



# THE THOMASIAN ALUMNI COMMUNITY

VOL. NO 7 ISSUE NO. 4

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE UST ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, INC.

## Newsletter

### UST HONORS NEW BATCH OF OUTSTANDING ALUMNI IN THE 2024 TOTAL AWARDS



The 2024 TOTAL Awardees with the UST Rector, OAR Director, and USTAAI President.

The University of Santo Tomas honored 13 alumni and one family who exemplified the Thomasian core values in their fields of expertise in the 2024 The Outstanding Thomasian Alumni (TOTAL) Awards. The awarding ceremony was held on September 27, 2024 at the Dr. Robert C. Sy Grand Ballroom, Buenaventura Garcia Paredes, O.P. Building, UST Manila.

The recipients were hailed as role models of students and younger generations of alumni by UST Rector Very Rev. Fr. Richard G. Ang, O.P. *"May the examples of our honorees motivate us to dream bigger, to strive harder, and never to lose sight of the impact we can create,"* said Rev. Fr. Ang during his speech. He also commended the awardees of their initiatives to drive progress within communities and bring about meaningful transformations.

The recipients were given gold TOTAL medals and plaques molded after UST Founder Fr. Miguel de Benavides whose religious and education contributions have left a lasting impact for centuries.

Among the awardees was Sta. Elena Construction and Development Corporation founder, Ms. Alice G. Eduardo under the category Accountancy, Business, and Management. Fondly known as the "Woman of Steel," she forged her path in an industry traditionally dominated by men, breaking barriers, and redefining what it means to be a leader in the field of construction and development.

Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP) President Sr. Maria Marissa R. Viri, RVM was named TOTAL Awardee for Health Allied for her commitment in combining her profession as a licensed pharmacist and an administrator of different RVM schools in the country, and for establishing full-service testing and research laboratories for students.

Associate Justice Amy C. Lazaro-Javier was conferred the TOTAL Award for Law and Judiciary. Being the 182nd Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the Philippines, Javier also served as an associate justice of the Court of Appeals where she led its Gender and Development Committee.

Two veteran and award-winning journalists were cited for the category of Media and Entertainment—Nestor Cuartero and Joselito Zulueta.

Cuartero, a former UST educator and book author, worked as a long-time editor for Manila Bulletin, garnering several awards such as the 2010 Binhi Awards' Environment Journalist of the Year and 2023 & 2024 SALUTE Awardee Nick Joaquin Literary Awards.

Zulueta was the former arts and culture editor of The Philippine Daily Inquirer and continues to write editorials. He is a leading voice in journalism, literature, and criticism. His notable work includes the Inquirer's special Vatican correspondence for key global events. He teaches at the UST Faculty of Arts and Letters and the UST Graduate School.

The recipient for the category of Medicine is Makati Medical Center's Chief of Hepatobiliary Pancreatic and Liver Transplant Surgery, Dr. Catherine Teh. She has made great contributions in the field of HPB surgery, multidisciplinary team approach, telemedicine, patient safety, and diversity and inclusion advocacies.

Two outstanding alumni stood out for the category of Music, Arts, Literature and Design. First is the modern and contemporary artist from Camarines Sur, Edgar Doctor. A prolific artist, Doctor has produced one-man shows and represented the country in several international and local art exhibitions. Architect Jose Pedro Recio is the second recipient to receive the award. He established RCHITECTS, Inc and has been recognized by the Professional Regulation Commission for his contributions in the field of Architecture.

Hasan Fard, the Chairman & CEO of Trend Group, Inc. and Trends & Technologies, Inc., was named the recipient for TOTAL Awards Science and Technology. He built Trends into a leading systems integrator and technology business services provider. His leadership has garnered the company over 300 awards and recognitions globally and locally.

For Service to the Church, UST Education Dean Pilar I. Romero, PhD was awarded in this category. She is a seasoned textbook writer and editor, religious education program consultant, and a member of the Board of Don Bosco

### UST AAI & OAR Team-building in La Union

Representatives of the UST Alumni Association, Inc. and the personnel of the UST Office of Alumni Relations held a team-building activity in La Union from July 27 to 29, 2024. The two groups discussed possible collaboration activities for 2025.

On the way, the group visited the Minor Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary of Manaoag and made a courtesy call to Fr. Roland Castro, OP who stays at the Basilica.



The group was welcomed by the Tomasining Ilocano La Union officers and members, who hosted lunch at Rose Bowl in Bauang, La Union. Dinner was hosted by Mr. Ronald Dy, an alumnus, at Gefseis Greek Grill at San Juan, La Union. Sunday dinner was at Lomboy Farms in Bauang, courtesy of Mayor Menchie Lomboy-De Guzman, an alumna.

USTAAI officers who joined the trip were Atty. Dwight Ramos, President; Atty. Ma Elena Enriquez, Corporate Secretary; Arnel Ocampo, Treasurer; Jonathan Peran, VP for Presence; Nanette Fernandez, Chief of Staff; Joy Gatmaytan, Deputy Chief of Staff for Publications; Bess Asiddao of the Sustainability Advocacy Committee; and Kaye Bundang, Business Manager.

OAR Director Asst. Prof. Joreen Rocamora, Ph.D. was accompanied by staff members Carla Ricarte, Elaine Cruz, Dani Factora, Marlot Ngo, Julia Benigay, JB Rebello, and JP Perpetua.

— Joy Viray-Gatmaytan, AB Translations, 1980

Education System. Her expertise includes catechesis, Catholic education, teacher formation, school administration, and values integration.

The Service to Humanity award was conferred to Jollibee Group Foundation Founder and Chair, Grace Tan Caktiong. Her dedication steered the growth of the foundation's work in areas of agriculture, education, and disaster response which empowered more Filipinos to dream bigger for their families and communities.

UST also gave special awards for Young Thomasian Achiever, Posthumous Award, and Thomasian Family.

Assistant Secretary Paul Anthony Pangilinan was named the Young Thomasian Achiever for his commitment to public service since 2007. He continues to make significant impact in improving the welfare of the Filipino people by serving the Office of the President today.

