

Henry Dunant Medal
Tribute to
Datuk Datin Paduka Ruby Lee

Datuk Ruby Lee joined the Malaysian Red Crescent Society in the early 1950's to chair the fund raising committee of the Selangor Branch. Her active involvement led to her appointment as Secretary General of the MRCS in 1965, a position she held until 1996 when she retired at the age of 69.

Datuk Ruby Lee devoted her life to the Malaysian Red Crescent and to the cause of the Movement. During her long tenure, her compassion and genuine empathy for the suffering of her fellow human beings drove her to tirelessly go the extra mile to care for the poor and the vulnerable.

She was also always the first to 'jump out of her seat' when a disaster struck, and there were many late nights when a phone call would summon her away from the comforts of home to an area where disaster had struck. Driven by her humanitarian conviction, she went way beyond the call of duty to alleviate suffering and bring comfort to those in need. This set a sterling example of professionalism and dedication to those who followed in her footsteps. She was a remarkable leader who excelled at mobilizing resources and rallying people from different walks of life to be of service. She was often the source of inspiration for staff and volunteers to constantly rise to meet the Society's increasing challenges.

Under her leadership, the Malaysian Red Crescent developed into an efficient and well functioning organisation, with increasing exchanges with the other components of the Movement. Datuk Ruby was an active member in a number of important Movement study groups and a respected representative of her Society at international conferences and meetings.

When the Vietnamese Boat People fled their country and landed on Malaysian shores, Datuk Ruby's personal experience as a refugee in India during the Second World War compelled her to champion their plight. This grew into a twenty year commitment for the MRCS, and throughout this time, she managed the demanding task of providing shelter, care and repatriation for 250,000 boat people with unwavering dedication. Her relentless efforts won her Society the Nansen Medal. This medal was awarded by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in recognition of outstanding services to humanity, making Malaysian Red Crescent Society the first National Society to receive this prestigious Medal.

In addition to her MRCS activities, Datuk Ruby was instrumental in setting up the Women's Institute. She also pioneered the development of movements and organisations for youth and the handicapped.

Known widely as the 'Jewel of the MRCS', Datuk Ruby is an iron lady blessed with natural grace and a caring heart. She nurtured relationships with colleagues and

volunteers while synergizing their energies and potential for the benefit of the community as well as their individual development.

Upon her retirement , Datuk Ruby Lee was made a honorary life member and she has remained an active supporter of the MRCS.

For her personal commitment, her important contribution to the development of humanitarian activities and for her work in promoting the Movement's Fundamental Principles and Ideals, the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent has unanimously agreed to award Datuk Datin Paduka Ruby Lee the Henry Dunant Medal, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's highest distinction.

Geneva, December 2008

H.E. Dr Mohammed Al-Hadid
Chairman
Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent