**[EZ Speech Writers No. 15762]**

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Remarks by Dr. Gilbert Mamaug at the second annual reunion of the Caba-

gan High School Alumni Association.

[IN A MOCK “FUNEREAL” TONE] DEARLY BELOVED . . .WE ARE GATHERED HERE THIS [MORNING/AFTERNOON/EVENING] TO MOURN THE PASSING OF A GREAT INSTITUTION . . . AN INSTITU-TION OF WHICH WE WERE ALL AT ONE TIME A PART . . . AND AN INSTITUTION WHICH — FOR MORE THAN 60 YEARS AND THROUGH ANY NUMBER OF TRANSFORMATIONS — PROVIDED THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF CABAGAN WITH A WONDERFUL EDUCATION AND, PER-HAPS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT, WITH THE TOOLS FOR LIVING A GOOD AND PRODUCTIVE LIFE. BUT UNLIKE MARK ANTONY IN SHAKESPEARE’S FAMOUS PLAY, I COME HERE TODAY *NOT* TO BURY CABAGAN HIGH SCHOOL — THOUGH IT “DIED” [NUMBER] YEARS AGO — BUT TO PRAISE IT, AND TO BEAR TESTIMONY TO THE ENORMOUS IMPACT IT HAD ON ALL OUR LIVES.

BEFORE I CONTINUE, HOWEVER, I’D LIKE TO PREPARE YOU TO HEAR WORDS THAT SOME OF YOU MIGHT NOT UNDERSTAND,

BECAUSE I PLAN TO COUCH AT LEAST A FEW OF MY REMARKS IN IBANAG, A FEW IN LLOKANO, AND SOME IN TAGALOG. WE ARE ALL PILIPINOS — ONE NATION [UNDER GOD] WHO SPEAK (BELIEVE IT OR NOT!) 182 DIFFERENT LANGUAGES AND DIALECTS. THAT’S WHY I’D LIKE IN MY REMARKS TODAY TO IN SOME SMALL WAY PAY TRIB­UTE TO THE MAGNIFICENT DIVERSITY OF OUR NATIVE LAND, AND BY EXTENSION, THE DIVERSITY OF THE MEMBERSHIP OF THIS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION. SO IF YOU DON’T UNDERSTAND SOME-THING I MIGHT SAY, I’M SURE SOMEONE SITTING NEARBY CAN HELP TRANSLATE FOR YOU.

I’D ALSO LIKE TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE DISTINGUISHED GUESTS WHO’VE JOINED US IN OUR CELEBRATION TODAY. AND SO TO [LIST THE NAME AND TITLE/POSITION OF EACH GUEST], I EXTEND OUR SINCEREST THANKS AND APPRECIATION FOR YOUR BEING HERE: WE ARE TRULY HONORED AND BLESSED BY YOUR PRES-ENCE. LET’S GIVE ‘EM A BIG ROUND OF APPLAUSE, SHALL WE? [LEAD THE GROUP IN APPLAUSE]

NOW I’M SURE THAT EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU HAS A TON OF FOND MEMORIES OF THE TIME YOU SPENT AT CABAGAN HIGH SCHOOL, AND, PERHAPS, ONE OR TWO NOT-SO-FOND ONES.

FOR ME, MY FIRST EXPERIENCES OF CABAGAN HIGH OCCURRED EVEN BEFORE I BECAME A STUDENT THERE. I WAS [NUMBER] YEARS OLD AT THE TIME AND I WAS A STUDENT AT [SPELL OUT “CCS”], WHICH WAS LOCATED JUST ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE HIGH SCHOOL. BECAUSE OF THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE PLACE, A LOT OF THE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WOULD HAVE TO PASS DIRECTLY THROUGH OUR CAMPUS TO GET TO THEIR CLASSES. I REMEMBER QUITE VIVIDLY HOW MUCH I ADMIRED THEM AND HOW MATURE THEY SEEMED, HOW PHYSICALLY FIT, AND HOW PROUDLY THEY CARRIED THEMSELVES. “THAT’S WHAT I WANT TO BE,” I THOUGHT TO MYSELF; AND SO, WITH MY PARENTS’ ENCOURAGE-MENT, I RESOLVED TO APPLY THIS HIGH SCHOOL.

NOW THOSE OF YOU WHO WERE IN SCHOOL AROUND THE SAME TIME I WAS — THAT IS, BETWEEN [YEARS] — WILL REMEMBER THAT, IN ORDER TO GET INTO CABAGAN HIGH, YOU NOT ONLY HAD TO HAVE GOOD GRADES IN GRADE SHOOL, YOU ALSO HAD TO PASS AN “APTITUDE TEST.” BUT THIS WASN’T THE USUAL KIND OF ACADEMIC SCREENING EXAM — NOT BY A LONG SHOT! IT WAS A GRUELLING TEST OF HARD LABOR AND ENDURANCE UNDER THE HOT PHILIPPINE SUN! FOR WE WERE TASKED WITH THE JOB OF CLEANING UP AND BEAUTIFYING THE ENTIRE HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS. WITH OUR BOLOS, WE CHOPPED DOWN THE TALL COGON GRASS, YANKED OUT ALL THE WEEDS, TRIMMED THE TREES AND BUSHES, AND THEN RAKED ALL THE DEBRIS INTO LARGE PILES, AND BURNED IT. WHAT A JOB THAT WAS! BUT I PASSED THE TEST AND WAS, TO MY HEART’S DELIGHT, ADMITTED TO CABAGAN HIGH.

AS IT TURNED OUT, AS I’M SURE MANY OF YOU WILL REMEMBER, THAT LITTLE APTITUDE TEST WASN’T OUR LAST INVOLVEMENT WITH AGRONOMY OR HARD OUTDOOR LABOR. FOR CABAGAN HIGH WAS AT THAT TIME ESSENTIALLY A “FARM SCHOOL,” AND SO, AS PART OF OUR STUDIES , WE ALL HAD TO MAINTAIN A SMALL GARDEN PLOT WHERE WE WOULD GROW EGGPLANT, REPOLYO, AND PECHAY CABBAGE, WHICH WE THEN SOLD AT THE LOCAL MARKET AND, SOMETIMES, ON THE STREETS. AND I MUST SAY THE PROCEEDS FROM THIS ENTERPRISE WERE PUT TO EXCEP-TIONALLY GOOD USE, FOR WE USED MOST OF OUR PROFITS TO BUY [NAME OF FAVORITE LIQUOR]. IF YOU’VE EVER WORKED A PRODUCE GARDEN, THEN YOU KNOW HOW MUCH WORK’S REALLY INVOLVED. I CAN’T SAY THAT I ADORED THIS PART OF MY HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION, BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, I KNOW THAT IT HAD VALUABLE LESSONS TO TEACH ME.

AND OF COURSE, IT WASN’T ALL STUDYING AND GARDENING. THERE WERE LOTS OF FUN TIMES, TOO, WHEN WE’D GO SCOUT-ING AND CAMPING, BUILDING OUR OWN THATCHED TENTS OUT OF COGON GRASS, SITTING AROUND A CAMPFIRE TELLING TALL TALES AND SINGING. I DON’T KNOW IF YOUR EXPERIENCES WERE ANYTHING LIKE MINE, BUT I HAVE TO BELIEVE THAT YOUR TIME AT CABAGAN HIGH SCHOOL WAS AS IMPORTANT TO YOU AS MY TIME THERE WAS TO ME; OTHERWISE I DON’T IMAGINE YOU’D’VE JOINED OUR ALUMNI ASSOCIATION IN THE FIRST PLACE.

WHICH BRINGS ME TO THE MAIN PURPOSE OF MY TALK THIS [MORNING/AFTERNOON/EVENING], AND THAT IS TO BEGIN WHAT HOPE WILL BE A CONTINUING DIALOGUE AMONGST US ABOUT WHAT THE PURPOSE, WHAT THE MISSION, OF THIS ASSOCIATION REALLY OUGHT TO BE GOING FORWARD.

ARE WE TO SIMPLY TO SERVE AS AN EXCUSE TO OUR SPOUSES FOR TRAVELING TO THE PHILIPPINES ONCE A YEAR — AN INTER-NATIONAL TRAVELING BROTHERHOOD OF GOOD FELLOWS AND GOOD CHEER? OR OUGHT WE NOT SEEK A MORE NOBEL MISSION, A MISSION THAT’S A BIT MORE USEFUL TO SOCIETY? IF I MAY SAY SO BLUNTLY: I THINK WE SHOULD.