Continued on page 9





## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK: *At Your Service* by Atty. Dwight Ramos

### Marching Orders

Father Rector Richard G. Ang, O. P., was installed for his second term this September. Reflecting on his message during the ceremony, I realized that this may well be our USTAAI guide in partnering with our Alma Mater.

I sat down with our AAI Chief of Staff, Nanette Fernandez, and we culled Vision 2028, the roadmap he unveiled for the University, which, as he emphasized, is guided by six priorities with a key emphasis on research and innovation. What we came up with is the following list for what we now believe as our own marching orders from him:

First is to reinforce alumni, academe, industry and government (AAIG) collaboration, which of course runs smack down our alley of the AAIG Summit initiative which is now on our 6th year of implementation;

Second is to expand global engagements, which speaks well of our thrusts in building more Thomasian Alumni communities worldwide that are active not only in engaging local people but also institutions;

Third is to partner in mentorship and fundraising projects, which we have actually been looking at and are already prepared to do;

Fourth is to gear up in all places where there are Thomasians living and/or working, in order to:

- \* Tie up with local government units for nation building and regional development.
- \* Do joint ventures with leading industry players for research and product development.
- \* Build a strong alumni network by sharing knowledge and expertise, developing careers and extending local and international reach.
- \* Strengthen public presence with more assertive promotion of UST quality education.
- \* Create narratives that highlight our successes and showcase our innovations.
- \* Develop a more efficient crisis management strategy and public relations; and,

Finally, that we are to do all these by clear communication, decisive action and constant coordination, summed up in the word SYNERGY.

## A BOUNTIFUL HARVEST

Once again, we are proud to have been part of The Outstanding Thomasian Alumni (TOTAL) Awards this 2024 which was held as a testament to the continuing and long-standing endeavor of the University to honor Thomasian alumni who have unequivocally given their best to the service of the community and the church. We thus congratulate not only the awardees, but also those who organized and made this momentous event possible.

TOTAL Award is the highest honor bestowed by the University upon Thomasian alumni in recognition of their significant and exemplary contribution to the society and the Church. Through the years, and now as a biennial event, TOTAL has continued to draw inspiration from all stakeholders of the Thomasian community, as it likewise inspires our Thomasian students, the future alumni of the University, to pursue excellence in their academic as well as spiritual and moral formation.

The USTAAI is one with the University in ensuring that this event remains as one of the great pillars that unite all Thomasians worldwide, as we exemplify the Thomasian core values in our respective fields of expertise, wherever we may be: competence in pioneering human endeavors, commitment to our profession and compassion for others, particularly the marginalized in the society.

Thank you to all who participated, most specifically to those who forwarded their nominations, and to the esteemed members of the Screening Committee, allowing us to once again select the best of the best this year. And of course, we thank our Alma Mater now, not only for shaping us but also for recognizing and bestowing this great honor.

The Awardees have undergone a comprehensive review process by the selection committee composed of past awardees, University administrators, and USTAAI officers. We have a special feature this time with the recognition of one of the nominees who unfortunately passed on before the deliberations were concluded, but whom the selection committee found deserving of recognition, albeit posthumously.

And so, our great thanks go to all the members of the selection committee for TOTAL Awards 2024, as follows:

### Chairperson:

Hon. Justice Teresita V. Diaz-Baldos (2016 TOTAL Awardee for Law & Justice)

### Members:

Rev. Fr. Isaias Antonio D. Tiongco, O.P., JCD (UST Vice Rector);

Rev. Fr. Louie R. Coronel, O.P., EHL (UST Secretary-General);

Asst. Prof. Joreen T. Rocamora, PhD (OAR Director, and yours truly,

Atty. Dwight M. Ramos (USTAAI President)

Atty. Ma. Elena R. Enriquez (USTAAI Corporate Secretary)

Ar. Yolanda D. Reyes (2002 TOTAL Awardee for Architecture)

Maria Minerva P. Calimag, MD, PhD (2022 TOTAL Awardee for Medicine)

Evelyn A. Songco, PhD (AAI Chairperson and TACFI Executive Director)

Inocencia Ida S. Tionko, RN, MHPed (USTAAI Chair of Academics Committee)

And so once again, thank you to the Father Rector and the University.

Congratulations to all Thomasians and friends. By God's unending grace, we surely have a bountiful harvest this 2024 and we are truly proud!





## CEAFI Holds General Assembly 2024



The General Assembly (GA) of the College of Education Alumni Foundation Inc. (CEAFI) was held on 13 July 2024 with 32 participants. At 8:30am, UST Senior High School PE teacher Anthony dela Cruz led the group in a colorful dance as energizer.

The Opening Prayer and Philippine National Anthem was led by Leo Quimson while CEAFI Vice-President Marielyn Quintana gave the opening remarks. Dean Pilar Romero of the College of Education then gave her Welcome Remarks, and asked participants to introduce themselves by giving their name, course and batch, and what was making them happy at the moment. The earliest batch represented was BSE 1969 with 2 attendees: Evelyn Mangahas and Evelyn Sebastian.

The business portion followed with Treasurer Cecille Lobo giving her financial report. Special Projects Committee head Leandre Dacanay appealed for everyone's cooperation in future activities before the year ends to improve our

finances. President Evangeline Timbang then showcased the activities of CEAFI throughout the year in her report which also covered CEAFI's active participation in the UST Alumni Association Inc. (USTAAI).

The guest speaker, Nutrition and Dietetics Department Chair Kathleen Cruzada was introduced by Trustee May Lagniton. Since July is Nutrition Month, Ms. Cruzada talked about "Colorful Plate for Colorful Life" as illustrated in Pinggang Pinoy. The open forum drew questions on nutrition and the Nutrition Assessment Clinic was promoted as free for all alumni.

The meeting ended with certificates of appreciation distributed, and an impromptu choreography of a CEAFI song that got everyone on their feet. All enjoyed a hearty lunch and a thoughtfully prepared loot bag by the Fellowship Committee led by Ces San Juan and May Lagniton.

— Nanette Ochoa-Fernandez, BSE 1976

## CELEBRATING THE SUCCESS of "UST Night sa Daet"

Tomasinong Bikolano held the "UST Night sa Daet" at Mareeya's Place on 25 September 2024.

