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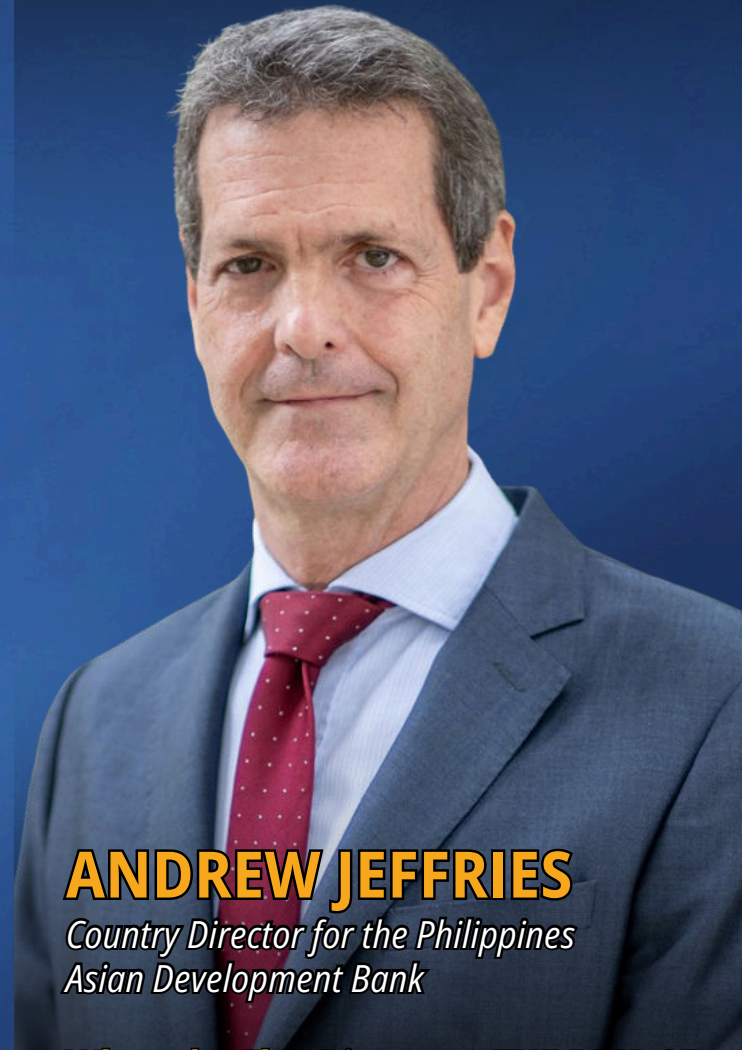
PETROLEUM AND SUPPLY CHAIN | BUNKERING | SHIPPING
SHIP BUILDING / SHIP REPAIR | AGRI BUSINESS VENTURES
PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT | ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT



ESGUERRA FARMS & STUD INC.

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the Rotary Club of Manila
balita

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ANDREW JEFFRIES

*Country Director for the Philippines
Asian Development Bank*

**When the Flag Rises:
Service, Sport, and the
Spirit of a Nation**

**TOWER Awards Committee
Gears Up for
This Year's Awards**

THE BRIDGE BUILDER

Leadership,
Service Above Self,
and the Life of
Jose Claveria
de Venecia Jr.

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PROGRAM



ROTARY CLUB OF MANILA 22nd Weekly Membership Meeting Rotary Year 2025-2026

Thursday, February 19, 2026, 12:30 PM
Manila Polo Club

Moderator: DSAA JOHN MICHAEL "John" CUTTER

PART I

11:00 AM Registration /Lunch

12:30 PM Call to Order
VICE PRES. RICARDO S.B. "Ricky" GUEVARA

Invocation
SEC. ANTONILO DC. "Anton" MAURICIO

Philippine National Anthem | **AVP**

Rotary Club of Manila Hymn
RCM WF Music Chorale

The Four (4) Way Test
TREAS. PAUL JOSEPH M. "PJ" GARCIA

Acknowledgement of Guests
DSAA JOHN MICHAEL "John" CUTTER

Welcome Song | **RCM WF Music Chorale**

Birthday Celebrants

Feb. 14 Rtn. Nico Hallare
Feb. 15 PIA Jordan Pizarra
Feb. 17 Rtn. Jun Aventura

Maligayang Bati / Happy Birthday Song
RCM WF Chorale

PART II

12:55 PM President's Time
VICE PRES. RICARDO S.B. "Ricky" GUEVARA

1:00 PM Introduction of the Guest of Honor & Speaker
PVP JOEL C. VALDES

Guest of Honor and Speaker

MR. ANDREW JEFFRIES
Country Director for the Philippines
Asian Development Bank

Address:
ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK
Overview – Key Priorities and Initiatives

1:30 PM Open Forum / Q&A

1:45 PM Presentation of Certificate of Appreciation
VICE PRES. RICARDO S.B. "Ricky" GUEVARA

2:00 PM Adjournment
VICE PRES. RICARDO S.B. "Ricky" GUEVARA

EDITORIAL

Reginald T. Yu
Editor-in-Chief



THERE are moments in the life of an institution when a speaker is not merely a guest, but a lens — through which we see our own country more clearly.

We are honored to welcome **Mr. Andrew Jeffries**, Country Director for the Philippines of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), as our Guest of Honor and Speaker. His presence is not simply ceremonial. It is consequential.

For when ADB speaks, the region listens.

The Philippines stands at a pivotal juncture. We are a nation of youthful demographics, expanding digital connectivity, sustained infrastructure ambitions, and a services sector that continues to power growth. Yet we also confront structural challenges that cannot be ignored — inequality, climate vulnerability, fiscal pressures, and the urgent need to create quality employment at scale.

Development today can no longer be measured by growth rates alone. It must be measured by resilience, inclusivity, and long-term competitiveness. Prosperity that is not widely shared is fragile. Growth that does not account for climate risk is temporary. Reform delayed is opportunity diminished.

In this context, the insights of the Asian Development Bank are more than economic commentary. They are strategic signposts. ADB is not merely a financier; it is a development partner that shapes infrastructure pipelines, advises on

EDITORIAL

governance and fiscal reforms, supports climate adaptation, and catalyzes private investment across the region. Its perspective situates the Philippines within the broader arc of Asian economic transformation.

The Philippine economy has demonstrated admirable resilience. Domestic demand remains strong. Public infrastructure investment continues to anchor policy direction. Yet resilience is not immunity. Global uncertainties — geopolitical tensions, commodity volatility, and shifting financial conditions — require vigilance and discipline. Sound fiscal management, productivity-enhancing investments, and regulatory clarity are essential if growth is to be sustained and inclusive.

Equally pressing is the climate imperative. The Philippines remains one of the most climate-vulnerable nations in the world. Flooding, typhoons, and environmental degradation are not

distant scenarios; they are lived realities. Development must therefore be climate-conscious by design. Infrastructure must be built not only for expansion, but for endurance. Economic strategy must integrate sustainability, not treat it as an afterthought.

The role of the private sector and civic institutions in this equation cannot be overstated.

Development is not the sole responsibility of government or multilateral institutions. It is a shared undertaking. When global capital aligns with national priorities, when policy reform is matched by entrepreneurial dynamism, and when civic organizations convene dialogue and accountability, transformation becomes possible.

This is why welcoming Mr. Jeffries is more than a courtesy — it is an opportunity. We look forward to gaining first-hand insights on development priorities, the economic outlook, and what lies ahead for the Philippines. We hope for candor as much as

EDITORIAL

encouragement. The Philippines does not need flattery; it needs clarity. Where must reforms accelerate? Where can we unlock greater competitiveness? How do we ensure that growth translates into opportunity across regions and sectors?

The question before us is not whether the Philippines will grow. It is how it will grow — and for whom.

Will growth be inclusive? Will it generate dignified work? Will it narrow regional disparities? Will it withstand climate shocks? Will it position the Philippines as a resilient and innovation-driven economy in Asia?

In hosting the Country Director of the Asian Development Bank, we engage not only with an institution, but with the architecture of our nation's future.

May this conversation sharpen our understanding, deepen our resolve, and translate insight into action. For development is not a projection on a slide deck. It is a

deliberate choice — made through policy, partnership, and principle.

And the future of the Philippines depends on how wisely we choose.



**ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK
MEMBER FACT SHEET**

Philippines: 2024 Commitments (\$ million)^a

Product Type	Sovereign	Nonsovereign	Total
Loans	2,793.37	102.15	2,895.52
Equity Investments	-	10.00	10.00
Technical Assistance ^b	11.84	-	11.84
Trade and Supply Chain Finance Program ^c	-	12.61	12.61
Total	2,805.22	124.76	2,929.98

a. In million U.S. dollars. b. Includes technical assistance for the private sector. c. Includes trade and supply chain finance programs.

ADB is helping the Philippines achieve a prosperous, inclusive, and climate-resilient future, building on a partnership nurtured for over 5 decades.

PHILIPPINES

The Philippines is among the largest recipients of sovereign support from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and is currently the leading client for public-private partnership operations. Additionally, the country represents a growing market for ADB's nonsovereign operations, reflecting its expanding development needs and opportunities.

Through its [country partnership strategy for 2024–2029](#), ADB contributes to the Philippines' pursuit of greater inclusion, climate resilience, and sustainable economic growth. Operations focus on (i) strengthening human development, (ii) boosting economic competitiveness and quality infrastructure, and (iii) scaling up nature-based development and disaster resilience. Across these strategic priorities, ADB will foster digital transformation, support the empowerment of women and girls, and strengthen governance and institutional capacity. The bank is also intensifying climate action and private sector development across all its operations by providing policy advice, up-to-date and client-responsive knowledge work, and higher levels of financing.

Sovereign operations. As of 31 December 2024, ADB has committed 647 public sector loans, grants, and technical assistance totaling \$36.5 billion to the Philippines. ADB's current sovereign portfolio in the Philippines includes 25 loans worth \$10.2 billion.¹

Source: www.adb.org

GUEST OF HONOR & SPEAKER

MR. Andrew Jeffries has 34 years of professional experience including over 19 years with the Asian Development Bank. He is currently the Country Director for the Philippines leading ADB operations and engagement in the country with an active portfolio of around \$12.5 billion.

He previously led region-wide energy transition initiatives, was ADB's Country Director for Viet Nam, and served as the Director of the Southeast Asia Energy Division where he was responsible for the divisions investments in energy infrastructure and policy advice. Earlier, he headed ADB's energy sector operations in India based in New Delhi.

Prior to joining ADB, Mr. Jeffries was a Senior Vice President in the New York office of Fortis Capital Corp. following his position as Vice President in the Global Energy division of GE Capital's Structured Finance Group in the United States, where he led transaction execution of structured finance transactions, project financings, and equity and preferred equity investments in energy infrastructure. Prior to GE, Mr. Jeffries worked for Caithness Energy LLC, a New York-based project developer of independent power generation projects in the U.S. and Southeast Asia.



Andrew JEFFRIES
*Country Director
for the Philippines
Asian Development Bank*

Mr. Jeffries holds a master's degree in international affairs from Columbia University and a bachelor's degree in economics from Bucknell University in the United States.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Induction and the Rotary Name Badge

AN induction ceremony in Rotary is regarded as one of the most solemn moments in our program. We rise to our feet, not merely out of custom, but out of respect — for the oath about to be taken, and for the ideals that bind us together in service and fellowship.

And yet, during this time, when a new member steps forward and hears his name spoken into the fellowship of Rotary, there is a quiet moment that often goes unnoticed.

A small badge, suspended from a delicate golden chain, is placed around the inductee's neck — it is his **Rotary Name Badge**.



Raoul C. Creencia
President

It is simple — metal, enamel, perhaps engraved in green or blue. It carries a name. Sometimes a title. Always the wheel.

Yet within that modest rectangle rests a lifetime of meaning.

A name badge is a declaration. In a world where titles can tower and achievements can echo loudly, Rotary reduces us to something beautifully elemental: a name. Not “Attorney,” not “CEO,” not “Former President,” not “Chair.” Just a name.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It reminds us that before vocation, before accolades, before power — there is a person. And Rotary begins there.

The badge also bears the wheel — Rotary's enduring symbol. The gear, with its spokes and cogs, does not move for itself. It moves for motion. It turns so something larger can advance. The wheel whispers a philosophical truth: life gains meaning not in isolation, but in interdependence. No spoke stands alone. No Rotarian serves alone.

I believe that the badge answers a fundamental human longing: to be known and to belong. It tells the world, "This is who I am." It tells the wearer, "This is who you have chosen to become."

Last Tuesday, at the Chapels at Heritage Park, I had the honor of presenting to our beloved Manay Gina de Venecia the Rotary name badge of her husband, an esteemed Manila Rotarian, the late Jose de Venecia Jr..

In a simple yet deeply meaningful ceremony, attended by our esteemed brothers from the Rotary Club of

Manila, I was privileged to deliver brief remarks. With your indulgence, I wish to reconstruct those words here.

The Rotary Club of Manila honors the life of a truly remarkable Rotarian — Jose de Venecia Jr. — a statesman, a dedicated servant of the Filipino people, and an exceptional builder of bridges across communities and causes. His leadership and legacy continue to inspire.

As I formally turn over Rotarian Joe's name badge, I wish to highlight the profound symbolism it carries—especially for a member who wore it with dignity and devotion. A Rotary badge is far more than a simple identifier; it embodies the values we live by, the commitments we honor, and the service we render to others. It is a reminder of a Rotarian's purpose, and today, it stands as a tribute to the legacy that Manong Joe has honorably and memorably upheld.

Please accept our deepest respect and heartfelt sympathies as we remember a distinguished Rotarian whose memory will always be held in the highest regard.

When the Flag Rises: Service, Sport, and the Spirit of a Nation

by PE Reginald T. Yu

THE Rotary Club of Manila gathered for its 21st Weekly Membership Meeting in an atmosphere both dignified and dynamic — an assembly that reflected its 107-year heritage while looking decisively toward the future. Held at the Manila Polo Club, the meeting brought together Rotarians, distinguished guests, civic leaders, and figures from the world of sports for an afternoon defined by fellowship, vision, and national pride.

