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The Official News Organ of
the Rotary Club of Manila

balita

ISSUE NO. 4077 • JANUARY 29, 2026



**Dr. Andreas Michael
Pfaffernoschke**

*Ambassador
German Embassy Manila*

**RI District 3810
Midyear Review
in Vietnam**

**A City in the Pines,
A Vision in Motion:**

Rotary Club of Manila's
18th Weekly Membership
Meeting with JHMC
President & CEO Manjit
T. Singh Reandi

**OF LEDGERS AND
LANDSCAPES**

*The Life, Learning,
and Cultural
Stewardship of
Jaime del Carmen Laya*

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PROGRAM



ROTARY CLUB OF MANILA 19th Weekly Membership Meeting Rotary Year 2025-2026

Thursday, January 29, 2026, 12:30 PM
Manila Polo Club

Moderator: PSAA GÜENTER GERHARD G. "Günter" MATSCHUCK

PART I

11:00 AM Registration /Lunch

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

Invocation | **RTN. VICTOR G. "Vic" GARCIA III**

National Anthem of Germany
Philippine National Anthem | **AVP**

Rotary Club of Manila Hymn
RCM WF Music Chorale

The Four (4) Way Test
PD ISSAM ELDEBS

Acknowledgement of Guests
PSAA GÜENTER GERHARD G. "Günter" MATSCHUCK

Welcome Song | **RCM WF Music Chorale**

Birthday Celebrants

Jan. 23 Rtn. Butch Campos
Jan. 24 PD Abe Pascual
Jan. 25 Rtn. Toti Cortez
Jan. 27 Rtn. Danny Go

Maligayang Bati / Happy Birthday Song
RCM WF Chorale

PART II

12:55 PM President's Time
PRES. RAOUL C. CREENCIA

1:00 PM Introduction of the Guest of Honor & Speaker
PSAA GÜENTER GERHARD G. "Günter" MATSCHUCK

Guest of Honor and Speaker

His Excellency
DR. ANDREAS MICHAEL PFAFFERNOSCHKE
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary of Germany
to the Philippines

1:30 PM Open Forum / Q&A

1:45 PM Presentation of Certificate of Appreciation
PRES. RAOUL C. CREENCIA

2:00 PM Adjournment
PRES. RAOUL C. CREENCIA

EDITORIAL

Reginald T. Yu
Editor-in-Chief



THE forthcoming address of His Excellency Dr. Andreas Michael Pfaffernoschke, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Philippines, comes at a moment when the value of principled diplomacy and genuine international partnership has never been more urgent.

His presence as Guest of Honor and Speaker is not merely ceremonial. It is a timely opportunity to reflect on the depth, maturity, and promise of Philippines–Germany relations — two nations separated by geography but united by a shared commitment to democratic values, multilateral cooperation, and sustainable development.

In a world increasingly shaped by geopolitical tension, economic uncertainty, climate vulnerability, and rapid technological change, Germany stands as a global leader in advocating rules-based order, innovation-driven growth, and climate responsibility. The Philippines, for its part, is an emerging regional partner — resilient, youthful, and strategically positioned in Southeast Asia, with a growing role in shaping the future of the Indo-Pacific.

Ambassador Pfaffernoschke represents a diplomatic tradition that views cooperation not as charity, but as partnership; not as short-term transaction, but as long-term investment in people, institutions, and shared progress. Germany's engagement with the

EDITORIAL

Philippines — across development cooperation, renewable energy, climate adaptation, vocational training, technology transfer, governance, and private sector collaboration — has consistently reflected this philosophy.

As we anticipate his address, we do so with the expectation of insights grounded in both global perspective and local relevance:

- How nations can work together amid shifting geopolitical alignments
- How economic cooperation can be aligned with sustainability and inclusivity
- How technological and human capital development can be leveraged for long-term resilience
- And how trust, dialogue, and shared values remain the bedrock of meaningful international relations

For the Rotary community and for readers of *The Balita*, this moment is especially significant. Rotary's ideals of international understanding, peace through

service, and leadership beyond borders find a natural resonance in the mission of diplomacy. The work of building bridges — between cultures, institutions, and generations — is the common ground where civic leadership and statecraft meet.

The visit of Ambassador Pfaffernoschke invites us to look beyond immediate concerns and toward a broader horizon: a Philippines that is an active, confident partner in global cooperation; and a Germany that continues to engage not only with governments, but with civil society, business, and community leaders in shaping a shared future.

Before he takes the podium, we welcome him with deep respect and high expectation. His forthcoming message promises not only to illuminate the state of Philippines–Germany relations, but to challenge us to think more expansively about our role in a world where progress is no longer the task of any one nation, but the shared responsibility of all.

GUEST OF HONOR AND SPEAKER

Dr. Andreas Michael Pfaffernoschke

*Ambassador
German Embassy Manila*

DR. Andreas Michael Pfaffernoschke, Ambassador of the German Embassy in Manila, has a distinguished diplomatic career. Born in Berlin on June 19, 1962, he has dedicated his career to advancing international relations and representing Germany worldwide.

Ambassador Pfaffernoschke completed his secondary school qualification in Berlin in 1980. He earned a master's degree in economics in 1985 and a Doctor of Economics degree in 1990, both in Berlin.

Dr. Pfaffernoschke began his diplomatic career in 1990 with training for the higher foreign service at the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin. He has held key positions at the Federal Foreign Office in Bonn and at German embassies in Dakar and Moscow. He also served at the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations in Geneva and New York, demonstrating expertise in multilateral diplomacy.



From 2006 to 2010, Dr. Pfaffernoschke served as Deputy Head of Division at the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin. He was Head of Division from 2016 to 2020, further establishing his leadership in international affairs.

Before his current role in Manila, Dr. Pfaffernoschke was the German Ambassador to Ouagadougou from 2020 to 2023. His broad experience and understanding of global issues support Germany's diplomatic efforts in the Philippines.

Dr. Pfaffernoschke is married with four children. Both professionally and personally, he is committed to promoting international connections and mutual understanding.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Reflections on the Mid-Year Review and Receiving the “People’s Choice” Award

THE recently concluded Mid-Year Review of Rotary International District 3810, held in the vibrant coastal city of Da Nang, Vietnam, was a meaningful convergence of leadership, reflection, and shared commitment to Service Above Self. Convened under the guidance of District Governor Mary Mei Rodrigo, the gathering brought together Rotary Club Presidents and District Officers from across the district to assess progress, share best practices, and renew collective resolve for the remainder of the Rotary year.



Raoul C. Creencia
President

As President of the Rotary Club of Manila, I was honored to represent Asia’s First Club in this much-awaited activity.

Set against Da Nang’s dynamic blend of tradition and modernity, the Mid-Year Review served as both a checkpoint and a catalyst. Club Presidents presented their accomplishments, challenges, and innovations, fostering an atmosphere of transparency, collaboration, and mutual learning. The exchange of ideas and the sharing of unique experiences by each Club President underscored the strength of Rotary’s network -- diverse in experience, yet united in purpose.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A highlight of the event was the presentation of first-semester accomplishments by the Presidents of the Rotary Clubs in the District, delivered either personally or through their designated representatives.

Summarizing and presenting our Club's mid-year accomplishments within a five-minute window was no small challenge. Yet, I believe our presentation succeeded in clearly conveying the depth of our work and the values that guide our service. At the conclusion of the sessions, I was deeply honored to be chosen by my fellow Rotary Club Presidents as the "People's Choice" Awardee --an affirmation made especially meaningful as it came from peers who fully understand the demands, responsibilities, and realities of club leadership.

Receiving the award was, for me, a deeply humbling and affirming experience. While it was presented in recognition of the presentation and its content, I view it as something far greater than a personal distinction. It was, in truth, a reflection of the shared values, collective efforts, and quiet dedication of the entire Rotary Club of Manila -- of officers and members who give generously of their time, talent, and heart in service to others.



Our Club's Mid-Year Review report was intentionally honest. It celebrated milestones reached and programs delivered, but it also acknowledged the work that still lies ahead -- the goals yet to be met, the mission yet to be fully realized, and the continuous "levelling up" that we, as Rotarians, must always strive for. In Rotary, progress is never static; it is a journey of constant learning, refinement, and recommitment to service.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In that context, receiving the “People’s Choice” award felt less like an endpoint and more like a quiet but meaningful confirmation. It affirmed that the Rotary Club of Manila is moving in the right direction, that our efforts are aligned with the values we espouse, and that our projects are resonating beyond our own Club. More importantly, it reinforced a belief I hold deeply -- that leadership in Rotary is not measured by accolades or applause, but by our capacity to inspire others, to build genuine connections, and to create impact where it truly matters.

I share this recognition with every member of the Rotary Club of Manila. It belongs to the hands that serve, the minds that plan, and the hearts that remain steadfast in our commitment to serve. If the award signifies anything at all, it is that our collective work is touching lives, strengthening communities, and contributing, in our own way, to the broader Rotary mission. For that affirmation, I am profoundly grateful -- and even more motivated to continue the work ahead.

The Da Nang Mid-Year Review has reaffirmed for me the value of coming

Our Club’s Mid-Year Review report was intentionally honest. It celebrated milestones reached and programs delivered, but it also acknowledged the work that still lies ahead -- the goals yet to be met, the mission yet to be fully realized, and the continuous “levelling up” that we, as Rotarians, must always strive for.

together at the midpoint of the Rotary year -- not just to assess our metrics and milestones, but to deepen fellowship and reignite our shared purpose. I return from this gathering with fresh insights, renewed energy, and an even greater appreciation for the transformative power of peer-driven encouragement.

In true Rotary spirit, the event was a testament to the idea that when leaders learn from one another and celebrate shared successes, the entire district moves forward -- stronger, more aligned, and ever more committed to service.

A City in the Pines, A Vision in Motion:

*Rotary Club of Manila's
18th Weekly Membership
Meeting with JHMC
President & CEO
Manjit T. Singh
Reandi*

by PE Reginald T. Yu

MARY MEI V. RODRIGO
DISTRICT GOVERNOR
ROTARY YEAR 2025-2026

Rotary 
District 3810

**UNITE
FOR**

THE stately halls of the Manila Polo Club once again became a meeting ground of minds and missions as the Rotary Club of Manila convened its 18th Weekly Membership Meeting for Rotary Year 2025–2026. Presided over by Vice President **Ricardo S.B. “Ricky” Guevara** and deftly moderated by Past District Governor **Alexander P. “Alex” Cureg**, the gathering unfolded not merely as a luncheon meeting, but as a journey — through history, ecology, community development, and a bold vision of inclusive, sustain-able tourism — led by the day’s distinguished guest speaker, **Mr. Manjit T. Singh Reandi**, President and Chief Executive Officer of the **John Hay Management Corporation (JHMC)**.



VP Ricardo S.B. “Ricky” Guevara called the meeting to order.

From the outset, there was a palpable sense that this would be more than a routine address. As Rotarians and guests settled in, the familiar rhythms of fellowship, song, and shared purpose set the tone, but it was the anticipation of hearing from the steward of one of the country’s most storied and environmentally significant landscapes — Camp John Hay in Baguio City — that lent the afternoon its particular gravity.

From History to Living Heritage

Mr. Reandi began by situating Camp John Hay within the long arc of Philippine and global history. Once a rest-and-recreation haven for American servicemen, the camp bears the name of John Milton Hay, U.S. Secretary of State under Presidents William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt. It was, he noted with solemn poignancy, at the gates of Camp John Hay that the first bomb of World War II in the Philippines fell in December 1941. And within its grounds still stands the table on which General Tomoyuki Yamashita formally surrendered in 1945 — now preserved at the U.S. Ambassador's Residence in the John Hay Reservation Area.

Yet Camp John Hay is not a relic frozen in time. Spread across 625 hectares, divided between a 301-hectare Special Economic Zone and a 325-hectare Reservation Area encompassing 14 barangays, it is today a living, breathing ecosystem and economic hub. “We are,” Mr. Reandi quipped with a smile, “the only city in the Philippines with fully air-conditioned outdoors,” referring to Baguio’s pine-cooled climate — made even cooler, by scientific measurement, within the forested core of the camp itself.



PDG Alexander P. "Alex" Cureg moderated the meeting.



Rtn. Paul Anthony T. "Paul" Kho led the invocation.



STAR Rtn. Oliver L. Pantaleon led the recitation of the Four-Way Test.

Stewardship of the Environment

Central to his message was a profound respect for nature. Camp John Hay, he shared, contains 53.6 percent of Baguio City's remaining forest reserve and the majority of its pine trees. This is not merely scenic capital; it is ecological responsibility.

JHMC, he proudly noted, is the only government-owned and controlled corporation in the country with ISO certification in environmental management. Their initiatives range from biodiversity conservation — such as the partnership with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' research arm and the protection of a 30-hectare experimental forest — to the revival of an 11-hectare bambusetum, one of the largest in Northern Luzon, home to rare and even China-endemic bamboo species.

Equally innovative is their wildfire mitigation strategy: the use of agave plants, rich in water content, as natural firebreaks — an indigenous solution now validated through research partnerships with local universities.



VP Ricardo S.B. "Ricky" Guevara during the President's Time



Rtn. Raymond N. Davis introduced the Guest of Honor and Speaker.

Community at the Heart of Development

Beyond forests and facilities, Mr. Reandi emphasized that the true soul of Camp John Hay lies in its people. Eighty percent of JHMC's workforce comes from the Cordilleras, and under his leadership, the camp's development has taken on a distinctly inclusive, community-centered character.

From partnering with local artisans for Christmas markets and cultural bazaars, to welcoming the famed “Pony Boys” of Wright Park and Loakan into the camp as part of its tourism experience, JHMC has sought to ensure that growth is shared. Through collaborations with TESDA, DSWD, and DTI, the John Hay Training Center now offers free skills development and entrepreneurship programs to residents of the reservation barangays — equipping them not only to find employment within the zone, but to build sustainable livelihoods of their own. The Philippine Experience Program, launched with the Department of Tourism, positions Camp John Hay as the northern gateway to the country's cultural tapestry, beginning at the historic Bell House. Here,



Guest of Honor and Speaker Manjit T. Singh Reandi, President & CEO of John Hay Management Corporation

heritage courts, amphitheaters, secret gardens, and soon a market-place for local produce converge to create an immersive narrative of Cordilleran and Filipino identity.

A Vision of Inclusive, Future-Ready Tourism

Innovation, however, does not stop at community markets and heritage trails. Mr. Reandi outlined an ambitious roadmap: the development of golf tourism linked to international markets, explored through engagements in Japan and plans to

connect Baguio seamlessly via Clark International Airport; and most strikingly, a proposed cable car system stretching from Tuba, Benguet, into Camp John Hay and looping through key points in the city — envisioning a car-free, congestion-free Baguio that marries mobility with minimal environmental impact. Complementing this are plans for a major Cordillera museum, skywalks, forest boardwalks, and expanded hospitality facilities — all designed under green architecture principles, ensuring that progress never comes at the cost of the environment.

Economically, the numbers underscore the camp's significance: 7 to 8 million visitors annually, gross sales reaching approximately ₱1.45 billion, and more than 3,200 direct jobs, with many more indirectly supported. Tourism and hospitality remain the anchor, but a growing ecosystem of eco-friendly, innovation-driven enterprises signals a diversified and resilient future.

