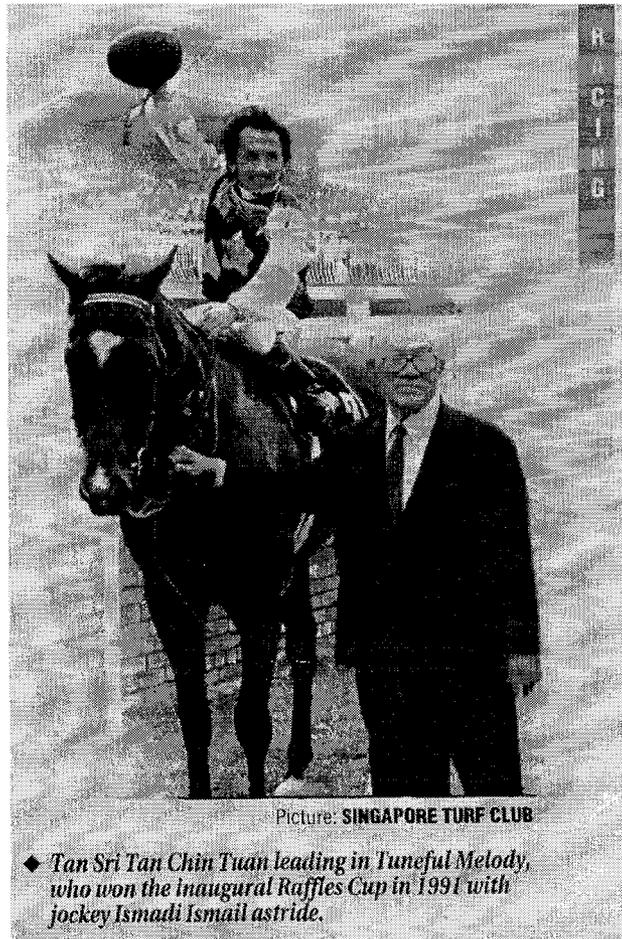


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FAREWELL

Mr Trier who loved his horses

By Danny Khoo

SINGAPORE lost one of its best-known bankers and philanthropists with the passing of Tan Sri Tan Chin Tuan last Sunday at 98.

But to old-timers in the racing circle, the banking tycoon's death marked the end of an era.

Rarely seen at the races in the last decade or so, the former chairman of the Singapore Turf Club was an ardent racing fan from the 1950s to the early 1990s.

He was not in it for the money. He betted nominally. He was in the game for the love of seeing his horses in full flight.

Win or lose, he loved his horses all the same.

To those who knew him, he was a 'Mr Trier'.

Not known to many, however, Tan Sri Tan's association with racing started by chance in 1951.

He became a reluctant horse owner after he won himself a horse in a ballot through a persistent friend.

He named it Giltedged. The horse failed to win a race. His second horse, British Paragon fare no better.

His first win came two years later but in a big way. He won the Singapore St Leger with Khor Muasa, who captured the Perak Derby the following year.

In later years, he showed a penchant for naming horses beginning with the letter 'T' under the Chen Stable banner.

Notable among them were Towkay, who won the 1981 Queen Elizabeth II Cup, and Tuneful Melody, winner of the inaugural Raffles Cup in 1991.

But his favourite horse was Happy Melody, whom he described as 'exceptionally intelligent.'

The Irish-bred won the King's Gold Cup in his first season in 1959. The following year, his champion added the Summer Cup and the Stewards' Cup.

Tan Sri Tan was acting chairman of the Singapore Turf Club in 1982 when Tan Sri Dr Runme Shaw suffered a coma. He stepped down in 1986 but returned to the helm two years later as the first chairman of the then-Bukit Turf Club.

A firm believer of giving back to charity, he once said: 'I've always felt that we must do this because the profits of the club are derived largely from the public.'