



## Yek Yew Choo

December 21, 1931 - January 5, 2021

On Tuesday, January 5th, 2021, Yek Yew Choo, father of four children and grandfather of three, passed away at the age of 89 in Orange County, California.

Yew Choo was born on December 21st, 1931 in Dabong village in Kelantan, Malaysia, to Daniel Yek and Wong Kam Yin. His father passed away when he was still a child, compelling him to travel with his teacher to Penang, Malaysia, at age 11 to seek his own fortune.

He survived the hardship of World War II, and although he did not finish his secondary education, Yew Choo found success in commerce, rising to the upper ranks of sales and management with the German-based conglomerate, Behn Meyer.

On January 24th, 1956, he married Penang-born Ong Keng Yeow. They raised three sons, Dan, John and Stephen, and a daughter, Grace. Yew Choo firmly believed in the value of scholarship, and made sure his children got their passports to life through education. All four of his children have advanced university degrees, one of whom is a doctor of medicine.

Fondly known as “Mr. Yek” by his friends and associates, Yew Choo was a natural-born leader, often calling the shots in one of the nearly ten languages and dialects in which he was fluent.

He was a sportsman, whose prowess in badminton was only a stone's throw away from the state championship. Yew Choo was an avid fisherman, often venturing into the deep sea to nab the big ones that didn't get away. In his later years, he even took a course in electronics and tinkered his way into a homemade transistor radio.

Yew Choo was a man ahead of his time who often gathered family and relatives alike on weekend excursions around the island of Penang. He was fun-loving, delighting his wife and those around him with his alacrity in ballroom dancing. At age 75, he dived right into the limbo rock at his Golden Anniversary reception.

Yew Choo was a loyal and devoted husband who took care of his wife in her later years when her health began to fail. Just as much, he was a stalwart and dutiful father who was fully committed to his children.

Yew Choo traveled many miles in his lifetime, from his relocation to Penang in his early years, to his days as a budding salesman, driving through the jungles and remote villages throughout Malaysia. In his eighties, Yew Choo bravely logged another 10,000 miles. He immigrated to the United States with his wife to join their children.

Yew Choo was preceded in death by his parents, his wife, Ong KengYeow, and his brother, Paul. He is survived by his sister, Deborah, his four children, Dan (Choy), John, Stephen (Theresa) and Grace (Jay), and his grandchildren, Surn Lee (Tanya), Surn Yee and Victoria.

Yew Choo leaves behind an inspired legacy and will be deeply missed. A funeral service will be held on Saturday, January 30th, 2021 at the Memory Garden, Brea, California at 1:00 p.m. PST.

Zoom has been set up for family and friends to attend the Funeral Service below.

Mr. Yek Yew Choo Funeral Service

Saturday January 30th, 2021

• Times are in Pacific Standard time zone

Zoom Video Connection:

MEETING ID: 835 8616 8751

PASSCODE: 730607

Time Itinerary for Service

12:45 - 1:00 pm Check in for service. Note: Relatives/Co-workers/Friends attending virtually, do connect in early.

1:00 - 1:10 pm Reverend Jeff Goeser Introduction & Welcome

1) Reading of Eccles. 3:1-8

2) A hymn "Be Thou My Vision"

1:10 - 1:40 pm Eulogy:

General Tribute (per emailed tribute guide doc.) read by Rev. Jeff or allocated sibling

Personal Tributes/Memories of siblings- Dan, John, Stephen, Grace

1:40 - 1:55 pm Video Tribute

1:55 - 2:15 pm 1) Homily- Words of Comfort:

I Thess. 4, II Cor 5, Phil 2

2) A hymn "Dear Lord & Father of Mankind"

3) Psalm 23 – "The Lord is my Shepherd"

closing blessing by Rev Jeff

2:15 pm Contemporary song "You Raise Me Up" (Share Screen- Audio)

# Previous Events

## Funeral Service

JAN 30. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (PT)

