



UNFORESEEN PASSING. San Francisco mayor Edwin Lee, left, and Oakland mayor Jean Quan, arrive at the White House in Washington for a state dinner in honor of Chinese President Hu Jintao, in this January 19, 2011 file photo. Mayor Lee, who oversaw a technology-driven economic boom in San Francisco that brought with it sky-high housing prices despite his lifelong commitment to economic equality, died suddenly in December at the age of 65. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci, File)

San Francisco mayor Edwin Lee dies suddenly at 65

By Janie Har
The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Mayor Ed Lee, who oversaw a technology-driven economic boom in San Francisco that brought with it sky-high housing prices despite his commitment to economic equality, died suddenly December 12 at age 65.

A statement from Lee's office said the city's first Asian-American mayor died at 1:11am at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital.

"It is with profound sadness and terrible grief that we confirm that mayor Edwin M. Lee passed away," the statement said. Lee was surrounded by family, friends, and colleagues. No cause of death was reported.

San Francisco Board of Supervisors president London Breed became acting mayor.

Supervisors and other public officials were stunned and saddened by his sudden death. They praised the low-key mustachioed mayor who was better known as a former civil-rights lawyer and longtime city bureaucrat than a flashy politician.

"I am floored. I can't believe he's gone. I just held a press conference with mayor Lee yesterday ... He was his normal friendly and jovial self," state senator Scott Wiener told KTVU-TV. "He wasn't the flashiest guy in the world, but he worked hard and it was an honor to work with him."

Former mayor Willie Brown and the late political power broker Rose Pak talked Lee into filling out the rest of Gavin Newsom's term when he was elected California's lieutenant governor in 2010. He was appointed interim mayor by the Board of Supervisors in 2011 after professing no interest in taking on the job permanently.

"We won based on our political shenanigans and our political skill sets. He got elevated to our mayor-ship under our charter and got re-elected twice," Brown said.

Brown said Lee will be known as the man who "stepped up and made it possible for Silicon Valley to almost relocate to our city."

U.S. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, who lives in San Francisco, said Lee's background as a community organizer and civil-rights lawyer served the city well.

"He knew the rhythms and the workings of San Francisco at the most granular level, and dedicated decades to improving the lives of all San Franciscans," she said in a statement.

Lee changed his mind about taking the

job permanently and won a four-year term in 2011. He was re-elected in 2015. Lee was an advocate for the needy, but in 2015, he ran against a slate of little-known candidates who criticized him as doing more for tech leaders than for poor people.

Detractors claimed he catered too much to Silicon Valley, citing his brokering of a tax break in 2011 to benefit Twitter as part of a remake of the city's downtown. Meanwhile, housing prices have surged in San Francisco with modest homes now topping \$1.5 million.

Lee, who is survived by his wife Anita and daughters Brianna and Tania, was a civil-rights lawyer who became the San Francisco city administrator before taking over as mayor.

He was a staunch supporter of San Francisco's sanctuary city policy toward immigrants, a stance he reiterated when a Mexican man who had been repeatedly deported was acquitted of murder in the 2015 killing of Kate Steinle.

The case became a flashpoint in the nation's immigration debate, with then-candidate Donald Trump repeatedly referencing it as an example of the need for stricter immigration policies and a wall along the Mexican border.

Flags were lowered at City Hall. The last mayor to die in office was George Moscone, who was murdered by a disgruntled former Board of Supervisors member in 1978, leading to the ascension of then-Board of Supervisors president Dianne Feinstein to mayor. Feinstein is now California's senior U.S. senator.

Lee's death now will likely upend the race to replace him, which had been scheduled for 2019. Former state senator Mark Leno, a one-time member of the Board of Supervisors and longtime political figure, has already announced his candidacy.

Retiring refugee leader to visit immigrants' home countries

By Dave Kolpack
The Associated Press

FARGO, N.D. — He has been the middleman in North Dakota's refugee resettlement program for nearly three decades, helping thousands of refugees and other immigrants navigate their journey to U.S. citizenship. Now Tri Phan wants to see their native countries, such as Nepal, Bhutan, and Sierra Leon.

Phan — himself a former refugee who spent three years in a North Vietnamese prison camp after serving as a tank commander for the South Vietnamese military — has been a longtime adviser for newcomers from dozens of countries. He is retiring from Lutheran Social Services in Fargo, which is North Dakota's lone resettlement agency.

