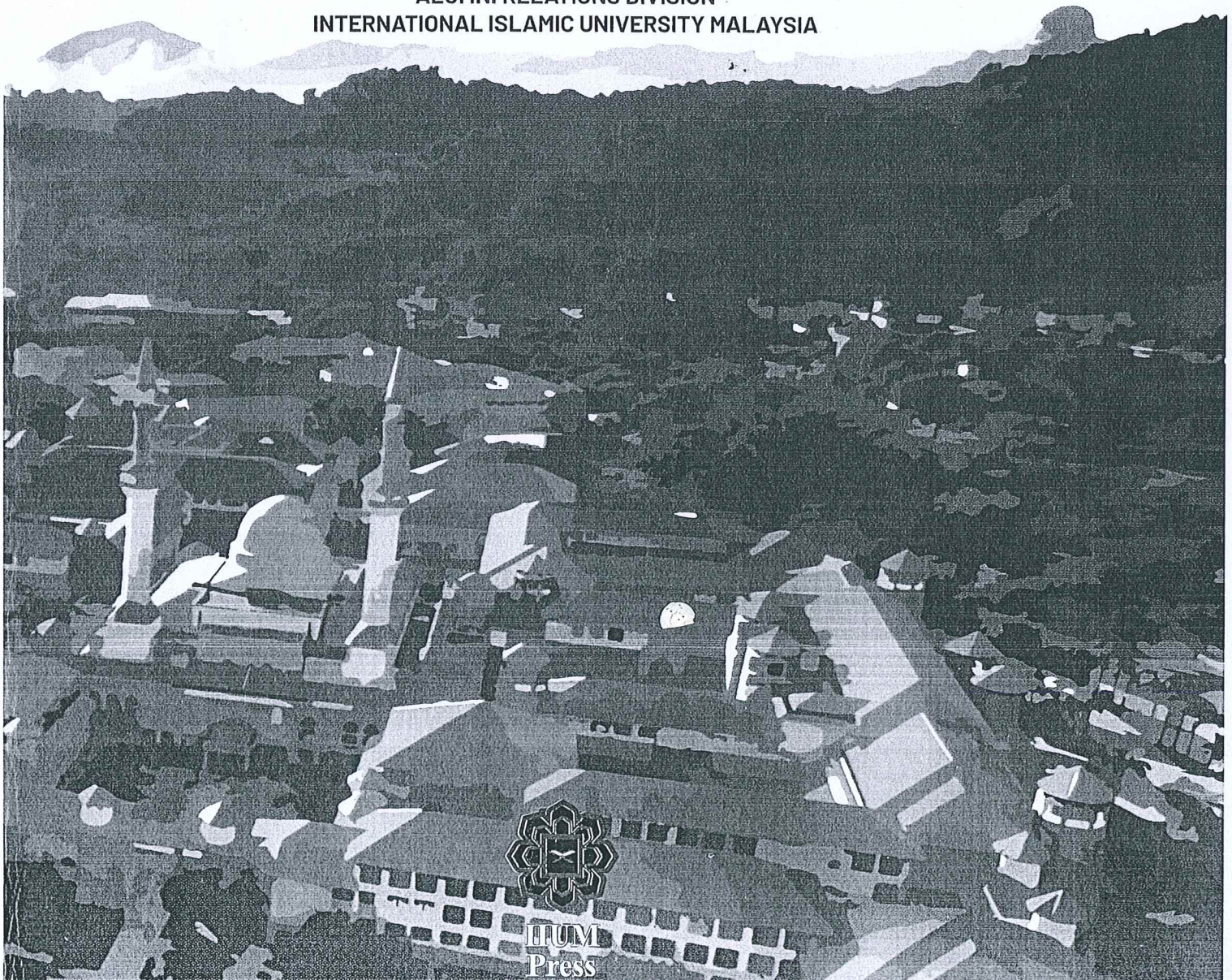

THE GARDEN OF KNOWLEDGE AND VIRTUE

ALUMNI MEMORIES AND REFLECTIONS

Edited by
AZAM OTHMAN

**ALUMNI RELATIONS DIVISION
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA**



THE GARDEN OF KNOWLEDGE AND VIRTUE

ALUMNI MEMORIES AND REFLECTIONS

Edited by
AZAM OTHMAN

**ALUMNI RELATIONS DIVISION
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA**



**IIUM
Press**

First Print, 2024
©IIUM Press, IIUM

IIUM Press is a Member of
the Majlis Penerbitan Ilmiah Malaysia – MAPIM
(Malaysian Scholarly Publishing Council)
Malaysian Book Publishers Association – MABOPA
Membership No. 201905

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced,
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means,
electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise,
without any prior written permission of the publisher.



Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia

A catalogue record for this book is available
from the National Library of Malaysia

ISBN 978-967-491-349-6



Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia

A catalogue record for this book is available
from the National Library of Malaysia

eISBN 978-967-491-350-2

Published in Malaysia by
IIUM Press International Islamic University Malaysia
P.O. Box 10, 50728 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Tel: +603-6421 5014; Fax: +603-6421 4862/6298

Printed in Malaysia by
FIRDAUS PRESS SDN BHD
No. 28, Jalan PBS 14/4
Taman Perindustrian Bukit Serdang
43300 Seri Kembangan, Selangor.
Tel / Faks : +6 03 8940 5595
firdauspress2013@gmail.com

CONTENTS

| | | |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <i>Foreword</i> | | <i>ix</i> |
| <i>Preface</i> | | <i>xiii</i> |
| Chapter 1: | Introduction <i>Azam Othman</i> | 1 |
| Chapter 2: | Ahmad Ibrahim Kulliyah of Laws (AIKOL) Homegrown, and Thankful for It! <i>Majdah Zawawi</i> | 7 |
| | So Much with that Pride <i>Sonny Zuhada</i> | |
| | The Meaning of Being an IIUM Alumnus <i>Yazid Zul Kepli</i> | |
| Chapter 3: | Kulliyah of Economics and Management Sciences (KENMS) | 23 |
| | The Nostalgic Experience <i>Mohd Nahar Mohd Arshad</i> | |
| | Beyond Boundaries <i>Yasmin Mohd Ramzi</i> | |
| Chapter 4: | Centre for Foundation Studies (CFS) <i>Murshid Kassim</i> | 35 |
| Chapter 5: | AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences (AHAS KIRKHS) <i>Tunku Mohar Mohktar</i> <i>Mohd Feham Md Ghalib</i> | 40 |
| Chapter 6: | Kulliyah of Education (KOED) How KOED Transformed My Life <i>Haniza Rais</i> | 54 |

