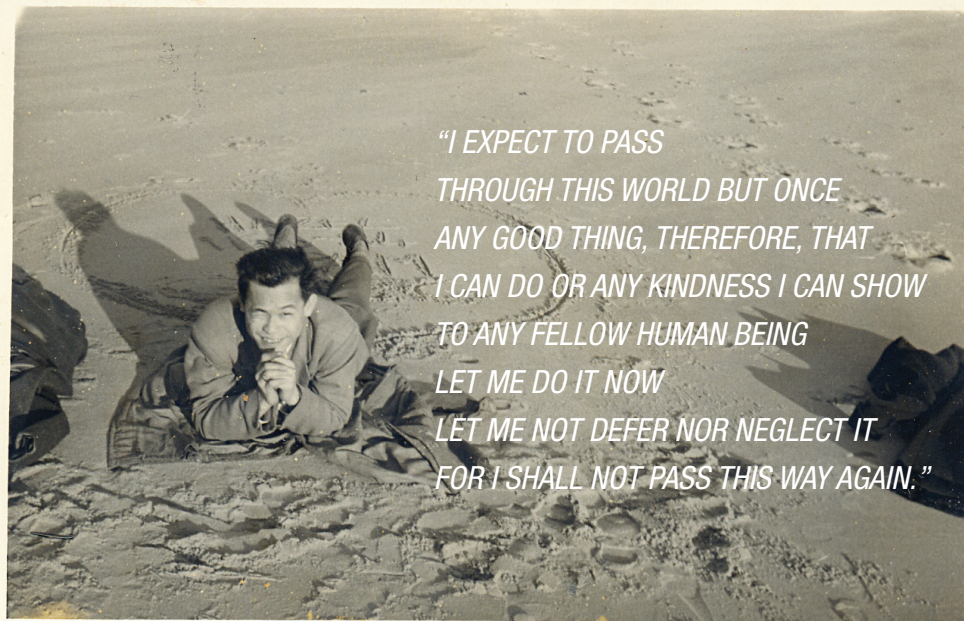


A MAN FOR ALL REASONS

Goh Teck Phuan



*"I EXPECT TO PASS
THROUGH THIS WORLD BUT ONCE
ANY GOOD THING, THEREFORE, THAT
I CAN DO OR ANY KINDNESS I CAN SHOW
TO ANY FELLOW HUMAN BEING
LET ME DO IT NOW
LET ME NOT DEFER NOR NEGLECT IT
FOR I SHALL NOT PASS THIS WAY AGAIN."*

FITTING TRIBUTE

As the Minister of Social Affairs from October 1963 to June 1977, one of my many roles was promotion of sports in Singapore. At that time, sports did not have the priority it now enjoys. Instead, for any progress to be made, a lot depended on individuals who were willing to go beyond the call of duty.

Goh Teck Phuan was easily such an individual. He was one of those staff who, filled with passion for sports, was full of ideas. More importantly, he was able to translate a lot of his ideas into reality with his enthusiasm, drive, initiative and high energy level. His love for sports was so strong that he didn't allow things to get in his way. If there weren't enough funds, he would think of ways to raise money. If others around him were less than excited, he either tried to win them over with his persuasion or he would lead by example first and slowly gain converts.

Working at the Sports Division under the Ministry of Social Affairs, he, along with others, contributed to many milestones in our

nation's sporting history from the 60s to the 80s - the setting up of the National Stadium, the introduction of the Toto lottery to fund major sports projects, the organization of the first Singapore Grand Prix, the establishment of Pesta Sukan as part of the local sports calendar, the successful hosting of the World Cup Golf and the founding of the Singapore Marathon.

Lasting Strides, initiated by his son Ivan Goh, is a most fitting tribute to him. Its centrespread celebrates his achievements, many of which were ahead of his times and which continue to influence the Singapore sporting landscape today. The fact that the rest of the book takes a look at the history of athletics in Singapore and highlights top athletes over the years is also apt. After all, Goh was an avid runner who took much pride in the success of his fellow athletes.

Othman Wok

Former Minister of Social Affairs

For any progress to be made in sports, a lot depended on individuals who were willing to go beyond the call of duty. Goh Teck Phuan was easily such an individual.”



