

# Serdang **SUN**

A Tradition of Giving, a Culture of Bonding

UPM Alumni Magazine

*A special  
revival issue*

## Pak Rashid the Che'gu

page 6

*"He did not only challenge his students but inspired them  
to do their best, learn the practical ways..."*



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## The voice of editor

**UPM** has made a remarkable ascent towards global recognition. Thanks to the people, the alumni and friends of alumni, for they have put UPM in a good spot. Today we celebrate another milestone, UPM Alumni's excellence is captured through an Alumni magazine the "Serdang Sun". Serdang is synonym with UPM, the sun that shines on this campus now radiates and energizes not only locally, but to other countries worldwide. The Serdang Sun will bind that energy and spirit of belonging and pride of alumni to the *Alma mater*.

The UPM Alumni Office and the Alumni Association acknowledged the support of UPM Management for endorsing the name of this magazine. It is like a history moving forward. The Serdang Sun was first issued in 1951 and continued until the 1973. Today the magazine takes on a different shape and outlook, bringing news of the university, alumni, friends of the university and updates to enrich them.

As the Editor -in-Chief, it has been an uphill task from the start, but what encouraged me was the passion and the vigor of alumni, the university and the people involved, to make it possible for this magazine to hit the stand again. The launch of the maiden issue attempts to bring to you the aspiration, nostalgia and feelings of the alumni. We hope we have done justice to the readers and we welcome feedback and articles for the coming issues. Intentionally the Serdang Sun will be produced every six months and hope that this magazine will be a vibrant, enlightening and engaging alumni communication media.

**Associate Prof Dr Rohani Ibrahim**

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# *A Tradition of Giving,* a Culture of Bonding

YBM Dato Seri Syed Razlan Jamallulai (*Dip Agri, 1972*)  
President of UPM Alumni Association

Associate Prof Dr Rohani Ibrahim (*Dip Agri, 1972*)  
Director of Alumni Centre

**The** tradition of giving back to the university, makes an alumnus closely bonded to their campus, in particular for those with a deep passion for the place they once share a common experience. For UPM, the Serdang or UPM spirit has always been great and till today alumni of the yesteryears talked fondly of returning to UPM and Serdang. What compels alumni to give back to UPM, strongly embraced the sense of pride and meaning, the impact has been far greater than one would probably had anticipated, as it lives and perpetuates on.

A long standing tradition of giving in this campus was earlier captured in the motto, "To Serve and Save" of the Serdang College, later transformed to "Berilmu untuk Berbakti" and finally adopted to be "Berilmu Berbakti" or "With Knowledge We Serve" will live on through the future. In UPM, the Alumni

Association and the Alumni Center are the two distinct entities responsible to foster strong and effective alumni relations. With the mission of encouraging and fostering intellectual and emotional ties between alumni and their *Alma mater*, beside fostering alumni interest and goodwill in the university affairs, it is of the utmost importance that links with existing alumni are expanded. We seek for ways and means to ensure new alumni will return and join the rank of the senior alumni to uphold the tradition of giving and the culture of bonding to UPM. To ensure a long lasting relationship between alumni and the *Alma mater*, the university Alumni Office will continue to engage the alumni by involving them in activities and programs that would enhance UPM's excellence. This truly will make our alumni feel that they are truly contributing to their *Alma mater* and hence impart a newfound appreciation of the value of helping their beloved institution and get connected into the campus community. Such relationship will help improve communications between alumni who have previously stayed away from the *Alma mater*, offering opportunities for them to make their presence *heard, seen and felt*.



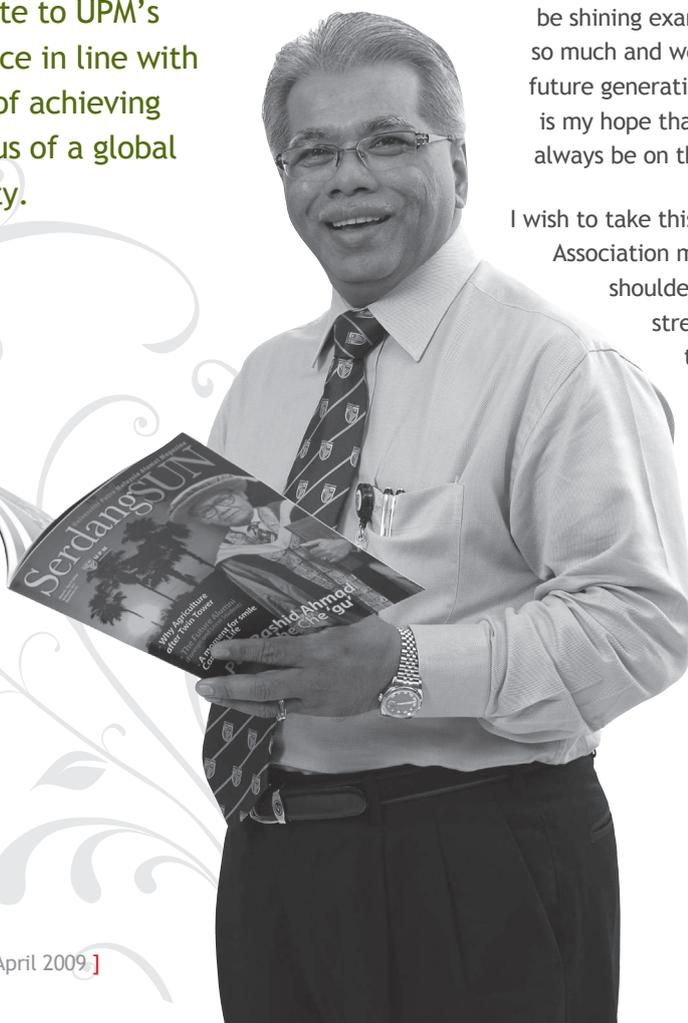
# The Serdang Sun *shines*

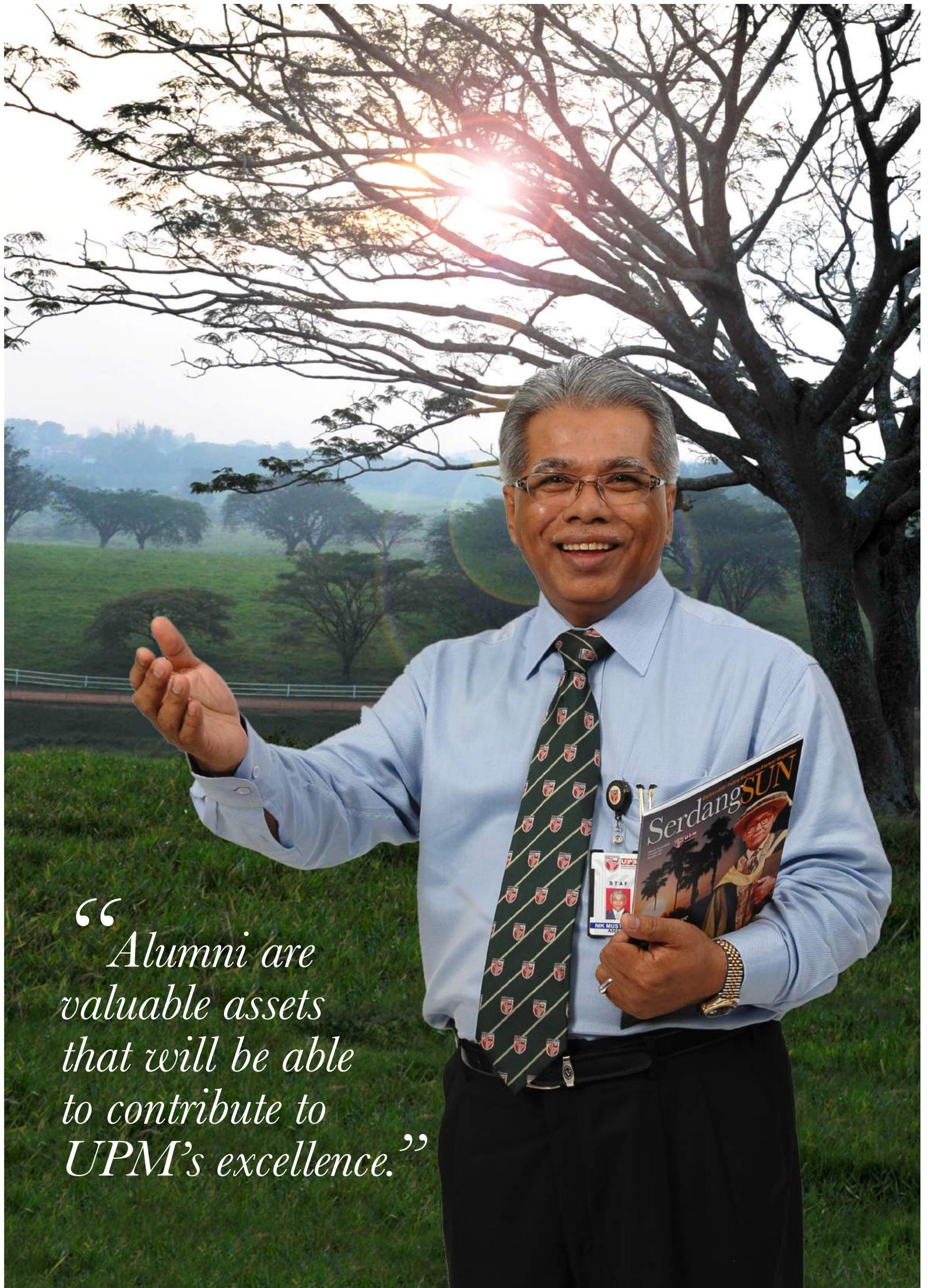
**Having** produced more than 130,000 alumni since its establishment 78 years ago, UPM stands tall today as one of the most reputed universities in the region. UPM alumni are always seen as valuable assets - assets that must be utilised by the university with the hope that this community will be able to contribute to UPM's excellence in line with its goal of achieving the status of a global university.

