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ESGUERRA FARMS & STUD INC.

The Official News Organ of
the Rotary Club of Manila

balita

ISSUE NO. 4062 • SEPTEMBER 4, 2025



Hon. Darlene Marie B.

BERBERABE

Solicitor General of the Philippines

Nominees for the
Board of Directors
for Rotary Year
2026-2027

Olayinka
Hakeem Babalola
Selected to be
2026-27 RI President

Manila Rotarians
Gather for
Fellowship at the
O2 Rooftop Bar

A HEART FOR
HEALING, A LIFE
OF SERVICE:

A Life of Service
and Compassion
in the Story of Dr.
Avenilo
Padernilla
Aventura Sr.

Rotary Club
of Manila at the
Merdaka Flag Raising



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

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ROTARY CLUB OF MANILA 6th Weekly Membership Meeting

Rotary Year 2025-2026

Thursday, September 4, 2025, 12:15 PM | Manila Polo Club

Joint meeting with the Rotary Club of Makati

Moderator: VP RICARDO “Ricky” S.B. GUEVARA

PART I

11:00 AM Registration

12:15 PM Call to Order
PRES. RAOUL C. CREENCIA (RC Manila)
PRES. EDUARDO “Eddie” H. GALVEZ (RC Makati)

Invocation
DS/PP LUIS ANGEL G. ASEOCHE

Philippine National Anthem | **AVP**

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

The Four (4) Way Test
DIR. ROGER COLLANTES (RC Makati)

Acknowledgement of Guests and Visiting Rotarians

Birthday Celebrants:

RC Manila:

Aug 17 PDSAA Val Aboy
Rtn. Joey Garcia
Aug 20 Rtn. Juan Montel
Aug 22 Rtn. Richard Ang
Aug 30 Rtn. Emilio Gonzales-LaO
Sept 1 Rtn. John Tan
Sept 2 Rtn. Chris Bello

RC Makati:

Sept 4 DS/PP Louie Aseoché
Mike Toledo

Rotary Anns
Sept 4 Caling Young
Sept 5 Bessie Cruz
Sept 6 Joyce Dizon

Wedding Anniversary
Sept 7 PP Jun Jun & Cecille Dayrit

Maligayang Bati/Happy Birthday Song
RCM WF Chorale

PART II

12:30 PM President’s Time
PRES. EDUARDO “Eddie” H. GALVEZ (RC Makati)
PRES. RAOUL C. CREENCIA (RC Manila)

12:40 PM - Video Presentation 1 (August Report)
- Video Presentation 2 (LEAP Program/Project)
- MOA/Supplemental Agreement Signing:

- **Office for Alternative Dispute Resolution (OADR)**
ATTY. MARGARET RAIZZA ANDAMAN
(Executive Director V, OADR)
- **Rotary Club of Manila**
PRES. RAOUL C. CREENCIA
(Rotary Club of Manila)
- **Philippine Institute of Arbitrators, Inc. (PIArb)**
ATTY. DRANYL JARED P. AMOROSO
(President, PIArb)

Presentation Recognition: **IPP JUJUT ENRIQUEZ**
Regional Public Image Awards 2025 Finalist

1:05 PM Introduction of the Guest of Honor & Speaker
SEC. ANTONILO “Anton” D.C. MAURICIO

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

1:30 PM Open Forum/Q&A

1:50 PM Presentation of Certificate of Appreciation
PRES. RAOUL C. CREENCIA (RC Manila)
PRES. EDUARDO “Eddie” H. GALVEZ (RC Makati)

1:55 PM Election Results
PP ARSENIO “Archit” M. BARTOLOME
(Election Committee Chairman)

2:00 PM Adjournment
PRES. RAOUL C. CREENCIA (RC Manila)
PRES. EDUARDO “Eddie” H. GALVEZ (RC Makati)

EDITORIAL

Reginald T. Yu
Editor-in-Chief



THE appointment of seasoned lawyer and academic Darlene Marie Berberabe as the country's new Solicitor-General comes at a most critical juncture for the Republic. The office she now helms is more than a legal arm of the government; it is the bastion of the nation's rule of law, the defender of the State's legal positions, and the guardian of public interest.

Berberabe brings with her an enviable record of legal expertise, intellectual rigor, and a reputation for integrity. For years, she has combined the depth of academic scholarship with the pragmatism of a lawyer seasoned in the trenches of

both the public and private sectors. This rare balance equips her to confront the daunting legal and political challenges that await her office — from constitutional disputes to cases that test the very resilience of our institutions.

Yet, the challenge before her is not merely one of jurisprudence. It is also one of perception and trust. In a society where public skepticism of institutions runs deep, the Solicitor-General must embody irreproachable integrity, impartiality, and a steadfast commitment to justice. The rule of law demands not just sharp legal arguments, but also the moral authority to persuade citizens that justice is being pursued in the service of the common good, and not of transient powers.

Berberabe's leadership will be tested in navigating politically charged cases, balancing the independence of her office with the mandate to defend government positions, and ensuring that the Office of the Solicitor-General is never reduced to a partisan tool. The Republic requires from her not just a capable litigator, but a principled steward of justice.

Her appointment should therefore inspire not complacency, but vigilance. Citizens, the Bar, and the Bench must hold her accountable to the highest standards of public service — and, in turn, support her in strengthening one of the Republic’s most vital institutions. If she succeeds, Berberabe will not only defend the State in courtrooms but also help restore faith in the justice system itself.

On another note, as the Rotary Club of Manila holds its **annual elections** today for the new Board of Directors of Rotary Year 2026–2027, let us be guided by the same principles we demand from our public institutions: integrity, leadership, and service.

As the nation’s premier and oldest all-men’s Rotary club, the Rotary Club of Manila bears a special responsibility to elect leaders who embody unimpeachable character, vision, and the Rotary ideal of “Service Above Self.” In choosing its next stewards, the electorate must look beyond popularity or prestige, and discern among their peers those whose actions demonstrate a true heart for service and a



... leadership is not a prize to be claimed but a responsibility to be carried with humility, courage, and an unwavering moral compass.

commitment to advancing the Club’s proud tradition of fellowship and civic duty.

Today, the electorate has the solemn duty to separate rhetoric from record, titles from true service, and ambition from authentic devotion to the ideal of “Service Above Self.” The choice of leaders will not only shape the club’s projects and direction for a year — it will signal whether RCM still has the courage to demand excellence of itself and of those who would lead it.

For both the Republic and Rotary, leadership is not a prize to be claimed but a responsibility to be carried with humility, courage, and an unwavering moral compass. Today’s choices — in government and in civic life — will shape not only institutions, but the moral direction of the communities they are sworn to serve.

GUEST OF HONOR & SPEAKER



**Hon. Darlene Marie B.
BERBERABE**
Solicitor General
of the Philippines

EDUCATION

University of the Philippines
Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy (1989),
Summa Cum Laude, Class Valedictorian

University of the Philippines
Master of Arts in Philosophy (1995)

University of the Philippines
Bachelor of Law (1999), Salutatorian

PROFILE

Solicitor General Lelen Berberabe is a summa cum laude graduate of Philosophy from the University of the Philippines (UP) and class valedictorian of the College of Social Sciences and Philosophy in 1989. She was the first female Philosophy instructor in the same school where she taught for 10 years, and has a Masters in Philosophy. She studied law from UP college of law where she graduated salutatorian of her class in 1999. She was an associate lawyer in Baker McKenzie Manila, Philippines with specialization on labor law.

Post law firm, she joined Procter & Gamble Philippines where she was a Senior Counsel and member of the Leadership Team. In 2010, she was appointed by the President of the Republic of the Philippines as the CEO of Pag-IBIG Fund.

She has been recognised as an Outstanding CEO in Asia by the ADFIAP, Outstanding CEO in the public sector by Asia CEO, one of the Ten Outstanding Women in Nation Service in 2013, and one of the 100 Most Influential Filipino Women in 2014.

Prior to her appointment, Dean Lelen Berberabe was a senior lecturer at the UP College of Law. She is also a professorial lecturer at the Philippine Judicial Academy.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

TODAY's weekly convocation of Manila Rotarians promises not merely another meeting, but a vibrant chapter of fellowship and purpose – an occasion where bonds are deepened, ideas take flight, and memories are etched anew.

As we hold our joint meeting with a leading and dynamic club – the Rotary Club of Makati – and as we welcome a respected government lawyer as our Guest of Honor and Speaker, our meeting promises not just deliberation, but delight; not merely routine, but remembrance. This will surely be a gathering where fellowship finds new color, and purpose shines with renewed brilliance.

Despite her busy schedule, Solicitor General Darlene “Lelen” Berberabe has graciously accepted our invitation to speak about her new and exciting role as the Tribune of the People.

I have personally known SolGen



Raoul C. Creencia
President

Lelen for more than a decade, and I lauded her appointment, first as Dean of the UP College of Law, and later on as the Republic's top lawyer. She is, indeed, a wise choice for the job. In a time when the nation yearns for leaders of both competence and integrity, it is essential that the Office of the Solicitor General be helmed by someone who embodies intellectual rigor, a proven track record in public service, and an unwavering commitment to the rule of law. In my view, our lady Solicitor General exemplifies these qualities, making her more than worthy of the trust and responsibility that comes with being the People's Lawyer.

