

The very first Executive Committee of CRC, at CRC Bocobo, Malate: Col. Manuel V Reyes, who came from the Judge Advocate General Office, Executive Secretary; Dr. Jesus P. Estanislao, Executive Director; and Dr. Bernardo M. Villegas, Academic Director.

# CAS



## • Our University's Spearhead • and Gateway

DR. ANTONIO N. TORRALBA

The College of Arts and Sciences helped make sure that the challenge St. Josemaria made to Filipinos through Bernardo Villegas, was on the way to full realization.

Before CAS, CRC was simply work-study graduate programs; with CAS, it was on the road to becoming a university.

“Good morning, University of Asia and the Pacific, formerly Center for Research and Communication. How may we help you?”

“Again, please!”

“UA&P, formerly CRC, good morning ...”

“Oh, sorry, I must have dialed the wrong number.”

And Ellen, our telephone operator for many years, in the first months after 26 June 1995 (the date of official conversion of CRC to university), using the PABX at the anteroom of the area in the ground floor of what is now known as ALB (Administration and Library Building) and currently occupied by the main Corporate Communication Office, would find herself having to repeat the greeting a number of occasions, since she would not be understood by the caller at first. If not Ellen, it was the security guard saying the line.

Six to seven years earlier, starting off in mid-1988 and reaching feverish levels in 1989, the same PABX, installed in 1981 when CRC transferred to Ortigas Center from Bocobo-Orosa, Malate, the operator would direct phone callers to the requested party, either Dean Bernie Villegas of CAS (the first in CRC to hold the title “Dean”) or any of the other fledgling officers of the about-to-start College of Arts and Sciences.

With the setting up of CAS in June 1989, the path to university status was clear. Four years later, 1993, the application for university conversion was submitted to CHED. Two more years later, the former Center for Research and Communication became the University of Asia and the Pacific.

Within 1993 and 1995, prior to actual conversion to university (signed by then concurrently education secretary and CHED chairman, Ricardo T Gloria, at Villamor Airbase, on 26 June 1995 ... but that's another story) there were several accreditation visits, indicated as one of three conditions for the grant of university status<sup>1</sup> by the previous education secretary Armand Fabella:

1. A preliminary visit and briefing for all the programs of the CRC;
2. A Level 1 visit for Liberal Education (CAS);
3. A Level 1 visit for four graduate programs: Master in Business Education or MBE of the School of Management at that time; Master of Arts in Applied Business Economics or MAABE of the School of Economics; and Master of Science in Industrial Economics or MSIE of the School of Economics; Master of Arts in Education (Values Education) or MAVE of the School of Education); and
4. A Level II visit for all four programs.

CAS did pave the way for accreditation and liberal education orientation. It was, after all, the oldest of the “definitively”-named schools. When the College of Arts and Sciences was put up as a gateway to CRC soon-to-be UA&P in 1989, there was no SEC (1993), no SED (1995), no SMN (1997), and more so, no SCM, SSE, and SLG.

From Bocobo and Adriatico in Malate and Ermita to Pearl Drive in Ortigas;

From purely graduate courses to the undergraduate AB Humanities (with several specializations) and AB Quantitative Economics as well;

From merely CRC economics or business economics-related institutes (e.g., Institute Of Social Economics,

<sup>1</sup> The two other conditions were (a) three years running research journal (put together under the title, Synergieia); and (b) a roster of at least 30 fully qualified PhD holders among the faculty members, full-time or part-time.



In front of the CRC offices in Bocobo, Malate: (L to R): Jess Estanislao, Joseph McPherson, Industrial Economics (IEP) student, who became director of The Heights of Washington D.C.; Henry Esteban, then president; and Tom Aquino, IEP student

Industry Monitoring Unit) to a College of Arts and Sciences as well, offering undergraduate humanities with several specializations (not majors);

From dealing exclusively with top-level businessmen and teachers of economics to dealing even more intensely with undergraduate students, some of whom were deemed “glorified high schoolers;”

From the well-known, with easy-recall, CRC, within top business, education, and other professional circles to the unknown, “whazzat!” UA&P;

And from an institution that came to BE a university to an entity that now continues to strive to BECOME a sterling university, with CAS serving as gateway (hence the CAS heraldry with a dragon guarding the wrought iron gate) ...

All these happened along a story timeline, all inspired by the line of St. Josemaría Escrivá in 1964, paraphrased, “To bring Christ and Opus Dei ... to the Philippines, and from the Philippines to the rest of Asia.”

#### CAS STORY = CRC STORY

The CAS story of 25 years (1989 to 2014) cannot be narrated without the CRC story of 50 years (1967 to 2017). Indeed, the CAS story is but a shorter version of the CRC story. A story of personal dealings through friendship and confidence ... of lay and secular spirit ... of fidelity to the Magisterium of the Church ... of the sanctity of freedom and personal responsibility ... of integral humanities perspective to the realities of day-to-day life ... of Christian orientation ... of a culture of excellence ... of love, life, and everything in between.

