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Dr Tony Tan pays tribute to late Tan Chin Tuan

THE late philanthropist and Singapore banking pioneer Tan Chin Tuan was cremated at the Mandai Crematorium on Thursday.

The former OCBC Bank chairman died on Sunday at the age of 98, leaving behind two daughters, eight grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

His wife Helene Tan and only son Tan Keng Siong are deceased.

Former deputy Prime Minister Dr Tony Tan, the late Mr Tan's nephew, delivered a eulogy for what he described as a 'larger-than-life' personality.

Dr Tan sketched his uncle's life story, of how he had lived long enough to witness momentous events such as the Great Depression, the Second World War and the birth of Singapore as an independent nation.

But Tan Sri Dr Tan, or Mr Chin Tuan as he was popularly called at OCBC, did more than watch history unfold. He made it too, said his proud nephew.

Under his watch, OCBC became a household name in Singapore and Malaysia. As a private individual, Mr Chin Tuan's care and concern for the Tan clan extended beyond his immediate family.

Dr Tan told of how Mr Chin Tuan stepped into his life as a father figure after his dad died in 1962, dishing out advice as the minister-to-be grew up.

It was this uncle who encouraged him to return to the Cabinet for a second stint in 1995, after having retired from it in 1991 to helm OCBC, Dr Tan said.

He sought his uncle's advice then, although he already felt he could not refuse the Government's request to become a minister again.

Dr Tan said: 'I went to his house at Cairnhill Road to explain to him why I had to leave OCBC a second time to take on a governmental post.

'After I had explained the reasons for my re-joining the Cabinet, Mr Chin Tuan paused for a little while and then unhesitatingly told me in a firm tone of voice: 'You have made the right decision.

'The security of our country must take priority over all other matters. Although I am very proud to see you as Chairman and CEO of OCBC, you are right to leave the bank to re-join the Government.'

He has also touched many people with his kindness and generosity, added Dr Tan, who bade a fond and touching 'goodbye' to his uncle on behalf of the family.