

Our guests, Dr. Rajah Rasiah, Dr. Rosalinda Ofreneo, Dr. Rene Ofreneo, Red Constantino, the Managing Director of the Constantino Foundation, the family of historian Renato Constantino, guests, students—good afternoon. Magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat. Maayong hapon sa inyong tanan.

It is an honor for the College of Media and Communication to host this convocation to remember the eminent historian Renato Constantino and his wife, Letizia Roxas Constantino. Through their books and scholarly engagement, they have given us so much by shaping generations of Filipinos who have embraced their nationalist views of history.

If the Philippines has experienced extraordinary political events like the First Quarter Storm and the struggle against the Marcos dictatorship that culminated in the EDSA People Power uprising, we can credit these in part to the progressive historiography of Renato Constantino, which is Filipino-centric and oriented toward social transformation.

A nationalist analysis through the lens of Renato Constantino is needed at this time to examine developments such as the war in the Middle East and the return of authoritarianism in the world, as seen in the punitive populism of Rodrigo Duterte. These have reshaped politics globally and on the home front. I leave it to Dr. Rajah Rasiah to discuss the broader implications of these events in connection with the nationalist views of Renato Constantino. He is an expert on the topic, and we are eager to listen to his lecture.

Part of my task in welcoming you to this convocation is to express what is likely an urgent responsibility of this college, which has offered a journalism degree since 1966, when it was established as an institute and later elevated into a college. It has yet to examine the journalism of Renato Constantino. And as Dean, I say this with regret.

Among the many honors and recognitions of Renato Constantino, one aspect is often overlooked—his journalism. He was a student journalist and served as the youngest editor of the Philippine Collegian, where he wrote columns criticizing President Manuel Quezon.

During World War II and in the decades that followed, he worked as a journalist, writing columns for various newspapers, including alternative or anti-Marcos press and mainstream publications.

His arrest during the Marcos martial law years was connected to his work in We Forum, which was raided and shut down in 1982.

In his introduction to *The State of the Filipino Press* (1983), Renato Constantino underscored the importance of social analysis in understanding the press. He wrote: “The press cannot be discussed without knowing the society of which it is a part. The ultimate analysis of the press would mean an analysis of the society which the press is a reflection of.”

In this age of disinformation, fake news, conspiracy theory, and AI-driven deepfakes, the words of Renato Constantino serve as both an argument and a challenge for journalists and

scholars alike to undertake a more serious study of the media, both legacy and social media. It is not too late for this college, where members of his family are part of the faculty and alumni. Is Karmina Constantino here? (applause)

This college should commit itself to a scholarly engagement with the body of work of Renato Constantino as a journalist.

On that note, still hopeful for the possibilities, let me welcome you to this afternoon's convocation. Magandang hapon po, and enjoy tayong lahat.