

# Tony Tan Keng Yam

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## 2011 - 2017 (Chancellor)

## 1980 - 1981 (Vice Chancellor)

Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam was appointed the first Vice Chancellor of NUS. The youngest Vice Chancellor in the history of NUS, Dr Tan's ties with the University can be traced back to his undergraduate years when he studied Physics. He graduated with a First Class Honours degree, topping his class in 1962. After completion of his Masters degree at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he returned to his alma mater as a lecturer with the Physics Department and later with the Department of Mathematics after obtaining his doctorate at the University of Adelaide. He continued to champion the development of higher education in Singapore through his appointments as Minister for Education (1980-1981 and 1985-1991) as well as Minister-in-charge for NUS and Nanyang Technological Institute (1981-1983). In 2005, he was presented the NUS Eminent Alumni Award in recognition of his role as a visionary architect of Singapore's university sector.



He retired from the Cabinet in 2005 and became the Chairman of both Singapore Press Holdings (2005-2011) as well as the National Research Foundation (2006-2011). He was also the Deputy Chairman and Executive Director of the Government of Singapore Investment Corporation.

## Education

- St Patrick's Institution; St. Joseph's Institution
- BSc (Univ. of Singapore)
- MSc (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)
- PhD (Univ. of Adelaide)

## Career

- 1964 Taught in Physics Department, University of Singapore
- 1967-69 Lecturer in Mathematics, University of Singapore
- 1969-79 Submanager, later General Manager, Overseas-Chinese Banking Corporation (OCBC)
- 1979 Member of Parliament
- 1979-80 Senior Minister of State for Education
- 1980-81 Minister for Education
- 1980-81 Vice-Chancellor, National University of Singapore
- 1981-83 Minister-in-charge for National University of Singapore and Nanyang Technological Institute
- 1981-86 Minister for Trade & Industry
- 1983-85 Concurrently Minister for Finance
- 1985-86 Minister for Health
- 1985-91 Minister for Education
- 1992-95 Chairman & Chief Executive Officer, Overseas-Chinese Banking Corporation Ltd
- 1995-2003 Minister for Defence
- 1995-2005 Deputy Prime Minister
- 2003-2005 Co-ordinating Minister for Security and Defence
- 2005-2011 Chairman, National Research Foundation; Chairman, Singapore Press Holdings; Deputy Chairman, Research, Innovation and Enterprise Council; Deputy Chairman & Executive Director, Government of Singapore Investment Corporation

## Offices held

- Chairman, National Trades Union Congress Investment and Co-operatives Committee
- Chairman, National Trades Union Congress Income Board of Trustees
- Chairman, People's Action Party Central Executive Committee
- Chairman, People's Action Party Community Foundation Management Council
- Chairman, Economic Development Board International Advisory Council
- Chairman, Singapore-US Business Council
- Founding Board Member, Government of Singapore Investment Corporation
- Member, Economic Review Committee
- Patron, Singapore Dance Theatre

## Honours

- 1959 Singapore Government State Scholarship
- 1962 Asia Foundation Scholarship
- 1965 Research Scholarship (University of Adelaide)
- 1988 National Trades Union Congress Medal of Honour
- MIT Club of Singapore Distinguished Services Award
- Hon. Doctor of Laws (Murdoch University)

## Key Speeches

[Economic Restructuring and Management Attitudes](#) 

University of Singapore Convocation Ceremony | 5 Sep 1980

[University Education and the NUS](#) 

Welcome Convention for New NUS Students | 2 Jul 1980