

BIOSKETCHES OF SPEAKERS AND REACTORS

Atty. SIMEON V. MARCELO

Ombudsman, Government of the Philippines

Ombudsman Marcelo first caught the public's attention during the Senate impeachment proceedings on graft charges against then President Joseph Estrada in 2000. During the proceedings, he handled the presentation of the prosecution's star witness, former Ilocos Sur governor Luis Singson. Thereafter, he was appointed Solicitor General of the Republic of the Philippines in February 2001. In October 2002, he was appointed as the Ombudsman, the youngest person ever appointed to the said position – an independent constitutional office.

During his term as Solicitor General, Atty. Marcelo successfully handled before the Supreme Court the recovery of the Marcos ill-gotten wealth worth US\$680 Million lodged in a Swiss Account. The decision in this case constitutes the first final ruling ever rendered finding the Marcoses guilty of acquiring ill-gotten wealth while in public office and forfeiting the same in favor of the government.

Atty. Marcelo also successfully argued before the Supreme Court major cases such as the constitutionality of the Plunder Law, the multi-billion peso coconut levy cases and the revival of the prosecution of the *Kuratong Baleleng* case against senior law-enforcement officers accused of summarily executing suspected criminal elements. To wit, in the middle of 2003, the Sandiganbayan issued a ruling that the sequestered United Coconut Planters' Bank shares were, indeed owned by the government in trust for the coconut farmers, having been purchased with public funds. In early May 2004, another resolution by the Sandiganbayan ruled that the block of San Miguel Corporation shares (about 27%), likewise purchased with coconut levy funds, is owned by the government in trust for the coconut farmers.

As Ombudsman, he now heads the panel of government lawyers prosecuting former President Estrada. Further, he actively supervises the prosecution of other major high-profile cases before the Sandiganbayan such as the President Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard case, the RSBS Pension Fund cases, the DPWH Repair Scam and the corruption case against Major General Carlos Garcia.