Special Issue: Review On Ozone Disco Fire

The New Capitol STANDARD

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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EDITORIAL

New Lease On Political Life Of Mayor Mathay

We speak of a person having a new lease on life after surviving very serious illness or very hazardous surgery which had brought him on the brink of death. In the case of Mayor Mathay, it might be said he had a new lease on life after that heart bypass surgery he had more than 10 years ago.

After the Ozone disco fire, the Mayor may be said to have acquired a new lease on his political life. From the way his political foes exploited the incident heaping the blame on him and demanding his resignation, even outright dismissal, it looked for a while that Mathay was in danger of going down and out. He was certainly going through the worst political crisis in his life. But as Inquirer columnist Adrian Cristobal has said, Mathay "has an exasperating talent for survival."

The survival came in the form of a clean bill of health given by the probe teams of both National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) which found nothing to incriminate him. And so, just as iron turns into steel through the crucible of fire, Mayor Mathay, to the utter grief, dismay and exasperation of his ill-wishers, gained new political strength through the crucible of the Ozone disco fire.

Mathay's political survival and resurrection also reminds us of the Phoenix, that sacred bird of Egyptian mythology, fabled as coming every 500 years from the Desert of Arabia to burn itself to ashes on the altar of Heliopolis, after which it would arise young, more vigorous and beautiful. From the ashes of the Ozone disco fire, Mathay has risen to a more respected and admired stature -- a more vigorous and attractive political figure.

FULL MOBILIZATION

QC Government Single-Handedly Launched Operation To Provide All-Out Assistance To Ozone Fire Victims And Their Families

While the Wannabe QC Mayors cried for Mayor Mathay's blood, while Congress conducted useless investigations "in aid of legislation" (or was it in aid of election, in aid of getting media footage?), and while the DILG, the NBI and the DOJ, under instructions of President Ramos, were more concerned, understandably, in going after guilty officials, only the QC Government single-handedly launched an all-out assistance operation for the Ozone fire victims and their families -- assistance which was not only financial in nature but moral and spiritual as well.

Paying no heed to the accusations against him and the demands for his resignation, Mayor Mathay concentrated all his thoughts and energies on the execution of this all-out assistance operation the QC government had launched. It actually started right after the 45-minute Ozone fire on March 19 had been put under control. Though suffering at the time from a respiratory infection, Mathay was the first city official at the fire scene. Steeling himself to the horrible sight of the piles of charred bodies, as high as eight layers, that greeted him, the Mayor acted promptly to cope with the situation. He called for ambulances to take injured victims to the hospitals, he had the bodies taken in vans to the funeral parlors, he assigned police details to guard against the loss of the jewelries and other personal belongings of the victims, and he instructed the Chief of the Department of Social Welfare Services (DSWS), Ms. Theresa Mariano, to put up a desk at the City Hall lobby where the families of the victims could go for assistance.

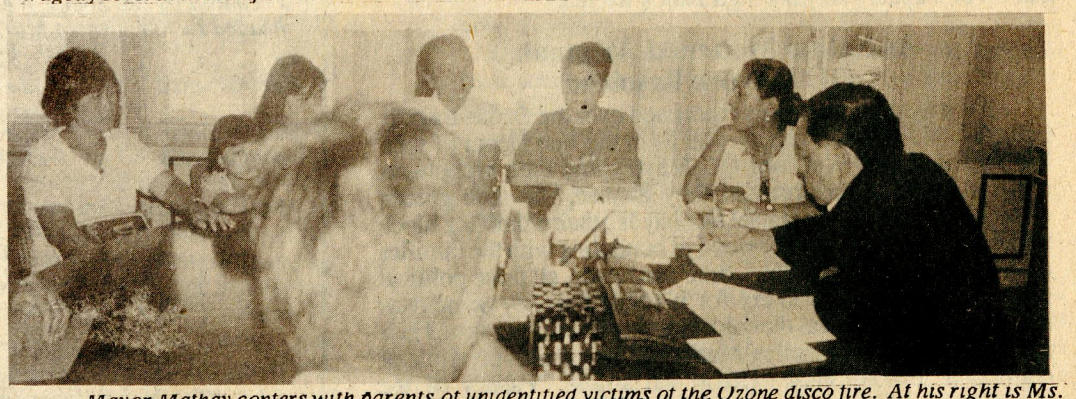
House To House

Following instructions of the Mayor, the entire DSWS staff was mobilized by Tess Mariano for the all-out assistance operation that was to be undertaken the ensuing days. The Mayor and Tess went from house to house, hospital to hospital and funeral parlor to funeral parlor to condole with the families of the victims and to inquire into their needs.

On March 23, 1996, four days after the Ozone disco fire, on March 19, 1996, the initial distribution of cash assistance to families of the victims was held at the City Hall Bulwagan: P15,000 to each family, P10,000 from city funds for which P3 million had been appropriated from the Mayor's calamity fund, and P5,000 from the P1 million donation of Mr. Emilio Yap, Manila Bulletin Publisher. (Mr. Yap had previously donated P2 million for victims of typhoon Rosing.) *(Turn To Page 6)*



President Fidel V. Ramos gets a briefing from Quezon City Mayor Ismael Mathay, Jr. on the Ozone tragedy several hours after the disco was razed. Mathay was the first QC official at the fire scene.



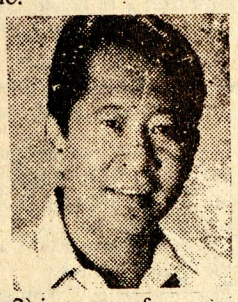
Mayor Mathay confers with parents of unidentified victims of the Ozone disco fire. At his right is Ms. Teresa Mariano, head of the Social Welfare Services Department.

Liban Condemns Statements Of MRTC Officials Against Council

In a privilege speech in the June 4, 1996 session of the City Council, Councilor Godofredo T. Liban II, Minority Floor Leader, condemned what he called "snide and unsavory statements of MRTC (Manila Rail Transit Corporation) officials tending to cast aspersions on the integrity of the Council." He demanded a public apology.

The "snide and unsavory statements" have to do with the controversial issue of lwhere the Cubao LRT station should be constructed -- south of the intersection of EDSA and Aurora Boulevard or north of it. The MRTC and the seven corporate investors in the project faveor the north side for reasons of economy, this side being less congested, they claim. The south side is favored by the Cubao Merchants Association, the Cubao Elementary School PTA and seven barangays in the area. They give the following reasons:

1) 67% of commercial buildings, 95% of business establishments, and 91% of the employment population in the intersection of EDSA and Aurora Boulevard are in the south side.



2) in terms of average daily human traffic, there are 760,059 in the south side while only

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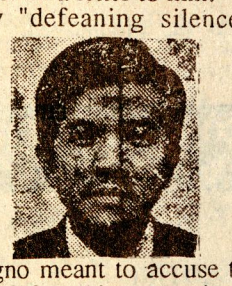
"Deafening Silence" Of Council Denied

The "Deafening Silence" on the Ozone disco fire imputed on the City Council by Teddy Benigno in his TV program, "Firing Line," has been denied by Councilor Moises Samson in a letter to him.

By "defeaning silence,"



Benigno meant to accuse the Council for taking no action in going after the city officials thought to be responsible for the disaster.

In his letter, Samson told Benigno that the Ozone disco fire was referred to the proper committees of the Council for investigation "in aid of legislation." The concerned officials were invited to the Council's Question and Answer Hour and, through their testimonies, Samson said, they found out

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Ordinance Limits Admission Of Patrons In Moviehouses To Sitting Capacity

Prodded by the Ozone disco fire, the City Council unanimously approved a long pending ordinance introduced by Councilor and President Pro Tempore Connie Angeles limiting the admission of patrons in moviehouses to their respective sitting capacities. It prohibits the entry of moviegoers fifteen (15) minutes after the start of the showing of the film. In other words, no more standing room will be allowed.

The Ordinance also regulates the showing of commercial advertisements and movie trailers in order to promote good values and government programs and projects as well as to facilitate any public information drive of the government.

Any violation of the provisions of the Ordinance shall be punished by a fine of not less than P1,000.00 but not more than P5,000.00 at the discretion of the court.



Angeles is also filing another measure to regulate admission to disco houses, pubhouses, restaurants, etc.

Other Measures Prompted By Tragedy

Ad Hoc Committee

The father and son tandem of Councilors Eufemio Lagumbay and Wencerom Lagumbay has introduced a proposed resolution creating an

(Turn To Page 10)

Secretary Of Justice Refuses To Render Legal Opinion Or Give Legal Advice To Private Individuals And Minor Gov't. Officials



By Ben O. Flores

The Secretary of Justice, the Hon. Teofisto Guingona, has refused to render a legal opinion on some questions we propounded relative to the impasse that the City Mayor, Ismael Mathay, Jr., and the City Council are in over the appointment of a new City Budget Officer.

High Qualifications

We informed the Justice Secretary that Mayor Mathay had appointed Ms. Bella Fernandez, then special Budget Analyst of the Department of Budget Management, to replace a retired City Budget Officer. The Mayor had submitted the appointment to the Civil Service Commission (CSC) which readily approved it, considering Ms. Fernandez' high qualifications. The City Council, we continued to inform the Hon. Guingona, has refused to confirm Ms. Fernandez appointment on the ground that the Mayor had not obtained its concurrence before submitting the appointment to the CSC in accordance with Section 454(d), Chapter 2, Book III of the Local Government Code (LGC), which is, as follows:

"Unless otherwise provided herein, heads of depart-

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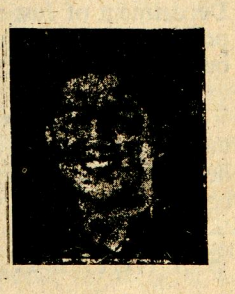
We Are Also To Blame For The Ozone Disco Tragedy -- Vice Mayor



In a privilege speech on March 19, 1996, a day after the Ozone disco fire, Vice Mayor Herbert Bautista declared that he, the Councilors and other city officials are also to blame for the disaster.

"We have been neglectful in seeing to it that all the necessary requirements are being complied with by establishments such as the Ozone disco," he said.

Councilor Alberto Galarpe, however, refused "to allow himself to be blamed for the things which happened that morning, referring to the Ozone disco fire. He pointed out that "there are authorities concerned for every matter, for every doing, for every activity that should be done in Quezon City."

"As the legislative branch of the city government," Galarpe continued, "our task is to enact laws and regulations, then they should b e properly complied and enforced by the authorities concerned." He suggested that these authorities concerned be invited to the Question and Answer Hour to enlighten the Council

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Standard Fare

By Ben O. Flores

Michael & Michaela

Beautiful names, Michael and Michaela. They synchronize perfectly. They belong to Councilor Michael Planas and to Ozone disco GRO (Guest Relations Officer) 17-year-old Michaela Rosales. She was at the table of Michael that fateful night the disco conflagrated. The Councilor's table was near the entrance door. He was one of the first, if not the first, to escape from the raging fire. In his hurry to save himself -- self-preservation is the first law of nature -- Michael forgot about the pretty GRO who had been entertaining him. But he did send his driver to try to get her out. The driver found her and grasped her arm at the wrist and tried to drag her out. But in the melee, the driver lost his grip on her. Michaela, however, managed to crawl her way out.

She was one of the 91 injured victims who was brought to one of the 18 hospitals that accommodated these victims. In the case of Michaela, it was the Philippine General Hospital to which she had been brought. As stated in the article on the assistance the city government gave the Ozone disco fire victims (Page 7), Ms. Teresa Mariano, Chief of the Social Welfare Services Department, and her staff visited the injured victims at the various hospitals where they were confined. Michaela was one of those they visited. It was to Tess and her staff that Michael's GRO related her ordeal at the Ozone disco fire, how the Councilor whom she was entertaining abandoned her.

Tess said that though she suffered burns all over her body, Michaela was still "very pretty and sexy." Michaela said her namesake, Michael, was a regular patron of the Ozone disco.

Tess gave us a lot of pictures of their visits to the hospitals. Some of them are published on Page 7. Unfortunately, there was no picture of their visit to Michaela. But in the Master List of Ozone Fire Victims Extended Financial Assistance on Page 10 the address of Michaela is given: 3292-B A. Mabini St. corner Palma, Makati. We will try to get a picture of hers and publish it in our next issue.Or perhaps, Michael has a picture of Michaela?

Councilor Moises Samson was rather harsh on his colleague. In a privilege speech, he is reported to have censured Michael for abandoning his GRO. It was a bad reflection, he said, against the members of the Council -- the men particularly who could be charged with lack of chivalry and gallantry.

Rosanna Roces

Now what has Rosanna Roces to do with this special issue on the Ozone disco fire. Nothing, of course. She is not a GRO but the reigning bold star of the country's entertainment world. Last Mothers Day, I watched her being interviewed on the TV program of, I think, Noli de Castro's "Magandang Gabi Bayan." One of the topics discussed was on a mother's love for her children. Before the interview, Rosanna had already admitted to movie reporters that, yes, she had two children. She didn't look like the famous bold star that she was. She wore glasses and a loose dress. One would think that a bold star has a beautiful body but hardly any brains. But Rosanna was very articulate in answering the questions of the interviewer, more articulate than many high officials being interviewed on radio or TV. And this is the reason why I could not resist including this item on her though she had nothing to do with the Ozone disaster. On the topic of a mother's love for her children, Rosanna gave a facetuous but very touching, picturesque and eloquent expression of how very much she loved her two children. She said: "Pag may dumapo na lamok sa mga anak ko, hinahabol ko hanggang mahuli at mapatay ko yang mga lamok na yan."

As Nation Mourned, Wannâbe QC Mayors Rejoiced

Even as the entire nation mourned over the Ozone tragedy in which 161 persons, mostly youths in the first bloom of their life, perished, the Wannabe QC Mayors and their sycophants rejoiced. Here in this disaster, they gloated, was their golden chance to topple Mayor Ismael Mathay Jr., their stumbling block to the QC mayoralty post. Instead of condoling with the families of the victims and extending some assistance, all these political enemies could do was to cry for his blood as they pointed an accusing finger at him as the culprit responsible for the fire. Their immediate basis for blaming Mathay is the dubious principle of command responsibility. (Read the article, "Fallacy of the Principle of Command Responsibility," on Page 3). In his Point of Order column (Manila Bulletin, April , 1996), Jose Guevara wrote: "Should the concept of command responsibility be invoked in the Ozone case? That's a highly doubtful proposition. Let's just leave politics out of it, and get on with an honest-to-goodness probe."

An honest-to-goodness probe did get on, resulting in a clean bill of health for Mayor Mathay given by both the NBI and the Department of Justice. And so, the rejoicing of the Mayor's political enemies was cut short. Now, they too are mourning -- but not over the dead victims of the Ozone fire but over the death of their dreams.

On Mathay's exoneration, Adrian Cristobal, Inquirer columnist, has this to say: "Not that Mathay is a perfect mayor, but he has this exasperating talent for survival and popularity with his constituents." Guess who are the most exasperated.

SECRETARY...

Justice

For the information of Justice Secretary Guingona, we had occasion to request legal opinion and legal advice from his predecessors, Justice Minister Neptali Gonzales and Justice Secretary Silvestre Bello II. They readily granted our request. The questions on which we had sought legal opinion from Guingona were in connection with our desire to do our bit in promoting good government, which, if I am not mistaken, should be the concern of ordinary citizens like ourself. Obviously, the Department of Justice can not help in this regard -- for ordinary citizens, that is. It does not want an ordinary citizen to do something extraordinary to promote good government.

OZONE DISCO FIRE

Small Fire, Big Casualty

It was a small fire which was put under control in 45 minutes, the Ozone facade was not even damaged, but in terms of human casualties, the Ozone disco fire ranks third in the world as the disco/nightclub fire that killed the most number of people as shown below:

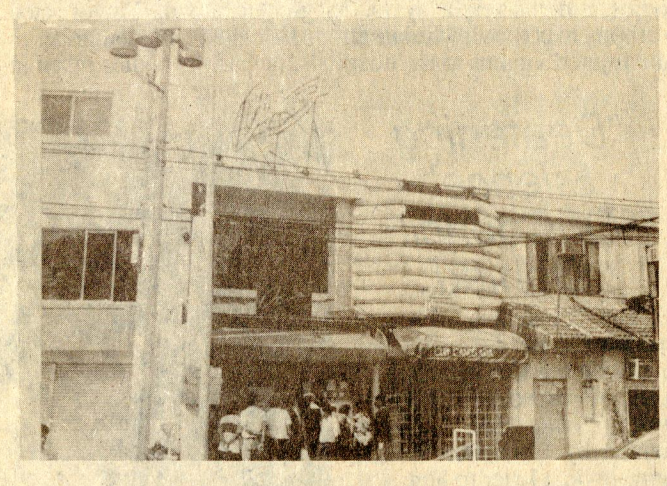
Major disco, nightclub fires since 1970

234 dead:	Disco fire at Fuxin in Liaoning, China	1994 Nov 27
161 dead:	Beverly Hills Supper Club, Kentucky, USA	1977 May 28
150 dead:	Ozone disco, Quezon City, Philippines	1996 Mar 19
146 dead:	Cina-Sept disco, Saint-Laurent-du Pont, France	1970 Nov 1
88 dead:	Nightclub in Seou, South Korea	1974 Nov 3
87 dead:	Arson at Happy Land disco, New York, USA	1990 Mar 25
82 dead:	Alcala 20 disco in Madrid, Spain	1983 Dec 17
67 dead:	Taichung karaoke bar, Taiwan	1995 Feb 15
56 dead:	Stardust disco in Dublin, Ireland	1981 Feb 14
51 dead:	Fire at entertainment hall in Urumqui, China	1995 Apr 25
43 dead:	Flying disco in Zaragosa, Spain	1990 Jan 14
37 dead:	Blue Bird cabaret, Montreal, Canada	1972 Sep 1
37 dead:	Fires at two clubs in London, Great Britain	1980 Aug 16
29 dead:	Nightclub in New Orleans, USA	1973 Jun 25
25 dead:	Bronx nightclub in New York, USA	1976 Oct 24
25 dead:	Disco fire in Caracas, Venezuela	1978 Oct 10

The fire started shortly before midnight of march 18, 1996, but it was shortly after said midnight, March 19 already, which has been taken, for the record, as the start of the fire.

Some 300 people, mostly young boys and girls celebrating their graduation, were making merry in a dance floor good for only 200. The fire started at the jockey's cubicle. An overlodaded lighting circuit melted wires and caused sparks to fly. They ignited the very combustible materials of which the curtains, wall panellings, soundboards and sound diffusers were made.

The merrymakers clapped thinking the sparks were fireworks but the terrible truth stunned them when they saw the raging flames and the thick, swirling smoke. Panic and chaos ensued. Screaming, they stampeded to the entrance door. Alas! it was a swing-in door (contrary to fire safety rules). The tendency of the Ozone patrons fleeing the fire was to push the door outward instead of pulling it inward. Trapped, they tumbled over each other and got incinerated. As high as eight layers of charred bodies were piled up.



The facade of the Ozone Disco was undamaged.

The New Capitol STANDARD
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SECRETARY...

ments and offices shall be appointed by the city mayor with the concurrence of the majority of all the Sangguniang Panlungsod members, subject to civil service law, rules and regulations. The Sangguniang Panlungsod shall act on the appointment within fifteen (15) days from the date of its submission, otherwise it will be considered confirmed."

Admission

We admitted that the Mayor did not get the concurrence of the Council required in the above cited Section 454(d) of the LGC. But the appointment, as we have already stated, was readily approved by the CSC, considering the high qualifications of the appointee and the fact that no one in the city government was interested in the position, including the Assistant City Budget Officer who had expressed to us her acceptance of the appointment of her new boss.

Constitutional, Independent Body

We pointed out to the Justice Secretary that the CSC is the constitutional body, an independent body, which is invested with the power, duty and function to approve or disapprove appointments to civil service positions in the government.

The questions on which we sought legal opinion were as follows:

1. If the City Council refuses to confirm an appointment duly approved by the CSC, would not that refusal be considered a repudiation of constitutionally given power, duty and function to an independent body like the CSC?
2. Which should prevail: the provision in Section 454(d) requiring Council concurrence or the CSC approval of the appointment made in the exercise of a constitutionally given power, duty and function.
3. Is non-compliance by the Mayor of the concurrence requirement fatal to a well-deserved appointment duly approved by the CSC?

Finally, we pointed out to the Justice Secretary the fact that Section 458, Article three, Chapter 3, Book III of the LGC titled "Powers, Duties, Functions and Compensation" of the Sangguniang Panlungsod does not list confirmation of appointments made by the city mayor as one of its powers, duties and functions. We asked: Does this not mean that the concurrence or confirmation requirement in Section 454(d) is only ministerial in nature?

Hereunder is the letter written for and in behalf of the Secretary of Justice by Senior State Prosecutor Teresita Reyes-Domingo explaining why our request for legal opinion could not be granted:

This refers to your letter dated 10 April 1996, requesting opinion.

In this relation, we would like to inform you that the Secretary of Justice, as Attorney General, does not render opinion and give legal advice save on specific legal ques-

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REPORT ON THE OZONE DISCO FIRE
As of June 6, 1996

Prepared by the Social Welfare Services Department headed by Ms. Teresa Mariano.

