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**BRANDON  
"GELO" WONG**  
Co-Founder, BYC Ventures

**Bridging Nations,  
Building Understanding:**

*The Rotary Club of Manila's  
25th Weekly Membership Meeting  
with H.E. Jing Quan*

**A Convergence  
of Purpose:**

*The March 24 Joint Meeting  
of Three Rotary Clubs*

**BETWEEN  
ENTERPRISE  
AND NATION:**

**The Life,  
Leadership,  
and Public Service  
of Abdulgani Matua  
Macatoman**

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# PROGRAM



## ROTARY CLUB OF MANILA

27th Weekly Membership Meeting

Rotary Year 2025-2026

Thursday, April 16, 2026, 12:30 PM

Manila Polo Club

**Moderator: SEC. ANTONILO D.C. "Anton" MAURICIO**

### PART I

11:00 AM Registration /Lunch

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

Invocation | **STAR RTN. WINSTON M. GINEZ**

Philippine National Anthem | **AVP**

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

The Four (4) Way Test | **RTN. RAYMOND N.  
"Ray" DAVIS**

Acknowledgment of Guests  
**SEC. ANTONILO D.C. "Anton" MAURICIO**

Welcome Song | **RCM WF Music Chorale**

#### **Birthday Celebrants**

|         |                    |          |                  |
|---------|--------------------|----------|------------------|
| April 1 | Rtn. Dick Lee      | April 11 | Rtn. Mike Ozaeta |
| April 4 | VP Ricky Guevara   |          | DE Caloy Serapio |
| April 7 | IS Albert Alday    | April 12 | Rtn. Vic Garcia  |
| April 9 | PD Noy Benedicto   | April 17 | AIA Mike Roxas   |
|         | Rtn. Willie Peliño |          |                  |

*Maligayang Bati / Happy Birthday Song*  
**RCM WF Chorale**

Bayanihan Fundraising  
**PDG ALEXANDER P. "Alex" CUREG**

Induction of New Members

Introduction of New Member  
**PRES. RAOUL C. CREENCIA**  
**PE REGINALD T. "Reggie" YU**

**Mr. Manuel E. Pangilinan**  
*Chief Executive Officer*  
*Finasiatech Corporation*

*Proposer: Pres. Raoul C. Creencia*

**Mr. Myles Seymour Y. Tan**  
*COO / VP of Sales*  
*Llyon Industrial Corporation*

*Proposer: PE Reggie T. Yu*

Oath of Membership  
**PRES. RAOUL C. CREENCIA**

## PROGRAM

### PART II

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

*Special Recognition to  
DGND Hermie Esguerra*

1:00 PM Introduction of the Guest Speaker  
**RTN. NICOLO S. "Nico" HALLARE**

Guest Speaker

**MR. BRANDON "Gelo" WONG**  
Co-Founder  
BYC Ventures

Address:

*Blockchain and Emerging Technologies:  
Securing Over \$90 Billion in the Philippine  
National Budget and Infrastructure Records*

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**

## 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



## EDITORIAL

**Reginald T. Yu**  
Editor-in-Chief



**I**N a country long burdened by questions of transparency, efficiency, and institutional trust, the emergence of a 23-year-old entrepreneur helping to place government records on-chain is not merely noteworthy. It is quietly disruptive.

**Brandon "Gelo" Wong** represents a generation that does not wait for systems to evolve. It builds new ones.

At an age when most are still finding their footing, Wong has already positioned himself at the intersection of technology, governance, and national infrastructure. As co-founder and Chief Growth Officer of BYC Ventures, he is part of a team that has helped bring over \$90 billion worth of government records onto blockchain. This is not simply a milestone in scale. It is a statement of direction.

This is not innovation for its own sake. It is innovation aimed at a problem that has defined the Philippine public sector for decades. Trust.

### **The Real Currency: Credibility**

For all the debates surrounding blockchain, its most enduring promise remains immutability.

In governance, that translates to credibility.

When records cannot be altered, when transactions leave permanent and verifiable trails, and when systems are designed around transparency, the nature of public accountability begins to change.

## EDITORIAL

Through its flagship platform, Lumen, BYC Ventures is building what it calls a Truth Operating System. It is a digital backbone where data integrity is not assumed but engineered.

The implications are significant. In agencies such as the Department of Budget and Management, Department of Public Works and Highways, Department of Information and Communications Technology, and even within the Congress of the Philippines, the adoption of such systems points to a shift toward proactive accountability.

### **A Different Kind of Builder**

Wong's story begins early, with entrepreneurship at 14. But what distinguishes him is not just timing. It is focus.

Many founders build for convenience or scale. Wong builds within institutions that are complex, slow-moving, and resistant to change.

Operating in that space requires more than technical skill. It

demands the ability to engage policymakers, navigate bureaucracy, and translate innovation into something government can adopt.

That he has represented the Philippine blockchain sector in policy discussions suggests a rare dual fluency. He understands both the language of systems and the language of governance.

### **A Regional Signal**

BYC Ventures' work carries implications beyond the Philippines.

Across Southeast Asia, governments are searching for ways to modernize without compromising security. The Philippines' deployment of blockchain at scale signals that emerging economies can build their own solutions.

It also suggests that public sector innovation can be collaborative. It need not be confined within government. It can be shaped alongside entrepreneurs who are willing to challenge legacy systems.



## EDITORIAL

### The Necessary Caution

Technology does not eliminate human failure. It changes its form.

Blockchain can secure records, but it cannot guarantee the accuracy of what is entered. It can promote transparency, but only if access is properly managed. It can strengthen trust, but only if institutions remain accountable.

There is also the question of resilience. As systems become digital, they must withstand cyber threats, technological shifts, and future disruptions.

The reference to post-quantum readiness reflects this awareness. But awareness must be matched by vigilance from both builders and regulators.

### Beyond One Individual

It is tempting to frame this as a story of youthful success. A 23-year-old building systems of national importance.

But the larger story is about who is shaping the future.

For decades, governance systems were built within institutions. Today, they are increasingly influenced by entrepreneurs.

This shift is inevitable. The question is whether it will be guided by purpose.

### Closing Reflection

In University of Asia and the Pacific, where Wong studied Entrepreneurial Management, there is a tradition of linking enterprise with responsibility. His work reflects that idea.

The challenge now is not only to scale infrastructure, but to deepen impact.

Can systems like Lumen influence not just records, but decisions? Can they improve not just efficiency, but fairness? Can they help create a government that is not only transparent, but trusted?

These questions remain open.

There is a quiet symbolism in placing government records on blockchain. It is an act of permanence.

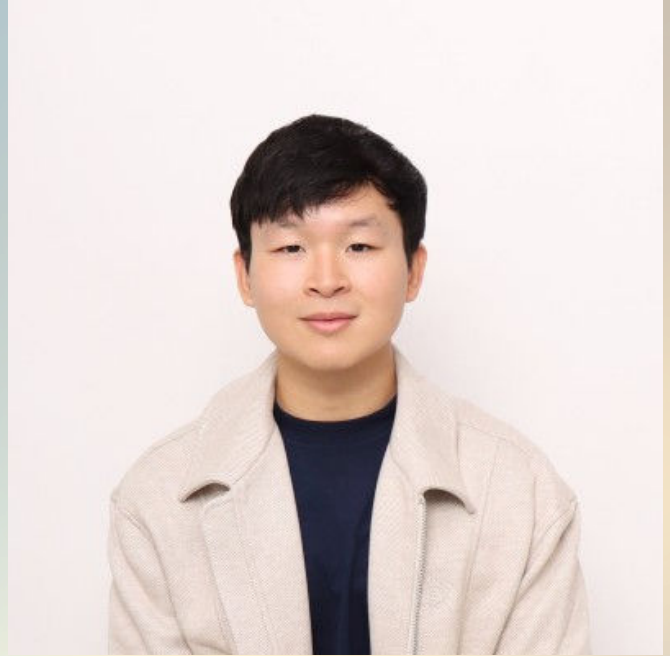
But permanence is not the goal.

**Trust is. ■**

## GUEST SPEAKER

**B**RANDON "Gelo" Wong is a 23-year-old Filipino entrepreneur and co-founder of BYC Ventures, the company behind the Philippines' national blockchain infrastructure. He began his entrepreneurial journey at 14 and now serves as Chief Growth Officer, leading go-to-market strategy and business development for a platform that has placed over \$90 billion in government records on-chain.

Under his leadership, BYC Ventures has grown into a trusted partner of major Philippine government institutions — including the DBM, DPWH, DICT, and the Philippine Congress — building one of the most significant blockchain deployments in Southeast Asian public sector history.



**BRANDON "GELO" WONG**

Filipino Entrepreneur  
Co-Founder, BYC Ventures

The company's flagship product, Lumen, serves as a Truth Operating System combining blockchain infrastructure, AI, and post-quantum readiness for institutional clients.

He studied Entrepreneurial Management at the University of Asia and the Pacific and has represented the Philippine blockchain sector in government hearings and policy discussions. ■



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## The Last Quarter

**T**HE month of April signals the Rotary year's entering its final quarter. As we welcome this final phase of our service year, a quiet but unmistakable shift begins to take place. The calendar itself seems to quicken, and what once felt like a long horizon of plans and aspirations now comes into sharper focus -- measured not in months, but in the tangible impact of what has been done, and what still remains within reach.

For a Club President, this period is both reflective and resolute.



**Raoul C. Creencia**  
President

It is a time to look back with honest clarity. The past months have been filled with intention -- flagship projects launched, new initiatives introduced, and long-standing signature programs faithfully carried out. Each meeting, each outreach, each partnership represents not just activity, but commitment: to service, to fellowship, and to the ideals that bind Rotarians together. Some efforts exceeded expectations; others may have encountered challenges. Yet all of them contribute to the living story of the Club -- one written not in perfection, but in perseverance.

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

At the same time, the last quarter is not merely about looking back -- it is about finishing well.

There is a renewed sense of purpose in ensuring that what was started is brought to meaningful completion.

Projects must not only be implemented, but sustained.

Commitments must not only be fulfilled, but strengthened. The energy of the Club often finds a second wind during this period, as members recognize that there is still time to make a difference -- to deepen impact, to expand reach, and to leave something enduring.

Equally important is the recognition that leadership, especially in Rotary, is never a solitary endeavor. Whatever has been accomplished in the past months is the result of collective effort -- of members who gave their time, ideas, and resources; of partners who shared in the vision; and of a community that allowed the Club to serve. Gratitude becomes more pronounced during this time, not as a formality, but as a sincere acknowledgment that leadership is ultimately an act of stewardship.

There is also a forward-looking dimension to this final stretch. As the current Rotary year begins to wind down, the groundwork for continuity must be laid. The next set of leaders top billed by PE Reggie will soon take the helm, and it is essential that they inherit not only completed projects, but a strong foundation -- clear systems, sustained relationships, and an inspired membership ready to carry the mission forward.

In many ways, the last quarter defines the tone of the entire year. It is where intentions are validated by outcomes, where vision is translated into legacy. It reminds us that leadership is not measured solely by what is initiated, but by what is sustained and entrusted to others.

As President, one comes to appreciate that the true value of the year lies not only in milestones achieved, but in the lives touched and the spirit of service strengthened within the Club. And as the Rotary year approaches its close, there is both fulfillment and humility in knowing that while one's term may be finite, the work of Rotary -- and the opportunity to serve -- continues far beyond it. ■



cover story

by PE Reginald T. Yu

# ***Bridging Nations, Building Understanding:***

*The Rotary Club of Manila's 25th Weekly Membership Meeting with H.E. Jing Quan*

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

Rotary  
District 3810

**UNITE  
FOR  
GOOD**

**ON a distinguished afternoon at the hallowed halls of the Manila Polo Club, the Rotary Club of Manila convened its 25th Weekly Membership Meeting for Rotary Year 2025–2026 — an assembly marked not only by fellowship, tradition, and music, but by a rare and significant moment in contemporary diplomacy.**

Presided over by **President Raoul C. Creencia**, and thoughtfully moderated by **President-Elect Reggie Yu**, the gathering unfolded as both a ceremonial and intellectual exchange — culminating in a deeply candid and far-reaching address by the Guest of Honor and Speaker, **His Excellency Jing Quan**, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People’s Republic of China to the Republic of the Philippines.



*President Raoul C. Creencia called the 25th Weekly Membership Meeting of the Rotary Club of Manila to order.*



*President-Elect Reggie Yu moderated the meeting.*



*Past Director Henry Go led the invocation.*

## A Program Rooted in Tradition and Fellowship

The meeting began with registration and lunch, where members and guests gathered in the familiar rhythm of Rotary fellowship. The formal proceedings commenced with the Call to Order by **President Raoul Creencia**, followed by an invocation delivered by **Past Director Henry Go**, setting a tone of reflection and purpose.

The program then transitioned into a solemn sequence of national pride. The National Anthem of China was presented through an audio-visual presentation, followed by the Philippine National Anthem, likewise rendered with dignity and reverence. These moments were not merely ceremonial; they framed the gathering as a shared space between two nations, grounded in mutual respect.

The Rotary Club of Manila Hymn, performed by the **RCM World-Famous Music Chorale**, reaffirmed the club's enduring identity, while **Director Warren S. So** led the recitation of The Four-Way Test, anchoring the assembly in Rotary's timeless ethical standards.



*Director Warren S. So led the recitation of the Four-Way Test.*

Reggie Yu then acknowledged the distinguished guests in attendance, extending a warm and gracious welcome. The Chorale followed with a welcome song that added both warmth and elegance to the occasion.

A brief yet heartfelt moment of celebration followed, as **STAR Rotarian Atty. Chris Tamesis** was recognized as the birthday celebrant. The Chorale rendered **Maligayang Bati**, reminding everyone present that beyond diplomacy and discourse, Rotary remains a community of shared humanity and personal connection.

## Leadership, Introduction, and Transition to Dialogue

During President's Time, President Raoul addressed the assembly,





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

offering reflections that prepared the audience for the significance of the afternoon's main engagement.

The introduction of the Guest of Honor and Speaker was delivered by **Director Hans Palacios**, whose stature and credibility underscored the importance of the moment. With that, Ambassador Jing Quan took the podium — not only as a representative of his nation, but as a thoughtful voice navigating one of the most complex bilateral relationships in the region.

### **The Ambassador's Address: A Candid Blueprint for Engagement**

Ambassador Jing Quan's address



*Director Hans Palacios introduced the Guest of Honor and Speaker.*

was notable for its candor, clarity, and strategic depth. Rather than relying on formal diplomatic language alone, he offered a deeply personal and insightful perspective on the evolving dynamics between China and the Philippines.

He began by sharing his experience upon arriving in the Philippines, describing a schedule filled with meetings and engagements that reflected both the urgency and importance of his mission. Yet beneath the busyness, he identified a fundamental issue: the absence of sustained official dialogue between the two countries. For over a year, diplomatic channels had fallen silent, creating space for misunderstanding and mistrust.



*Guest of Honor and Speaker, His Excellency Jing Quan, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to the Republic of the Philippines*

Recognizing this, he made it his immediate priority to restore communication. Through persistent effort, dialogue was resumed, beginning with meetings in Cebu and followed by subsequent engagements in Beijing. Plans were already underway for continued discussions at higher levels, forming part of a broader roadmap designed to ensure consistent and structured engagement.

This restoration of dialogue, he emphasized, was not an end in itself but a signal to all sectors — education, culture, business, and trade — that the time had come to

reconnect. Diplomacy, in this sense, becomes a catalyst, encouraging all other forms of exchange to follow.

## **Rebuilding Human Connections**

Perhaps the most compelling dimension of his message centered on the dramatic decline in people-to-people exchanges. Before the pandemic, millions traveled between China and the Philippines each year. That number had since fallen sharply, accompanied by a significant reduction in direct flights.

For Ambassador Jing, this decline was not merely a logistical issue but a deeply human one. When people stop visiting each other, he observed, misunderstanding inevitably grows. Without firsthand experience, perceptions become shaped by distance, speculation, and incomplete narratives.

Efforts are now being made to reverse this trend. Policies encouraging travel have been introduced, and direct flights are being restored between key cities. Each route reopened represents more than convenience — it is a pathway toward renewed understanding.

He expressed a simple yet powerful belief: when people encounter one another directly, they form their own impressions. They no longer rely on secondhand narratives. They see, they listen, and they return home with stories that humanize the other side.

## **Confronting Concerns with Transparency**

In a moment of notable openness, the Ambassador addressed concerns regarding safety and crime — issues that have affected perceptions among potential visitors. Rather than dismissing these concerns, he acknowledged their reality and emphasized ongoing cooperation with Philippine authorities to address them.

Efforts to apprehend fugitives and dismantle criminal networks form part of a broader commitment to restoring confidence. In doing so, he underscored a key principle: trust must be earned through action, not merely expressed through words.

