularly after the 1973 war when they Egyptian military performed more, better than anybody expected in the effort to regain the occupied Sinai and later became a global celebrity, for, you know, launching his his peace efforts. And and so she's up there with him, a star, and yet, at the very same time she's raising a family, and at the very same time she's not satisfied without getting more education. So she goes to get a B.A., she goes to get an M.A. even before President Sadat was assassinated. And then the President dies, he's killed early. He's assassinated in a tragedy that the world mourns, and she's widowed nearly for half of her life. And and she still launches her own effort to get a doctorate, to get a PhD, to pursue her own path. All the meanwhile she's leading on women's issues, as we have heard, along the way.

So I want to ask you this question, Noha. You were living through all these years, certainly not from the very beginning, but throughout much of that, and I want to to give us a window into what what drove this woman, what gave her strength, what she- how did she survive all these ups and downs throughout her life?

Noha El-Sadat: She was always a very, very strong woman, my mother, and this this strength, you can see it first when she first met my father and she was very, very young, at the time. And yet she- before she met him she had heard a lot about him from her cousin's husband, and and this and she she had this image of him, she was very patriotic. She's always been very Egyptian and she loves this country very much. And she she felt that Anwar Sadat

was a person who loves this country, he was always fighting for this country, who is trying very hard, you know to to to get this country to a better place. So even before she met him, she was you know, like half in love with it already. And then she met him and when she did, she said, this is the man I'm going to marry. I mean she was sure that it was him and against everybody. Her parents, at first, were not very happy. Her mother was British and she wasn't happy about this, but my mother persevered and she said, this is the person I'm going to marry and she did. And this just goes to show you how she was very strong person.

And then as a mother, as a mother, she was my mother and she was also my best friend, really. But as a mother, she always she always had her priorities very straight, you know. We, as her kids, we were her first priority before anything, whatever she was doing. Wherever she was, it was always her children before anything. She was always there for us. And she was always our strength. She was always in our backs, always, all of us, the four of us. And we never ever went to her for advice or or or for anything. She was always there, always there for us. She was very strong and even the day my father was assassinated, and it was one of the worst days of our lives, but she stood there, and she said, your father would have wanted you all to be strong and we have to stand by President Mubarak to make sure that everything goes on, that the country survives, and that, because at the time, there was a lot of chaos. And she said, this is not what he would have wanted, and she stood up, she stood up. And then after my father, and- she went to the States and she taught there. She forged a new life for herself, she taught and she she went all over the States for lecture tours, all over the world, actually, not the states for lecture tours. And yet she still was our mother, first and foremost. Always always always. And our grandchildren were closer to her maybe- our children, I mean, were closer to her as her grandchildren more than they were to us. I mean they would go to her with problems and with things that they wouldn't come to me with, or to the mother's father with, because she was always there for everyone, always. A very strong personality, and a very, very loving mother, very, very loving. This was, I think this was the secret of her strengths. She loved everyone, and she was- she loved us all, and she loved us very much, and she gave us everything, everything. And I think this is what shaped us into what we are, what my mother did for us. And I will always always think of her, I always think of her as with us, and always think of her as the strong person that she is. And you know we get with on our lives now and we're- we're doing very well because of her, she was always pushing us to be better, to do better, and she was very, very strong, up to the last moment- up to the last moment, she was strong and she she always- and she would never complain and she would never- she was always, she was a strong person. That's all I can say. Strong strong person, strong loving person.

Dr. Shibley Telhami: That- strong and lovely, those those two words are really appropriate with my own experience with her, it's been an extraordinary experience over the years. Where she- a lot of people didn't understand how strong and tough she can be when on substantive issues, when she had to stand her ground because she's so polite and she's so warm and she's so caring about people, that people didn't quite understand that this was a woman of substance that went far beyond, and she can be really tough, even if very kind at the same time. And I want to bring in Ambassador Tallawy just because of this characteristic of Dr. Jehan Sadat, and

especially on women's issues. I mean we're all talking about it because, obviously, she contributed to a lot, including advancing President Sadat's legacy of peace and beyond. But clearly during the presidency and beyond, she championed women's issues, as everybody recognizes, in ways that are lasting and important. As a role model for sure, but also in terms of real steps that changed the lives of many women. So I want to ask you about your first encounter with her and how you understood this commitment that she had for women's issues.

