

UNITED CLASS '61

JUBILEE DIARY

By Cesar D. Candari, '61 MD FCAP Emeritus

One hundred ninety-eight United Class '61 alumni graduated in April and October 1961. In the years that followed the majority of us were in America. And the rest of the story continued under the leadership of our class President, cardiac surgeon Philip S. Chua.

Our 60th anniversary (Diamond) in 2021 was unfortunately postponed to July 5-8, 2022, because of the Covid-19 pandemic. We are now in the winter of our lives. A lovely reminder that no matter how old we may be, we should always be full of life, even more than when we were young.

Members of Class '61 were very active in medical student affairs, occupying top positions in medical councils and other student organizations, and Philip was the founder and editor of *The Medical Student*, the official student paper, with Dr. Horacio A. Ylagan as adviser.

Class '61 was unique and famous in our medical school and beyond. For the first time in the history of the Philippine Medical Board Examinations, FEU (Class '61) garnered 8 of the top ten places on the board exam. From the First Place, all the way down to the 10th were members of Class '61, except the 4th and the 8th places were UST graduates. That broke the record, and perhaps never to be equaled. It highlighted the quality of the medical education at the FEU Institute of Medicine (renamed the FEU-Nicanor Reyes Medical Foundation, relocated to West Fairview, Quezon City.)

Class '61 members in the United States had three cruises within the past ten years. The COVID-19 pandemic precluded the planned cruise number 4.

I took the liberty of writing the diary of every important event such as the 25th anniversary (Silver) 35th anniversary (Coral), 40th anniversary

(Ruby), 45th anniversary (Sapphire), and 50th anniversary (Golden) for posterity

(I missed the 30th anniversary). These articles were published in the FEU Ectopic Murmurs. The Sapphire was posted on the FEU alumni website. www.FEU-alumni.com

As far as I can remember, there wasn't any FEU medical class that has established a jubilee diary except United Class '61. I wrote it for posterity, to be handed down to future generations.

SILVER JUBILARIAN - 25th ANNIVERSARY

JULY 27-30, 1986

I have been relentlessly active in the class of '61 reunions and social activities. There is no question we have that class unity, loyalty, and sincerity in supporting our alma mater. Our 25th Silver Jubilee was on July 27-30, 1986, held at the Cavalier Oceanfront Hotel in Virginia Beach, Virginia. We were all in our prime of practice in different parts of North America. There were 33 classmates in attendance. And it was fantabulous!

The jubilation, joy, and excitement to meet and be reunited with classmates after a quarter of a century were indescribable. We were still all young-looking, vibrant, full of energy, and vigor. Everyone was nice and very happy, successful in his or her practice - no matter what medical specialties they have chosen.

Some of us were (still are) presidents of medical associations in different cities in the U.S. and in different specialties, professors, medical staff presidents, and chiefs of service and chairmen of hospital departments.

We became U.S. citizens and have partaken in the American dream. That said, you will remember when I wrote in Chapter 4 of my book, - *Success is a Journey* - "The American Dream" is that dream of a land in which life would be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability and achievement. It is not a dream of better cars and higher wages, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately

capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position.” - Truslow James Adams.

It was at this time when our classmate, Dr. Lilia P. Luna, Director of FEU Hospital Institute, appealed for a donation of Pulmonary Laboratory equipment to the FEU Hospital. There was no question about our class of '61's loyalty and genuine sincerity to give support to our beloved alma mater. There was a formal meeting presided over by our class President Philip and a motion was made to the effect that each attendee will donate \$1,000.00. It was unanimously approved to provide Pulmonary Laboratory equipment badly needed in our FEU Hospital. United Class '61 donated \$20,000.

The thirty three classmates who attended this festive anniversary celebration are herein listed in alphabetical order: Roger Acosta, Lydia Aquino- Mapua, Vic Asanza, Roger Averion, Abraham Bacarra, Alberto Barreto, Eliseo Bautista, Mimi Bruno-Racela, Moises L. Buzon, Cesar D. Candari, Amado G. Chanco, Philip S. Chua, Rufino Crisostomo, Jr., Graciano B. Dichoso, Conrado D. Doce, Rosemary Espino-De Leon, Lionel D. Foz, Blards Garguena, Farida Isip-Chua, Arturo G. De Leon, Ernie D. Madarang, Lily Nuguit-Sim, Rodolfo M. De Ocera, Zaida D. Padua - De Ocera, Lilia Pagtakhan-Luna, Gorgonia Peralta -Garguena, Celia G. Roque, Estelito B. Santos, Prospero M. Sendaydiego, Abraham S. Sim, Leticia Subido-Dacanay and Julio Teodoro.

This was followed by a silver jubilee celebration in Manila in December 1986; a grand ball held at the Silahis Hotel. On the second day, we had a dinner party at the beautiful home of Lilia Pagtakhan-Luna. It was an evening full of joy and happiness. We laughed, ate, and reminisced during this most memorable evening. I will never forget this reunion where my wife, Cely, and I had the pleasure of meeting my former girlfriend and classmate Shirley, together with her children, after twenty-five years.

