

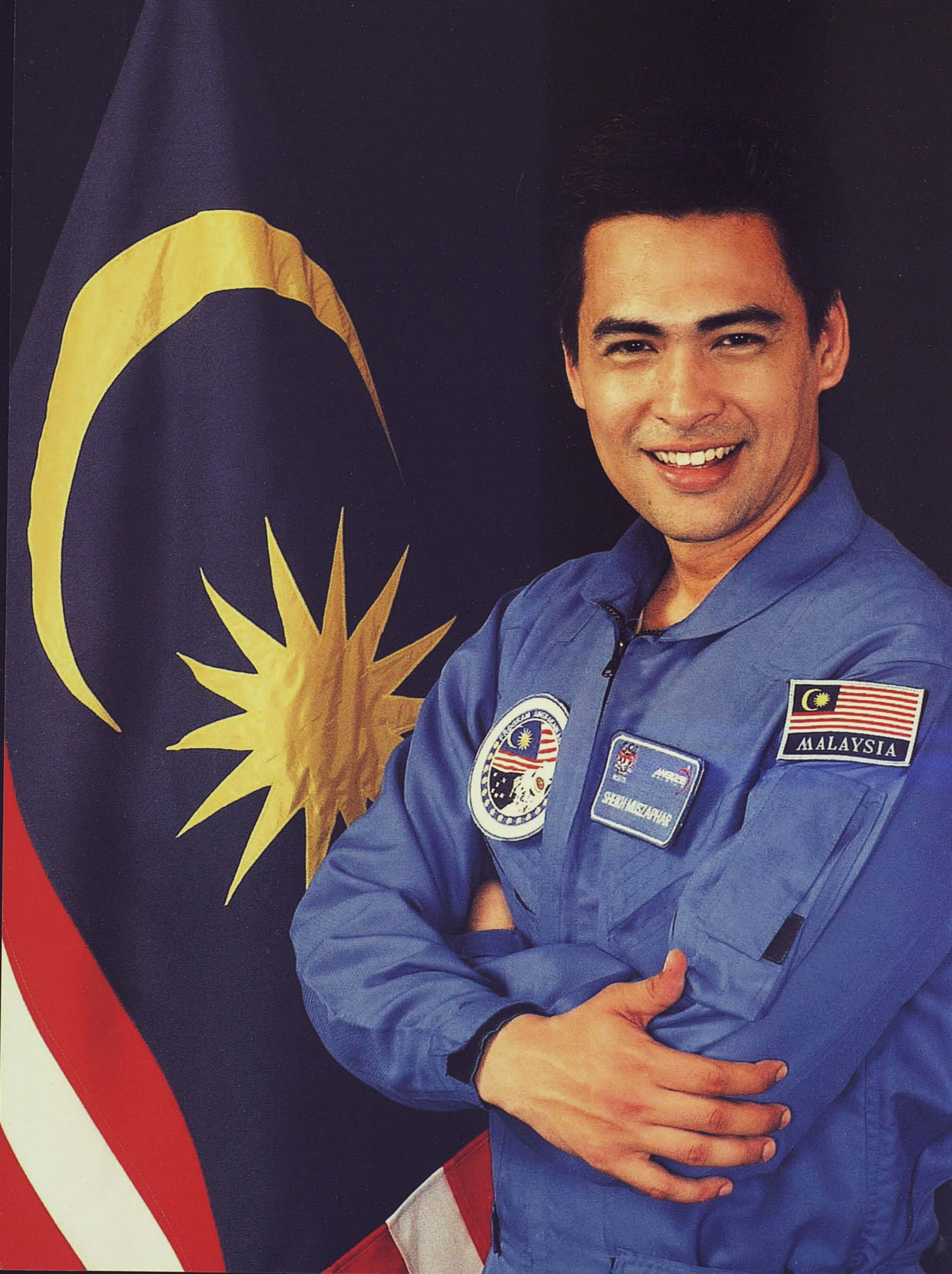
# REACHING FOR THE STARS

“You have been my  
No. 1 fan. You have always  
believed in me. My space  
journey is a tribute  
to you, Ajil.”