Ambassador Mervat Tallawy: My my first encounter with Mrs. Sadat was in preparation for her going to the International Women's Conference in Mexico. 75. And there was two views, whether she should go or should- she should not attend as head of the Egyptian delegation to this conference. But, finally, she said, let us ask the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, they called on me, and then I met her. And it happened that I convinced her that her role is to go and represent Egypt, she as a model and iconic image for Egypt. She should go. And then she called the Minister of Foreign Affairs and decided, because he was in a hurry to decide, so they can reserve hotels to the delegation. This was the first encounter. But in Mexico and also in the UN Women's Conference in Copenhagen, she was heading the Egyptian delegation there. And, at the time, 1980, the Arabs were against President Sadat because of the peace conference. And they decided to be harsh to Mrs. Sadat and to not to allow her voice to be heard, when she will deliver her statement. So I stood with the people in charge of the United Nations saying that all doors of the conference should be- the hall where she will speak- should be closed and have the security not allow anybody because I heard things that they want to do revenge against President Sadat by hurting Mrs. Sadat. Anyway, our peace our organization with the UN succeeded, she delivered her statement, was excellent statement. And the event passed away.

I can say that she- the strength and love she has for everybody, and not only her family, is because she was a charismatic person, she was very charismatic. Yet, she looks kind, nice, smiling to everybody, but she was very strong and very charismatic. You have to respect her, you have to take her words seriously, because at the end, she will take the right decision. This is how I saw Mrs. Sadat in many events. She believed in peace strongly. When we saw her on the television after the passing of the President Sadat, she was defending the peace agreement better than any politician or analyst in in- worldwide. She is a true believer in women's issues. Not a show-off but true believer. She always supported us to combine between the family and the work by organizing our time. She did not let any day pass without doing something good for the country.

She established an organization called Wafaa and Amal for all those officers and soldier who have been injured in the war, to keep them in this association and to give them- provide them with help, and if they don't have a family or somebody to take care of them, then this organization would take care of them. And it is a very important organization, when I was Minister of Social Affairs and Insurance, I was responsible for the civil society organizations. I went to Wafaa and Amal, and I saw it's not a little house, it's 250 acres or fidan, very big in the middle of the city, with a good hospital to help the people there. She was supervising this organization very closely. And she was also helping women to- to have seats to our quota in the

Parliament, and she managed to get thirty seats for the women in the Parliament. Many legal documents were passed to help women during her time. Also for children, for education, for culture, she was multi-active in all fields and a very serious one, not a superfluous image but she was really very sincere. I loved her so much I can't forget this lady because she is an honest person, and God bless her soul, she was a wonderful woman as a friend, as a simple woman, she was so simple and so down to earth, although she was the first lady of Egypt.

Dr. Shibley Telhami: Nicely said I you know, I think that everyone who has had the honor and the pleasure to meet her is left with the same impression, it's unforgettable. She was a presence, she was an extraordinary presence really, not- people talk about charisma, but it went far beyond charisma. Because you knew at the very same time that she was smiling, and every time I think about her it brings a smile to my face. That's- behind that smile, there was a woman of substance so and.

Ambassador Mervat Tallawy: Can I add something.

Dr. Shibley Telhami: Sure.

Ambassador Mervat Tallawy: I was very, very proud that she was the first woman in Egypt to have a military funeral and to be buried next to President Sadat, according to her wish. And the actual President Sisi allowed her by having a military- she did not ask for the military funeral, it was an appreciation by the military to Mrs. Sadat because she did a lot for helping those who suffered from the war. So all this is something to be written in history, she is the only woman in Egypt to have a military funeral and to be buried next to her husband.

