



## UPAA BAGUIO-NORTHERN LUZON CHAPTER AND UP BAGUIO ORGANIZES 2023 ON-SITE ALUMNI HOMECOMING

Cecilia Fe Sta. Maria-Abalos

The UP Alumni Association Baguio-Luzon Chapter with the Alumni Relations Office-UP Baguio organized the 2023 on-site Alumni Homecoming on May 6, 2023, to mark the 60th year of UP Baguio in the year 2021, and its 20th year as a constituent university in 2022. After two years of lockdown because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2023 Alumni Homecoming's theme "Pauwi sa Atin" became a welcoming affair for the alumni to see each other and reminisce about their student days.

The morning program was held at the Teatro Amianan, UP Baguio. UPAA Baguio-Northern Luzon Chapter President, Ms. Lilia Ronquillo-Bautista, formally welcomed everyone. The opening program also became the opportunity for the UPAA Baguio-Northern Luzon Chapter board members: President - Lilia Ronquillo-Bautista, Vice President - Atty. Shellah Yzanne Merced, Secretary - Hon. Isagani Calderon, Treasurer - Ms. Monalie Sta. Cruz-Romero, Public Relations Officer - Atty. John Ray Libiran, and members of the board: Dr. Mario Imson and Mr. Benedicto Alhambra to present their accomplishments for 8 years. With notable projects, such as: "Food for Thought" (free meals for selected UP Baguio students in need), their assistance to the "Kaagapay Project" of the UP System that provided laptops and tablets to students, partnership with UP Baguio to transport our students to their provincial residences at the height of the pandemic, and providing vitamins, medicines, rice, and food to students and staff during the series of lockdown in Baguio City, to that of extending financial support to UP Cebu during the 2021 earthquake, the board's full commitment to serve the UP Baguio constituents and the larger community is truly commendable.



From left, Angel Aquino, Outgoing UPAA Baguio-Northern Luzon Chapter President - Ms. Lilia R. Bautista and Aireen Perol-Jamaylin

The nominations and election for the next UPAA Baguio-Northern Luzon Chapter board members were also conducted during the morning program. The newly elected board members were Dr. Mario Imson, Atty. Frank Calpito, Ms. Monalie Sta. Cruz-Romero, Mr. Joebel Gurang, Atty. Francisco Benedicto, Mr. Joseph Paul Alipio and Dr. Maria Celia Junio-Fernandez. The newly elected board members will serve for three years (2023-2026).

Other activities in the morning of May 6 also include the Sports Fest, led by Prof. Ivy Inovero, Mr. Ariel Lachica, and Dr. Alejandro Ciencia held at Court A for the basketball and volleyball game at the Himnasyo Amianan, and the Blood Letting activity sponsored by the Scintilla Juris Alumni and Red Cross-Baguio at the UP Baguio Lobby.

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## MCLUHAN FORUM TACKLES RESPONSIBLE JOURNALISM AMIDST RAMPANT MEDIA DISINFORMATION

Roland Rabang

Responsible media is a clarion call for content creators on both social media platforms and traditional media, the latter sometimes called "legacy" media that is print and broadcast media.

The prevailing issue, however, is the difference in the treatment of content. If information published in newspapers, or aired on television and radio goes through layers of verification at least for accuracy, social media contents are summarily uploaded and oftentimes factually challenged resulting in misleading information.

If the age of social media has brought about terms such as "fake news," "misinformation," as well "disinformation," these conditions precipitated the rise of "fact-checking" and "fact-checkers" whose sole responsibility is to correct or supplement the faulty data after the content has been uploaded and shared.

Disinformation poses an existential threat to public order and safety. We recall the January 6, 2021 attack on the United States Capitol by a mob of supporters of defeated

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The evening program and fellowship were held at 456 Le Grande Hotel on Legarda Road. A night of festivities to celebrate the induction of the new board members of the UPAA Baguio-Northern Luzon Chapter, and the awarding of Outstanding Alumni 2023.

This year's Outstanding Alumni are Emmanuel Q. Palo, Zig Carlo M. Dulay, Mudjekeewis D. Santos, Eleanor C. Bulut-Begtang, Donnabel L. Tubera-Panes, Benjamin D.L. Sembrano, and Ferdinand V. Tamoria. This year's awardees were recognized for their contributions to the field of film and television, health and medicine, hard science, and governance.

As a way of recognizing the accomplishments of the outgoing UPAA Baguio-Northern Luzon, Chancellor Corazon L. Abansi gave them a citation award for their leadership and commitment to serving UP during the evening program.

As part of the Homecoming celebration, a golf tournament was held on May 7, 2023 morning at the Baguio Country Club.

