

# 2019 UPAAA DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARDEES

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## **OLIVE ROCHA-ALIGA**

**2019 UPAAA Distinguished Alumna in Leadership, Gender Equality and Women Empowerment**

Ms. Aliga is the President of the University of the Philippines Vanguard Corps of Sponsors Alumni International (UPVCSAI). She has provided strong leadership to UPVCSAI from its conception in 2014 to the present. It has members from the U.S., Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, Thailand, the Netherlands, Spain, and the Philippines. UPVCSAI has supported various community-based projects in the Philippines. She earned her Bachelor of Music degree from U.P. in 1973.

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## **JUANITA F. CACCAM, PhD**

**2019 UPAAA Distinguished Alumna in Biochemistry and Community Service**

Dr. Caccam developed a laboratory screening method for neonatal hypothyroidism at the San Diego Institute of Pathology and Maas Diagnostic Laboratory. She was a founding board member and past president of the Samahan Filipino American Performing Arts & Education Center and has been involved in teaching music with the Samahan Rondalla. She founded the UPAA of San Diego in 1983. Upon retiring from the Lab Corp as Clinical Chemist, she has volunteered as a Math teacher with the Urban Corp Charter School for young adults. She earned her B.S. Chemistry from U.P. in 1956 and her PhD in Biochemistry from the Duquesne University in 1964.



## **CRISTETA GOMEZ PASIA- COMERFORD** *Dr. Honoris Causa (UP)* **2019 UPAAA Distinguished Alumna in Culture and Culinary Diplomacy**

Ms. Comerford is one of the longest-serving White House executive chefs. She is the first female and the first Asian American appointed to this position. She has spent more than two decades exhibiting her mastery of the culinary arts in White House hosted dinners and functions. She practices the concept of culinary diplomacy to connect countries, and cultures through culinary arts. She attended classes towards a B.S. degree on Food Technology at the UP Home Economics.

On November 11, 2019, the University of the Philippines will confer Ms. Comerford with the Degree of Doctor of Humanities, *Honoris Causa* at the celebration of the 98<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the institution of the Home Economics program at UP College of Home Economics.

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## **POLLY SANTIAGO-CORTEZ, MBA**

**2019 UPAAA Distinguished Alumna in Finance, Institutional and Corporate Responsibility**

Ms. Cortez is the Vice-Chair of the Friends of U.P. Foundation of America (FUPFA). She retired in September 2015 after over 38 years as a Federal Banking Regulator at the U.S. Department of Treasury. She is actively involved with the Girl Scouts of USA and Northern California. She was a founding member of Camp CEO for mentoring the underserved and at-risk teens in San Francisco. She earned her B.S. in Business Administration from U.P. in 1966 and her MBA (Finance) in 1983 from Golden Gate University in San Francisco, CA.





## **BENITO O. DE LUMEN, PhD**

### **2019 UPAAA Distinguished Alumnus in Science and Technology**

Dr. de Lumen is Professor Emeritus of Nutritional Sciences at University of California, Berkeley. He is Founder and CEO of Narra Biosciences since 2012. It is a biotech company commercializing the anti-cancer peptide “lunasin”. He discovered “lunasin”, a unique 43-amino acid peptide found in soybeans which has been shown to suppress chemical carcinogen-induced transformation in mammalian cells and skin carcinogenesis in mice. He earned his B.S. in Agricultural Chemistry from U.P. Los Banos in 1962 and his PhD in Agricultural Chemistry/Biochemistry from University of California, Davis in 1971.

## **WILFRIDO C. FELICIANO, MD**

### **2019 UPAAA Distinguished Alumnus in Plastic Surgery and Health Care Leadership**

Dr. Feliciano is a plastic surgeon. He was an Assistant Clinical Professor of Plastic Surgery at St. Louis University, Missouri from 1989 to 2005. He served as President of several professional organizations including UP Medical Alumni Society in America (UPMASA) and Missouri-Southern Illinois Chapter of UPMASA. He participated in 25 medical missions to the Philippines and performed numerous cleft lip and cleft palate surgeries, and repairs of burn contractures and skin grafts. He provided scholarships to financially needy medical students at U.P. He is a lifetime member and Governor, 2014-2016, of Philippine Economic and Cultural Endowment (PEACE) which provides funds for building artesian wells, and funds to Filipinos affected by natural calamities. He earned from U.P. his BS Pre-Med degree in 1961 and his MD degree in 1966.



## **ROY B. GUINTO, MD**

### **2019 UPAAA Distinguished Alumnus in Surgical Missions and Community Service**



Dr. Guinto is a thoracic surgeon who has volunteered 12 times in rendering surgical missions in underserved towns in the Philippines through UPMASA since 2009. He served as President of NJ-NY-CT Chapter of UPMASA in 2010-2012. He initiated partnership with Handang Tumulong, USA with their Annual Run/Walk events to raise funds for supporting victims of disasters in the Philippines. He coordinated the Balik- Paaralan Project to provide support for educational opportunities to poor, deserving young Filipinos. He is active and support many community organizations like the Order of the Knights of Rizal. He raised funds for the creation of a Rizaliana website by the Ateneo De Manila University. He earned from U.P. his BS Pre-Med degree in 1966 and his MD degree in 1972.

