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Ombudsman Morales leads 2016 Ramon Magsaysay awardees

The six awardees of the prestigious 2016 Ramon Magsaysay Awards stand on equal footing but Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales is considered *primus inter pares* (first among equals) for a myriad of reasons, foremost of which is the confounding nature of her nemesis: corruption in the bureaucracy.



FOR RESTORING FAITH IN THE RULE OF LAW. Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales receives the iconic Ramon Magsaysay trophy from Vice President Leni Robredo and RM Foundation Board of Trustees Chairman Ramon del Rosario.

Ombudsman charges 25 for P900million Malampaya Fund scam

A hot-button political and legal issue and by virtue of the huge sums of money involved, the result of the investigation into the Malampaya fund scam by the Office of the Ombudsman is definitely newsworthy. Here in this story, Integrity Watch News gives its readers a summary of the case.

The Office of the Ombudsman has ordered the filing of two counts of Plunder, 97 counts of violation of Section 3(e) of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Prac-

tices Act (Republic Act No. 3019) and 97 counts of Malversation thru Falsification of Public Documents. **900 million: page 4**

Coming on the heels of her Doctor of Laws degree *honoris causa* award from the University of the Philippines in June 2016, Ombudsman Morales raised the bar anew with another accomplishment: her inclusion in the list of elite laureates of the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay Awards, widely known as the Asian equivalent of the Nobel Peace Prize.

The Board of Trustees of the Ramon Magsaysay Awards cites Ombudsman Morales for her “moral courage and commitment to justice in taking head-on one of the most intractable problems in the Philippines; promoting by her example of incorruptibility, diligence, vision and leadership, the highest ethical standards in public service.”

The lone Filipino awardee for 2016, Ombudsman Morales shares the spotlight with Dompet Dhuafa (Indonesia), Thodur Madabusi Krishna (India), Bezwada Wilson (India), the Vientiane Rescue (Laos) and the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers.

Multi-awarded

For the six years that Ombudsman Morales has led the Office of the Ombudsman, she has led the Office to the forefront of the fight against corruption. **Next page: awardees**

awardees

fice of the Ombudsman, she has merited the attention of the public with her no-nonsense leadership and management style. With her trademark candor, she has graciously kept the fiercest of critics at bay with the quiet force of her track record—*res ipsa loquitur* (the thing speaks for itself) to borrow an oft-repeated legal dictum. She has drawn raves on her work and accomplishments from a diverse set of award-giving organizations: from media organization (2014 *Filipino of the Year*, Philippine Daily Inquirer) to magazine publication (2015 *People of the Year*, Philippine Star), from jurists (2015 *Fearless and Peerless Crusader Award*, Philippine Constitution Ass'n) to economists (2015 *Distinguished Alumna Award*, UP School of Economics Alumni Association), from professional groups (2016 *Distinguished Icon Award*, UP Women's Lawyers Circle) to the academe (2014 *Government Service Award*, Ateneo de Manila University and 2013 *Doctor of Laws Honoris Causa*, University of the East).

Believers and the naysayers collide in her orbit but as the Ombudsman would always say—paraphrasing a consistent theme in her repartees with the media—the accolades and criticisms are par for the course, and at the end of the day, even while the job of the Ombudsman is fraught with danger, it is a duty ought to be accomplished.

Despite the occupational hazards, Ombudsman Morales does not budge. She fiercely sticks to her guns and talks straight out from the Ombudsman's rule book: the Office of the Ombudsman is a constitutional body free from any sort of influence; it only carries orders from the Constitution; investigates complaints on its own terms based on established rules; and prosecutes cases in the

manner the Office deems fit.

Indefatigable

The Ombudsman's working hours are legendary. She's in the office by 6:30 in the morning, attends to some administrative matters and meetings until mid-morning before she retreats to the so-called "war room" to read and evaluate cases. It is the same clockwork routine she has followed since her appointment as chief graft buster in July 2011. The Ombudsman has not skipped a beat since, and for good measure. It is her way of disproving the cynics who had begrudgingly given her the benefit of the doubt, on account of her age, in giving the Office a shot in the arm.

In contrast, the Board of Trustees of the Ramon Magsaysay Awards Foundation (RMAF) chose to see the other side of the spectrum. "In a world that puts premium on youth, these transformative leaders prove that with age comes wisdom—wisdom to change their societies and the world for the better. Our Ramon Magsaysay laureates who received Asia's premiere prize after reaching 70 are testaments that age is really about mind over matter," declared an article on the RMAF website.

Indeed, Ombudsman Morales, now 75, is the latest addition to the group of Magsaysay awardees who earned their award in the latter part of their careers. In fact, Ombudsman Morales is only the 10th in the list after Joaquin Villalonga, S.J. (1959, Philippines, 91 years old), Marcelline Jayakody (1983, Sri Lanka, 81), Masanobu Fukuoka (1988, Japan, 75), James Reuter, S.J. (1989, Philippines, 73), Fei Xiaotong (1994, China, 84), Nick Joaquin (1996, Philippines, 78), Yuan Longping (2001, China, 71), Seiei Toyama (2003, Japan, 96) and Gao Yaojie (2003, China, 76).

