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balita

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Managing Director
and Chief AI & Data Officer
Center for AI Research (PH)
Aboitiz Chair in Data Science
Asian Institute of Management

The Architecture of Trust

*The 27th Weekly
Membership Meeting
of the Rotary Club of Manila*

**TOWER Awards 2026
Preparations**

A LIFE THAT BUILT A NATION

**Francisco
Tomas Vivencio
del Rosario and the
Quiet Architecture of
a Life That Endures**

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PROGRAM



ROTARY CLUB OF MANILA

28th Weekly Membership Meeting

Rotary Year 2025-2026

Thursday, April 30, 2026, 12:30 PM

Manila Polo Club

Moderator: STAR RTN. INGILL RA

PART I

11:00 AM Registration /Lunch

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

Invocation | **RTN. RAMON ALBERTO B. "Ramby" NOLIDO**

Philippine National Anthem | **AVP**

Rotary Club of Manila Hymn
RCM WF Music Chorale

The Four (4) Way Test
STAR RTN. OLIVER L. PANTALEON

Acknowledgment of Guests
STAR RTN. INGILL RA

Welcome Song | **RCM WF Music Chorale**

Birthday Celebrants

Apr 18 Rtn. Caloy Buendia	Apr 20 PS Rico Domingo
Rtn. Teddy Garcia	Apr 23 PD Jun Hallare
Apr 19 PT Pepo Nuñez	Apr 24 Dir. Warren So
Rtn. Brix Pujalte	Apr 27 PDG Jackie
Rtn. Dan Obrado	Rodriguez

Maligayang Bati / Happy Birthday Song
RCM WF Chorale

PART II

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

1:00 PM Introduction of the Guest Speaker
SEC. ANTONILO D.C. "Anton" MAURICIO

Guest Speaker

DR. ERIKA FILLE LEGARA
Managing Director
and Chief AI & Data Officer
Center for AI Research (PH)
Aboitiz Chair in Data Science
Asian Institute of Management

1:30 PM Open Forum / Q&A

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

2:00 PM Adjournment
PRES. RAOUL C. CREENCIA

EDITORIAL

Reginald T. Yu
Editor-in-Chief



ON April 30, 2025, the Rotary Club of Manila gathers once more at the Manila Polo Club — not merely for its 28th Weekly Membership Meeting, but for something far more consequential: a conversation about the future we are already living in, yet have scarcely begun to understand.

Artificial Intelligence, Data Science, and Complex Systems are no longer

distant academic constructs or speculative technologies. They are here — quietly shaping markets, influencing decisions, redefining institutions, and, in many ways, rewriting the rules by which society operates. The question is no longer whether these forces will transform our world. They already have. The more urgent question is whether we, as leaders, are prepared to understand them—and more importantly, to guide them.

Our guest speaker, Erika Fille Legara, stands at the forefront of this evolving frontier. As Managing Director and Chief AI and Data Officer of the Center for AI Research Philippines, and as the Aboitiz Chair in Data Science at the Asian Institute of Management, she represents a rare convergence of scientific rigor, policy insight, and real-world application. With a doctorate in the physics of complex systems, her work moves beyond theory into the realm of impact — where algorithms meet governance, and data meets human consequence.

But this is not merely a lecture on technology.

It is, in truth, a challenge.

EDITORIAL

A challenge to rethink how decisions are made in a world where data flows faster than judgment, where predictive models may outpace human intuition, and where complexity defies simplistic solutions. In such a world, leadership cannot remain anchored in outdated paradigms. It must evolve — grounded not only in experience and values, but informed by evidence, sharpened by analytics, and guided by ethical clarity.

Artificial Intelligence, for all its promise, is not inherently benevolent. It reflects the intentions, biases, and limitations of those who build and deploy it. Without principled stewardship, it risks amplifying inequality, distorting truth, and concentrating power in ways that undermine the very fabric of society. This is why conversations like this matter. This is why institutions like the Rotary Club of Manila must engage — not as passive observers, but as active participants in shaping how these technologies serve humanity.

The intersection of AI and governance is no longer optional terrain. It is the new arena of

responsibility.

- What does it mean to lead when machines can learn?
- What does it mean to decide when data can predict?
- And perhaps most importantly, what does it mean to serve when technology can scale both good and harm at unprecedented speed?

These are not questions for technologists alone. They are questions for all of us.

As Rotarians, we are called not only to fellowship, but to foresight. Not only to service, but to stewardship. The tools of the future are being forged today. Whether they will uplift or unsettle depends, in no small part, on the values we bring to their use.

This 28th Weekly Membership Meeting is, therefore, more than a calendar event. It is an invitation — to listen, to learn, and to lead with greater awareness in an increasingly complex world.

The future is not arriving. It is already here. ■

GUEST SPEAKER

ERIKA Fille T. Legara is a pioneering Filipina scientist and one of the leading women in AI in the Philippines, working across government, academia, and industry as a data science and AI practitioner. She is the inaugural Managing Director and Chief AI and Data Officer of the Philippine Center for AI Research, and an Associate Professor and Aboitiz Chair in Data Science at the Asian Institute of Management, where she founded and led the country's first MSc in Data Science program from 2017 to 2024.



ERIKA FILLE T. LEGARA

Managing Director and Chief AI and Data Officer
Center for AI Research (Philippines)
Aboitiz Chair in Data Science
Asian Institute of Management (AIM)

Photo credit: Tatler Philippines

An Eisenhower Fellow, her work focuses on responsible AI governance and algorithmic auditing. She serves on corporate boards, is a Fellow of the Institute of Corporate Directors, an IAPP Certified AI Governance Professional, and a co-founder of a technology company. Her recognitions include the 2020 NAST Outstanding Young Scientist Award, TOYM and TOWNS honors, and selection as an Asia 21 Young Leader (Class of 2022). ■

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Artificial Intelligence

In today's weekly membership meeting, we will tackle one of the defining developments of our time -- artificial intelligence. Indeed, AI is transforming the way we work, communicate, learn, and solve problems. Across many fields -- from medicine, law and education to business, governance, and public service -- its potential to improve efficiency, expand human capability, and open new possibilities is undeniable.



Raoul C. Creencia
President

It is therefore both timely and commendable that our Program Committee has chosen to devote attention to a subject that will profoundly shape the years ahead.

For Rotary, discussions such as this are especially meaningful. Rotary has always been a forum where leaders, professionals, and citizens of goodwill come together to better understand the forces influencing society and to consider how change may be guided toward the common good. Artificial intelligence is no longer a distant or theoretical

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

concept reserved for laboratories or technology companies. It is already part of our daily lives, affecting how we access information, conduct business, receive services, and make decisions. Its reach will only continue to grow.

I look forward to hearing our guest speaker's insights, particularly on how artificial intelligence can be directed toward purposes that truly matter. Used wisely and responsibly, it can help improve the way we live today, and can positively impact everyone's healthcare access, enhance learning opportunities, strengthen disaster preparedness and emergency response, increase agricultural productivity, support environmental protection, and create new opportunities for entrepreneurs and underserved communities. In many ways, it can become a powerful instrument for inclusive progress and human development.

But in the face of unstoppable advances in AI technology, there is one thing we must constantly remember -- that no machine, however advanced, can replace the

qualities that define our humanity. Compassion, empathy, moral judgment, conscience, and the willingness to sacrifice for others cannot be automated. Technology may assist human beings, but it must never diminish our ability to care, to listen, to understand suffering, and to extend help where it is needed most. Efficiency must not come at the expense of kindness, and convenience must not weaken our sense of duty to one another.

This is especially important in a world where speed and automation are often celebrated above all else. The greatest societies are not built merely on innovation, but on relationships, trust, and service. If artificial intelligence causes us to become indifferent, isolated, or less attentive to the needs of others, then something essential will have been lost. Progress should make us more human, not less.

This is where Rotary's enduring values remain deeply relevant. Our commitment to Service Above Self, integrity, fellowship, fairness, and respect for human dignity provides a

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

moral compass as we navigate emerging technologies. Artificial intelligence should be a tool that strengthens human connection, expands opportunity, and enables more effective service. It should help us solve problems, but never replace the human heart that inspires service in the first place.

As Rotarians, we should neither fear change nor embrace it blindly. Rather, we should engage with it thoughtfully, ask the right questions, and encourage innovation that remains anchored in ethics and compassion. In the end, the true measure of artificial intelligence will not be how intelligent machines become, but whether humanity remains wise enough, caring enough, and united enough to use them in service of others. ■

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

cover story

by PE Reginald T. Yu

The Architecture of Trust

The 27th Weekly Membership Meeting of the Rotary Club of Manila



ON a warm April afternoon at the Manila Polo Club, beneath high ceilings that have borne witness to generations of discourse and decision, the Rotary Club of Manila convened its 27th Weekly Membership Meeting, an assembly that felt at once familiar and forward-looking, anchored in tradition yet quietly leaning into the future.

The gathering was called to order by **President Raoul C. Creencia**, whose steady hand continues to define the rhythm of Rotary Year 2025–2026. The invocation, solemnly delivered by **STAR Rotarian Winston M. Ginez**, set a tone of reflection, followed by the stirring cadence of the Philippine National Anthem and the Club’s own hymn, rendered by the **RCM World-Famous Music Chorale**. In that moment, the room became more than a venue. It became a continuum of purpose.

Presiding as moderator, **Club Secretary Antonilo D.C. “Anton” Mauricio** guided the proceedings with measured ease. **Rotarian Raymond N. “Ray” Davis** led the recitation of the Four-Way Test, while the Chorale returned to offer a welcome song that softened the formalities with warmth. The celebration of April birthday celebrants, among them **Rotarian Dick Lee**, **Vice-President Ricky Guevara**, **Incoming Club Secretary Albert Alday**, **Past Director Noy Benedicto**, **Rotarian Willie Peliño**, **Rotarian Mike Ozaeta**, **Director-Elect Caloy Serapio**, **Rotarian Vic Garcia**, and **Assistant Internal Auditor Mike Roxas**, added a personal cadence to the



President Raoul C. Creencia called the 27th Weekly Membership Meeting of the Rotary Club of Manila to order.



Club Secretary Antonilo D.C. “Anton” Mauricio moderated the meeting.



STAR Rotarian Winston M. Ginez led the invocation.

afternoon, a reminder that Rotary's strength lies not only in its programs but in its people.

The meeting was further distinguished by the presence of **District Governor-Elect Maria Rosa "Bing" N. Carreon**, whose attendance lent both significance and continuity to the occasion, symbolizing the seamless thread of leadership that binds the district and its premier club.

A moment of purpose followed as **Past District Governor Alexander P. "Alex" Cureg** led the *Bayanihan* Fundraising segment, invoking the enduring Filipino spirit of collective action.

Soon after, the Club welcomed new members into its fold, **Mr. Manuel E. Pangilinan** of Finasiatech Corporation, proposed by **President Creencia**, and **Mr. Myles Seymour Y. Tan** of Llyon Industrial Corporation, proposed by **President-Elect Reginald T. "Reggie" Yu**. Their induction, solemnized by the President, symbolized continuity, the passing of Rotary's torch to those who will carry it forward.



Rotarian Raymond N. "Ray" Davis led the recitation of the Four-Way Test.



Past District Governor Alexander P. "Alex" Cureg led the Bayanihan Fundraising segment.



President Raoul C. Creencia administered the oath-taking for the new members of RC Manila, Mr. Manuel E. Pangilinan and Mr. Myles Seymour Tan, with PE Reggie T. Yu as one of the proposers.



President Raoul C. Creencia presented a gift of appreciation to DGND Hermie Esguerra. From left: PE Reggie Yu, PP Boy Guevara, DGE Bing Carreon, Pres. Raoul Creencia, DGND Hermie Esguerra, PP Archit Bartolome, and Sec. Anton Mauricio

A Turning of the Lens: President's Time

In his remarks, President Creencia paused to recognize **District-Governor Nominee-Designate Hermie Esguerra**, for his yeoman efforts in reconstructing the RCM headquarters and offices at his personal cost. Yet it was clear that the afternoon was building toward something more, a glimpse into a world rapidly reshaping itself.