At exactly 12:15 PM, President **Raoul C. Creencia** called the meeting to order, formally commencing the day's proceedings.

The invocation was led by Rtn. **Nicolo S. “Nico” Hallare**, setting a contemplative tone that grounded the gathering in gratitude and purpose. This was followed by the Philippine National Anthem and the Rotary Club of Manila Hymn, stirring rendered with accompaniment by the RCM WF Music Chorale. Incoming Sergeant-at-Arms **Nagi Zeitouni** led the recitation of The Four-Way Test, reaffirming the ethical bedrock upon which Rotary's service stands.

Director **Edwin H. Hernandez**, serving as Moderator, warmly acknowledged the guests in attendance, extending the Club's trademark hospitality. The Chorale's Welcome Song further infused the room with warmth and camaraderie.

A joyful interlude followed as birthday celebrants for the week were recognized — Past President **Ebot Tan**, Rtn. **Paco Magsaysay**, Rtn. **Cris Acosta**, Rtn. **Dong Benedicto**, Rtn. **Val Co**, and Past President **Chito Zaldarriaga**. The traditional rendition of “*Maligayang Bati*” underscored the spirit of fellowship that distinguishes Rotary gatherings.



President Raoul C. Creencia called the meeting to order.



Director Edwin H. Hernandez moderated the meeting.



Rtn. Nicolo S. “Nico” Hallare led the invocation.



Incoming Sergeant-at-Arms Nagi Zeitouni led the recitation of the Four-Way Test.

President's Time: Programs and Purpose

During President's Time, President Raoul addressed the membership, providing updates on the Club's initiatives and forward programs. Of particular note was the announcement and launching of the RCM Pro initiative, supported by Past Director **Amado D.**

"Amading" Valdez. The Pro Patria Journalism Awards were likewise highlighted, reflecting the Club's continued commitment to responsible media, civic education, and principled public discourse.

This segment served as a reminder that Rotary is both guardian of tradition and architect of renewal — constantly adapting its service to contemporary needs while preserving its core values.



President Raoul C. Creencia during the President's Time



Director Edwin H. Hernandez formally announced the opening of this year's RCM Pro Patria Journalism Awards.

Introduction of the Guest of Honor and Speaker

Director Michael Jaey C. “Mike” Albaña introduced the Guest of Honor and Speaker, Hon. John Patrick C. Gregorio, Chairman of the Philippine Sports Commission.

John Patrick Gregorio, widely known as “Pato,” brings to public service decades of leadership in sports management and corporate governance prior to his current role at the helm of the Philippine Sports Commission.

What followed was not merely a formal address — it was a stirring narrative of resilience, national identity, and collective aspiration.



Director Michael Jaey C. “Mike” Albaña introduced the Guest of Honor and Speaker.

From Grass to Gold: The Address of Chairman John Patrick Gregorio

Chairman Gregorio began with warmth and humility, acknowledging the Rotary Club of Manila as the oldest Rotary club in Asia and recalling his early professional years when the Club met at the Manila Hotel. His tone was both respectful and personal, bridging institutional history with shared memory.

Accompanied by his Chief of Staff, Professor **Eugene Sunido**, and media colleague **Jun Albano** of the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, he framed his message through powerful storytelling, including video presentations that captured the emotional arc of Philippine sports.

A Nation’s First Gold

The Chairman reminded the audience that it took the Philippines 96 years from its Olympic debut in 1924 to win its first gold medal — courtesy of **Hidilyn Diaz** in Tokyo. Three and a half years later, **Carlos Yulo** secured two additional gold medals in Paris.



Guest of Honor and Speaker Hon. John Patrick C. Gregorio, Chairman of the Philippine Sports Commission

These triumphs, he emphasized, were not sudden miracles but the fruit of long perseverance. Hidilyn competed in four Olympics across 16 years before clinching gold. Carlos Yulo began training at the age of seven and endured early setbacks before rising to the pinnacle of global competition.

One of the most moving moments of his speech was his recollection of standing in Paris as acting chief of mission when Yulo won gold. As the Philippine flag was raised and the national anthem began, he found himself unable to sing — overcome with emotion. In that singular instant, sport ceased to be competition; it became a unifying

national experience. The anthem caught in his throat, and tears flowed freely — an image that resonated deeply with the Rotarians present.

The Three Pillars of Philippine Sports

Chairman Gregorio outlined three strategic pillars guiding the Philippine Sports Commission:

- 1. Athletes' Welfare.** Ensuring timely allowances, proper nutrition, quality training, and international exposure for over 2,000 national athletes and coaches, with plans to expand funding to a National Youth Training Pool for athletes aged 18 and under. This initiative aims to ease the financial burden on families nurturing young talent.
- 2. Facilities Modernization.** Upgrading the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex and PhilSports facilities, including dormitories, pools, and infrastructure improvements, made possible through support from the Office of the President.
- 3. Sports Tourism.** Positioning the Philippines as a premier

destination for international sporting events — recognizing that global tournaments drive tourism, stimulate economic activity, and elevate national visibility. Recent events in volleyball, football, surfing, tennis, golf, and martial arts illustrate this strategy in motion.

A Funding Breakthrough and Regional Vision

A landmark development for Philippine sports was the Supreme Court ruling increasing the Commission's share from PAGCOR revenues from 2.5% to 5% of gross earnings. This translates to approximately ₱400 million monthly, with substantial cumulative returns over time.

With strengthened funding, the Commission is establishing regional training centers outside Metro Manila — boxing in Bukidnon, weightlifting in Zamboanga, archery in Canton, and combat sports in Baguio. This decentralized model allows young athletes to train within their communities, study locally, and develop without being uprooted at a young age.



The Supreme Court's landmark resolution in Guiao vs. PAGCOR et al.—securing the Philippine Sports Commission's (PSC) rightful remittances from PAGCOR and PCSO—heralds a brighter future for Philippine sports, and a greater responsibility: to transform sustained funding into empowered athletes and a system anchored on good governance.

At a press conference held on 5 December 2025 at the Philsports Arena, PSC Chairman Patrick "Pató" Gregorio and petitioner Congressman Joseller "Yeng" Guiao emphasized the significance of the Supreme Court's ruling in securing consistent financial support for sports development—finally closing a battle that began in 2016.

Source: Philippine Sports Commission FB page

A Call for Partnership

Chairman Gregorio extended an invitation to the Rotary Club of Manila and the broader business community to collaborate. Under its charter, the Commission may accept private sector support in exchange for branding and tax credits — creating a win-win model that aligns corporate visibility with national athletic development.

He concluded with conviction: having already secured three Olympic gold medals, the Philippines stands poised to win more in Los Angeles. The present moment, he declared, may well be the “glory years” of Philippine sports.

Open Forum and Recognition

An engaging Open Forum followed, where members raised thoughtful questions on grassroots development, corporate participation, and long-term sustainability.

President Raoul then presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Chairman Gregorio, symbolizing Rotary’s gratitude and the potential for meaningful partnership.

At 1:45 PM, President Creencia formally adjourned the 21st Weekly Membership Meeting.

PSC Chair Gregorio engaged in a Q&A session with Rtn. Ramby Nolido, Sec. Anton Mauricio, DGND Hermie Esguerra, AIA Mike Roxas, visiting Rotarian from RC Ritto, PD Abe Pascual, and PDG Alex Cureg.



Service and Sport: Parallel Missions

The 21st Weekly Membership Meeting was more than a scheduled gathering. It was a convergence of ideals. Rotary builds character, discipline, and community through service. Sport does the same through competition and perseverance.

On that February afternoon at the Manila Polo Club, those parallel missions stood side by side — reminding all present that whether in service or in sport, excellence demands commitment, partnership, and unwavering belief in what a nation can become.



President Raoul Creencia adjourned the meeting.



President Raoul Creencia presented the Certificate of Appreciation to PSC Chair Gregorio, in the presence of Sec. Anton Mauricio, Dir. Mike Albaña, DE Del Lorenzana, ISAA Nagi Zeitouni, and Rtn. Nico Hallare.

Meeting Fellowship



*Exchange of
bannerette with the
visiting Rotarians
from the Rotary Club
of Ritto (Japan)*

Meeting Fellowship



CLUB ADMINISTRATION

RCM Members' Attendance Report RY 2025-2026



ATTENDANCE REPORT February 2026

FEBRUARY 2026	February 05, 2026 BIR COMMISSIONER ATTY. CHARLITO MARTIN R. MENDOZA	February 12, 2026 PSC CHAIRMAN JOHN PATRICK G. GREGORIO
MEMBERS PRESENT	40	36
MEMBERS PRESENT %	19%	17%
MAKE UP ATTENDEES	10	2
EXEMPTED	5	4
ON LEAVE	0	0
Total Active Members	50	38
Total # of Members	212	211
TOTAL %:	24%	18%
ROTARACTORS	15	10
MEDIA	2	0
EMBASSIES / DIPLOMATIC CORPS	0	0
DG, DGE, DGN, PDG	0	0
GOHS / GS	2	3
VISITING ROTARIAN	0	17
Guests of RCM MEMBERS	7	2
TOTAL ATTENDEES	64	68



LIST OF ATTENDEES February 12, 2026

- 1 Albaña, Michael Jaey C
- 2 Carlos, Vicente J.
- 3 Castro, Karlo Eugene Josef M.
- 4 Cid, Dean Y.
- 5 Creencia, Raoul C.
- 6 Cureg, Alexander P.
- 7 Davis, Raymond N.
- 8 Del Rosario Sr., Oscar A.
- 9 Egan, Brendan W.L.
- 10 Eldebs, Issam
- 11 Esguerra, Herminio S.
- 12 Guevara, Jr., Domingo S.
- 13 Hallare, Nicolo S.
- 14 Hernandez, Edwin H
- 15 Kalaw, Teodoro Alejandro Y IV
- 16 Locsin, Arsenio Z.
- 17 Lonzaga, Reinerio C.
- 18 Lorenzana, Delfin
- 19 Magsaysay, Francisco D.
- 20 Matschuck, Guenter Gerhard G.
- 21 Mauricio, Antonilo DC
- 22 Nolido, Ramon Alberto B.
- 23 Pascual, Abraham F.
- 24 Preysler, Jr., Fausto R.
- 25 Ra, Ingill
- 26 Roxas, Michael D.
- 27 Serapio, Carlos G.
- 28 Sibayan, Joselito H.
- 29 Valencia, John Nico P.
- 30 Yu, Reginald Tieng
- 31 Zeitouni, Nagi
- 32 Hiroyasu, Kanda
- 33 Ginez, Winston M.
- 34 Ke, Eric C.
- 35 Tamesis, Chris C.
- 36 Kho, Ralph Valentin L.

CLUB ADMINISTRATION

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

As of February 18, 2026

1 ABOY, VALENTINO G.
2 ABRIAM, ARIEL
3 ACOSTA, CRISPINIANO G.
4 AGNES, JERRY A.
5 ALBAÑA, MICHAEL JAEY
6 ALDAY, ALBERT S.
7 ALINGOG, ALDOUS REX A.
8 ALUNAN, RAFAEL M.
9 ANDAL, AVELINO L.
10 ARAGON, JOSHUA RUEBEN G.
11 ARAMBULO, JOAQUIN JR. L.
12 ARGUELLES, PABLO C.
13 AVENTURA, AVELINO JR. L.
14 BAGATSING, VALENTINO
15 BALANAY, ARIES B.
16 BARTOLOME, ARSENIO III M.
17 BAUTISTA, JOHN JR.
18 BEDIONES, RODOLFO P.
19 BELLA, GERONIMO JR. D.
20 BENEDICTO, BERNARDO III T.
21 BENEDICTO, SIXTO T.
22 BERTELSEN, BERTEL INGMAR
23 BLANCO, MANUEL M.
24 BOGOVICH, JASON M.
25 BOLTON, WILHELM
26 BRANELEC, JACQUES
27 BUENDIA, CARLOS
28 CABANGON, EDGARD
29 CABUNAG, ROGELIO
30 CAMAT, NATHANIEL
31 CAMPOS, JOSELITO JR. D.
32 CANON, RAUL JR C.
33 CARLOS, VICENTE J.
34 CARRANCEJA, ARVIN ARIK B.
35 CASTRO, KARLO EUGENE JOSEF M.
36 CATALAN, RODILLO
37 CHAHWAN, RAMI
38 CHAN, ROBERT JR.
39 CID, DEAN
40 CO, VAL CONSTANTINE L.
41 COYIUTO, ROBERT JR. G.
42 CREENCIA, RAOUL C.
43 CUREG, ALEXANDER P.
44 CUTTER, JOHN MICHAEL
45 DAYANG, JUAN E.
46 DAVIS, RAYMOND N.
47 DE CASTRO, JUAN ARTURO ILUMINADO

48 DEL ROSARIO, OSCAR
49 DIONISIO, RAFAEL
50 DOMINGO, RICO, V.
51 DOMINGUEZ, CARLOS G.
52 DY, MANUEL
53 EGAN, BRENDAN
54 ELDEBS, ISSAM
55 ENRIQUEZ, EDUARDO III
56 ESGUERRA, HERMINIO S.
57 ESQUIVIAS, JOAQUIN PABLO A.
58 EUGENIO, JOHN EMYL G.
59 EUGENIO, ERIC
60 FAJARDO, BEDA G.
61 FERNANDEZ, ANTONIO JAIME JOSE V.
62 FOLLOSCO, CEFERINO JR. G.
63 GARCIA, HERBERT JOEY
64 GARCIA, PAUL JOSEPH M.
65 GARCIA, THEODORE Q.
66 GARCIA, VICTOR III G.
67 GASPAS, FERNANDO
68 GINEZ, WINSTON M.
69 GO, DANNY C.
70 GO, HENRY S.
71 GONZALES, JONAS R.
72 GONZALES-LA'O, EMIL
73 GUARIN, MICHAEL ARCATOMY
74 GUEVARA, DOMINGO JR.
75 GUEVARA, RICARDO S.B.
76 HALLARE, DELFIN JR.
77 HALLARE, NICOL
78 HERNANDEZ, EDWIN H.
79 HESSE, UWE
80 IBUYAN, BENEDICT JULIUS F.
81 JUCABAN, JERIC J.
82 KALAW, TEODORO ALEJANDRO IV Y.
83 KANDA, HIROYUSI
84 KATIGBAK J ALFONSO L
85 KE, ERIC CHAN
86 KHO, RALPH VALENTIN
87 KLEBS, DAVID
88 KOH, PAUL ANTHONY
89 LACAMBACAL, ALVIN
90 LAYA, JAIME C.
91 LIAMZON, ROMEO THADDEUS M.
92 LIM, RICHARD
93 LAUREL, RICARDO P.
94 LAZARO, JUAN MIGUEL

