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JDV launches book...

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for all your service to the country and for me, thanks for being a great friend," Natori said.

Guests

Among the evening's notable guests were former New York congressman Ben Gilman, former Ambassador to the Philippines Nicholas Platt; Frank and Vivian Cruz; Roger and Irma Santiago and Assumption alumnae and classmates of Gina De Venecia.

De Venecia's entire family was in full force.

"I couldn't be here without my wife Gina, who Brett calls as "The Rock of Gibraltar of my life," De Venecia said before acknowledging his daughters who were present at the launch, Leslie, who works as an editor at Barron's and Alexandra, a scientist and a patent lawyer. Joe and Gina's youngest son Christopher, who currently writes a column for the Philippine Star was also present.

Praise

De Venecia, in his short speech, thanked three former

Philippine presidents for being gracious enough to write something about him.

Former President Corazon Aquino wrote a piece entitled A Statesman of Faith, where she recalled De Venecia's unflinching dedication to the defense of constitutional government against those groups that fought to impose military rule after the People Power revolution of 1986.

Former President Joseph Ejercito Estrada, who De Venecia ran against in the presidential race of 1998, wrote *Political Warrior* and Former President Fidel Ramos wrote *A Loyal Patriot and a Loyal Friend*. Visibly missing is De Venecia's former ally and friend, current President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

In the back-page blurbs for the book, Estrada says: "Jose De Venecia will certainly go down as one of the great Speakers in the history of the [Philippine] Congress. His many successful initiatives in the wider field of regional politics make him one of Asia's leading contemporary

statesmen. This biography by Brett Decker is about a man who has constantly reinvented himself to meet the challenges of ever-changing times. Even more important, in the overall way the world works, Jose De Venecia is a good man—and that, I think, is a true testament to character in our rough-and-tumble profession of politics."

Former president Ramos had this to say: "In the pantheon of Philippine democracy which is the oldest in Asia, Speaker De Venecia will reside with those others from the past who spent their lives taking our government to a higher plain. This is because he has nurtured a vision of greatness that beholds a more prominent leadership role for the Philippines on the world stage. It is an inspiring vision, and how he arrived there is an interesting story. In this biography, Brett M. Decker reveals knowledge of the Philippines and devotion to his subject that are only surpassed by Jose De Venecia's own passion for a better Philippines. Global Filipino is a great read about a patriotic Filipino, and I endorse them both with enthusiasm." ■

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