

Eminent archaeologist gets awarded honorary Doctor of Humanities degree

Wawasan Open University recognises her contributions to preservation, promotion of Malaysia's prehistoric past, cultural heritage.

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Datuk Dr Zuraina Abdul Majid (left) receives an honorary degree of Doctor of Humanities from Wawasan Open University chancellor Tunku Tan Sri Imran Tuanku Ja'afar. Applauding the occasion is Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon (right). – Facebook pic, November 26, 2023.

BY **Ian McIntyre**

WAWASAN Open University (WOU) has recognised the contributions of eminent archaeologist Datuk Dr Zuraina Abdul Majid by conferring on her the honorary degree of Doctor of Humanities at its annual convocation in Penang yesterday.

Chairman of WOU's board of governors Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon commended "the nation's first professionally trained archaeologist" during the event at the university's main campus in George Town.

"This prestigious accolade recognises her pioneering work in Malaysian archaeological research and many outstanding contributions to the preservation and promotion of Malaysia's rich prehistoric past and cultural heritage," he said.

Koh highlighted her ground-breaking discoveries at archaeological sites, including the Niah Caves in Sarawak, the 10,000-year-old intact skeleton of the “Perak Man”, and Kota Tampan, a 74,000-year-old Paleolithic stone tool site in Lenggong Valley, Perak.

“Zuraina was instrumental in many ways in helping Melaka and George Town to be successfully added as Historic Cities of the Straits of Malacca on the much-coveted Unesco World Heritage List in 2008,” said Koh, a former Penang chief minister.

He added that it was especially significant to award her the honorary degree in the year that George Town’s status as a heritage site celebrates its 15th anniversary. Zuraina is a former national heritage commissioner.

Zuraina, 79, remains active, lending her expertise as a fellow of the Academy of Sciences, Malaysia, as well as being the heritage advisor to the Sultan of Selangor.

She received the honorary degree from WOU chancellor Tunku Tan Sri Imran Tuanku Ja’afar. Also present was chief executive and vice-chancellor Prof Dr Lily Chan.

Chan announced that WOU would be producing ten graduates from the Doctor of Business Administration programme, since it was accredited by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency in November last year.

This year’s convocation sees 803 graduates, the majority of whom are working adults who earn while they learn.

This total comprises 172 from the postgraduate programmes and 631 from the undergraduate programmes, increasing WOU’s alumni strength to 8,081.

She pointed out that the popular programmes with the highest number of graduates are the Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Accounting (92 graduates) and the Commonwealth Executive MBA (82). – The Vibes, November 26, 2023.

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