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HON. JING QUAN

*Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary of the
People's Republic of China to
the Republic of the Philippines*

The Intelligence Age Begins

*Rotary Club of Manila Hosts
a Landmark Dialogue on
Artificial Intelligence*

RC Manila and PEZA
Discuss TOWER Awards
2026 Partnership

OXYGEN AND FIRE

**Joaquin Capen
Rodriguez's Life
of Ambition,
Integrity,
and Stewardship**

CONTENTS



Program	4
Editorial	6
Guest of Honor and Speaker	16
President's Message	18
The Intelligence Age Begins <i>Rotary Club of Manila Hosts a Landmark Dialogue on Artificial Intelligence</i>	22
Club Administration	52
Rotary Club of Manila and PEZA Discuss TOWER Awards 2026 Partnership	58
RCM Pro Patria Journalism Awards Committee Convenes	60
4th RCM Golf Cup	62
OXYGEN AND FIRE Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship	66
Fellowship	168
In the News	172
Board of Directors and Executive Officers for RY 2025-2026	174
Editorial Board for RY 2025-2026	175



PROGRAM



ROTARY CLUB OF MANILA 25th Weekly Membership Meeting Rotary Year 2025-2026

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

Moderator: PE REGINALD T. "Reggie" YU

PART I

11:00 AM Registration /Lunch

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

Invocation | **PD HENRY SY GO**

National Anthem of China | **AVP**
Philippine National Anthem | **AVP**

Rotary Club of Manila Hymn
RCM WF Music Chorale

The Four (4) Way Test | **DIR. WARREN S. SO**

Acknowledgement of Guests
PE REGINALD T. "Reggie" YU

Welcome Song | **RCM WF Music Chorale**

Birthday Celebrants

Mar. 13 STAR Rtn. Chris C. Tamesis
Mar. 17 ABLA Hansel Tillman
Rtn. Kazu Nomura
Mar. 19 PD Issam Eldebs

Maligayang Bati / Happy Birthday Song
RCM WF Chorale

PART II

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

1:00 PM Introduction of the Guest Speakers
DE DELFIN N. "Del" LORENZANA

Guest of Honor and Speaker

HON. JING QUAN
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary of the
People's Republic of China
to the Republic of the Philippines

Address:

1:30 PM Open Forum / Q&A

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

2:00 PM Adjournment
PRES. RAOUL C. CREENCIA

EDITORIAL

Reginald T. Yu
Editor-in-Chief



THE relationship between China and the Philippines has always been complex — rooted in centuries of commerce, migration, and cultural exchange, yet shaped in modern times by strategic rivalry and shifting geopolitical realities. Today, however, that relationship is entering an even more complicated chapter.

The Iran war and the resulting global oil crisis have introduced a

new dimension to the strategic calculations of both nations. What once revolved primarily around maritime disputes and economic engagement must now be viewed within a wider global framework—one defined by energy security, supply chain disruption, and the urgent need for regional stability.

In this context, the upcoming visit and address of **His Excellency Ambassador Jing Quan**, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of China to the Philippines, at the 25th Weekly Membership Meeting of the Rotary Club of Manila, comes at a moment of unusual global uncertainty.

Understanding the future of China–Philippines relations today requires looking beyond the West Philippine Sea and examining the wider geopolitical forces that are reshaping the world.

A Global Crisis Reaches Asia

The ongoing war involving Iran has triggered what analysts are calling one of the largest disruptions to global energy markets in history. Oil supplies have been severely

EDITORIAL

affected as conflict threatens shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, a maritime chokepoint through which roughly 20% of the world's oil supply normally passes.

The resulting supply shock has already driven crude prices above \$100 per barrel, with some projections warning of even higher levels if the conflict continues.

For Asia, the consequences are immediate and profound. Most Asian economies are net importers of energy, making them particularly vulnerable to oil price spikes and supply disruptions.

Few countries feel this pressure more acutely than the Philippines.

The Philippines imports nearly 90 percent of its oil from the Middle East, meaning that any disruption in that region reverberates quickly through the domestic economy.

When oil prices surge, the effect cascades through every sector of society — from transport fares to food prices, from electricity costs to industrial production.

In short, geopolitical conflict thousands of kilometers away quickly becomes inflation at the pump and higher prices at the market for ordinary Filipinos.

The Economic Dimension of China–Philippines Relations

This energy crisis is not only an economic challenge — it is also a diplomatic one.

China is the world's largest importer of oil, and like the Philippines, it relies heavily on energy shipments passing through the same vulnerable maritime corridors. The conflict has already forced Chinese refiners to reduce operations amid supply disruptions.

This shared vulnerability to energy shocks creates an unexpected point of common interest between Manila and Beijing.

Both countries have strong incentives to maintain stable maritime trade routes, open shipping lanes, and predictable energy markets.

EDITORIAL

While the two nations may disagree on maritime sovereignty issues in the South China Sea, they share an equally strong interest in preventing global conflicts from disrupting the economic lifelines of Asia.

The Iran crisis therefore highlights an important reality: regional cooperation is no longer merely a diplomatic ideal—it is an economic necessity.

ASEAN and the Call for Stability

Across Southeast Asia, governments are increasingly alarmed by the economic consequences of the Middle East conflict.

ASEAN foreign ministers recently called for an immediate halt to the escalation, warning that rising oil prices and disrupted shipping routes threaten trade and economic stability throughout the region.

The Philippines, as a key ASEAN member and maritime nation, finds itself in a particularly delicate position.

On one hand, Manila must defend

its sovereignty and uphold international law in the West Philippine Sea. On the other hand, it must also maintain working relations with China — the region's largest economy and one of its most important trading partners.

The Iran war reinforces the need for strategic maturity in diplomacy.

Confrontation in one region of the world is already causing economic disruption in another. Escalation in Asia would only multiply those consequences.

A Region of Interdependence

The Indo-Pacific today is defined by interdependence as much as by rivalry.

China remains one of the Philippines' largest trading partners, while Filipino exports — from agricultural goods to electronics — continue to flow into Chinese markets.

At the same time, the Philippines maintains strong alliances with the United States and other democratic partners.

EDITORIAL

This dual reality often creates the impression that the Philippines must choose between competing powers. In truth, the challenge is far more nuanced.

The Philippines must pursue strategic balance — maintaining strong alliances while also preserving constructive engagement with China.

In an interconnected world, economic prosperity often depends on cooperation even among nations with political disagreements.

The Energy Wake-Up Call

If there is one lesson from the Iran war, it is this: energy security is national security.

The Philippines' heavy dependence on imported fuel leaves it particularly vulnerable to geopolitical shocks.

For Manila, this crisis may accelerate efforts to diversify energy sources, expand renewable energy investments, and strengthen strategic reserves.

China, too, is facing similar pressures.

Both countries therefore share an incentive to pursue long-term strategies that reduce vulnerability to external energy disruptions.

Ironically, global crises sometimes create opportunities for cooperation that geopolitical rivalry alone might not produce.

Dialogue in an Age of Uncertainty

This is why diplomatic engagement remains essential.

Forums such as the Rotary Club of Manila play a unique role in fostering dialogue between leaders from different sectors — government, business, academia, and civil society.

The visit of Ambassador Jing Quan is not merely ceremonial.

It represents an opportunity to discuss difficult issues candidly while exploring areas of cooperation in trade, economic stability, regional security, and

EDITORIAL

energy resilience.

In times of geopolitical uncertainty, dialogue itself becomes a form of diplomacy.

The Path Forward

China and the Philippines will remain neighbors long after the present geopolitical crises have passed.

Their relationship will continue to evolve — sometimes cooperative, sometimes contentious — but always consequential for the future of Southeast Asia.

The Iran war reminds us that the world's challenges are increasingly interconnected. Conflict in the Middle East can disrupt shipping in Asia, alter energy prices in Manila, and reshape economic policy in Beijing.

In such a world, diplomacy must rise above short-term tensions and focus on long-term stability.

The real test of leadership lies not in avoiding disagreements but in managing them responsibly.

A Shared Responsibility for Peace

For both China and the Philippines, the stakes are clear.

A stable region ensures economic growth, energy security, and prosperity for millions of people.

A destabilized region risks undermining decades of progress.

The challenge before both nations is therefore not merely geopolitical. It is profoundly human.

At its heart lies a simple question:

Can neighbors with different strategic interests still work together to preserve peace and prosperity in a turbulent world?

The answer will shape the future not only of the South China Sea — but of the entire Indo-Pacific region. ■

GUEST OF HONOR AND SPEAKER

HIS Excellency Jing Quan was born in July 1975 in Shaanxi Province, China.

Ambassador Jing earned a bachelor's degree in English from Xian Foreign Studies University, a master's degree, and subsequently a PhD in international relations.

He entered the foreign service in 1997 as a Staff Member at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and remained in that role until 1998.

In 1998-2002, he was Attaché and Third Secretary, Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Kingdom of Thailand.

2002-2009, he was Third Secretary and Deputy Director, Department of North American and Oceanian Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

2009-2011, he was Second Secretary and later First Secretary, Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America

2011-2018, he went back home to be First Secretary, Director and Counsellor, Department of North American and Oceanian Affairs



HON. JING QUAN

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
of the People's Republic of China to
the Republic of the Philippines

(Credit: Manila Bulletin)

2018-2021, Deputy Director-General,
Department of North American and
Oceanian Affairs, MFA

2021-2025, as Minister and subsequently
the Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of
the People's Republic of China in the
United States of America

On December 11, 2025, he officially
became the People's Republic of China's
Ambassador to the Republic of the
Philippines.

Ambassador Quan is married with one
daughter. ■

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Chinese Ambassador

THIS week, the Rotary Club of Manila will have Chinese Ambassador Jing Quan as Guest of Honor and Speaker.

The decision to invite the Chinese Ambassador as a guest speaker, even amid strained relations between the Philippines and China over the West Philippine Sea, is best understood not as a political endorsement, but as a deliberate affirmation of Rotary's enduring principles: dialogue, understanding, and the pursuit of peace.

Rotary has always stood as a bridge-builder. Founded on the ideals of service above self and mutual respect among peoples, Rotary creates spaces where conversations can occur even – especially -- when official channels are tense or constrained. In inviting the Chinese Ambassador, the Rotary Club of Manila is not taking sides in a



Raoul C. Creencia
President

geopolitical dispute; rather, it is upholding a tradition of constructive engagement. Dialogue is not a concession -- it is a necessity.

Diplomatic tensions, particularly those involving territorial and sovereign interests, are often complex and deeply rooted. The disputes in the West Philippine Sea evoke strong national sentiments, and rightly so. Yet history has shown that isolation and silence rarely lead to resolution. Engagement, on the other hand, allows for clarity, reduces misperceptions, and fosters the human dimension often lost in state-

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

to-state exchanges. A guest speaking engagement in a civic forum like Rotary provides a unique opportunity for listening -- not necessarily agreeing, but understanding.

It is also important to recognize that the Rotary Club of Manila, as the oldest Rotary club in Asia, occupies a unique position in Philippine civil society. Its platform is not merely social; it is intellectual and diplomatic in the broader sense. By hosting no less than China's Ambassador to our country, the Club affirms its role as a convener of ideas and perspectives. It allows its members -- leaders from business, law, media, and public service -- to engage directly with a key international actor whose policies and positions significantly impact the region.

Moreover, such an invitation reflects confidence rather than weakness. It signals that Filipino institutions and leaders are secure enough in their national position to engage openly, ask difficult questions, and articulate concerns in a respectful but candid manner. Dialogue in this context becomes an assertion of agency, not acquiescence.

There is also a practical dimension. The Philippines and China, despite their disputes, remain economically intertwined and geographically proximate. Channels of communication must remain open, not only at the level of governments but also among peoples and institutions. Rotary, with its global network and non-partisan character, is uniquely positioned to sustain these channels.

Ultimately, the invitation is consistent with Rotary's long-standing commitment to peacebuilding. Peace is not achieved solely through treaties or legal victories; it is cultivated through understanding, patience, and sustained engagement. By hosting the Chinese Ambassador, the Rotary Club of Manila reinforces the idea that even in times of tension, there must be room for conversation.

In a world increasingly marked by polarization, such gestures matter. They remind us that diplomacy is not confined to formal halls of power. Sometimes, it begins in forums where individuals gather not as adversaries, but as members of a shared global community -- seeking, if not agreement, then at least a deeper understanding of one another. ■

cover story

by PE Reginald T. Yu

The Intelligence Age Begins

Rotary Club of Manila
Hosts a Landmark
Dialogue on
Artificial Intelligence

THE 24th Weekly Membership Meeting of the Rotary Club of Manila gathered Rotarians, guests, and distinguished thought leaders at the historic **Manila Polo Club** for a timely and far-reaching conversation on one of the most transformative forces of our time — **Artificial Intelligence**.

Presided over by **Rotary Club of Manila President Raoul C. Creencia**, the meeting underscored Rotary's enduring tradition of convening leaders to examine issues that will shape the future of society. With **Club Secretary Antonilo D.C. "Anton" Mauricio** serving as moderator, the program seamlessly blended Rotary's cherished traditions of fellowship and ceremony with a compelling discussion about the opportunities and challenges presented by the rapidly emerging Intelligence Age.



President Raoul C. Creencia called the 24th Weekly Membership Meeting of the Rotary Club of Manila to order.



Secretary Antonilo D.C. "Anton" Mauricio moderated the meeting.



Director-Elect Delfin N. "Del" Lorenzana led the invocation.

Opening Ceremonies and Fellowship

The meeting began with registration and fellowship over lunch, a moment that allowed Rotarians and guests to reconnect and strengthen the friendships that form the bedrock of the organization's service mission.

President Raoul C. Creencia formally called the meeting to order and welcomed the assembly to an afternoon that promised both intellectual stimulation and meaningful dialogue.

