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ESGUERRA FARMS & STUD INC.

The Official News Organ of
the Rotary Club of Manila

balita

ISSUE NO. 4063 • SEPTEMBER 11, 2025

TRIPLE *Treat*



Atty. Allan G. PANOLONG
National President
Integrated Bar of the
Philippines



Atty. Solomon M. HERMOSURA
Government
Corporate Counsel

BOOK *Launch*



The Nation's Advocate:
Lessons of Service from
Solicitor General
Berberabe

Election Results:
Board of
Directors for
RY 2026-2027

THE WATCHMAN'S PEN:
Antonio Somera Lopez
and the Unyielding
Chronicle of a Nation

Community Oral
Health Outreach
Program in Manila
and Marikina

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PROGRAM

ROTARY CLUB OF MANILA 7th Weekly Membership Meeting

Rotary Year 2025-2026

Thursday, September 11, 2025, 12:00 NN
Conrad Manila (Taft Room)



Moderator: DE CARLOS G. "Caloy" SERAPIO

PART I

11:00 AM Registration

12:00 NN Call to Order | **PRES. RAOUL C. CREENCIA**

Invocation

RTN. ABDULGANI M. "Gani" MACATOMAN

Philippine National Anthem | **AVP**

Rotary Club of Manila Hymn | **RCM WF Music Chorale**

The Four (4) Way Test

RTN. JASON ROLAND N. VALDEZ

Acknowledgement of Guests | **DE CARLOS G. "Caloy" SERAPIO**

Welcome Song | **RCM WF Music Chorale**

Birthday Celebrants:

Sept 05 Rtn. Rex Alingog

Sept 06 Rtn. Jae Jang

Rtn. Emyl Eugenio

Sept 09 Rtn. Claver Ramos

PDSAA Bollie Bolton

Sept 11 PD Art Lopez

Maligayang Bati/Happy Birthday Song

RCM WF Chorale

Turnover of Check to PETA Asia

PDG ALEXANDER "Alex" P. CUREG

12:25 PM President's Time | **PRES. RAOUL C. CREENCIA**

PART II

12:30 PM Panel Discussion

Topic: **WHAT IS THE LAWYER'S ROLE TO AVOID INJUSTICE**

JUSTICE SOLOMON M. HERMOSURA

Government Corporate Counsel

Office of the Government Corporate Counsel

Panel of Discussants:

Atty. Allan G. Panolong

National President

Integrated Bar of the Philippines

Justice Solomon M. Hermosura

Government Corporate Counsel

Office of the Government Corporate Counsel

PIA Jordan M. Pizarra

Rtn. Citos Manalaysay

Panel Moderator:

DE Teodoro "Teddy" Y. Kalaw, IV

Inspirational Talk

JUSTICE SOLOMON M. HERMOSURA

Government Corporate Counsel

Office of the Government Corporate Counsel

ATTY. ALLAN G. PANOLONG

National President

Integrated Bar of the Philippines

Presentation of Certificate of Appreciation

PRES. RAOUL C. CREENCIA

PART III

1:45 PM

Presentation of the Book

RTN. JOHN EMYL G. EUGENIO

1:50 PM

Message from the Author

PD AMADO "Amading" D. VALDEZ

2:00 PM

Adjournment

PRES. RAOUL C. CREENCIA

Book Signing

PART IV

GUIDED TOUR OF BOOK FAIR (Coffee will be served)

EDITORIAL

Reginald T. Yu
Editor-in-Chief



THERE are days in the life of a Club that feel less like routine and more like a turning of the page in a book we all write together. September 11, 2025 will be such a day for the Rotary Club of Manila — a day aptly called a Triple Treat, where wisdom is spoken, stories are shared, and service is celebrated.

At the helm of this gathering stand two pillars of the law. Atty. Allan G. Panolong, National President of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, brings with him the voice of a profession sworn to uphold justice even in the most turbulent of times. His words remind us that Rotary and the law are bound by the same thread: integrity, accountability, and the defense of what is right.

Alongside him, Atty. Solomon M. Hermosura, Government Corporate Counsel, offers a steady hand of governance, carrying lessons from boardrooms and courtrooms alike — lessons that resonate with our call to serve above self.

But the day does not end with discourse alone. Into this tapestry comes a story, woven by the deft hand of Dean Amado D. Valdez. His novel, *They Will Be in Heaven Before the Devil Knows*, launches on this very occasion, carrying readers into the moral struggles and triumphs of men and nations. Literature, like law and like Rotary itself, has the power to reveal truth and stir conscience. It is a gift to us all that Dean Valdez now turns his pen to narrative, reminding us that words can move mountains just as surely as deeds.

And yet, perhaps the sweetest note of the day is struck not on the podium or the printed page, but in the ballot box. We pause to extend hearty congratulations to the newly-elected Board of Directors of the Rotary Club of Manila for Rotary Year 2026–2027. Their election marks not just a transition of leadership but a renewal of trust, a reaffirmation of fellowship.

EDITORIAL

Past President Archit Bartolome and the COMELEC team deserve our highest commendation for orchestrating the Club's first-ever hybrid election — a seamless exercise in democracy where 94 members cast their votes, swiftly establishing quorum and producing results that were beyond reproach. The process itself was a triumph: a testament to our Club's ability to blend tradition with innovation, past with present, continuity with change.

In this convergence of law, literature, and leadership, we glimpse the very soul of Rotary. For here, justice is spoken, stories are told, and democracy is lived. September 11 is not simply a date in our calendar; it is a reminder that ours is a fellowship that does not stand still. We listen, we learn, we elect, we serve. We write the next chapter — together.



THE FIRM OF
CREENCIA CARILLO & VELASCO

RAOUL C. CREENCIA
Managing Partner

EDWIN M. CARILLO
Senior Partner

GLADYS M. CAGADOC-VELASCO
Senior Partner

MARLO V. DESTURA
Junior Partner

JERRY S. UY
Special Counsel

MARIA LEA BERNADETH S. OTICO
Senior Associate

MICHAEL P. PECAYO
Senior Associate

JONA N. PLATEJA
Associate

KRISTINA MARIE S. SAVELLANO
Associate

RENZO NIÑO M. ROSALES
Associate

KEITH MATTHEW R. CAMACHO
Associate

JOAQUIN ANTONIO S. DILLERA
Associate

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

ON September 10, I had the chance to join the Club's hardworking Oral Health Committee Chairman John Cutter in the second batch of distribution of oral care kits. The beneficiaries were more than 200 teenagers at the Boys Town Complex in Marikina City. Several subsequent distribution dates have been set so many more will be benefiting from this laudable project.

I believe that oral health care is more than just having a bright smile -- it is an essential part of overall well-being. Healthy teeth and gums



Raoul C. Creencia
President

contribute to proper nutrition, clear speech, self-confidence, and the prevention of many diseases. Yet, despite its importance, oral health care remains one of the most overlooked aspects of public health. In fact, Dr. Cutter always underscores that the Philippines is ruefully among those with high incidents of tooth decay. This is especially because many communities, especially those in rural and underserved areas, continue to face barriers in accessing proper dental services. Community oral health care emerges as a crucial approach in bridging this gap, ensuring that every individual has the opportunity to enjoy not just good oral health, but also a better quality of life.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

At its core, community oral health care goes beyond the traditional dentist's clinic. It emphasizes prevention, education, and accessibility. Instead of focusing only on treatment, it seeks to empower individuals with knowledge and habits that can prevent oral diseases before they arise. This is the focus of the program of the Rotary Club of Manila.

To be sure, programs such as school-based toothbrushing campaigns, fluoride application, and regular dental check-ups for children can dramatically reduce cases of cavities and gum disease. By instilling these practices early, communities build healthier generations who value oral hygiene as part of their daily lives.

Equity is another vital principle in community oral health care. Socioeconomic conditions often determine whether people can access dental services. High costs, lack of nearby clinics, and limited awareness prevent many families from seeking care. Community-based programs, however, bring oral health services closer to the people. Mobile dental clinics, free dental missions, and barangay-level oral health campaigns ensure that even those in remote areas receive proper attention. Such



initiatives highlight the idea that oral health is a right, not a privilege.

Community oral health care also relies heavily on partnerships, and civic organizations such as Rotary clubs can indeed play a crucial role in advancing oral health.

Ultimately, the success of community oral health care lies in prevention, accessibility, and collaboration. When communities invest in oral health, they prevent not only cavities and tooth loss, but also other health issues such as infections, malnutrition, and even heart disease. A healthy mouth leads to a healthy body, and a healthy body leads to a thriving community.

Community oral health care is a project that our Club must continuously and assiduously pursue.

cover story

The Nation's Advocate: Lessons of Service from Solicitor General Berberabe

by PVP Reginald T. Yu



MANILA Polo Club, September 4, 2025 — It was a Thursday afternoon brimming with the spirit of Rotary, as two of the nation's most influential clubs — the Rotary Club of Manila (RCM) and the Rotary Club of Makati (RC Makati) — came together in a historic joint weekly membership meeting at the elegant Manila Polo Club.



The occasion, held on September 4 at exactly 12:15 PM, brought together distinguished leaders, business stalwarts, legal luminaries, and dedicated Rotarians for an afternoon that was equal parts fellowship, celebration, and inspiration.

Opening Formalities and Fellowship

The session was gracefully moderated by **Vice-President Ricardo “Ricky” S.B. Guevara**, who kept the proceedings crisp yet convivial.



Vice-President Ricardo “Ricky” S.B. Guevara moderated the meeting.

