

Mikey takes backseat for GMA

By MARVIN SY

Presidential son Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo has indicated that he would be willing to step aside for his mother, President Arroyo, if she decides to run as representative of the second district of Pampanga.

The younger Arroyo led more than a hundred local government officials of Pampanga in

a lunch with the President at Malacañang yesterday with the objective of convincing her to run for Congress in next year's polls.

It was the second straight day that the Palace has demonstrated the supposed clamor for President Arroyo to continue her work as a

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public servant.

Last Friday, more than a hundred "professionals, fisherfolk, farmers and small entrepreneurs" of the towns of Pampanga's second district trooped to Malacañang and staged a rally inside the highly-secured compound to ask the President to run for Congress.

"Yesterday, it was the turn of the President's close allies in Pampanga to call on her to run.

The Pampanga Mayors League presented to the President the resolution they passed urging Mrs. Arroyo to heed the clamor for her to run as the second district representative of Pampanga.

After the various town mayors took turns to thank the President for what she has done for Pampanga and urged her to continue serving the province, Mikey took the stage and gave his own appeal. From a son to his mother.

"Until last month, I've been preparing for my reelection bid. I've been going around consulting our constituents, forling their love and talking to them on how we can improve our district," Arroyo said.

He said that the residents of Pampanga have agreed that the blessings of the province were all due to the efforts of the President.

Arroyo noted that various groups from Pampanga have indicated their desire to see President Arroyo represent them in Congress.

"My dear mother, in your decision making, my sentiments must be taken as inconsequential. My political future must be brought to the backseat because as public servants we have sworn to give our all to our country," he said.

"Madame President, I believe that the best service I can give to my constituents, who I've grown to love so much, is urging you not to deny them the privilege of being represented by your person," he added.

Arroyo is on his second term as the second district representative of Pampanga so he is entitled to seek a third term in next year's elections if he wants to.

For several months leading to the elections, widespread speculation has been raised regarding the President's political plans after she steps down next year.

The speculations were fueled by her frequent visits to Pampanga this year as well as a statement she jokingly made a few years back that she might run for Congress after her term ends.

Now that the filing of the certificate of candidacy has started, the entire province of Pampanga has been on a daily alert for the President's visit to the local Commission on Elections office.

So far the President has not responded directly to the calls for her to run.

Asked by some reporters point blank if she will heed the calls for her to run, the President only offered a smile and a "thank you."

The younger Arroyo said that he represents 95 percent of the total electorate in Pampanga "so it's safe to say I carried the voice of our people and the people want you to serve them."

He also said that the President does not have to file the COC herself if she does not want to because the mayors and other local government officials could do it for her.

This was also stated by Pampanga provincial board member and close Arroyo ally and friend Lilia Pineda the other day.

Pineda said Mrs. Arroyo is expected to hear Mass at the San Guillermo church in downtown Batangay San Nicolas in Lubao on Monday while waiting for the filing of her COC by her representatives.

"This, Madame President, my mother, will be the best gift of gratitude you'll be giving them for all their support not only to you, to me, but our ancestors as well," Rep. Arroyo said.

"I and when the President heeds the call of our people and the voice of God, then I'd like to say that the district, province, will show her how much she should be appreciated," he added.

- With Ding Cervantes