The event was honored by the presence of distinguished guests, including Archbishop of Caceres Rex Andrew C. Alarcon, UST AAI President Atty. Dwight M. Ramos, Tomasinong Bikolano Regional Coordinator Dr. Rollo Milante, Office of Alumni Relations Director Joreen T. Rocamora, UST AAI Chairman Dr. Evelyn Songco, and representatives from the UST-OAR and UST AAI who traveled all the way from UST Manila to join the event.

A significant highlight of the evening was the induction of the Tomasinong Bikolano-Camarines Norte Chapter Officers, led by its President, Judge Divine G. Peñañiel. The chapter's noble advocacy is "Tomasino Para sa Simbahan, Bayan at Tahanan."

Established in May 2023 by Archbishop Rex Andrew Alarcon, Tomasinong Bikolano-Camarines Norte Chapter has been steadfast in its commitment to serving the community. Reminiscing the past, he narrated how he formed the Tomasinong "Bikolano - Camarines Norte" when he was the Bishop of the Diocese of Daet.

In their speeches, Dr. Milante, Atty. Ramos, and Asst. Prof. Rocamora emphasized the importance of the UST Alumni Association (USTAAI) in encouraging unity and mutual support among members. Towards this same goal, the UST Office of Alumni Relations is actively connecting with UST alumni associations globally to expand its network and strengthen the bond as Thomasians worldwide.

The event also featured the distribution of souvenirs from UST Manila and Tomasinong Bikolano, adding a touch of UST pride to the gathering, thanks to the support of generous donors.

"UST Night sa Daet" is seen as a testament to the sense of solidarity and friendship that defines the UST community.

— Atty. Fatima Rojas Badaguas, BS Tourism Management 2002

## USTCEAA Turnover Of The Completed Covered Court To VMIS

The UST Civil Engineering Alumni Association (USTCEAA), in partnership with its mother organization, the UST Engineering Alumni Association, Inc. (USTEAAI) and the UST Simbahayan Community Development Office (SCDO), held on August 6, 2024 the blessing and turnover ceremony of the newly renovated and completed covered court and activity stage to the Villa Maria Integrated School (VMIS) in Porac, Pampanga.

Present during this event were Asst. Prof. Froilan A. Alipao, MCD, Director of the UST SCDO; Asst. Prof. Joreen T. Rocamora, PhD, Director of the UST Office of Alumni Relations; Engr. Agnes Cecilia Valencia Pabillo, President of the USTCEAA; and Engr. John Paul D. Pe, former president of the UST Engineering Alumni Association and one of

the 2022 Distinguished Thomasian Alumni awardees.

This construction project came into fruition after the Faculty of Engineering (FoE) Community Development Team and the Engineering Faculty Organization (EFO), in collaboration with the Engineering Student Council together with all FoE recognized student organizations, conducted a Christmas Donation Drive for Villa Maria Integrated School (VMIS) in December 2023. During that time, the covered court, used by the students and the community for their activities and programs, had stood half-finished and was in dire need of repair and completion. Engr. John Paul Pe, owner and President of Archipelago

Builders Corporation, along with his colleagues from the USTCEAA, donated more than one million pesos to cover the materials, labor, and logistics for this project.

— Jonathan H. Peran, BS ECE, 1996






# ENRIQUEZ


## SECURITY SERVICES, INC.




**Providing Professional  
Security Service for  
over 60 years**

30 Cetacio Street, Brgy Siena Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines 1114 

+63.917.588.1774; +63.917.906.022.0600 

(028) 743.0122; (028) 712.2153; (028) 712.2154 

[essi@enriquezsecurity.com](mailto:essi@enriquezsecurity.com) 





## How to Organize a 50th Anniversary College Homecoming in 3 "Easy" Steps

By Arthur Dominic Villasanta

Marketing Major, Class 1974

First off, we pray for the continued happiness, health and success of our fellow alumni, wherever they are in this world, who graduated from the University of Santo Tomas, College of Commerce in 1974. They are all our brethren. They are fellow travelers who trod the same road we did from 1970 to 1974. This sets them apart from the rest, and elevates their stature in our eyes. God eternally bless your kith and kin.

To our dear friends and fellow alumni who have departed this Vale of Tears, we extend a heartfelt "Thank you" for the staunch friendships you brought into our young lives. You are loved and greatly missed. Two of my closest friends, Reynaldo Oriola and Honorato Castro, Jr., now reside among God's Blessed Legions. These reserved and intellectual gentlemen are at last free from pain.

Young love was also our companion in those carefree years away in beautiful love songs and romance. We will forever cherish the "special someone" we fell in love with, and who chose to love us in return. First love is unforgettable. There are times I wish I were with you again.

### Golden Homecoming

Class 1974 held its GOLDEN JUBILEE HOMECOMING on September 28, 2024 at the UST Alumni Center. The Jubilee was part of the GENERAL ALUMNI HOMECOMING (GAH) involving Batch 1964, 1969, 1974, 1979, 1984, 1989, 1994, and 1999.

Both events were organized by COCAFI (UST College of Commerce Alumni Foundation, Inc.). The enormous task of successfully organizing and staging our Golden Jubilee or 50th Anniversary Homecoming was entrusted to a Steering Committee consisting of 15 alumni from Class 1974.

I think we can rightly claim the success of both the Jubilee and the GAH from a personal and business perspective. Alumni had tons of fun and weren't shy in saying so. Facebook posts on eight UST websites (Elementary, High School, Commerce and alumni), as well as word-of-mouth, attest to the great time alumni had that Golden Saturday. This was what mattered the most to the Steering Committee, of which I was a member.

Our Jubilee's website, USTCOMMERCE74GOLDEN JUBILEE, echoed the positive views. It now hosts 16 Jubilee videos and over a hundred photos of that grand event. One Jubilee video so far has had 1,200 Plays.

The website also displays the more than 170 "promotional teaser ads" (including GIFs) I created and placed online from April 29 to September 28 to drum-up awareness and attendance. There were even more good reviews on the UST Commerce Alumni Association Community website, which has over 1,400 members.

