

Light and shades: Political life of Vice Mayor Reynaldo S. Hermosisima

¹Johanna Faith R. Botohan & ²Garnette Mae V. Balacy*

¹Department of Arts and Sciences, UM Digos College, Philippines

²Research and Publication Center, UM Digos College, Philippines

*Corresponding author: garnettev@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to scrutinize, learn and mark out the career of Vice Mayor Reynaldo S. Hermosisima as a public servant or government official in Digos City. This includes and highlights his experiences about the personal, professional, and educational aspects, work experiences, challenges, contributions, and accomplishments during his term. Using the qualitative – biographical approach, the researcher was able to profile his biographical sketch. The research used person-to-person or actual interview with the subject for primary data and a series of triangulation, which includes information from the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) for the secondary data. Based on our findings, the political life of Vice Mayor Hermosisima as a public servant for 24 years ad as a human rights lawyer, according to him he undergoes public and personal criticism with regards to his leadership. He struggles to serve as a public servant and a father. But he became more resistant in long years in public service in adjustment to his political will and goal of being a public servant. During his years of service, he successfully implemented numerous bills and ordinances and implemented countless projects and programs for welfare and beneficial to Digos City citizens. Among his projects includes concreting of the farm-to-market roads, drainage, construction of barangay halls, barangay sites, giving livelihood projects, and financial assistance. He also supported scholarship grants and several programs in assistance to Digososños. Moreover, as a part of his profound devotion as a public servant, Digos City was awarded various awards and recognitions to distinguished Digos City as stepping up to its progress. One of the glorious recognitions obtained by the City of Digos is the "Seal of Good Governance" during his service.

Keywords: light and shades, political life, biographical design, Digos City



INTRODUCTION

The real scenario of politics does not just end after winning the heart of the majority but instead, by the time that a particular elected official will serve the function of his/her office for his/her constituents is the start of confronting the real challenge in politics. Aspiring public servants have different techniques of selling themselves to the general public. It is significant to note that the general public selected their candidates whom they want to occupy a seat in public office because they were persuaded and believed that these candidates are going to make a change for the betterment of the country. Nevertheless, not all elected government officials can meet the constituencies' standard expectations or the general public.

The basis of our political system is written under the constitution founded in 1987, which stipulated that "The Philippines is a Democratic and Republican state. Sovereignty resides in the people and all government authority emanates from them" (Article II Sec. I of 1987 Philippine Constitution). In a democratic country like ours, the majority voice of the public is what matters the most. This is because the principle of Democracy is that the government is created by the people and for the people. As time passes by, actors in politics develop in each era that defines that time. Men who define the thinking, culture, religion, technology, and every after aspect of that particular period. These days, many aspiring government officials want to occupy a post in the government. Some of them are successful, and others are not. These political actors differ in many ways as to how they govern and operate their constituents. As our societal generation develops and experiences the process of evolution from our ancestors to the present, our government's ways have also changed. Even though there are many changes that the government has undergone in the past, the purpose remains the same nevertheless. In a democratic country like the Philippines, a good politician knows how to make and support an idea that shall embody the public's ideas and aspirations. They also know how to convince them to prosper, accommodate others' points of view while retaining the core values, and ultimately find the points of agreement that will allow building a plan and democratic ideals. Hence, the study aimed to explore the political career of Atty. Reynaldo S. Hermosisima, his achievements, contributions, and accomplishments during his term as the City Vice Mayor

METHOD

The study used the qualitative-biographical approach. This approach allows the researcher to explore in diverse methodological and interpretative ways how the

life of an individual being understood by taking into account the generative cultural and structural settings and is therefore showing to help the view the illustration of the major societal changes that are experiencing, but essentially not in some broad social level (Roberts, 2002). The qualitative approach of data collection and analysis allowed the researcher to develop a depth understanding of the life of a political leader. The research applied actual interviews of the participant and direct observation.

The study was conducted through an actual interview on biographical data. The interviews were personally done. As Hanninen (2000) suggested, the interviews were based on the interviewee's answers about his profile and general leadership issues. Interview questions were made to relate to the research questions. The study used the narrative approach, which was the study of lives, which the idea of a story to construct how people formed an account of their lives. Researchers or writers have come up with an understanding of various forms of narrative and the self or identity. The point of narrative research is the analysis of stories. Narration research has spread during the last decade from the research of literature, social linguistics, history, and philosophy to other sciences, such as the social sciences and psychology.

