

## PHILIPPINE NURSES ASSOCIATION OF METROPOLITAN D.C., Inc.

### *A History to Remember*

In 1971, a small group of Filipino nurses under the leadership of Tess Sanchez Cauterrucci, organized the Philippine Nurses Association. The concept of organizing stemmed from the need to assist Filipino nurses for the state Board Examination. During that time, the regulatory and licensure commission were closely enforcing the Nurse Practice Act. The new mandate from the State Board of Nursing required all nurses including foreign graduates to be duly licensed to be able to practice in their respective states.

The organization was registered in the District of Columbia. Tess Cauterrucci served as the first president until 1973. She and her officers developed a board review curriculum and hired credentialed reviewers in preparation for the state board examinations. The nursing Boards of different states including the District of Columbia, Maryland, Florida and Virginia, approved the curriculum.

Crescencia Quintos was elected president in 1973; Alice Namata Andam succeeded her in 1974 when she was not able to finish her term due to an unfortunate serious accident. The association continued to offer review classes to all foreign graduate nurses in preparation for the state boards for a minimum fee of \$5.00 per subject.

Mamerta Benzon served as the president from 1976 to 1987. During her presidency the association became involved with the Asian Voters Coalition and the Philippine Heritage Federation.

Naty Labrador led the years between 1987 and 1989. She also initiated the assistance to newly arrived nurses in their job placements. She initiated the health-screening program serving the community.

Zenaida Marcelo was elected president in 1989 and served until 1991. She continued to give assistance to the newly arrived nurses. She extended the health-screening program to more communities.

Teresita Bantug led the organization in 1991 - 1993. In spite of an unprecedented turmoil in the organization, Tess worked hard to continue the goals and mission of the organization.

In 1993 and 1995, Naty Labrador again rose to the occasion and took leadership of the organization. Through her leadership she guided the organization

steadily during the tumultuous years by upholding the constitution and by-laws of the association.

Emma de la Rosa served as president from 1995 to 1997. She worked hard and collaborated with the PNAA in seeking legislation in the extension of H-1A visas to foreign educated nurses. As a result of this concerted lobbying efforts, a bill was passed averting the mass layoff of nurses mostly employed in long-term care facilities. Under her leadership, the organization became a member of the Philippine Nurses Association of America.

Diana Comiso was president from 1997 to 2001. She worked hard to obtain the IRS 501(C) 3 non-profit status for the organization. Diana was also instrumental in the elimination of the CGFNS examination for licensed practicing Filipino nurses from other states seeking endorsement to practice in the District of Columbia.

Alice Andam was elected president in 2001, re-elected in 2003, 2005, 2007 and 2009 for her fifth term. She had accomplished fourteen (14) medical missions to the Philippines as the Medical Mission Organizer/Coordinator, nine (9) of which happened during her incumbency as PNAMDC President, that provided free healthcare services and medication to over 58,253 indigent patients in the underserved areas in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, Philippines. PNAMDC became the first chapter in the Eastern Region of the PNAA and the second PNAA chapter to promote medical missions. Locally, she expanded provision of free health screening and flu shot vaccinations to low income seniors, as well as, first aid services in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan area. Under her leadership a comprehensive orientation program on the integration and transitioning to the American way of life was offered to newly arrived nurses and teachers from the Philippines. Through her leadership, PNAMDC won the Global Geny Lopez, Jr. 2009 Bayaning Pilipino Award. After her term of office, she accepted to continue her role as the PNAMDC, Inc.'s Medical Mission Organizer and Coordinator which is the legacy of the association's humanitarian services to the underprivileged areas in the Philippines.