My Journey with the Kulliyah of Education
Suhailah Hussein

Chapter 7: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civ
(ISTAC)
A Brief History of ISTAC
Thameem Ushama

My Learning Journey at ISTAC
Ssekamanya Siraje Abdallah

Chapter 8: Kulliyah of Engineering (KOE)

IIUM's Achievements
Ahmad Faris Ismail

My Journey with the Kulliyah of Engineering
Fadly Jashi Darsivan

Chapter 9: Kulliyah of Architecture and Environmental Des
(KAED)
Syakir Amir Ab Rahman
Mansor Ibrahim

Chapter 10: Kulliyah of Medicine (KOM)

How the Kulliyah of Medicine Came to be Estab
Taher Azhar

Recollections of a Former Student
Gafoor Mubarak

Chapter 11: Kulliyah of Pharmacy (KOP)

A Journey of Becoming a Muslim Health Professi
Fahmi Hassan

My Experience with the Kulliyah of Pharmacy
Nor Hidayah Mohd Taufek

If I Could Turn Back Time
Syed Mohd Syahmi

Wit
form
rad

A ca
stud
prof
its e
prof

The
inclu
educ
as a

ISBN 978-9



9 789674

CONTENTS

| | | |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Chapter 12: | Kulliyah of Science (KOS) <i>Iskandar Bahari</i> <i>Zakuan Azizi Shamsul Harumain</i> <i>Siti Fatimah Zakaria</i> | 130 |
| Chapter 13: | Kulliyah of Information and Communication Technology (KICT) <i>Shuhaili Talib</i> | 136 |
| Chapter 14: | Kulliyah of Allied Health Sciences (KAHS) History of the Kulliyah's Establishment <i>Suzanah Abdul Rahman</i> My Beautiful Life-Changing Journey in IIUM <i>Mohd Radzi Hilmi</i> | 144 |
| Chapter 15: | Kulliyah of Nursing (KON) <i>Firdaus Ismail</i> | 156 |
| Chapter 16: | IIUM Institute of Islamic Banking and Finance (IIiBF) <i>Salina Kassim</i> | 162 |
| Chapter 17: | Kulliyah of Dentistry (KOD) The Reality of a Dentist's Journey <i>Abdul Rahman Fauzi</i> <i>Ahmad Badruddin</i> Recollections and Reflections <i>Rafiq Khalid</i> | 168 |
| Chapter 18: | Kulliyah of Languages and Mangement (KLM) <i>Muhammad Izzat</i> | 175 |
| Chapter 19: | Dar Al-Hikmah Library <i>Sarifah Binti Abdullah</i> | 180 |
| Chapter 20: | Concluding Remarks | 189 |
| | <i>Contributors</i> | 191 |
| | <i>Index</i> | 198 |

CHAPTER 2

AHMAD IBRAHIM KULLIYAH OF LAWS (AIKOL)

Majdah Zawawi, Sonny Zulhuda & Yazid Zul Kepli

Preamble

The Kulliyah of Laws, as it was originally called, was one of the first two kulliyahs that came with the official establishment of the IIUM in 1983. It started with just three staff and 59 students when it was first founded. In the year 2000, after 17 years of serving the ummah, its nomenclature was changed to **Ahmad Ibrahim Kulliyah of Laws (AIKOL)**, in honour of its founding father, the late Emeritus Professor Tan Sri Ahmad bin Mohamed Ibrahim. This chapter presents the stories of three pioneer students of AIKOL as they experienced their memorable journeys with the Kulliyah and the IIUM.

Majdah Zawawi: Homegrown, and Thankful for It!

I have many times been accused of spending my “whole” life in IIUM. I admit it—I am indeed “homegrown”. This means that I did my matriculation, both my LL.B and LL.B(S), my master’s as well as my Ph.D degrees, all here at the Garden of Knowledge and Virtue, the International Islamic University Malaysia. On top of that, I married a fellow alumnus, and now, our two children are studying at this very same university.



IIUM Gombak

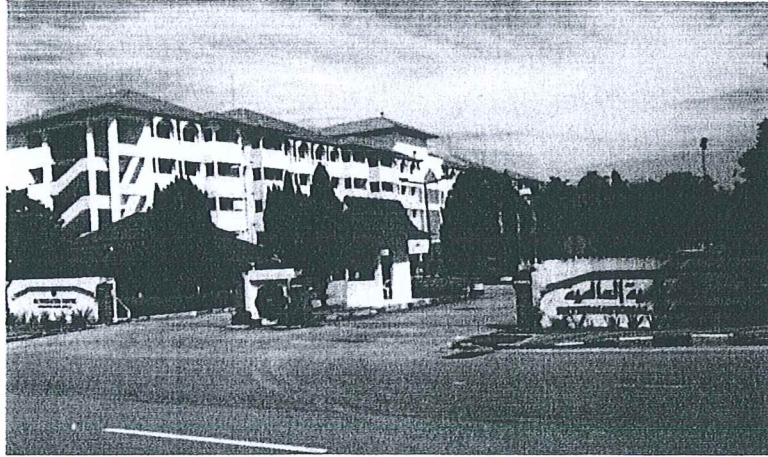
But did I plan all this? And is it so BAD to be spending my “whole” life here in IIUM? Well, my answer to the first question is “yes,” and the answer to the second is a resounding “NO!” And I will tell you the reasons why I am eternally grateful to Allah (SWT) for allowing my plan to study at the IIUM to come through—which later led me to spending my “whole” life in this blessed University. I consider this a benediction, rather than a blight, in my journey academican and as an *‘ibadullah* on the face of this earth.

I will tell my story in three parts. In the first part, which is this one, I begin my story by laying out my original plan of study and relating how Allah (SWT) in His infinite Mercy and Benevolence, had allowed this plan to slowly unfold. This part is important as it helps me to establish my first point, that is, one can plan but Allah also plans, and “verily Allah is the best of planners” (Surah Al-Anfal: 30).

وَمَكْرُوا وَمَكَرَ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَكْرِينَ

I am here—yes—because I planned to be here, but that was only possible because Allah (SWT) had willed it. In fact, my being here was part of His plan all along! In this segment of the story, I will narrate how certain incidents shaped my outlook and attitude in life. Part two of my story continues with the impact of my undergraduate days at the IIUM on my person. Meanwhile, the third and final part will describe my postgraduate studies and how that left me being labelled a “homegrown” academic. Contrary to popular belief, both the IIUM experience and label have left a positive impact on my personal and academic development, which I will never regret.

