

Filipino-American Sampaguita
Club of Tucson



Second Quarter
April, May, June 2026
Issue II

Sampaguita E-News

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Norie Mayo



On behalf of the Filipino-American Sampaguita Club of Tucson, thank you for making our Philippine Independence celebration a success. We were honored by your presence which celebrates our heritage and inspired our future. We paid tribute to the Filipino nurses, unsung heroes, whose compassion bridges culture everyday. Your support extends that same “malasakit” to our mission, to students, homeless women, animals and teachers in need.

To the distinguished 2026 Board and members, performers, guest speakers, sponsors, volunteers, and guests, you turned a celebration into lasting good.

Deeply appreciated,

Norie Mayo

(2026 FASCOT President)

**This article was printed without broad copy editing at the request of the writer.*



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Reminder

**July Donation Campaign to Sister Jose Women's Center.
Donate toiletries.**

We are also collecting donations for the newly arrived teachers in July.

CONGRATULATIONS! JESSICA COX, ARIZONA AVIATION HALL OF FAME

Our very own member of the Filipino-American community in Tucson, Jessica Cox, was inducted to the Arizona Hall of Fame on Friday, May 15 at the Pima Air & Space Museum. Among the guests were Fr. R. Miguel Mariano, Neneng Fassler and her daughter, Analynn, and Jessica's father, Bill Cox. Patrick, Jessica's husband delivered a beautiful introduction about the inductee. Jessica was the only living and also the youngest among the three pilots who were inducted. Jessica Cox is known worldwide as the first licensed armless airline pilot, a fourth-degree black belt in Taekwondo, and an inter-

national keynote speaker.

Jessica's parents are Bill Cox and the late Inez Cox, a Filipina nurse.

"This is a great achievement of fearlessness and dedication and courage—a unique source of inspiration."

Dr. Ben Ventura, FASCOT past president



PACCA Tucson: Induction of Officers and Business Excellence Awards Night
Venue: Desert Diamond Casino Date: May 2, 2026

CONGRATULATIONS!

The Philippine American Chamber of Commerce Tucson Chapter recognized FASCOT as the Outstanding Non-Profit Organization. FASCOT President, NORIE MAYO represented the Filipino-American Sampaguita Club of Tucson and received the award.

Congratulations also goes to MANOL OSWALD, who was the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Center: Manol Oswald

First from the L, Norie Mayo



National News!

Source: NaFFAA

Congratulations to JORDAN CLARKSON, the FIRST FILIPINO-AMERICAN player to win an NBA championship, after helping the New York Knicks capture their first title in 53 years.

Congratulations to RHODA MAGBITANG, WINNER OF TOP CHEF (Season 23). From *Tortang Talong* to *Kaldereta*, she brought our flavors to the world stage.

***** Addendum: Introducing an NBA player with Filipino roots. Dylan Harper is a Fil-Am professional who plays as guard for the San Antonio Spurs in the NBA. His mother, Maria Pizarro is a Filipina immigrant from Bataan, Philippines. Dylan's father Ron Harper was a five-time NBA champion who won the title with the Chicago Bulls and Los Angeles Lakers.

Kalayaan Event 2026 photos



FASHION SHOW



BIRTHDAY CELEBRANTS

07/16
CARMEN NORSWORTHY

07/20
SHAI IP

07/22
MARSHALL COLLEY

07/17 NORI RIECHERS
JUDGE MARYLOU
NATIVIDAD

07/26 PHIL HARMS
07/30 ERIC RIECHERS

06/11 MANOL OSWALD

06/13 JUDITH SCHULTZ

06/15
GLENDA TAN COLLEY
ANN GERSON

06/24 AL CONKLIN



THANK YOU!

OUR HEARTFELT
THANKS TO NICK SU-
BONG AND STAFF
FOR SERVING DELI-
CIOUS FOOD DURING
THE EVENT!

2026 Executive Board and Advisors

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Norsworthy

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tividad, Manol Os-
wald, Neneng
Fassler , Nori
Riechers

Committee:

Donation to Sister Jo-
se Chairs: Carmen
Norsworthy, Hermie
Maxon
Member: Mariles
Abong



FASCOT Philippine Independence Celebration

FASCOT celebrated the Philippine Independence “Kalayaan” with a bang! The theme speaks of itself, “East Meets West—a cultural Tapestry.”. The event was held on Saturday, June 13, at St. Odilia Catholic Community Parish Hall, Oro Valley, AZ.. The designated Masters of Ceremony, Filipino teachers Prospero Paragsa and Markee Narreto, did a superb job of making the program flow smoothly. Entertainment numbers received a warm response from the audience. Guest speaker Vivienne Abrugena, NP board certified who hails from Baguio City, Philippines, spoke about how nurses play a role of serving the sick. True to their profession and belief in God, they do extra touch of love to their patients. Just like a tiny ‘Sampaguita” flower, Filipino nurses serve their patients a perfume of sweetness that brings healing and comfort.

Vivienne and her husband, Deacon Adel Abrugena ,serve their community as dedicated Missionary Coordinators and Acting Chapter Heads with the Couples of Christ, Arizona.