## **DENNIS R. LABAYEN, MD**

### **2019 UPAAA Distinguished Alumnus in Community Empowerment and Human Development**

Dr. Labayen started as a Field Director in the Philippines for *Outreach International* from 1981 to 1994 and became its Chief Field Officer from 2012 to 2018. He developed and implemented the strategy of Participatory Human Development from 1982 to 2018. It has become the main strategy against poverty by *Outreach International* in its field operations in Nicaragua, Bolivia, Philippines, India, Nepal, Cambodia, Zambia, Malawi and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Marginalized people living in poverty participate in



identifying and working on collectively in resolving the problems in their communities. Through this approach they are able to organize and empower themselves in ensuring the sustainability of their development and multiplying of their resources. He earned from U.P. his BS Pre-Med degree in 1968 and his MD degree in 1972B.



## **TEODORO LAGUATAN**

**2019 UPAAA Distinguished Alumnus in Immigration Law**

Atty. Laguatan heads an ethics based law firm in the San Francisco Bay Area. He does complex litigation not only in immigration law but also other areas of law including human rights. He wrote a book entitled "A Layman's Guidebook on Immigration Laws of the US". He is the national co-founder, Legal Counsel and Spokesperson of the US Pinoys for Good Governance (USP4GG). He co-founded the Global Filipino Diaspora Council. He earned his BA in Public Administration from U.P. in 1968 and his law degree from University of San Francisco in 1979.

## **VENUS VERONICA BACATAN- LEIGHTON**

**2019 UPAAA Distinguished Alumna in Mass Communication**

Ms. Leighton is the only ethnic female journalist that carries tri-media platforms (print, broadcast and website) in the field of mass media communication in North America. She is the sole founder, creator, publisher, editor and manager of the longest-running monthly Filipino American publication (Via Times News magazine) and the executive producer of a sister broadcast outfit (Chicago Philippine Reports TV), the only locally-produced television show in the Chicago and the Midwest areas. She added a state-of-the-art website [www.viatimes.ne](http://www.viatimes.ne). She earned her B.S. in Foreign Service degree from U.P. in 1961.



## **EMMANUEL C.B. LIBAN, D. ENV.**

**2019 UPAAA Distinguished Alumnus in Environmental Sciences and Engineering**

Dr. Liban is the Executive Officer, Environmental Compliance and Sustainability in Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) in Los Angeles, CA. He is a Commissioner of the LA City Board of Transportation Commissioners and the LA County Beach Commission. Under his leadership, his transit agency has received numerous notable achievements including Best Environmental Management System among transit facilities; and first sustainability training program in the public sector to achieve a Model Program Award from the National Transit Institute. He served as a Technical Adviser for the Philippine Development Foundation in working to eradicate poverty through education, innovation and entrepreneurship. He earned his BS Geology

degree *magna cum laude* from U.P. in 1989 and his Doctor of Environmental Science and Engineering (D.Env) from UCLA in 2003.

## **EDWARD C. MADER JR., MD**

**2019 UPAAA Distinguished Alumnus in Neurophysiology and Medical Education**

Dr. Mader is an Associate Professor of Neurology at the Louisiana School of Medicine in New Orleans. He is currently the Program Director for the Clinical Neurophysiology training and Co-Director of the EEG and Epilepsy Monitoring Unit of the University Medical Center. Realizing the power of online outreach, in this ever-expanding on-demand 24/7 world of cyberspace, he is very innovative in his vision to teach medical education. He also replied to neuro-related questions from lay people as virtual audience, mostly on Quora, using Morpheus as his avatar. His science-related answers are filed in the 4 blog sites he created. He earned from U.P. his B.S. Biology degree in 1983 and his MD degree in 1987.





## **LUISITO S. PABLO, DVM, MS**

### **2019 UPAAA Distinguished Alumnus in Education**

Dr. Pablo is a Clinical Professor in the Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences at University of Florida. He has a strong track record of research and clinical experience on anesthesia and pain management. He has written numerous scientific publications and book chapters. He earned his DVM *cum laude* from U.P in 1978. He completed a Master of Science and Large Animal Surgery and Medicine Residency at Auburn University in 1982.

## **CIRILO REYES, JR., DVM**

### **2019 UPAAA Distinguished Alumnus in Veterinary Medicine and Community Service**

Dr. Reyes is the Production Veterinarian at Seaboard Foods. He is an Advisor to the Board of Directors, Southwest Kansas Filipino-American Association. He is the Director of the Vet Book Project which coordinate veterinary book project donation from the US to all veterinary schools in the Philippines since 2002. Over \$500,000 worth of veterinary textbooks and journals have been received by 19 veterinary schools in the Philippines including U.P. He earned his DVM degree from U.P. in 1981.