I was introduced to the IIUM by two important figures in my life. The first figure was in the person of my second cousin, Dr. Saodah Abdul Rahman (now Associate Professor Dr. Saodah Abdul Rahman) or better known as Kak Odah. She began teaching at the Kulliyah of Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, at the Petaling Jaya Campus, when the University was still in its infancy. My house was just about 10 minutes away from the campus, so she would come around for weekly visits, and she would tell me about her “misadventures” with her students. My parents would later give her a ride back to the IIUM where she was also a fellow, and I would stare in awe at the beautiful Petaling Jaya It was a new campus then and quite a sight to behold!É This was somewhere in 1986 and I was still in secondary school. Every time we sent her back to campus, I would think to myself, “How wonderful it would be to study here!” And so, I began to dream of studying at the IIUM.



IIUM Matriculation Centre, Petaling Jaya Campus

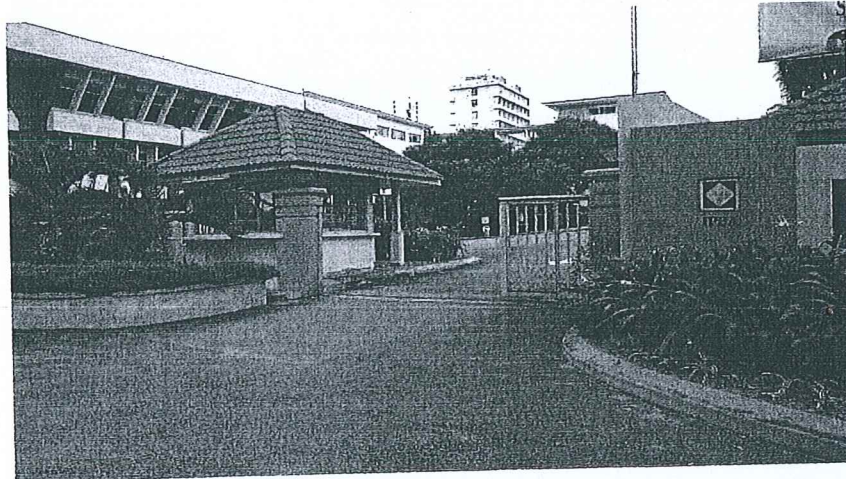
The second person who introduced me to IIUM was Miss Khairiah Bt Othman (now Dr. Khairiah Bt Othman), whom I had the pleasure of meeting when she came to my school, Sekolah Menengah Agama Mahaad Hamidiah, Kajang, for her teaching practicum. She taught my class English and completely captivated me and my friends with her style of teaching! Not only did she make learning English fun and interesting, but she also engaged us in activities that brought us closer to one another, to her and to Allah, particularly. Of course, her kindness and cheerfulness made her a favourite among us—my classmates and me. Being a trainee teacher, she was only with us for a short while, but she truly inspired my friends and me to do our best in our education and to always remember to be good Muslims. Her *akhlaq* and attitude left a lasting impression on me, in that, if I wanted to *be* anything like Miss Khairiah, I would then have to go to IIUM! Since then, I had my heart set on studying at this University.

At this juncture, I would like to highlight the first reason why I was attracted to IIUM. Basically, I was positively influenced by my cousin and my teacher, both of whom were from IIUM. How they were both so inspirational! They carried with them an aura that only IIUM lecturers had. Both were knowledgeable in their respective fields, both were endowed with the most beautiful *akhlaq*, and both were kind and had such a positive attitude towards life. Apart from that—and to me this was the most important point—both were *murabbis*, dedicated to nurturing not only minds but also young hearts towards the love for knowledge and the source of that knowledge, and towards recognising the greatness of *Rabbul Jalil*. This was an important element that influenced my own relationship with my students when I later became a lecturer at IIUM.

This brings me to the second part of my narration—the part where Allah (SWT) had actually answered my prayers and allowed me to begin my journey in IIUM. After obtaining my SPM results, Alhamdulillah, I was accepted into the University! An interesting twist to the story was that I was offered to read law—and not Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences (or IRKH) like what I had wanted to pursue and like what so many of my friends had received! I had always wanted to be a child psychologist because I loved interacting with children. So naturally, I was quite disappointed with the offer and started having second

thoughts. I actually considered forgoing my studies at IIUM, but my uncle's advice made me rethink my options. He told me, "*Kita tak akan tahu apa yang baik untuk kita, buat sembahyang istikharah. Insya Allah, akan beri petunjuk, mana pilihan yang paling baik.*"

I had never done any *istikharah* prayer before this point in my life, but I followed his advice and Alhamdulillah, I did get a sign indicating that I should not let this opportunity slip away. And so, I accepted the offer and enrolled in the Law Foundation programme at the IIUM Matriculation Centre in Lembah Pantai.



IIUM Matriculation Centre, Lembah Pantai Campus

Although brief, the time I spent at the IIUM Matriculation Centre actually helped to strengthen my grasp of the English language, in addition to improving my Arabic language. The time I spent there also allowed me to learn how to manage my time wisely. In the first three weeks of matriculation, I had a sort of "culture shock", as we had to do the course registration ourselves, decide when to study, and what to do with our free time. I was not familiar with these responsibilities before. Previously at school, we were so used to being told what to do and when to do it, with the school bell ringing every now and then to inform us of the time to change subjects or have a recess. All of a sudden, we were told to do and decide things for ourselves! I got a bit lost there for a while. Alhamdulillah, the seniors were always there to lend a helping hand and the lecturers were also helpful, assisting us greatly along the way.

After completing a year of matriculation, I started my LL.B. at the Petaling Jaya campus. Here, I would like to highlight another awesome part about studying at IIUM. Although I was in Malaysia, I had the opportunity to learn not only from local lecturers and professors, but also from learned scholars from various international backgrounds. We certainly had a diverse group of international staff at AIKOL. We learned the law of contract from a Singaporean lecturer, torts from a Mauritanian, family law and environmental law from Indian professors, company and land laws from two Sudanese scholars, intellectual property law from an American lawyer, and jurisprudence from a British lecturer. Not only that, but we also had the pleasure of being under the tutelage of experienced lawyers and retired senior judges who taught us criminal law, as well as learning from an Egyptian *ustaz*, the great Prof. Razali Nawawi, who taught us the Islamic law of transactions

and of course, the legendary Prof. Tan Sri Ahmad Ibrahim himself, who was an expert on the Malaysian legal system.

