

Nilo Villarín

Power for all

by CYNTHIA DE CASTRO / AJPress

IMAGINE yourself in an airplane getting ready for landing. You look through the cabin window and see the lights of the city of Los Angeles below you. As the plane descends slowly towards the runway, the pilot follows the airport's precision approach path indicator (PAPI), a light system positioned beside the runway. The PAPI consists of boxes of lights that provide a visual indication of an aircraft's position on the glide path for the associated runway. Suddenly, the lights go out. Blackout! Can you imagine the horror that would be for the pilot to land without any lights on the runway to guide him?

To ensure that this would not happen, the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) uses an innovative high reliability critical power distribution systems using state-of-the-art power monitoring and control systems. This breakthrough invention has been implemented in five major US terminal radar approach control facilities in Atlanta, Boston, Honolulu, Southern California and St. Louis, and virtually eliminated system power outages. And the inventor and designer of the system who has integrated it for the FAA is a Filipino from Washington, Engineer Nilo Villarín.

Villarín was granted a US patent for the switching device that detects failure in series connected lamps and automatically restores power to the remaining lamps for visual guidance of landing aircrafts. The Federal Aviation Administration has been successfully using Villarín's invention for their precision approach path indicator, deemed essential for ensuring aircraft safety when landing.

The FAA is not the only agency of the Federal government that has benefited from Villarín's inventions. Another is the US Bureau of Census with its mission-critical data centers with computer mainframes dedicated to generating data for the Federal government. Engineer Villarín's another invention was

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used to make sure there is no power interruption in service, regardless of weather conditions, outside power quality, or building equipment. Villarín holds a US patent for a transfer switch that is used to provide redundant sources of electrical power to computer-based equipment. Many computer servers offer the option of redundant power supplies so that in the event of power supply failure, one or more other power supplies can power the load.

In 2006, 600 of Villarín's transfer switches were installed at the US Census Bureau Computer. Since then, the facility had not experienced any unscheduled downtime of their computers. He also developed a maintenance bypass switch for uninterruptible power supply (UPS). The device allows complete isolation of UPS that provide continuous electric service to computer

loads so that maintenance or replacement can be made without computer service interruption.

In recognition of exemplifying Filipino excellence in his field of expertise and profession, Engineer Nilo Villarín was honored by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in Malacanang last December 2008 and was awarded the 'Pamana ng Pilipino' Award.

Villarín was one of seven overseas Filipino awardees who, in exemplifying the talent and industry of the Filipino, have brought honor and recognition through excellence and distinction in the pursuit of their work or profession. Arroyo praised the awardees "who gave the best of their lives to their calling... for their exceptional contribution to Philippine progress and development as well as their commitment to serve the Filipino people".



In conferring the Pamana ng Pilipino Award to Villarín, the President recognizes his noteworthy inventions in the fields of computer and aviation, and his entrepreneurship for establishing a consulting engineering firm and power systems manufacturing company in the US.

An electrical engineering graduate from Mapua Institute of Technology, Nilo worked as a technician and sales engineer in the Philippines prior to migrating to the US. He became one of the very few Filipino-American engineers to realize their dream of a successful independent professional engineering practice.

In 1986, Engineer Villarín founded the NV Enterprise, Inc. (NVE), a consulting engineering, facilities management and construction firm in Reston, Virginia. NVE designed and integrated the high reliability critical power distribution systems used by the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). He is also the founder and president of Quality Power Company, a startup company manufacturing devices for critical power systems. He invented and holds a US patent for a transfer switch that is used to provide redundant sources of

electrical power to computer-based equipment. His transfer switches are now being utilized at the US Census Bureau Computer.

Villarín also invented a glass-cutting machine for mass cutting of glass shapes for the production of stained glass lamps and other similar products. The apparatus which is now being used by some handicraft factories in the Philippines, significantly reduces labor costs in manufacturing stained glass lamps.

More than being a successful engineer, inventor, craftsman and entrepreneur, what makes Villarín stand head and shoulders above the rest is his being a philanthropist. In the indomitable spirit of Bayanihan, he has committed himself to helping Filipinos both in the US and back in the homeland. "My companies in the US are largely staffed by Filipino professionals whom I sponsored to immigrate," said Villarín.

Married to Myrian Reynolds and blessed with two children, Villarín is one of the active directors of the Philippine Association of Metropolitan Washington Engineers (PAMWE), a group of Filipino engineers in Washington, DC, Maryland, and Virginia. PAMWE



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is a non-profit, non-partisan, professional organization whose primary objectives include establishing and maintaining an employment and placement assistance program, with special concern for the newly-arrived and unemployed Filipino engineers; granting scholarships program for poor but deserving Filipino college students in the College of Engineering; and serving as a hospitality house for engineers and other related professionals who are new to the metro Washington area.

His patriotism and love for fellow Filipinos is displayed by his assistance and support of campaigns that benefit his kababayans. The hardworking engineer devotes his free time and resources for community work. He provided funding, through Feed the Hungry, Inc., for the building of two classrooms in Hilltop, San Jose, Mindoro in 2006. He also donated computers and laboratory equipment to Venturanza Elementary School in Lemery, Batangas.

A humble professional, Villarín described the key to his success in simple terms. "Just sheer hard work," he stated. ■

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