Thus, the narrative analysis was used in this study to investigate how Atty. Reynaldo S. Hermosisima accounted for his life experience and obstacles as a politician through interviews and guided questions. The study shall focus on the profile of the political career of Atty. Reynaldo S. Hermosisima, specifically his political life as a leader. The participant answered as honestly and specifically as possible about his life story.

Also, biographical research is a specific type of qualitative research that uses stories of individuals and other 'personal materials' to understand an individual's life within its social context (Roberts, 2002). The intention of qualitative-biographical research in its various guises is to gather and interpret the lives of as part of human understanding (Roberts, 2002). This highlights the vital role of subjective experiences within historical and social aspects and makes invisible the processes by which individuals negotiate their identities and their interpretation/engagement with norms, and guides the researcher in capturing, probing, and rendering understandable problematic experiences. This recognizes that what we capture in stories is mediation between the personal voice and wider cultural imperative social context (Roberts, 2002).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Political Journey

He started in politics sometime in 1992 when he ran for Board Member Representing the 1st District of Davao Del Sur. He was 33 years old when he first entered politics that year. He wanted to join politics because he believed then that his life would become an open book when he joined politics. He would be subjected to public scrutiny and criticism. But, because of the persistent offer and request of the late Governor Rogelio E. Llanos and the late Vice-Governor Romualdo C. Garcia, who wanted to introduce genuine reforms in the political landscape of Davao del Sur, he finally acceded by accepting the offer and joined their political party during 1992 Local and National Election. Fortunately, he was elected as a member of the Provincial Board of Davao del Sur and Joseph R. Peñas, our incumbent City Mayor and Atty. Romualdo C. Garcia, the former Vice-Governor.

During that time, he had no plan to enter politics. For several occasions, as a young human rights lawyer and active member of the legal profession, he was approached and asked by the late Gov. Rogelio E. Llanos, who was then the Municipal Mayor of Digos, to join their political party to run for Board Member representing the 1st District of Davao del Sur. Until finally, when the late Gov. R. Llanos was accompanied by the late Atty. Romualdo C. Garcia, the former Board Member and former Vice –Governor of Davao del Sur, who happened to be one of their "Ninongs" or major sponsors in their wedding ceremony, accepted the offer, of course, after consulting his wife and parents.

According to him, no one influenced him to enter politics. He was the one who fervently asked her mother to stop or put an end to her political career as she was an undefeated Municipal Councilor of Matanao, Davao del Sur, sometime in the 1970s because during that time, elected officials had no fixed salary as they were only receiving honorarium or per diem. Meaning they only received P25.00 every time they attended the session. They suffered financial difficulties because, during that time, five of his siblings were in college and Atty. Reynaldo S. Hermosisima was then 3rd Year High School studying at the University of Mindanao, Bansalan Branch. He also said that he was already married, a practicing lawyer, and a law professor in Co rJesu College of Law when he joined politics.

It was so difficult for him when he first joined politics. First, he had no previous experiences on how to handle political issues; Second, he has had no personal

knowledge on how to prepare campaign strategies; Third, he had no sufficient financial support to sustain the political battle; and, Fourth, running as a member of the Provincial Board is not easy because it covers Seven (7) Municipalities comprising the 1st District of Davao del Sur.

When did I ask him that when he won, what would be the conflicts that would arise? He said that being a human rights lawyer and a law practitioner, idealism is too high. He wanted to introduce genuine reforms via local legislation. Still, he could not entirely get the majority's approval as it would somehow go against the personal interest of big politicians. For example, he was the author and principal sponsor of a Resolution prohibiting Western Mining Corporation (WMC), a multi-million Australian Corporation, to conduct open-pit mining activities in the Municipalities of Kiblawan, Matanao, and Magsaysay. The management of that mining corporation lobbied financial dole-outs to the local politicians to get approval from the municipal and provincial legislators. At the outset, his proposed resolution was strongly opposed by the members of the Provincial Board. Still, when he organized the multi-sectoral group's, i.e., Farmers, urban poor, religious organizations, youth, women, and professionals with a cause of protecting the environment, it was finally approved by the body including the passage of resolutions declaring De. Terrence Garner, the Operation Manager of WMC as *Persona Non-Grata*, asked the Bureau of Immigration and Deportation (BID) for his immediate deportation. After his term as a member of the Provincial Board, the name of Western Mining Corporation (WMC) was changed to SMI or Southern Mindanao Mining Corporation, Incorporated during the time of Gov. Douglas Ra. Cagas and was able to obtain a permit from Davao del Sur's provincial government to conduct exploration and exploitation of mineral resources in the Municipality of Kiblawan.

