



Carmeña Luz Y. Miraflor - - - *A Tribute*

(1940.03.03 – 2007.05.22)

'Bebe', 'Carmen', 'A-Bebe' (the latter as she was endearingly called by her nephews/nieces)

Bebe was born in Lazi, Siquijor on March 3, 1940 to the late Nemesio V. Miraflor, Sr. of Tanjay and the late Carmen Yurong of Larena. She was the youngest girl of 16 siblings. In 1951 she completed her elementary education from the Lazi Public Elementary School and graduated from Lazi High School in 1955. She entered Foundation College (now a university) where she earned her Associate in Arts Degree in 1958. She transferred to Philippine Women's University in 1959 and obtained her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology two years later. Following that, she worked for the Philippine Mental Health Association under the late Dr. Lionel Granada. Shortly thereafter, she worked for The Philippine Psychological Corporation before emigrating to the U.S. in May 1971.

In California, Carmen first worked at the Union Bank of Palo Alto and later was employed at Stanford University where she found her niche and stayed for over 25 years. She was the Programs and Administration Manager at the Stanford Center for Integrated Systems (CIS) in the last few years. She continued to work at CIS past her retirement and until she was diagnosed with leukemia in early January of this year. In addition to her professional work, Carmen organized and led many Filipino cultural activities/workshops/seminars at Stanford University, bringing in many esteemed guest speakers and helping promote the many positive aspects of the Philippines.

A-bebe lived by that old adage: “give a person a fish and you feed him for a day, but teach them how to fish and you feed them for a lifetime.” Her love for the Siquijor youth is manifested in several GASA (Greater America Siquijorian Association) youth development projects she had initiated while serving as association president for the last 7 years. These included the annual GASA Youth Leadership Seminar/Workshop now in its 5th year; the on-going GASA Reading Clinic & Book Report Project; the annual GASA Spelling Bee now in its 3rd year and the recently and successfully piloted GASA STEW - an acronym for Siquijor Teachers English Workshop. For the next STEW, A-bebe helped facilitate a partnership with Foundation University who has expressed great interest in extending their outreach educational programs beyond Oriental Negros to include Siquijor. These projects continuously need financial assistance and A-bebe, with the help of the GASA Board and its members, appealed to organizations, other non-profit groups, peers and individuals by letters, email, phone or personal meetings.

One can never question her love and dedication to Siquijor and its youth. The day before she died, still in the ICU, she told her niece that she was tired of the hospital gown and wanted to wear something else. When asked what she wanted to wear, she pointed to the 2007 version of the GASA YLS t-shirt that was sent to her from Siquijor. The YLS, being GASA's first youth

development project, had a strong personal connection to her and having the t-shirt on probably made her feel connected to the Siquijor youth. This simple gesture symbolized what GASA's projects meant to her – a 'Gift' to the Siquijor youth.

Carmeña's multifaceted talents and responsibilities, coupled with her dedication to the GASA projects didn't go unnoticed. A few years ago, she was bestowed the honor as Asian-American Awardee of Stanford University and also as an Outstanding Alumnus of Foundation University.

Bebe traveled extensively within the U.S. and made several trips to Europe, South America and Asia. Wherever she went, museums, art galleries and local architecture were always in her itinerary, in addition to understanding and enjoying the local culture and cuisine. Of course, she loved to shop, albeit sensibly.

Goodbye to a fearless leader; a visionary; an amateur agriculturist; an art lover; a traveler; an amateur writer; a theatre lover (musicals, opera, ballet); a passionate reader; an amateur painter; a lover of jazz, classical and *bisaya* (particularly the *harana*) music; a good cook; a friend; a mentor; an advocate for the protection of the environment; a woman who loved life and whose heart was always in Siquijor and its people, particularly the Siquijor youth.

Bebe, we will sorely miss you, but I want to thank you for allowing me to personally share in your rich and wonderful life here on earth. You are now one with God.

Leo Mamicpic

(with contributions from **Romero'Dodong' & Mon Tresor 'Chuchu' Mirafior**)

There will be no funeral service for Bebe. Per her wishes, her cremated remains will be taken soon to Lazi, Siquijor.