The UPM Alumni Association, along with our strategic partners; the UPM Alumni Centre and State Chapters, are continuously striving to provide better services. We want to create an environment that will constantly bring together our alumni and industry players to participate in activities that will help our students, who will go on to become our future alumni, to realise their dreams and visions. As an alumnus of this great university myself, it has always been my hope that I will always continue to be a part of UPM. With this end in mind, I do my best to steer UPM into becoming the best university in the region. We must stand tall and never forget that as alumni of this great establishment, we also have a huge responsibility and duty to be shining examples for all our future alumni. We have gained so much and we must not forget to give back, not only to the future generation of UPM, but also to society as a whole. It is my hope that together, we will ensure that the UPM will always be on the right track on the road to greater success.

I wish to take this opportunity to remind all UPM Alumni Association members of the heavy responsibilities they shoulder. I urge them to continuously strive to strengthen and enhance the effectiveness of the association, to reach out to all our past students and invite them to join us as part of this great, big family. Congratulations once again to each and everyone one of you and my sincere wishes for your continued success in future endeavours.

**Prof. Datuk Dr. Nik Mustapha R. Abdullah**  
(Dip Agri. 1976)





*“ Alumni are valuable assets that will be able to contribute to UPM’s excellence.”*

# Pak Rashid

• Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rohani Ibrahim (Dip Agri, 1972)

# the Che'gu

“If your student failed, then you have failed as a teacher”, was among some of the quotes of the disciplinarian at work. All students during the good old College and Agriculture University days would not forget this man, Pak Rashid or Mohd Rashid Ahmad, referred by his colleagues and friends. Che Gu Rashid in Malay which simply means teacher. He stood out among all other teachers that we had come across. He did not only challenge his students but inspired them, to do their best, learn the practical ways of doing things, be versatile, committed, and consistent when doing tasks or chores assigned to them.

As I was writing this article, the images of him driving the green mini mock, wearing his straw hat and the sound of the students shouting “Pak Rashid is here!” kept flashing in my mind. His strong, tough voice would be heard in the backdrop and the images of the students not budging from their places and getting ready to be touched by his words etched firmly in my memory.

Despite having very little personal experiences and brief encounters with Pak Rashid during my student days at the College of Agriculture, now as the Secretary of Yayasan Pak Rashid or Pak Rashid Foundation, I could recollect that whenever his name was mentioned by the seniors, he was portrayed as a real strict man. I recalled during one of my field works with my Group 10, we tried in vain to pull out the stubborn deep-rooted plant, it hardly showed any sign of coming off the ground, then as the group saw Pak Rashid approaching and heard his husky voice, the three of us somehow found our strength and pulled the bush out and to our delight the bush was uprooted. We were amazed at the impact he had upon all of us. Amazing story about how the students moved the big boulder from the field designated students share-farm were retold many times by his student, Dato Ibrahim Ahmad (Dip Agri, 1971) currently the CEO,



Dewina Food Industries. Guess what? For whatever reasons then, many of us did it and that illustrated the tremendous power he had on many of us. The question that came to our mind at that time was, Pak Rashid was strict and scolded us because we were not giving our best and trying hard enough! Until today, all I know is, if you were trained by Pak Rashid, you will never give up and you will continue to do and give your best doing any task given to you!

Hamudin, (Bac. Art, 2001), who was a driver then worked with Pak Rashid since 1978, described Pak Rashid, the Deputy Farm Director, as a very disciplined, critical, good work ethics, very practical and possessed a good work culture. He developed and demonstrated an immense self-confidence by the time he left this institution. Dr. Bahaman ( Dip Agri, 1978) remembered him as a very strict College Master, well dressed, a very serious facial expression, spoke out loud and clear, giving the look of a very fierce-looking man, but added to this outlook was his commitment and serious work culture. Bahaman would always hold to his advice of “Be consistent in your life”. He added that “This Che’ gu has left a great mark in life and I knew that he would have an everlasting impact on the lives of many of his students and staff who worked with him”.

Dr. Azahari Ismail (Dip. Agri, 1971) recalled being interviewed by Pak Rashid at The Natural Rubber Building in Ampang in 1968, when he was called as a candidate for the Guthrie Scholarship for the Diploma of Agriculture Program at the College of Agriculture, Serdang. Pak Rashid was known as the individual with many educational philosophies. Added Azahari, Pak Rashid with his strong voice said this to me "Don't be afraid to think and give opinions for a good cause". Azahari was grateful to Pak Rashid, for this great teacher constantly reminded him that student should not be afraid to speak, in whatever situation they are in, they must think ahead and never give up when faced with problems and that they should have their own judgment. Azahari strongly felt that Pak Rashid had produced many PhD's in his lifetime, through his dedications and constant reminders about working hard and that we have to be prepared to pass on the knowledge to our students and that good teachers must be prepared to eventually learn from their students. His reflection of this remarkable "Che' gu" was that Pak Rashid presence was felt and his absence was realized! UPM proudly awarded him an Honorary Degree, Doctor of Letters in 1982. For his contribution, a few buildings were named after Pak Rashid. It was not only Azahari but many of his friends and students were happy that a Foundation, Yayasan Pak Rashid was established by UPM to honour his contribution to the College and the University.

Pak Rashid was a multi-talented teacher. Interestingly, all work did not make Pak Rashid a dull Jack as he was also actively involved in performing arts. Pak Rashid was a Member of the Federal Legislative Council 1953 to 1955 and an active Honorary Secretary of the Association for Smallholders Malaysia from 1982 to 1985. If People do not remember his enthusiasm in education, they surely do remember his voice in politics. He championed "Bahasa Melayu" to be the National Language for Malaysia.

Dr Mohd Rashid Ahmad was born on August 9, 1914 in Tanjung Pagar, Singapore. After successfully completing the Senior Cambridge from Raffle's Institution Singapore in 1930 at a young age of 15, he began his career teaching at the 'Sekolah Alsagof', Singapore for four years. He then continued his studies in 1935 at the 'Sekolah Pertanian', Serdang and obtained his Diploma in Agriculture in 1937. After graduation, he became an Agriculture Assistant in the Districts of Jerantut, Temerloh and Hulu Tembeling, Department of Agriculture Pahang, where he served for ten years. Pak Rashid was known among his colleagues as a hardworking, fierce, and dedicated man but friendly 'Orang Pejabat'. His first reentry to the School of Agriculture was in 1946 where he served as a lecturer until 1955. Again in 1964 Pak Rashid came back to serve his *Alma mater* as a Farm Director until his retirement in 1969. In 1973, he returned to then Universiti Pertanian Malaysia as a Deputy Farm Director and served the university until 1977.

His philosophy 'With Knowledge We Serve' reflects his passion for agriculture as the

founder and pioneer in the establishment of Universiti Pertanian Malaysia. Pak Rashid is always remembered for his dedication towards education and character building among his students. He successfully accomplished in moulding many of his students to be disciplined, dedicated, committed, trustworthy and efficient leaders. One of Pak Rashid's many contributions to the field of agriculture was the planning and implementation of a Certificate in Agriculture for school teachers and village headmen.

Mohd Rashid Ahmad left such an extraordinary impact on everyone. We now know why our senior gentlemen and distinguished alumni like Tan Sri Dr. Rashdan Baba, Tan Sri Dr. Arshad Ayub, Tan Sri Dr. Ani Arope and Dato Dr. Mohd Noor Ismail always referred to Pak Rashid as "Che'gu" and talked of the fond memories of him as a truly great, distinguished educator and teacher.

Pak Rashid may no longer be with us but the value of his contributions lives on in the many students and staff he left behind.



# Global *Excellence*

• Dr. Nayan Kanwal ( Managing Director, RMC )

**Uni**versiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) traces its humble beginning as School of Agriculture in 1931 and has since made progress to become a research-rich multidisciplinary university in Malaysia focusing on Agro-bio and Science and Technology (S&T) with academic staffs who are global experts in their field. UPM is now at an exciting and challenging transition as it moves into being a leading global university, and has been designated as one of the country's Research Universities under the Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006-2010).

Today, UPM conducts cutting-edge research across the broadest range of disciplines of any Malaysian university. The University's research spans three broad thematic areas; agricultural and food research that encompass research from development of food production, causal agents of disease, to increased agriculture growth; science and technology that offers insights into the natural and physical world and provides innovative solutions that will underpin Malaysia's future economic prosperity; and the social sciences and humanities that seeks to cultivate a civil society through visionary research and artistic creation.

The University has managed to lead in its research funding from government as well as international sources. The University's standing as a scholarship hub, its research-intensive culture and state-of-the-art facilities continues to be strong pull factors drawing talents from all over the world to Serdang.



A robust research environment is one of UPM's core strengths. As a lively hub for local and foreign researchers, the research arena here is conducive for cultivating varied talents. The 16 faculties, various research institutes along with different centres of excellence consolidate UPM's commitment to world-class research.

UPM is focusing on adequate investments in research and development and continuous capacity building which include infrastructure and human resource development. The University has established excellent research support facilities across the campus and is vitally connected to the global knowledge community. As a nurturing waterway preparing its graduates to thrive in the ocean of opportunity, UPM seeks to foster a global mindset. Building global partnerships and networking internationally, UPM makes the world its hinterland.