Memory Garden Memorial Park  
455 W Central Ave  
Brea, CA 92821

# Tribute Wall



“ *Memory Garden Memorial Park & Mortuary created a Tribute Video in memory of Yek Yew Choo*



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**Memory Garden Memorial Park & Mortuary** - February 02, 2021 at 08:40 PM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Yek Yew Choo.*



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January 30, 2021 at 02:21 PM

SY

“As my other brothers have mentioned before, my dad was ahead of his time, a forward visionary thinker and doer. There is also something special about my dad, he has, I realized in my later years coming to US learning and growing up, is his outstanding leadership traits and qualities that really stood out. *Courage, Influence, Respect and Integrity, to name key ones but there are others.*

*Courage – No matter how bad a situation is, my dad finds the courage in helping others in their most perilous of time. He told me of a story when he was traveling salesman, he stepped in to help identify a friend who died in a really bad road accident when the friend’s family was too stricken to go to morgue. With courage he went on behalf of his friend’s family to identify his friend’s body at the morgue. He then gave comfort to his friend’s family during the difficult times. There were other instances with my relatives’ facing most difficult times as well. My dad had the courage to step in to assist and comfort. One may even say he has shown empathy for those around him in their most difficult of times.*

*Influence – My dad has a way of influencing others. Many thought he did by way of persuasion. Truth to be said, he influenced by leading in his actions and advice through his own personal experience. When I was learning fishing with him, he took time to show how and why tying a fishing hook the way he did was the better way. No worry of that big one that got away, which I lost several hooks and baits to go when I did my way. For anyone into fishing to know, the fishing knot is called the Snell knot, used by many professionals who fish.*

*Respect – You will not find my dad demanding respect. He led a life, a family life guided by religion he embraced. He always preached to his children, do no harm to others, help others in need, never gamble (for a living) and never waste. You are welcome to chat to anyone of my siblings and you will find what my dad said still rings true for us all today. I like to share one story about never waste.*

*While dining out with dad & mom, my siblings and I, found ourselves staring at remainder food left on table. Dad would often say, "Come, waste not, want not" to us. Waste not, want not – what does that mean? My father spoke of when he was starting to make a living and going through World War 2 with Japanese Imperial Army occupation in Malaysia, there were some lean and difficult times. So he would conserve and not waste food. What food he bought, he would finish up and not throw away. In his many ways he lived by what he preached through his life time. On these disciplines he lived by, I respected my dad for what he had to do.*

*Integrity – what it means to my dad is keeping his word. When maternal grandma was dying, she asked my dad to help look after my 8th aunt who was unmarried. After grandma passed away, my dad, mother and 8th aunt banded to stay together. At an earlier time when my dad and mom traveled to US, I remembered hearing my elder brother, Dan, offering them to migrate to US and stayed with them. My dad, true to his word kept with maternal grandma, made the decision not to migrate. That to me demonstrated he is a man of integrity, true to his word.*

*So coming back on my dad a forward visionary thinker and doer, in those early years of his life, Courage, Influence, Respect and Integrity were his cornerstone leadership trait/quality that propels him into the kind of thinker and doer of his time. It is also why he's the Commander-In-Chief in family, as you have and will hear from his children's speeches/presentations honoring him.*

*Dad, some day down the road, I hope we'll meet again, mom & other loved ones in heaven.*

*Stephen  
(3rd son of Yek family)*

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**Stephen Yek** - January 30, 2021 at 02:19 AM

“As a child growing up, I recalled regular stories of my Father experiencing 2 near death illnesses. In his early adulthood illness, he dreamt of Jesus’ voice beckoning him to hop up on an old fashioned balancing weighing scale. Then some time in his middle age, he dreamt of the historical Buddha telling him to swim across a large lake. On both dreams, the tasks he did successfully in the dreams meant that he was not ready to leave this human world. I also recalled several years ago, a few years before my mother’s passing and when her health was ailing. My Father persistently got my Buddhist mother to chant the mantra of “Om Mane Padme Hum”. Some scholars identify the mantra as relating to controlling one’s acts of impure body, speech and mind & aspiring to have the exalted body, speech and mind of the Buddha. Putting this mantra into practice liberates one from the samsaric cycle. Regrettably, in his 3rd and last illness just before last Christmas, God then whispered his name to leave this world. He slipped away on the eve of Epiphany (some scholars may also accept that day as the Epiphany. This coincided with the 3 Magi (Wise) men who visited & recognised God incarnate as Jesus Christ. The other significance of the Epiphany was Christ’s baptism by St John.



