

The 2024 Governor General's Silver Medal Remarks by President and Vice-Chancellor William Lahey

The Governor General's Medal, established in 1873, is one of the most prestigious awards that can be received by a student in a Canadian educational institution for exceptional academic achievement.

The University of King's College Governor General's Silver Medal recognizes academic and journalistic excellence. It is awarded to a journalism student who is graduating with first class honours in the Bachelor of Journalism Honours degree program, or with distinction in the one-year post-baccalaureate Bachelor of Journalism degree program, who has shown significant professional development during his, her or their time in the journalism program of the School of Journalism, Writing and Publishing and stands the highest among their peers.

This year, I am pleased to present this award to Nour Hafid.

Soon after Nour Hafid arrived in Halifax last September to begin her studies in the Bachelor of Journalism, one-year program, this polyglot from Morocco quickly established a reputation for being thoughtful, quiet, meticulous and witty.

Said one of her instructors, quote, "Nour has the ability to juggle nine things at once, consider multiple options and make a fine choice. When working on a big story or facing deadline pressure Nour's ability to stay focused and fun makes her an exceptional King's graduate.

Said another, "While most journalists are adrenaline fueled, Nour is also unusually calm."

That calm was apparent when a magnitude 6.8 earthquake struck her home country the day after she got to Halifax. Despite this, and after reassuring her instructors that her family was okay, she got right down to work in the BJ boot camp - an intense eight weeks of journalism instruction. She displayed strong nerve and a sensitive ear in producing a boot camp audio item on the earthquake, which killed and injured thousands. Nour brought creativity to her news reporting finding the unusual, the whimsical or the touching to help her stories resonate. And she weighed every word.

Nour's compassion also shone through. Before coming to King's, she worked full-time for a year in London for the British Red Cross. She cared for refugees, first interviewing them at length, and then over time helping them rebuild their lives. She brought that spirit to King's with her.

Whenever a fellow student needed help, Nour took as much time as possible to assist. In the Advanced News Workshop, Nour led the way on assessing various free transcription tools, determining the relative utility of each and gathered intel on their privacy and security features, and she shared all this information with her classmates and then offered guidance to anyone who needed assistance.

Delightful to teach, generous, quiet and kind, it gives me great pleasure to present the Governor General's Silver Medal to Nour Hafid.