"Wala akong energy gap," Ombudsman Morales would say

in millennial-speak—one big reason why the younger generation has decidedly supported and latched on to the anti-corruption campaign.

Her equanimity is not lost on the public, especially with the string of her recent awards and distinctions which validate her sense of impartiality and integrity.

Annus mirabilis

The year 2016 could very well be the *annus mirabilis* of Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales.

In June 2016, she was feted with a Doctor of Laws Honorary Degree by her alma mater, the University of the Philippines, for her stewardship of the Office of the Ombudsman.

"With extraordinary courage and tenacity, she exposed and prosecuted the corrupt, among the high ranking and the untouchables, to the delight of an entire nation that has long yearned for the accountability of the unscrupulous ... oblivious to political pressure or affiliation, defying risk to self," read the citation.

"I thought that was the pinnacle of all the awards. I didn't think I'd be getting another one after that," the Ombudsman said a month later in one of her interviews with the media.

The summit is yet to be scaled.

Rule of law

It could be said that the arc of Ombudsman Morales' moral universe, to borrow the words of the American libertarians Theodore Parker and Martin Luther King, Jr., is bent towards justice.

On August 31, 2016, the Ramon Magsaysay Awards affirmed the Ombudsman's niche in the moral sphere when the privately-funded foundation, founded on the ideals of President Ramon Magsaysay—cited her

body of work, hailing it as a demonstrative and definitive work towards "restoring faith in the rule of law."

"Recognizing that corruption is not just a matter of persons but systems, she took the initiative in creating an integrity management-based program that mobilizes government agencies and the public and addresses the lack of strategy and direction in the overall anti-corruption campaign," prefaced the RMAF.

The Board of Trustees also gave a nod to the Ombudsman's other anti-corruption initiatives and innovative approaches.

"She advocated the passage of legislation to strengthen the OMB's investigative, disciplinary, asset recovery and preventive powers. All these are part of her resolve to go beyond political tokenism by establishing the framework of an effective anti-corruption campaign," said the RMAF.

Legacy

The Ramon Magsaysay award also trained the spotlight on the officials and employees of the Office of the Ombudsman.

"In choosing me as an awardee, the Foundation is also honoring the men and women of the Office of the Ombudsman who have faithfully toiled and persevered with me in our shared commitment to excise the cancer of corruption that has afflicted our country for decades," said the Ombudsman in her press statement right after the announcement. She reiterated her profuse gratitude to the men and women of the Office of the Ombudsman in her response during the awards night at the Rizal Hall of the Cultural Center of the Philippines. Her response came in the form of a letter to her grandchildren, Ennio and Cece.

"Please pray that Grand C (stands for grandma Chit) and her colleagues at the Office of the

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OMBUDSMAN TAKES INTEGRITY CARAVAN TO BICOL



(TOP) Ombudsman Conchita Morales delivers the keynote address at the Multi-Sectoral Forum. (ABOVE) The Ombudsman speaks to the Youth Empowerment Forum delegates.

The Office of the Ombudsman went right to the heart of Bicolandia for its annual Integrity Caravan (IC) on October 20-21, 2016 as Legazpi City, Albay played host to the IC delegation in two landmark venues—the Bicol University (BU) and the Oriental Hotel.

Highlighting the theme “Sowing the Seeds of Integrity” (*Pagtarok kan Pisog nin Integridad*), the Integrity Caravan drew together top officials of the Office of the Ombudsman, local

government officials and members of the academe, business, church and civil society for a two-day program roadshow.

With the picturesque Mayon Volcano and its gently sloping silhouette serving as backdrop, the Office of the Ombudsman successfully cascaded the salient facets of its corruption prevention and public assistance programs to the local communities by way of the Youth Empowerment Forum and the Multi-Sectoral Forum.

During the Youth Empower-

ment Forum held at the auditorium inside the sprawling campus of Bicol University, the IC contingent, led by Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales, was welcomed by the BU president, Dr. Arnulfo M. Mascariñas. Later, Ombudsman Morales addressed the 300-strong crowd of student attendees.

“By engaging the young people in the discourse on good governance, the Office not only sends the message of public accountability across but also gath-

ers fresh insights and perspectives which could redound to more effective anti-corruption programs and strategies,” framed the Ombudsman in her keynote message.

The Ombudsman also highlighted the “Ombudsman Young Leaders Development Camp” launched in May 2016 where 26 participants (8th and 9th academic and leadership achievers coming from the public high schools of Pangasinan I and II) went through an “intergenerational” leadership seminar.

“The campaign to improve people’s lives cannot be complete without joining the crusade to end the forces that degrade people’s lives. Progress starts to propel when corruption ends. The obvious challenge for the young people is saying ‘yes’ in remaining upright in all their dealings, be it in school, at play, in the community or at home. The more difficult challenge is for the young people to remain conscious when to say ‘no’ in compromising circumstances,” emphasized the Ombudsman.

On the second day of the Integrity Caravan, Ombudsman Morales addressed the diverse crowd which gathered for the Multi-Sectoral Forum at the ballroom of the Oriental Hotel. The event is aimed at engaging the public and private sectors on the programs of the anti-corruption agency and to address some pressing concerns and issues confronting the various sectors. The Ombudsman also took the lead in answering questions from the participants which allowed the Office to gain some insights into the lay of the land when it comes to corruption prevalence or the deterring effect of anti-corruption programs, as the case maybe.

“For the years to come, expect the Ombudsman to continue this dialogue at the grassroots level to heighten the awareness of the people on transparency, integrity and accountability in public service,” assured Ombudsman Morales.

900 million from 1

ments against 25 respondents from the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), and NGO representatives in connection with the illegal diversion in 2009 of P900million from the Malampaya fund.

Facing two counts of Plunder and multiple charges of graft and Malversation thru Falsification are former DBM officials Secretary Rolando Aureo Andaya, Jr., and Undersecretary Mario Relampagos; DAR officials former Secretary Nasser Pangandaman, Undersecretary Narciso Nieto and Director Teresita Panlilio; former

Candaba Mayor Rene Maglanque; Ruby Tuason, Janet Lim Napoles, Jo Christine Napoles, James Christopher Napoles, Reynald Lim, Evelyn De Leon, Ronald Francisco Lim, Ronald John Lim, Eulogio Rodriguez, Simplicio Gumafelix, John Raymund De Asis, Rodrigo Galay, Alejandro Garro, Paquito Dinso, Jr., Gerald Apuang, Napoleon Sibayan, Winnie Villanueva, Angelita Cacananta, and Ronald Venancio. The respondents are found to have acted in concert to divert the fund releases drawn from the P900 million Malampaya fund allocated by the DBM to the DAR in 2009, which was malversed and coursed through the NGOs controlled by Napoles and for which huge kickbacks and commissions

were paid.

Records further show that on 08 October 2009, then Secretary Andaya submitted to the Office of the President, a request for authority to use the Malampaya fund for relief operations, rehabilitation, and reconstruction of areas affected by typhoons “Ondoy” and “Pepeng.” Five days later, or on 13 October 2009, former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo issued Executive Order 848 authorizing the DBM to release the funds to the DAR as implementing agency. On 22 October 2009, Undersecretary Nieto requested Andaya for the release of P900million to provide direct assistance to farmer-beneficiaries affected by the two typhoons. The request for fund release was

based on 97 purported letter-requests made by the mayors of various local government units.

To facilitate the scam, Napoles instructed Galay to scan the letterheads of the 97 identified LGU-beneficiaries with Evelyn De Leon, Ronald John Lim, Jo Christine and James Christopher Napoles drafting the letters to make it appear that the mayors were requesting financial assistance. The DAR officials then prepared and issued 97 checks payable to the 12 NGOs corresponding to the amounts indicated in the letters and Memoranda of Agreement. DAR officials thereafter informed Napoles that the checks were ready for pick-up. Andaya, et. al. released the checks in four batches: (1) P200 million deposited on 27 November 2009; (2) P100 million deposited on 03 December 2009; (3) P200 million deposited on 23 December 2009; and (4) P400 million deposited 29 December 2009.

After the receipt of the checks, the NGO representatives issued official receipts and fake liquidation documents such as reports of disbursements, delivery reports, certificates of acceptance, certificates of project completion, inspection and acceptance reports, fund utilization reports, independent auditor’s reports, reports of disbursements by external accountant and lists of beneficiaries.

Ombudsman investigators found that the documents were all fictitious as there were no deliveries of agricultural kits or packages. Respondents also manufactured the lists of farmer-beneficiaries and forged the signatures of the recipients.

According to the testimony of whistleblower Benhur Luy, the following respondents received kick-

The fund was then downloaded by the DAR to the following NGOs:

	AMOUNT RECEIVED
Abundant Harvest for People’s Foundation, Inc. founded by Vanessa Eman (Napoles household helper)	P75 million
Bukirin Tanglaw Foundation, Inc. (founded by Gertrudes Kilap-kilap , nanny of Napoles’ child)	P75 million
Dalangpan Sang Amon Utod Kag Kasimanwa Foundation, Inc. founded by Jesus Castillo (Napoles driver)	P75 million
Ginintuang Alay sa Magsasaka Foundation, Inc. founded by Ronald John Lim (Napoles nephew)	P75 million
Gintong Pangkabuhayan Foundation, Inc. founded by Eulogio Rodriguez (Napoles driver)	P77.5 million
Karangyaan Para sa Magbubukid Foundation, Inc. founded by Simplicio Gumafelix (Napoles clerk)	P82.5million
Kasaganahan para sa Magsasaka Foundation, Inc. founded by Genevieve Uy (Napoles family friend)	P82.5million
Kaupdan Para sa Mangunguma Foundation, Inc. founded by John Raymond De Asis (Napoles security/driver)	P75 million
Masaganang Buhay Foundation, Inc. founded by Lorna Ramirez (Wife of Napoles driver/security)	P75 million
Micro Agri Business Citizens Initiative Foundation, Inc. founded by Ronald Francisco Lim (Napoles brother)	P55 million
Saganang Buhay sa Atin Foundation, Inc. founded by Lilian Español (Napoles household helper)	P80 million
Tanglaw para sa Magsasaka Foundation, Inc. founded by Nova Kay Dulay (former Napoles household helper)	P72.5 million
TOTAL for 97 projects	P 900,000,000.00

