



**VALEDICTORY ADDRESS
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SUACONA Chairperson
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Today, I look back with humility and yet also with pride to that time in 2009, when you gave me the vote of confidence to lead the Silliman University Alumni Council of North America, the umbrella organization of the chapters representing alumni and friends of Silliman University in the United States and Canada.

That was a humbling affirmation of your faith in my leadership abilities to galvanize the team, coupled with a never-ending loyalty to our Alma Mater, Silliman University.

When I came in, I was deeply aware of the great expectations of the Chapters belonging to SUACONA. After all I came trying to fit the big footprints and emulate the enormous achievements of those who came before me.

But just like you and I, all alumni of this great University, we do not balk from the challenge--- we rise and bring with us our wealth of experience, our hard work, our dedication and passion to serve.

The SUACONA Mission has set the highest standards for us. I think, this moment is ripe, for us to be again reminded of these challenges:

- , Provide a lifelong community for students and alumni of Silliman University.
- , Be an effective partner in supporting Silliman's academic and artistic excellence.
- , Enhance commitment to Silliman's historic values and community service.
- , Commit ourselves to creating a caring community, and developing a vibrant quilt of cultures where the future will work for all.

Such a very tall order indeed. But I am proud of the team and the officers that I work with in SUACONA. This is the team to beat- as the cliché goes. It is composed of people who know what they want; how to get there- and to get there fast.

The road map that we imprinted , was a result of painstaking plans, hours of inter-action and

discussion, using the modern methods of teleconferencing, e-mail blasting among others. I learned to be more tech-savvy, to preside over E-MEETINGS, that include everything from Opening Prayer to Closing prayers, observing the rules of parliamentary procedures in between. Numerous brilliant ideas blossomed, fueling and refueling our passion to do the best we can for SUACONA and what it stands for.

Taking off from the larger mission, we culled our own and committed ourselves” to provide leadership among alumni and students to create a life-long community of committed and steadfast Sillimianians toward a more effective partnership with Silliman University as we embrace the principles of excellence in education and community service.” Our plans and programs therefore, were inspired by these principles.

Let me share with you some milestones during our term as officers. We were able to organize A new Chapter in Vancouver, Canada, Sillimianians of British Columbia, Two more Chapters will soon be organized in Pensacola, Northwest Florida, Alabama, and the other one in Kansas, Arkansas, & Mississippi and activated some of the not-so active chapters.

But the greater challenge given to us is the construction of the Silliman University Student Center. The Student Center that many of us hoped was there when we were students of the University. The opportunity to partner with Silliman University came as a subtle prodding from Silliman University President Ben S. Malayang III, who saw through us and our desire to leave a lasting testament of our commitment to student development. Thus the campaign continues even beyond my term.

Today, I am here before you, with gratefulness in my heart, recognizing that the opportunity to lead the SUACONA is a precious gift- a gift that I will continue to cherish now and in the years ahead. I hope I did not disappoint you- I will continue to learn and serve with you in whatever capacity, as a true-blue Sillimianian.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt thanks and profound gratitude

- to President Ben S. Malayang III for his exceptional leadership and gracing this phenomenal event with his lovely wife Mrs. Gladys Rio Malayang , and for being the architect of the Silliman University Gratitude and Goodwill Ambassadors (SUGGA) TO GIVE SPECIAL TRIBUTE/OFFERING to the Tenth Anniversary Celebration of SUACONA and in gratitude to the SU Alumni of North America.
- Our sincere thanks also to the members of the SU Board of Trustees present here: Atty Grace Sumalpong , Mrs. Roselyn Grino Delloso, Dr. Sylvester Almiron, Jr.
- SAAI President, Judge Rafael Crescencio Tan, Jr., & Mrs. Yolanda Valente Maxino, SAAI Executive Secretary,
- Dr. Betty Cernol McCann of UBCHEA & our guest speakers, Dr. Jean Yan and Dr. Eusebio Kho.
- Our special Thanks and cheers to the Silliman University Alumni Chapter of ALASKA, for their amazing hosting of Tipon Silliman 2011, led by their very dynamic President, Elizabeth “Betsy” Merto Engle.
- CHEERS and a BIG Round of APPLAUSE to the New York/ New Jersey Chapter headed by Dely Po Go, for spearheading the very successful Grand Raffle, with net proceeds earmarked for the University Student Center Project.
- Applause to the Tipon Silliman Chorale, under its Founding Director, Ruby Leah Ordinario Agnir.

To all of you, our Alumni, guests and friends who came all the way from the Philippines, Hong Kong, Australia and other parts of the world, THANK YOU for your enormous demonstration of remarkable support, which helped make this Tison Silliman 2011 spectacular and a resounding success. Another milestone that we can all be proud of having accomplished together. To those who were unable to celebrate with us this time, please know that your generous support and good thoughts have been just as equally and whole-heartedly felt and deeply appreciated.

As I end my term as SUACONA Chairperson, I can only look back with tremendous gratitude at what we – all of us together – have accomplished. The projects or programs are phenomenal accomplishments, but more than that, we have made great strides in our efforts to connect our alumni back to our alma mater. The best thing we can do as an alumni association is to instill and reinvigorate that Silliman Spirit within each one of us, and in the short span of ten years of SUACONA's existence, we have remarkably accomplished a lot in that direction.

I wish to thank all the officers –the Executive Committee, the different standing committees and special committees, as well as the chapter presidents who comprise the Board of Directors for unselfishly sharing your time, talent and treasure. I am also profoundly grateful that little by little, we realize the concept that while we are several alumni chapters vastly spread all over North America, we can significantly contribute towards the mission of our alma mater when we coordinate our efforts to work on something that would respond to the university's more urgent needs.

May I end by sharing with you what Maya Angelou, the celebrated author, said to Oprah in an interview during Maya Angelou's 71st birthday anniversary, reminding us all, that we cannot go through life, without sharing something:

“I have learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands; you need to be able to throw something back.”

To the officers who will come after me, Let me share this thought, as you lead the SUACONA:

“ I HAVE LEARNED THAT PEOPLE WILL FORGET WHAT YOU SAID, PEOPLE WILL FORGET WHAT YOU DID, BUT PEOPLE WILL NEVER FORGET HOW YOU MAKE THEM FEEL.”

God bless us all. God bless SUACONA. God bless Silliman University.