

15/12/2001

Usman's family grateful for memorial

PETALING JAYA, Fri. - The family of national laureate Datuk Dr Usman Awang has expressed its gratitude to the Johor Government for its plan to build a memorial to him in his birthplace of Kuala Sedili.

Eldest daughter Haslina said today that the family was touched by this gesture and expressed heartfelt support for the plan, which they had learnt of from the newspapers.

As yet, no representative from the State Government had contacted them, she said.

Usman, one of Johor's illustrious sons, died on Nov 29 after a long battle with diabetes and heart disease. He left behind a legacy of some of the best literary works that many in and outside the literary fraternity felt would benefit generations of Malaysians.

The Johor Government's memorial plan is a way of ensuring that his works do not die with the man.

Johor Education and Manpower, Youth, Sports and Culture Committee chairman Ahmad Zahri Jamil said on Wednesday that a special committee had been set up to expedite the construction of the memorial, in the form of a museum, to display Usman's works and personal artefacts.

Haslina, 44, said Usman's family appreciated this gesture. She said it was too early for them to make any decision on whether his personal belongings could be given away to the museum.

Haslina also expressed the family's gratitude to the scores of Malaysians, including Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Hospital Pantai group chief executive officer Datuk Dr Ridzwan Abu Bakar, who extended their condolences.

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