This 25th-anniversary reunion in Manila, and the opportunity to be together with my classmates who decided not to come to America and instead established their successful medical practices in our beloved homeland, was a momentous bonding to remember.

It was during the 1994 FEU annual reunion that the hardbound 33rd Anniversary Yearbook of United Class of '61 edited by Philip Chua was finally published. His energy, dedication, a labor of love, and patience made

this possible. It took him seven years of (contacting all our classmates, waiting for their bio and pictures) gathering the materials to produce this awe-inspiring historical yearbook, which was beyond our imagination. He is a man worthy of our admiration. No one and no other class organization was able to duplicate it. It was Philip's dedication to our class and our members' individual achievements that placed United Class '61 at the top, the envy of other classes. I am overwhelmingly proud of every member of our United Class of '61

The New Orleans reunion in July 1994, reminded me of our first impromptu part in the program during the Filipiniana Night when Philip performed his magic-illusion talent ala David Copperfield and Lance Burton. I was the emcee and was asked to sing a popular 'Visayan' folk song for United Class of '61 who danced in style and was highly appreciated.

Our class group luncheon was unbelievably full of contentment, joy, and glee. Everyone wanted to be a comedian like Letterman or Leno with a rampage of Pinoy jokes. It was a wonderful and memorable reunion.

Every time class '61 had a reunion, my three buddies in medical school were foremost in my mind: Manuel Catalan, Gerardo Delfin and Bonifacio Gamo. Both Gerry and Boni had passed away. Manolo has always kept in touch with me. He even visited me in San Diego several times with his lovely wife and our classmate Amelia (Pally) Levardo. I learned that Letty Dacanay, Bert Barretto, Vic Versoza, Mimi Bruno, Jim Sendaydiego have passed away. May they all rest in eternal peace.

At one time we traveled together on a Carnival cruise and had a most memorable and wonderful time. The Catalans always entertained us every time we were in Manila. I admired Manny's professional career, success, opulence, public popularity, and respect by the community of Carmona, Cavite. He was a former Mayor of the town and elected later as a provincial Board Member of the province of Cavite. He owns a hospital in Carmona. He wrote later and stated in 2012: "...but I do manage to stay young. I am still involved in activities like biking and dancing multiple times a week. At seventy-six, I am still active in my medical practice in Sto. Tomas, Batangas and running my hospital in Carmona, Cavite."

SHINNING CORAL – 35th ANNIVERSARY

JULY 1996

Bloomington, Minnesota, was the chosen venue where one out of six people owned a boat, one out of three owned a fishing license, and nearly everyone spent at least some part of the year relaxing by the lake.

On a bright summer day, the six sparkling lakes in the heart of Minneapolis seemed as blue as lapis lazuli, their shimmering surfaces spangling with rowboats, canoes, and sailboats. Not far from Bloomington, where the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers join, are the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St Paul, the choice spot for our reunion.

The skies were hazy, the humidity fair, with rainfall at times. Nonetheless, it did not matter much to the attendees. The host and local alumni chapter made good their promise of fun and festivities and a superb CME program. Altogether, it was a very successful reunion of friends, classmates, and our families.

Some 25 members of the United Class of '61 alumni, the Coral Jubilarians, were there. Coral symbolizes a deep pink color, reminiscent of the showy pink-and-white lady's slipper, the official flower of Minnesota. At thirty-five years after graduation for United Class of '61, pink was incredibly beautiful. It was majestic.

From the very first day of the festivities, with a welcome reception motif of "Back to the 50s," it was evident that the reunion was full of nostalgic moments from the Morayta/Azcaraga/Quezon Boulevard/Espana campus. The pomp and feast during the Filipiniana Night showed a musical extravaganza spotlighting the hidden talents of the Coral graduates of 1961. It was an outstanding performance on the stage, with a chorus of the Kundiman dedicated to our alma mater under the baton of our class president.

The practice sessions were full of fun. We were no longer highly formal, and serious doctors; we simply became our true natural selves, the boys, and girls of the FEU days of yore. With all the laughter, the giggling, and the

kidding, one had to marvel at this spontaneous transformation of happy human beings. It was as if we were at the FEU campus again.

At the luncheon's get-together with our spouses, we resolved to convince a classmate who missed the gathering to attend the next reunion in Dallas. Meanwhile, a cruise was being entertained to take place soon. Certainly, the spirit of the Class of '61 was vibrant, alive, and more reinvigorated. Philip's magic performance and the off-colored jokes of the boys - Pat Avila, Dick Chiu (hubby of Isabel Uy), and yours truly- also entertained us. If there were any punch lines in those jokes, Baby Rosemary Espino De Leon missed them most of the time.

The grand dinner ball was resounding proof that the Class of '61's spirit was high and well in the hearts of its members. Cameras were clicking as we posed here and there. I had a funny feeling that we had invented in our vernacular the absolute adjective of *katakot-takot na kodakan* (camera-induced pyrotechnic demonstration).