The university has made further inroads into the global arena. Global standards and norms became the University's watch word. International engagement took on an intensity altering the physical, cultural and intellectual landscape of the campus to a microcosm of an increasingly globalised world. The University has established synergistic partnerships with universities worldwide and taken on strategic roles in global linkages that will now bring a wealth of educational, research and entrepreneurial opportunities for the University.

Highly trained staff is UPM's greatest asset. The university has large pool of highly-trained academic staff with vast experience in teaching, research and professional services. UPM currently has 1,349 lecturers out of which 944 (70%) are PhD holders, of which there are 165 professors. In addition, UPM scientists have won numerous prestigious awards and accolades both nationally and internationally at world's leading R&D exhibitions.

The University saw the emergence of various research outputs. Research products to be patented soared from 65 in 2006 to about 160 this year indicative of further enhancing the position of UPM as a centre of R&D. UPM has 27 patents, 16 commercialised products and 34 trademarks.

In a nutshell, UPM is certainly leaping forward in quest for global excellence. The University may have a long way to go before reaching that target, but the first step has certainly been taken.





# UPM Alumni Icon • Associate Prof Dr. Rohani Ibrahim (Dip Agri, 1972) Mohd Rashdan Baba... *The visionary*

**Tan** Sri Professor Emeritus Dr Rashdan Hj Baba, a legendary figure known to all of his students as the “Founding Father of Agriculture University of Malaysia” and was the first Vice Chancellor of Universiti Pertanian Malaysia. During his tenure at Universiti Pertanian Malaysia, nine faculties, and two academics centers were established; offering nineteen Bachelor programmes together with nine Diplomas and many other programmes both professional and advanced. Recently he celebrated his 73rd birthday at the Historical Building of UPM, the College of Agriculture building, in the same room he occupied when he first assumed the post as the principal of the College of Agriculture in 1965.

At this age when, most people are fully retired, Tan Sri Professor Emeritus Dr Rashdan Hj Baba remains busy, giving his time and ideas to organizations voluntarily such as the Pak Rashid Foundation. At home he keeps himself fit in his gymnasium and spends time reading and playing with his three loveable and bright grandchildren.

After obtaining a Grade 1 in the Senior Cambridge examination in 1954, he entered the College of Agriculture Malaya and graduated with a First Class Diploma in Agriculture. Coming from an agriculture background and fully committed to achieving

higher academic qualification, Rashdan made a decision to go for further studies abroad. He continued his studies in agronomy in the UK and graduated with a Doctor of Philosophy in Agriculture Science from the University of Leeds in July 1964. Again Rashdan won the attention of the British media who featured him in the British newspaper as “Malayan gets Leeds Degree “. Despite being offered the post of an assistant lecturer at the University of California at Davis in the United States, his commitment to be in his home country to fulfill his commitment with the Malayan sponsor was very high. He decided to return home. He became the first Malay to graduate with a PhD in agronomy. Rashdan’s passion and journey in agriculture sector continued when he was appointed the senior agronomist at the Federal Agriculture Experimental Station in Serdang, a place so close to his heart. During that time, the Principal of College of Agriculture Malaya, G.I.M Martin retired and was ready to return to England and the Government then was searching for someone to take over. It was just like a homecoming for him, being an alumnus of this prestigious agriculture college, when the government named him as the Head of the college, a post held for the first time by a Malay.

Rashdan became the Principal of the Agriculture College on 25 June 1965 at the age of 30. During his stints at this institution, he envisioned growth and even conceived the idea for a university. Among his initial move was to open opportunities to the rural Malay students to study at this college. He began to focus on strengthening the college by building a strong team of faculty members, Pak Rashid and Mohd Noor Ismail were among the first two to initiate the expansion programs both physical as well as academic. A one-year Preliminary Program was introduced to cater for those with good results but deficient in one or two subjects in the Cambridge examination. The college went all out to secure and enroll as many qualified rural students to fill up the number required for Malaysia’s Development Programme.



*“What was your aspiration when you first embarked to transform this established institution?”*

The then Deputy Prime Minister directed Rashdan to submit a report on his planning for the country’s First National Plan. With a very clear vision and confidence, encouraged by his strong team, the report was completed on time. They completed the report with a budget of RM 9,647,450. Foreseeing that the country’s growth will rely on the scientific and technical support, Rashdan embarked upon the mission to expand the training of the academic staff.

He formulated the nation’s first staff exchange programme with several international organizations such as the Ford Foundation, Canadian Industrial Development Authority, Australian Asian Vice Chancellors Cooperative Scheme and several others emphasizing on disciplines such as agriculture, food science, veterinary medicine, forestry and economics. The staff exchange programme allows Malaysian candidates to study abroad until obtaining their doctorate degrees. This scheme was absolutely successful and formed the very foundation of the establishment of an Agricultural University.

Rashdan carefully considered all aspects of professional requirement to deal with the development in the rural sector encompassing agriculture and food production, education in science and mathematics, physical education and other disciplines in humanities and Islamic studies. The three main

thrusts in his development programme for the College of Agriculture was and still is teaching, research and extension.

In May 1969, Tun Razak during the Diploma Conferment speech recommended the Agriculture College to begin offering agriculture degree program. This was followed by a memorandum to him by the Minister of Education, Honorable Hj Abdul Rahman Yaakub which stated that an agriculture university, Universiti Pertanian Malaysia was to be set up with the merger of the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Malaya and the College of Agriculture and that the university has to be located in Serdang! The year of its establishment was 1973, offering two tier programmes, diploma and degree in Agriculture, Veterinary Medicine and Forestry.

Meanwhile Rashdan was appointed to head the newly established Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia which he programmed extremely well. Serdang campus began its physical development to cater for the new university. In early 1971, Rashdan was chosen by the second Prime Minister, the late Tun Abdul Razak to lead the agriculture university in Serdang and he was officially appointed as the Vice Chancellor on 4 November 1971.

Three foundation faculties namely the Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary and Animal were set up and the founding



deans Dr Mohd Zain Karim (Agriculture) Dr Omar Abdul Rahman (Veterinary and Animal Health) and Dr Manap Ahmad (Forestry) were appointed. Additionally, important drivers to move this institution, the University's Registrar, Mr Mahmud Taib and Librarian Mr Syed Salim Agha were appointed. The first session began on 23 July 1973 with a student population of 1600, but Rashdan envisioned a population of 10,000 or more students by the Third Malaysia Plan in the 80s. All these graduates fitted extremely well in the various agriculture development sectors such as FELDA, FELCRA, RRI, KADA, KESEDAR, MADA and research organizations such as MARDI, PORIM (now MPOB) and RRI. The first Deputy Vice Chancellor was Mohd Noor Ismail, followed by Dr Nayan Ariffin and Dr Kamaruddin Kachar.

To further radiate the role of UPM, the university relaunched the new logo of UPM in 2007, with the motto "BERILMU BERBAKTI". For years UPM paved the pathways for extension work to reach

out to the farmers throughout the country with high academic and research values to support the programme. For almost two decades, to be exact 17 years, Rashdan has laid all the foundations for the only agriculture institution in the country to champion agriculture for the nation. Until today, the nation speaks proudly of UPM achievement in producing leaders in the agriculture sectors. The name change to Universiti Putra Malaysia in 1997, indeed was unexpected by those who had a strong passion for agriculture. It was assumed that the university would no longer focus on agriculture. Despite that misconception, agriculture remained supreme and the key focus in UPM in line with the aspiration of the country, being one of the engine of growth for Malaysia.

The phenomenal success of College of Agriculture and UPM did not come from Rashdan alone at the forefront. His undying spirit to help the rural poor coupled with his very able, trustworthy and highly committed team formed during his early days as the chief of the organization had made the difference. His colleagues, friends and students felt proud and fondly held Rashdan as the icon that had inspired the underprivileged to aim high and give back to the community. UPM's motto BERILMU BERBAKTI, speaks the truth for all the sons and daughters and all graduates associates of Serdang.

**UPM Alumni Association** • Dr. Yusoh Salleh ( Dip Agric, 1971 )

# historical moments

## The Formation Years of 70s

29 June 1971

### Registration of College Agriculture Alumni Association

The graduates of the College of Agriculture Malaya, officially registered the Association as "Bekas-Siswa Kolej Pertanian" with The Registrar's Office Selangor State