Hence, let’s go 22 years prior to CRC CAS and start from the very beginning of the Center for Research and Communication and even what took place a little earlier ... when youthful idealism planted the seeds of CRC, CAS, UA&P, and several academic units converted to schools.

#### FRIENDSHIPS = SEEDS OF BIG BREAKTHROUGHS

A young man, a 1958 summa cum laude graduate in two degrees (AB Humanities and BSC Accounting, of De La Salle College, jointly called LiaCom for AB Commerce) decided to proceed to Harvard University for his PhD Economics, after passing his CPA exam; working with Proctor and Gamble for two months; and teaching liberal arts and business subjects at DLSC for a few months.

With a Fulbright scholarship and complementary funding from SC Johnson and Asia Foundation, this man, Bernardo Malvar Villegas, grandson of General Miguel Malvar, left for Harvard in September 1959, pursued his graduate studies, qualified for PhD Economics after two years of studies, and was thereby by practice automatically awarded his MA Economics degree. While at Harvard, he served as a

teaching fellow of accounting and economics to augment his scholarship and to hone his skills in teaching pedagogy.

It was in Harvard where Bernie met Placido (Cidito) Mapa, Jr., finishing his PhD Economics dissertation; Roberto “Bobby” Paterno, pursuing PhD in Oriental History; Antonio “Tony” Ozaeta, pursuing MBA; Leon Gonzales, then pursuing MA Linguistics in Boston University; and after two years, Jesus “Jess” Estanislao, then about to start his PhD Economics after spending one year in Fordham University.

Most important, it was in Harvard where Bernie met Opus Dei, invited by Fr. Guillermo Porras to the university residence run by the Work (Opus Dei), whom he initially met in campus through the Harvard Catholic Club. It was in Harvard where the spirit of Opus Dei slowly but surely unfolded in his mind and heart, borne out by his weekly letters (with no exaggeration) to his family from 1959 to 1963 (now compiled in four bound scrapbook volumes). He started attending daily Masses, Saturday meditations, get-togethers and excursions organized by Elm Brook Residence Hall, encouraged by the other lay people who were getting close to the Work as he was, and by the professionalism of the likes of Fr. Dick Rienan, chaplain of a second Opus Dei center and the first American numerary.

Professional work conducted with the highest levels of excellence; strengthening of family life; daily, weekly,

monthly, and annual means of spiritual and doctrinal formation; study sessions on current social issues; fraternal chats; get-togethers; excursions to intensify personal friendships and generate greater confidence ... it was these channels that persons in CRC, from its Year One to the present, have been constantly striving to utilize ... in a spirit of filial fidelity to the teachings of St. Josemaría ... to bring young and old closer to God and “to be saints” while putting up a university.

#### GROUNDWORK: FROM BARCELONA TO THE PHILIPPINES

Before finally returning to Manila, Bernie spent some time in Barcelona to do research work related to developing the MBA course of IESE Business School of the University of Navarra, Pamplona, Spain<sup>2</sup>, then a fast-rising star in the firmament of higher education in business. It was on the way to Manila that he met Monsignor Josemaría in Rome ... it was then that the Opus Dei founder made the challenge, “... from the Philippines to the rest of Asia.” The goal from the beginning was a university, but it had to start small, with well-thought out and deliberately taken steps, making sure of sustainability, through the three prongs of Structure – People – Money (*Struktura – Tao – Pera*)

<sup>2</sup> Instituto de la Educacion Superiores de la Empresa, located in the Barcelona campus of the University of Navarra



“To bring Christ and Opus Dei ... to the Philippines, and from the Philippines to the rest of Asia.”



**“...the CAS story is but a shorter version of the CRC story. A story of personal dealings through friendship and confidence...lay and secular spirit...of the sanctity of freedom and personal responsibility... of integral humanities perspective to the realities of day-to-day life... of Christian orientation...of a culture of excellence...”**

It was Bernie’s contact with IESE, experience with DLSC as chair and dean, and involvement in the setting up of Asian Institute of Management (AIM) that led him to confer passionately with old and new contacts about what structure to put up in the Philippines that would create the greatest social impact on society. Bernie, Jess, and Cidito were avid students of economics, with great potential to be high-level economists. They and other friends had been going through continuing human, doctrinal, spiritual, professional, and apostolic formation that gave them firm foundations of the humanities and the social sciences. Industrial and social economics seemed a good starter and catalyst.

At that time, no entities in the Philippines were doing economic forecasts. The Jesuits and the La Salle Brothers were partnering to set up the Asian Institute of Management. There were still many good universities with economics majors that still remained faithful to the moral and social doctrine of the Church. Their service milieu in the Philippines, they thought, had to be broader than just professionals, business, and university students and graduates. It had to include everyone; it had to be universal ... it had to cover even Asia and the Pacific.

