



Tuesday, 19 January 2010

## Cerge Remonde: A great loss to the country

Press Secretary Cerge M. Remonde died of heart attack this morning at the Makati Medical Center (MMC). He had been found unconscious in the bathroom of his residence in Bel-Air, Makati City. He was 51.

He was not breathing and his heart was not beating when brought to the hospital. The official time of death was 11:51 a.m.

"He is a great loss to the Arroyo administration and to the entire country. I am sure the President will have a special honor for him," said Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita when interviewed by reporters outside the hospital.

Ermita said President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo had already been informed of the press secretary's demise.

The late press secretary held a number of important positions in the media before joining the government. One of his early jobs included working as stringer in the Philippine News Agency (PNA).

Cerge, as he is fondly called, served as anchor of the highly rated DYLA Interaction, a primetime news and commentary program that set the benchmark for public affairs programming. He held the distinction of being the first ever to rise from the ranks of provincial reporters to serve as national chairman of the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas (KBP), for an unprecedented six terms.

In January 2001, President Arroyo, three days after assuming office, appointed him press undersecretary in charge of broadcast. He was later named head of the Government Mass Media Group (GMMG), overseeing various government-owned media entities, including NBN 4, RPN 9 and IBC 13; Bureau of Broadcast Services or Radyo ng Bayan; Bureau of Communication Services; and the Philippine News Agency.

In October 2006, he was appointed director-general of the Presidential Management Staff. He was the Lead Convenor of the National Anti-Poverty Commission, a position he held in concurrent capacity.

He received various awards, among them Most Outstanding Visayanian in the Field of Mass Media in 1998 and, together with former Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., Most Outstanding Cebuano in 1999.

Aside from his Cabinet post and his being Senior Adviser to the GRP-NDF Peace Panel, Cerge was chairman of the Advertising Board of the Philippines, the Freedom Fund for Filipino Journalists, and the Appeals Board of the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB). He also served as commissioner of the Communications Committee for UNESCO.

He held his last media briefing in Malacanang last Friday and was interviewed on Radio ng Bayan during the Sinulog Festival in Cebu the next day.

The late press secretary was born in Argao, Cebu, on Dec. 21, 1958. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree, magna cum laude, from the University of the Visayas (UV). In 1986, he studied Cooperation and Development Studies at the Afro-Asia Institute in Tel Aviv, Israel. In 1992, he took part in the United States State Department International Visitors Program in Washington, D.C.

He is survived by his wife, newspaper columnist Marit Remonde, nee Stinus, of Denmark. (PND)

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