



FCAN NEWSLETTER

FCAN 2022 Christmas Gala, "el Grande!" (by Carlos Fajardo)

December 10, 2022 - A couple of hundred FCAN members, families, and friends, donned in gowns, trendy suits, some in glittery dresses, others in floral or colourful laces cheered the season of joy, giving and of getting to see each other. It's Christmastide in Niagara, a Filipino-Canadian tradition.

This year's FCAN Christmas gala, not only of higher turnout but also with more elements added, lifting a notch or two to one's revelry experience. With dancing encouraged right at the get-go, sumptuous dinner meals, late snacks, more door prizes, fundraiser raffle draws and pictures and picture "pa more." Even the members of the association's executive board did not disappoint the crowd showcasing their dance moves on Michael Jackson's "Rock With You" music. It was an evening of celebration el Grande!

The gala was a huge success, credit is due to all the attendees, including members of other Filipino groups and associations in Niagara, for having their enthusiasm and best mindsets to enjoying the party. In the words of Mr. Art Viola, a former Lord Mayor of Niagara-On-the-Lake and an FCAN member, *"The FCAN executives and the gala committee had done well and most importantly, the crowd enjoyed the evening."*

The Filipino-Canadian Association of Niagara (FCAN) is grateful with the presence of some of the public officials in different levels, including the Member of Parliament, Messrs. Tony Baldinelli and Chris Bittle, Member of Provincial Parliament, Mr. Wayne Gates and a member of the Niagara regional council, Mr. Mark Stevens. Also acknowledging the attendance of the reigning FCAN Ambassador, Ethan Zamora

One of the highlights and created excitement and



energy for the evening was the association's first edition of the FCAN Maharlika Award which was masterfully emceed by the duo of Luz Makimkim and John Vermeer and with coordinating sound-light effects and music by the DJs, Mr. & Mrs. Ross and Virgie Navarro. Also, a big shout out to the other members of the gala and the award night's team, Carlos Fajardo, Arlene Alerta, Cris Manalo, Violy McArthur, Alice Udell, Aida Mulley, Marisa Oloroso, Thelma Abando, Veron Quintin, Johnny Pingol, and Sylvia Ocasion.



Lastly, the FCAN executive board would like to thank Thelma Ongcangco for the invocation, the Super Plak and the Scott Family for the no-charge printing of the gala tickets, the Delphi Banquet Hall and their staff, Theresa Redula (through Maki Makinano) of OMNI News- Filipino Edition for the news coverage of the Christmas gala & the awards' night, and to all the donors for the door prizes, late snacks, and the contents of the gift basket fundraiser.

The FCAN Maharlika Awards go to...

(by Carlos Fajardo, with data extracted from the nomination file)



L-R: Arlene Alerta, Johnny Pingol, Elaine Tinio-Hind, Minda Panday (receiving for Loramhel Mateo), John Ciril Respicio, Therese Chelsea Zamora, Dr. Myrna Zapata and Reynaldo Baecher

December 10, 2022 – In conjunction with the 2022 Christmas Gala, the Filipino-Canadian Association of Niagara (FCAN) had recognized and honoured the community contributions, the personal and professional achievements of the commendable members and family of the association as they were presented with the plaque of excellence. As part of the New Horizons for Seniors Program (NHSP) funded FCAN project entitled, “Seniors Step-up to the Challenge,” the “Recognition Methodology Development and Recognition” activity evolved starting in the summer of 2022 when eleven knowledgeable senior members volunteered and developed the over 40-page comprehensive recognition processes and guideline, giving the genesis of the

recognition award fittingly called the “FCAN Maharlika Award.” The development team included Dante Daquiaoag, Elise Daquiaoag, Arturo Edralin, Fe Edralin, Rene Ongcangco, Thelma Ongcangco, Eddie Pangga, Tessie Pangga, Arlene Alerta, Luz Makimkim and Carlos Fajardo as the project lead.

Aside from the FCAN plaque of excellence, the awardees were also presented with the House of Commons certificates as provided by the offices of the Member of Parliament, Messrs. Tony Baldinelli and Chris Bittle. This year’s 8 awardees in 7 categories are:

Category: Volunteer Award-FCAN Organization. This award honors a member who enthusiastically and consistently offers his/her time, talents, and resources to upbuild the FCAN organization

Nominees: Teddy Dela Cruz, Rolando Dela Cruz, Rodrigo Cuizon, Arlene Alerta, Johnny Pingol

Awardee: **Arlene Alerta**, nominated by Alice Udell, presented the award was Lito Palabay, FCAN President, 1974-1975.