The invocation was delivered by **Director-Elect Delfin N. "Del" Lorenzana**, whose prayer invited reflection on wisdom, humility, and responsibility in leadership—qualities that are increasingly vital in a world being reshaped by technological change.

Members then rose for the **Philippine National Anthem**, reaffirming Rotary's deep commitment to the nation and its future.

The **RCM World-Famous Music Chorale** followed with a stirring rendition of the **Rotary Club of Manila Hymn**, reminding those present of the Club's proud legacy as the oldest Rotary club in Asia.



Rotarian Steve "Momo" Mommaerts led the recitation of the Four-Way Test.

Rotarian Steve "Momo" Mommaerts then led the members in the recitation of The Four-Way Test, Rotary's timeless ethical guide that calls upon every Rotarian to measure actions and decisions against the highest standards of truth, fairness, goodwill, and benefit to all concerned.

Secretary Antonilo D.C. "Anton" Mauricio then offered the Acknowledgement of Guests, warmly recognizing visiting Rotarians, distinguished speakers, and friends of the Club.

The **RCM World-Famous Music Chorale** returned to the stage to perform the **Welcome Song**, further reinforcing the sense of camaraderie and fellowship that has long characterized Rotary gatherings.

Celebrating Rotary Fellowship

The meeting also paused to celebrate several Rotarians marking birthdays during the week.

Those recognized included **DGND Hermie Esguerra, Rotarians Brendan Egan, JB Pallasigue, Ben Ibuyan, and STAR Rotarian Winston Ginez.**

The **RCM World-Famous Chorale** led the traditional **“Maligayang Bati / Happy Birthday”** tribute, a cheerful interlude that reminded everyone present that Rotary is not only an organization of service and leadership but also a fellowship of enduring friendship.

President’s Time

During **President’s Time**, **President Raoul C. Creencia** reflected on the responsibility of leaders to remain attentive to the forces shaping society’s future.

In a rapidly evolving world, he noted, civic organizations must continually expand their



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

understanding of emerging developments — particularly those that promise to transform economies, institutions, and everyday life.

Artificial Intelligence, he observed, represents one of the defining issues of our era. The technology’s ability to reshape industries, education, governance, and communication means that conversations about AI can no longer remain confined to technical circles. They must involve leaders from every sector of society.

This perspective set the stage for the afternoon’s centerpiece discussion.



Pinning of New Paul Harris Fellows.
STAR Rtn. Winston M. Ginez and
STAR Rtn. Chris C. Tamesis

Introducing the Panel “The State of the Nation in AI”

The panel discussion, introduced by **Club Secretary Anton Mauricio**, focused on the theme **“The State of the Nation in AI.”**

The speakers represented the **Global AI Council Philippines**, a multidisciplinary initiative that brings together experts from technology, law, business, and public policy to help shape the country’s approach to artificial intelligence.

The distinguished panelists included:

Dr. Donald Patrick Lim,
 Chairman and Co-Founder of the
 Global AI Council Philippines.

Atty. Mark S. Gorriceta,
 Corporate Secretary and Co-Founder
 of the Global AI Council Philippines.

Ms. Catherine S. Jalandoni,
 Founder and President of the Global
 AI Council Philippines.

Together, the panelists offered a broad and insightful perspective on how the Philippines must prepare for the profound transformations brought about by AI.





Club Secretary Anton Mauricio introduced and moderated the panel.

Entering the Intelligence Age Dr. Donald Patrick Lim's Strategic Perspective

Dr. Donald Patrick Lim began the discussion with a thoughtful preamble that framed artificial intelligence as a defining force of the present rather than a distant possibility.

AI, he emphasized, is already transforming how businesses operate, how governments serve citizens, how students learn, and how societies make decisions. For that reason, the real question facing the world today is no longer whether AI will change the world. The more urgent question is how societies will



Dr. Donald Patrick Lim started the discussion by framing artificial intelligence as a force of the present, not a distant possibility.

shape AI so that it improves the world rather than harms it.

For the Philippines, artificial intelligence presents both tremendous opportunity and serious challenge.

The country possesses important advantages, including a young and digitally savvy population, a globally competitive workforce, and a vibrant ecosystem of technology entrepreneurs. For many years these strengths helped establish the Philippines as a global leader in outsourcing, customer support, and digital services.

Yet the very technologies that created these industries are now disrupting them.

Lim explained that AI systems capable of translating languages instantly and performing sophisticated knowledge work are gradually eroding the traditional advantages of English proficiency and service specialization. In this new environment, countries can no longer rely solely on their workforce's communication skills. They must instead develop the capacity to create, design, and deploy AI-enabled technologies themselves.

In other words, the Philippines must move beyond being merely a user of AI tools and instead aspire to become a builder of AI-driven industries.

Education and the Foundations of Intelligence

One of the most important themes of Lim's presentation concerned education and workforce preparation.

Although many governments have begun discussing the inclusion of artificial intelligence in school curricula, Lim argued that the most urgent priority is actually far more fundamental.

Before students can master AI, they must develop the ability to think clearly, reason logically, and solve problems independently.

He explained that even highly capable university students often struggle with basic mental calculations or analytical reasoning because of an overreliance on digital tools. Without strong foundational skills in mathematics and logical thinking, students may find themselves ill-equipped to design or guide AI systems effectively.

Thus, rather than rushing prematurely into specialized technical instruction, the country must strengthen the basic intellectual foundations that enable students to process information, identify problems, and formulate solutions.

Artificial intelligence, Lim emphasized, is ultimately shaped not by machines but by the questions humans ask and the decisions humans make.

Three Principles for Responsible AI Development

According to Lim, responsible AI development must be anchored on three essential principles.

First, technology must place humans first. Artificial intelligence should enhance human potential and creativity rather than undermine human dignity or displace meaningful work without consideration of social consequences.

Second, AI must be used responsibly and ethically. Systems must operate transparently, and their outputs must be accountable to the public.

Third, artificial intelligence must contribute to national competitiveness. Nations that harness AI effectively will lead the next era of economic growth, while those that fail to adapt risk falling behind.

For Lim, these principles underscore the importance of collaboration across sectors. Governments, businesses, universities, and civil society must work together to ensure that the benefits of AI are distributed widely and responsibly.

Technology, Law, and Governance ***Atty. Mark S. Gorriceta's Perspective***

The second speaker, **Atty. Mark S. Gorriceta**, brought a legal and policy perspective to the discussion.



Atty. Mark S. Gorriceta brought a legal and policy perspective to the discussion.

A pioneer in technology law in the Philippines, Gorriceta has been deeply involved in shaping the country's regulatory framework for emerging technologies. His work spans areas such as blockchain, cryptocurrency, e-commerce, digital banking, and cybersecurity.

He explained that artificial intelligence has quickly become a major legislative concern, with numerous bills currently being discussed in Congress.

Many of these proposals, Gorriceta noted, approach AI primarily from a defensive standpoint, focusing on the possibility that automation could displace jobs. While such concerns are

understandable, he cautioned that regulation must not focus exclusively on job protection.

Artificial intelligence also raises important questions about governance, trust, literacy, transparency, and the spread of misinformation. Deepfakes and automated social media manipulation, for example, present serious challenges for democratic societies.

Gorriceta emphasized that legislation must balance two equally important goals. On one hand, governments must protect citizens from potential harm and ensure that AI systems are used responsibly. On the other hand, policymakers must avoid stifling innovation by regulating technologies that are still rapidly evolving.

Crafting effective AI policy therefore requires careful judgment and continuous dialogue between lawmakers, industry experts, and civil society.

The Philippines and ASEAN AI Leadership

Gorriceta also discussed the Philippines' opportunity to play a significant role in shaping the future of artificial intelligence within Southeast Asia.

With the country serving as ASEAN Chair, the Philippines has a unique platform from which to contribute to regional discussions on technology governance and innovation.

Developing a coherent ASEAN framework for AI will be essential in promoting collaboration, sharing best practices, and ensuring that the region remains competitive in the global digital economy.

If approached strategically, Gorriceta suggested, artificial intelligence could become not only a technological tool but also a diplomatic and economic bridge connecting ASEAN nations in shared development.

A Mother's Motivation Catherine S. Jalandoni on Building the Future

The final speaker, **Ms. Catherine S. Jalandoni**, offered a deeply personal perspective that brought emotional resonance to the discussion.

As **Founder and President of the Global AI Council Philippines**, she explained that her involvement in AI advocacy began not from technological curiosity but from a very human concern: the future of her children.



Ms. Catherine S. Jalandoni offered a deeply personal perspective that brought emotional resonance to the discussion.

As a mother of five, she realized that the technologies being developed today will define the world in which the next generation will live and work. That realization prompted her to ask a simple but urgent question: what can be done today to ensure that the Philippines is prepared for that future?

When the Global AI Council Philippines was formed, the group quickly discovered that even experts from different industries lacked clear answers to many of the questions surrounding artificial intelligence.

Instead of waiting for solutions from elsewhere, the organization decided to begin a national conversation.

Its mission was to break down silos,

connect stakeholders, and encourage collaboration among government agencies, private industry, academic institutions, and civic organizations.

Jalandoni emphasized that the work has been largely voluntary and driven by a shared sense of responsibility. The initiative has received no guarantees of reward, yet many leaders have stepped forward to contribute their time and expertise because they recognize the stakes involved.

Artificial intelligence, she observed, was introduced into the world without clear guardrails. Now the challenge is to establish those guardrails while the technology continues to evolve.

This task requires leadership, cooperation, and courage.

A Nation Beginning to Move

Despite the complexity of the challenge, Jalandoni expressed optimism about the progress already made.

Within a year, the Global AI Council Philippines has helped bring together national government leaders, local government units, members of Congress, and private sector organizations to begin addressing the opportunities and risks of artificial intelligence.



Dr. Lim, Atty. Gorriceta, and Ms. Jalandoni engaged in a Q&A with President Raoul Creencia, PD Amading Valdez, PVP Joel Valdes, PP Chito Zaldarriaga, Rtn. Momo Mommaerts, and PSAA Gunter Matschuck.



The goal is not perfection but momentum.

As AI continues to advance, the Philippines must move quickly to develop its own strategies for innovation, workforce development, and responsible governance.

The country's greatest asset, she concluded, remains its people — their creativity, resilience, and willingness to collaborate in pursuit of a better future.

Open Forum and Dialogue

The panel discussion concluded with an **Open Forum**, during which Rotarians engaged the speakers with thoughtful questions and reflections.

The conversation ranged widely across topics such as workforce transformation, education reform, technological ethics, and the potential role of AI in strengthening economic competitiveness.



President Raoul C. Creencia presented Certificates of Appreciation to the three panelists in recognition of their valuable insights and contributions to the Club's continuing educational mission. From left: Secretary Antonilo D.C. "Anton" Mauricio, Dr. Donald Patrick Lim, Atty. Mark S. Gorriceta, Ms. Catherine S. Jalandoni, President Raoul C. Creencia, and Director-Elect Delfin N. "Del" Lorenzana.

Participants recognized that artificial intelligence will inevitably reshape industries and institutions. Yet they also affirmed that the direction of this transformation will depend on human choices, values, and leadership.

Recognition and Appreciation

Following the discussion,

President Raoul C. Creencia presented **Certificates of Appreciation** to the three panelists in recognition of their valuable insights and contributions to the Club's continuing educational mission.

Their participation reflected Rotary's commitment to fostering dialogue that bridges professional expertise with civic responsibility.

Rotary and the Future

The 24th Weekly Membership Meeting of the Rotary Club of Manila demonstrated once again the organization's enduring role as a forum for thoughtful engagement with the issues shaping the modern world.

Artificial intelligence may be driven by complex algorithms and advanced computing power, but its ultimate impact will be determined by human judgment.

By bringing together leaders from technology, law, business, and civil society, the Rotary Club of Manila reaffirmed its belief that progress must be guided by ethics, collaboration, and a commitment to the common good.

As the world stands at the threshold of the **Intelligence Age**, Rotary's timeless principle of **Service Above Self** remains as relevant as ever — reminding us that technological advancement must always serve humanity's highest aspirations. ■



President Raoul Creencia adjourned the meeting.



Meeting Fellowship



Meeting Fellowship



CLUB ADMINISTRATION

RCM Members' Attendance Report
RY 2025-2026



ATTENDANCE REPORT
March 2026

MARCH 2026	March 05, 2026 MR. DAVID NYE	March 12, 2026 STATE OF THE NATION IN AI - GLOBAL AI COUNCIL PHILIPPINES
MEMBERS PRESENT	34	39
MEMBERS PRESENT %	16%	19%
MAKE UP ATTENDEES	17	21
EXEMPTED	5	5
ON LEAVE	0	0
Total Active Members	51	60
Total # of Members	211	210
TOTAL %:	24%	29%
ROTARACTORS	17	14
MEDIA	0	0
EMBASSIES / DIPLOMATIC CORPS	0	0
DG, DGE, DGN, PDG	0	0
GOHS / GS	4	3
VISITING ROTARIAN	0	0
Guests of RCM MEMBERS	2	12
TOTAL ATTENDEES	57	68



LIST OF ATTENDEES
March 12, 2026

- 1

Albaña, Michael Jaey C
- 2

Arguelles, Pablo C.
- 3

Bartolome III, Arsenio M.
- 4

Bediones, Rodolfo P.
- 5

Benedicto, Sixto T.
- 6

Bolton, Wilhelm
- 7

Carlos, Vicente J.
- 8

Castro, Karlo Eugene Josef M.
- 9

Co, Val Constantine L.
- 10

Creencia, Raoul C.
- 11

Cureg, Alexander P.
- 12

Davis, Raymond N.
- 13

Del Rosario Sr., Oscar A.
- 14

Garcia, Paul Joseph M.
- 15

Go, Henry S.
- 16

Guevara, Ricardo S.
- 17

Hernandez, Edwin H
- 18

Lonzaga, Reinerio C.
- 19

Lopez, Arthur M.
- 20

Lorenzana, Delfin
- 21

Matschuck, Guenter Gerhard G.
- 22

Mauricio, Antonilo DC
- 23

Mommaerts, Steve
- 24

Pascual, Abraham F.
- 25

Preysler, Jr., Fausto R.
- 26

Rankl, Peter
- 27

Recto, Philip H.
- 28

Schneider, Bernd
- 29

Serapio, Carlos G.
- 30

Sibayan, Joselito H.
- 31

Simon, Juanito A.
- 32

So, Warren S.
- 33

Tagaysay, Hector O.
- 34

Valdes, Joel C.
- 35

Valdez, Amado D.
- 36

Yu, Reginald Tieng
- 37

Zaldarriaga, Felix Francisco S.
- 38

Ginez, Winston M.
- 39

Tamesis, Chris C.