Lionel "Buddy" Foz's son, Lyle, was present. So was Fred Millan's son, Marc, Efren Barzaga's beautiful daughter, Cindy, an American Airline stewardess, flown in from Florida. Conrado Doce was at his daughter's wedding that evening, but with Roger Acosta around, he was able to join us later that night.

Furthermore, Pat Avila, a successful surgeon from Oklahoma, not only could belt a song ala Engelbert Humperdinck, but could also entertain one and all. "I'm poor, but I go in style," Pat's joked. He told us he was in the process of building a mansion in San Juan, Batangas, and the blueprint of the Moorish architectural design was something to behold. He promised to take care of me if I were to fly out there for vacation upon its completion.

Arturo "Ot" De Leon still jogged every morning. I was Ot's barber when we were in residency training at Edgewater Hospital, Chicago, Illinois in 1962. Amado "Jobo" Chanco still sported "white-white" hair. Bert Barreto was in excellent condition. Fred Lim looked very prosperous. Roger Acosta was fighting the allergies. The triumvirate of Vic Asanza, Buddy Foz and "Ming" Buzon were the same nice guys as ever. Marianito Chua played host to a sumptuous lunch at a Chinese restaurant. Lydia Aquino came solo because her husband, Rene, was in Manila. From Chicago, Luming Holgado Daza and Letty Subido Dacanay drove in their Carrera. As always, Ulysses and

Fe Baje were present with their cameras. Everyone in attendance appeared to be in good health. Farida Chua (2018) commented she was retiring in two years. We missed the words of wisdom from “Mommy” Baldemor on the topic of retirement. She had indeed convinced me to ‘re-tire’ instead.

During this convention, two of the class of ‘61 members were elected to the high positions in our Medical Alumni Foundation in 2002. Philip Chua was elected president and yours truly as vice president.

Amid the increasing barrage of information regarding managed care, capitation, market focus, competition, buy-outs, and mergers of practices, the United Class of ‘61 nonetheless took it all in stride and style. We came to this reunion to savor fond memories and to have fun. At this stage in our lives, we could not predict the Almighty’s will. Those who did not make it were sorely missed.

During the years following our Class of 61’s 35th anniversary, Cely and I never missed the annual conventions and reunions in Manila. They were interposed with medical missions to the Philippines. It was during these times that I seriously planned for my early retirement. I had prepared for it and wrote articles relating to the right time to retire. Finally, in September 1998, I officially announced my retirement from my practice.

RUBY – 40th ANNIVERSARY JULY 18-20, 2001

United Class of ‘61 was there to MAMBO! It was our 40th (Ruby) jubilee. This time it was celebrated during the 22nd annual reunion and scientific convention held at the Monte Carlo Resort and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada. This is a city of neon lights blazing around the clock, a metropolis that looks like an exotic jewel dropped into the middle of the vast Mojave Desert and where an estimated 4,000 people relocate every month.

The event took place on July 18-20, 2001. The summer heat in Vegas, with the temperature outside registering more than 100 degrees, did not matter much to the attendees of the reunion. Gambling was brisk and entertainment shows were aplenty. The host and local alumni chapter made good on their promise of fun and festivities and a superb CME program. Altogether, we had a successful reunion of friends, classmates, and families.

Some thirty-one members of the class came from all over the U.S. During the gala night, we were in our formal attire, deep red cummerbunds with red bow ties for the males and black long gowns for the females. There was extreme jubilation of the members and their spouses.

Ruby was beautiful and fantastically memorable! Oh yes, for the first time in 40 long years Ruby Cureg (no pun intended) was present. - Nako ang bilis - Time went by so fast. Obviously, we had been somewhat out of touch, but on this occasion, we showed in our hearts our deep, true, unseen friendship and brotherhood that stayed forever green. We could see the yearning to see one another were never-ending within United Class of '61 under the leadership of Philip. He was our class president for life! Yes, of course, we love "King" Philip and "Queen" Farida.

From the very first day of the festivities, with a welcome reception motif of "Viva Las Vegas," it was evident that the reunion was to be more than nostalgia of our school days at Morayta. There was joviality, camaraderie, relaxation, and fellowship and above all, deepened friendships. The Alumni Filipiniana Night showcased impromptu but outstanding performances by Remy Diasen-Sonson in a hula-hula solo dance and this writer serenaded his wife Cely with Ruben Tagalog's romantic kundiman, "Ang Puso Ko" (My Heart).

Lily Naguit and Abraham Sim were our dance instructors. A Mambo #5 dance presentation was our number at the Grand Ball. It was a two-minute salvo of distinctive hip movements plus the forward and backward footsteps—a dance that originated in Cuba. Mind you, we had been practicing this dance since July 2000 at our Bloomingdale, Illinois reunion. Then through cyberspace, Lily emailed the dance steps, and we finally practiced the dance as a group three hours a day for three consecutive days before the presentation. Practicing Mambo #5 in earnest at long hours was overkill, and it was never really perfected. Nevertheless, at the grand presentation, we turned out to be a colorful bunch, a magical production featuring dancers in a Copacabana-style of made-to-order costumes.

