

# LEADERS'

## DIGEST

Political empowerment is still a treasure that eludes us as a community here in America. While we are the second largest Asian American community in the United States, we have yet to harvest the power that comes from our numbers. The Voice of FilAm features elected and appointed officials—regardless of political affiliation—in the different US states who are of Filipino ancestry. As your Filipino American community newspaper, the Asian Journal recognizes the fact that we all have a responsibility towards bringing political empowerment to fruition, especially for our future generations. It is our hope to have our voices heard all over America.

## David Mercado Valderrama

1st Filipino-American to win as representative to the Maryland Legislature (1990)

IN 1990, David M. Valderrama became the first Filipino-American to be elected to a state legislature on the mainland United States. A Democrat, he served Prince George's County in Maryland as a member of the House of Delegates from January 9, 1991 to January 8, 2003.

Born in Manila, Philippines, on February 1, 1933, Valderrama holds a Bachelor of Laws degree from Far Eastern University, Manila, Philippines, and a Master of Comparative Law degree (American Practice) from George Washington University in Washington, DC.

A former Philippine lawyer and anti-Marcos activist, he immigrated to America in November 1961, and worked for many years as a senior legal specialist of the US Library of Congress. Regarded as a community role model and coalition builder, Valderrama has been a band-leader, sales executive, bank executive, television correspondent, author, small businessman, publisher, and editor before he entered politics.

The former president of the Philippine Lawyers Association of Washington, DC.

Valderrama became the first FilAm probate judge in the US. He was first elected to public office in 1982, when he won a seat on the State Democratic Central Committee, where he served as a vice-chair for Prince George's County until his appointment by Governor Harry Hughes to fill an



unexpected vacancy on the bench in November 1985. In 1986, as his term was running out, he stood for election in his own right. He ran in the September primary and won overwhelmingly in an unusually crowded field of 11 candidates, which victory he duplicated in the November election of the same year. Following his election, Valderrama became the Maryland State Representative to the National College of Probate Judges and the Orphans' Court Liaison Judge from Prince George's County to the Maryland General Assembly. In 1990, he was elected to the state legislature where he served for more than a dozen years.

Among Valderrama's many achievements are the following:

Member of the Constitutional and Administrative Law Committee, 1991-92

Environmental Matters Committee, 1992-94

Deputy Majority Whip, 1995-2001

Member, Judiciary Committee, 1995-2003 (gambling subcommittee, 1995-97; chair, gaming law & enforcement subcommittee, 1999-2003)

Joint Committee on Protocol, 1995-2003

Deputy Majority Leader, 2001-03

Member, Law Enforcement and State-Appointed Boards Committee, Prince George's County Delegation (chair, 1995-98)

Judge, Orphans' Court, Prince George's County, 1985-90

Member, Task Force to Study Health Professional-Client Sexual Exploitation, 1993-96

Task Force to Study Anti-Asian Violence, 1995-98

Board of Directors, Economic Development Corporation, Prince George's County, 2006

Vice-Chair, Democratic State Central Committee, Prince George's County, 1982-85.

Former chair, Southeast Asian Refugee Task Force

Director, Prince George's County Chapter of Southern Christian Leadership Conference

Director, Greater Southeast Community Hospital of Washington, DC

Recipient of Most Outstanding Filipino Award and Honored American Award.

David Valderrama is married to Nellie, with whom he has two daughters, Kriselda and Vida. ■

## Make a difference this Independence Day!

DEVINE Communications announces two new services for Filipinos based abroad—more freedom to stay connected to your loved ones in the Philippines through Tawag Na Direct and Balikbayan Gifts.

These two services give Filipinos based in the US and other parts of the globe the freedom to enjoy the following benefits:

- Call your relatives in the Philippines through Tawag Na Direct; a prepaid long-distance calling service which has been in existence for almost nine years, and is now improved with rates as low as 10.9 cents per minute. This service requires no subscription fees and has no hidden charges.

- Balikbayangifts.com helps you send gifts to your love ones anywhere in the Philippines. .

- There is a wide variety of gift items that you can choose from: starting with cakes, flowers, cell phones, toys and even appliances to lechon, groceries and other unique gift ideas at competitive prices. The service also allows you to send customized gifts and even prepaid loads.

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In commemoration of Philippine Independence Day, Tawag Na Direct and Balikbayangifts.com offer you a different kind of freedom- to make a difference by giving children of the Philippines the gift of hope. This June, for each dollar spent with Tawag Na Direct and Balikbayangifts.com, a portion of the proceeds will be donated to various children's charitable institutions in the Philippines. By buying credits or reloading your Tawag Na Direct accounts or by simply sending a gift to a loved one in the Philippines, you can help build the future of hundreds of children in the Philippines.