Also, he said that there were isolated instances when he experienced conflict with the Presiding Officer, the Vice-Governor, and one (1) member of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan. In the case of the Vice-Governor, he remembered, the former issued a written Memorandum asking the Provincial Board members to explain in writing within 24hours the allegations that the motorcycles issued to us were seen roaming around the Poblacion of Digos during wee hours in the morning carrying young ladies. All Sangguniang Panlalawigan except him, who were issued motorcycles and received the memorandum from the Vice-Governor, submitted written explanations. He was confronted by the Vice-Governor staff and asked him to submit his written explanation as he was ordered by his superior officer (the Vice-Governor). He told the staff that he would answer the allegations during the session and not via written explanation because he is solely answerable to the

people of Davao del Sur. The latter voted him into the office and not to the Vice-Governor in using the yellow pick-up assigned in his office. It was used in transporting pots from Hagonoy to his business establishment in Digos; it was used in transporting his orchids from Digos to Davao City; it was used in a session, the yellow pick-up assigned to the Vice-Governor was personally used by the Mayor Delos Cientos of Padada in going to Manila. The same was stranded in Leyte because of the typhoon. He said, under the Local Government Code of the Philippines, any motor vehicle owned by the province cannot be used outside the province without the Governor's written approval. The use of the yellow pick-up by Mayor Delos Cientos in going to Manila was without the knowledge and approval of Governor Llanos. And, so, when the Presiding Officer, Vice-Governor Dr. Antonio Sunga, heard my privileged speech, he immediately stepped down and asked sorry about the memorandum he issued. In the case of his fellow Board Member, he spread gossips and malicious information to the members of the Municipal Councilors and to the Barangay Captains of Davao del Sur telling them that he was the one who vehemently opposed the resolution increasing the salaries of the Barangay Officials when in truth and fact he was a co-sponsor of said resolution. He knew about it because he was told by his close friends, who were also members of the Municipal Councilors League of Davao del Sur. When he rose and delivered his privilege speech during the session and confronted that Board Member about his malicious circulations of wrong information, he decided to quit and opted to resign as a Provincial Board member. Still, they were settled by Governor Llanos as they belong to the same political party and, eventually, their conflict was settled.

When I asked him if there was an issue that he failed to overcome, he answered that he could not remember any issue or problem he failed to overcome during his entire political career. He positively believed that no problem does not carry its solution. In solving complicated problems, what is needed is prayer and soul-searching—the bottom line is-humility.

In fact, according to him, every plan or program, be it personal or in the office, is full of challenges. As a mature and responsible leader, we have to dissect the problem by getting the positive and the negative aspects of it. As the saying goes, get the grain and throw the trash. As a visionary leader, he does believe in "blessing in disguise"-the ultimate yardstick. Even how good are your plans and programs if they are not attuned to the will of God, the Almighty, they are useless and a mere exercise of futility. All problems he encountered along the way made him a better leader.

As a Vice Mayor and, at the same time, Presiding Officer in the Sangguniang Panglungsod, his primary function is to see to it that proper etiquette is always maintained, observed, and respected by the members during the conduct of session as guided by the internal rules of the council and under the Parliamentary Procedure. As a rule, it is the Sangguniang Panglungsod that approves the budget, plans, and programs as proposed, and, once approved, it is the mayor who will implement it. Countless projects and programs were already approved by the Sangguniang Panglungsod of Digos and successfully implemented by the mayor. To name a few, the construction of different Barangay Halls in Digos City; the concreting and cementing of city and barangay roads in Digos; the construction of drainage and open canals; the purchase of barangay sites by the city government; the giving of livelihood projects to existing cooperative and non-government organizations by extending financial assistance to them; the financial support of the city government to the PhilHealth members; the scholarship program of the city to deserving students; the giving of summer vacation; the support to the senior citizens of Digos; the health programs; among others.

