

EMBARGOED UNTIL 5:00 p.m. November 13, 2013

**Afghan Institute of Learning's Sakena Yacoobi Wins
Million Dollar Opus Prize**

Award to further education, health work for women and children in Afghanistan

NOVEMBER 13—Sakena Yacoobi, founder and president of the Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL), an Afghan women-led NGO dedicated to promoting education, health and culture among women and families in Afghanistan is the recipient of the 2013 Opus Prize. The announcement was made at a ceremony hosted by Georgetown University.

This year's other two finalists, Fahmina Institute of Cirebon, Indonesia, and Sister Carol Keehan, president of the Catholic Health Association of the United States each are receiving \$75,000 to advance their work. Fahmina is being recognized for its promotion of an understanding of the Islamic faith dedicated to justice and gender equity; and Sr. Carol for her relentless advocacy in providing affordable healthcare for the poor.

The Afghan Institute of Learning is Afghanistan's largest NGO. With offices in Kabul and Herat, the organization runs dozens of centers that provide literacy programs, higher education, arts and culture, healthcare and income generating activities. Since 1996, they have supported 342 schools and learning centers. One of the organization's core programs continues to be teacher training. AIL also recently assumed control of most government-run orphanages in Afghanistan.

In awarding the prize, Georgetown University President John J. DeGioia said:

"Dr. Sakena Yacoobi has demonstrated an inspiring commitment to the promotion of education and health services for women and children in Afghanistan. She is an eminently deserving recipient of this faith-based humanitarian award—for her disproportionate contributions to the betterment of our global family."

Each year, the Opus Prize honors unsung heroes of any faith tradition with a \$1 million award for efforts to solve today's most persistent and pressing global issues, including poverty, illiteracy, hunger, disease, and injustice. The main prize and awards for the two other finalists are collectively considered one of the largest faith-based humanitarian awards recognizing social innovation in the world.

More information about this year's winner and finalists, including video interviews, is available at: <http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/opusprize>.

To request an interview with Dr. Yacoobi, contact: Erin Taylor, director of communications, Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University, et453@georgetown.edu, 202-687-2443.