**“Manindigan
kontra
katiwalian”**

backs for facilitating the release and the illegal diversion of the Malampaya fund:

Date Received:	Amount:	Respondent:
05 January 2010	P 4 million	Panlilio
06 January 2010	P6 million	Nieto
07 January 2010	P30 million	Panlilio
12 January 2010	P45 million	Pangandaman*
13 January 2010	P5 million	Panlilio
14 January 2010	P5 million	Panlilio
02 February 2010	P12.5 million	Panlilio
24 February 2010	P30 million	Pangandaman*
Various dates	P242.775 million	Tuason
TOTAL	P 380,275,000.00	

***Pangandaman received his kickbacks through Maglanque.**

In 2013, a team from the Special Audits Office (SAO) and Technical Services Office of the Commission on Audit (COA) issued a SAO Report after conducting a performance audit of the fund. It uncovered the anomalies in the fund use such as: (1) The requests for fund release were made by the NGOs and not by the mayors and this was made possible by the lack of validation of the requests and actual needs of the 97 LGUs; (2) The respondents entered into Memoranda of Agreement with the 12 NGOs even before the approval of the Special Allotment Release Order; (3) the MOAs did not provide for time schedules for periodic inspection and evaluation, monitoring requirements and date of program completion; (4) No portion of the Malampaya Fund was earmarked for implementation by the NGO; (5) The 12 NGOs were selected without compliance with procurement regulations; (6) Funds were transferred to the NGOs even before the release of the Notice of Cash Allocation; (7) The existence of the NGOs were highly questionable; (8) DAR failed to monitor the implementation of the multi-million peso projects; and (9) The implementation of the projects was highly irregular as 67 mayors categorically denied their signatures on alleged letter-requests and they also de-

nied participation in the project implementation.

According to Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales, “the respondents’ intent and purpose show cohesion and interconnection, demonstrating the attainment of the same objective through their separate acts as each contributed in the end result of defrauding the government of the P900million Malampaya fund.”

In the approved 134-page Joint Resolution, the Ombudsman ruled that “by respondents’ own overt acts, they showed their undue interest in the immediate release of the funds...regardless of whether there was compliance with applicable laws or rules governing such disbursements.”

Ombudsman Morales added that the siphoning of the fund by Napoles “was facilitated by Winnie Villanueva who, as Branch Manager of Metrobank Magdalena Branch in Binondo, Manila, allowed the opening of and withdrawals and transfers from the NGOs’ bank accounts despite incomplete and questionable requirements and circumstances.”

The charges against Ruby Tuason were upheld as she admitted her involvement in cooperating with Napoles to facilitate the fund release through her brother Remy, a contact in Malacañang,

and for having received kickbacks totaling P242.775 million at her house. Thus, the Ombudsman resolved that “the Office is not inclined to grant her request for immunity considering that her declarations could only point to the probable liability of Napoles in the illegal fund diversion.” The primary participation of Napoles in the complex and well-orchestrated scheme, however, is already established and highlighted by the whistleblowers’ statements, COA report, Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC) Inquiry Report, sworn statements of mayors, municipal agricultural officers and purported farmer-beneficiaries.

Ombudsman Morales also furnished the AMLC with a copy of the Joint Resolution for immediate action on possible violations by the respondents, including Edgar Valdez, Erwin Dangwa, Rodolfo Plaza, Rene Villa, Cynthia Dequiña, Roselle King, William Lim, Hector Ang, Francis Palmones, Jr., Flordeliz Galido, Liza Maclang Ong, Corazon Dizon and Cecilia Caballero. According to the whistleblowers, Valdez, et. al., also received multi-million peso kickbacks from the fund.

The charges against former President Arroyo, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Dominador Sison, Jr. and Nilda Bauí, both from DAR, were dismissed due to insufficiency of evidence. The Joint Resolution explained that “complainants failed to prove that they conspired with their co-respondents in the illegal diversion of the P900 million Malampaya fund or that they deviated from the regular procedure.”

Background information on Malampaya Fund

By virtue of Presidential Decree (PD) 910, a Special Fund was created to finance the government’s energy resource exploration, development and exploitation programs and projects and such other purpose as may be directed by the President. The funds are collected through the

Department of Energy (DOE) from the government’s share in royalties, rentals, production share on service contracts and other payments on the exploration, development and exploitation of energy resources.