SolGen Lelen's professional journey

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

reveals a consistent pattern of excellence. As a lawyer, she has displayed mastery not only of the law but of its application in addressing complex issues affecting the public interest. Her career is not defined merely by private success, but by the kind of public service that bridges technical expertise with a genuine concern for people's welfare. Her leadership as former President and CEO (PCEO) of the Home Development Mutual Fund (Pag-IBIG



With Solicitor General Darlene "Lelen" Berberabe

Fund) is proof of this. Under her stewardship, the institution was strengthened with reforms that enhanced transparency, efficiency, and accountability, while also expanding services for millions of Filipinos. It is rare to find a leader who can both uphold institutional integrity and innovate to widen access to social benefits, but she has done so decisively. I was the Government Corporate Counsel, Pag-IBIG Fund's statutory counsel, at the time when SolGen Lelen served as its PCEO. This is why I personally know how she so competently and impressively managed this institution.

Another aspect that I find endearing about SolGen Lelen is her reputation for integrity and incorruptibility. In an era when public confidence in institutions can be fragile, the Office of the Solicitor General must be entrusted to one whose moral compass is clear and unwavering. Her public record reflects precisely that—leadership unmarred by scandal, stewardship guided by transparency, and a life committed to service rather than self-interest. She has consistently proven that public office can be exercised with dignity and credibility.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Her academic grounding further complements her professional experience. With her strong legal education and exposure to various areas of the law, she possesses the intellectual foundation required to confront the diverse and complex legal challenges that the Solicitor General must face.

Beyond credentials and achievements, what makes Atty. Lelen truly fit for the role is her deep sense of public mission. The Solicitor General is not merely an advocate for the government, but a guardian of the people's interest. To be “the

tribune of the people” requires the courage to stand for the Constitution, the wisdom to discern the just from the expedient, and the humility to recognize that the law must serve justice above all else. In her career, Atty. Lelen has demonstrated each of these qualities in action.

For all these reasons, I believe that the current Solicitor General is not only fit but destined to serve as such. In her, the nation would find a principled lawyer, a dedicated public servant, and a leader who can bring honor to one of the country's most vital legal institutions.



With Public Attorney's Office (PAO) Chief Persida Rueda Acosta and Solicitor General Darlene “Lelen” Berberabe

Nominees for the Board of Directors for Rotary Year 2026-2027



MICHAEL JAEY C. ALBAÑA

Inducted 15 April 2021, Filipino
Director, 2023-2026
*Vice President/General Manager
SMX Convention Center*



EDWIN H. HERNANDEZ

Inducted 25 June 2020, Filipino
Director 2025-2026;
Secretary 2022-2024
Paul Harris Fellow 2022
*President
Jardine Distribution, Inc.*



KARLO EUGENE JOSEF M. CASTRO

Inducted 9 November 2017, Filipino
Asst. Treasurer 2025-2026;
2019-2020, 2023-2024;
Treasurer 2020-2021; 2022-2023
Paul Harris Fellow 2019, 2022
*President & CEO
Palawan Group of Companies*



TEODORO ALEJANDRO Y. KALAW IV

Inducted 15 April 2021, Filipino
Director 2024-2025; Assistant Board
Legal Adviser 2023-2024
Chairman, Peace and Conflict Resolution
Committee
*Mediator, Philippine Dispute Resolution
Center, Inc.*



JASON MICHAEL BOGOVICH

Inducted 11 May 2017, American
Director, 2025-2026;
SAA 2024-2025; DSAA 2019-24
Paul Harris Fellow 2020
*Independent Consultant
Asia Development Bank*



DELFIN NEGRILLO LORENZANA

Inducted 19 October 2023, Filipino
STAR Rotarian of the Year 2024-2025
Chairman, Program Committee



RAMI CHAHWAN

Inducted 15 April 2021,
Canadian-Lebanese
Director 2025-2026;
Asst. Secretary 2023-2024
Paul Harris Fellow 2022
Rotarian of the Year 2022-2023
COO, Starbreaker Inc.



ABDULGANI M. MACATOMAN

Inducted 8 December 2016, Filipino
*Chairman
Global Empire International Grouping
Companies*

Nominees for the Board of Directors for Rotary Year 2026-2027



ALBERT C. PALACIOS

Inducted 5 April 2018, Filipino
Paul Harris Fellow (1000 PTS) 2018
Director 2025-2026; 2020-2024
Chairman, Holy App Ventures, Inc.



JOHN NICO P. VALENCIA

Inducted 5 April 2018, Filipino
Chairman, Fellowship Committee 2024-2026
President, Valencia Holdings Development, Inc.



MICHAEL D. ROXAS

Inducted 25 August 2022, Filipino
Paul Harris Fellow 2023
Treasurer 2024-2025;
Asst. Internal Auditor 2025-2026
*Chairman & CEO
Moore, Roxas, Tagle & Co.*



REGINALD T. YU

Inducted 17 October 2019, Filipino
Paul Harris Fellow 2022
Vice President 2022-2024; Secretary 2020-2022
STAR Rotarian of the Year 2019-2020
Chairman, BALITA Committee 2024-2026
President, Times Paint Corporation



CARLOS G. SERAPIO

Inducted 29 July 2021, Filipino
Board Legal Adviser 2025-2026
Rotarian of the Year 2024-2025
*Lawyer/Consultant
Serapio De Castro Law Office*

CLUB ADMINISTRATION

RCM Members' Attendance Report
RY 2025-2026



ATTENDANCE REPORT

August 2025

AUGUST 2025	August 07, 2025 BUCHER DIR. GEN. GREGORIO CATAPANG JR.	August 14, 2025 OCD ASST. BERNARDO ALEJANDRO A. PDRF PRES. BUTCH MELEY	August 21, 2025 HOLIDAY	August 28, 2025 FELLOWSHIP
MEMBERS PRESENT	45	36	0	26
MEMBERS PRESENT %	21%	17%	0%	12%
MAKE UP ATTENDEES	7	4	0	12
EXEMPTED	6	4	0	3
ON LEAVE	0	0	0	0
Total Active Members	52	40	0	38
Total # of Members	215	215	215	215
TOTAL %:	24%	19%	0%	18%
ROTARACTORS	14	15	0	0
MEDIA	0	0	0	0
EMBASSIES / DIPLOMATIC CORPS	0	0	0	0
DG, DGE, DGN, PDG	0	0	0	0
GOHS / GS	5	6	0	0
VISITING ROTARIAN	5	0	0	0
Guests of RCM MEMBERS	8	15	0	0
TOTAL ATTENDEES	77	72	0	26



LIST OF ATTENDEES

August 28, 2025

- 1
- Acosta, Crispiniano G.
- 2
- Bartolome III, Arsenio M.
- 3
- Bediones, Rodolfo P.
- 4
- Carlos, Vicente J.
- 5
- Chahwan, Rami
- 6
- Cid, Dean Y.
- 7
- Creencia, Raoul C.
- 8
- Cutter, John Michael
- 9
- Davis, Raymond N.
- 10
- Del Rosario Sr., Oscar A.
- 11
- Gonzalez, Michael Raymond L.
- 12
- Guevara, Jr., Domingo S.
- 13
- Guevara, Ricardo S.
- 14
- Kalaw, Teodoro Alejandro Y IV
- 15
- Locsin, Arsenio Z.
- 16
- Macatoman, Abdulgani M.
- 17
- Mommaerts, Steve
- 18
- Nuñez, Jr., Jose A.
- 19
- Ong, Rowel Janson S.
- 20
- Palacios, Albert C.
- 21
- Ra, Ingill
- 22
- Reynolds, David J.
- 23
- Rodriguez Sr., Joaquin C.
- 24
- Serapio, Carlos G.
- 25
- Sibayan, Joselito H.
- 26
- Yu, Reginald Tieng

CLUB ADMINISTRATION

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

As of September 3, 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 BAGATSING, VALENTINO
11 BALANAY, ARIES B.
12 BARTOLOME, ARSENIO III M.
13 BAUTISTA, JOHN JR.
14 BEDIONES, RODOLFO P.
15 BELL, GERONIMO JR. D.
16 BENEDICTO, SIXTO T.
17 BERTELSEN, BERTEL INGMAR
18 BLANCO, MANUEL M.
19 BOGOVICH, JASON M.
20 BRANELEC, JACQUES
21 BUENDIA, CARLOS
22 CABANGON, EDGARD
23 CANON, RAUL JR. C.
24 CAMPOS, JOSELITO JR. D.
25 CARLOS, VICENTE J.
26 CARRANCEJA, ARVIN ARIK B.
27 CASTRO, KARLO EUGENE JOSEF M.
28 CATALAN, RODILLO
29 CHAHWAN, RAMI
30 CHAN, ROBERT JR.
31 CID, DEAN
32 CREENCIA, RAOUL C.
33 CUREG, ALEXANDER P.
34 CUTTER, JOHN MICHAEL
35 DAYANG, JUAN E.
36 DAVIS, RAYMOND N.
37 DEL ROSARIO, OSCAR
38 DY, MANUEL C.
39 ELDEBS, ISSAM
40 ENRIQUEZ, EDUARDO III
41 ESGUERRA, HERMINIO S.
42 ESQUIVIAS, JOAQUIN PABLO A.
43 EUGENIO, JOHN EMYL G.
44 FERNANDEZ, ANTONIO JAIME JOSE V.
45 FOLLOSCO, CEFERINO JR. G.
46 GARCIA, HERBERT JOEY
47 GARCIA, THEODORE Q.
48 GARCIA, VICTOR III G.
49 GO, HENRY S.
50 GONZALES, JONAS R.
51 GUEVARA, DOMINGO JR.
52 GUEVARA, RICARDO S.B.
53 HALLARE, DELFIN JR.
54 HALLARE, NICOL
55 HERNANDEZ, EDWIN H.
56 HESSE, UWE
57 IBUYAN, BENEDICT JULIUS F.
58 KALAW, TEODORO ALEJANDRO IV Y.
59 KATIGBAK J ALFONSO L.
60 KLEBS, DAVID
61 KOH, PAUL ANTHONY
62 LAUREL, RICARDO P.
63 LAZARO, JUAN MIGUEL
64 LEDDA, JAIME VICTOR B.

