



MERDEKA  
AWARD

Fostering a Culture  
of Excellence

# MERDEKA AWARD 2024

Founded by:



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MERDEKA  
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## Our Story

The Merdeka Award Trust celebrates the achievements and significant contributions of individuals and organisations to Malaysia, within their respective fields.

It explores the liberation of the mind and spirit, the strength of character and integrity that underpin meaningful impact, together with the creativity and vision that drive progress.

In fostering a culture of excellence, the Merdeka Award Trust has two signature programmes, namely the Merdeka Award and the Merdeka Award Grant for International Attachment.

Both these signature programmes are designed to recognise outstanding accomplishments that have impacted the nation positively, while also providing a platform to nurture talent, foster innovation, and facilitate international collaboration.

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## Kisah Kami

*Merdeka Award Trust meraikan pencapaian dan sumbangan bermakna individu dan organisasi kepada Malaysia - dalam bidang masing-masing.*

*Ia menerokai pembebasan minda, kekuatan watak dan integriti untuk menunjangi pencapaian cemerlang serta kreativiti dan visi untuk memacu kemajuan.*

*Dalam usaha memupuk budaya kecemerlangan, Merdeka Award Trust mempunyai dua program utama, iaitu Anugerah Merdeka dan Geran Anugerah Merdeka untuk Penempatan Antarabangsa.*

*Dua program utama ini bertujuan untuk mengiktiraf pencapaian cemerlang yang telah memberi impak positif kepada negara, sekaligus menyediakan platform untuk memupuk bakat, menggalakkan inovasi dan mengukuhkan jalinan kerjasama antarabangsa.*





HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS  
SULTAN NAZRIN MUIZZUDDIN SHAH  
IBNI ALMARHUM SULTAN AZLAN  
MUHIBBUDDIN SHAH AL-MAGHFUR-LAH

D.K., D.K.S.A., D.K.A., D.M.N., D.K. (Kelantan), D.K.(Selangor), D.K.N.S., D.K.(Perlis),  
D.K.(Kedah), D.K.1 (Johor), D.K. (Pahang), PhD (Harvard)

**The Sultan of Perak Darul Ridzuan**  
**Royal Patron And Chairman of The Merdeka Award Trust**

## Board of Trustees



**YM Tan Sri Tengku  
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Abdullah**  
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Asma Ismail**  
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## Fostering A Culture Of Excellence For The Past 17 Years

The Merdeka Award Trust was established in August 2007. The Trust, founded by PETRONAS and Shell, aims to honour individuals and organisations that have contributed in an exceptional way to the people of Malaysia by conferring them the prestigious Merdeka Award.

Open to all living Malaysians, the Merdeka Award is internationally benchmarked and features two main programs: the Merdeka Award and the Merdeka Award Grant for International Attachment.

The Award has been given in areas such as Education & Community, Environment, Health, Science and Technology, Outstanding Scholastic Achievement, and Outstanding Contribution to the People of Malaysia. Additionally, the Anugerah Harapan Merdeka was introduced to recognize rising talents.

Since 2012, the Merdeka Award Grant for International Attachment has supported Malaysians under 35, fostering innovation and international collaboration. The programs aim to cultivate thought leadership and global perspectives, positioning Malaysia as a competitive force in various sectors.

The presentation ceremony has been organized biennially since 2019, alternating between the Award and the Grant.

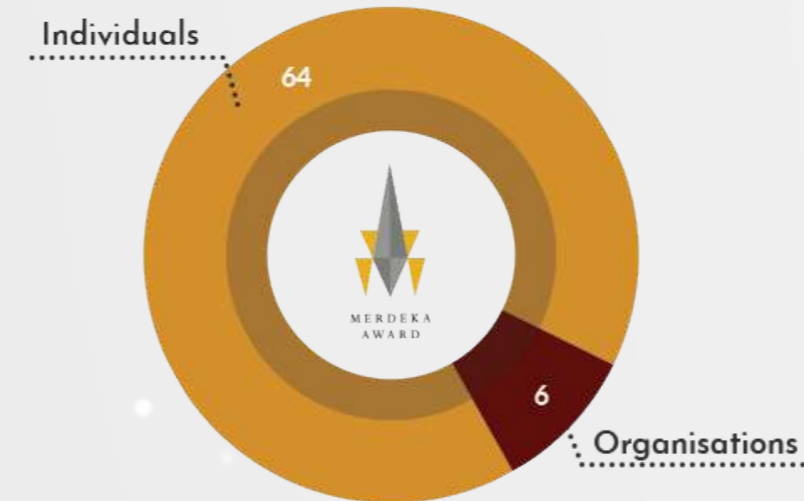


# Making Our Mark

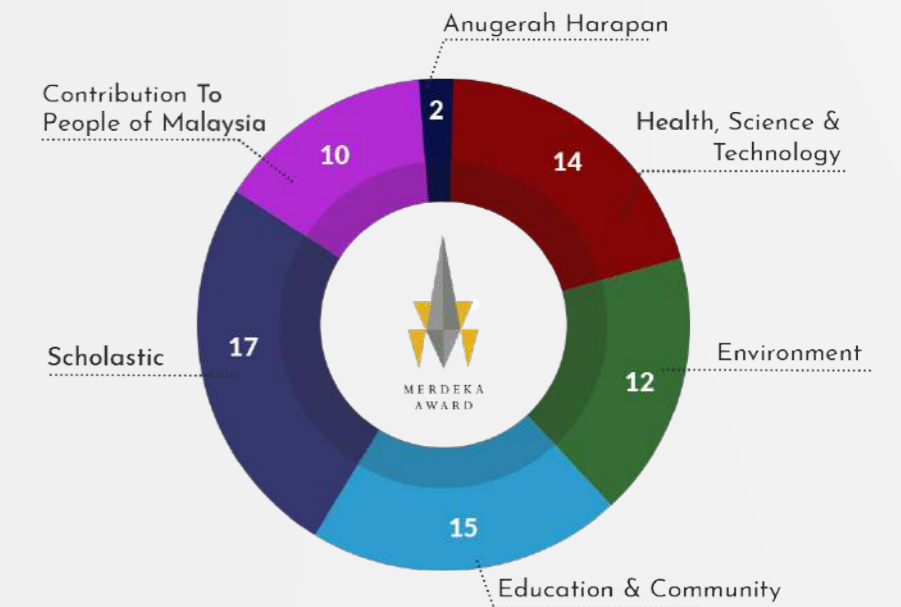
The Merdeka Award is presented to honour individuals and organisations that have contributed in an exceptional way to the people of Malaysia. This Award celebrates the human potential and its ability to achieve excellence by realising the highest goals with breakthrough ideas, and the perseverance to stay with the task to its fulfilment and achievements. It is this exceptional spirit that inspires people and organisations to produce consistently brilliant work over a period of time.

The Merdeka Award, now in its 14th cycle, will continue to foster a culture of excellence, promote thought leadership and innovation, encourage a world view, thereby enhancing Malaysia's standing as a dynamic, competitive 21st Century Global Player in all key sectors from science and technology to the arts.

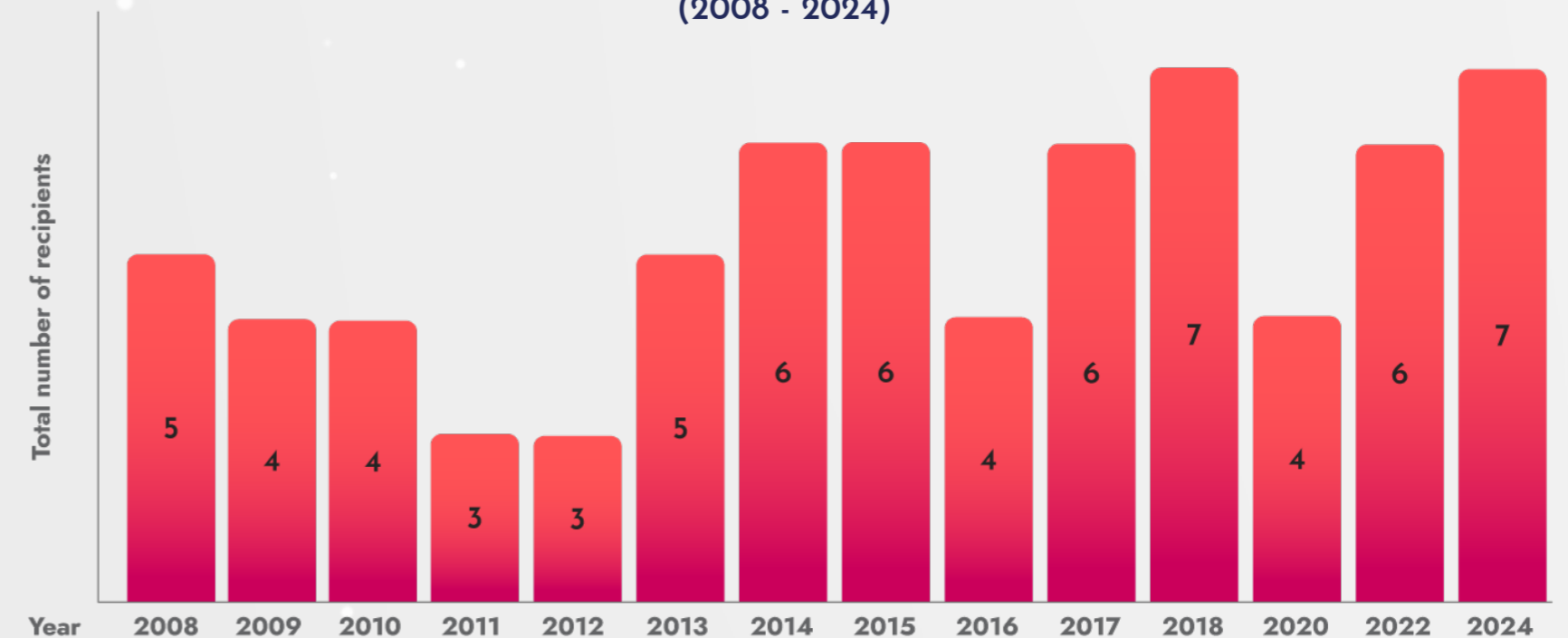
## Merdeka Award Recipients (2008 - 2024)



## Merdeka Award Recipients By Category (2008 - 2024)



## Merdeka Award Recipients By Year (2008 - 2024)



# Award Categories

## Education and Community

Awarded to individuals and/or organisations to honour exceptional thinking and the educational infrastructure of Malaysia in elevating the level of education and in benefiting the marginalised.

## Environment

Awarded to individuals and/or organisations to honour the development, research and application of new technology and practices in renewing and protecting the environment.

## Health, Science and Technology

Awarded to individuals and/or organisations to honour the creation, development, support and application of new and innovative technology that improves the lives of people everywhere.



## Outstanding Scholastic Achievement

Awarded to a scholar conducting or playing a major role in academic research resulting in significant discovery.

## Outstanding Contribution to the People of Malaysia

Awarded to a citizen of any nationality and/or foreign organisation to honour substantial contribution to Malaysia or to the lives of Malaysians.

## Anugerah Harapan Merdeka

Awarded to aspiring and promising young Malaysian individuals aged 40 years old and below or organisations below 10 years of inception in three selected disciplines - Education and Community, Environment, and Health, Science and Technology. The recipients of this category should make a significant, and meaningful contribution whether in the field of Education and Community, Environment, and Health, Science and Technology that benefits or improves the lives of Malaysians or the Malaysian society.



# The Merdeka Award Laureate

The Merdeka Award proudly celebrates its laureates, acknowledging their invaluable contributions to Malaysia.

Whether their efforts are prominently or quietly impactful, the dedication and achievements of our laureates, in various fields and disciplines, reflect the spirit of Merdeka.

The commitment of these outstanding individuals and organisations, and their dedication to excellence continue to inspire and uplift the nation.

## Merdeka Award Laureates By Category

2008 - 2024

### Education and Community

Dato' Seri Dr. Abdul Samad Mohamed Said (Joint Recipient)  
 Dato' Dr. Faridah Merican (Joint Recipient)  
 Teach For Malaysia  
 Majlis kanser Nasional  
 Hassan Abdul Muthalib  
 Dato' Dr. Abdul Halim Ismail  
 Tan Sri Lakshmanan Krishnan  
 Tan Sri Dr. Jemilah Mahmood  
 Seniman Diraja Datuk Mohd Nor Khalid (Lat)  
 Allahyarham Tan Sri Datuk Haji Arshad Ayub (Joint Recipient)  
 YM Raja Tun Dato' Seri Utama Muhammad Alias Raja Muhammad Ali (Joint Recipient)  
 The Late Datin Paduka Mother A. Mangalam A/P Iyaswamy Iyer  
 Allahyarhamah Tun Fatimah Hashim (Joint Recipient)  
 The Late Tan Sri Dato' Lim Phaik Gan (Joint Recipient)  
 Allahyarham Royal Professor Ungku Abdul Aziz Ungku Abdul Hamid

### Environment

Professor Dr. Joy Jacqueline Pereira  
 Global Environment Centre  
 South East Asia Rainforest Research Partnership  
 Engr. Gurmit Singh KS  
 Dato' Seri Tengku Dr. Zainal Adlin Tengku Mahamood  
 Tan Sri Dato' Seri Dr. Salleh Mohd Nor  
 Professor Emeritus Dato' Dr. Abdul Latiff Mohamad (Joint Recipient)  
 Emeritus Professor Tan Sri Dr. Zakri Abdul Hamid (Joint Recipient)  
 Mohd Khan Momin Khan  
 The Late Dr. Lim Boo Liat  
 Dato' Dr. Ar. Kenneth Yeang  
 Malaysian Nature Society

### Health, Science and Technology

Tan Sri Dato' Dr. Abu Bakar Suleiman  
 Dato' Professor Dr. Adeeba Kamarulzaman  
 Dato' Dr. Gan Ee Kiang (Joint Recipient)  
 Professor Dato' Dr. Mohd Hair Bejo (Joint Recipient)  
 Professor Dr. Balbir Singh Mohan Singh (Joint Recipient)  
 Dr. Timothy William (Joint Recipient)  
 Distinguished Professor Datuk Dr. Looi Lai Meng  
 Professor Datin Paduka Dr. Khatijah Mohamad Yusoff  
 Datuk Dr. Choo Yuen May  
 Tan Sri Dato' Dr. Yahya Awang  
 Academician Tan Sri Emeritus Professor Datuk Dr. Augustine Ong Soon Hock  
 Professor Datuk Dr. Halimatun Hamdan  
 Nipah Virus Encephalitis Investigation Team from the Faculty of Medicine, University of Malaya (Joint Recipient)  
 Allahyarham Professor Emeritus Dato' Dr. Khalid Tan Sri Abdul Kadir (Joint Recipient)

### Outstanding Scholastic Achievement

Emeritus Professor Dr. Jomo Kwame Sundaram  
 Emeritus Professor Dato' Dr. Siti Zuraina Abdul Majid  
 Emeritus Professor Dr. Ng Kwan Hoong  
 The Late Emeritus Professor Tan Sri Dato' Dr. Khoo Kay Kim (Joint Recipient)  
 Distinguished Professor Dr. Rajah Rasiah (Joint Recipient)  
 Professor Emeritus Ir. Dr. Masjuki Haji Hassan  
 Professor Dato' Ir. Dr. Wan Ramli Wan Daud  
 Professor Emeritus Ir. Dr. Mohd Ali Hashim  
 Professor Dr. Abdul Latif Ahmad (Joint Recipient)  
 Professor Datuk Ir. Ts. Dr. Ahmad Fauzi Ismail (Joint Recipient)  
 Emeritus Professor Dato' Dr. Lam Sai Kit  
 Tan Sri Professor Dr. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas  
 The Late Emeritus Professor Dato' Dr. Goh Khean Lee (Joint Recipient)  
 The Late Professor Dr. Mak Joon Wah (Joint Recipient)  
 Datuk Professor Ulung Dr. Harith Ahmad (Joint Recipient)  
 Professor Emeritus Dr. Yong Hoi Sen (Joint Recipient)  
 Dato' Seri Ir. Dr. Zaini Ujang

### Outstanding Contribution to the People of Malaysia

Dr. Kathryn Anne Rivai  
 Dato' Dr. Annabel Teh Gallop  
 Suzanne Mooney  
 Andrew James Eavis  
 Professor Dr. Anthony Milner  
 Dr. Elizabeth Lesley Bennett  
 Dato Sri Gathorne, Earl of Cranbrook  
 The Late Dr. Engkik Soepadmo  
 The Late Tan Sri Dr. Just Faaland  
 The Late Datuk Leslie Davidson

### Anugerah Harapan Merdeka

Ian Yee Ngan Fui  
 Samuel Isaiah



## Selecting The Best

The nomination and selection of Merdeka Award recipients are administered by five Nomination Committees and one Selection Committee.

These Committees go through a long and rigorous selection process that reflect the high ideals of the Merdeka Award.

The Committee members are made up of eminent individuals from Malaysia and abroad, bringing with them a wealth of knowledge, experience and expertise to allow them to nominate and select outstanding individuals and organisations who have laboured tirelessly, with great sincerity and conviction for the good of this country and its people.

Committee members will deliberate, examine the merits and finer qualities of each individual or organisation's nomination, and in the end, identify those who have stood above and beyond the rest, in their embodiment of the Merdeka spirit.

