

REFERENCE PROCEEDINGS FOR ALLAHYAHRAM
TUN DATO' DR. HJ. MOHAMED SALLEH BIN ABAS

25th August 1929 – 16th January 2021

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

1. Saya Nuralissa binti Norrazak cucu kepada Allahyahram Tun Dato' Dr. Hj. Mohamed Salleh Bin Abas akan menyampaikan ucapan mewakili semua ahli keluarga Allahyahram. Saya memohon untuk menyampaikan ucapan saya diberikan dalam Bahasa Inggeris.
2. My family and I are honoured and humbled that the judiciary has convened this special reference proceedings of the Federal Court in honour of my late grandfather, Tun Dato' Dr. Hj. Mohamed Salleh Bin Abas.
3. We are deeply moved and touched by the eloquent and heartfelt speeches delivered by the President of the Malaysian Bar, the Attorney General and the Honourable Chief Justice.
4. It has been 34 years since my late grandfather was dismissed as the Lord President of the Supreme Court of Malaysia, after serving the judiciary for almost 10 years. Prior to that he had also served in the judicial and legal services including as Solicitor General before his appointment to the Federal Court.

5. My late grandfather came from humble beginnings. He was born on 25.8.1929 in Kampung Raja, Besut in the state of Terengganu. His father, my late great grandfather was a sea-fairing man and would often travel between Besut and Songkhla in southern Thailand to import rice, salt or other commodities to be sold in Besut. My late grandfather had 7 siblings including himself. His only surviving sister, Puan Hajjah Shamshiah binti Abas, is in attendance with us here today.
6. My late grandfather's journey to school was a challenging one. He had to go through bushy paths and hills which he said sometimes raised his hair for the fear of ghosts. He even had to wade knee deep water to reach his school. This showed his determination to attain education in spite of the ghosts.
7. Before he completed his primary education, he was interviewed by a team of officers from the education office of Kuala Terengganu for the purposes of sending him to study at Malay College Kuala Kangsar (MCKK). Even though he was selected, he decided to stay in Terengganu as there were no direct roads to Kuala Kangsar from Terengganu back then.
8. His desire for further education was so strong because he realized that without education, his life would be mired in poverty and ignorance. In 1940, with the assistance of his father, he decided to study at Sultan Sulaiman English School in Kuala Terengganu. He was forced to suspend school due to the Japanese invasion

in 1942 and return to Besut on foot with a number of people. The journey took 4 days. Whilst in Besut, he did not remain idle. He studied Arabic.

9. After the war was over, he resumed his studies at the English school. In 1948, he sat for the Cambridge School Certificate Examinations which was the first time that a Terengganu school ever held this Examination. He obtained grade 1 to the delight of his teachers and the Superintendent of Education at that time.
10. In 1950, the late Sultan Ismail Nasaruddin Shah, the grandfather of the present Sultan of Terengganu established a scholarship for deserving students to study in the UK. Not known to many, my late grandfather was one of the first recipients who was offered the scholarship for accountancy or public administration. He gratefully accepted the scholarship. Arriving in England, he was brought to see an officer in the colonial office. Somehow or rather, he decided to read law as he had previously studied Latin and obtained a distinction for his Cambridge examinations. And the rest as they say is history.
11. As a student, he was an admirer of Lord Denning who wrote clear judgements in short sentences and was much against technicalities. After his call to the Bar, he personally met Lord Denning to get his signature to be enrolled to the English High Court.

12. Upon his return to Malaya, he joined the Judicial and Legal Service and served for many years there and eventually became the Solicitor General from 1969 to 1979. As he was reaching the age of 50, he was counting the days to retirement to join private practice but the late Tun Suffian had other plans, appointing him straight to the Federal Court in 1979 and was eventually promoted as Chief Justice in 1982. When the late Lord President Raja Azlan Shah (as His Majesty then was) ascended to the throne in 1984, he recommended my late grandfather to succeed him as the Lord President. And so, he was appointed and served as the Lord President until his dismissal in 1988. The struggles my grandfather experienced post-1988 were neither reported nor recorded. He rarely spoke about it but only God knows the sacrifices and struggles he faced. He sought solace back in Terengganu with the guidance from God and praise be to God, he was truly a man full of sabr.

13. As a young boy, he never dreamt of being someone of position, let alone Lord President of Malaysia. He thought he would be contented living a life of a kampung man growing paddy & tapping rubber. But Allah had other plans for him & through education & hard work, he joined the civil service & became the highest judge of the land.

14. Even during his last years, he would appear before the Courts to aid those who were wronged, pro-bono. As his clientele were mostly humble folks that included fishermen or farmers, he would accept their produce in return for the legal advice he provided. That was the kind of man he was – generous and humble, expecting nothing in return.

15. Although he may appear as a man of a few words, he was a loving grandfather. Always reminding and teaching all 6 children and 26 grandchildren about Islam and the importance of seeking knowledge. I had asked several of my cousins how they would describe our late grandfather in a few words. The common ones are; studious (we would always find him reading the day's paper or a book), a workaholic (until he was not able to) and a man of nature (we would always find him in his pagoda t-shirt and kain pelekot tending to his orchard).

16. My late grandfather's dedication and devotion to serve his country never wavered through times of change and progress and through times of sadness and loss. He was a fearless man. Soon after his dismissal, he was invited to deliver the John Foster Galaway Memorial Lecture at University College London on 4.11.1988. Permit me to share an excerpt of his speech:

“In spite of what has happened to me and the Malaysian judiciary, I am happy to note that the affair surrounding my removal has so strengthened the nation that Malaysians irrespective of race and religion have become united and jointly concerned over this episode. This is surely an indication that they have understood

and appreciated the principle of an independent judiciary and, this is a great asset on which to rebuild the shattered judiciary from its present ruins. To their simple minds the message can simply be stated in these words: "No judge; no law. No law; no protection and everyone for himself."

17. I am confident that the Malaysian Judiciary had rebuilt itself from the dark days of '88 and will reach even greater heights under the stewardship of the Chief Justice and the Honourable Judges.

18. On behalf of the entire family of Tun Salleh Abas, I thank our Chief Justice, Yang Amat Arif Tun Tengku Maimun binti Tuan Mat, once again for giving me this opportunity to speak on behalf of my family at this Reference Proceedings in memory of our beloved brother, father and grandfather.

Wabillahi taufik walhidayah.

Wassalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.