## **MARY JACQUILINE ROMERO, PHD**

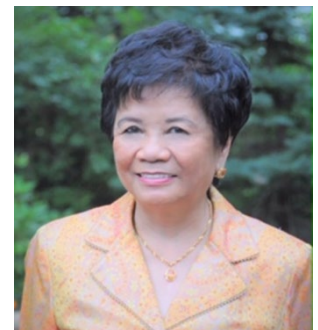
### **2019 UPAAA Distinguished Alumna in Quantum Physics**

Dr. Romero is a quantum physicist in the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Engineered Quantum Systems at the University of Queensland, Australia. Her research expertise and interests are in the field of quantum foundations and quantum information. She is studying the properties of single photons for the development of new quantum alphabets and the nature of quantum causality. In 2016, she was awarded a Discovery Early Career Research Award (DECRA) to continue her work on quantum foundations and single photon manipulation, specifically studying security in higher-dimensional quantum systems. Her research has implications for cyber security and more efficient data transfer and storage. She earned her BS Applied Physics degree from U.P. in 2006 and her PhD at the University of Glasgow in U.K.

## **CONSTANCIA SOMERA-UY, MD**

### **2019 UPAAA Distinguished Alumna in Pediatric Nephrology and Women Empowerment**

Dr. Uy is Emerita Professor of Pediatrics at the Rutgers- New Jersey Medical School. She served as Vice-Chair for Clinical Affairs in the Department of Pediatrics and Director of Pediatric Nephrology at University Hospital. She was the recipient of 11 Golden Apple Awards for her excellence in teaching to the medical students. She was named the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey Master Educator in 2011. Dr. Uy is Diplomate of the American Board of Pediatrics, and Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics. She has demonstrated her leadership by being elected President of 8 organizations including UPAAA, UP Medical Alumni Society in America (UPMASA), and UPMASA- NJ/NY/CT Chapter (Founding President). She earned from U.P. her BS Pre-Med degree in 1964 and her MD degree in 1967.





## **JOSEFINO B. TUNAC, PHD**

**2019 UPAAA Distinguished Alumnus in Medical Science**

Dr. Tunac is the President and Chairman of Arterez, LLC, a biotechnology group. His expertise is in the design and discovery of pharmacologically bioactive molecules from various sources including microorganisms, tissue culture cells and other organic sources. He has been involved in the discovery and development of a range of bioactive compounds including anticancer, anti-infective, anthelmintic, cardiovascular, anti-arthritic, immunosuppressive, and antiviral drugs. He invented the Tunair™ shake-flasks and the Airmentor™ bioreactor. These vessels have been instrumental in the development of proprietary and production processes of a number of fermentation-based compounds. He has 22 patents. He earned his BS Plant Pathology degree from U.P. in 1964 and his PhD in Medical Science in 1974 from Rutgers University.

## **WINSTON C. UMALI, MD**

**2019 UPAAA Distinguished Alumnus in Pediatric Medicine**

Dr. Umali is a Pediatrician. He is the Chairman of the Department of Pediatrics at CarePoint Health - Christ Hospital in Jersey City, NJ. He is a Clinical Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics. He is active in providing leadership in several professional societies and community organizations including serving as President of UPMASA NY-NJ-CT Chapter and President of the Handang Tumulong Foundation. He received the Award of Excellence in Pediatrics from the Pan-American Concerned Citizens Action League in 2016 and recognized as "One of the Top Three Pediatricians in Jersey City, NJ in 2017 by Besttrated.com. He earned from U.P. his BS Psychology degree *cum laude* in 1988 and his MD degree in 1994.



## **DIOSDADO BANATAO (Dr., Honoris Causa, UP)**

**2019 UPAAA Special Recognition Award for Philanthropic Services**

Diosdado Banatao is an entrepreneur and engineer working in the high-tech industry, credited with having developed the first 10-Mbit Ethernet CMOS with silicon coupler data-link control and transceiver chip, the first system logic chip set for IBM's PC-XT and the PC-AT, and the local bus concept and the first Windows Graphics accelerator chip for personal computers. A three-time start-up veteran, he co-founded Mostron, Chips and Technologies, and S3 Graphics. He provides scholarships in engineering in the Philippines and also to high school students of Filipino heritage in California who are pursuing degrees in engineering. He earned his BS in Electrical Engineering *cum laude* from the Mapúa Institute of Technology and his MS in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at Stanford University in 1972. He was conferred an honorary doctorate degree by U.P. in 2000.

## **ZENAIDA MENDOZA-SARMIENTO**

**2019 UPAAA Special Recognition Award for International Medical Services**

Aida Sarmiento is a Practice Manager at Midwest Pediatrics, Ltd., Lombard, Illinois. She is the UPAAA Vice President for Midwest, 2017-2019 and served as its board secretary 2015-2017. With her husband, Dr. Rodolfo Sarmiento, she has participated in numerous medical missions in the last 20 years. They went to 40 countries including the Philippines, Scotland, Greece, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Belgium, Austria, Kenya, Malawi (twice), Amazonas, Brazil (twice), India, Ethiopia, and Rwanda. In these missions, she actively led and participated in providing free medical, dental, and vision services; visited orphanages and impoverished communities, giving food, clothing, toys, school supplies, and provided health education and Christian ministries. She earned her graduate degree in Nursing from UP-PGH in 1967.

