

Editorial

By Dr. Dionisio B. Yorro, MD'68, Editor

Whatever happens in Long Beach should not stay in Long Beach". The happening of course is the 24th USTMAAA annual grand reunion in Long Beach, California. It is a demanding undertaking to be chronicled and worth broadcasting among the Thomasians. This is where memories are made and nostalgic feelings fulfilled. For many first time attendees, coming to these celebrations is taken lightly but after experiencing the affair they all will plan to attend yearly.



Dr. Dionisio B. Yorro

Although the grand reunion is full of fun it doesn't lack in meaning.

Although the grand reunion is full of fun it doesn't lack in meaning. Here is where we honor our Jubilarians celebrating a milestone in their careers. We acknowledge those numerous benevolent Thomasians who share their time, talent and treasures. The most outstanding Thomasian alumni are recognized every year. Awards were given to a special family of Thomasian doctors (Ferrer family) and to a uniquely skilled plastic surgeon who uses his talent to service the poor (Dr. Jim Sanchez). This year also we have the USTMAA Southern California come back to the fold and even host the convention through the efforts of our Executive Director, Dr. Primo Andres. The affair ran the gamut from Jubilarian parade, award presentations, CME lectures with the annual Luis Guerrero lecture given by Dr. Edgar Lerma, and of course dance, dance, dance till the wee hours.



One defining feature of our grand reunions is the opportunity to connect and interact with the VIPs from the Philippines. Unfortunately this year Rev. Fr. Rector Herminio Dagohoy, Vice Rector Fr. Richard Ang, and Dean Jess Valencia were unable to join us for reasons of health and/or prior commitments. Fr. Angel Aparicio, Regent of the USTFMS, however was present and aptly

filled in for all of them together with the USTMAA Philippine current President, Dr. Marivic Cruz and their In-coming President Dr. Gil Gonzalez. Together they brought our membership up to date regarding the state of the medical school, hospital and the University through a town hall meeting format. Although the task is far from over they are happy to report that progress is being made and solutions will be explored to resolve some issues brought up during the Board meeting: lack of acknowledgment and feedback on funded projects and other donations from the alumni, replacement of the Wall of Honor, Tree of Life and other plaques removed from the different walls and rooms, dwindling patient load which limits the clinical experience of the interns and residents, inability to retain the top students due to low salary for residents (this has been partially corrected with increase in the salary at same level as the private but not the government hospitals), etc. There is also a dramatic cultural change in the relationships between residents and interns and students and faculty. This is obviously very critical in instilling loyalty to our Alma Mater and making them proud to be Thomasians.

For our part, our challenge is to get everyone together and nurture the unity and team spirit within the association.

For our part, our challenge is to get everyone together and nurture the unity and team spirit within the association. Also, more aggressive attempts will be made to reach out to more alumni in the USA. We are thereby announcing a call to action for all US Thomasians to appeal to their alumni friends and classmates to contact us and be included in our mailing list. Recognize, however, that it is a challenge to strike the right tone to make inroads with skeptic Thomasian alumni and be respectful of their sensitivity.

To effect a drastic change in our University, medical school and hospital is a formidable undertaking demanding an overwhelming cultural change that we may have no control of. Too many times we feel helpless in our ability to change things for the better but little efforts by many can still make a difference. With our perseverance and the seemingly more receptive attitude of the administration, we will not only endure but may also prevail. After all it will

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be a win-win situation for all. We are encouraged by the initiative presented to us by the “Blink Group” of class 1967. Their ideas and vision are very much aligned with ours and geared towards resolving most of our enumerated issues with the USTFMS. The Board has therefore unanimously approved to partner with them in the establishment of the DO (Development Office) in the University. This can facilitate, implement, supervise and enhance whatever projects we do in the Philippines in addition to procuring grants from big corporations. Once approved, the DO will be overseen by a salaried Executive Director at the expense of the Blink Group and governed by a Board of Directors with absolute autonomy selected by our group. As an offshoot from this project, the USTMAAA has accepted the challenge of matching the \$500,000 to be donated by the Blink Group earmarked for the Fr. A. Aparicio Scholarship Program. Fr. Aparicio, the USTFMS Regent, has pointed out that 98% of medical students are from the middle and upper class families and this scholarship program will give the poor but deserving students opportunity to enroll in our medical school. Our association will aggressively campaign to raise this fund and will not be taken from the endowment fund already in the Foundation coffers.

Again, another memorable and productive grand reunion. Thanks to the efforts of our Executive Director, Dr. Primo Andres and the ever present staff and members. We the US Thomasians, have more than the Foundation money to brag about. We also have a core group who are more than up to the task and proud to be Thomasians. God bless and see you all in the next reunion in Vancouver, Canada.

25th USTMAAA GRAND REUNION
VANCOUVER

By Primo Andres, MD, Executive Director

It is never too early to prepare for the next Grand Reunion and Medical Convention especially if it is in a “foreign country”. The next annual gathering of Thomasian medical alumni will be in our northern neighbor, Canada, in the gorgeous city of Vancouver in British Columbia at the Sheraton Wall Centre atop the hill in the middle of downtown overlooking the entire city. It is one of those cities we have always meant to visit and spend some time in but never got around to doing it. Now here is our chance to check this in our bucket list and be pampered by USTMAAA as our host. Isn’t that a dream come true? Mark your calendar now. The meeting and reunion days are July 1-5, 2017 but consider extending your stay if you are planning on exploring the beauty of the northwest by joining the various excursions that precede and follow the Grand Reunion.



There is so much to do in Vancouver that all efforts are being made to give more time for all attendees to enjoy the city. Saturday, July 1, 2017, happens to be a very special Canada Day, the 150th Anniversary of the founding of the country. It is a great opportunity for us to participate in this historic Canadian holiday. We have originally contracted for just enough rooms for the Officers and Board Members to use because of the early meeting the following morning. However, we are now negotiating for more rooms to be released to our block to accommodate those of you who may want to take advantage of this opportunity to party with the Canadians. Meetings are limited to mornings and early afternoons and evening events are started later in the evenings except on the final night, the Gala Dinner, which is slotted to start at 6 PM. Attendees are encouraged to try the excellent International Cuisine that the city has to offer. Do your homework and look up your references and make early reservations even before arriving to ensure you have a space in the restaurants. They are very busy and are almost always full all day of the week. Plan to stay longer than the convention days, and even better, join the scheduled excursions to make the most out of your trip.

The airfare is not much more expensive than going to the West Coast if you make your reservations early, especially through the discount outlets like Expedia. If you are planning to attend the reunion and go to the Canadian Rockies, be sure to book a flight to Vancouver one way, then Calgary to home the other way as the tour will end in Calgary, Alberta on Tuesday, July 11, 2017 after 4 PM.

Here is the tentative schedule of the Grand Reunion and the proposed excursions:

6/25 -7/1, 2017

ALASKAN CRUISE on Celebrity Infinity. USTMAAA will arrange only if there are more than 50 cabins (couples).



