Dean Sta. Maria of FEU Delivers Professorial Lecture on Liberty and Prosperity

FEU Institute of Law hosted another public lecture on September 26, 2017 with its new Dean, Atty. Melencio Sta. Maria, FLP’s recently appointed Holder of the Chief Justice Panganiban Professorial Chairs program. Discussing in detail his paper titled “Human Rights, Politics, International Law and Trade Arrangement and Economic Prosperity: A Reading of the Philippine Situation”, Dean Sta. Maria focused on provisions of the Philippine Constitution vis-à-vis several tenets of international law that demonstrate how the government’s commitment to economic prosperity is equally important as human rights.

Investing in human capital, according to the Dean, necessitates safeguarding the basic human rights of the people, as well as their right to work, right to adequate food and good health, right to housing, and right to education, among others. He argued that at the international stage, the Philippines is constantly under scrutiny, hence the government must think twice before its reputation is ruined.

Reactions were offered by Ateneo School of Government Dean Ronald U. Mendoza, PhD, University of San Carlos School of Law and Governance Dean Joan S. Largo, and Ateneo Human Rights Center Executive Director, Atty. Ray Paolo J. Santiago. Discussions focused on the need to lawfully manage institutions that will propel the country’s economy to bridge the roles of economists and lawyers as well as on how economic stability is hinged on socio-political stability.
Rule of Law as the King

Violeta M. Najarro, Jr.
San Beda College - Alabang College of Law

(Executive Summary)

Each of us can choose what to like and unlike. We have the option to see things as moral or immoral, good or bad. Thanks to the rule of law, anybody has the free will of what he wants to do or not.

Basically, the rule of law tells us when our actions may be punishable. It draws the line and lets us know our boundaries. Thus, we must have ready access to it. Laws must be made known to us before it can be implemented. If we can’t find or predict the law, our acts will be limited because no one will gamble doing anything which might be illegal. This is why we have a requirement of publication under the Civil Code. The rule of law means equality before the law. The Law is the King, and no one is above it. Each one of us is subject to it. It should always be for the best interest of the common good.

Passing along Metro Manila, we see buildings, billboards, hotels, motels and even night clubs. Entering a store, we see a variety of goods, from liquors to cigarettes, and magazines to videotapes, we see all these and their different classes. Interestingly, though some may find these things unhealthy, unpleasant, or even sinful, these things still stand legally because of rule of law. Thanks to the rule of law, we have the liberty to move and act without unnecessary restraint. I believe that it is only with maximum liberty that a person can truly attain prosperity. Liberty and prosperity are inseparable. For it is only with liberty that a man can utilize his human experience. But we should keep in mind that our liberty is limited by the same liberty exercised by others. Liberty is achieved when the rule of law is equally applicable to all people. As Lord Acton said, Liberty is the assurance that every man shall be protected in doing what he believes his duty against the influence of authority and custom and opinion. For this reason, he declared that the securing of liberty “is the highest political end”.

This leaves us the duty of protecting liberty and prosperity under the rule of law. This is not an easy task for we are faced with different challenges. This is why whenever there are threats to our freedom, we instantly object and criticize. Relatively, seeing the news today, we see people expressing their opinions. They may support or criticize any public official. They may write articles, assemble in Luneta, or even rally in front of Malacañang. They can do all of these without being punished, because the law allows them to do so.

Although now, maybe there is nothing much I can do, I believe it is important to engage in intelligent discussions about this. It is always exciting to interact with experienced people themselves. I remember when I was taking Constitutional Law II during my first year in law school. My professor was the lawyer of a well-known accused then. I saw the fury of most people for “defending” a “criminal”. Back then, I couldn’t understand why he had to be the lawyer for such person. But while we were on the topic of due process, he told us how he was able to acquit a drug pusher. He was not proud of it, for he knew his client was guilty, but he explained that the police officers spent and replaced the marked money, causing the mismatch of the serial numbers on record. Applying due process, his client was acquitted. I then understood the concept of rule of law, that it applies to everyone, even to the evilest of all.

As I study the law deeper, I am seeing the connection of the subjects to one another and the more I appreciate studying it. I know that I have a lot more to learn but this doesn’t stop me from giving importance to the rule of law. I may still be a student, trying my very best to pass each subject I take, but I am not just a student. Above all, I am a citizen, freely exercising and enjoying this liberty that was granted to us by law and the prosperity that comes with it, and I know that I have the duty to protect it in any way I can.
Consent and Liberty of the Governed under the rule of law

Dion Ceazar M. Pascua
San Beda College Manila College of Law

(Executive Summary)

In these centuries of radical changes against colonial rule happening all over the world, social classes have also risen, and populist nationalism had begun to rise. More importantly, the modernization and renewal of legal and government institutions have taken place.