## **Economic Cooperation and Shared Growth**

Turning to economic relations, Ambassador Jing reframed the discussion beyond traditional measures of trade volume. While China remains the Philippines' largest



*His Excellency Ambassador Jing Quan*

trading partner, he suggested that the future of cooperation lies not in the quantity of exchange but in its quality.

He spoke of opportunities to introduce advanced technologies that could directly benefit the Philippine economy. From digital systems and renewable energy to agricultural innovation and artificial intelligence, these developments represent pathways toward sustainable growth.

One particularly compelling example was the concept of waste-to-energy technology. By transforming waste into electricity, such systems could address both environmental challenges and energy needs simultaneously. In a country where electricity costs remain high, the implications are significant.



## **The Challenge of Confidence in Investment**

Despite these opportunities, the Ambassador acknowledged a critical barrier: the decline in large-scale investments from China. This hesitation, he explained, stems not from economic limitations but from uncertainty in the political environment.

Investors seek stability. Without it, even the most promising opportunities become risky. His message was clear — if confidence can be restored, investment will follow. Stability in relations is therefore not merely a diplomatic goal; it is an economic necessity.



*His Excellency Ambassador Jing Quan*

## **Navigating Differences with Wisdom**

Addressing maritime disputes, Ambassador Jing offered a pragmatic framework rooted in restraint and cooperation. He emphasized that while differences exist, they are not unique to China and the Philippines. Many nations navigate similar challenges.

What matters, he suggested, is not the absence of disagreement but the manner in which it is managed. Force must be avoided, dialogue must be sustained, and stability must be preserved. Beyond this, there remains room for cooperation, even in contested spaces.

In this context, he highlighted examples of collaboration, including joint rescue efforts and potential agreements on maritime cooperation. These initiatives demonstrate that even amidst disagreement, constructive engagement is possible.

## **A Philosophy of Balanced Diplomacy**

At the heart of his address was a broader philosophy of diplomacy — one grounded in reciprocity and balance. He spoke of responding to words with words, actions with



*President Raoul C. Creencia presented a Certificate of Appreciation to His Excellency Ambassador Jing Quan, witnessed by Director Hans Palacios, PD Amading Valdez, DE Del Lorenzana, Mr. Victor Lim (President of FFCCCI), PD Henry Go, and Director Warren S. So.*

actions, and cooperation with cooperation, emphasizing mutual respect as the foundation of all engagement.

Rejecting the notion of choosing sides between global powers, he encouraged a perspective centered on national interest. The Philippines, he suggested, need not define itself in relation to others, but rather in alignment with its own priorities and aspirations.

## **A Shared Legacy, A Shared Responsibility**

In his closing reflections, Ambassador Jing invoked the long history between China and the Philippines — a relationship spanning centuries, shaped by trade, migration, and cultural exchange. He spoke of the pride he felt in witnessing this shared heritage, and of the responsibility carried by the present generation.

The question he posed was both simple and profound: when future generations look back, will they see a period of division, or one of renewed understanding?

His hope was clear — that today's efforts would be remembered as a time when leaders chose dialogue over silence, cooperation over conflict, and understanding over mistrust.

### **An Afternoon that Transcended Ceremony**

The address was followed by an engaging open forum, where members had the opportunity to exchange views directly with the Ambassador. The dialogue that ensued reflected the very spirit he had advocated — open, respectful, and constructive.

A Certificate of Appreciation was presented by President Raoul, formally recognizing the Ambassador's presence and contribution. The meeting then concluded with adjournment, marking the end of a program that had gone far beyond routine proceedings.

### **Rotary as a Platform for Meaningful Dialogue**

In hosting Ambassador Jing Quan, the



*President Raoul Creencia adjourned the meeting.*

Rotary Club of Manila reaffirmed its role as a venue where ideas are exchanged, perspectives are broadened, and understanding is deepened.

The afternoon served as a reminder that diplomacy is not confined to official halls — it can unfold in spaces of fellowship, guided by shared values and mutual respect.

And in that space, even the most complex issues can begin to find clarity.

Because when people choose to listen as much as they speak, bridges are not only built — they endure. ■



## Meeting Fellowship





## Meeting Fellowship



cover story

by PE Reginald T. Yu

## *A Convergence of Purpose:*

*The March 24  
Joint Meeting of  
Three Rotary Clubs*



**I**N a rare and meaningful convergence of Rotary fellowship and purpose, the Rotary Club of Manila, the Rotary Club of Makati, and the Rotary Club of Makati West gathered on March 24 for a Joint Meeting that was as much a reaffirmation of shared ideals as it was a call to collective action.



It was a gathering that transcended routine. Three of the country's most storied Rotary institutions came together not merely to exchange courtesies, but to engage in dialogue on issues that cut across sectors, industries, and communities. The room carried a palpable sense of anticipation — one shaped by the presence of leaders who understood that service, at its highest form, demands both reflection and resolve.

## Opening Ceremonies

The meeting formally commenced with the Call to Order, setting the tone for an afternoon anchored on Rotary's enduring values — service above self, fellowship, and ethical leadership.

At the helm of the gathering were the presidents of the three clubs: **Raoul Creencia** of the Rotary Club of Manila, **Eddie Galvez** of the Rotary Club of Makati, and **Gino Dumatol** of the Rotary Club of Makati West. Their presence symbolized not only leadership, but unity — three institutions moving in concert toward a shared vision.



*Rotary Club of Makati President Eddie Galvez*



*Rotary Club of Makati West President Dino Dumatol*



*Rotary Club of Manila President Raoul C. Creencia*

Among those recognized during the program were **Jed Balayan**, Treasurer of Rotary Club of Makati West; **Louie Asioche**, District Secretary and incoming District Governor; and **Aaron Virata-Mempil** of Rotary Club of Makati, who served as moderator for the afternoon's program.

The invocation and national anthem grounded the assembly in both spiritual reflection and patriotic duty, reminding all present that Rotary's mission is inseparable from the larger narrative of nation-building.

*Rotarian Aaron Virata-Mempil of RC Makati moderated the program.*



## Fellowship and Shared Purpose

What distinguished the March 24 gathering was not merely its scale, but its spirit. Conversations unfolded naturally across tables —

between seasoned Rotarians and new members, between leaders of different clubs, between individuals united by a common calling.

This was Rotary in its most authentic form — not confined within the identity of a single club, but expressed through collaboration. The joint meeting became a living testament to the power of collective action, where relationships were strengthened and new possibilities quietly began to take shape.



*Treasurer Judd Balayan of RC Makati West led the invocation.*

*RCM President-Elect Reginald T. "Reggie" Yu led the recitation of the Four-Way Test.*





*From top: Rotary Club of Makati President Eddie Galvez, Rotary Club of Makati West President Dino Dumatol, and Rotary Club of Manila President Raoul C. Creencia during the President's Time*

## **The Address of the Guest of Honor and Speaker**

The highlight of the afternoon was the address of the Guest of Honor and Speaker, The Honorable Senator **Francis Pancratius "Kiko" Pangilinan**.

Speaking with candor and conviction, Senator Pangilinan opened with an apology for his delayed arrival, having come directly from a Senate hearing addressing the escalating crisis in the Middle East. Yet, rather than dwell on uncertainty, he framed the moment as an opportunity — a call to transform crisis into catalyst.

He addressed the audience not merely as Rotarians, but as leaders in the private sector, capable of shaping outcomes far beyond the confines of their respective professions.

At the heart of his speech was a powerful and deeply human narrative: the condition of the Filipino farmer.

He spoke of a reality that has long persisted but remains insufficiently addressed — that those who feed the nation often cannot feed themselves.





*District Secretary Louie Asioche introduced the Guest of Honor and Speaker.*

He painted vivid portraits of elderly farmers who had spent decades tilling the land, their combined years of service reaching nearly two centuries, yet who remained trapped in cycles of poverty and indebtedness.

This, he emphasized, is not simply a matter of food supply — it is a matter of justice.

Food security, in his framing, must be understood alongside food justice. A nation cannot claim stability when its primary food producers remain among its most vulnerable.

He highlighted the structural weaknesses in the agricultural sector, particularly the lack of support systems for farmers and fisherfolk. Investments in infrastructure and



*Guest of Honor and Speaker, The Honorable Senator Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan*

technology, while important, will fall short if the human foundation of agriculture remains neglected.

To address this, he outlined key reforms aimed at strengthening the sector from within. Among these were the revival of the Bureau of Agricultural Cooperatives and the renationalization of extension services — measures designed to empower farmers, improve productivity, and create sustainable support networks.

He contrasted the Philippine experience with that of more developed agricultural systems, where close coordination between extension workers and farmers ensures both efficiency and resilience. The disparity, he noted, underscores the urgency of reform.



*President Raoul C. Creencia, Pres. Eddie Galvez (RC Makati), and Pres. Dino Dumatol (RC Makati West) presented a Plaque of Appreciation to Senator Francis Kiko" Pangilinan.*

The discussion then widened to include energy security, particularly in light of the ongoing geopolitical tensions affecting global oil supply. The Philippines' heavy dependence on imported oil exposes it to external shocks — an exposure that calls for a decisive shift toward renewable energy.

But beyond policy, Pangilinan's message was fundamentally about partnership.

He underscored the indispensable role of the private sector — and organizations like Rotary — in bridging gaps that government alone cannot address. He cited initiatives that allow direct procurement from farmers, eliminating exploitative intermediaries and ensuring fairer incomes.

More importantly, he extended an invitation: for Rotarians to actively participate in nation-building by investing in agricultural systems, supporting cooperatives, and using their networks to create sustainable impact.

His speech was not merely informative — it was a challenge. A challenge to rethink priorities, to act with urgency, and to recognize that meaningful change requires collective effort.

## **Reflections and Closing**

As the program transitioned toward its conclusion, the atmosphere shifted from attentive listening to thoughtful reflection.

The conversations that followed bore

the imprint of the afternoon's message — serious, purposeful, and forward-looking. There was a shared understanding that the issues discussed were not distant concerns, but immediate realities requiring action.

The Joint Meeting, in its entirety, became more than a scheduled gathering. It became a moment of alignment — of three Rotary clubs recognizing the strength of unity and the responsibility that comes with it.

The Adjournment marked the formal close of the program, but not the end of its impact.

### **Epilogue: Toward a Unified Rotary Action**

If there was a single thread that ran through the March 24 Joint Meeting, it was this: the recognition that leadership, especially in times of uncertainty, demands more than position — it demands purpose.

In bringing together the Rotary Club of Manila, the Rotary Club of Makati, and the Rotary Club of Makati West, the meeting affirmed a simple but profound truth:

That the future is best shaped not in isolation, but in unity.

And in that shared space — through dialogue, reflection, and a renewed commitment to service — the foundations of that unity were strengthened, one meaningful conversation at a time.





## Meeting Fellowship



*Sen. Kiko Pangilinan and PT Chito Tagaysay*



*From left: Sec. Anton Mauricio, RC Makati PP Fidel Alfonso, Sen. Kiko Pangilinan, and PP Archit Bartolome. All are members of Upsilon Sigma Phi.*



*Sec. Anton Mauricio (far right) with RC Makati Dasmariñas PP Dada Cua, Senator Kiko Pangilinan, and RC Makati Dasmariñas President Tet de Guzman*



*PE Reggie Yu (right) with RC Makati's Cristopher Concepcion, son of RCMer Rene Concepcion*



*From left: PDG Alex Cureg, BLA Caloy Serapio, PE Reggie Yu, Sen. Kiko Pangilinan, and Sec. Anton Mauricio*

CLUB ADMINISTRATION

RCM Members' Attendance Report  
RY 2025-2026



ATTENDANCE REPORT  
March 2026

| MARCH 2026                      | March 05, 2026<br>MR. DAVID NYE | March 12, 2026<br>STATE OF THE NATION IN AI -<br>GLOBAL AI COUNCIL<br>PHILIPPINES | March 19, 2026<br>AMB. OF CHINA TO<br>THE PHILIPPINES<br>H.E. JING QUAN |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MEMBERS PRESENT                 | 34                              | 39                                                                                | 36                                                                      |
| MEMBERS PRESENT %               | 16%                             | 19%                                                                               | 17%                                                                     |
| MAKE UP ATTENDEES               | 17                              | 20                                                                                | 11                                                                      |
| EXEMPTED                        | 5                               | 5                                                                                 | 4                                                                       |
| ON LEAVE                        | 0                               | 0                                                                                 | 0                                                                       |
| Total Active Members            | 51                              | 59                                                                                | 47                                                                      |
| Total # of Members              | 211                             | 210                                                                               | 210                                                                     |
| TOTAL %:                        | 24%                             | 28%                                                                               | 22%                                                                     |
| ROTARACTORS                     | 17                              | 14                                                                                | 12                                                                      |
| MEDIA                           | 0                               | 0                                                                                 | 0                                                                       |
| EMBASSIES / DIPLOMATIC<br>CORPS | 0                               | 0                                                                                 | 0                                                                       |
| DG, DGE, DGN, PDG               | 0                               | 0                                                                                 | 0                                                                       |
| GOHS / GS                       | 4                               | 3                                                                                 | 3                                                                       |
| VISITING ROTARIAN               | 0                               | 0                                                                                 | 0                                                                       |
| Guests of RCM MEMBERS           | 2                               | 12                                                                                | 37                                                                      |
| TOTAL ATTENDEES                 | 57                              | 68                                                                                | 88                                                                      |



LIST OF ATTENDEES  
March 19, 2026

- Albaña, Michael Jaey C
- Bediones, Rodolfo P.
- Benedicto, Sixto T.
- Carlos, Vicente J.
- Carranceja, Arvin Arik B
- Co, Val Constantine L.
- Creencia, Raoul C.
- Cureg, Alexander P.
- Davis, Raymond N.
- Del Rosario Sr., Oscar A.
- Esguerra, Herminio S.
- Go, Henry S.
- Guevara, Jr., Domingo S.
- Guevara, Ricardo S.
- Kalaw, Teodoro Alejandro Y IV
- Locsin, Arsenio Z.
- Lonzaga, Reinerio C.
- Lorenzana, Delfin
- Mommaerts, Steve
- Obrado, Daniel Calzado
- Palacios, Albert C.
- Recto, Philip H.
- Reynolds, David J.
- Roxas, Michael D.
- Serapio, Carlos G.
- Shimoda, Shigeru
- Sibayan, Joselito H.
- So, Warren S.
- Tagaysay, Hector O.
- Tan, John G.
- Tee, Teddy Jr. B.
- Valdes, Joel C.
- Valdez, Amado D.
- Valencia, John Nico P.
- Yu, Reginald Tieng
- Tamesis, Chris C.

