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# The Leader

UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA ALUMNI MAGAZINE

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*Khabar  
Se Indah  
Rupa*





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Cover artwork by Alec Chin. 'Khabar Seindah Rupa' is translated as 'news as good as the looks'. This is a play on the Malay saying *indah khabar dari rupa* which means news that does not reflect the actual situation.



# From the Editor

Photograph by Ummu 'Atiyyah Mohamed Talhah



The Leader is dedicating this issue to our lady alumni.

A large number of our women alumni are employed, pursuing a career, or doing some voluntary work in addition to managing a home. Some have chosen to be full-time house makers, while others have made names as career women. The articles in this issue try to tell some of their stories.

The editorial team tried their very best to sample the most representatives among these ladies. This was arduous, considering the myriad of positions and posts held by thousands of our lady alumni, spanning four decades, across half the world. Although the sample here is insufficient, we hope readers will still be enthused.

Another difficult task was designing a cover that can encapsulate the spirit of these articles, since portraying women via less clichéd symbolisms can never be satisfactory to all. We finally settle on the image of an elegant pendant brooch, the craftsmanship of which symbolises strength and endurance.

At the invitation of Datuk Tan Bin Sin (Soc. Science '74) we have the pleasure of completing this issue at his Batu Rakit (Trengganu) beach-house. We are truly grateful to him for this generous gesture and camaraderie. Thanks are also due to his staff, especially Ah Hock, for making our stay pleasant and fruitful. We look forward for offers from other alumni to host us in other locations 😊. Any takers?

As for forthcoming issues, *The Leader's* team has lined up a number of themes. For September, the theme will be the performing arts. Would those of you who have been associated with this field kindly send in photos to compliment our planned articles?

As usual, we welcome your opinions and short articles to ensure the continuity of *The Leader* as a vibrant publication. Anything you send in may be of value. You never know how a faded photo or a seemingly unimportant line can bond this fraternity of ours ...USM Alumni

**Chief Editor**  
Mohamed Talhah Idrus  
B. Soc. Sc. '74

## It's Us!



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Photograph by Alec Chin







Rashidah Shuib  
B. A. '76

Artwork by Rusly Jamaludin

**NO EASY  
BATTLE**

# KANITA



When I reached my office at the School of Medical Sciences early one morning in late February 2005 I received an unexpected call from the Vice-Chancellor of USM, Professor Dato' Dzulkifli Abdul Razak. He wanted to know whether I would be interested to take the helm as the Director of KANITA.

"But that would mean leaving behind your family in Kota Bharu", he said almost apologetically.

I have been comfortable as the coordinator of the Women's Health Development Unit which I founded at the School of Medical Sciences. My life was occupied with paper presentations, travels, research, teaching and community work in addition to spending time with my family.

The phone call changed all that.

I thought deeply about what it would mean to move to the main campus in Penang. Would it be worth the sacrifice of being alone and leaving the family behind?

It is now three years since that day. I am glad I accepted the offer. To be the Director of 30-year old KANITA, is akin to fulfilling a dream. Not just my dream but the dream of those who were responsible for what KANITA is now. It is a dream and a belief that women/gender studies should have its place in the academia. Not just any place but one that is recognised to be important in the creation and advancement of knowledge which could impact and change society; a more gender equal and equitable society.

Sitting in my office with a splendid view of the luxuriant flames of the forest close to my window and a view of the sea yonder, I could not help but think: some centres are "offered on a platter" whereas others get to be established after a long struggle by champions.

The Women's Development Research Centre, also known as KANITA, is a result of the work of champions. This seems to be the nature of many women/gender studies programme or similar programmes which sit at the periphery of the established fields in academia. It often takes passion and commitment from an individual or a group of academicians to persistently drive the agenda even when little recognition is given or when their contributions are seen to be "over and above" their own work within their respective schools.

One such champion was Dr Wazir Jahan Karim. The former professor of the School of Social Sciences was responsible for planting the seed of a multi-disciplinary research cluster. Funded by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 1978, the research on "*Kanak-Kanak and Wanita*", (hence KANITA) focused its work on children and women, particularly those in the rural areas and the poor. The multi-disciplinary nature of the research brought other academicians, mostly women, to KANITA. From a project geared towards issues of poverty, leadership, motherhood and culture, KANITA secured other grants from the Prime Minister's Department, International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and Ford Foundation which enabled it to expand its research work to women and the modern work culture, child rearing, socialisation, religious revivalism, the position of Muslim women and the restructuring of the Syariah courts.



No Easy Battle

From a research cluster, KANITA blossomed into a Women and Human Resource Studies Unit in the School of Social Sciences. It gained national and international recognition in its work. On 17 April 2001 KANITA was upgraded to an autonomous centre making it the first of its kind in the Malaysian academic history. Women and gender studies programme finally found its own worthy place.

On 17 April 2008, KANITA celebrated its thirtieth year since its humble beginnings as a research project. The Centre acknowledges the contributions of its past directors. Apart from Wazir, there were Dr Rohana Ariffin and Dr Maznah Mohamad. KANITA's faculty associates and its council members, appointed by the Vice Chancellor shape and mould the Centre.

In its thirty years, the Centre has successfully generated new knowledge using the gender perspective, thus contributing to a better understanding of issues and the realities of peoples' lives. Most of its research has policy and programme implications.

The path for KANITA has not been smooth. However, with the support of the Universiti, the Centre now has its own academic and support staff; that critical infrastructure which enables the organisation to bid for more research grants and be more ambitious in its activities. To survive, KANITA has to be more strategic. Getting input from all its members, KANITA now has clearly defined thrust areas namely, sustainable development, economic and social development, health, policy and law, media and culture, and family. It successfully secured six research university grants and form research partnerships with colleagues from the Asian Research Institute, Singapore, Sisters In Islam and the World Wildlife Fund. It harnessed its human resource expertise to develop and facilitate training on violence against women for the NAM Institute for the Empowerment of Women. In the health sector KANITA has been contributing to the gender and rights training of health professionals, both locally and abroad. There is also now a health and social policy cluster.



Rashidah during the '80s  
(Photograph courtesy of Rashidah Shuib)



Rashidah (right) and friends  
(Photograph courtesy of Rashidah Shuib)



A moment with Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamad Ali, wife of Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad  
(Photograph courtesy of Rashidah Shuib)



## No Easy Battle

In 2007, KANITA saw her first doctoral candidate receiving her PhD scroll. This year it expects to graduate another PhD candidate and a Master's candidate. The graduate programme is continually expanding with students, both local and foreign. As the Centre develops its research programme, it hopes to further develop its graduate programme with more graduates and postdoctoral fellows. Its networking which long before had successfully reached beyond the Malaysian shores is further strengthened and the net is cast even wider. As one of the founding members of the Asian Association of Women's Studies, KANITA sees itself as a regional and a global player.

The years ahead will be more challenging for KANITA. As the Universiti competes to excel as a research university with ever more stringent criteria, KANITA has to position itself to ensure its sustainability and growth. It has to be seen to be relevant and indispensable.

Getting back to the present, I can almost touch the flames of the forest close to my window. The view stays splendid even on rainy days. It has been a good three years of sacrifice. Worthy of the dreams. It reminds me of the poem, "Ithaca" (Constantine P Cavafy 1911):

*When you set out on your journey to Ithaca,  
pray that the road is long,  
full of adventure, full of knowledge,  
Always keep Ithaca in your mind.  
To arrive there is your ultimate goal.  
But do not hurry the voyage at all.  
It is better to let it last for many years;  
And to anchor at the island when you are old,  
Rich with all you have gained on the way,  
Not expecting that Ithaca will offer you riches.*

*Ithaca has given you the beautiful voyage.*



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# Unchaining Mindset

Yong Check Yoon

*The appearance of padi fields remain unchanged - as if frozen in time - with the sprawling grain-laden landscape criss-crossed by mud bunds. These fields bear witness to the sad but dramatic changes over the years when men and women toiled collectively in the fields during harvesting season; now harvesting machines have taken over some of the jobs.*

When machines were used, padi cultivation became a "men's" job, forcing women to seek other occupations. They are no longer active partners in padi planting and their roles have been taken over by men and machines.

This is just one of the many cases that Professor Datin Rashidah Shuib who heads the Women's Development Research Centre (KANITA) pointed out to *The Leader*. She calls for the government to adopt supportive policies and our society to break away from the discriminating social norms against gender and their roles.







For example, often we perceive men as the bread winner of the family while the wife either works to contribute to the household income or remains at home as a housewife. What if she were to reverse roles to enjoy a highly successful career while the man became a 'househusband'? How would the man feel when he has to accompany his wife to a social function and be introduced as a 'househusband'?

"There is a need to educate the society about the changing roles ... Unfortunately we didn't give housework a value and hence it has no economic value," she said, adding that housework actually involves decision making (e.g. on how to nurture children) and also management skills. No economic value was tagged to it when the gross domestic product for the capita income of a country was calculated and thus its intrinsic value was overlooked. However, when foreign maids are paid for performing the same job, suddenly there is a value to it.

Rashidah defined successful and stable families as those with fathers who can establish good bonds with their children. This should also happen when couples reverse roles and they should be able to continue with their contributory roles to the family.

"There should be policies to enable couples to play their roles effectively," she said. "If the wife can earn much more than the husband, the role of earning for the family can be taken over by the wife while the husband manages the family. This is just a matter of people assuming new roles."

She said that there are many happy and successful families where couples reversed roles. People just need to embrace the changing paradigm in the dynamics of the society and the government has to adopt policies that encourage and facilitate their development.

Confucius had aptly said: "To put the world right in order, we must first put the nation in order; to put the nation in order, we must first put the family in order; to put the family in order, we must first cultivate our personal life; we must first set our hearts right."



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# A CLASS CHANGE

*Sharifah Darweena Syed Ahmad Amir Feisal  
B. Sc. '07*

*Nor Rafizah Md. Zain*

*Photographs by  
Mohamed Talhah Idrus  
B. Soc. Sc. '74*



*Hasni tutoring one of her earliest clients, Ummu 'Atiyah Mohamed Talhah in the latter's home*

Starting with just two students at Penang Free School (PFS) during her practical, Ms Hasniyati Hasan now tutors full-time. She provides 'home tuition' and this means that she has to go to the home of her students to conduct lessons and each of her class consists of two students at the most. For this, Hasni has to travel around come rain or shine from Sungai Ara to Air Itam, teaching students from Primary 1 to Form 5.

After graduation in 2005, she was offered a post as a teacher in Sarawak but she turned it down because her heart strongly told her to venture on her own as a home tutor.

"My family was totally against the idea," said Hasni. "They dissuaded me, saying that it is a very risky undertaking."

While it is distressing to face such opposition, she understood the concern of her elder siblings (two sisters and a brother) for her. Hasni's mother had passed away when she was 11 years old and her father died five years later.



*Dr Sharifah Norhaidah, Hasni always turn to her for advise.*

Facing this dilemma, she went to see her USM lecturer, Dr Sharifah Norhaidah Syed Idros, for advice. She told Hasni, "It's your choice, once decided, never look back. You know what you want, don't let others bring you down."

From then on she and her soul mate, Mr Mohd Hanis Hadi, worked hard sending flyers offering home tuition from house to house. They distributed the pamphlets for almost three weeks covering Minden, Sungai Ara, Bukit Jambul, Taman Sri Nibong, extending to Farlim, Sri York and Green Lane area.

It was trying for her to get students because she was new and inexperienced. Her breakthrough came rather unexpectedly when she received a call from Mrs Angeline Ong (not her real name).

"She asked me to teach her son and Angeline promised me that if I had taught her son well, she would recommend me to others," Hasni recalled.



## A Class Change

With Hasni tutoring her son, Angeline saw an improvement in his school grades and, keeping to her promise, she recommended Hasni to her friends. It was rather easy because she owns a company and hence has wide business contacts.

Currently Hasni tutors 26 students from primary and secondary schools, covering subjects from Mathematics, Science, Bahasa Melayu, Biology to Additional Mathematics.

As advised by Sharifah, she has no regrets and no wish of turning back for the simple reason she earns about twice that of a degree holder's salary per month. However, she admits that it is not easy to start.

She had been admonished by parents when she got the timetable mixed up but these unfortunate incidents have been eliminated with experience. She also introduced an attendance book for each of her students and herself to avoid being accused of not turning up, coming late or leaving early.

"This is a measure to avert any misunderstanding and also to keep track of the students' progress," Hasni explained.

From lessons learned, she also carried a schedule book to update the students' timetable. She covers an average of five houses daily, working half day on Saturday. Hasni always keeps abreast with changes in the school syllabi by checking with her students and friends.