The meeting was formally called to order by President **Raoul C. Creencia** of RCM and President **Eduardo “Eddie” H. Galvez** of RC Makati, symbolizing the unifying bond of the two powerhouse clubs.



RC Manila President Raoul Creencia and RC Makati President Eduardo “Eddie” H. Galvez called the meeting to order.

Following tradition, District Secretary and Past President **Luis Angel G. Aseoche** (RC Makati) led the invocation with solemnity, before the assembly rose for the Philippine National Anthem and the stirring hymns of both clubs — the **RCM World-Famous Chorale** leading their home hymn and RC Makati’s members giving voice to their own.



District Secretary and Past President Luis Angel G. Aseoche of RC Makati led the invocation.

Director **Roger Collantes** (RC Makati) led the community in reciting the timeless Four-Way Test, grounding the afternoon in Rotary’s ethical compass.



Director Roger Collantes of RC Makati led the community in reciting the Four-Way Test.



Celebrations of Life and Love

The meeting also served as a celebration of milestones. RCM honored Rtn. **Emilio Gonzales-LaO**, who marked his birthday on August 30. RC Makati in turn celebrated birthdays of DS/PP **Louie Aseoche** (Sept. 4), as well as Rotary Anns **Caling Young** (Sept. 4), **Bessie Cruz** (Sept. 5), and **Joyce Dizon** (Sept. 6).

Love was not forgotten — Past President **Jun Jun** and **Cecille Dayrit** were recognized for their upcoming wedding anniversary on September 7. The **RCM Chorale** filled the air with the cheerful notes of *Maligayang Bati* and *Happy Birthday*, sealing the moment in harmony.

President's Time and Shared Programs

Both club presidents took turns addressing the assembly. President **Eddie Galvez** of RC Makati and President **Raoul Creencia** of RCM shared their visions, underscored by two video presentations: one highlighting August accomplishments, and another showcasing the transformative LEAP Program/Project.

A highlight of the afternoon was the MOA and Supplemental Agreement signing, marking a partnership between the **Office for Alternative Dispute Resolution (OADR)**, the **Rotary Club of Manila**, and the **Philippine Institute of Arbitrators, Inc. (PIArb)**. Signing

the agreement were **Atty. Margaret Raizza Andaman** (Executive Director V, OADR), President **Raoul Creencia** (RCM), and **Atty. Dranyl Jared P. Amoroso** (President, PI Arb).



MOA and Supplemental Agreement signing. From left: Atty. Margaret Raizza Andaman (Executive Director V, OADR), President Raoul Creencia (RCM), and Atty. Dranyl Jared P. Amoroso (President, PI Arb)



District Secretary General/Past President **Hermie Esguerra** proudly presented IPP **Jujut Enriquez** as a finalist in the Regional Public Image Awards 2025, a recognition that further elevated the prestige of RCM in the region.



District Secretary General/Past President Hermie Esguerra presented IPP Jujut Enriquez as a finalist in the Regional Public Image Awards 2025

A Guest of Honor with Gravitas

Introduced with warmth by Club Secretary **Antonilo “Anton” Mauricio**, the afternoon’s Guest of Honor and Speaker, Solicitor General **Darlene Marie B. Berberabe**, took to the podium.

Her address was nothing short of riveting — a personal narrative woven



Club Secretary Antonilo “Anton” Mauricio introduced the Guest of Honor and Speaker.

with candor, humor, humility, and the moral fortitude that has defined her career. From her unlikely beginnings as the first female instructor at UP’s Department of Philosophy, to her corporate tenure at Procter & Gamble, and later her transformative leadership as CEO of the Pag-ibig Fund, she shared lessons in integrity, courage, and perseverance.

Berberabe’s recollections of her tenure in government — navigating Senate probes, doubling loan ceilings, expanding nationwide housing branches, and defending institutional integrity — resonated deeply with her audience. She spoke of courage in the face of pressure, of doing what is right “even when no one is looking,” and of her unwavering conviction that law must always serve the nation rather than political expediency.



Guest of Honor and Speaker Solicitor General Darlene Marie B. Berberabe

Her recent ascent as the nation’s Solicitor General provided the crowning arc of her story. With sincerity, she shared her hopes for institutional strengthening, legal training for OSG lawyers, digitization of case records, and above all, ensuring the transparency and integrity of the Office of the Solicitor General.

In one of the most poignant moments of her talk, she shifted from professional triumphs to her role as a mother, introducing her daughter Jamie Christine — summa cum laude in Mathematics and a two-time SEA Games gold medalist in karate — as her greatest pride. The hall filled with admiration as she recalled her daughter’s words on unconditional love, a testament to resilience both in public service and in personal life.

The Solicitor General’s candid reflections — peppered with humor, anecdotes of family, and her prayer for “courage and wisdom” — left the audience moved and inspired.

Open Forum and Honors

An open forum allowed Rotarians to engage her further, before Presidents Creencia and Galvez jointly presented the Certificate of Appreciation — a token of gratitude befitting her powerful message.



RCM President Raoul C. Creencia presented the RCM’s Plaque of Appreciation to Solicitor General Darlene Marie B. Berberabe, witnessed by RCM Secretary Anton Mauricio, RC Makati’s President Eduardo “Eddie” H. Galvez, Director Roger Collantes, and DS/PP Luis Angel G. Aseoche.



Solicitor General Darlene Marie B. Berberabe engaged in an interactive conversation with Rtn. Jun Palafox (RC Makati), PP Chito Zaldarriaga, and PP Boy Guevara



Club Elections: A New Chapter for RCM

The afternoon also bore witness to an important moment in RCM’s own history. Past President **Arsenio “Archit” Bartolome**, Chair of the Elections Committee, announced the results of the annual elections.

From among 13 nominees, 8 emerged victorious — led by Past Vice President and past RCMFI Chairman **Reginald T. Yu**, who was elected President-elect with an overwhelming 86 votes. Past Treasurer **Karlo M. Castro** followed closely as Vice

President-elect with 82 votes. Out of 94 votes cast, the results reflected not only democratic strength but also the trust placed in RCM's next line of leadership.



Past President Arsenio "Archit" Bartolome, Chair of the Elections Committee, announced the results of the annual elections.

Closing and Benediction of Fellowship

At exactly 2:00 PM, the gavel was struck for adjournment by Presidents Creencia and Galvez, closing the meeting that had been a rare convergence of legacy and leadership between two of the nation's most prominent Rotary clubs.

The 6th Weekly Membership Meeting of RCM, in fellowship with RC Makati, will be remembered as more than just another Thursday gathering — it was a testament to Rotary's enduring values



RC Manila President Raoul C. Creencia and RC Makati President Eduardo "Eddie" H. Galvez adjourned the meeting.

of Service Above Self, strengthened through partnerships, celebrated milestones, inspired addresses, and the promise of leadership renewed.



Meeting Fellowship



Meeting Fellowship



CLUB ADMINISTRATION

RCM Members' Attendance Report
RY 2025-2026



ATTENDANCE REPORT

September 2025

SEPTEMBER 2025	September 04, 2025 SOL.GEN. DARLENE MARIE BERBERABE
MEMBERS PRESENT	99
MEMBERS PRESENT %	46%
MAKE UP ATTEENDEES	0
EXEMPTED	5
ON LEAVE	0
Total Active Members	99
Total # of Members	215
TOTAL %:	46%
ROTARACTORS	9
MEDIA	0
EMBASSIES / DIPLOMATIC CORPS	0
DG, DGE, DGN, PDG	0
GOHS / GS	1
VISITING ROTARIAN	0
Guests of RCM MEMBERS	9
TOTAL ATTEENDEES	118



