

*The Year 2002*  
*Presidential Awards*  
*for Filipino Individuals*  
*and Organizations Overseas*

MALACAÑAN PALACE  
MANILA



## MESSAGE

My warmest congratulations to the recipients of the **Year 2002 Presidential Awards for Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas**.

Time and again, I have acknowledged the vital contributions of overseas Filipinos to national development. They have shared their skills and expertise to enable the Philippines to benefit from new developments in science and technology. Remitting more than \$48 billion in the last 10 years, they have contributed to our country's economic stability despite numerous crises. Overseas Filipinos have also shown that they are dependable partners, providing alternative sources to augment much-needed resources for education, health, and infrastructure support in the country.

We pay tribute to the men and women who have dedicated themselves to uplifting the human condition, those who have advocated the cause of Filipinos worldwide, and who continue to bring pride and honor to the Philippines by their pursuit of excellence.

I join the rest of the Filipino Nation in congratulating the nominees and awardees of the Year 2002 Presidential Awards for Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas. By your achievements and accomplishments, you have shown the best in the Filipino.

*MABUHAY!*

  
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

MANILA  
12 December 2002

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
PASAY CITY



## MESSAGE

It is with great pride and honor that I congratulate the recipients of the Year 2002 Presidential Awards for Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas.

Decades ago, when a series of oil shocks sent our national economy and other economies into a tailspin, the Department of Labor and Employment which I then headed, managed to create new and exciting frontiers for job generation overseas. Like pioneers in search of new territory, young men skilled in construction and engineering bade their families farewell and flew into the desert plains of the Middle East to fulfill their dreams.

Today, there is hardly any territory left where a Filipino has not set foot on to work with diligence and selflessness. Sadly, we hardly hear of the success stories that have led to such a global demand for Filipino workers. They have become the pillars of so many economies. And while they now add up to millions, we at the Department of Foreign Affairs through our Posts would come to know of a select few who were able to affect other people's lives in ways that truly inspire. Through the Commission on Filipinos Overseas, a biennial search was launched for individuals and organizations that have led many of our overseas Filipinos to carry on, oceans away from their families, for better futures.

It is only fitting that we give these role models the recognition they deserve through the 2002 Presidential Awards for Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas. These awards gain greater value because none of the recipients even knew they were on the shortlist of winners. They did what they did because of the dictates of their hearts and sheer strength of their character.

To the awardees, you give the global Filipino community and the entire nation hope, courage and trust in the quiet goodness of our race.

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Blas F. Ople', written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

BLAS F. OPLE  
Secretary

PASAY CITY  
12 December 2002

Department of Foreign Affairs  
COMMISSION ON FILIPINOS OVERSEAS



## MESSAGE

The Commission on Filipinos Overseas joins the entire Filipino nation in greeting the 2002 Presidential Awardees, whose exemplary work and achievements have served the cause of Filipinos here and abroad, and continue to give pride to our country and people.

Two and a half centuries after Filipinos first established a small settlement in the new world, we have an overseas Filipino population that is very significant in its growing size and economic importance to both the Philippines and the countries where they live. More fittingly, we are all now part of an expanding transnational community of people who will be found living within and beyond the national territory. While more than seven million Filipinos have gone to live or work in many parts of the world, they continue to demonstrate a consciousness of their origins from a single country, and maintain a common active interest in life and progress at home. It is this sense of community that makes possible and relevant the ties we maintain with overseas Filipinos, and the honor we give to this year's group of awardees.

In congratulating the 2002 Presidential Awardees, we express our trust that through their eloquent examples, they will continue to inspire and influence others, and help bring out the best from our compatriots, specially second generation Filipinos overseas.

I take this opportunity to wish our awardees a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year, and *Mabuhay* to all!

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'J' followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

JOSE Z. MOLANO, JR.  
Executive Director

MANILA  
12 December 2002

*Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino*

*The Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino (LINKAPIL) Award is conferred on Filipino associations or individuals for exceptional contribution to progress and development in the Philippines*

*Awardee*

*Cosme R. Cagas, M.D.  
United States of America*



*Cosme R. Cagas, M.D.*

*United States of America*

Best known for being the founding president of Philippine Economic and Cultural Endowment (PEACE), Dr. Cosme R. Cagas, is a talented academic, a productive medical researcher and a multi-awarded physician.

Dr. Cagas was a consistent honor student in his student years. He obtained both his pre-medical and medical degrees from the University of the Philippines. He finished his internship and residency in the United States and received his fellowship in pediatric endocrinology and metabolism at the National Institute of Health and Human Development at the University of Oklahoma. Aside from his medical practice, he has held teaching positions at the University of the Philippines, University of Oklahoma and Southern Illinois University. He is a member of various medical organizations and has received numerous awards for professional achievement. He has published over 50 scientific papers internationally.

In 1986, Dr. Cagas, together with other civic-spirited physicians in the USA, founded PEACE. This initiative was an offshoot of the 1986 EDSA peaceful revolution. PEACE is a fund raising philanthropic organization whose activities center on providing deep wells for poor rural neighborhoods in the Philippines. The organization believes that a clean drinking water supply makes the best contribution to the health of children and adults. Other projects of PEACE include immunization of children in orphanages in Manila, and disaster and relief operations and support in the aftermath of the Mt. Pinatubo eruption and the 1990 earthquake. In 1996, PEACE received the Presidential Award (LINKAPIL) from President Fidel Ramos for its humanitarian service to the Filipinos on a continuing basis.

Dr. Cagas is also the founder of the Association of Filipino Physicians of Southern Illinois (AFPSI). Through AFPSI, physicians in the United States are able to serve their homeland through medical missions, donation of medicines and cash contributions. Under his leadership, Dr. Cagas initiated science scholarships for deserving students in the Philippines.

Dr. Cagas was the first elected speaker of the house of delegates of the Association of Philippine Physicians in America (APPA). He also founded the University of the Philippines Medical Association (UPMASA) serving as its president for three years. The UPMASA now has 12 chapters throughout the United States. Through the leadership of Dr. Cagas, the UPMASA has offered its invaluable service to the UP College of Medicine and the Philippine General Hospital. It has provided financial help for buildings, laboratory instruments and professorial chairs. In 1987, Dr. Cagas was awarded as the Most Outstanding Alumni Abroad by the University of the Philippines. He was also given the Most Outstanding Physician Award by the Philippine Medical Association.

He also serves as liaison between the Christ United Methodist Church of Fairview Hills, Illinois and the Holy Mountain Methodist Church of Ormoc, Leyte and the Visayas Districts of the Philippine United Methodist Church. Through his recommendation, the US church donated a van for the Ormoc church, augmented the salary of the local pastor and sponsored scholarships. Dr. Cagas is also personally involved in volunteer work for the lepers of Culion by soliciting aid from American organizations.

Aside from his philanthropic and other activities, he has also been editor of the Philippine American Bulletin for the past 10 years.

Dr. Cosme R. Cagas was born in Oroquieta City, Misamis Occidental. Whenever he goes home to his hometown, he does not fail to bring with him medicines which he provides when undertaking personal medical missions in places in Mindanao. Amidst his material and professional successes abroad, he has never forgotten to give something back to his fellow Filipinos. He is a man with a big heart and hand that is always ready to help.

# *Kaanib ng Bayan*

*The Kaanib ng Bayan Award is conferred on  
foreign private organizations for exceptional contribution to  
Philippine progress and development*

*Awardee*

International Medical Help for Children (A.M.I.E.)  
*Belgium*





## *International Medical Help for Children*

*Belgium*

The International Medical Help for Children (A.M.I.E.) is a non-government organization based in Belgium, dedicated to helping very poor Filipinos and other people from developing countries earn a decent living and overcome difficulties, by providing financial assistance for livelihood projects and sponsoring the education of children. Every year, about 300 Filipino students from different scholastic levels receive financial support from the organization for their schooling. It also conducts free medical treatment and provides support for various income generating projects.

A.M.I.E. makes a profound impact on the lives of its beneficiaries through simple mini-projects designed to encourage financial independence and creativity.

Mr. Timoteo Viñas is a physically handicapped watch repairman living in Novaliches. With the help he received from A.M.I.E. he was able to buy tools for his trade and build a small stall for working at the public market.

A sampaguita vendor, Mrs. R. San Jose has, for a long time, relied on a middleman for her source of income. A big percentage of her daily earnings used to go to the middleman who supplies sampaguita flowers. Ever since she received financial support from A.M.I.E., she started to operate her own business, and now gets the full net of her earnings by the end of the day. She has recently added religious articles to her thriving sampaguita business. She has paid all her debts and is now the master of her own life.

Mrs. Heidi Roque now runs a successful mini carinderia after getting support from A.M.I.E.. Since then, she has set up a bigger canteen on an empty lot near the factories. She is now able to save and raise her children without running to usurers for her business needs.

Mrs. Anita Santos sews clothes for a living. A factory owner pays her for every piece of clothing she finishes. A.M.I.E. extended financial support to her by providing money to purchase thread that she uses to embroider the clothes she makes. The assistance extended has helped her increase her earnings, and she is hoping to save enough to buy her own sewing machine.

Mr. Jesus Gonzales is grateful to A.M.I.E. for the pushcart that he was provided with, for which he could now gather empty bottles and old newspapers to sell to a recycling factory. He is earning well.

With the help he got from A.M.I.E., Mr. Felipe Cortes added two more piglets to the one he was initially raising. Now he is raising 6 piglets. With the income from his business, he was able to improve their dilapidated house and had even rented out one of its rooms for extra income.

A.M.I.E. has likewise lent its support to various institutions and needy communities in the Philippines. The Don Bosco Boy's Home in Cebu for example, received classroom furniture in support of its initiatives to educate and keep children off the streets. To compensate for the children's home expenses, A.M.I.E. also initiated an animal-raising project through its "small projects program". In Pasil, A.M.I.E. enabled the Mama Margaret Center to obtain sewing machines for training and employing women in the community.

May it be in the form of scholarships, micro-enterprise projects or free medical services, A.M.I.E. has extended more than P25 million worth of assistance to the Philippines since 1980, making our country one of the biggest, if not the biggest recipient of A.M.I.E.'s generosity.

These are but a few accounts about those who have benefited from the creative income-generating schemes of A.M.I.E.. In its own effective way, the organization is helping people regain their confidence and trust in what they can do, notwithstanding poverty and very limited resources.

For all their good work, A.M.I.E. deserves our praise and recognition.



# *Banaag*

*The Banaag Award is conferred on Filipino and foreign individuals or associations for advancing the cause of Filipino communities overseas or for supporting specific sectors / communities in the Philippines*

## *Awardees*

Babaylan-Switzerland  
*Switzerland*

William D. Dechavez  
*United States of America*

Estrella C. Beatty  
*Cyprus*

Ruby L. De Guzman-Formoso, M.D.  
*Canada*

Norma R. Benzon  
*United States of America*

Sonia S. Del Rosario  
*Canada*

Centre for Philippine Concerns - Australia  
*Australia*

Filipino Association in Brunei  
*Brunei Darussalam*

Lolita B. Compas  
*United States of America*

Filipino Communities Council of  
Australia, Inc.  
*Australia*

Zenaida S. Concepcion, M.D.  
*Libya*

Filipino Community Center, Inc.  
*United States of America*

*Awardees*

Marcos R. Fojas, M.D.  
*Greece*

National Organization of Professional  
Teachers - Hong Kong  
*Hong Kong Special Administrative Region*

Kalayaan  
*United Kingdom*

Philippine Association of Metropolitan  
Washington Engineers  
*United States of America*

Bridget Lew  
*Singapore*

N. Ravindranathan, M.D.  
*Brunei Darussalam*

Maharlika-Switzerland  
*Switzerland*

Francis V. Talangbayan, M.D.  
*United States of America*

Benjamin T. Manglona  
*CNMI*

Benjamin S. Tomelden, Jr.  
*United Kingdom*



*Babaylan-Switzerland*  
Switzerland

Even in very progressive countries like Switzerland, Filipino women could fall prey to different kinds of abuses, exploitation and discrimination. Babaylan-Switzerland was organized by a group of Filipino women precisely because of this problem.

“Babaylan” is the term used to call priestesses in pre-colonial Philippines. They were women who performed medical and religious roles in their respective tribes, and were held in high regard by their people. Calling this network “Babaylan” symbolizes a calling back to life of the old, courageous spirit of Filipinas.

Babaylan-Switzerland is an offshoot of Babaylan-Europe, an organization of Filipina migrant workers and homemakers based in Europe. It is well-known that more than half a million Filipinos reside in Europe, 80 percent of whom are women. Babaylan-Europe was organized to deepen the understanding of women’s and migrant issues and strengthen efforts to empower them in that continent. This idea inspired the eight Filipina leaders of women’s organizations in Switzerland who attended the European event to organize a Swiss chapter.

Babaylan-Switzerland was organized mainly for the following reasons: to create a network of Philippine women’s organizations in Switzerland; to encourage the setting up of women’s desks in other Filipino organizations; to link up with other women’s organizations and institutions in Switzerland that are sympathetic to third world issues; to train facilitators who will undertake the responsibility of establishing education and information programs on women’s issues and other concerns; to hold an annual forum of Philippine women in Switzerland; and to support lobbies and campaigns on issues affecting women. Its present members are Samahang Pilipina Bern, Samahang Pilipina Zurich, Samahang Pilipina Luzern, Samahang Pilipina Zug, Kapwa-Ina, Silayan, Diwang Kayumanggi, Tuluyang Pinoy, Balikatan, and Agbayan.

Since its inception, Babaylan-Switzerland has conducted various seminars and workshops on violence against women, marriage and partnership, learning as a tool for empowerment and binational relationships, among others. It has also participated in various symposia and women’s events in Europe. In 1997, it produced a video film entitled *Breaking the Silence*, a documentary film about four Filipina domestic workers. Aside from these, the organization has helped countless Filipinas in Switzerland who have gone through various struggles in many areas of their lives as workers, homemakers, wives, and women in a foreign land. It has helped open the eyes of Filipina migrant workers to their rights as women and restore their confidence in themselves.

Living in a strange land could prove to be very difficult, especially for Filipino women. It is heartening to know that there are organizations like Babaylan-Switzerland whose purpose is to help uplift their lives.

*Estrella C. Beatty*  
Cyprus



When six Filipinos were killed and many others were injured in a tragic bus accident in Cyprus, one of the first to offer assistance was Estrella Beatty, a native of Tuao, Cagayan and now a British citizen living in Cyprus. She gave her time visiting, giving moral support and comforting the victims and their relatives. She even accompanied Philippine officials in transporting the bodies back to the Philippines and helped raise funds for the benefit of the relatives of the fatalities.

