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Father of Independence leaves a legacy of unity

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112TH BIRTHDAY COMMEMORATION:

Malaysians are inspired by Tunku, who courageously led the nation on the road to independence

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The powerful words of 'tanah tumpahnya darahku' in the Malaysian national anthem were written by **Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj**. His granddaughter, Datin Sharifah Menyelara Hussein, says that line is his reason for being, his cause and his inspiration.

IN commemorating the 112th birthday of the nation's Father of Independence Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj today, his call for unity, understanding and cooperation among Malaysians is as relevant today as it was half a century ago.

Recalling fond memories of a man she tenderly called "Tok", Tunku's granddaughter, Datin Sharifah Menyelara Hussein, said the lessons her grandfather taught were applicable not only to their immediate family but to Malaysians as a whole.

"Take each other as you are, accept your weaknesses as well as your strengths'. That is a lesson we Malaysians should remember," she said.

Speaking at the Commemoration of Tunku's birthday, organised by the Institute for Democracy and Economic Affairs at the Tunku Abdul Rahman Memorial here yesterday, Sharifah said: "Tok was remembered for his rising cheers of 'Merdeka' and his eloquence and skills as a speaker.

"But he was different at home. He was subtle and what he left unsaid was as important as what was said."

Tunku, Sharifah said, had a love for the country that was incomparable and that Malaysia meant everything to him.

"The powerful words of *tanah tumpahnya darahku* in our national

anthem were written by Tok himself.

"For him, that line was not a mere lyric, but his reason for being, his cause, his inspiration.

The legacy of Tunku has touched many, young and old, from all backgrounds and all parts of the nation.

Chan Saw Imm, 56, described Tunku as a down-to-earth leader and appreciated the effort he put in to achieve independence.

"Although Tunku was a prince, he went down to the ground to help the needy," the mother of four said.

Rabab Borhanuddin, a postgrad-

uate student of Universiti Malaya, said Tunku was a symbol of independence to Malaysians and the iconic image of him shouting "Merdeka" on Aug 31, 1957 meant a lot to Malaysians.

Account executive Nabilah Abdul Rashid, 24, said Tunku's courage in seeking independence for the nation inspired her in her daily life.

Nabilah said his leadership skills should be emulated, as Tunku was known to be unbiased, fair and loving to all Malaysians.

Aminah Mohd Noor, 79, from Kampung Simpang Pelangai, Pa-

hang, said the day Malaya achieved independence was still fresh in her memory.

"It was the biggest news of the day and everybody shared the joy. I was working in Kuala Lipis as a nurse at that time and I heard about it on the radio," she said.

Taylor's University Centre for Continuing Professional Education vice-president Professor Dr Selvaraj Oyyan Pillay said Tunku was able to unite the nation.

"He was a man of integrity and sincerity who always spoke cordially."