## Nomination Committee

There are five Nomination Committees, one for each Award category each comprising a minimum of three Nominators except for the Education and Community Nomination Committee which has five Nominators.

The objective and duty of each Nomination Committee is to seek, deliberate, shortlist and recommend eligible candidates for their respective Award category and to submit that shortlist of candidates to the Selection Committee.

## Selection Committee

The Selection Committee comprises five Nominators. Their objective and duty is to deliberate the merits of the candidates from the shortlist submitted by the various Nomination Committees and recommend a final list of nominees to the Board of Trustees.

## 2024 Selection Committee



**Emeritus Professor  
Dr. Ng Kwan Hoong  
(Chairperson)**



**Professor Tan Sri Dr.  
Ghauth Jasmon**



**Professor Datin  
Paduka Dr. Khatijah  
Mohamad Yusoff**



**Dato' Kathleen Chew**



**Professor Dr.  
Abhimanyu  
Veerakumarasivam**

## 2024 Nomination Committee

### Education & Community



**Professor Datuk  
Ts. Ir. Dr. Siti  
Hamisah Tapsir  
(Chairperson)**



**Chen Li Kai**



**Sumitra  
Visvanathan**



**YM Tengku Nurul  
Azian Tengku  
Shahrman**



**Farahida  
Mohd Farid**

### Environment



**Tan Sri Dato' Seri Dr.  
Salleh Mohd Nor  
(Chairperson)**



**Sophia Lim**



**Dr. Yasmin  
Rasyid**



**Distinguished  
Professor Datuk Dr.  
Looi Lai Meng  
(Chairperson)**



**Dato' Dr. Gan  
Ee Kiang**



**Datuk Dr. Beatrice  
Ming Baikan @  
Berniedetta**

### Health, Science and Technology

### Outstanding Scholastic Achievement



**Datuk Professor  
Ulung Dr. Harith  
Ahmad  
(Chairperson)**



**Professor Dr.  
Noorsaadah Abd.  
Rahman**



**Emeritus Professor  
Dato' Dr. Siti Zuraina  
Abdul Majid**



**Dato' Ho Kay Tat  
(Chairperson)**

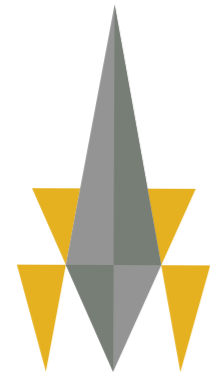


**Caroline Christine  
Russell**



**Dr. Glen Reynolds**

### Outstanding Contribution to the People Of Malaysia



MERDEKA  
AWARD

## 2024 Recipients



**Education and Community**  
Dato' Seri Dr. Abdul Samad  
Mohamed Said (A. Samad Said)  
(Joint Recipient)



**Education and Community**  
Dato' Dr. Faridah Merican  
(Joint Recipient)



**Environment**  
Professor Dr. Joy Jacqueline  
Pereira



**Health, Science and Technology**  
Tan Sri Dato' Dr. Abu Bakar  
Suleiman



**Outstanding Scholastic  
Achievement**  
Emeritus Professor Dr. Jomo  
Kwame Sundaram



**Outstanding Contribution to the  
People Of Malaysia**  
Dr. Kathryn Anne Rivai



**Anugerah Harapan Merdeka**  
Ian Yee Ngan Fui



## Education and Community

Awarded to individuals and/or organisations to honour exceptional thinking and the educational infrastructure of Malaysia in elevating the level of education and in benefiting the marginalised.

### A Literary Luminary of Malaysia

Dato' Seri Dr. Abdul Samad Mohamed Said, often fondly known as A. Samad Said, stands as one of Malaysia's most distinguished literary figures. His work has left an indelible mark on the nation's cultural landscape, shaping generations of writers and preserving the essence of Malay language and tradition through his extensive body of work. His deep engagement in social and political issues and his commitment to promoting Malay culture have earned him a place among the most revered cultural icons in Malaysia.

**Dato' Seri Dr. Abdul  
Samad Mohamed Said**

Joint Recipient

## The Early Years and Literary Impact

Born in Malacca but raised in cosmopolitan Singapore, A. Samad Said's formative years were marked by diverse influences. These experiences, especially the hardships endured during the Japanese military occupation from 1941 to 1945, found their way into his literary works, giving them a unique depth and authenticity. Notable among these are the novels *\*Sungai Mengalir Lesu\** (1967), *\*Di Hadapan Pulau\** (1978), and *\*Keledang\** (1978), which vividly portray the struggles of those times.

His most celebrated work, however, remains *\*Salina\**, published in 1961. This novel, hailed as a masterpiece of Malay literature, has been extensively discussed and reprinted over the years, cementing A. Samad Said's reputation as a literary giant. The novel's profound aesthetic and philosophical values have been lauded by critics, with Singapore's laureate Keris Mas describing it as the first colossal, modern, and universal Malay-authored novel. The special edition reprint of *\*Salina\** in 2021, marking its 60th anniversary, is a testament to its enduring relevance.



After receiving the SEA Write Award at Bangkok in 1979.



A Samad Said with his late wife, Saleha Rashid, known as Salmi Manja that sang the song Tinggi Gunung Seribu Janji.

## Literary Evolution and Exploration of New Genres

His later works, such as *\*Daerah Zeni\** (1985) and *\*Hujan Pagi\** (1987), continued to garner critical acclaim, with the latter being recognised for its seamless incorporation of magical realism—a genre pioneered by Latin American novelist Gabriel Garcia Marquez. In fact, *\*Hujan Pagi\** is regarded as the first Malaysian novel to explore this genre, showcasing A. Samad Said's ability to innovate and push the boundaries of Malaysian literature.

Travel also played a significant role in inspiring his creative endeavors. His month-long sojourn in India in 1965 led to the creation of the novel *\*Bulan Tak Bermadu di Fatehpur Sikri\** (1966), while his brief visits to England and France in 1989 inspired the novel *\*Cinta Fansuri\** (1994), set against the backdrop of Paris. These works, along with *\*Warkah Eropah\** (1991), a collection of letters to his family, reflect the broad range of influences that shaped his literary output.



Reciting poems at the Jeonju Asia-Africa Literature Festival.

## Journalism and Short Stories: A Prolific Career

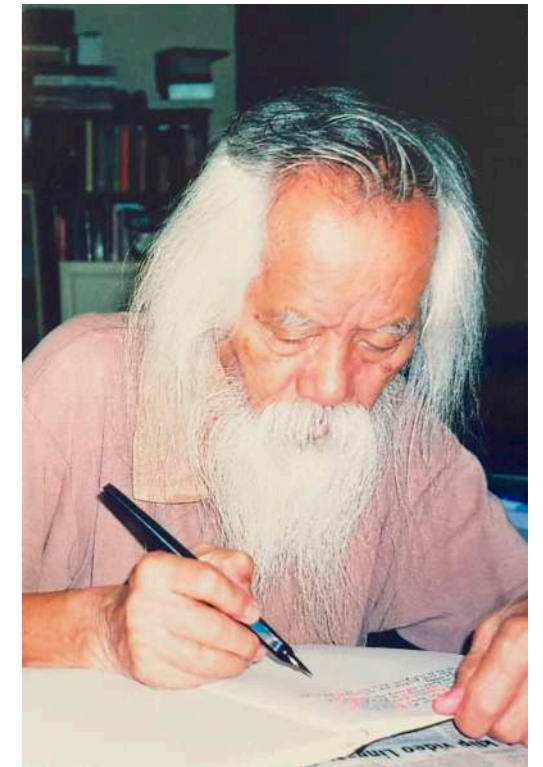
In addition to his novels, A. Samad Said made significant contributions to Malaysian journalism and short story writing. He began his journalistic career in 1958 at *Utusan Melayu* and later served as the Chief of Literary Development at the *New Straits Times* newspaper group. His short stories, first published in 1954, capture the essence of everyday life in Malaysia, portraying characters such as students, squatters, and the unemployed with a keen eye for social realism.

These short stories were later compiled into a collection titled *Hati Muda Bulan Muda: Kumpulan Cerpen 1954-1992* (1993), edited by Othman Puteh. The collection highlights A. Samad Said's ability to depict the struggles and triumphs of ordinary Malaysians, making his work relatable to a wide audience.

## Essays and Socio-Political Commentary

A. Samad Said's essays also hold a significant place in his body of work. After stepping down as editor of *Berita Harian* in 1978, he devoted himself to writing essays, many of which were later compiled into books such as *Tangan yang Simpatik: Kumpulan Esei* (1981), *Antara Bulan dan Wira* (1989), and *Ilham di Tepi Tasik* (2006). These essays delve into issues related to the development of Malaysian literature and the works of both Eastern and Western authors, reflecting A. Samad Said's extensive reading and deep understanding of global literary trends.

His writings often tackle socio-political themes, offering insightful commentary on topics such as identity, colonialism, nationalism, and social justice. Through his literature, A. Samad Said has sparked critical discourse and reflection among readers, using his platform to advocate for positive change and social awareness.



In the process of writing.

## Continued Legacy and Recognition

Even in his retirement, A. Samad Said continued to produce literary works, including poetry collections like *Balada Hilang Peta* (1990), *Al-Amin* (2001), and *Suara Dari Dinding Dewan* (2003). His contributions to the drama genre, such as *Lantai J Pinkie* (1996), have also been met with critical acclaim, with the play being staged multiple times to enthusiastic audiences.

His influence extends beyond Malaysia's borders, with some of his works being translated into other languages, including Korean and English.

Notably, his poem *Gagak Parit* (1991) was translated into English as *The Dead Crow* and included in the Malaysian lower secondary school English literature curriculum, further cementing his legacy as a literary icon.

His influence extends beyond Malaysia's borders, with some of his works being translated into other languages, including Korean and English.



Inauguration of the KTMB Art Exhibition.

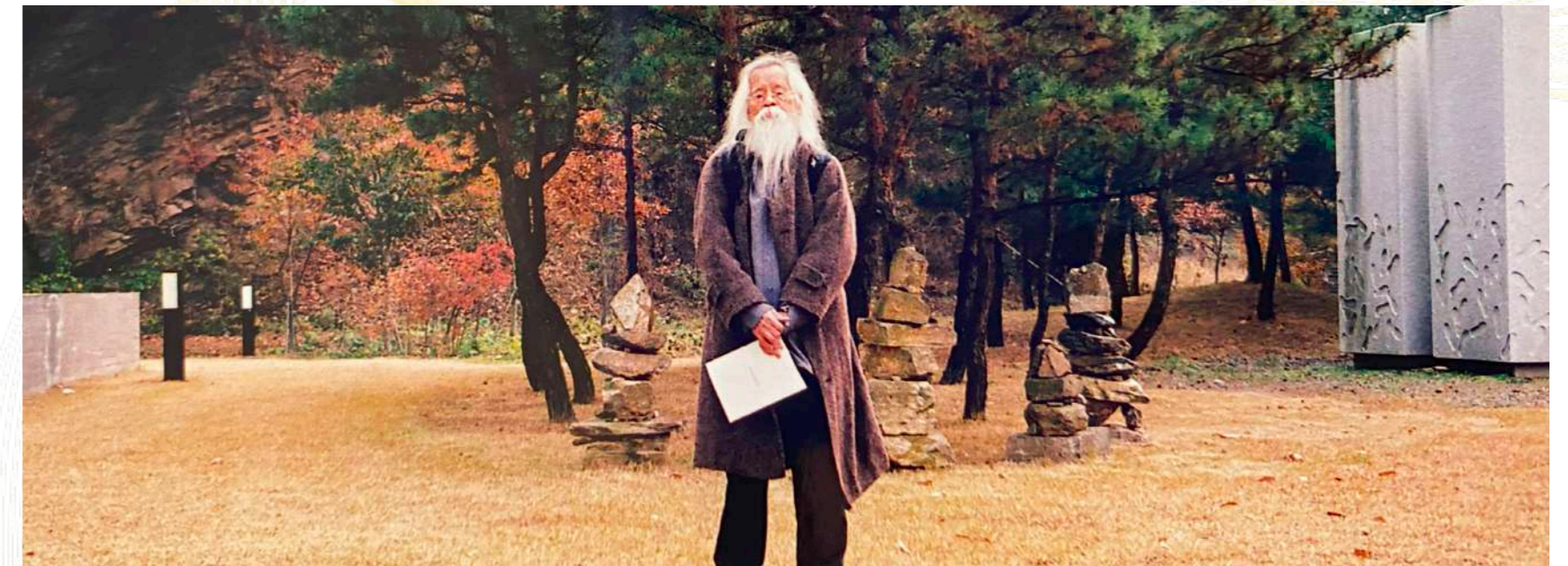
## A Lasting Contribution to Malaysian Literature

A. Samad Said's impact on Malaysian literature is profound and enduring. With over 100 of his works now preserved in the Pak Samad Gallery at Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA), future generations will continue to benefit from his literary legacy. His numerous accolades, including the prestigious Sasterawan Negara (National Laureate) title in 1985, and his recent recognition with The Knights Award 2023, underscore the significance of his contributions to Malaysian culture and literature.

His work continues to inspire and resonate with readers of all ages, ensuring that his legacy will endure for generations to come.



Interview at Kuala Lumpur International Book Fair 2024.



## A. SAMAD SAID: PERSPEKTIF PERIBADI

### Apakah satu pencapaian yang paling anda banggakan?

Saya fikir kejayaan saya menulis novel yang saya tidak sangka sebenarnya - dia menjadi. Tapi selepas saya dapat pujian, selepas saya dapat hadiah material saya merasa ini seakan satu anugerah yang tak disangkakan dan saya amat besar hati dan berterima kasih.

Setiap kali saya menulis dan menjadi, dan mendapat sambutan yang baik saya merasa itu bukan saja keuntungan bagi saya, keuntungan bagi masyarakat dan juga saya fikir dia menjadi khazanah untuk negara.

### Apakah kenangan terbaik anda sepanjang kerjaya anda?

Bagi penulis, saya fikir saya tak sangka saya dapat menghabiskan satu antologi puisi Islami yang panjang *Al-Amin* - yang lain-lain saya bangga juga tapi tak seperti *Al-Amin* sebab dia memerlukan seluruh keikhlasan saya, seluruh pengetahuan saya, seluruh keupayaan saya untuk menulisnya.

### Apakah cabaran terbesar yang perlu anda hadapi sepanjang pengalaman kerja anda?

Setiap kali saya terilham untuk membuat sesuatu, jikalau dia mengambil masa yang amat lama untuk menjayakannya saya akan merasa risau, tapi sebaik-baik saya mengatasinya saya merasa senang.

### Bagaimanakah anda mengatasi cabaran itu?

Cabaran yang terbesar saya gagap sebenarnya!

Jadi dari awal keinginan ingin menjadi great orator. Jadi saya pergi ke tepi ombak laut, saya tunggu ombak besar datang, dia pukul pantai ataupun batu, saya akan menjerit sebolehnya lebih nyaring daripada dia.

### Bagaimanakah masa anda dibahagikan antara kerjaya dan kehidupan peribadi anda?

Saya tak dapat nak membezakan sebenarnya sebab bagi saya setiap detik yang berlalu itu amat berguna bagi saya dan kegemaran saya hanya membaca. Jadi di kiri kanan bila ada buku senang hati saya.

### Apakah falsafah atau pegangan hidup anda?

Saya kira saya didatangkan oleh Allah - pilihan yang sangat saya hargai.

Dan saya harap kehadiran saya di dunia ini memberi sumbangan kepada bangsa saya dan negara saya.

Saya fikir kerana banyak dalam kehidupan yang saya lalui. Dan kebanyakan ini amat berguna untuk golongan sekarang, jadi setidaknya saya memulangkan apa yang saya alami berharap apa yang saya hantar itu berguna untuk orang lain.

Masing masing mempunyai terjemahannya sendiri, bagaimana kehidupan itu wajib dimanfaatkan dan oleh kerana saya seorang penulis, jadi saya ingin menulis sebaiknya, dan oleh kerana kehidupan saya agak susah jadi pegangan agama saya itu menjadi amat bererti.

Jadi setiap kali saya risau atau apa saya akan membaca kisah-kisah yang disampaikan dalam al-Quran.

### Apa yang anda usahakan sekarang?

Sekarang ini saya lebih banyak menghabiskan membaca buku-buku klasik yang tidak sempat saya habiskan. Misalan saya suka baca Dostoevsky, Leo Tolstoy, Hemingway tapi tidak semua habis dulunya, tapi sekarang saya go slow dengan hasrat untuk menikmati dan mananggung dia punya hasil.