It is her wish that her siblings will understand her decision and provide her the moral support. However, despite being able to do well in what she strives for, they still could not forget her rejection of the offer to teach in Sarawak.



"Hadi always consoles me by saying that sooner or later they'll understand me. He advised me to give them time to get over the issue," she said, adding that although Hadi, Sharifah and Angeline are there in times of need, she still needs the support from her siblings.

She said that it is painful to go on without support from her family but she does not intend on quitting. Hasni's passion for teaching reminds her of her teacher parents. Coincidentally, her birthday falls on Teacher's Day (17 May).



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With a definite passion for architectural conservation, Norzakiah Arshad told *The Leader* that a heritage building that undergoes modern renovation would lose its identity as much as “an old man losing his memory”.

As an architect of her own firm, Norzakiah Architect in Ampang, she said that most people misunderstood what conservation really is.

“When you are plastering a Heritage Building or Listed Building, you can't simply use Portland cement,” Norzakiah explained. “You need to carry out tests on the original plastering so that you can apply similar materials. Sometimes the ‘old plastering’ contains egg white which is used as a binder. Traditionally lime plaster or clay plaster materials were used.”

Currently she and her team are working on the Institute of Medical Research Museum in Kuala Lumpur, Gedung Timah Raja Abdullah in Klang and Istana Bandar Sultan Sir Alaeddin in Banting. Such projects need in-depth study from the aspects of its design to the choice of colour and the historical significance of the building. Norzakiah cited the Kuala Lumpur Railway Station with Moorish architecture as a restoration of a splendid heritage building.

“You have to study and analyse the form, style, colour and tone as well as the character of the building dating back to the time it was built,” she said. “You could trace its origin. Passion and patience are highly required in conservation work.”

she says,  
“Old is Gold”





she says, "Old Is Gold"

Sharifah Darweena Syed  
Ahmad Amir Feisal  
B. Sc. '07

She lamented that in the past, old buildings are not appreciated. In Singapore, old buildings were demolished as what was happening here in Malaysia. Without realising their intrinsic value, many 'old buildings' were demolished in the name of progress. This could be due to our lack of concern and realisation of conservation purposes. When Singapore took conservation seriously, the Republic managed to preserve many buildings that have now been appreciated by many in the republic and those abroad.

Building conservation does have its unique problems. There are cases where heritage buildings are located on prime land that cost millions. Some of these are properties under numerous names and may end up in a legal tussle. This type of complication may cause the building to be neglected to a stage of disrepair. There are also occasions where families may give them away for conservation purposes.

Unlike England where funds for heritage buildings conservation are available from the National Trust, building societies and from charity funds; we are dependent on contributions from the few organisations that understand and appreciate conservation works.

Allocation on conservation works is determined by Ministry of Unity, Culture, Arts and Heritage wherein the National Heritage Department is tasked to handle and organise such works.

"With time and passion, I love to be involved in conservation works," Norzakiah declared. "It is a platform from which you can be known for your work. In conserving a heritage building, the architects worked through until the building is restored close to its original state." Norzakiah and her team have conserved the first Ice Factory in Alor Setar, Penjara Jugra in Kuala Langat, Kellie's Castle in Batu Gajah and have partially conserved the Gedung Timah Raja Abdullah in Klang.

Kellie's Castle,  
Perak



Institute of Medical Research Museum,  
Kuala Lumpur



Istana Bandar Sultan Sir Alaeddin,  
Banting



Gedung Timah Raja Abdullah,  
Klang

Photographs courtesy of Norzakiah



she says "Old Is Gold"

Field study, Bayan Lepas International Airport, Pulau Pinang in the early '80s

In the architecture studio, Leicester Polytechnic in 1987

USM's field trip to Borobudur, Indonesia

With family during a holiday in Perth, Australia

She did not have problems working alongside two male business partners in her previous architectural practice at Norzakiah, Voon and Thang Architects Sdn. Bhd. Likewise she works well with her current associate partner, Mr Mohd Sabri Mohd Nadzir. Furthermore, she is well-inspired and motivated by her husband, Mr Zulkifli Zahari.

From the beginning, Norzakiah was determined to pursue her studies in architecture. After completing her USM matriculation course, she applied for a degree programme in Housing, Building and Planning (HBP) as the only choice in her admissions application. She was eager to join the course after which she had planned to further her studies for the profession qualification in architecture. She was advised by Assistant Registrar, Ms Fauziah Shahrom (now Puan Sri Fauziah Shahrom) regarding application procedures and was accepted into the HBP programme.

Norzakiah was eager for an early opportunity to work in an architectural practice and to gain experience in the field. During her third year of studies, she gained much experience while undergoing industrial training at Arkitek Mutiara in Penang. She was subsequently offered work at Razaly Associate Architects upon completing her HBP course.

Although she knew that she could not as yet be an architect without completing the two-year professional course in architecture, she applied for scholarship to further her studies whilst working at the architect's firm. She subsequently left for England to join the Leicester School of Architecture at Leicester Polytechnic (now De Montfort University).

Upon returning from UK, Norzakiah worked for Azza Associate Architects and then rejoined Razaly Associate Architects. "I was the only lady designer in those firms, the youngest and also the smallest in physique in the team. I have been running my own architecture practice since 1997," said Norzakiah. Currently she is looking for qualified graduates to join her firm. She manages her practice and is still able to be a wife and mother of five children.

In conservation works, we need passionate people like Norzakiah to look back as to move forward. She said that the public need to know and understand the need to protect and preserve buildings because they reflect the era which they were constructed and showcase our 'truly Malaysian' identity.



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Photographs courtesy of Norzakiah

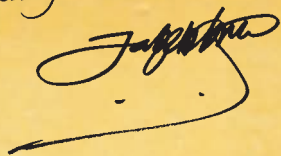




# Giving Back

*Thank you for your contributions. Our building is slowly taking shape. However, we still need more. Please give generously, even if you have already done so.*

*Sincerely*



Associate Professor Mohamed Talhah Idrus  
Editor  
The Leader

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Work Progress  
at Alumni Club House  
(as in April 2008)



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Artwork by Mohamed Talhah Idrus

Text and Photographs by  
Mohamed Talhah Idrus  
B. Soc. Sc. '74

Sharifah Munirah Syed Mohamed  
B. Soc. Sc. '74

# Crafting a Mission





A hard wood reject adorned with gilded silver craft

**Z**uraidah Abdul Razak has one and a half passions. One is art. The half is a desire to help the poor.

She majored in history - not knowing how she got there - but art has always been her love. She enjoys the creative process and seeing its products.

Being a city girl who grew up in Kuala Lumpur (KL), visiting her granny in Negri Sembilan when she was young gave her an early chance to reflect on the contrast between KL environment and her granny's village. The poverty that she observed in the village slowly turned a romantic concept into reality.

"I felt for the people. I wanted to help them. But what can I as a city girl do?"



Zu admiring a **kerongsang** (pendant brooches) on sale at the Karyaneka Complex

Even when she entered USM, she could only reflect on poverty, unlike art which she could indulge in.

"My first job was with Radio Television Malaysia (RTM) before joining the Selangor Agricultural Development Corporation (SADC)," Zu (as Zuraidah is affectionately known) said. Now she could do something with the other half of her passion, though her granny may not understand why her granddaughter would want to leave RTM for a less glamorous job to be with the farmers and fishermen. However, Zu stayed with SADC for six years serving the poorer sector of the Malaysian population.



Zu (second left) with friends during student days. Others are (right to left) Zaini Rahmat, Rastam Isa and Johana Annuar (Photograph courtesy of Zaini Rahmat)

Yet merely making acquaintances with the poor (while on duty) was not what Zu's creative mind had when she first felt the need to help them. Besides, being with SADC has restricted her artistic endeavours.

A new door opened when she stepped into the Malaysian Handicraft Development Corporation (MHDC). She was now engaged with the group she wanted to help since childhood. Unlike SADC, being in MHDC gave her a wider room to use her artistic talents to help the poor.

Zu was entrusted with a number of projects which were all aimed at promoting indigenous craftsmanship as a respectable career.



Gold-thread embroidery on a throw cushion

"I was posted to Terengganu then to Negri Sembilan where I continued to initiate projects for the less privileged."

Zu married her campus sweetheart in 1975, with whom they have four children, two boys and two girls. They were divorced after 15 years.

"I single-handedly raised the four children. It was quite tough for my youngest girl," Zu reflected on those days when her youngest daughter found it hard to live without her father.

When she remarried in 1991, Zu took a break from her career to live in Singapore. After nine years there, the urge to pursue a career brought her back to KL, where she secured a post as project manager for the construction of the Federal Territory mosque.

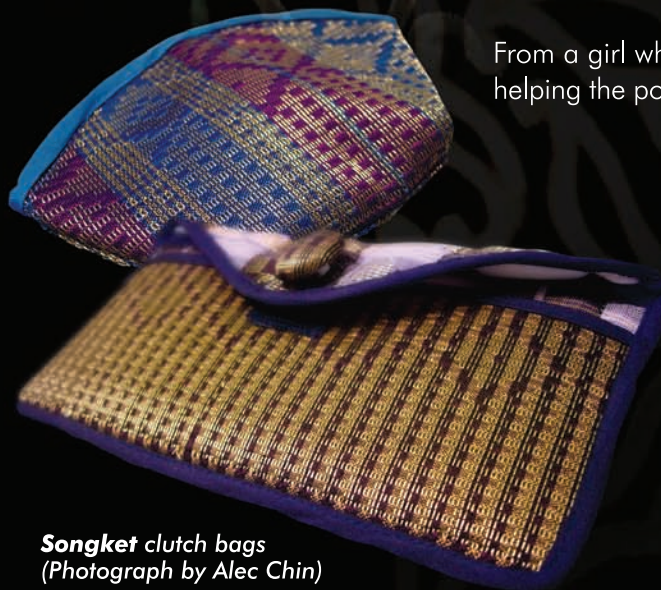
Her constant locational changes and job diversity must have been the spice of life for Zu. She quickly moved from KL to Cherating, Pahang, to manage a resort consisting of 21 chalets and an international restaurant. But her original passions would pull her back into the world of art. Her managerial abilities too were not unnoticed, for in 2002 Datuk Zakiah Ahmad (Social Science '74), handpicked Zu to manage Syarikat Pemasaran Karyaneka Sdn. Bhd.,

a new subsidiary of the Ministry of Culture, Heritage and Tourism aimed at promoting and marketing local handicrafts. She has since helmed the organisation.

From a girl who loved art and dreamed of helping the poor, Zu has made a full circle.

Her four children have completed their tertiary education, allowing her to have more time with her career. In the Syarikat Pemasaran Karyaneka complex, some of the elegant handicrafts (like silverwork) found there resulted from her ideas. It must be fulfilling for her to see how these ideas, and the craftsmen's ingenuity, can contribute towards

improving the livelihood of the poor. Observing her movements around the complex, her handling of the products, and the interaction with her staff, one is inclined to conclude that Zuraidah Abdul Razak is at home.



Songket clutch bags  
(Photograph by Alec Chin)



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TEOH HOCK GUAN



THO YOW LEONG



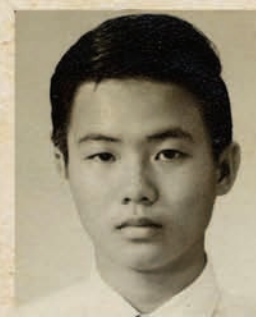
WONG CHART HOONG



WU FOOK YEW



YEOH LOY TOON



YOON KOK LAM

AHMAD MAHMUD: *Photograph not available*



“  
...all of us must set our individual  
goals and aspirations, and to strive  
at achieving it.”

- Rafidah Jalil

Fitting the

# Cogwheels

Zulkifli Osman

Datin Rafidah Jalil (Fidah to friends) is what every career women would yearn to be ... a dedicated wife and a home-maker who has a successful career.

Despite her hectic professional schedule, she can still allocate time to be with her family, which she prioritizes over her career. When her husband, Dato' Abdullah Wahab (more popularly known as Tok Bob) fell ill, for example, she took leave from work to nurse him to good health.

Although a graduate in biological sciences, she has successfully switched to management as a career. This is not an easy feat which not be many will dare to attempt.

“My previous employment with Unilever, Standard Chartered and Suria KLCC has provided me with good management training,” said Fidah who has 20 years of management experience behind her. Now she holds the post as the Queensbay Mall (in Pulau Pinang) general manager.

“To be a dutiful wife, a mother of two dotting sons and a general manager needs good balancing abilities”, Fidah added. Her advice is that “You have to take charge ... whatever the circumstances. Your



## Personality

### Fitting The Cogwheels

responsibility should never be delegated to others, be it at home or in the office.”