#### AT LAST—CRC

It would seem then that the best channel for social service and influence was a think tank, which, in the mind of Jess, would carry out theoretical and practical research on economics. It was to be called Center for Research and Communication. It was to be like IESE in spirit and culture, in prestige. ¡Ójala! But the university had to be always in mind as an institutional end. It had to be lay and secular, but nevertheless faithful to the Magisterium of the Church.

Five or so Harvard years later, on 27 May 1964, Bernie came back to Manila, and Opus Dei officially started in the Philippines. Bernie spearheaded with Jess the setting up of CRC (1967) while teaching economics and accounting at DLSC, where he became chairman of the economics department and dean of the graduate school of business. Simultaneously, with great moral boost from former Dean Amado Castro (Harvard University, 1950s) and from the current Dean Jose Encarnacion, Bernie Villegas taught at the School of Economics of the University of the Philippines for four years, 1967 to 1971, while still at DLSC and as CRC went through the first four years of its young and fast-maturing, prolific life. DLSC and UP became most fertile grounds for apostolate, for putting together the first batch of people for the graduate programs to be eventually put

up by the think tank that was CRC. It was to pave the way for university life ... with a college of arts and sciences serving as gateway, with a core curriculum that was to be humanities and liberal education-oriented. Economics had to be looked at from the perspective of philosophy, rational psychology, history, Christian civilization, sociology, and the other social sciences, even the languages.

In the meantime, Jess returned from his Harvard studies and worked with the Presidential Information Agency (PIA), later renamed Presidential Economic Staff (PES). He met up with several young people, with whom he discussed principles, theories, and issues of economics and society, conversing with them in just about any restaurant, such as Barrio Fiesta, or other conducive space available. The renowned economist and his thesis adviser, Simon Kuznets, gave him solid framework of the basics and nuances of economics and society.

The ground was ready for the Center for Research and Communication. In 1967, CRC found a temporary haven in the office of the friend of Jess, Joe Romero of the Corominas-Richards and Co. (CRC!). Located at the Gabaldon Building, in Colorado Street, Malate (now Josefa Llanes Escoda), just across the British Club and behind the first Rustan’s, the office was equipped with a secretary, a



messenger, and office machines. Jess put together bright and socially committed young men and formally organized CRC, with Bernie, Vic Abola, and Fernand Cruz (who acted as messenger), among a few others.

The age of CRC, 50 by 2017, is reckoned on the basis of that act.

On the morning of 15 August 1968, the feast of Our Lady of the Assumption, CRC was formally inaugurated in its second site, 1607 Bocobo Street, Malate, City of Manila, the ancestral home of Dr. Antonio Villarama of Bulacan, former secretary of health under President Carlos P. Garcia.

On that same day, on the ground-floor classroom of Bocobo, the first conference ever organized by CRC, attended by 25 international journalists, was put up by the Business Economics Reporters Association of the Philippines (BERAP). President Marcos addressed the group in a five-star hotel in Dewey Boulevard.

The day after the inauguration, a meeting was organized in CRC through Joe Romero for the Manila Junior Chamber of Commerce Economics Affairs Committee (of the Manila Jaycees), one of the most prestigious economics associations in the country. This was attended by top people in government and business, including Cesar Virata, Amado Castro, and Armand Fabella, who at one time or another became prime minister, UP dean of economics, and education secretary, respectively.