What I am saying is that my Father had been practicing spiritual fluidity throughout his life. In Christ’s humility as a human treading this world, his journey and ministry, he instilled Hope & taught men the right way of living through kindness, love, compassion, charity, forgiveness and many other noble virtues. It is not unlike the mantra, with both teachings sharing the same Hope that we practise the ideals of humanity in this world. Many troubled relatives and friends who crossed his path would have experienced his good practice of humanity. Your problems, issues and troubles would be resolved by my Father, when he set his energy on same. For us, his children & my mother, we felt safe under his wings. Today, who, how and what we are as his children speaks volumes of my Father. For this, I am thankful and grateful to him.

*My observation of his joy in his latter years was his witnessing of his children getting along well among themselves during the re-union occasions. He once told me of his wish that we maintain this unity throughout our siblingship. Translated to a broader picture, it is about the noble qualities of kinship and fellowship of mankind.*

*I am not going to say that my Father is all perfect either. But no one is, including me. There had been challenges in his life journey that were reflected upon us to endure those challenges. He is and was the way God has created him in this world. Overall, warts and all, his intentions were ultimately good for all of us and people who crossed his path.*

*Death is a part of Life. It is that one moment in Life that then begins in the after Life which does not belong to this human world. My mother's Buddhist faith speaks of the end of Samsara and the attainment of Nirvana. While it saddened me that my Father's journey in this world has ended, he had gained plenty of human experiences. He left a legacy of his living and life for us and his grandchildren to cherish him. What is our loss is a gain in the other world. I think the lessons he learned, Wisdom he gained in this world and his efforts to walk the walk of Christ will well equip him for his after Life journey to a better place to dwell. We are consoled by the Gospel of John chapters 5, 11 & 14 that speak of Christ's promise of such a Place, his Salvation and Eternity. Some time in the future, perhaps our paths may cross & we will rejoice once again with my Father.*

*But for now, my Father, I bid you farewell. You have earned your Peace.*

*John  
(2nd child in Yek family).*

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**John Yek** - January 29, 2021 at 05:25 PM

“ I’m Grace. I’m the youngest and only girl in the family. Some say my father became a different father when I came around. Word was he became even more protective, and perhaps, softer.

*My father did not come from privilege. But that didn’t stop him from fighting for his place in the world. He worked hard and built diligently to secure a better future for his kids – that’s just the kind of father he was. Build every generation up, he used to say.*

*Perhaps, because of how hard he fought for his opportunities, it was forever etched in him to never take anything for granted. He often repeated life advice to us kids such as “Be brave,” “Time waits for no man,” “Make hay while the sun shines,” “If there is a will, there’s a way,” and when it comes to food, “Waste not want not.”*

*I have to admit his life advice was sometimes met with eye rolls but I think that just reflects how much distance my father was able to put between his life’s uphill climb and the comfortable life he built for his kids.*

*For someone who did not finish secondary school – because of the Second World War – my father never budged from his full-hearted belief in the importance of education. He thought of education as a “passport” to a better life, and made sure all four of his kids went to college.*

*He modeled that kind of book industry too. When I was in maybe 4th or 5th grade, he decided he would improve on his command of the English language. He got a pocket-sized dictionary which he carried everywhere alongside the daily newspaper, The New Straits Times. He read, periodically stopped to reference the dictionary, and read some more. True to his work ethic, he never let up, and that became his new daily routine.*

*As much of a fighter my father was, he was just as much a protector. When I was 13, I developed acute asthma. Back in the*