Plunder is committed by a public officer who acts by himself or in connivance with members of his family, relatives by affinity or consanguinity, business associates, subordinates or other persons, by amassing, accumulating or acquiring ill-gotten wealth through a combination or series of the following overt criminal acts: (a) Through misappropriation, conversion, misuse, or malversation of public funds; (b) By receiving, directly or indirectly, any commission, gift, share, percentage, kickback, or any other form of pecuniary benefits, in connection with any government contract or project or by reason of office or position of the public officer; (c) By the illegal or fraudulent conveyance or disposition of assets belonging to the government; (d) By obtaining, receiving or accepting directly or indirectly any shares of stock, equity or any other form of interest of participation including the promise of future employment in any business enterprise; (e) By establishing agricultural, industrial or commercial monopolies; (f) By taking advantage of official position, authority, relationship, connection or influence to unjustly enrich himself or themselves at the expense and to the damage and prejudice of the Republic. The aggregate amount or total values of the ill-gotten wealth must be at least P50 million.

Section 3(e) of Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act (Republic Act No. 3019) prohibits public officials from causing undue to any party, including the Government, or giving any private party any unwarranted benefits, advantage or preference in the discharge of his official administrative or judicial functions through manifest partiality, evident bad faith or gross inexcusable negligence.

OMB HOSTS GAD BUDGET PLANNING FORA



While the mandate of the Office of the Ombudsman is centered on the investigation and prosecution of graft and corruption cases, it is nevertheless one of the more active government agencies when it comes to the gender development front.

This gender activism was in full display when the Office played host to the 5th Gender and Development Planning and Budgeting Fora held at the Office of the Ombudsman Function Room on November 10-11, 2016.

“As we prepare for the work ahead, that of again preparing our annual GAD plans and budgets for 2018, I hope that the discussions that will take place here will be able to clarify the many issues and concerns that we all have on the GPB process as well as the preparation and implementation of our respective plans and budgets. The members of our GAD Focal Point System and our technical working group are here to make your time here at the Office of the Ombudsman worthwhile,” opened Assistant Ombudsman Jennifer Manalili as she addressed the 200 participants of the two-day fora.

In partnership with the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), the planning and budget fora served as a venue to unpack the issues relating to the agencies’ compliance with the minimum 5% of agency budget spending requirement on GAD-related activities as provided for under the Magna Carta of Women or Republic Act 9710. At the same time, AO Manalili stressed that the fora also provide technical assistance on how to deal with, or altogether prevent receipt of, audit observation memoranda from the Commission on Audit.

This “mainstreaming of gender perspectives” serves as a raft on which the commitment of the Philippines to the UN Convention to the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is shown.

“How can we as GAD advocates push for changing (the) mindsets of men, as well as women, for genuine respect, basic respect for women, basic respect for humanity in society?” posed PCW Executive Director Emmeline Verzosa.

“I would like to think that despite all the darkness that is prevailing in the world, we GADvocates will keep the light burning now that we are made more conscious about what we are fighting for, about the cause we are fighting for, to ensure that there is no more discrimination regardless of sex, gender identity, religion, ethnicity, etc.” reminded Verzosa in her keynote message.

TWO MORE REPS FOUND LIABLE OVER PDAF SCAM

Before 2016 drew to a close, Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales ordered the filing of charges against two more congressmen over the anomalous utilization of their Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF).

The Integrity Watch News culled these reports from the website of the Office of the Ombudsman.

Faux livelihood programs

The Office of the Ombudsman is not letting up on its investigation into the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) scam. Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales has ordered the filing of two counts of violation of Section 3(e) of Republic Act No. 3019 (Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act) against former 2nd district Representative Simeon Datumanong of Maguindanao. **(Editor's note: Datumanong passed away on February 28, 2017)** Also ordered charged were officials of the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF); namely, Commissioner Mehol Sadain, Fedelina Aldanese, Aurora Aragon-Mabang, Olga Galido, Queenie Rodriguez, Galay Makalinggan (one count) and Gracita Cecilia Mascenon-Sales of Maharlika Lipi Foundation, Inc. (MLFI).

In-depth investigation uncovered that in May 2012, the Department of Budget and Management issued a Special Allotment Release Order covering P3,800,000.00 in favor of NCMF, as implementing agency, charged against Datumanong's PDAF. The money was intended to finance livelihood programs such as soap making, candle making and meat processing for the municipalities of Mamasapano, Ampatuan and Datu Abdullah Sanki.

To facilitate the fund utilization, Datumanong requested that

the P3.8million be coursed through the *Maharlika Lipi Foundation, Inc.*, as NGO-partner.

Upon audit, the Commission on Audit found that the selection of the NGO was undertaken in violation of COA Circular No. 2007-01 noting the absence of public bidding in the NGO-selection process.

