



## Full Text LEGACY

Lamberto Avellana left behind an enduring legacy for all Filipinos through his films. Listen to how Lamberto ventured into the film industry and how he was named a National Artist for Film.

Legacy is part of the Modern Hero Stories, a series of stories under Sandaang Salaysay about the lives of great and honorable Filipinos. Brought to you by Arete and Ateneo de Manila Basic Education in partnership with The Bookmark, Inc. and sponsored by Role Players, Inc. written by Simon Godfrey Rodriguez and will be read to us by Von Totanes.

### Play

There is a saying that goes: "A man dies twice. The first time is when he breathes his last, and the second time is when his name is breathed out for the last time."

Like dying, a man is also born twice. The first time is when he springs forth from his mother's womb, and the second is when he finds out why he was born. Our story begins with the second birth of Lamberto V. Avellana.

The Sun cast a magnificent hue across the sky, like the rebirth of a phoenix, on the day the young Lamberto walked across the threshold of the Ateneo de Manila into what would be his lifetime passion.

It was in this school that Lamberto would realize why he was born. "Should I?" Lamberto asked himself as he pondered over the sign that read: Theater Auditions.

### Fast Forward

After Lamberto auditioned, he was caught up in years of stage productions and roles. He was a born performer on stage, but there was one person who was his match, or even better at inhabiting parts: his sweetheart, Daisy Hontiveros.

Lamberto and Daisy would star in many plays together, most of them directed by Lamberto himself. They established themselves as the unstoppable duo changing the landscape of dramatics in the Philippines.

"Where do we go from here?" Daisy asked Lamberto.

"Forward," Lamberto confidently replied. And so they did.

In 1939, Lamberto, Daisy, and some of their friends founded the Barangay Theater Guild that would mount productions of Filipino and classic plays for stage, then later, even for radio and television. Lamberto and Daisy were then newlyweds. Together, they dazzled audiences in play after play.

### Rewind

Lamberto was doing an important role in a play he also directed. That day, he did not understand why he was nervous. But his inner actor took over, and he conveyed emotions so genuinely that the audience gave him thundering applause for his performance as both actor and director.

After the show, a dignified man in black approached Lamberto. His name was Carlos P. Romulo, then President of Philippine Films, who would later become, among many other positions, a general, President of the University of the Philippines, and President of the United Nations General Assembly. Romulo saw the potential in Lamberto and encouraged him to direct a film that Romulo would produce.

Pause

A million thoughts crowded Lamberto's mind. He had no experience in directing a movie. He knew his decision would determine his future.

He thought to himself, "Should I risk it? Should I leave the stage and try directing a film?"

Lamberto knew Daisy would be behind him all the way. He also knew the road ahead would be daunting whatever he decided. He took the challenge.

Play

At the age of 23, Lamberto set out into a new world: the world of directing film. Romulo wanted him to direct a film on the revolutionary, Macario Sakay.

Lamberto's debut film was called "Sakay." In directing it, Lamberto was being a revolutionary, like his subject. Despite budgetary constraints and his not being familiar with the medium, Lamberto introduced a point-of-view storytelling technique to Philippine cinema.

When the movie was released, it garnered rave reviews for its technical innovation and realism. It won the Best Film for 1939.

After that, Lamberto would direct many more films, and would win more acclaim and awards, some of them international awards.

Fast Forward

In 1976, Lamberto was proclaimed the first National Artist of the Philippines for Film. By then, Lamberto, with Daisy by his side, had built a reputation for making excellent films.

Many years later, Lamberto has decided to move from directing stage plays to directing films. He was confronted by a big unknown, but he faced the challenges head on.

Lamberto's films are among the classic gems of Philippine cinema. Surely he left behind for all Filipinos a solid and enduring legacy.

Stop.

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Source: *Legacy*. Simon Godfrey Rodriguez. The Bookmark, Inc. 2015.

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