



**THE**

centennial volume, issue no. 1

# **CABLE TOW**

the official publication of the most worshipful grand lodge of the philippines



## **“CHANGE HAS COME”**

**MW DON T. RAMAS-UYPITCHING  
GRAND MASTER, MY 2023-2024**

**Inside  
MW DRU's Mindanao Caravan  
The Cable Tow Turns 100**



**THE** centennial volume issue no. 1  
**CABLE TOW**  
the official publication of the most worshipful grand lodge of the philippines

**CENTENNIAL STAFF**

VW ROLANDO F. ROCHA, GScr  
Editor In Chief

VW JONATHAN AMOROSO  
Associate Editor

VW CECILIO A. SALVADOR II  
Managing Editor

**CONTRIBUTORS**

VW OLIVER V. YABUT, AGS  
VW VICTOR A. YU

VW MICHAEL L. BENJAMIN, JGL

VW EF MICHAEL B. CUEVAS

VW ANTHONY E. TAN

BRO. GIOVANNI A. VILLEGAS

BRO. SALVADOR BALLESTEROS

**CORRESPONDENTS**

BRO. LUISITO G. SALAZAR  
JUNIOR GRAND LECTURERS

**CREATIVE DIRECTORS**

BRO. RONALD A. GARCIA

**OFFICE SECRETARY**  
MS. APRIL SALVADOR

## About The Cover

This issue's cover features the Grand Master, MW Don T. Ramas-Uypitching, during the Mindanao leg of his caravan across the grand jurisdiction.



# Editor's Note

## The Cable Tow: A journey of a century

ONE HUNDRED YEARS. ONE HUNDRED VOLUMES.

And a century of standing witness to the ever-unfolding story that is Philippine Freemasonry.

Indeed, The Cable Tow--the official publication of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines, has withstood the test of time; establishing itself as one of the oldest publications in the country and the premiere repository of masonic articles and news.

Within its seasoned pages can be found the labors of the brethren of this jurisdiction for the past one hundred years. It had seen the rise of Grand Masters, the establishment of masonic lodges, the holding of Annual Communications, and the raising of countless craftsman, who have, at least once or twice, found enlightenment and illumination on various matters pertaining to our Ancient Craft.

Its illustrious roster of Editors-In-Chief include Past Grand Master, Past Senior Grand Lecturers, and other notable writers and scholars of masonry.

As it forges onward to the next hundred years, The Cable Tow will once again brave the challenges of the ages. Yet in this world of paperless and digital wordsmithing, there is no doubt that our official organ will still prevail.

VW ROLANDO E. ROCHA, GScr  
Editor-In-Chief



## In This Issue

Editor's Note	1
MW Ramas-Uypitching Leads GLP June 12 Rites	3
The Cable Tow: A Brief History	4
AnCom 2023: Illuminating The Brotherhood	21
A Masonic Pilgrimage: A Historical Journey Across Mindanao	36
Dugong Mason: A Legacy Written In Blood	43
The Beginnings Of Maynilad Lodge No. 1521	44
Of Pillars And PDGMS: MD Laguna West Honors Its Past District Leaders	50
Painfully Beautiful	56
E Pluribus Unum	61
PGM Gus Mateo Drops Working Tools, Accorded Last Masonic Honors	64
A Tribute to MW Agustin V. San Mateo, PGM	68
The Broken Column	72
From The Grand Lodge	73
A Message from the Grand Master, MW Ramas- Uypitching	74



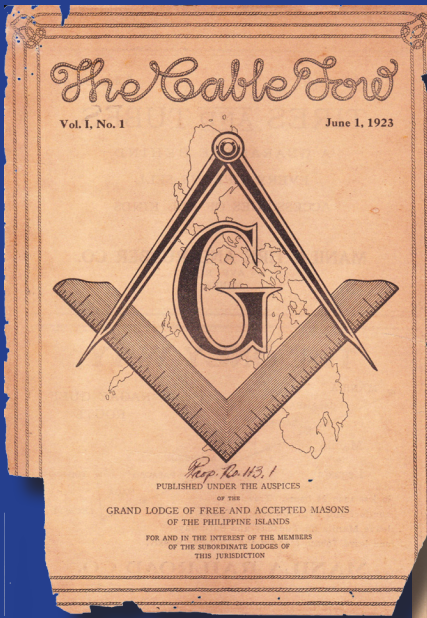
ABOVE: The Grand Master, MW Don T. Ramas-Uypitching, led the brethren of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of the Philippines, in celebrating this year's Independence Day rites at the Luneta Park and at the GLP grounds in the City of Manila.

## MW Ramas-Uypitching Leads GLP June 12 Independence Day Rites

Last June 12, 2023, the Grand Master, MW Don T. Ramas-Uypitching, joined with other government and non-governmental organizations in celebrating this year's Independence Day rites in the capital city of Manila.

The festivities, held every morning in front of the Rizal

Monument, kicked off with a flag-raising ceremony at Kilometer Zero followed by wreath-laying performed by the attending groups. The celebration continued where the Grand Master led the brethren and allied masonic organizations in offering flowers before the busts of heroes at the GLP grounds in the City of Manila.



# THE CABLE TOW: A BRIEF HISTORY

By Bro. Giovanni A. Villegas

**T**HIS YEAR, 2023, marks the Centennial Anniversary of The Cable Tow – the official organ of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines. Let us revisit its humble beginnings and retrace its evolution up to the present time that we may honor those responsible for its continued success, and likewise appreciate its role and significance in the development of Freemasonry

within our Grand jurisdiction. Almost a decade after the establishment of the Grand Lodge of the Philippine Islands in 1912, there had been no formal and dedicated newsletter through which information, official or otherwise, could be disseminated to all lodges and members. Though a handful of separate periodicals from individual lodges and Scottish Rite bodies existed during that

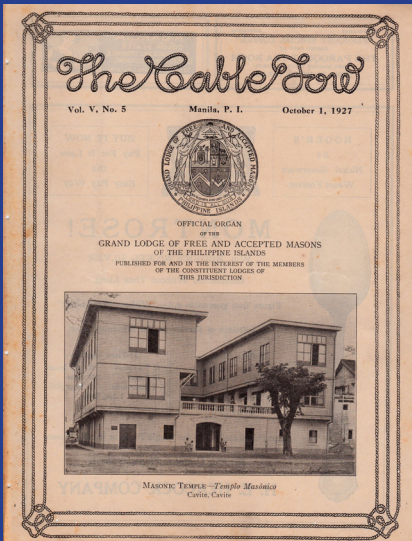
period – such as Sinukuan Lodge’s Acacia; Nilad Lodge’s Hojas Sueltas; Philippine Bodies’ El Aguila; and Manila Bodies’ Far Eastern Freemason – their scope and reach were confined to their respective members. Hence, the need for a singular medium to bridge the gap and foster a sense of unity and connectivity among local Masons became increasingly urgent.

On January 17, 1922, during the 10th Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge, Bagumbayan Lodge No. 4 presented a resolution for the “foundation of a Masonic newspaper, either weekly, semi-monthly, or monthly, which shall be the official organ of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of the Philippine Islands and the exponent of Ancient Craft Masonry in these islands, and shall be published under the auspices of this Most Worshipful Grand Lodge.” Recognizing the importance of this proposal, it was endorsed to the incoming Grand Master on January 22. It was then brought before the Grand Lodge for consideration and referred to the Committee on Jurisprudence on January 24. Later that evening, the Committee recommended it back to the incoming Grand Master with its added recommendation: “that steps be taken by him at as early a date as practicable

to carry out each and every one of the recommendations contained in the said resolution, all of which will, in the opinion of the Committee, if properly undertaken, redound to the benefit of the Craft.” This recommendation was then approved, setting the stage for the realization of a long-awaited Masonic periodical.

Grand Master Quintin Paredes (GM 1922) approached Masonic historian Manuel Artigas to spearhead the publication of the periodical. With a budget of P200 per month allocated by the Grand Lodge, the plan was for each lodge to receive three copies, while a few additional copies to be given to the office of the Grand Secretary. To ensure its sustainability, the periodical aimed to generate revenues through advertisements.

Not long thereafter, the periodical came into being, calling itself The Level. Unfortunately, the periodical’s journey was brief and was beset with challenges. Insufficient funds and concerns over the editorial quality hindered its progress, resulting in only four issues being published, with the last one failing to reach circulation. Despite its untimely demise, The Level represented the ambitious endeavor to have an official Masonic newspaper in



the country, albeit one that fell short of its intended longevity.

At the next Annual Communication of 1923, a resolution urging the continuance of The Level was considered. It was to be administered by three members to act as editorial staff and Board of Control. To cover its expenditures, the Grand Lodge was to provide the Board a monthly sum, while lodges were to contribute P24.00 per year. This resolution was submitted to a special committee and was reported back with the added recommendation that five copies of the periodical, instead of three, were to be furnished to each lodge.

Philippines then adopted the above, but shortly after the installation of the new Grand Master, Frederick Stevens (GM 1923), there was refusal from Manuel Artigas to submit to the terms of the resolution. The seeming contention was that The Level was claimed to be the property of Artigas and not of the Grand Lodge. As such, the latter resolved that the periodical still be published, but under a different name, and with the elective Grand officers as its Board of Control.

Replete with expertise in matters of printing and publishing, having likewise been involved with that of the Far Eastern Freemason, the Grand Master knew of a strategy to push the venture forward. He enlisted the services of Samuel Stickney as Business Manager of the new periodical, in charge of finding ways and means to financially support the publication. Stickney had years of experience in the ins and outs of journalism. The Grand Master also appointed George Harvey (GM 1915), Teodoro Kalaw Sr. (GM 1928), and Leo Fischer – all outstanding Masonic scholars – as Associate Editors. Fisher also became the official translator for the periodical and E.J. Herier became Advertising Advisor.

The Grand Lodge of the START OF THE CABLE TOW

Near the end of May that year, the first issue of the new periodical, dated June 1, 1923, became ready for circulation, bearing the name of The Cable Tow, which came at the suggestion of Samuel Stickney and F.J. Herier. It was officially distributed the following month, marking the beginning of the official organ of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines.

Copies of the first issue were mailed to all lodge secretaries in ample quantities for every member of every lodge. The periodical received commendable feedback, which was owed greatly to the diligent efforts of the Business Manager and the Advertising Advisor as evidenced by the multitude of advertisements featured within its pages. Others who were involved in bringing the periodical to life were likewise inundated with compliments and congratulatory messages from their fellow Masons. While there may have been a few dissenting voices, subsequent releases of the second, third, and fourth issues revealed the inherent resilience of the periodical and its potential for long-term success. Gradually, those who had previously expressed doubt and derision became ardent advocates and supporters, recognizing the crucial importance of fostering

a culture of positivity and unwavering support for The Cable Tow's continued success.

At this time, the editorial office of The Cable Tow was located at the Masonic Temple (Old Philippine National Bank building) in Calle Escolta, Manila.

### ON AIMS AND PURPOSES

Voicing its introduction to the Masonic community, the first issue of The Cable Tow published its *raison d'être* under the title, "Aims and Purposes of our Publication," which stated the following:

"No progressive Mason will



deny the necessity of Masonic periodicals. The time when Masonry was obliged to work in the dark is a thing of the dim past. Our Brethren demand further light in Masonry; they are anxious to keep informed of what the Craft is doing in the Islands and abroad; they are ready to welcome with open arms any Masonic literature they know to be regular and authorized in these times when clandestine Masonry is rampant, and year after year we have heard expressed the desire that our Grand Lodge publish something in the nature of an 'Official Gazette,' informing the Craft in the Islands of the edicts, circulars, and decisions of the Grand Master, giving them other news of interest, and, if possible, containing articles on Masonic subjects for the enlightenment and instruction of the thousands of Masons dispersed throughout our widespread Archipelago."

"This necessity The Cable Tow has come to fill, and we have no doubt that it will fill it adequately. Owing to the lack of funds in the treasury of the Grand lodge, it has been found necessary to make advertisements a feature of this paper in order to enable its management to get a copy to each Mason in the Islands instead of furnishing only five copies to each lodge, as contemplated in

the Grand Lodge resolution, and to give its readers a creditable, well gotten-up paper of which no Grand Body of the world need be ashamed."