Re	:	OZONE DISCO FIRE
Place Occurred	:	Tomas Morato Cor. Timog Avenue, Quezon City
Date Occurred	:	March 18, 1996
Time Occurred	:	12:00 Midnight

I.	Total No. of Victims	251
	A. Total No. of Victims Injured	91
	1. No. of Victims Discharged	77
	2. No. of Victims Confined	14
	B. Total No. of Dead	160
	1. No. of Cadavers Recovered on Site	149
	a. Identified/Claimed	137
	b. Unidentified	12
	2. No. of Victims who died in Hospitals	11
II.	Total No. of Hospitals Where Victims Were Brought	18
III.	Total No. of Funeral Parlors Where Cadavers Were Brought	10
IV.	No. of Families Extended Financial Assistance	215
	a. Dead	123
	b. Confined in Hospitals	65
	c. Unidentified Cadavers	23
	d. Discharged Patients	4

V. SERVICES RENDERED

1. Ocular survey and provision of emergency lights, blankets and formalin needed at the Ozone Disco.
2. Assisted in the processing of recovered belongings of the victims to determine its owners.
3. Established Public Assistance booth at the Quezon City Hall Lobby to answer questions of immediate families and assist them in locating the victims in the different hospitals and funeral parlors.
4. A master list of victims for identification and record purposes was made for continuous monitoring and assistance to victims/relatives.
5. Provision of financial assistance to victims and their respective families in the amount of P15,000.00 cash (P10,000.00 from the City Government and P5,000.00 from the Manila Bulletin Publishing Co.)
6. Together with Hon. Ismael A. Mathay, Jr., visited victims at the hospitals and wake of the deceased in the funeral parlors and simultaneously gave financial assistance of P15,000.00 to each family.
7. Negotiated with the various funeral parlors and hospitals for possible discount on funeral contracts and hospital bills of the victims.
8. Continuous coordination/linkages with the different agencies such as the following: National Disaster Coordinating Council, Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, hospitals and funeral parlors.
9. Gave updates to media and other agencies on the status of the Ozone victims
10. Provided series of supportive counselling, and stress debriefing to victims in the hospitals and relatives of the deceased.
11. Facilitate the mass burial of the unidentified cadavers through coordination with the Group Developers Inc. (Loyola) and funeral parlors.
12. Close coordination with the Quezon City Health Department team of experts in identifying cadavers.
13. Facilitate the following:
    a. Distribution of the donation from Mr. Henry Tong of World News to the victims confined at hospitals.
    b. Received and indorsed to the Quezon City Health Department the donations from Mayor Bunye of the City of Muntinlupa.
    c. Coordination with Dr. Alremada dela Rosa, Chief of the PNRI Atomic Research Division for the irradiation of the common graft for the regrowth of the burnt skin of the victims.
    d. Preparation of Social Case Study Report for PCSO assistance.
    e. Coordination with the Loyola Memorial Parks to assist families of identified cadavers in the final burial plot of their kin.
    f. Referral to Damayan (Rosa Rosal's TV Program) for extension of medical assistance.
    g. Coordination with City Civil Registrar's Office for certified true copies of death certificates of victims.
    h. Coordination with various hospitals for medical certificates of statements of accounts to assist the families in securing other benefits, i.e. insurances, SSS.
14. Extension of additional financial assistance and stress debriefing sessions from April 15 to 19, 1996.
15. Completion of Intake Interview of patients confined in hospitals to determine further assistance.
16. Extension of financial assistance to out-patient victims.
17. Referral to Sec. Reodica of DOH for other medical assistance
18. Settlement of accounts with Loyola Memorial Park and all funeral parlors which serviced unidentified cadavers.
19. Procurement of reagents for DNA typing.
20. Extension of financial assistance from Malacañang in the amount of five thousand pesos last April 28, 1996.
21. Extension of financial assistance to families of dead victims from Mr. Henry Tong of World News last April 28, 1996.
22. Extension of financial assistance in the amount of P10.000. to each family from the national government last May 9-12, 1996.

CLEAN BILL OF HEALTH

Why Mayor Mathay Could Not Be Held Responsible For The Ozone Disco Fire

By Ben O. Flores

Both the NBI and the DOJ (Department of Justice) have given Mayor Ismael Mathay, Jr. a clean bill of health on the Ozone disco fire. Why could the Mayor not be held responsible for this blaze that killed 161 persons, mostly youths in the first bloom of their life? To answer this question there are several issues to be considered.

Command Responsibility

First, Was the Mayor culpable under the principle of command responsibility? Even before investigations were started, this principle was the immediate basis for blaming the Mayor, especially by the Wannabe QC Mayors who saw in the disaster a golden opportunity to get rid of their political nemesis. But how valid is this principle of command responsibility, which is popularly interpreted to mean that the top man in an organizational structure must be held responsible for all the actions or inactions of his subordinate?

In the first place, does the principle of command responsibility apply to civil administration? No less than retired Justice Mila German, presidential adviser on agrarian affairs and reforms, opines that it applies only to the military. Willie Ng stated in his column in the Manila Bulletin (April , 1996) that this opinion was told to him personally by Justice German. Ng wrote further:



"At that, there should be cutoffs, (meaning to say that command responsibility, even in the military, has limitations, that it cannot go all the way up to the highest commander). For instance, if an army transport place, because of poor maintenance goes down in flames killing the crew and all passengers on board, who should get the blame?

"Logically, it is the head of the maintenance office who should be blamed. It would be far-fetched to apply the principle of command responsibility to the commander of the army.

"An example would be the U.S. air force plane which crashed the other week off Dubrovnik, killing Commerce Secretary Ronald Brown and all aboard.

"The plane, badly off course, was using 40-year-old avionics which was unreliable during foul weather. And why did the air force not assign one of its modern planes to fly Brown?

"There has been no outcry for the head of the U.S. air force commander, much less for the head of the commander-in-chief.

"The surviving families of Brown and the many nationally-known business executives who perished in the crash are not crying for heads to roll."

In the same manner, the families of the Ozone fire victims are not crying for Mathay's head to roll but are thanking him instead for the assistance he has been giving them.

"If one is to follow the principle of command responsibility as understood by those crying for Mathay's blood, then no mayor is safe from prosecution each time a fire breaks out in his city or municipality," Justice German said, according to Ng's column.

Nene Pimentel

Like Justice German, former Senator Nene Pimentel, who is regarded the country's foremost expert on local governments (he is the principal author of the Local Government Code), believes that "there is no such thing as command responsibility in the civil government bureaucracy" and that "a mayor cannot be held responsible for the faults and lapses of subordinates in charge of specific offices," according to Manila Times columnist Larry V. Sipin in his April 9, 1996 column. Pimentel is the lawyer of JOV (Justice for Ozone Victims) which is preparing a class suit against the disco owners.

Hereunder are the comments of columnists on the principle of command responsibility -- all questioning its validity:

Ramon Tulfo



Yes, those city officials who were responsible for issuing safety permits to the Ozone disco, as well as the owners of the nightspot, should be made to anser for their negligence. That's a given.

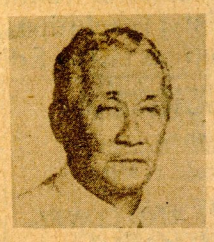
But blaming Mathay for the tragedy is carrying the principle of command responsibility a bit too far. Its just like blaming Corazon C. Aquino for the massacre at Mendiola by the police and military anti-riot contingents just because she was the Commander-in-Chief at the time. True, some police bigwigs, including then Brig. Gen. Ramon Montano, were sacked in the wake of the public uproar. But there was no cry for Ms. Aquino to resign.

Asking Mathay to resign because of the tragedy is an outlandish demand. It is like calling on President Ramos to resign because of the discovery of massive corruption in the Department of Health.

When the Coconut Grove nightclub in Boston, Massachusetts, was burned down in 1942, sending about 400 people to their fiery deaths, the mayor of the city did not resign. Why should he leave office just because his subordinates were negligent in their jobs?

In that fire, the worst ever in terms of the number of fatalities in one particular place, the fire chief and building supervisors were sacked, charged and were convicted for negligence. The Boston mayor was not included in the charge. *(Inquirer, March 28, 1996)*

J.V. Cruz



Mathay is being pilloried on the cross of "command responsibility." This theory of "command responsibility" is a very tricky business: no one really knows where the parameters are and where the lines may be drawn. By resigning his office (actually he was sacked), Health Secretary Hilarion Ramiro in effect admitted the validity of the catalogue of irregularities laid at his door; should President Ramos now resign too on the basis of "command responsibility"? If the answer is yes, then by all means Mathay should also be held responsible for not knowing about the defective electrical system and the lack of emergency exits at Ozone. *(Manila Chronicle, March 27, 1996)*

J.V. Cruz speaks of "parameters where the lines may be drawn." Indeed, it's about time a legislative, administrative or judicial definition of "command responsibility" be adopted, setting these parameters or limitations. In the case of Mayor Mathay, even if an unlimited, uncircumscribed principle of command responsibility were valid, he could not be charged under it because, in the first place, the officials tasked with the issuance of building and occupancy permits and fire safety clearances are not, as we will show presently, under his command.

Second and Main Issue

The second -- and main -- issue is: Was Mayor Mathay responsible for the issuance of the business permits which permitted Ozone disco to operate despite its being a fire trap not having complied with building and occupancy permits requirements designed to insure fire safetiness and for not having obtained a fire safety certificate? To answer theis question, let us review the history of how the Ozone disco came into being.

On Dec. 14, 1986, a business permit was issued to a certain Serafin Pua for a cocktail lounge, class A at 902 Tomas Morato Ave. It was called Birdland Food and Spirit Cocktail. At the time, Brigido R. Simon, Jr. was OIC under the revolutionary government following the EDSA revolution. Pua subsequently renewed his permit yearly until 1990 and, in August 1991, he retired his business.

It was taken over by Westwood Entertainment Corporation which obtained a business permit on Oct. 10, 1991 "to resume operation" also as a cocktail lounge, class A. Westwood did some renovation and expansion and obtained an additional permit for a restaurant. Actually, the place was converted into a disco and renamed Ozone. These permits -- the original and the additional -- were obtained under Mayor Simon who had won in the 1988 elections for local officials. In granting these permits, the records show that no inspections of the disco were conducted by the concerned officials under Simon which is why it operated without fire safety measures and devices.

Before Mathay's Time

It is important to note that it was before Mathay's time that the business permits allowing Ozone disco to operate, despite fire trap conditions, were issued. It is true that these permits were renewed under his administration -- four renewals corresponding to the years 1993, 1994, 1995 and 1996. But as renewals, in accordance with the policy of the city government, no occupancy permit and fire safety certificate were required -- unless there were adverse reports from the City Building Official or the Chief of the Bureau of Fire Protection. Without such reports, the only requirements are the previous year's permit and official receipts of payment for required fees and business taxes. Occupancy permit and fire safety clearance are required only for business permits of new establishments.

It should also be pointed out that while the Business Permit and Licensing Office (BPLO) is under the Office of the Mayor, the Mayor has delegated completely the task of issuing business permits to the BPLO Chief. The rationale for this complete delegation is that the issuance of a business permit -- it's otherwise called Mayor's permit -- is not such a delicate task that needs tight supervision, considering that a business permit, in the words of the Mayor and City Legal Officer Mario Laqui, is a permit for the privilege to conduct business in the city; it is not tied up or dependent on fire safety clearances issued by the Bureau of Fire Protection except, as already stated, for business permits for new establishments. Business permit renewals have to be processed as fast as possible, dispensing with fire safety clearances and occupancy permits, because they are the sources of big income for the city government, which is pressed for more and more funds, considering the city's enlarging population necessitating expanded and improved services.

Schizophrenic City Engineer

It will be pointed out that it is the person of the City Engineer, who is under the Mayor, who issues building and occupancy permits as well as enforces compliance, through periodic inspections, with the structural, planning, sanitary and electrical requirements. It is true, the City Engineer is under the command or authority of the Mayor but the trouble is the law has made the City Engineer a schizophrenic, to use a psychiatric term, meaning a dual personality, a two-in-one. Under the National Building Code (PD No. 1096), it was the Secretary of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) who appointed a City Building Official who remains under his authority. But the Local Government Code has changed all this: It provides that the City Engineer is concurrently the City Building Official but in the performance of his tasks, he is under the authority, not of the Mayor, but of the DPWH Secretary. The City Engineer performs the task of issuing building and occupancy permits and enforces compliance, through periodic inspections, with the aforementioned requirements in his capacity or personality as City Building Official, so that the Mayor has absolutely nothing to do with said tasks, not even a glimpse of the building plans being submitted for approval, much less affixing his signature on the approved permits. For violations of the Building Code, therefore, it is the DPWH Secretary who may be held responsible.

Bureau of Fire Protection

With respect to the issuance of fire safety clearances, that is the duty of the Fire Protection Bureau. It is issued after verification that the business establishment concerned had complied with fire safety requirements such as adequate and visible fire exits, emergency lights, water sprinklers, maximum capacity, etc. The Bureau of Fire Protection is not under the jurisdiction of the Mayor but under the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG). There is no way Mayor Mathay could be charged for violations of the Fire Code of the Philippines (PD No. 1185).

If the City Engineer in his capacity as City Building Official and the Fire Chief had failed to discover and report that Ozone disco had been operating without the required fire safety measures and fire safety devices, it was no longer the fault of the Mayor, who had no command or authority over the two officials concerned.

The excuse of the two officials is that they did not have enough inspectors to undertake annual inspections, considering the 97,000 establishments in QC. Besides, under the law, they are required to make only "periodic", not annual, inspections. Thus, Mayor Mathay has suggested this amendment: Require annual inspections, increase the number of inspectors as well as their pay to make them less vulnerable to corruption and make the inspections a joint and coordinated undertaking of the City Building Official and the Fire Chief, in order to avoid buck-passing, as they have been doing.

Third Issue

Overloading was the cause of the fire. The issue is: Was Mayor Mathay right in contending that "the processing and the issuance of certifications could not have caused and/or prevented the overloading." In an editorial of the Inquirer (April 15, 1996), titled "An Act of Grace," this contention of Mathay was not accepted. In a Letter to the Editor, in answer to the editorial, we showed that the Mayor was right:

In your editorial, "Act of Grace," (PDI, 4/15/96) you dreamt that Quezon City Mayor Ismael Mathay Jr. "accepts ultimate responsibility for the terrible fire that consumed 161 people..." Fortunately, it was only a dream. I hope that when you are not asleep, you can see that the dream is not supported by logical thinking.

To determine who was responsible for the Ozone fire, the cause must be determined first. It has been determined that the cause was the overloading of the lighting system of the disco. Now, who was responsible for keeping the electric load of the disco's lighting system within proper, safe limits? Was it Mayor Mathay? Yes, it could be him -- but only in a dream.

The culprit who should accept ultimate responsibility is the Ozone disco management, specifically the manager and his assistant, who, I understand, were among those who perished in the fire. If the owners were aware of the overloading and tolerated it, I suppose they share the guilt.

You don't accept Mathay's contention that "the processing and the issuance of permits and certifications could not have caused and/or prevented the overloading." Here is a clear, simple way to show that Mathay's contention makes sense:

Take, for example, two discos. Call them Disco A and Disco B. Now, Disco A was issued a permit to operate even if it had not complied with fire safety regulations and had not installed the necessary fire safety devices. But in the course of its operation no overloading was committed. Hence, no fire occurred.

Disco B, on the other hand, was issued a permit to operate only after having complied with fire safety regulations and installing the necessary fire safety devices. But in the course of operations, overloading of the electrical circuitry was done. And a fire broke out.

Isn't it quite clear that, as contended by Mathay, the processing and issuance of permits and certifications can neither cause nor prevent overloading because overloading is an act committed during the operation of the disco and that is beyond the control of the mayor and his subordinates -- unless, of course, they make nightly inspections, which is possible only in a dream.

RESIGNATION DEMANDS. . .

now, anyway.

Coseteng's election to the Senate is under challenge from an electoral protest filed by former Sen. Nene Pimentel.

I assume she'll allow that law to take its course and await the results. As of this writing word from the Comelec is that there has been a change of the number of votes in that election.

Ailing Mind

This 4th and last case we are citing involves a pathological anti-QC government columnist -- Raul Valino of the Manila Chronicle. We say pathological because only someone with an ailing mind can see no good in the city government. All Valino's columns have assailed and maligned almost every activity of the City government. With respect to the Ozone disaster, he does not want Mathay's resignation; he demands his outright dismissal. We suspect, however, that in calling for Mathay's outright dismissal, he saw a chance to make a play of the word fire and appear clever thereby. In his April 11, 1996 column, Valino wrote: "An eye for an eye and a fire for a fire. Mathay, under this principle, should be fired for the Ozone fire." Valino was unduly fired up by the Ozone fire.

"I Won't Quit"

Mayor Mathay hardly paid any attention to the agitation for his resignation. He was too busy in directing and supervising the city government's efforts to extend assistance to the families of the fire victims. With Ms. Tess Mariano of the Social Welfare Services Department, the Mayor went from house to house to condole with the parents, relatives and friends of the fire victims, to inquire into their needs, to help in the identification of unrecognizable bodies and providing mass burial for them at the Loyola Memorial Park.

It was only when interviewed by reporters of the Manila Times on April 3, 1996 that Mathay reacted rather sharply to the demands for his resignation.

"Why should I resign?" he snapped back at the reporters' question. "That would be turning my back on the mandate given me upon my election last year. The majority of the people have chosen me. Let them boot me out of office."

He added: "If I had ever considered not running again, now I have decided to run for a third term, if only to find out if the people still want me."

FROM ALL SECTORS

Widespread Manifestations Of Support And Confidence In Mayor Mathay Drowns "Clamor" For His Resignation

In the wake of the Ozone disco fire, there were widespread manifestations of support and confidence in Mayor Ismael Mathay, Jr. which drowned the so-called "clamor" for his resignation which came only from Wannabe QC Mayors and others who had an axe to grind against him. But the manifestations came from all sectors of society: Media, Congress, Business, Metro Manila Council, Teachers, NGOs, Church, Ordinary Citizens and - incredibly enough -- from Families of the fire victims themselves.

On this page and on the next are representative examples of said manifestations of support and confidence, which were in various forms, such as news stories; comments of the opinion makers otherwise known as columnists; resolutions; public statements of Senators and other high officials; Letters to the Editor; etc.:

REPUBLIKA NG PILIPINAS
TANGGAPAN NG PANGULO
Pangasiwaan Sa Pagpapaunlad Ng Kalakhang Maynila
(Metropolitan Manila Development Authority)

METRO MANILA COUNCIL
Resolution No. 6

FULLY SUPPORTING QUEZON CITY MAYOR ISMAEL A. MATHAY, JR. IN HIS SINCERE EFFORTS TO COMFORT AND EXTEND HIS WHOLEHEARTED SUPPORT TO THE FAMILIES AND RELATIVES OF THE VICTIMS OF THE OZONE DISCO TRAGEDY

WHEREAS, the Metro Manila Council, comprising the city and municipal mayors of Metro Manila, share with the families, relatives and friends of the victims of the Ozone Disco Tragedy their deep sense of loss and profound sorrow over the untimely death of their loved ones;

WHEREAS, we join the entire nation in fervent prayers for the repose of the souls of the 161 young men and women who died in the tragic incident; and for the early recovery and good health of the survivors;

WHEREAS, we hope the incident will serve as a poignant lesson for those who are responsible for the safety and security of our citizens while in the premises of commercial and entertainment places;

WHEREAS, we believe, however, it is unkind and in bad taste for some politicians to exploit the incident for purely political propaganda advantage;

NOW THEREFORE, the Council, after due deliberation, in session duly assembled, resolves as it is hereby resolved, pursuant to Sec. 6 of RA 7924, pledge our collective support to Mayor Ismael Mathay Jr. in his sincere efforts to comfort and extend his wholehearted support to the families and relatives of the victims; commend Mayor Mathay's exemplary deportment and quiet courage in the face of the desperate efforts of his political enemies and critics to make him principally responsible for the tragic incident; and hope that in the continuing observance of the Holy Week, we draw from the Ozone Disco incident a deeper sense of love, kindness and forgiveness.

This Resolution takes effect upon approval.

DONE this 10th day of April, 1996 at Makati, Metro Manila, Philippines.

PROSPERO I. ORETA
Chairman

Metro Manila Mayors Back Mathay

By BRENDA PIQUERO TUAZON

Manila Mayor Alfredo S. Lim led Metro Manila mayors yesterday in commending Quezon City Mayor Ismael A. Mathay Jr. for his "quiet courage" in rising above desperate efforts of his political enemies to malign him over the Ozone fire tragedy.

The mayors, all members of the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) with former Malabon Mayor Prospero Oreta as chairman, ratified Metro Manila Council Resolution No. 6 pledging their "collective support" for Mathay's efforts in extending comfort and support to the families and relatives of the victims.

Mandaluyong Mayor Benjamin Abalos drafted the resolution.

Lim disclosed that it was the popular consensus among the Metro mayors that it is unkind and in bad taste for certain politicians to exploit the QC tragedy for "purely political propaganda advantage."

The Manila mayor lamented the efforts of Mathay's political opponents and critics to push him to the bottom of the barrel by calling him principally responsible for the tragic incident.

"What we want to establish through the resolution is that all of us mayors and other government officials are operating under clearly defined chains of command that must be observed and respected, and we are always ready to accept our responsibilities and obligations under such chains of command," Lim said.

