

Ohio varsity lauds PM's contributions
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TRIBUTE: Najib receives honorary doctorate

SHAH ALAM: PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak was yesterday conferred an honorary doctorate in humane letters by Ohio University for his achievements in education, democratisation and unity.

The award was conferred by Ohio University trustee David Brightbill on behalf of university president Roderick McDavis, at the 9th Tun Abdul Razak Lecture, an event celebrating the 32-year partnership between Ohio University and the Malaysian government.

Reading the award citation, Brightbill said the doctorate was given in recognition of Najib's contributions, leadership and influence in the field of education, as well as his clear commitment to the democratisation and modernisation of Malaysia.

"Najib fulfils many of the requirements for the award based on his outstanding record of accomplishments as a national and international leader who deals with society's most pressing problems," Brightbill said.

The award was jointly presented to Najib by Brightbill, Ohio University Centre of International Studies executive director Dr Ming Li and its Advancement vice-president Dr Bryan Benchoff.

In his acceptance speech, Najib paid tribute to the American university for its role in Malaysia's development.

He said since 1968, Ohio University, through its work with Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM), had helped develop many business, accounting and communication programmes needed to train the country's young talent.

"We had set up a new nation but we still had to forge a new social consensus and transform our economy. We needed dynamic entrepreneurs, strong institutions and business-friendly civil servants."

Since then, he said, more than 2,400 Malaysians had graduated from Ohio University, the largest alumni group outside the state of Ohio itself.

"Engineers trained in Ohio built the bridges and buildings on which Malaysia's modernisation depended. Accountants and business graduates helped create a strong and internationally competitive private sector.

"And teachers and professionals ensured that the skills learnt in Ohio were embedded within Malaysia's institutions."

The link between educational institutions, he said, could be seen as a sign of cooperation between the East and West.

"It is fashionable now to frame the growth of the East as an existential crisis for the West; to claim that two powerful civilisations must come into conflict rather than cooperation.

"The relationship we celebrate today offers an alternative view."

Present were Najib's wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, United States Ambassador to Malaysia Datuk Paul Jones, and Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Khaled Nordin.

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