65 LEE, RICHARD L.
66 LIM, DAVID EDUARDO T.
67 LONZAGA, REINERIO C.
68 LOPEZ, ANTONIO
69 LOPEZ, ARTHUR M.
70 LORENZANA, DELFIN
71 MACATOMAN, ABDULGANI M.
72 MAGSAYSAY, FRANCISCO D.
73 MANALAYSAY, CESAR P.
74 MANGALILE, SENEN
75 MARTINEZ, RONALD
76 MATSCHUCK, GUENTER GERHARD G.
77 MAURICIO, ANTONILO DC
78 MAURICIO, FRANCISCO C.
79 MENDOZA, RAYMUND JOSEPH D.
80 NOLIDO, RAMON ALBERTO B.
81 NOMURA, KAZUHIRO
82 NONES, ROMEO C.
83 NUÑEZ, JOSE A.
84 OCAMPO, TEODORO J.
85 ONG, ROWEL JANSON S.
86 PAGDANGANAN, ROBERTO M.
87 PALACIOS, ALBERT S.
88 FALLASIGUE, JOHN BRIAN C.
89 FASCUAL, ABRAHAM
90 FAYUMO, FELICITO C.
91 FELINO, WILFREDO
92 FINEDA, PATRICIO JR. F.
93 FIZARRAS, JORDAN M.
94 FREYSLER, FAUSTO JR. D.R.
95 RA, INGILL
96 RANKL, PETER
97 RECTO, PHILIP H.
98 REYNOLDS, DAVID
99 RODRIGUEZ, JOAQUIN ANTHONY JR. H.
100 RODRIGUEZ, JOAQUIN SR. C.
101 ROMUALDEZ, FERDINAND
102 ROXAS, MICHAEL D.
103 SCHNEIDER, BERND
104 SERAPIO, CARLOS G.
105 SEVILLA, LUIS ANGELO L.
106 SHIMODA, SHIGERU
107 SIBAYAN, JOSELITO H.
108 SO, WARREN
109 STRANATHAN, IKE EDWARD
110 SYJUCO, JOSE, JR. A.
111 TAGAYSAY, HECTOR O.
112 TALUSAN, FERDINAND E.
113 TAMANO, SHALIMAR H.
114 TAN, EUSEBIO V.
115 TAN, LAWRENCE L.
116 TEJUMAL, MICHAEL
117 ILLMAN, HANSEL JOSEPH MICHAEL L.
118 VALDEZ, AMADO
119 VALDEZ, JASON ROLAND N.
120 VALENCIA, JOHN NICO P.
121 VALENCIA, RODOLFO G.
122 VILLARICA, HENRY R.
123 YORDANOV, STEFAN
124 YU, REGINALD T.
125 ZALDARRIAGA, FELIX FRANCISCO S.
126 ZEITOUNI, NAGI
127 ZIALCITA, XAVIER Y.
128 ZIMMER, CHRISTOPHER

CLUB ADMINISTRATION

Rotary Information Briefing



A Rotary Information Briefing was held on Friday, August 29, 2025, at 4:00 PM via Zoom for Mr. Hiroyasu Kanda.

The session was led by Rotary Information Chairman PDG Obet Pagdanganan, with PP Ebot Tan and Rtn. Romy Nones, who provided valuable insights on Rotary's vision, mission, and objectives, as well as the history and ongoing projects of the Rotary Club of Manila. Also present was Secretary Anton Mauricio, who attentively listened to and supported the informative session.

Outstanding Ambassador Award Committee Meeting



THE Outstanding Ambassador Award Committee met via Zoom on August 12, 2025 to plan for the awards for RY 2025-2026.

President Raoul Creencia, Director Edwin Hernandez (Director-in-Charge of Vocational Service), PDG Jackie Rodriguez, Rotarian Vic Garcia (Chairman), Internal Auditor Nick Locsin, Past Vice President Joel Valdes, and Secretary Anton Mauricio attended the meeting.

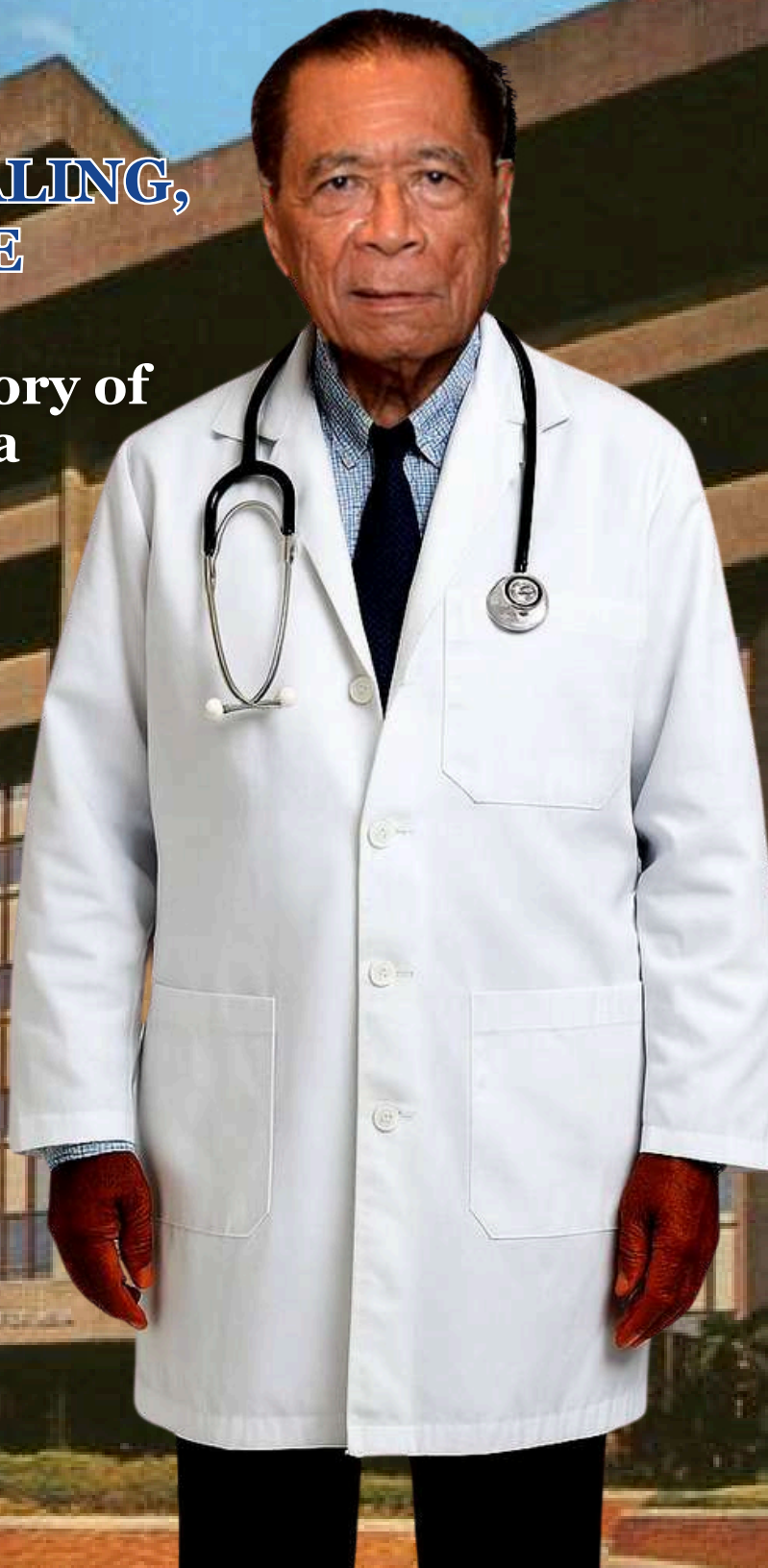
PEOPLE

A HEART FOR HEALING, A LIFE OF SERVICE

A Life of Service and Compassion in the Story of Dr. Avenilo Padernilla Aventura Sr.

By PVP Reginald T. Yu

THE operating room was silent save for the rhythmic beeping of the heart-lung machine. A frail patient from Malaysia lay on the table of the Philippine Heart Center, her life tethered to the precision of human hands and the fragile promise of science. Dr. Avenilo “Nilo” Padernilla Aventura Sr., then the institution’s founding Executive Director, leaned over the open chest with calm resolve.



A HEART FOR HEALING, A LIFE OF SERVICE: A Life of Service and Compassion in the Story of Dr. Avenilo Padernilla Aventura Sr.

Years of discipline honed in New York and New Jersey hospitals guided his every movement, but what gave weight to that moment was not simply skill — it was compassion. He performed the double valve operation free of charge, an act of mercy that transcended medicine. That surgery, in 1977, marked more than the saving of one life. It was the seed of a lifelong bond with the Rotary Club of Manila (RCM), the very organization that had helped facilitate the patient's referral through Rotary connections in Malaysia. For Dr. Aventura, it became a moment of convergence — where his vocation as a healer fused seamlessly with a new calling: to serve humanity through Rotary.

His induction into RCM that same year was no coincidence. It felt instead like destiny unfolding, a rhythm set in motion by forces greater than himself. In the decades that followed, Dr. Aventura would stand at the intersection of medicine and service, of scalpel and fellowship, of science and altruism. To Rotary, he gave his time, talent, and skills. To the nation, he gave an institution that became a sanctuary for the Filipino heart.