Rotary and the Spirit of Service

Throughout his presentation, what resonated most with the Rotarian audience was not merely the scale of projects, but the philosophy behind



Mr. Reandi engaged in a Q&A session with PP Archit Bartolome, PP Chito Zaldarriaga, PDG Vince Carlos, STAR Rtn. Wins Ginez, PSAA Günter Matschuck, and PD Abe Pascual.



them: stewardship, inclusivity, transparency, and service — values that mirror Rotary’s own ideals. Mr. Reandi spoke of quarterly dialogues with locators, of governance reforms, of gender and development excellence, and of anti-red tape initiatives that have placed JHMC among the top-performing GOCCs in the country.

In him, the Club saw not only a corporate leader, but a custodian of heritage and a partner in nation-building.

As Vice President Ricky Guevara later presented the Certificate of Appreciation, the applause that filled the hall was not perfunctory. It was the collective recognition that Camp



VP Ricardo S.B. “Ricky” Guevara presented the Certificate of Appreciation to Mr. Reandi, in the presence of Rtn. Ray Davis, STAR Rtn. Oliver Pantaleon, and Rtn. Paul Koh.

John Hay, under its present stewardship, stands as a model of how history, environment, community, and economic vitality can be woven into a single, coherent vision of sustainable progress.

The 18th Weekly Membership Meeting thus concluded not merely with the formalities of adjournment, but with a renewed sense of inspiration. In the cool pine air of Baguio evoked through words and images, Rotarians were reminded that service, when guided by foresight and compassion, can indeed transform landscapes — and lives.



VP Ricardo S.B. “Ricky” Guevara adjourned the meeting.

Meeting Fellowship



CLUB ADMINISTRATION

RCM Members' Attendance Report RY 2025-2026



ATTENDANCE REPORT January 2026

JANUARY 2026	January 08, 2026 BSP GOVERNOR ELI M. REMOLONA JR.	January 15, 2026 CLASSIFICATION TALKS	January 22, 2026 JHMC PRES. & CEO MANJIT T. SINGH REANDI
MEMBERS PRESENT	49	27	29
MEMBERS PRESENT %	23%	13%	14%
MAKE UP ATTENDEES	21	8	11
EXEMPTED	4	2	4
ON LEAVE	0	0	0
Total Active Members	74	37	44
Total # of Members	212	212	212
TOTAL %:	35%	17%	21%
ROTARACTORS	9	0	16
MEDIA	0	0	0
EMBASSIES / DIPLOMATIC CORPS	0	0	0
DG, DGE, DGN, PDG	24	0	0
GOHS / GS	7	0	2
VISITING ROTARIAN	39	2	0
Guests of RCM MEMBERS	3	1	1
TOTAL ATTENDEES	107	30	48



LIST OF ATTENDEES January 22, 2026

- 1 Bartolome III, Arsenio M.
- 2 Benedicto, Sixto T.
- 3 Bolton, Wilhelm
- 4 Carlos, Vicente J.
- 5 Castro, Karlo Eugene Josef M.
- 6 Cureg, Alexander P.
- 7 Cutter, John Michael
- 8 Davis, Raymond N.
- 9 Del Rosario Sr., Oscar A.
- 10 Egan, Brendan W.L.
- 11 Eldebs, Issam
- 12 Guevara, Ricardo S.
- 13 Koh, Paul Anthony T
- 14 Lorenzana, Delfin
- 15 Matschuck, Guenter Gerhard G.
- 16 Mauricio, Antonilo DC
- 17 Obrado, Daniel Calzado
- 18 Ong, Rowel Janson S.
- 19 Pascual, Abraham F.
- 20 Preysler, Jr., Fausto R.
- 21 Serapio, Carlos G.
- 22 Shimoda, Shigeru
- 23 Sibayan, Joselito H.
- 24 Simon, Juanito A.
- 25 Yordanov, Stefan
- 26 Zaldarriaga, Felix Francisco S.
- 27 Pantaleon, Oliver
- 28 Ginez, Winston M.
- 29 Tamesis, Chris C.

CLUB ADMINISTRATION

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

As of January 27, 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 COYUTO, 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 GASPAR, 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 KHO, RALPH VALENTIN
86 KLEBS, DAVID
87 KOH, PAUL ANTHONY
88 LACAMBACAL, ALVIN
89 LAYA, JAIME C.
90 LIAMZON, ROMEO THADDEUS M.
91 LIM, RICHARD
92 LAUREL, RICARDO P.
93 LAZARO, JUAN MIGUEL
94 LEDDA, JAIME VICTOR B.

CLUB ADMINISTRATION

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

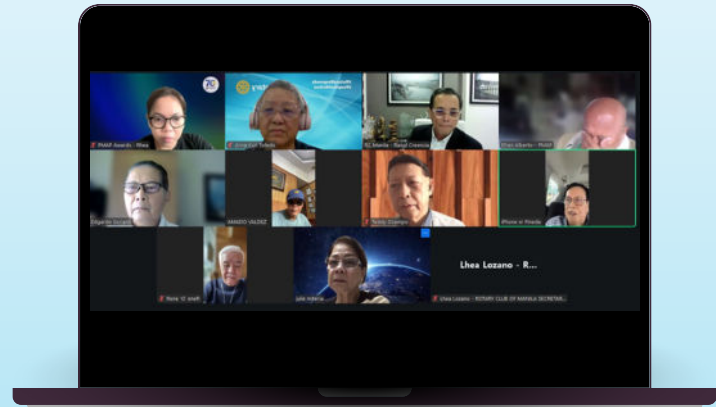
As of January 27, 2026

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

CLUB ADMINISTRATION

TOWER Awards 2026 Planning Session

THE Rotary Club of Manila's TOWER (Outstanding Workers of the Republic) Awards Committee met with leaders from the People Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP) on Tuesday, January 27, 2026 via Zoom. This virtual session focused on coordinating efforts and refining the selection process for the upcoming TOWER Awards 2026.



Representing PMAP were Past President Edgardo Soriano, Executive Director Rene Gener, Assessors Julie Miteria, Efren Alberto, Willie Estoque, and Executive Assistant Rhea Paragsa.

Rotary Club of Manila attendees included President Raoul Creencia, Centennial President /TOWER Awards Chairman Susing Pineda, Past President Teddy Ocampo, Past Director Amading Valdez, Executive Secretary Lhea Lozano, and Consultant Anna Kun Toledo.

CLUB ADMINISTRATION

RCM's Pro Patria Awards Committee Gathers to Plan for 2026



THE Rotary Club of Manila's Pro Patria Awards Committee met on January 27, 2026, from 5 pm to 7 pm. Director-Elect Mike Roxas hosted the meeting at his Moore Roxas Tabamo & Co. boardroom.

Present at the meeting were PDG Jackie Rodriguez, Director Edwin Hernandez, Chair PD Amading Valdez, Secretary Anton Mauricio, STAR Rotarians Winston Ginez, Oliver Pantaleon, and Chris Tamesis.



CLUB ADMINISTRATION

RCM's 107th Inaugural Finance Committee Meeting



THE 107th Inaugural Finance Committee meeting was held on January 22, 2026, at the Turf Room of the Manila Polo Club.

In attendance were STAR Rotarian Rowel Ong, Vice President-Elect/ Assistant Treasurer Karlo Castro, PDG/Chair Alex Cureg, and President-Elect Reggie Yu.

AREAS OF FOCUS



PEACEBUILDING AND
CONFLICT PREVENTION



DISEASE PREVENTION
AND TREATMENT



WATER, SANITATION,
AND HYGIENE



MATERNAL AND
CHILD HEALTH



BASIC EDUCATION
AND LITERACY

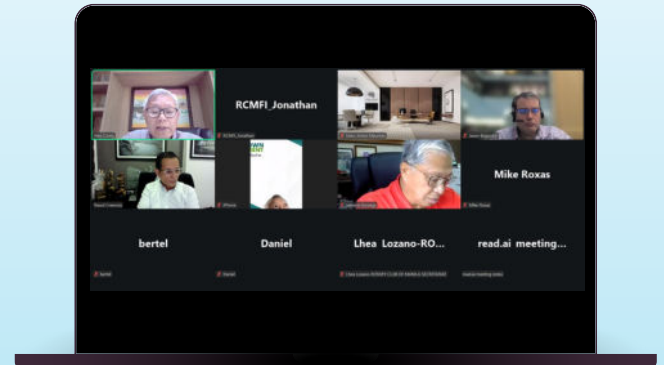
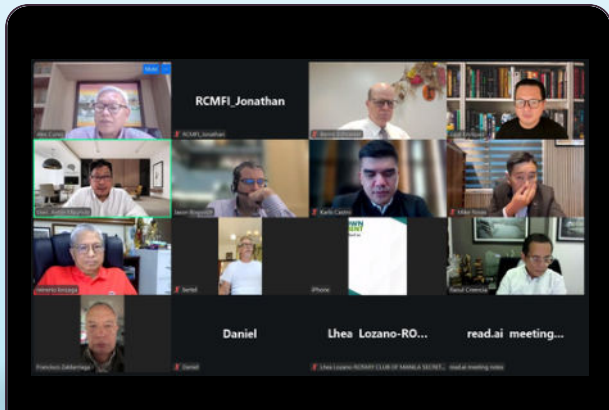


COMMUNITY ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT



ENVIRONMENT

RCManila Foundation Gears Up for 2026-2027 With First Board Meeting



THE RCManila Foundation, Inc. held its first organizational meeting for the incoming 2026-2027 Board of Trustees (BOT) on January 27, 2026.

Led by incumbent Chairman and BOT-Elect Alex Cureg, the virtual meeting brought together the foundation's future leaders to plan for the year ahead.

In attendance:

- Incumbent Chair/BOT-Elect Alex Cureg
- Incumbent President/BOT-Elect Jujut Enriquez
- RCM President/Chair-Elect Raoul Creencia
- Incumbent Treasurer/President-Elect Mike Roxas
- Incumbent Secretary/BOT-Elect Anton Mauricio
- Incumbent Board Legal Adviser/BOT-Elect Caloy Serapio
- Incumbent AT/BOT-Elect Dan Obrado
- BOT-Elects: Bernd Schneider, Ner Lonzaga, Jason Bogovich, Karlo Castro, and Chito Zaldarriaga
- Screening Committee Chair Bertel Bertelsen

RI District 3810 Midyear Review in Vietnam



The District Team at the Midyear Review held in Da Nang, Vietnam, led by District Governor Mary Mei Rodrigo and spouse, with DGND/Secretary General Hernie Esguerra and PDG Joyce Ambray, Executive Secretary Eric Candidato, and Chief of Staff George Ng.

RI District 3810 Midyear Review in Vietnam



President Raoul Creencia with Classmate Presidents
at the RID 3810 Midyear Review held in Vietnam from January 22 to 23, 2026.

RI District 3810 Midyear Review in Vietnam

Congratulations

President Raoul Creencia
for being awarded the
People's Choice Award
during the Rotary District
Midyear Review!



Awarding of the People's Choice Award

1st: President Raoul Creencia, RC Manila
2nd: President Kelvin Cheng, RC Raha Sulayman
3rd: President Melissa Oreta, RC Manila 101

RI District 3810 Midyear Review in Vietnam



President Raoul Creencia receives the Certificate of Participation from District Governor Mary Mei Rodrigo, witnessed by DGND/ District Secretary General Hermie Esguerra, PDG Joyce Ambray, PDG Ernest Yuyek, District ES Eric Candidato, and Rotary District 3810 officers.



PEOPLE

OF LEDGERS AND LANDSCAPES

*The Life,
Learning,
and Cultural
Stewardship of
Jaime del
Carmen
Laya*

By PE Reginald T. Yu



OF LEDGERS AND LANDSCAPES

The Life, Learning, and Cultural Stewardship of Jaime del Carmen Laya

THERE are men who leave their mark through force of personality, and there are those whose influence is quieter, almost architectural. They do not dominate rooms. They design them. They do not seek to be remembered. They ensure that what follows them does not collapse.

Jaime “Jimmy” del Carmen Laya belongs unmistakably to the second kind.

He never believed that leadership was about being right in public. He believed it was about building systems sturdy enough to withstand error, ambition, and time.



An oil portrait of Dr. Jimmy Laya from his time as Governor of the Central Bank, masterfully rendered by National Artist Federico Alcuaz. Remarkably, the artist completed the entire work in a single sitting of just two hours, capturing with swift yet assured brushstrokes both the authority of the office and the quiet intensity of the man who helped steer the nation's monetary policy during a pivotal period in Philippine history.

OF LEDGERS AND LANDSCAPES

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In conversation, he often resisted the language of heroism. He described himself instead as a “follower” — a word he used not in false modesty, but with deliberate intent. To him, progress depended not on singular brilliance, but on alignment: with institutions, with process, with constraints.

This instinct — to distrust drama and privilege coherence — would shape every phase of his life. It informed how he taught, how he governed, how he managed money, how he collected art, and how he understood culture itself. It also explains why his most consequential work often appears, at first glance, understated.

Jimmy’s life unfolded across domains that many treat as opposites: business education and the arts, budgeting and beauty, numbers and memory. He never experienced these as contradictions. To him, proportion, balance, and discipline were universal principles. They governed a well-constructed curriculum as surely as they governed a well-composed painting.

The chapters that follow do not trace a man chasing prominence. They trace a mind preoccupied with order — how it is built, how it is preserved, and how easily it is undone when care gives way to impulse. This is a story about stewardship: of institutions, of ideas, of cultural inheritance.

It is also a story about restraint, about choosing the long view in a world impatient for immediacy. Jimmy once said that people often misunderstand technocrats because they confuse action with noise. His life is an argument for the opposite: that the most serious work is often done quietly, and that endurance is the highest form of success.

The Day the Radio Spoke

Jimmy remembers the radio more clearly than the room.

Memory, over time, is selective. It releases faces, loosens edges, dims the color of walls and furniture. But sound — especially the sound that arrives uninvited — has a way of staying intact. Even now, what remains most vivid to Jimmy Laya is not where he was standing, nor how the light fell that morning, but the voice that came through the radio: calm, factual, almost indifferent to the weight of what it carried.

He did not learn that his time in government had ended through a sealed envelope, a discreet phone call, or the courtesy of advance notice. There was no formal goodbye, no moment staged for transition. He learned it the way nations often learn the truth about themselves — suddenly, impersonally, through broadcast.

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It was February 1986.

