

The
HERMA
Group



DR. MILWIDA M. GUEVARA

A New Generation of Hope

10th WMM Recap:

Roots of Resilience:
Inspiring Leadership and
Service from Delfin N.
Lorenzana

RCM Election
Result Report

Medical Mission &
Wheelchair
Distribution
at Santa Rosa Plaza



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PROGRAM

11th Weekly Membership Meeting
Rotary Year 2024-2025
Thursday, 3 October 2024, 12:30 PM
Manila Polo Club

Moderator: **VPE RICARDO "Ricky" S.B. GUEVARA**

PART I

- 12:00 PM Registration
- 12:30 PM CALL TO ORDER
PP FELIX FRANCISCO "CHITO" S. ZALDARRIAGA
Invocation
PT KARLO EUGENE JOSEF "Karlo" M. CASTRO
Philippine National Anthem | **AVP OF RCM MEMBERS**
Rotary Club of Manila Hymn | **RCM WF MUSIC CHORALE**
The Four (4) Way Test | **RTN. ROMEO "Romy" C. NONES**
Acknowledgement of Guests
VPE RICARDO "Ricky" S.B. GUEVARA
Welcome Song | **RCM WF MUSIC CHORALE**

Birthday Celebrants

- Sept 27 **Rtn. Ralph Joseph**
Rtn. Ronald Martinez
Sept 28 **Rtn. Jovee Ong**
Sept 29 **Rtn. Michael Go**
Rtn. Juan Miguel Lazaro
Oct 02 **Dir. Teddy Kalaw**
Maligayang Bati / Happy Birthday Song

- 12:50 PM President's Time
PP FELIX FRANCISCO "Chito" S. ZALDARRIAGA
- 12:55 PM Introduction of the President of Newly Chartered
Daughter Club: **Rotary Club of Manila Expats**
RTN. ROMEO "Romy" C. NONES (Adviser)
Presentation of the Chartered Club
CP RIA JANUSZCZAK | RC Manila Expats

PART II

- 1:05 PM Introduction of the Guest of Honor and Speaker
RTN. FRANCISCO "Paco" D. MAGSAYSAY

Guest of Honor and Speaker

Address:
DR. MILWIDA M. GUEVARA
President, Synergeia Foundation
Former Undersecretary, Department of Finance

- 1:45 PM Open Forum / Q.A.
- 1:55 PM Presentation of Certificate of Appreciation
PP FELIX FRANCISCO "Chito" S. ZALDARRIAGA
- 2:00 PM Adjournment
PP FELIX FRANCISCO "Chito" S. ZALDARRIAGA

Guest of Honor and Speaker

Dr. Milwida M. GUEVARA

**President
Synergeia Foundation**



DR. Milwida M. Guevara is a visionary leader and an advocate for education reform, currently serving as the President of Synergeia Foundation, an organization dedicated to ensuring that every Filipino child completes a quality elementary education. Through her leadership, Synergeia has built a model for community-based education governance that works to transform local communities by empowering leaders, teachers, and families. The Foundation's mission aligns with Dr.

Guevara's lifelong commitment to social equity and education as a catalyst for change in underserved communities, particularly in regions like Mindanao where poverty remains a significant barrier to progress.

Before founding Synergeia in 2003, Dr. Guevara had a long and distinguished career in public finance, having spent over 20 years mobilizing resources for the Philippine government. From 1991 to 2000, she served as Career Undersecretary in the Department

of Finance, where she was instrumental in shaping tax reforms and policies that were critical to revenue generation for the country. She was also a key figure in advancing fiscal discipline, and her efforts earned her the prestigious Gawad Haydee Yorac Award in 2008, recognizing her integrity, excellence in public finance, and leadership in education reform.

Her experience is extensive and international in scope. As a Fiscal Advisor to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Kyrgyzstan, Dr. Guevara provided critical support to the Ministry of Finance in building a robust revenue program, and she worked to enhance the capacity of local staff in financial forecasting and programming. Additionally, she has held influential positions as a faculty member at the Asian Institute of Management and the Ateneo Graduate School of Government, where she continues to develop future leaders in public finance.



Dr. Guevara's approach to education reform is grounded in her belief that local governments are pivotal in fostering change. She has tirelessly advocated for local governance models that prioritize participatory planning and implementation, ensuring that all children have equal access to quality education. Under her guidance, Synergeia has partnered with over 426 mayors across the Philippines, dramatically improving education outcomes in some of the most disadvantaged areas of the country. One of Synergeia's notable achievements is raising the cohort survival rate to 90 percent in areas where student dropout rates were once alarmingly high.

Her efforts in education are not just about academics—they are deeply rooted in the promotion of peace and stability. Having witnessed how poverty and lack of education can make communities vulnerable to extremism, particularly in Muslim Mindanao, Dr. Guevara's work is driven by the conviction that education is a pathway to social justice and empowerment. She often highlights how education can break the cycle of poverty and give children a fighting chance at a better life. For her, the task goes beyond simply providing learning materials; it involves instilling hope and resilience in students who come from the most difficult circumstances.

Her concept of Synergeia as a "social movement" is unique in its collaborative approach. By awarding municipalities with "seals of good education governance," Synergeia fosters accountability and ensures that elected officials act in the best interests of their communities. The Foundation's

operations resemble a scalable franchise model, providing local governments with the tools, training, and resources they need to drive meaningful and lasting change in their education systems.

Despite her deep involvement in policy and finance, Dr. Guevara remains closely connected to her roots as a former grade school teacher. Recently, she conducted a virtual training session for primary school teachers, many of whom lacked access to basic technology. Moved by the sight of 80 teachers huddled around a single computer screen, she was reminded of the urgent need for better teacher training and resources. Her empathy for teachers and students alike fuels her commitment to creating more equitable educational opportunities for all.

Dr. Guevara's philosophy on public finance has evolved over the years. Once focused on tax collection and resource mobilization, she now views finance through the lens of equity—using it as a tool to redistribute wealth and create opportunities for the poor. Her experiences in government, particularly her encounters with political resistance and harassment while pursuing accountability in cases of tax fraud, have strengthened her resolve to advocate for the marginalized.

Her achievements extend beyond the Philippine borders, having earned her a reputation as a global leader in both public finance and education reform. Dr. Guevara holds a Master's Degree in Fiscal Studies from

the University of Bath, where she specialized in macroeconomics, taxation, and revenue administration. She has also served as the Lead Convenor of the Movement for Good Governance, continuing her advocacy for ethical leadership and accountability in both government and civil society.

Dr. Milwida M. Guevara's story is one of unwavering commitment to public service, integrity, and the belief that education is the most powerful weapon to combat poverty and inequality. Through her tireless efforts, she has become a beacon of hope for many Filipino children and communities, helping them achieve their dreams, one step at a time.



EDITORIAL

Reginald T. Yu
Editor-in-Chief



IN the Philippines, the dual challenges of poverty and governance remain intertwined, significantly impacting the nation's youth. Our guest speaker for today, former Finance Undersecretary and Synergeia Foundation President Milwida Guevara, an educator turned advocate, exemplifies the transformative power of grassroots initiatives in addressing these issues. With nearly two decades of experience in Mindanao, she has witnessed firsthand the debilitating effects of poverty, where only 40% of grade 1 children progress to grade 6, perpetuating cycles of hardship and vulnerability to extremism.

Guevara's career reflects a steadfast commitment to equity and social justice. As the former Undersecretary of Finance, she faced systemic challenges, confronting tax evasion with a resolve that defied the political status quo. Her experiences shaped her belief that true governance emerges from community engagement. Founding Synergeia, an NGO that promotes good education governance, she emphasizes the importance of empowering local leaders

to drive educational reform.

The model she developed — akin to a franchised approach — facilitates the sharing of best practices across municipalities, creating a robust network that champions education. Guevara recognizes that the lack of resources and trained educators severely hampers progress. During a recent virtual training session, witnessing 80 teachers sharing a single screen underscored the dire state of educational support.

Guevara's philosophy is rooted in the belief that empowering children starts early. Her workshops encourage students to articulate their dreams despite their challenging circumstances, instilling hope and resilience. By fostering a sense of agency, Guevara aims to cultivate a generation that believes in its potential, challenging the narrative of helplessness often perpetuated by poverty.