This year's alumni homecoming was made successful by the 189 participants who came despite two months of preparation and lead time, the University Student Council-UP Baguio who served as ushers during the morning and evening program, UP Baguio faculty members and staff, alumni fraternities, sororities, confraternities, and student organizations who volunteered their time and services in the conduct of the program.

Proceeds of this year's Alumni Homecoming will be added to the funds for renovating and repainting the hallway, Student Council, OUTCROP, and Council of Leaders offices located at the Alumni Center, U.P. Baguio, and for the UP Baguio Student Resilience Fund.

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Bottom row, left to right: Judge Isagani Calderon, Atty. John Ray Libiran, Atty. Yzanne Merced, Ms. Lilia Bautista, Chancellor Corazon Abansi, Dr. Mario Imson, Mr. Benny Alhambra. Top row, from left to right: Dr. Mudjekeewis Santos, Col. Benjamin Sembrano, Dr. Loreta Ramel-Galima, Cong. Eleanor Bulut-Begtang, Dr. Donnabel Tubera-Panes, Mr. Zig Dulay, Mr. Emmanuel Palo, and Dr. Ferdinand Tamoria.

## UP ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BAGUIO-NORTHERN LUZON CHAPTER AND UP BAGUIO RECOGNIZES OUTSTANDING ALUMNI 2023

### Alumni Relations - UP Baguio

The evening of May 6, 2023, was an occasion to recognize this year's Outstanding Alumni. With more than 20 nominations received, only 8 were selected as recipients of the 2023 Outstanding Alumni Award.

The UP Alumni Association Baguio-Northern Luzon Chapter and the University of the Philippines Baguio recognize exemplary alumni. Upholding honor and excellence in their respective fields, the Outstanding Alumni Award is also given to an alumnus or alumna who consistently contributes to social change and development.

This year's awardees come from the fields of education, governance, health science, medicine, hard science, and the film and television industry. Our awardees are pioneers in their respective fields who continue to build a better world. Our Outstanding Alumni Awardees are embodying what UP stands for. They carry the Tatak UP... TATAK UP BAGUIO.

*In the field of Education:*

#### LORETA VIVIAN RAMEL-GALIMA

Loreta Vivian Ramel-Galima earned her degree in BA Political Science from UP College Baguio in 1974, her MA in Asian Studies, and her Ph.D. in Philippines Studies from UP Diliman. Among the many leadership roles as a faculty of Nueva Vizcaya State University, she served as a Consultant, Presidential Assistant for Public Relations and Linkages, Editor of the Graduate Research Journal, Associate Editor of the NVSIT Research Journal,

and faculty, Dean, and Vice President for Academic Affairs of Nueva Vizcaya State University, among others. Dr. Ramel-Galima "has empowered deans... saved programs that were on the verge of being phased out and helped in establishing the College of Agriculture as a Center of Development." Loreta Vivian Ramel-Galima has mentored many students and faculty members and colleagues in other universities and is now a Professor Emerita at NVSU. She has left the TATAK UP BAGUIO by serving Nueva Vizcaya State University.

#### FERDINAND V. TAMORIA

A graduate of BS Mathematics, UP College Baguio. He earned his MS Statistics degree from UP Diliman and his Ph.D. in Education (Mathematics) from the UP Open University. A Professor of the President Ramon Magsaysay State University (PRMSU), he is the current Chair of the College Research Committee. He spearheaded research activities for the College of Teacher Education, implemented a curriculum for future teachers of mathematics and statistics, and developed course materials for flexible learning to strengthen the teaching of mathematics and allied sciences. He is also a consultant for the design, analysis, and evaluation of research/thesis of undergraduate and graduate students. He took the lead in improving the quality management system of delivery units of President Ramon Magsaysay State University, San Marcelino Campus. An accreditor of the Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities of the Philippines (AACUP), Dr. Tamoria "continues to be of service to the academic community."





Participants from the McLuhan Forum held on March 24, 2023 at the UP Baguio Teatro Amianan

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Presidential candidate Donald Trump, which resulted in fatalities, injuries, and destruction of property, only because Trump falsely claimed that the election was stolen from him. This false claim, in turn, was amplified on social media as well as television networks loyal to Trump.

This is the backdrop of discussions at the McLuhan Forum held on March 24, 2023, at the University of the Philippines Baguio Teatro Amianan. Three former recipients of the McLuhan Fellowship grant spoke at the forum. They were journalists Christian Esguerra, Manny Mogato, and Ellen Tordesillas. Esguerra, a McLuhan Fellow in 2020, is the anchor of the Facts First podcast on YouTube. Mogato, a 2017 McLuhan Fellow, is editor-at-large of the television network News5. Tordesillas, president of the online news organization Vera Files, which had expanded its role to include fact-checking social media content, was a McLuhan Fellow in 1998.