Arlene Alerta has been an active member of FCAN for over 21 years and is currently the 1st VP of the association. Her numerous volunteers work within FCAN not only as a performer but also in her leadership roles in planning and successful implementation of the tasks at hand earned her this award. Among others of her varied volunteer labors with FCAN are: She’s part of the FCAN dance group; volunteered for FCAN community activities such as butt picking and mother earth clean-up; volunteered and have had leadership roles in the FCAN projects and activities such as the A Day of Walk, Tree planting, and outreach related to the digitally equipping seniors’ activity.

Category: Volunteer Award-Community. This award honors an individual who enthusiastically and consistently offers his/her time, talents, and resources to upbuild the Niagara community

Nominees: John Vermeer, Eileen Tinio-Hnd, Arturo Viola

Awardee: **Eileen Tinio-Hind**, nominated by Rene Ongcangco, presented the award was Rene Ongcangco, FCAN President, 1976-1977.



In the 45 years residing in Niagara Falls, **Eileen Tinio-Hind** has always been a volunteer, not only for the Filipino-Canadian community, but also both for her beloved Niagara region and other communities as well. Among many of her community volunteer credits are with FCAN at various capacities, Boys and Girls Club of Niagara, Niagara Film Festival Committee, Casino Committee that lobbied the Niagara Falls casino, volunteer jobs for various disasters like Yolanda typhoon, the Ferry Boat disaster in the Philippines. Recently, she was a volunteer in the municipal elections as part of the mayor’s Seniors and multicultural committees. She was also a recipient of the Kentucky Colonels Award from the governor of Kentucky awarded for her humanitarian deeds.

Category: Art and Culture Achievement. This award is given to an individual who during his/her lifetime has made creative contribution in the field of painting, sculpture, music, folk arts and performing arts

Nominees: June B. Pingol, Rosauro Navarro, Reynaldo (Rey) Baecher, Adrienne Jacob Rosete

Awardee: **Reynaldo (Rey) Baecher**, nominated by Eddie Pangga, presented the award was Art Edralin, FCAN President, 1982-1983.

“Ray Baecher - the Artist, a Singer, and an Actor, all rolled into one.” his nominator wrote. To say that Mr. Baecher has “tons” of achievements in Art and Culture is an understatement. Some of the highlights of his career are: He’s an entertainer who appeared on stage both amateur and professional throughout Niagara Region including Showboat Festival Theatre in Port Colborne. He also appeared in a

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principal role in three major TV commercials, such as the Continental Airlines, Lotto 649 and Kellogg's Yogos Roller. He's a recipient numerous awards and commendations, he maintains many news clippings for his art works' peer reviews and praises. For all of his accolades, Rey keeps his humility and lovingly performs within FCAN and other Filipino community events.

Category: Academic Excellence in Under-Graduate or Post Graduate Studies. This award is given to an individual who achieved the highest overall academic honor upon graduation in the under-graduate or post graduate studies

Awardees:

- **John Ciril Respicio**, nominated by Art Edralin, presented the award was Eddie Pangga, FCAN President, 1990-1993.

John Ciril Respicio graduated Summa Cum Laude with a bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering in 2022 at the McMaster University. He is the son of FCAN members, Cirilo and Maggie Respicio.

- **Therese Chelsea Zamora**, nominated by Rosemary Cruz, presented the award was Lita Rozon-Pingol, FCAN President, 1994-1997.

Therese Chelsea Zamora graduated Summa Cum Laude in 2021 at the McMaster University, Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BScN). She is the daughter of FCAN members Dennis & Clarisa Zamora and the sister of the reigning FCAN Ambassador, Ethan Zamora.

Category: Excellence in Sports. This award is given to an individual who has reached the pinnacle of his/her career in the field of sports over the period of the last two years.

Nominees: Garlan Enaje, Rodrigo Palabay, Ronald Aperocho, Loramhel Mateo

Awardee: Loramhel Mateo, nominated by Aida Mulley, presented the award was Jimmy Alejandro, FCAN President, 2002-2003.

