

75 JEWELS of UPM



Freedom Fighter to the Hilt • An Educator to Remember • Poet Rooted in Royalties • F1 Crusader • Father of Sabo
dependence • Visionary Leadership • Living Life to the Fullest • The Everlasting Force • Born to Agriculture • Pioneer
a • From Ivory Towers to Corporate Eminence • Agricultural Academician to the Core • Adventurous in Nature •
2 Confessed Workaholic • Once a Teacher, Always a Teacher • Resilient Like Natural Rubber • Always a Farmer
ider at 40 years of Nation Building • Always at his Best • Banking on Agriculture • Protector of Plants • Simp
histicated • A Name to be Proud of • Literally Up in Smoke • Force Behind K-Technopreneur • Reformed and Lov
Adding Flavour to Food Industry • Federal Land Loyalist • Man of Distinction • Greening the World • Pahe
s-made-good • The Business of Farming • Alumni Queen Bee • People's Man • "Biotech" Man • Safeguarding
dren • At Home in the Jungle • Baiting Pests • Sharing and Caring • Humming his Own Tune • Chocolate Drec
Food Safety on Her Mind! • Designing Success • A Different Kettle of Fish • Galloping All The Way • Gett
Goat • Post Harvest Fruit Scientist • Leader with a Golden Touch • Flying High in the Corporate Sector • I
ationist! • Protector of the Voiceless • Outstanding Avian Veterinarian • In Love with Politics • Creating Grains of C
ture • Fuelling Mobile Communications • Potions which Nurture • From Tending Gardens to International Relati
Breathing with Ease • Globe Trotter • Leading the Way • From Lab Coats to Boardroom Suits • The Turnarou
mager • A Gentle Disciplinarian • Scoring Goals • Borned Athlete • Iron lady of Athletics • Treading Perilous P
Literary Treasure Trove • Information is the Key • Nature's Knight • Growing with Agriculture •
ion for Super Bikes • Dead on Target • Number Crunching • Scorching Sprinter Creates Records •



Vice Chancellor's *Communiqué*

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh and Salam Sejahtera

I thank God for this opportunity to pen a few words in this book and to celebrate the contribution of our alumni towards achieving our goal to be an excellent university; 75 years from our humble beginning of an 'attap' school in 1931, an age considered to be mature and stable. Since then slowly and steadily, UPM has produced quality graduates and we are harvesting the product now. For this, we are indebted to all the contributions of our pioneers in building UPM to what it is today. To enhance the networking between UPM and its alumni, the Alumni Centre was established with the main aim to foster a close and continuous working relationship within the alumni to realize the vision of this Universiti to be an excellent institution.

This book is thus dedicated to several generations of our alumni who have significant contributions to the progress and good name of our Universiti. If we were to list them all, we would have volumes as there are so many who have done UPM proud. To commemorate the Diamond Jubilee celebration of UPM, 75 notable individuals were nominated and selected to grace the pages of this collection. These individuals have excelled in his or her chosen field some have even successfully penetrated the global market, establishing a firm foundation for future alumni in years to come. These are their stories

and legacies for the next generation to emulate and strive to greater heights in tandem with our motto "With Knowledge We Serve".

Universiti Putra Malaysia has now been recognised as one of four research universities in Malaysia. This will certainly provide further opportunities for the alumni to join forces in efforts with the university to further enhance the stature and reputation of this university. The expertise and experience of the alumni will go a long way to help the universiti and its students to realise the vision and mission to be an excellent research universiti in the world. Networking and close linkages the alumni with the university can only enhance both entities.

Alumni UPM can confidently step beyond its boundaries with the increasing significant number of international students graduating from UPM. They are our international links in this global world and their contributions are deeply appreciated and encouraged. UPM is proud that many of our international alumni have not only embarked in the development of a knowledgeable community in their respective countries, but many have also become leaders of high caliber. In order not to 'lose' them, Alumni UPM will establish international chapters to sustain these linkages and enhance networking through academic and research collaborations as well as in business ventures.

I would like to record my deep appreciation and thank you to all involved in making this book a reality as this reflects our epic journey from the humble beginnings to the sophisticated present and towards an astronomical future.

With Knowledge We Serve

Professor Datuk Dr. Nik Mustapha R. Abdullah

From the Desk of the Editor

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh and Salam Sejahtera

When I was asked to embark on to the production of a book to honour 75 alumni of UPM as a part of the 75th year UPM celebration, I was, understandably, both very nervous but at the same time extremely excited to see the end result, knowing that it would be a tough and challenging undertaking. UPM has a long list of alumni, and many of whom are eminent people who have contributed to *alma mater* and society at large. Thus, it was indeed a difficult task, for the Selection Committee, to select just 75 distinguished alumni from a long list of possible candidates.

The committee also faced difficulty in contacting some of the notable local and international alumni. However, with the assistance of all medium of communications available, from emails to snail mail; we were able to get in touch with some of them. While we may have sounded very demanding for information and feedback, trying to stick to deadlines, we did our utmost to be accomodating and obliging at all times. We are indeed very thankful for their kind understanding and cooperation and of course proud of the length their breadth of their areas of interest and accomplishments.

The result, after 11 months of intensive work, is a unique portrait of UPM and the people it has helped produced. '75 Jewels of UPM' represents the various intricate journeys these selected individuals alumni have undertaken to transform and become what they are today. They have held, and some still hold, leadership positions in public and private institutions. Their contributions during and beyond their time in UPM, as well as their life philosophies will be a good learning experience for the readers.

This book could not possibly have been completed without the commitments and dedication of all team members who shared the enthusiasm to continuously tracked down the individual alumni. The team members would like to acknowledge their appreciation to the support staff of the UPM Alumni Centre and the Publication Office, all of whom worked very hard putting together the contents and the finishing touches to produce the final copy the '75 Jewels of UPM'. Finally, on behalf of the 75 Jewels team, I would like to extend my gratitude and appreciation to the UPM 75 Years Celebrations main committee for having consented and approved the publication of this book.

It has definitely been an inspiring journey tracing the lives, experiences and many accomplishments of our notable alumni!

With Knowledge We Serve

Rohani Ibrahim

James Philip Ho

Diploma in Agriculture • 1974

For two years, he fought a battle with lung cancer. But the dreaded disease was no match for his overwhelming desire to live. In 2004, James Philip Ho's medical report showed that he was free of cancer. "My positive attitude and faith in God helped me a great deal. Now, I'm fully recovered," he declared. His family, friends and colleagues were surprised how he contracted the disease as he was a non-smoker. Furthermore, he was known to have a golden heart. He had always been a social worker and was ever ready to help people in need.

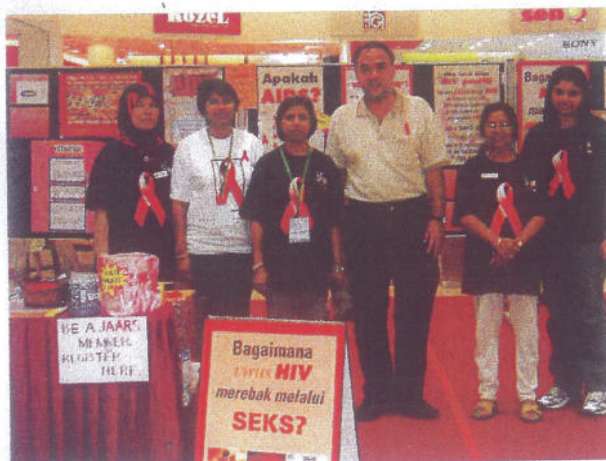
Fresh after graduating with a Diploma in Agriculture in 1974, he started his career, as a Planter, with Harrisons & Crosfield (now Golden Hope Plantations) as an Assistant Manager in Prang Besar Estate, Kajang, Selangor. Later in 1979 he joined Boustead Estates Agency as Senior Assistant Manager in Bukit Mertajam Estate, Kulim, Kedah, and in 1984, promoted as Manager of Bukit Kledek Estate, Jasin, Melaka. His work saw him being posted to various parts of the country (Selangor, Kedah, Penang,

Melaka, Johor and Sabah). He then opted out to join Keck Seng (M) Bhd, a public-listed company based in Pasir Gudang, Johor as a General Manager (Plantations) in 1993. In the same year, he was seconded as the General Manager, Tanjong Puteri Golf Resort, Pasir Gudang. 'The 'all round' training I received from Serdang had enable me to multi-task and do both jobs well' he quipped.

