

Health

The UP Manila Health and Life Magazine



Ripples

Jan-Jun 2018 • Vol. 1 • No. 1



The Great & The Departed

Second in a series of issues on UP Manila alumni who have passed away and made significant contributions and impact on Philippine health.





The UP Manila Health Ripples magazine is published bi-annually by the **UP Manila Information, Publication, and Public Affairs Office (IPPAO)**, 8th floor, Philippine General Hospital Central Block, Tel. nos. 554-8400 local 3842. Contributions are welcome. Please email to ippao@upm.edu.ph or send to the IPPAO. EDITOR: **Cynthia M. Villamor**; EDITORIAL CONSULTANT: **Dr. Olympia Q. Malanyaon**; WRITERS: **Cynthia M. Villamor, Fedelynn M. Jemena, January R. Kanindot, Charmaine A. Lingdas, Anne Marie D. Alto** LAYOUT ARTIST: **Anne Marie D. Alto**; PHOTOGRAPHER: **Joseph Bautista**; CIRCULATION: **Sigrid G. Cabiling**; Contributing **Josephine D. Agapito**

Table of Contents

Dr. Florentino B. Herrera, Jr: Humanizing Philippine Medicine	2
<i>Cynthia M. Villamor</i>	
Dr. Geminiano T. de Ocampo: National Scientist and Father of Modern Philippine Ophthalmology	7
<i>Anne Marie D. Alto</i>	
Dr. Minda Luz M. Quesada: Passionate Health Champion and Advocate	12
<i>Charmaine A. Lingdas</i>	
Charlotte A. Floro: Pillar of Rehabilitation Sciences in the Philippines	15
<i>January R. Kanindot</i>	
Dr. Magdalena C. Cantoria: Advancing Philippine Pharmacy and Botany	19
<i>Fedelynn M. Jemena</i>	
Dr. Alberto “Quasi” G. Romualdez, Jr.: Crusader for Universal Health Care	22
<i>Charmaine A. Lingdas</i>	
Dr. Juan M. Flavier: A Doctor for the People	27
<i>Fedelynn M. Jemena</i>	
Dr. Serafin C. Hilvano: Pillar of Modern Philippine Surgery	32
<i>Cynthia M. Villamor</i>	

Dr. Florentino B. Herrera, Jr: Humanizing Philippine Medicine

By Cynthia M. Villamor

“Health must be viewed as both a means to an end and as an end in itself. It is a means insofar as it is a precondition for an individual to harness and maximize his potential as a productive member of the community. It is an end in itself, insofar as health is an entitlement of a human being merely as a human being.”



October 9, 1917 - December 27, 1985

This holistic view of health, taken from one of his speeches entitled “Health in the Countryside” published in 2011 in the book “Bringing Health to Rural, Communities” had always been practiced and espoused by **Dr. Florentino B. Herrera, Jr.**, medical internist (UP Medicine Class 1941), clinical pharmacologist, academician, teacher, and university administrator.

He complemented this perspective of health with his humanistic view of

medicine and of doctors when treating patients. Addressing the UP College of Medicine (UPCM) Class of 1978, Dr. Herrera, who was then UPCM dean, told the graduates that doctors are, first of all and basically, human beings who must respond to the humanity of their patients. “When they treat an infection, it is not the infection alone they are treating; it is the patient’s fears, insecurities, and other pains. When they are confronted with an incurable or malignant

disease, they should consider the patient’s qualities – his strengths and his frailties – in their approach to treatment. And above all, they should be instilled with the conviction that because the science of healing is life-giving, it is, therefore, also an art.”

From this perspective and recognition of health emanated the legacies and contributions of Dr. Herrera that have endured to this day. Dr. Herrera started his career

as an Adjunct Professor in Medicine at the Philippine General Hospital after which he became a Fellow in Clinical Pharmacology at the University of Pennsylvania and Cornell University. He was a Diplomate of the American Board of Internal Medicine, was former UPCM dean and secretary, and founding and first chancellor of the Health Sciences Center, UP Manila's forerunner.

Long before Universal Health Care was advocated for in the Philippines, Dr. Herrera had been pushing for **all** Filipinos to be entitled to **all** quality health services at **all** times. His death in 1985 left this desired legacy unfulfilled and even with the government's current *Kalusugang Pangkalahatan* program, the full availment of "Health for All Filipinos" remains elusive for poor and marginalized Filipinos.

But it can be said that Dr. Herrera made significant strides in paving the road towards Universal Health Care. He was an institution builder, medical education reformer, competent administrator, and in the words of one of the so-called "Herrera Boys," Ramon Magsaysay awardee and National Scientist Dr. Ernesto Domingo, "a compleat physician who spent his entire professional life of 42 years in academic medicine."



Dr. Herrera at SHS opening

Institution Builder

Dr. Alberto Romualdez, former Health Secretary and former UPCM dean and another Herrera Boy, stated during the inaugural Dr. Florentino Herrera Memorial Lecture at UP Manila of which he was the lecturer: "In the entire university, there is probably not a single institution, structure, or program or activity that has not, in some way, been driven by Dr. Herrera's pervasive influence, inspiration, or initiative."

Of the institutions he built, the most noteworthy were the School of Health Sciences in Palo, Leyte; Postgraduate Institute of Medicine at the UPCM; and Health Sciences Center, the precursor of UP Manila. All three are considered landmarks in medical education and showed his firm resolve to improve medical education in the Philippines as part of his goal on "Health for All Filipinos."

The stories behind each institution exemplify the dedication and commitment of Dr. Herrera to academic excellence and relevance to society.

School of Health Sciences

The goal for increased relevance to community health during his time led to Dr. Herrera's creation of an "Extraordinary Curriculum Committee" whose task was to design a curriculum that would ensure that its graduates were not only scientifically disciplined and medically competent but, more importantly, socially conscious. The members' creative ideas formed the backbone for a program that linked the various health professionals together through a ladder curriculum. With scant funding but maximum inspiration, the Institute of Health Sciences, as how SHS was known then, was established in Tacloban by the UP Board of Regents during its 871st meeting on

April 19, 1976 under Dr. Herrera's term as CM dean.

The other committee members were Dr. Alfredo Bengzon, Dr. Victor Reyes, Dr. Andres Reyes, Dr. Adriano Laudico, Dr. Clemente Amante, Dr. Augusto Damian, Dr. Tito Litonjua, Dr. Ernesto Valdez, Dr. Horacio Estrada, the Bonifacio brothers, Armand and Manuel, Lamberto Parayno, and Eligio Manto.

The IHS was formally launched on June 28, 1976 with a complement of non-tenured faculty and staff at a hastily constructed school building with a group of 96 students mostly from Eastern Visayas with a few from Agusan and Surigao, Tawi-tawi, Sulu, Oriental Mindoro, and Palawan.

Dr. Armando Bonifacio, one of the so-called Herrera boys, described the then IHS as "differing markedly from other medical schools in that the social context of



Dr. Herrera with UP officials

its curriculum is the rural community, in fact, not just any rural community but a real, live Philippine rural community.”

Dr. Amparo Banzon, then DOH Eastern Visayas Regional Director, served as IHS first director until 1979 and was succeeded by Dr. Manuel Roxas. The first batch of 96 students completed the Community Health Work (or midwifery) program in 1978 and posted a 97% in the licensure examination, including a Surigao girl with the lowest National College Entrance Examination score of 9. At least 40% of the passers were hired right away as government midwives in their respective places of origin. Forty six proceeded to the next step and completed the Community Health Nursing program in 1979, posting an 83% passing rate, higher than the national passing rate of 57%.



Dr. Herrera with colleagues

Today, the SHS has grown into a network of campuses educating a range of health professionals from remote and underserved communities, thus, increasing the availability and services of such trained health personnel. The SHS Baler, Aurora campus opened in July 2008 caters to students from Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, Aurora, and Isabela. The SHS Koronadal City, South Cotabato campus opened

in 2010 admits students from different cultural communities and religious affiliations in Cotabato and nearby provinces. Its graduates have a retention rate of 85% and are deployed in government rural health units, regional and provincial hospitals, and other public health facilities.

Postgraduate Institute of Medicine

The Postgraduate

School of Medicine, as it was called then, was established by a group of clinical faculty members to provide continuing medical education to colleagues outside Manila. From 1951 to 1954, the School successfully carried out its activities. During the late 1950s and throughout the 60s, it became dormant. Dr. Herrera revived the School through a Circuit Course program initially funded by a shoestring budget in 1971. With his support, the program not only grew as a continuing medical education resource but also established a network of regional practitioners whose commitment to academic excellence made them natural leaders whose talents were later tapped for other activities of the College.

The success of the first course held in Baguio and with close to 100 participants was attributed to the support of local medical practitioners, hence, the presence of UPCM alumni became a condition for determining future sites. The courses were heavy on science to counter perceptions of an erosion of the scientific legitimacy in drug company-sponsored continuing medical education.

It was in the next course held in Legazpi, Albay where the faculty recognized the big disparities in health

between Manila and the countryside. It became the spark that ignited the School's zeal for relevance often overshadowed by the bid for academic excellence. The succeeding courses were developed and implemented monthly in Vigan, Capiz, and Tacloban with relevance and the need for the UPCM to address health inequities as the prevailing themes.

Today, the PGSM, renamed Postgraduate Institute of Medicine, fulfills significantly its role of improving the knowledge and skills of physicians long out of medical school and establishing a national network of continuing medical education under the aegis of the Institute. Through the different departments, it conducts 37 postgraduate programs.

The Health Sciences Center

In 1979, after 12 eventful years as UPCM dean and after three years of founding the SHS Leyte, Dr. Herrera was named first chancellor of the Health Sciences Center created under Republic Act 5163 where all health science units of the university were grouped together.

Under the Act, the general objectives of the Center were to provide leadership in education, research and services in the various sciences and thereby in health care of the highest quality; to provide for



collaboration, integration, and coordination of the units for economy and productivity; to influence national policies and decision-making relative to health; develop innovative programs, projects, and models that are responsive to the health needs and aspirations of the country; and to make the Center more responsive to the country's healthcare system through the development of improved techniques, better facilities, and maximization of the health science units.

The Center became the second autonomous university of the UP

System in 1979 and was renamed **UP Manila** in 1982, when the Colleges of Pharmacy and Nursing returned to the Manila campus. On December 21, 1983, UPM underwent its first reorganization through Executive Order No. 11 integrating the UP Health Sciences Center and the College of Arts and Sciences (formerly called UP College Manila).

The creation of the HSC was the culmination of long discussions on how best the health of the people could be served by UP. At that time, there was a growing concern that the university

was not serving the majority of poor Filipinos and those living in isolated and deprived communities.

The present day HSC, renamed UP Manila, is today's recognized leader in national health education, research and public service that has produced generations of Filipino professionals in the varied fields of health and allied disciplines. The UP Manila graduates have served in different capacities in different institutions and have occupied and are still occupying positions of influence and impact on health policy and program planning.

Medical Educator, Researcher, and Physician

Unknown to many, it was also during the term of Dean Herrera when the World Health Organization and the Association of Philippine Medical Colleges sought the support of UPCM to bring the concept paper for the National Teacher Training Center for the Health Professions (NTTCHP) to the UP Board of Regents. Dr. Herrera endorsed the concept that led to the creation of NTTCHP on January 30, 1976. Dr. Herrera appointed Physiology Professor Dr. Corazon Gonzalez as its founding director. The Center is the first and only one of its kind in the Philippines that enhances the instructional skills of health professions teachers



so they can become transformative health care professionals.