CLUB ADMINISTRATION

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

As of February 18, 2026

95	LEDDA, JAIME VICTOR B.	141	RODRIGUEZ, JOAQUIN ANTHONY JR. H.
96	LEE, RICHARD L.	142	RODRIGUEZ, JOAQUIN SR. C.
97	LI, RICHARD JOSEPH C.	143	ROMUALDEZ, FERDINAND MARTIN G.
98	LIM, DAVID EDUARDO T.	144	ROMUALDEZ, JOSE MANUEL G.
99	LOCSIN, ARSENIO Z.	145	ROÑO, MARLON
100	LONZAGA, REINERIO C.	146	ROXAS, MICHAEL D.
101	LOPEZ, ANTONIO	147	SARMIENTO, RICARDO MANUEL M.
102	LOPEZ, ARTHUR M.	148	SCHMITZ, STEFAN
103	LORENZANA, DELFIN	149	SCHNEIDER, BERND
104	MACAPAGAL, MICHAEL T.	150	SERAPIO, CARLOS G.
105	MACATOMAN, ABDULGANI M.	151	SEVILLA, LUIS ANGELO L.
106	MAGSAYSAY, FRANCISCO D.	152	SHIMODA, SHIGERU
107	MANALAYSAY, CESAR P.	153	SIBAYAN, JOSELITO H.
108	MANGALILE, SENEN	154	SIMON, JUANITO AYSON
109	MARTINEZ, RONALD	155	SO, WARREN
110	MATSCHUCK, GUENTER GERHARD G.	156	SOBREPEÑA, ROBERT JOHN
111	MAURICIO, ANTONILO DC	157	STRANATHAN, IKE EDWARD
112	MAURICIO, FRANCISCO ROBERTO C.	158	SYJUCO, JOSE, JR. A.
113	MENDOZA, MIGUEL	159	TAGAYSAY, HECTOR O.
114	MENDOZA, RAYMUND JOSEPH D.	160	TALAMPAS, JOSE ANGEL L.
115	MOMMAERTS, STEVE	161	TALUSAN, FERDINAND E.
116	NOLIDO, RAMON ALBERTO B.	162	TAMANO, SHALIMAR H.
117	NOMURA, KAZUHIRO	163	TAMAYO, VICTOR L.
118	NONES, ROMEO C.	164	TAMESIS, CHRIS
119	NUÑEZ, JOSE A.	165	TAN, EUSEBIO V.
120	OBRADO, DANIEL	166	TAN, JOHN G.
121	OCAMPO, TEODORO J.	167	TAN, LAWRENCE L.
122	ONG, PHILIP	168	TEE, TEDDY JR. B.
123	ONG, ROWEL JANSON S.	169	TEJUMAL, MICHAEL
124	PAGDANGANAN, ROBERTO M.	170	TILLMAN, HANSEL JOSEPH MICHAEL L.
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127	PANTALEON, OLIVER	173	VALDEZ, JASON ROLAND N.
128	PASCUAL, ABRAHAM	174	VALDERRAMA, JASON ROMEO
129	PAYUMO, FELICITO C.	176	VALENCIA, JOHN NICO P.
130	PELIÑO, WILFREDO	177	VALENCIA, RODOLFO G.
131	PINEDA, JESUS JR. M.	178	VAZQUEZ, EVARISTO JR.
132	PINEDA, PATRICIO JR. F.	179	VILLARICA, HENRY R.
133	PIZARRAS, JORDAN M.	180	YAP, ENRIQUE JR.
134	PREYSLER, FAUSTO JR. D.R.	181	YORDANOV, STEFAN
135	PUJALTE, JOSE BRITTANIO JR.	182	YU, GEOFFREY C.
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CLUB ADMINISTRATION

Membership Committee Meets Prospective New Members



Mr. Manuel E. Pangilinan
(Filipino)
Chief Executive Officer
Finasiatech Corp.
Proposed by President Raoul Creencia



Mr. Myles Y. Tan
(Filipino)
Chief Operating Officer/VP of Sales, Ilyon
Industrial Corp.
Proposed by President-elect Reginald T. Yu

THE Membership Committee met on February 12, 2026, to get to know the proposed new members at the Turf Room of the Manila Polo Club in Makati City.

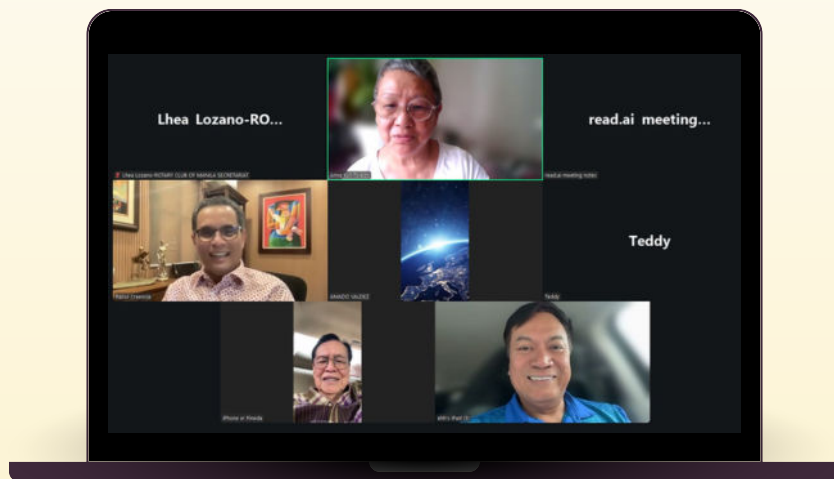
Present from the Membership Committee were Chairman/Past Vice President Fausto Preysler, Past District Governor Vince Carlos, Director-elect/Program Chair Delfin Lorenzana, Director-elect Teddy Kalaw, Past Treasurer Lito Sibayan, and Secretary Anton Mauricio.

CLUB ADMINISTRATION

TOWER Awards Committee Gears Up for This Year's Awards



**The Outstanding
Workers of the
Republic (TOWER)**



The Outstanding Workers of the Republic (TOWER) Awards Committee met via Zoom on February 17, 2026.

Present during the meeting were President Raoul Creencia, Director Edwin Hernandez, TOWER Awards Chair /Centennial President Susing Pineda, Past President Teddy Ocampo, and Past Director Amading Valdez.

First Golf Committee Meeting Continues



THE First Golf Committee Meeting, led by Golf Chair Karlo Castro, resumed on February 17, 2026, at the Manila Elks Club in Corinthian Plaza, Makati City.

In attendance were Chair Alex Cureg, Past Chair Lito Sibayan, Secretary Anton Mauricio, Treasurer Mike Roxas, and Executive Officer Ms. Ting Puzon-Yupangco.

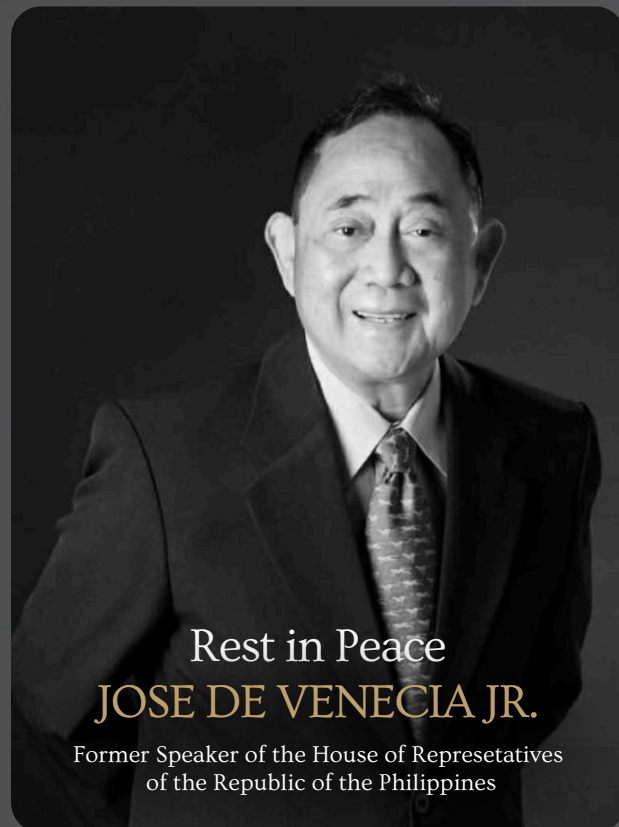


Editor's Note

WITH deep sadness, we mark the passing of Jose “Joe” de Venecia Jr., an outstanding Manila Rotarian, who left us on Tuesday, February 10.

Joe de Venecia was a figure who loomed large in Philippine public life, but more importantly, he was a life lived in service—of dialogue over division, of institution-building over spectacle, of bridges patiently constructed where others chose walls. His passing invites not only remembrance, but reflection.

*In recognition of his extraordinary life and enduring legacy, the editors of The Balita have decided to dedicate a special tribute in this week's **PEOPLE** segment, honoring the many roles he played: statesman, legislator, peacemaker, institution-builder, husband, father, and mentor to generations of leaders. This segment is offered not as a chronicle of titles held, but as a portrait of a man whose impact continues to be felt long after the gavel has fallen silent. At moments like this, we are reminded why stories matter. They help us grieve with*



gratitude, and they help us understand what endures. Joe de Venecia's life reminds us that leadership is not measured solely by power acquired, but by trust earned — and by the bridges we leave behind for others to cross.

We offer this tribute with respect, affection, and a deep sense of loss, extending our condolences to his family and to all who were shaped by his life and work.



PEOPLE

THE BRIDGE BUILDER

Leadership,
Service
Above Self,
and the Life of
Jose Claveria
de Venecia Jr.

By PE Reginald T. Yu



THE BRIDGE BUILDER

Leadership, Service Above Self, and the Life of Jose Claveria de Venecia Jr.

A life shaped not by conquest, but by connection.

Across politics, diplomacy, and peace-building, Jose de Venecia Jr. chose dialogue over division and institution-building over spectacle — believing that democracy endures through trust patiently earned and service quietly rendered.

The House chamber was still.

Not the ordinary stillness before a session begins, but the heavy, anticipatory quiet that settles when outcomes are already known and words are about to be weighed for the record rather than the vote. It was February 4, 2008. The motion had been filed. The numbers had been counted. Survival had become a matter of arithmetic.

Jose de Venecia Jr. rose from his seat.



Joe de Venecia serving as a Congressman, delivers an impassioned address on the plenary floor of the House of Representatives in 2008, shortly after being stripped of his post as House Speaker.

In a moment charged with emotion and consequence, Joe publicly argued the circumstances of his removal, asserting that he had been betrayed by the very administration he had supported, which he alleged was behind his ouster. The speech marked a dramatic and defining episode in his long parliamentary career — one that laid bare the fractures within the political establishment and underscored his willingness to confront power openly in defense of principle, institutional integrity, and his own political legacy.

THE BRIDGE BUILDER

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He did not hurry. He did not look around for approval. He moved with the practiced calm of a man who had stood in this hall for decades and knew its rhythms better than its acoustics. When he began to speak, his voice was level, almost conversational, as if addressing colleagues across a long table rather than a chamber on the verge of rupture.

He spoke of years spent holding the House together, of moments when the country teetered and institutions threatened to give way. He spoke without drama, without grievance. Then, without pause or flourish, he said that generals had come to his home.

They had warned him, he said, that he and his son were in danger. That others had already been killed. That he had written to the President, asking for intervention. That nothing had been done.

The room did not react. There was no murmur, no rush of indignation, no applause to break the weight of the words. Silence held.

This was not accusation for effect. It was testimony.

Hours later, just past midnight, the vote was taken. One hundred seventy-four members declared the Speakership vacant. Thirty-five opposed. Sixteen



Joe on the hustings, surrounded by enthusiastic and devoted constituents — an image that captures his enduring connection with the people he served. This campaign culminated in his sixth consecutive term as Representative of the 4th District of Pangasinan, affirming the deep trust and confidence repeatedly bestowed upon him by his electorate.

More than a local triumph, this decisive victory proved pivotal on the national stage. It paved the way for his unprecedented fifth term as Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of the Philippines, marking a rare feat in Philippine parliamentary history and underscoring his singular influence, legislative mastery, and sustained leadership in shaping the nation's democratic institutions.

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abstained. Numbers did what numbers do. Joe walked out of the chamber he had shaped for more than a decade — without escort, without spectacle — no longer Speaker, but unmistakably a man who had chosen record over survival, conscience over office.

That moment lingered.

Long before and long after that night, the rooms he entered were rarely quiet.

Not because he demanded attention, but because attention moved toward him, drawn by an unseen current. Presidents paused mid-sentence. Prime ministers smiled before they were conscious of doing so. Parliamentary veterans — hardened by years of brinkmanship — found themselves leaning in, listening.

There was something about him that resisted imitation: a confidence that did not assert itself, a warmth that did not concede ground, an attentiveness that made even adversaries feel, briefly, understood. Watching him move through a hall of statesmen was to witness a subtler form of power at work — not command, not coercion, but gravity.

Once, at a gathering of parliamentarians on the far side of the world, someone whispered, half amused and half in awe,



Jose de Venecia Jr., fondly known as Manong Joe, greets his supporters during a political rally on April 10, 1995, at the height of his re-election campaign as Representative of the 4th Congressional District of Pangasinan.

The show of warmth and popular support foreshadowed electoral success. Triumph followed at the polls, as he not only secured his congressional seat but also went on to reclaim the Speaker's gavel in the 10th Congress, reaffirming both his local mandate and his national leadership in the House of Representatives.