"Seems everyone had a great time," noted Marissa Montezon McIntosh in the Golden Jubilee FB page. "Fun, fun, fun! Nice," gushed alumna Josie Barlin.

"Feeling young," wrote Nella Peña. "A blessed night for us all! Thank you God for making it happen," said Fidelita de Leon. "All you guys look good," stated Cesar Balbontin. "Nice," said Daisy Canoy in many separate posts.

"Baka nilagnat iba dyan the next day," joked Mon Ancheta. To which I replied: "Sigurado. Tawag dyan Overjoy Disease."

### Three Steps

The Jubilee and the GAH more than met its goals by raising funds and attendance way above expectations. This much was reported by Steering Committee Chair Exequiel Lampa during his speech at the GAH. The excess funding has gone to the scholarship program for 3rd and 4th year students of the College of Commerce and Business Administration. It will help a lot of these kids graduate from the school we love and give them a leg-up in life.

This lengthy preamble now brings us to the main point of this piece: "Why were the 2024 Jubilee and the GAH successful?" For future organizers of the many GAH to come, I present for your perusal three "easy" suggestions:

- Focus on the women • Forget your ego • PRAY

#### 1. Focus on the women

Women comprised most of the attendees to the Jubilee/GAH. This was to be expected since women tend to like and attend reunions more than men. Photos and videos from Class 1974's Silver Anniversary in 1999 show more women than men in attendance.

The last UST reunion I attended was that of The Varsitarian. I was a staff member of the university's newspaper twice (1972 and 1974). Although I can't recall the correct year of this Varsi reunion (I think it was 2008), I clearly remember there were a lot more Varsi women than men in attendance. The Varsitarian will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 1928. I'll go—if I'm still alive four years from now.

The inescapable fact women are the target market for the Jubilee simplified the task of the Social Media Committee (SocMed) consisting of myself as Chair, Pat Abaño, Philip Bautista and Ed Manahan. It meant we had to design our awareness campaign to appeal to women.

We had to use social media, specifically Facebook and FB Messenger, given the global reach of our awareness campaign. Facebook remains the social media of choice for the more mature (read elderly) segment of the population. We ruled out relying on Instagram, YouTube and What's App because these tended to appeal to the youngsters (read our kids and grandkids).

It was decided to create Facebook teasers targeted at our alumna. This choice was reflected in the romantic colors (pink, red, gold) and themes (love and love songs, for example) we used to encourage alumna attendance. This ad campaign ran almost daily for five months. We also created Facebook Reels to add more depth to the campaign.

Facebook teasers are those short, engaging images and videos that seize and generate interest for an event, in this case the Jubilee/GAH. I created some 170 of these teasers either as JPEG images or GIFs.

Most of the Jubilee alumni in attendance on September 28 were indeed women. One "Class Photo" shows about 60 alumni, of which fewer than 20 are men. There were more than 110 Golden Alumni from Class 74 at the event. In addition, dozens of alumni from the other Batches were also in attendance.

Women also played a heavy role in organizing our Golden Jubilee. Two of the three committees in the Steering Committee were headed by alumna: Fidelita (Fely) de la Rosa-de Leon (Programs) and Maria Luisa (Marlo) Dadia (Finance). They led the effort to put together the Jubilee and fund it.

A shout-out to the Finance crew of Marlo, Joseph Bautista, Jake Flea and Ed Nepomuceno who spearheaded that campaign to raise the funds that financed the GAH, the publication of the Souvenir Program, the entertainers and all the other miscellaneous expenses that combined to create a Night to Remember. They greatly exceeded their targets and made the event a profitable one for the College. A special "Thank You" goes to Pat Abaño for his stunning donation. Kudos to all the Steering Committee members who solicited ads for the Souvenir Program.

The flawless Program ensured the Homecoming's success. It was crafted after an enormous amount of work by Fely and her team consisting of Andy Cua, Quiel Lampa, Mon Pestaño, Susan Orin-Trinidad, Vic Vianzon and Cynthia Yee-Escalona. These friends greatly helped in making the proceedings glitch-free.

#### 2. Forget your ego

The men and women in the Jubilee organizing committee held senior management positions (President, Vice-Presidents,

Entrepreneurs) during their fruitful careers before retiring to private life. An accumulation of egos imbued with the experience of high command can be a problem. Thankfully, this was never a headache with the 15 members of the Steering Committee. The Greater Good was always paramount.

Many of these alumni had worked together for UST for years and were close friends. I was among the newest to the group and was brought in because of my experience in public relations and publications. Watching my mates work was eye-opening.

There was no one-upmanship, ego-tripping and loud fights among this group consisting mostly of upright, practicing Roman Catholics. They cooperated unselfishly towards our common goal—ensuring the success of our Golden Jubilee. It was a pleasure working in a civil and non-confrontational environment so radically different from the maddening corporate milieu.

Ubiquitous communications via social media proved indispensable in getting things done. We held Zoom meetings almost every week and talked via the Internet constantly. We also had face-to-face meetings with COCAFI leaders led by President Irene de Leon-Arroyo at UST and other places about eight times. Problems rose constantly but were quickly overcome thanks to the zeal among the team.

All of us did this job gratis for OUR College. It was a worthwhile sacrifice of time and talent. It was great teamwork.

#### 3. PRAY

Coming from the only Catholic and Pontifical University in Asia apart from being pious Catholics, my comrades in the Steering Committee take to prayer easily. We began and ended each Zoom meeting and each face-to-face meeting at UST with a short prayer. The plea was consistent: asking the Lord to bless our endeavors with success. On September 28, one of our mates offered two Novenas so rain wouldn't spoil this special day. Needless to say, this great day was sunny and warm throughout. Others also prayed for sunny weather.

Prayer was a constant. Prayers and effective action were the keys to success.

Once the Jubilee ended, our Viber page was rife with prayers thanking the Lord for making this event a success. "Never doubt the power of prayer," goes one popular adage. There are no doubters in this group.

