

You will always be our 'ibu'

NST 31/10/2003 - 2 PRECISE

Dear Datuk Seri,

AFTER Friday, you will "step down" as the First Lady — wife of the Prime Minister. We know that you will heave a deep sigh of relief, not because you are glad the nightmare is over.

Indeed, no. As you have told journalists recently, it will simply be because you will have more time to yourself, for your husband and your family.

There is much that you have to catch up with, not least with family and friends who want to visit you in your "civilian" home at the Mines.

We wish you well, Datuk Seri, and hope Dr Mahathir's post-retirement days will be restful but no less



stimulating for you.

We know the first thing you will attend to is the packing of your belongings in Putrajaya and the unpacking of these things in your new home. Yes, we remember how worried you were that you were not able to supervise this because you had so many engagements and did not want to disappoint the people who had invited you and your husband.

As Malaysians say *adieu* to you as First Lady, we know some things will not change. We know you will continue being "Dr Siti Hasmah", *ibu kepada anak-anak* Malaysia.

You were there for many Malaysians striving to reach the peak. You lamented, as we all did, at some sorry state of affairs in the country affecting the layman. Your voice was also loud in international organisations.

Datuk Seri, thank you for being there. We will always

remember you as the stoic, strong and serene woman who was Malaysia's First Lady for 23 years.

It was so nice to hear you say that getting back to "ordinary life" was no big deal. You said there would be many things you would miss but there would be as many things to look forward to.

Here's to better things to come! And may God bless you and your family.

Nuraina A. Samad
Political Editor, NST