---

*"This necessity The Cable Tow has come to fill, and we have no doubt that it will fill it adequately. Owing to the lack of funds in the treasury of the Grand lodge, it has been found necessary to make advertisements a feature of this paper in order to enable its management to get a copy to each Mason in the Islands instead of furnishing only five copies to each lodge, as contemplated in the Grand Lodge resolution, and to give its readers a creditable, well gotten-up paper of which no Grand Body of the world need be ashamed."*

---

"Each issue will contain articles embodying the fundamental features of Masonry, beginning

with the 'Old Landmarks,' the 'Ancient Charges' and other important Masonic document not available to every Mason and which every Mason ought to know, will follow, and The Cable Tow will thus become a valuable library of reference to the Philippine Mason, in addition to being a collection of the edicts, circulars, and decisions published from time to time. The Lodge or Mason having a complete file of The Cable Tow will soon wonder how the Grand lodge and Masonry in these Islands ever got along without this paper, and we predict that in a few years, the first issues of The Cable Tow will be much sought after to complete collections, and we therefore recommend to all Brethren and Lodges that they carefully preserve the succeeding numbers, because the Grand Lodge cannot guarantee an extra supply for the future."

Indeed, in the years that followed, The Cable Tow became a much sought-after item as its quality in terms of content and production improved over time. It became a repository and chronological record of the development of Freemasonry in the country, keeping Philippine Masons posted on Masonic activities both locally and internationally. It kept them connected to the Fraternity and the Craft by

nourishing them with much needed Masonic information, instruction, inspiration, and even entertainment.

#### EDITORIAL BEFORE THE WAR

Six months after the inaugural release, Leo Fischer remained as the sole Associate Editor on The Cable Tow's staff, demonstrating his unwavering commitment to the periodical. Recognizing his exceptional talents, he became Managing Editor in April 1927, a role he held for nearly a decade until February 1936. Fischer was an articulate Masonic writer of his day who served, at some time, as Editor of the Far Eastern Freemason, The Lambskin, and El Aguila.

In February 1938, Pablo Samson became the new Business Manager. Shortly thereafter, a new set of members for the editorial board was appointed, consisting Teodoro M. Kalaw Sr. as Chairman and of George Harvey, Conrado Benitez (GM 1936), John Robert McFie (GM 1941), and Joseph Francis Boomer as members. Antonio Gonzalez Sr. (GM 1932) became the Editor of the periodical and held that position until the last of the pre-war issues.

#### AFTERMATH OF WAR

Ravaged by World War II, the

country experienced immense destruction and fell under Japanese occupation. Many Grand Lodge officers were incarcerated by the invading Japanese forces. Hence, there were no issues of *The Cable Tow* made from 1942 until mid-1945 when the war finally ended.

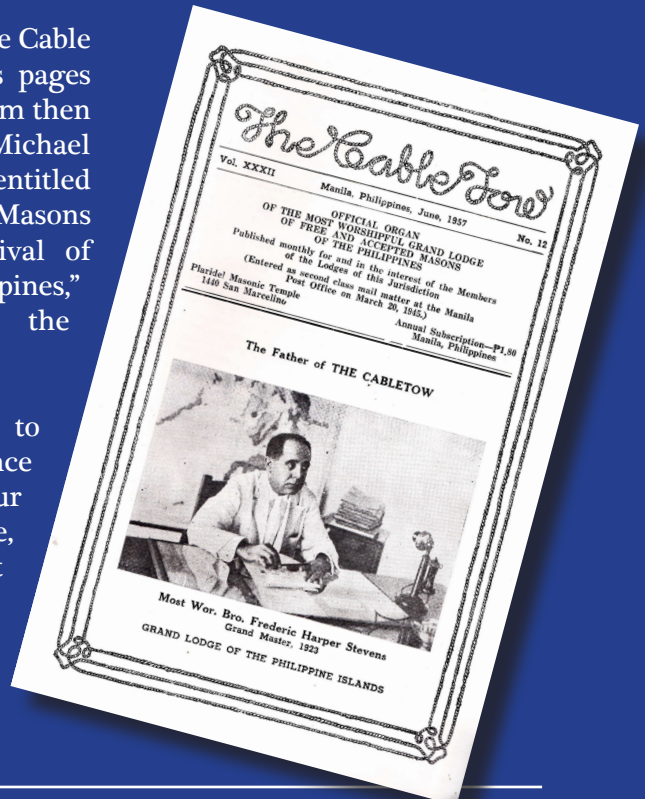
In December 1945, *The Cable Tow* reappeared in circulation, as the Grand Lodge resumed its operation along with the rest of the surviving establishments in the country. Antonio Gonzalez Sr., who was Editor from May 1938 to May 1940, again took charge of the periodical.

In its returning issue, *The Cable Tow* included within its pages an inspiring message from then Acting Grand Master, Michael Goldenberg (GM 1946), entitled "Our Gratitude to all Masons for the Dramatic Survival of Masonry in the Philippines," wherein he stated the following:

"We are indeed happy to welcome the reappearance of *The Cable Tow*. Our Grand Lodge magazine, which was forced out of existence by the Japanese invasion, is at long last here again. We will endeavor to do what we can to keep

it in circulation for the benefit of our members in particular and of the Craft in general. Some of our most active Brethren who contributed greatly to the success and popularity of our *Cable Tow* are forever gone from us for having sacrificed their lives for the honor of the Philippines and America. May they rest in peace until we join them in that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler returns."

"Notwithstanding the ravages of the last war and the confusion and persecution that accompanied



the Japanese invasion, Masonry somehow survived and kept its spirit aflame in every Mason's heart. After our country's liberation by the victorious forces under our own Illustrious Brother, General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, it was extremely difficult to reorganize and rehabilitate Masonry here due to the ravages of the war."

"Liberation found us confused and literally destitute. We had no means, no funds, no records. But true friends and brothers from America immediately went out of their way to assist us in every possible way. They are truly Masons – Masons who are indeed a credit to the Lodges they belong.

By their prompt and brotherly acts they have won our hearts and for their material and timely assistance, we are sincerely grateful."

#### MOVING TO INCORPORATE

Regularly convening thereafter, every first Thursday of the month at the Plaridel Masonic Temple building on San Marcelino Street in Manila, the Committee on Cabletow conducted a multitude of essential tasks, such as answering correspondences, securing advertisers, reviewing and proofreading the issues before going into press, and

planning the logistics of their distribution. The Committee then saw benefit in incorporating itself.

During the 49th Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge on April 28, 1965, a recommendation for The Cable Tow to be incorporated was unanimously approved. The Cabletow Committee then prepared and filed an Articles of Incorporation with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) in September 13 and it was approved and registered in October 21. The incumbent Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master, Senior Grand Warden, and Junior Grand Warden were to automatically act as Trustees of the corporation. Its office was to be in the same location as the Grand Lodge, i.e., in Plaridel Masonic Temple, and was to have an employee on duty to accommodate businesses related to the new Cabletow, Inc.

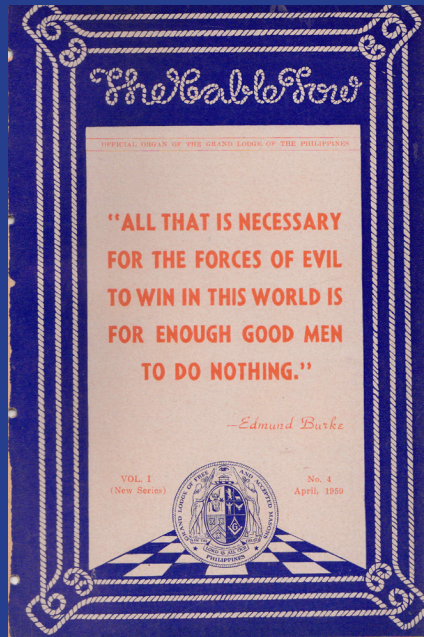
Vigilantly reporting to the Grand Lodge its plans, bills, expenses, acquisitions, pricings, and earnings, the Cabletow, Inc. behaved and functioned as a true separate corporation. It conducted activities on its own such as initiating essay writing contests to fill the pages of The Cable Tow and the procuring of an addressograph and postage

franking machine. The latter, for a time, proved useful in facilitating easier and quicker mailing of issues. The corporation also had plans to acquire its own printing press and to form a sort of Masonic Press Club that would entitle itself representation in the Philippine press.

Unavoidable troubles, however, in terms of administration and financial management, plagued the Cabletow, Inc. causing delays in printing and distribution. It was then decided, during the 67th Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge in 1983, that “the corporate life of the Cabletow, Inc. would be terminated by April 30, 1983, and that the corporation would cease publication of The Cable Tow magazine” eventually delegating it back to a Committee under the direct control of the Grand Lodge. In 2000, a report of the Board of General Purposes advised the assessment of the “desirability of incorporating The Cable Tow,” but never took off.

#### REALIZATIONS AFTER FIFTY YEARS

Expressed in the June 1973 issue of The Cable Tow that marked its 50th anniversary was a speech by then Grand Master, Ruperto Demonteverde Sr. (GM 1973) entitled “The Golden Cable Tow,” which he previously



delivered on June 16, 1973 at a Scottish Rite Luncheon. His speech emphasized the importance of The Cable Tow to Philippine Masonry, as interest in the periodical seemed to have declined. He said that “The Cable Tow is never stale and stagnant. It publishes events as they happened, first hand. It reflects the character and condition of the times as each issue comes out. It is flexible and changes according to the mode of the time. It is, in essence, a Chronicle of Masonry in the Philippines. It has withstood the ravages of time for fifty years; it would be a shame to dismiss it as a needless expense now.”

Demonteverde went on

to enumerate some of the complaints and criticisms on the periodical from the grapevine, among them: “that there is nothing interesting worth reading in *The Cable Tow* except for a column or two geared towards Masonic Education; that the materials published are irrelevant to lodges not within the territorial limits of the Philippines; that one column is published only for a few who understand the language; that few lodges are given the opportunity to be heard or read; and that the youth of Masonry, the associated chapters, and appendant bodies, are not given even publicity.” Clearly, *The Cable Tow* had to evolve to suit the times. A comprehensive set of solutions and other suggestions were then proposed by Demonteverte, and, in the coming years, the periodical saw the above criticisms addressed and rectified. More interesting and relevant articles were consequently published in succeeding issues, including some that highlighted the other appendant orders of Freemasonry, thus widening its readership base. These improvements could be seen in the issues released during the time Raymond Wilmarth (GM 1967) was Editor.

Since the beginning, the issues of *The Cable Tow* were labeled by Volumes and Numbers. The Volume represented the years elapsed from the first issue to the year of a particular Masonic term of office, such that Volume X, for instance, represented the term of one Grand Master, while Volume X+1 represented that of the next. Theoretically, therefore, the Volume represented the age of the periodical. The Number, on the other hand, was merely used to indicate which issue was first, second, or third in a given Volume. By this method, it was easy to determine which issues were published under which Grand Master’s term of office. Sometimes, however, unforeseen circumstances – such as World War II, during which there were no issues printed – have prevented the Volume from always aligning with its actual age, which was why, for instance, Vol. 61 (to account for March to April 1985) and Vol. 64 (to account for January to April 1988) were missing. The purpose was to “correct” the succeeding Volumes in order to align with their respective number of years since the first issue. Thanks to such alterations, the future Volume 100, for instance, shall fall neatly on its Centennial anniversary in 2023.

## NUMBERING THE ISSUES

## EVOLUTION OF

---

*Lauded within its pages  
also are the great works  
and masterpieces of  
exemplary Masonic  
scholars of every  
generation, such as  
Reynold Fajardo,  
Fernando Pascua Jr.,  
Jesus Flor Nicolas,  
and Samuel Fernandez.*

*Their remarkable  
writings, diligent studies,  
extensive researches, and  
insightful proposals  
have left indelible  
impacts on the minds  
of both Grand Masters  
and ordinary Masons  
alike through the ages,  
reshaping the landscape  
of Philippine Masonry  
into one where members  
have learned and  
embraced the profound  
wisdom of their Craft.*

---

### THE CABLE TOW

Since its maiden issue in 1923, the name of the official organ of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines has always been spelled in its title page with two words – “Cable Tow” – despite the fact that the articles inside its pages referred to the name with one word – “Cabletow.” Through the years, it became acceptable to call the periodical by any of the two forms of the same name.

Early issues of The Cable Tow were printed in single color, averaging 32 pages only per issue, and with a size format of 8 ½” x 11 ½” before being standardized into the near A5 and 6” x 9” sizes we know today (although there were a few issues that were produced in varying sizes through the years). The issues started using other colors in 1958 by adding a shade of blue to the cover pages. It was not until the second quarter of 1982, however, when full-color cover pages started to appear. By 2009, colored pictures began to appear in the inside pages as well.

As the periodical was born during the time when the Philippines was transitioning from Spanish to American rule, its early contents were understandably bilingual. Half of the articles were in English, the other half

in Spanish. In due time, contents became fully English, with the occasional inclusion of articles in Tagalog.