#### We'll meet again

I'll end this piece by thanking all the Jubilee Steering Committee members and COCAFI who worked closely together as one team to pull-off the GAH. This will be the last time I work with this group since there will no longer be a 50th Homecoming to fight for.

Thank you Quiel Lampa, Pat Abaño, Cristina de la Cruz-Basilio, Joseph Bautista, Philip Bautista, Andy Cua, Max de la Cruz, Marlo Dadia, Fely de Leon, Cynthia Yee-Escalona, Jake Flea, Ed Manahan, Ed Nepomuceno, Vic Vianzon, Mon Pestaño and Susan Orin-Trinidad. As Chair, Quiel played the key role in keeping us on track and on point. He deserves the plaudits due him.

Much gratitude goes to COCAFI and its leaders: President Irene de Leon-Arroyo (my teammate in the Commerce Quiz Team), Carmelita Garcia, Estelita Ramos, Cristina Aquino, Jennifer Langitan and Charlotte Ramos-Chua for making the job a delightful one.

I dedicate to you all this nostalgic old song from the 1940s my late father used to sing: "We'll meet again. Don't know where. Don't know when. But I know we'll meet again some sunny day."

I look forward to that sunny day.

- Arthur Dominic Villasanta, BSC Marketing, 1974





USTAAI, UST OAR and Tomasining Bikolano Camarines Norte chapter distributes relief goods to Talisay City



USTCEAA turnover of the completed covered court to Villa Maria Integrated School



UST EHSGAI Meeting with the 2025 Jubilarian Batches in preparation for the Grand Alumni Homecoming



Quarterly BOT Meeting of the UST Alumni Association, Inc.



USTAAI, UST OAR and member alumni association presidents meet with Rev. Fr. Max Gatela, O. P.



UST Thomasian Alumni Leaders Association (TALA) gives gift packs to the UST guards





USTAAI and UST OAR teambuilding at Thunderbird Resort in La Union



# -CLICKER-RAZZI-



BLESSING CEREMONY OF THE USTAAI, UST OAR AND THE ALUMNI OFFICES



USTAAI, TACFI and UST TALA donate relief good to the victims of Typhoon Carina



Tomasinong Ilocano - La Union welcomes USTAAI and UST OAR

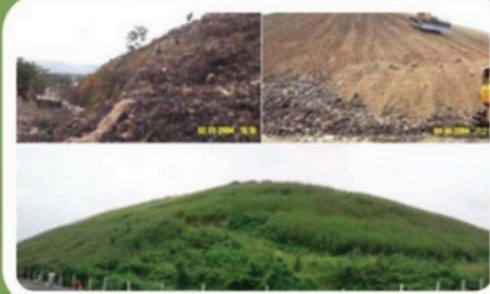






## BASIC ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS & TECHNOLOGIES, INC.

### SERVICES OFFERED BY BEST



REHABILITATION & CLOSURE  
OF OPEN DUMPSITE



MATERIALS RECOVERY FACILITY



REFUSED DERIVED FUEL (RDF)

### INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS



LANDFILL CONSTRUCTION,  
OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE



MBE CENTERS



GARBAGE HAULING AND DISPOSAL

### CONTACT US



UNIT 708 THE TAIPAN PLACE, F. ORTIGAS JR. RD.  
ORTIGAS CENTER, PASIG CITY 1605



+632 5310-4625



info@best.com.ph



www.best.com.ph





## USTECEAA holds its first General Assembly



The UST Electronics Engineering Alumni Association (USTECEAA), in coordination with its mother organization, the UST Engineering Alumni Association, Inc. (USTEAAI), held its first General Assembly at the George S.K. Ty Function Hall, Buenaventura G. Paredes, O.P. Bldg. on 28 September 2024. Titled *ECEGAw Natin!* this event brought together members of the USTECEAA community, the electronics engineering students, and the current and former engineering faculty members.

Asst. Prof. Ma. Luisa T. Asilo, the UST Faculty of Engineering Secretary, gave the opening remarks on behalf of Dean Angelo R. dela Cruz. This was followed by the message of USTECEAA President, Engr. Mario Rommel A. Diño. Included in the program were the presentation of the USTECEAA Officers and Board of Trustees for 2023-2025, the USTECEAA President's report given by Engr. Exequiel C. Delgado, and the USTECEAA

Treasurer's Report by Engr. Stewart Lim.

The highlight of the event was the presentation and testimonial of the past and present scholars, which were fitting enough as the General Assembly was set out to build the organization's fund raising efforts and to allow the association to further its advocacies, most notably the USTECEAA Scholarship Program. This scholarship program aims to help financially challenged but deserving UST ECE students. In line with this program, the Electronics Engineering alumni attendees were encouraged to avail of the opportunity to be recognized as one of the pioneers in the USTECEAA "paECEmuno" Lifetime Membership, proceeds of which will go directly to the USTECEAA scholarship fund.

This event was hosted by Monina Evangelista (ECE Batch 1994) and Michael Jan Cas (ECE Batch 2003).

- Jonathan H. Peran, BS ECE, 1996

## UST HONORS NEW BATCH OF .....

from page 1

Former DITEM, Inc. co-founder and president Morris Agoncillo was conferred the Posthumous Award for his achievements in the field of civil engineering. Under his leadership, DITEM has earned various awards and recognitions. Engr. Agoncillo has also been known as a staunch supporter of UST student-athletes.

The Thomasian Family Award was given to the Ling Family. In 1983, Architect Jose Siao Ling and his wife, Architect Ana Mangalino-Ling, established the JSLA Architects and led the company, together with their sons and daughters, to become the leading ISO certified architectural design firm with over 800 completed projects and 50 design capabilities and master plan.

Health Allied recipient Sr. Viri gave the response on behalf of her fellow awardees. She identified the award both as an honor and a responsibility for them.

"We are more determined to uphold the ideals of the TOTAL Award as we are expected to continue striving for excellence and serve as role models for future Thomasians. We commit to continuing to use our skills, knowledge, and experiences to make a possible impact in our respective fields and contribute to transforming the communities we serve. We hope to inspire others to pursue their passion, embrace challenges, and contribute to the greater good just as the Thomasian community has inspired us," said Sr. Viri as she encouraged everyone to strive for excellence and to lead with integrity and compassion. "May the TOTAL Award we receive be a lamp that will guide us in upholding the values of our Alma Mater."