LIST OF ATTEENDEES

September 4, 2025

1	Abay, Valentino G.	51	Macatoman, Abdulgani M.
2	Acosta, Crispiniano G.	52	Magsaysay, Francisco D.
3	Albana, Michael Jaey C	53	Mangalile, Senen T.
4	Alday, Albert Singson	54	Martinez, Ronald
5	Alingog, Aldous A.	55	Mauricio, Antonio DC
6	Andal, Avelino L.	56	Mauricio, Francisco Robert DC.
7	Aragon, Joshua Reuben	57	Mendoza, Miguel
8	Bagatsing, Valentino S.	58	Mommerts, Steve
9	Balanay, Arnes B.	59	Nones, Romeo C.
10	Bartolome III, Arsenio M.	60	Nufiez, Jr., Jose A.
11	Bautista, John Jr. I.	61	Obrado, Daniel Calzado
12	Bogovich, Jason M.	62	Ocampo, Teodoro J.
13	Buendia, Carlos C.	63	Ong, Phillip L.
14	Camat, Nathaniel	64	Ong, Rowel Janson S.
15	Carlos, Vicente J.	65	Pagdanganan, Roberto M.
16	Carranceja, Arvin Arik B.	66	Palacios, Albert C.
17	Castro, Karlo Eugene Josef M.	67	Pascual, Abraham F.
18	Chahwan, Rami	68	Pellio, Wilfredo M.
19	Chan, Robert Sy Jr.	69	Pineda, Jr., Jesus M.
20	Cid, Dean Y.	70	Preysler, Jr., Fausto R.
21	Co, Val Constantine L.	71	Ra, Ingil
22	Creencia, Raoul C.	72	Recto, Philip H.
23	Cureg, Alexander P.	73	Reynolds, David J.
24	Cutter, John Michael	74	Rodriguez Sr., Joaquin C.
25	Davis, Raymond N.	75	Rodriguez, Joaquin Anthony H.
26	Dayang,Jr Juan E.	76	Roxas, Michael D.
27	Del Rosario Sr., Oscar A.	77	Schneider, Bernd
28	Enriquez III, Eduardo V.	78	Serapio, Carlos G.
29	Esquerria, Herminio S.	79	Sevilla, Luis Angelo L.
30	Esquivias, Joaquin Pablo A.	80	Shimoda, Shigeru
31	Eugenio, John Emyl G.	81	Sibayan, Joselito H.
32	Fernandez, Antonio Jaime Jose V.	82	Simon, Juanito A.
33	Garcia, Herbert Joey	83	So, Warren S.
34	Garcia, Paul Joseph M.	84	Syljuco, Jr., Jose A.
35	Garcia, Theodore Q.	85	Tagaysay, Hector O.
36	Garcia,Victor G.	86	Talusan, Ferdinand E.
37	Go, Henry S.	87	Tan, Eusebio V.
38	Gonzales, Jonas R.	88	Tan, Lawrence Li
39	Guevara, Jr., Domingo S.	89	Tee, Teddy Jr. B.
40	Guevara, Ricardo S.	90	Tillmann, Hansel Joseph Michael L.
41	Hallare, Jr., Delfin T.	91	Valdez, Amado D.
42	Hallare, Nicolo S.	92	Valencia, John Nico P.
43	Hernandez, Edwin H.	93	Valencia, Rodolfo G.
44	Ibuyan, Benedict Julius F.	94	Vazquez, Evaristo Jr.
45	Kalaw, Teodoro Alejandro Y IV	95	Yu, Geoffrey C.
46	Koh, Paul Anthony T	96	Yu, Reginald Tieng
47	La'O Emilio, Gonzales	97	Zaldarriaga, Felix Francisco S.
48	Ledda, Jaime Victor B.	98	Zeltouni, Nagi
49	Locsin, Arsenio Z.	99	Zsoltia, Xavier Y.
50	Lonzaga, Reinerio C.		

CLUB ADMINISTRATION

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

As of September 10, 2025

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	ANDAL, AVELINO L.
9	ARAGON, JOSHUA RUEBEN G.
10	ARGUELLES, PABLO C.
11	BAGATSING, VALENTINO
12	BALANAY, ARIES B.
13	BARTOLOME, ARSENIO III M.
14	BAUTISTA, JOHN JR.
15	BEDIONES, RODOLFO P.
16	BELLA, GERONIMO JR. D.
17	BENEDICTO, SIXTO T.
18	BERTELSEN, BERTEL INGMAR
19	BLANCO, MANUEL M.
20	BOGOVICH, JASON M.
21	BRANELEC, JACQUES
22	BUENDIA, CARLOS
23	CABANGON, EDGARD
24	CAMAT, NATHANIEL
25	CAMPOS, JOSELITO JR. D.
26	CANON, RAUL JR. C.
27	CARLOS, VICENTE J.
28	CARRANCEJA, ARVIN ARIK B.
29	CASTRO, KARLO EUGENE JOSEF M.
30	CATALAN, RODILLO
31	CHAHWAN, RAMI
32	CHAN, ROBERT JR.
33	CID, DEAN
34	CO, VAL CONSTANTINE L.
35	CREENCIA, RAUL C.
36	CUREG, ALEXANDER P.
37	CUTTER, JOHN MICHAEL
38	DAYANG, JUAN E.
39	DAVIS, RAYMOND N.
40	DEL ROSARIO, OSCAR
41	DY, MANUEL C.
42	ELDEBS, ISSAM
43	ENRIQUEZ, EDUARDO III
44	ESGUERRA, HERMINIO S.
45	ESQUIVIAS, JOAQUIN PABLO A.
46	EUGENIO, JOHN EMYL G.
47	FERNANDEZ, ANTONIO JAIME JOSE V.
48	FOLLOSCO, CEFERINO JR. G.

49	GARCIA, HERBERT JOEY
50	GARCIA, PAUL JOSEPH M.
51	GARCIA, THEODORE Q.
52	GARCIA, VICTOR III G.
53	GO, DANNY C.
54	GO, HENRY S.
55	GONZALES, JONAS R.
56	GONZALES-LO, EMIL
57	GUARIN, MICHAEL ARCATOMY
58	GUEVARA, DOMINGO JR.
59	GUEVARA, RICARDO S.B.
60	HALLARE, DELFIN JR.
61	HALLARE, NICOLÒ
62	HERNANDEZ, EDWIN H.
63	HESSE, UWE
64	IBUYAN, BENEDICT JULIUS F.
65	KALAW, TEODORO ALEJANDRO IV Y.
66	KATIGBAK J ALFONSO L
67	KLEBS, DAVID
68	KOH, PAUL ANTHONY
69	LAUREL, RICARDO P.
70	LAZARO, JUAN MIGUEL
71	LEDDA, JAIME VICTOR B.
72	LEE, RICHARD L.
73	LIM, DAVID EDUARDO T.
74	LOCSIN, ARSENIO Z.
75	LONZAGA, REINERIO C.
76	LOPEZ, ANTONIO
77	LOPEZ, ARTHUR M.
78	LORENZANA, DELFIN
79	MACAPAGAL, MICHAEL T.
80	MACATOMAN, ABDULGANI M.
81	MAGSAYSAY, FRANCISCO D.
82	MANALAYSAY, CESAR P.
83	MANGALILE, SENEN
84	MARTINEZ, RONALD
85	MATSHUCK, GUENTER GERHARD G.
86	MAURICIO, ANTONILO DC
87	MAURICIO, FRANCISCO C.
88	MENDOZA, MIGUEL
89	MENDOZA, RAYMUND JOSEPH D.
90	MOMMAERTS, STEVE
91	NOLIDO, RAMON ALBERTO B.
92	NOMURA, KAZUHIRO
93	NONES, ROMEO C.
94	NUÑEZ, JOSE A.
95	OBRADO, DANIEL
96	OCAMPO, TEODORO J.
97	ONG, PHILIP
98	ONG, ROWEL JANSON S.
99	PAGDANGANAN, ROBERTO M.

99	PAGDANGANAN, ROBERTO M.
100	PALACIOS, ALBERT S.
101	PALLASIGUE, JOHN BRIAN C.
102	PASCUAL, ABRAHAM
103	PAYUMO, FELICITO C.
104	PELIÑO, WILFREDO
105	PINEDA, JESUS JR. M.
106	PINEDA, PATRICIO JR. F.
107	PIZARRAS, JORDAN M.
108	PREYSLER, FAUSTO JR. D.R.
109	RA, INGILL
110	RAMOS, CLAVER P.
111	RANKL, PETER
112	RECTO, PHILIP H.
113	REYNOLDS, DAVID
114	RODRIGUEZ, JOAQUIN ANTHONY JR. H.
115	RODRIGUEZ, JOAQUIN SR. C.
116	ROMUALDEZ, FERDINAND
117	ROXAS, MICHAEL D.
118	SCHNEIDER, BERND
119	SERAPIO, CARLOS G.
120	SEVILLA, LUIS ANGELO L.
121	SHIMODA, SHIGERU
122	SIBAYAN, JOSELITO H.
123	SIMON, JUANITO AYSON
124	SO, WARREN
125	STRANATHAN, IKE EDWARD
126	SYJUCO, JOSE, JR. A.
127	TAGAYSAY, HECTOR O.
128	TALUSAN, FERDINAND E.
129	TAMANO, SHALIMAR H.
130	TAN, EUSEBIO V.
131	TAN, LAWRENCE L.
132	TEE, TEDDY JR. B.
133	TEJUMAL, MICHAEL
134	TILLMAN, HANSEL JOSEPH MICHAEL L.
135	VALDEZ, AMADO
136	VALDEZ, JASON ROLAND N.
137	VALENCIA, JOHN NICO P.
138	VALENCIA, RODOLFO G.
139	VAZQUEZ, EVARISTO JR.
140	VILLARICA, HENRY R.
141	YORDANOV, STEFAN
142	YU, GEOFFREY C.
143	YU, REGINALD T.
144	ZALDARRIAGA, FELIX FRANCISCO S.
145	ZEITOUNI, NAGI
146	ZIALCITA, XAVIER Y.
147	ZIMMER, CHRISTOPHER

CLUB ADMINISTRATION

Membership Committee Meeting



THE Membership Committee met on September 4, 2025 at the Sports Cafe of the Manila Polo Club in Makati City to get to know the proposed new members.

Present from the Membership Committee were Chairman/Past Vice President Fausto Preysler, Co-Chairman/Immediate Past President Jujut Enriquez, Director in Charge of Membership Concerns/Vice President Ricky Guevara, Past Treasurer Lito Sibayan, Past District Governor Vince Carlos, Past Director/Director Elect Teddy Kalaw, and Secretary Anton Mauricio.

Membership Committee Meeting

Mr. Eric Ke, President of Sonera Industrial Group, Inc., also attended the event, accompanied by his proposer, President-Elect Reggie Yu, who offered his support.



