

SINGAPORE
**Academic institutions, think tanks
pay tribute to Mr Lee Kuan Yew**

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"When the dust of history settles and the definitive books are written on 20th century history, Mr Lee will emerge as one of the greatest leaders of the century," says Dean of Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy Kishore Mahbubani.

PHOTOS



Mr Lee Kuan Yew. File photo: ZORAN MALIC/REUTERS
CAPTION

SINGAPORE: Local academic institutions such as the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at National University of Singapore and Singapore Institute of International Affairs on Monday (Mar 23) paid tribute to Singapore's first Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, who passed away this morning.

Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy

"On behalf of staff, faculty and students, the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (LKY School), NUS, wishes to convey its deepest condolences to the family of Mr Lee Kuan Yew on his passing," the school said in a statement.

"The LKY School is proud to have been the first institution to be named after Mr Lee. His name has been an enormous blessing to our School. It has enabled us to rise rapidly in global rankings and to fulfill our mission of inspiring leaders, improving lives and transforming Asia.

"Mr Lee also strongly supported the School personally. He came several times to interact with faculty and students and shared his wise counsel with us. He also wrote personal letters to potential donors. All these enabled the School to grow in strength and become the third-best endowed School of Public Policy in the world.

"In 2011, we were further honoured by Mr Lee's acceptance of the appointment as Distinguished Fellow at the School.

"In 2013, the LKY School held a conference entitled, "The Big Ideas of Mr Lee Kuan Yew" to celebrate its 9th anniversary. The conference brought together notable speakers and close associates who spoke about his policies both in depth and with personal anecdotes which brought to life his leadership. A book of the same title and which collated the accounts from the conference was launched the following year at the School's 10th anniversary."

Prof Kishore Mahbubani, Dean of the LKY School, shared his impressions of the former Prime Minister. "In my 33 years with the Singapore Foreign Service, one of the greatest privileges I had was the opportunity to work directly with Mr Lee Kuan Yew several times. He was a tough taskmaster. Yet, I never failed to learn valuable lessons from each encounter. Having watched him interact with several global leaders, including Reagan, Thatcher, Mitterrand and Koh, I saw first-hand how they were blown away by his breadth of vision, acute geopolitical analyses and wise policy solutions.

"When the dust of history settles and the definitive books are written on twentieth century history, Mr Lee will emerge as one of the greatest leaders of the century. His impact extended beyond Singapore and South-east Asia. Great leaders like Deng Xiaoping and George H. W. Bush benefited from his wise counsel. He will be missed in Singapore and by the world," added Prof Mahbubani.

Singapore Institute of International Affairs

Mr Lee Kuan Yew will be remembered for leading Singapore from the third world to first. Equally important, the late statesman has played a big part in fostering regional stability, said Associate Professor Simon Tay, Chairman of the Singapore Institute of International Affairs (SIIA).

Mr Lee's vision on governance and diplomatic engagement has also influenced policymakers beyond Singapore. For that, more than Singapore will feel his passing, Prof Tay added.

"Mr Lee has always focused on Singapore and led the country through difficult times, from 'third world to first' (in his own words). But in the process, he was a mind that analysed key global issues that impacted our small country, like the rise of China and continuing role of the USA.

"He was a personality that interacted with generations of leaders and struck up long term relationships with leaders of great powers. And his was a voice that spoke clearly and directly, even if his views might be controversial. So although he did not set out to speak for Asia, it will be more than Singapore that will feel his passing," said Prof Tay.

Mr Lee came to power in the tumultuous 50s. He forged solid friendships with world leaders to ensure Singapore's survival. His personal ties with former Malaysian Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak and former Indonesian President Suharto resulted in the founding of ASEAN in 1967. His friendship with members of UK Prime Minister Harold Wilson's government helped delay the British troops' withdrawal from Singapore to late 1971, buying the country more time to build up its own defence forces. He also held lasting friendships with former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, German chancellor Helmut Schmidt and Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping.

"This amity was crucial as it helped Singapore in many areas from security to economics," said Prof Tay.

National University of Singapore

"Mr Lee was a globally respected statesman, a visionary leader, and a much admired alumnus of the National University of Singapore. He was a giant of a man who was passionate about education, and a fearless pioneer who made it possible for Singaporeans to have a standard of living today that is admired by many. NUS mourns the loss of one of our own, and sends our heartfelt condolences to PM and Mrs Lee, and the Lee family," said NUS Chairman Mr Wong Ngit Liong.

NUS President Professor Tan Chorh Chuan, who had hosted Mr Lee at several university functions, said: "Singapore today is a direct result of Mr Lee Kuan Yew's visionary leadership, sheer will and hard work. He transformed a small island with no natural resources into a modern, successful nation respected by countries around the world.

"There are many things for which we thank Mr Lee, including his unwavering focus on building an outstanding educational system in Singapore. All of us at NUS mourn the passing of an eminent alumnus, an inspirational leader, and a true icon of our times."

Nanyang Technological University: President Bertil Andersson

"NTU owes much of our success as an engine of progress for Singapore and mankind to Mr Lee's vision and stewardship of education, including higher education, which has propelled Singapore onto the global stage and created opportunities for all Singaporeans.

"From NTU's early days, Mr Lee took a personal interest in the development of this university. He visited the campus unannounced, typically on Sundays, to observe how the initial academic buildings were shaping up and suggested various improvements to benefit students.

"I feel very privileged to have interacted with him, and have been greatly motivated by his astute intelligence and vision of Singapore.

"In the passing of Mr Lee, we are reminded of the ideals we should all aspire towards, including a dedication to nurturing the younger generation, who will strengthen and sustain Singapore's success globally."