It’s important to underscore these developments that led to the institutionalization of democratically-made laws. These laws must always be understood as made in the context and consent of the governed. While indeed republicanism is the only practicable and modern way to initiate and govern democracy, its main disadvantage lies in its shortcomings in representing the entirety of the governed.

But of course, this is understandable, considering that informed consent has become a privilege rather than an absolute right; only some people are capable of participating politically because of their upbringing, education, and social background which enable them to acquire enough knowledge to form a well-grounded belief in politics.

Let us take this into the Filipino context. Informed consent and political activity on the part of Filipinos is a societal problem—majority of Filipinos do not know how government works and how it functions to an extent to give them enough to give an informed consent on things. Instead, the same Filipinos have become more focused on their individual lives rather than their lives as relative to the government—as citizens of the Philippines. And there is nothing wrong with this, actually. We would rather engage in more pleasant matters than the complexities of politics, drama, and the occasional scandals. We would rather plough the fields and fish in the oceans to bring bread to the table than engage in discourse that would use too much time that could be used on more important matters.

As the old legal maxim goes: ‘your freedom ends where mine begins;’ if there is no respect to other liberties, there wouldn’t be liberty for all. As citizens we must always recognize the independence of others. Laws must always be made in consideration of being the middle-ground of liberties among citizens—to construct the limitations of private and personal rights to the benefit of all. While it cannot be an insurer of liberties, laws must always strive and maximize the protection and the furtherance of rights. Besides that fact, laws must always be forward-thinking and open-minded, always embracing change, and always inclusive of new concepts. At the least, laws must reflect verified scientific and rational findings beyond the scope of what has been established and constructed. In other words, laws must be the exponent of morality and good policy.

Today, the Philippines is ideally a government of laws, and not of men, as it follows strictly its codes of laws to the letter, owing to its nature as a primarily civil law legal system. Recent events, particularly pertaining to the widespread proliferation of extrajudicial killings, would show that this isn’t the case, and rights have been greatly miscarried and deprived. We must never compromise our belief in the laws to the whims of the cries for vengeance, no matter how righteous those calls may be. Due process is an object of liberty; and liberty is an object of social justice. Most of all, social justice creates and broadens opportunities and rights for people who will engender a better future for the state.

The laws of the state may not be perfect, and often times, unfair, but an active citizenry will always fulfil the intent and letter of the laws through their unvitiated and informed consent, regardless of the number of persons with self-serving agendas. The law equally requires our participation and consent to it, as well as demanding us to effect and air out our political concerns and grievances.

We are often daunted with other affairs that concern our personal lives, but we must never forget our roles as citizens of the Republic.
In a country where adherence to due process and the rule of law is uncompromising, it is indeed a well-settled principle that the law may be harsh but is still the law, or *dura lex sed lex*. This legal maxim does not only refer to the implementation and enforcement of the laws and to the administration of justice, but also to safeguarding liberty, nurturing prosperity and conquering poverty. Everything in this country does not always revolve around the orbit of politics, economy, and justice. However, with the current changes in our political system, especially with the new administration, we must also take into consideration the minor details, not just the major issues or problems, as these would definitely have great impact in the profession of law, and most importantly, to the public at large.

It is then the public and civil society which strengthens the rule of law through whatever contribution they may impart, such as mass opinion and proposals for the enactment of laws. Apart from this, holding the public officials and government institutions accountable to the people makes the rule of law unbending. The relation between the public and the government, then, is a vital element to promote one’s philosophy and to achieve his desired outcome of protecting the rights of the citizens, sharing prosperity and reaching out to the poor and the underprivileged.

In safeguarding liberty, it is not necessary for us to be lawyers, judges, or justices. Any choice of profession will do because regard for everyone’s right is also everyone’s duty. A journalist can protect one’s liberty by writing whatever he thinks is the truth. Those engaged in the field of medicine are also capable of doing this by reaching out to remote areas and conducting voluntary medical missions for the indigenous peoples and for those who cannot afford medical assistance. Engineers and architects also allot their time and share their skills in building home for the homeless and for those affected by calamities and other natural disasters. Business enterprises also protect the rights of the laborers as the human asset of every employer. Even students can be advocates of this aim as the youth has always been the hope of our nation. Ordinary citizens, whether employed or unemployed, are endowed with the freedom of expression and the right to petition the government for the redress of their grievances. Lastly, through the use of social media, all of us can express our thoughts, in a justifiable and decent manner, and voice out our opinions, as part of our freedom of speech and of expression. In other words, liberty does not only involve civil and political rights, but also the natural and inherent rights of a person. Regard for human dignity is a must.