The McLuhan Fellowship is awarded by the McLuhan Program and the Embassy of Canada to a journalist who embodies outstanding qualities in the field of investigative journalism.

While the McLuhan lecture series had “responsible media” as its main theme, the UP Baguio leg of the forum weighed in on the implications of disinformation and how organizations engaged in disinformation threaten the principles of democracy itself.

Tordesillas said that while fact-checking appears to have been the outcome of rampant disinformation on social media, the process of “checking the facts” is as old as journalism itself. The difference is that whether information is published as news or feature format on print (newspapers, magazines) or broadcast (radio, television), the facts are verified prior to publication or airing.

The endeavor to ascertain facts as well as affirm the reliability of sources of these facts has been imperative with traditional media because at stake is the credibility of the publication and network, which in turn results in public patronage. Meticulous and rigorous fact-checking and selection of sources are necessary because accountability and responsibility rest solely on the media institution. In social media, there are no such guardrails so that content could be uploaded by individuals with false identities.

“False information on social media could just be inadvertent or deliberate,” Tordesillas said. Deliberate disinformation makes the content toxic, she adds. “That’s the reason why social media made fact-checking a necessity because disinformation has no geographical boundaries, and it also allows for anonymity.”

The other question is whether people still care about facts. In dealing with this question, Esguerra said the underlying problem is not with facts alone but the tendency for facts to be politicized. He said deliberate disinformation had been weaponized to the extent that it results in extreme political polarization. Citing the hostility of the Duterte administration against traditional media practitioners, Esguerra laments that when politicians utilize disinformation as a weapon, it causes the media to be under siege, which places journalists in harm’s way.

Widespread disinformation also fosters a culture of impunity where accountability and responsibility are nowhere to be lodged. “The byline is not just to identify who the writer of the content is,” Tordesillas said. “It also identifies who is accountable for the content. Without an identified author, who will you bring to court?”

The problem, according to Esguerra, is that if there are media practitioners

who abide by “a set of standards in journalism,” such as those who work for legacy media, there are also “line troll networks – or the propagandists, and meta-partisan news ecosystems such as those on YouTube” who can engage in unmitigated attacks simply because they are hiding behind the cloak of anonymity.

There is a need to go back to the basics, Tordesillas said. Mogato added that the need goes deep into establishing media literacy programs in schools. “Schools have a civic duty to educate children,” he said. Likewise, Mogato added there might be logic in considering laws that would penalize disinformation peddlers. “The audience should realize that not all information is news, but all news is information,” Esguerra said.

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For Governance:

## ELEANOR C. BULUT-BEGTANG

The former Governor of Apayao, Hon. Eleanor C. Bulut-Begtang is now the Representative of the lone district of Apayao. Serving several terms as Governor, Congresswoman Bulut-Begtang elevated the capacity of health sectors to respond to COVID-19 and strengthened the collaboration between the National Line Agencies and Local Government Units in Apayao. Demonstrating good governance, she ensures that in all her work aspects of inclusion, equity, efficiency, and participation are practiced. As the current Congresswoman, she continues to prioritize education by enacting laws for the establishment of 12 independent public secondary schools in Apayao, converting two provincial roads into national roads, and allocating funds for the development of her constituents. Taking the lead in the environmental protection of the forest of Apayao, Representative Eleanor C. Bulut-Begtang is living proof of honor and excellence.

## BENJAMIN D.L. SEMBRANO

Living the unsullied life of a Police Colonel, Benjamin D.L. Sembrano has earned the respect of the uniformed and non-uniformed Filipinos he continues to serve. As City Director of the Olongapo City Police Office to his current position as Chief of PCO Placement and Promotion Division, Directorate for Personnel and Records Management (DPRM), Philippine National Police, Benjamin Sembrano has consistently performed his duty to his country. With a track record of operational accomplishments, ensuring peace and order, and directly addressing crime, Police Colonel Sembrano is a highly decorated officer who shows how a uniformed Iskolar ng Bayan can truly engender respect and trust from the public.



For Science, Health, and Medicine:

## MUDJEKEEWIS D. SANTOS

A Fishery Scientist and Marine Biologist, widely recognized for his work on utilizing genetics, resource assessment, and policy studies to strengthen fisheries management and aquaculture to address food security, aid in the conservation of marine biodiversity, and facilitate climate change adaptation, Dr. Mudjekeewis D. Santos or "Doc Mudjie" has taken upon himself to ensure that honor, excellence, and service become the mantra of the hard sciences. A Scientist 4, and working for the Training Division of the National Fisheries Research and Development Institute - Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Doc Mujie transgressed the boundaries of scientific concepts that are difficult to understand to popularizing knowledge on science, making it accessible and comprehensible, and piquing the interest of the public. Showing high regard for his pioneering work on marine biodiversity, an islet in the Eleven Islands or Once Islas in Zamboanga City was named "Mudjie Wise Key Islet." Dr. Mudjekeewis D. Santos exemplified honor, excellence, and service and is very much deserving of this Outstanding Alumni Award.