"I would love to travel," said Phan, who is moving to California with his wife to be close to their three grown children and their grandchildren. "It would be interesting to visit these places I have heard so much about."

As a proportion of its population, the Fargo area takes in more refugees than most American cities. Phan arrived in North Dakota in the early 1990s, when the state was experiencing an influx of refugees from Southeast Asia. He began working as a bilingual case manager at Lutheran Social Services before working his way up to supervisor of immigration services.

"Tri Phan, he came here as a refugee," said Mariam Bassoma, a one-time refugee and one of Phan's co-workers. "For the longest time he worked two jobs. He never complains and he never gets tired. He just makes you feel like you can do it too."

Shirley Dykshoorn, a Lutheran Social Services vice president, figures Phan handled an average of 500 to 600 cases a year. That adds up to about 14,000 people he assisted with processing, technical assistance, counselling, and testing for citizenship.

Phan helped Abdiwali Sharif-Abdinasir move to North Dakota from Somalia in 2004, several years after his first application was filed. Later, after Sharif-Abdinasir travelled to Kenya to get married, Phan managed the process for Sharif-Abdinasir's wife, who was granted a visa after about 14 months.

"I would give Tri Phan a hard time," Sharif-Abdinasir said, adding that he would ask Phan, "When is she coming?"

"He was really patient with me. I think the city of Fargo should give him an award because of how many refugees he has helped bring here."

Dykshoorn said managers tried to get Phan to stop coming into the office on weekends, to no avail. She said he saw

California political trailblazer March Fong Eu dies at 95

IRVINE, Calif. (AP) — March Fong Eu, California's first female secretary of state and former ambassador to Micronesia,



HELPING HAND. Tri Phan, right, poses with fellow Lutheran Social Services staff members Abdiwali Sharif-Abdinasir and Mariam Bassoma, at the agency's refugee resettlement office in Fargo, North Dakota. They are holding a poster Phan received when he was honored with the organization's first-ever Dove Award for his dedication and outstanding service. Phan, 66, worked for the resettlement program for nearly three decades. (AP Photo/Dave Kolpack)

clients even if they didn't have appointments. He returned almost every message left via e-mail, work phone, or home phone. The only way he couldn't be reached was by cellphone, because he's never had one.

Phan, who turned 66 on Christmas, left Dykshoorn a "to-do" list for his department that stretches into 2019.

"He has taught everybody to fish, as the parable goes," Dykshoorn said. "Nobody is going to be around forever, but he has trained and mentored and helped lots of people."

Phan came to the U.S in 1990 to make a better life for his family more than a decade after his 1978 release from the prison camp.

"There was a strong stigma against people who served in the old Republic of Vietnam and there were many job and work opportunities that would have been barred from myself and even my children if I had stayed there," Phan said.

Phan said his experience at the prison camp taught him to appreciate life and make the most of his opportunities. Sentenced to three years of hard labor and lucky to get one cup of rice per day to eat, his weight fell from 140 pounds down to 100 by the time he was released. His mother didn't recognize him.

"I almost died. Now I feel alive," he said. "Regardless of what happened in your life, you need to be strong and accept it. Deal with it. The opportunity is right here."

died December 21 at the age of 95.

Longtime spokeswoman Caren Lagomarsino said Eu died in Irvine, California, from complications following a fall and subsequent surgery.

Eu was a trailblazer for women and Chinese Americans. She served in the state assembly before becoming California's chief elections officer in 1975. She held that position until 1994 when President Bill Clinton named her ambassador to the Pacific nation of Micronesia.

Eu ushered in voter registration by mail and campaigned successfully to ban pay toilets in public buildings, saying that urinals were free.

She was born March 29, 1922 to immigrants Yuen Kong and Shiu Shee in the central California town of Oakdale. Her parents ran a hand laundry.



Summer Run

7810 SE Foster Road
Portland, OR 97206
503-774-8885

Retirement Apartments

- Studio & One-Bedroom Apartments
- Affordable Rent with No Costly Buy-Ins or Application Fees
- Federal Rent Subsidies Available
- Ideal Urban location near shopping, bus lines, restaurants, and more!
- Enjoy our small community atmosphere that's relaxed & friendly!