Every time, through the years, The Cable Tow had faced countless challenges, including some that concerned leadership, editorial, contents, funding, and the most perennial of its problems – printing and distribution. In 1972, the entire country was placed under Martial Law and caused added publication delays due to the strict regulations and supervision imposed by the military before copies could be distributed. Even before and after that, there were times when debts were incurred with the printing press in one year that consequently

added to the payables of the next. There were also times when the budget allocated for mailing were insufficient, consequently causing stocks of issues remaining unsent to their intended recipients, prompting future recommendations to limit the number of issues to be printed and allocated per lodge. During those times when issues were sent individually per member of the lodge, a great number of copies were returned, as some recipients were already deceased while some no longer living in their indicated addresses. In 2000, it was suggested to again restrict the distribution to no more than five copies to each Masonic District and ten copies to each lodge.



Eventually came the time when most Masons in the Philippines no longer saw, much less read, a single issue of *The Cable Tow* despite its continued existence. Its limited supply and restricted distribution made it rare and inaccessible and therefore rendered seemingly unimportant. Masons no longer cared for it, thus no longer went looking for it, as if its existence had been forgotten or acknowledged to be insignificant. As a result, more stocks of unsent back issues remained in the Grand Lodge, where so few lodge representatives ever bothered to collect and claim them.

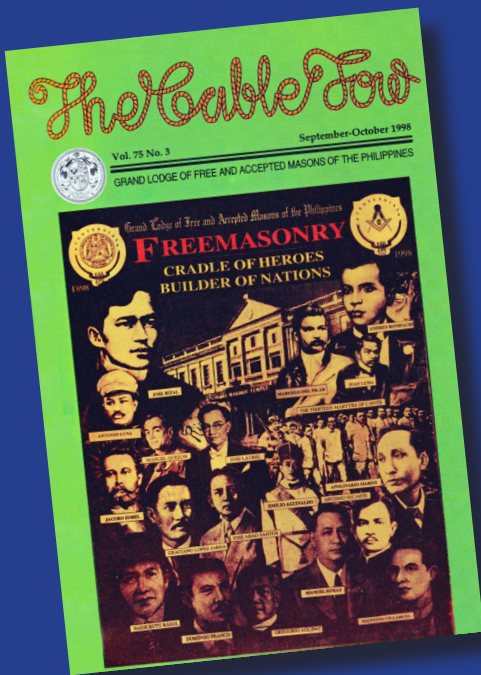
Years between 2003 and 2017, as

Information Technology rapidly improved, online versions of *The Cable Tow* were made available for download through the Grand Lodge website, in an effort to increase readership. Later, in 2020, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the editorial team undertook the endeavor of digitally scanning all the remaining issues of *The Cable Tow*, from the first to the current, and uploaded them online for everyone to access. At this time as well, then Grand Master, Agapito Suan Jr. (GM 2019-2020), created an additional Grand line position intended for Editors-in-Chief of *The Cable Tow*, called the Grand Scribe.

At present, the cost of production of *The Cable Tow* remains subsidized by lodges, included in their annual dues and per capita assessment to the Grand Lodge as a subscription. It would be a shame and a loss for lodges and individual Masons not to take advantage of reading it, which is why the Grand Lodge and *The Cable Tow* editorial staff have always been finding new and better ways to not only improve the periodical but also how it can better reach its readers.

#### FREEMASONRY'S VOICE

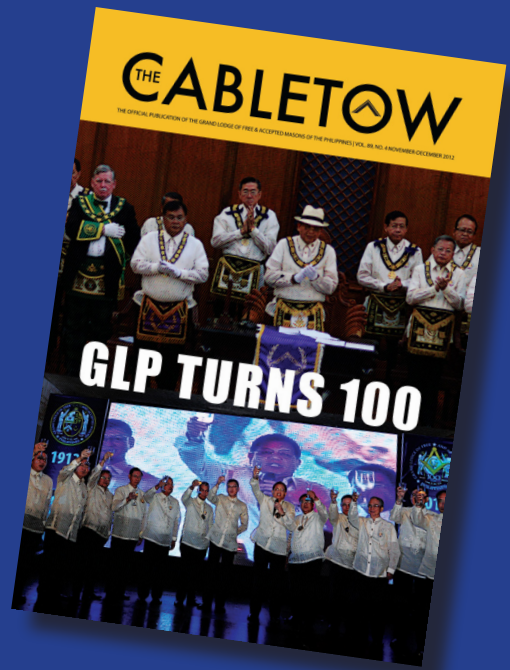
Going a century now, *The Cable Tow* has proudly held the mantle of being the "Voice of Masonry



in the Philippines,” standing tall as the sole and unrivaled beacon of regular and recognized Freemasonry in this territory. Within its treasured pages is a tapestry of illuminating articles, enlightening Masonic education, informative news, and indispensable announcements, ensuring that local Masons remain steadfastly abreast of all matters related to their venerable Fraternity and the Craft it practices. It is continuously created by Masons for Masons, with no outside employment of paid roving reporters, researchers, or writers, but rather with the labor of love meticulously woven by the very Brethren who passionately contribute to its every issue.

Lauded within its pages also are the great works and masterpieces of exemplary Masonic scholars of every generation, such as Reynold Fajardo, Fernando Pascua Jr., Jesus Flor Nicolas, and Samuel Fernandez. Their remarkable writings, diligent studies, extensive researches, and insightful proposals have left indelible impacts on the minds of both Grand Masters and ordinary Masons alike through the ages, reshaping the landscape of Philippine Masonry into one where members have learned and embraced the profound wisdom of their

Craft. It is to these intellectual writers and to their invaluable contributions to Masonry that we owe much of the success of The Cable Tow, turning it into the national Masonic treasure and historical archive it has now become, containing not just the thoughts and memoirs of Masons past, but also their chronicles of the times to which they belonged, recording Philippine Masonic history as they happened, and preserving their narratives for us to learn and appreciate. From its pages could be learned how Masonry was and developed from the Post-revolutionary period of the country, to the “roaring 20’s,” to the aftermath of World War II, to



*Going a century now, The Cable Tow has proudly held the mantle of being the “Voice of Masonry in the Philippines,” standing tall as the sole and unrivaled beacon of regular and recognized Freemasonry in this territory.*

*Within its treasured pages is a tapestry of illuminating articles, enlightening Masonic education, informative news, and indispensable announcements, ensuring that local Masons remain steadfastly abreast of all matters related to their venerable Fraternity and the Craft it practices. It is continuously created by Masons for Masons, with no outside employment of paid roving reporters, researchers, or writers, but rather with the labor of love meticulously woven by the very Brethren who passionately contribute to its every issue.*

the proliferation of clandestine and schismatic Masonry, to the second Philippine Independence, to the time of the Cold War, to the darkness of the Martial Law era, to the turning point of the People-Power revolution, to the Computer and Information Age, and to the time of the COVID-19 pandemic and the post-pandemic world. The Cable Tow has been witness to all of these and has captured their stories, like a time capsule for future generations to rediscover.

As it now reaches its remarkable Centenary, The Cable Tow stands as a testament to resilience, having weathered the storm of tumultuous times, both from external forces and internal struggles; its flame kept alive for generations by the unwavering commitment of its devoted Editors and erudite writers, who have all steadfastly nurtured its enduring light. May this light continue to shine as we enter the next hundred years of its phenomenal existence, making us as much a part of its history as it is of ours.

Happy 100 Years to The Cable Tow – the Voice of Masonry in the Philippines.

#### REFERENCES:

- Bolinao, Mallari, Malban, Guiang, Bernal, Ramos,

- Viernes, Ancheta, Magallona. The Brethren Book 3 : The Craft under the Republic, 1946-2018. Manila, Philippines: Grand Lodge of the Philippines, 2018.
- Councell, William. "Editorial: How the Cable Tow came into being." The Cable Tow Vol. 52 No. 7, June 1975.
  - Demonte Verde, Ruperto. "The Golden Cable Tow." The Cable Tow Vol. 50 No. 6, June 1973.
  - Fajardo, Reynold. The Brethren in the Days of Empire: Philippine Masonry from the US Colonial Era to the Commonwealth Years. Manila, Philippines: Enrique Locsin and the Grand Lodge of the Philippines, 1999.
  - Fernandez, Samuel. "The Pre-War Cable Tow." The Cable Tow Vol. 50 No. 6, June 1973.
  - Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines, Annual

- Communication for the years 1964, 1966, 1967, 1973, 1983, 1995, 2000, and 2017.
- Recela, Jose. "Editorial: The Birth of the Cable Tow." The Cable Tow Vol. 32 No. 12, June 1957.
  - Wilmarth, Raymond. "Editorial: The Cable Tow is Incorporated." The Cable Tow Vol. 41 No. 5, November 1965.



The Annual Communication (ANCOM) has been pivotal in the Masonic calendar. However, ANCOM 2023 reset all norms, sailing into uncharted waters and setting a new gold standard. From April 26-28, 2023, Dumaguete City, known as the “City of Gentle People” and a well-regarded “University Town,” bloomed with the fraternity’s camaraderie. This vibrant city welcomed the largest face-to-face gathering since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic and the most significant in the history of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines.

In a remarkable convergence, 12,000 brothers from across the globe gathered, marking ANCOM 2023 as a landmark moment in the annals of Freemasonry in the Philippines and beyond. It set a new benchmark for future assemblies in our evolving post-pandemic world. It robustly embodied Freemasonry’s resilience, adaptability, and the everlasting resonance of its fundamental tenets: Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth.

The selection of Dumaguete City as the venue added a layer of depth to this significant



ABOVE: It was the first time that the Annual Communications of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of the Philippines was held in the rustic city of Dumaguete where the Grand Master, MW Don T. Ramas-Uypitching, holds residence.

# ANCOM 2023: Illuminating the Brotherhood

**A Landmark Confluence in the City of Gentle People - Dumaguete City**

Written by: Bro. Daryl Robinson  
Mount Kaladiaz Masonic Lodge #91  
Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental R. XVIII



event. Dumaguete, lovingly cradled by the sea and radiant in tropical warmth, is home to several esteemed educational institutions, including Silliman University. For many brethren, who are alumni of this and other universities and colleges in Dumaguete, ANCOM 2023 was not just a Masonic gathering but also a homecoming. The city's academic pulse echoed with their fond memories. It offered a nostalgic journey through the hallowed halls of their alma maters.

Amidst this historical backdrop, the brethren and their families savored the city's natural beauty, enjoyed its culinary offerings, reveled in its rich culture, and appreciated the warm hospitality that Dumaguete is renowned for. Brimming with historical, cultural, and natural treasures, the city and surrounding areas offered an enriching and enjoyable experience, creating a perfect blend of relaxation, adventure, and fraternity.

This unforgettable event showcased Freemasonry's remarkable growth and evolution amidst global challenges. It emphasized its unwavering commitment to fostering unity, enlightenment, and philanthropy. The brethren, hailing from diverse

backgrounds, brought unique experiences, knowledge, and insights, converting Dumaguete City into a global Masonic hub for those three momentous days in April. This physical and symbolic transformation reflected the fraternity's ability to turn any corner of the world into a stronghold of Masonic principles and brotherly love.

#### INAUGURAL ANCOM OLYMPICS: A CELEBRATION OF FRATERNAL COMPETITION AND CAMARADERIE

In a historic first for the Annual Communication, the brethren in the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines took a momentous leap with the introduction of the ANCOM Olympics. Sanctioned by MW Johnny T. Pimentel, the initiative was a groundbreaking addition to the rich tradition of ANCOM, adding a vibrant new dimension to this prestigious gathering.

Officially commencing on April 25, a day before the start of the main event, the ANCOM Olympics encompassed a trifecta of sports: billiards, golf, and basketball. These games, carefully selected for their mix of individual skill, team strategy, and friendly competition, were emblematic of the spirit of Masonic fellowship.



Then-Grand Master, MW Johnny T. Pimentel addressing the brethren of the 2023 Annual Communications at the Uypitching Multi-Purpose Hall in the rustic city of Dumaguete City



ABOVE: As part of the activities during the 2023 Annual Communications, then-Grand Master MW Johnny T. Pimentel, together with several grand line officers, participated in a Golf Tournament at the Bravo Golf Course in Sibulan, Negros Oriental.

Held at the spacious Macias Sports Complex in Dumaguete City, the billiards and basketball events saw a thrilling mix of talent and sportsmanship. The brethren engaged in friendly competition, each game a testament to their commitment to fair play, respect, and mutual encouragement. The cacophony of cheers, the lively banter, and the shared thrill of the game added dynamic energy to the ANCOM Olympics, a far cry from the formal solemnity typically associated with Masonic gatherings.

The Bravo Golf Course hosted the golf event a short distance

from Dumaguete. Its verdant greens and serene environment provided the perfect setting for a day of sport and camaraderie. The precision of each swing, the tactical decisions, and the connection among the golfers personified the Masonic values of discipline, strategic thinking, and brotherhood.