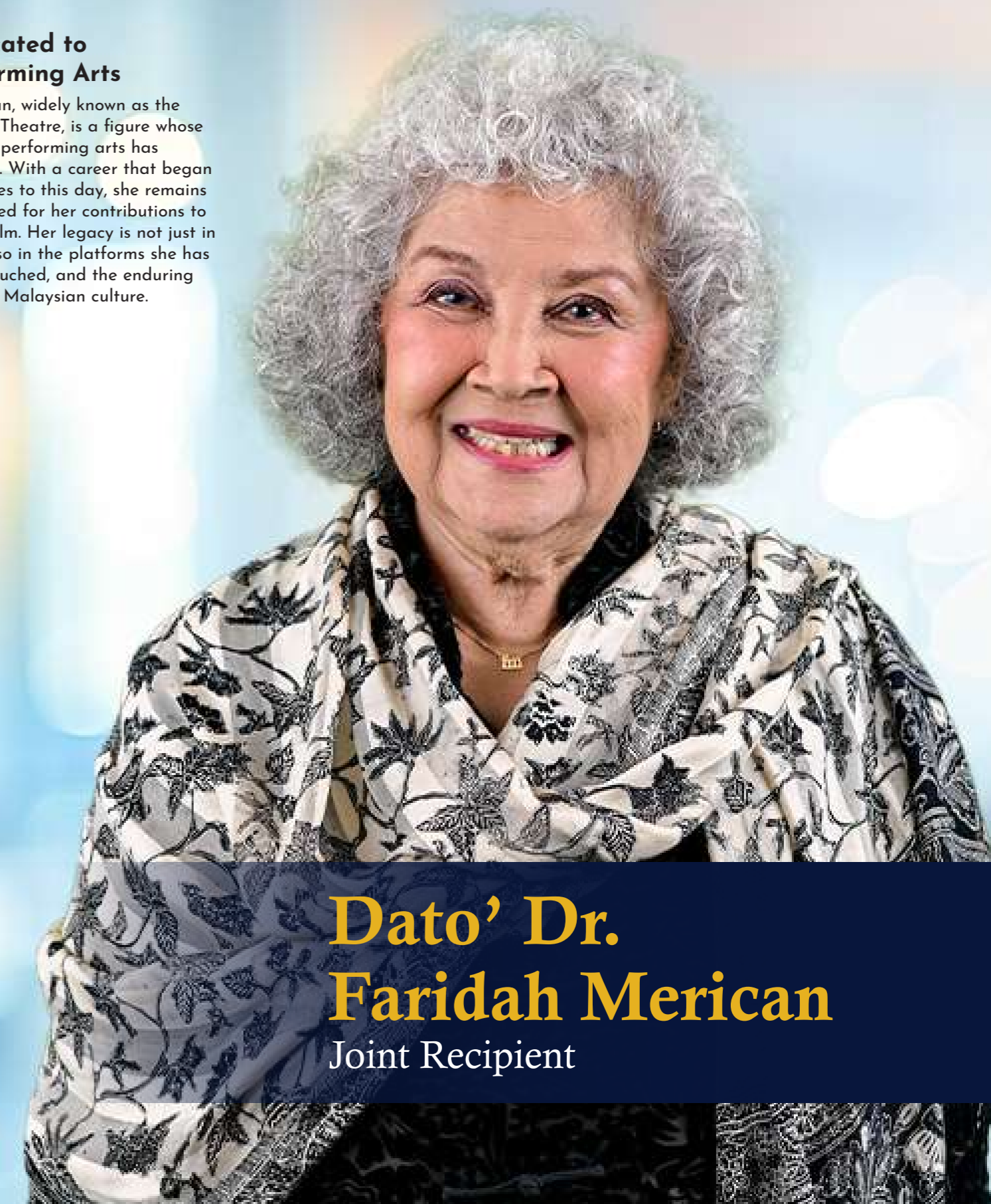


## Education and Community

Awarded to individuals and/or organisations to honour exceptional thinking and the educational infrastructure of Malaysia in elevating the level of education and in benefiting the marginalised.

### A Lifetime Dedicated to Malaysian Performing Arts

Dato' Dr. Faridah Merican, widely known as the First Lady of Malaysian Theatre, is a figure whose influence in the world of performing arts has transcended generations. With a career that began in the 1960s and continues to this day, she remains a household name, revered for her contributions to theatre, television, and film. Her legacy is not just in her performances but also in the platforms she has built, the lives she has touched, and the enduring impact she has made on Malaysian culture.



**Dato' Dr.  
Faridah Merican**  
Joint Recipient

## Early Career and Rise to Fame

Faridah's journey in the performing arts began during a time when Malaysia's theatre scene was still in its nascent stages. Her early roles in iconic plays such as *Lela Mayang*, *Tok Perak*, *Uda dan Dara*, and *Alang Rentak Seribu* during the 1960s and 70s set the stage for her future contributions. These performances were not just acts of entertainment; they were instrumental in addressing and encouraging discourse on racial, political, and social issues. Faridah's ability to portray a wide range of characters with depth and authenticity earned her widespread acclaim, establishing her as a versatile and powerful force in Malaysian theatre.



1972, Faridah as Dara d.

## The Actors Studio: A Beacon of Malaysian Theatre

In 1989, Faridah co-founded The Actors Studio (TAS), a move that would significantly advance Malaysia's performing arts industry. TAS quickly became a cornerstone for contemporary theatre in the country, providing a platform for actors, directors, and playwrights to showcase their skills and foster artistic innovation. Over the years, TAS has hosted nearly 600 productions, attracting almost 1 million patrons. Its mission to educate individuals of all ages in various art forms has been pivotal in enriching the nation's cultural landscape.

## The Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre (klpac): A Platform for Cultural Exchange

The devastating flash floods of 2003, which destroyed TAS's underground complex, could have marked the end of an era. Instead, it led to the creation of the The Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre (klpac) in 2005, driven by Faridah's determination and vision. klpac, a non-profit organisation, has since become a hub for artistic expression, hosting over 2,500 shows and events and welcoming more than 800,000 visitors. The centre's dedication to inclusivity and diversity is evident in its wide range of performances, from Cantonese Opera to Mak Yong, and from Shakespeare in Bahasa Malaysia to contemporary experimental works.

## Expanding the Reach: penangpac and Nationwide Impact

Faridah's vision for theatre extended beyond Kuala Lumpur. In 2011, she co-founded the Performing Arts Centre of Penang (penangpac), which played a crucial role in fostering creativity and the arts in the northern region of Malaysia. Penangpac provided a platform for local artists to showcase their talents and for the community to engage with diverse cultural experiences. Although penangpac closed its doors in 2022 due to financial pressures exacerbated by the pandemic, its legacy lives on in the countless artists and audiences it touched during its decade of service.



2018, Dato' Faridah in Adam The Musical, directed by Joe Hasham OAM.

## Tackling Social Issues Through Theatre

Faridah has never shied away from using theatre as a platform to address pressing social issues. Her groundbreaking *Life Sdn Bhd* series has fearlessly delved into topics such as abuse, mental health, and refugee plights. In 2016, *Life Sdn Bhd: Human Trafficking* shed light on the urgent issue of human trafficking in Malaysia, featuring the participation of both non-actors and actors. Faridah's collaboration with the Malaysian AIDS Council to produce *Adam The Musical* in 2010 was another significant effort, using the arts to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS, breaking down stigmas, and fostering a deeper understanding of these health issues within the community.



2015, Uda Dan Dara Performance, directed by Dato' Faridah.

## Mentorship and Advocacy

Faridah's influence extends far beyond her roles as an actor, director, and producer. She is widely recognized as a mentor who has provided numerous Malaysian performing artists with their initial breakthroughs in the industry. Through klpac and other initiatives, she has created nurturing grounds for budding thespians, underscoring her commitment to the growth and development of talent within the Malaysian performing arts community.

Her advocacy for the arts is equally commendable. Faridah has actively championed educational initiatives aimed at fostering a deeper appreciation and understanding of the performing arts among the Malaysian public. Through workshops, seminars, and outreach programs, she engages audiences of all ages and backgrounds, instilling a passion for theatre and cultivating future generations of theatre enthusiasts.



2012 KLPAC Fundraising feature in News Straits Times.

## Leadership and Legacy

Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which severely impacted the performing arts industry, Faridah's resilience shone through. She continued to produce, direct, and act in plays, including one in a Chinese dialect, bringing joy to theatre enthusiasts even in difficult times. Her leadership has been instrumental in shaping the trajectory of Malaysian theatre, inspiring countless individuals to pursue careers in the performing arts.

In 2020, Faridah took on the role of Adjunct Professor and Programme Development Director of TUTAS, Malaysia's first performing arts conservatory degree programme. Through this role, she continues to inspire and mentor the next generation of actors and artists, ensuring that her legacy will endure for years to come.

The play *Thunderstorm* she directed in Chinese dialect (Hokkien & Cantonese) was in 2019 before the pandemic. During the pandemic, she directed *Bollywood Dreams* (March 2021) - the first live show after five months, staged just 2 weeks after the official announcement by MKN which is a feat after transnational / online rehearsals.

## Achievements and Recognition

For nearly seven decades, Dato' Dr. Faridah Merican's illustrious career has been a testament to a lifetime dedicated to the arts. Her impressive portfolio includes approximately 1,500 productions and performances, spanning various genres and showcasing both existing classics and innovative original works. Among her many accolades, she has been recognized with numerous prestigious awards, including the Elite@UM Fellow in 2023, the Honorary Doctorate of the Arts from Taylor's University in 2018, and the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Boh Cameronian Arts Award ceremony in 2004.



2005, Dato' Dr. Faridah was conferred the 'Darjah Dato' Paduka Tuanku Ja'afar by the Yang Di-Pertuan Besar of Negeri Sembilan on the occasion of His Highness' 83rd Birthday.

## A Lasting Contribution

Dato' Faridah Merican's unwavering commitment has shaped Malaysia's performing arts landscape, providing Malaysians with invaluable access and exposure to the arts. Her unique blend of cultural influence, advocacy, leadership, and mentorship distinguishes her as a highly respected and influential figure in Malaysia. Her contributions to the arts make her deserving of the Merdeka Award in the Education and Community category, recognizing a lifetime of dedication to the enrichment of Malaysian culture.



## DATO' FARIDAH: PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES

### How do you see Arts play a role in shaping who we are as a nation?

Well, we have always believed that we have a big responsibility in the Arts, and that's why we train our kids from 3 years old to 70 and beyond. It is not an easy task to do. We have been striving for years and years and years and we are, I think we are kind of succeeding, not entirely because we're still telling our students what it means to be a cultured person, a person who believes in the arts, a person who tells the truth. We emphasise on this quite a bit about the truth of what we are and who we are and who our friends are and who are neighbours are and it is such a long road. And I'm not saying that we may even achieve our goals, but we will never give up.

### What are those goals?

Our goal is to create a cultured society. We want to share with Malaysians, the whole learning of what it means to be cultured and some people might think I am a bit harsh to say things like that, but I think that it does not mean that culture is just the arts, culture is our lives, totally.

Everything that we do, everything that we touch, everything that we speak, everything that we utter with one another, that is the culture that we want to leave behind to our children, so that we become better. We become a better race of people.

### Having been in the field since the 1950s, how do you see Malaysia's arts industry evolving in the next few decades?

My best years of Malaysia were the years, when I was growing up in Penang and with our first Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman. It was so wonderful. I am not a university graduate, but the amount of things I learned because I sat together with intelligent people who talk about what they have learned, during their troubles - people like Syed Alwi and Usman Awang and others. However, that opportunity to sit together with people who will share with us their learnings, their intelligence is much reduced today. I just wish we could have more of these - so that the knowledge is passed down from one generation to the next.

### What would you say to be your legacy for the performing arts?

I will not rest until I see a theatre at every street corner in Malaysia. I do not think it is going to happen, but I still wish there was a widespread performing arts throughout the country. At the moment, it is just in Kuala Lumpur or in Penang or a little bit in Malacca, a little bit in Johor. I used to say that street theatre is something that we should inculcate, we should create, we should develop, we should encourage, and it happens in many cities in the world, Street Theatre. I think it is great fun. I think that your children will enjoy it, even adults can enjoy it. So my legacy is I want to see theatre develop and develop and do not stop developing.

In the old old days, when traditional theatre was happening, there was Mak Yong, Bangsawan and Boria and everything and that was how theatre developed. When I was growing up, I was watching Chinese Wayang and Bangsawan in Penang, at the theatres that we had, looking over the fence of the theatre.

There's a lot of talent in the country, a lot who are willing to share their joys of performing with the people in the country, all we need to do is just click your finger, make it happen.



2019, cover story with The Edge.





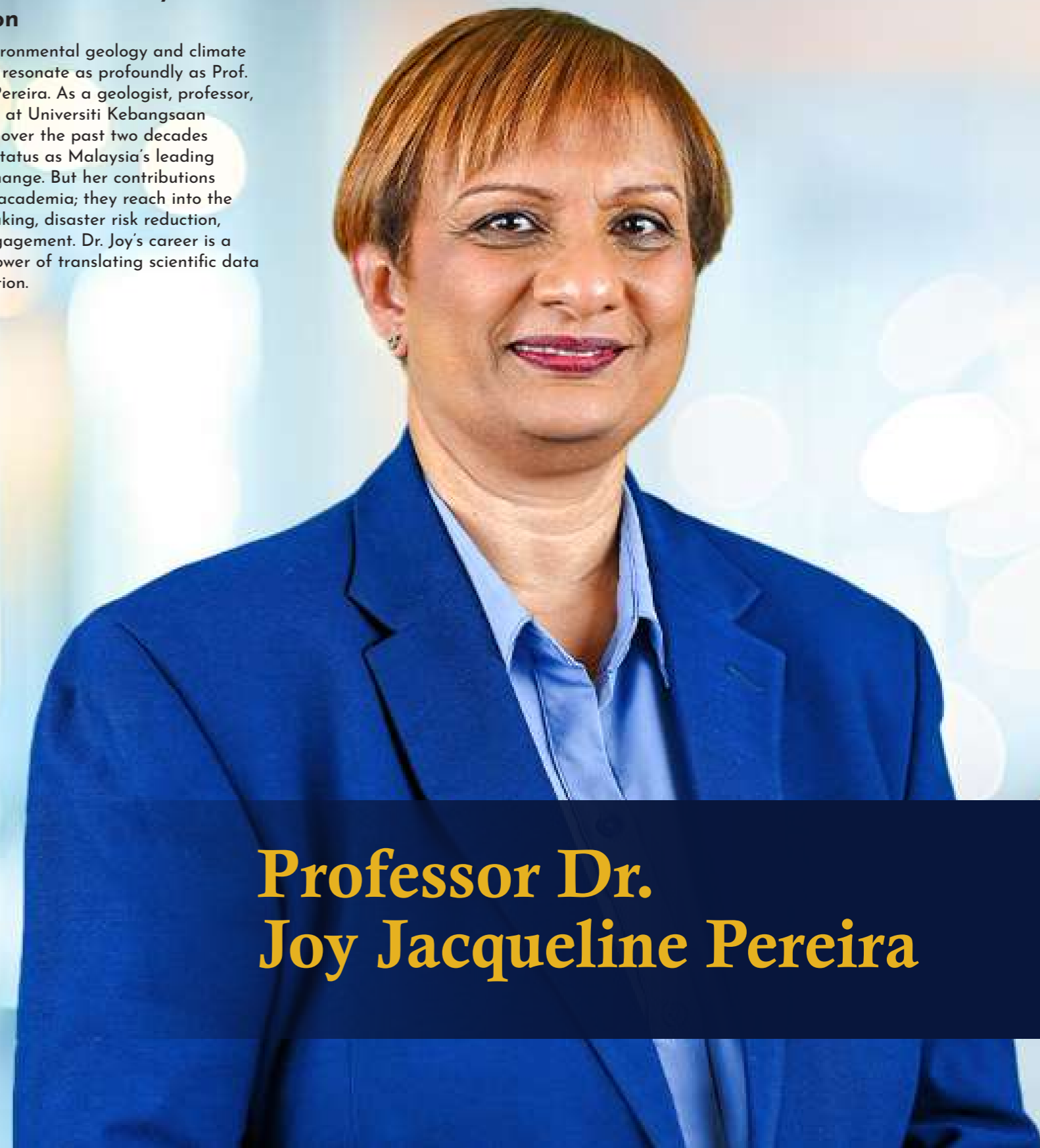


## Environment

Awarded to individuals and/or organisations to honour the development, research and application of new technology and practices in renewing and protecting the environment.

### Bridging Science and Policy for Climate Action

In the world of environmental geology and climate change, few names resonate as profoundly as Prof. Dr. Joy Jacqueline Pereira. As a geologist, professor, and research fellow at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, her work over the past two decades has cemented her status as Malaysia's leading expert in climate change. But her contributions extend far beyond academia; they reach into the realms of policy-making, disaster risk reduction, and community engagement. Dr. Joy's career is a testament to the power of translating scientific data into meaningful action.



**Professor Dr.  
Joy Jacqueline Pereira**

## Translating Science into Action

Dr. Joy's unique strength lies in her ability to navigate the complex interface between science and policy. As the Chairperson of the Malaysian Network for Research on Climate, Environment, and Development (MyCLIMATE), she has dedicated herself to making scientific data on climate change accessible and actionable for both the public and policymakers. Her work focuses on critical areas such as disaster risk reduction and sustainable development, ensuring that the evidence of climate change is not just understood but acted upon.

Her research serves as a cornerstone for advocating adaptation strategies and influencing policy-making. Dr. Joy's leadership is recognized through her roles on various panels and councils, both locally and internationally. Her ability to communicate complex scientific concepts in a way that drives action has made her an invaluable asset in the fight against climate change.



Led the project team that delivered the inaugural National Policy on Climate Change and the National Disaster Risk Register for Malaysia.



Delivering the summary of the inaugural ASEAN Disaster Resilience Forum, convened by the ASEAN Disaster Resilience Platform, a revitalised institutional arrangement for the region.