The gift of appreciation was presented to DGND Hermie Esguerra in grateful appreciation of his invaluable contributions to the Rotary Club of Manila, particularly for:

- meticulously updating the roster of members inducted into the Club since June 2019 for inclusion in the Centennial Glass Roster
- his steadfast support in enhancing the Club Office through the rehabilitation of the Club trellis, significantly improving the safety and preservation of Club property and personnel
- inviting and securing the participation of the Rotary Club of Manila in the 2025 Christmas Gift-Giving initiative of the Dangal ng Bulacan Foundation
- donating fifty 50 jet pumps to the community of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, on behalf of the Rotary Club of Manila during the Mindoro Service Caravan on March 28, 2026
- updating the Rotary Club of Manila Lupang Hinirang anthem video, to include new members inducted and members not in the original version.



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

The Future, Articulated

The introduction of the Guest of Honor and Speaker by **Rotarian Nicolo S. “Nico” Hallare** carried with it a sense of anticipation. The speaker, **Mr. Brandon “Gelo” Wong**, Co-Founder of BYC Ventures, represented a new archetype of leadership, young, technical, and deeply engaged in nation-building through innovation.

At just 23, Wong stood before a room of seasoned leaders not as a disruptor in defiance of tradition, but as a bridge between eras.

He began not with abstraction, but with clarity. Blockchain, he explained, is not cryptocurrency, an



Rotarian Nicolo S. “Nico” Hallare introduced the guest speaker.

important distinction often blurred in public discourse. Rather, blockchain is infrastructure, “the road,” as he put it, upon which various applications such as currency, contracts, and identities may travel.

From there, he traced the evolution of the internet, from Web 1.0’s static consumption, to Web 2.0’s participatory platforms, and finally to Web 3.0’s promise of ownership, where individuals reclaim control of their data. This progression framed blockchain not as novelty, but as inevitability.

Yet Wong’s most compelling argument lay not in theory, but in application.



Guest speaker Mr. Brandon "Gelo" Wong, Co-Founder of BYC Ventures

He spoke of the Philippines, of a nation quietly positioning itself at the frontier of technological governance. Through partnerships with agencies such as the Department of Budget and Management, the Department of Public Works and Highways, and the Department of Information and Communications Technology, his team has helped place over 90 billion US dollars in government records on-chain.

This was no small claim. It meant that national budgets, infrastructure records, and financial allocations, traditionally vulnerable to opacity and manipulation, could now exist in a tamper-proof, verifiable system accessible to citizens, NGOs, and media alike.

"Blockchain does not replace institutions," Wong emphasized. "It makes them more trustworthy."

The implications were profound. In a country where public trust in data remains fragile, where systems are often fragmented, blockchain offers a singular source of truth, a ledger that resists alteration not through authority, but through consensus.

He illustrated this elegantly. To alter a single piece of data on a blockchain, one would have to simultaneously change it across thousands of independent nodes. Truth, in this system, is not dictated. It is validated.

Beyond governance, Wong painted a broader horizon. Land titles that cannot be duplicated. Medical records that follow patients seamlessly. Academic credentials immune to forgery. Even elections, he suggested, could one day be secured by immutable registries.

And then, with a subtle shift, he looked ahead.

Blockchain, he argued, will not stand alone. It will converge with artificial intelligence, serving as the verification layer in a world

increasingly shaped by machine-generated information. In an age where truth itself may be contested, blockchain becomes not just a tool, but a safeguard, a quiet arbiter ensuring that what is known remains anchored in what is real.

The room, accustomed to discussions of service projects and civic initiatives, found itself contemplating something larger, infrastructure not of roads or buildings, but of trust itself.

Dialogue and Recognition

The Open Forum that followed allowed members to engage directly, bridging the gap between concept and context. Questions moved fluidly, from practical applications in business to broader implications for governance, reflecting a genuine curiosity among Rotarians to understand and perhaps participate in this unfolding transformation.

President Creencia later presented Wong with a Certificate of Appreciation, a gesture that, while customary, carried deeper meaning. It acknowledged not only a speaker, but a shift, a recognition that Rotary's mandate of service must evolve alongside the tools that shape society.



Mr. Wong engaged in an interactive conversation during the Q&A with Rtn. Paco Magsaysay, Rtn. Willie Pelino, DGE Bing Carreon, DSAA John Cutter, Mr. Jose De Venecia III, and PD Tony Lopez.





President Raoul C. Creencia presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Mr. Brandon "Gelo" Wong, with Sec. Antonilo D.C. "Anton" Mauricio, Rtn. Nico Hallare, and Rtn. Ray Davis.

The Quiet After

As the meeting drew to a close and was formally adjourned by President Creencia, the conversations did not end. They lingered, in small clusters, over coffee, in reflective pauses.

For what had transpired that afternoon was not merely another Weekly Membership Meeting. It was an encounter between legacy and possibility. Between those who have built institutions over decades, and those now reimagining how those institutions may endure.



President Raoul Creencia adjourned the meeting.

In the end, the 27th Weekly Membership Meeting was less about blockchain, and more about belief, the belief that systems can be made better, that trust can be engineered, and that even in a world of rapid change, the enduring values of Rotary, integrity, service, and fellowship, can find new expressions in the architecture of tomorrow. ■





Meeting Fellowship



CLUB ADMINISTRATION

RCM Members' Attendance Report
RY 2025-2026



ATTENDANCE REPORT
April 2026

APRIL 2026	April 02, 2026 NO WEEKLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING (HOLIDAY)	April 09, 2026 NO WEEKLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING (HOLIDAY)	April 16, 2026 MR. BRANDON "Gelo" WONG	April 23, 2026 NO WEEKLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING (FELLOWSHIP)
MEMBERS PRESENT	0	0	33	0
MEMBERS PRESENT %	0%	0%	16%	0%
MAKE UP ATTENDEES	0	0	4	0
EXEMPTED	0	0	4	0
ON LEAVE	0	0	0	0
Total Active Members	0	0	37	0
Total # of Members	210	210	212	212
TOTAL %:	0%	0%	17%	0%
ROTAFACTORS	0	0	6	0
MEDIA	0	0	0	0
EMBASSIES / DIPLOMATIC CORPS	0	0	0	0
DG, DGE, DGN, PDG	0	0	0	0
GOHS / GS	0	0	1	0
VISITING ROTARIAN	0	0	3	0
Guests of RCM MEMBERS	0	0	3	0
TOTAL ATTENDEES	0	0	46	0



LIST OF ATTENDEES
April 16, 2026

- Albaña, Michael Jaey C
- Bartolome III, Arsenio M.
- Co, Val Constantine L.
- Creencia, Raoul C.
- Cureg, Alexander P.
- Cutter, John Michael
- Davis, Raymond N.
- Del Rosario Sr., Oscar A.
- Egan, Brendan W.L.
- Eldebs, Issam
- Esguerra, Herminio S.
- Guevara, Jr., Domingo S.
- Guevara, Ricardo S.
- Hallare, Nicolo S.
- Lopez, Antonio S.
- Macatoman, Abdulgani M.
- Magsaysay, Francisco D.
- Mauricio, Antonilo DC
- Ozaeta, Miguel Antonio L.
- Peliño, Wilfredo M.
- Preysler, Jr., Fausto R.
- Ra, Ingill
- Reynolds, David J.
- Serapio, Carlos G.
- Sibayan, Joselito H.
- Simon, Juanito A.
- So, Warren S.
- Tagaysay, Hector O.
- Yu, Reginald Tieng
- Ginez, Winston M.
- Tamesis, Chris C.
- Tan, Myles
- Pangilinan, Manuel E.

CLUB ADMINISTRATION

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

As of April 28, 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 28, 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.
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CLUB ADMINISTRATION

Rotary Club of Manila Formalizes Partnership with Stages Production Specialists, Inc.



IN a meaningful step toward what promises to be a memorable celebration, the Rotary Club of Manila formalized its partnership with Stages Production Specialists, Inc. through the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement on April 23, 2026, at Alex III Restaurant in Quezon City.

The agreement secures the participation of the multi-awarded vocal group, The CompanY, as a featured performer during the Rotary Club of Manila's 107th Anniversary and Turnover of Board and Officers, set to take place on July 2, 2026, at the historic Manila Hotel.

Signing on behalf of the Rotary Club of Manila was President-Elect Reggie Yu, while Moy Ortiz, lead singer of The CompanY, represented Stages Production Specialists, Inc. The occasion was witnessed by fellow CompanY member Annie Quintos, band manager Cris Ojeda, and RCM Executive Secretary Lhea Lozano.

The collaboration brings together one of the country's most enduring musical groups and Asia's first Rotary club, setting the stage for an evening that will celebrate legacy, leadership, and the enduring spirit of service — enhanced by music that has defined generations.

Prospective Water Project Meeting



President Raoul Creencia, President-Elect Reggie Yu, Past President Romy Nones, and Past District Governor Jackie Rodriguez recently met to discuss a new water project.

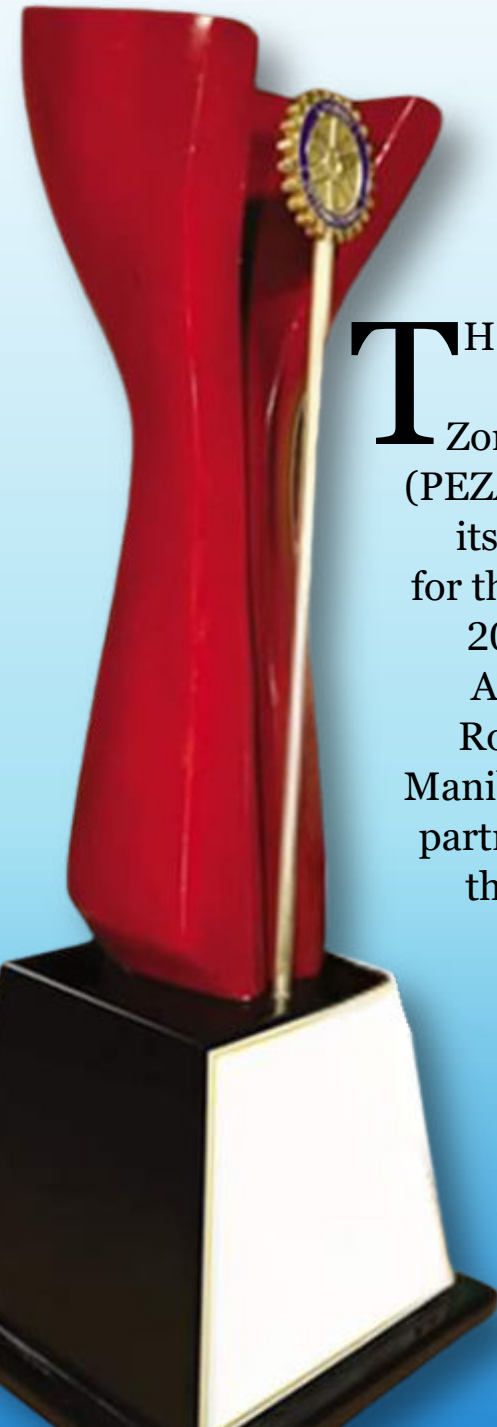
They were joined by Inaki Xavier Alegria Maglipon, Manager of a zeolite mining company (leftmost), and JT Warring, Chairman of the Rotary's water warriors program (fourth from left). The program has been building clean water projects in various countries in Asia and is now expanding its work to the Philippines.

TOWER Awards 2026 Preparations



The Outstanding Workers of the Republic (TOWER) Awards Chairman/Centennial President Susing Pineda and President Raoul Creencia met Screening Committee Chair/Past President PP Romy Nones and President-Elect Reggie Yu at the Sports Cafe of Manila Polo Club on April 16, 2026 after the Club's weekly membership meeting.

TOWER Awards 2026



THE Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) expresses its full support for the upcoming 2026 TOWER Awards of the Rotary Club of Manila (RCM), in partnership with the Philippine Ecozones Association (PHILEA).