Sharing prosperity, on the other hand, does not always refer to money, material possessions or to any tangible thing. It is about instilling in our minds that peacekeeping is one of the abstract things that would bring prosperity and hope for the future. As much as we need prosperity in economy, we also need prosperity in kindness and decency. This prevents the evil of being corrupt and self-centered. We need to nurture every individual’s perception of prosperity. Just because one is poor or underprivileged, does not mean he cannot be prosperous. Of course he can, but not financially. I think this has been the wrong connotation of this word. We need to emphasize, cliché as it may seem, that money cannot buy us happiness. Truly, money creates sustenance for living, aside from food and shelter; because, basically, one cannot acquire food and shelter without finances. In the words of Tacitus, prosperity is the measure or touchstone of virtue, for it is less difficult to bear misfortune than to remain uncorrupted by pleasure. Thus, our goals must be broad enough to include the needs of others. Prosperity can be achieved by showing kindness to others. And this is something not capable of any pecuniary estimation.

With great respect to the rights of one another and to the fair and equal distribution of wealth to the public, the outcome then would be amity and economic progress.
To the Random Law Student Studying in the Corner:

I do not know your name, or where you come from, but I know you. I recognize the perpetual eye bags that have taken residence on your face. I know the slight bent on your spine from bearing the weight of the stress heavier than the hardbound textbooks you carry. I know that more than once you have wondered whether Socrates woke up on the wrong side of the bed the day he started teaching using his method, and I know how fast you can read when faced with the threat of major exams in less than 24 hours. I know caffeine courses through your veins, and I know how index cards can become the subject of your nightmares. I know your struggle, because I share it with you.

I wonder how many times you have asked yourself if the dream is worth it. Do you even remember why you went to law school? When there are seemingly insurmountable odds stacked against you, it is easy to forget. So indulge me, my young friend. Allow this humble law school junior to remind you why we are here.

This is the first reminder: we are here to humanize the law. Our role is to make the law less intimidating, and more approachable. We advocate, not argue. We educate, not excoriate.

This is the next reminder, my nameless friend: as students of the law, we ipso facto become vanguards of the Constitution. Necessarily, our mandate includes the protection of our people’s rights to life, liberty and prosperity. It is our moral obligation to uphold the supremacy of the rule of law to secure these inherent and sacred rights.

This is my final reminder to you: we do what we do because if not us, then who?

As future lawyers, the role we play is one in partnership with the policy makers. Our role is to uphold laws and advocate for its implementation. We educate to empower. We raise awareness so the likes of Lola Iping and Joy do not have to resort to means outside the bounds of law. We nurture their prosperity and safeguard their liberty by recognizing the supremacy of the rule of law. Anything less than that is a betrayal to who we are and who we are supposed to be.

There is so much to be done. Whether you choose to go into corporate law and ensure that business owners comply with regulatory and reportorial requirements, or whether you go into criminal law to either vindicate rights or assert them, your obligation, as much as mine, is to practice law with vigilance and integrity.

Whether you go into private practice and handle cases for clients who can afford legal representation, or go into government service and cater to “the least, the last and the lost”, your obligation, as much as mine, is to provide our clients the best possible solution within the bounds of the law.

To borrow from Talmud, it is up to us to finish the work; neither are we free to desist from it.

It is easy to fall into the trap of disillusionment when we are confronted with the realities of being a law student, but the life we have chosen is not for the faint of heart.

So keep at it, my dear future lawyer. Highlight those provisions with love. Cling to your codals like they are sacred texts. Take those doctrinal pronouncements to heart, for when the hinges of the Bar finally swing open to allow your admittance, the real work begins.

One with you in the struggle and in faith,

Tess Marie P. Tan
The Power and the Limitation of Law in the Pursuit of Liberty and Prosperity

Vanessa Gloria S. Vergara
Ateneo de Manila Law School

(Executive Summary)

As powerful as the law is, I have come to realize that it means nothing if it doesn’t address the actual realities that people live in. Well-worded laws on civil liberties mean nothing if they exist in a society where people are abused economically, where people don’t have a voice in society because they’re too hungry to speak. Further, the best laws on access to basic services and protection of trade would be in vain if they didn’t come with real improvements in the civil and political freedoms of the most marginalized members of society. If the law is to mean anything, it has to be sensitive to the actual realities of the people, and to adjust to what we really need.

To my mind and little as I know of the actual experience of the legal profession, men and women of the law can play a role in the pursuit of justice, liberty, and prosperity especially in three aspects. The first is in the upholding of the importance of dialogue and deliberation. The second is in our capacity to represent other people’s points of view. The third is in our role of support in the everyday lives of people.

