

FOREWORD

JOSE C. CAMPOS, JR.: A MAN OF GENIUS AND INTEGRITY*

Antonio R. Bautista**

When we mourn a man's passing, we, at the same time, celebrate his singular genius and the bountiful gifts which he had so generously shared with us. Justice Campos, or "Peping" to most of us here, was no ordinary mortal. He had a highly disciplined and sharp legal mind. He, like his wife Marita, was a caring law teacher. His is a truly vanishing breed. He not only preached, but actually practiced, integrity in everything that he did: whether as a law professor, a university administrator, a government functionary or as a judge and justice.¹ They do not seem to make any more men from the mold he was cast in.

I always acknowledge, with great pride, that Justice Campos was not merely my law professor. He was as much a father to me. Truly, I probably would not have become a lawyer and then a UP Law professor myself – and neither would my daughter Chryse, who is now my colleague in the faculty – had not Justice Campos so generously helped me through law school and the Bar examinations. During my senior year in 1957, a tragedy befell my family such that I was left without any wherewithal to complete my legal

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¹ Justice Campos spent more than forty years in the public service. He began as an instructor in the University of the Philippines in 1950, eventually becoming a full professor in 1959, and rising to various administrative positions such as University Secretary and Registrar. He became a Judge of the Court of First Instance of Pasay City in 1971 and a Justice of the Intermediate Appellate Court in 1983. In 1992, President Fidel V. Ramos appointed him to the Supreme Court, where he served for less than eight months before retiring.

education. Peping very kindly offered to take me into his home as a non-paying boarder. He paid for my lodging and tuition for that year and all my expenses until I graduated from law school and took the Bar examinations in 1958. He must have been only in his early thirties then. His children were still very young and he was then living mainly on his salary as a UP law professor. I knew that he similarly helped other impecunious law students, but perhaps not as much as he had helped me.

While the intensity of my association with Justice Campos has receded through the years, I had always kept in touch with him and Marita. I was with him once in a law convention which took us to Singapore and Jakarta, and he visited me while I was doing my graduate studies in Ann Arbor, Michigan. I would occasionally call upon him and exchange light banter and ideas while he was a judge and justice. I never ceased to wonder whether he was not being too idealistic and impractical in resisting all temptations to aggrandize himself financially with the use of his official position.

Peping was a highly opinionated person. He had very strong opinions of persons and of their behavior. Yet he was simple and always helpful. He was himself devoid of all affectation. No fancy clothes or fancy cars for him.

He was modest in every way. He accepted a Court of First Instance judgeship at a time when many of his former students were either in the Court of Appeals or the Supreme Court. As his stay in the judiciary wore on, he was flirting with the idea of being appointed as, say, a mere general counsel of the Philippine National Bank. When close to retirement from the Bench, he told me that he would be happy if he could end up as Presiding Justice of the Court of Appeals. His belated promotion to the Supreme Court was richly deserved, a vindication of his conscientiousness, competence and probity.

As a teacher, administrator and judge, he could easily strike one as being boorish. But that was an impression which did not last because he would soon be revealed as a tender, soft-hearted and kind man.

The greatest legacy of Justice Campos is the example he set by the way he lived. It was a simple, honorable, productive and edifying life. But I must admit, his is a difficult act to follow.