

2020 LAS LIFETIME CONTRIBUTION AWARD

Idris Bin Rashid Khan Surattee

Idris Bin Rashid Khan Surattee is being honoured with the 2020 LAS Lifetime Contribution Award for his significant contribution to the development of the library profession in Singapore. During his career that spans more than 30 years, he has had a significant influence and left a lasting mark on Singapore librarianship, both in the public and private sector.

Mr Idris began his career at the British Council Library before spending over 25 years at Singapore Press Holdings (SPH) where he rose to the rank of Head Librarian and Vice President of the Information Resource Centre, a position he held for over a decade. He spearheaded the effort to build the SPH Information Resource Centre into a cutting edge, world class news library and repository for many of Singapore's most important historical documents and in the process demonstrated how libraries can offer value and thrive in a constantly changing and highly competitive corporate environment.

Mr Idris' management and leadership skills are highly acclaimed within SPH. He has been a fount of knowledge, respected role model and nurturing mentor who has constantly encouraged his staff to build confidence in their own abilities and gain new skills to improve themselves to better serve their community. He has also followed his own advice to pursue lifelong learning by returning to University to earn his MSc (Information Studies) in 1997 and then went on to become a part-time Lecturer in the Division of Information Studies at Nanyang Technological University.

In addition to building and managing Singapore's largest special library, Mr Idris has also become one of the most respected and influential thought leaders in librarianship in Singapore. He has demonstrated a unique ability to highlight important, unconventional, occasionally provocative and often controversial issues while moderating differences and ensuring balance among those with opposing views. He has actively participated in guiding the discussion regarding where Singapore libraries should be headed while bringing meaning to librarianship in the larger context of society and how libraries and librarians can contribute to Singapore's national goals and development.

Mr Idris' success in enhancing the quality of conversation about the appropriate direction of Singapore libraries is, in part, rooted in his active participation in the Library Association of Singapore (LAS) and other prominent organisations. In LAS, Idris served as a Council Member, Editor of the LAS Journal, Chairperson of the Publications Committee, and LAS Vice President, just to name a few. He has also been appointed to other Boards including the National Library Board, where he played a key role in securing the rights to digitise, for public access, a collection of 1.8 million newspaper articles from the Straits Times spanning nearly two hundred years of Singapore's social history. His wisdom and insights on matters pertaining to cultural heritage have been put to well use through his participation on the Boards of the National Archives, and Street and Building Names, as well as serving as a Director of the Malay Heritage Foundation.

In 2019, Yayasan MENDAKI published a book by Mr Idris and Dr Noor Aisha Binte Abdul Rahman titled Navigating Educational Development: MENDAKI and the Malays. It showcases the progress and breakthroughs of the Malay/Muslim community in tandem with the nation's advancements and how MENDAKI, as the pioneering self-help group, upholds the critical self-help concept through creating a resilient community superstructure of opportunities

LAS is privileged to present Idris bin Rashid Khan Surattee with the Lifetime Contribution Award in appreciation of his influence and involvement in not only building and managing one of Singapore's most important and successful libraries, but for also making a profound impact on libraries, librarians and the community at large in Singapore.