As to the first: we’ve all heard stories about how lawyers are scumbags of the earth. Sometimes, these stories involve a lawyer representing a guilty/criminal/evil person. But my law school education so far has really driven home to me the idea that even well-meaning people can get a justice verdict wrong, because nobody has a monopoly on the truth. The idea of which person is innocent or guilty or which verdict is just, further, is too important a matter to leave to just one person, or to a group of people who have not thought it out, to decide. Thus we have the justice system, which involves the threshing out of both sides of an issue – even of the side which most people believe to be wrong. It involves dialogue, debate, and careful deliberation. It involves second-guessing our own long-standing opinions.

As to the second: it is notable that lawyers, quite apart from taking part in deliberations on justice, also have the job of representing others in the process.

I recall reading Hannah Arendt’s account of the plight of the millions of stateless people in Europe after the end of the first World War, who were deprived of their citizenship and thus had to live outside the jurisdiction and without the protection of the law.[1] These people, being outside the pale of the law, roaming from the borders of one country to another or living in interment camps, could be argued to have more freedom of movement and speech than their contemporaries who lived in totalitarian countries.[2] And yet, their so-called freedoms mattered little in their attainment of justice.

“[T]heir freedom of movement, if they have it at all, gives them no right to residence which even the jailed criminal enjoys as a matter of course; and their freedom of opinion is a fool’s freedom, for nothing they think matters anyhow...The fundamental deprivation of human rights is manifested first and above all in the deprivation of a place in the world which makes opinions significant and actions effective...the loss, in other words, of some of the most essential characteristics of human life.”[3]

Indeed, the chance to direct our own lives, to have lives that matter, to have opinions and points of view that are recognized as legitimate by others – in short, the chance for our humanity to be recognized – I believe this to be the end of justice.

As to the third: one useful thing about the legal profession is that it can be intimately involved in every aspect of life. Thus, we men and women of the law have a duty to use our everyday positions in society to pursue justice. This is true not only for those involved in government work or in litigation where the civil rights of clients are at issue, but also for those who involve themselves in corporate work and business. Wherever we are, whatever we choose to involve ourselves in, we have a duty to work towards liberty and prosperity.

2 Id. at 296.
3 Id. at 296-297.
I. Introduction

Officially established on October 27, 2011, the Foundation for Liberty and Prosperity is now on its fourth year of operation. Ably led by its Board of Trustees—namely Chief Justice (CJ) Artemio V. Panganiban, CJ Hilario G. Davide Jr., Washington Z. Sycip, Edilberto C. De Jesus, Elenita C. Panganiban, Maria Theresa P. Mañalac, Jennifer J. Manalili, Evelyn T. Dumdum and Joel Emerson J. Gregorio—the FLP has steadily gained recognition from its stakeholders and partners through its various programs, projects and activities.

The Foundation’s vision is a society that fully appreciates the necessity of “Liberty & Prosperity” and their essential interdependence. It underscores FLP’s core philosophy, that liberty and prosperity are mutually inclusive. The Foundation’s mission is to educate the people regarding this fundamental and essential interrelation between liberty and prosperity by initiating, maintaining, organizing, and supporting projects aimed at promoting, educating, training, developing, assisting and protecting liberty and prosperity under the rule of law.

II. Ongoing Programs and Projects

The FLP was founded to perpetuate the core judicial philosophy of then Chief Justice Artemio V. Panganiban—that jurists and lawyers should not only safeguard the liberty of our people but must also nurture their prosperity under the rule of law. In the first few years since its incorporation, FLP focused on the following activities: (1) FLP’s flagship project, the “Chief Justice Panganiban Professorial Chairs on Liberty and Prosperity,” (2) the official FLP Website (www.libpros.com), and (3) the “Liberty & Prosperity Journal,” hitherto an e-newsletter. For the year 2017, FLP has started implementing two education-centered programs to complement its flagship project: the FLP Dissertation Writing Contest and FLP Scholarship Program.

Professorial Chairs Program

The “Chief Justice Panganiban Professorial Chairs on Liberty and Prosperity” is being implemented for more than five (5) years now following its launch on 18 September 2012 at the Metrobank Auditorium, Makati City. This flagship project is in partnership with the Metrobank Foundation, which has so far donated a total of One Million Four Hundred Thousand Pesos (PhP 1,400,000) in co-sponsorship of the program. The total funds for the project, including FLP’s co-sponsorship fund, amounts to Two Million Eight Hundred Thousand Pesos (PhP 2,800,000).