Saturday, 7/1/17

8 A-5P Board Meeting 1
6 P Board Reception, Canada Day

Sunday, 7/2/17

8A-12P Board Meeting 2
3P-4P Thanksgiving Mass
4P-5P Opening Ceremony
6P-12A INDIVIDUAL CLASS REUNIONS

Monday, 7/3/17

7:30- 12P CME1
12P-1P Town Hall Meeting - UST Administration
1P-9P FREE TIME
9P-12A TALENT NIGHT after dinner

Tuesday, 7/4/17

7:30A-1P CME 2
1P-6P FREE TIME

6P-12A GALA DINNER
Wednesday, 7/5/17 VICTORIA and BUTCHART GARDENS all day excursion
Price per person: CAD 190
English Afternoon Tea: CAD 35



Thursday, 7/6/17

Vancouver City Tour
Price per person: CAD 75



7/7-7/11/2017

Friday:

Canadian Rockies Tour:
Rocky Mountaineer Gold Leaf service scenic train ride to Kamloops for overnight stay



Saturday

Continuing train ride to Lake Louise for overnight stay at four star Fairmont Château Lake Louise



Sunday

Banff and Yoho National Park tour and Gondola ride
Overnight stay at four star Rimrock Resort Hotel



Monday Columbia Icefield Tour and Ice Explorer
Overnight stay at Rimrock Resort Hotel



Tuesday

Banff to Calgary
Visit and lunch at Heritage Park Historical Village
Drop off at Calgary Airport
Arrange flight for home after 4 PM



Estimated cost in USD:

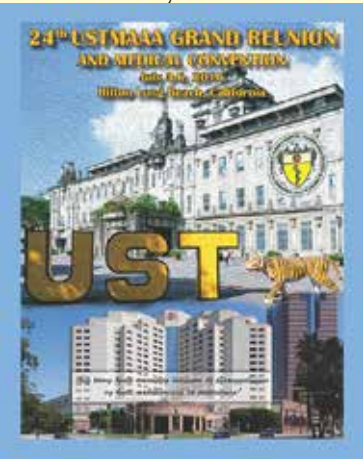
Occupancy	Price per person incl. tax
Double	USD 3640.50 (Adult)
Single	USD 4558.32 (Adult)
Triple	USD 3242.10 (Adult)

24th USTMAAA GRAND REUNION
A GREAT SUCCESS

By Primo Andres, MD

The 24th USTMAAA Grand Reunion and Medical Convention held at the Hilton Long Beach, CA on July 3-6, 2016 was by all standards a big success. Exceeding expectations, all the blocked hotel rooms were booked and the evening events were filled beyond capacity to the point of turning away some guests. But it was not without apprehension because of fewer than usual preregistered attendees with a lot more on site registrants adding additional stress to the convention staff who did their best to cope with the additional workload. The Hotel also did its best to accommodate requests for additional space but still was quite limited by the availability of food to serve the added guests.

“Meetings before the scheduled meetings” were held among the leaders in an effort to facilitate the Board Meeting that had a very full agenda on the first day. Thanksgiving mass was held earlier than usual at 1 PM and was immediately followed by the Opening Ceremony that was hosted by the USTMAA Southern California chapter.





Historic hosting of USTMAAA Grand Reunion by USTMAA Southern CA

This was an historic event because Southern California had finally formally joined the USTMAAA National Organization as a chapter and no longer existed as a separate and completely independent entity. And so for the first time USTMAAA truly is the UST Medical Alumni Association of ALL of America.

It appeared like the University of Santo Tomas Administration was underrepresented with the absence of the Vice Rector, Fr. Richard Ang, and the Dean, Dr. Jesus Valencia, because of health issues but the Regent of the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, Fr. Angel Aparicio, and the ranking officers of USTMAAI Philippines, Dr. Maria Victoria Concepcion Pilares-Cruz, the President, and Dr. Gil Gonzales, the President-elect, more than adequately filled their shoes and gave meaningful information about the alma mater. This allowed more time for Fr. Aparicio to promote the “Scholarship Fund” that will be the central project of the Sesquicentennial Anniversary of the UST FMS in 2021. The Board Reception at the “Loft” was pleasantly subdued for a change and those present were treated to a well appointed dinner with soft background music played by a trio band.



Town hall meeting w/ UST Admin

Three classes held their Class Reunion in the hotel. The Forever Young and Glorious Class of 1956 celebrated its Diamond Jubilee with 29 including spouses in attendance, the largest batch of Diamond Jubilarians the USTMAAA had ever had, a feat that was just fitting for the largest class ever that graduated from UST FMS, over 600 of them. They were given their Lifetime Achievement Award complete with a commemorative USTMAAA medallion. Despite their relatively small number they had a complete 4-man band play for them as they danced the night away. They are now touting this as their best reunion ever in 60 years, which is quite a feat by itself.



Forever Glorious and Young Diamond Jubilarian Class of 1956

The Amazing Class of 1966 also celebrated its Golden Jubilee at the Catalina Room overlooking the Long Beach World Trade Center. They were likewise given their Lifetime Achievement Award and medallions. The band that was assembled by Dr. Max Basco of Class 1970 provided the music that made them rock the night away. They bonded together like glue renewing relationships and fostering a stronger camaraderie like no other and spending lots of time together to rehearse their performance for the final night at the gala dinner. It was a time well spent and at no better occasion than their Golden Jubilee.



Amazing Golden Jubilarian Class 1966

The Centennial Class of 1971, la Creme de la Creme, also enjoyed their Sapphire class reunion in the International Ballroom, relieved that they were assigned a larger venue where they could rehearse their gala dinner presentation even while sharing a heavy hors d'oeuvre. As was later seen, they really needed the larger room to accommodate the lively, boisterous and very colorful group.

USTMAAA 2016 Long Beach CA
La Creme de la Creme Sapphire Jubilarian Centennial Class of 1971

The Continuing Medical Education program was pretty much borne by the Silver Jubilarian VIP (Very Innovative Physicians) Class of 1991. With a theme of “The Circle of Life”, speakers deftly struggled to maintain fifteen-minute talks that covered topics from cradle to grave. And to top it all, their feature



The VIP (Very Innovative Physicians) Class of 1991 during CME



Dr. Edgar V. Lerma of Class 1991 as the Luis E. Guerrero Memorial lecturer



Dr. Kara Steijlen and husband, Dr. Peter Evangelista with Dr. Oni Yorro

USTMAAA 2016 Long Beach CA
Dr. Jim Sanchez, MD'80 connecting with his more mature comrades in medical missions, Dr. Orlando Sison MD'55 & Dr. Florentino Ibabao MD'51

Dr. Jim Sanchez came back to USA after a speaking 3-week tour from coast to coast in May to talk more about a very innovative approach of rendering medical center type surgical care to remote areas in the Philippines through a Hospital On Wheels that he is calling “RP Healthcraft Carrier”.



speaker, Dr. Edgar V. Lerma, a Nephrologist from the Chicago area, delivered the 314th Luis E. Guerrero Memorial Lecture, the only one to ever do so from both banks of the Pacific, having delivered the 311th Memorial lecture 2 years earlier in Manila. This was supplemented by representatives from the different Jubilarian and non-Jubilarian classes and even by a newly wed couple, the son of Drs. Jose and Stella Evangelista, Peter, a Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation specialist and his young bride, Dr. Kara Steijlen, a Neurologist, both from the Mayo Clinic. Cutting edge cancer research and even such varied topics as Spirituality and Medicine, Suicide, and a CSI drama of a criminal investigation and subsequent litigation of an alleged serial murder committed by two Filipina nurses in a Michigan VA hospital added color and interest to the whole program.

