

Faizal is confident that more young Malay-Muslim Singaporeans can be Senior Counsels

By: IRA MUSFIRA

SINGAPORE: With the advent of “many high potential” young lawyers in the Malay-Muslim community today, this can result in more Malay-Muslim Senior Counsels in the next decade.

That was the view of Mr Mohamed Faizal Mohamed Abdul Kadir, who was appointed Senior Counsel yesterday (6 Jan) - an exclusive, prestigious title only accorded to the best and most skilled lawyers in the Singapore legal field.

In an interview with BERITAMediacorp, Mr Faizal also stressed how his appointment has proven that those in the Malay community can be successful in any field.

He currently works as Deputy Chief Prosecutor and Senior State Counsel (Crime) at the Attorney General’s Chambers (AGC).

"As a member of the Malay-Muslim community, I think this appointment reflects the fact that those in the community are able to achieve excellence in legal practices or in other fields."

"Nothing prevents us from achieving excellence if we are willing to work hard. It is only with such a philosophy that we can break the glass ceiling," said the 39-year-old Senior Counsel.

FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS, HE CLIMBED UP THE LADDER OF SUCCESS

The assessment was made based on Mr Mohamed Faizal’s own humble beginnings.

His mother is a housewife and his father assists in running several coffee shops.

Coming from a neighbourhood school, Bedok View Secondary School, Mr Faizal eventually entered Tampines Junior College and the National University of Singapore (NUS) thanks to his hard work.

He then went on to excel in his studies, graduating with a law degree from Harvard University, and also attending the Oxford Program in Negotiation at Oxford University.

And for three consecutive years - in 2017, 2018 and 2019 - Mr Faizal was listed as one of the 500 Most Influential Muslims in the World (For information: This listing is compiled by the Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre in Amman, Jordan, which is also known as Muslim 500. This was first published in 2009.). In summary, his accomplishments are too numerous to be listed individually.

THE ONLY MALAY-MUSLIM SENIOR COUNSEL

Most recently (6 Jan), Mr Faizal received yet another accolade when he was appointed Senior Counsel - a great honour for a lawyer in this country.

This makes him the only person in the Malay-Muslim community so far to hold this prestigious title, out of a total of 88 Senior Counsels in Singapore.

When asked what other achievements he was proud of, Mr Faizal replied that he had recently assisted the court in a case which clarified and developed a sentencing hierarchy for sexual offences.

A case like that which provides clarity on such matters demonstrates “our seriousness regarding sexual offenses,” he said.

Such a framework is now applicable in all courts.

Expressing his gratitude at being appointed Senior Counsel, Mr Faizal said that the success was a result of his parents’ “love, education and sacrifice”, as well as his wife’s strong support in spite of his tight work schedule.

“The reality is you cannot do well in legal work without a very supportive family behind you, walking every step with you,” he explained.

Mr Faizal, who has been in the legal profession for the past 15 years, is presently serving as a member of the MUIS Appeal Board, which oversees appeals in Syariah Court cases.

OPTIMISTIC ABOUT MALAY-MUSLIMS IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION

Mr Faizal expressed optimism when commenting on the future of the Malay-Muslim community in the local legal sector.

According to him, there are “many young lawyers in the community who have significant potential”.

“Personally, I know many lawyers who have great potential and I believe that with opportunity and effort, more members of the Malay-Muslim community will achieve similar or greater successes.

I am confident that we can see more Malay-Muslim Senior Counsels in the next 10 years,” he told BERITAmidiacorp.

Mr Faizal also encourages more young people to pursue a law degree and believes that if there are more Malay-Muslim lawyers, more people in the community can be extended assistance when and where it is needed.

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