Apart from being one of the earliest Filipino physicians to engage in finance and research, Dr. Herrera became the Eli Lilly Fellow in clinical pharmacology at the University of Pennsylvania. From 1947 to 1949, he became the Hoffman La Roche Scholar, in the same field, to Cornell University Medical College. While pursuing his education in the US, Dr. Herrera engaged in researches on cardiovascular and pulmonary clinical pharmacology. Still, he found time to prepare and later qualify for a Diplomate of the American College of Internal Medicine. He motivated young medical scientists and provided them with

the environment that supported their otherwise unrewarding scientific interests.

Dr. Herrera was a recipient of the Bronze Medal of Valor from the Philippine government and the Medal of Freedom from the United States. Beneath the hard exterior was a heart that understood deeply the sufferings and problems of those he dealt with – a poor, sick patient; a student struggling with his medical subjects; a fellow teacher/ researcher trying to balance livelihood and academic demands; or entire communities in need of adequate and quality health services.

He is married to Ameurfina Melencio-Herrera, the oldest living retired

Supreme Court justice, second woman Supreme Court associate justice, and Chancellor Emeritus of the Philippine Judicial Academy.

References:
Health for All Filipinos: The Unfulfilled Legacy of Dr. Florentino B. Herrera, Jr., 1st Chancellor Florentino B. Herrera Memorial Lecture delivered by Dr. Alberto Romualdez, UP Manila, October 2009.

On the Founding of SHS, Ernesto Domingo, Bringing Health to Rural Communities, Innovations of the UP Manila School of Health Sciences, edited by Josefina Tayag and Leothiny Clavel, UP Manila, 2011.

Florentino Herrera, Jr. – The Original Conceptualizer, Bringing Health to Rural Communities, Innovations of the UP Manila School of Health Sciences, edited by Josefina Tayag and Leothiny Clavel, UP Manila, 2011.

Introduction of Dr. Florentino B. Herrera, Jr.: The First UP Manila Chancellor, by Dr. Ernesto O. Domingo delivered during the 1st Chancellor Florentino B. Herrera Memorial Lecture held at UP Manila, October 2009.

Dr. Geminiano T. de Ocampo: National Scientist and Father of Modern Philippine Ophthalmology

By Anne Marie D. Alto

“We never gave him his wishes of having someone to follow his footsteps. That to him was his biggest failure, none of his children became a doctor. [But] that was how life should be for him. No one could measure up to him. Whoever would have followed him as a doctor would only be compared to him. It would not be comparable. He was immeasurable.”

– Leticia de Ocampo Elegado



September 16, 1907 – September 2, 1987

A man of great scientific ability, revered National Scientist **Dr. Geminiano T. de Ocampo** was hailed the “Father of Modern Philippine Ophthalmology” for devoting his knowledge and lifetime laying the foundation of ophthalmology in the Philippines.

Known as the country’s finest ophthalmologist, researcher, inventor, writer, and civic leader, Dr. de Ocampo was the man behind the creation of the Philippine Eye Research Institute (PERI). Hand in hand with the passage of Republic Act 4593 that mandates research on eye diseases afflicting Filipinos,

he was the first to establish an eye hospital in the Philippines.

As an inventor, he was the first Filipino to design a corneal dissector; as a surgeon, he was the first to start corneal transplantation in the Philippines; he was the first President of the Philippine



The de Ocampo Eye Hospital, 1952-1980.

Ophthalmological Society; and the first recipient of the Jose Rizal Medal in Ophthalmology from the Asia-Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology (APAO).

Quest for Vision

A native of Malolos, Bulacan, Mining (short for Geminiano) was born on September 16, 1907, of Vicenta 'Inta' Tiongson de Ocampo and Juan de Ocampo. 'Inta' was widowed at an early age with five children to raise and the youngest still in her womb. Mining's father, Juan, succumbed to illness during the great epidemic of influenza at barely 34 years old leaving his family without his guidance and support.

Mining was myopic and started wearing glasses when he was only 11. His myopia only became stabilized when he was in college, but before then, he



Inauguration of the APAO, Manila, 1960.

had to change the grade of his glasses every six months. Despite his blurry vision, Mining was a competitive learner and was class valedictorian in primary, intermediate, and high schools.

In his memoir, Geminiano wrote that it was his mother, Inta, who inspired him to achieve for

excellence. While he had no special preferences for a career in high school, "law, medicine, and engineering were the most popular professions at that time. The class prophecy at our high school graduation predicted that I would become a chief justice."

In 1932, he completed his Doctor of Medicine

at the University of the Philippines College of Medicine and specialized in Ophthalmology. "I was an admirer of Rizal from early childhood. I was glad I decided on medicine. Two of the reasons why I favored ophthalmology are its rare emergencies and demand for delicateness and precision in details."

When he was Associate Resident in early 1937, he met Amparo Leaño, a senior student nurse. "It was one of those doctor-nurse romances, consisting of visiting at the wards and nurses' dormitory and going to the movies and to excursions." Dr. de Ocampo only asked for Amparo's hand when he had a house of his own in Vito Cruz. They were married in 1939 and had four children.

Dr. de Ocampo always referred to his wife as "Mrs. de Ocampo" according to his memoir. He emphasized how she was always beside him on all social occasions, even out of the country travels.

He started to live and work as a family man in the year 1939. He had a bicycle which he rode to and from Philippine General Hospital and Vito Cruz. He sometimes took the jeepney until the age of 40 when he was able to afford his first car. For him, the education of his children was a priority more than any luxury.

His daughter, Leticia de Ocampo Elegado, disclosed, “He wanted to give the best legacy a father can ever give his family and that is financial security through the generations as well as honorable name and pride in his achievements.”

Amidst the Rubble

From 1942 to 1945, during the Japanese occupation, all his accumulated possessions went up in smoke and he and his family had to start from scratch all over again. It was a dark age but in spite of that, he was able to write two of his most important papers sent to the American Journal of Ophthalmology, namely, the *Case Report on Neovasculogenesis of the Retina, Perivasculitis, and Plevitis Retina* and the *Blindness during the Japanese Occupation in the Philippines* both published in 1944.

Because of the war, medical practitioners in the Philippines received no foreign journals which is why he only knew that his papers were accepted two years after the publication.

After the Second World War, Dr. de Ocampo was sent to the United States for a Kellogg Fellowship in Ophthalmology. Completing a year as a fellow at the Johns Hopkins' Wilmer Institute in Baltimore, Maryland and at the Columbia Presbyterian University in New York City, he was introduced to corneal



GTO presents 'A System of Medical Research' to Dr. Carlos P. Romulo, with Dean Patrocinio Valenzuela.



GTO receives the first Jose Rizal Medal in Ophthalmology at the APAO Congress, 1986.

transplantation operation. He began to share this knowledge when he returned to the Philippines in 1947.

Civic Leader

Later on, he became aware of the high prevalence of blindness among Filipinos due to corneal pathologies. This led to his obsession of sourcing eyeballs for those suffering from corneal blindness. Dr. de Ocampo requested Dr. Edmundo Reyes, an Eye-Ear-Nose-

Throat (EENT) specialist and his brother, Justice J.B.L. Reyes, to craft a bill on human-organ donation for medical and scientific purposes. “The bill was introduced in the Philippine Congress in 1948 and became the Republic Act 349, signed by President Elpidio Quirino on May 17, 1949 as the first law on the donation of human organs including the eyes.”

This paved the way for the first successful corneal transplantation that was performed by Dr. Geminiano de Ocampo at St. Luke's Hospital in June 1949.

He also worked for the passage and amendment of Republic Act No. 4593 which established the Philippine Eye Research Institute, and for the passage and amendment of Republic Act No. 7885, the law that covers the donation of eyeballs for corneal transplantation.

His Legacy

It was a monumental accomplishment in the field of ophthalmology when, in 1950, the Philippine Eye Bank was established that Dr. Geminiano helped lay the foundation. The following year, when ophthalmology was separated from otorhinolaryngology in the EENT Department of



The founding staff of the UP Department of Ophthalmology circa 1961. Back row (from left): Drs. Roberto Tan, Fr. Agileo Sibayan, Roberto Sunga, Salvador Salceda, Reynaldo Francisco, Estrella Balalong Espino. Front row (from left): Drs. Romeo Fajardo, Marcos Fojas, Emmanuel Almeda, Liborio Mangubat, Geminiano de Ocampo, Gloria Lim, Romeo Espiritu, and Tim Jimenez.

the Philippine General Hospital, Dr. de Ocampo served as the division head of ophthalmology.

From the eyes of a colleague, “Dr. de Ocampo was a kind gentleman tutored in the best tradition of the old school where honor, honesty, moral ascendancy, and genuine friendship were held in esteem and practiced with compassion,” Dr. Conrado Banzon attested.

He trained ophthalmologists with principles and unique methods of solving ophthalmologic problems including surgical akinesia, fine sutures, intracapsular cataract

extraction with capsule forceps, and immature cataract-lens extraction.

His student, Dr. Salvador Salceda, said, “Dr. de Ocampo belonged to that uncommon few who collectively embody the functional duality of a great—to teach and to think.”

In 1952, five years after his foreign educational training, he opened the first eye hospital in the Philippines, the **De Ocampo Eye Hospital (DOEH)** located at the United Nations Avenue. “It was a realization of a dream – the first and only eye hospital of its kind in the country,” said Dr. de Ocampo.

As early as 1954, he was already acknowledged as the “Father of Modern Philippine Ophthalmology.” In 1956, he designed an ophthalmologic instrument called the **de Ocampo corneal dissector** which was later manufactured by Storz & Co., an American company.

In 1958, he founded the Philippine Ophthalmological Society, serving as its first president for six years. Likewise, Dr. de Ocampo served as the first president of the first Asia-Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology, an internationally recognized specialty society of Filipino ophthalmologists, in 1960.

Dr. de Ocampo envisioned a center for the advancement of ophthalmology in the country. This vision materialized on June 19, 1965, coincidentally the birthday of Jose Rizal, when the establishment of the **Philippine Eye Research Institute (PERI)** through Republic Act No. 4593 was approved. Similarly, he was appointed as its first director.

Thirty three years later, Republic Act No. 8503 established the **National Institutes of Health** in the University of the Philippines Manila in which PERI was integrated as one of the member institutions.

Throughout the years, PERI has expanded to reduce blindness in the country through notable researches, policy setting, and advocacy. It has been conducting, collaborating, and supporting researches directed toward the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of eye diseases in the new millennium. PERI is housed at the **Sentro Oftalmologico Jose Rizal (SOJR)** building; the contemporary national eye referral center built in 2005. The SOJR is equipped with the modern diagnostic equipment and surgical instruments to answer to the needs of numerous Filipino eye patients both private and poor. The facility has also enhanced the training of ophthalmology residents of the UP-PGH Department of Ophthalmology.

His Acquisition

A fellow ophthalmologist, Dr. Corazon Estrella, explained that “underneath the stern disciplinary image” of Dr. de Ocampo was a warm compassionate being with a heart.”

Dr. de Ocampo was a recipient of several prestigious awards as the *Republic Heritage and Cultural Award for Science* (1961), *Distinguished Service Medal* (1965), *Jose Rizal Award for Excellence* (1968), *Distinguished Medical Alumnus of UP* (1971), *Ayala Award for Medical Science* (1974), among others.



Dr. de Ocampo with PERI staff circa 1965. Front row from left: Dr. Felipe Tolentino, Dr. Romeo B. Espiritu, Dr. Salvador R. Salceda, Dr. Geminiano de Ocampo, Dr. Liborio Mangubat, Sr., Dr. Romeo V. Fajardo, Sr., and Atty. Tito Pantoja. Back row from left: Dr. Rosie Reyes-Noche, Ms. Eloisa Madrazo, Ms. Josefina Chavez, Mr. Isabelo Sarmiento, Dr. Hector Sulit, Mr. Ruperto M. Abendanio, Ms. Teresita Pascual, Dr. Antonio Montalbo, Dr. Evangeline Olivar-Santos, Mr. Domingo Baranco, and Mr. Eddie Peñalosa.