From the very beginning, Dr. Aventura's Rotary journey was distinguished not by committee titles or ceremonial speeches, but by the lives he quite literally saved. His involvement in the "Save a Heart, Save a Life" project, which sought to

provide surgery and care to impoverished Filipinos with congenital and valvular heart conditions, was emblematic of this union between his profession and his Rotary vows. What others saw as charity, he saw as duty — a seamless continuation of his calling as surgeon and servant.

To Rotary, he gave his time, talent, and skills. To the nation, he gave an institution that became a sanctuary for the Filipino heart.

In the late 1970s, RCM was already a prestigious club, a gathering of the nation's leaders in politics, business, and the professions. Yet for Dr. Aventura, its attraction was simpler. He saw in its service the chance to bring a "new dawn of life" to the destitute, to offer permanence where despair had taken root. For him, this was not supplemental to his work at the Philippine Heart Center — it was its very essence carried into the wider world.

There is a peculiar paradox in the life of a surgeon: while trained to navigate matters of life and death with cold precision, the work also demands a profound humanity. To open the chest of

A HEART FOR HEALING, A LIFE OF SERVICE: A Life of Service and Compassion in the Story of Dr. Avenilo Padernilla Aventura Sr.

a stranger and hold in one's hands the fragile rhythm of existence is to confront the very mystery of life. For Dr. Aventura, Rotary was the natural extension of this paradox. It gave form and fellowship to the impulse that had always guided him: to heal, to restore, to serve.

Looking back at that fateful year of 1977, one sees the beginning not just of a Rotary career, but of a legacy. Dr. Aventura would go on to blend the demands of hospital leadership with the warmth of Rotary camaraderie, never allowing the weight of his duties to deter him from the call of service. His guiding principle was deceptively simple: "If one is a busy man, he should really find the time to accomplish what he has agreed to do." It was a maxim that shaped both his medical leadership and his Rotary journey, proof that true service is not about convenience, but commitment.

Thus begins the story of **Dr. Avenilo "Nilo" Padernilla Aventura Sr.** — a man who gave the Philippines not only its premier heart center, but also decades of selfless Rotary service. His life is a testament to the possibility that science and service, skill and compassion, institution and fellowship can all beat in unison, like a healthy heart.

Roots of a Healer

Every great healer begins not in the

hospital ward, but in the quiet stirrings of childhood. For Dr. Nilo, born on March 9, 1934, the Philippines of his youth was a nation in flux — recovering from war, dreaming of modernity, yet still tethered to traditions of family and faith. From these beginnings emerged a young man of discipline, driven by curiosity and a deep sensitivity to human suffering. His was not a childhood marked by extravagance but by the quiet insistence of values: service, study, sacrifice.



Rotary Club of Manila's "Save a Heart, Save a Life" surgical mission team led by Dr. Aventura is presented to club members. From left: Dr. Emily Tan-Aventura, Dr. Robert Cristobal, Dr. Jun Aventura and Dr. Nilo Aventura

The boy who would one day found the Philippine Heart Center was shaped by an era when medical science in the Philippines was still modest, when diseases of the heart often spelled a death sentence. It was here, in this setting of limitation, that his ambition took root.

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While some were drawn to commerce, politics, or the arts, Dr. Nilo Aventura's gaze turned toward the mysteries of the human body — the rhythm of the heart, the fragility of life, and the possibility that the surgeon's hand could snatch existence back from the precipice.

His decision to pursue medicine was not an accident of circumstance but a conscious embrace of vocation. At the University of Santo Tomas Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, he immersed himself in rigorous study, graduating in 1958 with the foundation of knowledge that would carry him across oceans. UST, with its centuries-old tradition of forming healers imbued with both skill and conscience, left its indelible mark on him. For Dr. Nilo Aventura, medicine was not merely a career but a covenant — a commitment to deploy one's gifts where they mattered most.

After earning his medical degree, he faced a choice familiar to many of his generation: whether to stay and practice in the Philippines or seek further training abroad. Driven by a restless pursuit of excellence, he left for the United States, where the frontiers of thoracic and cardiovascular surgery were rapidly expanding. At Elmhurst Hospital in New York, beginning in 1964, he absorbed the discipline of residency in thoracic surgery, witnessing firsthand the advances of a field that was transforming

The boy who would one day found the Philippine Heart Center was shaped by an era when medical science in the Philippines was still modest, when diseases of the heart often spelled a death sentence.

how humanity understood — and repaired — the heart.

But residency was only the beginning. Hungry for mastery, he pressed onward into fellowship training, securing positions at some of the most reputable institutions in the U.S. At St. Barnabas Hospital and St. Anthony Hospital in New York (1966), and later at St. Michael's Hospital in Newark, New Jersey (1967), he sharpened his skills in thoracic and cardiovascular surgery. These years were grueling, marked by long hours, exacting mentors, and the relentless pressure of high-stakes cases. Yet it was here that he gained not only the technical prowess of a surgeon but also the discipline that would define his later leadership at home.

In America, he could have easily built a successful career, joining the ranks of Filipino doctors who flourished abroad. But for Dr. Aventura, the call of the homeland was stronger. He carried with him not only the knowledge gleaned from

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advanced training but also the vision of what the Philippines could become if world-class healthcare were made accessible. He saw the disparity between what was possible in New York and what was available in Manila, and it troubled him deeply. He knew that to heal his country's heart, one needed more than skills — one needed institution, systems, and the will to build them.

Returning to the Philippines, he brought with him a determination forged abroad but rooted in Filipino soil. His surgical career flourished, earning him recognition as one of the nation's leading thoracic and cardiovascular surgeons. Soon, his reputation attracted the attention of government leaders, particularly during the administration of President Ferdinand Marcos, which sought to establish the Philippines as a regional hub for specialized medicine. When the vision for a Philippine Heart Center began to crystallize, Dr. Aventura was the natural choice to helm it.

These roots — the discipline of his youth, the rigor of UST, the demanding years in New York and New Jersey — converged into a singular trajectory. From the boy who marveled at the mysteries of life to the surgeon who would touch the very core of human existence, Dr. Nilo embodied the transformation of vocation into legacy.

His journey was not simply about personal achievement but about the deliberate preparation to lead a nation's medical renaissance.

The heart, in many cultures, is more than an organ. It is the seat of courage, the wellspring of emotion, the symbol of life itself. For him, the heart was also



Dr. Aventura is inducted as a member of RCM, sponsored by Atty. Alberto Romulo by President Benny Angtuaco as Mrs. Nati Aventura looks on.

destiny. His roots as a healer did not lie in privilege or chance but in the steady unfolding of character — a character that would soon be tested as he undertook the greatest task of his life: to build a heart center not merely for patients, but for an entire nation.

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A Nation's Beating Heart – Founding the Philippine Heart Center

When the Philippine Heart Center (PHC) opened its doors in 1975, it was more than the unveiling of another hospital — it was the birth of a national dream. At the helm stood Dr. Nilo, freshly appointed as its first Executive Director, a man whose life had been shaped by discipline, precision, and compassion. For over a decade, from 1975 to 1986, he would serve as the steward of this institution, transforming it into one of Asia's most advanced medical facilities and a sanctuary for those whose lives hung in the delicate balance of their own beating hearts.

The Philippines in the 1970s was still emerging from a landscape of uneven healthcare. Specialist institutions were rare, and advanced surgical procedures — particularly in thoracic and cardiovascular medicine — were largely inaccessible to the ordinary Filipino. To suffer from congenital heart defects or valve diseases was, for many, a quiet death sentence. Yet there were those who dared to dream: that the nation could house a center dedicated solely to the heart, where Filipinos would no longer have to journey abroad to receive life-saving treatment.

The first Executive Director of the Philippine Heart Center (PHC) was Dr. Avenilo P. Aventura. He served in that role from 1974 to 1986.

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Dr. Aventura was the man chosen to translate this dream into reality. His credentials were impeccable — training in New York and New Jersey, mastery of thoracic and cardiovascular surgery, a reputation for discipline and quiet authority. But beyond these, he possessed something rarer: the ability to combine vision with execution. He was not content with being a surgeon of renown; he sought to be an architect of systems, a builder of institutions.

The early years of the PHC were marked by daunting challenges. Resources were finite, the need immense, and the expectations towering. As Executive Director, Dr. Aventura bore the dual responsibility of shaping both the medical and administrative dimensions of the Center. He was surgeon and statesman, healer and leader, tasked with balancing the immediacy of saving lives with the long-term project of building a world-class institution.

What distinguished Dr. Aventura's leadership was his insistence on discipline. Trained in the rigor of American hospitals, he infused the PHC with a culture of exacting standards. Punctuality, precision, and professionalism were non-negotiable. He demanded from his colleagues the same commitment he demanded of himself, believing that in matters of life and death, there could be no compromise. Yet

beneath the sternness was compassion — he was affable, approachable, and unafraid to blend warmth with authority. His colleagues remembered him not as a distant bureaucrat but as a leader who shared their burdens in the operating room, sleeves rolled up, hands steady on the scalpel.

Under his stewardship, the Philippine Heart Center quickly rose in prominence. It became a hub not only for surgeries but for training, research, and innovation. Filipino surgeons and nurses

Under his stewardship, the Philippine Heart Center... became a hub not only for surgeries but for training, research, and innovation.

were given the chance to work with advanced equipment, while patients from across the archipelago streamed into its halls, carrying with them the fragile hope of survival. Many who could never have afforded such procedures found themselves treated, thanks in part to the Center's commitment to public service and to the partnerships that Dr. Aventura forged with civic organizations — including Rotary.