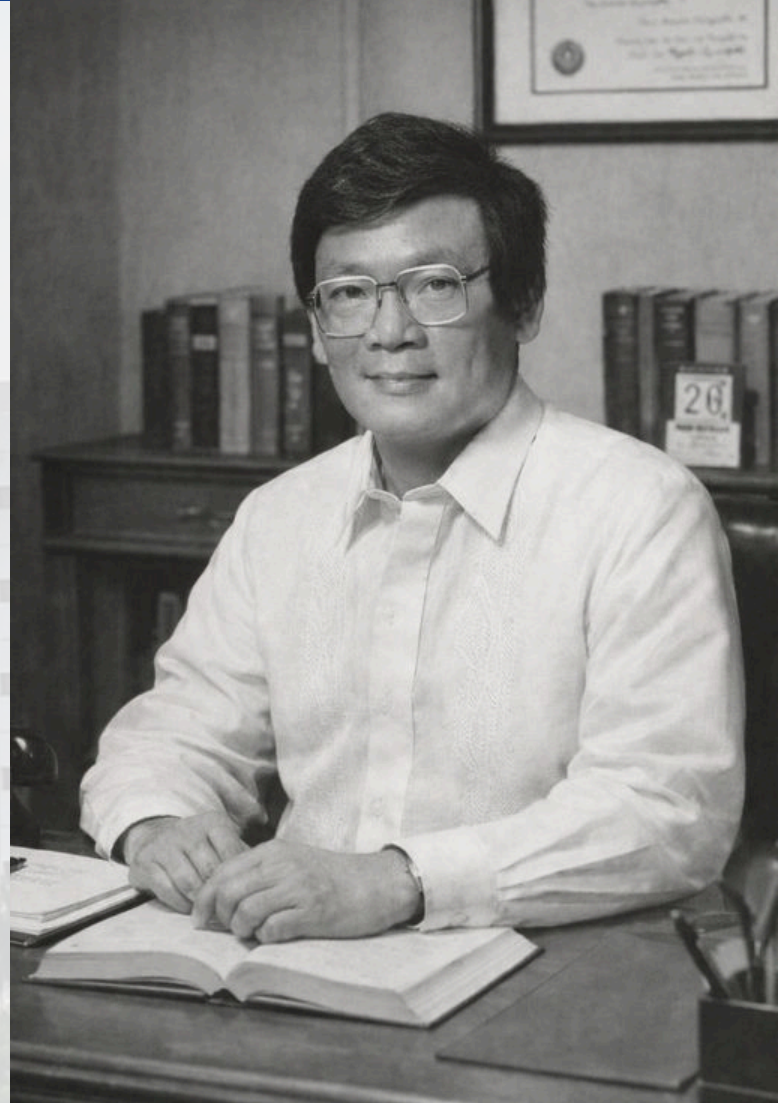
Just moments earlier, he had come from a courtesy call on **President Corazon Aquino**, part of the Marcos Cabinet led by **Cesar E. A. Virata** — his former professor, mentor, and long-time collaborator in both academe and government. The meeting itself bore the unmistakable tone of an ending, though no one named it as such. It was polite, restrained, almost ritualistic. History, for a brief moment, observed manners.

There were no raised voices, no proclamations of rupture. Only the quiet understanding that the country was moving, that the ground beneath institutions was shifting, and that the structures of authority were being rearranged in real time.

Then the radio spoke.

The announcement was spare. The Cabinet had been replaced.

No embellishment followed. No commentary on service rendered, no enumeration of years spent, no acknowledgment of personal cost or professional sacrifice. The words were delivered plainly, as if describing a change in traffic flow or a shift in weather. And in that very plainness lay their finality.



Dr. Jimmy Laya as Governor of the Central Bank of the Philippines in 1981, assuming the helm of the country's monetary authority at a pivotal period in national economic history. His tenure reflected a blend of technocratic rigor and public service, guiding monetary policy with a steady hand while upholding the integrity and stability of the Philippine financial system.

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Jimmy absorbed the news without visible reaction. What struck him was not the abruptness of the announcement, but its inevitability. Governments, he had long believed, must move forward decisively. They could not pause for sentiment, nor wait for individuals to gather their thoughts. Institutions, if they were to function at all, could not be hostage to personal closure.

Power, once withdrawn, had to be relinquished cleanly.

He would later reflect that the moment felt less like an expulsion than a conclusion — one reached not by argument or protest, but by circumstance. Public office, in his understanding, was never an extension of the self. It was not identity. It was a role — necessary for a time, demanding in its season, and finite by design.

In that sense, there was no bitterness to process, no sense of loss to mourn. What mattered was not how the departure unfolded, but whether the work done within the institution would endure after the individual had stepped away.

That distinction — between position and purpose — had guided him long before that day. It had shaped how he taught, how he governed, how he managed, and how he collected and preserved. Titles were temporary. Systems were what remained.

As he moved forward from that moment, there was no dramatic recalibration of self, no existential unraveling. The radio announcement did not unsettle his sense of direction. If anything, it clarified it. It reaffirmed a belief he had practiced quietly throughout his life: that authority must never be confused with permanence, and that influence is most meaningful when it survives one's absence.

The day the radio spoke did not end Jimmy Laya's public life. It simply returned him to what he had always trusted most — work that required no applause, institutions that could stand without him, and a life defined not by how loudly one exits a room, but by whether the room still holds its shape long after one has gone.

A House Built of Books

Jaime del Carmen Laya was born on January 8, 1939, into a household where learning was not celebrated as achievement, but practiced as habit.

Knowledge in that home was not ornamental. It was not something displayed, cited, or used to establish superiority. It was lived. Books were present not as trophies, but as tools — handled, returned to shelves, taken down again. Conversation did not revolve around accolades or ambition, but

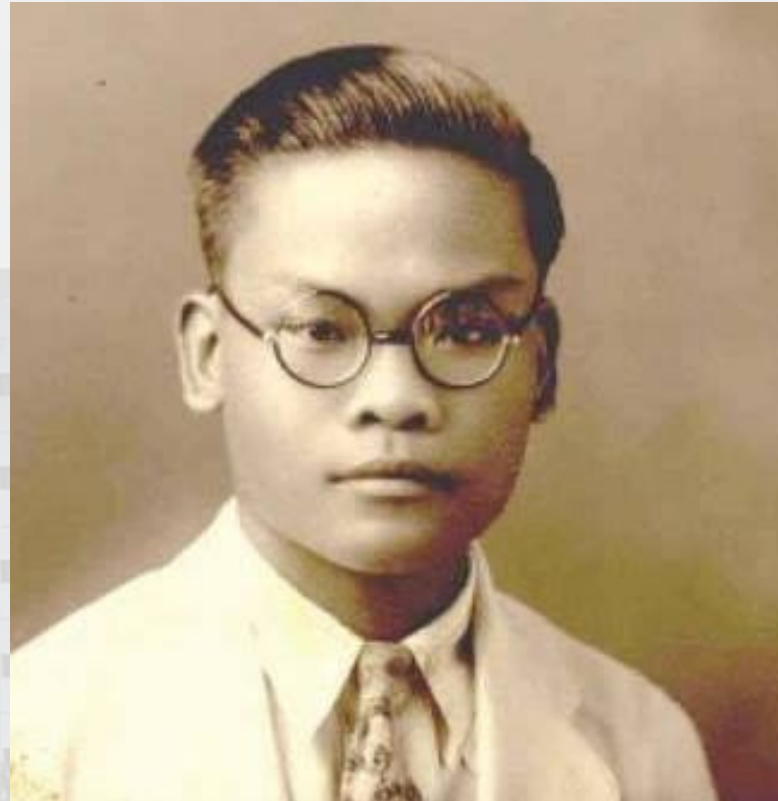
OF LEDGERS AND LANDSCAPES

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around ideas, stories, and the steady obligations of daily life. Learning was not framed as a path upward, but as a way of staying oriented in the world.

His father, **Juan Cabrerros Laya**, was a novelist, playwright, and cultural worker of quiet distinction. He moved easily between literature and public engagement, between the discipline of writing and the demands of civic life. At a time when Filipino letters were still shaping a national voice, Juan Laya wrote with moral seriousness and historical consciousness. His novel *Lahing Kayumanggi* would later become required reading for teachers of Pilipino in the 1950s. Another work, *His Native Soil*, earned the Commonwealth Literary Award for the Novel in 1940 — an honor bestowed at the Metropolitan Theater by President Manuel L. Quezon. During the Japanese Occupation, he was active in Dramatic Philippines, a theater group that persisted under conditions of scarcity and risk. Art, in that sense, was not an abstraction. It was something done in real time, under pressure, with consequence.

His mother, **Silvina del Carmen**, was a teacher whose influence was felt less through instruction than through example. She continued in public education and would later become a superintendent in the public school system, raising her children with



Juan Cabrerros Laya (1911–1952), Dr. Jimmy Laya's father, was an educator and novelist whose life bridged literature and public service. He served as principal of the Manila High School and later became the first Filipino principal of the Manila North High School, a milestone that symbolized the growing leadership of Filipinos in the country's educational institutions. Through both his teaching and his writing, he helped shape young minds and contributed to the nation's cultural and intellectual life.

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steadiness rather than spectacle. She demonstrated what it meant to prepare carefully, to speak plainly, to finish what one had started. From her, Jimmy absorbed the idea that authority did not require volume, and that competence, once established, did not need to be announced.

Between them, an unspoken ethic governed the household: do not take advantage of others; do your work well; let your actions speak. These were not rules recited aloud. They were expectations embedded in routine. Ethics were transmitted through repetition — through watching adults do what they said they would do, day after day. This quiet continuity shaped him more deeply than any single admonition could have.

The only boy in a household of sisters, Jimmy grew accustomed early to solitude. Left largely to his own devices, he learned to occupy himself quietly — watching plays alone, wandering through *Filipiniana* libraries, reading without supervision.

The war intruded early into his consciousness, not as narrative, but as atmosphere.

He was still very young when Manila burned. Yet the memory stayed — not as fear, but as light. The unnatural glow in the night sky. The sense that something

familiar was being undone. He remembered Japanese patrols moving through the streets, their presence both routine and menacing, and then, just as vividly, the sudden release of joy when American troops marched down Rizal Avenue in 1945, greeted by crowds that seemed to materialize out of nowhere.

For a brief time, an American soldier — a Texan named **Joseph Slay** — was billeted in their Sampaloc home. The detail lingered not because it was extraordinary, but because it was intimate. The soldier slept without a mosquito net after spraying the room with DDT. It was an ordinary human accommodation amid extraordinary circumstances. The war, he learned early, was not only fought in headlines and battles. It unfolded in living rooms, in borrowed beds, in gestures of temporary coexistence.

These memories endured not because they were dramatic, but because they revealed how fragile normalcy could be, and how easily it could be disrupted by forces beyond one's control.

Then came the loss that altered the architecture of his thinking.

When his father died suddenly in a car accident, Jimmy was still young — barely into adolescence. The death was abrupt and irrevocable. There was no long illness to prepare for it, no gradual

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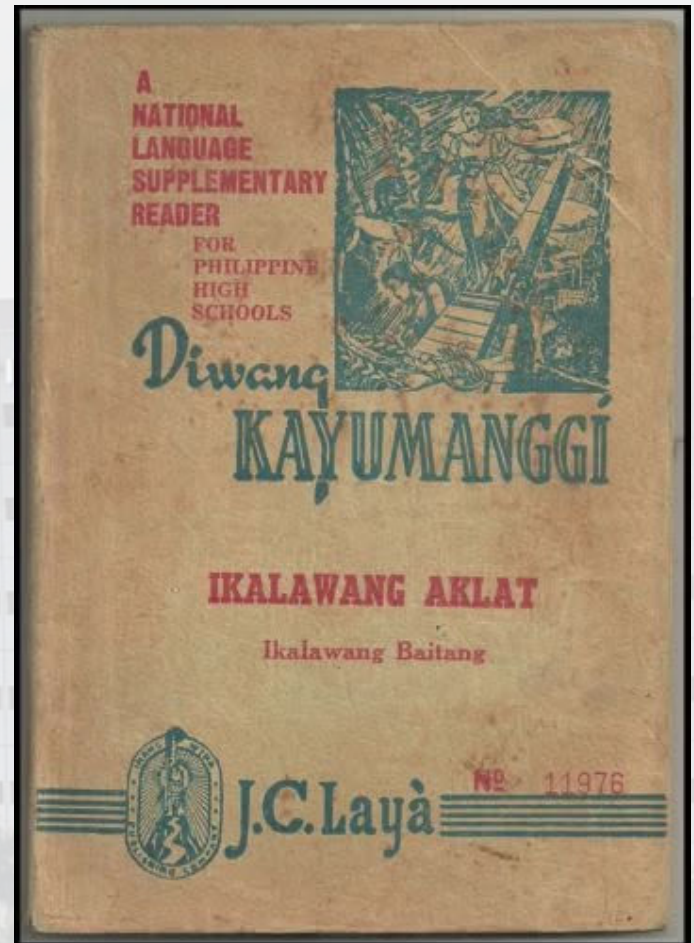
loosening of ties. One day his father was there; the next, he was not.

The loss left a permanent mark. It introduced him early to finitude, not as abstraction, but as lived fact. Life no longer appeared open-ended, but bounded. Time, he understood, was not guaranteed. The question that followed was not dramatic, but practical: *if time were limited, what should be done with it? What obligations mattered most? What work was worth sustained effort?* This awareness did not make him reckless. It made him careful.

He learned to value preparation over impulse, structure over improvisation. Even as a boy, he gravitated toward order — not rigid order, but coherence. He wanted things to make sense. He was drawn to systems that explained themselves, to arrangements where parts related logically to one another.

Books became companions in this search. Reading was not escape, but orientation. He read widely and without hierarchy — history, economics, literature, architecture, numbers, art — absorbing not only content, but form: how arguments were built, how narratives held together, how balance was achieved without excess.

Through reading, he learned to recognize proportion, clarity, and restraint — qualities that would later shape his



First published in 1948, *Diwang Kayumanggi* by Juan Laya became one of the most influential works in Philippine literature and a staple high school textbook until the 1960s. Written in the early years of the postwar, newly independent Philippines, it shaped generations of students' understanding of Filipino identity, nationalism, and social realities, leaving a lasting imprint on the country's literary and cultural consciousness.

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approach to finance, education, governance, and visual culture. Long before he encountered balance sheets or museum collections, he was already training his eye to see how parts related to wholes, how excess weakened structure, and how meaning often resided not in what was added, but in what was deliberately left out.

By the time he entered adulthood, the foundations were already laid — not in ambition, but in discipline; not in spectacle, but in attention. The habits formed in that early household would follow him everywhere, quietly informing the life he would go on to build.

Formal schooling did not interrupt this domestic education; it extended it.

Jimmy's early years in elementary school revealed nothing flamboyant. He was not remembered as a prodigy in the theatrical sense, nor as a student who sought attention. What distinguished him even then was steadiness. Teachers noted his seriousness — not severity, but attentiveness. He listened carefully, followed instructions precisely, and completed work without dramatics. Excellence, for him, was not a performance. It was a habit.

By the time he reached **Arellano High School**, from which he graduated in

1953, these habits had hardened into instinct. The school was demanding, and the postwar years offered little indulgence for distraction. Jimmy adapted easily to structure. Timetables appealed to him. Rules clarified expectations. Within those boundaries, he found freedom rather than constraint.

He gravitated toward subjects that required internal order — mathematics, logic, structured argument — yet he never abandoned his love for reading. Literature remained present not as escapism, but as moral calibration. Stories trained his sense of proportion: how actions led to consequences, how choices accumulated over time.

His classmates would later recall him as diligent rather than dazzling. He was not the loudest voice in the room, nor the quickest to volunteer opinion. But when he spoke, his comments were precise. There was an economy to his thinking that suggested early restraint — an instinct to say only what advanced understanding.

School, for Jimmy, was never merely preparation for a career. It was rehearsal for responsibility.