Dr. Shibley Telhami: Yes, and she she represented Egypt honorably with dignity, and clearly everyone recognized it. I'm going to go to Dr. Zahi, I'm going to then go to President Kirwan and and I'm going to leave the last comments to Sarah and Sherif, have that conversation a personal one obviously, I'd love to end on a personal note. But Dr. Zahi I mean you have known her over many decades and so I'd love to hear first of all how you first met her. But more about also your, you know, over the past 10, 20 years I know you and she have done so much in particularly with delegations that were coming to Egypt to show the strength of Egypt, the wonder of Egypt that you both had, that you could both share. So I'd love to hear your story with her.

You're muted, you're muted still Dr. Zahi.

Dr. Zahi Hawass: Okay now?

Dr. Shibley Telhami: Yeah, yes, good.

Dr. Zahi Hawass: I want first to say that when I was an inspector at the Pyramids I saw Mrs. Sadat twice. And I was really impressed by her. The first time I shaked her hand, I was standing

at the entrance of sound and light and she came to a big performance by Frank Sinatra. And the second time she came with President Sadat and Jimmy Carter. To the pyramids. And I will never forget, I was explaining the pyramids and I said that the stones of the Great Pyramids of Khufu are two million and three hundred thousand blocks. And President Sadat maybe he hear this many times, but he repeated the number of the stones in front of Jimmy Carter to show the culture and how Egypt's heritage is so deep that he needs by his voice, and I can imitate exactly what President Sadat said in that moment. The third time, I used to see her coming to Saqqara to study Egyptology, under a professor. His name is Abdel Moneim Abu Bakr. She loved ancient Egypt so much. And she knew as the first lady she will travel everywhere, and the only thing that people will ask her is about ancient Egypt. And she- this is why she took lessons about Egyptology.

Then how I met her. I think at the first years when she was teaching at the University of Maryland. I was giving a lecture in Washington, DC and I was flying from Washington, DC airport to New York to take TWA. And I was sitting, because in that time it happened a big snowstorm and we could not fly. I looked. I saw her. And I came to her to introduce myself, she said, of course I know you. And we sat, we talked for hours. And since this moment I became a very good friend of hers.

But now I'm going to say two important things about her. The first, I went with Mrs. Sadat to give a lecture and she- to give a lecture in Reno. And there was- she gave a talk. Look, the way that she gives a lecture, it's very impressive. She talks with dignity and power at the same time. And she in front of 3,000 people. If you throw anything in the ground, you cannot hear the sound because people who are listening to her that have never seen in my life audience will do that for any person. After that, the media will talk to her. She was talented in one thing that maybe many people did not recognize: sound bites. She doesn't talk about it for the in front of the TV, but she gives sound bites, and this is why I saw all- because in America actually they love sound bites and she knew that. And she gave in front of me more than 25 beautiful interviews and what is in her heart: the love of Egypt, the love of her country, the love to the people of Egypt.

I want to come to a point of meeting her in her house. She used to make lots of dinners and lunches and used to invite me all the time. But the first time I went was with a famous writer. His name is Ahmed Ragab and Ibrahim El Moallem, who's a publisher. And really I wanted to ask her all the time, I was afraid to ask her that question: how a beautiful lady like you, young, to marry an old man, married and has children. And he has no job. And I told her all of this. And she smiled and she looked at me, and she said Zahi, he was a hero. Then she really looked at him as a hero, and she became in love with him because of what President Sadat did for his country. This why she became in love with him.

The other important thing that I found out that tourism in Egypt was really not good. I really- we need to promote Egypt. I called her. I said we need you. She said what? I said we need to advertise your name for Americans. Then you can meet them in your home. And the reason that I asked her to do that is because I know how Americans love her. And this can bring money to

the country. Can fund. And tourism is very important to every house in Egypt. She said Zahi, I will do it. And I don't want anything except I want to help Egypt. She used to meet all the people who will come to Egypt, maybe six groups a month in her house. And I met them the next day. And half of my meeting, they're talking about her. How she is lovely, polite, wonderful, incredible. I mean, I just came before this interview giving a lecture to a group- an American group. You know, they are so sorry. We came to Egypt to meet Mrs. Sadat. Who are so sad that you are not going to see her. We loved her. Exactly- this is what a man and his wife told me an hour ago. Then Mrs. Sadat used to meet all of them in her house. She will sign her book, and she will give a smile, and she will talk to everyone equally and beautifully. And that is the talent of this incredible lady, that she was really actually in my heart.