Helping her *kababayans* is nothing new to Estrella. After all, she is not president of the Philippine Community Association in Cyprus for naught. Her role as “overseer” of the Filipino community in Cyprus keeps her in close touch with the Philippine Consulate, which in turn depends on her for help in matters involving the needs of Filipino migrants in that island country.

The Philippine Community Association in Cyprus has helped countless Filipinos in problems ranging from immigration status, employment abuses, sexual harassment, and illnesses. The association has organized fund-raising events to help meet the needs of women suffering from cancer and other sicknesses, and support other Filipino community associations in meeting the needs of their constituents. The group also helps promote the cultural traditions of the Philippines by participating in local events, organizing fairs and events such as the Philippine Centennial Celebration in 1998, in which the “Beauty of the Philippines” was portrayed in a cultural program. It also helps meet the needs of the poor and the physically handicapped people of Cyprus. Behind all these activities is the ever-energetic Estrella Beatty.

Estrella performs her activities as a personal passion. She has helped many Filipinos far beyond the call of duty. She has offered her home and support to countrymen who had nowhere to stay during times of trouble with their employers. She is also known to be active in church activities in her community.

Estrella spent her elementary and secondary education in her hometown of Tuao, Cagayan. She graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Commerce, major in Accounting from the Far Eastern University. In 1986, she went to work in Libya for the Voest Alpine Oilfield Division where she assisted other Filipino and Asian employees when they encountered problems with management.

Now, in Cyprus, where she is not allowed to work due to restrictions that bar spouses of expatriates from seeking employment, she devotes her time to her husband Stuart and three children, and of course, the Filipino community.

Wherever she may be, Estrella has proven that her heart goes out to those who need help, a quality deserving of respect and admiration.



## *Norma R. Benzon*

*United States of America*

One of the most prominent Filipinos in Houston for many years now has been the ever-energetic Norma Rieza Benzon. Norma's concern for her fellow Filipinos abroad and in the Philippines is widely known.

Norma was born and raised in Manila. She finished high school at St. Rita College and obtained her bachelor's degree in Architecture from the Mapua Institute of Technology. After practicing her profession as a licensed architect in Manila, she moved to Houston in 1972 where she received top honors from the American Institute of Banking. This earned her a teaching position at Houston Community College.

Subsequently, she worked for JP Morgan Chase where she rose from clerk to vice president and senior manager before retiring, after serving the company for 24 years. She is currently the chief executive officer and executive director of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) of Houston.

Since migrating to the United States, she has been active in various community and professional associations which earned her many honors and recognition, some of which are, the Community Achievement Award from the city of Houston in 1981, the Volunteer of the Year Award from YWCA in 1983, and the Gold Award (1995), Lending Hand Award (1996) and the Commitment to Leadership Award (2000) from United Way, the largest non-profit organization in the United States.

Her leadership and volunteer initiatives brought her into the limelight in Houston's local media. She has been featured in various newspapers like the *Houston Chronicle*, *Houston Sun* and *Forward Times*. She was featured on Channel 11 as one of five "Asians Making History Today," in celebration of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month in May 1996. In the same year, she was also conferred the True Heart Award by the Women's Federation for World Peace. She was featured this year on Channel 39 as an "Asian Heroine," and on Channel 13 in the celebration of Houston's Asian Heritage Month. She received the 1999 JP Morgan Chase Global Volunteer Award in New York and was featured as one of 500 Most Influential Asians in America by Avenue Magazine. Other major organizations that recognized Norma's leadership were the AIDS Foundation of Houston, Lions International, the Philippine-American Chamber of Commerce in Dallas, and the Asian American Coalition, among others.

What is most notable of Norma's many accomplishments, however, has to do with her charitable projects and activities in the Philippines. In 1999, former US President Jimmy Carter presented Norma with the Habitat for Humanity International Kingdom Builder Award for helping raise \$120,000 for building 15 homes for poor residents of Cavite, Parañaque, Bacolod, Dumaguete and General Santos. She received the Veterans Memorial Foundation award in 1993 for her role in helping ship 150,000 books to various libraries in Bicol, Leyte and Pangasinan. Norma's own alma mater presented her the Outstanding Alumna Award in 1995. In 2000, she was recognized by the parishioners of Our Lady of Fatima in Sta. Mesa for initiating fund-raising events to help finance the building of a parochial school.

For most of her life in the United States, Norma has been constantly involved in activities and organizations meant to promote the Philippines. She served as president of the Filipino-American Society of Texas in 1981, the Council of Philippine American Organizations in 1986, the Texas Association of Mapua Alumni in 1988, and the Filipino American Council of South Texas in 2000. She spearheaded the annual Santacruz in Houston in 1981, which raised over \$500,000 that went to funding scholarship grants to deserving poor students in the Philippines.

With the support of her husband Meredith and their son Red, Norma continues to help others as she proudly represents the Philippines in many endeavors. A woman whose activities and accomplishments run kilometric, but whose feet remain grounded in her native soil – that is Norma Benzon.





*Centre for Philippine Concerns - Australia*  
Australia

The Centre for Philippine Concerns – Australia (CPCA) is a non-profit community organization run by a handful of Filipino migrants in Victoria, Australia. Chaired by Maria Theresa Selga, the center has been in operation for over eleven years now with the continued help and support of its volunteers.

The CPCA was organized to empower the Filipino migrant community, by promoting its well-being and rights to better economic, cultural and political life in Australia. It was also formed to generate support among the Filipinos and the broader Australian communities for justice, peace, national sovereignty and sustainable development in the Philippines, as well as lend support to the struggle of other people for self-determination and social justice.

Since its inception, the CPCA has been active in community service campaigns on issues that confront Filipino women and children in Australia, such as marital murders, serial sponsorships, mail order brides, sex tourism and domestic violence. As a result, the Department of Immigration in Australia has started to look at the situation of women migrants more closely, and instituted changes in policies on serial sponsorship.

In 1992, the CPCA provided temporary accommodation to Filipino stonemasons who suffered abuse from a Melbourne-based business, and also housed women who were victims of domestic violence. In that year, it was also involved in the “Free Sarah Balabagan” campaign. These actions have helped increase community awareness on the plight of migrants around the world.

From 1997 to the present, the CPCA has been looking after the needs of newly-arrived Filipinos in Victoria, with funding support from the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs.

Other projects of CPCA include a research on “Illegal Drugs Amongst Filipino Youth in Victoria” conducted in 1999. This resulted in a comprehensive documentation of drug use and abuse of Filipino youth, and the establishment of the Drug Education for Filipino Youth or DEFY. In 2000, it initiated a campaign to “Stop Family Violence in Rural Victoria.” To finance this project, the CPCA was able to solicit funding from the Victoria State Department of Transport and Communication.

A quarterly newsletter, *Ang Tinig*, is published by CPCA to update the Filipino community on current issues facing newly-arrived migrants in Victoria, and on international and Philippine issues, to raise community awareness and community education.

Because of its work in uplifting the lives of Filipino migrants in Australia, the CPCA has received awards and recognition, including an “International Year of Volunteers 2001” certificate, and Certificate of Merit from the Australian Heads of Government in 1996 for its campaign against murders and disappearances of Filipino women.

From its founding to the present, the CPCA has been taking on the cudgels for the countless Filipino women migrants in Australia who continually undergo various forms of maltreatment and abuse from employers, husbands, and other people. It has served as a refuge and home to these Filipinas.

The work of CPCA is an effective manifestation of the Filipino spirit of *bayanihan*, an example for Filipinos here and overseas to follow.





## *Lolita B. Compas*

*United States of America*

Of the many Filipino nurses working in the United States, one nurse clearly stands out for her dedication to helping uplift the lives of the rest of America's immigrant nurses. Her name is Lolita B. Compas.

Lolita finished her Bachelor of Nursing in 1967 at St. Paul College of Manila. In 1977, she obtained her Master of Arts in Nursing at New York University. She is a licensed nurse in three different states and has obtained various licenses and certifications related to her profession. Starting as staff nurse at the Cabrini Medical Center in 1969, she is now a clinical instructor in the critical care unit, hemodialysis and emergency services in the same hospital. She is the recipient of various awards recognizing her leadership and outstanding service in the nursing profession and in community work.

Since arriving in New York in 1969, Lolita has been helping her fellowmen by providing guidance and support to thousands of immigrant nurses in the United States. Known to many Filipino and other Asian nurses in New York as "Ate Lolit," she has become a surrogate family member to these nurses.

As a professional nurse in the United States, Lolita recognized that although immigrant nurses from many different countries were dedicated, competent, and articulate, they needed help in adjusting to American culture and developing their confidence and aggressiveness. Early on in her career, she signed on for the Philippine Nurses Association New York chapter (PNA-NY), the New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA), and the American Nurses Association. This gave her several venues to pursue her mission of helping her fellow immigrant nurses. She gave her personal time and effort assisting many of them in various situations, ranging from the professional to the personal. These include helping them study for state board examinations, how to shop, finding new apartments, assisting in visa matters, and even finding houses of worship. She also encouraged American nurses to interact with immigrant nurses by encouraging the former to engage in various activities like collecting household goods for new arrivals and acting as mentors for the new nurses.

Lolita's concern for personal dignity and human rights escalated when she became aware of the injustices many of the immigrant nurses experienced such as monetary exploitation by recruitment agencies, substandard living arrangements, forced overtime work and continued threat of revocation of sponsorship with their visas. Through her work as chairperson of the New York State Nurses Association Council on Human Rights, she was able to provide sufficient documentation to the New York State Attorney General's Office, which led to an investigation of employment agencies, the situation of immigrant nurses, and the subsequent sanctions to be meted out on the offenders.

Lolita's efforts have not gone unnoticed by her peers. She is presently the president-elect of the New York State Nurses Association, the first Filipino-American and the first Asian-American to head this oldest, largest and most innovative state nurses association in the United States. She is also a director of National Coalition of Ethnic Minority Nurses Association, member of the Appeals Committee of the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools, member of the Editorial Board of the American Journal of Nursing, and delegate to the American Nurses Association House of Delegates. In the past, she was director at large of NYSNA, and president of the Philippine Nurses Association in New York and in America.

She has also been a strong supporter of the projects of the Philippine Consulate General in New York. Since 1994, she has also been serving as president of Food for Children, a non-profit agency of Cabrini employees that provide support, humanitarian assistance and food for children in East Africa and other underdeveloped countries. She also helped in the construction of the Holy Child Center in Baguio City, which provides shelter for street children.

Lolita B. Compas is a dynamic, committed leader with integrity, who has touched so many lives—those of her patients, her colleagues and many Filipino Americans.

*Zenaida S. Concepcion, M.D.*

*Libya*



Year after year, Filipinos go abroad in search of greener pastures. Dr. Zenaida S. Concepcion found her “greener pasture” by serving the sick and the needy in Libya.

Dr. Concepcion has been working in Libya for the past 24 years, and holds the distinction of being the only remaining practicing Filipino doctor in that country. She went to Libya in 1978 as a general medical practitioner at the INAS Dispensary, PSSI. At present, she is connected with the Ministry of Health in Tripoli, Libya. As a government doctor, Zenaida has been hailed as an exemplar of discipline, competence and reliability. She is planning to retire next year.

The constraints of government employment and bureaucracy did not prevent Zenaida from attending to the medical needs of the many Filipino workers in Libya. She considers her Filipino patients her special beneficiaries, giving them extra attention, guidance and care. In most cases, she treated the sick and injured overseas Filipino workers for free. Because of her position and length of service, she has been able to develop a network with hospitals and clinics where she could refer many Filipinos for treatment at a minimal fee, if not free medical service.

Dr. Concepcion is known in Libya for her remarkable contribution to the promotion of medical and health care that resulted in the elimination of epidemics such as hepatitis, tuberculosis, and meningitis. She has also promoted ways to prevent coronary artery disease and breast cancer among overseas Filipino workers. She has relentlessly campaigned against smoking, exposing the dangers and risks of lung cancer.

Outside her profession, she has helped several distressed women OFWs particularly those jailed for alleged immorality. She remains active in community affairs and has been an ardent supporter and participant in Philippine Embassy activities.

She was given recognition in 1994 by the Philippine Ambassador to Libya as one of the 10 Outstanding Overseas Filipino Workers in Libya. During the 104th Philippine Independence Day celebration (2002), she was named by the Embassy as the Most Outstanding Filipino in Libya.

Zenaida Concepcion was born in Tondo, Manila. She finished elementary schooling at the Lakandula Elementary School, high school at Torres Academy in Manila and pre-medicine at the Manila Central University, where she also eventually obtained her medical degree in 1959. After graduation, she practiced medicine in a private capacity in the Philippines for almost ten years. She then became the principal of the School of Midwifery at Leyba Maternity Hospital and instructor in obstetrics, anatomy and physiology in the same school. From 1973 to 1976, she was a resident physician at Protacio’s Maternity Hospital. Prior to leaving for Libya, she owned and operated the Concepcion Medical Clinic.

Dr. Concepcion has devoted her entire life and career to the promotion of the welfare of other people, be it Filipino or Libyan. Although she never married, she supported the education of her nieces and nephews who now are all professionals.

Dr. Concepcion epitomizes the model overseas Filipino worker who demonstrates genuine caring for her fellowmen. She is a true inspiration to all.



## *William D. Dechavez*

*United States of America*

It has often been said that education is the key to success. None would believe this more than William D. Dechavez, an educator, a youth specialist, a community activist, and a dedicated volunteer worker.

Willie is a research room teacher and coordinator of the Asian Learning Center at the Ronald McNair Technical Middle School in Detroit, Michigan. He is the only Asian educator in this almost 100 percent African American school, but this does not deter his success in any way. For him, his minority status is a way to promote his culture as a Filipino. As coordinator of the Asian Learning Center, he is able to help his students understand and appreciate Filipino and other Asian cultures. He brings in Filipino culture by inviting Filipino artists to demonstrate different skills and talents like arnis and ethnic dances. He introduces Asian culture to his students by holding workshops, video presentations and even food sampling activities. As a teacher, Willie has received many awards for his dedication and innovation. Among them are, the Marygrove College Professional Teacher Award, the Michigan Teacher of the Year Award, the McNair Tech Booker T. Washington Award, the US Fulbright Teacher Japan Travel Program, and the Tanglaw Award in Education.

Willie is also an outstanding community member and leader both in the Filipino and American communities. He is a member and leader of various organizations, which include the Philippine American Community Center of Michigan (PACCM); the Filipino American Community Council of Michigan (FILAMCCO), of which he is the Vice-Chairperson; the Council of Asia Pacific Americans (CAPA) and the City of Sterling Heights Ethnic Issues Advisory Committee. Because of his efforts, Sterling Heights, his home for many years now, has a sister relationship with Legazpi City in Bicol. He also worked closely with Michigan officials in renaming Northland Park Court to Philippine Street to draw attention to the new Philippine American Community Center.

For the past six years, Willie has been a volunteer at the *Paaralang Pilipino* in Michigan, a project of PACCM. The *Paaralang Pilipino*, which started in 1984, teaches between 25 to 70 students aged 6 to 18 to learn the Filipino language, songs, dances and other skills. The teachers are not paid. Willie has shown his dedication and creativity to this project by obtaining funds from outside organizations in Michigan to help promote the school. Through his efforts, the school received a donation of 5 computers from a company in Michigan. Willie also chairs the PACCM Philippine Studies Library.

Even while he was still in the Philippines, Willie was already involved in community service in the country. He did volunteer work in the completion of farmers' irrigation projects, youth development and responsible parenthood programs.

Willie, who originally hails from Sorsogon, left the Philippines in 1982 in search of the proverbial greener pasture. He landed in Detroit with only \$6 in his pocket and a job as a kitchen helper in a restaurant, notwithstanding the fact that he has a college degree (BA in Political Science from the University of Santo Tomas), and held a top managerial position in a Filipino corporation. Holding two jobs at a time and raising a family, he was able to earn his teaching certificate, and consequently his master's degree in education from Marygrove College. He obtained his certification as an educational specialist in school administration from the Wayne State University, where he is now pursuing his doctoral studies. He is married to the former Winifred Jackson, with whom he has one daughter, Jacqueline.

William Dechavez proudly carries the Philippine banner in his new home. He has shown to many that one does not need to live in the Philippines to be a true Filipino.



*Ruby L. De Guzman-Formoso, M.D.*

Canada



Ottawa, Canada is home to many Filipinos. It also boasts of a hardworking and gregarious lady in the person of Ruby de Guzman-Formoso.

Ruby is the youngest of seven children. She grew up in Manila where she attended the Quirino Elementary School and the University of Santo Tomas High School. She finished her pre-medical studies at UST, where she eventually obtained her medical degree, graduating cum laude in 1971. After passing the qualifying exam for foreign medical graduates, she moved to Canada in 1972 where she initially trained at the University of Ottawa in internal medicine, anatomical and general pathology and neuropathology. She passed the specialist certification in anatomical pathology of the American Board of Pathology in 1982, and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada in 1983.

Dr. Formoso worked as a pathologist at the Riverside Hospital of Ottawa, but in 1988 she gave up the fulltime job to shift to what would turn to be her true love - psychiatry. She trained for another four years at the University of Ottawa, after which she passed the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada board examination in psychiatry and went on to become a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Canada.

At present, she runs a private practice in Ottawa as a spiritual psychiatrist. Her style is eclectic, and tends to gravitate to transformational work. She continues to widen her skills and knowledge as a professional. She is now a master practitioner in neurolinguistic programming, and holds a clinical hypnotherapy certification obtained from the Transpersonal Hypnotherapy Institute in Colorado. She is a member of the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis, Ontario Medical Association, Canadian Medical Association, and Association of Transpersonal Psychology.

With her many professional accomplishments, Ruby has not forgotten to serve her fellow Filipinos. She started to be involved with the Filipino Canadian Association of the Ottawa Valley (FCAOV) in 1982, serving the organization in various capacities: as vice president, president and adviser. One of her major programs as president of FCAOV was promoting the establishment of the Philippine Heritage Language School in Ottawa. The language school, which is under the administration of the Ottawa Roman Catholic School Board, is a center for children to learn how to read, write, and speak the Filipino language. Through the school, the children of Filipino migrants are able to learn about Filipino culture and heritage. It has also served as a place for interaction among parents. Ruby served as the first principal, first instructor-in-charge and first president of the Parent Teachers Association of the school. In many instances, she lent her own talent by acting in school plays and taking part in other school activities.

Ruby is also involved in church activities. She established the Philippine Pastoral Group in Ottawa and served as its first chairperson. As chairperson, she started the tradition of a monthly Filipino gathering for the Catholic mass at the local church. She actively participated in the celebration of the Philippine Centennial, acting as chairperson of the Philippine Independence Committee of the Ottawa Valley in preparation for the 1998 celebrations.

As Chair of the Philippine Heritage Foundation of Canada, Dr. Formoso together with other women leaders of the Filipino community, worked to raise funds for the installation of the bust of Dr. Jose Rizal in the City Hall of Lull, Quebec.

Among the many awards received by her are the *Bayanihan* Award for Community Service of the Filipino Canadian Association of Ottawa Valley (1987), one of the Ten Most Outstanding Filipino Canadians for Community Involvement (1997) and one of 100 Outstanding Filipino Canadians, *Karangalan* Awards (1999).

Dr. Ruby Formoso's dedication to her profession and volunteer work has brought her very close to the hearts of the Filipinos in Ottawa.



## Sonia S. Del Rosario

Canada

“A dedicated community leader and an advocate of Filipino culture and values.” This is what people say about Sonia del Rosario, one of the most prominent Filipinos now residing in Ottawa, Canada.

Sonia graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing at the Far Eastern University in 1965. She migrated to Canada with her daughter Sarah in the early 1980s. She joined Prudential Insurance Company of England in 1987 and instantly became the top seller. When Prudential was acquired by Clarica Life Insurance Company in 1995, she ranked first in life insurance sales, setting a new company record. Today, she is Clarica’s top agent in Eastern Canada, and has established herself as one of the company’s leading advisors. For her hard work and diligence, Sonia has won numerous sales campaigns, outstanding producer awards, and earned top company honors.

Sonia never fails to look back to her roots. She plays a significant leadership role in the Filipino Community in Canada, as well as in the Canadian community at large. She is one of the founders of the Ottawa Homemakers’ Association, a support network of people from the Philippines, Caribbean, Bangladesh, and others. Through this network, she is able to help others in employment needs, immigration problems, and temporary shelter. Her focus on social issues also extends to her role as regional vice president of the National Council of Canadian Filipino Associations. In this capacity, she helps to bring the voice of Filipino-Canadians to the forefront on issues concerning the Canadian citizenry.

Her prominent role in the Filipino community gives her the chance to serve as liaison between the Embassy of the Philippines and the Filipinos in Ottawa. She helps disseminate information on labor laws, immigration rules, and many other matters to the Filipino community. She has also actively contributed to the success of three official visits of three Philippine presidents. In 1999-2000, she hosted business seminars in coordination with the Philippine Embassy to promote the Philippines as a place for investments. Sonia is also a member of the Canada Philippines Business Council. On top of these, she is the Chair of the Philippine Independence Committee of the Ottawa Valley and the Adviser of the Filipino Canadian Association of Ottawa Valley which is the umbrella organization of Filipino associations in Ottawa.

In support of her goal to regularly inform and update the Filipino community of news and developments relevant to them, Sonia founded the *Pinoy Eh!*, a Filipino-Canadian newsletter.

In times of calamity in the Philippines, she organizes the Filipinos in fund-raising campaigns and relief support operations. In the past, Sonia helped organize fund-raising events for victims of Mt. Pinatubo. As a member of the Philippine Heritage Foundation, she also raised funds for the installation of the bust of Dr. Jose Rizal at the City of Hull in Quebec. Recently, she organized a fund-raising event to assist the critical care facility of the Ottawa Hospital. Sonia is a member of the board of the Philippine Development Assistance Program, which works with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), to provide financial assistance for sustainable community projects in the Philippines.

Sonia is also active in church activities, serving as lay minister in St. Bridget Church in Ottawa. This work gives her the opportunity to meet and be of help to fellow Filipinos, especially those who have just migrated to Canada.

Sonia has received countless awards both in her profession as well as her involvement in community organizations. In her years in Canada, Sonia has shown herself to be reliable, honest, generous, and a person of quiet integrity.



## *Filipino Association in Brunei* *Brunei Darussalam*

No other group in Brunei can rival the commitment to help less fortunate Filipino migrants who suffer from unfair treatment of their employers, or are in need of medical and financial assistance than the Filipino Association in Brunei (FAB).

The FAB started as an informal gathering of Filipinos residing in Brunei Darussalam, whose goal was to serve as a venue for social interaction. Soon, it was leading activities to promote and showcase Philippine culture and traditions. It has since then evolved into a full-fledged organization committed to helping Filipinos in Brunei who are in distress. In March 1982, two years before Brunei became independent from British rule, FAB was formally founded. It became the first Filipino association to be registered under the Brunei Government Registrar of Societies (preceding the 1984 establishment of the Philippine Embassy in Brunei). The FAB has grown from an initial 80 members in 1982 to an association with almost 10,000 members today.

The main objectives of FAB are: 1) to encourage closer cooperation and understanding among members of the Filipino Community in Brunei through social and cultural activities; 2) to assist whenever possible in the fostering of good relations between the citizens and government of Brunei and of the Philippines; and 3) to disseminate information to all members on matters of primary and/or general interest to the Filipino Community in Brunei, and to serve as a means of discussing such matters, provided that neither partisan politics nor sectarian religion shall be debated upon.

To these ends, the FAB has undertaken various projects and initiatives. The FAB has contributed financial assistance to many Filipinos in their times of need. These include funeral assistance, plane fare for some workers who faced deportation, and cash assistance for some whose employment were abruptly terminated without the legal 30-day notice.

In sports, the FAB organized basketball tournaments aimed at building camaraderie and rechanneling the migrants' efforts to more productive activities. In cooperation with the Philippine Embassy and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, it also organized the First Friendship Games held in Asia, participated in by players from other Asian countries.

For several years now, FAB has also been sponsoring events to showcase Filipino culture and heritage. Among others, the University of Santo Tomas *Salinggawi* Dance Troupe and students from the Philippine High School for the Arts, have been invited to share their talents and entertain homesick Filipinos.

The FAB has been involved in many charitable causes such as blood donation campaigns, a student exchange program with students from Ateneo de Zamboanga and Western Mindanao State University, and a calamity fund drive for lahar victims of Mount Pinatubo, among many others. It has also assisted in promoting services for Filipino migrants in Brunei by linking up with Philippine agencies like the Social Security System in order to facilitate business with them. The Philippine Embassy in Brunei routinely enlists the help of the FAB whenever Philippine dignitaries visit that country.

The Filipino Association in Brunei has been steady in its commitment to the well-being of its constituents over the years. Its manner of serving the Filipino community without fanfare has been one of its most admirable qualities.





*Filipino Communities Council of Australia, Inc.*  
Australia

Since its inception in 1990, the Filipino Communities Council of Australia, Inc. (FILCCA) has been very effective in promoting social and welfare needs of the Filipino community in Australia. It provides a very important link between Australia and the Philippines, particularly in its role of presenting to the Australian government and policymakers, the peculiar interests and needs of the Filipino community in that country.

The FILCCA is the national apex body of Filipino organizations in Australia, whose constituent members are the State Councils in various Australian states and territories. Through the dedicated work of its members, it has advanced the interests of Filipinos by setting up programs to address the development of community action and highlight the positive contribution of the Filipino community to contemporary Australian society. These include programs for women, children, and the aged; immigration, settlement and ethnic affairs; employment and overseas qualifications; and education and culture.

In Australia, the FILCCA has done much in promoting the Filipino language. It is credited for the inclusion of the Filipino language in the New South Wales High School curriculum as an elective Year 11 subject starting 1997. It has also established Filipino Language Schools in South Australia and Queensland, and its members are involved in organizing and managing Filipino language classes in other states of Australia.

The State Councils of FILCCA have been active in providing information and referral services to the Filipino community with regard to migration rules and regulations, an important need that FILCCA helps address and has been quite effective in doing so.

The youth, elderly, and women are a high priority of FILCCA programs. This is evident in the various projects they have promoted. Its State Councils provide places of activity where the Filipino elderly could hold excursions, picnics, dances, forums, and health-related programs. Done in coordination with the appropriate government agencies, this project aims to help the elderly overcome isolation due to the language barrier, inactivity, and generation gaps.

FILCCA initiated the creation of the NSW Filipino Community Trust Bank, which extends services to Filipinos who are unable to obtain loans from banks and other financial institutions. The project has also helped establish more than 20 small businesses in the Philippines.

Youth programs and activities such as leadership and other socio-cultural activities are also undertaken in order for younger generation Filipino migrants to be in touch with their native culture. These programs have made a difference in the lives of Filipino youth, giving them confidence in their being Filipino Australians.

Through the State Councils, FILCCA provides information to Filipina victims of violence, and puts them in touch with the proper government or non-government organizations. The volunteers at FILCCA act as guide to these women to facilitate assistance to them.

FILCAA has also not forgotten the needs of Filipinos in the Philippines. They have initiated programs such as scholarships, disaster relief, livelihood projects, and many others that are meant to help their *kababayans*. It extends support in the Philippines through the Adopt-A-Scholar Project of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas, and the Disaster Relief Program.

FILCCA has served as representative, coordinator, and catalyst, of the Filipino community in Australia for the last twelve years. True to its calling, it has bridged many gaps for its constituents, and promises to continue doing so in the years to come.



*Filipino Community Center, Inc.*  
United States of America

The Filipino Community Center, Inc. in Hawaii is a dream come true for one of the largest overseas Filipino communities. After waiting for 50 long years, Filipinos in Hawaii have finally succeeded in establishing the biggest and most impressive community center in the United States or anywhere outside the Philippines.

The FilCom Center, Inc. building project was initiated by the Filipino Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii in 1991. Previous attempts to build a similar center were initiated as early as the 1950s but these efforts faltered for various reasons. In 1993, FilCom Center, Inc. became an independent entity, and was registered as a non-profit organization. It is governed by a Board of Directors composed of representatives of the Filipino community as well as other multicultural groups in Hawaii.

For many years, the organization pooled its human and material resources to plan for the establishment of the Center. The City Government of Honolulu, as well as the State Government of Hawaii actively supported the fund-raising campaign for the Center. This lead was followed by federal agencies like the US Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration and the US Department of Agriculture, which saw the Center's potential for promoting economic revitalization in the area. Other donors include private foundations like The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation and the Consuelo Zobel Alger Foundation. What was most notable, however, was the financial support that poured in from the thousands of individuals and families within the Filipino community in Hawaii. All in all, their contributions helped generate over 13 million US dollars to fund the project.

