

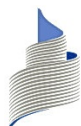
A portrait of Tan Sri Leo Moggie, an elderly man with grey hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a patterned tie. He is seated in a dark leather office chair at a wooden desk. The background features wood-paneled walls with framed certificates and a computer monitor. The lighting is warm and professional.

PERDANA LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION  
ORAL HISTORY SERIES

**A CONVERSATION WITH  
TAN SRI LEO MOGGIE**

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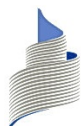
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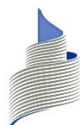
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# CONTENTS

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<b>Foreword by Tan Sri Azman Hashim</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Foreword by Tan Sri Nik Mohamed Nik Yaacob</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Profile: Tan Sri Leo Moggie</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Profile: Mohd Shahwahid Haji Othman</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Background</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>School</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>University</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Values</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Politics</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Leadership</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Sabah &amp; Sarawak</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>The Multimedia Super Corridor</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Malaysia's Energy Sector</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Life Principles</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>About Perdana Leadership Foundation</b>	<b>89</b>

# FOREWORD

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**Tan Sri Azman Hashim**

**Chairman, Board of Trustees, Perdana Leadership Foundation**

**JUST AS AN ACCOMPLISHED CAMERAMAN PANS** out and zooms in on his subject for greater effect and clarity, a keen historian employs both a macro as well as micro lens to history for deeper understanding. The sweep of history may be grand and its arc may span decades, but the view from the individual who was in the thick of it may be far different. Often, it's more nuanced and complex.

The Oral History series by the Perdana Leadership Foundation is akin to the close-ups and zooms of the camera – focusing on specific individuals and their experience of history, their thinking, and their views. It is our hope that these oral history sessions will enrich the nation's documented history, and perhaps even unveil new facets of our past and present.

In this episode of our Oral History series, we had the privilege of conversing with one of the longest-serving Federal Ministers from Sarawak. I thank Tan Sri Leo Moggie for his time and generosity in sharing his experiences as a Sarawakian politician, from the tumultuous 1970s to the fast paced 1990s and early 2000s. Tan Sri's personal story as well as his account of the politics of the time offer lessons and insights to all readers.

I also thank the interviewer, Professor Dr Mohd Shahwahid Othman, as well as the Oral History team, for their work in making this series a reality.

The Board of Trustees of Perdana Leadership Foundation fully supports this endeavour to document the personal histories of key Malaysians for the benefit of future generations.

# FOREWORD

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**Tan Sri Nik Mohamed Nik Yaacob**

**Executive Director, Perdana Leadership Foundation**

**TAN SRI LEO MOGGIE WAS A SARAWAK** politician who experienced first-hand life in Sarawak before Independence, and after the formation of Malaysia in 1963.

In this transcript of his oral history with Perdana Leadership Foundation, he recounts many of the early dissatisfactions of the Sarawak natives with federal policies, and shares his opinion on the current scenario of East and Peninsular Malaysian politics. As a former member of the Opposition in Sarawak who then joined the National Front, a civil servant, and a Cabinet Minister who served for more than two decades under the leadership of Tun Hussein Onn and Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Tan Sri Leo has many insights to share. His stories about growing up in a longhouse in rural Kanowit, pursuing further education in New Zealand, serving in the Sarawak state government, and becoming a politician, make for a very enlightening read, as are his views on the unique politics of East Malaysia, and Malaysia's energy sector. I also particularly enjoyed his anecdotes on Tun Tan Sri Temenggong Jugah and Tun Abdul Rahman Yakub, among others.

I'm grateful that he agreed to this conversation, and thank him for his time. I also thank Professor Dr Mohd Shahwahid Othman, of Universiti Putra Malaysia, for being our interviewer for another episode of the Oral History series. I also thank the Board of Trustees for continuing to support our efforts to document key Malaysians' oral histories.

This book will be of interest to researchers as well as members of the public who wish to know more about Tan Sri Leo Moggie, and Sarawak's as well as Malaysia's early political history.

of Batu Lintang as a teacher training college, but during my time, it also provided schooling for young, native boys from all over Sarawak. We mixed with people of different backgrounds and different cultures. English was the medium of instruction and if you were caught not speaking English, you were fined. There was very intensive use of English, and a curriculum based on the English public school system.

You attended to your studies but you were also expected to participate in extracurricular activities, including sports and committees such as the gardening committee where you planted vegetables which you then sold to the school canteen. You received additional pocket money from that endeavour. Each morning, there were physical exercises led by the teachers. It was a very good environment. We were not purely academic. Teachers were also very dedicated. I think Batu Lintang played a very important role for me and, I believe, for many others who went there.

**QMS | Tan Sri, what were your extracurricular activities then?**

**SLM |** I played football, of course, and hockey. As I said, we were also encouraged to do a lot of gardening. Students also cleaned the school compound on a rotation basis. We were encouraged to organise ourselves based on the hut where we stayed. The hut captain would have a roster. Everybody had their turn.

**QMS | It seems the student experience nowadays is different.**



**TSLM |** Very much so. You know, I attended a Batu Lintang alumni gathering some time last year and shared things with some of the (current) students there. I gather the students don't clean the compound nor cut the grass now. In those days, that was part and parcel of what schoolchildren did.

**DMS |** What are your views on this? I enrolled in Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) the year the university was elevated from Kolej Pertanian to Universiti Pertanian Malaysia, and we had to do weeding! It definitely inculcated the agricultural culture within us.

**TSLM |** I think that students should be encouraged to clean the school compound. Students in other schools also had to clean toilets. It was normal.

**DMS |** When you were at Batu Lintang, were you inspired to become a teacher?

**TSLM |** Batu Lintang was more a continuation of school for us. In 1958, it became a full-fledged teacher training college when the government opened other secondary schools. We were then sent to attend classes at the new schools, depending on the class we were in. Some of us were sent to start the more senior class in Miri at Tanjung Lobang, now known as Kolej Tun Datu Tuanku Haji Bujang. Others started classes at the present Tun Abdul Razak College, which used to be called Dragon School. The third school was Kanowit Secondary School which is now SMK Datuk Haji Abdul Rahman Yakub (SEDAYA). The Batu Lintang schoolkids were split among these three main schools. That's how



**TAN SRI DATUK AMAR LEO MOGGIE** anak Irok was Malaysia's Minister of Energy, Communications and Multimedia, and Minister of Welfare Services in the Sarawak State Government in the eras of Tun Abdul Razak, Tun Hussein Onn, and Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad. He had an illustrious career as a politician in Sarawak, first as a member of the Opposition, then as part of the National Front. Tan Sri is the longest-serving Chairman of TNB, Malaysia's largest electricity utility company, having helmed the electricity company since 2004.

Perdana Leadership Foundation interviewed Tan Sri Leo Moggie as part of its Oral History Series. A proud Dayak, Tan Sri shares much of what life was like in East Malaysia before Sarawak's Independence, and the complications that arose once it became part of Malaysia. He shares also many entertaining anecdotes of life as a politician in Sarawak.

This book shines a spotlight on one of Malaysia's longest-serving members of Cabinet, and an icon of Sarawak politics, Tan Sri Leo Moggie anak Irok.

