

By JOSEPH G. LARIOS

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ROSEMONT, Illinois (*jGLi*) – On the night that speakers were extolling living community heroes in their midst, they ran out of living role models to cite and emulate.

While Philippine Deputy Consul General Orontes V. Castro paid tribute to former Philippine Corazon Aquino as having restored democratic institutions and Interior and Local Government Jesse Robredo for breathing life into these institutions, Filipino American car dealer Emir C. Abinon gave credit to his father and a friend as mentors, whose righteous legacies guided the

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success of his business that grew from 35 to 160 employees and chalked up sales of \$150 million.

Of course, former President Aquino and Secretary Robredo are both gone from this world and so are Mr. Abinion's father and a friend.

Mr. Orontes was there to deliver the message of Consul General Leo M. Herrera-Lim while Mr. Abinion was to give an inspirational talk to recipients Saturday, Aug. 25, at Hyatt Hotel at O'Hare at Rosemont, Illinois, at the 18<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Gintong Pamana* (Golden Heritage) Awards hosted by *Fil Am Megascene* and Gintong Pamana Foundation headed by Bart and Yoly Tubalinal.

Castro cited the late President Cory Aquino for championing micro-finance projects for the Filipinos and described Robredo as having transformed Naga from a third-class to first class city after being elected mayor at the age of 29.

He said the public are welcome to visit the Consulate and sign up in the condolence book for Mr. Robredo, who was given a rare state funeral and honored with a half-mast flag in government offices throughout the Philippines and consulates and embassies abroad.

Mr. Castro also credited incumbent President Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino III for pursuing the righteous *tuwid na*

*daan*

(straight) path leadership, which saw the country observe reforms, significant cut in wasteful and unnecessary spending and made officials accountable for their actions, making the Philippines open for business under a new management.

He cited the Philippines earning a first quarter increase of gross domestic product by 6.4 percent and the overseas Filipinos “that means you” contributing \$20-Billion in remittances; stock exchange breaching the 5,000 level; Philippine exports, \$48-Billion in 2011; and having employed 638,000 BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) employees from only 5,000 in 2000, contributing \$11-Billion to Philippine economy in 2011.

## **BESSIE ANDERSON STANLEY POEM “SUCCESS”**

For his part, Mr. Abinon used the poem of Bessie Anderson Stanley entitled “Success” and the verse from Philippians 2:3 as inspirations for his success.

Stanley said, “He has achieved success who has lived well, laughed often, and loved much who has enjoyed the trust of pure women, the respect of intelligent men and the love of little children; who has filled his niche and accomplished his task; who has left the world better than he found it whether by an improved poppy, a perfect poem or a rescued soul; who has never lacked appreciation of Earth’s beauty or failed to express who has always looked for the best in others

and given them the best he had; whose life was an inspiration; whose memory a benediction.”

Philippians 2:3 says, “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

Mr. Abinion, president and owner of Fox Valley Automotive Group, consisting of Volkswagen, Buick, and GMC dealerships in the Northwest suburbs of Chicago, said as two of the big three domestic auto makers filed for bankruptcy and 4,500 automobile dealerships across the nation were hard hit by economic times, other car dealers had to employ

deceptive practices by inserting hidden fees in the fine prints of their advertising offers.

“My leadership team urged me, begged me to follow same pattern based on deceptive marketing practice,” he said.

“I was very tempted to compromise my values under hard economic times,” where “defining moments call for us to do what is right, according to my father,” he said. But he rejected the temptation and he was rewarded with success.

“In life, God always presents man circumstances that test courage, love, conviction, values and your faith as a person’s defining moment true north of any decision is always guided, by one of your mentors or coaches, it’s accumulation of what you learned, what you been taught, what is in your heart.”

He said he lost his parents (Ellen and Ed) in 2009 and 2010. In 2011, he lost his closest friend and a mentor.

The Gintong Pamana awardees were Andrea Christine C. Andrada of Illinois, *Pag-asa* (Hope) Award for Outstanding Achievement in College; Atty. Rodel E. Rodis of California, Apolinario Mabini Award in Leadership; Dr. Philip S. Chua of Nevada, Kamanyang



(frankincense) Award in Medicine; Dr. Jose L. Evangelista and Dr. Stella S. Evangelista of Michigan, Tahanan (home) Award for Outstanding Parents of the Year; Reinabelle Reyes, Ph. D., of Illinois, Agham (science) Award for Exceptional Achievements in Science (Astrophysics); Gloria T. Caoile of Nevada, Gabriela Silang Award in Leadership; Paul & Linda Goldman of Illinois, for Kindred Spirit Award; Fresas Flores Balistreri, MBA, Maria Pacita Vargas Flores, BSN, RN, Grace A. Gomez, RN, CCRN, Weng S. Sanson, RN, BSN, CCRN, and Erlinda Sayson Limcaco, BSN, RN, all for Prism Award for Women of Style & Achievement.

The program was hosted by news editor Alpha Nicolasin while entertainment numbers were provided by Emil Nicolasin, Nina Mae Vidal, Louella Maningas Cabalona of *SamaSama* Project, Ryanka Racal, Mark Martin and Dr. Vickie G. Navarra.

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