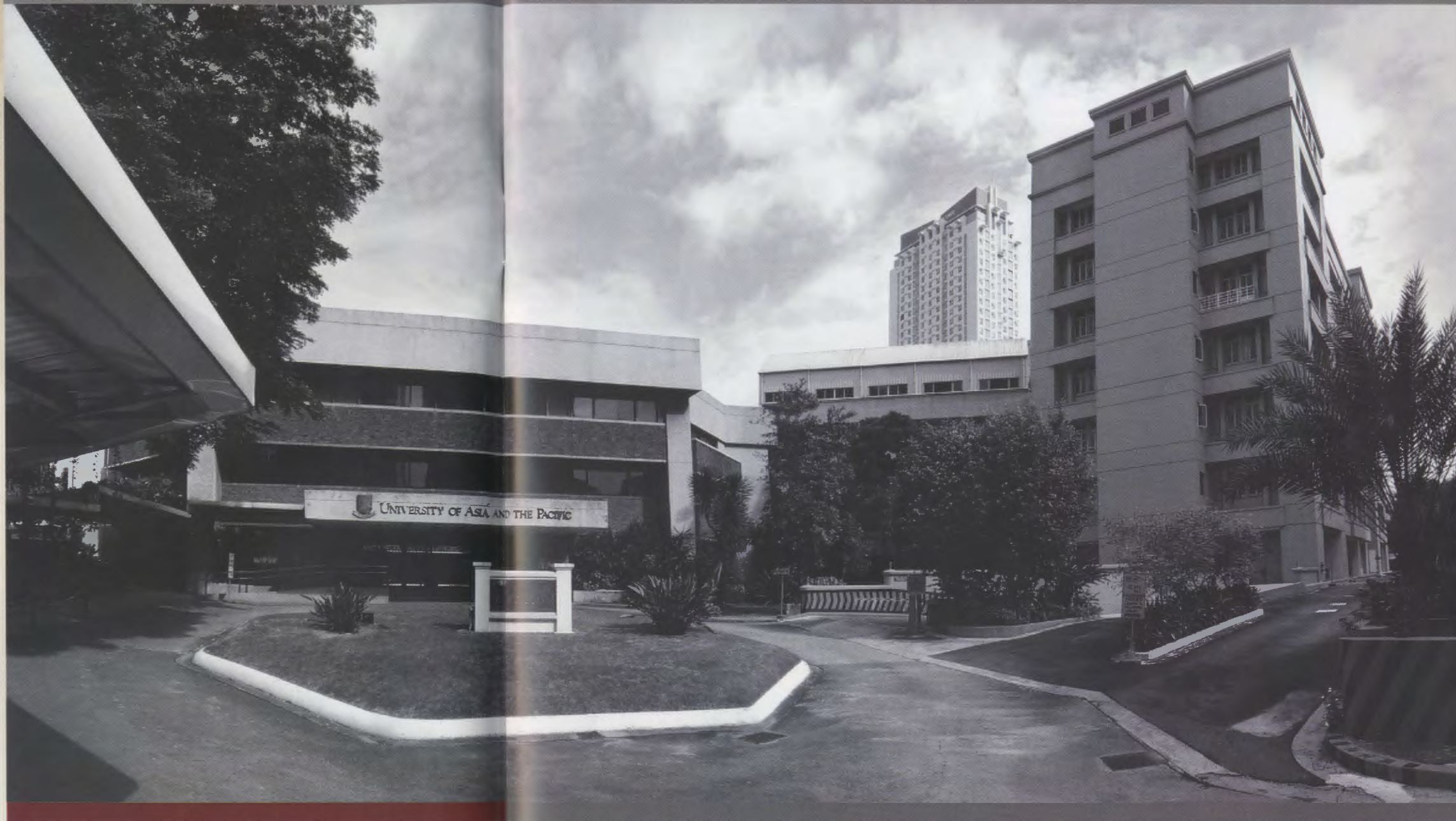
Also shortly after the inauguration, Dr. Placido Mapa, Jr. delivered a lecture at CRC to business reporters on the intricacies of macroeconomics. In reply to an almost-rhetorical question on the Marcos macroeconomics, Dr. Mapa wrote on the board a complex mathematical formulation that explained the intricacies of the current foreign exchange policy of the government. The board work did answer the question completely and competently, and it also certainly reduced the number of smart alecks in the world of newspaper journalism.

The prestige of CRC in the international scene, in media, and in the national government was off to a good start.

About three years after, an extension office, to house administrative functions, had to be set up at the Elena Apartments along Salas corner Adriatico Streets.

## ENTER CAS

It would still be 22 years from the inauguration year of CRC before CAS would enter the academe. But yes, CRC was rather well prepared for the advent of a college of arts and sciences, with degree programs along MS Industrial Economics for fresh college graduates or young professionals, MA Economics Education for teachers, Master in Business Economics (previously called Corporate Planning Course) for top business executives, and MA in Applied Business Economics (previously called Economics Research Program, intended then for research associates of CRC research tutors) for middle level management.



Dr. Antonio N. Torralba is university fellow and trustee of the University of Asia and the Pacific. He is the holder of the Mariano and Estelita Que professorial chair on family and youth education, which carries three streams: youth character education, family and youth research, and formal studies on youth family.

Dr. Torralba joined CRC in 1972; left in 1976 to help put up PAREF-Southridge School and EDUCHILD Foundation; and returned to CRC in 1989 to help put up School of Education, where he was dean for ten years. He was dean of the College of Arts and Sciences for another ten years. He has handled all levels of education in 45 years in the school system.

He spearheads I Am S.T.R.O.N.G. - I Keep Love Real program, which has directly or indirectly reached millions of youth, parents, and teachers nationwide.



### CAS TODAY

CAS has evolved through the years to what it is today. According to current CAS Dean Atty. Delia Tantuico, the College has a three-pronged function.

First, as the custodian of the liberal education in the University, it delivers the core curriculum and all of general education subjects of all programs in the University. These are the English, Filipino, History, Civics, Arts, Asia Pacific Studies (APS) and Philosophy courses that all students take during the first three years of their stay in the University.

Second, it is the gateway for all the students in the University, allowing the CAS faculty to meet and teach all the University students.

Third, it is an academic unit that administers the Humanities Program, which has two courses of study: the Bachelor of Science in Humanities and the Master of Science in Humanities. The Humanities Program is a holistic program that aims to build on the students' interests in history, philosophy, literature, and the arts. This field of study focuses on man – his motivations, his capabilities, his limitations, and those that are universal in him throughout human history.



