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**SPEECH BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR. AT THE CONFERMENT
CEREMONY OF THE 2023 GAWAD SA MANLILIKHA NG BAYAN (GAMABA)**

[Delivered at the Manila Metropolitan Theater, Padre Burgos Avenue, Ermita, Manila
| 07 May 2025]

Thank you to our NCCA Chairman, Chairman Victorino Manalo. *[Please be seated.]*

Tourism Secretary, Secretary Christina Frasco; Manila Mayor Honey Lacuna; local chief executives who are here with us today to support their constituents; nandito si Banna – the Banna Mayor from Ilocos Norte Chrislyn Abadilla; Caraga municipality Mayor Ronie Osnan; at ang pinakamahalaga na ating kasama rito ngayong araw na ito ay ang mga awardees ng *Gawad sa Manlilikha ng Bayan*; fellow workers in government; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen.

Magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat.

Ang ating pagkakakilanlan bilang Pilipino ay hinubog ng mayamang kultura at tradisyong minana natin sa ating mga ninuno–kayamanang ating iniingatan at ipapasa sa susunod na mga henerasyon.

As the world adapts to the pace of the modern times—where fleeting trends often eclipse the wisdom of the past—the Philippines stands proud as a haven of timeless traditions, preserved and kept alive by the devoted stewards of our cultural bearers.

I consider it an honor to be in a room with our esteemed *Gawad sa Manlilikha ng Bayan* awardees—for they are the living embodiments of our national heritage and pillars of our cultural identity.

Kasama ng pagkilala sa ating mga katutubong manlilikha, binibigyang-pugay din natin ang walang kapantay nilang kontribusyon sa ating pagkakakilanlan.

Hailing from the mountains of Northern Luzon to the southern islands of Mindanao, our awardees are carriers of tradition – oral traditions, artisans of age-old crafts, [and] guardians of indigenous knowledge.

They have withstood the test of time with purpose—[proving] that culture, when deeply rooted and consciously preserved, can never be erased.

The issuance of Proclamation No. 427 in 2023 affirms the State’s commitment to honor and to support our cultural masters whose lives are dedicated to the enrichment of our cultural spirit.

So today, with deep gratitude and profound admiration, we extend our sincerest congratulations to the nine 2023 GAMABA awardees. *[applause]*

Their passion and mastery of their crafts, entwined with their communities' distinct cultures and values, have earned them this rightful recognition to be among the country's finest traditional artists.

For their profound oral tradition and chanting, we honor Ms. Adelita Bagcal of Ilocos Norte and Ms. Rosie Sula of South Cotabato. It is through their voices that the stories of our people continue to echo across generations.

We celebrate Ms. Abina Coguit of Agusan del Sur and Ms. Amparo Mabanag of Mountain Province for their exquisite work in embroidery and beadwork. Their hands bring to life patterns that speak of spirituality, of our identity, and certainly of beauty.

In the delicate art of mat and textile weaving, we are grateful to have Ms. Marife Ganahon of Bukidnon, Ms. Samporonia Madanlo of Davao Oriental, and Ms. Barbara Ofong of [South] Cotabato.

Using locally grown and sourced materials, they weave intricate patterns where every thread and every strand conveys vibrant stories of their communities and of their history.

In the expressive art of dance, we are graced by Ms. Hadja Sakinur-ain Delasas of Tawi-Tawi.

Through every move, she embodies the soul, grace, and strength of her people.

And for the enduring art of brass casting, we recognize Mr. Bundos Fara of South Cotabato. His work reminds us that with fire, metal, and patience, he molds more than just mere objects—he forges a continuing cultural identity.

Ladies and gentlemen, our awardees serve as the guiding light towards a future where tradition and progress must coexist.

May today's ceremony serve as a powerful reminder of our collective duty to protect, preserve, and to pass on the cultural treasures entrusted to us.

Sa ating mga Manlilikha ng Bayan, maraming salamat po sa pagtuturo ng kahalagahan ng ating katutubong kultura. Sa gitna ng makabagong mundo, kayo ang tinig ng ating pinagmulan.

Be assured that this Administration, through the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, will continue to champion traditional arts, indigenous knowledge, and cultural sustainability.

Kasabay ng pangakong ito ay panawagan ko sa lahat ng Pilipino—lalong-lalo na sa ating mga kabataan—kilalanin natin at ipagmalaki natin ang sariling atin.

Support the continuation of the priceless legacies that have been passed on to us by our cultural masters.

It is our civic duty to keep these traditions alive—for within them lie our voice, our strength, and the very essence of our identity.

Isabuhay natin ang pagiging Bagong Pilipino: na may disiplina, mahusay, at mahal ang inang bayan.

Muli, isang taos-pusong pagpupugay sa ating mga Manlilikha ng Bayan!

Maraming salamat. Mabuhay ang kulturang Pilipino!

Mabuhay ang Bagong Pilipinas! [applause]

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