

## CITATION HIJJAS BIN KASTURI

Hijjas bin Kasturi graduated from the Faculty of Architecture (as it was then known) at the University of Melbourne with a Bachelor of Architecture in 1965, followed by a Diploma of Town & Regional Planning in 1966. Born in Singapore, Hijjas was awarded a prestigious Colombo Plan Scholarship in 1958 to study architecture, which he began at the University of Adelaide before transferring to Melbourne. From his arrival in Malaysia in 1967, his influence in architectural education, the architecture profession and the shaping of an architectural identity for Malaysia has been inestimable.

He has made an outstanding contribution to architecture in Malaysia and the region, contributing to numerous iconic buildings across the country and shaping key aspects of the Kuala Lumpur skyline. The significance of Hijjas' role in the development of Malaysian architecture is articulated in the book *Recent Malaysian Architecture (2007)* by Ngiom, who notes Hijjas designed for the first time in Malaysia "in a way that carried an identifiable signature, like an artist would ... due to strong articulation of forms, the practice's buildings became iconic landmarks [and] Hijjas Kasturi ... probably Malaysia's first architect hero."

His work has been recognised by numerous awards. Amongst a number of awards for particular buildings, he received a PAM (Malaysian Institute of Architects) Excellence Award (2000) for the Securities Commission Headquarters Building in Kuala Lumpur. Most notably his contribution to the visual arts (architecture) has been recognised with an ASEAN Award (1990) and the 12<sup>th</sup> Toyko Creation Award in 1998. In 2001, he was awarded the PAM Gold Medal, the Malaysian profession's highest accolade, for his extraordinary contribution Malaysian architecture.

Hijjas' contribution to architectural education has been very important. He was instrumental in establishing Malaysia's first professional degree in architecture at MARA Institute of Technology from 1967, before setting up in private practice in 1969 with Arkitek Bersekutu (Architects' Collaborative). In 1977, he formed Hijjas Kasturi Associates Sdn (HKAS). His vision for architectural education, in the combination of arts and technology, has also found ready expression in his robust designs that explore both technological challenge and the artistry of form. Hijjas has consciously sought to design within the Malaysian cultural context in a sophisticated manner: as he puts it "reconcil[ing] form and function within cultural continuity." His enduring interest in structure and materials is evident in such landmark high-rises as Tabung Haji, KL (1984), Menara Apera-ULG, KL (1984) and Menara Maybank, KL (1989). More recently, Menara Telekom, KL (2002), proudly continues the firm's tradition of design virtuosity.

Hijjas has maintained his connection with the Faculty of Architecture, Building & Planning through regular return visits and fostering the fledgling careers of new Melbourne graduates through work experience or continuing positions. He continues to actively engage in architectural education through occasional lectures and as an external examiner in Malaysia. His contribution to the arts in the region is also enormously important, particularly through his centre for architecture, creative arts and nature conservation at his property Rimbun Dahan.

Hijjas bin Kasturi has made a significant and lasting artistic, environmental, technological and professional contribution to architecture and identity in Malaysia. He is a fitting ambassador for the success of the Colombo Plan and its education of the future leaders of the professions in Asia, and the University of Melbourne's proud role in that endeavour.

**(Revised by Hijjas 20.11.08)**