The Master of Arts in Humanities students share a common liberal arts curriculum with the A.B. students during their first three years in UA&P. On their third year, they begin to take specialized subjects in the Humanities. Also, in their 5th year, they are expected to write a thesis.

Through the College of Arts and Sciences, UA&P has remained steadfast in its quest for liberal education. It is still one of the few universities in the Philippines that emphasize a strong liberal education for its students, no matter what the chosen field of specialization of the student is.

### CAS OF TOMORROW

UA&P will always be committed to a whole-person education and development as a service to society, through its liberal education administered by CAS. This commitment will not change in spite of the implementation of new regulations such as the K to 12 program, which has pared down to the barest minimum the general education subjects.

**In Dr. Camacho's words: "I would like to see CAS continue to serve as the gateway to the University as the home of liberal education. I would like to see CAS at the vanguard of liberal education (in the country and region) that benefits from specialized knowledge and engages the public, and at the same time enables specialized knowledge to see beyond itself and aim for wisdom and service."**



The CAS community also believes that CAS should press on with its mission, one of which is to promote research. Former CAS Dean Marya Svetlana Camacho says she dreams of CAS "being truly research-oriented so that liberal education remains not simply as an idealized practice but one that further develops through impact and pedagogical research. I dream of CAS having graduate programs in the areas critical to the University's mission: to educate students and professionals, and to intensify research and publish (in print and other forms) a broad range of works that will reach a wide public." Dr. Camacho also looks forward to CAS faculty engaging faculty from non-humanities specializations, conscious of the abiding role of the humanities in orienting university work towards "integral human development," as the University has encapsulated its principal mission.

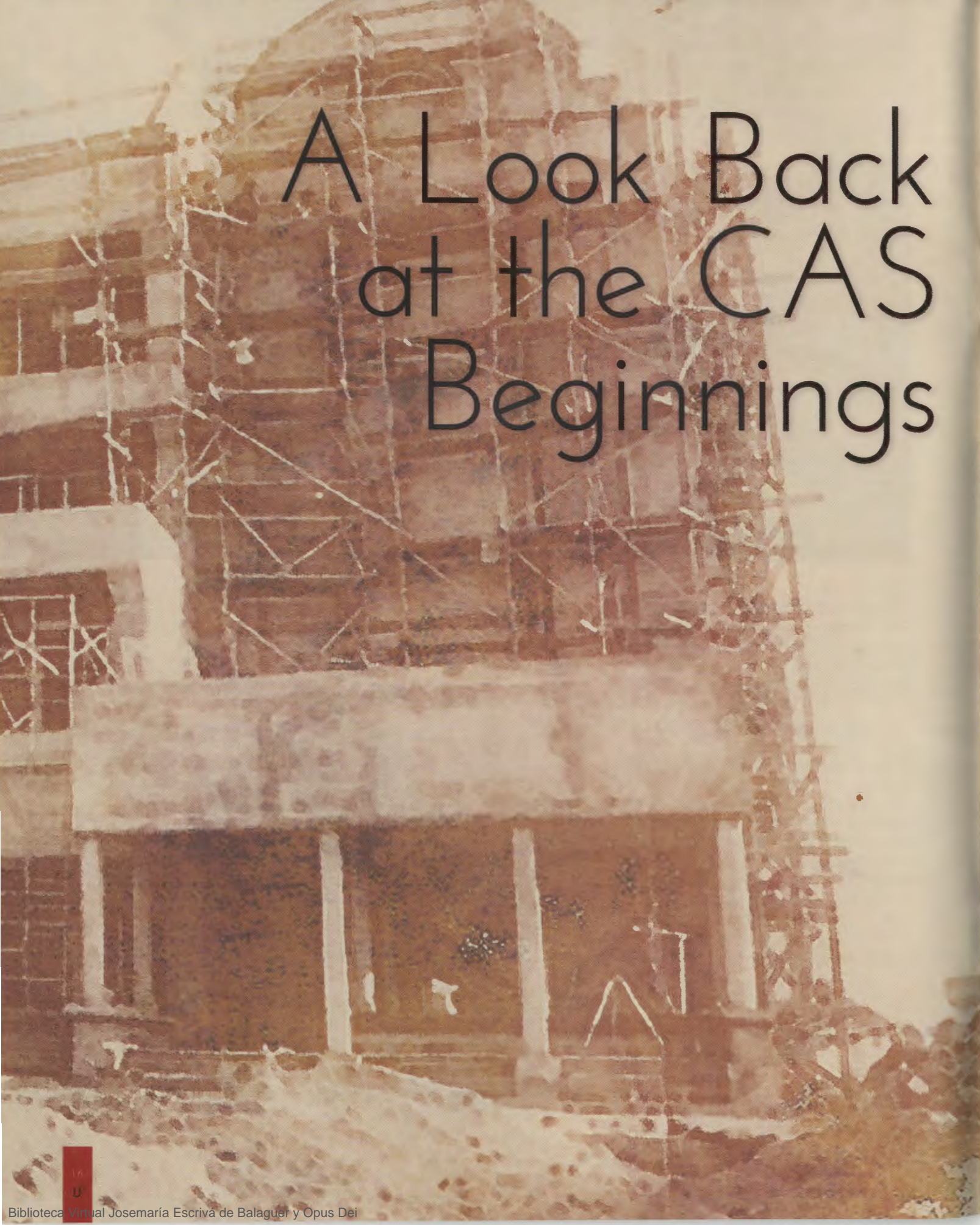
Dr. Villegas pinpoints specific aspirations. Looking to the University of Navarra for inspiration, he believes that new programs, such as Philosophy and Theology, can be established in the future. In the field of arts, Dr. Villegas sees the opportunity to enhance the music appreciation program to include

