

The HERMA Group

#BUILTOLAST

PETROLEUM AND SUPPLY CHAIN | BUNKERING | SHIPPING
SHIP BUILDING / SHIP REPAIR | AGRI BUSINESS VENTURES
PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT | ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT



ESGUERRA FARMS & STUD INC.

The Official News Organ of
the Rotary Club of Manila

balita

ISSUE NO. 4073 • DECEMBER 11, 2025



Her Excellency **MARYKAY L. CARLSON**

Ambassador, Embassy of the United
States of America to the Philippines

WHERE THE EARTH TREMBLES AND THE LEADERS GATHER

A Chronicle of the 14th Weekly
Membership Meeting of the
Rotary Club of Manila

Project R.I.V.E.R

Building Resilience
Through Safer Water
Management

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel
del Gallego Romualdez in
Service and Diplomacy

MOA Signing with Dualtech and
Launch of RC Manila's ARAL Program



CONTENTS



Program	6
Editorial	10
Guest of Honor and Speaker's Profile	14
President's Message	18
WHERE THE EARTH TREMBLES AND THE LEADERS GATHER: A Chronicle of the 14th Weekly Membership Meeting of RC Manila	22
Club Administration	44
RCManila Foundation, Inc.	51
"ONE IN A MILLION YOUTH" Program	54
A Greener Future for the Dumagat Tribe	58
MOA Signing with Dualtech and Launch of RC Manila's ARAL Program	64
Project R.I.V.E.R: Building Resilience Through Safer Water Management	68
Kalinga kay Maria: Women's Health Caravan	72
THE LISTENER: The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy	76
Youth Service	156
Interclub Event	158
District Activities and Events	160
International Relations	176
Fellowship	184
Public Image	186
Board of Directors and Executive Officers for RY 2025-2026	190
Editorial Board for RY 2025-2026	191



PROGRAM



ROTARY CLUB OF MANILA 15th Weekly Membership Meeting Rotary Year 2025-2026

Thursday, December 11, 2025, 11:30 AM
Manila Polo Club

Moderator: DSAA JOHN M. CUTTER

PART I

10:30 AM Registration /Lunch

11:30 AM Call to Order | **PRES. RAOUL C. CREENCIA**

Doxology | **TEATRO RIZALIA**

Invocation | **DE CARLOS G. "Caloy" SERAPIO**

US National Anthem | **AVP**
Philippine National Anthem | **HIMIG RIZALIA**

Rotary Club of Manila Hymn
RCM WF Music Chorale

The Four (4) Way Test | **PD ISSAM ELDEBS**

Acknowledgement of Guests
DSAA JOHN M. CUTTER

Welcome Song | **RCM WF Music Chorale**

PART II

11:45 AM President's Time | **PRES. RAOUL C. CREENCIA**

Presentation of the RCM Outstanding
Ambassador of the Year
PRES. RAOUL C. CREENCIA
PDG JOAQUIN "Jackie" C. RODRIGUEZ, SR.
(Chairman, RCM Ambassador of the Year Committee)

Serenade Number | **HIMIG RIZALIA**

12:00 PM Introduction of the Guest of Honor and Speaker
RTN. VICTOR "Vic" G. GARCIA III

Guest of Honor and Speaker
Her Excellency
MARYKAY L. CARLSON
*Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Embassy of the United States of America
to the Philippines*

12:30 PM Open Forum / Q & A

PART III

12:45 PM Birthday Celebrants

Dec 5 Rtn. Chris Zimmer
Dec 8 PD Alvin Lacambacal
IPP Jujut Enriquez
Dec 9 Rtn. Manny Blanco
Dec 10 IT Arik Carranceja
Dec 12 PE Reggie Yu
Dec 13 PDG Alex Cureg
Dec 16 PD Phil Ong
Dec 18 Pres. Raoul Creencia
Dec 19 PAT Joshua Aragon
Rtn. Steve Mommaerts
Dec 22 PD Rod Valencia
Dec 26 Rtn. Joe de Venecia
Dec 27 PP Boy Guevara
Rtn. Bob Sobrepena
Dec 28 Rtn. Joey Syjuco
Rtn. Gani Macatoman
Dec 29 DSAA Dave Reynolds
Dec 30 Rtn. Bon Li
Rtn. Shigeru Shimoda



PROGRAM



ROTARY CLUB OF MANILA 15th Weekly Membership Meeting Rotary Year 2025-2026

Thursday, December 11, 2025, 11:30 AM
Manila Polo Club

Moderator: DSAA JOHN M. CUTTER

12:55 PM Induction of New Members

Introduction of New Members

Pres. Raoul C. Creencia

PP Domingo S.B. "Boy" Guevara

PE Reginald T. "Reggie" Yu

1. **WINSTON M. GINEZ**

Founding Partner – Quial Ginez Beltran & Yu
Classification: Law Practice – Intellectual
Property
Proposer: Pres. Raoul C. Creencia

2. **ERIC. C. KE**

President, Sonera Industrial Grp., Inc
Classification: Real Estate Developing –
Residential Subdivision
Proposers: PP Boy Guevara, DGND Hermie S.
Esguerra, and PE Reggie T. Yu

3. **CHRIS C. TAMESIS**

Managing Partner, Sadsad Tamesis Legal and
Accountancy Firm (STLAF)
Classification: Medicine – Accounting
Taxation
Proposer: PP Boy Guevara

4. **CHRISTOPHER U. LIAO**

Owner, Fisio Rehabilitation Clinic
Classification: Medicine – Physical Therapy
Proposers: DGND Hermie S. Esguerra and
PE Reggie T. Yu

5. **RALPH VALENTIN L. KHO**

VP/Owner, Sonera Industrial Grp., Inc.
Classification: Trading- Commodities
Proposer: PE Reggie T. Yu

Oath of Membership

PRES. RAOUL C. CREENCIA

1:20 PM RCMFI Accomplishment and Financial Status
Report

PDG Alexander P. "Alex" CUREG

Chairman, RCMFI

NOMELEC Result

PE REGINALD "Reggie" T. YU

1:30 PM Adjournment

PRES. RAOUL C. CREENCIA



**SERVICE
ABOVE SELF**

EDITORIAL

Reginald T. Yu
Editor-in-Chief



IN an era defined by geopolitical tremors, economic realignments, and the relentless contest for influence in the Indo-Pacific, the Philippines finds itself once again at the fulcrum of history. Our nation, long accustomed to navigating the shifting tides of global power, stands today at a moment when principled partnerships are no longer optional — they are indispensable.

This week, the Rotary Club of Manila is honored to welcome Her Excellency **MaryKay Carlson**, the United States Ambassador to the Philippines, as our distinguished guest speaker. In recognition of her exemplary diplomatic service, steadfast commitment to mutual prosperity, and unwavering support in strengthening the U.S.–Philippine alliance, Ambassador Carlson will be conferred the Most Outstanding Ambassador Award — a testament not only to her personal leadership but to the deepening relationship between our two nations.

A Partnership Tested by Time and Trial

The U.S.–Philippine partnership has always been more than a matter of treaties, defense arrangements, or economic agreements. It has been a story written in shared sacrifice — from the battlefields of Bataan to the humanitarian corridors carved out by cooperation in the face of pandemics, natural disasters, and complex regional challenges.

Today, that story continues in a world that is undeniably more fractured. The emerging crises in global trade, climate vulnerability,

EDITORIAL

maritime disputes, and democratic resilience have placed both the United States and the Philippines at critical inflection points. Each nation grapples with its own domestic pressures, yet both recognize that their destinies remain intertwined by common values and a shared vision for a free, secure, and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

The Indo-Pacific: A Region of Promise, Promise, and Peril

As great-power competition sharpens, the Philippines confronts realities previously relegated to the strategic periphery. The West Philippine Sea is now a theater of global concern. Cybersecurity threats are escalating. Economic transitions — green energy, supply chain diversification, digital transformation — demand cooperation rather than isolation.

The United States has responded with clarity: its commitment to the Mutual Defense Treaty is ironclad. Its investments in development, climate adaptation, and people-to-people exchanges continue to grow. And under Ambassador Carlson's watch, the alliance has expanded to



Her Excellency MaryKay Carlson, the United States Ambassador to the Philippines, will be conferred the Most Outstanding Ambassador Award by the Rotary Club of Manila for her leadership and the deepening relationship between our two nations.

new frontiers — from maritime domain awareness to clean energy, from education to public health.

Such progress is not accidental. It reflects deliberate diplomatic stewardship, anchored on respect, transparency, and a uniquely Filipino-American bond.

Ambassador MaryKay Carlson: Diplomacy with Purpose

Ambassador Carlson embodies a style of diplomacy that is calm yet

EDITORIAL

decisive, strategic yet compassionate. She has been instrumental in elevating the partnership beyond the usual rhetoric, helping ensure that cooperation is felt not merely in Manila's conference halls but in the lives of ordinary Filipinos — in the recovery of communities after disasters, in educational opportunities for Filipino youth, in initiatives that strengthen our democratic institutions.

Her leadership exemplifies the finest traditions of international service. It is fitting that the Rotary Club of Manila honors her with the Most Outstanding Ambassador Award, not simply for what she represents, but for what she has tangibly delivered.

The Path Forward: Unity in an Uncertain Age

As the world becomes more unpredictable, alliances such as that of the United States and the Philippines must not only endure — they must evolve. They must remain grounded in the principles of democracy, sovereignty, mutual respect, and shared progress. They

must be agile enough to address emerging threats and visionary enough to seize new opportunities.

In celebrating this moment with Ambassador Carlson, we reaffirm that diplomacy still matters. Values still matter. Partnerships still matter.

For if the 21st century has taught us anything, it is that no nation stands secure alone—and that enduring friendships, forged in history and strengthened by purpose, remain humanity's most reliable anchors in turbulent times.

The Rotary Club of Manila stands at this intersection of service and statesmanship. As we honor one of the finest envoys to serve on Philippine shores, we also echo a conviction: that the U.S.–Philippine relationship—rooted in a century of shared struggle and shared aspiration — remains not only relevant, but vital, as we navigate the uncertain world before us.

In unity, there is resilience. In partnership, there is hope. And in steadfast friendship, there is a future worthy of our peoples.

GUEST OF HONOR & SPEAKER

Her Excellency MARYKAY L. CARLSON

Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary,
Embassy of the United States
of America to the Philippines

A MBASSADOR MaryKay Loss Carlson was nominated on February 4, 2022, as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Republic of the Philippines. She was confirmed by the Senate on May 5, 2022. Ambassador Carlson is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service with the rank of Minister-Counselor.



GUEST OF HONOR & SPEAKER

Ambassador MaryKay Loss Carlson



She previously served as the Deputy Chief of Mission and Chargé d'affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Prior to her assignment to Argentina, she served as Deputy Chief of Mission and Chargé d'affaires in New Delhi, India, and held the position of Principal Deputy Executive Secretary for the Secretary of State in Washington, D.C. A Foreign Service officer since 1985, she has served at U.S. Diplomatic Missions in China (twice), Ukraine, Hong Kong, Mozambique, Kenya, and the Dominican Republic. Her domestic assignments include Director of the Secretary's Executive Secretariat Staff and Deputy Director of Korean Affairs.

A native of Little Rock, Arkansas, Ambassador Carlson received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish and International Studies from Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee. She holds Master's Degrees from Georgetown University (International Relations) and the National War College (National Security Studies). She is married to retired Foreign Service officer Aubrey Carlson, and they have two daughters.

PRESIDENT'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

My dear brothers in Rotary,

As we usher in the Christmas season, I am reminded to reflect on the meaningful months I have spent in service as Club President.

Looking back, I see the countless moments in which your dedication, generosity, and spirit of service have shone so brightly. This season, more than any other, reminds us of the values we share -- compassion, fellowship, humility, and the unwavering desire to uplift the lives of those around us.

Each of you has contributed in your own meaningful way to the work we do as the Rotary Club of Manila. Whether through leadership, participation, quiet support, or simple presence, you have helped advance our mission and strengthen the bonds that make our club not just an organization, but a true brotherhood. It is this spirit of unity and shared purpose that I am



Raoul C. Creencia
President

especially grateful for as we celebrate Christmas.

In the rush of festivities, the sparkle of lights, and the joyful noise of family gatherings, it is easy to be swept away by the busyness of the season. Yet, amid all this celebration, let us pause to remember the profound message that Christmas -- and indeed, the entire season of giving -- offers us: that kindness has the power to heal wounds both seen and unseen, that generosity opens doors to opportunities and transforms lives, and that service brings light to corners of our communities where hope may otherwise flicker dimly.

PRESIDENT'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

As Rotarians, we are not mere observers of these truths; we are their living embodiment. Each day, in the projects we undertake, in the communities we reach out to, and in the friendships and bonds we cultivate within our club, we carry this message forward. Our service is more than a duty -- it is a testament to the belief that each act of compassion, no matter how small, creates ripples that extend far beyond what the eye can see.

As we welcome this season of joy and renewal, I pray that your homes be filled with peace, your hearts with gratitude, and your lives with countless blessings. May laughter surround your families, may love be present in every gathering, and may the coming year bring new opportunities for growth, service, and meaningful impact.

Thank you, my brothers, for the companionship, the fellowship, and the shared commitment to "Service Above Self." I consider it a sincere honor to serve with you, and I look forward to the remaining months of this "Unite for Good" year -- standing together, supporting one another, and fulfilling our shared mission of service.

Wishing you and your loved ones a blessed, joyful, and grace-filled Christmas -- and a New Year filled with hope, strength, and renewed purpose.

May this joyful time remind us of the true spirit of service -- sharing our blessings, uplifting those in need, and strengthening the bonds that unite us as Rotarians.

In Rotary friendship and brotherhood,

Raoul





cover story

WHERE THE EARTH TREMBLES AND THE LEADERS GATHER

A Chronicle of the 14th Weekly Membership Meeting of the Rotary Club of Manila

by PE Reginald T. Yu

ON a sunlit Thursday at the Manila Polo Club, the Rotary Club of Manila assembled for its 14th Weekly Membership Meeting — an occasion that began, as always, with the quiet hum of fellowship, the clinking of cutlery over lunch, and the warm reunions that give life to the country's oldest and most distinguished Rotary club. Members arrived in steady currents, greeted by familiar handshakes, capped with the gentle music of camaraderie that precedes every RCM gathering.

Soon, the hall settled into formal rhythm as President **Raoul C. Creencia** initiated the Call to Order, signaling the beginning of yet another chapter in the club's long tradition of service. The Invocation, delivered with solemn grace by Star Rotarian **Rowel Ong**, invited the presence of the Divine.

The Philippine National Anthem followed — an AVP rendering that carried the room toward a moment of patriotic stillness — before the **RCM World-Famous Music Chorale** filled the hall with the Rotary Club of Manila Hymn.



President Raoul C. Creencia called the meeting to order.



Treas. Paul Joseph M. "PJ" Garcia moderated the meeting.



STAR Rotarian Rowel Ong led the invocation.

The Four-Way Test was led with clarity by Rotarian **Lawrence "Lance" Tan**, its timeless questions echoing through the venue, grounding the club's mission once more in truth, fairness, goodwill, and benefit. Guests were acknowledged with customary warmth, and the Chorale returned with their signature welcome song — one that lifted the room with cheer before they transitioned seamlessly into "*Maligayang Bati*," honoring the birthday celebrants of November.



Rotarian Lawrence "Lance" Tan led the recitation of the Four-Way Test.

Then came President's Time — an opportunity for President Raoul to update the assembly on ongoing endeavors.

Among the highlights was the signing of a **Memorandum of Agreement with the Global Peace Foundation Philippines** — another step in strengthening community-building partnerships — and the presentation of RCM Scholar **Rolly V. Laxamana** by benefactor, Past President and District Governor-Nominee **Herminio "Hermie" Esguerra** (who also sponsored delicious turkey meals for the entire audience who attended the meeting in observance of Thanksgiving Day), whose journey of aspiration stood as a reminder of why the club does what it does. The hall applauded the scholar with sincere admiration.



President Raoul C. Creencia delivered his messages during the Presidents' Time.



DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra presented the RCM scholar, Rolly V. Laxamana.



Rolly Laxamana, RCM's scholar under DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra's term as RCM President.



Ms. Analyn Baclat (Rolly Laxamana's school adviser/mentor)



Signing of a Memorandum of Agreement with the Global Peace Foundation Philippines (GPF) — another step in strengthening community-building partnerships.



From left: Sec. Antonilo D.C. “Anton” Mauricio, Ms. Ana Marie Mina (GPF), Mr. Leonard Faustino (Exec. Dir., GPF), Pres. Raoul C. Creencia, PE Reggie T. Yu, and STAR Rtn. Ingill Ra (Chairman, GPF).