To further enhance his professional qualifications as a Planter, he obtained the Associate Diploma of the Incorporated Society of Planters (AISP) in 1982. Actively involved in the Incorporated Society of Planters (ISP) activities, he served as Branch Secretary, Johore (1983/1984) and as a Branch Chairman, ISP Lahat Datu while working as an Estate Manager in Tabung Tentera Estate, Lahat Datu, Sabah. As a Branch Chairman of ISP's Lahat Datu, he managed to raise funds to buy an ultrasound scanning machine costing some RM40,000.00 for the Lahat Datu General Hospital. James has also raised funds for various charity projects such as for the Hospice Home for Pelangi Community Foundation in Trengganu (2006), Tsunami Medical Relief in Nias Island, Indonesia (2005) and Kota Tinggi Flood Relief (2006).

James may be an expert in managing oil palm plantations but he revealed that his true calling is doing social work. His kind nature was something he displayed even when he was young. After obtaining a Diploma, he decided to work in order to finance the tertiary education of his three brothers. His financial assistance came with two conditions – his siblings must pass all their examinations and they should not repay him! "Well, I'm very happy to report that they're all doing very well today," said the bubbly Kuala Kangsar-born. He counselled patients suffering from depression, psychological disorders, HIV/AIDS,

Sharing and CARING



cancer, terminal illnesses or victims of abuse at the Sultanah Aminah Hospital and his church in Johor Bahru. He said sometimes he even gets calls at odd hours asking him to counsel someone. "I just hop into my car and drive there to meet the client. After my counselling session, I drive back home and go to work." James is an Exco Member of the Johor AIDS Action and Research Society and the Chairperson of the Catholic AIDS Ministry.

He said he deliberately chose to work with people with HIV/AIDS as there were not many social workers willing to help them. "I guess it's the stigma attached to people who have AIDS or HIV." He said, it gave him immense joy to help such people. "There have been times when I've worked with patients who have limited time left to live and they've asked me why I'm spending my time with them when they had nothing to offer me. I told them all I wanted was a chance to play a meaningful role in their lives and to give them love."

James recalled that when he was told by doctors that he had cancer, his family was devastated. Instead of wallowing in self-pity, he carried on with his social work. Even his zest for life did not diminish. "I told myself that I was not going to focus on my troubles. Instead, I continued helping other people with their troubles. While doing this, I realized how small my problem was compared to those faced by others," even after 18 and 30 rounds of chemotherapy and radiotherapy respectively, he acted and behaved as if he was normal and healthy. "My friends were so amazed how I could do it. I told them I had the will to live." Now that he is fully recovered, James goes all out to motivate and boost the confidence of cancer patients. Having walked down the path himself and a cancer survivor now, he is the best person to

understand their needs and emotions. His wife too shares his passion for social work. He noted, with satisfaction and pride, that his children have picked up their parents' caring and sharing attitude.

His wife Lam Yim Hoong is a Homemaker and they have a daughter (an entrepreneur) and two sons. The older one is a training consultant while the "baby" of the family is still in school.

The Serdang spirit of "coption" (cooperation) and "never say die" had been engrained in him since the day he stepped foot in Kolej Pertanian Malaysia (KPM). The "ragging/orientation" lessons and the values of "coption" among the various races enabled him to associate well with his workers and staffs during his many postings to the estates and plantations. He credited his meteoric rise climbing the corporate ladder to his "all-round" training in Serdang. Always grateful for the opportunity given to be accepted into Serdang for a 3-year Diploma course, he is actively involved in organising UPM Old Boys gatherings wherever he was posted. Together with Dato' Soh Poh Seng (batch 1976), he initiated the "Serdang Sunshine" group in Johor and organized yearly gatherings with participations of Serdang graduates from all over the country.