Having a maid to help in their house is no reason for Fidah to relegate all the house chores to her. She may do the cleaning and tidying, but when it comes to attending the children’s needs, Fidah and Tok Bob personally attend to them.

“I will soon be leaving my job and move back to Kuala Lumpur to be with my family, and to prepare for our son’s wedding,” said Fidah, failing to conceal the enthusiasm in her voice. She feel blessed with two well-behaved and independent sons.

I asked her for the secret that drove her to the pinnacle of success. She replied that it was her deep desire to achieve success, be it at home or in the office. Whatever she does, the objectives are clear, and a time-line set for achieving them. “In this manner one always remains focused about one’s mission” she said.

Fidah is a result-orientated person. Products and outcomes are her measurements for success. Reflecting on her effort in managing Suria Kuala Lumpur Commercial Centre (KLCC), she is immensely satisfied with its present status as a premier commercial-cum-business centre. As a team leader, she has also managed to guide her management team in their tasks as well as to make each member a better individual.

“I strongly believe that we must set our individual goals and aspirations, and to strive to achieving them,” said Fidah, adding that her success is also due to having good and knowledgeable friends. She attributed to their ability to “guide me and stick with me through thick and thin”.

For Fidah, her heart has always been able to accommodate God, her family and friends. She has been generous in her praises for them and finds time - not matter how little she has - to be there to share those precious moments. I cannot help reflecting how these silent qualities epitomize a successful individual like her. Like the sun, she shines on all and brings a glow to the life of those she is in touch with.



Zulkifli Osman is currently a lecturer at the School of Housing, Building and Planning, USM. He can be reached at [zulosm@usm.my](mailto:zulosm@usm.my)

### 灣廣場與理大聯辦忠誠活動



(右) 在拉菲达 (左三) 和嘉宾的陪同下, 在模拟优惠卡



■拉菲达: 皇后湾广场欢迎有意在该广场内举办活动的学府, 愿意提供平台给这些学府举办有益活动。

### 灣廣場提供交流平台 學生走入社會

大学学生的学习空间。理大副校长马雅奥玛表示, 该校与皇后湾广场过去已4次合作, 而该校希望双方的合作是长远性的, 这才

A Chinese daily featuring Fidah with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Associate Professor Omar Osman (Student and Development Affairs) launching the Queensbay loyalty card for USM community recently



At *Ekspo Kerjaya dan Pendidikan (EKSPEN 2008)* with the Alumni Association President Dr Mohamad Jafre Zainol Abidin in February (Photograph by Yusuf Suid)



Fidah (back row, second from right) in her undergraduate days with her course mates (Photograph courtesy of Mohamed Talhah Idrus)



# Winnie: A Winner

## *A Force Unveiled*

Hamima Dona Mustafa  
B.A. '73

My earliest image of Puan Sri Winnie Hamzah Sendut was from a black-and-white photograph taken by my father on the afternoon of my graduation at the Dewan Sri Pinang in 1973. Winnie, dressed in formal Malay *sarong kebaya*, stood beside her husband, the Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Sains Malaysia, Tan Sri Professor Hamzah Sendut, greeting VIPs. Hamzah was in his academic robe.

One other time that I came face-to-face with Winnie was during the farewell dinner for Dato' Noel Ogle (USM's first registrar) at the Bukit Jambul Golf Club in 1991.

For most of us, especially students, who were on campus during the early days, Winnie did not cut a familiar figure.

The earliest secretarial/clerical recruits, however, had more to say about Winnie. Ms Molly Toh, who joined the Universiti on 1 July, 1969, was one of them. According to Molly, she and her friend used to take walks after office hours. On one occasion, they had seen Winnie, also taking an evening walk, in the field at the foot of the Vice-Chancellor's residence.





Winnie (second from left) and friends (Photograph courtesy of Winnie)

"When we discovered that, we no longer walk in that vicinity for fear of running into her. We felt *segan*." (*Segan* is the Malay word for "feeling shy out of deference".)

Ms Yvonne Rasen, another early recruit, remembered Winnie as a gracious and thoughtful person. She was impressed at the way Winnie hosted the various dinners for distinguished visitors.

Mr V. V. Sarachandran, also a member of the clerical staff then, recalled the garden parties especially during *Hari Raya*. Sarachandran also referred to the notion of deference toward Winnie.

According to him, "We were youngsters who had just completed our secondary education. Hence, there was an age gap."

There were, however, individuals who had more interactions with Winnie. Datin Gaik Ogle was one of a group of three who were quite often invited to have lunch with Winnie at the Vice-Chancellor's residence or at the restaurant in Hotel Mandarin, Macalister Road. The other two in the team of 'the three musketeers', (as nicknamed by Gaik), were the late Mrs Margaret Cheah (the bursar's wife) and Mrs Pearly Lim (the chief librarian's wife).

"She took us under her wings and we have to live up to her expectations," Gaik said. "It was during such gatherings that Puan Sri would give us tips and advice on how to be gracious hostesses when entertaining guests. In those days we used to have many visitors especially from abroad. Besides that, Puan Sri would keep abreast with what was happening on campus, from our perspectives."

Gaik described Winnie as 'the First Lady of the Universiti' who was 'a super able person' as well as 'the hostess with the mostest'.

Gaik said, "Puan Sri Winnie was a generous person, always remembering to bring back gifts whenever she travelled abroad."

Especially cherished till this day is a smoky topaz given by Winnie from one of her trips. Gaik had the semi-precious stone set into a pendant. Whenever she wore it she would get compliments on the piece of jewellery.

Besides being generous, Winnie is remembered by Gaik as being 'very gifted'. The artistic bent in her was reflected in her choice of home décor, from the cutlery to the art pieces.

"Puan Sri loved shocking pink," Gaik added. "Her style showed in her taste for classy clothes ... custom-made long skirts and tops."



**Winnie: A Winner**  
*A Force Unveiled*

Gaik continued, "Puan Sri held her position as the First Lady of the Universiti well." Gaik also attested to the *Hari Raya* Open House where the garden would be beautifully decorated.

Recently, when the editorial team visited Winnie at her apartment in the heart of Kuala Lumpur, she mentioned that it was in the garden, 'where my orchids were' that she would wait for Hamzah to come home. Sitting beside him on the cast-iron bench she would listen to his thoughts on the day's events.

"Most of what I knew I heard from him," Winnie said.

Indeed, Winnie was up-to-date with issues such as the 30 percent use of *Bahasa Malaysia* in the Universiti courses, the interdisciplinary nature of the courses, and the students' discontent with a certain expatriate academic staff member.

According to Winnie, what mattered most to Hamzah was that his graduates must be marketable.

He also told her, "We must have a standard."

Winnie described the analogy which Hamzah used to explain his philosophy. According to him, if one were to pluck a mango when it is still raw and to force it to ripen, the fruit would be sour. On the other hand, if one were to pluck it when it has shown signs of ripening and keep it for a few days, then the fruit would be sweet.

Winnie recalled the day when Hamzah, who was then in Kuala Lumpur, received a phone call from Education Minister Khir Johari asking him to go to Pulau Pinang to establish a university, "Just like that . . . at hardly two weeks' notice . . . at the drop of a hat."

Winnie who perceived herself as 'a practical person' foresaw a number of problems.

"There was no staff. There was no building. We have to borrow two rooms from the Malayan Teachers' Training College. You carried the tables, you carried the chairs."



*The Al-Marhum Tuanku Syed Putra Ibni Al-Marhum Syed Hassan Jamalullail (USM's first Chancellor) celebrating his birthday (Photograph courtesy of Winnie)*



*On hand to receive the fifth Yang Dipertuan Agong and Raja Permaisuri Agong during Their Majesties' state visit to Pulau Pinang (Photograph courtesy of Winnie)*

Winnie continued, "Tun Razak had faith in him."

Faced with the daunting task at hand, Hamzah turned to people whom he knew he could count on to help him. One of those was Mr S. Kandasamy, someone he was familiar with since his days as the Master of the First Residential College at the University of Malaya. Indeed, Winnie confided that it was Hamzah who motivated Kandasamy to pursue a degree which eventually came in handy.

Hamzah approached Kandasamy and asked, "Kandasamy, will you come with me to Penang?"

"Yes, Sir," came the crisp reply.

Both Hamzah and Kandasamy shared the date of appointment of 1 June 1969. That was how Kandasamy became the bearer of the second staff number, K02, immediately after Hamzah's number of K01. Quite a few of us knew this because every so often this 'Man Friday' would proudly announce this fact to whoever was on hand to listen to him.

Initially, Hamzah and Kandasamy were assisted by Sarachandran and Mr Chin Seik Yoon. They operated from 'an office' at Hotel Ambassador, Pulau Pinang, 'working day and night'.

Sarachandran remembered how he sat on the edge of the bed, tearing open envelopes containing applications from potential candidates.

Indeed, it was through Winnie that the earliest secretarial/clerical staff members were recruited.



**Winnie: A Winner**  
*A Force Unveiled*

"I remembered that my former school, the Penang Light Street Convent, offered commercial subjects. So, I called up my former fifth form teacher, Mrs Khor Cheang Kee, informing her that Hamzah needed clerical staff," she said.

Another person who proved worthy of Hamzah's trust was Ogle whom Winnie described as 'a man of calibre'. Formerly, Ogle had been helping Hamzah in the fieldwork in Besut, Terengganu.

Winnie remarked, "Hamzah, as the leader of the research team, saw the 'spark' in Ogle, a city man who could fit in with the rural surroundings."

Additionally, based on relationships established during those days at the University of Malaya in Singapore, Hamzah recruited Cheah Hoong Tuck to be the bursar and Edward Lim Huck Tee as the chief librarian of Universiti Pulau Pinang (the precursor to Universiti Sains Malaysia). The same was true of Professor Sharom Ahmat (the second dean of the School of Humanities) and Professor K. J. Ratnam (the first dean of the School of Social Sciences).

To ensure the security of the campus, Hamzah roped in his longtime friend from his home village, Johor, Negri Sembilan, Major (R) Osman Haji Kadir.

When the campus at Minden became a reality, Winnie moved from her temporary living quarters at 2 Park Road into the Vice-Chancellor's residence. Immediately, Winnie set to work on the house.

"Hamzah trusted me with that task since I have a background in arts," Winnie said, who trained as a teacher at the Kirby Teachers' Training College, England, in 1955.

*Hamzah Sendut and his family stayed in this no.2 Park Road bungalow before the Minden Barracks was transformed into a campus (Photograph by David Chew)*

Reflecting on her former home on the Minden campus, she recalled the marble floor, the carved cabinets, the purplish and shocking pink upholstery and the carpeted staircase.

"We always used the house to hold functions. Since Hamzah was particular about knowing his senior staff members, a table to seat 14 people was especially made for meetings in the house."

Winnie said she learnt a lot from Hamzah, most of all, his humility. She recalled one incident where a VIP's brother-in-law was arrogant, not knowing the person he was talking to, at a dinner party.

Later, after the dinner Winnie asked Hamzah why he entertained that person.

Hamzah replied, "The person is ignorant. It's not my job to teach him. He will learn one day by himself. You don't have to tell people how great you are. You are only good if somebody tells you that you are good. Furthermore, humility does not cost you anything."

To Winnie, Hamzah was 'a first class Malay gentleman'. She remembered Hamzah whom she met in Liverpool in 1955 as a "visionary". They were married in Osman's house in 1959. Hamzah dubbed her as "my finance minister".

She explained, "My job is to see that my family will be well looked after. There was no pension in those days. I have to make sure that we can maintain our lifestyle in our old age. From day one, I set targets for myself and learn to invest what little we have."

**Still Remembered**



*The complex in KL which houses Winnie's last residence (Photograph by Mohamed Talhah Idrus)*



**Winnie: A Winner**  
*A Force Unveiled*

*A painting by Lim Eng Hooi hangs prominently in Winnie's apartment in KL (Photograph by Mohamed Talhah Idrus)*

In 1976, when Hamzah came to the end of his term of office, Winnie said that the campus' physical set-up was completed. Consequently, since Hamzah's commitments were mostly in Kuala Lumpur, the family returned to the capital city.

There had been occasions when Winnie came to campus. One such time was when she brought some friends to tour the campus grounds. When she returned home to Kuala Lumpur she said that Hamzah had asked her about the water tower, what the campus was like and whether Winnie had seen the mosque.

When Hamzah passed away in 1996, Winnie recalled how moved she was when friends from their USM days contacted her to convey their condolences. Till today, Winnie is in touch with them.

