

THE JOY OF CLASS REUNIONS – JULY 5 – 9, 2000

by Norma Calderon-Panahon, UPCM '67

While preparing to attend Virginia and Aniceto Lomotan's 50th wedding anniversary celebration in Albany on December 21, 2019, I came across this class reunion photo taken on July 7, 2000 held at my home in Buffalo. This coincided with the 15th Annual Grand Convention of UPMASA that the Western New York Chapter of UPMASA hosted during my presidency. The picture rekindled those nostalgic feelings about "Happy Days" 19 years ago. Everyone was excited, joyous, deliriously happy to bond with each other. The group was composed of regular attendees and some newcomers to both UPMASA AGC and our class reunions. We were all so thrilled to be with Mario Canlas and his wife (Emy Talens), since we had not seen them for ages. And of course, we had just heard Lynn's "*Si Inay*" story, thus the hysterical laughter.

Can you identify all the attendees in this picture? Alvin was not in the picture because he was busy with chores. We were all having a grand time!



Front row: Wee Besa, Mario Canlas, Ike Sajor, Chito Lomotan, Nelin Sajor (RIP)
Second Row: Winnie Besa, Metty Vargas-Pellicer, Joh Olympia, Baba Alonso-Perez, Ellen Homena-Hetz, Vicky Galapon-Marquez, Evelyn Mendoza-Parial, Connie Somera-Uy, Lilia Lim-Maceda, Noy Calderon-Panahon, Alex Kwan, Bayani Manalo
Third Row: Linda Torres, Emy Talens-Canlas, Be Lazaro-Lomotan, Carmen Tuazon, Johnny Brawner (RIP), Jackie Kwan, Rory Bairan, Lando Perez, Sam Torres, Lynn Coligado-Alentajan, Chito Maceda (RIP), Sonny Parial, Sol Manalo

During that 15th Annual Grand Convention, Class '67 played important roles as moving spirit and organizers. Alvin Panahon, Joh Olympia (Board member and CME Chair), Chito Maceda (treasurer), Lilia Lim -Maceda, Nieva Baria-Castillo, and myself (chapter president). There were 48 members of our chapter. We raised funds for the Cesium Program for the Cancer

Institute at PGH. The funds provided the needed cesium and helped with infrastructure renovations. For patients with uterine cervical cancer, the waiting period of 4 years was eliminated and over 20,000 patients have been treated since then. We also provided consultations.

During that convention, we toured Niagara Falls and the wineries at Niagara on the Lake in Canada. We enjoyed singing “Push on UP” on the tour bus with the UP President. We attended CME organized by Joh, had the welcome reception and the *Pabidahan* at University of Buffalo’s Cultural Center. Our contribution to the *Pabidahan* was a dance number captivatingly called Mambo #5, choreographed by Arthur Murray Dance Studio and religiously rehearsed for months. There was a brief period of anxiety because someone forgot to bring the CD for the music! It was quickly resolved and the performance well received! The formal gala was held at the Buffalo Marriot Hotel, with the ladies showing off their lovely gowns and the gentlemen in their evening jackets.

I reflect on the reason for my attending reunions with Class’67. I realize that I seek a connection with those who have gone through the same experiences with me at UPCM and PGH. We survived it together and became better physicians because of these. We look back with pride on how UP had molded us – doctors with big brains and BIG hearts.

The sense of reconnecting is felt each time I meet another classmate, even outside the reunions. That connection and bond exists even without ongoing contact. The reunions offer something bigger, something different. It reminds us that we all have arrived and UP has given us the ingredients for success. We are proud to be from Class ’67. We left UPCM with UP and Moon River in our hearts.



About the Author: *Dr. Norma Calderon-Panahon is a psychiatrist in Buffalo, NY. Her passion and involvement with UPMASA have been all-encompassing over several decades.*

2007 UPMASA Most Distinguished Overseas Alumna Award
2019 UPMASA Awardee for Meritorious Achievement
2020 UPMASA Lifetime Achievement Awardee