

WEST SIDE STORY

Rotary Club of Makati West



OFFICIAL FACEBOOK PAGE
RCMWD3830

Volume 36, RY 2020-2021
April 1, 2021

Remembering Two men of Action; Two men with Zest



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



ALASDAIR J.W THOMSON
President, RY 2020 - 2021

Men of Action!,

I'm not entirely sure when I've had a harder week than this in Rotary, and I am sure many of you feel the same.

When we lost baby Migo on the operating table last Saturday afternoon as he was undergoing open heart surgery at the age of just two months, I was pretty deflated, mostly thinking about his family, and about the medical team who fought so hard to give him a full life.

Waking on Sunday to the news of the sudden death of Serge Arroyo left me numb and disbelieving, all the more so given the energy and vibrancy of his contribution during our meeting last week.

Hearing on Sunday afternoon that PDG Tony Rufino had died left me bereft.

This week we have no formal meeting. It may be a good thing. Instead, this may be a moment to return to our families, to dwell on the Easter message of life renewed, and to reflect on these three lives, all ended too soon.

Each of them came from different circumstances, different generations, knew different loves and different sorrows. Each of them touched us all and many beyond us. They all mattered, and they all made a difference in our world.

Ultimately, our destination on this planet is the same for all of us. At some point these bodies cease to carry us. It is up to us to decide what we do in the meantime. I already know that what I will eventually take from this week is not pain, nor anguish, nor loss. I already know that what I will take from this week will be a new resolve. I will take inspiration from these lives so well lived; from the dedication of the doctors and our social workers; from the love of the families and the friends that poured out their hearts this week.

Rotary, and RCMW provides us all with a platform to channel such resolve and inspiration. And so, Brothers, shed what tears you need this weekend and come back with renewed spirit.

The World needs your Zest.
Alasdair Thomson

Epitaph on My Own Friend

By Robert Burns

An honest man here lies at rest,
As e'er God with His image blest:
The friend of man, the friend of truth;
The friend of age, and guide of youth:
Few hearts like his, with virtue warm'd,
Few heads with knowledge so inform'd:
If there's another world, he lives in bliss;
If there is none, he made the best of this.

WORDS ON PDG TONY RUFINO

By Pres. Al Thomson

Few men can wear a tuxedo truly well. James Bond for sure. Probably Giorgio Armani. The wearing of a tuxedo is not about the suit, but about the man beneath it.

When I think of PDG Tony, it is of him in a tuxedo. That man could wear a tux. He had the poise, the precision, the confidence and that little bit of steel that makes all the difference.

Most of you will know PDG Tony far better than I. None of you then will find it in the remotest bit surprising that he ultimately is the reason why I am the President of our Club this year.

When PDG Tony took you aside and quietly told you that he thought it would be a good idea for you to do something, you knew it came with that little bit of steel. It was dressed up of course in all the diplomacy and charm and good manners that we associate with PDG Tony, but it wasn't really a suggestion. It was a statement of what you were going to do. He just had a way of leaving you thinking you'd made the decision. It didn't matter if you were one of the younger members that he recruited to our Club, like Robin or Scott, or one of the "Old Dogs" like PRID Guiller or PDG Oskie.

What was always true of him was that, when he'd "helped" you make the decision, he then stepped up to help you make a success of the outcome. He wasn't one to shove you forward and then abandon you to your fate, or to scurry on to the next thing. No. He took full responsibility for his choices, and for yours.

So from the moment I accepted to become our Club President, I've always appreciated and sought his advice. It was rarely offered but always readily available. It was never wrong. It was always efficient and to the point. I have no shadow of a doubt that generations of Makati West Presidents before me will tell of the same experience.

That we have lost him so suddenly is of course a tragedy. For his wonderful wife, Tita Mita, for his family, and for all of us who knew him. But his life, from my own very limited perspective, was the polar opposite of a tragedy. It was a triumph in the way that it shaped the world in big ways and small ways into a better place.

Of course we are all numb, and shocked, and deeply saddened by his death. The loss is terrible. But PDG Tony in my experience was not a man prone to wallowing in sorrow or the misfortunes of life. He was a Man of Action. A Man with Zest. When the covid pandemic struck he did not fear it, or moan about its challenges. Instead he adapted, leading the way among our older members in adopting the technology of Zoom and thus remained ever present in our meetings.

What is important is not that Tony died this week. What is important is how he lived all the weeks before this week. What is important is what we all learned from him and his way of life. What is important is what we all do next; what actions we take to serve as he served, to love as he loved, to guide as he guided and to inspire as he inspired.