But the moment everyone awaited came next.

For on that afternoon, the Rotary Club of Manila would turn its gaze not toward the past or the ceremonials of the present, but toward a truth that lies beneath every Filipino’s feet.

The introduction of the Guest of Honor — delivered by Star Rotarian **Ingill Ra** — set the stage for a speaker whose words would soon pull back the curtain on the uneasy geography of our archipelago.

The PHILVOCS Director's Warning and Wisdom

When PHIVOLCS Director Dr. Teresito C. Bacolcol stepped before



STAR Rtn. Ingill Ra introduced the Guest of Honor and Speaker.

the podium, he carried with him the calm bearing of a man who lives in the company of restless mountains and quivering earth. He spoke not with alarm, but with the steady tone of someone long accustomed to the truth — one that most people would rather not confront.

In his opening, he surprised the audience with a personal recollection: his roots in Rotary go back four decades, when he served as president of an Interact Club in Mindanao. That youthful brush with service, he mused, seemed to circle back to him now — only this time with a heavier mandate and far higher stakes.

From the first moments of his address, the room leaned in.

A Nation on the Edge of the World's Strongest Forces

Dr. Bacolcol described the Philippines not merely as a country of islands, but as a nation held in tension between titanic geological forces. Pushed from the east by the Philippine Sea Plate and resisted from the west by the Eurasian Plate, the archipelago is like a block of rock pressed from two sides —cracking, shifting, never at rest.

It is this pressure, he explained, that creates over 180 active faults, along with six major trenches, all capable of producing powerful earthquakes. He spoke of the recent tremors that rattled Cebu and Mindanao — magnitudes 6.9 and 6.8 — in rapid succession. These were not isolated incidents but reminders of our geography's perpetual unrest.

The Philippines, he said with candor, consistently ranks **first in the**

World Risk Index — not only because hazards strike us, but because they strike us often, strongly, and in places where millions live.

Why the Ground Shakes the Way It Does

He traced the archipelago's geological evolution with almost cinematic clarity.

Millions of years ago, Palawan had been nestled close to Taiwan. As the South China Sea opened, Palawan slowly drifted southwestward — settling into the stable edge of the Eurasian Plate.

This is why, he revealed, Palawan remains one of the few areas in the country with minimal seismic activity.

But such serenity is the exception. The rest of the Philippines is a tapestry of trembling earth.

He projected maps — vivid with red dots — each marking an earthquake recorded over time. The country appeared carpeted with them.

“Where in the Philippines is there almost no earthquake?” he asked.

Only Palawan — and only for ancient reasons.



*Guest of Honor and Speaker PHIVOLCS
Director Dr. Teresito C. Bacolcol*

Metro Manila: A City Built Beside a Sleeping Giant

The Director's tone grew more deliberate as he turned to the metropolis.

Metro Manila, he explained, is highly vulnerable not only because of its population density but because it sits near one of the most dangerous faults in the region: the West Valley Fault.

A rupture along this fault has happened four times in the last 1,400 years. The last was in 1658.

The fault's length — more than 100 kilometers — means it is capable of generating a magnitude 7.2 earthquake.

Then he paused, and with clinical clarity, translated magnitude into imagery:

A magnitude 7.0 equals 30 Hiroshima bombs.

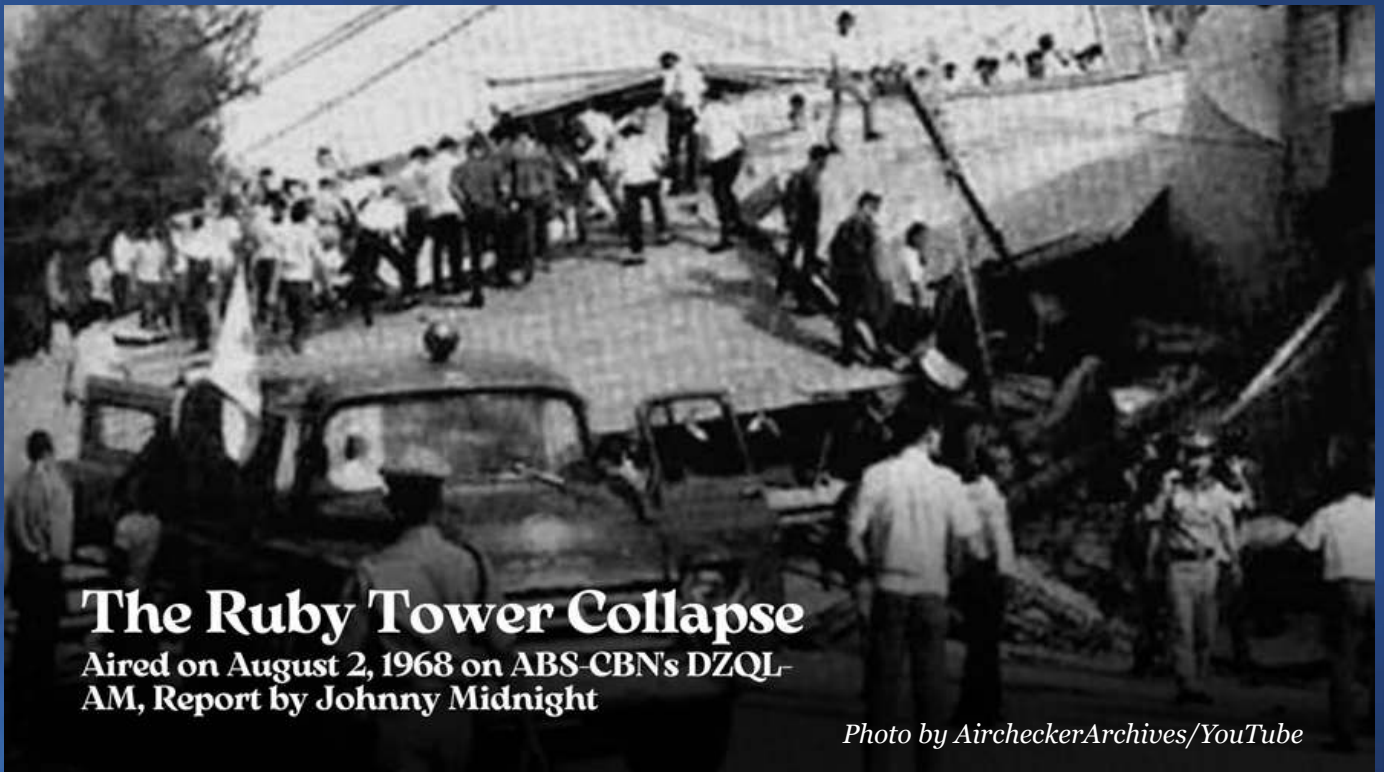
A magnitude 7.2 releases roughly twice that energy.

The hall fell silent.

What History Has Already Shown

The Director reminded everyone that Manila has shaken violently before. He spoke of the **1968 Casiguran earthquake** whose epicenter lay some 300 kilometers away, yet its force was sufficient to bring down the **Ruby Tower in Binondo**, claiming 269 lives. He recalled how the Manila Cathedral, in its long and storied existence, had been repeatedly damaged or destroyed by major earthquakes in 1600, 1645, 1863, and again in 1880. Churches, buildings, and roads across the old city had all borne witness to the fury of these long-ago tremors. **Metro Manila, he said, has never been spared, never been immune.**

When he turned to the scenario often referred to as "**The Big One**," the room seemed to hold its breath. Decades of scientific modeling show that a magnitude 7.2 earthquake along the West Valley Fault would



The Ruby Tower Collapse

Aired on August 2, 1968 on ABS-CBN's DZQL-AM, Report by Johnny Midnight

Photo by AircheckerArchives/YouTube

blanket most of the metropolis in Intensity VIII shaking, a level of violence capable of tearing buildings apart. Casualty estimates are sobering: as many as 33,000 deaths could arise from the shaking alone, with another 18,000 lives lost in the fires that would follow, sparked by ruptured gas lines and the collapse of electrical systems. If nearby provinces are included, the toll could rise to 48,000. More than half a million structures would be at risk of liquefaction, while landslides would carve through the eastern part of the region. Bridges would collapse, lifelines would fail, and Metro Manila would fracture into four isolated sectors,

each forced to rely on its designated evacuation zone. This, he insisted, was not prophecy; it was probability.

Yet earthquakes are not the only threat. While the West Valley Fault itself would not generate a tsunami, the offshore Manila Trench could unleash devastation of its own. A magnitude 8.3 event from this trench could send waves up to 3.5 meters high surging toward Manila Bay, swelling to as much as 5.5 meters if the quake coincided with high tide. These waves could reach up to 2.7 kilometers inland and arrive in as little as 45 minutes. The destruction, he warned, would be catastrophic.

But after painting these stark possibilities, Dr. Bacolcol did not leave the room in despair. Instead, he shifted to the promise of preparedness. He spoke of the **PHIVOLCS Modernization Act**, which will finally enable the agency to construct the 300 seismic stations the country has long needed — a target impossible to reach under the previous rate of only four installations per year. He described the decentralization of operations through cluster centers in Tagaytay, Cebu, and Davao, ensuring that the agency could continue functioning even if its Metro Manila headquarters were compromised.

He introduced a suite of scientific tools now placed within the reach of ordinary citizens. **FaultFinder** allows people to determine how near their homes or businesses lie to active faults. House Safe empowers homeowners to assess whether their buildings can withstand significant shaking. **HazardHunterPH** can produce official multi-hazard reports in seconds. REDAS simulates earthquake damage and casualty estimates, while **PlanSmart** enables local governments to automatically generate recovery, rehabilitation, and land-use plans. New partnerships with national agencies promise safer schools, more resilient settlements, and more data-informed governance. These innovations, he stressed, bring the power of science directly to the Filipino public.

Before concluding, he emphasized five essential imperatives for building a safer future:

1. **Strengthen infrastructure** — retrofit old buildings, enforce standards.
2. **Manage population density** — acknowledge both strength and strain.
3. **Protect scarce open spaces** — they are the lungs of evacuation.
4. **Advance social equity** — the poor suffer most in disasters.
5. **Build preparedness into culture** — not once a year, but daily.

“Disaster preparedness,” he concluded, “is not the business of PHIVOLCS alone. It is everyone’s duty.”

With that, he ended — a quiet finality that resonated long after.

The applause that followed was not thunderous; it was solemn, grateful, reflective.

The club had not only learned — but awakened.

He ended quietly, without theatrics, but the finality of his words reverberated. The applause that followed was not loud but sincere — solemn, grateful, contemplative. The club had not only listened; it had awakened.

Closing the Meeting, Opening the Conversation

An open forum followed, where members sought clarity and guidance. Then came the presentation of the Certificate of Appreciation to Dr. Bacolcol — a small gesture for a truth so large. The meeting eventually drew to its formal close, but the message lingered.



Dr. Bacolcol engaged in a conversation with PD Tony Lopez, PVP Joel Valdes, and Pres. Raoul Creencia.



Pres. Raoul C. Creencia presented the RCM's Plaque of Appreciation to Dr. Bacolcol, witnessed by Treas. Paul Joseph M. "PJ" Garcia, STAR Rtn. Ingill Ra, Program Chair/DE Delfin N. "Del" Lorenzana, Rtn. Lance L. Tan, and STAR Rtn. Rowel J. Ong.



*Dr. Marcus Lester Suntay, President of the World Surgical Foundation Philippines (WSFP), officially received the donation from RCMFI Chair Alexander "Alex" P. Cureg, with President Raoul Creencia and Rotarian Dr. Paul Kho present as witnesses. This handover marks a significant step in the joint initiative between RCM and RCMFI, titled **OPLAN Kalinga: Surgical Outreach Program**.*

The program is set to take place on December 11–12, 2025, at Our Lady of Peace Hospital in Parañaque City.

The Rotary Club of Manila had gathered that day as it always does — united by service.

But it adjourned with something more:

- a renewed resolve to strengthen the ground beneath our communities,
- to prepare where preparation saves lives,
- and to lead with eyes open to the tremors of tomorrow.

For in the Philippines, the earth beneath us is alive.

And so must we be.



Pres. Raoul Creencia adjourned the meeting.



CLUB ADMINISTRATION

RCM Members' Attendance Report
RY 2025-2026



ATTENDANCE REPORT
November 2025

NOVEMBER 2025	November 06, 2025 PEZA DG TERESO O. PANGA	November 13, 2025 SENATOR BAM AQUINO	November 20, 2025 GEN. HERMOGENES C. ESPERON JR. (RET)	November 27, 2025 PHIVOLCS DIR. TERESITO C. BACOLCOL, PHD
MEMBERS PRESENT	38	36	33	35
MEMBERS PRESENT %	18%	17%	15%	16%
MAKE UP ATTENDEES	18	13	6	3
EXEMPTED	6	5	3	5
ON LEAVE	0	0	0	0
Total Active Members	56	49	39	38
Total # of Members	213	213	214	214
TOTAL %:	26%	23%	18%	18%
ROTARACTORS	12	0	13	14
MEDIA	0	0	0	0
EMBASSIES / DIPLOMATIC CORPS	0	0	0	0
DG, DGE, DGN, PDG	0	0	0	0
GOHS / GS	4	1	2	1
VISITING ROTARIAN	10	0	6	0
Guests of RCM MEMBERS	6	8	3	5
TOTAL ATTENDEES	70	45	57	55



LIST OF ATTENDEES
November 27, 2025

- Albaña, Michael Jaey C
- Bartolome III, Arsenio M.
- Carlos, Vicente J.
- Co, Val Constantine L.
- Creencia, Raoul C.
- Cureg, Alexander P.
- Cutter, John Michael
- Egan, Brendan W.L.
- Esguerra, Herminio S.
- Garcia, Paul Joseph M.
- Go, Henry S.
- Koh, Paul Anthony T
- Locsin, Arsenio Z.
- Lonzaga, Reinerio C.
- Lopez, Antonio S.
- Lopez, Arthur M.
- Lorenzana, Delfin
- Matschuck, Guenter Gerhard G.
- Mauricio, Antonilo DC
- Ong, Rowel Janson S.
- Pascual, Abraham F.
- Ra, Ingill
- Recto, Philip H.
- Reynolds, David J.
- Rodriguez Sr., Joaquin C.
- Schneider, Bernd
- Serapio, Carlos G.
- Sibayan, Joselito H.
- Tan, Lawrence Li
- Valdes, Joel C.
- Valencia, John Nico P.
- Yu, Reginald Tieng
- Hiroyasu, Kanda
- Valderrama, Jason
- Pantaleon, Oliver

CLUB ADMINISTRATION

List of Members Who Have Paid Their Annual Dues for RY 2025-2026

As of December 9, 2025

1	ABOY, VALENTINO G.	45	DAVIS, RAYMOND N.
2	ABRIAM, ARIEL	46	DEL ROSARIO, OSCAR
3	ACOSTA, CRISPINIANO G.	47	DIONISIO, RAFAEL
4	AGNES, JERRY A.	48	DOMINGO, RICO, V.
5	ALBAÑA, MICHAEL JAEY	49	DOMINGUEZ, CARLOS G.
6	ALDAY, ALBERT S.	50	DY, MANUEL
7	ALINGOG, ALDOUS REX A.	51	EGAN, BRENDAN
8	ALUNAN, RAFAEL M.	52	ELDEBS, ISSAM
9	ANDAL, AVELINO L.	53	ENRIQUEZ, EDUARDO III
10	ARAGON, JOSHUA RUEBEN G.	54	ESGUERRA, HERMINIO S.
11	ARAMBULO, JOAQUIN JR. L.	55	ESQUIVIAS, JOAQUIN PABLO A.
12	ARGUELLES, PABLO C.	56	EUGENIO, JOHN EMYL G.
13	AVENTURA, AVELINO JR. L.	57	EUGENIO, ERIC
14	BAGATSING, VALENTINO	58	FAJARDO, BEDA G.
15	BALANAY, ARIES B.	59	FERNANDEZ, ANTONIO JAIME JOSE V.
16	BARTOLOME, ARSENIO III M.	60	FOLLOSCO, CEFERINO JR. G.
17	BAUTISTA, JOHN JR.	61	GARCIA, HERBERT JOEY
18	BEDIONES, RODOLFO P.	62	GARCIA, PAUL JOSEPH M.
19	BELLA, GERONIMO JR. D.	63	GARCIA, THEODORE Q.
20	BENEDICTO, BERNARDO III T.	64	GARCIA, VICTOR III G.
21	BENEDICTO, SIXTO T.	65	GASPAR, FERNANDO
22	BERTELSEN, BERTEL INGMAR	66	GINEZ, WINSTON M.
23	BLANCO, MANUEL M.	67	GO, DANNY C.
24	BOGOVICH, JASON M.	68	GO, HENRY S.
25	BRANELEC, JACQUES	69	GONZALES, JONAS R.
26	BUENDIA, CARLOS	70	GONZALES-LA'O, EMIL
27	CABANGON, EDGARD	71	GUARIN, MICHAEL ARCATOMY
28	CABUNAG, ROGELIO	72	GUEVARA, DOMINGO JR.
29	CAMAT, NATHANIEL	73	GUEVARA, RICARDO S.B.
30	CAMPOS, JOSELITO JR. D.	74	HALLARE, DELFIN JR.
31	CANON, RAUL JR C.	75	HALLARE, NICOLO
32	CARLOS, VICENTE J.	76	HERNANDEZ, EDWIN H.
33	CARRANCEJA, ARVIN ARIK B.	77	HESSE, UWE
34	CASTRO, KARLO EUGENE JOSEF M.	78	IBUYAN, BENEDICT JULIUS F.
35	CATALAN, RODILLO	79	KALAW, TEODORO ALEJANDRO IV Y.
36	CHAHWAN, RAMI	80	KANDA, HIROYUSI
37	CHAN, ROBERT JR.	81	KATIGBAK J ALFONSO I
38	CID, DEAN	82	KLEBS, DAVID
39	CO, VAL CONSTANTINE L.	83	KOH, PAUL ANTHONY
40	COYIUTO, ROBERT JR. G.	84	LACAMBACAL, ALVIN
41	CREENCIA, RAOUL C.	85	LIAMZON, ROMEO THADDEUS M.
42	CUREG, ALEXANDER P.	86	LAUREL, RICARDO P.
43	CUTTER, JOHN MICHAEL	87	LAZARO, JUAN MIGUEL
44	DAYANG, JUAN E.	88	LEDDA, JAIME VICTOR B.