The ANCOM Olympics was more than just a series of sports events. It was a novel platform to foster stronger bonds among the brethren, engage in friendly competition, and display the fraternity's embrace of both the traditional and the innovative. It was an

expression of Masonic unity and brotherhood, personified not in solemn ceremonies but in the lively atmosphere of competitive sports.

Whether they were spectators

---

*The ANCOM Olympics was more than just a series of sports events. It was a novel platform to foster stronger bonds among the brethren, engage in friendly competition, and display the fraternity's embrace of both the traditional and the innovative. It was an expression of Masonic unity and brotherhood, personified not in solemn ceremonies but in the lively atmosphere of competitive sports.*

---

cheering from the sidelines or participants striving for the win, the brethren were united in their enthusiasm and mutual respect. Their engagement in the ANCOM Olympics transcended the competitive nature of the sports, reinforcing the Masonic principles of fellowship,

cooperation, and mutual respect.

The first-ever ANCOM Olympics added a thrilling edge to the Annual Communication, paving the way for future gatherings to continue this innovative tradition. Including an ANCOM Olympics, borne from the vision of MW Johnny T. Pimentel, was an undeniable success. It reflected the adaptability and openness of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines to new traditions that reinforce the enduring Masonic principles. By injecting a spirit of lively competition and camaraderie into ANCOM 2023, the Olympics was an event that truly celebrated the Masonic spirit in a fresh and invigorating way.

#### FELLOWSHIP WITH INTERNATIONAL BRETHREN: EMBODYING GLOBAL UNITY AND FRATERNAL SOLIDARITY

One of the many exceptional aspects of ANCOM 2023 was the convergence of Freemasons from across the globe. These brethren represented the far reaches of the Masonic fraternity, each bringing with them the unique perspectives and practices of their jurisdictions. Their participation in this event exemplified Freemasonry's universal spirit and principles that transcend

geographical boundaries.

The Past Grand Master's Night was a monumental occasion highlighting this global unity. As the sun set on Dumaguete City, the venue buzzed with the vibrant energy of a fraternity that spanned continents and cultures. Inside the stunning ambiance of Brooke's Place Dumaguete, the brethren reveled in the shared camaraderie, the convergence of Freemasonry's past, present, and future leaders painting a picture of global solidarity.

The evening was graced with numerous esteemed guests, including Grand Masters from international and local jurisdictions. They were warmly welcomed into the fold, reflecting the spirit of brotherly love and mutual respect that Freemasonry champions. Their participation was a testament to the inter-connectedness of our fraternity and the universal appeal of its noble principles.

Nevertheless, the event was not just about formalities and symbolism; it was also a night of joyous fellowship. The exchange of pleasantries, the shared laughter, and the camaraderie that flowed freely amongst the brethren of various nationalities were heartening. Masons, regardless of their native tongue

or homeland, found common ground in their shared Masonic journey.

Dialogue and discussions ranged from scholarly discourse on Masonic philosophy to shared personal experiences within the fraternity. These interactions were a testament to Freemasonry's rich diversity and collective wisdom and a celebration of the fraternity's ability to foster unity amidst diversity.

The presence of international brethren at ANCOM 2023 showcased the global unity of Freemasonry, an agreement forged through shared values and a common dedication to the betterment of humanity. The brethren returned to their respective jurisdictions, not only with memories of a grand event but also with strengthened bonds and newfound insights, further reinforcing the global fraternity that is Freemasonry.

In conclusion, the fellowship with international brethren during ANCOM 2023 vividly reflected global unity. It was a testament to the all-encompassing nature of Freemasonry, demonstrating that although our fraternity may be spread across the globe, we are bound together by the enduring principles of brotherly love, relief, and truth. This event

underlined that Freemasonry is not confined to any nation or culture. However, it is a universal fraternity that brings together men of all backgrounds in a shared journey of self-improvement and service to humanity.

**CELEBRATING THE START:  
THE OPENING AND  
RECEPTION OF DIGNITARIES**  
The grandeur of ANCOM 2023 was indeed brought to life at the ceremonial opening of the Grand Lodge. Amidst a sea of brothers adorned in Masonic regalia, the event commenced with a palpable sense of anticipation and respect, demonstrating the

profound significance of this milestone gathering.

The ceremonial opening was a testament to our cherished Masonic rituals. As the Grand Lodge officers expertly performed their duties, the brethren present were reminded of the sacred bond of fraternity that unites Freemasons worldwide. It was a powerful spectacle, underscoring our deep commitment to Freemasonry's centuries-old traditions and noble principles.

As we progressed into the reception of dignitaries, the diversity and breadth of our



ABOVE: MW Johnny T. Pimentel, being received as the Grand Master and Presiding Officer during the 2023 Annual Communications of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of the Philippines, held at the Uypitching Multi-Purpose Hall in Dumaguete City.

fraternity were indeed brought to light. This crucial segment began with welcoming the Past Grand Masters of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines. These esteemed brothers, whose leadership and contributions have left indelible marks on Philippine Masonry, were recognized for their invaluable service.

Following this, the representatives of various Masonic Appendant Bodies were received, their presence highlighting the diversity of paths within our Masonic journey. Their participation was a potent reminder of the rich tapestry of Freemasonry, with each body contributing unique perspectives and enriching our collective understanding of Masonic life.

Perhaps the most poignant reflection of our global brotherhood was the reception of representatives from 14 international Masonic jurisdictions. Brethren from different parts of the world, each bringing unique cultural nuances and Masonic traditions, joined us in unity and brotherhood. Their presence underlined the universal nature of Freemasonry, a fraternity that transcends national borders, cultural divides, and linguistic barriers.

The procession of international delegates was a powerful display of global unity, a reaffirmation of the universal principles that bind us all - Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth. Each representative, through their presence, demonstrated a shared commitment to the ideals of Freemasonry and a dedication to fostering fraternity on a global scale.

As the reception of dignitaries concluded, the brethren were filled with anticipation and excitement for the enlightening discussions, memorable interactions, and fraternal camaraderie that lay ahead. The reception was not just a celebration of the beginning of ANCOM 2023 but a vivid celebration of the global brotherhood of Freemasonry.

With this promising start, the stage was set for an unforgettable gathering to celebrate our shared commitment to Freemasonry, deepen our understanding of Masonic principles, and foster an even stronger bond among brothers worldwide.

#### THE GRANDEST OF THE GRAND: GRAND MASTER'S NIGHT BY THE SEA

ANCOM 2023 unveiled its grandeur with the crowning event of the first day, the much-

anticipated Grand Master's Night. Framed by the captivating beauty of the Dumaguete seaside, the evening celebrated Masonic fellowship, commencing the three-day event with jubilation and profound reverence.

Deputy Grand Master, Worshipful Master, and Masonic Lodge, honoring our Masonic journey's selfless service and leadership pillars. Each accolade celebrated the individual dedication and the collective endeavor that drives



ABOVE: The brethren the 2032 Annual Communication dined and wined at the open air venue by the sea during the Grand Master's Night at the host city of Dumaguete. The event was highlighted by musical entertainment capped with a dazzling fireworks display.

As dusk wove its magic over the gathering, the brethren and their families filled the seaside venue with anticipation and camaraderie. This inaugural event was an opportunity to honor brethren's hard-earned accomplishments and reaffirm our fraternity's timeless bonds.

In a moving ceremony, various personal awards were presented to the Most Outstanding District

our fraternity forward.

The evening was further amplified with the recognition of victors in the first-ever ANCOM Olympics. The champions of this friendly yet spirited competition were celebrated, their victories emblematic of Masonic tenets of perseverance, teamwork, and mutual respect. The cheers that rang out were an affirmation

of shared achievement and a testament to the strength of our fraternity's bonds.

As the awards were handed out and applause filled the air, the brethren basked in the shared successes and the collective pride of being part of an enduring Masonic legacy. The Grand Master's Night was not merely a celebration but a reaffirmation of our shared commitment and an invigoration of the Masonic spirit within us.

The climax of this remarkable evening was a spectacular fireworks display. As the first streaks of color lit up the sky, the brethren looked on in awe, their faces lit by the radiant glow. The bursts of light mirrored the excitement and joy that filled the hearts of everyone present. It was a fitting end to the grand event, a spectacular visual representation of the vibrancy of our fraternity.

The Grand Master's Night had concluded, leaving behind not just the echo of the sea and the fading glow of fireworks but also the warmth of Masonic fellowship, a sense of pride in our shared legacy, and anticipation for the promises the coming days of ANCOM 2023 held. Indeed, the Grand Master's Night was the grandest of the grand - a perfect kickoff to an event that

encapsulated the essence of Masonic unity, achievement, and celebration.

#### THE TRANSITION OF LEADERSHIP: INSTALLATION OF THE NEW GRAND MASTER

One of the most profound moments of ANCOM 2023 was the grand leadership transition among the grand line officers. This momentous transition marked the conclusion of the Masonic term of MW Johnny Ty Pimentel, a leader whose contributions to the fraternity have been immeasurable. It will resonate in the halls of Masonic lodges for years to come. Before this transition, a new Junior Grand Warden was elected, which led to the election of RW Robert Joseph S. Moran from a respected and competent list of 13 nominees for the position.

As one chapter closed, another unfolded with the ascension of RWDon Tern Ramas-Uypitching, the Deputy Grand Master, to the esteemed position of the 105th Grand Master of Masons in the Philippines. This seamless transition, conducted with the deep reverence and solemnity that mark our Masonic tradition, was more than just a change in leadership. It symbolized a renewal of dedication, a continuity of purpose, and a



ABOVE: The Grand Master, MW Don T. Ramas-Uypitching taking his oath of office during his installation as the 105th Grand Master of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines inside the new Uypitching Multi-Purpose Hall.

commitment to uphold and promote the Masonic principles we hold dear.

The installation ceremony was a spectacle of our cherished Masonic traditions, conducted with the highest decorum and respect. It affirmed the new Grand Master's commitment to the fraternity. This commitment is a prerequisite for the efficient discharge of the extensive duties of this high office. The brethren witnessed this historical moment, and the occasion's solemnity elevated their spirits.

In his inaugural address, MW Don Tern Ramas-Uypitching

captivated the brethren by articulating his vision and objectives for the forthcoming Masonic year under the theme: "Freemasons altogether, building temples within the hearts of men." His words not only expressed his Masonic philosophy but also underscored the guiding principles of our fraternity – Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth.

He emphasized the importance of unity amongst the brethren and the need for each Mason to work on his inner temple. In doing so, he signaled his intent to encourage a Masonic journey focused on self-improvement and



ABOVE: The Grand Master, MW Don T. Ramas-Uypitching, together with other elected officers of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines, stands before the altar, awaiting to be installed inside the Uypitching Multi-Purpose Hall.

spiritual growth. His vision of Freemasons altogether building temples within the hearts of men serves as a compelling reminder that while our fraternity constructs monumental buildings, our actual work lies in building better men.

The new Grand Master’s vision for the forthcoming Masonic year is a powerful reminder of our purpose as Freemasons. His leadership promises to strengthen the spiritual edifice of our fraternity, encouraging every brother to focus on inner development, mutual aid, and a commitment to our Masonic values while emphasizing the

importance of happiness.

As we embrace this new era under the leadership of MW Don Tern Ramas-Uypitching, we anticipate a year filled with even deeper fraternal connections, personal growth, and the continued betterment of society. The Installation of our new Grand Master has invigorated the Grand Lodge of the Philippines, inspiring the brethren to continue our work in the quarries, spreading the light of Freemasonry across this great nation and beyond.

REFLECTION AND ANTICIPATION: ECHOES OF

## A MOMENTOUS GATHERING AND THE PROMISE OF BRIGHTER TOMORROWS

As the grandeur of ANCOM 2023 faded into cherished memories and the brethren bid their farewells, the immense significance of the gathering in Dumaguete City remained palpable. This event was not just another chapter in the storied accounts of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines but a monumental occasion that left a permanent imprint on all present. The unprecedented participation scale, diverse international representation, and profound Masonic discourse signified a fraternity growing in numbers and global influence and impact.

This record-breaking attendance was a testament to the vitality and unity of the brotherhood, with every individual, from the freshly raised Master Mason to the most esteemed Past Grand Master, enriching the event through their shared passion and commitment to Masonic principles.

Furthermore, ANCOM 2023 emerged as a global nexus of Freemasonry, drawing brethren from the farthest reaches of the globe to converge in Dumaguete City. This diversity was a testament to Freemasonry's

universal appeal, with its principles uniting men of varied cultures, languages, and backgrounds. Their collective presence, interactions, and the insights they shared transmuted the event into a world forum for Freemasonry.