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HTCOTP (Help the Children of the Philippines)—before making a purchase. You also have the freedom to make these little angels smile by sending them a gift through Balikbayangifts.com, which will be delivered to these charitable institutions with your name and special message.

Devine Communications currently serves more than 35,000 Filipinos abroad, and has announced that they are currently developing their services to cater the global market. This will benefit Filipinos abroad. Since these services are designed with Filipino families in mind, Devine Communications is a telecoms company based in

San Francisco, California, and has been in existence for almost nine years. Under its wing is its customer care call center, Devine Care, Inc., which is based in Manila, Philippines.

For more information about Devine Communications and its services, please visit our websites: <http://www.mytawag-nadirect.com> and <http://www.balikbayangifts.com> or you can call their customer support hotline numbers: 1-877-379-6439 for Tawag Na Direct and 1-888-530-8934 for Balikbayan Gifts.

For more information please call Wayie Marcelo, Marketing Manager at 415-251-6517 or e-mail [wayie.marcelo@devinecareinc.com](mailto:wayie.marcelo@devinecareinc.com). ■

## Fundraiser for Ronald McDonald House

COME together and help raise money for the Loma Linda Ronald McDonald House. This house provides a "home away from home" for families with children receiving treatment for cancer or other critical illnesses and injuries. We have wonderful support from Ms. Debra Daniel, Supervisor of Admissions and Mrs. Jean Steven-

son, Director of Nursing Education along with their Department and the rest of the Four-D College staff and faculty. They walked on Sunday May 17, 2009 from 8am to 3pm at Sylvan Park in Redlands. The Admissions and Vocational Nursing Department would like to thank everyone who participated. ■

### People and Events

## Stratus Building Solutions expands franchising

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI—Stratus Building Solutions is continuing its extraordinary growth in the US by awarding a master franchise to Stratus Building Solutions of Orange County, Inc., a new building service and maintenance franchisor with headquarters at 333 South Anita Drive in Orange County, CA.

This marks Status Building Solutions' third master franchise in California since the firm established operations in Ventura County and Los Angeles County in 2008. California is among 17 states in the US where Stratus Building Solutions has established franchise territories since the company was founded in 2004.

Petar Vavan, a native of England who for more than 20 years served as a corporate executive for US and Asian companies before settling in California as an entrepreneur, is owner/operator of Stratus Building Solutions of Orange County. He can be reached at (714) 634-4351 ext. 201.

Dennis Jarrett, CEO of Stratus Building Solutions, said, "Petar is an enthusiastic marketing and franchise executive eager to grow Stratus Building Solutions in Orange County and help create new jobs by helping franchisees provide contract cleaning services for retail, commercial, industrial, multi-family and professional buildings based on Stratus Building Solutions' successful model.

"We plan to aggressively start new building service franchise businesses and create jobs by helping franchisees provide environmentally-friendly maintenance services to building owners and managers in our territory," Mr. Vavan added.

Pete Frese, President of Stra-

tus Building Solutions, said "Stratus Building Solutions of Orange County will hire several employees immediately, and plans to establish sub-franchise operations across its territory starting immediately."

Stratus Affiliated Services, LLC, a division of Stratus Building Solutions, provides landscaping audits, recycling, pest control, hard-surface cleaning, and related services to complement the company's successful building franchise programs.

Stratus Building Solutions

franchise benefits include orientation and training; customer referrals; administrative and accounting support; pre-arranged credit lines; access to insurance and security bonds, financing options, business reviews; promotional support; and other turn key advantages.

For more information, pls. see the website [www.stratusclean.com](http://www.stratusclean.com) or call Stratus Building Solutions at 314-731-2000 or toll-free at 877-7310-2020. Media contact is Jeff Dunlap at PowerlinePR 314-993-6925. ■

## Marc Abuel graduates with top honors



MARC Creencia Abuel, 17, the second child of Raul and Meelah (Creencia) Abuel was awarded the highest honors at the Golden Valley High School's third commencement exercises for Class 2009 seniors in Santa Clarita, California. He was the Valedictorian, graduating with a GPA of 4.71. He also received the coveted Principal Leadership Award, as well as several honor awards. Marc has been accepted at the UCLA, School of Engineering and was also awarded the UCLA Scholarship Recognition Award. ■

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