



## **Tunku Datuk Seri Mustapha Ibni Tunku Besar Burhanuddin Tunku Kecil Besar** KCVO, SPTJ, PSD, JMN, PPT, PPM

Almarhum Y.M. Tunku Datuk Seri Mustapha Ibni Tunku Besar Burhanuddin, the Tunku Kecil Besar of Negeri Sembilan, was a senior member of the Negeri Sembilan royal family who played a significant role in the growth and development of Seremban as well as the administration of the Istana Negara (National Palace). He was born on 30 October 1909 in Istana Baroh in the royal town of Seri Menanti, Negeri Sembilan.

Y.M. Tunku received his early education at the Malay College Kuala Kangsar (MCKK), a prestigious institution established for the Malay royalty and elite during British rule. Upon the completion of his studies, he joined the Malayan Civil Service (MCS), where he rose steadily through the ranks.

Y.M. Tunku had a distinguished career in public service. He was appointed the first President (Yang di-Pertua) of the Seremban Town Council from 1954 to 1956. Under his stewardship, Seremban evolved from a mining and trading settlement into a burgeoning and sophisticated suburban and administrative centre, driven by a structured approach towards urban planning and the broadening of municipal responsibilities into a full town council. In 1965, the role was later absorbed under the office of the Menteri Besar of Negeri Sembilan.

Following Malaysia's independence (Merdeka) in 1957, Y.M. Tunku was appointed the first Private Secretary to the first Yang di-Pertuan Agong (King of Malaysia), D.Y.M.M. Almarhum Tuanku Abdul Rahman Ibni Almarhum Tuanku Muhammad of Negeri Sembilan (1957–1960), who was also his brother-in-law. In this role, Y.M. Tunku handled key administrative and liaison duties to support the monarch in fulfilling his constitutional responsibilities in the early years of the newly formed constitutional monarchy.

He later served as Grand Chamberlain of the Istana Negara (National Palace) from 1967 to 1974, during the reigns of D.Y.M.M. Almarhum Tuanku Ismail Nasiruddin Shah Ibni Almarhum Sultan Haji Zainal Abidin of Terengganu (1965–1970) and D.Y.M.M. Al-Sultan Almu'tasimu Billahi Muhibbuddin Tuanku Al-Haj Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah Ibni Almarhum Sultan

Badlishah of Kedah (1970–1975). As Grand Chamberlain, he oversaw palace functions and ceremonial affairs, including the installation of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

Y.M. Tunku also made meaningful contributions to social welfare. He became President of the Malaysian Leprosy Relief Association (MALRA) in 1982, succeeding his friend YB Senator Tan Sri Hj. Mohammed Tahir Tan Tong Hye, and served as President until 1987.

During his lifetime, Y.M. Tunku was conferred numerous honours and awards in recognition of his significant services to Malaysia and Commonwealth.

As a mark of rare distinction amongst Malaysians, he was conferred an honorary knighthood at the personal discretion of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, namely the Knight Commander grade of the Royal Victorian Order (K.C.V.O.) - the second-highest grade of the order - which is given to those deemed to have performed significant service to the monarch or the monarchy in a personal capacity; had Y.M. Tunku been a British citizen, this investiture would have accorded him the right to use the title “Sir”.

Y.M. Tunku was also the recipient of various National honours and awards, which included Darjah Panglima Setia Diraja (P.S.D.), Commander of the Order of Loyalty to the Royal Family of Malaysia, which granted him use of the title “Datuk”, Darjah Johan Setia Diraja (J.S.D.), Companion of the Order of Loyalty to the Royal Family of Malaysia, as well as Pingat Peringatan Malaysia (P.P.M.), Malaysia Remembrance Medal – a medal awarded to individuals who provided meritorious service during the formation of Malaysia in 1963 - by various D.Y.M.M. Agongs.

Y.M. Tunku also received numerous state awards during his lifetime which included Darjah Seri Paduka Tuanku Ja’afar (S.P.T.J.) or Knight Grand Commander of the Grand Order of Tuanku Ja’afar, by the Ruler of the state of Negeri Sembilan in recognition of his distinguished service to the state, which granted him use of the title “Dato’ Seri”, as well as the Public Administration Medal (P.P.T.).

Y.M. Tunku passed away on 6 July 1990 at the age of 80, leaving behind a remarkable and distinguished legacy of dedicated public service, loyalty to the Monarchy, and meaningful contributions to the welfare and development of the nation.