Established in 1975, The Outstanding Workers of the Republic (TOWER) Awards Program of the Rotary Club of Manila is a prestigious annual award that recognizes the vital contributions of Filipino workers—particularly rank-and-file, blue-collar, and non-supervisory white-collar employees—to national economic development.

The program seeks to uplift workers' morale, enhance career opportunities, and promote industrial harmony by honoring individuals who demonstrate excellence, innovation, and dedication in their respective fields.

In line with PEZA's mandate to promote employment generation and strengthen the Filipino workforce, the Authority proudly supports this initiative by encouraging enterprises to nominate deserving employees across PEZA-registered ecozones.

These individuals, from both manufacturing and services sectors, play a vital role in driving productivity, operational efficiency, and global competitiveness, thereby contributing to the continued growth of the country's investment landscape.

PEZA likewise places utmost importance on recognizing enterprises that actively elevate and honor their

workforce by nominating employees whose achievements reflect excellence, innovation, and the dignity of labor.

In this regard, we are calling on our locators to nominate qualified employees and encouraging them to submit their nominations on or before May 11, 2026 through the Google Form link:

<https://forms.gle/QNLnukLrUH8NcEaa8>

The TOWER Awards Ceremony will be held on May 28, 2026 at the Manila Polo Club, where outstanding employees will be formally honored for their exceptional achievements and valuable contributions to their respective organizations and to national economic development. In recognition of their exemplary performance, each awardee will receive a cash prize of **Php 100,000.00** under the TOWER Awards Program.

For questions or clarifications, you may coordinate directly with the Rotary Club of Manila through Anna Kun Toledo (0908 873 7405) or Lhea Lozano (0995 991 2933), or via email at kuntoledo@rcmanila.org or manilarotaryclub@gmail.com

The poster features a large, red, stylized trophy on the left. The text "2026 TOWER AWARDS" is prominently displayed in large, bold, yellow letters. Below this, it says "THE OUTSTANDING WORKERS OF THE REPUBLIC AWARDS". Logos for PAGCOR, Rotary Club of Manila, and San Miguel Corporation are at the top right. Logos for PHILEA and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) are at the bottom left. A dark brown box in the center contains the text: "Winners will receive a TOWER Awards Signature Trophy and a cash prize of **Php 100,000**". At the bottom, it says "Awarding on MAY 28, 2026 at the Rotary Club Manila".

2026 TOWER AWARDS

THE OUTSTANDING WORKERS OF THE REPUBLIC AWARDS

Winners will receive a
TOWER Awards Signature Trophy
and
a cash prize of
Php 100,000

Deadline for submission
of Nomination:
MAY 11, 2026

GCash

Contact Persons:
PHILEA
Arnold Canaria 09777061871
ROTARY CLUB OF MANILA
Anna Kun Toledo 09088737405
Lhea Lozano 09959912933
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Awarding on **MAY 28, 2026** at the **Rotary Club Manila**

TOWER Awards 2026



From left: STAR Rotarian Jason Valderrama; Past President Romy Nones (Screening Committee Chairman); President Raoul Creencia; from PEZA - Mr. B Philip Radin, Investment Promotions Division Chief; Mr. Marion Christian Tancinco; Administrative Officer II; Ms. Mikee Fabellar, Corporate Communications Officer; and RCM Secretariat Consultant Anna Kun Toledo

The Outstanding Workers of the Republic (TOWER) Awards Committee met with the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) leaders on April 22, 2026 at the Boardroom of the PEZA office.



President Raoul Creencia and President-Elect Reggie Yu discussed the final details of the new deadlines for the TOWER Awards.

An Intimate Conversation with PP Susing Pineda



Over a quiet and elegant luncheon at Mt. Fuji Japanese Restaurant on April 21, 2026, Past President Jesus “Susing” M. Pineda Jr. graciously hosted The Balita EIC Reggie Yu for an intimate and deeply engaging interview.

Amid the refined ambiance of the Manila Polo Club, the conversation unfolded into a rich tapestry of memories — stories of resilience, leadership, public service, and personal turning points that shaped a remarkable life. From his formative years to his distinguished career in banking, diplomacy, and Rotary service, PP Susing shared candid reflections with both clarity and quiet depth.

The exchange proved more than just an interview — it was an illuminating journey through a life lived with purpose and conviction, offering rare insight into the experiences and values that defined one of Rotary’s most respected leaders.



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

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

TOURNAMENT FEE
PHP 9,000.00

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Breakfast, Lunch & Raffles**

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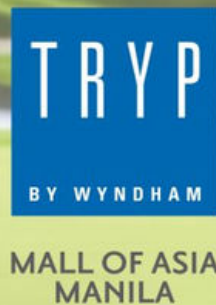


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PEOPLE

A LIFE THAT BUILT A NATION

*Francisco Tomas
Vivencio del Rosario
and the Quiet
Architecture of
a Life That Endures*

IN a life that moved quietly yet reshaped the lives of many, Francisco “Toting” V. del Rosario built more than businesses and institutions — he built systems, standards, and opportunities that would outlast him, proving that the truest measure of a man is not what he achieves, but what endures.

By PE Reginald T. Yu



A LIFE THAT BUILT A NATION

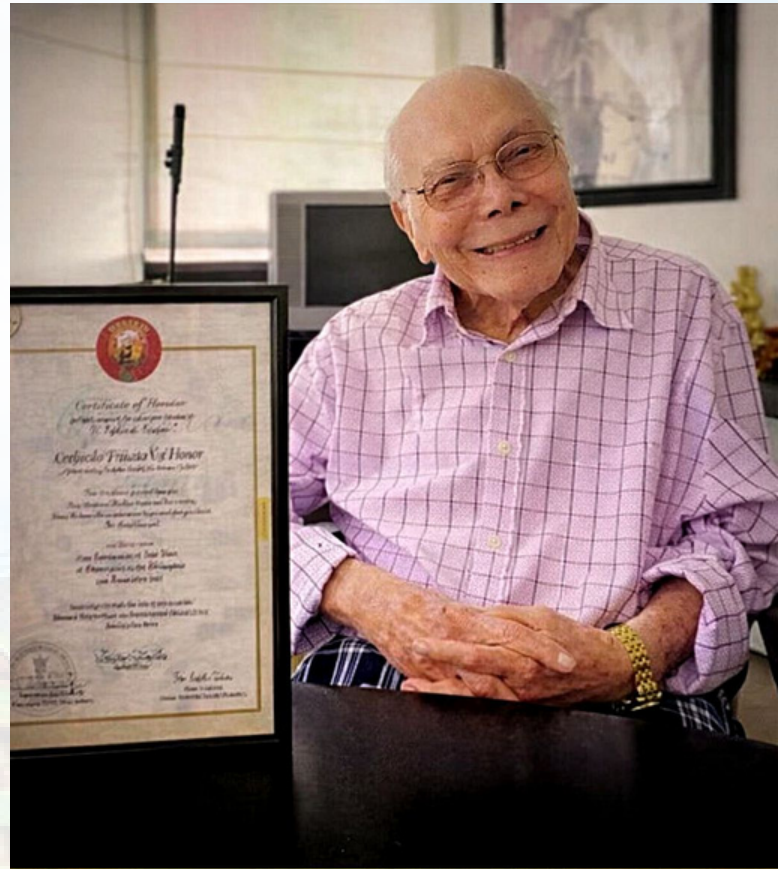
Francisco Tomas Vivencio del Rosario and the Quiet Architecture of a Life That Endures

O the morning of March 2, 2026, Francisco Tomas “Toting” V. del Rosario slipped away quietly, as though mindful not to disturb the rhythm of a world he had long learned to move within without demanding attention.

He was ninety-nine.

There are lives that end with ceremony — announced in headlines, recounted in superlatives, compressed into a litany of achievements meant to capture, in hurried sequence, the breadth of a man’s years. But there are other lives, rarer perhaps, that resist such treatment. They do not lend themselves easily to summary, not because they lack accomplishment, but because their true weight lies elsewhere — in the consistency of their making, in the quiet discipline with which they are lived, in the structures they leave behind that continue long after the man himself has gone.

Toting’s was such a life.



In 2021, at the age of 94, Toting was honored by Santuario de San Antonio Parish as the oldest living male ambassador — a fitting recognition of a life marked by distinguished service, enduring presence, and remarkable longevity.

A LIFE THAT BUILT A NATION

Francisco Tomas Vivencio del Rosario and the Quiet Architecture of a Life That Endures

He was not the beginning of the story. He was its continuation — shaped by a lineage of builders, by a mother whose will held a family together, and by a name that had already begun to mean some-thing in the world before he was born.

He had lived through nearly a century of change. He was born into a Philippines still finding its footing in the aftermath of colonial transition, came of age in the shadow of war, built his career in the optimism of reconstruction, and matured into leadership at a time when institutions — business, civic, and govern-mental — were beginning to take on the shape of permanence. He moved through all these phases not as a spectator, but as a participant — sometimes at the center, more often just off to the side, where the real work tends to be done.

And yet, if one were to ask what defined him, the answer would not come readily from the list of roles he held.

He had been many things: an accountant trained in the discipline of numbers, a businessman who helped reshape access to modern living, a civic leader who believed deeply in the development of others, a Rotarian whose sense of service extended beyond gesture into structure, a diplomat who



Antonio Vivencio del Rosario, Toting's grandfather, rose from the modest beginnings of a silversmith's son to pursue a distinguished legal career. He went on to serve as Secretary General of the University of Santo Tomas, Governor of Laguna, and, in a historic first, became the first Filipino magistrate during the Spanish colonial period.

A LIFE THAT BUILT A NATION

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carried the weight of representation with quiet clarity. These are all true.

But they are not, in themselves, sufficient.

Because what distinguished him was not the variety of what he did, but the sameness of how he did it.

He approached everything — whether modest or monumental — with a kind of internal order. There was no visible strain in the way he carried responsibility, no flourish in the way he exercised authority. Things were simply done, and done properly. It was not a style that drew immediate notice. It did not seek to.

It endured.

In his later years, when the demands of work had eased and conversation had taken on the slower cadence of reflection, he spoke of success in a way that surprised those who expected something more elaborate. There was no formula, no grand theory. Instead, he spoke of something almost disarmingly simple: the way one chose to do a thing.

He would recall, for instance, a bellman in a hotel in Tokyo — an ordinary man performing an ordinary task, and yet doing so with such quiet pride that the task itself seemed to change in



Dr. Salvador del Rosario (second row, far right) pictured with fellow Filipino reformists, circa 1897 — a gathering of young intellectuals and patriots united by a shared vision of national awakening, whose ideas and convictions would help shape the course of Philippine history.

character. It was not the work that elevated the man, but the man who elevated the work.

A man splitting rocks, he would say, is not merely splitting rocks.

He is building a church.

A LIFE THAT BUILT A NATION

Francisco Tomas Vivencio del Rosario and the Quiet Architecture of a Life That Endures

It was a remark offered without emphasis, almost in passing. But it lingered.

Because in it was contained the essence of how he had lived.