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Indeed, his dual role as surgeon and Rotarian created a powerful synergy. The Heart Center was not a tower of ivory medicine but a living testament to service. Through Rotary, patients in need were referred, missions organized, and funding secured. For Dr. Aventura, the PHC was not merely a national project but also a Rotary project on a grand scale — a continuation of his belief that “one good turn deserves another.” His medical expertise, combined with Rotary’s network of compassion, created pathways for patients who would otherwise have been left to the mercy of fate.

One of the most striking aspects of his leadership was his capacity to inspire those around him. Young doctors who trained under him absorbed not only techniques but values. Nurses and staff, too, learned that professionalism was inseparable from compassion. For Dr. Aventura, to heal the body was never enough; one must also heal the dignity of the patient, treating each as a life worthy of the finest science and the deepest respect.

His tenure at PHC coincided with a period of political turbulence in the Philippines, yet the Center stood as a beacon of what was possible when vision met determination. Amidst a nation’s challenges, the PHC flourished, a symbol of resilience and modernity. It was a

For Dr. Aventura, to heal the body was never enough; one must also heal the dignity of the patient, treating each as a life worthy of the finest science and the deepest respect.

place where ordinary Filipinos could witness miracles of medicine, where the rhythm of the heart could be restored even after it faltered.

But perhaps the greatest testament to his leadership was not the number of surgeries performed, nor the prestige the Center gained, but the legacy it created. By the time he stepped down as Executive Director in 1986, the Philippine Heart Center was firmly established as one of Asia’s foremost institutions for cardiovascular care. It had become not only a hospital but also a training ground for future leaders, including his own son, Dr. Avenilo “Jun” Licud Aventura Jr., who would decades later assume the same mantle of leadership in 2024. The circle had closed, and a legacy had been secured.

In building the Heart Center, Dr. Aventura did more than construct a hospital; he gave the Philippines a new metaphor for its national life. The heart,

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once a symbol of weakness in the face of disease, became a symbol of resilience and renewal. The institution he led stood as proof that with discipline, vision, and compassion, even the frailest heartbeat could find strength again.

When asked years later how he managed to balance such a demanding role with his Rotary commitments, his answer was characteristically simple: “Well, I believe that if you get a busy man, he’ll find the time — provided he agrees to take the job.” It was this philosophy that defined his years at the Philippine Heart Center: a refusal to be daunted by the scale of the task, a determination to serve wherever service was needed.

Thus, in the story of the Philippine Heart Center, one finds not only the evolution of Philippine medicine but also the reflection of one man’s life: disciplined, compassionate, relentless in its pursuit of healing. For as long as its walls stand, the name of its first Executive Director will be remembered — not as an administrator, but as a pioneer whose vision gave the nation a new heartbeat.

Rotary Beginnings – The Call of Compassion (1977)

In July 1977, just two years after the Philippine Heart Center had opened its doors to the Filipino public, another door opened for Dr. Nilo — the door of Rotary. Sponsored by his friend, former Senator Alberto “Bert” Romulo, he was inducted into the Rotary Club of Manila (RCM), the nation’s oldest and most prestigious Rotary club. For many, membership in RCM was a recognition of professional stature, a gateway to camaraderie with leaders in politics, commerce, and the professions. But for Dr. Aventura, Rotary was never about prestige. It was about service.

As if by divine choreography, his induction coincided with a moment that would forever define the character of his Rotary journey. That same year, a Malaysian patient was referred to him through Rotary connections. The patient



Rotary Club of Manila's "Save a Life, Save a Heart" project is chaired by De. Aventura (fifth from right). He is joined by (from left to right): Dr. Jun Aventura, Dr. Lloyd Santos, Dr. Jojo Purino, patient with mother; Dr. Manny Dy, Mr. Santi Dumlao and Consul General Miguel Guerrero

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was in desperate need of a double valve operation — a procedure both delicate and costly. Dr. Aventura performed the surgery, but he charged no professional fees. For him, it was not about remuneration; it was about compassion. In doing so, he set the rhythm of his Rotary life: one that would always place service above self.

Rotary in Action – Service Through Surgery

In Rotary, projects often come and go, each significant in its own way. But for Dr. Nilo, there was one project that embodied his life's dual calling as healer and Rotarian: **“Save a Heart, Save a Life.”**

The initiative, launched under the presidency of Rotarian Santiago Dumlao, was simple in name yet profound in impact. Its mission was to provide lifesaving cardiac surgeries for Filipinos who could never dream of affording such treatment. To lead it, there could have been no one more fitting than the nation's foremost cardiovascular surgeon, who at that time was also steering the Philippine Heart Center. When Dr. Aventura accepted the chairmanship of the project, he did so not as a formality but as a personal crusade.

The Campaign of Hope

Under his guidance, “Save a Heart, Save a Life” became more than a campaign — it became a movement of compassion. Families from remote towns and impoverished communities found their way to Rotary through whispers of hope: that there were doctors who could heal their children's congenital heart defects, that there were Rotarians willing to help shoulder the costs.

Patients with “hole in the heart” conditions, valvular diseases, and other congenital defects began to see their destinies rewritten. What would have been a death sentence turned into a new lease on life. Each successful surgery was not merely a medical triumph but a living parable of Rotary's motto, Service Above Self. Hundreds of lives were changed and extended through the project, but more importantly, generations of families were given back a son, a daughter, a parent, a spouse.

For Dr. Aventura, this was Rotary at its purest: not a dinner of speeches, but an act of mercy; not a plaque of recognition, but a beating heart restored.

The Missions That Reached the Margins

But Dr. Aventura's Rotary action

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extended far beyond the walls of the Heart Center. With sleeves rolled up and surgical team assembled, he ventured into remote provinces and underserved urban settlements where patients awaited not statistics but miracles. Medical missions became his second operating theater.

In these missions, he was not the distant Executive Director of a premier institution, but a fellow Rotarian — a man carrying the same spirit of volunteerism as his peers. He joined missions to the country's remotest villages and municipalities, setting up makeshift operating rooms in rural hospitals or provincial facilities. He offered what he knew best: his expertise, his steady hands, and his indomitable will to heal.

Rotary's network made it possible to mobilize patients, equipment, and volunteers. But it was Dr. Aventura's presence that gave these missions both credibility and success. For him, these were not mere outreach events. They were sacred extensions of his vocation.

The Bohol Miracle

Among the many missions he participated in, one remains etched most vividly in his memory: the **medical mission in Bohol**, sponsored by the Rotary Club of New York.

For two and a half days, in a flurry of precision and endurance, the team performed **25 open-heart surgeries**. It was an extraordinary feat, the kind of achievement that even major hospitals would hesitate to attempt in so short a time. Yet here, in a provincial setting, it became a reality.



Receiving an award from the Rotary Club of Manila (RCM) for the Save a Heart, Save a Life Project, Dr. Aventura (right) is all smiles as he is congratulated by RCM President Domingo Guevarra.

What made the mission unforgettable was not only the volume of cases but the spirit in which it was carried out. Nurses from New York came at their own expense, bringing with them vital supplies such as heart valves and disposable parts for artificial heart-lung machines. They came not for recognition but for service, and their generosity overwhelmed the patients who, in gratitude, insisted on making even modest donations toward the cost of their surgeries.

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Tears flowed freely — from patients who could hardly believe they had been given another chance at life, and from doctors and nurses who witnessed the transformation of despair into hope. For Dr. Aventura, the mission encapsulated everything he believed about Rotary: that when compassion, expertise, and fellowship converge, miracles happen.

A Rotarian's Scalpel

What distinguished Dr. Aventura's Rotary service was the way he turned his professional skill into his personal Rotary contribution. While others brought their resources in business or their influence in government, he brought his scalpel. His surgical precision was not confined to operating rooms in Manila; it was carried to missions where Rotary called him to serve.

Rotary, after all, emphasizes the use of one's professional expertise for the betterment of society. Few embodied this principle more fully than Dr. Aventura. To him, a patient was never just a case file or a medical challenge; each one was a child with a future, a parent with responsibilities, a person deserving of a second chance. By applying his surgical skill within Rotary projects, he elevated the meaning of service — showing that service is most powerful when it springs directly from one's vocation.

For Dr. Aventura, the mission encapsulated everything he believed about Rotary: that when compassion, expertise, and fellowship converge, miracles happen.

The Most Meaningful Contribution

In hindsight, when asked about the most meaningful contribution of his Rotary life, Dr. Aventura never pointed to awards, titles, or leadership positions. Instead, he always returned to "Save a Heart, Save a Life." For him, this was not only a project but the embodiment of what Rotary meant: the extension of life, the restoration of dignity, the giving of hope.

That so many of those saved were children made the project even more poignant. Each young patient who survived congenital heart surgery symbolized not only survival but possibility — the chance to study, to dream, to grow, to live. To save one life was to alter the course of history for a family, a community, and even a nation.

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The Ripple Effect

The ripple of Dr. Aventura's Rotary surgeries extended far beyond the operating room. Parents who had nearly resigned themselves to loss discovered gratitude that reshaped their families. Communities witnessed the living proof of Rotary's compassion. Young doctors and nurses who volunteered in these missions found themselves inspired; their sense of vocation deepened by the experience of service.

Most of all, the ripple reached the Rotary Club of Manila itself. Through these projects, RCM's identity as a club of service was reaffirmed. Its prestige was not merely in the stature of its members but in the tangible impact it created. And at the center of this affirmation was Dr. Nilo Aventura — the surgeon whose scalpel became a Rotary tool.

