

The Filipino-American Association of Pensacola, Inc.

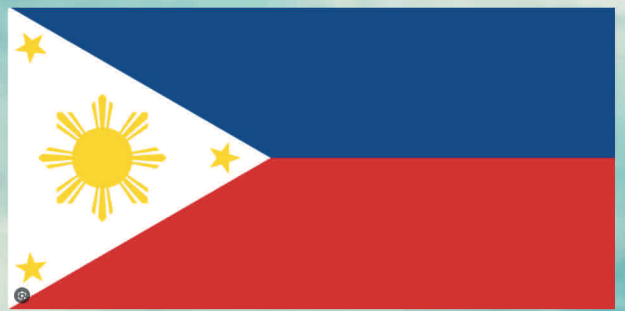


Golden Anniversary
Celebration
October 19th, 2024



The Star Spangled Banner

Oh, say can you see by the dawn's early light
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars thru the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming?
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.
Oh, say does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?



Pambansang Awit ng Pilipinas

Bayang magiliw
Perlas ng Silanganan
Alab ng puso
Sa dibdib mo'y buhay
Lupang Hinirang
Duyan ka ng magiting
Sa Manlulupig
Di ka pasisiil
Sa dagat at bundok
Sa simoy at sa langit mong bughaw
May dilag at tula
At awit sa pag layang minamahal
Ang kislap ng watawat mo'y
Tagumpay na nagniningning
ang bituin at araw niya
Kailan pa ma'y di magdidilim
Lupa ng araw ng luwalhati't pagsinta
Buhay ay langit sa piling mo
Aming Ligaya na pag may mang-aapi
Ang mamatay ng dahil sa iyo.

Welcome

It is with considerable pride that I represent the Fil-Am Association of Pensacola as president during this remarkable and exciting year, our golden anniversary. For fifty years, this organization has thrived and continued to flourish despite the challenges we've faced. Even in the twelve years I've been involved, we have encountered numerous obstacles, but our dedicated team has always come together and persevered. I vividly recall being invited to a Fil-Am meeting a dozen years ago, where I was deeply impressed by the commitment and kindness of the group. Their hard work and genuine compassion encouraged me to become a member.

Over the years, we've weathered many storms, hurricanes, and floods, and even completed a major remodel of the Cultural Center. Although the pandemic restricted our fundraising efforts for maintaining the building, our members' dedication ensured that we prevailed. We've continued to support those in need and contributed to charities, while our special events have celebrated our cultural heritage and provided us with much joy.

Our members are part of a unique and special family. We work hard, contributing our time, money, and effort, but we also share many laughs and smiles. The friendships we've built and the positive impact we've made over the years are truly rewarding. I am honored to be part of these precious fifty years and look forward to many more. Thank you, and God bless us all.



Elvie Battles
President, Fil-Am



EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
WASHINGTON, D.C.



MESSAGE

On behalf of the Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines in Washington, D.C., I convey our warmest greetings to the officers and members of the Filipino-American Association of Pensacola, Inc. on the occasion of its 50th Anniversary on 19 October 2024.

After 50 golden years of promoting Filipino culture, organizing charitable and civic activities, and strengthening the bonds between Filipino and American communities, your organization continues to lead in fostering and preserving a strong Filipino identity in Pensacola. We laud your organization's commitment to deepening people-to-people ties and educating the local community about our beautiful heritage, since 1974. Your work reflects the enduring warmth and generosity of the Filipino spirit.

Furthermore, your contributions have reached far beyond your local community. The financial support and relief efforts you have extended to our kababayan in the Philippines, especially during times of calamity, are heartwarming and inspiring.

The Embassy also wishes to express its appreciation for your invaluable support in organizing the consular outreach mission in Pensacola this year. Your cooperation ensured the smooth delivery of essential services to many of our kababayan. Rest assured, the Embassy remains committed to working closely with you in our shared mission to uplift the Filipino people.