The Youngest Son

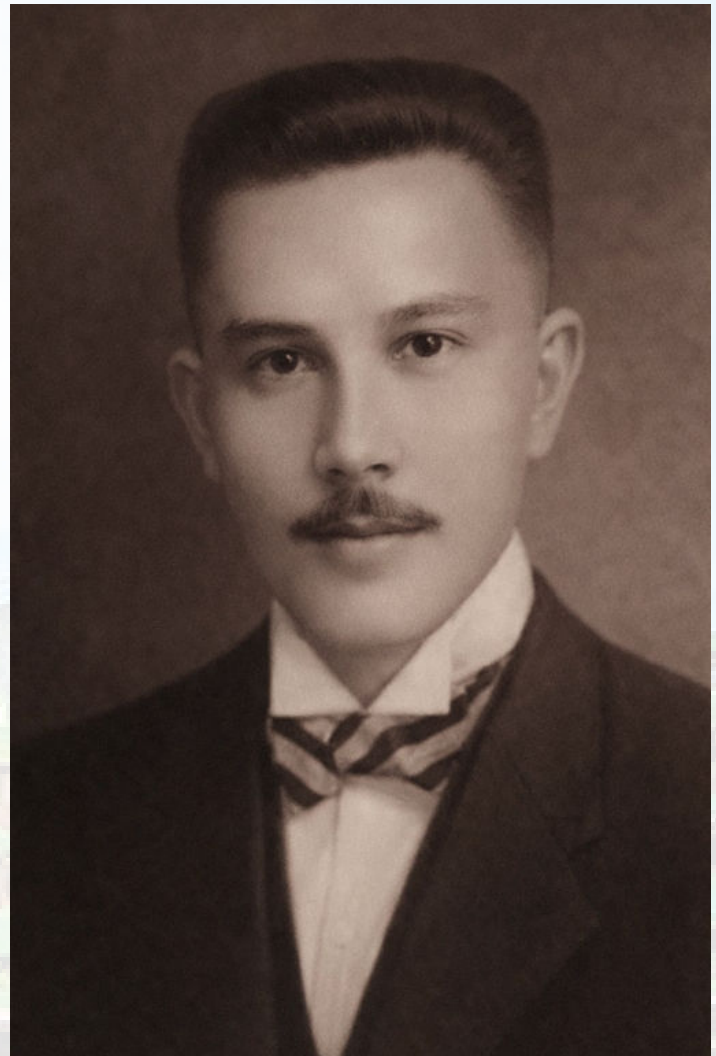
He was born on January 29, 1927, into a household already in motion.

The Del Rosario family was not one that stood still long enough for any single member to define its direction. It moved forward through the collective momentum of its parts — each sibling finding his place, each carving out a path that would, in time, become a contribution not only to the family name but to the wider world they were beginning to inhabit.

That momentum did not begin with the brothers.

It had been set in motion long before them.

His father, Salvador V. del Rosario, was a man shaped by both intellect and service. Educated at the University of Santo Tomas and later in Madrid, he belonged to a generation that believed in the disciplined pursuit of knowledge and the responsibility that came with it. He was among the early physicians of his



Dr. Salvador V. del Rosario, Toting's father, was a distinguished writer and orator who took part in the historic Malolos Congress. In the years that followed, he continued his service to the nation as a member of the Board of Health under the American civil government.

A LIFE THAT BUILT A NATION

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time, and his involvement as a delegate to the Malolos Congress placed him within the country's early efforts at self-definition. His life was one of structure — of study, of profession, of contribution.

But it was his mother, Benita Quiogue, who would define the atmosphere in which her sons were raised.

She came from a lineage rooted in trade and enterprise, the daughter of a family that understood commerce not as theory, but as daily practice. She inherited not only business acumen, but a kind of tenacity that did not easily yield to circumstance. Widowed early, she assumed the weight of the household without hesitation. She did not speak of resilience. She embodied it.

In a family that had known loss — where several children did not survive infancy — the lessons were neither abstract nor gently delivered. Stability had to be built. Discipline had to be maintained. There was no room for drift.

And so the surviving sons — Mariano, Ramon, Jesus Vivencio, and the youngest, Francisco — grew up not only under guidance, but under expectation.

Toting was the youngest.



Doña Benita Quiogue, Toting's mother, was a woman of remarkable enterprise, building a range of ventures from shopping stalls to public housing and even bowling alleys. Guided by keen business acumen and quiet resolve, she sustained and raised the young Del Rosario brothers through the hardships of the Great Depression in the 1930s.

A LIFE THAT BUILT A NATION

Francisco Tomas Vivencio del Rosario and the Quiet Architecture of a Life That Endures

Before him came men who were already beginning to define what it meant to be a Del Rosario.

Mariano, the eldest, carried himself with a kind of quiet steadiness that inspired confidence. He was dependable in the way only those accustomed to responsibility from an early age can be. In time, he would take charge of the family's funeral services business — an enterprise that required not only organization, but a certain sensitivity to people at their most vulnerable. He approached it without fanfare, doing what needed to be done, day after day, with little need for recognition.

Ramon moved with a different rhythm. Where Mariano was rooted, Ramon was expansive — comfortable in broader circles, navigating relationships with ease. There was an instinct in him for connection, for understanding how people moved and how influence traveled. His path would bring him into spaces where presence mattered as much as substance, and he learned to carry both.

Then there was Jesus Vivencio — “J” to those who knew him — whose energy seemed to move ahead of him. He began as a salesman for International Harvester, and not just any salesman, but one who understood early that selling was not merely about product,



Doña Benita Quiogue (center, seated) is pictured with her four sons and their wives — a matriarch at the heart of a closely knit family, whose quiet strength, enterprise, and unwavering devotion bound generations together. This portrait captures not only lineage but legacy, reflecting the unity, resilience, and shared values that defined the Quiogue household and shaped those who came after.

but about possibility. He had a way of seeing opportunity where others saw routine, of pushing beyond the expected boundaries of his role. It was through him that the family would later encounter the opening that would change everything — the chance to take over the distribution of appliances, and with it, to build something of their own.

A LIFE THAT BUILT A NATION

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Each brother was different.

Yet they shared a common trait — a refusal to remain static.

It was a trait that could be traced, unmistakably, to their mother.

Benita did not raise her sons to inherit comfort. She raised them to create.

Even in the smallest details of daily life, this was evident. She remained deeply present — not only as a figure of authority, but as a participant in the rhythms of the household. Her grandchildren would later remember her not as distant, but as attentive: taking them to the movies, placing coins in their hands for small indulgences, bringing them along on errands — even to collect rent from family properties. These were not grand gestures, but they carried something more enduring. They revealed how work and life were not separate spheres, but continuous, intertwined.

And beneath this lived example was an unspoken standard: that one must be useful, that one must be prepared, that one must never remain idle when there was something to be done.

And then there was Francisco.

The youngest. A menopausal baby, in fact.

There is something particular about arriving last in a family such as this. The path is not unmarked; it is already being carved. Expectations are not loudly declared, but they exist nonetheless — quietly, steadily, like a current beneath the surface.

He grew up not in isolation, but in observation.

He watched how Mariano handled responsibility without complaint, how Ramon moved through people and circumstance with ease, how “J” pushed forward with restless energy, always searching for the next opportunity. He saw how decisions were made, how risks were taken, how work was approached not as obligation but as necessity.

He saw enough to understand that each man carried his own strength.

And that his would have to be different.

At the center of it all remained his mother — decisive, forward-moving, unwilling to accept inertia. If something needed to be done, it was done. If an opportunity did not present itself, it was created.

His father, in contrast, offered something quieter but no less essential. There was structure in the way Salvador approached life — a discipline rooted in education, in

A LIFE THAT BUILT A NATION

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A rare gathering of the extended Quioque clan, captured in a moment of shared heritage and quiet pride in 1960, from which Toting and his siblings trace their maternal roots. This photograph reflects not only the breadth of the family but also the enduring bonds, traditions, and collective strength that shaped generations — an inheritance of resilience, enterprise, and unity that would profoundly influence the Del Rosario lineage.

order, in doing things properly even when no one was watching.

Between them, something took root in the youngest son.

Not a desire to outshine, nor a need to distinguish himself through force of personality, but a steadier instinct — to understand, to prepare, to be ready when the moment required it.

He was not the loudest in the room. He did not need to be.

He was paying attention.

And in that quiet attention, something essential was forming — an understanding that life was not simply to be lived, but to be built.

A LIFE THAT BUILT A NATION

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Funeraria Quiogue in Binondo, the enterprise that Doña Benita Quiogue steadfastly managed on her own after being widowed, stands as both a place of livelihood and legacy. It was here, amid the rhythms of duty and resilience, that young Toting grew up — this funeral home doubling as his ancestral residence, shaping his early years within a household defined by strength, sacrifice, and quiet perseverance.

Learning to See What Others Missed

At the University of Santo Tomas, the habits that had taken root in silence began to find form.

It was not a place that rewarded noise. It rewarded discipline — steady effort, applied day after day. For Toting, this was not a constraint. It was familiar ground.

He chose Commerce, majoring in Accounting — not because it was the obvious path, but because he saw in it something others often overlooked. Business, he believed, could be learned in the real world — through decisions made, risks taken, outcomes observed.

Accounting was different.

It required structure. It demanded formal discipline. It was a language that had to be learned properly, or not at all.

So, he approached it the only way he knew — quietly, methodically, without display. There was no need to announce ambition. It revealed itself in the work.

He graduated *magna cum laude* in 1949.

A year later, he passed the Certified Public Accountant examinations.

These were not turning points. They were confirmations — of a way of thinking already in place.

To those outside it, accounting can seem narrow, confined to numbers and ledgers. But to those who stay with it, it becomes something else entirely. It becomes a way of seeing.

One begins to understand that every action creates consequence, that every decision must reconcile somewhere.

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Errors do not appear suddenly; they accumulate, quietly, until they surface. And systems, when properly designed, carry far more weight than individual effort ever could.

Toting understood this early.

When he joined SyCip, Velayo, Jose & Co., he entered a world where discipline was not optional. It was the foundation upon which trust was built. The firm itself was still taking shape — Filipino professionals building something that could stand alongside long-established institutions.

There, he encountered a principle that would stay with him for life.

Systems do not succeed because of brilliance alone.

They succeed because they are consistent.

He saw how processes were designed not just to function, but to endure — how decisions were documented, reviewed, validated; how the smallest lapse in discipline could ripple outward into consequence.

And he saw something more enduring still.

That institutions are not built in moments.

They are built in repetitions.

The same standard, applied over and over again, until it ceases to be effort and becomes habit.



Monching del Rosario (far left) hosts a celebratory cocktail party at the Oak Room of the Manila Hotel in 1950, honoring Toting's (2nd from right) successful passing of the CPA licensure examinations. Joining the occasion are brothers Mariano and Jesus, marking a proud family milestone set against one of Manila's most storied venues.

A LIFE THAT BUILT A NATION

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DRB: The Opportunity That Changed Everything

By the early 1950s, the Del Rosario brothers were, by all outward measures, already successful. Each had found his footing in a world that rewarded discipline and initiative.

Mariano had anchored himself in a business that required constancy, where steadiness mattered more than recognition and where responsibility was carried quietly, without need for acknowledgment. Ramon, by contrast, moved with a broader ease, navigating circles where relationships shaped outcomes and influence traveled through presence as much as through action. Jesus Vivencio — “J” — had risen within International Harvester not merely through effort, but through instinct. He possessed an uncommon ability to look beyond the immediate transaction and recognize, even early on, the larger possibilities that lay behind it.

Toting, for his part, had taken a different route. His early career moved across industries that appeared, at first glance, unrelated, but which in hindsight formed a coherent preparation. From Burroughs to Shell, from his training in London to his work with Henry Hunter, Bayne & Co., he absorbed not just experience, but structure — how organizations held together, how decisions were made, how

risk was measured, and how systems endured. He was not searching for prominence. He was learning how things worked.

Together, they were doing well.

But they were building for others.

It was their mother who gave voice to what had until then remained unspoken.



Toting (far right) stands with the newly admitted SGV partners from Henry Hunter Bayne & Co. — Ramon Gorres and Arsenio Reyes — alongside Fred Velayo, Enteng Jose, and Wash SyCip in 1953, marking a formative moment in the early consolidation of what would become a cornerstone institution in the Philippine accounting profession.

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The moment came without ceremony, in the middle of an ordinary gathering, where conversation moved as it always had — until it didn't. Benita Quiogue, who had long watched her sons rise within the structures of other men's enterprises, chose that moment to speak with characteristic clarity.

"You are all successful," she said. "But you are making other people rich."

There was no reproach in her tone, only precision. Then came the question that would linger far longer than the moment itself.

"When will you build something of your own?"

It did not demand an answer. It introduced a direction.

What followed was not haste, but a quiet convergence of intent. The idea settled first before it moved. In time, a company was formed — Del Rosario Brothers, Incorporated. It would later be known simply as DRB, but at that moment, it represented something more than a business venture. It was a declaration that the family would begin to build under its own name.

There was capital, modest but sufficient, and there was the advantage of experience drawn from different fields.

What remained uncertain was direction.