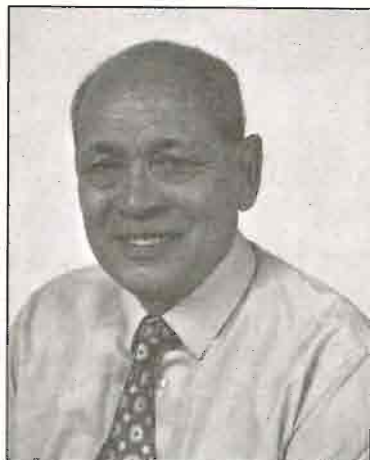
The full realization of the Filipino Community Center in Hawaii is a product of the collective efforts of the local Filipino Community, the State and Federal Governments, and various private entities and individuals. However, two individuals are credited with leadership and generating the momentum to rally various sectors behind the project. They are Eddie Flores, Jr. and Roland C. Casamina.

The FilCom Center has three levels of approximately 50,000 gross square feet of space. It is located on a two-acre parcel of land at the site of the former Oahu Sugar Mill, where many of the original Filipino settlers in Hawaii first worked. The first floor has been allotted as income producing space and operational funding source for FilCom Center activities to make the Center self-sufficient.

The FilCom Center was built to provide services and programs for the community in economic revitalization (e.g. youth programs, families and children, micro-enterprise training, business incubation and job-readiness programs, cultural events, exhibitions and related activities), and various special events.

Filipinos started arriving in Hawaii in 1906 as immigrant laborers for the sugar plantations. This first arrival was followed by waves of other plantation laborers, and starting in the mid 1960s to this date, professional and white collar workers. Filipino immigrants brought with them their culture and traditions, which were eventually integrated in the large multicultural population of Hawaii. The mid 1990s saw the decline of the sugar industry in Hawaii and with it, the closing down of the Oahu Sugar Company, once the largest employer of Filipino Americans.

*The FilCom Center has raised the level of public awareness of the richness of Filipino culture and increased the visibility of the positive contribution and outstanding achievements of Filipinos in Hawaii. The founders of the Center hope that the Center will help spark an economic revitalization needed badly since the decline of the Hawaiian sugar industry. It is also expected to serve as the long-needed institution to help new Filipino arrivals in Hawaii adjust and feel welcome. It is a sign of the long-awaited coming of age for Filipino Americans who have struggled for generations to survive and gain respect as Hawaii's third largest ethnic group. As one of its founders aptly puts it, "it will be a symbol of what Filipinos can achieve." Indeed, the FilCom Center profoundly speaks for itself.*



*Marcos R. Fojas, M.D.*  
Greece

In Athens, Greece, a lone Filipino doctor has touched the lives not only of his patients, but the many Filipinos who live and work there because of his dedication to the education and well-being of their children. He is Dr. Marcos R. Fojas.

Dr. Fojas is the President of the Board of Trustees of the Katipunan Philippines Cultural Academy (KAPHILCA), the Philippine Community School in Athens. The school caters to the children of the 40,000 Filipinos living and working in Greece and serves to provide them with a Philippine education while away from the country, before returning to the Philippines. With financial support from the Philippines, the school started in the summer of 1997. This was not, however, without difficulty. Because of government procedures, the seed money from the Philippines took some time before reaching Athens. In order not to delay the opening of the school, Dr. Fojas used personal diplomacy and persuasion in getting the support of parents and the rest of the Filipino community in Athens. This effort resulted in the initial and timely opening of Grade I level. Working with little resources, the Board and the school administrators led by Dr. Fojas managed to start the school and today, it offers complete elementary education from Grades I to VI.

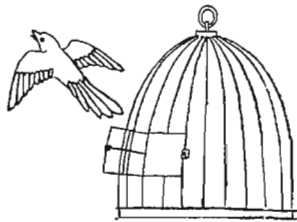
The school has been fully accredited by the Philippine Department of Education. Tuition has been fixed at an affordable rate, that is, 30% of what is charged by other English language schools in Athens. It now has computers and audio-video equipment that help students learn more effectively. The KAPHILCA also serves as a showcase of Philippine culture in Athens. It accepts regular invitations from local and international organizations in the Athens area, for the pupils to demonstrate their talents in performing Filipino folk dances, choral singing, gymnastics and ballet. The pupils have also proved their acting abilities in playing princes and princesses in the local staging of *"The King and I."* Through the school, Philippine cultural visibility is well maintained in Greece, a European country with a closed cultural system.

Dr. Marcos Fojas had a lucrative private practice in ophthalmology, was assistant professor in the UP College of Medicine and was secretary-treasurer of the Philippine Ophthalmological Society before migrating to Athens. He had to move to Greece when the parents of his Greek wife, Dr. Helen Marcoyannopoulou-Fojas, were gaining in years and none else could take care of them. When he arrived in Greece in 1969, Dr. Fojas was the only Filipino in Athens.

Dr. Marcos Fojas was an achiever ever since he was young. He graduated Valedictorian from the Torres High School in 1949, finished his Associate in Arts at the University of the Philippines "With Highest Honors," finished his Doctor of Medicine in UP as No. 6 in a class of 100, and passed the Medical Board Examinations ranking No. 6 among over 600 successful examinees. He had been trained in the best hospitals in the Philippines and England, and is a member of many ophthalmological and sub-ophthalmological societies in the Philippines and in Greece. His private practice in Greece has earned him the respect and admiration both of his patients and colleagues.

Being the longest living Filipino resident in Athens, and having distinguished himself as a very capable eye doctor, Dr. Fojas, together with his wife, have been able to establish excellent relationships with highly placed people in government. This closeness to government officials was useful in helping other Filipinos who were having problems with employers, the police, and immigration officials. This, aside from the medical services they wholeheartedly extend to many.

In his long years in Athens, Dr. Fojas has endeared himself to the many Filipinos there who look up to him as a surrogate father, always willing to help them when in need. He is a strong inspiration and influence to Filipinos in Greece.



*Kalayaan*  
United Kingdom

Kalayaan means freedom. It is also an organization of Filipino women fighting for the rights of overseas domestic workers in the United Kingdom.

Kalayaan was formally founded in 1987 to meet the needs of a growing number of Filipinos who are running away from abusive employers, deprived of food, locked up, abused physically and sexually, and denied of pay. It works hand in hand with the United Workers Association (UWA), formerly known as *Waling-Waling*. In the last 10 years, Kalayaan has documented over 3,000 domestic workers who have fled from their employers including Sri Lankans, Indians, and Nigerians. A large part, however, are Filipino women who have banded together to form *Waling-Waling*. Kalayaan serves as the campaign support group, and together jointly run a drop-in center for migrant domestic workers.

Kalayaan was established mainly to improve the lives of all migrant domestic workers by making them aware of their rights, and giving them access to social services and assistance. The scope of their work includes any domestic migrant worker regardless of nationality, sex, religion and status. Kalayaan also aims to advance public education concerning domestic work through its campaigns, publications, and seminars.

For 12 years, Kalayaan campaigned for changes in immigration rules which unjustly bind the workers to their employers. This injustice has largely been due to the granting by the British Government of concessions to returning expatriates and wealthy employers to bring along their domestic staff. This practice effectively and irrevocably tied the workers to a named person; under no circumstances are they able to change employers. Kalayaan's efforts have been noticed by national and international presses which gave coverage to the various cases documented by the group. This put the issue of migrant domestic workers to the forefront, gaining the attention of migrant and refugee organizations, church groups, human rights groups, trade unions and the International Labor Organization. In July of 1998, the British Government announced that domestic workers now had the right to change employers, and that those who had entered under the old system would be regularized.

Kalayaan's dedication to easing the plight of Filipino domestic workers has not waned even with its success. Everyday, Kalayaan is involved with the hundreds of cases of abused women who go to them for emotional, physical and financial support. It is involved in the review of the Overseas Domestic Worker Concession, and has been negotiating with the Home Office to discuss changes that they propose to make. Kalayaan has also helped migrant domestic workers with problems such as withholding of passports, by communicating with the Home Office and submitting the names of workers involved. It has also produced a briefing sheet about migrant domestic workers for the police, aimed at making the police more sensitive to the needs and rights of the workers. It continues to negotiate with the British government over the terms and conditions of regularization. As member of the European RESPECT Network, Kalayaan continues to receive funding from the Daphne Programme of the European Commission to enhance its projects, particularly those affecting women migrant domestic workers.

In 2000, Kalayaan received the Emma Humphrey Memorial Prize for its contribution to the effort to fight violence against women.

Kalayaan's impact has been deeply felt by the individuals who received their help, specially when help was needed most. Kalayaan continues to serve as a shining light to many migrant domestic workers in the United Kingdom.





*Bridget Lew*  
*Singapore*

Singapore is home to one of the biggest number of overseas Filipino workers. It is also home to one energetic and highly-skilled lady who has been a champion of the rights of overseas foreign workers in Singapore. Her name is Bridget Lew, a Singaporean with a big heart for others.

Bridget is a highly experienced human resources consultant with extensive knowledge and skills in people development, recruitment and selection, career counseling, communications, and employee relations. She has provided consultancy on organizational-climate and people-developer-award projects, and designed and conducted customized-management and human relations skills programs. Besides her professional work, she is a dedicated and committed volunteer church worker serving the under-skilled foreign workers, students and tourists in Singapore.

Bridget was born in Singapore on September 29, 1948. She finished both her undergraduate and post-graduate studies at the University of Singapore. She is a member of the Singapore Training and Development Association and formerly a councilor and professional member of the Singapore Human Resources Institute. She is also chairman of the Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Singapore.

Her profession and volunteer work have brought Bridget in close contact with many Filipinos working as domestic helpers in Singapore. In 2001, she helped develop and implement, with support from the Singaporean government, foreign embassies and community organizations, an employer orientation seminar on “building harmonious relations with foreign domestic helpers.” The program was aimed at building national awareness among Singaporean employers on the need to treat their foreign domestic helpers fairly and justly. This included the presentation of awards for “maid-friendly” organizations and individual employers. Bridget’s zeal and concern for the plight of low-skilled foreign workers is not only because of her profession. She is also a dedicated and committed church volunteer serving the marginalized foreign workers in Singapore.

To address the problem of under-skilled foreign domestic helpers, Bridget was responsible for developing programs in livelihood skills like cooking, baking, hairstyling, and computer training, among others. Hundreds of overseas workers, including a big number of Filipinos, have benefited from these programs at nominal fees. She also helps meet their emotional and spiritual needs by providing counseling, financial assistance, legal advocacy and court attendance, airport assistance, and network services through a 24-hour crisis response service. She also organizes fund-raising activities to raise funds for OFWs with financial difficulties.

Bridget helps link foreign workers with their respective governments and embassies by holding dialogues with officials and policymakers. Such sessions promote and foster understanding between the host country and the migrant workers’ countries of origin in the resolution of cases that affect the lives of such workers in Singapore. Through these sessions, individual cases of maid abuse are dealt with.

Bridget’s zeal and devotion to the betterment of working and living conditions of migrant workers is a worthy example of unselfish and genuine concern for others.



## *Maharlika-Switzerland* Switzerland

In many parts of the world, Filipino organizations give much of their time and resources for the upliftment of the lives of their compatriots at home. One group that tirelessly devotes itself to such undertaking is Marharlika Switzerland.

Maharlika-Switzerland was founded in 1993 and is based in Rheinfelden, Switzerland. Its members are Filipino migrant workers who live in that country. In the beginning, the goal of the organization was to preserve their Filipino culture in Switzerland through cultural events and various festivities. Through Maharlika-Switzerland, Filipinos in Switzerland have found a common venue for interaction, and showcasing of Filipino talent and culture.

As years went by, Maharlika-Switzerland became increasingly active in organizing and financing development and charity projects in the Philippines. Since inception, it has donated over P5 million in support of many such projects. These include the improvement of facilities for the Educational Research Development Assistance Technical and Vocational Secondary School, concreting of roadway and installation of culvert in Catarman, Northern Samar, and the construction of two multipurpose halls in Sarangani, Davao Sel Sur. It funded outreach programs in Coron, Palawan, Calape, Bohol, and various barangays in Pateros. It provided the maintenance and operating expenses of the Day Care Center for Special Children (from Pasig, Pateros and Taguig), and the funding for the construction of a school building in Pajo, Quezon City, low cost housing units in Mabalacat and Arayat, Pampanga, and multi-purpose halls in Pateros, among others.

Among its members, Maharlika-Switzerland is active in providing information and imparting knowledge to improve health, skills, and language ability. These include a German Language course for Filipino members and non-members, round-table discussions about social health, lectures and discussions about *taichi*, *quicong* and drugs, as well as guidance counseling and team-building courses.

Maharlika-Switzerland helps propagate Filipino culture by presenting cultural shows featuring different ethnic groups. One of the biggest events participated in was a three-day event in a museum where Filipino food was featured together with cultural performances and a workshop on *tinikling*. The event was featured in a local newspaper in Basel. To increase foreigners' awareness of the national hero Jose Rizal, Maharlika-Switzerland sponsored the showing of the movie *Rizal*. It also introduced *sungka* to Europeans in one of their festivals.

Maharlika-Switzerland continues to organize activities and festivals in order to foster the Filipino spirit and encourage Filipino tradition and camaraderie in Switzerland.

Maharlika-Switzerland's contribution to the upliftment of the lives of Filipinos both in Switzerland and the Philippines is proof that, with hard work and unity, there is plenty of good work that could be accomplished.





*Benjamin T. Manglona*  
*Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands*

Rota Island in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas (CNMI) is home to hundreds of Filipino workers, most of whom have become permanent settlers. The Filipino community in Rota credits its Mayor Benjamin Taisacan Manglona for the improvement and upliftment of their lives.

Mayor Manglona was born in Rota Island on March 31, 1938. He finished his college education at the University of Guam with a degree in Civil Engineering Technology. From 1970 to 1975, he was the Public Works Officer in Rota. Prior to becoming mayor, he held various positions both in the legislative and executive branches of Mariana Islands. He was a member of the Marianas District Legislature from 1963 to 1965, member of the House of Representatives in the Congress of Micronesia (COM) from 1965 to 1970, member of the Mariana Islands District Legislature from 1975 to 1978, member of the CNMI Legislature from 1978 to 1988, Senate President of the CNMI Legislature from 1988 to 1990, and Lieutenant Governor of the CNMI from 1990 to 1994.

Mayor Manglona has time and again shown his genuine concern for the many Filipinos living in his island. As one of the founding fathers of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, he was responsible in creating an option for American citizenship for Filipinos and other foreign nationals, who have been working and living in the Northern Mariana Islands for many years. Mayor Manglona lobbied hard for the inclusion of this option in the covenant establishing the Commonwealth in political union with the United States. This paved the way for many Filipinos to obtain their coveted American citizenship. He also provided assistance in the preparation of the necessary applications and personally intervened with United States federal authorities to make sure that Rota Filipinos received United States passports.