23 Nov 1973

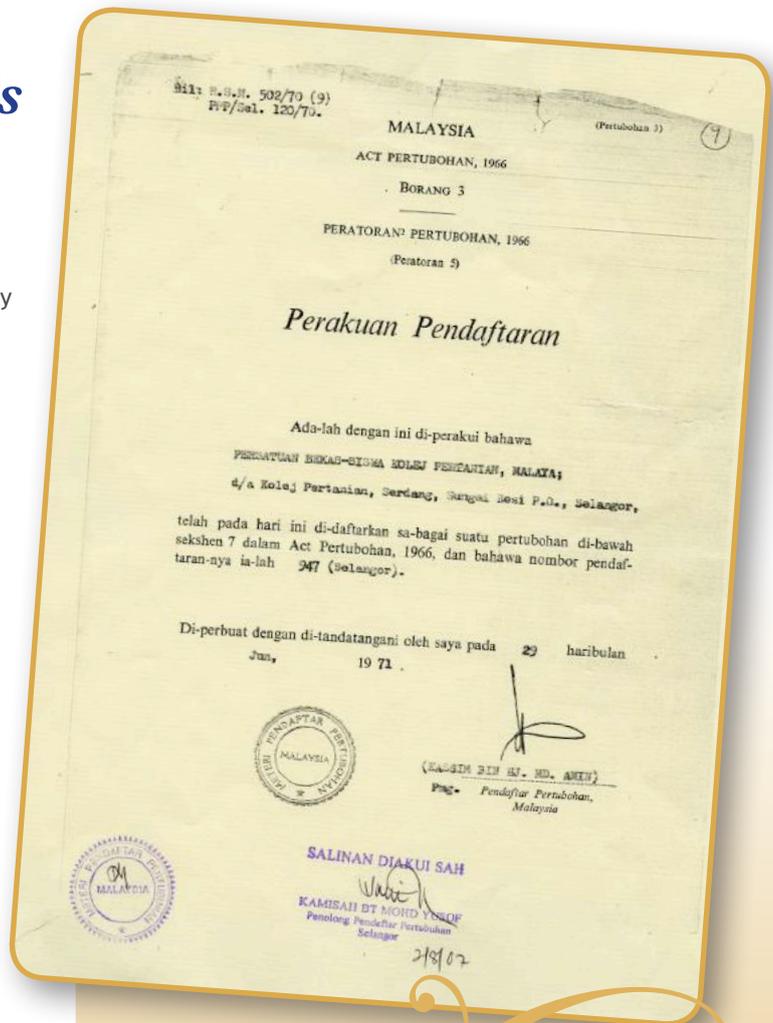
### Universiti Pertanian Malaysia Alumni Association

In line with the formation of the agriculture university, a new name adopted by the association was Persatuan Alumni Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (PAUPM), or Universiti Pertanian Malaysia Alumni Association.

1977

### UPM Alumni Gold Medal Award

PAUPM initiated and sponsored the Alumni Gold Medal Award to the best academic graduate at the Bachelor's Degree level. The award was conferred by the Chancellor during the University's convocation celebration beginning the year 1977/1978 until today. The award includes gold medal, cash and certificate of achievement.



## Serene 80s

The financial constraint and the waning support from the University led to an era void of activities during the early 80s. Pockets of activities championed by high spirited individuals committed to promoting the camaraderie among the graduating classes, helped sustain the association. The era ended with an exciting golf event at the Awana Golf Club in 1988 then in 1989, an Alumni Dinner was successfully organized in Kuala Lumpur. The dinner which somewhat revived the alumni spirit of the Serdang days, also gathered in many notable Alumni and received a renewed support from the university management.

## Revolutionary 90s

### Reaffirming Agriculture

Welcoming the era the association regained its footing when in 1990 the Association successfully organized a seminar on the Sixth Malaysia Plan deliberating on the policies and strategies of agriculture development. This allowed the Association to reposition itself through various involvements in agriculture activities related to teaching, research and extension through the agencies under the Ministry of Agriculture.

### Alumni Home Base

Other exciting happenings were seen on and off campus including golf meets and reunion activities held in Kuala Lumpur and around Selangor. To further intensify support to the alumni association, in 1993 UPM Management consented to the use of the former VC's hilltop official residence as the alumni club house.

Alumni was acknowledge as a strategic partner to UPM, thus to strengthen the alumni network for the university,

a liaison office, the Alumni Unit was established in 1999 under the purview of The Deputy Vice Chancellor of Students Affairs. The small unit was renamed the Alumni Centre in line with its core thrust to build lifelong relations with alumni and to expand the database of alumni. The Alumni Association has its office set up within the Alumni Centre on campus. The platform and support provided by the university has already made a tremendous impact on the growth of the Alumni Association.



## The Blooming 2000s

### Pak Rashid Foundation

The Association kicked off its activities with the launching of the Yayasan Pak Rashid or Pak Rashid Foundation in November 2002, an event that brought together distinguished alumni for a notable cause. A fund raising drive for the foundation was initiated and till today the Association continues to support the *Alma mater* via the foundation and participates in other UPM fund raising drive projects including the UPM Clock Tower.

### Royal Patronage

The hallmark event for the Association in 2006 was the acceptance by His Royal Highness the Chancellor of UPM to be the Fellow of Alumni Association, the highest award bestowed on Alumni.

### Membership Expansion

With resurgence of Alumni Chapters at the faculties and states, simultaneously blossoming was the special interest

groups that closely linked themselves with the association. On campus activities to enhance alumni relations such as Alumni lecture series, mentorships, alumni outreach, road shows, reunions, homecoming and golf games have become annual events. This has captured the attention of young and senior members to return and rejuvenate friendships. The tradition of giving and the culture of bonding continues to be alive.

# Agriculture after Twin Towers?

• Dr. Mad Nasir Shamsuddin ( Dip Agri, 1978)  
• Zakaria Sidek ( Associate Alumni 1982)

*(This article is the writer's personal viewpoint and do not reflect the view of Universiti Putra Malaysia)*

**The** great world civilization started with agriculture. The early civilization started from agriculture-based communities that grew to become cities and a few cities that became nation. From a nomadic life man decide to settle down because man realized that to survive and prosper one must have abundant and constant supply of food.

Soon agriculture products were so abundant that man started to trade hence port cities were established to support agriculture activities. Man soon realized that productivity have reached their maximum capacity. It dawn to man that they need machines to assist them in their agriculture activities, without which yield will stagnate. Machines need to be invented for this to happen. Hence the early machineries were one way or another associated with or used for agriculture.

Looking closer at home, Persekutuan Tanah Melayu was nothing more that an agriculture nation when we gained our independence in 1957. We became an agriculture trading nation with rubber as a major export product when our agriculture was well established. During the era of the second Prime Minister the late YAB Tun Abdul Razak, we put agriculture at the fore front. Then we have the Buku Hijau Project as one of the mean to eradicate rural poverty and ensure food sufficiency. We

soon realized that a nation cannot stay as an agriculture nation if she was to become an advanced nation. During the tenure of the previous premier YAB Tun Mahathir, the fourth Prime Minister and long after Buku Hijau, we began our road map to become an industrialized and advanced nation. Our nation put a lot of emphasis on industrialization and soon agriculture was regarded as the third engine of growth. We build superhighway, skyscrapers, magnificent new metropolitans and extensive industries to fulfill our dream. With this development, the Malaysian economy has undergone a massive transformation from an agricultural to an industrial based economy. The transformation was mainly brought about by the rapid expansion of the manufacturing sector since the 1980s. Nevertheless, the agri-food sector will continue to play its role in contributing towards national development in terms of output, employment, export earnings and food security.

Reminiscing at the history and development of Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) we see similar event unfolding. We started as a humble School of Agriculture before becoming College of Agriculture and eventually University of Agriculture. We succumbed to the demand of the nation's industrialization frenzy and soon the university's name was changed to Universiti Putra Malaysia in 1997 to reflect the multitude of disciplines and degrees offered by UPM. Agriculture however is still one of the disciplines and degree offered in UPM.

The economic downturn of 1997 jolted us from our sweet dream and realized that we suddenly have become a net importer of food when once we could produce what we need. A nation that can produce her own food has become a nation that import more food than she can produce. Our food import deficit increased from about MR4 billions in 1998 to over MR7 billions in 2005 and continued to increase since. After some soul searching we knew that this is inevitable. We suddenly have become more modern in lifestyle including our food preference and we craved for better food for our sustenance. We once survived mainly on rice and fish but now we expect milk and cheese to be available on our table, something that we do not produce in our own backyard. Suddenly agriculture became a focal point of the nation.

To cap it, when the current Prime Minister YAB Dato' Seri Abdullah delivered his 2005 Budget Speech, agriculture was





given a more prominence. It was proposed that the agriculture sector be revamped to increase income and reduce dependence on imports, particularly food. UPM meanwhile will be transformed into a centre of excellence for agriculture education to provide the skilled manpower needed for these changes. One way or another the topic of agriculture kept reappearing in the subsequent yearly budget speech and in the 2008 Budget Speech agriculture was to become one of the major sources of economic growth with a sum of MR 6.5 billion allocation.

Man will continue to progress and industrial development will always be featured prominently in our economy. What we need is not the “Buku Hijau” of the early 70’s, but a more balanced and technologically advanced agriculture that will fulfil the need of the nation and our citizen, particularly farmers. At the end of the day what a farmer really need is a technology, simple enough for him to increase his agriculture production fitting into the current marketing system and international trade requirement.

As long as man live, he will require food! Agriculture is the only solution to this need. The sector, however, faces several issues and challenges. These include ensuring adequate supply of safe and high quality food at affordable prices, labour requirement and productivity, competitiveness, private sector involvement, entrepreneurial skill, raw material supplies, and technology adoption and development. In order to sustain the development of the sector, relevant strategies need to be put forward which include providing a conducive business environment, land provision, tackling labour issues, adoption of advanced technology, environmental preservation and expanding the industrial base.

# Unbeatable Spirits

• Anas Ahmad Nasarudin ( Dip Agri, 76 • Bac. Eng, 84 )

## Serdang ANGELS

**Angels** are rarely associated with robustness, ruggedness or other aggressive attributes. Angels normally depicts kindness, beauty and the fairer forms. Hence one would wonder how on earth a rugby team be named as the Serdang Angels. In the early 70s for many incoming students familiar with the game it has always been perplexing. No one would have thought UPM then would produce a team which could match even the likes of Cobra, Royal Malaysian Air Force(Black Hawks), Sembawang Tigers and Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment (RNZIR) from Singapore.

It is unimaginable that a college team comprising mainly of boys that hardly pass the age of 20, could actually stand against the nation's senior teams. For those who went through the few years to do their diploma it would not take long to understand how this beautiful game got to be the centerpiece of the campus sporting life. There has been a lot of artistry in the Serdang Angels. There were names like Ahmad Kamal Abdullah, Osman Atil, Zol Jang Klawang, Mat Grumal, Khalid Hassan, Ridzuan, Mat Giant and Ghaffar Bond. Through the 70s these were the names that graced the rugby pitches in the Klang Valley.