Toting in his mid-forties, firmly established as a successful entrepreneur at the helm of DRB — a period marked by steady growth, strategic vision, and confident stewardship. Beyond DRB, he was equally immersed in forging partnerships with foreign firms, bringing some of the world's most iconic brands into the Philippine market and expanding the reach of international business within the country.

A LIFE THAT BUILT A NATION

Francisco Tomas Vivencio del Rosario and the Quiet Architecture of a Life That Endures

They did not rush to define it.

They waited, but not passively. They paid attention.

It was “J” who first recognized the opening when International Harvester decided to divest its appliance line. Refrigerators and air-conditioning units, once part of its broader portfolio, were no longer aligned with its future. To most observers, it was a routine corporate decision. To him, it was something else entirely — an opportunity shaped by timing and proximity.

Through relationships cultivated over years, he secured for DRB the chance to take over the distribution of these products. More significantly, the arrangement came with access to Central Bank dollar allocations, a decisive advantage in an era when foreign exchange was tightly controlled. It was an opportunity that, once recognized, could not be ignored.

Yet the real question was not whether the brothers could distribute these products, but how.

The market they were entering was narrow by design. A refrigerator cost six hundred pesos, at a time when the minimum wage was roughly one hundred twenty. Ownership, under such conditions, belonged almost exclusively to those who could afford to pay in full. The prevailing model was straight-

forward — cash, immediate, exclusive — and it had long been accepted as the only way such goods could move.

The brothers saw it differently.

Instead of asking who could afford the product, they began to consider who could afford the process of acquiring it. The distinction was subtle, but it changed everything. Ownership did not have to be immediate to be real. It could be constructed over time.

From this shift in thinking emerged the installment system — structured, deliberate, and aligned with the financial realities of the families they hoped to serve. What appeared simple on the surface was, in truth, a carefully built framework. Installment selling introduced risk, and without discipline, it could quickly unravel. Payments could be delayed, defaults could accumulate, and the balance between inflow and obligation could easily be lost.

This was where Toting’s training proved essential.

He understood that expansion without structure was not growth, but exposure. And so, the system was designed with care. A financing arm — the First Acceptance and Investment Corporation — was established to manage receivables. Promissory notes could be converted into

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liquidity through banking relationships. Sales operations were organized with discipline, and collections were structured to ensure consistency rather than reliance on chance.

What took shape was not simply a method of selling, but an integrated system that allowed scale without instability.

The results followed quickly. Within three years, revenues rose from two million to nearly fifteen million pesos. Yet the significance of what had been built could not be measured by numbers alone.

Something more fundamental had shifted.

Families who had once stood outside the market found themselves able to participate in it. Ownership was no longer defined solely by immediate capacity, but by the ability to engage over time. What had once been inaccessible became, in a practical sense, attainable.

The business did not merely distribute appliances.

It expanded access.

And in doing so, it altered the structure of the market itself.

For Toting, this was more than a successful venture. It affirmed something



Toting in 1955, captured as a young executive at the SEATO headquarters in Bangkok, Thailand — an early chapter in a career that would soon unfold across international and diplomatic circles.

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he had come to understand through years of observation and practice — that systems, when properly designed, could extend beyond their immediate function. They could create order where there had been limitation. They could enable participation where there had been exclusion.

They could, in quiet but lasting ways, change how people lived.

Beyond Distribution

Success has a way of narrowing a man's world — if he allows it.

When systems begin to work and the numbers start to rise, there is a natural inclination to hold steady, to protect what has been built. One refines, scales, and safeguards the rhythm that has finally been achieved, careful not to disturb the balance that made success possible in the first place.

Many stop there.

Toting did not.

Even at the height of Del Rosario Brothers' early success, he understood something that would guide him for the rest of his life — that growth, if it is to matter, must move outward.

By the mid-1960s, the Philippines itself was beginning to change. Cities were expanding, offices were becoming more

complex, and the language of business was evolving. What had once been defined by simple transactions was giving way to systems of communication, documentation, and coordination. The world was becoming more interconnected, and with that came new tools — technologies that allowed information to move faster and decisions to be made with greater efficiency.

Many saw these developments as something happening elsewhere.

Toting saw them differently.

He recognized them as opportunities waiting to be brought home.

Through Del Rosario Brothers, he began engaging with companies that were not merely selling products, but shaping entire industries. One of these was Fuji Xerox. At the time, xerography was not yet widely understood, but its implications were unmistakable. Documents that once required time and labor could now be reproduced instantly. Offices could function differently. Information could circulate with a speed that altered the very nature of work.

Introducing such technology into the Philippines was not simply a matter of distribution. It required translation — not of language, but of context. How would it be used? Who would adopt it? What systems needed to be in place for it to take root?

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These were not questions the manufacturer alone could answer.

They required someone who understood both sides — the origin of the technology and the environment into which it was being introduced.

Toting became that bridge.

It was a role he would repeat.

With Sharp, the trajectory moved further — not just into distribution, but into production. Black-and-white television sets began to be assembled locally, followed in time by color units. What had once been imported could now, in part, be built within the country. It was a quiet shift, but a meaningful one.

The Philippines was no longer merely receiving technology.

It was beginning to participate in it.

These developments did not announce themselves as milestones. They unfolded gradually, within the logic of business decisions that, taken individually, seemed practical rather than transformative. But viewed together, they revealed something larger — a way of thinking that refused to accept limitation as permanent.

For Toting, this was not a departure from what he had done with Del Rosario Brothers.

It was an extension.

Where installment selling had expanded access, these ventures expanded capability. They were different expressions of the same instinct — to recognize what was possible, and then to give it structure.

And yet, even as business continued to grow, another current was beginning to take hold — one that had less to do with products, and more to do with people.



A group of Manila Jaycees, led by President Toting del Rosario, poses with the children of Asilo de San Vicente de Paul during the 1958 Operations Godfather project — a meaningful outreach that reflected the organization's commitment to service, compassion, and the upliftment of those in need.

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President Toting (center, seated) with his Board of Directors, leading the Manila Jaycees during the 1958–1959 term — a dedicated team at the helm of one of the country’s most dynamic civic organizations, united in purpose and driven to advance leadership, service, and meaningful community impact.

Jaycees: Where Leadership is Tested

He joined the Manila Jaycees in 1948 at the age of twenty-one, at a time when the organization itself was still taking shape. It was his brother, Monching — nine years his senior — who first introduced him to it, drawing him into a circle of young men who believed that leadership was not something to be inherited, but something to be practiced.

At that age, one does not yet think of legacy. One thinks of movement — of doing, of participating, of being part of something that feels larger than oneself.

The Jaycees provided exactly that. It was not a quiet organization. It moved with urgency, animated by the energy of youth and the conviction that action mattered more than intention. Projects were not abstractions to be discussed at length; they were immediate, planned

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and executed within the span of a term, measured not by theory but by outcome. There was little patience for delay. If something was to be done, it had to be done now.

For Toting, it was a departure from the structured world of accounting and the systems-driven logic of business. Here, leadership was visible. One stood before others, spoke, persuaded, organized. There was no shelter in process alone.

He did not begin as the most visible among them.

But he was among the most prepared.

He approached Jaycee work as he approached everything else — with attention, discipline, and an instinct for structure. While others were energized by activity itself, he looked beyond the movement to the mechanics behind it — how it could be organized, sustained, made effective beyond the immediate moment.

Over time, this distinction became clear. Responsibility followed, not abruptly, but with a certain inevitability. He moved through the organization — Director, then Vice President — and eventually, in 1958, assumed the presidency of the Manila Jaycees at the age of thirty-one.

Leadership at that level reveals something essential — not what a man says he believes, but what he chooses to build.

During his term, the work continued. Playgrounds were constructed, community efforts undertaken, restoration initiatives pursued. These projects addressed immediate needs and carried their own importance. But beneath them, something else was taking shape — something less visible at first, but far more enduring.

An idea.

It did not originate with him alone. It was proposed by a fellow Jaycee, Howard Q. Dee — a man whose own life would later come to be defined by service of the highest order. The idea was simple in its framing, yet profound in its implications: to recognize outstanding young Filipinos — not those already established in power, but those still in the process of becoming.

At the time, recognition tended to be informal, limited to circles that rarely extended beyond their own reach. There was no structured way of identifying excellence across fields, much less of presenting it as something to which others might aspire.

The proposal sought to change that.

Under Toting's presidency, the idea moved from suggestion to structure. It was refined, organized, and given form in a way that allowed it not merely to exist, but to endure.

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On April 15, 1959, the Ten Outstanding Young Men Awards was formally launched.

At first glance, it was a program. But it carried within it something more enduring — a standard.

The first awardees — Napoleon Abueva, Leandro Locsin, Alejandro Roces, along with leaders in medicine, science, and music — were not chosen for prominence alone. They were recognized for contribution, for a kind of excellence that was defined not by position, but by impact.

The awards were presented in Baguio during the national convention, before President Carlos P. Garcia. It was a formal moment, marked by ceremony, but its deeper significance would only become clear over time.

What had been created was not merely recognition.

It was continuity.

Each year, new names would be added. Each generation would encounter, in those names, a model — not of perfection, but of possibility. And through that repetition, the idea would take root, extending beyond the moment of its creation into something that could be carried forward.

For Toting, this was where its true success lay.



President Toting (center) stands with the inaugural six awardees of The Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) during the Philippine Jaycees National Convention at the Saint Louis Auditorium in Baguio on October 13, 1959 — a landmark moment in his presidency, when the very first TOYM search and awarding was launched. What began under his leadership would go on to become a revered national institution, honoring generations of outstanding young Filipinos and their contributions to nation-building.

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Not in the event itself, but in the fact that it could continue without him — that it had been structured well enough to outlast its origin.

It was, in many ways, a reflection of how he thought.

He did not build for the moment.
He built for continuation.

And in doing so, he moved beyond the boundaries of enterprise and into something larger — quietly shaping not just projects or institutions, but the way a nation comes to recognize its own.

When Recognition Turns Inward

It is one thing to help establish a standard. It is another to be measured by it.

In 1959, under his presidency, the Ten Outstanding Young Men (T.O.Y.M.) Awards had been launched with a clear sense of purpose — to recognize excellence not as status, but as contribution. It was meant to look outward, to identify those whose work, still in its early stages, carried the promise of shaping the nation.

Two years later, in 1961, that gaze turned inward.

Toting himself was named among its awardees, recognized for Business and

Civic Leadership. There is a symmetry in such moments that can easily be mistaken for closure, as though the arc of effort had come full circle. But for him, it was nothing of the sort.

He understood that recognition, if left unchecked, could alter a man's orientation. It could invite a pause, encourage a shift from movement to reflection, from building to preserving. It could suggest, however subtly, that something had already been completed.

He did not allow that shift to take hold.

If anything, the recognition sharpened his sense of responsibility. To be measured against a standard he had helped put in place meant that the obligation did not end with the award. It continued — quietly, persistently — long after the moment had passed.

The following year, in 1962, he was named Young Businessman of the Year by the Business Writers Association of the Philippines (BWAP), then a prominent organization known for recognizing excellence in business and education. The acknowledgment came, as others had, without ceremony in his own mind. It was noted, understood for what it was, and then set aside.

Work continued.

What distinguished his response was not modesty in the conventional sense. He

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did not dismiss recognition, nor pretend it carried no meaning. He understood its value — its ability to open doors, to create space for engagement, to extend influence beyond immediate circles.

But he refused to let it define direction.

Recognition, in his view, was not a marker of arrival. It was an indication to continue.

In later years, when he spoke of success, he did so without reference to awards. He spoke instead of effort, reducing what others might complicate into something almost disarmingly simple.

“Success did not come easily,” he would say. “I had to work hard to achieve it.”

There was no embellishment in the statement — only a quiet acknowledgment of process.

And from there, he would often return to what he considered the more enduring principle: attitude.

It was not brilliance, he believed, that sustained a man, but the way he approached what lay before him. He would recall, with quiet clarity, the image of a bellman in Tokyo — performing an ordinary task with such dignity that the task itself seemed transformed. The man carried himself as though he were the best in the world at what he did, and in that conviction, the work took on a



Toting, captured in his early thirties, stands at the threshold of a promising career — a young executive already marked by quiet confidence, disciplined intellect, and a growing sense of purpose. In this formative stage of his life, he was steadily carving out a path defined by professionalism, leadership, and the promise of greater responsibilities yet to come.