Mr. Eric Eugenio, Assistant Vice President for Sales of CE-Logic Inc., with his proposer, Past President Teddy Ocampo

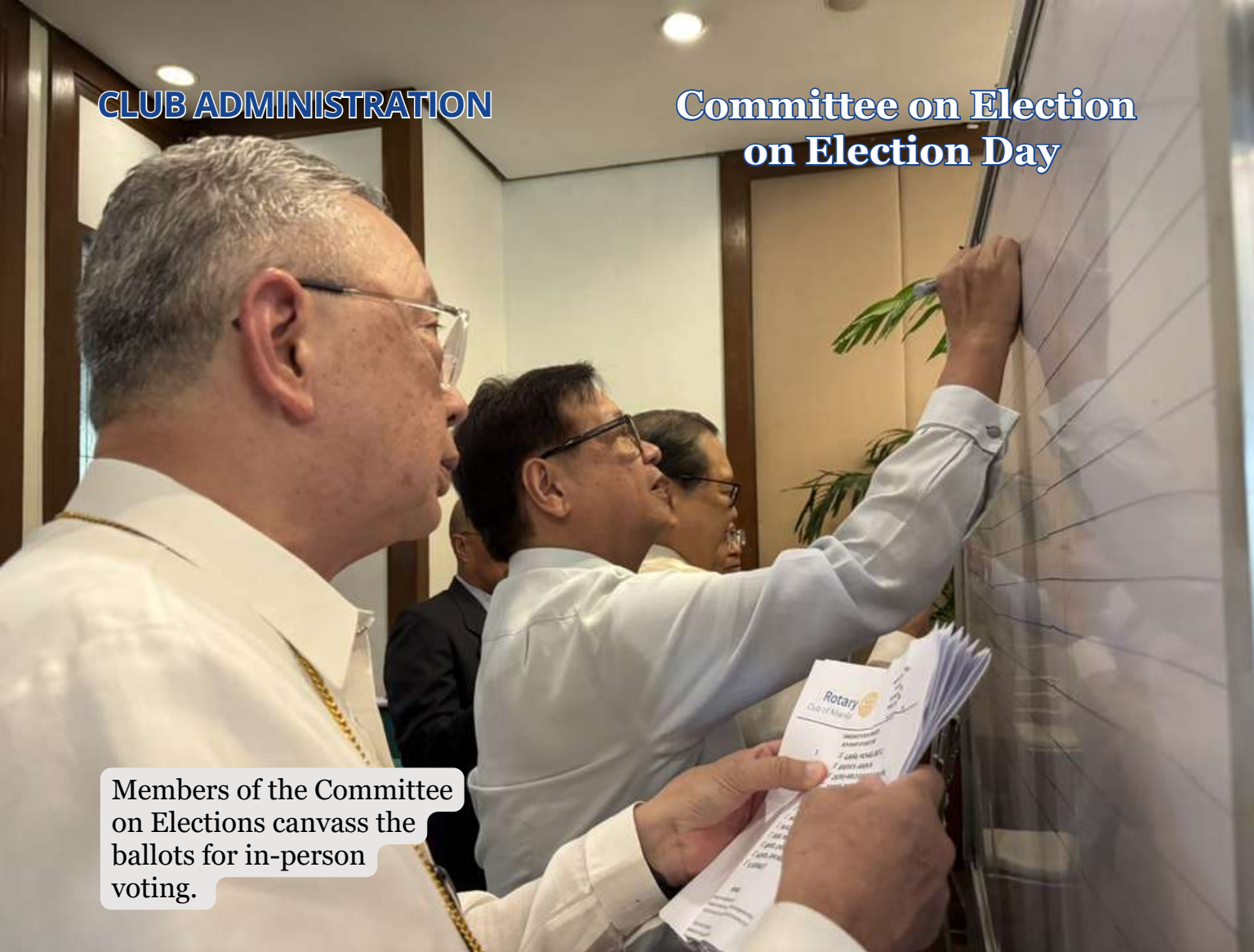


Mr. Robert Paguia, Division Chief and Data Protection Officer of Cybercrime Investigation and Coordinating Center, proposed by President Raoul Creencia.



Mr. Oliver Pantaleon, Senior Partner and Head, Litigation and Dispute Resolution Department (ACCRA LAW Offices) proposed by President Raoul Creencia.





Members of the Committee on Elections canvass the ballots for in-person voting.

Vice Chairmen: Immediate Past President Jujut Enriquez and Past President Chito Zaldarriaga

Members: Past Director Pepp Nuñez, Past Director Ner Lonzaga, Past Director Abe Pascual, Rotarian Cris Acosta, Past Director Oscar del Rosario, Past Treasurer Chito Tagaysay, and Rotarian Romy Nones



CLUB ADMINISTRATION

Committee on Election on Election Day



Committee on Election - E-Balloting
Administrators Rotarian Nico Hallare
and Rotarian Ben Ibuyan with
Immediate Past President Jujut
Enriquez, Vice Chairman of the
Committee on Election



CLUB ADMINISTRATION

Election Results:
Board of Directors for
Rotary Year 2026-2027



September 5, 2025

To: President Raoul Creencia
Rotary Club of Manila

From: PP Archit Bartolome
Chairman
Committee on Election

Subject: Report of the Committee on Election

On behalf of the Committee on Election, I am pleased to submit our report on the election of Directors for the Rotary Year 2026-2027, which we had yesterday at the Manila Polo Club.

According to our latest report to Rotary International, we have 215 members. Our election guidelines for determining a quorum state that 30% of the total membership of 215, or 71, is required.

We are pleased to report that we had 100 members who participated in our election proceedings, as follows:

- 44 members cast their votes through e-ballot, all of which were successfully processed by the Election Runner program.
- 56 members cast their votes through an in-person ballot.

The members of the Committee on Election were:

- Vice Chairman / IPP Jujut Enriquez
- Vice Chairman / PP Chito Zalzarriaga
- Members: PD Oscar del Rosario, PD Ner Lonzaga, PD Pepo Nuñez, PD Abe Pascual, PT Chito Tagaysay, Rtn. Cris Acosta, Rtn. Romy Nones

The e-balling was led by Rtn. Nico Hallare, assisted by Rtn. Ben Ibuyan.

Election Results:

1.	Reginald Yu –	86
2.	Karlo Castro –	82
3.	Michael Albaña –	71
4.	Michael Roxas –	57
5.	Nico Valencia –	55
6.	Caloy Serapio –	55

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Website: www.rcmanila.org



7.	Teddy Kalaw –	54
8.	Del Lorenzana –	52
9.	Edwin Hernandez –	48
10.	Rami Chahwan –	47
11.	Jason Bogovich –	38
12.	Gani Macatoman –	25
13.	Hans Palacios –	22

It has always been a pleasure to be of service to our dear Rotary Club of Manila.

Archit

PP Archit Bartolome
Chairman, Committee on Election

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PEOPLE

THE WATCHMAN'S PEN

Antonio Somera Lopez and the Unyielding Chronicle of a Nation

By PVP Reginald T. Yu

THERE are lives that move in straight lines, marked by predictable milestones. And there are lives that bend with the weight of history, entwining one man's story with that of a nation. The life of Antonio "Tony" Somera Lopez is of the latter kind.



THE WATCHMAN'S PEN: Antonio Somera Lopez and the Unyielding Chronicle of a Nation

For more than six decades, Lopez has lived with ink-stained hands and the restless spirit of a journalist — pounding the beat as a teenage reporter, turning *The Varsitarian* into a weekly at the University of Santo Tomas, sparring with presidents at Malacañang, chronicling revolutions, recessions, and scandals, and ultimately founding *BizNewsAsia*, the country's most formidable business weekly. He has not merely witnessed history; he has wrestled with it, interrogated it, and at times provoked it into revealing its contradictions.

He is the reporter who dared to challenge Ferdinand Marcos Sr. at scripted press briefings, the correspondent who pressed Enrile into admitting electoral fraud during EDSA, the interviewer who recorded Marcos in exile whispering about Yamashita's treasure as the source of unexplained wealth. He is also the newsman who once received poems from Ninoy Aquino, typed in bursts of brilliance just days before his assassination.

Tony Lopez's journey is not of a man chasing power, but shadowing it — illuminating truths, exposing deceptions, recording legacies. His creed has been disarmingly simple, repeated like a litany: truth, freedom, justice, excellence. These were not abstract ideals but working tools, shaping every story he filed, every headline he challenged, every issue of *BizNewsAsia* he published.

To speak of Lopez is to speak of Philippine journalism itself: its golden years of vibrant dailies, its long nights under Martial Law, its resurgence during People Power, its precarious survival in the digital deluge. His story is the story of press freedom's fragile endurance — silenced, manipulated, and threatened, yet stubbornly alive in the hands of those unwilling to surrender the pen.



Tony Lopez interviews President Ferdinand Marcos in Malacañang in 1982, with no notes, no notebooks, no tape recorders

Beyond the newsroom, his life intersects with service. As a member of the Rotary Club of Manila, he embodies the creed of Service Above Self, proving that truth-telling is itself a form of service to community and country. Recognition has

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followed — TOYM laurels, international respect, Rotary's centennial *Journalist of the Year* — but none rivals the significance of longevity: the fact that six decades after his first byline, Lopez still writes, still questions, still believes.

His is the story of a boy from Quezon City who topped scholarship exams because poverty demanded it, who eloped young and sustained his family by the inch of newsprint, who entered journalism not as a stepping stone but as destiny. It is also the story of a man who became the watchman of his nation's conscience, standing guard over its truths while others looked away.

To read his life is to traverse Malacañang's corridors and EDSA's camps, Manila's newsrooms and Makati's boardrooms, through revolutions and recessions, coups and collapses. It is to witness not only the rise and fall of presidents but the endurance of a single vocation: the calling to write, to question, to tell.

His life reminds us that journalism, though battered, remains the noblest profession — a covenant between the governed and the governing, a bridge between memory and future, the fragile safeguard of democracy itself. His career is a testament to that covenant: a relentless watch, a lifelong vigil, a pen that has never ceased to ask.