FLP intended its first program, in the format of the professorial chair project, to be educational and implemented in an academic setting. The main objective is to get educational institutions and law schools to research and propagate the philosophy at the level of the academia (including training of students, professors, lawyers, and judges.)

FLP started with the appointment of nine (9) deans of top law schools and the Chancellor of the Philippine Judicial Academy (PhilJA). The outputs varied in form from traditional lectures, debates, as well as moot court competitions. The written lectures from the chair holders have been uploaded to the FLP website and published in the Liberty & Prosperity e-newsletter. These shall be compiled and will eventually be published in a book form as well as other modes of communications under the information, education and communication projects of FLP.
In 2017, the appointment of two (2) chair holders were renewed, namely (1) Atty. Sedfrey M. Candelaria (Dean, Ateneo de Manila School of Law); and (2) Atty. Joan Sarasaus-Largo (Dean, University of San Carlos School of Law and Governance). In addition, four new appointments were made: Dean Melencio S. Sta. Maria, Far Eastern University, Dean Gemy Lito L. Festin, Polytechnic University of the Philippines; Professor Elizabeth Aguiling-Pangalangan, University of the Philippines College of Law; and Professor Tanya Karina A. Lat, Ateneo Law School. This brings the number of chair holders to 13.

**FLP Dissertation Writing Contest**

The FLP Dissertation Contest is a five-year program which aims to augment the Foundation’s flagship project by incorporating new, dynamic and perhaps more profound input to the body of works discussing FLP’s core philosophy. We believe that the fresh insight and unique perspective of law students will provide bold, novel and innovative avenues for the development of the Foundation’s tenets.

FLP will look for the best thesis and/or dissertation – or its equivalent in law schools not offering the Juris Doctor program – that espouses the philosophy of liberty and prosperity under the rule of law. The contest is co-sponsored with the Ayala Group and in cooperation with the Philippine Association of Law Schools (PALS).

The contest is open to third year and fourth year law students as well as those taking up Master of Law. Only one (1) entry per student is allowed. Each entry must be a thesis/dissertation or its equivalent that espouses the philosophy of liberty and prosperity under the rule of law. An entry must be certified to have gone through the process of a thesis/dissertation or a procedure similar thereto and that it is of thesis/dissertation type and quality.

The Foundation will also tap its roster of professorial chair holders, among others, to create the Panel of Judges who will choose the winning entries and conduct dialogues where the winners shall discuss, argue and debate their submissions, engendering a deeper understanding of the core philosophy of the Foundation. These discourses on their work with the Panel of Judges will foment the kind of analysis that will contribute to the evolution, development and enrichment of the Foundation’s philosophy. FLP will also constitute a Dissertation Contest Committee to assist the Panel of Judges.

Up to twenty (20) qualifying entries will be chosen by the FLP Dissertation Contest Committee from all entries submitted. Thereafter, a short list of up to ten (10) entries will be chosen by the FLP Panel of Judges from the twenty (20) qualifying entries. The authors on the shortlist will then each submit a new entry, either expanding on their respective original entries or covering a completely new subject.

The FLP Panel of Judges will choose the five (5) recipients of the primary awards (first, second and honorary mentions) from the new entries submitted by the ten (10) authors on the short list. Monetary awards are as follows: PhP300,000 to the first-place winner, PhP 200,000 to the second-place winner, and PhP100,000 each to three (3) honorary mentions. These winners will also receive commemorative plaques. The twenty (20) qualifying entries chosen by the FLP Dissertation Contest Committee will each receive PhP20,000.

The Ayala Corporation has already agreed to facilitate the provision of funds for this project through its various partners and has committed to FLP the funding for the entire five-year program. They have given Two Million Pesos (PhP 2,000,000) for the first year of the program.

**Activities in School Year 2017-2018.** The FLP conducted an information campaign regarding the contest in all law schools of the country. Flyers and posters were sent to the law schools throughout the country through their respective deans for dissemination to the law students to encourage them to submit entries to the dissertation writing contest. FLP officials visited law schools in the National Capital Region and in Cebu and discussed the mechanics/guidelines of the contest. Among these law schools are the University of the Philippines, Ateneo Law School, De La Salle University, Centro Escolar University, Far Eastern University, Polytechnic University of the Philippines, University of San Carlos, Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila, and San Beda University. Information regarding the contest was posted online on the FLP and some law school websites and through social media – Facebook pages of FLP, PALS, Association of Law School Students of the Philippines, Bar Boys, and law schools. FLP also tapped its scholars in disseminating information regarding the contest to their fellow students.