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“He’s a rock star.” The remark was meant lightly, but it carried truth. Joe did not merely attend history; he moved within it. He belonged to that rare class of leaders whose presence altered the chemistry of a room, making the improbable feel discussable and the unthinkable momentarily negotiable.

And yet this is the paradox that clings to his life: despite five terms as Speaker of the House of Representatives — the most in Philippine history; despite authoring more than two hundred landmark laws; despite brokering peace with insurgents, mutineers, and secessionists; despite shaping Asia’s parliamentary and interfaith architecture — Joe remains persistently misunderstood.

To some, he is the consummate coalition builder, the steady hand who gave a fragile democracy its legislative backbone. To others, he is too smooth, too conciliatory, too committed to consensus in a country that often prefers confrontation to compromise. In truth, he is something more difficult to categorize: an architect of institutions in a nation prone to dismantling them; a believer in dialogue in a political culture addicted to rupture.

His story is not one of linear ascent. It is a story shaped by scale — of thinking beyond election cycles, beyond borders,

beyond the fleeting applause of crowds. It is the story of a man who believed that politics, at its best, was not war by other means, but architecture: the patient assembly of structures strong enough to hold competing interests without collapse.



JDV's iconic campaign photograph — a defining image that came to symbolize his populist appeal, political resilience, and enduring bond with the electorate. Framed by the energy of the campaign trail, the photo captures JDV at his most elemental: confident, accessible, and firmly rooted in the people’s trust, an image that would endure as shorthand for a long and consequential public life.

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There were triumphs so complete they felt permanent. Defeats so intimate they nearly unmade him. Loss — unspeakable loss — that no title, no office, no standing ovation could soften. Through it all ran a single, unyielding conviction: that nations do not endure on rage, nor on charisma, nor even on laws alone, but on the fragile, hard-won miracle of trust.

And in that belief, quietly and stubbornly held, lies the measure of Jose de Venecia Jr.

A Man Born into History

Jose Clavería de Venecia Jr. was born on December 26, 1936, in Barangay Pogo Grande, Dagupan City, at a time when the Philippines itself was suspended between inheritance and invention. The Commonwealth era promised self-rule but offered no guarantees. Institutions existed, but their permanence was untested. Sovereignty was imagined more than secured. Into that uncertainty arrived a child whose life would come to echo the nation's recurring struggle — between fracture and repair, collapse and construction.

Public service was not an abstraction in the de Venecia household; it was a daily language. His father, Judge Jose Ravago de Venecia, represented the law in its most exacting form — measured,



Judge Jose R. de Venecia Sr. and Casimira Villamil Claveria, the esteemed parents of former Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., embodied discipline, dignity, and quiet strength.

A jurist guided by integrity and fairness, Judge de Venecia Sr. instilled a deep respect for justice and public service, while Casimira Villamil Claveria anchored the family with grace, faith, and steadfast resolve. Together, they shaped a home rooted in principle, learning, and service — values that would profoundly influence their son's lifelong commitment to statesmanship and nation-building.

THE BRIDGE BUILDER

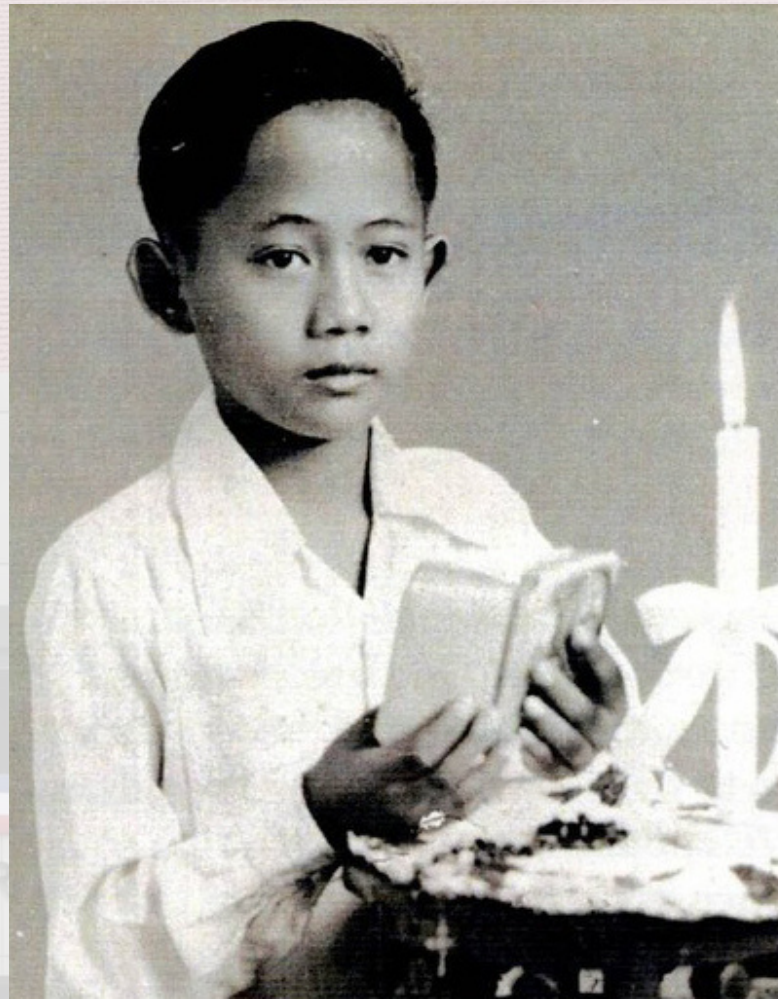
Leadership, Service Above Self, and the Life of Jose Claveria de Venecia Jr.

disciplined, unsentimental. Authority, in his presence, was something earned through restraint.

His mother, Casimira Villamil Clavería, supplied the moral ballast of the home, grounding ambition in continuity and memory, reminding her children that duty was not something announced but practiced. His grandfather, Guillermo de Venecia, had served as mayor of Dagupan in an era when leadership was intimate, personal, and constantly observed. Politics, in that generation, had faces.

Jose was the youngest of seven children, a position that trained him quietly but thoroughly. He learned early how to listen before speaking, how to read the emotional temperature of a room, how to attract attention without demanding it. These were not lessons taught explicitly. They were absorbed. And in time, they would become instincts.

His precocity appeared early. In elementary school, he was accelerated by a full year — a bureaucratic adjustment that hinted at a life that would repeatedly outrun standard timetables. At De La Salle College in Manila, his world widened abruptly. Manila was not simply larger than Dagupan; it was sharper. It was a place where ambition announced itself openly, where intellect competed



Joe as a young boy during his First Holy Communion — a quiet, formative moment of faith and innocence that reflected the values of reverence, discipline, and moral grounding instilled in him at an early age, and which would later underpin a life devoted to service and public leadership.

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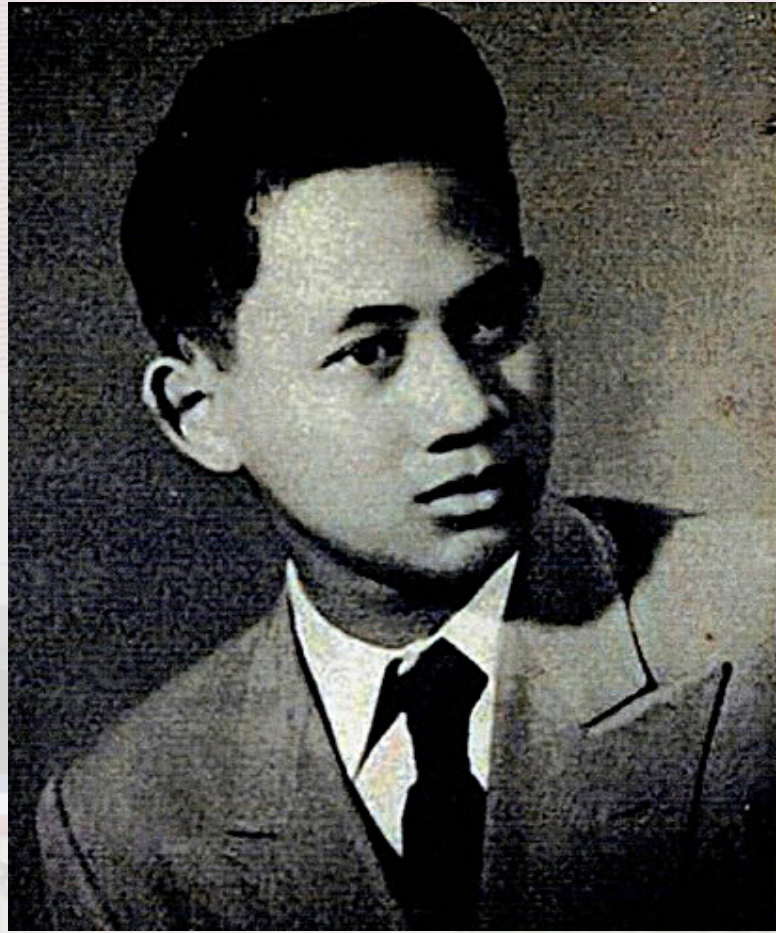
for oxygen, and where reputation was earned in public view.

The decisive turn came at Ateneo de Manila University, where Joe chose journalism. In an era when law and economics were the conventional gateways to power, journalism was a deliberate divergence. It was a statement of method: he wanted to understand power by explaining it.

He thrived. As Associate Editor of *The Guidon* and later Editor-in-Chief of *The Aegis*, he demonstrated not only command of language but an instinct for relevance — an ability to sense which ideas mattered before others recognized their importance. Under his leadership, *The Guidon* achieved rare international distinction, recognized as among the finest college newspapers in the world. The honor mattered less for its prestige than for what it revealed. Even then, Joe was thinking beyond borders.

Journalism disciplined him. It also armed him. He learned that facts persuade only when arranged with meaning, that truth without structure is easily ignored, and that leadership often begins not with command, but with narrative coherence.

Barely out of his teens, he entered professional journalism as Manila



Young Joe pictured in 1955 as Editor-in-Chief of Aegis, the official yearbook of the Ateneo de Manila University — an early glimpse of his intellectual rigor, leadership instinct, and command of ideas, foreshadowing a lifelong engagement with public discourse, institution-building, and national service.

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bureau chief and Philippine correspondent for a Pan-Asia news alliance. He wrote weekly columns on Asian affairs at a moment when Asia itself was renegotiating its identity in the aftermath of empire. This was not local reporting. It was geopolitical apprenticeship.

That apprenticeship deepened dramatically in 1966, when at just twenty-nine years old he was appointed Minister and Economic Counselor at the Philippine mission in Saigon, during the Vietnam War. Saigon was diplomacy under siege — a city where protocol unfolded beneath the constant thrum of helicopters, where official briefings competed with the knowledge that yesterday's certainties could dissolve overnight. It was a place where systems failed visibly, and human consequences followed immediately.

It was there, amid war and displacement, that Joe conceived what would become one of the most consequential economic innovations in Philippine history: the Dollar Remittance Program for overseas Filipino workers.

At the time, Filipinos working abroad sent money home through fragile, informal channels. Black-market exchanges devoured earnings. Families waited in uncertainty. Joe saw that



As an 18-year-old correspondent, Joe was already at the center of history, covering Vice President — and later President — Carlos P. Garcia for the Pan-Asia Newspaper Alliance, the first Asian news agency of its kind. It was a formative period marked by national transition and uncertainty: Garcia had assumed the presidency following the tragic death of Ramon Magsaysay, who perished in a plane crash, an event that profoundly shaped the political mood of the country.

By the age of 25, Joe was no longer merely an observer of events but an active participant in their resolution. In a defining moment of political maturity, he successfully appealed to President Garcia to finally concede defeat to President-elect Diosdado Macapagal, helping ease the nation through a delicate democratic transition. Garcia's decision — and his response — was given directly to a jubilant young Joe, a testament to the trust he had earned and an early indication of his lifelong role as a bridge between power, principle, and the public good.

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migration, unmanaged, could hollow out households — but structured properly, it could stabilize them. The program he designed was not merely technical. It was moral. It asserted that the state owed protection to its citizens even when they labored beyond its shores.

In time, the program would channel billions of dollars into the Philippine economy, cushioning it through devaluations, political crises, and global shocks. But at its origin, it was an act of empathy sharpened by policy. Recognition followed. So did a reputation for thinking in systems rather than slogans.

Long before remittances were spoken of as lifelines, Joe had built one.

The program became a model for other developing economies — Pakistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Turkey — seeking to harness migrant labor without exploiting it. BizNews Asia would later estimate that the system had generated more than USD250 billion since its inception. For this achievement, Joe received The Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) award — recognition not for rhetoric, but for architecture.



At just 19 years old, Joe distinguished himself as the Philippine Correspondent and Manila Bureau Chief of the Pan-Asia Newspaper Alliance — a remarkable early achievement that underscored his precocious intellect, journalistic discipline, and emerging role as a keen observer and interpreter of regional affairs, long before his rise as a national statesman.

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At 33 years old, Joe, then serving as Minister-Counselor, is pictured with William Westmoreland, Commander of the United States Forces in Vietnam. The meeting reflects Joe's early engagement at the highest levels of international diplomacy and security affairs during a critical period of the Vietnam War, underscoring his exposure to global power dynamics and his growing role as a trusted interlocutor linking Philippine interests with major allied military and diplomatic leadership.



Joe de Venecia, then Minister-Counselor for Economic Affairs at the Philippine Embassy in Saigon, in conversation with Philippine troops of PHILCAG in Tây Ninh, Vietnam, near the Cambodian border.

The moment reflects his dual engagement in diplomacy and on-the-ground realities during a volatile period in Southeast Asia, underscoring a leadership style attentive not only to policy and international relations, but also to the welfare, morale, and lived experience of Filipino servicemen deployed far from home.

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In 1974, Joe was conferred The Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) of the Philippines award for Business Leadership by the Philippine Jaycees, in recognition of his pioneering contributions to national economic development at a remarkably young age. He was likewise honored with the President Roxas Economic Leadership Award, affirming the transformative impact of his early initiatives.

