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The Official News Organ of the Rotary Club of Manila

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ISSUE NO. 4090 • MAY 28, 2026



Rotary Club of Manila

TOWER Awards 2026

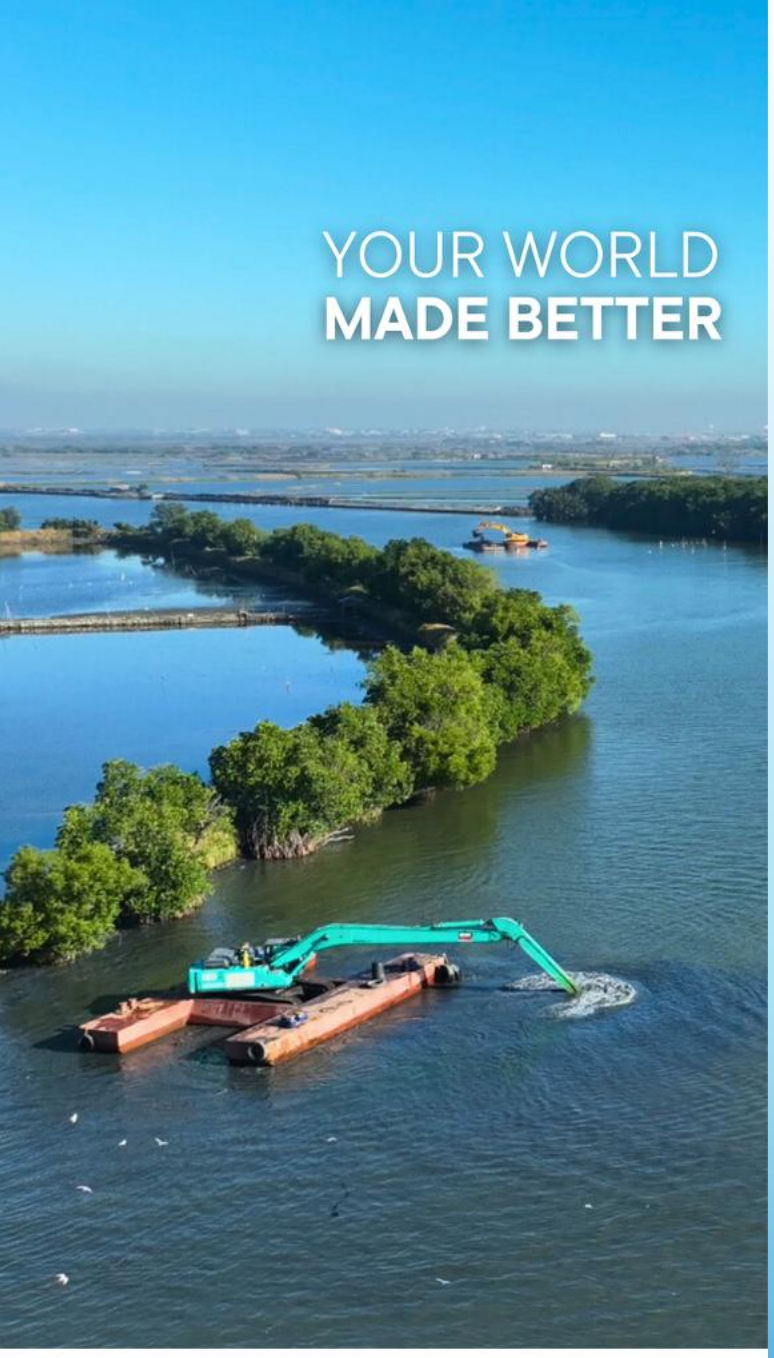
The Outstanding Workers of the Republic Awards

GCash · PAGCOR · SAN MIGUEL CORPORATION · PHILEA · PEZA

The TOWER Awards: In Praise of the Nation's Quiet Builders

IN THE PATH OF CONSEQUENCE
The Measure of Jesus Antonio Morente Pineda Jr.

Meet the 2026 TOWER Awards Honorees



SAN MIGUEL CORPORATION

As a leading Filipino company, we are committed to being a force for good for our country and people.

The massive clean-up of major rivers throughout Luzon is among our most significant environmental commitments to date. Through this effort, we hope to address flooding in our cities and protect our vital waterways, and help enhance ecosystems.

Through investments and initiatives that generate jobs, opportunities, and improve the lives of more Filipinos, SMC is building a better world for generations to come.

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PROGRAM

Rotary Club of Manila | UNITE FOR GOOD

ROTARY CLUB OF MANILA

32nd Weekly Membership Meeting
Rotary Year 2025-2026

TOWER AWARDS 2026

Thursday, May 28, 2026, 12:30 PM
Ballroom 2, Fairmont Hotel Makati

Moderator: PVP FAUSTO PREYSLER

PART I

11:00 AM Registration /Lunch

12:30 PM Call to Order | **PRES. RAOUL C. CREENCIA**

Invocation
PP TEODORO "Teddy" J. OCAMPO

Philippine National Anthem | **AVP**

Rotary Club of Manila Hymn
RCM WF Music Chorale

The Four (4) Way Test
PD AMADO "Amading" D. VALDEZ

Introduction of visiting Rotarians and Guests
STAR Rtn. JASON VALDERRAMA

Welcome Song | **RCM WF Music Chorale**

PART II

12:55 PM Welcome Remarks
PRES. RAOUL C. CREENCIA

Opening Remarks
CP JESUS M. "Susing" PINEDA, JR
Chairman, TOWER Awards 2026

1:10 PM Presentation of TOWER Awards 2026
(The Outstanding Workers of the Republic)
DIR. EDWIN H. HERNANDEZ
(Director of Vocational Service)
RTN. ROMEO C. NONES
(Board of Judges, TOWER Awards 2026)

TOWER Awards Trophy
and cash award together with
PRES. RAOUL C. CREENCIA
CP JESUS "Susing"M. Pineda, Jr.
(Chairman, TOWER Awards 2026)
Hon. ALEJANDRO H. TENGCO
(PAGCOR Chairman & CEO)
Hon. TERESO O. PANGA
(PEZA, Director General)
District Gov. MARY MEI RODRIGO
(R.I. District 3810)
PP F. FRANCISCO "Chito"S. ZALDARRIAGA
(PHILEA, President)
MS. MICHELLE FERNANDEZ
(Mynt, Inc. (GCash))

1:20 PM Message from the Awardees represented by
MR. JANSEN MERCADO ANGELES

PROGRAM

ROTARY CLUB OF MANILA
32nd Weekly Membership Meeting
Rotary Year 2025-2026

TOWER AWARDS 2026
Thursday, May 28, 2026, 12:30 PM
Ballroom 2, Fairmont Hotel Makati

Moderator: PVP FAUSTO PREYSLER

PART III

1:25 PM Brief Message of Inspiration

MS. MICHELLE FERNANDEZ
Vice President, Corporate Sustainability and Communications, Mynt, Inc. (GCash)

MR. LENNARD CONSTANTINE C. SERRANO
Assistant Secretary, Department of Labor and Employment

RCM PP F. FRANCISCO S. ZALDARRIAGA
President, Philippine Ecozone Association (PHILEA)

HON. ALEJANDRO H. TENGCO
PAGCOR, Chairman & CEO

District Governor MARY MEI RODRIGO
Rotary International District 3810

Presentation of Gifts of Appreciation to TOWER Awards Project Supporters
Department of Labor and Employment
Board of Judges
Philippine Ecozone Association (PHILEA)
Mynt, Inc. (GCASH)
San Miguel Corporation
Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation
Pres. RAOUL C. CREENCIA
Centennial Pres./Chair JESUS M. PINEDA

1:40 PM Introduction of the Guest of Honor and Speaker
RCM PP F. FRANCISCO S. ZALDARRIAGA

Address:

HON. TERESO O. PANGA
Director General
Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA)

1:55 PM Presentation of TOWER Awards signature trophy
Guest of Honor and Speaker
PRES. RAOUL C. CREENCIA
Centennial Pres. JESUS M. PINEDA
TOWER Awards Committee and Board of Judges

2:00 PM ADJOURNMENT
PRES. RAOUL C. CREENCIA

EDITORIAL

Reginald T. Yu
Editor-in-Chief



THE 2026 TOWER Awards arrives at a moment when the meaning of work itself is being tested by disruption, automation, uncertainty, and rapid technological change. Yet amid these transformations, one truth remains constant: nations are not built by vision alone, but by the hands, minds, discipline, and quiet perseverance of workers who choose excellence every single day.

The men and women honored today remind us that the true strength of the Philippines has never rested solely in its institutions or leaders, but in the dignity, ingenuity, and resilience of its labor force.

For more than five decades, the TOWER Awards — The Outstanding Workers of the Republic — has stood as one of the nation's most meaningful tributes to labor. Conceived in 1975 by the Rotary Club of Manila in partnership with labor and industry leaders, the Awards was never intended to be a mere ceremonial exercise. It was a statement of national values: that excellence deserves recognition regardless of rank, title, or social standing; that the machinist, the mechanic, the technician, the operator, the engineer, and the production worker all contribute to the architecture of national progress.

This year's honorees embody that spirit with remarkable clarity. They are not celebrities of commerce nor architects of corporate strategy from distant boardrooms. They are workers who confronted inefficiency and chose to solve it. Workers who transformed operational problems

EDITORIAL

into innovations that generated millions in savings, improved sustainability, enhanced workerergonomics, strengthened productivity, and advanced local manufacturing capability. From automation systems and hydroponic nutrient technology to waste reduction mechanisms, local additive manufacturing, and sustainable lubrication alternatives, the innovations recognized this year share a common thread: they were born not from abstraction, but from deep familiarity with the realities of work itself.

There is something profoundly important in that distinction. In an age obsessed with disruption and spectacle, the TOWER Awards reminds us that progress is often built quietly. Innovation does not always emerge from billion-peso research laboratories or multinational technology hubs. Sometimes it emerges from a mechanic observing inefficiency on a production line. Sometimes from a technician who refuses to accept waste as inevitable. Sometimes from a young engineer who sees how automation can improve agriculture and sustainability. These honorees demonstrate that the Filipino worker is not merely capable of supporting industry, but of transforming it.

The stories featured in this commemorative issue also challenge a dangerous misconception that still lingers in many societies: that labor and intellect exist in separate worlds. The TOWER Awards has long rejected that false divide. The history of the Awards reveals generations of Filipinos whose mastery of craft, discipline of execution, and practical ingenuity elevated entire industries. Whether welder, miner, machinist, seamstress, technician, systems specialist, or engineer, the common denominator has always been excellence pursued without fanfare.

Equally significant is the fact that many of this year's honorees rose not from privilege, but from perseverance. Several built their expertise through hands-on experience, self-learning, and years of disciplined labor. Their journeys affirm a truth too often overlooked in modern discourse: that greatness is not reserved for the fortunate, but remains accessible to those willing to work with integrity, humility, and purpose.

EDITORIAL

The TOWER Awards therefore serves not only as recognition, but as national reminder. A reminder that the dignity of labor must never be reduced to economics alone. That productivity without humanity is hollow. That innovation without inclusivity is incomplete. And that no country can genuinely aspire toward progress while failing to honor the very people who sustain its industries, power its systems, grow its food, maintain its infrastructure, and keep its institutions functioning day after day.

This year's awardees stand in a lineage that stretches across fifty years of Filipino excellence — a living archive of workers whose contributions shaped industries, strengthened communities, and quietly carried the nation forward through changing times. Their stories deserve to be told not simply because they succeeded, but because they illuminate what the country must continue to value: competence, discipline, innovation, resilience, and the enduring nobility of honest work.

In honoring them, the TOWER Awards honors something larger than individual achievement. It honors the Filipino worker itself — not as statistic or abstraction, but as builder of the nation's future.

The men and women honored today remind us that the true strength of the Philippines has never rested solely in its institutions or leaders, but in the dignity, ingenuity, and resilience of its labor force.

President's Message

TOWER Awards: RCM's Signature Celebration of Work, Honor, and Nationhood



Raoul C. Creencia
President

FOR decades, the Rotary Club of Manila has distinguished itself not only through humanitarian service and civic leadership, but also through meaningful programs that recognize excellence in nation-building and uphold the dignity of the Filipino worker. Among its most enduring, respected and institutionally signifi-cant signature projects is the TOWER Awards — The Outstanding Workers of the Republic — a prestigious recognition program that celebrates the invaluable contributions of Filipino workers whose dedication and integrity quietly sustain the nation's progress.

President's Message

Conceived as a tribute to the often-unsung men and women whose labor powers industries, communities and institutions, the TOWER Awards has, through the decades, evolved into one of the country's most credible and inspiring platforms for honoring exemplary workers. More than simply rewarding productivity or efficiency,the program recognizes individuals who embody excellence in character, professionalism, leadership, innovation, discipline, and service to both company and community.

The significance of the TOWER Awards lies in its affirmation of a simple yet profound truth: that the strength and greatness of a nation are built not only by those who lead in boardrooms, government offices, or centers of influence, but equally by ordinary workers who perform extraordinary acts of commitment in their daily lives. From factory workers, technicians, mechanics and machine operators to supervisors, engineers, administrative professionals and skilled personnel across various industries, the award shines a national spotlight on individuals whose work ethic and integrity elevate the standards of Filipino labor and professionalism.

Unmistakably, the TOWER Awards is a celebration of the dignity of labor. It reminds society that honest work deserves honor, and that excellence can flourish in every level of enterprise when nurtured by perseverance, accountability and pride in one's craft. In recognizing workers who exemplify these ideals, the Rotary Club of Manila reinforces the enduring Rotary values of service, integrity, fairness, goodwill and respect for the worth of every individual.

Beyond recognition, the TOWER Awards has become a source of inspiration for countless Filipino workers and their families. Each awardee represents a larger story of sacrifice, resilience and aspiration — proof that dedication and excellence do not go unnoticed. The program uplifts morale not only within workplaces, but also within communities, encouraging a culture

President's Message

where hard work, innovation, professionalism and ethical conduct are publicly celebrated and emulated.

The prestige and continuing relevance of the TOWER Awards are further strengthened by the support of distinguished institutional partners from both the public and private sectors. This year's program is supported by Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation, San Miguel Corporation, GCash, Philippine Economic Zone Authority, and Philippine Ecozones Association. These partnerships reflect a shared commitment to strengthening the Filipino workforce, promoting industrial excellence, and recognizing the indispensable role of labor in national development and economic growth.

As a signature project of the Rotary Club of Manila, the TOWER Awards represents far more than institutional continuity or ceremonial recognition. It reflects the club's deep understanding that genuine service also means affirming human excellence, honoring integrity in everyday work, and giving national recognition to those whose quiet dedication builds industries, strengthens families, and sustains the nation.

In an era where recognition is often directed toward prominence and visibility, the TOWER Awards stands apart by honoring the silent strength of the Filipino worker. Through this landmark initiative, the Rotary Club of Manila continues to inspire generations of Filipinos to pursue excellence with integrity, patriotism and pride -- proving that "Service Above Self" may also mean recognizing and uplifting those whose daily labor forms the very backbone of the Republic.

PHILEA

Congratulations to all TOWER Awards honorees for your unwavering dedication, excellence, and valuable contributions in driving productivity and progress within our ecozones.

Our ecozones would not thrive as vibrant parks and communities without the presence, hard work, and commitment of each and every one of you.

2026 TOWER AWARDS

PAGCOR

Rotary Club of Manila

SAN MIGUEL CORPORATION

GCash



Rotary Club of Manila

TOWER Awards 2026

GCash

PAGCOR

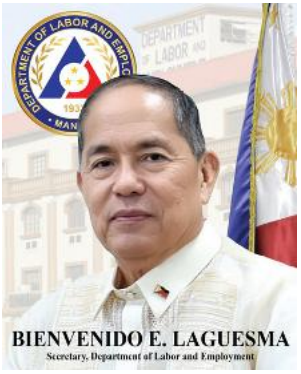
SAN MIGUEL CORPORATION

PHILEA

May 28, 2026 | 12:30 PM

Fairmont Hotel, Makati City

Message from the Secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment



Warmest congratulations to the 31st batch of awardees of this year's The Outstanding Workers of the Republic (TOWER) Awards.

Initiated in 1976 through a partnership between the then Ministry of Labor and the Rotary Club of Manila, the TOWER Awards continues to uphold the dignity of labor.

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) is one with the Rotary Club of Manila in honoring exemplary workers in the manufacturing and service sectors who embody 'service above self through innovations that have significantly enhanced their company's efficiency, productivity, and overall performance. Reflecting a holistic approach, the TOWER Awards recognize not only professional achievements but also the integrity, discipline, and character of the awardees.

As the backbones of national economic development, it is only fitting to highlight the significant contributions of workers in the manufacturing and services sectors, especially that we have just commemorated the 124th Labor Day under the theme, *"Disenteng Trabaho para sa Lahat: lisang Hangarin, Bagong Pilipinas Sama-samang Mararating."* The latest Labor Force Survey continues to show strong employment figures, where over 30 million Filipinos are employed in the services sector, while over three million are employed in the manufacturing sub-sector.

Beyond tangible organizational benefits, the recognition also boosts employee morale and motivation, while fostering a culture of teamwork, responsibility, and commitment to the company's broader goals.

The Department shall continue to support programs that promote a culture of excellence and cultivate a more engaged workforce through management support for innovations and improvements introduced by the organization's human resources.

May the stories of this year's awardees inspire others to uphold the same dedication, integrity, and spirit of service in their workplaces and communities.

Muli, mainit na pagbati sa mga katangi-tanging manggagawa! Mabuhay ang Bagong Pilipinas!

BIENVENIDO E. LAGUESMA
Secretary

Message from the District Governor of RI District 3810



Warmest congratulations to the Rotary Club of Manila for its inspiring initiative in honoring the Outstanding Workers of the Republic.

This meaningful recognition affirms that the true strength of every organization lies in its people who embody excellence, integrity, and unwavering dedication to their craft.

To the distinguished awardees, you represent the highest standards of professionalism and commitment. Your loyalty, discipline, and adherence to your company's core values have not only strengthened your respective organizations but have also contributed significantly to economic growth and nation-building.

To our partner companies, your continued support in nurturing, recognizing, and valuing your workforce creates an environment where excellence thrives and sustainability is achieved.

Indeed, progress is a shared journey where the success of workers fuels the growth of companies, and the growth of companies uplifts our communities and our nation.

May this recognition continue to inspire a culture of excellence, dignity in labor, and pride in every Filipino worker.

When we honor the worker, we strengthen the foundation of our nation.

Congratulations to all.

Yours in Rotary Service,

Mary Mei V. Rodrigo
District Governor 2025–2026
Rotary International District 3810

Message from the President of the Rotary Club of Manila



The TOWER (The Outstanding Workers of the Republic) Awards has long stood as one of our most meaningful traditions — a tribute to the quiet heroes whose dedication, integrity, and excellence strengthen the very foundations of our nation. Today, we honor men and women who remind us that true greatness is often found not in position or title, but in character and service.

This year's awardees embody the values we hold dear: hard work without fanfare, commitment without condition, and service without expectation of recognition. Their stories inspire us to look beyond ourselves and to reaffirm Rotary's timeless call to "Service Above Self."

To our honorees — thank you for showing our country what excellence looks like in its purest form. Your work uplifts communities, strengthens institutions, and inspires generations. You are living proof that the Filipino worker is, and always will be, the nation's greatest asset.

To my fellow Rotarians, sponsors, partners, and the dedicated TOWER Awards Committee — thank you for your unwavering support. Your collective effort ensures that this tradition continues to flourish and that those who labor with integrity receive the honor they so richly deserve.

May today's celebration remind us of our shared responsibility to recognize, elevate, and empower the workers who move our nation forward.

Mabuhay ang manggagawang Pilipino.
Mabuhay ang Rotary.

Raoul C. Creencia
President
Rotary Club of Manila

Message from the Chairman of TOWER Awards 2026



Greetings!

It is with immense pride and profound respect that I extend my warmest regards to the distinguished guests, corporate sponsors, members of the Rotary Club of Manila, officers of the Philippine Economic Zone Authority, friends, and most importantly, to the honorees of this year's TOWER Award.

As a proud legacy project of the Rotary Club of Manila (RCM), the TOWER Award has long stood as a beacon of excellence. It serves a noble and vital purpose: to seek out, recognize, and celebrate The Outstanding Workers of the Republic of the Philippines.

This noble endeavor is profoundly strengthened by the invaluable partnership between the Rotary Club of Manila and the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA). As the esteemed agency that supervises all economic zones across the country, PEZA is the driving force that provides livelihood and opportunities to thousands of Filipino workers. Through this powerful synergy, between RCM and PEZA, we are able to reach deep into the heart of the nation's industries to discover and uplift the brightest minds within our manufacturing sector.

Today, we honor these unsung heroes. The individuals recognized in today's ceremonies are not just employees but are visionaries on the factory floor. Through their remarkable ingenuity, creativity, and relentless pursuit of innovation, they have revolutionized the manufacturing process, resulting in improved efficiency but also generated additional income and growth for their companies and their communities.

TO THIS YEAR'S AWARDEES: CONGRATULATIONS!

MABUHAY ANG MANGGGAGAWANG PILIPINO!

MABUHAY ANG PEZA *AT ANG* ROTARY CLUB OF MANILA!

MARAMING SALAMAT.

JESUS M. PINEDA, JR.
Centennial President
Chairman, TOWER Awards 2026

Message from the Chairman & CEO of PAGCOR



On behalf of the men and women of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR), I extend our warmest congratulations to the Rotary Club of Manila for the successful staging of the 2026 Outstanding Workers of the Republic (TOWER) Awards.

