Dolphy laid to rest

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Zsa Zsa Padilla bids a tearful goodbye to her “lovey,” Dolphy, during solemn funeral rites at the Heritage Park in Taguig City on Sunday. Hundreds of friends and relatives joined the funeral procession for the King of Comedy who died at the age of 83. PHOTO BY MIGUEL DE GUZMAN The Philippines’ top film and television actors and leading politicians joined hundreds of relatives and friends of the country’s most popular comedian as his body was laid to rest Sunday.
Dolphy, born Rodolfo Vera Quizon, was widely regarded as the nation’s “King of Comedy”, whose almost seven-decade-long career brought cheer to the Philippines during its most turbulent and darkest moments.

Dolphy’s remains were encased in a glass-topped golden metal casket that he himself bought in the 1970s at slightly over $40,000.
Many in the star-studded crowd openly wept as the casket shimmered in the afternoon sun while pall bearers carried it a short distance from inside a chapel to the grounds of a heavily-secured exclusive cemetery in Manila.

Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim snapped a salute in front of Dolphy’s casket, while Dolphy’s partner of 23 years, Zsa Zsa Padilla, tightly clung to it before it was shut and placed inside a black stoned crypt.

The ceremony was closed to Dolphy’s millions of grieving fans, many of whom travelled from different parts of the country to pay their respects to the comedian, officials said. Private television stations however beamed the funeral live to homes on Sunday afternoon.

“Thank you for joining us in taking Dolphy to his final resting place,” an emotional Padilla told the crowd. “I love you my lovey. Until we meet again.” Many of the country’s top actors who had worked with Dolphy were in the crowd and they openly wept despite exhortations by the priest that the late comedian wanted everyone to smile in his funeral.

Dolphy was widely known for his colorful comedic roles, from a cross-dressing homosexual to a poor jack-of-all-trades. He died at 83 last week due to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

In the 1970s he played the poor husband to a rich wife, who poked fun at his loud-mouthed mother-in-law, giving comedic relief during Ferdinand Marcos’ brutal 20-year martial law regime that left thousands dead and missing.

It was a slapstick brand of comedy that steered clear of politics or criticism of Marcos. President Benigno Aquino 3rd, who visited Dolphy’s wake last week, paid the highest tribute to the comedian, calling him a force that embodied the best of Filipino traits. “Through his art, he widened our outlook, he gave us the power to find and cherish happiness in our daily lives,” Aquino had said.