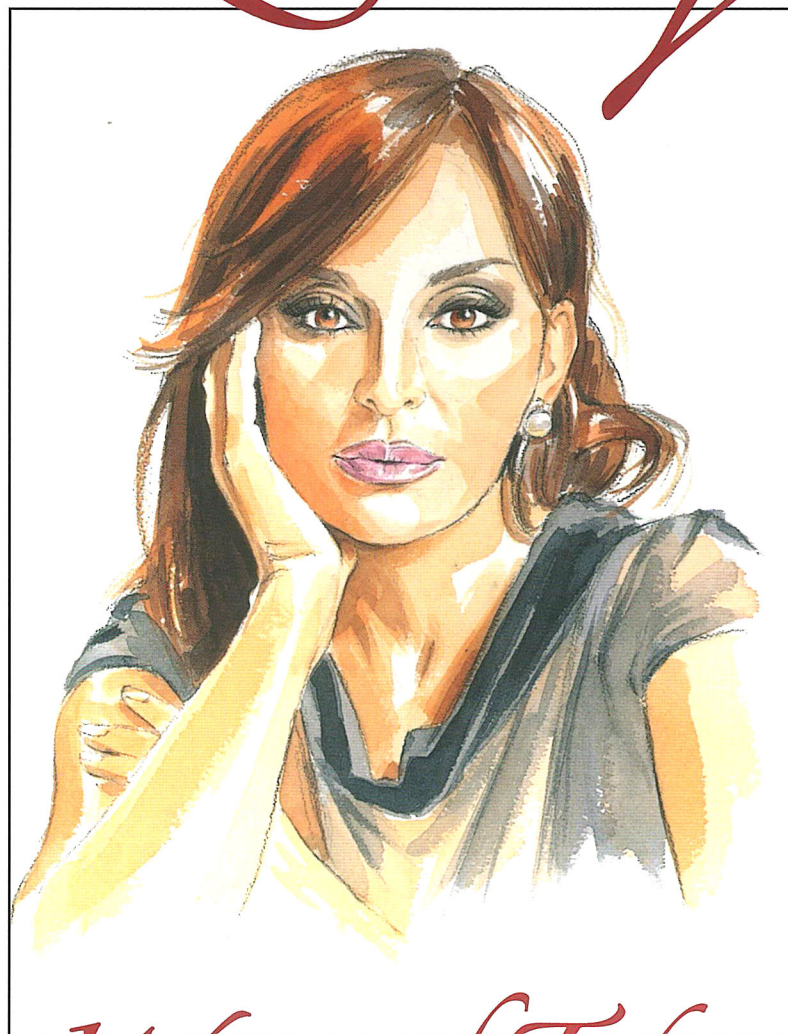
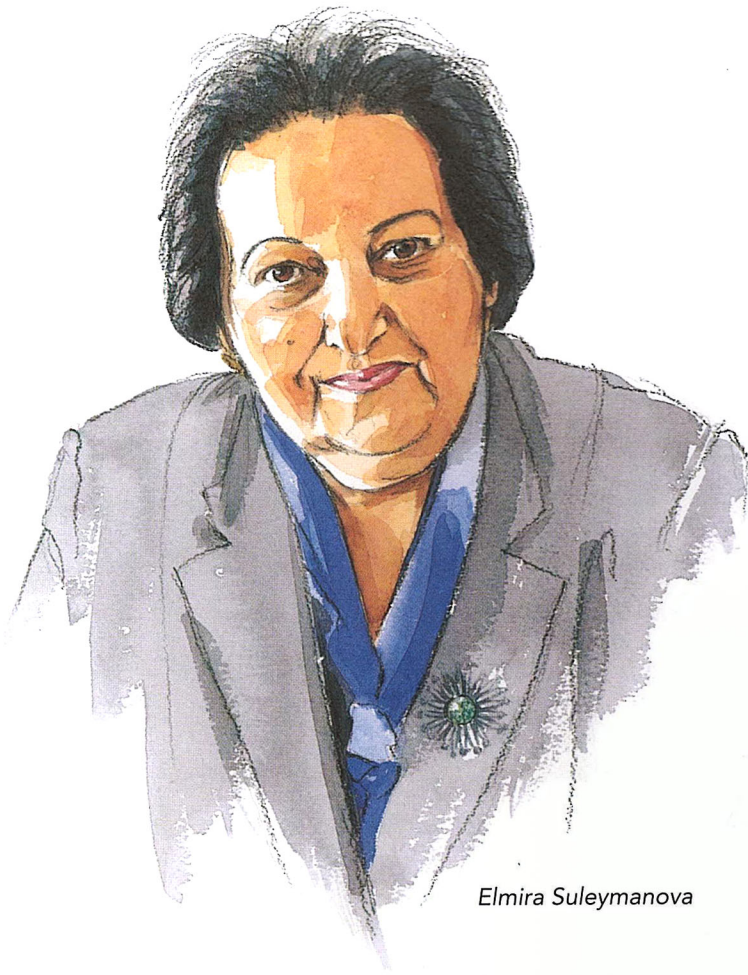


Azerbaijan



Women of Today



Elmira Suleymanova

one-hundred most prominent women in the world acting for the defense of women's rights. "The problems that women meet are just about the same everywhere in the world. Azerbaijan is developing quickly in every field and of course in human rights which naturally include women's rights. I regularly go with my team to the various regions of our country to encourage women to engage in public life, to run in elections and more generally to assert themselves. It is our duty to explain that they can handle responsibilities in the very same way men can.

Women's cause made an important step forward in the political field when in 2002 the Parliament elected **Elmira Suleymanova** as the First Commissioner for Human Rights ('Ombudsman', a term of Swedish origin, is often used). I had the opportunity to meet this seventy-seven year old woman in her office.

The first thing that struck me was the many stacks of files, each one a cause to defend. Mrs. Suleymanova has a strong personality and a thundering voice. She is a scientist by training, having graduated with a PhD from the faculty of chemistry at the Baku State University. She started dedicating her life to human rights as early as 1992. In 1998, she was honored by Rochester University, New York, as one of the