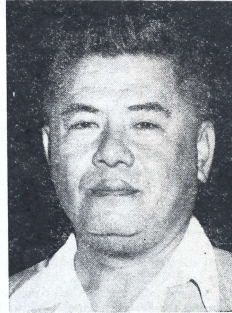


DIRECTOR
CELEDONIO
S. AGRAVA



DIRECTOR
EUSTAQUIO
BALAGTAS

Several months ago, an organization devoted to exploiting the creative talents of local inventors and artists, went on record to lament the fact that the patent attorney, who is an inevitable institution in American business life, is still an unfamiliar figure in the Philippine scene. It was further said that the budding genius is virtually left unprotected at the mercy of corrupt tradesmen who would steal or copy the product of his inventiveness for a get-rich-quick harvest of profits.

Under the situation, the inventor becomes a "babe in the woods" but for the protecting arm, long outstretched on a ceaseless vigil, of the Patent Office of which Atty. Celedonio S. Agrava, a friendly and well-read lawyer in his early fifties, is the director.

The story of the Patent Office would be practically commonplace without mentioning the uphill task of Atty. Agrava who, on August 15, 1947, by drafting the organization chart and rules, gave impetus to its existence. In a run-about way of speaking, the Patent Office, which he has nursed from its fledgling stage, is Director Agrava's baby.

Drawing authority from a committee appointed by the Secretary of Justice in accordance with the provisions of Republic Acts Nos. 165 (Patents), 166 (Trademarks), and 167 (Copyrights), Atty. Agrava had to start on a frugal budget of P82,560 which was surely not much in helping meet the financial difficulties of his trail-blazing work. Notwithstanding this setback, the Patent Office passed the blueprint stage by the middle part of 1947 and, as a fitting consideration of his endeavors, the late President Roxas appointed Atty. Agrava *ad interim* Director of Patents on August 18, 1947.

But the well-deserved reward has not gone into his head as witnessed by his apparent hesitancy to ruminate upon his early struggles as the "founding father" of an entity dedicated to the economic well-being of the country. To do so, as he puts it, would be "chewing the cud of one's own accomplishment." He becomes quite vocal though when the ambitious program of his office to hasten the commercial coming of age of the country is brought up; his current obsession is to open the eyes of the public to the importance, from the economic point of view, of stimulating the creative faculties of the country by assuring inventors protection in their rights. However, casual remark about his role in this planning for an industrial millennium would draw a reticent response. This trait brings out the retiring quality in his demeanor.

Atty. Agrava considers his educational background historic in the sense that it is filled with significant acquaintanceship. At the University of the Philippines, his esteemed alma mater where he received his A.B. and LL.B. degrees in 1915 and 1918, respectively,

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Politics is the same everywhere. The candidate who knows his constituents more intimately than the other does—can call them by the first name, pat them in the back and show concern over their problems, can win their support. That is Director Eustaquio C. Balagtas, of the Bureau of Prisons and former member of the Municipal Board of Manila, who had been in the city council continuously for twenty-one years. But Hon. Balagtas has other assets besides those common traits of a successful politician. He is a fighter and a conscientious law-maker so much so that even Manila's electorate, unquestionably the most intelligent group of voters in the Philippines, had found it advantageous to send him every election back to the city council. Administrations have changed in Manila several times since 1922, when he was elected for the first time, but he always managed to keep his seat in the city council.

An experienced City Father that he is, Hon. Balagtas had always a figure to reckon with in the Municipal Board where he was president for two times. Very well versed in city government, he knows how to get things done and how to do them speedily and properly. He has quite a wonderful memory and a fondness for statistics, and he could not be fooled by his colleagues.

Another advantage of Director Balagtas is the fact that he is a lawyer by profession and his knowledge of law enables him to stand out prominent in the many activities that he has undertaken in a wide field of politics and otherwise.

When the first world war broke out Atty. Balagtas was a captain in the historic organization, the Philippine National Guards. Imposing in personality, commanding in voice and tough in appearance, he carries himself with considerable respect. But despite this impressiveness, Director Balagtas has that amiableness that draws people close to him and to make him friends who stick by him through thick and thin. In fact he has developed that personal relationship that has qualified him for leadership in numerous group undertakings. Continuously for 16 years, from 1922 to 1938, he was Superintendent of the Philippine Carnival and Exposition which require a lot of tact in dealing with the public. But nobody could have discharged his duties more successfully than he did.

As a lawyer, Director Balagtas has had very limited practice. He had handled mostly criminal cases in which he had almost always rendered his services free. But he feels glad that he is a lawyer because, he says, there are really some people, even in the city of Manila, who can not afford to pay for legal services and that is the time when he can come to their help.

Atty. Balagtas at first did not plan to study law. He took it up only at night while employed with the Bureau of Commerce and

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for being of the Patent Office inventors and writers to such an extent to entrust their brain-children to the competency of their applications. It is a matter of course for workers to have their suspicions easily aroused by a manifestation of interest in their work by a stranger. One favorite tale among patentees is about the eccentric inventor of a device who wanted himself strapped to his contrivance in the archives of the government pending the issue of a patent in his name. His reason was that "I came from a village of horse-traders; I do not trust anybody."

In relating this anecdote, Director Agrava was perhaps unaware that by the sizeable number of applications for patents and trademarks that pour daily into his office, one can tell that the man radiates the essential stock-in-trade that keeps the machinery going. This virtue is confidence. His kindly appearance, accentuated by thick-rimmed glasses, outwardly shows a personality that is identical to that of a cleric or a college professor. Either way, he could be the repository of a trust. This fact is said to be one of the un-inventoried assets of the Patent Office.

In the course of his duties, Director Agrava every now and then pauses to ponder whether he has found the right job considering that in his youth, the practice of law had been the beckoning "lighthouse" in his plans. Law has always fascinated him and now as he sits comfortably in his swivel chair, he wonders a lot and becomes introspective. Looking over gadgets and plans is indeed a far

But he invariably finds consolation in the same destination which is public service.

Director Agrava was born in Manila fifty-five years ago on March 3.—M. S. Jr.

DIRECTOR BALAGTAS . . . (Continued from page 285)

Industry where he was, from 1919 to 1923, assistant commercial agent. From 1918 to 1919 he was instructor in military science at the University of the Philippines. From 1920 to 1922 he was instructor, also in military science, at the National University.

Director Balagtas was born 52 years ago in Iba, the capital of Zambales. He finished his elementary and part of his high school education in his home province, after which, like most ambitious youth, he came to Manila. He entered the Manila High School from where he graduated his secondary education and then proceeded to the University of the Philippines.

When the University of Manila offered the combined law and business administration course, he was attracted by the new curriculum and took it for five years. He is a holder of A.B., LL.B. and B.B.A. degrees. He was admitted to the Philippine Bar in 1927.

Atty. Balagtas is a member of more than a dozen national organizations and several semi-government commissions. He is also a member of civic, social and religious associations, among which are the Caballeros de Rizal and the Knights of Columbus. He is one of the few who can be relied upon to organize parades, mass meetings and rallies.

He plays very good golf.—I.T.R.

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