

Imelda Marcos in tears, says she's penniless

by PHILIP TUBEZA
Inquirer.net

MANILA – A tearful former First Lady Imelda Marcos on Thursday claimed she was penniless and had to withdraw from her husband's pension to pay for the travel bond set by the Sandiganbayan for her recent trip to Singapore for a medical check-up.

Speaking to reporters at the anti-graft court, Marcos said she had to withdraw money from the pension of the late president Ferdinand Marcos at the Philippine Veterans Bank, including the P40,000 reward for his medal of valor, to pay for the P750,000 travel bond.

"I have nothing, I have no money ... I saved this and did not touch the money in Marcos' pension of P4,500 as a retired colonel of the Philippine Award. He also got P40,000 for having the highest award ... the medal of valor," the widow said.

"And I have not touched it, because it is my proof that he was a soldier and a national hero and the most decorated Filipino in World War II. And yet, until now, he hasn't been buried. This is an injustice. Please, have mercy," she added.

While the authenticity of most, if not all, of the late dictator's World War II medals has been disputed, the Marcoses are insisting that he should be buried at the Libingan ng mga Bayani.

The former first lady was in court Thursday because the Sandiganbayan also required her to appear in person and present her passport within five days after her return to the country. She went to Singapore for an eye check-up.

She has undergone four eye surgeries since she started complaining of blurring vision and pain in her left eye in November 2008, documents submitted to the court showed.

"My children practically kidnapped me and

brought me there (in Singapore). I'm very grateful," she said.

"It is painful that every time I have to leave, even just for medical treatment, I have to pay a P750,000 travel bond. I have no more money," she added.

Marcos also castigated the government for continuing to prosecute the graft cases against her 23 years after she and her husband were driven out of power.

"Why is this taking so long? When they filed these cases in 1986, I was only 56 years old. In two weeks, I will be 80," she said.

"Justice delayed is justice denied. What is my crime? Why is it that until now I'm still being prosecuted? Is this really how the justice system works in this country?" she added.

She then went on a spiel about the many infrastructure projects she initiated while she was still in power.

"I did so many projects for this country ... the Heart Center, Lung Center, Kidney Center ... and I am being punished for it," Marcos said.

"I just want to help this country. That's my only goal: to help the poor. Just give me a chance ... to love. But why are they doing this to me? I'm the one who's guilty because I loved?" she added.

When asked whom she was supporting in the 2010 presidential elections, Marcos said she would back "the candidate who will love this country and not his own self."

"The candidate who is not only about talk ... (He or she should) put up or shut up," she said.

When asked about the anti-Charter change protests, the former First Lady said: "Enough of these protests. Let us unite. *Pare-pareho lang naman, maliit ka, malaki ka, duling, pilay - lahat may depekto.*" ■

De Venecia wife running for Congress

by YOLANDA SOTELO
Inquirer.net

DAGUPAN CITY – The wife of Pangasinan Representative Jose de Venecia Jr., Gina de Venecia, said she would seek her husband's seat in Congress in the 2010 elections.

"It took me a long time to decide whether I will join politics or not because I'm not a politician. I am a housewife and a mother and I know that this decision is life-changing. But I'm ready to offer my life in service to the people," Mrs. De Venecia said in a statement.

The former speaker of the

House of Representatives is on his third and last term. He has served as congressman for close to 20 years.

If elected, Mrs. De Venecia said she would focus on livelihood generation and alleviating the plight of abused women, abandoned children and the elderly.

Mrs. De Venecia said she declined an offer to run for senator under the opposition ticket in order to run for Pangasinan representative.

"I have been praying and it became clear in my mind that I can't trade for a higher position the welfare of our people

in the fourth district," she told the Philippine Daily Inquirer (parent company of Inquirer.net) in an interview.

Mrs. De Venecia said she has informed former president Joseph Estrada that she would not run for senator, despite her inclusion in the former leader's list of potential senatorial candidates.

The 4th district of Pangasinan is composed of Dagupan City and the towns of Manaoag, San Fabian, San Jacinto and Mangaldan.

Mrs. De Venecia said mayors and barangay (village) chairmen convinced her to run. ■

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