

Tun Ahmad Sarji Abdul Hamid (1938 - 2021)

M. Fakhurrrazi Ahmad

Born on September 16, 1938 in Tapah, Perak, Tun Ahmad Sarji Abdul Hamid received his early education at the Malay School Pasir Puteh, Ipoh, Perak. He attended the Government English School in Tapah and Anderson School in Ipoh, before pursuing a Bachelor's degree at the University of Malaya in 1960 and a Diploma in Public Administration at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, Netherlands in 1967. He obtained his Master's degree in Public Administration from the Harvard University in the United States in 1971.

Ahmad Sarji began his career in public administration as the Deputy Assistant District Officer of Klang, Selangor in 1961. At the age of 25, he was one of the youngest civil servants to be made a District Officer, first at Rembau in 1963 and then at Port Dickson in 1964. He was appointed as the Assistant Director of the Public Service Department in 1968 and the Secretary of the Prime Minister's Department in 1972. He served as the founding Director General of the Farmers Association Authority from 1973 until 1979. In 1981, he was the Deputy Chairman and Director General of Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA). In 1985, he was appointed as the Deputy Director General of the Public Service Department (JPA) and the Director General of the Ministry of Trade and Industry, as well as the Chairman of the Malaysian Industrial Development Board (MIDA). From 1990 until 1996, he served as the Chief Secretary to the Government, the most senior position in the civil service.

Ahmad Sarji was a remarkable bureaucrat who demonstrated excellent leadership and relentlessly pushed the boundaries for his beloved country. He argued that strong development plans and policies were insufficient for Malaysia's success, and that a government dedicated entirely to serving the needs of the people was far more necessary. According to him, visionary leadership that recognises administrative challenges at the political level and is backed by competent public service administration would initiate change in public administration and socio-economic development.

In 1992, Ahmad Sarji was appointed as the first Chairman of the Institute of Islamic Understanding, Malaysia (IKIM) and served until 2009. Prime Minister Tun Mahathir reappointed him as Chair of IKIM in 2019. His leadership strengthened the institute's reputation as a leading centre for Islamic knowledge and education in promoting inter-civilisational dialogues, Islamic finance and economics, environmental ethics, and sustainable development. He also served as the Chairman of the Malaysian Institute of Standard and Industrial Research

(SIRIM) in 1992, Chairman of Permodalan Nasional Berhad in 1996, Chairman of Sime Darby in 1998, Pro-Chancellor of Universiti Tun Abdul Razak (UNITAR) in 2003, Pro-Chancellor of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) in 2006, and Chancellor of Universiti Tun Abdul Razak (UNIRAZAK) in 2012.

Ahmad Sarji regarded leadership not as a position of profit but of trust; and one can only achieve great victory if this trust was honoured. He received numerous recognitions for his outstanding leadership in administration and management, including the National Ma'al Hijrah Award in 1999, the Sports Leadership Award by the National Sports Awards, the Tun Sri Lanang Premiership National Book Icon Award, the Gold Medal of Honour 2012 by the Royal Rotary Club of Kuala Lumpur, the Queen Victoria Memorial Medal by the European Business Assembly, and he was named the National Sports Icon in 2015. In June 2008, Ahmad Sarji was granted the Seri Setia Mahkota Malaysia (SSN), which bears the title 'Tun'. He breathed his last breath on 28 August 2021 at the age of 82 and was buried at the Raudhatul Sakinah Islamic Cemetery, Bukit Kiara, Kuala Lumpur.

Professor Dato' Dr Siddiq Fadzil (1947-2021)

Mohamed Azam Mohamed Adil

Professor Dr. Siddiq Fadzil was born on 4 January 1947 in Kampung Sungai Tiang Darat, Bagan Datoh, Perak, to a family of Javanese descent. He received his primary education at Sungai Tiang Darat Primary School (1954-1959) and his secondary education at Izzuddin Shah Religious School in Ipoh (1959-1966). He then moved to the Lembah Pantai Language Teaching College in Kuala Lumpur (1967-1968) to begin his career as an educator, before continuing his studies at the University of Malaya (1971). He joined Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, as a tutor after obtaining a Bachelor of Arts degree in Islamic Studies with First Class Honours (1974), then pursued his second degree at the same university, gaining a Master of Letters (M.Litt.) in Islamic Thought in 1978. In 1989, he was the first person to get a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) degree in Malay Culture and Islamic Philosophy from the Institute of Malay Language, Literature and Culture, UKM.

Siddiq Fadzil served as the third President of the Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement (ABIM – Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia) from 1983-1991, succeeding Anwar Ibrahim, who quit to enter politics by joining UMNO. He was also the President of the National Association of Malaysian-Muslim Students