

Mon'Chito' G. Mandap

A servant leader par excellence



Chito Mandap is enormous in the eyes of Filipino Americans for spearheading the Dr. Jose P. Rizal Monument Movement (JPRMM), a journey that started on December 8, 2004, when (26) Fil-Am leaders from different associations convened and decided through a 22-2-2 awe-inspiring vote, that Chito should lead such an altruistic project.

The Filipino Americans' dream, and Chito's passion of having the first, and only full-sized statue of our Philippine national hero in California has come to fruition after eight long years.

He always humbly share with his colleagues and others the crowning glory of the Fil-Am community in So. CA, which can be seen in the City of Carson – the bigger than life 8-foot bronze statue of Dr. Jose P. Rizal mounted on a 7-foot granite finished pedestal at the Carson International Sculpture Garden. It was unveiled on September 29, 2012, with no less than Maria Serena Diokno, Chairperson of the National Historical Commission of the Philippines, as the guest keynote speaker at the Unveiling Ceremony and the Gala. Among other dignitaries present, USA Congresswoman Laura Richardson presented a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition to JPRMM that day.

Chito had humble beginnings, educated in public schools from elementary to college. His fear of being kicked out as a poor full scholar at the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila (PLM) became his strength to excel and be at the top of the his class with degrees in AA, BTEE and BSEE.

At work in the Philippines, he quickly rose from the ranks and had been sent every year (1975~1985) for further advancement to different countries in Asia and Europe and several States in America. He pursued Technical and Management courses at Hitachi Japan, General Electric USA, GE Spain, and the American Management Association.

He migrated from the Philippines to California in 1987, followed by his supportive wife Bessie a few years later. In pursuit of that 'American dream', he worked double jobs during his first three years, 14-16 hours a day, 6-7 days a week as a 7-11 store clerk at night and as an electrical design engineer during day. He quickly rose again from the ranks and became the Chief Engineer and Manager of the entire Engineering Department. It was at this time that he thought of sharing his blessings to help the poor and envisioned long-lasting and meaningful projects to carry out his goals. The Rizal Monument in Carson will be indeed a continuing perpetual legacy.

He continues to be a 'servant leader' currently or formerly – President of Club Minalin of So. CA, Chairman of the United Pampanga Leaders Council, President of LA Angelenos Lions Club, Vice Chair of NaFFAA Region IX, Co-chair of Kalayaan 2001 Independence Ball, Overall Chairman of Kalayaan 2004, California Area Deputy Commander of the Knights of Rizal, Trustee of the Philippine Heritage Institute International, and the list goes on.

He is involved in charitable activities supporting several associations, and not to forget, his commitment as Founder/Chairman of the Dr. Jose P. Rizal Monument Movement. Luck follows him wherever he goes. Or is it blessings from above, because he ends up with record net profits whenever he is the president or chairman.

He has received numerous awards as Community Leader, for Achievements, Excellence and/or Outstanding Leadership. These are all gratifying, but what he cherishes most is his principle in life of humility with excellence and integrity or excellence with integrity and humility. He is not rich but looks rich because of his kindness and generosity. He is humble and shy but appears in the limelight because he always gives his best shot without expecting any return or reward.

Above all, he sincerely believes that everything good in him is a gift from God.