And of course, in addition to this galaxy of learned persons, there were young and budding and energetic Malaysian lecturers who were always intellectually engaging and understanding. Masya Allah! And so, as the story went, even though Allah had put me in a local university, Alhamdulillah, by His will, I had the vast opportunity to learn from all these great minds that came from many parts of the world. This certainly had introduced me to different styles of learning, ranging from rigorous Socratic questioning to intense debates and countless invigorating discussions during tutorials and seminar series. But studying law at the IIUM was so much more than just attending lectures, participating actively in tutorials, and doing well in the exams. It also included a very important extracurricular activity—which came in the form of mooting—that despite its challenges was intoxicatingly alluring.

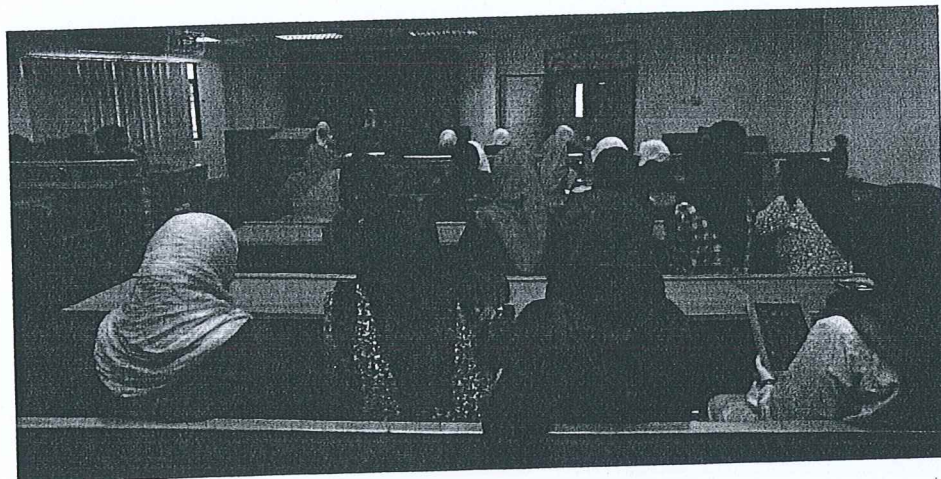


Students of Ahmad Ibrahim Kulliyah of Laws

When I was in my second year, a good friend of mine, Basmah Abdul Aziz, who held a position on the Law Society's Moots and Client Counselling secretariat, suddenly invited me to join a week-long mooting workshop which further led to a mooting competition known as the Inaugural Internal Moots Competition 1993. Prior to this point, I had never even heard of mooting and thus, was rather intrigued by the invitation. Once the workshop ended, my friends persuaded me to participate in the competition—which I did. We ended up winning the competition and Alhamdulillah, I was announced as the Best Oralist in the final round! I still remember the Bench was presided over by the late Prof. Tan Sri Ahmad Ibrahim himself. That was the beginning of my passion for mooting during my undergraduate days. Alhamdulillah, I was able to represent the Kulliyah and the University at several national and international mooting competitions. In fact, it was my mooting experience that allowed me to introduce two new subjects for LL.B. students (i.e., Compulsory Moots and Legal Methods) when I later became a law lecturer at AIKOL.

Mooting in IIUM taught me many important aspects of a wholesome legal education. It cemented my love for IIUM and all that it stood for. Through my mooting experience, I gained exposure to a culture of problem solving that was based on sound research and the ability to support submissions with valid evidence and authorities. All this was done through the art of persuasion and the ability to

address the concerns of the judges that would determine the outcome of the case in favour of our client. Mooting taught us hard work, perseverance, meticulousness, and resilience. Our trainers were very experienced lawyers who joined the Kulliyah to share their knowledge and experiences with us. We were fortunate to have Mr. Baharuddeen Abu Bakar, with his no-nonsense attitude and constant expectation for perfection. Then there was the kind and patient Dr. Syed Ahmad Alsagoff, our moot master, who would obligingly guide us on how best to persuade judges to accept our arguments. And of course, there was Dr. Ida Madieha Azmi who kept our spirits up and was always there to give us her unwavering support. And then we were blessed with the sweet presence of Madam Maizatun Mustafa, who accompanied us to international competitions and was a constant supporter! And there were all those senior mooters who were always willing to come and train us, anytime, absolutely free of charge, just because they wanted to keep the mantle of mooting alight in IIUM. Regrettably, I had to stop my mooting activities during my final year, as my parents insisted that I concentrate fully on my studies which, by this time, had become more demanding. Nevertheless, I continued to lend a helping "mooting" hand whenever and wherever I could.



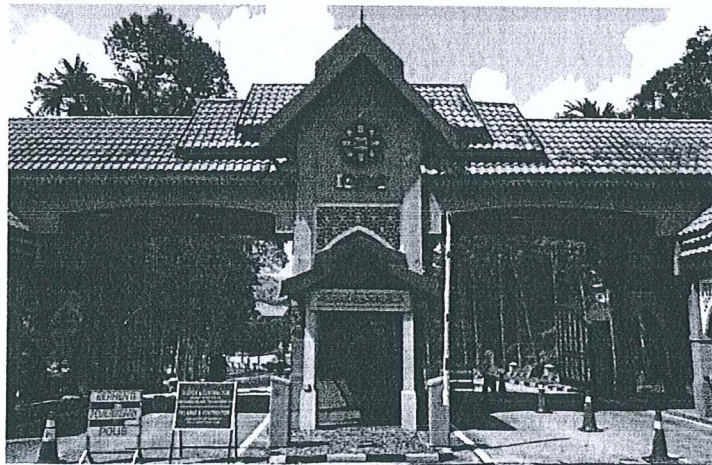
AIKOL Moot Room

Once I completed my LL.B., I did my pupillage at the chambers of Messrs. Leong & Megat. My master was Miss Leong Kim Mooi who was a tough but kind master. Under her watchful and vigilant eyes, she taught me the ropes of conveyancing. During my time at the firm, aside from Miss Leong, the partner of the firm, Mr. Megat Abdul Munir, was also instrumental in teaching me the ropes during the nine months of my pupillage. Again, Allah (SWT) had sent me someone from IIUM to help me get through this difficult time. It was while chambering here that Mr. Megat taught me the ropes of civil litigation. Several opportunities presented themselves to me during my chambering at Messrs. Leong & Megat. The most important one was when I was asked to assist in an appeal case at the Court of Appeal. There were times when I felt like quitting, especially when I had to assist Mr. Megat in preparing the written submissions, Bundles of Documents and Bundles of Authorities for the appeal case. We had to be at the office on weekends and even return to it after *tarawih* prayers during Ramadan, just so we could keep to the deadlines. Resilience—that was the virtue that the mooting experience in IIUM

had taught me. Alhamdulillah, I had gone through a similar training when I was preparing for my many mooted competitions, the experience of which had given me the will and wisdom to overcome any feeling of wanting to give up.