We look forward to another 50 years of your cooperation as we jointly overcome the challenges of our times. The Philippines will never waver in our dream of a better and brighter Philippines. Let us continue to uphold what is right and good, *para sa Bagong Pilipino, para sa Bagong Pilipinas*.

Maraming salamat at mabuhay po kayong lahat!


JOSE MANUEL G. ROMUALDEZ
Ambassador

19 October 2024

Our Golden Anniversary Keynote Speaker

CURRICULUM VITAE

Ms. Donna M. Rodriguez
Career Minister



Ms. Donna M. Rodriguez is a native of Quezon Province, located south of the Philippine capital Manila. Born in 1977, she joined the Department of Foreign Affairs in 1997, after passing the examination for Foreign Service Officers.

Since joining the Department of Foreign Affairs, Ms. Rodriguez has served as Principal Assistant at the Office of Asian and Pacific Affairs (ASPAC) from 1998 to 2001, and as Acting Director in ASPAC in 2003, as Director at the Office of the United Nations and Other International Organizations (UNIO) from 2009 to 2011, and as Director at the Office of ASEAN Affairs (ASEAN) from 2018 until June 2021.

Abroad, Ms. Rodriguez was assigned as Second Secretary and Consul to the Philippine Embassy in Moscow from 2003 to 2007, as First Secretary, Alternate Permanent Representative to ESCAP and Consul to the Philippine Embassy in Bangkok from 2007 to 2009, as First Secretary and Consul, and later on as Minister and Consul at the Philippine Embassy in Beijing from 2013 to 2015. Her last foreign assignment prior to her current post was to the Philippine Embassy in Berlin, where she served as Deputy Chief of Mission from 2015 to 2018.

Ms. Rodriguez arrived in Washington, D.C. in 2021, where she served as the head of the Political and Legislative Section of the Philippine Embassy until June 2024. She is currently assigned as Minister and Consul General, where she heads the Consular Section of the Embassy.

Ms. Rodriguez graduated Magna Cum Laude in 1996 at the age of 19 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science from the University of the Philippines, Diliman. She was also a scholar of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) from 2001 to 2003, where she obtained her Master's degree in International Development Studies from the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies in Tokyo. She obtained a second Master's degree in National Security Administration from the National Defense College of the Philippines in 2020. She also holds the rank of Commander at the Philippine Naval Reserve Command.



Ms. Donna M. Rodriguez
Minister and Consul General



CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF COMMUNITY IMPACT THE FIL-AM ASSOCIATION OF PENSACOLA, INC.

INTRODUCTION

A half century ago, a small group of Filipino Americans in Pensacola came together with a shared vision. To build a vibrant community and promote cultural understanding. This humble beginning marked the inception of the Fil-Am Association of Pensacola. An organization that has since become a cornerstone of community life in the region. As we celebrate its 50th anniversary, it's clear that the membership of Fil-Am's dedication to service, cultural enrichment, and charitable work has left an indelible mark on the Northwest Florida community and a positive impact in the Philippines as well.

FOUNDING AND EARLY YEARS

Founded in the early 1970s by a dedicated group of Filipino Americans who sought to foster a sense of unity and pride within their community. Their goal was not only to celebrate Filipino heritage but also to integrate into the broader Pensacola society, sharing their rich cultural traditions and values. In its formative years, the organization focused on small community gatherings and cultural events. These early efforts laid the groundwork for what would become a series of impactful initiatives aimed at highlighting the Filipino community and supporting charitable causes.