CLUB ADMINISTRATION

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

As of March 17, 2026

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

CLUB ADMINISTRATION

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

As of March 17, 2026

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

Rotary Club of Manila and PEZA Discuss TOWER Awards 2026 Partnership



From left: PEZA Chief of Staff Napoleon Ferdinand L. Melendres, RCM Past Director Oscar del Rosario, RCM Past Director Amading Valdez, Centennial President and TOWER Awards 2026 Chairman Susing Pineda, PEZA Director General Tereso O. Panga, RCM President Raoul Creencia Investment Promotion Division - Acting Division Chief (ADC) B Philip A. Radin, and Corporate Communications Officer Mikee Anne S. Fabellar

President Raoul Creencia, Centennial President and TOWER Awards 2026 Chairman Susing Pineda, Past Director Amading Valdez, and Past Director Oscar del Rosario met with Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) Director General Tereso O. Panga on March 12, 2026 at the PEZA Office to discuss promotional and partnership activities for TOWER Awards 2026.



CLUB ADMINISTRATION

RCM Pro Patria Journalism Awards Committee Convenes



The RCM Pro Patria Journalism Awards committee met last Tuesday, March 17, 2026, to discuss this year's event. The meeting was graciously hosted by DE Mike Roxas, who provided a delightful merienda for all attendees.

Present were Chairman/PD Amading Valdez, Co-Chair DE/BLA Caloy Serapio, and STAR Rotarians Oliver Pantaleon and Jason Valderrana.

ROTARY'S AREAS OF FOCUS



PEACEBUILDING AND
CONFLICT PREVENTION



DISEASE PREVENTION
AND TREATMENT



WATER, SANITATION,
AND HYGIENE



MATERNAL AND
CHILD HEALTH



BASIC EDUCATION
AND LITERACY



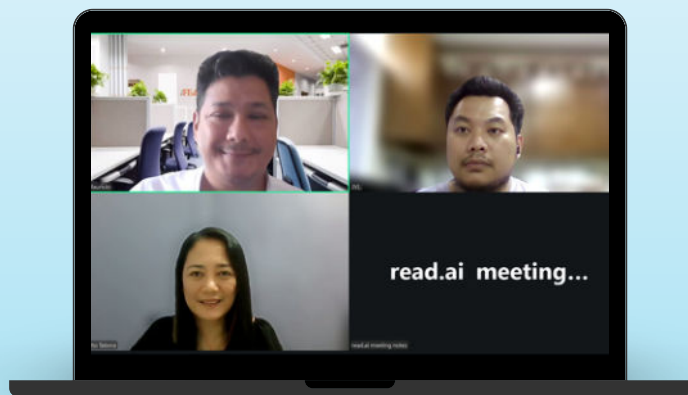
COMMUNITY ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT



ENVIRONMENT

RCMANILA FOUNDATION INC.

Meeting to Finalize the 3rd RCM Golf Cup Souvenir Program



Souvenir Chairman/Sec. Anton Mauricio led a virtual meeting on March 17, 2026, to discuss the souvenir program for the 3rd RCM Golf Cup. Executive Assistant Jonathan Lagarto and Editorial Consultant Rhea Vitto Tabora were also present to help finalize the content.



Sta. Elena Golf Club
JUNE 22, 2026 (MONDAY)

REGISTRATION: 6:00AM
SHOTGUN TEE-OFF: 8:00AM

TOURNAMENT FEE
PHP 9,000.00

**Green Fee, Cart-sharing, Giveaways,
Breakfast, Lunch & Raffles**

**FOR THE BENEFIT OF RCM AND
RCMFI PROJECTS**



SPONSORS

A golfer in a blue shirt and cap is captured mid-swing, positioned behind the word "SPONSORS". To the right of the word is a graphic of a golf ball with a green and white striped flag.

PEOPLE

OXYGEN *and* FIRE

*Joaquin Capen
Rodriguez's
Life of Ambition,
Integrity, and
Stewardship*

By PE Reginald T. Yu



OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

THE first warning did not come through politics or finance.

It came at dusk.

There was a time when Philippine rivers flickered at twilight — when humid air carried the faint hum of insects and small lights pulsed above the water. Children chased them. Farmers paused. Night descended not as darkness, but as glow.

Then one evening, Joaquin “Jackie” Capen Rodriguez noticed they were gone.

No announcement marked their departure. Nature does not accuse aloud. It simply withdraws.



At the microphone. Between two stands and under steady light, Jackie speaks — not to dominate the room, but to steady it. The words are measured, the tone deliberate. He has long understood that leadership is not volume, but clarity; not performance, but responsibility.

Behind him sit colleagues and witnesses, each carrying their own histories. Before him lies the quiet task of persuasion — the work of aligning conviction with collective will.

For Jackie, speech was never ornament. It was structure — a way of shaping air into purpose, and purpose into action.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

Fireflies survive only where balance endures — where air is clean, where rivers breathe, where ecosystems hold. When they vanish, something has already shifted.

Jackie had lived through louder disruptions. He was born into war, carried as an infant into the mountains while his mother was imprisoned. He built companies, lost hundreds of millions in collapse, argued across ideological divides, presided over civic institutions, endured public opposition, buried the woman who shared sixty-three years of his life.

He had survived fire.

But the absence of fireflies unsettled him differently.

Because it was not event-driven.

It was generational.

His generation had measured forests in board feet and rivers in megawatts. Expansion had meant progress. Speed had meant success. The earth had seemed inexhaustible.

Now the air felt subtly thinner.

He began to think in terms of oxygen.

Oxygen had sustained him as a hidden infant in the Cordillera mountains. It had filled his lungs on varsity courts where he tried to prove he belonged. It steadied him after financial collapse. It animated the forests he later tried to replant. It was what cities needed more of — literally and figuratively.

Oxygen is invisible yet essential.

So are integrity, humility, and legacy.

To understand Joaquin Capen Rodriguez is to trace a life shaped by fire and oxygen — by war and ambition, loss and recalibration, enterprise and service.

He would come to measure success not by scale or title, but by atmosphere.

Not by what he accumulated, but by what remains breathable after he is gone.

His story begins in war — an infant carried into the mountains so he might live.

And it ends decades later by a river, an old man standing at dusk, searching the dark for lights that once flickered freely.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

A Child of War and Mountains

Joaquin “Jackie” Capen Rodriguez was born on April 27, 1941, at 1:45 in the morning, in Ugac Norte, Tuguegarao, Cagayan — a province that, within months, would become part of the front line of a global war.

He entered the world into a family shaped by layered histories. His grandmother, Florence Noel Capen, traced her lineage to Alsace-Lorraine, a region long contested between France and Germany — itself a symbol of shifting borders and divided sovereignties. His paternal line carried Spanish roots from Galicia and Catalonia, including Jewish and Hispanic ancestry. His father bore the bearing of a frontier builder; his mother the discipline of American-influenced education.

It was a household where Europe, America, and the Philippine frontier converged.

But history was accelerating.

On December 8, 1941 — hours after the attack on Pearl Harbor — Japanese forces began bombing key installations across the Philippines. Within days, Northern Luzon was engulfed in military movement.



Jackie, at four. A child of war and mountains, too young to understand the tremors shaping his world, yet already standing in it — steady, watchful, formed by displacement and refuge. Before the titles, before the enterprises, before the trials of loss and leadership, there was this small boy learning balance in uncertain times. The air he breathed then was fragile. It would teach him, quietly, to endure.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

Tuguegarao and nearby regions became strategically exposed due to their proximity to airfields and transport routes.

Civilian life unraveled quickly.

Roads filled with evacuees. Communication lines faltered. Rumors traveled faster than verified reports. Families hid valuables, burned documents, prepared for displacement.

Jackie's mother was arrested and later imprisoned in Camp Holmes in Baguio, a detention site that held both Filipino civilians and foreign nationals. The imprisonment was not ideological; it was part of the machinery of occupation. In wartime, vulnerability is often arbitrary.

For the infant Jackie — barely eight months old — the risk was existential

The decision was made swiftly. He would be removed from the lowlands and taken into the Cordillera mountains, to Pasil, Kalinga. It was not a dramatic evacuation. There were no convoys or escorts. It was quiet, deliberate concealment — the kind that saves lives without fanfare.

The journey into the mountains marked his first experience of displacement.

Pasil was geographically removed from the main military routes. Japanese forces focused on cities, transport corridors, and coastal access points. The highlands offered natural insulation. The terrain itself was protection.

While urban centers experienced surveillance, shortages, and uncertainty, life in Kalinga retained its rhythm. Agriculture continued. Tribal governance functioned. Ritual and kinship maintained order.

For a child whose birth year coincided with invasion, this environment became formative.

He did not grow up surrounded by constant gunfire or military patrols. Instead, his earliest memories were shaped by mountain air, river currents, and communal life. The Cordillera landscape imposed patience. Rice was cultivated by season, not by urgency. Rivers moved steadily regardless of political upheaval.

He absorbed, almost unconsciously, a different model of authority. In tribal communities, leadership was earned through respect and responsibility rather than imposed through hierarchy alone. Courage was not performative; it was demonstrated in daily conduct.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

His parents, despite separation and uncertainty, maintained discipline in his upbringing. His mother, shaped by American schooling, emphasized structure and moral clarity. His father embodied resilience and adaptability. Though wartime constrained communication, the household narrative reinforced continuity — that this period of disruption would not define the family's future.

Language became a quiet instrument of stability.

With his grandfather, he spoke Spanish — a bridge to lineage and memory. With his mother, English — the language of education and emerging governance. With neighbors and peers, he spoke *Ibanag, Itawis, Ilocano, and Kalinga*. He moved between linguistic worlds with ease.

Each language carried a different cadence of thought. He learned that identity could shift without dissolving. One could inhabit multiple cultural frameworks without fragmentation.

This early cultural fluency would later prove invaluable in business negotiations, civic leadership, and diplomacy. But at the time, it was simply normal life.



Atty. Joaquín Rodríguez Serra — orator at the Rizal commemoration in Zamboanga on the fifteenth anniversary of the martyrdom of Dr. José Rizal. This was Jackie's grandfather. Born in Tarragona and shaped by the shifting sovereignties of Spain, he arrived in the Philippines during another age of transition and helped build institutions where frontiers once stood. Jurist, governor, founder, and steward of land and press, he believed that reputation was architecture — constructed block by block through discipline, restraint, and service. In his bearing was the quiet authority of a man who understood that nations, like families, endure only when anchored by law and conscience.

The castle began here.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

War remained present but indirect. He was aware of absence — of a mother imprisoned, of conversations hushed when adults gathered. He sensed vulnerability without fully understanding its scale.

What the war taught him, even before comprehension, was fragility.

War taught him this early: order can vanish quickly, institutions can falter, and security is never guaranteed.

The mountains, however, taught him perspective.

Nature endured. Seasons returned. Life continued beyond human conflict.

This dual exposure — instability and continuity — shaped his temperament. He would later respond to financial collapse, institutional conflict, and political tension not with panic, but with recalibration.

He had already learned, as an infant, that survival sometimes requires relocation rather than resistance. That protection can be quiet. That stability must be maintained, not assumed.

When he eventually descended from the mountains into a nation rebuilding after occupation, he carried with him an internal compass formed by displacement and refuge.



***Seventeen.** Before the titles, before the weight of office and institution, there was a young man in a white dinner jacket — poised between adolescence and destiny. The room is formal, the posture composed, but the future is still unwritten. At seventeen, Jackie had not yet learned the language of governance or stewardship. But the instinct was already there: attentiveness, restraint, a quiet awareness of responsibility beyond himself.*

Fire had not yet tested him. Oxygen had not yet become metaphor. He was simply a young man stepping into the world — unaware that one day he would help steady the air within it.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

War did not define him as trauma. It defined him as adaptable. Stability, he would later conclude, is never permanent.

But perspective can be.

The Grandfather and The Castle

If Kalinga gave Jackie breadth of perspective, his grandfather gave him structure.

Judge Joaquin Rodriguez Serra was born in Tarragona, Spain — a Mediterranean city shaped by Roman ruins and centuries of political transition. His father came from Galicia in northern Spain, a region known for its maritime resilience and deep Catholic tradition. His mother was Catalan, of Jewish and Hispanic descent, raised in a culture long accustomed to balancing local identity with broader national authority.

He arrived in the Philippines during a period of transition. Spanish colonial rule had ended. American administration had begun reshaping institutions — courts, schools, civil governance. The country was redefining itself in real time.

The judge would become appointed governor of Mindanao during the American era — specifically overseeing what were then referred to as the

Provincias Moras, regions where Muslim communities had historically maintained autonomy and resistance to outside control.

Mindanao at that time was not yet the commercial hub it would later become. It was frontier territory — culturally diverse, politically sensitive, economically underdeveloped. Governance required more than legal authority. It required negotiation between religious communities, indigenous traditions, and colonial administrative systems.

Rodriguez Serra operated within this complexity.

He was not merely an official; he was a bridge.

