

United Chambers of Commerce honors outstanding business and civic leaders at 33rd Annual Celebrating Business recognition dinner

by RENE VILLAROMAN
AJPress

WOODLAND HILLS—The United Chambers of Commerce, San Fernando Valley and Region, recognized San Fernando Valley's outstanding business leaders and business firms in its 33rd Annual Celebrating Business recognition dinner at the Woodland Hills Hilton Hotel last Thursday, March 19.

UCC bestowed the Outstanding Small Business of the Year Award to Harold Wilson Insurance and Financial Services, Inc., and its President/Owner, Harold Wilson, a member of the San Fernando Valley Filipino American Chamber of Commerce (SFVFACC), received the award.

"I especially want to thank the Filipino American Chamber

of Commerce of San Fernando Valley, although my time with them has been very limited," Wilson acknowledged. "Each and every day, we make an impact on someone else's life," Wilson said.

Before establishing his insurance and finance firm, Wilson had served as a helicopter pilot during the Vietnam War, and was for 11 years, a Fireman, Lieutenant/Fire Protection Officer and Marshall with the Alto Richardson Bay Fire District in the Bay Area.

People is Wilson's number 1 priority that is why he feels that being in the insurance business is his true calling.

"I am very proud of him because I know he works very hard," said his Fil-Am wife Amelia. "He loves what he does because he is helping people," Amelia said.

"It's a great award," Wilson told Asian Journal after receiving the award in the presence of some members and officers of the SFVFACC, including President Leo Maranan, Past President Noel Omega, and Secretary Maryann Omega.

"First of all, it's a great honor to be picked from a thousand other people," Wilson said. "I am very thankful to SFVFACC for the different things they do for the community and allowing me to be a part of it."

Wilson said the award was unexpected. "I am really excited about this," he said.

The award was handed to Wilson by Stephen Holzer, UCC Chairman of the Board and program Master of Ceremony, and Debi Schultze, President and Chief Executive Officer; and Assembly Mem-

ber Cameron Smyth of the 38th District.

UCC also bestowed the President's Award to the Southland Regional Association of Realtors, the Outstanding Medium Business of the Year Award to the Beverly Garland's Holiday Inn; Outstanding Large Business of the Year Award to Westfield Topanga and Promenade; Outstanding Public Safety Official of the Year Award to Firefighter Mitch McKnight; Outstanding Elected Official's Staff Member of the Year Award to Mitchell Englander and Councilman Greig Smith; Outstanding Business Leader of the Year Award to Joe Vitti; the Tami Ginzburg "Celebration of Service" Award to Marilyn Robinson; the Chairman's Awards to Providence Health & Services; and Metropolitan Water District. ■



Amelia and Harold Wilson hold the UCC Outstanding Small Business Award trophy. AJ Press Photo by Rene Villaroman

Coron islet to be next...

PAGE A1 roads will be constructed from the airport to the Marcella port," Ms Arroyo said.

2012 opening
Ho said the resort would open probably by 2012.

Based on Banyan's statistics, Palawan will benefit from the total tourists' spending of \$200 million per year.

"This is generally a big help for Coron," he said.

The company already has hotels in some of the world's most exclusive and popular holiday spots such as the Seychelles and Maldives.

It will develop the project, its first in the Philippines, together with Filipino businessman Salvador Zamora of Tranden Group.

Banyan Tree was founded by Ho, a former journalist, and his wife in 1994 and was one of the first resort chains to offer guests the seclusion of their own villa equipped with a private pool and a tropical spa. ■

First \$2,400 of unemployment benefits tax-free for 2009

WASHINGTON—All or part of unemployment benefits received in 2009 will be tax-free for many unemployed workers, according to the Internal Revenue Service.

"This morning we learned that a record 5.6 million people were receiving unemployment benefits in the middle of March. This underscores the need for the relief provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment

Act, which includes making the first \$2,400 of unemployment insurance exempt from tax," said IRS Commissioner Doug Shulman. "I urge all unemployed workers to take this special tax break into account as they plan their tax withholding and quarterly estimated tax payments for the year. This change offers a helping hand to millions of Americans who are out of work and struggling to make ends meet."

Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, enacted last month, every person who receives unemployment benefits during 2009 is eligible to exclude the first \$2,400 of these benefits when they file their tax return next year. For a married couple, the exclusion applies to each spouse, separately. Thus, if both spouses receive unemployment benefits during 2009, each may

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