

Comments by Lita Malicsi

At the Unveiling of the Philippine-American War Corrective Plaque
Feb. 4, 2002

Ambassador Del Rosario, Lt. Gov. Schunk, Gen. Andreotti, Consul Cruz, Distinguished Speakers, Ladies and Gentlemen, and my dear *Kababayans*:

There is no better time than now to say, "I am proud, I am truly proud to be a Filipino Minnesotan." Now more than ever, we can find joy and dignity in knowing that we are raising proud children who, now, are aware that their heritage is better recognized.

Filipinos have lived in Minnesota since 1907. We have been part of Minnesota's social and economic fabric long before the old plaque was erected. Through those years, many Filipinos have felt that our ancestors' quest for freedom and independence was belittled by language—language such as found on the plaque. All Minnesota children who have visited the Capitol and read the plaque have clearly been misinformed by the presentation on the wall of our very own official state building.

As a teacher in the Minneapolis Public Schools, I know fully well how challenging it is to convince young people to do what is right, to strive for accuracy, when they see misleading information around them, especially in public spaces. How do we instill in their young, hungry minds the importance of truth? of integrity? of responsibility?

Today, ladies and gentlemen, Minnesota—home to thousands of Filipino Americans—takes a giant step to strengthen the lives of all its children, and to usher our community into a future that is conceivably rich in optimism for the generations of Filipino Minnesotans yet to come.

I want to thank all those who made it possible for this significant correction of the historical record to be installed in the Rotunda. Your positive leadership is inspiring.

On behalf of the Filipino American Community, I wish to express my deepest appreciation to Ambassador Del Rosario for his distinguished presence at this momentous unveiling; to Consul Adel Cruz for always being supportive of our community; to Lt. Gov. Schunk for being part of this historic day for the Philippines and the State of Minnesota; and lastly, to the real heroes—the Philippine Study Group of Minnesota—who never gave up the quest for truth. I leave you with four words that portray what you are: Purposeful. Resilient. Determined. Fearless.

For all that you are, I salute you. We salute you. Maraming salamat sa inyong lahat. Thank you very much to all.