The [Talent Night](#) was extra special. A number of guests dressed up in “early Mexican Californian” attire for the occasion, with two even showing up as Zorros, at least one of them obviously a fake (LOL). The [grand children of Dr. Max Basco](#), our music coordinator, were the curtain openers. Dance exhibition by [Dr. and Mrs. Ernesto Acosta](#) followed, then the Flores family took over with [Dr. Chito Flores](#) crooning and his younger brothers, Roy and Gerry, and their spouses, Susan and Tess, dancing. [Dr. Greg Tan of Class 1979 finally delivered his “Cascades Concert”](#) after missing it last year due to his



Sights & Sounds of the USTMAAA Talent Night

mother's fatal illness. And the Voice of USTMAAA, [Dr. Jess Chua](#), mesmerized everybody with a couple of songs, including a repeat of the “The Prayer, a duet by Bocelli and Celine Dion” from last year per popular demand, with both voices sang by him. [Dr. Jim Aragones](#) brought his entourage with him including Mr. Malaki, a professional tenor, who sang his original composition, “Gintong Alaala”, while he played the violin with a lot of passion. But perhaps a pleasant surprise was the participation of a nanogenarian, [Dr. Rudy Simeon, of Class 1952](#) (that is 64 years from graduation folks) singing two operatic songs including “Granada” to the delight and entertainment of all those present. The band was fantastic and was up to the challenge of keeping the capacity crowd dancing. Everybody was so exhausted that they quit one hour early with feet and legs aching and could no longer keep up with the still lively and very enthusiastic band.

The Gala Dinner on the last night was nothing less than spectacular. With “Oscars” for a theme, most everybody came in their best suits and dresses with a lot of the men sporting tuxes. The program was kept as short as possible but still allowing time for the [Outstanding Alumni](#) to be recognized. Dr. Zenaida Young-Bhatia of Class 1972 Clerks garnered the Most Outstanding Alumnus of the Year award. Dr. Mary Lou Javier-Buendia of Class 1975 received the Most Outstanding Alumnus Award for Service to Alma Mater while Dr. Roberto Ang of Class 1976 got the award for Community Service. Three alumni were named Outstanding Alumni for Academic Achievement: Dr. Edgar V. Lerma of Class 1991, Dr. Lino J. DeGuzman of Class 1986 and Dr. Edward C. Siriban of Class 1971. Special awards were given to the Ferrer Family, the Benavidez Thomasian Loyalty Award, and to Dr. Jim Sanchez, the Jose Rizal Humanitarian Award. Class Jubilarian awards were handed out: Blue Sapphire (the first one ever given) to Dr. Florentino Ibabao of Class 1951, the whole “Forever Young

Outstanding Alumni Awardees

and Glorious” Class of 1956 received the Diamond Jubilarians award, Dr. Ramon Lopez was the Golden Jubilarian, Dr. Edward Siriban was the Sapphire Jubilarian, Dr. Noel Chua was the Ruby Jubilarian, and the whole VIP Class of 1991 was the Silver Jubilarian awardees.

But the most awaited moment of the Grand Reunion always revolves around the Parade of the Jubilarians that was participated in by all the classes, and the presentations that were done by five classes. The [Diamond Jubilarians](#) danced to the music that was composed by their classmate, Dr. Jim Aragones, and was capped by “Those Were the Days” sung by the band as they exited. The [Amazing Golden Jubilarian Class of 1966](#) danced a medley of graceful waltzes while the [Sapphire Centennial Class](#)

Oohs & Aahs of the Gala Dinner

of 1971 presented a colorful Carnival complete with drums, bird tweets and swirling ribbons that could rival New Orleans and even a Rio festival. With a new name “[To Life 76ers](#)” the Ruby Jubilarians were bright and alive as they went through a series of line dances. The [Silver Jubilarian VIP Class of 1991](#) gave the only Filipino folkloric performance dancing to the tune of “Mamang Sorbetero” and ending it by inviting the rest of the attendees to join in the dance, and thus opening the rest of the evening for an enjoyable night of dancing and partying.

And to add more drama to the already very eventful gathering the souvenir programs that were supposed to have arrived days earlier were no where to be found. As it turned out, delivery was delayed because the train carrying them was derailed somewhere in Utah and everybody was asked to pray so that they would arrive on time, at least for the gala dinner. And they did. That is how powerful the Thomasian Prayer Brigade is. And for the first time all the programs were brought home by the attendees and there is even more request for extra copies that we barely have left. They are now collector's item so hold on to your copies.

Yes indeed it was an enjoyable night that was worth reminiscing and another USTMAAA event that is etched in the memory of the Thomasian alumni as an affair to remember. #

SPECIAL THANKS

By Primo Andres MD, Convention Director

There are many people to be grateful to for the success of the 24th USTMAAA Grand Reunion and Medical Convention in Long Beach, CA and I cannot say enough for their contribution. First, the various committee members who carried the heaviest burden in making sure everything worked out. Class 1979 was especially very helpful as the arms and legs that carried out our plan and for providing those songs that became the soul of our events. The class coordinators and leaders that made sure that their constituents had the most out of the reunion and convention. The USTMAASC that hosted the meeting and worked hard to encourage its members to participate in our events. The exhibitors and the contributors and advertisers of our Souvenir Program that helped assure that we have some funds to spend. The speakers in the CME who gave their best to share their knowledge and expertise with the rest of the attendees. And what is a party if there is no good music? I especially acknowledge the efforts of Dr. Max Basco who went above and beyond to ensure that we had the best, personally lending his instruments and physically helping in setting them up, and assembling the best artists to entertain us all at an unbelievably low cost. What a guy! And thank you, Drs. Harry and Norma Salceda, for partly sponsoring the bands that made it possible for us to afford the extravagance of great music. How about our part time staff, Ginger and Patty? They are my right and left arms and both legs. And of course our usual core of reliable people, and you know who you are, without whose participation the whole event would not have been possible. THANK YOU ALL!

**DIAMOND JUBILEE
UST MEDICINE CLASS 1956**

Teresita Bacani-Oropilla M.D.



Cupid watched as members of Medicine Class 1956 were pierced by his loving arrows of the past. Huddled around tables at the lobby of luxurious Long Beach Hilton Hotel, we being the remaining stalwarts left from a graduating class 60 years ago, there did not seem to be enough time to catch up with each other about how and why we came to the USA, our previous moves, the satisfaction, triumphs, and heartaches of medical practice, the successes of children and grandchildren in this now beloved adopted country.

Reminiscences of previous courtships and broken engagements of friends and classmates were analyzed in the context of today. Not lacking were condolences for the loss of spouses and other loved ones and acceptance of the fact that many of us were experiencing physical infirmities of one kind or the other. One thing was evident however, all still had the will to live and enjoy what was left of life to the fullest.