But, Lim added, "especially during times of calamity in our respective cities and towns, Metro Manila Mayors are a league of our own, united and strengthened by a common bond of friendship, helping each other in times of crisis, and filled with a strong sense of commitment to our respective constituencies."

"We will not allow our political enemies -- and they're all out there in the woodwork -- to try to destroy and smear us everytime a disaster or accident occurs in our jurisdictions," Lim declared.

In both normal and trying times, according to Mayor Lim, "mayors are always ready to rise to the needs of our constituents and we will always be there for them."

"Our only accountability is to our constituents and they will pass judgment on us if and when we should choose to present ourselves to them again in the elections."

In the resolution, the mayors said they hope the QC fire incident "will serve as a poignant lesson for those who are responsible for the safety and security of our citizens while in the premises of commercial and entertainment places."

They expressed confidence that government officials will draw from the tragedy a deeper sense of commitment, kindness and forgiveness.

The Metro Manila mayors who signed MMDA Resolution No. 6 aside from MMDA Chairman Oreta, Lim and Abalos, were: Pasay City Mayor Pablo Cuneta, Muntinglupa Mayor Ignacio Bunye, San Juan Mayor Jinggoy Estrada, Pasig Mayor Vicente Eusebio, Caloocan Mayor Reynaldo Malonzo, Parañaque Mayor Joey Marquez, Las Piñas Mayor Vergel Aguilar, Taguig Mayor Isidro Garcia, Pateros Mayor Jose Capco Jr., Navotas Mayor Felipe del Rosario Jr., and Malabon Mayor Amado Vicencio.

According to Mayor Lim, Marikina Mayor Bayani Fernando and Valenzuela Mayor Bobbit Carlos had earlier expressed their support to the resolution before leaving for the Palarong Pambansa, a national athletic event now being held in South Cotabato.

Muntinglupa Vice Mayor Jaime Fresnedi, president of the Metro Manila Vice Mayors League and City of Manila Councilor Ernesto Rivera, president of the Metro Manila Councilors League, both members of the MMDA Metro Manila Council, also signed the resolution. *(Manila Bulletin, April 17, 1996)*

Quezon City Public School Teachers Association
Office: San Vicente Elementary School
Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. 932-08-85

RESOLUTION EXPRESSING SUPPORT AND CONFIDENCE TO HIS HONOR, MAYOR ISMAEL A. MATHAY JR.

WHEREAS, the Quezon City citizens are thankful and grateful for the many programs and projects spearheaded and pursued by His Honor, Mayor Ismael A. Mathay Jr.;

WHEREAS, Mayor Mathay has accomplished much for the welfare of the teachers, the schoolchildren and their parents and for enhancing quality education in Quezon City public schools, thus earning the title "The Education Mayor of the Philippines;"

WHEREAS, since he assumed office as Mayor in 1992 -- earlier as Vice Mayor in 1967 -- Mayor Mathay has been manifesting and demonstrating his concern for the welfare of the common man;

WHEREAS, some sectors have in the past days criticized Mayor Mathay as an aftermath of the Ozone tragedy, even going to the extent of asking him to resign from the highest elective position of the Quezon City government;

WHEREAS, Mayor Mathay did not leave any stone unturned in a sincere and sustained effort to extend help, support and comfort to the affected families and individuals in the Ozone tragedy;

WHEREAS, while we commiserate with the families of the victims of the Ozone tragedy and feel their pain and anguish, we believe that Mayor Mathay's resignation will not help improve the situation but instead will derail the measures being taken by the City government in helping those affected by the tragedy;

WHEREAS, in the midst of the clamors of some sectors for him to step down from his post, the teachers would like to appeal to Mayor Mathay to please remain in his position and continue serving his constituents; and

WHEREAS, the Quezon City teachers believe that Mathay should get all the support and concern of his constituents considering the multifarious programs and projects he has spearheaded and implemented for the welfare of the Quezon City citizens

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved to express full confidence and support to His Honor, Mayor Ismael A. Mathay Jr. and prevail upon him to remain in his position and continue serving his constituents;

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, that copies of this Resolution be furnished His Excellency, President Fidel Valdez Ramos, Hon. Secretary Rafael T. Alunan III of the Department of Interior and Local Government, Chairman Prospero Oreta of the Metro Manila Development Authority, Quezon City Council and other concerned individuals, offices and institutions.

ADOPTED this 28th day of March in the Year of Our Lord 1996 in Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines.

CERTIFIED CORRECT:
(Sgd.) LILIA TOLOSA-SANTOS
Secretary

ATTESTED:
(Sgd.) EUSEBIO S. SAN DIEGO
President

QC Business Backs Mathay

The Quezon City Association of Filipino-Chinese Businessmen, Inc. has adopted a resolution throwing their all out support and confidence in Quezon City Mayor Ismael Mathay Jr.

The resolution which was adopted by the association during its regular monthly board meeting also lauded Mayor Mathay for the assistance he has extended to the relatives of the Ozone fire victims.

The association members believed that no other mayor had served Quezon City better than Mayor Mathay who, they said, continues to gain the people's trust and confidence for all the efforts he has undertaken to improve the living conditions of the city constituents.

The resolution was presented to Mayor Mathay by the association's president, Nemesio Co.

The Quezon City Association of Filipino-Chinese Businessmen, Inc. has about 200 members, which include Shoemart, Shell Canvas, Moldex, Uratex Foam, Automatic Center, among others.

Also present during the occasion were Gen. Hercules Cataluna of the Central Police District Command and the heads of the stations from La Loma, Galas, Baler and Anonas police substations.

The Quezon City Association of Filipino-Chinese Businessmen, Inc. is among the latest group to express support to Mayor Mathay after the Ozone tragedy.

Earlier this week, the Metro Manila Mayors Council and the Soroptimist International of Quezon City have adopted separate resolutions also expressing their full support and confidence in Mayor Mathay.

The resolution adopted by Soroptimist International cited Mayor Mathay for his compassion and sincerity he had displayed in condoloing and providing moral and financial assistance to each of the families of the Ozone tragedy victims "without fanfare and publicity." *(Manila Bulletin, April 22, 1996)*

STATEMENT OF THE CITY AND MUNICIPAL MAYORS OF METRO MANILA ON THE OZONE DISCO TRAGEDY

We, the CITY and MUNICIPAL MAYORS OF METRO MANILA, share with the family, relatives, and friends of the victims of the Ozone Disco Tragedy their deep sense of loss and profound sorrow over the untimely death of their loved ones;

We join the entire Filipino Nation in their fervent prayers for the repose of the souls of the 161 young men and women who died in the tragic incident and for the early recovery and good health of those who miraculously survived in the tragedy;

We deeply regret that the tragedy ever happened;

We hope the incident will serve as a poignant lesson for those who are responsible for the safety and security of our citizens while in the premises of commercial and entertainment places;

We believe, however, it is unkind and in bad taste for some persons to exploit the incident for purely political propaganda advantage;

We pledge our individual and collective support to Mayor ISMAEL A. MATHAY, JR. in his sincere efforts to comfort and provide assistance to the families of the victims;

We commend Mayor Mathay's exemplary deportment and quiet courage in the face of the desperate efforts of his political enemies and critics to make him principally responsible for the tragic incident; and

We hope that in our continuing observance of the Holy Week, we draw from the Ozone Disco incident a deeper sense of love, kindness and forgiveness.

Signed this 4th day of April, Nineteen Hundred and Ninety Six.

BENJAMIN A. ABALOS
Member
Mayor, City of Mandaluyong

JEJOMAR C. BINAY
Member
Mayor, City of Makati

IGNACIO R. BUNYE
Member
Mayor, City of Muntinlupa

for PABLO P. CUNETA, SR.
Member
Mayor, Pasay City

VICENTE P. EUSEBIO
Member
Mayor, City of Pasig

ALFREDO S. LIM
Member
Mayor, City of Manila

REYNALDO O. MALONZO
Member
Mayor, Caloocan City

ISMAEL A. MATHAY, JR.
Member
Mayor, Quezon City

VERGEL A. AGUILAR
Member
Mayor, Las Pinas

JOSE T. CAPCO JR.
Member
Mayor, Pateros

BOBBIT L. CARLOS, M.D.
Member
Mayor, Valenzuela

FELIPE C. DEL ROSARIO
Member
Mayor, Navotas

JINGGOY E. ESTRADA
Member
Mayor, San Juan

BAYANI F. FERNANDO
Member
Mayor, Marikina

ISIDRO B. GARCIA
Member
Mayor, Taguig

JOEY P. MARQUEZ
Member
Mayor, Parañaque

ALFREDO S. LIM
Mayor
City of Manila

BENJAMIN S. ABALOS
Mayor
City of Mandaluyong

JEJOMAR C. BINAY
Mayor
Makati City

REYNALDO O. MALONZO
Mayor
Caloocan City

VERGEL A. AGUILAR
Mayor
Las Pinas

AMADO S. VICENCIO
Mayor
Malabon

BAYANI F. FERNANDO
Mayor
Marikina

IGNACIO R. BUNYE
Mayor
Muntinlupa City

FELIPE C. DEL ROSARIO, JR
Mayor
Navotas

JOEY P. MARQUEZ
Mayor
Parañaque

PABLO P. CUNETA, SR.
Mayor
Pasay City

VICENTE P. EUSEBIO
Mayor
Pasig City

JOSE T. CAPCO, JR.
Mayor
Pateros

JINGGOY E. ESTRADA
Mayor
San Juan

ISIDRO B. GARCIA
Mayor
Taguig

AMADO S. VICENCIO
Member
Mayor, Malabon

JAIME R. FRESNEDI
Member
President, MM Vice Mayors League

ERNESTO A. RIVERA
Member
President, MM Councilors League

QC SOLON. . .

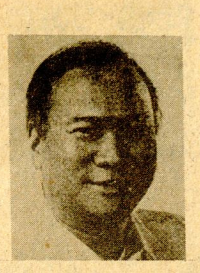
that while RA No. 7610 has criminalized child abuse and imposed stiff penalties for violators, "a specific problem concerns the continued stay or custody of the abused children with their abusive parents or guardians whose acts of child abuse would likely recur."

"HB 6549," Calalay said, "provides a legal recourse for abused children to enable them to escape from the clutches of morally corrupt and unworthy parents or guardians and give them a lasting respite from their sad and horrible predicament."

Calalay said that he was moved to file the bill because, inspite of RA No. 7610, child abuse cases rose by more than 200 percent in the last five years. He cited last year's DSWD statistics which show that there were 2,016 cases of child abuse, 70% of which were incest and rape cases. The other 30% involved other forms of child abuse such as pedophilia, maltreatment, sex/labor exploitation and child trafficking.

WIDESPREAD MANIFESTATION. . .

OPLE, MAGSAYSAY
Two Of Most Respected Senators Bat For Mathay



Two of the country's most respected senators, Blas F. Ople and Ramon Magsaysay, Jr. took up the cudgels for Mayor Ismael Mathay, Jr. who was being beleaguered by his political enemies.

Senator Ople, in his column in the Manila Bulletin, April 5, 1996, titled, "Mathay as Scapegoat?", wrote: "If some politicians will have their way, the Ozone Disco tragedy must be able to claim one more victim, no less than Mayor Ismael Mathay, Jr. of Quezon City. The NBI probers say they have no evidence to link him to the tragedy, but some politicians who may be thinking of 1998 want the prosecutors of the Department of Justice (DOJ) to include Mathay in a list of officials to be charged criminally for negligence. In other words, is Mayor Mathay being crudely set up as the principal scapegoat for the tragic fire?"

The column is reprinted in full below.

Senator Magsaysay, in a press statement published in the April 4, 1996 issue of The Philippine Journal, stated:

"We should not be too quick in casting aspersions upon individuals by allowing the smooth conduct of investigation on the Ozone tragedy.

"In the spirit of the Lenten season, let us be patient and await the results of the investigation before convicting the accused.

"While the Ozone fire has aggrieved the entire nation, it should not be used as an excuse for the summary crucifixion of people who may or may not have had a hand in the tragedy.

"Mathay, like Romulo and Confesor, has done an excellent job in public service and the public, especially the people of Quezon City who had confidently put him in office, should not let intense emotions cloud their judgment."

Other members of Congress like Senator Francisco Tatad and Representative Jose Zubiri were, unlike Magsaysay, in a hurry to see heads roll. Tatad said: "Let us bury the dead and then cut off some heads." Amen to that, Zubiri said. Sadists, these two.

Mathay As Scapegoat?

By Blas Ople
MANILA BULLETIN, April 5, 1996



If some politicians will have their way, the Ozone Disco tragedy must be able to claim one more victim, no less than Mayor Ismael Mathay, Jr. of Quezon City. The NBI probers say they have no evidence to link him to the tragedy, but some politicians who may be thinking of 1998 want the prosecutors of the Department of Justice (DOJ) to include Mathay in a list of officials to be charged criminally for negligence. In other words, is Mayor Mathay being crudely set up as the principal scapegoat for the tragic fire?

Even President Fidel Ramos is under pressure from some of Mathay's political ill-wishers to suspend the mayor from office in the course of the investigation. But fortunately the President is keeping his sense of proportion. The President was quoted as saying that he would wait for "lower level institutions" to do their duty before he steps in as the Chief Executive.

Mayor Mathay has comported himself with dignity and great patience in the face of the attempt to make him the 160th victim of the Club Ozone tragedy. Fortunately the people of Quezon City know their mayor well and are standing by him. If it is true that Mathay is being framed up as the sacrificial lamb to propitiate popular anger over the disco tragedy, the national government had better look for a more believable scapegoat, not one who by general consent is perhaps the country's most effective metropolitan administrator.

Mathay may be held accountable in only one forum, the court of the popular will. It doesn't seem reassuring for the enemies of Mel Mathay that two years before 1998, the mayor is completely secure in the trust, esteem and affection of his constituency, the one and half million voters of Quezon City. The dead are entitled to our respect and should be spared from political manipulation.

Fortunately, the people of Quezon City know their mayor well and are standing by him. If it is true that Mathay is being framed up as the sacrificial lamb to propitiate popular anger over the disco tragedy, the national government had better look for a more believable scapegoat, not one who by general consent is perhaps the country's most effective metropolitan administrator.

WE ARE ALSO. . .

on the cause of the Ozone disco fire.

Councilor Franz Pumaren, Chairman of the Committee on Games and Amusement, concurred with Galarpe in his refusal to be blamed. He said his Committee will conduct its own investigation of the fire.

Councilor Willy Altuna obviously agreed with the Vice Mayor as to their being also to blame.

"Many of them (city officials, barangay officials and some councilors) have been at Ozone disco, but have they tried to inspect whether said establishment has all the required safety measures," Altuna said.

In his speech, Bautista related that he was about to sleep when at 11:30 P.M. he was beeped by his staff informing him of a fire at Ozone disco. He immediately rushed to the site and found Mayor Mathay to be already there. He also saw, he said, Councilors Ferrer and Planas (he was there all the time, being entertained by a pretty 17-year-old GRO or Guest Relations Officer who was his namesake: Michaela), Congressmen Mike Defensor, Rey Calalay, and Edcel Lagman. Wannabe QC Mayor Feliciano Belmonte was nowhere to be seen, inspite of the fact that the disaster occurred in his district, the 4th.

The Vice Mayor helped in retrieving, identifying and numbering the personal belongings of the victims

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo



Mel, Hang In There!

I am a resident of Quezon City and, as such, I want to have a say on the affairs of my city. I am four square behind Mayor Mel Mathay in his hour of crisis. I am not motivated by my friendship with Mathay for such reason is indefensible. I stand behind Mathay on a matter of principle. I believe he is not to blame for the Ozone tragedy.

Greg Timbol, a renowned architect, is of the same mind. He calls on Mathay not to resign his position despite the strong clamor from some quarters.

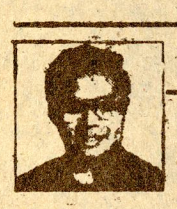
Timbol's letter to Mathay:

"The mind-boggling Ozone disco incident has happened without anyone wanting it to happen, more so you as mayor. If mayors are to attend personally to the doings of their department heads, then 24 hours a day is not enough to discharge the other functions of his office to be an effective administrator and, therefore, be of real service to his constituents.

"Let this be a hard lesson for us all -- gov't officials, businessmen, professionals and citizens -- to learn from it for our own good in the future.

"So, relax my friend, and just weather the storm. We are behind you."

Mel, just hang in there! *(Philippine Dailiy Inquirer, April 4, 1996)*



Word Alive

• Fr. Bel R. San Luis, SVD

MAYOR ISMAEL MATHAY. Holy Week is over, but not for QC Mayor Ismael Mathay. Some partisan politicians who want to exploit the Ozone Disco tragedy are clamoring: "Crucify him, crucify him!"

Politicians who may be eyeing his position in 1998 want the prosecutors of the Department of Justice (DOJ) to include the city executive as criminally charged for negligence. In other words, he is being set up as the principal scapegoat for the tragic fire. To my mind the accusation and dastardly act of these modern-day Annas and Caiphas are absurd.

Why did they not cry for Mayor Mathay's blood when similar fires in Quezon City like Uniwide's happened due to faulty electrical wiring and negligence? Why only now? Then think about the numerous establishments within Metro Manila with the same predicament whose mayors were not criminally liable?

If Mayor Mathay is axed because of the political manipulation of his unscrupulous adversaries, then he'll have been another unfortunate victim of the Ozone Disco tragedy. And what a great pity because the low-profile, action-oriented city mayor has a sterling record of achievements and sincere concern for his constituents. *(MANILA BULLETIN, April 8, 1996)*

Lakas Supports Mathay



Judge Oscar A. Inocentes, National Capital Region (NCR) Chairman of the ruling Lakas-NUCD-UMDP party issued a statement recently throwing his all-out support and confidence in Mayor Ismael Mathay Jr.

Inocentes lauded Mathay for the speedy assistance that he has extended to the relatives of the Ozone Disco fire victims. He said that Mathay is the best mayor the city has ever had, "a hands on local executive" who has continuously gained the trust and confidence of his constituents for his sincere efforts to improve their living standard.

The Lakas NCR chairman further said that Mathay's genuine compassion and sincerity, as well as his action with dispatch during the early moments of the Ozone Disco tragedy, should be emulated by other local executives.

Mathay has likewise been given support by other associations like the Soroptimist International, Metro Manila Mayors Council and the Association of Filipino-Chinese Businessmen, Inc. of Quezon City. *(Jimmy O. Oliver)*

consumers' POST

By ETHER SOLIVEN T.
MANILA BULLETIN, April 9, 1986

While we are on a spiritual "high" let us ponder current issues in the light of God's Word.

In the gospel of Matthew, chapter 7, we are admonished to "judge not, lest we be judged... for the way you judge you will be judged and with what yardstick you measure, you will be measured." Indeed, we read on -- how can you notice the splinter in your brother's eye without noticing first the beam in your own eyes?

We bring this up in the light of the Ozone tragedy which has turned into a political blaze of solons and other critters seeking to hog media attention at the expense of Quezon City Mayor Mel Mathay, the "fall guy" for the season.

Instead of sticking to the issues, Mathay's detractors would rather pounce on his person in the hope of catching public attention, like -- hey, remember me, see -- I'm squawking, cocka-doodle-doo! Senator Coseteng should read the book of Matthew, chapter 7, and burn that "beam" in her eye. The same goes for the political wannabes who are aiming for Mathay's job. Instead of addressing the issues that led to the Ozone affair and of helping the fire victims and their families, they want to stomp on and kick the "fall guy." Since Mathay is such a well-loved, familiar public figure, how handy it is for them, di ba?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Ozone Tragedy: From a Mother's Heart

In Ecclesiastes 3, it says:

"There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens...
A time to be born and a time to die;
A time to plant, and a time to uproot the plant;
A time to weep, and a time to laugh;
A time to mourn and a time to dance...
A time to be silent and a time to speak..."

For someone like me who has experienced the depths of darkness and pain... the time to speak is now.

Last August 1994, our two sons and a nephew were kidnaped for ransom. The nine-day ordeal was the darkest moment in our life as a family. The intensity of the pain, terror and anguish we went through is beyond words to describe. And even if the boys are back with us, we are still in the painful process of picking up the bits and pieces of our broken lives, trying to heal and to build what that incident wounded and destroyed within each of us.

Unlike a house that can easily be rebuilt after a quake or a storm, apparently, the heart and memory take longer to heal. I have come to realize that fear will never go away. It will always be a part of us. Today, a year and a half after the incident, my younger son would still tremble in fear and cry in his sleep because he would have nightmares that he is being kidnaped again. And every time I seek him like this, my already broken heart breaks even more. That's why I understand the pain of the fathers and mothers whose children died in the Ozone fire. Indeed, as parents, the more tender we love, the deeper our wounds.

What deeply saddens me also at this time is what's happening to Mathay who is, at heart, a good man. During the kidnaping, he and General Panfilo Lacson were the two government authorities who helped us recover the boys. They worked quietly in the background, even late into the night, monitoring the daily developments... with no fanfare and no publicity. In those moments when everything seemed dark and uncertain, their sincere concern and dedication to duty were truly inspiring and restored our faith in good government. And I write this letter today, in gratitude.

It is my prayer that, to those who are clamoring for Mayor Matha's resignation, may you not be motivated by money or political ambition but by a clear and pure conscience and a sincere desire to seek the truth for the good of all.