My mother too kept me grounded. She frequently said to me these wise words, “*Alang-alang menyeluk pekasam, biar sampai ke pangkal lengan!* No matter how hard things are, do not give up! You must finish what you started!” And with all that fervent encouragement and conviction, what daughter would give up? So, Alhamdulillah, I completed my pupillage and was finally called to the bar in 1996, where I became an advocate and solicitor at the Malaysian High Court in Kuala Lumpur. Alhamdulillah, I was retained at Leong and Megat. But I was constantly anxious, particularly when returning from court. Although I enjoyed preparing and presenting my case in court, I did not enjoy the meetings with clients, who were always demanding, nor could I stand the obnoxious and condescending attitude of certain lawyers that were representing the opposite side.

I also constantly found myself meeting old friends from the IIUM who no longer wanted to be associated with the University, nor did they want themselves to be identified as ex-IIUM students. They neither portrayed themselves as IIUM students nor did they want to be associated with the University any longer. Where were all those Muslim law graduates that were supposed to flood the market and change the system? Something needed to be changed—Prof. Ahmad’s vision would not be realised if this trend of behaviour continued. That was when I decided, if I wanted to make things right, I would have to do something about this disconcerting trend. So, I had no other option but to go back to IIUM.



IIUM Gombak Entrance

It was then that Allah granted me another opportunity to return to IIUM. This brings me to the third part of my story, which concerns how Allah returned me to IIUM for a career as an academician and for my postgraduate studies, which actually cemented my status as a “homegrown” academic! This time, the opportunity came in the form of an opening for the post of assistant lecturer, with an opportunity to further my studies. I quickly applied for the post and Alhamdulillah! I was accepted and was immediately asked to apply for a master’s degree overseas. I was accepted for the LL.M. at the London School of Economics and was called for a scholarship interview.

Allah (SWT) as it turned out, had other plans for me. During the interview, Prof. Ahmad suddenly asked whether I would be interested to teach Islamic law subjects. I replied positively, “yes”—I would be interested but I was not allowed to join the LL.B. (S) as my Arabic was not proficient enough at that time. The then Rector, Prof. Dr. Abdul Hamid AbuSulayman, then asked where I learned my Arabic, to which I replied, “in school and IIUM.” I jokingly added that I might need to immerse myself in an authentic Arabic culture in order to improve my Arabic! Everyone broke into laughter and at the end of the interview, the Rector suddenly announced, “We shall send you to an Arab country. Just choose one and you will go for a year. When you return, you must take your LL.B(S) and only when you finish, you may continue with your masters and Ph.D.”

I was dumbfounded! Masya Allah! I wasn't going to London after all! Instead, I was sent to the University of Jordan to do a full year of Arabic and upon returning. I completed my LL.B(S) after which I continued with my Master in Comparative Laws (MCL) at AIKOL, IIUM.



AIKOL building at IIUM Gombak

What I would like to highlight here is the myriad opportunities that IIUM has given me. Although not as planned, opportunities were indeed opened to me to venture into areas not traditionally or normally done—to the extent that I was even allowed to go to the University of Jordan, free from any bond, while being given a full study leave with full pay and a scholarship to cover my tuition fees for a year.

What about my offer from the London School of Economics? I wrote a letter to them requesting a deferment. Unfortunately, this was not acceptable to them. After completing my LL.B(S), I was hoping to be able to do my master's at an overseas institution. But Allah (SWT) had willed it that this time, I was to stay and do my master's at IIUM. The Malaysian government was facing a terrible financial crisis and all funding for overseas studies was frozen. Nonetheless, I took it as a blessing in disguise as it allowed me to begin my own new family whilst still giving me the chance to continue with my studies. I completed my master's degree within a year and graduated with a baby and a scroll! Alhamdulillah!

What did this teach me? It taught me that primarily, opportunities come in many forms and in unexpected ways. It is up to you to look out for them and seize them, appreciate them and make the best of them! Alhamdulillah, opportunities came to me when I planned and worked on them and prayed that would allow them to happen. These experiences also taught me that there is always a *hikmah* to

anything that Allah (SWT) has ordained and willed to happen. What I thought was a lost opportunity actually turned out to be a positive experience. It all depends on how you treat the situation. If Allah (SWT) gives you lemons, then make lemonade or a lemon cake, or any other possible thing that can be made with lemons! If you do not know how, then learn, discover new things, and make it happen.

This leads me to my PhD voyage—why did I do it in Malaysia and not overseas? Before I embarked on my PhD, I read a book called, “*How to Get a PhD*” by Estelle M. Phillips and Derek S. Pugh (1st Edition). I first had to determine the impetus for that exercise. One thing was very clear—I HAD to do my PhD because it was a university requirement if I wanted to be confirmed in service! I was already halfway through my journey as an academician, and I just had to complete it. It was part of the process. The next question was—where to do it?

The book further suggested that where to do your Ph.D would depend largely on who the potential supervisor would be and determining this related largely to the area of research that I wanted to embark on. I started reading and searching for a research problem and found an area that was very, very interesting to me—assisted reproductive technologies—but I wanted to look at how this technology should be regulated in Malaysia and I wanted to put forward an Islamic framework surrounding its use.

On a more personal note, at the same time, my husband had just been granted a teaching position at the University Putra Malaysia. They needed him to teach for at least two years before embarking on his PhD. I did not favour the thought of going overseas alone with two toddlers! But I wasn't one to be intimidated by hardship either! Furthermore I also did not want to be brash and end up coming home with no Ph.D and a debt to pay. After all, what was important was completing my Ph.D. Again, I did my *istikharah*, and I obtained an answer—which was to do it in Malaysia.

