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Tony Tan pays tribute to banker Tan Chin Tuan

By CONRAD RAJ
AND OH BOON PING

(SINGAPORE) Tan Chin Tuan was remembered at his funeral yesterday as a banker and businessman without equal in his generation.

In his eulogy before more than 200 mourners at Mandai Crematorium, former deputy prime minister Tony Tan described his uncle, who died last Sunday, as a man who was 'no by-stander but actively participated in the making of our nation's history'.

Dr Tan said: 'Tan Sri Dr Tan or Mr Chin Tuan, as he was popularly addressed at OCBC, was probably best known for his extraordinary success in business, building up the OCBC (Oversea-Chinese Banking Corporation) Group of companies to make OCBC a household name in Singapore and Malaysia. As a banker and businessman, he had no equal in his generation.'

'Mr Chin Tuan was noted for his scrupulous honesty in his business dealings and not one breath of scandal or report of misdoing besmirched his name and character throughout his whole corporate career.'

Dr Tan also talked of his uncle's philanthropy and his support of education. 'Mr Chin Tuan regularly went out of his way to extend a helping hand to individual Singaporeans who had fallen on hard times or who were in difficult circumstances,' he said. 'His personal intervention has made a difference in the lives of many Singaporeans.'

When Dr Tan was asked to leave the executive chairmanship of OCBC to rejoin the Cabinet in 1995 following the departure of several senior members, including S Dhanabalan and Yeo Ning Hong, Mr Tan gave his support.

'The security of our country must take priority over all other matters. Although I am proud to see you as chairman and CEO of OCBC, you are right to leave the bank and rejoin the government,' Dr Tan recalled his uncle as saying.

Granddaughter Chew Gek Khim paid tribute to Mr Tan's love and devotion for his family in her eulogy at the cremation ceremony.

She said he was a man who 'would rather lose a deal, walk away or make less, than do anything against his principles'.

'And true to his own principles, he was loyal to his friends and staff. They were loyal to him. Ah gong (grandfather) never forgot his friends.'

Former Great Eastern Life Assurance chief executive Alan Pathmarajah told BT that Mr Tan was a 'three-in-one' man.

'He was an extraordinary man who was not only a good leader but also a remarkable entrepreneur and an excellent mentor,' said Mr Pathmarajah, who worked for Mr Tan from 1973 to 1992.

'He was not an easy person to work for - he had a stubborn streak. Once he made up his mind, it was difficult for anyone to change it.

'But he was friendly, frank, firm and fair, and believed in corporate governance long before it became fashionable. He was a stickler for compliance and performance - a man who walked the talk.

'He was also able to make ordinary people do extraordinary things.'

At Mandai Crematorium, students and scouts from Anglo-Chinese Junior College (ACJC) lined the driveway, their heads bowed, awaiting Mr Tan's casket.

Earlier, members of the ACJC band had lined up outside his Grange Road home, playing Amazing Grace, as the casket left.

At a service at Barker Road Methodist Church, the crowd sang Mr Tan's favourite hymn, Onward, Christian Soldiers, backed by the ACJC band and choir.

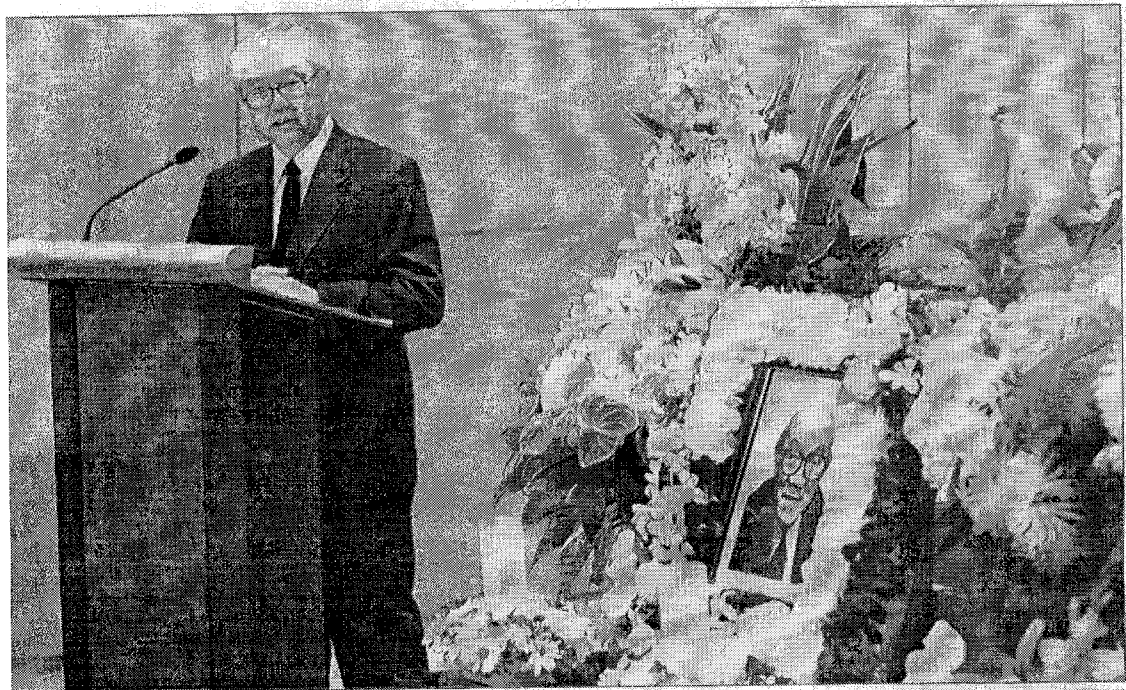
The banking magnate, who died on Sunday, aged 98, leaves two daughters, eight grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.



FRANCIS ONG/ST

LAST JOURNEY

Hundreds mourn passing of banker Tan Chin Tuan. Pg 2



LAU FOOK KONG/ST

Dr Tan: *In his eulogy, the former deputy prime minister noted his uncle's many and varied contributions to society*