As the Philippines strives for better governance and educational outcomes, Guevara's work illustrates a path forward — one that prioritizes community involvement and redefines the role of governance as a catalyst for change. By lifting basic education standards, the nation can not only combat poverty but also pave the way for a more just and equitable society. In this pursuit, the ultimate goal is clear: to transform communities, one by one, until the promise of a brighter future is realized for all.

cover story

ROOTS OF RESILIENCE: Inspiring Leadership and Service from Delfin N. Lorenzana

by PVP Reginald T. Yu

LAST Thursday, September 26, 2024, the Rotary Club of Manila convened its 10th Weekly Membership Meeting at the prestigious Manila Polo Club, bringing together members and guests for an afternoon filled with camaraderie, inspiration, and service. The event, moderated by Rotarian Antonilo “Anton” DC. Mauricio, showcased the club's commitment to fostering meaningful connections within the community and promoting Rotary’s core values.





Opening Ceremonies

The meeting commenced with registration at 12:00 PM, allowing members to connect and engage before the formal proceedings began. At 12:30 PM, President **Jujut Enriquez** called the meeting to order, setting a tone of unity and purpose. Past Director **Phillip “Phil” L. Ong** led the invocation, invoking a spirit of service and gratitude.



Rotarian Antonilo “Anton” DC. Mauricio moderated the meeting.



President Jujut Enriquez called the meeting to order.

The Philippine National Anthem was presented through an audio-visual display, followed by the Rotary Club of Manila Hymn performed by the RCM World Famous Music Chorale. Rotarian **Abdulgani “Gani” M. Macatoman** then articulated the Four-Way Test, a cornerstone of Rotary’s ethical guidelines, emphasizing the importance of integrity in our actions.



RCM WF Music Chorale performed the Rotary Club of Manila Hymn.



Rtn. Abdulgani “Gani” M. Macatoman articulated the Four-Way Test.

Celebrating Membership and Milestones

Acknowledgments continued with Rotarian Anton's welcome of guests and a spirited rendition of the Welcome Song by the RCM World-Famous Music Chorale. The meeting also celebrated birthday celebrants, including **Rtn. Inov Talusan** and **Rtn. Nico Valencia**, with a heartfelt rendition of the “*Maligayang Bati*” birthday song, reinforcing the sense of family within the club.



President Jujut Enriquez took the floor for President's Time.

Musical Interlude and Raffle Draw

As the afternoon progressed, the RCM World-Famous Music Chorale graced the assembly with musical presentations, including “*Ay, Ay, Ay... O Pag-ibig*” and “*Tagumpay Nating Lahat*,” fostering a celebratory atmosphere. Excitement filled the room during the raffle draw, where lucky attendees received prizes, symbolizing the rewards of participation and community spirit.



The RCM WF Music Chorale delighted their fellow RCM members with performances of “*Ay, Ay, Ay O Pag-Ibig*” and “*Tagumpay Nating Lahat*.” These pieces were highlights from their recent successful concert in collaboration with the Philippine Opera Company. Titled “*Tinig, Himig, at Pag-Ibig*,” the concert took place at the Metropolitan Theater as a fundraising event for the End Polio Now project.



To add a festive mood during the 10th WMM and RCM Election Day, a raffle draw was held. The prizes were raffled off, and the winners were announced by Rtn. Anton Mauricio, Rtn. Paco Magsaysay, PD Art Lopez, and STAR Rtn. Del Lorenzana.



5 Winners of the "A Legacy of Leaders..." book:

1. PVP Fausto Preysler
2. PD Nick Locsin
3. Rtn. Philip Recto
4. Rtn. Geof Yu
5. Rtn. Paco Magsaysay

Winner of the 18-year-old Single Malt Whiskey (Glenfiddich), courtesy of STAR Rtn. Jonas Gonzales: Rtn. Paul Kho

Winner of the 2-night stay at Bellevue Bohol (worth P25K) with breakfast for two, courtesy of PD Art Lopez: PD Hans Palacios

Insights from Distinguished Speaker

Rotarian **Francisco “Paco” D. Magsaysay** introduced the meeting’s speaker. STAR Rotarian **Delfin “Del” N. Lorenzana**, a distinguished figure with a remarkable background in military service and leadership, conducted his classification talk. Del’s narrative traced his roots back to Parang, Cotabato, where he learned the values of diversity and resilience amid various cultural influences.



Rtn. Francisco “Paco” D. Magsaysay introduced the meeting’s distinguished speaker.

Early Life and Values

Del recounted his upbringing in Parang, Cotabato, a town characterized by its rich cultural diversity and vibrant community. He highlighted how growing up among various tribes and dialects instilled in him a deep appreciation for multiculturalism. This foundation shaped his values and inspired a commitment to unity and understanding in a nation marked by complexity.

His roots in Cotabato, where his parents migrated during the post-war era, also underscored the resilience of the Filipino spirit. Del illustrated how his family's journey mirrored that of many Filipinos who sought a better life, emphasizing the importance of perseverance and hard work in overcoming adversity.

Military Career and Leadership Lessons

Transitioning to his military career, Del shared insights from his time in the Philippine Army. His commitment to service was evident in his willingness to volunteer for assignments in Mindanao, demonstrating a profound sense of duty to his homeland. Del's journey through various ranks — from platoon leader to major general — provided him with invaluable lessons in leadership.



He spoke candidly about the challenges he faced, particularly during his tenure as a battalion commander in Davao City, where he dealt with insurgency issues. Del highlighted the importance of adaptability and strategic thinking in leadership, as he navigated complex situations that required quick decision-making and clear communication.

Service Beyond the Military

Del's experiences extended beyond military service. His role as Secretary of National Defense allowed him to advocate for veterans' rights, reflecting his commitment to ensuring that those who served the nation were recognized and supported. He poignantly addressed the historical injustices faced by Filipino World War II veterans, advocating for their recognition and benefits in the U.S. Congress.

His passion for service was evident as he described his efforts to secure medical benefits and financial assistance for veterans, emphasizing that advocating for those who served is a moral obligation. This work not only highlighted his leadership skills but also demonstrated the profound impact one individual can have on the lives of many.

Reflections on Community and Nation

Del's narrative culminated in a powerful message about the role of community and the responsibility of individuals to contribute to the greater good. He emphasized that leadership is not confined to positions of authority; rather, it is about service and making a positive difference in people's lives.

In closing, Del urged members of the Rotary Club to remain steadfast in their commitment to service above self. He inspired attendees to actively engage in their communities, reminding them that every small action contributes to a larger tapestry of change.

Open Forum



Retired AFP Maj. Gen. / STAR Rtn. Delfin "Del" N. Lorenzana engaged in an interactive conversation with PD Oscar Del Rosario, Rtn. Gani Macatoman, PD Hans Palacios, PD Amading Valdez, Rtn. Paco Magsaysay, Rtn. Romy Nones, and PP Chito Magsaysay.



Retired AFP Maj. Gen. Delfin "Del" N. Lorenzana received RCM's Plaque of Appreciation, witnessed by Rtn. Antonilo "Anton" DC. Mauricio, Rtn. Francisco "Paco" D. Magsaysay, Pres. Jujut Enriquez, Dist. Gov. Joaquin "Jackie" C. Rodriguez Sr., PD Phillip "Phil" L. Ong, and Rtn. Abdulgani "Gani" M. Macatoman.

RCM Election Results

The announcement of the results of the RCM elections followed, marking a significant moment for the club's leadership. With 81 members in attendance, Atty. **Raoul Creencia** emerged as the president-elect, while **Ricky Guevara** was elected vice president, paving the way for a new chapter of leadership and service.



Committee on Election Chairman PP Arsenio "Archit" M. Bartolome III announced the results of the RCM elections.



President-elect Raoul C. Creencia delivered his acceptance speech.

Closing Remarks

As the meeting adjourned at 2:00 PM, the sentiments shared resonated deeply among the attendees. The gathering was not merely a routine assembly; it was a heartfelt reminder of the enduring spirit of Rotary, where service above self thrives, and where every member's journey contributes to a greater collective impact.

The Rotary Club of Manila continues to exemplify the ultimate ideals of Rotary — service, integrity, and fellowship — ensuring that every meeting is not just a formality, but a celebration of community, growth, and unwavering commitment to making a difference.