I'm not all that sure that PDG Tony would want us to do so "in his honour". I never saw him as a man seeking personal acclaim. I think he'd want us to do so because it is the right thing to do.

And so, as we bid our farewell to Tony, let us simply resolve to do the right thing, and give of our talent, our time and our treasure. Just as he did. Every day.

Mabuhay PDG Tony! Thank you for everything.

PICTURES WITH PDG TONY RUFINO



PICTURES WITH PDG TONY RUFINO



FAMILY PICTURES OF PDG TONY RUFINO



WORDS ON PDG TONY RUFINO

By PDG Oskie De Venecia

Tony Rufino has been a friend of mine since 1975. We first met when we were inducted as members of the Rotary Club of Makati West. Since that day, we have accomplished so much together. We were both Presidents of the Club and District Governors as well. Even outside Rotary, our career paths continued to cross through our involvement in the Management Association of the Philippines, Philippine Coast Guard Auxiliary, and the Consular Corps of the Philippines.

On a personal level, he was a Godfather to one of my sons while my wife was a Godmother to one of his children. Every weekend, because of our proximity to each other, Tony and Mita, myself and Boots, Jun and Nancy Tambunting, Rene and Mila Tanseco, Bernie and Barbara Lichaytoo, Cesar and Baby Cruz, and Eddie and Baby Hernandez would get together and eat in different restaurants. Those were memorable dinners.

So how does one say goodbye to a dear friend after 46 years? The simple answer is you can't. You remember the good days, the good work, and the good times. To Mita and the family, know that Tony was loved by many and a great friend. He will truly be missed. He has left his imprint on our Club and in our hearts.



WORDS ON RTN. SERGE ARROYO

By Pres. Al Thomson

One of the things I love most about Makati West is that there is space for all sorts. We are a home to people of many cultures and nations, who cut across three generations or more and who come from, and represent, a true kaleidoscope of activities, professions, hobbies and interests.

Serge certainly added diversity to our Club, and we are all the richer for it. As a constant emissary of the world of “tech”, he pushed our thinking in every meeting as to how the world was changing, and why we needed to keep up. Despite a sea of largely blank faces, he would ask about how this or that emerging technology or trend might affect someone’s business, or how an idea from Silicon Valley could be used in Manila. Though we must have appeared as New Age Luddites to him, he never tired of shining light on the changes ahead of us..

All that truly matters to be a member of Makati West is that you share the highest standards of integrity, that you are prepared and desire to serve, and that you pass the, (I’ll put it diplomatically for this audience) “airport lounge test”. That is the one where, if you found yourself delayed for your flight by five hours, you’d enjoy the company of the person in question.

There is no doubt that Serge was a man you would be happy to be stuck in an airport lounge with. He was a vividly informed Geek with an almost complete absence of “geekiness”. Unless of course you want to count the Zoom virtual backgrounds that would have him placed on a Star Wars stormtrooper transporter or somewhere deep within Dr Who’s Tardis. After hours in his company you left with your head spinning as a result of his enthusiasm for things new, and his sheer energy and passion.

That assumes of course that he would have been let into the airport lounge at all. If he had turned up, as seemed all too common, in full tactical ambush gear, with his U2 Bono shades and his gelled hair they might have worried they were letting in the Filipino version of The Terminator. His catch phrase really should have been “Babalik Ako”.

I was lucky enough to host Serge and Gina at my house in Tali during the 50th Anniversary celebrations of our club last year. You were perfect guests, finding that elusive balance of being helpful and leaving well alone. You brought brightness to my home and laughter late into the evening.

Of course those of us from the Club know him as a man who was driven to serve. He sat on our Board of Directors on several occasions, and when not in official office was always willing to lend a hand and to lend support. From my first days in the Club, he supported me personally as we ran a number of Likhang Sining on the spot art contests. I mean that literally. We supported each other as the effects of PP Fern’s lychee mojitos would take effect into the afternoons outside M Cafe.

Most recently, we were all so happy when he agreed to take on the leadership of our Guardian Angel Program, where our members follow the lives of children who have benefit from heart surgery through our Gift of Life program to ensure that, having survived such early peril they may continue to thrive into adulthood. The Arroyo family has long had their own ward in the GAP, and he saw first hand the value of such a relationship. With PP Roque, they have been working enormously hard in recent months to reinvigorate the Guardian Angel Program and to make it truly scalable as the number of children we have helped now exceeds 1,500.