Loramhel Mateo attended Brock University and graduated in 2021 with a bachelor's degree in Recreational and Leisure Studies. She was a member of the Brock University Rugby team, 2018-2021 – go Badger! She was also a rugby player with Niagara WASPS Rugby club, 2017-2019; Upright Roque Rugby 7's, 2019, Ontario Rugby Development, 2020 and presently a member of the Brantford Club. Her sports enabled her to travel to various countries, including the Philippines, Korea and Dubai. She was a recipient of the Rookie of the Year in 2018 while attending the Mohawk College, an MVP in 2015-2016 while in St. Michael (NF), Brock University Athlete Scholar Award, 2018-2021. At the time of the award's night, she was in the Philippines on a training camp for the Rugby national team.

Category: Lifetime Achievement Award. This award celebrates a member that has demonstrated an outstanding service, contribution, and commitment to the FCAN community.

Nominees: Jimmy Alejandro, Warlito Palabay, Arturo Viola, Juanito (Johnny) Pingol

Awardee: Juanito (Johnny) Pingol, nominated by Lita Rozon-Pingol, presented the award was Renato Aonan, FCAN President, 2014-2015.

Johnny Pingol has been involved with the FCAN for over 50 years since when it was then called "The Filipino-Canadian Association of Greater Niagara." Starting as a "working" member in food preparation and as a vendor, to becoming a Vice President (2 years) and as the association's President for two terms, one in 1988-1989 and the other in 2012-2013. During his FCAN presidencies, Johnny had several important accomplishments, some of which include: 1988-1989 - the launch of the FCAN Newsletter, the first formal selection of the FCAN Queen, the current FCAN logo design was introduced. In 2012-13 - the biggest fundraising of the FCAN community was held at the Robertson Hall for which over \$16,000 was raised. During his terms as president, FCAN was a grant recipient of Trillium Foundation and the association's very first New Horizon's for Senior Program. Johnny is truly an FCAN living legend!

Category: Career Success Performance. This award is given to an individual who has demonstrated excellence in his/her professional career including credited innovation and work importance to the society.

Nominees: Violeta Paz Rozon Pingol, Warlito Palabay, Cris Manalo, Allan Rosete, Dr. Myrna Zapata

Awardee: Dr. Myrna Zapata, nominated by DanLester (Ryan) Zapata, presented the award was Sylvia Ocasion, FCAN President, 2020-2021.

Dr Myrna Zapata graduated with a Doctor of Medicine degree in 1973 with the University of the Philippines, College of Medicine. She migrated to Canada in 1975 and applied as a research assistant the University of Manitoba (UofM). She enrolled in and completed all the requirements of the university's master's program of the department of Physiology. While in Manitoba, she was a rotating intern at UofM health center and passed the licensing examination for General Practice. She did a locum serving the indigenous people in Northern Manitoba for 3 months before starting her specialty training in pediatrics. She moved to Ontario where she continued and completed her pediatric residency training at McMaster's Health Sciences Center. In 1983 she passed the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons Specialty Board

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in Pediatrics. In the same year, she opened her pediatric practice in Niagara Peninsula. Over the years of practice, she would tirelessly work 80 hours a week looking after the sick children in Niagara region. She mentored medical students in training and other undergraduate students pursuing the field

of medicine. She was involved in various medical missions and along with her two sisters, had held free clinics in the Philippines. As testimonials, some parents of her pediatrics patients in the region still to date appreciating her treating and/or saving their children from serious illnesses.

The FCAN Executive Board's KKB at Johnny Rocco

by Arlene Alerta



December 19, 2022 – FCAN Executive Board, senior adviser and some spouses at Johnny Rocco's restaurant for a brief month of December meeting (Gala feedback/recap plus 2023 Ambassador Ball update) and Christmas get together. KKB of course.



Dr. Jose Protasio Rizal (June 19, 1861- December 30, 1896) A Role Model for Our Youth

An FCAN Newsletter featured article, written by Renato (Boy) Aonan

It was reportedly a serene and blue sky that fateful morning of December 30, 1896. A Filipino, aged 35 years old, about 4 feet 11 inches in height, was calm and composed. His hands were loosely tied behind his back. He had a black suit, white shirt, black tie, black shoes and a black derby hat in his head. The sound of slow beating military drums and praying bystanders permeated the cool morning air. Then the clicking of rifles, the commanding sound of "Fuego" followed by simultaneous rifle shots pierced the deadening silence. The man fell to the ground with his dying face bathed by the sun rising over Manila Bay, the island of Corregidor and the mountains of Cavite. It was 7:05 A.M. The execution was caught in black and white photography.

