

News

Cancer victim plans his own funeral service



FAREWELL: The late Mr Stanley Chua's wife Rosalind at his funeral yesterday. (Far left) A photo of Mr Chua with his dog, Ginny, which also died of cancer.

TNP PICTURES: JEREMY LONG

Penning his last goodbyes

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IT WAS an unusual funeral. For one, it had been planned in advance by the late Mr Stanley Chua, who made sure that no detail was overlooked.

On the cover of the pamphlet given out at the two-night memorial service was a love letter to his wife of 23 years.

"... though how I wish I could celebrate our 25th wedding anniversary in an exchanging of vow(s) but I'm afraid I can't make it," he wrote to his wife Rosalind.

He then went on to repeat the wedding vows.

Mr Chua, 51, died in the early hours of Friday after a three-year battle with cancer. His condition had deteriorated rapidly in the past three months, the last of which was spent in a hospice.

As a sign of acceptance that he was not going to get better, he decided to plan his own funeral.

What he would wear, which picture to use, the Christian songs that would be sung, even handpicking the musicians that would play at the wake.

He also went on to write separate letters thanking his family and church friends, which were included in the pamphlet.

"As our demised parents said, 'we are always a family in spite of our differences and family is always there for one another'," he wrote in the letter to his siblings, adding that he would always be a "hip-hop uncle" to his nieces and nephews.

Mr Chua planned everything from his hospital bed, where he had his wife bring his computer.

"My first reaction was 'fine, just do it,'" his wife said, adding that she did so to show her support of his acceptance.

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She told The New Paper that they met in

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— Mr Stanley Chua's wife Rosalind



church more than 30 years ago, when she was still in junior college. Mr Chua was then a full-time youth worker. The pair dated for nearly eight years before marrying on May 26, 1990.

When Mr Chua knew he could not be there for their 25th wedding anniversary, he wanted to give her something for the occasion but was too ill to go out and buy it himself.

Diamond ring

Instead, he roped in his sister to buy his wife a diamond ring.

"When he gave it to me by his bedside in hospital, it was too small!" Mrs Chua recalled with a laugh. While taking it to the shop to have it resized, another design caught her eye and she chose that one instead.

"I showed it to Stan and he agreed that it was nicer," she said, smiling at the memory.

When The New Paper was at the Grace Hall in Mount Vernon yesterday, friends and relatives streamed in for Mr Chua's funeral.

Among them were youngsters he had worked with in his church's youth group, a passion he held dear all his life.

He had an uncanny knack of knowing what was troubling someone and would offer advice before being asked, said nurse Neo Yu Shan.

The 25-year-old had known him since her teens and was by his bedside towards the end of his life, along with Mrs Chua.

"He was a caring and fatherly person, and always knew the right thing to say to the young. He was very genuine and sincere," she said.

The couple have no children and ran a dog day-care and grooming centre in the Thompson area that they named after the first dog they bought together, Ginny, a golden retriever.

It died of cancer two years ago.

Fittingly, Mr Chua chose a picture of himself and Ginny for his wake.