For his defense, respondent claimed that "the Ombudsman should await the final determination of the COA on whether the funds were mismanaged." Datumanong also insisted that his signatures in the documents were forged.

Ghost projects

The former representative of the 3rd district of Nueva Ecija is in hot water after Ombudsman investigators found him and four others liable for the anomalous utilization of his 2005 Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF). A former governor of Nueva Ecija, Aurelio Umali facilitated the mishandling of his P15million PDAF intended for the acquisition of irrigation pumps and fertilizers. The agricultural implements were supposed to benefit his constituents in Laur, Gabaldon, Bongabon, Santa Rosa,

General Natividad and Cabanatuan City.

In a 38-page Resolution, Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales ordered the filing of Informations for four counts of violation of Section 3(e) of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act (Republic Act No. 3019) and three counts of Malversation against Umali, Janet Lim Napoles, Department of Agriculture (DA) officials Renato Manantan (Regional Executive Director) and Narcisa Maningding (Accountant). Also indicted are Anita Tansipek and Corazon Bautista, both from the *Samahan ng mga Manininda ng Prutas sa Gabi, Inc.*

Aside from criminal indictment, Umali and Manantan were found guilty of Grave Misconduct, Gross Neglect of Duty and Conduct Prejudicial to the Best Interest of the Service and were ordered dismissed from the service. They were also meted the accessory penalties of perpetual disqualification from holding public office and forfeiture of retirement of benefits. In case of separation from the government service, the penalty shall be convertible to a fine equivalent to respondents' one year salary.

Ombudsman investigators

found that in 2005, Umali identified and endorsed the *Samahan* and the *Masaganang Ani Para sa Magsasaka Foundation, Inc.* (MAMFI), as NGO-partners. To implement the project, the DA downloaded P12million to MAMFI and P3million to the *Samahan*. Respondents made it appear that the funds were used to purchase 7,920 bottles of liquid fertilizers and 15 irrigation pumps. During in-depth validation, however, Ombudsman field investigators found that "there was no real purchase at all since the liquid fertilizers had been sourced from another Napoles company, *Nutrigrowth Philippines*." Similar findings of "ghost projects" were confirmed insofar as the alleged purchase of irrigation pumps.

The Office of the Ombudsman found that the fund usage was riddled with irregularities such as the NGOs lack of credentials and track record to implement multi-million peso projects; absence of market survey and identification of product standards for the agricultural implements; absence of public bidding; usage of undated and unnumbered disbursement vouchers; and lack of delivery of irrigation pumps to the intended beneficiaries.



Rep. Simeon Datumanong



Comm. Mehol Sadain of the Nat'l Commission on Muslim Filipinos



Rep. Aurelio Umali

OMB NAMES WINNERS OF ESSAY TILT ON INTEGRITY

They had to go through the wringer.

The eight finalists of the 2nd Integrity Development Essay Writing Contest needed to hurdle a final round of on-the-spot writing and put themselves through the proverbial eye of the needle in a stringent interview before the panel of judges before coming away with medals, plaques and cash incentives at the Final Screening and Awarding Ceremony on November 8, 2016 at the Ombudsman Function Room.

Twenty-seven students, 10-12 years of age, took on the written advocacy challenge which centered on the theme, “*Katapatan sa Serbisyo Publiko – ang Susi sa Kaunlaran ng Komunidad*”. The contest called for both public or private school students all over the country who are the children or relatives (up to the third degree of consanguinity or affinity) of any active or retired public official or employee to submit 1,000-word entries, and which should not have been previously published online or offline.

Designed as a corruption prevention program, the Integrity Development Essay Writing Contest seeks to ingrain a sense of integrity – and its concomitant values such as transparency, accountability and honesty—among the younger generation. Its overarching concept is to develop precocious leaders and thinkers steeped in creative, cognitive and social intelligence and pro-active values training.

From the initial submissions of 27, the screening committee whittled the number down to these ten finalists: Rania Maxine Sevilla (Naga City), Ellise Faith Apostol (Bataan), Rey Robert Cabusas (Pagadian City), Anne Beatrice Nelmidia (Marikina City), Emothee Bernardo (Davao City), Thea Coleen Castaneda (Tuguegarao City), Caryl Jan Pauline Agawin (Bukidnon), John Paolo Jambalos (Marikina City), Debbie Heart Yapoyco (Negros Occidental) and Niggy Jhan Abdon (Negros Occidental). Yapoyco and Abdon, however, opted to sit it out owing to conflict in school activities.

Part of the final screening was the crucial on-the-spot writing round – a suggestion made by Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales herself. “This is to ensure that the content comes from the heart,” said the Ombudsman.



PEP TALK. The finalists calmed their nerves and put the jitters away by listening to some pep talk from Dir. Alan Cañares, Acting Director Rhodora Galicia and Ms. Joyce Wyne Nomil



FOR THE WIN. The eight finalists write their way to possible medal finishes in the on-the-spot writing round.

The 8 finalists wrote their way to possible medal finishes by expounding on this guide question: what's the lesson on integrity and honesty that you learned from your parents?