By the time he left Arellano High School, the trajectory was already visible, even if unnamed. The boy who had grown up

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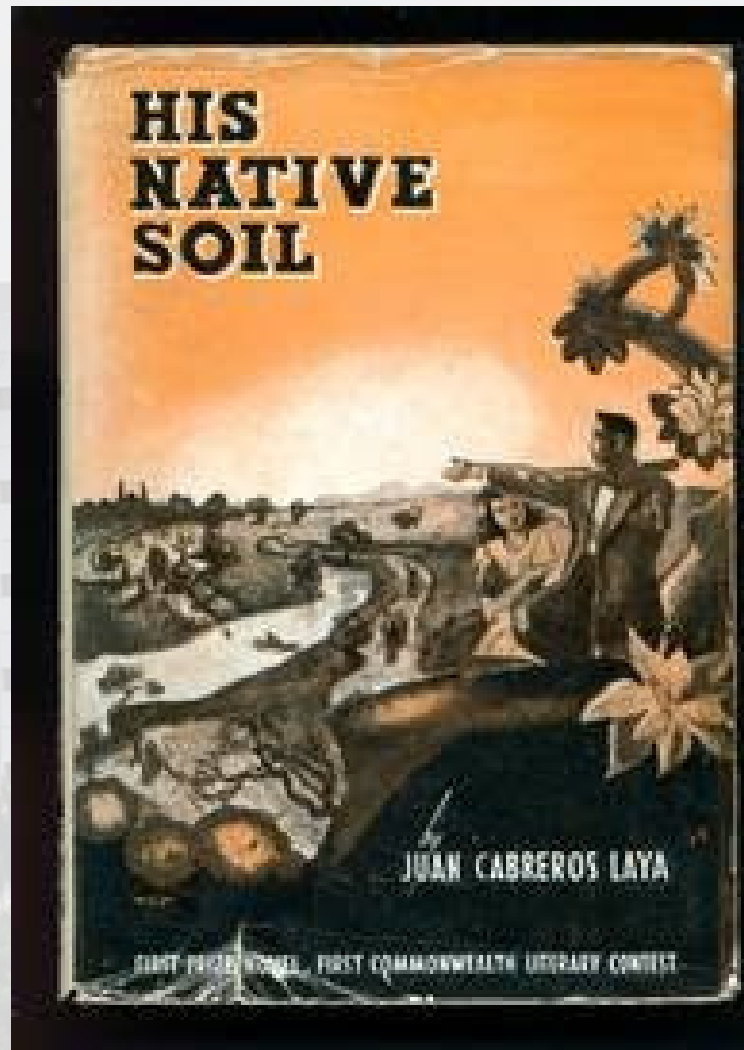
surrounded by books had learned to move comfortably between discipline and curiosity, between rule-following and independent judgment. He carried with him not a hunger for distinction, but a respect for structure — an understanding that institutions, like people, functioned best when built deliberately and maintained carefully.

The University of the Philippines would refine these instincts. But they had been formed long before he ever set foot in Diliman.

The Discipline of Excellence

At the **University of the Philippines Diliman**, Jimmy Laya's gifts became unmistakable — not because they announced themselves loudly, but because they held under scrutiny.

At the core of this long arc stood an academic formation that never loosened its grip on his thinking. Jimmy was trained rigorously in accounting and finance. He moved through the campus with an ease that came from preparation rather than confidence. The work did not overwhelm him; it organized him. When he graduated *magna cum laude* in 1957 with a degree in business administration and placed **eighth in the Certified Public Accountant examinations** at



His Native Soil (1940), the novel that earned Dr. Juan Laya First Prize in the inaugural Commonwealth Literary Awards in the same year, marking a landmark achievement in prewar Philippine literature and affirming his place among the country's pioneering literary figures.

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the age of eighteen, the achievements were remarkable even by the university's exacting standards. Yet they did not intoxicate him. If anything, they sharpened his curiosity.

He was far less interested in the applause that followed than in the mechanics beneath it.

Numbers, for Jimmy Laya, were never abstractions. They were expressions of order — ways of describing how effort translated into outcome, how resources moved, how institutions either held together or quietly failed. While others saw accounting as terminal expertise, he saw it as a language that pointed toward deeper questions. Why did certain organizations remain coherent under stress while others fragmented? What invisible assumptions held systems together? Where did discipline end and judgment begin?

These questions could not be answered locally, or quickly.

He left for the United States not in pursuit of prestige, but of perspective. At **Georgia Institute of Technology**, where he earned a master's degree in industrial management in 1960, he encountered an environment that emphasized process over personality, optimization over intuition. Systems

were dissected, tested, improved. Efficiency was treated not as speed, but as alignment.

From there, he went on to **Stanford University**, earning a doctorate in financial management in 1965. Stanford exposed him to a culture of analytical rigor that was both demanding and unsentimental. Ideas were not admired for elegance alone. They were stress-tested. Models were dismantled. Assumptions were challenged not to provoke debate, but to reveal limits. His doctoral dissertation — *A Cash Flow Model and the Rate of Return: The Effect of Price Level Change and Other Factors on Book-Yield* — reflected an early and sustained concern with realism in measurement, with how theoretical constructs behaved when exposed to inflation, distortion, and time.

The experience resonated deeply with him. Yet he did not return home armed with ideological certainty or missionary zeal. He returned with tools — and with a sharpened skepticism toward easy answers. The more he learned, the more he understood how partial most explanations were. Complexity, he realized, was not an obstacle to be conquered, but a condition to be respected.

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As a Ford Foundation grantee, he became the first Ph.D. in business produced by the **U.P. College of Business Administration** — an institutional milestone that symbolized his lifelong role as bridge-builder between global rigor and local responsibility. He returned to the University to join the faculty and began teaching economics, finance, and accounting, not merely credentialed, but committed, serving as faculty member from 1957 to 1978 where he would shape generations of economists, managers, and accountants who learned — often without realizing it — that discipline was a moral stance as much as a technical one.

His classrooms were marked by clarity rather than charisma. He did not seek to persuade students into agreement. He sought to train them in discernment. Arguments had to be coherent. Assumptions had to be named. Conclusions had to survive scrutiny. He believed education was not about producing consensus, but competence. Not about shaping opinion, but cultivating judgment. Ideas, he insisted, only mattered if they could function under pressure.

Students sensed this immediately. He was demanding without being theatrical, exacting without humiliation. He corrected errors not to assert authority, but to protect standards. Over time, it



Juan Laya (right) receives the Commonwealth Literary Award for the Novel in 1940 from President Manuel L. Quezon (left), with Carlos P. Romulo seated and looking on. The moment captures a historic convergence of Philippine letters and statesmanship, honoring Laya's achievement in literature at a time when the nation, under the Commonwealth, was asserting its cultural identity and celebrating Filipino excellence on the eve of independence.

became clear that his seriousness was not severity. It was respect — for the discipline, for the institution, and for the students who had entrusted him with their formation.

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Leadership, when it arrived, did so without declaration.

Jimmy did not seek prominence. He worked within systems, respected hierarchy, and followed institutional processes with care. Yet his reliability set him apart. He noticed structural problems others had learned to work around. He asked why inefficiencies persisted. He proposed solutions quietly, implemented them patiently, and stayed to see whether they worked.

Trust accumulated around him almost incidentally.

By the time he succeeded **Cesar E. A. Virata** as **Dean of the College of Business Administration** in 1967, the transition felt natural rather than ambitious. He was still young, but he had already demonstrated a rare capacity to hold complexity without losing coherence.

As dean, his gaze extended beyond the classroom.

He began thinking about how education itself was structured — about curricula that responded to real conditions, about graduate programs that prepared leaders rather than technicians, about research institutions that supported inquiry rather

than prestige. He was no longer concerned only with producing graduates. He was thinking about building an ecosystem — one that could generate professionals who understood not just how to succeed, but how to sustain.

The work was meticulous, demanding, and unfinished.

And it was only beginning.

Rebuilding Business Education

When Jimmy Laya assumed the deanship of the University of the Philippines College of Business Administration in 1967, he did not experience the moment as a promotion. He experienced it as a problem that had been waiting to be named.

The College, as he encountered it, was competent but incomplete. It produced graduates who knew how to compute, how to analyze figures, how to perform within established frameworks. Yet too often, they struggled to see how those frameworks related to one another. Knowledge existed in compartments. Accounting, economics, management, agriculture, policy — each was taught as if it occupied a separate universe, intersecting only by accident.

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The Palma Hall Annex Building in UP Diliman, which housed the University of the Philippines College of Business Administration during Dr. Jimmy Laya's term as Dean. Recognizing the rapid growth in enrollment and the evolving demands of management education, he saw that the old Benton Hall had become too cramped and inadequate in facilities for a school aspiring to world-class standards. The move to a more spacious and modern setting reflected his forward-looking vision of providing students and faculty with an environment conducive to rigorous learning, research, and professional formation.

To Jimmy Laya, this fragmentation was not merely academic. It reflected an economy that no longer existed.

The Philippines he saw emerging was a system of interdependencies — agriculture feeding industry, industry shaping services, services influencing policy, policy restructuring incentives that rippled back through the entire economy. Business education that treated these domains as discrete disciplines was, in effect, training students for a world already in retreat. If education did not evolve, it would become technically proficient yet strategically blind.

He did not announce this diagnosis with fanfare.

Jimmy Laya did not begin with speeches or sweeping declarations. He began with structure. Administration, as he understood it, was not about persuasion alone. It was about alignment — of curricula with reality, of faculty expertise with institutional goals, of student formation with the responsibilities they would eventually carry.

He believed that reform should be quiet, methodical, and defensible. Each proposal had to withstand a simple but unforgiving question: *What problem does this solve that the existing structure cannot?* If the answer was unclear, the proposal did not proceed.

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From this logic emerged the **Doctoral Program in Business**

Administration. It was not conceived as an abstract exercise in theory, nor as a credential to be accumulated. It was designed to cultivate scholars capable of grappling seriously with Philippine conditions — men and women who could bring rigorous analytical tools to local realities rather than importing models uncritically. The aim was intellectual sovereignty, not imitation.

The **Master of Agribusiness**

Management followed naturally. Jimmy Laya had long been troubled by the way development discourse treated agriculture as a residual category — important in rhetoric, marginal in strategy. He rejected the notion that agriculture was pre-modern or peripheral. It was central, structurally and morally, to the Philippine economy. To ignore it was not only analytically flawed, but socially irresponsible. The program sought to reconnect business education to the land, to production cycles, to the lives and labor of those who sustained the economy long before balance sheets recorded their value.

The **five-year Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and Accountancy** proved more controversial. Critics argued that it would delay students' entry into the workforce, that it imposed unnecessary rigor in an economy hungry for

credentialed labor. Jimmy Laya was unmoved. Time, he believed, was not wasted if it was used to integrate learning.

Accountancy, in his view, was not simply technical proficiency. It was ethical responsibility. Those entrusted with certifying truth in numbers carried a burden that could not be rushed. Students needed time — not only to master technique, but to mature into judgment. Compression, he felt, risked producing efficiency without conscience.

He also insisted on a **full-time MBA program**, resisting pressures to accommodate part-time formats that prioritized convenience over immersion. Serious management education, he believed, required sustained engagement — space to think, to argue, to fail safely, and to reconsider assumptions.

Then came the **joint degree programs** — with Agriculture, Economics, and Home Economics. These were not experiments designed to impress. They were correctives. Business students, Jimmy Laya believed, needed to understand production systems, labor realities, consumer behavior, and the economics of hospitality and service. Management divorced from context was management in name only.

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Faculty reaction was mixed. Some welcomed the changes; others worried about disruption, dilution, or loss of disciplinary purity. Jimmy Laya listened carefully, but he did not govern by consensus alone. Institutions, he understood, often resist reform not because ideas are wrong, but because they unsettle routines that have grown comfortable. His responsibility was not to eliminate discomfort, but to ensure that it led somewhere constructive.

In 1971, this philosophy took institutional form with the establishment of the **U.P. Business Research Foundation**. The Foundation created a formal bridge between scholarship and practice. Faculty were encouraged to conduct research that mattered, to engage in consultancy without abandoning academic rigor, and to hold professorial chairs that recognized sustained contribution rather than episodic achievement.

It institutionalized something Jimmy Laya had long practiced intuitively: that theory gains strength when tested against reality, and that practice deepens when subjected to disciplined inquiry.

That same year, his attention turned



Dean Jimmy Laya receives a donation from Manuel Marquez in 1971 for the establishment of a Professorial Chair, an occasion that highlighted the growing partnership between the academic community and the business sector in strengthening higher education. The moment reflects Dr. Laya's leadership at the University of the Philippines College of Business and his commitment to advancing teaching, research, and faculty development through endowed support.

to the College's physical environment.

The existing facilities no longer matched the seriousness of its ambitions.

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Classrooms were functional but inadequate. Research space was limited. Informal intellectual exchange — the kind that happens between lectures, in hallways and shared rooms — was constrained. Ideas, Jimmy Laya believed, needed space — literal space — to develop fully.

Plans were quietly drawn for a new building. Not a grand monument, but a structure that conveyed permanence rather than improvisation. One that suggested the College expected to be there for the long term, and intended to do its work with gravity. Construction would begin in 1976, after his term had ended, but the impulse was unmistakable: institutions should look as serious as they intend to be.

Recognition arrived, predictably and awkwardly.

In 1967, the same year he became dean, Jimmy Laya was named one of **The Outstanding Young Men of the Philippines (T.O.Y.M.)** by the Philippine Jaycees, cited for Business Education. He accepted the honor with gratitude, but without attachment. Awards, he believed, were secondary indicators at best. They mattered only insofar as they affirmed that an institution was moving in the right direction. They were never the point.



Dr. Jimmy Laya, together with nine other distinguished honorees of The Outstanding Young Men (TOYM), graced the cover of the February 1968 issue of The Sunday Times Magazine. The feature recognized a generation of young Filipino leaders whose achievements and promise were shaping the nation's future, with Dr. Laya counted among those celebrated for excellence, leadership, and service.

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By the time he stepped down as dean in 1975, the College of Business Administration had been quietly transformed. It was no longer merely training professionals. It was shaping institutional thinkers — men and women prepared to navigate complexity without resorting to simplification.

Jimmy Laya had not imposed a personality on the College. He had given it something far more durable: a structure capable of evolving without him.

Rotary: The Weekly Rehearsal of Public Virtue

Jimmy Laya joined the **Rotary Club of Manila** in 1975, at a point in his life when professional responsibility had begun to accumulate and public visibility had become unavoidable. By then, he had already moved through academe into government, and his days were increasingly shaped by institutions that demanded judgment under pressure. To an outsider, Rotary might have appeared redundant — another organization competing for time, another set of meetings layered onto an already full schedule.

To Jimmy Laya, it was something else entirely.

It was practice.

He entered Rotary not seeking expansion, but consolidation. Sponsored by its Past Vice President **Jose Roberto “Robbie” Delgado**, co-founder, CEO, and chairman of the Transnational Diversified Group, Jimmy approached the Club without expectation of prominence or influence. What attracted him was not Rotary's prestige, but its structure — its stubborn refusal to reinvent itself simply to remain interesting. In a professional world increasingly enamored with novelty, disruption, and rhetorical urgency, Rotary's insistence on repetition struck him as quietly radical.

The same meetings. The same order of business. The same questions asked again and again, even when the answers appeared obvious. Especially when they appeared obvious.