This reunion was as joyful as it was in our previous reunion. Our reunion was a homecoming and rejuvenation. We were together as if time stood still for a brief few days. It was as though we were all at medical school at the same time, regardless of who started first. Time has elapsed, my classmates and friends have transformed but really nothing has changed. Their

personality, uniqueness, voice, speech, intonations, peculiarity, all remained. Our paths crossed and hopefully, our bonding and friendship will be “from here to eternity.”

We had our class luncheon meeting in the Market Place at the Monte Carlo Resort, Las Vegas. The planned cruise was resurrected. This time everybody was excited. It would be a cruise to Alaska either before or immediately after our July reunion in San Francisco the following year. We got everybody's email addresses, and King Philip was to use this medium whenever a decree was made. The United class of '61 members had to obey it; otherwise, they would get “beheaded.” This was indeed super leadership. Seriously speaking, United Class of '61 was vibrant as ever. Historically, we have many qualities. Our classmate, Vic Verzosa, topped the medical board examination. Our class received eight out of the ten top places that year. We were the first to produce an alumnus who became the director of the FEU hospital, Lilia Pagtakhan Luna, and we were always first in school spirit and participation. We topped the number of attendees to our school reunion and jubilant celebration and did so after 40 years from graduation.

The grand finale was our recognition night - a repeat of the Coral reunion in Bloomington, Minnesota, where the Class '61 spirit was high and well in the hearts of its members. The flash of lights from our cameras was the order of the night. Then came the presentation of the jubilarians. We observed a minute of silence in honor of our departed classmates, about a dozen of them. The latest one was my very good friend Gerry Delfin. Thank God, all of us in attendance appeared to be in good health.

We danced the rest of the evening. We watched Zaida walk her walk at the fashion show of the convention and, she did not appear nervous. Similarly, Candy Barzaga, daughter of Ephraim, Cely, Glicey and Estrella Tupaz were remarkably outstanding. Yours truly was part emcee of the program. All models were exquisitely beautiful in their gorgeous ballroom gowns, and I cautioned the audience by saying, “Beautiful women are paradise to the eyes, hell to the soul, and purgatory to the purse.” Those impressive gowns were expensive.

I noticed Pat Avila was tranquil and gentle on the evening of the reunion. I loved it when he was always jovial and festive in this event. That was what a jubilee is all about, to be *gocoso* and gleeful. He was not the ala- Engelbert

Humperdinck that I knew of in the previous reunion when he sang all night. What a downer. Pat, I am only kidding.

At the final hour of the grand ball that evening, some of us stayed behind and sang our hearts out along with the band. Sam, Ted, Efren, Roger, and I drank wine down to their dregs. No doubt the wining deepened our friendship, heart, and soul. Guys, you are my friends. That was one of the most wonderful evenings in my whole life. We were drunk.

Together with Dick Chiu, we exchanged dyoks na pang Pinoy lamang (Filipino jokes), sometimes off colored and with green jokes coverage, e.g., Kapag ang palda ng babae ay may hati sa likod, ang ibig niyang sabihin ay, "Halika, sundan mo ako!" Kapag ang hati ng palda ay nasa gilid, "Halika, tabihan mo ako." Kapag ang hati ng palda ay nasa harap, "Halika, bahala ka na".

We missed those classmates that attended the 40th wedding anniversary of Jobo and Ruby Chanco, hence unable to come to this Ruby celebration. I apologize for not listing the 31 classmates in attendance.

Those of us in the retirement circle are all at peace. To those of you still in practice, don't change your 'tires' if you still enjoy working.

**SAPPHIRE - 45th ANNIVERSARY
JULY 5-9, 2006**

UNITED CLASS OF '61 DANCE-SKIT A HIT

The venue of the 27th Annual Reunion-Convention of the FEU-DNR School of Medicine Alumni Foundation was Houston, Texas, known affectionately by its citizens as the "Bayou City." It is on the southeast Texas coast of the Gulf of Mexico. Founded by the Allen brothers in 1836, Houston boasts of its interesting and extensive history, even serving as the temporary capital of the Republic of Texas after the War of Independence from Mexico. Today, Houston covers over 540 square miles and is the 4th largest city in the United States of America. Over 2 million people and 100 ethnic groups call the city home, spreading their unique heritage and influence out in every

direction. It is a city of rich diversity. The residents speak more than ninety languages, which is what makes it a global city.

Held at the Westin Oak Hotel, the alumni reunion-convention was on July 5-9, 2006, our Sapphire anniversary. Ushering it was a reception dinner followed by the Scientific Seminar, a Filipiniana Night (the United Class of '61 presented its Hawaiian Dance-Skit) and concluding with a grand ball. The Silver and Sapphire Jubilarians were honored and decorated with a medal necklace for their respective year by Mrs. Josephine C. Reyes, chairman of the board of the FEU-NRMF (Philippines), assisted by Rolly Casis, outgoing alumni chairman, and Arsenio Martin, outgoing alumni president. The host and local alumni chapter made good their promise of fun and festivities, as it was a superb CME program and altogether a successful reunion of friends, classmates, and their families.