Davao: Building More Than Property

In Davao, he established Hacienda Carmen — not simply as agricultural enterprise, but as a long-term stake in land that was still being structured economically and socially. Ownership in frontier regions often signaled power. But what distinguished him was what followed.

He later donated land to local natives — land that still carries the name Carmen today. The gesture reflected not charity alone, but philosophy: stewardship over extraction.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

He also founded *Echo de Davao*, the region's first newspaper. Establishing a press in an emerging city is a declaration that public discourse matters — that information, transparency, and civic dialogue are foundations of growth.

His Bolton Street residence in Davao was more than home. It housed his office and printing operations. Decades later, that property would become the site of the University of Mindanao — a transition from private estate to educational institution.

In these decisions, a pattern emerges: what begins as personal enterprise often becomes public infrastructure.

That pattern would not be lost on his grandson.

Manila and the Commonwealth Circle

In 1920, at the urging of President Manuel Quezon, Rodriguez Serra relocated to Manila. The capital during the Commonwealth period was a crucible of political thought.

Independence from the United States was being negotiated. Constitutional frameworks were being refined.

Intellectual leaders debated the shape of Filipino identity.



Manila Polo Club — A Meeting of Offices.
In a brief clasp of hands, two public roles intersect — Davao Mayor Rodrigo Duterte and RCM President Jackie Rodriguez — one carrying the authority of city governance, the other the stewardship of institution and service. The exchange is formal, measured, almost spare. For Jackie, such moments were never about spectacle. They were about structure — the quiet work of engagement, where dialogue precedes division and institutions must remain steadier than personalities.

History often remembers the headline. But leadership is practiced in these smaller gestures — firm handshake, steady gaze, the discipline to keep the air between offices breathable.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

He moved within circles that included Jose Laurel, Sergio Osmeña, Claro Recto, Quentin Paredes, and other architects of early republican leadership.

Yet he did not pursue office aggressively. He practiced law. He maintained his bearing. He embodied continuity between Spanish-era jurisprudence and American-modeled legal reform.

When he died in 1956 at eighty-seven years old, three presidents and eleven senators attended his wake. It was a public affirmation of stature.

But for young Jackie, the lessons were not delivered in ceremony.

They were delivered in conversation.

The Refusal to Shift

As English steadily replaced Spanish in the courts and commercial houses of Manila, many professionals adjusted quickly. English opened doors. It meant access to American administrators, broader clientele, smoother integration into the new power structure shaping the country. The transition was practical, even inevitable.



Where nations meet in service. In 2019, as President of the Rotary Club of Manila, Jackie rose beneath a canopy of flags — a constellation of nations bearing silent witness to words spoken in the spirit of service. Beside him, The Honorable Karlo Nograles, then Cabinet Secretary under President Rodrigo Duterte, stood as guest of honor and speaker.

Oxygen filled the hall in the form of dialogue — policy and purpose, governance and goodwill. The fire was leadership: steady, deliberate, and outward-looking. At that table, framed by the colors of the world, Jackie embodied Rotary's quiet power — to convene, to bridge, to ignite conversations that move beyond borders and into shared responsibility.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

Judge Joaquin Rodriguez Serra understood this as well as anyone.

Yet he did not fully make the shift.

He continued to practice largely in Spanish, drafting arguments and delivering reasoning in the language that had formed his legal mind. Clients diminished. Opportunities narrowed. Younger lawyers adapted faster, moved more fluidly in English proceedings, aligned themselves with the emerging order.

To outside observers, the judge's insistence seemed impractical — perhaps even stubborn. Why cling to a fading language when adaptation promised expansion?

But to him, the matter was not about nostalgia. It was about coherence.

He did not reject modernity. He resisted erasure.

Language, for him, carried more than vocabulary; it carried memory, lineage, intellectual formation. To abandon it entirely for convenience felt like surrendering continuity. Adaptation, yes. But not self-abandonment.

His grandson watched quietly.



34th Commencement Exercises — University of Eastern Philippines, Samar-Leyte. At the carved wooden lectern of the University of Eastern Philippines, Ambassador Joaquin C. Rodriguez stands as commencement speaker, addressing graduates on the threshold of their own unfolding. Behind him, faculty and dignitaries; before him, a generation ready to step beyond the campus gates.

Commencement is often framed as culmination. For Jackie, it is ignition — education as oxygen, steady and sustaining, enabling young minds to rise beyond circumstance. He speaks not of glittering success, but of structure: integrity that outlasts applause, discipline that outlives ambition, service that steadies communities. In Samar and Leyte, where resilience is not abstract but lived, his message carries quiet clarity — build well, breathe deeply, and leave the air better for those who follow.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

The lesson was not delivered as a lecture. It was absorbed through pattern. The judge did not complain about lost clients. He did not dramatize sacrifice. He simply continued.

From that quiet persistence, Jackie internalized a distinction that would guide him decades later: influence may diminish; dignity must not.

The judge often spoke of family as a castle — not a monument of stone, but a structure of reputation built generation after generation. Each decision was a block. Education added strength. Discipline reinforced walls. Generosity fortified foundations. Recklessness, dishonor, or negligence weakened them.

Wealth, he would explain, is movable. It can be gained, multiplied, lost.

Reputation is structural.

Once cracked, it requires generations to repair.

“In family,” he would say to his grandson, “the respect for one is the respect for all.”

It was not sentimental advice. It was intergenerational discipline. To carry a surname was to carry cumulative weight.

Young Jackie grew up aware that his name was not merely personal — it was inherited architecture.

He observed the judge in small details: the way he entered a room without haste, the way he held silence when others argued, the way he refused to raise his voice even when challenged. Authority did not require volume. Composure was its own form of strength.

Children absorb posture before they understand principle.

Jackie learned that steadiness outlasts spectacle.

Years later, when ₱950 million evaporated in the Oranbo collapse, the metaphor returned with force: you can lose land, but not the blocks. Integrity, discipline, and family cohesion remained.

The spine formed in childhood held.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

Competition and The Education of Belonging

When Jackie returned fully to Manila for formal schooling, he entered a world very different from the Cordillera mountains of his early years.

Post-war Manila was rebuilding with energy and ambition. American influence shaped curriculum and civic life. English dominated elite education. Schools like American School and later De La Salle were incubators for the country's future professionals — lawyers, executives, public officials.

In that environment, Jackie sensed something subtle but persistent: he stood slightly apart.

He carried Spanish lineage in a society redefining itself after colonial transition. Spanish surnames still suggested prestige in certain circles, but they also signaled a fading chapter of history. He had grown up among mountain communities speaking dialects that many Manila classmates did not know. His childhood had included tribal rhythms unfamiliar to urban elites.

He was neither fully provincial nor fully metropolitan. Neither wholly of the old order nor entirely of the new.



Where rivalry roared and friendship endured. In the charged air of a La Salle–Ateneo championship, amid a sea of green and the thunder of collegiate pride, Jackie stands beside his good friend, His Excellency Ambassador Sung Yong Kim, then Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Republic of the Philippines.

The arena burned with competition, but between them there was only warmth — a fellowship forged beyond flags and final scores. Oxygen fed the fire of the crowd; friendship steadied it. In that moment, sport became more than a game — it became a meeting of nations in laughter, loyalty, and shared history.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

It was not exclusion he felt. It was difference.

Difference presents a quiet fork in the road.

It can produce withdrawal — a gradual retreat into caution.

Or it can produce effort.

He chose effort.

“I always tried a little harder,” he would later say. The sentence sounds modest, almost casual. In truth, it captures a defining habit.

Sports became his proving ground.

On the basketball court and tennis court, lineage dissolved. Performance was visible, immediate, undeniable. If you could run faster, defend harder, shoot accurately, endure conditioning — standing followed naturally.

The clarity appealed to him.

In social spaces, belonging could feel implicit and layered with nuance. On the court, belonging was earned through contribution.

Varsity athletics demanded discipline. Practices were repetitive. Conditioning was relentless. Coaches emphasized teamwork over ego. Preparation often determined the outcome long before the whistle blew.



Knights in formation. In satin jerseys that caught the gymnasium light, a young Jackie Rodriguez stands among his Letran High School varsity brothers — a line of boys bound by sweat, steel, and shared hunger. Beneath the backboard and before the roar of crowds, character was being forged. Here, oxygen came in hard practices, scraped knees, and the discipline of team before self. The fire was competition — fierce, clarifying, relentless. Each drill a spark. Each game a crucible. They were only teenagers then. Yet in that polished court, in that quiet geometry of formation, you can already see the outline of a life that would burn bright — always rising, always striving, *siempre arriba*.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship



Before the world knew his name. A teenage Jackie Rodriguez — varsity player of Letran High School — stands at the quiet edge of becoming. In the sharp lines of youth and the steady gaze of resolve, one already senses the ember beneath the surface.

On courts and in classrooms, oxygen came as discipline, sweat, and brotherhood. The fire was ambition — clean, bright, impatient. Each game a proving ground, each loss a lesson, each victory a spark shaping the steel of character. Long before boardrooms, diplomacy, or public life, there was this: a young Knight learning how to stand, how to strive, how to rise — siempre arriba — with flame in his heart and horizon in his eyes.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

He learned that defeat, while public, was instructive.

A missed shot required adjustment. A lost match required analysis. Loss did not define identity; it provided information.

Adolescence sharpened awareness of difference — accent, posture, subtle social codes. But instead of breeding resentment, it intensified drive. Insecurity, he discovered, can be converted into fuel if directed toward preparation rather than comparison.

The pattern formed almost unconsciously:

Compete harder.
Prepare longer.
Recover faster.

He did not resent classmates who seemed naturally at ease in elite circles. He studied them. He matched them. Often, he surpassed them — not by entitlement, but by effort.

That discipline would follow him into boardrooms and negotiations. The executive who studied mining geology before assuming leadership, the investor who structured deals carefully, the Rotary officer who prepared thoroughly before proposing initiatives — each traced back to a young athlete who refused retreat.



Where embers gather. Around a simple table — bread broken, stories poured, laughter rising — Jackie sits among friends whose years together have outlived seasons and storms. The setting is modest, the fellowship profound.

Oxygen here is memory: campaigns waged, ventures built, causes defended, victories shared. The fire is quieter now, but no less alive — a steady glow of loyalty, brotherhood, and earned affection. Time has silvered their hair and softened their pace, yet the flame endures. Not the blaze of youth, but the enduring warmth of men who have walked far together — and still choose to sit, to speak, to remember.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

Belonging, he learned early, is not granted.

It is built.

And once built, it steadies.

Structure and Leadership

Athletics taught him more than endurance and accuracy.

It introduced him to structure.

On a team, talent alone is insufficient. Five players move, but only if they move together does the game open. A captain is not appointed by proclamation; he is recognized by performance. Teammates follow the player who delivers when it matters, who runs drills without complaint, who absorbs pressure without collapse.

Jackie began to notice something subtle: authority on the court is fragile.

A captain who fails to perform loses influence quickly. A player who lectures but cannot defend loses credibility. Respect cannot be demanded; it must be demonstrated repeatedly.

He watched older teammates rise and fall in standing based on consistency. He saw how quickly admiration shifted when performance declined.

Leadership, he realized, was not a static title. It was a daily test.

That insight stayed with him.

Years later, in boardrooms and civic organizations, he would instinctively distrust authority detached from competence. Titles meant little without delivery. Influence, he would come to believe, must be renewed continually through credibility.

Sports also introduced him to public vulnerability.

When a game is lost, there is no private interpretation. The scoreboard is visible. Teammates feel it. Spectators register it. There is no hiding behind explanation.

He learned to walk off the court after defeat without excuse. To shake hands. To return to practice.

Loss became part of rhythm, not rupture.

That quiet conditioning prepared him, though he did not know it then, for larger arenas where setbacks would carry heavier consequences. Financial collapse, institutional opposition, political tension — none of these would feel entirely unfamiliar.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

Young Jack-Of-All-Trades Of La Salle Masters Some

By PAUL STEPHEN LIME

The night was young and the band was just getting hot. In the dim light, a personable young man stepped from table to table, sliding hands, slapping backs, cracking jokes and passing drinks.

After seeing that all was well, he stopped behind a counter, pulled out a set of levitating, and started reading. The bartender consulted him once or twice, but he didn't seem to mind the disturbance of the noise.

After all, he was the manager of the place.

At 20, Jack C. Rodriguez is not only part-owner of a prosperous nightclub frequented largely by college crowds, but is also a promoter. He has four popular teen-age combos under his wing.

These include the Jaspers, featuring Dery Fajardo, Harry Belafonte of the Philippines; the Kryptons, specializing in rock 'n' roll music; the Dynamites, composed of talented San Beda and La Salle students, and the Hot Shots, a group of sixteen-year-old boys from St. John's academy.

Besides these, Jackie is also the close friend of D'Elorado, Hi-Jacks, Electromatics, Diana Cruz, Jose Mari, Bobby Ledesma, Mari Ojeda, Pepe Pimental, Pilita Corrales, Bobby Ng, Ike Lora, and many other show people.

"Many of these wonderful people," Jackie confided, "will be featured in my



JACK RODRIGUEZ

He goes for Jo Ann are so many plans I don't Campbell, Julie London, know what to do with them. The Everly Brothers, Elvis I have to keep this club, Presley, and has a record put up Campus Jambores, collection of about 400. He and still go to school." reads Leon Uris and Erskine Caldwell. When asked about the future, he said calmly,

"Young Jack-of-All-Trades," La Salle years. Before titles and offices, there was curiosity — restless, hands-on, unafraid to try. In a workshop corner of youth, Jackie bends over craft and experiment, already rehearsing a lifelong pattern: learn first, build carefully, improve what exists.

The boy who refused to stand still would one day steward institutions. But even then, the instinct was visible — not to inherit advantage, but to earn it; not merely to occupy space, but to shape it.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

He had already experienced the discipline of recovery under watchful eyes.