His classification, **Government—Education**, was descriptive rather than aspirational. Rotary did not ask him to transform, to rebrand, or to perform a version of himself for approval. It required something far more demanding: presence. Attendance. Participation. Return. It insisted that one show up not when inspired, but when routine threatened to dull attention.

Jimmy Laya understood institutions as moral technologies — structures that shape behavior not through intensity, but

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through duration. Rotary, in this sense, functioned as an ethical gymnasium. One did not attend to be stirred emotionally. One attended to keep habits from eroding.

The **Four-Way Test**, recited so often that it risked becoming background noise, was a case in point. Its genius lay precisely in that risk. Truth, fairness, goodwill, mutual benefit — these were not principles meant to dazzle. They were standards meant to be rehearsed. Their power came not from eloquence, but from persistence. Recited weekly, they worked their way quietly into reflex. Jimmy Laya understood this immediately. He had spent his life inside systems where ethical lapses rarely arrived dramatically. They crept in through exception, through haste, through the small accommodations made when no one seemed to be watching. Rotary's discipline lay in preventing that creep.

He did not seek prominence within the Club. He served when asked, declined when necessary, and remained present without posturing. Leadership, he believed, was not about visibility. It was about reliability. His contribution was steady rather than spectacular, cumulative rather than episodic.

In **1996**, he was named a **Paul Harris Fellow** — a recognition not of a single



Dean Jimmy Laya receives a donation in 1968 from the Marinduque Mining Corporation for the establishment of a Professorial Chair, marking an important collaboration between industry and academe. The endowment helped strengthen the University of the Philippines College of Business by supporting faculty development and academic excellence, reflecting Dr. Laya's vision of building enduring institutional partnerships in the service of education and nation-building.

gesture, but of sustained commitment. The honor did not change his behavior. It merely acknowledged what had already been consistent. Later designated **Senior Active**, he became part of the Club's institutional memory, even as other professional obligations intermittently drew him away.

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His most revealing Rotary role came quietly, without ceremony.

In **Rotary Year 2005–2006**, Jimmy Laya served as **Internal Auditor**.

It was not a glamorous position. There were no speeches to deliver, no applause to receive. The work involved scrutiny rather than celebration — reviewing records, examining controls, asking whether procedures were followed not in spirit alone, but in fact. For many, it would have seemed a burdensome assignment.

For Jimmy Laya, it was familiar ground.

He had long believed that institutions failed not because of bad intentions, but because of neglected systems. Transparency, accountability, and internal control were not bureaucratic irritants; they were moral safeguards. When systems weakened, even the most idealistic organizations became vulnerable — to error, to complacency, to quiet drift.

As Internal Auditor, he approached Rotary the same way he approached banks, universities, and public offices — not with suspicion, but with care. The goal was not to catch wrongdoing, but to ensure that trust was deserved. Integrity, he believed, had to be verifiable.



The current University of the Philippines College of Business Administration building, a lasting legacy of Dr. Jimmy Laya's term as Dean. Conceived and realized under his leadership, the structure stands as a physical testament to his vision of strengthening business education, providing future generations with an environment worthy of rigorous learning, research, and the formation of principled leaders.

Rotary, for Jimmy Laya, was never separate from the rest of his life. It was not an extracurricular commitment. It was rehearsal — a place where the habits required of public service could be practiced without the distortions of power or urgency. Patience. Restraint.

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Consistency. The willingness to submit oneself to rules even when one had outgrown the need for supervision.

In a world increasingly impatient with continuity, Rotary offered something rare: the discipline of staying the course. Of returning, week after week, to principles that did not change simply because the world around them did.

For Jimmy Laya, that discipline was not nostalgic.

It was essential.

When Theory Meets Gravity

Jimmy Laya did not enter government believing that good ideas automatically prevailed.

When **Gerardo P. Sicat** – his former cohort and young career co-instructors at the University of the Philippines – assumed leadership of the **National Economic and Development Authority** in 1974, he invited Jimmy Laya to serve as his deputy – not as an act of patronage, but of confidence.

Jimmy's work quickly earned him respect within the technocratic core of government. So indispensable did he become that Central Bank Governor **Gregorio S. Licaros** requested to

share his services, leading to his concurrent role as Deputy Governor.

By the time he accepted senior roles in national administration, he had spent enough years inside complex institutions to understand a hard truth: policy rarely failed because people did not know better. It failed because systems did not align. Intent drifted away from execution. Authority outpaced accountability. Political urgency collided with administrative reality. Between what was imagined and what could actually be implemented, gaps formed – and it was in those gaps that even well-meaning reforms quietly unraveled.

He arrived in government without illusions of mastery. What he brought instead was a habit of observation. He paid attention to how decisions moved – or stalled – as they passed through layers of bureaucracy. He noticed where discretion hardened into privilege, where exceptions accumulated until rules no longer held, where processes designed for clarity had become rituals of accommodation.

It was this reputation – for precision, restraint, and institutional loyalty—that led **President Ferdinand E. Marcos** to elevate him to **Minister of the Budget**, where Jimmy introduced reforms aimed not at expansion, but at restoring

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coherence to public expenditure. During this time, the country was already straining under the weight of its own complexity. Programs had multiplied rapidly, often in response to political imperatives rather than long-term coherence. New initiatives were layered on top of old ones, rarely retired, frequently overlapping. Budgeting, in practice, had become reactive — less a strategic instrument than an annual exercise in negotiation, bargaining, and deferral.

The budget no longer described a plan. It described a truce.

Jimmy Laya did not respond with rhetoric. He did not cast himself as a reformer battling entrenched interests. He framed his task in a quieter, more demanding way. What the system required, he believed, was not reinvention, but repair.

Repair meant restoring the relationship between planning and budgeting — ensuring that expenditures reflected articulated priorities rather than inherited entitlements. It meant clarifying lines of responsibility so that programs could be evaluated not only for intent, but for outcome. It meant insisting on procedures that could be defended not just in political forums, but within the logic of the institution itself.



University of the Philippines President Emmanuel Soriano, Dr. Jimmy Laya, UP College of Business Alumni Association President Fanny Cortes-Garcia, and then-Dean Emmanuel Soriano lead the inauguration of the new UP College of Business Administration building in 1981. The ceremony marked a milestone in the strengthening of business education in the country, celebrating a modern facility that embodied the university's commitment to academic excellence and Dr. Laya's enduring legacy in advancing the institutional growth of the College.

He treated the budget not as a statement of desire, but as an expression of constraint. Every peso allocated carried a cost beyond its immediate use. It foreclosed alternatives. It signaled preference. To deny this was to invite imbalance. Governments, he understood, did not collapse only from corruption or crisis. They collapsed when promises outran capacity.

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Under his stewardship, coherence became the objective.

Performance budgeting was strengthened not as an ideological statement, but as a means of asking whether programs did what they claimed. Multi-year perspectives were introduced to counter the short-termism that distorted annual cycles. Regional rationalization sought to align national priorities with local realities, reducing duplication and unevenness that had crept into implementation.

None of these measures were revolutionary. That was precisely their point.

They were attempts to make government legible to itself — to allow decision-makers to see, clearly and honestly, what the state was actually doing. Jimmy Laya believed that opacity bred irresponsibility, while clarity, even when uncomfortable, created the conditions for discipline.

What frustrated him most was not resistance from politicians. He understood their pressures, their constituencies, their need to respond visibly. What troubled him was the quiet erosion of rules through exception. Each exemption appeared reasonable in isolation. Taken together, they hollowed out the system. Flexibility, unbounded,

became arbitrariness.

His response was not confrontation, but structure.

If discretion could not be eliminated — and he knew it could not — it had to be bounded. Choices had to be traceable. Deviations had to be justified. Systems had to be strong enough to absorb pressure without deforming beyond recognition.

The work was slow. It required patience rather than flair, persistence rather than proclamation. It did not lend itself to dramatic narratives of victory or defeat.

It also did not make headlines.

What it did was more difficult, and more enduring. It reduced the likelihood of sudden failure. It lowered the risk of collapse disguised as momentum. It strengthened the institutional fabric in ways that would only become visible when tested by strain.

For Jimmy Laya, that was the measure of success. Not applause, but endurance. Not recognition, but resilience.

Central Banking Under Constraint

In **1981**, when the position became vacant, Jimmy Laya was appointed **Governor of the Central Bank of**

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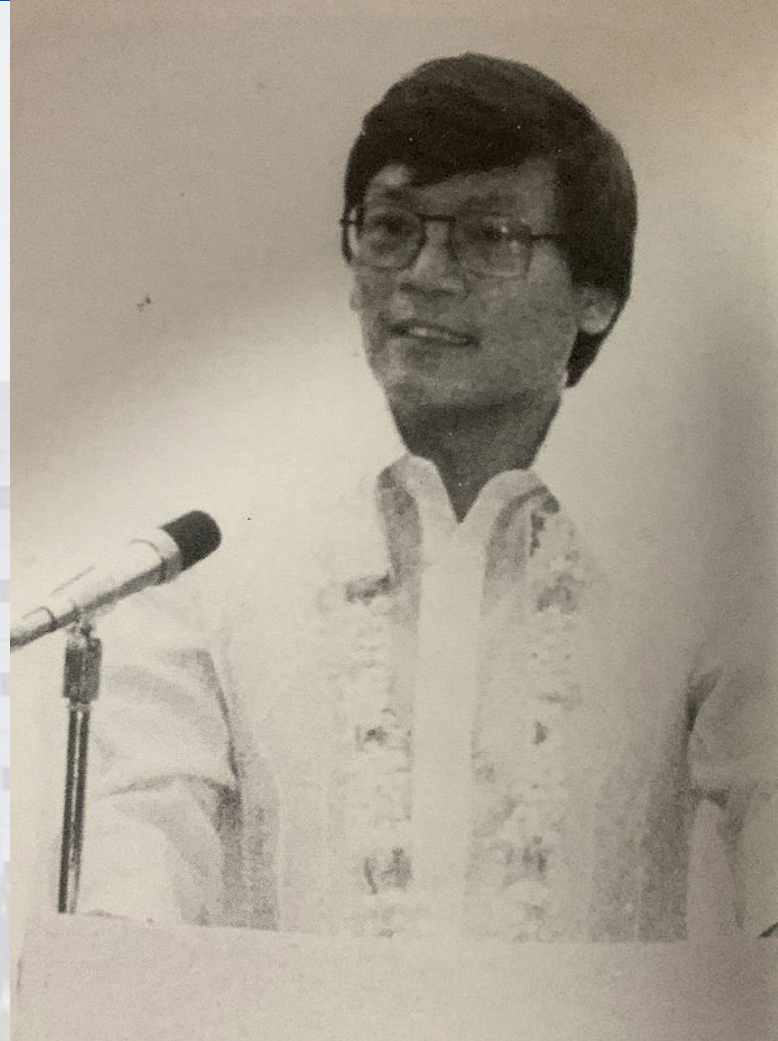
the Philippines, becoming the youngest person ever to hold the post. The appointment was widely noted for its symbolism — youth elevated to one of the most consequential economic offices in the country — but symbolism was the least of his concerns.

The timing could not have been more unforgiving.

The global environment was tightening its grip. Interest rates abroad were rising sharply, driven by policy shifts far beyond Philippine control. International capital was becoming cautious, selective, impatient. At home, confidence was already brittle, sustained more by habit than conviction. Political uncertainty hovered over every major decision, shaping expectations in ways that monetary instruments alone could not correct.

Jimmy Laya entered the office with no illusion that authority equaled sovereignty. Central banks, he understood, operated within constraint. Their tools were powerful, but finite. Their decisions reverberated through markets, but they could not command trust by decree.

He rejected the romantic image of the central banker as a figure operating in a realm of technical purity, insulated from politics and human behavior. Monetary decisions, he knew, were entangled —



Dr. Jimmy Laya delivers his first remarks as the newly appointed Governor of the Central Bank of the Philippines in 1981, marking the beginning of his stewardship of the country's monetary authority. The address signaled a new chapter of leadership at a critical time in the nation's economic history, reflecting both the weight of responsibility he assumed and his commitment to stability, integrity, and public service.

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woven through expectations, fears, international pressures, and domestic narratives. The challenge was not to pretend these forces did not exist, but to navigate them without surrendering coherence.

Then came **August 1983**.

The assassination of **Senator Benigno Aquino Jr.** ruptured what little confidence remained. The shock was not only political; it was psychological. Markets respond not just to numbers, but to meaning, and the event signaled instability that could not be priced easily. Capital flows thinned almost immediately. Investors hesitated. Credit tightened. Rumors traveled faster than data.

By **1984**, the Philippines faced a full-blown financial crisis.

Foreign financing dried up. Debt obligations loomed larger than available reserves. The margin for maneuver narrowed until there was almost none left. Eventually, a **debt standstill** became unavoidable — a decision as sobering as it was consequential. It marked the point at which external confidence could no longer be sustained by internal assurances alone.

These were the moments when technocratic training met its limits.

Models faltered under conditions they had not been designed to accommodate. Historical precedent offered guidance, but no blueprint. Every decision carried consequences that extended far beyond balance sheets — into employment, prices, livelihoods, and national credibility.

Jimmy Laya did not later describe this period with defensiveness or self-exculpation. He acknowledged missteps where they occurred. He recognized constraints where they prevailed. He accepted the reality that some outcomes were shaped by forces beyond domestic control. Powerful countries pursued their own interests. International institutions had their own thresholds of tolerance. The global financial system was not neutral terrain.

Yet even within these constraints, he insisted on discipline.

Decisions, he believed, had to be reasoned, documented, and defensible. Not because they would always succeed, but because coherence itself was stabilizing. Panic was contagious. So was disorder. A central bank that appeared uncertain amplified fear. One that acted methodically — even under strain — signaled resolve.

Clarity, even when painful, was preferable to reassurance built on illusion.

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It was during these years — almost paradoxically — that Jimmy Laya made one of his most enduring and least expected contributions.

Amid financial crisis, when reserves were scarce and attention consumed by survival, he expanded the **Central Bank's acquisition of Philippine artworks and pre-Hispanic artifacts**. To some observers, the decision appeared incongruous, even indulgent. Why invest in art when the economy was under siege?

To Jimmy Laya, the logic was precise.

Institutions, he believed, derived authority not only from function, but from meaning. A central bank was not merely a vault or a regulator. It was a symbol of continuity. In moments when confidence was fragile, when faith in systems wavered, cultural memory served as reassurance that the nation was more than its crisis.

Art, in this sense, was not decoration. It was assertion.

The acquisition of works by **Félix Resurrección Hidalgo, Simón Flores**, and others — alongside ancestral gold and pre-Hispanic artifacts — was an act of institutional self-definition. It declared that even under strain, the country would not abandon its story. That



Then–Central Bank Governor Jimmy Laya donates to the BSP Professorial Chair Fund in 1981, with Dean Magdaleno Albarracin Jr. receiving the contribution on behalf of the University of the Philippines College of Business. The gesture underscored Dr. Laya's enduring commitment to education and academic excellence, strengthening the partnership between the country's monetary authorities and the nation's premier state university.

while numbers fluctuated and capital retreated, identity endured.

These collections would later form the nucleus of what became the **Museo ng Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas**, a permanent repository of cultural memory housed within a financial institution. The juxtaposition was deliberate. Finance and

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heritage were not opposites. They were parallel forms of stewardship — one concerned with resources, the other with meaning.

