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**Message**

**By**

**HANS T. SY**

**UP PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS**

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

Before anything, let me wish everyone Happy Valentine's Day!

I am very honored and happy to be here this morning before an esteemed group of academicians and successful alumni of the University of the Philippines. Not known to many, UP has been one of our long-time partner schools in the nationwide college scholarship program of SM Foundation. Through this program, SM has and continues to provide free college education to thousands of deserving children coming from very poor families. This program is deeply rooted on empowering our youth, giving them hope, honing their true potential and investing both in their future and that of the whole country. I am proud to say that every year, more than 40% of our scholars graduate with Latin honors. They now have productive lives and successful in their fields of endeavour. Meanwhile, more than 1,300 SM scholars are busy studying in the foundation's various accredited schools nationwide, including UP and striving to achieve excellence, a value that we foster even as they enter the program.

Another program we have in SM Foundation is to provide good facilities to public institutions who are just as passionate as we are in promoting good education. For many years now, SM has been donating classrooms and school buildings to public elementary and high schools to augment the work that our government is doing for our youth. To date, the SM group has donated 144 classrooms and 58 school buildings. We have also recently donated buildings to the De La Salle University and the Xavier School, the two schools being the alma mater of the my brothers and myself.

For that matter, this morning, I am glad to announce that SM will gladly lend its support to construct the UP Professional Schools BGC Building and all its related facilities for UP's delivery of academic and continuing education programs. SM has earmarked Php400 million for this project. In addition, we commit to supervise the construction and delivery of the nine-storey building and all its facilities which include, among others, classrooms, function rooms, a multi-purpose hall, an auditorium, libraries, a computer laboratory, faculty and student lounges, cafeteria and coffee shop, two basement parking floors, and

administration facilities. On completion, SM aims to turnover a building that is highly conducive to learning and progress.

We believe in the ultimate goal of the University of the Philippines to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity and excellence in the various disciplines and professions to serve the Filipino ideals, a goal that is made more evident by its graduates who are now among the country's luminaries and models of Philippine society. And the fact that it is committed to providing affordable education makes SM even more willing to lend a hand.

My father Henry Sy, Sr. strongly believes that poverty should never be a hindrance to good education. As a young boy, he was a self-starter, a dreamer and one whose life is a living testimony that education can empower anyone to rise from poverty and deprivation. Himself having grown out of abject poverty, my father simply knew that he had to work harder than the rest of his classmates just to be able to go to school. He taught himself to ignore the despair surrounding him, and dreamt of a much better life for him, his family and for this country.

This is the kind of legacy he passed on to us, his family and the whole SM organization, and the kind of legacy that we would like to share with all Filipinos. UP is one of the institutions we hold in high regard and one that we trust to keep Mr. Henry Sy, Sr.'s legacy alive.

Conversely, we thank you for giving us this opportunity to also be a part of UP's commitment to excellence and continued education. Rest assured that we will deliver the Henry Sy, Sr. Hall in the best condition and in the earliest possible time.

Thank you very much and let me wish everyone a pleasant day ahead.