Dr Sheikh Muszaphar Shukor  
First Malaysian Angkasawan



by **SHEIKH MUSTAPHA SHUKOR AL-MASRIE**



# REACHING FOR THE STARS

**SHEIKH MUSTAPHA SHUKOR AL-MASRIE**

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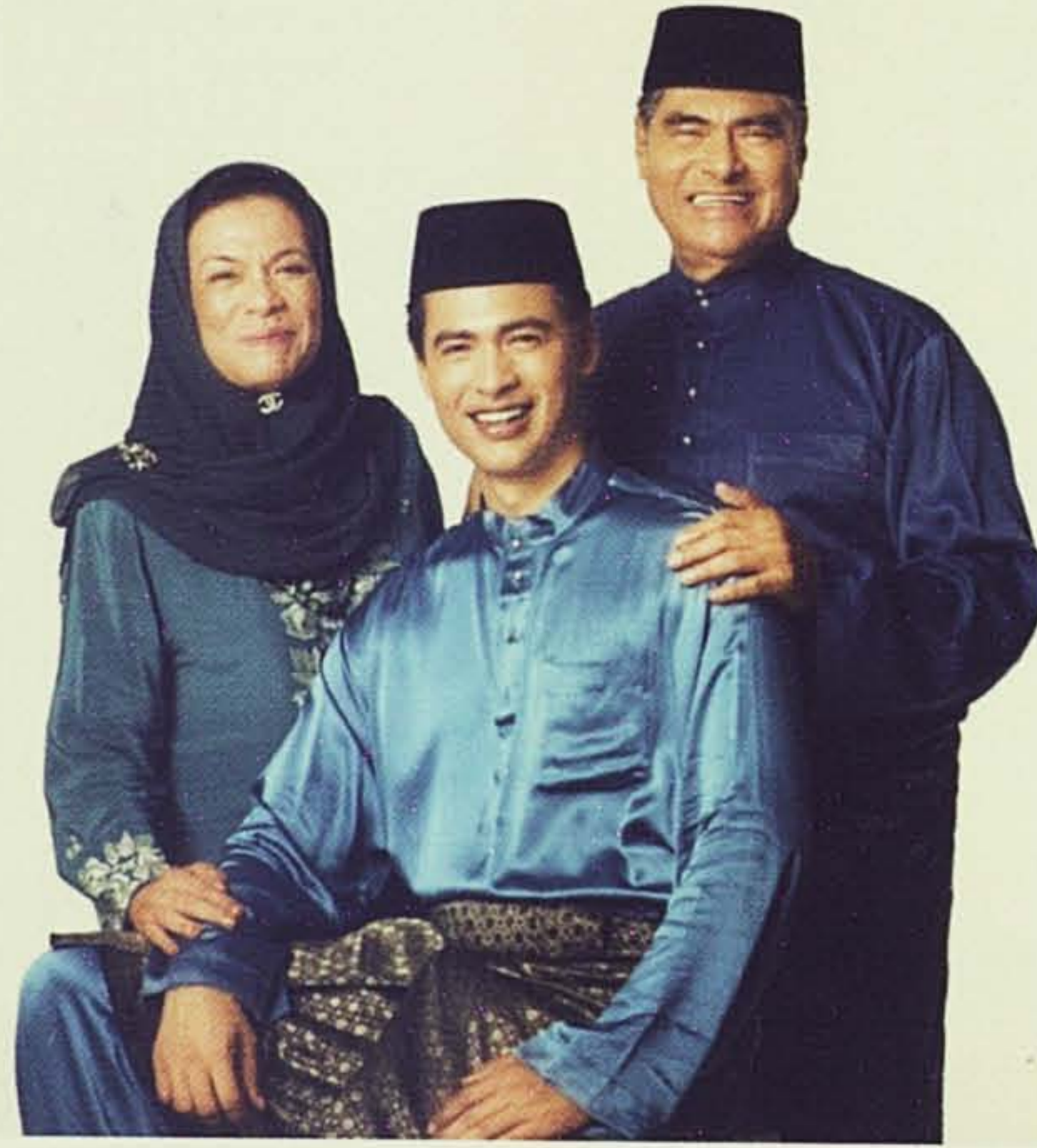
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## All In the Family



**Parents:**

Standing left to right:

*Datin Zuraidah Sheikh Ahmad (Umi - Mother),  
Datuk Sheikh Mustapha Sheikh Shukor (Abah - Father).*



**Brothers:**

Left to right:

*The late Sheikh Mustapha Shukor Al-Masrie (Ajil), Sheikh Taufik Shukor Al-Masrie (Opik),  
Dr Sheikh Muszaphar Shukor Al-Masrie (Amus), Sheikh Ahmad Shukor Al-Masrie (Abang),  
Sheikh Arwiz Shukor Al-Masrie (Arwiz).*

# Dedication

This book is a tribute to the late Sheikh Mustapha Shukor Al-Masrie (Ajil) – a beloved son, a caring brother and loving father to Aiman and Balkish.

We sincerely wish to thank everyone involved in developing this book. Our special thanks especially to our dear family friends Dr Adleen Che Ani and her husband, Dr Azmi Aziz, who initially put forth the idea of publishing this book.

You helped us make Ajil's dream come true.

Thank You

FROM

THE FAMILY OF SHEIKH MUSTAPHA SHUKOR AL-MASRIE



*Amus in ISS with his family pictures*



# Foreword

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By Dr Sheikh Muszaphar Shukor  
*Angkasawan Malaysia*

**M**y journey to space is a tribute to my late younger brother, Ajil, who passed away on October 27, 2007. Who would have thought that this incident would occur?

What a twist of fate! I was the one facing all the dangers and risks of travelling at 27,000km/h into space but God took his life instead.

It was a tragic moment for my family and me, especially for my mother. The whole family was focusing on me on the day I was launched into space on October 10, 2007. My mother lost 7kg during those two weeks before the launch, just worrying about me. Again, who would have thought that Ajil's life would be taken instead?

I am stunned and shocked up to this very day. There was and still is an emptiness inside me. My journey into space was supposed to have a happy ending, not only for me but for the entire nation. There was so much I wanted to share with Ajil... the experiences I have gathered and my moments in space. Ajil was the most excited one when I was short-listed for the space programme. He was also the one who was most ecstatic when I was chosen as the *angkasawan*.

He kept on telling everyone he met how proud he was of me. He was full of pride and joy. During the selection process, he encouraged and pushed me to the limit, reminding me not to give up. He believed in me right from the very start. Ajil knew I would be chosen as Malaysia's first *angkasawan*. We discussed the right strategies to take. We studied about space on many occasions. He would definitely be the chosen *angkasawan* himself had he applied for the programme. He would have been my strongest competitor.

Ajil was a brilliant intellectual. He was funny at the same time. Everything an *angkasawan* needs to be. He made me laugh even though we fought and argued once in a while. But, that is what being brothers is all about. We were close-knit and inseparable – all five of us. I truly and dearly miss him.

Ajil was three years younger than me. Since we were young, I've always tried to be a role model for him. He would try to imitate me in many ways – from the way I dressed to the way I acted. I guess he always looked up to me. We were really close. So were the rest of the brothers. When I had a fight with my two elder