Medicine Meets Rotary – Building Bridges of Care

For many professionals, the demands of a high-level career often come at the cost of civic life. Surgeons, in particular, spend their lives in operating rooms where hours blur into days, their schedules dictated by emergencies and the frailty of human bodies. But Dr. Avenilo “Nilo” P. Aventura Sr. was not like most men. For him, medicine and Rotary were not separate tracks, competing for his time and energy — they

were parallel arteries feeding into one heart of service.

The Balancing Act of a Surgeon-Leader

As the first Executive Director of the Philippine Heart Center (1975–1986), Dr. Aventura bore a staggering workload.



Rotary Club of Manila members take part in this Medical Mission to Calapan, Mindoro. The group consists from left to right, Archit Bartolome, Ben Santos, Butch Marking, Mike Arambulo, Rodolfo Valencia, Beda Fajardo, Dr. Aventura, George Salazar and Joey Guanzon

He was administrator, innovator, teacher, and surgeon all at once. Each day brought with it life-and-death decisions, strategic planning, and the delicate task of nurturing an institution in its infancy. Yet even as he carried this monumental responsibility, he never withdrew from his Rotary commitments.

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How was it possible? His answer was deceptively simple: *“If you get a busy man, he’ll find the time — provided he agrees to take the job.”* It was not a matter of spare hours but of discipline and conviction. For Dr. Aventura, Rotary was not extracurricular. It was essential — an extension of the very same vocation that guided his surgical career.

Rotary as a Second Operating Room

If the Heart Center was his operating room on a national scale, Rotary became his operating room in the community. The two spheres did not compete; they complemented. At PHC, he worked within the framework of an institution, performing cutting-edge surgeries and mentoring future medical leaders. In Rotary, he harnessed the power of networks and fellowship to reach those whom institutions often left behind: the indigent, the forgotten, the unseen.

He himself often blended the two. Cases referred through Rotary found themselves under his care at the Heart Center, where the line between charity and professional duty dissolved. Patients saw not just the walls of a hospital but the hands of Rotary guiding them through. In his leadership, PHC and RCM were not silos — they were bridges to each other, bound by the common goal of saving lives.

Service at the Grassroots

Dr. Aventura’s Rotary involvement also pulled him out of the rarefied environment of the Heart Center into the grassroots realities of the Philippines. He joined medical missions in far-flung villages, where facilities were limited, where patients walked for hours just to see a doctor. In these settings, he was not the Executive Director in a suit and tie but a Rotarian in rolled-up sleeves, improvising with what resources were at hand.

If the Heart Center was his operating room on a national scale, Rotary became his operating room in the community.

Here, too, his professional expertise was invaluable. While others in Rotary contributed funds, logistics, or manpower, he contributed his specialized knowledge, transforming missions from mere consultations into opportunities for real, tangible healing. His presence gave credibility and confidence to missions that otherwise might have faltered. And his leadership ensured that Rotary’s medical initiatives were not token acts but true interventions.

International Collaboration

His work also extended to collaborations with international Rotary clubs. The Bohol mission sponsored by the Rotary Club of New York was but one example. Through these partnerships, he witnessed the extraordinary generosity of foreign Rotarians who traveled at their own expense, carrying supplies and equipment to supplement local needs.

These collaborations underscored a truth he held deeply: that the spirit of service knows no borders. Whether in Manila, Bohol, or New York, the same pulse of compassion beat through Rotary's veins. As a Filipino surgeon, he brought his skills to the table; as a Rotarian, he joined hands with others across the world, proving that healing is most powerful when shared.

Rotary and Public Health Advocacy

Dr. Aventura also saw Rotary's role not merely in treating disease but in preventing it. He urged clubs to initiate campaigns on disease prevention and health education, to bring laboratories and free screenings into communities, and to leverage the talents of medical members to maximize Rotary's impact.

Fellowship as a Second Family

For a man whose days were consumed by the weight of saving lives, fellowship was not a luxury — it was a necessity. The surgical theater demanded precision, restraint, and relentless discipline. But in Rotary, Dr. Avenilo “Nilo” Padernilla Aventura Sr. found another dimension of life: warmth, camaraderie, and a second family with whom he could share laughter, music, and purpose.

Another Family, Another Home

From the outset, Dr. Aventura described Rotary fellowship as akin to gaining “another family.” It was not merely a social circle but a fraternity bound by common ideals, shared burdens, and mutual support. Within the Rotary Club of Manila, he found brothers-in-service who spoke the same language of professionalism and compassion, men who, like him, understood that privilege must be coupled with responsibility.

Weekly meetings at the Manila Polo Club were not idle gatherings for him. They were occasions to reconnect with that family, to deliberate on projects with the same seriousness he devoted to surgeries, and to recharge his spirit in the company of like-minded peers. The discipline he

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admired in medicine — punctuality, order, excellence — he also saw reflected in RCM meetings, where discussions were animated yet purposeful, where service was always at the center.

The Bond with Santiago Dumlao

Among the many friendships he cultivated in Rotary, his bond with Past President Santiago Dumlao was one of the most profound. Together, they led the “Save a Heart, Save a Life” project — Dumlao as initiator, Aventura as surgeon-leader. Theirs was a partnership of complementary strengths: Dumlao’s vision as club president and Aventura’s expertise as heart surgeon.

But beyond professional collaboration, their friendship embodied the deeper spirit of Rotary: men of different backgrounds joining forces not for personal gain but for the healing of others. For Dr. Aventura, this relationship was a living reminder of what fellowship could accomplish when anchored in purpose.

The Rotary Chorale: Harmony in Service

One of the most unexpected but joyful expressions of his fellowship came

through music. Dr. Aventura was a member of the RCM Music Chorale, a group of Rotarians who sang not for fame but for service. The chorale raised funds for projects like “Save a Heart, Save a Life,” proving that even voices — golden or otherwise — could be instruments of healing.



Rotary Club of Manila function, Dr. Aventura (center) banters with (from left to right) a Japanese guest, Eo Dumalo, Nati and Nilo Aventura, Francisco Ortigas Jr., a foreign guest and RCM Past President Santi Dumlao

It was in this space of song that the surgeon found reprieve. After hours in operating rooms where silence was broken only by the beeping of machines, he found in choral singing the release of rhythm, melody, and human connection. For him, the Chorale was an embodiment of Rotary’s Four-Way Test, particularly the question, “*Will it be beneficial to all*

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concerned?” The answer was clear: yes. It benefited patients, it strengthened fellowship, and it brought joy.

The Chorale was also symbolic. Just as surgery required harmony between surgeon, anesthesiologist, and nurses, so did music require harmony between voices. Both were collective acts of precision, each member dependent on the others. In music, as in medicine, he thrived in collaboration.

Professionalism and Camaraderie

In his reflections, Dr. Aventura often contrasted the rigor of his medical career with the camaraderie of Rotary. “We start and end on time and we discuss projects animatedly. I also like the spirit of volunteerism in our group,” he once said. It was this balance — professionalism tempered by fellowship — that kept him engaged across decades.

The culture of RCM during his early years, he observed, was one of seriousness of purpose. Yet, it was never devoid of humor, warmth, and humanity. This blend mirrored his own character: disciplined yet affable, exacting yet approachable.

The Four-Way Test in Fellowship

For Dr. Aventura, fellowship was not only

about friendship but also about living Rotary’s ethical compass. The Four-Way Test guided not only his surgical decisions but also his Rotary relationships. In every act of fellowship, he asked: *Is it the truth? Is it fair to all concerned? Will it build goodwill and better friendships? Will it be beneficial to all concerned?*

This moral framework infused his friendships with depth. It meant that bonds were built on trust, fairness, goodwill, and mutual service. Fellowship for him was not frivolous; it was purposeful.

Sustaining a Demanding Life

It is easy to imagine the toll of his dual responsibilities: the exhausting demands of surgery and hospital leadership, the constant calls of Rotary service. But fellowship sustained him. In the laughter of fellow Rotarians, in the animated debates over projects, in the harmonies of the Chorale, he found the respite and renewal needed to continue his work.

For someone who gave so much of himself to others, fellowship gave something back: belonging. Rotary became his second home, a sanctuary not of sterile walls and surgical tools but of brotherhood and joy.

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Fellowship as Legacy

In the end, Dr. Aventura's view of fellowship transcended the personal. He saw it as the glue that held Rotary together, the force that transformed projects into movements. Without fellowship, service would falter. Without fellowship, even the most ambitious initiatives would collapse under the weight of apathy.

For nearly five decades, he lived out this truth. His friendships, his music, his shared projects — all were part of a larger symphony of service that defined the Rotary Club of Manila. And in that symphony, he played his part not only as a surgeon but also as a brother, a friend, a fellow traveler in the long journey of service.

The Four-Way Test in the Operating Room

For most Rotarians, the Four-Way Test serves as a guide in business dealings, personal conduct, and community life. But for Dr. Nilo, the Four-Way Test went further: it entered the operating room. It was etched not only in his Rotary service but in his very approach to patient care and leadership.

The Four Questions of a Surgeon

The first question, *“Is it the truth?”*

For most Rotarians, the Four-Way Test serves as a guide in business dealings, personal conduct, and community life. But for Dr. Nilo, the Four-Way Test went further: it entered the operating room.

resonated with him as a doctor. In medicine, truth is not negotiable. It is the accurate diagnosis, the honest prognosis, the clear communication with patients and their families even when the news is grim. For Dr. Aventura, truth was dignity. To mislead a patient, to offer false hope or to obscure the risks of a procedure, would be to betray the sacred trust between doctor and patient. In Rotary as in medicine, truth had to be the starting point.

