

## August 4, 2009 - UP Mass Comm: Restore dignity and honor in naming National Artists



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signed by 22 faculty members led by Dean Roland Tolentino

August 4, 2009



The undersigned faculty members of the University of the Philippines College of Mass Communication (UP CMC) denounce in the strongest possible terms the shameless intervention of Malacañang in the conferment of the Order of National Artists (formerly National Artists Awards). According to the government's press release, "(t)he seven new national artists are Manuel P. Urbano alias Manuel Conde (posthumous award in the field of film and broadcast arts); Lazaro A. Francisco (posthumous award for literature); Federico Aguilar Alcuaz (visual arts, paintings, sculpture and mixed media); Cecille Guidote-Alvarez (theater); Magno Jose Carlo Caparas (visual arts and films); Francisco Bobby Mañosa (architecture); and Jose Pitoy Moreno (fashion design)." The awarding may be scheduled this month after the 10-day mourning for former President Corazon Aquino who died last August 1.

The Macapagal-Arroyo administration's decision not to include renowned composer Dr. Ramon Santos, former dean of the UP College of Music and University Professor Emeritus, shows its lack of respect for the selection process undertaken by the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA). That the government even had to constitute an "honors committee" shows its brazen effort to put political color in what should be a

collegial undertaking among artists and cultural workers.

Aside from Santos, the CCP and the NCCA selected Urbano, Francisco and Alcuaz. Malacañang decided to not only omit Santos but to add four more names: Alvarez, Caparas, Mañosa and Moreno.

The UP CMC protests the Malacañang-initiated conferment of the Order of National Artist on Alvarez, Caparas, Mañosa and Moreno. Alvarez serves as NCCA executive director and heads the secretariat for the Order of National Artists. A careful scrutiny of Caparas's body of work in the fields of visual arts and film would show that his accomplishments do not fit that of a national artist.

In addition, the UP CMC demands that Malacañang explain the omission of Santos in the Order of National Artists even if his peers have already strongly recommended him for his outstanding work.

Since the establishment of the National Artists Awards in 1972, this is the first time since democracy was restored in 1986 that an incumbent President dropped a recommended awardee from the roster and added not just one but four names.

Indeed, dignity and honor should be restored in the conferment of the Order of National Artists. The President has absolutely no business intervening in the highest national recognition given to Filipino artists. UP CMC believes that excellence, freedom and integrity must be observed in the selection of National Artists and that these must never be compromised.

## **SIGNATORIES**

1. Dr. Roland Tolentino, dean
2. Dr. Georgina Encanto, former dean
3. Dr. Lourdes Portus, college secretary
4. Prof. Alfonso Deza (chair, Department of Communication Research)
5. Prof. Rosa Maria Feliciano (chair, Department of Broadcast Communication)
6. Prof. Marichu Lambino (chair, Department of Journalism)
7. Prof. Eduardo Lejano, Jr. (director, UP Film Institute)
8. Prof. Danilo Arao (Department of Journalism)
9. Prof. Olivia Cantor (UP Film Institute)
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11. Prof. Melba Estonilo (Department of Broadcast Communication)

12. Prof. Roehl Jamon (UP Film Institute)
13. Prof. Ma. Theresa Jazmines (Department of Journalism)
14. Dr. Jose Lacson, Jr. (Department of Communication Research)
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16. Prof. Cenon Palomares (UP Film Institute)
17. Dr. Aleli Quirante (Department of Communication Research)
18. Dr. Arminda Santiago (UP Film Institute)
19. Prof. Josefina Santos (Department of Broadcast Communication)
20. Prof. Lucia Tangi (Department of Journalism)
21. Dr. Violeda Umali (Department of Communication Research)
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*For verification, please call the UP CMC Department of Journalism at 920-6852.*