

Rafidah Not Defending Her Umno MT Post
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GEORGE TOWN, Aug 26 (Bernama) -- Former Wanita Umno chief Tan Sri Rafidah Aziz will not be defending her post as an Umno Supreme Council member (MT) in the party election, scheduled in October.

Rafidah who is the longest serving Umno MT member (since 1975), said new faces should be given an opportunity to contest MT posts in this year's Umno election.

"I am the longest serving MT member. I started since Tun Abdul Razak Hussein was the president until today and its time for me to retire from politics. For the past 35 years, I have won the post (Umno MT) through contests and not by appointment.

"I know I can't hang on to the post forever as I'm already 70 now and we should give opportunities for young leaders to contest," she told reporters after her keynote address at the Northern Region MNC Women's Leadership Summit here, Monday.

Rafidah who joined UMNO in 1970, won the Selayang Parliament seat in the 1978 General Election by beating DAP's Zainal Rampak by a 21,279-vote majority.

In the 1984 Umno election, she became Wanita Umno Chief after defeating Datin Paduka Zaleha Ismail by 71 votes but in 2008, she failed to defend her post as Wanita UMNO Chief after losing to Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil.

Rafidah is currently Non-Executive Chairman and Independent Non-Executive Director of AirAsia X Bhd.

She said politics is not all about winning party posts or winning General Election but instead all about serving the nation.

"To me, politics is all about serving the country and serving the public to ensure that the country achieve its goals," she said.

In the 1982 General Election, Rafidah contested in Kuala Kangsar, Perak and eventually became a seventh term MP with the latest in 2008 when she defeated PAS candidate Khairuddin Abd Malik by 1,458 votes.

Her last post was Minister of International Trade and Industry (until 2008).

Rafidah was not a candidate in the 13th General Election.

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