

The Honorands of The 2012 Commencement

Humaira Awais Shahid Doctor of Humane Letters

Humaira Awais Shahid is a journalist, human rights activist, and Provincial legislator. She focuses primarily on human rights issues, and has been advocating, writing, and legislating against human rights abuses. Shahid is the first parliamentarian of the Provincial Assembly of the Punjab to pass a law (and repeal a former one) as a private member, an achievement that took more than four years in parliament facing sustained opposition from government departments. Her legislation, the Punjab Private Money Lending Act, 2007, prohibited interest-based private money lending in Punjab, Pakistan. Her law was replicated and adopted by the Provincial Assembly of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. She also passed many resolutions and is an active voice in the parliament against acid crimes, forced marriages, fundamental rights of women in Islam, and legal measures for the Panchayat system (village councils). She has been recently elected back to Provincial Assembly Punjab on one of the reserved women seats. As a 2009-2010 Fellow at Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University, Shahid explored the subject of violence and women in the sociocultural context of the Muslim world, particularly Pakistan. She is also the lead advocate of International Violence against Women Act (IVAWA), a legislation moved in the U.S. Senate and Congress by a coalition of 150 women organizations worldwide.