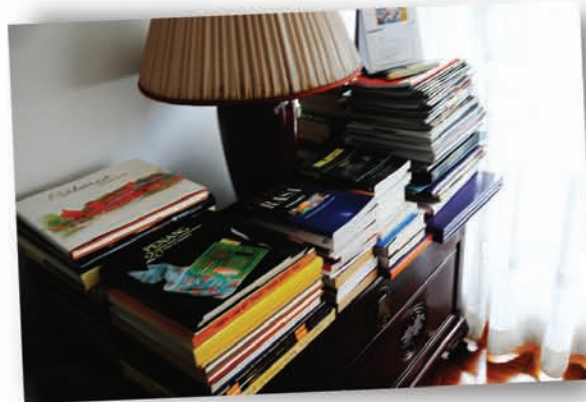
On 10 December 2004 Winnie brought her family to campus to attend the ceremony of naming the library, Perpustakaan Hamzah Sendut.

Winnie had been aware that Hamzah's colleagues at USM felt something appropriate be named after the pioneer Vice-Chancellor.

"It was not surprising that Professor Dato' Dzulkifli Abdul Razak was the one to honour Hamzah, the Vice-Chancellor of his student days." Winnie added. "As Hamzah would have said, 'It takes a great man to recognize another'."

She continued, "With this honour Hamzah's contributions were duly recognized by the Universiti. His faith in the goodness of man would have been strengthened."

In the evening of the library dedication, Winnie hosted a dinner at Hotel Equatorial, to say 'thank you' to those who have helped in the initial period of the setting up of the Universiti.



*Winnie's books reflecting her interests (Photograph by Mohamed Talhah Idrus)*

Winnie's 'survival instinct' seemed to pay off. Her two sons are successful in their chosen careers. Winnie had four grandchildren, one of whom she nicknamed 'Princess.' She lives comfortably in an apartment unit with three bedrooms, surrounded by her collection of antique Chinese vases and art work. She keeps abreast with local and global events by reading four English language newspapers.

As we took our leave, the chief editor of *The Leader* registered his recognition of the paintings on the wall as originals from two of USM's renowned artists, Mr Chew Teng Beng and Mr Lim Eng Hooi.

"Yes," said Winnie, "We were presented with one by Eng Hooi and I bought another from Teng Beng, respectively, when Hamzah officiated their first exhibitions." Characteristically, with 'an eye for investment', she also bought works from other artists, Malaysian and foreign.



*Dr Hamima Dona Mustafa is currently a lecturer at the Women's Development Research Centre (KANITA), USM. She can be reached at hamima@usm.my*



## What Say They...

It would be better if the magazine includes 'Campus Rumours', latest building, USM before and after. Although these may be simple information, at least the younger generations are updated with what's happening around the campus.

**ONG SU EN**

B. Sc. (HBP) '05

Articles in Volume 3 Number 1 which highlighted USM graduates becoming entrepreneurs are so interesting and inspiring. They showed us that it is so OK to venture into any fields of business even though they are way too different from what we have majored in universities. Just trust in yourself and go on exploring new challenges!

**ZAHANIM ZAKARIA**

B. Sc. '94

It is great to see young graduates involved in the Alumni organisation and it would be good to have more young alumni being featured in "The Leader". I am an advocate for the rights of youth and women. Perhaps we can have more news on them.

**HAMOON KHELGHAT DOOST**

B. A. '07

# what say they...

I always love history. When I first received *The Leader*, I was attracted to 'Sustaining Heritage', and I hope the author will keep up the good work.

**EZERI ISMAIL**

B. A. '06

For me, I like its attractive layout. It is also an informative magazine.

**EMA ROZAIMA ISMAIL**

B. Comp. Sc. '06

Personally, I am satisfied with it. *The Leader* facilitates networking among the alumni. The photos are first class.

**NUR FADHLINA MISNI**

B. Mgmt. '05

*The Leader* baru sungguh cantik dan bagus isinya.

**HJ ABDUL RAHMAN**

B. A. '78



# a Tale







# of Two Mothers

The Other Residents

Text and Photographs by  
Mohamed Talhah Idrus  
B. Soc. Sc. '74

*They reproduce, stay with their young, feed and groom them, even manage their dirty laundry. On top of that they even participate in the building of the apartments, and later clean them. These are no ordinary damsels.*

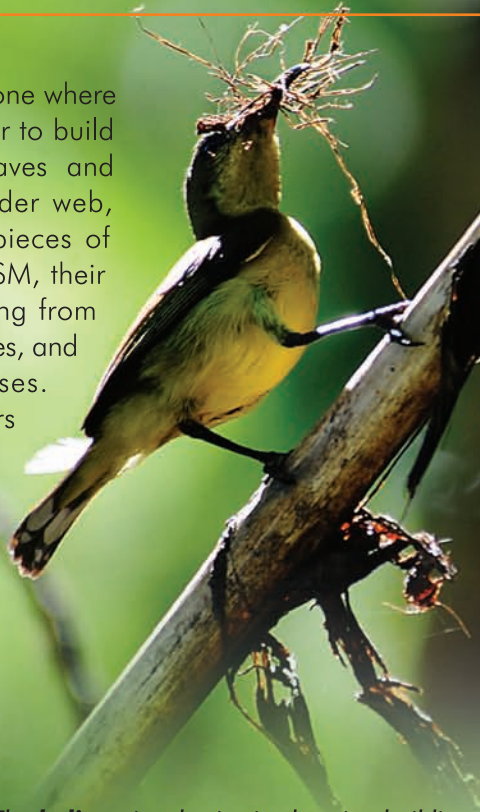
This story is about two of them. It is a tale that is usually dismissed, in fact untold. This is because these mothers are birds.

They do not show their expectancy as obviously as humans do. They do not exhibit their ordeals when the young ones are to appear. Yet once they realise the coming of parenthood, they display an almost obvious eagerness for that moment. Nest building is earnest and unrelenting. In some species only one gender makes the nest, while in others, both potential parents share the task.



A Tale of Two Mothers

The *kelicap* (sunbird) is one where both sexes work together to build a flimsy nest of dried leaves and grass cemented by spider web, sometimes tucking in pieces of plastic and trash. In USM, their nests conspicuously hang from low branches, electric lines, and any overhanging trusses. Sometimes one wonders why they do not make an extra effort to hide their nests. Have they realised that not many people bother to notice anyway?



The *kelicap* is selective in choosing building materials, but will occasionally use available man-made structures to anchor its nest



The *takor* does not gather materials to build its nest but laboriously digs a hole for the purpose

The *takor* (coppersmith barbet) too have rather conspicuous nests. Though they dig holes to make their nests they are rather boisterous in doing so, apart from the sound of their chiseling, they would regularly stop to make their haunting *kwoot, kwoot* calls while the nests are still under construction.



A Tale of Two Mothers

Even though she is well protected deep in her hole, the female **takor** occasionally scans the area for potential threats

Once the nests are ready (a few days for the *kelicap*, and weeks for the *takor*), the female would get inside them and stay there, starting their fasts until the eggs hatch. While the *takor* is hidden in the branch, the female *kelicap* is exposed. Her demure head poking out of the flimsy nest while hatching the eggs exudes a dedicated motherly expectancy. Maybe this is her way of weaving a bond to connect humans with birds.

With her head poking out of the nest, the female **kelicap** anxiously waits for the eggs to hatch

When the chicks hatch, usually two, both father and mother of the two species take turn to feed their insatiable young ones. During this stage which lasts for about two to three weeks, they display an amazing parental dedication. The fathers too participate in feeding and guarding the nests. Their "absence" during the time when the female was in the nest is suddenly made up by a seemingly ceaseless care and concern.

Both *kelicap* and *takor* would approach their nests gradually and cautiously, making stops before stopping at the entrance, and throwing quick glances while feeding. The *takor* is especially cautious, making more such moves.



Feeding the young needs patience and hard work



A male **kelicap** guarding the area around its nest

Scanning the surrounding before stopping at the nest entrance to feed



A Tale of Two Mothers

Amazingly, they even take the dirty laundry out! Both would enter the nest, gather the excrement of the chicks and fly out of the nest with the droppings in their mouths. The *takor* would continue to collect it from inside the nest, while the *kelicap* manages to coax the stronger chicks to spurt the bundle of waste right into one of the parents' mouths!

Removing fecal waste with its mouth



The parents would then remove the waste away from the nest to avoid detection, as well as propagating the growths of new plants elsewhere.

While the parents tend to their young ones with trepidation, there is always the danger of losing the chicks. While they have few predators, overactive chicks occasionally fall out of nests. Monitor lizards have been seen climbing trees, and occasionally carrying chicks away. Some flimsy nests are occasionally ravaged by strong winds or a torrential downpour. But most often, it is human that poses the greatest threats.

Car and motorcycle are often parked close to these nests forcing species like the *takor* and *kelicap* to tolerate such acts. However, heavy maintenance and construction works have induced these avian residents to abandon some nests. These are most evident by the substantial number of completed and semi-completed *takor* nests. Most scary to them must be the removal of chicks by over-enthusiatic "bird-lovers", and the destruction of nests and chicks by overzealous tree-cutting. Many a time, one hears sad cries of distraught parents when these happen.



The young *kelicap* spurts the excrement from its rear end for mummy to collect and dispose

Despite these threats the *takor* and *kelicap* seem to be doing well, flying away with the chicks after a few weeks.

Songbirds like *murai cacing* (robins), *murai batu* (shamas) and *tekukur* and *merbuk* (doves) fare less well in campus. Despite hiding their nests and distraction tactics, many, including the chicks end up in the cages of the human residents.

The display of these avian parenting evokes mixed feelings of joy and sadness; joy in seeing unconditional and relentless love. Sadness creeps in when one sees the cautious, quick glances, which has had no effect on the advances of chainsaws and power drills.

Hopefully, USM campus residents will develop the wisdom of co-existing with these other residents. Beside books and lectures, their presence can teach us an invaluable lesson ... unconditional love.

Background: a flock of *takors* prefer dead branches to perch when not feeding. This particular branch in Lorong Pegawai was recently pruned.



A baby *takor* trying some *ficus* on its own



Associate Professor Mohamed Talhah Idrus is currently a lecturer at the School of Housing, Building and Planning, USM. He can be reached at [tolamaha@yahoo.com](mailto:tolamaha@yahoo.com)



"Come back on Saturday for my portrait shots, I'm not prepared today. Drop-by on Monday or . . . perhaps Tuesday would be better, at noon during **waktu rehat** (lunch break), if you want to shoot my **minuman** (drinks)," Ann said, in a mixture of Hokkien and Mandarin with a smattering of Bahasa Malaysia (the national language).

# Ann's Cocktails of Life

Alec Chin  
B. Comm. '92

Photographs by David Chew



Ann's Cocktails of Life

"What a down-to-earth and easy-going person," was my first impression of Ann, or "Auntie Ann" as she is known by most of the students and campus staff.

It was a sweltering Saturday afternoon. A 'prepared' Ann was on hand at the canteen of Desasiswa Bakti Permai (students' village Bakti Permai) to greet me and my photographer buddy, David Chew.

Ann, with light make-up and sporting a recently-done hairdo wore a bright pink blouse. The interview started with us chatting like old friends and lasted until late evening.

Her registered name is Loh Shock Hean. Her father had a small fruit stall at the entrance of the Road Transport Department in Sungai Dua and her mother is a housewife. Together with her other five siblings, Ann started helping out at her father's stall since she was in Standard Four (fourth grade). Family hardship prompted her to quit school when she was in Form One (seventh grade).

"My early 'entry' into working life trained me to be street-wise, independent and hard-working. That's why I'm able to give you guys plenty of worthy advice," said Ann, pointing her finger to David and me.

Ann started operating a tiny stall selling *leng chee kang*, a popular local dessert, in Desasiswa Cahaya (students' village Cahaya) in 1978. Three years later, she moved to the then newly-built Bakti canteen, her present location. Through balloting, Ann was allocated Gerai 11 (Stall Unit 11), which faces the "backyard" of the canteen complex - a not so good feng shui location - according to Ann.

Equipped with a 'never-say-die' attitude, Ann's survival instinct was put to work.

"I started figuring out ways to "pull" customers to my stall, knowing very well that selling *leng chee kang* (mixed nuts dessert) alone wouldn't work!" she confided.

Relating the time when she seemed to strike the right chord, Ann said, "I tried out some fresh fruit juices and some self-formulated mixed juices like sour plum with green apple, honey dew topped with vanilla ice-cream, and cendol (glutinous rice noodles in coconut milk and palm syrup). The students kept coming to my store asking for more. I then knew fairly well that I was on the right track."

Indeed, the display of the mixed drinks has become the unique branding for Ann's outlet.