Because the class reunion was in conjunction with the USTMAAA's 25th anniversary, we were surrounded and mingled with younger, still actively practicing Jubilarian alumni from the USA and Philippines. Many met relatives and old friends among the festive group. The corridors leading to the rooms for the CME, the Holy Mass, the practice of presentations, and the banquet halls were lined with displays of jewelry, expensive bags, colorful kimonos and barongs. Distinguishing ribbons and tags identified year of graduation. Many complemented us for being active in mind and on our feet and hoped they too would reach their diamond anniversaries.



Lifetime Achievement Awards & Medallions given to all attendees

In an exclusive dinner for our class, USTMAAA honored us with Lifetime Achievement Award diplomas and golden medallions presented by Regent Angel Aparicio and Dr. Primo Andres. This was followed by dancing and more camaraderie.



The Forever Young and Glorious Class of 1956 in the Parade of Jubilarians

July 4th was celebrated with another dinner paid for by class funds. The [final grand Gala Night](#) brought all alumni together in a colorful and joyful affair with dance presentations by the younger Jubilarian classes in their class colors of silver, ruby, sapphire, emerald, and gold. [Class 56, carrying our Diamond Banner](#), marched to the tune of Dr. Aragones' original composition which incidentally he had presented in the talent show the night before. We [danced the waltz](#) in white formal clothes, barongs and tuxes and finished off with our theme song. If we made some mistakes in our cadena, we must have been forgiven because the crowd joined us in our theme chorus with gusto.

["Those were the days"](#) my friend,
We thought they'd never end,
We danced and sang forever and a day,
La la la la la."

The Class, as a whole, was presented [The Diamond Jubilee Award](#), accepted by Dr. Ascelita Dacanay-Luz and Dr. Alex Datuin. Ascelita was given a [Diamond Jubilarian Coordinator Award](#). Both had spearheaded a successful and memorable reunion indeed and to them go our thanks.



The Diamond Jubilarians of the Year at their Waltz medley presentation

As we face the sunset of our lives, we raise a toast to a life well lived! Hasta la vista!! God's blessings to all!!

"MISSION IMPOSSIBLE"

By Dr. Ismael Goco, MD'56



INTRODUCTION:

The non-profit medical mission group, Hands of Hope North Carolina, provides free medical and surgical care to the people of the Dominican Republic. Supported by private

donations and fund raising, 2 mission trips are sponsored each year, in February and June. Approximately 80 surgeries per week are performed in the local hospital in Barahona. In addition, health clinic days are provided for bateys, small villages of sugar cane workers that surround the city. The following is a revelation of how much can be accomplished with limited resources.

METHODS:

Thirty-three health care providers were divided into a surgical and a medical team. Each provider checked one bag full of medical/surgical supplies in addition to supplies that had been sent ahead of the mission. Logistical, tactical and technical organization was excellent.

We left Greensboro, North Carolina on February 15, 2014. It was a cold day with snow on the ground. We arrived in Santo Domingo at 4:45 p.m. local time. It was a hot evening and a four hour bus ride to Barahona, one of two coastal cities in the southwest of the Dominican Republic. As darkness fell, there appeared to be snow on the ground that, in the morning, we realized were white rocks, typical of this part of the island. Our accommodations at a local hotel were comfortable, with hot water and air conditioning.

The following morning, a Sunday, we boarded a truck for a fifteen minute ride to the hospital. With no scheduled cases for the team this day, we started unpacking boxes and our bags of supplies in the operating room.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Shortly after we began unpacking, a young man was wheeled to the operating room with penetrating wounds to the left wrist as a result of a machete fight (Figure 1). Preliminary examination



Figure 1: Lacerated wrist sustained from a machete fight

revealed that the patient could move his thumb and index finger. The through and through laceration involved two thirds of the ulnar side of the left wrist. A thorough neurologic evaluation was not recorded. This was a case for an excellent local surgeon with assistance provided by one of our team. Under general anesthesia at the discretion of the local surgeon, an examination of the wounds determined that tendons, flexors and extensors were severed, as well as the median and ulnar nerves. Small bones were cut as well. An amputation was performed expeditiously.

In a US hospital setting, this hand almost certainly could have been saved. The radial artery, by collaterals, would likely have

allowed the whole hand to survive. After stabilization of the bones, tendons and nerves could be repaired later. Post-operative rehabilitation would be prolonged and exhaustive. In the setting of a rural Dominican Republic hospital, it appeared unlikely that the expertise to provide this level of surgical and post-operative care was available. The economy of the area was also unlikely able to support multiple corrective operations and rehabilitation services. It is hoped that the patient does not depend on fine movements of his hand for his livelihood. For all these reasons, we only observed and reserved judgment on the choice of amputation.

Various cases were seen in the following five days. Several gynecologic surgeries were done by two gynecologists with the assistance of one anesthesiologist, two anesthetists, and two student anesthetists. Patients were evaluated in the pre-operative area and surgeries performed in three operating rooms. Post-operative care was provided also by this dedicated team. What a job!

Three general surgeons, one of them retired (assisted only), did general surgical cases. The rest of the surgical team was composed of registered nurses, physician assistants, medical assistants, an emergency medical responder, and one pharmacist.

Interestingly, one of the team was an interventional radiologist who did not hesitate to do just about anything that needed attention, a "super specialist". This individual transferred patients from stretchers to table and vice versa, scrubbed and assisted in various cases, handled instruments, and exposed the operative field. Although unrelated to clinical expertise as a radiologist, these activities greatly facilitated our mission. The message to future "super specialists" is clear: Do not hesitate to participate in a Hands of Hope mission!

Several hernias of various types were repaired; none were performed laparoscopically. In one case, a sixteen month old child had a large left inguinal hernia with loops of small intestine in the sac. A five inch Ascaris worm was discovered inside the small intestine. The intestine and worm were very gently reduced back into the abdomen (Figure 2) and the hernia was repaired.



Figure 2: Large left inguinal hernia with 5 inch Ascaris inside

Both child and Ascaris did well, although the fate of the Ascaris will be determined with a dose of Albendazole [2]. A total of 9 instruments were on the tray in each of the hernia repairs.

Several cholecystectomies were performed, all through a 4 cm incision. Patients were released the following day. Total number of instruments in each of these "mini-cholecystectomies" was eleven and it was refreshing to revisit this surgical procedure (Figure 3).



Figure 3 : Mini-cholecystectomy instrument set

CONCLUSION:

In all, sixty-one surgical cases were performed during the Hands of Hope February 2014 mission trip. One can only conclude that humanitarian medical relief can be provided on limited resources with talented and committed health care professionals. The mission is possible.

MILLENNIUM MEDICS CLASS 1975 MINI REUNION

By AQE

July 2, 2016

In conjunction with the USTMAAA Annual Convention in Long Beach, California, a few classmates met for lunch at the Downey residence of Bernie de los Reyes where food, fruits and fun-filled storytelling were aplenty. There was no end to the reminiscing, even going past dinnertime. There were the usual quips from medical school days, fabled anthologies



about professors, and antics and escapades outside the ivied walls of the Medicine Building, all of which seemed fresh just like yesterday, despite having been rehashed several times over from previous get togethers. And then, there were the present day reports of memory lapses, aches and pains that come with the aging process, and real life Medicare situations. Some spouses were present, along with special guests Dr. Pol Lasala and his wife.