A friend, Arturo Rotor, revealed that the outstanding physician “provides the most eloquent refutation of the popular definition of a specialist as a man who knows more and more about less and less.” In 1982 he was conferred the highest award in his field as National Scientist by the National Academy of Science and Technology. “The title of National Scientist, this recognition is the highest point in my life,” wrote Dr. de Ocampo.

In his lifetime, he has authored and presented 150 scientific articles on ophthalmology and 30 medical researches. His last book, the *Theoretical Bioophthalmology*, was published a year after his

passing on September 2, 1987.

His daughter, Leticia, remarked, “We never gave him his wishes of having someone to follow his footsteps. That to him was his biggest failure, none of his children became a doctor.” Leticia continued, “[but] that was how life should be for him. No one could measure up to him. Whoever would have followed him as a doctor would only be compared to him. It would not be comparable. He was immeasurable.”

References:

- A vision to remember.* (2012, February 9). Retrieved from PAO Journal: <http://paojournal.com/vol36no2/vol36no2/article-list.php?id=8>
- Geminiano T. de Ocampo: Centennial Celebration of a National Scientist. (2007, September 14). Taguig, Philippines: National Academy of Science and Technology.
- Iguban, E. B., Tuaño, P. C., Domingo, R. D., & Villalon, P. T. (2011). *A vision to remember.* *Philippine Journal of Ophthalmology*, 92-95.
- National Committee for Sight Preservation PH. (2016, May 15). *UP Manila Institute of Ophthalmology.* Retrieved from National Committee for Sight Preservation PH: <https://ncsp.org.ph/first-post-3b8b322598ee>
- Ocampo, G. T. (1986). *Memoirs of Geminiano T. de Ocampo.* National Academy of Science and Technology.
- Philippine Ophthalmology A Century Hence.* (2012, February 9). Retrieved from PAO Journal: <http://paojournal.com/vol36no2/vol36no2/article-list.php?id=1>

Dr. Minda Luz M. Quesada: Passionate Health Champion and Advocate

By Charmaine A. Lingdas

Advocacy in all its forms seeks to ensure that people, particularly those who are most vulnerable in society, are able to have their voice heard on issues that are important to them, defend and safeguard their rights, and have their views and wishes genuinely considered when decisions are being made about their lives. An advocate has the vital role to persuade leaders, decision makers in both government and non-government organizations to undertake policy and operational program decision towards improving the situation of the community.



July 19, 1937 - February 20, 1995

“She was dubbed the “Gabriela Silang” of the Con Com’s nationalist bloc, for her fearless defense of human rights, women’s rights, patients’ rights and labor rights during plenary sessions.”

Prof. Minda Luz Quesada

is a paragon of a true advocate. She has shown many advocacy works in her desire to serve the Filipino people, and in her capacity as a nurse, an educator, an activist, and nationalist.

Prof. Quesada was a faculty member of the College of Public Health and a founding member and pioneering president of the Alliance of Health Workers. She was the lone health sector representative of the Constitutional Commission

that framed the 1987 Philippine Constitution. Through her painstaking efforts, health is now recognized as a right of every Filipino citizen.

“I’m not a self-conscious practitioner of advocacy and this will be the first time for me to speak formally on the subject. After I have to read more about what advocacy is, I discovered that I have been an advocate for certain groups and a variety of issues and concerns. I was

not conscious of the term “advocacy,” though most of the time I was living it,” Prof. Quesada explained in a lecture she delivered about advocacy work. Her speech was published in the Philippine Journal of Nursing, “Bridging the Gap towards Access and Equity of Health Care,” Volume 81, January-June 2011 issue.

Minda Luz Melendez was born on July 19, 1937 at Malolos, Bulacan. Her career path and life works

seem to follow the steps of her father, Pedro D. Melendez, a lawyer, who was one of the Province of Bukidnon's delegates to the Constitutional Convention that drafted and formulated the 1935 Philippine Constitution. Her mother, Luz Reyes Melendez, was a high school principal.

She married Juan A. Quesada, Jr. and bore six children, namely, Augusto Juan M. Quesada, Mari Luz Quesada-Tiongson, Bertrand Felipe M. Quesada, Emma Rose Quesada-Medina, Rosanna Modesta Quesada-Palma, and Ronaldo Noel M. Quesada.

In 1958, Prof. Quesada graduated with a degree in Bachelor of Science in Nursing, major in Public Health Nursing at the UP Manila College of Nursing. She obtained the Master of Arts in Teaching (School Health) at the UP Diliman College of Education in 1970 and Master of Public Health (Community Health) at Loma Linda University School of Health, California, U.S.A. in 1973. She finished Doctor of Public Health (Health Education) at the UPM-College of Public Health and took advanced studies leading to a doctoral degree at Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health in Baltimore, Maryland in 1990.



“My experiences in advocacy started as far back as the late 1960s. I was a school public health nurse then at the Philippine Normal College (PNC) when I organized the State Colleges and Universities Nurses Association of the Philippines (1964-1966). This group of health service providers felt disadvantaged and underprivileged in terms of conditions of life and work in comparison to their counterparts, the members of the academe. Shortly after this, I initiated the organization of the PNC Employees Association after hearing a lot of their problems, issues, and concerns while consulting at the Medical Clinic. I felt that these individual groupings had to be channelled to organize actions,” Prof. Quesada recounted the beginning of her journey as a school nurse to becoming an effective leader.

Her daughter, Emma Rose Quesada-Medina, recalls: “As a nurse early in her career, she saw

the glaring disparity of working conditions and compensation between medical doctors on the one hand, and nurses and institutional health workers on the other. She became an advocate for health workers, and effectively harnessed her natural gifts for organizing, public speaking, writing and educating, to champion their cause.”

Prof. Quesada's involvement in politics began while teaching at the CPH in the 1970s. Whether as an initiator or project coordinator of community-based programs, she endeavoured to organize and educate communities on obtaining alternative access to health care services.

Within the university, she joined various organizations and held several positions. She headed the Masters of Public Health Committee of the CPH in 1983 and 1993; became the officer-in-charge of the Office for International Students Program of UP Manila from 1985-1986; elected as president of the Pamantasang Asambleya of UP Manila from 1988-1990; became chairperson of the Health Policy, Health and Safety Committee from 1990 – 1992; and chairperson of the Committee on Women and Development of UP Manila from 1992 – 1994.

“She was a magnanimous helper to many. In the early 1970s, we witnessed how our mother aided striking employees at a private hospital a stone's throw away from our house. She let the picketing hospital staff – absolute strangers, linked only by professional affinity – into the family home. She allowed them to cook meals, take showers and nap in the bedrooms while the strike dragged on,” said Medina.

Prof. Quesada's work in this field led to her involvement in the Philippine Nurses Association (PNA). As PNA Vice-President in 1979, she headed the labor panel during the 1st tripartite conference on “Employment and Conditions of Life and Work of Nursing and other Health Personnel” held on 26-28 September 1979. This was convened by the Ministry of Labor and Employment (now DOLE) in response to Proclamation 851 ratifying ILO Nursing Convention 149. The tripartite was able to obtain the right to self-organization in non-stock, non-profit institutions.

In 1984, Prof. Quesada became the founding president of the Alliance of Health Workers (AHW). During the Marcos dictatorship, the AHW spearheaded efforts to improve the work conditions of health workers, as well as provide better health services to



Prof. Quesada presiding over the first session of the UP Manila University assembly in 1988.

the public. Not limited to academic discussions or panel hearings, Dr. Quesada along with AHW members, joined mass demonstrations that marked the last years of the Marcos dictatorship. In 1985, AHW was instrumental in the approval of the 25% salary hike to paramedical workers of government and in 1987 for the granting of medical allowance to the Department of Health employees.

After the EDSA Revolution, she was among those who formed the Task Force for People's Health. This Task Force, which eventually became a coalition called Bukluran para sa Kalusugan ng Sambayanan or BUKAS, challenged the newly-installed administration of Cory Aquino to address the vital issues affecting the health care delivery system. She helped in the drafting of the Manifesto for People's Health that embodied the people's aspiration and recommendations for

the development of the country's national health care system.

"Her professional credentials, social activism and leadership were all recognized by President Corazon Aquino in 1996, when Prof. Quesada was named to the Constitutional Commission representing the health care sector. She was one of only six women named to the original 50-person commission. She was dubbed the "Gabriela Silang" of the Con Com's nationalist bloc, for her fearless defense of human rights, women's rights, patients' rights and labor rights during plenary sessions. She relentlessly wanted the safeguarding of the national patrimony enshrined in the new Constitution," recounted Medina.

Her involvement in law-making did not end in the Commission. When Congress opened, she became an effective lobbyist for progressive

and significant health measures. She spearheaded and mobilized the sustained campaign for the passage of Magna Carta of Public Health Workers, the first of such kind worldwide, a ground-breaking law that provided for economic and non-monetary benefits for government health workers.

For her achievements, Prof. Quesada was proclaimed Most Distinguished Alumna in Education, awarded by the CPH Alumni Association in 1991 and the Most Outstanding Alumna of UP Manila in 1993. She was recognized as the Most Outstanding Health Professional by the Philippine Chamber of Health and Most Outstanding Health Professional in Nursing for distinguished contributions to health development awarded by the Council of Professional Health Associations both in 1987.

In 1991, Prof. Quesada devoted part of her time in LAKAS or Laban sa Kanser, which she helped organized together with fellow activists from women NGOs. She herself was stricken with cancer but she courageously faced that reality in the midst of her health crisis.

"The health sector will always remember Prof. Quesada's short but very meaningful life. As the Filipino people are confronted with burning issues of the day, she would

surely be in the forefront of protest actions, marching side by side with workers, farmers and urban poor masses," asserted Professor Cora Añonuevo in an article she wrote entitled "Minda Luz Quesada: Nurse, Leader, and Nationalist."

Her work to improve people's lives continued after the new Constitution was ratified in 1987. At UP Manila, she helped facilitate the democratic participation of faculty, students and non-academic personnel in university and national issues as first president of the pioneering University Assembly of U.P. Manila despite not so facilitative conditions.

But undoubtedly, it was her passionate and unrelenting advocacy works for quality health care and protection of the rights of Filipino workers that is her greatest legacy. For whatever gains the health sector and the health community are reaping now and the improvements in the Filipinos' health, they owe a big measure of such gains to Dr. Quesada, the untiring and committed health educator, champion, and advocate until her death in February 20, 1995.

In 2009, the College of Public Health, together with the College of Nursing organized the 1st Minda Luz M. Quesada Memorial Lecture.

Charlotte A. Floro: Pillar of Rehabilitation Sciences in the Philippines

By January R. Kanindot

Living with a disability comes with varying degrees of challenges. Seemingly routine tasks like commuting, eating and caring for oneself can be daily struggles. Rather than dismiss or alienate persons with disabilities, what if we empower them as contributors to our Filipino society?

We live in a time of heightened disability awareness, but 50 years ago, this was not the case. An outstanding woman, with a heart set on helping persons with disabilities, cemented the foundation for the rehabilitation sciences and in the Philippines. It was the job that **Charlotte Aspuria Floro** took on with gusto.

The Emergence of Rehabilitation Sciences in the Philippines

Soon after World War II, the need for physical rehabilitation for both Filipino and American casualties became apparent. In February 1945, the Philippine Civic Affairs Unit I General Hospital

Her desire to promote the rehabilitation sciences in the Philippines and the Filipino Occupational Therapist still remains her great legacy to her students and colleagues. She was a champion of compassionate professionalism not only as a full-time educator but as partners of people with disabilities.



