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University honours five ex-teachers

Jaspal Singh

TANJUNG MALIM, Fri. - Datuk Mohd Zain Rashid, who once taught Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the Sultan Abdul Hamid College in Alor Star, was today bestowed the "Tokoh Guru Suluh Budiman 2003" award.

The 90-year-old former teacher is one of five people to be bestowed with the award by Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris here. Penang Governor Tun Abdul Rahman Abbas presented the awards.

Other recipients were Singapore's former senior Minister for Education Sidek Saniff, 65, Sultan of Brunei Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah's private secretary Pengiran Abdul Mumin Pengiran Othman, 80, author Abu Hassan Ali, 73, and former curator of the Terengganu Museum Othman Ali, 84.

They each received a medal and certificate of appreciation.

All graduated from the then Sultan Idris Teachers' College between 1934 and 1965.

Zain said teachers must realise that their students were the nation's future leaders.

"Give them the best education and at the same time sound ethical and religious grounding ...do not teach them anything which will make them act contrary to the aspirations of the people."

Zain said he had taught Dr Mahathir "all that we as teachers believed in would make our students responsible citizens".

Recalling the days when he taught the Prime Minister, the former senior lecturer and one-time principal of the college said Dr Mahathir was a fast learner.

"The teachers at the Sultan Abdul Hamid College used to tell each other how (Dr) Mahathir could answer difficult questions.

"This was because he had access to large number of titles in his father's library."

Vice-chancellor Datuk Dr Mohammad Noor Salleh said the five were chosen for their contribution in educating and helping to mould the younger generation and contributing towards the growth of Malay intellectualism.

UPSI also bestowed the Anugerah Suluh Budiman to 10 former teachers. They were Datuk Abdul Fatah Hassan, Datuk Abdul Rashid Ngah, Baharuddin Marji, Ali Yaakob, Wan Dus Mohamed, Abdul Rahman Salleh, Shafie Tasi, Mohamad Said, Mohd Anis Tairan and the late Zainuddin Ismail.