Post-War Manila and Ambition

The Manila he inhabited during his De La Salle years amplified this instinct toward striving.

Post-war optimism still animated the city. Infrastructure projects were expanding. New commercial districts were rising. Families who had rebuilt after occupation were now thinking in terms of growth. The Philippines, confident in its education system and regional position, encouraged ambition.

Young men were expected not merely to inherit, but to build.

In classrooms and corridors, conversations were rarely small. They revolved around enterprise, law, engineering, public service. The assumption was forward movement.

Jackie's competitive instinct fit naturally into that environment. He did not need to be convinced that effort would matter; he had already tested that premise on the court.

But there was a difference in tone.



Siempre Arriba. Before the crest of Letran's 400th year — four centuries of faith, fortitude, and formation — Jackie stands where his own fire was first kindled. Here, in these halls, a young boy who graduated in 1957 learned discipline, conviction, and the quiet courage to rise.

Time has circled back, but the flame remains. The oxygen of memory feeds it — classrooms once walked, lessons once wrestled with, dreams once whispered beneath cloistered arches. At four hundred years, Letran celebrates its endurance. In Jackie, it sees its proof: a life lifted upward, always forward — siempre arriba.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

For some classmates, ambition felt like extension of entitlement. They carried inherited advantage comfortably, as if success were expected outcome.

For Jackie, ambition was not assumed.

It was pursued.

The mountain-raised boy who had grown up speaking multiple dialects did not presume he belonged automatically among Manila's future elite.

He worked to belong.
He studied harder. Trained longer.
Prepared more carefully.
He did not see advantage as birthright.
He saw it as target.

And that difference — subtle but decisive — would define the manner in which he later built enterprises, navigated setbacks, and carried responsibility.

He did not assume scale.

He earned it.

Carrying the Habit Forward

When Jackie eventually stepped into mining and real estate, the habits he had formed in adolescence did not

announce themselves dramatically. They simply reappeared.

Before entering an industry, he immersed himself in it. In mining, he did not rely on summaries from engineers; he studied geological reports. He learned how extraction sites functioned, how commodity pricing moved with global demand, how regulatory approvals could stall progress. In real estate, he walked properties personally, examined infrastructure plans, questioned projections.

Preparation had become reflex.

He did not assume competence would transfer automatically from one field to another. He treated each venture the way he once approached a new season in athletics: understand the terrain, train deliberately, earn your place.

He could have leaned more heavily on surname and association. His lineage carried history. His connections were substantial. But instinct resisted complacency. On a court, reputation does not win games. In business, it does not secure sustainable returns.

Work does.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

The discipline that once governed conditioning drills now governed boardroom preparation. Meetings were not improvised; they were structured. Risks were assessed before capital was deployed. Decisions were revisited and recalibrated when necessary.

When the Asian Financial Crisis struck in 1997 and Oranbo collapsed under the weight of systemic shock, the same internal rhythm activated. He did not indulge paralysis. He reviewed exposure. He gathered family. He restructured strategy. The competitor who had once analyzed missed shots now analyzed leverage ratios.

Defeat required response.

The team instinct also surfaced. In athletics, individual brilliance means little without coordinated execution. In enterprise, success depended on sons, partners, managers, financiers. Shared objective mattered more than personal ego.

Later, in Rotary leadership, that understanding deepened. Volunteer institutions cannot be commanded; they must be aligned. He approached civic leadership not as proprietor but as teammate — listening, persuading, adjusting.



A flame named "Star." In 2015, as a Star Rotarian of the Rotary Club of Manila, Jackie stood before his fellow Rotarians to deliver his classification talk — not merely to recount a profession, but to reveal a life shaped by enterprise, conviction, and service.

The screen behind him bore his name. But the real illumination was the story itself: a journey from industry to impact, from private success to public good. Oxygen fed the fire of purpose; experience gave it direction. In speaking of his work, he spoke of responsibility. In sharing his path, he strengthened the circle. And in that room, the flame of Rotary — service above self — burned a little brighter.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

The young man who once said he “always tried a little harder” did not outgrow that impulse.

He refined it.

The effort became more strategic. The competitiveness became quieter. The drive remained constant.

Difference had never weakened him.

It had trained him.

Being slightly apart in school had sharpened discipline. Being raised in multiple cultural environments had expanded adaptability. Feeling the need to prove himself had cultivated resilience.

Over time, these traits ceased to feel compensatory.

They became structural.

And that work ethic — steady, unadvertised, persistent — would become one of the most consistent threads running through his life, from mining pits to diplomatic halls to family gatherings on Sunday afternoons.

Rise and Scale

By his late thirties, Jackie had moved decisively into large-scale enterprise.

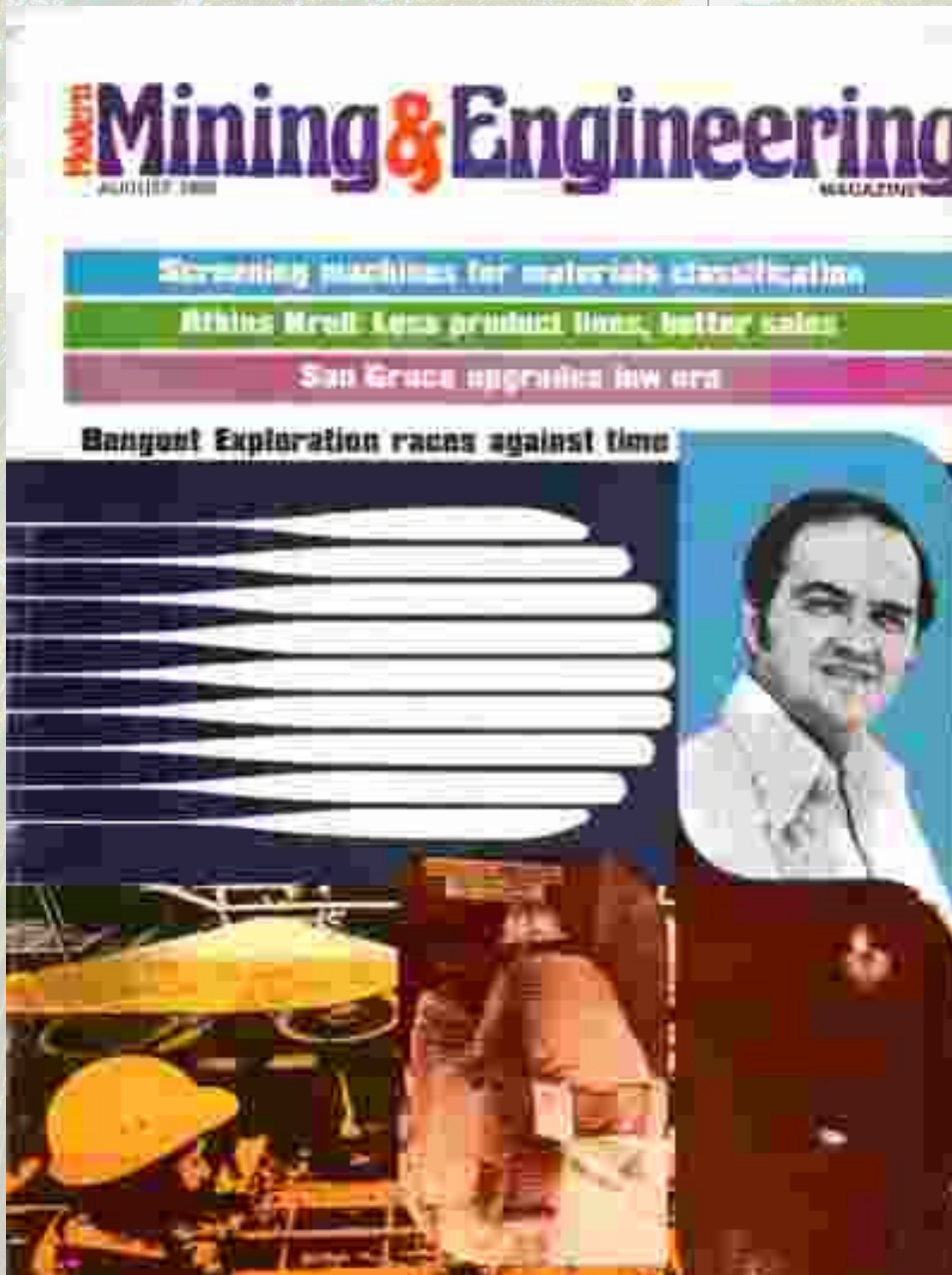
The Philippines during the 1980s and early 1990s was a country in transition. Political upheaval had reshaped leadership. Economic reforms were uneven but ambitious. Infrastructure development accelerated. Frontier industries — mining, property development, agribusiness — attracted entrepreneurs willing to operate at scale.

Jackie did not gravitate toward small ventures. He entered sectors where decisions affected terrain, capital flows, and long-term regional growth.

At thirty-nine, he became president of Benguet Exploration Mining Corporation — a position that placed him at the center of an industry both economically critical and politically sensitive. Mining in the Philippines has always been complicated. It requires regulatory negotiation, environmental compliance, community engagement, and large capital investment. Commodity prices fluctuate with global markets. Infrastructure costs are significant. Returns are rarely immediate.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship



When industry burned bright. August 1980 — the cover of Modern Mining & Engineering Magazine bore the face of a man who moved with the pulse of the earth itself. Jackie, among the country's most dynamic leaders in the mining industry, stood at the frontier where rock met resolve, where vision carved value from stone. In an era of risk and raw ambition, he worked where fire lived beneath the surface — in furnaces, in foundries, in the restless drive to build. Oxygen came in the form of enterprise and courage; the flame was innovation, discipline, and daring. This was not merely a cover story. It was a moment when industry recognized its own firebrand — a leader who understood that beneath every layer of earth lies potential waiting to be awakened.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

Mining demands patience and risk tolerance.

It also demands conviction.

Jackie approached it methodically. He immersed himself in operational details — geology, extraction logistics, regulatory frameworks. He negotiated with engineers and financiers alike. The role required both strategic overview and granular understanding.

The scale of mining changed his perception of enterprise. Decisions were no longer about individual properties or transactions; they were about multi-year projections and international commodity cycles.

Success followed.

Early wins reinforced confidence. Strategic decisions proved effective. Leadership authority solidified. He developed a reputation for decisiveness and preparedness.

Diversification followed naturally.

Agriculture expanded. Real estate acquisitions increased. Asset management structures became more formalized. In 1990, he established Guidance Management Corporation — not simply as holding vehicle, but as

mechanism to consolidate and protect family assets for future generations.

The move reflected foresight. He was thinking in decades, not quarters.

Momentum built steadily.

Confidence, however, can subtly shift into assumption.

When success compounds, it creates the impression that disciplined preparation can neutralize most variables. Markets appear navigable. Risk appears manageable. Scale appears controllable.

The line between competence and overconfidence is rarely visible in real time.

The Oranbo Opportunity

Then came Oranbo.

Three and a half hectares in Pasig — strategically located at a time when Metro Manila's urban expansion was accelerating. The site presented development potential aligned with regional growth trends. Infrastructure projects were underway. Commercial real estate demand was rising.

The purchase price was ₱950 million.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

Jackie put down ₱500 million. The remaining ₱450 million was financed through bank loans. A Singapore-based development partner entered into agreement, bringing international expertise and projected capital leverage.

It was not speculative recklessness. It was structured. It was calculated.

It was consistent with prevailing optimism in Southeast Asian markets during the mid-1990s.

Across the region, growth was strong. Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines were experiencing rising investment flows. Credit was accessible. Currency values appeared stable.

Few anticipated systemic collapse.

The Shock of 1997

In July 1997, Thailand devalued the baht.

What began as localized currency adjustment spread rapidly. Investor confidence evaporated across Southeast Asia. The Philippine peso weakened sharply. Interest rates spiked. Credit tightened abruptly. Foreign capital withdrew.

The Asian Financial Crisis was not gradual.



Where old worlds meet in new light. At the Manila Polo Club in Makati City, Rotary Club of Manila President Jackie puts the Honorary Membership pin on Spanish Ambassador Jorge Moragas Sánchez in a gathering shaped by history and warmed by dialogue. Beneath polished wood and quiet civility, oxygen flowed through conversation — heritage remembered, partnerships imagined, futures discussed. The fire was not loud, but luminous: the enduring connection between nations once intertwined, now meeting as equals in mutual respect.

In that room, diplomacy was not merely protocol. It was fellowship — a steady flame of understanding carried forward by men and women who believe that bridges, once built, must always be tended.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

It was sudden.

Projects dependent on leveraged financing were exposed immediately. Debt servicing costs rose. Asset values fell. Development timelines stalled.

Oranbo, built on carefully structured assumptions, became vulnerable to forces beyond managerial control.

Within months, the financial architecture underpinning the project destabilized.

The property was lost.

Nearly a billion pesos in value disappeared.

The Psychological Break

Financial loss at that scale is not merely a number on paper.

It alters internal equilibrium.

Jackie had believed in preparation, negotiation, and disciplined risk assessment. Those principles had served him well for decades. The crisis revealed limits.

Systemic collapse does not discriminate between reckless and careful operators.

The loss punctured a quiet assumption: that disciplined leadership could always outmaneuver volatility.

He has described that period not as despair, but as clarity.

Ambition had been tested.

The illusion of control had been exposed.

Regrouping

The critical response came not in panic, but in regrouping.

Family gathered. Sons were already involved in enterprise. The decision was made collectively: withdraw emotionally or rebuild strategically.

They rebuilt.

The loss did not fracture the family structure. It reinforced it.

The metaphor inherited from his grandfather resurfaced with renewed force.

The castle held — not because land was secure, but because character and cohesion remained.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

What endured after Oranbo was not asset base, but cohesion. The family enterprise adjusted. Risk assessment became more conservative. Leverage was approached with greater caution. Expansion remained possible, but tempered by experience.