The TOTAL Awards is a biennial event where the University confers its highest honors upon Thomasian alumni in recognition of their significant and exemplary contribution to the society and the Church. It has cited over 295 alumni and 10 Thomasian families since it began in 1993. Recipients have undergone a comprehensive review process by a selection committee composed of past awardees, University administrators, and UST Alumni Association, Inc. (USTAAI) officers.

- Office of Alumni Relations

## At a Glance

### USTHS CLASS '63



JULY 17 At Conti's Restaurant at San Juan City, The July-born were feted by their classmates with a hearty lunch, followed by a short program of honoring MYRNA AGAWIN-MILITANTE, PRECY DE LEON, MYRNA PLATA-MUNDA, and PERLA EVANGELISTA ROY.



JULY 26 At the Celebrity Sports Plaza where MYRNA AGAWIN-MILITANTE had her birthday (July 27) family celebration and classmates were likewise invited.



SEPTEMBER 14 JOSEPH OCAMPO came home to his Motherland and reunited with his high school classmates after 21 years at a merienda-cena in the home of a fellow classmate, SUSANA M. CALALAY in Quezon City. There was a lot of updating that happened over cups of coffee and native delicacies. Joseph promised to return next year for more updating on his future plans.



AUGUST 22 At the PICC for the 45TH Commencement Exercises of the University of Perpetual Help System Dalta, PROF. MYRNA PLATA-MUNDA was conferred the degree of Doctor of Humanities, Honoris Causa by President DR. ANTHONY TAMAYO, assisted by the Vice President, Dr. DAISY TAMAYO, and witnessed by Senator SHERWIN GATCHALIAN and by Dr. MYRNA's family - her husband ENGR. REYNALDO MUNDA and her son ENGR. JOSEPH BENJAMIN HILARIO. The reception followed at THE SM MOA 101 Restaurant.

### USTHS CLASS '78



AUGUST 23 - LEEBAI ESQUIVIAS-GAMBOA, a former president of the USTHS Alumni Alliance, passed away after bravely battling her kidney disease. She was a kidney transplant patient who received a kidney from her husband in 2017. Her positivity allowed her to continue with her research about her condition, and she never complained about what she was going through. Her companions throughout this medical challenge were her family and friends who were her prayer warriors. Her remains were viewed at the Paket Santiago Memorial Funeral Homes along Marcos Highway and inurnment was held on August 30 at the Loyola Memorial Park in Mankina. Her Novena Masses, Funeral Mass, and 40 Days celebration were also on zoom for those who resided far away.

- Myrna Plata-Munda, USTHS, 1963





## Campus Memories:

## No Experience of Flooding in UST (and how UST brought me to where I am now)

In 2011, UST marked its quadricentennial and staged a series of events in celebration of its 400 years as an educational institution—the oldest extant university in all of Asia. It was a good time to finally return to the campus that taught me practically everything I know in this world.

My homecoming became work when I was made to co-host with Ali Sotto the three-hour program that was staged in one part of the campus that wasn't there yet when I left school. I can't tell you the exact location, but it was on the Governor Forbes side... oops, A. Lacson, rather. Did I just give away my age?

In one part of the show, Herman Salvador a.k.a. Brod Pete was called in to do a quiz show. The questions, of course, were all about UST. Here was a sample question: What is the official name of UST? The contestants chose from the following: A) University of Santo Tomas B) Pontifical and Royal University of Santo Tomas (the correct answer) C) Aquatic University. Everyone had a good laugh over the third choice, except me. I didn't get the joke. Ali had to explain to me that it had something to do with the constant inundation of the UST campus during the rainy season.

Even before I enrolled in UST, I was already told about its legendary flooding during the wet months. But this reality never stuck in my mind because I never experienced wading in floodwater in all my years in the University. Maybe it can be put on record that I am the only alumnus who never went through that experience since the time the campus moved to its present Suluyan site in 1927.

How did I escape all that flooding? Simple. Every time there was a typhoon, I'd call the school first to find out if classes had been suspended.

Maybe it paid off that I attended the afternoon sessions since most of the "flood victims" were students who had their classes in the morning. Or perhaps I was just lucky—even lazy because I loved staying in bed every time it rained. In those days, quality education to me was secondary to good sleep.

The only time I got drenched during my academic years were in those mandatory ROTC drills that were conducted in the open field facing the grandstand. Rain or shine, we were there Sunday mornings for two years. After I was done with ROTC, it was all sunshine for me. I finally enjoyed university life.

Oh, the resto that served the best grilled cheese sandwich! Somehow, I never got over that delicious treat. During those years I was with GMA, production had to provide me with a cheese sandwich before I went on air. Was that asking for too much? That requisite cheese sandwich was nothing compared to Richard Gomez' demand for a whole "bilao" of banana-Q during the whole time he was hosting S-Files.

Those classrooms devoted to AB classes in the Commerce building witnessed the discovery of whatever artistic potentials I had aching within my creative mind and soul. These became tools

as I navigated the entertainment profession after I finished school.

In second year, for instance, I was simply hanging out in an empty classroom with friends when Raquel Ramirez (our teacher in Spanish and Science) stepped in with a bunch of lovely coeds from other schools. Senorita Ramirez said that she was putting together this talent-personality contest called Miss Hispanidad. Do we want to help mount the production? I volunteered and it was one of the best decisions I ever made in this life. The production work we did was past the amateur phase since we were staging the event at the Philamlife Theater. We had to move like professionals even if we were only college students because the show sold tickets to the public.

After I was done with school, I was drafted to join the Manunuri ng Pelikulang Pilipino (a critics' group) and my first assignment was to put up the Gawad Urian, an awards show that honored the best of the best in local cinema. That was a walk in the park for me, thanks to my experience putting together (for two years) Miss Hispanidad.