## Impact and Global Leadership

Dr. Joy's contributions have not gone unnoticed on the global stage. For over a decade, she has been an active member of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), contributing to numerous working groups and reports. Her dedication to shaping the climate change discourse led to her historic election in 2023 as the first female Asian co-chair of the IPCC Working Group III on Mitigation of Climate Change. In this role, Dr. Joy has provided a comprehensive perspective on mitigation and adaptation efforts, influencing global assessments and policy.

Dr. Joy has also been a key figure in the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction's (UNDRR's) Asia-Pacific Science and Technology Advisory Group (AP-STAG). This group supports science-based decision-making to implement the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, a global initiative aimed at understanding vulnerabilities, investing in resilience, and preparing for disasters in the face of climate change.

## Pioneering Disaster Risk Reduction Initiatives

One of Dr. Joy's most notable contributions is her work in disaster risk reduction. As the Director of the Asian Network on Climate Science and Technology (ANCST) at UKM, she has led several transformative projects. Among them is the Kuala Lumpur Multi-Hazard Platform (KL-MHP), a groundbreaking forecasting system designed to provide early warnings and enhance preparedness and response mechanisms in urban areas. This system, in use by the City Hall of Kuala Lumpur (DBKL) since 2021, integrates data on weather, geological, and atmospheric hazards, offering a comprehensive approach to disaster risk management.

Dr. Joy also spearheaded the development of the MyBahaya Platform, which aims to foster social entrepreneurship among early-career geologists. This platform empowers geologists to monitor and report on geohazards, such as landslides, and engage with communities to build resilience against climate-induced disasters. By nurturing the next generation of geologists, Dr. Joy is ensuring that the field of disaster risk reduction continues to evolve and adapt to new challenges.



With the Her Excellency the High Commissioner of Canada to Malaysia and Tengku Mohd Azzman Shariffadeen of the Academy of Sciences at the launch of the IDRC Project on Promotion of Social Entrepreneurship in Disaster Risk Reduction to Build Community Resilience in 2019.



Conducting an IPCC outreach to researchers in Japan to kick-start the Seventh Assessment Cycle in Tokyo, Japan.

## A Champion for a Sustainable Future

Dr. Joy Jacqueline Pereira's career is a shining example of how scientific research can be translated into meaningful action. Through her leadership in scientific research, policy advocacy, disaster risk reduction, and community engagement, she has become a pivotal figure in the global climate change discourse. Her work not only addresses the immediate challenges posed by climate change but also lays the foundation for a more resilient and sustainable future for all.

Dr. Joy's dedication to understanding and combating the impacts of climate change has made her a trailblazer in her field. Her efforts have not only influenced national policy but have also made a significant impact on the global stage, ensuring that the fight against climate change continues to gain momentum.

## A Legacy of Mentorship and Academic Excellence

For nearly 30 years, she has been a principal research fellow at UKM's Southeast Asia Disaster Prevention Research Initiative (SEADPRI-UKM), where she has supervised the research of over 40 graduate students and postdoctoral candidates. Her mentorship has helped shape the careers of many scientists who are now contributing to climate change research and policy on a global scale.

Dr. Joy's academic achievements are reflected in the numerous awards she has received, including the Malaysia Research Assessment (MyRA) Excellence Award. Her work has been published in top-tier journals, and she continues to serve as an editor for several international scientific publications.



## PROFESSOR DR. JOY: PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES

### How do you feel about winning the Merdeka Award in your category?

It is such a pleasure to have my work recognised. I feel that I am making a positive difference to society and the environment, specifically in bridging the science-policy gap in climate change and building disaster resilience for sustainable development. This acknowledgment is also important to show my family, friends and colleagues that their faith and support to me has not been in vain.

### Can you briefly share with us your professional experiences?

I have built my career on environmental geology, working primarily on earth resources and natural hazards, to channel scientific findings into policy. After obtaining my first degree in Earth Science from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, I was granted the British High Commissioners Award, now known as the Chevening Award, to continue my Masters in Mineral Exploration and Mining Geology from University of Leicester. I then embarked on my Ph.D. in University of Malaya working on gold mining and environmental impacts.

On the recommendation of Emeritus Prof. Dato' Ibrahim Komoo, I joined the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's Institute for Environment and Development (LESTARI) in 1996 and moved on to the Southeast Asia Disaster Prevention Research Initiative (SEADPRI-UKM), where I started leading multi-country international projects. Over the years, I have been privileged to work with scientists from multidisciplinary backgrounds in UKM, Malaysia and other countries, and channel the findings to policy makers and practitioners.

### What is the one accomplishment you're most proud of? Why?

I am most proud of the project that I jointly led with Professor Lord Julian Hunt of Trinity College, Cambridge, involving scientists, practitioners and policy makers from Malaysia and United Kingdom, which delivered the Kuala Lumpur Multi Hazard Platform.

Professor Hunt is an atmospheric scientist, and I am a geologist, and together we conceptualised and the first ever forecasting system of its kind, combining information on weather, geological and atmospheric hazards for cities, funded by the Newton Ungku Omar Fund. The Kuala Lumpur Multi Hazard Platform was launched by the Mayor of Kuala Lumpur in 2021 and is now used by the City Hall of Kuala Lumpur, with operational support from the Meteorology Department of Malaysia (MetMisia).

### What are your best memories throughout your career?

My best memories are the collaborative initiatives on climate change that I led involving scientists, practitioners and policy makers from Malaysia and other countries. In addition to delivering substantial products, there was always very high energy, excitement and so much learning in each of the initiatives. I could feel myself gaining experiential knowledge throughout its duration. The initiatives were instrumental in providing me with the credibility to join the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and contribute to several IPCC Reports since 2014.



### What is your personal philosophy?

I have always strived for continuous improvement in my work and my being.

I have two quotes that I stick in my annual planner to inspire me. The first is attributed to Winston Churchill "Success is not final; failure is not fatal; it is the courage to continue that counts". Another anonymous quote also deeply resonates with me "When you encounter setbacks and difficulty, be practical and rational, not sentimental or emotional".

On the personal front, I am a work in progress. I admire humble, respectful and wise people. I have simplified these characteristics for better understanding, to make it part of my being. Gratitude is the pathway to humility. Respect is listening to another person, the one in front of you. Wisdom is patience, understanding, acceptance and contextual appreciation.

A pivotal moment of my career was when I delivered a keynote on IPCC findings at the inaugural bipartisan Symposium on Climate Change on 5 Sept 2022, which was officiated by the Speaker of the Parliament of Malaysia.

A major international moment was when I was elected as Co-Chair of the IPCC Working Group on Mitigation of Climate Change, after serving as Vice Chair of the IPCC Working Group on Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability.

### What has kept your passion in this specific field for so many years?

Making a positive difference to safeguard communities and build their resilience. I am driven by the potential impact of my work on society and the environment. Every project I undertake, every collaboration I engage in, is guided by the goal of contributing to sustainable development and disaster resilience. The satisfaction of seeing tangible results and knowing that my efforts are helping to create a safer, more sustainable world keeps me passionate and motivated in this field.

### Message to young Malaysians what is your personal philosophy or quotes

Work hard, give praise generously, avoid conflict and always enlarge the pie - don't fight over the biggest slice. Rank and recognition that is publicly awarded is nice but tends to be quickly forgotten, influence is more important. Always enlarge your circle of influence.

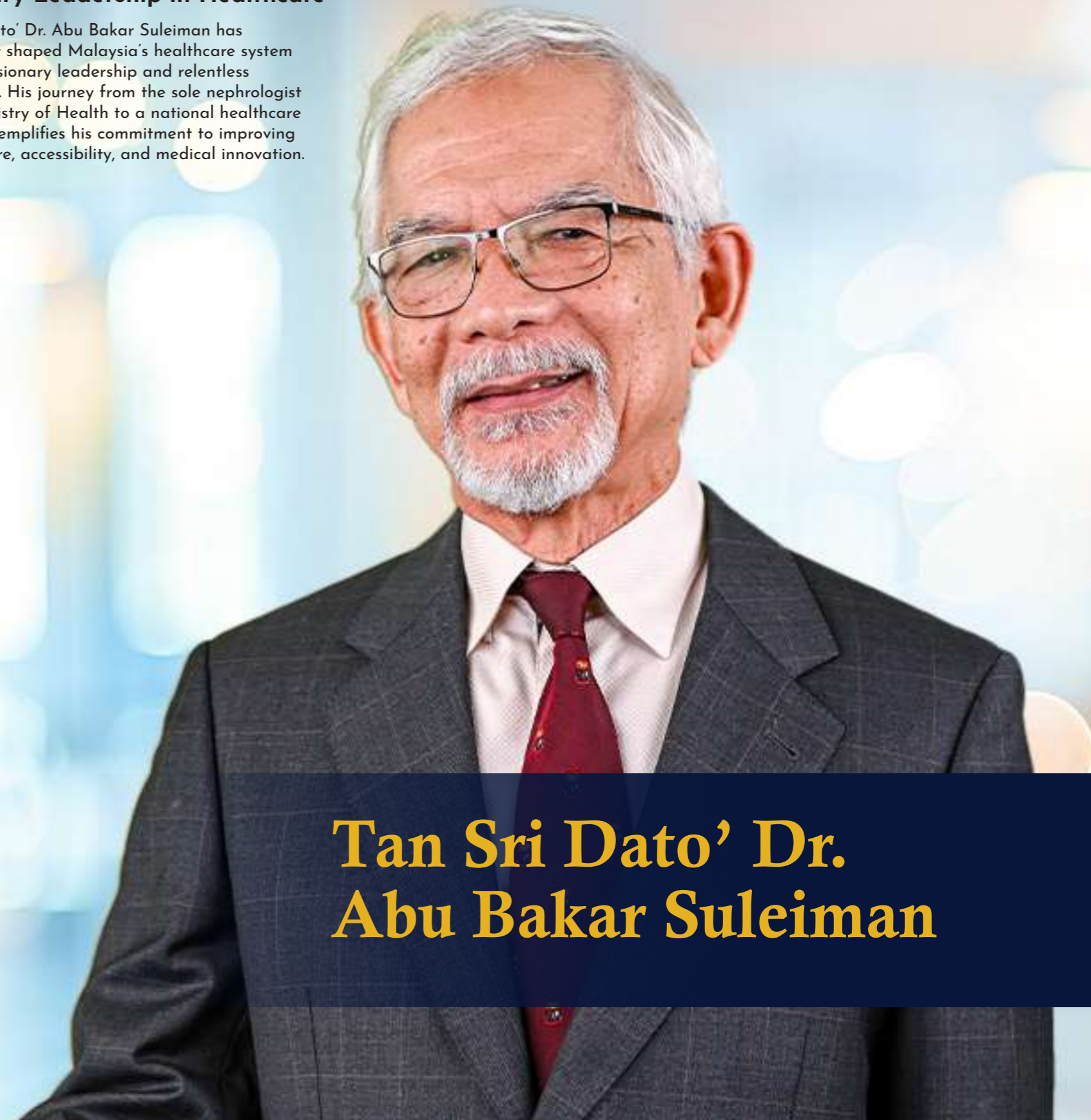


## Health, Science and Technology

Awarded to individuals and/or organisations to honour the creation, development, support and application of new and innovative technology that improves the lives of people everywhere.

### Visionary Leadership in Healthcare

Tan Sri Dato' Dr. Abu Bakar Suleiman has profoundly shaped Malaysia's healthcare system through visionary leadership and relentless dedication. His journey from the sole nephrologist in the Ministry of Health to a national healthcare pioneer exemplifies his commitment to improving patient care, accessibility, and medical innovation.



**Tan Sri Dato' Dr.  
Abu Bakar Suleiman**



Gathering of Malaysian nephrologists and Singaporean nephrologists.

## Pioneering Nephrology in Malaysia

Dr. Abu Bakar's career began with a pivotal role in nephrology. As the sole nephrologist in the Ministry of Health, he recognized the urgent need for accessible dialysis services across Malaysia. His work at Hospital Kuala Lumpur (HKL) laid the foundation for decentralizing nephrology services, making hemodialysis accessible to more patients nationwide.

To address the challenge of centralizing services at HKL, Dr. Abu Bakar developed strategies to decentralize and expand dialysis services. He established satellite dialysis units in major towns and supported local physicians in setting up peritoneal dialysis units, reducing the need for patients to travel long distances. His innovative approach to self-care dialysis empowered patients to manage their treatment at home or work, significantly improving their quality of life. This initiative not only expanded treatment accessibility but also provided a cost-effective model for developing countries facing similar healthcare challenges.

## Championing Professional Development and Patient Empowerment

Dr. Abu Bakar's career began with a pivotal role in Dr. Abu Bakar's commitment to strengthening the healthcare system extended beyond technological advancements. As the President of the Malaysian Medical Council (MMC) in 1997, he introduced mandatory Continuous Medical Education (CME) to ensure that doctors remain updated on medical advancements. This initiative was a significant step toward improving patient care and professional accountability.

Additionally, Dr. Abu Bakar was instrumental in establishing the National Specialist Registry (NSR) in 2000. Managed by the MMC, the NSR created a public database of qualified specialists, enhancing transparency, safeguarding public health, and empowering patients in their healthcare choices. By requiring ongoing CME participation for NSR inclusion, the registry ensured that specialist clinicians maintained their knowledge and competence throughout their careers.

## A Lifelong Dedication to Medical Education

After retiring from government service in 2001, Dr. Abu Bakar transitioned to be the President of the International Medical University (IMU). During this time, he guided the institution to launch healthcare services that benefited the community while supporting clinical training. His efforts at IMU have left an enduring legacy, fostering the next generation of healthcare professionals and ensuring that they are equipped with the knowledge and skills to navigate the challenges of modern healthcare.

## Leadership in Healthcare Innovation

In 1987, Dr. Abu Bakar became the Director of Medical Services at the Ministry of Health, overseeing 130 hospitals nationwide. His leadership was instrumental in advancing healthcare policies and systems. As the Director-General of Health from 1991 to 2001, he spearheaded several groundbreaking initiatives, including the development of the Telehealth Blueprint.

Appointed by the then-Prime Minister in 1996, Dr. Abu Bakar led a national task force to modernize Malaysia's healthcare system. The Telehealth Blueprint, launched in 1997, envisioned a patient-centered approach to healthcare, emphasizing the importance of electronic health records (EHRs), teleconsultations, and remote access to health information.

The Blueprint's successful implementation included the adoption of a paperless and filmless system at Selayang Hospital and Putrajaya Hospital, showcasing the practical benefits of health IT in government healthcare facilities. Despite facing challenges during the Asian financial crisis and technological hurdles, the Blueprint continues to influence Malaysia's digital health initiatives, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. countries facing similar healthcare challenges.

## Global Contributions and Ongoing Impact

On the global stage, Dr. Abu Bakar represented Malaysia in various health committees, contributing to discussions at the World Health Assembly and the WHO Western Pacific Regional Committee. His dedication to public health continued even in retirement, as he took on advisory roles, including as a member of the COVID-19 Expert Advisory Group.

Dr. Abu Bakar's lifelong contributions to healthcare were recognized with numerous accolades, including the Lifetime Achievement Award from the College of Physicians, Academy of Medicine of Malaysia in 2017, and an Honorary Doctor of Medicine from the International Medical University in 2023. These honors reflect his enduring influence on Malaysia's healthcare landscape.



Snapshot of activities as Minister of Health to Malaysia.

## A Lifelong Commitment

Tan Sri Dato' Dr. Abu Bakar Suleiman's legacy as a health expert, educator, and transformative leader continues to inspire and shape Malaysia's healthcare system. His pioneering work in nephrology, leadership in healthcare innovation, and commitment to professional development and patient empowerment have left an indelible mark on the nation. His unwavering dedication to improving healthcare services and medical education is a testament to his visionary leadership and lifelong commitment to public health.



## TAN SRI DATO' DR. ABU BAKAR: PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES

### How do you feel about winning the Merdeka Award in your category?

I was pleasantly surprised and gratified that the work that I had been involved in from some years ago would receive such recognition.

Gratified because there is only so much that any one individual can contribute, but it had been the contributions of many that worked with me, that really mattered.

I had the privilege of working with many highly committed and dedicated colleagues, including the specialists, medical officers, nurses, medical assistants and others that made up teams that made contributions to the health services in our country. I represent them in receiving this award.

### What has kept your passion in this specific field for so many years?

I have been blessed to be involved in work that interested me and through which contributions to the health system is possible. Healthcare and education are so intertwined, that working in Education after retirement from the Ministry of Health was a natural process. Working with younger people and to facilitate their development into future leaders is a great privilege.

### What are your best memories throughout your career?

There have been many good memories.

I had referred a number of my patients to nephrologists in several countries, when they moved to join their families living abroad. In one case, I had given advice to the patient and family and communicated with a nephrologist who would continue her care. Three years later her son took the trouble, while on a visit here, to see me to express his mother's and his family's appreciation for my advice that helped them to cope with, and accept the continuing care for the mother in Canada.

In 1985 when I was President of the Malaysian Society of Nephrology, we hosted the Asian Colloquium in Nephrology in Kuala Lumpur. We arranged for three events to run concurrently with the main conference which included a two week course in Nephrology for specialist trainees in Nephrology and a three day training course for nurses and medical technicians. Delegates from all over Asia attended the training courses and the main conference. The leadership of the International Society of Nephrology who attended the conference were very impressed at this arrangement, and decided to continue the two week training course in Nephrology to be held together with their International Congress in Nephrology. This practice has continued to this day.