## DONNABEL L. TUBERA-PANES

The COVID-19 pandemic has created fear and uncertainty. Alongside the threat of this virus, Dr. Donnabel L. Tubera-Panes was holding the reins of leadership as a Medical Officer of the Health Services Office-Baguio City. Making tough decisions as the head of the City Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit of Baguio, Dr. Tubera-Panes became the "watchman" for emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases, directing and guiding the front liners in public and private hospitals in the city to mitigate further spread, prevent deaths, and ensure that Baguio citizens are safe and healthy. Among her accomplishments as a medical officer, Dr. Tubera-Panes spearheaded the Tobacco Control Program, Smoke-Free Baguio, and Tuberculosis Control Program. Working with limited resources, Donnabel Tubera-Panes continues to inspire medical practitioners and researchers to tirelessly serve the public.



Angel Aquino and Manny Palo with our students. Front row, Jude Laporga, middle row, Giana Madrid, third row-from left to right, Aaron Yancha and Arjay Adrid



Zig Dulay with our students



May 7, 2023 Gold Tournament at the Baguio Country Club. UP Alumni Association - National Board members with the Outgoing UPAA Baguio Northern Luzon Chapter Board Members



Alumni Basketball Players (men and women) at Court A

For film, television, theater, and the arts

## ZIG M. DULAY

Tightly sewing stories of the past and present, Zig M. Dulay shows us how this enmeshment can be watched on television. Capturing the hearts and minds of the audience through his storytelling, Direk Zig raises critical questions about the past and eases the audience into confronting the present. Zig's works are not only aesthetically pleasing but also an iteration of Mills' "Sociological Imagination" – "the understanding of one's position and experiences as reflective of broader and social and historical forces." Baon ni Direk Zig Dulay ang kamalayan ng isang Iskolar ng Bayan. From his works such as "Maria Clara at Ibarra," "Black Rainbow," "Paglipay," and others, Direk Zig keeps in mind that film and television are a way to shape the consciousness of the audience.

## EMMANUEL Q. PALO

A multi-awarded director and writer here and abroad, Emmanuel Q. Palo continues to charter new territories in film and television. Through the years, his works are narrative metaphors that contain a spectrum of powerful images that illustrate the social reality of the Filipino masses. Direk Manny is never afraid of his choice to tell stories about marginalized, oppressed, and oftentimes voiceless people. His eloquently written and directed films and television shows peel on Filipino social reality. Emmanuel Q. Palo is a weaver of stories who is not afraid of positioning his art for challenging the Filipinos to choose and assert equality.



## UP CLOSE WITH UP BAGUIO ALUMNI

To strengthen our relationships with our alumni, this portion under the UP Baguio Alumni Corner features alumni who are flourishing in their fields of profession. As a way of recognizing our alumni, we will share how UP Baguio has molded them to uphold honor and excellence, and the way they charted their career directions to serve the people and our nation.

As a first for *Up Close*, our own students interviewed Emmanuel Palo, Zig Carlo Dulay, and Angelita Grace Aquino, who are now big names in the film and television industry, and Dr. Donnabel Tubera-Panes.

### EMMANUEL "MANNY" Q. PALO

Aaron Yancha

Emmanuel Q. Palo is an award-winning film and television director, screenwriter, and playwright. Among his laudable teleseryes include "The General's Daughter," "The Good Son," and the currently streaming "Unbreak My Heart." Manny Palo has received national and international awards as a director and screenwriter.

In my exclusive interview with Direk Emmanuel "Manny" Palo, I had the opportunity to learn about his experiences as an Iskolar ng Bayan of UP Baguio. His story of how he became a person in the field of the arts proves that life is an ever-changing journey, filled with unexpected twists and turns.

Palo revealed that he first took up BS Pre-Med (a program that is now nonexistent in UP Baguio) with the intent of becoming a doctor. He shifted to BS Biology because he would have had to pursue Medicine for the Pre-Med program to fully make sense. However, along the way, he got involved in student politics. In his sophomore year, he ran as a student council representative and then was recruited to progressive organizations such as SAMAFIL (Samahan ng mga Mag-aaral sa Filipino). In the latter part of the year, he became a member of Pi Sigma Fraternity, which he says is a "very progressive fraternity" that prides itself on its motto "Paglingkuran ang Sambayanan."