November 23, 1926–April 28, 1995

(PCAU I) was created to answer those needs. Occupational Therapy was introduced to PCAU I, and In 1948, PCAU I was renamed to National Orthopedic Hospital (NOH). Dr. Benjamin Tamesis was appointed in 1953 as Chief of NOH. His training in orthopaedics in the USA, under the UNICEF Fellowship

program, helped in develop the rehabilitation sciences in the Philippines. Dr. Tamesis recognized the role of the allied medical professions that would complement the residency programs in orthopedics and traumatology in NOH. To provide holistic rehabilitation program to the growing number of patients, professionally



Floro, third from left, with colleagues.

trained occupational and physical therapists were needed.

In 1956, the Philippine government awarded NOH foreign assistance for a more meaningful training for OTs and PTs. That same year, Dr. Henry Kessler, UN consultant in rehabilitation and orthopedic surgery to the US Armed Forces, recommended to the United Nations Technical Assistance Administration the need to establish a Physical and Occupational Therapy School to provide professionally trained rehabilitation personnel to the Philippines.

Finally, in 1957, US Army trained physiotherapist Jose Inoturan wrote letters to Philippine Medical Association President Francisco Q. Duque and Secretary of Health Dr. Paulino J. Garcia,



emphasizing the need for a bachelor's degree program in Physical and Occupational Therapy for the proposed School of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation of the University of the Philippines. He also sent a letter with the same

sentiment to Dr. Florentino Herrera of the Philippine General Hospital.

Acting on Dr. Kessler's recommendations, in 1959, Dr. Tamesis presented to then Secretary of Health, Dr. Elpidio Valencia, to finally formalize the

Occupational and Physical Therapy programs in the country. Two years later, the World Health Organization finally supported the establishment of a professional program for Occupational and Physical Therapy through Project 71: Philippines. It was a three-year certificate course in a university setting. And while other universities were considered, Secretary Valencia designated the University of the Philippines as the pioneer host of these groundbreaking programs. The three-year certificate course was then changed to the University's standard four-year bachelor's degree.

The development of the curriculum was a monumental task. A team of experts in the field was tapped: Mr. Robert Jacques, Ms. Elizabeth Ahlberg, Mrs. Conchita Abad, and Mrs. Charlotte A. Floro. The main goals of the programs were as follows: 1) to equip students to attain a high level of professional skill and competence; 2) to allow students to function effectively as contributing members of the medical profession and to the community; and 3) to help students develop a deep sense of responsibility for professional growth through post-graduate study, research and teaching.

The School of Allied Medical Professions became a unit under the University of the Philippines College of Medicine when the Board of Regents finally approved the curriculum proposal on its 697th meeting on May 16, 1962. This made UP the first university in the country to offer OT and PT courses and the first in Asia to offer the OT baccalaureate degree. Mrs. Charlotte A. Floro then became the first Chair of the Occupational Therapy Department.



Floro with fellow OT advocates.

Floro's Contributions

Charlotte A. Floro was in the forefront of the Allied Medical Professions in the Philippines. Upon her return to the Philippines in 1954, she dedicated her entire career in the conception, development and sustenance of the rehabilitation sciences profession to the Philippines.

Born in Spreckelsville, Maui, Hawaii, Charlotte Aspuria was the youngest of 10 children of Ilocano migrants, Julian Aspuria and Patricia Ollero. Both her parents were among the first Filipino contract laborer workers, then known as 'sakadas', who lived and worked as field workers in Wailuku, Hawaii. Despite her impoverished childhood, she completed her Bachelor of Science degree from the

University of Hawaii at Manoa in 1948. In 1949, as a recipient of the HOTA fellowship grant, she earned a Bachelors diploma in Occupation Therapy from Milwaukee-Downer College in Wisconsin. Within a year of her graduation, she passed the OT licensure exam, becoming the first certified Filipino Occupational Therapist in the US. She returned to Kaneohe, Oahu in 1950 to work as an occupational therapist at the Tertiary Hospital.

Floro also briefly worked at the Goldwater Memorial Hospital at Welfare Island in New York. She then joined the army and became a First Lieutenant. While working at the Letterman Army Hospital in Presidio, San Francisco she met her



Floro at an awarding ceremony at CAMP.

future husband, Francisco R. Floro, who was studying at Stanford University in the MBA program. They married in 1954 and shortly moved to the Philippines with her husband. They raised their four children

in Philam Homes, Quezon City.

As the Chair of the OT Department, Charlotte spearheaded new developments for the School of Allied Medical Professions and

founded the Occupational Therapy Association of the Philippines (OTAP). OTAP became a full member of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists in 1969. Floro also spearheaded non-government organizations like the National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons and the Philippine Foundation for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled, Inc. She also established a relationship with the Dangerous Drugs Board to promote the role of OT in drug rehabilitation. The Department of Labor and Employment, was also established to promote the rehabilitation of workers with disabilities, while in the process of fulfilling their duties through the Employees Compensation Commission.

Floro firmly advocated for the independence and autonomy of the OT, PT, and Speech Pathology (SP) professions from the doctors of Rehabilitation Medicine. By 1988, SAMP successfully amassed 375 graduates since its inception. These graduates needed further training. To further this advocacy, she spearheaded the reorganization and transformation of the SAMP to include master's degree programs and the expansion of research, post-graduate, and community and extension activities. The UP Board

of Regents approved the elevation on April 28, 1988 thus becoming what it is today, the College of Allied Medical Professions (CAMP).

Work Ethics

Since Floro held on to her American citizenship, sustaining her tenure in the University was difficult while being awarded as the first American Dean at UP was almost unattainable. She was very much a Filipino at heart, who loved serving the educational and social community. Former CAMP Dean Professor Teresita Mendoza Mrs. Floro as her mentor and inspiration, said "She was very influential in what I am today. Her emphasis in work ethics is really something that one would remember - developing or assigning tasks that promote one's leadership potential. She leads by example."

Floro was known as a strict professor with an expectation of the highest ethic standards: a model of excellence, integrity, and compassion. She installed in her students to professionally work in the way they dress and carry themselves – always neat, prim, and proper.

She was also very thorough in demonstrating different processes involved in the various therapeutic activities an OT may use in the treatment of patients. Floro based her lectures on the most updated available resources and the wealth of her professional experiences.

Her desire to promote OT and the rehabilitation sciences in the Philippines and to promote the Filipino OT still remains her great legacy to her students and colleagues. She was a champion of compassionate professionalism not only as a full-time educator but as partners of people with disabilities.

She encouraged professional staff development in the School in order for the faculty to have first hand contact with the practice and state of these professions in other countries. This has ensured that these professional educational programmes were keeping abreast with international standards. To this end, she worked to obtain sponsorships from international agencies like the World Health Organization, Colombo Plan. Various lecturers undertook educational and practice visits to countries

like the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, Sweden, Norway, Australia.

Today, there are still a number of issues and challenges that the rehabilitation sciences need to overcome but the efforts of Charlotte A. Floro remain a monumental contribution not only in education but in the lives of so many Filipino people.

Legacy

While travelling in the US to visit her siblings and children, Charlotte Aspuria Floro died suddenly on April 28, 1995 at the age of 69. The Charlotte A. Floro Professional Chair, approved by the UP Board of Regents, was established in 1997 to support CAMP research and development. Six faculty members from the Departments of OT, PT, and SP have benefited from the foundation.

Dr. Magdalena C. Cantoria: Advancing Philippine Pharmacy and Botany

By Fedelynn M. Jemena



October 25, 1924 - December 25, 2008

One of UP Manila's 20th century heroes who changed things for Philippine pharmacy and botany (and, to an extent, the world's) was **Dr. Magdalena C. Cantoria**.

Through her researches, she added greatly to the knowledge about the medicinal value of plants like *agar* (a type of seaweed), *Rauwolfia vomitoria Afz.*, *Datura stramonium L.*, mint, and Piper species. With her many awards and recognitions, she brought

honor to her country, her alma mater, and to women.

Education/Early influences

The only child of school teachers, Magdalena De La Cuesta Cantoria was born in Manila on 25 October 1924. Described as a precocious child, her energy and intellect were directed early by her parents to academic pursuits. At age five, the mother brought the child along to where she was teaching and made her sit among first graders.

This kind of nurturing led to accelerations in Magdalena's schooling as well as honors from elementary and high school (Mapa High School).

Magdalena took a teaching course at the Philippine Normal School (now the Philippine Normal University), her father's alma mater, graduating with honors just before World War 2 broke.

There were no records and interviews as to what she and her family experienced and did during the war and how they survived. What is sure is that Magdalena graduated with a degree of Bachelor of Science (BS) in Pharmacy, *cum laude*, from the College of Pharmacy in 1947. At the same time, she became a member of two Honor Societies—Phi Kappa Phi and Phi Sigma Biological Sciences. The latter bestowed on her two awards later -- Marked Distinction in Biology in 1951 and Most Outstanding Phi Sigman in 1977.

She became a Scientific Research Assistant at the

Through her researches, she added greatly to the knowledge about the value of medicinal plants like agar (a type of seaweed), mint, and Piper species. These and her extensive academic background made her a leading international authority in botany.

National Research Council of the Philippines (NRCP) soon after graduation and stayed there until 1950. She also held many positions at NRCP: Associate Editor of the NRCP Research Bulletin, Chair of the Division of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Corporate Secretary of NRCP, and Editor of the NRCP Research Journal.

As Teacher and Researcher

In 1950, Magdalena left NRCP and became a faculty of the College of Pharmacy upon the invitation of then Dean Dr. Patrocinio Valenzuela. She was known as a ‘terror’ teacher, according to **Dr. Yolanda Robles**, who was her student and had worked with her in some research projects. But when she and the other graduates got high grades in the licensure examinations, Prof. Cantoria treated them to a delicious meal in a restaurant. The teacher was very proud of them. Dr. Robles later on became a faculty and dean of the College.

Another former research assistant, **Dr. Mildred Balbin-Oliveros**, credited Dr. Cantoria’s teachings with opening her eyes to the amazing medicinal benefits that certain plants can give to improve people’s health as well as in guiding her research work. Dr. Oliveros was a UPCP faculty from 1964-2006.

During her years at UPCP, Prof. Cantoria



Cantoria with students and colleagues.

remained active in her pursuit of higher studies. In 1951, she received her Master of Science (MS) in Botany from UP. Through fellowship grants, she earned the Master of Science degree in Pharmacy, major in Pharmacognosy, from the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy in 1955 (under the guidance of Dr. Heber W. Youngken Sr., a world-renowned pharmacognosist); and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Botany, on plant physiology and biochemistry from the University of Chicago in 1961.

That same year, she took a summer course in Radiation Biology at Argonne National Laboratory (USA). In 1965, Prof. Cantoria had a UNESCO training course in Plant Physiology at the University of Delhi (India).

During her studies in the US, Prof. Cantoria received two awards from the American Foundation for Pharmaceutical Education: 1954 Edwin Leigh Newcomb Award in Pharmacognosy for her work on *Rauwolfia vomitoria* Afz (Africa); 1962 Edwin Leigh Newcomb Award in Pharmacognosy for her cooperative work with her adviser, Dr. Edward S. Mika, on the growth and development of *Datura stramonium* L.

It was also during this period that Dr. Cantoria was inducted into the Rho Chi Pharmaceutical Honor Society-MCP Chapter (1955); and in the Sigma Xi-UC Chapter (1960). The latter society is devoted to the promotion of research in science.