UPM Rugby began in the early days of its initial entity, Serdang College. It was reported that through 1957 to 1971, apart from soccer, rugby gained popularity and mass support of the campus residents. In 1959 the college team joined the nation's most prestigious annual competition, the Selangor Rugby league. Perhaps the team may have received its biggest boost in 1964 when it was managed and coached by D.M. Ellison, a staff member who happened to be a New Zealand *All Blacks* enthusiast.

The momentum was carried through to the 80s when the Serdang Angels ruled the intervarsity derbies, and like the talents in the 70s, the national team was fed with the bests from Serdang. The University Malaya *Varsity Blues*, UTM *Lions* and UTM *Tech Pirates* often provided fierce resistance but only to be subdued by the Angels by the time the last whistle is blown. Shafri Rejab, Wajidi and Halim kicked the ball, termed *pun*, higher and farther than other *flyhalves* in the country. Fakhrun and Jimmy ran into, and through, the most solid defenses as if they were cheetahs.

The student supporters have been the source of inspiration to the team. It was reported that whenever the team appeared to be on the verge of losing, the girls brigade will be rushed to the rugby field to 'uplift' the spirit of the players. When the girls were there cheering, an angel would not even care if he 'tears an ear' to win a game. In contrast to the girls, the boys support more often than not came in the form of loud shouting, swearing, singing cacophonies and contagious laughter though all in the good spirit of the game.

Graduates who were former players of the UPM team, known as *Ex-Angels* continues the Serdang Angels legacy and some went on to even administer the game at the national level. Widely considered an icon of the rugby playing fraternity, DSDR Syed Razlan Jamalullail, who is now the President of the Alumni Union, also went on top to be the President of the Malaysian Rugby Union. Jamal Salim, as an entrepreneur, supplies the best rugby jerseys and apparels and, Wan Ibrahim became a national referee and later on served the Asian rugby circuit.

Rugby is said to be a '*ruffians' game played by gentlemen*', in contrast to soccer's '*gentlemen's' game played by ruffians*'. Not too favourable to soccer enthusiast though, but certainly, just like most highly physical activities, rugby involves discipline and composure. More so for the Serdang Angels which has the reputation of performing at the highest level consistently over the years, the affiliation with the game has generated a culture of confidence and resilience. Perhaps as a result, a significant number of *Ex-Angels* today are known to excel in their careers such as in the plantation industry, manufacturing sector and the government civil service. The current Vice Chancellor of UPM Datuk Professor Nik Mustapha Raja Abdullah himself has been very much associated to the rugby game from his school days and into his studies in UPM in the early 70s. Some like Dato Aziz Arab, went on to master new fields such as the entertainment and airline businesses and Fauzi Omar, only an off-the-pitch *Angel*, pioneered the mobile telephony industry in Malaysia.



It is no surprise in as far as Malaysian Rugby, UPM Rugby and the Serdang Angels has been acknowledged as an integral component. A leaf taken out of the web page of the Malaysian Rugby Union demonstrated this where UPM is positioned alongside the International Rugby Board and National Sports Council.

**Syabas Serdang Angels - you have made UPM proud!**



# Recognizing Excellence Convocation Gold Medals & Awards

• Dr. Kalthum Hashim (MSc, 1984)

**Excel**lence is always rewarded. That is the world culture.

For university students, the dream is always to be the best among bests, through seeking knowledge, learning and contribution to society. Rewards can be in the form of medals, plaques, monetary and certificates. But I believe the most rewarding feeling comes when the award is presented in front of ones peers such as during the graduation convocation. Such is the impact!



Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) graduation convocation is an annual affair since 1977. Since then, three gold medals and two awards were presented, they are the Chancellor Gold Medal, Yayasan Pak Rashid Gold Medal, Alumni Gold Medal, Anugerah Pelajaran Diraja (Royal Education Award) and Hadiah Syed Kechik.

Each of the gold medal awards consists of an engraved gold medal, money and a certificate of excellence, while the awards are a medal and/or a certificate. Winners are nominated by the respective faculties and only after stringent evaluations by the Award Committees of UPM, will the nominations of the recipients be endorsed by the senate of the Universiti.

The Chancellor Gold Medal, awarded at the first UPM convocation in 1977, by no mean is its first award. It was called the Challenge Shield, and was awarded to the most outstanding graduate of the three year Diploma program. As was told, the



**Dr. Zaitun Yassin** ( Dip Agri, 1971 )  
 Faculty of Medicine and Health Science  
*Best All Rounder Graduate Of College Agriculture 1971*



**Dr. Hassan Mad** (BSc. Agri 1979)  
 Entrepreneur: Amenity Group  
*Chancellor Gold Medal 1979*



**Dr. Nur Ain Izzati Mohd Zainuddin** ( BSc. 2003 )  
 Faculty of Science  
*Yayasan Pak Rashid Gold Medal 2003*

shield was a challenge trophy. It was then replaced by a small gold medal (for easy handling and keeping) which the graduate was allowed to keep signifying his/her achievement in the academic world. As of today a total of 31 medals have been awarded to those who have not only attained an outstanding GPA (Grade Point Average) but also excel in co-curricular activities and contribution of the society.

To commensurate with the scope, size, and diversity of the graduates, the University has focused towards an excellence area of thrust in agriculture, and to endorse the institutional commitment and passion to agriculture, another gold medal award (mooted

by the alumni of UPM) was created in 2003, the Yayasan Pak Rashid Gold Medal Award. The award is given to UPM graduate who excels in agriculture or agriculture related fields.

The Alumni Association of UPM has played a momentous role in recognizing excellence when it awarded the UPM Alumni Association Shield to the ‘Best All Rounder Graduate’ of College of Agriculture from 1971 to 1973. However, this award was renamed The Alumni Gold Medal Award in 1977. Currently, there are 31 recipients of this medal.

The Anugerah Pelajaran Diraja (Royal Education Award) and Hadiah Syed Kechik

are also awarded to outstanding students during the convocation ceremony of UPM. Apart from the mentioned Universiti awards, faculties too confer various awards to their respective excellence students.

Regardless of the current and future direction of the Universiti, the list of recipients will grow. Tracking these performers and ensuring they are still part of the *Alma mater* is strategically important. A few had joined the UPM academic to serve the *Alma mater*, while others will, hopefully, be upholding with pride to the University’s motto “Berilmu Berbakti” or “With Knowledge We Serve”.

# Being a part of UPM

• Murad Alazzany ( Ph.D, 2008 )  
*The writer is from Yemen and was the president of UPM International Student Association (UPMISA) in 2006/2007.*

**As** an international and post graduate student who comes from Yemen, I joined Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) in 2002 at pursue a Master of Arts degree, specialising in Applied Linguistics. After completing my Master degree in 2004, I continued to pursue a Doctorate degree in Critical Discourse Analysis. I graduated with a Ph.D in English Language at Faculty of Education. Actually, any student enrolled in UPM in 2002 realised the fast growth that UPM has gone through. New buildings and roads were constructed at many locations on campus.

UPM has proved itself to be a remarkable academic institution and research centre. This makes any international student feels proud in joining UPM to pursue his/her academic goals. I feel this pride myself as the University allows me to endeavor in memorable academic and non-academic pursuits. One of the memorable experiences was being nominated to represent UPM in debating competition held throughout Malaysia. I represented UPM in the 2004/2005 Asian Debating Championship and Great Serdang Inter-varsity Debating Championship.

I was elected as the President of UPM International Student Association (UPMISA) in 2006. The tenure as the President enabled me to participate in non-academic activities thus further enriched my life as an international student in Malaysia. I was involved with the help of my friends in a tourism programme in the Pachitan village Seremban, Negeri Sembilan.

The best thing about being a UPM student is meeting many intellectual personalities who represented different walks of life and display different levels of critical thinking. During the





time spent in UPM, students will be given the opportunity to meet professors, doctors, managers, people in various occupations and students from different countries around the world. International students especially, can get mesmerized by the colorful experiences from these people in a very profound way. The opportunities for students to interact can potentially polish their personality more than through reading from books. The academic environment offered by UPM is supported by adequate facilities; research tools, materials, academic articles, social events and conferences. Students are exposed to these facilities from the first day in UPM. I am sure every student that leaves UPM with a degree in hand, would have many stories to tell about his/her experiences in UPM.

However, it would be a great loss for students as well for UPM if students are disconnected from this environment, experience and successes after their graduation. It is important for students to be aware that they are always a part of the UPM community from the moment they enroll to pursue their studies. This is because the greatest asset of any university is its human resources and a portion of this asset is graduate students whose success will perpetuate the excellent reputation of the University.

Therefore, the alumni centres in many universities around the world are usually established to become a channel of communication between students and their universities after graduation. It feels great to know that UPM has its very own Alumni Centre. Although the centre is relatively new, it is doing a good effort to gather graduate students from various specialization area of study.

Thus, I would like to encourage all international students to register with the UPM Alumni Centre and participate in its activities. This provides the opportunities for UPM Alumni members to maintain ties and form new friendship with all graduates from UPM. Although international students may not be physically located at UPM campus after their graduation, as alumni they are valuable asset to UPM. They and UPM can symbolically exits sharing rich experiences which can contribute to the advancement of both parties. They can bring a real-world perspective to the academic; contribute to the university research and development, as well as university entrepreneurial ventures. The Alumni Centre can facilitate this mission and can help connect students to their university. I would like to urge all students, particularly international students to register with UPM Alumni Centre to ensure the continual connection with the University.