It was the height of Martial Law when he became an Iskolar ng Bayan. With cases of human rights violations rising, he eventually got immersed in activism and the anti-dictatorship movement. This led to changes in his perspective and the discovery of his talents in the field of the arts.

He became the head of the cultural committee of LFS (League of Filipino Students), and his main tasks consisted of organizing cultural workers and mounting performances to protest against the dictatorship. He came to a realization that he did not want to pursue Medicine anymore, as he focused on becoming a full-time activist instead.

Palo especially felt the essence of being an Iskolar ng Bayan during the Marcos



*Direk Manny Palo on-location shoot in Italy for the series "Unbreak My Heart."*

dictatorship, to which he stated, "Kailangan ma-fulfill namin what is expected of us as Iskolar ng Bayan, during the Marcos dictatorship, to which he stated, "Kailangan ma-fulfill namin what is expected of us as Iskolar ng Bayan, which is to fight for a just, humane society... To fight for the marginalized and the oppressed."

He founded TABAK-Baguio (Tanghalang Bayan ng Kabataan sa Baguio) together with Bong Ramillo, who was one of his closest friends at the time. To this day, TABAK-Baguio is a thriving performing organization in UP Baguio that has consistently moved people with their striking and relevant plays that critique the socio-political and economic situation of the country. "Ang maganda kapag naging estudyante ka ng UP, hindi mo makakalimutan yung pinagmulan mo, yung experiences na pinagdaanan mo."

An advice he gives to students of UP Baguio is to always remember that the masses pay for their education through their taxes, not the administration. He adds that the masses deserve nothing less from us students too; therefore, we as students must continue serving the people inside and outside of the campus. UP Baguio has always been a home for Palo. The friendships he formed at the university have kept him grounded to this day. He assures that the shared struggles and sacrifices that he and his friends have experienced will always remain and will never change.

### ZIG CARLO M. DULAY

Arjay Adrid

Zig Carlo M. Dulay is an award-winning film and television director and screenwriter. Among his multi-awarded films are "Paglipay," "Bagahe," and "Black Rainbow." His notable teleseryes include "Legal Wives" and "Maria Clara and Ibarra." Direk Zig has received international and national awards as a director and screenwriter.

I first saw Direk Zig when he went up the stage of Teatro Amianan after his short film "Black Rainbow" was screened through PROGRAM. During the short forums before and after the film showing, it was mentioned that Zig specifically requested to appear in the program, and it looked like it was the way he talked to the audience and the way he shared his experiences as a filmmaker from UP Baguio. He was compassionate and eccentric; he looked like he was excited to finally be back home.

My interview with him was comparable to a mentoring session: it felt like he was mentoring me as a graduating student from his alma mater, especially since we are both from the field of communication. He shared his experiences when he was still a student in UP Baguio; this was where he learned about the fundamentals of being a true Iskolar ng Bayan. What interested me the most was when we talked about Wright Mills' sociological imagination, a theoretical concept that we both have learned in UP Baguio that underscores how a writer, filmmaker, and artist shapes his reality through his art drawn from community and field experience. It was interesting how he was fond of applying such an academic concept to his field.

With my one-on-one kwentuhan with the batch 2022 alumnus, I also learned that his works were not only influenced by his academic learnings in the academe but his inspirations and work ethics were also influenced by the lessons he learned on the ground with his organizations when he was a student in UP Baguio; organizations which are Alliance of Concerned Students and Student Christian Movement of the Philippines. His experiences in joining his organizations taught him the importance of collective



action, community-building, and learning about societal situations in reality through educational discussions, basic mass integration, and other organizational activities. True enough, this was something that I truly related to since I, myself, was able to extend my education outside the four walls of the classroom through organizational activities and other extracurricular activities. Direk Zig and I would agree, UP Baguio is a community that hones its students not only academically but also through immersion in realistic situations.

UP Baguio nurtures its students by honoring their origins – that is the pride of UP Baguio, as realized by Direk Zig. As a "probinsyano" coming from Isabela, who studied in Baguio, and later faced the challenges of life in Metro Manila, Direk Zig greatly holds onto his deep appreciation for local arts and narratives, especially those that he brought from his hometown. According to him, this is what is unique about UP Baguio: it teaches you an appreciation for diversity as much as it teaches you to appreciate your own individuality, your own locality, and your community. True enough, his appreciation for local art and narratives are evident in his works such as the films "Black Rainbow," "Paglipay" and "Bagahe," and teleseryes "Legal Wives" and "Maria Clara at Ibarra."



