

**CITATION BY PROFESSOR DANNY QUAH,
DEAN, LEE KUAN YEW SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY**

**PUBLIC ORATOR FOR DR TONY TAN KENG YAM,
RECIPIENT OF HONORARY DOCTOR OF LAWS**

**NUS COMMENCEMENT 2023, MAIN CEREMONY
THURSDAY, 6 JULY 2023
NUS UNIVERSITY CULTURAL CENTRE**

President of the Republic of Singapore and NUS Chancellor Madam Halimah Yacob,

Second Minister for Education, Dr Mohamad Maliki Osman,

NUS Pro-Chancellors,

NUS Chairman and Trustees,

NUS President,

Distinguished Honorary Graduand Dr Tony Tan,

Distinguished Honorary Graduate Dr Margaret Chan,

Graduates, Parents and Friends;

Ladies and Gentlemen

Service

Dr Tony Tan is among the most distinguished of public servants we have in the Republic of Singapore. He has served the Singaporean people recently and most obviously as the Republic's President, and as Minister for Finance, Minister for Trade and Industry, Minister for Education, Minister for Defence, Coordinating Minister for Security and Defence, and of course as Deputy Prime Minister.

Between his positions in Cabinet and becoming the Republic's President, Dr Tan continued to work for the benefit of Singaporeans as, among many other things, Deputy Chairman and Executive Director of GIC - the Government of Singapore Investment Corporation - Chairman of the National Research Foundation, Deputy Chairman of the Research, Innovation, and Enterprise Council, and Chairman of Singapore Press Holdings.

Across a spectrum of roles such as these and yet others, Dr Tan has stood for the objectives and ideals of education in his service to Singapore's landscape of universities. As Minister for Education, he guided the creation of Singapore's great universities, including our own NUS.

Dr Tan's contribution has been key in the growth of Singapore's research and development capability over the last quarter of a century. Today Singapore is frequently cited as one of the world's most innovative and competitive economies, that is due in no small part to Dr Tony Tan's leadership and championing of our education sector.

Early Background

Given this breath-taking range of assignments, leadership, and Ministerial portfolios, one might be hard-pressed to guess Dr Tan's earlier background. He graduated in 1962 from the then University of Singapore with a First Class Honours in Physics. He then went to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the United States where he earned a Master of Science degree, after that he obtained a PhD in Applied Mathematics at the University of Adelaide.

He was an academic in the Department of Mathematics at the University of Singapore, before taking up banking as a career at OCBC, and then leaving that industry to enter politics in 1979.

Other Awards

Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, we are this morning to honour the man behind such a glittering career of service. But we are obviously not the first seeking to do so.

Dr Tan has honorary doctorates from universities around the world, including from his own PhD alma mater, the University of Adelaide. Dr Tan was inducted into the Honorary Senate of the Foundation Lindau Nobel Laureate Meetings.

For contributions to international thinking and to education and research, Dr Tan was awarded the Foreign Policy Association Medal by the New York Foreign Policy Association; he was awarded the Great Gold Medal by Comenius University Slovakia; and the King Charles II Medal by the Royal Society of the United Kingdom.

If I might be allowed a small personal note, it was on that trip to London that Dr Tan made on the occasion of the King Charles II medal, that I first got to meet him at a glittering dinner hosted by Queen Elizabeth. It was an event to make all Singaporeans, all Asians, everyone who wants to improve their nation, proud of the achievements of this man who stood, next to the Queen, in all his quiet dignity.

Conclusion

The award of an honorary doctorate is a recognition of the achievements of the individual. But it serves also as an inspiration to the rest of us.

Dr Tan's public service and his commitment to education, research, and science have advanced the well-being of every one of us, in Singapore and around the world.

Madam Chancellor, for his devoting his life to public service, to education and science and research, and to Singapore, may it please you to confer on Dr Tony Tan the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws.