

**Presidential Communications Operations Office
Presidential News Desk**

**SPEECH OF
PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE
DURING THE CONFERMENT OF POSTHUMOUS QUEZON SERVICE
CROSS AWARD ON THE LATE SENATOR MIRIAM DEFENSOR
SANTIAGO**

[Delivered at Rizal Hall, Malacañan Palace | 03 December 2018]

Kindly sit down. Thank you for your courtesy.

Former President and House Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo; Undersecretary Narciso Santiago and family; Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea and other members of the Cabinet; Senator Francis Joseph Escudero and his lovely wife, Marie --- Love Marie Escudero --- beautiful name; Senator Aquilino Pimentel; Senator Emmanuel Pacquiao; Representative Estrellita Suansing; honorable members of the House of Representatives; Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio; family and friends of Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago; other distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen

Before anything else --- before reading this --- ilan 'to? Dalawa pages --- two pages. I remember fondly well sir, si Ma'am Miriam. And of course, in the many times that we saw each other in public, she spent time just to greet me and strike a conversation. I think once was in the --- ano ba 'yon? --- double --- Triple V. At lumapit ako nagsabi ako na, "Ma'am, magandang..." She was eating with... I think we had a dinner sir with her.

And during the campaign, she was campaigning for me, I was campaigning for her in short. So magandang laro iyon. *[laughter]* And simply because I hesitated to ask questions because I would not maybe just be able to answer her correctly.

And I was more or less hesitant that I'd be corrected in public even in the question itself. So I just said, "How can I ask a question from a learned human being?"

Well, of course, kaibigan talaga kami ni Ma'am. So many instances that we thought that we would agree on a lot of a --- a majority of the government policies and also would join her in the things that we saw that needs to be corrected.

Today, we are gathered as one grateful nation to honor an esteemed lawmaker, constitutionalist and stateswoman, our beloved Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago.

I am deeply honored to lead the Filipino people in conferring on the late Senator the Quezon Service Cross --- the highest recognition for outstanding civilian service by the Republic of the Philippines.

Senator Santiago dedicated her life to public service for almost 50 years, holding the distinction of serving in all three branches of government. Throughout her stellar career, she embodied the highest standards expected of any public servant with her academic, professional and moral excellence.

Before her election to the Senate for three terms, she previously served as Presiding Judge of the Regional Trial Court of Quezon City, then as Commissioner of Immigration and Deportation, and eventually as Secretary of Agrarian Reform.

In the Senate, she would make her mark not just by crafting crucial legislations that shaped the future of our nation, but also by helping formulate policies that touched the lives of ordinary Filipinos.

Senator Santiago's skills, intellect and dedication to public service had been recognized by various organizations in the Philippines and around the world, the most prestigious of which is the Ramon Magsaysay Award, Asia's counterpart of the Nobel Prize, for Government Service.

Dubbed as the "Iron Lady of Asia" for her no-nonsense drive against graft and corruption, Senator Santiago also gained international recognition as a legal luminary.

All these achievements clearly demonstrate how her values, ideals, and dedication to public service highly compare to the standards exemplified by the late President Manuel L. Quezon.

Throughout her life, Senator Santiago profoundly stirred our nation, especially the youth, to challenge pre-conceived notions on political and social issues.

I am hopeful that as we recognize her exemplary contributions to society, she will serve as an inspiration to a generation of Filipinos who will use their talents for the benefit of the country and their fellowmen.

Let us all do our part, however small, in helping bring about positive change in the country. May Senator Santiago's shining example be the legacy that we will leave behind to future generations of Filipinos.

Let her memory serve as the light that will guide us towards a more progressive, inclusive and equitable society.

Thank you, our beloved Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago
at mabuhay ang sambayanang Pilipino! [*applause*]

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