CLUB ADMINISTRATION

RCM Members' Attendance Report
RY 2024-2025

September 2024

SEPTEMBER 2024	September 05, 2024 ENGR. EDGAR B. SAAVEDRA	September 12, 2024 WENDELL ADRIAN R. TAMAYO	September 19, 2024 RET. CHIEF JUSTICE REYNATO S. PUNO	September 26, 2024 CLASSIFICATION TALK WITH STAR RTN DEL LORRACANA
MEMBERS PRESENT	50	33	41	26
MEMBERS PRESENT %	21%	14%	17%	41%
MAKE UP ATTENDEES	12	20	11	1
EXEMPTED	5	5	4	5
ON LEAVE	0	0	0	0
Total Active Members	57	51	48	92
Total # of Members	236	236	236	236
TOTAL %:	24%	22%	20%	29%
ROTARACTORS	3	0	5	3
MEDIA	2	1	3	0
EMBASSIES / DIPLOMATIC CORPS	0	0	0	0
DG, DGE, DGN, PDG	0	0	0	0
GOHS / GS	4	7	9	0
VISITING ROTARIAN	3	0	0	0
Guests of RCM MEMBERS	13	1	23	1
TOTAL ATTENDEES	73	41	78	100

LIST OF ATTENDEES		10th Weekly Membership Meeting		September 26, 2024	
1	Aboy, Valentino G.	49	Lozano, Juan Miguel G.	97	Padilla, Wilfredo M.
2	Acosta, Crispiniano G.	50	Lozano, Arsenio Z.	98	Palacios, Albert C.
3	Albana, Michael Jaey C.	51	Lopez, Renano C.	99	Pallasgüe, John Brian
4	Alcantara, Isidro C.	52	Lopez, Arthur M.	100	Pascual, Abraham F.
5	Alingco, Aldous A.	53	Lorenzana, Delfin	101	Patterson, Colin David
6	Amesler, Manuel G. MD	54	Mausonman, Abdulgani M.	102	Pelino, Wilfredo
7	Aragon, Joshua Reuben	55	Maguayay, Francisco D.	103	Pineda, Jesus Jr. M.
8	Arguelles, Pablo C.	56	Manalaysay, Cesar P.	104	Pineda, Patricio Jr. F.
9	Aventura Jr. Avenilo L.	57	Mangalle, Sean T.	105	Pizarra, Jordan M.
10	Balibonero II, Arsenio M.	58	Mauricio, Antonio DC.	106	Preysler, Fausto Jr. D.R.
11	Bedones, Rodolfo P.	59	Mendoza, Miguel	107	Recto, Philip H.
12	Bello, Christian Cesar P.	60	Monsura, Kazuhiko	108	Reynolds, David J.
13	Benedicto, Sixto T.	61	Nones, Romeo C.	109	Rodriguez, Joaquin Anthony H.
14	Berino, Manuel M.	62	Nuñez, Jr. Jose A.	110	Rodriguez, Joaquin Sr. C.
15	Bogovich, Jason M.	63	Orsatti, Daniel Galardo	111	Roxas, Michael D.
16	Bottom, Wilhelm	64	Ong, Philip L.	112	Schmitz, Stefan
17	Buendia, Carlos C.	65	Ozorio, Miguel Antonio L.	113	Schneider, Bernd
18	Canon, Raul Jr. E.	66	Palacios, Albert C.	114	Serapio, Carlos C.
19	Carlos, Visante J.	67	Pallares, Ben Thomas P.	115	Sevilla, Luis Angelo L.
20	Castro, Karlo Eugene Josef M.	68	Pascual, Abraham F.	116	Shimoda, Shigeru
21	Cenica, John T.	69	Patterson, Colin David	117	Sibayan, Joselito H.
22	Chahwan, Ram	70	Padilla, Wilfredo M.	118	Simon, Juanito
23	Chastano, Johnny M.	71	Padilla, Jr. Jose A.	119	So, Warren
24	Co, Val Constantine L.	72	Padilla, Jr. Jesus M.	120	Sobrepina, Robert John L.
25	Cortez, Lorenzo	73	Preysler, Jr. Fausto R.	121	Sylvico, Jose Jr. A.
26	Cresencia, Raul C.	74	Pujalte, Jr. Jose S.	122	Tagayay, Hector O.
27	Cureg, Alexander P.	75	Reynolds, David J.	123	Talampas, Joel Angel L.
28	Cutter, John Michael	76	Rodriguez Sr., Joaquin C.	124	Talusan, Ferdinand E.
29	Davis, Raymond N.	77	Rodriguez, Joaquin Anthony H.	125	Tamayo, Victor L.
30	De Castro, Juan Arturo Remonado C.	78	Schneider, Bernd	126	Tan, Eusebio V.
31	Del Rosario Sr., Oscar A.	79	Schneider, Bernd	127	Tan, John G.
32	Edible, Isaac	80	Semano, Carlos G.	128	Tan, Lawrence L.
33	Enriquez II, Eduardo V.	81	Sibayan, Joselito H.	129	Tee, Teddy Jr. B.
34	Enriquez, Joaquin Pablo A.	82	So, Warren	130	Teddy Jr. B.
35	Eugenio, John Enryl G.	83	Tagayay, Hector O.	131	Tejuma, Sham Michael
36	Fajardo, Berla G.	84	Talampas, Jose Angel L.	132	Tilman, Hansel Joseph Michael
37	Fernandez, Antonio Jaime Jose V.	85	Tan, John G.	133	Valdes, Joel C.
38	Go, Henry B.	86	Tee, Teddy Jr. B.	134	Valdes, Amado D.
39	Go, Michael G.	87	Valek, Amado D.	135	Valencia, John Nico P.
40	Gonzales, Jr., Domingo S.	88	Valencia, John Nico P.	136	Valencia, Rodolfo G.
41	Gonzales, Ricardo S.	89	Valencia, Rodolfo G.	137	Valek, Amado D.
42	Hallare, Jr., Delfin T.	90	Valek, Amado D.	138	YU, REGINALD T.
43	Hallare, Nicole S.	91	Yasushi, Heats	139	Zaldarriaga, Felix Francisco S.
44	Joseph, Ralph Lim	92	Yu, Geoffrey C.	140	Zeitouni, Naji
45	Juvallan, Jeric J.	93	Yu, Reginald T.	141	Zialcita, Xavier Y.
46	Kaligash, J. Albert L.	94	Zaldarriaga, Felix Francisco S.	142	Zimmer, Christopher
47	Koh, Paul Anthony T.	95	Zaldiva, Kasey Y.		
48	Lacambacal, Alvin D.	96	Gonzales, Jonas R.		

