

# ANTONIO Y. DE PIO

## the Carolinian Congressman

IT WAS just yesterday when I used to meet him in our classroom; he was one of those energetic professors in the USC College of Law — a mere Atty. Antonio Y. de Pio.

Today, when his students and friends meet him, instinctive courtesy will tell them to take their hats off and say: Good day, Congressman! In his characteristic humility, he cannot fail to smile while he makes his response.

The story of this Carolinian professor is the story of how diligence, toil, self-determination, and self-sacrifice can really mean success. Born on September 8, 1908 in Tuburan, Cebu, he is the son of Potenciano de Pio and Rosario Ybanez. Sometime during his childhood, his parents moved to Cadiz, Negros Occidental. It was in Cadiz that he finished his primary and elementary grades as valedictorian.

His first two years in high school were spent in the Vasayan Institute (now, University of the Visayas). Then he transferred to the University of Manila where he studied during the night and worked during the day. At first, he worked as stenographer in the office of the late Paulino Ybanez (his uncle) who was then the Congressman of the Seventh District of Cebu. Later, he transferred to the Radio Corporation of the Philippines. Not long thereafter, he was promoted from stenographer to chief clerk. And his rise was so rapid that before he knew it, he was connected with the Erlanger and Galingier, Inc. where he became the Assistant Collection Manager and in charge of the sale of movie sound equipment.

It was while working in the Erlanger and Galingier, Inc. that he took up his Law in the University of Manila. He finished it in 1933, took the bar, and passed. Then he quit his job, returned to Cebu, and started his law practice.

In 1939, he was offered a teaching job in the University of San Carlos. He accepted it; he handled Public and Private International Law and subjects in Civil Law left by the present Senator Decoroso Rosales when the latter ran for Congress in 1941.

During the war, Congressman-elect de Pio edited the War Bulletin, a newsette published by the guerrilla unit of Bantayan Island. He also acted as Chairman, Arbitration Committee, Unit of Civil Affairs Committee of the Cebu guerrillas.

After the liberation, he was attached to the Real Estate Division of the Armed Forces of the Western Pacific (AFWESPAC), a unit of the US Army in Cebu City charged with the leasing of buildings and lands to the US Army as well as with the payment of rentals and damages for the civilian properties used by the US Army in the course of Cebu's liberation. He was the Administrative Assistant then, next in rank to the American Colonel in charge of the unit. Simultaneously he resumed his teaching job in San Carlos.

In 1946 he was elected member, Board of Directors, Cebu Lawyers'

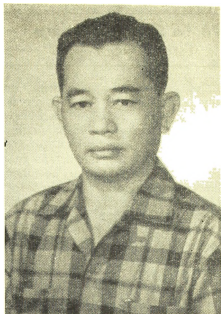
by

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League. He got elected as member of the Board of Governors of the same organization in 1955. When the Cebu Motor Vehicle Operators Association, an organization of jeepney and bus operators in the city and province of Cebu, held its election, he was chosen president.

Tonying, as his friends are fond of calling him, first courted the Seventh District of Cebu in 1953. The people knew his sincerity of purpose and his true love for them; they would have accepted him in that year's elections were they not barred by the tremendous public works given out by the Liberals. No less than 10,000 laborers were paid right in front of the precincts on election day.

He was the NP candidate for the district then. Yet, it was his district which did not taste the splendour of Magsaysay's campaign entourage; it was his district which



Congressman-elect Antonio Y. de Pio  
Amelioration of the masses is his  
concern...

did not hear even a single campaign speech by any senatorial candidate or any Cebu NP bigwig for that matter. And despite his being the official NP candidate, a rebel aspirant won the support of some Cebu Nacionalistas: Santos Migallos ran as a rebel Nacionalista; so, the NP votes in the western coastal towns were split.

The year 1957 was his second chance. A winner never quits, a quitter never wins. This, he believes although he did not think he lost in 1953. He won the hearts of the people; his opponent merely their hands. There are things which money cannot buy; these are the things upon which he would build his candidacy for the people to convert into a monument of victory.

His rival was the very man whom he opposed in 1953: Dr. Nicolas Escario, the incumbent Congressman, the head of the Liberal Party in Cebu, and the President of one of Cebu's institutions of learning, the Cebu Institute of Technology (CIT). Escario was supported by the ten town mayors of the entire district; he had the backing of the ten municipal machineries in that district; he had the backing of the Liberal Party.

On the other hand, Tonying who was the official candidate of the party in power did not enjoy the blessings of the public works which his adversary took advantage of in 1953 under the latter's party ad-

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## Antonio Y. de Pio ...

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ministration. The year 1957 had already its ban which prohibited the release of public works, including those financed by provincial funds, within 45 days prior to the elections. Furthermore, he had to face tremendous odds for his opponent had already entrenched himself during the last two terms that he was the 7th's representative.

But he won! By 2,674 votes! In all towns but two!

When asked about the secret of his victory, the humble Carolinian professor smiled and said: Simply win the affection of the masses. He remembered having penetrated the remotest barrios and sitios and islets of the district; he remembered having preached the gospel of Magsaysay with all sincerity and honesty; he remembered having served the needs of his people despite his defeat in 1953: free legal counsels, jobs, aid to indigents. These made up his triumphs.

But he cannot overlook his loving and understanding wife, Alice. "She was my biggest asset; she was my campaign manager. She delivered speeches, campaigned house to house, and she won the hearts of the women, young and old alike," Tonyng commented. Incidentally, Mrs. de Pio is a Home Economics instructress in this University.

"What are your plans, Congressman?" I asked him.

"I will concentrate on legislative work. My primary concern is the amelioration of the masses because in my campaign, I gave emphasis to the solution of unemployment problems and the improvement of the living conditions of the people."

"Do you intend to resume your teaching job in San Carlos?" I queried further.

"Well, I hate to be away from the old University. But even then, I do not cease to be a Carolinian," he replied.

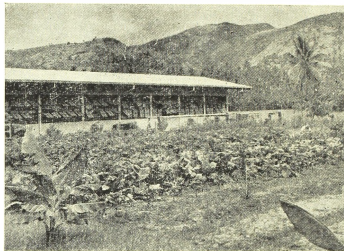
It was 5:30 p.m. I had to leave for class. Time was when I used to bid him a "Good-bye, sir." This time, I would say, "Good-bye, Congressman." And I recalled that he had once been just the stenographer of a Congressman, now he is a Congressman himself.

Longfellow's lines came into my mind:

Lives of great men all remind us  
We can make our lives sublime.

\* \* *this is the Youngsters' HOME*

The semi-concrete "HOME" of 46 occupants of the Boys Town located in Punta Priocesa, a few kilometers from Cebu City. This building and the five-hectare lot were donated by Don Ramon Aboltiz, the biggest Boys Town benefactor. It is run by five priests and a brother of the Salesian Order.



Happy faces are those of the "spheroid artists" of the Cebu Boys Town posing for the lensman. They found it fun to stay in the Center with good living accommodations, free movies and plenty of hours of leisure. But before all these, they attend religious services at the Boys Town chapel to dedicate themselves to their Creator.