### Have you ever met a role model that you thought was highly inspirational?

I am proud of developing the Nephrology services, including renal. The person I idolised the most was my late father who was generous, kind and instilled in me a love for reading and emphasised the importance of education. His advice and expectations shaped my outlook and value system.

However, professionally the person I admired was the late Dato' Dr Lim Kee Jin, with whom I worked as a house doctor and later as medical registrar. He was always professional, courteous and kind to all his patients. He had great clinical problem solving skills and was committed to continuous learning. There were a lot of learning activities working in his department, during ward rounds, and also journal reading sessions, tutorials, lectures and case presentations after office hours, five days a week.

All these encouraged doctors working with him to study for post graduate qualifications, and at the same time attend the post graduate course in Internal Medicine at the National University of Singapore. I was one of many that succeeded in obtaining my specialist qualification while working with him. aspects of quality in the clinical services in the Ministry of Health.

I had viewed the development of nephrology services and the initiatives on quality as one accomplishment.

### What is the one accomplishment you're most proud of? Why?

I am proud of developing the Nephrology services, including renal transplantation at Hospital Kuala Lumpur, and in extending the Nephrology services to hospitals outside Kuala Lumpur, while being the sole kidney specialist in the Ministry of Health at the time. I had to run nephrology clinics in various general hospitals by making regular visits to these hospitals. I had also started Haemodialysis units in these hospitals and supervised them from Hospital Kuala Lumpur. The staff in these haemodialysis units were trained at Hospital Kuala Lumpur.

In the early 1980s, kidney specialists who spent two years working with me and a year overseas, were then posted to these hospitals and to run the nephrology services there. Training programmes for medical officers and for nurses were organised on an annual basis.

While starting the nephrology services, I also started a system approach to quality improvement in the nephrology services. In 1983 when the Ministry of Health initiated their national Quality Assurance Programme, they found that the nephrology services was the only clinical service that had any form of quality programme. I was then appointed to chair the National Technical Committee for Quality for the patient care services, I later came to chair the National Committee for Quality Assurance in the Ministry of Health as Director General. I had taken the approach for the specialist doctors running clinical services to take responsibility for quality. This resulted in the clinical specialists to become champions and experts in different aspects of quality in the clinical services in the Ministry of Health.

I had viewed the development of nephrology services and the initiatives on quality as one accomplishment.

### Message to young Malaysians what is your personal philosophy or quotes

The youth of Malaysia as with the youth in other countries face challenging times in so many ways. However, this is a time of rapid, rapid change, with an abundance of opportunities. We all need to work to leave the education system and health system of last century, and build the new education system and health system of this century.

The challenges of artificial intelligence (AI) and synthetic biology may be daunting, but the potential for good to be tapped will be important for the health system and education system of the future.

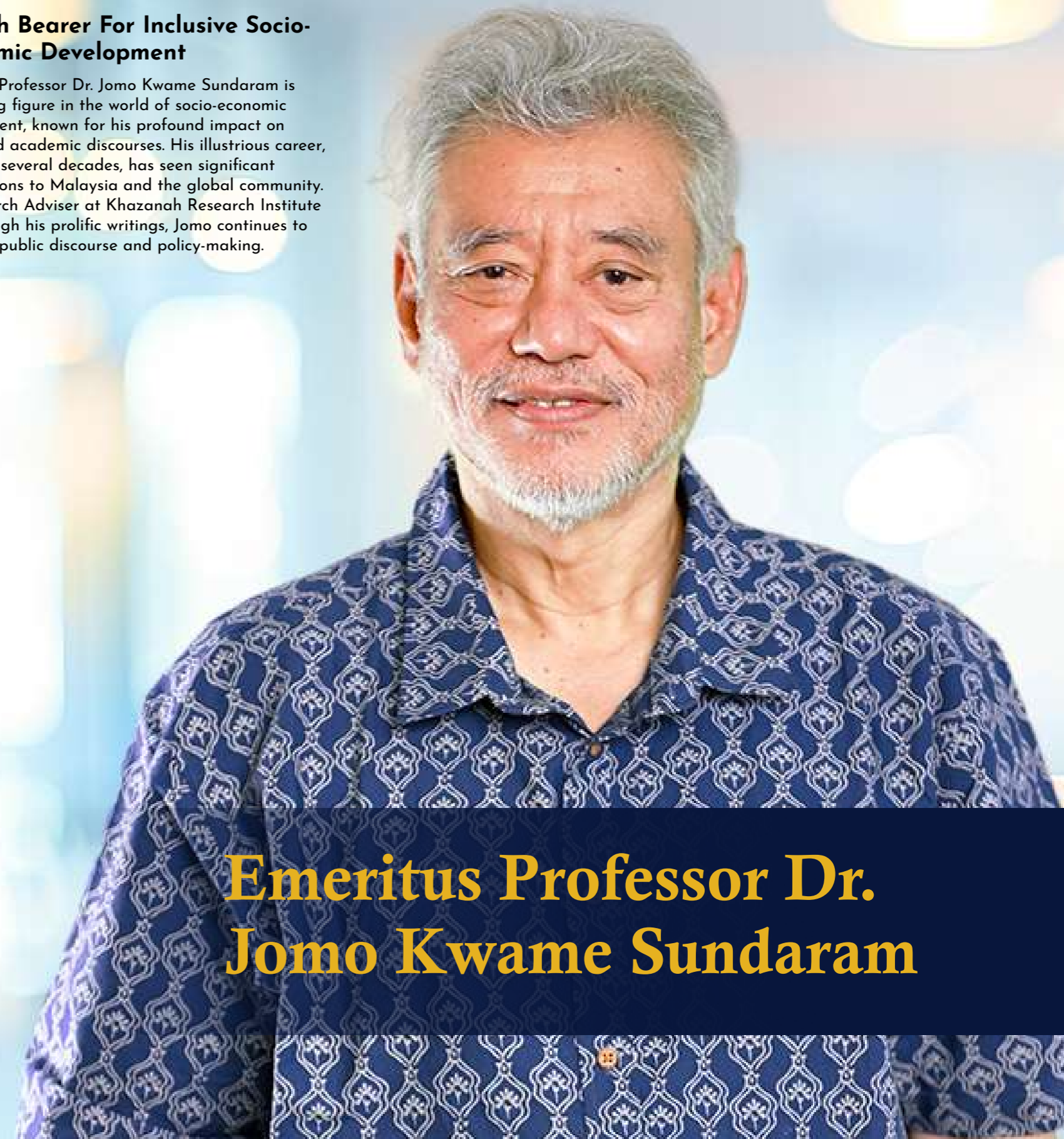


## Outstanding Scholastic Achievement

Awarded to a scholar conducting or playing a major role in academic research resulting in significant discovery.

### A Torch Bearer For Inclusive Socio-Economic Development

Emeritus Professor Dr. Jomo Kwame Sundaram is a towering figure in the world of socio-economic development, known for his profound impact on policy and academic discourses. His illustrious career, spanning several decades, has seen significant contributions to Malaysia and the global community. As Research Adviser at Khazanah Research Institute and through his prolific writings, Jomo continues to influence public discourse and policy-making.



**Emeritus Professor Dr. Jomo Kwame Sundaram**

## A Leading Voice in Economic Policy

Jomo's influence extends far beyond Malaysia's borders. After the historic 2018 Malaysian general election, he was appointed as one of the five members of the Council of Eminent Persons. The council advised the new government on economic and financial matters during the transition. From 2019, he continued his advisory role as part of the Economic Action Council (EAC), chaired by then Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Throughout his career, Jomo has authored over 50 books, edited more than 50 volumes, and written numerous academic papers and media articles. His prolific output reflects his deep commitment to advancing socioeconomic development and sharing his insights with a global audience. Besides writing for other media, he has contributed over 400 opinion-editorials to the Inter-Press Service, covering a wide range of topics related to development, globalisation, human rights, and environmental issues.



Jomo presenting remarks at the DPI Millennium Development Goals Gap Launch.



1972, Family photo with father SK Sundaram, mother Chua Sock Liang, grandmother Kuppamal

## Revitalizing Global Economic Policy at the United Nations

One highlight of Jomo's career was his tenure as Chief Economist of the United Nations, where he served as Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development from 2005 to 2012. During this time, he revitalised the UN's presence in global economic policy discourses, particularly in response to the 2008 global financial crisis. As a member of the Stiglitz Commission, he helped shape government responses to the crisis, advocating policies that promoted financial stability and economic recovery.

Jomo also served as honorary Research Coordinator for the G-24 Intergovernmental Group on International Monetary Affairs and Development. He was also asked to serve as advisor to the President of the 63rd United Nations General Assembly, Father Miguel d'Escoto. Thus, while at the UN, he helped shape the global response to the financial crisis.

## Eradicating Poverty and Malnutrition

Jomo's dedication to creating a more equitable and prosperous world is further evidenced by his work on eradicating poverty and hunger. He played a key role in facilitating an outcome for the 2nd UN Financing for Development Conference in Doha in 2008. He convened the 2nd International Conference on Nutrition in Rome in 2014, underscoring his commitment to addressing global malnutrition and associated challenges. This plan promotes coordinated efforts across key areas, including sustainable food systems, universal healthcare coverage, and social protection.



Jomo as former Assistant Director-General for Economic and Social Development of the United Nations.

## Scholarly Excellence

Jomo's contributions to economic thought have been widely recognized and celebrated. He was the first scholar not from the US or Japan to receive the Abe Fellowship in 1993, a testament to his groundbreaking research and thought leadership. In 2007, he was awarded the Wassily Leontief Prize for "Advancing the Frontiers of Economic Thought".

His influential writings cover a wide range of topics, from international economic issues to Malaysian development challenges. Some of his notable works include *Rents, Rent-Seeking and Economic Development*, *Globalization Versus Development*, *The New Development Economics* and *After The Storm: Crisis, Recovery and Sustaining Development in East Asia*. His deep insights into Malaysia's economic and social landscape are reflected in titles such as *A Question of Class*, *Privatizing Malaysia*, *Malaysia's Political Economy* and *Malaysian Eclipse*.

His contributions to socio-economic development, in Malaysia and beyond, are a testament to his intellectual dynamism and commitment to social justice. His work has not only advanced the frontiers of economic thought, but also had tangible impact on policies and development initiatives worldwide.

As a scholar, advisor, and thought leader, Jomo continues to inspire and influence younger generations of economists and policymakers, especially in the Anglophone Global South. He remains unwavering in his dedication to advancing socio-economic development and fostering a more equitable and sustainable future.



1972, Pulau Perhentian

## Championing Sustainable Development

Jomo's contributions to global development are perhaps best exemplified by his role in formulating the UN's Global Green New Deal. During the 2008-2009 global financial crisis, the UN recommended policies to achieve economic recovery, eliminate poverty, enhance ecological sustainability and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In addition, Jomo contributed to the UN General Assembly adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. These goals, which serve as a comprehensive framework for sustainable development worldwide, were later integrated into Malaysian five-year plan documents and various medium to long term vision statements. His intellectual leadership played a significant role in the transition from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the more comprehensive, robust and legitimate SDGs.





## EMERITUS PROFESSOR DR JOMO: PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES

### What is the one accomplishment you're most proud of? Why?

Mooting the idea of a Global Green New Deal. Although clumsy as a slogan, it offered the prospect of a strong and just economic recovery after the 2008 global financial crisis while addressing sustainability challenges.

### What is the biggest challenge you had to face throughout your working experience?

Negotiating to secure multilateral consensus on the urgent need to fight malnutrition while meaningfully securing the right to food for all.

### How did you overcome the challenge?

By making compromises on peripheral issues while securing the needed multilateral consensus on issues key to addressing malnutrition.

### Have you ever met a role model that you thought was highly inspirational?

Nelson Mandela, whom I met in 1994 after the ANC had won the election and just before his inauguration as president. I was inspired by his ability to work with those who had persecuted and oppressed him for decades in the larger national interest.

### What is your personal philosophy?

To uphold truth and do no harm.

### What has kept your passion in this specific field for so many years?

The continuously expanding scope for myth-busting.

### What is your life motto?

Well, I have not had a single motto in life, but my school slogan at the Military College was not bad, namely "Serve to Lead". All too often, people believe they deserve to lead, that leadership has been thrust upon them or inherited due to merit.

It is important to recognise that leadership is most appreciated when it is earned through service to others.



### How do you see Malaysia evolving in the near future?

It is important for us, not just Malaysians, but people all over the world, to develop a greater sense of empathy for others.

We are now perhaps more divided than ever. Many recent trends promote our distinctive and separate identities, rather than enhance our common humanity. This is most unfortunate, but not irreversible. Responsible leadership can contribute much. In Malaysia now, unfortunately, the incentives, particularly for political advancement, is to stress differences. Hence, we tend to draw boundaries rather than strive to transcend them to overcome our differences.

Never before have I felt that humanity, and the humanity of Malaysians, is under serious existential threat. There are many people ready to go to war on the slightest of pretexts and the slimmest of excuses. This is very dangerous, not only for them, but also for us all. Conflicts can easily spiral out of control as our means of mutual destruction have become more potent than ever before.

Besides the usual criteria for progressive social, economic and political changes, we need to do much more to create the conditions for peace and cooperation. When people greet one another, the typical greeting is one of peace, Salam and so on. We must be sincere about this and let this commitment shape our relations to others, all others. This has many implications for everyday life.

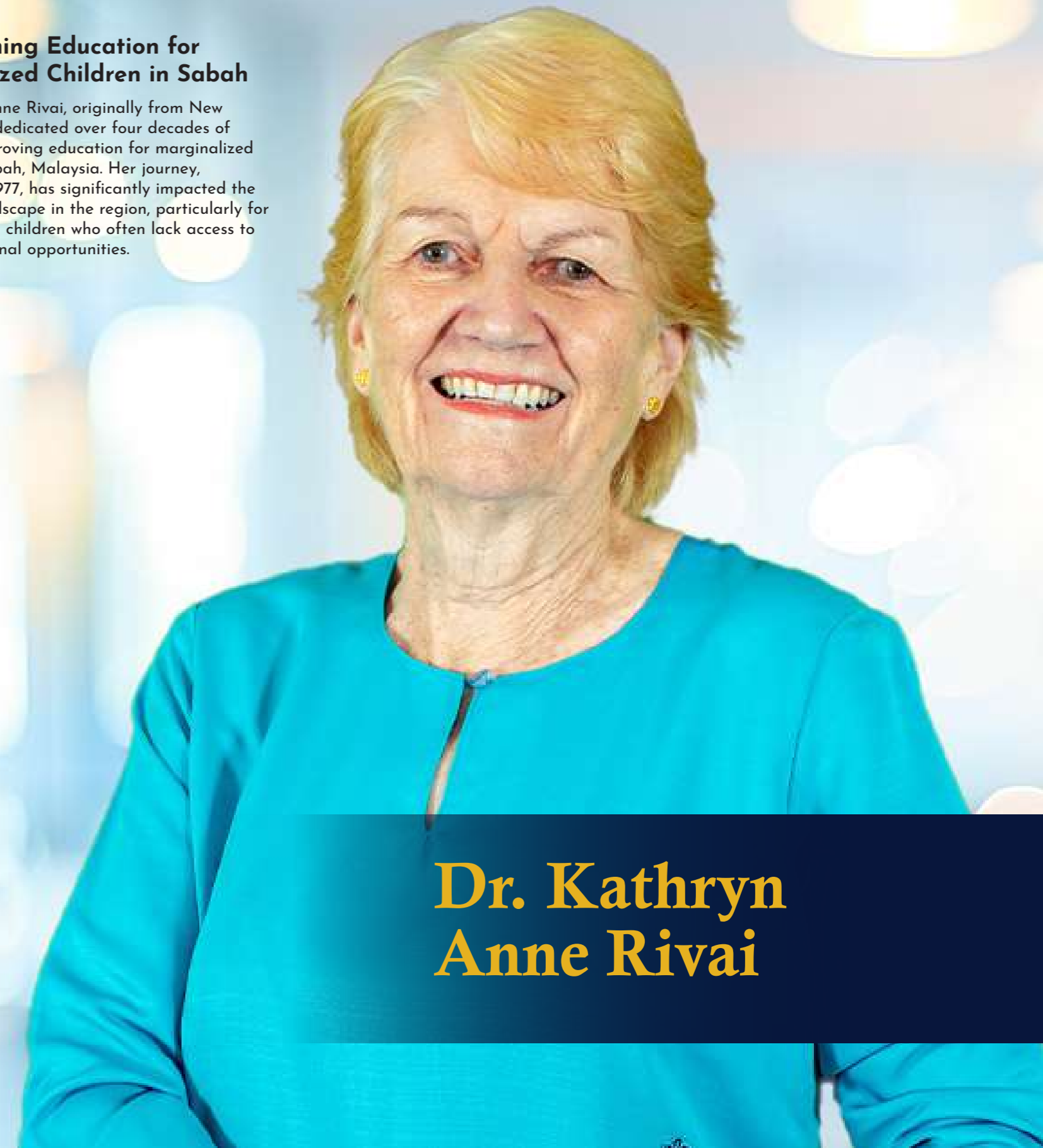


## Outstanding Contribution to the People of Malaysia

Awarded to a citizen of any nationality and/or foreign organisation to honour substantial contribution to Malaysia or to the lives of Malaysians.

### Transforming Education for Marginalized Children in Sabah

Dr. Kathryn Anne Rivai, originally from New Zealand, has dedicated over four decades of her life to improving education for marginalized children in Sabah, Malaysia. Her journey, beginning in 1977, has significantly impacted the education landscape in the region, particularly for undocumented children who often lack access to basic educational opportunities.



