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SENATE
P. S. R. No. 954

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION
EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE TO NOMINATE LISA MACUJA-
ELIZALDE FOR THE NATIONAL ARTIST AWARD FOR DANCE,
IN RECOGNITION OF HER IMMENSE AND UNPARALLELED CONTRIBUTIONS
TO PHILIPPINE CULTURE AND THE ARTS, SPECIFICALLY TO
PHILIPPINE BALLET

WHEREAS, Proclamation No. 1001, creating the National Artist Award, is administered jointly by the Cultural Center of the Philippines and the National Commission of Arts, and conferred by the President of the Philippines through a presidential proclamation;

WHEREAS, the National Artist Award is the highest honor conferred on Filipino Artists who have made distinct contributions to the fields of Literature, Music, Dance, Theater, Visual Arts, Literature, Film, Broadcast Arts, Fashion Design and Architecture, and Allied Arts;

WHEREAS, nominations for National Artist are based on the following criteria, as set forth by the Cultural Center of the Philippines and the National Commission on Culture and the Arts:

1. Living artists who have been Filipino citizens for the last ten years prior to nomination as well as those who have died after the establishment of the award in 1972 but were Filipino citizens at the time of their death;
2. Artists who have helped build a Filipino sense of nationhood through the content and form of their works;
3. Artists who have pioneered a mode of creative expression or style, earned distinction for it, and made an impact on succeeding generations of artists;
4. Artists who have created a substantial and significant body of works and have consistently displayed excellence in the practice of their art, enriching artistic expression or style; and
5. Artists who have enjoyed broad acceptance through prestigious international and national recognition such as the Gawad CCP, 13 Artists Award, NCCA Alab ng Haraya, and critical acclaim and respect and esteem from peers;

WHEREAS, notable artists who have received this honor include Amado V. Hernandez, N.V.M. Gonzales, Nick Joaquin, Levi Celerio, Lino Brocka, Ishmael Bernal, Rolando Tinio, Fernando Poe Jr., Napoleon Abueva, Vicente Manansala, and Cesar Legaspi, among others;

WHEREAS, for the dance category, only five people have been conferred with the National Artist Award: Francisca Reyes Aquino, Leonor Orosa Goquingco, Ramon Obusan, Lucrecia Reyes Urtula, and recently, Alice Reyes;

WHEREAS, on 4 December 2012, the Senate adopted Resolution No. 134 nominating Ms. Lisa Teresita Pacheco Macuja-Elizalde for National Artist for Dance in recognition of her exemplary contributions to Philippine culture and arts, specifically in Philippine ballet;

WHEREAS, Ms. Macuja-Elizalde is the first Philippine-based prima ballerina, and first foreign soloist to join the Kirov Ballet in 1984; she is also the Artistic Director of Ballet Manila, Vice-Chairperson of the Philippine UNESCO National Commission, and Directress and faculty member of the Ballet Manila School; she was previously Commissioner of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women;

WHEREAS, Ms. Macuja-Elizalde started learning ballet at age eight; she underwent five Royal Academy of Dancing syllabus examinations in ten years and became an apprentice and young soloist of Dance Theater Philippines;

WHEREAS, Ms. Macuja-Elizalde later received her advanced certificate from the Royal Academy of Dancing; in 1982, she earned a scholarship from the USSR Ministry of Culture to the Vaganova Choreographic Institute in Russia, which is now known as the Academy of Russian Ballet;

WHEREAS, Ms. Macuja-Elizalde graduated at the top of her class in 1984; she became the first foreign soloist to be invited to join the Kirov ballet, also known as the Imperial Russian Ballet; she became the principal dancer of the renowned Kirov Ballet between 1984 and 1986; it was at the historical Maryinsky Theater that she first premiered as principal ballerina in *The Nutcracker*, *Don Quixote*, and *Giselle*;

WHEREAS, in 1984, Konstantin Sergeyev praised Lisa Macuja-Elizalde during a television interview on the 245th graduation program of the Leningrad Choreographic School at St. Petersburg, Russia: "Especially remarkable is Lisa Macuja, who is exceptionally gifted. She is striking. She is like a spark, a spark full of life. She is graceful and virtuosic in her technique. She excites the audience. This is a great art; and it is her art and her natural talent";

WHEREAS, she returned to Manila in 1986 and became the first artist-in-residence of the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) while dancing with Ballet Philippines;