Moreover, the enlightening Masonic discussions, formal presentations, and casual conversations reinforced Freemasonry's intellectual vigor. These exchanges of knowledge, experiences, and ideas offered an opportunity to deepen understanding, broaden perspectives, and fortify fraternal bonds.

In this global fraternity, the seamless leadership transition from MW Johnny Ty Pimentel to MW Don Tern Ramas-Uypitching added significant weight to the event. The ascension of the new Grand Master not only signified a change of guard but heralded a new direction for the fraternity, drawing lessons from the past and insights from the present to guide us toward a future ripe with potential.

The echoes of ANCOM 2023 will resonate in the brethren's hearts and the halls of our lodges for years to come as a vivid reminder of our collective strength, unity, and potential. As

The newly-installed Grand Master, MW Don Terng Ramas-Uypitching giving an impassioned and extemporaneous speech during his Inaugural Address.



we press forward, invigorated by the spirit of this monumental gathering, we are inspired to uphold and embody our noble Masonic ideals in every thought, word, and deed.

Nevertheless, as we bask in the afterglow of ANCOM 2023, our gaze is already cast toward the horizon, where the promise of another grand event awaits. The next Annual Communication, ANCOM 2024, will unfurl its grandness in Clark, Pampanga.

Renowned for its amalgamation of history, culture, and modernity, Clark provides a fitting stage for the next Masonic assembly.

The prospect of this event fills us with a sense of exhilaration and determination to craft yet another landmark moment in our Masonic journey.

Let the triumph of ANCOM 2023 inspire us to ensure the gathering in Clark becomes a similarly impactful occasion that resonates with the universal spirit of Freemasonry and reaffirms our unwavering commitment to the fraternity's timeless principles. So, as we cherish the echoes of our recent gathering, we also prepare to pen the next chapter of our shared Masonic journey at ANCOM 2024, fueled by our eternal call of 'making good men better.'



ABOVE: Then Grand Master, MW Johnny T. Pimentel, posing for a picture together with his grand line officers at the conclusion of the Grand Installation Ceremonies of the . Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines,

**A**N UNPRECEDENTED event transpired between June 18-25, 2023, leaving an indelible mark on Masonic history in the Philippines. MW Don Terng Ramas-Uypitching, the Grand Master of Masons of the Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines, undertook an exceptional journey, embarking on a week-long caravan across the expanse of the Mindanao region.

Diverging from the conventional path, the Grand Master and accompanying brethren embarked on this extraordinary venture not to summon the brethren to the Grand Lodge in Manila but to personally reach out to them, visiting various lodges and reinforcing the bonds of fraternity. This tour signified a profound demonstration of gratitude, a testament to the brethren's unwavering dedication



ABOVE: The Grand Master, MW Don T. Ramas-Uypitching, is being received into a masonic lodge during his 7-day Mindanao Caravan last July 2023.

## A Masonic Pilgrimage: A Historical Journey Across Mindanao

Written by: Bro. Daryl Robinson  
Mount Kaladias Masonic Lodge #91  
Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental R-XVIII

and relentless support towards the Masonic fraternity.

Beyond extending gratitude, the Grand Master interpreted this journey as a chance to reaffirm the brethren's responsibilities and highlight the foundational principle of Edict 357 (Safeguarding Adherence to Masonic Proficiency Standards for Newly-Raised Brethren in Subordinates Lodges), which was dated May 23, 2023. According to this directive, attaining the 3rd-degree proficiency signifies a crucial milestone in any Masonic journey, and such a journey will not be able to come to full fruition without complying within 90 days with the 3rd-degree proficiency examination after being raised to the sublime degree of a Master Mason. It is a testament to any Freemason's unwavering commitment and dedication to his obligation to himself and the fraternity. Additionally, the Grand Master underscored the importance of cultivating harmony and fostering happiness within the Masonic lodges, which equally extends to their lives outside the brotherhood.

#### THE HISTORIC JOURNEY: A DAY-TO-DAY CHRONICLE

The historic caravan spanned seven days, covering an extensive list of lodges across

Mindanao and offering unique opportunities for interaction and fellowship among the brethren. Here is a detailed chronicle of the journey:

**Day 1:** The journey commenced in Dipolog City, with visits to Antonio G. Lim Masonic Lodge #162. Following this, the caravan traveled to Calamba, Misamis Occidental, visiting Bernardo A. Neri Masonic Lodge #214, then Gregoria O. Calit Masonic Lodge #154 in Oroquieta City. The tour continued to Palilan Masonic Lodge #239 in Jimenez. It concluded with a fellowship hosted by Mt. Malindang Masonic Lodge #130/Timoteo S. Uy Sr. Masonic Lodge #349 in Ozamiz City.

**Day 2:** After a hearty breakfast hosted by VW Governor Henry S. Oaminal Sr. and joined by MW Romeo A. Yu, PGM, the caravan embarked on a Roro ride across the sea. The caravan reached Mukas Port in Tubod, Lanao del Norte, and was greeted by a warm welcome from local brethren. A courtesy call with Vice Governor VW Allan Lim followed, after which the caravan proceeded to Glicerio A. Lim Sr. Masonic Lodge #222 in Lanao del Norte and ended with a grand reception at Tolomeo C. Galarrita Masonic Lodge #242 in Cagayan de Oro.

Day 3: The third day commenced in Cagayan de Oro with a visit to Leonardo T. Panares Masonic Lodge #220, where a function hall was dedicated in the name of MW Don's father, WB Antonio S. Ramas-Uypitching Sr., Past Master of Mount Kaladias Masonic Lodge #91 located in Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental. The journey continued to Kidapawan City, visiting Kidapawan Masonic Lodge #170, then to Midsayap Masonic Lodge #267 in Midsayap, and concluded with a visit to Rio Grande Masonic Lodge #192 in North Cotabato.

Day 4: On the fourth day, the caravan arrived in Tacurong City, Sultan Kudarat, where a grand reception awaited at Daguma Mt. Range Masonic Lodge #244—a courtesy call and lunch with Governor Bro. Pax Ali Mangudadatu followed. The journey proceeded to Koronadal Masonic Lodge #209 in Koronadal and ended at Alabel Maribulan Masonic Lodge #304 in Alabel, Sarangani Province.

Day 5: The fifth day took the Grand Master from Digos City's Masonic Lodge #198 to Davao del Norte via Davao del Oro. It included a joint grand reception at Shangri-La Masonic Lodge #196 and Tagum Masonic Lodge #204 and a visit to Davao

Gold Masonic Lodge #443. It concluded with an evening of local fellowship in Mati City at Aurora Masonic Lodge #198.

Day 6: The sixth day began with a visit to Mati Aurora Masonic Lodge #198 and continued to Don Salvador P. Lopez Masonic Lodge #276. The journey then proceeded to the future Manay Masonic Center site in Manay City. It moved on to Kamayo Masonic Lodge #255 in Cumanas, Bislig City, Timberland Masonic Lodge #219, and Agusan Marsh Masonic Lodge #160 in San Francisco, Agusan del Sur.

Day 7: The final day started with a visit to Agusan Valley Masonic Lodge #160, a courtesy call to Bishop Cosme Damian R. Almedilla, Diocese of Butuan, and the Stated Meeting of Butuan Masonic Lodge #299. The journey reached a respectful and harmonious conclusion with a fellowship that filled every member with a sense of accomplishment and anticipation for future gatherings.

#### A JOURNEY OF UNITY, DEDICATION, AND BROTHERHOOD

In the archives of Philippines Masonic history, June 2023 will emerge as a unique chapter when MW Don Terng Ramas-Uypitching led an



TOP: The Grand Master, MW Don T. Ramas-Uypitching, posing for a photograph with the brethren at one of his stops during his Mindanao caravan. ABOVE: The Grand Master, Don T. Ramas-Uypitching, receiving a souvenir shirt from his brethren. INSET: The The Grand Master, Don T. Ramas-Uypitching, signing a Tyler's Book for posterity.

ABOVE: The Grand Master, MW Don T. Ramas-Uypitching, addressing the brethren of a masonic lodge during his 7-day Mindanao Caravan last July 2023.



unprecedented caravan across the sprawling landscapes of Mindanao. This venture was more than just a tour; it stood as a tangible symbol of unity, gratitude, and discovery, underscoring the essence of the Masonic Brotherhood.

The caravan journey, a week-long pilgrimage across varied geographies and cultures, represented a remarkable exploration of fraternity. It was a unique voyage that transcended the boundaries of traditional gatherings, strengthening the bonds among brethren spread across the length and breadth of Mindanao. This journey opened doors for personal interaction, facilitating a deeper understanding of each other's experiences and perspectives, thus bolstering the camaraderie that forms the bedrock of the Masonic fraternity.

An integral part of the journey was the collective sense of dedication that resonated through each lodge visited. Each stop on the journey unfolded a new chapter of perseverance and shared commitment, bringing to light the heartwarming stories of brethren who tirelessly contribute to the growth and sustainability of their lodges. The emphasis on adherence to the Masonic principles, specifically Edict 357, reiterated





ABOVE: The Grand Master, MW Don T. Ramas-Uypitching, with the Rainbow for Girls.

the importance of commitment and dedication within the Masonic journey, underpinning the Masonic ideals in each brother.

Under the steadfast leadership of our Grand Master, the caravan came to symbolize unity. The harmonious convergence of brethren from diverse lodges fostered a profound sense of unity, embodying the very principles the Masonic fraternity stands for. Each shared meal, every casual conversation, and all moments of fellowship brought the brethren closer together, intertwining their journeys into a single, unified pilgrimage.

The Masonic Caravan across Mindanao also served as a testament to brotherhood. Each day of the journey added a new layer to the fraternal bond, transforming the week-long tour into a compelling narrative of brotherly love, relief, and truth.

The trail of Masonic footprints left in its wake will serve as a constant reminder of the timeless bond that links each member of the Masonic fraternity, regardless of geographical boundaries.

Finally, the echoes of this historic pilgrimage will continue reverberating through Mindanao's lodges. They will be a constant reminder of a journey that brought brethren closer, a pilgrimage that strengthened fraternity, and a caravan that personified the Masonic spirit of unity, dedication, and brotherhood. The voyage across Mindanao was a profound journey that deepened ties, revealed new facets of the fraternity, and ultimately solidified the spirit of Masonic camaraderie. This legacy will undoubtedly inspire future generations of Masons, encouraging them to uphold the time-honored values of the Masonic fraternity.



ABOVE: Borne out the idea that most of the urgent calls are blood requests and assistance especially to the immediate family of the distressed brothers, Dugong Mason have been assisting patients in need of blood for several years--ensuring ample supply when needed.

# DUGONG MASON: A LEGACY WRITTEN IN BLOOD

For the past several years, the brethren of Dugong Mason have been helping people through continous blood letting operations in order to aid those who are in need of blood.

Its mission is to provide relief through blood donation. By organizing blood-letting activities through the assistance of Philippine Heart Center and the sponsoring lodges, appendant bodies and districts the “SCWC Dugong Mason” was able to produce hundred of blood bags ready to serve distressed worthy brothers and his immediate



family.

The program is the brain child of the later brother Jojo Narciso of Island Luz Minerva No.5 and is continued by several concerned brethren.



ABOVE: The brethren of Maynilad Lodge No. 1521, whose establishment spurred out of the idea of the Grand Master, MW Kwame Acquaaah of having a Filipino masonic lodge in the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia.

# The Beginnings of Maynilad Lodge No. 1521

By VW Generoso de Guzman Calonge

**GRANDMASTER KWAME ACQUAAH AS LEADER OF MASONS IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

Many times, a leader has to think of and assess the condition of his organization as it faces the future. The view from the top does not always look promising. In 2009, Grandmaster Acquaaah witnessed a hindrance to Masonry's progress in his jurisdiction.

The obstacle was a looming downward spiral in membership. He firmly believed, as the head, that there must be a solution to the problem. A part of the answer was not visible over the horizon. Luck and serendipity played roles that were never anticipated. Grandmaster Kwame Acquaaah did not know it then, but he had a significant portion of his vision fulfilled in due time.

### IDEAS OF GM ACQUAAH

As Grandmaster of Masons of the District of Columbia, it was expected that GM Acquaah would think of the welfare of Freemasonry in his jurisdiction. What was impressive was that he was trying to find doable and concrete ways to arrest the decline in numbers in the rosters of DC lodges. He explained that among his initial solutions, one was the establishment of university lodges, a practice that is widespread in many jurisdictions. Two such attempts were made, with the successful one being Colonial Lodge No. 1821, chartered on November 11, 2009.

