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Four receive Merdeka Award

RECOGNITION: They are honoured for contribution to country, region

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FOUR outstanding Malaysians received the 2016 Merdeka Award at Dewan Filharmonik Petronas here last night.

The four who received the award from Sultan of Perak Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah were Tan Sri Lakshmanan Krishnan, Tan Sri Dr Salleh Mohd Nor, Prof Datuk Dr Looi Lai Meng and Prof Datuk Dr Wan Ramli Wan Daud.

Lakshmanan is a pioneer in the Malay film industry. He received the award in the Education and Community category for his outstanding contribution to laying the foundation for the modern film industry and for his instrumental role in developing early acting talent, including the late Tan Sri P. Ramlee.

Salleh received the award under the Environment category for his contribution to the conservation of the natural environment and forestry, through his leadership role at the Forest Research Institute Malaysia and the Malaysian Nature Society.

Dr Looi, the longest-serving diagnostic renal pathologist in the country, was honoured under the Health, Science and Technology category, for her outstanding contribution to

pioneering research in amyloidosis, renal pathology and cancer pathology, and for her role in promoting pathology in the country and the region.

As for Dr Wan Ramli, he was given the award under the Outstanding Scholastic Achievement category for his scholarly research and development in advancing the technology of fuel cells and hydrogen energy in the country and the region.

All four recipients gave their acceptance speeches after receiving their awards.

Dr Looi paid tribute to her colleagues who have been with her throughout her 35-year journey. She also attributed her success to her university, Universiti Malaya.

"I owe whatever success I have achieved academically to the university I work in. To Universiti Malaya and the Faculty of Medicine, this tribute is to you.

"To my parents and family, this tribute is also to you."

Dr Wan Ramli, the last of the recipients, said it was a great honour for him, as a scientist and professor who has devoted 35 years of his life in the research of hydrogen and fuel

cells, to get the award.

Sultan Nazrin, the royal patron, presented the Merdeka Award trophy, a work of art by Malaysian artist Latiff Mohidin, a recognition certificate and a cash award of RM500,000 to the recipients.

Present was Raja Permaisuri Perak Tuanku Zara Salim.

Guests were entertained by a dance performance by Emma Tosh and Azmi Zainal, as well as two vocal performances by Salamiah Hassan and Akim Ahmad, accompanied by the Malaysian Philharmonic Youth Orchestra.

Cartoonist Datuk Mohammad Nor Khalid, better known as Lat, also sketched his famous Kampung Boy character lifting the Merdeka Award trophy.

Lat was the Merdeka Award recipient in 2014 for his outstanding contribution to the promotion and pluralism of Malaysia's cultural identity through the use of cartoons, and for the promotion of understanding and respect among Malaysia's ethnic communities.

Since its establishment in 2007, 34 people and two organisations have received the award.

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Sultan of Perak Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah with award recipients (from left) **Prof Datuk Dr Wan Ramli Wan Daud**, **Prof Datuk Dr Looi Lai Meng**, **Tan Sri Dr Salleh Mohd Nor** and **Tan Sri Lakshmanan Krishnan** in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. Pic by Mohamad Shahril Badri Saali