Maestro Juan C. Flores, The Father of Pampanga Sculpture and Woodcarving

A Documentary produced by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), - (circa 1997) tracing the life of Juan Flores and showcased his immense talent and one of a kind artworks, the man who pioneered and started the Renaissance of Sculpture and woodcarving in Betis and throughout Pampanga.

Considered as the Father of Pampanga Sculpture and woodcarving, Juan Flores or "Apung Juan" as he was fondly called, had established a rich legacy consisting not only of exquisite artworks but of his selfless dedication to impart his artistic talent to the people of Pampanga and around him. Flores pioneering efforts to convert the once predominantly fishing village into a furniture haven and eventually into a major source of sophisticated artworks has successfully placed the Filipino artistry in the light of world-class recognition.

He is both an institution and a national treasure, yet during his lifetime, the recognition he attained somehow fell short of his pioneering effort and artistic acumen that he nurtured through the years. The conversion of Pampanga, particularly Betis as a furniture haven and a major source of sophisticated artworks successfully place the Filipino artistry in the light of world class recognition and merited international approval.

He is the 1st Filipino sculptor and carver to be recognized here and abroad. No less than the late Pres. Manuel L. Quezon, recognized his talent when he was commissioned to do the wooden carved door and paneling in Malacanang Palace way back in the thirties. He has sculptured various figures with religious and historical significance, as well as personalities, such as wooden life-bust of Pres. Quezon, Franklin Roosevelt, D.Eisenhower, Gen. D. McArthur and few years back Pres. R. Nixon. He was honored as far as Spain, Canada, U.S.A. and Japan to name a few.

In the late sixties, he was honored for exemplary talent for sculpture by KATHA, an association of painters, writers, sculptors and concerned citizen for the promotion of Philippine Arts and Cultures. In 1972, he represented the country as the sole delegate in a 3-day competition of Nixon Bust in Washington State, USA. More than 60 sculptors all over the world participated. He won the coveted 1st prize.

In 1977, he was given the prestigious Panday Pira award by Sec. Blas Ople in recognition of his pioneering effort and the thousand he had trained in woodart. He was named the most distinguish son of Pampanga twice, in 1983 from then Governor and Solicitor General Estelito Mendoza and in 1988 from then Governor Bren Z. Guiao.

His works has found their way into the number of Musuem and institution, such as Dev. Bank of the Phil. (DBP), Presidential Musuem in Malacanang Palace, Nat'l Musuem in Agrifina Circle Manila and the Nat'l Commission on Culture and Art (NCCA) to name a few, Home of prominent families like the Zobel, Aranetas, Marcoses, Madrigal's and others. Cathedrals and churches-San Agustin in Intramuros, San Sebastian in Quiapo, Antipolo Dome, Forbes Park and more.

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