Another idea was to expand the number of Lodges to reflect the status of Washington, D.C. as a global center. Grandmaster Acquaah was witness to European, Middle Eastern, African, and Latin American representation that exist in Lodge memberships in the District of Columbia. What was missing, according to him, was an Asian component. So when we discussed the concept of having a Filipino-themed lodge, meaning one with a heritage emanating from the Philippines, he was excited about the prospect. The initial question would be whether a Filipino Lodge can thrive in the jurisdiction. I had a feeling

that Grand Master Acquaah had a highly favorable disposition towards the founding of such a Lodge.

### MEETING AT JOPPA LODGE NO. 35

On Tuesday, July 7, 2009, a typical summer night, I decided to attend Joppa Lodge No. 35, which meets at the Singleton Masonic Hall on Wisconsin Avenue. This particular visit to Joppa Lodge resulted in the chartering of a new Lodge that eventually added to the mosaic of international membership that the Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia is famous for around the world. That Lodge is Maynilad Lodge No. 1521.

That evening, unknown to me, Grandmaster Acquaah himself also wanted to visit Joppa Lodge. By a stroke of luck and coincidence, Grandmaster Acquaah and I were at the door at the same time, about to seek admission. I proceeded to sign the attendance sheet in front of the door. In a very humble gesture, Grandmaster Acquaah extended his hand and introduced himself. We did not know each other before that moment. He announced that he was also a visitor. Then he asked me to sit next to him once we were admitted in the Lodge. I was honored because we were

not really acquainted with each other. It was our first meeting.

Once inside the Lodge, there were the usual introductions. Grandmaster Acquaah was accorded the honors due his office. Quietly, he asked where I was from and I said I was born and raised in Manila. After the meeting, as we were walking to the Lodge door to leave, we discussed the idea of having a Filipino Lodge in his jurisdiction. He suggested that if I will assist him in that endeavor, he will strongly pursue it for the duration of his term. We walked to our parked cars and talked about the topic at great length. It was getting late at that point and before we parted ways, he requested me to contact two brothers. These two brothers would play key roles in the initial actions that led to the founding of the Lodge. These brothers were Ken Gibala and Ted Villapando. We parted ways late that evening. Annex 1 shows the Register of Joppa Lodge No. 35 indicating signatures by GM Acquaah and myself in attendance.

Grandmaster Acquaah described Brother Ken Gibala as a man of action. Ken was, according to the Grandmaster, a brother who works hard to deliver desired results. Ted Villapando, on the other hand, was a Past Master

of a DC Lodge, Washington Daylight Lodge No. 14, and a 33rd degree Scottish Rite Mason. Grandmaster Acquaah added that Ted was a highly respected Brother and that he is fit to be the first Master of the new Lodge under dispensation. Most of all, WBro. Villapando, as a Filipino-American, would symbolize the heritage sought to be perpetuated by the new Lodge.

Following the instructions of Grandmaster Acquaah, I called Brother Ken Gibala the following morning. We arranged a meeting and map out a strategy to get the new lodge on its feet. I also called Brother Ted Villapando who gladly agreed with the idea of having a Filipino Lodge in the District. He warmly embraced the plan that he will be the first master of the Lodge, he being a Past Master of the Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia.

In the Fall of 2009, it was obvious that time was of the essence because the end of the term of Grandmaster Acquaah was fast approaching. Believing that a number of Masons were interested in the formation of a Lodge at one of our planning sessions, Brother Ken and I agreed to approach Alianza Fraternal Americana Lodge No. 92 to solicit their assistance.

Both of us attended their stated communication on November 18. I spoke at that meeting and pleaded for Alianza’s support and endorsement. While I had the floor, I invoked the similarities in colonial experience and traditions between the nations comprising Alianza and the Philippines. I pointed out that

very well reciprocated. Brother Ken and I got the unanimous and spirited nod of Alianza’s membership. Alianza fully backed the establishment of the new Lodge with a Certificate of Support dated November 18, 2009.

**FORMING THE LODGE STRUCTURE**

In consultations with like-minded Brothers, thirteen petitioners agreed to request the Grand Lodge for a dispensation to allow the new Lodge to work. A proposed list of principal officers was also provided to the Grand Lodge. Attached to the petition was Alianza’s Certificate of Support dated November 18, 2009 showing that the Lodge accords “respect for the moral character and Masonic abilities of the said Petitioners.” In that meeting, Alianza Brethren “resolved to support the formation of the said new Lodge and to recommend to the Grand Master that he gives favorable consideration to the said Petitioners’ prayer.” Annex 2, with attachments, is the petition for Dispensation including the list of petitioners and the supporting Certificate to Accompany a Petition for a Dispensation to Form a New Lodge.

Thus, Dispensation No. 09-25 was issued to Maynilad Lodge,



more than three hundred years of Hispanic governance over our islands bound us culturally and linguistically. I thought that I hit an emotional cord that was

U. D., by Grand Master Acquaah, paving the way for it to operate until the issuance of its regular Charter. Annex 3 is a copy of the Dispensation signed by Grand Master Acquaah.

On May 11, 2011, at the Semi-Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge, the Oversight Committee Report on Maynilad Lodge U. D. was delivered by RW Christopher Mahaney. In the report, it was "...the unanimous recommendation of the Oversight Committee that the Lodge be considered for a Charter and moves for the adoption of this report and the approval of its recommendation to grant a Charter to Maynilad Lodge U. D. to be called Maynilad Lodge No. 1521, upon the favorable action of the Grand Lodge." Attached as an appendix to this report was a list of Charter Members of the newly numbered Lodge, consisting of sixty seven Brothers including two Past Grand Masters, namely, MW Akram Elias and MW Constante Uson of the Grand Lodge of Manitoba, Canada. The Grand Lodge issued the Charter to Maynilad Lodge Number 1521 on May 11, 2011.

#### WHY MAYNILAD?

In early discussions with Brother Ken Gibala, the name and number of the new lodge

came up as an agenda item. I learned at that time that DC lodges do not necessarily have to follow consecutive numbers, to indicate seniority, as in other Grand Lodges. I came up with "Maynilad Lodge No. 1521." Of course, the new Lodge had to be under dispensation first before its proposed number is issued. The number 1521 was decided early on for historical reasons.

In Philippine history, Maynilad was the ancient name of Manila before Spanish colonization in the 1500s. Nilad was the name of the plant that adorned the banks of the Pasig River, the body of water that bisects the city. Maynilad exactly means "where the nilad plants are." The passage of time and differences in pronunciation evolved into "Manila" as the name of the settlement by the river that eventually became the capital of the Philippines.

#### WHY 1521?

The year 1521 is significant to the Philippines. On March 16 of that year, Ferdinand Magellan, the Portuguese explorer, who was in the service of King Philip II of Spain, landed in the Philippines and claimed the islands in the name of the Kingdom of Spain. By giving the number of the new lodge as 1521, the symbolism is that the Philippines has become

linked to the West, specially to Europe, and specifically to Spain, in that particular year . From that year on, the Philippines signified a nation in Southeast Asia that straddled the East and the West. The Philippines is at the intersection of Eastern and Western civilizations.

And as writers say, the rest is history.

#### FAST FORWARD TODAY

After twelve years of existence as a regular Lodge, Maynilad Lodge No. 1521 has a total of 192 members in 2023, the third largest Lodge in the District of Columbia. It is still growing. Starting with 69 members in 2012, it grew rapidly to 95 in 2013, 105 in 2014, 108 in 2015 and 148 in 2020. See Annex 4 showing data from the Grand Lodge on the current membership status of the Lodge.

#### MAYNILAD LODGE NO. 1521 AND THE FUTURE

Maynilad Lodge members, under the tutelage of the Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia and the distinguished membership of the entire jurisdiction, face the future with confidence and fortitude. We feel secure that the Masonic principles with which we are all inculcated will be with us to live by for future generations to pass on in perpetuity. We have

the strength to carry on, inspired by the Masonic diversity of the District for which it is universally famous.

Grand Master Acquaah was correct. An Asian dimension to the interplay of Masonic affinities in the District of Columbia is attainable. Maynilad Lodge No. 1521 is an example. The future holds the door open for further opportunities extended by our Masonic world.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author is indebted to the valuable assistance extended by the following Brothers in connection with the search for records for this article:

- MW Kwame Acquaah, PGM (interviews and recollections)
- Grand Secretary Jeffrey D. Russell, PGM
- RW Christopher Mahaney
- RW George Nicol
- RW Ken Gibala
- RW Carlos Landazuri
- WBro. Bayani Pioquinto
- WM Raul Ampudia Matos

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

VW Generoso de Guzman Calonge became a Past Master of Island Luz Minerva Lodge No. 5 (2007) of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of the Philippines and is among the Founding Member, Maynilad Lodge No. 1521.



It would have been a typical night for Masonic honors, but the Masons of MD R-IV Laguna West were in for a lot of big surprises, for the grandiose event was far glamorous than anyone expected, even the organizers. It was, to sum it up, exceptional!

This brainchild of the current DDGM came about as he recalled an anecdotal story told to him unbegrudgingly by a very senior PDDGM, of the efforts and pains during the time of his service to the District, which, for all intents and purposes, is what being a DDGM, or a District officer is all

successful fund-raising activities, but also provided talented and resolute brethren who formed the core group to bring this noble thought into fruition. It was during this time too that it became apparent, that to give due honor to the elders, we cannot stop with the PDDGMs only, for their work, have always been complemented, supplemented, and if not, balanced, by the wisdom and able leadership of their DGLs, not unlike what was found in the entrance of King Solomon's Temple, there were 2 pillars. And as the District unanimously supported this

---

# Of Pillars and PDDGMs:

## MD LAGUNA WEST HONORS ITS PAST DISTRICT LEADERS

By **VW Winston A. Uy**

about, SERVICE.

Not wanting experiences and stories like this to remain unknown, or go unremembered and unappreciated, VW Winston Paye Uy, mused on having the privilege of introducing such in his very young district – a Past DDGMs' Night.

And the District went all-in and provided, not only a hefty budget (or so the District thought) from

thought process, the challenges grew and the budget “shrunk”.

So the challenges continued to come, sometimes one-by-one, often as a deluge. From getting the honorees together for pictorial, to getting them to provide their memorabilia, from logistical issues like venue, food, drinks, sounds, light, entertainment, to “legal issues” like timely and proper approval of District resolutions so we can



ABOVE: The Hon. Art Josep Mercado, Mayor of San Pedro City delivering his Inspirational Speech. RIGHT: Then-Senior Grand Warden RW Ariel T. Cayanan speaking to the brethren.



purchase the jewels.

From designing the tokens, jackets, plaques, rings, to designing the right program, and getting the best Master of Ceremonies. From ensuring we have the right guests and speakers, the right seating, to ensuring we provide the toasts commensurate to the honors they should profess and to choosing the right toastmasters, the latter, ably done by the Immediate Past and Incumbent Worshipful Masters.

And as summarized by the DDGM, in a comment to the core

group comprised of Kuyang Carlo Catingub (Creative Director), Kuyang Tony Deus (Logistics Director), Kuyang Gerry L. Perez (Awards and Token Director), WB Joey Sisik (Jewels and Resolution Approvals), and yours truly (Master of Ceremonies), immediately before the start of the program, “Ang Gagaling ninyo! Nagawa nyo to, from scratch, walang ginayahan, no template! You moved mountains! Pahinging calling card!”

Not to be outdone by the preparations, the speakers, and the wisdom they conveyed, added eminence to the night. From



The Past District Deputy Grand Masters of Masonic District Laguna West.

the opening remarks where the DDGM explained why PDDGM's Night and why Tubalcain was prominent in the evening, to the truly Inspiring Speech of Mayor Art Joseph Mercado, Mayor of the City of San Pedro,

alluding to the great works of Freemasonry, as seen from the perspective of a non-mason government official. From the touching and grateful response of VW Roberto Santos, as the most Senior of the Honorees, to

the stimulating, passionate and heartfelt message delivered by RW Ariel T. Cayanan, who the GOHAS, in the stead of MW Johnny T. Pimentel, who was still recovering from a medical operation.

As if those weren't enough, there were two more surprises for the evening! Three communications tools were unveiled that night:

1. The Official District Newsletter named, "Look Well (LW) ..... Laguna West (LW)" - As a play of the initials LW for Look Well to the West and Laguna West, district's official name.
2. Annual Report E-Book – a digital compilation of the monthly reports diligently submitted by the DDGM to the



ABOVE: One of the District's awardees.

- Grand Master.
3. The Coffee Table book, which will be out by the end of this term, will contain, the activities, the highlights, the fellowship and memories of the District during MY2022-2023.

The other surprise was the revelation of the crème-dela



The Past District Deputy Grand Masters of Masonic District Laguna West.

crème, during this term MY2022-2023:

- Most Outstanding Grand Lodge Inspector – WI Mario Hernandez
- Most Outstanding District Grand Lecturer – VW Januario Brusas
- Most Outstanding Worshipful Master – WB Milo Crisostomo
- Most Outstanding Lodge Secretary – VW Benjamin Reuel Ortiguero, Jr.
- Most Outstanding Lodge – San Pedro Masonic Lodge No. 292

It was indeed a magnificent night. And I do not say this because I was part of the core group, but this was the unanimous feedback from all those who attended, and more importantly, from those who were honored!

