

I have a dream, I have a mission

By **Nehal el-Sherif**

“I ALWAYS say I am like Mena who brought the north and south together,” she says proudly, referring to the Ancient Egyptian King Mena, who united the Upper and Lower Egypt.

Famous Egyptian businesswoman Mona Zaki may not be the only one whose parents are from the opposite ends of the country, but she's been deeply influenced by this mix. With a mother from the Upper Egyptian Governorate of Sohag and a father from the northern Governorate of el-Qaliubia, she was brought up as a strong, determined and artistic character.

“As an Upper Egyptian, my mother was a strong woman who was brought up in a conservative way; however, there was another influence, her French education,” says Mona.

“I also went to a French school, the Mère de Dieu, where the nuns taught me to be strong, persevering, hopeful and tolerant.”

Her father, an engineer, taught her the one thing that would rule her life: strategic thinking. Playing chess with her late father

After emerging from this experience, she became the Business Consultant for the *Financial Times*, a post she's held since 1990. Mona does what she calls “promoting Egypt” with the yearly report FT publishes on Egypt.

“The main objective of the report is to expose Egypt internationally, revealing its potential, in order to place it in the international market,” she explains. “FT is read by decision-makers all over the world and I see it as an opportunity to attract different kinds of investments to the country.”

Mona believes that, the better placed Egypt is in the international market, the more she can promote her country as an ideal place for future strategic projects.

Her own business, Global Strategic Consultants (GSC), which she founded in 2003, is also about attracting investors to the country and developing strategic projects. Her consultancy firm does feasibility studies on what the country needs, by taking a problem and finding ways to solve it.

“For example, we've thought of a way to solve the problem of the burning of rice stubble which compounds Egypt's pollution. We discovered that we need high-tech equipment.

“Therefore we need investors who will contribute their technology to support the project, working according to the Public Private Partnership [PPP] system,” she explains, adding that investors from the Czech Republic

