

H.E. FIDEL V. RAMOS

Fidel Valdez Ramos, military hero of the 1986 Philippine People Power Revolution in February 1986 and victor in the first multi-party presidential elections of the country, became the 12th President of the Republic of the Philippines on June 30, 1992. He has anchored his government on his philosophy of people empowerment as the engine to "operationalize economic growth, social equity and national solidarity."

The President took over the reins of a newly restored democracy, which he helped recover from a 20-year dictatorship and successfully defended against a series of adventurist military take-over attempts. Today, this non-traditional President has made big strides in bringing about a new social and political order by actively reaching out to even political opponents and insurgents to unite the nation behind a common vision.

The President's framework of governance is founded on a 5-point program: peace and stability; economic growth and sustainable development; energy and power generation; environmental protection; and a streamlined bureaucracy.

Fidel "Eddie" Valdez Ramos was born on March 18, 1928 and grew up in Lingayen, province of Pangasinan. His father, Narciso Ramos, was a lawyer, crusading journalist and 5-term legislator of the House of Representatives, who eventually rose to the position of Secretary of Foreign Affairs. As such, Narciso Ramos was the Philippine signatory to the ASEAN declaration forged in Bangkok in 1967. The President's mother, Angela Valdez, was an educator, woman suffragette and daughter of the respected Valdez clan of Batac, Ilocos Norte.

In 1946, Ramos, through competitive examinations won a government scholarship to the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, New York. Seeing the need to help raise his country from the ruins of war, he pursued further studies in engineering following his graduation from West Point in 1950, obtaining a Masters Degree in Civil Engineering in the University of Illinois in 1951, still a government scholar.

In his military career, Fidel Ramos, rose from 2nd Lieutenant Infantry platoon leader in the Philippine Expeditionary Force in 1952 during the Korean War to Chief of Staff of the Philippine Civil Action Group to Vietnam in 1966-1968. He is also known as the "father" of Philippine Army Special Forces, an elite paratroop unit skilled in community development as well as fighting communist insurgents. Later, he was appointed Deputy Chief of Staff for Home Defense of the Armed Forces, Chief of the Philippine Constabulary, reaching the zenith of his military career in February 1986 when he was named Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines as a four-star general.

In January 1968 Fidel V. Ramos took over the stewardship of the nation's Department of National Defense in the cabinet of President Corazon C. Aquino. In this role, he introduced systematic response mechanisms as concurrent head of National Disaster Coordinating Council. He provided effective impetus to national stability programs as Vice Chairman of the National Peace and Order Council and spurred economic activity

as Cabinet Officer for Regional Development for Region 9 in the southwestern Philippines.

President Ramos' ascent to the highest office of the land through peaceful, democratic elections was a masterpiece of political daring and calculation. He founded the Partido Lakas Tao (People Power Party), espousing his long-held political doctrine of people empowerment, seeking to bring to the people "greater control over their livelihood, culture, politics and all aspects of their lives." He formed the winning coalition of similar parties such as the National Union of Christian Democrats/United Muslim Democrats of the Philippines and consolidated the strength of non-government organizations and marginalized sectors who compose the majority of the electorate.

President Ramos is married to the former Amelita "Ming" Martinez and they have 5 daughters. Mrs. Ramos is herself a low-profile but hard-working First Lady, whose long experience in education, sports development and plant propagation has enabled her to spearhead projects in environmental protection, culture and arts development, and livelihood generation.

The six-year term of President Ramos is looked upon with much optimism, not only for his clear vision of the future but also his hands-on style of leadership in addressing the challenges facing the Filipino nation. As Centennial President, a name conferred on him because his term coincides with the 100th year anniversary in 1998 of the declaration of Philippine Independence from Spain, the nation looks forward to attaining full political stability, sustained economic development and social justice by the turn of the 21st century.