Deadline for submission of entries was moved twice to allow more students to join the contest and to synchronize the contest timetable with the law schools’ calendar. During the discussion with the law school deans, it was learned that thesis/dissertation writing usually starts in the second semester of the 3rd year level and it is only in the second semester of the 4th year level when students have a full paper ready for presentation.

A Screening Committee headed by FLP Corporate Secretary, Atty. Joel Gregorio, conducted the initial screening of the 18 entries and determined that 5 entries passed the qualifying round. Another 3 entries were found to have potential and may be considered for a merit award subject to their submission of a revised paper that meets the requirements of the contest.

Authors of qualifying entries, as well as the authors of entries with potential, were advised to submit a new entry (revised/improved entry) by 5 pm, January 26, 2018.
Meanwhile, FLP organized its Board of Judges with Supreme Court Justice Presbitero J. Velasco, Jr. (Chairman), and Former Education Secretary Dr. Edilberto De Jesus, PALS President Sedfrey Candelaria, Ateneo Law School Professor Tanya Karina A. Lat, and Ayala Corporation General Counsel Solomon Hermosura as members.

FLP Scholarship Program

This is a four-year program. The Foundation is sponsoring a unique, merit-based FLP Scholarship Program. Co-sponsored by the Tan Yan Kee Foundation and also undertaken in cooperation with PALS, it aims to look for the best and the brightest law students in the country.

There will be ten (10) scholars for the program and the scholarship is open to those entering their third year as law students. FLP is opening ten (10) slots to all law schools that have obtained a passing percentage above the overall passing percentage for the bar exams of the relevant year based on the statistical data from the Supreme Court Office of the Bar Confidant. No law school shall have more than three (3) awardees in a year.

Applicants must submit an essay written in English with a minimum of two thousand (2,000) words and a maximum of 3,000 words. The essay must be on the philosophy of the Foundation, expanding on and espousing the precept: safeguarding of liberty and nurturing of prosperity under the rule of law, and how he/she will apply the same in his/her legal career.

There will be an interview to be conducted by the FLP Panel of Judges who will be given full discretion in the conduct of the said interview. The Panel shall consider the candidate’s ability to demonstrate clearly, logically and concisely what he/she has done and intends to do to propagate and espouse the philosophy of liberty and prosperity under the rule of law. Although the scholarship is merit-based, the less privileged shall be preferred in case of a tie between two nominees. Selection shall be final when affirmed by the FLP.

Awardees must agree to the terms and conditions of the FLP Scholarship Program, including but not limited to, the requirement to provide volunteer services for the Foundation as well as giving back to the FLP Scholarship Program to ensure its sustainability such as teaching law subjects that espouse the philosophy of liberty and prosperity, developing a concept/program along the philosophy of the FLP and commitment to mentoring other law students, subject to institutional arrangements with partner law schools. Awardees must likewise agree to enter into a formal commitment agreement with FLP and the pertinent academic institution for this purpose.

Each of the ten FLP Scholarship is a monetary scholarship award of PhP200,000 of which a maximum of PhP100,000 shall be for tuition fee and PhP20,000 for the book allowance. The amounts for the tuition fee and the book allowance will be transferred to the account of the student created especially for this purpose and in tranches corresponding to the schedule of payment for tuition fee per semester of the pertinent academic institution. The remaining PhP 80,000 for stipend shall be deposited monthly throughout the academic year to the same account created for this purpose. Only such amount needed shall be deposited. If the tuition fee component of the monetary scholarship award is in excess of the awardee’s tuition, the balance will be returned to FLP, which will be used for the scholarship program. If the awardee is entitled to another scholarship award, he/she will still receive the cash monetary scholarship award to be provided by the FLP.

The Tan Yan Kee Foundation has provided a total of Six Million Four Hundred Thousand Pesos (PhP 6,400,000) for the first two school years of the program.

Activities in School Year 2017-2018. The FLP is continuously undertaking activities that will broaden the reach of its programs. As usually done at the start of its program implementation, FLP conducted an information campaign on the FLP legal scholarship program in the 34 law schools of the country that had a percentage of passing higher than the overall percentage of passing for the 2015 bar exams. FLP produced flyers and posters and sent these to the qualified law schools throughout the country through their respective deans for dissemination to the law students to encourage them to submit applications to the legal scholarship program. Posters were also displayed in the law schools’ bulletin board.

FLP officials visited law schools in the National Capital Region and in Cebu and discussed the mechanics/guidelines of the program. Among these law schools are the University of the Philippines, Ateneo Law School, De La Salle University, Centro Escolar University, Far Eastern University, Polytechnic University of the Philippines, University of San Carlos, Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila, and San Beda University. Information regarding the contest was posted online on the FLP and some law school websites, and through social media – Facebook pages of FLP, PALS, Association of Law School Students of the Philippines, Bar Boys, law school student councils, and law schools. FLP also tapped its incumbent scholars in disseminating information regarding the scholarship program to their fellow students.