Last but not least, I hope all international graduates who are UPM Alumni will take the lead to form the UPM Alumni chapters in their respective countries thus further enhance UPM's contribution to the global community and achieve its vision and mission to be a well-known research university.



Murad Alazzany



# Warisan Budi Putra

• Rohani Ibrahim • Mohd Fikri Abu Bakar ( B. Comm, 2006 )

**A** unique clock tower project, the Warisan Budi Putra has been underway at Universiti Putra Malaysia. The special committee to look into it was formed when UPM celebrated its 75 years of establishment. The clock tower will be located near the new Student's Complex next to the Dusun Contoh, later to be known as Lembah Putra (Putra Valley) will serve two primary functions.

First, it will serve as a landmark, displaying time through the incorporation of four, 5-foot diameter clock faces. Second it will serve as an observation tower for research purposes by incorporating platform into the design. Thus the use of this tower is beyond a landmark, displaying time. The community and visitors alike will be able to see how this versatile building from afar.

The special architectural design captured the legacy frozen in "time", signifying a mature institution that had set its foot in the locality since year 1931. The tower symbolizes the importance of time for the campus community relating to it, the history of its establishment with many alumni borne and many more in time to come. The tower signifies the meaning of the culture of giving back to its Alma mater. The clock tower will become a historical legacy and another landmark for the future generation to the glory of UPM.

## On set of UPM 75 years Celebration

The fund for Warisan Budi Putra was soft launched during the Homecoming dinner held on 3rd September 2005. Pledges to purchase various sized tiles amounting to RM8000 was collected. The project had prompted interest and awareness for the alumni to immortalize their presence and love for their Alma mater by purchasing the various sized tiles, more tiles were sold, close to RM 23,000 was raised. The tiles will lined the inner walls of the tower, the names of donor and the graduating class engraved on to them.

The Clock Tower project continues on, the project has raised almost 50% of the total fund accumulating close to RM 400,000, mostly coming from the generosity of alumni and staff and friends of UPM. There has to be creative ways of making it affordable. Efforts to sell the tiles are continued targeting making offers to friends of the UPM to participate and hasten the ground breaking work in 2009. The construction phase of the project was scheduled to commence by January of 2008 pending collection of the funds. The estimated budget of the clock tower project to be approximately RM 1,000,000.

## Category of Contributors and Tiles

The staff, alumni, friends of the university and students can buy the tiles. Two types are available; the regular tile and the exclusive tile. The regular tile will cost from RM 75.00 up to RM 1,075.00. Meanwhile the exclusive tiles, two main categories are available. For Category A the tile is sold at for an amount above RM 10,075.00 above meanwhile Category B is sold at RM 5,075 to RM 10,000. For friends of the university or corporate organizations, their logo will be engraved on the tiles.



## Concept and design

The concept and design of this clock tower was created by Associate Prof. Ar. Mohd Razali Mahyuddin (Tok Wan) from the Faculty of Architecture and Landscape, UPM.

The design of the tower takes on a geometric diamond shape, with a square base to amplify the diamond shape. The concrete wall will be made of granite tiles while the clock will be fastened with anodized aluminum cladding. The floor of the tower will be lined by the non-slip homogenous tiles. The overall height of the tower from the base to the top is 1931 inches or 160 feet, symbolizing the long journey in the establishment of UPM since 1931. The width of the floor is 1075 square at the base measuring 61.4'x61.4'. Located on the 7th floor of the 10 storey high clock tower will be a balcony, which allows for viewing of campus surrounding by campus visitors.

The dedicated group of faculty advisors has worked hard to produce a very intriguing and unique structure, one that supports research and teaching, as well as displays time and history. This tower will be one of a kind and will bring an additional recognition to the Universiti Putra Malaysia. It will serve as a symbol of the quality and of strength of the university and while displaying the products and the generosity that alumni and UPM community possess.

*For information about donations to the clock tower and having you own a personalized tile in the tower and its plaza, visit the Warisan Budi Putra Giving of UPM Alumni section on the website. Thank you for donating to Warisan Budi Putra.*



Alumni tracer • Rohani Ibrahim • Saiful Bahrie Abdul Manap ( B. Econ, 2003)

# Tracking Graduate SUCCESS

**Getting** your graduates into the job market is the main concern of all institutions of higher learning. Producing competitive and highly marketable graduates is a vital agenda to ensure the sustainability and competitiveness over other institution. Many of the local institutions have developed programs to increase employability of graduates ranging from soft skill to finishing program for graduates thus making them ready for the job market.

UPM and the Alumni Centre work hard to ensure this agenda becomes a reality. Various programs such as 'The Alumni Mentoring Program', 'Get That Job Workshop', 'The Outreach Program' and 'UPM Career Carnival', were carried out by Alumni Centre and intended to enhance the quality and self-esteem of UPM students. These programs, one way or another, may have contributed to the improvement of the graduate employment.

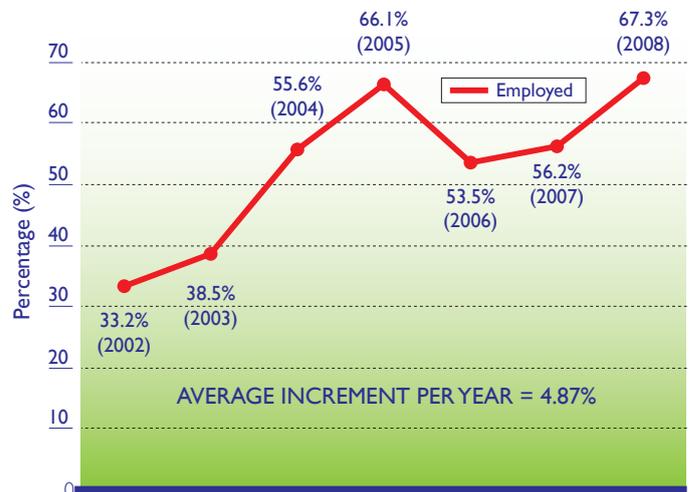
It is interesting to note the percentage of UPM graduates who were employed six months after finishing their studies have risen steadily from 33.2% in 2002 to 67.3% in 2008 (Graph I) with an average increment of 4.87% annually.





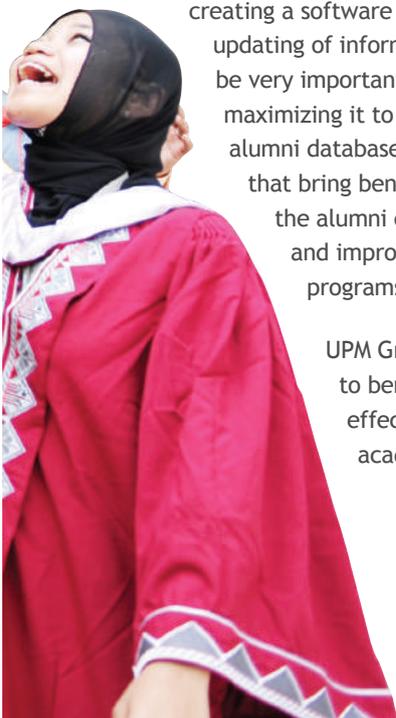
Besides giving the data on employability, Graduate Tracer Study also is the basis for creating Alumni Database. This updated and informative database is beneficial to the university and the alumni. The database complete with personal information, addresses and include also their interest and family is extremely useful for networking and building a lifelong relationship. Updating the database and keeping the information current is vital for all of its intended functions to take place, thus creating a software program that allows retrieval and updating of information for an individual would be very important. Having the database and not maximizing it to the fullest is meaningless. The UPM alumni database is also used to generate activities that bring benefits both to the university and the alumni especially for career development and improvement of university's academic programs.

UPM Graduate Tracer Study is used to benchmark and evaluate the effectiveness and relevancy of the academic programs in relation to



Graph I: Status of UPM Graduates Employability from 2002 - 2008

employability. Results from the study also provide feedback about UPM facilities, services and infrastructures. Thus, allowing UPM to continuously upgrade its facilities and services. Alumni Centre has been entrusted to conduct this study for UPM.



# Campus Life

*A moment for smiles...*



## My happy moment in UPM

• Wang Yuxia ( MBA, Semester 4 )  
International Student (China)

Malaysia is a big multi-racial country and UPM is a small multi-cultural community. I learned many things from here. I would like to say that the market strategy simulation program that was conducted by Graduate School of Management (GSM) is the happiest thing I've ever experienced. It really taught me many things I can't learn from books. It's the combination of book and reality for all students.

We had many activities, such as war game, crossing bridge and swimming. We enjoyed these activities and at the same time, we learnt how to cooperate with each team member effectively in order to accomplish our goals. For swimming activity, there

were only three out of twenty people who knew how to swim, but we did completed the task on time because we considered ourselves as a team, and helped each other.

Although we felt very exhausted everyday, we were feeling very happy. Throughout the simulation program, we got to know and made friends with people from the other team we met but never had chance to talk. We also had a good opportunity communicating with the lecturers involved. It was a wonderful experience that I might had missed in my country. Hopefully I can have the chance to attend such kind of activities again.

