

STEPDAUGHTER POSTED COMMENTS ONLINE ABOUT FOO MEE HAR

MP's mother-in-law sues stepdaughter for breaching pact

ASHLEY CHIA
ashley@mediacorp.com.sg

SINGAPORE – She is accusing her stepdaughter of breaching an oral agreement, which forbade the latter to publicly talk about the family and its lawyers, by posting comments online about her daughter-in-law, West Coast GRC Member of Parliament Foo Mee Har.

However, the accused, Ms Wendy Chan, 49, is denying the existence of

“**Lawyer Wendell Wong, representing Ms Chan, put to Mdm Tan that she had no ‘legal basis’ to come to court and that her actions were made on an ‘emotional basis’ and were a ‘mother’s ventilation’.**”

such an agreement and believes her stepmother, Madam Eleanor Tan, was pressured into suing her by her four half-siblings and brother, who were unhappy about an earlier S\$1 million agreement made between the two.

On the first day of a three-day civil trial in the High Court yesterday, lawyer Wendell Wong, representing Ms Chan, put to Mdm Tan that she had no “legal basis” to come to court and that her actions were made on an “emotional basis” and were a “mother’s ventilation”.

To this, Mdm Tan, 79, replied that she (did not) know what she was feeling and that she was “all confused”.

She also said the suit was brought on because of her unhappiness and that her children had no part to play.

The dispute stems from an agreement made in 2011 when Mdm Tan decided to sell her late husband’s Lornie Road property and give Ms Chan S\$1 million and a further S\$36,000 to purchase her own apartment and cover interim rental expenses.

Under the agreement, Ms Chan could not say or write anything about Mdm Tan and her family in the newspapers or on the Internet and social media as Mdm Tan wanted to live the rest of her life in peace and privacy. Ms Chan agreed.

The terms of the original agreement was later amended such that Ms Chan was only not allowed to publish any defamatory or scandalous remarks against Mdm Tan and her family on the Internet.

In October 2012, Ms Chan posted comments on a Channel NewsAsia forum about a parliamentary question by Ms Foo on public housing prices. This led Mdm Tan to file an injunction to set aside the second agreement, claiming there was also an oral agreement in which Ms Chan agreed not to speak publicly about her and her family at all.

During the hearing, which ran for close to six hours, most of Mdm Tan’s replies to Mr Wong’s questions consisted of “cannot remember” or the fact that she “(did not) know” how to answer.

Asked during the cross-examination yesterday to give evidence of the alleged oral agreement and how she had come to know about the online postings, Mdm Tan said she “(did not) remember” and that it was her friends who told her about the comments.

Mdm Tan was also unable to remember or point out in court documents where Ms Chan had “concealed her true intentions” and “misrepresented her intentions” to procure an amended agreement, as she had alleged.

Asked by Mr Wong whether she wanted to withdraw her lawsuit, Mdm Tan disagreed after returning from a ten-minute break, when she consulted her lawyers.

When asked whether she agreed that she had “missed an opportunity to make peace” with Ms Chan by making a phone call to ask her about the online comments, Mdm Tan said: “Yes.”

The trial continues.



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