A Boy with a Pen, a Nation with a Story

The story of Antonio Lopez begins not in the grand halls of power where he would one day spar with presidents, nor in the newsroom desks of Manila's storied dailies where ink and ambition collided every deadline. It begins, instead, with a boy in Quezon City who, in 1964, found himself holding a reporter's notebook for *The Quezonian*, the school paper.

The teenage Lopez was hardly destined for the newsroom. His first ambition was law, an honorable profession of argument and reason. Yet fate, and the modest



Tony Lopez receives his TOYM trophy for International Journalism from Mrs. Judy Araneta-Roxas in 1986

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means of his father, would dictate otherwise. College was a luxury the family could not afford. His father's counsel was blunt: "*Bahala ka na sa sarili mo after high school.*" It was a nudge into the wilderness, but Tony had something more powerful than wealth — he had words, and he had will.

A scholarship became his passage. In 1966, he topped the city-wide examination for the Arsenio H. Lacson Scholarship — named after the great journalist-mayor of Manila — which promised free tuition at the University of Santo Tomas. The College of Arts and Letters was famed for its journalism program, staffed not by theoreticians but by working newsmen who brought the grit of the pressroom to the classroom. It was here that Lopez would begin the life he has since lived without pause: six decades of journalism.

At *The Varsitarian*, UST's student paper, Lopez displayed not just talent but audacity. As news editor in his third year, he transformed the monthly into a weekly. By his fourth year, now managing editor, he ran both a weekly and a monthly simultaneously, often single-handedly as his editor-in-chief pursued academic honors. It was a crucible of work — weekends surrendered at the UST Press, long nights covering UAAP basketball, and grades that had to remain above 85 to keep his scholarship. Yet the

young man thrived. In 1970, he graduated magna cum laude, major in journalism, minor in economics and marketing.

This was no ordinary graduate. Lopez left UST not just with a diploma but with the stamina of a newsmen already seasoned by pressure, deadlines, and the restless need to turn observation into story.

Baptism by Fire: *The Chronicle*, the *Times*, and Martial Law

Lopez's first steps into professional journalism were as relentless as his student days. Before graduation, he was already eloping, already working, already sustaining himself with the pen. Jullie Yap-Daza, the proverbial author of *Etiquette for Mistresses* and one of his professors, nudged him into the profession with introductions to Greg Cendaña of the National Media Production Center and Rod Reyes of *The Manila Chronicle*. Both hired him on the same day.

He wrote for the government's *Voice of the Philippines* from dawn until mid-afternoon, and for *The Chronicle* from two o'clock onward. His beat covered Quezon City's sprawling government offices — the Department of Agriculture, Agrarian Reform, Tobacco Administration,

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Coconut Institute. He was expected to pound the beat literally: walk the streets, enter the offices, talk to clerks, messengers, section chiefs. Each day he delivered four stories, industrious not out of obsession but necessity. Payment was by column-inch: seventy-five centavos for an inside-page story, more for the front page.

He quickly discovered a secret to earnings: the business pages were wide and underfed. Older reporters were content with one story a day. Lopez filed three for business, one for the front page, and earned ten times the regular salary. Hustle, not hierarchy, made him indispensable.

By 1971, he joined *The Manila Times* as senior business reporter under Alfie Locsin, the hard-driving business editor who became one of his earliest mentors. Locsin taught him how to make complex business stories comprehensible, how to turn numbers into narrative. At just 24, Lopez became acting business editor when Locsin underwent a kidney transplant. By 27, at the *Times Journal*, he was the youngest business editor in the nation, already shaping the paper's coverage of finance, construction, and real estate.

But history has a way of intruding. Martial Law was declared in 1972 while Lopez was in Europe covering Philippine

Airlines' new routes. On his return, he discovered that press freedom had been extinguished. A haughty army sergeant stopped him from entering The Manila Times office, confiscated his press ID, and declared: "*Wala nang press-press ngayon. Martial Law na!*"

It was a symbolic act that defined an era: the silencing of the free press. Yet Lopez adapted. For a month, he had no job until a connection with the Japanese newspaper Mainichi Shimbun opened the door to foreign correspondence. His coverage of Japanese stragglers in Mindoro, including Shiro Onoda, brought him scoops, recognition, and his first taste of being a foreign correspondent —



Exiled First Lady Imelda Marcos takes a quick Polaroid shot of Ferdinand Marcos and Tony Lopez during the latter's visit to Hawaii in 1987.

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Manila, 29 May 1987



*To Tony Lopez of Asiaweek -
Thanks and Best Wishes
Ferdinand Marcos*

A signed memento from former President Ferdinand Marcos taken by no less than former First Lady Imelda Marcos in May 1987

paid in dollars, treated with limousine rides in Tokyo, and respected for the scoops he delivered.

That episode would foreshadow his later career: international recognition, scoops under dangerous circumstances, and a nose for the story others overlooked.

Asiaweek: Into the Big Time

If Martial Law clipped the wings of the local press, it propelled Lopez into the global stage. In 1978, Asiaweek, a Hong Kong-based news magazine, tapped him for contributions. By 1982, he was a full-fledged staffer, and when Time Warner acquired Asiaweek in 1985, Lopez had arrived in the big time.

As a senior correspondent, Lopez enjoyed unprecedented access to presidents. He asked questions others dared not, refusing the staged scripts of Malacañang press conferences. When Ferdinand Marcos Sr. insisted there was no rice crisis, Lopez countered: As a matter of fact, Sir, I have just come from the provinces which is why I am asking this question. Marcos, instead of taking offense, seemed amused by Lopez's defiance.

His interviews with Marcos — both in power and later in exile — remain legendary. In one nine-hour session in Hawaii, Lopez asked bluntly if the president had stolen money. Marcos responded with a sly shrug: "Oh, just how much can you steal from the government?" Pressed further, he whispered conspiratorially, "*I discovered the treasure of Yamashita.*" When Lopez checked with Imelda, she reacted with fury, storming into her husband's room. The journalist had not just uncovered a story; he had unwittingly sparked a marital spat.

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Tony Lopez covered the assassination of Senator Benigno Aquino at his residence in Times Street, Quezon City on August 21, 1983.

Equally memorable were his encounters with Ninoy Aquino, whose words flowed like machine-gun fire, whose warmth extended to dedicating poems and pocketbooks to Lopez even as death loomed. The juxtaposition of these two figures — Marcos and Aquino — captured the contradictions of Philippine politics, where brilliance coexisted with brutality, charm with duplicity, conviction with peril.

It was during his years at *Asiaweek* that Lopez received one of the nation's highest honors: **The Outstanding Young Men of the Philippines (TOYM)** award in 1985 for international journalism.

Bestowed by Junior Chamber International (JCI) Philippines, the annual award recognizes Filipinos under 40 whose work has made a lasting impact on their field and community. Lopez was the youngest in a distinguished class that included future senators Miriam Defensor-Santiago and Gringo Honasan, and future House Speaker Prospero Nograles. His conferment was more than recognition of talent — it was affirmation of courage. He had risked insolence before dictators, pursued truth in a climate of lies, and produced stories that reverberated far beyond the country's borders.

Presidents in the Mirror of Time

Few journalists can claim what Lopez can: to have covered every Philippine president from Ferdinand Marcos Sr. to Ferdinand



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Marcos Jr. This vantage point has given him a longitudinal view of governance, leadership, and the recurring ailments of the republic.

From Marcos Sr.'s brilliant duplicity to Cory Aquino's cautious piety, from Ramos's managerial pragmatism to Estrada's populist failings, from Arroyo's technocratic resilience to Duterte's iron populism, Lopez saw not just personalities but patterns. Crises repeated: recessions under Marcos, Aquino, Ramos, Estrada. The same specter of corruption, the same fragility of institutions, the same oscillation between hope and despair.

Lopez's reporting turned governance into narrative. He understood that presidents were not just executives but mirrors of the nation — its strengths, its insecurities, its ambitions, and its betrayals. His task was not to worship or to vilify but to observe, to question, and to record. Journalism, in his view, was not just craft but responsibility, the singular profession enshrined in both the Philippine and U.S. Constitutions with guaranteed freedom.

A Leap of Faith: Founding *BizNewsAsia*

When *Asiaweek* folded in 2001, it was as if a continent had lost one of its voices. For Lopez, who had given a quarter of a century to the magazine, it was not merely the loss of an employer but of a professional home. Yet in endings, he saw beginnings. Rather than retreat into



A young Tony Lopez poses with President Diosdado Macapagal when he was a junior high school paper editor

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nostalgia or accept the comfort of another corporate masthead, Lopez reached for the most radical decision of his career: to invest his own savings in creating a new magazine.

