



“The pen is mightier than the sword.”

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The Blind Votes of Cagayan de Oro

By: Ben Emata

I was deeply sad to learn that our very own candidate in the national level, Aquilino “Koko” Pimentel, III got just sixth place in the City of Cagayan de Oro. He lost so much votes right in his own backyard, an advantage that could have propelled him to a comfortable position in the on-going canvassing. I don’t mind so much if he gets the 12th in the final score for as long as he gets first place in the city.

Our city needs more education on how to take care of its future leader. We need to understand the things between local and national polls. We already had one, a colorful, young and brilliant man, but was neglected in his development and growth towards high heavens. Frankly, I have not seen this guy, Koko Pimentel, because he was young when I was practicing journalism in Cagayan de Oro. I am not related to his family but just a good friend of his parents, Nene and Bing. As a Kagay-anon, I jumped with pride and joy when I learned he was in the top of the bar examinations. I quipped, “Another star is born in my city.”

I can see many of our Kagay-anon voters have not matured so much in the matter of knowing well our candidates and the position they are running for. Or the city has so much of new immigrants now from nearby islands that just don’t understand the heartbeats of the real natives, its history, culture and tradition. While I may agree the local electorates for some reasons rejected Koko when he aspired for



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the city mayorship, I beg to disagree that the same local voters would also refuse him for a seat in the national level.

Kagay-anons could have united themselves for one good cause – send another good man in the Senate. Blind politics destroyed our aspirations and the future of our youngsters. Ignorance, lusts, jealousy, intrigues, politics, and other non-sense spices combined together to hinder the development of the man, Koko.

Koko Pimentel may not be the best candidate for senator in the last elections, but you will agree with me, he is very much better than the majority of those who filed their certificates of candidacy for the Senate. He is full of dreams. He is very aggressive, competent and well-behaved gentleman. Above all, he is a very good material for the presidency in the coming years.

It is really fatal for one Kagay-anon to let Koko go off in his ballot for Senator just because he belonged to the other side in the local politics. That was one electoral exercise that we must forget local politics. That is one ugly feature in our culture because we let politics rule over us and we do not think of the situation in relation with the future of our generations.

What we fatally did was dropped his name in our ballot and in his stead wrote the name of candidates from Luzon whom we did not even knew since Adam. It was plain shortsightedness and a blind error. A grave blunder never paralleled ever since.

Koko is a pure-blooded Kagay-anon by all analysis. He grew up and educated right in our city. The Pimentels, from the time of Aquilino Sr. “Aquio” to friends, got involved in the service of the city even before World War II. Koko’s parents Nene and Bing belonged to us in their entire lives. Nene Pimentel has served our city so much and



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so well as former City Mayor until he rose to the national level of cabinet secretary and became an outstanding senator.

It cannot be disputed that Nene has utterly filled the shoes of Vice President Maning Pelaez insofar as political history is concerned. Like Maning Pelaez, Nene Pimentel has also filed quality bills that made him terrific in the hall of the Senate. I could see his chance to become President of the Republic fading but I can see it in his son, Koko. The latter Pimentel started politics young and to reach a higher goal is not a remote possibility.

We have a handful of young politicians we can truly be proud of, and who have the drive to go up the national leadership. Koko is one and he is the man to watch in the national scene.