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LASTING IMPACT: Mr Tan made a lasting impact as one of Singapore's most important corporate bankers.

Bank pioneer Tan Chin Tuan dies

By Yen Feng

PHILANTHROPIST and Singapore banking pioneer Tan Chin Tuan died yesterday aged 98.

The health of the former OCBC Bank chairman had taken a turn for the worse last Monday morning when staff at his Grange Road home were unable to wake him up.

A weeping staff member told The Straits Times last night Mr Tan had been coughing and complained of breathing difficulty last Sunday.

Before that, he could walk and was able to feed himself.

When the family could not rouse him on Monday, he was sent to the intensive care unit at Singapore General Hospital. After regaining consciousness, he remained there until Friday, when he asked to be brought home.

The last two days he spent at home were happy, the staff member said. 'He was smiling, and even doing some light exercises in bed on Saturday morning.'

The Straits Times understands Mr Tan lost consciousness again yesterday, and an ambulance arrived at the family's Grange Road condominium at about 1.15pm.

The cause of his death is not immediately known. His family could also not be reached for comment.

But an OCBC Bank spokesman said last night that its management and employees are 'deeply saddened by the passing of Mr Tan Chin Tuan'.

'Having devoted more than 50 years of his career to the OCBC group, he will always be remembered as one of Singapore's greatest bankers.'

He started out his career at age 17 as a clerk at the Chinese Commercial Bank. He rose to become OCBC's managing director in 1942 and concurrently its chairman in 1966 till his retirement in 1983.

He was also known for his philanthropy. This year, he donated \$29 million to the National University of Singapore, towards a wing of the new administrative centre.

He leaves behind two daughters, eight grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. His wife Helene Tan and only son Tan Keng Siong are deceased.

Mr Tan's funeral takes place on Thursday.

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