The collapse did not end ambition.

It refined it.

From Scale to Stewardship

The Oranbo episode marked a turning point.

Before the crisis, expansion had been central. After it, stewardship became more pronounced.

He began to think more consciously about sustainability — not only environmental sustainability, but financial and generational sustainability. Growth without structural resilience is fragile.

The experience deepened his later environmental advocacy. Mining had already exposed him to the tension between extraction and preservation. The financial crisis exposed the tension between leverage and durability.



Five flames from one hearth. At the center stands Jackie — father, compass, quiet forge — encircled by his four sons: Joaquin Jr. (Jack), Sean, Armando Carlos (Archie), and Antonio. No longer boys, but men tempered by their own trials, carrying forward the fire he once kindled.

Oxygen once came in the form of lessons, laughter, discipline, and example. Now it is their turn to breathe life into the world — in boardrooms and studios, in ventures built and dreams pursued. Together they stand not merely as a family, but as legacy made visible: five flames, distinct yet born of the same enduring spark.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

Both taught the same lesson:
Scale without balance is unstable.

The competitive athlete had matured
into executive leader.
The executive leader had been tested by
systemic collapse.

And from that testing emerged
something quieter, but stronger —
perspective.

Love, Partnership, and the Architecture of Continuity

Long before Oranbo collapsed.

Long before mining presidencies and
Rotary debates.

There was Sonja.

Jackie met Sonja Habana in the early
1960s, when his life was still gathering
direction but not yet momentum. The
Philippines was optimistic then —
rebuilding from war, industrializing
cautiously, believing in upward
movement. Young men with ambition
felt the horizon widening.

Sonja came from Davao, from a family
whose own history mirrored the frontier
ethic that had shaped parts of his
lineage.

The Habana clan traced its roots to
Iloilo but had moved south in search of
opportunity, building quietly and
steadily. There was nothing ostentatious
about her background. It was
disciplined, rooted, hardworking.

They met through shared circles —
family connections, gatherings,
conversations that began politely and
extended longer than expected. There
was no cinematic drama, no instant
proclamation. What unfolded was
something steadier.

What caught his attention was not
glamour.

It was composure.

She carried herself with an ease that
did not seek approval. She listened
more than she spoke. Her faith was not
performative; it was integrated into
daily conduct. There was a steadiness
in her — the kind that does not draw
the room's attention immediately but,
once noticed, becomes quietly
indispensable.

He, by contrast, was forward-moving.
Competitive. Already thinking about
enterprise, expansion, possibility. His
mind leaned toward the next venture,
the next horizon.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship



When two flames became one. 1962 — at their wedding reception, Jackie and Sonia stand at the threshold of a shared horizon. The music was soft, the laughter easy, and beehive hairdos crowned the evening with the elegance of the era. It was a time when love dressed in satin and optimism wore its finest suit. Oxygen filled the room in the form of family, friends, and promise. The fire was young — bright, hopeful, unafraid. Hands clasped, futures uncharted, vows still echoing in the air. In that moment, beneath the glow of celebration, two separate sparks chose to burn as one — a union that would endure seasons of calm and storm, always finding its warmth in the quiet constancy of love.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

They were different in tempo: he accelerated; she anchored — and the difference created balance.

And that difference created balance rather than friction.

Courtship in that era was not casual. Families observed. Intentions were clarified. Conversations extended beyond affection to questions of direction. What kind of life would they build? Where would they live? What principles would guide them?

Jackie knew, even then, that his future would not be static. Mining, agriculture, real estate — these were not professions rooted in one place. They required travel, risk, relocation. Stability would not come from predictability.

Sonja understood the life he was building would never be predictable. She chose him anyway. They married in 1962.

He was young, ambitious, convinced that the future would reward effort. What he did not yet fully grasp was that expansion without anchor becomes drift.

She became that anchor.

Their marriage developed around a deliberate, almost intuitive division of strength. He managed the outer world — negotiations, acquisitions, risk exposure, capital allocation. She managed the inner world — the daily architecture of family life, the tone of discipline, the formation of character.

It was not a hierarchy.

It was complementarity.

While he traveled to Spain, Thailand, and the United States pursuing enterprise, she ensured that home remained consistent. Their four sons — Joaquin Jr. (Jack), Sean, Armando Carlos (Archie), and Antonio — were raised not with entitlement, but with expectation. Church attendance was habitual. Education was non-negotiable. Respect was required. Conversations were direct.

Sunday lunches became ritual. Not elaborate affairs — simply consistent ones. Everyone present. Stories shared. Disagreements aired without theatrics. It was through these repeated, almost ordinary moments that cohesion formed.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

Families that build multigenerational enterprises often fracture not because of financial stress, but because of relational neglect. Sonja understood this instinctively. She cultivated unity deliberately.

When Oranbo collapsed in 1997 and nearly ₱950 million evaporated, the crisis entered their home not as accusation but as recalibration. External perception shifted. Leverage tightened. Years of disciplined growth appeared suddenly vulnerable.

Moments like that test more than balance sheets.

They test marriages.

There were no dramatic confrontations. No visible recriminations. Instead, there was reassessment. Sons gathered. Strategy was reexamined. Expenses were reviewed.

Expansion paused.
She reinforced calm.
He absorbed the blow.
The castle held.

Parenting had always been part of their long view. Their sons were not raised merely to inherit assets; they were raised to understand responsibility. They learned business mechanics, yes —



The circle that kept the flame alive.

1962 — gathered in satin, suits, and towering beehives, the friends of Jackie and Sonia filled the room not just with presence, but with promise. They were witnesses to a beginning, custodians of laughter, conspirators in joy. Oxygen moved freely that evening — in stories retold, glasses raised, and embraces that lingered. The fire was communal: a shared warmth born of youth, loyalty, and the unspoken vow that this love would never stand alone.

Years would pass, fashions would change, hair would soften and silver. But in this sepia stillness remains a truth — that every enduring union is fed not only by two hearts, but by the steady breath of friendship surrounding it.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

but also restraint. They were taught that power, unchecked by conscience, corrodes families. They were reminded that a surname carries obligation.

Succession was gradual. Leadership was transferred deliberately. By the time Jackie began devoting more time to Rotary and civic service, the next generation was prepared to assume operational control.

This was possible because home had been structured with foresight.

Their life together unfolded across geographies — Davao, Manila, Madrid, Malaga, Bangkok, Los Angeles, Orlando. Each move required adaptation. Each adjustment required negotiation. Through it all, partnership endured.

Sixty-three years.

Longevity in marriage is rarely the product of uninterrupted harmony. It is the result of continuous adjustment. They argued. They recalibrated. They forgave. They resumed.

He built externally.
She preserved internally.
And in that interplay, continuity solidified.



Eighty-four candles. One enduring flame.

At Solaire in 2025, beneath a sky of painted stars and the soft shimmer of celebration, Jackie stands at the center of what he built not in boardrooms, but in love — his entire family gathered close.

Children and grandchildren cluster around him; great-grandchildren tug at hems and hands. The room glows, not merely with lights, but with lineage. Oxygen comes as laughter, embraces, stories retold for the hundredth time. The fire is continuity — passed from heart to heart, generation to generation. At eighty-four, the measure of a man is not the titles he carried, but the lives that carry him now. Surrounded, sustained, and flanked by those who bear his name and his values, Jackie stands not as a solitary flame — but as a hearth from which many fires now burn.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

Three months and three weeks before he would publicly reflect on his life, Sonja passed away.

Grief in later years is less explosive than in youth. It arrives as subtraction. The house feels altered. The air feels thinner. Routine becomes echo.

He speaks of it without dramatization. Happiness once meant full schedules and three meals a day; now it means one simple meal. Once it meant playing basketball or tennis; now it means watching a game quietly. Once it meant travel to Paris or Madrid; now it means sitting with grandchildren.

Loss recalibrates scale; ambition softens, and presence enlarges.

When asked how he wishes to be remembered, he does not cite mining leadership, diplomatic service, or Rotary initiatives. He does not mention assets or titles.

He answers simply: Ulirang Ama — Most Outstanding Father. It is not modesty; it is order.

Enterprises rise and fall. Public positions rotate. Recognition fades. But if children stand steady — if grandchildren inherit coherence — then the architecture endures.



***A new spark in steady hands.** Cradled against his chest, Jackie's latest great-grandchild sleeps — unaware of the history that holds him, the generations that breathe softly around him. The elder's hands, once firm in enterprise and resolve, now move with reverence, as though guarding a flame newly lit. Oxygen comes as lullaby and lineage — whispered stories, inherited strength, a name carried forward. The fire is gentle here, no longer the blaze of conquest, but the quiet glow of continuity.*

In this tender exchange — weathered hands and newborn breath — time folds in on itself. The spark passes on. The flame endures.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

Marriage was not a chapter in his life.
It was the foundation beneath all others.
He may have built companies.
But together, they built continuity.

With the household steady and the next generation stepping forward, he began turning outward — to service and institution-building beyond his own enterprises.

Rotary: From Profit to Service

Jackie entered the Rotary Club of Manila in 2016.

By then, he was an established businessman. Mining had expanded his scale. Family enterprise was stable. His sons were assuming operational leadership. The urgency of daily management had begun to ease.

A different question surfaced:

If enterprise builds wealth, what builds balance?

Rotary offered an answer.

In business, success had always been measurable — margins, assets, return on capital. Authority carried weight; decisions translated directly into outcome.



Rotary Year 2016–2017. *At the podium, Jackie does more than present a banner — he presents a standard. Symbols, for him, are not decoration; they are reminders of obligation. Behind the emblem and theme lies the deeper work: aligning word with action, vision with structure.*

In rooms like this, beneath projected mottos and formal light, he practiced what would become a defining discipline — leadership as stewardship, service as architecture, and every promise measured not by applause, but by the lives it would quietly strengthen.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

Rotary spoke a different language.

There were no dividends. No contracts compelling compliance. Projects advanced only through persuasion. Leadership conferred responsibility, not control.

In mining, approval meant execution. In Rotary, approval required conviction. The adjustment refined him.

When he was elected President of the Rotary Club of Manila in 2019 — with the shortest span between induction and presidency in the Club's recent memory — he treated the office not as culmination, but as discipline. He embraced servant-leadership not as slogan, but as practice: authority without ownership, influence without compensation, responsibility without entitlement. In volunteer institutions, capital carries little weight; credibility carries everything — and must be earned repeatedly.

His presidency emphasized structure and measurable service. Environmental programs were sharpened. Educational initiatives strengthened. Governance was documented carefully. He believed Rotary's moral authority depended on procedural clarity.

Through the TREES initiative, he

pushed for sustainability over symbolism. Early reforestation efforts had prioritized visibility; survival rates lagged. He insisted on monitoring, community engagement, and higher survival rather than higher headlines. Bamboo became strategic — fast-growing, soil-stabilizing, economically viable. Environmentalism detached from livelihood fails in developing contexts. Bamboo aligned ecology with income.

His thinking broadened: cities generate carbon; they must also generate oxygen.

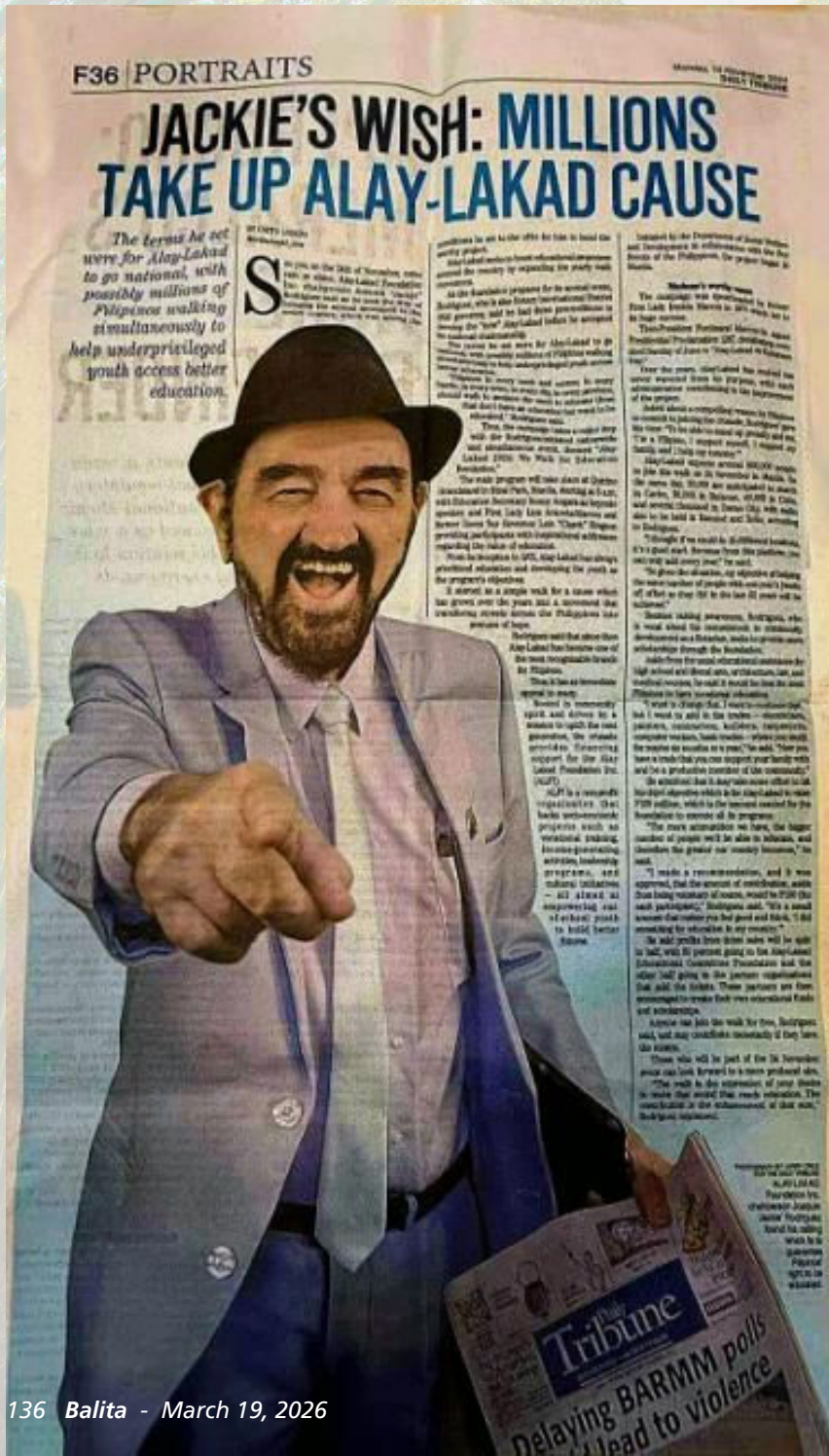
He began advocating for municipal ecological parks — five to ten hectares dedicated not merely to recreation but to oxygen production and environmental education. It was not anti-development; it was ecological accounting. Extraction must be balanced by restoration.