CLUB ADMINISTRATION

List of Members Who Have Paid Their Annual Dues for RY 2025-2026

As of December 9, 2025

89	LEE, RICHARD L.	133	REYNOLDS, DAVID
90	LI, RICHARD JOSEPH C.	134	RODRIGUEZ, JOAQUIN ANTHONY JR. H.
91	LIM, DAVID EDUARDO T.	135	RODRIGUEZ, JOAQUIN SR. C.
92	LOCSIN, ARSENIO Z.	136	ROMUALDEZ, FERDINAND MARTIN G.
93	LONZAGA, REINERIO C.	137	ROXAS, MICHAEL D.
94	LOPEZ, ANTONIO	138	SARMIENTO, RICARDO MANUEL M.
95	LOPEZ, ARTHUR M.	139	SCHMITZ, STEFAN
96	LORENZANA, DELFIN	140	SCHNEIDER, BERND
97	MACAPAGAL, MICHAEL T.	141	SERAPIO, CARLOS G.
98	MACATOMAN, ABDULGANI M.	142	SEVILLA, LUIS ANGELO L.
99	MAGSAYSAY, FRANCISCO D.	143	SHIMODA, SHIGERU
100	MANALAYSAY, CESAR P.	144	SIBAYAN, JOSELITO H.
101	MANGALILE, SENEN	145	SIMON, JUANITO AYSON
102	MARTINEZ, RONALD	146	SO, WARREN
103	MATSCHUCK, GUENTER GERHARD G.	147	STRANATHAN, IKE EDWARD
104	MAURICIO, ANTONILO DC	148	SYJUCO, JOSE, JR. A.
105	MAURICIO, FRANCISCO ROBERTO C.	149	TAGAYSAY, HECTOR O.
106	MENDOZA, MIGUEL	150	TALAMPAS, JOSE ANGEL L.
107	MENDOZA, RAYMUND JOSEPH D.	151	TALUSAN, FERDINAND E.
108	MOMMAERTS, STEVE	152	TAMANO, SHALIMAR H.
109	NOLIDO, RAMON ALBERTO B.	153	TAMAYO, VICTOR L.
110	NOMURA, KAZUHIRO	154	TAN, EUSEBIO V.
111	NONES, ROMEO C.	155	TAN, JOHN G.
112	NUÑEZ, JOSE A.	156	TAN, LAWRENCE L.
113	OBRADO, DANIEL	157	TEE, TEDDY JR. B.
114	OCAMPO, TEODORO J.	158	TEJUMAL, MICHAEL
115	ONG, PHILIP	159	TILLMAN, HANSEL JOSEPH MICHAEL L.
116	ONG, ROWEL JANSON S.	160	VALDES, JOELC.
117	PAGDANGANAN, ROBERTO M.	161	VALDEZ, AMADO
118	PALACIOS, ALBERT S.	162	VALDEZ, JASON ROLAND N.
119	PALLASIGUE, JOHN BRIAN C.	163	VALDERRAMA, JASON ROMEO
120	PANTALEON, OLIVER	164	VALENCIA, JOHN NICO P.
121	PASCUAL, ABRAHAM	165	VALENCIA, RODOLFO G.
122	PAYUMO, FELICITO C.	166	VAZQUEZ, EVARISTO JR.
123	PELIÑO, WILFREDO	167	VILLARICA, HENRY R.
124	PINEDA, JESUS JR. M.	168	YAP, ENRIQUE JR.
125	PINEDA, PATRICIO JR. F.	169	YORDANOV, STEFAN
126	PIZARRAS, JORDAN M.	170	YU, GEOFFREY C.
127	PREYSLER, FAUSTO JR. D.R.	171	YU, REGINALD T.
128	PUJALTE, JOSE BRITTANIO JR.	172	ZALDARRIAGA, FELIX FRANCISCO S.
129	RA, INGILL	173	ZEITOUNI, NAGI
130	RAMOS, CLAVER P.	174	ZIALCITA, XAVIER Y.
131	RANKL, PETER	176	ZIMMER, CHRISTOPHER
132	RECTO, PHILIP H.		

CLUB ADMINISTRATION

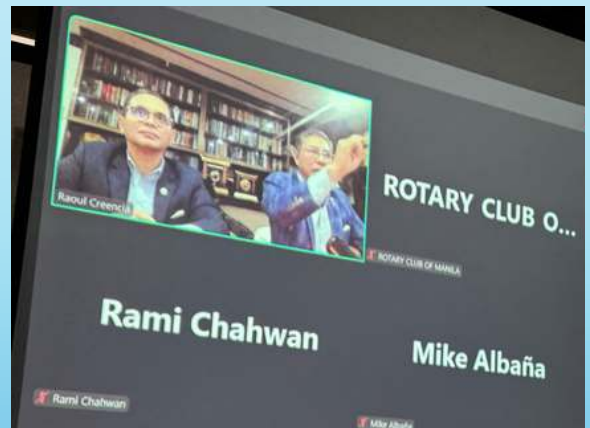
6th Regular Monthly Meeting



THE 6th regular monthly meeting was held on November 27, 2025 in the Library Room of the Elks Club.

Attending via Zoom were Directors Jason Bogovich and Rami Chahwan.

Present in person were President Raoul Creencia, alongside Directors Mike Albaña, Edwin Hernandez, Hans Palacios, and Warren So. Also in attendance were Secretary Anton Mauricio, Treasurer PJ Garcia, DSAA John Cutter, Internal Auditor Nick Locsin, Assistant Internal Auditor Mike Roxas, DE/BLA Caloy Serapio, and DGND/PP Hermie Esguerra.



CLUB ADMINISTRATION

First Planning Meeting of the 107th Anniversary/ Handover Committee



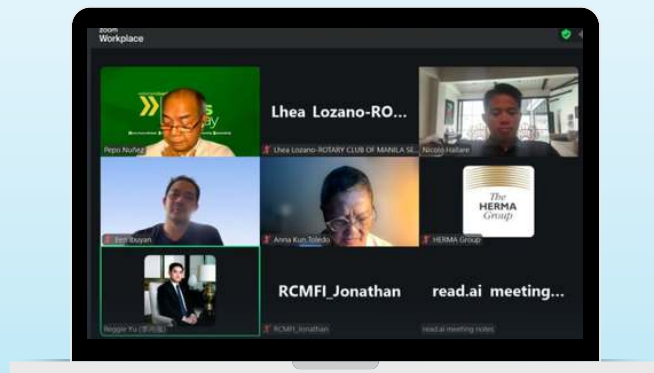
THE first planning meeting of the 107th Anniversary/Handover Committee was held at the China Blu, Conrad Manila.

Present were Event Chair/PDG Alex Cureg, DGND Hermie Esguerra, DE Del Lorenzana, DE/Director Mike Albaña, STAR Rtn. Rowel Ong, DE Nico Valencia, and Incoming Treasurer Arik Carranceja. DE/Dir. Mike Albaña hosted the meeting.



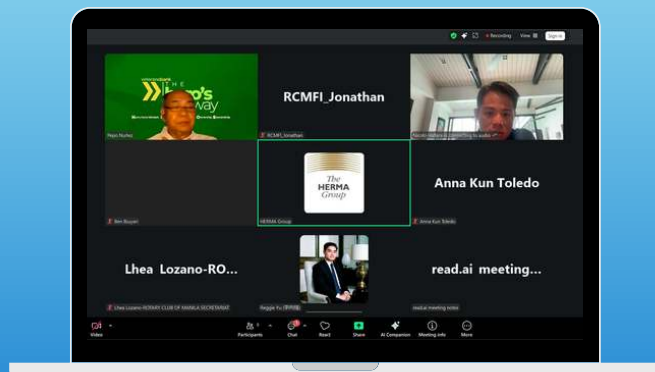
RCMANILA FOUNDATION, INC.

NOMELEC Committee Planning Meeting



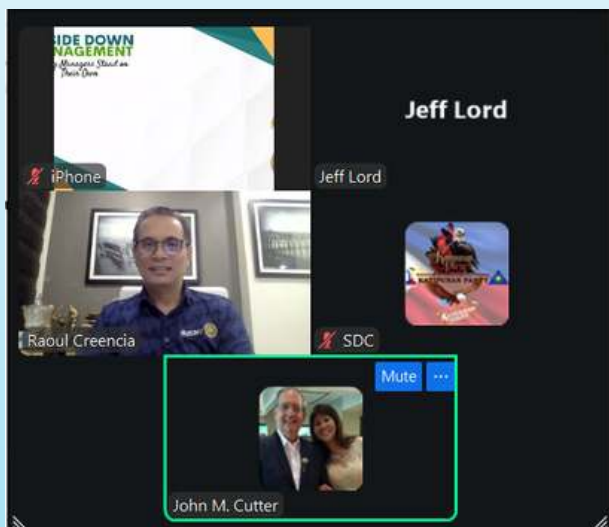
THE NOMELEC Committee, chaired by PE Reggie Yu, met on December 8, 2025, at 1:30 PM via Zoom to plan and prepare for the upcoming election of the Board of Trustees for RY 2026-2027

Present were Chair/PE Reggie Yu, Vice Chair/PC Pepo Nuñez, DGND Hermie Esguerra, Rtn Ben Ibuyan, Rtn Nic Hallare, RCM Consultant Anna Kun Toledo, ES Lhea Lozano, and EA Jonathan Lagarto.



CLUB ADMINISTRATION

Getting Ready for the Weekly Membership Meeting



PRESIDENT Raul Creencia, Director-elect Caloy Serapio, and Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms John Cutter met on December 10, 2025, for a Tech-Run meeting to prepare for the upcoming Weekly Membership Meeting.

ROTARY'S AREAS OF FOCUS



PEACEBUILDING AND
CONFLICT PREVENTION



DISEASE PREVENTION
AND TREATMENT



WATER, SANITATION,
AND HYGIENE



MATERNAL AND
CHILD HEALTH



BASIC EDUCATION
AND LITERACY



COMMUNITY ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT



ENVIRONMENT

“ONE IN A MILLION YOUTH” Program



TO combat the rising issues of mental health challenges and cyberbullying among youth, the Rotary Club of Manila, in partnership with several other clubs in District 3810, hosted a seminar for 500 high school students from Masville High School in Parañaque City.

Attending both in-person and online, the students heard from various lecturers on key topics. Among the speakers was Club President Raoul Creencia, who led an insightful session on cyberbullying.



“ONE IN A MILLION YOUTH” Program





ENVIRONMENT

A Greener Future for the Dumagat Tribe



ON November 30, 2025, the Rotary Club of Manila reaffirmed its commitment to the environment and community by holding a tree-planting and community immersion activity in Sitio Ysiro, Brgy San Jose, Antipolo.

Club members worked hand in hand with the local Dumagat tribe, listening to their stories and learning about their way of life.

To support the tribe's livelihood, RCM, led by President Raoul Creencia, donated fertilizers, fast-growing rice varieties, and boots through their leader, Rapu.

President Raoul Creencia was joined by Lady Myls Creencia, PDG Jackie Rodriguez, Director Warren So, Secretary Anton Mauricio, BLA/DE Caloy Serapio, and Project Chair Raf Dionisio. Rotaractors from RAC Manila, De la Salle, and PCU were also present, strengthening the bonds of service across generations.



ENVIRONMENT

A Greener Future for the Dumagat Tribe





ENVIRONMENT

A Greener Future for the Dumagat Tribe





BASIC EDUCATION
AND LITERACY



COMMUNITY ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT



Dualtech scholars under the RCM's ARAL program)

MOA Signing with Dualtech Training Center and Launch of RC Manila's ARAL Program

THE Rotary Club of Manila advances its mission of empowering lives through education and employment with the launch of the ARAL (Advancing Resources for Accessible Learning) Program, marked by a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signing with Dualtech Training Center.

Present at the event were RC Manila President Raoul Creencia, Leon Lambert Fellows Chair/Centennial President Susing Pineda, Vice Chair Romy Nones, Director Warren So, and Secretary Anton Mauricio. Representing Dualtech Training Center Foundation were President and Executive Director Mr. Jerry Muhi, Consultant for Sponsorships Mr. Leo Calderon, Manager for Student Affairs Mr. Jose Jacob, and Scholarship Officer Mr. Marc Jeffrey Precones.



**BASIC EDUCATION
AND LITERACY**



**COMMUNITY ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**

MOA Signing with Dualtech Training Center and Launch of RC Manila's A.R.A.L. Program



Signing of the Memorandum of Agreement between the Rotary Club of Manila and Dualtech Training Center



Turning over of the PHP 1 million check to Dualtech Training Center



This project will support the education and technical training of 15 deserving students at Dualtech.



President Raoul Creencia delivering his message to the Dualtech scholars



WATER, SANITATION,
AND HYGIENE

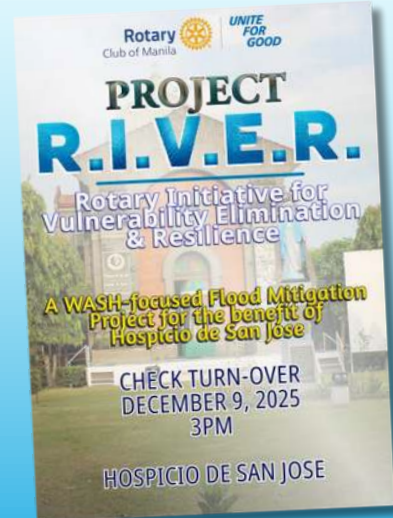
Project R.I.V.E.R

Building Resilience Through Safer Water Management

The club's first major initiative is the installation of a flood-control water pumping system at Hospicio de San Jose. This infrastructure will safeguard the institution's vulnerable residents and ensure its continued safety and operations during heavy rains and rising floodwaters.



THE Rotary Club of Manila proudly introduces Project RIVER (Rotary Initiative for Vulnerability Elimination and Resilience), a WASH-focused initiative dedicated to strengthening community resilience through improved water management systems.





WATER, SANITATION,
AND HYGIENE

Project R.I.V.E.R

Building Resilience Through Safer Water Management



On December 9, 2025, the Rotary Club of Manila officially turned over the check to Hospicio de San Jose.



RCManila also installed its 6th Four-Way Test marker at Hospicio de San Jose.





**MATERNAL AND
CHILD HEALTH**

Kalinga kay Maria: Women's Health Caravan

The Rotary Club of Manila, together with 11 partner Rotary Clubs of District 3810, brought *Kalinga kay Maria* to life—a women's health caravan focused on providing vital medical services to underserved communities.

The project offered health screenings, medical care, and education to women who lack access to these resources.

Kalinga kay Maria reflects Rotary's commitment to improving lives through meaningful action. This initiative was made possible by the collective efforts of volunteer physicians, sponsors, and partner clubs, all working together to support women's health and build stronger, healthier communities.



