

## INTRODUCTION OF THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER

WILLIAM G. PADOLINA

*Secretary*

*Department of Science and Technology*

I am privileged to introduce to you our guest of honor and keynote speaker this morning.

Our distinguished guest belongs to an illustrious clan of lawmakers, educators, and public servants from the province of Batangas. In fact, a random scan of famous names from his family reads like a Who's Who of the late-19th and 20th century Philippine history.

He prepared for his storied political career by completing his elementary education at the Ateneo de Manila Grade School. He finished high school at De La Salle College during the war years. At the University of the Philippines, where our speaker became renowned as a passionate orator and debater, he graduated with an Associate of Arts degree in both pre-med and pre-law before capping his collegiate career with a Bachelor of Laws degree in 1952. He then went to Yale University, where he obtained his Master of Laws in 1953 and Doctor of Juridical Science degree in 1960.

Our distinguished guest applied his extension knowledge on civil libertarianism and judicial reform into good use at the Senate floor. Among his more significant achievements are the passing of the Government Reorganization Act (1968-1970) and the amendments to the Land Reform Code (1971). He, however, became most acclaimed for passing a series of landmark legislations collectively known as the "Justice for the Poor" laws, in which poor litigants are given top priority in courts, provided free meals, lodging, and transcripts of their court proceedings, etc. He also wrote extensively on law, labor, foreign relations, and the dynamics of social conflict in the Philippines. For his outstanding performance and contributions, he was named "Outstanding Senator" from 1968 to 1971.

As the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Justice, he was responsible for updating the Filipino people on a wide range of national issues at the time, reporting on the criminal jurisdiction provisions of the RP-US Military Bases Agreement, the state of penal institutions in the country, and violations of civil liberties in the "Golden Buddha" scam of 1971.

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After the imposition of martial law, he became a leading figure in the fight against the dictatorship of Ferdinand E. Marcos. While keeping vigil for democracy's return in the seventies, he was awarded "Most Outstanding Legal Aid Lawyer of the World" by the International Bar Association in rites held at Stockholm in 1976. In the same year, he was also given the "Dangal ng Batangan" Award.

As President of the Nationalista Party, he closed ranks with the united opposition that would ultimately topple the Marcos regime in 1986. After EDSA, he went on to serve as Prime Minister of the Aquino Revolutionary Government, Secretary of Foreign Affairs and, most memorably, as Vice-President of the Republic of the Philippines.

Now Chairman of the National Centennial Commission, it is my privilege to introduce to you the Honorable SALVADOR H. LAUREL.