Mayor Manglona's concern for his Filipino constituents is shown by his actions in some disputes involving Filipinos. When six Filipino citizens faced eviction in one village in Rota, he intervened for them and asked the courts to uphold their rights. When the lower court action and an appeal failed to grant relief to the six Filipinos, he filed his own action on their behalf with the CNMI Supreme Court.

In past years, the labor situation in the CNMI had not been favorable to workers. The United States federal government and the media were becoming critical of workers, most of whom were Filipinos. What Mayor Manglona did was to hire Filipino workers in his own construction company, the B&M Construction. He treated his workers fairly and set a precedent for proper labor relations, which encouraged other locals to hire Filipinos. He then intervened on many occasions to resolve disputes between Filipino workers and their employers. In many instances, he was able to bring about settlement and reconciliation among conflicting parties.

While he was still Lieutenant Governor of the Commonwealth, he used all his influence to quell a serious conflict between Filipino workers and local Chamorro residents. He averted an island-wide violent confrontation by personally appealing to the parties and pleading for calm. His diplomacy and sincerity bore fruit when the parties agreed to reconcile.

Other acts by Mayor Manglona, which showed his concern for foreign workers include the creation a special Nonresident Worker Recognition Day, the first of its kind in the Commonwealth. He also set aside for the use of the Filipino community a prime stretch of beach land at Rota's Uyulan section and encouraged them not only to use the land for recreation, but also gave them the autonomy to improve it in any way they thought best. This provided the Filipinos with a permanent place to meet, interact, and gain a sense of belongingness.

Benjamin Manglona has proven himself to be a healer and a facilitator when the Filipino community needed both. He is truly a trustworthy friend of the Filipinos in the island of Rota.



*National Organization of Professional  
Teachers - Hong Kong*  
*Hong Kong Special Administrative Region*

The National Organization of Professional Teachers - Hong Kong (NOPT-HK) is an organization that has persevered in working to uplift the conditions of teacher members among the overseas Filipino workers in Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong chapter of the NOPT was founded in November 1999, during the first seminar on continuing professional education sponsored by the Professional Regulation Commission. With only 20 members on its first year, its membership has grown to 1,200 today. It is sub-divided into 13 regional groups which carry out projects to develop the skills and potentials of teacher OFWs. Their activities include seminars, conferences, training, sports festivals, and other social and cultural activities.

NOPT-HK has been instrumental in the professional advancement of its members. It regularly conducts seminar workshops through which teachers from different regions get to interact and exchange views. Speech development, creative writing and computer application training workshops help the teachers update and upgrade their skills. It also helps them develop a sense of participation, coordination and readiness. NOPT-HK has also sponsored scholarships and campaigned strongly for its members to enroll in postgraduate courses in Hong Kong. Among the professional training it has provided to members are "Enhancing Professional Competencies", "Teaching as a Vocation," and "Focusing on the Learner".

NOPT-HK was responsible for the holding of the second teaching licensure examination in Hong Kong on March 2001, the result of coordination with the Professional Regulation Commission in the Philippines, and in response to the clamor of thousands of teacher OFWs who were not yet board passers. It also took the initiative of conducting review classes for teachers, and mobilizing professionals and inter-disciplinary experts such as lawyers, journalists, and bankers for the review. The initiatives resulted in the professional certification of many Filipino teachers working in Hong Kong.

NOPT-HK has also been a partner of the Philippine Consulate General in Hong Kong for many years now, in regard to information dissemination and the implementation of the Consulate's programs and activities. It serves to advance the interests of Filipino workers in Hong Kong by conducting information campaigns on issues such as the absentee voting act, sexual harassment and the rights of domestic helpers, among others.

Through the "Adopt a School" project, NOPT-HK has been able to reach out to needy schools in the Philippines. It provides books, clothing and other school materials to students in its adopted schools.

The group is also involved in the propagation of Filipino culture through its various cultural and sports programs aimed at fostering unity as well as showcasing the best of Filipino talent and abilities. It is also actively involved in the Tourism Volunteer Program of the Department of Tourism, and held joined charity walks both for Filipino and Chinese communities in Hong Kong.

The members of the NOPT-HK give their fellowmen a deep sense of pride. Through their unity and service, they have highlighted the dignity of the teaching profession and elevated the status and image of the overseas Filipino workers several notches higher.



*Philippine Association of Metropolitan  
Washington Engineers*  
United States of America

A group of Filipino engineers in Washington, D. C., decided in March 1980 to form a group that would help Filipino professional and student engineers be assured of a bright future. Thus was born the Philippine Association of Metropolitan Washington Engineers or PAMWE.

PAMWE's primary objectives include: establishing and maintaining an employment/placement assistance program, with special concern for the newly-arrived and unemployed Filipino engineers in Washington, D. C.; granting scholarships to deserving Filipino engineering students both in the Philippines and in Maryland, USA; and serving as a hospitality house for engineers and other related professionals who are new to the metro Washington area.

For over two decades now, PAMWE has been instrumental in establishing bonds of unity and friendship among its members, maintaining a job referral system, providing information and assistance in preparing the state professional licensing examination, serving as a medium for promoting the professional advancement of its members, and conducting various functions to generate funds for scholarship programs.

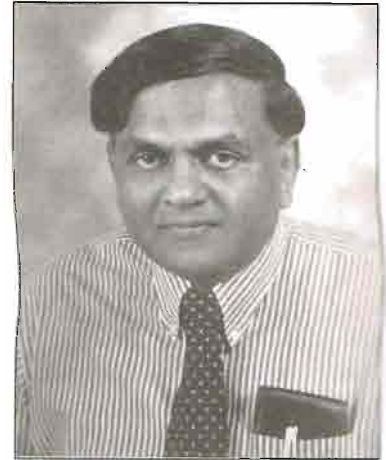
Of its many projects, its scholarship programs have made the most impact. Since 1981, PAMWE has granted 77 individual scholarships and 10 endowment scholarships at major educational institutions, including the University of the Philippines, De La Salle University, Cebu Institute of Technology, St. Louis University, San Agustin University, AMA Computer Learning Center, Notre Dame of Dadiangas, Mapua Institute of Technology and the National University. It has also supported individual scholarships for Filipino students at the University of Maryland. PAMWE's goal is for the graduates of their scholarship programs to join the mainstream of Philippine industry and contribute to the economic well-being of the country.

PAMWE also maintains a job-referral system in order to assist the Filipino engineers in Washington, D. C. advance professionally. Not only do they help newly-arrived engineers get jobs, they also assist currently employed engineers obtain better paying jobs or relocate to better firms. To help promote professional advancement and continuing education, PAMWE conducts seminars and lectures at least twice a year with various topics which include professional registration and licensure, small business administration assistance, proper preparation of resumes, personal and professional income tax issues, stress management, retirement planning, and project management. Individual members also conduct technical seminars on subject matters like design and construction of medical facilities, design and construction of data processing centers, power distribution systems, security systems design, and energy conservation programs. These seminars have made a difference in its membership in enhancing their knowledge base, improving their skills, building their confidence, attaining their career goals, and making better professionals of themselves.

PAMWE has also been active in various community activities. Its members have offered their professional services free in helping plan the proposed renovation of the old Philippine Embassy premises in Washington, D.C. It also participated in a major capacity in the formation of the local chapter of the Science and Technology Advisory Council.

PAMWE and its members have consistently cared for and shared with the Philippines and the Filipino American community in Washington, D.C. in true *bayanihan* spirit and practice. For this, it deserves our country's recognition.

*N. Ravindranathan, M.D.*  
*Brunei Darussalam*



It has always been heartwarming to hear about foreigners who devote their time and effort helping out indigent Filipinos. One noteworthy example is Dr. N. Ravindranathan, a British national born in Ceylon, residing in Brunei.

Dr. Ravindranathan is both a medical and dental doctor specializing in maxillofacial and facial plastic surgery. He graduated with a degree in dental medicine in 1972, with honors, and obtained his medical degree from the St. George Hospital Medical School, University of London in 1983. He is licensed to practice medicine and dentistry in various countries like the United Kingdom, Singapore, Brunei and Malaysia. He is also an honorary fellow of the Philippine College of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons. He has attended trainings and given academic papers and lectures in various parts of the world. At present, he heads the Department of Maxillofacial/Facial Plastic Surgery of RIPAS Hospital in Brunei Darussalam.

Dr. Ravindranathan's involvement with Filipinos started in December 1986 when he was invited by the then vice-dean of Centro Escolar University, to lend his skills to help indigents in the poorer parts of Manila with cleft lip and palate deformities, and those in need of surgery for tumors of the jaw, bones, face, salivary glands and associated structures of the neck. He set up charity clinics for his indigent patients in Quezon City and Sampaloc, Manila with the help of the vice-dean and the president of the Educational and Research Development Assistance (ERDA) Foundation. In the course of this project Dr. Ravindranathan visited Manila once every month during which he conducted surgeries and whole-day clinics alternately. He conducted surgical operations at the De Ocampo Hospital free of charge, with the hospital's support. From December 1986 to October 1990, he had made about 48 trips to Manila and performed approximately 30 operations per year, traveling to Manila at his own expense.

During his visits to the Philippines, Dr. Ravindrathan had the chance to meet His Eminence, Jaime Cardinal Sin, who advised him to consider moving his volunteer services where it mattered most – the rural areas. After visiting various poverty-stricken areas in the country, Dr. Ravindranathan decided to move his operations to the province of Isabela. After meeting local officials, professionals and the clergy in Isabela, he founded the Socio Economic Development Assistance Foundation of Isabela. The foundation, which holds offices at the municipal council of Alicia, Isabela provides free cleft lip and palate services for indigents of Isabela and maintains a school, which supports his "Back to School Program" aimed at addressing the high incidence of school dropouts in the province.

In October 1990 Dr. Ravindranathan started operating his charity clinics in the Rural Health Unit in Alicia. He travels from Brunei to Isabela four times a year during which he provides his services entirely free, using his own instruments and operating theatre equipment. He conducts surgical operations at the Cagayan Valley Sanitarium Hospital.

His back-to-school program is just as successful. In 1991, with the help of the ERDA Foundation he built a two-classroom school in Barangay Aurora, Alicia, Isabela serving 287 children. The school has been in operation for 11 years now. Every year, Dr. Ravindranathan also runs an oratorical contest in Region 2 for children between 11-16.

Dr. Ravindranathan has given hope to countless poor Filipinos, and has given them a brighter future. He is a true modern-day hero who deserves our national recognition.





*Francis V. Talangbayan, M.D.*  
*United States of America*

Filipino community associations overseas are able to progress because of the hard work and determination of their leaders. One example of such leader is Dr. Francis Talangbayan of Philadelphia.

Dr. Talangbayan is the President of the Filipino Executive Council of Greater Philadelphia (FECGP), an umbrella organization composed of 23 Filipino organizations within the tri-states of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware, home to about 35,000 Filipinos. As the FECGP head, he is able to effectively blend Filipino American Associations of heterogeneous backgrounds into one visible, credible movement.

FECGP's accomplishments include the following: a medical outreach (August 2000) administering free vaccinations to children and offering free medical services and examinations to residents of Philadelphia; educational and cultural presentations of "The Dream Weavers: the T'boli Tribe of Lake Sebu" (September 2000), "Advent Philomels" (1999) and "Wings of Songs" (1999); an "Asian Health and Fitness Service Day (October 2000); a Seminar on Humanitarianism (July 2001) with the Chair of the Philippine National Red Cross as guest speaker; a "gift-giving caravan" (December 2001) with a motorcade of 23 cars extending Christmas wishes, gifts, carols, and cultural performances by the Philippines Folk Arts Society, among other activities. He founded the "Computer Literacy Program: Free Library of Philadelphia", a project which provides knowledge on information technology to residents and visitors of Philadelphia. Under Dr. Talangbayan's leadership, the FECGP has been moving for a more visible participation, involvement and commitment among Filipinos on issues and activities that help them become socially and politically empowered.

Prior to taking on the helm of the FECGP, Dr. Talangbayan has proven himself to be a man with a big heart for the underprivileged, especially among his *kababayans*. Since 1970, he has been offering voluntary and free medical care services among the poor citizens of Philadelphia who belong to Filipino and other Asian-American communities. He has also extended his medical missions to Davao and Quezon provinces. When tragedy struck the World Trade Center last year, he organized a memorial mass during the visit of Pres. Gloria Arroyo to pray for the souls of the victims. He has also led and been part of various professional and civic organizations in Philadelphia. Just recently, he presented a paper on "The Status of Filipino Foreign Medical Graduates" at the National Federation of Filipino Associations in America Convention.

Dr. Talangbayan hails from Guinyangan, Quezon. He obtained his medical degree in 1968 from the University of the East Ramon Magsaysay Medical Center, graduating at the top of his class. After serving his residency in Internal Medicine at the Manila Sanitarium and Hospital, he moved to Philadelphia to serve an additional residency at Mercy Catholic Medical Center and then as a Fellow in Cardiology at Philadelphia General Hospital. He served as an Assistant Professor of Medicine at Hahnemann Medical College and as an internist with the Philadelphia Department of Public Health and the American Federation of Labor.

Dr. Francis Talangbayan now resides in Penn Valley, Pennsylvania with his family. He was cited by the City of Philadelphia in 2000 "for his over three decades of good will and hard work in providing medical care for poor and underprivileged citizens, as well as his devoted community work on behalf of Philadelphia's Filipino community and all other Asian-American communities" in Philadelphia. He is one Filipino overseas who shines visibly in his part of the world.

*Benjamin S. Tomelden, Jr.*  
*United Kingdom*



When Filipinos go to other lands, they bring not only themselves but some of the country as well. This is well demonstrated by Benjamin “Benjie” S. Tomelden, Jr. of Middlesex, United Kingdom.

Benjie entered the United Kingdom on a catering work permit in 1976. He started as a kitchen porter, then moving on to become a waiter, head hall porter, barman, chef, auditor, cashier and night manager in the 5-star Excelsior Hotel at Manchester Airport. He resigned upon becoming a permanent resident in 1981. He then found work in Laliq, UK, first as a packer driver, and eventually as warehouse manager after 18 months. After three years in the company, he moved to Syntegra, a wholly-owned subsidiary of British Telecom. From line supervisor, he rose within five years to level 3 Manager before retiring in 1995 at the age of 60. He is now Director and Consultant of logistics, distribution and materials management in his own company, BT Logistics Services.

