

Mayor Celso Lobregat yesterday led Zamboanguenos in a commemorative program to pay tribute and remember the life and memories of the first and only Zamboangueno to become a senator, Roseller Tarroza Lim also known as “El Gallo Sulangkang” and “El Niño Bonito of Zamboanga.”

Dubbed as “Dia di Roseller T. Lim,” yesterday marked the 97th birthday of the late senator who also had served as congressman of the then Zamboanga Province and as a Court of Appeals Justice.

The celebration, which kicked off with a commemorative mass at St. Joseph Church, was pursuant to City Ordinance No. 283 authored by Councilor Rudy Lim.

To mark this very momentous occasion of each year, the city government has lined up series of activities focusing on the principles and character of Sen. Roseller T. Lim, among such activities is the Search for “Five Outstanding Zamboangueno Young Leaders” in cooperation with the Junior Chamber International (JCI) Zamboanga Chapter. The awarding ceremony was conducted last night.

In his message during the commemorative program at Roseller Lim’s monument, Lobregat said the city government under his administration has erected the bronze monument of the senator three years ago to remind all Zamboanguenos, especially the young generation that at one point in time of the city’s history “we have had a great leader whose integrity and dedication to public service is worth of emulation. To all of us, this monument signifies fact that even if Senator Lim is long dead and gone, his memory lives on, so do his works and ideals.”

Roseller was born on Feb. 9, 1915 in Zamboanga City to Don Antonio Lim and Mercedes Tarroza. He married the former Amy Schuck of Jolo, Sulu with whom he had five children. He finished his Bachelor of Laws at Siliman University and passed the Bar Examination with a rating of 84.4%, and became the dean of the College of Law at the Zamboanga A.E. Colleges now Universidad de Zamboanga until he was appointed fiscal of Zamboanga City.

Senator Lim’s remarkable career in politics and leadership started in 1949, when he was elected congressman for the Province of Zamboanga. He was then 34 years old. He was reelected in 1953 and served for six consecutive years (from 1957 to 1963).

During his stint as congressman, Lim filed a bill which later became a law that divided the then Province of Zamboanga into what are known as the provinces of Zamboanga del Sur and Zamboanga del Norte. He was one of the annual recipients of the Outstanding Congressman of the Philippines Award, and is not remembered for delivering a speech for 18 and a-half hours to prevent the election of Ferdinand Marcos as President of the Senate that earned for him the moniker as “The Great Filibuster.”

He became senator for two years (from 1955 to 1957) and was reelected for another six-year term (1957-1963). In the senate, Lim proved to be more competent and efficient by being

instrumental to the election of the Philippines to the governing body of the International Labor Organization in 1957. He was cited as “Outstanding Senator of the Philippines.”

Present during the program were the Lim’s family headed by former Vice Mayor Roberto Lim, Western Mindanao Command chief Maj. Gen. Noel Coballes, Police Regional Office Director Atty. Napoleon Estilles, Task Force Zamboanga commander Col. Buenaventura Pascual, acting city police director Sr. Supt. Edwin de Ocampo, Councilors Rudy Lim and VP Elago, and representatives from various government offices and other sectors. — Vic Larato