These distinctions recognized Joe's trailblazing role in opening overseas contract work for Filipinos in the Middle East and North Africa, a visionary effort that generated employment for millions and helped establish overseas labor as a vital pillar of the Philippine economy. He was also cited for pioneering oil and gas exploration in Palawan, an undertaking that led to the first commercial oil discoveries in the western Philippines, strengthening the country's energy prospects and economic resilience.

Together, these achievements underscored a rare blend of entrepreneurial foresight, nation-building ambition, and practical leadership that would continue to define his public life.

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From diplomacy, Joe moved into international enterprise — not as an escape from public life, but as an extension of it. In the 1970s, he became a pioneer in overseas contract work for Filipinos, deploying tens of thousands of workers to the Middle East and North Africa. His companies operated ports in Saudi Arabia, developed agriculture in Africa, built mass housing, and ventured into oil exploration in the Middle East.

Business taught him scale. It also taught him execution — the unforgiving truth that vision without delivery is indistinguishable from fantasy. These years hardened him, expanded his global network, and deepened his respect for labor — not as abstraction, but as sacrifice.

At thirty-two, he entered Congress for the first time, elected in 1969. He was young, articulate, and unusually prepared. Then history intervened. Martial Law was declared in 1972. Congress was abolished.

The lesson was unmistakable and enduring: institutions are fragile. Progress is reversible. Power, when unchecked, erases process first.



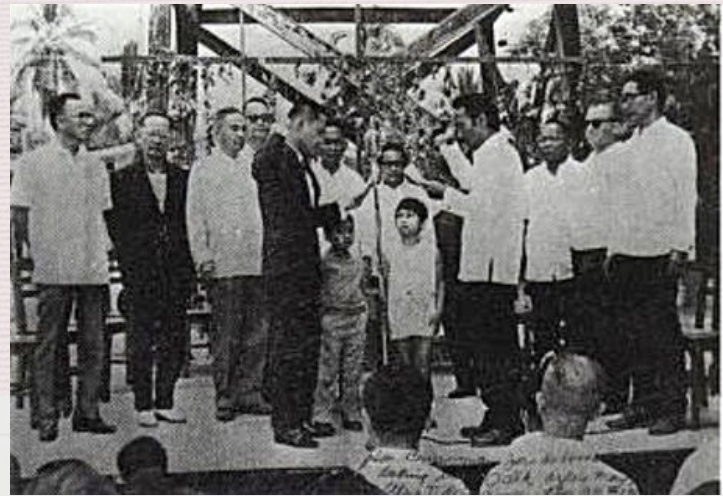
House Speaker Cornelio Villareal in strategic consultation with his Foreign Policy Adviser, Jose de Venecia Jr., in 1964, a formative moment that highlights Joe's early immersion in the craft of governance and international affairs. Still in the early stages of his public life, Joe was already engaged at the highest levels of legislative strategy and foreign policy thinking, contributing insight and perspective to national decision-making. The scene foreshadows a career that would later place him at the center of Philippine diplomacy and parliamentary leadership, bridging domestic politics with a widening global outlook.

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Senator Benigno Aquino Jr. and presidential candidate Sergio Osmeña Jr. formally proclaim Jose de Venecia Jr. in 1969 as the Liberal Party's free zone congressional candidate, marking a decisive moment in his early political ascent. The proclamation took place in the presence of key national and local leaders, including Antonio Villegas, then Mayor of Manila; Maria Kalaw-Katigbak; and Pangasinan party stalwarts A. Perez, L. Reyna, and L. Catubig. Together, they signaled a broad coalition of reform-minded leadership and regional support, underscoring the confidence placed in Joe's candidacy and foreshadowing his emergence as a formidable figure in Philippine legislative politics.



Joe de Venecia, a freshman congressman, is formally sworn into office in 1969 by Alejo de Guzman, then Mayor of Binmaley, assuming his post as Representative of the 2nd District of Pangasinan at the age of 32.

The ceremony marked the beginning of a distinguished legislative career rooted in public trust and local mandate, signaling the arrival of a young lawmaker whose intellect, discipline, and political acumen would soon propel him to the highest ranks of national leadership.

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When democracy returned in 1987, Joe returned with it — older, seasoned, and acutely aware that rebuilding a legislature required more than eloquence. It required alignment. It required patience. It required coalitions strong enough to hold when personalities failed.

He had spent a lifetime preparing for that work — though he may not yet have known it.

The Coalition Builder

Joe did not come to power by confrontation. He came to it by **counting** — counting votes, counting interests, counting the invisible cost of instability. Long before he held the Speaker's gavel, he had reached a conclusion that would govern his public life: in a fragmented democracy, ideology without arithmetic was sentiment, and power without coalition was illusion. That conviction hardened after 1972.

When Martial Law abolished Congress, Joe did not merely lose a seat. He lost any faith in the permanence of institutions. The legislature, he concluded, survived not because it was noble, but because it was useful. When it ceased to serve power, it vanished. If it was to endure, it had to make itself indispensable — not adversarial to the executive, not submissive to it, but operationally necessary.



Joe de Venecia was elected Congressman of Pangasinan's 2nd District in 1969, marking his first term in the House of Representatives.

The victory signaled the formal entry of a young and formidable leader into national legislation, launching a parliamentary career that would span decades and eventually elevate him to the Speakership multiple times. It was an early mandate rooted in local trust, foreshadowing his rise as one of the most influential figures in Philippine legislative history.

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This insight would shape everything that followed.

When democracy returned in 1987, Joe ran again — this time for the newly created Fourth District of Pangasinan — and won. But the House he entered bore little resemblance to a democratic revival. It was fragmented, suspicious, ideologically scattered, and scarred by years of authoritarian rule. Reformists distrusted compromise. Conservatives feared reform. Veterans understood that survival required agility rather than purity.

Joe distinguished himself quickly, not through speeches, but through presence. He listened more than he spoke. He brokered rather than postured. He remembered who needed what — and when. He shared credit freely. In a legislature emerging from enforced silence, this was disarming. Trust accumulated around him almost unintentionally.

Then came 1992.

Fidel V. Ramos, the former general who had defended democracy in 1986, sought the presidency. His problem was not vision or credibility. It was arithmetic. He lacked a dominant party and faced a fractured electorate — and an even more fractured Congress.

Ramos turned to Joe.



Jose de Venecia Jr., Representative of the Fourth District of Pangasinan, takes his oath of office on July 27, 1992 as Speaker of the House of Representatives for the 9th Congress of the Philippines.

The moment marked the beginning of one of the most consequential speakerships in Philippine legislative history, ushering in a period of assertive parliamentary leadership, institutional reform, and close collaboration with the executive branch during a critical phase of democratic consolidation and economic restructuring.

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Together with Raul Manglapus and a small circle of moderates, Joe helped assemble a new political vehicle: Lakas ng Tao, later Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats. It was not built around dogma. It was built around inclusion. Christian Democrats and Muslim leaders, reformists and pragmatists, were gathered under a broad tent that promised stability rather than ideological victory.

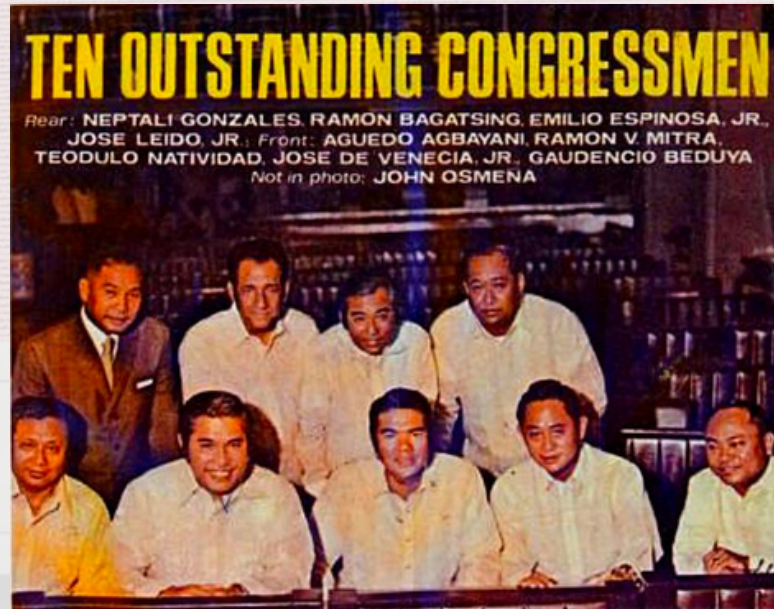
Ramos won with only a plurality. The real battle shifted immediately to Congress.

In parliamentary systems, plurality victories can be absorbed. In presidential systems with weak parties, they are combustible. Joe understood the danger at once. Without a working majority in the House, reform would stall — or provoke institutional warfare.

What followed was his first great architectural achievement: the **Rainbow Coalition**.

Rather than enforce loyalty, he offered participation. He reached across party lines — LDP, NPC, Lakas, and smaller blocs — assembling a majority not through conversion, but coexistence. The logic was blunt and effective: the House would be a partner in reform, not a battlefield.

In 1992, Joe was elected Speaker of the House of Representatives.



The Ten Outstanding Congressmen of 1972 — a distinguished assembly of lawmakers recognized for legislative excellence and public service. Jose de Venecia Jr., pictured second from left, stands out as a first-term congressman among seasoned peers, a testament to his early impact and promise in national legislation.

Sharing the honor with him (from left) are Neptali Gonzales, Emilio Espinosa, Ramon Bagatsing, Jun Leido, Aguedo Agbayani, Teodulo Natividad, and Ramon Mitra—a cohort whose collective achievements helped shape Philippine governance during a pivotal era. For Joe, the recognition marked an early affirmation of his legislative skill, integrity, and emerging stature as a national leader.

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He was not yet fifty-six.

From the outset, he redefined the position. Previous Speakers had treated the role as ceremonial or reactive. Joe treated it as managerial. Legislation, he believed, should move at the speed of necessity, not tradition. Committees were reorganized. Calendars enforced. Dead bills buried without sentiment to clear space for viable ones.

The Ramos administration carried an ambitious agenda — tax reform, deregulation, privatization, infrastructure, financial liberalization. None of it would pass without discipline. Joe supplied it.

Under his stewardship, the House became an engine. Bills moved not because they were popular, but because they were essential. Critics accused him of being too close to the executive. He answered privately that proximity was not subservience — it was coordination.

Two laws captured his governing philosophy.

The first was the Build-Operate-Transfer Law. Infrastructure, Joe believed, was the skeleton of development. Without power plants, roads, ports, and transit systems, reform remained theoretical. The state lacked capital. Rather than wait for aid or inflate public debt, he championed a

framework that mobilized private capital to build, operate, and eventually transfer infrastructure to government.



A historic moment in Philippine economic diplomacy: Alfonso Calalang, Governor of the Philippine Central Bank; Carlos P. Romulo, Secretary of Foreign Affairs; Eduardo Romualdez, Secretary of Finance; James Wilson, U.S. Chargé d'Affaires; and Jose de Venecia Jr. present to President Ferdinand Marcos the first "lipstick" U.S. dollar checks — distinctive instruments bearing red overprints and cashable only in Philippine pesos.

This landmark presentation inaugurated the country's first formal U.S. dollar remittance mechanism, laying the groundwork for a transformative inflow of foreign exchange. The initiative would prove pivotal in strengthening external reserves, stabilizing the economy, and institutionalizing overseas remittances — an early milestone in a system that would later become a vital pillar of Philippine economic resilience.

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In 1990, Jose de Venecia Jr., a prominent member of the House of Representatives, held a historic meeting with Kim Il Sung at a secluded North Korean mountain retreat — a rare and consequential encounter during a period of deep Cold War tension in East Asia.

The talks yielded significant diplomatic breakthroughs. The two leaders agreed on the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and North Korea, and Joe secured an unprecedented written pledge from Pyongyang committing not to support the Communist New People's Army (NPA) — a major assurance with direct implications for Philippine national security.

Beyond bilateral concerns, Joe used the meeting to press for broader regional and global reconciliation, urging North Korea to pursue normalization of relations with the United States and Japan, and to work toward peaceful reunification with South Korea. The dialogue reflected his consistent belief in engagement, dialogue, and parliamentary diplomacy as tools for conflict resolution.

Notably, this landmark meeting preceded the high-profile visits to North Korea by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and Japanese political leader Shin Kanemaru, underscoring Joe's role as an early bridge-builder in one of the world's most closed and complex diplomatic theaters.

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It was not ideological. It was functional. The BOT Law unlocked tens of billions of dollars in investment and became a model for other developing economies. Joe valued it not for its elegance, but for its results.

The second was the Bases Conversion Law.

The closure of American military bases left behind vast tracts of land — and deep uncertainty. Joe saw opportunity. The law he authored converted former bases — Subic, Clark, Camp John Hay, Fort Bonifacio — into economic zones, free ports, and eventually cities. It was a long game. Critics mocked the timelines. Joe waited.

Years later, Bonifacio Global City rose where barracks once stood. Clark reemerged as an economic hub. Subic became a logistics gateway. These outcomes were not accidents. They were decisions made years earlier by a Speaker who understood spatial economics and political patience.

Reelected Speaker in 1995, Joe entered his second term with confidence — and with heavier burdens.

The country remained volatile. Military rebellions simmered. Communist insurgency persisted. Muslim separatism



The peace agreement with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), signed in 1996, followed Joe de Venecia's pivotal offer of a Coalition Agreement to Nur Misuari, a bold political accommodation aimed at transforming armed struggle into participatory governance.

As a result of this framework, Nur Misuari assumed office as Governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), marking a critical step toward political inclusion and stability in the region. The agreement became a cornerstone of the 1996 peace process, demonstrating how dialogue, power-sharing, and institutional integration could advance lasting peace and development in Mindanao.

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in Mindanao remained unresolved. Joe believed force alone would fail. He had learned that lesson in Vietnam and reinforced it in diplomacy and business.

As peace envoy, he undertook negotiations others deemed reckless.

He crossed the Sahara Desert twice to meet Muammar Qaddafi and Moro National Liberation Front leader Nur Misuari. The journeys were punishing and politically dangerous. But Joe believed distance should never excuse indifference.

He persuaded Misuari to accept autonomy over secession, leading to the 1996 peace agreement that ended decades of armed conflict. It was not perfect. But it was real.