TRUE PIONEER

“The traits which led him to initiate and organise major sporting events were already evident to many of us in our early days of friendship. And we were quick to ride on his strengths to promote track & field.”

I was never a star athlete. But athletics developed in me the qualities needed for success in my business as the founder of Sincere Fine Watch and Fountain Pen Dealer back in 1954. It instilled in me the spirit of healthy competition, developed in me a sense of perseverance and tenacity and gave me the outlet to meet many outside of the watch industry. Many of these individuals grew to become my close friends and important associates. One of the most memorable was the inspiring Mr Goh Teck Phuan. Indeed, the man who, along with a few other key figures, pioneered many of Singapore's pivotal events, including the highly successful Singapore Marathon, was a figure of inspiration.

The traits which led him to initiate and organise major sporting events were already evident to many of us in our early days of friendship. And we were quick to ride on his strengths to promote track & field. For example, I remember how, in June 1947, a group of us formed the Swift Athletes Association. Given Teck Phuan's natural talent for organisation and immense drive, it was not surprising that he became Honorary Secretary, with Yeo Choon Bee as President.

In the years that followed, what he did for Singapore sports and especially athletics (and athletes) only reinforced our strong belief that here was one special individual willing to work behind the scene to make a big difference.

Apart from making a name as literally the man behind some major events (like the Singapore Marathon), he also left his mark as a coach and as a friend to athletes. There are many stories of how he, with his soft touch for the athletes, went out of his way to help them in concrete ways, including recommending some for relevant jobs to ensure they had a life after their glorious days on the track or in the field.

I am delighted to be part of this project to honour a special individual among us. Today, as Singapore plans and embarks on the many projects it wants to undertake to develop itself as a sports hub and as we witness the growing success of some of our events (eg the Singapore Marathon), it is only right that we recognise the pioneers who laid the ground work. Goh Teck Phuan – a true pioneer - was, in my opinion, one of these key individuals.

Tay Boo Jiang

Founder
Sincere Watch Limited



A GOOD FIGHT

In the early 60s, it was upon Goh Teck Phuan's request that I took over the presidency of the Swift Athletes Association. From the time I knew him, he had always shown his complete dedication to athletics and the Swifts in particular. Nurtured from the stables of the Anglo Chinese School which produced many top athletes such as Yeo Choon Bee, Tan Soo Liat and his brother Soo Hian, Chan Oon Leng, Chen Yew Wah and others, Teck Phuan epitomised the kind of deep passion for track & field few can match.

He was one of the founders of Swift who built up a great tradition of competitive athletics which ensured an endless supply of national champions.

In later years when I was in the Singapore Sports Council and, in collaboration with the Singapore Athletic Association, was promoting the Singapore Marathon, he served as the Secretary of the Organising Committee. In this role, he was the dynamo that drove the committee, pleading with sponsors, writing to various international associations for participation, and persuading the local officials to help with the many duties and responsibilities.

Such was his single mindedness in making every marathon event a success, he worked day and night tirelessly.

Inevitably, the Singapore Marathon became the international attraction that it is today. Many who were associated with the event will remember with deep nostalgia Teck Phuan The Marathon Man, loyal to our nation's hopes and aspirations.

With his passing, we shall miss his fire and dedication to athletics, his friendliness, his strong faith that things will turn out fine even in the face of problems and, most of all, his deep love and inspirational leadership to all young athletes of the Swift AA and the Singapore AA. Like the great athlete who had engaged successfully in life's competition, Teck Phuan merits the biblical quote from Paul: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

(2 Timothy 4: 7)

Lau Teng Chuan

Former Executive Director
Singapore Sports Council

"He was one of the founders of Swift who built up a great tradition of competitive athletics which ensured an endless supply of national champions."

OPENING DOORS

“In many ways, he was my teacher. He encouraged me. He trusted me with responsibilities which were challenging. Often, I had to work hard so as not to disappoint him.”

Lasting Strides is a tribute to the late Goh Teck Phuan. It also takes a look at athletics in Singapore and the many athletes whose lives were touched by him over the years. I am one such athlete. I became a student member of the Swift Athletes Association when it was formed in 1947. Teck Phuan and Yeo Choon Bee, former champions of ACS, came to the Barker Road school field to recruit students to join Swift.