Throughout the years in the U.K., Benjie never forgot his Filipino roots. Wherever he lived, his house became a meeting point for Filipinos in the area. Through interactions at his residence, Filipino migrants were made to feel as if they never left home. Benjie has also helped many of them get better jobs and accommodations. Sometimes, he would even drive them to their new jobs.

From 1981 to 1984, Benjie was involved in the Cultural Dance Group of the Filipino Chaplaincy. He became lead dancer and performed with them all over the United Kingdom and as far as Ireland. Through their presentations, they were able to showcase the best of Filipino culture in dance. He was elected President of the Social Club of the Chaplaincy which had the goal of raising funds for helping Filipinos in danger of being deported. Through this project, they were able to support the women who sought temporary refuge at the Chaplaincy. Benjie’s creativity showed in the projects he initiated, such as bingo games, cultural shows, and a *Barrio Fiesta* complete with a *Santacruzán*.

Later on, Benjie joined the Philippine Centre, in which he has been serving in various capacities: as board member since 1985, vice president for 8 years, and Chairman first in 1988, and then from 1997 to the present. As head of the Philippine Centre, he was responsible for the increase of organizational membership from less than 20 in 1997 to 54 active organizations today. The Filipino community in the United Kingdom is now consolidated into a single cohesive unit under the umbrella of the Philippine Centre. He has also been instrumental in forging links with major organizations in the European Community and with the International Network of Filipinos Overseas, an international network with members from over 20 countries worldwide. He also instituted tutorial classes for children of Filipino parentage to help them hurdle the National Examinations given to 7, 11 and 14 year old students, a requirement of the British educational system.

One of the highlights of Benjie’s accomplishments has been the responsibility of running the annual *Barrio Fiesta sa London*. This activity was started by the Philippine Centre to raise the spirits of the Filipinos in London and other parts of England. Since then, the *Barrio Fiesta sa London* has become an established annual event in London, attracting as many as 25,000 Filipino and other visitors from all over Britain and the rest of the European Community. It has become instrumental in elevating the image of the Filipino in the United Kingdom, and showcasing Filipino arts, crafts, and enterprise. It has also helped bring the Filipino community together, while increasing mainstream British awareness of Philippine culture and Philippine life.

Benjie is happily married, with three grown children. His leadership in promoting the Filipino in a land away from home calls for no less than the highest recognition from his home country.



# *Pamana ng Pilipino*

*The Pamana ng Pilipino Award is conferred on Filipinos overseas  
for excellence and distinction in their work or profession*

## *Awardees*

Manolo I. Abella  
*Switzerland*

Joanne De Asis-Benitez  
*United States of America*

Belinda A. Aquino, Ph.D.  
*United States of America*

Cesar M. Dela Cruz  
*Indonesia*

Benjamin J. Cayetano  
*United States of America*

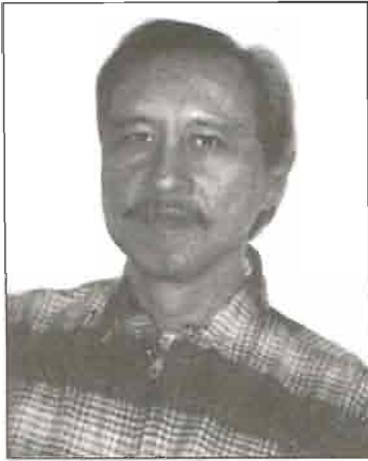
Renato B. Garcia, MBE  
*United Kingdom*

Arlene Joan Chai  
*Australia*

Michael Patrick L. Guingona  
*United States of America*

Lina L. Ciani  
*Italy*

Josie C. Natori  
*United States of America*



## *Manolo I. Abella*

*Switzerland*

Manolo I. Abella is Chief of the Migration Branch of the International Labor Organization (ILO) headquarters in Geneva. He has acquired international recognition for his scholarly contribution to the literature on international migration, particularly on its economic impact on countries of origin and on its implications for state policy and governance. Since joining the ILO, he has advised governments in Asia, Central Europe, Africa and the Middle East, and Central America on a wide range of policy issues, and on technical cooperation in managing labor migration, migrants' remittances, and return and re-integration of migrants.

Manolo obtained his Bachelor of Arts in Economics at the Ateneo de Manila University, his Master of Arts in Economics at McGill University in Canada, and his Master of Arts in Public Administration at Harvard University where he was awarded the Edward Mason fellowship.

Manolo began his career teaching economics part-time at the UP School of Business Administration and the Ateneo Graduate School for Business. During the same period, he joined the Board of Investments' Economics Section, which he eventually headed in 1974. Later on, he served in various capacities in different government offices and agencies such as: Director of the Bureau of Employment Services, expanding and modernizing its operations; Chairman of the inter-agency task force for the employment of Muslim rebel returnees; Economic Counselor to the then newly-established Philippine Embassy in Beijing; and the first Executive Director of the Institute of Labor and Manpower Studies.

Manolo's expertise is internationally-recognized. He has wholly or partly written fifteen books, published sixteen studies, and undertook seven unpublished studies on international labor migration. His authored and co-authored books include, *Middle East Interlude: Asian Workers Abroad – A Comparative Study of Four Countries*, and *Sending Workers Abroad – A Manual for Low and Middle Income Countries* which has been translated into Russian and Bahasa Indonesia. His studies have been published in various academic journals such as the *Population and Development Review*, *Jahrbuch Fur Vergleichende Sozialforschung*, the *Journal of Behavioral and Social Sciences*, the *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, the *International Immigration Quarterly Review*, the *Pakistan Development Review*, and the *International Labour Review* (Geneva). For many years, he headed ILO's Asian Regional Programme on International Labour Migration which, among others, carried out a large number of studies on the growth of Asian labour migration in Asia and its impact on developing countries of origin. He is a most sought after speaker on international migration, having addressed six major conferences and having organized many more around the world. In 1998, he chaired the Technical Committee of the United Nations that organized the Technical Symposium on International Migration in The Hague. He is also a long-time member of the editorial board of the *Asia Pacific Migration Journal*.

Manolo has not failed to lend his talents to promote assistance to his fellowmen in distress. Due largely to Manolo's efforts as coordinator of an Asian Regional Programme on international labor migration from 1986 to 1993, Filipinos who lost their jobs during the Gulf crisis were able to claim compensation from the United Nations. Indeed, his professional commitment to Filipino and other migrants in all parts of the world remains consistent and strong.

Manolo Abella has spent the last twenty years of his life as an international civil servant. He has truly made his mark as a world-class professional and authority in the field of international labor migration and overseas employment.

*Belinda A. Aquino, Ph.D.*

*United States of America*



Filipinos are not only known in political circles in Hawaii. In the academe, one Filipino stands out for her intellectual prominence.

Dr. Belinda Ancheta Aquino is a distinguished scholar, educator, author, journalist and community leader whose career as a Filipino professional overseas spans three decades of intellectual achievement and invaluable service to international, national and local institutions.

At present, Dr. Aquino is Professor of Political Science and Asian Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. She is an expert in the realm of higher education in the social sciences and contemporary Philippine affairs. She is the Director of the Center for Philippine Studies, the establishment of which she was also instrumental. Under her guidance and direction, the Center has become an international source of expert information and analysis on issues related to the Philippines and Filipinos, institutions of higher learning, business organizations, foundations, media and the community at large. To date, the Center is the only one of its kind in the United States or any part of the world outside the Philippines.

Dr. Aquino is widely published. She has written numerous scholarly and journalistic articles, books, monographs, essays, reviews and commentaries mainly about the Philippines and developments in the Philippines. She also writes a regular column in the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. Through her work, she has greatly elevated the level of discourse on Philippine issues, particularly among Filipinos overseas.

Dr. Aquino's career as an educator spans decades and several continents. After completing her Bachelor of Arts and 24 units for Master of Public Administration at the University of the Philippines, she moved to Hawaii where she obtained her M.A. in Political Science at the University of Hawaii. She holds a Ph.D. in Comparative Government, with minors in Southeast Asian Studies and Public Administration from Cornell University. She held various teaching and administrative positions at the University of Hawaii, University of the Philippines, Tokyo University, Kansai University, and the Singapore Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Her contribution to the Filipino community is well known. Since arriving in Hawaii 30 years ago, she has always been visible, approachable, cooperative and accommodating as far as community activities and programs are concerned. She never fails to share her resources and talents with the community, and is always prepared to contribute her ideas on various issues, such as human rights, immigration, the employment of minorities, and political empowerment and advocacy.

Dr. Aquino serves the large Filipino community in Hawaii through outreach services in cooperation with the Philippine Consulate General and other institutions like the Department of Education, Department of Health, State Immigration Service Center and the Catholic Immigration Center. She gives lectures on the Philippines, serves on scholarship committees and competitions, conference panels and provides assistance to community organizations, and assists the Hawaiian government in programs involving Filipinos.

Her efforts to promote Philippine studies internationally has resulted in the establishment of regional or national chapters in mainland USA, Australia, Japan, Southeast Asia, Spain, France, England, the Netherlands, and other parts of Europe. As Chair of the International Philippine Studies Committee, Dr. Aquino has been able to organize several international conferences abroad attended by the best minds in academe. These conferences are important steps to institutionalize the teaching of Philippine studies in tertiary institutions overseas.

Dr. Aquino was also instrumental in developing an academic exchange program between the University of Hawaii in Manoa and the University of the Philippines which involve the exchange of faculty, scholars, researches, students and publications between the two institutions. She has received numerous awards both in the Philippines and Hawaii for her contribution to advancement in the social sciences.

Dr. Belinda Aquino is a fine example of a Filipino scholar overseas in the service of the country and Filipino people.



## *Benjamin J. Cayetano*

*United States of America*

Benjamin J. Cayetano is probably the most formidable political leader of Filipino ancestry anywhere overseas. Now completing his second term as Governor of the State of Hawaii, he is the first and so far, the only United States Governor of Filipino ancestry.

He started his political career in Hawaii when he served in the Hawaii State House of Representatives from 1975 to 1978. He was elected to the Senate in 1979. From 1986 to 1994 he served two four-year terms as Lieutenant Governor, after which, he was elected Governor. Since entering the political scene in 1974 as a progressive Democrat, he has never lost an election.

Gov. Ben Cayetano is credited for employing responsible fiscal policies while improving education, boosting commerce and diversifying the economy, modernizing government, and preserving Hawaii's natural beauty and unique way of life.

Under the Cayetano Administration, more new schools were built, surpassing the record of any previous administration. Growth in the education and special education workforce rose by 19%, and teachers' salaries in the State were increased dramatically.

Due largely to his radical fiscal policies, Gov. Cayetano ushered in the largest tax cut in Hawaii's history, saving taxpayers almost \$2 billion over six years. His administration enacted a landmark Technology Omnibus Bill, which serves to provide some of the most progressive tax incentives in the whole United States. Because of this act, the number of high technology firms in Hawaii nearly tripled from that of ten years ago.

More homes have been developed for native Hawaiians and low-income residents than at any other time in Hawaii's history. His administration has consistently been a national leader in welfare reform and accuracy in managing federal initiatives, resulting in several million dollars in cash awards. Gov. Cayetano also undertook radical measures like launching a revolution in civil service reform, privatization of government services, and an entirely new approach to collective bargaining. He has also worked hard to ensure justice for Hawaiian citizens and preserving Hawaii's culture and environment.

Gov. Cayetano has been recognized nationally and internationally with numerous awards for his accomplishments in public service, including the UCLA's Edward A. Dickson Alumnus of the Year Award, the Harvard Foundation Leadership Award, the UCLA Medal, the UCLA's John E. Anderson Graduate School of Management Distinguished Leadership Award, an honorary Doctor of Public Service degree from Loyola Marymount University and an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from the University of the Philippines.

Ben graduated from Farrington High School in Honolulu, Hawaii in 1958. He earned his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of California in Los Angeles in 1968, and a Juris Doctorate from the Loyola Law School in Los Angeles in 1971. Prior to being elected Lieutenant Governor, he practiced law for 15 years. From 1983 to 1986 he was a partner in the law firm of Schutter Cayetano Playdon. He is married to the former Vicky Tiu, President of United Laundry Services, and has five children.

Ben Cayetano has proven to be a dauntless innovator in the political arena, as well as in many other respects. In his words, "I make a contribution by breaking stereotypes. I open all doors for all kinds of people."

Governor Benjamin Cayetano is without doubt, one person whom the Filipino nation can be truly proud of.



*Arlene Joan Chai*  
Australia



In many parts of the world, Filipinos are recognized for their talent, industry and creativity. Arlene Chai is one shining example. An Australian citizen born and raised in the Philippines, Arlene is touted to be Australia's answer to Amy Tan and Isabel Allende, two international best-selling authors.

Arlene completed her primary and secondary education at the Immaculate Concepcion Academy in San Juan and graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree, major in Communication Arts at Maryknoll College. She completed a post-graduate certificate course in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL) at the Australian Catholic University.

Before migrating to Sydney with her parents and three sisters in 1982, she worked as a copywriter for almost ten years at Bates-Alcantara Advertising Inc. in Manila, where she eventually rose to the position of creative director. It took her three years of adjusting and shuttling between Sydney and Manila to finally decide to make Sydney her permanent residence. In 1985, she joined George Patterson Advertising in Sydney as a writer, the first Asian to work in the prestigious advertising agency.

Her career as a novelist started in June 1992 when she decided to take a year off work, with the encouragement of her director, the best-selling author Bryce Courtenay, to start writing books. It was this time when she wrote her first novel *The Last Time I Saw Mother*, which was published in 1995 by Random House. The book drew on her mother's personal experiences in the Philippines during the Japanese occupation. The book became a bestseller in Australia and was shortlisted for the 1995 New South Wales Premier's Literary Award. This also instantly elevated her to the Australian literary scene alongside a few known Asian novelists like Amy Tan. As Arlene puts it, "It's a myth that Australians prefer reading caucasian writers. It's just that there are few Asians who try to write novels in the English language."

Her first book was followed by three others: *Eating Fire and Drinking Water*, about life in Manila under the Marcos regime; *On the Goddess Rock*, based on her own Chinese ancestry and her experiences overseas; and *Black Hearts*, a psychological thriller delving into dark human emotions and their terrible consequences. Indeed, Arlene has arrived as a mature and full-fledged novelist in her own right.

Arlene has participated in various writers' and arts festivals as well as library events in Australia. She is a member of the Writers' Bloc. Her interests include art, history, and studying the Italian language, for which she took formal classes for several years. She is one of the five women of Filipino descent in *Filipina Fusions*, a project organized by the Philippine Embassy in Canberra, the Philippine Consulate General in Sydney and the Philippine Australia Foundation as a contribution to the celebration of Australia's Centenary of Federation.

