



President Benigno Aquino III

President of the Philippines

Hosting ABAC Dinner January 21, 2013

The 15th President of the Republic of the Philippines, Benigno Simeon Aquino III, has come to stand for Filipinos' reinvigorated passion to build a nation of justice, peace, and inclusive progress. Aquino—the only son of democracy icons Senator Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino and President Corazon Aquino—has in different junctures throughout his life responded to the challenge of acting with and serving the Filipino people.

In 1983 after the assassination of his father, he returned from exile to the country to help show the way for the EDSA People Power Revolution—the nonviolent and prayerful revolution by ordinary people that toppled a dictatorship and restored Philippine democracy.

In 1998, Aquino entered public service to make sure that the democracy his parents fought for would bring changes in people's lives. He served as Representative of the 2nd District of Tarlac from 1998 to 2007. In May 2007, he joined the Philippine Senate, wherein he worked to bring about legislative initiatives anchored on the protection of human rights and honest and responsible governance.

The most despondent days perhaps in Aquino's life took place in 2009 when his mother passed away from cancer after suffering for nearly a year. Her demise prompted mourning from all over the country. And yet it also awakened a remembrance of the values she stood for. It stirred up the people's yearning for a leadership that is honest and compassionate, and a nation that trusts and works with its government.

Immediately after her wake, people began to call on Aquino, urging him to run for presidency in the 2010 elections to continue his parents' work. Signature drives and an outpouring of support through yellow ribbons and stickers went full blast, convincing him to run. Moreover, candidates for president such as Senator Manuel “Mar” Roxas II, Pampanga Governor Eddie Panlilio, and Isabela Governor Grace Padaca gave up their presidential aspirations to support Aquino.

After a spiritual retreat at the Carmelite Monastery in Zamboanga City, Aquino responded to the call to make the people's passion for change the driving force behind a new government. On September 9, 2009, the 40th day after former president Cory Aquino's passing, he officially announced his candidacy for president at the Club Filipino in Greenhills, San Juan—where his mother took oath on the final day of the EDSA People Power Revolution. “I want to make democracy work not just for the rich and well connected but for everybody,” he said.

On June 9, 2010, the Congress of the Philippines proclaimed Aquino as the President Elect of the Philippines. In his inaugural address on June 30, 2010, he told the Filipino people: “We are here to serve and not to lord over you. The mandate given to me was one of change. I accept your marching orders to transform our government from one that is self-serving to one that works for the welfare of the nation.”

The presidency of Benigno Aquino III has been marked by a hardy dedication to bringing about shared progress by doing things the right way. Aquino's determination to lead the government and the nation towards the straight path has been the catalyst for unprecedented economic growth, which has trickled down to the margins of society through improved government services, reforms in the education system, and conditional cash transfers for the poor; an inspired campaign for good governance and justice as evidenced by the prosecution of corrupt and abusive government officials; and the empowerment of every citizen so that they may participate in building a nation of hope and opportunity.