Filipino classical kundiman music. He also hopes that soon there will be a good Language Center catering to foreigners who want to learn Filipino as well as other Asian languages.

To further expand the resources of the College as well as the University, Dr. Villegas believes that more partnerships could be formed with foreign educational institutions as well as private groups and individuals. These partnerships can help toward establishing scholarships that will make sure that, as envisioned, a larger percentage of the student population will consist of the less privileged segment of society.

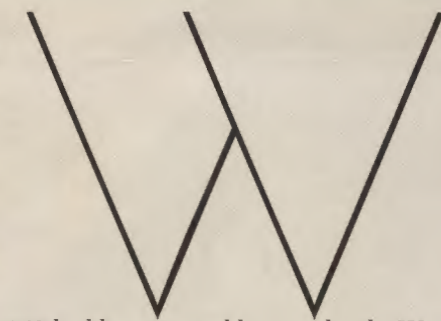
Through the many possible permutations and developments that CAS is sure to undergo in serving society, one dream endures. In Dr. Camacho's words: "I would like to see CAS continue to serve as the gateway to the University as the home of liberal education. I would like to see CAS at the vanguard of liberal education (in the country and region) that benefits from specialized knowledge and engages the public, and at the same time enables specialized knowledge to see beyond itself and aim for wisdom and service."

# A Look Back at the CAS Beginnings



"FROM DREAM TO DREAM"

## From the Dean of the College



We are as excited as the prospective students about the opening of CRC's College of Arts and Sciences on June 13, 1989. As of late February we have admitted some

160 highly motivated boys and girls. We intend to admit 180 first-year students during our first academic year.

As you probably already know, the CRC CAS is offering a solid liberal arts program as a preparation for careers in business, economics, education, journalism and law. Without neglecting specific professional skills, we shall be emphasizing the study of theology, philosophy, the humanities, languages, sciences, and mathematics (including computer literacy) in order to prepare the youth for the year 2000 and beyond.

You will be glad to know that we are offering similar programs in the humanities for business executives and other professionals. We shall send you more information on these humanities courses that will start by the first semester. I remember that some of you who joined us last year at the Puerto Azul conference with top US authors George Gilder and Michael Novak were clamoring for more philosophy and arts courses to complement your overly technical background.

One last word: We want to make sure that our college can admit deserving children of rank-and-file employees who cannot afford to pay the tuition fees which will be set at levels comparable to those of the leading private universities. Therefore, we appeal to our Friends to raise scholarship funds for us. Our Development Office will be contacting you for this purpose.

Many of you have seen us grow from our humble beginnings in Malate, Manila. If we are moving from "dream to dream," as I said during the Topping-Off Ceremony of the college building, we have you to thank for your unflagging support. We shall keep you posted on the unfolding of our latest "dream": a top-caliber College of Arts and Sciences.

(From CRC Newsletter Vol. 1 No. 1, April 1989)





# Homily of the June 13, 1989 Mass

FR. JOSEPH DE TORRE

Today we witness the conception of a new university. I say "conception," for it is not formally born yet. Is today entrusted to this academic community of parents, teachers, administrators, and students by the Lord of all wisdom and truth, that it may grow to its successful birth and development in the coming years, having started as a College of Arts and Sciences.

It comes to life cherishing the hope of becoming a real breeding ground of culture, that is, of cultivation of humanity, a humanity in the image and likeness of God, Creator of all that exists, Father of all men, Redeemer of man, and Sanctifier of the world. Indeed, our Christian faith places on us the responsibility of "renewing the face of the earth" as co-creators, co-redeemers, and co-sanctifiers with God. As the Second Vatican Council states, "all the faithful of Christ, of whatever rank or status, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity," and "by this holiness as such a more human manner of living is promoted in this earthly society" (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 40).

The late Msgr. Escrivá, under whose inspiration this institution is now coming into existence, used to say that anything of lasting value begins small, like the evangelical mustard seed. "This indeed is the smallest of all seeds," Jesus said, "but when it grows up, it is larger than any herb and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and dwell in its branches." Paraphrasing Msgr. Escrivá again, we can dream of a bright future of cultural achievement, provided we keep our feet firmly on the ground, namely on our faith blended with our life.