"To fully utilise the space allocated, I sell fruits, canned drinks, ice-cream and popular local desserts, such as, barley- *fu-chuk* (beancurd sticks)," said Ann, her face lighting up with joy.



Ann with her husband, Khaw Tain Guan, daughter Ying Ying and son Yung Yung



Ann in a studio pose

Thirst quenchers in a myriad of colours - a unique branding for Gerai 11



## Ann's Cocktails of Life

When comparing the present to the earlier days of the university, Ann admitted that her business has become more competitive with the mushrooming of the fast food outlets and hawker centres within the vicinity of the campus. In the past, the number of small eateries outside the gates for the students to 'hang out' was limited.

In the '70s, the small campus community was closely-knit with students and staff knowing each other by names and even nicknames.

"I can still remember vividly the antics of the students back then: some were talkative, fussy and always complaining. Some were 'reserved' and didn't talk much. Later, some became lecturers. No matter what happened, I treat them as one of my 'children' and buddies till today," said Ann.

Over the years, Ann managed to create tremendous rapport with her customers. This was demonstrated during our conversation. Ann would be nodding and waving to the passers-by. Also, we have to take breaks in between our conversation because some of Ann's customers came seeking her advice. Ann entertained advice ranging from personal problems to health matters. At one juncture, a lecturer asked for Ann's 'special concoction' to cure his sore throat.

"Look at this *pudina* (mint) leaves," said Ann, pointing to a potted plant beside the sink. "It is good for curing sore-throat and cooling your body. I can boil it for you, of course, F.O.C. (free-of-charge)!"



Standing next to her older brother, Ann entertains a customer

Lee, a loyal customer and a PhD student, posing with Ann and her sister-in-law, Kim in 1995 (Photograph courtesy of Ann)



Ann (back row left) with the operators from the Bakti canteen at the Teluk Bahang Butterfly Farm in 1994 (Photograph courtesy of Ann)

Ann is ever ready to lend a helping hand, especially to the freshies whom she treated like her own children regardless of race and background.

"The biggest satisfaction is seeing the students receive the scrolls during convocation and meeting their parents on that day."

With tears welling in her eyes, Ann continued, "Some of the students have become parents and they dropped by my stall when enrolling their children. I'm happy to see this happen."

For some of her former customers who have become prominent figures in the corporate world, having a drink in Ann's stall is a must whenever they visit the campus.

Despite her busy schedule running the stall and taking care of her daughter and son, expanding the business is always on top of Ann's agenda.

"My dream is to own a fair-price eatery out there. I would like to see every customer who walks out of my place feeling satisfied and with a full stomach. But I guess I have to put that dream on hold for now because right here, the campus people still need me and my drinks."

I nodded with a smile. For sure, Ann's Gerai 11 will be around for a long time to come. As a parting item, I tried to pry from Ann some of the stories behind campus romances that she had been familiar with.

She replied firmly, "That I cannot tell you!"



Alec Chin is a designer and the founder of Timur Communication. He can be reached at [alec@timurcomm.com](mailto:alec@timurcomm.com)



" 1 Julai 1975, berlangsunglah pertandingan tinju antara Muhammad Ali dan Joe Bugner di Kuala Lumpur. Pada tarikh itu jugalah saya diminta untuk melaporkan diri sebagai Pegawai Kerja di Desasiswa B, sekarang ini dikenali sebagai Desasiswa Bakti Permai," Cik Faridah Omar mengimbau kenangan hari pertama di USM. "Saya terkejut apabila beberapa pelajar telah melanggar cermin kaca sehingga pecah semasa berpusu-pusu keluar apabila selesai menonton perlawanan itu."

Faridah yang berkelulusan Diploma in Hotel and Catering Management dari Institut Teknologi MARA (ITM), berpengalaman luas. Beliau pernah menjalani latihan di beberapa buah hotel di Kuala Lumpur, Singapura dan Pulau Pinang seperti Hotel Ambassador, Hotel Eastern & Oriental dan Century Park Sheraton. Beliau juga pernah bekerja dengan syarikat perkapalan, The China Navigation Co. Ltd.

Faridah telah mendapat tajaan Swiss Hotel Society untuk menjalani latihan praktikal selama enam bulan pada Oktober 1973 sehingga April 1974 di Hotel

Bali, Geneva, Switzerland. Sekembalinya ke Malaysia, beliau berkhidmat sebagai staf di bahagian penyediaan makanan, Sistem Penerbangan Malaysia (MAS), Kuala Lumpur.

Semasa bertugas di Desasiswa B, beliau bertanggungjawab menjaga Blok 306, 307, 308 serta Blok Klinik dan 10 buah rumah teres yang juga dijadikan tempat penginapan pelajar. Selain itu, Faridah bertanggungjawab menjaga kebersihan kantin, asrama, bilik air, bilik tetamu, bilik sembahyang dan juga kawasan di sekitar desasiswa tersebut.



# Serikandi Asrama

Nor Rafizah Md. Zain

Zamhari Ahmad  
B. Mgmt '04



Artwork by Alec Chin



## Serikandi Asrama

Pejabatnya pada masa itu adalah di kantin Blok C, berkongsi dengan Desasiswa C (sekarang dikenali sebagai Desasiswa Cahaya Gemilang) pada ketika itu penggalannya Encik Huck Tee. Selepas itu, pejabat itu telah berpindah ke Bangunan H10, bangunan asrama yang diberi gelaran 'Holiday Inn' oleh Pegawai Desasiswa B ketika itu, Tunku Dato' Dr Ismail Jewa dan staf pentadbiran asrama.

"Walaupun beliau mempunyai banyak tugas dan bertanggungjawab menjaga Hilton, Holiday Inn dan 11 gerai di kantin Desasiswa B, beliau tidak banyak membantah dan menjalankannya dengan penuh dedikasi," jelas Tunku. "Tugas beliau adalah memantau para pelajar yang pulang lewat ke desasiswa, membuat 'spot-check' di desasiswa bagi memastikan tiada pelajar yang *squatting* dan memantau para pekerja blok desasiswa yang lain serta pengusaha kantin. Sekiranya ada perkara yang tidak diingini berlaku beliau akan terus melaporkan kepada saya," tambah beliau lagi.

"Faridah tegas dalam hal-hal berkaitan pengurusan desasiswa. Apabila ada cadangan untuk menempatkan pelajar lelaki dan perempuan di Hilton, beliau tidak bersetuju. Beliau berpendapat ini akan menimbulkan pelbagai masalah disiplin dalam kalangan pelajar," sambung Tunku.

"Ketegasan saya dalam menjalankan tugas bukanlah untuk menunjukkan kuasa dan kepentingan saya, tapi ini adalah untuk kepentingan dan keselesaan pengguna serta penghuni desasiswa tersebut," kata Faridah.

"Begitulah juga dengan Tan Sri Hamzah Sendut yang tegas ketika menjadi Naib Canselor. Beliau prihatin tentang kebersihan dan keceriaan di desasiswa. Jika terdapat pelajar menyidai pakaian di tangga dan jendela, beliau akan terus melaporkan kepada Encik Fong Yee Chye. Jadi, sebelum beliau menegur, saya akan mengambil tindakan terlebih dahulu," katanya.

Faridah juga pernah berkhidmat sebagai Penolong Pengurus Rumah Tetamu dari tahun 1985 hingga 1990. Mengikut Faridah, "Semasa bertugas di Rumah Tetamu, pelbagai majlis besar telah dilangsungkan seperti penggambaran filem *Ali Setan*, Majlis

Perkahwinan Encik Noor Rizan Khalid (Pengarah Keselamatan di USM sekarang), dan perkahwinan anak mantan Naib Canselor, Tun Hamdan Sheikh Tahir."

"Di samping itu, Rumah Tetamu juga menjadi tempat penginapan ahli rombongan Di Raja Perlis dan Perak, serta tetamu dalam dan luar negara," beliau menambah.

Menurut Dato' Noel A. Ogle, mantan Pendaftar, "Saya mengharapkan semua staf setegas Faridah, tetapi ketegasan beliau tidak disenangi oleh

Bersama staf Desasiswa B pada tahun 1983



Di bilik Rumah Tetamu dengan penyanyi Sheila Majid semasa penggambaran Ali Setan pada tahun 1984



Bersama pelajar-pelajar dari luar negara





Serikandi Asrama



Aktiviti bersama pelajar di Tasik Kenyir, Terengganu

sebahagian pekerja dan mereka membuat aduan kepada saya. Saya percaya dan yakin beliau mampu memberikan khidmat yang cemerlang serta menyediakan kemudahan-kemudahan yang bersih dan selesa di Rumah Tetamu. Di samping itu, beliau juga telah memastikan makanan yang disediakan baik dan sedap, serta bilik-bilik kemas menanti penghuninya."

Semasa Unit Perumahan dan Penginapan Universiti (UPPU) mula diwujudkan, Faridah telah diberi kepercayaan untuk menjadi Penolong Pengurus Asrama Kanan untuk mengurus unit tersebut. Di sini, beliau berdepan pula dengan cabaran baru. Beliau dikehendaki menguruskan kesemua 48 gerai kantin, farmasi dan kedai di Pusat Pelajar. Beliau juga bertanggungjawab untuk menjaga lebih kurang 60 unit di Rumah Antarabangsa serta Rumah Keluarga.

Di dalam ketegasan dan sifat 'garang' beliau semasa berurusan dengan pelajar dan pengusaha kantin, beliau juga seorang yang cepat mesra dan mudah untuk bekerjasama. Kenyataan ini disokong oleh Tuan Haji Mohd Pisol yang beranggapan, bahawa Cik Faridah seorang yang komited, tegas dan berilmu dalam menjalankan tugasnya. Di samping itu, beliau juga merupakan seorang yang baik budi bahasa dan bertimbang rasa semasa melayani kerendah pelajar dan pelanggan yang lain.

Menurut rakan sekerja Faridah semasa di Desasiswa B, Yeoh Guan Hoo dan isteri, Yeap Bee Luan, "Saya kenal beliau semasa mula bekerja di Desasiswa B iaitu pada tahun 1977. Beliau seorang yang mudah

bekerjasama dan sangat tekun dalam menjalankan tugas serta sanggup kerja lebih masa hanya untuk memantau kegiatan pelajar dan menyelesaikan masalah yang dihadapi," katanya apabila ditanya mengenai Faridah.

Sebagai seorang staf yang amanah dan komited dengan tanggungjawab yang diberi, sumbangan beliau kepada USM tidaklah ternilai. Kata beliau "Walaupun tidak menerima pendapatan yang lumayan tetapi niat, semangat berkhidmat serta sayang kepada USM adalah kuat."

Kini, setelah bersara wajib, perkhidmatan beliau terus diperlukan. Beliau kini berkhidmat sebagai kerani kontrak di Institut Pengajian Siswazah. "Setelah ibu dan bapa saya kembali ke Rahmatullah pada tahun 2003 dan 2004, saya terus bekerja untuk mengisi kekosongan masa saya. Saya sangat terhutang budi dan berterima kasih kepada kedua ibu bapa saya yang telah memberi dorongan dan semangat untuk saya berkhidmat dengan jitu kepada USM serta memahami kedudukan saya sebagai seorang staf yang perlu bekerja tanpa mengira waktu. Semoga Allah S.W.T. mencucuri rahmat kepada kedua ibu bapa yang membesarkan dan sentiasa berdoa untuk kejayaan saya," harapan beliau.

