THE HISTORY OF PHILIPPINE GOVERNANCE

by:
Donna May S. Baltazar
Teacher III, Orani National High School Parang - Parang

In the History of the Philippines, there have been sixteen presidents that govern the country, not including those during the Spanish Colonialism.

The first ever President of the Philippines was President Emilio Aguinaldo, he was declared as president after the Filipinos won the war against the Spanish forces with the help of the Americans. But Aguinaldo did not want to be ruled over by another foreign influence so he declared war against American forces. Unfortunately, due to miscalculations and strategy failure, Aguinaldo was pushed back by the Americans up north where he was captured and arrested after two years of fighting.

For thirty-four years, the Philippines went under the jurisdiction of American forces up until 1935 when they established the Commonwealth, the government of the Philippines under the influence of the United States of America. President Manuel L. Quezon was the elected as the First president under Commonwealth. He won against Emilio Aguinaldo and Gregorio Aglipay. Quezon served two terms as president, from 1935 to 1941, then from 1941 to 1944. President Manuel L. Quezon’s second term was cut short however when he died due to tuberculosis.

President Quezon’s position was then succeeded by Sergio Osmeña Sr. He only served as president for over a year, just finishing President Quezon’s term.

Then the Second Republic of the Philippines was established, Jose P. Laurel was then elected as president. President Laurel was the president during the Japanese oppression.
In 1946, Manuel Roxas was elected as the third and the last president under the Commonwealth. Roxas served as president up until he died due to heart attack in 1948.

After Roxas, Elpidio Quirino was elected as president in 1949. He won against Jose P. Laurel. Quirino’s term ended in 1953 when he lost to Ramon Magsaysay.

Ramon del Fierro Magsaysay became the third president under the Third Republic of the Philippines in 1953. Magsaysay was regarded as the Champion of the masses. Magsaysay have a heart for the poor. He gave special regards to farmers and was known for establishing NARRA or the National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Administration and the ACCCFA or the Agricultural Credit and Cooperative Financing Administration. Sadly, President Magsaysay died on a plane crash in Cebu on March 17, 1957.

The precedency was superseded by the then Vice President Carlos P. Garcia. Garcia was known for his “Filipino First” policies. He put Filipino investors first before foreigners. Garcia run for precedency in 1961 but lost against Diosdado Macapagal.

President Diosdado Macapagal was the ninth president of the Philippines. He was known for the Agricultural Land Reform Code of 1963. Macapagal was the president from 1961 to 1965.

1965 marked the beginning of the longest rule as president in the history of the Philippine government. President Ferdinand E. Marcos, ruled for over twenty years. Marco’s time as president was regarded as one of the darkest and bloodiest paces in Philippine government. Although he had done some good reforms and laws, all of those were overshadowed by his declaration of martial law in 1972. Under the military government, the Filipinos were placed under oppression and injustice. Many were arrested as political prisoners People started to disappear, some were found dead, and other were never seem again. But in 1986, Filipinos took a stand and marched in what will be known as the People Power Revolution. From February 22 to 25, 1986, hundreds
and thousands of people flooded EDSA to show support against the alleged dictatorship of Marcos.

Subsequent the People power revolution which overthrew the Marcos’s rule and sent them fleeing to Hawaii, María Corazón Sumulong Cojuangco-Aquino became the first female president of the Philippines, and the first president under the Fifth Republic of the Philippines. Aquino was seated until 1992.

After Aquino, Fidel B. Ramos won as president in the 1992 presidential election which made him the twelfth president of the Philippines and the second president under the Fifth Republic of the Philippines.

In 1998 the movie star Joseph Ejercito Estrada was seated as the thirteenth president, only to be deposed in the second People Power in 2001.

The rule was then passed to his Vice President, Gloria Macapagal Aroyo, daughter of the former president Diosdado Macapagal. Gloria Aroyo was the president for three consecutive terms from 2001 to 2010. However, Aroyo became controversial due to alleged deceitful election 2004 when the infamous “Hello Garcy” tape was released. Arroyo then made a public apology.

After the death of Corry Aquino in 2009, her son, Benigno S. Aquino III who was a senator at that time, gained the support of the majority to run as president, which he won in 2010. He became the fifteenth President of the Philippines. Aquino served as president until 2016.

In the 2016 Precedential election, Rodrigo Roa Duterte won in a landslide win against hist opponents. Duterte was the mayor of Davao city for over twenty years before he run for the chief executive position. He was known for ruling with the will of steel. For the past three years however, Duterte’s administration was in constant controversies due to his war against illegal drugs and his temperamental and brute ways. As of date,
Duterte is still under fire because of his stand regarding the West Philippine sea dispute against China.

The Philippines is a glorious country, with wonderful people. We are surrounded by vast rich oceans and are gifted with abundant natural resources. But from the beginning, politics and governance are our greatest fails. The presidents that we elect did not measure to what our lovely country deserves, the ones who showed promise either died young or disposed early. But in time, as the world progress and with generations getting more and more knowledgeable, maybe in the near future, we will see a president that will not only lift the country but its nation as well.

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