In the absence of our US based President, Phoebe Ama-McGuinness, a short meeting was held. It was decided to attend next year's Convention to be held in Vancouver, BC and join in the excursion to follow. Our classmate, Malou Javier-Buendia is the current President of USTMAAA. The consensus was to meet more often, because we remember those who we will never see again, having prematurely gone before us. As we approach the cusp of retirement, we must persist and prevail in renewing the friendship and camaraderie that began about 40 years ago, and for some, even longer. We will keep you informed of future plans, and we hope that more will be able to attend. #



GOLDEN JUBILEE REUNION CELEBRATION OF MEDICINE CLASS'66

Long Beach California Hilton (July 3-5 2016)

By Elena T. Estuita-Shah

Day 1 (July 3rd)
The Amazing Medicine Class'66 did it again! The Golden Jubilee class reunion at Long Beach California (July 3-5, 2016) was grand and a memorable one,

celebrated in collaboration with the activities of all the USTMAAA Jubilarians. It started on July 3rd with an USTMAAA welcome ceremony and a holy mass, officiated by the UST Regent Rev. Fr. Angel Aparicio, followed later in the evening by individual class reunions. Our reunion class dinner was held in the Long Beach California Hilton. After dinner, a flurry of activities ensued. With Dr. Romy Perez as the emcee, he first called on Dr. Alex Valdellon to sing the USA and the Philippine national anthems. It was such a powerful and beautiful rendition of the Star Spangled Banner, and The Lupang Hinirang by Alex, and what a talent he is. Then he called on few of our classmates to give short speeches, including Dr. Tony Ferrer who informed us of the working arrangement and coordination of the California host members, followed by a more detailed description by Dr. Daisy Dolorfino. Dr. Maria Luisa Flores our USA class president, and Dr. Sonia Abrio our Philippines class president also gave their short speeches.

Then a surprise came when Dr. Primo Andres, the Executive Director, with other officers of the USTMAAA, arrived to deliver boxes of the Jubilarian Award materials, which consisted of "Lifetime Achievement Awards" of: 1. Award Certificates, and 2. USTMAAA green and gold-plated Medals. Also given were golden ribbon medallion lapels. These three items were given to each one of the Golden Jubilarian in attendance, although some, who did not receive them will be given at a later time. After Dr. Primo Andres said a short highlight about the award, he gave out the certificates, and he installed the gold medals on each jubilarian, assisted by Romy Perez, while a photographer took photos of each one of us. Primo Andres is such a great and generous simple soul, with a golden heart. He said that this "Lifetime Achievement Medal Award", for the first time in USTMAAA history, is given to the 2016 Golden Jubilarians.

Not only did we receive the certificates and medals, but later during the USTMAAA "Oscar Gala Night" we were so honored to receive a "Golden Statue" for each Golden Jubilarian, placed at our tables, reminiscent of the "Oscar Lifetime Achievement Golden Statue Award". It is a coincidence that this statue award, though symbolic, was given in the city of Los Angeles, the home of the "Hollywood Oscars". I for one, and (maybe others too), was so touched and excited, to be professionally acknowledged by our medical school peers, the USTMAAA, which is a



testament to our lifetime hard work from Medical School, to our post professional career accomplishments, a worthwhile reward in the time of our retirement.

Award plaques were given to five of our classmates, announced by Dr. Carmelo Dichoso, chairman of the awards committee. Boy Dichoso did a very good job in creating these plaques. Recipients of these awards were:

Dr. Maria Luisa Flores and Dr. Sonia Abrio Lopez, both received Leadership Awards;

Dr. Cecilia Castroverde Malanum - Distinguished Service Award

Dr. Ramon Lopez - Academic Achievement Award (the 2016 class Golden Jubilarian);

Dr. Norberto Restituto - Humanitarianism Award.

Appropriate acknowledgments mentioned by Dr. Maria Luisa Flores of Dr. Oscar Laserna who served for many years as our class president, and who initiated this yearly reunion events; Drs. Rena Mate and Renita Blanco-Pinar, who, besides assuming the traditional role of managing the class finances, were also responsible for balancing all activities accounts. This job requires full attention to detail and is time consuming. Kudos to both of them. The rest of the evening was pleasant, with dancing and chatting, giving us time to reconnect with old and new friends, except for Malu's unexpected announcement of her resignation as class president, which was a surprise to us. I hope she will change her mind and continue to serve at least for another year, as some of our classmates and I, have suggested to her.

Day 2 (July 4th)

We were treated generously, and indeed we are very grateful to our California classmates who hosted the Capistrano Bus Trip, for their excellent effort in making the event joyful, pleasant, and memorable for us. So thoughtful of them to give us food snacks in the bus so we wouldn't get hungry. Their warm and sincere gesture of welcome was evident in the complimentary food bag, which were painstakingly designed by Daisy Dolorfino to reflect our 50th Golden Jubilee. Each food bag had a list of the host members: Tony and Purita Ferrer, Virgie Cabilao-Veloso, Joey Briones, Daisy Dolorfino, Ceferina Pulgar Ruiz, Ernesto (Popoy) Jimenez, Sofia Saldares Pamplona, Luz Agbanlog Martinez, and Dina Agustin Yancha. During the bus ride, Tony Ferrer served as our tour guide pointing to all the interesting places on the way.

We visited the legendary Capistrano Mission, and inside the compound are located the Chapel of St. Junipero Serra the newly canonized Saint by Pope Francis, and the chapel of St. Peregrine, patron St. of cancer sufferers. There was a short blessing for our deceased classmates by the Pastor, a Monsignor of the Mission, and we offered prayers for our classmates, and friends with cancers and with disability. We walked around the beautifully landscaped gardens of the mission's compound taking pictures of those exotic tropical plants and flowers. I got lost from the group, but I happened to see Enie and Sonia looking for the restroom and I was able to join them.

The most exciting part of the day was the continuing bus ride to

San Clemente where we had lunch at Tony Ferrer's house where his son Tony Jr. now resides. The beautiful home was open and airy with a gorgeous panoramic view of the Pacific Ocean. Tony and Purita Ferrer and the rest of the family received us so warmly. We conveyed our congratulations to the Tony Ferrer clan for being a Tomasino Family of the Year.

When we arrived, the food was ready and we were ushered in immediately to a line of Mexican hor 'dourves of Nachos and its condiments, sliced avocados, chopped tomatoes, tropical drinks etc., different kinds of grilled veggies, and all were delicious. We were just about full with the appetizers when another line led us to the main meal of grilled chicken, marinated pork dish being sliced from the hot rotisserie stand, and served to us by two Spanish speaking chefs. Other items were soft tacos and other veggies, fruits and variety of Filipino desserts. In our table were seated Raul Templonuevo, Ofelio Tiu and Shirley, Connie Cabantac and Jun, Popoy Jimenez, Annabelle Castello, and myself. We were having fun chatting and joking while we ate. Other groups I noticed were doing the same. But Manuela Fernandez, with her companion, preferred to sit out in the open veranda to enjoy the sun. There was a short pause when Sari Laserna handed out fund raising raffles for the USTMAAM & World Foundation to benefit the UST Charity Hospital and hospitals on wheels.