Semasa menerima Diploma di ITM pada tahun 1972

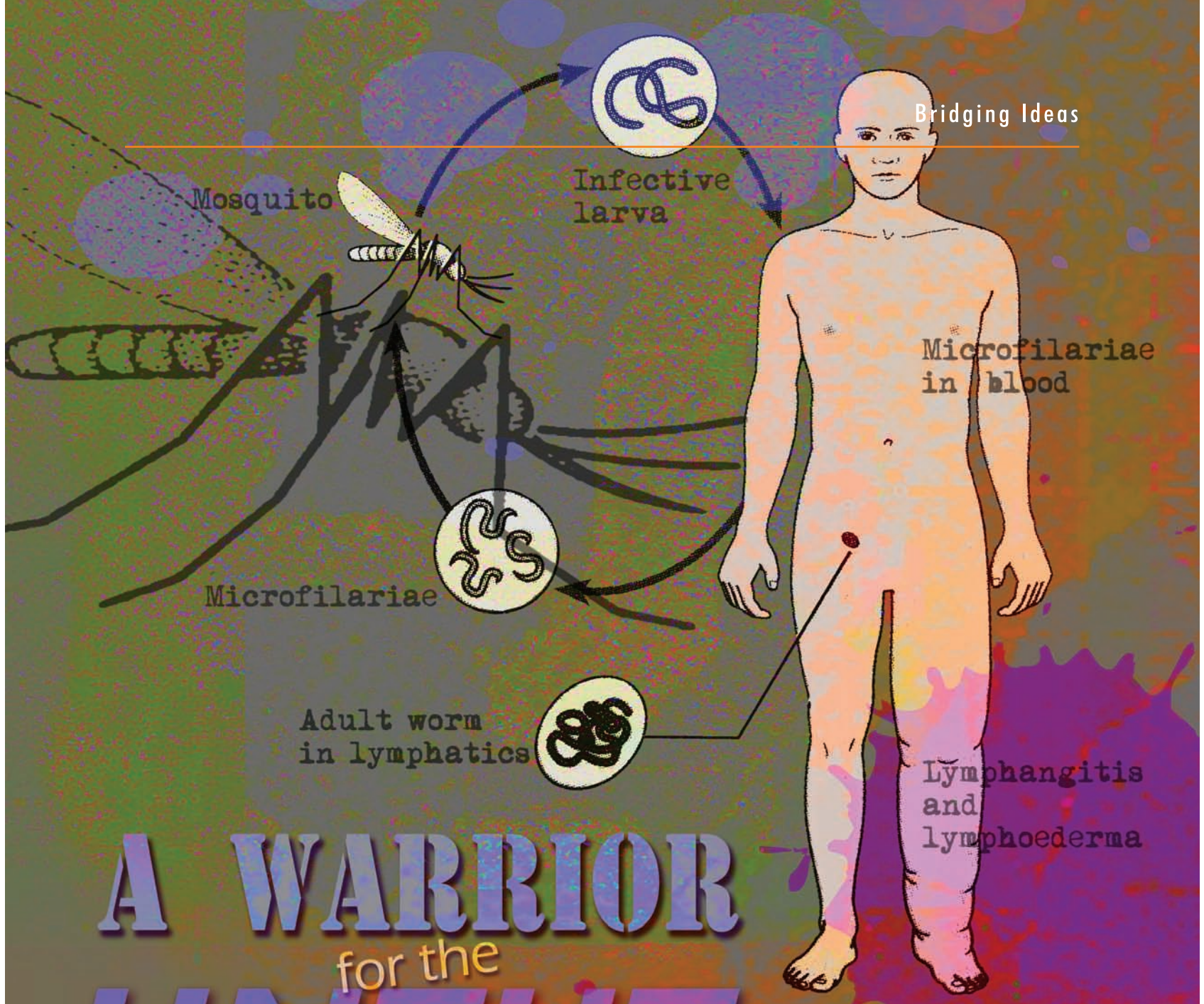


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# A WARRIOR for the UNTUT

Artwork by Rusly Jamaludin

Yong Check Yoon  
Photographs by Rusly Jamaludin



A Warrior For The **UNTUT**

About 120 million people worldwide have this debilitating disease characterised by oversized limbs, especially the legs, hence earning its name elephantiasis. Another commonly affected area is the genitals. The disease put some 1.1 billion people at risk of this infection in 83 countries. Considering the 120 million people suffering from this disease, we can imagine a population as large as that of Japan or one that is almost five times that of Malaysia who are afflicted by this woe.

Looking through a microscope, the larvae of the parasitic worms appear like a mass of short strands of thread. Harmless as they seem, the adult stages of the worms which reside in the lymph nodes and lymphatics of humans are the cause of *untut*, the Malay name for elephantiasis. An infectious tropical disease caused by any one of the three species of thread-like parasitic worms transmitted by mosquitoes, it thickens the skin and the tissues beneath the affected part.

Elephantiasis is only one of the many symptoms of the parasitic infection. Unfortunately, people tend to associate the infection with elephantiasis because it is the most outstanding feature of the disease lymphatic filariasis. Tragically, the manifestation of this symptom also signifies the point when the use of drug to kill the parasite may no longer help.

These parasites are like some stealthy invaders concealed in the bodies of their victims, growing yet evading detection, sporadically emerging into the blood stream in the evenings. Thus, should there be any attempt to detect their presence, it will be in the evenings with the need of a drop of blood. Even then, their detection has traditionally been a problem until Professor Rahmah Noordin produced diagnostic tools that can detect the parasites at an early stage. It was clearly a breakthrough.

Rahmah's interest in the disease started in 1993 when she became a lecturer at USM's School of Medical Sciences (SMS).

Professor Rahmah Noordin



A Warrior For The **UNTUT**

The leg of a person affected by **untut** as appeared in **Berita Harian** 15 April 2008

Diagnostic kits for Lymphatic Filariasis

"I chose to research on the disease because the diagnosis of the disease then was still not satisfactory and the area for which the disease was present in Kelantan and Terengganu was not far from SMS," said Rahmah.

To address the lack of a good diagnostic tool, research in this area was initiated in 1993 and it culminated in the development of a rapid diagnostic kit for the detection of one of the three species, *brugian filariasis*. This world-first commercialised kit requires a blood test to be done. The test proves to be highly sensitive and accurate. It can be performed with finger-prick blood sample taken at any time of the day and the results be known within 15-20 minutes.

Such a diagnostic tool came at the opportune time as subsequently, in 1998, the World Health Organization (WHO) initiated the Global Programme for Elimination of Lymphatic Filariasis. Battle lines were drawn and the target for global eradication of the disease is 2020, whereas in Malaysia, a country with fewer cases, by 2013.



Diagnostic kits to test for the presence of *brugian filariasis* parasites

"This tool made it possible to accurately map the areas of the disease most rampant so that it can be monitored even after it is said to have been eliminated," said Rahmah.

The diagnostic kit has since been used by *brugian filariasis* endemic countries which include Malaysia, Indonesia, India and South Korea.

"To date, we have also successfully produced diagnostic kits for other species of these thread-like parasitic worms," she added. Rahmah is currently the Deputy Director (Innovation, Technology and Business Development) of the Institute for Research in Molecular Medicine (INFORMM).

She noted that it is pertinent to detect and treat the disease early before elephantiasis (caused by the obstruction of the lymphatic vessels in the body) sets in. Otherwise, the drug used to treat the disease may no longer be effective and surgical interventions may be needed. Rahmah's inventions have brought refreshing hope in defeating the disease.



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What has ecology to do with feminism? There is much that we can ponder upon, especially the terms that we so often see: 'mother nature' and 'nature' being referred to with the pronoun 'she'.

First introduced by French feminist Françoise d'Eaubonne in 1974, eco-feminism went on to challenge western dualism theory that expounds conflicting coexistence. What it means is, when there is domination there is subordination. This is applicable to male/female, reason/nature, self/other, and master/slave. Each of these pairs is diametrically different yet complementary.

In 'dualism' we often assign one of the elements in the pair as being more superior than the other and this will inevitably dismiss its other element as irrelevant and inferior. In trying to understand this phenomenon, we shall keep the man/woman pair in focus.

# Equally a Steward

Hamoon Khelghat Doost  
B. A. '07

Photographs courtesy of Women's  
Development Research Centre (KANITA), USM



It is common in many parts of the world that a housewife's crucial role in supporting and easing her husband's life outside of the home is ignored and overlooked. Often there is no value tagged to the work of a housewife. She is not legally protected as in other jobs which might even be unionised.

Just as women's contribution has been disregarded, nature has similarly been sidelined, despite human dependency on the planet and its resources. In both cases, women and nature are condemned to the background in contrast to men who are centre-staged. Throughout history, women were more often perceived as being emotional and irrational in comparison to men who are seen as representatives of rationality and wisdom. This perception has resulted in an oppressive approach towards women.

Similarly there appears to be an association between women and oppression as claimed by some eco-feminists. We have heard of phrases such as 'raping the land' and 'taming nature' which when associated with the pronoun 'she', gives a perception of the land as susceptible to 'rape' and as 'wild'. It is therefore not as 'complementary' as it appears to be but has more complicated links.

Eco-feminism is not a word just out from the mint because it is based on an ancient wisdom affiliating to this school of thought. It can be defined as a common platform where ecology and feminism meet and merge. The core theme of eco-feminism is to demonstrate the associations between the oppression of women and the exploitation of nature that have been taking place since the dawn of history. In the search for this connection, eco-feminism resists traditional male-biased dominating ideas, theories and practices on nature and human beings.



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# B10

## a site to BEHOLD

Text and Photographs by Rusly Jamaludin

Bungalow is a derivative of the Hindi word for 'bangalah' which means Bengalese house. Locally the term was originally introduced by the British who popularised this building typology especially in the first quarter of the 20th century referred to it as a detached single family residence set in large compounds, which provide privacy and space.

Artwork by Rusly Jamaludin

B10



If there is one bungalow in the campus that captures the spirit of tranquility, B10 would be it. Secluded yet always familiar, the impassive white-washed building has its special charms and modesty of origins.

B10 is instantly identifiable by its stout silhouette, snuggling in a calm cul-de-sac amid lush wooded site of *Lorong Pegawai* where silence is broken only by the shrill calls of *riang-riang* (cicadas), insects and birds. It is here in the traffic-free surroundings that the restful haven and mother-nature synchronise to a perfect pitch.

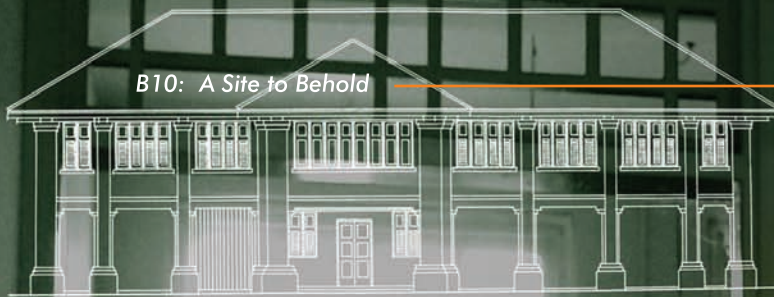
This cool hideaway in a green refuge is one of the campus' oldest 1938 bungalows. The architecture and compound fuse a touch of romantic 'Englishness' and the Malay vernacular charm.

The seventy year-old property was originally a British army officers' quarters during the Minden barrack era. B10 is currently the residence of Director of Security Noor Rizan Khalid and his family.

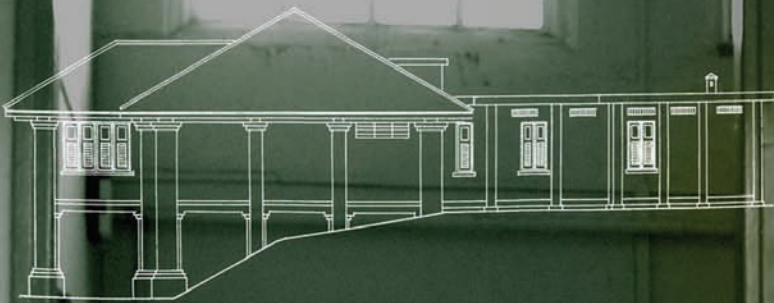
*On the northwestern edge of Lorong Pegawai, B10 overlooks the green valleys with an enduring appeal unlike any other buildings in the campus*



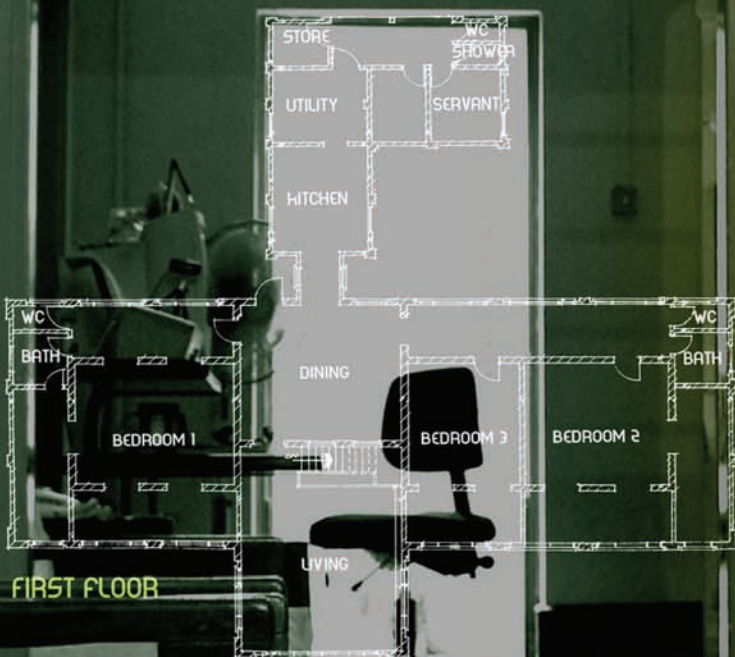
B10: A Site to Behold



FRONT ELEVATION



SIDE ELEVATION



FIRST FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR

The building speaks of those colonial days; the front is dominated by *porte-cochere*, a huge porch under which carriages could drop-off their occupants and protect them from the elements. Although the *porte-cochere* is faintly reminiscent of European 'baronial' style, it is informal and novel in its organization, intimately akin to an *anjung* (Malay term for 'porch') and it exudes a confidence of purpose that is rare these days. One is immediately drawn to this *porte-cochere* which makes one want to see what is inside and what it has to offer.