2024 - 2025 Filipino-American Association of Pensacola, Inc. Executive Council & Board Members



President: Elvie Battles

Vice President: G. David Craig

Secretary: Marie Linebaugh

Treasurer: Divina Herrera

Auditor: Lilia Dioso

Executive Director: Romie Tatel

Additional Board Members: Danny Contreras, Rose Contreras, Ched Geiger, Marita Higdon, Larry Linebaugh, Arlin Rodriguez, Sally Salamone, Cecilia Smith, Kory Smith, Randy Stone, Lynn Sweetman, Ely Bustamante, Myra Downs, and Nene Rodriguez

The Filipino-American Association of Pensacola, Inc. Past Presidents



Benjamin Perez



Adolfo Laguio



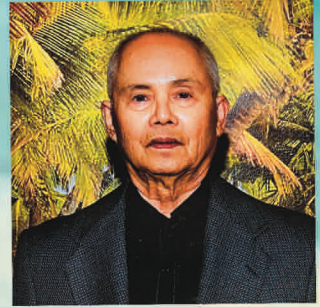
Justo Ruiz



Ely Martinez



Alfredo Estilong



Aniceto Mercado



Vicky Leyva



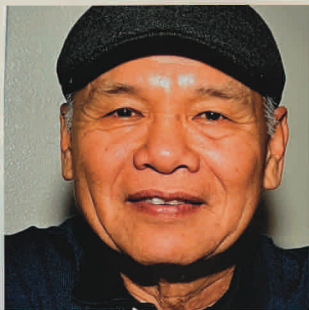
Rodolfo Soriano



Vic Villarama



Lita Golen



Rey Casuga



Frederico Mayorca



Nellie Narciso



Cesar Herrera



Joe C. Ramos



Danny Contreras



Romie Tatel



Benito Bernal



Divina Herrera



Julie Atherton



Azalea Webb



Lita Ramos

Disaster Response

Over the years we have responded to many calamities; putting our time, money and personal efforts towards helping those in need. Members of the Fil-Am Association of Pensacola, Inc. have funded medical missions with the Association of Philippine Physicians of the Florida Panhandle, distribution of food & other supplies to victims of disasters in Tacloban, Leyte, Panama City, and the Taal Volcano eruptions just to name a few. We regularly contribute to charities in our local community and abroad, supporting the education of children, and other worthy endeavors.



Food for Hurricane Michael victims.



Cash Donations to ABS Foundation for Calamity victims in the Philippines.



Cultural Center Flood and the awarding of a \$1,000,000 restoration grant.



Medical mission with Philippine Physicians of the Florida Panhandle in Bohol.

Annual Sports Festivals: A Tradition of Fun and Fellowship



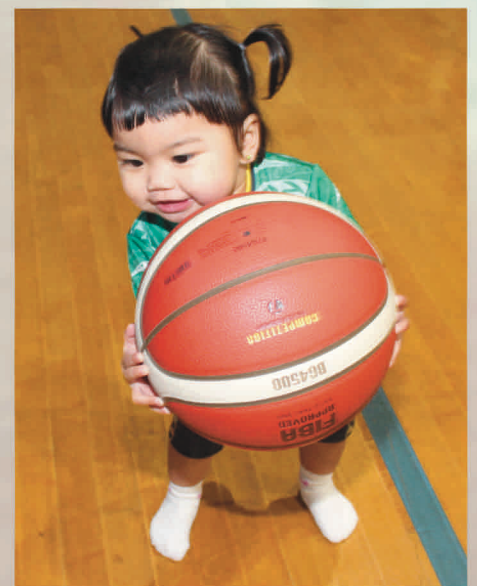
Since 1982, the Fil-Am has hosted the Sports Festival, an event that has become a popular highlight of our Pensacola social calendar. These festivals are more than just athletic competitions; they are a celebration of community spirit and camaraderie. Featuring a variety of events, including basketball, volleyball, bowling, golf, track and field, scrabble, and chess, the festivals bring together participants of all ages. Now called SportsFest, it fosters teamwork, encourages healthy lifestyles, and good sportsmanship. It's also a platform for regional talent to shine, as SportsFest attracts competitors from Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi and other states. It's also a chance for families to come together and enjoy a day of fun and friendly competition, reinforcing the bonds of friendship and community.