We came back to the hotel from the bus trip earlier than expected, and we approached the USTMAAA Booth if there was a space for us at the dinner - talent show. Four of us - Annabelle Castillo Juat, Renita Blanco-Pinar with her pretty daughter Rowena, an accomplished dermatologist, and myself, Elena Estuita-Shah, were given a space in the table with the other Goldies: Judy Sandique and her male companion, Rena Mate, and Cecile Castroverde. The talent show was remarkable. The performers were our alumni gifted physicians who exhibited their great talents in singing, others were composers of musical pieces - being sung by a gifted vocalist, excellent dancing, and girls trio of an alumnus' small children - one singing, and the other 2 accompanying with piano and violin. We were so impressed by Judy Sandique who, in spite of her limited mobility, danced the intense tango with intricate footwork with her expert dancing partner, Ray. It was delightful to watch. Most of our classmates who did not attend the talent show were having last minute dance practice for our class presentation where I saw Malu and Joey Briones overseeing



the dance practice.

Day 3 (July 5th)

Last day - was the USTMAAA 'Oscar Gala Night'. It was spectacular and festive! First, it was the parade of the Jubilarians. We were behind the Diamond Jubilarians in the parade (60 yrs. post-graduation), and we marched to the music of the She Bang - She Bang. Leading the parade, so touching to watch, was our smiling and determined classmate, Jess Patalinghug, on a wheel-chair, assisted by our classmates, and in front of him was the Amazing Class Med'66 banner. As we followed we marched clapping and singing the She Bang, went around 2-3 times in the dance floor with the audience clapping and smiling, and on our way to exit we pumped-up our arms with shouts of joy. The last one to exit was our class 2016 Golden Jubilarian, tall and handsome Ramon Lopez, carrying a small yellow banner '1966'.

Next was our golden jubilarian dance presentation, which was a waltz line dance, best choreographed by Dr. Romy Tagala, husband of classmate Vickie Rabe. The dancers were graceful, elegant, and the dance performance was well-executed; there was a generous and warm applause by the audience. Worth mentioning are our golden jubilarian dancers who worked hard despite the limited practice time. These dancers were our classmates and their spouses: Romy and wife, Victoria (Vickie), Tagala, Sonia Abrio, Renita Blanco-Pinar, Augusto (Gus) Fojas, Connie Cabantac-Orchetorena, Virgie Cabilao Veloso, Elena Estuita-Shah, Ofelio Tiu and wife, Shirley, Raul Templonuevo and wife, Josefina, Arthur Licican and wife, Letty, Ramon Lopez and wife, Marylyn, Vicky Acierito-Vea, Rena Mate, Cecile Castroverde-Malanum, Noemi Pizarro-Albano, Rosita Bersamin, Beverly DeLeon, Lourdes Patalinghug, Norberto Restituto, Romy Perez, and Alex Valdellon.



Attendees from the Philippines, Sonia Abrio Lopez and Renita Blanco Pinar with daughter Rowena, were just happy, and enjoying the celebration. Other classmates and guests in other tables were also having fun. Some classmates came with their family members, like Connie Cabantac and Tony Ferrer who came with their children and guests. After the dinner of fish and steak, we moved from table to table, taking pictures, some holding proudly their "Oscar" Golden Statues. Other highlight of

the event was the award ceremony to all 2016 Class Jubilarians. As soon as our class Golden Jubilarian of the Year, Ramon Lopez, was announced, we gave a big, and sustained round of applause and we congratulated him. He then expressed his humble gratitude by showing to us in our tables, his award plaque with its inscription.



Proud to mention, are our Golden Jubilarian attendees (ladies), who wore fashionable evening gowns fit for the "Oscar". They were:

1. Rosario (Sari) Laserna: Looked beautiful, polished and sophisticated, in a chic and stylish black gown with gold sleeves trimmings;
2. Maria Luisa Flores (Malu): Pretty, poised and elegant, in golden yellow top - tulle skirt gown, with laced-low back, and see through front;
3. Rena Mate: Regal, a picture of graceful elegance in a well-fitted long sleeve golden tan gown;
4. Sonia Abrio: Gorgeous and lively, in cream yellow gown with off-shoulder sleeves with decorative appliques;
5. Me - Elena: Cool in simple minimalistic style short sleeves, long beige satin gown and shimmery top with golden collar applique;
6. Zeny Cunanan: Tall and stunning, in a fitted one-sided bare shoulder, beige-white gown with a side maxi-slit;
7. Nila Villafuerte: Exotic - in a two piece-like textured top, with flare-flowery skirt gown;
8. Annabelle Castillo: Looked middle eastern, empress-like, in yellow gown, studded with pearls necklace and a long glittering gold sash;
9. Penny Delgado: Looked charming and stylish, in beaded silvery, shimmering and sweet, low neck, short sleeve gown;
10. Marylyn Lopez: Looked lovely, refined, and cozy in greenish-gold low neck gown, with textured black-accented fabric design;
11. Vicky Restituto: Beautiful and Glamorous, queen-like in pastel/glittery outfit with a panuelo-like top
12. Cecile Castroverde: Graceful in sleeveless white-yellow floral top, with a side glittering gold sash, and black skirt gown.
13. Rosita (Osie) Bersamin: Sweet in a stringed shoulder - sleeveless yellow textured, low neck outfit, with a stylish sheer black open long cape overlay.
14. Josefina Templonuevo: Demure and flirty in a beaded-sheerly chic tan afternoon dress.
15. Shirley Tiu: Prim and proper in a simple and sweet goldish/shimmery knee-high outfit.
16. Lourdes Patalinghug: Stylish in a beaded/sequined golden gown.
17. Daisy Dolorfino: Glorious, in Modest stylish outfit with yellow loose bolero-like top, accented by a waistline black sash, and a black skirt.

18. Letty Licican: Adorable in simple, low-back and elegant textured-fabric tan gown.

19. Other classmates and spouses: All Stylishly dressed in black elegant gowns with glitters, different style tops, some with gold accents and trimmings, few with Filipiniana outfit with varied tops or panuelos: They were worn by: 1. Renita Blanco, 2. Virgie Cabilao, 3. Ceferina Pulgar, 4. Judy Sandique, 5. Isabel Perez, 6. Connie Cabantac, 7. Vicky Acierito-Vea, 8. Noemi Pizarro, 9. Purita Ferrer 10. Baby Vijungco, 11. Rose Fojas, 12. Beverly DeLeon, 13. Helen Dichoso. Other spouses of classmates of Drs: Alejandro Valdellon, Ramon Morato, Conrad Ballecer, Rodolfo Maceren and others also wore stylish formal evening wear.