Direk Zig M. Dulay

## ANGELITA GRACE "ANGEL" V. AQUINO

Giana Madrid

Angelita Grace M. Aquino is a fashion model, host, and actress in film and television. She has been awarded by PMPC as Best Actress and Best Travel Show Host, and she also received the most coveted Best Supporting Actress Award by Urian. Among the many teleseryes, she is best known for her roles as Brig. General Diane Oligario in "Probinsyano," and Feliz Fiero-Pavia in "Dirty Linen."

Easy, open-minded, and compassionate. Those were three words that Ms. Angel Aquino used to describe herself, but I think she may have just missed one more: angelic. Like most people, I have always adored seeing Ms. Angel on television, but I was just as starstruck when I got the chance to interview her online – I mean, it's THE Angel Aquino herself! Her beauty and kindness were piercing through our laptop screens. But apart from her timeless charm, there is a lot more about Angel Aquino that I find admirable.

Ms. Angel is unarguably an amazing actress that we all look up to, yet who would have guessed that she also once roamed around the UP Baguio campus, making fun and crazy memories here? I also never would have expected that she also took the same courses I am currently taking. Angelita Grace Aquino entered UP Baguio in 1989 with a program in Mathematics but shifted to the Bachelor of Arts in Communication program in 1991, two years later. She stayed in UP Baguio for six years before graduating in 1995. As a journalism major, she said she enjoyed "getting to the bottom of things" and even aspired to be a broadcaster and pursue investigative journalism – a dream that I genuinely resonate with.

During her years at the university, Ms. Angel was also involved in organizing and mobilizing her fellow students. It was during this time that the most pressing issue in the country was the construction of US military bases. She felt strongly about it, saying, "As Filipinos and UPians, we advocate for sovereignty, and we cannot fully have that if [military] bases were around and controlling the political landscape of our country." Having this conviction, along with the company of her politically-inclined friends, she became more exposed to the reality and struggles of the country. She became a part of the Alliance of Concerned Students (ACS) and League of Filipino Students (LFS) and has since become more involved in political work, including protests and information



Angel Aquino

dissemination. I was squealing on the inside when I learned about this – Angel Aquino and I belonging to the same organizations felt so unreal to me. I wanted to believe that we may as well be soulmates at this point, but kidding aside, I truly respect the fact that she was also once a part of the movement that we, the youth, are striving to keep alive today.

Like a true Iskolar ng bayan, Ms. Angel embodied UP's slogan: to serve the people. On top of being a student activist, she was also working part-time as a model, traveling to Metro Manila during weekends for modeling gigs. Her life in university was nothing short of hard work, and of course, challenges. Like any other struggling student, she's also had her fair share of ups and downs. Ms. Angel recalled failing a math class and being left with only six units, which made her stay in UP: one minor subject and one PE subject. She also shifted two years after entering the university and took six years to graduate – which up to this day, holds a lot of pressure and a notion of "failure." However, this reminded me that we are all just trying our best to figure out what works for us, so mistakes are inevitable, if not crucial. Even Ms. Angel, a successful figure in the industry, once went through this process, and yet she isn't defined by her setbacks. She faced her challenges with grit and came back stronger.

Now in her 50s, Ms. Angel is thriving in her career and has never been happier with her craft. She shares that she's in a position where her voice is louder, and her creative opinions are heard and acknowledged. In all that she does, she finds strength and empowerment in strong and wonderful women around her, including her nanay and her two



daughters. Moreover, throughout her struggles and victories, Ms. Angel was able to continue persevering with grit and grace because in her core is a strength founded on learnings and experiences she's had growing up and during her stay in UP. "All those six years in UPB, it really formed who I am today. I will not discount my childhood experiences, but when it comes to the strength of character, principles, political beliefs, and my belief system – it was honed through my being a UPian and through the help of my friends. They helped me a lot in terms of the way I put value in myself, as a person, and especially as a woman, and as a Filipino. All these things, natutunan ko at na-hone sa UP Baguio."

To this day, Ms. Angel considers UP Baguio a home that she can always come back to.

## DONNABEL TUBERA-PANES

Jude Laporga

Donnabel Tubera-Panes is currently the Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit Head of the Baguio City Health Services Office. Donna earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology and graduated in 1996. She works closely with faculty members from the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science to monitor COVID-19 and Dengue cases in the city.

"Honor and Excellence" goes beyond being just a university motto. For Dr. Donnabel Tubera-Panes, it is a lived reality. From her time as a student at the University of the Philippines Baguio (UP Baguio) to immediately beginning work as a teacher, going to medical school, serving as a doctor to the barrios, and now overseeing the City Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit of Baguio, "it is still the same, honor and excellence."