Rotary District 3810 | **UNITE FOR GOOD**

Rotary Club of Manila | **Rotary Club of Aduana Manila** | **Rotary Club of Manila Binondo Prime** | **Rotary Club of Manila Experts**

Rotary Club of Manila Bay | **Rotary Club of Manila Metro** | **Rotary Club of Manuel A. Roxas Boulevard** | **Rotary Club of Luzang Islands**

Rotary Club of Pasay | **Rotary Club of Pasay MIA** | **Rotary Club of Pasay Estero** | **Rotary Club of Cavite Uptown**

"KALINGA KAY MARIA : WOMEN'S HEALTH CARAVAN"
PAGKALINGA. PAG-ASA. PAGBABAGO

FREE SERVICES

- Lectures on Women's wellness
- Prenatal check-up
- Breast examination & ultrasound
- Cervical Cancer screening
- Cervical Cancer Prevention
- Pelvic & Transvaginal ultrasound
- Biopsy
- Gynecologic consultations

December 8, 2025
Ground Floor, Champ Bldg, Anda Circle Bonifacio Drive, Port Area Manila

Mary Mei V. Rodrigo
District Governor D3810
RY 2025-2026

SPONSORS:

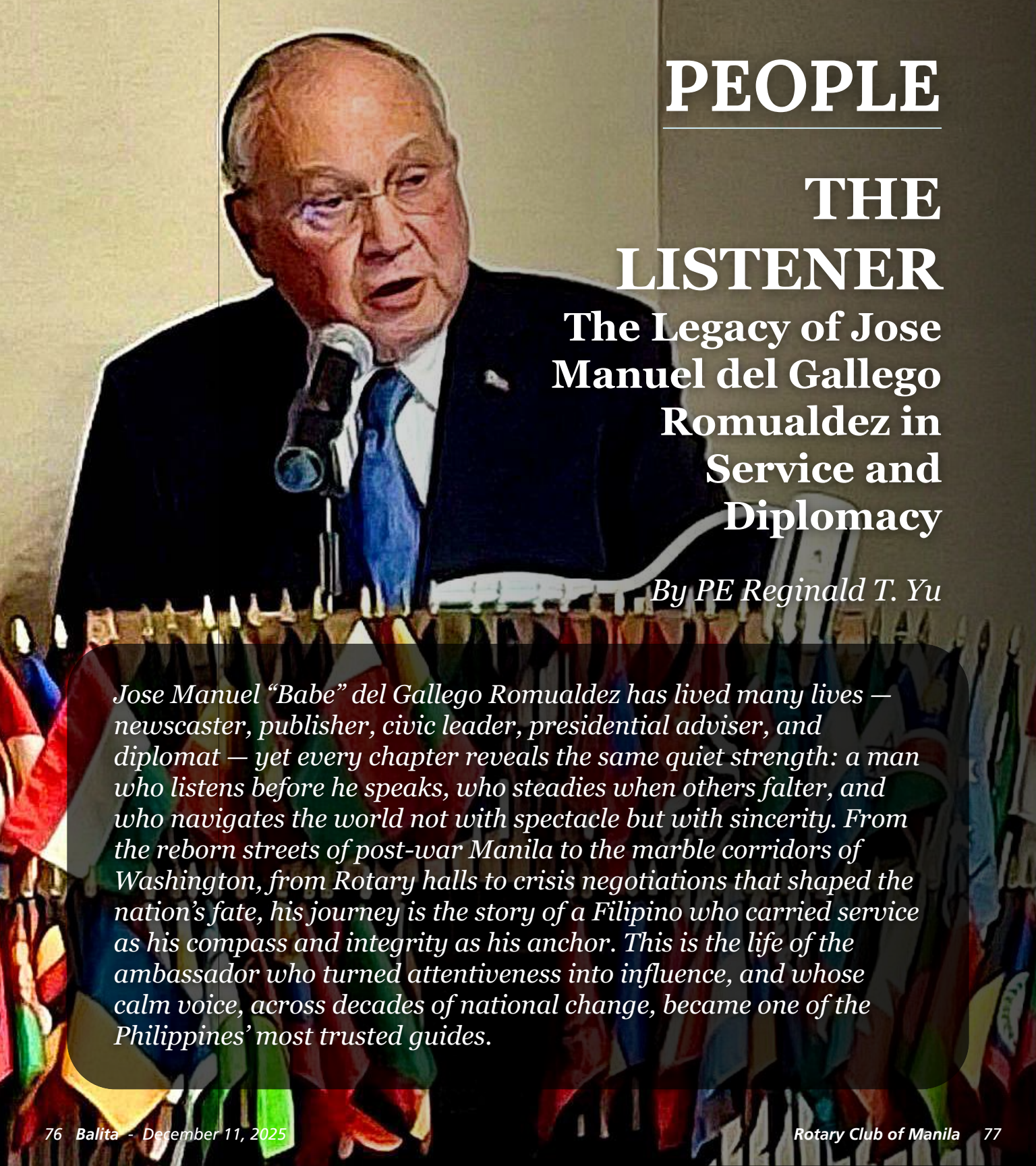
BIO Femur



MATERNAL AND
CHILD HEALTH

Kalinga kay Maria: Women's Health Caravan



A portrait of Jose Manuel "Babe" del Gallego Romualdez, an elderly man with glasses, wearing a dark suit and a blue tie, speaking into a microphone. The background is a collage of various national flags.

PEOPLE

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy

By PE Reginald T. Yu

Jose Manuel “Babe” del Gallego Romualdez has lived many lives — newscaster, publisher, civic leader, presidential adviser, and diplomat — yet every chapter reveals the same quiet strength: a man who listens before he speaks, who steadies when others falter, and who navigates the world not with spectacle but with sincerity. From the reborn streets of post-war Manila to the marble corridors of Washington, from Rotary halls to crisis negotiations that shaped the nation’s fate, his journey is the story of a Filipino who carried service as his compass and integrity as his anchor. This is the life of the ambassador who turned attentiveness into influence, and whose calm voice, across decades of national change, became one of the Philippines’ most trusted guides.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy

LONG before the first cars cut through the early-morning quiet of Massachusetts Avenue, before the diplomats and lobbyists filled its corridors, a single figure often walked toward the Philippine Embassy in Washington, D.C. The city was still half-asleep — its monuments dim, its avenues hushed — but he moved with the calm certainty of someone who understood the weight of the day long before it began.

The Marine guard at the entrance would straighten as he approached. There was no entourage, no flashing lights, no display of authority. Only the soft rhythm of measured steps, the faint fog of breath in the cold air, and an unmistakable presence that carried both steadiness and resolve. He gave a modest nod, as he always did, acknowledging duty with the same understated grace that had guided him through every chapter of his life.



U.S. President Donald Trump formally welcomes Ambassador Jose Manuel “Babe” Romualdez during the presentation of credentials at the White House in 2017—a ceremonial moment that officially marked the beginning of his tenure as the Philippines’ top envoy to Washington. In this distinguished diplomatic rite, President Trump receives Ambassador Romualdez as the personal representative of the President of the Philippines, affirming the continuity of a long and historic alliance. The exchange symbolizes mutual respect between the two nations and sets the tone for deeper engagement in security, defense, trade, and people-to-people cooperation. Ambassador Romualdez’s appointment underscored his extensive experience in diplomacy, media, and public affairs, as well as his role in strengthening Philippine–U.S. relations during a complex and evolving geopolitical era. This moment at the White House stands as a significant milestone in his diplomatic career and in the enduring partnership between the Philippines and the United States.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy

Inside his office, he would pause. Sometimes his gaze lingered on the framed photographs — presidents, dignitaries, moments of history captured in stillness. Other times he looked out the window toward the waking city, its domes and spires catching the first light. But more often than not, he simply closed his eyes for a moment and breathed.

It was a ritual not born of habit but of gratitude — a quiet grounding before the storms of policy briefings, negotiations, interviews, and urgent calls that came with representing a nation of more than 110 million people in one of the world's most consequential capitals.

In those early hours, stripped of ceremony, he was simply **Babe Romualdez** — a communicator whose voice had crossed airwaves, a publisher whose columns had shaped conversations, a civic servant whose efforts had touched communities, and a diplomat who carried his country's hopes into rooms where decisions outlived headlines.

He understood the contradictions of his role. The ambassador is visible yet invisible, praised and blamed in unequal measure, bound by duty yet required to remain above politics. He knew that diplomacy rarely offered triumphs; it

demanded patience, restraint, and the capacity to carry burdens quietly. In those still moments at dawn, he confronted not the grandeur of the position but the responsibility it required of him.



Ambassador Babe Romualdez convenes a press briefing with the Philippine media delegation in Washington, D.C., providing clarity and context ahead of President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr.’s scheduled meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump. In this scene, he stands as the country’s principal voice on U.S.–Philippine relations, outlining key priorities, anticipated discussion points, and the broader strategic significance of the engagement. His steady, diplomatic presence reflects both his mastery of the bilateral relationship and his commitment to ensuring that the Filipino public is well-informed on matters of national interest.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy

He had seen enough of the world to understand that what moves nations is often unseen. He had learned that the truest influence is not rooted in spectacle but in sincerity. And he had come to believe that leadership, at its highest form, is built not on the force of one's voice, but on the discipline to listen.

From the reborn streets of post-war Manila to the crowded halls of New York City, from the intensity of television studios to the quiet contemplations of the writing desk, from Rotary fellowship halls to the marble floors of the Pentagon, his life had been shaped by stories — those he reported, those he witnessed, and those he lived.

Each phase had prepared him for the work that awaited him behind that embassy door.

What history would eventually record as diplomatic achievement began with moments exactly like this: a man sitting alone before sunrise, gathering the fragments of experience that had brought him to this point — discipline from his father, empathy from his mother, clarity from Jesuit teaching, resilience from immigrant life, purpose from Rotary service, perspective from journalism, and steadiness from the countless human encounters that had taught him the value of understanding.



Ambassador Babe Romualdez joins President Bongbong Marcos's economic team at the Philippine Embassy in Washington, D.C., following their participation in the World Bank–International Monetary Fund (WB–IMF) Spring Meetings. The photo captures a moment of focused collaboration, as the delegation consolidates key takeaways from high-level discussions on global economic trends, development financing, and investment opportunities for the Philippines. Ambassador Romualdez's presence reflects his pivotal role in facilitating strategic engagements with U.S. counterparts, ensuring that the country's diplomatic and economic priorities move in lockstep as the Philippines positions itself for sustained growth on the international stage.

Outside, the city slowly awakened — traffic thickened, newsrooms churned, government buildings brightened, and corridors filled with the noise of ambition. Yet inside the quiet office, the ambassador remained still for a final breath, committing himself once more to the work ahead.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy

For in a world of shifting alliances, contested narratives, and relentless scrutiny, his greatest strength was not a commanding voice.

It was the calm, attentive presence of a man who had spent his entire life listening — to stories, to people, to history, to conscience — and who now carried that discipline into the delicate art of guiding a nation's place in the world.

And when he finally opened his eyes and rose to begin the day, he did so with the same quiet conviction that would define his legacy:

That in the long arc of public life, what endures is not spectacle, but service.

Two Lineages, One Foundation

Babe Romualdez was born on November 8, 1947, into a Philippines still recovering from war, a country stitching itself back together after years of devastation. His world began at the crossroads of two distinguished lineages: the Romualdez clan of Leyte and the del Gallego family of Camarines Sur. These were heritages rich in public service, exploration, and intellectual rigor, but they were never brandished in his home as instruments of entitlement. They formed, instead, the quiet frame of responsibility that would guide his life.



Babe, at just five years old, stands beside his mother, Dr. Covadonga del Gallego, in a tender portrait that captures the warmth and quiet strength of their bond. She appears composed and graceful—already a figure of intellect, compassion, and gentle authority—while young Babe looks on with the openness and curiosity of a child shaped by a nurturing home. This early photograph offers a glimpse into the formative world that helped mold him: a household anchored by a mother whose values, discipline, and steady guidance would leave a lasting imprint on his character. Even in this simple moment, one can sense the beginnings of the confidence, empathy, and inner grounding that would later define Babe as a journalist, diplomat, and public servant.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy



The Del Gallego clan, a distinguished family whose roots trace back to a legacy of civic leadership, professional excellence, and deep community ties. Known for their strong sense of tradition and family unity, the Del Gallegos have produced generations of accomplished individuals who have served the country in various fields—from medicine and public service to education, business, and diplomacy. This family stands as a testament to the enduring values passed down through the years: integrity, compassion, discipline, and an unwavering commitment to the greater good. Their story reflects not only heritage and kinship, but also the shaping of character and purpose that continues to influence the paths of their descendants, including Ambassador Babe Romualdez, whose maternal lineage carries the quiet strength and guiding principles of the Del Gallego name.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy



Babe's maternal grandparents, Don Juan del Gallego and Doña Potenciana del Gallego, stand as dignified pillars of a family whose legacy is woven deeply into the fabric of Philippine society.

Their lives reflect an era of tradition, honor, and quiet leadership—values they passed down through generations.

Don Juan, known for his integrity, industry, and deep sense of community, embodied the qualities of a true hacendero-patriarch of his time, while Doña Potenciana, with her grace, strength, and unwavering devotion to family, was the nurturing heart of the household.

Together, they formed the bedrock of the del Gallego lineage, shaping the character, values, and aspirations of their descendants. Through them, one sees the early roots of Babe's own discipline, sense of purpose, and commitment to service—traits inherited from a family whose story is marked by respectability, responsibility, and enduring influence.



The Romualdez patriarch and his sons captured in this classic 1960s photograph—a rare glimpse into the early years of a family whose influence would span generations.

Standing together in their youthful days, the brothers reflect the strong foundation of discipline, unity, and purpose instilled by their father, Dr. Alberto Zialcita Romualdez Sr., whose quiet authority and dignified presence shaped the character of each of his children.

At the extreme right is a young Babe Romualdez, still years away from becoming a respected journalist, publisher, and diplomat. The photo reveals the beginnings of his poised demeanor and confident bearing, even at a young age. This image is more than a family portrait—it is a window into the formative environment that molded the Romualdez men: a home guided by principles, strengthened by close fraternal bonds, and destined to produce individuals who would contribute significantly to public service, medicine, and national life.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy



The entire Romualdez clan, circa 1950s, gathers in this rare and historic family photograph—a portrait of a lineage whose influence spans generations of public service, leadership, and national contribution. At the forefront, Ferdinand Marcos, positioned second from the left, stands prominently among members of the extended family, reflecting the closeness between the Romualdez and Marcos families long before their political destinies would intertwine. Seated second from the right is Babe Romualdez, still in his younger years yet already carrying the quiet confidence and poised demeanor that would later mark his career as a journalist, publisher, and diplomat. This image captures more than just a family assembly; it is a snapshot of heritage, unity, and shared history—an early glimpse of individuals who would go on to shape significant chapters in the nation's political and social landscape. It stands as a testament to the strong familial bonds, deep traditions, and enduring legacy of the Romualdez clan.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy

His father, Dr. Alberto Romualdez Sr., was a physician of global standing who eventually became Secretary-General of the World Medical Association. Yet what remained in Babe's memory was not the prestige of the title but the discipline behind it — the early mornings spent reading medical journals under the glow of a desk lamp, the calm precision with which his father treated both ideas and people. From him, Babe learned that competence must be grounded in character.

His mother, Dr. Covadonga del Gallego, a respected pathologist at the University of Santo Tomas Hospital, embodied a blend of scientific rigor and Spanish warmth. She brought tenderness to a profession defined by precision. Her life taught her children that intellect was hollow without empathy, and that leadership began with respect for human dignity.

In this household, excellence was not demanded but demonstrated. Babe grew up alongside siblings whose achievements spanned medicine, sports, and public service, yet rivalry never defined them. Their parents emphasized purpose over prestige, urging each child to forge his own role in the world.



Dr. Alberto Zialcita Romualdez Sr., Babe's father, was a towering figure in Philippine medicine—a man whose brilliance, integrity, and deep compassion shaped not only his profession but also the generations that came after him. Renowned for his expertise and respected for his ethical leadership, he belonged to that rare class of physicians who combined scientific rigor with an unwavering commitment to service. As the patriarch of the Romualdez family, Dr. Romualdez Sr. exemplified discipline, humility, and a profound sense of duty to country. His guidance created an environment where intellectual curiosity and personal responsibility thrived. For Babe, he was not only a father but also a model of principled leadership—someone whose quiet strength and moral clarity became a lifelong compass.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy



Babe's parents, Dr. Covadonga and Dr. Alberto Romualdez Sr., represent a remarkable union of intellect, compassion, and public service—two distinguished physicians whose lives were devoted not only to their professions but also to the values they instilled at home. Dr. Covadonga, known for her gentle strength, sharp mind, and unwavering dedication to family, brought a nurturing presence and a deep sense of moral grounding to their household. Dr. Alberto Sr., respected for his brilliance, integrity, and leadership in the medical field, provided an example of principled service and professional excellence. Together, they created an environment where discipline, curiosity, humility, and civic responsibility were part of daily life. Their partnership shaped the character and aspirations of their children, laying the foundation for Babe's future path in journalism, diplomacy, and national service.



The first five Romualdez siblings captured in a rare childhood photograph, all still below ten years old—a moment filled with innocence, closeness, and the unmistakable bonds of early family life. At the center is Babe, surrounded by his brothers and sisters, each one reflecting the warmth and character of a home built on love, discipline, and shared memories. This precious image preserves a simpler time, long before public roles and professional paths would shape their futures. Here, they are simply children—playful, curious, and deeply connected—laying the groundwork for the lifelong loyalty and unity that would define the Romualdez family through the years.

From the del Gallego side came stories of exploration and civic duty. His maternal grandfather, Don Juan del Gallego, a Spanish explorer, had founded the town that bears the family name. His maternal uncle, Manuel del Gallego, served as governor of Camarines Sur. These narratives instilled in Babe a sense that service was neither burden nor performance — it was a natural extension of one's place in the world.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy

Taken together, these influences formed a foundation that would accompany him through the many transformations of his life: discipline from his father, empathy from his mother, curiosity from his ancestors, and a quiet conviction that purpose mattered more than applause.



Babe (right) with his cousin Pepot Romualdez in their childhood years—a tender snapshot of simpler times. The photograph captures the innocence, closeness, and carefree spirit of two young boys growing up within a tightly knit family. Long before the demands of public life and professional duty, they shared the easy laughter, shared adventures, and uncomplicated joys of youth. The image is a warm reminder that even the most accomplished public figures begin as children shaped by family, companionship, and the early bonds that help form character. Here, Babe's youthful smile hints at the warmth, wit, and grounded nature that would stay with him throughout his life.



A complete family portrait of the Romualdez family, capturing the warmth, unity, and closeness that defined their household through the years. At the center are the family's beloved pillars—Dr. Covadonga del Gallego Romualdez and Dr. Alberto Zialcita Romualdez Sr., whose partnership, values, and example shaped the lives and character of all their children.

Surrounding them are their children, each with their own unique path yet bound by the same strong foundation: Joaquin Maria (Waco) and Maria Ana (Ana) seated beside their parents, and standing behind them, Alberto Jr. (Dr. Quasi), Juan Miguel (Johnny), Maria Dolores (Nina), and Angel Maria (Tots). This rare full-family photograph reflects not just a gathering for the camera but a testament to the legacy of a remarkable couple and the enduring ties of a family whose members would grow to contribute to society in medicine, public service, diplomacy, and various fields. It stands as a meaningful reminder of the roots from which Ambassador Babe Romualdez and his siblings drew their strength, discipline, and sense of purpose.

A City Rebuilding Itself

Babe grew up in a Manila learning to stand again. The 1950s capital was a place of contrasts — scarred buildings beside new storefronts, American military remnants blending with a culture eager to reclaim its identity. The city hummed with the energy of a people determined to rebuild. For a child, it was a daily lesson in resilience.

He witnessed families striving to restore normalcy, children returning to classrooms, entrepreneurs reopening humble shops, and communities refusing to let the memory of war dictate their future. The Manila of his youth was not glamorous, but it was determined. That spirit of perseverance — modest, unsentimental, persistent — would leave a lasting impression on him.

In 1954, Babe entered the Ateneo de Manila Grade School and later the High School. The Jesuit environment imposed an intellectual discipline that would shape the rest of his life. The priests taught him to think rigorously, to examine motives, to speak with clarity, and to use education not as a private asset but as a tool for service.

The Jesuit motto of becoming “a man for others” resonated deeply with him. Their style — analytical but empathetic, decisive but reflective — formed the template for the communicator and diplomat he would later become.

Among his teachers, one stood out: Onofre “Pagsi” Pagsanghan. Pagsi was legendary for his ability to stir both intellect and conscience. He taught literature not as mere text but as moral inquiry. Under him, Babe learned that words could reveal truths, illuminate choices, and sometimes even change the direction of a life. Pagsi sparked a patriotism rooted not in rhetoric but in responsibility.

Through these formative years, Babe absorbed the essence of Jesuit leadership: clarity of thought, depth of reflection, and the conviction that public life must be guided by a well-formed conscience.

The American Shift

In 1965, when his father assumed the post of Secretary-General of the World Medical Association, the Romualdez family moved to New York. The shift was jarring — from the familiar rhythms of Manila to the relentless pace of Manhattan and the multicultural sprawl of Queens.

At Forest Hills High School, Babe was exposed to a tapestry of identities: recent immigrants from Europe, Puerto Rican families carving a place in American life, African-American students shaped by the civil rights era, and fellow Asians finding their footing in a changing city. It forced him to develop an instinct he would rely

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy

on for the rest of his life — the ability to listen across differences.

New York also taught him humility. He worked part-time jobs at a fast-food shop in Manhattan and later at an A&P supermarket in Queens. These experiences stripped away any illusions of privilege. They showed him what it meant to serve customers, to manage pressure, and to treat people with dignity regardless of status. He learned that leadership was not an entitlement but a practice built on daily effort.

Years later, when he stood in the Oval Office or walked into the Pentagon, he carried with him the memory of grocery aisles, clattering trays, and the honesty of working-class America. It kept him grounded through every chapter that followed.

Returning to a Country in Awakening

When Babe returned to Manila in 1966, he encountered a nation on the brink of social transformation. The youth were stirring. Activism surged across campuses. The idealism of post-war recovery was giving way to calls for justice, reform, and structural change.

He studied Business Administration at De La Salle College, learning the frameworks



Eighteen-year-old Babe shares a warm family moment with his parents during their time in Manhattan, New York—a chapter that marked both a formative period in his youth and a meaningful season in the life of the Romualdez family. Standing on the steps of their residence, the young Babe is flanked by his mother, Dr. Covadonga del Gallego Romualdez, and his father, Dr. Alberto Zialcita Romualdez Sr., both pillars of strength, discipline, and compassion in his upbringing. This photograph captures the intimacy and stability of their family bond amid the vibrancy of New York City—a place where Babe's worldview widened, shaped by exposure to a diverse global environment and the encouragement of parents who nurtured his curiosity, character, and sense of purpose. In this quiet but significant moment, one sees the early foundations of the man he would become: grounded in family, strengthened by education and experience, and guided by the enduring values passed on by two remarkable parents.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy

of commerce and management. But outside the classroom, he witnessed a country grappling with inequality, ideological conflict, and political tension. These years sharpened his perception of Philippine society and deepened his understanding of the forces that shape national identity.

By 1970, as he graduated, the Philippines stood on the edge of turbulence. The First Quarter Storm was approaching. Martial Law loomed over the horizon. His generation sensed — even before anyone could articulate it — that the country was entering a decisive and complex chapter. What Babe did not yet know was that destiny was waiting for him in an unexpected realm — broadcasting — where his voice would first meet the public ear and where the quiet instincts of a diplomat would begin to take shape.

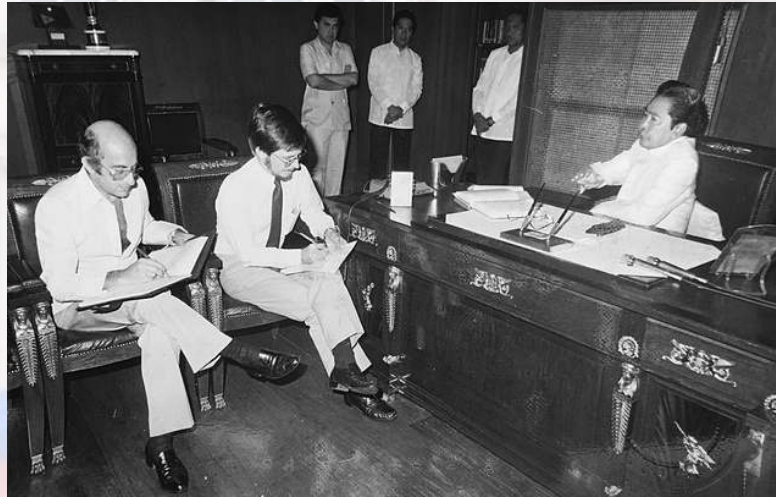
Stepping Into the Light

The suggestion first came from a friend — casual, almost playful.

“Why not try television?”

It was not something Babe had seriously considered. With a newly earned degree in Business Administration, he expected to build a conventional corporate career. But the country was turbulent, and he sensed that the familiar pathways of business would not be enough to satisfy the deeper curiosity forming within him.

The Philippines was changing, and he wanted to understand it — not simply as a participant in commerce but as an observer with a fuller view of the national mood.



Babe (standing at the side in a white bush jacket) is captured here in his early days as a news reporter for KBS Channel 9, covering President Ferdinand Marcos as the latter speaks with a group of foreign journalists. The photograph reveals the intensity and discipline of the newsroom environment of that era—note-takers leaning forward, tape recorders and notebooks in hand, and the President addressing inquiries with his characteristic command.

Amid this scene, Babe stands attentively to the side, already displaying the poise and professionalism that would later define his long career in media, public affairs, and diplomacy. The image offers a rare glimpse into his beginnings in broadcast journalism, a field where he honed the skills—communication, clarity, and calm under pressure—that would ultimately shape his future as one of the country's most respected public figures.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy

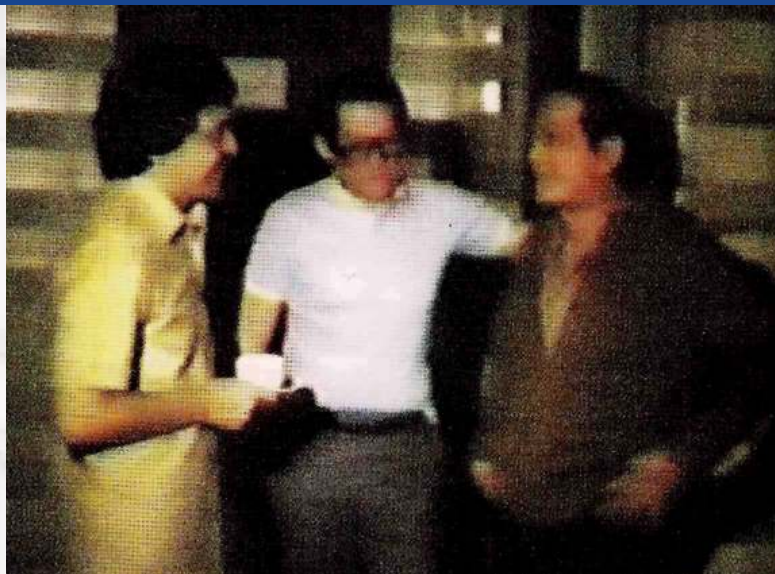
The audition at Kanlaon Broadcasting System (KBS) was meant to be exploratory. He arrived with no formal training, no theater background, no prepared persona for the camera. He brought only his steadiness, the discipline acquired at home and in school, and the clarity of thought shaped by Jesuit education.

In the studio, under the glare of hot lights, something clicked. His delivery was calm, precise, and free of affectation. There was no attempt to impress; the strength lay in simplicity. Executives noticed immediacy in his presence — not the loud charisma common in broadcasting, but a quiet authority rooted in composure. Before the session ended, they knew they had found someone who could speak to the country with clarity.

He was hired. And he accepted, sensing that a door had opened.

Learning the Craft

Broadcasting in the early 1970s was a demanding field. There were no teleprompters to rely on. Anchors digested stories themselves, summarized them in their own words, and delivered them live with no margin for error. The newsroom was a relentless environment — the clatter of typewriters, the chaos of deadlines, the tension of political uncertainty.



Babe shares a rare and historic moment with Senator Ninoy Aquino and former Vice President Doy Laurel—three figures whose paths would intersect with some of the most pivotal chapters in modern Philippine history.

This candid snapshot captures them in relaxed conversation, far from the formalities of public life, revealing the warmth, camaraderie, and mutual respect that bound them long before their individual roles would shape the nation's democratic struggle.

It is a photograph that preserves not just a meeting of men, but a meeting of minds destined to influence the country's future.

Babe found himself in the company of veterans who took the craft seriously. Ronnie Nathanielsz, sharp and uncompromising, taught him the value of precision. Atty. Felipe Medina, the KBS news manager, instilled discipline and the strict ethics of reporting. They were exacting mentors, and he learned quickly under their guidance.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy

He spent long hours studying scripts, understanding the context of events, and training himself to maintain composure on air. He arrived early, stayed late, and treated everyone in the studio — from cameramen to technicians — with equal respect. That consistency, more than anything, set him apart. In a medium where ego often overshadowed professionalism, his humility made him a stabilizing force.

Soon he was trusted not only as an anchor but as an executive assistant to the chairman of the board. The exposure gave him a clearer view of how media intersected with politics, business, and public sentiment. He learned that news was not merely information; it was influence.

By his late twenties, he had risen to President and Vice Chairman of the Television Corporation of the Philippines, an affiliate of KBS. It was a steep ascent — a testament to capability more than ambition. But even as he entered executive roles, he never lost the grounding sense of responsibility that broadcasting had given him: the awareness that words carry weight, and that clarity in communication shapes the way a nation understands itself.



Babe with Philippine Ambassador to the United States and former Vice President Emmanuel Pelaez—his father's close friend and Ateneo classmate—in a photo taken in 1989.

This image captures a meaningful encounter between two figures deeply rooted in public service: Ambassador Pelaez, a statesman of towering integrity and experience, and Babe, then already charting his own path in media and public affairs. Their meeting reflects not only a personal friendship carried over from the previous generation but also the transmission of values—duty, patriotism, and principled leadership—that would guide Babe throughout his career.

Standing beside Ambassador Pelaez at a pivotal moment in contemporary Philippine diplomacy, Babe is seen absorbing the insights of a man who helped shape the nation's political landscape.

The photograph is a quiet testament to legacy, mentorship, and the enduring bonds that influence the making of a future statesman.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy

From Television to the Printed Word

Television gave him a voice, but print journalism gave him perspective.

Over time, Babe felt drawn to a medium that allowed more reflection. In print, he could explore ideas beyond the constraints of airtime. He transitioned toward writing and publishing, eventually taking on the leadership of Stargate Media Corporation, an affiliate of *The Philippine Star*.

There he became publisher of *PEOPLE Asia Magazine*, shaping the publication into a platform not for glamour but for substantive human stories. He insisted that profiles dig beneath public image to reveal character — the struggles, convictions, and defining values of the individuals featured. It was an editorial philosophy he inherited from his mentor and friend, Max Soliven, who believed that stories matter most when they help a nation understand its own identity.

Parallel to his work in publishing, Babe developed his weekly column in *The Philippine Star*. The column became his steady conversation with the public. His pieces were never sensational. They were marked by restraint, clarity, and a desire to illuminate rather than provoke. He



Babe Romualdez, during his years with The Philippine Star, is pictured here with President Corazon “Cory” Aquino—a meeting that reflects an important chapter in both his journalistic career and the country’s democratic history.

As a prominent journalist navigating a newly restored democratic landscape, Babe covered the issues, reforms, and political shifts of the post-EDSA era with clarity and depth. Standing beside President Cory, he is seen at the intersection of media and governance, during a time when a free press played a crucial role in shaping national consciousness.

The photograph captures not only a professional encounter but also a moment symbolic of an era defined by transparency, institutional rebuilding, and renewed civic engagement. It offers a glimpse of Babe’s dedication to responsible journalism—an early foundation for the diplomatic integrity and public service he would later embody.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy



Babe (seen at the extreme left in the foreground) joins the Philippine basketball team during their historic 1974 visit with Chinese Premier Chou En Lai. The photograph captures a rare moment of sports diplomacy at a time when international relations were shifting in significant ways.

Standing alongside the national athletes during this landmark encounter, Babe becomes part of a delegation that helped open doors for deeper cultural and diplomatic engagement between the Philippines and China. The image reflects not only the pride of representing the country on foreign soil but also the symbolic power of sports in bridging nations and fostering goodwill during a pivotal era in regional history.

wrote about global affairs, foreign policy, leadership, and Filipino communities across the world. His readership grew not because he courted controversy, but because he offered reason and insight in a time often dominated by noise.

Through these years, Babe refined the habit of observation — the ability to sense the deeper forces shaping events. He learned to spot patterns beneath the surface of politics and economics, and to communicate them in a language

accessible to ordinary readers. This gift, more than any formal training, became the foundation of his diplomatic skill.

The shift from broadcasting to print was not a change in direction but an evolution — from immediacy to depth, from delivering news to interpreting it, from reflecting events to helping shape how they were understood.

The Spirit of Service

Even as he navigated media and business, another dimension of his life was quietly taking shape — one that would deepen his sense of purpose. In 2010, he joined the Rotary Club of Manila, the oldest Rotary chapter in Asia. Introduced by Past Vice President Fausto Preysler, he entered Rotary with the same attitude he had toward every new phase of his life: he listened first.

He found in Rotary a fellowship rooted in humility and service. The club's weekly gatherings at the Manila Polo Club exposed him to the needs of communities often overlooked by mainstream institutions. He learned about medical missions in remote barangays, scholarship programs for students with limited means, disaster response efforts, and livelihood initiatives that helped struggling families stand on firmer ground.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy

Rotary shaped him not by ceremony but by encounter. He met farmers who survived typhoons, children who walked miles for schooling, families who relied on the generosity of volunteers. These experiences strengthened his understanding of the Filipino story — not from headlines, but from lives lived on the margins.

His leadership emerged naturally. He became Vice President of the club for three consecutive terms — a rare affirmation of trust in an organization filled with accomplished leaders. He worked on programs that brought relief to disaster-stricken communities, supported education, and strengthened civic institutions.

Rotary also taught him the essence of diplomacy before he formally entered it. He learned how to build consensus among people with differing views, how to mediate discussions with calmness, and how to keep purpose at the center of group effort. It was a grounding force — one that prepared him for the rigorous world of statecraft.



Ambassador Babe Romualdez is honored as Ambassador of the Year by the Rotary Club of Manila, a recognition bestowed upon him for his exemplary strides in strengthening and elevating Philippines–United States bilateral relations. The distinction reflects not only his diplomatic skill but also his steadfast commitment to advancing national interests, deepening strategic cooperation, and ensuring that the long-standing partnership between the two nations remains dynamic and forward-looking. This accolade stands as a testament to his leadership, credibility, and enduring contributions to the country's foreign policy landscape.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy

Entering the Global Stage

His involvement in international affairs began not through formal appointment, but through years of joining official trips and delegations. As early as 1989, he coordinated the media group for Vice President Salvador Laurel's visit to the United States. He observed the choreography of diplomatic meetings — the gestures, the silences, the subtle cues that shaped outcomes.

Under President Fidel V. Ramos, he joined delegations to the United States, Mexico, and the APEC Summit in Canada. He noticed how alliances were strengthened through both formal negotiations and informal conversations. He saw how economic opportunities emerged from patience, preparation, and sincerity. These missions taught him the rhythm of diplomacy — a practice built not on spectacle but on relationship.

Under President Benigno Aquino III, he joined trips to China, Japan, and New Zealand, gaining an even deeper appreciation for the complexities of the Asia-Pacific. He understood how economic ambition, political caution, and cultural identity interplayed in a region where power was shifting rapidly. These journeys gave him firsthand exposure to geopolitical dynamics that textbooks could only outline.



Babe is pictured with President Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino III during the launch of a PeopleAsia Magazine issue honoring the late President Corazon “Cory” Aquino. The moment is both personal and historic: a son paying tribute to his mother’s enduring legacy, and a seasoned journalist—now an influential public figure—bearing witness to a milestone in contemporary Philippine media and political memory.

The photograph captures the warmth and mutual respect between the two men, shaped by years of intersecting paths in public service, media, and national advocacy. Surrounded by the energy of the event, they stand before a publication celebrating Cory Aquino’s life of courage and moral leadership—values that continue to resonate across generations. For Babe, who has long been part of chronicling the nation’s political narrative, this occasion reflects not just a professional engagement but also a meaningful acknowledgment of a family whose story is woven into the fabric of Philippine democracy.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy

By the time the Duterte administration came in 2016, Babe had already accumulated decades of insight. President Rodrigo Roa Duterte appointed him Special Envoy to the United States — a role that demanded tact during a period of recalibration in Philippine–U.S. relations.

He approached the task with characteristic steadiness, ensuring that communication lines remained open and that both sides continued to engage constructively.

Later that year, he was asked to serve as Ambassador to the United States. But a serious eye condition required urgent surgery, forcing him to decline — a difficult decision made out of integrity, not hesitation.

After recovering, he accepted the appointment in 2017, stepping into one of the Philippines' most consequential diplomatic posts.

He carried with him not only credentials but a lifetime of preparation — the broadcaster's clarity, the writer's insight, the Rotarian's empathy, and the communicator's instinct for nuance.

He was ready.



Stargate/PeopleAsia publisher and CEO, and long-time Philippine Star columnist, Jose “Babe” Romualdez is seen here with President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, who reappointed him as Special Envoy to the United States in 2017.

The reappointment underscored President Duterte’s trust in Babe’s diplomatic acumen, extensive media experience, and deep understanding of Philippine–U.S. relations. In this role, Babe helped open crucial channels of communication between Manila and Washington during a period of shifting geopolitical priorities, ensuring that the long-standing alliance remained constructive and forward-looking.

This photograph captures a significant moment in their collaboration—two leaders from different fields, working together to strengthen one of the Philippines’ most important international partnerships.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy



Babe with then Foreign Affairs Minister Carlos P. Romulo—a distinguished statesman, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, and one of the Philippines' most respected diplomatic figures. This photograph captures a meaningful encounter between two generations of communicators and public servants: Romulo, already a towering presence in global diplomacy, and Babe, then rising in his own career in media and public affairs. The image reflects not only their family connection but also the early shaping of Babe's worldview by a mentor whose life embodied service, intellect, and patriotism. Standing beside Minister Romulo, Babe is seen absorbing the wisdom of a man who helped define the Philippines' voice on the world stage—a legacy he would later continue in his own distinguished diplomatic journey.

The Ambassador Arrives

When Babe Romualdez presented his credentials at the White House on a warm afternoon in November 2017, he carried with him not only the formal weight of the ambassadorship but also the accumulated wisdom of a life spent listening — in newsrooms, civic halls, boardrooms, and community centers. His path to diplomacy had been unconventional, shaped more by experience than by doctrine. He had not risen through the ranks of the foreign service, but through roles that demanded a deeper understanding of people: journalist, executive, publisher, adviser, Rotarian. These positions taught him that diplomacy was not merely about policy but about perception, empathy, and trust.

In Washington, he stepped into a political landscape defined by volatility. The United States under President Donald J. Trump was reconfiguring alliances, renegotiating economic relationships, and asserting a new brand of transactional diplomacy. Meanwhile, the Philippines under President Rodrigo Duterte was recalibrating its foreign policy, testing new strategic directions while reaffirming its long-standing alliances. The role of ambassador required a steady presence — someone with enough clarity to navigate shifting narratives and enough restraint to keep dialogue intact even when rhetoric grew sharp.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy

From the outset, Babe understood his task: he needed to steady an alliance undergoing stress, preserve communication at all levels, and ensure that Filipino interests remained clearly understood in Washington. He operated with calm precision, choosing words carefully, maintaining professionalism even when political winds blew unpredictably. Those who worked with him — American officials, Filipino diplomats, congressional staffers — noted a quality rare in modern public life: he did not chase attention, and yet attention gravitated toward him because he spoke with balance and sincerity.

He approached diplomacy the way a journalist seeks context. He listened first, interpreted second, and responded only when the full picture became clear. It was an approach that brought stability during moments when it was most needed.

A Relationship Tested, A Relationship Renewed

During his early months, Babe found himself carefully positioned between two strong-willed leaders. President Duterte and President Trump shared blunt rhetorical styles, but each carried different priorities. In such moments, an ambassador becomes more than a messenger; he becomes a mediator of tone. Babe ensured that conversations between Manila and Washington remained anchored in mutual respect.



Babe, together with Philippine Vice President Salvador “Doy” Laurel, meets former U.S. President Richard Nixon—a rare and historically resonant moment captured on record. The encounter brings together three figures whose lives intersected with pivotal periods in global and Philippine politics. In this photograph, Babe stands alongside Vice President Laurel, witnessing firsthand an exchange between a key leader of the post-Marcos transition government and one of America’s most consequential, if controversial, presidents.

The meeting reflects the Philippines’ effort to strengthen diplomatic engagement in the late 1980s, as the nation worked to rebuild institutions and redefine its place in a rapidly changing geopolitical environment. For Babe, this moment represents not only professional exposure to high-level diplomacy but also an early immersion into the complex world of international relations—a formative experience that foreshadowed the distinguished diplomatic path he would later take.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy

He spent long hours in congressional offices, reassuring senators and representatives that the alliance remained strong. He engaged American defense officials, clarifying the Philippines' positions on security cooperation and maritime stability. He met with business leaders, investors, Filipino-American organizations, and policy think tanks, explaining the nuances behind headlines and reminding them of the deep historical ties between the two nations.

The work was not glamorous, nor was it loud. It was methodical, steady, deliberate — the quiet labor that prevents alliances from unraveling.

His efforts bore fruit. Washington grew to view him not merely as Manila's representative but as a stabilizing figure whose clarity helped cut through noise. His credibility became one of the Philippines' most valuable diplomatic assets during a turbulent geopolitical era.

The Return of the Balangiga Bells

Among the defining moments of his ambassadorship, one stands apart — the return of the Balangiga Bells.

For 117 years, the bells taken from Eastern Samar in 1901 had remained in

American possession, their return stalled across administrations despite repeated negotiations. They were relics of a painful chapter in Philippine history, symbols of loss and unfinished reconciliation.

Babe understood that the bells represented more than historical objects. They embodied memory — the kind nations struggle with, reconcile with, and eventually must face together. To succeed where others had failed, he reframed their narrative. He did not approach the issue as a demand, nor as a grievance. Instead, he framed it as an opportunity for healing.

He worked quietly with senior officials in the Pentagon, cultivated dialogue with senators and military historians, and engaged Filipino-American veterans and community leaders who understood both sides of the story. Progress came slowly, then suddenly. Once consensus formed, momentum followed.

In December 2018, the bells began their journey home.

At F.E. Warren Air Force Base in Wyoming, where the turnover ceremony took place, Babe stood before rows of American soldiers as the bells — heavy with history — were lowered and prepared for transport. It was a moment of solemn dignity, a gesture of goodwill

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy

that resonated far beyond military tradition.

Days later, when the bells arrived in Manila, the applause that greeted them was not merely for the bells but for what they represented: the possibility of closing historical loops, of healing old wounds, of renewing respect between allies.

The return of the Balangiga Bells became the signature achievement of his ambassadorship — a moment that required patience, tact, and the ability to persuade not through pressure but through principle.

Diplomacy in a Time of Pandemic

No ambassador in recent memory faced a crisis as sweeping as the COVID-19 pandemic.

In early 2020, as borders closed and countries scrambled for scarce supplies, vaccine diplomacy became a defining test of global leadership. For the Philippines, securing access to vaccines was a national imperative. Competition was fierce, and the Philippines risked being pushed to the sidelines by larger, wealthier nations.

The embassy in Washington became a command center, and Babe found



Pinky Webb interviews Philippine Ambassador to the United States Babe Romualdez live on CNN Philippines in 2023, in a wide-ranging conversation that delves into the evolving dynamics of PH-U.S. relations, regional security, and the geopolitical challenges shaping the Indo-Pacific.

Speaking from Washington, D.C. via remote feed, Ambassador Romualdez provides clear, candid analysis on key issues—from defense cooperation and economic partnerships to the shifting global landscape influenced by major power competition.

Pinky Webb, known for her incisive and balanced journalism, guides the discussion with sharp questions, allowing the ambassador to articulate the Philippines' strategic priorities and the diplomatic work unfolding behind the scenes. The interview highlights the importance of transparent communication between government and the public, offering viewers an informed look into the country's foreign policy direction at a critical moment in global affairs.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy

himself at the heart of the effort. He activated networks across government agencies, pharmaceutical companies, and congressional offices. His decades of relationships — built through credibility, not favor — became crucial pathways to securing early vaccine commitments.

He negotiated with Pfizer, Moderna, Janssen, and Novavax, navigating supply chain bottlenecks, regulatory issues, and international agreements. Many negotiations unfolded in late-night calls, when urgency overshadowed time zones. Some discussions were derailed by production delays or bureaucratic hurdles, but he persisted until solutions were found.

His diplomacy during the pandemic was unlike the ceremonial functions of peacetime. It was the work of crisis — pressure-filled, time-sensitive, and consequential. Through his efforts, the Philippines secured millions of doses that helped jumpstart vaccination programs at home.

He never framed the achievement as personal. It was, in his view, simply the duty of the office he held. But those who witnessed the effort knew that his persistence made a difference in the lives of millions.



Philippine Ambassador to Washington Jose Manuel “Babe” Romualdez extends his congratulations to President-elect Donald Trump during a courtesy meeting at the Trump International Golf Club in Florida—a moment that signaled the Philippines’ readiness to engage constructively with the incoming U.S. administration. Held shortly after the U.S. elections, the meeting underscored the importance of maintaining strong bilateral ties and continuing the long tradition of cooperation between the two countries. Ambassador Romualdez conveyed Manila’s commitment to deepening collaboration in areas such as defense, trade, security, and regional stability, while President-elect Trump expressed his openness to strengthening the alliance. The encounter captured a pivotal diplomatic moment—one that helped set the tone for renewed engagement and ongoing partnership between the Philippines and the United States at the outset of a new administration.

Beyond Washington — The Caribbean Posts

As ambassador to the United States, Babe also served as non-resident ambassador to a constellation of Caribbean nations, including Jamaica, Haiti, Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua and Barbuda, and several others. Each country carried unique challenges and opportunities — labor agreements, disaster resilience, maritime issues, and the welfare of overseas Filipino workers.

He approached these nations with the same respect he brought to all diplomatic engagements. Even when meetings were virtual or constrained by geography, he ensured that ties remained warm and purposeful. His efforts strengthened Philippine presence in regions seldom reached by Manila's traditional diplomacy, proving that representation does not diminish with distance.

Continuity Under a New Administration

In 2022, when Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. assumed the presidency, observers wondered how the Philippines' foreign policy would evolve. The answer came early. Babe was reappointed as ambassador and confirmed unanimously by the Commission on Appointments — a rare bipartisan nod of confidence.



Speaker Martin Romualdez shares a warm and engaging conversation with Philippine Ambassador to the United States Babe Romualdez at the Maharlika Lounge in Villamor Air Base—an encounter that reflects both family ties and shared commitments to public service.

Uncle and nephew, and both proud members of the Rotary Club of Manila (RCM), the two Romualdezes stand as influential figures in Philippine governance and diplomacy. Their dialogue in this moment, set against the dignified backdrop of the Maharlika Lounge, symbolizes the synergy between legislative leadership and international representation, as well as the continuity of a family tradition deeply rooted in service to the nation.

This photograph quietly captures the respect, rapport, and shared sense of duty that have long defined their relationship—two leaders connected by heritage, principle, and a mutual vision for the country's future.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy

The continuity signaled something essential: diplomacy was best served by steadiness. Under President Marcos, Babe expanded engagements across the U.S. government, strengthened defense cooperation, and renewed discussions on trade, technology, and maritime security.

He did not alter his style. He remained measured, diplomatic, and unhurried, maintaining the same calm presence that had defined his service from the beginning.

The Man Behind the Office

Through all his years in Washington, Babe remained grounded. He began days with quiet reading, scanning global developments with the eye of a lifelong journalist. He wrote columns even during the busiest weeks, believing that communication was part of his responsibility to the Filipino public. On weekends he found balance in golf — not as a luxury, but as a form of mental reset.

Despite the demands of diplomacy, he remained a family man. His wife and daughters were constants in his life, the center around which everything else revolved. They were his anchor through long postings far from home, through diplomatic challenges, through personal tests.



A young adult Babe sits beside his mother, the esteemed Dr. Covadonga Romualdez, capturing a tender moment that reflects both familial warmth and the quiet confidence of his formative years. It is an image that speaks not only of their close bond but also of the values, discipline, and sense of purpose instilled in him by a woman of remarkable intellect and grace.

For all the titles he held, he never allowed position to overshadow the person. Those who interacted with him, from senior officials to embassy staff, noted the same qualities: respectfulness, patience, a habit of listening before speaking, and an unwavering sense of purpose.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy



Ambassador Babe photographed during an ASEAN meeting, fully engaged in the region's ongoing diplomatic dialogue. In this moment, he represents not only the country's voice in the regional community but also the forward momentum of Philippine diplomacy. With the Philippines preparing to assume the Chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2026, his presence underscores the nation's commitment to regional cooperation, strategic leadership, and a strengthened role in shaping Southeast Asia's collective future.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy

Lessons Shaped by a Lifetime

As the years in Washington unfolded, Babe grew increasingly aware that diplomacy, at its core, was less about ceremony than it was about character. Policies changed, leaders came and went, priorities rose and fell — but the essential qualities that guided effective diplomacy remained constant: clarity, consistency, and conscience.

He never claimed to be a theorist. His understanding of international relations was not born from textbooks alone but from the sum of lived experiences: the discipline of his father's medical world, the empathy of his mother's vocation, the Jesuit insistence on reflection, the newsroom's demand for accuracy, the corporate world's lessons in strategy, the civic realm's grounding in service, and the diplomatic arena's call for steadiness.

Each phase of his life had left an imprint, forming a coherent philosophy of leadership. He believed that a public servant must listen before speaking, understand before deciding, and remain calm when others are overtaken by urgency. He believed that one must yield ego in order to see the larger picture, and that the most effective influence is often the quietest.



The Romualdez clan gathers in full strength to celebrate the 80th birthday of their beloved matriarch, Dr. Covadonga Romualdez—a moment that honors not only her life, but the generations she nurtured with wisdom, faith, and unwavering love. Surrounded by her children, grandchildren, and extended family, Dr. Covadonga stands at the heart of this gathering, a symbol of grace and quiet strength whose values have shaped every Romualdez across the decades.

This rare family portrait radiates warmth, unity, and deep gratitude. It reflects the enduring legacy of a woman whose guidance anchored the family through triumphs and challenges alike. Her 80th birthday becomes more than a milestone—it is a testament to a lifetime of service, compassion, and the profound influence she continues to impart on each member of the Romualdez clan.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy

If there was a single thread that tied his journey together, it was the habit of attentiveness. He had learned early that a communicator who cannot listen is merely a performer. A journalist who cannot listen distorts truth. A leader who cannot listen mistakes noise for public sentiment. And a diplomat who cannot listen fails to grasp what is unsaid — which is often the most crucial part of any negotiation.

Across decades, that attentiveness became his anchor. It allowed him to build trust even among skeptical counterparts. It allowed him to sense shifts in tone that others missed. It kept his work grounded not in ambition but in responsibility.

A Steward of Institutions

Ambassadors serve not for themselves but for the office they temporarily inhabit. Babe understood this deeply. He treated the embassy not as an extension of personal authority but as a national institution whose credibility must be protected.

He strengthened the embassy's operations, upgraded systems, and improved the morale of its staff by encouraging professionalism and unity. He welcomed every visitor — from senior officials to overseas Filipino workers — with the same courtesy. He made it clear that public office required accessibility, not distance.



The Romualdez siblings gather around their mother in their adult years—a moving portrait of a family whose bonds have only strengthened with time. No longer the children once captured in early photographs, they now stand as accomplished individuals in their respective fields, each carrying forward the values, discipline, and compassion instilled in them by their parents.

At the center of this reunion is their beloved mother, Dr. Covadonga Romualdez, whose steady guidance and enduring love shaped the character and aspirations of all her children. Surrounding her are the Romualdez siblings—united by shared memories, mutual respect, and a deep sense of gratitude. This photograph captures not just a family gathering, but a testament to a life well-lived and the legacy of a matriarch whose influence continues to resonate across generations.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy

Diplomacy, to him, was never about status. It was about stewardship. He carried the office with dignity but without extravagance. Washington saw in him a representative who respected both the Philippines and the country to which he was assigned — a balance essential for alliances to flourish.

His credibility became a bridge not only between governments but between people. Filipinos abroad felt they had an advocate who understood their concerns. Americans found in him a counterpart who approached negotiations with sincerity rather than posturing. Within the diplomatic corps, his reputation was that of a man who was steady in crisis and gracious in success.

The Quiet Strength of a Communicator

The clarity with which Babe communicated became one of the hallmarks of his diplomatic work. His weekly columns, written even amid intense schedules, served dual purposes. For Filipino readers, they explained global developments in straightforward, contextual language. For policymakers in Washington and Manila, they offered insight into how issues were perceived by the public — a form of analysis that no official memo could fully replicate.

He wrote not to persuade but to illuminate. His style was unembellished,



Ambassador Babe Romualdez speaks before the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines (FOCAP) during its annual Prospects Conference, delivering a grounded and insightful assessment of the country's foreign policy direction and the evolving geopolitical landscape.

Addressing an audience of seasoned journalists and international observers, he articulates key developments shaping Philippine diplomacy, offers clarity on critical global issues, and underscores the nation's strategic posture in an increasingly complex world.

His remarks reflect both statesmanship and depth of experience, reinforcing his role as one of the country's most trusted voices in international affairs.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy

thoughtful, and restrained — reflecting the very manner in which he conducted himself in person. In an era when commentary often sought controversy, his voice stood apart: calm, rational, and anchored in facts.

Communication had always been his craft, but diplomacy refined it into an instrument of bridge-building. He mastered the art of choosing the right words at the right moment, avoiding unnecessary escalation, and framing the Philippines' interests with precision. Whether in a congressional hearing room, a corporate roundtable, or a private meeting with senior officials, he spoke with the same careful cadence — never hurried, never careless, always grounded.

A Life Beyond Titles

The public often sees only the visible part of an ambassador's life — the speeches, ceremonies, official photos, and diplomatic events. But those who knew Babe understood that the core of his being lay elsewhere.

He was a devoted husband and father, and his family remained the center of his identity. His daughters grew up watching him navigate the demands of public life with humility, and they saw the sincerity behind his commitments — not the pursuit of recognition but the desire to serve well.

Confrontations: y, Strategy, ooperation



Ambassador Babe Romualdez delivers an insightful discourse on geoeconomics in the Asia-Pacific region at Meridian International, offering a nuanced perspective on how shifting economic forces shape diplomacy, security, and regional stability. Speaking before an audience of policy leaders, diplomats, and scholars, he outlines the strategic imperatives driving the Philippines' engagement with major economic partners and highlights the interconnectedness of trade, investment, and geopolitical realignments. His presentation reflects a deep understanding of the region's complexities and reinforces his role as a key thought leader in advancing Philippine interests on the global stage.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy

He often said that whatever success he enjoyed came from the values instilled in him at home. The steadiness that defined his public life was mirrored in his private one: he valued simplicity, loyalty, and quiet routine. Golf brought him balance; writing gave him clarity; family gave him purpose.

Those who met him casually encountered a man who was approachable and even humorous, unburdened by the airs that often accompany high office. He treated people not according to rank but according to respect.

This consistency — between public duty and private character — became one of the most enduring features of his legacy.

Legacy

As his years in Washington drew on, it became clear that Babe Romualdez had left an imprint on Philippine diplomacy that would outlast his term. His tenure coincided with some of the most complex geopolitical shifts of the 21st century: rising tensions in the Indo-Pacific, the recalibration of alliances, increased competition among global powers, and the pandemic that tested every government on earth.

Through these transformations, he provided continuity in a world prone to



Ambassador Babe Romualdez warmly welcomes President Bongbong Marcos during the latter's first official meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump, marking a significant moment in Philippine–U.S. diplomatic engagement.

In this scene, Ambassador Romualdez serves as the vital bridge between the two leaders, ensuring that the visit begins on a tone of mutual respect, strategic cooperation, and strengthened bilateral ties. His presence underscores the importance of the occasion and reflects his pivotal role in guiding the Philippines' relationship with one of its most longstanding allies.

sudden change. He strengthened defense cooperation through the Mutual Defense Treaty and Visiting Forces Agreement. He expanded dialogues on trade, technology, and maritime security. He broadened the Philippines' diplomatic footprint in the Caribbean. And he rebuilt trust at moments when rhetoric threatened to overshadow decades of alliance.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy

But perhaps his greatest legacy was the manner in which he served. He showed that diplomacy need not be loud to be effective. That clarity matters more than spectacle. That relationships are strengthened through patience, not pressure. And that a nation's dignity is best represented by individuals who combine humility with conviction.

History often remembers grand gestures, but the quieter contributions — the ones rooted in understanding and consistency — shape outcomes in ways that numbers and headlines do not easily capture. Babe's story is one of those contributions.

Epilogue

In the final months of his service, when the sun dipped lower over the Potomac and the winter air sharpened the edges of Washington's skyline, Babe Romualdez often found himself taking one last slow walk through the embassy corridors. At that hour — quiet, unhurried, unguarded — the building carried a different character. The bright urgency of diplomacy softened into something more reflective, almost sacred, as though the walls themselves understood the weight of the years they had witnessed.



Ambassador Babe is seen with President Bongbong Marcos, First Lady Liza Araneta Marcos, and Lourdes Márquez-Romualdez during an intimate dinner hosted in his honor at the Marcos residence.

The gathering reflects the deep trust and long-standing personal and professional ties between the ambassador and the First Family.

It is a warm, elegant occasion that underscores the administration's appreciation for Ambassador Babe's steadfast service, diplomatic leadership, and enduring contributions to strengthening the Philippines' international standing.

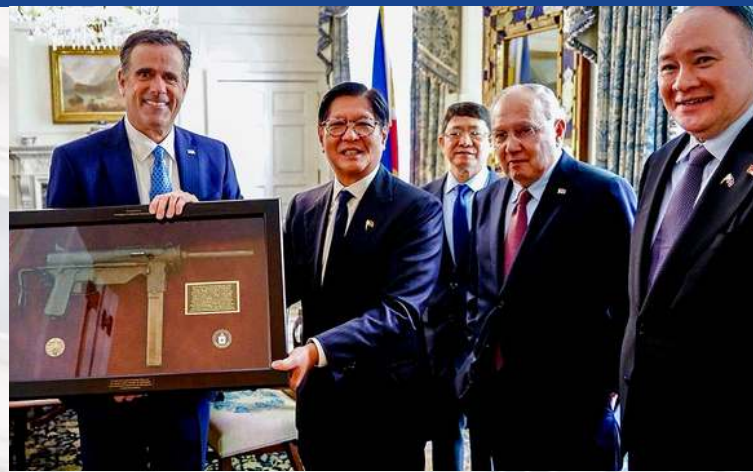
THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy



U.S. President Donald Trump and Philippine President Bongbong Marcos (PBBM) hold a joint press conference at the White House in July 2025—an event that underscores a renewed chapter in Philippine–U.S. relations. Standing side by side at the iconic White House podiums, the two leaders outline the key outcomes of their bilateral meeting, reaffirming shared commitments in defense cooperation, economic partnership, regional stability, and the protection of democratic values in the Indo-Pacific.

The press conference marks a high point in diplomatic engagement between Manila and Washington, reflecting strengthened trust and a strategic alignment between the two administrations. Before an audience of international media, President Trump and President Marcos highlight collaborative initiatives aimed at enhancing security, promoting trade and investments, and addressing global and regional challenges. This moment symbolizes not only the enduring alliance between the two nations but also the forward-looking vision of both leaders as they navigate an increasingly complex geopolitical landscape.



President Bongbong Marcos, accompanied by Ambassador Babe Romualdez and senior Philippine officials, presents a commemorative framed firearm to U.S. Director of National Intelligence John Ratcliffe during a high-level courtesy visit in Washington, D.C. The symbolic gift—an iconic representation of historic security cooperation—underscores the long-standing defense partnership and shared strategic interests between the Philippines and the United States.

Standing beside Ambassador Romualdez, Filipino leaders from the security and foreign affairs sectors witness the exchange, reflecting the united front of the Philippine delegation in reaffirming commitments to intelligence collaboration, regional stability, and mutual preparedness amid evolving geopolitical challenges. Director Ratcliffe's warm reception and the delegation's cordial engagement highlight the deep respect and trust that continue to shape PH-U.S. relations.

This moment captures the spirit of alliance-building and the ongoing efforts to strengthen cooperation between the two nations at the highest levels of government.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy



The first meeting between Ambassador Babe Romualdez and U.S. Ambassador MaryKay Carlson, held on January 2, 2024, marked an important reaffirmation of the long-standing friendship and strategic partnership between the Philippines and the United States.

This initial courtesy call brought together two seasoned diplomats who share a common commitment to strengthening bilateral cooperation in areas such as defense, economic growth, regional stability, and people-to-people ties.

Their conversation set a warm and forward-looking tone for the year ahead, underscoring mutual priorities and the shared resolve to deepen collaboration amid a rapidly evolving Indo-Pacific landscape. The meeting symbolized not just protocol, but a renewed chapter in PH-U.S. relations—anchored on trust, shared values, and a vision for a more secure and prosperous region.

On certain evenings, he would pause before stepping outside, much as he had done at dawn countless mornings before. The same photographs lined the entrance hall. The same flags stood in their places. The same long glass panels reflected the same steady figure. But in the warm glow of the setting sun, there was a subtle shift — not in the world around him, but in the man himself.

He had come to Washington as a communicator, a bridge, a listener.

He now prepared to leave as something far quieter and far greater: a steward of a chapter in Philippine history.

Outside, the embassy grounds were bathed in the soft amber of late afternoon. The Marine guard — younger now, new to service, unaware of the early mornings this ambassador once kept — snapped to attention as he approached. Babe returned the gesture with the same modest nod he had given for years, a small but telling signature of a man who never allowed authority to overshadow humanity.

He stepped out into the cooling air.

The city hummed with its usual pulse — policy meetings still underway, motorcades slicing through traffic, the Capitol dome catching the last of the light. Yet where others saw power, he saw continuity.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy

Where others felt pressure, he felt purpose.

It was easy for outsiders to view diplomacy in terms of the dramatic: the ceremonies, the speeches, the televised handshakes. But he had learned — as all true diplomats eventually do — that the real work is quiet. It is done in conversations that leave no headlines, in tensions eased by sincerity, in alliances strengthened by patience, and in the unseen labor of those who choose humility over spectacle.

His life had always returned to one principle: **service carries its own reward.**

In that twilight walk, he felt no need to rehearse accomplishments. He thought instead of the people who shaped his journey — his parents, whose integrity formed his compass; his mentors, who taught him clarity; the journalists who sharpened his discipline; the Rotarians who showed him the meaning of fellowship; the embassy staff who worked beside him; the Filipino people whose hopes he carried across continents.

He remembered the dawns that began his days, the crises that demanded calm, the bells that journeyed home after more than a century, the vaccine shipments secured in dark hours of uncertainty, the alliances reaffirmed in a world growing more divided.



Babe Romualdez, in his role as Publisher of PeopleAsia Magazine, delivers a speech before an audience of industry leaders, diplomats, and distinguished guests—a reflection of his dual identity as both a media executive and a respected voice in public affairs.

Speaking with his characteristic blend of clarity, depth, and understated confidence, Babe underscores the magazine's mission of celebrating excellence, telling meaningful stories, and highlighting individuals who shape the nation's cultural, business, and political landscape. His remarks echo his long-standing commitment to elevating Filipino achievements and fostering dialogues that inspire progress. This moment captures not only a publisher addressing his community, but a man whose influence spans journalism, diplomacy, and national discourse—using his platform to honor remarkable lives and contribute to the country's ongoing narrative of leadership and aspiration.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy



Escada Managing Director Marilou Koa, Bb. Pilipinas International 2016 Kylie Verzosa, and PeopleAsia Publisher Babe Romualdez share a moment during the prestigious “Women of Style and Substance” recognition night organized by Stargate PeopleAsia. The event, known for honoring remarkable women who seamlessly blend sophistication with achievement, brings together leaders from fashion, business, media, and public service.

The work had been demanding.

The responsibility enormous.

But the privilege unmistakable.

As the last light slipped behind the Washington horizon, Babe looked once more at the embassy — not with attachment, but with gratitude. He had given what he could, in the way he knew best. With steadiness. With discipline. With attentiveness.

And then, unhurried and unburdened, he walked away from the building not as a man leaving office, but as a man whose duty had come full circle.

The dawn that opened his journey was his offering.

The dusk that closed it was his peace.

Standing beside industry icons and cultural influencers, Babe—as publisher—plays a key role in celebrating the accomplishments of Filipinas whose talent, elegance, and professional impact continue to elevate the country’s presence on the global stage. This photograph reflects the spirit of the evening: a confluence of style, purpose, and empowerment, captured in the company of individuals who represent the very best of modern Filipino excellence.

THE LISTENER

The Legacy of Jose Manuel del Gallego Romualdez in Service and Diplomacy



For in the end, his legacy was not found in titles or ceremonies, but in the quiet truth he carried his entire life:

Leadership begins with listening.

Service begins with humility.

And a nation is best served by those who understand the power of both.

Ambassador Babe Romualdez addresses the members of the International Club of Annapolis on November 5, 2025, offering a thoughtful and compelling discourse on the enduring special relationship between the Philippines and the United States. Speaking with both historical perspective and diplomatic clarity, he highlights how the two nations have long stood together as friends, partners, and allies—bound by

shared values, mutual strategic interests, and decades of cooperation across defense, economic development, and people-to-people ties. His remarks underscore the vitality of this alliance in an evolving geopolitical landscape and reaffirm the Philippines' commitment to strengthening its partnership with the United States for regional stability and a more secure, prosperous future.

YOUTH SERVICE

RC Manila, De La Salle-College of St. Benilde Explore Collaboration Opportunities



Special Assistant to the Governor-Manila SDG Albert S. Alday and SDG Aries Balanay in a meeting with officials of the De La Salle-College of St. Benilde led by De La Salle-College of St. Benilde School of Design and Arts Prof. Vanju Alvaira together with representatives from the Center for Social Action, Service Learning and Multimedia Arts Program of the college last December 5, 2025 at the De La Salle-College of St. Benilde School of Design and Arts in Manila, exploring possibilities of collaboration with the Rotary Club of Manila, which, among others, include the possible revival of the Rotaract Club of De La Salle-College of St. Benilde which the club chartered way back in RY 2017-2018.



Special Assistant to the Governor-Manila SDG Albert S. Alday, SDG Aries Balanay, Rtn. Inov Talusan and Rotaract Club of Manila IPP Summer Stephanie Bonifacio in a group picture after a meeting with officials of the De La Salle-College of St. Benilde led by De La Salle-College of St. Benilde School of Design and Arts Prof. Vanju Alvaira and representatives from the Center for Social Action, Service Learning and Multimedia Arts Program of the college last December 5, 2025 at the De La Salle-College of St. Benilde School of Design and Arts in Manila.

INTERCLUB EVENTS

RC Manila Supreme 198's 8th Induction, 9th Handover Ceremony, and 10th Charter Anniversary



President Raoul Creencia attended the 8th Induction, 9th Handover Ceremony, and 10th Charter Anniversary of the Rotary Club of Manila Supreme 198 on December 8, 2025 at the Makati Sports Club.

In photo: President Raoul Creencia with RCMS198 President Jay-R Ipac

Governor's Visit to the Rotary Club of Manila Supreme 198



DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra attended the Governor's Visit to the Rotary Club of Manila Supreme 198 last December 8, 2025 at the Makati Sports Club in Makati City.



DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

DGND Hermie Esguerra Attends RC Manila Midtown's Disaster Preparedness Program



DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra attended the District Disaster Preparedness and Awareness Program hosted by the Rotary Club of Manila Midtown last November 29, 2025 at the F.G. Calderon High School in Tondo, Manila.



RI District 3810 Leaders Join December 2025 EXECOM Meeting Virtually

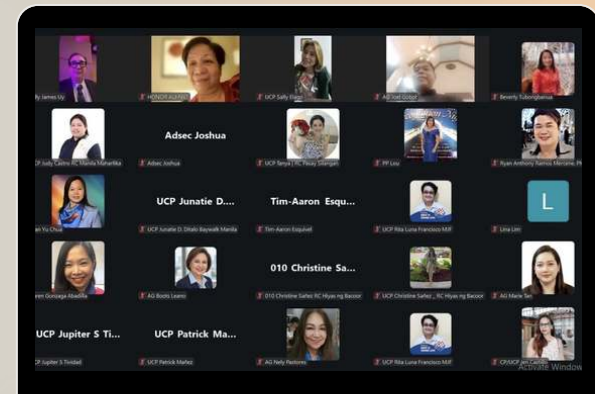
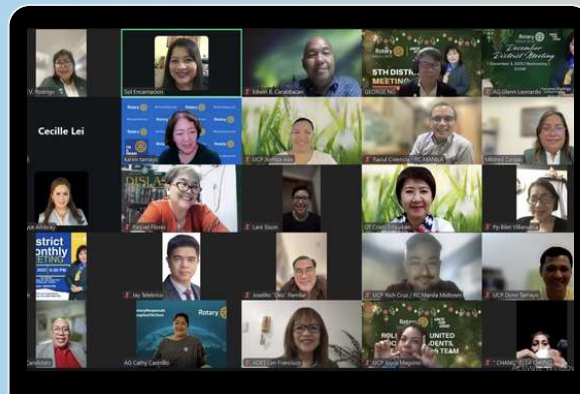
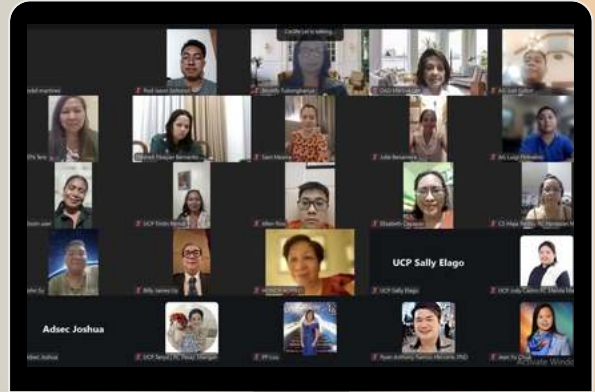


DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra and Special Assistant to the Governor-Manila SDG Albert S. Alday attended the Executive Committee (EXECOM) Meeting of Rotary District 3810 for the month of December 2025 last December 1, 2025 via Zoom virtual platform.



DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

District Area Meeting for the Month of December



DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra, Special Assistant to the Governor-Manila SDG Albert S. Alday and Rotary Club of Manila President Raoul Creencia attended the District Area Meeting for the month of December last December 3, 2025 via Zoom virtual platform.

DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

District Vibrant Club Workshop



DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra was the sole representative of the Rotary Club of Manila at the District Vibrant Club Workshop held last December 6, 2025 via Zoom virtual platform. During this event, he was given the task of synthesizing the entire workshop.

The following was his synthesis/panel reaction on the entire workshop:

THE ROTARY SYMBIOTIC CYCLE

I am sure not all of us have seen when Rotary was founded, but we know Paul Harris and his three (3) friends started it. In fact, the first impactful community project they had was the installation of the public restroom Room in 1937 in downtown Chicago, and that too was the very first act of Service Above Self, and thus, the public image of Rotary started, and the rest is history.

1. **Public Image** – “How the world sees us.”

A strong public image showcases who we are, what we do, and why Rotary matters.

When communities see real stories of service, transparency, and impact, they begin to appreciate Rotary as a trusted and relevant force for good.

Then it leads to ↘

2. **Membership Attraction** – “People join because they see value.”

A good public image naturally attracts like-minded leaders who want to belong to something meaningful. People are inspired to join when they see Rotary changing lives, when they witness our culture of fellowship, and when they feel they can contribute their talents to a respected organization.

3. **TRF Giving** – “The fuel for bigger impact.”

As membership grows, so does our capacity.

More Rotarians mean more partners, more donors, more advocates.

DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

District Vibrant Club Workshop

This expands our ability to strengthen The Rotary Foundation—allowing us to fund larger, smarter, and more sustainable projects that create long-term, life-changing impact.

4. **Call to Action** – “Turning goodwill into movement.”

When communities witness meaningful, well-funded Rotary projects, they feel the invitation to act—to volunteer, to support, to collaborate, or even to join.

This call to action not only engages the public; it energizes Rotarians themselves, pushing us to dream bigger and do better.

THE CYCLE CONTINUES

Impactful action improves our Public Image,

which boosts Membership Attraction,
which increases TRF Giving,
which strengthens our Call to Action,
which again enhances our Public Image.

It is a powerful, self-sustaining chain—a Rotary engine fueled by service, trust, and purpose.

Governor's Visit to the Rotary Club of Manila Expats



Special Assistant to the Governor-Manila SDG Albert S. Alday attended the Governor's Visit to the Rotary Club of Manila Expats, daughter club of the Rotary Club of Manila, last December 2, 2025 at the Top of the Alpha, Makati City.



DISTRICT EVENTS

Rotary Club of Manila Expats' First Anniversary and Induction Party



PP Jackie Rodriguez, Special Assistant to the Governor-Manila SDG Albert S. Alday and Rotary Club of Manila Expats Club Adviser PP Romy Nones attended the First Anniversary and Induction Party of the Rotary Club of Manila Expats, one of the daughter clubs of the Rotary Club of Manila, last December 2, 2025 at the Top of the Alpha, Makati City.



Rotary Club of Manila Expats Club Adviser PP Romy Nones and Special Assistant to the Governor-Manila SDG Albert S. Alday with United Chosen President/Charter President Ria Januszcza of the Rotary Club of Manila Expats, daughter club of the Rotary Club of Manila and husband, Rtn. John Januszcza, during the First Anniversary and Induction Party of the Rotary Club of Manila Expats.

Rotary Club of Manila Expats' First Anniversary and Induction Party

PP Jackie Rodriguez, Special Assistant to the Governor-Manila SDG Albert S. Alday and Rotary Club of Manila Expats Club Adviser PP Romy Nones as part of the group photo at the end of the First Anniversary and Induction Party of the Rotary Club of Manila Expats.



Special Assistant to the Governor-Manila SDG Albert S. Alday playing the Family Feud Game during the First Anniversary and Induction Party of the Rotary Club of Manila Expats.



Special Assistant to the Governor-Manila SDG Albert S. Alday winning the Family Feud Game and receiving a wireless karaoke as a prize during the First Anniversary and Induction Party of the Rotary Club of Manila Expats.

DISTRICT EVENTS

District 3810 Council of Governors Christmas Celebration and Meeting

DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra and PDG Vince Carlos attended the Rotary District 3810 Council of Governors Christmas Celebration and Meeting hosted by DG Mary Mei Rodrigo and presided over by PDG Joyce Michelle Socorro Ambray, Chairperson of the Council of Governors for RY 2025-2026, last December 4, 2025 at the Benjarong Restaurant, Dusit Thani Manila, Makati City.



Clockwise from left: PDG Ernest Yuyek, DGE Bing Carrion, DGN Jun Pasion, PDG Robert Koa, PDG Josie Ang, DG Mary Mei Rodrigo (lunch host), PDG Joyce Michelle Ambray (meeting chair), DGN Hermie Esguerra, PDG Danny Yu, PDG Paco Atayde, PDG Vince Carlos, and PDG Edmond Aguilar.



DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra received a warm welcome as the newest member of the Rotary District 3810 Council of Governors last December 4, 2025.



DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra participating in the Rotary District 3810 Council of Governors Christmas Celebration and Meeting.

PDG Vince Carlos stressing a point during the Rotary District 3810 Council of Governors Christmas Celebration and Meeting

DISTRICT EVENTS

Joint Christmas Party of the Philippine College of Rotary Governors and the Philippine Rotary Media Foundation, Inc.



DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra and PDG Rudy Bediones attended the Joint Christmas Party of the Philippine College of Rotary Governors and the Philippine Rotary Media Foundation, Inc. last December 6, 2025 at the Rotary Club of Makati Center in Makati City.



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

President Raoul Creencia Attends RC Jinju Jeil's 30th Anniversary Celebration



On December 5, 2025, President Raoul Creencia and Lady Myls were warmly welcomed by the President, President-Elect, Club Secretary, and members of RC Jinju Jeil.





President Raoul Creencia Attends RC Jinju Jeil's 30th Anniversary Celebration



President Raoul Creencia and First Lady Myls Creencia attended the Rotary Club of Jinju Jeil 30th anniversary celebration held at the MBC Convention Center in Jinju City.



President Raoul Creencia Attends RC Jinju Jeil's 30th Anniversary Celebration



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS | FELLOWSHIP

Sister Clubs Friendship Golf Round

RC Jinju Jeil (RI D3590), RC Gwangju Yeomju (RI D3710), and RC Manila (RI D3810)
Sunday, December 7, 2025



A Timeless Gift: Honoring Rotary International Past President Dong Kurn Lee



DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra and District 3810 Council of Governors Chairperson/District Rotary Foundation Chairperson PDG Joyce Michelle Socorro Ambray presented Rotary International Past President Dong Kurn Lee (Rotary International President, RY 2008-2009, and Chair, The Rotary Foundation, RY 2013-2014) with a Rotary District 3810 commemorative watch at a private dinner last December 9, 2025 in Makati City.

FELLOWSHIP

Aleco Monday breakfast



A Aleco breakfast fellowship was held on December 1, 2025 hosted by Past Director Ner Lonzaga.

Present were (clockwise from bottom left) Sec. Anton Mauricio, Internal Auditor Nick Locsin, Past District Governor Jackie Rodriguez, Past Director Ner Lonzaga, Director-elect/Board Legal Adviser Caloy Serapio, Past Director Abe Pascual, former member Francis Juico, Past Treasurer Chito Tagaysay, Rtn. Cris Acosta, Past Director Beda Fajardo, Past President Archit Bartolome, former member Jorge Salazar, Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms Dave Reynolds, and Past Director Rod Valencia.

A Aleco breakfast fellowship was held on December 8, 2025 hosted by Past President Archit Bartolome.

Present were (clockwise from bottom left) Rtn. Willie Peliño, Secretary Anton Mauricio, PDG Jackie Rodriguez, former member Raoul Villegas, Internal Auditor Nick Locsin, Past Director Jun Hallare, Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms Dave Reynolds, Past President Ebot Tan, Past President Archit Bartolome, Past Director Beda Fajardo, Past Director Ner Lonzaga, Rtn. Cris Acosta and Past Director Rod Valencia.

PUBLIC IMAGE

RC Manila Installs Fifth Four-Way Test Marker at Mithing Pangarap in Tondo, Manila



On December 1, 2025, the Rotary Club of Manila installed its fifth Four-Way Test marker at the Mithing Pangarap compound in Balut, Tondo.

President Raoul Creencia, Director Jason Bogovich, and Chairman John Cutter were on hand to implement the project.



With President Raoul Creencia, Director Jason Bogovich, and Project Chair / DSAA John Cutter were Iluminada Woellhaf, Founder, Mithing Pangarap Educational Foundation, Inc., and Jane de la Cruz, CEO, Mithing Pangarap Educational Foundation, Inc.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Magbigay pag-asa.
Maghatid ng saya.
Ipadama ang diwa ng Pasko.

We are accepting monetary donations
to support our gift-giving activity and
provide rice and Christmas packages
to 500 flood-affected families in
Calumpit, Hagonoy, and Paombong.

★ 20 December 2025
Saturday



ACCOUNT NAME:

Dangal ng Bulacan Foundation, Inc.

METROBANK

Current Account Number
905-7-305-51080-3

PHILTRUST BANK

Savings Account Number
1312-0000414-4

CONTACT US

facebook.com/dbfiofficial

dbfisecretariat.2003@gmail.com

0926-027-4326

dangalngbulacan.org

**DEC
11**

**2:30
PM**

Project KALINGA Surgical Outreach

in partnership with the World Surgical
Foundation Philippines
Our Lady of Peace Hospital
Coastal Road, Parañaque City

**DEC
13**

**3:00
PM**

Gift Giving at Smokey Mountain

Mithing Pangarap
Balut, Tondo, Manila

**DEC
16**

**11:00
AM**

Gift Giving at Hospicio de San Jose

Manila

**DEC
20**

Gift-Giving in Malolos, Bulacan

in partnership with Dangal ng Bulacan
Foundation
Exact time and venue to be advised



BOARD OF DIRECTORS & EXECUTIVE OFFICERS RY 2025-2026

RAOUL C. CREENCIA
President

EDUARDO V. ENRIQUEZ, III
Immediate Past President

RICARDO SB. GUEVARA
Vice President

MICHAEL JAEY C. ALBAÑA
JASON M. BOGOVICH
RAMI CHAHWAN
EDWIN HERNANDEZ
ALBERT PALACIOS
WARREN SO
Directors

ANTONIOLO DC. MAURICIO
Secretary

PAUL JOSEPH M. GARCIA
Treasurer

JASON M. BOGOVICH
Sergeant-at-Arms

CARLOS G. SERAPIO
Board Legal Adviser

FRANCISCO D. MAGSAYSAY
Assistant Secretary

KARLO EUGENE JOSEF M. CASTRO
Assistant Treasurer

ARSENIO Z. LOCSIN
Internal Auditor

MICHAEL D. ROXAS
Assistant Internal Auditor

JOHN M. CUTTER
DAVID J. REYNOLDS
Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms



Official Newsletter of
Rotary Club of Manila
balita

EDITORIAL BOARD RY 2025-2026

PRES. RAOUL C. CREENCIA
Publisher

SDG REGINALD T. YU
Editor-in-Chief

RTN. SENEN T. MANGALILE
Managing Editor

SEC. ANTONILO DC. MAURICIO
Associate Editor

SDG ALBERT S. ALDAY
Editorial Consultant

DSAA JOHN M. CUTTER
Contributing Editor

RHEA V. TABORA
Editorial Consultant

RCM SECRETARIAT

LHEA J. LOZANO
Executive Secretary

RCM OFFICE

543 Arquiza St. cor. Grey St.
Ermita, Manila
Tel. No. 8527-1885
Email: rcmanila@rcmanila.org

www.rcmanila.org