2024 SportsFest Chair Divina Herrera organized another incredibly successful competition, building upon a cherished tradition. Competitors were warmly welcomed at the Cultural Center on July 5th, with the scheduled competitions taking place on July 6th and 7th. This year's highlights included basketball, bowling, golf, and scrabble, drawing enthusiastic participation and spirited rivalry.

The festival has thrived thanks to the many dedicated Fil-Am volunteers whose tireless efforts contributed to this smoothly run multi-day extravaganza. The talents of the Fil-Am board members were on display, serving up delicious meals at the Cobb Center basketball venue and hosting a spectacular Awards Dinner at the Fil-Am Cultural Center on the final evening.

Ramon Rogado delivered his usual stellar performance as the Basketball Coordinator, expertly managing the games and even stepping in as one of the referees. Chris Herrera also joined us from Orlando to referee the games, adding to the excitement on the court.





Cordova Lanes was the buzzing hub for the SportsFest bowling events, with Willy Galace taking the lead as this year's Coordinator. The golf competitions were masterfully coordinated by Sal Linezo, while Betchu Serwit headed up the intense and brainy Scrabble matches. A huge thanks goes out to everyone whose hard work and enthusiasm made the 2024 SportsFest a competition to remember! Participating were 14 Fil-Am basketball teams, 20 Golfers, 25 bowlers, and 5 scrabble players. This year's event was a display of athleticism and a wonderful celebration of community spirit and camaraderie.



Pearl of the Orient Dance Group

Traditional dance has always been a featured highlight at our events throughout the years. Led by choreographer Anna Abundo, superb performances are delivered in an ever changing array of wonderful costumes. Formerly the Fil-Am Dancers, The Pearl of the Orient Dance Group was christened in 2017. Below are just a sampling of the diverse ensembles that grace our stage as the dancers thrill Fil-Am audiences.



Troupe: Elvie Battles, Rose Contreras, Anna Abundo, Marita Higdon, Sally Salomone, Lynn Sweetman, Susan Hargreaves, Marie Shuck, Delia Stierwalt, Cecilia Smith, Jo Decker, Ched Geiger, Myra Downs, Cheryl Espanteleon, Danny Contreras, Randy Stone, John Nowak, and Reymart Masong

Pageants for a Cause

Another cornerstone of the Fil-Am's community service is its series of pageants and fundraising events. These pageants are not only a showcase of talent and beauty but also serve as a vital source of funding for various charitable causes. Over the years, the organization has used these events to support local charities, educational scholarships, and disaster relief efforts both locally and internationally.



1996 Lina Lampitoc



1997 Susan B. Decker



1998 Loree C. Costa



1999 Helen E. Galace



2000 Zeny Rees



2001 Rose Contreras



2002 Lyn Gillian



2003 Julie Reguindin



2005 Vivian Moore

Pageants for a Cause

The pageants are known for their emphasis on cultural identity and community involvement. Contestants often highlight their Filipino heritage, contributing to a deeper understanding and appreciation of Filipino culture among the wider Pensacola community.



2006 Belen Slone



2007 Delia Stierwalt



2009 Azalea Webb



2010-11 Erlinda Fonacier



2013 Liz Meriwether



2018-19 Elvie Battles



2020 Amy Austria



Pageants for a Cause



Josephine Cline
1st Runner Up

Maria Abell
2024 Mrs. Philippines
of Northwest Florida

Cheryl Espanteleon
2nd Runner Up



A reunion of previous Mrs. Philippines of Northwest Florida

The 2024 Mrs. Philippines Pageant for a cause was the result of months of tireless work by the candidates. Maria Abell of Panama City, Josephine Cline of Crestview, and Cheryl Espanteleon of Pensacola are to be commended for their efforts on behalf of the charities they chose. It was a wonderful evening with many fabulous performances.