Once I had decided to go local, I began to search for “experts” to become my supervisors. The area that I wanted to do my research in was related to the rights of individuals and the extent of their duties when making decisions relating to how they reproduced. And I was planning to incorporate an Islamic legal framework into the idea as well. The names of two experts kept coming up in my search—Prof. Dr. Abdul Aziz Bari, an expert in Constitutional Law and Prof. Dr. Zaleha Kamaruddin, an expert in Family Law. Coincidentally, both were AIKOL professors at IIUM.

Why did I not choose experts from other Malaysian universities? Well, I did a search and found that the IIUM's Kulliyah of Laws had the most diverse number of PhD holders and many of the “experts” were able to supervise research in both Islamic law and civil law. If I were to do my PhD at UM for example, I would have to decide whether to join the Law Faculty or the Akademi Islam. It was the same for UKM. The only university that would allow me to have a PhD from a law faculty that integrated civil law with Islamic law was the IIUM—that is, at the Ahmad Ibrahim Kulliyah of Laws, specifically.

Subsequently, I had to write an appeal letter to the Ministry of Education as they did not allow researchers to do their PhD at the place where they were working. I gave my justifications and prayed hard to (SWT) for my appeal to be

accepted. Alhamdulillah, they accepted it and I began my amazing PhD journey at the IIUM.

Looking back, I never regretted my decision to stay at IIUM for my PhD. My supervisors were excellent! They actually read and supervised my work. We would have alternate fortnightly meetings where I would present them with my work, and we would have discussions and they would comment on how to make the chapters sound and presentable. In retrospect, Prof Dr. Abdul Aziz Bari always allowed me to explore ideas and read myriad sources, and then synthesise my thoughts into the proper context. We would argue and he would provoke me with questions like how I would prove something, would a certain something be workable under certain parts of the Malaysian Constitution, and the like. He made me read about the history of rights in both the English and Islamic legal systems. He threw challenging questions at me, for example, "What was Liberalism?", "How did it impact the notion of rights and responsibilities in the Western world?", "How is the Islamic concept different?", "How could I suggest an Islamic framework when our legal system and constitutional set up were largely Western centric?" Meanwhile, Prof. Dr. Zaleha provided a more structured approach to my writing. She made sure I perfected my research methods and had the relevant sources and authorities to support all my arguments. The assessment system for doctoral theses required that I have one internal examiner and two external examiners, so Prof Dr Zaleha made sure that I kept my writing succinct, clear, and unfailingly supported by the relevant sources and authorities. She was so meticulous that if I made a mistake even in my footnotes, she would notice it and insist that I make corrections.

The University, through the Research Management Centre, awarded me a small fund of RM15,000 for me to collect data from existing clinics in Malaysia, the United Kingdom, Egypt, Korea, Singapore, and Turkey. In these countries, I was able to conduct interviews, visit ART labs and meet with doctors who were directly involved in the field. Aside from that, I was also funded by AIKOL and the Centre for Postgraduate Studies Through the recommendations made by the then Rector, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kamal Hassan, I was able to present parts of my findings at two international conferences. So, although I did my doctoral research locally at IIUM, it was the IIUM that allowed me to explore every avenue of my research, collaborate with other researchers, and test my proposals and suggestions towards a valid solution. This shows that the University has what it takes to be recognised as a world class university and the work that we do can leave an impact on society and the world at large, Insya Allah.



Research Management Centre, IIUM Gombak

Alhamdulillah, with excellent supervision, some financial assistance and genuine concern and support from the Rector, the Deans of AIKOL and the Centre for Postgraduate Studies, my PhD experience at IIUM was an amazing one! I was able to submit my thesis within three and a half years of research and writing. Through IIUM, I was able to establish a good networking with the Ministry of Health and the LPPKN. Not only that, but the opportunities that came my way/ were given to me while doing research at IIUM had also allowed me to establish working contacts with researchers from all over the world who were working in the same area.

And so, although I have spent my “whole life” at IIUM, it has allowed me to become a better person, a better researcher, and a better academician. Alhamdulillah. I have been able to embark on collaborative research with other kulliyahs and universities as well both locally and internationally. Alhamdulillah, I have also been given the opportunity to sit in national committees to help formulate guidelines and regulations relating to biotechnology and ART. Through this, I have been able to develop several new courses that will hopefully enable students to learn Islamic law in a more practical and innovative way. I have also been able to introduce courses that help enhance the ability of students to solve legal problems and present cohesive and persuasive submissions, both in written and oral formats. I hope and pray that I can inspire my students in the same way that Kak Odah and Miss Khairiah and all my lecturers and mentors had inspired me all those years ago! I hope to be able to inspire them to become first and foremost good Muslims. I hope to inspire them to want to learn for the sake of Allah (SWT) and for the love of knowledge. And I hope they realise and remember, that with Allah, anything is possible!

So, yes, I am homegrown, but proud of it and forever thankful for it!
Alhamdulillah, wa syukur lillah! Wallahu'alam.

Sonny Zuhuda: So Much with that Pride

Back in 1994, when I first applied for a place to study at the IIUM, the University had not really made a name for itself yet, to be frank. Many of us who graduated from Islamic schools in Indonesia would either choose the Al-Azhar in Egypt or any of the universities in Saudi Arabia to further our studies. Malaysia was not among the choices—it was not really in the picture just yet. My decision to further my study in Malaysia was often responded to with more queries, such as which university in Malaysia, where and how long it would be, and perhaps the most challenging one was why I chose Malaysia of all the countries in the world.



IIUM Gombak campus under construction

But I had a list of good answers to give those who asked, although I only learned about the IIUM from very limited sources. The first source was my school seniors who attended IIUM just a few years before me, and my second source of information was the square-shaped IIUM prospectus. I read everything in that prospectus, including every single course or subject that was offered by the faculties of my choice, namely AIKOL and IRKHS.



International students of IIUM

So why did I choose IIUM? I reckoned that the educational programmes IIUM had to offer consisted of a nicely packaged and well-integrated Islamic and international education that was modern yet accommodating of traditional and classical studies, sources and experiences from the past. The intriguing mix of Western law and the Islamic *shari'ah* in the LL.B. programme that I had my eyes on had triggered my interest as I knew I would be acquiring valuable knowledge of both the *shari'ah* and Western law. It so appealed to me that a compelling Western-Islamic blend was offered in such an exciting learning environment—a melting pot of international and local cultures that included my own Indo-Malay heritage. Certainly, I could not turn this amazing offer down. Just the thought of it—of coming to this University and becoming part of this enchanting place—thrilled me to the core. On top of that, I learned that IIUM was also giving out scholarships, a good enough reason to attract applicants back in those days.