When she doesn't answer me I get afraid there is something wrong with her and I call Noha directly, that you will answer me. I said, how is al-Hanem, how is Mrs. Sadat? She said she's fine and she will talk to you now. We- me and her are friends of a lady, she is now 98 years old. Her name is Nancy Binz. You cannot believe how Nancy will talk about Mrs. Sadat. She will tell me, this lady is in my heart. I had dinner with her in LA and she gave me two photographs. One of her with Mrs. Sadat and one with Mrs. Sadat only. I put them in my office, then I can see Mrs. Sadat almost every day, I feel I'm with her every minute. And even many- many people do not know that Mrs. Sadat was an artist. I do have a painting that she did paint in my office and really all the people who come to my office- I meet many people every day- I talk about two people that I loved in my life. The first is Mrs. Sadat, and the second is Omar Sharif. And I lost the two as I lost a big part of my life.

But Mrs. Sadat will be recognized in our history, she- her name will be written in gold, not in history only, but in the hearts of every Egyptian. Because all the Egyptians loved her. You know why? Because she's down to earth. I will never forget in my life that she made a TV interview with a stupid reporter. And she was telling him, "Your Excellency", and he will tell her "you." They- people everywhere loved her, of the way that she doesn't deal with him with the same way that this guy addresses her, but she does that, because she wants to show the people that she's a lady with respect.

Her name will be written in gold in the history of Egypt.

Dr. Shibley Telhami: Thank you Zahi, very well said and that's a great testament obviously to this great lady. I'm going to turn to the Maryland connection of Dr. Jehan Sadat and to our own President Kirwan. And I have to say that those of you who have known about Mrs. Sadat's connection to Maryland that lasted- that started before I came to Maryland because I came as a scholar after the chair had been established. But throughout her presence at Maryland prior to President Pines, who we heard today, there were really three Presidents: President Kirwan, President Mote, and President Loh. And all three were great in working with her and with the Sadat Chair, and she loved them all.

Kirwan had a special place because he was the first one that- where they both bonded at

Maryland. And I want to turn to you, Brit, I know how much you loved this lady and I know how much she loved you. And I want you to tell us, first of all, how you met- how you met initially, what your impression was, and how you came about to support the establishment of the Sadat chair.

You are still- still muted, you're still muted.

Dr. William "Brit" Kirwan: Thank you, thank you so much Shibley. Well I first became- I first became "aware" of Mrs. Sadat actually back in the 1970s. I was a relatively young professor at the University of Maryland in the seventies, and this was a time when there was just intense interest in our country about the possibility of peace between Egypt- Egypt and Israel. So much so that the great news commentator Walter Cronkite flew to Aswan- Suez, excuse me, Suez- to do an interview with President and Mrs. Sadat. And so there I was, back in College Park watching the evening news, and I saw this unbelievable presence. Of course, we were all impressed with President Sadat. But Mrs. Sadat- her elegance, her intelligence, her beauty, I mean it made such an impression on me. And I was thinking, my goodness, I would love to meet that woman someday. And I thought, what a fantasy, that could never happen.

Well, you fast forward a couple of decades, and so the question becomes how did she become associated with the University of Maryland? It turns out that we had a very distinguished political scientist by the name of Ed Azar, who was Lebanese. He was an expert, of course, on the Middle East and the politics of the Middle East, and he was an advisor to government leaders, and he got to know the Sadats because of his expertise and his erudition, and got to know Mrs. Sadat very well. So when her husband was tragically assassinated, and she began thinking about his legacy and what she might do about it, Ed Azar, who incidentally founded the Center for Conflict Management here at the University of Maryland, began talking about the University of Maryland and why it would be the right place to create an endowed professorship in his honor to carry on his his his his legacy. And Ed was a very persuasive individual and she- it made sense to her. Here was this great research university right outside the nation's capital, all these dignitaries would be coming through, it would have high visibility. So she agreed that Maryland would be the place where this professorship would be created.