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different meaning.

That, to Toting, was the lesson.

Not the scale of the work, but the spirit in which it was done.

It is in this light that his own recognition must be understood — not as elevation, but as alignment between what he believed and how he lived.

As his visibility expanded, so too did the range of his engagements. He was no longer simply a participant in business or civic life, but had become, in the eyes of others, a point of reference — a man whose presence suggested reliability, whose involvement implied seriousness of purpose.

It was not a position he sought.

But it was one he accepted, quietly, as he did everything else.

Rotary: A Place to Practice Service

If the Jaycees had been a proving ground, Rotary would become something else entirely — a place not to test leadership, but to live it.

He joined the Rotary Club of Manila in 1954, and his entry was anything but accidental. He was brought in by men who had already shaped his early professional life — Washington SyCip

and Alfredo Velayo, his former principals in the accounting firm where he first learned the discipline of systems, order, and responsibility. They were more than sponsors. They represented a continuity of influence — men who believed that excellence in one's profession must ultimately find its way into service.

That same year, the Club was under the presidency of Eugenio Puyat, a familiar figure from the Manila Jaycees, whose own journey reflected a transition many would make — from the urgency of youth leadership into a more enduring form of civic engagement.

For Toting, Rotary did not mark a departure.

It marked a continuation.

He entered not as a figure of prominence, but as a participant willing to understand the institution from within. His early years were quiet, but not passive. He served in the Membership Committee, the Fellowship Activities Committee, and the Fines Committee — roles that carried little outward visibility but required patience, attention to detail, and a deep understanding of people. They demanded presence, and he gave it.

Over time, his understanding of Rotary deepened. It was not, he came to see, an organization defined solely by its projects, but a living network sustained by relationships. Structure mattered, but

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it was not enough on its own. The strength of the institution lay in the quality of engagement among its members.

Fellowship, he realized, was not incidental.

It was foundational.

He developed a balance that would come to define his presence within the Club — the ability to move between seriousness and lightness, between structure and spontaneity, without losing the integrity of either. It was a quiet skill, but one that others began to notice.

Recognition followed, though not in a single moment or confined to a single year. He would be named Rotarian of the Year repeatedly — first in Rotary Year 1961–1962, and again in 1969–1970, 1972–1973, 1975–1976, and later, in a rare distinction spanning 1986 to 1988. These were not acknowledgments of isolated achievement, but of continuity — a recognition of a man who remained present long after he might have been excused from doing so.

Yet if there was one defining characteristic of his Rotary life, it was not the awards.

It was attendance.

Week after week, year after year, he showed up — not out of obligation, but

out of conviction. He believed that service, like discipline, must be practiced, and that presence itself carried meaning. It was through this steady participation that something less visible but more enduring took shape.

Authority.

Not the kind that comes from position, but the kind that emerges from reliability — from being present often enough, long enough, that others begin to depend on it without needing to say so.



During his 1965 presidency, Francisco del Rosario established the Rotary Club of Manila Speakers' Bureau — an initiative designed to extend the club's voice beyond its meetings, bringing thought leadership, civic ideals, and informed discourse to a wider public audience.



A moment of warmth, wit, and camaraderie captured at the height of an evening's celebration. As the Rotary Club of Manila's most sought-after finemaster, Past President Toting del Rosario (center) was known for his sharp humor and impeccable timing — qualities that made him a favorite in any gathering. On this particular occasion in September 1978, his presence drew the appreciative attention of President Ferdinand Marcos (right), who warmly extended his felicitations as he marked his 59th birthday. Looking on with evident delight is Rotary Club of Manila President Bert Romulo (left), himself a distinguished statesman, witnessing a lighthearted yet meaningful exchange among leaders bound by fellowship.

More than a simple birthday greeting, the photograph reflects the unique spirit of Rotary — where leadership, friendship, and shared moments of joy come together in enduring memory.

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Toting developed this quietly.

He also brought something else into the space — lightness.

Within Rotary, the role of the Fine Master sits at the intersection of structure and spontaneity, intended to enliven proceedings and draw people closer through humor. In lesser hands, it can become routine. In his, it became something more.

He understood people — where they could be teased without offense, where humor could open rather than close, where a moment of levity could deepen rather than distract from the sense of community.

There is a story, often retold within Rotary circles, that captures this instinct. During a meeting attended by then President Ferdinand Marcos, Toting, serving as Fine Master, posed a question that balanced boldness with ease: how much, he asked, should two prominent businessmen be fined to support Rotary's civic projects?

The President, playing along, named the amount — one hundred thousand pesos each.

It was a moment that drew laughter, but it also revealed something more enduring: that authority, when

approached with the right tone, need not create distance. It can, instead, draw people in.

This was his gift within Rotary.

He did not impose himself upon the institution.
He inhabited it.

In time, responsibility came — not because he pursued it, but because he was ready for it. And when it did, he brought with him everything he had learned — from family, from business, from the Jaycees, and from the quiet discipline of showing up.

By then, he understood something that would define his years in Rotary.

Service is not an event.

It is a way of being.

The Weight of Responsibility

When responsibility finally comes, it rarely announces itself as a culmination. More often, it feels like a continuation — an extension of what has already been practiced, refined, and understood over time.

By the time Toting assumed the presidency of the Rotary Club of Manila in 1965, there was little about the role



A landmark collaboration between Habitat for Humanity and the Rotary Club of Manila led to the establishment of Rotaryville in Taguig City in 2007, providing safe and dignified homes for 100 families — a testament to the enduring power of partnership in transforming lives and building communities. This achievement would not have been possible without the yeoman efforts of PP Toting, whose exceptional fundraising acumen and adroit management brought the project to life.

that felt unfamiliar. He had been present long enough to understand its rhythms, engaged deeply enough to recognize its strengths, and disciplined enough to see where its potential lay. He did not approach the position as something to be occupied, but as something to be used.

The Rotary Club of Manila was, even then, an institution of consequence. Its

members were men accustomed to responsibility in their own fields — leaders, professionals, individuals whose time was already committed in many directions. To lead such a group required something more than authority.

It required alignment.

Toting did not begin with grand

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declarations. He began with structure. He believed that service, if it was to move beyond intention, had to be organized — shaped into programs that could be carried out, measured, and completed. Goodwill alone, no matter how abundant, was not enough.

It needed form.

One of the earliest expressions of this belief came in response to a crisis. The eruption of Taal had displaced families, leaving behind not only damage, but uncertainty. Relief efforts arrived quickly, as they often do — food, clothing, temporary shelter. They were necessary, but they were not sufficient. Relief addressed the immediate moment; what was needed was continuity.

The project that emerged — Operation Damayan — was conceived not as a gesture, but as a solution. Homes were to be built, not as symbols, but as places where families could begin again. Fifty units were constructed with attention to both speed and durability, requiring careful coordination — resources mobilized, labor organized, logistics managed. It was not simple work, but it was familiar. It was, in many ways, an extension of what he understood best: how to take an idea and give it form.

The homes were completed, families moved in, and life resumed. Yet for Toting, completion was never defined by construction alone. What mattered was

what followed — whether the structures would endure, whether the families would find stability, whether the effort would sustain itself beyond its initial momentum.

At the same time, another thread was taking shape — education.

He had long understood that opportunity, if it was to be meaningful, had to extend beyond immediate need. It had to create pathways, allowing individuals to move from circumstance into capability. Scholarship initiatives began to take form during his presidency, modest at first, but guided by a clear principle: support must lead somewhere. It must not end at assistance; it must continue toward independence.

He encouraged members to think in these terms — not in isolated acts of generosity, but in systems that could carry individuals forward. Education, when properly supported, could become one such system.

Other initiatives followed. The “Have Gavel, Will Travel” program extended the Club’s reach beyond its usual boundaries, reinforcing connections with other Rotary chapters. A Speakers’ Bureau created space for ideas to circulate, allowing members to engage not only in action, but in thought. Individually, each effort might have seemed modest. Together, they formed something more coherent — a pattern.

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What defined his presidency was not any single project, but the way they fit together. Each addressed a different need, each was structured with care, and each was carried through with consistency. Beneath all of it lay an unspoken expectation — that members would participate.

He did not enforce this through instruction. He demonstrated it.

He was present — at meetings, at projects, in conversations — again and again, without announcement. Over time, that presence became a standard. Leadership, in this sense, was not something he imposed; it was something he embodied.

When his term came to an end, there was no dramatic shift, no sense of departure. What had been built was not dependent on him alone. It could continue.

That, more than anything, marked the success of his leadership — not what was accomplished during his time, but what remained after.

There comes a point in a life shaped by discipline when effort alone begins to reveal its limits. One can give time, resources, leadership — but eventually, something deeper becomes clear: that impact, if it is to endure, cannot remain centered on the individual. It must be shared.

For Toting, this realization did not arrive suddenly. It unfolded gradually, shaped by experience and by the repetition of projects, through an awareness that need, in all its forms, always exceeded the capacity of any one person. He had seen what organized effort could accomplish. He had built systems that expanded access and addressed immediate concerns with structure and intention. But now the question shifted — from what more he could do, to how many others could be brought into the work.



Toting delivers his address during DRB Founders' Day on October 25, 1997 — a moment of reflection and pride, as he speaks to the company's journey, milestones, and the enduring vision that continues to guide its growth.

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The approach he adopted was characteristically simple, yet deeply effective. He did not ask for sweeping commitments. He asked for something precise — something manageable.

One person, one commitment.

Repeated often enough, it becomes something more.

The Don Bosco scholarship initiative would become one of the clearest expressions of this thinking. The need was evident: young men, capable and willing, yet without the means to pursue technical education. At first glance, the solution seemed straightforward — provide funding. But Toting did not approach it as a benefactor. He approached it as an organizer.

He invited participation in its simplest form: sponsor one scholar.

The clarity of the request gave it weight. It did not overwhelm; it made action possible. More than two hundred Rotarians responded, and with that response, more than two hundred lives were set on a different path.

Yet even then, the work did not end.

Education alone could not guarantee outcome. A degree or certification was only a step. What followed would determine whether the effort had truly succeeded. Recognizing this, he

extended the system further. Through relationships built over decades — within business, within institutions, within networks that had quietly expanded around him — he created pathways for employment.

Graduates were not left to navigate uncertainty alone. They were guided, placed, and given the opportunity not only to learn, but to build.

What emerged was a sequence that was both simple and profound: education, employment, dignity.

It was not charity.
It was continuity.

Around the same time, another effort began to take shape — one that carried forward an earlier instinct, now expressed on a larger scale. Housing, once again, but under different conditions.

This was no longer a response to a single event, but to a persistent need.

In Taguig, a project emerged through the alignment of multiple institutions. The city provided land, the Pag-IBIG Fund contributed financing, Habitat for Humanity offered technical guidance, and Rotary mobilized participation. Individually, each element was insufficient. Together, they formed something capable of enduring.

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Eight buildings rose, three stories each, and one hundred families moved into homes that were no longer temporary, no longer uncertain, but stable.

To an observer, the outcome might appear straightforward — structures completed, units occupied, project concluded. But Toting did not measure success in completion alone. He rarely did.

What mattered to him was the alignment that made it possible — the coordination of systems, each operating within its own logic, brought together into something cohesive. It was, in many ways, the culmination of how he had learned to think — not as a builder of isolated efforts, but as a connector of systems.

By then, the pattern of his life had become unmistakable. In business, he had expanded access. In civic life, he had created structure. In Rotary, he had multiplied participation.

Each phase did not replace the previous. It extended it.

And through all of it, there remained a quiet consistency — the same instinct that had guided him as the youngest son, observing more than speaking; the same discipline that had shaped his years in accounting; the same clarity



Toting in his element as Philippine Ambassador to Germany, photographed in his Bonn office in 1996 — a seasoned diplomat at work, navigating the responsibilities of statecraft with poise, purpose, and a deep commitment to advancing Philippine interests abroad.

that had defined his approach to enterprise.

