



ASRA Q. NOMANI

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BIOGRAPHY

Asra Q. Nomani, a former reporter for the Wall Street Journal for 15 years, is the author of "Standing Alone: An American Woman's Struggle for the Soul of Islam." Starting in August 2007, she will be a visiting scholar in the practice of journalism at Georgetown University, leading the Pearl Project, a faculty-student investigation into the murder of Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl. She currently lives in Morgantown, W.V., with her son Shibli.

Born in 1965 in Bombay, India, she came to the United State at the age of four not knowing any English. She was raised in the foothills of West Virginia in Morgantown, W.V. As editor of her high school newspaper at Morgantown High School, she had an early appreciation for journalism. At West Virginia University, she worked at the student newspaper, the Daily Athenaeum, as a journalist starting from the summer before her freshman year, interviewing visiting speakers from Abbie Hoffman to G. Gordon Liddy. She interned at Harper's Magazine and States News Service, a regional wire service in Washington, D.C., and reported for Newsweek OnCampus, a college publication by Newsweek, before earning her bachelor's degree in liberal sciences in 1986. In Washington, D.C., she worked at Reuters news agency as a stringer while taking courses at the American University's School of International Service toward a master's degree in international communications, earned in 1990.

After an internship at the Wall Street Journal's San Francisco bureau in 1988, Nomani was hired as a staff reporter in the Journal's Chicago bureau at the age of 23, reporting on the commodity's market before making a mark as an airline industry reporter, breaking stories regularly and chronicling the era of tumultuous mergers, acquisitions and bankruptcies through the 1990s . Nomani broke new ground with stories about how airline pricing officials secretly signaled pricing changes through an electronic airfare database. The Justice Department launched an investigation. The case was settled with a multimillion dollar class action settlement for airline customers.

big picture



Pearl Project:
Investigation into murder of WSJ reporter Daniel Pearl



Return to India:
South Asian Journalists Assoc. Reporting Fellowship



Gender Jihad
for Islam's Future

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Nomani moved to the Wall Street Journal's Washington bureau in 1992 where she covered the Transportation Department and international trade, reporting on the nexus between corporations, politics and lobbying. In 1997, Nomani moved to the Wall Street Journal's New York bureau for the launch of the newspaper's Weekend section, covering travel. In 2000, Nomani went on book leave to write *Tantrika: Traveling the Road of Divine Love*, a journey into the corners of her identity as a Muslim, an Indian and an American.

After September 11, 2001, while on leave from the Wall Street Journal, Nomani became a correspondent for Salon magazine, reporting in Pakistan. She earned an Online Journalists Award for feature reporting for her dispatches. Nomani was inspired by tragedy and hope following the kidnapping and murder of her friend Daniel Pearl in 2002 in Karachi, Pakistan, where Pearl was staying at Nomani's home when he was kidnapped. Nomani was actively involved in the investigation to find Pearl. Nomani returned to her home in Morgantown, where she wrote *Standing Alone: An American Woman's Struggle for the Soul of Islam*. She has written on issues related to Islam for the Washington Post, the New York Times, Time magazine, American Prospect, Slate and Sojourners magazine on Islam. Her work has appeared in such magazines as Cosmo, Sports Illustrated for Women, Runner's World and People.

In Morgantown, Nomani became a writer-activist dedicated to reclaiming women's rights and principles of tolerance in the Muslim world. In 2003, Nomani challenged rules at her mosque in Morgantown that required women enter through a back door and pray in a secluded balcony. She was put on trial at her mosque to be banished. The New York Times wrote about her "Rosa Parks-style activism." On March 1, 2005, she posted on the doors of her mosque in Morgantown "99 Precepts for Opening Hearts, Minds and Doors in the Muslim World." She was the lead organizer of the woman-led Muslim prayer in New York City on March 18, 2005.

In 2005, Nomani was a visiting scholar at the Center for Investigative Journalism at Brandeis University and a Poynter Fellow at Yale University.

In September 2006, she co-founded with other Muslim women an organization, Muslims for Peace, dedicated to standing for peace (www.muslimsforpeace.net). She has provided commentary on CNN, NPR, BBC, Nightline and Al-Jazeera, among others. In

October 2006, she received a reporting fellowship from the South Asian Journalists Association to report on a Muslim woman activist building a women's mosque in India.

Starting August 2007, she will be a visiting professor in the practice of journalism at Georgetown University's School of Continuing Studies. There, she will lead a faculty-student project, the Pearl Project, aimed at answering questions, including: Who really killed Pearl? Why did they kill? What are the underlying politics of the event? And what lessons can we draw for society from this tragic intersection of cultures?

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