When she returned to the Philippines, Dr. Cantoria busied herself with

teaching, research, and scientific conferences. It was a prolific time wherein her expertise added to the treasury of knowledge on the “structure, physiology, and biochemistry of plant drugs; pharmaceutical sciences; and botanical drugs in the Philippine pharmacopeia.” (NAST)

Dr. Cantoria’s studies on agar (a jelly-like substance from Philippine seaweed) and on mints, particularly the Yerba Buena (*Mentha cordifolia* Opiz), are considered pioneering in local pharmaceutical studies. In 1990, because of her expertise in describing botanic characteristics of plant drugs, she became an adviser for a World Health Organization-funded ASEAN project in Indonesia to prepare standardization monographs of herbal medicines.

She wrote two books on pharmacognosy, three monographs related to the subject, and published over 60 scientific papers in national and international scientific journals on plants yielding volatile oils and alkaloids of pharmaceutical and medicinal values.

Of her books, the most outstanding is still "Pharmacognosy in Action and in Practice" (NRCP Research Foundation). One monograph, entitled, "Some Household Remedies (Galenicals) for External Use Prepared from Local Medicinal Plants," was used by the volunteers of the Ugnayan ng Pahinungod-Manila in their early work in the rural areas.

Dr. Cantoria was elected Academician of the National Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) in 1980. She assumed the deanship of the College of Pharmacy in 1988 until she reached the compulsory retirement age in 1989. The University then gave her a permanent appointment as Professor Emeritus.

Other Honors & Recognitions

Dr. Cantoria is listed in "Excerpta Botanica" (1980), a valuable bibliographical source for vegetation science (edited by the International Association for Plant Taxonomy, Utrecht, Netherlands); charter member, American



Cantoria with faculty of the College of Pharmacy.

Society of Pharmacognosy; member, Gesellschaft Für Arzneipflanzenforschung (Society for Medicinal Plant Research, Germany); and Visiting Professor of Pharmacognosy and Pharmaceutical Botany, faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai, Thailand.

She held positions and memberships in scholarly societies like the National Research Council of the Philippines, Philippine Pharmaceutical Association, Colegio Medico Farmaceutico de Filipinas, Biology Teachers Association of the Philippines, Philippine Association of University Women, Association of Systematic Biologists of the Philippines, Philippine Biomedical Society, Philippine Association for the Advancement of Science and Technology, Radioisotopes Society of

the Philippines Inc, Manila Pharmaceutical Society, Philippine Botanical Society, Philippine Society for Microbiology Inc, and Philippine Federation of Health Professionals, Inc.

She was conferred the NRCP Achievement Award (1993); Diamond Achiever Award, PNU Alumni Association, Inc (Sept. 2001); UPMAA Professorial Award in Pharmacy, and UP Manila Alumni Association Award (2005). She was appointed chair, Publications Committee of the NRCP and elected member, Board of Trustees, NRCP Research Foundations, Inc.

Dr. Magdalena C. Cantoria, one of the great scientists of the country, died of cardiac arrest on 25 December 2008 at the National Kidney Institute, Quezon City.

Sources:

Padilla, Carmencita D., MD; Santos Ocampo, Perla D., MD. "Magdalena De La Cuesta Cantoria, PhD." *A Century of Women in the Health Sciences: 1900-2000 AD*, pp. 50-51. Publishers: National Academy of Science and Technology (NAST), Institute of Human Genetics (UPM-NIH), National Institutes of Health of UP Manila (UPM-NIH), and the University of the Philippines Manila. 2004

"Magdalena C. Cantoria, NAST Academician." *National Academy of Science and Technology (NAST)*. Link: <http://spheres.dost.gov.ph/sci-profile.php?i=000086>

"Academician Nena Cantoria passes away." *University of the Philippines Manila*. 2009. Link: <https://www.upm.edu.ph/node/782>

"Dr. Magdalena C. Cantoria—Botanist." 13 February 2010. Link: <https://personalmemoir.wordpress.com/2010/02/13/dr-magdalena-c-cantoria-botanist/>

Magsaysay, Vics. "Dr. Mildred Balbin Oliveros: Sa pagtuklas ng gamot at humanitarianism." 21 July 2018. Link: <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/balitambayan/talakayan/661252/dr-mildred-balbin-oliveros-sa-pagtuklas-ng-gamot-at-humanitarianism/story/>

Dr. Alberto “Quasi” G. Romualdez, Jr.: Crusader for Universal Health Care

By Charmaine A. Lingdas

“Dr. Alberto Romualdez is one of only a few health professionals whose expertise and sphere of influence traverse boundaries. He had served in the executive and legislative branches of the government, in the private and nongovernment sectors, in the academe and health research institutions, and in local and international organizations in different capacities.”

– Dr. Ernesto O. Domingo



September 14, 1940 – October 14, 2013

With a deep sense of humanity and unparalleled passion for universal healthcare, **Dr. Alberto “Quasi” Romualdez, Jr.** has devoted his life to addressing social iniquities by championing health reforms in the Philippine health system. He tirelessly fought for reforms on health issues, such as reproductive health, cheaper medicines, tobacco control, and other health equality concerns.

“We must reduce health iniquities as our prime

task for improving the nation’s health. And to pursue this task, we must confront the need for radical change in the health sector,” stated Doc Quasi in a lecture entitled *State of the Nation’s Health* he delivered at the University of the Philippines Manila Centennial Lecture Series held during UP Manila’s celebration of UP’s 100th year at the PGH Science Hall in September 2008.

Dr. Romualdez, fondly known to many as ‘Doc

Quasi,’ is a former secretary of the Department of Health (DOH) and former dean of the UP College of Medicine. He was named after ‘Quasimodo,’ the hunchbacked bell-ringer in Victor Hugo’s novel. ‘Quasimodo’ roughly means ‘almost merely’ or ‘merely almost,’ which indicates Quasimodo’s deformity and that he is ‘almost human.’

Contrary to his name, in terms of “his endeavors and commitments, he was far from being only ‘almost,’”

said former Congressman Edcel Lagman, principal author of the Reproductive Health Law in an article. UP Diliman Chancellor Michael Tan referred to Doc Quasi in an article as a “secular humanist at heart.”

“For whatever reason, my life has been spared once more and I need again to try and be “good” in order to be worthy of this great honor called life... I know that this time, as in other times, I will achieve a slightly higher standard of “goodness” than before,” affirmed Doc Quasi, in ‘A Note of Thanks from Paris by Doc Quasi Romualdez’ he wrote for his friends on 18 April 2013, after recuperating from a bout with septicemia at the American Hospital of Paris that turned out to be the last few months of his life.

Doc Quasi undoubtedly filled his remaining days trying to be “good.” A few months before his death, he was frequently seen in DOH activities working towards the realization of a universal health care (UHC) system for Filipinos through the “Secretary’s Cup,” a six-month campaign to spread awareness on *Kalusugang Pangkalahatan* (Universal Health Care) via nationwide collegiate debates, townhall meetings, talk series and roundtable discussions that tackled the different issues that impact on health as well as in the “Health System Shapers,”



Doc Quasi delivering his lecture entitled State of the Nation's Health at the UP Manila Centennial Lecture Series at PGH Science Hall in September 2008

an advocacy campaign that targetted the different social sectors to talk about their roles in the health care system.

“Dr. Alberto Romualdez is one of only a few health professionals whose expertise and sphere of influence traverse boundaries. He had served in the executive and legislative branches of the government, in the private and nongovernment sectors, in the academe and health research institutions, and in local and international organizations in different capacities,” stated Ramon Magsaysay awardee and

National Scientist Dr. Ernesto O. Domingo, also former chancellor and now University Professor Emeritus of UP Manila, as he introduced Doc Quasi during the UP Centennial Lecture Series. He, together with Doc Quasi, were known as the “Herrera’s bright boys” as both of them are determined and passionate in continuing the work of their mentor Chancellor Florentino B. Herrera in the attainment of universal health care in the country.

Doc Quasi, born in September 14, 1940 in

Manila, was the eldest of seven children of Dr. Alberto Zialcita Romualdez Sr., former Secretary General of the World Medical Association and Dr. Covadonga del Gallego, former chairman of the Pathology Department of the University of Santo Tomas.

Although Doc Quasi’s family background came from the socially and politically prominent Romualdez clan, his life was far from being ‘Imeldific’ (a word coined for Imelda Marcos which means ostentatious extravagance. Fuelled by his desire to serve the underserved, Doc Quasi who earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Biological Sciences from the Ateneo de Manila University studied medicine at the UPCM and graduated in 1965. During his schooling, he participated in the UPCM-Kansas University student exchange program. He became a fellow on Tumor Immunology at the University of Connecticut and Membrane Biophysics at the Harvard Medical School in the United States of America for four years.

After his fellowship, Doc Quasi became a Professor of physiology at the UP College of Medicine, and eventually served as the UPCM dean from 1984 to 1988.



Dr. Romualdez showing the medallion after delivering the first Chancellor Florentino B. Herrera Memorial Lecture in October 2009. With him are Dr. Herrera's widow, Assoc. Justice Amurfina Herrera and then Chancellor Ramon Arcadio

Doc Quasi became a Medical Adviser from 1979 to 1982 of the Marcos Administration to the then Minister of Health. He became a consultant to former Senator Juan Flavio and a local government consultant for health sector reforms. He was the first Director of the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM) from 1981 to 1984, a facility under the Department of Health (DOH). He also became the first Executive Director of the Philippine Council for Health Research and Development (PCHRD), under the Department of Science and Technology from 1982-1986.

Doc Quasi was subsequently appointed as Assistant Health Secretary by Secretary of Health Alfredo Bengzon during



Dr. Quasi in one of his speaking engagements.

the Aquino Administration in 1988 but he opted to work for the World Health Organization's (WHO) Western Pacific Region holding position as acting Regional Adviser in Development of Human Resources for Health in 1988 until 1990. From 1990 to 1996, he became Director of Health Services, Development and Planning. At some point,

he also served as WHO Representative to the DOH.

Doc Quasi served various organizations and held different positions. He served as President of Friendly Care Foundation, Inc. in 2001-2004; various leadership capacities in the Culion Foundation Inc.

(CFI) from 1982-2013; Chairman in the Medicine Alliance Council; Senior Policy Adviser, Health Policy Development Project, UPEcon Foundation, UP Diliman School of Economics; a member of WHO Bi-Regional Reference Group on People at the Center of Care Initiative, Southeast Asia and Western Pacific Regions; Director of Health and Human Values Program, M-Tech Hospital, Makati City; and Freelance Consultant on Health Development. He became the Dean of the Graduate School of Health Sciences, Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila in 2008 to 2011. He also served as consultant to various institutions, programs, and projects.

Doc Quasi was appointed health secretary by then President Joseph 'Erap' Ejercito Estrada on September 11, 1998 until 2001 when President Estrada was forced to step down from Malacañang. Doc Quasi followed his appointer's campaign slogan 'Erap para sa mahirap' (Erap for the poor) during his term as Health Secretary.

Doc Quasi's most significant achievements as Health Secretary were the formulation of the Health Sector Reform Agenda

(HSRA) and his inputs in the formulation of the National Drug Policy.

DOH launched the HRSA in 1999 that focused on five key health areas of health reforms. These are improving management of government hospitals and providing them fiscal flexibility and autonomy; securing stable, generous multi-year funding for

regulatory agencies like the Bureau of Food and Drug Industries (BFAD), quarantine, health surveillance; and expanding the health coverage through the national health insurance program or PhilHealth especially to the indigents and the informal sector consisting mostly of the self-employed. With the HRSA, PhilHealth had the most rapid growth

cheaper drugs without granting them brand names, the kind now known since then as “generics.”

In his National Drug Policy, effective regulation of drugs was implemented as the agency worked on barring substandard medicine. In his pursuit of lowering further the prices of drugs, Doc Quasi thought of issuing an administrative

efforts to oust President Estrada eventually became successful.