## CLUB ADMINISTRATION

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

As of April 14, 2026

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

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



## CLUB ADMINISTRATION

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

As of April 14, 2026

|     |                                |     |                                   |
|-----|--------------------------------|-----|-----------------------------------|
| 101 | LAZARO, JUAN MIGUEL            | 152 | RECTO, PHILIP H.                  |
| 102 | LEDDA, JAIME VICTOR B.         | 153 | REYNOLDS, DAVID                   |
| 103 | LEE, RICHARD L.                | 154 | RODRIGUEZ, JOAQUIN ANTHONY JR. H. |
| 104 | LIAMZON, ROMEO THADDEUS M.     | 155 | RODRIGUEZ, JOAQUIN SR. C.         |
| 105 | LIM, RICHARD                   | 156 | ROMUALDEZ, FERDINAND MARTIN G.    |
| 106 | LI, RICHARD JOSEPH C.          | 157 | ROMUALDEZ, JOSE MANUEL G.         |
| 107 | LIM, DAVID EDUARDO T.          | 158 | ROÑO, MARLON                      |
| 108 | LIAO, CHRISTOPHER              | 159 | ROXAS, MICHAEL D.                 |
| 109 | LOCSIN, ARSENIO Z.             | 160 | SARMIENTO, RICARDO MANUEL M.      |
| 110 | LONZAGA, REINERIO C.           | 161 | SCHMITZ, STEFAN                   |
| 111 | LOPEZ, ANTONIO                 | 162 | SCHNEIDER, BERND                  |
| 112 | LOPEZ, ARTHUR M.               | 163 | SERAPIO, CARLOS G.                |
| 113 | LORENZANA, DELFIN              | 164 | SEVILLA, LUIS ANGELO L.           |
| 114 | MACAPAGAL, MICHAEL T.          | 165 | SHIMODA, SHIGERU                  |
| 115 | MACATOMAN, ABDULGANI M.        | 166 | SIBAYAN, JOSELITO H.              |
| 116 | MAGBANUA, GERRY P.             | 167 | SIMON, JUANITO AYSON              |
| 117 | MAGSAYSAY, FRANCISCO D.        | 168 | SO, WARREN                        |
| 118 | MAGSAYSAY, JESUS VICENTE E.    | 169 | SOBREPEÑA, ROBERT JOHN            |
| 119 | MANALAYSAY, CESAR P.           | 170 | STRANATHAN, IKE EDWARD            |
| 120 | MANGALILE, SENEN               | 171 | SYJUCO, JOSE, JR. A.              |
| 121 | MARTINEZ, RONALD               | 172 | TAGAYSAY, HECTOR O.               |
| 122 | MATSCHUCK, GUENTER GERHARD G.  | 173 | TALAMPAS, JOSE ANGEL L.           |
| 123 | MAURICIO, ANTONILO DC          | 174 | TALUSAN, FERDINAND E.             |
| 124 | MAURICIO, FRANCISCO ROBERTO C. | 176 | TAMANO, SHALIMAR H.               |
| 125 | MENDOZA, MIGUEL                | 177 | TAMAYO, VICTOR L.                 |
| 126 | MENDOZA, RAYMUND JOSEPH D.     | 178 | TAMESIS, CHRIS                    |
| 127 | MOMMAERTS, STEVE               | 179 | TAN, EUSEBIO V.                   |
| 128 | NOLIDO, RAMON ALBERTO B.       | 180 | TAN, JOHN G.                      |
| 129 | NOMURA, KAZUHIRO               | 181 | TAN, LAWRENCE L.                  |
| 130 | NONES, ROMEO C.                | 182 | TAN, MYLES                        |
| 131 | NUÑEZ, JOSE A.                 | 183 | TEE, TEDDY JR. B.                 |
| 132 | OBRADO, DANIEL                 | 184 | TEJUMAL, MICHAEL                  |
| 133 | OCAMPO, TEODORO J.             | 185 | TILLMAN, HANSEL JOSEPH MICHAEL L. |
| 134 | ONG, PHILIP                    | 186 | UY, IVAN JOHN E.                  |
| 135 | ONG, ROWEL JANSON S.           | 187 | VALDES, JOELC.                    |
| 136 | OZAETA, MIGUEL ANTONIO L.      | 188 | VALDEZ, AMADO                     |
| 137 | PAGDANGANAN, ROBERTO M.        | 189 | VALDEZ, JASON ROLAND N.           |
| 138 | PALACIOS, ALBERT S.            | 190 | VALDERRAMA, JASON ROMEO           |
| 139 | PALLASIGUE, JOHN BRIAN C.      | 191 | VALENCIA, JOHN NICO P.            |
| 140 | PANTALEON, OLIVER              | 192 | VALENCIA, RODOLFO G.              |
| 141 | PASCUAL, ABRAHAM               | 193 | VAZQUEZ, EVARISTO JR.             |
| 142 | PAYUMO, FELICITO C.            | 194 | VILLARICA, HENRY R.               |
| 143 | PELIÑO, WILFREDO               | 195 | YAP, ENRIQUE JR.                  |
| 144 | PINEDA, JESUS JR. M.           | 196 | YORDANOV, STEFAN                  |
| 145 | PINEDA, PATRICIO JR. F.        | 197 | YU, GEOFFREY C.                   |
| 146 | PIZARRAS, JORDAN M.            | 198 | YU, REGINALD T.                   |
| 147 | PREYSLER, FAUSTO JR. D.R.      | 199 | ZALDARRIAGA, FELIX FRANCISCO S.   |
| 148 | PUJALTE, JOSE BRITTANIO JR.    | 200 | ZEITOUNI, NAGI                    |
| 149 | RA, INGILL                     | 201 | ZIALCITA, XAVIER Y.               |
| 150 | RAMOS, CLAVER P.               | 202 | ZIMMER, CHRISTOPHER               |
| 151 | RANKL, PETER                   |     |                                   |

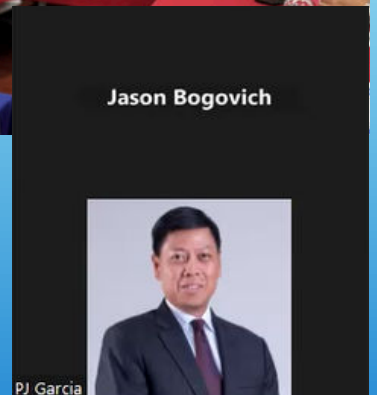
## CLUB ADMINISTRATION

### Regular Monthly Board Meeting



The Regular Monthly Board Meeting was held on Thursday, March 19, 2016, from 5 PM to 7 PM in the Library Room at the Elks Club.

Attendees included President Raoul Creencia, Vice President Ricky Guevara, Directors Mike Albaña and Warren So, Secretary Anton Mauricio, Internal Auditor Nick Locsin, DE/Assistant Internal Auditor Mike Roxas, and DSAA John Cutter. Director Jason Bogovich and Treasurer PJ Garcia joined the meeting via Zoom.





## CLUB ADMINISTRATION

# Planning Meeting for the 107th Induction and Handover Ceremonies



The 107th Inaugural Committee convened at around 3:00 PM on March 20, 2026, at Lakbay Museum, Ayala Malls Manila Bay, Parañaque City.

In attendance were Rtn. Lance Tan, Overall Chair for the oath-taking ceremonies at Luneta Park; Director-Elect Mike Roxas; and Induction Chairman/PDG Alex Cureg.





## CLUB ADMINISTRATION

### Planning Meeting for the 107th Induction and Handover Ceremonies

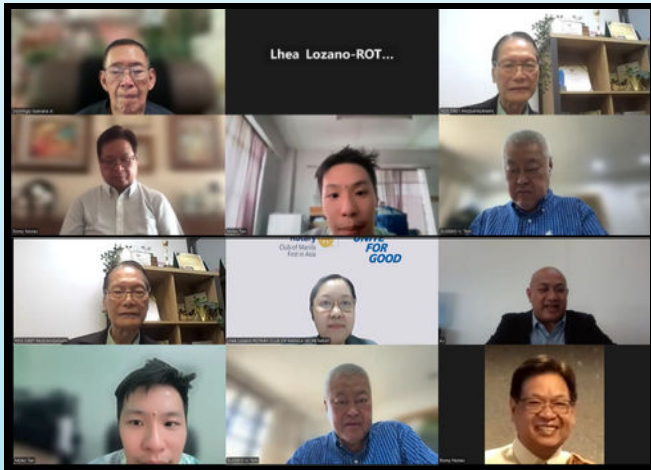


Event organizers for the 107th Induction and Handover Ceremonies, Finest Media and Events On Demand, also presented their plans during the meeting.



## CLUB ADMINISTRATION

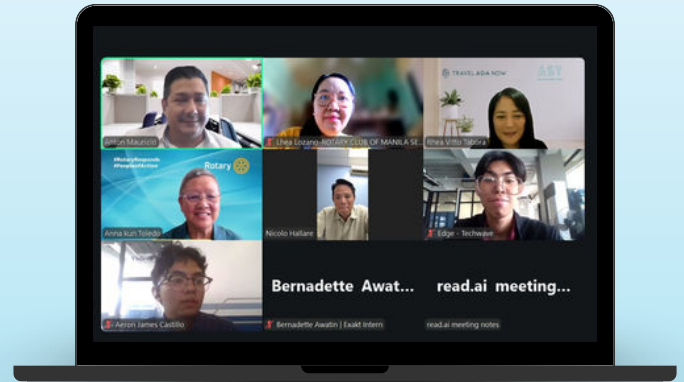
### Rotary Information Briefing



A Rotary Information Briefing was held on March 26, 2026 at 2:00 PM via Zoom for Messrs Manuel E. Pangilinan and Myles Seymour Y. Tan.

Rotary Information Chairman PDG Obet Pagdanganan, along with Co-Chairman PP Boy Guevara, PP Ebot Tan, and Rtn. Romy Nones provided essential information about Rotary. This included the organization's vision, mission, and objectives, as well as the Rotary Club of Manila's history and ongoing projects.

### RCM Website Committee Meeting



The RCM Website Committee held a virtual meeting on March 30, 2026 to discuss and demonstrate the process of uploading Balita content to the website.

Present were Chair Rtn. Nico Hallare, Secretary Anton Mauricio, Editorial Consultant Rhea Vitto Tabora, and representatives from Techwave Technologies Corporation: Aeron James Castillo, Edge Nicolas, and Bernadette Awatin. Also in attendance were Consultant Anna Kun-Toledo and ES Lhea Lozano.



# Project Report: RCM-RCMFI Reading Literacy Teacher Training Project with Reading Specialists

## ABCs of Reading: How to teach children to read

READING SPECIALISTS  
x ILUGIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Feb 2026

## Snapshot of Training

The recent national conversation revealed the learning challenges of our country where 88% of students entering Grade 7 struggle to read at their level. The Reading Specialists, in partnership with Rotary Club of Manila, Rotary Club of Manila Foundation, Kabisig ng Kalahi Foundation, and Ilugin Elementary School, spent Feb 7 and Feb 23, 2026 in a two-day interactive workshop on the Science of Reading. 60 teachers from Kindergarten to Grade 7 level attended 16 hours of training aimed at equipping them with the tools and knowledge to develop skills in reading and comprehension. This report highlights how partnerships are empowering our teachers to make a real difference in ensuring that all Filipino children are able to read.



## Feedback from Participants

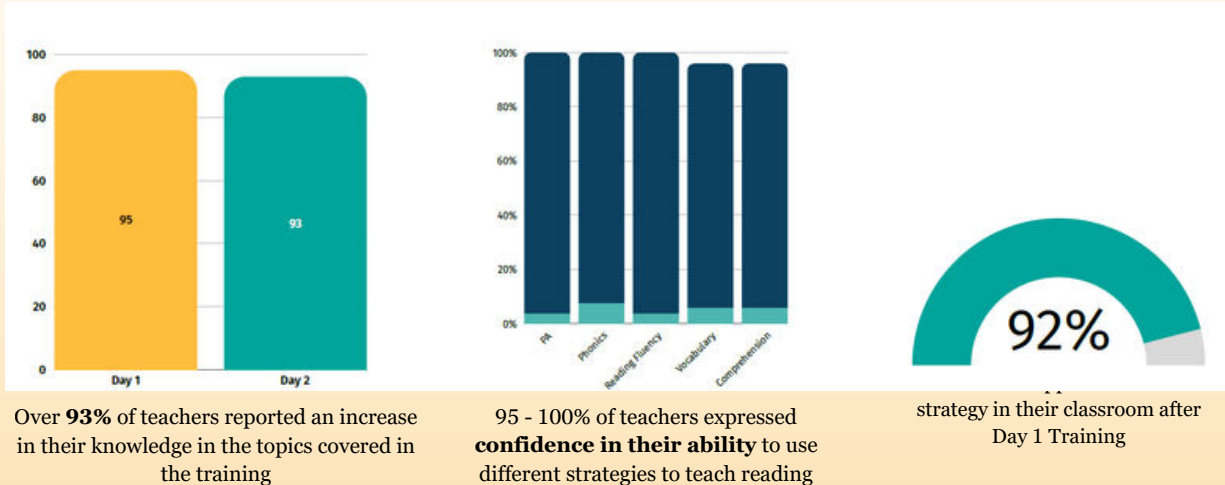
“The two day training is very informative to us, as a teacher in Kindergarten it gives me more ideas or strategies on how I handle teaching my learners how to read in a fun way.”



## Project Report: RCM-RCMFI Reading Literacy Teacher Training Project with Reading Specialists

“I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to all speakers for sharing your expertise in reading. You have given it all. All I need to do is to choose which strategies fit my learners.”

### Survey Results

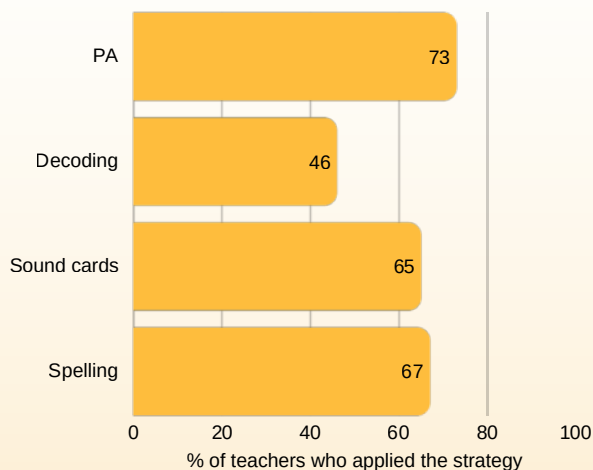


For each day of the training, teachers were asked to fill in a survey. The results revealed that **100 % of teachers** either agreed or strongly agreed that the training content was relevant to their needs as a teacher and was presented in an engaging and effective way.



Looking even further at the survey results, it revealed that the most gain was in the Day 1 topic on the Science of Reading and theoretical models of reading, and the Day 2 topic of using the Frayer Model for teaching vocabulary. This suggests that awareness of the models and concepts of the Science of Reading were training topics that connected the most with the teachers who participated in the training sessions.

## Project Report: RCM-RCMFI Reading Literacy Teacher Training Project with Reading Specialists



In addition, **92% of teachers said “Yes”** when asked whether they were able to apply the strategies demonstrated on Day 1. The graph shows the breakdown of the strategies they applied, which shows that strategies on **Phonological Awareness (PA) were applied by 73%**, followed by spelling, sound cards, and decoding. With these results, follow-up training to strengthen decoding practices can be conducted to further encourage the adoption of a variety of strategies for teaching decoding and comprehension in the classroom.



The two days of interactive training, as supported by the survey results and comments from the participants, helped the teachers of Ilugin Elementary School gain an improved understanding of the Science of Reading, have confidence to apply new strategies in teaching reading in their practice. With the positive results, teachers can be further supported to keep using what they learned in their classrooms every day.



# Project Report: RCM-RCMFI Reading Literacy Teacher Training Project with Reading Specialists



BASIC EDUCATION  
AND LITERACY



From the teachers of Ilugin Elementary School, Pasig City

“

"I already used the sound cards in my class and also the spelling activities. They enjoyed it. They also enjoyed the rhyming game, phoneme segmentation and blending activities."

”

“

"I will try the magnetic letters/words because I know that it really works for my learners; they can use their fine motor skills, as well as enjoy and have fun while learning."

”



# Project Report: RCM-RCMFI Reading Literacy Teacher Training Project with Reading Specialists



BASIC EDUCATION  
AND LITERACY

“

To our friends at the Rotary Club  
Manila and the Rotary Club  
Manila Foundation, Inc.,

They say it takes a village, and we are so grateful you are part of ours! Your sponsorship allowed us to bring our teachers together for two Saturdays last February of interactive training, where they are guided to try out different materials and apply the Science of Reading. They learned new strategies that will change the way young Filipino students engage with learning to read and reading to learn. Thank you for recognizing the value of a well-trained teacher and for being a true champion for literacy in our country.

Warmly,  
The Reading Specialists



# Project Report: RCM-RCMFI Reading Literacy Teacher Training Project with Reading Specialists



**BASIC EDUCATION  
AND LITERACY**



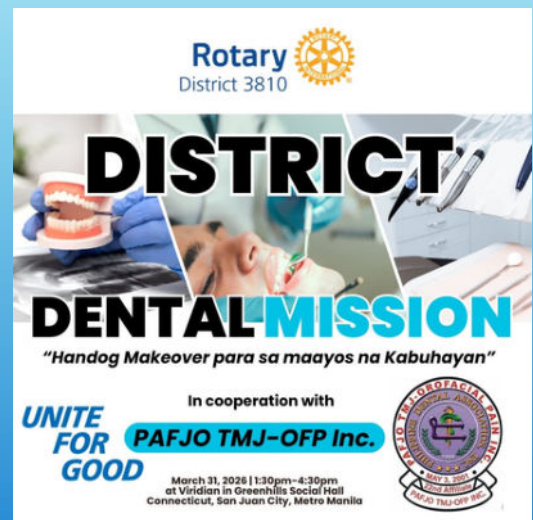


## Handog Makeover District Dental Mission



*DGND Hermie Esguerra checking the new dentures that were fitted on a beneficiary while volunteer dentists look on.*

**O**N March 31, 2026, **Rotary International District 3810**, in partnership with PAFJO TMJ OFP Inc., successfully conducted the “Handog Makeover District Dental Mission” at the Viridian, Greenhills Social Hall.





# Project Completion Report: District 3810 “Handog Makeover”



COMMUNITY ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT



MATERNAL AND  
CHILD HEALTH



DISEASE PREVENTION  
AND TREATMENT

**To:** The Board of Directors  
Rotary Club of Manila  
RY 2025-2026

**Thru:** Raoul C. Creencia - President

**From:** PP Herminio S. Esguerra

**Re: Project Completion Report:  
District 3810 “Handog  
Makeover”**

**Date:** April 13, 2026

## Avenues of Service:

- Community Service
- Vocational Service
- Youth Service

## Areas of Focus:

- Community Economic Development
- Maternal and Child Health
- Disease Prevention and Treatment

## Report:

RI District 3810, in partnership with PAFJO TMJ OFP Inc., successfully conducted the “Handog Makeover District Dental Mission”.

This project, conceptualized together with PDG Joyce Ambray, was designed to support individuals aged 16 to 35 who often struggle to secure employment because appearance and presentation requirements can stand in their way — knowing that a confident smile can open doors.



*Dir. Mike Albaña and Special Assistant to the Governor-Manila SDG Albert S. Alday, together with a dentist from RC Manila Phenomenal Dentists, check on the newly-installed dentures on a beneficiary.*

## Project Completion Report: District 3810 “Handog Makeover”

In this project, fifty (50) young jobseeker beneficiaries received well-fitted dentures, completing a journey that began weeks earlier in the private clinics of volunteer dentists from PAFJO TMJ OFP Inc. and the Rotary Club of Manila Phenomenal Dentists, a daughter club of the Rotary Club of Manila. There, they underwent oral rehabilitation procedures such as prophylaxis, fillings, and extractions. The final denture installation during the mission marked the culmination of their dental transformation — restoring both function and self-esteem.



*DGND Hermie Esguerra, Special Assistant to the Governor-Manila SDG Albert S. Alday stressing points during simulated job interviews as PE Reggie Yu observes.*

Far beyond oral health, the program included grooming sessions for men and makeup tutorials for women, followed by styling assistance to ensure they dressed appropriately for the workplace. Each beneficiary received a professional ID photo for job applications. In a heartfelt display of Rotary service, volunteers also donated pre-loved corporate attire, shoes, and belts, helping beneficiaries feel confident and ready for professional environments.



*Special Assistant to the Governor-Manila SDG Albert S. Alday, DGND Hermie Esguerra and PE Reggie Yu as part of the panel in conducting simulated job interviews*

# Project Completion Report: District 3810 “Handog Makeover”

Rotary Club of Manila members prepared beneficiaries for employment by conducting simulated job interviews. These sessions equipped participants with the confidence and communication skills to take on real-world opportunities. Some qualified beneficiaries were even hired on the spot, achieving their dreams of gainful employment.

Manila Rotarians who participated and donated included:

- **DGND Hermie Esguerra** - assorted shirts, blazers, pants, long sleeves, and belts
- **IPP Jujut Enriquez** - 1 tuxedo, 1 blazer, 3 full suits, 3 long sleeve office polo shirts, 2 female tops and 2 dresses from his wife
- **PE Reggie Yu** - 1 suit
- **Dir. Mike Albaña** - 30 neckties, 10 suits, and 20 long-sleeve office shirts
- **PD/IS Albert Alday** - 4 office bags
- **Sec. Anton Mauricio** - shirts and belts
- **Rtn. Teddy Tee** - 2 suits and 2 white long sleeves

*Some of the fine office clothes donated by the Rotary Club of Manila members*



*Dir. Mike Albaña and PE Reggie Yu mentoring and supervising the beneficiaries as they fill out their respective biodata forms.*



*Special Assistant to the Governor-Manila SDG Albert S. Alday supervising and mentoring beneficiaries on how to fill out their biodata forms.*



## Project Completion Report: District 3810 “Handog Makeover”



*DGND Hermie Esguerra mentoring a beneficiary on proper styling of an office attire*



*Dir. Mike Albaña mentoring a beneficiary in filling out her biodata form*



*PE Reggie Yu with one of the volunteer dentists during the fitting of a new denture on a beneficiary.*



*Manila Rotarians and Rotary District 3810 dignitaries flashing the End Polio sign during the event.*

# Project Completion Report: District 3810 “Handog Makeover”



*Manila Rotarians side by side with Past, Present and Future District Governors of Rotary District 3810. Standing (from left): DGN Jun Pasion, SDG/Dir. Mike Albaña, Special Assistant to the Governor-Manila SDG Albert S. Alday, DGND Hermie Esguerra, PE Reggie Yu, DG Mary Mei Rodrigo, UCP Alex Rodrigo, Club Secretary Anton Mauricio and IPP Jujut Enriquez. Sitting (from left): Lady Peaches Pasion, The Rotary Foundation Fund Development Specialist Gretchen Laurel, PDG Joyce Ambray, PDG Ernie Choa, PDG Josie Ang and Lady Celene Choa.*

The project was attended by respected Rotary leaders, including Past District Governors Ernie Choa, Josie Ang, Robert Koa, DGN Jun Pasion, Members of the Executive Committee, District Officers, and United Chosen Presidents, showing unified district commitment under District Governor Mary Mei Rodrigo.

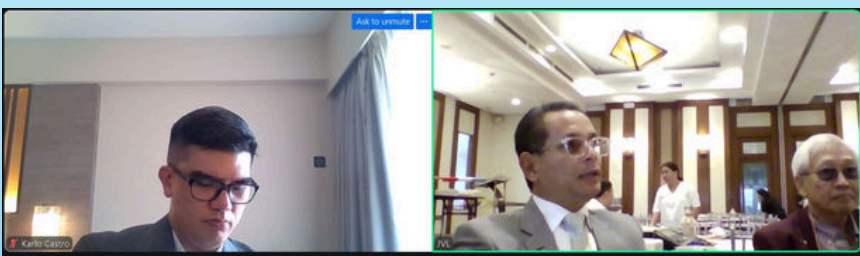
This project reflects Rotary’s spirit—transforming lives through service and opening brighter futures for those in need.

Yours in Rotary Service,

**PP Herminio S. Esguerra**



## Incoming Board of Trustees RY 2026-2027 Organizational Meeting



Incoming Board of Trustees  
RY 2026-2027  
Organizational Meeting led  
by Chair-Elect/RCM  
President Raoul Creencia,  
held last March 19, 2026,  
2:15 PM at the Turf Room,  
Manila Polo Club.

Present were Chair-Elect/RCM  
Pres. Raoul Creencia, Incumbent  
Chair/Trustee-Elect Alex Cureg,  
Incumbent Treas./President-Elect  
Mike Roxas, Incumbent Sec./Elect  
Anton Mauricio, Incumbent  
BLA/Elect Caloy Serapio,  
Trustee-elect Ner Lonzaga,  
Trustee-elect Mike Albaña,  
Trustee-elect Noy Benedicto,  
Trustee-elect Del Lorenzana, and  
RCM President-Elect Reggie Yu.

Present via Zoom was Trustee-  
elect Karlo Castro.



## PUBLIC IMAGE

### RC Manila, RC Makati, and RC Makati West Joint Meeting

**RECAP:  
JOINT MEETING WITH RCM WEST & RC MANILA**  
TUESDAY, 24 MARCH 2026, SHANGRI-LA MAKATI

| GUEST SPEAKER                  |                                      |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Sen. Kiko Pangilinan           |                                      |
| PRESIDENT                      |                                      |
| Eddie Galvez<br>RC Makati      |                                      |
| PRESIDENT                      | PRESIDENT                            |
| Dino Dumatol<br>RC Makati West | Raoul Creencia<br>RC Manila          |
| MODERATOR                      | INVOCATOR                            |
| Aaron Mempo<br>RC Makati       | Treas. Jud Balayan<br>RC Makati West |
| 4 WAY-TEST                     | INTRODUCER                           |
| PE Reggie Yu<br>RC Manila      | DS Louie Asecho<br>RC Makati         |

**KAUNLARAN**  
7 APRIL 2026

When three of the country's leading Rotary clubs come together for a joint meeting, it is always expected to be a significant gathering—and this third joint meeting for the Rotary year was no exception.

RC Makati, RC Makati West, and RC Manila convened at the Makati Shangri-La, Manila on 24 March, where members and guests gathered at the Isabela Ballroom for a lunch meeting featuring Sen. Kiko Pangilinan as guest speaker.

The program was smoothly emceed by Aaron Mempo and formally opened with the call to order led by the presidents of the three host clubs: Pres. Eddie Galvez of RC Makati, Pres. Dino Dumatol of RC Makati West, and Pres. Raoul Creencia of RC Manila.

Leading the prayer was Treas. Judd Balayan of RC Makati West, who expressed gratitude for the opportunity to come together in fellowship and service. He prayed for guidance and wisdom as the participants listened to Sen. Pangilinan, particularly in gaining a deeper understanding of the government's efforts in addressing food security. He likewise offered prayers for the success of everyone's projects and missions, that they may continue to create meaningful impact in their respective communities.

It was also during this meeting that the MoA signing for the Daloy Project with RC Makati Dasmariñas (RCMD) was conducted. Representing RCMD, UGP Tet De Guzman signed the agreement, while Pres. Eddie Galvez signed on behalf of RC Makati, with Dir Paolo Turno and PP Elisa Cu as witnesses. The Daloy Project is an initiative that aims to provide potable water to schools and underserved communities in Puer Princesa, Palawan. The project has a total cost of P250,000, with P100,000 contributed by RC Makati Dasmariñas and P150,000 from RC Makati.

Announcements. IPP Ke Harrison shared highlights from his recent visit to our sister club RC Fukui Aisai in Japan, who recently celebrated its 25th Anniversary. As a gesture of friendship, the club sent a basket of goods, which he looks forward to sharing with members during a future evening gathering at the clubhouse. He likewise rem



**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**

The Rotary Club of Manila's Joint Meeting with the Rotary Club of Makati and the Rotary Club of Makati West, held on March 24, 2026 at Shangri-La Makati, was featured on RC Makati's publication. The guest of honor and speaker was Senator Francis Pancratius "Kiko" Nepomuceno Pangilinan.



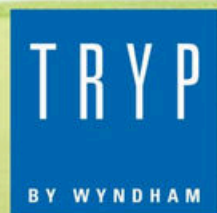


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## *Between* **ENTERPRISE** *and* **NATION**

*The Life,  
Leadership,  
and Public Service  
of Abdulgani Matua  
Macatoman*

*By PE Reginald T. Yu*





## BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

*The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

**O**N a humid morning in July 2017, Abdulgani “Gani” Matua Macatoman stood quietly in his office, looking out over the Manila skyline.

The city was already alive with motion. Traffic crept along the avenues below, office towers reflected the early sunlight, and the restless energy of the capital hummed through the streets. In a few hours, he would formally assume a new role.

The appointment letter lay on the desk beside him.

*“Undersecretary of the Department of Trade and Industry.”*

For many professionals, such a title would represent the culmination of ambition — a position of national influence within one of the government’s most important economic institutions.



*Taking his oath of office as DTI Undersecretary, Macatoman is sworn in by Trade Secretary Ramon M. Lopez, marking a milestone in his career in public service.*

# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

## *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

Yet Gani's thoughts were not focused on the prestige of the office.

They were focused on responsibility.

Accepting the appointment meant stepping away from the private enterprise he had spent years helping build. It meant leaving behind the daily decisions of corporate leadership and entering the far more complex world of national policy.

And it meant trusting that the company he helped create would continue forward under new leadership.

Across the room sat his wife, Mufaida Unda Alonto Macatoman.

Together they had built Global Empire International Group of Companies, navigating the uncertainties of entrepreneurship and the demands of developing projects in industries as challenging as renewable energy and infrastructure.

Now the moment had come for a transition.

As Gani prepared to enter government service, Mufaida would assume full leadership of the enterprise as President

and Chief Executive Officer, guiding the company into its next chapter.

Neither of them spoke for a moment.

They both understood the weight of what was about to happen.



*Representing the Philippines in a regional policy dialogue, Macatoman participates in discussions on trade cooperation and development initiatives across Southeast Asia.*



# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

## *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

Public service has a way of changing the trajectory of a life. It shifts the center of responsibility from organization to nation, from boardroom decisions to policies that affect millions.

Gani picked up the appointment letter again.

For a brief instant, the memories of a much earlier time came rushing back — memories of the community in Mindanao where he had grown up, of parents who taught him that leadership meant keeping one's commitments, of teachers who insisted that education carried with it a duty to serve others.

Those lessons had shaped every step of the journey that brought him to this moment.

Now they would shape what came next.

He placed the letter back on the desk and turned toward the door.

Outside, a new chapter of responsibility awaited.

But the story of how he arrived there — how a boy raised in the communities of Mindanao came to stand at the intersection of enterprise and national leadership — began many years earlier.



*Engaging local leaders, TDP representatives, and DTI-SSF beneficiaries at a meeting held on April 11, 2018 at Pagana Hall in Mindanao State University, Marawi City, Macatoman joined discussions focused on rebuilding community enterprises and strengthening economic recovery in the region.*



*Representatives from government agencies, development organizations, and private sector partners gather alongside Gani Macatoman during a memorandum of agreement signing ceremony aimed at strengthening collaboration in entrepreneurship and livelihood development initiatives.*

# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

## *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

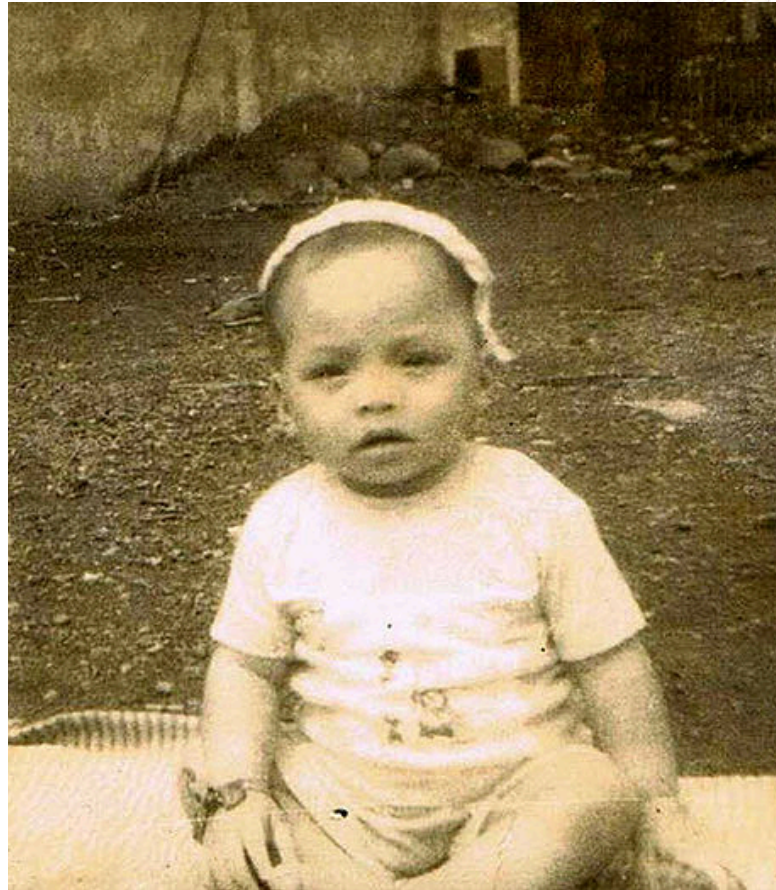
### Roots in Mindanao

Long before Gani would sit across negotiating tables with international investors, long before he would help shape policies affecting Philippine enterprise and trade, his life unfolded in a place where leadership was understood in its most basic form — within the rhythms of family and community.

Mindanao, the island where he was raised, is a land of remarkable diversity. Its landscapes range from fertile plains and coastal waters to mountainous regions and bustling towns shaped by centuries of cultural exchange. Generations of communities — Muslim, Christian, and indigenous — have lived side by side, each contributing traditions that form the region's rich social fabric.

For the young Gani, Mindanao was not simply a geographic location. It was the environment that shaped his earliest understanding of responsibility.

The communities where he grew up valued relationships deeply. Families maintained close ties with neighbors, relatives, and elders whose wisdom carried quiet authority.



*Photographed at nine months old in 1972 at the Salaman House, this early portrait captures Abdulgani "Gani" Macatoman in infancy — long before the life of leadership and public service that would later define him began to unfold.*



# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

## *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

Respect for age and experience was ingrained from childhood. Children were taught to listen carefully when elders spoke, for their stories were not merely anecdotes but lessons drawn from lives shaped by struggle and perseverance.

Within the Macatoman household, these values were reinforced every day.

His parents believed strongly that character formed the foundation of success. Material circumstances, they reminded their children, might rise or fall with time, but integrity remained constant.

His father, Abdulrahman Macatoman, embodied discipline and responsibility. A man of firm convictions, he believed that leadership began with personal accountability. If a promise was made, it must be kept. If a task was undertaken, it must be completed with diligence.

From him, the young Abdulgani learned that credibility is earned slowly and lost quickly.

His mother, Rasmia Matua Macatoman, by contrast, represented the quiet strength that sustains families through life's uncertainties. Patient and deeply

rooted in faith, she emphasized compassion, humility, and the importance of treating others with dignity.

From her, he absorbed the belief that leadership must be tempered with empathy.



*Among thousands of pilgrims in Mecca, Macatoman stands in simple white ihram garments during the Hajj — an experience of humility, devotion, and spiritual reflection.*

## BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

### *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

Together, his parents created a home environment where expectations were clear.

Education was not optional.

Discipline was not negotiable.

And faith was not merely professed — it was practiced.

The family's circumstances were modest, but the atmosphere within the household was rich in encouragement. Books were valued. Curiosity was welcomed. Questions were met with thoughtful conversation rather than dismissal.

Family gatherings often became informal classrooms.

Relatives and elders would share stories about the past — stories of communities navigating economic hardship, of individuals who overcame adversity through determination, and of leaders who placed service above personal comfort.

The young Gani listened attentively.

In those moments, he began to understand something fundamental about leadership: that it often grows quietly within communities long before it becomes visible in public life.



*A memorable family outing finds Macatoman enjoying the clear waters and vibrant marine life of Starfish Island in Honda Bay, Palawan.*



# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

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Life in Mindanao also instilled resilience.

The region's history has been shaped by both opportunity and challenge. Communities learned to adapt to shifting economic conditions, political changes, and the complexities of a multicultural society.

For young people growing up in such an environment, adaptability was not merely useful — it was essential.

Gani's childhood unfolded within this atmosphere of both stability and uncertainty. The lessons he absorbed during those years would later become central to his leadership philosophy.

Hard work was necessary. Integrity was non-negotiable. And service to others was a responsibility that accompanied success.

Yet childhood was not defined solely by lessons and discipline.

Like many young boys, he was curious about the wider world beyond his immediate surroundings. Books opened windows into places and ideas far beyond the boundaries of his community. Through reading, he

discovered stories about leaders, innovators, and thinkers whose influence extended across nations.

Education soon became the pathway through which those possibilities might be explored.

When he entered Camp Keithley Elementary School in Marawi City,



*Community leaders and officials listen as Gani Macatoman speaks during the PNP Oplan BES (Bisita Eskwela) Program, a grassroots initiative aimed at strengthening cooperation among government agencies, law enforcement, and local communities.*

## BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

### *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

teachers quickly noticed his seriousness toward learning. He approached assignments with quiet determination, rarely seeking attention but consistently demonstrating diligence.

His teachers encouraged that curiosity.

They understood that education could serve as a bridge between the realities of rural life and the opportunities that lay beyond.

Later, at the Mindanao State University Training Center, his intellectual horizons expanded further. Surrounded by students from different backgrounds across Mindanao, he encountered new perspectives on politics, economics, and social development.

These experiences introduced him to a broader national conversation.

For many young Filipinos of his generation, the question of how one might contribute to the country's progress was deeply personal. The Philippines was navigating economic transitions and social challenges that demanded both innovation and leadership.

Gani began to imagine a future where he might play a role in that process.



*Officials of Mindanao State University–Marawi present Gani Macatoman with a Plaque of Commendation following his commencement address, recognizing his contributions to public service and economic development in Mindanao.*



*A cultural gathering in Lanao del Sur brings together local leaders and community members, with Macatoman participating in efforts to strengthen unity and grassroots engagement in Mindanao.*



# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

## *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

Teachers and mentors recognized his potential and encouraged him to pursue higher education beyond Mindanao. Their advice planted a seed that would eventually lead him to Manila — a journey that would expand his horizons and prepare him for the responsibilities that awaited him.

Yet even as his ambitions grew, the lessons of Mindanao remained firmly anchored within him.

The values learned in childhood — respect, discipline, humility, and faith — would accompany him through every stage of his life.

In later years, when he found himself working in government institutions, advising businesses, or advocating for economic development, he would often reflect on those early influences.

They were the compass that guided his decisions.

And they reminded him that leadership, in its truest form, begins not in public office but in the communities that first shape a person's character.

### **The Discipline of Education**

The classroom at Camp Keithley Elementary School in Marawi City was quiet except for the soft scratching of pencils against paper.



*Community leaders and stakeholders listen as Macatoman speaks at a development forum in Mindanao, sharing government programs designed to empower local entrepreneurs and strengthen livelihoods.*

## BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

### *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

Rows of wooden desks faced the chalkboard where numbers had been carefully written in neat columns. The exercise seemed simple enough: solve the arithmetic problems and show the process step by step.

For most of the students, the task required concentration.

For the young Abdulgani Macatoman, it required something more — precision.

He leaned forward slightly as he worked through the equations, methodically checking each calculation before moving to the next line. Numbers, he had begun to realize, followed a logic that rewarded patience and careful thought.

His teacher watched the room attentively as students worked. When she reached Gani's desk, she paused briefly.

His answers were correct.

More than that, the work showed an unusual attention to detail for a student his age.

Moments like these were small and easily overlooked, yet they often revealed something about the future direction of a young mind.

For Gani, the discipline required in those early classroom exercises mirrored the values he had learned at home. His parents had instilled in him a respect for effort and preparation. School, therefore, was not merely an obligation — it was an opportunity.

From the beginning, he approached his studies with seriousness.



*A moment with then Davao City Mayor (and now Philippine Vice-President) Sara Duterte reflects collaboration among national and local leaders committed to development in Mindanao.*



# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

## *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

Camp Keithley provided more than academic instruction. Located in Marawi City, the school operated within an environment shaped by both community life and the presence of nearby institutions that valued order and discipline.

Students were expected to arrive prepared. Teachers emphasized not only academic performance but also responsibility, respect, and cooperation.

Gani responded well to that structure.

He developed an early interest in subjects that demanded logical thinking and careful analysis. Mathematics and accounting concepts — though still simple at the elementary level — captured his attention.

Numbers made sense.  
They followed rules.  
And when those rules were understood, problems could be solved.

Yet education was never confined to the classroom alone.

Outside school hours, conversations at home continued to reinforce the lessons of discipline and perseverance. His parents reminded their children that learning was a privilege — one that many families struggled to obtain.

Education, they believed, opened doors.

For Gani, this belief gradually transformed study from routine into aspiration.



*During a Southeast Asian gathering, Macatoman poses for a photograph with Anwar Ibrahim, then former Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia and future Prime Minister of the country.*



# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

*The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*



*Wearing traditional royal robes while seated beside a portrait of Amir Timur (Tamerlane), Macatoman reflects appreciation for Central Asia's rich imperial heritage.*

As he progressed through his elementary years, teachers began encouraging him to aim higher. They recognized not only his academic ability but also his quiet determination.

Such encouragement can shape a young student's sense of possibility.

For Gani, it planted the idea that education might eventually carry him beyond the boundaries of his hometown.

## **The Training Center Years**

When Gani later entered the Mindanao

State University Training Center for his secondary education, his world expanded significantly.

The Training Center brought together students from different communities across Mindanao. In the hallways and classrooms, conversations reflected a wide range of backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives.

For many students, the school served as a gateway to opportunities beyond their local communities.

Gani quickly immersed himself in the environment.



# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

## *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

High school introduced new academic challenges and intellectual debates. Subjects became more complex, and expectations for independent thinking grew.

At the same time, the Training Center offered opportunities for students to participate in organizations and activities beyond academic coursework.

Gani began to explore these opportunities.

Through student activities and school initiatives, he gained his first experiences working collaboratively with peers to organize events and manage responsibilities.

These early leadership experiences were modest in scale but meaningful in impact.

They taught him an important lesson: leadership often begins with small responsibilities carried out faithfully.

Teachers again played a pivotal role during these years.

Several mentors recognized his discipline and intellectual curiosity.

They encouraged him to pursue higher education and to consider fields where analytical thinking and leadership could be applied.

Their advice broadened his ambitions.

By the time he approached graduation, Gani had begun considering a future that extended beyond Mindanao.



*Delivering remarks at the Muslim Traders' Entrepreneurship Forum 2019, Macatoman highlights opportunities for Muslim entrepreneurs through enterprise development programs and stronger collaboration between public and private sector partners.*

# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

## *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

Manila, with its universities and national institutions, represented the next stage of that journey. Leaving home would not be easy.

But it was necessary.

The lessons learned in Marawi and at the Training Center had prepared him for that step.

And soon, the young student from Mindanao would find himself entering a much larger world — one where the ideas he had cultivated in the classroom would begin to intersect with the realities of business, governance, and national development.

### **A New World in Manila**

When Abdulgani Macatoman arrived in Manila to pursue higher education, the experience felt like stepping into an entirely different universe.

The capital moved with a rhythm that was both exhilarating and intimidating. Streets were crowded with students, workers, and entrepreneurs chasing their own ambitions. Conversations in classrooms often extended late into the evening, fueled by debates about politics, economics, and the future of the country.



*Seated with colleagues and stakeholders during a strategic meeting, Macatoman engages in discussions on policy directions and collaborative initiatives for economic development.*





# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

## *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

For a young man from Mindanao, Manila was both a challenge and an opportunity.

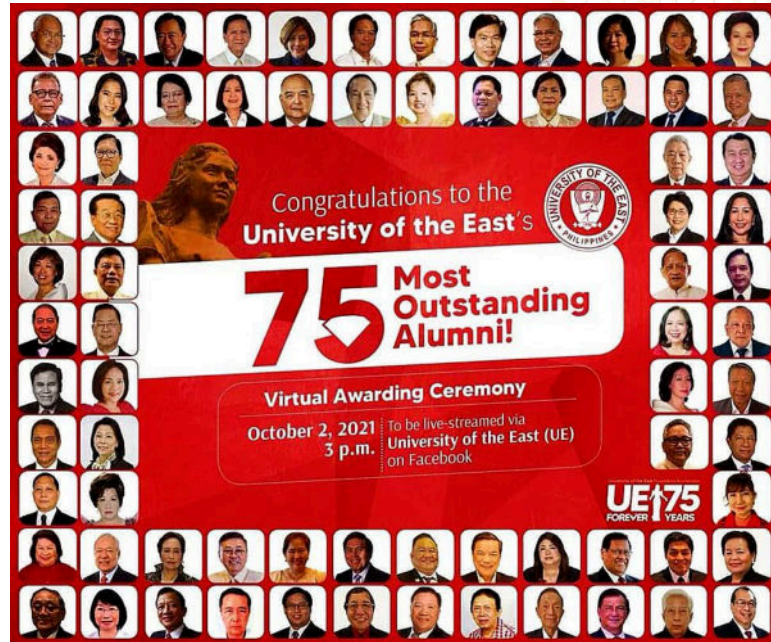
He enrolled at the University of the East, one of the country's most respected institutions for business and legal education. There he pursued a Bachelor of Science in Commerce, majoring in Accounting — a discipline that appealed to his methodical nature and his affinity for structured reasoning.

Accounting demanded precision. Numbers left little room for ambiguity. Each calculation required discipline, patience, and clarity of thought.

For Gani, the field became more than a technical specialization. It was a way of understanding how organizations functioned — how financial systems shaped decisions and how accountability could be measured.

Yet even as he immersed himself in accounting studies, he recognized that leadership required a broader intellectual framework.

The world of enterprise did not operate solely on financial logic. It was also shaped by laws, institutions, and governance systems.



*A commemorative poster celebrating the University of the East's 75 Most Outstanding Alumni recognizes Macatoman for his leadership in government and regional development.*





*Government officials, industry leaders, and entrepreneurs gather for a commemorative group photo during a major business and trade event attended by Gani Macatoman, highlighting public-private collaboration in promoting investment and enterprise development.*

Determined to deepen his understanding, he pursued legal studies while continuing his academic journey. Law offered insight into how societies organize themselves, how regulations shape markets, and how institutions maintain order.

Eventually he expanded his education further through a Master's Degree in Business Administration, completing a trio of disciplines — accounting, law, and management — that would later define his professional versatility.

Each field offered a different perspective. Accounting sharpened analytical discipline.

Law illuminated the structures of governance. Business administration provided the strategic lens through which organizations could grow and innovate.

Together they formed an intellectual toolkit that would guide Gani throughout his career.



# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

*The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

## Enterprise and Opportunity

After completing his academic training, Gani entered the private sector during a period when the Philippine economy was gradually opening itself to new opportunities.

Global trade networks were expanding. Regional markets within Southeast Asia were becoming increasingly interconnected. Industries were evolving in response to technological change and international competition.

For young professionals, the environment demanded both adaptability and vision.

Gani's early years in business exposed him to the realities of organizational leadership. Decisions made in executive offices carried immediate consequences for employees, investors, and communities.

Leadership required balancing multiple priorities: financial sustainability, operational efficiency, and the welfare of the people whose livelihoods depended on the organization.

Through these experiences, Gani developed a philosophy that would remain consistent throughout his career.



*On the public affairs television program "Usapang Bayan," host Gani Macatoman interviews entrepreneur George Chua, President and CEO of Bayan Automotive Industries Corporation, discussing opportunities for Philippine industry and business growth.*

# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

## *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

Business, he believed, was not merely about profit.

It was about creating value — value for workers, for investors, and for society.

This belief eventually led him to participate in ventures that sought to combine entrepreneurship with long-term development goals.

Among the most significant of these was the creation of Global Empire International Group of Companies Inc.

The company emerged during a period when renewable energy and infrastructure development were becoming increasingly important to the Philippines' economic future. As the country grappled with rising energy demands and the need for sustainable power solutions, businesses operating in these sectors faced both enormous challenges and extraordinary opportunities.

Within Global Empire International Group, Gani became deeply involved in strategic planning and corporate leadership.

Yet from the very beginning, the enterprise was not solely his undertaking.

It was the product of a partnership.



*Among diplomats and trade officials at the Indonesian Trade and Tourism Festival 2019, Macatoman joins the celebration of strengthened economic and cultural ties between the Philippines and Indonesia.*



*As keynote speaker at the Indonesian Trade and Tourism Festival 2019, Macatoman underscores the importance of deeper cooperation in trade, tourism, and cultural exchange between the two neighboring nations.*



# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

*The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

## A Partnership in Leadership

Behind many leadership journeys stand individuals whose contributions remain less visible but equally vital.

For Abdulgani Macatoman, that presence has been his wife, Mufaida.

Long before she became a business executive, Mufaida had built a career in journalism. She served as an executive broadcast journalist for TV3 Malaysia, where she developed a reputation for professionalism and insight.

Broadcast journalism demanded the ability to interpret complex events quickly and communicate them clearly to a wide audience. It required discipline, composure under pressure, and a deep awareness of the social forces shaping public life.

Those experiences would later prove invaluable when she entered the world of enterprise.

Over time, Mufaida transitioned from journalism into business leadership. Together with her husband, she helped establish Global Empire International Group of Companies Inc.

Within the organization she initially served as Chief Operating Officer, overseeing the operational structure that allowed the company to function efficiently. Her work required navigating regulatory frameworks, coordinating projects, and managing teams working within the emerging field of renewable energy.

The company gradually developed expertise in solar and power solution industries, sectors that were gaining importance as the Philippines explored sustainable energy alternatives.



*During the International Conference on Science for Peace on August 16, 2016 — an event highlighted by the keynote address of Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah of Perak — Macatoman receives a token of appreciation.*

# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

## *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

For more than a decade Mufaida accumulated extensive executive management experience, becoming a central figure in the company's development.

Then in July 2017, the trajectory of the Macatoman family's professional life took a decisive turn. Abdulgani Macatoman accepted an appointment as Undersecretary of the Department of Trade and Industry.

Public service required his complete focus. Government ethics demanded that he step away from direct corporate leadership.

At that moment, the responsibility for guiding Global Empire International Group passed fully to Mufaida.

She assumed the role of President and Chief Executive Officer, leading the company through the next stage of its development.

The transition reflected not only professional capability but also trust.

Under her leadership, the company continued its work in renewable energy and development-oriented ventures, sustaining the enterprise even as her husband entered the demanding world of national policy.



*Industry leaders and government officials gather with DTI Undersecretary Gani Macatoman during the opening ceremonies of Franchise Asia Philippines 2019, one of the region's largest franchise events promoting entrepreneurship and business expansion.*





# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

## *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

Yet her interests extended beyond corporate leadership.

In the 2022 national elections, Mufaida Macatoman served as the first nominee of the Ang Kabuhayang Kayang Kaya (AKKK) Party-List, a movement advocating entrepreneurship development, livelihood opportunities, and economic empowerment.

Her advocacy mirrored many of the values that had guided the couple's shared journey: the belief that enterprise could become a powerful tool for uplifting communities.

### **The Call to Government Service**

The path that eventually led Gani national government did not begin with a single appointment or political ambition. Rather, it unfolded gradually — through a series of engagements that exposed him to the inner workings of public institutions and the complex responsibilities of governance.

By the time he entered formal government service, Gani had already spent years working at the intersection of enterprise, policy, and civic engagement. His experience in business had allowed him to see firsthand how economic decisions made in government offices reverberated



*The ceremonial ribbon-cutting of a new business establishment is led by DTI Undersecretary Gani Macatoman, joined by local officials and industry stakeholders celebrating investment and entrepreneurship.*



*A moment at Malacañang Palace with President Rodrigo Roa Duterte reflects Macatoman's role in government service and his work advancing national trade and economic development programs.*





*Representing the Philippines at the 21st BIMP-EAGA Ministerial Meeting in Tarakan, Indonesia, Macatoman joins ministers and senior officials working to strengthen regional economic cooperation.*

across industries and communities. Regulations could determine whether entrepreneurs thrived or struggled; policies could open markets or close doors.