And so it was!

One night. Purported to be the first of its kind. A night full of reminiscing, pondering, and reflecting; Of remembering and honoring, of giving credit to where it is due. It was indeed a long night of veneration, an evening with heightened drama and emotions ... and one that ended with inspired, grateful young masons and happy, appreciated and honored wise masons leaving the venue.





By VW Victor A. Yu

## Painfully Beautiful

“There is no art in being bitter my love, for only the fool cannot find the beauty in tragedy.”

– RH Fowler

**T**HE ABOVEMENTIONED quote aptly describes the beautiful lessons imparted by our Masonic allegories which included the legendary tragedy of Hiram Abiff. Such “tragedy” is not based on historical facts as such builder lived to a ripe old age according to the accounts in the scriptures (2 Chronicles 4:11). Nevertheless, the fictional drama based on his life was adopted by our forefathers in Freemasonry to teach us important lessons in life.

A Masonic lodge is metaphorically said to be supported by three great pillars, denominated wisdom, strength and beauty; it being necessary that there be wisdom to contrive, strength to support and beauty to adorn all things. This pillar of beauty is represented in our lodge meetings and works by our Junior Warden and Hiram Abiff.

Among the beauties in Masonry are the wonders of human

interactions where a brother may initiate and nurture true friendships with persons who would have otherwise remained at a perpetual distance. The common venues for such opportunities are most often in our meetings, conferrals, conventions, fellowships; and more importantly, during the extensions of Masonic relief where true friendships are formed and connections established.

However, among such instances, the most prominent to the public are our fellowships. While fraternal fellowships no doubt fortify our mystic ties, it also provides us with a respite from the harshness or boredom of our daily labors and routines. Nevertheless, excessive refreshments similarly cause disharmony, indolence, misplaced complacency; and further pave the paths to our self-destruction.

Our Masonic elders often lament that intemperate and excessive fellowships had become venues for unfit behavior of Masons to be tragically displayed. Such despicable acts not only result in the disruption of the fraternal harmony but also the staining of our institutional reputation amongst our Masonic family and the public as well.

The tendencies for such abuse during fellowships had been duly observed by our Craft since the olden times as evidenced by following provision from the compilation of the Old Charges of 1722 by Reverend and Brother James Anderson, to wit:

BEHAVIOUR AFTER THE LODGE IS OVER AND THE BRETHREN NOT GONE

... You may enjoy yourself with innocent Mirth, treating one another according to Ability, but avoiding all Excess, or forcing any Brother to eat or drink beyond his inclination, or hindering him from going when his occasions call him, or doing or saying anything offensive, or that may forbid an easy and free conversation, for that would blast our harmony, and defeat our laudable purpose.

Cognizant of such human imperfection, the Junior Warden is thus invested with the plumb as the badge of his office to deeply impress upon him to hold the scale of justice in equal poise, to observe the just medium between overindulgence and enjoyment; and to make his passions and prejudices coincide with the line with his duties. To him therefore is committed the superintendence of the Craft during the hours of refreshment.

The Junior Warden is

further admonished that it is indispensably necessary that he should be not only be temperate and discrete in the indulgence of his own inclinations but should likewise carefully observe that none of the Craft be suffered to convert the means of refreshment into intemperance and excess.

In faithful discharge of this important duty, Junior Warden gives due and timely notice to

incidents, it is often due to the unbridled influence of the ruffians or shadows within the brethren with serious unresolved personal issues. As discussed in a previous issue of The Cable Tow ("Ruffians Glory"), such issues are deeply rooted in our experienced traumas, tragedies, frustrations, humiliations, indiscretions, unrealized goals, etc. that are ingrained into our subconscious and have snowballed into

---

*In life and in death, Hiram Abiff merited the applause of his brethren and the testimony of a good conscience. Hence, his friends and brethren all came to his relief upon knowing of his desolate state. They then enabled him to overcome the demise of hope and achieve a resurrection of ardor to pursue life's journeys again.*

---

the Master of any approaching dangers upon noticing any erring brother during the hours of refreshment or fellowships. Thereafter, he also assists the Master in obliterating any disharmony that may be caused by unsuitable words spoken and unworthy deeds done during the fellowship. In consequence thereof, the lodge maintains the peace and harmony amongst the brethren.

Whenever beautiful moments of fellowships turn into unfortunate

irrational personal insecurities.

Cognizant of the existence of ruffians or shadows within every person, a mythical tragedy was therefore integrated into our rituals in the Sublime Degree of Master Mason. In such degree, we learned that Hiram Abiff was known for his brilliance in building skills and worthiness in character. Hence, he was appointed to be the architect of the work in the building of King Solomon's Temple. Since all labors were under his direct

instructions and examination, such position entails much power, prestige and privileges among the builders of the temple.

Even if Hiram Abiff was mindful of his own talents and achievements, his heart was never consumed by conceit and vanity. Knowing that the pursuit of excellence is unending, he went into the temple regularly to review his own work and made further improvements on them, thereby improving himself daily.

Mindful also of the limitations of human intelligence and capability, he entered the Sanctum Sanctorum or Holy of Holies every day to offer his devotions to the Ever Living God and pray for His wisdom necessary to enable him to draw designs upon the threstle board where the Craft may pursue their labors.

Even when Hiram Abiff was threatened by the ruffians, he never responded equally despite the enormous powers he possessed. Instead, he reminded his assailants to be patient and make themselves worthy first to be able to progress as builders. Even in the face of impending death, Hiram Abiff never wavered in his fidelity to the



tenets and virtues of the Craft.

In life and in death, Hiram Abiff merited the applause of his brethren and the testimony of a good conscience. Hence, his friends and brethren all came to his relief upon knowing of his desolate state. They then enabled him to overcome the demise of hope and achieve a resurrection of ardor to pursue life's journeys again.

How painful it is to see beautiful friendships forged in Masonry laid to waste because of certain brethren who still cannot come to terms with their respective inner ruffians during fellowships. Nonetheless, such painful and sad state is not beyond repair, for there always is hope as symbolized by the Sprig

of Acacia.

As the brethren were able to find the burial site of Hiram Abiff through the Sprig of Acacia that marked the grave, we are reminded that there is always some degree of goodness placed in every one of us by our Great Creator. With resumed nourishment through the practice of our Basic Tenets and Cardinal Virtues, such goodness shall gradually sprout out of our lives like a tender branch that springs forth from the stump of a fallen tree.

As the freshness of pristine acacia leaves signals the end of devastation and the initiation of a rebirth, our faith in the Supreme Ruler of the Universe and His infinite goodness shall be regenerated. While immediate reform is impossible, the yearning to become worthy Masons shall be our working tool to bring hope to any despair in our lives. Henceforward, the emulation of our Grand Master Hiram Abiff in his truly exalted and exemplary character, in his unfeigned piety to God and in his inflexible fidelity to His trust would be most promising to bring about a self-reform.

Accordingly, instead of consciously or unconsciously wallowing in personal

insecurities, a daily return to the temples in our respective hearts would be most helpful. Such return will enable us to discover the several improvements necessary in our lives both for stability (strength) and happiness (ornament).

More meaningfully, by also regularly entering our respective Sanctum Sanctorum to seek Divine assistance, we would be better enabled to accept and repent for our past shortcomings; forgive themselves for our ignorance, hubris and unbridled passions; and pursue a worthy journey in life. It does not matter at what stage of life we are, there is always hope in the Sprig of Acacia.

Finally, let us remember to ever plant such symbolical acacia firmly inside our hearts so that we may altogether building temples amongst Masons and men. From such moral and Masonic edifices, may we also continue make a positive difference to mankind. Together, Brethren!



# E PLURIBUS UNUM FROM THE SENIOR GRAND LECTURER



ABOVE: Sharing a light moment with some grand line officers.

Fraternal greetings, my brethren!

As this is the time of district conventions and multi-districts, I congratulate the officers and brethren of our masonic districts on their successful hosting of their respective events.

Truly, there is nothing more satisfying to the eyes than to see brethren coming together in joy and harmony working towards the betterment of the Craft.

With this year's theme, "Freemasons Altogether,

Building Temples INSIDE The Hearts of Men", our Grand Master MW Don T. Ramas-Uypitching, has enjoined the brethren and lodges of this grand jurisdiction to focus more on fostering harmony and the betterment of ourselves in order to be worthy vessels of the Great Architect Of The Universe.

I have been fortunate to have been invited to some district conventions this year and during the rare times I would be requested to deliver the

Continued on Page 62 ...

**... Continued from Page 61**

masonic education, I would center on the basics—among which are our due guards and signs, which I have noticed in some of the lodges I was able to visit, are still not properly executed by some of our lesser-informed brethren.

While it is up to the blue lodges to instruct these brethren properly on this matter, allow me to offer a reminder that in accordance to

guards and signs, we remind ourselves of the oath we took and of the penalty that we incur should we ever consider breaking such oath.

This therefore brings us to the main topic of this masonic education, which gains relevancy during that time of the year when we start choosing the next set of leaders and members of the GLP and of our blue lodges.

As our laws and rituals dictates,

---

*As our laws and rituals dictates, we choose our candidates for the degrees of Freemasonry in the blue lodges through the use of the ballot box; casting our affirmative votes in the form of white balls and our rejection in the form of black cubes. The same procedure is used when we elect our officers for the ensuing masonic year.*

---

our rituals, our due guards and signs are essentially part of how masons make themselves known. Remember, that the due guards alludes to the position in which our hands were placed when we took our obligation and that the signs alludes to the penalty for violating our obligation. Thus, each time we execute our due

we choose our candidates for the degrees of Freemasonry in the blue lodges through the use of the ballot box; casting our affirmative votes in the form of white balls and our rejection in the form of black cubes. The same procedure is used when we elect our officers for the ensuing masonic year.

During the conduct of these activity, the ballot box is place near the VSL and qualified members are directed to approach the Altar at the center and before casting their votes, are made to execute the due guard and sign.

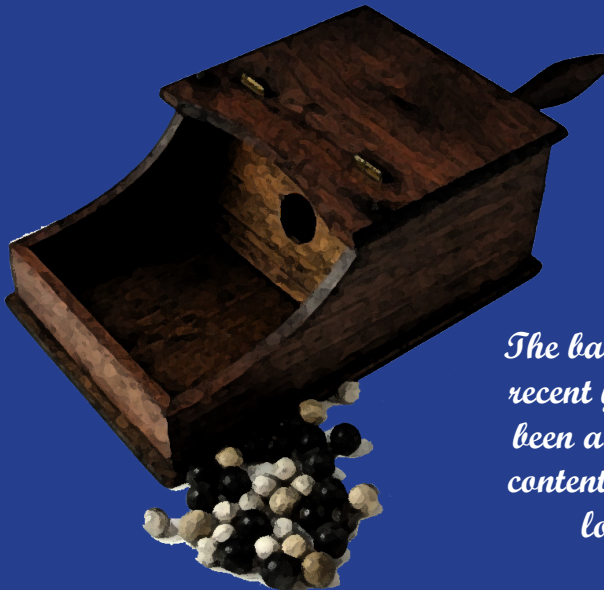
While it may be argued that the execution of the due guard and sign before prior to voting is a salute to the WM in the East. It can also be considered that such ritual is a quick reminder that as we exercise our duty to elect, we remind ourselves of our solemn obligation and the penalty of deviating from such obligation. Moreso, when such execution is performed in the presence of the Divine Being—represented thereat by

the VSL duly-placed in front of such brother voting. It can be inferred as a silent statement of such brother that when casting his vote, he casts it with God as his witness.

Thus, it is with utmost brotherly concern that I gently remind our beloved brethren to respect our ballot and the use of it as well as vote with good thoughts and sincere intentions, whatever vote they may cast for the candidate or the nominee for such elected office.

Keep in mind that when we elect, the Great Architect Of The Universe is watching.

Thank you and keep safe, my brethren.



*The ballot box in recent years, has been a source of contention within lodges*



ABOVE: The Necrological Ceremonial Team assembled by the Grand Lodge of the Philippines, led by MW Santiago T. Gabionza, Jr., PGM assembled around the remains of PGM MW Agustin V. Mateo at the Jose Abad Santos Hall.

## PGM Gus Mateo Drops Working Tools, accorded last Masonic Honors

Alas! The roll of the workmen has been called and another has been taken by the Celestial Lodge on high.

The shroud of death have again veiled the hallowed halls of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of the Philippines as one of its pillars have been called to cease from his labors.