List of Members Who Have Paid
Their Annual Dues for RY 2024-2025

As of October 2, 2024

1	ABOY, VALENTINO G.	73	LAZARO, JUAN MIGUEL
2	ACOSTA, CRISPINIANO G.	74	LEDDA, JAIME VICTOR B.
3	ALBANA, MICHAEL JAEY C.	75	LIM, DAVID EDUARDO T.
4	ALCANTARA, ISIDRO C.	76	LIM, RICHARD
5	ALDAY, ALBERT	77	LOCIN, ARSENIO Z.
6	ALINGCO, ALDOUS A.	78	LONZAGA, REINERIO
7	ARAGON, JOSHUA REUBEN G.	79	LOPEZ, ARTHUR M.
8	ARGUELLES, PABLO C.	80	LORENZANA, DELFIN
9	AVENTURA, AVENILO JR. L.	81	MACAPAGAL, MICHAEL T.
10	BAGATSING, VALENTINO S.	82	MACATOMAN, ABDULGANI
11	BALANAY, ARIES B.	83	MAGSAYSAY, FRANCISCO D.
12	BARTOLOME, ARSENIO III M.	84	MANALAYSAY, CESAR P.
13	BEDONES, RODOLFO P.	85	MANGALILE, SENEN T.
14	BELLA, GERONIMO JR. D.	86	MARTINEZ, RONALD I.
15	BELLO, CHRISTIAN CESAR	87	MATSCHUCK, GUENTER GERHARD G.
16	BENEDICTO, SIXTO T.	88	MAURICIO, ANTONILO DC.
17	BLANCO, MANUEL M.	89	MENDOZA, ESTELITO P.
18	BOGOVICH, JASON M.	90	MENDOZA, MIGUEL
19	BOTTOM, WILHELM	91	NOLIDO, RAMON ALBERTO B.
20	BRANELLEC, JACQUES	92	NOMURA, KAZUHIRO
21	CABANGON, EDGARDO A.	93	NONES, ROMEO C.
22	CAMAT, NATHANIEL	94	NUÑEZ, JOSE A.
23	CANON, RAUL JR. C.	95	OBRAIDO, DANIEL CALZADO
24	CARLOS, VICENTE J. J.	96	ONG, PHILLIP L.
25	CABRANCEJA, ARVIN ARIK B.	97	PAGDANGANAN, ROBERTO M.
26	CASTRO, KARLO EUGENE JOSEF M.	98	PALACIOS, ALBERT C.
27	CATALAN, RODILLO R.	99	PALLASGUE, JOHN BRIAN
28	CENICA, JOHN T.	100	PASCUAL, ABRAHAM F.
29	CHAHWAN, RAMI	101	PATTERSON, COLIN DAVID
30	CO, VAL CONSTANTINE L.	102	PAYUMO, FELICITO C.
31	CORTEZ, LORENZO R.	103	PELINO, WILFREDO
32	COYIUTO, ROBERT JR. G.	104	PINEDA, JESUS JR. M.
33	CRENCIA, RAUL C.	105	PINEDA, PATRICIO JR. F.
34	CUREG, ALEXANDER P.	106	PIZARRAS, JORDAN M.
35	CUTLER, JOHN MICHAEL	107	PREYSLER, FAUSTO JR. D.R.
36	DAVIS, RAYMOND N.	108	RECTO, PHILIP H.
37	DAYANG, JUAN E.	109	REYNOLDS, DAVID J.
38	DE CASTRO, JUAN ARTURO ILUMINADO C.	110	RODRIGUEZ, JOAQUIN ANTHONY H.
39	DEL ROSARIO, OSCAR SR.	111	RODRIGUEZ, JOAQUIN SR. C.
40	DOMINGO, RICO V.	112	ROXAS, MICHAEL D.
41	DOMINGUEZ, CARLOS III G.	113	SCHMITZ, STEFAN
42	DY, MANUEL C.	114	SCHNEIDER, BERND
43	EGAN, BRENDAN W.L.	115	SERAPIO, CARLOS C.
44	ELDEBS, ISSAM	116	SEVILLA, LUIS ANGELO L.
45	ENRIQUEZ, EDUARDO III V.	117	SHIMODA, SHIGERU
46	ESQUEJERA, HERMINIO S.	118	SIBAYAN, JOSELITO H.
47	ESQUIVIA, JOAQUIN PABLO A.	119	SIMON, JUANITO
48	FAJARDO, BEDA G.	120	SO, WARREN
49	FERNANDEZ, ANTONIO JAIME JOSE V.	121	Sobrepina, Robert John L.
50	FOLLOSCO, CEFERINO JR. G.	122	Sylvico, Jose Jr. A.
51	GARCIA, THEODORE Q.	123	Tagayay, Hector O.
52	GARCIA, VICTOR III G.	124	Talampas, Joel Angel L.
53	GO, HENRY S.	125	Talusan, Ferdinand E.
54	GONZALES, JONAS R.	126	Tamayo, Victor L.
55	GUARIN, MICHAEL ARCATOMY H.	127	Tan, Eusebio V.
56	GUEVARA, DOMINGO JR.	128	Tan, John G.
57	GUEVARA, RICARDO S.B.	129	Tan, Lawrence L.
58	HALLARE, DELFIN JR. T.	130	Tee, Teddy Jr. B.
59	HALLARE, NICOLAS	131	Teddy Jr. B.
60	HALLERBACH, MATHIAS	132	Tejuma, Sham Michael
61	HERNANDEZ, EDWIN H.	133	Tilman, Hansel Joseph Michael
62	HESSE, UWE	134	Valdes, Joel C.
63	HORTALEZA, ROLANDO B.	135	Valdes, Amado D.
64	IBUYAN, BENEDICT JULIUS F.	136	Valencia, John Nico P.
65	IWATA, YASUSHI	137	Valencia, Rodolfo G.
66	JOSEPH, RALPH L.	138	Valek, Amado D.
67	JUCABAN, JERIC J.	139	YU, REGINALD T.
68	KALAW, TEODORO ALEJANDRO IV J.	140	ZALDARRIAGA, FELIX FRANCISCO S.
69	KATIGBAK I ALFONSO L.	141	Zeitouni, Naji
70	KLEBS, DAVID	142	ZIALCITA, XAVIER Y.
71	KOH, PAUL ANTHONY T.	143	ZIMMER, CHRISTOPHER
72	LACAMBACAL, ALVIN D.		

Election for Board of Directors for Rotary Year 2025-2026



*Chairman PP Archit Bartolome
Vice Chairman PDG Alex Cureg*

Committee Members on duty

Committee on Election members and
Board of Canvassers



Team 1:

*Captain: PDG Alex Cureg
Members: PD Abe Pascual, PD Bebot Pineda*



Team 2:

*Captain: PDG Vince Carlos
Members: PD Ner Lonzaga and Rtn. Wilie Peliño*

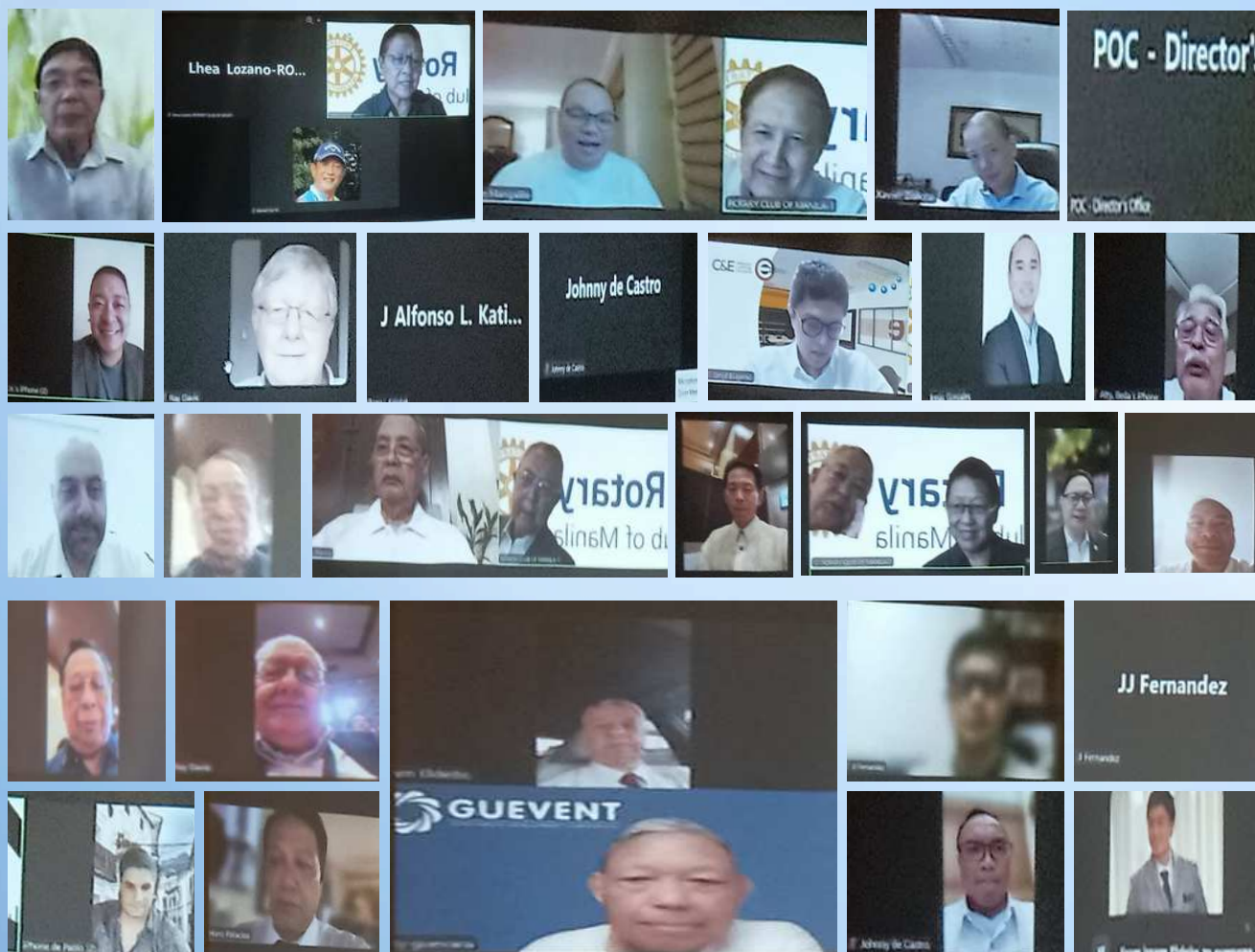


Team 3:

