

SENATE

P.S. Res. No. _____

Introduced by **SENATOR LEILA M. DE LIMA**

RESOLUTION
HONORING THE LATE NATIONAL ARTIST FOR LITERATURE F.
SIONIL JOSE FOR HIS INVALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO PHILIPPINE
LITERATURE WITH HIS PIECES DEPICTING SOCIAL ISSUES AND
STRUGGLES AND EMPHASIZING ON THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL
JUSTICE, THEREBY IMMORTALIZING ART IN WORDS

1 WHEREAS, the Philippine Senate honors and pays tribute to remarkable
2 Filipinos for their outstanding legacy and service to the people;

3 WHEREAS, on Saturday, 06 January 2022, it was confirmed that National
4 Artist for Literature F. Sionil Jose had succumbed to death at the age of 97;¹

5 WHEREAS, known as a Philippine literary giant for all his artistic works, his
6 widely translated works “delves into the [Philippines]’ painful colonial past and social
7 injustices.” His prolific writing career, which spanned seven decades, allowed him to
8 pen novels, short story collections, essays and a regular newspaper column;²

9 WHEREAS, five of F. Sionil Jose’s works have won him Carlos Palanca
10 Memorial Awards for Literature. He was a 1980 Ramon Magsaysay awardee for
11 journalism, literature, and creative communication arts. He continued to receive
12 recognition from several award-giving bodies, including the Cultural Center of the
13 Philippines Centennial Award in 1999, the Chevalier dans l’Ordre des Arts et Lettres
14 in 2000, and the Order of Sacred Treasure (Kun Santo Zuiho Sho) in 2001. He was

¹ Rappler. (06 January 2022) *National Artist F Sionil Jose dies at 97*. Retrieved 08 January 2022, from <https://www.rappler.com/life-and-style/literature/national-artist-f-sionil-jose-dies/>

² France-Presse, A. (07 January 2022) *Philippine literary giant F. Sionil Jose dies at 97*. Retrieved 07 January 2022, from <https://www.manilatimes.net/2022/01/07/news/philippine-literary-giant-f-sionil-jose-dies-at-97/1828505>

1 later conferred the title of National Artist for Literature in 2001. In 2014, he was
2 awarded the prestigious Pablo Neruda Award in Chile;³

3 WHEREAS, no less than the National Commission for Culture and the Arts
4 (NCCA) declared that F. Sionil Jose’s writings since the late 1960s, when taken
5 collectively, can be “best described as epic”. With the sheer volume of his literary pieces
6 alone, he has been on the forefront of Philippine literature. His works have even been
7 translated into 22 languages, including Korean, Indonesian, Russian, Latvian,
8 Ukrainian and Dutch;⁴

9 WHEREAS, F. Sionil Jose consistently espoused the aspirations of the Filipino
10 for national sovereignty and social justice in his literary works. In his five-novel
11 masterpiece, the Rosales saga, consisting of *The Pretenders*, *Tree*, *Mass*, *Po-on*, and
12 *My Brother, My Executioner*, he captured the sweep of Philippine history as he
13 narrated the lives of generations of the characters whose lives were intertwined with
14 social struggles of the nation – which were likewise hurdled by ordinary Filipinos. One
15 of the most widely read Filipino authors in the world, his novels showcased class
16 struggle – letting the world know how the elite caused and compounded the suffering
17 of the poor and the marginalized. He was not afraid to mirror daily realities in his
18 artistic works such as corruption and poverty, as well as colonialism and diaspora;

19 WHEREAS, F. Sionil Jose will live through the pages of his artistic pieces. The
20 message of his literary works will continue to reverberate in society as a clear message
21 that as long as there will be oppressors, there will be the oppressed, and as long as
22 social justice is not upheld, protected and fought for, the Filipino class struggle will
23 persist. His works are a poignant reminder that the long-standing fight to achieve
24 equality and equity is a battle that can only be won if acknowledged, and then finally
25 properly addressed;

26 WHEREAS, F. Sionil Jose has inspired generations of writers who are not afraid
27 to publish the truth regardless of how painful or ugly it might seem. His literary pieces

³ Sarao, Z. (07 January 2022) *National Artist for Literature F. Sionil Jose dies at 97*. Retrieved 07 January 2022, from <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1537272/national-artist-for-literature-f-sionil-jose-dies-at-97>

⁴ National Commission for Culture and the Arts. *Order of National Artists: F. Sionil Jose*. Retrieved 07 January 2022, from <https://ncca.gov.ph/about-culture-and-arts/culture-profile/national-artists-of-the-philippines/f-sionil-jose/>

1 stimulated the imagination and creativity of Filipino writers to keep depicting reality
2 and society without embellishment;

3 WHEREAS, whether or not we agreed with his political views on the issues of
4 the day, there is no mistaking that he has always sought to champion the interests of
5 the Filipino people;

6 WHEREAS, it is thus only fitting that the Senate recognize National Artist for
7 Literature F. Sionil Jose's immeasurable contributions to Philippine Literature and
8 honor him for his role in shaping art and literature in the Philippines, inspiring
9 generations of Filipino writers;

10 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE, as it is hereby
11 resolved, to honor the late National Artist for Literature F. Sionil Jose for his
12 invaluable contributions to Philippine Literature with his pieces depicting social issues
13 and struggles and emphasizing on the importance of social justice, thereby
14 immortalizing art in words.

Adopted,

(Sgd.) **LEILA M. DE LIMA**