Last July 24, 2023, barely a month after celebrating his 92nd birthday, MW Agustin Mateo, 75th Grand Master of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines, dropped his Working Tools due to pneumonia and septic shock.

MW Mateo's remains were

brought to the Plaridel Masonic Temple in Malate, City of Manila, where a wake was held in his memory at the Jose Abad Santos Hall for viewing last 25 July 2023.

The 3rd Degree funeral rites, performed by a Ceremonial Team presided over by MW Santiago T. Gabionza, Jr., PGM, was solemnly given last 26 July 2023 at 5:00pm.

MW Gabionza, was ably assisted by other brethren composing the team as follows: Senior Grand Warden-MW Juanito

Abergas, PGM, Junior Grand Warden-RW Bob Moran, JGW, Grand Treasurer-MW Agapito S. Suan Jr, PGM, Grand Secretary-VW Ritzi Uy, Grand Chaplain-VW Rommel Ortiz, Grand Marshal-VW Marino Garcia, Senior Grand Deacon-VW JP Ralph Magara, Junior Grand Deacon-VW Raul Logarta, Grand Bible Bearer-VW Ronald Ramirez, Senior Grand Steward-VW Henry Kok, DDGM, Junior Grand Steward-VW Frank Nunez, and Grand Tyler-VW Jimmy Ngan, DDGM.

Serving as Musical Director and Director of Ceremonies



**ABOVE: MW Santiago T. Gabionza, Jr., PGM, who presided over the necrological rites for PGM MW Agustin V. Mateo, extends his condolences and sympathies to Ms. Margaret Mateo-Cua, daughter of the deceased Past Grand Master.**

were Bro. Luisito G. Salazar and and VW Emmanuel J. Diesta, respectively.

No less that Past Grand Master and former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Philippines, MW Reynato S. Puno, delivered the eulogy.

Being also a 33rd Degree Scottish Rite Mason, MW Agustin V. Mateo was also given the 18th Degree funeral rites of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite earlier that day.

From the Plaridel Masonic Temple, the body of MW Agustin V. Mateo, PGM, was transferred to La Funeraria Paz in Quezon City for public viewing from the 27th to the 29th of July 2023. Burial was held last 30 July 2023.

The Grand Master, MW Don T. Ramas-Uypitching, upon learning of the sad news of MW Agustin V. Mateo's passing, immediately issued a message of condolences, remembering the Past Grand Master, MW Agustin V. Mateo.

In his message, MW Don T. Ramas-Uypitching expressed the following sentiments: "Melancholic emotions prevail all over our grand jurisdictions when communications came to us that our dear MW Agustin

V. Mateo, PGM, had passed on to the Celestial Lodge on high. Fondly called by his close mason friends as MW "Gus Mati", he was a true lover of our fraternity. During his term as Grand Master, MW Mateo's principle of Grand Lodge governance was that of 'We who can best work and best agree'.

Employing such principle, he displayed utmost diplomatic deftness in matters pertaining Masonic relations and thereby preserved the harmony of brethren in this part of the world during his term. He also avoided any suppression on the visibility of Freemasonry to the public. It was also his opinion that when masons make positive differences in the communities where we reside, the motivating spirit arising from Masonry should not be concealed in darkness. Thus, the public became more aware of the presence and positive influences of our fraternal institution in Philippine society.

Upon becoming a Past Grand Master, his zeal for our Craft did not diminish. He continued to be ardent in the labors of the Past Grand Masters in sharing their wisdom to succeeding Grand Masters; and was active in matters and concerns

pertaining to the Grand Lodge and appendant organizations. His presence was always felt at the Grand Lodge Temple and Capitol Masonic Temple and in subordinate lodge meetings. He also regularly attended annual communications as well as district and multidistrict conventions. Such presence which we will all most sadly miss.

We relay our heartfelt condolences to Sister Lolit and everyone in your family. We also express our deep gratitude to you all in the family for sharing your husband and patriarch with us during his earthly travel in life. May our Great Creator grant

you all His comfort and grace in this time of grief.

Our beloved brother Gus, our deep memories of you shall forever remain in our hearts. "Soft and safe to thee be the earthly bed! Bright and glorious be thy rising from it! Fragrant be the acacia sprig that there flourish! Though thy mortal frame be now laid in the dust by the chilling blast of death, thy spirit shall spring into newness of life and expand in immortal beauty, in realms beyond the skies."

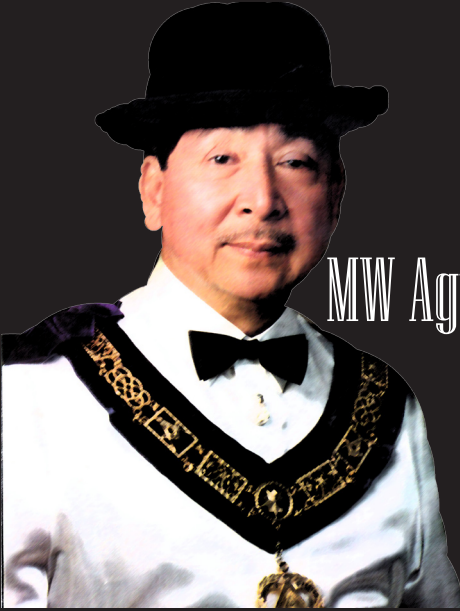
Until then, dear brother, until then, farewell."



**ABOVE:** Former Chief Justice, PGM MW Reynato S. Puno, who delivered the eulogy for the deceased Past Grand Master MW Agustin V. Mateo, extended sympathies to Ms. Margaret Mateo-Cua, daughter of the deceased.

"What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us; what we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal."

-Albert Pike



## A Tribute to MW Agustin V. Mateo, PGM

*Delivered by MW Reynato S. Puno, PGM and former Chief Justice, Supreme Court of the Philippines on the occasion of the Necrological Rites given to the late MW Agustin V. Mateo, PGM last 24 July 2023 at the Jose Abad Santos Hall, Plaridel Masonic Temple in Manila.*

**M**W Agustin Victorio Mateo, PGM has dropped his working tools at age 92. He received his summons from the Great Architect of the Universe, which we all have to obey. In our own appointed time, we will receive the same summons for as the writer of Ecclesiastes reminds us "no one can hold back his spirit from departing; no one has the power to postpone his

day of death; for there is no discharge from that obligation, no exemption from that dark battle." But the inevitability of death notwithstanding, we, Christian masons, cling to the belief that at the end of our spiritual journey, death does not have the last word; it is resurrection that has the final word. Rightly said, death is the "last chapter in time but the first chapter in eternity."

Our funeral ritual tells us that the mortal part of MW Gus Mateo is gone but his immortal part remains. As well put by the eminent masonic philosopher Albert Pike “what we have done for ourselves alone dies with us; what we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal.” Tonight, as we bid farewell to MW Gus Mateo, I invite you to remember “what he did for others and the world” thru masonry. As MW Gus Mateo rhapsodized in one of his masonic messages “up in the sky I feel very near my creator; earth bound, I am reminded of my mission to use whatever God given talents I have for contributing to the progress of my people and my country.”

To be sure, his contributions to the progress of our people and our country are legion. We have heard about the bits and pieces of these contributions from various sources and I will not delay you with their iterations and reiterations. But let me just assert his contributions to our people and our country and I proffer the view that his most outstanding contribution was the unheralded part he played in the EDSA Revolution of 1986. He was then serving as full Colonel in the Philippine Constabulary, under then General Fidel Ramos. As we all

know, Gen. Ramos took refuge in Camp Crame, home of the Phil. Constabulary. Against overwhelming odds, MW Mateo joined Ramos in that historic revolution. In a later interview, he described those days as follows: “Everyone of those days seemed to be the last. Thus, I consider my surviving the EDSA revolution as a new lease in my life so that I intend to dedicate the rest of it to the faithful service to my country men.”

Let me now go to the most significant contribution of MW Mateo to masonry. We have overseas lodges. One of them is McArthur Lodge No. 183, established in Seoul, South Korea in 1964. Its members are mostly Americans servicemen who were based in South Korea during the Cold War. In 1992, during the term of MW Mateo as GM, WM William Berry of McArthur Lodge No. 183, informed MW Mateo of their decision to break away from our MWGL and join the MWGL of Japan citing many complaints against our Grand Lodge. To make matters worse, the Grand Master of Japan, MW Richard A Gripe, Jr., supported the breakaway of McArthur Lodge No. 183 and informed MW Mateo of their willingness to accept McArthur Lodge No. 183 under their

jurisdiction. This precipitated the exchange of strongly worded communications until in utter exasperation, MW Mateo gave the MWGL of Japan the ultimatum ... that the MWGL of the Philippines will sever its relationship with the MWGL of Japan, cut off our recognition if they take McArthur Lodge No. 183 from our jurisdiction. That was the kind of a crisis that our GL never met before in its entire life and existence and the whole masonic world was all eyes on us. By God's grace, the MWGL of Japan and McArthur Lodge No. 183 blinked in the eyeball to eyeball confrontation, thanks to the leadership of MW Mateo. When MW Mateo stepped down from the Grand Oriental chair in 1993, I had the honor to give him the Past Grand Master's Jewel. This is part of what I said in honor of MW Mateo:

“In his last days in office, a Grand Master is given by the brethren a final hard look over from top to toe. To determine whether he has lived up to their trust, the searching look sometimes produces searing heat which Grand Masters in good spirit tolerate, for they know that they who seek a place in the sun cannot avoid sunburn. MW Mateo has finished his term and he survived it. And

let me add very quickly that he has not only finished his term but he has immensely succeeded. For the true measure of success lies not only in coming out on top but it lies in the quality of obstacles one has to hurdle before he succeeds. I am privy to the fact that at the start of his term, MW Mateo has to wrestle to the ground a gargantuan problem.

We have an overseas lodge whose leadership was trying its best to transfer the lodge, lock, stock, and barrel to another Grand Lodge. That act was bad enough but it was made worse by the open assistance of another Grand Lodge. The act had to be frustrated not only because it was making a mockery of our own Constitution, but more importantly, losing that lodge could trigger the break away of other lodges for indeed who would care to maintain allegiance to a Grand Lodge with the strength of a spaghetti. It was a fight which our Grand Lodge could not afford to lose but it was a fight between a David and a Goliath as our Grand Lodge appears to be the weaker protagonist. You know that

battle between David and Goliath. All the Israelites trembled in fear, because to them Goliath was too big to be hit. Only little David was

---

*In his last days in office, a Grand Master is given by the brethren a final hard look over from top to toe. To determine whether he has lived up to their trust, the searching look sometimes produces searing heat which Grand Masters in good spirit tolerate, for they know that they who seek a place in the sun cannot avoid sunburn.*

*MW Mateo has finished his term and he survived it. And let me add very quickly that he has not only finished his term but he has immensely succeeded.*

---

not seized by fear for to him, Goliath was not too big to hit but rather he was too big to miss. MW Mateo played the

role of David, and with the assistance of our overseas brethren, notably Brother Clyde Whitfield here and Brother David Roads as well as their officers, our MW Mateo was able to abort the break-away of that overseas lodge, and in doing so, he was able to preserve the sanctity of the sovereignty of our Grand Lodge. The beauty of it all is that when MW Mateo ultimately won the battle he did so without disturbing our harmony with that other Grand Lodge, a tribute to MW Mateo's fine masonic statemanship and diplomacy. MW Mateo is therefore leaving the Grand Oriental Chair with the territorial integrity of our Grand Lodge intact, and so today, we are still the biggest Grand Lodge in the world in terms of territorial jurisdiction. All thanks to MW Mateo.

MW Agustin Victorio Mateo, PGM, you are one of a kind. By your creeds and deeds, you will always be with us, you are not gone ... you have just gone ahead of us to that temple not made by man eternal in the heavens.

Good night MW Mateo. Till we meet again.



## FROM THE GRAND MASTER

### FRATERNAL GREETINGS!

I extend to the editors and staff of The Cable Tow my sincerest congratulations and salutations on the publication's centennial anniversary.

Despite the challenges that our beloved organ has encountered at the start of this term, the staff has nevertheless persevered to come out with the first of many issues of the year.

I have been fortunate to have witnessed this milestone during my term as your Grand Master and I have no doubt that the current leadership of The Cable Tow have exciting things in store for us in celebration of the publication's centenary.

Communication has always been an essential part of our masonic way of life and as the official publication of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines, The Cable Tow has admirably performed its function despite the challenges of the rise of paperless publishing.

The Cable Tow is here to stay, whether papered or digital, and it will continue to inform and illuminate the brethren of this jurisdiction as the premiere herald of the masonic times.

Maraming salamat po.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RAMAS'.

MW DON T. RAMAS-UYPITCHING  
Grand Master