

Acceptance speech of Atty. Paolo S. Tamase

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Paolo S. Tamase

Dear Colleagues in the Ateneo de Manila University:

I am honored to accept this Outstanding Scholarly Work Award for the Ateneo Law School, for the chapter Parrying Amendments: The Philippines' Multi-Tiered System of Constitutional Change, which was published in Volume 2 of the Asian Comparative Constitutional Law series.

I only share the credit that is truly owed to Dr. Bryan Dennis "Bo" Tiojanco of Tokyo University. The multi-tiered system of constitutional change is Bo's original creation, and I am grateful that Bo invited me to co-write this chapter and articulate this new framework for understanding how the Philippine Constitution changes even when its form stays the same. Bo's generosity and knowledge of Philippine constitutional law and history are only surpassed by his love for the Philippines, which he has continued to write about even far from home.

I also wish to thank the School of Law, led by Dean Joey Hofileña, for giving me the opportunity to teach here. Although I earned my undergraduate and first law degrees in the other law school, I trace my scholarly roots to my holistic education in the High School. Teaching in the Law School has not only given me a chance to give back to the Ateneo. The weekly discussions with my students have allowed me to practice comparative methodologies which, in turn, shed much needed light on the peculiarities of the Philippine constitutional system. Those insights have found their way into this chapter and in the rest of my scholarship. On that note, I am grateful to Atty. Patricia Sta. Maria, my co-teacher in the first Rights-Based Constitutional Review class that I taught in the School of Law, and the Ateneans I have had the privilege of teaching since.

Unlike other graduate programs in the Philippines, law programs (on the whole) do not tend to prioritize academic research and instead focus on professional training and mentorship. Yet law programs fail to meet their promise as agents of justice when they only teach students what the law is, with all of the inequalities and inequities built in its text and structures. Scholarship, as product and process, allows us not only to critically examine the law for consistency but also to ponder on the fairness of the law. Especially when informed by other disciplines (and vice versa), scholarship enables us to see and reflect on the law's true value to society in an ever more uncertain world—in so many words, what the law could or should be.

It is an honor to receive this award from a university committed to building a more just society. Insofar as our work offers a new way of imagining the continued development of our constitutional system, I sincerely hope that it has contributed no matter how measly to the University's mission.

Thank you.