Our United class of '61, the Sapphire (45th year) Jubilarians, had the greatest number of alumni attending. This year, there were 20 of us from all over the United States, with two, of them flying halfway around the world, from the Philippines, to join our reunion. Together with the spouses, there were about 40 of us. About half were now retired, but we were all looking good, strong, and robust. The men were thin on top and have potbellies, the women a bit older but still charming and sexy.

During the grand ball, we were in our formal attire like the previous Ruby Jubilee except for the change of color, deep blue cummerbunds and blue bowties for the males, and sapphire blue long gowns for the females. Our Sapphire Jubilee was indeed beautiful and fantastically memorable! It rekindled once again our friendships and camaraderie from deep in our hearts. This love we have for each other will stay forever green in our group. The yearning to see one another is never-ending in this United Class '61, with the inspiring leadership of Philip and the sincere and genuine conviviality of our loyal members.

The Alumni Filipiniana Night showcased the FEU version of the ala "Academy Award-winning presentation" of the "Sapphire Jubilarians, who presented a Hawaiian dance skit on July 7th. The tireless and talented couple, Abe and Lily Sim, choreographed the skit, and all the members of United Class of '61 participated. The male members were topless and wore only a crown made of green leaves, grass skirt, beaded necklace, and

anklets. Philip narrated the story before the dance presentation behind the scenes:

“Once upon a time, in a tiny remote and secluded island in Hawaii, untouched by civilization, there lived a mighty king by the name of King Candarloko, who was very sad and depressed about his inability to father a son, a successor to the throne. His eight wives failed to give him a son. One day at dawn, he had a dream. In his dream, from out of the blue, he met a beautiful woman who bore him a son. His dream was so vivid, so real, he became so obsessed in finding this fertile maiden, but no one knew who or where she was. He believed that the gods would bless him, and find this fertile wife for him, if he made a special offering to them by the 7th sunset of the 7th moon. He then summoned his best chieftains and their wives from the various regions in the island to perform an ancient religious dance ritual to please the gods. After the offering, like in his dream, the future mother of his son would suddenly appear from nowhere, and dance her way to his heart.”

I played King Candarloko. I was in my throne while my chieftains and their wives swayed to the rhythm of the famous music from the cartoon movie “Lilo and Stitch” as they performed the fertility dance to the gods. The women wore a long Hawaiian MuMu, a necklace and bracelet with large beads; the men were topless and wearing authentic grass skirts, necklace, and anklets, exposing their potbellies. Notwithstanding arthritis, all of us danced with grace (albeit out of sequence sometimes) and gusto. The dance skit was met with a standing ovation, and paparazzi from various classes swarmed our class as we posed for a posterity souvenir shot.

Philip had coined my new name, King Candarloko, with his subjects of *lokos* and *lokas* (crazy men and women). As he had stated in a post-reunion email to all of us, “Our ability as a class to make fun of ourselves make fools of ourselves when the right occasion comes, signifies our zest for life and our love to enjoy it. We are all game and good sports, even willing to dance practically naked in the name of friendship and fun and to entertain...all these qualities make united class ‘61 what it has been in our life and career and during our reunions.”

Our Hawaiian dance skit was only a five-minute presentation. We had three rehearsal sessions. Lilia Pagtakhon-Luna was delayed on her flight from Manila and was able to attend the last rehearsal and did well. At this amazing grand presentation, we turned out to be a colorful bunch, a magical

production turning into a big hit. Sorry to miss the listing of names of those in attendance. I apologize.

As the story went, King Candarloko finally got his wish when a beautiful maiden (played by Remy D of Hawaii) came out from nowhere and made the king happy, and they walked down towards the sunset with his tribe and lived happily ever after.

**GOLDEN - 50th ANNIVERSARY
JUNE 15-18, 2011**

The Golden Jubilee of the class of '61 of the Far Eastern University-Dr. Nicanor Reyes Medical Alumni Foundation (FEUDNRS-MAF) was held during the 32nd Annual Convention and Reunion on June 15-18, 2011, at the Monte Carlo Resort in Las Vegas.

The good news was, most of us were still engaged in successful practices, while others were in gainful employment in various hospitals and medical centers. The majority, however, had retired and are now living comfortably in the United States and elsewhere.

Common in any class reunion, old memories were re-lived, friendship was rekindled, new ones were forged, and new recollections were made. What I observed among the early retirees, and semi-retirees was their laughter, was directly proportionate to the length of time they retired.

Indeed, this reunion was remembered as the most pleasing, wholesome, and fabulous episode of our lives. It was nostalgic. It was the best of times. Forty-six Golden Jubilarians, jetting in from all over the United States and the Philippines, showed up along with their respective spouses – the largest attendance ever since the FEUDNRS Medical Alumni Foundation was founded 32 years ago.