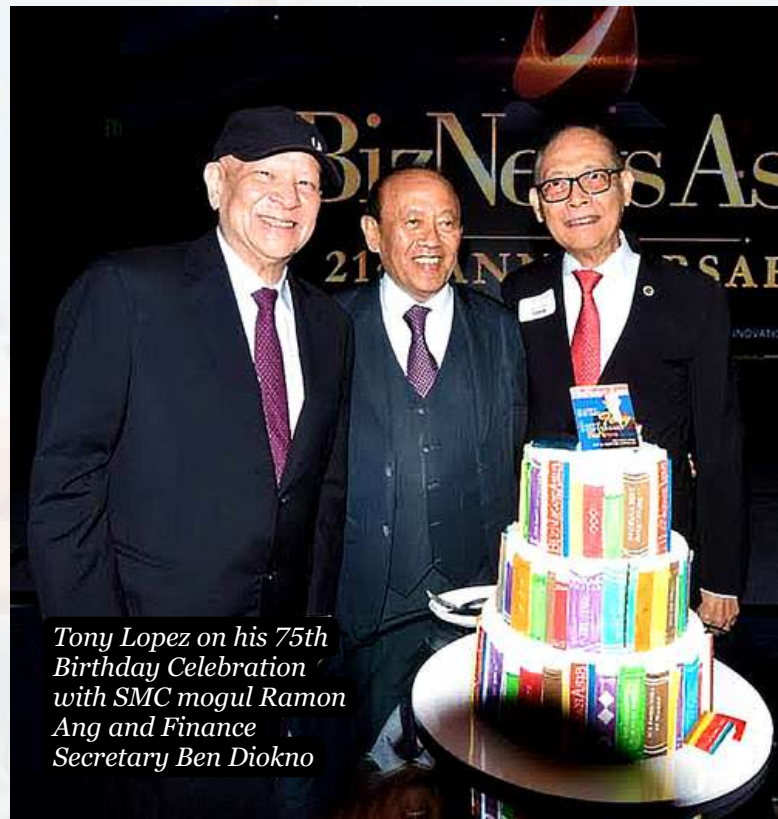
It was Valentine's week of 2001 when he launched *BizNewsAsia*, a weekly newsmagazine devoted not just to reporting but to explaining. Its mission was incisive and in-depth coverage of business, the economy, and the individuals who shaped them. Lopez understood that in a country where politics was loud and omnipresent, the quieter but deeper story often lay in boardrooms, factories, and trading floors.

Starting a magazine in the new millennium, when print was already being questioned by digital upstarts, was audacious. It demanded not only editorial skill but entrepreneurial grit: funding, distribution, advertising. Lopez wore two hats, journalist and publisher, and often the two collided. To accept an advertisement without compromising editorial independence; to sustain a payroll without becoming beholden to financiers — these were daily negotiations of conscience.

Yet the magazine endured and grew. Today, *BizNewsAsia* is recognized as the largest weekly business and news

magazine in the Philippines, a platform where Lopez's long-form instincts thrive. Its covers, often devoted to entrepreneurs, tycoons, and game-changing enterprises, form a gallery of modern Philippine capitalism. Its editorials bear his unmistakable voice: sharp, explanatory, unwilling to flatter, always demanding clarity.

The secret of its success? Lopez attributes it to depth, to the refusal of shortcuts. Where others chase the quick headline, he insists on context. Where others repeat official handouts, he interrogates. In an era of noise, *BizNewsAsia* carved a reputation for coherence.



Tony Lopez on his 75th Birthday Celebration with SMC mogul Ramon Ang and Finance Secretary Ben Diokno

Between the Pen and the Purse: The Publisher's Dilemma

Running a magazine meant Lopez could no longer pretend to be only a writer. He was now also a businessman, negotiating printing costs, managing subscriptions, balancing books. Yet he insisted that editorial independence was never negotiable.

The challenge, of course, was survival. The Philippine media has long been vulnerable to pressures from both politics and business. Advertising contracts are dangled as carrots or withdrawn as sticks. Yet Lopez, fortified by decades under the strict ethical standards of international journalism, held the line.

"I did not do PR. I did not join the government, though there were Cabinet offers. I have not engaged in any other business," he reflects. Journalism was not his sideline — it was his singular devotion. The magazine would live or die by its credibility, not by its compromises.

It is a rare position, one that explains both the esteem he enjoys among peers and the independence *BizNewsAsia* retains. He learned from Time Inc. that the ultimate currency of journalism is trust. Lose that, and no balance sheet can save you.

Rotary and the Ethos of Service

If journalism gave Lopez a profession, Rotary gave him a fraternity of service. He entered the Rotary Club of Manila in 1990, endorsed by Past District Governor Frankie Roman, and took pride in belonging to Asia's first Rotary club and the largest in the Philippines. For him, Rotary's creed of Service Above Self dovetailed seamlessly with journalism's calling: both vocations anchored on truth, fairness, and the betterment of society.



Tony Lopez is awarded the Rotary Club of Manila's Centennial Journalist of the Year in 2019

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In 2019, as the club marked its centennial, Lopez received the coveted Journalist of the Year award. It was both professional triumph and personal vindication. Decades earlier, his mentor Alfie Locsin had won the same honor for exposing the peso devaluation under Marcos. For Lopez, to stand in that same tradition, fifty years into his own career, was less an accolade than a homecoming.

Rotary also widened his civic horizon. In 2023, he was elected to the club's Board of Directors under President Rafael "Raffy" M. Alunan III, his first leadership post in thirty-three years of membership. In the club's projects — wheelchairs for the disabled, scholarships for the young, peace initiatives for fractured communities — Lopez recognized journalism's twin impulse: to illuminate, to uplift, to improve lives. He believes that Rotarians who are also journalists carry a singular burden and gift: to turn truth-telling into civic action, and to transform stories into service.

Journalism as the Noblest Profession

Lopez has often declared, with conviction and repetition, that journalism is the noblest of all professions. His reasoning is constitutional: *"in both the Philippine and U.S. charters, only one profession is explicitly guaranteed — the free press."*

Not law, not medicine, not accounting, not even soldiering, but journalism."

This guarantee, he argues, springs from necessity. Without truth, there can be no freedom. Without freedom, no justice. Without truth, freedom, and justice, there can be no excellence — neither in governance nor in society. Journalism, then, is not simply about reporting events. It is about safeguarding the very conditions of democracy.



Tony Lopez brought his family to the house of Ambassador Carlos P. Romulo's house in Dasmarinas Village, Makati a few days before his passing

Lopez distills his guiding principles into four words: **truth, freedom, justice, excellence.** They are both his professional compass and his personal creed. They explain why he never strayed

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into government service despite offers, why he refused to reduce himself to public relations, why he endured the precarious life of independent publishing.

For him, journalism is not a stepping stone. It is the stone itself — the foundation on which society rests.



The Digital Deluge and the Written Word

When asked about digital media and the supposed death of print, Lopez responds with a parable: even Moses had to carve the Ten Commandments on stone. Words must be written for them to endure. Oral traditions fade; written traditions bind generations.

Thus, while he acknowledges the rise of digital platforms and citizen journalism, he refuses to declare newspapers dead. *“As long as people have a passion for reading, newspapers will be here forever,”* he insists. For Lopez, the written word is civilization’s anchor. Without it, history dissolves, memory weakens, accountability vanishes.

Yet he is not blind to change. He himself expanded into multimedia — maintaining a digital presence through *biznewsasia.com*, and hosting *BizNewsTV*, a business-oriented program. Adaptation, yes. But surrender, never. Journalism must evolve without losing its soul.

Covering Power: Lessons from Presidents

One of Lopez’s unmatched distinctions is his coverage of every president from Marcos Sr. to Marcos Jr. Across these

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administrations, he has seen brilliance and blunder, courage and cowardice.

He recalls Marcos Sr. as wiry yet brilliant, a man who could lie with such natural ease that one forgot to question. He remembers Cory Aquino as punctual, devout, but often evasive in interviews. He pressed Fidel Ramos on the mechanics of governance during the Asian financial crisis. He chronicled Estrada's unraveling amid jueteng scandals. He endured Gloria Arroyo's technocratic yet embattled presidency. He navigated Duterte's populist storm. And now, he observes Ferdinand Marcos Jr., whose leadership inevitably echoes — and contrasts — the shadow of his father.



Ferdinand Marcos Sr and Tony Lopez during the former's exile in Hawaii



Tony Lopez in a tete-a-tete with President Bongbong Marcos

What has he learned from half a century of covering the powerful? That governance is cyclical, that crises return, that corruption persists. Yet also that hope remains, embodied not in individuals but in institutions — if only they are strengthened. His counsel to future leaders is simple: learn from history, practice humility, and remember that leadership is not entitlement but stewardship.

The Proudest Achievements

Across six decades, Lopez has written thousands of stories. Which does he consider his proudest? He speaks of many: the nine-hour interview with Marcos in Hawaii, the first post-

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assassination conversation with the dictator, the machine-gun conversations with Ninoy, the exposure of stragglers like Shiro Onoda, and the launch of *BizNewsAsia*.

But perhaps his truest pride is longevity. Few journalists have endured so long without detour into government or corporate PR. Few have built institutions — like *BizNewsAsia* — that survive two decades. Few have been recognized both locally, by Rotary, and nationally, through the TOYM by the Jaycees. His legacy is not a single scoop but a lifetime of them, stitched into a fabric of credibility.

EDSA: A Revolution Won by a Lie

History is often painted in broad, heroic strokes: a million people on EDSA, toppling a dictator through the sheer force of collective courage. But Lopez, ever the journalist, saw the fine print. He was there — not as a bystander swept by slogans, but as a reporter listening to whispers, piecing together the mechanics of history as it unfolded.

On February 22, 1986, Lopez was in Cebu, buying a guitar for his wife, when he heard rumors of a coup by Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and General Fidel Ramos. He rushed to Manila on the last flight and went straight to Camp

Aguinaldo. Unlike Martial Law in 1972, when soldiers confiscated his press ID, this time the gates opened. “As long as you’re foreign press, you’re welcome,” they told him.



Tony Lopez pays a courtesy call to then newly-elected President Corazon Aquino with his family in 1986

He pressed Enrile with a blunt question: “*Did you cheat in the elections?*” Enrile demurred but later admitted, yes — by 300,000 votes. The admission was startling. Here was a key architect of Martial Law conceding fraud, not under duress but in front of journalists. Lopez wrote it down, knowing that revolutions are fueled as much by revelations as by rifles.