Cuisine

Most people consider the delicious food served at our events to be an extraordinary benefit of membership and attendance. We are blessed with some wonderful chefs and a hard working and dedicated kitchen crew. Shown are just some of these delectable offerings. The menu at our recent Luau Night is depicted below. Warning. You may get hungry!



Food*Friends*Family*Fun*Fil-Am



Food*Friends*Family*Fun*Fil-Am





Looking Ahead: A Legacy of Service and Unity

As the Fil-Am Association of Pensacola celebrates its 50th anniversary, it reflects on a legacy of dedication, service, and cultural enrichment. The organization's journey from its humble beginnings to its prominent role in the Pensacola community is a testament to the power of volunteer effort and a shared vision.

Looking forward, the Fil-Am continues to embrace its mission with renewed vigor, committed to furthering its impact and fostering a sense of unity and pride among its members and the wider community. With plans for new initiatives and ongoing support for cherished traditions, the Fil-Am is poised to continue its positive influence for many years to come.

The Fil-Am Association of Pensacola's 50-year history is a story of perseverance and community spirit. Fil-Am remains a beacon of unity and service, embodying the values that have guided its journey and looking forward to a bright future of continued success and community enrichment.

G. David Craig
Vice President

Fil-Am Association of Pensacola, Inc.

Bryan Madril
Manager
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Visit our website and follow our Facebook to stay in touch with Fil-Am Events.



Website: filampcola.org

facebook.com/filampcola

**In memory of
Cesar T. Herrera
September 25, 1946
to May 26, 2013**

**Fil-Am President
January 1998
to January 2000**



**Divina R. Herrera
Fil-Am President
January 2010
to January 2016**



D'Maharlika Dancers

Congratulate Fil-Am of Pensacola on their Golden Anniversary

Travel More, Travel Better, & Travel For Less!
Presenting our Newest
PLATINUM PARTNER



JOSEPHINE CLINE

Josephine Cline Evelyn Daniel

Liza Davis

Rowena Canete Riza Garcia

Zenaida Bell

Wilbeth Canete Mystie Schmitz



**Maligaya
Dance Group
Best Wishes to
Fil-Am of Pensacola
on their 50th
Anniversary**

**Evelyn Daniel
Dahlia Nuriddin
Alicia Jacob
Sonia Reid
Trini Davis
Eva M. Lauric
Aurora Zierden**



**Pearl of the Orient
Dance Group
showing our
culture through
Philippine Folk
Dance. Happy
50th Anniversary
Fil-Am of
Pensacola.**



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External Affairs



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Managing Partners
Internal Affairs

Mabuhay! Congratulations to the Fil-Am Association of Pensacola, Inc. officers and members on their 50th Anniversary Celebration! We commend your ever-burning passion for promoting and propagating Filipino American families' unique strength and contribution to the community!



US Immigration Legal Services:

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Port Charlotte, FL 33953

Food*Friends*Family*Fun*Fil-Am





Bisayan Connection is happy and excited as we recognize the Fil-Am Association of Pensacola at this Golden Anniversary of their founding. We have shared so many good times over the years as our friendships continue to blossom. Wishing you continued growth and success!



**Happy 50th
Anniversary to Fil-Am of
Pensacola. Congratulations!!!
From Sally & Bob Salomone**



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Linda Gulley (Retd), Tessie Josue

**Our staff's health and weight are managed
by WELLNESS MD, care of Dr. Alex Spence
and lovely wife Leah Dotlich, ARNP.**



Dr. Alex Spence

Leiah Dotlich, ARNP



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Established in 2000

o Over 24 years license on tax preparation, bookkeeping, payroll, e-filing and business documents services. Prompt service - initial and follow through.

o While some clients are based all over the US and the world, Pensacola has been our only chosen office location. Out of town clients do remote business with our trained staff

o Extensive interview and info gathering enables us to provide the optimal tax filing for clients.

o Best prices and best results. We stand behind our work.