Those present were. Ephraim B. Barzaga, Minerva Bruno-Racela, Amada G. Chanco, Jr., Philip and Farida Chua, Elsa Cura, Remy Diasen-Sonson, Graciano Dichoso, Godofredo Lim, Ernesto Madarang, Rodolfo de Ocera, Zaida Padua- de Ocera, Leona Raymundo-Calderon, Emma Reyes-Carbonel Herminia Salvador, Nardo T. San Diego, Isabel Uy-Chiu. However, to highlight a few not listed above, Vic Verzosa, displayed a grandfatherly physique, an illustrious man, who surprised everyone. Pat

Avila, vociferously full of anecdotal wisdom, Prospero Jim Sendaydiego, (I call him Senday) the tallest and loudest of all, can never be forgotten. Lydia Aquino and hubby Rene came from Bicol, Manuel Catalan, and his lovely wife Amelia (Pally) Levardo Catalan from Carmona Cavite. Manolo was a former Vice Mayor, then-Mayor of Carmona and finally a provincial board member in the province of Cavite. He could have been a governor of Cavite. Bernardo T. Mora Jr., from Surigao City, a former member of the board of directors of the PMA in the Philippines, a senior government health official, a consultant on the agriculture sector, President Family Planning Organization of the Philippines was present. Lilia Pagtakhan Luna, from Manila, our former Medical Director of the FEU Hospital, was always present in the past reunions, and she still looks beautiful.

Zeny Espino-Ostman was one classmate I could never forget. When we were in our internship at FEU hospital, she unremittingly wore a *contodoplantsado* white uniform. No, I cannot recognize her now. She is as attractive as before. Bimbo Ceniza is still a heavysset man. The troika (Russian word- 3 horses, pulling a cart), Ming Bozon, Vic Azansa, and “Buddy” Foz were the same old horses, and in the cart ridden by Rose, Lucy and Inday Nora. ‘Ot’ de Leon, my client in my barbershop at Edgewater Hospital, Chicago, Illinois, and spouse Rosemarie are tightly inseparable ever since we were in medical school. Abraham Baccara and his attractive wife Zeny came for the second time. Letty Subido-Dacanay gave me a hug. Uly Baje, you are an avid photographer. The flash of lights from those cameras was the order of the night. In a strange way, it evoked a feeling that ‘our existence was but a brief crack of light between two eternities of darkness.’

Ted Teodoro remained young-looking as ever. Bert Baretto, Manuel Ramos, and Emil Quilala. We missed those that were unable to attend. Credit rightfully belongs to the Class of '61 president, who left no stone unturned to secure the success of the event, with the help of various committee chairs. Once more, the venerable and inspiring class prexy showed his enduring leadership as everyone agreed that the recently held 50th-anniversary celebration was the most significant, and the grandest ever.

THE EVENTS

Wednesday, June 15. The Welcome Reception of the evening was with a motif of “Viva Las Vegas,” it was evident the reunion was again more than the nostalgia of our school days at Morayta. There were shows and entertainment. A Las Vegas professional singer, an Elvis Presley look-alike,

performed the antics, singing modulations and bodily movements no different from the real Elvis. Yes, Elvis is still alive. Exhibitions of two showgirls, tall six-footer blond beauties at the grand ball entrance welcomed guests and joined them for photos. They were so attractive in their voluptuous burlesque attire.

Prospero (I fondly call him Senday) Sendaydiego did a beautiful invocation, a master of prayers in all native lingo. The grippingly nostalgic moments from the old days continued.

I was in my black suit wearing a hat, entertaining the alumni as a one-man band on my keyboard synthesizer - dance music in the rhythm of cha-cha, bolero, rumba, and big band, a gig appreciated by everyone. It was a performance repertoire.

Thursday, June 16. Three Class '61 members were participants on the first day of the CME program. At 8:00 o'clock that morning, Philip S. Chua was the moderator. I delivered my lecture and then followed Lily Naguit-Sim. My lecture touched some hearts of listeners about our country, the Philippines, reminiscing about a story of how we all migrated to this land of milk and honey. Not only have we enjoyed the blessings of freedom, opportunities, and prosperity not available in our beloved homeland, but we were also blessed with an American Dream.

The first schedule of rehearsal of our 'dance troupe presentation' was planned for this day after our joint lunch at a Filipino Kapit Bahay restaurant on the Strip. We walked our way from the hotel to the restaurant under the hot rays of the Las Vegas sun, the temperature in the high 90s. We were a happy bunch of humans rejuvenated into young vibrant students of Morayta. One could imagine we were like the boys and girls in the far distant past at the FEU campus.

At 1:30 pm our rehearsal began. The producer and choreographer presented a complicated variety of marching, dancing, positioning, along with hip and hand movements from tribal styles to the current modern free-style dancing. Every five minutes the choreography changes. Philip ran around dictating tempos, timing, and the firing of cannons between two tribal warriors. It was a skirmish. He became a combination of a choreographer/producer, and everything else, King Philip, the director. Everyone was keenly serious and excited, afraid to be "beheaded" if non-

compliant (kidding lamang.) Can you imagine professors, directors, hospital department chiefs, corporate presidents, fellow emeritus, and diplomates spontaneously acting like medical students of yore?