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That first night at the camp, Gringo Honasan woke them repeatedly with alarms: "They're going to bomb us!" Lopez, exhausted, lay on a bench. "If they bomb us while I'm awake, I die. If they bomb us while I'm asleep, I also die. Better to sleep." It was gallows humor,

the kind that keeps a journalist sane when history turns deadly.

But the turning point of EDSA, Lopez insists, was not one million people. By Sunday night, the crowd had thinned, fatigue had set in, the sandwiches and



Tony Lopez interviewing then President Fidel Ramos on BizNewsTV

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Jollibee fried chicken had run out. The miracle, he recalls, was a rumor. A Radio Veritas reporter slipped a note to June Keithley: “The Marcoses have fled.” It was patently false — Marcos would not leave until Tuesday — but it was broadcast at dawn on February 24, and thousands streamed to EDSA in jubilation. “People Power was won by a lie,” Lopez says. The irony is stark: a dictatorship undone not by arms but by misinformation. A journalist’s truth is to record even that paradox, without varnish.

Between Coups and Crises

The years after EDSA were hardly tranquil. Lopez covered seven coup attempts, each threatening to undo the fragile democracy. He chronicled recessions like recurring fevers: Marcos in 1984, when interest rates soared to 44% and the country ran out of dollars; Cory Aquino, whose six years ended with zero growth thanks to coup jitters; Ramos, whose reforms were undermined by the Asian financial crisis; Estrada, undone by scandal and cronyism.

Each downturn, Lopez noted, revealed a rent-seeking elite. Interest rates of 44% were paradise for the idle rich — better to park money in banks than risk it in factories. Political turmoil bred economic paralysis. Again and again, he saw how the poor bore the brunt while the wealthy learned to profit even from crisis.

For Tony, this pattern became the spine of his business journalism. Numbers were not abstractions; they were stories of survival and suffering. GDP growth rates, exchange rates, recessions — these were not mere figures but human dramas, shaping the fates of jeepney drivers, small entrepreneurs, and families in crowded barangays. His business columns became, in effect, chronicles of national resilience and recurring betrayal.

Filipino Journalists on the Global Stage

Having worked for Time Warner’s Asiaweek, Japan’s Mainichi Shimbun, and even German broadcasters, Tony knows what sets Filipino journalists apart. It is, he believes, their tenacity and resourcefulness. “Filipino journalists will find the story,” he says. “We pound the beat, we know how to talk to people from the grassroots to the generals. We are warm, persistent, and unafraid.”

In Asia, he was once told he was the best reporter. That accolade, he admits, was both flattering and frightening. To be called the best meant the bar was always higher, the scrutiny sharper. But it also gave him confidence: that Filipinos, often underestimated, could excel in the most competitive arenas of journalism.

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He insists, however, that the true strength of Filipino journalism lies not in scoops but in survival. Despite dictatorship, censorship, corruption, and now the chaos of digital misinformation, Filipino journalists endure. They remain, stubbornly, the custodians of truth in a land where truth is often negotiable.

Personal Principles and the Long March

Tony Lopez is clear about his personal compass. Four words, repeated like a mantra: **truth, freedom, justice, excellence**. They are not slogans; they are survival tools.

He recalls offers of Cabinet positions, temptations to enter government. He declined. He recalls colleagues who abandoned journalism for public relations, where pay is steadier and clients more indulgent. He refused. For him, journalism is not a stepping stone to power or profit. It is the profession itself — the stone upon which all else stands.

“I have known no other profession or enterprise except journalism,” he says. It is not mere stubbornness. It is fidelity. He sees journalism as both career and creed, as labor and liturgy. For half a century, he has lived by deadlines, bylines, and the constant need to make sense of chaos. Few can say the same.



Tony poses with newly-elected Congresswoman Gloria Macapagal Arroyo in her Batasang Pambansa office in 2010

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Advice to the Next Generation

Asked what he would tell young journalists; Tony does not sugarcoat. The profession is harder now: newsrooms leaner, pay thinner, digital noise louder. But the core remains the same. *“Put yourselves in continuing service — for truth, justice, freedom, and excellence,”* he urges.

He warns against chasing clicks, against confusing popularity with credibility. He reminds them that journalism is the only profession constitutionally protected, precisely because its absence imperils democracy. To be a journalist is to carry a burden — and a gift — that outlives trends and technologies.



Tony Lopez with former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo in Balesin

He advises them to read voraciously, to research relentlessly, to condense complexity into clarity. And above all, to be unafraid. The most dangerous question is the one never asked.

The Personal Life Behind the Public Man

Behind the headlines, Lopez's life was also marked by love and sacrifice. He eloped before graduation, compelled by both romance and responsibility. Journalism was never just a career; it was sustenance for a young family. The pressure to produce stories daily was not only professional but personal. Each byline was also bread on the table.

Over the years, he has traveled widely, interviewed presidents, tycoons, revolutionaries. Yet he remains, at heart, a boy from Quezon City who once could not afford law school, who won scholarships by topping citywide exams, who discovered that words could be both livelihood and legacy.

The Written Word as Covenant

Lopez returns often to one metaphor: Moses carving commandments on stone. For him, writing is not just expression but covenant. Oral traditions may inspire; written traditions endure.

THE WATCHMAN'S PEN: Antonio Somera Lopez and the Unyielding Chronicle of a Nation

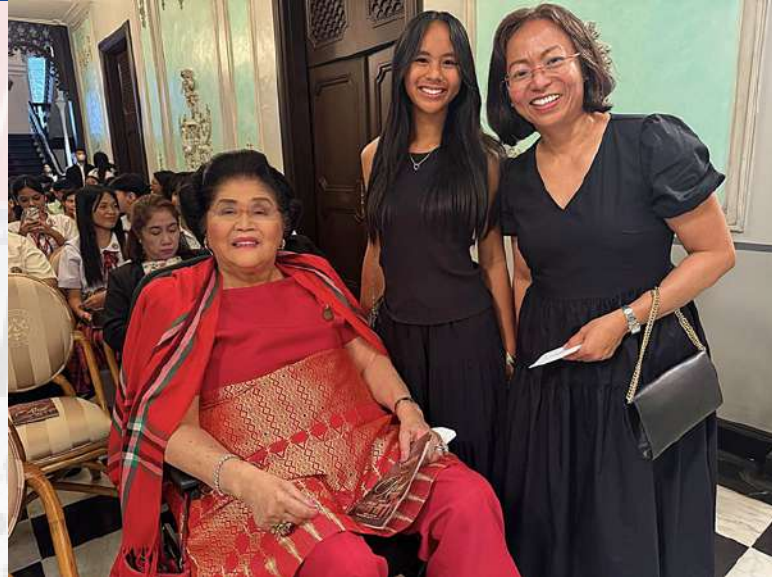
A society without written record is a society without memory. And a society without memory is doomed to repeat its failures.

Thus, he insists on writing — even as television dazzles, even as social media drowns truth in noise. He believes people still hunger for clarity, for narratives that connect past to present, present to future. His own career is testimony: sixty years of stories that form a bridge between generations.

Toward the Final Chapter

Today, Lopez writes a column for *The Philippine Star*, fulfilling an invitation extended decades earlier by its founder, the late Betty Go-Belmonte. He still publishes *BizNewsAsia*, still edits, still comments on television. Six decades on, he is not retired but retooled, his pen as restless as ever.

He knows the twilight of a career invites reflection. What will endure? Not the daily headlines — they fade. Not even the scoops — they are soon eclipsed. What endures is credibility, the long record of truth-telling, the trust of readers across generations. That, he hopes, will be his legacy: a man who stood his ground, who asked the hard questions, who refused to bend the pen to power.



Former First Lady Imelda Marcos with Tony's daughter Ivy and granddaughter Audrey at the Goldenberg Mansion in July 2025

Legacy and Final Reflections

When people look back at Antonio Lopez, what should they remember? He answers without hesitation: that he lived for truth, justice, freedom, and excellence. That he served journalism not as a job but as a vocation. That he never wavered in his belief that the press is the noblest of all professions.

From *The Quezonian* in 1964 to *The Varsitarian* in 1970, from the *Chronicle* and *Times* of the 1970s to *Asiaweek* in the 1980s, from the People Power revolution to the recessions of four presidents, from the founding of *BizNewsAsia* to his present columns in

THE WATCHMAN'S PEN: Antonio Somera Lopez and the Unyielding Chronicle of a Nation



Tony Lopez awards the First Lady Liza Araneta Marcos during the MOPC Tourism Awards Night

The Philippine Star — the arc is long, the story immense.

It is, ultimately, the story of a man who took up a pen when his father could not give him tuition, who chose journalism when law was denied, who dared to ask questions when others submitted scripts, who built a magazine when an empire collapsed, who still writes, six decades later, with the same insistence: the people deserve the truth.

Tony's life is, in many ways, the story of Philippine journalism itself: its struggles under Martial Law, its resurgence during People Power, its precarious survival in the age of digital noise. It is

also the story of the nation: its brilliant leaders and its flawed ones, its cycles of crisis and recovery, its stubborn refusal to surrender hope.

From a boy who topped a scholarship exam in 1966 to a journalist who questioned Marcos in exile, from a managing editor of *The Varsitarian* to a publisher of the nation's largest business weekly, Lopez has lived a life both ordinary and extraordinary. Ordinary in that it was carved by diligence, by pounding the beat, by filing four stories a day. Extraordinary in that it brought him face to face with presidents, revolutions, and the enduring drama of history.