As Vice Mayor of Digos City from 2010 up to the present, he passed and approved several local policies that redounded to the benefits of the Digosenos. To name a few: An Ordinance Creating City Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council (CDRRMC), thereby institutionalizing the calamity and disaster preparedness pieces of training and programs to all public and private institutions within the city of Digos; An Ordinance Declaring Curfew Hours To Minors; An Ordinance Creating City Tricycle For-Hire Regulatory Board (CTFRB) which regulates the operation of motorized tricycle for hire in the city, giving a discount to students and senior citizens in the payment of fares; Anti-Loitering Ordinance in thru City; An Ordinance Prohibiting Smoking in Public Places within the City; An Ordinance Regulating Fireworks Display in the City; among others. The titles of the ordinances speak for themselves and for whom the benefits redounded.

The first and the greatest achievement he obtained as Vice Mayor and, at the same time as presiding officer of the Sangguniang Panglungsod of Digos City was the unification of all members in the council regardless of their political affiliation; Second, the smooth and orderly conduct of every session with high regard to professionalism and mutual respect thereby making the good future, welfare and development of the city as the guiding principle in public service where true democracy is strictly maintained; Third, all local legislations we had passed and approved redounded to the benefits of all sectors in the society especially the youth, i.e., scholarship programs, feeding programs, support to the alternative

learning system, summer job programs, to the students, support to different day-care centers, among others.

However, there are many plans in the city council, which were too accomplished because of our limited time and limited resources to have it approved and implemented. Some of which are the possible construction of a new city hall. Our existing city hall is dilapidated, ruinous, and not safe to occupy because it is the municipal building. Because of insufficient funds, the city could not build or construct a new city hall which the Digosenos, in the future, can be proud of; the farm-to-market road in the entire city has not yet been cemented or concreted because of the limited resources; drainage system is not capable of withstanding floods; full scholarships to deserving students cannot be given; there is no assurance of genuine peace and stability in the city because of the limited resources were checkpoints and choke points in the city boundaries can be established and maintained; among others.

During my interview, I asked him what priorities he makes and keeps? He said that he is subservient and dependent on their political party and the mayor. He will be supporting, all the way, the plans, and programs of the mayor being his next in command. In the meantime, as the May 2016 local and national election is forthcoming, He will abide by the political party's decision to run for reelection as vice-Mayor of Digos City. While serving as incumbent Vice- -Mayor, he will maintain his good working relationship with the city councilors, city officials, and employees.

According to the vice mayor, when his useful years deteriorate and the people of Digos for whom he committed to serve to turn their backs, that's the time he would quit politics and live a simple and peaceful life. No one can claim a monopoly in public service. Time will come, and, certainly, the term of a politician will surely end. It is as certain as death to come. He said what is important is the living legacy you left when you say goodbye to public service.

Truly, politics in Davao del Sur is too many partisans. If you join a certain political party, you have to abide by its rules and by-laws; otherwise, you will be isolated and left behind. The voters in Davao del Sur are not yet mature and responsible, unlike in western countries where the competence and ability to serve are the qualifications before being elected into office. If not corrected, in the future, politics in Davao del Sur will only be good to the haves and moneyed. In Davao del Sur, time will come that another politician will have no place in politics even

how brilliant and competent they are because politics in the entire country is won by popularity and influential family. That is the reality.

Electoral Strategies of vice Mayor Atty. Rey S. Hermosisima were Applied in his Political Journey

To the question, I asked. What was his strategy? Why had he been elected as city vice mayor? He said he was a Human rights Lawyer and was in the legal profession for 25 years? During those years, he served as legal counsel for several groups, organizations, and associations in public and private agencies without asking for payment for his legal services. He served as legal counsel of the labor sector in Digos Public Market and bus terminals, the jamboleros, cooperatives, farmers, teachers, policemen, armies, and even human rights victims. He also served as a member, legal counsel, adviser of fraternities and sororities in Digos City and Davao Del Sur's province. He served as the lawyer of barangay captains in Davao del Sur; He was the UM Digos College Alumni Association President for more than ten years. He served as President of all Vice Mayors in Davao del Sur and, at the same time, President of all Vice Mayors in Region 11. These are the reasons why he was elected as Vice Mayor of Digos City