When I took my major—journalism—I was fortunate to have some of the best professors. Two of them—Ramon Francisco and Rina David—actually worked as journalists and they knew how to write and put their respective publications to bed. They beamed with pride when I became their colleague in the journalism field—pointing out that they helped shape my foundation in the profession. They weren't lying when they said that. Those teachers taught me how to craft heads and form lead paragraphs in the pieces I wrote.

In a literature class, Ms. Piedad Rosales told me to report on the rehearsal of a campus production of Oedipus Rex after she heard me speak during recitation. Without the class knowing it, she was actually conducting a search for actors to play secondary and tertiary parts. The lead had been cast—with Henry Tenedero playing the title role—and I ended up playing a shepherd.

I graduated to bigger roles in succeeding productions, but I never took the acting bug seriously (I was a ham in those school plays!)—until I joined show business and was given the chance to do movies and acting roles on television where I had the opportunity to work with Dolly de Leon before she became an acclaimed actress in Hollywood. Even if I was awful in those campus productions, I have to admit I learned a lot doing those plays, particularly discipline—memorizing lines and hitting the mark at the precise moment. All that proved to be useful when I decided to join mainstream entertainment.

Incredibly enough, it was also in UST where I was discovered by Charo Santos—the first time. I say the first time because there was a second time, which changed my life forever.

The first time around, Charo was hosting with Tito, Vic & Joey a youth-oriented talk show called Friends. She was in the UST campus and was on the lookout for students to interview. I happened to be passing by and she pointed to me and made

me sit down in the panel.

Of course, she no longer remembers that first meeting given the fact that she deals with countless people in her job. One day recently, she was in my house for a late lunch and I reminded her about the incident. She had already forgotten that chapter of her life. Quite an irony for someone who annotated a show called Maalaala Mo Kaya for three decades.

But she still remembers the second time she discovered me. The details are already hazy in her mind, but I do recall the moment. We were actually neighbors in a subdivision in Quezon City, and there I was biking away when she spotted me again and offered me a talk show in ABS-CBN. The program was Showbiz Lingo and I did it for five and a half years—until I decided to study abroad.

Upon my return, the show had already been canceled, but fortunately for me, GMA took me in and I stayed in that network for 16 years. I did two programs there: Startalk and the game show Now Na!

Today, I'm back in ABS-CBN doing another talk show, Best 10 Bets, which airs in various platforms (we're strongest though in TFC). I've come full circle and I think that it was UST that molded me into the person that I became.

UST armed me with weapons that I used in hurdling the various intricacies of my chosen profession. I learned lessons in life not only in the classroom, but in the different areas of the campus as well, including the resto where I munched on grilled cheese sandwich while observing the behavior of other people. That taught me how to deal with the unpredictable characters in show business—the craziest and even the meanest.

Looking back, UST became the staging area for a career in entertainment where one can easily lose one's values, scruples and principles. I'm not saying that I am up to my neck with moral values, but thanks to the strong Christian foundation provided by the university, I'd like to think I've managed to hang on to the teachings of the Catholic faith. I need all that to keep my sanity intact in the jungle that is show business.

That—and grilled cheese sandwich.

— Butch Francisco, *AB Journalism, 1980.*

*The columns of Butch Francisco have appeared in various publications. He has written chapters in several books on film and culture. He was also the author of the Eat Bulaga book when the long-running noontime show turned 30. As a film critic, he sat as judge in different award giving bodies, including the Catholic Mass Media Award, Gawad CCP for TV, the annual Metro Manila Film Festival and the national selection for the Oscars. He remains a member of the Manunuri Ng Pelikulang Pilipino. Still active as a talk show host, Butch is back in ABS CBN where he anchors Best 10 Bets. He has also branched out into acting. In 2017, he appeared in the anti-government series Tukhang, where he played opposite now international star Dolly De Leon.*





# VISION ARCADIA

## REIMAGINING ARCADIA

by: Mr. Lito Zulueta

In Greek classical literature and art, “Arcadia” represents an idyllic, unspoiled wilderness, a pastoral paradise where simplicity, peace, and harmony with nature prevail. Named after the mountainous region of Greece, Arcadia became a symbol of an idealized rural life, untouched by the corruption of civilization. In this mythical land, shepherds lived in harmony with nature, free from the burdens of urban life, experiencing a life of rustic innocence and quiet pleasure. Arcadia symbolizes a utopian world, where existence is serene and untroubled a stark contrast to the complexities and tribulations of the real world.

In the present time, when corruption, environmental degradation, and social injustices plague societies worldwide, the concept of Arcadia holds significant relevance. Contemporary artists, in particular, can draw inspiration from this classical ideal to address both personal and collective visions of peace, wellness, and environmental consciousness in their works. By reimagining Arcadia, they can offer a powerful commentary



on the current state of the world while proposing a return to simplicity and harmony, both within ourselves and with the environment.

In Vision: Arcadia, University of Santo Tomas (UST) alumni artists from the old College of Architecture and Fine Arts and the present College of Fine Arts and Design reimagine the concept of Arcadia to make it more relevant to the Philippine context. Some artists draw on local landscapes, traditions, and cultural symbols. By incorporating elements of Philippine flora and fauna, as well as geography and topography the physical as well as the social and the spiritual Into their representations of Arcadia, they can create a uniquely Filipino vision of pastoral peace. This localized Arcadia can reflect the rich cultural heritage of the Philippines while also addressing contemporary issues such as urbanization, loss of agricultural land, and the displacement of indigenous communities.

Moreover, some UST contemporary artists infuse their works with a sense of hope and resilience, if not with a sense of whimsy and playfulness, emphasizing the possibility of reclaiming and preserving Arcadia in today’s world. Through their art, they can inspire a collective vision of a better, more sustainable future one



where humanity lives in harmony with nature and where the simple pleasures of life are once again valued.

Through Vision: Arcadia, UST alumni artists reimagine the classical ideal of Arcadia in ways that address both personal and societal concerns. By exploring themes of personal wellness, environmental consciousness, and cultural identity, they can create powerful works that resonate with the challenges and aspirations of the present time. In doing so, they can offer a vision of hope and renewal, reminding us all of the enduring appeal of simplicity, peace, and harmony in a complex and troubled world.