The modestly sized gross floor area of 3,660 square feet, B10 has a great deal more character than its solid appearance may suggest. The building was specially designed to blend into the slope of a hilly landscape, built with an elevated floor structure assimilating the vernacular Malay stilt house. It has an asymmetrical elegance on the frontal elevation and stands imposingly on its enormous concrete *pilotis* or pillars, further rendering the illusion that it is floating over the landscape.

A view into the spacious and well ventilated dining-kitchen from the pantry

The point of entry to the bungalow is literally through a *kolong* (the underside of the building in a Malay house). Built into the *kolong*, a garage adds another functional element to the building as it is perfectly weatherproof. As one enters through the *kolong* vestibule (a small enclosed entrance hall between the outer door and the interior of the building), the L-shaped staircase brings a visitor upstairs to the centre living space. The numerous wooden jalousied windows (with adjustable shutters) allow natural light to flood into this high-ceiling convivial space. It has an open, bright and airy ambience of a *serambi* (living room) in a *kampung* house. Cross-ventilation is pleasantly achieved by the open planning and spatial arrangement. Most of the spaces open out to the vista of silent valleys clothed in the richest green where the land undulates north-westward.



## Sustaining Heritage

### B10: A Site to Behold



The surviving squat water closet, one of the design triumphs of its day

The formal living room is cooled by cross-breezes with draped windows opening to the greenery, home to many birds and insects



The warm and inviting 'porte cochere', 'kolong', wooden shuttered windows exude an atmosphere that exemplifies English luxury and the kampung elegance



A doorless opening from the dining area overlooking the formal living room



"Bare is beautiful" is a maxim befitting these white walls which give the superior bedroom its monastic air

B10 is one of those few abodes in the campus with a world of calm and repose at its most enviable. The eloquent silence appears to arise from a subtle rapport between interior and exterior, engaging the five senses all at once: all rooms open wide to the ever-changing moods of the natural surroundings, the smell of humidity, the taste and feel of coolness are indeed restful.

Noor Rizan's nineteen years of tenancy proved that B10 is never just an idyllic abode.

"I've been here so long that I often feel this is like my real home in *kampung*. For me, B10 is still an ideal panacea for relief and retreat," he remarked.

Noor Rizan explained, "The quaint austere interiors provide two lofty superior (with full-height wardrobe and en suite bathroom) and one deluxe bedrooms with plenty of living space - an arrangement which is unusual but very practical. The dining and kitchen areas enjoy direct access to the backyard garden and the ever-present Birds' Sanctuary loom in full. In the early morning it may be like listening to a jungle orchestra tuning up."

Not surprisingly, B10 had been designed by an anonymous military engineer with an eye for the beautiful 'symphony' of building and nature. The elements of a graceful marriage of English and traditional Malay concept are proven again unpretentiously yet sensual and beautiful in its rationality. Indeed the '*kampung* wisdom' is no less transcendental. It unequivocally imparts vital lessons, today and always.

### B10 Occupancy

1938-1969	British Army Officers' Residence
1971-1974	Ir. Foong Yee Chye, Director of Development Office, USM
1975-1982	Major Othman Abdul Kader, Director of Security, USM
1982-1989	Hj. Che Dan Ahmad, Director of Security, USM
1989-present	Noor Rizan Khalid, Director of Security, USM



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# THE ROAD TO BURMAH

Yong Check Yoon

Photographs by Rusly Jamaludin

There is no spelling error in the street or place names in this article. I have adhered to the old spelling of these to reflect the time-frame we are going to delve into ... experiencing a 'time travel' back into the period between 1786 and mid-19th century.

Burmah Road is steeped in history as we unravel the fascinating facts about the road that has long been associated with the selling of drinking water. As with most streets, Burmah Road has been added on in the map and it is like a chapter of a history book that tell a story of the bygone years. In fact, the 3.7 km-long road - one of the longest on the island - has a mosque called "Mesjid Tarek Ayer" (literal: Water Pulling Mosque) to bear testimony of the 'water pulling' activity.

Built in 1880, this mosque was a replacement of an earlier surau located in a village named *Kampong Tarek Ayer*. This village has been obliterated by development, leaving only the mosque to remind us of one important chapter in history.

Before piped water was available, water was collected from the Penang waterfall (at the Botanic Gardens) and was transported by bullock carts to sell in the area of *Kampong Tarek Ayer*. It is from this activity that both the village

Artwork by Rusly Jamaludin

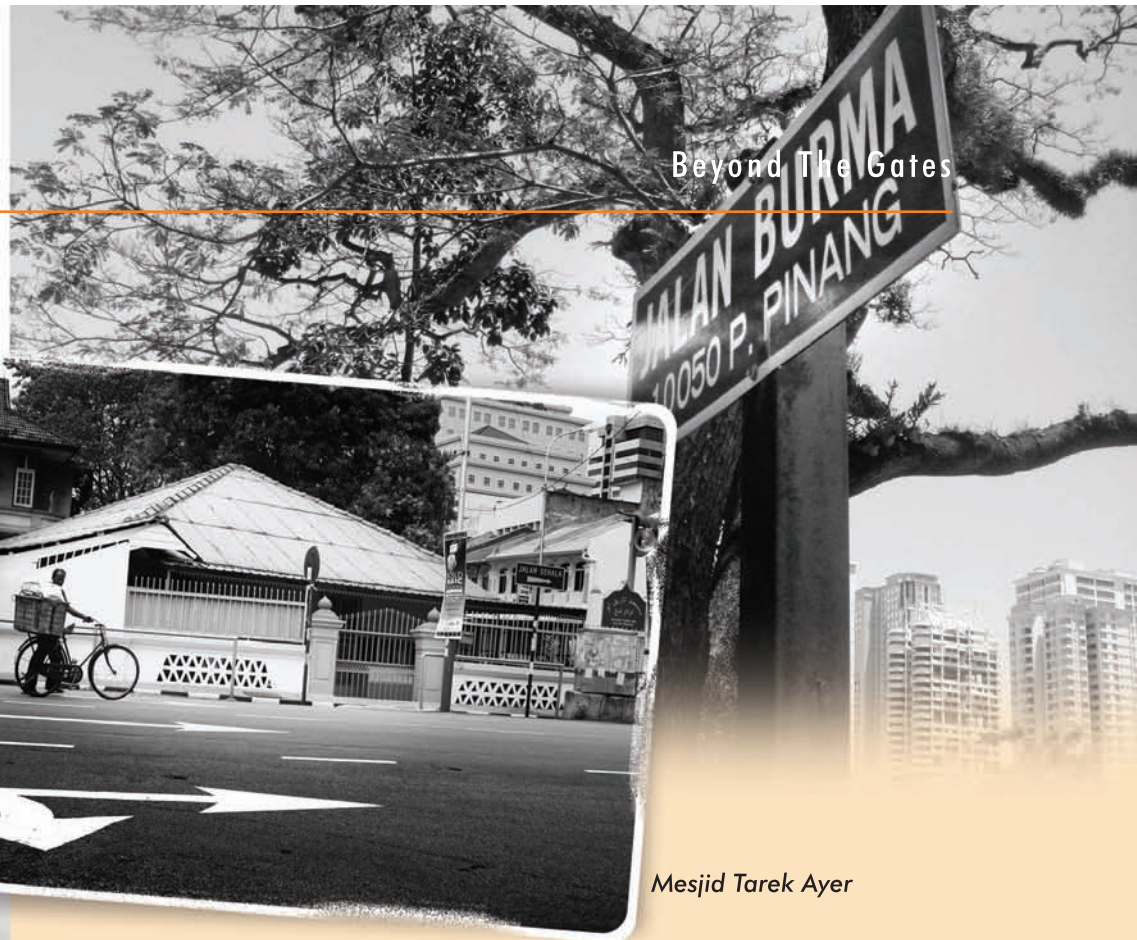


Above: Two old picture postcards of Burmah Road





The Road to Burmah



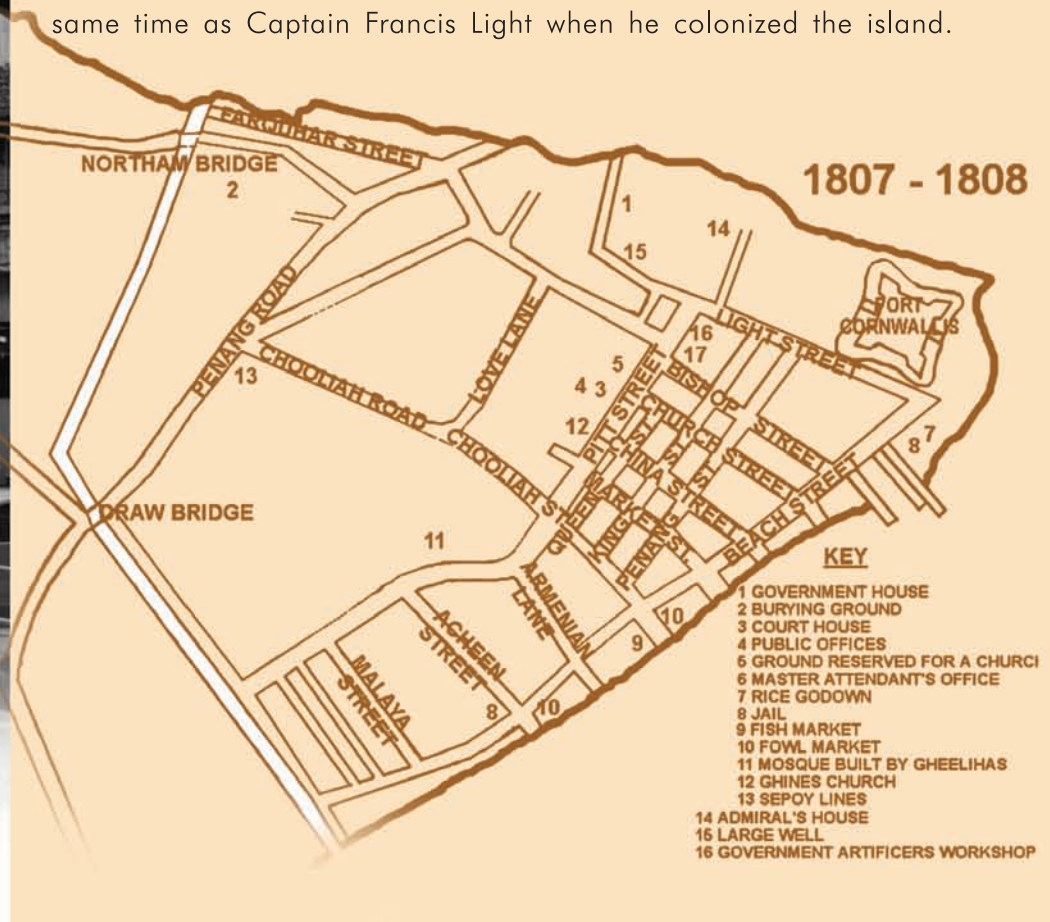
Mesjid Tarek Ayer

and its mosque got their names. This is also reflected in the Chinese name for Burmah Road: *Chia Chooi Lor* (Water Cart Road).

Although 'Burma' is the politically correct spelling today, documents dating prior to the 19th century show that the old spelling was spelt with a 'h'. Hence, the name should have been retained as 'Burmah Road' and let us remind ourselves that it is one of the earliest and longest roads around besides Perak Road. In fact the Thais and the Burmese arrived about the same time as Captain Francis Light when he colonized the island.



Mesjid Titi Papan





The oft-frequented Burmah Road mosque, established in 1893, close to the Penang Road junction has a signboard that announces *Mesjid Titi Papan* (Wooden Bridge Mosque). Although the wooden drawbridge no longer exists, indeed there was such a structure across the Prangin Ditch (or Canal as it is also known) that stretched from Weld Quay, bisecting Penang Road, traversing a short section of Burmah Road before going right along Transfer Road exiting at the North Beach. This Ditch was actually used to mark the early limits of George Town, as it was spelt before the 60s.

If we look at the early map of George Town, this Ditch literally carved the city into an 'island'. In other words, if we were to cross over to where the 65-storey Komtar now stands, we can consider ourselves as venturing into the suburbs.

