

DATELINE PHILIPPINES

BLAIR, LOWNEY IN PRE-SESQUI EVENTS

Ateneo lines up special events to mark sesquicentennial

MANILA—All roads lead to Loyola Heights, the heart of Ateneo de Manila University this year. 2009 is the final year of the three-year countdown to Ateneo's 150th anniversary, or sesquicentennial, which will be marked on December 10.

In 2007, the university community was rallied to celebrate the Ateneo's excellence in various fields and callings. In 2008, the theme segued to deepening Ignatian spirituality which is the hallmark of Atenean formation. This year, 2009, the community proudly hearkens back to 150 years of building the nation, the milestone of which are deeply entwined with the country's own history.

March brings two distinguished international speakers to the Ateneo: Tony Blair, former prime minister of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, who will deliver a talk at the Ateneo MVP Center Sesquicentennial Leadership Forum, and Chris Lowney,

bestselling author of *Heroic Leadership*, who will be the Loyola Schools' commencement speaker.

On June 14, the Ateneo de Manila University officially kicks off its sesquicentennial year celebration. The Sesquicentennial Kick-off Mass at the Manila Cathedral will have His Eminence Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales, Archbishop of Manila, as main celebrant. It will be followed by a grand motorcade that will pass through the Ateneo campuses—Intramuros, Padre Faura, Salcedo and Rockwell in Makati, Ateneo School of Medicine and Public Health in Pasig and finally, Loyola Heights, in Quezon City—to symbolically retrace Ateneo's journey from its beginnings as a school for boys in Intramuros to its present stature as a world-class university.

On June 12, the very Rev. Fr. Adolfo Nicolas, SJ, Superior General of the Society of Jesus returns to the Ateneo to celebrate Mass in honor of St. Ignatius,

founder of the Society of Jesus at the Ateneo High School Covered Courts.

December is jam-packed with special events. There will be a Grand Sesquicentennial Anniversary Mass at the Church of the Gesu on Dec. 10. Dec. 12 is made special for alumni through the grand alumni homecoming Mass, One Big Night and grand alumni homecoming at the Ateneo Loyola Heights campus. Also in December, Gawad Kalinga-Ateneo will spearhead the GK Sesquicentennial Build, a grand house-build for the much-anticipated Sesquicentennial Village.

Two books will be launched this year. Fr. Jose Arcilla, SJ's coffee table picture book *The Ateneo Way. 150 years in May, and 150 Year in the Life of the Nation*, produced by the Loyola Schools Department of History, in December. Advanced orders and reservations can be made for these books and for limited-edition memorabilia, including a replica

of the Immaculate Conception statue from the Intramuros campus rendered by well-known artist Sajid Imao, Sesquicentennial Swatch watches, car plates, and medals accompanied by a Certificate of Authenticity from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

Expect more celebrations as the Blue Eagle Gym, Ateneo's oldest structure built in 1949, turns 60 years old in June and a modern, five-story Rizal Library building is completed in November.

For a detailed calendar of sesquicentennial events, please visit <http://150.ateneo.edu> or contact the Office of University Development and Alumni Relations at 426-6001, local 4081 to 4094, or e-mail address 150@ateneo.edu. You may also visit the OUDAR at Alingal Hall, across from Eli-azo Residence Hall in the Loyola Heights campus. This book is also available at the *Asian Journal* offices. Please call Gemma Fabro at (213) 250-9797 or Ria Fabro at (213) 291-8278 for books reservations. ■

PALACE STRESSES

Arroyo not running for Congress

by TONETTE OREJAS
Inquirer.net

LUBAO, PAMPANGA—Will President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo run for Congress in 2010?

In the last 22 days, Ms Arroyo visited Pampanga five times and four of those visits were all to her home province's second district.

Ms Arroyo's frequent trips to the province have fueled speculations that she plans to seek a congressional seat in her district in 2010.

There are talks in the local business and media circles that her plan is tied to a long-running proposal to amend the 1987 Constitution, mainly to pave the way for the shift from presidential to parliamentary form of government in which a representative can be voted as prime minister.