Arlene's literary success has encouraged several first time Filipino novelists and authors in Australia to follow in her footsteps. She has effectively raised the profile of the Filipino women and the Filipino migrant community in Australia to unprecedented levels, and has made them proud. Arlene Chai is truly an inspiration not only to Filipino writers but also to all Filipinos who wish to make it a big success in their own professions.



## *Lina L. Ciani*

*Italy*

Filipinos are known and recognized for their artistic abilities in the performing and visual arts. In Italy, one Filipina painter who continues to make her mark in the art scene is Lina Llaguno Ciani.

Lina was born in Daraga, Albay in 1943. She went through elementary and high school in Legazpi City. In 1963, she graduated at the University of the Philippines School of Fine Arts. After graduation, she worked for the prestigious advertising agency, McCann-Erickson. Bringing her modest savings from her previous employment, she left for Italy in 1968 and worked at Image Plan International in Milan, and BBDO Italia in Rome. She also co-founded GraphX, a design studio based in Rome whose clientele include Rhone-Poulenc Europe, Servizi Interbancari, Danesi Caffè and Meridiana Airlines, among others. She designed the book "Rome by Water" for the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Lina also conducted design workshops at the European Institute of Design, which gave exposure of her Filipino talent to students from all over Europe. Even though she had a lucrative career in graphic design and art direction, Lina could not help but gravitate toward her real love, painting. While supporting herself with her income from her jobs in Italy, she enrolled at the Accademis delle Belli Arti in Perugia, Italy.

Lina Ciani held her first art exhibit in Terni, Italy in 1971. When she moved her works to Rome, the uniqueness and enigma of her paintings caused a great deal of attention and interest. She has held many one-woman exhibits in Italy, something that is rare in the Italian art scene, where galleries patronize only the works of well-known and established European artists. Lina has brought her works to galleries in Terni, Amelia, Perugia, Bari, and Rome, in Italy. Her works have also been exhibited and collected in Washington, D.C. and New York. In 1984, her paintings were exhibited along with other Asian artists in Jakarta. Ms. Ciani's paintings, which have been featured in numerous one-woman shows, have boosted Italian awareness of Filipino artistry.

Lina's love for her country, specially her hometown, has never left her. She visits Daraga regularly to renew her soul, and whenever she is in Bicol, she does not fail to paint. In Bicol, however, her style becomes more relaxed, filled with serenity and equilibrium. Her works include her own renderings of the sunken Cagsawa belfry, Daraga sceneries, native textile patterns, Philippine kites, antique furniture, and many other things Filipino including use of Filipino tribal colors. She prefers to share her art with her fellow Filipinos by holding her exhibits in galleries where her works could be viewed by people from all walks of life, and where she could freely interact with her audience. For Lina, one of the most gratifying reactions she received from her exhibits in the Philippines was from a sweepstakes ticket vendor in Legazpi, who quipped after viewing her works, "with paintings like these, I could write a poem."

Indeed, Lina Ciani's work is difficult to categorize. "Her art is essence distilled and defined in few objects, casual fragments of things camped against vast backgrounds of silent and oniric profundity", according to *Il Messagero*, a leading Italian newspaper. Another Italian newspaper, *Il Tempo* commented about her art as "what is evident is the relationship established between man and the environment that hosts him, an affectionate communion without a shadow of harshness and ecological transgression. A kind of strange animism is present in the figures of plants and humans intermingling to become "unico". All these are rendered with a great compositive and technical capacity."

Lina's subjects are mostly women, whom she considers more aesthetic. They are, however, faceless and because they do not look like portraits, any woman could easily identify with them. Not unexpectedly, when an important book about nineteen Filipino women of substance from different parts of the world was published in 2000, Lina's work was chosen for its cover piece.

Lina Ciani has shown herself to be a model of the best in the Filipino artist abroad, more so, because of success in a country with a tradition in art that dates back to the Renaissance.

## *Joanne De Asis-Benitez*

*United States of America*



Rarely does a Filipino, much less a Filipino woman, make it in the company of recognizable names in the financial world of Wall Street. For this, Joanne De Asis Benitez is one of a kind.

Joanne Benitez is currently the Chair of Globe Capital Partners, L.L.C., New York, Manila, Stuttgart, and Founder and Chair of Asia Pacific Capital Partners, New York, Manila.

Joanne Benitez had been into investment banking at Morgan Stanley and Company, and CS First Boston for 20 years, followed by five years in principal investing. This experience has placed her in a unique position from which to direct both capital market financing and direct investments, and corporate strategic alliances into the Philippines. A sampling of transactions and multi-million dollar investments which have already benefited the Philippines are Coastal Petroleum – Subic Bay Authority, Comsat, Washington D.C. – PhilCom, Deutsche Telecom Germany – Islacom and W.R. Berkeley Connecticut – Family First. Other investment proposals are in progress.

She has also been responsible for channeling significant endowments into the Philippines, personally accompanying philanthropic visits to the country. Some of the organizations and individuals she has helped bring into the Philippines are the Henry Luce Foundation (Central Colleges Philippines, Silliman University), Samuel Le Frak (scholarships in typhoon science), Mrs. William Rockefeller and daughter Sally (reforestation projects), and Henrik Ehrnrooth (reforestation projects).

Joanne's involvement in Filipino American causes are shown by her active membership in various non-profit organizations such as the Philippine American Chamber of Commerce in New York, for which she serves as chairman of the advisory board, the Filipino American Human Services, Inc., the Asian Cultural Council, the Association of Foundations, and the Philippine Pastoral Council. She is also a member of various advisory boards, and participates in high level financial meetings which consistently present the Philippines in a positive light.

Joanne is also a member of the advisory board of the Harvard Medical School, the International Selection Committee of the Liberty Medal of Philadelphia, the Immigration and Refugee Services of America, and the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction based in New York City.

Joanne began her financial career in the United States at Morgan Stanley and Company, where she was handpicked to be with a group that opened Morgan Stanley International in London in 1980. Within a year, she was promoted to vice president. In 1987, she moved to Dillon Read and Company as international director of the company. From 1990 to 1996, she was managing director of CS First Boston in New York. Subsequently, she left to establish her own entrepreneurial venture, the Asia Capital Partners, a boutique investment firm based in New York and Manila. In 2000, she folded her company into Global Capital Partners L.L.C., and expanded the partnership to Stuttgart, Germany. For her success and example in entrepreneurship, she was one of five individuals chosen for the 2001 Asian Women in Business Entrepreneurial Leadership Award in New York, U.S.A.

Joanne holds a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from Maryknoll College in Manila, and a Master of Business Administration from Columbia University in New York.

Joanne Benitez has carved a niche in a highly competitive male-dominated world of investment banking and corporate finance. She undoubtedly serves as a role model to all those who aspire to achieve her rare brand of exemplary success.



*Cesar M. Dela Cruz*  
*Indonesia*

One of the Filipinos who has made a name for himself in the financial and corporate world in Indonesia and other parts of Asia is Cesar Dela Cruz. Last year, he was selected by Finance Asia Magazine as the best CFO in Indonesia, and by the Philippine Marketing Association as the 2001 Awardee for the Asia Pacific Agora Award for Marketing Excellence.

Mr. Dela Cruz was born in Manila on February 17, 1943. He was a consistent honor student, graduating Salutatorian at the Gen. Roxas Elementray School in 1955 and with high honors at the F.G. Calderon High School in 1959. He graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Business Administration, major in Accounting at the University of the East in 1963.

After landing 11<sup>th</sup> place at the CPA examinations in 1964, he worked as a junior auditor in the Audit Division of Sycip Gorres Velayo & Co. (SGV). With an SGV scholarship, he obtained his MBA in Finance from the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania in 1971.

Immediately after, Cesar worked for about two years with one of SGV's correspondent firms in the USA, which is now part of Klynveld, Peat, Marwick and Goerdeler (KPMG), a leading provider of assurance, tax, legal and financial advisory services. In 1972, he was assigned to the SGV Group's member firm in Indonesia, Drs. Utomo, Mulia & Co. where he worked until 1977 when he was promoted partner in the Audit Division of the Group. In May of that year, he was seconded to be the Senior SGV partner at Ahn Kwon & Co., the group's member firm in Seoul, Korea. While in Korea, he was responsible for the financial audits of multinational companies such as General Motors, Citibank, Coca Cola, Bank of America, Credit Lyonnais and others. In 1981, he returned to Drs. Utomo Mulia & Co. in Indonesia where he stayed for another two years.

After twenty years with SGV, he resigned in 1983 and joined the Salim Group, the largest business conglomerate in Indonesia. He started out as adviser to the group's internal audit division and eventually became a director of the group. His involvement has been mostly in the group's Food and Consumer Products Division, although he was at one time or another involved with the other divisions such as the plantations, distribution and the international divisions. He has been a member of the group's steering committee for its food and consumer products division since 1984. He served in the management committee of Indofood and was the chief administration officer of the edible oils and fats operations from 1984 to 1994. In 1994, he was appointed as commissioner of PT Indofood Sukses Makmur Tbk. when it went public. In 1997, he became a director of the Company and was appointed chief financial officer in 1999. In January 2001, he was designated as deputy chief executive officer of the Indofood Group.

*Married to the former Elnora Tapia and with four children, Cesar Dela Cruz has demonstrated how the Filipino expatriate professional can succeed in the Asian corporate world with flying colors.*



*Renato B. Garcia, MBE*  
*United Kingdom*



Renato Garcia brought pride to the Filipino people in England when Queen Elizabeth II conferred upon him the Member of British Empire (MBE) award in August 2002, for his dedicated service to mentally incapacitated people. He is the first British citizen of Filipino descent to have ever been bestowed such honor.

Rene was one among those in the original batches of Filipinos who came to England in 1970 to train as nurses. He was only 19 years old then. Prior to that, he was a pre-medicine student at the Far Eastern University. Upon arrival in England, he trained as a psychiatric nurse at St. Bernard's Hospital and graduated in 1974 as a registered mental health nurse. He then completed his master's degree in counseling at Brunel University in 1995 and received his diploma in NHS Management at The Royal College of Nursing in 1999. At present, he is the locality manager of the Southall Mental Health Team, West London Mental Health NHS Trust. He resides with his family in Maidenhead, Berkshire.

As a nurse working in a multi-cultural borough where 75% of the residents belong to ethnic minorities, Rene developed a nursing style that is innovative, sympathetic and culturally sensitive. He leads a team who speak their own national languages, providing culturally appropriate assessments and alternative professional health care that is familiar to patients' own culture. Deviating from western-style medical practice, the team offers alternative and complementary treatment like prayer meetings, music and relaxation sessions like yoga, Reike and Indian head massage, among others. Starting with 500 patients, the project is now accessible to 1,200 patients per month.

For four years, Rene coordinated the World Mental Health Day Campaign in Ealing. In this campaign, he helped promote good mental health and social inclusion in the community, and challenged stigma and discriminatory attitudes towards mental illness, disability, aging and race.

Apart from his professional life, Rene is very active in church. He is presently the country head of Couples for Christ (CFC) in the United Kingdom. His work for CFC brings him around England in spreading the faith and helping in Christian renewal. With CFC, he helps provide family-like support, assistance, pastoral guidance and advocacy for new arrivals of Filipino nurses. The organization has also helped Filipino nurses financially when relatives were ill, or when they needed assistance with employment, or family problems in the Philippines.

Both in his work as a mental health nurse and service with Couples for Christ, Rene is able to give his commitment and professionalism to people of the United Kingdom; at the same time, sharing his faith and promoting the culture and values of the Filipino people.

When Rene received the MBE, he said, "I am truly delighted that my dedicated service in nursing has been prestigiously and publicly merited. This recognition is not only for me but for the contribution of all the nurses in the industry and the Filipinos in this country." Indeed, this native of Mabalacat, Pampanga, continues to give honor to his country through his life and his example.



## *Michael Patrick L. Guingona*

*United States of America*

Filipino Americans account for almost one third of the total population of Daly City, California. However, no Filipino American had ever been elected to the City Council until 1993 when Michael Patrick L. Guingona made history by winning a council seat. Two years later, at the age of 33, he became Daly City's youngest mayor. He has held this position thrice: from 1995 to 1996; from 1997 to 1998; and from 2001 to the present. In between terms, he also served as the vice-mayor of the city. It is also known that at an early age, he already demonstrated leadership and a genuine concern for fellow citizens and the community.

Mayor Guingona was born in San Francisco and grew up in Daly City, California. In 1985, Guingona obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree in History from the University of California at Los Angeles, and then, pursued his Juris Doctorate degree at the University of San Francisco Law School. He received his law degree in 1989, and was soon admitted to the California Bar Association. He is also a member of the State Bar of California, the Filipino Bar Association of Northern California (board member), the California Trial Lawyers Association and the California Public Defenders Association, among others.

After obtaining his license to practice law, Michael worked as Deputy Public Defender in the San Francisco Public Defender's Office. Later on, he established and managed a San Francisco-based law firm specializing in, but not limited to, criminal defense.

Amidst his law practice, a keen interest in local government and community issues caught Guingona's attention. As a Daly City resident, he witnessed first-hand the demographic changes his hometown had undergone. In less than three decades, the city's population swelled two and a half times its original size, with a big chunk of it composed of the Filipino community. But for almost twenty years until 1993, no Filipino American candidate was successful in becoming a member of the City Council. Michael Guingona's election was therefor highlighted not only by the Filipino and Asian communities in California, but also in other parts of the U.S.

As Mayor and member of the City Council, Guingona focused his attention on three key issues: re-development of Daly City, public safety and the youth. His efforts led to housing and business development, the establishment of the Daly City Youth Center, a 20-screen theatre complex, restaurants and other establishments, a public gymnasium, library and fire station, among others.

Guingona also placed serious attention to unification of the Filipino community in order to ensure their continued representation in government. When the San Francisco Airport recently laid-off more than 800 screeners, most of whom are Filipinos, Guingona together with other local officials initiated a proposal that sought financial assistance from federal and state governments for job training and support to laid-off workers.

Mayor Guingona's interest in forging a close relationship between his Filipino American constituents and the Philippines led to the establishment of the Daly City – Quezon City Sister City Committee.

Guingona has been elected to the City Council of Daly City on the basis of his successful and pioneering effort to rally broad multicultural community support. His campaign gave a new face to Filipino American politics in California. His success has drawn attention to a new generation of politically active Filipino Americans who have demonstrated effectiveness in American local politics. The prestigious mainstream newspaper, San Francisco Examiner editorialized his election as "*Daly City Filipino Makes History*".