The decision reflected a belief that crises, while destabilizing, also clarified priorities. And that even in moments of contraction, a nation must remember who it is — or risk losing more than solvency.

For Jimmy Laya, central banking was never only about managing currency. It was about preserving coherence — economic, institutional, and cultural — when the forces arrayed against it were strongest.

That, he believed, was the quiet responsibility of power exercised without illusion.

The Custodian of Memory

Jimmy Laya's sensitivity to memory found earlier expression in another role — one that spoke directly to his understanding of visual culture, space, and the obligations of stewardship.

In **1979**, he was appointed the **first Action Officer of the Intramuros Administration**, at a time when the historic walled city stood at a crossroads. Decades after the war, Intramuros remained scarred not only by physical

destruction, but by uncertainty. Parts of it had been reconstructed hastily. Other sections had been left to decay. The danger was not simply neglect, but misinterpretation.

Intramuros was not merely a site. It was a palimpsest — a record of layered histories written over one another: colonial ambition etched into stone, religious devotion embedded in orientation and form, wartime destruction visible in absences as much as in ruins, and postwar neglect evident in improvisations that confused survival with restoration. To intervene without understanding these layers was to risk turning memory into caricature.

Jimmy Laya understood this immediately.

He approached the task not as a developer seeking activation, nor as a curator arranging spectacle, but as a scholar trained to read form. He believed that buildings were texts, and that restoration required literacy. Walls were not neutral surfaces. Their thickness, alignment, and articulation responded to climate, defense, and ritual. Gates were oriented deliberately — toward procession, toward surveillance, toward threshold.

Ornamentation was not excess. It was language.

To erase these features in the name of modernization was not progress. It was amnesia.

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Under his stewardship, attention shifted from isolated attractions to coherence. Fortifications were studied as systems rather than backdrops. Gates were treated as sequences rather than landmarks. Ecclesiastical structures were understood not simply as devotional spaces, but as spatial narratives — arrangements of light, proportion, and movement designed to shape experience over time.

Objects were collected, catalogued, and documented with care. Publications followed — not glossy promotional material, but records meant to endure. The aim was not to impress visitors, but to orient them. Intramuros, Jimmy Laya believed, should be encountered as an archive one could walk through, where understanding deepened with attention rather than speed.

He resisted the temptation to dramatize restoration. There were no grand unveilings meant to announce transformation. The work was incremental, deliberate, and often invisible to casual observers. Success was measured not by crowds, but by fidelity — to original form, to documented history, to the quiet intelligence embedded in the built environment.

Decades later, when Jimmy Laya helped spearhead the restoration of the **Jesuit House in Cebu** through the **Escuela**



Then-Central Bank Governor Jimmy Laya delivers his remarks at the University of the Philippines College of Business Administration in 1981, on the occasion of his endowment of a professorial chair. His address reflected a deep belief in the role of education in nation-building and underscored his commitment to nurturing future leaders through sustained support for academic excellence.

Taller de Filipinas Foundation, the same philosophy reasserted itself with clarity. The structure, dating back nearly three centuries, bore the marks of multiple adaptations. Some were sympathetic. Others were distortions accumulated over time.

Once again, Jimmy Laya insisted that restoration was not reinvention. It was responsibility.

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The task was not to leave a personal imprint, nor to update the building to contemporary taste. It was to remove the accretions that obscured its logic and allow the original form — its proportions, materials, and intent — to speak again. Modern intervention, where necessary, had to be legible and restrained, never pretending to be what it was not.

This approach required humility. It demanded acceptance that the restorer was a temporary steward, not an author.

The same sensibility that guided his work in budgeting and central banking — respect for structure, suspicion of excess, insistence on coherence — found its natural counterpart in visual culture. In both realms, Jimmy Laya believed that systems endured not because they dazzled, but because they were intelligible. Flourish without structure collapsed under scrutiny. Restraint, properly exercised, became a form of care.

For Jimmy Laya, preservation was not nostalgia. It was continuity.

And continuity, he understood, was the quiet labor that allowed memory to survive without becoming spectacle.



Dr. Jimmy Laya receives a plaque of appreciation from University of the Philippines College of Business Dean Magdaleno Albarracin Jr., in recognition of his distinguished service and lasting contributions to the institution. The moment reflects the deep respect of the academic community for Dr. Laya's leadership, generosity, and commitment to advancing business education and nation-building.

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Culture as National Infrastructure

When Jimmy Laya assumed the role of **Minister of Education, Culture and Sports in 1984**, he inherited a portfolio that many regarded as ancillary to what were then called the “serious” concerns of governance. Economic stabilization, political negotiation, and security dominated public discourse. Education and culture, by contrast, were often framed as downstream considerations — important, perhaps, but postponable.

He did not share that view.

To Jimmy, education and culture were not supplemental. They were structural. They shaped not only what a society knew, but how it behaved under strain. Economic systems could be repaired. Political arrangements could be renegotiated. But when a nation lost coherence — when it ceased to recognize shared standards of responsibility, memory, and meaning — recovery became far more elusive.

He believed that nations did not fail only through fiscal mismanagement or external shock. They failed through erosion. Education systems that trained for skill without responsibility produced competence without conscience. Cultural institutions treated as luxuries fostered a public life disconnected from memory.

The result, he feared, was a society that functioned efficiently but hollowly — capable of output, but uncertain of purpose.

His tenure in the ministry was brief and politically turbulent, unfolding amid intensifying national uncertainty. Yet his approach did not waver. He resisted spectacle and avoided grand proclamations. Instead, he focused on alignment — between policy and preservation, between educational outcomes and civic responsibility, between cultural investment and long-term continuity.

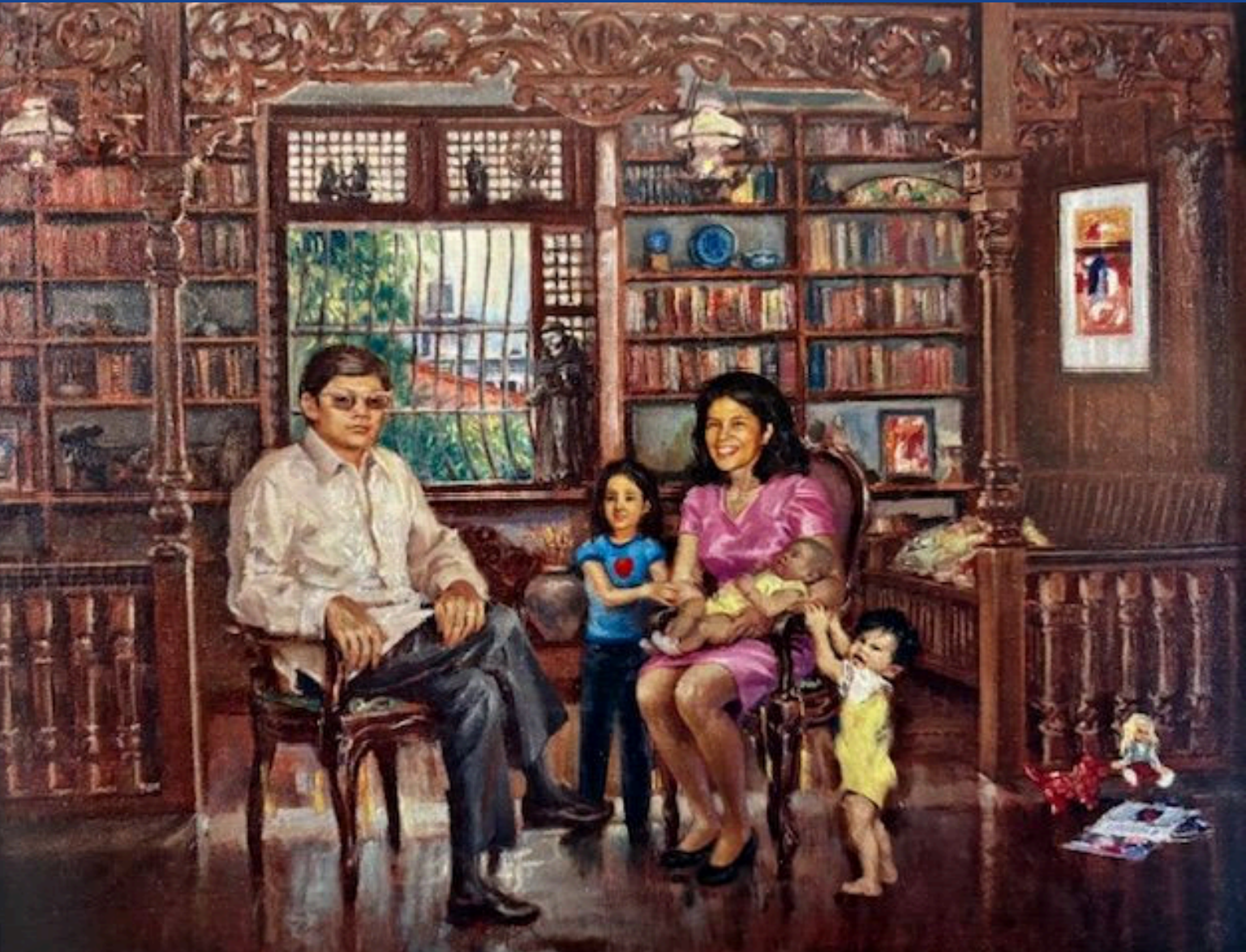
Education, in his view, was not merely about throughput — how many students passed through classrooms, how quickly credentials were issued. It was about formation. What habits were being cultivated? What standards were being normalized? What responsibilities were being quietly deferred?

Culture, likewise, was not an adornment. It was infrastructure of a different kind. It shaped how societies remembered themselves, how they oriented future generations toward the past without becoming captive to it.

After **1986**, released from the immediacy of formal office, Jimmy Laya returned to this work with greater clarity and patience. Freed from the constraints of ministerial timeframes, he could focus on institutional architecture rather than policy firefighting.

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The portrait, called "Family Ties," is "conversation piece" painted over five years by Carlos P. Valino Jr., depicting the Laya family in their sala — Dr. Jimmy Laya with his wife Alice and daughter Mianne — later joined on canvas by their children Jem, Sandra, and Amy as the family grew. Begun when Mianne was seven and completed through countless Sunday morning sittings, the work captures not only likeness but life itself: shifting light from lamps and windows, shelves of books, a carved arch, and even the changing trees outside. With each visit, Valino added small but telling details, turning an intimate domestic scene into a living chronicle of time, memory, and family history.

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As **Chairman of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts**, beginning in **1996**, he presided over a period of critical consolidation. The Philippine cultural landscape had long been fragmented — multiple agencies operating with overlapping mandates, uneven resources, and unclear lines of authority. Good intentions abounded, but coherence was lacking.

Jimmy approached the problem as he always had: not through reinvention, but through structure.

In **1998**, the **National Museum System** was enacted, providing long-overdue clarity to the stewardship of the nation's material heritage. Roles were defined. Responsibilities were aligned. Resources were stabilized. It was, in essence, a budgetary act applied to culture — an exercise in institutional design that treated heritage not as sentiment, but as obligation.

The effect was subtle but profound. Cultural work could now proceed with continuity rather than improvisation. Preservation ceased to depend solely on personalities or short-term advocacy. It became embedded in the system itself.

Years later, when Jimmy Laya assumed the chairmanship of the **Cultural Center of the Philippines**, he



Dr. Jimmy Laya addresses members of the media during a press conference of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, articulating the Commission's vision and priorities in advancing Philippine arts, heritage, and cultural development. The moment reflects his role as a thoughtful advocate for culture in the public sphere, bridging policy, history, and creative expression in shaping the nation's cultural narrative.

encountered a different but related challenge. The CCP's iconic structure — already heavy with symbolic and architectural significance — required attention. Time had taken its toll. Systems aged. Standards evolved. The temptation, in such moments, was cosmetic transformation.

Jimmy Laya rejected that temptation outright.

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He was precise in his language. This was not renovation. It was **rehabilitation**. The distinction mattered. Renovation implied replacement, reinvention, the imposition of contemporary taste. Rehabilitation implied care — investigation, repair, strengthening. The goal was not to modernize appearance, but to restore function.

The building, he insisted, would look the same. Its form already carried meaning. Its proportions, materials, and spatial logic were part of its identity. The task was to ensure that it could continue to serve — technically, acoustically, structurally — for generations yet to come. To intervene without erasing. To strengthen without altering character.

Once again, the pattern was unmistakable.

In finance, in education, in culture, Jimmy Laya's instinct was identical: build systems that could endure without explanation. Institutions, he believed, should not require constant justification. Their design should make their purpose evident. Their structure should quietly enforce their values.

In a public life marked by turbulence, he remained committed to continuity. And in



“Wala Lang” is a collection of anecdotes on Philippine life and culture, seen through the discerning eyes of Dr. Jimmy Laya, was launched at the Manila Hotel in 2016. Capturing personal reflections and historical moments that shaped the nation’s social and cultural landscape, the book was formally presented during the launch, with a copy respectfully handed to former First Lady Imelda Marcos.

fields too often dismissed as secondary, he demonstrated that the deepest forms of governance were those that shaped memory, responsibility, and meaning — slowly, deliberately, and with care.

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The Banker Who Never Stopped Teaching

After public office, Jimmy Laya did not retreat. He recalibrated.

The radio announcement of 1986 had closed one chapter of his life with unmistakable finality, but it did not extinguish his appetite for work, nor his faith in institutions as instruments for the public good. What changed was not conviction, but proximity. The work moved away from the glare of office and toward quieter forms of influence. It became more selective, more deliberate, and in many ways more enduring.

He understood that public service did not end with formal authority. It simply changed its scale.

Returning to professional practice, Jimmy Laya brought with him the same seriousness that had marked his years in government. In 1986, he founded J.C. Laya & Co., Ltd., a firm that helped institutionalize standards of professionalism that extended far beyond client engagements. The firm's growth was steady, cumulative, and reputation-driven—mirroring the very principles he had taught and practiced for decades. What began as a modest accounting and management consultancy was shaped by the same principles that guided his work

as dean, minister, and central banker: clarity of purpose, rigor of method, and respect for institutional continuity. The firm grew steadily — not through spectacle or aggressive expansion, but through accumulated trust.

Over time, it became **Laya, Mananghaya & Co.**, and eventually become the Philippine member firm of **KPMG International**, now known as **R.G. Manabat & Co.**, expanding from a handful of professionals into one of the country's largest accounting and consultancy firms. By the time Jimmy Laya retired from active practice as chairman in **2004**, the organization employed hundreds and had helped shape not only corporate practice, but the standards of the profession itself.

Yet growth was never the point.

What mattered to Jimmy was credibility — whether the firm's work could withstand scrutiny, whether its judgments would remain defensible long after engagements concluded. He believed that trust was the true currency of finance. Capital could be replenished. Reputation, once compromised, could not. This conviction informed his leadership in professional organizations and his insistence on ethical restraint even when shortcuts were tempting or expedient.

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Dr. Jimmy Laya delivers his remarks at the opening of an art exhibit at the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, reflecting his rare blend of economic leadership and deep cultural advocacy. The occasion underscores his belief that national institutions are not only stewards of financial stability, but also patrons of the arts, helping nurture creativity and preserve the country's artistic heritage.

Competence without conscience, he believed, was ultimately destructive.

From professional practice, banking followed naturally.