At the same time, he opened quiet channels to military rebels who had tried to overthrow the government, negotiating ceasefires that led to amnesty. He extended dialogue to the Communist Party and the New People's Army, traveling to Europe to meet exiled leaders.

What unified these efforts was not idealism, but calculation. Instability, Joe believed, was economically ruinous and morally corrosive. Peace — even imperfect peace — created room to govern.



Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi meets in 1992 with then Congressman Jose de Venecia Jr. and former Defense Secretary Fidel V. Ramos in Sirte, Libya, in a high-level exchange marked by regional and geopolitical significance.

Held just months before Ramos' presidential victory, the meeting reflected early diplomatic engagement and strategic dialogue amid shifting post-Cold War alignments, underscoring Joe's active role in parliamentary diplomacy and his proximity to pivotal moments in Philippine political transition.

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Joe, then a House Representative, links arms with Kim Dae Jung, President of South Korea; Corazon Aquino; and Raul Manglapus in a moment emblematic of democratic solidarity.

Their exchange centered on political and economic integration and the shared defense of human rights, reflecting a convergence of reform-minded leadership across Asia. The scene captures a rare alignment of statesmen committed to dialogue, democratic transition, and regional cooperation — values that would continue to shape Philippine foreign policy and Joe's enduring advocacy for parliamentary diplomacy.

By 1998, after six years as Speaker, he faced another reckoning.

The ruling party sought a successor to Ramos. Many expected Defense Secretary Renato de Villa to prevail. Joe entered the contest knowing the risks. He won the nomination. De Villa bolted. The election that followed was crowded, emotional, and volatile.

Joe finished second to Joseph Estrada.

The loss struck deeper than anticipated. For months, he withdrew from public life. Later, he admitted to depression — a rare confession from a man accustomed to control. The defeat was not merely political. It was existential. He had built coalitions, delivered reforms, stabilized institutions — and still lost to populism.

Yet power has a way of returning to those who understand its mechanics.

On New Year's Day 2001, Joe reemerged, calling for constitutional transition as unrest mounted. When Estrada fell weeks later, the country entered another moment of uncertainty.

Joe returned to the House — unchallenged in his district — and was again elected Speaker.

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Former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Joe de Venecia, ran for President in the 1998 Philippine national elections, carrying his long parliamentary record and reform agenda onto the national campaign stage. He was joined by Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, then a sitting Senator, as his vice-presidential running mate.

The tandem brought together legislative experience and economic expertise, presenting a platform anchored on governance reform, economic modernization, and political stability at a pivotal moment in the country's post-EDSA democratic transition.

This time, the coalitions were thinner, the palace more volatile, and the stakes far higher.

And this time, the very skills that had lifted him would, eventually, be turned against him.



Joe de Venecia, then Speaker of the House of Representatives, formally receives Pervez Musharraf, President of Pakistan, expressing gratitude for Pakistan's co-sponsorship of the JDV initiative on Interfaith Dialogue at the United Nations and its support for Joe's Debt-for-MDGs anti-poverty programs — efforts aimed at linking peacebuilding with concrete development outcomes.

On the same occasion, President Musharraf was conferred the Congressional Medal of Achievement and addressed a joint session of the Philippine Congress, underscoring the depth of bilateral engagement and the shared commitment to dialogue, cooperation, and inclusive development at both the parliamentary and international levels.

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Jose Maria Sison, founder of the Communist Party of the Philippines, and then Jose de Venecia Jr., Speaker of the House of Representatives, meet at a hotel in Amsterdam on March 24, 1997.

The encounter formed part of Speaker de Venecia's broader efforts at political dialogue and conflict resolution, reflecting his belief that engagement — even with ideological adversaries — was essential to exploring peaceful pathways toward national reconciliation. The meeting underscored a rare moment of direct contact between the Philippine political establishment and the communist movement, set against the wider context of peace initiatives and back-channel diplomacy during the late 1990s.



Junichiro Koizumi, Prime Minister of Japan, expressed his deep appreciation to Joe., then Speaker of the House of Representatives, for his decisive interventions that helped bring the Japan–Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA) to a successful conclusion.

The landmark agreement paved the way for expanded Japanese investments, facilitated the entry of Philippine nurses and skilled workers into Japan, increased Philippine exports to the Japanese market, and included a crucial safeguard guaranteeing that Japan would not export toxic waste to the Philippines — a provision reflecting Joe's insistence on balancing economic openness with environmental and public-interest protections.

Prime Minister Koizumi likewise thanked Speaker Joe for his support of Japan's bid for permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council, underscoring Joe's broader role in advancing strategic partnerships, regional stability, and principled multilateralism through parliamentary diplomacy.

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A Different Kind of Institution

In the year 2000, as the country drifted through political unease and Joe remained publicly subdued after his 1998 defeat, he made a quieter decision — one that did not register on front pages or party rosters, but would matter deeply to him.

He joined the Rotary Club of Manila.

Founded in 1919, the Rotary Club of Manila carried its own history of institution-building — one rooted not in elections or executive power, but in voluntary service, ethical discipline, and continuity. For Joe, Rotary did not represent retreat from public life. It represented refinement.

He had spent decades navigating coercive power: votes, budgets, alliances, crises. Rotary operated by an entirely different logic. There were no whips, no rewards to dispense, no penalties to impose. Influence here was earned through consistency, credibility, and service rendered without spectacle. Leadership functioned only if others consented to follow.

This appealed to him.

In Rotary, Joe encountered a familiar challenge stripped to its essentials: how



Joe, a proud Rotarian, is pictured with His Excellency Ambassador Jorge Moragas Sánchez of Spain at the Manila Polo Club in 2019.

The occasion marked one of the last personal appearances of the former Speaker at a Rotary Club of Manila membership meeting, lending the moment a quiet poignancy. It captured JDV still engaged in fellowship and dialogue, embodying Rotary's ideals of service and international goodwill even in the later years of a life devoted to public leadership and civic engagement.

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to align people without authority; how to move projects forward without hierarchy; how to sustain institutions without ambition as fuel. It was democracy reduced to its moral mechanics.

Those who worked with him during this period noticed a shift — not in his intellect or energy, but in his tempo. He listened more than he spoke. He observed process closely. He treated Rotary meetings not as social ritual, but as exercises in disciplined cooperation. Service, he believed, was not an abstraction. It was logistical. It required planning, accountability, and continuity.

Rotary also offered something politics rarely did: **memory without vengeance**. Its members carried long institutional recollections, but they were not weaponized. Failures were absorbed, lessons retained, egos largely checked by shared purpose. For a man who had watched institutions collapse under the weight of personality, this mattered.

The ethic of Service Above Self resonated with convictions Joe had long practiced intuitively but seldom named. He did not interpret it as self-denial. He interpreted it as sustainability. Institutions endure, he believed, only when leaders subordinate personal



Speaker Joe, together with Albert del Rosario, Philippine Ambassador to the United States, paid a courtesy call on senior U.S. Senator Daniel Inouye at his office on Capitol Hill.

The meeting sought Senator Inouye's support for JDV's debt-for-equity initiative, a forward-looking proposal designed to help finance the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The initiative aimed to convert portions of sovereign debt into targeted investments for poverty reduction, education, health, and sustainable development — reflecting Speaker de Venecia's continuing advocacy for innovative, cooperative solutions that link global finance with human development outcomes.

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urgency to collective longevity.

Rotary gave him space to lead without defending territory — to practice influence divorced from survival.

It was also, quietly, a form of preparation.

When Joe returned to the political arena in early 2001, calling for constitutional transition amid national unrest, he did so with a recalibrated sense of scale. Power, he had relearned, was not only what could be commanded. It was what could be convened. Rotary had sharpened that distinction.

So, when he reassumed the Speakership later that year — again by overwhelming vote — it was not simply the return of a seasoned tactician. It was the reemergence of a leader who had spent a year relearning governance in its most voluntary form.

The coalitions would be thinner this time. The palace more volatile. The stakes higher.

But the discipline — the patience, the respect for process, the belief that institutions outlast ambition — had been quietly reinforced in a room where no one needed to obey him.



Joe de Venecia, Speaker of the House of Representatives, is pictured at the U.S. Congress with Raul Rabe, Newt Gingrich, and William Cohen, who would later serve as U.S. Secretary of Defense.

Earlier that same morning, Speaker de Venecia met separately with Bob Dole, then U.S. Senate Majority Leader, accompanied by adviser Anthony Start. Their discussions focused on the contentious Spratly Islands issue, the shared imperative of keeping the South China Sea sea lanes open to freedom of navigation, and the growing political, economic, and social role of the 2.8 million Filipinos living in the United States and Canada.

The engagements underscored Joe's active parliamentary diplomacy at the highest levels of American leadership, linking regional security, international maritime stability, and the interests of the global Filipino diaspora within a broader framework of strategic Philippine-U.S. relations.

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Power, Betrayal, and the Price of Conscience

By the time Joe returned to the Speakership in 2001, he understood that power had changed its temperament.

The country was weary. People Power had restored democracy, but it had not restored trust. Institutions functioned, but they were brittle. Loyalty had become transactional, patience scarce, memory short. The coalitions Joe once built on shared purpose now had to be assembled on thinner material — fear of instability, exhaustion with crisis, the desire to keep things moving even when direction was uncertain.

Still, he did what he had always done.

He counted. He listened. He assembled.

Once again, the House moved. Budgets passed. Legislation advanced. The machinery of government functioned because he insisted it must. From the outside, it appeared as continuity. From the inside, it was constant negotiation against erosion.

Joe had always believed that proximity to the executive was not a moral failing but a structural necessity. Coordination, he argued, was how systems survived. The House could restrain excess not by open warfare, but by making itself

indispensable — by absorbing pressure rather than amplifying it.

For a time, this logic held.

But power, he was discovering, had grown less tolerant of mediation. The



Joe de Venecia, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Manny Villar, Senate President, applaud Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo during her State of the Nation Address at a joint session of Congress held at the Batasang Pambansa in 2006.

The moment captures a rare display of institutional unity between the legislative and executive branches, underscoring the constitutional solemnity of the SONA and the leadership roles played by Congress's top officials in steering national policy discourse at a pivotal juncture in Philippine governance.

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palace was no longer content with partnership. It wanted obedience. Nuance was interpreted as resistance. Independence, once an asset, began to look like defiance.

The change was subtle at first.

Meetings became shorter, more formal. Conversations that once ranged freely narrowed to scripts. Decisions arrived already formed. Joe noticed the shift not in what was said, but in what was no longer asked of him.

Signals blurred. Allies hesitated. The arithmetic that had long been his ally — his most reliable instrument — began to rearrange itself quietly, beyond his reach.

He had spent decades mastering the geometry of coalitions: how pressure moves, how incentives align, how compromise stabilizes competing ambitions. But coalitions, he knew, depend on a single fragile assumption — that participation remains safer than exclusion.

That assumption was beginning to fail.

What had once made Joe indispensable now made him inconvenient. He did not rule by fear. He tolerated dissent. He believed institutions should outlast



Michael Camdessus (right), then Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, honors Jose de Venecia Jr. with a luncheon at the IMF headquarters in Washington, D.C. in 1997.

The recognition cited Speaker de Venecia's partnership with President Fidel V. Ramos in successfully sponsoring a comprehensive Philippine tax reform package, as well as achieving three consecutive years of balanced budgets and fiscal surplus for the national government — milestones that strengthened macroeconomic stability, restored investor confidence, and underscored the country's commitment to sound, disciplined economic governance.

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personalities. In a political climate growing increasingly impatient with restraint, these were liabilities.

He sensed the ground shifting beneath him.

There were moments — brief, almost imperceptible — when he could have adjusted course. He could have tightened control, demanded loyalty, silenced dissent. He chose not to. Authority, he believed, decayed when it relied too heavily on coercion. A legislature that governed by intimidation would eventually be stripped of legitimacy — and then of power.

The costs of that choice accumulated.

By 2007, the tension had become unmistakable. The House remained functional, but trust had thinned to calculation. Decisions were weighed not for their necessity, but for their alignment. Joe's insistence on process — on record, on transparency, on dialogue — was no longer admired. It was resented.

Then came the moment that clarified everything.

His son publicly questioned a government-backed deal involving a



While accompanying President Fidel V. Ramos on an official visit to the White House, Jose de Venecia Jr., then Speaker of the House of Representatives, is received by Bill Clinton in 1997.

The encounter underscored the strength of Philippine–United States relations at the close of the 20th century, reflecting close cooperation on democratic governance, economic reform, and regional security, and highlighting Speaker de Venecia's active role in advancing high-level parliamentary diplomacy alongside the executive leadership of the Philippines.

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foreign telecommunications firm. It was an act rooted in principle, but politics rarely honors intent. The challenge was interpreted as defiance. The distance between father and son blurred in the eyes of power. What had been tolerated as independence hardened into threat.

Joe understood immediately what this meant.

Power does not need to explain itself when it decides to move. It simply withdraws cover.

All at once, arithmetic turned hostile. Names were counted without him. Meetings happened elsewhere. The coalition he had built with care did not fracture loudly. It dissolved quietly, one calculation at a time.

He did not panic. He had seen this pattern before — in other countries, other systems, other leaders who mistook indispensability for immunity. Power, he knew, always reasserts itself eventually. The only question is whether institutions survive the correction.

As pressure mounted, he made a final calculation of his own.

He could preserve his position by narrowing the record — by remaining silent, by absorbing the blow privately,



Then Condoleezza Rice, United States National Security Adviser, with Jose de Venecia Jr. following a substantive exchange in which Speaker de Venecia outlined his proposal for global and regional interfaith dialogue.

Joe explained how sustained, structured engagement among faith communities could reduce ethnic tensions and politico-religious conflicts by strengthening moderate voices and isolating extremist elements, offering a pragmatic framework that linked peacebuilding with security and development. The discussion reflected a shared recognition of dialogue as a strategic tool in addressing some of the most complex challenges of a post-Cold War world.

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by allowing the machinery to move without resistance. Or he could speak, knowing full well that speech would accelerate the outcome.

He chose the record.