Now we then became the envy of higher education. There isn't a university in America who would- didn't want to have the Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace. And so just her agreement to do this suddenly shined a spotlight on the University of Maryland in the most wonderful way. And it was- the excitement across the campus that we were going to be associated with this great leader and with Mrs. Sadat. So she threw herself into the the effort to create this Chair, to help with all the fundraising that would be necessary. She moved to Washington- the Washington DC area. She became a fellow at the University, she was a constant presence on her her on our campus. She would have events for her- I had a wonderful evening in her beautiful home that Dr. Hawass talked about on the banks of the Nile river, where we had a chance to talk about the Chair and what it would mean for Egypt and what it would mean for global understanding of issues of peace.

But she she was- it's just hard for people who weren't around at the time to to fully appreciate what heroes Anwar Sadat and Mrs. Sadat were in this country. They were beloved in the U.S. And her presence, she was- her presence was just phenomenal. And so whenever she invited or she was involved in any kind of an event, the attendance was assured. So we began having these events around the country to raise funds for the Sadat Chair. I'll never forget, we had a major dinner in New York City at the Waldorf Astoria hotel. And who were the co-hosts of this dinner? None other than Barbara Walters and Henry Kissinger. The ballroom was full and it was just- it was a magical, electric- electric evening.

We had then a big dinner in Hollywood, hosted by a very wealthy couple in Hollywood. And guess who came to that dinner? I'll just show you this picture. This is a picture taken at that dinner and, of course, you see, in the middle, Mrs. Sadat with Mrs. Reagan and the President, that's a younger version of me on the President's right. But at this dinner, this this person from- born and raised in Lexington, Kentucky was suddenly sitting at a dinner table with Kathy Bates, the academy award winning movie star. That was Mrs. Sadat's ability to attract the rich and famous, as well as the common folks, to anything she she was involved in. I have to say that this was in many ways the most exciting, but the easiest fundraising assignment I ever undertook, because of her. People could not say no to her. That was just this universal love for her. I got to meet Farah Pahlavi, the Shah of Iran's wife, who made a contribution to the- to the Chair.

And so in fairly short order, we raised the funds to make this Chair possible, and then we began the difficult job of finding the appropriate first shareholder for this very distinguished position. And, of course, there were lots of people interested in the position. But it is a reflection of how, how prized this position was that we were able to attract this rising star from Cornell University. Shibley Telhami, to come to the University of Maryland and be the first and still only occupant of the Sadat chair. So it's it's just a wonderful, a beautiful story.

But I want to make one other point, Shibley, about her presence, her impact on me, on the university. Her her contribution to the university went so much beyond just raising the funds for this Chair and the creation of this wonderful chair. How great that is, but her contributions were even greater. Because it was a time when the university was paying special attention and had all sorts of initiatives surrounding the matter of gender equity. And the women's role in our in our society. And she was a constant presence on our campus. Giving inspirational talks, going wherever she was asked to go to speak on these of these issues.

And she told a story once- and I'll close with this- she told a story once that left such a deep impression on me, and it says so much about her character. As you mentioned earlier Shibley, she got her master's degree and then after her husband was assassinated she went on to get a doctorate in comparative literature at the University of Cairo. And so, she finished her thesis, and now it became time to defend her thesis. And she went to the powers that be at Cairo University and said, I want my defense to be on national television. And everybody said what,

on national television, people told, no, no, no, you can't do that. Oh, my goodness, the pressure you'd be under, this would be impossible, you mustn't do that, you mustn't do that. She said no, no, I want my defense on national television because I want the women of Egypt to see a man asking a woman questions and the woman giving the answer. I get goosebumps to this day, thinking about that, but it speaks so much to the character of this woman and and and her values, and the impact she had on so many. You know in Egypt we have the Jehan laws, these are all because of the work she did about- on on women's rights, making it possible for women to pursue the kinds of careers that they are able to do in this day and age.

