

SIMPLICIO S. DEL ROSARIO
(1866-1947)

Jurist and Moral Critic

“We have been like a man who sports about in a limousine when all he really can afford is a *carrromata*.” This stinging remark made in the 1930’s, yet still appropriate for the present, may well be what Simplicio del Rosario is best remembered by.

Born on June 24,1866 to Tiburcio del Rosario and Teresa Sempio in Bulacan, Bulacan, Del Rosario took up his primary studies at a public school in Bulacan. He went to Manila to pursue a college education and enrolled at the Ateneo de Manila for his Bachelor of Arts degree, which he earned in 1884. There, he received the title of surveyor. He was already working when he pursued law at the University of Santo Tomas, finishing the course in 1891.

After graduating from UST, he practiced law in Bulacan for a while. Entering the government service, he served as acting fiscal and registrar of deeds of Leyte. During the revolutionary period, he was made a delegate to the Malolos Congress, representing Leyte, and law professor at the Universidad Literaria de Filipinas established by Aguinaldo in Tambobong (now Malabon).

He joined other prominent individuals including T.H. Pardo de Tavera, Florentino Torres, Ambrosio Flores, Felipe Bunecamino, and Tomas del Rosario, in founding the Federal Party at No. 37 Villalobos Street in Quiapo, Manila on December 23, 1900. Formed at a time when the Filipino-American war was still raging, the Federal Party, as expressed in its manifesto issued at its founding, aimed for the restoration of peace country in the and the “reunion of all Filipinos” and thereby “freely organize a new constitution...foster its manufactures...agriculture and its commerce...that they may enter upon the true era of liberty and prosperity...”

Once the Americans had established their rule in the country, he was designated Registrar of Deeds of the north district of Manila, a position he held until his appointment as a judge of the Court of Land Registration on January 1,1903.

Around 1909, he was appointed judge of the fifth judicial district, comprising the provinces of Rizal and Bulacan. The following year, he was transferred to the Manila Court of First Instance, serving there until his retirement in 1931.

Judge Del Rosario was intensely patriotic. He was a man of his convictions and was quite outspoken. Labeled as a miser for his refusal to contribute to the independence fund, he defended his refusal by saying, “ the milk of human kindness flows freely from the heart, not forced.” He showed his generosity in the case of a young girl who left home because her mother refused to give her money to see a movie; just so the girl would go home and be reconciled with her mother, he gave her money himself.

Del Rosario was known to be a moral crusader, especially against obscene motion pictures and suggestive vaudeville. His crusading spirit extended against corruption in the government. He denounced lavish fiesta celebrations and public dancing as responsible for retarding progress, and wrote of the many failings of Filipinos, particularly what would later be known as “colonial mentality.”

“We should gain much if we could inculcate a strong and profound love of country in the minds of our young people from their tenders years,” he once wrote, “Then there could not arise the case of our young men, who, upon returning from the United States and other foreign countries after a few years’ stay there, have tried to be everything but Filipinos.”

Del Rosario was married to Juana Barlosa y Alejo. They had seven children, Teresa, Carmen, Dolores, Jose, Paz, Manuel and Luis.

He died on February 22, 1947.

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NHI File (cites the memorial tablet at the mausoleum of the Del Rosario Family at La Loma Cemetery)

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