AND I THINK THERE ARE ANY NUMBER OF WORTHY, CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES IN WHICH WE MIGHT BECOME INVOLVED. OF COURSE, SINCE WE ALL LIVE IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD NOW-

DAYS, IT PROBABLY WOULDN’T BE PRACTICAL TO SELECT A CHAR-ITY OR CAUSE THAT’S CENTERED ON ANY ONE CITY OR ANY ONE COUNTRY OTHER THAN OUR HOMELAND. BUT WHAT KINDS OF SOCIALLY USEFUL CAUSES MIGHT WE EMBRACE THAT WOULD BE CENTERED HERE IN THE PHILIPPINES?

COULD WE SPONSOR AN ANNUAL BASEBALL OR SOCCER OR SWIMMING COMPETITION BETWEEN TEAMS FROM THE THREE HIGH SCHOOLS STILL IN OPERATION IN THE GREATER CABAGAN REGION?

MIGHT WE UNDERTAKE A FUNDRAISING EFFORT TO PROVIDE ONE OR MORE COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS TO WORTHY GRADUATES OF THESE HIGH SCHOOLS?

OR SHOULD WE SPONSOR A “CABAGAN DISASTER RELIEF SQUAD,” WHICH WOULD MOBILIZE RESIDENTS OF THE AREA TO ASSIST WITH MONEY, FOOD, MEDICAL SUPPLIES, AND OTHER VITAL NECESSITIES WHENEVER A NATURAL OR MAN-MADE DISASTER OCCURS ANYWHERE IN THE PHILIPPINES?

COULD WE, PERHAPS, FIND A WAY TO SET UP A LOW-FREQUENCY RADIO STATION STAFFED MAINLY BY HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS FROM THE REGION, TO GIVE THEM HANDS ON EXPERI-ENCE IN COMMUNICATIONS AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT?

SO MANY OF US NOW ARE ACTIVE IN A WIDE RANGE OF OCCUPA-TIONS AND PROFESSIONS, I WONDER IF THERE MIGHT NOT BE A WAY — THROUGH THE MODERN CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION AVAILABLE TODAY — TO SOMEHOW SHARE THE EXPERIENCES AND EXPERTISE WE’VE GARNERED IN OUR PROFESSIONAL LIVES WITH HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS ALL OVER THE PHILIPPINES? I’M THINKING HERE, PERHAPS, OF A SERIES OF CONTINUING EDUCATIONAL OR INSPIRATIONAL WEBINARS WHICH COULD BE PRODUCED IN OUR OWN RESPECTIVE HOMETOWNS, THEN DISTRIBUTED OVER THE INTERNET TO STUDENTS THROUGHOUT THE PHILIPPINES.

THESE ARE JUST SOME OF THE IDEAS THAT’VE OCCURRED TO ME. I’M SURE THAT EVERYONE IN THIS ROOM COULD COME UP AN EVEN BETTER LIST FOR THE ASSOCIATION TO CONSIDER.

SO I’LL CLOSE MY REMARKS BY INVITING YOU TO THINK ABOUT OUR FUTURE AS AN ORGANIZATION, AND TO SEND ME [OR THE NAME OF PERSON WHO YOU RECRUIT FOR THE TASK] YOUR IDEAS, AND HOW THEY MIGHT BE IMPLEMENTED. THIS DOESN’T HAVE TO BE DONE OVERNIGHT, OR EVEN IN A MONTH OR TWO. BUT BY THE TIME OF NEXT YEAR’S ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MEETING, I THINK IT WOULD BE WONDERFUL IF THE MAIN AGENDA ITEM THEN WERE TO BE A DISCUSSION OF ALL THE IDEAS WE’VE COME UP WITH, SO THAT WE MIGHT ULTIMATELY CHOOSE A MISSION FOR OUR ORGANIZATION THAT WILL ENHANCE THE LIVES OF CHIL­DREN, SERVE SOCIETY, AND NURTURE OUR PLANET.

THANK YOU.

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