When he rose in the House and spoke of warnings delivered in private, of threats unaddressed, of silence from those entrusted to act, he was no longer negotiating. He was documenting. The chamber did not erupt. It absorbed his words in stillness.

Hours later, the numbers did what numbers always do.

The position was declared vacant. The gavel passed. The chamber emptied.

Joe walked out without ceremony, without bitterness, without illusion. He had lost the office. He had preserved the line.

In politics, survival is often mistaken for victory. Joe had learned, too early and too often, that the two are not the same.

What remained was not power, but consequence.

And consequence, once set in motion, has a longer memory than power ever does.



While accompanying President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to the White House Oval Office, Joe de Venecia, then Speaker of the House of Representatives, is received by President George W. Bush.

During the meeting, Speaker de Venecia was given the opportunity to explain his initiatives for interfaith dialogue and global Christian-Muslim engagement, aimed at reducing conflict through mutual understanding, moderation, and sustained dialogue among faith traditions. President Bush responded positively to these proposals, in the presence of Condoleezza Rice and Colin Powell, underscoring international recognition of Joe's role as a leading advocate of faith-based diplomacy as a tool for peace and global stability.

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Legacy, Love, and the Long View of History

Power, once lost, has a way of stripping life to its essentials. What remains is not what one commanded, but what one built — and what one refused to trade away.

After his ouster in February 2008, Joe did not attempt a return to the Speakership. He did not assemble a counter-coalition, nor did he nurse grievances in public. The House had spoken in the only language it ultimately respected: numbers. The coalition builder accepted the arithmetic. But acceptance did not mean retreat, and it did not mean silence.

Instead, he widened the frame.

Freed from the daily calculus of floor counts and alliance management, Joe returned fully to the work that had always run parallel to his domestic career: international dialogue, peace-building, and the slow, unglamorous construction of institutions designed to outlast election cycles. He had long believed that Asia's future would be determined not by dominance, but by integration — not by rivalry, but by conversation disciplined enough to survive disagreement. Now he could



Speaker Joe addresses the United Nations Security Council in a landmark moment of Philippine parliamentary diplomacy. Seated behind him are Bayani Mercado, then Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative, and Mr. Anacleto Lacanilao III of the Permanent Mission of the Philippines to the United Nations.

The address formed part of a sustained Philippine initiative to advance interfaith dialogue as a global peace-building mechanism. In 2004, on behalf of the Philippines, Lauro Baja Jr. (Ambassador Larry Baja), together with his deputy Mercado, introduced in the United Nations General Assembly the first in a series of resolutions that ultimately led to the creation of a dedicated unit or focal point within the United Nations tasked with promoting and coordinating interfaith dialogue worldwide — institutionalizing an idea long championed by Speaker de Venecia as a means of reducing conflict, empowering moderates, and fostering global understanding.

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pursue that belief without compromise, and without permission.

He devoted himself to institutions he had spent decades imagining into existence. The International Conference of Asian Political Parties, conceived as a neutral table where ruling, opposition, and independent parties could speak without the theater of statecraft, expanded steadily across the continent. It became a rare space where adversaries encountered one another not as enemies, but as political actors bound by the same regional consequences. He continued shaping the Asian Parliamentary Assembly, careful not to replicate Europe's models but to fashion something suited to Asia's particular fractures — its uneven development, its historical wounds, its unresolved tensions.

He spoke insistently of an Asian Parliament, an Asian monetary framework, and cooperative mechanisms that could buffer the region from economic shocks and political extremism. These ideas were often dismissed as aspirational. Joe accepted the skepticism. He had learned long ago that institutional change rarely looks practical before it becomes necessary.

Interfaith dialogue became another



President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, receives Jose de Venecia Jr. in a meeting centered on the transformative promise of “open education” or long-distance learning.

During their discussion, Speaker de Venecia shared his experience introducing and advancing open and distance education in the Philippines as a means of democratizing access to learning, especially for working students, those in remote communities, and learners excluded by geography or circumstance. President Mandela expressed keen interest in the model's potential to expand opportunity, empower citizens, and build human capital, reflecting a shared conviction that education — made accessible and inclusive — is a cornerstone of social justice, national development, and enduring freedom.

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arena for his pragmatism. His approach was neither sentimental nor naïve. He did not believe that religious conflict could be dissolved by goodwill alone. But he believed it could be managed — through structure, sustained dialogue, and the moral courage to convene those who would otherwise never share a table. He spoke at global forums not as a partisan Filipino politician, but as a statesman shaped by decades of negotiation with men who once carried weapons and commanded armies.

In 2017, when he was appointed Special Envoy for Inter-Cultural Dialogue, the role formalized what he had already been doing for much of his adult life. It was an acknowledgment — quiet but significant — that his most enduring influence might not be legislative, but conversational: the ability to bring together people whose differences were real, and whose consequences were shared.

Yet even as his international stature endured, the most defining chapters of his later life unfolded far from podiums and plenary halls.

Joe's public identity had always been expansive — Speaker, lawmaker, diplomat, peacemaker. But those who knew him best understood that his emotional center was not institutional.



Speaker Joe de Venecia, formally receives George W. Bush and Laura Bush at the House of Representatives of the Philippines.

President Bush's visit marked a historic parliamentary moment, as he accepted Speaker de Venecia's invitation to address a joint session of the Philippine Congress, underscoring the depth of Philippine–United States relations and the central role of legislative diplomacy in advancing shared commitments to democracy, security, and international cooperation.

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It was familial. He had endured public defeats and political betrayal, but nothing tested him more profoundly than private loss.

On December 17, 2004, a fire broke out in his home in Dasmariñas Village. The blaze, traced to Christmas lights, spread quickly. His sixteen-year-old daughter, Kristina Casimira — KC — was trapped inside. She died of suffocation.

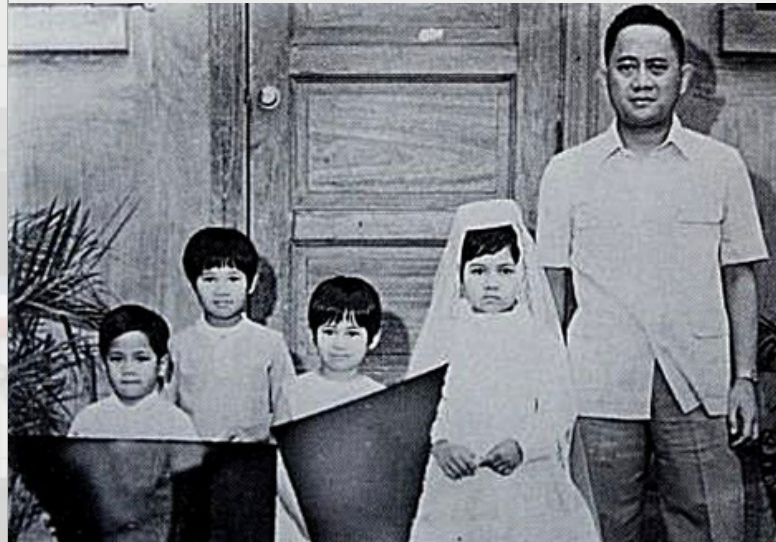
No public office prepares a man for that.

The death of KC left a permanent fracture in the De Venecia household. Friends noticed that even as Jose continued to perform his duties as Speaker, something within him had quieted. Grief did not make him theatrical; it made him inward. Those close to him would later say it deepened his empathy, stripped away whatever remnants of political vanity remained, and reinforced a belief already forming within him: that power, unmoored from compassion, is ultimately hollow.

It was during these years that his partnership with his wife, Georgina “Gina” Vera-Perez de Venecia, became visibly central to his life. Gina was not a political accessory or ceremonial presence. She was a leader in her own right — twice elected to Congress, a tireless advocate for women, children,

abused mothers, and the forgotten. As head of the Congressional Spouses Foundation, she led the establishment of women’s centers across the country, creating sanctuaries for victims of violence and neglect. Her work did not mirror his. It complemented it.

Their marriage was often described by friends as joyful, but it was also resilient. They had met in the early 1980s, introduced by a mutual friend.



Joe with his children Leslie, Vivian, Sandra, and Joey, captured during Leslie’s First Holy Communion — a tender family moment marked by faith, pride, and togetherness, reflecting the deep importance he placed on family life, spiritual grounding, and shared milestones amid the demands of public service.

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Their first date — at a screening of Flashdance — ended with Joe falling asleep from jet lag. Gina, instead of being offended, thought simply: this man needs someone to look after him. Three days later, he sent her roses with a note that revealed his old journalist's instinct for language: In each rose, I crown thee the empress of my heart and the sovereign of my domain.

It was not a line one forgot — and it proved prophetic.

Through triumph and tragedy, Gina remained what she later called “the wind beneath his wings,” and he remained her fiercest supporter. Their partnership revealed a dimension of Joe often obscured by his public image: he admired strength in others, especially when it did not resemble his own.

Left photo: Joe and Gina with their family, captured in a moment that reflects both closeness and a remarkable constellation of individual paths shaped by education, faith, and service.

From left are Joey III; Vivian V. Garcia, holder of a master's degree from Smith College, married to Dr. Dennis Garcia, a Harvard Medical School graduate; their beloved daughter KC, who passed away at the age of 16; Ipe, an Ateneo de Manila University graduate who worked with ABS-CBN Publications; and Christopher, an Ateneo stage actor and youth columnist for The Philippine Star.

Not in the photo, as they were then based in the United States, are Sandra, a Wellesley College graduate, former scientist with the U.S. Armed Forces and now a patent lawyer holding a doctorate in Chemistry from Princeton University, with her American husband Mark Haner; and Leslie Perez de Venecia Norton, a Yale University graduate with a master's degree in journalism from Columbia University, former Bloomberg correspondent in London and currently columnist and Asian Editor of Barron's in New York.

Together, the family reflects a shared legacy of learning, professional excellence, and global engagement — anchored by strong family bonds and values that transcend borders and generations.



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Their children grew into accomplished adults — scientists, scholars, writers, legislators — each reflecting a different facet of their parents' values. When their son Christopher later assumed the congressional seat in Pangasinan, it was not framed as inheritance, but as continuation. The torch passed without spectacle, with quiet pride.

As Joe aged, the pace of his life slowed, but the reach of his legacy widened. Invitations to speak continued to arrive from parliaments and assemblies across the world. Abroad, he was still greeted with deference. At home, reassessment began.

In August 2024, the Philippine Senate adopted a resolution commending him for an “illustrious career and invaluable contributions to the country.” The measure was co-authored across party lines. Senators spoke not only of laws passed and coalitions built, but of a man who steadied democracy when it was most vulnerable. One senator recalled that her own political career had begun at his invitation — a reminder that influence often operates quietly, through trust extended rather than authority imposed.

In January 2025, a building and museum bearing his name were inaugurated at the Batasang Pambansa Complex. The gesture was deliberate. It acknowledged that Joe had shaped the House not merely as an occupant, but as an architect.



Speaker Joe de Venecia of the House of Representatives, is photographed with his wife Gina and their children Christopher “Toff” (right) and the late Kristina Casimira “KC” (left) during the opening of the Joint Session of Congress on July 25, 1994.

Taken at a moment of constitutional solemnity and national attention, the photograph offers an intimate counterpoint to public office — capturing the Speaker not only as a parliamentary leader presiding over a critical legislative occasion, but also as a husband and father, grounded in family amid the demands and responsibilities of national leadership.

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By the time he celebrated his ninetieth birthday, at a modest gathering organized by Gina, he was no longer physically spry. But those present noticed what had not changed. He listened more than he spoke. When he spoke, it was measured. There was no triumphalism, no bitterness — only a quiet contentment.

History, when it finally settles, rarely measures leaders by the titles they held. It asks harder questions. Did they build or merely occupy? Did they divide or connect? Did they leave institutions stronger than they found them?

Joe took big strides through Philippine history. He did not tiptoe. He believed that dialogue was not weakness, that compromise was not surrender, and that democracy — messy, imperfect, and fragile — requires engineers as much as it requires orators.

He was a coalition builder in a country suspicious of coalitions. An institutionalist in a culture often

Right photo: On December 28, 2025, some 300 friends, loyalists, and members of the De Venecia family gathered at Golden Bay Restaurant to celebrate the 90th birthday of Jose de Venecia Jr. — affectionately known as "Manong Joe," the country's five-time Speaker of the House of Representatives.



Former Speaker Joe, shares lighthearted and affectionate moments with his children by his first wife, Victoria — Joey, Vivian, Sandra, and Leslie.

The candid scene reveals a relaxed, paternal side of the statesman, capturing the ease, humor, and closeness of family life that complemented his demanding public career and grounded him beyond the halls of power.



Shown here are Joe de Venecia and his wife Gina, together with son-in-law Dr. Dennis Garcia, daughter Carissa Evangelista, and son Joey de Venecia — a warm family tableau that anchored the evening's tributes in gratitude, continuity, and love. The gathering marked not only a personal milestone, but a collective salute to a life devoted to public service and bridge-building at home and abroad.

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Leadership, Service Above Self, and the Life of Jose Claveria de Venecia Jr.

impatient with institutions. A peacemaker who understood that peace is rarely pure, but always preferable to endless conflict.

His life suggests that the most durable form of power is not domination, but trust — patiently assembled, vote by vote, law by law, conversation by conversation.

And in that sense, long after the gavel fell silent, Joe remained what he had always been at his best: a builder of bridges, standing quietly at the crossings of history.

EPILOGUE: What Endures

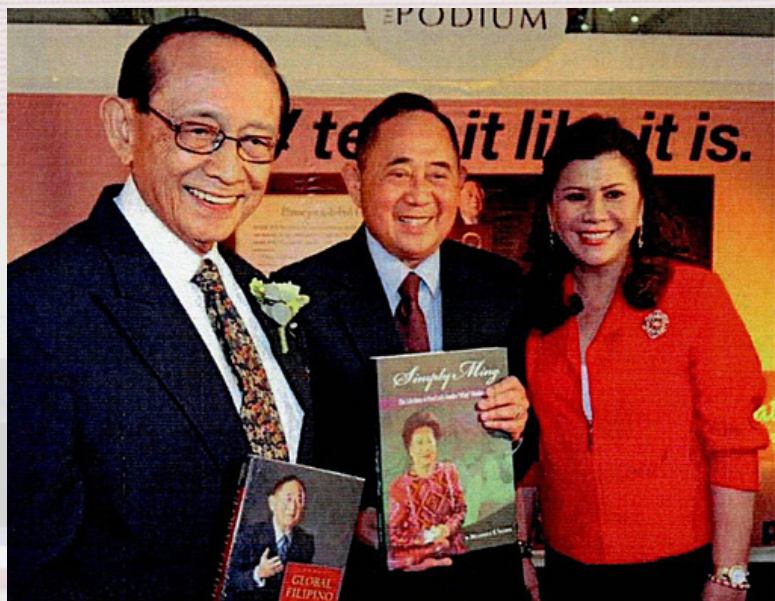
In the end, power recedes more quickly than the questions it leaves behind.