WORDS ON RTN. SERGE ARROYO

By Pres. Al Thomson

As always, Serge brought a tech perspective to things, and he donated his time and his company resources to provide us with a fully cloud based medtech monitoring system to link our beneficiaries with the Guardian Angel, with our Rotoractors and with medical services. It is a leap forward in capability of the type that he always espoused. We, and thousands of children, are indebted to him and to Ascendent Technologies for all that effort. Our duty and responsibility now is to "Fill the GAP" exactly as he intended.

Like all of you, I cannot conceive of the notion that we will not see his sparkling eyes shining back at us from across a Zoom screen, or more importantly from across a room. He has been an ever-constant in our meetings and fireside chats this year, just as he was when we used to meet in person.

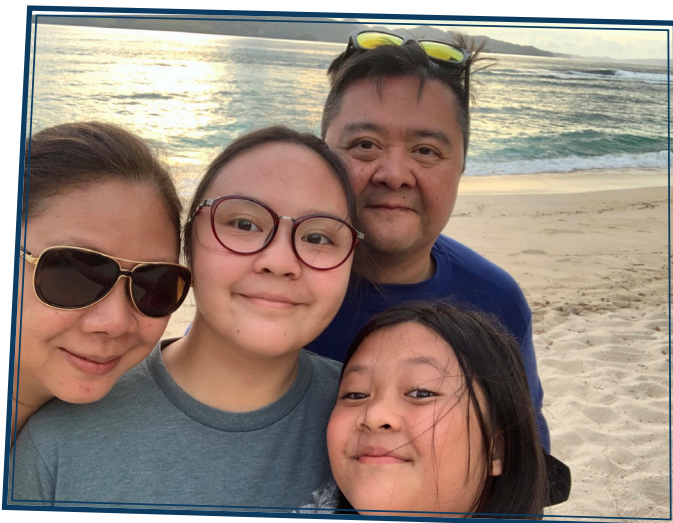
His was the constancy of the truest friend. The constancy of a devoted and loving husband. The constancy of a besotted father.

Within our Club he was the present and the future. We mourn the passing of this wonderful Man of Action. This amazing Man with Zest.

Rest in Peace, Serge. Thank you.



FAMILY PICTURES OF RTN. SERGE ARROYO



WORDS ON RTN. SERGE ARROYO

By IPP Eric Tensuan

By the time you read this article you would have already heard me share my amusing experiences with our dear friend Serge.

It's almost unfathomable how well we got along. I think it all started with our "Spamalot" practices back when slightly taller people were being crowned as Kings. We were quite a team; he would work on the scotch and I on the Bombay Sapphire Gin.

"Too much was never enough," that's how I fondly remember Serge. He was present in most of our Japan international sorties. During one of those trips in Osaka, Serge and I worked on a bottle of Nikka at my hotel room. It was engaging to drink with Serge since he can intelligently elaborate on any discussed topic. I think Serge and I kinda dosed off that evening and when we woke up, Serge told me that he intended to go back to the hotel across our hotel. I still can't remember why I ended up going with him. Yes, we got to his hotel; yes, I think we got to the right floor, but no, he couldn't open the door with his room keys. I had to pull out his key card from his pants just to ask the front desk for his room number.

While he was a gentleman, he had a unique way of dressing up in almost psychedelic technicolor, which contrasted rather sharply with the likes of Eric A's safari shirts, Maritoni's lululemon gym gear, and Larry Ocampo's stoic face. Anticipating what kind of eccentric fashion he'd carry that day was always a delight.

Oh how Serge loved good food. He would feast on Hida beef in Takayama, would take extra orders of chicken wings in Nagoya, and would tandem in having seconds with Mon Guerrero in our Osaka food walk. To clear his palette, he would have Dax as his drinking buddy. More food and more drinks was definitely better than less.

Serge is an insatiable shopper. At the Sapporo airport on our way home to Manila, his luggage literally burst at the seams. He must have overpacked too many boxes of Shiroi Koibito cookies. On a very high stress mode, we both ran to Muji, bought the biggest luggage available and repacked just in time to check-in and catch our flight. His luggage was full of BIC gadgets and Don Quixote goodies for his entire family.

One very late freezing evening in Sapporo, I enter the hotel lobby seeing the beautiful ladies, Kathy, Marivic, Techie and my wife Fides who questions me looking for the bachelors of the trip, Junvee and Serge. I was emphatically commanded by my wife to search for the two so off I went even if I was not dressed warmly enough as Fides was feeling obligated to Julienne and Gina for their husbands' safety. She would not allow me to run up to our room to pick up a winter jacket. And so, I ended up shivering on the streets of Sapporo. Luckily, there is truth in the belief that likeminded birds flock together. After checking 2 bars, I finally found them in the third. Though the search only took twenty minutes, returning back to the hotel with them took almost 2 hours. Go figure.