At **Philtrust Bank**, where he would serve as **Vice Chairman** and later as **Chairman and President**, Jimmy Laya

approached governance with the sensibility of a custodian rather than a strategist. He understood cycles — how confidence accumulated slowly and evaporated quickly — and he resisted the seduction of short-term performance. To him, banking was not about avoiding risk entirely, but about understanding it. Systems had to be strong enough to absorb error without collapsing, transparent enough to reveal stress before it became crisis.

He favored prudence over bravado, coherence over momentum. Decisions were evaluated not only for profitability, but for sustainability. Banking, in his view, was a public trust as much as a private enterprise.

Beginning in 2007, he served as an independent director of GMA Network, Inc., contributing to governance in one of the country's most influential media institutions. His presence on the boards of Ayala Land, Manila Water Company, Philippine AXA Life Insurance Company, and Charter Ping An Insurance Corporation reflected not only professional stature, but a reputation for judgment under constraint — an attribute boards value most when markets are calm, and need most when they are not.

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Parallel to this corporate stewardship ran his continuing devotion to culture and education. He chaired the Don Norberto Ty Foundation and the Escuela Taller de Filipinas Foundation, institutions dedicated to preserving craft, memory, and skill across generations. He served as trustee of St. Paul University–Quezon City, the Cultural Center of the Philippines, the Metropolitan Museum of Manila, the Yuchengco Museum, Fundación Santiago, and the Ayala Foundation, among others — quietly reinforcing the infrastructure of Philippine cultural life without ever confusing patronage with spectacle.

Despite the formality of boardrooms and balance sheets, Jimmy Laya never abandoned his identity as an educator. Writing remained a constant thread. His weekly column in the *Manila Bulletin* — *Wala Lang* — continued to offer readers brief but incisive meditations on history, art, culture, and national memory. The title, deliberately modest, concealed an exacting intelligence. Each column compressed insight into economy, wit into restraint. Collected into three carefully produced volumes, the essays became objects of sharing — books given not as declarations, but as invitations to reflect.

Colleagues and younger professionals often remarked that he taught without lecturing. He listened carefully, asked precise questions, and corrected gently.



An official portrait of Dr. Jimmy Laya, painted by Romy Carlos, hangs at the University of the Philippines College of Business (now U.P. Virata School of Business), honoring his distinguished service and lasting contributions to the institution. The work stands as a quiet yet enduring tribute, situating his legacy within the halls where he taught, led, and helped shape generations of future Filipino business leaders.

OF LEDGERS AND LANDSCAPES

The Life, Learning, and Cultural Stewardship of Jaime del Carmen Laya



Dr. Jimmy Laya and the family home on Panay Avenue, Quezon City, where he has lived since 1955 — a house lovingly filled with the books, artworks, mementos, and personal belongings accumulated by him and his family since childhood. More than a residence, it stands as a living archive of memory and history, bearing quiet witness to the formative years, achievements, and enduring legacy of a life devoted to public service, culture, and learning.

OF LEDGERS AND LANDSCAPES

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Authority, he believed, was most effective when exercised sparingly. His advice was rarely prescriptive, but it was consistent: read more, think longer, resist haste. He had little patience for intellectual shortcuts and even less for moral ones.

He continued to write — not to explain himself, but to document what might otherwise be lost. His columns and books ranged across governance, history, art, economics, and memory. They were neither memoir nor polemic. They were acts of preservation, grounded in a belief that experience left unrecorded eventually distorts itself. Writing, for him, was a form of stewardship. His home became an extension of that impulse.

Filled with books — history, economics, architecture, visual arts, opera, mystery — alongside paintings, santos, furniture, textiles, and objects that recalled earlier chapters of life, it functioned less as a residence than as a living archive. He once described himself, with amused self-awareness, as a congenital tsundoku, surrounded by stacks of unread books. The accumulation was not indulgence. It was anticipation. Each book represented a future conversation, a deferred inquiry, a curiosity not yet satisfied.

Even as age advanced, routine retained its importance.



Opening of the “Woman: Thesis and Antithesis” exhibit, with (from left) CCP Trustee Nikki Junia, Cultural Center of the Philippines Chair and Yuchengco Museum, Inc. Board Member Dr. Jaime Laya, and Yuchengco Museum Chairperson Yvonne Yuchengco. The occasion brought together leaders of the country’s foremost cultural institutions in celebrating an exhibition that explored the many dimensions of womanhood through art, dialogue, and critical reflection.

He continued to go to the office, to attend meetings, to read until sleep overtook him mid-page. He exercised when time permitted, practiced restraint in diet, and treated health not as entitlement but as responsibility. He approached aging as he approached institutions — with realism, discipline, and acceptance of limits.

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Retirement, to him, was not idleness. It was discretion.

It was the freedom to choose what still mattered, and the wisdom to recognize that meaningful work did not require constant visibility. Influence could persist without announcement. Purpose could endure without title.

In recalibrating his life after public office, Jimmy Laya did not diminish his commitments. He refined them. He shifted from positions of command to roles of stewardship, from urgency to continuity, from intervention to care.

And in doing so, he demonstrated — once again — that the most enduring forms of service are often the quietest.

What Endures

Jimmy Laya does not measure success the way many of his contemporaries did.

He does not count applause. He does not linger on titles. He measures a life by what remains standing when the moment has passed — by what continues to function without explanation, without supervision, without his presence.

The habit formed early. After his father died young, he began to think of life as



Telesforo Collado Laya and Laejandra Cabreros, the paternal grandparents of Dr. Jimmy Laya, whose lives and values formed part of the family roots that shaped succeeding generations. Their legacy of character, education, and tradition laid the foundation for a lineage that would later contribute significantly to Philippine public service, culture, and intellectual life.

finite rather than open-ended, asking what might be done if time were uncertain and limited. The exercise was not morbid. It was clarifying. It gave him urgency without haste, ambition without impatience. It taught him to value preparation over drama, endurance over display.

OF LEDGERS AND LANDSCAPES

The Life, Learning, and Cultural Stewardship of Jaime del Carmen Laya

He has lived through war and liberation, dictatorship and transition, boom and collapse. He witnessed the Diliman Republic at close range, drove through streets littered with debris after political rallies, navigated the financial crisis of 1984, and learned of his own departure from office through a radio broadcast. He has seen institutions strain, falter, and sometimes fail — and has spent a lifetime trying to ensure that when they did, they fell less violently.

Fulfillment, to him, was never theatrical.

Doing one's best, whether recognized or not, was sufficient.

That his children have found their paths — and have become good parents themselves — is reward enough.

Those paths stretch far beyond any single geography, yet remain quietly tethered to the same ethic. His eldest, Mianne, built her professional life in global consulting and now works with McKinsey & Company in Madrid, where she lives with her husband, Carlos Ortega. Their children, Diego and Isabel — now in college at Harvard — once spent a summer doing volunteer work in Tacloban, an unannounced gesture that carried forward the belief that privilege is best answered by service.



Dr. Jimmy Laya with the Trustees of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, in a gathering that reflects his close involvement with the country's leading cultural institution. The moment underscores his commitment to supporting the arts, preserving national heritage, and helping guide the CCP in its mission to nurture Filipino creativity and cultural excellence.

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The Life, Learning, and Cultural Stewardship of Jaime del Carmen Laya

His only son, Juan Claudio — known in the family as Jamesy — established his career in Singapore, where he is now a partner at KPMG. He and his wife, Kate Ansbro, are raising their daughters, Sophie and Ana, at a distance that geography never fully translated into absence. The youngest, Amelia, works in Washington with the World Bank, drawn, as her father once was, to institutions where policy meets consequence.

Only Alexandra — Sandra — remained based in the Philippines. A noted gastroenterologist, she lives with her husband, Mario Zinampan, and their daughter, Irene, a champion gymnast at the British School. To many, she is also familiar as the physician who cared for Joshua, the son of Kris Aquino — an association she neither sought nor advertises, and one that sits lightly beside the daily seriousness of her work.

What unites these lives is not prominence, nor the repetition of a name, but the persistence of habits formed early: competence without display, responsibility without announcement, and service understood not as performance but as obligation.

That the institutions he touched — academic, financial, cultural, civic — continue to function is satisfaction



Spending Christmas with his children and their families has always been a special joy for Dr. Jimmy Laya, a time cherished for its warmth, togetherness, and the simple happiness of being surrounded by loved ones. These gatherings reflect the importance he places on family, tradition, and the continuity of generations, making the holiday season one of his most treasured moments each year.

enough. That Rotary still meets weekly, asking the same questions it always has, comforts him more than he might readily admit.

As for dreams, they are modest and exacting: a peaceful old age, good health, and the ability to remain useful.

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The Laya family at the Hôtel Le Lulli in Paris, captured during a memorable moment of travel and togetherness. The scene reflects both the family's shared experiences abroad and the close bonds that have marked their life journey, blending personal history with the wider world beyond home.

He still wakes each day with intention. He still reads voraciously. He still believes that culture is not a luxury, but a necessity — one of the quiet infrastructures that makes a society intelligible to itself.

His legacy, therefore, is not dramatic. It is durable.

A college curriculum that still works.
A budget process that still holds.
A museum collection that still tells a story.
A restored wall that still remembers.
A cultural center that still breathes.
A Rotary Club that still gathers.

Jimmy Laya did not seek to be unforgettable.

He sought to be useful.

And in choosing usefulness over spectacle, stewardship over applause, and continuity over immediacy, he became something far rarer than celebrated.

He became enduring.

Epilogue: After the Rooms Are Quiet

When the rooms finally grow quiet, when the chairs are returned to their places and the lights dim without ceremony, what remains is rarely the name of the last person who spoke. What remains are the rooms themselves — how they were built, whether they feel steady underfoot, whether those who enter them later sense order or confusion, dignity or neglect.

Jimmy Laya understood this instinctively.

He lived his life with an unusual awareness that every position is temporary, every title provisional,

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every moment of authority borrowed. What mattered was not the duration of one's presence, but the condition in which one left things behind. His work was shaped by that awareness, and so was his temperament. He was never hurried by applause, never unnerved by obscurity. He moved with the patience of someone who knew that the true measure of a life would be taken long after he had stepped out of the frame.

In time, history would record his roles: academic, public servant, central banker, cultural steward, professional, Rotarian. But those labels, useful as they are, miss the essential throughline. Jimmy was, above all, a custodian — of ideas, of institutions, of memory. He believed that things worth keeping required not passion alone, but discipline; not enthusiasm, but systems; not charisma, but care.

There is a particular courage in that kind of life. It asks a person to accept that the most meaningful work may never bear his name, that its success will look effortless precisely because it was done well. It asks for humility without withdrawal, conviction without exhibition. It asks one to trust that usefulness, quietly practiced, is a form of dignity.

In his later years, as the tempo of public life softened but never fully stopped, Jimmy did not retreat into nostalgia. He



Birthday celebrant Jaime Laya (far right) with his son Jamesy and granddaughters Irene, Sophie, and Ana, gathered around his 80th birthday cake in 2019—a warm family moment that celebrates not only a milestone year, but the continuity of generations bound by love, memory, and legacy.

continued to read voraciously, to write, to attend meetings, to walk familiar paths, to concern himself with both the health of institutions and the well-being of those who would inherit them. His curiosity did not dim. His sense of responsibility did not dissolve with age.

Time did not narrow him; it clarified him.

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He took pleasure in small continuities: the rhythm of a workday, the weight of a book in hand, the quiet satisfaction of a system functioning as it should. He found reassurance in the persistence of things larger than himself — organizations that still met, buildings that still stood, programs that still shaped lives. These were not trophies. They were confirmations.

If there is a quiet sorrow in such a life, it is the knowledge that its greatest successes will not announce themselves. A student will pass through an improved curriculum without knowing who designed it. A citizen will walk through a restored historic space without knowing who insisted it be done properly. An institution will survive a transition without knowing whose foresight made that survival possible.

But Jimmy never sought to be remembered in that way. He sought something else entirely.

He sought coherence.

Coherence between values and action.
Between intellect and conscience.
Between power and restraint. Between the present moment and the future it quietly prepares.

In a time increasingly impatient with anything that does not produce immediate spectacle, his life offers a

different lesson: that endurance is not passive, that restraint is not weakness, and that the most responsible form of ambition is the kind that designs itself to be unnecessary.

When future generations encounter the institutions he touched, they may not ask who built them. They may simply assume they were always meant to be there. That assumption — mistaken, yet generous — is the highest compliment such a life can receive.

And so, when the rooms finally grow quiet, when the work passes to other hands and the day ends without fanfare, Jimmy Laya's presence does not vanish. It lingers — in the steadiness of systems, in the preservation of memory, in the assurance that someone once cared enough to build carefully.

This is not the ending of a story, but the completion of a circle.

A life that began with books and example returns, at last, to something equally simple and enduring: the knowledge that one has done what needed to be done, as well as it could be done, and left the world knowing how to go on without you.

For some lives, that would feel like erasure.

For Jaime del Carmen Laya, it is fulfillment.

COGS IN THE WHEEL

Rotarian Rafael “Raf” S. Dionisio Named 2025 TOYM Awardee for Regenerative Tourism and Circular Economy Entrepreneurship



ROTARIAN Rafael “Raf” S. Dionisio has been named one of the 2025 honorees of The Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) Awards, one of the country’s most prestigious recognitions for exemplary leadership and service. Raf was selected for the category of Regenerative Tourism and Circular Economy Entrepreneurship, emerging as one of only four awardees chosen nationwide from a competitive field of 150 nominees.

The TOYM Awards, jointly conferred by Junior Chamber International (JCI) Philippines and the TOYM Foundation, honor young Filipinos whose professional excellence and civic commitment contribute significantly to nation-building. The 2025 edition carries the theme “Excellence in Action: Building a Better Tomorrow,” underscoring the role of visionary leadership in addressing the country’s most pressing social, environmental, and economic challenges.

A committed member of the Rotary Club of Manila (RCM), Dionisio has been a consistent and passionate advocate for sustainable development, particularly in advancing initiatives that integrate environmental stewardship with inclusive economic growth. Within Rotary, he has actively championed projects aligned with sustainability, climate action, and community resilience, helping advance the organization’s mission of “Service Above Self” in the context of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

COGS IN THE WHEEL

Rotarian Rafael “Raf” S. Dionisio Named 2025 TOYM Awardee for Regenerative Tourism and Circular Economy Entrepreneurship

Professionally, Raf is a social entrepreneur whose work spans multiple sectors, including forestry, agriculture, food, education, travel, construction, and sustainability. His enterprises and advocacy focus on regenerative development models that go beyond minimizing harm, instead restoring ecosystems, empowering local communities, and building circular systems that reduce waste and maximize resource efficiency.

Through his leadership in regenerative tourism, Raf has promoted approaches that protect natural landscapes while creating livelihood opportunities for host communities. His work in the circular economy emphasizes responsible production, sustainable supply chains, and innovative business models that transform environmental challenges into engines for inclusive growth.

Being named a TOYM 2025 awardee places Raf among an elite group of young Filipino leaders recognized for their outstanding contributions to society. His selection as one of only four honorees nationwide highlights



the growing importance of sustainability-driven entrepreneurship and the pivotal role of the private sector in advancing climate action and long-term national development.