He was not doing something new. He was doing the same thing, at a different scale.

Toward a Larger Horizon

By the time the next transition came, it did not arrive as a break from what he had built. It came, as most things in his life did, as an extension.

Public service had never been absent from his work. It had always existed at



Through the efforts of Ambassador Toting, bilateral relations between Germany and the Philippines were significantly strengthened in the mid-1990s, culminating in the historic visit of German Chancellor Helmut Kohl to Manila in 1996, where he was welcomed by President Fidel V. Ramos — an enduring symbol of deepening diplomatic and economic ties between the two nations.

the edges — in the communities he had helped support, in the systems he had quietly organized, in the institutions he had strengthened without calling attention to himself. What had once been informal would now take on a more defined shape.

His entry into government unfolded gradually, shaped by relationships and by a reputation that had been built long

before any formal appointment. During the Aquino administration, he was asked to serve as Philippine Trade Commissioner for Europe, a role that required him to navigate not only markets, but perception — to understand how the country was viewed beyond its borders and how that perception might be strengthened. It was unfamiliar in setting, but not in substance. The work still demanded structure, trust, and

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alignment across different systems.

From there, he moved into a broader field of responsibility as Undersecretary for International Trade at the Department of Trade and Industry. The role required a wider lens — balancing policy, coordinating priorities, and engaging with a global economy that was becoming more interconnected by the year. It called for steadiness more than speed, judgment more than visibility.

His work soon drew him outward again. As Philippine Consul General to the United Kingdom, based in Southampton, the nature of representation shifted. It was no longer confined to trade or policy, but extended into the everyday concerns of Filipinos abroad. The work became more immediate, more human. It required not only competence, but presence.

By the time he was appointed Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany, the transition felt less like a change in direction than the natural continuation of a path already in motion.

It was at this point that he made a decision that revealed, more clearly than any statement could, the principle that had guided him all along.

He divested.

The businesses he had helped build, the interests he had accumulated over

decades, the structures that could have continued to generate both influence and income — he stepped away from them. It was not required of him. It was not imposed.

It was chosen.

For Toting, service was not something to be balanced against personal interest. It required clarity — an undividedness of purpose that could not coexist with competing claims. To represent the country fully, he believed, one had to be free of anything that might compromise that representation, even in perception.

In Germany, he entered a world shaped by a different kind of discipline — one governed by diplomacy, by negotiation, and by the careful management of relationships between nations. It was a different arena, but not an unfamiliar one. The principles remained the same.

He approached it as he approached everything else — with preparation, with attention, and with an instinct for alignment. Systems, whether in business or government, worked best when their parts moved together.

He would later speak of persistence as the defining requirement of such work. Progress, he observed, rarely comes quickly. It demands patience, a willingness to continue even when results are not immediately visible.



Ambassador Toting delivers his remarks during the signing of the bilateral investment treaty between Germany and the Philippines in 1997 — an important milestone aimed at promoting and reciprocally protecting investments, and strengthening economic ties between the two nations.

It was in this spirit that he pursued one of his most notable efforts — the visit of Chancellor Helmut Kohl to the Philippines. The invitation was not secured in a single attempt. It required sustained engagement over time, a steady cultivation of trust, and the discipline to follow through without guarantee.

When it finally came to fruition, the moment carried significance beyond ceremony. From October 29 to 31, 1996, Chancellor Kohl undertook a three-day state visit to the Philippines, meeting

with President Fidel V. Ramos to strengthen economic and bilateral ties. He was accompanied by a delegation of cabinet ministers and businessmen, underscoring the depth of engagement between the two nations and the opportunities such a visit made possible.

For Toting, however, the achievement did not call for celebration.

It called for perspective.

He would later describe his role in disarmingly simple terms: to “sell the

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Philippines.” But what he meant extended far beyond promotion. It was about representation — about presenting the country not as a supplicant, but as a credible partner. It required an understanding of how others saw the Philippines, and the discipline to shape that perception with clarity and confidence.

He carried this out without flourish, with the same quiet steadiness that had defined his life. In doing so, he affirmed a principle he had long practiced: that the most enduring forms of influence are not asserted.

They are earned.

The Man Within

For all the systems he built and the institutions he helped shape, there remained a part of Toting that existed beyond the visible structures of his work. It was quieter, less documented, and yet no less formative.

He had lived much of his life in motion — moving between business, civic engagement, and public service with a consistency that left little room for pause. And yet, there was always a center to which he returned.

Family.

His first marriage, in 1949, to Teresa “Titang” Maceda Gomez, a former Miss



Marissa del Rosario's baptism, 1956 — a cherished family gathering marking a moment of faith and new beginnings. Pictured are members of the Del Rosario family across three generations: in the front row, Carlos and Franco; in the second row, Doña Benita, Titong Chuidian, Tessie Revilla Santos, Malu Manzano del Rosario, and Fred Borromeo; and in the third row, Rody del Rosario, Teresa, and Francisco — each present to witness and celebrate this meaningful milestone in the family's life.

Pangasinan, came at a time when his life was still taking shape, when the demands of building a career and establishing an enterprise unfolded side by side. From that union came four children — Juan Carlos, Francisco “Franco” Jr., Maria Socorro “Marissa,” and Maria Clara.

They did not grow up apart from his work, nor in its shadow, but alongside it.

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They saw the hours he kept, the rhythm of his commitments, and the steady manner in which he moved from one responsibility to the next. There was little need for explanation. The example was there, quietly but persistently, in the daily repetition of effort.

At home, another dimension of his character revealed itself with clarity.

He was, by all accounts, a stern disciplinarian.

Order was not something he reserved for business or public life; it extended into the household with the same firmness of expectation. Language, for instance, mattered. When his children were heard using profanity, the correction was immediate and unmistakable — he would have them wash their mouths with soap, a lesson delivered not in anger, but in principle. Words, like actions, carried weight, and they were to be used with care.

Time, too, was not negotiable. Dinner was at eight o'clock — exactly. No matter the circumstance, all were expected to be home. If they were not, the consequence was equally clear: grounding for the rest of the week. It was not punishment for its own sake, but an insistence on discipline, on accountability, on the understanding that structure begins at home.



Ambassador Toting is pictured with two of his children, Carlos and Claire — a quiet, intimate moment that reflects the warmth of family and the enduring bond he shared with those closest to him, even amid a life of public service and professional achievement.

And yet, beneath the firmness, there was no absence of care.

He was not a man given to grand displays of affection, but neither was he distant. He guided in much the same way he led — through expectation rather than instruction, through presence rather than pronouncement. Those closest to him would later recognize this as his way. He did not impose unnecessarily; he allowed space. But within that space, the boundaries were clear, and responsibility had room to take root.

Life, as it often does, did not remain unchanged.

A LIFE THAT BUILT A NATION

Francisco Tomas Vivencio del Rosario and the Quiet Architecture of a Life That Endures

In 1974, his marriage to Titang came to an end. It was a turning point that did not unfold in public view, nor was it something he spoke of at length. Like many aspects of his life, it was carried quietly, without spectacle, absorbed into the broader movement of years that continued to demand his attention and resolve.

Four years later, in 1978, he married again — this time to Carmencita Katigbak of Lipa, Batangas, whose presence brought a different kind of balance into his later years. From this marriage came a daughter, Ma. Elena.

By then, he was no longer the young man finding his place in the world. Much had already been built. Yet the expansion of his family gave his life a continuity that extended beyond work, reshaping not its direction, but its depth.

It is often assumed that men who live at such a pace — who move through business, civic life, and public service with such constancy — must leave something behind in the process. Perhaps that is true. But in Toting's case, what emerges is not absence, but integration.

His family was never separate from his life's work. It was part of it — not in the sense of direct involvement in projects or institutions, but in the way it anchored him. It provided a space where the



A warm family gathering of Toting del Rosario and his siblings, captured in a moment of shared history and enduring bond. Seated in the front row (left to right) are Millie del Rosario, Marianing del Rosario, Francisco del Rosario, Elisa del Rosario, and Ramon del Rosario — pillars of a generation shaped by time, memory, and kinship. Standing behind them are Mariza and Carlos del Rosario, along with Marissa R. Blackett, representing the next generation, continuing the legacy of a family rooted in unity, heritage, and quiet strength.

demands of the outside world could settle, where expectations did not need to be carried in full.

And yet, even within that space, the same principles remained. Discipline. Consistency. Presence.

A LIFE THAT BUILT A NATION

Francisco Tomas Vivencio del Rosario and the Quiet Architecture of a Life That Endures



Toting pauses to blow out the candle during his 80th birthday dinner — a quiet, celebratory moment that reflects a life well lived, surrounded by loved ones and marked by gratitude, legacy, and enduring joy.

There was no version of himself that he set aside when he stepped away from public life. He remained, in essence, the same man — measured, steady, unassuming.

If there was warmth, it revealed itself not in grand gestures, but in the constancy of small things: the time he gave, the attention he paid, the quiet assurance that, whatever else required him, he would return.

In the end, what defined him most clearly was not how he divided his life, but how he refused to divide it at all. He lived it as a whole — each part reinforcing the other, each role grounded in the same enduring center.

The Thinker

In his later years, when the urgency of building had gradually given way to the clarity of reflection, Toting found himself speaking more often — not to instruct, but to share.

He did not speak in abstractions. He spoke in stories.

One of these, which he would return to with quiet consistency, was the image of a bellman in Tokyo. There was nothing remarkable about the setting, nor about the task itself. The man opened doors, carried luggage, greeted guests — work that, to most, would pass without notice. And yet, in the way he carried himself — in the care with which he handled even the smallest gesture — there was something unmistakable.

Dignity.

To Toting, this was never incidental. It was the point.

The man was not defined by the task before him, but by the way he chose to perform it. And from this, Toting drew a conclusion that would linger long after the story was told: a man splitting rocks is not merely splitting rocks — he is building a church.

It was a simple observation, almost



Chinese New Year at the Baguio Country Club was especially close to Ambassador Toting's heart — a celebration shaped by his long and dedicated service to the Club. From 1972 to 1996, he served as a member of the Board of Directors, Vice-President, and Chairman of the Executive Committee, playing a pivotal role in its development, financial restructuring, and expansion. The Ambassador Francisco V. del Rosario Hall, which houses the Baguio Country Club Museum, stands as a lasting tribute to his enduring contributions and legacy.

understated. But within it lay the essence of how he understood life.

Success, he would say, did not come easily. "I had to work hard to achieve it." There was no embellishment in the statement, no attempt to soften its meaning. Effort was indispensable. But over time, he came to understand that effort alone was not enough.

There had to be something else.

Attitude — not the kind that announces itself, but the kind that endures. The quiet disposition that sustains a man when recognition is absent, when progress is slow, when the work itself offers no immediate reward.

He spoke of leadership in much the same way — not as a quality one possessed, but as something one practiced, repeatedly and without spectacle. He would point, at times, to figures like Ramon Magsaysay, not for their position, but for their readiness to accept responsibility when it was needed, and to act without hesitation when the moment called for it.

By then, however, his own life had begun to move into a different rhythm.

After completing his ambassadorial stint in Germany, he did not retire in the conventional sense. He returned to the world he understood best, but in a more focused and deliberate way. Through F.V. Del Rosario and Associates, Inc., he

A LIFE THAT BUILT A NATION

Francisco Tomas Vivencio del Rosario and the Quiet Architecture of a Life That Endures

concentrated on the trading of club shares — an arena that required not only financial acumen, but the same discipline and judgment that had defined his earlier years in accounting and enterprise.

At the same time, he remained deeply engaged in corporate life, serving as director across a wide range of companies — twenty-one in all. Among these were major institutions such as Philippine National Bank, Philippine Airlines, First Philippine Holdings, and Philippine Commercial International Bank, along with numerous industrial, financial, and trading firms. It was a breadth of involvement that reflected both trust and reputation — earned over decades, sustained through consistency.

Yet even in this phase, there was no sense that he was accumulating for its own sake. The work was measured, deliberate, aligned with the same principles that had guided him from the beginning.

What mattered, in the end, was not what one had been given, nor even what one had built.