For decades, the TOWER Awards has stood as a most meaningful tribute to the Filipino worker by recognizing individuals whose dedication, integrity, innovation, and perseverance quietly but powerfully contribute to national progress.

Through this noble initiative, the Rotary Club of Manila continues to affirm the important truth that the strength of our nation rests not only on leaders and institutions but also on the hardworking men and women whose daily efforts sustain our industries, communities, and national economy.

At PAGCOR, we believe in the dignity of labor and in the value of every worker, regardless of rank or position.

Whether in the public or private sector, every employee plays a vital role in nation-building. From those on the front-lines of operations to those working behind the scenes, each contribution matters and deserves recognition.

This is why we are honored to support initiatives such as the TOWER Awards, which fosters a culture of professionalism, commitment, and service among Filipino workers.

To this year's awardees, may this recognition inspire you to continue making a meaningful impact not only within your organizations, but also in the lives of the people and communities you serve.

To the Rotary Club of Manila, thank you for sustaining this inspiring platform. May you continue uplifting our workforce and reinforcing the vital role of labor in building a stronger and more progressive Philippines.

Very truly yours,

ALEJANDRO H. TENGCO
Chairman and CEO

Message from the Director General of PEZA



We at the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) extend our warmest congratulations to the awardees of this year's TOWER (The Outstanding Workers of the Republic) Awards. We also commend the leadership of the Rotary Club of Manila and the event organizers for sustaining this meaningful initiative that celebrates and empowers Filipino talent and ingenuity.

Over the years, PEZA has witnessed this platform serve as a key driver in recognizing the excellence of the Filipino workforce on both regional and global stages. More than a celebration of individual achievement, this event reaffirms the world-class capabilities, dedication, and invaluable contributions of Filipino workers across industries.

We acknowledge the vital role of our human capital in driving productivity and innovation, which are key factors in boosting the Philippines' competitiveness. A strong and resilient workforce remains essential to sustaining operations within our more than 400 economic zones and reinforcing the country's position as a premier destination for business expansion and investment.

At PEZA, we remain committed to fostering a stable and investment-ready business environment that supports not only the growth of our locators, but the creation of more opportunities for our workforce. To date, ecozone locators directly employ over 1.8 million Filipinos, and their continued operations indirectly provide jobs to about 9 million more.

We take pride in collaborating with Rotary Club Manila for this year's awards as it provides an opportunity for our ecozone locators to showcase their model employees- many of whom are pioneering members and industry experts who have helped expand their operations and elevate the Philippines on the global stage. Their participation demonstrates the strength and resilience of the Filipino workforce and our shared goal of advancing inclusive and sustainable development.

We remain committed to working closely with the Rotary Club of Manila and industry stake-holders in appreciating our workforce and in creating more opportunities for our people.

We wish the TOWER Awards continued success.

Thank you, and *Mabuhay*!

TERESO O. PANGA
Director General

Message from the President of PHILEA



Rotary Club of Manila's Tower Awards stands as a powerful reminder that the true strength of our nation lies in the quiet excellence of its workers—the men and women whose dedication, integrity, and perseverance elevate not only their organizations, but the country as a whole.

On behalf of the Philippine Ecozones Association (PHILEA), we are honored to have collaborated with PEZA in identifying and celebrating outstanding individuals from among our member locators. Across our ecozones, we witness daily the discipline, skill, and pride that Filipino workers bring to their craft. The Tower Awards shine a well-deserved light on these unsung heroes—individuals whose contributions often go beyond duty and reflect a deep commitment to excellence.

This partnership underscores a shared vision: to recognize and uplift those who embody the highest standards of work ethic and service. By celebrating their achievements, we not only affirm their value but also inspire others to strive for the same level of dedication and purpose.

As we honor this year's awardees, may their stories continue to inspire a culture of excellence across all industries. Together, let us keep building workplaces-and a nation-where hard work, integrity, and excellence are not only recognized, but celebrated.

Congratulations to all the TOWER Awards honorees. You represent the very best of us.

F. FRANCISCO S. ZALDARRIAGA
President

The TOWER Awards:
In Praise of the Nation's Quiet Builders

By PE Reginald T. Yu



From the humble beginnings of recognizing ten outstanding Filipino workers in 1976, the TOWER Awards has grown into one of the country's most enduring tributes to labor excellence—continuing its mission decades later by honoring workers whose innovation, dedication, and craftsmanship uplift Philippine industry and nation-building.

THERE are stories that shape a nation, and there are stories that sustain it.

The latter are seldom told.

They unfold not in the glare of public attention, but in factory floors and shipyards, in workshops thick with the scent of metal and wood, in fields under the unfor-giving sun, in control rooms where precision is the difference between order and failure. These are the stories of workers whose names rarely make headlines, yet whose labor quietly anchors the life of a country.

The TOWER Awards:
In Praise of the Nation's Quiet Builders

It is to these men and women that the **TOWER Awards** — The Outstanding Workers of the Republic — has, for over half a century, paid its enduring tribute.

Conceived in 1975 by the Rotary Club of Manila, in partnership with the government's labor institutions and organized labor, the Awards were born in a time when the dignity of work demanded not only recognition, but restoration. Under the stewardship of visionary leaders of that era, the initiative sought to affirm a simple but profound truth: that excellence is not defined by rank, but by the discipline, integrity, and mastery with which one performs even the most modest of tasks.

From its earliest staging, the TOWER Awards was never intended to be a mere ceremonial exercise. It was a statement. A deliberate act of elevating the worker — of placing the machinist, the welder, the farmer, the technician — on a platform where their contributions could be seen, acknowledged, and celebrated.

It quickly became one of the defining highlights of the nation's Labor Day observance. National leaders themselves bore witness to these ceremonies,



The 1976 TOWER Awardees were received at Malacañang Palace by First Lady Imelda R. Marcos on May 1, 1976 — Labor Day — in recognition of the dignity, dedication, and invaluable contributions of the Filipino worker to national development.

underscoring a powerful convergence between civic recognition and public policy. Around this time, landmark efforts were undertaken to strengthen employer-employee relations, emphasizing harmony, mutual respect, and shared responsibility in the workplace.

Yet beyond these milestones, the true measure of the TOWER Awards lay not in the prominence of its ceremonies, but in the quiet transformation it inspired.

The TOWER Awards:
In Praise of the Nation's Quiet Builders

For the awardees, recognition often came not with fanfare, but with something far more enduring: dignity. A machinist who had spent years perfecting his craft would find his work validated. A seamstress, whose hands had long labored in anonymity, would see her skill honored before a national audience. A miner, a fisherman, a lineman — each would be lifted, if only for a moment, into the light.

And in that moment, something shifted.

The Awards elevated not only individuals, but the very perception of labor itself — within companies, within communities, and within families. It affirmed that the work of one's hands, when done with excellence, carries with it a nobility equal to any profession.

As the Philippine economy evolved, so too did the TOWER Awards. What began as a recognition of blue-collar excellence gradually expanded to include non-supervisory white-collar workers, acknowledging the rise of new industries and the changing nature of work. From manufacturing floors to digital platforms, from traditional trades to emerging sectors, the Awards adapted, reflecting the dynamic character of the Filipino workforce.



Rotarian Tong Payumo delivers his address during the 6th TOWER Awards Conferment Ceremonies at the Technological University of the Philippines (T.U.P.), where awardees were formally presented with their Bachelor of Science in Technology diplomas by Dr. Jose R. Vergara in recognition of their outstanding contributions as Filipino workers.

There were years when the program fell silent, its cadence interrupted by shifting priorities and changing times. Yet each revival carried with it renewed purpose. The call was always the same: to restore focus on productivity, to celebrate innovation at every level, and to remind the nation that progress is built not only on vision, but on execution.



The 1984 TOWER Awardees pose with President Ferdinand E. Marcos, First Lady Imelda R. Marcos, Rotary Club of Manila President Relly Reyes, and TOWER Awards Chairman Jing Crisol during the Labor Day rites held on May 1, 1984, honoring outstanding Filipino workers for their excellence, innovation, and contributions to national development.

By the time the Rotary Club of Manila reached its centennial milestone, the TOWER Awards had become more than a program. It had become a legacy. A defining expression of the Club's commitment to service — not in abstraction, but in the lived realities of the Filipino worker.

The Centennial Edition of the Awards was staged with deliberate intent, supported by key institutional partners.

It was not merely a celebration of history, but a reaffirmation of purpose: that even in an age of globalization and technological disruption, the human element of work — the skill, the discipline, the quiet perseverance — remains at the heart of economic progress.

In the years that followed, the world would face one of its greatest disruptions. The global pandemic reshaped industries,

The TOWER Awards:
In Praise of the Nation's Quiet Builders

displaced livelihoods, and tested the limits of resilience. And yet, when the TOWER Awards resumed after a brief hiatus, its relevance had never been more evident.

For it was during this period that the true heroes of the workplace emerged — not in titles, but in action. Workers who adapted to new realities, who continued to show up despite uncertainty, who found ways to sustain operations, protect communities, and keep the machinery of society moving.

They were no longer invisible.
They were essential.

To date, hundreds of individuals have been recognized through the TOWER Awards. Each name represents not just a profession, but a story — a life defined by diligence, by quiet innovation, by an unwavering commitment to doing one's work well.

And yet, the Awards themselves do not claim to complete the story.

They simply illuminate it.



The 1984 TOWER Awardees were honored during ceremonies of the Rotary Club of Manila led by President Relly Reyes, together with Department of Labor officials and TOWER Foundation leaders, recognizing exemplary Filipino workers from diverse industries whose excellence and innovation contributed to national progress.

For in every corner of the nation, there remain countless others — unnamed, unheralded — whose labor continues to shape the country in ways both seen and unseen.

The TOWER Awards stands for them as well.

The TOWER Awards:
In Praise of the Nation's Quiet Builders

Not merely as recognition, but as reminder.

That in the end, the strength of a nation rests not only on those who lead, but on those who build.

Faces of Excellence: The Men and Women Behind the TOWER Awards

What distinguishes the TOWER Awards is not merely the diversity of professions it recognizes — but the consistency of values it upholds.

Across five decades, whether machinist or engineer, farmer or technician, a pattern emerges:

- Work done with precision
- Responsibility carried without complaint
- Excellence pursued without expectation of recognition

And yet, recognition came.

Not to elevate one above others, but to remind all that **dignity resides in the work itself.**



Members of the 1984 TOWER Awards Board of Judges and Rotary Club of Manila leaders gather during the selection and recognition ceremonies honoring outstanding Filipino workers, led by Deputy Minister Carmelo Noriel, District Governor Benny Yokingco, RCM Past President Paqui Ortigas, President Relly Reyes, and Awards Chairman Jing Crisol.

From the shoemaker in Leyte in 1975 to the systems specialist of today's digital economy, the TOWER Awards has quietly built a living archive of Filipino excellence — one worker, one story, one legacy at a time.

The TOWER Awards:
In Praise of the Nation's Quiet Builders

1 . Rotary Year 1975–1976
President: Fil Reyes
Chairman: Rtn Bert Romulo
Total Awardees: 10

Honorees:

- Rolando M. Requiel — Machinist, SMC Polo Brewery
- Mariano C. Mira — Textile Worker, Utex Marikina
- Severino M. De Guzman — Construction Worker, A.M. Oreta & Co.
- Jesus Tangoan — Foundry Worker, Atlas Consolidated (Cebu)
- Rafael M. Saldua — Welder, Procter & Gamble
- PMC Yusof Alfad — Fisherman, Badjao Fishermen's Association (Sulu)
- Honorato R. Cruz — Electrician, Cavite Naval Shipyard
- Santiago L. Badongen — Miner, Benguet Consolidated
- Roberto L. Sta. Ana — Mechanic, Northern Motors
- Ruperto Malabola — Shoemaker, Leyte

2. Rotary Year 1976–1977
President: Benny Angtuaco
Chairman: Rtn Pit Braga
Total Awardees: 12

Honorees:

- Jesus V. Bauca — Transport Worker (Driver), J.D. Transit
- Leon E. Cahatol — Handicraft Worker, Palayan Lamps
- Monico S. Claro — Cabinet Worker, Radiowealth
- Rebecca V. Garrido — Garment Sewer, Levi Strauss Philippines
- Felix M. Lacandalo — Farmer, Zamboanga
- Felipe C. Laygen — Seafarer, C.F. Sharp & Co.
- Antonio Macatangay — Bellboy, Manila Hilton
- Nimfa O. Olaguer — Social Worker, Culion Leper Colony
- Julito P. Decena — Construction Foreman, CDCP
- Jovito V. Valenzuela — Communications Worker, PLDT

Special Awardees:

- Rosario G. Fundo — Supervisor, T'boli Handicraft Workers
- Veronica Langgong Trolan — Paramedic, Lake Sebu

The TOWER Awards:
In Praise of the Nation's Quiet Builders

3. Rotary Year 1977–1978
President: Fr. Francisco Reyes, OFM
Chairman: Rtn Pit Braga
Total Awardees: 10

Honorees:
- Roger B. Balla — Carpenter, Albay
- Anastacio S. Barong — Welder, Cebu Shipyard
- Filemon F. Carpio — Agricultural Worker, Laguna
- Martina S. Fikan — Auxiliary Health Worker, South Cotabato
- Ricardo A. Mundin — Overseas Construction Worker, Kuwait
- Jose S. Necessario — Electrician, Atlas Fertilizer
- Perfecto S. Pilapil Jr. — Swine Breeder, Leyte
- Edgardo B. Ramirez — Bottle Technician, San Miguel Corp.
- Lucas A. Taruc — Fisherman, Misamis Occidental
- Magno F. Veri — Mechanic, Mandaluyong

4. Rotary Year 1978–1979
President: Alberto Romulo
Total Awardees: 6

Honorees:
- Angelina R. Malana — Agricultural Laborer, Cagayan



Rotary International President Hingli Mukasa, First Lady Imelda Romualdez Marcos, Labor Minister Blas Ople, TUCP President Lorenzo Mendoza, and Fort. Vince join the 1983 TOWER Awards rites at the Folk Arts Theater on May 1, honoring outstanding Filipino workers whose dedication and craftsmanship embodied the spirit of labor solidarity and national progress.

- Eriberto D. Caancan — Automotive Worker, Delta Motors
- Emma R. Baarde — Welfare Aide, Ministry of Social Services
- Honorato M. Torre-Campo — Welder, Engineering Equipment Inc.
- Bernardo B. Bermudez — Electrician, Philippine Appliance Corp.
- Eliezer P. Recente — Plant Operator, Coca-Cola

The TOWER Awards:
In Praise of the Nation's Quiet Builders

5. Rotary Year 1979–1980
President: Paqui Ortigas
Chairman: Rtn Joe Concepcion
Total Awardees: 11

Honorees (Selected Highlights):
- Ricardo P. Tungol — Mechanic, Philippine Air Force
- Inocencio A. Pineda — Telecommunications Worker
- Benjamin C. Elloso — Electrician, Meralco
- Sylvano G. Bantol — Hotel Worker, Bohol
- Juanito R. Gravidez — Miner, Benguet
- Santos M. Escaño — Petroleum Worker, Pilipinas Shell

Special Posthumous Award:
- Aurora A. Ferrer — Street Sweeper, Metro Manila

6. Rotary Year 1981–1982
President: Rene Concepcion
Chairman: Rtn Tony Quion
Total Awardees: 12

Honorees:
- DANILO G. LARDIZABAL, Agri-business, Foremost Farms, Inc., Teresa Rizal
- JAIME C. ROCA, Communications, Globe Mackay Cable & Radio Corporation, Kawit, Cavite
- LUZVIMINDA O. MACASPAC, Construction, Meralco Industrial Engineering Services Corporation, Mariveles Bataan
- CARLOS DAYSON, Electronics/Electrical, Goodwill Industries of the Philippines, Inc., Grace Park, Caloocan
- ELY M. AGUILA, Food Manufacturing, San Miguel Corporation – Magnolia Dairy Products, Montalban, Rizal
- ELIZABETH C. BEDRIJO, Handicraft, Self-employed, Koronadal, South Cotabato
- RESTITUTO L. JAVA, Metal Processing & Forming, Atlantic, Gulf and Pacific Company of Manila, Inc./ Honiron Division, Pasig, Metro Manila
- RODOLFO K. AGUID, Mining and Field Exploration, Sangilo, Itogon, Benguet Itogon Suyoc Mines, Inc.
- TERESITA D. GARCIA, Publishing & Printing, Social Communications Center, Inc., Sampaloc, Manila
- RAFAEL D. DAVID, Rubber Products, Rubberworld Philippines, Inc., Sampaloc, Manila
- BENIGNO B. ELCANO, Textile and Garments Universal Textile Mills, Inc., Marikina, Metro Manila
- OMAR S. ALI, Transportation, Philippine Aerospace Development Corporation, San Juan, Metro Manila

The TOWER Awards:
In Praise of the Nation's Quiet Builders

7. Rotary Year 1982–1983
President: Vince Carlos
Chairman: Rtn Jing Crisol
Awardees (11):

- Cerilo P. Zamayla — Agri-business
- Fernando V. Biag — Automotive
- Rogelio S. Kabigting — Construction
- Cesar D. Custodio — Manufacturing
- Jesus N. Isip — Agriculture
- Virgilio D. Legaspi — Metal Processing
- Nicolas V. Manloloyo — Mining
- Federico A. Carasco — Petroleum
- Felix S. Orden — Rubber
- Roberto G. Tiburcio — Textile
- Reynaldo C. Tibayan — Construction

8. Rotary Year 1983–1984
President: Relly Reyes
Chairman: Sec.Jing Crisol
Awardees (12):

- Bernardino Adornado — Agriculture
- Luis Oana — Construction
- Jaime Tanamor — Automotive Manufacturing
- Marcelino Cabagbag — Electronics
- Ludovico Pineda — Metal Processing
- Norberto Pascual — Glass Manufacturing
- Luis Gutierrez — Petroleum
- Getulio Buena — Textile
- Romulo Surat — Mining
- Ponciano Eugenio — Energy
- Rufino Omadio — Aerospace
- Melchor Montemayor — Electrical

9. Rotary Year 1984–1985
President: Santi Dumlao
Chairman: Sec Jing Crisol; TOWER Awards Foundation
Chairman: PP Paqui Ortigas
Awardees (11):

- Gregorio F. Rosanes — Agriculture
- Manuel C. Ano — Social Services
- Angelito A. Cruz — Construction
- Leonardo G. Gumasing — Electronics
- Zoilo J. Borcillo — Food Manufacturing
- Wilfredo V. Diana — Steel Industry
- Mario D. De Acosta — Manufacturing
- Crisanta A. Cunanan — Garments
- Simeon A. Abiva — Textile
- Chongareb B. Tecag — Mining
- Roman G. Tamayo — Energy

10. Rotary Year 1985–1986
President: Romy del Rosario
Sec./Chair: Jing Crisol; TOWER Awards Foundation,
Chairman Don M. Ferry
Awardees (12):

- Rosendo A. Glorioso — Agriculture
- Val G. Dela Cruz — Electronics
- Alberto V. Ignacio — Community Service

The TOWER Awards:
In Praise of the Nation's Quiet Builders

- Buenaventura A. Borruel — Construction
- Mario C. Francisco — Manufacturing
- Francisco G. Jubelag Jr. — Electronics
- Enrique L. Sumogba — Food Industry
- Hipolito G. Godinez — Paint Industry
- Clara B. Morandarte — Garments
- Guido E. Elago — Mining
- Lucino C. Mijares III — Energy
- Roderico R. Ogapong — Aerospace

REVIVAL AND EXPANSION

11. Rotary Year 1995–1996
President: Dong Saludo
Chairman: Dir. Bien Magnaye
Awardees (10):

1. Celso P. Liclican — Air Transportation
2. Ianney N. Baskinas — Metal Processing
3. Nilo C. Amos — Glass Manufacturing
4. Maximo Q. Gueco — Beverage Industry
5. Wilfredo R. Pelayre — Non-metallic Minerals
6. Alberto T. De Leon — Pharmaceuticals
7. Isidro G. Buenconsejo — Rubber & Plastics
8. Josefina G. Calderon — Dairy Industry
9. Aureliano R. Rosales — Electronic
10. Joey M. Cristobal — Paper Products

12. Rotary Year 1996–1997
President: Boy Guevara
Chairman: Rtn. Tom Banguis
Awardees (9):

- Jose J. Badua — Cement Industry
- Eulogio O. Caparas — Automotive
- Mamerto L. Castro — Sugar Industry
- Armando A. Dormentes — Food Industry
- Amormio C. Feria — Automotive
- Celso D. Jaculba — Manufacturing
- Dionisio D. Las Piñas — Food Engineering
- Catalino I. Monje — Design/Drafting
- Rogelio L. Tercenio — Power Distribution

13. Rotary Year 1997–1998
President: Netoy Sevilla
Chairman: Rtn. Tom Banguis
Awardees (10):

- Nestorio V. Boco — Agriculture
- Noel V. Florante — Manufacturing Equipment
- Benjamin P. Hijastro — Government Service
- Modesto M. Malijan — Paper Industry
- Guillermo A. Judaval — Food Manufacturing
- Franklin P. Manalastas — Glass Industry
- Jonathan M. Palma — Industrial Technician

The TOWER Awards:
In Praise of the Nation's Quiet Builders

- Sulpicio C. Ramos — BSP Operations
- Luvimi C. Sagario — Power Generation
- Rizal V. Valeros — Automotive

14. Rotary Year 1998–1999
President: Peter Wohlrab
Chairman: Rtn. Tom Banguis
Awardees (9):
- Noel C. Bayan — Paper Processing
- Benedicto J. Cordero — Food Processing
- Florentino E. Divina — BSP
- Richard G. Gaspasin — Automotive
- Teodoro C. Ildefonso — Manufacturing
- Wolfredo M. Macasaet — Water Services
- Carlos M. Roxas — Food Industry
- Severino L. Somera — Mining
- Cesar M. Sison — Transportation

15. Rotary Year 1999–2000
President: Tito Gupit
Chairman: PD Phillip Ong
Awardees (5):
- Hermes O. Belaro — Manufacturing
- Feliza B. Belinan — Handicrafts
- Dionisio C. Estepa Sr. — Mining
- Meliton E. Obrero — Automotive
- Francisco T. Orig — Food Industry

16. Rotary Year 2000–2001
President: Buster Arrastia
Chairman: DE Gert Gust
Awardees (7):
- Miguel P. Rosas — Automotive
- Gregorio A. Pulla — Garments
- Ranulfo V. Alfornon — Manufacturing
- Leopoldo G. Salcedo — Government
- Roel D. Pagulayan — Petroleum
- Jerrybel A. Serquina — Water Services
- Eliezer T. Tupaz — Beverage Industry

17. Rotary Year 2001–2002
President: Edgardo Tumangan
Chairman: PD Jun Hallare
Awardees (8):
- Cirilo A. Amoy — Food Manufacturing
- Job B. Arnoco — Water District
- Ramil C. Delute — Automotive
- Loreto V. Flor — Metal Processing
- Dante P. Lacsina — Power Generation
- Aguinaldo S. Maghuyop — Manufacturing
- Manuel G. Mayor — Automotive
- Warlito D. Tampos — Industrial Mechanic

The TOWER Awards:
In Praise of the Nation's Quiet Builders

18. Rotary Year 2002–2003
President: OB de Baybay
Chairman: Rtn. Benny Laguesma
Awardees (8):

- Mark I. Andrada — Electronics
- Pablo R. Davis — Utilities
- Jerry S. Lapara — Food Industry
- Roberto C. Nabo — Water Services
- Roberto M. Pangan — Textile
- Romeo D. Pascua — Mining
- Enrico G. Sapitan — Garments
- Alfredo C. Surigao — Manufacturing

19. Rotary Year 2003–2004
President: Boy Ampil
Chairman: Rtn. Benny Laguesma
Awardees (7):

- Christopher G. Patriana — Agriculture
- Eva L. De Dios — Electronics
- Rodolfo S. Francisco — Beverage Industry
- Arthur V. Tosloc — Manufacturing
- Danilo V. Icawalo — Textile
- Belcezar Dioquino Jr. — Automotive
- Antonio A. Cadiz — Manufacturing

20. Rotary Year 2004–2005
President: Alex Yap
Chairman: VPE Benny Laguesma
Awardees (9):

- Elgen S. Catarina — Manufacturing
- Michael G. Dinulos — Automotive
- Darey U. Dulca — Services
- Diosdado P. Fortuno — Energy
- Arla Bella C. Obero — Manufacturing
- Jaime T. Opider — Water Services
- Gil N. Quiminales — Beverage Industry
- Nestor J. Villarmino — Manufacturing
- Arthur P. Vismanos — Agriculture

21. Rotary Year 2005–2006
President: Cesar Ubaldo
Chairman: Rtn. Tom Banguis
Awardees (8):

- German D. Anobling — Wastewater Operations, Manila Water
- Rolando C. Ballera — Plant Mechanic, Phosphate Fertilizer Corp.
- Alexander M. Galang — Corporate Communications, Manila Water
- Antonio Delos Reyes Gimang — Production Team Member, Toyota
- Marcial N. Huerte — Plant Operator, Magellan Cogeneration
- Maria Christina A. Macadini — Production Operator, Amkor
- Deolindo B. Olipendo — Heavy Equipment Mechanic, Del Monte
- Brando B. Tulang — Technician, Amkor

The TOWER Awards:
In Praise of the Nation's Quiet Builders

22. Rotary Year 2006–2007
President: Francis Juico
Chairman: PT Ian Fenton
Awardees (3):
- Andrew P. Cabang — Agriculture Mechanic, Del Monte
- Larrydith E. Leano — Moulder Setter, Styrotech
- Nestor C. Suganob — Wastewater Operations, Manila Water

Rotary Year 2007–2008
Status: No recorded TOWER Awards staging

23. Rotary Year 2008–2009
President: Romy Batino
Chairman: PP Benny Laguesma
Awardees (4):
- Vincent O. Fernandez — TMX Philippines
- Ernesto L. Labanza — Manila Water
- Romel A. Ronquillo — STAR Motors
- Fernando V. Vivas — Toyota Philippines

Rotary Year 2009–2010
Status: No recorded TOWER Awards staging

Rotary Year 2010–2011
Status: No recorded TOWER Awards staging

Rotary Year 2011–2012
Status: No recorded TOWER Awards staging

24. Rotary Year 2012–2013
President: Roberto M. Pagdanganan
Chairman: PP Benny Laguesma
Awardees (7):
- Victor Y. Acotin — First Baker, Baguio Country Club
- Belinda M. Polintan — Medical Program Support
- Anacleto A. Bordarays — Machinist, Moog
- Michael L. Calimag — Production Staff
- Joel O. Cosme — Sampleshop Specialist
- Lorence M. Gatan — Noodle Maker
- Delfino S. Obatonon — Manufacturing Operator

Rotary Year 2013–2014
Status: No recorded TOWER Awards staging

Rotary Year 2014–2015
Status: No recorded TOWER Awards staging

Rotary Year 2015–2016
Status: No recorded TOWER Awards staging

The TOWER Awards:
In Praise of the Nation's Quiet Builders

Rotary Year 2016–2017
Status: No recorded TOWER Awards staging

Rotary Year 2017–2018
Status: No recorded TOWER Awards staging

MODERN ERA HIGHLIGHTS

25. Rotary Year 2018–2019 (Centennial Edition)
President: Susing Pineda
Chairman: PP Benny Laguesma

Awardees:
- Benigno N. Acacio — Heavy Equipment Officer, Manila Water
- Roberto G. Duran Jr. — Industrial Mechanic
- Gerald A. Taguiam — Technical Services Engineer
- Johnny S. Talaban — Energy Technician
- Endeng Jamhali — Master Weaver, Zamboanga

26. Rotary Year 2020–2021 (Post-Pandemic Resumption)
President: Bobby Joseph
Chairman: Centennial Pres. Susing Pineda

Awardees:
- Lyka A. Castillo — Process Operator, Nestlé
- Nell D. Pagkalinawan — Cloud Application Consultant
- Marven M. Rosario — Electrical Engineer
- Moises I. Bandong — Manufacturing Leader

27. Rotary Year 2021-2022
President: Chito Zaldarriaga
Chairman: Centennial Pres. Susing Pineda

Awardees: 4
- FRANKLIN A. DALIDA, RBF Technician, San Miguel Yamamura Corporation; Category: Individual | Manufacturing
- CARLO R. SERECO, Senior Cloud Application Consultant, Opentext; Category: Individual | Information Technology/E-Commerce – Software Development

The TOWER Awards:
In Praise of the Nation's Quiet Builders

- CHRISTIAN P. CAUBANG, Maintenance Engineer FCRS/PME, Energy Development Corporation; Category: Individual | Power Generation
- RAMIL A. ATIENZA, NP Technician III, Nexperia; Category: Individual | Manufacturing

28. Rotary Year 2022–2023
President: Hermie Esguerra
Chairman: Centennial Pres. Susing Pineda
Awardees: 12

Industry Representation:

- ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

1. JOSEPH E. ESTRADA Mechanical Technician; Category: Individual | Energy/Electricity
2. JONATHAN A.SALIDAGA, Geochemist- Field and Flow Test Category: Individual Energy/Electricity
3. KAY KIMBERLY L. KOBAYASHI, Reservoir Geochemist; Category: Individual | Energy/Electricity FCF MINERALS CORPORATION
4. CLYDE JUSTINE A. CAYABAN Maintenance Order Processor Category: Individual | Mining

- MAKATI MEDICAL CENTER

5. WILSON S. ALBAY, Bed Management Officer; Category: Team | Health Care
6. JUSTINE KRISTEL B.BALACANO, Workforce Management Officer; Category: Team | Services
7. ABBY LAUREEN E. ENRIQUEZ, Workforce Management Officer; Category: Team | Health Care
8. CHARISSA DE LUNA, Category: Team | Health Care
9. DORIS LILBETH ORETA Category: Team | Health Care

- MOOG CONTROLS CORPORATION

10. TEEJAY L. GENEROSA, Technical Lead, Manufacturing Engineer Category: Team Manufacturer of Aircraft Motion Control
11. JOHN MATTHEW C. QUEDI, Process Quality Engineer II; Category: Team | Manufacturer of Aircraft Motion Control
12. RENE G. TUPAS, JR., Machinist III Category: Team | Manufacturer of Aircraft Motion Control

Notable Insight:
This year marked the strong recognition of **team-based excellence**, reflecting the collaborative nature of modern industries.

The TOWER Awards:
In Praise of the Nation's Quiet Builders

29. Rotary Year 2023-2024
President: Raffy Alunan
Chairman: Centennial Pres. Susing Pineda
Awardees: 13

Category: Individual
- ARMANTE L. SABACAJAN, Senior System Project Specialist, FCF Minerals
- REYMOND R. DIMITUI, Quality Safety Health & Environment Personnel, PTT Philippines Corporation
- JOSE C. RIVERO, Machine Operator, onsemi Intelligent Technology Better Future.

Category: Team
- JAMES A. ZABALA, Paring Oil Mill Operator, Franklin Baker
- ROBERT JAY E. PUJEDA, VCO/POM Lead Man, Franklin Baker
- JESSTHONY M. NUYDA, Assistant Senior Supervisor, Yazaki-Torres Manufacturing, Inc.
- JUSTIN B. INGAL, Assistant Senior Supervisor, Yazaki-Torres Manufacturing, Inc.
- VERNA BEA L. ATIENZA, assembler, Yazaki-Torres Manufacturing, Inc.
- JOY CLARISS D. MIRAYA, Assembler, Yazaki-Torres Manufacturing, Inc.
- EDNALYN E. LANCETA, assembler, Yazaki-Torres Manufacturing, Inc.
- LUIS G. MACASIO, JR., Operator/Lot Scheduler Leader, onsemi
- APRIL L. DELA CRUZ, Operator, onsemi
- FENNY V/ CRUZ, Operator, onsemi

30. Rotary Year 2024–2025
President: Jujut Enriquez
Chairman: Centennial Pres. Susing Pineda
Awardees: 7

Category: Individual
- DDIE ALEGABAN, Energy Development Corporation;
- SHIRLEY GONZALES, Yazaki-Torres Manufacturing Inc.

Category: Team
- ELSEWORTH GEMPESAW, Franklin Baker Company of the Philippines-Emerald Plant
- KRISH SYRUS C. MICABALO, Franklin Baker Company of the Philippines – Emerald Plant
- MICHAEL DASALLA, Franklin Baker Incorporated
- MARK FELNOR BUTAYA, Franklin Baker Incorporated
- RONALD QUIñONES, Franklin Baker Incorporated

TOTAL AWARDEES: 262

TOWER Awards Committee 2026

(31st Year)



RAOUL C. CREENCIA
President



CP SUSING PINEDA JR.
Chair, 31st TOWER Awards



EDWIN H. HERNANDEZ
Director, Vocational Service



AMADO D. VALDEZ
Past Director/Member



TEODORO J. OCAMPO
Past President/Member



JOHN EMYL G. EUGENIO
Member



TOWER Awards 2026 Board of Judges

Rtn. ROMEO "Romy" C. NONES
Chairman
Board of Judges



Romeo Nones is a member of the Rotary Club of Manila and has been a Rotarian for 40 years. He served as president of the Rotary Club of Panday Pira Manila in 1989-1990 and has been a district officer of R.I. District 3810 in various capacities.

He was president of Macro Machinery and Industrial Supply Corp and Macrotrade Resources Inc. Both businesses functioned as manufacturers' representatives in the mining, water, food, and power industries. Mr. Nones is a graduate of B.S. Mining Engineering from the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City. He has also served as Vice -President of the University of the Philippines Alumni Association. He is presently a Board Member of the National Housing Authority.

TOWER Awards 2026
Board of Judges

President-elect
REGINALD T. YU
Member
Board of Judges



Reggie Yu is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Times Paint Corporation and one of the country's respected leaders in business, civic service, and leadership development. A cum laude graduate of the University of the Philippines Diliman with a degree in Business Administration and Accountancy and a Certified Public Accountant, he began his professional career at Andersen Consulting (now Accenture) before assuming leadership in the manufacturing industry.

In recognition of his professional achievements and contributions to society, he was conferred the Distinguished Alumni Award by the University of the Philippines College of Business Administration (now, UP Virata School of Business) in 2019.

STAR Rtn. JASON ROMEO VALDERRAMA
Member
Board of Judges



Engr. Jason Valderrama is the Founder, President, and CEO of JCVA, one of the Philippines' leading construction consultancy firms, with a team of over 300 professionals managing more than 1.7M sqms and PHP 150 billion worth of projects nationwide.

A UP Diliman Civil Engineer and 10th placer in the 2006 board exams, he holds an MBA from Ateneo, and has completed programs at Cornell University and Singapore Management University.

He was named 2024 Entrepreneur of the Year at the Asia CEO Awards Circle of Excellence and the 2024 UP Alumni Engineers Citation of Merit Awardee in Entrepreneurship.

TOWER Awards 2026
Board of Judges



EMMANUEL D. CORTERO
Member
Board of Judges

Emmanuel D. Cortero is the Acting Deputy Director General for Policy and Planning at the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA). He holds a Bachelor of Science in Architecture from the University of Santo Tomas–Legazpi, a Master's Degree in Management, major in Public Administration, and is an alumnus of the Temasek Foundation Leaders in Economic Development Programme of the Civil Service College Singapore.

Prior to his current role, he served as Zone Administrator of the Mactan Economic Zone and the Baguio City Economic Zone, overseeing multiple PEZA special economic zones across the country. He also served as Department Manager of the Ecozone Development Department, where he played a key role in the declaration and development of numerous economic zones nationwide, as well as in ecozone management and operations and the registration of ecozone utilities (power, water, and telecommunications) and facilities enterprises.



ROWENA TORRES-NAGUIT
Member
Board of Judges

Rowena Torres-Naguit is the Group Manager for the Management Information Systems and Corporate Planning Group (MISCPG) at the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA). She is a graduate of AB Communication Arts, major in Journalism from the University of the Philippines, Diliman, and she earned her Master's in Business Administration from the Lyceum of the Philippines, Manila. GM Naguit's distinguished career with PEZA began in 1997 when she joined as a Records Officer.

Through her dedication and expertise, she steadily advanced through the ranks, ultimately assuming her current leadership role. Throughout her tenure, she has contributed to various key departments, including an initial assignment in the Office of the Administrator at the Cavite Economic Zone, followed by roles in the Office of the Deputy Director General for Policy & Planning, the Promotions and Public Relations Group, and the Office of the Director General.

Meet the 2026 TOWER Awards Honorees

THE 2026 TOWER Award Honorees represent the very best of the Filipino worker — individuals whose quiet dedication, practical ingenuity, and unwavering commitment to excellence continue to strengthen Philippine industry and uplift the dignity of labor. Drawn from diverse sectors of manufacturing and engineering, these honorees demonstrate that innovation is not defined by titles or resources alone, but by the courage to solve problems, improve systems, and create meaningful impact through honest work and disciplined perseverance.



From groundbreaking advances in automation and additive manufacturing to practical innovations that improved productivity, sustainability, ergonomics, and operational efficiency, each honoree embodies a spirit of purposeful leadership rooted in real-world experience. Their stories reflect resilience, humility, and an enduring belief in the power of Filipino capability. More than outstanding workers, they are builders of progress whose contributions inspire industries, strengthen communities, and remind us that transformative ideas often emerge from those closest to the work itself. Together, they exemplify the enduring ideals of the TOWER Awards — excellence, innovation, integrity, and service to the nation.

Meet the 2026 TOWER Awards Honorees



Jerry A. Dalioan
Yazaki-Torres Manufacturing, Inc.

In today's manufacturing industry, excellence is defined not only by productivity, but by the ability to solve problems with precision, consistency, and practical insight. Among the many professionals who work tirelessly behind the scenes, Jerry Dalioan exemplifies these qualities through his diligence, ingenuity, and unwavering professionalism.

At Yazaki-Torres Manufacturing, Inc., Jerry has earned the respect of colleagues and supervisors alike for his dependable work ethic and keen attention to detail. In an environment where efficiency and accuracy are critical, he consistently demonstrates the ability to address operational challenges with calm focus and resourcefulness. His contributions may often happen away from the spotlight, yet they play a vital role in ensuring the smooth and reliable flow of production.

What distinguishes Jerry is not only his technical competence, but also his commitment to continuous improvement.

He approaches every task with discipline and a genuine sense of responsibility, understanding that even the smallest refinements can have a meaningful impact on overall performance and quality. His practical mindset and steady leadership by example have made him a valued member of the organization.

More than an outstanding worker, Jerry represents the quiet strength and dedication that sustain the manufacturing sector. Through years of faithful service, he has shown that true excellence is built not through recognition alone, but through consistency, integrity, and an enduring commitment to doing one's work well every single day.

Meet the 2026 TOWER Awards *Honorees*



Jansen M. Angeles
Zenith Foods Corporation

In manufacturing, where efficiency is measured in seconds and waste quietly affects profitability, meaningful innovation often comes from those who understand operations at the ground level. Jansen "Jans" Angeles embodies this kind of practical and solutions-driven leadership.

A Manufacturing Technician 4 at Zenith Foods Corporation, Jans has spent more than a decade building a reputation for technical excellence, discipline, and operational insight. A graduate of Electronics and Communication Engineering from Tarlac State University, he combines engineering expertise with hands-on production experience — a balance that has enabled him to deliver lasting improvements within one of the country's leading food manufacturing companies.

Among his most notable contributions is "Project Enforcer," an innovative waste-management solution developed for the sausage production line. Recognizing that large amounts of water were unnecessarily mixed with solid waste, Jans designed an in-house fabricated strainer system that separated liquid and solid residues directly at the source.

The impact was significant. The project diverted approximately 83% of wastewater directly to treatment facilities, reduced waste disposal requirements, improved housekeeping conditions, minimized drainage issues, and enhanced operational efficiency. More remarkably, the low-cost initiative generated monthly savings of about ₱158,708 and cumulative savings exceeding ₱9 million as of December 2025.

Using only scrap materials and in-house fabrication, Jans demonstrated that transformative innovation does not always require expensive technology — only ingenuity, initiative, and the courage to challenge inefficiency. Through his professionalism, consistency, and quiet dedication, he exemplifies the spirit of the Filipino worker whose contributions uplift both industry performance and the dignity of labor itself.

Meet the 2026 TOWER Awards *Honorees*



Roberto R. Bismonte
Global 3D Systems, Inc.

In an era where technological innovation defines global competitiveness, Roberto "Bob" Bismonte stands as a remarkable example of Filipino ingenuity — an engineer whose vision and persistence have helped advance Philippine manufacturing into the field of additive technology.

Born in Oas, Albay, Bob's journey reflects perseverance shaped by humble beginnings and disciplined ambition. A Mechanical Engineering graduate of Bicol University, with additional technical training in automotive and refrigeration-air conditioning technology, he developed a strong practical foundation that would later fuel his engineering innovations. After years of experience in manufacturing and technology firms, he joined Global 3D Systems Inc. in 2015 as Design Head and Product Development leader.

What sets Bob apart is his ability to see possibilities where others see limitations. At a time when the Philippines relied heavily on imported 3D printing systems, he led the development of a locally designed and manufactured industrial-grade SLA 3D printer capable of serving medical, dental, automotive, and engineering applications.

Through years of research and refinement, his innovation became one of the country's pioneering achievements in additive manufacturing. By sourcing and designing components locally, Bob reduced acquisition costs by 45% to 55%, generating estimated annual savings of ₱1 million to ₱5 million while shortening production lead times by nearly 60%.

More importantly, his work demonstrated that world-class technology can be engineered and manufactured by Filipinos. Grounded in humility, family, and purpose, Bob embodies the spirit of the Filipino innovator whose work strengthens industries, inspires future engineers, and elevates national capability on the global stage.

Meet the 2026 TOWER Awards *Honorees*



Renato L. Lopez
Dole Philippines, Inc.

In manufacturing, where efficiency, precision, and reliability are essential, Renato "Boyax" Lopez has become a quiet yet indispensable force through his dedication, leadership, and practical innovation.

Raised in Polomolok, South Cotabato, Boyax built his career through perseverance and a relentless willingness to learn. Although he was unable to complete his Electrical Engineering studies at the University of Mindanao, he transformed hands-on experience into expertise, steadily rising through the ranks at Dole Philippines, Inc. — from Mechanic Trainee in 2004 to Head Mechanic in 2025. His journey reflects the dignity and transformative power of honest labor.

Boyax earned respect not only for his technical skills, but also for his solutions-driven mindset. His most notable innovation was the installation of a cups inverter system for 4 oz. and 7 oz. cup products at the PCFP Binning Line. Previously, workers manually inverted thousands of cups during packing — a repetitive process that caused fatigue, ergonomic strain, and inefficiency.

Through careful observation and hands-on fabrication, Boyax developed a simple but highly effective inverter mechanism that automated the process. The innovation significantly reduced manual handling, improved operational flow, enhanced worker ergonomics, and increased productivity. More importantly, the project generated savings exceeding ₱7.6 million within a single operational period.

Dependable, collaborative, and deeply committed to continuous improvement, Boyax exemplifies the Filipino worker whose ingenuity and perseverance uplift both industry performance and the dignity of labor itself.

Meet the 2026 TOWER Awards Honorees



Rowena L. Gumban
Dole Philippines, Inc.

In manufacturing, where efficiency and teamwork are vital to success, Rowena "Weng" Gumban has distinguished herself through practical innovation, steady leadership, and an unwavering commitment to excellence.

From her early days as a packer at Dole Philippines, Inc. in 2003 to her current role as Team Leader, Weng's journey reflects resilience, discipline, and determination. While balancing work and family responsibilities, she earned a degree in Business Administration major in Management Accounting from RMMC in 2015 — a testament to her perseverance and drive for continuous growth.

Over more than two decades in the industry, Weng earned a reputation for reliability, sound judgment, and effective leadership. Her consistently outstanding performance evaluations reflect not only technical competence, but also her ability to lead teams and improve operational efficiency.

Her most notable contribution was the "Design and Implementation of Ginaca 3 Diversion for Line Integration and Manpower Reduction." Recognizing inefficiencies caused by separate preparation tables and redundant handling processes, Weng developed a diversion chute system that allowed two Ginaca machines to operate using a single preparation and processing line.

The innovation streamlined workflow, reduced manual handling, improved ergonomics, and maintained product quality and operational reliability. Most significantly, the project reduced 22 personnel across two shifts and generated savings exceeding ₱9.2 million.

Beyond operational results, Weng is admired for her collaborative spirit, dependability, and willingness to mentor others. As a wife, mother, and respected production leader, she exemplifies the strength, ingenuity, and dignity of the Filipino worker.

Meet the 2026 TOWER Awards *Honorees*



Jose Luis M. Millena
Denso Philippines Corporation

At an age when many young professionals are still discovering their direction, Jose Luis "Jolo" Millena has already demonstrated the qualities of a true innovator — technical excellence, practical ingenuity, and a strong commitment to solving real-world problems through engineering.

An Automation Engineer at DENSO Philippines Corporation, Jolo represents a new generation of Filipino professionals whose ideas are helping reshape industries beyond traditional manufacturing. Born in 1999 and raised in Cabuyao, Laguna, he earned his degree in Electronics and Communication Engineering from Pamantasan ng Cabuyao, where he developed a strong foundation in automation systems and intelligent technologies.

Shortly after joining DENSO in 2023, Jolo distinguished himself through the development of an Automated Nutrient Dosing System for hydroponics. The project addressed one of the most labor-intensive aspects of hydroponic farming: the manual monitoring and adjustment of nutrient levels, a repetitive process prone to human error and inconsistency.

Jolo designed a system capable of monitoring nutrient parameters, calculating exact requirements, dispensing the precise dosage, and verifying nutrient levels automatically. By automating the process, the system significantly reduced labor hours, improved efficiency, and produced more stable and uniform crop quality.

What makes Jolo especially admirable is his ability to apply advanced engineering concepts to practical agricultural challenges. His innovation bridges technology and food sustainability — two sectors critical to national development. Grounded, disciplined, and purpose-driven, Jolo exemplifies the spirit of the Filipino innovator helping build a smarter, more efficient, and more sustainable future.

Meet the 2026 TOWER Awards Honorees



Norvin A. Adang
Franklin Baker Company of the Philippines

In manufacturing, some of the most meaningful innovations come not from laboratories, but from workers who understand operations deeply and possess the determination to improve them. Norvin Adang exemplifies this kind of practical and purposeful innovation.

A Mechanical Leadman at Franklin Baker Company of the Philippines, Norvin has earned a reputation for reliability, technical skill, and resourcefulness through years of dedicated service in the food manufacturing industry. Based in Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur, he developed his expertise through hands-on experience, discipline, and continuous learning, steadily rising through maintenance and operational roles involving oil mill and apron operations.

What distinguishes Norvin most is his ability to transform operational challenges into sustainable solutions. Faced with recurring supply issues and high costs involving imported synthetic lubricants used for blancher and dryer rollers, he searched for a practical local alternative. Drawing from the company's own coconut by-products, he pioneered the use of organic pairing oil as a replacement lubricant for low-speed apron rollers and guides.

The results were remarkable. By replacing imported synthetic lubricants with locally produced organic oil, maintenance costs dropped from more than ₱151,000 monthly to approximately ₱11,000, generating annual savings exceeding ₱1.6 million while eliminating recurring supply concerns.

Beyond the financial impact, Norvin's innovation promoted sustainability and operational self-sufficiency by maximizing the company's own resources. Hardworking, dependable, and deeply committed to his craft, he embodies the ingenuity of the Filipino worker whose practical creativity strengthens both productivity and resilience in industry.

cover story

by PE Reginald T. Yu

A Gathering of Diplomacy, Service, and National Reflection at the Rotary Club of Manila



On a warm Thursday afternoon at the historic Manila Polo Club, the Rotary Club of Manila convened its 31st Weekly Membership Meeting for Rotary Year 2025–2026, bringing together diplomats, civic leaders, business figures, Rotarians, and distinguished guests for what would become a meaningful convergence of public service, international friendship, and national reflection.



Director-Elect Carlos G. "Caloy" Serapio moderated the meeting.



President Raoul C. Creencia called the Weekly Membership Meeting of the Rotary Club of Manila to order.

Moderated by Director-Elect Carlos G. "Caloy" Serapio, the gathering unfolded with the familiar dignity and fellowship that have long characterized the country's oldest Rotary club. Yet beneath the formal cadence of ceremony and protocol was an unmistakable undercurrent of transition and uncertainty. The afternoon's scheduled Guest of Honor and Speaker, Mr. Emmanuel Sto. Domingo "Manny" Lopez, Lead Convenor of the People's Constitutional Reform Initiative (PCRI), was unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances.

In many events, such an absence might have left an irreparable vacuum. But on this occasion, the gathering found an unexpected center of gravity in another voice entirely: that of Spanish Ambassador Miguel Utray Delgado, whose acceptance speech upon receiving the Rotary Club of Manila Outstanding Ambassador Award for 2026 transformed the luncheon meeting into something deeper than a routine recognition ceremony. It became, instead, a meditation on diplomacy, history, cultural memory, and the enduring ties between nations.

Fellowship Beneath the Chandeliers

The Manila Polo Club once again served as more than a venue. It became a stage upon which tradition and continuity quietly unfolded.



VPE Karlo Eugene Josef M. "Karlo" Castro led the invocation.



Rotarian Rowel Janson S. Ong led the recitation of the Four-Way Test

Guests arrived before noon, exchanging greetings over lunch as members of the Rotary Club of Manila gathered beneath the familiar atmosphere of old Manila elegance. At precisely 12:30 in the afternoon, President Atty. Raoul C. Creencia called the meeting to order.

What followed was a sequence both ceremonial and deeply communal: the invocation led by VPE Karlo Eugene Josef M. "Karlo" Castro, the Philippine National Anthem presented through audio-visual presentation, the Rotary Club of Manila Hymn rendered by the RCM WF Music Chorale, and the recitation of The Four-Way Test led by Rotarian Rowel Janson S. Ong.

Director-Elect Caloy Serapio acknowledged the distinguished guests in attendance, among them diplomats, past district governors, senior Rotarians, civic leaders, and members of the diplomatic corps. The chorale then filled the hall with a welcome song that softened the formalities of the afternoon and reminded everyone that Rotary, for all its structure and stature, remains fundamentally about fellowship.

The birthday celebrants for the month of May were likewise recognized in the spirit of camaraderie that has long defined the club's weekly meetings. The gathering paused briefly from matters of diplomacy and governance to honor the ordinary yet meaningful rhythms of life: birthdays, friendships, shared laughter, and songs rendered in good cheer.



President Raoul Creencia addressed the membership during President's Time.



PDG Alex Cureg gave an update on the Bayanihan Fundraising 107th Celebration and Induction Ceremony. He thanked all the members who contributed to the event.

President's Time and the Spirit of Recognition

During President's Time, President Raoul Creencia addressed the assembly with the composed confidence of a leader presiding over one of the Rotary Club of Manila's final meetings for the Rotary year. There was an unmistakable sense that the club stood at the threshold of transition, preparing to hand stewardship to a new administration while continuing to affirm the values that have guided it for more than a century. The afternoon's central recognition soon followed.

Rotarian Daniel C. "Dan" Obradó formally introduced the recipient of the Rotary Club of Manila Outstanding Ambassador Award for 2026, Spanish Ambassador Miguel Utray Delgado. The award itself was presented by President Raoul Creencia alongside Past District Governor Joaquin "Jackie" C. Rodriguez Sr., Chairman of the Rotary Club of Manila Ambassador of the Year Committee.

The atmosphere inside the hall shifted noticeably as Ambassador Delgado approached the podium.

What might have been expected to be a standard diplomatic acceptance speech instead unfolded into an expansive reflection on Philippine-Spanish relations, global tensions, cultural memory, and the profound human dimension of diplomacy.

Ambassador Miguel Utray Delgado and the Meaning of Diplomacy

Ambassador Miguel Utray Delgado began not with politics or policy, but with gratitude.

Addressing President Raoul Creencia, General Delfin Lorenzana, Past District Governor Jackie Rodriguez, Vice President-Elect Karlo Castro, Honorary Consul Issam Eldebs, Past District Governor Vince Carlos, Daniel Obradó, Ambassador Victor "Vic" Garcia, Ambassador Senen Mangalile, and the distinguished guests present, the Spanish envoy greeted the audience warmly:

"Queridos amigos. Magandang hapon sa inyong lahat."

It was a small gesture, but one that immediately framed the tone of the speech. This would not merely be the remarks of a diplomat discharging protocol. It would be the reflections of a man who had come to regard the Philippines not as a distant assignment, but as a place deeply intertwined with his own personal and professional journey.

Receiving the Outstanding Ambassador Award, Ambassador Delgado described the recognition as among the fondest memories of his



Rotarian Daniel C. "Dan" Obradó formally introduced the recipient of the Rotary Club of Manila Outstanding Ambassador Award for 2026

diplomatic career. He spoke with visible sincerity about his nearly four years in the Philippines, describing the posting as one of the most interesting and fruitful periods of his life.

But what distinguished the speech was not merely its warmth. It was its unusual depth.

Rather than offering broad platitudes, the ambassador spoke candidly about the extraordinary transformation he had witnessed in the Philippines during his tenure. He praised not only the country's development, but more importantly, the resilience of its people. In an increasingly unstable world marked by geopolitical conflict, economic volatility, and social uncertainty, he expressed confidence that the

Filipino people possessed the capacity to overcome whatever challenges lay ahead. The speech gradually widened from personal reflection into geopolitical discourse.

Ambassador Delgado underscored the exceptionally strong state of relations between Spain and the Philippines, noting that the two nations would soon commemorate the 80th anniversary of formal diplomatic relations. Yet he reminded the audience that the connection between both countries stretches back far beyond modern diplomacy. Nearly five centuries of shared history continue to echo through language, culture, faith, architecture, cuisine, law, and collective memory.

Far from dwelling nostalgically on the past, however, Delgado emphasized how this shared history has evolved into a modern partnership grounded in mutual respect and common principles.

He spoke of political dialogue between Spain and the Philippines not merely in bilateral terms, but within the larger framework of global stability. He cited shared commitments to international law, rules-based order, peaceful resolution of disputes, and the defense of democratic principles at a time when conflicts in the Middle East, Ukraine, and other regions threaten global equilibrium.

Receiving the Outstanding Ambassador Award, Ambassador Delgado described the recognition as among the fondest memories of his diplomatic career. He spoke with visible sincerity about his nearly four years in the Philippines, describing the posting as one of the most interesting and fruitful periods of his life.

Particularly striking was his unequivocal expression of support regarding Philippine concerns in the West Philippine Sea. Spain, he affirmed, together with the European Union, supports a free and open Indo-Pacific governed by international law and anchored upon the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). His remarks drew particular attention from the audience, coming at a time when maritime tensions remain among the region's most pressing geopolitical concerns.

The ambassador also announced Spain's support for the Philippines' candidacy as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for the 2027–2028 term. It was a diplomatic gesture of considerable significance, signaling not merely goodwill but strategic confidence in the Philippines' role on the global stage.

Yet perhaps the most compelling portions of the speech emerged when Ambassador Delgado turned toward culture and heritage.

With visible enthusiasm, he spoke of the ambitious cultural initiatives currently being developed between Spain and the Philippines, particularly through collaborations involving the Museo del Prado and Filipino-Spanish artistic heritage.

His narration of the rediscovery of Filipino-Spanish artworks scattered across Spain carried the texture of historical detective work. The Prado Museum, he explained, had spent years locating and restoring dozens of paintings and sculptures connected to Filipino artists and illustrados of the nineteenth century. Sixty-three paintings and thirty-one sculptures are presently undergoing restoration and are expected to be exhibited in Madrid before eventually traveling to the Philippines.

Ambassador Delgado spoke of the ambitious cultural initiatives currently being developed between Spain and the Philippines, particularly through collaborations involving the Museo del Prado and Filipino-Spanish artistic heritage.

For many in attendance, this may have been the first time they heard of what could become one of the most significant exhibitions of Filipino art ever assembled outside the country.

The ambassador's remarks on the Museo del Galeón likewise reflected his fascination with shared historical memory. Referring to the life-size replica of the Spanish galleon Espiritu Santo, constructed in Cavite in 1603, Delgado highlighted the museum as both a historical and educational bridge between nations once linked by maritime trade routes that reshaped the world.



President Raoul C. Creencia presented the Rotary Club of Manila Outstanding Ambassador Award for 2026 to Spanish Ambassador Miguel Utray Delgado.

He also noted the remarkable increase in Filipino tourism to Spain, which had risen dramatically in recent years. Beyond statistics, however, he seemed genuinely moved by the idea that Filipinos traveling to Spain increasingly discover not a foreign civilization, but a strangely familiar one — a place where echoes of shared identity quietly persist despite oceans and centuries.

Toward the conclusion of his address, Ambassador Delgado returned once more to gratitude.

He thanked the Rotary Club of Manila for the honor bestowed upon him. But more than that, he thanked the Filipino people themselves — for their kindness, warmth, and friendship.

There was no theatrical flourish in his final words. No overt sentimentality.

Only sincerity.

"Maraming salamat. Muchas gracias."



And in that brief bilingual farewell lay the essence of the entire afternoon: two nations, two histories, two cultures, still speaking to one another across time.

The Absent Speaker and the Presence of Reflection

The scheduled Guest of Honor and Speaker, Mr. Emmanuel Sto. Domingo "Manny" Lopez of the People's Constitutional Reform Initiative, was unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances.

Yet in many ways, his absence created space for a different kind of conversation to emerge.

Rather than centering solely upon constitutional reform and political structure, the meeting evolved into a broader contemplation of diplomacy, international partnership, historical continuity, and civic responsibility.

There was something fitting about this unexpected shift.

Rotary itself has always occupied a unique intersection between local service and global citizenship. On that afternoon, through the words of Ambassador Delgado and the fellowship of those gathered, the meeting quietly reaffirmed that identity.

An Afternoon That Became Something More

At its surface, the 31st Weekly Membership Meeting of the Rotary Club of Manila followed the familiar structure of a Rotary luncheon program: invocation, songs, recognitions, introductions, speeches, and adjournment.

But beneath the formal agenda was something far more enduring.

It became an afternoon about bridges: between nations, between histories, between diplomacy and friendship, between memory and modernity.

In honoring Ambassador Miguel Utray Delgado, the Rotary Club of Manila did more than recognize diplomatic excellence. It honored the enduring possibility that nations shaped by complicated histories can continue to move forward not in resentment, but in mutual respect, shared purpose, and cultural understanding. And perhaps that is what lingered most strongly after the meeting concluded.

Not merely the applause.

Not the protocols.



President Raoul Creencia adjourned the meeting.

Not even the award itself.

But the quiet reminder that diplomacy, at its best, is ultimately about people — their stories, their shared humanity, and their willingness to continue building bridges long after history itself has changed course.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 in the afternoon, with members and guests slowly dispersing through the halls of the Manila Polo Club carrying with them not only the memory of another Rotary gathering, but the resonance of an afternoon unexpectedly transformed by the grace and depth of a diplomat's words.
















ROTARACT












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RCM Members' Attendance Report
RY 2025-2026

ATTENDANCE REPORT
May 2026

MAY 2026	May 07, 2026 FORMER CONSUL GEN. VOLTAIRE D. MAURICIO	May 14, 2026 SCIENCE DIPLOMAT GLENN S. BANAGUAS	May 21, 2026 AMBASSADOR AWARD: AMB. MIGUEL UTRAY DELGADO
MEMBERS PRESENT	39	29	35
MEMBERS PRESENT %	18%	14%	17%
MAKE UP ATTENDEES	3	16	12
EXEMPTED	4	2	5
ON LEAVE	0	0	0
Total Active Members	42	45	47
Total # of Members	212	212	212
TOTAL %:	20%	21%	22%
ROTARACTORS	9	12	8
MEDIA	0	0	0
EMBASSIES / DIPLOMATIC CORPS	0	0	0
DG, DGE, DGN, PDG	0	0	0
GOHS / GS	1	1	1
VISITING ROTARIAN	0	0	0
Guests of RCM MEMBERS	9	0	4
TOTAL ATTENDEES	58	42	48

Rotary Club of Manila | UNITE FOR GOOD

LIST OF ATTENDEES
May 21, 2026

1 Bartolome III, Arsenio M.
2 Benedicto, Sixto T.
3 Carlos, Vicente J.
4 Castro, Karlo Eugene Josef M.
5 Co, Val Constantine L.
6 Creencia, Raoul C.
7 Cureg, Alexander P.
8 Cutter, John Michael
9 Davis, Raymond N.
10 Del Rosario Sr., Oscar A.
11 Egan, Brendan W.L.
12 Eldebs, Issam
13 Esguerra, Herminio S.
14 Garcia,III Victor G.
15 Guevara, Jr., Domingo S.
16 Hernandez, Edwin H
17 Locsin, Arsenio Z.
18 Lorenzana, Delfin
19 Mangalile, Senen T.
20 Matschuck, Guenter Gerhard G.
21 Obrado, Daniel Calzado
22 Ong, Rowel Janson S.
23 Pascual, Abraham F.
24 Peliño, Wilfredo M.
25 Preysler, Jr., Fausto R.
26 Ra, Ingill
27 Recto, Philip H.
28 Rodriguez Sr., Joaquin C.
29 Schneider, Bernd
30 Serapio, Carlos G.
31 Simon, Juanito A.
32 Valdez, Amado D.
33 Zeitouni, Nagi
34 Tamesis, Chris C.
35 Pangilinan, Manuel E.

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

As of May 26, 2026

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

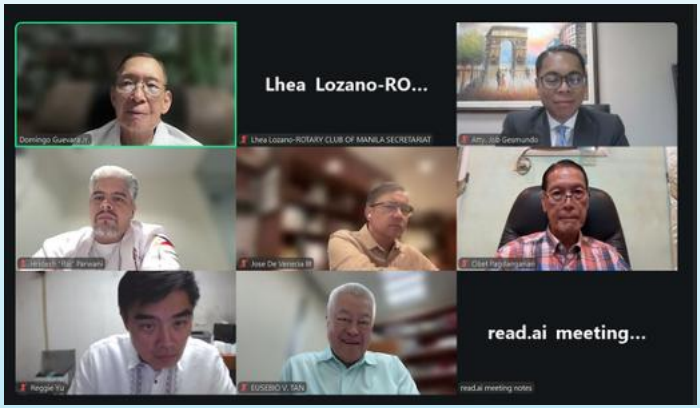
List of Members Who Have Paid Their Annual Dues for RY 2025-2026

As of May 26, 2026

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

Rotary Information Briefing





A Rotary Information Briefing was successfully conducted last Monday, May 25, 2026, at 5:00 PM via Zoom for Messrs. Jose P. De Venecia III, Hridesh M. Parwani, and Joseph Benedict G. Gesmundo.

Rotary Information Chairman PDG Obet Pagdanganan, together with Co-Chairman PP Boy Guevara, PP Ebot Tan, and PE Reggie Yu (in place of Rtn. Romy Nones), delivered a comprehensive and insightful overview of Rotary. The session covered the organization's vision, mission, and objectives, as well as the rich history and ongoing initiatives of the Rotary Club of Manila.

Fourth Golf Committee Meeting







The 4th Golf Committee Meeting, led and hosted by VPE/Chair Karlo Castro, was held on May 21, 2026, Thursday, 5pm at his residence.

Present were Sec. Anton Mauricio, DE Nico Valencia, IT Arik Carranceja, IAS Jonas Gonzales, DE/PE Mike Roxas, Dir. Rami Chahwan, Treas. PJ Garcia, and event organizer Ms. Ting Yupangco-Puzon



ROTARY'S AREAS OF FOCUS



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4TH RCM GOLF CUP
Sta. Elena Golf Club
JUNE 22, 2026 (MONDAY)
REGISTRATION: 6:00AM
SHOTGUN TEE-OFF: 8:00AM
TOURNAMENT FEE
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Green Fee, Cart-sharing, Giveaways, Breakfast, Lunch & Raffles
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4TH RCM GOLF CUP

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STA. ELENA
GOLF CLUB

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JETOUR X50 SPORTS

TOURNAMENT DATE
JUNE 22, 2026
MONDAY

6:00 AM
REGISTRATION

8:00 AM
SHOTGUN
TEE-OFF

HOLE IN ONE PRIZE

STA. ELENA GOLF CLUB, STA. ROSA, LAGUNA

ROTARY CLUB OF MANILA
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4TH RCM GOLF CUP

HOLE IN ONE

HOLE 2, 7 & 21

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FIFTY THOUSAND PESOS

Rotary Club of Manila

RCMANILA FOUNDATION, INC.

TOURNAMENT DATE
JUNE 22, 2026
MONDAY

6:00 AM
REGISTRATION

8:00 AM
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STA. ROSA, LAGUNA

CO-PRESENTER

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RC Manila Receives Certificate of Donation from Mama Earth Foundation for the 1,297 Mangroves Planted in Davao del Sur



The Rotary Club of Manila received a Certificate of Donation from Mama Earth Foundation in recognition of the 1,297 mangroves, amounting to Php 23,350, planted in Barangay Astorga, Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur. The donation was paid for by Rtn. Bertel Ingmar Bertelsen.

PEOPLE

In the Path of *CONSEQUENCE*

The Measure of Jesus Antonio Morente Pineda Jr.

By PE Reginald T. Yu



HE never set out to be at the center of power — yet he stood there, quietly shaping institutions, navigating political tides, and building systems that would outlast the eras that created them.

IN THE PATH OF CONSEQUENCE

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FROM the rice fields of Tarlac to the boardrooms of banking, from the upheavals of Martial Law to the quiet discipline of service, the life of Jesus Antonio "Susing" Morente Pineda Jr. unfolds not as a story of ambition loudly pursued, but of influence deliberately exercised — measured, restrained, and enduring.



Susing as a graduating student of the Ateneo in 1955 — a young scholar poised at the threshold of adulthood, carrying with him the discipline, values, and quiet determination that would shape his future life and legacy.

The idea did not begin with certainty. It began with an absence.

By the early 1970s, the coconut industry stretched across the Philippines with quiet enormity, sustaining more than a million farmers and touching nearly every province. Yet for all its reach, it lacked a center. There was no institution that belonged to it, no system that allowed those who produced to

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influence what followed. The imbalance was not accidental. It was structural: the farmers grew, but others decided.

By then, Susing had spent enough time in banking to understand where control truly resided. It no longer rested in land alone. It had shifted — subtly but decisively — into finance. Capital dictated direction, and the ability to build systems determined who would shape outcomes.

The question, therefore, was no longer whether the industry needed a bank, but whether one could be built that would genuinely serve it.

The discussions that followed were quiet, unfolding not in grand declarations but in offices and private conversations where practicality met ambition. At the center of them was Eduardo 'Danding' Cojuangco Jr., who saw clearly that without a financial backbone, the industry would remain dependent — reactive, never in control of its own course.

Vision, however, was only a beginning. To endure, it required structure. And structure demanded execution.

What would eventually become the United Coconut Planters Bank did not originate with Susing. It emerged from Cojuangco's conviction that the industry needed to be consolidated and directed. Susing's role was different. He understood how to build what had been imagined.



United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB) opened its doors in 1975, becoming the institution where Susing would spend much of his banking career — years marked by dedication, leadership, and steadfast service during a transformative period in Philippine banking.

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He did not claim authorship. He took responsibility.

The work began, as it always does, with people. Drawing on relationships built over years within the banking community, he assembled a core group willing to take on an undertaking that offered little certainty. There were no guarantees to give, only clarity: this would require building from the ground up — systems, teams, processes — under conditions that left little room for error.

Some hesitated. Others recognized the scale of what was being attempted and chose to step in.

One by one, they joined.

What followed was relentless. Days stretched into nights as the institution took form. A bank could not remain an idea; it had to function — lending, processing, moving capital, sustaining operations from the moment it came into existence. Every delay risked credibility, and every misstep carried consequence. There were moments when the weight of it pressed heavily, when the scale seemed larger than the structure being built to contain it.

But momentum began to take hold, and with it, belief.

Gradually, the system came together. What had been conceptual narrowed into something tangible. For the first time, there was the possibility that coconut farmers — long positioned at the margins — would be connected to an institution designed to finance their own industry. Ownership, even in part, suggested a shift in the balance.

Or so it seemed.



Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr., then President of First United Bank, walks alongside Juan Ponce Enrile during his tenure as head of the Philippine Coconut Authority, with Susing accompanying the two influential figures during a pivotal period in the country's banking and coconut industry history.

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No institution of that scale, in that era, existed apart from the state. As the bank moved from concept to operation, it entered the orbit of national power under Ferdinand Marcos, where industries were being consolidated and decisions increasingly centralized.

At a critical moment, readiness was not enough. The project required sanction.

There was no ceremony, no prolonged deliberation — only a directive that carried the weight of authority.

Proceed.

With that, the bank came into being — not as an accident, but as the convergence of vision, execution, and power.

For Susing, there was no space to pause and reflect on what had been accomplished. The work did not end with creation. It shifted.

Building, he understood, was only the beginning.

Sustaining would demand something else entirely.

Formation

Long before he would sit in rooms where industries were shaped and institutions conceived, Susing belonged to a world where power did not need to announce itself.



Jesus Pineda Sr. and Caridad Morente on their wedding day — a timeless portrait of love, grace, and commitment, marking the beginning of a family legacy built on faith, perseverance, and enduring devotion.

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It was understood.

In Concepcion, Tarlac, where he was born on May 17, 1938, power lived in land — not as abstraction, but as presence. The horizon stretched across fields that seemed to run without end, marked only by the steady rhythms of planting and harvest. It was a landscape that carried both continuity and command, shaping the lives of those who depended on it.

This was the life his father chose.

Jesus Tereso Pineda had been trained in law at Ateneo, prepared for a profession defined by structure and argument. But when he married, inheritance altered that path. A vast agricultural estate came with it — not only as opportunity, but as responsibility. He stepped into it without hesitation, leaving behind the profession he had trained for and embracing the life that had been handed to him.

That decision defined the household his children would grow up in.

For Susing, responsibility was never abstract. It was visible, lived, and constant. The farm functioned as a system — tenants, laborers, overseers, and managers working within a structure that depended on coordination and trust. Decisions did not remain theoretical;



Susing during his Ateneo high school freshman years, spending a quiet summer break at their family farm in Tarlac — a simple season of youth shaped by discipline, humility, and provincial roots that would later define his character and life's journey.

they translated into outcomes that affected livelihoods.

Even as a child, he observed this.

He watched how his father led — not from a distance, but through presence. Authority was not imposed; it was exercised through familiarity, through an understanding of the people who made the system work. It was a quiet form of leadership, but one that left a lasting impression.

If his father provided structure, his mother provided direction.

Caridad Morente possessed an intellect that had been recognized early, becoming a professor at a young age. Yet her path had been altered by a decision not her own — the denial of a scholarship that would have taken her abroad. She rarely spoke of it, but she did not forget it. Instead, she transformed that loss into resolve.

Her children would not be limited.

In their home, this took the form of disciplined expectation. There were no raised voices or dramatic punishments, only a steady insistence on accountability. Meals were occasions for conversation, and report cards were examined with care — not to reprimand, but to understand. Questions were asked, not to assign blame, but to identify where improvement was needed.



Susing, then a high school sophomore, walks through their family farm in Tarlac — a young man shaped by the quiet discipline of provincial life, where hard work, simplicity, and strong family values took root early in his character.

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For Susing, this created a mindset that would endure. Failure was not something to fear, but something to address. It required response, and improvement was assumed.

Yet the household was not defined by discipline alone.

There was also a quiet generosity that revealed itself in simple acts. When tenants arrived at their home during mealtime, they were not turned away. They were invited to sit, to eat, to share the table. It was not presented as charity. It was simply part of how life was lived.

From this, another lesson took shape — one that would stay with him as clearly as any taught at the table.

Leadership was not about distance.

It was about inclusion.

The Weight of Expectation

By the time the family moved to Manila, the direction of their lives had already been set with quiet certainty.

Education would no longer follow the rhythms of provincial life. It would be anchored in institutions that carried both academic rigor and social expectation — Ateneo for the boys, Assumption for the girls — schools where formation mattered as much as instruction. Their home in Quezon City marked more than relocation; it was an entry into a different environment, one in which identity would increasingly be shaped in relation to others.

At Ateneo de Manila University, Susing encountered both familiarity and contrast. The discipline was not new — the Jesuit structure, the emphasis on order, the insistence on intellectual rigor all echoed what he had known at home. What differed was the proximity to difference. Here, he was no longer defined by family or land, but by how he moved among peers who carried their own backgrounds, temperaments, and assumptions.

He did not attempt to dominate this space. He adjusted to it.

He would later describe himself simply as a student who followed the rules, but the simplicity of that description concealed something more deliberate. For him, following the rules meant understanding the system well enough to move within it without friction — observing before acting, learning expectations, and meeting them without drawing unnecessary attention. It was a tendency that would stay with him: to absorb, to assess, and to respond rather than react.

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Even within that structured environment, however, there were moments when order gave way to something less predictable.

Among his classmates was an American student, Patrick Hilton, whose size and presence translated easily into influence. He used it casually, often at the expense of smaller boys — among them Mario Tiaoqui, Tony Lopa, and Susing himself. Their response was not confrontation, but restraint. They endured it, deflected it, and waited for it to pass.

Until one day, it did not.

What followed was not planned but instinctive. Another classmate, less inclined toward restraint, stepped in. Joseph Estrada confronted Hilton, and the exchange quickly escalated into a fight. It ended the bullying in a way that quiet resistance had not.

The consequences, however, did not unfold evenly. Authority responded to the act rather than the pattern behind it. Estrada was disciplined and eventually expelled, while Hilton faced far less consequence.

For Susing, the incident did not provoke defiance so much as recognition. It revealed, in a setting beyond the family, how power operated in practice — how it could diverge from fairness, shaped by perception, authority, and factors not always visible or consistent. It was a



Susing as a graduate of the Ateneo de Manila University, Class of 1959, earning his degree in Business Administration — a milestone that marked the beginning of a lifelong journey shaped by discipline, leadership, and an enduring commitment to excellence.

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lesson that would surface again in different forms over the years.

Yet his time at Ateneo remained defined more by continuity than disruption. He moved from high school to college within the same institution, guided by routines that reinforced rather than challenged his upbringing. He chose business administration, drawn less to argument than to structure, less to persuasion than to systems.

While others asserted themselves more visibly, Susing continued to refine a quieter approach — one grounded in consistency rather than display. It was not a style that demanded attention, but it proved to be one that endured.

The First Departure

The decision to leave for the United States was neither impulsive nor driven by a desire to escape. It had been set in motion years earlier, shaped by a quiet, unfinished chapter in his mother's life.

Caridad Morente had once been awarded a Fulbright scholarship — an opportunity that recognized her intellect and promise — but it was not hers to accept. Her father refused to let her go, a decision that, for that generation, was both unquestioned and final. She complied, but she never forgot.

What had been denied to her would not be denied to her children.

By the time Susing completed his studies at Ateneo, the expectation had already taken form. He would study abroad — not as a visitor, but as someone who would step into a larger world and learn to move within it.

When he arrived in New York in the early 1960s, the adjustment was immediate. Manhattan offered no transition. Its pace, scale, and anonymity stood in contrast to the familiarity he had known. There was no extended family to receive him, no network to soften the experience. For the first time, he was operating without the structure that had always defined his life.



Susing proudly poses beside his newest car, a 1965 Chevy Corsair — a symbol of youthful ambition, hard-earned success, and the confidence of a young man beginning to carve his own path in life.

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At St. John's University, he entered an MBA program populated by students who brought with them real-world experience — managers, professionals, individuals who spoke not in theory but from practice. He adapted in the way he always had: by observing, listening, and absorbing. He contributed when he could, but more often, he studied how others thought, how they approached problems, and how decisions were made under pressure.

Outside the classroom, life followed a different rhythm. He lived in Astoria, Queens, among fellow Filipinos who were navigating the same balance between independence and obligation. Together, they formed a small, familiar community within a city that offered little of it. There were late nights, shared meals, and conversations that moved easily across languages. For the first time, he experienced a kind of freedom that was not structured by expectation.

It was, for a time, intoxicating.

There were moments of excess — long evenings, easy indulgences, the small liberties that came with distance from home. Yet even within that loosened structure, something else began to take hold.

A sense of responsibility.

That shift became clearer when he entered JPMorgan as an executive trainee. The environment demanded a different kind of discipline. Systems were precise, expectations defined, and decisions operated within frameworks that left little room for improvisation. Here, he saw how institutions functioned at scale — how consistency, rather than personality, sustained trust.

It was a quieter education, but one that would stay with him.

At the same time, his personal life expanded. Relationships formed easily, shaped by proximity and shared experience, and for a while, the possibility of remaining in the United States seemed not only viable, but natural. He had work, a growing network, and a sense of belonging that had not existed when he first arrived.

And yet, the pull of home remained.

It did not assert itself dramatically. It lingered — subtle, persistent, shaped by memory as much as by obligation.

When his parents visited, the trip was framed as travel, but its purpose was understood. They wanted him to return. The conversation was quiet, without pressure. His mother did not argue; she reminded him — of family, of place, of a life that, while less independent, was more connected.

The decision did not come immediately. There were reasons to stay,

opportunities to pursue, and a life that had begun to take shape. But there was also an understanding, formed over time, that life was not only about where one could go, but where one was meant to be.

He chose to return.

Not because the United States had failed him, but because the Philippines offered something he could not find elsewhere — a role within a system he understood, and a place where what he had learned could be put to use.

When he left New York, he carried more than a degree. He carried perspective — an understanding of how systems operated at scale, an appreciation for independence tempered by its limits, and a growing sense that the life ahead would be defined not by distance, but by engagement.

What awaited him in Manila was not yet clear.

But it would require everything he had begun to learn.

Entry Into the System

When Susing returned to Manila in the mid-1960s, he stepped into a country on the cusp of transformation.

The Philippines he had left as a student was still finding its postwar footing, its institutions developing within structures that were at once inherited and improvised. The one he returned to was more complex. The economy was expanding, though unevenly. Political ambitions were sharpening. Networks of influence — family, business, and government — were becoming more tightly interwoven.

It was within this environment that he began his professional life in earnest.



During the inauguration of the Makati Branch of the Philippine Bank of Commerce, Jesus Sr. (left), Susing, and Luis Tirso Rivilla, EVP and Director, gather in a moment that reflected the dynamism and expansion of Philippine banking during a transformative era in the country's financial history.

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His entry into banking came through Commercial Bank and Trust Company, or Comtrust, an institution that, while not yet dominant, held a strategic position within the financial system. The introduction was facilitated by family — his father arranging a meeting with his uncle, Atos Barcelona, then president of the bank — but whatever advantage that connection provided ended there. Inside, he was expected to perform.

He entered as part of an executive training program designed not only to teach, but to observe. Young officers were rotated across departments — credit, investment, operations — exposed to the inner workings of banking in a way that revealed not just how decisions were made, but why.

Susing approached the process with intent. He treated each rotation as part of a larger system to be understood. In credit, he saw that risk was not defined by numbers alone, but by judgment and the evaluation of people. In investment, he observed how capital moved across sectors, shaping outcomes beyond the immediate transaction. In operations, he encountered the discipline required to ensure that systems functioned reliably, that errors were minimized, and that trust — once given — was maintained.

He did not distinguish himself through visibility.

Instead, he developed a reputation that was quieter, but no less consequential. He was dependable, absorbed information quickly, and understood instruction without needing it repeated. Just as importantly, he worked within the system without disrupting it — a quality that, in a hierarchical environment, allowed him to advance without resistance.



Susing in a reflective moment during one of his provincial sorties — away from the boardrooms and formalities, he found quiet strength in the simplicity of provincial life and the rare moments of solitude it offered.

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Over time, familiarity became trust, and trust translated into responsibility. He was given increasing exposure — not only to processes, but to people — and began to engage with senior officers whose concerns extended beyond execution into judgment.

The most significant shift in his trajectory, however, came from relationships beyond the formal structure of the bank.

It was during this period that he came into closer contact with Danding. The connection emerged from overlapping networks rooted in Tarlac, but it quickly grew into something more consequential. Cojuangco represented a different kind of influence — one that recognized how economic power could be organized, expanded, and aligned with political direction.

Through this association, Susing began to see banking differently. It was no longer simply an institutional function, but an instrument. Capital, when directed with intent, could shape industries, influence outcomes, and create structures that extended far beyond individual transactions.

At Comtrust, his responsibilities expanded accordingly. He moved from trainee to officer, and from officer to manager, taking on roles that required both operational competence and judgment. His assignments placed him in closer proximity to decision-makers, where discussions moved beyond procedure into strategy.

It was in these settings that he observed how influence truly operated.

Rarely declared, often unspoken, it moved through relationships — the ability to convene, to align, to act without the need for formal instruction. Institutions, he came to understand, did not exist in isolation. They were part of a broader ecosystem that included politics.

And in the Philippines of the mid-1960s, that ecosystem was changing.

When Ferdinand Marcos assumed the presidency in 1965, his administration introduced a style of governance that was both expansive and controlled. Development was emphasized — infrastructure, systems, national projects — but decision-making became increasingly centralized.

For those in banking and business, this created opportunity and complexity in equal measure. Projects expanded. Financing needs grew. Institutions scaled. But these developments also required alignment with policies shaped at the highest levels of government.

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At the inauguration of the first United Coconut Planters Bank branch in Zamboanga, Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. addresses guests and stakeholders, with Susing Pineda seen among the officers and associates who helped bring the bank's vision of countryside development closer to the Filipino people.

Susing did not position himself as a political actor. He remained, fundamentally, a banker.

But he was now operating within a system where the distinction between the two was becoming less defined.

At a certain point, he was offered greater responsibility within the Philippine Bank of Commerce, an institution linked to the Cojuangco group. The move marked a transition from structured learning to active leadership.

He accepted.

His early assignments focused on oversight — managing branches, ensuring operations ran effectively, and building teams capable of sustaining growth. In Quezon City, and later along Buendia, he was given control over branches that operated with a degree of autonomy uncommon at the time. These were not merely processing units; they were decision-making centers, capable of granting loans, structuring deals, and responding to local conditions without constant reference to head office.
It was here that his leadership style took clearer form.

He did not rely on pressure.
He relied on structure.

Teams were built deliberately, often drawing from individuals he trusted, but always with an emphasis on competence. Expectations were defined. Responsibilities were clear.
Performance was not left to chance.

At the same time, he maintained proximity to the center.

Afternoons were often spent at head office, where conversations extended

beyond immediate concerns. With Cojuangco and his associates, discussions would begin with banking operations and industry developments, then move into broader considerations — investments, political shifts, strategic direction.

These were not formal meetings. They were working conversations.

But they were where alignment took shape.

And in those rooms, Susing was no longer simply learning the system.

He was becoming part of it.

The Architecture of Power

By the early 1970s, the Philippines had entered a period in which the boundaries between business, politics, and state power were no longer clearly defined. With the declaration of Martial Law in 1972 by Ferdinand Marcos, the shift was not simply one of authority, but of structure. Industries were no longer left to evolve on their own; they were reorganized, consolidated, and aligned with national priorities that were as political as they were economic.

For Susing, already established within the banking sector, this transition was not abstract. It came as instruction, opportunity, and risk at the same time.

His association with Danding placed him close enough to observe how decisions were shaped — not purely by market logic, but by political calculation. Cojuangco's influence, rooted in provincial power and expanded through business, was further amplified by his alignment with Marcos. Together, they represented a convergence of authority that allowed large-scale initiatives to move with unusual speed.



Zamboanga City Mayor Maria Clara Lobregat leads the ribbon-cutting ceremonies for the UCPB Zamboanga Branch, their very first branch, joined by Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. and Susing Pineda — a milestone that reflected UCPB's growing presence and commitment to regional development in Mindanao.

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It was within this environment that efforts to reorganize the coconut industry began to take form.

Despite its scale, the industry had long been fragmented. Millions of farmers sustained production, yet control over pricing, processing, and export rested with a relatively small group of intermediaries. The imbalance was structural. Farmers produced, but they did not determine value.

The response was not incremental reform, but consolidation.

The creation of the United Coconut Planters Bank became central to this effort, serving as the financial backbone of a broader system that sought to integrate financing, production, and distribution. Alongside it came institutions such as UNICOM, designed to consolidate oil mills and stabilize processing. The objective extended beyond efficiency — it was to establish control over supply, pricing, and direction.

What followed extended beyond banking.

As the system took shape, capital did not remain idle within the institution. It moved — deliberately, strategically — into assets that could anchor the industry's long-term position. Among the most consequential of these was the acquisition of a significant stake in San Miguel Corporation.

Framed at the time as an investment on behalf of coconut farmers, the move was carried out through the Coconut Industry Investment Fund (CIIF), financed by the coconut levy — a tax collected from millions of millers across



Susing shares a warm family moment with his sons, Paolo and Carlo, alongside Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. — a photograph that reflects not only enduring friendship and mentorship, but also the close personal bonds formed through years of shared experiences and trust.

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the country. United Coconut Planters Bank served as the financial conduit, holding and managing these funds, while the structure itself was directed under the leadership of Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr., whose influence bridged both finance and state power.

Through this mechanism, roughly 27 to 31 percent of San Miguel Corporation was acquired during the early 1980s. The shares were effectively placed under a system that linked the country's largest food and beverage conglomerate to the resources of its coconut industry — an alignment that, in concept, was meant to give farmers indirect participation in one of the nation's most valuable corporate assets.

Control, however, did not disperse as broadly as the structure implied.

The shares, while sourced from levy funds, were consolidated under entities within the CIIF network and managed through UCPB, placing operational authority within a tightly held circle. San Miguel, in turn, became the largest depositor of UCPB, reinforcing a financial loop in which the bank, the investment fund, and the corporate asset were bound together.

By 2012, the original ₱1.65 billion outlay tied to the acquisition of a 31 percent stake had expanded into an estimated ₱93.5 billion in value, reflecting the extraordinary performance of San Miguel Corporation over nearly three decades. What had begun as a strategic deployment of levy funds had evolved into one of the most financially significant assets associated with the coconut industry.

In the end, the acquisition of San Miguel Corporation stood as both achievement and contradiction.

It demonstrated how capital, when



Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. engages with members of the United Sari-Sari project in Tarlac, with Susing, in a red shirt, actively participating in the grassroots initiative aimed at empowering small community entrepreneurs and strengthening local livelihoods.

organized at scale, could transform an industry's position within the national economy. But it also revealed the tensions inherent in that transformation — between intent and control, between structure and ownership, and between the systems that were built and the people they were meant to serve.

For Susing, the work was both technical and relational. Building a bank required more than capital; it required trust. Drawing from his network in Commercial Bank and Trust and the wider banking community, he persuaded executives to join a venture that was ambitious but uncertain. Competitive compensation helped, but what ultimately convinced many was the opportunity to build something at scale.

The demands were relentless. Long days stretched into nights as systems were put in place and operations brought online within compressed timelines. Every delay carried consequences, and the margin for error was narrow.

Yet the work did not exist apart from the state.

At critical moments, alignment at the highest levels was necessary. Decisions could shift in a single meeting in Malacañang. Susing was not always present in those rooms, but he understood their weight. When directives came, they were executed.

It was a system that rewarded decisiveness, but it also required loyalty.

At the same time, power was not concentrated along a single axis. In Tarlac, where Susing had deep roots, another figure shaped the political landscape: Benigno Aquino Jr..

The relationship between Cojuangco and Aquino was, at least initially, complex rather than adversarial. Both operated within overlapping spheres of influence, each commanding authority in different ways. Aquino, as governor, wielded a form of power rooted in communication and political instinct. Where Marcos was methodical, Aquino was fluid — capable of shaping outcomes through persuasion as much as policy.

Their approaches, however, diverged. Aquino's reformist inclinations, particularly in land distribution, placed him at odds with structures that figures like Cojuangco — and by extension, those working within his sphere — were helping to build.

An episode from that period captures the nature of these dynamics.

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When the Spanish-owned Central Azucarera de Tarlac encountered operational difficulties amid unrest, its owners moved to sell. Aquino stepped in as intermediary, facilitating the transfer to his in-laws. The transaction required a sovereign guarantee — approval that could only come from the highest levels of government. It was secured through political negotiation, aligning interests that were, at least temporarily, compatible.

The episode underscored a defining reality of the time:
Economic decisions were rarely purely economic.
They were shaped by politics, strategy, and personal relationships.

For Susing, navigating this environment required discipline of a different kind. He was not a politician, yet he operated within political structures. He did not set policy, yet he implemented decisions that carried wide consequences. His role was not to define direction, but to ensure that institutions could function within the framework that had been established.

It required balance.

And, at times, silence.



Susing and Maritess receive the prestigious Golden Shell Award, one of the Philippines' highest honors for export excellence, in recognition of the outstanding achievements of Flora Arts Philippines in bringing Filipino craftsmanship and artistry to the global market.

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Collapse and Consequence

There are moments in history when systems do not unravel gradually, but all at once. For those within them, however, the shift is rarely as dramatic as it appears from the outside. There is no single rupture, no clear line separating what was from what is about to follow — only a growing recognition, first among a few, then more widely, that something fundamental has changed.

By the mid-1980s, that recognition had begun to take hold.

The Philippines, long defined by centralized authority, was reaching a point of strain. Institutions that once seemed stable were now subject to scrutiny, and relationships that had enabled access and influence were becoming liabilities. The alignment between business and politics, once an advantage, was turning into a source of risk.

For Susing, this shift was not abstract.

It was immediate.

Institutions such as the United Coconut Planters Bank, which had grown into a central force within the coconut industry, now found themselves under a different kind of attention. The systems, networks, and relationships that had once driven their expansion were no longer viewed in the same light. What had enabled growth was now being examined through a lens shaped by reform, accountability, and the redefinition of power.

When the People Power Revolution unfolded, it did more than change political leadership. It altered the conditions under which institutions could exist. Assets were sequestered, investigations initiated, and decisions made years earlier were revisited — not in the context in which they had been made, but in light of what had followed.

For Susing, this marked the beginning of a different kind of challenge.

The bank, once a symbol of structure and consolidation, became a point of contention. Shares were placed in escrow, and legal processes began — slow, complex, and often without clear resolution. Much of what he had helped build was no longer within his control.

It was not a moment of collapse.
It was a moment of reckoning.

The response it demanded was not the discipline of action, but of restraint — the ability to accept uncertainty, to continue without resolution, and to move forward within conditions that could no longer be shaped in the same way.

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Reinvention

If his early life had been shaped by inheritance, and his middle years by institution-building, the period after 1986 would come to be defined by reinvention — not as a single decision, but as a gradual shift shaped by circumstance.

There was no moment of declaration. No clear turning point. What followed unfolded quietly, through a series of decisions that, taken together, marked a change in direction. He returned to what he understood best: systems — not always at scale, but always with structure.

Even before the political transitions of the mid-1980s, this instinct had already begun to take form.

In 1980, he organized the United Sari-Sari and Livelihood Corporation, an effort to bring order to one of the most diffuse yet essential components of the Philippine economy: the sari-sari store. These small neighborhood shops were ubiquitous, forming the final link between supply and everyday life, yet they operated without coordination. The concept itself originated with Danding, framed as a *"tulong sa mga tao"* of Tarlac. What he envisioned as assistance, Susing translated into structure.

He began by establishing logistical



Bound by more than seven decades of friendship and shared memories from their Ateneo high school days, (from left) Ruben Nuñez, Poch Robles, Minging Ordoñez, Susing Pineda, and Freddie Rodriguez continue to embody the enduring bond of brotherhood forged through the years.

district offices across the province — nodes within a system designed to serve sari-sari store owners directly. These offices became distribution centers, ensuring the steady delivery of basic commodities and retail goods to communities that had long depended on fragmented and inefficient supply chains. What emerged was not merely a program of support, but a functioning network.

Alongside this, he organized joint

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ventures with rice millers throughout Tarlac. The arrangement was deliberate: rice production would no longer pass through multiple layers of middlemen. Instead, it would be consolidated, distributed, and sold directly to institutions, as well as to both traditional and non-traditional markets. Prices improved. Margins stabilized. For the millers, it meant something more significant — the ability to participate more directly in determining the value of what they produced, under the guarantee of the United Sari-Sari and Livelihood Corporation.

The model suggested a broader possibility.

Had events taken a different course — had the EDSA People Power Revolution not intervened — the system might well have expanded beyond Tarlac, evolving into a national network of sari-sari stores. It would have stood as a locally rooted alternative to the retail chains that would later emerge, many of them franchised by foreign multinational companies.

But history redirected its path.

Even so, the intention behind it remained intact.

These efforts were not conceived for scale alone. They were built to reach those who had less in life — to create access where there had been none, to strengthen livelihoods at the margins, and, in quiet but meaningful ways, to make the poor less poor.

But intention does not remain untouched by history.

After 1986, the corporation became entangled in the broader legal processes that examined assets linked to the Marcos era. Identified in government investigations and later included in the case of Republic vs. Sandiganbayan, it was drawn into a narrative far removed from its original purpose. What had begun as a livelihood initiative became part of a larger inquiry into power and accountability.

For Susing, this was not entirely unfamiliar. It reinforced a pattern he had already come to recognize: systems, once created, do not remain confined to their intent. They are shaped — and at times overtaken — by the forces around them.

Even as one chapter was reinterpreted, another began.

By the late 1980s, he turned to production. The global market for artificial flowers was shifting, moving from low-grade plastic to more refined materials such as polyester and silk. Production was consolidating in Asia, where labor-intensive processes could

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be scaled to meet international demand. In 1988, he established Flora Arts Philippines in Concepcion, Tarlac — not simply as a business, but as a livelihood system. Designed to employ thousands, it combined imported manufacturing technology with local labor, creating a structure that could meet global standards while providing income to communities with limited opportunities.

The response was immediate. Exports to the United States and Europe grew steadily, and production expanded. Workers were organized on a piece-rate basis and supported with transportation and meals, allowing them to earn in proportion to their output. The venture complemented his wife's business in artificial foliage, which had already found markets in the Middle East and Southeast Asia.
Recognition followed.

Flora Arts Philippines received the Golden Shell Award, one of the country's highest honors for export excellence. It validated not only the enterprise, but the model — one that combined industry with livelihood.

But markets shift as surely as institutions.

By the early 1990s, China's manufacturing capacity had transformed the industry. Factories multiplied in the Pearl River Delta, producing at a scale that dramatically



Susing remains an active officer of the Manila Overseas Press Club (MOPC), working alongside President Tony Lopez and fellow media, diplomatic, and civic leaders in advancing the organization's longstanding tradition of excellence in journalism and public discourse.

lowered costs and expanded global reach. Artificial flowers became a high-volume export, driven by efficiency rather than craftsmanship.

The change became unmistakable during a visit to a manufacturing facility in Shenzhen. What he encountered was not merely competition, but magnitude — a workforce of thousands operating within a system that no smaller enterprise could match.

The conclusion was clear.
No adjustment in efficiency could bridge that gap.

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In 1995, after nearly a decade of success, he closed the business — not out of failure, but out of recognition. The discipline that had guided him in building now guided him in letting go.

As the country moved into a period of liberalization under Fidel V. Ramos, the emphasis shifted toward rebuilding institutions and attracting investment. It was during this time that Susing became involved in Philippines, Inc., a group focused on facilitating engagement between foreign investors and the local environment. The work was less about control and more about coordination — navigating regulatory frameworks, aligning interests, and ensuring that projects could move forward.

His proximity to political leadership continued, though in a different capacity. Meetings with presidents became functional rather than symbolic, centered on practical concerns rather than influence. He was appointed to roles such as director of the National Power Corporation and Clark Development Corporation, positions that required oversight and discretion.

His presence in these spaces was not driven by ambition.
It was continuity.
He understood the system, and the system understood him.

At the same time, he returned to banking — though not in the way he had before. The rural bank tied to his wife's family, known as the Bank of Rodriguez, was not initially positioned for expansion. It was a legacy institution, shaped as much by family dynamics as by financial considerations.

He saw it differently.

Where others saw complication, he saw structure waiting to be imposed. Internal decision-making had been hindered by emotion and indecision. He introduced a mechanism — a put-and-call arrangement — that allowed ownership to be consolidated. It was a simple proposal, but one that brought clarity.

It was accepted almost immediately.

What followed was not dramatic transformation, but stabilization. Professional management was introduced, systems were put in place, and the institution began to function with greater coherence. He did not take control in the traditional sense. Instead, he stepped back, allowing professionals to manage operations while positioning himself as a guide.

It marked a shift in leadership.

He no longer needed to be at the center.

Only to ensure that things worked.

At the same time, he expanded into

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other ventures. Ugong Trade & Holdings became a platform for broader business activity, defined not by a single industry but by adaptability — distribution, partnerships, and industrial engagement shaped by opportunity rather than fixed direction.

He also revisited earlier ideas, particularly those centered on grassroots systems. The concept behind the United Sari-Sari Corporation — organizing small retailers into a structured network — remained relevant. Experience had only reinforced the insight: markets are not shaped solely from the top. They can be influenced from the ground, through systems that enable those who operate within them.

Much of this work was not visible. But it was consistent.

And it was deliberate.

His proximity to political leadership continued, though in a different capacity. Meetings with presidents became functional rather than symbolic, centered on practical concerns rather than influence. He was appointed to roles such as director of the National Power Corporation and Clark Development Corporation, positions that required oversight and discretion.

That continuity found deeper expression during the administration of Joseph Estrada.



Susing shares a moment with then Philippine President Joseph "Erap" Estrada during the celebration of his wedding anniversary in 1993 — an evening marked by friendship, camaraderie, and enduring personal ties forged through the years.

Their relationship was not newly formed. It traced back to their years as classmates at Ateneo de Manila University High School — a connection shaped in youth, interrupted by Estrada's expulsion, yet sustained across decades. What began in the familiarity of shared classrooms matured into a friendship that endured beyond circumstance, position, and time.

When Estrada entered the presidential race, Susing joined him — not as a

political operative seeking prominence, but as a friend offering quiet support grounded in trust. The campaign, for him, was less about ambition than about continuity.

Upon Estrada's election to the presidency, that trust was affirmed through appointment. He was named Director of the National Power Corporation and Director of the Clark Development Corporation — roles that placed him once again within institutions central to national development. As in earlier chapters of his life, he approached these positions not as platforms for visibility, but as systems to be guided with discipline and care.

Yet it was in moments removed from formal office that the depth of their relationship became most evident.

During Estrada's period of house arrest in Tanay, when authority had receded and public life had narrowed into confinement, Susing remained present. He, together with a small circle of trusted friends, made regular visits — not out of obligation, but out of constancy. The conditions had changed, but the relationship had not.

That same constancy endured in the years that followed, including Estrada's tenure as Mayor of Manila. Their interactions were no longer framed by position or power, but by familiarity —



Rotary Club of Manila President Susing Pineda formalizes a partnership with the City Government of Manila, led by his former high school classmate Mayor Joseph "Erap" Estrada, for the pilot implementation of the Sari-Saring Aralan program aimed at empowering out-of-school youth through education and skills development.

conversations shaped by shared history, quiet understanding, and the recognition of a bond that had outlasted the shifting tides of public life.

For Susing, these moments were not separate from the broader arc of his life. They reflected a pattern he had followed throughout: relationships sustained not by convenience, but by presence; loyalty expressed not in declaration, but in continuity.

His presence in these spaces was not driven by ambition. It was continuity. He understood the system, and the system understood him.

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Susing and Maritess during their courtship years in the mid-1960s — a quiet moment between two young hearts whose relationship would grow into a lifetime of love, partnership, and shared memories.



Susing and Maritess with their respective parents on their wedding day — a cherished family portrait capturing the union of two families bound together by love, tradition, and the promise of a shared future.

The Quiet Center

Amid the shifting demands of business and the uncertainties of institutional life, one area remained constant.

Family.

His relationship with Maritess Rodriguez Mendoza-Pineda did not begin with urgency, nor was it marked by dramatic gestures. It unfolded gradually, shaped by conversation, presence, and a shared understanding of what mattered over time.

They met in New York, introduced through family connections during a holiday gathering. She was reserved, almost distant, and conversation did not come easily. For many, that might have been reason enough to move on. For Susing, it became something else — a quiet invitation to understand.

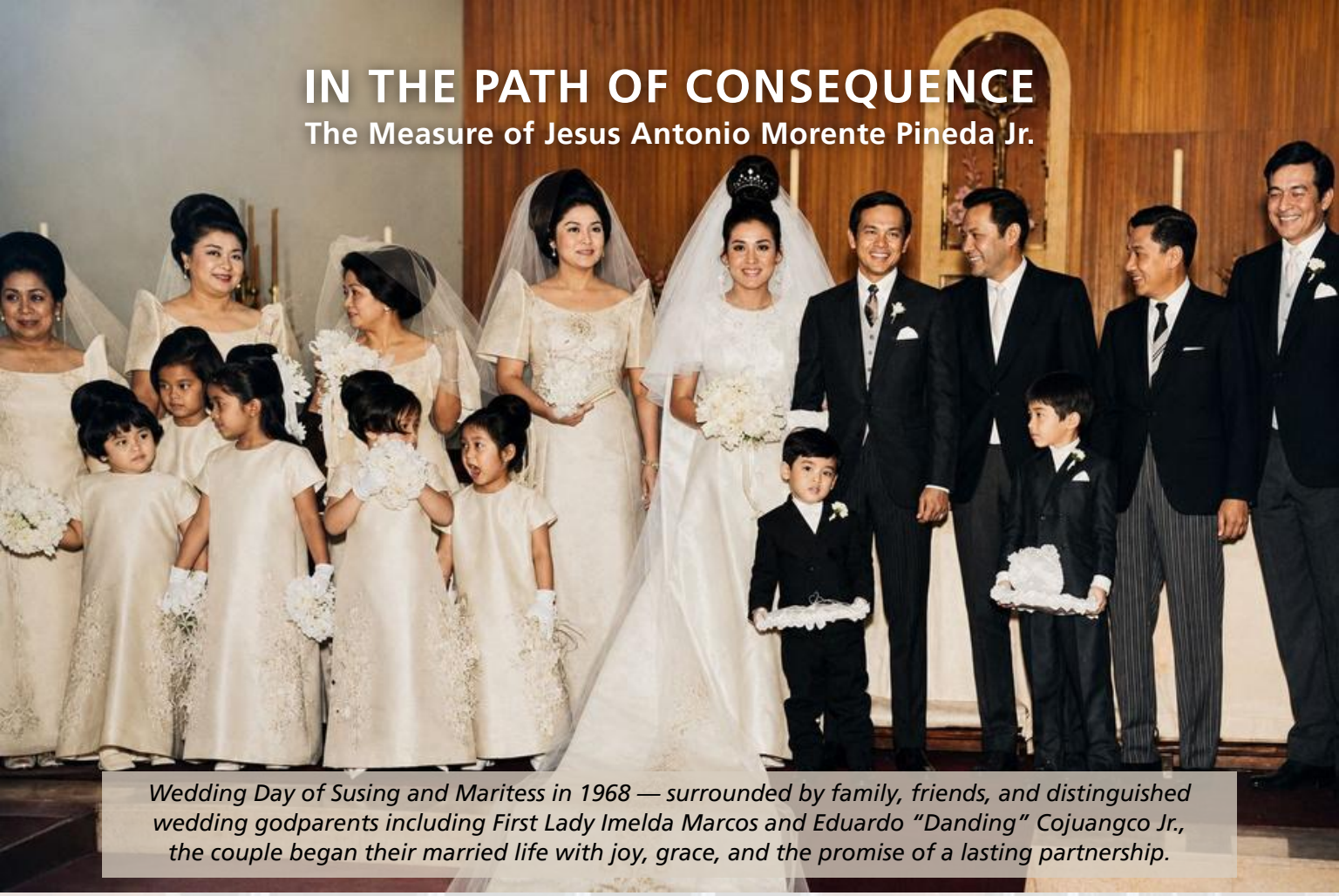
He pursued her with patience rather than intensity. What began as curiosity settled into certainty. When the moment came, he chose her without hesitation.

They married in 1968.

The early years of their life together were defined, in large part, by the demands of his career — long hours, frequent absences, and responsibilities

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Wedding Day of Susing and Maritess in 1968 — surrounded by family, friends, and distinguished wedding godparents including First Lady Imelda Marcos and Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr., the couple began their married life with joy, grace, and the promise of a lasting partnership.

that left little room for balance. There were sacrifices, moments missed, and time that could not be recovered. Yet the foundation of their relationship held, anchored in trust, faith, and a shared sense of purpose that did not require constant affirmation.

Together, they raised four children — Ria, Paolo, Carlo, and Patricia — offering them both support and independence. He did not impose direction so much as provide opportunity, allowing each to find their own path. It was an approach that reflected his own upbringing: guided, but not controlled; present, but never overbearing.

Years later, when asked about the secret to a lasting marriage, he did not offer anything elaborate. He spoke simply of humor — of the ability to laugh, to defuse tension, and to accept that perfection was neither expected nor necessary.

"There are no perfect marriages," he would say.
"Only perfectly imperfect ones."

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Susing and Maritess as newlyweds in 1968 — radiant with hope and joy as they began a lifelong journey together, building a marriage founded on love, partnership, and enduring devotion.

Service Without Spectacle

When Susing entered the Rotary Club of Manila on December 1, 1993, it was not the result of long-held ambition or deliberate pursuit. It came, as many things in his life did, through circumstance and persistence — shaped by a relationship he could not easily refuse.

His uncle, Past District 3810 Governor Patricio "Pat" Pineda, had been inviting him for years. The invitations were steady, almost expected, and just as consistently declined. At the time, Rotary seemed peripheral to Susing — admirable, certainly, but not essential to a life already occupied by business and institutional commitments.

But persistence, when anchored in familiarity, tends to endure.

One afternoon at the Manila Polo Club, over what was meant to be a routine lunch, the conversation shifted. There was no extended persuasion. Instead, his uncle recited the Rotary Four-Way Test — not as argument, but as reminder. By the time the meal ended, the application was in front of him.

All that remained was his signature.

He signed.

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What followed was not immediate immersion. As he had done in every new system he entered, Susing began by observing. He attended meetings regularly but did not rush to participate, choosing instead to listen and to understand the rhythms of the organization. He gravitated toward the elder statesmen of the club — figures such as Don Francisco "Paco" Delgado and his uncle — men whose understanding of Rotary was shaped not by recent projects, but by decades of experience.

From them, he came to see that Rotary, particularly in Manila, was more than a network.

It was a tradition.

His transition from observer to participant came gradually. During the presidency of Gert Gust, he was elected to the Board of Directors, taking on responsibilities that required both judgment and collaboration. The work exposed him to the inner mechanics of the organization — committee decisions, project oversight, and the realities of governance within a civic institution.

Not all of it was straightforward.

At one point, a legal dispute involving the club drew him into court proceedings alongside fellow director



Susing joins PEZA Director General Tereso O. Panga and fellow Manila Rotarians in a shared commitment to advancing investment, enterprise development, and national economic growth through stronger public-private collaboration.



Past Rotary International Director Raffy Garcia turns over a ₱1 million donation to the Leon Lambert Fellows, chaired by Centennial President Susing Pineda, in support of the organization's educational assistance program for deserving students.

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The Rotary Club of Manila, under the leadership of President Susing Pineda, formalizes its partnership with the Polytechnic University of the Philippines through a Memorandum of Agreement with PUP President Dr. Manuel Muhi, reaffirming a shared commitment to expand educational opportunities and provide meaningful support for deserving PUP scholars.

Teddy Ocampo.

It was his first direct encounter with litigation in that setting — unfamiliar, at times uncomfortable, and markedly different from the cooperative environment he had come to expect. Yet the experience reinforced a principle he already understood: institutions, regardless of intent, are not immune to conflict. They require stewardship — and, when necessary, defense.

Over time, his presence within the club became more defined. He was not the most vocal member, nor the most visibly assertive, but he was consistent. He showed up, contributed where needed, and built relationships that extended beyond formal roles.

When the opportunity to lead came, it did not come easily.

His election to the presidency — eventually culminating in his role as Centennial President in 2019 — was closely contested, reflecting the dynamics of an organization where leadership was both privilege and responsibility. By the time he assumed the role, the club was preparing to mark its 100th year, a moment that called not only for reflection, but for direction.

Susing approached it with focus.

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His presidency was anchored on education. He believed that if Rotary were to remain relevant, its work had to produce outcomes that endured beyond the life of any single project. Visibility, while useful, was secondary to impact.

One of his most significant initiatives was a scholarship program launched in partnership with institutions such as the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila and the Polytechnic University of the Philippines. Beginning in 2019, the program supported approximately 200 students, each receiving a modest monthly stipend.

In absolute terms, the amount was limited.
In practice, it was transformative.

For many of the students, the support covered transportation, meals, and daily expenses — costs that often determined whether they could remain in school. The selection process was deliberate, overseen by respected Rotarians to ensure that recipients were chosen not only for academic performance but for character and genuine need.

What emerged from that process left an impression on him.



Susing with DPWH Secretary Vince Dizon during a gathering of the Consular Corps, fostering dialogue and collaboration among leaders in government, diplomacy, and public service.

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These were not abstract beneficiaries, but individuals navigating constraints that extended well beyond the classroom. Their ability to continue studying depended not only on intelligence, but on resilience.

He did not see the program as charity. He saw it as investment.

Alongside this, he supported broader initiatives, working with partners such as the Ayala Foundation to develop educational facilities, including programs designed for working students in underserved communities. He also contributed to ongoing Rotary efforts in healthcare and nutrition, ensuring continuity in projects that had already taken root.

Fundraising, often a challenge in civic organizations, came naturally to him — not because he approached it as a campaign, but because he treated it as an extension of relationships. During his Centennial year, he raised approximately ₱24 million, largely through direct engagement. He spoke to individuals, explained the purpose of each initiative, and asked — not for himself, but for the work.

People gave because they trusted him.

His involvement extended beyond Rotary into microfinance, where he served as chairman of Grameen Pilipinas Microfinance, Inc. Through this work, he helped expand access to small loans for underserved communities — sari-sari store owners, small entrepreneurs, and individuals operating at the margins of the formal



Rotary Club of Manila President Susing Pineda shares a moment of fellowship with fellow RCM members during the National Festival of Talents in 2019, reflecting the enduring camaraderie and spirit of service that continue to unite Asia's first Rotary club.



Together with the Ayala Foundation under the leadership of President Ruel Maranan, the Rotary Club of Manila, led by President Susing, launched the Sari-Saring Aralan Project in 2019 — a collaborative initiative dedicated to empowering out-of-school youth through education, skills development, and renewed opportunities for a better future.

economy. By the late 2010s, the program had reached around 10,000 beneficiaries.

For Susing, this was not a departure from his earlier work, but a return to it.

It reflected a belief he had long held — that systems, to be meaningful, must include those at their lowest levels.

What distinguished his approach across these efforts was consistency. He did not publicize his involvement extensively, nor did he frame projects as personal achievements. He saw them as part of a continuum — work that extended beyond any single role or period.

Service, for him, was not an event.

It was a practice.
It required presence more than performance.

And in that steady, deliberate way, he built a legacy within Rotary that was not defined by visibility, but by impact — measured not in recognition, but in the lives that moved forward because something had been made possible.

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Susing Pineda received front cover recognition from BizNews Asia magazine in 2019 as Centennial President of the Rotary Club of Manila, commemorating the historic 100th year of Asia's first Rotary club and his leadership during its milestone centennial celebration.

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Diplomacy Without Illusion

Susing Pineda did not set out to become a diplomat.

Unlike his entry into banking, which followed a deliberate progression of education, exposure, and responsibility, his involvement in diplomacy came almost by accident — an extension of relationships rather than ambition. What began as a brief encounter would, over time, evolve into a role that quietly occupied his later years.

The moment itself did not announce its significance.

In 2014, during a diplomatic gathering in Manila hosted by Ambassador Manuel "Manolo" Lopez, the evening unfolded in the familiar rhythm of such events — formal, courteous, and largely inconsequential. Conversations moved easily across tables, introductions were made, and pleasantries exchanged. It was within that setting, at one table among many, that Susing found himself seated beside the Ambassador of Fiji to Japan, who also held jurisdiction over the Philippines.

Fiji, though distant and modest in scale, maintained its diplomatic presence across the region through a network of honorary consuls. Their exchange was brief. Names were shared, cards passed,



Susing shares a warm moment with Philippine Ambassador to the United States Jose Manuel "Babe" Romualdez — fellow Manila Rotarians bound by friendship, diplomacy, and a shared commitment to service and nation-building.

and the conversation moved on. There was no indication, at that moment, that anything more would follow.
Three months later, the call came.

The Fijian government was offering him the position of Honorary Consul General to the Philippines.
He accepted — not for the title, but for the nature of the work itself.

What he encountered bore little resemblance to the formal image often associated with diplomacy. There were no negotiations of consequence, no ceremonial exchanges that defined policy or power.

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Instead, the work unfolded through individuals — through cases that required attention, judgment, and persistence more than protocol.

Among the first challenges he faced were Fijian nationals who had overstayed their visas in the Philippines. Many had built lives — marrying Filipinas, raising families — but existed without legal status, caught between countries and systems that did not easily accommodate them. Resolving their situation was not a matter of simple compliance. It required navigating immigration processes, securing clearances, and addressing penalties that had accumulated over time.

This was work that could not be handled at a distance.

Susing engaged directly, establishing contact with officials at the Bureau of Immigration and building relationships that allowed the process to move forward. Rather than relying solely on formal channels, he approached the problem in a way that was characteristically his — practical, deliberate, and relational. He created access where it did not exist, built trust where it was needed, and worked through each case individually.

The number of individuals involved was not large — perhaps fifty in total — but



Ambassador Isikeli Mataitoga of Fiji formally confers upon Susing Pineda the title of Honorary Consul in 2014, recognizing his longstanding contributions to diplomacy, international relations, and public service.

the complexity of each situation required attention.

He handled them one by one.

Beyond immigration concerns, he began to focus on education, recognizing an opportunity that aligned both with the Philippines' strengths and Fiji's needs. He facilitated the placement of Fijian students in agricultural and irrigation training programs at institutions such as the University of the Philippines. These

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were not formal agreements negotiated at the state level, but arrangements made possible through coordination and trust — practical solutions that served immediate and long-term purposes.

For Fiji, it represented capacity-building.

For Susing, it was a continuation of something he had long believed — that education, when properly directed, could create lasting impact.

Not all situations were structured.

There were cases that demanded immediate intervention, where process alone was insufficient. In one instance, he encountered a young Fijian national struggling with drug dependency — a former athlete whose circumstances had deteriorated beyond control. The situation required more than administrative handling. Susing arranged for rehabilitation, coordinating with medical institutions to ensure that the individual received care despite limited resources.

These efforts were not visible.
They were not meant to be.
But they mattered.

Over time, his involvement deepened, and he became more active within the Consular Corps of the Philippines — a network of honorary consuls that



Susing joins members of the Consular Corps together with Foreign Affairs Secretary Ma. Theresa "Tess" Lazaro in an evening of diplomacy, friendship, and shared commitment to strengthening international relations and global cooperation.

functioned as both a formal and informal structure for coordination among diplomatic representatives. The work required not only familiarity with systems, but the ability to move within them, balancing relationships, responsibilities, and expectations across different jurisdictions.

Leadership within the Corps was not automatic. It had to be recognized.

In 2024, he was elected Dean of the Consular Corps, a role that placed him at the center of its operations. The position required both diplomacy and management — providing direction while maintaining alignment with Philippine

institutions and the interests of the countries represented.

He approached it the same way he had approached everything else in his life.

Not with visibility, but with structure.

One of his priorities was economic diplomacy, an area that allowed him to draw from his experience in business while extending the reach of his diplomatic work. In mid-2024, he led a mission to Davao City, bringing together ambassadors and representatives from several countries to explore opportunities in agriculture and tourism. The objective was not ceremonial. It was to understand, to connect, and to identify where collaboration could be made practical.

The delegation engaged with local leaders, examined possibilities, and established pathways that could be developed further. It was, in many ways, a continuation of the work he had done decades earlier — linking systems, facilitating relationships, and enabling movement across boundaries that were often more administrative than real.

He also emphasized education as a central focus, supporting initiatives that sought not only to provide resources but to create environments where learning could be sustained. Programs developed



As Dean of the Consular Corps, Susing joined Education Secretary Sonny Angara in extending financial assistance for underprivileged students, reaffirming a shared commitment to education, opportunity, and nation-building through public service.

during his tenure reflected this approach — measured, practical, and oriented toward outcomes rather than visibility.

What distinguished his leadership was not scale. It was clarity.

He did not attempt to redefine diplomacy or expand its image. Instead, he grounded it — reducing it to what he believed it should be at its core: a means of making systems work for people.

For him, diplomacy was not representation alone.
It was problem-solving.
Ensuring that relationships produced tangible outcomes.

That systems functioned as intended.
That individuals, often overlooked, could find resolution within structures that otherwise moved too slowly.

By January 2025, as his term concluded and leadership transitioned, there were no dramatic changes to mark his tenure.
No sweeping reforms or visible transformations.

But there was continuity.

And in institutions, continuity often matters more than disruption.
Looking back, his role in diplomacy did not alter his identity.

It extended it.

He remained what he had always been — a man who understood systems, who moved within their limits, and who worked, quietly and persistently, to make them function just a little better than they otherwise would have.



Susing, as Dean of the Consular Corps, with Foreign Affairs Secretary Maria Theresa "Tess" Parreño Lazaro, strengthening ties between the diplomatic community and the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs in the spirit of cooperation and international friendship.

IN THE PATH OF CONSEQUENCE

The Measure of Jesus Antonio Morente Pineda Jr.



Susing shares a warm moment with United States Ambassador MaryKay Carlson and Mr. Aubrey Carlson during an evening celebrating friendship, partnership, and enduring alliances between the Philippines and the United States.



At the Ephesus House in Tagaytay, Susing shares a meaningful moment with businessman and philanthropist Ramon S. Ang, whose generosity became a true blessing for the Ephesus Foundation's spiritual mission. The Ephesus Foundation is the spiritual project behind the Ephesus House of Mama Mary — an exact replica of the original House of the Virgin Mary in Ephesus, Turkey. While Susing led the efforts to raise the funds necessary to build the shrine in Tagaytay, Ramon Ang generously donated the property where the Ephesus House now stands.

Beyond this extraordinary gesture, RSA also committed an additional ₱100 million for the construction of the pilgrims' chapel and other surrounding amenities, which are now being developed. Truly, it has been a remarkable blessing that continues to touch the lives and faith of countless pilgrims and devotees.

IN THE PATH OF CONSEQUENCE

The Measure of Jesus Antonio Morente Pineda Jr.



Surrounded by their children and loved ones, Susing and Maritess Pineda celebrate their golden wedding anniversary not only with gratitude and joy, but with a shared commitment to give back — proudly presenting a scholarship cheque that reflects fifty years of family, generosity, and purposeful living.

A Life, Considered

In the later years of his life, as the urgency of daily decisions began to recede, Susing Pineda found himself entering a phase few ever fully prepare for — the gradual shift from participation to reflection.

It did not arrive all at once. There was no clear moment when work ended or responsibility was formally set aside. Instead, the transition unfolded quietly, as roles evolved, others assumed what he once carried, and the systems he had helped build continued to function without his direct involvement. For a man shaped by decades within institutions, this required a different kind of discipline — not the discipline of action, but of perspective.

Looking back, he does not divide his life into neat categories. Business, politics, and personal decisions were never separate spheres; they overlapped, influenced one another, and often

unfolded simultaneously. His years in banking, particularly during the formation of the United Coconut Planters Bank, remain central — not because they defined success, but because they revealed both the potential and fragility of systems. He had seen institutions rise with clarity of purpose, only to be reshaped by forces beyond their control. Structures that once seemed stable could, in time, become subjects of scrutiny, their origins questioned and their intentions reinterpreted.

These experiences did not leave him disillusioned, but they did leave him measured.

He speaks of Ferdinand Marcos without absolutes, recalling the decisiveness of the early years while recognizing the limitations that emerged over time. Discipline, once imposed, created order, but power, when extended without restraint, could lose its balance. His view of Benigno Aquino Jr. is shaped by a different appreciation — an acknowledgment of his ability to communicate, to connect, and to move people through words. Yet even that admiration is tempered by the understanding that leadership is never defined by a single strength.

He does not attempt to reconcile these figures into a single narrative. He allows



Susing and Maritess Pineda celebrate 50 years of love, partnership, and shared purpose — a golden journey marked by enduring devotion, family, friendship, and a lifetime of service together.

IN THE PATH OF CONSEQUENCE

The Measure of Jesus Antonio Morente Pineda Jr.

them to remain as they were — complex, contradictory, shaped by their time. That same refusal to simplify extends to how he understands his own life. He does not frame it as a sequence of successes and failures, nor does he attempt to impose meaning on moments that, at the time, unfolded without clear resolution. Instead, he sees it as a series of situations — some understood, others not — each contributing in ways that only become clear in hindsight.

When asked about regret, he acknowledges it without dwelling on it. There are decisions that might have been made differently, relationships that did not unfold as expected, and outcomes that moved beyond his control. But for him, regret serves no purpose unless it leads to acceptance, and acceptance is not passive. It is an active recognition that life resists perfect balance.

"Life is not fair," he says — not as a complaint, but as fact.

The response, then, is not to expect fairness, but to work toward it — to adjust, to compensate, and to make circumstances less unequal where possible. It is a philosophy shaped by experience, grounded in the understanding that outcomes are often



Monina Lopez, Eleanor Laya de Gracia, Maritess and Susing Pineda, and Trixie Cepeda-Sison gather in celebration and thanksgiving during the 50th Wedding Anniversary Renewal of Vows of Susing and Maritess at the St. Michael the Archangel Parish, marking five decades of enduring love, faith, and friendship.

influenced by forces beyond individual control.

This perspective extends to his relationships. Over the years, he has known both loyalty and its absence. There were those he helped who did not return that support, moments when trust was tested and expectations were unmet. He does not deny these experiences, but neither does he allow them to define his approach. To help, in his view, is not to create obligation — it is simply to act. Whether that action is

IN THE PATH OF CONSEQUENCE

The Measure of Jesus Antonio Morente Pineda Jr.



Three generations of the Rodriguez–Pineda family gather in celebration of the birth anniversary of Don Eugenio "Amang" Rodriguez, with his granddaughter Maritess Rodriguez Mendoza-Pineda and the family continuing the legacy of kinship, tradition, and public service.

acknowledged or reciprocated is secondary. It is not idealism. It is discipline.

The same discipline that guided his work within institutions now informs how he understands people. Expectations, when left unchecked, lead to disappointment. When adjusted, they allow for clarity.

In contrast, the relationships that have endured — family, close friends, long-standing associates — were never contingent on circumstance. They were built over time and sustained not by transaction, but by presence. He speaks of his children, each having pursued their own paths, and of gatherings that continue not out of obligation, but because they are valued. These are not peripheral to his story. They are what remain when other roles recede.

There are moments when the impact of his life returns to him unexpectedly — a former employee whose retirement

IN THE PATH OF CONSEQUENCE

The Measure of Jesus Antonio Morente Pineda Jr.

benefits provided stability, a family whose circumstances improved through assistance given years earlier, a passing encounter where someone recalls a decision that made a difference. He does not seek these affirmations, but he recognizes them when they come.

They do not define his achievements. They affirm his approach.

When asked how he wishes to be remembered, he does not construct an elaborate legacy. Titles and positions, he understands, are temporary. What endures is simpler — a name, a reputation, and the sense, carried by others, that he acted with fairness, that he was consistent, and that he used what he had not to accumulate, but to contribute.

He does not claim to have done this perfectly.
Only with intention.

And in the end, when the institutions he once moved within have evolved beyond recognition and the urgency of his earlier years has given way to quieter rhythms, he returns to what he considers the only measures that matter.

Family and friends.

Everything else belongs to time.



Susing shares a lighthearted moment with his sons, Paolo and Carlo, during a family vacation in Bangkok — a glimpse of the warmth, laughter, and close bond that have always defined their family life.



Susing and Maritess surrounded by their growing family at their San Juan residence during Christmas 2025 — a joyful gathering marked by love, laughter, gratitude, and the enduring strength of family across generations.

Epilogue: Power, Memory, and Meaning

In reflecting on his life, Susing does not divide experience into neat categories. The personal and the political, the professional and the philosophical, have never existed separately for him; they have always overlapped, each shaping the other in ways that only become clear over time.

He has seen power in many forms — held, resisted, and, at times, absorbed by those who moved within it. He neither romanticizes it nor rejects it outright. What remains with him is an understanding of its complexity, shaped less by theory than by proximity.

He speaks of Ferdinand Marcos with measured acknowledgment, recalling the decisiveness that defined the early years of his administration while recognizing how that same power, extended over time, revealed its limits. His view of Benigno Aquino Jr. carries

IN THE PATH OF CONSEQUENCE

The Measure of Jesus Antonio Morente Pineda Jr.

a different tone — an appreciation for his ability to communicate, to persuade, and to connect with people in ways few could. He does not attempt to reconcile these perspectives into a single judgment. He allows them to remain as they were: complex, incomplete, and human.

That same acceptance shapes how he understands his own life. He does not see it as a sequence of clearly defined chapters or tidy conclusions, but as a collection of experiences — some understood, others not, some resolved, others still unfolding in memory. Regret, when it surfaces, is acknowledged but not given weight. It is part of the whole, but not its center.

What matters more, in his view, is acceptance — the recognition that outcomes are often shaped by forces beyond individual control, and that fairness, while never guaranteed, remains something worth working toward.

In the end, he does not measure his life by what has been accumulated, but by what has endured. Relationships — family, friends, those who remain when structures change and roles recede — form the constant thread.

Everything else, he understands, moves with time.

What remains is who stayed. ▮



Nowadays, Susing Pineda finds his greatest joy in the company of his beloved grandchildren, cherishing the simple moments of laughter, play, and togetherness that make family life deeply meaningful.



ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

SERVICE ABOVE SELF

DISCON & AWARDS 2026

DAY 1 (May 22, 2026)



DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra, Special Assistant to the Governor-Manila SDG Albert S. Alday and President Raoul Creencia as part of the group photo of the United Chosen EXECOM, District Officers and Team at the UCP Breakfast with RIPR PDG Sushena Ranatunga.



Pres. Raoul Creencia at the registration booth



Dir. Warren So, DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra, PE Reggie Yu, President Raoul Creencia, VPE Karlo Castro and DE/Dir. Mike Albaña striking a pose before the processional of the Opening Ceremonies

DISCON & AWARDS 2026



President Raoul Creencia during the processional of the Opening Ceremonies of the DISCON AND AWARDS 2026



PDG Jackie Rodriguez during the processional of the Opening Ceremonies



Special Assistant to the Governor-Manila SDG Albert S. Alday during the processional of the Opening Ceremonies



DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra during the processional of the Opening Ceremonies

DISCON & AWARDS 2026



DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra delivering the Closing Remarks at the United Chosen Presidents Breakfast last May 22, 2026 on the first day of the DISCON AND AWARDS 2026 at the Le Parc Event Hall, Pasay City.



The delegation of electors of the Rotary Club of Manila at the Business Meeting on the first day of the DISCON AND AWARDS 2026.



DISCON & AWARDS 2026



PE Reggie Yu as part of the group picture of the Impact Creating Presidents Breakfast.



The Electors from the Rotary Club of Manila, namely, VPE Karlo Castro, Club Sec Anton Mauricio, PE Reggie Yu, DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra, DE/Dir. Mike Albaña, President Raoul Creencia and DE/BLA Caloy Serapio.

DISCON & AWARDS 2026



PDG Vince Carlos, PDG Jackie Rodriguez and DGND Hermie Esguerra attended the Rotary International President's Representative Luncheon with the Council of Governors hosted by Rotary District 3810 Council of Governors Chairperson PDG Joyce Michelle Socorro Ambray last May 22, 2026 at the Grand Westside Hotel, Parañaque City as part of the activities of Day 1 of the DISCON AND AWARDS 2026.



Dir. Warren So, DE/BLA Caloy Serapio, Special Assistant to the Governor-Manila SDG Albert S. Alday, PE Reggie Yu, President Raoul Creencia, VPE Karlo Castro, Club Secretary Anton Mauricio and PDG Vince Carlos as part of the Rotary Club of Manila delegation last May 22, 2026 during the Opening Plenary during Day 1 of the DISCON AND AWARDS 2026 at the Le Pavillon in Pasay City.

DISCON & AWARDS 2026



President Raoul Creencia in his high-powered performance as Danny Zuko in the broadway musical, “Grease” presented by the other half of the Manila Area.





DGND Hermie Esguerra as part of the performance of the Council of Governors of Rotary District 3810



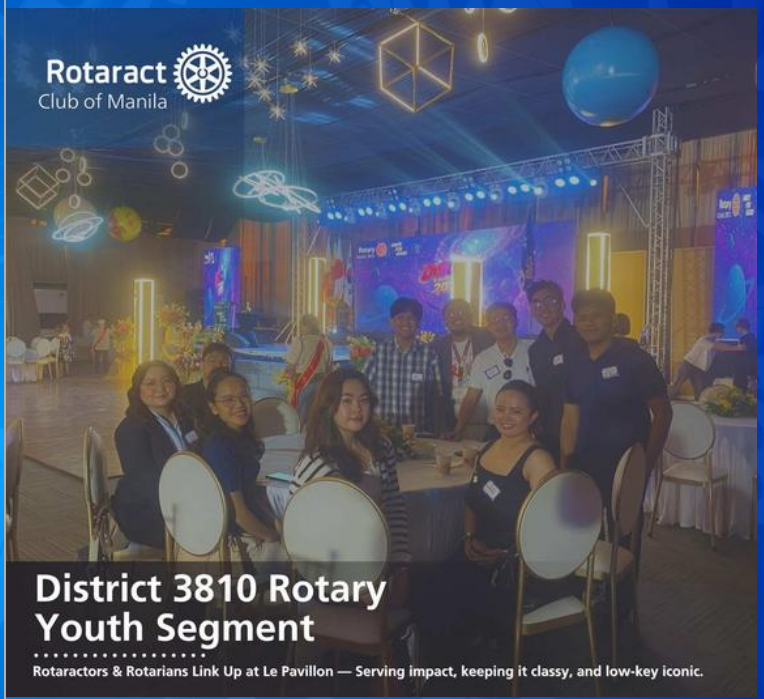


DISCON & AWARDS 2026

DAY 2 (May 23, 2026)



DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra announcing that he will add Php 75,000 for each award level of the broadway musical presentations of the different areas.



Members of the Rotaract Club of Manila attending the Youth Segment of the DISCON AND AWARDS 2026, entitled, "Young Leaders, Big Impact".

DISCON & AWARDS 2026



Special Assistant to the Governor-Manila SDG Albert S.Alday, PE Reggie Yu, Club Secretary Anton Mauricio, President Raoul Creencia, PDG Jackie Rodriguez, VPE Karlo Castro and Dir. Mike Albaña at the Day Two Plenary.



PDG Rudy Bediones and Rotary International President's Representative (RIPR) PDG Sushena Ranatunga of Rotary District 3220 sharing a light moment.



PE Reggie Yu, DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra, President Raoul Creencia, PDG Jackie Rodriguez, VPE Karlo Castro and Club Secretary Anton Mauricio at the Plenary of Day Two.

DISCON & AWARDS 2026



President Raoul Creencia as part of the UCP Fashion Show representing Thailand



PDG Rudy Bediones, President Raoul Creencia and DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra striking a pose after the Fashion Show.



President Raoul Creencia with his fellow United Chosen Presidents during the Fashion Show

DISCON & AWARDS 2026



DGND Hermie Esguerra, Incoming Deputy District Public Image Coordinator Albert S. Alday and PE Reggie Yu as part of the performance of the Impact Creating team.



UP System President Angelo Jimenez speaking on "United for Progress: Transformation Leadership in Times of Crisis and Opportunity"



Dr. William Yu, Chief Technology Officer & Co-Founder, Novare Technologies and Past President of the Rotary Club of Manila Bay, speaking on "The 25th Hour: How AI Gives Rotarians Time Back for More Service"



P/Gen. Nicolas Torre (Ret.), General Manager, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), speaking on the topic, "Peace & Order in the Metropolis"

DISCON & AWARDS 2026



PE Reggie Yu and Club Secretary Anton Mauricio sharing a light moment with speaker, Dr. William Yu, Past President of the Rotary Club of Manila Bay.



UP Alumni among the Rotary Club of Manila, namely, Dir. Mike Albaña, VPE Karlo Castro, PE Reggie Yu and Special Assistant to the Governor-Manila SDG Albert S. Alday strike a pose with UP System President Angelo "Jijil" Jimenez and DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra.



Special Assistant to the Governor-Manila SDG Albert S. Alday, President Raoul Creencia and Rotary Ann Atty. Mylene Marcia-Creencia, PDG Rudy Bediones and Dir. Warren So later in the evening at the District Awards



DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra announcing the consolation prize winners at the Be a United Chosen Millionaire Raffle Draw



President Raoul Creencia receiving one of the first wave of awards

DISCON & AWARDS 2026



President Raoul Creencia with the plaques representing the first wave of awards of the Rotary Club of Manila



President Raoul Creencia receiving the **Every Rotarian Every Year** Award



President Raoul Creencia receiving the **Midyear Review Best in Oral Report** First Place Award



President Raoul Creencia receiving the **Top 2 Polio Giving** Award

DISCON & AWARDS 2026

DAY 3 (May 24, 2026)



Special Assistant to the Governor-Manila SDG Albert S. Alday, President Raoul Creencia, DE/BLA Caloy Serapio, DE Mike Roxas and Club Secretary Anton Mauricio as early birds



Special Assistant to the Governor SDG Albert S. Alday, Dir. Warren So, President Raoul Creencia, PE Reggie Yu and VP Ricky Guevara at the District Awards



The Rotary Club of Manila delegation receiving the first wave of awards for the day

DISCON & AWARDS 2026

The various awards of the club as part of the first wave of awards for the day







DISCON & AWARDS 2026



Various photos of President Raoul Creencia receiving the higher awards capped by the much coveted Most Outstanding Rotary Club and Most Outstanding Rotary Club President for RY 2025-2026 (one of the five best of the best overall), the highest awards given that night.





DISCON & AWARDS 2026











DISCON & AWARDS 2026





DGND/DSG Hermie Hermie Esguerra receiving the **Governor's Exemplary Service Award** from District Governor Mary Mei Rodrigo



DISCON & AWARDS 2026



DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra dancing at the Governor's Ball



DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra and President Raoul Creencia dancing at the Governor's Ball



President Raoul Creencia dancing at the Governor's Ball



DISCON & AWARDS 2026



President Raoul Creencia presenting the token painting to DG Mary Mei Rodrigo on behalf of the United Chosen Presidents



PDG Rudy Bediones won the 50" TV at the Be a United Chosen Millionaire Raffle Draw with Lot 168, Ticket No. 80162



DG Mary Mei Rodrigo giving her response of gratitude to the painting presented by President Raoul Creencia on behalf of the United Chosen Presidents

DISCON & AWARDS 2026



DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra together with PDG Joyce Michelle Socorro Ambray winning the grand prize of One Million Pesos (Lot 147, Ticket No. 70247) in the Be A United Chosen Millionaire Raffle Draw which will be shared between the Association of District Secretaries (ADSEC), their household help and the District Sergeant-at-Arms.



DISCON & AWARDS 2026

ROTARY CLUB OF MANILA AWARDS

RY 2025-2026

- Most Outstanding Rotary Club, RY 2025-2026 (one of the five best of the best overall)
- Most Outstanding President, RY 2025-2026 (one of the five best of the best overall)
- Fifteen Outstanding United Chosen Presidents for RY 2025-2026 under Core Values
- Platinum Rotary Club Excellence Award
- Platinum President Excellence Award – UCP Raoul Creencia
- Best in Club Administration
- Distinguished Service in Rotary Areas of Focus Awards
  1. Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention – LEAP Awards (Leaders Excelling in Alternative Dispute Resolution)
  2. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene – Wash Station Project – Handwashing Facility
  3. Community Economic Development – ARAL (Advancing Resources for Accessible Learning)
- Distinguished Governor's Challenge Award
- Governor's Exemplary Service Award – DGND/DSG Herminio S. Esguerra
- Governor's Award for Outstanding DISCON 2026 Delegation
- Every Rotarian, Every Year Club Excellence Award
- Top 2 Club in the District in Polio Giving of US $3,078.56
- Top 3 Club in the District in TRF Total Giving of US $33,696.56
- Midyear Review Excellence Award Best in Oral Report – 1st Place, UCP Raoul Creencia
- District Excellence Award for Midyear Review Participation
- Sponsoring/Chartering New Club – Rotary Club of Manila Alpha
- Leadership Award with Distinction – UCP Raoul C. Creencia
- Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention Achievement
- Disease Prevention and Treatment Achievement

DISCON & AWARDS 2026

ROTARY CLUB OF MANILA AWARDS

RY 2025-2026

- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Achievement
- Maternal and Child Health Achievement
- Basic Education and Literacy Achievement
- Community Economic Development Achievement
- Environment Achievement
- Avenue of Service Achievement Award – Vocational Service
- Avenue of Service Achievement Award – Club Service
- Avenue of Service Achievement Award – Youth Service
- Avenue of Service Achievement Award – International Service
- District Event Hosting Achievement, District Oktoberfest
- Governor's Exemplary Service Award – Special Assistant to the Governor-Manila
  - SDG Albert S. Alday
- Governor's Exemplary Service Award - District House Committee Chairman
  - SDG Michael Jaey Albaña
- Governor's Exemplary Service Award – Online Tool and Website
  - SDG Aries B. Balanay
- Governor's Exemplary Service Award – GML Editor-in-Chief
  - SDG Reginald T. Yu
- Plaque of Appreciation – Special Assistant to the Governor-Manila SDG Albert S. Alday
  - Chairman, Correspondence, DISCON and AWARDS 2026

Rotary Club of Pasay's 67th Anniversary

President Raoul Creencia, PDG Vince Carlos, and PDG Jackie Rodriguez joined the Rotary Club of Pasay's Past Presidents and other District dignitaries to celebrate the club's 67th anniversary. The event was held on May 20 at the Hilton Newport Hotel. RC Pasay is a daughter club of the Rotary Club of Manila.



President Raoul Creencia with Rotary Club of Pasay President Eric Pasion

RCMFI Attends PCNC's 27th General Assembly





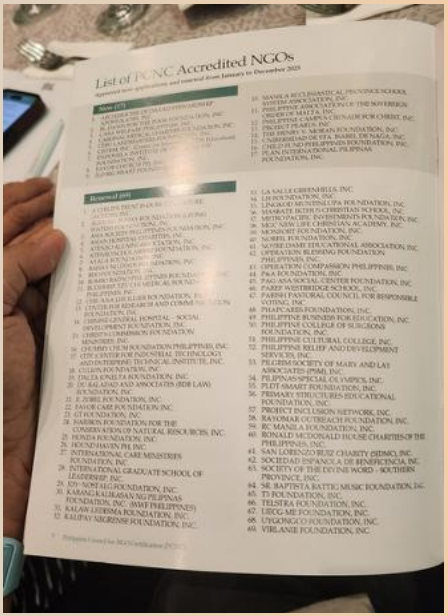




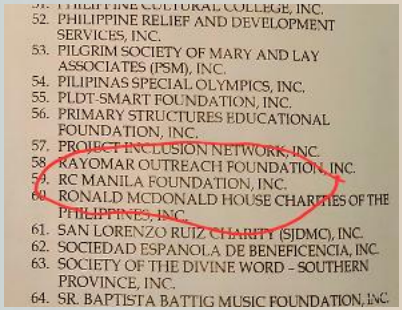








Secretary Anton Mauricio represented the RCManila Foundation, Inc. at the PCNC's 27th General Assembly on May 14, 2026 in Crowne Plaza Manila Galleria. RCMFI is a PCNC-accredited NGO.



RCM Supports Inner Wheel Club's Young Women's Leadership Summit



The Rotary Club of Manila was proud to support the Inner Wheel Club of Manila's fundraiser for the Young Women's Leadership Summit. The dinner dance event was held at Club Filipino on May 27, 2026.



Manila Rotarians with Inner Wheel Club of Manila President Delby Bragais







IN THE NEWS

RCM Past President/Former Supreme Court Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban's Column in the Philippine Daily Inquirer

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
OPINION

Editor
Juliet L. Javellana

Government must speak with one voice



WITH DUE RESPECT
ARTEMIO V. PANGANIBAN

The Supreme Court, voting 9-5-1, denied Sen. Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa's prayer for a temporary restraining order (TRO) or status quo ante order (SQAO) to prevent his possible arrest arising from a warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC). The controversy has since been broadcast, debated, and even politicized ad infinitum. Let me, however, discuss what I believe is a very fundamental issue: Has the government adopted a clear, consistent, and unified position?

PRIOR TO THIS 9-5-1 VOTE, the Court passed sub silentio Dela Rosa's repetitive motions for the issuance of an ex parte TRO or SQAO. It merely ordered the respondents to comment on the petition and the petitioner-senator to reply thereto. That practical denial of Dela Rosa's plea should have given the government enough leeway to form a strong, unified stance to arrest the lawmaker and haul him to the ICC.

Then again, the Court's 9-5-1 denial of Dela Rosa's pleas strongly suggests a judicial recognition, at least preliminarily, that to the executive branch belongs the power to determine whether to cooperate with the ICC and that determination deserves judicial deference. It also woke up the government into, at last, acting solidly behind the Department of Justice's opinion, though belatedly, to bring Dela Rosa to justice.

Parenthetically, the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) led by the brilliant Darlene Marie B. Berberabe pointed to Section 17 of Republic Act No. 9851 (titled "Philippine Act on Crimes Against International Humanitarian Law, Genocide, and Other Crimes Against Humanity"), which "vests upon the State the discretion to determine whether a person accused of crimes punishable under the law should be surrendered to an international tribunal ... such as the ICC."

As the counsel of the government, the OSG emphasized that the implementation of the ICC's warrant is within the power of the executive, since it "requires the discretion and wisdom of the President" on matters involving foreign relations and dealings with the international community.

Citing Pangilinan v. Cayetano (Mar. 16, 2021, per SAJ Marvic M.V.M. Leonen, en banc, 15-0), the OSG insisted that the President's discretion as chief architect of our foreign policy must be accorded great respect and deference by the judiciary.

In contrast, Israelito Torreon, counsel for Dela Rosa, countered that the government cannot "disclaim ICC obligation in pleadings, then use an ICC warrant as the practical basis for a domestic arrest." He pointed to prior contrasting public pronouncements from executive officials who contended that, after withdrawing from the Rome Statute, the Philippines was no longer duty-bound to cooperate with the ICC. He added that no less than the President declared that the government would "not lift a finger" to assist the ICC.

I BELIEVE THE QUESTION IS NOT WHETHER ONE SUPPORTS OR OPPOSES THE ICC WARRANT OF ARREST. The more important concern is the need for the government to speak with clarity and consistency in all matters, especially those involving international accountability.

Relevantly, the Supreme Court of the United States (Scotus) offers an instructive parallel. In Zivotofsky v. Kerry (June 8, 2015), it ruled that the President has the "exclusive power to grant formal recognition to a foreign sovereign" as part of his powers over foreign affairs. Interestingly, the Scotus stressed that the "[n]ation must speak ... with one voice" and "only the Executive has the characteristic of unity at all times."

This is why the OSG's stance as the legal counsel of the state becomes particularly significant. When the OSG speaks, it speaks as the singular voice of the government. Yet, various officials projected differing approaches. Some insisted that the Philippine withdrawal from the Rome Statute terminated all its ICC obligations. Others acknowledged residual duties arising from proceedings initiated before the withdrawal.

ADMITTEDLY, CONTRASTING VIEWS WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT are natural in constitutional democracies. Even collegiate courts are sometimes divided. But once the executive branch adopts a legal posture before the Supreme Court through the OSG, consistency becomes indispensable. Government officials cannot oscillate and offer competing theories. This oscillation creates institutional confusion and international embarrassment.

Even the OSG itself recognized the danger of "multifarious pronouncements" from different departments that undermine the coherence of the government's official stance. The warning is well taken. For when the executive branch is divided on whether ICC warrants may be enforced, uncertainty inevitably follows, not only for law enforcement agencies but also for the courts, the Filipino public, and the international community.

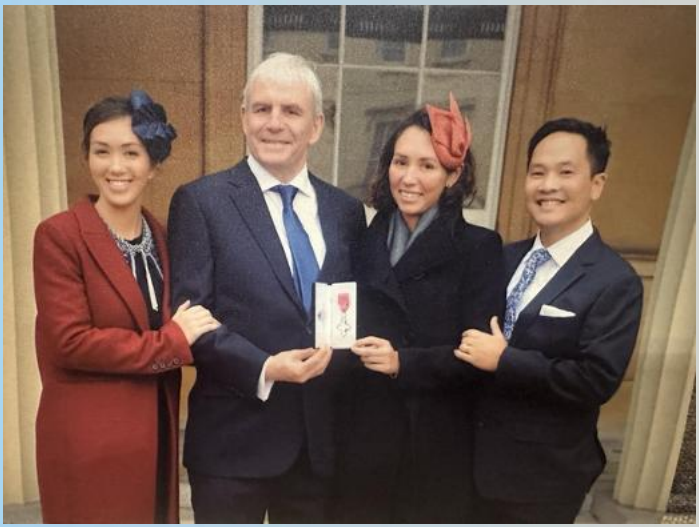
In fine, whether the ICC ultimately possesses enforceable jurisdiction over Dela Rosa is an issue the Court will resolve in due course. While waiting for the final determination, one principle should remain: The government must put its act together and speak with one voice.

One strong, resonant voice and one clear stance on the arrest of the senator and on any other subject.

Comments to chiefjusticepanganiban@hotmail.com

RECOGNITION CORNER

Dave Reynolds Receives Member of the British Empire (MBE) Award



DSAA Dave Reynolds was awarded a Member of the British Empire (MBE) outside Buckingham Palace.

He is pictured here with his children (from left): Lorraine, Lara, and Christian.



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PHILIPPINE ECONOMIC ZONE AUTHORITY

Attached to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) created by virtue of Republic Act No. 7916, the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) is a pioneer in ecozone development in the Philippines and a huge contributor to the country's economy. It supervises economic zones (public or privately developed) nationwide that are proclaimed under its mandate. PEZA also attract the strategic investments into the country needed to advance the country's socio-economic progress.

PHILIPPINES: YOUR PREFERRED INVESTMENT DESTINATION!

- HIGH LABOR PRODUCTIVITY
- QUALITY FACILITIES FOR INVESTORS & THEIR FAMILY
- GROWING DOMESTIC MARKET
- ABUNDANT NATURAL RESOURCES
- BILATERAL TRADE AGREEMENTS
- POLITICAL STABILITY & INDUSTRIAL PEACE
- STABLE GOVERNMENT & ECONOMIC OUTLOOK
- STRATEGIC LOCATION

WE MAKE THE PROCESS FAST AND EASY!

- 24/7 one-stop and non-stop shop service — from registration to operations to expansion
- Fully digitized and streamlined registration and permitting system
- QMS ISO 9001:2015 certified for the last 15 years
- Internationally-benchmarked, strategically-located and SDG-driven industrial & IT parks in strategic locations
- Most generous fiscal incentives in ASEAN thru the CREATE MORE law

PEZA PERFORMANCE (1995 to 2025)

- PhP 260.89 B APPROVED INVESTMENTS
- US$64.483 B ACTUAL EXPORTS
- 1,839,543 DIRECT JOBS CREATED

PEZA BRAND OF SERVICE: *NO RED TAPE, ONLY RED CARPET TREATMENT*

CONTACT PEZA, AND ENJOY THE RENOWNED RED CARPET TREATMENT FROM THE COUNTRY'S BIGGEST FDI PROMOTION AND FACILITATION AGENCY!

PEZA PRIORITY SECTORS

- **Mega ecozone Development**
- **Advanced Manufacturing** (including EVs)
- **Extractives** (green ores processing)
- **Agriculture and Blue Industries**
- **IT Services and Frontier Technologies**
- **Eco-Industrial Park Development** (renewable energy and alternative energy, clean water and wastewater treatment, green buildings, smart systems integration)
- **Science, Technology, and Innovation**
- **Integration of SMEs into the ecozone value chain**

Come and be part of our 4000+ locator ecosystem spread over 400 ecozones nationwide.



BE PART OF THE PEZA FAMILY!

SUNPOWER, SAMSUNG, ANALOG DEVICES, TOSHIBA, accenture, Google, JPMorgan Chase & Co., Telstra, Del Monte, Dole, TERUMO, Philipcare, arkray, muRata, Amkor Technology, ttec, Cargill, MAGNAKRON, JMS, AG&P, HONDA, Continental, YAMAHA, TOYOTA, ISUZU, AISIN, sateco, AMANPULO, TIGER, MELCO, TRAVELLERS, SURESTE, ABOITIZ, KODEC, SHIMANO

RECOGNIZED FOR EASE OF DOING BUSINESS

QMS ISO 9001:2015 certified for the last 17 years

IFC, Bloomberg AIQ, CSC

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF INVESTING IN PEZA?

Scan the QR code for more details or visit www.peza.gov.ph

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