Where it all began

Her story began at UP College of Baguio, now referred to as UP Baguio, a small, chilly University of the Philippines campus where everyone knows each other. The students at UP Baguio form a close-knit community with diverse cultures and life experiences. As a result, Dr. Tubera-Panes had little trouble adjusting to collegiate life. She had "manangs" and "adings" (older and younger siblings) from her organizations who acted as her social support system. "Hindi naman (nahirapan mag-adjust sa college) dahil I was connected to a religious organization(ization). I have ates with me to support me... social support talaga ang hinanap ko noon," Dr. Tubera-Panes said. She further explains, "It (referring to the bonding) transcends sa year level mo... May mga ates ka pa, may mga adings ka pa... 'Yun 'yung circle of friends ko, and I am happy about it,' she added.

Her financial struggles, however, significantly contributed to many difficulties she faced in college. Her mother even told her that she couldn't attend college due to the family's financial constraints. Despite this, if a young girl truly desired something, nothing could stop her from achieving it. She was fortunate enough to be accepted into bracket one of the

Socialized Tuition and Financial Assistance Program (STFAP) after passing the UPCAT, which enabled her to pursue a college education. Dr. Tubera-Panes had to work as a student assistant to the faculty's kids, earning 12 pesos per hour, to support herself in Baguio.

Some may argue that Dr. Tubera-Panes' poverty did not affect her ability to achieve her dreams. But this isn't about that. These hardships and other grievous experiences of her friends from the same economic class were instrumental in her becoming more sympathetic and empathetic to people's welfare and struggles. That experience indeed made an impact on choosing her career path later. Throughout our conversation, she never made me feel that her story was merely another illustration of the adage "poverty is not a hindrance," but rather was the narrative of a young adult woman discovering her place and calling in the world. She said, "Through those stories, and I am surrounded by my friends who are like me or even poorer than me, kung may ganoon man, doon mo marerealize na kailangan ka nga ng tao."

Concurrently, Dr. Tubera-Panes was also an academic achiever. She completed her Bachelor of Science in Biology program in just three and a half years. Her academic career taught her to perform tasks with excellence rather than solely for the sake of completing them. Being a student at UP Baguio comes with the burden of high expectations for one's abilities. That is the culture UP Baguio is cultivating, and it is the culture that has prepared Dr. Tubera-Panes for much bigger duties that await her outside of the university.

Staying true to her core values

Following her six months of teaching at UP Baguio, Dr. Tubera-Panes immediately enrolled at Saint Louis University's medical school, where her academic excellence and leadership abilities were tested. Even if she and the other UP graduates don't always top the exams, they are nonetheless trusted to take the lead in group projects. She states that the ability to confidently lead a group distinguishes UP graduates from others. "Every UP graduate is already called to lead. Hindi ka pa man din grumagraduate mayroon ka na ring calling to lead the team," she added.

Meanwhile, when she served as a



Donnabel Tubera-Panes

doctor in a barrio, this leadership ability was again tested. At an early age, she was tasked with administering the entire community's health on a shoestring budget. Although it was not a simple assignment, serving the community ignited her passion for public health. The experience opened her eyes to how inaccessible and costly public health is for people from a far-flung community. She argued that many diseases could have been avoided if people had been adequately taught about them. Hence, she promotes prevention above cure. "I don't like people getting sick kasi if people get sick ubos na 'yung pera niyan. Ibebenta mo 'yung kalabaw mo. Ibebenta mo 'yung lupa mo," she said. "Kung walang magpa-public health sino ang mag-fi-fight ng rights ng mga tao," she added.

Dr. Tubera-Panes also recounted an event in the Barrio where she had stood by the moral high ground. "When I was serving this community, mayroong mga corruption... They let you sign things that you did not purchase. Hindi ko talaga kinaya. I ran in the middle of the talk, and I cried... it was the conviction na hindi mo kayang gawin na gagawa ka ng masama," she shared.

A Lifetime Practice

Dr. Tubera-Panes continues to uphold honor and excellence today. Armed with expertise and immense prior experience, she assumed command as the head of the City Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit of Baguio in the grueling battle against the COVID-19 pandemic.



She became the "watchman" for emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases, directing and guiding the frontline workers in public and private hospitals to mitigate further spread, prevent deaths, and ensure Baguio citizens are safe and healthy. The experience encourages her to use her expertise and to do "what is right" by holding herself accountable for the information she gives, especially when fake news is pervasive.

She also keeps up with advocacy work with programs like the Tuberculosis Control Program, Smoke-Free Baguio, and the Tobacco Control Program, which urge people to live healthier lifestyles. And up to this day, she continues to stand up for the principles taught by UP whenever people try to intimidate her because of her advocacies.

