



SILLIMAN UNIVERSITY

Dumaguete City, Philippines

and

SILLIMAN ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, INC.

present this

OUTSTANDING SILLIMANIAN AWARD

in

MILITARY CHAPLAINCY

to

Francisco D. Somera, Jr.

Who, as Military Chaplain, has lived as “salt of the earth”, providing to innumerable servicemen and women the human touch of comfort, friendship and mentorship, counsel, encouragement, inspiration and hope – based on his unwavering Faith in Christ, The Way, The Truth and The Life.

Given this 28th day of August 2009 in Dumaguete City, Philippines
on the 108th Founders Day of Silliman University.

DOROTHY S. CAJAYON

President, Silliman Alumni Association, Inc.

Juanita D. Amatong
JUANITA D. AMATONG
Chairperson, Board of Trustees

BEN S. MALAYANG III
President

**2009 OUTSTANDING SILLIMANIAN AWARDEE
FOR MILITARY CHAPLAINCY**

REV. DR. FRANCISCO D. SOMERA, JR.



“You do not have to do grandiose things to make a difference in the life of others.” And true to his words, Rev. Dr. Francisco D. Somera, Jr. has indeed spent a life not aiming to occupy lofty positions: his life’s purpose has been to serve and reach out to people who needed him, and to willingly devote his time to lead people to the Master of his own life.

The Rev. Dr. Somera was born, raised, and tutored in the campus of Silliman University, Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental, Philippines. He pursued and finished his studies in Agriculture, majoring in plant breeding. The call to the ministry made him decide not to pursue a career in Agriculture, but to return to Silliman University to engage in the study of Theology. In 1967, he obtained a Master’s degree in Divinity from Silliman University while working as an instructor in the University of Southern Philippines in Cebu City, where he taught from 1966 to 1969. At the same time that he worked as an instructor, he was the Associate Pastor of the Cebu Christian Center Church. He also was designated as the Regional Youth Minister for the Visayas region.

Rev Dr. later served Silliman University as Dean of Men, and also was a faculty member from 1969 to 1972. In 1972, he was awarded a World Council of Churches scholarship. He left the Philippines to pursue his doctoral degree in Ministry, majoring in Psychology and Pastoral Counseling, which he obtained from Andover Newton Theological Seminary, Massachusetts, USA. During his tenure there, he served as Associate Minister of the Littleton Congregational Church in Massachusetts, from 1973–1974.

Opportunities for ministry let the Rev. Dr. Somera to serve as Chaplain for the City Jail and the Juvenile Detention Home in Richmond, Virginia, until 1976. With the endorsement from the United Church of Christ, he was commissioned as a US Army Chaplain, and was called to active duty. He served in that position until he retired in 2001. “As a Christian Chaplain,” Dr. Somera said, “my Lord teaches me that whatever I do to the least of my brethren [I do] for Him. I consider it my sacred and distinct mandate to bring soldiers and their families to God.”

All through his military career, Ch (COL) Somera rose through the ranks. He was able to break through the “glass ceiling” in the U.S. Army Chaplaincy senior leadership echelon when he rose to the position of Colonel, having dutifully served his various assignments in administrative, managerial, and pastoral levels throughout his military career – which earned him the respect of his superiors and colleagues alike. According to the Rev. Msgr. Philip W. Hill, STI, JCD, one of his

superiors in the Army, “Frank has consistently sought out opportunities to serve, not only the people of the church, but the citizens of Texas where he lives. He has always pursued the service route, all in the name of his faith in Jesus Christ”

From 2001 until the present, the Rev. Dr. Somera has served as pastor of the Christian Church – Disciples of Christ, in Copperas Cove, Texas. He has been engaged and active with the community and various organizations. Dr. Somera was elected and served as a member of the Copperas Cove, Texas City Council, which made him the first Asian-American elected to the body; the first Filipino-American elected to an office in the State of Texas, and the first Sillimanian elected to a political office in the United States.

His involvement in community service is as extensive as it is admirable. He served as President of the Central Texas Military Officers Association, a member of the Board of Directors for the Retiree Council in Fort Hood, Texas, and the Hill Country Community Action Association, Inc., the Optimist Club of America; one of the police chaplain of the Copperas Cove Police Department; a consultant for the Clergy of Accountability for the South Central Conference of the United Church of Christ, South Central Conference; the Disciple of Christ Ministerial and Pastoral Care Committee; a member of the Emergency Rapid Response Team; member of the Copperas Cove Ministerial Alliance; the Free and Accepted Masons and its appendant bodies; and the Alpha Phi Omega International Service Fraternity .

The Rev Dr. Somera’s exceptional service, dedication and hard work not only made him a person respected and beloved by the people around him, but also gave him well-deserved awards and recognition. Among the awards and medals he has received include the Legion of Merit (the highest peace-time Award given by the U.S. Army), the meritorious Service Medal (with six oak leaf clusters), the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the National Defense Medal, and the Korean Defense Medal.

Rev. Dr. Somera is married to the former Nelly Acuna, an alumna of the Silliman University College of Law. They have two children, Junnelie Ruth (Lee), and Kahlil John.

Despite retiring from the military, the Reverend Doctor Somera continues with his “internet ministry” and pastoral responsibilities that has impacted and influenced the lives of those whom he makes contact with.

All told, the Reverend Doctor Somera has lived, practiced, embodied, and shared the guiding tenets of Silliman University – *“The Way, the Truth, and the Life”*.

Note: Write-up was taken and up-dated from *The 2009 Outstanding Sillimanian Awards* brochure (Written by Deil Jossaine Galenzaga).