WHEREAS, two years later, or in 1988, she became a ballerina of the Philippine Ballet Theater (PBT) and has since remained in the Philippines, performing as principal ballerina in major local productions and as international guest artist in Russia, Lithuania, Latvia, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, the United States, Cuba, Mexico, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, and New Zealand;

WHEREAS, Lisa Macuja has also placed in ballet competitions abroad, such as:

- Special Prize for Artistry by the House of Diaghilev in Moscow (1992)
- International Diaghilev Ballet Competition in Moscow, Russia, 5th Place (1992)
- USA International Ballet Competition in Jackson, Mississippi, Semi-Finalist (Senior Division) (1990)
- Asia-Pacific Ballet Competition in Tokyo, Silver Medal (1987)

WHEREAS, in 1995, she established Ballet Manila, envisioned as a ballet company by the dancers, of the dancers, and for the dancers; together with ballet master Osias Barroso, Ms. Macuja-Elizalde drilled the company in the highly-rigorous Russian (Vaganova) method of classical ballet;

WHEREAS, during the first 10 years of Ballet Manila's touring, Lisa Macuja-Elizalde has led the Company on four performance tours of 16 cities in Russia, four performance tours of 15 cities in the U.S.A., and in several Arts Festivals such as the Aberdeen Youth Festival in Scotland, and the Folk Arts Festival in South Korea, the Asia Arts Festival in Beijing, China, the Angkor-Gyeongju World Culture Expo in Angkor-Wat, Cambodia and the Philippine Fiesta in Japan; she also led her Company in Outreach performance tours of more than 45 cities and towns throughout the Philippines;

WHEREAS, Lisa Macuja-Elizalde has received many national and international citations and recognitions for her outstanding contribution to ballet and society, these are:

- Pearl of the Orient Award (2008)
- Outstanding female lead performance in a dance production (Gawad Buhay Awards for the Performing Arts, 2008)
- The Order of International Friendship awarded by Russian President Vladimir Putin (2001)
- Ten Outstanding Young Persons of the World (TOYP U.S.A, 1997)
- Ten Outstanding Young Filipinos (TOYF, 1995)
- The Outstanding Women in Nation's Service (TOWNS, 1989)
- Quezon City's Outstanding Citizen Award (1989)
- Manila's Patnubay ng Kalinangan at Sining (1988)

WHEREAS, in 2011, Ms. Macuja-Elizalde launched her *Swan Song Series*, in which she said goodbye to her favorite full-length classical roles within a three-year-period, paving the way for her retirement in 2014;

WHEREAS, in 2012, Ms. Macuja-Elizalde became the first classical artist to be awarded Entertainer of the Year by the Aliw Awards Foundation, having garnered three other trophies in the same competition that year – Best Classical Dancer, Best Concert Collaboration (for *The Legends and the Classics* with Cecile Licad and Lea Salonga), and Best Dance Company (for Ballet Manila);

WHEREAS, Ms. Macuja-Elizalde has displayed excellence, not just in her field of dance, but also in academics; she was a consistent honor student in elementary and she graduated salutatorian in high school; in 2004, she received an Associate of Arts degree in General Studies, and in 2007, she graduated with honors with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management from the University of Phoenix, which is an online correspondence school;

WHEREAS, Lisa Macuja-Elizalde also hosted a radio show entitled “Art 2 Art”, with the hope of nurturing a relationship between the Filipino audience and the artists to promote art consciousness by having a lively exchange of ideas and experiences by guest artists on radio; in 2008, the Catholic Mass Media Awards (CMMA) awarded “Art 2 Art” as Best Educational Program in Radio category, "for inspiring people by featuring the stories behind the success of personalities who received the national artist award";

WHEREAS, Lisa Macuja-Elizalde’s contribution to Philippine society should not go unrecognized; she is a rare gem, who has contributed much to the proliferation and appreciation of the arts in our country;

WHEREAS, today, no Filipina ballerina has yet surpassed the recognition and pride Lisa Macuja-Elizalde has brought to the Philippines; she is the embodiment of talent, intelligence, and grace that makes her befitting of the title of National Artist;

WHEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, by the Philippine Senate, to express the sense of the Senate to nominate Lisa Macuja-Elizalde again for the National Artist Award for Dance, in recognition of her immense and unparalleled contributions to Philippine culture and the arts, specifically to Philippine ballet.

Adopted,


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO
our.