To Mayor Mathay, this is not the time to resign and distance yourself from the tragedy... but to embrace it with everyone else who has suffered by helping them build and restore whatever is left of the bits and pieces of their broken lives.

To all Filipinos, especially the people in government, big business and media, may take this season of Lent as a time to search our hearts, go back to God, and live in the light, that we may no longer add to the pain in the world, but rather, be an instrument of renewal and peace.

To those who have gone ahead of us, may they find peace in the heart of God.

To all the surviving victims of this tragedy, mothers, fathers, children and friends, in the midst of your pain, when you have prayed all the prayers that you know, when the well of tears has run dry, I invite you to go into the silence of your hearts to that sacred place deep within which no pain can reach, no fear can touch, no evil can ever tarnish or destroy... And it is my prayer that there you will also find God and the peace and healing you are longing for.

May God in His goodness embrace us all with His love.

MRS. KATA J. BELLOSILLO
Diliman, Quezon City

(Manila Bulletin, April 3, 1996)

Why Mathay?

In a Letter to the Editor titled "Why Mathay?" which was published in the April 7, 1996 issue of MALAYA and in the April 10, 1996 issue of the INQUIRER, former UP President OD Corpuz wrote:

Unfortunately some unscrupulous elements bring their selfish agenda to the media. Some ambitious politicians plan to run for Quezon City mayor in 1998 and are using the Ozone disco tragedy in their campaign against incumbent Mayor Ismael A. Mathay Jr. The news in coffee shops is that one wannabe Quezon City mayor is using his family connections with the media for this purpose.

Mathay also gets it from defeated and disgruntled political opponents. What else can you expect?

The anti-Mathay campaign is desperately enlisting former Quezon City Hall employees, who were separated or replaced by Mathay for inefficiency and irregularities, are now submitting statements blaming Mathay for issuing a business license to the owner-operators of Ozone disco.

The politicians who are manipulating these dismissed employees are underestimating Justice Secretary Teofisto Guingona. Guingona knows that Mathay did not start the Ozone disco fire. And Guingona knows that Mathay did not create the system of building permit and fire safety clearances in our city government.

Ozone Fire

So much has been said and written about the Ozone Disco tragedy in Quezon City that has claimed about 160 young lives and injured many others.

Let us all contemplate and allow reason to prevail, instead of unnecessarily blaming people who may not even have anything to do with the incident.

I am appealing to some lawmakers and politicians who may expect to profit politically from the investigations and constant innuendoes linking Mayor Mel Mathay Jr. to be more objective and reasonable. They know, for a fact, that Mayor Mathay had nothing to do with the issuance of permits and the inspection of the place.

Mathay is too busy performing his job as city executive, addressing various problems for the residents, that he is not expected to perform the duties of employees at City Hall and even those in other departments of the national government that have anything to do with issuing permits and inspecting establishments.

RODRIGO SAMONTE
UP Diliman, Quezon City

(Manila Bulletin, April 16, 1996)

Inexperienced Vice Mayor

Stop calling for the resignation of Mayor Mel Mathay over the Ozone tragedy. Pity us Quezon City residents who will have to suffer this two-bit child actor as mayor if Mel goes. Okay lang sana if Mayor Mel is truly accountable for what happened in Ozone. But that does not seem to be the case, since national government officials appear to be more to blame than the mayor. *(Mla. Chronicle, March 30)*

More important, if the political enemies of Mathay succeed, we will end up with an inexperienced Vice Mayor in charge of Metro Manila's largest city. Okay, it is our fault that we elected a juvenile clown to that high office, but let us not aggravate the problem by allowing him a chance to mess the city up. *(Mla. Chronicle, April 2)*

QC GOVERNMENT...

On March 31, a second distribution of cash assistance was held also at the Bulwagan: P15,000 also to each family, P10,000 from city funds and P5,000 from the P2 million donated by the Office of President Ramos.

On April 1, 1996, a third distribution of cash assistance was held as usual at the City Hall Bulwagan, this time from a P3 million of the Chinese community presented to Mayor Mathay through Mr. Henry Tong of World News and Mr. Chan representing the Chinese community. It was Mr. Tong who had spearheaded the collection of donations from the Chinese community.

It should also be mentioned here that the Association of Retired Police Officers had donated P20,000 presented to Mayor Mathay during a flag raising ceremony.

Weekly Hospital Visits

Upon instructions of the Mayor, DSWD Chief Tess Mariano and her staff continued to make weekly visits to the hospitals to provide moral support, counselling and additional financial assistance. See pictures below:

Commendation

For the all-out assistance given to the Ozone fire victims and their families by the city government under the initiative and leadership of Mayor Mathay, commendation came from all sectors -- except, of course, his political foes and other ill-wishers. Here are the comments of two very respected newspaper columnists:

PINCH OF SALT



Ninez Cacho Olivares

All throughout the days following the Ozone tragedy, few, if any of them, moved to provide moral and financial assistance to the relatives of the victims. Even those who represent Quezon City residents hardly made an appearance, whether in hospitals, funeral parlors or even the mass burial.

It was Mathay that the general public saw at almost every site where the victims' relatives gathered. And it was Mathay who saw to it that financial and moral assistance was extended to them.

So where were all of those "bleeding hearts" politicians who used the tragedy to advance their political ends by demanding the resignation of Mathay?

Why did they not come out in full force during the time of need of their living constituents? Why did they not start some kind of a fund for them if their hearts truly bled for these victims?

Some, like Manuel Morato, who wanted to cash in on the publicity to make themselves look good before the public, offered financial assistance. Weeks later, it was discovered by the relatives of the victims that the offer was just for show. Some relatives complained publicly that Morato's offer was just hot air. No assistance was forthcoming from the lotto king who wants to become president.

It was Mathay who slowly went about doing his job. Ignoring the resignation calls from those politicians who were after his head, Mathay and his people worked to get the bodies identified and even made provisions for a mass funeral.

His work did not go unnoticed by the relatives of the victims. Some of them have been quoted in the papers city Mathay as the only local official providing moral and financial assistance to lthe fire victims and their relatives.

In between seeing to the moral and financial needs of the victims and their relatives, Mathay went about gathering documents to prove that he could not possibly be held liable for negligence.

To my recollection, Mathay didn't even bother to answer the accusations hurled at him by these solons. He didn't have to. He was not accountable to them.

What he did was to appear before committees and investigating agencies, providing them with documents that established just where the line of command stopped.

Quezon City voters, among whom count the relatives of the Ozone fire victims, will remember the congressmen and senators who spat fire and fury as they demanded restitution for the victims but did nothing for them when it came to providing moral and financial assistance.

O. SOL. PALACPAC



'Lost in the confusion...over the Ozone tragedy are peripheral issues involved in licensing a business establishment...'

While his detractors concentrated their fire on him, Mayor Mathay stayed calm. He put the whole city resources at the disposal of the victims and their families. He mobilized the whole city machinery to conduct search and rescue operations for the victims, provide assistance needed by the victims and their families. He went around hospitals and funeral parlors -- and talked with the parents and relatives of the victims -- not only to express deepest personal sympathy and that of the city government, but also to provide comfort and to see to it that they were being given the right kind of assistance by the city government. He coordinated with various national and local agencies for additional assistance to lthe victims and their families. These he did practically on a 24-hour basis, without fanfare, and barely getting a rest.

Identification

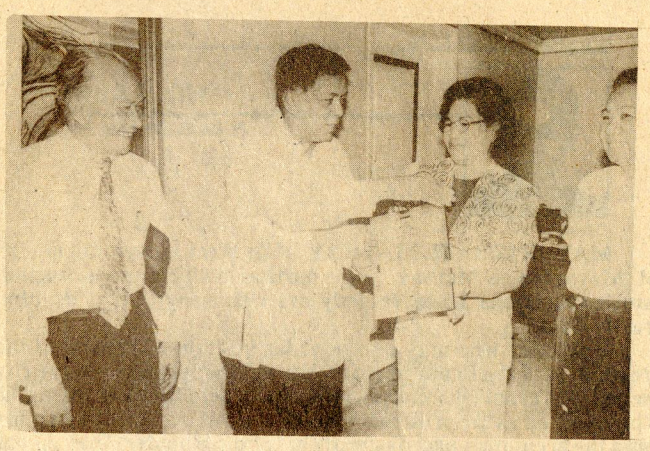
Aside from financial assistance, the QC government rendered other kinds of assistance like the identification and mass burial of 17 unidentified cadavers. Mayor Mathay had formed the Ozone Task Force to work on the identification of these cadavers. Task Force coordinator is City Health Officer Dr. Magdalena M. Ybañez, with Dr. Paz D. Ugalde, Assistant City Health Officer, as Assistant Task Force Coordinator.

Three volunteer members of the Task Force are Dr. Raquel del Rosario-Fortun, Forensic Pathologist, U.P. College of Medicine; Prof. Jerome Bailen, Anthropologist, Department of Anthropology, U.P.; and Myra Grace Lara, Assistant Anthropologist, also of U.P. Twelve other members of the Task Force are personnel of the QC Health Department.

Identified Victims

The Ozone Task Force identified 11 of the cadavers examined. Table below gives the details:

DATE	NAME	WHERE
3/29/96	Marcos Oscaris	Pacheco
3/29/96	Vhirma Badique	Pacheco
3/30/96	Marilyn Yambot	Prudential
3/31/96	Giselle May Sagario	Paramount International
4/1/96	Ritchie Villanueva	Paramount International
4/3/96	Alfredo Matias	Loyola Memorial Lot 6-1 (Prudential)
4/12/96	Delfin Pedenes	Loyola Memorial Lot 5-5 (Paramount)
4/12/96	Manuel Mercado	Loyola Memorial Lot 5-11 (Vasquez)
4/15/96	Irish Bacani	Loyola Memorial Lot 6-6 (Vasquez)
4/18/96	Janice Salas	Loyola Memorial Lot 6-3 (Arlington)
5/11/96	Jose Yarisantos	Loyola Memorial Lot 5-7 (Paramount)



QC Mayor Mathay presents to Dr. Ma. Paz Ugalde, assistant coordinator of the Ozone Task Force which the Mayor formed for the identification of unidentified victims, the Plaque of Appreciation given to the Task Force by the "Hoy Gising!" TV program. Looking on are Dr. Guia Najera-Ison of the QC Health Department and Engr. Llorente Yarisantos whose son, Jose, Ozone Disco General Manager, was one of those identified by the Task Force.

Mass Burial

On April 2, 1996, the 17 victims examined for their identities by the Ozone Task Force, which was able to identify 11 of them, leaving six unidentified, were buried at the Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina. For the burial lot, the QC government paid P380,000, a special price given by LMP. It spent P126,300 for the funeral expenses of the victims that had been brought to different funeral parlors. It started to rain when the mass burial rites began and stopped when finished, prompting Mayor Mathay to remark: "Even nature condoles with the families of the victims of the Ozone disco tragedy." Some families of the victims subsequently transferred their respective victims' remains to individual burial lots. For this transfer, LMP charged P7,000.

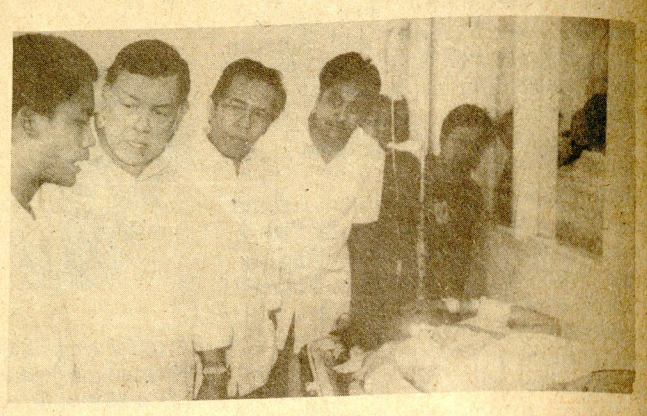


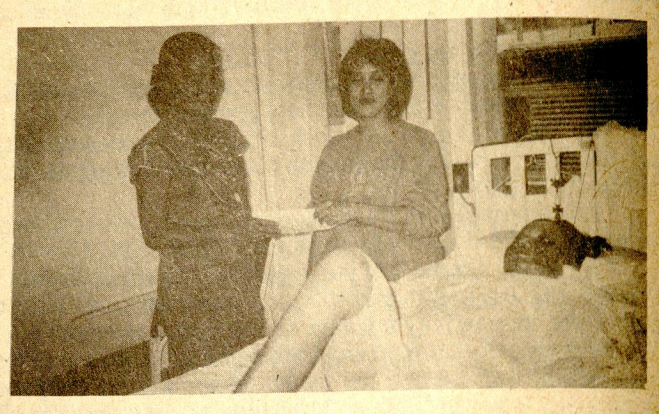
BURIAL. Quezon City Mayor Ismael Mathay Jr. consoles the fa

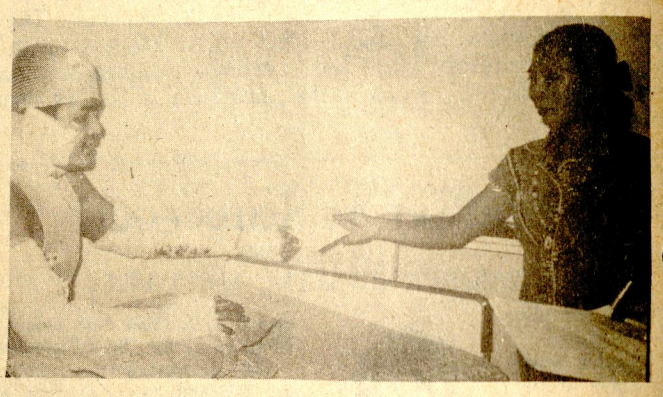


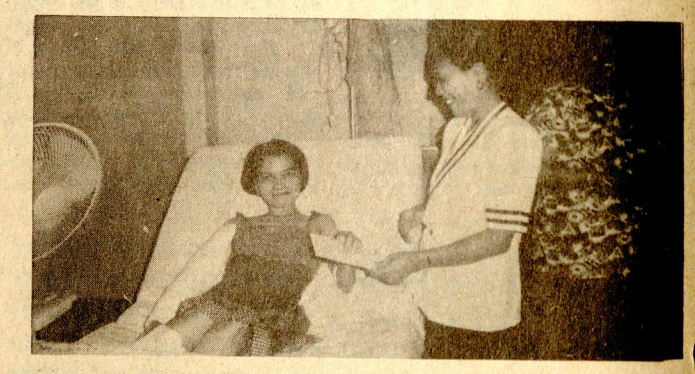
Mayor Mathay presents a plaque of appreciation to Dr. Jerome Bailen and Dr. Racquel del Rosario- Fortun who headed the Ozone Task Force which was set up by Mayor Mathay to help identify the remaining unclaimed victims.

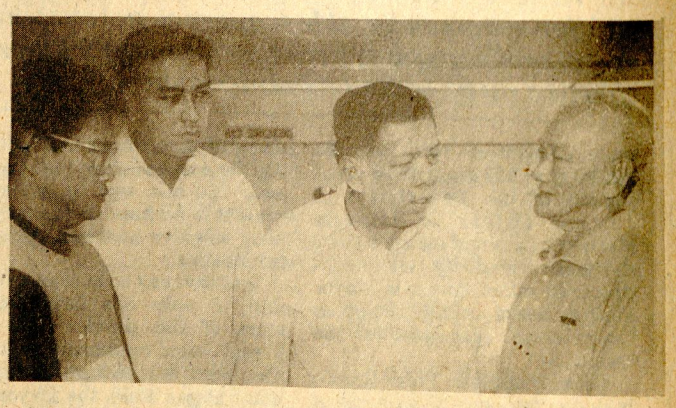
Pictures below show Mayor Mathay and SWSD Chief Tess Mariano visiting injured Ozone victims at the 18 hospitals to which they had been brought. The two bottom pictures show Mr. Henry Tong of World News visiting injured victims and extending financial assistance. He had spearheaded the drive to solicit donations from the Chinese community which amounted to P3 million.

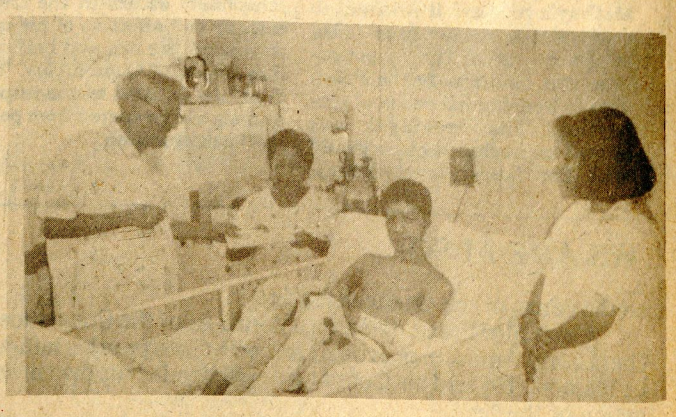












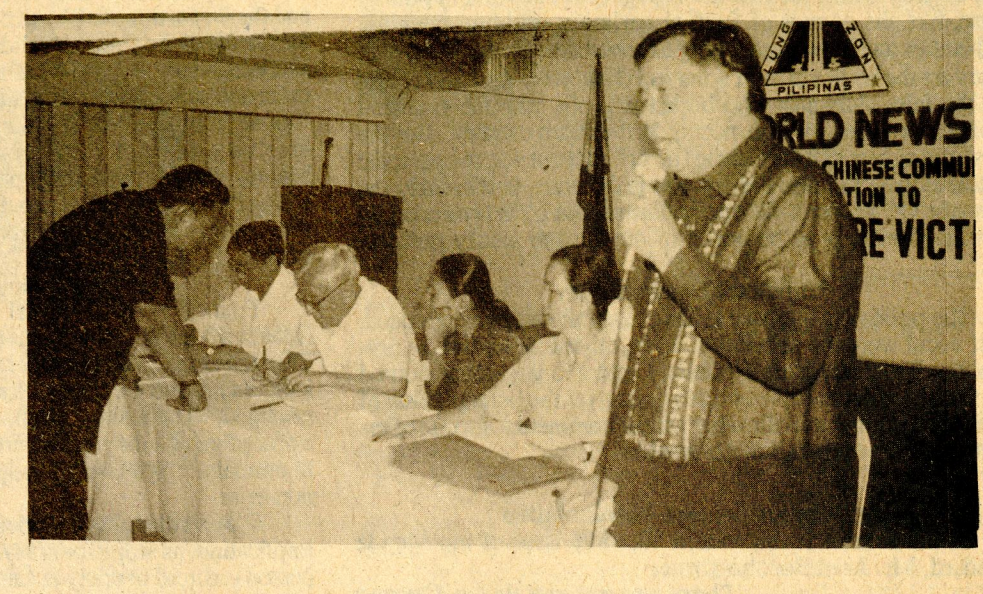


(Turn to next page for more pictures)



Mayor Mathay talks to the parents and relatives (below) during the distribution of cash assistance to them held at the City Hall Bulwagan on March 23 and 31, 1996 and on April 1, 1996. With the Mayor are (from right) Tess Mariano , City Legal Officer Mario Laqui and an aide of the Mayor.

Mayor Mathay acknowledging the donation of the Chinese community made through Mr. Henry Tong (third from right, seated) and Mr. Chan (seated, extreme left) representing the Chinese community. Ms. Tess Mariano, SWSD Chief, is second from right, seated. In picture below, the Mayor hands to a recipient of the donation of the Chinese community. With him are Mr. Tong and Mr. Chan.







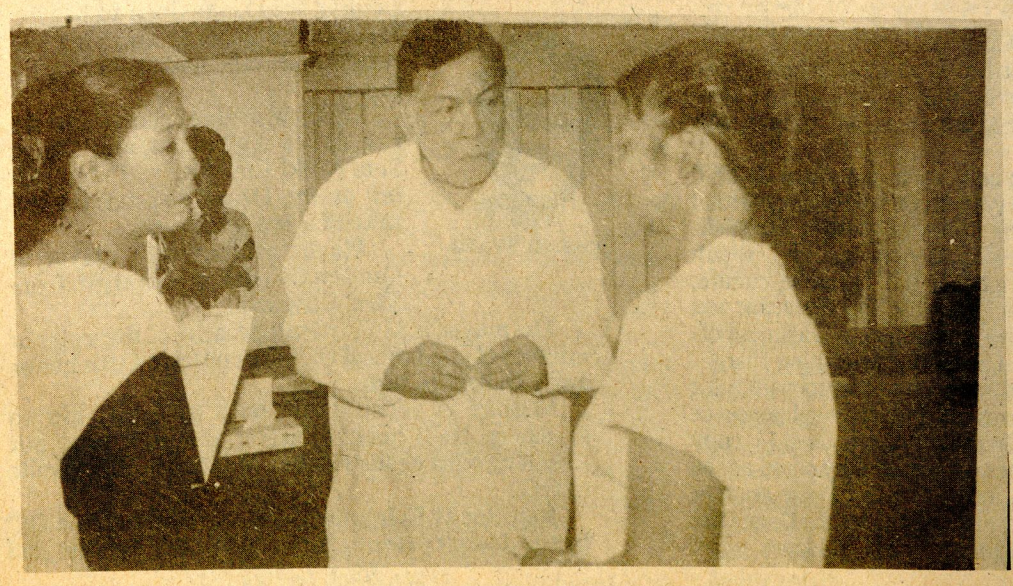
On this spread are pictures of Mayor Mathay and Tess Mariano listening to the parents and relatives of the Ozone victims as they poured out the pain and anguish in their hearts over the loss of their loved ones. Notice that City Legal Officer Laqui is shown in only one picture (top picture, left side). The reason is that he said he could not bear the sob stories. He had to leave.

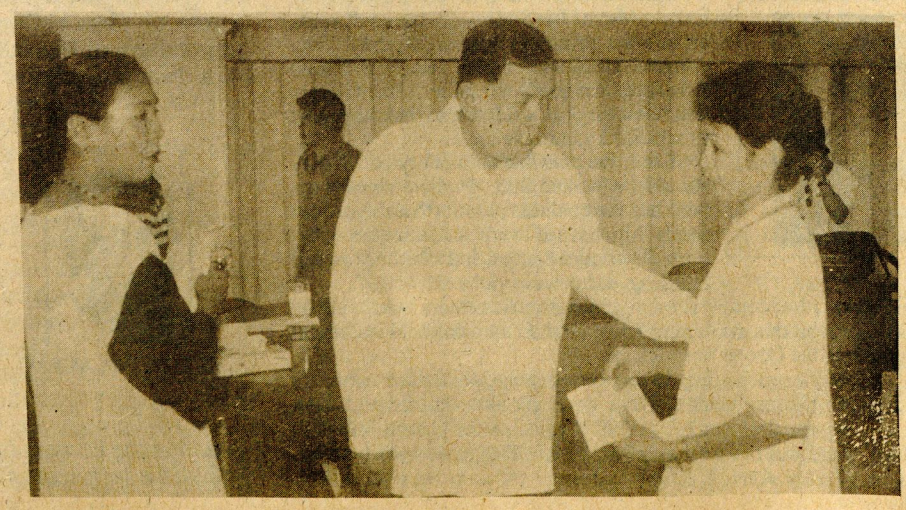












POLITICAL EXPLOITATION

The Other Tragedy In The Ozone Disco Fire

The main tragedy is, of course, the death of 161 persons, most of them young students celebrating their graduation. The other tragedy is how the disaster brought out the worst in human nature, like the owners of funeral parlors squabbling over the dead bodies and later on charging exhorbitant rates from parents retrieving the bodies of their sons and daughters. And there were also the false claimants who hoped to profit from the financial damages expected to be imposed on the disco owners. But the worst, the ugliest that the Ozone fire brought out was the political exploitation of the disaster by the politicians, particularly the Wannabe QC Mayors. As one columnist put it: "It reminds (us) of vultures picking at the bones of the dead to satisfy political lust."

Universal Denunciation

The political exploitation has been universally denounced. Most vocal were the opinion makers, otherwise known as columnists. From the general public, Letters to the Editor poured into the newspapers expressing disgust over the bone picking of the political vultures. Following are the comments of some of the country's most outstanding columnists:

QC Congressman's Manipulation

In his column in the March 30, 1996 issue of the Manila Standard, Mr. Ariel Bocobo wrote:



ARIEL BOCOBO

There are reports that a Quezon City congressman is trying to manipulate the involvement of QC Mayor Mel Mathay in the Ozone Disco fire and to have him included among those to be charged in connection with the tragedy.

It seems this congressman's consuming desire is to get elected as QC mayor and he has been having sleepless nights since learning of Mathay's plan to seek reelection which, in effect, dooms his mayoralty dreams.

But, with Mathay implicated in the Ozone tragedy and forced to resign, the congressman can piece together his broken dream of becoming mayor. He feels Mathay's reelection plans could go pfft once he is indicted in the Ozone Disco case.

This congressman has been contacting friends within the ruling Lakas NUCD, to which he belongs, and also those from the opposition in his consuming desire to have Mathay implicated in the disco tragedy, have him charged and forced to resign as a result.

Among the parties he has been conniving with are politicians defeated by Mathay in the last mayoralty elections.

Of course, the group has grabbed the opportunity to hit back at Mathay and has pledged to combine efforts with the congressman in driving Mathay out of city hall.

QC political worms feed on tragedy

For Pete's sake



BOO CHANCO

LIKE sharks attracted to any scent of blood, politicians of all sizes and colors are now using the Ozone tragedy to give them an early start in the 1998 elections. It didn't escape our notice that there is a well-orchestrated plan to make sure that Quezon City Mayor Mel Mathay is tainted somehow in the wake of the tragic disco fire.

It is funny how headline stories in some of the papers have been screaming that Mayor Mathay is being held legally liable for the Ozone fire. The fact is, the Mayor has not been charged. The NBI has even conceded that they have uncovered no evidence that suggests Mayor Mathay should be charged with anything in court.

A quote attributed to President Ramos about plans to suspend Mayor Mathay is also suspect. It seems that a suggestive question to that effect was asked of the President and FVR gave his usual non-committal response. The headlines the following day, however, made it look like the President wants Mathay suspended.

As I previously wrote, I think all these moves to force Mathay out of City Hall are unfair not only to the Mayor but to us residents of Quezon City. For one thing, getting Mathay out will only make things worse, especially for the families of the Ozone victims. It is the Mayor who is at the forefront of government efforts to help the victims in everything from identifying the charred remains to burying them and supporting the medical needs of the survivors. *(Manila Chronicle, April 2, 1996)*

Ozone tragedy tainted by politics

COUNTERPOINT
Alvin Capino



The losers in the 1995 elections led by former Mayor Jun Simon, as expected, made an attempt to heap blame on Mathay. The congressional and council seat losers used the name "Bangon Quezon City." But it is clear that it is their political fortunes that they want to rebuild and not the city.

Sure, the possible culpability of Mathay should be looked into. Probers should see whether the business permits that the offices under him issued were made under questionable circumstances, and whether fire and building codes were violated.

However, the political scavengers and carrion eaters should not be allowed to exploit this incident to advance their own political interest at the expense of the Ozone fire victims.

It would be interesting to know what the politicians who are exploiting the Ozone incident have done for the victims and their families. Perhaps the members of JOV (Justice for Ozone Victims) should ask them that before they allow themselves to be used by these politicians. *(Today, April 2, 1996)*

FLIMSY GROUNDS

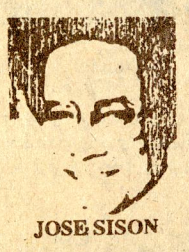
Resignation Demands Vs. Mathay Now Moot And Academic

With the exoneration of Mayor Mel Mathay by both the NBI and the Department of Justice (DOJ) from any responsibility for the Ozone disco fire, the validity of the resignation demands that had been made by anti-Mathay political elements have become moot and academic. But in the hope that it will contribute to the formation of the proper attitude or reaction to future situations, involving other city chief executives, similar to the situation Mathay was in, we think it profitable to go over the grounds on which the resignation demands were based and show how flimsy they were. We will take four cases of "Mathay, Resign" demands.

Libelous Editorial

First, was the Editorial of the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (March 27, 1996) which was precisely titled "Mathay, Resign." This Editorial would compel Mathay "to bow his head in guilt and shame and beg forgiveness from a public he had deeply wronged." The Editorial called this a "heroic act" which will "set a precedent of monumental proportions for other public officials to emulate." We can not help exclaiming: "What monumental nonsense!"

We call the Editorial libelous because it portrays Mathay, by implication, as stupid or crazy, or, if not stupid or crazy, a gutless person -- stupid or crazy because, what would you call a man who will "bow his head in guilt and shame," when he knows he has no reason to do that, and, gutless, because, what would you call a man who, when an accusing finger, however falsely, is pointed at him, immediately turns pale and quivers with fear and abjectly "bows his head in guilt and shame," in self-flagellation instead of standing up like a man and fighting for his right to defend himself. Is that the kind of a man the Editorial wants public officials to put on a pedestal as their model? God forbid! The Editorial urges Mathay "to beg forgiveness from a public he had deeply wronged." The people who were the most deeply wronged were the parents and relatives of the fire victims. How could Mathay beg forgiveness from them when they were commending and thanking him, instead of denouncing him and demanding his resignation ala Inquirer! They accepted the assistance the Mayor was giving them, with sincere gratitude, because they believed he was not to blame for the fire. Had they believed otherwise, they would have probably accepted the assistance just the same but with contempt as "consuelo de bobo."



JOSE SISON

Huwag Mong Ipaglaban

Another "Mathay, Resign" demand was made, oddly enough, in the column of Atty. Jose C. Sison in the *Philippine Star* (March 23, 1996). What is odd about it is that Sison has this "Ipaglaban Mo" TV program conducted with his son, QC Councilor Joseph Peter Sison. Sison wrote:

"It is pure wishful thinking, given our damaged culture, (to expect) the voluntary and remorseful resignations of the local government officials ultimately responsible for the tragedy before whom the buck should stop."

Sison does not mention the name Mathay but it is very obvious from the phrase, "before whom the buck should stop," that he was referring to the QC Chief Executive, the top local official in QC before whom the buck should stop. He wrote further:

"In other Asian countries like Korea and Japan, a tragedy of this magnitude has triggered the instant resignation of the local government executives though they are not directly and proximately linked to lthis useless and unnecessary loss of lives. These resignations are not admissions of culpability or guilt but a conscience decision to accept accountability because, after all, it is principally and ultimately within their power to prevent the disaster by enforcing the laws or effectively monitoring their enforcement. But none of that could happen here."

The point Sison wants to bring out is that Mathay need not worry if he voluntarily and remorsefully resigned because he would not be adjudged culpable but merely accountable. Now, is there much of a difference between culpability and accountability? Even if there is, Mathay can not be held accountable because, as pointed out by Sison himself, accountability is premised on the accountable person having the "power to prevent the disaster by enforcing the laws or effectively monitoring their enforcement." But Mathay has shown that these are duties, powers and functions which belong to other offices or agencies and it is precisely because of this fact that both the NBI and DOJ have found the QC Mayor bereft of responsibility for the Ozone disaster.

It is strange that one who urges his TV viewers and newspaper readers to *ipaglaban* their rights, principles and convictions within the ambit of the law would, on the contrary, urge Mathay to accept accountability for a disaster for which he had no power to prevent. *Huwag ipaglaban.*

Japanese Culture

Atty. Sison and the Inquirer Editorial have something in common. They both want Mayor Mathay to emulate the Japanese culture of "harikiri" and not to adhere to what Sison calls "our damaged culture."



O. SOL. PALACPAC

In his column in the April 7, 1996 issue Malaya, Mr. O. Sol Palacpac wrote: ". . . doing either of these self-punishments (resignation or suicide), which are ingrained in the Japanese culture, cannot apply locally." Mr. Palacpac was referring to some cases of Japanese officials resigning or committing "harikiri" after being found responsible for major cases of failure, negligence or shame. Granting that we could copy the Japanese style, Mathay could not be forced to resort to either resignation or suicide since he was not in any way responsible for the Ozone fire unlike the Japanese officials mentioned by Mr. Palacpac.



CRUCIFIXION came early for ousted Health Secretary Hilarion Ramiro and Quezon City Mayor Ismael Mathay.

Weeks before Good Friday, Ramiro was already being crucified over the DOH's "medikit scam" while Mathay was being crucified for the Ozone disco tragedy.

There is, however, a difference between the lashings and the crowning of thorns and nailing of Ramiro and Mathay.

In the case of Ramiro, the public asked for his blood. In Mathay's case, it was just some politicians and Malacañang executives that demanded his head.

There was yet another difference between the two: one was greeted with tons of evidence against him, while the other had evidence to show that there was no case against him.

One is out, the other still in, despite repeated calls from some politicians for him to resign.

It is strange that it has not yet occurred to these politicians demanding the resignation of Mathay why their call is not being supported by the general public or Mathay's constituents. They still do not seem to realize that the reason their call has no public support is that most Filipinos, including some relatives of the Ozone fire victims, see the hand of ugly politics behind the demand for Mathay's resignation.

What else was all that sound and fury from the politicians if not grandstanding for more political points?

HERE AND THERE

J.V. Cruz

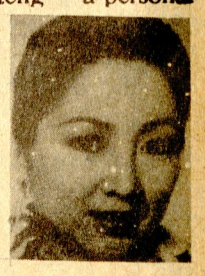


LAST MARCH 22 we wrote: "There will be investigations galore in the Ozone disaster. These will not be easy times for Quezon City Mayor Mel Mathay. There will be strenuous efforts to trace the onus of responsibility all the way up to him, although checking electrical systems and nightclub doors would seem to be distantly removed from a mayor's normal duties. But of course the politicians he has repeatedly defeated in the past, and those lusting for his position in 1998, will join hands in baying for his blood. We expect him to take the lead in, and cooperate fully with, the investigations, and we expect him to throw the book at the unconscionable, corrupt scalawags -- not God -- who have allowed this unspeakable catastrophe to happen."

Well, the lynching mob against Mathay is in full cry, and while they're nowhere to be seen, we have no doubt it is being whipped into frenzy by the politicians he has beaten in the past and those who hope to beat him in 1998. They have found allies and confederates in the media: some, to be sure, are sincerely convinced he should be held responsible for the disaster, but others may be inspired by less noble impulses. In any case, Mathay has said he welcomed any investigation of the extend of his culpability, whether conducted by Malacañang, the DILG, the Department of Justice or Congress. He has already appeared before congressional hearings, and has pledged to make available all the files and records of the city government that may be subpoenaed. *(Manila Chronicle, March 27, 1996)*

Best Of Motives

This third case we are citing on the agitation for Mathay's resignation is unlike the two "Mathay, Resign" demands taken up above. It is more of a plea than a demand and was made in a personal letter to Mel from Sen. Nikki Coseteng -- a personal letter which she impersonalized by having it published in the papers. The lady Senator claimed that it was with the best, even noble, of motives that she wanted Mathay to step down. She said she wanted to remember him "as the Mayor who is an ideal example of a public servant" and that she wanted him "to earn the respect of our people for having displayed this sense of delicadeza in doing the right thing."



We wrote Nikki, as follows: "Those who do not know of your interest in the city's mayorship (either for herself or for a certain QC Congressman) may believe you, but to those who do, your protestations of noble motives will be taken with a grain of salt."

We also challenged Nikki to be the one to set an example of resigning out of *delicadeza* considering that her position as Senator is in a precarious state in the face of the favorable progress of Nene Pimentel's "Dagdag-Bawas" protest against her and some other senators. We said that if she did set the example, we would have no objection to Mel Mathay's following suit.

The lady Senator has not answered us, unlike that time, some years ago, when we tried to implicate her in connection with an anomalous contract awarded by the Department of Public Works and Highways. Nikki immediately replied in a handwritten, handcarried letter denying that she had anything to do with the contract except to have recommended the project covered by it.

In response to Senator Coseteng's plea that Mayor Mathay relinquish his post, Joe Guevara, in his Point of Order column (Manila Bulletin, March 30, 1996) wrote:



JOSE GUEVARA

Investigations are going on regarding the Ozone fire and Mayor Mel Mathay, too, is awaiting the results and, as he said, will abide by them.

This is what due process and the rule of law is all about, and I hope Sen. Nikki Coseteng will stop riding on the Ozone disaster for the sake of a few headlines.

Mayor Mathay isn't mayor of Quezon City as a personal gift from Mrs. Coseteng.

The mayor is in City Hall because of the votes of millions of residents of QC who conferred this honor and privilege to him.

Mathay is accountable only to them, not to Coseteng. He'll heed whatever they tell him, but Coseteng must be nuts if she can speak for the people of QC.

Rep. Sonny Belmonte is a congressman from QC but he doesn't presume to speak for the city, not just

(Turn Back To Page 3)



Wise and Otherwise

By Eddie C. Flores

The Ozone Disco Fire Tragedy

Like a Heavy Cross

The Ozone Disco fire tragedy was a heavy cross mislaid on the shoulders of QC Mayor Ismael Mathay, Jr. by the professional Mathay haters and rabid political detractors.

Oh! How they gloated as they exploited to the bone the tragic fire, just to gain political mileage aimed at burying Mathay politically under the debris of the Ozone Disco fire.

Oh! How they frothed and lusted for the juicy prospect of getting the much coveted post of QC Mayor on a silver platter.

Oh! How they jumped and danced with joy at the thought that the Ozone Disco tragedy would spell the doom of the Mathay administration.

These political foes of Mathay arrogated unto themselves the roles of prosecutor, judge and executioner. Even before the investigations started, they had already condemned and convicted him as the culprit in the outbreak of the Ozone Disco fire. But both the National Bureau of Investigation and Department of Justice found nothing to link the QC Mayor to the fire.

Atonement

Despite his exoneration, however, Mathay will continue to carry the heavy cross that is the Ozone Disco fire tragedy. He will carry it towards his own Mt. Calvary to atone for the sins of omission and commission of those who were truly responsible for the fire. And as he labors and struggles under the weight of the cross, the professional Mathay haters and political detractors will continue to shout: Crucify him! Crucify him! and to jeer: Resign! Resign!

Even if they had succeeded in nailing Mathay to the Ozone Disco fire cross, he would have forgiven them for not knowing what they were doing and would have committed himself into the hands of the good people of Quezon City who had elected him overwhelmingly. Yes, it will be the good people of Quezon City who will render the final verdict. And considering his exemplary performance as the city's Chief Executive, the verdict can not be otherwise than favorable.

So, take note, all of you who devoutly wish to beat the Mayor. Stop beating him black and blue with your politically orchestrated hate campaign and black propaganda because the only way to beat the Mayor is to beat his exemplary performance.

Of course, the Mathay administration is not perfect; it has its share of shortcomings but not the fatal kind and they are rectifiable. In fact, Mayor Mathay, together with the many hard-working, honest and competent city officials and employees are trying their damn best to minimize and rectify the shortcomings. If you can not contribute anything towards the attainment of this goal, the least you can do is not to rock the ship (Bureaucracy). If the ship capsizes, you will sink with it to the bottom of the bureaucratic sea.

However, it would be good to rock the ship a little -- just a little to nudge and awaken those city officials and employees who may be sleeping on their jobs. *Kung may kasamahan kayong natutulog sa trabaho, ay huwag naman ninyo suntukin, tapikin lang ninyo ng bahagya sa balikat para magising. Kaya lang kung bagong gising huwag mong biruin sapagkat may kasabihan na biruin mo na ang lasing huwag lang lang bagong gising.*

Finally, to all the incorrigible foes of Mathay, stop playing with the fire of hatred and black propaganda, otherwise, you might create and be stoking your own Ozone Disco fire. This could happen if your blind and misguided hatred intensifies to an overload, triggering a short circuit, similar to what happened at the Ozone Disco. The fire that would be ignited will grow to raging flames that will engulf and finally devour you.

Keep Smiling

Service with a smile -- that is the motto of the city government. Let us keep smiling inspite of many unpleasant things happening around us. Let us not deny ourselves the luxury of a smile. A smile is physically, mentally and spiritually uplifting. Remember the saying: Smile and the world smiles with you; weep and you weep alone. Look at Coun. Connie Angeles, she always wears a friendly, beautiful smile, making those around her in good spirits. No wonder she cannot be dislodged from the No. One position she holds as Councilor not only in her district but in the entire city.

Even if we think of the Ozone Disco fire tragedy, I think we can still smile at the thought that those who perished are now enjoying eternal life and wearing eternal smile in God's Kingdom. To the bereaved parents and relatives of the victims, let us offer a silent prayer that the good Lord may give them the strength to bear the pain of their loss. Perhaps, even they can smile at the thought that their loved ones are now in an infinitely better place than where we are now.

Norman's Request

Norman Crisostomo, who works at City Hall's Sanitation Division, is the son of Professor and top journalist Isabelo T. Crisostomo. He requested this little corner to say a good word about his father's latest opus -- The Filipino Achievers In America, which tells of gifted and talented Filipinos who have excelled in various fields of endeavor in America.

If it is a Crisostomo book, it must be damn good. So book your orders now and read the inspiring stories of these gutsy Filipinos who conquered the land of milk and honey against fierce competition.

Incidentally, Norman comes from Nueva Ecija, cradle of some great Filipino achievers and where politics is invariably mixed with gun power and blood. The province is the gateway to the Cagayan Valley, the land of adventurous and industrious Ilocanos. The violence-prone politicos of Nueva Ecija should read the book of one of their favorite sons and learn a lesson or two about the honest and peaceful struggles of the Filipino Achievers in America. In the process, they might draw enough inspiration to lead in the transformation of their politically battered province into a land of peace, progress and prosperity. And, who knows, they too might become great achievers in their native land for the benefit of their compatriots instead of for Americans. And arrest the brain drain in our country.

The Green Terrace: A Place Of Dining Solace

One of the newest and finest eateries to open its door to gourmand lovers is the GREEN TERRACE located at Matalino St., QC, back of City Hall. One of the owners who wants to be known simply as Mona Lisa said that the eatery is designed to promote the native food industry. It specializes in native dishes which are prepared and cooked the native way under strict supervision to insure freshness and cleanliness. They are served by courteous and honest waiters. So, if you want to experience the gastronomical delight of mouth-watering, steaming native dishes, the place to go is the GREEN TERRACE, a place of dining solace.

IN AID OF LEGISLATION/ELECTION?

Congressional Investigations

Aside from the NBI and DOJ investigations on the Ozone disco tragedy, both the upper and lower houses of Congress conducted hearings on the case supposedly "in aid of legislation." Or was it "in aid of election"? In the House of Representatives, the hearing was conducted at the instance of QC Rep. Feliciano Belmonte whose mayoralty ambition is an open secret. Belmonte blamed the issuance or non-issuance of permit to operate to the Ozone disco under Mayor Mathay. He said: "If no permit was issued, it was criminal negligence, if a permit was issued (despite





the disco's lack of fire safety certificate), it was a bigger crime." The hearing was conducted by the Committee on Public Order and Security of which Rep. Roilo Golez of Parañaque is Vice Chairman and Belmonte, a member. In the Senate, the hearing was conducted by the Committees on Local Government and on Urban Planning, Housing and Resettlement chaired by Senators Sotto and Honasan.

Were these Congressional hearings really conducted "in aid of legislation?" Inquirer columnist Adrian Cristobal does not think so. In his April 8, 1996 column he wrote:

THE BREAKFAST TABLE
Adrian Cristobal



Congressional investigations have lately been nothing more than an aid to legislators. They don't tell us more than what we already know: *jueteng* and drug lords, for example. But what they achieve most of the time is headlines for the investigators and the great opportunity of promoting their political agenda.

This is what happened to Quezon City Mayor Mel Mathay in the wake of the Ozone disco tragedy. As the families of the victims said, the whole inquiry into the affair has all the elements of politicking. It reminds them of vultures picking at the bones of the dead to statisfy political lust.

The ostensible reason for the congressional inquiry was to find out how safety rules and the building code were enforced. The objective, as it turned out, was to question the Quezon City administration and make the mayor and other officials appear as the villains of negligence, setting them up for the kill in 1998. (Sen. Blas Ople pointed out in his column that there was even a desire to make Mathay the 160th victim.)

While Rep. Feliciano Belmonte cannot be faulted for showing interest in the tragedy that claimed hundreds of young lives in his own city, there's a political taint to his concern, something that could have been avoided by a little inhibition. Of course, he had assured Mayor Mathay that he had nothing to do with a newspaper's attacks on his person, but it's like being assured by a Rothweiler.

As one columnist puts it, the Ozone tragedy has provided some of the worms the opportunity for coming out of the woodwork. These are the electorally defeated and the politically hungry.

COUNTERPOINT — ALVIN CAPINO



A CONGRESSIONAL hearing during Holy Week? Unbelievable but true. The Committee on Public Order with its vice chairman, Parañaque Rep. Roilo Golez, taking the lead, continued its public hearings on the Ozone tragedy yesterday, and will probably go on until tomorrow.

Considering that Congress is on a one-month recess and many of their peers are already enjoying their vacation, the hearing is a rare phenomenon.

If I didn't know any better, I would be joining the public acclamation that such an extraordinary demonstration of diliegence by Golez and company deserves. However, the obvious political motives behind the investigation makes the proponents underserving of praise. They should instead be denounced for making a mockery of this holy season by continuing with their muckraking of an investigation apparently meant to advance a partisan agenda.

It is obvious that the Golez-led congressional investigation has only one principal objective which has nothing to do with any planned legislation at all: to find fault with Quezon City Mayor Ismael Mathay Jr. and fuel the clamor for his resignation by some people who are not really after accountability but only political opportunity.

The focus on Mathay had been obvious from the first day of the hearings when the questions all tried to establish Mathay's alleged failure to enforce the building and fire codes on safety of establishments like the Ozone Disco. For example, the direction of yesterday afternoon's hearing was already telegraphed by the headline of the morning tabloids, quoting Golez as saying that the owners ofOzone Disco are political supporters of Mathay and they contributed to his campaign pot in the last elections.

If Golez really wanted an honest-to-goodness investigation, he should have extended the probe to other big fires over the last six months, to see whether local officials, including building and fire officers in-charge of granting permits and clearances, failed to do their job. There is that fire in another disco house in Pasay City last October, for example, where 10 stay-in workers died because they were trapped in the building which had no fire escape. Golez and the other members of the panel are apparently not interested in the incident. Then there is the big fire at the Ortigas complex. Although no one died in that incident, there are people who say that deaths were only avoided because the fire happened outside of store hours. The panel is not interested in that either. It's only Ozone that it wants to investigate and it's only Mathay that it wants to pin the blame on for that incident.

The real brains behind the investigation are two Quezon City congressmen -- Reps. Dante Liban and Sonny Belmonte. Liban is a bitter political rival of Mathay. Their feud started when Liban tried, and failed, to create Novaliches City from territory to be carved from Quezon City. The feud intensified in the last elections when Mathay's son ran against Liban for the 2nd district of Quezon City. Belmonte, who has also been vocal about the alleged culpability of the Quezon City government for the Ozone tragedy, is known to be eyeing the mayoralty in 1998.

Golez, famous for starting investigations with a bang and ending with a whimper (remember the jueteng and illegal drug probes?), is doing the Ozone Disco as an apparent "favor" for his friends. Golez, aside from the gratitude of those who would like to oust Mathay or at least bury him in the ashes of Ozone deep enough so that he can't extricate himself from it come 1998, probably thinks that the national publicity from this investigation would help his possible bid for the Senate in 1998.

Many worms, all wannabe mayors of Quezon City, are coming out of the woodwork in the wake of the Ozone tragedy and all of them are trying to exploit the incident by hitting Mathay.

One legislator who cannot run for reelection even tried to milk publicity mileage out of the burial of the unidentified victims as the issue. That issue was forced, since there seems to be nothing wrong with interring the still unidentified victims in individual plots at the Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina.

Dad's Search For Son Ends

By DIVINA P. JAPA



Engineer Llorente O. Yarisantos had despaird in finding the body of his eldest son Jose, who was among those inise the Ozone Disco when the pre-dawn fire struck.

Jose "Joey" Yarisantos was the manger of the Quezon City disco for eight months where he had organized the popular ballroom dancing four nights a week.

The March 19 fire left 160 people dead, most of them teeners. Days after the fire, a total of 22 bodies remained unidentified.

The elder Yarisantos, a civil engineer, scoured the funeral parlors and could not find the body of his 49-year-old son. He learned that a task force formed by QC Mayor Ismael A. Mathay Jr. is working on the identification of 22 bodies.

Yarisantos went to the Quezon City Hall health department and learned that he was claimant no. 26.

He provided the task force the materials that could help identify his son.

These included a photo, records provided by his dentist Dr. Paulyn Daing, X-ray and fingerprints.

The task force, which included Prof. Jerome Bailen of the UP department of antropology and pathologist Dr. Racquel del Rosario-Fortun, had identified some cadavers, but not that of Joey Yarisantos.

"I was losing hope," said Llorente Yarisantos. What Yarisantos did not count on, however, was the dogged determination of the Ozone Task Force to identify the remaining bodies.

The team worked days and nights. Dr. Maria Paz Ugalde, assistant city health officer and task force member, said the team conducted "panoramic dental X-ray" on several cadavers.

Last May 10, the ABS-CBN Channel 2 program "Hoy Gising!" gave the team, headed by Dr. Magdalena Ybañez, QC health officer, a plaque of recognition "for the outstanding performance of duties and responsibilities in the services of the Filipino."

But instead of going home to celebrate after the program ended at 6 pm, the task force members went back to the Quezon City Hall, buoyed by the prospect of identifying one more cadaver.

Earlier, the team went back to the Loyola Memorial Park where the bodies were placed in shallow crypts and had opened one casket. They found that one cadaver had two skull caps and body parts that could belong to different persons. This casket also contained a set of dentures; yet, the cadaver inside had a full set of teeth.

The dentures fitted the description given by Joey's dentist. The dentures had nicotine stains, for the disco manager smoked four packs of cigarettes a day, his father said. The dentures also matched those of another cadaver which had missing teeth.

Dr. Guia Najera Ison, a task force member, said Dr. Fortun also noted that this cadaver had a "full grown heart" indicating that the cadaver was an adult, in contrast to the majority of the casualties who were 17 to 22 years old.

"We had to confirm and reconfirm the dental analysis on the cadaver," said Ugalde.

Last May 11, the team concluded that the cadaver was that of Yarisantos. At 10 p.m., they called engineer Yarisantos to inform him they had found his son's cadaver. It was the 11th body to be identified by the task force.

The elder Yarisantos was speechless and cried. His wife Lourdes also broke down.

Now, the Yarisantos family could plan the burial of Joey, who left behind his wife Monina De Veyra and sons, Colin, 20; Cyril, 18; and Casey, 9.

Joey will be buried on July 18, his 50th birthday, at the family mausoleum in La Loma.

The Ozone Task Force, whose other members include Dr. Anastacio Rosete Jr. and Faustino Mangaser, dentists of the city health department; Myra Grace Lara of the UP department of anthropology; and Vilma Ching and Rodrigo Bermudez of the QC health department will continue working on the other cadavers.

Ugalde said they could not complete their mission without the invaluable help of Mathay, the UP department of anthropology, the UP college of medicine, Dr. Filoteo Alano of the National Kidney Institute, Dr. Raul Fores of the Makati Medical Center, and the UP College of Dentistry. *(Manila Bulletin, May 18, 1996)*



Engineer Llorente O. Yarisantos meets Mayor Ismael A. Mathay Jr. after the Ozone Task Force identified the body of his son Jose, who was the manager of the Quezon City disco that burned down. With them are task force members Dr. Ma. Paz Ugalde and Dr. Guia Najera-Ison of the city's health department.

MASTER LIST OF OZONE VICTIMS EXTENDED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Prepared by the Department of Social Welfare Services headed by Ms. Teresa Mariano

Name of Victim	Hospital/Funeral Parlor	Claimant/Relationship	Address	Amount Extended	Date Released
Abrajano, Nazareta	V. Luna Gen. Hospital	Ernesto Abrajano	B-66, L1, Purok 5, Upper Bicutan, Taguig	P15,000.00	March 21, 1996
Arroyo, Christopher	Capitol Medical Center	Martha Arroyo	1121 Miguelin St., Sampaloc, Manila	P15,000.00	March 21, 1996
Bacante, Rosemarie	East Avenue Medical Center	Manalo Bacante	44-B Parinas St., Project 8, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 21, 1996
Cadete, Ritchie	Capitol Medical Center	Catalina Cadete	9-D Kamias Road, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 21, 1996
Cordova, Merly	East Avenue Medical Center	Merly Cordova	Gastambide St., Sampaloc, Manila	P15,000.00	March 21, 1996
Castillo, Jennifer	Capitol Medical Center	Jose Vincent Castillo	8 Dena St., Visayas Avenue, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 21, 1996
Floresca, Ryan	V. Luna Gen. Hospital	Rusela Floresca	c/o VLMC	P15,000.00	March 21, 1996
Givan, Levie	V. Luna Gen. Hospital	Helen Givan	1767 P. Florentino St., Sampaloc, Manila	P15,000.00	March 21, 1996
Loyola, Gerardo	East Avenue Medical Center	Remedios Loyola	Cogeo, Gate I, Antipolo, Rizal	P15,000.00	March 21, 1996
Loza, Arnold	Capitol Medical Center	Melanie Valeros	1198 Int. A., Pandacan, Manila	P15,000.00	March 21, 1996
Miranda, Michael	East Avenue Medical Center	Felipina Miranda	125 Wawa, Balagtas, Bulacan	P15,000.00	March 21, 1996
Riva, Janet	V. Luna Gen. Hospital	Tessie Riva	Foundation St. Joseph Unit, 194 Blk 11, Rosario, Pasig	P15,000.00	March 21, 1996
Orolfo, Eloisa II	East Avenue Medical Center	Eloisa Orolfo	B-23 Lito Don Castillo, Pasay, c/o VLMC	P15,000.00	March 21, 1996
Palaganas, Norberto	East Avenue Medical Center	Carlota Palaganas	20 Quezon St., 6th Avenue, Caloocan City	P15,000.00	March 21, 1996
Papio, Joey	Capitol Medical Center	Erlinda Papio	2961 Lorenzo St., Dela Paz, Pandacan, Manila	P15,000.00	March 21, 1996
Reyes, Zandro	Capitol Medical Center	Teresita Reyes	1570 A.G. Tuazon St., Sampaloc, Manila	P15,000.00	March 21, 1996
Santiago, Romanito	East Avenue Medical Center	Crisanto Santiago	Balagtas, Bulacan	P15,000.00	March 21, 1996
Sorebillo, Vicente	Capitol Medical Center	Dolores Sorebillo	5-1 Road 10, 1st St., Triangle, San Juan	P15,000.00	March 21, 1996
Teodoro, Cristina	V. Luna Gen. Hospital	Cristina Teodoro	H-3 Pilar St., Village, Novaliches, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 21, 1996
Vijandre, Marian	V. Luna Gen. Hospital	Menardo Vijandre	Lapnit, San Ildefonso	P15,000.00	March 21, 1996
Calderon, Ma. Teresa	Jose Memorial Reyes Hospital	Stewart Reynoso/Cousin	851-B Dos Castillas, Sampaloc, Manila	P15,000.00	March 21, 1996
Castro, Vemelie	V. Luna Gen. Hospital	Villarina Lachica/Aunt	7-B Makabayan St., Brgy. Obrero	P15,000.00	March 21, 1996
Dangit, Dafudil	Jose Reyes Memorial Hospital	Michael Dangel	18-H R Bambang, Pasig	P15,000.00	March 21, 1996
Dinio, Carolina	United Doctors Medical Center	Pinky Manungay/Sister	48-C Malaya St., Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 21, 1996
Arreza, Sarah Jane	Arlington Memorial Chapel	Nida Cynthia Arreza/Mother		P15,000.00	March 21, 1996
Garcia, Grace	Arlington Memorial Chapel	Aiden Garcia	15 Escopa II, Proj. 4, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 21, 1996
Rempil, Rommel	Arlington Memorial Chapel	Ruby Rempil		P15,000.00	March 21, 1996
Ty, Emiliano Santos	Arlington Memorial Chapel	Carmen Ty	36 Gonzales St., Cal. City	P15,000.00	March 21, 1996
Vengco, Rhodore	Arlington Memorial Chapel	Dicky Lim		P15,000.00	March 21, 1996
Abgao, Noel	Popular Funeral Parlor	Jesus Abgao/Father		P15,000.00	March 22, 1996
Asuncion, Jane Pearl	Capitol Funeral	Teresita Roxas/Aunt	2164 Eden St., Sta. Ana, Manila	P15,000.00	March 22, 1996
Borja, Anthony	St. Peter	Rachel Borja/Sister	76 Roces Ave., Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 22, 1996
Castillo, Keith	Paramount Funeral	Federico Catillo/Father	Atis St., Mapayapa Village, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 22, 1996
Cruz, Roxanne	Funeraria Oro	Edmundo Cruz/Father	856 Dos Castillas St., Sampaloc, Manila	P15,000.00	March 22, 1996
Cruz, Rhazel	Funeraria Oro	Edmundo Cruz/Father	856 Dos Castillas St., Sampaloc, Manila	P15,000.00	March 22, 1996
De Asis, Ronald	Capitol Funeral	Pilar de Asis/Mother		P15,000.00	March 22, 1996
De los Reyes, Raquel	Capitol Funeral	Lourdes de los Reyes		P15,000.00	March 22, 1996
Espina, Crisanto	St. Peter	Cristina Bustalinio/Mother	20 Florpena St., Roxas District, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 22, 1996
Liwanag, Giovanni	Prudential	Esperanza Liwanag	132-B Speaker Perez St., Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 22, 1996
Nabong, Wendy	Arlington Memorial Chapel	Torio Nabong	Eduke St., Makati Ave., SMC Apartelle	P15,000.00	March 22, 1996
Pascual, Evangeline	Vasquez Funeral	Rosita Bondos	53 Unrubia St., Project 4, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 22, 1996
Patulot, Rommel	St. Peter	Gracita Santos/Sister	867-A Mabini St., Hagonoy, Bulacan	P15,000.00	March 22, 1996
Patulot, Ma. Rosario	St. Peter	Gracita Santos /Sister	867-A Mabini St., Hagonoy, Bulacan	P15,000.00	March 22, 1996
Rivera, Michael	International Funeral	Fely Rivera/Mother		P15,000.00	March 22, 1996
Roxas, Ma. Teresa	Capitol Memorial Chapel	Teresa Roxas/Mother	2164 Eden St., Sta. Ana, Manila	P15,000.00	March 22, 1996
Sanchez, Michelle	Capitol Memorial Chapel	Scarlet Sanchez/Mother	Luzon Avenue, Culiat, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 22, 1996
Sanchez, Dino	Pacheco Funeral Home	Scarlet Sanchez/Mother	Luzon Avenue, Culiat, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 22, 1996
Talampas, Emiliano	Pacheco Funeral Home	Ma. Israel Talampas/Wife	556 San Miguel, Hagonoy, Bulacan	P15,000.00	March 22, 1996
Torres, Rosella	Capitol Memorial Chapel	Agustin Torres	16 Urdaneta St., Intramuros Village	P15,000.00	March 22, 1996
Viloria, Joseph Conrad	International Funeral	Gina Viloria	Mapayapa	P15,000.00	March 22, 1996
Zante, Junie	St. Peter	Juvenal Zante	Gagba, Libao, Aklan	P15,000.00	March 22, 1996
Tiomico, Laurence,	United Doctors Medical Center	Lola Tionico/Sister	1247 Gelinos St., Sampaloc, Manila	P15,000.00	March 22, 1996
Tomeno, Nelson	United Doctors Medical Center	Norberto Tomeno	8 Ventura St., Balingasa	P15,000.00	March 22, 1996
Dizon, Baby	Ospital ng Maynila	Sally Dizon/Sister-in-Law	1235 Tayabas St., Sta. Cruz, Manila	P15,000.00	March 22, 1996
Flores, Mary Rose	U S T	Marlene Flores/Mother	852-D Dos Castillas, Sampaloc, Manila	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
De Guzman, Franklin	Veterans Hospital	Lolita de Guzman	Virata St., Caloocan City	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Galang, Jose Melvin	Phil. Gen. Hospital	Melba Galang	2326 Laura St., Pandacan, Manila	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Pilapil, Angelo	International Funeral	Bernardo Pilapil/Father	2691 South Ave., Brgy. Olympia, Makati City	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Rauza, Ana Rhodora	Funeraria Oro	Librada Bruce/Aunt	52 Dos Castillas, Sampaloc, Manila	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Refran, Ma. Leamor	Pacheco Funeral Homes	Teresita Refran/Mother	19-A Luna St., Sta. Lucia, Novaliches, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Romero, Susan	Popular Memorial Chapel	Ester Romero/Mother	224 Leyte St., Gagalangin, Tondo, Manila	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Sagario, Galo	St. Peter	Tessie Sagario/Wife	01-D Bayabas St., Sitio Sto. Niño, Bicutan, Taguig	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Sagario, Galvin	Funeraria Oro	Tessie Sagario/Mother	01-D Bayabas St., Sitio Sto. Niño, Bicutan, Taguig	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Samson, Emmanuel	Prudential Funeral Homes	Ronilo Samson/Father	17 Goodwill St. Kaingin Road, Balintawak, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Sevillena, Ricardo	San Fernando Funeral Homes	Merly Sevillena/Mother	56 Nabituan St., Masambong, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Tiamson, Fiona	Vasquez Funeral	Adelina Tiamson/Mother	60 Sampaguita St., East Bagong Barrio, Caloocan City	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Tsuda, Abraham	Capitol Memorial Chapel	Lourdes Tsuda	2601-C Old Panaderos, Manila	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Vance, Bernadette	Pacheco Funeral Homes	Ceferino Vance Jr./Father	508H-MEQ, BNS, Fort Bonifacio, Makati City	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Vela, Oscar	International Funeral Homes	Josefina Vela Baltazar/Sister	62 East Riverside, Brgy. Paltok, SFDM, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Mamerto, Anabelle	Arlington Funeral Chapel	Rizalina Mamerto/Mother	258 PNR Compound, Sangandaan, Caloocan City	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Menguis, Russel	Prudential Funeral Homes	Cecilia Menguis/Mother	1-M dela Cruz St., Krus na Ligas, Diliman, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Ocampo, Joel	Pacheco Funeral Homes	Leo Ocampo/Father	Rizal St., San Jose, Occidental Mindoro	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Ocampo, Manuel	International Funeral Homes	Leo Ocampo/Father	Rizal St., San Jose, Occidental Mindoro	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Oclarit, Romeo Butch	Pacheco Funeral Homes	Amalia Oclarit/Wife	35 Romblon St., Bago Bantay, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Pacheco, Kristofer	Pacheco Funeral Homes	Francisco Pacheco/Father	135 Premium Ext., GSIS Vill., Project 8, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Pangidian, Mariecar	Dayao Funeral Home	Ramon Pangidian/Father	2272 Luzon Ave., Sampaloc, Manila	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Peras, Bienvenido	Prudential Funeral Homes	Asuncion Peras/Mother	624 F.F., Blumentritt St., Hulo, Mandaluyong City	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Agregado, Evelyn	Paramount Funeral	Antonio Agregado/Father	55 Cotabato St., Bago Bantay, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Alcala, Ariel	Pacheco Funeral Homes	Alejandro Alcala/Father	2538 Cellejon I, del Pan, Sta. Ana, Manila	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Alvarez, Carmelita	Prudential Funeral	Bernard Alvarez/Husband	101 Klawit St., Bo. San Jose, Caloocan City	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Antonio, Rosaline	Vasquez Funeral	Pelagia Antonio/Mother	383 Quirino Highway, Bagbag, Novaliches, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Castro, Venil	Prudential Funeral	Emily Castro/Mother	7-P Makabayan St., Kamuning, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Cruz, Michael	Prudential Funeral	Reynaldo Cruz/Brother	77 N. Vicencio St., Ningan, Malabon	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Cruz, Rommel	Pacheco Funeral Homes	Arbelinda Ignacio/Sister	Blk. I, Lot 57, Comp. 6, Kingspoint, Sauyo, Novaliches	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Dela Cruz, Baby Rose	Funeraria Oro	Lily dela Cruz/Mother	2202 Alabastro St., San Andres Bukid, Manila	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Donato, James	Pacheco Funeral Homes	Marina Donato/Mother	2563 New Panaderos St., Sta. Ana, Manila	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Dulfo, Antonio	Vasquez Funeral	Lesme Dulfo/Brother	Daang Bakal, 6th Ave. Ext., Caloocan City	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Galang, Jose Jesus	Pacheco Funeral	Melba Galang/Mother	2326 Laura St., Pandacan, Manila	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Jacobe, Leonardo	Funeraria Oro	Elsie Jacobe/Wife	256-E Gov. Forbes, Sampaloc, Manila	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Lomerio, Victor	Funeraria Oro	Teresita Lomerio/Mother	Blk. 6, Lot 29, Urban BLISS, Marikina	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Lopena, Froilan	Prudential Funeral	Melody Lopena/Wife	1614-B, 1st St., Onyx St., Paco, Manila	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Mallari, Rodolfo	Ospital ng Maynila	Rizalina Mallari/Mother	1527 Sta. Maria, P. Gil, Paco, Manila	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Galang, Jose Rener	Phil. General Hospital	Melba Galang/Mother	2326 Laura St., Pandacan, Manila	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Romano, Carlo	Jose Reyes Hospital	Inacita Romano	36-A Josefa St., Barangka, Marikina	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Aben, Rachelle	Delos Santos Hospital	Alexander Aben	947 Valdez St., Sampaloc, Manila	P15,000.00	March 23, 1996
Biasbas, Monching	Delos Santos Hospital	Angelita Rueda/Cousin		P15,000.00	March 24, 1996
Bruan, Cherrylyn	Delos Santos Hospital	Marissa Bruan/Cousin	87 Lunes St., Land Com. Vill., V. Mapa St., Manila	P15,000.00	March 24, 1996
De Galicia, Valerie	Veterans Hospital	Jerome de Galicia/Brother	7th Avenue, Caloocan City	P15,000.00	March 24, 1996
Gueco, Regina	Veterans Hospital	Remedios Gueco	87-B Gozon St., Caloocan City	P15,000.00	March 24, 1996
Javindar, Jenny	St. Luke's Hospital	Jerry Medina/Cousin	63 Fort Santiago	P15,000.00	March 24, 1996
Lagman, Jonard	St. Luke's Hospital	Jonard Lagman/Patient	30 Doña Aurora, Exec. Village, Santolan, Pasig	P15,000.00	March 24, 1996
Manuel, Manuel Jr.	Phil. Gen. Hospital	Maricel Manuel/Wife	1468 Balagtas St., Lapaz Village, Makati City	P15,000.00	March 24, 1996
Montesa, Myra	St. Luke's Hospital	Ike Montesa/Husband	14-C Aguinaldo St., Project 4, Quezon city	P15,000.00	March 24, 1996
Obrero, Ronillo	Phil. Gen. Hospital	Maida Obrero/Sister	4753 Barasian St., Makati City	P15,000.00	March 24, 1996
Origenes, Raymund	St. Luke's Hospital	Glenda Santos/Cousin	228 T. Morato Cor. Scout De Guia	P15,000.00	March 24, 1996
Orolfo, Cynthia	Ospital ng Maynila	Erlinda Labrata/Aunt	Blk. 24 Lot 8, Don Carlos Village, Pasay City	P15,000.00	March 24, 1996
Papas, Junily Gay	St. Luke's Hospital	Emelita Papas	136 H. Alarcon, Antipolo, Rizal	P15,000.00	March 24, 1996
Paz, Jianne	UST Hospital	Fe Tabora/Mother	33 Gen. Malvar St., Caloocan City	P15,000.00	March 24, 1996
Paz, Eleven	UST Hospital	Fe Tabora/Mother	33 Gen. Malvar St., Caloocan City	P15,000.00	March 24, 1996
Pazquin, Romarico	St. Luke's Hospital	Ma. Paz Pasquin/Mother	21-F Kaingin Road, Balintawak, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 24, 1996
Rosales, Micaela	Phil. Gen. Hospital	Elenita Rosales	3292 B-A Mabini St., Cor. Palma, Makati	P15,000.00	March 24, 1996
Sto.Domingo, Hermano	Capitol Medical Center	Lolita Salvador/Aunt	17 Goodwill St., Kaingin Road, Balintawak, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 24, 1996
Veloso, Chona	Phil. Veterans Hospital	Teresita Veloso		P15,000.00	March 24, 1996
Dimailig, Micheele	Quirino Memorial Medical Center	Melita Dimailig/Mother	Purok 5, Luud, Lipa City	P15,000.00	March 25, 1996
La Fuente, Anthony	Makati Medical Center	Litton La Fuente/Brother	113 Yulo Plaza, Pasong Tamo, Manila	P15,000.00	March 25, 1996
Maralit, Liza	Qurino Memorial Med. Center	Celso Maralit/Brother	Purok 5, Ludlud, Lipa City	P15,000.00	March 25, 1996
Muramatsu, Marlon	Medical City	Cesar Muramatsu	132 Gonzales St., Caloocan City	P15,000.00	March 25, 1996
Advincula, Jennifer	Popular Memorial Chapel	Juliet Advincula/Mother	16 Anahaw Road, Tandang Sora, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 25, 1996
Aizon, Rommel	Prudential Funeral Homes	Lilia Aizon/Mother	24 Villa Maria, Sangandaan, Caloocan City	P15,000.00	March 25, 1996
Dela Cruz, Jerry	Prudential Funeral Homes	Nora dela Cruz	Phase 8 Blk. 191, Lot 28, Bagong Silang, Caloocan City	P15,000.00	March 25, 1996
Del Pilar, Romer	International Funeral Homes	Myrna del Pilar/Mother	8413 Trabajo St., Makati City	P15,000.00	March 25, 1996
Diaz, Dante	Prudential Funeral Homes	Antonio Diaz/Father	816 Leyte del Sur, Sampaloc, Manila	P15,000.00	March 25, 1996