The clamor initiated by Doc Quasi proved to create an awareness on the consciousness of the lawmakers to prompt pharmaceutical companies to come up with explanations for the high prices of their drugs. After his term, Doc



Dr. Quasi as the Health Secretary during the term of President Joseph Ejercito Estrada

priority public health programs; promoting development of local health systems and ensuring their effective performance and organizing sub-optimal municipal health units into Inter Local Health Zones (ILHZs); strengthening the capacities of health

in enrolment of indigents from 1999 to 2000, when the membership expanded to more than 1.7 million from the previous half a million.

Doc Quasi is also known as the brains behind the Generics law where drug firms started manufacturing

order (AO) that will prevent the multinationals from using their brand names in whichever form of advertising. This caused opposition from pharmaceutical firms. With this and all events thereafter became the controversial issue of his stint as Health Secretary. Unfortunately, the proposed A.O. never materialized when the

Quasi became involved in other health reforms such as the passage and implementation of the “sin tax” law to curb smoking and drinking, more stringent application of laws against the unsafe and unethical use of stem cell treatments, and as a feminists and Reproductive Health advocate, Doc Quasi fought vocally and tirelessly for the passage of

the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health (RPRH) Law.

Doc Quasi was also instrumental in the development of the Department of Science and Technology National Ethics Committee, created through the DOST Special Order 84-053 series of 1984, to promote ethics review in health research.

Awards and recognition also served as his motivators. Doc Quasi was the first recipient of Outstanding Young Scientist Awardee in 1980 given by the National Science Development Board, now known as the Department of Science and Technology.

Doc Quasi died on October 14, 2013. A day after his passing, the DOH acknowledged his contributions to the health sector. Then DOH Secretary Dr. Enrique Ona said Doc Quasi will be “sorely missed as our ally in championing for health reforms.”

The Department of Science and Technology-Philippine Council for Health Research and Development (DOST-PCHRD) in collaboration with the DOH initiated the Alberto G. Romualdez, Jr. Outstanding Health Research Award (AROHRA) which encourages researchers to be sensitive to the



Health Secretary Dr. Romualdez, Jr. speaks on "Ethics in Public Service"

scientific and technological requirements of the health delivery system and rewards those whose research has contributed significantly to addressing prevalent health issues.

“He mentored several generations of health leaders who continue to pursue his vision,” affirmed Dr. Gideon Lasco, a former research assistant and mentee of Doc Quasi when they worked together in the University Health Care Study Group in the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

“I have known Doc Quasi since I was a medical student. Despite his status as the elder statesman of the health sector, he was almost grandfatherly to me and my colleagues. But at the same time, when it

comes to policy debates, he spoke with great clarity and candor,” added Dr. Lasco.

On his most memorable times with Doc Quasi, Dr. Lasco recounted the time he last saw him at the WHO WPRO Office in UN Avenue, where Doc Quasi spent a part of his career.

“I was about to go to the Netherlands to take up my PhD in Medical Anthropology when he told me: ‘With your education, you can work anywhere and earn a lot, but working for your country is a privilege that no salary can match.’”

Dr. Quasi did not only work on developing strategic health reforms in the Philippine health care system. He walked his talk

of serving the Philippines and the Filipinos first and encouraged other physicians to do so because he knew that this is one of the ways to ensure the success of Universal Health Care.

He was posthumously awarded with a Senate Resolution 927 authored by Senator Pia Cayetano. The resolution honors Secretary Alberto “Quasi” G. Romualdez Jr., who played a crucial and instrumental role in the passage of key health legislations, such as the Reproductive Health Law, PhilHealth Law, Sin Tax Law, and the Cheaper Medicines Act and commemorates his legacy in health reforms and other invaluable contributions to the health sector.

Dr. Juan M. Flavier: A Doctor for the People

By Fedelynn M. Jemena

When former Senator **Juan M. Flavier** passed away on 30 October 2014, a great outpouring of grief and regret came from people who knew him. Even today, many people still speak with awe and respect in their voices when they talk about the man.

Diminutive (4'11"), quick-thinking, and witty, Flavier was charismatic to both masses and the intelligentsia. He was sincerely interested in people: he really asked them what they wanted and weighed these against professional assessments of their situations. More importantly, he got back to them with the ideas and solutions packaged clearly in the tongues they knew: the languages of the crowds of Nora Aunor and Kris Aquino, of the farmer and the professional, peppered with a healthy dose of salty humor. He was also willing to butt heads with powerful groups and personalities if a situation demanded it.

“Our 3 years together in the Department of Health showed that one can stay in government devoid of corruption, and be able to implement meaningful policies and successful programs within the realm of government.”

—Dr. Jaime Galvez Tan



June 23, 1935– October 30, 2014

The Formation of Juan Flavier

Born on 23 June 1935 to Dominador Acosta Flavier and Francisca Martin, Juanito Martin Flavier grew up in Benguet. He is the fourth child in a brood of six. His father worked as a machinist in the Balatoc Mines and, later, at Camp John Hay. Nanay Kikay was

a housewife who took care of the children: Fortunato (adopted; the orphaned child of an aunt), Dominga, Bonifacio, Agring, and Onyoy.

The child was baptized as *Juanito*, but preferred *Juan* as it was shorter and easier to spell. At school and throughout his life, that was

how he chose to spell his name.

Flavier excelled in school, graduating as valedictorian in both elementary (Baguio City Government, 1948) and high school (Baguio City High School, 1952). At BCHS, he showed signs of being an able communicator: class officer at every level; editor of the school newspaper; Baguio's little mayor for two years; junior police chief for a year; winner of several oratorical and writing contests. Flavier credited his talent in communicating to his father Mang Domeng who, although unable to finish elementary, loved to read and was well-known as a storyteller.

In 1952, Flavier entered UP Diliman to pursue a Bachelor of Science degree and finished it in 1956. It was there where he met the man who influenced him on how to make a community care program: Fr. John P. Delaney, SJ, an activist priest and advisor of the UP Student Catholic Action (UPCA) group to which Flavier belonged. Delaney gave him an unforgettable lesson: *Let people build what they need, and they will care for it for the rest of their lives.*¹

Flavier entered the UP College of Medicine and graduated in 1960. He ranked 26th in his class of 100. He then interned at the Philippine General Hospital, earning a Selected



Dr. Juan Flavier and wife Susana.

Outstanding Intern award, also in 1960. Aside from the topnotch academic and hospital training, Flavier said UP-PGH taught him the value of talking to patients (it was as “much for their therapy as my own sanity”) and the healing power of laughter.

The Barrio Doctor

It was in medical school that his decision to go to the barrios was cemented. President Ramon Magsaysay had just died in a plane crash in March 1957 and there was a national outpouring of grief. Reflecting on it, Flavier asked himself if he felt the same way for the country as Magsaysay did. His answer? *“Yes! I am studying medicine precisely because I believe in social justice! I will be a doctor for the poor! For my country above all.”*²

Another deciding factor was meeting Dr. Y.C.



Dr. and Mrs. Juan Flavier, 14 February 1961

James Yen, a Chinese scholar known for his work in mass literacy and rural reconstruction in China and other countries. His International Mass Education Movement (IMEM) established the Philippine Rural

Reconstruction Movement in 1952 (PRRM) to assist the poor sector of society. He later founded the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) in Silang, Cavite.³

Dr. Yen invited Flavier to

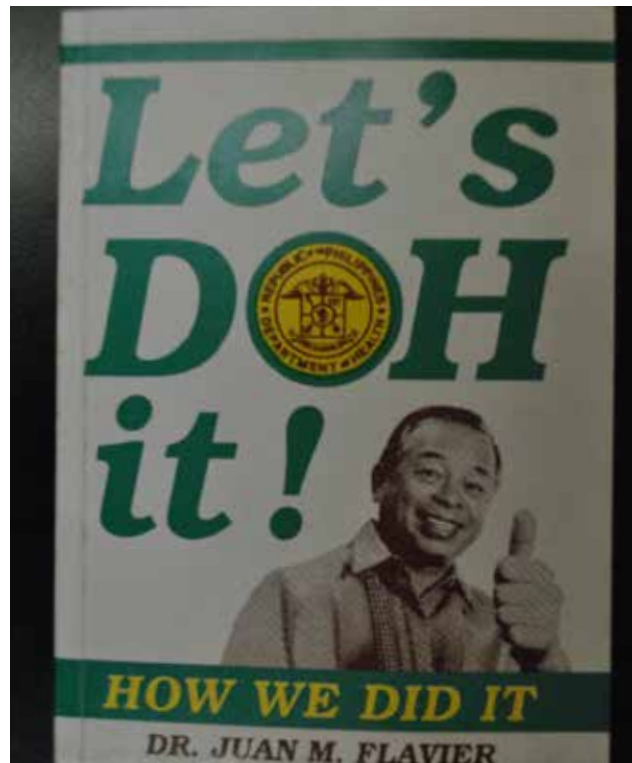
join PRRM for two years, starting in April 1961. He stayed for 31 years doing medical and community development work in Nueva Ecija and Cavite. In 1977, Flavier became president of PRRM; from 1978-92, he was IIRR president.

To be able to serve the barrios better, Flavier went back to school, earning a Certificate in Management Accounting in 1968 (Economic Development Foundation), Certificate in Communications in 1969 (Michigan State University), and a Master in Public Health in 1969 (John Hopkins University).

Flavier's time in the barrios resulted in many publications, including the popular "Doctor to the Barrios" (1970), "Parables of the Barrios" (Volumes 1-10), "From Barrio to Senado: An Autobiography" (2007) as well as more than a hundred articles on Rural Development, Family Planning, Public Health, Communications and Health Promotion.

Family Man

It was in Diliman that Flavier met his future wife, the beautiful Alma Susana Dumuk Aguila—daughter of Doroteo A. Aguila (a Protestant lay minister and former governor of La Union) and Donata D. Aguila (one of the Outstanding Rural Health Workers of the Philippines). Alma Susana majored in Social Work and



"More than 30 years of rural development work made him what he was—sensitive to people's needs, steeped in the wisdom of the simple folk." – Ma. Ceres P. Doyo⁵

graduated in 1956. On 14 February 1961, Flavier and Susan got married at Ellinwood Church in Malate, Manila. The union blessed them with four children: Jonathan David, Juanito Doroteo, James Gregorio, and Mary Jocelyn. All his children, Flavier said, had their first steps either in Nueva Ecija or Cavite.

Flavier described Susana as the wind beneath his wings, the woman who "by her own sacrifice and hard work, afforded me the luxury of being the idealist. It is Susan who has literally taken care of me and my children's every need."⁴

Jonathan (Jondi) became a doctor. He is the Executive Director of the Philippine Center for Population

and Development. Juanito (Johnnet) is a businessman who owns the Little John Restaurant at Camp John Hay and manages the family's Beyond The Sunset Memorial Park (a columbarium and crematorium) in Baguio City. James is the property manager of Tambulilit, Inc., the family corporation. The youngest, Joy, became her father's secretary at the Department of Health. Now known as Joy Alampay (wife of Roby Alampay of TV 5), she is the Director for International Programs of Neuron: Leadership and Communication Center for Asia and the Pacific.

The "Let's DOH It!" Guy (Secretary of Health, 1992-95)

In 1992, Pres. Fidel V.