The second question, *“Is it fair to all concerned?”* was equally central. Fairness, in his context, meant equity of access. He was painfully aware that advanced cardiac surgery was beyond the financial reach of most Filipinos. Yet fairness demanded that such lifesaving procedures not be confined to the wealthy. This conviction drove him to perform pro bono surgeries, to champion projects like “Save a Heart, Save a Life,” and to bring Rotary into the fight against medical inequality.

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Fairness, for him, meant opening the doors of the Philippine Heart Center to those who could never afford to walk through them.

The third question, *“Will it build goodwill and better friendships?”* found its answer in the way he approached both his colleagues and his patients. In the operating room, the surgeon is captain of a team — anesthesiologists, nurses, perfusionists, and assistants must all work in harmony. Goodwill was not optional; it was essential. He treated colleagues not as subordinates but as partners, building bonds of trust that translated into seamless teamwork. With patients, goodwill was shown in the compassion that softened the harsh realities of surgery. In Rotary, goodwill and friendships gave fuel to projects; in medicine, they gave cohesion to surgical teams.

Finally, the fourth question, *“Will it be beneficial to all concerned?”* was perhaps the most powerful in his life. It was the question he applied not only to Rotary projects but even to small decisions. Would his actions bring benefit to patients? To families? To the larger community? Even in lighter pursuits, like singing with the RCM Music Chorale to raise funds, he measured the effort by this standard. Whether or not their voices were golden was irrelevant; what mattered was that the effort benefited patients, communities, and Rotary itself.

Legacy of Healing, Legacy of Service

The true measure of a life well lived is not found in titles or accolades, but in what endures after the hands have stilled and the voice has quieted. For Dr. Nilo, legacy was never a grand monument nor a plaque on a wall — it was the beating of every heart he helped restore, the fellowship of every Rotarian he served beside, and the institution he shaped into a sanctuary for a nation.



Award given to Dr. Nilo Aventura during the Centennial Celebration of Rotary International, Manila Hotel 2005

The Philippine Heart Center: A Living Monument

The most visible legacy of Dr. Aventura's

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life is, of course, the **Philippine Heart Center (PHC)**. From its inception in 1975 through his leadership until 1986, PHC grew from vision to reality: a place where Filipino patients could receive world-class care without leaving their homeland. To this day, the PHC remains one of Asia's foremost institutions for cardiovascular medicine, its halls echoing with the stories of countless lives extended and families reunited.

It is easy to see the hospital as brick and mortar, operating theaters and machines. Yet for those who knew its first Executive Director, the Center is something far more human: it is his heart made visible, his discipline given form, his compassion institutionalized. Every nurse trained, every young doctor mentored, every patient healed — these are the living monuments of his time at the helm.

A Rotarian's Legacy

But his legacy cannot be confined to medicine alone. Within the Rotary Club of Manila, Dr. Aventura left an imprint no less indelible. The **“Save a Heart, Save a Life”** project, which he co-led with Past President Santiago Dumlao, continues to symbolize the best of what Rotary can achieve: the marriage of professional skill and volunteer spirit, the translation of compassion into concrete action.

Hundreds of patients owe their lives to that campaign. Yet perhaps just as significant are the generations of Rotarians who were inspired by it. They saw in Dr. Aventura a model of what it meant to be a Rotarian: to offer not only money or time, but the very essence of one's vocation for the service of humanity. In his case, that meant the surgeon's scalpel, the precision of training, the discipline of leadership.

Even in the lighter aspects of fellowship, such as his involvement in the RCM Chorale, he left behind a legacy: the reminder that joy, music, and camaraderie can be instruments of healing when placed at the service of others.

A Father's Legacy

His legacy also extends to his family. In 2024, decades after Dr. Aventura first assumed leadership of the Philippine Heart Center, his son Dr. Avenilo Licud Aventura, Jr., also a thoracic and cardiovascular surgeon, was appointed Executive Director of the same institution. The torch had passed from father to son, not by entitlement but by inspiration.

For Dr. Aventura Sr., this succession was not simply a continuation of

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bloodline but a vindication of values: discipline, service, and compassion handed down like heirlooms more precious than any inheritance. Through his son, the rhythm of his life's work continues, the same commitment to healing flowing across generations.

The Ripple Effect

Yet legacy is not only institutional or familial. It is also personal, rippling outward into communities and lives. Patients who once lay on his operating table now live as grandparents, professionals, parents. Children who might never have seen adulthood because of congenital heart defects have grown into lives full of promise. Families who once braced for loss instead discovered joy.

Rotarians who served alongside him found themselves inspired to bring their own professional expertise into service, following his example of translating vocation into volunteerism. Younger doctors who trained under him carried forward not only surgical skills but also the ethic of fairness, truth, and compassion.

This ripple effect is impossible to measure in numbers, for it lives in stories. In a farmer who returned to till his land, in a teacher who returned to her

When asked what sustained the Rotary Club of Manila across generations, he pointed without hesitation to three enduring strengths: professionalism, camaraderie, and volunteerism.

classroom, in a child who returned to play. His legacy is carried in lungs that breathe, in hearts that beat, in lives that continue because he chose to serve.

Lessons for the Future

In reflecting on his Rotary journey, Dr. Aventura pointed to three enduring strengths of the Rotary Club of Manila: **professionalism, camaraderie, and volunteerism.**

Reflections and Vision

As his decades of service stretched into nearly half a century, Dr. Avenilo “Nilo” Padernilla Aventura Sr. came to embody a rare vantage point: that of a man who had not only led in his profession and in Rotary, but who had also lived long enough to reflect on what truly mattered. His reflections were never abstract musings; they were grounded in the hard-earned wisdom of a surgeon, the tested discipline of an

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administrator, and the lived experience of a Rotarian whose hands had touched both life and death, both despair and hope.

Epilogue – A Life Fully Lived

The heart is both fragile and resilient. It can falter under strain, yet with care it can beat strong for decades. It can betray the body in sudden silence, or it can sustain it with faithful rhythm. For Dr. Avenilo “Nilo” Padernilla Aventura Sr., the heart was not only the organ he studied, repaired, and taught others to heal. It was also the metaphor of his life: a rhythm of discipline, compassion, and service that pulsed through everything he did.

From his childhood in pre-war Philippines to his medical training in New York and New Jersey, from the founding of the Philippine Heart Center to his induction into the Rotary Club of Manila, his story was one long heartbeat of purpose. Each chapter of his life flowed into the next like chambers of the heart: education feeding vocation, vocation feeding service, service feeding legacy.

A Symphony of Healing and Service

Looking back, one sees not a career but a symphony. The scalpel in his hand was a

violin bow drawing out the delicate music of survival. The operating room was his stage, the nurses and surgeons his orchestra, the patient’s life the melody. Yet this symphony did not end at the doors of the Philippine Heart Center. It extended into Rotary meetings, chorale rehearsals, medical missions, and community projects, where service became harmony and fellowship became rhythm.

He proved that the operating room and the fellowship hall were not opposites but partners. Both demanded humility, both demanded discipline, both demanded the giving of oneself for the good of others.

It is rare to find a man who can straddle two worlds — the precision of science and the warmth of service — without compromise. Dr. Aventura managed it with grace. He was surgeon and Rotarian, director and chorister, leader and friend. He proved that the operating room and the fellowship hall were not opposites but partners. Both demanded humility, both demanded discipline, both demanded the giving of oneself for the good of others.

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The Hearts He Healed

The most powerful testimonies to his life are not found in archives or awards but in the lives of those he healed. The farmer who returned to his field after a successful surgery. The mother who lived to see her children graduate. The child born with a hole in the heart who grew into adulthood because of a Rotary-supported operation. Each life restored was a verse in the greater song of his service.



Rotary Club of Manila Award for Community Service to Dr. A. Aventura given by RCM President Boy Ampil, Westin Philippine Plaza, June 9, 2004

To walk the halls of the Philippine Heart Center today is to walk through his legacy. Behind each procedure, each medical breakthrough, is the memory of a man who once believed that Filipinos deserved no less than the best that medicine could offer. Behind each patient referral handled by Rotary is the echo of his conviction that service knows no boundaries, that one good turn indeed deserves another.

The Fellowship He Treasured

But Dr. Aventura's life was not only about healing bodies. It was about healing communities, binding people together in fellowship and purpose. For him, Rotary was not an obligation but a joy. The camaraderie of animated debates, the discipline of punctual meetings, the laughter in the Chorale — these nourished him as much as any professional achievement.

He found in Rotary a family, one that reminded him he was never alone in his mission. Past President Santiago Dumlao, the Rotarians of the New York mission in Bohol, the colleagues in the Chorale — they were brothers who marched with him, who sang with him, who stood with him in the trenches of service. Their fellowship was proof that service is not sustained by duty alone but by joy, laughter, and friendship.

The Moral Compass He Followed

Through all this, the Four-Way Test was his constant compass. In the operating room, it meant telling the truth to patients and families, even when difficult. It meant fairness in deciding who would receive scarce surgical slots. It meant goodwill in treating colleagues with respect and dignity. And it meant benefit — always asking whether the action would truly improve lives.

By living these questions daily, he showed that Rotary is not just for meetings but for life itself. The Four-Way Test was not framed on his wall; it was written in his choices, his surgeries, his relationships. It became the pulse of his leadership, the rhythm of his service.

A Legacy That Lives On

Today, his legacy continues in many forms. It lives on in the Philippine Heart Center, where his son, Dr. Jun, now carries the torch as Executive Director, continuing the work his father began in 1975. It lives on in the Rotary Club of Manila, where younger Rotarians recall his example and strive to use their own professions for service. It lives on in every patient who survived because of his steady hands, and in every

The Four-Way Test was not framed on his wall; it was written in his choices, his surgeries, his relationships. It became the pulse of his leadership, the rhythm of his service.

community uplifted because of his Rotary projects.