**Dr. Kathryn  
Anne Rivai**

## A Journey Rooted in Commitment

Dr. Kathryn's connection to Sabah began in 1977 when she moved to the state after marrying a Sabahan native. Starting as a secondary school teacher in Kota Kinabalu in 1978, she quickly advanced into leadership roles, serving as Deputy Principal and Acting Principal at Maktab Nasional, a private school. Her experience and dedication led her to establish primary schools like Datuk Simon Fung in 1998 and Seri Insan in 2004, both of which were registered under the Ministry of Education. These early initiatives set the stage for her lifelong mission to improve education for all children in Sabah.

## A Life-Altering Encounter

In 2009, Dr. Kathryn had a life-altering encounter that would shape her future endeavours. A request from a timber mill and plantation to start a school exposed her to the harsh reality faced by many children in Sabah. These children, often undocumented and living in poverty, were deprived of their fundamental right to education. This experience ignited Dr. Kathryn's passion for advocating for these marginalised children and led her to establish Etania Schools in 2009.

## Etania Schools: A Beacon of Hope

Etania Schools, formally registered under the Persatuan Pendidikan Kanak-Kanak Matakana Sabah by the Registry of Societies (ROS), have become a beacon of hope for marginalised children in Sabah. For nearly 15 years, Dr. Kathryn has tirelessly worked to provide quality education to these children, many of whom live in palm oil plantations and rural areas. With 14 schools under the Etania umbrella, over 1,000 students aged 5 to 18 have benefited from the education and life skills training provided by Etania.

Dr. Kathryn has pioneered a unique curriculum at Etania, emphasising academics, life values, and essential living skills. This approach ensures that students are well-equipped to contribute effectively to society, fostering a sense of responsibility, leadership, independence, and empathy. The impact of this curriculum is evident, with over 10 students having graduated from university by 2023, and many others succeeding in various vocations.

## Addressing Socio-Economic Challenges

Understanding the socio-economic challenges faced by marginalised communities, Dr. Kathryn expanded her focus to include vocational training, aiming to enhance livelihoods and foster self-reliance. One of the notable initiatives under her leadership is the Model Vegetable Farm project, launched in 2020. This project, involving 60 families across three schools, provided training to Etania students on starting and maintaining vegetable farms. The initiative has since expanded to include fish farms, benefiting even more families and helping them sustain themselves during challenging times, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another innovative project is the Aquaponics Programme, launched in 2023 with sponsorship from Calls Over Ridges, a Taiwanese NGO. This program teaches children sustainable farming methods, ensuring food security for their families in the face of increasing water scarcity and rising temperatures in Sabah. The Etania Sewing Programme, launched during the pandemic, has also empowered women by providing them with the skills to generate extra income through sewing, benefiting 30 families across two schools, with plans to expand further.



Serving as Principal and Education Consultant Etania Schools, Sabah.

## Collaborations and Expanding Impact

Dr. Kathryn's strategic approach to fostering partnerships with community members and local and international organisations has broadened Etania's impact and enhanced the quality of education provided. Collaborations with entities like UNICEF and Me.Reka have introduced valuable digital skills training to Etania students since 2018, including computer literacy, coding, and robotics. These skills open up new income opportunities for students, including remote work and employment at community computer centres.

Looking ahead, Dr. Kathryn is preparing to launch a new life skills centre in Kota Kinabalu in mid-2024. This centre will offer programs that emphasise skills training, including computer skills, sewing, baking, electronics, and business skills. The centre will serve not only Etania alumni but also graduates from other learning centres, preparing them for future occupations and ensuring they have the skills necessary to succeed in their chosen fields.

## Championing Teacher Training

Recognizing the importance of well-trained educators, Dr. Kathryn established the Coalition of Learning Centers Sabah in 2015. This initiative has successfully implemented annual cost-free training programs for educators, equipping them with the resources needed to address the psychological impact of marginalisation on students. These programs have trained hundreds of educators, including 70 in early 2024 alone, ensuring that the next generation of teachers is well-prepared to meet the needs of their students.



Students celebrate birthdays of the month bring a sense of self esteem and recognition to every child.



Many helpful visitors come to our schools to understand the learning needs of our children.

## Achievements and International Recognition

Under Dr. Kathryn's leadership, Etania Schools have gained international recognition for their contributions to education. In 2020, the Junior Chamber International (JCI) Malaysia Chapter honoured Etania Schools with the Sustainable Development Award, specifically recognizing their contributions to SDG 4 (Quality Education). They also received the 'Best of the Best' Overall Award for their educational programs targeting marginalised communities.

Etania Schools also received the Singapore President Award in 2020 for the sustainable design of the Etania Green School, a project that houses over 350 students in Beaufort, Sabah. Constructed in collaboration with Singapore-based NGO Billion Bricks, the school's environmentally friendly design, using recycled shipping containers and timber, has been recognized as a model for serving other underserved communities.

## A Legacy of Dedication

Dr. Kathryn Anne Rivai has dedicated most of her life to serving the children of Malaysia, regardless of race, age, or creed. Her efforts to provide education and uplift marginalized communities are highly commendable. She is deserving of the Merdeka Award under the Outstanding Contribution to the People of Malaysia category, as her work continues to inspire and create lasting change in the lives of countless children.



## DR KATHRYN: PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES

### What is the biggest challenge you had to face throughout your working experience?

We have many challenges in the work we do now but I find the hardest and upsetting issue is when some people treat these marginalised children and their families with disdain and relegate them to the lowest ranking in society.

We know our students are known as the invisible children of Sabah because very few citizens want to know about them nor care for them and their welfare. In fact, our families are often even called derogatory names.

I think a re-education is needed in our society to issues like; what is humanity, what is equity and equality. Of course, a major challenge for our communities is how to get documentation. Many of our children have families that have been in Sabah for 3-4 generations and so this intergenerational statelessness creates many problems with documentation.

Another challenge is to equip our students with skills so they can provide for their families in the future and breaking the cycle of poverty.

### How did you overcome the challenge?

The challenge has not fully been overcome. In our learning centres we focus on setting examples for the children of becoming a good person with good values contributing to society.

We encourage responsibility for one's own life, leadership and independence and empathy for others who are struggling in their lives.

Living skills like this occupy about 1/3 of our curriculum activities. Academic programmes occupy another 1/3 and 1/3 is devoted to living skills training.

### What is the one accomplishment you're most proud of? Why?

Over the years there have been several awards for Etania from both national and international sources of which I am proud of and very thankful to the organisations and governments.

Yet, what I am most proud of is the way the students who have come from such a difficult background and face seemingly unsurmountable challenges, have withstood and with determination and grit have achieved great things.

I am proud of their achievements; going onto further studies; setting up businesses; acquiring good jobs and most of all becoming good people assisting in community development.



### What is your personal philosophy?

Equity for all- in everything including children. Children must have access to a happy and fulfilling childhood the same as any child in the world. Every child must have the love, protection and care of a family and society. They must have opportunities to explore the world and find a career, they must have access to education, health care and nutritious food. My philosophy then is children are our future, let's give each one equal opportunity to succeed.

Being an academician, I used to be entirely focussed on a determined curriculum but over time I have learnt that preparation and learning for life is so much more relevant to our society today.

We need to educate our children and their families for skills to survive, skills to find their way through the labyrinth of the job market, how to work together, study smartly, be flexible and adaptable to future developments.

How can our marginalised communities sustain themselves? Clearly the number of marginalised people is increasing in our nation and in the world. I believe handouts do not have sustainability so we must think together for ways we can educate each of our families to take responsibility for their individual and collective lives.

### Do you have a favourite quote that you live by?

"Just Do It." (Nike)

This has always been my favourite quote. If something needs doing then just do it for the benefit of the children and the school. I don't like wasting time, get the job done now. In my kind of work if we idle our time in implementing projects the children lose out. Too many repetitive meetings and talking simply loses precious time and we cannot predict how this loss affects our students.

Many people tell me not to work with the marginalised, just let them be.

But if we don't help them who will? There will be societal problems if a huge diaspora of people are left behind with no education and no way of earning a living. We must be fair and have equity amongst all human beings no matter their background.

I guess another favourite quote for me is "equity for all". The only differences amongst us are man- made. This has to change. We have to view humanity as one.

## Anugerah Harapan Merdeka



Aimed at awarding aspiring and promising young Malaysian individuals aged 40 years old and below or organisations below 10 years of inception in three selected disciplines - Education and Community, Environment, and Health, Science and Technology.

The recipients of this category should make a significant, and meaningful contribution whether in the field of Education and Community, Environment, and Health, Science and Technology that benefits or improves the lives of Malaysians or the Malaysian society.

### A Trailblazer in Investigative Journalism

Ian Yee Ngan Fui, a multi-award-winning journalist, has left an indelible mark on society through his relentless pursuit of truth and justice. His work in investigative journalism, particularly in the areas of social justice and human rights, has set new standards in the field. As the leader of the R.AGE team at *The Star* newspaper and co-founder of *The Fourth*, Yee has consistently tackled some of the most pressing issues facing Malaysia and the region.

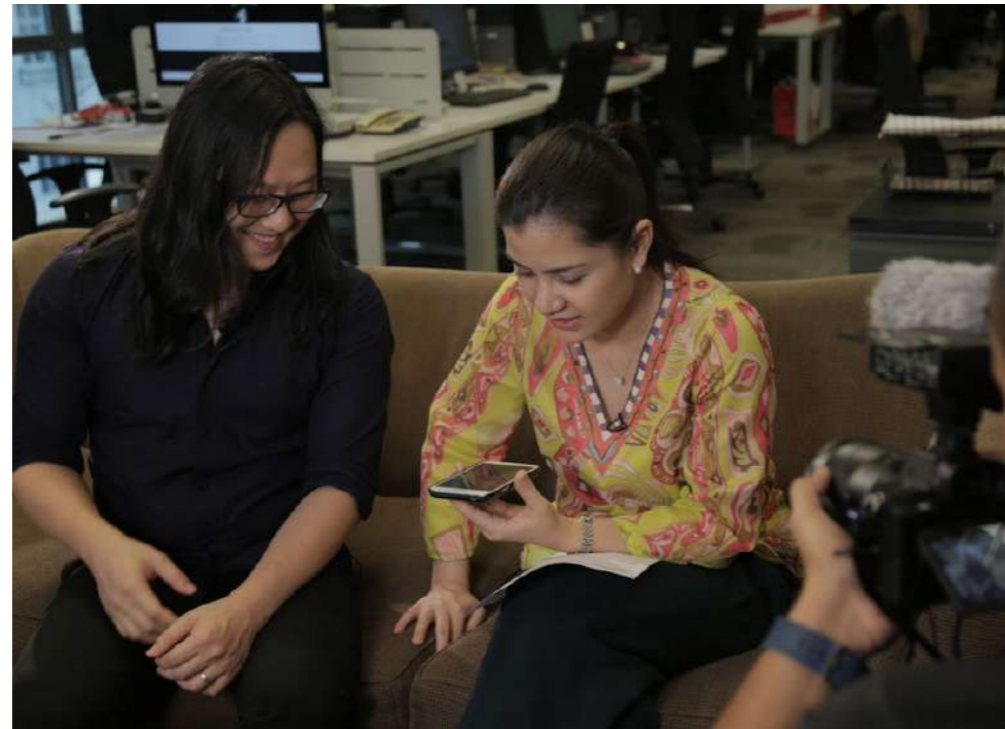


**Ian Yee  
Ngan Fui**

## Transforming R.AGE: A Platform for Investigative Journalism

Ian Yee joined R.AGE in 2006, when it was still primarily a youth and lifestyle platform. With support from award-winning journalist-producer Elroi Yee and a brave young team, Ian helped transition R.AGE into a formidable platform for investigative journalism. Yee and his team began to report on issues that were often overlooked, such as unreported deaths in indigenous villages, sexual predators targeting children, human trafficking, refugee rights, and violence in schools.

One of the most significant projects under Yee's leadership was the "Predator in My Phone" documentary, which exposed child sexual groomers exploiting underage victims through popular chat apps. This exposé led to a successful public action campaign that lobbied for the passing of the Sexual Offences Against Children Act in 2017. The Act, which is still in operation today, has since protected numerous children from sexual exploitation, with over 300 suspects charged within the first year.



Yee and actress Lisa Surihani calling Members of Parliament during a live stream to get their support for the Predator In My Phone campaign.



Yee and fellow co-founders of The Fourth, Claire Anthony (left) and Shanjeev Reddy (right) speaking at The Kancils creative festival.

## Campaigning for Kindness: #StandTogether

In 2017, in response to a series of tragic student bullying cases, Yee and his team at R.AGE launched the #StandTogether National Kindness Week campaign. Instead of taking the conventional route of anti-bullying measures, the campaign focused on promoting kindness and empathy. This innovative approach was endorsed by the Ministry of Education and received widespread support from organizations such as UNICEF, SP Setia, Digi, and Teach For Malaysia.

The campaign's impact was far-reaching, with involvement from 30 Members of Parliament and international expansion into the Kindness Leaders programme, reaching students across 11 countries. The United Nations highlighted the campaign as one of the 10 best examples of child-inclusive interventions to end violence against children. families across two schools, with plans to expand further.

## Exposing Human Trafficking and Drug Mule Syndicates

Yee and the team's commitment to uncovering social injustices continued with their work on the "Student/Trafficked" investigation, led by senior producer Elroi, which exposed human trafficking syndicates using fake colleges to bring victims into Malaysia and coerce them into forced labor. The investigation, which involved undercover journalism and hidden cameras, led to a police probe and the halting of these trafficking operations, potentially saving thousands of lives.

In 2020, Yee was also involved in investigating regional drug mule syndicates that were duping young Malaysians into transporting drugs into Hong Kong. The team's investigation helped lead to the arrest of four syndicate leaders and brought attention to the plight of the victims' families. The reporting even played a role in court cases in Hong Kong, with one of the mules eventually being acquitted and returned to Malaysia.



Accepting a World Digital Media Award in Glasgow, Scotland.

## International Recognition: Champion of Investigative Journalism and Social Justice

Ian Yee's contributions to journalism have been recognized on a global scale. In 2021, he was appointed to the advisory committee for the Pulitzer Centre's Rainforest Journalism Fund, and he is among the first group of Malaysians to be selected as an Obama Foundation Leader. His work has also been featured at various international journalism conferences and in industry publications like the \*Columbia Journalism Review\*.

Yee's commitment to press freedom earned him the Global Press Freedom Teaching Award in 2023, and The Fourth was selected as one of 25 global changemakers for the UNLEASH incubator lab and conference in Rwanda.

Yee was most recently appointed as the resident investigative editor for the Asia Investigative Reporting Network (AIR Network), an international effort to strengthen investigative journalism in Southeast Asia. Yee is now in charge of coordinating cross-border investigations, developing training programs, and improving safety and security support for investigative journalists in the region.



Yee and his team have received over 40 major awards since 2016.

## The Fourth : Defending Social Justice

In 2021, Ian Yee co-founded The Fourth, a media company dedicated to defending social justice through investigative journalism and impactful media campaigns. The Fourth's motto, "Berani kerana benar" ("Brave because of truth"), encapsulates Yee's approach to journalism. The company has produced over 70 videos and garnered more than 12,000 subscribers on its YouTube channel, all while maintaining a focus on social impact.

The Fourth also operates an academy that has trained over 1,000 participants, ranging from teenagers to veteran journalists. The academy offers a variety of courses and workshops, both online and in-person, with consistently high ratings. The team also provides on-site training in Orang Asli villages and refugee communities, further extending their impact.



## IAN YEE: PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES

### How do you feel about winning the Anugerah Harapan Merdeka in your category?

I just feel so grateful to the incredibly talented and courageous people I've worked with at The Fourth – and previously at R.AGE. Being investigative journalists can be a thankless task in Malaysia, especially with the risks and threats we face, so I'm glad we as a community can get this recognition.

### What has kept your passion in this specific field for so many years?

Our investigations don't always succeed in driving change, but every once in a while, the people rally behind our campaigns and we get to make a real difference, the kind that saves lives and inspires hope. Those moments help.

### What is the biggest challenge you had to face throughout your working experience?

The biggest challenge has been the mental toll of doing investigative work. Not only is it super demanding in terms of time and energy, there's also the various risks that come with the job. I think our team has done really well at mitigating those risks and looking out for each other, but I'm responsible for keeping everyone on the team safe, so that can take a toll sometimes.

And it's not just physical risks we have to deal with now. Journalists everywhere are increasingly exposed to lawsuits (especially frivolous Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPP)) suits designed to drain your money and time), cyber attacks, online harassment, etc.

My job now is basically to raise funds and develop programs to ensure that investigative journalists can continue to do their critical work without fear or favour. It's been a huge challenge, but it's easy to stay motivated when the people you're working with are so courageous and impactful.



### What are your best memories throughout your career?

After the Predator In My Phone investigation, we were invited to Parliament when the new laws against child sexual crimes were being debated. When the law was finally passed, I remember this wave of joy and relief just crashing down – and I could only enjoy it for about 10 seconds, because we had to rush across Parliament to interview Dato' Seri Azalina Othman Said, who had championed the bill as Minister of Law. That was a nice memory.