*Captain: PDG Rudy Bediones
Members: PP Chito Zaladarriaga, PT Chito Tagaysay, Rtn. Colin Patterson*

RCM members who participated in the election via Zoom:

29 RCM Members were present on Zoom during the election: Rtn. Cris Acosta, Dir. Mike Albaña, Rotarians Pablo Arguelles, Jun Aventura, Manny Blanco, Butch Canon Jr., DSAA Rami Chahwan, PD Johnny Chotrani, Rotarians Ray Davis, Johnny De Castro, Emyl Eugenio, PD Beda Fajardo, Rotarians JJ Fernandez, Michael Go, Ricky Guevara, Jeric Jucaban, STAR Rotarians Yasushi Iwata, Rtn. J Alfonso L. Katigbak, STAR Rtn. Kazu Nomura, Rotarians Citos Manalaysay, Senen Mangalile, Mike Ozaeta, Toby Panares, Brix Pujalte, Joel Talampas, John Tan, Dir. Rod Valencia, PT Raoul Villegas and Rtn. Xavy Zialcita.



RCM members who participated in the election via Zoom:



Election Result Report



ROTARY CLUB OF MANILA
 ELECTION RESULT REPORT
 Board of Directors of Rotary Year 2025-2026
 Thursday, September 26, 2024 | Turf Room, Manila Polo Club

RANK	POSITION	NAME OF CANDIDATES	VOTES
1	President	RAOUL C. CREENCIA	58
2	Vice President	RICARDO "Ricky" SB GUEVARA	56
3	Director	WARREN S. SO	55
4	Director	EDWIN H. HERNANDEZ	48
5	Director	JASON M. BOGOVICH	47
6	Director	RAMI CHAHWAN	47
7	Director	MICHAEL "Mike" JAEY C. ALBANA	44
8	Director	ALBERT "Hans" C. PALACIOS	41

Number of VALID VOTES	67
Number of INVALID VOTES	1
TOTAL MEMBERS WHO VOTED	68
TOTAL ATTENDANCE (Physical & Virtual)	97
REQUIRED QUORUM	78

Respectfully submitted to the Board for confirmation.

Certified true and correct.

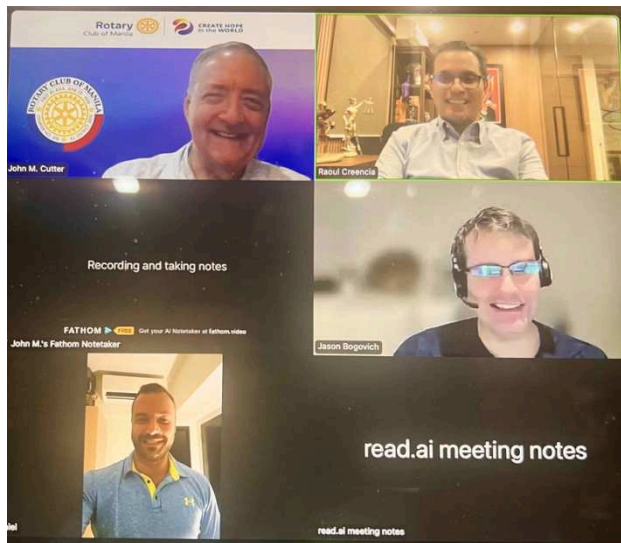
PP ARSENIO M. BARTOLOME III
 Chairman

PDG ALEXANDER P. CUREG
 Vice Chairman

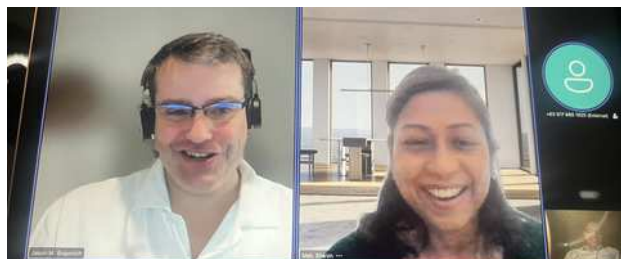
MEMBERS

VICENTE J. CARLOS Past District Governor	RODOLFO P. BEDIONES Past District Governor	F. FRANCISCO S. ZALDARRIAGA Past President
DELFIN T. HALLARE JR. Past Director	REINERIO C. LONZAGA Past Director	Rtn. COLIN DAVID PATTERSON
ABRAHAM F PASCUAL Past Director	Rtn. WILFREDO M. PELÑO RCManila Foundation Immediate Past President	PATRICIO F. PINEDA, JR. Past Director
Rtn. CARLOS G. SERAPIO	HECTOR O. TAGAYSAY Past Treasurer	

Children's Cancer Care and Community Oral Health Committee Meeting



The Children's Cancer Care and Community Oral Health met on September 9, 2024 via Zoom.



The Committee, represented by SAA Jason Bogovich, DSAA John M. Cutter, and PBLA Raoul Creencia then had a meeting with Sharon Mak of Abbot on September 27, 2024 in preparation for the October 24 MOU signing.

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FROM COURTROOM TO COMMUNITY

Conversations with
Atty. Raoul C. Creencia,
Rotary Club of Manila's
President-Elect

By Reginald T. Yu



SECURING an impressive 85% of the total votes cast, **Atty. Raoul Chicano Creencia** was elected as the 106th President of the Rotary Club of Manila. This momentous occasion, held during the 10th Weekly Membership Meeting on September 26, 2024, marks the beginning of a new chapter for the esteemed organization, as Atty. Creencia prepares to formally assume the presidency on July 1, 2025.

A titan of law and governance, Atty. Creencia's journey began in 1996 with the founding of CCV Law Firm, where he melded passion with purpose. His academic pursuits at the University of Santo Tomas and San Beda University laid the groundwork for a career characterized by legal brilliance and

unwavering commitment to public service. From teaching Constitutional Law to guiding government corporations through complex legal mazes, his expertise spans civil litigation and corporate advisory, illuminating the paths of countless professionals and institutions alike.

*As he embarks on this new role within the Rotary Club, **The Balita** sat down into an enlightening question-and-answer session with the new President-Elect, exploring his vision for the club, the values that guide him, and the lessons drawn from a life steeped in law and leadership. Join us as we uncover the man behind the title, whose dedication to community service reflects the Rotary ethos, promising to steer Manila's Rotary Club toward new horizons.*

The Balita: Reflecting on your career and experiences, what specific events or influences have shaped your commitment to Rotary, and how do these experiences inform your leadership style as you prepare to take on this role?

PE Raoul: The personal journey that I wish to focus on is the one I experienced in the past two years. After my admission to the Club in November 2021, exciting times ensued in the succeeding years. I served the Club in those two years as Board Legal Adviser, **The Balita** Editor-in-Chief, and WASH Committee Chair. However, the challenges, and later disillusionment, made me ponder and ask myself: Is this Club worth my time? Should I continue and soldier on? I thankfully realized that there are many positive things in RCM far outweighs the things I found saddening. Indeed, the good were worth fighting for, and worth staying on — the friendships and sense of brotherhood, the feeling of fulfillment in completing a community project, the overall joy of serving, and the opportunity to share Rotary's values and virtues. All these, coupled by the inspiring words and gestures from the senior members of the Club influenced and strengthened my commitment to stay and serve. In fact, after saying “no” last year, I decided to say “yes” to serving as a Director. But as fate would have it, I became a President-Elect.

Rotary is a sublime setting to serve others and make friends. As a lawyer, I happily note that it was actually an attorney who formed

the Rotary Club of Chicago in 1905 to enable professionals with diverse backgrounds to exchange ideas and form strong, meaningful, and lifelong friendships. I hope my law career and active involvement in various pursuits over the years (since my college years) would enable me to effectively serve as President — promoting the interest of the members, and articulating the RCM's collective thinking and wisdom. I also hope that my experience as BLA, WASH Committee Chair, and **The Balita** Editor-in-Chief from 2022-2024, as well as my current role as RCM Board Adviser and RCMFI Board Legal Adviser will make me better prepared to take on my new role next Rotary year.