## My life as an international post graduate in UPM

• Hazel Monica Matias-Peralta ( Ph.D, Semester 7 )  
International Student (Philippines)

Coming to Malaysia has been a tremendous challenge since I have never been away from my family for as long as I can remember. My purpose of coming to UPM was not to pursue graduate degree but to share the knowledge I gained from five years of hard work in the field of Aquatic Biology. I dreaded the thought of pursuing graduate studies because of the tremendous amount of work and the demand for creativity and critical thinking that goes with it. However, after one year working as a research assistant in UPM my interest in pursuing a postgraduate degree increased. Students from all over Asia (ASEAN countries, Bangladesh, China, India, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Pakistan) and beyond (America, Africa and Canada) come to study at UPM, which provided a great deal of cultural exchange opportunities. The University not only provides facilities of world standard but also experts in many fields (applied science, mathematics, environmental studies, engineering, and others).

As I reminisced the experiences in Malaysia, specifically in UPM, I cannot keep myself from laughing. I remembered being so scared to go alone anywhere because I have difficulty finding my way to places since everything I see seemed to be the same. The buildings looks all the same with maroon coloured roofing, roads are endless 'Jalan Sehalal' (which, I realised later, means one way street), driving is on the right side of the road, and most women are covered from head to toe (under the hot sunny

weather!), I could only see their faces. Returning to my house was similarly an agony for the same reasons. Further to this, I came to Malaysia in time for the Ramadan. I did not have any idea as to how this event was revered by the Muslim people until I experienced it myself. I thought that I have to live in famine, during the day and in abundance during the night when throughout my life I have always three meals daily. However, after a month I was fascinated by the turn of events! Great foods were everywhere, with or without invitation, and it was free!



# A Nostalgia... • Assoc. Prof. Ir Muhammad Salih (Dip Agri, 1970)

## Campus Life in the 70s

I was born on October 20, 1952 in Kampong Parit Kadzi Tengah, Muar, Johor and received my early education at the Sekolah Ismail (2), Muar, Johor from 1959 until 1964 before I continued my secondary education at the Sekolah Tinggi Muar from 1965 until 1969. Thereafter, I pursued my Diploma of Agriculture at the College of Agriculture Malaya, Serdang from June 1970.

My friends and I were convinced by our senior college friend, Mahfoor Harun, that we could get a job as a Plantation Manager earning RM 1000 per month which was quite a high salary for a person with a diploma. I did not join the plantation but instead worked as an Agricultural Assistant at the Agricultural Extension Branch, Department of Agriculture (DOA), Kuala Lumpur from mid 1973 until the end of 1973 with a monthly salary of RM 540. I resigned from DOA to further my study in agricultural engineering at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, USA in January 1974 and obtained a Bachelor of Science (Agricultural Engineering) and a Master of Science (Agricultural Engineering) degree in December 1976 and December 1978 respectively.

I returned home to start my career as a lecturer on 24 January, 1979 in the Department of Field, Power and Machinery Engineering, Faculty of Agricultural Engineering, Universiti Pertanian Malaysia, Serdang and was sent to the Sarawak Branch Campus in Semenggok, Kuching, Sarawak for a year and half (May 1980 - November 1981). Currently I lecture and conduct research in agricultural engineering at the Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, UPM. I teach agricultural machinery to the Bachelor of Engineering (Agriculture) undergraduates, Master of Science students (Bio-production Machinery) and Master of Science in Emergency Response Planning graduate programs.

My research focuses on the design and development of small machines and devices for oil palm loose fruits collection (in collaboration with the Malaysian Palm Oil Board - MPOB), orchard fruits harvesting, cocoa pod splitting and cocoa bean extracting (in collaboration with the Malaysian Cocoa Board - MCB) and coconut cleaving. A prototype paddy direct seeder metering device was also designed and developed.

### Serdang Nostalgia

I have many fond memories of Kolej Pertanian Malaya (now UPM) during the 3 years of diploma programme and it deeply touched my heart. I was interviewed for admission in April 1970 by two lecturers, Dr. Ismail Hamzah and the late Dato' Dr. Abdul Halim Hassan at the Lembaga Pertubuhan Peladang in Malacca. After receiving the admission reply from the college, my senior friend Mahfoor Harun (Dip Agri, 1972) and I hitch-hiked from Muar to Kuala Lumpur where we boarded the old and famous Toong Foong bus No. 107. We paid a 60 cents bus ticket and took the bus flight 107 at the Pudu Bus Station and travelled through the long, winding and bumpy Sungai Besi road to Kolej Pertanian Malaya, Serdang.

### Stressful but fun orientation weeks

The first three weeks of college life was stressful. It started with a Freshie Orientation Program organized by the College of Agriculture Student Union (CASU). Despite the weary feelings, we participated and enjoyed every moment of what was programmed for all the freshies. Among the things we had to do were fancy dress parade, gardening parade, cultural and art classes, and carrying luggage on the head. Some days were wonderful and delightful especially the independent (a day no one disturbed us and we were free to do things we like) and the orientation tea party, other days such as orientation examination were full of suspense. We all went through humorous and memorable moments, the funniest was we had to crow like cockerels before we entered the dining hall for our meals. We were even made to count leaves of shrubs and stars in the sky and early morning wake up calls made you very anxious and wondered what the next interesting experiences would be. Some days we had to go through a tough and rough commando-like activities; the routine would include hill rolling, TC, elbow crawling, Serdang spin. The most memorable and unforgettable of all was the Serdang College tradition, the Serdang Royal Bath and the Max Factor. The Royal Bath was a mixture of water, grass, mud and cow dung placed in a big barrel and each student, male and female had to take a dip in that barrel! Shocking to many who are unfamiliar with the tradition, they could not imagine how one could endure such awful activity, but looking back, it was actually funny and exciting! We all had a good laugh, and without doubt everyone possessed the inner drive to survive. Our utmost endurance, steadfastness and patience had helped us throughout the encounters and that made us what we are now!

### Medical leave and the friendly seniors

Almost everyone had to go through the hardships of the orientation weeks, but some days we can escape or be

exempted by getting protection from our seniors by volunteering to wash their clothes or obtaining a medical leave for the day by saying that we were under repair! The unforgettable and humorous experiences and memories that everyone had were always shared with current students and our classmates. Those experiences engraved the basic Serdang Spirit of cooption (coined by the seniors to mean co-operation) to most of us.

### Memory drills

We were forced to memorize names of senior ladies, gentlemen and lecturers together with their home addresses, sponsors, identity card numbers, room mates, room numbers and blocks and also Serdang terms and definitions, songs and interestingly the common, scientific and/or commercial names of various plants and fruits! But to our benefits, those drills helped us in memorizing the common and scientific names for insects, rocks, soil types, plants, herbs, weeds, animals, diseases and fungi for our academic courses. We even gave the lamp post and the underwear scientific names; *Lamposta electrica* and *Suspenda longaris*. Most of the orientation activities gave us new and mixed dimensions, exposures, experiences, encounters and perspectives besides developing our skills, knowledge, thoughts and attitudes towards life itself. We were very much grateful to those seniors who successfully managed the orientation programs without the college administration intervention and that has given us a strong foundation of the spirit of Serdang Cooption.

### Dining twice at different hall!

Normally after the noon classes, a few students would rush back quickly to the dining hall to be at the front of the dining hall's queue. To do that they have to make a fast uphill run to the college foyer which means cutting across the grasses very fast so as to make sure that they were not spotted and caught by the Farm Director. Then it was a taboo to walk and run on the grasses! Once caught you had to walk back to the beginning of the tarred road that you had started from! Friday night menu was the best menu of the week when chicken *kurma* and *nasi beriani* were served. Sometime some of us (including me!) would sneak in for dinner twice (once before and the other after the Maghrib prayer) and of course at different dining halls which was quite far apart (Block A and Block E). We thought that we

were smart enough and would not be noticed and marked as we always got away with it once caught, it would be embarrassing as they would made fun of you all the times!

### Grooming - the barber shop!

Those were the Beatle days and to be trendy we all kept long hair. One morning, while on my way to the fieldwork site, I was stopped by the Farm Director Dato' Mohd. Noor Hj Ismail. I was ordered to take off my hat to check if I had long hair. He caught me right there! I was ordered immediately to get have my hair cut. Unfortunately the college barber shop in the basement in Block A of the hostel was not open yet, so I had to walk to an Indian barber shop in Federal Experimental Station (FES), Serdang. Interesting to note that the college shop was normally closed during weekday mornings and opened only after 5 pm till 11 pm! Later during our final year in 1973, the long hair regulation was imposed by the college administration for male students. The long hair issue prompted the CASU (College Agriculture Student Union) representatives to meet with Tan Sri Dr. Mohd Rashdan Baba, the College Principal to settle the issue of long hair. The directives were given by the college administration that any male student with long hair would be barred from entering the examination hall, indirectly stopping him from taking the final examinations. Few jagas (the College Security) were stationed at the entrance of examination hall to make sure that the rules were followed.

### Living skills - welding and driving the tractor!

The agricultural program gave us the exposures and experiences on gardening, fieldwork, share farms and extension work in the selected extension areas. For male students, we had to learn welding, soldering, carpentry, lathe work and plumbing during the workshop practical and for agricultural engineering





course we had to study agricultural machinery, soil and water engineering and agricultural processing. All these had equipped me with a very strong foundation that has encouraged me to further my study in the agricultural engineering, my current expertise. It was thrilling, exciting, joyful and fun occasion to learn and operate an old Yanmar pedestrian tractor on tarmac road in front of the college workshop (currently the ITMA building). We also had to drive an antique four-wheel Massey Ferguson tractor on a rough and bumpy terrain (now Fifth College) and this left me with many unforgettable memories. One day during the pedestrian tractor learning sessions, one of my group mates had to frantically stop the moving Yanmar from crossing the tarred road because he mistakenly moved the gear control lever to high gear causing the tractor to go on a high speed! The engine troubleshooting laboratories conducted by Mr. Roberto Bautista gave me the confidence in diagnosing and choking my neighbour's car back home. It was really a joyful experience and we picked up many skills along the way!