These are but a few of my adventures with Serge. But my admiration of him goes beyond all these. He was committed in the various projects of the club. Most recently he was offering his expertise on IT for our Guardian Angel project. Clearly our fellowships in the club become our strength with members like Serge.

Serge, thank you for the brotherhood, laughter and colorful moments you shared with us. As President Al commented of PDG Tony as one of the few who can carry a tux, you on the other hand are one of the few who can be garbed elegantly in all the colors as you merrily eat to the last bite and drink to the last shot.

Thank you, Serge. Love you, bro . See you later...hopefully much, much, much later.

We are Makati West!
You are Makati West!

Godspeed.

PICTURES WITH RTN. SERGE ARROYO



SERGIE MY ROOMIE

By PP Eric Angeles

Serge was naturally a very considerate fellow. On a trip to Japan for a sister club installation in 2014 Rosanna and Gina decided to pass. Since the other members of the RCMW delegation were couples Serge and I were designated roommates once again. Serge and I had already shared sleeping arrangements in the past and I was needling him endlessly about not being able to sleep because of his snoring.

During the side trip to Takayama the group decided to stay at a ryokan so we had futon mattresses for a bed and basically all our stuff was on the floor. Serge smiles at me and said "Hey Eric, you don't have to worry about my snoring anymore. I brought my CPAP gadget to spare you my nocturnal noise." "Wow, thanks Serge!" I said, "That is so thoughtful of you!"

So Serge puts on his mask and goes to sleep and just as advertised there was peace and quiet in our room. I did not sleep right away as seeing Serge with that CPAP mask at the opposite bed gave me a creepy feeling of sleeping beside Hannibal Lecter. As I was about to doze off the motor of the CPAP starts whirring, and since we had no bedside table as we were on the floor, the whole ryokan starts to shake every time the motor kicks in. So that motor on the wooden floor felt like an Intensity 2 earthquake each time it turns on thereby extinguishing all possibility of sleep for a light sleeper like me.

Even with all the nocturnal challenges, I would not think twice about rooming again with Serge. He was a joy to be with. He was very easy to get along with and he was always game for a midnight walk to the local Family Mart for a can of beer or a miniature liquor bottle. Of course there has to be a customary stop for a bucket of tebasaki on the way home.

I will miss you Sergei my roomie. Have a great trip to the big chicken wing grill in the sky!



TRIBUTE TO RTN. SERGE ARROYO

By PP Junvee Vital

The news of Serge's passing hit me hard that when I was asked to say a few words about him, I did not think twice. I wanted to share how Sergie was special to me and in this way can come to terms with what happened.

I personally got to know Sergie when I joined RC Makati West in 2008. He was so easy to approach and talk to that we insistently became friends.

Sergie and I have a lot in common which is probably why we gravitated to each other and got along so well. We both have very strong wives, two lovely girls, loved gadgets, watches, socializing, trendy clothes and of course LOVED OUR DRINKS.

Sergie was a fixture in Rotary, always there the meetings and events. But I was fortunate to even get closer to him when it was my year as PRESIDENT. After all, I wanted my year to be the year of FELLOWSHIP and made sure the focus was on building stronger connections with everyone, through a brotherhood of fun, laughter and drinking. Sergie was always present and I appreciated that. He was really my ROTARY BROTHER through and through.

Sergie has lived a colorful life, that when one thinks of him, everyone has their own Sergie story to share. I have so many fun-filled stories from our Japan trips and countless Rotary events to fill a lifetime. I can go on and on but it just showed how Sergie lived life to the fullest. He had a gift of connecting with everyone with such sincerity that he would instantly make you feel like a good friend or brother. Thank you Serge, for being part of my life.

But even with his dedication to his friends in Rotary, no one can deny that his priority was his family. It showed how much he loved GINA, AINA AND ALLIE. Everyone can see that his family came first in everything. He loved showering his girls with memorable trips, food explorations and genuine family bonding time. Enough to fill a lifetime!!! He was foremost a family man!

Thank you so much Gina for sharing Sergie with us. He was a special man that touched all of us. Sergie was one of the sincerest, kindest and easy going guy I have ever met. Gina, believe me when I say that everyone loved Serge!!!

