

A democratic Hongkong and China Ng's final wish

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A DEMOCRATIC Hongkong and China was the final wish of liberal legislator Mr Stephen Ng Ming-yum, who died yesterday after a four-month battle with leukaemia.

This was one of the wishes contained in his will, announced by colleagues in the United Democrats of Hongkong (UDHK) as the community, led by the Governor, Lord Wilson, paid tribute to a politician known for his tireless pursuit of a more democratic future.

"This is a great tragedy for his family and they have my deepest sympathy," Lord Wilson said.

"It is also a great loss for the community. Despite his youth, Mr Ng made a major contribution to public affairs both in Tuen Mun and in the territory as a whole. He will be missed by his many friends and admirers."

Mr Ng, 36, died of liver failure - a complication that developed after a bone marrow transplant he received from his younger sister on April 10 to combat leukaemia.

A 25-member funeral preparatory committee headed by UDHK chairman Mr Martin Lee Chu-ming will arrange funeral services at the Hongkong Funeral Parlour on Sunday.

Members of the public will be allowed to pay their last respects to the late legislator from Saturday evening.

By-elections for the seats vacated by Mr Ng on the Legislative Council, the Regional Council and the Tuen Mun District Board will be held within the next two months.

Government officials are drawing up a timetable that will allow sufficient time for nominations and electioneering for each seat to be contested on different dates.

Lord Wilson, colleagues,

friends and his constituents in New Territories West paid tribute to Mr Ng for his dedication and contribution to the community.

The UDHK's vice-chairman, Mr Yeung Sum, said yesterday at a press conference there would be a cremation following Protestant funeral services.

It was Mr Ng's wish to have half of the ashes kept by his wife, Mrs Selena Ng Bin Mi-wan. The remainder were to be scattered across the Yellow River.

Mr Yeung Sum said the UDHK had considered the political implications and was aware of the difficulties of taking Mr Ng's ashes to China given the icy relationship between the party and Beijing.

The UDHK chose to make Mr Ng's will public because it believed he would have wanted to that way.

"We knew him very well. He would never hesitate to say in public what he believed," Mr Yeung said.

"[Mr Ng] also hoped there would be democratic systems for Hongkong and China. He hoped both Hongkong and China would be ruled by law, and there would be respect for individual rights in both places," he said, with tears in his eyes.

Mr Ng had asked friends to lay flowers in Tiananmen Square on his behalf when the pro-democracy movement was rehabilitated, to symbolise his participation.

Mr Yeung said Mr Ng had made his wishes known to his family and friends before the transplant, fearing that he might not survive the operation.

The UDHK will consider setting up a memorial fund in Mr Ng's memory which could be used to help leukaemia patients.

Queen Mary Hospital had gained approval from the family to examine Mr Ng's body today to gather information beneficial to patients.

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final wish

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patients awaiting the transplant operation.

The co-director and attending physician of the hospital's bone marrow transplant centre, Dr Edward Chiu Kin-wah, said Mr Ng was certified dead at 3 am yesterday. Liver failure was triggered by the hepatitis B virus.

Mr Ng is survived by his wife, a five-year-old son and a daughter aged three.

The two children were apparently unaware of what had happened to their father and were still playing and chatting at their Heng Fa Chuen home yesterday.

Mr Ng's younger brother, Mr Ng Ming-cheung, said the children had seen the television news but were too young to know what was going on.

In a press statement, UDHK chairman Mr Lee said he was deeply saddened by the loss of Mr Ng.

The Chief Secretary, Sir David Ford, expressed his condolences to Mr Ng's family.

Sir David highly commended Mr Ng's performance.