Jota Medellin
FASCOT Sampaguita Dance Group



Tinkling Dance
Philippine Mabuhay Cultural Foundation





The second guest speaker was Ma Jessica Gonzaga, RN, MSN, NP-C. She hails from Igaras, Iloilo, Philippines. She spoke of freedom that's enjoyed by the Filipinos after the colonization from Spain and the United States. She made a point that freedom brings responsibility. She also spoke of millions of Filipino people living in poverty, their lack of jobs and what we can do about it.

Jessica has ventured into entrepreneurship and a financial service provider. . She helps individuals and families build strong financial houses that protect their income from market fluctuations. An active Catholic, Jessica organizes and leads retreat for teens and couple in the Philippines and is working towards building a Retreat House in the Philippines.



Little boy's dance number



Registration table



****Hip-hop moves with attendees***

The lady in blue caught my attention. I conducted a brief interview about her love of dancing. She got excited when she learned that I attended the University of San Carlos, Cebu City. She had also attended USC and graduated in 2012, major in Hospitality and Management. She took her internship in Baltimore, Maryland Country Club where Tiger Woods plays golf. She now works at LA Fitness Gym and also conducts physical exercise to residents in a Retirement Community. Her name is Yuri Claxton. She hails from Toledo, Cebu, Philippines

Reporter: Neneng B. Fassler



Our deepest sympathy to our FASCOT member Liglig Brennan for the loss of her dear husband,

Wally Brennan



Acknowledgement

Kudos to Sofia Polizon Washburn for singing the U.S. National Anthem, playing the banduria and ukulele.

Shout out to Ronnie Banan Hall for singing the Philippine National Anthem and the classic song, *Bayan Ko*.

Thank you, Fashion Models and all participants on this event!

Collaboration works!
FASCOT Executive Board and Advisors



Kalayaan Event

Photo: Myla's Creation



Thank you, Manol, Carmen,
Nori and everyone for
planning this simple
gathering for my birthday.
Love, Neneng
P.S. I love those earrings
you made, Robert!

Thank you Nori Riechers for
the beautiful birthday cake!

Brief History of the Filipino American Sampaguita Club of Tucson

In 1971 there was already a small community of Filipino-American families who were in the military and those who worked for various companies in Pima County. It was a caring, fun-loving group who always warmly welcomed you into their homes. In 1972, the group created the Sampaguita Club of Tucson and elected Dr. Ben Ventura as president. In 1980, the name of the club was changed to the Filipino-American Sampaguita Club of Tucson. Fred Polintan, Sr. was elected president. Carol Ypulong, the secretary, officially registered the club's C & B to the Arizona Corporation Commission. The mission and goals of the club attract members to sign up. There are so many projects, like sending aid to victims of natural disasters in the Philippines, Adopt-A-Roadway, TMY Filipino booth, Educational Assistance for students entering freshman year in college, charitable donations, Walk to end Alzheimer's disease, and welcoming new Filipinos arriving in Tucson. In the past few years, the club made a monetary donation to Youth on their Own, donated items for Sister Jose Women's Center and to the Pima Animal Care Center.

The mission of FASCOT is to promote the Filipino cultural heritage and promote social, economic, educational and charitable goals. Thus, FASCOT Sampaguita Dance Group serves as a cultural ambassador. This cultural group becomes the face of FASCOT as they perform during Tucson Meets Yourself festival downtown every year. Pista/Philippine Independence and Christmas celebration are held every year to remind us not to forget our roots. The events foster friendship and camaraderie. The club collaborates with other local organizations, supports members, gives rides to seniors, welcomes Filipinos new to Tucson, and supports Filipino businesses.

- Neneng Babanto Fassler

REFLECTIONS

by Neneng B. Fassler

These past days, I remember the song I learned from my mother. It's a Bisaya song that tells about life's mystery.

"Nganong mosidlak ang adlaw, Nganong modag-om ang langit. Nganong mobagyo molinaw. Kana ang kinabuhì. Chorus : Langit, yuta, utlanan sa atong kalipay, Katawa, hilak, lamas sa kinabuhì. Di kang katilaw sa tam-is kon di kang katilaw sa mga mapait."

Everyone, rich or poor, we taste life's bitterness as well as sweetness. We all experience tears, laughs coupled with so many failures and so many successes. I remember the "Footprints in the Sand." God walks with us and when the going is rough, the Lord carries us. Life has more meaning if we also turn our eyes to those who are in need, even in the form of kind words, smile, or helping a poor student attend college. These past two months, we've attended a big show, production, and entertainment. Now, we pause and turn our eyes to victims of earthquake that hit General Santos and Cotabato, Philippines. The best thing we can do is send a direct monetary aid to an individual or families in need. No man is an island. We need each other. Giving a piece of ourselves add strength and joy in our hearts.

Lately, during my simple birthday gathering, everyone magnified a definition of myself. I'm honored to hear those words. Some people express those honest words too late, i.e. when the person is already out-of-sight. Furthermore, I thought of the heavenly host of angels singing when a child is born. In that moment, I realized I was surrounded by the human angels: Lita Doss, Eric and Nori Riechers, Gorgie and Robert Hamburger, Trini Sumpter, Susan Liang, Carmen Norsworthy, Manol Oswald, Rose Miller, Liglig Brennan, and Eileen Godollei. A song echoed, "You are a child of God."