

# Sir Norman gets his PR but it is 10 minutes too late

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IPOH: Sir Norman Frank Sisson died yesterday without knowing that his dying wish of becoming a Malaysian permanent resident had been granted.

Ten minutes after he breathed his last at the Ipoh Hospital, Home Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Radzi Sheikh Ahmad announced in Putrajaya that the 75-year-old Australian's request had been approved.

The minister had used his ministerial discretion to approve Sir Norman's application after reading articles in the *New Straits Times* about his predicament.

But it was two months too late for the former businessman who came to work in Malaysia in 1989 and stayed.

His earnest wish had been to be as legally Malaysian as he could after coming to love the country and its people over 17 years of residence here.

Some of Sir Norman's friends could not help but be a little cynical when they commented that the approval of PR status could have been done earlier.

"Well, it is a little late in the day for Sir Norman isn't it?" said A.J. Wahid.

Sir Norman died at 4pm yesterday due to lung and kidney complications, after being admitted to the hospital on July 17.

A friend said Sir Norman never came out of a two-month coma.

Over the last week, the close friends that he had made here

kept vigil around his bed as Sir Norman's condition worsened.

But they still harboured hopes that he would recover as he opened his eyes several days ago.

"He died with tears in his eyes," said a friend.

She said his son, Leigh, and daughter Maggie, who were in Perth, Australia, had been informed of his death but would not be able to make it for the funeral.

Sir Norman is expected to be cremated with his ashes to be sent later to his family in

Australia.

It is learnt that the hospital will not release Sir Norman's body until his medical bills amounting to RM20,000 had been paid.

A friend said Leigh was expected to send the money soon to make funeral arrangements possible.

Sir Norman said in a recent interview that he had submitted his application in 1989 but had not received word from the ministry.

He had also written regularly to ask about the status of his application.

Meanwhile, Radzi, unaware of Sir Norman's death, told reporters that his officers had been directed to deliver the PR papers today to Ipoh Hospital.

He told reporters after his ministry's post-Cabinet meeting that the Immigration Department had approved Sir Norman's application on compassionate grounds.

"We read the newspaper articles about him and I used my ministerial discretion to allow him PR."

Radzi said that the department did not have records of Sir Norman's application, adding that he may never have filed a formal application.

"Our records show that he only sent one letter asking for PR two years ago, but that was not a formal application."

Asked why state immigration officers in Perak did not act on it, Radzi said the incident "happened some time ago and is quite unfortunate".