

Kelly Razzouk

Young Alumna of the Year

Kelly Razzouk graduated summa cum laude from Southern Adventist University in 2005. At Southern, she was active in campus life. Razzouk was president of her senior class and led her fellow seniors to organize a benefit for victims of the 2005 tsunami in Asia. From a young age, her parents instilled in her a passion for helping those in need, and her family has a long history of service to God and their community.



Her father, Dr. Akram Razzouk, is a dedicated psychiatrist and a medical director of Adventist Hinsdale Hospital. He has served on the hospital's governing board for more than 10 years. Dr. Razzouk has been featured in television programs and has delivered mental health lectures in the Middle East. Razzouk and her father co-authored an article that was published in the *DePaul Journal of Health Care Law* about U.S. soldiers returning home from Iraq and living with post-traumatic stress disorder. Kelly's mother, Sinka Michelle Razzouk, was president of the Loma Linda University Women's Auxiliary, led efforts to raise money for much-needed medical equipment to be sent to hospitals in Africa, and currently is organizing several philanthropic projects in Serbia.

Razzouk's parents are both immigrants to this country—her mother from Serbia and her father from Lebanon. Because of this, she has a deep appreciation and love for this country and the freedoms offered. Kelly's father, who became an Adventist while in Lebanon, left the country in the midst of war and was determined to make a better life for his family in the United States.

Razzouk grew up in Hinsdale, Illinois. She sang her first solo, "Silent Night," in church at age 3. In second grade, Kelly organized a class benefit to raise money for a wheelchair for a disabled class member. At age 10, she put forward the winning theme for the Hinsdale Fourth of July parade—"Let Freedom Ring"—and was chosen as the parade's grand marshal. She recorded a Christian music album at the age of 11 that won an Angel Award.

While attending Southern, Razzouk majored in vocal performance and public relations. During her junior year, she experienced the United Nations in New York for the first time through an internship opportunity. This opened her eyes to the world of international relations and human rights law. In her senior year, Razzouk began to rethink her career path. After consulting with her trusted advisor—Volker Henning, Southern's associate vice president for Academic Administration—Razzouk decided to take pre-law courses and prepare to enter law school after graduation. In autumn 2005, she received

a scholarship to attend DePaul University College of Law. While there she worked as a research assistant for renowned law professor Cherif Bassiouni at the International Human Rights Law Institute and received a Sullivan Human Rights Law Fellowship. She also traveled to Siracusa, Italy, to attend specialized human rights courses. Razzouk was president of the International Law Society and a member of the DePaul Law Review. In 2008, she graduated from DePaul magna cum laude with her juris doctor and a certificate in international and comparative law.

Following her graduation, Razzouk was offered a prestigious Presidential Management Fellowship with the U.S. Department of State. At the State Department, she worked in several offices, including the Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, and the Office of the Geographer and Global Issues. Razzouk also worked overseas as a human rights officer at the U.S. Embassy in Amman, Jordan. While in Jordan, she spoke to student groups, met with judicial leaders and civil society organizations, and organized a toy drive for children of a care center in Amman, Jordan.

In 2010, Razzouk was offered a position as a human rights advisor at the United States Mission to the United Nations where she worked for Ambassador Susan Rice. Razzouk negotiated a resolution on “the rights of the child.” She also traveled to the U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva, where she participated in meetings with diplomats from around the world. In 2011, Razzouk received a Superior Honor Award from the State Department for “advancing U.S. human rights goals at the United Nations.” She is currently working at the United States Mission to the United Nations and is humbled by the opportunity to represent the United States.

Razzouk has also been active in her church community. While in New York, she attended the Church of the Advent Hope. She and fellow church member Alex Espana founded an annual Christmas benefit concert to raise money for specific international projects. The projects have ranged from providing aid to ADRA for children around the world to helping victims of Hurricane Sandy in New York and New Jersey.

Razzouk resides in New York City with her husband, Michel Diwan. The couple is expecting their first child this winter.

Southern Adventist University alumni, faculty, and staff honor Kelly Razzouk for outstanding professional and personal accomplishments to improve humanitarian conditions worldwide.