

Malaysia has lost a patriot
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All who know Fan Yew Teng grieve at his passing in Bangkok yesterday, losing his personal battle to cancer.

NONEAs I alluded this morning when Parliament observed one-minute's silence as respect to Fan and condolence to the bereaved family, his wife Dr Noeleen Heyzer and his twin daughters, Malaysia has lost a patriot as Fan had fought many important battles for justice, freedom, democracy, human rights and good governance for the country and people in his life.

Fan was acting DAP secretary-general for a year from October 1969 when I was detained for the first time under the Internal Security Act at the Muar Detention Centre, and had held various important positions in the party, including national organising secretary and editor of the party organ, the Rocket.

In 1969, Fan was elected MP for Kampar and under the cloud of a prolonged sedition trial, he was elected MP for Menglembu in Perak and Selangor state assemblyman for Petaling Jaya in 1974.

Even before his full political involvement and at an extremely young age, Fan already made a name for himself as trade union leader, especially as editor of the organ of National Union of Teachers (NUT).

Fan's parliamentary life was cut short when he became the first victim of the repressive sedition laws in the country for publishing as editor of Rocket a speech by the then Penang DAP chairman Dr Ooi Kee Saik at a dinner to welcome my release from ISA.

Fan left DAP over party differences before the 1978 general elections but two decades later, he returned to the DAP fold in 1998 and was in the forefront in the party's battle for justice, freedom, democracy, human rights and good governance.

Fan contested in the 1999 general elections in the Perak State Assembly seat for Tebing Tinggi but was not successful.

I will attend Fan's funeral service in Bangkok with other party leaders which is scheduled for next Wednesday.

Fan will be remembered not only as a patriot, but a humanist and a fine human being.

The writer is DAP MP for Ipoh Timor and party adviser.