



In conferring the PAFIOO Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino Award upon Leo-Felix M. Jurado, the President recognizes his exemplary advocacy for the nursing profession and remarkable achievements and contributions as a nurse, educator, and leader that have promoted inclusivity and paved the way for broader opportunities for Filipino nurses in the United States.

Leo-Felix M. Jurado

**United States of America
Hometown: Lasam, Cagayan**

When asked for his philosophy on nursing, Dr. Leo-Felix M. Jurado's response is as profound as it is simple: *"In nursing, you will always be making a difference in people's lives. To do that well, you have to be selfless."* This ethos has driven his remarkable career as an advanced practice nurse, educator, administrator, and advocate. Since moving to the United States in 1988, Dr. Jurado has carved out a significant legacy, not only in nursing but also in uplifting Filipino nurses and the profession as a whole.

Dr. Jurado's roots are deeply connected to his Filipino heritage. He earned *magna cum laude* honors for both his bachelor's degree in Nursing and in English from St. Paul University in Tuguegarao City, Cagayan.

In the United States, he pursued a Master of Arts in Delivery of Nursing Services and a Doctor of Philosophy in Urban Health Systems, laying the groundwork for his future accomplishments in both nursing practice and academia. His early academic achievements would

soon be matched by his groundbreaking work in shaping nursing policy and practice in the United States.

Leading Change

One of Dr. Jurado's defining moments came when he was appointed by then-Governor Christine Todd Whitman as a Board Member of the New Jersey Board of Nursing (NJBON). He was then elected by the Board Members as President, making him the youngest nurse to hold this prestigious position.

During his tenure, Dr. Jurado led initiatives to make the nursing licensure process more accessible and equitable for foreign-educated nurses, including Filipinos. He was responsible for approving new nursing programs, regulating the nursing profession, and advocating for reforms in New Jersey's nurse licensure procedure. His work ensured these highly qualified foreign-educated nurses could contribute to healthcare in the United States without facing unnecessary hurdles.

Breaking Barriers

Dr. Jurado's legacy of advocacy extends far beyond New Jersey. Under his leadership, the NJBON successfully lobbied to remove the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS) Examination as a prerequisite for foreign-educated nurses taking the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX). His efforts were instrumental in ensuring nurses from the Philippines and other countries could take the NCLEX without facing redundant testing barriers.

This significant change was not limited to New Jersey. Dr. Jurado extended his advocacy to other states, working with chapters of the Philippine Nurses Association of America (PNAA) to implement similar reforms in places like Virginia and Indiana. His relentless push for fairness in the licensure process created opportunities for many Filipino nurses seeking to practice in the United States.

As a past president of both the Philippine Nurses Association of New Jersey, Inc. (PNANJ) and the PNAA, Dr. Jurado made lasting contributions that continue to shape the nursing profession. He founded the international, peer-reviewed *Journal of Nursing Practice Applications & Reviews of Research (JNPARR)* to provide a platform to advance scholarship among PNAA members. He served as Editor-in-Chief for three years and is currently serving as its Associate Editor.

He served as the PNAA Parliamentarian for 7 years, and Executive Director for 4 years, where he introduced subchapter formation, fostering the growth of PNAA chapters across the United States. His efforts created a more robust network for Filipino nurses, giving them greater opportunities for professional development and community engagement.

Giving Back to the Community

Dr. Jurado's humanitarian spirit has led to multiple efforts to give back, both to the Philippines and to Filipino nurses abroad. In 1998, through the PNANJ, he facilitated donations to Books for the Barrios, benefiting more than 800 Filipino children. He also led a donation drive to build a 50-home PNAA *Gawad Kalinga* Village in Bulacan after a natural disaster displaced many residents.

He has been involved in setting up legal defense funds and emergency preparedness initiatives and continuing the *Balik-Turo* educational program, which allows Filipino nurses in the United States to return to the Philippines to share their expertise with local nurses.

As a mentor, Dr. Jurado has inspired many nurses to pursue further education, encouraging them to obtain postgraduate and doctoral degrees. His guidance has helped nurses become educators, leaders, and advocates in their own right, continuing the cycle of positive influence he began.

Leadership and Inclusivity

In addition to his leadership roles with professional organizations, Dr. Jurado has left a profound mark in the academic field. He is the Inaugural Dean of the College of Healthcare Professions at DeSales University. He served as the Founding Dean and Tenured Professor at the College of Health Professions at the Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania from 2022 to 2024. From 2019 to 2022, he also served as the Chair of the Department of Nursing at William Paterson University of New Jersey.

Dr. Jurado's teaching and leadership experiences have made him a valuable mentor to many nursing professionals. His doctoral dissertation, the *Social Construction of Filipino Nurses in the Philippines and Foreign-Educated Nurses in the United States*, reflects his commitment to understanding and addressing the challenges faced by Filipino and minority nurses. He has presented his research at conferences worldwide, sharing his insights on the experiences of foreign-educated nurses and the role of men in nursing.

Dr. Jurado has worked to tackle the issue of qualified students being turned away from nursing programs due to a shortage of certified instructors. As one of the 15 minority nurse educators selected for the inaugural year of the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) program, Dr. Jurado gained valuable experience in online education and developed new strategies for remote learning.

His work has had a lasting impact on the nursing profession, helping shape policies and programs that support the education and professional advancement of minority nurses. He is particularly passionate about promoting diversity in nursing, believing that role models from minority backgrounds are essential for fostering inclusivity and success within the profession.

Accolades

Dr. Jurado's contributions to nursing have not gone unnoticed. In 2022, he was honored with the *Gawad Alab ng Lahi* Award, presented by the Philippine Consulate General in New York and the *Hiraya* Foundation for Filipino-American Heritage Preservation. This award recognizes his tireless advocacy for Filipino nurses and his impact on the nursing profession.

Further solidifying his place among the greats in American nursing, Dr. Jurado was inducted as a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing in 2016. Throughout his career, he has also received accolades, such as the Nurse Scientist/Scholarship Award from the National Coalition of Ethnic Minority Nurse Associations and was named in *Who's Who* in American Nursing and *Who's Who Among American Teachers*.