In the homily of the Mass opening the school year in Rome last October, the Holy Father (St. John Paul II) referred to the following words of Psalm 8 as a perfect background to a synthesis of Christian anthropology and ethics: "What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou dost care for him?...Thou hast given him dominion over the works of thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet..."

Do we not perhaps," the Pope went on, "find here in concise outline, the program of teaching for the world's Catholic institutes of higher education? At the heart of all

that we must continually study in depth, also by means of various forms of knowledge of the visible word, does there not remain St. Augustine's saying: *noverim Te noverim me?*" Knowing you, I know myself....

Ten months earlier, at the traditional Advent Mass for the university community, the Holy Father had turned his attention to Mary, Seat of Wisdom. He first referred to the term "philosopher," that is, "friend of wisdom" as found, he said, "at the root of our whole culture and civilization." "Science," he explained, "regards the objects of nature, which are known by the intellect through the senses; thus it considers the visible word. Wisdom arrives at the ultimate origins of everything. It answers the questions about the 'first cause' and the 'ultimate end.' In this way, wisdom allows man to define himself in his ultimate nature in the midst of the entire universe. It allows him to discover the fundamental meaning of his own existence."

This ancient distinction between science and wisdom, the Pope went on, "is valid for the whole doctrine of knowledge as well as for the philosophy of being, metaphysics. It has been taken up and deepened in Christian reflection in the light of biblical revelation.

This distinction has remained a timely one in all ages. But in our age one cannot help but note the tremendous progress in the realm of 'science,' in contrast with a notable confusion in that of wisdom....Consequently, contemporary man often lives without a definitive 'horizon.' At times, he even experiences acutely a lack of answer to the question of life's fundamental meaning.

It is precisely that aim of this College to unify and harmonize all the branches of knowledge by not splitting the so-called humanities from the so-called sciences, but restoring the classical and Christian Seven Liberal Arts, which comprise metaphysics and theology, logic and all the arts, as well as the sciences of the universe, on which all technical specializations must be based, so as to produce real human beings, not robots or selfish individualists, but real persons in solidarity with all mankind.

It is to Mary, Seat of Wisdom, then, that we turn today as we invoke the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth and wisdom, resolving to follow the path of intellectual humility and intellectual labor joined to purity of life, that this academic community may truly become a powerful source of cultural creativity and promotion of the common good of society, with a truly Catholic spirit of universality, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.





# CRC College Opens

Two hundred and twenty-seven college freshmen trooped to the Center for Research and Communication last June 13 to attend a whole-day orientation marking the first day of school year 1989-90 and the beginning of the new CRC College of Arts and Sciences (CRC CAS).

The College offers five courses: Humanities, Education, Business, Economics, and Entrepreneurial Management. It has a small student population, most of whom are graduates of high schools in Metro Manila

The whole-day orientation was conducted to: (1) introduce the faculty and the students to each other; (2) explain the College's curriculum policies, and requirements to the students; and (3) help the students understand the approach to teaching at CRC CAS.

The orientation began with a Holy Mass celebrated by Fr. Joseph de Torre, Chaplain of the College and Head of the Department of Philosophy. Dean Bernardo Villegas gave the opening address. He was followed by Dr. Julius Caesar Parreñas, Assistant Dean who delivered the school's inaugural lecture on "The Dawning of the Asia-Pacific Era."

In the afternoon session, the topics taken up are Liberal Education Curriculum, Fields of Specialization, Beyond Books and Classrooms, and Building an Academic Community. The speakers' panel consisted of members of the College Executive Committee and Faculty, namely, Dr. Jose Maria Mariano, Dr. Julius Caesar Parreñas, Mr. Fernan Victor Lukban, Mr. Manuel Escasa, Dr. Antonio Torralba, and Ms. Severina Villegas.

The CRC CAS was set up through the encouragement and help of several top executives in the business community. Its curriculum is based on the "Great Books" program of European and American liberal arts college and aims to enrich the technical expertise sought by college graduates with a deep foundation in the humanities.

(From *CRC Newsletter* Vol. 1 No. 2 (July 1989), p. 9.)



# First Equatorial Rites

August 16, 1991

Ms. Margaret Puyat, a communication arts junior, who was later honored with the year's Academic Achievement Award, then delivered an address on behalf of her classmates.

Taking off from Ms. Puyat's address, the batch's ninong and ninang posed some challenges to their "godchildren." Mrs. Corazon Cuadrante, CAS science professor, to translate what they learn "into fruitful action for the benefit of all." Dr. Mariano told them "There must be no dichotomy between what you know and how you live." He also said that to be real pioneers, the students should consider themselves "not just the first batch, but the cofounders of CRC CAS, a perfect embodiment of the CAS spirit."

Afterwards, three outstanding members of the junior class received special awards of distinction. The Service Award went to Mr. Leandro Tomas Tan. The Leadership Award went to Mr. John Eric Francia. The Academic Achievement Award was presented to Ms. Margaret Puyat.