### VISION ARCADIA

A project of USTAAAI President Ms. Marissa Pe Yang

Curated by Mr. Janos Delacruz



Layout by Juert Asejo





# FEATURED THOMASIAN

## Emelito T. Malabanan: *The Accountant*

Lito was born on February 20, 1961 in the province of Quezon, although both his parents hailed from Batangas. When he was 3 years old, his family migrated to Quezon City where his parents traded rice and some grocery items.

After a year of kindergarten, Lito was sent to the UST Elementary School to begin Preparatory school where he graduated in 1973.

The following school year, Lito attended the UST High School. There he met his favorite teacher, the former Ms. Evelyn Ariola. He was a shy, unsure kid robbed of confidence, but Ms. Ariola was kind and assuring. He claims that it was she who inspired him to pursue accountancy.

After high school graduation, Lito applied and was accepted in the UST College of Commerce where he met his better half, the former Maria Lourdes Castillo.

They got married in 1980 while they were both in their 3rd year of college. Malou finished a semester later than the regular four years but Lito had to finish a whole year later because he had to work to support a young family.

Lito did odd jobs like driving their family owned jeepney to make ends meet. When he finally graduated in 1982, he was already a regular employee of a multinational insurer.

Lito's job was not about accounting. Back then like now, the probability of passing the CPA Licensure Examination is 1 out of 5. Although graduates from UST fared better at 4 out of 5, he was at a disadvantage as he was already employed doing an unrelated function. Nonetheless, through the prodding of his father-in-law who was himself an accountant and a lawyer, he tried although with severe hesitation.

It was extremely difficult. Lito could not attend the review course offered in UST where takers' success rate was almost 5 out of 5. The review course started too early and he was coming from his job in Makati.

Lito had to make do with a little-known review school somewhere in Manila. He was always late that he occupied the farthest seat, seeing and hearing very little. In the end, he decided to just self-study. He got hold of past examinations and did mock tests during weekends. It

was all he could do.

When Lito took the October 1982 CPALE, he was sure he would fail. Going home from work in the summer of 1983, his father-in-law dropped him off at the corner of Governor Forbes and España. He aimlessly walked to the direction of PRC where the results were pasted on the concrete fence of the building. By some miracle, he passed the CPALE in one take. He could not believe it, but he did.

However, things were not better in his place of work. Lito still was not doing accounting. He was moved around a lot. He started in operations, then in personnel, then in data processing, until finally, in accounting.

Something happened that twisted Lito's fate. He was asked to attend a training seminar about productivity improvement. He was assigned lead analyst of a team whose purpose was to improve efficiency. He probably did good at it that his employer was able to reduce his manpower requirement. Then, like a flash of lightning, it hit him. He could lose his job too when someone better would come along. The false security provided by employment dawned on him.

In 1989, Lito enrolled at the DLSU Graduate School of Business and Economics aiming for an MBA degree. It was extremely difficult. He got ill along the way but he marched on. He finally earned the degree in 1993, but waited one year before falling out of the employment line to escape the rat race.

In 1994, Lito resigned from employment, practiced public accounting and taught accountancy in Letran College.

Lito also became an accomplished computer programmer. He developed and marketed his very own off-the-shelf Integrated Accounting System. It proved effective because he sold a lot of it. Many of its users still continue to be his advisory and consulting clients.

As fate would have it, he was lured back into the corporate world when a client in the advertising industry offered him a job as Director of Finance where he functioned as an employee and a minority shareholder. He accepted, provided he could still do his advisory and consulting business.

When his boss and partner passed away in 2012, Lito's plan was to retire. He was in his 50's and he had passive income. However, a neighbor in his Batangas rest house needed his help. Again, he was lured back to the corporate world, this time in the construction industry where he remains to this day.

Lito's involvement in the Thomasian Alumni Community started in 2015. He and Malou were asked by their high school batchmates to coordinate with the USTHS Alumni Alliance and to prepare for their Ruby Jubilee in 2017.

In 2018, Lito was thrust in a power struggle and ended up the elected President of the USTHS Alumni Alliance. It was something he did not plan on but which fell on his lap. His position inevitably got him involved as a member of the board of trustees of the UST Alumni Association.

In 2019, Lito and Malou were asked to be Hermano Mayor and Hermana Mayor of the first ever Thomasian Alumni Community Santa Cruzan.

In the same year, Lito was elected President of the Rotary Club of Las Piñas Central that he joined in 2016.

Lito is currently Chair of the UST High School Alumni Alliance, the Financial Comptroller and Resource Chair of the UST Alumni Association (USTAAI), and a founding member and Compliance Officer of the Thomasian Alumni Community Foundation Inc (TACFI).

Lito is also a Senior Assistant Governor of the Rotary International District 3830 covering the towns of Makati, Taguig, Pateros, Parañaque, Muntinlupa, and Las Piñas, and the province of Palawan.

Lito thinks of himself as a "dyed in the wool, true blue



Thomasian." For him, the Thomasian core values are not just lip service. They are essential guides for a purposeful life. He knows them to be true because he has reaped their rewards. Lito follows a simple set of rules demanded of him by his deceased parents. He will always be true. But when being true will be unkind, he will choose to be kind. But when being kind will be unfair, he will choose to be fair.

### EDITORIAL BOARD 2024

**ATTY. DWIGHT HILARION RAMOS**  
Editor-in-Chief, Juris Doctor, 1990

**JOY VIRAY-GATMAYTAN**  
Editor, AB Translations, 1980

**MARISSA PE-YANG**  
Circulation Manager, BFA Advertising, 1995

**JUSTICE RONALD MORENO**  
Legal Adviser

**KAYE BUNDANG**  
Business Manager, ITCGAPT, 2003

**JOJO RAGIL, JR.**  
Layout Artist

**ANA MARIE OCHOA-FERNANDEZ**  
Chief of Staff, BSE English, 1976

**JONATHAN PERAN**  
Presence, BS ECE, 1996

**ATTY. MARIZ MANALO**  
PRO, Juris Doctor, 1995

### AD RATE:

15,000 – whole page | 8,000 – half page

We welcome sponsorship of printing cost.