In the meetings with law school deans, FLP officials learned the challenges law students face in applying for FLP scholarship: the requirements of the FLP scholarship program are too high, students are having a hard time getting the grades required in the program, most of their students are working students and this contributes to the difficulty in maintaining high grades.
S/Y 2016-2017 Scholars. The FLP Board of Trustees reviewed the requirements of the Legal Scholarship Program and agreed to change the GPA requirement from 86% or 2 for each semester to 86% or 2 for the entire school year. Based on the revised GPA requirement, five (5) scholars qualified to continue their scholarship for the school year 2017-2018.

S/Y 2017-2018 Legal Scholarship Program. For the school year 2017-2018, the legal scholarship guidelines were revised as follows:

2.3 Must have a cumulative grade point average (GPA) not lower than 85% or 2.25 for the immediately preceding school year (2017-2018);
2.4 No dropped subject and no grade lower than 75% or 3.0 during his or her stay at the law

The number of awardees was also increased to a maximum of three (3) for each school per year.

Sixteen (16) scholarship openings for the following:
10 scholars for incumbent third-year law students, and six (6) scholars for incumbent fourth-year law students. To allow more students to participate in the contest, the deadline for submission of entries was moved from September 15, 2017 to October 31, 2017.

By end of October 2017, the Foundation received a total of 25 applications.

The Board of Judges for the interview and final judging of applicants to the Legal Scholarship Program for S/Y 2017-2018 was organized with Supreme Court Senior Justice Antonio Carpio as Chairman, and Former Secretary of Education Dr. Edilberto C. De Jesus, PALS President and Ateneo Law School Dean Sedfrey M. Candelaria, Tan Yan Kee representative Ms. Elizabeth T. Alba, and FLP Corporate Secretary Atty. Joel Emerson J. Gregorio as members.

Final evaluation and interview of applicants were scheduled to be held in February 2018.

FLP Newsletter

FLP has so far released eight (8) e-newsletters. The two most recent issues are Volume IV Issue 1 and Volume V Issue 1. Volume IV features the Fourth Annual Report as well as the Chairman’s lecture entitled: “ASEAN: Unleashing Entrepreneurial Ingenuity.” Volume V on the other hand, features the Fifth Annual Report, and contains articles on PCNC’s site visit, FLP’s ongoing programs and projects as well as the Executive Director’s legal article entitled: “Untangling the Dragnet Clause.”

FLP Website

The Foundation has continued to use a simple, neat and uniform design aesthetic for its website (www.libpros.com) that remains consistent whatever device is being used to view or access it – either desktop, tablet or smartphone. It features front and center the two (2) new programs being undertaken by the Foundation: the FLP Dissertation Writing Contest and the FLP Legal Scholarship Program. The guidelines and forms for these programs have also been uploaded and are ready for download by interested participants and the public. The current composition of the Board of Trustees has also been updated. We have also provided a special email address for the Secretariat (secretariat@libpros.com) for coordination and support for these programs. We will continue to work with the site’s administrator, Mr. Kristian Jeff C. Agustin, to further improve and enhance the website.

III. Recent Developments in 2017

Accreditation with the PCNC and BIR Certification

FLP accreditation with the Philippine Council for NGO Certification (PCNC) has been renewed, this time for an extended period of three years (compared to the previous one-year period accreditation) from March 31, 2017 to March 30, 2020. This was after we submitted the necessary documents to PCNC and the site visit last August 23, 2016. PCNC thereafter transmitted our application for renewal to the BIR. FLP has already received the BIR’s Certification also effective for an extended period of three years from July 17, 2017 to April 5, 2020.

18th PCNC Annual Assembly

The Foundation, through its Executive Director, participated in the 18th PCNC Annual Assembly held last June 1, 2017 at the JY Campos Hall, UNILAB Bayanihan Center, Kapitolyo, Pasig City. As one of the accredited members in good standing, FLP was able to participate in the discussions and vote for the new members of the PCNC Board of Trustees.

IV. Future Plans and Direction

FLP Visual Art Competition

A project proposed by Mr. Kristian Jeff C. Agustin, the Liberty & Prosperity: Images, Figures, Expressions (LIFE) is a visual art competition that aims to make known the Foundation’s philosophy of “liberty and prosperity under the rule of law” in creative ways. It is designed after three well-established and long-running visual art competitions in the Philippines, namely: the DPC-PLDT Visual Art Competition, the Metrobank Art & Design Excellence Competition and the Shell National Students Art Competition.