The other one was being able to bring the entire team to Bali for the Asian Media Awards ceremony, and us actually winning gold. We had some legendary parties there – and some not-so-productive brainstorming sessions. We had been nominated for our Student/Trafficked investigation (led by Elroi), which exposed how syndicates were using fake colleges in Malaysia to traffic young people into the country and coercing them into forced labor. That was another good example of impact-driven investigative journalism. It pushed the Higher Education Ministry to put an end to such practices, and we partnered with the Daily Star in Bangladesh to make sure students there were aware of these trafficking scams as well.

Finally, getting to meet Barrack and Michelle Obama and tell them about our investigative work was definitely a trip! I was selected for Obama's leadership program, and had a couple minutes of facetime with the former US president and First Lady during a community site visit. That was pretty surreal.

### Message to young Malaysians:

If you want to make things better in the world, just be kind to yourself, and to others. On that note, supporting The Fourth's investigative journalism only costs \$4 a month! Subscribe at [www.thefourth.media/subscribe](http://www.thefourth.media/subscribe). Terms and conditions apply. :)

# Merdeka Award Recipients 2008 - 2022

## 2008 Merdeka Award Recipients

### EDUCATION & COMMUNITY

**Allahyarham Royal Professor Ungku Abdul Aziz Ungku Abdul Hamid**  
For his outstanding contribution to the eradication of poverty, rural economics, the development of Tabung Haji and in the field of education.



### ENVIRONMENT

**Malaysian Nature Society**  
For its outstanding contribution to the Belum-Temenggor Forest Complex Conservation Initiative.



### HEALTH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

**Nipah Virus Encephalitis Investigation Team from the Faculty of Medicine, University of Malaya (Joint Recipient)**  
For its outstanding contribution to the discovery and understanding of the causes, effects and control of the Nipah encephalitis viral infection.



### HEALTH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

**Allahyarham Professor Emeritus Dato' Dr. Khalid Tan Sri Abdul Kadir (Joint Recipient)**  
For his outstanding contribution to the study and understanding of diabetes and the relationship between hormones and stresses in various tissues.



### OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO THE PEOPLE OF MALAYSIA

**The Late Datuk Leslie Davidson**  
For his outstanding contribution in the introduction of the pollinating insects *Elaeidobius kamerunicus* from Africa to the oil palm plantations in Malaysia, leading to the rapid development of the palm oil industry.







# 2009 Merdeka Award Recipients

## EDUCATION & COMMUNITY

**Allahyarhamah Tun Fatimah Hashim (Joint Recipient)**  
For her outstanding contribution to the empowerment of women in Malaysia and for protecting and securing rights and economic opportunities for women through advocacy.



## EDUCATION & COMMUNITY

**The Late Tan Sri Dato' Lim Phaik Gan (Joint Recipient)**  
For her outstanding contribution to the empowerment of women in Malaysia and for protecting and securing rights and economic opportunities for women through advocacy.

## HEALTH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

**Professor Datuk Dr. Halimaton Hamdan**  
For her outstanding contribution in the development and application of Maerogel as a commercially viable multi-purpose material.



## OUTSTANDING SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT

**Dato' Seri Ir. Dr. Zaini Ujang**  
For his outstanding study and scholarly contributions in the various environmental initiatives concerning water supply, sewage, river rehabilitation and industrial ecology.



# 2010 Merdeka Award Recipients

## EDUCATION & COMMUNITY

**The Late Datin Paduka Mother A. Mangalam A/P Iyaswamy Iyer**  
For her outstanding contribution in promoting the welfare of the underprivileged and for fostering national unity.



## OUTSTANDING SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT

**Professor Emeritus Dr. Yong Hoi Sen (Joint Recipient)**  
For his outstanding contribution to the development of basic and applied knowledge of Genetics, Molecular Biology, Biological Systematics, Evolutionary Biology and Biological Diversity of Malaysian flora and fauna.

## OUTSTANDING SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT

**Datuk Professor Ulung Dr. Harith Ahmad (Joint Recipient)**  
For his outstanding contribution in research and promoting the development of photonics in Malaysia.



## OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO THE PEOPLE OF MALAYSIA

**The Late Tan Sri Dr. Just Faaland**  
For his outstanding contribution to the advocacy of equitable growth through eradication of poverty and reduction of socio-economic polarisation.



# 2011 Merdeka Award Recipients



## ENVIRONMENT

### Dato' Dr. Ar. Kenneth Yeang

For his outstanding contribution to the development of design methods for the ecological design and planning of the built environment.



## OUTSTANDING SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT

### The Late Emeritus Professor Dato' Dr. Goh Khean Lee (Joint Recipient)

For his outstanding contribution in elevating the study and practice of gastroenterology and hepatology in Malaysia to global standards.



## OUTSTANDING SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT

### The Late Professor Dr. Mak Joon Wah (Joint Recipient)

For his outstanding fundamental and applied research in parasitology and parasitic diseases, public health and pathology.



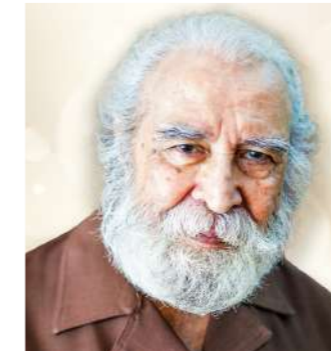
# 2012 Merdeka Award Recipients



## HEALTH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### Academician Tan Sri Emeritus Professor Datuk Dr. Augustine Ong Soon Hock

For his outstanding contribution to the research and development of the chemistry and technology of palm oil and for his significant role in advocating and promoting the Malaysian palm oil industry to the world.



## OUTSTANDING SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT

### Tan Sri Professor Dr. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas

For his outstanding contribution to the scholarly research in the area of Islamisation of contemporary knowledge and of Muslim education.



## OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO THE PEOPLE OF MALAYSIA

### The Late Dr. Engkik Soepadmo

For his outstanding contribution to the research and conservation of Malaysia's forest plant diversity.



# 2013 Merdeka Award Recipients

## EDUCATION & COMMUNITY

### Allahyarham Tan Sri Datuk Haji Arshad Ayub (Joint Recipient)

For his outstanding contribution in shaping Malaysia's education landscape through the development of professional education, education reforms and innovation that have resulted in education becoming more accessible to Malaysians.



## EDUCATION & COMMUNITY

### YM Raja Tun Dato' Seri Utama Muhammad Alias Raja Muhammad Ali (Joint Recipient)

For his outstanding contribution to rural development and rural reform through organising successful land settlement projects (FELDA) for the many landless, rural population in Malaysia.

## ENVIRONMENT

### The Late Dr. Lim Boo Liat

For his outstanding contribution to the conservation of Malaysia's biological diversity through the study, understanding and control of vector-borne diseases and the relationship between diseases and the environment; and for advocating the protection of our natural heritage.



## HEALTH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### Tan Sri Dato' Dr. Yahya Awang

For his outstanding contribution to pioneering the development of clinical research and cardiac surgery in Malaysia and for his instrumental role in the establishment of the National Heart Institute (IJN).

## OUTSTANDING SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT

### Emeritus Professor Dato' Dr. Lam Sai Kit

For his outstanding contribution to scholarly research and development in medical virology and emerging infectious diseases including dengue.



# 2014 Merdeka Award Recipients

## EDUCATION & COMMUNITY

### Seniman Diraja Datuk Mohd Nor Khalid (Lat)

For his outstanding contribution to the promotion and pluralism of Malaysia's cultural identity through the use of cartoons and for the promotion of understanding and respect among Malaysia's diverse ethnic communities.



## ENVIRONMENT

### Mohd Khan Momin Khan

For his outstanding contribution to wildlife research and conservation through the setting up of captive breeding centres as well as for pioneering and successfully managing the human-wildlife conflict in affected areas.

## HEALTH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### Datuk Dr. Choo Yuen May

For her outstanding contribution to the development of novel, efficient and green processes for the palm-based industry through research and commercialisation of various technologies.



## OUTSTANDING SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT

### Professor Datuk Ir. Ts. Dr. Ahmad Fauzi Ismail (Joint Recipient)

For his outstanding contribution to the scholarly research and development of technologies for commercialisation in membrane performance for both gas separation, and water and wastewater treatment.

## OUTSTANDING SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT

### Professor Dr. Abdul Latif Ahmad (Joint Recipient)

For his outstanding contribution to the scholarly research and development of technologies in the areas of polymer science, wastewater treatment and membrane separation technology.



## OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO THE PEOPLE OF MALAYSIA

### Dato Sri Gathorne, Earl of Cranbrook

For his outstanding contribution in pioneering research and conservation of Malaysia's forest biodiversity and the ecology and biology of Malaysian mammals and birds, and for advocating environmental conservation.



# 2015 Merdeka Award Recipients

## EDUCATION & COMMUNITY

**Tan Sri Dr. Jemilah Mahmood**  
For her outstanding contribution to the development of humanitarian and international emergency relief.



## ENVIRONMENT

**Emeritus Professor Tan Sri Dr. Zakri Abdul Hamid (Joint Recipient)**  
For his outstanding contribution to the observation, analysis and assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services, fostering the remediation and protection of the natural environment and promoting environmental sustainability in Malaysia and globally.

## ENVIRONMENT

**Professor Emeritus Dato' Dr. Abdul Latiff Mohamad (Joint Recipient)**  
For his outstanding contribution to the research and understanding of plant taxonomy and conservation biology in Malaysia.



## HEALTH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

**Professor Datin Paduka Dr. Khatijah Mohamad Yusoff**  
For her outstanding contribution in the field of microbiology and virology through a better understanding and diagnosis of the contagious and fatal viruses in poultry and the study of the potential of the virus in combating cancer cells.

## OUTSTANDING SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT

**Professor Emeritus Ir. Dr. Mohd Ali Hashim**  
For his outstanding scholastic contribution in the research of separation processes and water and wastewater treatment and for his instrumental role in the setting-up of the Centre for Ionic Liquids.



## OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO THE PEOPLE OF MALAYSIA

**Dr. Elizabeth Lesley Bennett**  
For her outstanding contribution to the conservation and management of wetland habitats and that of endangered wildlife in Malaysia through research, advocacy and policies.



# 2016 Merdeka Award Recipients

## EDUCATION & COMMUNITY

**Tan Sri Lakshmanan Krishnan**  
For outstanding contribution to laying the foundation for the modern film industry in the country and for his instrumental role in developing early acting talents including Malaysian film icon the late P Ramlee.



## ENVIRONMENT

**Tan Sri Dato' Seri Dr. Salleh Mohd Nor**  
For outstanding contribution to conservation of the natural environment and forestry in Malaysia through his leadership role at the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) and the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS).

## HEALTH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

**Distinguished Professor Datuk Dr. Looi Lai Meng**  
For outstanding contribution in pioneering research in amyloidosis, renal pathology and cancer pathology and for her significant contributions and role in promoting the field of pathology in Malaysia and the region.



## OUTSTANDING SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT

**Professor Dato' Ir. Dr. Wan Ramli Wan Daud**  
For outstanding scholarly research and development in advancing the technology of fuel cells and hydrogen energy in Malaysia and the region.



# 2017 Merdeka Award Recipients

## EDUCATION & COMMUNITY

**Dato' Dr. Abdul Halim Ismail**  
For outstanding contribution and his pivotal role in establishing the first Islamic Bank in Malaysia, which led to the development and growth of the Nation and region's Islamic banking, insurance and finance sectors.



## ENVIRONMENT

**Dato' Seri Tengku Dr. Zainal Adlin Tengku Mahamood**  
For outstanding contribution to wildlife and forest conservation in Malaysia and the region through fieldwork, education, advocacy, policy and international cooperation.

## HEALTH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

**Dr. Timothy William (Joint Recipient)**  
For outstanding contribution to the effective treatment of a new cause of human malaria, Plasmodium knowlesi. The discovery has changed the way this infection is managed in the country and globally.



## HEALTH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

**Professor Dr. Balbir Singh Mohan Singh (Joint Recipient)**  
For outstanding contribution to the discovery and pioneering work on a new cause of human malaria, Plasmodium knowlesi. The discovery of this potentially fatal zoonotic disease has changed the understanding of malaria and the way infections are treated in the country and globally.

## OUTSTANDING SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT

**Professor Emeritus Ir. Dr. Masjuki Haji Hassan**  
For outstanding scholarly research in engineering and energy science and for his instrumental role in the research and development of biofuel and other sources of efficient energy and automotive engines.



## OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO THE PEOPLE OF MALAYSIA

**Professor Dr. Anthony Milner**  
For outstanding contribution to research and education in Malaysian history that has shaped and promoted the understanding of the Nation's identity, heritage and culture, and for his role in fostering international collaborations.



# 2018 Merdeka Award Recipients

## EDUCATION & COMMUNITY

**Hassan Abdul Muthalib**  
For outstanding contribution as the pioneer and earliest influence in the local animation world through his folktale-inspired works and his leadership role in developing an educational framework on the artistic importance of animation in the country.



## ENVIRONMENT

**Engr. Gurmit Singh KS**  
For his outstanding contribution through his activism, advocacy works and leadership role in the promotion of sustainable environment and combating climate change in Malaysia.

## HEALTH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

**Professor Dato' Dr. Mohd Hair Bejo (Joint Recipient)**  
For outstanding contribution and instrumental role in advancing efforts towards sustainable food production through the development and commercialisation of chicken disease vaccines in treating Gumboro disease that benefits the poultry industry in Malaysia and internationally.



## HEALTH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

**Dato' Dr. Gan Ee Kiang (Joint Recipient)**  
For outstanding contribution in his pioneering work in developing a successful exemplary commercial model for R&D for Malaysia's universities, and through his extensive work and leadership role in the fields of clinical pharmacology, pharmaceutical sciences and drug-related research in the country.

## OUTSTANDING SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT

**Distinguished Professor Dr. Rajah Rasiah (Joint Recipient)**  
For outstanding contribution in his scholarly research and development of the theoretical macroeconomic framework in the promotion of sustainable development, by pioneering the conceptualisation, measurement and application of innovation theory and the framing of innovation policy for developing countries.



## OUTSTANDING SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT

**The Late Emeritus Professor Tan Sri Dato' Dr. Khoo Kay Kim (Joint Recipient)**  
For outstanding contribution to the scholarly research, development of reinterpretation of Malaysian history and lifetime dedication in the history education in the country that has shaped the post-independence study of history in modern Malaysia.

## OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO THE PEOPLE OF MALAYSIA

**Andrew James Eavis**  
For outstanding contribution in his pioneering works in the areas of geomorphology and cave survey through the Mulu Cave Projects with the Royal Geographical Society Expedition, and the discovery of the Sarawak Chamber, leading to extended research on rainforest habitats and ecosystem and establishing international collaborations for scientific and nature expeditions.





# 2020 Merdeka Award Recipients

## EDUCATION & COMMUNITY

**Majlis Kanser Nasional**  
MAKNA has provided financial, emotional and social support to nearly 60,000 cancer patients for over 26 years, without discriminating on creed, colour or ethnicity.



## ENVIRONMENT

**South East Asia Rainforest Research Partnership**  
SEARRP has contributed to the conservation, sustainable management and restoration of Malaysia's forest ecosystem and also played an instrumental role in the education and training of Malaysian environmental scientists.



## OUTSTANDING SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT

**Emeritus Professor Dr. Ng Kwan Hoong**  
A medical physics pioneer whose research in radiation medicine has contributed significantly to the fight against breast cancer globally by researching various imaging methods including breast density measurement to help early detection.



## OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO THE PEOPLE OF MALAYSIA

**Suzanne Mooney**  
An advocate for sustainable food systems, founder of Malaysia's first sustainable food bank that is feeding Malaysians and reducing food waste in the country.



# 2022 Merdeka Award Recipients

## EDUCATION & COMMUNITY

**Teach For Malaysia**  
For outstanding contribution in influencing 330,285 students over the past decade through collaborations with 893 schools and 131 student-led initiatives with 34,676 beneficiaries.



## HEALTH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

**Dato' Professor Dr. Adeeba Kamarulzaman**  
For outstanding contribution towards the study, treatment and prevention of infectious diseases and HIV/AIDS for over 30 years. Her work has led to a dramatic drop in the rate of new HIV/AIDS infections by 50 per cent over the previous 10 years.



## OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO THE PEOPLE OF MALAYSIA

**Dato' Dr. Annabel Teh Gallop**  
For her tireless dedication and commitment towards the international promotion of historic manuscripts written in the Malay language for the past three decades.



## ENVIRONMENT

**Global Environment Centre**  
GEC has contributed to the biodiversity, river and forest conservation and restoration of Malaysia. They have played a fundamental role in the restoration of Mangrove trees in Malaysia, as well as helping over 277 community organisations and 700 schools increase their capacity to protect and restore water resources.