The evaluation of the written outputs as well as the the make-or-break interviews and the final deliberations fell under the responsibility of the panel of judges, namely: Director III of the Senate Legislative Research Service and multi-awarded Palanca playwright Atty. Nick Pichay, prolific and multi-awarded writer and educator, Prof. Layeta Bucoy of UP Los Baños, Jollibee Foods Corp. Vice President for Corporate Affairs Carina Agarao, Assistant Commissioner David Cabanag, Jr. of the Civil Service Commission (CSC), Assistant Ombudsman Jennifer Manalili, and Deputy Ombudsman for the MOLEO Cyril Ramos.

The judges' deliberations involved several layers of discussion on style, structure, message, nuances and authenticity. Putting all these elements together, the judges came up with the following winners: Champion, Caryl Jan Pauline Agawin of Kisolon Central Elementary School (Bukidnon City); 1st runner up, Thea Coleen Castañeda of Tuguegarao North Central School (Tuguegarao City); and 2nd runner up, Emothee Bernardo of Sta. Ana Elementary School (Davao City).

Co-presented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Department of Education, CSC and Jollibee Foods Corporation, the contest gave away P30,000, P20,000 and P10,000, respectively to the top three winners and a consolation prize of P3,000 to the next two in rank.



CARYL JAN AGAWIN of Kisolon Central Elementary School (Bukidnon City) receives the grand prize from Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales, DO Cyril Ramos and Jollibee Corporate Affairs VP Carina Agarao.

Ombudsman, British Embassy launch CHANGE project



Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales and UK Ambassador to the Philippines Asif Anwar Ahmad lead the launch of the CHANGE project at the B Hotel in Quezon City.

Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales and British Ambassador to the Philippines Asif Ahmad have launched the “Cultivating Holistic Accountability Towards National Growth and Empowerment (CHANGE)” Project at The Tent, B Hotel, Quezon City on 25 October 2016.

Graced by officials and employees of the Office of the Ombudsman and the British Embassy, Ombudsman Morales and Ambassador Ahmad inked a Memorandum of Agreement establishing the P6.2M grant from the British government for institutionalizing capacity-building of prosecutors, lawyers and investigators. The MOA aims to increase the case disposition rate of the Office with as much as 20%, and to eventually attain “zero-backlog” by the end of 2018.

In her keynote speech, Ombudsman Morales lauded the grant as a “testament to the mutual trust and shared commitment of both institutions towards inclusive, collaborative, and sustainable initiatives...[t]ogether, let us make a choice in giving lasting change a fighting chance,” she stated. CHANGE is the fifth bilateral partnership between the Office of the Ombudsman and the British Embassy since Ombudsman Morales took the helm of the office in 2011.

Ombudsman Carpio Morales feted as ‘icon of legal excellence and public service’

Coming on the heels of the prestigious 2016 Ramon Magsaysay Award—also known as the Asian equivalent of the Nobel Peace Prize—for her contribution in “restoring faith in the rule of law”, Ombudsman Morales was recognized as distinguished icon of legal excellence and public service by the UP Women’s Lawyers Circle (WILOCI) on September 2, 2016 at the Manila Polo Club.

Steeped in meaning and symbolism, the award represents another facet of Ombudsman Morales’ journey as a legal luminary who has continuously espoused the WILOCI advocacy of rendering free legal aid to disadvantaged women and children.

In fact, WILOCI said that “the Supreme Court and the Filipino nation have been enriched by the brilliance, dedication, courage, integrity and patriotism of WILOCI” which includes the Honorable Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales who stamped her mark of professional discipline and judicial ethics in the Supreme Court from 2002 to 2011.

Alongside Ombudsman Morales, the other WILOCI awardees are Chief Justice Ma. Lourdes P.A. Sereno, incumbent Supreme Court Justice Teresita Leonardo-de Castro, former Supreme Court Justices Ameurfina Melencio-Herrera, Carolina Griño-Aquino (posthumous), Irene Cortes (posthumous), Flerida Ruth Pineda-Romero, Minerva P. Gonzaga-Reyes, Consuelo Yñares-Santiago, Alice Austria-Martinez, Minita Chico-Nazario, former Senators Miriam Defensor-Santiago (who succumbed to lung cancer 4 weeks after the awarding rites) and Pia Cayetano, Congresswoman Bellaflor Angara-Castillo, former ambassador and chairperson of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Lilia Bautista, former chairperson of the Commission on Audit and now UN-Independent Advisory Audit Committee (IAAC) vice chairperson Grace Pulido-Tan and incumbent SEC chairperson Teresita Herbosa.

The WILOCI—founded by the late Court of Appeals Justice Corazon Juliano-Agrava—celebrated its 70th founding anniversary.