The Balita: As you step into the presidency, what is your ultimate vision for the Rotary Club of Manila? How do you intend to align your initiatives with both the club's historic values and the evolving needs of our community?

PE Raoul: I do not think my current thoughts regarding RCM can qualify as a “grand vision”. In fact, to be candid, I have not yet really put together my vision for RY 2025-2026. This is something that I wish to formulate together with the fine gentlemen of the incoming Board. With that said, I personally envision a Rotary Club of Manila with an unblemished prestige, with its legacy preserved, and with all members proudly united and waving the RCM brand.

I believe that all initiatives and projects should be anchored on and draw inspiration from the club’s historic values. Our history, values and mission should inspire us in pursuing projects that have transformational impact.



The Balita: Considering the pressing social issues facing our communities, what innovative programs do you plan to introduce, and how will you ensure they resonate with both current and potential members?

PE Raoul: We must constantly find new and innovative ways, as well as adopt best practices to make the club most effective in fulfilling its mission, and in implementing impactful projects for the benefit of the community. For one, the club can start from the basics, close to home. This means improving the systems and procedures in the office, to enable our secretariat to further its ability to support the various activities of the club. Secondly, strengthening existing partnerships and creating more alliances will be key in sustaining all current projects, and launching new ones. As I see it, the club already has a healthy mix of legacy and institutional projects, complemented by several other worthy undertakings whose need and relevance come to fore only in the course of the Rotary year. The key, therefore, is to strategically allocate time and resources, manpower and volunteers, to implement each project seamlessly and in the best way possible.

The Balita: With the declining membership numbers and polarization among members, what strategies will you employ to foster a sense of unity and belonging, while also attracting new members who share Rotary's ideals?

PE Raoul: There is no doubt that RCM draws its strength from its members. As the country’s premier club, there is an imperative to have a membership profile befitting its status as Asia’s First.

Getting quality members begins with proper vetting, and this screening should first be undertaken by the RCMer inviting a prospective member. Our Membership Committee should then make a thorough process of judiciously determining the fitness of the applicant. Once applicants are favorably considered, I think it would be good to have them undergo a short (at least half day) customized orientation program to make them fully aware and truly understand their duties and responsibilities as Manila Rotarians. The attendance in this orientation can be a precondition to the final approval of their membership and the taking of their oath. Once we successfully swear in a new member, we need to keep them engaged by giving them every opportunity to meaningfully participate in RCM activities. Indeed, we must talk to our Star Rotarians, understand their passions, and know how to make them enjoy Rotary. Through this, we can increase satisfaction and engagement, paving the route to success. Classification talks must be constantly imbedded in our weekly meetings, as this will give our new members a unique platform to say “hello”.

Moreover, I note that RCM currently deals with Rotaractors in our various projects. I believe we should consider the Rotaract Clubs as a pool of potential RCMers. To begin with, these Rotaractors have been immersed in Rotary values and activities. They are also energetic and passionate. They want to do good. Rotaractors are the Rotary of the future, as they say. And what better way to have them morph into full-fledged Rotarians than to actually invite them to RCM at the appropriate time.

The Balita: Many members express a growing preference for fellowship activities over community service projects. How do you plan to strike a balance between these aspects, ensuring that the club remains relevant while fulfilling its service mission?

PE Raoul: RCM is a membership organization **AND** a service organization. It's not either/or. As a membership organization, we must foster friendships through fellowship activities. As a service organization, we need to be out there together doing service. Indeed, rendering service becomes more enjoyable when we do it with friends and buddies; hence, the need to strengthen our fraternal bond through meaningful fellowships and other activities such as poker and golf.

Fellowship is key, I think, in ensuring our club's strength and in retaining members. When I made a decision to stay, among the factors that influenced me was the friendships already forged. I saw a lot of truly respectable members – all dedicated volunteers and positive contributors to the overall welfare of the club. There was also the inspiring example of our veteran members who, for decades, have served the club with passion and dedication. Hence, the Rotary journey of all members must be made more meaningful and enjoyable through a healthy combination of bonding and fun activities, on the one hand, and rendering service, on the other. We should all help steer RCM to become a fun club to be in. We should make everyone, especially the new ones, feel welcomed.

The Balita: In light of the challenges Rotary faces regarding its perceived relevance in today's society, what specific measures will you take to modernize the club's image and engage with a broader audience?

PE Raoul: We definitely need to get better at social media. For one, we need improve our website. Aside from mainstream media that we have been able to tap, our club also needs to more effectively access social media and use it to improve our public image. I also believe the communities we serve must be made to understand what Rotary is. This is why I think that whenever we roll out a project in a community, we must have a Rotary "hour" or "session" with them, just talking about Rotary – what we do (aside from the project that we are about to implement), and why we need their participation and collaboration.

The Balita: *As you develop new initiatives, what frameworks will you put in place to assess the long-term sustainability and impact of these projects on the communities we serve?*

PE Raoul: As a project implementor, we know that our RCM project is not really complete until we have evaluated its outcomes, measured its successes, and reflected on its challenges. This is a must and indeed useful for future projects, or similar other projects to be undertaken in other areas. It is imperative that the goals we set for our project is guided by the community's objectives and by the immediate results and short-term effects that we are seeking.



As I mentioned earlier, we need to continue working with our partners for the sustainability of our projects. Through these partnerships, we will be able to benefit from their expertise and resources that will sustain the project, increase its impact, and expand our reach.

The Balita: *How do you envision leveraging partnerships with other organizations to enhance the effectiveness of your initiatives, and what role do these partnerships play in overcoming challenges?*

PE Raoul: Forming strategic partnerships with local businesses, academic institutions, and other non-government organizations, as I already said, bring complementary skills, knowledge, and the ability to create something really valuable. I believe that partnerships strengthen our club and enhance our ability to serve. It also diversifies our resources and impact.

I believe that our partners look up to RCM as a worthy partner. Indeed, the quality of our membership bring immense value to these partnerships. Our club's secret strength is our social capital, which is our membership. To further increase our value in these partnerships, we must consciously bring in additional quality members and position ourselves to convene, to influence decision-makers, and to amplify the voices of the unheard. This, too, is the power of the Rotary brand, and it is up to us to optimize its use.

Speaking of partnerships, it is worth noting that most of our institutional programs are actually through our long-established partnerships, which I believe must be nurtured. We must also be ready to forge new ones. In this regard, Chairman John Cutter, Director-Elect/Sergeant-at-Arms Jason Bogovich and I are currently hammering the details of RCM's partnership with Abbot Laboratories to pursue an impactful project

aimed at curbing and addressing malnutrition among children. The Memorandum of Understanding with Abbot is scheduled to be signed during our October 24 GMM.

The Balita: In a time of increasing polarization, how will you actively promote diversity and inclusion within the club, and why do you believe this is critical for fostering a collaborative environment?

PE Raoul: While I believe that there is a need to discuss and re-examine the club's current all-male set-up, I also recognize that this is both a serious and sensitive matter to tackle. Therefore, timing is key. I believe that Manila Rotarians will soon frankly and objectively discuss this matter.

The Balita: As you consider the legacy you wish to leave, how do you envision the Rotary Club of Manila evolving in the next decade, and what steps will you take to ensure that future leaders are equipped to navigate the challenges ahead?

PE Raoul: In the next decade, I envision a Rotary Club that is able to cherish its past, respect its time-honored traditions, while at the same time bravely embracing new practices, and adopting the ways and thinking of a new generation of Rotarian leaders. The world is evolving, and so must our club. We must be adaptable. However, the endearing and enduring motto of "Service Above Self" as well as the "The Four-Way Test" must remain constant, today and in the years to come.



The Balita: Given the myriad challenges facing the Rotary Club of Manila, what specific strategies will you implement to regain or reassert its position as the most prestigious Rotary Club in the country? How do you plan to communicate this renewed vision to both current and potential members?