The Rotary Club of Manila joins the broader Rotary and JCI communities in congratulating Rotarian Raf Dionisio for this well-deserved honor, celebrating his vision, integrity, and unwavering commitment to building a more sustainable and resilient Philippines.

Director Michael Jaey Albaña's Views on Philippine Tourism Published in Manila Bulletin

MANILA BULLETIN

ifestyle

TRAVEL

B-8 | SATURDAY, JANUARY 24, 2026

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The greatest roadblock to Philippine tourism competitiveness lies in poor connectivity, restrictive travel policies, corruption perception, and fragmented coordination among stakeholders. While the Philippines offers some of the most breathtaking destinations in Asia, many remain difficult and costly to access due to limited direct flights, poor inter-island transport, and weak digital infrastructure. Compounding this is the lingering negative image of government corruption, which undermines investor confidence and discourages tourists seeking a sense of safety and transparency. Unlike neighboring countries that have adopted seamless and free visa policies, the Philippines still struggles with cumbersome entry procedures and regulatory red tape.

To fix this, the government must prioritize clean and efficient governance, strengthen physical and digital connectivity, simplify visa processes, and adopt a unified "whole-of-destination" approach through empowered regional destination management organizations. Alongside this, sustained investment in workforce upskilling and sustainable tourism will ensure that the Philippine brand of hospitality shines with professionalism and integrity. The Philippines doesn't lack beauty, it lacks connectivity, good governance, and coordination to reach its full tourism potential.



A MAJESTIC MOUNT Mayon in Albay stands at over 2,462 meters (8,077 feet) and is one of many natural landmarks tourists marvel at the country. (MB file photo)

What is the greatest roadblock to Philippine tourism?

We ask industry stakeholders what we need to level up

ALFRED M. REYES
Vice president for Operations and general manager
Bai Hotel Cebu

The Philippines stands at the brink of maximizing its tourism potential, with our world-class destinations and renowned hospitality setting vibrant foundations. To further elevate our status, there's an opportunity to enhance our infrastructure, improving accessibility, streamlining business operations, and strengthening our global image. Embracing this progress ensures that international event organizers see the Philippines as a top choice for large-scale conventions and exhibitions.

Our counterparts in Asia have excelled in the MICE sector by offering seamless travel experiences and integrated support systems, providing a benchmark for our own growth. By focusing on these areas, we can accelerate our journey toward becoming a leading MICE destination.

A unified, nationwide effort is essential to recognize the vital role MICE plays both economically and within tourism. This involves harmonious coordination among government bodies, private venues, and local industries to enhance connectivity, simplify processes, and elevate the professionalism of event services. As SMX broadens its reach nationwide—in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, and emerging areas—we have a golden opportunity in MICE operations. This expansion not only strengthens regional economies but also helps cultivate a cohesive MICE identity for the Philippines.

Through robust collaboration and innovation, we can convert our well-known hospitality into a competitive advantage in the global MICE arena. This proactive approach will position the Philippines as a formidable powerhouse for international meetings and events in Asia, enhancing our reputation and bringing sustained economic benefits.

STANLEY NG
Vice president
PAL Holdings

Today's travelers live online—they dream, plan, and book their journeys there. If we want them to choose the Philippines, we must make it easy for them to find and fall in love with what we offer. It is of vital importance that we invest in our digital infrastructure, ensuring that Philippine destinations, hotels, and experiences are visible, bookable, and competitive across the world's leading metasearch engines and online travel platforms. We already have the beautiful destinations, heritage, culture, and the warm people. The next step is to make sure the world can find, explore, and book them with ease.

But beyond being discoverable online, the experience on the ground must match the promise we make digitally. We should also create visa processing, which we are starting to do, and open for certain markets, as well as the much-needed tourism infrastructure like airport capacity, access roads to destinations, and sustainable features to make sure the host community is protected and is a part of the tourism experience.

MICHAEL JAEY ALBAÑA
Vice president and general manager
SMX Convention Center

Some of the biggest tourism events in the world are sports events: FIFA, FIBA, FIVB, Formula 1, etc. Why? Because it is memorable, it is exciting, it is a global celebration. The Philippines Sports Commission (PSC) is happy to collaborate with the Department of Tourism, TIEZA, and TPB. President Marcos has instructed us to push this strategy. This should be the next big tourism push—through sports.

PATRICK GREGORIO
chairman
Philippine Sports Commission

CLEOFE ALBISO
Managing director
Megawold Hotels and Resort

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

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

 Editor
 Juliet L. Javellana

Seven empowered women

WITH DUE RESPECT

ARTEMIO V. PANGANIBAN

In my Jan. 5 column, I exalted the women of Asean (led by Malaysian Chief Justice Maun), who are transforming and empowering gender parity. Today, let me focus on seven ladies whom I have met and who, in my humble opinion, are exemplars of the empowered women of the Philippine private sector.

DR. CHARO SANTOS-CONCIO's keynote address during the inaugural meeting of the Management Association of the Philippines held last week, at the Shangri-La The Fort stressed that leadership and integrity are intertwined. Without integrity, leadership becomes self-serving and will not, by itself, build up an organization. And integrity without leadership, though not bad per se, does not result in firm decision-making.

She was a campus scholar, beauty queen, multi-awarded actress, and acclaimed corporate executive, as the first female president and CEO of ABS-CBN Corp. from 2008 to 2015. She propelled the network to its height in both revenue and reach.

DR. LYDIA ECHAUZ is an independent director of Meralco, where, as her fellow ID, I have marveled at her wit and wisdom. She also sits as an ID of Meralco PowerGen Renewable Energy, Shell Philippines, D&L Industries, and other major corporations, and serves as the executive director of the Henry Sy Foundation.

A towering figure in Philippine education, Lydia was president of Far Eastern University and former dean of the De La Salle University Graduate School of Business. She is widely respected for bridging academia and industry, promoting collaboration between educators and business leaders to advance national development.

BERNADINE SIY was elected in 2008 as the first and thus far the only lady president and queen of the Manila Golf Club. Since 1901, the club had been a bastion of masculine pride till 1987, when women were admitted as members. Bern is also the only woman to chair the board of trustees of Ateneo de Manila. Under her guidance, Ateneo will establish a new campus in Riverpark, Cavite, which will expand access to world-class Jesuit education.

member of the A4S CFO Leadership Network established by King Charles III.

Under her stewardship, MPIC partnered with the Foundation for Liberty and Prosperity (FLP) in sponsoring an annual P500,000 fellowship program for five MBA (or equivalent degree) students specializing in entrepreneurship, sustainability, management, economics, and business law or "ESMEL."

TESSIE SY-COSON is the eldest of the six Sy siblings who together own the country's largest conglomerate in market cap. She chairs our nation's largest bank, BDO, acclaimed by the London-based "Brand Finance" as the most valuable Philippine brand. Despite her storied achievements and being the nation's wealthiest woman, she remains simple, modest, unaffected, and unassuming.

While she readily concurs with FLP's annual search for outstanding law students, she believes we should also look for lawyers who are ethical. FLP heartily agrees and is now formulating the guidelines for this difficult and sensitive quest, with her or her companies as FLP's partners.

LASTLY AND MOSTLY, FIRST LADY LOUISE ARANETA-MARCOS is a distinguished lawyer of integrity and competence. When her husband was elected President, she voluntarily dissolved her formidable "MOST" law office but remained an active law professor. She is especially proud of the West Visayas State University (where she teaches), which obtained a 100 percent passing rate in the last bar exam. An alumna of Ateneo de Manila, she honed her postgraduate studies in criminal procedure at New York University. She was recently awarded the "Governance Excellence Award" by BizNews Asia.

She shares my philosophy of safeguarding liberty and nurturing prosperity under the rule of law. Happily, she is also an active supporter of FLP's proposed interactive, immersive, artificial intelligence-powered and tech-driven futuristic Museum for Liberty and Prosperity.

Comments to chiefjusticepanganiban@hotmail.com

YOUTH SERVICE

RAC DLSU's 27th Induction and 26th Handover Ceremony



The Rotaract Club of De La Salle University marked its 27th Induction and 26th Handover Ceremony on January 24, 2026.



The Rotary Club of Manila was represented by PDG Jackie Rodriguez, serving as Guest of Honor and Speaker, alongside Secretary Anton Mauricio and Internal Auditor Nick Locsin, with a special video message from President Raoul Creencia.

RAC DLSU's 27th Induction and 26th Handover Ceremony



*UCP Miles Laurice
B. Tolentino*



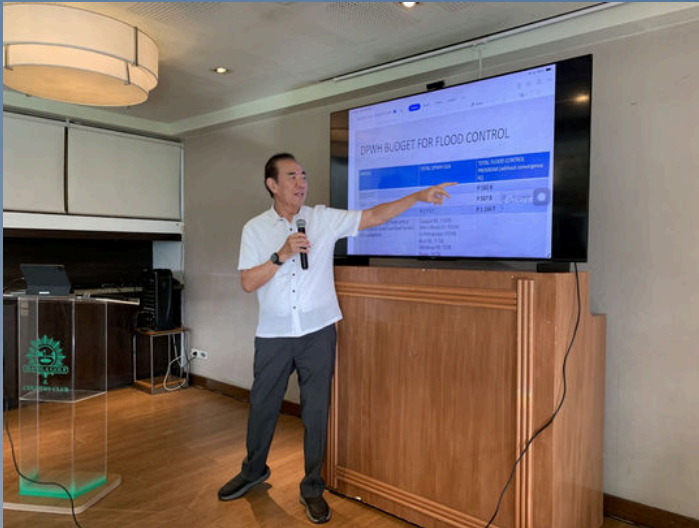
Inside the Flood Control Scandal: *Singson Speaks to Aleco*



IN the quiet, amber-lit setting of an intimate breakfast gathering, a small circle of members from the Rotary Club of Manila's Aleco Group listened closely to a rare and unvarnished account from former Department of Public Works and Highways Secretary and former Independent Commission for Infrastructure Commissioner Rogelio "Babes" Singson.

It was not a ceremonial talk nor a retrospective filled with pleasantries. It was a sober, first-hand exposition by a man who once stood at the front lines of one of the country's most corruption-prone sectors, offering a clinical and deeply unsettling dissection of what he described as the ongoing crisis in flood control governance.

Inside the Flood Control Scandal: *Singson Speaks to Aleco*



Secretary Singson spoke with the precision of an engineer and the moral clarity of a reform advocate as he laid bare the anatomy of what has come to be known as the “Flood Control Corruption Exposed” scandal—a multi-billion-peso web of alleged irregularities that, since 2024, has not only submerged communities but steadily eroded public trust and institutional integrity.

Peeling back the layers of the General Appropriations Act, he described a sophisticated system of budgetary manipulation carried out not with force, but with paperwork, signatures, and strategic legislative insertions. According to his analysis, an estimated ₱500 billion has flowed through more than 5,500 flood control projects, with a significant portion coursing through

the ₱214-billion Unprogrammed Appropriations. This pool of funds, he warned, has become fertile ground for ghost projects, bloated costs, and the alleged concentration of contracts among a small circle of favored firms, reportedly insulated by political patrons who themselves benefit from the system.

Beyond exposing fiscal irregularities, Singson lamented the abandonment of a science-based vision he had championed during the administration of President Benigno “Noy” Aquino III: Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM). This holistic framework treats rivers, watersheds, forests, agriculture, solid waste systems, drainage, and coastal zones as one interconnected ecological system. Its neglect, he explained, is now

Inside the Flood Control Scandal: *Singson Speaks to Aleco*

evident in denuded uplands that dump silt into rivers, plastic waste that clogs urban waterways, eroded farmlands and landfill runoff that poison estuaries, and flood control structures rendered ineffective by upstream degradation and downstream mismanagement. The nation, he said, has been addressing symptoms while ignoring the disease.

He also expressed grave concern over the distortion of the Convergence Fund, originally designed to enable DPWH to collaborate with agencies such as the Departments of Education, Tourism, and Health to produce infrastructure with multiplied social impact. In some cases, he noted, the mechanism has reportedly evolved into a channel for procedural circumvention, where success is measured less by public safety or functionality and more by the speed of fund obligation and disbursement.



Citing reports from Bulacan, he pointed to claims that as much as ₱2 billion a month had been spent through in-house construction arrangements and borrowed contractor licenses, all shielded by the presumption of regularity, even as questions lingered over quality, necessity, and genuine public value.

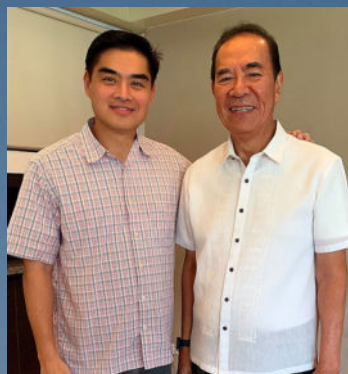
Yet Singson's message was not one of despair. As the discussion drew to a close, he offered a framework for reform distilled into what he called the "Five Rs of Good Governance": the Right Project, at the Right Cost, implemented by the Right People, with the Right Quality, and delivered Right on Time. Simple in formulation, the principles demand a

Inside the Flood Control Scandal: *Singson Speaks to Aleco*

level of discipline that would fundamentally challenge entrenched practices.

He then issued a call that resonated strongly with his Rotary audience: the creation of a Citizens' Mandated Audit. This proposed coalition would bring together civil society organizations, professional associations, faith-based groups, and volunteer institutions to conduct independent reviews of public works—scrutinizing budgets, validating physical accomplishments, and demanding transparency and accountability. Complementing this, he advocated for an Integrity Pledge for contractors, modeled on the uncompromising standards of Hong Kong's Independent Commission Against Corruption, binding participation in public projects not only to technical competence but to enforceable ethical commitments.

For the Rotary Club of Manila, the discussion pointed to a clear civic role. With members drawn from engineering, architecture, accounting, law, environmental science, information technology, urban planning, education, and community leadership, the organization possesses a depth of professional expertise uniquely suited to support such a citizen-led audit initiative. It can convene multi-sector coalitions, partner with universities and watchdog groups, train citizen-auditors,



Inside the Flood Control Scandal: *Singson Speaks to Aleco*

deploy technical review teams, and provide a trusted, non-partisan platform for the responsible and factual presentation of findings.

Beyond auditing, Rotary's service tradition also positions it to help revive the principles of Integrated Water Resources Management through watershed rehabilitation, solid-waste programs, river and estero clean-ups, coastal protection, and public education that links environmental stewardship with anti-corruption advocacy. In this way, flood control is reframed not as a cycle of concrete pouring and ribbon-cutting, but as a long-term commitment to systems thinking, sustainability, and integrity.

Secretary Singson's testimony that morning served both as a warning and a roadmap. Flooding, he underscored, is not solely an act of nature. It is, too often, the product of distorted priorities, corrupted processes, and weakened institutions. But precisely because it is man-made, it can also be undone—if informed citizens, principled professionals, and values-driven institutions choose to stand not on the sidelines of polite concern, but on the front lines of truth, accountability, and nation-building.

RECOGNITION CORNER

IAT Xavier “Xavy” Zialcita Joins Seafront Board



Seafront Resources Corp. has named Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.'s (RCBC) Xavier Y. Zialcita to its board.

IAT Xavier “Xavy” Zialcita currently serves as senior vice president for strategic initiatives at RCBC and brings more than 20 years of experience in investment banking, corporate advisory, and strategic planning.



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Official Newsletter of
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