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OCBC BANK MARKED AS A HISTORIC SITE BY THE NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD

Bank also officially re-opens OCBC Centre Branch

Singapore, 16 February 2001 - Oversea-Chinese Banking Corporation Limited ("OCBC Bank") crossed an important milestone today with the marking of OCBC as a historic site by the National Heritage Board. The ceremony, which was hosted by the Chairman of OCBC Bank, Mr Lee Seng Wee, and Vice-Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Mr Alex Au, also saw the official re-opening of their flagship branch at OCBC Centre.

The Historic Site plaque was unveiled by Mr Lee and Mr Kwee Liong Keng, Distinguished Member of the National Heritage Board. Mr Kwee is also Chairman of the Singapore Art Museum and Managing Director at Pontiac Land Pte Ltd.

Commenting on the rich heritage of the Bank and the importance it has played since it was first incorporated on 31 October 1932, Mr Lee said, "The Bank was born as a child of the Great Depression following the merger of three Hokkien banks - the Chinese Commercial Bank founded in 1912, the Ho Hong Bank founded in 1917 and the Oversea-Chinese Bank founded in 1919."

He continued, "The Bank was formed in the midst of the 1930s Depression, when times were tough for many Singaporeans, with fortunes wiped out overnight. Fortunately, our founding fathers understood the problems that people faced and took the initiative to help the community by providing customers with capital to overcome the hardships they faced. In the process, OCBC Bank has formed partnerships with customers that would last a lifetime."

From these community-centric roots, Mr Lee went on to note OCBC Bank's continued focus on customer service over the years, citing amongst the Bank's pioneering services its introduction of the first night safe system in 1948, and Singapore's first mobile bank in 1958.

To reflect the Bank's rich heritage and resilient community spirit, Mr Au introduced OCBC Bank's new mantra - "*Strength to Strength*". He said, "Our Chinese Junk logo symbolises our willingness to explore and to rise up to new challenges ahead. Our parentage is strong and has flourished over the past decades. *Strength to Strength* is an apt reflection of our past, and it symbolises our aspirations for the future. We will help our customers grow from strength to strength; we will ensure that our staff develop their career with us from strength to strength while, at the same time, the Bank itself will grow from strength to strength."

During the ceremony, the Bank's flagship OCBC Centre Branch was also officially re-opened by Mr Lee, Mr Au and Mr YY Chin, Head of Consumer Financial Services. The banking hall of OCBC Centre Branch was closed in late 2000 for a S\$ 5 million upgrading and makeover. The Branch is the Bank's pride of joy as it integrates elements of innovation in its services while retaining its strong Asian heritage. The restoration of six stained-glass windows,

recovered from the China Building that originally housed OCBC Bank, is a symbol of this rich parentage.

The Branch features an extensive range of services, including a 24-hour *Fastlane* that provides instant round-the-clock access to ATM machines, Quick Cash deposits and Passbook Update Machines. It has also upgraded its customer interface services with personal financial consultants, a Premier World Service as well as private banking facilities for high net worth customers. There is also a new Business Banking section to cater to the needs of corporate customers, including small and medium enterprises.

About OCBC Bank

With total assets of S\$54 billion, and a staff force of 5,900 in 90 branches and representative offices in 13 countries, OCBC Bank (which was founded in 1932) now ranks as one of the largest banks incorporated in Singapore. In 1999, it reported a profit attributable to shareholders of S\$690 million.

OCBC Bank's mission is to be a world-class financial institution in Asia Pacific. This it seeks to achieve by the provision of superior customer service, particularly through the use of technology. A leading eCommerce financial player, OCBC Bank owns Bank of Singapore Limited (BOS), which is positioned to pursue global innovative eCommerce initiatives in the buyer-advocate space. BOS comprises finatq.com, the consumer division; finixis.com, a financial and business solutions hub; and eVentures, a venture investment arm. In addition, OCBC Bank has a joint venture with Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited to create Asia's premier web-led bank.