These observations slowly drew him closer to public service.

His earliest roles in government came through advisory work. He served as a Consultant in the Office of the President

of the Republic of the Philippines, where he gained insight into the processes through which national priorities were shaped and coordinated.

The experience offered a rare vantage point into the machinery of governance, where decisions often required balancing competing interests and long-term national goals.



# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

## *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

At around the same time, he also served as Executive Officer in the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS). The role exposed him to another dimension of public policy — education, a sector he believed formed the foundation of national development. If entrepreneurship and economic growth created opportunity, education ensured that citizens could seize it.

His work later expanded into areas connected with national security and law enforcement. Gani served as a Consultant to the Philippine Center on Transnational Crime (PCTC) as well as to the Office of the Chief of the Philippine National Police (PNP). These engagements required coordination across agencies addressing complex challenges that extended beyond national borders.

Alongside these responsibilities, he also served as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Philippine Army, reflecting his broader commitment to national service.

Through these varied roles, Gani gained a deeper understanding of how public institutions operate. Governance required patience and discipline. It demanded the ability to work within systems that moved deliberately and

often required consensus among multiple stakeholders.

These early experiences prepared him for a turning point that would significantly expand his responsibilities.



*At a regional gathering, Macatoman meets Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia, highlighting ASEAN cooperation and dialogue.*

# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

## *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

In July 2017, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte appointed Abdulgani Macatoman as Assistant Secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). The appointment placed him within the agency responsible for shaping the country's economic competitiveness, promoting trade and investment, and supporting the development of Filipino enterprises.

Gani entered the department with a perspective shaped by years in business and advisory roles in government. He understood the concerns of entrepreneurs as well as the institutional realities of public administration.



*As DTI Assistant Secretary, Gani Macatoman served as Guest of Honor and Speaker at the opening of the Malaysia Festival at Glorietta 2 in Makati, joining Malaysian Ambassador H.E. Raszlan Abdul Rashid and business leaders in celebrating the first festival of its kind in the Philippines — an event highlighting growing trade and cultural ties between the two nations.*



*Left photo: At the Marawi Entrepreneurs' Forum and Job Fair held at Mindanao State University's Dimaporo Gymnasium on July 16, 2018, DTI Assistant Secretary Gani Macatoman joined Trade Secretary Ramon M. Lopez, development partners, and private sector leaders in supporting livelihood and entrepreneurship programs under the Bangon Marawi initiative.*



# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

## *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

His diligence and work ethic soon earned the confidence of leadership within the department.

Barely a year after his appointment, in July 2018, he was promoted to Undersecretary for Special Concerns, a role that required coordination across key programs and strategic initiatives.

The scope of his responsibilities continued to grow.

In February 2019, he was given an additional appointment as Undersecretary of the Trade Promotions Group, placing him in a position where his experience in enterprise and international engagement would become particularly valuable.

By that point, Gani had moved fully into the center of the country's economic policy framework.

The responsibilities awaiting him would involve not only government administration but also engagement with industries, entrepreneurs, and international partners seeking to understand the opportunities within the Philippine economy.

It was a role that demanded both technical expertise and diplomatic skill.



*Delivering the welcome remarks at IFEX Philippines NXTFOOD Asia, Macatoman highlights the country's growing presence in global food trade and the importance of innovation and export promotion.*



*Officials and staff of the Department of Trade and Industry stand alongside Macatoman during a ceremonial flag-raising for the agency's anniversary celebration honoring decades of service to Philippine trade and industry.*

# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

## *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

And it marked the beginning of one of the most significant chapters of his public life.

### **Inside the Department of Trade and Industry**

When Abdulgani Macatoman assumed leadership responsibilities within the Department of Trade and Industry, he stepped into one of the most complex arenas of Philippine economic policy.

The agency carried a broad mandate: strengthening domestic industries, promoting exports, attracting foreign investment, and supporting the millions of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) that form the backbone of the country's economy.

These enterprises represent the entrepreneurial spirit of the Philippines. From family-owned workshops and neighborhood retailers to emerging technology ventures, MSMEs provide employment for a vast segment of the population.

Yet they also face formidable challenges — limited access to financing, difficulties in reaching international markets, and the pressures of competing in a globalized economy.



*During a trade and investment forum, DTI Undersecretary Gani Macatoman outlines initiatives of the Trade Promotions Group aimed at strengthening Philippine exports and expanding opportunities for Filipino entrepreneurs in the global marketplace.*



# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

## *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

Gani understood these realities well. Having spent much of his career in business, he was familiar with the obstacles entrepreneurs encounter when navigating regulatory systems and competitive markets.

Within the Department of Trade and Industry, he sought to help bridge the gap between policy and practice.

His responsibilities placed him at the intersection of government strategy and private sector development. Programs aimed at strengthening export competitiveness and improving the country's investment climate became central to the department's work.

International engagement also played an important role. Trade promotion required constant dialogue with foreign investors, business chambers, and economic partners interested in exploring opportunities in the Philippines.

Gani's experience in enterprise and international business circles proved valuable in these discussions. He understood the questions investors often asked: How stable are regulatory systems? What opportunities exist in emerging sectors? How can partnerships between local industries and foreign companies be structured to benefit both sides?



*Addressing members and guests of the Foreign Chamber Council of the Philippines, Macatoman joins international chamber leaders in discussions on foreign investment and economic cooperation.*



*Delivering the keynote address during the 30th Anniversary of the Taiwan Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the Philippines, Macatoman underscores the strong trade partnership between Taiwan and the Philippines.*

# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

## *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

Such conversations were rarely limited to economic statistics. They involved building confidence — demonstrating that the Philippines possessed both the resources and the institutional capacity to support long-term investment.

The department's work also intersected with regional development initiatives, particularly those connected to Mindanao. Expanding economic opportunities in historically underserved regions formed an important part of the country's broader development strategy.

For Gani, this aspect of the work carried personal meaning. The island where he had grown up possessed enormous economic potential, and initiatives that encouraged entrepreneurship and investment there represented opportunities to strengthen communities as well as industries.

The role demanded constant movement between policy discussions, consultations with business leaders, and international engagements.

Yet throughout these responsibilities, Gani remained guided by a principle

that had shaped his career from the beginning.

Economic development should not exist solely in policy documents or corporate balance sheets.



*Joining fellow delegates at a BIMP-EAGA Strategic Planning Meeting, Macatoman participates in discussions strengthening regional economic connectivity.*



# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

## *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

It should translate into opportunity — into jobs created, enterprises strengthened, and communities empowered.

Within the Department of Trade and Industry, he sought to advance that vision.

### **The Global Arena**

As the Philippine economy became increasingly integrated into global markets, Gani's responsibilities also took on an international dimension.

Trade diplomacy had become an essential component of economic policy. Nations competed not only through domestic reforms but also through their ability to attract investment, expand export markets, and position themselves strategically within regional alliances.

Gani's experience in the private sector proved invaluable in these discussions.

Having spent years interacting with international investors and business organizations, he understood the concerns that often shaped investment decisions — regulatory stability, infrastructure capacity, and the predictability of economic policy.



*During a high-level meeting at the Department of Trade and Industry, DTI Undersecretary Gani Macatoman joins Secretary Ramon M. Lopez and senior officials in discussions on policies supporting Philippine trade and inclusive economic growth.*



*At the Türkiye–Philippines Trade and Investment Forum, Macatoman receives a token of appreciation from Turkish Ambassador H.E. Hatice Pinar Isik, reflecting growing economic cooperation between the two nations.*

# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

## *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

His work frequently intersected with organizations such as the Foreign Chamber Council of the Philippines, where representatives from foreign business chambers discussed the evolving conditions for investment and trade.

These dialogues were not merely technical. They were conversations about trust.

Investors sought assurance that the Philippines could provide a stable environment for long-term development. Government leaders, in turn, sought partnerships that could generate employment, stimulate innovation, and strengthen domestic industries.

Gani often found himself at the intersection of these interests, helping bridge perspectives between global investors and national policy priorities.

In doing so, he contributed to a broader effort to position the Philippines as a competitive participant in the global economy.

### **Mindanao and the Promise of Development**

While his responsibilities increasingly involved national and international



*A cordial exchange between Macatoman and President Rodrigo Roa Duterte reflects a meeting grounded in mutual respect and dialogue.*



*A lighthearted gathering brings together President Rodrigo Duterte, Senator Bong Go, and Macatoman, sharing a moment of camaraderie and conversation.*



# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

## *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

initiatives, Gani never lost sight of the region that had shaped his earliest experiences.

Mindanao remained central to his vision for inclusive development.

For decades, the island had faced challenges that extended beyond economics — political tensions, uneven infrastructure development, and the lingering effects of conflict. Yet it also possessed enormous potential.

Rich natural resources, strategic geographic location, and vibrant communities offered opportunities for economic transformation.

Gani believed that entrepreneurship and investment could become powerful instruments for stability.

Through initiatives connected to organizations such as the Bangsamoro Business Council, he advocated for programs designed to attract investors, support local enterprises, and create employment opportunities in the region.

Economic development, he believed, could complement broader peace-building efforts by giving communities a stake in stability and progress.



*Appearing on GMA's 24 Oras as Chairman of the Bangsamoro Business Council, Macatoman discusses developments affecting Mindanao and the broader Bangsamoro business community.*



*Business and government leaders gather with Macatoman during the launch of the Bangsamoro Federal Business Council, promoting investment and entrepreneurship in the Bangsamoro region.*

# KABUHAYAN at NEGOSYO

HOST

GANI MACATOMAN

*On DWIZ News TV, Macatoman hosts the program "Kabuhayan at Negosyo," sharing insights on entrepreneurship and economic development.*

Mindanao, in this sense, represented more than a policy priority.

It was the place where his own journey had begun.

## The Public Voice

Leadership sometimes requires more than policy work.

It also requires communication.

Gani's commitment to entrepreneurship advocacy eventually extended into media through the program "Kabuhayan at Negosyo," broadcast

nationally on Channel 23 and DWIZ 882.

The show offered practical discussions about business development and livelihood opportunities. Entrepreneurs shared their experiences, experts discussed strategies for small businesses, and viewers across the country gained access to information that might otherwise remain confined to policy circles.

For Gani, the program served an important purpose.

Economic knowledge should not belong exclusively to specialists.



# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

## *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

Entrepreneurs across the Philippines — whether operating in urban centers or rural communities — deserved access to insights that could help them succeed.

By bringing discussions about enterprise into the public sphere, the program sought to encourage a culture of innovation and initiative.

### **Ideas and Advocacy**

Beyond his work in government and media, Gani also contributed to discussions about emerging economic sectors.

Among these was the global halal economy, a rapidly expanding market encompassing food production, finance, tourism, and consumer goods designed to meet the needs of Muslim populations worldwide.

Recognizing the Philippines' potential role in this sector, Gani authored "Global Halal Economy," a work exploring how the country could position itself strategically within this international market.

The book examined not only commercial opportunities but also the broader implications of halal industries for inclusive development — particularly in regions such as



*During a courtesy meeting in Toronto, Macatoman presents a copy of his book *The Global Halal Economy* to Consul-General Orontes V. Castro of the Philippine Consulate General.*

# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

*The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

Mindanao with significant Muslim populations.

For Gani, the subject represented more than economic analysis.

It reflected a broader belief that development strategies must recognize cultural diversity and regional strengths.

## Recognition and Responsibility

Over the course of his career, Gani's work has been acknowledged through numerous awards and recognitions.

Among them were distinctions such as Management Man of the Year from the Philippine Council of Management, recognition as one of the Ten Most Influential Filipinos by the Philippine Cancer Society, the Lambert Award, and honors from the University of the East as one of its most outstanding alumni.

He has also served as a Reserve Lieutenant Colonel in the Armed Forces of the Philippines, reflecting another dimension of his commitment to national service.

Yet those who know him personally often remark that Gani rarely dwells on recognition.



*Among the honorees of the Philippine Cancer Society's 2012 Exemplary Men of Influence, Macatoman stands alongside leaders including former President Fidel V. Ramos, Wilson Tieng, Henry Chusuey, and others recognized for their contributions to nation-building.*



*In a ceremony attended by colleagues and supporters, Senator Bong Go formally pins Gani Macatoman, symbolizing recognition of his role in advancing development initiatives aligned with national programs.*



# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

## *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

For him, awards serve less as milestones than as reminders of responsibility.

Leadership, he believes, is measured not by accolades but by the lives affected through one's work.

### **Service Above Self**

Public service does not always take place within the formal structures of government.

For Abdulgani Macatoman, another dimension of service emerged through an institution whose influence has quietly shaped leaders across generations — the Rotary Club of Manila, the oldest Rotary club in Asia and one of the most respected civic organizations in the Philippines.

His introduction to Rotary came through an invitation from Past Director Amado “Amading” Valdez, who recognized in Gani a set of values deeply aligned with the organization's mission.

In 2016, Gani joined the Rotary Club of Manila.

Rotary's guiding principle — “Service Above Self” — resonated immediately



*As a Rotarian, Gani Macatoman joins fellow leaders and distinguished guests during a Rotary Club of Manila Weekly Membership Meeting, fostering dialogue among leaders committed to service and nation-building.*

# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

## *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

with him. The philosophy mirrored the lessons he had carried since childhood in Mindanao: that leadership must be measured not by personal advancement but by the willingness to serve others.

Within Rotary, Gani found a community of professionals, entrepreneurs, and public servants united by a shared commitment to humanitarian service and ethical leadership.

The club's projects ranged widely — from education and health initiatives to disaster relief and community development programs. Through these efforts, Rotary provided an avenue where professional expertise could be transformed into practical service.

Gani approached Rotary in the same way he approached every responsibility in his life: with quiet diligence and a sense of stewardship.

He participated actively in the club's activities, contributing not only his professional experience but also his perspective on economic development, entrepreneurship, and community empowerment.

Over time, his colleagues recognized both his integrity and his commitment to the institution.

After more than nine years as a member of the Rotary Club of Manila, Gani was appointed Club Auditor for Rotary Year 2026–2027.

The role carries significant responsibility within the organization. The Club Auditor helps safeguard financial transparency and institutional accountability — principles that are essential to sustaining trust within a century-old institution.



*During a Rotary Club of Manila Weekly Membership Meeting, STAR Rotarian Gani Macatoman joins fellow Rotarians and guests as Hon. Amado D. Valdez serves as Guest of Honor and Speaker.*



# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

## *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*



*At Malacañang Palace, President Benigno S. Aquino III receives members of the Foreign Chambers Council of the Philippines, including Macatoman, for discussions on strengthening trade and investment partnerships.*

For Gani, the position reflected a natural alignment between his professional training in accounting and governance and Rotary's emphasis on ethical stewardship.

Yet the significance of Rotary in his life extends beyond titles or roles.

The organization represents a community where leadership is expressed through service — through projects that uplift communities,

support education, and respond to humanitarian needs.

In Rotary, Gani found a continuation of the same ideals that had guided his journey from the beginning.

Integrity.  
Responsibility.

And the belief that service, when practiced consistently and humbly, can strengthen the fabric of society.





*Away from the responsibilities of public service, Gani Macatoman enjoys a quiet family time at home — a reminder that faith and family remain the foundation of his life.*

## **Family and the Meaning of Legacy**

In the public imagination, leadership is often measured through titles held, policies shaped, or institutions guided. Yet for Gani, the deeper measure of a life's work has always been far more personal.

It lies in family.

Despite the wide scope of his professional journey — spanning enterprise, government service, civic leadership, and public advocacy — Gani has remained deeply conscious that the foundations of character are built not in public office but within the quiet spaces of home.

Throughout the many transitions of his career, one constant presence has been his wife, Mufaida. Their partnership has



## BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

### *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

extended far beyond shared professional endeavors. It has been rooted in a mutual understanding that leadership, whether in business or public service, requires both sacrifice and support. The responsibilities that accompany such roles often demand long hours, difficult decisions, and a willingness to place the needs of institutions and communities ahead of personal convenience.

In such moments, the strength of a family becomes essential.

For Gani, the encouragement and steadfast presence of his wife have been a source of stability throughout the demands of public life. Together they have navigated the shifting landscapes of enterprise and national service while maintaining a home environment centered on faith, humility, and mutual respect.

Their family life has been shaped by the same principles that guided Gani's upbringing in Mindanao — values passed down from parents who believed that character mattered more than circumstance.

Those values now form the foundation of the household he and Mufaida have built together.



*A quiet moment with his wife Mufaida, captured in 2010 at the Venice Grand Canal Mall, reflects the partnership and family life that have long anchored Gani Macatoman's journey.*

# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

## *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

The couple has been blessed with three children: Abdul Hakeem, Amirah Jareeza, and Kamilah Amber.

For Gani, fatherhood represents one of the most meaningful responsibilities of his life. While public leadership carries its own obligations, raising children offers a different kind of legacy — the opportunity to shape the next generation's understanding of integrity, discipline, and compassion.

