The Star

Cambridge college elects M’sian Fellow

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Well-deserved: Professors Lee (right) and Clarke posing for a photo together at the Wolfson Annual Fellowship Dinner.

Prof Datuk Dr Elizabeth Lee is the first Malaysian woman to be elected Honorary Fellow of Wolfson College, University of Cambridge.

The Fellowship was bestowed on the Sunway Education Group chief executive officer in recognition of her role and leadership in the field of education, particularly for the work she has done to advocate for women in education and business. Honorary Fellowships at Wolfson College are awarded to persons of distinction whom the college holds in high standing.

Prof Lee joins the prestigious list with 33 other Honorary Fellows, including internationally renowned historian Prof Wang Gungwu, opera singer Dame Kiri Te Kanawa and Singapore president Tharman Shanmugaratnam.

Thanking Wolfson president Prof Dr Jane Clarke and members of the Honorary Fellowship governing body of Wolfson College in her acceptance speech at the Wolfson Annual Fellowship Dinner on March 6, Prof Lee said the award is a testament to the unwavering support and friendship and the deep connection which ties her to the college and its community.

“Thank you so much for bestowing upon me this amazing honour. Your belief in me and my contributions in the field of education is both an inspiration and a motivation to do better and more.

“I am truly privileged to be recognised among the esteemed fellows of Wolfson College,” she said in a press release from Sunway.

Believing education has the power to change lives, Prof Lee has actively contributed towards the education sector in the country.

Describing herself as “simply a teacher at heart”, Prof Lee has gone from being an educator to an advocate for women.

As we step into the future, gender equality and inclusivity are not just ideals but a necessity, she said, adding that creating an inclusive workplace is not a solo act; it is a team sport.

“Allies, especially men, play a pivotal role in this game. They hold the key to unlock opportunities and break down barriers.

“Imagine a workplace where everyone, regardless of gender, stands shoulder to shoulder, advocating for fairness and equality.

“It is not only about speaking up against biases; it is also about fostering an environment where these conversations are the norm, where we openly discuss why diversity and inclusivity matter,” she said, stressing that women empowerment is not only about men supporting women; it is also about women supporting women.

Everyone should rally for a workplace that celebrates differences and thrives on inclusivity, said Prof Lee, who has received a string of local and international accolades for her work, including the Leadership Commitment for Malaysia Award, the Pacific-Women’s Empowerment Principles Award, the Sin Chew Educationist of the Year Award, the Education Leadership Award, the Malaysian Chinese Women of Excellence Award, and the Women Entrepreneur in Canadian Education.