Dr. Villegas ended the rites with warm praises for the parents of the junior students. He attributed the "better-than-satisfactory" performance of the pioneering students primarily to their upbringing at home... He thus urged the parents to carry on with their task of creating a bright and cheerful family environment.

(From *The Meridian* Vol. 1, No. 5, September-October 1991)

You are about to witness the birth of an academic tradition at CAS," announced the master of ceremonies, Mr. Jerome Kliatchko, head of CRC's Public Relations Office, to an audience made up of CAS students, parents, and faculty members at the start of the College's first "equatorial rites" in the afternoon of August 16 at the Dizon Auditorium.

The CAS Equatorial Rites have been patterned after the academic rites popularly known in Spain and other European countries as the *paso del equador* ("the crossing of the equator"). The rites are held every year to acknowledge the efforts of the university students who have made it through the first half of their course.

Mr. Kliatchko explained that the CAS has adopted this tradition to pay tribute, first and foremost, to its pioneering batch of students and, later on, to all the succeeding batches that make it to the midpoint of their college years. The purpose of the rites, he added is to encourage the students "to launch themselves in pursuit of academic excellence at CRC."

Dr. Jose Ma. Arsenio Mariano, CAS assistant dean, then presented the 115 junior students who were to be imposed with the colors of their respective faculties. Dr. Bernardo Villegas, the CAS dean, imposed the sashes on 37 political economy majors, 23 entrepreneurial management majors, 15 general humanities majors, four prelaw majors, two philosophy majors, and one development education major.



# Evolving Identity: From Marlin to Dragon



## SEARCHING FOR AN IDENTITY

The UA&P student is molded to be a moderate conservative and a moderate liberal. This description appears to be contradictory—conservative means “traditional and cautious”; and liberal means “open to new concepts even to the point of disregarding traditional views.” Confusing as it may sound, it is a distinctive identity the University promotes—progressing forward and innovating without losing the understanding of principal causes, morality and virtues.

## CREATING A SYMBOL

To have a representation of the characteristics that students should embody, universities come up with a mascot. In the early 1990’s, UA&P students were called the “Marlins,” because the emblem of the university is a galleon that traverses the ocean guided by the star of the orient. It aptly alludes to the ability to survive the tides of the ocean.

Eventually, the students began to feel that the marlin did not encapsulate their identity, as motivated by the University. So a mascot-making contest was held in the mid 1990’s, thus producing “Chippy the Pencil.” Still, there was some measure of discontent in its disconnection from the image they want: vigor, valiance, courage, prestige, and the sense of being Asian.

Finally, in 1998 the students started using the image of a “dragon” for its sports activities. The dragon, however, was not an exclusive idea: it was an element in the CAS emblem—a dragon guarding a gate.

After some discussions with alumni, professors, and staff, they arrived at a consensus that the dragon stands for the guardian of the Asia Pacific region. It was to be an Asian dragon that, unlike the Western dragon, symbolizes nobility, wisdom, and power. The Asian dragon breathing and engulfed in fire was the image used by the students and eventually embraced by the University. The fire image is well in keeping with the tagline of the University—Blaze a trail. The fire signifies that each member of the UA&P community is a source of the spark that promotes the mission and vision of the University.

In 2001 Uappy, a cartoon-like version of the dragon, came out. The mascot was conceived by the then-SEB



(Student Executive Board), who sought to make the dragon friendlier and more approachable to the students.

## A CONSERVATIVE LIBERAL

At first glance, there seems to be an incongruity in the identity of Uappy. Though bearing a warm demeanor, it takes on the challenge of preserving Christian tradition in the aggressive 21st century relativist thinking. However, Uappy is not intended to be a dogmatic figure but a welcoming and soft symbol of Christian tradition in the 21st century.

The students who embrace the identity of Uappy seize the challenge to preserve Christian tradition in ways that have never been imagined. As Pope Francis proclaimed to young people during World Youth Day last year: “We need saints—saints for the 21st century—that go to the movies, listen to music, . . . eat a pizza or drink beer with their friends.” At the same time “they put God in first place, . . . look for time to pray every day and know how to be in love with purity, chastity and all good things. We need saints . . . with a spirituality appropriate to our new time. We need saints that have a commitment to helping the poor and to making the needed social change.” Therein are our aspirations.

The image of Uappy was carefully crafted not to mirror a pedagogue; rather he embraces an attitude of an explorer. Every day, he faces the fast-paced lifestyle of the world but reminds himself that every experience is indispensable to his holistic appreciation of life.

In the end, Uappy embraces a mindset of a conservative liberal. He represents the idea that a guardian of principles, virtues, and tradition does not necessarily have to be violent or dogmatic. Instead, he is approachable, patient, soft, considerate, and motivating.

Blazing a trail does not necessarily mean burning people at the stakes until they retract certain views about life and humanity. The focus is not on “blazing,” but on creating a trail and leaving a light for others to follow.