Pally and Lilia were interested in perfecting the precise movement of body and soul. We were seemingly ridiculous, crazy, and yet serious, obedient, and calm followers. We expressed our intensity in our rehearsal to achieve Academy Award fame, another hit presentation.

The Filipiniana Night, Friday, June 17. I was the Emcee with Dr. Ben Reyes '70 as my co-MC. For the Class of '61 it was an evening of attractive Filipina doctors and their friends and spouses, the good-looking Filipino doctors in their seventies, with their balding heads, potbellies, and knee weaknesses. The Kundiman, bolero, cha-cha music in the synthesizer I was playing, welcomed the alumni in their entrance to the ballroom. The Bohol Songbird Band followed. Yes, it was indeed Filipiniana Evening. Barong Tagalog, Philippine Terno, and Kimonas with modern long gowns were the attires of the night. It was a nationalistic fervor. Cameras' flashes all over resembled pyrotechnics.

Our camaraderie radiating from all these bursts of lights seemed to place us into the horizon of the moonlight. Were these examples of afterglows in the sunset of our lives? Amelia (Pally) Levarado-Catalan sung *Saan Ka Man* with accompaniment in the piano by her husband Manuel Catalan. I introduced her as the Doris Day of United Class of '61. She captivated the audience with her magnetic performance, incredible voice, and beauty that was something to behold. Conrado Doce (Ado), the professor and a charismatic performer, sung his hearts out for several Kundiman songs. I belted out one Ruben Tagalog song - my contemporary gig of our native harana song. Dance, dance, dance 'til midnight showing off our terpsichorean prowess on the floor.

GRAND FINALE

Grand Ball, Saturday, June 18. The grand finale of the four-day event was a dinner and ball with the Golden Jubilarians Class of '61 and the Silver Jubilarian Class of '68 as honorees. One of the momentous highlights of the night was the distribution of commemorative medallions by no less than the late Mrs. Josephine Reyes, chairman of the FEU-NRMF Board of Trustees. FEUDNRS Medical School Dean Remedios Habacon, FEU-DNRSMAF

chairman Dr. Pepito Rivera, and FEU-DNRSMAF president Oscar Tuazon assisted her. Photos for posterity were taken in abundance.

Then the much-awaited Golden Jubilee presentation began. With all the preparation and rehearsals tightly kept from other alumni, the audience was in for a huge surprise. The United Class '61 "Hawaiian-motif presentation during the Sapphire Anniversary in year 2005 in Houston, Texas, acclaimed as an Academy Award-winning presentation, this time was a big "Hollywood Epic"!

The special presentation delved on a bit of Philippine history. Legend has it that "On April 7, 1521, Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan landed in Cebu. He was welcomed by Rajah Humabon, the King of Cebu, who together with his wife and about 700 native islanders, were converted into Catholicism on April 14, 1521. Magellan, however, was killed by King Lapu-Lapu in the battle of Mactan, barely 20 days after the Portuguese set foot on Mactan."

However, the United Class of '61 presentation trekked back to 50 years before the arrival of Ferdinand Magellan, where the two warring tribes dominated the southern Philippines. After Magellan landed, the Spanish friar (priest) convinced the two chiefs of the tribes to stop their fighting and unite. From these unified tribes was born a King, later to be known as Lapu-Lapu.

Participants who hastily changed from their formal attire to G-strings (*bahag*) for men, and *tapis* for women, wearing black tights, wigs, bracelets, necklaces, earrings, leg trinkets, and whatever native accessories there were during those days, made dramatic entry in a darkened ballroom to the tune of staccato music and native sounds of the clanging cymbals and drums.

Led by Dr. Bernie Mora holding a Santo Nino, I followed him in friar's frock, and with my right- and left- hand movements of priestly blessings *and Signum Crucis*. Philip Chua and Abraham Sim acted as leaders of the warring tribes.

After performing the tribal war dances, I delivered a sermon for peace in Latin, Spanish, Visaya, Tagalog and Ilocano (which no one, including myself, understood) much to the delight of the audience.

Consequently, both members of the tribes laid down their Hawaiian torches, spears, and daggers at the center of the ballroom, and everything

ended with a resounding pronouncement from me – the priest, *“Mabuhay! Puri-in natin ang United Class ’61.*

In our final special tribal presentation lasting for about fifteen minutes, it was a hit, a trademark of an Oscar - it was a big show, an epic. The Class of '61 presented a colorful full-costume tribal dance. It received a lot of applause and praises, a fitting electrifying conclusion of the reunion. Our performance occupies a special place in our hearts.

2012 AWARDEES

Written in Global Balita, Las Vegas Newspaper stated, “The highlight of the night belonged to Cesar D. Candari, M.D., FCAP Emeritus, who was honored with not one, but two prestigious awards: Most Outstanding Alumnus of 2011 from the FEUDNRSMAF, and the Dr. Philip S. Chua Class of '61 Presidential Award.” Dr. Lelia Pagtakhan- Luna was also a recipient of the Class '61 Presidential Award.

We extended our glorious thanks to Rosemary de Leon who chaired the class of '61 award “committee” and presented **The Endearment Award** to our class President Philip S. Chua for his tireless dedication and leadership in uniting us forever.

