

people rush to put it to good use? Would the older professors see in its construction the significance of a long-cherished ideal? Would the younger members of the faculty see it as progress itself? Would they accept the building as something modern and yet of lasting value that it would most likely endure and in enduring give the Republic a measure of strength?

Actually, there is nothing anyone can add to the Republic that is not already part of it. A president can, of course, lay out a new avenue or put up an imposing edifice for no better reason than that the money for it was available along with the rhetoric that would give it a justification of sorts. However, if the avenue or the building did not serve a real academic purpose in the pursuit of an academic ideal, neither avenue nor edifice would last beyond one presidential term. Ultimately, only the Republic knows in the collective wisdom of its faculty what is and what is not of itself.

Necessarily, therefore, the history of the University of the Philippines cannot but be the history of what its presidents and its academicians had done together in the pursuit of a commonly held ideal. No event or development in the University of the Philippines can be adequately explained except in these terms.

Concept of the University

Carlos P. Romulo began his presidency with a speech. Emerging from the oath-taking ceremony, he delivered his first presidential statement:

Ours is a university of the people, and therefore, it has no particular political affiliation. It is a secular university, and therefore, it has no religious sectarian adherence. Its mission is to constantly search for knowledge. Scholarship is its primordial concern, research its indispensable arm and unflinching source of strength. It believes in and values above all things else human freedom without which there can be no creative ingenuity that can make of knowledge a blessing for society.¹⁹

His audience readily recognized the traditional ideals of the traditional university. The more perceptive among his listeners noted at once that he had said something none of his predecessors had ever said. He had neatly linked the old ideals to the altogether new concern for human freedom and through this he connected the traditional university to modern society. However, the idea that made of knowledge a blessing for society might have been old in heaven but in 1962 it was new in Diliman.

President Romulo closed his first speech as President of the University of the Philippines with the solemn promise: "From this day onward, Mr. President and Members of the Board of Regents, to keep faith with (the