## OUTSTANDING SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT

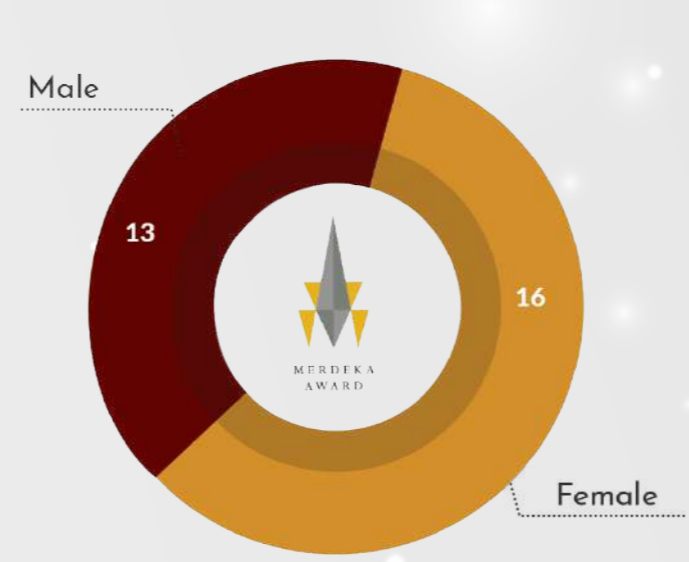
**Emeritus Professor Dato' Dr. Siti Zuraina Abdul Majid**  
Pioneer in Malaysia's field of Archaeology, renowned for discovering the Palaeolithic site of Kota Tampan and the Palaeolithic skeleton of the Perak Man, in Lenggong, which may be regarded as Malaysia's first "capital". Her research also established that early man's migratory route from Africa to Australia was through Peninsular Malaysia, thus putting Malaysia on the archaeological map of the world.

## ANUGERAH HARAPAN MERDEKA

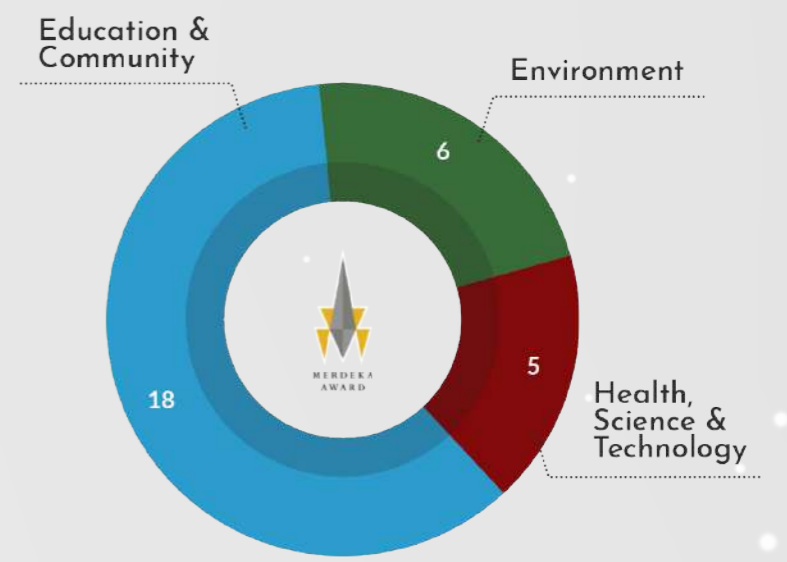
**Samuel Isaiah**  
For his contribution as well as commitment in improving and uplifting the standard of education among the Orang Asli children, and in coaching teachers to elevate the overall quality of education for all.



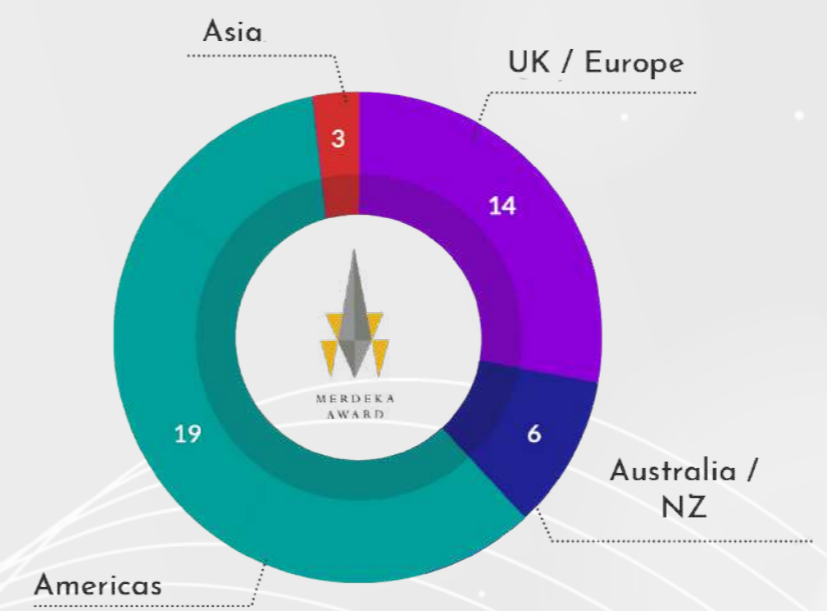
## Grant Recipients (2013-2023)



## Grant Recipients by Category (2013-2023)



## Grant Attachment Destinations (2013-2023)



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Americas</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scripps Institutions of Oceanography, University of California, San Diego</li> <li>Institute of Genetic Medicine, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, USA</li> <li>Broad Institute of Harvard-MIT</li> <li>Harvard Business School</li> <li>New York University Medical Center</li> <li>Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), USA</li> <li>Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, University of California Berkeley, USA</li> <li>Brown University, USA</li> <li>California Institute of Technology</li> <li>University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD)</li> <li>Center for Conservation Bioacoustics, Cornell University, New York</li> <li>College of Veterinary Medicine, Cornell University, New York, USA</li> <li>University of Toronto</li> <li>Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Morelos (UAEM), Mexico</li> </ol> <p><b>Asia</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disaster Prevention Research Institute, Kyoto University</li> <li>Seoul National University (SNU)</li> <li>National Taiwan University (NTU)</li> </ol> | <p><b>UK / Europe</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>University of Cambridge</li> <li>University of Bristol</li> <li>University of Oxford</li> <li>Imperial College London</li> <li>Nottingham Trent University</li> <li>Newcastle University</li> <li>Newcastle- Upon-Tyne</li> <li>The EDEN Project, Bodelva, Cornwall</li> <li>Durham University</li> <li>Uppsala University, Sweden</li> <li>Ecolé Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne</li> <li>Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zürich</li> <li>Aalborg University, Denmark</li> </ol> <p><b>Australia / New Zealand</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>University of Sydney</li> <li>National Art Gallery of Australia</li> <li>Deakin University</li> <li>Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa</li> <li>University of Melbourne</li> <li>Macquarie University, Sydney</li> </ol> |
|---|--|

# Merdeka Award Grant For International Attachment

The Merdeka Award Grant for International Attachment was launched in 2011.

The Grant is designed for qualified and deserving young Malaysians, between the ages 22-35, to engage in short-term collaborative projects or programmes at an internationally recognised host institution in select disciplines (education, arts, sports, community/social work, environment, health, science and technology).

Grantees will have the unique opportunity to collaborate with other academics and researchers in their field of interest in order to build on their body of work and achievements.

The value of The Merdeka Award Grant goes far beyond numbers in its goal of investing in Malaysians for the benefit of Malaysia. The Grant extends the goal of the Merdeka Award by infusing thought leadership and innovation, fostering a culture of excellence and encouraging a global outlook among young Malaysians for the future.

# Merdeka Award Grant for International Attachment

**2013**

Recipients



**HEALTH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

**Professor Dr. Natrah Fatin Mohd Ikhsan**

Understanding molecular microbial ecology towards sustainable agriculture production.



**HEALTH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

**Professor Dr. Abhimanyu A/L Veerakumarasivam**

Identification of molecular markers for the diagnosis, prognosis and therapy of bladder cancer through greater molecular understanding of the disease.



**HEALTH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

**Professor Dr. Kamalan Jeevaratnam**

Mechanistic insight for cardiac cellular therapy using stem cells.



**HEALTH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

**Professor Dr. Lim Hong Ngee**

Nanotechnology-based blood testing to identify breast cancer.

**2014**

Recipients

# Merdeka Award Grant for International Attachment Recipients 2013- 2023



## Merdeka Award Grant for International Attachment

**2015**

Recipients



**HEALTH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

**Chua Ling Ling**

Association between gut microbiome dysbiosis (changes in the gut microbiome) with systemic immune activation, inflammation and early onset of age-related diseases in HIV infected individuals.



**HEALTH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

**Dr. Mohd Sukor Su'ait**

Advanced Energy Conversion And Storage Material From Malaysian Palm Oil Industries.



**EDUCATION & COMMUNITY**

**Koh Lily**

How Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) can strategically position themselves in the value chain in the midst of Industry 4.0.



**ENVIRONMENT**

**Dr. Khamarrul Azahari Razak**

The Power of Knowledge: How Prepared Are We For Disaster - The Malaysia Context.

**2016**

Recipients

## Merdeka Award Grant for International Attachment

**2017**

Recipients



**EDUCATION & COMMUNITY**

**Shahar Koyok**

Indigenous Arts and National Narratives: A Comparative Study of Indigenous People's Art and Representation within National Institution.



**HEALTH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

**Professor Madya Dr. Zetty Norhana Balia Yusof**

The Potential of Malaysian Seaweeds as the Source of Antifungal Compounds for Application in the Oil Palm Industry.



**HEALTH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

**Dr. Sophia Rasheeqa Ismail**

Lipidomics Profiling and Risk of Early-Onset Myocardial Infarction.

# Merdeka Award Grant for International Attachment

**2018**

Recipients



**HEALTH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

**Professor Dr. Ong Wee Jun**  
Solar Energy Conversion and Energy Storage to Address the Seriousness of Energy Security and Environmental Issues by Mimicking the Ingenuity of Nature.

**HEALTH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

**Dr. Lee Tian Khoon**  
Converting Rubber Material for Advanced Energy Storage and Conversion.

**HEALTH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

**Aishah Ismail**  
Stroke Prediction Biomarker through ocular blood flow using Laser Speckle Flowgraphy.

# Merdeka Award Grant for International Attachment

**2019**

Recipients



**EDUCATION & COMMUNITY**

**Juliana Ooi Sue May**  
Safeguarding our Future Generation through Empowering Young Parents in Reproductive and Social Health Education.

**ENVIRONMENT**

**Chrishen R. Gomez**  
Conservation Genetics Research Fellowship for Development of Long-term Genetics Study of Sunda Clouded Leopard (*Neofelis diardi*) and Sympatric Carnivores.



**HEALTH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

**Feng Ying Xing**  
Prognosticating Work Productivity, Stress Level and Workload Capacity through fNIRS Brain Haemodynamic Signal Measurement.

**HEALTH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

**Dr. Mohd Azri Ab Rani**  
Batteries for Future; The Birth of Na+ Batteries.

**HEALTH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

**Dr. Yanny Marlina Baba Ismail**  
Smart Material that Speeds Up Bone Healing.

## Merdeka Award Grant for International Attachment



**2021**  
Recipients

### ENVIRONMENT

**Dr. Aini Hasanah Abd Mutalib**  
Tracking the symphony: Using the Passive Acoustic Monitoring (PAM) to determine the occurrence, distribution and behaviour of small apes at Kenyir Rainforest, Terengganu.

### ENVIRONMENT

**Dr. Wan Nor Fitri Wan Jaafar**  
Cloning and Stem Cell Research in Wildlife Reproduction.



### HEALTH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

**Prof Madya Dr. Nur Adlyka Ainul Annuar**  
Peering into the Dim Heart of Active Galaxies: Weak or Buried Monster Black Holes?

### HEALTH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

**Jessica Ooi Sui Ying**  
Paper-based device for Colorimetric Detection of Ovarian Cancer Biomarker miRNA-665.

### HEALTH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

**Ir Dr. Freddy Tan Kheng Suan**  
Design of Next-Generation On-Board Charger of Electric Vehicle using State-of-the-Art Wide Bandgap Technology.

## Merdeka Award Grant for International Attachment



**2023**  
Recipients

### EDUCATION & COMMUNITY

**Dr. Masni A/P Mat Dong**  
Reimagining Inclusive Socio-Economic Development for the Orang Asli In Malaysia.

### EDUCATION & COMMUNITY

**Syaza Soraya Sauli**  
Empowering Environmental Sustainability Values In Preschool Children In Malaysia Through Comprehensive Nature-Based Learning Modules.



### ENVIRONMENT

**Dr. Kong Xin Ying**  
Photocatalytic Upcycling Plastics as a Sustainable Energy Alternative.

### ENVIRONMENT

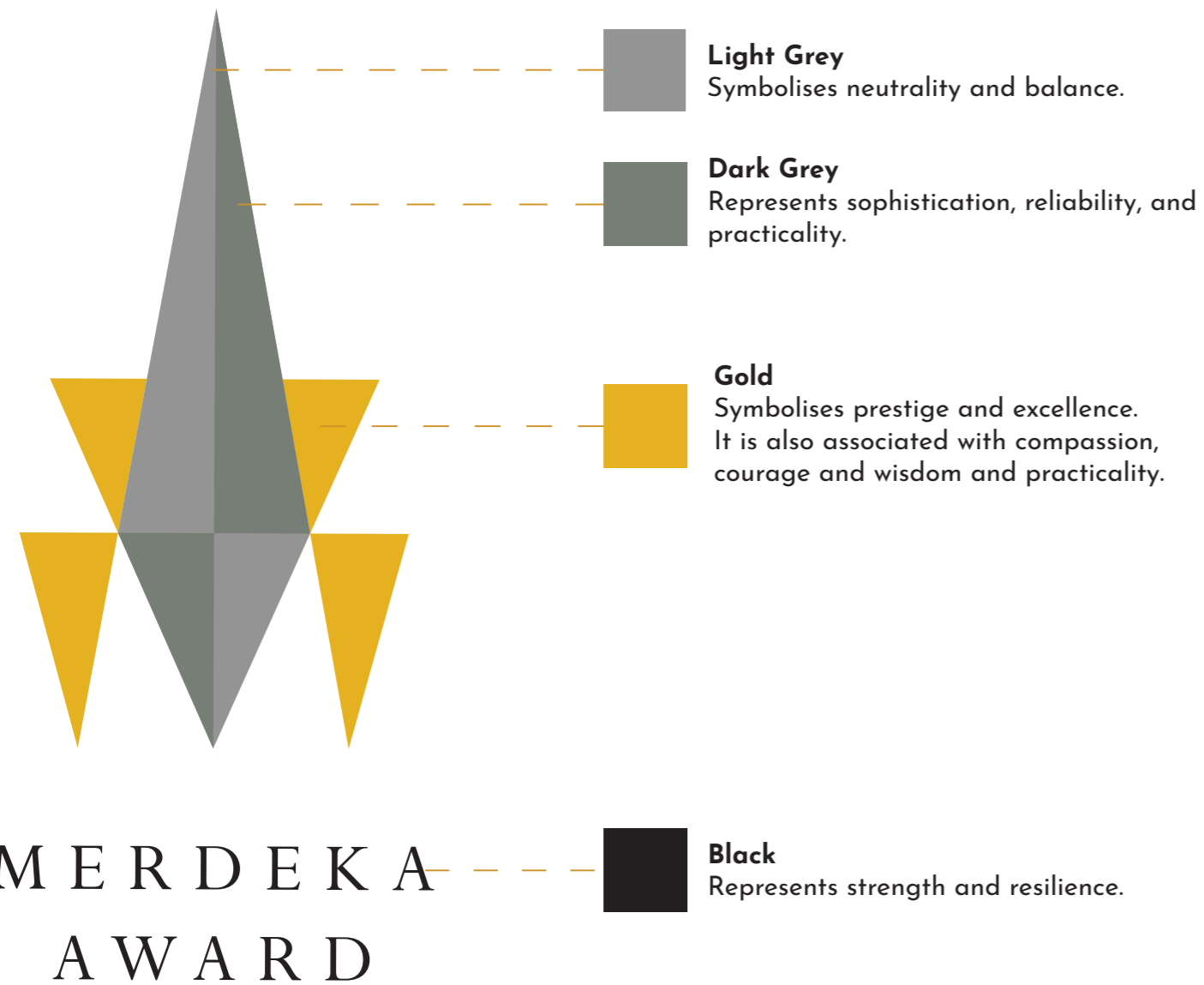
**Amaziasizamoria Jumail**  
Tropical Forest Ecology Restoration within a Global South Context.

### ENVIRONMENT

**Dr. Ng Chuck Chuan**  
Phytoremediation - A Nature-based Solution (NbS) for Soil Heavy Metals Pollution.

# Merdeka Award Logo

Designed by Dato' Johan Arif, the Merdeka Award logo represents environmental concerns in the form of a plant shoot Rebung, transparency, ethics, and the glorious six decades of Malaysian independence.



## Merdeka Award Trophy

The trophy is a three dimensional version of the Merdeka Award logo. It expresses convergence and ascension, the same qualities celebrated in the achievements of the Merdeka Award winners.

The trophy is built using Lapis Lazuli gemstone as its base, with elements of gold, silver, Malaysian pewter and Malaysian hardwood, Chengal.



"Many Merdeka Award recipients persist in their inspiring efforts with unwavering passion, working towards a sustainable future for all. They lead us through unprecedented challenges, all the while cultivating a culture of excellence."

**YM Tan Sri Tengku Muhammad Taufik**  
President and Group Chief Executive  
Officer PETRONAS and Merdeka  
Award Board of Trustee.



“As we build a society that is more compassionate, just and sustainable, we must uphold our values of striving for excellence, guided by a growing cadre of outstanding change-makers and trailblazers.”

**Siti Hurrairah Sulaiman**  
Country Chair of Shell Malaysia and  
Merdeka Award Board of Trustee.



**Merdeka Award Trust Secretariat**

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Malaysia

[www.merdekaaward.my](http://www.merdekaaward.my)



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