Our male classmates wore dignified Filipino Barong Tagalog of different styles and colors, like Drs. Jose (Boy) Vijungco, Tony Ferrer, Francisco DeLeon, Conrad Ballecer, Joey Briones, Quintin Prado etc., and some in dark formal men suits, like Drs. Roberto Cunanan, Renato Villafuerte, Ernesto Jimenez and others.

Dancing continued till late night. Some of our classmates with their spouses were graceful dancers, most of the time in the dance floor. Our so-called "always single" classmate, a debonair and gentleman, Popoy (Ernesto) Jimenez, danced with the girls with no dancing partners, so that no one was seated as a permanent fixture like "flower vase" on the tables. He was a unique dancer, and danced free style "A La Elvis". Other male classmates danced with girl classmates as well - like Renato, Raul, and others. Shirley Tiu was sport enough to lend her dear Ofelio to dance with me. Girls like Connie, Rena, Malu and myself danced girls with girls, and there was line dancing too. Looked like, all were having fun, even just talking with one another, like when I went to Penny and Daisy's table and just chatted and relived those moments when we were in medical school. We missed some classmates who could not attend the Gala Night, Manuela Fernandez and Cherry Carmona Ghosh (who came with hubby Rontu), as they had other engagements to attend.

Lastly, this USA Golden Jubilee affair was celebratory and exhilarating, just by meeting and enjoying with classmates in all the events activities. There was a feeling of awe and gratitude to be honored by the USTMAAA with the Golden Jubilarian Lifetime Awards that we least expected. While each one of us was building our career paths, we somehow strayed away, but now, in that three-day event, we became closer to the USTMAAA with a feeling of coming home to our roots, and it seemed we finally arrived. Thank you to the USTMAAA, to all our California hosts, to our classmates from around the United States, and especially those who traveled from the Philippines, Sonia and Renita, and everyone who came to attend this event, your presence gave life and vitality to this grand celebration. Hope we see each other again in next year's reunion, and many more years to come. The USTMAAA already scheduled next reunion in Canada.

I tried to mention all the names of our classmates who attended this reunion, and my apologies if I failed to mention some names here.

Day 4 - July 6/2016 ALOHA!!!

All congregated in the Hilton lobby, after breakfast, and bid long good-byes. Malu, Cecile, and I went to the LAX airport the same time. Going home gave me a feeling of a fulfilled adventure, and at the same time, a sense of emptiness. Hope we'll see each other again next time. Love you all. CIAO!

Elena



USTMAA MIDWEST HOLDS ITS INDUCTION BALL

Amidst pomp and glory, the University of Santo Tomas Medical Alumni Association of the Midwest held its 39th Induction Ball at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare Hotel in Rosemont, Illinois on July 30, 2016. This is where USTMAA America had all begun when work on unification

of all the regional Thomasian medical alumni associations was conceived by the founding leaders headed by Dr. Jose Evangelista who is recognized as the founding father, and where Dr. Rodrigo Floro assumed the first presidency of USTMAAA in 1990. And now, 26 years later, [Dr. Lourdes Dimaano-Floro](#) of Class 1964 is inducted into the same office to once more lead the USTMAA Midwest in another challenging period in the history of the organization. She takes over the reign from outgoing President, [Dr. Zita Balbin-Yorro](#) of Class 1968.



Dr. Jose Evangelista inducted the officers and the members of the Board of Governors. [Dr. Primo Andres](#), the USTMAAA Executive Director, was invited as the guest speaker and he updated the chapter members on the state of the USTMAA America and invited them to participate in the next national gathering, the 25th USTMAAA Grand Reunion and Medical Convention in Vancouver, BC, Canada on July 1-5, 2017 at the Sheraton Wall Centre.



The program was concise and very efficiently emceed by Dr. Greg Tolentino of Class 1972, the first President of the USTMAA Foundation. [Dr. Alfonso Estrada](#) of Class 1975, the incumbent Vice President of USTMAAA and a former President of USTMAAM, gave the invocation after [TMACS \(Thomasian Medical Alumni Choral Society of Illinois\)](#) beautifully sang the National anthems and the UST hymn. There was plenty of time to enjoy the music and to satisfy the guests with happy feet. There was mass the following morning followed by a tasty Filipino breakfast. There is no question that the USTMAA Midwest chapter of the USTMAAA is alive and well.

DR. PRIMO ANDRES' ADDRESS AT THE USTMAA MIDWEST INDUCTION BALL ON JULY 30, 2016

<https://vimeo.com/primoandres/ustmaam2016primoandres>



President, Dr. Lourdes Floro, fellow Thomasians of the Midwest, honored guests, ladies and gentlemen. I am as surprised as you are why I am up here in front of the podium instead of behind the video camera where I am more comfortable. However, I was tasked by our President to give you an update on USTMAAAmerica, and a command to make it “sweet and short”. I do not know if I can make it sweet because that is dependent on the taste bud of the listener and besides I am not much of a speaker. I am more of a doer. I can certainly try to make it short. And so I prepared a one-hour lecture and not a second more.

It always brings me great pleasure to come back to the place where USTMAAAmerica had begun over a quarter of century ago. It is only through the visionary dreams of our leaders that made it possible for a national organization to spring from the multiple regional organizations to give birth to what we now know as the University of Santo Tomas Medical Alumni Association in America. Congratulations and thank you to all of you in the Midwest that made it happen, especially to our President, Dr. Lory Floro, whose commitment dates back to the very beginning when her husband, Rudy, assumed the first Presidency of USTMAAAmerica. Also here with us tonight is Dr. Greg

Tolentino also from the Midwest, Chicago nonetheless, the first President of the, USTMAA Foundation, the breadbasket of our organization, perhaps the best legacy that our founding leaders have ever dreamt of. Let me acknowledge also the presence of Dr. Joe Evangelista, our founding father, and his best partner in arms, Dr. Stella Evangelista, the only known Foundation Executive Director, and their not so secret weapons in their endeavors, Drs Oni and Zita Yorro, also all from the Midwest. What we have here in USTMAAM is practically who is who in USTMAAAmerica. I would like to express my appreciation of Dr. Lory Floro's devotion to both USTMAAMidwest and to USTMAAAmerica and her passion in accomplishing our goals, altering her tight schedule and coming to Long Beach, CA a month ago to attend our very important strategic meetings barely a day after her arrival from the Philippines.

Although USTMAAA had enjoyed a tremendous growth as the umbrella organization, it has also evolved with time and today we are confronted with different challenges chief among them being the dwindling membership and perhaps the seemingly less passionate involvement of our younger alumni. The changing practice environment is forcing most of them to focus more on their jobs, most of who are now employed by hospitals, with lesser flexibility than our more senior members had enjoyed when private practice was the norm. Despite touting ourselves as the largest and the most organized Filipino-American professional organization in the USA, with an estimated potential membership of over 6,000, it is sad to note that we have only 860 registered members in our roster and only 792 of them are considered “active”. Gone are the days when we had close to 1000 attendees in our Reunions and we could generate revenues of over \$100,000 a year that helped grow our Foundation Endowment Fund. In more recent years we barely could generate enough income to take care of the administrative expenses of the Association, at one time relying on a “bail out” from the Foundation to keep us afloat.

