

Malaysian women with corporate muscle

COMPILED BY **PREMALATHA JAYARAMAN**

JANET YELLEN made history last Saturday by becoming the first female US Federal Reserve chairman in its 100 year history. Her appointment is said to have broken the glass ceiling surrounding the corporate scene in the US, which have kept women from powerful jobs. Corporate Malaysia, in comparison, has not taken so long in according women with positions of power despite it being still very much a man's world. While the number may be far and few between, the quality of the women in power more than make up for the lack in numbers. SunBiz compiled a list of such notable names who have made their mark and continue to trail-blaze corporate Malaysia.

TAN SRI DR ZETI AKHTAR AZIZ

Zeti is not only the country's first female Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) governor but is also the second longest serving, holding the position since May 2000.



The 7th and current governor of BNM also has the enviable title of being the first female head of a central bank in all of Asia.

A product of Assunta High School, Petaling Jaya in Selangor, she received her Bachelor of Economics (Honours) from the University of Malaya and her PhD from the University of Pennsylvania.

Zeti began her career as an economic analyst for the South-East Asia Central Bank Training & research from 1979 to 1984. She was then appointed deputy manager of the Economics Department at BNM.

Elevated as acting governor by the then prime minister Mahathir Mohamad in September 1998, Zeti cut her teeth during the Asian financial crisis that ravaged the region.

As governor, she has a key role in monetary policy formulation and implementation and in ensuring stability of the Malaysian financial system. She also oversaw the successful transformation of the Malaysian financial system into one of the most developed and resilient financial systems in an emerging economy.

Zeti is actively involved in shaping the future of financial cooperation in the Asian region and is an important voice for the

emerging economies in the international financial fora. She chaired the Executives' Meeting of East Asia Pacific Central Banks taskforce to draw up the blueprint for future regional financial cooperation. Zeti is a member of the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) Central Bank Governance Group and a founding member of the Asian Consultative Council for the BIS. Dr. Zeti also continues to promote the development of Islamic finance, domestically and internationally. She served as the Islamic Financial Services Board Council Chairman for the 2007 term and was also the chairperson of the International Islamic Liquidity Management Corporation (IILM) Governing Board until 2011. Zeti is currently the chairperson of the IILM's board executive committee. She also chaired a high-level international taskforce mooted by the Islamic Development Bank, which examined the role and relevance of Islamic finance in promoting global financial stability. Zeti was a member of the United Nations Commission of Experts to examine possible reforms in the global financial system.

TAN SRI DR ROBAAYAH ZAMBAHARI

Robaayah is the managing director and chief executive officer of Malaysia's premier heart centre, Institut Jantung Negara (IJN) since 2009. She is also the senior consultant cardiologist and head of department of IJN.



Highly respected and known for her extensive experience in cardiology, both locally and internationally, she became well-known when she became a part of the team of doctors who treated Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad when he suffered a heart attack in 1989. She was appointed senior consultant cardiologist and head of department at IJN in 1992.

Among her achievement includes first recipient of Malaysian Woman of Substance Award 2010, Pursuit of Excellence (Medical) Award, CHT Network in 2011, Chien Foundation Lectureship Award 2011 and Anugerah Mutiara Perak "Woman of Distinction" Award, in recognition of Perak Women who had contributed to Malaysia's socio-economic development in 2012.

Dr Robaayah received her Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery from the University of

Malaya in 1977.

TAN SRI SITI NORMA YAKOB

Siti Norma was the nation's first woman high court judge, court of appeal judge, federal court judge and later the chief judge of Malaya, and today has the un-enviable position of being the chairman of the Malaysia Competition Commission (MyCC), a body seeking to safeguard the interests of the people by ensuring free and fair competition in the market place.



Siti Norma was appointed in April 2011.

She received her early education at Malay School Rahang, Convent of the Holy Infant Jesus and King George V of Seremban, and served as senior assistant registrar of high court Kuala Lumpur, prior to her appointment as the chief judge of Malaya.

In 1962, she studied law in London and obtained the Degree of Barrister-At-Law from the Honourable Society of Gray's Inn and certificate in public international law in post-finals course, conducted by Council of Legal Education, London.

