

Zonta International Honorary Member Corazon Aquino Dies

Former Philippine Republic President Corazon Aquino and Zonta International Honorary Member Corazon Aquino died early Saturday, August 1, 2009 in Manila. Aquino, a beloved democracy icon who swept away a dictator and inspired nonviolent resistance to autocratic rule, was the keynote speaker at the Zonta International Convention in Hong Kong in 1992.

The program of the Zonta International Convention in 1992 stated in part: "Corazon Aquino recently completed her term of office as the seventh president of the Philippine Republic and the first woman to serve in this office. Widely admired for her ability to govern with grace throughout an historic time of transition for the Philippines, she accepted the challenge of her people with charisma and determination. Instrumental in advancing the status of women in her nation, she increased the number of women serving in public office, encouraged women to participate actively in public life, and aided in the formation and passage of the Philippine Development Plan for Women. Named "Woman of the Year" by Time magazine in 1988, Corazon Aquino has received worldwide recognition for her statesmanship. It is with great pleasure Zonta International welcomes Corazon Aquino as an International Honorary Member, recognizing her commitment to advancing the status of women and promoting peace, justice and human rights worldwide."

Aquino rose to prominence after the assassination in 1983 of her husband, opposition leader Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr. The uprising she led in 1986 brought down Marcos' repressive 20-year regime and served as an inspiration to nonviolent resistance across the globe, including those that ended communist rule in Eastern Europe.

Maria Corazon Cojuangco was born on Jan. 25, 1933, into a wealthy, politically powerful family in Paniqui, about 75 miles (120 kilometers) north of Manila.

Her unlikely rise began in 1983 after her husband was gunned down at Manila's international airport moments after soldiers escorted him from a plane on his arrival from exile in the United States to challenge Marcos, his longtime adversary. Investigations showed one of his military escorts was the assassin.

After the murder, Aquino returned to the Philippines and led the largest funeral procession Manila had ever seen, with crowd estimates as high as 2 million.

The killing unleashed a broad-based opposition movement that thrust Aquino into the role of national leader.

She ran against Marcos in 1986 and became the Philippines first female President on February 25, 1986. She held that position until 1992.

Listerby, Sweden August 4, 2009

**Beryl Sten
President Zonta International**