City Treasurer Invited To Special PhD Program In Fiscal Studies

City Treasurer Alfredo G. Mercado is one of four to six senior executives in government and the private sector invited to attend a Special Ph.D. Course in



Fiscal Studies to be conducted by the Claro M. Recto Academy of Advanced Studies. The course combines social sciences, such as anthropology and psychology with economics focused on government finance, expenditures, public debt, local governments and fiscal administration.

OTHER...

ad hoc committee to conduct an investigation of safety conditions in establishments that cater to the public "in aid of legislation." The committee will be composed by the Chairmen of the Committees on City Planning; Building and Zoning Regulations; Cultural Affairs and Tourism; Trade, Commerce and Industry; Games and Amusement; Public Peace and Order; and any other member of the Council selected by the Ad Hoc Committee.

* * *

Ozone Shrine

Councilor Tamayo has introduced a Resolution "authorizing the City Mayor, Ismael A. Mathay, Jr., to initiate expropriation proceedings for that real property along Timog Avenue, QC, on which the ill-fated Ozone Disco once stood, for the purpose of converting the same to a shrine in memory of the 157 (161 actually) young people who perished in a conflagration thereat."

Tamayo said that the shrine "would be a fitting memorial to those who died there, a mute testimony to their unfulfilled dreams and aspirations as well as a grim reminder to government authorities to be vigilant and faithful to their sworn duties and responsibilities."

LIBAN...

132,222 are in the north side.

3) of the total average daily vehicular traffic, numbering 11,287, 85% or 9,607 are in the south side leaving 1,680 or 15% only in the north side.

4) the panel of foreign engineers commissioned by the government and which conceptualized the EDSA LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT SYSTEM CONCEPT DESIGN and which the EDSA LRT HOLDINGS, INC. has agreed to implement, recommended putting up the Cubao Station at the south side.

In the statements of the MRTC officials, they accused the Councilors of siding with the pro-south group in order to make a fast buck. Liban said that his speech was not meant to dwell on the merits of either north or south as the site of the Cubao LRT station, but he stressed that the Council has the right to be consulted on which is the better site. He reiterated his condemnation of the "snide and unsavory" statements of the MRTC officials and stressed that if ever they make a choice, north or south, it will not be for monetary considerations but for what will best serve public interest.

Councilor Samson suggested a resolution declaring the MRTC officials concerned as persona non-grata in QC.

Retired QC Policeman Uses Pension For Drug Abuse Prevention

Retired QC Corporal Vicente Za. Quintos (Viczaqui to friends) has been using his pension to organize youth groups in school campuses and communities to fight the drug addiction menace.

He said that there are four groups involved in the drug abuse problem:

1) Kids who have never used drugs but are being conditioned to start because it is "the thing to do" or "fashionable;"
2) Borderline kids who may have used drugs once or twice but not yet deeply involved;
3) Kids who are already committed to drugs, using them regularly; and
4) Kids who have become addicts.

Quintos said that the apprehension and rehabilitation of kids in the last two groups is the responsibility of the narcotic agents and the courts.

The youth groups he is organizing are for the first two groups -- borderline kids and kids being conditioned to start using drugs, Quintos said. The program stresses prevention rather than apprehension and rehabilitation, he added.

Quintos cited statistics to show how grave is the drug abuse problem:

In Metro Manila, 70,000 street children sniff solvents to escape the harshness of life with the "heaven-like" feelings induced by drugs.

In Tondo, about 20,000 addicts roam the streets creating all sorts of trouble. Five thousand (5,000) are already insane. Of the estimated 35 million durg addicts in the entire country, about 8 million are either absolutely hooked, have become insane, or have met an early death.

Quintos advises the youths: "Do not be high with drugs but high with God. Remember your Creator while you are young and read ECC 12:1"

(For inquiries on how to organize youth chapters in schools and communities, write to: SMARTEENS, P.O. Box 161, U.P. Campus, 1101 QC)

Name of Victim	Hospital/Funeral Parlor	Claimant/Relationship	Address	Amount Extended	Date Released
Sigua, Roger		Amelia Sigua/Mother	42 Policarpio Apt., Gen. Satorre, Imus, Cavite	P15,000.00	March 28, 1996
Cabuslay, Clara	J.F. Cotton Hospital	Rebecca Cabuslay/Sister	6 Don Isidro St., Ma. Corazon Subd., Mayamot, Antipolo	P15,000.00	March 28, 1996
Cabuslay, Susan	J.F. Cotton Hospital	Rebecca Cabuslay/Sister	6 Don Isidro St., Ma. Corazon Subd., Mayamot, Antipolo	P15,000.00	March 28, 1996
Ranada, Lauren Jess	Family Clinic	Pearlita Ranada/Sister	1138 Miguelin, Sampaloc, Manila	P15,000.00	March 28, 1996
Mariano, Anziel	Paramount	Joel Mariano/Brother	917 Matias St., Sampaloc, Manila	P15,000.00	March 29, 1996
Lopez, Dashiel	International	Priscila Lopez/Mother	9 Santo St., Damayan	P15,000.00	March 29, 1996
Romero, Elbert	Jose Reyes Memorial	Bernardina Romero/Mother	460 Int. I, Star St., Mandaluyong city	P15,000.00	March 29, 1996
Santos, Julian		Armando Santos/Brother	147 M.H. del Pilar St., SFDM, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 29, 1996
Guzon, Christopher		Ma. Josie Guzon/Mother	101 Dahlia St., Villa Teresa Subd., Marulas, Valenzuela	P15,000.00	April 1, 1996
Cajucom, Jayson		Teresa Cajucom/Wife	2 Biaknabato, 6th Ave., Cor. Payapa, Caloocan City	P15,000.00	April 1, 1996
Yambot, Marilyn		Danilo Yambot/Father	160 Twin Pioneer, Don Carlos Village, Pasay City	P15,000.00	April 1, 1996
Crudo, Eugene	J.F. Cotton Hospital	Eugene Crudo/Victim	Foundation St., Joseph, Unit 21 Bldg. II, Rosario, Pasig	P15,000.00	April 1, 1996
Pedenez, Delfin		Deogracias Pedenes/Brother	6 Zamboanga St., West Avenue, Quezon City	P15,000.00	April 2, 1996
Guzman, Jimmy de		Tranquilino de Guzman/Father	252 Virata St., Caloocan City	P15,000.00	April 2, 1996
Melo, Dorothy	Capitol	Susan Melo/Mother	Area 6 Luzon Ave., Quezon City	P15,000.00	April 1, 1996
Manabat, Jake	Vasquez	Felipe Manabat/Father	842-C P. Noval, Sampaloc, Manila	P15,000.00	April 1, 1996
Fernandez, Teresa	Funeraria Oro	Irene Fernandez/Mother	42-Elvie St., Sto. Domingo	P15,000.00	April 1, 1996
Petallar, John	Paramount/International	Cecille Petallar/Sister	164-B H. Lopez Blvd., Tondo, Manila	P15,000.00	April 8, 1996
Celestino, Rufino	Pacheco Funeral Homes	Regina Celestino/Sister	20 Cooper St., SFDM, Quezon City	P15,000.00	April 8, 1996
Sta. Maria, Danilo	Funeraria Oro	Gregorio Sta. Maria	34 Pitimini St., Paltok, Quezon City	P15,000.00	April 8, 1996
Maglonso, Ronaldo		Teresita Guillen/Mother	2141 Rizal Ave., Sta. Cruz, Manila	P15,000.00	April 10, 1996
Pahatuat, Kim		Rodolfo Pahatuat/Father	2162 Merardo St., Pandacan, Manila	P15,000.00	April 10, 1996
Salas, Janice		Glenda Salas/Mother	2462 Sto. Niño St., Pandacan, Manila	P15,000.00	April 10, 1996
Bacani, Irish		Imelda Bacani/Mother	2467 Sto. Niño St., Pandacan, Manila	P15,000.00	April 10, 1996
Cue, Karen Joy		Helena C. Millar/Sister	6 White Field St., White Plains, Quezon City	P15,000.00	April 11, 1996
Arceo, Manuel		Loida Limco/Sister	24 Legal St., Project 8, Quezon City	P15,000.00	April 12, 1996
Oscaris, Marcos		Abad Manungay/Grandfather	48 Malaya St., La Loma, Quezon City	P15,000.00	April 13, 1996
Bravo, Pia Jasmin		Carmelita B. Marcelo	2467 Bacta St., Pandacan, Manila	P15,000.00	April 15, 1996
Magahas, Patrick John		Teodora M. Mangalos/Mother	537 Gov. Forbes St., Sampaloc, Manila	P15,000.00	April 15, 1996
Vega, Albert			Blk 27 Lot 3 , BLISS P. Burgos	P 5,000.00	April 17, 1996
Yuson, May			842-B P. Noval St., Sampaloc, Manila	P 3,000.00	April 17, 1996
Badigne, Vhirma		Virginia Badigne/Mother	2207 Indium St., Sta. Ana, Manila	P15,000.00	April 18, 1996
Abon, Margarita			947 Valdez St., Sampacloc, Manila	P 5,000.00	April 19, 1996
Mercado, Manuel		Araceli Espiritu	Area H Block 4, Sapang Palay, Bulacan	P15,000.00	April 22, 1996
Rompe, Jojie		Sgt. Jonathan Rompe	669 Earnshaw, Sampaloc, Manila	P15,000.00	April 24, 1996
Mendoza, Ariel			Lot 17 Blk 33, Lagro, Quezon City	P15,000.00	April 25, 1996
De Leon, Laurence			35 Sta. Ana St., Sto. Rosario Village, Malabon	P 1,000.00	April 29, 1996
Calon, Joseph		Janette Calon	Floraville Subd., Camarse Compd., Bacoor, Cavite	P15,000.00	April 29, 1996
Hortizuela, Charlie		Geraldo Hortizuela	1367 P. Casals St., Sampaloc, Manila	P15,000.00	June 4, 1996
Fontillas, Arnie	Popular Funeral	Elizabeth Carido/Sister	179 T. Claudio St., San Juan, Manila	P15,000.00	March 25, 1996
Itchon, Paul	Prudential Funeral	Erlinda Itchon/Mother	1918 Kahilum St., Pandacan, Manila	P15,000.00	March 25, 1996
Jacinto, Enrico	Funeraria Paz	Delia Jacinto/Mother	17-E Goodwill St., Kaingin Road, Baltintawak, Q.C.	P15,000.00	March 25, 1996
Mamon, Dhona	Popular Funeral	Rolando Mamon/Father	1354-A Unang Sigaw, Balintawak, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 25, 1996
Mandap, Melissa	Prudential Funeral Homes	Erlinda Mandap/Mother	1 Area 6, Luzon Ave., Diliman, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 25, 1996
Matias, Alfredo	International Funeral Homes	Federico Matias/Father	9 Gen. Trias, Malabon	P15,000.00	March 25, 1996
Mondragon, Kaia	Prudential Funeral Homes	Fara Mondragon/Sister	2 Area 6, Luzon Ave., Diliman, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 25, 1996
Montenegro, Cyd	Arlington Memorial Chapel	Veronica Montenegro/Mother	106 Bldg. 6, Foundation of St. Joseph, Pasig	P15,000.00	March 25, 1996
Nuevas, Evangeline	Arlington Memorial Chapel	Felix Robedillo/Father	17-I Katipunan St., Balintawak, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 25, 1996
Padahinog, Yasmin	International Funeral	Yvonne Padahinog/Sister	Blk. 10 Lot 13, Phase III-C, Talangka Alley, Cal. City	P15,000.00	March 25, 1996
Reclusado, Amycilla	Funeraria Vasquez	Aileen Reclusado/Sister	Jalung, Porac, Pampanga	P15,000.00	March 25, 1996
Reyes, Claudyne	Arlington Memorial Chapel	Teodoro Reyes/Father	52-D Cotabato St., Bago Bantay, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 25, 1996
Reyes, Ireneo	Arlington Memorial Chapel	Carmen Macosme/Mother	5 Gen. Trias St., Malabon	P15,000.00	March 25, 1996
Jereza, Michael	Arlington Memorial Chapel	Enrico Jereza	308 Duterte St., Banawa, Cebu City	P15,000.00	March 25, 1996
Silva, Jay	Prudential Funeral Homes	Jovn Silva/Father	68 Corcuera St., Tondo, Manila	P15,000.00	March 25, 1996
Silvertino, Zhermine	Pacheco Funeral Homes	Lamberto Silvertino/Father	24 F Aniceta St., Balintawak, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 25, 1996
Soriano, Dennis	Funeraria Oro	Enrique Soriano	105 UP Village, Tandang Sora, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 25, 1996
Jiola, Miguel	Pacheco Funeral Homes	Gardo de Rosa/Brother	2220 Paco Roman St., Sta. Ana, Manila	P15,000.00	March 25, 1996
Tolentino, John	Pacheco Funeral Homes	Sonia Tolentino/Mother	1953 Flordeliz St., La Paz, Makati City	P15,000.00	March 25, 1996
Valenzuela, Alma	International Funeral	Adoracion Valenzuela	346 Bagumbayan, Taguig	P15,000.00	March 25, 1996
Violante, Glenda	Prudential Funeral Homes	Agapita Dime/Grandmother		P15,000.00	March 25, 1996
Abina, Juneniel	Paramount Funeral	Pedro Abina Jr.	7 Maligaya St., Freedom Park I, Batasan Hills	P15,000.00	March 26, 1996
Bunuan, Domingo Jr.	Capitol Memorial Chapel	Lolita Bunuan/Mother	Blk. 8 Lot 59, Caloocan City	P15,000.00	March 26, 1996
Lizardo, Wilfredo	Medical City	Virginia Lizardo/Mother	192 Cura Compound, San Nicolas, Cavite	P15,000.00	March 26, 1996
Cinco, Ranulfo	East Avenue Medical Center	Marilyn Cinco	104 Sitio Mabilog, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 26, 1996
Dela Cruz, Victoria	Popular Funeral	Gregorio Vega/Husband	5 Apollo St., Project 6, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 26, 1996
Gamapas, Robert	Pacheco Funeral Homes	Vicente Gamapas/Father	113 Benitez St., Cubao, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 26, 1996
Hernandez, Lorelie	Popular Funeral	Luzviminda Hernandez/Mother	148 Marulas, Caloocan City	P15,000.00	March 26, 1996
Miranda, Margarita	Arlington Memorial Chapel	Florita Miranda/Mother	12 Ruby, Doña Juliana Village, Pasig City	P15,000.00	March 26, 1996
Polinar, Reynaldo	Arlington Memorial Chapel	Lovecita Polinar/Mother	131 Gonzales St., Caloocan City	P15,000.00	March 26, 1996
Valle, Olympia	St. Peter Funeral	Sarah Valle/Sister	25 Aguho St., Project 3, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 26, 1996
Yabut, Genaro	Funeraria Paz	Mario Tolentino	Lot 22 Blk 18 Teachers Vill., Balon Bato, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 26, 1996
Amador, Edwin	Paramount Funeral	Wilma Amador/Sister	91 Sitio Mabilog, Culiat, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 26, 1996
Yamzon, Romehlee	Paramount Funeral	Elizabeth Yamzon/Mother	2023 Perpecto St., Tondo, Manila	P15,000.00	March 26, 1996
Fabian, Liza Marie		Avelina Fabian/Mother	8 Sanggumay St., Doña Manuela Subd., Las Piñas	P15,000.00	March 26, 1996
Sagario, Giselle Mae		Tessie Sagario/Mother	01-D Tayabas St., Sto. Niño, Western Bicutan, Taguig	P15,000.00	March 26, 1996
Villanueva, Ritchie		Rolando Villanueva/Father	Blk. 34 Lot 29 Lagro, Novaliches, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 26, 1996
Cunanan, Rodel	Mary Chiles	Roussel Cunanan/Sister	31 Yakal St., Victory Avenue	P15,000.00	March 27, 1996
Santos, Alexander	St. Luke's Hospital	Adoracion Santos/Mother	87 Stanford St., Cubao, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 27, 1996
Aldeguer, Marilou	Funeraria Paz	Remedios Aldeguer/Mother	131 7th Avenue, Grace Park, Caloocan City	P15,000.00	March 27, 1996
Aldeguer, Rachelle	Funeraria Paz	Remedios Aldeguer/Mother	131 7th Avenue, Grace Park, Caloocan City	P15,000.00	March 27, 1996
Espelimbergo, Nilda	Funeraria Oro	Liza Espelimbergo/Sister	37 AIB Sto. Domingo, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 27, 1996
Lizardo, Juanito	Funeraria Oro	Luningning Lizardo	192 Carcnacion St., Cuevas Comp., San Nicolas	P15,000.00	March 27, 1996
Molina, Mary Ann	Arlington Memorial Chapel	Edgar Molina/Brother	579 Sta. Quiteria, Caloocan City	P15,000.00	March 27, 1996
Patajo, Wilbert	Arlington Memorial Chapel	Lucrecia Patajo	Blk 34 Lot 24, Lagro, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 27, 1996
Villarosa, Josel	Prudential Funeral Homes	Ireneo Villarosa/Father	20 Magsaysay St., San Agustin, Malabon	P15,000.00	March 27, 1996
Enciso, Mary Joan	Popular Funeral	Oscar Enciso	2601 Old Panaderos, Sta. Ana, Manila	P15,000.00	March 28, 1996
Enciso, Roegail	Popular Funeral	Oscar Enciso	2601 Old Panaderos, Sta. Ana, Manila	P15,000.00	March 28, 1996
Villanueva, Manuel	Al Quin Memorial Service	Angelita Villanueva/Sister	315 Palasina St., Cabiao, Nueva Ecija	P15,000.00	March 28, 1996
Cajegas, Carlos		Reynaldo Cajegas/Brother	106 Tahimik St., 6th Ave. Cor. Payatas St., Caloocan City	P15,000.00	March 28, 1996
Gallarde, Filemon		Milagros Gallarde/Mother	106 Tahimik St., 6th Ave. Cor. Payatas St., Caloocan City	P15,000.00	March 28, 1996
Pelayo, Salvador Jr.		Noel Pelayo/Brother	Blk 42 Lot 50, Lagro, Quezon City	P15,000.00	March 28, 1996

