

## **DAP needs to thank Ling for breaking SUPP stranglehold of Sib**

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**By FMT Reporters**

SIBU: The current crop of DAP MPs and state assemblymen in Sib have one man to thank for their successes in the political arena. That man is Ling Sie Ming.

Ling was a young Taiwan graduate running a small business in Sib in the late 1970s when he brought DAP to Sib in 1979.

Together with other Sarawak DAP stalwarts like Chong Siew Chiang and Sim Kwang Yang, Ling was determined to prove that the DAP platform was the alternative to SUPP for the Sib Foochows.

Post-independence Sib was the stronghold of SUPP, whether the party was outside or in the government. SNAP fought the party in Sib many times but was never successful.

In came Ling Sie Ming and DAP. In the 1982 general election, Ling turned giant-killer when he defeated SUPP strongman and state minister Dr Wong Soon Kai for the Sib seat.

It was only after Ling's victory by a majority of merely 141 votes, that DAP caught the imagination of the Sib community.

Hence, the 1982 election could be described as a significant chapter in Sib's political history.

As MP, Ling managed to bring in many young professionals into DAP, some of whom are still with the Sib DAP today.

Ling deserves more credit than what he has been given by DAP leaders in Sib today. Although he lacked personal resources, it was his determination and perseverance that gave DAP its life in Sib till this day.

Ling has since migrated to New Zealand with his family but he will be back in Sarawak during elections to help out DAP.

Wong later moved on to become SUPP's third president and became Sarawak's deputy chief minister.

He retired from politics after his defeat at the hands of DAP in the 1996 state election. Wong passed away in March last year at a ripe old age of 90.

Wong and Ling should be remembered as possibly two of Sibü's most famous sons in the political arena.

Sibu reverted to SUPP from 1986 till 2010. Its longest-serving MP was Robert Lau Hoi Chew, from 1990 till his passing in 2010, forcing a by-election which was won by DAP's Wong Ho Leng by a majority of only 398 votes.

However, in GE13, DAP's Oscar Ling scored a bigger majority of 2,641 votes over his SUPP opponent, Vincent Lau.

The coming GE14 will be another see-saw battle between DAP and SUPP.

Like Lanang, the Sarawak BN has predicted that it has a fair chance of wresting the seat back.

State BN secretary-general Dr Stephen Rundi said in Sibü recently that SUPP and UPP must close ranks as that is crucial to enable BN to wrest the opposition strongholds of Sibü and Lanang.

Chief Minister Abang Johari Openg's also remarked recently that there is a fighting chance for BN to wrest these two seats in GE14.

However, political observers do not share the BN's optimism. They point to the SUPP-UPP tussle which seems difficult to resolve and has torn apart their supporters.

They also believe that Sibü will be given to UPP as a direct BN candidate because UPP's strength lies in central Sarawak.

If the quarrel is not resolved before GE14, everyone in Sibü will surely bet on a DAP victory.

However, the result ultimately lies in the hands of the 64,601 voters in the Sibü parliamentary constituency.

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