THE WATCHMAN'S PEN: Antonio Somera Lopez and the Unyielding Chronicle of a Nation



Tony Lopez meets First Lady Liza Araneta Marcos during the MOPC Grand Tourism Night



First Lady Liza Araneta Marcos greets old pal Tony Lopez during the MOPC Awards Night in August 2025



Tony Lopez playfully takes a selfie with First Lady Liza Araneta Marcos and Tourism Secretary Christina Frasco at the MOPC Tourism Night

Epilogue: What Remains

When the last column is written, when the last cover of BizNewsAsia is printed, when the last TV commentary has aired, what will remain? For Lopez, it is not fame, though he has earned it. Not awards, though he has many. It is something simpler, stronger: the idea that journalism matters. That in a country often starved of truth, one must insist on telling it.

“Without truth, there can be no true freedom. Without freedom, there can be no true justice. Without truth, freedom, and justice, there can be no meaningful and profound excellence,” he says. It is both creed and epitaph.

And so, the life of Antonio Somera Lopez, born in Manila in 1948, journalist since 1970, remains unfinished — not because he has more to prove, but because journalism itself is never finished. As long as lies are told, stories must be written. As long as history unfolds, reporters must record. As long as nations strive for freedom, journalists must stand guard.

Tony Lopez, six decades on, still keeps that watch.

RC Manila and Rotaract Manila
Carry Out Community Oral Health
Outreach Program



Community Oral Health Outreach Program at Casa Bantu

.....
Pull Up & Glow Up — Oral Health Hits San Andres Bukid

ON September 5, 2025, Rotaract Manila, in partnership with Rotary Club of Manila member PD/DSAA John Cutter, brought the gift of brighter smiles to the children of Casa Bantu in San Andres Bukid.

RC Manila and Rotaract Manila Carry Out Community Oral Health Outreach Program

IPP Stephanie Bonifacio and Director Julienne Aguilar represented the club, distributing toothbrushes, toothpaste, and an oral health guide booklet designed to instill proper dental hygiene practices at an early age. The initiative emphasized that caring for one's smile is caring for one's overall well-being, reminding the young beneficiaries that good health empowers confidence and growth.



As part of our commitment to shaping future leaders, we believe that children are the heart and hope of the nation. This is why Rotaract Manila continues to dedicate efforts toward programs that uplift and empower the youth. We are building the biggest and finest Rotaract club in the country, and we want more passionate individuals to help us nurture tomorrow's changemakers. Join us today —because when we invest in the youth, we invest in a brighter future for all.



DISEASE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

RC Manila Distributes Oral Health Kits to Over 200 Beneficiaries in Marikina

ON September 10, 2025, President Raoul Creencia and Community Oral Health Chair John Cutter distributed oral health care kits to over 200 beneficiaries at the Boys Town Complex in Parang, Marikina.



VOCATIONALSERVICE

President Creencia and President-Elect Yu Meet with PRA to Discuss 2025 ORE Awards Plans



ON September 5, 2025, President Raoul Creencia and President-Elect Reggie Yu met with representatives from the Philippine Retailers Association (PRA) at the Burnt Bean, Podium Mall in Mandaluyong City to discuss plans for the upcoming Outstanding Retailers (ORE) Awards.

PRA was represented by Board member Lorenzo Formoso, Executive Director Bing Miranda, and Deputy Executive Director Mayan Singgil.

Sports Committee Meeting



THE Sports Committee convened on September 9, 2025, via Zoom. In attendance were Sports Committee Chair and Past Director Nagi Zeitouni, President Raoul Creencia, Vice President Ricky Guevara, Fellowship Committee Chair and Director-Elect Nico Valencia, Rotarian Ben Ibuyan, Secretary Anton Mauricio, and Rotarian Mike Tejuma.



RC Manila Supports the Launch of Rotary AI Academy

ROTARY Club of Manila Director for Innovation and Sustainability (DIS) Secretary Anton Mauricio attended the launch of the RC Makati AI Academy at their Clubhouse in Makati City.

The launch, led by RC Makati President Eddie Galvez and Project Chairman Roger Collantes, was also attended by the various clubs of District 3830 led by DG Reggie Nolido, brother of RCM's Engr. Ramby Nolido.

The guests of honor were DICT Sec. Henry Aguda, Philippine Red Cross

RC Manila Supports the Launch of Rotary AI Academy

Director General Gwendolyn Pang, and Malaysian Ambassador His Excellency Dato Abdul Malik Melvin Castelino.

The program offers AI and Data Science training to underprivileged Senior High School students and out-of-school youth.



RC Makati President Eduardo "Eddie" Galvez



RC Manila Director for Innovation and Sustainability (DIS) Secretary Anton Mauricio



RC Manila Supports the Launch of Rotary AI Academy



Philippine Red Cross Director General Gwendolyn Pang



DICT Secretary Henry Aguda



**RC Manila Supports the Launch
of Rotary AI Academy**



*RC Manila DIS and Secretary Anton Mauricio
with HE Ambassador Dato Abdul Malik Melvin
Castelino*



INTERCLUB EVENT

**Rotary Club of Manila
Pugad Lawin's
9th Induction Ceremony**



President Raoul Creencia attended the
9th Induction Ceremony of the Rotary
Club of Manila Pugad Lawin (RCMPL)
on September 9, 2025.



INTERCLUB EVENT

Rotary Club of Lipa South's 46th Founding Anniversary

PRESIDENT Raoul Creencia and Director Edwin Hernandez attended the 46th Founding Anniversary of the Rotary Club of Lipa South (sister club of RC Manila) on September 7, 2025 at The Blue Sapphire Hotel.



RC Lipa South President Joseph Lim (center) in a posterity pose with RC Manila President Raoul Creencia (right) and Director Edwin Hernandez (left)



INTERCLUB EVENT

Governor's Visit to the Rotary Club of University District Manila



DISTRICT Secretary General Hermie Esguerra attended the Governor's Visit to the Rotary Club of University District Manila, daughter club of the Rotary Club of Manila, last September 8, 2025 at the City State Tower Hotel in Manila.

Rotary Club of University District Manila's 54th Induction of Officers and Turnover Ceremonies



DISTRICT Secretary General Hermie Esguerra, Past President Jackie Rodriguez and Special Assistant to the District Governor-Manila SDG Albert S. Alday attended the 54th Induction of Officers and Turnover Ceremonies of the Rotary Club of University District Manila, daughter club of the Rotary Club of Manila, last September 8, 2025 at the City State Tower Hotel in Manila.



INTERCLUB EVENT

At the Rotary Club of University District Manila's 54th Induction of Officers and Turnover Ceremonies



RC Manila Receives Certificate of Appreciation as Co-host of District Interact Assembly



THE Rotary Club of Manila received a Certificate of Appreciation as co-host of the District Interact Assembly hosted by the Rotary Club of University District Manila, daughter club of the Rotary Club of Manila, which was held last September 6, 2025 at the Manuel G. Araullo High School in Ermita, Manila.

Special Assistant to the District Governor-Manila SDG Albert S. Alday received the said certificate on behalf of the club during the 54th Induction of Officers and Turnover Ceremonies of the Rotary Club of University District Manila last September 8, 2025 at the City State Tower Hotel in Manila.



INTERCLUB EVENT

Governor's Visit to the Rotary Club of Manila Pugad Lawin



DSG Hermie Esguerra Attends Rotary Club of Manila Pugad Lawin's 9th Induction Ceremony

DISTRICT Secretary General Hermie Esguerra attended the Governor's Visit to the Rotary Club of Manila Pugad Lawin last September 9, 2025 at the Shanghai Saloon, The Podium Mall, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.



DSG Hermie Esguerra attended the 9th Induction Ceremony of the Rotary Club of Manila Pugad Lawin last September 9, 2025 at the Shanghai Saloon, The Podium Mall, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

FELLOWSHIP

First Friday Mass



THE Rotary Club of Manila members celebrated the First Friday Virtual Mass on September 5, 2025. The presider for the mass was Father Larry Tan, SDB.



Present were: Past Treasurer Chito Tagaysay, (Commentator), Director Rami Chahwan (Pre-Mass Intercessory Prayer), Rotarian Chris Bello (First Reading and Responsorial Psalm), Rotarian JJ Fernandez (Prayers of the Faithful), President-Elect Reggie Yu (Spiritual Communion Prayer and Jubilee Prayer), Past Director/Internal Auditor Nick Locsin (Novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus), Past President Boy Guevara, Past District Governor Alex Cureg, Director-Elect Caloy Serapio, Past Director Ner Lonzaga, Director-Elect Nico Valencia, Past President Archit Bartolome, and Rotarian Emman Dela Cruz.



Aleco Adamson Breakfast Forum



On September 8, 2025, a meeting was held with travel agents at the Fairmont Hotel, Sampiro Room, to discuss Osaka Expo.

Present were Mr. Jorge Salazar (Past Secretary), PDG Jackie Rodriguez, Mr Raoul Villegas (Past Treasurer), PP Ebot Tan, PP Archit Bartolome, PD Ner Lonzaga, PD Jun Hallare, Mr Eric Severino (Past Director), Rotarian Cris Acosta, Assistant Secretary Paco Magsaysay, Rotarian Bernd Schneider, Secretary Anton Mauricio, and the travel agency team. The breakfast meeting was graciously hosted by Rotarian Bernd Schneider.





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Official Newsletter of
Rotary Club of Manila
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