Pains and Struggle Experienced by Vice Mayor Atty. Rey S. Hermosisima in his Political Career

To the question what are the pains and sorrows that he had passed in times of hardships or difficulties in leading, he responded that truthfully, along the way, as the leader, he had experienced and realized that sometimes your friends, party mates, and supporters have three (3) hearts and six (6) faces. They are good in front of you but stab you at your back when you are not around. That is why he learned to pray every day to God, the almighty, saying: "God protect me from my friends and companions because I know how to handle my enemies"...Amen. I quote.

He can say that one must not let it get personal. First and foremost, never personalize criticism, even when you're personally attacked. Look how McCain handled Trump's vicious attack. Appearing on Morning Joe, he said in a calm voice that Trump didn't owe him an apology, but he did owe POWs and the families of POWs an apology. And he left it at that. McCain became the picture of grace under fire and gained the respect of millions. Also, there's a great lesson in that. Show your wisdom and decision-making competence by remaining calm,

cool, and collected. Most critics are trying to get a rise out of you, making you want to fire back.

Don't. Self-defense is an instinct but always weigh the costs. A few careless words may haunt you for years to come. You will be criticized. So learn to live with it. When you're in a leadership position, it's just part of the job description, so understand it and don't take unfair criticism to heart. Accept the fact that a lot of criticism is aimed at those in positions of authority—as it has always been and always will be. Top executives are easy targets for people who want to vent their frustration. Don't get bitter—whatever it is, let it go. Never let someone else's criticism define who you are or derail what you're trying to accomplish. Your first reaction may be to respond in kind or trade barbs with whoever's criticizing you. Resist the impulse. Before you start talking, take a few moments to think carefully and weigh all your response factors and ramifications. It's always better to wait a while before deciding whether or how to respond. Put it aside overnight and answer the criticism in the light of the following day. The passion you feel now will dissipate overnight, and you'll be in a better position to respond objectively and dispassionately—just as John McCain did.

Since none of us are above reproach, the criticism directed at you may be—dare I say it?—justified. If it is, and you acknowledge it to yourself, you're in a good position to correct your behavior or performance, whichever the case may be. Rising above the criticism and objectively analyzing its authenticity earns the respect of your employees.

You may not agree with the criticism, but remember this: The person criticizing you thinks you deserve it, and even if they're wrong, you have the opportunity for a frank, and hopefully objective, discussion with them to correct their impression. Look at this as an opportunity to make an ally out of what could otherwise be an adversary. "Rising above the criticism and objectively analyzing its authenticity earns the respect of your employees..." And keep this in mind: If you get the same criticism from two or more people, you can bet there's a problem you had best examine—and soon. As

Allen Mulally, former president and CEO of Ford Motor Company, was fond of saying: "Winners learn quickly how to get out of their way."

Impact of Being a Public Servant to the Family

According to what was said by the wife of Vice-mayor Reynaldo S. Hermosisima, the adjustments she has made were not that difficult because before the vice mayor was elected, he has been helping people as a lawyer. The job, according to him, is almost the same. Additional adjustments are the time that the vice mayor can spend with them because now and then, the vice mayor would be invited to speaking engagements in different places. However, as a rule, set by their family –Sunday is for the family and also birthdays and anniversaries. Everything can be changed as long as communication is open nevertheless.

In terms of problems that they have undergone related to her husband's job, she said that it's not a problem but more adjustments when he was asked to join politics by the late Gov. Roger Llanos, she said: she disagreed at first. But because of the insistence of the Gov. Roger Llanos, she eventually agreed. The late governor Llanos explained that he was seen something from Vice Mayor Reynaldo S. Hermosisima that will be able to help a lot of people. In his daughter's case, she said that it does not affect her or her siblings that their father is a public servant. They are, in fact, proud that their father is serving the people of Digos City with sincerity and honesty. The only adjustment that she has made is that they have to accept that their father's time for them will be limited but spent wisely. As a matter of fact, during their father's vacant time, his father would spend it with them. According to his daughter, it's all about time management.