Finally, after more than a year of applying, I was enrolled. The agony of waiting that I felt really made my determination to succeed in IIUM even bigger and stronger. I lived my life in IIUM throughout my student years literally with excitement and high spirit. I completed all my academic workload, read as many books as I could, and made full use of my time as a student of IIUM. In total, I completed thirteen years of study to reach my PhD. By 2010, I was a PhD graduate and ready to start my life as a new lecturer at the Ahmad Ibrahim Kulliyah of Laws, IIUM.

Looking back to where I once was—the path I had travelled in IIUM—always brings back fond memories, nothing less. Be it good or bad, I never had any regret in pursuing all my degrees at the IIUM: my LL.B., MCL, and finally PhD in Law. Perhaps it would have been a different kind of excitement if I had studied elsewhere. But other than Allah (SWT), no one knows what could have happened. So, being grateful for what you have is the best thing you can do in whatever situation.

Being part of the IIUM alumni means so much to me. For one, I feel that the world can never be a boring place for an ex-IIUM student. Wherever you go, there will always be an IIUM connection somewhere, here or there. I discovered this myself during my numerous travels over the years—from Mecca to Istanbul, Oxford to Kuwait, and Leiden to Dubai. Every time, there was always someone connected to the IIUM, in one way or another, that I had chanced upon. Whether I was in Toronto or Sydney, or Singapore or Beijing, there were always people—whose past was linked to the IIUM—who were more than happy to welcome me and take me around to eat their local food, while chatting and recalling the old days at IIUM. That was just awesome.

I believe these encounters were more than a mere reunion of friends. In fact, they felt so much like a “homecoming” and a celebration of very thoughtful experiences and ideas that we had shared together as IIUM students. Whether you were an advocate or a proponent of “Islamisation of Knowledge”, for example, there was always space where we could revisit our ideas, and to some extent, agree—or disagree—with one another. Whether or not we were actively involved in any one of the IIUM’s student societies, we would laugh together the moment we reunited at how enjoyable it was to be in such an intriguing place that celebrated unity over diversity.

During those days in IIUM, the word “*ummah*” carried so much meaning and power. We were made to learn that Muslims are but one community, called the Muslim *ummah*. Back then, everything we did and wished to do must be done for the *ummah* and its betterment. Every single day we would hear people discussing the problems of the *ummah*, and how to solve them. Every year we would celebrate the “*Ummatic Week*” where cultural diversity among the *ummah* was demonstrated, celebrated, and cherished. And there was a student club named “Ummatic Network for Student Development” (UNSD) that was established to spearhead efforts to synergise the *ummatic* potentials at IIUM. The repeated use of the word *ummah*, every time we spoke about anything at all, hammered into our hearts and minds the spirit and understanding that we needed to embrace one another as part of a big

Muslim family. And that was why we kept calling one another brothers and sisters. Our relationships were never defined by the colour of our skin or the language we spoke or the country we hailed from. In fact, at IIUM, we were and still are united by our faith—the beautiful *deen* of Islam—and we will always be moved and at the same time, united, by that strong *ummatic* spirit.

In yesteryears, every international student who wished to enrol in IIUM had to provide some evidence of support from a recognised Islamic organisation back home. Letters of recommendation from Muslim figures (e.g., the local imam) or Islamic scholars in our home countries were regarded highly by the IIUM. The University required these written recommendations to ensure that all its students were connected to the Islamic cause or movement wherever they might be. Sadly speaking, these words of recommendation from Islamic organisations and scholars are no longer required today as they were before—something to be reconsidered by the IIUM authority today in enrolling new students.

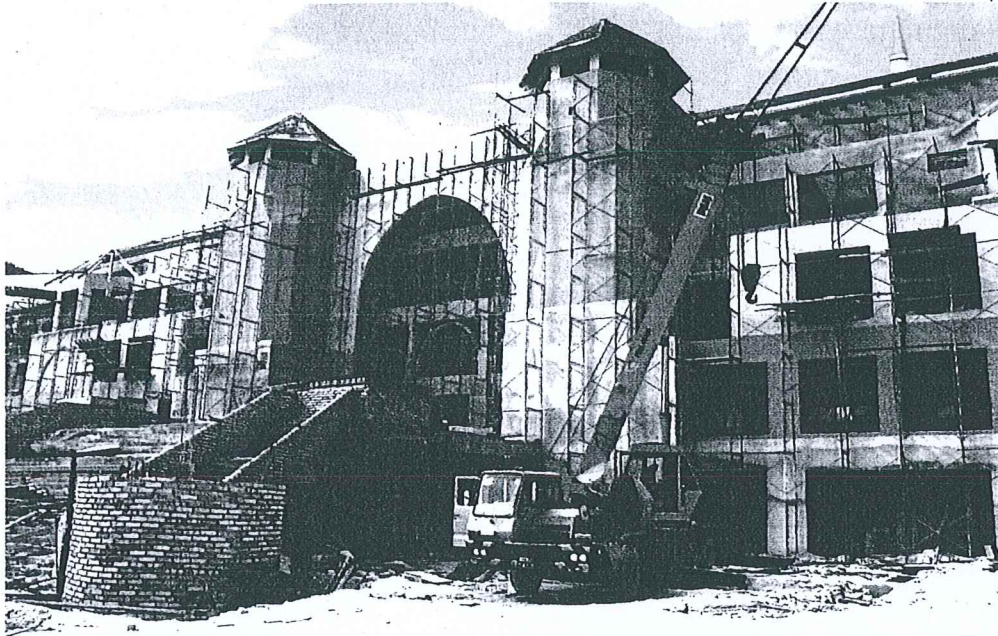
Now, even after 25 years of being part of the IIUM community, my pride and excitement remain intact. I am glad and grateful that I was educated by my IIUM *murabbis* in those days, which had developed an Islamic vision in my realm of thought and really nurtured my ever-strong *ummatic* sentiment in looking at the world today. Wherever you are and wherever you go, if you are a product of IIUM, you live with that pride and excitement—always. This pride, I reckon, may not be sufficient to satisfy your quest and desire to solve the problems of the world today. But surely, it is powerful enough to keep you moving and going, with the *ummah* and the *deen* deep in your heart, your mind, and your soul.

Yazid Zul Kepli: The Meaning of Being an IIUM Alumnus

I graduated from the Ahmad Ibrahim Kulliyah of Laws, International Islamic University Malaysia in 2004 after four years of reading law as an undergraduate student. Instead of working right away, my mother persuaded me to continue with my master's degree at the same university. In total, I spent around 6 years at IIUM as a student; one year in foundation (at the Matriculation Centre—as it was known back then), four years in Gombak as an undergraduate, and another year as a master's student of law.