On January 30 2008, the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) Courts appointed Siti Norma as one of their six new judges. She is the first female judge to join the DIFC Courts.

DATUK REBECCA FATIMA STA MARIA

Rebecca is the secretary-general of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry.



Groomed by the indomitable Tan Sri Rafidah Aziz, she rose from the position of deputy secretary-general (trade) to secretary general in a matter of four years.

Prior to that she was senior director of investment policy and manufacturing services division of MITI. In this capacity, she was involved in negotiating Malaysia's Investment Agreements under Malaysia's bilateral and regional FTAs.

She also served as the director of Strategic Planning at MITI, a post she held from Sept 1 2002 through July 15 2005. Prior to her

appointment to MITI she served as the senior project coordinator at the Leadership Centre, National Institute of Public Administration (INTAN).

She began her career in the Administrative and Diplomatic Service in 1981 and served in various capacities in the then Ministry of Trade and Industry. In 1988 she was seconded to the ASEAN Plant Quarantine and Training Centre as its Chief Administration and Procurement Officer.

Rebecca has a doctorate in Human Resource Development from the University of Georgia, Athens, United States, a Masters degree in Counselling from Universiti Putra Malaysia, and a Bachelors degree in English Literature from the University of Malaya.

DATUK NOORIZAH ABDUL HAMID

Noorizah is the managing director of the largest highway operator in Malaysia, PLUS Expressways Bhd, and was appointed to the board of directors of PLUS Malaysia Bhd on Nov 29, 2011.



She has been managing director of PLUS Expressways since April 1, 2007. Prior to that, she was the managing director of Faber Group Bhd from March 17, 2003 and Faber Hotels Holdings Sdn Bhd from August 3, 2002.

She holds a master degree in business administration, majoring in finance and management and a Bachelor of science, degree in business administration from Central Michigan University, United States of America.

Since joining the UEM Group in September 1991, she was attached to various companies in the group which includes Renong Bhd (now known as UEM Land Holdings Bhd), HBN Management Sdn Bhd (now known as UEM Group Management Sdn Bhd), Projek Lebuh raya Utara-Selatan Bhd and Faber Group Bhd.

RITA BENOY BUSHON

Rita was appointed as the CEO of Minority Shareholder Watchdog Group (MSWG) on Jan 1, 2009 and as its director on May 18, 2009. She was a founding director of MSWG since 2002.

She is also in the Capital Market Task Force (CMTF) headed by the Minister of Finance II in 2012. Rita is currently the co-chair of the International Corporate

Governance Network (ICGN) Shareholder Responsibilities Committee and heads the Diversity Working Group for 2012.

In November 2011, Rita was awarded the BrandLaureate Brand ICON Leadership Award for Transformation Leadership by the Asia Pacific Brands Foundation.

She had previously served the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) for 23 years since 1984 in various senior

positions including head of External Portfolio Managers, head of Corporate Surveillance, head of Equity Research as well as head of Private Equity. She has also been a non-executive director on the boards of two public-listed companies in Malaysia (KFC Holdings Malaysia Bhd, and Land & General Bhd), and one in the USA. Rita holds an MBA from Henley Management College (1993), and has an Honours Degree in Economics (Statistics) from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (1984).



SHILA DORAI RAJ

Shila Dorai Raj, has the distinction of being one of the few civil servants to have been appointed CEO of an independent body in Malaysia.

Appointed at the formation of the Malaysia Competition Commission in Jan 1, 2012, Shila used to head the interim competition unit in the Ministry of Domestic Trade, Co-operatives and Consumerism (MDTCC) and tasked with setting up the Competition Commission.

She was also in charge of laying the foundation for the implementation of the Competition Act 2010, which came into effect on Jan 1, 2012.

She was formerly the undersecretary of the MDTCC's policy and planning division where, as a key team member, she formulated the competition policy and drafted the Competition Act 2010. She has been involved with competition policy and law for the last nine years.

Before this she was an officer at the Ministry of Finance, having worked extensively in international economics and government finance.