Joe held some of the highest offices a democracy can offer. He shaped laws, assembled coalitions, brokered peace, and stood at the intersection of domestic politics and global diplomacy for more than half a century. He knew the mechanics of power intimately — how it is built, how it is sustained, and how it withdraws its protection without warning.

Yet when the offices fell away, what remained was not bitterness, nor nostalgia, nor a need to settle accounts.

What remained was clarity.

He had learned — early and often — that power is never permanent, but consequence is. Laws outlast speeches.



Fidel V. Ramos proudly displays the authorized biography of former Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., who in turn holds up the biography of President Ramos' wife, Amelita Ramos ("Ming").

Beside them, Manay Gina de Venecia shares a warm, convivial moment with the two iconic Pangasinan statesmen, capturing a scene rich in mutual respect, shared history, and enduring friendship — an exchange of books that symbolized lives intertwined by public service, leadership, and a common commitment to nation-building.

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Institutions outlast personalities. Records outlast applause. And silence, when chosen for survival, exacts a cost that authority can never fully repay.

His life was marked not by a straight ascent, but by cycles of construction and disruption. He rose by persuasion rather than intimidation, by arithmetic rather than anger. He believed that democracies fail not because they lack passion, but because they lack architecture — structures strong enough to contain disagreement without collapsing under it. That belief guided his legislative work, his coalition-building, his peace negotiations, and even his defeats.

He was often criticized for being too conciliatory, too patient, too willing to compromise in a political culture that rewards confrontation. But history has a way of softening judgments that once seemed sharp. Compromise, he understood, was not surrender. It was the price of coexistence in a plural society.

He crossed deserts — literal and political — to make peace. He sat across from men who had once carried weapons, believing that dialogue, however imperfect, was preferable to endless war. He accepted that peace agreements would be flawed, that



Speaker of the House of Representatives, Martin Romualdez, together with his wife, Yedda Marie Romualdez, Representative of Tingog Party-list, leads the inauguration and unveiling of the marker for the Jose C. de Venecia Jr. Building and Museum at the Batasang Pambansa Complex on January 27, 2025.

At the center of the ceremony is the 88-year-old honoree, Jose de Venecia Jr., accompanied by his wife Gina de Venecia and their son, Christopher de Venecia, Representative of Pangasinan. The event paid tribute to JDV's enduring legacy as a five-time Speaker and statesman, institutionalizing his contributions to Philippine parliamentary leadership, diplomacy, and nation-building within the very halls where he served for decades.

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institutions would disappoint, that progress would arrive unevenly. Perfection was never the standard. Stability was.

He also learned, painfully, that no public success shields one from private loss. The death of his daughter broke something that no office could repair. Grief reordered his sense of urgency, stripping away whatever vanity power might still have held. After that, ambition no longer stood alone. It answered to something quieter, more exacting.

In his later years, reassessment came — not in the language of triumph, but of recognition. Honors arrived. Buildings bore his name. Younger leaders acknowledged debts that had once gone unspoken. But these gestures mattered to him less than the knowledge that systems he helped build continued to function without him.

That, to his mind, was the true test.

History rarely remembers leaders kindly if they mistake authority for purpose. It remembers more generously those who treat power as a tool rather than an identity — who use it to build frameworks sturdy enough to survive their own absence.

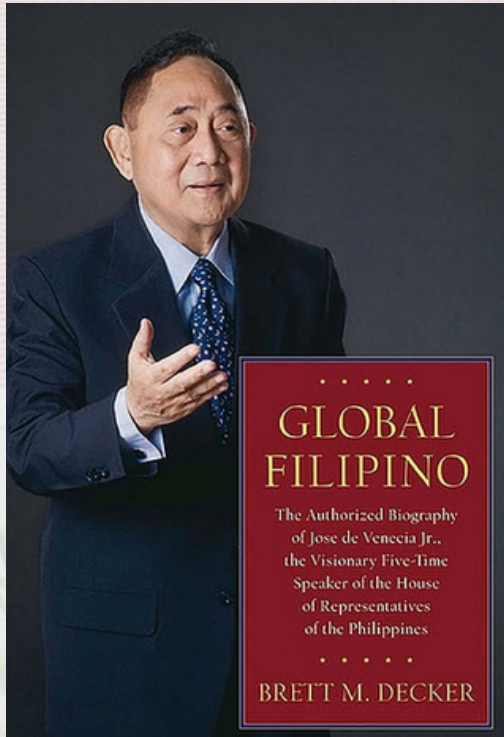


Manong Joe, now in his later years, stands before a towering image of his younger self at the Jose C. de Venecia Jr. Building and Museum — a poignant visual dialogue between past and present.

The juxtaposition captures a lifetime of public service distilled into a single frame: the youthful fire of the campaign trail set against the quiet gravitas of legacy. More than a portrait, the scene reflects continuity — of conviction, leadership, and nation-building — within the very halls where JDV shaped Philippine parliamentary history and where his contributions are now permanently enshrined.

THE BRIDGE BUILDER

Leadership, Service Above Self, and the Life of Jose Claveria de Venecia Jr.



In Global Filipino: The Authorized Biography of Jose de Venecia Jr., the Visionary Five-Time Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Philippines, author Brett M. Decker offers a rare, behind-the-scenes portrait of a statesman at the center of power in one of America's most important allies.

Tracing his meteoric rise to the Speakership in 1992, the book chronicles how Jose de Venecia Jr. became a principal architect of Philippine policy on war and peace, parliamentary diplomacy, and global engagement. Published in 2008, the biography situates de Venecia's leadership within the wider currents of regional security and international politics, revealing the convictions, negotiations, and strategic choices that shaped a decisive era in Philippine governance.

Joe belonged to that rarer category.

He was an institutionalist in a culture often impatient with institutions. A coalition builder in a country suspicious of coalitions. A peacemaker who understood that peace is seldom pure, but always preferable to the corrosion of perpetual conflict.

He did not believe democracy was elegant. He believed it was necessary. He accepted its messiness, its compromises, its reversals, and its costs. And he spent a lifetime working within those constraints rather than attempting to transcend them.

In the quiet of old age, as the tempo of his life slowed and memory did its selective work, what seemed to matter most was not how often he prevailed, but when he chose not to yield — when he placed something on the record knowing it would cost him power, when he favored endurance over advantage.

Titles fade. Coalitions dissolve. Gavels fall silent.

But bridges — patiently built, imperfectly aligned, and strong enough to be crossed — remain.

And it is there, at those crossings, that the life of Jose de Venecia Jr. ultimately resides. ■

At the Wake of Former House Speaker/ Rotarian Jose de Venecia



Rotary Club of Manila, led by President Raoul Creencia, presented the RCM name badge of former House Speaker/Rotarian Jose de Venecia to Mrs. Gina De Venecia.



Centennial
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Susing
Pineda and
Past
Director
Oscar del
Rosario



Director Mike Albaña, Asst. Secretary
Paco Magaaysay, and PD Oscar del Rosario

At the Wake of Former House Speaker/ Rotarian Jose de Venecia

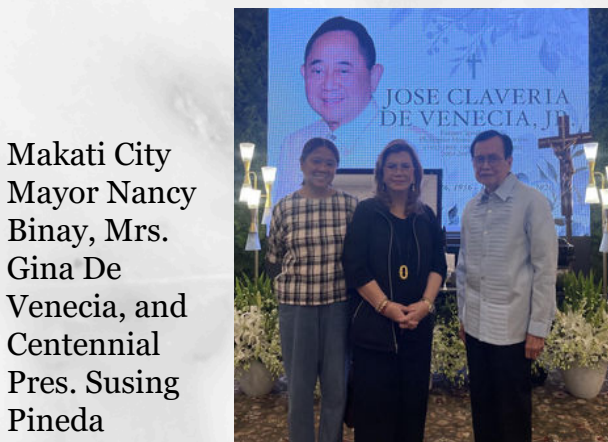
PVP Joel
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DE Teddy Kalaw with
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Manila Rotarians Offer Condolences to the Family of STAR Rotarian Winston Gines



President Raoul Creencia and
Director-elect/Assistant Internal
Auditor Mike Roxas offer their
condolences to the family of
STAR Rotarian Winston Gines.

Rotary



THE FOUR-WAY TEST

of the things we think, say or do

- I. Is it the TRUTH?
- II. Is it FAIR to all concerned?
- III. Will it build GOODWILL
& BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?
- IV. to all concerned?

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





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Editor
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Celebrating AIM and AI management



WITH DUE RESPECT
ARTEMIO V. PANGANIBAN

I have always said that the lightning pace of hi-tech innovation is both daunting and exciting. One educational institution that has, through the years, kept up with this blitzkrieg is the Asian Institute of Management (AIM). I join AIM, currently celebrating its 58th anniversary, in applauding its expansion from face-to-face to online classes, from graduate to undergraduate degrees, from business-as-usual to sustainability, from corporate governance to artificial intelligence (AI) responsibility.

THE AIM CELEBRATION IS INCOMPLETE, in my humble opinion, without honoring a business legend, management guru, philanthropist, and dear friend—the late Washington SyCip—whose vision, wisdom, and passion led to the founding of AIM.

Along with the Harvard Business School advisory group, prominent business leaders, and academicians, he helped organize AIM. And as its founding chairman, he foresaw the need for the institution to lead businesses to be more people-centric and nation-builders.

A visionary, a genius of a man—Wash, as he was fondly called—would not be surprised that the flagship college of AIM, the Washington SyCip Graduate School of Business, now offers seven graduate degrees, which include four distinctive programs.

Among them is the master's in international business law (MIBL) degree that I proposed to AIM several years ago and that was successfully launched in 2024. It was inspired by an email from my grandson, Jose Miguel "Mig" Sandejas, who finished with honors two master's degrees: an MBA (in entrepreneurship) at the highly rated Babson College near Boston and a Master of Science in Business Law at the Northwestern University in Chicago.

Mig's email stated, in part: "I discovered that knowledge of the law rounded out my business thinking. Not only does the law tell you what you cannot do, but it tells you how far you can go." In turn, AIM proudly explains that its MIBL program "will benefit those who

do not intend to pursue a legal career but are interested in gaining a comprehensive understanding of the global business landscape."

Remarkably, several MIBL students have been awarded the coveted "Fellowship Awards" of the Foundation for Liberty and Prosperity (FLP) in partnership with the Metro Pacific Investments Corp. In 2011, I founded FLP with Wash, among others. A firm believer like me in liberty and prosperity, he was the first trustee to donate P500,000 to the FLP.

THE LEGACY LIVES ON as the baton was passed to Dr. Jikyeong Kang, the first female president and dean of AIM. She was also the first from the Asia-Pacific to chair the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business—the most prestigious global business education alliance and accreditation body.

She has expanded academic offerings in AIM from three-degree programs to 15, and increased its student enrollment severalfold. These include the launching of the Philippines' first transnational double-degree undergraduate program in partnership with the University of Houston.

Relevantly, AIM now offers a master's degree in AI and data analytics: ready-to-learn data analysis, machine learning, and, of course, AI itself—skills that are relevant to face business challenges and drive smart decisions.

At this critical juncture, I have witnessed

how Jikyeong manages transformation with remarkable energy, grit, elegance, and grace. Were she not a foreigner, she would have been included in my column last Jan. 26, as one of the exemplars of the empowered women in the private sector.

AIM HONORED MY LATE WIFE LENI—an AIM alumna and the first female professor for 37 years (and associate dean for a few years), who passed to the Eternal Kingdom on April 9, 2023—by naming a case room after her and by rededicating its chapel (which she helped build) as the "Chapel of the Immaculate Conception In Loving Memory of Professor Leni Panganiban." Our University of Michigan-educated daughter, Ma. Theresa "Tet" P. Mañalac, continued the professorial stint of Leni after she retired in 2009.

As I have repeatedly stressed, I believe in the value of shared prosperity and in alleviating poverty under the rule of law for more equitable socioeconomic progress. This is why my interest in AIM remains active, even as the FLP addresses these endeavors in its other programs (legal scholarships, dissertation writing, professorial chairs, educational assistance for the poor, etc.) to promote the national weal and get the country out of its generational problems of poverty, corruption, and abuse of public office.

As organizations transform, so, too, do the leaders who navigate the future with integrity and creativity. I am more than glad to learn that AIM is determined to continue its mission "to lead, inspire, and transform." In celebration of this year's homecoming, AIM is conducting two alumni masterclasses: AI applications in business and generative AI fundamentals for the workplace.

In sum, I keep faith in the FLP's core philosophy: People need both liberty and prosperity under the rule of law. With AIM's collaboration, FLP is determined to generate more programs to bring that philosophy more meaningful and useful to the wider public.

Comments to chiefjusticepanganiban@hotmail.com

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Aleco Monday Breakfast Fellowship



PT Chito Tagaysay hosted the Aleco Monday Breakfast Fellowship on February 16, 2026. In honor of the late Rotarian and active Aleconian, Tong Payumo, PT Chito will donate 25 copies of the Philippine Almanac to the University of Nueva Caceres, Bataan.

Present were (clockwise from bottom left) former member Raoul Villegas, PT Chito Tagaysay, Rtn. Cris Acosta, DE/BLA Caloy Serapio, PD Ner Lonzaga, PD Rod Valencia, former member Eric Severino, PD Abe Pascual, PP Archit Bartolome, former member Jorge Salazar, and IA Nick Locsin.



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