PE Raoul: There is a need for an urgent realization and action. Indisputably, being the First in Asia is RCM's superpower, which no other Club can claim or take away. However, this legacy and prestige can easily be severely eroded and buried in a cacophony of barbs, chaotic mixture of missteps, and mindless conflicts. We know that this is unhealthy, and we also know that we need to close ranks if we want to preserve our stature as the country's premier club. We should not lose sight of why and how RCM became the biggest and most prestigious Rotary Club in the country. We simply must do things right, and do the right things. We must not allow ourselves to be blinded or distracted by the spotlight or klieg light; we must instead remain true to the simplicity and beauty of the candle glow. In other words, we need to go back to basics. We must move on and march ahead as responsible Rotarians — buoyed by a common desire to serve and to make RCM the best it can be. We have quality membership. We have our elders and past presidents ready to guide and assist. I am convinced that with everybody's readiness to lend a helping hand, we can do this.

The Balita: As a career litigation lawyer, how will you apply your legal expertise and skills in negotiation, conflict resolution, and advocacy to navigate the complexities of leadership within the Rotary Club? In what ways do you see these skills benefiting the club's initiatives and member interactions?

PE Raoul: Being a lawyer will certainly help in amicably resolving disputes and disagreements. Hopefully, I will not be spending too much time on these matters. I think I speak for the entire incoming Board when I say that we wish to devote our energies towards successfully accomplishing, hand in hand with all our RCM brothers, our Rotarian mission to render service above self; and through this self-effacing and noble exercise, be able to jointly preserve and solidify the prestige of Asia's First — our very own Rotary Club of Manila.



MEDICAL MISSION AND WHEELCHAIR DISTRIBUTION AT SANTA ROSA PLAZA

by PVP Reginald T. Yu



ON September 27, 2024, the Santa Rosa Plaza became a beacon of hope and compassion as more than 600 indigent residents from 33 barangays gathered for a transformative medical mission and wheelchair distribution. Spearheaded by the **Rotary Club of Agham, Rotary e-Club of Nueva Ecija, Rotary Club of Manila, and RCMFI**, this initiative aimed to enhance mobility and improve the quality of life for those in need.

The event, running from 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM, showcased the dedication of key participants including Vice-Mayor **Ethel Angeles-Roxas**, president-elect of the Rotary e-Club of Nueva Ecija; **Lyndon Wong**, charter president of

Nueva Ecija; **Dr. Irene Santos**, charter president of Rotary Club of Agham; **Eduardo “Jujut” Enriquez III**, President of the Rotary Club of Manila; PDG **Alexander “Alex” Cureg**; Rtn. **Ferdinand “Inov” Talusan**; and RCMFI Chairman **Reggie Yu**. Their collective efforts embodied a commitment to community service and upliftment.

The distribution of 40 wheelchairs was particularly poignant, as it represented not just physical mobility but also the empowerment of individuals to participate more fully in their communities. Each wheelchair was a symbol of accessibility, allowing recipients to regain a degree of independence often taken for granted.



Supporting the mission were several sponsors, including PAGCOR and Euroasia Pharmaceutical, Inc., whose contributions underscored the spirit of collaboration that is essential for such initiatives. The Office of the Sangguniang Bayan also played a pivotal role, ensuring the event reached those most in need. Additionally, Pascual Laboratories, represented by Rtn. **Abe Pascual**, generously donated multiple boxes of medicines, providing vital resources for health care.



A team of six volunteer dermatologists from the Philippine Dermatological Society further enriched the event, offering free consultations and treatments to attendees. This aspect of the mission highlighted a holistic approach to health care, addressing both immediate medical needs and long-term wellness.

As the day unfolded, the atmosphere buzzed with gratitude and joy, exemplifying the profound impact of community-driven





initiatives. The Rotary Clubs, through their unwavering dedication, not only delivered essential services but also fostered a sense of unity among participants. This mission served as a reminder of the ultimate goal of humanitarian work: to create a world where everyone has the opportunity to thrive, regardless of their circumstances.

The September 27 event at Santa Rosa Plaza was more than just a distribution of wheelchairs; it was a celebration of community resilience and the power of collective action in addressing the needs of the most vulnerable. Through continued efforts like this, we can delve deeper into the challenges faced by those in need and work towards sustainable solutions that uplift entire communities.





From today's wheelchair project in Nueva Ecija. Special thanks to PDG Alex and FL Anna Cureg, Chair Reggie Yu, and Rtn. Inov, whose roots are from Nueva Ecija and makes this project special to him.

- Pres. Jujut Enriquez



Rotaractors Join Rotary Club of Manila's 9th Weekly Membership Meeting



Written by: Jamber Alexis J. Idulsa

Edited by: IPP Arvin Reyes

ON September 19, 2024, the Rotaract Clubs of De La Salle University, Manila, and Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila attended the 9th weekly membership meeting of our sponsoring Rotary Club, the Rotary Club of Manila. This was the first time that all three sponsored Rotaract Clubs were in attendance at the same time.

The meeting that was presided over by PP Arsenio "Archit" Bartolome III featured the presence of the Guest of Honor and Speaker, Hon. Reynato S. Puno, the 22nd Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Philippines. Justice Puno, who held the country's highest judicial position under President Gloria

Macapagal Arroyo, is widely respected for his insights into the intersections of law, governance, and societal welfare. His speech revolved around the timely and thought-provoking theme, "Welfare, Lawfare, and the World of New Disorder." The topic comes at a crucial time as nation-states grapple with emerging global challenges in international law and governance. His informative speech was well-received by Rotarians and Rotaractors alike who were in attendance on that day.

After the keynote speech, the audience was given a rare opportunity to meet and converse with Justice Puno. The Rotaractors even had a group photo with the former chief justice!



After the meeting concluded, Rotaractors from the three clubs had the chance to network and get to know the Rotarians of our sponsoring Rotary Club. This was an invaluable experience for the Rotaractors, especially since it was the first time for some of them to attend the Rotary Club of Manila’s weekly membership meeting. We would like to convey our utmost gratitude to the Rotary Club of Manila for giving us this opportunity!



NEWS CLIPPINGS



Rotary Club of Manila Expats Chartered on September 4, 2024

The Rotary Club of Manila Expats, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Manila, was admitted to membership in Rotary International on September 4, 2024.



31ST MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL

RC Manila attended the 31st Mid-Autumn Festival, hosted by RC Chinatown, held at Century Seafood Restaurant on September 26, 2024.



*Seated, from left: Rtn. Paul Kho, Rtn. Raul Canon, DE Warren So, PVP Reggie Yu, Rtn. Phillip Recto, Rtn. Caloy Serapio, guests from RC Manila Kalaw
Standing, from left: Ms. Violeta Agustin and Ellen Lopez (guests of Rtn. Dan Obradó), PD Nick Locsin, PDG Vince Carlos, FL Sharon Bediones, PDG Rudy Bediones, Gov. Jackie Rodriguez, and Rtn. Dan Obradó*





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**IT IS WITH GREAT JOY AND HONOR THAT WE
PRESENT OUR CHAIRPERSON FOR THIS YEAR**



MR. ARTHUR "ART" LOPEZ

**MEMBER: MEN OF THE SACRED HEART,
EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION**



PD Nick Locsin with Rotaract Club of Manila President Summer Bonifacio and Rotaractor Hans Villamor at the joint Mooncake Festival celebration of the Rotaract Clubs of Manila, Makati, and San Pedro East held at the Rotary Club of Makati's headquarters in Guadalupe Viejo on September 28, 2024.



"YOU'VE EARNED YOUR SHARE, MARINA." From the novel, **TWIN SISTERS IN COLONIAL PHILIPPINES—A JOURNEY OF ONE SOUL**

(Netflix Series 2027) History Fiction
Author: VEE DAVID

Intramuros, Manila – 17 July 1924

IT WAS A DAY UNFAMILIAR, yet not entirely unexpected. Marina Takemoto stood at the edge of the balcony, her hands resting on the stone balustrade as she gazed over the sprawling walled city of Manila. She had blossomed into a striking beauty, her features a reflection of her Japanese heritage and the resilience that came with years of struggle and triumph.

Her almond-shaped eyes, dark and deep, seemed to carry the weight of both her past and the hopes for her future. Her smooth skin, warmed by the Manila sun, carried a soft golden hue, and her long black hair, always impeccably tied back in a simple knot, framed her delicate face with effortless grace, unmistakably *Japanesque*.