I'll truly miss you Serge. You are one person that won't easily be forgotten. Though it pains me to think that you are gone, I am happy thinking that you are there watching over us. Keep my glass of YAMAZAKI full!

Until we meet again my brother!!



MESSAGE FROM FOREIGN SISTER CLUBS

From RC Singapore West PP Darryl Kuek:

"Evening Franco... heard the sad news of PDG Rufino's passing. Further saddened by Serge's passing too. Please convey my deepest condolences

Dear President Al Thomson,

We send a message of condolence to the news of your two members passing. May they Rest In Peace.

Yours in Rotary,

**Junko Maehara President, RY 2020-2021
RC Sapporo West**

Please pass our deepest condolences to the club on the passing of PDG Tony Rufino. He's such an energetic, and jovial character we see in almost every activity always in a party mood. He was here in Malaysia not long ago, our last discussion was when we shall meet again. He shall be sorely missed. Also on the passing of Serge Arroyo. I have meet him in person before as well... we shall sorely miss them all.

**President Victor,
RC Petaling Jaya**



MESSAGE FROM FOREIGN SISTER CLUB



FROM PP DR KU (RC KOWLOON WEST)

Our club Rotarians are deeply saddened by the bad news about the loss of our old friends.

Mr Daniel Suen, President of our club, urge me to contact you and your club to send our heartfelt condolences.

FROM PDG JASON YEUNG (RC KOWLOON WEST)

Hi Eric Angeles,

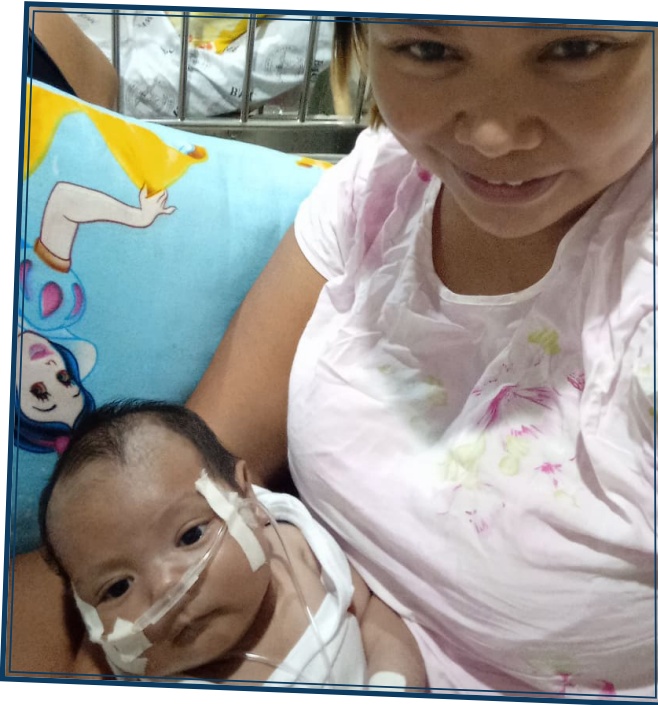
Thanks for putting us in the picture. But we feel bad for not knowing earlier and missed the chance to send our condolences to Mita and family.

Thanks for letting us know.

Regards,
Jason Yeung

That's very kind of you, Eric. Appreciate your thoughtfulness. Kowloon West is going to celebrate 60th Anniversary this November. Just hope the world is sufficiently opened up by then. Welcome you all from Makati West.

MIGO GILI - 2 YEARS OLD



Migo Gili, a 2 month old male from Purok 9, Larap, San Jose Panganiban, Camarines Norte was rushed to the hospital by his parents due to shortness of breath. His 2D Echo findings revealed severe heart ailment and Migo was diagnosed with Critical Cyanotic heart disease.

The pediatric cardiologist in Bicol immediately alerted Dra. Go of the need for further medical management. Migo's father Dante, 37, works as a miner "magkakabod" and his mother Rio, 31, is jobless. The family receives support every 2 months from DSWD under the 4P's Program. Migo has 2 elder siblings. Given the circumstances, Migo qualified for care under the Gift of Life program funded under GG#2014724 - Rotarian Hearts for Children's Hearts.

By ambulance, Migo and his parents arrived in Manila on the morning of Saturday 27th March, and he underwent emergency surgery at Delos Santo Medical Center. Despite the best care of the medical team, Migo sadly died during the procedure.

Our hearts go out to Migo's family, and to the medical teams who tried so hard to save him.



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| Ex-Officio Director | Enrico B. Tensuan |
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