

IN MEMORIAM:

PROF. EMILIANO R. NAVARRO

(1917-1961)

Death is inevitable, but the precise time when it will strike often lies uncertain in the inscrutable timetable of the Divine Providence.

Death came with tragic instantaneousness upon EMILIANO R. NAVARRO—professorial lecturer in law, skillful practitioner, and a man of principles.

Navarro saw the first light of day on September 11, 1917 in the town of Orion, Bataan. Of poor parentage, he strived hard to finish his elementary and high school education. With the financial assistance of some relatives and friends, he enrolled at the University of the Philippines, to pursue his formal legal education. Equipped with his natural talents and an indomitable spirit of determination, he entered the College of Law. Endowed with a profound legal mind and possessed of the required degree of diligence and discipline, he emerged as the "intellectual giant" of the "ebullient" Class of 1940. He graduated as valedictorian and passed the bar examinations in the same year with the general average of 92.75%.

Eager to engage in the practice of law, he served as legal assistant in the Paredes, Zulueta & Roxas Law Offices. But attracted by the sublimity of a scholarly academic life, he applied for, and was appointed, as instructor in law in his Alma Mater on May 2, 1947. In recognition of his meritorious performance, he was promoted to the rank of assistant professor.

In search of newer perspectives in the ever-expanding fields of the law, he pursued his graduate studies at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, during the academic year 1949-50, under fellowship grants extended to him by the University of the Philippines, University of Michigan, and the United States Educational Foundation.

Upon his return to the Philippines, he resumed his teaching career at his Alma Mater, and at the same time opened up his own law office. The time-consuming pressure of his private practice made him to request for a change in his academic status from full-time associate professor to professorial lecturer in law.

Navarro also distinguished himself as an author of standard legal textbooks and as a meticulous researcher and legal commentator. He wrote two volumes on *Persons and Family Relations*, a remarkable book on *Criminal Procedure*, and an unpublished work on *Evidence*. From time to time, his writings on lively legal topics graced the pages of the *Philippine Law Journal*, *Decisions Law Journal*, and the *Lawyers' Journal*. Alternating with Atty. Norberto J. Quisumbing, he served as Faculty Editor of the *Philippine Law Journal* for the years 1947-51.

Ever in search of new vistas, and imbued with the true sense of dedication to his countrymen, he ran as an "independent" candidate for Congressman for the lone district of Bataan. On the fateful morning of November 1, 1961, exactly 13 days before the elections, death came instantaneously, when a speeding panel truck hit him while he was in the course of his campaign in barrio Colo, Dinalupihan, Bataan.

By his death, the College of Law lost one of its dedicated professors, and the legal profession, one of its honorable brethren.

Navarro died in the "prime" of his life. But within such span of life, he had achieved "something" in his own humble way.

"Were a star quenched on high,
For ages would its light
Still coming downward from the sky
Beam on our mortal sight.
So when a good man dies,
For years beyond our ken,
The light he leaves behind him lies
Upon the paths of men."

"NO SOLO DE PAN VIVE EL HOMBRE"

TO EMILIANO R. NAVARRO

Man does not live by bread alone for his ideals also keep him alive and going. He also lives by his principles.

The province that produced Cayetano Arellano and Pedro Tuason also produced Emiliano Navarro. Some people might say that it is improper to place Navarro side by side with Arellano and Tuason by virtue alone of the fact that they were nourished by the same soil and invigorated by the same air. But they would be wrong. For Navarro had many things in common with Arellano and Tuason. Like them he had a head on his shoulders. But more importantly, like them also, he was moved by lofty ideals and governed by the highest ethical principles.

Mely, as his friends called him, was a reasonable man. When his private practice began to impinge on his full-time teaching, he promptly asked for a change to part-time status. This was not easy to grant because his teaching was not only effective but also inspired. He regarded himself not a mere carpenter fitting together the pieces of the law, but as architect with a grand design: the achievement of man's goal through the legal processes. Again, when his private practice grew even more extensive, he readily asked to be placed on lecture basis.

But Mely's foray into politics which was to take his life—for he was struck down by a truck while conducting a barrio campaign—was too many based on an unreasonable assumption. The trouble was, Mely sought Bataan's lone congressional seat with hardly a centavo in his pocket. In his quixotic logic, he would ask the people to vote for him simply because he was truly qualified for the office, as in fact he was. However, students and observers of contemporary politics would attribute to this logic some false premise. But such attribution would be a grave error because it disregards Mely's ideals and principles. For Mely, like all true leaders, had a greater faith in the people he sought to lead than they have in themselves.

So, good-bye, dear friend. You died without seeing the dawn but as God is in His Heaven your country will eventually be a better place to live in because of you.

VICENTE ABAD SANTOS