Studying at IIUM meant a lot to me. In my school days, before SPM, I fell sick and was unable to attend school for many months. Due to my poor health, I did most of my studying for SPM alone at home. Because of that, I was really afraid that my SPM results would not turn out to be good enough for me to enter this prestigious university. I felt this way because the competition to join the IIUM was very stiff, and the seats were limited. To my surprise, my SPM results were much better than my expectation. I managed to come out as the best male student for the non-science stream in my school despite having been sick and absent from school for more than three months. I believed this to be due to my parents' prayers for me. Indeed, the prayers of parents are powerful and effective.

The IIUM is not your ordinary university. There is an element of myth and mystique when people talk about this blessed University—I'm not really sure what it is and why it is so. My best guess is the word "Islam" attached to the University's name. Society's expectations are high because the University carries the name 'Islam' with it. The IIUM was established on the 23rd of May, 1983 and founded upon Islamic principles, while Islamic values are consciously inculcated into every discipline in its curriculum.



IIUM Gombak under construction

Students from this prestigious University are expected to portray a good attitude and good manners (*akhlaq*) consistent with the teachings of the religion. The *ummah* expects the students to carry its hopes into the future. To shoulder these heavy responsibilities and fulfill the hopes of the *ummah*, the University is sponsored by eight Muslim governments and the Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

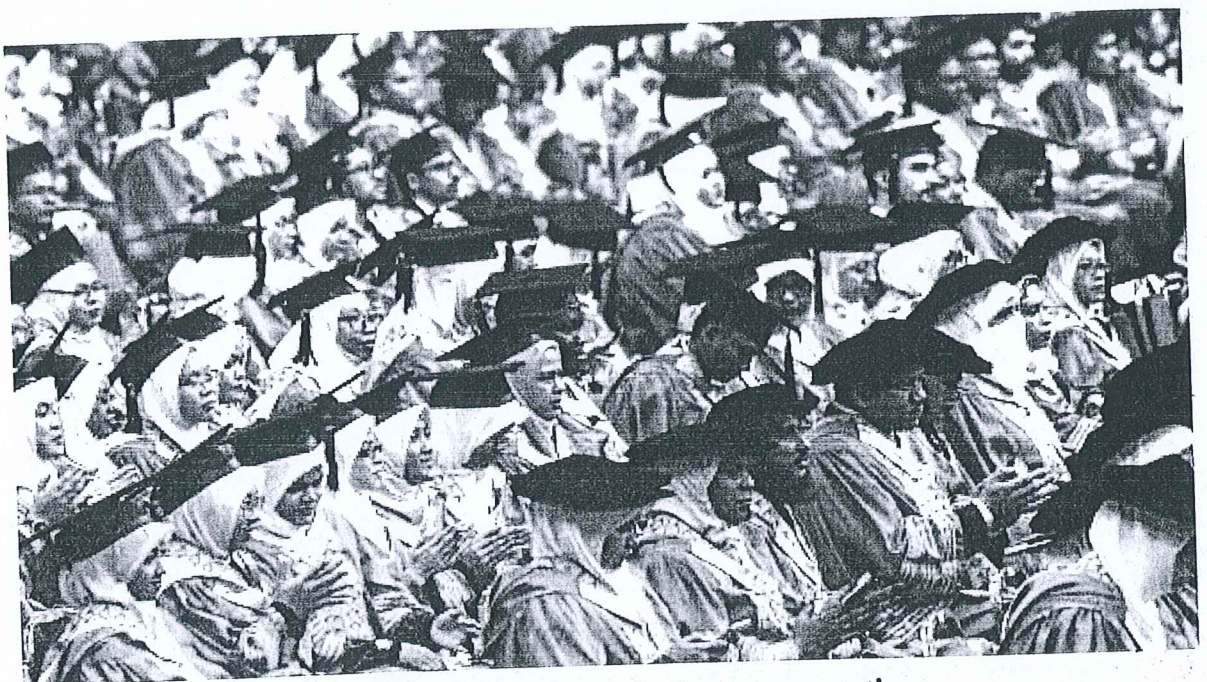
Since my early years as an IIUM student, I noted that the IIUM was (and still is) blessed with committed and hardworking lecturers. My own lecturers were very meticulous, hardworking, caring, and thoughtful. On top of all this, they put in a lot of effort to ensure a proper balance between theory and practice as required by the industry. For their helpfulness, I would give my lecturers a full score—a 10 out of 10. None of them had failed to respond to the questions asked in class or through email. In sum, they were kind, dedicated and smart, just the type of people who make this world a better place simply because they are part of it.

Prof Naqib was one of the most unforgettable lecturers during my time, a great Muslim scholar who left a huge impression on most of his students. We thoroughly enjoyed the courses he taught. All of my lecturers were experts in their respective fields. The most memorable ones were those who were not only expert, but were also kind and humble, especially to students and young lecturers who were just learning the ropes.

My years at IIUM were filled with happy memories with friends and colleagues. Looking back, I now understand how university years are so much more than just spending your time reading, studying, and learning. The university is a place where your character is built, and friendships made. During my university years, I learned the meaning of being grateful. Some of my friends were from poor families, but they were always eager to help others whenever their help was needed. Many of them were very hardworking students despite their initial limitations. For example, some of them came from remote villages and their command of the English language was poor in the beginning. Instead of giving up, they put in a lot of effort to improve their English by practicing to use it daily and eventually, they became fluent in it.

IIUM is a place where you need to leave your comfort zone. When you decide to leave your comfort zone and embark upon your study here, you will be exposed to different types of experiences and situations. Through these experiences, you will gain essential skills needed to face the challenges in life. IIUM is also a place to collect memories. The most prominent memories I have of my years at IIUM revolve around jogging with friends in the early mornings, spending late nights engaged in a variety of extracurricular pursuits, and of course, spending many weekends discussing important issues in the IIUM's unique *usrah* system.

Since its inception in 1987, the IIUM has produced more than 70,000 postgraduates and undergraduates from more than 100 countries around the world. By being an IIUM alumnus, you are taking part in something bigger than yourself. The society at large still looks at IIUM students and alumni with high expectations. Therefore, it is important to always present the best of yourself and maintain the good name of the University wherever you may be. May Allah (SWT) guide us all, Ameen.



IIUM graduates during convocation