In conversations with his children, he often returns to the lessons he learned as a young boy growing up in Mindanao.

Respect for others.  
Commitment to education.  
The importance of humility even in moments of success.

And above all, the understanding that leadership is not defined by recognition but by service.

These are the principles he hopes will guide them as they pursue their own paths in life.

Balancing family life with the demands of professional responsibility has never been simple.

Public service often requires travel, extended meetings, and responsibilities that stretch far beyond normal working

hours. Yet Gani has remained mindful of the importance of preserving time for the moments that define family life — shared meals, celebrations of milestones, and the quiet conversations that strengthen relationships.

Such moments provide perspective.

They remind him that the ultimate purpose of leadership is not merely institutional achievement but the well-being of people and communities.



*A lighthearted moment unfolds as Macatoman shares durian with colleague Rowel S. Barba, celebrating Mindanao's famous fruit and the region's rich culinary heritage.*



# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

## *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

As the years have passed, Gani has come to view legacy not as something measured through individual accomplishments but as something reflected in the lives touched along the way.

Legacy can be found in the entrepreneurs who gain opportunities through economic development initiatives. It can be seen in the communities strengthened through cooperation and investment. It can be felt in the institutions that continue to serve long after individual leaders have stepped aside.

But perhaps most enduringly, legacy lives within family.

It lives in the values passed from one generation to the next, in the quiet example of integrity, and in the lessons children carry forward into their own lives.

For Gani, this understanding brings his life's journey full circle.

The boy who once listened attentively to the wisdom of elders in Mindanao now finds himself sharing those same lessons with his own children.

The principles remain unchanged.



*During the 2018 launch of Breaking Barriers, Creating Communities: Southeast Asia and ASEAN — An Introduction at the Writers Bar of Raffles Hotel Makati, Gani Macatoman shares a moment with former Philippine President Fidel V. Ramos, whose foreword appears in the book.*



# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

## *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

Faith.  
Humility.  
Responsibility.  
Service.

These values shaped his beginnings, guided his career, and now define the legacy he hopes to leave behind.

### **Epilogue: The Measure of Leadership**

The life of Abdulgani Macatoman illustrates a quiet but powerful truth about leadership.

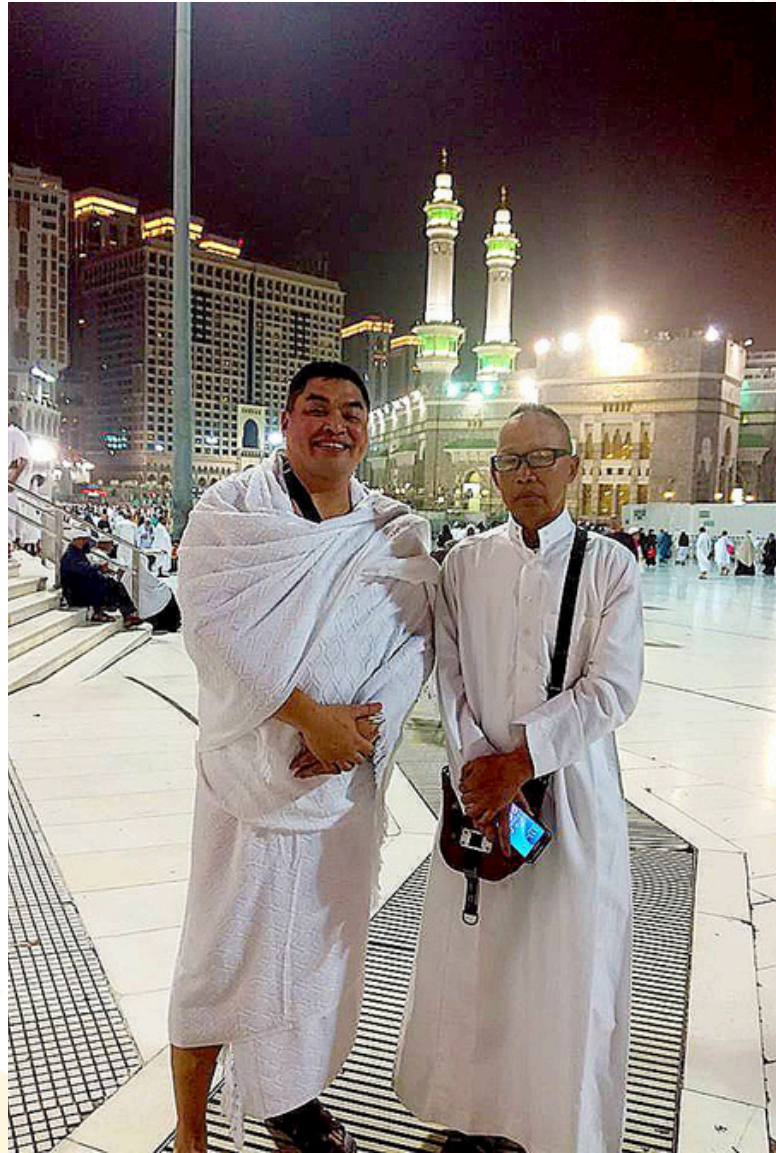
Influence does not always emerge from dramatic moments or public attention.

More often, it grows steadily through years of disciplined work, ethical decisions, and the willingness to serve beyond personal interest.

Gani's journey — from the communities of Mindanao to the halls of national government — reflects that philosophy.

He has moved between sectors that often appear distinct: enterprise and policy, local communities and international markets, private initiative and public service.

Yet throughout these transitions, one principle has remained constant.



*Standing within the sacred grounds near Masjid al-Haram in Makkah, Gani Macatoman pauses during his pilgrimage — an expression of faith, gratitude, and spiritual devotion.*



# BETWEEN ENTERPRISE AND NATION

## *The Life, Leadership, and Public Service of Abdulgani Matua Macatoman*

Leadership must serve others.

The Philippines today continues to navigate the challenges of economic development, globalization, and social transformation. Within that evolving landscape, leaders who can bridge perspectives between sectors remain essential.

Gani's career stands as an example of that bridge.

A life lived between enterprise and nation.

And a reminder that the true legacy of leadership is measured not only by achievements, but by the opportunities created for others to succeed. ■



*During travels in the Middle East, Macatoman explores a marketplace filled with intricately crafted mosaic lamps — an evocative glimpse into the region's rich artistic traditions.*



*Left photo: A professional visit in Qatar brings Macatoman together with Sheikh Hamad Saud Al-Thani of Qatar Fuel (WOQOD) and Mohd. Khalifa Turki Al-Sobai, reflecting dialogue with leaders in the global energy sector.*

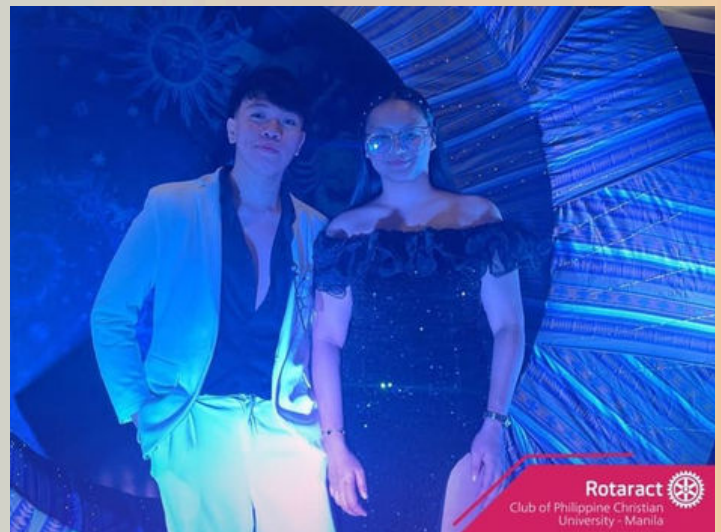


## YOUTH SERVICE

### Philippine Rotaract Conference (PROCON) Iloilo 2026



**T**HE Rotaract Club of Philippine Christian University - Manila participated in the Philippine Rotaract Conference (PROCON) Iloilo 2026, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Manila. The conference was held in Grand Xing Imperial Hotel, Iloilo City on February 20-22, 2026.





## YOUTH SERVICE

### RYLA 2026



The Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) 2026, with the Rotary Club of Manila as Major Co-Host, successfully sponsored five delegates from the Rotaract Club of De La Salle, Rotaract Club of Manila, and Rotaract Club of Philippine Christian University.



The two-day leadership camp was held on March 28–29, 2026 (Saturday and Sunday) at the Kim Siong Community in Silang, Cavite.



## YOUTH SERVICE

### RYLA 2026

RYLA is a dynamic leadership development program designed for individuals aged 14–30, primarily college students and young professionals who exhibit strong leadership potential. Participants are nominated and sponsored by Rotary clubs, and the program is open to both Rotaractors and non-Rotaractors.





## DISTRICT EVENT

### 45th Charter Anniversary of RC Intramuros Manila (Daughter Club of RC Manila)



DGND Hermie Esguerra, Special Assistant to the Governor-Manila SDG Albert S. Alday and PS Aries Balanay attended the 45th Charter Anniversary of the Rotary Club of Intramuros Manila, daughter club of the Rotary Club of Manila, last March 20, 2026 at the Ilustrado Restaurant in Intramuros, Manila.

DGND Hermie Esguerra is an Honorary Member of the Rotary Club of Intramuros Manila. Special Assistant to the Governor-Manila SDG Albert S. Alday was likewise an Honorary Member of said club in RY 2017-2018. PS Aries Balanay was a President of the Rotary Club of Intramuros Manila in RY 2017-2018 before transferring to the Rotary Club of Manila during RY 2022-2023.



*DGND Hermie Esguerra delivering a message during the 45th Charter Anniversary of the Rotary Club of Intramuros Manila*

## DISTRICT EVENT

### 45th Charter Anniversary of RC Intramuros Manila (Daughter Club of RC Manila)



*DGND Hermie Esguerra singing the Hotdog classic, "Manila", during the fellowship*



*DGND Hermie Esguerra singing the Neil Diamond hit, "Sweet Caroline", during the fellowship*

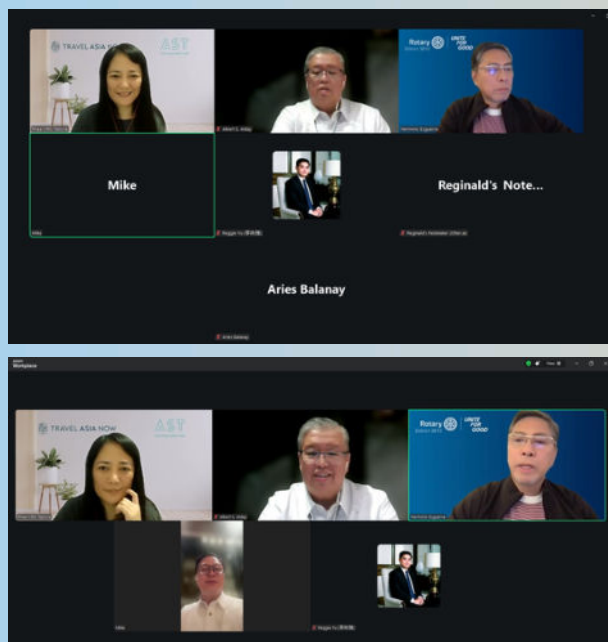


*DGND Hermie Esguerra, Special Assistant to the Governor-Manila SDG Albert S. Alday and PS Aries Balanay as part of the group picture at the end of the 45th Charter Anniversary of the Rotary Club of Intramuros Manila.*



## DISTRICT ACTIVITY

### PRMFI 2025-2026 Search for the Most Outstanding Environmental Project Awards



The Rotary International District 3810 Committee for the Philippine Rotary Media Foundation, Inc. (PRMFI) Search for the 2025-2026 Most Outstanding Environmental Project Awards met on March 24, 2026 to review the entries from the participating clubs.

Present were Committee Chairman DGND Herminio S. Esguerra; Committee members SDG Reginald T. Yu, SDG Aries B. Balanay, SDG Michael Jaey C. Albaña, SDG Albert S. Alday, and Rtn. Rhea Vitto Tabora.

## RECOGNITION CORNER

### U.S. Embassy Chargé d’Affaires Visits La Joya Resort and Presents Tokens of Appreciation to PDSAA Bollie Bolton



U.S. Embassy to the Philippines Chargé d’Affaires, a.i., Y. Robert Ewing presented tokens of appreciation to PDSAA Bollie Bolton during his visit to La Joya Resort. The visit was part of the commemoration of the Fall of Bataan on April 9, 2026.



## Aleco Monday Breakfast Fellowship



*From left (standing): President Raoul Creencia, Auditor Nick Locsin, PD Rod Valencia, PP Ebot Tan, former member Raoul Villegas, Mayor Benjie Magalong, PD Amading Valdez, Jorge Salazar, PD Abe Pascual, PD Philip Ong, DSAA Dave Reynolds, BLA/DE Caloy Serapio, PT Chito Tagaysay, Rtn. Romy Nones; seated: PD Ner Lonzaga, Sec. Anton Mauricio, Rtn. Cris Acosta, PP Archit Bartolome, and former member Eric Severino. Not in photo: Dir. Edwin Hernandez*

RCM and Aleco hosted Baguio Mayor Benjie Magalong for a no-holds-barred discussion on Philippine politics, offering confidential insights into pressing governance issues.

The forum was organized by PP Archit Bartolome and Rtn. Cris Acosta, Mayor Magalong's PMA mistah, at the Manila Golf Club.





## Aleco Monday Breakfast Fellowship



*Mayor Benjie Magalong ended with a challenge: do not lose hope for the future. He also reiterated that he will not run for any national position in 2028.*



*Mayor Magalong was awarded the Rotary Centennial book as a token of appreciation.*

## FELLOWSHIP

### PD Amading Valdez Presents *Balita* Issue to Mrs. Gina de Venecia



Past Director Amading Valdez presents a copy of *Balita* to Mrs. Gina de Venecia during the 40th-day memorial for her late husband, former House Speaker and Rotarian Joe de Venecia. The issue, which features Former Speaker de Venecia in its People section, was presented at the service held at the Libingan ng mga Bayani on March 21, 2026.

### A Legacy Remembered: A Tribute to RCM Past President Francisco “Toting” del Rosario



In a moment of remembrance over lunch, PE Reggie Yu sits down with Rotary Club of Makati West Past President Franco del Rosario at the Sports Café of the Manila Polo Club on April 13, 2026 to reflect on the life and enduring legacy of his father, RCM Past President Francisco “Toting” del Rosario, who passed last March 4, 2026.



## FELLOWSHIP

### Aleco Monday Breakfast Fellowship



The Aleco Monday Breakfast Fellowship was held on March 30, 2026, hosted by PP Ebot Tan, who shared his story as an accidental law student. Resolved, that many in the Philippines have cut back on spending because of the crisis.

Present at the fellowship were (clockwise from bottom left) former RCM member Jorge Salazar, PD Ner Lonzaga, PP Ebot Tan, PD Abe Pascual, former member Eric Severino, BLA/DE Caloy Serapio, PD Rod Valencia, Sec. Anton Mauricio, PP Archit Bartolome, PT Chito Tagaysay, and Rtn. Cris Acosta.



The Aleco Monday Breakfast Fellowship was well-attended, welcoming new attendees Phil Ong and Romy Nones; celebrating the birthdays of Ricky Guevara and Willie Peliño; and getting a pharma industry update from Pascual Laboratories' Abe Pascual, who hosted the meeting.

Resolved, that a dominant political dynasty (e.g., Masbate) can actually work positively because not a lot of energy is wasted on political opposition.

In Loving Memory

## D. Edgard A. Cabangon

### *Thank You*

With hearts full of gratitude, we thank you for surrounding our family with your prayers, your love, and your remembrance.

For standing beside us in our grief and for honoring the life of D. Edgard A. Cabangon, who was so deeply loved and cherished, we are forever grateful.

— Sharon, Maritoni, Giannina, Dannica, Antonio, and the Cabangon Family

IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
**DOMINIC EDGARD A. CABANGON**  
April 9, 1964 – March 8, 2026

*Message from the Cabangon family*



*At Rotarian Ed Cabangon's  
62nd birthday celebration*

In loving memory of a gentle soul  
whose legacy of love continues  
to shine brightly



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

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

# OPINION

Editor  
Juliet L. Javellana

## Why not Cecile, Lea, and Lisa

I have featured empowered women in the judiciary ("Women power at SC rites," 10/11/15) and in the private corporate sector ("Seven empowered women," 01/26/26). During this National Women's Month, I will spotlight women in the performing arts, not because they need it, for they have long shone brightly through their artistry, but to share my opinion on why they deserve the highest recognition from the very country they have honored throughout their lives.