We, as an organization, therefore need to pivot and align with the new paradigm in order to be at par with our members. With less free time to attend meetings in person, we need to be able to communicate with them through alternative means like the Internet and social media and even through tele or video-conferencing if necessary. We have to cut our expenses and be more imaginative in disseminating information without indulging too much in printed materials and blindly mailing out publications to unverified postal addresses, a very costly and often times ineffective endeavor.

Taking these into consideration, USTMAAA now has a very robust website that we manage ourselves, even a Facebook page that we regularly use to disseminate relevant information to our members. Our only challenge now is how to make all of you read them. We monitor our email several times a day and try to answer inquiries within 24 hours and this has received tremendous acceptance by those who have availed of this service. I have a “Go To Meeting” account that we have used intermittently in the past to hold tele/video conferences that perhaps can be utilized more often in the future. We no longer publish printed newsletters,

going instead into an electronic newsletter, the eUSThomasian, which can be published at any time, with no limit as to the length of the articles or the number of images and graphics to be added, FOR FREE. We have ceased using contracted Registration Services and even having paid Convention Assistants that we can no longer afford and we are now relying more on volunteer staff and part time paid staff that has saved us a tremendous amount of money leaving enough funds to take care of the administrative expenses of the Association. And despite all of these cost-cutting measures, we have been more successful in promoting programs to our members especially in response to appeals for disaster relief and medical missions. These are the new waves of the present that will carry us to the future.

But all of these would be impossible to continue successfully unless we get updated demographics from our alumni. This task can only be made easier by working closely with our different chapters and sharing information with one another. A tighter relationship is therefore necessary. To move in this direction, we have now formalized our relationship with the different chapters by officially acknowledging them in our Constitution and Bylaws in its most recent amendment and by promulgating that membership in one is automatically a membership in the other. There is going to be a sharing in the revenues generated from membership fees. While this appears to be only a meager move, it will prove to be a giant step to a brighter future of our organization. It is imperative therefore that we all participate by revisiting our website and updating and completing our information. (How about doing it now? Log on to <http://www.ustmaamerica.org/membership>)

In any future planning, we have to include succession as a part of the conversation. I have to admire Drs. Joe and Stella Evangelista and Drs. Oni and Zita Yorro for their incomparable and enduring devotion to the organization. I also have to thank them for giving me the opportunity to participate in a small way to the organization. But we are all getting up there in years and we have to start looking for and begin molding leaders who can take over the reign of our organization. We have lots of them who have the talent to lead and bring USTMAAAmerica to the next generations. But talent is not enough. There has to be a commitment to do what is good for the organization and a willingness to sacrifice one's self and the passion that should match that of our visionary founding leaders. Fortunately, we see those leaders from those who are behind us and all we have to do is to fashion them into real strong USTMAAAmerica leaders.

I can foresee a brighter tomorrow if all of us will put our heads together and work shoulder to shoulder.

To borrow from President John F. Kennedy, allow me to paraphrase the message a little by challenging you, my fellow Thomasians, to “Ask not what USTMAAAmerica can do for you -ask what you can to for your alma mater and the Philippines, our country of birth”. What USTMAAA can do for you is already a given: a commitment to keep you connected and inspired to keep looking back to where you came from, while having fun celebrating with your classmates and friends, and in the process also contributing

and/or benefitting from our various programs. The real question is, are you prepared to sign up and go with us all the way?

In conclusion, I would like to invite you to the 25th USTMAAAmerica Grand Reunion and Medical Convention, yes 25 years of doing this, this time in the beautiful city of Vancouver, Canada on July 1-5, 2017. Nestled between the snow-capped mountains and the cool waters of the Pacific, the picturesque city of Vancouver is one of those places we have always dreamed to spend some time in someday but never got around to doing it. Now is our chance. We are anticipating that this will be one of the better-attended gatherings of USTMAAA in recent years despite its being held in a "foreign country". In addition to the expected jubilarian classes with years ending in 2 and 7, various non-jubilarian classes are planning on having their "mini-reunions". It carries some challenges but also offers a lot of opportunities. July 1 happens to be the 150th Anniversary of the Founding of Canada, their Canada Day. And so we will be competing for hotel space with the citizens of Canada. The garden-like city of Vancouver is gifted with an International culture, and an International cuisine. There are lots of things to see, do and enjoy and you will find that there seems to be not enough time to do them all. We will do our very best to keep our programs concise to allow you more time to explore the city. Consider enhancing your experience by joining the various excursions that are offered following the Reunion. Go to Victoria, the capital city of British Columbia in the Island of Vancouver, where the magnificent Butchart Garden is located and a traditional English afternoon tea is waiting in a setting of blooming flowers. Ride with us to experience what everybody is talking about, the Rocky Mountaineer scenic luxury train ride, as we head east to immerse our eyes in the grandiose panorama of the northern Rocky Mountains to enjoy Lake Louise and Banff among other places. Be sure to read for more details the next issue eUSThomasian that is about to be released.

Maraming salamat po at magandang gabi sa inyong lahat!

GETTING TO KNOW US

By the Executive Director

Have you noticed recently that our website name has gotten shorter? Yes, we have finally dropped the wildapricot surname and are now going by our very own name: www.ustmaaamerica.org. Yes, you can still use the old name for 'nostalgic purposes' but why? We also own www.ustmaaamerica.com and that is going to be linked to our website as well, in case some forget whether it is .org or .com. It won't matter anymore. And do you know that we now have a facebook page: www.facebook.com/USTMAAAmerica?

What is in a name you might ask? PLENTY! It identifies us and all the different names lead to us, USTMAAA. We do not want to leave any reason for you not to be in touch with us. So why don't you try the following links just for the fun of it?

www.ustmaaamerica.org

www.facebook.com/USTMAAAmerica

www.ustmaaamerica.org/membership

www.ustmaaamerica.org/events

www.ustmaaamerica.org/photovideo

www.ustmaaamerica.org/donations

www.ustmaaamerica.org/awards

www.ustmaaamerica.org/DisasterRelief&MedicalMissions

www.ustmaaamerica.org/memorial

www.ustmaaamerica.org/jubilarians

SPECIAL OFFERS

In regard to the forthcoming 25th Grand Reunion and Medical Convention with the anticipated broad interest from all the Thomasian medical alumni, and not only those who are celebrating their jubilee year, and with the concern about the availability of sufficient hotel rooms to accommodate the demand, all efforts are being made to encourage those who are planning to attend to register early, or at least express their interest early, so that appropriate adjustments can be made in our negotiations with the hotels and other venues and vendors of the various events and excursions that are being prepared for. In this connection, USTMAAA is offering incentives for early registration:

- Annual Membership is free until October 31, 2016 and 50 % off beyond that date until December 31, 2016.
- A 10 % discount is offered for online registrations made for Packages A, B and C until December 31, 2016.

Please commit early and take advantage of the special offers. Flights are also so much cheaper if you book early. #

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AN INVITATION

We invite all of you to contribute an article in the next issue of the eUSThomasian. We reserve the right to edit any article that is submitted and decide whether it is going to be published or not.

The Editorial Staff