Ramos picked Dr. Juan Flavier as his DOH Secretary. Flavier's executive team included Dr. Jaime Galvez-Tan as Undersecretary, Dr. Susan Pineda (now Mercado) as Head Executive Assistant, and Dr. Francis Cruz as head of the Press Information and Health Education Service (PIHES).⁶

At the beginning of his term, this media-savvy physician used himself as the poster guy for the DOH's programs. He and the DOH used his height, naughty grin, folksy humor, and paired them with catchy slogans to attract support from the people. They launched "Let's DOH It!" capitalizing on Nike's popular "Let's Do It!" campaign. Coupled with the thumbs up sign, the slogan was short and playful enough to be memorable, yet, pushed people to do something about their health. The slogan made the DOH more visible to the public. Children, even adults, shouted "Let's DOH It!" when they saw him. Celebrities like Vilma Santos, The Apo Hiking Society, Sharon Cuneta, Richard Gomez, Tetchie Agbayani, and Ogie Alcasid volunteered their services for the DOH campaigns.

Flavier and his team identified priority issues for his term and created health campaigns for them. Some of these were: Oplan Alis Disease, a massive



Yosi Kadiri campaign

immunization campaign which led to the Philippines being officially declared by the World Health Organization as polio-free by 1998. Yosi Kadiri, considered by many as the most successful tobacco control drive in the country. (revived in 2017 by the DOH.), Family Planning Program that championed both natural and artificial methods in spacing childbirth (for the health of the mother) and preventing unwanted pregnancy. HIV/AIDS health information campaign, the country's first prevention program on the disease which brought high social awareness. Oplan Sagip Mata provided free operations and services to arrest the increasing rate of blindness in the country. Sangkap Pinoy, a campaign against micronutrient

malnutrition. Pusong Pinoy targeted cardiovascular diseases. Sariling Salata sa Suso, a breast cancer awareness program. Doctors to the Barrios, a program that still continues to this day, deploys graduates of medical schools to poor and remote municipalities.

Other health programs were Baby and Mother Friendly Hospitals, Sampung Halamang Gamot, Stop TB, Kontra Kolera, Patak Health Centers, Healthy Places Initiative, National Voluntary Blood Service Program, and Hataw Fitness Program.^{7,8,9}

The Honorable Senator (1995-2000; 2001-07)
UPCN Auditorium, late 1990s. Sen. Flavier was a guest in a health

organization's forum. As usual, he made people laugh with his anecdotes, but one caught us. He said the stories about lobby groups attempting to bribe senators and Congress people were true. One tobacco lobby group placed Php 20 million on his table, his for the taking if he were to support them. Flavier refused the bribe, crediting his vigilant staff with helping him resist such temptations.

In 1995, Dr. Juan Flavier ran for senator under Pres. Ramos's Lakas-CMD (Lakas ng Tao-Christian Muslim Democrats) Party. Some believed Ramos did it not only to clinch a majority win for his party in the elections, but also to diffuse tension with the Roman Catholic Church over Flavier's aggressive family planning stance.

Ramos, however, said that with a senatorial bid, Flavier can make permanent policy through legislation.¹⁰

Flavier landed fifth in the Top 12 senatorial list for the 10th Congress. Due to his outstanding performance, he ran again in the 2001 elections, this time under Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's Lakas-KAMPI-CMD. He landed No. 2 in the Top 12.

In both terms, Flavier distinguished himself, preferring to "strive not to be the best, but the most useful senator" according to former executive assistant Ramon Navarra Jr.¹¹ The Senate website noted that the senator attended the most number of committee hearings, with zero absences

from the sessions. He chaired the Committees on Health and Demography, Education, Social Justice, and Ethics. From 2002-07, Flavier served as Senate President Pro Tempore.

Dr. Jaime Galvez Tan wrote that Flavier did not use his pork barrel, but channeled these instead through the Land Bank for low-cost loans to farmer and fisherfolks.¹²

Senator Flavier authored/co-authored/passed/sponsored the following laws: *Traditional Medicine Law, Poverty Alleviation Law, Anti-Money Laundering Act of 2001, Declaring Eidul-Fitr as a National Holiday, Barangay Micro-Business Enterprise, National Service Training Program for Tertiary Students of 2002, Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, Clean Air Act, Plant Variety Protection Act, Indigenous People's Rights Act, Amendments to the Quarantine Law, Philippine Nursing Act of 2002, and Tobacco Regulation Act.*

He earned many awards in his life, the most notable being the Ten Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) award in Rural Development (1967), Ramon Magsaysay Institutional Award for International Understanding (1986), Civil Service Commission's Dangal ng Bayan Award (1994), Hellen Keller International Award for



People loved Flavier not only because of his humor and approachability but also because of his integrity, honesty and hard work. Illustration by Rene Elevara for "Flavier's Legacy" (Cebu Daily News)

Blindness Prevention/Child Survival (1994), and the Golden Heart Presidential Award by Pres. Fidel V. Ramos (1998). But it was a simple student award from UP-PGH which he said he valued most: *1959 Mosby Book Award* for interns "with the best bedside manners." To him, it meant that his heart had not hardened against pain.

Legacies

Sen. Flavier died in October 2014 of multiple organ failures due to pneumonia at the ICU of the National Kidney Transplant Institute in Quezon City. His remains were cremated.

In an article he wrote for Rappler, Dr. Jaime Galvez Tan said that Flavier's core staff at the DOH dreamt of a Philippines led by President Juan Flavier. He wrote that his former boss would have been a great one. *"Our 3 years together in the Department of Health showed that one can stay in government devoid*

*of corruption, and be able to implement meaningful policies and successful programs within the realm of government. We learned what government can do best and what government cannot do. We recognized that government cannot do it alone and government would need the partnership of NGOs, the private business sectors, community-based organizations, people's organizations, and faith-based groups."*¹³

References:

¹²Flavier, Juan M. "From Barrio to Senado: An Autobiography." [si] Dr. Juan M. Flavier (c 2007)

³Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia. "Y.C. James Yen." Link: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Y.C._James_Yen

⁴Torrevillas, Domini M. "Susan Flavier, the wind beneath Johnny's wings." *Philippine Star*. 4 December 2017. Link: <https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2017/12/04/1765366/susan-flavier-wind-beneath-johnnys-wings#XZczdL3zOx4JIO7m.99>

⁵Doyo, Ma. Ceres P. "Flavier, a barrio parable." *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. 6 November 2014. Link: <http://opinion.inquirer.net/79909/flavier-a-barrio-parable>

⁶Flavier, Juan M. "From Barrio to Senado: An Autobiography." [si] Dr. Juan M. Flavier (c 2007)

⁷Senate of the Philippines: 17th Congress. "Senator Juan M. Flavier: Still 'DOH-ing' It!" Link: <https://www.senate.gov.ph/>

[senators/sen_bio/flavier_bio.asp](https://www.senate.gov.ph/senators/sen_bio/flavier_bio.asp)

⁸Department of Health. "Juan Flavier." Link: <https://portal2.doh.gov.ph/node/1643>

⁹Galves Tan, Jaime Z. "Juan M. Flavier: The Filipino Health Hero." *Rappler*. 31 October 2014 <https://www.rappler.com/nation/73626-juan-flavier-filipino-health-hero>

¹⁰Sauler, Erika et al. "Tributes pour in for poorest senator Juan Flavier." *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. 01 November 2014. Link: <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/648180/tributes-pour-in-for-poorest-senator-juan-flavier#ixzz5PTP5LgRa>

¹¹Sauler, Erika. "DOH employees remember Flavier as inspirational leader, 'small giant'." *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. 04 November 2014. Link: <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/648794/doh-employees-remember-flavier-as-inspirational-leader-small-giant>

¹²Galves Tan, Jaime Z. "Juan M. Flavier: The Filipino Health Hero." *Rappler*. 31 October 2014 <https://www.rappler.com/nation/73626-juan-flavier-filipino-health-hero>

¹³Ibid.

Photo sources: Senator Juan M. Flavier – from www.senate.gov.ph

Book cover. "Let's DOH It! How We Did It." By Juan M. Flavier. Link: <http://www.healthandlifestyle.com.ph/the-cabinets-funnyman/the-cabinets-funnyman-as-remembered-by-his-president-4/>

"Yosi Kadiri" campaign. Link: <https://kusineradiaries.wordpress.com/2014/11/01/lets-doh-it-a-small-tribute/>

Santos, Tina G. "Cancer survivors recall Flavier 'Yosi Kadiri' campaign." *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. 1 November 2014. Link: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/648248/cancer-survivors-recall-flavier-yosi-kadiri-campaign>

Illustration for "Flavier's Legacy" by Rene Elevara: <https://cebudailynews.inquirer.net/46866/flaviers-legacy>

Dr. Serafin C. Hilvano: Pillar of Modern Philippine Surgery

By Cynthia M. Villamor

He put the Philippines on the global surgical map and inspired many Filipino surgeons to pursue the highest standards of care for their patients.



March 31, 1944–October 17, 2014

He was the top surgical diplomat of the Philippines for more than two decades, one of the leaders of laparoscopic surgery in South Asia, co-founder of the Endoscopic and Laparoscopic Surgeons of Asia, and leader of hepatopancreato biliary surgery in the Philippines. He helped create the Asian Hepatopancreatobiliary

Association, a chapter of the international organization.

In 2009, during the 129th meeting of the American Surgical Association (ASA), the oldest and most prestigious surgical organization in America, **Dr. Serafin C. Hilvano** was awarded Honorary Membership, the only Filipino surgeon accorded

this recognition due to his role in introducing endoscopic and laparoscopic surgery in the Philippines and being a leader of the innovation in South Asia.

For his daughter, Dr. Anna Margarita Hilvano-Corsiga, more than his pioneering works in the field of surgery and telemedicine, his greatest legacy are the men and women he has trained, a generation of surgeons skilled in the practice and willing to learn and to embrace the future.

“They are now the current leaders, doing pioneering work in the field of surgery. He had the gift to inspire people not just to do well, but to look beyond and see where boundaries can be pushed. Long after the awards and recognition have faded into memory, they will continue the work that he had begun. They are his truest and most enduring legacy, for they will, in turn, inspire the next generation to pursue new and greater things,” Dr. Anna Melissa declared.

Dr. Hilvano literally and figuratively cut a “robust” figure in the national and global surgical landscape

during the almost five decades that he served as its practitioner, teacher, administrator, and Information Technology advocate.

Early Life and Influences

Dr. Hilvano, born on March 31, 1944, was from Mandaluyong City. He took his pre-medicine course at the University of the Philippines and obtained his medical degree from UP Manila in 1971. He had his internship and residency training at the UP-Philippine General Hospital (PGH). Following his surgical residency at the PGH, he had further training at MD Anderson, Sloan Kettering, and University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA) hospitals in the United States.

He devoted 38 years to the UP College of Medicine-PGH, from being a member of the surgical consultant staff starting in 1981, later as division chief of the Gastrointestinal Surgery (1988-2000). Returning to Manila from his UCLA training, Dr. Hilvano rose through the ranks at the UPCM, becoming a professor in 1996, head of the Endoscopy Unit (2001-2005), and chair of the Department of Surgery from 2007 until his retirement in May 2010.

“Having been widowed early, he had to raise a son and three daughters as a



Dr. Hilvano performing surgery with daughters Dr. Anna Melissa and Dr. Anna Margarita.

single parent. He had a very illustrious career, but at the same time, he had a strong presence in our lives as a father. He was our role model, our pillar of strength and our guide. He never imposed his wishes on us, rather he patiently guided and waited for us to come into our own. He taught us by example, showing us the value of persistence and hard work. The seemingly impossible, becomes possible with faith and perseverance. He showed us how to live life to the fullest, grabbing each opportunity to live out our dreams,” Dr. Anna Melissa stated.

Being the only parent for most of their formative and adult years, he was a great influence on his children. “He showed us how to be strong in the midst of adversity and intense personal crisis with the illness and loss of his wife at an early age. He taught

us the value of hard work and dedication, courage and determination -- to not be afraid of the unknown, the new, or the different,” she recalled.