DEAFENING...

that there was some negligence and laxity by officials tasked to enforce fire safety rules and regulations.

Financial Assistance

Samson also informed Benigno that "immediately after the (Ozone disco) conflagration, the City Council unanimously passed and approved under suspended rules Resolution No. 96-73 entitled "A Resolution Granting Financial Assistance To All The Victims Of The Fire That Hit The Ozone Disco Pub in Timog Avenue, Quezon City, To Be Taken From The Calamity Funds Or Any Available Funds At The City Treasury."

The Councilor from the 1st district, who is the Majority Floor Leader, cited the privilege speeches of Councilor Connie Angeles, President Pro Tempore of the City Council, and of Councilor Emilio Tamayo. Angeles informed the Council that she was preparing to introduce a measure to regulate the number of persons in moviehouses and theaters "for safety reasons and to avoid conflagration."

Tamayo spoke of "three factors to be considered in the Ozone tragedy;" to wit:

1) The non-vigilance of the public;

2) The attitude of business establishments to seek more financial returns on their investments; and

3) Negligence, laxity and other incapabilities of the concerned officials.

Finally, Samson cited the Resolution expressing the condolences of the City Council on the untimely death of the 157 victims of the Ozone disco fire.

Samson concluded his letter by appealing to Benigno "to avoid mudslinging in this (sic) times of crisis and instead put our acts together."

(Editor's Note: Except his statement that the Ozone disco fire was referred to the proper committees for investigation "in aid of legislation," Samson's citation of the privilege speeches of Councilors Angeles and Tamayo, the resolution granting financial assistance and the resolution expressing condolences of the City Council does not refute Benigno's charge of the Council's "deafening silence," which, as already stated, refers to the Council's lack of punitive action against the city officials deemed responsible for the disaster.

Samson also failed to cite a Resolution in support of the Mayor when he was being blamed by his political enemies for the Ozone disco fire and being compelled to resign. Is it because the City Council did not pass such a resolution of support? There is no mention of such a resolution in the Minutes of Council sessions. Even the City Secretary, Atty. Eugenio Jurilla, does not know if there is such a resolution.

In an interview of Mayor Mathay by reporters of TODAY, to the question "What support did Vice Mayor Herbert Bautista and the City Council give when you were getting flak from all over?", Mathay answered:

"When I get into a crisis situation, they (Bautista and the Councilors) are not supportive because they feel they will get 'burned' in supporting a controversial person. ***Mabuti pa nga yang Metro Manila mayors, nagbigay kaagad ng resolution (of support) ahead of a resolution from my own city council."*** *What resolution was the Mayor referring to? Was it a resolution of support against his political foes or was he referring to the resolution granting assistance to the Ozone disco fire victims?)*

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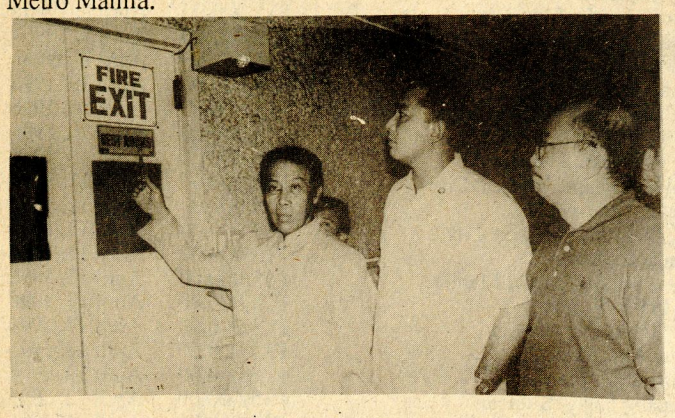
5. EMILIO M. LLANES

STIFF PRICE
Lessons From The Ozone Tragedy

It was for a very stiff price, the death of 161 persons and indelible injury to a hundred more, mostly young boys and girls celebrating their graduation. Nevertheless, the lessons learned from the Ozone disco tragedy are very significant.

Fire Safety Consciousness

First, it aroused fire safety consciousness. Mayor Mathay set the example by creating, immediately after the fire, a Task Force to inspect fire safety conditions in establishments where an assembly of people takes place, such as cinemas, theaters, shopping malls, dormitories, discotheques, etc. Those found with inadequate fire exits and fire safety devices were closed. The other Metro Manila Mayors followed Mathay's example and created their respective Task Forces to inspect their establishments in their respective cities or municipalities. In fact, there was countrywide creation of Task Forces similar to those in Metro Manila.



Quezon City Administrator Dr. Manuel Alba points to a newly-placed fire exit sign at one of the establishments inspected by a special task force formed by Mayor Mathay to inspect all establishments in the city. Looking on are Councilor "Bu" Mathay and Col. Rafael Galvez, head of the task force.

Amendments

The Ozone disaster opened eyes to the need for amending or revising the National Building Code, P.D. No. 1096, and the Fire Code of the Philippines, P.D. No. 1185, which were adopted 20 years ago. It has been pointed out that new technologies used by modern discotheques are not covered by the two PDs. Thus, these modern discotheques need as much as 20,000 watts for its audio system with its ultra booming sounds and for its lighting system consisting of rows of dancing lights, strobe lights, lasers, mirror balls with spotlights, floodlights and pinlights. The huge electric consumption of modern discotheques puts the power lines to maximum task, and, during surges, bring about overloads that melt the wires resulting in the outbreak of fire, as what happened at the Ozone disco.

The Building and Fire Codes need an amendment to impose a total ban on the use of combustible or flammable soundboards, curtains, wall panellings, decorations, such as those used at the Ozone disco where the sound boards or sound diffusers and the curtains were made of highly combustible materials -- cotton or polyester for the curtains and papiermache, corkboard, boxboard, or styropor for the sound diffusers.

Mathay's Suggested Amendment

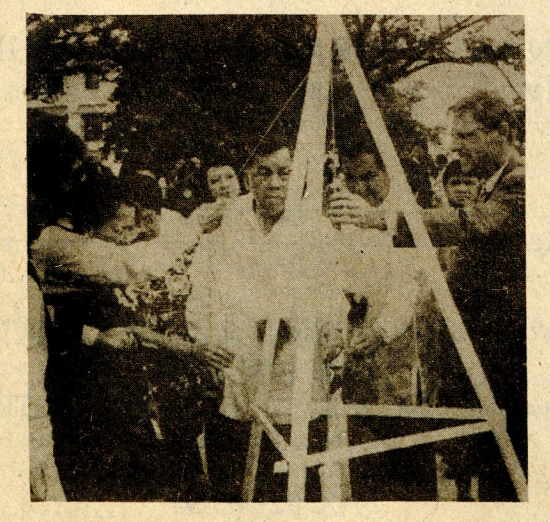
Mayor Mathay himself has suggested these amendments to the Fire and Building Codes: Separate City Engineer and City Building Officials, annual instead of "periodic" inspections by the City Building Official and the Fire Marshall of the Bureau of Fire Protection who should coordinate in undertaking these inspections to avoid buck passing, and more inspectors and higher pay to make them less vulnerable to corruption.

UAP And PDC Confab

The United Architects of the Philippines (UAP) and the Professional Development Center (PDC) held recently a national conference to discuss necessary amendments to the Building Code, such as the creation of a separate office of the building official who must be an architect. It is claimed that an architect is more competent than a civil engineer in planning for the protection of life and property in buildings where a big number of people gather.

Burn Units

The Ozone tragedy also disclosed the need for more Burn Units in hospitals. It has been found out that in Metro Manila there are only 40 hospital beds available for patients that suffer burns and most of them are at the Philippine General Hospital which accommodated 22 Ozone disco fire victims. There are five other private and government hospitals which have put up units specializing in burns but only last year. Outside Metro Manila, there are only three hospitals with Burn Units -- in Bohol and in the cities of Cebu and Davao.



Quezon City Mayor Ismael Mathay, Jr. (center) lowers a time capsule as Negros Oriental Rep. Miguel Romero (second from right) and other dignitaries watch during the groundbreaking ceremony to launch the Philippine Burn Center at the QC General Hospital Compound on Seminary Road, Bgy. Bahay Toro. Others shown (from left) are Atty. Edmund Ruaro, President of the Rotary Club of Roxas District 3780; Dr. Marina Yulo Bringas, QCGH Director; and Serge Guillaume, delegate of the Societe Generale de Surveillance S.A. (SGS), which is helping fund the project.

Atty. Kasala Is Acting City Assessor



With the retirement last April 12, 1996 of City Assessor Constantino Rosas, Atty. Benjamin Kasala, Assistant City Assessor, took over as Acting City Assessor.

Kasala started his service in the government in 1959 as Checker, City Auditor's Office, Pasay. In 1967, he was Sr. Right of Way Agent, Bureau of Public Highways, QC, was promoted to Legal II the following year and to Legal Officer in 1967.

He joined the Office of the City Assessor, QC, in 1972 as Legal Officer and Deputy. He rose through the ranks, occupying various positions -- Legal Officer, Deputy City Assessor, Administrative Officer and Deputy, Chief Deputy Assessor, Chief Deputy Assessor III, Acting Assistant City Assessor, Chief Deputy Assessor III, OIC, City Assessor and Chief Deputy Assessor -- and finally became Assistant City Assessor n 1991.

From 1969 to 1995, Kasala attended 21 seminar-workshops on diverse subjects, the last on "Fair and Equitable Real Property Taxation Towards Philippines 2000.

The Acting City Assessor, who is from Bauan, Batangas, is married to Angelita A. Kasala, a retired government employee, by whom he has five children.

City Planning & Development Office Has New Task



By Ben O. Flores

About a month ago, we noticed unusually brisk activities at the City Planning and Development Office on the 10th floor of City Hall where we have our desk as a "squatter." A big number of people kept coming into the office. We soon learned that Mayor Mathay, in Office Order No. 32, had given a new task to the CPDO: The issuance of locational clearances as conditions for the issuance of building and business permits. Hereunder is the Order No. 32 addressed to the CPDO Chief, Arch. Gerardo G. Magat:

OFFICE ORDER NO. 32
RE: Designation of ARCH. GERARDO G. MAGAT, City Planning & Development Officer, this City

In the interest of the service, Arch. GERARDO G. MAGAT, City Planning & Development Officer, this City, shall, in addition to his present duties, act as Acting Zoning Official vice Atty. Lourdes P. Santos.

As Acting Zoning Official, Arch. Magat shall primarily be tasked to implement the Q.C. Zoning Ordinance, particularly the issuance of locational clearances as conditions for the issuance of building and business permits.

This Order takes effect immediately. Any previous order, memorandum or issuance inconsistent with the provisions of this Order is revoked/modified accordingly.

(Sgd.) ISMAEL A. MATHAY, JR.
City Mayor

(Editor's Note: We were furnished the flow chart showing the course taken in the issuance of a locational clearance. It is too complicated, however, we are afraid readers won't understand it. We don't, ouself. For our next issue, we will request a simplified way of showing how to get a locational clearance -- perhaps, an enumeration of the different steps an applicant has to take. For instance:

1. Get an application form from the CPDO and accomplish it properly and completely
2. Attach the following documents:
a)
b) and so forth.

For lack of space, we can not publish now the "List of permissible uses per zone." Next issue na.)

CPDO Guest Speaker



At the end of every month, the City Planning and Development Office (CPDO) invites a guest to speak on a subject designed to enhance the competence and efficiency of the CPDO staff. The last guest speaker was Phivolcs Director Punongbayan who gave an illustrated talk, using pictures and charts, on the location of earthquake faults, knowledge of which is essential in the preparation of city development plans. (Unfortunately, the CPDO photographer failed to give us a photo of the affair.)

Previous to Director Punongbayan, the guest speaker was Dr. Felipe Landa Jocano, a noted anthropologist and a retired U.P. Professor, who is now serving as Director of the Philippine Studies Program of the Asian Center and Dean of the Institute of Philippine Studies. Human resources development is Dr. Jocano's forte.

He talked on "Filipino Cultural Values in Relation to Public Service." He said that Filipinos are by cultural orientation, relationalists putting great value on harmonious relationships. Thus, he said, when working, Filipinos invoke group oriented norms like "hiya, pakikisama or utang na loob" to enjoin fellow workers to work as a team. The guest speaker advised CPDO management to utilize these Filipino traits to motivate its employees to perform their tasks efficiently and effectively.

Without Any Reason At All We May Or May Not Confirm -- Altuna

By Ben O. Flores

In the 2nd special session of the Council held on April 23, 1996, Councilor Altuna is reported in the Minutes to have stated: "If the Mayor has the discretion to appoint, more so with those who are vested with the power to confirm. Without any reason at all (underscoring supplied), they may or may not confirm (an appointment made by the Mayor." We were stunned by this statement of our good friend Willy that we sought him for verification -- but we could not catch up with him. We presume that the statement is correct, however, because the Minutes in which it is reported was approved by the Council in the session following the 2nd special session. Altuna was in said session.

Irrational Government

If any government action can be taken with or without any reason at all, what kind of a government would we have? We would have an irrational government based on whim, caprice, impulse, amor propio, political hostilities, personal or private considerations, etc. The heck with reasons! -- valid reasons, that is.

Willy speaks of the "power" of the Council to confirm. What "power?" Has he tried looking at the list of powers of the Sangguniang Bayan enumerated in Section 458, Article three of Chapter 3, Book III of the Local Government Code? That power is not there! It is true, however, that the Council's concurrence to a proposed appointment made by the Mayor and confirmation of the same once approved by the Civil Service Commission is required in Section 454(d) in Chapter 2, Book III of the LGC, but are these mandatory or absolute necessary requirements? If they are, why the provisions in said Section 454(d) stated as follows:

1) "subject to civil service law, rules and regulations" and

2) "The Sangguniang Bayan shall act on the appointment within fifteen (15) days from the date of submission, otherwise the same shall be deem confirmed."

Ministerial Function

Obviously, the requirements in question involve, not a power, but a ministerial function. The Council has no choice but to confirm an appointment duly approved by the Civil Service Commission. It is not given the power to refuse confirmation of such duly approved appointment by the CSC. The 15-day grace period is, we think, intended to give the Council a means to express a sentiment against the appointment in question, a sentiment fo which it has now power to make it mandatory.

Constitutional Body

Another point against the power of the Council to confirm appointments duly approved by the Civil Service Commission is the fact that the CSC is a constitutional body, an independent body, vested with the power, duty and function to approve or disapprove appointments to civil service positions in the government. Now, if the Council refuses to confirm an appointment duly approved by the CSC, as it did with the appointment of the new Budget Officer, that refusal would be a repudiation of a constitutionally given power, duty and function. It is obvious that what should prevail is not the concurrence and confirmation requirements in Section 454(d) of the LGC but the CSC approval of the appointment made in the exercise of a constitutionally given power, duty and function.

Councilor Altuna probably wants to equate the requirement that the Council confirm appointments made by the Mayor duly approved by the CSC to the requirement that appointments made by the President to his Cabinet be confirmed by the Commission on Appointments (CA) of Congress. There is a whale of a difference between the two requirements: The requirement with respect to the Council involves appointees who must have the proper civil service eligibilities over which the CSC, by virtue of a constitutional mandate, is the final arbiter, which is why, as we have stated, the Council has no power not to confirm and appointment duly approved by the CSC. On the other hand, the requirement with respect to the CA of Congress involves political appointees who need not have any civil service eligibilities, which is why the confirmatory requirement imposed on the CA is mandatory in nature: It has no choice but to make a decision on whether to confirm or not to confirm. There is no limiting period within which it must make the decision, otherwise confirmation would be automatic, because, to repeat, the requirement to make a decision on whether to confirm or not to confirm is mandatory. In the case of the Council, there is a limiting period of 15 days because, the requirement to confirm an appointment made by the Mayor and duly approved by the CSC is just a ministerial function. The Council has no choice other than confirmation. As already stated, non-confirmation would be tantamount to a repudation of the Constitution. Non-compliance of the concurrence requirement in Sec. 454(d) of the LGC is a minor violation which can not be fatal to a well-deserved appointment duly approved by the CSC.

Finally, may we point out that while the requirement for the CA of Congress to confirm or not to confirm appointments made by the President to his Cabinet is mandatory and CA's power is absolute on the matter. CA confirms or does not confirm without any reason, as Councilor Altuna would have the Council do.

QC Solon Files Bill To Strengthen Anti-Child Abuse Law

Congressman Reynaldo A. Calalay of Quezon City's first district has filed HB No. 6549 which is designed to strengthen RA No. 7610, otherwise known as "The Special Protection of Children Against Child Abuse, Exploitation and Discriminaton Act."

Calalay's bill provides that "a child who is a victim of any acts of child abuse by the parent (s) or guardian shall be removed from the custody of his/her parent(s) or guardian and shall immediately be placed under protective custody of either relatives or the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

The bill further provides that "in no case shall the abused child be returned to his/her parent(s) or guardian without the prior approval of the court."

The QC Congressman said

(Turn To Page 4)

SECRETARY. . .

tions formulated and submitted by national government functinaries, such as department heads or the chiefs of bureaus and officers of equivalent rank, and then only on specific questions of law arising in the performance of their respective powers and duties. In this regard, he has consistently refrained from rendering an opinion or giving legal advice to other government officials and to private individuals or entities (Secretary of Justice Opinions No. 151, s. 1991; No. 160, s. 1989; No. 116, s. 1985; and No. 43, s. 1981).

We regret therefore that we are unable to be of assistance to you on this matter.

Very truly yours,
FOR THE SECRETARY OF JUSTICE
(Sgd.) TERESITA REYES-DOMINGO
Senior State Prosecutor &
Officer-in-Charge, Technical Staff

Since the Justice Secretary cannot render a legal opinion for a private individual like us, how about our brilliant lawyer-friends in the Council rendering the legal opinion themselves. It will be just as good to us. How about it, Attorneys Moises Samson, Joseph Peter Sison and Willy Altuna?

(Turn To Page 2)