

# Moroccan scholar to speak

**Rachida Kerkech**, chair of the English department, Ecole Normale Supérieure, Rabat, Morocco, will be the JCCC Scholar in Residence April 12-16. During her residency, she will present two public lectures and a book discussion. All events are free and open to the public.

■ *Women's Issues in Moroccan Literature* will be at 11 a.m. Tuesday, April 13, in the Craig Community Auditorium.

In this presentation Kerkech will discuss literature in general, including the history of male writers and the more recent occurrence of female writers (now being translated into English) and how male and female Moroccan writers address gender issues.

Moroccan culture is traditionally based on oral transmission rather than written text. Religious scholars and theologians had access to written science and law, not common people. After Morocco's independence from French protectorate in 1956, schooling became obligatory, giving both boys and girls access to education. However, females dropped out of school to get married and raise children, resulting in a higher illiteracy rate among women; therefore, women's writing in Morocco is relatively recent.

In the 1960s and '70s, a few women started writing, but it was only in the 1980s and '90s that women's writing became more visible. Kerkech will focus on the main concerns of Moroccan women writers.

■ *Moroccan Women's Legal Rights: American and Moroccan Views* will be at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 15, in the M.R. and Evelyn Hudson Auditorium, Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, JCCC. A reception precedes the lecture from 6-7 p.m. in the Atrium.

In this presentation, Moroccan women's issues like the Mudawwana (Family Code), the veil and women's associations will be discussed in the context of the country's patriarchal society. The focus will be on the difference between the old and the new Mudawwana, reformed in 2004, as well as the social and psychological consequences of both versions on women and the family. Attention will be given to the efforts made by women's associations and their long struggle for more rights. Challenges such as illiteracy, conservatism and psychosocial resistance will be debated.



Rachida Kerkech will speak on literature and women's and intercultural issues.

Kerkech will broaden the discussion to intercultural issues and how Americans and Moroccans view each other.

■ Kerkech will discuss *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood* by Fatima Mernissi from 2 to 4 p.m. Friday, April 16, in 270 Regnier Center. Refreshments will be served.

Kerkech will lead a discussion of the autobiography by Mernissi, who writes about the confusion she experiences as a young girl in a harem against the backdrop of Moroccan nationalism, Westernization and the growing women's rights movements.

During her five-day residency, Kerkech will visit JCCC classes and meet with JCCC faculty.

Kerkech was proposed as a JCCC Scholar in Residence by Karen Schory, professor, interactive media. As part of the 2008 Fulbright Group Project in Morocco, Schory heard Kerkech speak and was impressed with Kerkech's rich background as a modern Moroccan woman growing up in what is still a male-dominated country.

Kerkech has bachelor's and master's degrees in English literature from the Mohamed V University, Rabat, and Montreal University, Canada, respectively.

JCCC's Scholar in Residence program is designed to bring visiting scholars to students, faculty and the public. Kerkech's residency is sponsored by the English and Journalism division, Interactive Media, and International Education. For more information about Kerkech's residency, contact Pat Decker, program facilitator, honors program, at 913-469-8500, ext. 2512, or pdecker5@jccc.edu. 