In terms of the problem that their family had encountered related to their father's political career, she responded that; yes, every politician's family would encounter problems related to his political career. According to her, they cannot please everybody that everything politicians do is for the good of the people. Destructors and criticizers would always be present. But it's up to the family to handle them; they can ignore or talk back if they want to.

CONCLUSION AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

During Atty. Reynaldo S. Hermosisima's youthful years did not occur even in his wildest dreams that he wanted to join politics because he believed then that his

life would become an open book when he joined politics. He would be subjected to public scrutiny and criticism. Because of the persistent offer and request of the late Governor Rogelio E. Llanos and the late Vice-Governor Romualdo C. Garcia, who wanted to introduce genuine reforms in the political landscape of Davao del Sur. He finally acceded by accepting the offer and joined their political party during 1992 Local and National Election. Fortunately, he was elected as a member of the Provincial Board of Davao del Sur and Joseph R. Peñas, our incumbent City Mayor and Atty. Romualdo C. Garcia, the former Vice-Governor.

He pointed out that being a leader does not exempt anyone from problems. All his pains and sorrows he had overcome in times of hardships or difficulties in leading. He responded: truthfully, that along the way, as the leader, you will experience and realize that sometimes your friends, party mates, and supporters have three (3) hearts and six (6) faces. They are good in front of you but stab you at your back when you are not around. That is why he learned to pray every day to God, the Almighty, saying: "God protect me from my friends and companions because I know how to handle my enemies" ...Amen.

His strategy has been elected as city vice mayor. He was a Human rights Lawyer and was in the practice of the legal profession for 25 years. He served as legal counsel for several groups, organizations, and associations in public and private agencies without asking for payment for his legal services. He served as legal counsel of the labor sector in Digos Public Market and bus terminals, the jamboleros, cooperatives, farmers, teachers, policemen, armies, and even human rights victims. He also served as a member, legal counsel, adviser of fraternities and sororities in Digos City and Davao del Sur. He served as a lawyer of barangay captains in Davao del Sur; He was the UM Digos College Alumni Association President for more than ten years. He served as President of all Vice Mayors in Davao del Sur and, at the same time, President of all Vice Mayors in Region 11. These are the reasons why he was elected as Vice Mayor of Digos City.

It is the government's primary duty to protect and serve its citizens as mandated in the 1987 Philippine Constitution, Declaration of the Philippines, and State Policies. Those who seek to occupy a seat in the government, like the politicians, must make new solutions in solving the problems of its constituents for the betterment of the community. Changing the people's bad views or presumptions about those seeking a seat in the government will lead to a lack of cooperation with the government.

In as much as this study is limited to the political life of Vice Mayor Reynaldo S. Hermosisima. The following implications for further research are advanced. It is an effective way to determine the effectiveness of a government towards its constituents in the process of interviewing together with his wife and his daughter. As the 1987 Constitution says, that Open office is an open trust. Meaning, that open officers and representatives must, at all times, be responsible to the general population, serve them with the most extreme obligation, trustworthiness, devotion, and productivity, and act with patriotism and equity. Along these lines, a study relating to great administration might be directed to assess the general population's trust and certainty, and it chooses government authorities.

To effectively comprehend the difficulties as far as improvement emergency confronted by offices of the administration, CCL made and directed an examination study by utilizing Benchmarking competency structure. We concentrated on two noteworthy inquiries: What abilities as far as the initiative is most vital for government associations' achievement? Benchmarks database recovered 16 key initiative aptitudes, and also five (5) wrecking considers that can show a chief's profession is in a bad position. In the meantime, while each of these abilities is fundamental to general pioneer adequacy, some are seen as more basic than others in various commercial enterprises or parts. Knowing which capacities and abilities matter most in the legislature segment can help offices make or make a technique in administration improvement that manufactures the capacities very much required for more noteworthy viability. How do the pioneers in the administration segment perform the competency regions most basic to achievement? It is vital to be instructed how the administration aptitudes in your association match those distinguished as most essential for pioneers in the administration area. Knowing administration qualities and shortcomings permit an association to pick how well individual abilities in parallelism with hierarchical needs. It is likewise vital to distinguish central errors that should be tended to through centers for improvement and learning.

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