



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City



EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Resolution No. 1975

Introduced by REPRESENTATIVE ERIC L. OLIVAREZ

**A RESOLUTION
EXPRESSING DEEPEST CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES ON THE DEMISE OF HIS EXCELLENCY,
AMBASSADOR BIENVENIDO RUFINO TANTOCO, SR.**

WHEREAS, former Ambassador Bienvenido R. Tantoco, Sr., passed away on July 6, 2021 at the age of 100 due to pneumonia;

WHEREAS, Bienvenido R. Tantoco was appointed as Ambassador of the Philippines to the Vatican City in 1983 during the Marcos years. He was then at the forefront of the efforts initiated by his predecessors that led to the beatification and canonization of San Lorenzo Ruiz for which, throughout his tenure, he campaigned tirelessly, making known particularly to the Vatican community the miraculous works of the first Filipino saint. By his gentlemanly manners, urbane attitude, lack of self-interest, and diplomatic knack, he was also able to smoothen what was then a less than ideal relationship between the Philippine leaders and the papacy;

WHEREAS, former Ambassador Tantoco, Sr., who was fondly called Lolo Benny by his grandchildren, is the son of Luis Buendia Tantoco, a farmer, fisherman, and trader from Malolos, Bulacan, and Carmen Fabella Rufino, a pianist and music teacher. While he was born to a life of privilege, Benny likewise knew how to struggle

in life as he grew up fully exposed to the plight of an ordinary working man in his community. He learned the value of one's toil since Benny was assigned by his father Luis in his early age to help watch over their fishponds and their other livelihood;

WHEREAS, Ambassador Tantoco has descended from a strong ancestral stock, many of whom took part in the revolution during the Spanish colonial times. His great-granduncle Fr. Agustin Tantoco was the leader of the KKK's Katipunan del Norte in Malolos, Bulacan. Of the 20 Women of Malolos of 1888 who peacefully formed a movement in 1888 for educational reforms in the country, at least seven were Tantocos, including Basilia Tantoco, Lolo Benny's great-grand aunt. No less than our national hero, Jose Rizal paid homage in 1889 to these brave women for their staunch desire to educate themselves. In his life of 100 years, Lolo Benny like Rizal did not lose sight of the potential of women and the dignity and honor they deserved. This can be gleaned not only in the support he gave to his wife and the way he raised his daughters, but his overall respect, admiration and veneration to the capacity of women in their own respective fields;

WHEREAS, he and his wife, Gliceria Rustia Tantoco or Glecy, founded Rustan's in 1952 in their San Marcelino home in Ermita, Manila. At first, they only sold trove of things of interest that they found in their many travels - some of which they also shared as gifts with their relatives, friends and neighbors. Even then, before Rustan's grew into an empire with expansive and diversified interests in retail, real estate, food and beverages, and lifestyle, its founders even while traveling the world had this desire to make the Philippines a part of the global retail village;

WHEREAS, Tantoco has become known as the "Father of Philippine Luxury Retailing" for being the first to trailblaze the luxury retail business industry;

WHEREAS, as the patriarch and founding father of the Rustan Group of Companies, Bienvenido Tantoco, Sr. together with his late spouse, Gliceria, is rightly credited for establishing the luxurious retail trade on this nation - a legacy he has handed over to 2 succeeding generations of the Tantoco clan. Under his visionary management, Rustan's grew from a single division retailer to the multifaceted conglomerate that it is right now;

WHEREAS, in 2010, Forbes listed Bienvenido R. Tantoco, Sr. as the 34th richest Filipino with a networth of USD\$95 million;

WHEREAS, throughout the years, Ambassador Tantoco Sr. received various awards and accolades for his outstanding business achievements and societal contributions. Beyond his reputation, he is mostly admired for his love of God, family, friends, and all his staff and employees whom he considered as his extended family;

WHEREAS, another feather was added to his cap when Tantoco, as an esteemed diplomat, was decorated by the Republic of Italy the Order of Merit with the rank of Commander, which is the highest citation given to a non-Italian. He was also conferred The Grand Cross pro Merito Melitensi by The Chancellor of the Sovereign Military Order of St. John of Jerusalem;

WHEREAS, Ambassador Tantoco never lost his dedication and discipline as a working honor student. From managing theaters, he learned to run and then expand a retail empire. The Tantocos dreamt big and wanted Rustan's to be at the same level as the world's most famous department stores, in the mold of Harrod's and Saks Fifth Avenue. And so, Rustan's became the premier shopping luxurious destination of the country;

WHEREAS, taking the lead from both his parents, Ambassador Tantoco learned the paramount importance of a work ethic, civic duty, and the values of hard work, and subsequently passed them on to his family and to the succeeding generations of the Tantoco clan;

WHEREAS, former Ambassador Bienvenido R. Tantoco, Sr. is survived by his children, Rico Tantoco and his wife, Nena, Nedy Tantoco and her long time partner ,Patrick Jacinto, Menchu Lopez and her husband, Jun, Marilou Pineda and her husband, Eddie, Marilen Tantoco and, Maritess Enriquez and her husband, Renato;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, by the House of Representatives in session assembled, to express its deepest sympathies and condolences on the demise of former Ambassador Bienvenido R. Tantoco, Sr.

RESOLVED FURTHER, that a copy of this resolution be furnished to the bereaved family of the deceased.

ADOPTED.


ERIC L. OLIVAREZ