*day, we were at the mercy of the doctor to make a house call for treatment. I sat up for hours on end, struggling to breathe. My father sat up all night with me -- with a heat lamp in tow, aimed at the back of my lungs for what he thought would be some relief. When morning came, he turned right around and went straight to work. That was the kind of father he was.*

*He taught me how to drive a stick shift to boot, and on the left side of the road. This was back in Malaysia. He definitely had his hands full.*

*He was also the first fan of my cooking – if you could call it that – when I learned to make simple food items. One of my early hits with him was chicken pot pie.*

*Speaking of food, one of my father's new favorite things to do in America was to hit the sample stations at Costco. He was tickled to think the store would give away free food!*

*It's ironic but now that my father has passed, I feel more connected to him than ever. I've come to understand what a remarkable life he lived, and what a remarkable man he was.*

*Tenacity, courage, charity, loyalty, family. My father lived these principles, and they will remain his lasting legacy.*

*Pa, I wish I could hold your hand once again. I'm glad my daughter, Victoria, got to know you. She loved seeing you every summer in California. Thank you for taking such good care of us. I love you and miss you. Until we meet again.*

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**syek1** - January 28, 2021 at 07:55 PM

PF

*Beautiful piece, Grace. This reax is from Philip Fair, now in kl mco lockdown. Yr dad Mr Yek Yew Choo cared for me when I was studying degree in Mass communications at usm 1977 to 79 in penang. My tel is msia 010 9877568. Buzz me in WhatsApp or call, msg me. I m not on Facebook strangely. Regds.*

Philip fair - January 31, 2021 at 06:03 AM



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Yek Yew Choo.*



January 27, 2021 at 01:34 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Yek Yew Choo.*



January 24, 2021 at 06:27 AM

KM

“ *KHOO Family (Penang, Malaysia) purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Yek Yew Choo.*



**KHOO Family (Penang, Malaysia)** - January 24, 2021 at 04:47 AM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket* was purchased for the family of Yek Yew Choo.



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January 22, 2021 at 01:47 PM



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray* was purchased for the family of Yek Yew Choo.



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January 21, 2021 at 05:00 AM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet* was purchased for the family of Yek Yew Choo.



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January 21, 2021 at 12:47 AM



“ *Sweet Solace Spray* was purchased for the family of Yek Yew Choo.



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January 20, 2021 at 08:47 PM



“ *It is with sadness and pride that I am delivering this tribute to a special man who persevered through adversity during the Japanese occupation, British colonialism and Malay nationalism. With hard work, luck and God’s blessings, he made a comfortable life for his family.*

*He was forward thinking for his time – during the 60’s, tolerant, dismissive of illogical taboos and an advocate for the younger generation (namely my generation of cousins). Regardless of social infractions or status, he always welcomed family and friends to any event – birthdays, lunches, dinners, Christmas and new year celebrations.*

*With the rise of Malay nationalism in the 70’s, he and a hesitant mom facilitated their children’s exodus from the old country’s systemic discriminatory and deteriorating education system. This opportunity allowed me to build a good life in the US. We offered to have them live with us after each of our sons was born, but they declined. The next best thing was extended visits. We made an effort to take them to the best restaurants, visit tourist spots, sightsee from the Dakotas to Tennessee, and Missouri to California. He enjoyed the road trips, marveled at the wide expanse of land and endless roads, shopping return policies and the variety and food portion sizes.*

*In the 80’s and 90’s they enjoyed their golden years in the old country with their generation of friends and relatives. However as the years wear on, the absence of their children and family gnawed at him. When they could no longer look out for themselves I brought them to the US so that my family can care for mom who was suffering from Parkinson’s disease. She passed in April 2013 after a year in my home with her grandchildren around her. With mom gone, he lived with Stephen and Grace for a while, and finally settled in Park Regency Retirement Center. Stephen and Terry did their best to cater to his needs while at Park Regency. This involved weekly dining out, answering frequent phone calls and visits to help and reiterate technical answers. Regrettably he passed because of COVID. May he now rest in peace.*

**Oon** - January 20, 2021 at 01:58 PM