## ALUMNI GRATITUDE POST

UP Baguio received gifts from our alumni. Thank you very much, Sigma Kappa Phi and Sigma Delta Pi for sponsoring the UPB University Student Council's "Kapihan." Beta Sigma Fraternity for the flat-screen television displayed at the UPB Lobby. University of the Philippines Medical Alumni Association (UPMASA) for supporting the project of the Office of Counseling and Guidance - UPB. Marian Cathedral-King and Friends of the University of the Philippines Foundation in America (FUPFA). The Technical Working Group (TWG) of UPB@60 under the leadership of Prof. Shine Queri.

Thank you for investing in generations of leaders who will embody honor, excellence, and service.

Partner with us by giving to UP Baguio. Email us at [alumni.upbaguio@up.edu.ph](mailto:alumni.upbaguio@up.edu.ph)



Blood Letting project with Red Cross-Baguio and Scintilla Juris



Pi Omicron Faternity



Nominations for the next UPAAG Baguio-Northern Luzon Chapter Board members at the Teatro Amianan



Winners of this year's Alumni Golf Tournament



The newly elected Board Members. Left to right, Atty. Frank Calpito, Ms. Moanalie Sta Cruz-Romero, Atty. Francisco Benedicto, Dr. Mario Imson, Dr. Maria Celia Junio-Fernandez, Mr. Joseph Paul Alipio and Mr. Joebel Gurang



## ASCENDING HILL STATION

Luis Zuriel P. Domingo

Academics are travelers. Most of us do not have permanent but only temporary addresses. We move from one place to another. A new teaching or research post means moving and settling into a new institution: new colleagues, a new environment, and even a new cubicle. We move from one academic post to another not only for personal growth but sometimes because it is how the job market works nowadays – better opportunities translate to a better lifestyle.

It has been five months since I moved to Baguio from Manila. As a young academic, I started my career in Manila as a researcher for several years while finishing my graduate studies in history. I worked from one full-time job to another, some part-time jobs to another, and some gig research and writing projects on the side. Amidst the pandemic, a new opportunity opened for me to take a new post as a lecturer here in town – say, a pandemic lecturer – a term we call ourselves, referring to those who started our recent academic posts online, teaching long distance. Imagine teaching history from my study in Manila for a year, having yet to meet any of my students or colleagues in person. But after that year of online teaching, I joined the university as a full-time faculty member, moving in for partial face-to-face classes.

Baguio has been home to many well-known academics or had been their home at some point in their stellar careers. And Baguio is now my new home. As a Manileño – a modern ethnic term based on the idea of “place” that I consider myself to be part of, born and bred in Imperial Manila but never seen or felt, ethnically and culturally connected with my parents’ ancestry – moving a hundred miles from the center was kind of a culture shock to me. While I get to travel for leisure and work from one country to another, moving and living in another town was entirely novel.

My memory of Baguio before moving in was limited to old film photographs that my parents took when I was still a toddler: fog, strawberries, and horses.

Historically and culturally – and based on personal observations, Baguio is an example of a modern town settlement (which I believe would raise an eyebrow from my colleagues in the college). Despite its rich and vibrant indigenous cultural heritage that can be traced a hundred years ago, Americanism dominates its everyday tangible and intangible culture.

For one thing, Baguio has no trace of Spanish colonialism. Even the most significant colonial artifact that the Spaniards left and deeply embedded in Filipino culture, Catholicism, was introduced in Baguio only during the American period under Belgian missionaries. The Americans were the first to take a strong interest in this Cordilleran plateau beyond their colonial pursuit. Its urban architectural design is American, and even streets are named after American colonial administrators. Jeepneys and taxicabs play locally-produced country music. Not to mention, you’ll find a group of old men wearing cowboy hats converging at McDonald’s every morning, having their pancakes and coffee. It only shows that Baguio was and is a successful American colonial project.

But throughout the years, the city has developed its own culture, just like every center. A unique culture built on a tradition that came to embrace the idea of modernity. Sometimes, these modern cultures are prejudiced against those who come to embody them, but I see it as something emphatically distinctive, as every place has its own cultural characteristics. Something that most Filipinos fail to see and do not come to appreciate or value.

For five months, most of what I knew at first about Baguio was from my colleagues’ informal orientation of the town and its culture, but I have corroborated and confirmed some of this through personal interaction – and have yet to experience some more as I continue to explore the corners of Baguio.

It’s not only the alluring cold weather that makes Baguio unique nor the indigenous heritage that makes it an interesting tourist destination for locals and foreigners. But Baguio has that riveting overtone that it continues to share with its weekend visitors and passersby.

When people I meet here in Baguio ask me about my experience of living in town for months now, I just always tell them that I love how Baguio does not run out of surprises.

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