One of these earliest suburbs was populated by Burmese fishermen and farmers who settled around Kampung Ava. They arrived during the time of Captain Francis Light and built the Burmese Buddhist temple in 1803. This location is now known as Burmah Lane ('Burmah' reflecting the community's country of origin).

Along the entire stretch of Burmah Road, we can find road names related to Burmah branching out from it: Salween Road, Rangoon Road, Mandalay Road, Moulmein Road, Irrawaddi Road, Burmah Lane, Burmah Cross, Burmah Crescent and Tavoy Close.

As seen in the case of Burmah Road, it clearly demonstrates the point that we cannot alter these names according to our whims and fancies because each thoroughfare, particularly the old roads, has immense historic significance. Certainly, we need to display extra caution when trying to rename roads within inner George Town since we are seeking recognition for 'heritage city' status.



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The Prangin Ditch of the past (inset) and present





Stadium

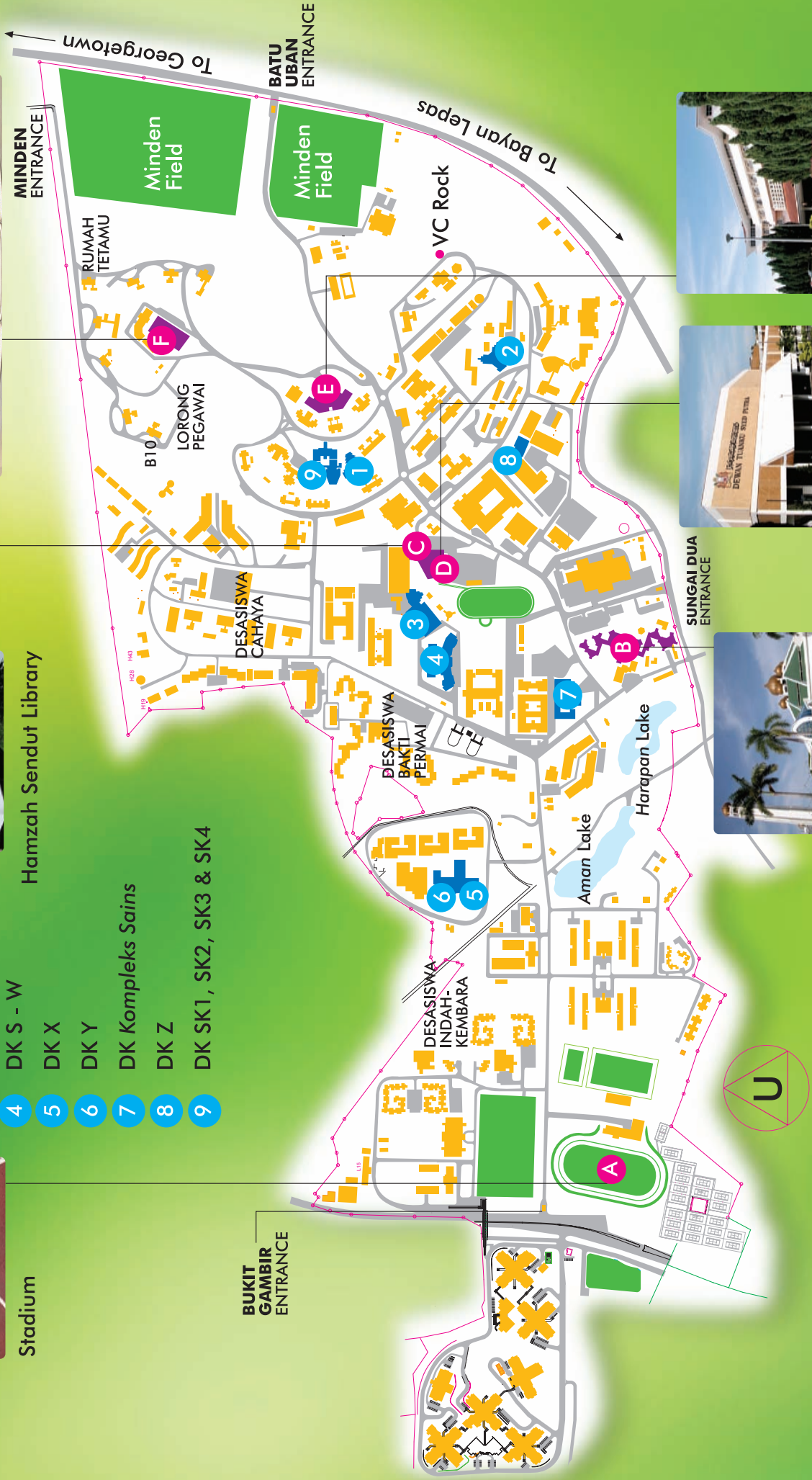
Lecture Theatres (DK)

- 1 DK A, B & C
- 2 DK D, E & F
- 3 DK G - R
- 4 DK S - W
- 5 DK X
- 6 DK Y
- 7 DK Kompleks Sains
- 8 DK Z
- 9 DK SK1, SK2, SK3 & SK4



Hamzah Sendut Library

Museum and Gallery Tuanku Fauziah



Balai Islam



Dewan Tuanku Syed Putra



Chancellory Building



RESTORAN MINAH


# Unpretentiously Minah

*Minah Restaurant* has been a household word to generations of Penangites, USM staff and students alike for its delicious halal dishes based on home-cooked recipes. Its cuisine never fail to excite the taste buds (even among the most discerning) of customers and ensures their return time and time again.

Zulkifli Osman

Photographs by  
Mohamed Talhah Idrus  
B. Soc. Sc. '74






Unpretentiously "Minah"



Beyond The Gates

From the humble beginnings of a road-side stall to being a full fledged restaurant, Minah Restaurant commenced operations in 1959 and is located along Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah about one kilometre from the USM Batu Uban gate. For almost 50 years, the restaurant is still in the same location. The restaurant is a living testament of a successful and visionary entrepreneur. Its founder, the late Mohamed Sultan Yusof was a humble and modest man who knew what his customers were looking for and how to satisfy their palate without hurting too much on the pocket. The restaurant was named after Ahminah Bee (hence Minah), his second daughter and she ran the business with the support of husband, Abu Bakar Merican who was an English language teacher. Apart from USM and the Minden Heights community, it is a common sight to see top expatriates of multinational companies, located in the nearby Free Trade Zone, together with local staff sampling the dishes at the restaurant and in the process getting flushed in the faces and perspiring due to the spicy curry. No many can resist *ayam goreng*, *kurma kambing*, *pasembor*, and *kepala ikan* at Minah Restaurant!



Mak Minah (as Minah was fondly called) during her younger days, would personally supervise the preparation and serving of food and was a force to be reckoned with. No one was spared of her tongue-lashing, not even her own siblings, if things were not done according to her ways and quality standards. Her own children as well as staff had learned well from her and some of them, in their own right, have moved on to open eateries elsewhere which are well received by the locals.

Minah Restaurant caters not only for walk-in customers but also provides door-to-door deliveries for those

finding it more convenient to cater their meals. Some of Minah's longest serving customers are over 30 years. It is a sight to behold when Nasir, one of Ahminah Bee and Abu Bakar Merican's son, makes his daily deliveries. He mirrored his father in stature and self-confidence. He used to wear khaki short pants and knee length stockings, resembling the former Royal Australian Air Force staff at the Butterworth Airbase. With his usual warm smile and customary greeting at the house gate, he would walk in carrying the tiffin carriers and chatting away. The common topic being the soccer matches on Astro television the night before. One wonders how he gets up early in the morning for his marketing chores when he is up all night watching the live telecast.

One thing certain is that he is never short of pleasantries eventhough he has been making the rounds for years. This is an example of how well Pak has taught his children. If we read books on the success story of Toyota, Honda and Starbuck, we should write a book on the success of Minah and its service to customers.

Minah has served us and the community well over the years and there are no 'let ups' (disappointed customers) even to this day. It has become a household word among many of us especially when our thoughts turn to *makan-makan* (food).



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### ICT Week

The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Week, *Enovate 2008*, was organised by the Centre for Knowledge, Communication and Technology and held in the Minden Campus on 24-28 March. *Enovate 2008* was aimed at updating the campus community and public on the latest developments in Information Technology including challenges facing the ICT industry. Ten ICT conglomerates participated in information sharing through a series of seminars to interested staff and students of USM and other institutions of higher learning in the vicinity.



Photograph by Mohd Fairus Md Isa

### Brain Awareness Week

In conjunction with the World Brain Awareness Week 2008, USM lined up a series of activities for the public from 22-27 March. The programme involved talks on brain functions and the mind, a book exhibition and an invitation to students in Pulau Pinang to attend a game show, Young Neurology Scientist Programme. USM proposed the setting up of a Neuroscience Research Centre which can make early detection of human brain disorders by using the Ultra High Field (UHF) Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) 7 Tesla (7T). Malaysia's first *angkasawan* (space traveller) Dr Sheikh Muszaphar Shukor rounded up the week addressing an interested audience on "Brain in Space: Our New Frontier".



Photograph by Mohd Fairus Md Isa

### Sanggar Sanjung (Hall of Fame)

Held on 21 March at Hotel Equatorial, the annual Sanggar Sanjung Gala Night was graced by Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Ibni Al-Marhum Tuanku Syed Putra Jamalullail, Raja of Perlis (who is also the USM Chancellor) and his consort. Dignitaries and staff of the university also attended the event to honour the 45 staff members recognised for their outstanding contributions and achievements.



Photograph by Mohd Fairus Md Isa

### Alumni USM 12<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The USM 12<sup>th</sup> AGM was attended by about 35 members on 17 March at the Lecture Theatre 'A'. Among the list of Alumni activities planned for the year are the hosting of an 'English Camp' in May and a motivational seminar for PMR/SPM students in June.



Photograph courtesy of Centre for Instructional Technology and Multimedia (PTPM), USM





Photograph by Mohd Fairus Md Isa

### Inaugural March Convocation

In view of the increasing number of higher degree graduates, the University held a convocation in March for the first time, in addition to the annual convocation traditionally held in August. The 37<sup>th</sup> Convocation was held on 22 March with 737 students receiving their scrolls from the Chancellor. The ceremony was no less grandiose with the graduates resplendent in their robes. A smaller scale Pesta Konvo was also held. Professor Datuk Dr Mazlan Othman, Director, United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs was conferred an honorary Doctor of Science for developing the national space exploration programme.

### Oral history

Penerbit (Publisher) USM plans to produce a book commemorating the University's 40th anniversary. In conjunction with that, it is organising a series of oral history, at Taman Buku (The Book Garden) beginning with two retired senior staff, Dato' N.A. Ogle (first Registrar) on 26 February and Dato' Dr Sharom Ahmat (first Deputy Vice Chancellor) on 2 April. On 29 April, Mr K. Manoharan (Soc. Sc. '73), Associate Professor Mohamed Talhah Idrus (Soc. Sc. '74) and Dr Hamima Dona Mustafa (Humanities '73) participated in the third session of the series. As three of the earliest to register at the University of Pulau Pinang (the former name of USM) they narrated their experiences before an audience of 80 staff members and students.



Photograph by Yong Check Yoon

## Minden Diaries 2008

	Date	Activity	Venue
JUNE - JULY	18-20 June	Second USM Penang International Postgraduate Convention	Main Campus
	29 June-6 July	New undergraduate intake orientation for academic session 2008/09	All Campuses
	14 July	A Talk by Datuk Seri Idris Jala, CEO Malaysia Airlines System	Main Campus
AUGUST	14-17 August	38 <sup>th</sup> USM Convocation	All Campuses
OCTOBER	10-12 October	Alumni Conference for Excellence 2008 (ACE '08)	Parkroyal Penang

For details, kindly contact Mr Helmi Samsudin, Assistant Registrar of Students Affairs and Development at 04-653 3103.





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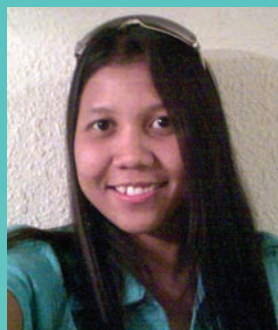
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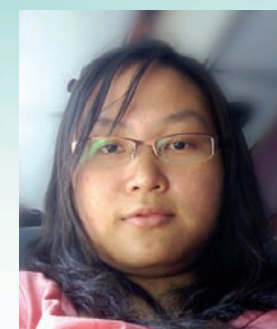
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Ah Hock, the beach house supervisor

# Thank You

The Leader appreciates Datuk Tan Bin Sin's generosity for accommodating the team at his Batu Rakit house to complete this issue.