Marina's beauty was both in her appearance, and in the way she moved—confident, yet humble. She walked with a purpose that had been sharpened by her experience as a migrant worker in a foreign land, and by the expectations placed upon her. Her frequent mannerisms—touching her lower lip in thought, slightly tilting her head when listening intently, or clasping her hands together gently in front of her when nervous—only added to her charm.

Fluent now in Spanish, English, Tagalog, and her native Japanese, Marina had become an invaluable asset in Manila's elite circles. Every time she spoke, she flowed seamlessly between languages, her words polished, her tones adapting to the company she kept. It was Manuel Quezon himself who had made this possible. He had invested in her education, sparing no expense to ensure she became proficient in the languages she would need to navigate the growing economy of the Philippines. And Marina had worked tirelessly to meet his expectations.

"You're progressing faster than I imagined," Quezon had told her one evening, his voice pulsating with pride as they sat on the veranda of his Marikina estate. The sun had begun to set, casting long shadows over the golf course below, where Quezon often took Marina to discuss business. "I knew you'd be an asset, but you've far exceeded my hopes, Marina."

His words filled her with a mixture of pride and relief, but also pressure. She could not afford to fail—not with everything Quezon had done for her. When his posting in the US had expired and he returned to Manila, he had taken her under his wings in earnest. Together with Olivia Rodriguez, his sharp and efficient secretary, Quezon began taking Marina to his meetings, social gatherings, and even his golf swings. It wasn't long before the wealthiest businessmen of Manila, men like Don Vicente Madrigal and Don Andres Soriano, began gravitating toward her, eager to leverage her unique access to Japan, a country rapidly rising as a global power.

"Marina, join us tomorrow at the club," Quezon had said one afternoon after a business luncheon. "It's time you meet some of the larger players in the sugar and abaca industries. They're eager to work with Japan."

"They're all in the **Rotary Club of Manila**," he said, bristling, as blue smoke coiled up from his freshly-lit Alhambra cigar—its roasting aroma wafting through the air.

She had nodded, swallowing the nerves that bubbled up within her. Each meeting, each introduction, was a test—a chance to prove that Quezon's investment had paid off. And with every handshake, every polite bow, and every carefully constructed sentence, Marina could feel herself becoming an integral part of Quezon's sphere of influence.

"She's indispensable," Quezon would say proudly to his associates, a glint of satisfaction in his eyes. "Japan may be rising, but thanks to Marina, we're already ahead of our rivals."

The wealthy class began to take notice of Marina, recognizing her as Quezon's protégée. She was invited to events, business dinners, and private gatherings, where her fluency in multiple languages and her understanding of both Filipino and Japanese cultures set her apart. Men like Madrigal and Soriano viewed her as the bridge between the Philippines and Japan, and they weren't wrong. Quezon's investment in her had indeed paid off.

As Marina's role deepened, Quezon ensured she was well-compensated. It began with small amounts, enough to keep her comfortable, but as her involvement in high-stakes negotiations grew, so did her earnings. One evening, after successfully closing a deal with Japanese traders, Quezon handed her an envelope, his eyes gleaming with approval.

"You've earned your share, Marina," he said. "You've done more than just assist—you've made these deals happen."

Marina hesitated, her fingers brushing the edges of the envelope. The weight of it was unfamiliar but exhilarating. "Thank you, Don Manuel," she replied softly, bowing her head in gratitude. But inside, she was already calculating how to put this money to good use.

That night, she confided in Olivia, who had become her closest confidante and mentor. Olivia had taken Marina under her wing as well, teaching her the finer points of business and navigating Manila's complex social landscape.

"What will you do with it, Marina?" Olivia had asked, her voice calm but full of wisdom. "This is just the beginning. You've got the world at your feet now."

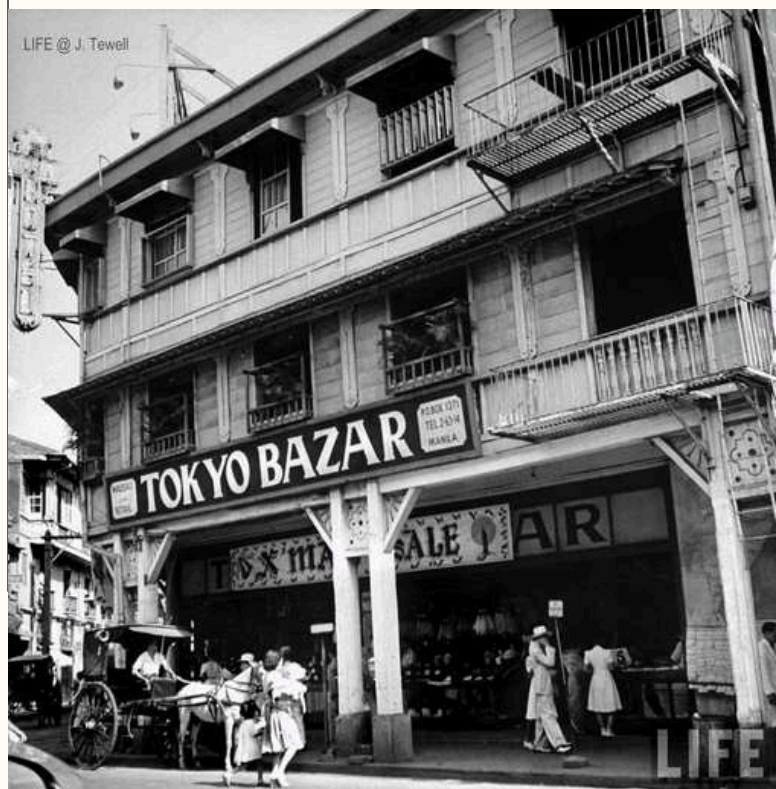
"I don't know," Marina admitted, her brows furrowing. "I'm not interested in luxuries, but I want to make smart investments. I want to build something."

"Something that multiplies by itself," she added, her eyes brimming with foresight.

"Without much effort," she interjected before Olivia could move her lips.

"Then don't wait. Start now." Olivia's eyes had glimmered with pride, her hand resting gently on Marina's arm. "Invest wisely, and don't be afraid to take risks. With Quezon's guidance and mine, you can't go wrong."

And so, Marina took the leap. She avoided the trappings of wealth—the luxurious clothes, the extravagant parties—and instead poured her money into land deals. It was a decision that would eventually pay off tenfold. Together with Olivia, she invested in what would later become the famous Tokyo Bazaar on Escolta, a bustling marketplace that catered to both Filipino and Japanese clientele. The Bazaar was a reflection of Marina herself—a blend of cultures, a place where two worlds collided and thrived.



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The owners offered Marina a few shares at rock-bottom prices, hoping to cash in on her connection with Quezon. She suggested a few innovations, like serving free kakigori (flavored shaved ice) on Sundays and opening a small Japanese restaurant in the adjacent space inside. The owners took the bait.

The Tokyo Bazaar quickly became an instant success, with its customers doubling in the first week. Its stalls were lined with silks, pottery, and other Japanese goods that had become highly sought after in Manila. Marina suggested that the Bazaar focus on selling hard-to-find Japanese goods—leading to exclusive contracts with Japanese manufacturers. Her wise investments paid off, but she never allowed herself to grow complacent. She continued working closely with Quezon, attending meetings, negotiating deals, and ensuring that both her reputation—and his—remained untarnished.

But amidst all the success, there was one piece of her life that remained incomplete. Her thoughts often drifted to Mariko, her twin sister, who had been lost to her all those years ago.

Where are you, Mariko? she would think during quiet moments, her heart heavy with

the weight of the unknown. She had confided in Olivia about her missing twin sister last seen in Shanghai, but she had never mentioned it to Quezon. Not yet. She couldn't ask for his help until she was absolutely certain she had proven her worth.

One night, she promised herself: *One day, I'll ask him for his help, and we'll find Mariko together.*

For now, Marina focused on her work, determined to meet Quezon's expectations and secure her place in Manila's elite circles. But no matter how much success she found, the longing for her twin sister never faded. It was a quiet ache that followed her everywhere, a reminder that even in triumph, there were still pieces of her that remained lost.

The night sky over Intramuros deepened with even more piercing silence—not a hiss from the shimmering stars.

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VEE DAVID

Prisoner of Literature

Writer-by-the-sea

Monday, 30 September 2024

Miyazaki, Japan





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