Programs like *Alay Lakad* reinforced another conviction: peace is built through opportunity. Inequality fuels grievance; education reduces it. Scholarships and youth development were not charity, but preventative investment.

His diplomatic experience in Serbia had shown him how disparities harden into fracture. Rotary allowed him to work

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship



"Jackie's Wish." Not a headline, but a summons. With finger pointed outward, he calls not for applause but for participation — millions walking so that millions more may breathe possibility.

For Jackie, Alay Lakad was never merely an event. It was oxygen in motion — footsteps turning into scholarships, resolve turning into structure, service turning into future. The gesture is direct, almost playful. But the conviction behind it is firm: if we walk together, we widen the air for those who have none.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

upstream — strengthening cohesion before division.

After completing his club presidency, fellow Rotarians urged him to run at the district level. Leadership beyond a single club required election by weighted vote across District 3810.

He entered the race for District Governor Nominee for Rotary Year 2024–2025.

Two candidates stood: Joaquin Capen Rodriguez of the Rotary Club of Manila, and Vilma Castillo Vinluan of the Rotary Club of Sampaloc. On November 9, 2021, District Governor Robert G. Koa announced the results of the election conducted through the Rotary-contracted SimplyVoting platform.

Of 129 weighted votes cast, Jackie received 56.6 percent. His closest opponent received 43.4 percent. There were no abstentions.

The margin was clear, though not overwhelming. It signaled both confidence and the presence of differing expectations within the district.

He was declared District Governor Nominee for Rotary Year 2024–2025.

District 3810 spans Manila, Pasay, Cavite, and Occidental Mindoro — a wide geographic and socio-economic range. Governance at that scale requires diplomacy as much as direction.

Jackie approached the role with the same discipline that had defined his presidency. Documentation mattered. Compliance mattered. Integrity mattered. He believed strong institutions protect both leaders and members; structure prevents favoritism; procedure prevents arbitrariness.

But structure, when applied firmly, can unsettle those accustomed to flexibility.

The tensions that would later surface did not begin in hostility.

They began in philosophy.

For Jackie, Rotary's values — integrity, fairness, transparency — were operational standards, not ceremonial words.

As District Governor, he acted accordingly.

And that commitment would soon test him more severely than any business setback ever had.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

Freshly-minted RI 3810 district governor's heart beats for poor children

Joaquin 'Jackie' Rodriguez, newly elected Rotary International District 3810 Governor and this year's Alay Lakad Foundation chairman, is urging everyone to join Alay Lakad's Walk for a Cause on 8 September to benefit underprivileged children. "By walking together, we raise money which goes to the schooling of children whose parents cannot afford it."

The new Rotary International District 3810 Governor Joaquin "Jack" Rodriguez Sr. is setting up a nationwide walk for poor children on 8 September as a major project for this year.

The 83-year-old Rotarian and new chairman of Alay Lakad Foundation was inducted as the Rotary's District 3810 governor last 4 July at Solaire Resort and Casino in Parañaque City.

With the club's principle of service above self, Rodriguez urges the nation to join him in the walk by contributing P100 as the fee for the activity.

"By walking together, we raise money which goes to the schooling of children whose parents cannot afford it," he said.

Lifestyle for new and old generations

Rodriguez aims to ensure that helping the less privileged even in small ways becomes a lifestyle for the old and new generations by declaring every September 8 as the National Alay Lakad Day.

In his speech for the induction on the new Rotary district governor, Rodriguez requested the help of former president and Alay Lakad chairperson and now Pangasinan 2nd district Representative Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to officially declare that day as such.

Good example

"I will not leave without setting a good example for my family. We will walk in every city, every town for those children," he said.

Alay Lakad in Metro Manila is traditionally done at the Luneta Park in Manila City, and supported by several civic

groups and other former national presidents, Fidel Ramos and Benigno Aquino III.

Rodriguez recalls a day at Luneta Park where he recently joined in a feeding activity for street children. "We fed them, brought them entertainment, and clothed them. We showed them love. That is Rotary. The symbol of living your own family is the same symbol of loving your country," he stressed.

"The Philippines is a young country; one half of the population are 25 years old and below. We should show our children the magic of transforming lives through service above self," Arroyo, who was the guest speaker for the Rotary induction, added.

Arroyo said she was also very happy to know that her childhood neighbor Rodriguez is prioritizing children's welfare as it reminds her of her own project and that of her husband's, former Rotary president Mike Arroyo.

"His project was functional literacy and they taught the Nangyans how to read and write," the former lady President said.

Joining the walk

Rodriguez said he expects members from over 1,200 Rotary offices in the country and all civic groups to join the walk.

Under his one-year term as Rotary district governor, Rodriguez, who became a Rotarian in 2015 and was elected RC Manila president in 2018 said he is excited to brainstorm and create projects that will address Rotary's seven areas of focus: peace building and conflict prevention, disease prevention



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN LOUIE ARRIAGA FOR THE DAILY TRIBUNE
NEW Rotary International 3810 district governor Joaquin 'Jackie' Rodriguez has also been named this year's Alay Lakad Foundation chairman.

and treatment, water sanitation and hygiene, maternal and child health, basic education and literacy, community economic development, and environment.

Also as a businessman, Rodriguez said he is always mindful about promoting and implementing Rotary Club's goals of sustainable socioeconomic growth by responsibly managing his businesses in mining and renewable energy.

Freshly minted District Governor, 2019. Clothed in formality yet anchored in purpose, Jackie steps into district leadership not as ornament, but as obligation. Beneath the ribbon and regalia beats the same conviction that has guided him from enterprise to service: that authority is hollow unless it bends toward the vulnerable.

For him, governance was never about title. It was about oxygen — creating space where children from forgotten streets could breathe possibility, where opportunity replaces grievance, and where service above self is practiced, not proclaimed.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

Ideology and Peace

Jackie's friendship with self-exiled Communist Party of the Philippines founder and leader Jose Maria Sison endured not because they agreed, but because neither man feared disagreement.

One evening, long after insurgency had reshaped the country's political landscape, they sat across a modest dining table. No press. No audience. Just two men aware that history had placed them on different sides of the same national wound.

"You build enterprises," Sison said evenly. "But who owns the land beneath them?"

Jackie paused. Silence, he believed, clarifies thought.

"The question is not ownership alone," he replied. "It is opportunity. If people participate in growth, they defend stability."

"Stability for whom?" Sison asked.

The exchange did not escalate; it deepened.

Sison argued that the system preserved elite advantage and that reform without

rupture merely prolongs injustice. Jackie did not deny inequality. He had seen rural poverty firsthand. But he rejected the idea that destruction guarantees justice.

"If you burn institutions," he said, "you still have to build new ones. Power does not disappear. It transfers."

They moved between theory and lived experience — revolutionary models and economic realities. What lingered for Jackie was not the rhetoric, but the shared premise: both wanted a better Philippines. They differed on method, not on diagnosis.

At one point, the tone softened.

"If education had been equitable decades ago," Jackie said quietly, "perhaps fewer young men would carry rifles."

"Education within a broken system teaches obedience," Sison replied.

The argument never resolved.

It was not meant to.

Jackie never romanticized armed struggle. He knew its cost. But he also refused to reduce insurgency to criminality alone. Inequality creates

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship



Rotary Club of Manila Induction, 2019 — Manila Hotel. From the mountains of Kalinga to the halls of the Manila Hotel, the journey had come full circle. As President of the Rotary Club of Manila, Jackie stood not merely beside power, but within responsibility — carrying forward a tradition of service shaped by discipline, loss, and renewal.

Titles would come and go. What endured was the conviction that leadership is not possession, but stewardship — and that the air institutions breathe depends on the integrity of those entrusted to guide them.

vacuum; where opportunity is absent, resentment organizes itself.

The conversation clarified his conviction: reform must be structural — but lawful. Justice must be pursued — but without violence.

Later, in peace consultations, he carried that perspective with him. Ceasefires pause conflict; opportunity prevents its return. Economic inclusion, education, and institutional credibility mattered more than signatures alone.

The middle ground drew suspicion from both extremes. He accepted that.

Dialogue is slower than revolution. But it is less likely to bleed.

Years later, observing Balkan fragmentation as Consul General, he would recall those conversations. He had seen how quickly lines harden when dialogue collapses.

National cohesion requires space for disagreement without dehumanization.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

The long argument with his friend never ended.

Perhaps that was its value.

As long as two men can sit at a table and argue about justice without reaching for weapons, a country still has hope.

The Balkan Lens

For twenty-eight years, Jackie served as Consul General of Serbia.

The title sounded ceremonial. The vantage point was not.

Serbia was still living in the shadow of Yugoslavia's collapse — borders redrawn, families divided, institutions strained. Jackie did not witness the height of war, but he observed its residue: guarded language in official settings, economic reports reflecting uneven development, conversations that carried memory beneath civility.

Yugoslavia had not collapsed overnight.

It weakened gradually — through regional disparity, ethnic nationalism, and institutions overshadowed by personality. Unity had been sustained by force and charisma more than durable structure. When that leadership disappeared, suppressed tensions resurfaced.



Malacañang Palace, 2018 — Presentation of Credentials. As Honorary Consul of the Republic of Serbia to the Philippines, Jackie stood at the quiet intersection of nations — witness to the formal exchange between Serbian Ambassador Slobodan Marinković and President Rodrigo Duterte, in the presence of Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano and Lady Mira Gnjatović.

Diplomacy, like oxygen, is invisible when it works. It is built in gestures measured, words weighed, and respect carefully extended across borders. For Jackie, this role was never ceremonial alone. It was an extension of a lifelong discipline — strengthening institutions so that nations, like families, may breathe without fracture and endure beyond personalities.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

Jackie listened more than he spoke.

The pattern unsettled him because it felt familiar.

The Philippines, too, is regionally diverse. Development remains uneven. Insurgency lingers in parts of Mindanao. Political culture often gravitates toward personalities.

He did not believe the Philippines was destined for fragmentation.

But he understood how vulnerability forms.

Resentment accumulates when regions feel neglected. Loyalty shifts when institutions are perceived as partisan. Stability built on personality proves fragile.

A Serbian official once told him quietly, “We thought we were too civilized to fall apart.”

The remark lingered.

Civilization is not immunity.

Economic strain, polarization, and weakened institutions can destabilize any nation.

Jackie carried that awareness home. His advocacy for education, ecological sustainability, and economic inclusion



Where fellowship becomes flame. In the warm glow of Rotary fellowship, Jackie stands shoulder to shoulder with brothers and friends of the Rotary Club of Manila — men bound not merely by meetings, but by mission.

Here, laughter becomes oxygen, stories spark like embers, and years of shared service burn steady and bright. In rooms like this, the fire is not spectacle but sustenance — a quiet blaze of trust, loyalty, and service above self.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship



A moment of recognition, witnessed. Under banners rich with color and heritage, Datu Haron R. Ali of the Rotary Club of Manila Quiapo Central presents a plaque to Past District 3810 Governor Rudy Bediones — a gesture of gratitude, service honoring service. Jackie stands among them, not at the center, but attentive, understanding that institutions are strengthened when acknowledgment is given where it is due.

Awards may be held in hand, but what they signify is less visible: years of discipline, commitments kept, communities steadied. In such ceremonies, the fire of leadership is affirmed — and the oxygen of continuity quietly renewed.

was not abstract idealism; it was structural thinking. Peace is preserved not by optimism, but by institutions that function predictably and fairly.

From Oranbo, he had learned that systemic forces can overwhelm even careful planning.
From Sison, that inequality fuels unrest.

From Rotary, that institutions endure only when credibility is shared.

In Serbia, he saw what happens when cohesion fails to keep pace with fragmentation.

The lesson did not produce alarmism.

It produced vigilance.

Nations do not fracture suddenly.

They weaken gradually.

And unity, like reputation, must be built block by block.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

The Rotary Crisis: Structure and the Cost of Standing Firm

Leadership in volunteer institutions tests character differently than leadership in business.

In enterprise, authority is reinforced by capital and contract. In Rotary, authority rests on trust — and trust can be contested.

The crisis that would mark the closing months of Jackie Rodriguez's term as District Governor of Rotary International District 3810 did not arise from ideology or ambition. It arose from procedure.

During the district's gubernatorial nomination process, serious allegations surfaced concerning one of the candidates — allegations involving more than fifty counts of financial malversation. The matter was not rumor alone; it was accompanied by documentation, including findings from an external audit that recommended possible criminal liability.

Jackie did not act impulsively.

Before taking any step, he formally sought guidance from Rotary International President Stephanie Urchick.

Her written reply, as he recounts it, was clear:

“This is a local issue. I would also recommend that you create an investigation committee.”

To Jackie, those words were decisive.

