

31 DEC 2003

Mahathir-Tribute

OVERWHELMING RESPONSE TO BERNAMA'S "MAHATHIR: A SPECIAL TRIBUTE"

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 31 (Bernama) -- The dedication by software engineer Lee Wee Yan to Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad on the special Bernama.com "Mahathir: A Special Tribute" website set up in October as a tribute to then outgoing Prime Minister has been selected as the best.

In his dedication, Lee, 26, who is now working in Britain, said: "A true champion is not one that has won many honours on a battlefield, nor one that crushes his enemies through might. A true champion is one that gives his people an identity, a purpose to strive harder and a sense of self-belief. Dr Mahathir, you are a legacy".

Lee, of Damansara, was presented with a laptop which was received by his mother, Lee Kim Teng, from Bernama general manager Datuk Syed Jamil Syed Jaafar at a ceremony at Wisma Bernama here today.

"I regret not being able to attend this special occasion due to work commitments. However, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Bernama news agency committee for awarding me this prize," he said.

The selection committee also picked the dedication by Azmi Atan, of Johor Baharu, and Jessie Francis, of Kuala Lumpur.

Azmi was presented with a computer desktop which was accepted on his behalf by a friend, while Francis was present to personally receive a personal digital assistant (PDA).

The idea to organise the dedication was mooted by Bernama chairman Datuk Kalimullah Hassan as Bernama's way of encouraging Malaysians to express their gratitude and appreciation to Dr Mahathir. He donated the gifts for the best three dedications.

Kalimullah steps down as the chairman of Bernama today and will assume the position of group editor-in-chief and executive director of The New Straits Times Press (NSTP) tomorrow.

Bernama.com received overwhelming response from Malaysians as well as non-Malaysians. The 1,000 dedication received included those from other countries including Australia, Britain, Saudi Arabia, Senegal and Singapore.

Although the length of the dedication was restricted to 50 words, there were some which exceeded the requirement.

The selection committee headed by Kalimullah himself decided to select four lengthy tributes for special mention. The lengthy tributes included those by British-born Malaysian Datuk Paddy Bowie, Senegalese Mohamed Ali Toure, Pain Muzal of Sabah, and Wan Hussain Wan Yusoff, of Kedah.

The tributes can be viewed through Bernama.com. A compilation of the dedications will be presented to Dr Mahathir personally by Syed Jamil.

-- BERNAMA

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