By launching a new visual art competition, the FLP can make itself more relevant to the country’s art and
culture scene, which is very instrumental in capturing or defining the “zeitgeist” of a particular society. For instance, today's zeitgeist of “Filipino Democracy” has eventually latched on to the consciousness and culture of Filipinos by way of the media’s constant revisiting of the EDSA People Power Revolution and representations of the spirit of “Filipino-ness” (especially by means of evocative images and stories). Hence, to better promote its vision of “a society that safeguards liberty and nurtures prosperity under the rule of law” to the public, the FLP must tap and develop the potential of Filipino artists, designers, and other creative practitioners.

Coffee Table Books on the Professorial Lectures and Speeches of CJ Panganiban

FLP also plans to partner with the Metrobank Foundation regarding the publication of two (2) coffee table books: one, a compilation of the lectures and output delivered under the CJ Panganiban Professorial Chair Program; and two, a compilation of selected speeches of CJ Panganiban. Metrobank Foundation agreed in principle to sponsor said coffee table book projects and offered to assist FLP in undertaking the same considering that they have had several similar projects.

Support to the Reform Program of the Judiciary and the Ombudsman

In terms of its commitment to reforms, FLP plans to work closely with the SC and the Office of the Ombudsman in establishing a reform program patterned after the SC’s Action Program for Judicial Reform (APJR). The Foundation is planning to seek the assistance from the World Bank (which provided the funding for the APJR) and other international funding institutions in this endeavor.

Legal Education Reform Program

Another avenue as regards reform (as well as education) is FLP’s plan to partner with the Legal Education Board in developing a program to reform the legal education in the Philippines.

Teaching Exemplars on the Rule of Law

The Department of Education (DepEd) has adopted the teaching exemplars on the rule of law developed under the Public Education on the Rule of Law Advancement and Support (PERLAS) Project of the Supreme Court and DepEd. The exemplars integrate concepts of the rule of law into the basic education curriculum to educate and inform the public on the functioning of a society anchored on the justice system and to mold the students into becoming responsible and law-abiding citizens. A total of 112 teachers from 82 public schools nationwide have been trained on the use of these exemplars in 2011.

FLP will collaborate with the Department of Education in revisiting these exemplars and enhance these as may be necessary to keep these relevant to the current situation in the country. FLP plans to assist in the roll-out of these exemplars to all public and private schools in the country.

FLP Museum

The Foundation is looking at establishing an FLP Museum where various memorabilia and important items will be kept and made available for viewing of the public. This will be through a possible purchase of the entire floor of a building in FEU Makati at cost which the Chairman has proposed to the Chairman of FEU to be put up in the land purchased by FEU where the old 6-story Zuellig building is located at the corner of Ayala and Buendia Avenues. The Chairman of FEU said that she will bring this proposal to the Board of FEU and that she agrees in principle to sell one floor to the Foundation.

V. Assets and Financial Position

As reported by then FLP President Maria Elena P. Yaptangco in her First Annual Report (2012), the Foundation was incorporated with a total of two million pesos (P2,000,000) as initial funds, contributed by retired Chief Justice Artemio V. Panganiban. At present, based on the 2017 Audited Financial Report presented before and approved by the Board of Trustees, the Foundation’s total assets reached a sum of seventy million six hundred seventy-nine thousand two hundred forty pesos (Php70,679,724.00) which includes the value of the PCCI property in Makati.

FLP’s depository bank is Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI). The funds may be withdrawn only by signature of two of its four authorized signatories, preferably, the President and/or the Treasurer.

Apart from its cash assets, the Foundation is the recipient of copyrights over the “Ageless Passion” musical compositions of Mr. Ryan Cayabyab and lyrics thereto by Mr. Kristian Jeff C. Agustin.

Supplementary info, graphs, and tables are included in the online version of this 7th Annual Report, via the FLP’s website: www.libpros.com
Thank you, Mr. Sycip

The board of trustees, officers, and staff of FLP continue to cherish their fondest memories of Mr. Washington Sycip, who, since the Foundation was formally established in 2011, shared his wisdom to see it successfully grow as a trusted institution. As FLP’s Finance Committee Chairman, Mr. Sycip continued his legacy as an illustrious accountant by seeing through the successful implementation of all the Foundation’s professorial lectures and scholarship grants, as well as its dissertation contest program.

Mr. Sycip was 96 years old when he passed away on October 7, 2017; his longevity thus inspires the Foundation to serve as a long-lasting beacon of hope for today’s and tomorrow’s generations of Filipinos.