Michael Patrick Guingona is a role model for Filipino American youth who aspire for public office in America.

*Josie C. Natori*  
*United States of America*



"I love my work, but success in fashion is not enough; I want to be able to give back, to make a difference in people's lives. Only then will I feel as though I've accomplished something." These are the words of Josie Natori, a Filipina who has undoubtedly gone a long way in the world of international fashion.

Josie Natori started in the corporate world when she became an associate in corporate finance at Bache Securities in New York, through which she was able to establish the firm's Manila office. She then moved to Merrill Lynch as an investment banker where she soon became its first woman vice-president. Her success in Wall Street, however, soon bored her and no longer found it challenging. Josie therefore decided to establish her own business with her husband.

Josie initially tried her hand at a variety of local Filipino products, from wicker baskets to reproduction Queen Anne furniture. After facing a lot of manufacturing and shipping problems, she considered starting a children's clothing store. It was then that an old high school friend sent her samples of hand-made Filipino children's clothing, including a few hand-embroidered ladies blouses. She took the blouses to Bloomingdale's where a lingerie buyer suggested that she make the shirts longer, call them nightshirts, and sell them as lingerie. This started the Natori empire and a ticket to multi-million dollar success.

The Natori Company was born in 1977 with Josie as Chief Executive Officer. It is now internationally recognized as one of the top luxury brands in the world. It designs, manufactures, markets and distributes lingerie and accessories throughout the United States and elsewhere. It has also added the Josie collection of versatile and contemporary line of lingerie. Much of the manufacturing of the Natori and Josie products is done in Italy, China, Turkey, the U.S., and, of course, in the Philippines. These products are available in major department and specialty stores like Saks Fifth Avenue, Neiman Marcus, Bergdorf Goodman, Bloomingdales, Nordstrom, Jacobson's, Macys, Lord & Taylor, and Dillards. Natori designs are regularly featured in *Cosmopolitan*, *Glamour*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, and *Women's Wear Daily*, and are shown in some television series like *Veronica's Closet*, *The Bold and the Beautiful*, *Suddenly Susan*, *The Young and the Restless*, and *General Hospital*. Julia Roberts' low-backed nightgown with crisscrossed straps in *Pretty Woman* is a Natori creation. Quite importantly, Natori designs have been exhibited at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Josie has won numerous awards for her role in revolutionizing the fashion industry. These include the Galleon Award, the New York City Partnership's Business Woman of the Year Award, the New York City Asian-American Award, the Philippine-American Foundation Friendship Award, the Dallas Fashion Award, among many others. She has been honored by various organizations as one of the most influential Asian women in America. During the presidency of Bill Clinton, she was appointed to the White House Conference on Small Business, an eleven-member presidential advisory council to help small businesses in the United States.

Josie was born in Manila in 1947. Aside from her passion for fashion, Josie is a pianist with a Bachelor of Arts in Piano from Santa Isabel College. At the young age of nine, she performed with a full symphony orchestra, and to celebrate her 50th birthday, she performed a solo piano concert at Carnegie Hall.

Amidst her travels abroad, Josie makes it a point to return to the Philippines regularly to share her business insights with her *kababayans*. Her strong adherence to Filipino ways and values in the light of global success deserves the respect and admiration of her countrymen.

*The Year 2002 Presidential Awards for  
Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas*

*Awarding Ceremonies and Testimonial Dinner  
7:00 p.m., 12 December 2002, Ceremonial Hall, Malacañan Palace*

*Programme*

*Philippine National Anthem*

*Invocation*

*Welcome Remarks*

*Executive Director Jose L. Molano, Jr.  
Commission on Filipinos Overseas*

*Presentation of Awards*

*Message on Behalf of the Awardees*

*Dr. Manolo J. Abella*

*Introduction of H.E. the President*

*Honorable Blas F. Ople  
Secretary of Foreign Affairs*

*Message of Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo*

*Dinner*

*Ms. Cecilia L. Laxaro  
Master of Ceremonies*



## *The Presidential Awards System*

The Presidential Awards for Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas is a biennial awards system to give recognition to Filipinos and other individuals or organizations that contribute to Philippine development and progress, or promote the interests of overseas Filipino communities. The awards are also given to Filipinos overseas who have distinguished themselves in their professions, and have brought honor to the Filipino people.

The awards system was institutionalized in 1991, with the issuance of Executive Order No. 498 by then President Corazon C. Aquino. Since its establishment, the awards have so far been conferred on one hundred fifty-six (156) Filipinos and private organizations overseas. The first set of Presidential Awards for 22 individuals and organizations was given by President Fidel V. Ramos in December 1993, while the second set, conferred also by President Ramos in December 1996, was received by 45 individuals and organizations. In 1998, the awards were conferred by then President Joseph E. Estrada on 30 awardees, while 59 individuals and organizations overseas received the Awards in December 2000.

The Presidential Awards consist of five categories. The *Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino* Award is conferred on Filipino associations or individuals for their significant contribution to Philippine national development efforts. The *Kaakabay ng Bayan* is given to Filipino communities, groups of individual Filipinos, or Filipino associations overseas who have united for the common ideal and purpose of providing support to the progress and development of the country. The *Kaanib ng Bayan* Award is accorded to foreign organizations for their contribution to Philippine progress and development. The *Banaag* Award is given to Filipino and foreign individuals or associations for contribution which has significantly benefited a sector or community in the Philippines, or advanced the cause of Filipino communities abroad. The fifth category, the *Pamana ng Pilipino* Award is conferred on Filipinos overseas who have consistently pursued their work or profession with excellence and distinction.

This year's awardees were selected from a total of 169 nominations from 35 countries. Of the 34 awardees, 24 are individuals while 10 are organizations. The awardees come from Australia, Belgium, Brunei, Canada, the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, Cyprus, Greece, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Indonesia, Italy, Libya, Singapore, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

*The Year 2002 Presidential Awards for  
Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas*

*Executive Committee*

CHAIRMAN

Hon. Blas F. Ople  
Secretary of Foreign Affairs

VICE CHAIRMAN

Amb. Cecilia B. Rebong  
Chief of Presidential Protocol

MEMBERS

Hon. Jose Z. Molano, Jr.  
Executive Director, Commission on Filipinos Overseas

Bishop Ramon C. Arguelles  
Chairman, Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and  
Itinerant People, Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines

Mr. Guillermo M. Luz  
Executive Director, Makati Business Club

Ms. Marites Dañguilan-Vitug  
Editor-in-Chief, Newsbreak

*Technical Committee*

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Ma. Rowena M. Sanchez  
Chief Coordinator, Office of the Secretary

Ms. Blesila C. Cabrera  
Executive Director, Office of Protocol

COMMISSION ON FILIPINOS OVERSEAS

Ms. Minda I. Cabilao-Valencia  
Director, Migrant Integration and Education Office

Mr. Ernesto Noel P. Calleja  
Attache

## *Gallery of Presidential Awardees*

### *Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino*

Caoile, Gloria T.  
Feed the Hungry, Inc.  
H.O.P.E. Foundation International  
Ho, Jesus T.  
Montero, Juan II M.  
Nacario, Emanuel N.  
Navarra, Victoria C.  
Philippine American Foundation  
Philippine Children's Charity Fund  
Philippine Cultural Organization in Saarland, E.V.  
Philippine Economic and Cultural Endowment  
Science and Technology Advisory Council, San Francisco  
Tan, Elton See  
Torio, Isabelo S.  
Vijungco, Jose G.  
World Bank / IFC-IMF Filipino Association

### *Kaakabay ng Bayan*

Aloha Medical Mission  
Balikatan Sa Kaunlaran – Hong Kong Council  
Confederation of Filipino Overseas Organization  
Filipino-American Community of Colorado  
Filipino Community in Thailand  
Filipino Community in the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)

- L & T Group of Companies
- Marianas Fil. Association of Fil. Engrs. & Architects
- Marianas Inst. of Fil. Certified Public Accountants
- Rodrigo Ceron
- Visayas Mindanao Association of CNMI

Filipino Community of Guam  
Foundation for Aid to the Philippines, Inc.  
Volunteer Business Counselors of Doha

### *Kaanib ng Bayan*

Anesvad Foundation  
Association Alouette  
Association Philippines International of Geneva

Books for the Barrios  
Consuelo Zobel Alger Foundation  
Jules and Paul-Émile Léger Foundation  
Operation Smile International  
PAG-ASA Group – Japan  
Philippine Development Assistance Programme  
“Salamat Po Kai”  
Tsakos Shipping and Trading, S.A.

### *Banaag*

Acebuche, Nestor A.  
Acosta, Rodrigo C.  
Al Zedjali, Essa Mohamed  
Andes, Phoebe Cabotaje  
Angelical, Lilia  
Aranilla, Leticia R.  
Astillero, Moh'd Ali Carlito  
Balik Bohol Medical Mission  
Bautista, Antonio C.  
Bayoumi, Mohammad Ahmad  
Bulos, Alice P.  
Cheng, Sian Chun  
Covarrubias, Grace Fe N. (+)  
Cueto, Alex M.  
Cunanan, Aguedo Q.  
Cunina Organization  
Dasodas, Catherine D.  
Dela Paz, James Allan  
Docoy, Fr. Eugene Jr.  
Evangelista, Jose L.  
Filipino American Human Services, Inc.  
Filipino Coalition for Solidarity, Inc.  
Filipino Ladies Association of Guam  
Florentino, Sr. Magdalena S., FMM (+)  
Ginete, Alex Jose R.  
Go, Mildred Aires  
Halasz, Fr. Luis, SVD  
Helbig, Aurea G.  
Hernandez, Carmencita R.  
Hongkong Bayanihan Trust  
Ick, Claire R.  
Juele, Lilia R.  
Kanagawa Women's Space Ms. La  
Kawayan Philippine Language and Cultural School

## *Gallery of Presidential Awardees*

### *Banaag*

Kinderhilfe Philippinen, e.V.  
Lammawin, Francis L.  
Lubang-Looc International  
March, Marina Roma  
Mataac, Celso Jr. T.  
Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Concepcion  
Miyake, Chiyo  
Natividad, Cornelio R.  
Paragas, Rodolfo D.  
Paterno, Ramon A.P.  
Penang Support Group for Migrant Filipinos  
Philippine Heritage Band  
Phil. Inst. of Certified Public Accountants - Riyadh  
Philippine School Bahrain  
Quiblado, Conrada P.  
Racinez, Sr. Olivia, WCW  
Ramos, Angel T.  
Rizal-Blumentritt Society Austria  
Sabio, Fr. Raymond T.  
Seguritan, Reuben S.  
Sirmata (Vision) 2004  
Steiner, Mona Lisa L.  
Tahanan (Diocesan Center for Filipino Migrants)  
Tendencia, Benita B.  
Tenorio, Pedro P.  
Theresa Lädeli  
Tordjman, Paul Semo  
Uy, Emilio Y.  
Vargas, Orlando R.  
Victorian Community in Belgium  
Zamora, Prospero C.

### *Pamana ng Pilipino*

Abad, Pacita  
Aguirre, Bayani S.  
Alcantra, Anacleto R.  
Antonio, Camilo C.  
Aranda, Jacob V.  
Armit, Amelita Aranas  
Balcos, Ophelia G.  
Banatao, Diosdado P.

Bebars, Evelyn Panganiban  
Bobis, Merlinda  
Camara, Jorge G.  
Carlota, Lupo T.  
Castrence, Pura Santillan  
Castro, Salvador P.  
Chen, Anita B.  
Cielo, Angel B.  
Clemente, Lilia Calderon  
Cordero, Paciente Jr. A.  
Cordova, Frederic and Dorothy  
De Guzman, Rodolfo A.  
Del Rosario, Remedios K.  
Diaz, Jose Duddley  
Fitzsimmons, Edith Dizon  
Flores, Eddie Jr.  
Garcia, Jorge M.  
Garcia, Manuel M.  
Goh, Ma. Cynthia J.  
Hagedorn, Jessica  
Haley, Ma. Luisa Mabilangan  
Ho, Anita Magsaysay  
Igarta, Venancio C.  
Kelly, Angelita Castro  
Layosa, Erlinda R.  
Lewis, Loida Nicolas  
Llamas, Antonio Garcia (+)  
Mandac, Evelyn L.  
Maulana, Nasser B.  
Medalla, David C.  
Menez, Ernani G.  
Moguel, Milagros K.  
Natividad, Irene  
Pagtakhan, Rey D.  
Palis, Rosendo K.  
Pangilinan, Manuel V.  
Recana, Mel Red  
Rodriguez, Manuel Sr. A.  
Sagun, Teresita B.  
Salih, Sharifa Zeannat Alih  
Santos, Emmanuel T.  
Soriano, Edward  
Sunico, Raul M.  
Tabalba, Camilo M.  
Tabuena, Romeo V.  
Veloria, Velma R.  
Zwaenepoel, Rev. Paul



## *Directory of 2002 Awardees*

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### *Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino*

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Cosme R. Cagas, M.D.	1 Bunkum Woods Drive Fairview Heights, Illinois 62208 U.S.A.	TN: 1618-398-6308	Crcagas@aol.com
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### *Kaanib ng Bayan*

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International Medical Help for Children - Belgium (A.M.I.E.)	Ericastraat 9 B-2440 Geel, Belgium	TN: 3214-588-871	jean.flipot@skynet.be
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### *Banaag*

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Babaylan-Switzerland	c/o Balikatan Munzweg 20. 7002 CHUR Switzerland	TN: 4181-252-4539	BALIKATAN@datacomm.com
Estrella C. Beatty	29-A Epias Avenue Engomi 2411 Nicosia, Cyprus	TN: 35722-592-814	beatty@spidernet.com.cy
Norma R. Benzon	3131 Lazy Brook Drive Sugar Land Texas 77479, U.S.A.	TN: 1281-265-4630 TN: 1713-868-9922 FN: 1713-868-5235	nbenzon@ywcahouston.org
Centre For Philippine Concerns - Australia (CPCA)	Ross House Level I 247 Flinders Lane Melbourne, 3000 Australia	TN: 613-9663-2874 FN: 613-9663-7620	maria.selga@cisv.com.au
Lolita B. Compas	320 East 23rd Street Apartment 15-G New York, New York 10010, U.S.A.	TN: 1212-777-6423	LBC.NYC@juno.com

## *Directory of 2002 Awardees*

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### *Banaag*

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Zenaida S. Concepcion, M.D.	Kaser Bengaseer Libya, or c/o PE Tripoli	TN: 218-483-3966 TN: 218-483-6158 FN: 218-489-3966	Tripoli_pe@lttnet.net
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