The historic event at Bagumbayan (now Luneta Park) 126 years ago is remembered from Luneta Park in Manila to the Avenida *Las Filipinas* in Madrid (Spain). Wherever a statue or bust of the executed man is erected in the Philippines, United States, Western Europe or Canada, due homage is paid to the "Pride of the Malay Race", scholar, ophthalmologist, scientist, artist, philosopher, historian, linguist, social reformer and literary giant in his own right—the National Hero of the Philippines: Dr. Jose Protasio Rizal.

Since childhood, the young Rizal saw how the Filipinos were treated unjustly during the Spanish

regime. At age 11, he learned of the execution by garroting of Fathers Mariano Gomez, Jose Burgos and Jacinto Zamora (Gomburza Martyrs) who were falsely implicated in the 1872 Cavite Arsenal Mutiny. An excellent student at the Ateneo de Manila (now Ateneo de Manila University), he studied philosophy & letters and medicine at University of Sto. Tomas in Manila and obtained his licenciante in philosophy & letters and medical degree at the Universidad Central de Madrid (now the University of Madrid, Spain) He also attended the universities of Paris (France), and Heidelberg (Germany) and traveled to different European cities. His two trips abroad devoted to intensive studying and extensive touring included the United States and Niagara Falls (May 13, 1888). In 1892, he returned home to practice ophthalmology and face the socio-economic and political challenges under the Spanish regime.

The 1887 publication of Dr. Rizal's novel "*Noli Me Tangere*", in Berlin, Germany made his name known in political and social circles. Dr. Rizal became active in the reform movement and used the power of his pen in fighting for freedom, justice and equality in his native country. His prolific writings exposed the unfair conditions of tenancy in the friar lands of Calamba, Laguna, his hometown and the tyranny of the Spanish colonial regime. As a result, he was judged "heretical, impious and anti-patriotic

Dr. Jose Protasio Rizal (continued from page 4)

towards the Church and Spain". He was arrested, jailed in Fort Santiago and exiled to Dapitan, Zamboanga for four years. He was later court marshaled and accused of treason and rebellion against Spain, a conviction that carried death by firing squad.

Like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968), Dr. Jose Rizal was a Christian humanist who upheld the dignity of the human person regardless of race or creed. Like Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), Dr. Rizal was a pacifist preferring dialogue and compromise to violence. He used his pen to uphold justice and equality. Like Nelson Mandela (1918-2013), Dr. Rizal fought against racial discrimination and bigotry. Like Simon Bolivar (1783-1830), Dr. Rizal led the independence movement from Spain, not by the sword but through his pen. Like the Bengali

poet and guru, Rabindranath Tagore (born the same year as Dr. Rizal and the first Asian to win the 1913 Nobel Prize in literature), Dr. Rizal was an educator and firmly believed that the future of a nation was in the Youth of the land. In his writings, he strove "to create in the young an innate desire to cultivate their intelligence and proper motivation to influence and better the society in which they live". He was a true patriot who loved his country. Despite his studies and travels abroad, he was always homesick for his "Patria adorada" which he describes in his "Mi Ultimo Adios" ("My Last Farewell") as "Perla del Mar de Oriente".

Dr. Jose Protasio Rizal's words and writings are so timeless and timely that our today's Youth of Filipino ancestry should read, ponder and heed.

About the author: Renato (Boy) Aoanan, a UST alumnus, studied in Madrid (Spain), Bogota (Colombia), Toronto and Ottawa (Canada). He taught high school, college and university. He was a keynote speaker on Rizal Day at the Fil-Am Assn. of Kauai, Hawaii in 1997 and 2018. He is a retired ecclesiastical lawyer.

The printing of this Newsletter was made possible through the kindness of the following:

Mr. And Mrs. Jimmy and Julie Alejandro

Mr. and Mrs. Richard and Violy McArthur

Jennifer Penalba

Marian Moretti
RMT, CMRP
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Carlos and Emilina Fajardo

Mr. and Mrs. Renato and Tessie Aoanan

Ms. Paz Bajar

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