It was an honor for me to be chosen as Most Outstanding Alumnus. What a pleasant surprise. In receiving the award, I said, “With all humility, I thank you all who supported me, and I share my award with my dear wife. Without her, I would not have been where I am now...” My last seven words that I stated in receiving this award were, “I love my wife Cely very much.” The applause was loud, and a request was heard distinctly, “Kiss! Kiss! And we did.

The 50th Jubilee Reunion was an excellent time to be reconnected with former classmates and friends, share the fond memories of college days, and celebrate once in a lifetime. Everyone went home with a happy heart and more memories to look forward to in years to come. Au revoir Mon Cheri!



United Class '61 Fantastic Tribal Presentation met with a Standing Ovation

EMERALD - 55THth ANNIVERSARY JULY 7-9, 2016

Thursday, July 7, 2016, 37th annual FEUDNRSM Alumni Foundation reunion scientific convention held at the Hilton San Francisco at Union Square.

This reunion and scientific convention celebration underscored once again not only our accomplishments in the Alumni Foundation but also a reaffirmation of our vision, shared values, commitment, loyalty, and sense of duty towards achieving our aims and objectives for our Alma Mater. We take great pride and are profoundly inspired as we sustain, improve, and enhance our programs for the benefit of our medical school in the Philippines. The Continuing Medical Education Committee had prepared a superb scientific seminar, for continuing medical education of the members. My compliments and our sincere thank you to the chairman of the CME, Cesar V Reyes MD. He demonstrated par excellence in our continuing medical education activities. As a scientific organization, we continue to advance our knowledge

in the art of medicine for the ultimate benefit of the patients in our adopted country of America - the land of the brave and the free - and in the Philippines, our native land.

The spirit and the renewal of camaraderie is an understatement; it is the great feeling of love and cohesiveness or zest for life and our love to enjoy being together with bonding getting stronger.

At the start of the convention, the welcome party was amazing. The three nights of social activities with music to entertain and to execute to the ballroom dancing, jazz, tango, rumba, and cha-cha were enamoring. Recognition of officers and awards never ends. Special presentations from the three Class of Jubilarians, the Emerald, Golden and Silver performed live presentations. Once, again, I was the emcee for two nights.

The Mardi Gras of United Class of '61, 55 years after graduation was a dance and singing presentation in Mardi Gras Costumes and outfits. Wardrobes included crowns, hats, and other accessories. You can imagine going with a smile on your face. Masks were stunning, with feathers on one side of the black, white, red, and silver, displaying a party show perfectly. At our 55th anniversary, we can't deny we are at the heavenly shades of night falling, the twilight time, words by Buck Ram--*subalit hindi pa laos sabi ni Philip Chua* (but not yet incapacitated says Philip Chua). We still have the youthful vigor, stamina, nay even sensual eagerness. To restate it is only when we truly know and understand we have a limited time on earth - and that we have no way of knowing when our time is up - that we will begin to live each day to the fullest.

Yours truly was appointed as the King of Krewes. If the Emerald bade farewell and goodbye, we still look forward to the Diamond Jubilee five years from today. The 55th Jubilee of class '61 serves as a testimonial of the firmness of our relationship that has withstood the test of time.

The following list of Class of '61 that attended the Emerald anniversary were Drs. Philip S Chua and Farida Chua, Dr. Ruby Cureg, Dr. Cesar D Candari and Cely Candari, Dr Vicente Asanza and Nora Asanza, Dr. Lionel Foz and Lucy Foz, Drs. Lily Sim and Abraham Sim, Dr. Remedios Diasen-Sonson and Samuel Sonson, Drs Arturo de Leon and Rosemary Espino-de

Leon, Drs. Minerva Bruno-Racela and Sunny Racela, Drs. Dick Chiu and Isabel Uy-Chiu, Dr. Rod de Ocera, and Dr. Fe Baje.

Our Emerald Anniversary reunion can be compared to the following poetic phrases; “When friends meet, hearts warm. The wonder of years. Yesterday once more yester me, yester you. Bits of yesterday. The class of 61 had its dreams. Do you remember this? Friends forever. Friends never say goodbye. I love remembering. I remember when... the best antiques to collect are good friends. Friends help you move. Real friends help you move bodies. Friendship – the older it grows, the stronger it is. It is easier to be older than it is to get wiser. It is one of the blessings of old friends that you can afford to be stupid with them. Many joys come and go but friendship is forever. Older age is when your classmates are so gray and wrinkled and bald, they don't recognize you. Old shoes and old friends are best for relaxing. Someday we'll look back on this, laugh nervously, and change the subject. You are only young once, but you can stay immature indefinitely.”

From the Emerald, United Class' 61 sung this song: “Adieu, adieu, to yieu and yieu and yieu. So long, farewell, au revoir, auf wiedersehen. We'd like to stay and taste your good champagne. So long, farewell, auf wiedersehen, goodbye. We leave and heave a sigh and say goodbye Goooodbye ...” May God Bless us all. #