Another daughter, Dr. Anna Margarita recounted that Dr. Hilvano’s training as a varsity athlete in his collegiate life instilled in him a life of discipline, persistence, determination, and balance. So in all his endeavors – from being a young doctor, to an educator, to a hospital administrator – he became determined to perform his duties in the best way he could.

An avid sportsman, Dr. Hilvano was a member of the UP Varsity Basketball Team (1963-1965) and UP Varsity Volleyball Team (1963). He has participated in various tennis and golf tournaments and has emerged as champion in many of these.

He was a purposeful leader and a gentle physician.

To his colleagues and residents, he was known as a stern consultant, always emphasizing quality and excellence. But to his patients, he was a kind and caring doctor, always with a big smile and jolly spring to his step. He also believed in balance. Despite all his endeavors, he continued to enjoy sports and travel as a manner to balance out the stresses from work.

PH on the Global Surgical Map

Dr. Hilvano put the Philippines on the global surgical map and inspired many Filipino surgeons to pursue the highest standards of care for their patients.

He believed that endoscopes were essential tools for the surgeon and following his training in



With UP Fighting Maroons basketball teammates 1963



Dr. Hilvano at the American Surgical Association meeting.

Japan, Germany, Taiwan and Hongkong, he shared his expertise with surgeons and surgeons in-training at the PGH. He was a member of the team which performed the first laparoscopic cholecystectomy in the Philippines (PGH, 1990), ushering the laparoscopic era in the country. Dr. Hilvano went on to organize the Philippine

Association of Endoscopic Surgeons in 1991.

He was the first Filipino who served as Governor in the newly formed Endoscopic and Laparoscopic Surgeons of Asia (ELSA), a position he held from 1991 till 2003; he later served as its president in 2001-2002. Dr. Hilvano was a member of the Philippine College

of Surgeons (PCS) Board of Regents (1991-1994, 1997-1999), president of the Philippine Society of General Surgeons (PSGS) Metro Manila Chapter (1999-2000) and president (2000-2001). He had given various lectures and presented numerous papers he had authored, both locally and internationally.

He is a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons and has contributed broadly to the international peer-reviewed literature in biliary and endoscopic surgery.

Such breadth and depth of experience can only come from a person with a holistic and long-term view of things. His daughter describes him as a true visionary. "He is recognized as the pioneer in laparoscopic surgery in the country and laid the foundation of endoscopic and

laparoscopic surgery in the Philippines. He performed the first ever laparoscopic cholecystectomy in the Philippines at the Philippine General Hospital in 1993. He has been recognized locally and internationally for his many achievements both in the field of surgery and public service," Dr. Hilvano-Corsiga said.

IT Advocate for Health

I personally witnessed Dr. Hilvano's passion and desire to utilize the power and impact of Information Technology as a tool for patient care while covering some of such events. Heading the UP Manila Information Technology Council at that time, he initiated teleconferencing at the PGH Department of Surgery and as coordinator of the Asia Pacific Advanced Network Medical Working Group, he enabled UP Manila to experience its first teleconferencing activity with other Asia Pacific university hospitals right on campus.

Organizing and overseeing the 1st UP Manila-VietDuc University (Hanoi) Live Telesurgery on March 29, 2012, he was a strong and committed participant and partner to his counterparts in Vietnam.

During that milestone moment, audiences at the PGH Estrada Hall composed of UP medical students and professors

had the rare chance of witnessing the first live, interactive surgical teleconferencing between the two universities as surgeons from both sides performed two different laparoscopic operations.

The historic event aimed to share best country and institutional practices and experiences in doing surgeries and was the first in a series conducted with several foreign universities.

This devotion for IT in health care did not escape Dr. Anna Melissa's recollection of her father's contributions. "He recognized the enormous potential benefits that the technology can bring to surgical training and mentoring, knowledge sharing, institutional and regional cooperation and ultimately to healthcare. He pursued this with the same passion and fervor as he did with endoscopy and laparoscopy, knowing well that connectivity can enhance healthcare in our country's provinces as well as bring in new knowledge from our regional partners."

Apart from telesurgery, Dr. Hilvano was instrumental in realizing the first ever telerounds at the UP-PGH on May 5, 2010 with surgeons led by Dr. Hilvano lending their medical opinion from the General Surgery (GS) III Conference Room while a 5th year resident reported a patient's condition from Ward 2. A first in the country, it was conducted by



The 1st UP Manila-VietDuc University(Hanoi) Live Telesurgery organized by Dr. Hilvano was held on March 29, 2012 at the PGH Estrada Hall.

the Hepatobiliary Division (GS III) of the PGH Department of Surgery, in collaboration with the UP Manila – National Telehealth Center (UPM-NThC), and Network Bridge Inc.

Dr. Hilvano later stated: "We are looking forward to use this technology with our partners in remote areas. We would also like to watch our resident surgeons perform laparoscopic and endoscopic procedures from our GS III office."

ASA membership

The ASA, founded in 1880, is composed of a select group of professors and chairs of various academic medical institutions in the US. Membership is

by invitation only, upon nomination of a member. Foreign honorary members are nominated and screened by the Honorary Membership committee. To date, there are only 70 honorary members.

At the conferment ceremonies held at the Hyatt Grand Champions golf resort in Indian Wells, California, Dr. Hilvano was introduced by ASA president Prof. Anthony Whittemore, who was chief medical officer of the Brigham and Women's Hospital, a teaching affiliate of the Harvard Medical School. Whittemore said Dr. Hilvano "led surgery into the 21st century, by introducing laparoscopy in 1990 and serving as the number one surgical

diplomat of the Philippines over the last two decades."

"A son of the Philippines, Serafin Hilvano understands the need for community service, for giving back to the community from which he emerged. He has raised money to buy endoscopes for his hospital, to bring it up to date, when internal resources were lacking. He persuaded pharmaceutical companies to deliver millions of dollars of much-needed medicine to the poor, who would otherwise have remained untreated for common curable infectious diseases."

Other Honors and Awards

Dr. Hilvano received numerous awards for his



Dr. Hilvano after receiving the award as UPMAS 2013 Alumni Family of the Year with other awardees

contributions to surgery and health care in the Philippines, among which are the Outstanding Consultant (1984, 1985, 1986; UP-PGH) and Outstanding Teacher in the Clinical Sciences (2003; UP College of Medicine) and Professor Emeritus in 2012 (Department of Surgery, College of Medicine, UP Manila). He was awarded the Enrique Garcia Professorial Chair for 2001-2002; UP Medicine Class 1940 Professorial Chair for 2007-2009; Oblation Award, Pillar of Excellence In Leadership and Management (UP Manila Alumni Association 2008); Most Distinguished Bedan Award (San Beda College Alumni Association, 2008); and Outstanding Alumni, UP Manila.

He was bestowed the Dr. Jose Rizal Memorial Award for the Distinguished Filipino Physician in Clinical Practice, Philippine Medical Association (October

2005) for distinguishing himself in clinical work through ethical practice and exemplary conduct in dealing with patients; Honorary Member, Rotary Club Makati (June 2003) for institutionalizing the In-Hospital Surgical Mission at the PGH, benefitting the indigent patients of the outpatient clinics by decreasing their waiting time for elective major and medium operations as well as lessening the backlog cases for operation; Service Above Self Award, Rotary Club International (July 1996) for outstanding outreach service to the community; and Honorary Senior Fellow, International College of Surgeons, Japan Section (March 1993) for notable contributions in the field of Surgery.

In 2012, he was accorded the lifetime honorific title of Professor Emeritus of Surgery.

Ode to a Friend

In his November 3, 2014 Philippine Star column, classmate, friend, and Palanca awardee Alfred A. Yuson paid tribute to Dr. Hilvano:

“We’ll treasure most Doc Boy H.’s convivial and hail-fellow-well-met spirit, sense of camaraderie, generosity (in the last few years he conducted life-saving surgery on a couple of our batchmates), and dedication to family (he drove to Dinalupihan in Bataan and back every weekend to be with his wife Cecile who ran the hospital there, and performed commendable surgical operations together with two of his daughters).”

Former UPM Chancellor and San Beda High School classmate Dr. Ramon Arcadio, who spoke on behalf of the Bedans during the necrological services said: “May Boy H. find eternal happiness and unending Heavenly bliss as he begins life everlasting.

Farewell, Boy H., dear friend and classmate, Surgeon par Excellence and Professor Emeritus.”

References:
Incisions, Newsletter of the PCS, Vol. 34, No. 3 – Oct-Dec 2014 issue <https://www.philstar.com/other-sections/the-good-news/2009/05/24/470367/pgh-surgeon-named-honorary-asa-member#ozxL81ei7yG2Dd5F.99>
 “UP-PGH surgeon named honorary ASA member”, 24 May 2009 (<http://www.philstar.com/good-news/470367/pgh-surgeon-named-honorary-asa-member>)

UP Manila Newsletter, July-Aug 2011 issue

UP Manila Newsletter, March-April 2012 issue

Ang Maninistis, published by the UP-PGH Department of Surgery, 1996

Maraming Salamat sa Taos Pusong Paglilingkod

Ang mabuhay sa mundo ay isang biyaya
Pagpapalang galing sa Diyos na may likha
Kaya kung lumisan man dito sa lupa
Pamanang nagawa ay yaman ding sadya.

Dr. FLORENTINO B. HERRERA Jr. sa Kolehiyo ng Medisina
Pinakauna ring nahirang na Chancellor ng UP Manila
Isinulong ang School of Health Sciences para sa masa
Doktor sa mga rehiyon at komunidad ang kailangan talaga.

Dr. ALBERTO G. ROMUALDEZ ay isa ring manggagamot
Dekano ng College of Medicine at sa adbokasiya ay nakatutok
Isinulong din ang SHS at pinaunlad ang post grad course
Maging ang Universal Health Care kanyang itinampok.

DR. MINDA LUZ M. QUESADA mula sa Kolehiyo ng Pamublikong Kalusugan
Isang nars, edukador, aktibista at sadyang makabayan
Magna Carta of Public Health Workers ang sadyang tinutukan
Upang mga karapatan nila ay tunay na maingatan.

Dr. GEMINIANO T. DE OCAMPO, sa larangan ng Ophthalmology
Father of Modern Ophthalmology siya'y kilala siyempre
Philippine Eye Bank, siya ang founder na masasabi
Unang hinirang na Pangulo Philippine Ophthalmological Society.

Dr. JUAN M. FLAVIER, Senador ng ating bayan
Sikat na kalihim ng departamento ng kalusugan
Stop TB, Oplan Alis Disease, at Doctor to the Barrios ang ilan
Sa mga programang LET's DOH IT ang tumatak sa isipan.

Dr. SERAFIN C. HILVANO, isang sikat na siruhano
Laparoscopic surgery ang talagang pinauso
Endoscopic surgery at telemedicine ang kombinasyon nito
Kaya naman "Pillar of Modern Surgery" ang naging titulo

Dr. MAGDALENA C. CANTORIA, naging dekana at Professor Emeritus
Sa Kolehiyo ng Parmasiya ay sumikat na lubos
Bilang dalubhasa sa mga halamang gamot
Mga ginawang pananaliksik ay di kayang malimot.

Dr. CHARLOTTE A. FLORO, naging dekana ng CAMP
Allied Medical Professions ang pinaunlad na tunay
BSOT at BSPT kurikulum ang tumatak sa isipan
Kauna-unahang nagbukas ng kurso dito sa ating bayan.



Josephine D. Agapito

*Guro sa Department of Biology, College of Arts and Sciences, UP Manila;
nagsusulat at bumibigkas ng mga tula tungkol sa agbam sa DZEC tuwing Linggo, 5 pm sa
programang "Pinoy Scientist."*