But presidential deputy spokesperson Lorelei Fajardo shrugged off such talks. She replied "No" when asked if Ms Arroyo wants to run for Congress.

"She does not even want to talk about politics as you have heard," she said after Ms Arroyo finished a taping for a local television show in the City of San Fernando.

Explaining the many presidential visits, Fajardo said: "She has many invitations here. *Ganun naman siya. Basta available siya ina-accept niya ang mga invitations. Sabay-sabay, nagkataon na talagang maraming activities here in Pampanga (She's usually like that. Whenever she's available, she accepts invitations. The events are happening all at the same. It just happens that there are many activities here in Pampanga.)*"

Moreover, she said Pampanga is "close to the heart" of Ms Arroyo.

"This is her home province. She's very much welcomed here," Fajardo added.

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WASHINGTON BALLET

A tribute to a Filipina ballerina

MANILA—The Washington Ballet last week honored Filipina Mary Saldares in a moving memorial service that celebrated the life of the 20-year-old ballerina who was fatally struck by a car on Feb. 20 after a performance in Harford County, Maryland.

About 200 people, including Philippine embassy officials and Saldares' relatives, gathered at the company's studio to hear testimonies about Saldares' talent, her warmth and her contributions to the dance company, according to a dispatch from Philippine Ambassador to Washington Willy Gaa.

Video footage of Saldares' 2008 performance as Odette in the Company's production of *Swan Lake* and in *Fallen Angels* were played. At the end of the memorial service, the audience gave Saldares a standing ovation.

Positive force

Septime Webre, the company's artistic director, praised Saldares for her "luminosity" which shone through during her performances and in her interaction with her colleagues.

He said Saldares was a "positive force" who was able to see opportunities even in difficult circumstances.

"No words can describe the pain of losing Mary. She was not only a beautiful dancer, but a radiant soul who emitted peace and joy. The entire Washington Ballet family mourns her passing, and extends its thoughts and prayers to Mary's family," Webre said in an earlier statement released by the company.

Saldares, who began dancing at age 6 under Sofia Elizalde and Raul Sauz at the Steps Dance Studio in Manila, was selected to join the Washington Ballet's Studio Company, a pre-professional training program for young dancers, for its 2008-2009 season.

On the day of the accident, Saldares had just danced the *pas de deux* in George Balanchine's *Who Cares?* and returned to her



Mary Saldares

hotel along with other dancers and staff members. They planned to spend the rest of the evening watching a movie. Saldares and two other company members decided to walk across the highway to a convenience store for snacks.

Police said Saldares dashed in front of an oncoming Chevy Impala at about 10 p.m. while crossing Route 24, the Washington Post reported on Feb. 24. She died an hour and half later. The driver was not charged.

Saldares received the Luva Adameit Award in the first NAMCYA Ballet Competition in the Philippines in 2004. In 2006, she received the highest Royal Academy of Dance Award, the Solo Seal. She was the first Filipino entry in the 2006 Adeline Genee International Ballet Competition.

Gaa, in his personal letter to the Saldares family, described Saldares as a "true artist and a rare talent whom the Philippines could rightly be proud of."

The Studio Company said it was canceling the rest of its tour after Saldares' death.

The Washington Ballet has established a fund to defray the funeral expenses, the Washington Post reported.

Saldares' remains were returned to the Philippines with the assistance of the Washington, DC embassy.

She is survived by her father Jose Jr., mother Marissa and brothers Patrick Vincent and Brian Joseph. ■

Recantation to affect VFA review—Palace

by MARVIN SY
Philstar.com

MANILA—A Palace official admitted last March 18 that the recantation made by Subic rape victim "Nicole" against American Marine Lance Corporal Daniel Smith could have an impact on the review of the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA).

At the weekly press conference at Malacañang, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the review of the VFA would now depend on the action to be taken by the United States, particularly

on the provisions covering the custody of American servicemen involved in a crime.

Ermita said the move of Nicole also took the Palace by surprise, as he reiterated that they had nothing to do with it.

Calls for a review of the VFA were prompted by a ruling by the Supreme Court (SC), which declared the VFA constitutional but directed Smith to be placed under the custody of Philippine authorities.

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