It was from then that a lasting association and friendship developed between Teck Phuan and I. Over the years, I didn't become the top athlete I was striving to be. Instead I dedicated myself to athletics by being a coach and official. Often, the positions I held were thrust upon me by Teck Phuan. I became the Assistant Honorary Treasurer of the Swift Athletes Association in 1951 at the age of 19.

I am now 75 years old and holding the position of Vice President of the Club. As the longest serving member of the Club, I have held different positions over 56 years. Over this period, I have also held positions in the Singapore Athletics Association

(SAA), Singapore National Olympic Council (SNOC), Asian Athletics Association (AAA) and International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF). How did all this come about? It started with the belief Teck Phuan had in me and the doors he opened for me.

In many ways, he was my teacher. He encouraged me. He trusted me with responsibilities which were challenging. Often, I had to work hard so as not to disappoint him. I was fortunate to have good guidance from him and people like him.

To the young, I want to say this: there is no short cut to anything you want to achieve. To be successful and respected, one has to be diligent. One must have a strong sense of responsibility and be sincere, committed and humble. These are qualities one could see in Goh Teck Phuan and other pioneers of his generation and I am happy there is now a book dedicated to him.

Maurice R. Nicholas

Honorary Secretary
Asian Athletics Association

REMEMBERING A MASTER

I came to know my master in athletics, Goh Teck Phuan in 1962 when I was a schoolboy runner from Anglo-Chinese School. Teck Phuan was the founding secretary of Swift Athletes Association, a position he held from 1947 to 1956. I was in the long distance group in a closely knit family. I felt proud in just running for Swift. When I became a lawyer in 1970, I went into administration in the Management Committee of Swift Athletes Association.

In 1974, I was anointed by Teck Phuan and Lau Teng Chuan to be the successor President of Swift Athletes Association taking over from the two of them who were alternating the presidency of Swift, Teck Phuan being the President in 1957 to 1958 and 1971 to 1973 while Teng Chuan was the President from 1961 to 1970. Swift grew from strength to strength from the small Chinese communal club that was germinated in 1945 to graduate into a cosmopolitan club and a fully fledged affiliate of Singapore Amateur Athletic Association in 1947 when Swift was officially founded.

I am proud to be still leading Swift for which I am thankful to both my masters. Needless

to say, Swift is the oldest and strongest all round club in Singapore athletics with its broad base of athletes and officials. It fulfils its fair share of the task of complementing the parent body in organising events for the promotion of athletics, Swift organising not less than two (2) big events yearly. In terms of the production of athletes and the promotion of their interest, Swift had been the champion team both in men and women categories in the annual Inter-Club Championships many times consecutively until the competition was suspended in 2005 and has done consistently well in other events organised by the parent body yearly including the annual Singapore Open Track & Field Championships.

My leadership role then expanded to the helm of Singapore Athletics in 1982 when I was elected the President of the then Singapore Amateur Athletic Association and now Singapore Athletic Association. Teck Phuan was extremely happy to see his protege confirmed his faith in his choice of succession in Swift.

It was also in the year 1982 when Teck Phuan changed his leadership role to that of

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Organising Secretary in the inaugural Singapore Marathon held very successfully on 5 December, 1982. Since then, he was involved in almost all marathons in Singapore except for the Mobil Marathon which alternated biennially with the Singapore Marathon until 2002 when Standard Chartered Bank came in to be the sponsor of the Standard Chartered Singapore Marathon organised jointly by Singapore Athletic Association and Singapore Sports Council. Teck Phuan then played a reduced role more as an advisor and also chairman of the Jury of Appeal. In any event, he was still very much involved physically on Race Day itself on the first Sunday of December each year.

Teck Phuan’s spirit in Swift Athletes Association and the Singapore Marathon lives on. His strong character, his fiery spirit and above all, his care and concern are something that always inspire me to find it a pleasure to continue in Athletics. “Lasting Strides” which is published in memory of Teck Phuan is a fitting way for us to always remember Teck Phuan for his contribution to athletics particularly to Swift Athletes Association. We, Swiftians will always

remember him fondly. From next year, we will rename our annual Age Group Cross Country Championships to Goh Teck Phuan Memorial Age Group Cross Country Championships in fond memory of our founding father.

Loh Lin Kok
President, Singapore Athletic Association
President, Swift Athletes Association