It was what one had done with it.

And if there was a measure of success, it was not to be found in awards or recognition, but in something quieter —



At the Baguio Country Club — his cherished refuge and “happy, safe place” — Toting is pictured with his children Carlos and Marissa, along with his daughter-in-law Mariza, a warm family moment set against a place that held deep personal meaning and comfort throughout his life.

a sense that the work had been carried through, that effort had found its proper place, that what had been started had, in its own way, been completed.

And yet, within those continuities, something of him remained.

A LIFE THAT BUILT A NATION

Francisco Tomas Vivencio del Rosario and the Quiet Architecture of a Life That Endures



Toting shares a quiet moment with his eldest son, Carlos, as they reflect on their family's history — an exchange of stories, memories, and legacy, where the past is thoughtfully passed on and preserved across generations.

The homes he helped build still stand, not as monuments, but as places where families continue to live and begin again. The scholars he supported have long since moved beyond the moment of assistance, working, providing, building lives of their own. The institutions he helped shape — within business, within Rotary, within the broader fabric of civic life — continue to function, often without conscious awareness of the man whose discipline and clarity once helped give them form.

Perhaps this is the truest measure of his life.

Not what he held, but what he left behind that no longer depended on him.

He did not set out to create permanence, nor did he speak of legacy in grand terms. But in the way he worked — in the systems he built, the standards he upheld, the consistency he practiced — he created something that endured beyond his presence.



Four generations of the Del Rosario family gathered under Toting's patriarchal care — a living portrait of lineage, legacy, and love. At the center stands the quiet strength of a family bound across time, where values are passed down, stories are shared, and the enduring presence of a devoted patriarch continues to shape and inspire those who follow.

In time, he became part of the structure of things.

There are lives that draw attention, and there are lives that sustain. His belonged to the latter. It was not lived loudly, nor marked by spectacle, but carried forward with a steadiness that

proved, over time, to be its own kind of strength.

“Happiness,” he once said, “with all that has been achieved.”

It was not pride.
It was clarity.

A LIFE THAT BUILT A NATION

Francisco Tomas Vivencio del Rosario and the Quiet Architecture of a Life That Endures



At 98, Toting beams with a warm, unmistakable smile as he savors a plate of sweets — a simple yet joyful moment that reflects a life still rich in delight, gratitude, and quiet celebration.

Epilogue: What Remains

On March 2, 2026, Toting passed away due to complications from pneumonia.

In his final years, he had lived a quieter life, attended to by a caretaker and a driver. His health had begun to decline nearly a decade earlier. The man once defined by an almost cyclonic energy — moving effortlessly between business, civic work, and public service — had gradually been confined to a wheelchair, his physical world narrowing even as the imprint of his life continued to expand beyond him.

He was, by then, the last of the illustrious Del Rosario brothers of his generation — a generation that had helped shape industries, expand opportunity, and leave an indelible mark on Philippine business and civic life. With his passing, a chapter quietly came to a close.

The world, as it always does, did not stop.

Meetings continued. Projects moved forward. Lives unfolded in their own directions, shaped by forces both visible and unseen.

A LIFE THAT BUILT A NATION

Francisco Tomas Vivencio del Rosario and the Quiet Architecture of a Life That Endures



Ambassador Toting is pictured with Rev. Fr. Anton C. T. Pascual, Executive Director of Caritas Manila, who officiated a special Mass in celebration of Toting's 99th birthday — a solemn and grace-filled occasion of thanksgiving, faith, and reflection on a life richly lived.

Even in his final years, when movement was limited and the pace of his life had slowed, that steadiness remained. It had never depended on circumstance. It was, instead, a way of being — formed early, practiced often, and held to until the end.

And so, what remains is not simply memory, but continuation.

If there is a lesson to be drawn from his life, it does not arrive as instruction, but as example: that no task is small when undertaken with purpose, that no role is insignificant when carried out with integrity, and that a life lived in quiet, consistent service does not diminish with time.

It endures. ■

Rotary



THE FOUR-WAY TEST

of the things we think, say or do

- I. Is it the TRUTH?
- II. Is it FAIR to all concerned?
- III. Will it build GOODWILL
& BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?
- IV. to all concerned?

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SERVICE ABOVE SELF

DISTRICT EVENT

66th Charter Anniversary of the Rotary Club of Quezon City (Daughter Club of the Rotary Club of Manila)

President Raoul C. Creencia attended the Rotary Club of Quezon City's 66th Charter Anniversary on April 20, 2026. The celebration was held at Club Filipino in Greenhills, San Juan.



President Raoul C. Creencia with RC Quezon City President Diego Bañaga



Pres. Raoul Creencia delivered an inspirational message to the Rotary Club of Quezon City members



DISTRICT EVENT

66th Charter Anniversary of the Rotary Club of Quezon City (Daughter Club of the Rotary Club of Manila)



From left: RCQC PP George Briones, Pres. Raoul C. Creencia, and RID 3800 PDG Pope Solis



DISTRICT EVENT

Governor's Visit of the Rotary Club of Intramuros Manila (Daughter Club of the Rotary Club of Manila)



DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra attended the Governor's Visit of the Rotary Club of Intramuros Manila last April 15, 2026 at the Rotary Club of Intramuros Visitor Center in Intramuros Manila.



DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra giving his insights during the Governor's Visit



DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra at the beginning of the Governor's Visit of the Rotary Club of Intramuros Manila

DISTRICT EVENT

Governor's Visit of the Rotary Club of Intramuros Manila (Daughter Club of the Rotary Club of Manila)



DGND/IDSG Hermie Esguerra with PDG Lyn Abanilla, DG Mary Mei Rodrigo and spouse, Rotary Club of Pasay Metro Sunrise UCP Alex Rodrigo during the presentation of token to the District Governor during the Governor's Visit of the Rotary Club of Intramuros Manila



DGND/IDSG Hermie Esguerra as part of the group picture at the end of the Governor's Visit of the Rotary Club of Intramuros Manila, daughter club of the Rotary Club of Manila where he is likewise an Honorary Member

COGS IN THE WHEEL

DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra and RI District 3810 Council of Governors Chairperson PDG Joyce Ambray Visit Commemorative Tiles in Chicago



DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra and Rotary District 3810 Council of Governors Chairperson PDG Joyce Michelle Socorro Ambray visited their respective tiles at the Paul Harris Memorial and Presidential Walkway at Mt. Hope Cemetery in Chicago, Illinois on April 18, 2026.



The tile of DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra



The tiles of DGND/DSG Hermie Esguerra and Rotary District 3810 Council of Governors PDG Joyce Michelle Socorro Ambray beside tile of the first lady club president of Rotary, Dr. Sylvia V. Whitlock

RECOGNITION CORNER

Secretary Antonilo D.C. Mauricio and Director Rami Chahwan Speak at the International Franchise Conference (Franchise Asia 2026)



Secretary Antonilo "Anton" D.C. Mauricio and Director Rami Chahwan were featured speakers at the International Franchise Conference (Franchise Asia 2026), held at the SMX MOA on April 23, 2026.





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FOR THE BENEFIT OF

*"The Young Women's
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FELLOWSHIP

Aleco Monday Breakfast Fellowship



The Aleco Monday Breakfast Fellowship was held on April 20, 2026, hosted by banking technology pioneer Eric Severino.

Resolved, that once liberalized, online gaming/gambling transactions will far exceed merchant payments and P2P transfers.



The Aleco Breakfast on April 27, 2026 was hosted by sugar magnate Tony Montinola.

The Philippines sugar industry is beset by increased imports, lack of available workers who are transferring to the construction sector, and trends towards health consciousness.

FELLOWSHIP

RIPR Rafael Garcia III's Birthday Celebration



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

'Global Filipino Artists,' not 'National Artists'

Last March 23, 2026, I wrote about three super ladies—Cecile Licad, Lea Salonga, and Lisa Macuja-Elizalde—whose talents have carried the Philippine flag onto the global stage of the performing arts. Despite their achievements, none of them had been formally recognized as a "National Artist (NA)." Thus, I looked into the law and jurisprudence involved in the proclamation of NAs.

THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR CULTURE AND THE ARTS (NCCA)—created by Republic Act No. 7356 on April 3, 1992—administers the conferment of the award. Specifically, together with the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP), the NCCA was granted by that law the sole prerogative to recommend to the president of the Philippines the "Order of National Artists" to Filipino citizens who have contributed to building a Filipino sense of nationhood through their art forms.

In *Almario v. Executive Secretary* (July 16, 2013), the Supreme Court held that the president's discretion is limited to the names submitted by the NCCA and the CCP. The president cannot, under this law, confer the Order of National Artists upon anyone whose name is not included in the final list of NA nominees.

I will no longer inquire, nor will I belabor my "wonderment" why—despite Cecile's universal excellence in music, Lea's triumphs on the world's most prestigious stages, and Lisa's influence through ballet worldwide—these ladies have not landed in the final list.

Without in any way begrudging any of the NAs or belittling their achievements, and in fact, lauding them for their much-deserved awards, I believe that Cecile, Lea, and Lisa merit a separate category that recognizes a level of distinction that transcends national recognition.

Their achievements, indeed, acquire doctrinal relevance. Each has long been part of discussions surrounding the National Artist Award: Cecile in the field of music, Lea in both music and theater, and Lisa, in dance, but, to repeat, they have not been included in the final list submitted to the president for reasons I do not know and will not speculate on.

WHAT BECOMES EVIDENT, HOWEVER, IS THE PRESENCE OF AN INSTITUTIONAL GAP where recognition for globally distinguished Filipino artists ought to stand. I believe that the president can fill this gap by creating the "Order of Global Filipino Artists" or GFA via the issuance of an executive order specifically for artists of Philippine ancestry (meaning, one or both parents were Filipinos at the birth of the awardee) and giving the same, if not better, privileges and honors as the NAs. In time, Congress may institutionalize this category by granting congressional recognition to these globally distinguished Filipino artists.

Relevantly, I remember that former President Ferdinand E. Marcos, Sr. initiated the creation of the NA Award via Proclamation No. 1001 on April 27, 1972. This was later refined by Proclamation No. 1144 on May 15, 1973, and by Presidential Decree No. 208 on June 7, 1973, which laid the foundation for the conferment of the title "National Artist" and all the privileges attached thereto.

President Marcos Sr. likewise issued Proclamation No. 1151 on June 7, 1973, that established the "Award and Decoration for International Artists" intended for FOREIGN talents whose works have contributed to Philippine arts and culture. This proclamation rested on the premise that the arts and letters are universal media of expression free of the confines of geography and nationality. Those so honored were, when practicable, granted privileges similar to NAs during their stay in the Philippines.

Thus, in 1976 and 1977, pianist Van Cliburn (USA), prima ballerina Margot Fonteyn (UK), and ballet dancer Rudolf Nureyev (USSR/France) were the first to be proclaimed as International Artists. In 1982, the renowned Russian cellist and conductor Mstislav Rostropovich was also recognized following his performance at the CCP.

IN THIS LIGHT, THE NOTION OF AN "INTERNATIONAL ARTIST" MUST BE RE-IMAGINED. In my humble opinion, the current executive issuances and statutory framework do not fully recognize Filipino artists who belong to a distinct class, the Filipino diaspora, whose contributions to Philippine arts and culture are acclaimed not only within our shores but across the globe—the Global Filipino Artists.

After such honor is created by executive fiat and the super ladies selected as the first GFAs, I believe the conferment should be held at the Malacañan Palace, the CCP, or the Philippine International Convention Center, the very institutions that have long stood as the sanctuaries of our artistic heritage. More than a ceremonial recognition, the President may fittingly invite the three GFAs to perform and transform the conferment into a living testament to Filipino excellence before both the nation and the world.

And so, I say this without trepidation: the question is no longer whether they are worthy, as they have long proven that they are. The more compelling inquiry is whether our institutional frameworks can welcome a new dimension of artistic excellence that is global in reach, yet unmistakably, indelibly Filipino in essence.

Comments to chiefjusticepanganiban@hotmail.com

WITH DUE RESPECT
 ARTEMIO V. PANGANIBAN



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