

Aquino takes power after Marcos resigns

After 20 years in power, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos stepped down. A strong and powerful leader, he

did much good for his country although his popularity waned in the passed years. Fourteen years ago Marcos



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declared martial law, taking away many individual rights and giving more power to the military.

In 1983 Senator Benigno Aquino Jr., a politician who opposed Marcos, returned to the Philippines. As he stepped down from the stairs of the airplane, he was shot and killed. Marcos' friend General Fabian Ver, the armed forces Chief of Staff, and 25 other members of the military were charged with conspiracy to commit the murder. They were set free by the court, but most Filipinos believed they were guilty.

In November 1985, Marcos announced that he would hold a special presidential election. He hoped to prove his own popularity. In December, Corazon (Cory) Aquino, widow of the murdered senator, joined with former senator Salvador Laurel. She was going to run for president of the Philippines against Marcos, with Laurel running as her vice president.

The United States, which has always been friendly with Marcos, sent observers to watch on the February election day. When the observers returned to the United States, they reported widespread cheating, mostly by the followers of Marcos. People counting the ballots walked out on their

job, saying the count was not correct. Although the final count favored Marcos, few people believed that Marcos had won.

Corazon Aquino claimed that she was victorious in the election, and citizens marched in the streets, chanting, "Cory, Cory, Cory!" Meanwhile, high ranking members of the military had begun to join those opposing Marcos.

Inauguration day arrived. Both Marcos and Aquino were sworn in as president. Later in the day, Marcos and his family and several close friends flew by helicopter to the U.S. air base. From there they left the Philippines for Hawaii.

The overthrow of the Marcos government was smoother than most rebellions. Cory Aquino has appointed many strong leaders to assist her in changing her country and released many political prisoners, as promised.

The biggest question now concerns the Marcos' great wealth, in currency and in real estate throughout the United States. His family's net worth has been guessed at figures from \$2 billion to \$12 billion. Filipinos believe some of the money belongs to the country rather than the former president. Even though he has left the country, Ferdinand Marcos will not be forgotten.

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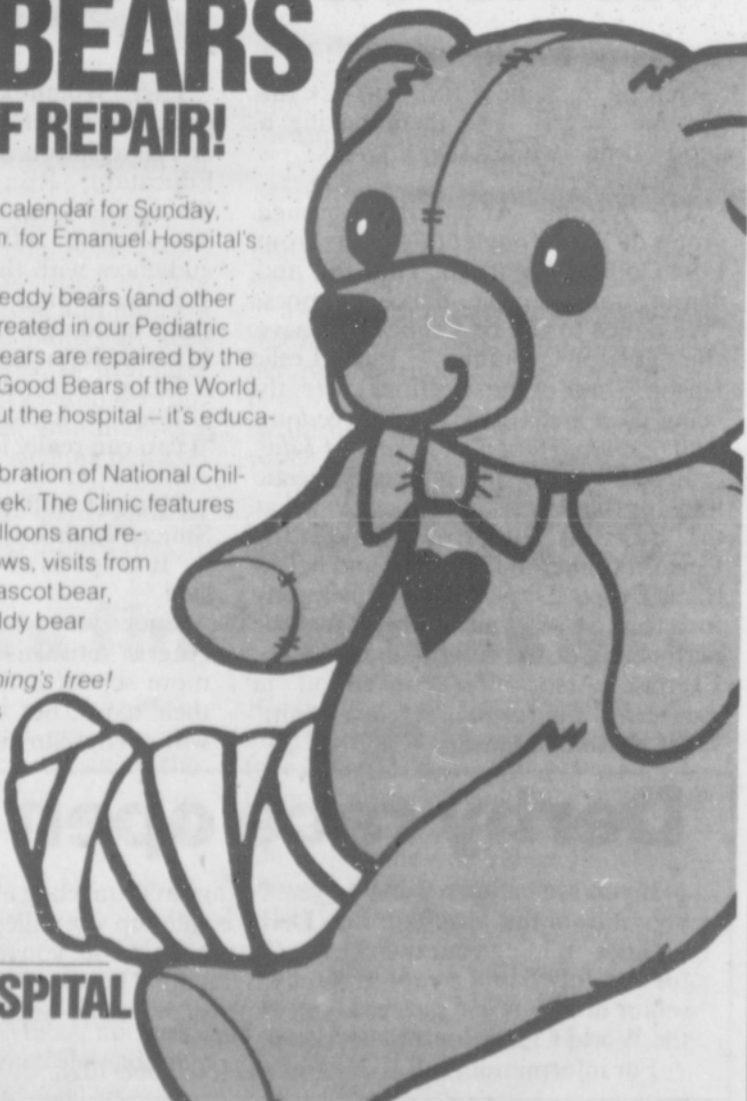
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