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MARY RAWNSLE V. LOPEZ
 Editor-in-Chief

JERRY BENEDICT C. ROSETE
 Writer/Art Director

MYRA I. VALDEZ
 Writer

MARY ANN L. HULAR
 Research/Circulation

PETRONILO V. PAUYA
 Layout Artist

ADVISERS
Ombudsman CONCHITA CARPIO MORALES
 Assistant Ombudsman **JENNIFER J. MANALILI**

JESSIE A. SUGUITAN
 Contributing Photographer

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND MEDIA RELATIONS BUREAU (PIMRB)
 479-7300 local 2122, Fax 426-7750
 Ombudsman Building, Agham Road, Diliman, 1101, Quezon City
mediaaffairs@ombudsman.gov.ph
 OmbudsmanPH

THE MAGSAYSAY CONNECTION



The Ramon Magsaysay awardees are presented with a certificate and a gilded medallion with an embossed image of Ramon Magsaysay. The Award is presented in formal ceremonies in Manila, Philippines on August 31st of every year, which coincides with the birth anniversary of the much-loved Philippine President whose ideals foreground the relevance of the awardees' body of work.

Since the Award's creation in 1957, it has recognized a wide range of Asian personalities, irrespective of class, gender, religion, profession, etc. The awardees are testaments to the emergence and preponderance of innovative ideas and works that ramify throughout the region. Over the years, the Ramon Magsaysay Awards has become an iconic symbol of selflessness and excellence.

So pop the champagne, throw in some mambo music and let's celebrate the Ramon Magsaysay Awards. But for the meantime, let's start with some key facts and numbers:

318

- number of awardees to date consisting of 294 individuals and 24 groups or associations/organizations

22

- number of countries or territorial jurisdictions in Asia whose citizens, residents or organizations have won a Magsaysay award. India has the most number of awardees at 66. The Philippines comes in second. The others are Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, China, South Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Taiwan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Hongkong, Cambodia, Nepal, Laos, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Singapore, Tibet and East Timor.

59

- number of years that the RMAF has kept the tradition of giving out awards in celebration of "transformative leadership and the greatness of the human spirit". Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales belongs to the 59th group of Magsaysay laureates.

57

- number of awardees coming from the Philippines. There had been 45 individual and 11 organizational awardees from 1958-2015. In 2016, Ombudsman Morales became the 57th Filipino awardee.

awardees from 2

Ombudsman will win the fight against corruption. *I am accepting this award on behalf of my colleagues at the Office for their perseverance in carrying out our constitutional mandate as protectors of the people. I am also accepting this recognition on behalf of all anti-corruption advocates including journalists, civil society workers and good governance volunteers,*" said Ombudsman Morales.

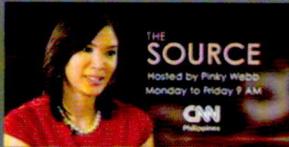
Turning emotional in the epilogue, the Ombudsman's letter concluded: "*Ennio and Cece, as you go to bed tonight, know that your grandmother is optimistic that your tomorrow will be a better day.*"

TALKFEST

OMB AMPS UP ANTI-CORRUPTION ADVOCACY IN MEDIA BLITZ

As soon as the Ramon Magsaysay Foundation gave out the list of the 2016 Ramon Magsaysay awardees in social media, desk editors of the television and print media started calling the media bureau of the Office of the Ombudsman to seek out one-on-one interviews with the lone Filipino awardee of the year, former Supreme Court Associate Justice turned chief graftbuster, Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales.

Ombudsman Morales lost no time in seizing the moment and engaged tv and print journalist to engaging conversations about her anti-corruption advocacy.



THE SOURCE
CNN PHILIPPINES
HOST: PINKY WEBB
September 19, 2016

“To institutionalize all the reforms we have been instituting, we are asking Congress to help us carry out these reforms.” – Ombudsman Morales on the best achievement she could accomplish before her term ends in 2018



NEWS TO GO
GMA NEWS TV
HOST: HOWIE SEVERINO
September 20, 2016

“I am confident *na hindi ako papakialaman* at all events. *Kung papakialaman ako*, I will do what is right. *Hindi ako puwedeng ma-influence* to do this or to do that even if it’s against my will, even if it’s against the evidence. *Matapang ako*, but I have to be.” – Ombudsman Morales on maintaining the independence of the Office



BAWAL ANG PASAWAY KAY MARENG WINNIE
GMA NEWS TV
HOST: SOLITA “WINNIE” MONSOD
September 23, 2016

“I have great trust in the integrity of our investigators and I’d like to believe that whatever decision comes out of the Ombudsman is based on reasonable grounds.” – Ombudsman Morales on the sense of fairness and justice of the men and women in the Office



MEET THE INQUIRER FORUM
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
(LIVE STREAM)
December 12, 2016

“It’s still the Ombudsman which finally decides whether you go this way or that, whereas the Supreme Court, in a division of five, decides on a case. There are 15 of you who decide on a case. That’s why it’s more rewarding to be an Ombudsman, the difficulties notwithstanding, because you are alone, you take responsibility for any decision you make.” – Ombudsman Morales on the unique role of the Office of the Ombudsman