But perhaps most profoundly, it lives on in the values he embodied: professionalism, camaraderie, volunteerism. These were not just words to him; they were the essence of a life fully lived.

A Life Fully Lived

When history remembers Dr. Nilo, it will list many titles: surgeon, pioneer, executive director, Rotarian. But to reduce his life to titles would be to miss its essence. He was, above all, a man whose heart beat for others — for his patients, for his colleagues, for his fellow Rotarians, for his country.

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His life was proof that greatness does not lie in self-advancement but in self-giving. He could have chosen to remain abroad after his training, building a lucrative career in New York or New Jersey. Instead, he returned to the Philippines, choosing service over comfort, building institutions instead of merely practicing within them. He could have confined himself to the prestige of being a hospital director. Instead, he joined Rotary, sharing his time and talent with those who could never repay him.

And so, his life, like the heart he so often repaired, did not beat for itself but for others. That is why, even now, long after his tenure at the Philippine Heart Center and decades since his induction into Rotary, his story still inspires. It is the story of a healer who became a servant-leader, of a Rotarian who lived the motto Service Above Self not in word but in deed.

In the final measure, his epitaph is not carved in stone but written in lives — in every patient who breathes, in every family reunited, in every Rotarian inspired. His life was a heartbeat that will not fade, a rhythm that continues in the institutions he built, the missions he led, the family he raised, and the fellowship he cherished.

A life of discipline.
A life of compassion.
A life of service.
A life fully lived.



At the oath-taking of his son, Dr. Jun Aventura, as the Executive Director of the Philippine Heart Center in June 2024.

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

Olayinka Hakeem Babalola Selected to be 2026-27 Rotary International President

OLAYINKA Hakeem Babalola, a member of the Rotary Club of Trans Amadi, Nigeria, has been selected by the Board of Directors to become Rotary International's president for 2026-27. His term will begin on 1 July 2026.

The Board, guided by the RI code of policies, conducted a special session to select the organization's leader after the resignation of RI President-elect SangKoo Yun, who decided to step back from his Rotary responsibilities and focus on his recovery from recent cancer treatment.

Babalola began his Rotary journey in 1988 as a Rotaractor. He joined the Rotary Club of Trans Amadi six years later. His leadership roles include serving as district governor (2011-12), RI vice president (2019-20), and member of the RI Board (2018-20).



Olayinka Hakeem Babalola, a member of the Rotary Club of Trans Amadi, Nigeria, has been selected by the Board of Directors to become Rotary International's president for 2026-27.

Olayinka Hakeem Babalola Selected to be 2026-27 Rotary International President

He was also an active leader and participant in RI committees such as the End Polio Now Countdown to History Campaign Committee (2017-23) and the Nigeria National PolioPlus Committee (2013-present, adviser 2016-present).

An attorney, Babalola received a university degree in engineering in 1988. He has worked for 25 years in the oil and gas industry, holding senior positions in Shell PLC and carrying out projects on four continents. He is the founder of two companies: Riviera Services Ltd., an oil and gas infrastructure delivery company, and Lead and Change Consulting, an executive coaching and organizational performance advisory group.

Babalola's professional affiliations include the Nigerian Society of Engineers, the Institute of Safety Professionals, and the Association of Change Management Practitioners. He is a member of Jericho Business Club, an organization in his home city that provides input to governments on economic and social policy.

Babalola and his wife, Preba, live in the city of Port Harcourt. He supports The Rotary Foundation with a named endowment and as an Arch Klumph Society member. A trustee of ShelterBox UK and director of the Safe Blood Africa project, he is a recipient of the Africa Centennial Heroes Award, the Regional Service Award for a Polio-Free World, the RI Service Above Self Award, and The Rotary Foundation Citation for Meritorious Service.

The president of Rotary International serves a one-year term, presiding over the Board of Directors and providing inspirational leadership for the organization. As the spokesperson for the global network, the president visits clubs around the world to promote Rotary's values and represent the organization at major events. Rotary chooses its president from members who have demonstrated extensive leadership experience within Rotary, including service as a club president, district governor, and member of the Board.

—28 August 2025

Source: www.rotary.org

INTERCLUB EVENT

Rotaract
Club of Tacloban



UNITE
FOR
GOOD

Rotary Club of Tacloban's 78th Charter Anniversary, Induction and Handover Ceremonies



The Rotary Club of Tacloban held its 78th Charter Anniversary, Induction and Handover Ceremonies on August 23, 2025 at Summit Hotel, Robinsons Place Tacloban, Marasbaras, Tacloban City.

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optical motion picture

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Rotary Club of Tacloban Officers and Directors RY 2025-2026

President - Jude Duarte
Vice President/President Elect - Neil Sia
Secretary - Romer Serna
Treasurer - Orlando Uy
SAA - Glenn Tabanao
IPP - Joey Reyna
Service Project - Anup Khiatani
TRF Chair - Malcom James Ching

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Protocol Officer - Virgilio Gaspay
Club Administration - Marco Nardo
Public Image - Joseph Escalona
Public Relations - Edgardo Esperancilla
Youth Service Committee - Peter Justin Chua
DRRMC - Rhoel Ladera
CICO - Felicito Cabe Jr
Bldg Manager - Millan Almar Estorninos

INTERCLUB EVENT

Rotary Club of Tacloban's 78th Charter Anniversary, Induction and Handover Ceremonies



Rtn. Richard Ang attended the 78th Charter Anniversary Celebration, Induction, and Handover Ceremonies of the Rotary Club of Tacloban



INTERCLUB EVENT

Rotary Club of Tacloban's 78th Charter Anniversary, Induction and Handover Ceremonies



*Jude A. Duarte
78th President
Rotary Club of Tacloban
District 3860
RY 2025-2026
(with his wife)*



The new set of officers of the Rotary Club of Tacloban for RY 2025-2026 (L-R): Inducting Officer, President Jude A. Duarte, Secretary Romer S. Serna, Treasurer Orlando C. Uy, PE/Vice President Neil M. Sia, Membership Eugene A. Tan, Rotary Foundation Malcom James Y. Ching, Sergeant-At-Arms Glenn A. Tabanao, Club Administration Marco Nardo, Youth Service Committee Peter Justin A. Chua, Building Manager Millan Almar D. Estorninos, Service Project Anup H. Khatani, DRRMC Rhoel A. Ladera, Protocol Officer Virgilio P. Gaspay, & Immediate Past President Jose Antonio D. Reyna

INTERCLUB EVENT

Governor's Visit to the Rotary Club of Raha Sulayman Manila



DISTRICT Secretary-General Hermie Esguerra attended the Governor's Visit of the Rotary Club of Raha Sulayman Manila last August 27, 2025 at the Board Room of the YMCA in Manila. The club is a daughter club of the Rotary Club of Manila.



INTERCLUB EVENT

Rotary Club of Carmona's Induction Ceremony



*President Raoul Creencia
with RCC President Cecile Lei*



*President Raoul Creencia
with District Governor Mary Mei Rodrigo,
RC Raja Sulayman President Kelvin Cheng,
and RC Intramuros President
Darwin Ibañez*

PRESIDENT Raoul Creencia attended the Induction Ceremony of the Rotary Club of Carmona on August 28, 2025 in Spring Palace, Paseo de Carmona.

FELLOWSHIP

Manila Rotarians Gather for Fellowship at the O2 Rooftop Bar

August 28, 2025



FELLOWSHIP

Manila Rotarians Gather for Fellowship at the O2 Rooftop Bar

August 28, 2025



FELLOWSHIP

RC Manila at the Merdeka Flag Raising



ROTARY Club of Manila
Director for Innovation &
Sustainability (DIS)
Secretary Anton Mauricio
attended the Malaysian National
Day flag-raising breakfast held on
August 31, 2025, at Rumah
Malaysia.

The Embassy of Malaysia in the
Philippines, led by HE Ambassador
Abdul Malik Melvin Castelino Anthony,
hosted the event. Malaysia is also this
year's ASEAN host.



FELLOWSHIP

RC Manila at the Merdaka Flag Raising



RECOGNITION CORNER

Rotarian Jerry Agnes Leads in Establishing a Semiconductor Facility in India

ROTARIAN Jerry Agnes, Director/ CEO of CG Semi Private Limited, was hired by the Murugappa group to set up a semiconductor facility in India.

The company currently has more than 70 expatriates from the Philippines, comprising workers, engineers, technicians, a director, and a VP with semiconductor experience, with a combined experience of over 1,000 years in the semiconductor industry.

The Philippine Flag stands proud in the company premises.



SAKSHI POST

CG Semi unveils one of India's first end-to-end OSAT facilities in Gujarat

Aug 28, 2025, 19:20 IST

CG Semi is a subsidiary of CG Power and Industrial Solutions Limited and part of the Murugappa Group.

"This facility represents more than a milestone for me or for CG Semi; it is a national milestone. It shows how the Government and Industry can come together with conviction, capital, and scale to achieve the vision set by our Prime Minister. Every chip we make here is a step toward India's technological sovereignty," said Vellayan Subbiah, Chairman, CG Power.

To build and operate the OSAT, CG Semi has brought together a team of industry veterans with a combined experience of over 1,000 years in semiconductors.

"The inauguration of CG Semi Private Limited's Pilot Production facility in Sanand today marks a significant leap in India's semiconductor manufacturing journey. Coming just ahead of the 'SEMICON India 2025' mega event, this milestone showcases India's capability to deliver high-tech manufacturing at scale," said Ashok Chandak, CEO and President, SEMI India and IESA.



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