**THREE WOMEN HAVE CONSISTENTLY LIFTED THE PHILIPPINE FLAG** higher than most of us ever dreamed possible. Inexplicably, the highest state recognition in the arts—the Order of National Artist—has yet to be conferred on child prodigy Cecile Licad, Broadway icon Lea Salonga, and prima ballerina Lisa Macuja-Elizalde.

With due respect to the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) and the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP), whose task is to give such honors, the time has come to right this oversight. These women are not merely exceptional; they are living embodiments of Filipino excellence who have earned the respect and admiration of the world. They have made a lasting impact on succeeding generations of artists. To withhold from them the title of "National Artist" is to deny ourselves the pride we so richly deserve.

**Let me begin with Cecile Licad.** At seven, she formally debuted, and at 20, she won the prestigious Leventritt Gold Medal in New York—the first Filipino to do so—and has since stunned audiences with her interpretations of Chopin, Rachmaninoff, and Tchaikovsky, among others. She has performed with the world's greatest orchestras and conductors, from the Philippine Philharmonic to the New York Philharmonic to the London Philharmonic. Critics have called her "a pianist's pianist."

According to business leader Lin Ilusorio Bildner, "she inspired young musicians through master classes and benefit concerts."



**WITH DUE RESPECT**  
ARTEMIO V. PANGANIBAN

Indeed, she has reached the hearts of people in grassroots communities. Her artistry is not loud; it is profound. It reflects discipline, intellect, and a love for music that transcends borders. Truly, it is an artistry that cannot be confined locally, for it resonates across the world.

**Next is Lea Salonga.** From the musical "The King and I," where she started at a tender age, she has grown into a global phenomenon. She is the first Asian to win the Tony Award for Best Actress in a Musical ("Miss Saigon"), the first to voice two Disney princesses (Mulan and Jasmine), and the recipient of an Olivier, a Drama Desk, and countless other honors. She has performed in sold-out concerts across continents. Recently, she was honored with a star in the Hollywood Walk of Fame Class of 2026, on which my family and I strolled during the holidays.

Lea did not simply "make it" abroad; she carried the Philippines with her. Every time she sang, she held audiences in breathless silence only to release them into acclamation at the final note. She has opened doors for countless young talents across the international and local theaters. She is, quite simply, a national gem.

**And then there is Lisa Macuja-Elizalde**—the first Filipina to become a prima ballerina in an international classical company and the first foreign soloist ever accepted into Russia's legendary Kirov Ballet. For decades,

she has danced the great classical roles with unmatched grace and power. Upon returning home, she founded Ballet Manila and brought world-class ballet to ordinary Filipinos.

Late Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago authored a Senate resolution nominating Lisa for National Artist in recognition of her immense contributions to Philippine culture and arts and for bringing ballet closer to the hearts of Filipinos. That was 14 years ago. Since then, Lisa has continued to serve the country with the same passion, now celebrating her 40th homecoming milestone.

**WHY DO THESE THREE MATTER** so much during Women's Month? Because they prove that Filipino women do not need to wait for permission to conquer the world. I do not have enough space to present the enormous work and influence these three women have done.

They studied, sacrificed, competed against the best, and won the hearts of Filipinos longing for a sense of national pride. They have become role models not only for girls who dream of the stage or the concert hall but for every Filipino who believes excellence has no gender.

The Order of National Artists was created precisely to honor such individuals while they are still alive and able to inspire. We have rightly honored the late Lucrecia Kasilag, Andrea Veneracion, and others. But living legends walk among us. The existing selection criteria must be screened with fresh eyes—allowing layers of judgment to shed the limiting weight of the past.

To proclaim Cecile, Lea, and Lisa now would send a powerful message that we value our artists, that we refuse to take their light for granted, and that women who bring glory to the nation deserve the nation's highest artistic accolade.

I respectfully urge the NCCA, the CCP, and Malacañang to consider this humble opinion. The world already knows their worth. It is time the Philippines officially does too.

Comments to [chiefjusticepanganiban@hotmail.com](mailto:chiefjusticepanganiban@hotmail.com)

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


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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER  
**OPINION**

Editor  
 Juliet L. Javellana

### Relentless defender of PH sovereignty

**A** week ago, the nation was reminded once more why retired Senior Associate Justice (SAJ) Antonio T. Carpio remains one of the most formidable defenders of Philippine sovereignty. At the turnover ceremony of the historic map "1875 Carta General del Archipiélago Filipino" to the National Library, SAJ Tony (as he is fondly called by his Supreme Court colleagues) calmly but firmly urged the government to file a new arbitration case against China—this time over the blatant denial of our fishermen's rights at Scarborough Shoal.

**FOR THOSE WHO ADMIRE SAJ TONY'S CAREER**, this latest clarion call comes as no surprise. He served with distinction on the Supreme Court for 18 years. For almost a decade, he was the Court's longest-serving SAJ. (By the way, the appellation "SAJ" is a distinct rank granted by law to the sitting Court member serving the longest, compared to his/her current colleagues.)

So respected was he that he was often called the "Chief Justice we never had." Time and time again, when the Chief Justice was absent or incapacitated, SAJ Tony stepped in as acting chief, guiding the Court with quiet authority and unassailable integrity.

Yet it is what he did after retirement that truly elevates him to the heroic rank. Most justices, upon reaching mandatory retirement age, fade gracefully into private life. Not SAJ Tony. He made a different and far more demanding choice: to dedicate the full weight of his remaining years to the defense of our waters.

He has remained a vocal, independent figure, emphasizing the rule of law, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and multilateral approaches to the maritime dispute, often positioning the Philippine case as benefiting the international community. His postretirement work is nonpartisan and advocacy-driven rather than commercial or judicial.

During the meeting of the "Association of Retired Justices of the Supreme Court" last March 23, I—as president of the group—paid



**WITH DUE RESPECT**  
ARTEMIO V. PANGANIBAN

tribute to him. I said that a few years ago, during a reception for a retiring colleague, one of the 10 wealthiest Filipinos approached him, and in my presence, offered him a seat as an independent director in his conglomerate.

He politely declined, "Thank you, but sorry I cannot accept because I want to devote my full time, energy, and resources to defending Philippine sovereignty in the West Philippine Sea." The answer stunned the offeror. He could hardly believe that his offer, which included substantial per diems and bonuses, would be declined.

**INDEED, HE IS THE MOST ARTICULATE AND RELENTLESS CHAMPION of the 2016 Arbitral Award**—the landmark victory that affirmed our sovereignty and sovereign rights over the West Philippine Sea. He does not do it for power or popularity. He does it because he believes, as every true patriot must, that the international rule of law is the only shield of smaller nations against the world's superpowers.

Why does this matter to ordinary Filipinos? Because fishing rights are not abstract legal concepts. They are the daily bread of thousands of our fishermen whose livelihoods depend on the rich waters of the sea. When they are blocked, the incident is not merely a diplomatic tiff—it is an assault on their right to feed their families.

It is about liberty—the freedom to navigate our territorial waters without fear and harass-

ment. It is about overflight—the right of our aircraft to fly over waters that are indisputably ours. And it is about prosperity—the sovereign right to explore and develop the oil, gas, and other resources within our exclusive economic zone, including the promising Reed Bank, which SAJ Tony has repeatedly bemoaned has remained untapped due to outside forces.

**THESE ARE THE FOUNDATIONS OF NATIONAL DIGNITY** and economic survival. In an era when some would rather take the opposite view, SAJ Tony stands as a beacon of principled resistance. He reminds us that true friendship among nations is built on mutual respect for the law, not on the surrender of sovereign rights.

The government may not have acted yet on his recommendation for a new case. But history will record that when others wavered, one man—retired from active government service—never stopped fighting with the same intellectual rigor and patriotic fire that defined his judicial career.

Some may oppose his assertions. That is their right in our democracy. In a similar way, though I praise him for his relentlessness and patriotism, I did not always agree with him. When we were both incumbents, we clashed on his advocacy for the death penalty, while I fearlessly opposed it as violative of the Constitution and God's commands.

He shows strength not through force, but through the calm and principled exercise of due process, grounded in respect for the rule of law and international covenants. Critics may disagree with him, but I think his wisdom and unwavering research are more than enough to prevail in any international tribunal.

SAJ Tony had left the bench, but he has never left the battlefield for the country. For that, our people owe him a debt of gratitude. He remains, in my humble opinion, a relentless defender of Philippine sovereignty—a modern-day hero.

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 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER  

# OPINION

 Editor  
 Juliet L. Javellana
 

## Adversity, love, and renewal



### WITH DUE RESPECT

ARTEMIO V. PANGANIBAN

Over the years, I have come to realize that the great truths of Scripture are not cloistered in the pages of the Bible or the walls of the Church. They are lived in our daily struggles. Easter reminds us that we, too, must pass through our own passion and death to resurrect and enjoy a renewed life. May I capitalize with quotation marks the lessons from my 1997 book, "Justice & Faith," and update them with my own journey (as well as that of others) through passion, death, and resurrection.

**"SOMETIMES, ADVERSITIES AND MISFORTUNES IN LIFE ARE PRELUDES TO GREATER VICTORIES."** Because my father could not afford the then 15-centavo bus fare from Sampaloc, Manila, I was unable to enroll in my school of choice—University of the Philippines Diliman, where I had a scholarship. I envied my classmates who made it there. Yet, God had a different path for my passion. At Far Eastern University, I was blessed to meet and be taught by a brilliant lawyer who had just been appointed law dean—Dr. Jovito R. Salonga.

He became my mentor who pushed me beyond my limits, especially when I wanted to give up on the bar exam because I was hospitalized on the first day. There was also a time when I felt embittered that I could not enjoy my masteral scholarship at Yale due to my sheer inability to pay for my airfare. I wallowed in self-pity, but in the end, I found greater triumph in seeing all my five children travel to and finish their graduate degrees in their chosen US universities. Perhaps it was also providential that I later organized my own company that assured them of travel.

In my journey from a poor newspaper boy to Chief Justice, I saw how adversity forged character. Court battles lost and won, personal bereavements, the weight of public office: each trial sharpened my sense of purpose and deepened my reliance on prayer. I have seen the same in countless Filipinos who, after calamity, rise to rebuild with quiet heroism.

**"WHATEVER HAPPENS, DO NOT LOSE HEART."** During the stock market crash of

1982 in Hong Kong, I lost everything I had earned abroad. I was heartbroken enough to cause me a heart attack. In fact, many were reported to have committed suicide. Forlorn and poor again, I decided to go back to the Philippines and concentrate on my law practice.

In 1983, I joined the Rotary Club of Manila, where I met future President Fidel V. Ramos, who later appointed me to the Supreme Court in 1995. Working from that high office was never a walk in the park. After my term, I chose to continue creating new meanings in the lives of others through the Foundation for Liberty and Prosperity.

History, too, bears witness to this truth. Abraham Lincoln lost businesses, suffered devastating electoral defeats, mourned the death of his beloved, and endured a complete nervous breakdown. But through perseverance and unshakable resolve, he rose. At 60, he became President of the United States. Though tragically assassinated, he is hailed as one of the greatest leaders in history.

Some of us lose heart after only a few disappointments. But remember: No matter what happens, keep working and believing. Trust in your capacity to rise above defeat and in God's unfailing power and providence.

**"HAVE FAITH IN GOD."** During my own season of passion and death, I moved among the high and the lowly, the powerful and the weak, the glitterati and the downtrodden. I

was outwardly active, yet inwardly hollow. My restless pursuits brought me no peace, no fulfillment, no sense of purpose.

My turning point came in 1986, when I found Jesus Christ and was baptized in the Holy Spirit. That encounter changed everything. I understood then that my own resurrection would be incomplete if I kept God's goodness to myself. Since that day—though feeling inadequate and unworthy as I often do—I have taken up the mission of bringing His Word to every person I meet, quietly and humbly, never noisily and boisterously.

We know the story well: Jesus was betrayed, scourged, crowned with thorns, nailed to the cross, and left to die in agony. The suffering was visceral, public, and seemingly final. Hope appeared extinguished. Yet on the third day came the resurrection.

This divine pattern mirrors life itself. A pregnant woman endures months of discomfort and exhaustion. Labor brings intense pain. Yet she embraces it willingly, out of love. And the reward feels eternal at the sound of the first cry. Without pain and love, there is no new life.

In the same way, personal trials—illness, loss, failure—often become the soil from which our deeper purpose, stronger relationships, and renewed faith spring forth. Today, we pray for peace in a world shaken by a war none of us wanted, yet one that affects us all. Though our struggles differ, we collectively bear the weight of these global tensions.

The message of Easter is not despair but defiant hope. May we emerge from our suffering not merely as survivors but as victors transformed by our suffering: more loving, more resilient, more anchored in the God who conquered death itself. That is the ultimate meaning of His passion, death, and resurrection.

And that, my friends, is the eternal lesson our bleeding world desperately needs today.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER  
**OPINION**

Editor  
Juliet L. Javellana

### Holding the US and Trump accountable

#### WITH DUE RESPECT

ARTEMIO V. PANGANIBAN

**L**ast week, United States President Donald Trump issued a stark warning to Iran via social media, boasting that “a whole civilization [would] die tonight, never to be brought back again” if Tehran failed to meet his deadline. Shortly after, a two-week ceasefire was announced alongside Iran’s reopening of the Strait of Hormuz—a chokepoint for roughly one-fifth of global oil and gas trade, fertilizers, and other products en route to Asia. As of this writing, the ceasefire remains at risk due to the alleged violations thereof by the US and Israel in striking Lebanon and by Iran in refusing to reopen Hormuz.

**UNITED NATIONS SPOKESPERSON**

Stephane Dujarric expressed alarm at Trump’s rhetoric, noting that threats to target civilian infrastructure, if acted upon, could risk violating international humanitarian law.

Specifically, the UN Charter, in its Article 2(4), commands all member states—including the US, Israel, Iran, and others—to “refrain ... from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.”

As a founding member of the UN and a permanent member of its Security Council, the US did not merely sign this document; its leaders wrote it. That pledge carries weight beyond politics. It represents a commitment, forged from the ashes of two world wars, to replace the law of the jungle with the rule of law.

**CLEARLY, THE JOINT US-ISRAELI STRIKES ON IRAN** and the killing of its leaders were conducted without full congressional approval, without UN Security Council authorization, and without evidence of an imminent armed attack to justify the inherent right to self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter.

Even if the US were to claim legitimate self-defense, the methods of warfare must still comply with the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their protocols. Threatening to leave “every power plant and bridge in Iran burning, exploding, and never to be used again” is not

battlefield bluster—it is a direct challenge to the principle of distinction under the laws of war, differentiating at all times between military targets and civilian infrastructure.

The consequences were swift and destabilizing. Retaliatory risks escalated. The disruption of the Strait of Hormuz sent shock waves through global markets. US allies withheld support, with many refusing to endorse what they characterized as an illegitimate use of force.

**HISTORY OFFERS A SOBERING LESSON** for those who mistake military audacity for strategic wisdom. Japan’s surprise attack on Pearl Harbor was designed as a decisive blow, but it merely served to ignite American patriotism to change the then-US policy of neutrality to militant unity to defend the motherland. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has devolved into a grinding war of attrition marked by casualties, isolation, and economic sanctions.

UN Secretary General António Guterres, echoing the sentiment in the UN General Assembly, has condemned the surprise attack on Iran as a violation of the UN Charter. I doubt, however, whether the UN Security Council—in which the US, as a permanent member, has veto power—can use its coercive authority to stop the attack and to get the warring parties to the status quo ante.

Sad indeed is the situation when a major

power is the violator of the UN Charter and the laws of war. The UN’s peace mandates cannot be enforced. And while still holding the presidency, Trump—being constitutionally immune, like any incumbent Philippine president—cannot be tried and convicted in US courts. Waiting till his term expires or till he is impeached may be too late. Not even the International Criminal Court can enforce its arrest orders, if any are issued, on Trump, in the same way it could not do so on Russia’s Vladimir Putin.

Verily, enforcement of UN majorities against a major power like the US remains a pipe dream. The International Court of Justice, the judicial organ of the UN, faces limits in disputes involving the permanent Security Council members. Enforcement of the Geneva Conventions on the laws of war cannot also be observed.

However, accountability is not only judicial. It is political, historical, diplomatic, and democratic.

Recent polls have showed a measurable decline in Trump’s domestic approval ratings, revealing deepening divisions over both the human costs and strategic direction of his policies. The reluctance of key allies of the US, especially the European countries, to lend their support constitutes a broader international verdict.

Violating the UN Charter while expecting other nations to absorb the consequences is not leadership; it is unilateralism that corrodes the very architecture of collective security. The world cannot afford another precedent where might makes right, where powerful states selectively honor the rules they helped create.

The international community has arrived at a crossroads. One path leads toward a rules-based order, however imperfect. The other leads toward a world where power alone defines legitimacy, and where no nation, however strong today, is safe tomorrow. The rule of law is not merely a preference. It remains the ultimate arbiter.

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