By describing the matter as “local” and recommending the formation of an Investigation Committee, the responsibility, as he understood it, rested squarely with him as District Governor — the highest Rotary official within the district. He did not interpret the instruction as advisory in tone; he understood it as jurisdictional in nature.

He convened the Investigation Committee.

The committee reviewed the evidence and subsequently recommended disqualification of the candidate. The recommendation cited concerns over financial irregularities and violations inconsistent with Rotary's core values — integrity, honesty, adherence to the Four-Way Test, and compliance with the organization's by-laws and code of policies.

Jackie upheld the recommendation.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

He has since explained that reversing course at that point would have projected inconsistency — even executive weakness. Having sought guidance, received authorization to treat the matter as local, and acted on the findings of a duly constituted committee, to disregard its recommendation without procedural basis would have signaled carelessness.

The election itself had not originated under his administration; it was a process inherited from the previous governor. Had Rotary International wished to assume direct oversight, it possessed the authority to do so. A directive centralizing the process — or appointing its own committee — would have removed the burden from the district.

No such directive came.
The responsibility remained local.

Instead, on April 12, 2025, with barely two months remaining before the close of his term on June 30, Rotary International President Urchick issued notice removing him as District Governor.

Jackie appealed the decision. He has stated that he was informed the removal was not the result of a formal Board decision but of consultations at the international level. He awaited further clarification.



Weekly Membership Meeting, Rotary Club of Manila. In the quiet fellowship of shared purpose, Jackie stands alongside former Manila Mayor and Senator Alfredo Lim and Architect Philip Recto — public servant and builder, law and design, discipline and imagination converging in one room.

These gatherings were more than social ritual. They were working sessions of conscience — where governance, architecture, and enterprise met under a single premise: that institutions must outlast personalities, and service must steady the nation's breath. In such company, legacy was not discussed as memory. It was practiced as responsibility.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

None came before the term neared its end.

He faced a choice.

He could litigate.

He could escalate the matter publicly.

He could attempt to reclaim office through formal challenge.

He chose restraint.

Litigation might have restored position. It would almost certainly have fractured the district further. Rotary, like all volunteer institutions, depends on cohesion more than coercion.

He returned to the metaphor his grandfather had once taught him: the castle.

Influence can be lost.

Position can be removed.

But the blocks — integrity, composure, continuity — must remain intact.

He wrote to fellow Rotarians without rancor. He acknowledged the disappointment but expressed no regret for having served. He reiterated that his actions had been guided by his mandate to safeguard the district's integrity. He described himself, even in removal, as a "servant governor."

There is a cost to dignity.



Rotary Club of Manila Music Choral.

Among fellow Rotarians, under the steady guidance of the late Past President Babes Reyes, Jackie lends not authority, but voice. In this gathering, leadership yields to harmony; rank dissolves into shared breath.

The music chorale was more than performance. It was fellowship made audible — conviction softened into song, service expressed in unison. Each note required listening as much as singing, humility as much as presence. Here, oxygen was literal and symbolic: breath drawn together, released together — a reminder that institutions endure not only through policy and structure, but through shared rhythm and trust.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

It is not always paid in silence, but it is often paid without spectacle.

Jackie did not interpret the episode as betrayal alone. He saw it as a stress test of conviction. In volunteer institutions, disagreement can escalate quickly when procedure intersects with personality. Hard lines form. Interpretations diverge.

He accepted the consequence without surrendering the principle.

Service continued.

The episode clarified for him something he had already learned in business and diplomacy: institutions are fragile not because of conflict, but because of how conflict is handled.

Power, when contested, reveals posture.

He could not control the decision rendered above him. He could control only his response. And in that response — measured, restrained, unwilling to retaliate — the spine formed in childhood held.

Dignity sometimes costs influence.

He accepted the cost.

The castle stood.



Task Force Bangon Marawi, 2017. Around a modest table, far from ceremony and far closer to consequence, Jackie confers with Raffy Alunan and Regional Director Raylindo S. Aniñon of the Office of Civil Defense–ARMM, listening to the stories of those displaced by the Marawi Siege. The room carries no grandeur — only maps, notes, and the quiet weight of loss.

Here, rebuilding is not metaphor. It is concrete: homes to restore, schools to reopen, dignity to return. Rotary's role is not to command, but to support — to bring structure where chaos had scorched the ground, to convert compassion into coordinated action. In Marawi, fire had already done its damage. What remained was the work of restoring oxygen — of ensuring that communities once fractured could breathe again, steadied not by rhetoric, but by sustained service.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship



A house above the sea. Fifty-four years ago, Jackie bought a home in Málaga — a whitewashed perch overlooking the Mediterranean, where the garden blooms generously and the horizon stretches in impossible blue. He has lived there less than six months in total, yet the tending has never ceased. Maintenance, like memory, is constant. Friends have come and gone, borrowing its quiet. A guesthouse waits, doors open to salt air and sunlight.

It is a place of beauty — but also of reckoning. He returned not only to repair walls and pathways, but to mend the architecture of intention. Years earlier, believing he would go first, he transferred his estate to Sonja — an act of love shaped by assumption. Time proved otherwise. It was, he admits, a mistake. Yet even miscalculation carries instruction.

Oxygen comes in humility; fire in learning. In Málaga, beneath bougainvillea and Mediterranean light, he discovered that wisdom is not the absence of error, but the courage to correct it — and to tend what remains with steadier hands.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship

Epilogue: Oxygen

In his later years, Jackie found himself returning repeatedly to a simple, elemental idea:

Oxygen.

Not as metaphor alone, but as measure.

Environmental advocacy, for him, was never ornamental. It was not about public tree-planting ceremonies or photographs taken beside newly planted saplings. It was structural. Urban expansion, he observed, steadily reduces breathable space. Concrete multiplies. Vehicles increase. Rivers narrow. Cities expand upward and outward, but rarely pause to account for what disappears.

Air does not protest loudly when it thins.

It simply changes.

His advocacy for ecological parks — five to ten hectares in every municipality dedicated not merely to recreation but to oxygen production — was practical. Bamboo initiatives were not romantic environmentalism; they were calculated balance. Bamboo grows rapidly. It stabilizes soil. It absorbs carbon. It creates livelihood. Restoration must be economically viable to endure.

Environmentalism detached from structure collapses.

But oxygen, he came to realize, was not limited to trees. Education produces oxygen. Fair opportunity produces oxygen. Predictable institutions produce oxygen.

Social inequity and environmental neglect share the same root: long-term disregard. When communities are ignored, when ecosystems are extracted without restoration, when access narrows for the many while concentrating for the few, the air grows thin — socially, economically, morally.

In earlier decades, he measured success in hectares acquired, ventures expanded, revenues stabilized. Those metrics were concrete and immediate.

Now he measures differently.
Not in hectares.
In atmosphere.

War threatened his first breath as an infant carried into the mountains while cities burned.
The mountains preserved it.

Ambition expanded it — through enterprise, negotiation, risk.

Loss refined it — when nearly a billion pesos disappeared and pride was forced to recalibrate. Service redirected it — from accumulation toward inclusion. Integrity protected it — when standing firm cost him position but preserved coherence.

OXYGEN AND FIRE

Joaquin Capen Rodriguez's Life of Ambition, Integrity, and Stewardship



Birthday, held in bloom. Amid flowers, soft light, and the quiet clink of celebration, Jackie receives an unguarded kiss from his granddaughter Katarina — a moment where fire gentles into warmth, and oxygen takes the shape of love. Years of storms and service fall away, leaving what endures: affection freely given, joy unearned yet deserved, and a legacy measured not by titles, but by tenderness.

And now, as patriarch, he thinks in generational terms.

He does not ask primarily what he has built. He asks what remains breathable.

Will his grandchildren inherit air less burdened by conflict, less distorted by inequity, less depleted by neglect? Will institutions outlast personalities? Will opportunity widen rather than narrow?

The fireflies may not return in the numbers he once saw.

But their absence taught him something permanent.

A life is not ultimately measured by assets accumulated, but by conditions left behind.

Is the air clearer?
Is the structure stronger?
Is the next generation steadier?
Those are the questions that now define legacy.

The castle his grandfather described — built block by block through conduct, discipline, restraint, and care — still stands.

Not flawless.
Not immune to weather.
But intact.

And in the quiet arithmetic of oxygen and time, that may be enough. ■



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FELLOWSHIP

Game Night at the Elks Club



Manila Rotarians gathered for a game at the Elks Club on March 11, 2026. Present were (clockwise from bottom left) Allen Lee (brother of former RCMer Edgar Lee), Dir. Edwin Hernandez, DSAA Dave Reynolds and Sec. Anton Mauricio (standing), Dir. Rami Chahwan, IA Nick Locsin, and PDG Vince Carlos.

Aleco Monday Breakfast Fellowship



The Aleco Monday Breakfast Fellowship was held on March 16, 2026, hosted by Secretary Anton Mauricio.

Present were (clockwise from bottom left) PD Abe Pascual, former member Raoul Villegas, Sec. Anton Mauricio, former members Francis Juico, Eric Severino, BLA/DE Caloy Serapio, PD Jun Hallare, PP Archit Bartolome, IA Nick Locsin, and former member Jorge Salazar.

In Loving Memory of Rotarian Dominic Edgard Cabangon



Rotary Club of Manila members pay tribute to Rotarian Dominic Edgard Cabangon last Thursday, March 12, 2026 at Chapel 6, The Heritage Park.

In photo: PVP Joel Valdes, DE Nico Valencia, PD Noy Benedicto, PD Oscar del Rosario, PP Obet Pagdanganan, VP Ricky Guevara, PP Archit Bartolome, PE Reggie Yu, Dir. Mike Albaña, DE Teddy Kalaw, Sec. Anton Mauricio, Pres. Raoul Creencia, PDG Vince Carlos, PDG Alex Cureg, DGND Hermie Esguerra, CP Susing Pineda, Rtn. Bollie Bolton, IIA Gani Macatoman, Rtn. Inov Talusan, Rtn. Ingill Ra, PD Henry Go,

Rtn. Bernd Schneider, PD Amading Valdez, Treas PJ Garcia, Dir Hans Palacios, Rtn Jack Rodriguez, and DE/BLA Caloy Serapio.

Not in photo: VPE/AT Karlo Castro, Dir. Warren So, Rtn. Teddy Tee, Rtn. Caloy Buendia, PD Rod Valencia, IA Nick Locsin, Rtn John Simon, DE/AIA Mike Roxas, Consultant Anna Kun-Toledo, and ES Lhea Lozano.

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

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OPINION

 Editor
 Juliet L. Javellana

When will Sara's impeachment process end?

WITH DUE RESPECT

ARTEMIO V. PANGANIBAN

Voting unanimously in *Sara Z. Duterte v. House of Representatives* (July 25, 2025, per Senior Associate Justice Marvic M.V.F. Leonen, en banc, 13-0 with Justice Alfredo Benjamin S. Caguioa inhibiting and Justice Maria Filomena D. Singh on leave), the Supreme Court declared unconstitutional the articles of impeachment filed by the House against the Vice President, for violating the one-year rule imposed by the Constitution. Accordingly, the Senate under then Senate President Francis "Chiz" Escudero archived the Articles.

BY THE SAME VOTE, the Court—in a resolution dated Jan. 29, 2026—clarified that, in sum, after one year, impeachment complaints may be initiated anew in accordance with the Constitution and the rules of the House. Significantly, the Court did not rule on the merits of the articles of impeachment.

Consequently, four impeachment complaints were filed in the House. One was later withdrawn; another was dismissed, while the two others—"filed by Fr. Joel Saballa, et al." and by "Atty. Nathaniel G. Cabrera"—were declared sufficient in form and substance by the House committee on justice. Thereafter, the justice committee issued a "Notice" directing the VP to file her "Verified Answer" to the two complaints within a nonextendible period of 10 calendar days or until yesterday, March 15, 2026.

At her option, the VP may or may not comply with the notice. However, "her failure to file her Verified Answer" within the said period "shall be deemed a waiver of [her] right" to submit her answer and she "shall be considered to have interposed a general denial to the allegations contained in the impeachment complaints."

Upon receipt of the answer, if any, the complainants were given three calendar days to file a reply, with a copy furnished to the VP. Upon receiving the reply, the VP may then file a rejoinder within three calendar days. During these exchanges, both parties may submit their supporting evidence, affidavits, and other pleadings.

After hearing and evaluating the evidence,

tee should refrain from so proceeding unless the House amends its rules or gives express authority allowing the committee to continue.

Should the committee proceed without such authority, it would be vulnerable to a petition in the Supreme Court to declare its proceedings unconstitutional. In this instance, if a temporary restraining order is issued by the Court stopping the committee's proceedings or worse, judging them unconstitutional, then the proceedings would be delayed indefinitely.

However, as a caveat, the President may call a special session of Congress during the contemplated recess. In this case, the committee, in my humble opinion, could also proceed with its hearings.

THERE IS NO CONSTITUTIONAL DEADLINE limiting the length of the proceedings in the upper house, except that "trial by the Senate shall forthwith proceed." The trial of former President Joseph Estrada lasted roughly one month, because the prosecutors walked out after the Senate voted 12-11 to stop the opening of the "second envelope" that was supposed to contain damning evidence against the then president. Instead, he was ousted by the Second People Power revolution. In contrast, the full trial of Chief Justice Renato C. Corona spanned about five months.

Given the foregoing, and assuming the complaints progress through the House and the articles of impeachment are transmitted to the Senate, the full trial could extend well into 2027, depending on scheduling, evidence presentation, legal challenges, and political dynamics.

As our people await accountability and clarity, we can take solace in Martin Luther King Jr.'s enduring insight: the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice. True justice, in this context, demands thoroughness, not haste—ensuring that any outcome rests on truth rather than on expediency.

Comments to chiefjusticepanganiban@hotmail.com



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