

THE strong will that Fatimah possesses, however, does not mean she does not miss her husband, although she does not admit the fact. Every entry in her personal diary begins with the number of days it has been since Kadir died and every night she reads the surah yasin for his soul.

"This year, on Dec 23, would have been our 50th wedding anniversary. Just before he died, he asked me if I remembered this. He had wanted to celebrate it with me, but God decided that this would not be so."

Such is the closeness that the family enjoys that every year, on Dec 25 which is Fatimah's birthday, everybody gets together to pray and read the Quran.

"The children and grandchildren must see how important we were to each other and how we worked hard to keep the marriage going," she said.

Fatimah said this tradition has been maintained after Kadir's death, like the rest of the family routines, including the one where all the children keep a joint family file. This is where details of how the family finances and affairs are kept, with each child assigned to look after the different aspects.

Despite both her and her husband having been Cabinet ministers, Fatimah said they never had much money, "not like politicians now".

"When they (the children) were growing up, we kept every sen we had for their education and never spent on ourselves, except for one trip to perform the haj," she said.

Now, she said, she is glad that the investment has paid off and all her **children** are successful in their own fields and happily married. Of the **six**, **Mariam** is the *director-general of the National Library*, **Professor Datuk Khalid** the *dean of the medical faculty in Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia*, **Mohamed Shah** the *managing director of McDonald's*, **Ali** an *accountant and partner of Ernst and Young*, **Karim** a *businessman and area manager of TOA Corporation* while **Faridah** is an *economist working for a Copenhagen-based organisation, the Industrialisation Fund For Developing Countries*.

They are now pooling resources to build a library in Fatimah's home to store her and her husband's memoirs.