### **Water War is synonym with exam time!**

The middle and final examination weeks were stressful in a student life! Those who do not have the habit of studying in

the library would always have to study elsewhere either in the hostels or the surrounding area as the spaces were all booked and occupied. To release the tensions, we had water wars among the blocks at night, it was exciting and fun. Normally amongst the victims of the water wars were the smart guys who just came back from the library. Buckets of water would be shoved and poured as they passed under the verandah or walked up the stairways. I recalled hearing a long female-like screaming coming from one of the blocks and I thought it was some kind of hysteria going on. A few hostel and college officials rushed to the girls block and only later to discover that a group of male students was releasing their tensions by dragging their cangkuls along the hostel corridors in the girls block!

### **Common room and Canteen**

The common room was alive most of the time, with the old gramophones playing the songs of the 60s selection of famous singers such as A. Ramlie, Ahmad Jais, Jeffridin, the Santanas, the Beatles, Tom Jones, Engelbert Humperdinck, Deep Purple and other undergrounds music while playing carom and watching television. Next to the common room was the canteen and Ah Fook (the operator) served special menus. The canteen was also a place for gatherings, discussions,

celebrations and dining for many of the students. Ah Fook's way of attracting customers was to employ attractive young assistants running the canteen and that is probably why the canteen was always lively with customers coming in and out! The canteen was always full, during the time when the students received their scholarships! For those who were fond of maneuvering and motoring (no Mat Rempits at that time!), like our senior friends, Azman and Zulkifli, they would show their technical and aesthetic talents by modifying their big old motorcycles, converting to a CC Rider type with high handles, like those hippy bikers. We were brave enough sometimes to ride a Kawasaki, or Yamaha or Vespa motorcycles without a driving license along the Rothman Corners of Serdang near Kampong Pasir (now stood UPM Student Centre). One evening, my friend was chased by a policeman on a motorcycle when he was roaming the street of FES, to avoid been chased by the police he pressed his wheels straight to the farm!

### **Thanks to them - they are great teachers!**

There were many wonderful memories attached to the good old College of Agriculture days, they are forever very sweet fond memories, blossoming in our heart. My wonderful and caring lecturers during the diploma days helped in molding me, my interests, attitude, experiences, skill and knowledge. They have invested their efforts in making us to be good, useful and successful students. Many also were indebted to the laboratory and field assistants, technicians, college and hostel staff, cook and chefs as they were all our teachers! I have never regretted joining the Kolej Pertanian Malaya, Serdang and indeed was glad that I did, and it was really a stepping stone for my professional career. The tremendous opportunities and trainings during the college days helped me to foster my thinking, skills and attitude (technical, organizational and educational). May all of them and their families receive blessings for their contributions to my success in UPM.

# Updates & Happenings



## Alumni Gatherings '09

UPM Alumni Association Roadshows 2009 in Clearwater Sanctuary Golf Resort, Batu Gajah, Perak and the Sabah Chapter in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah will be held soon. For more information, please contact : 03-89467271.

## UPM Alumni Association Direct Access Mastercard Affinity card launched 17 Feb 2009

The launching held at Dewan Taklimat, UPM was officiated by the President of UPM Alumni Association. All alumni are encouraged to join and enjoy the benefits while at the same time contribute to the Association. For details contact Alumni Office at 03-89467271.



## Alumni Mentorship Program

- 12 February, 26 February, 12 March and 26 March 2009

The mentorship program is an informal afternoon session where alumni and undergraduates meet face to face to get help and exchange information to support learning and help maximize their potential, develop friendship and create network or link with their mentors for career purposes. Four mentoring sessions will be held on the selected Thursday at the PPL Hall, UPM starting at 5 -7pm. Light refreshment will be provided.

All UPM Alumni and staff are welcomed to become mentors. For detail contact Alumni Center at 03-89466079/6080/7886 or our website.

## UPM Alumni Reunion

• 21 February 2009

A grand reunion dinner to commemorate seven decades of alumni will be held at Putra Banquet Hall, UPM. This event also witnesses the launching of UPM Alumni Magazine and Alumni Mascot. Go to the website and view the gallery at [www.alumni.upm.edu.my](http://www.alumni.upm.edu.my)

## PA BiAnnual General Meeting and Alumni Public Lecture

• 18 April 2009

The BiAnnual General Meeting of PAUPM will be held on Saturday 18 April 2009 at Engineering Auditorium, UPM. In conjunction, an Alumni Public Lecture will be held before the AGM. A distinguished dynamic corporate personality, Dr Sharifuddin Abdul Wahab (MSc, 1981) will speak at this meeting. For detailed information contact Alumni Office 03-89467271

## Hari Alumni UPM Alumni Day

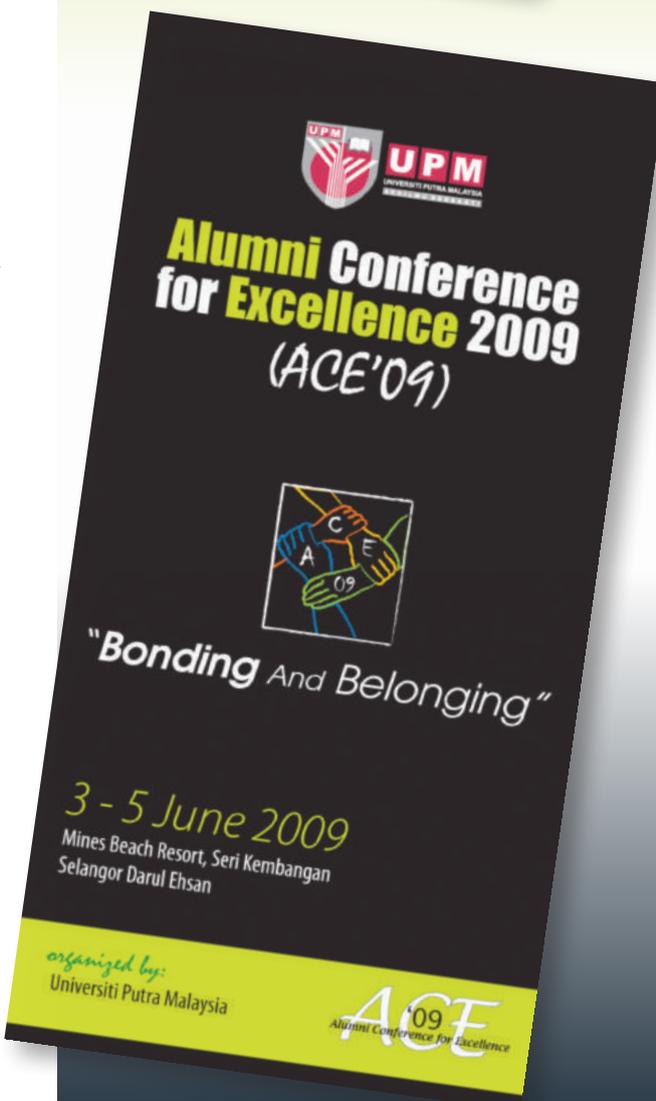
The *Hari Alumni* UPM will be officially launched on 21 Mei 2009, a special date to be remembered by everyone, as it is the official founding date of the School of Agriculture in Serdang in 1931. The ceremony to commemorate the date will be held at the UPM Great Hall PKKSSAAS. Watch out for more on this event or contact Alumni Center at 03-89466079/6080/7886 or visit our website.

## Alumni Conference for Excellence 2009 (ACE' 09)

• 3-5 Jun 2009

UPM and UPM Alumni Association will jointly organize the Alumni Conference for Excellence 2009 (ACE09), the sixth series of such meeting. The theme 'Bonding and Belonging' hopes to reconnect alumni from all institution at the Mines Beach Resort, Seri Kembangan. The conference will highlight issues of nurturing the spirit of camaraderie, pride and concern of the Alumni for their Alma mater. The conference is targeted for those who are involved in alumni-related activities. Distinguished speakers will share their experiences during the meeting. Watch out for more! Contact Alumni Center at 03-89466079/6080/7886 or our website.

For more information on any of the activities please check our website <http://www.alumni.upm.edu.my>



# UPM alumni update form

School of  
Agriculture  
1931



College of Agriculture, Malaysia  
1952 - 1961



College of Agriculture, Malaysia  
1962 - 1964



College of Agriculture, Malaysia  
1965 - 1971



Universiti Pertanian Malaysia  
1971 - 1997



Universiti Putra Malaysia  
1997 - present

## 1 personal details

Name :

I.C. No. / Pasport No \* :

Programme :      Diploma       Bachelor       Master       Ph.D

Field of Study :

Faculty :

Year of Graduation :

State/ Country :

## 2 contact details

Permanent Home Address :

Office/ Business Address :

Position :

Telephone nos. :      Home :       Mobile :   
                                 Office :       Fax :

E-mail :

### UPM alumni online Community

Kindly visit our website and update your address with us from time to time  
We thank you for your co-operation. This data will be kept in the UPM Alumni database  
for future correspondences .

Tel : 603-8946 6079 / 8946 7271

Fax : 603-8656 6933

E-mail : alumni@alumni.upm.edu.my

Webpage: <http://www.alumni.upm.edu.my>





## UPM ALUMNI

The BULL as mascot will be a reminder that the great Serdang spirit has contributed to nation's agro industrial development and hence sets the foundation of the new industries. The BULL reminds alumnus of what they always meant to be **pioneering, hardworking and resilient.**

These shall be the attributes that would continually prepare them to brace the future.

