

**TRANSCRIPT OF EULOGY
BY PRESIDENT DR TONY TAN KENG YAM
AT THE FUNERAL OF THE LATE MR LEE KUAN YEW
SUNDAY, 29 MARCH 2015
UNIVERSITY CULTURAL CENTRE AUDITORIUM**

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong

The Family of the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew

Excellencies

Distinguished Guests

Friends and Fellow Singaporeans

1 On behalf of all Singaporeans, my wife Mary and I convey our deepest condolences to Prime Minister Lee and the family of the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew on Mr Lee's passing.

2 Today, Singapore bids farewell to our country's first Prime Minister — the founder of our modern Republic. As a nation, we mourn a man who made a difference. A man who shaped our very identity as a society. A man who was devoted to ensuring that Singapore succeeded when no one thought we could.

3 But we do not mourn alone. Mr Lee's impact stretched far beyond our shores. He raised the profile of our Republic, earning respect and admiration around the world. On behalf of Singapore, I thank the many friends of Mr Lee — friends of Singapore — who have travelled great distances to be with us today.

4 Two years ago, I asked to visit Mr Lee to see how he was doing. With Mr Lee's increasing frailty and out of respect, I planned to meet him at his office. Mr Lee, however, was adamant that he should come to my office. It took him a great deal of effort. But he did it as a mark of respect for the Office of the President.

5 This incident was more than a matter of protocol. To me, it demonstrated Mr Lee's strong regard for our Constitution. For the institutions of our state.

6 And even though he played a lead role in creating these institutions, he also knew that they had to be greater than any one man. It is often said that Singaporeans are a pragmatic people. And we are. But we are also fundamentally a nation built on ideals. Mr Lee once said:

“Each generation is fired by its own vision of the ideal society in the ideal world. The ideal can never be achieved, but because men have ideals, those societies progress.”

Mr Lee’s ideals were clear. He believed in them, and he lived them.

Meritocracy.

Honesty.

Integrity.

7 When Mr Lee became Prime Minister in 1959, he pulled together a strong team of leaders from diverse backgrounds. He ensured that positions in government were filled by the most capable people, rather than those with connections or money.

8 Mr Lee took severe measures to curb corruption, a root cause of inequality. He put in place tough laws to investigate those suspected of corruption and heavy penalties for those caught taking bribes. By ensuring that our government and economy stayed honest, accountable and free of corruption, Mr Lee assured investors and companies that Singapore was the right place for their investments. Companies from around the world came, and continue to come to Singapore – creating opportunities for employment, learning and growth for Singaporeans.

9 Mr Lee demanded, without compromise, complete integrity in personal and professional matters from himself, his family and his colleagues. He said in Parliament in 1979:

“The moment key leaders are less than incorruptible, less than stern in demanding high standards, from that moment the structure of administrative integrity will weaken, and eventually crumble.”

10 To make sure that our public services were working well to serve the people, he made unannounced visits to inspect our HDB estates, hospitals, parks and other public places.

11 Integrity, however, was more than a basis for a strong economy and a capable government. Mr Lee had a vision of Singapore as a fair and just society. Today, all Singaporeans have the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from Singapore’s development regardless of race or religion, connections or family background. Through his personal example, Mr Lee embedded a sense of integrity into our very identity as a nation.

12 With integrity as our nation’s bedrock, Mr Lee forged a cohesive society that shares common values and experiences across races and religions.

13 When Singapore gained independence, we were a fractured and divided society. This past week, Singaporeans from all walks of life came together to mourn the loss of Mr Lee. Large numbers of Singaporeans queued patiently for hours to pay their last respects at Parliament House and Community Tribute Sites across the island. Many individuals and businesses offered shelter and refreshments to those who had been waiting in line, lending a helping hand to fellow Singaporeans. This would have made Mr Lee very proud. This was what he had worked for his whole life – to build a united people, who respect and care for one another as fellow citizens.

14 Every National Day, we looked forward to seeing Mr Lee. I remember vividly our National Day Parade two years ago. There had been some uncertainty about Mr Lee's health. While I was waiting to enter the Floating Platform to officiate the Parade, suddenly I heard a huge roar, a cheer, — the biggest that day. My staff informed me that Mr Lee had just made his entrance to take his seat. That roar captured the feelings of a nation, of all of us, towards Mr Lee. It rang with respect, affection, friendship and deep emotional attachment. It is not something that can be easily put into words. But I know that all Singaporeans, in their hearts, understand what I am talking about. It was the sound of one nation united.

15 We will miss Mr Lee at this year's National Day Parade. But he will be foremost in our minds. And in our hearts.

16 Over the past week, we have mourned the passing of a man and an era. There will never be another Lee Kuan Yew. No one person can take his place nor do what he did.

17 But Mr Lee believed passionately that Singapore had to be greater than any single individual. When Mr Lee stepped down as Prime Minister a quarter of a century ago, he was still in good health. He had many more years to contribute. But he knew that Singapore would always be a work in progress. That each generation needs its own leaders. Now is the time for us to take up the torch to further the ideals upon which Singapore was built, and to make them our own.

18 There is a well-known saying, most famously used by Isaac Newton: "If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants." We are held aloft by Mr Lee and our founding generation. They have given us the foundation, the ability and the confidence to look forward to the future, to shape an even better Singapore for all Singaporeans. Together, we can respond to challenges. Together, we can create new opportunities for our children and grandchildren in Singapore. This is Mr Lee's legacy for us.

19 We must continue to pursue our ideals with courage and commitment. And so I call on all Singaporeans to honour the memory of Mr Lee by working together to achieve

happiness, prosperity and progress for our Singapore. This will be our tribute to Mr Lee Kuan Yew.

20 Goodbye Mr Lee. May your soul rest in peace.