So let me just say, Shibley in closing that I spent almost 30 years as a president or a chancellor of higher education institutions, and my interaction with her, my association with her, stands among the most important matters- experiences in my professional career. And I can't help but think back to the 1970s, when I thought, how could I ever meet this woman. And look what happened over those years, and what an impact she's had on me personally, on our university, but I would say, on the world.

You're muted, Shibley.

Dr. Shibley Telhami: Yes, now it's my turn. Thank you Brit for these really wonderful words but also for what you personally have done for this Chair, as well as for our university and higher education broadly.

Let me turn to Sherif before I go to Noha because I want to talk to Noha last for good reason. But I, I want to talk to Sherif more about- you know, now that, you know- the the- Dr. Sadat has passed, you've had time to reflect more on her life. You were living through a relationship with her that started when you were a baby through through- until the time that she died. And, as I said, later on- as I said earlier that you had- as the eldest of the grandchildren you received particular attention. So you knew them probably better than any of the other grandchildren, spent more time with them, and so I wonder when you're hearing you know this testimony about her life, how did it look to you, while you were living through it?

Sherif Marei: Well, from my point of view Shibley she was a grandmother in every sense of the words. I mean putting the politics and putting the public persona aside. She was very much the typical caring, doting grandmother, where I spent my summers with her, whether it was in Egypt or when she had moved to the States. I also used to go spend at least a month at the house in Virginia, so in that sense, she was very much a grandmother. I was close to her because when my mother had me she was quite young and my grandmother decided that she would basically take over, and she she was very involved in my upbringing as such, all the way through- even after my grandfather passed away, she was very much involved.

Of course I'm hearing a lot of wonderful stories and some of them, for the first time, some of them I had already heard before. And and and the lovely reflection on her on her legacy, but like I said for for me, first and foremost, she was my grandma who will- you know I used to go to if I

had any issues, I used to go to whenever I needed help with anything, whenever- well, when I was very young, if my parents were- you know I didn't get what I'd asked for, something didn't work out, I'd go to her and she gets it done.

Your your typical typical doting loving grandmother, and for me hearing all this and how busy she was, it's amazing that she actually had the time and and made the efforts to be involved the way she was.

Dr. Shibley Telhami: She was certainly a family woman, first and foremost that she loved the family, but she loved a lot of other people and and that showed over time. One more question to you Sherif before I turn it to Noha.

You know, obviously given a grandson, you- you're a different generation then some of us who are talking about her who lived through the politics of her life, you know, in a closer way. So we have a little bit of a different understanding of the role that she played in that history. But when you look at people who are your age or younger, like Sarah's age or or, you know any of the other grandchildren, do they have a different perception you think of her legacy? Has that impacted them in the same way? I mean I know here in the U.S. memories fade, even even 9/11 seems like history for some people, so I wonder how how you see it in terms of this generational perception.

Sherif Marei: Well, I must say she's she's- she remained to the end, a public figure in the sense that she was very much in demand for, you know TV interviews, journalists. So she was she was quite involved, she was always there. So I would say that the impact she has has lasted- transcended generations. For for for me, on a personal level, for example, the way I raise my own children, I have two girls and a boy. For the girls, I always tell them this- you're no different than any boy, there's no such thing as anything a guy can do you can do for sure. One of them, for example, is on the Egyptian ski shooting team, which is slightly abnormal for Egypt but, but, so for us, I think that her legacy and her impact definitely transcend the generations, mine and even younger than me.

Dr. Shibley Telhami: Yeah, it is a remarkable, you know this longevity of her presence is really extraordinary. Because you know, in some ways she remained a first lady of Egypt throughout. And and clearly was visible at the- in the political circle, in the media throughout- not just internationally, but certainly in Egypt. And so that's one of her strengths and and the legacy that she leaves behind.

Sarah I want to turn to you- to talk a little bit more about sort of your perception of her drive for women's rights, seeing it as a granddaughter. With, certainly a young woman who wants to see full equality, like all of us want to see but we know that women don't yet have full equality. But you see her life. You watch her over the years, and now you hear more about how she looked to the rest of the world on this issue. Where she's not just saying, women need to be empowered by having jobs, by having economic power to get political power, by having an education of their

own. She is not only preaching it, but she lived it. She didn't sit there, even though she was on top of the world at some point, and yet she still wanted to stand on something independent that carried her through after President Sadat was assassinated. It is really a powerful and empowering message, but how does that look to you? How did that inspire you personally?

Sarah Marei: She was an exceptionally inspiring and admirable person in many ways, but I think what you're talking about is one of the ways that really struck me watching her. She was a role model, because of her strength, and I think she was also very grounded. I mean if there was a problem and there was something happening, she would be very grounded, very calm, very assessing, very intelligent. And her reactions would always be extremely measured. And I learned that from her, I learned that you need to calmly look, watch, learn and find out what's happening, gather information. She never assumed, she would always listen. She would listen to people, she would listen to people who'd come to her with problems, she paid attention to what was being said.

And I think in that way she was sort of, she was trying to keep up with what's happening with women and what's happening around Egypt and in our generation, the younger generation. She also would always encourage us and encouraged me personally. When I started working I actually worked with Dr. Zahi Hawass in the ministry. And she was so proud. She was so proud. Whenever I passed by her because I had a lunch break or something, because her house was close by...she threw me back to work. "Go back" she said...So she was very encouraging and the way she handled things was also a great learning experience to learn from.

Dr. Shibley Telhami: I mean this- you know, a lot of people could see, obviously and and you've experienced it firsthand. So for you, when you're looking back and now she has left us, she has- she's left obviously a legacy that we're all celebrating. This is really an event of celebration. It's not an event of mourning because of all that she's done that's going to outlast many of us. And so I want you, I want you to think about what her legacy means to you.

Sarah Marei: It means a lot of things. I mean one of the things that I always admired was her ability to balance her personal life with her work life, and her family and every person. She was always honest and only honest. I don't think I've ever seen her lie, her personality kept her from being dishonest. And I learned that from her, I learned that this is the way to go.

She also- something that wasn't mentioned, I think, is that she had an unbelievable sense of humor. When we'd go to her with the problems that we used to get into and all the trouble. And we'd run to her, that's the first thing she would do, she would start laughing and she turned it into a joke. And here we were crying or panicking or something, and we end up laughing. And she thought that that's one of the best ways to go about life, to find the humor, to find the funny side and just laugh. And then after that you can start to figure out what you're going to do from there, you know. But her sense of humor is something that, personally, I was just thinking it's something that I'd love to have and I'd love to remember and I'd love to keep.

Dr. Shibley Telhami: I am so glad that you mentioned that Sarah because those of us who knew her well so much appreciated her sense of humor. And that is in a way part of the reason why she was so modest, because she was able to laugh, even at herself. And she in that sense was very Egyptian. I mean, this is, you know, a trait that Egyptians generally have, and I have to say that you know of all the proud Egyptians I have met, and I think most Egyptians are very proud people, she was the most proud Egyptian I have ever met. She was very proud of who she was, she considered herself, first and foremost as a woman of Egypt, she loved her country, she loved her people. Yes, she loved everyone else. She sought international peace in human rights, and particularly women's rights, but, above all, I can see whenever we would meet an Egyptian, whether it's in Arizona or California, when we were traveling, and someone comes to introduce themselves, no matter what they did, how old or young they were, the smile on her face would brighten up the room. So this was something really very special about her and it made everybody else smile and everybody else laugh and made everybody at ease. She always made people feel at ease.

Sarah Marei: Exactly.

Dr. Shibley Telhami: Even in serious times. So now with- I want to thank you all for this incredible conversation, remembering our friend, a woman we loved, a woman of Egypt. And now I would like to end by showing a slideshow of a moments- her moments on campus. Particularly these great events when we, together, hosted extraordinary world leaders and Nobel laureates throughout the period that she was associated with us. So please start the show Kirsten.

Dr. Jehan Sadat, an extraordinary woman of Egypt, 1933 to 2021. What a life, what a legacy. Thank you all for joining us.