

*The Many Faces of*  
**Albert M.G. Garcia**

by  
Benjie de Ubago

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# *Dedication*

*“This book is dedicated  
to my parents who gave me  
the benefit of an education  
that has been  
my True North.”*

Albert M.G. Garcia



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There's the old adage  
that the grass is always  
greener on the other side.

For Albert, it was always green  
wherever he was.

Ever the eternal optimist,  
he made sure it was green  
wherever he set foot.

And if it wasn't,  
he simply turned it green.



# Foreword

*By Benjie de Ubago*

When I was asked if I would write the introduction for the biography of Mr. Albert Maximo Garcia Garcia, my initial reaction was - whaaat!? Me? For how does one capture the very essence of the man? How could I do justice to a man who has done so much and who has reached the pinnacle of his career? On the other hand, and on second thought, it has been an absolute honour to have been entrusted with his life's works.

It was a daunting task to start off with, as I delved into the inner makings of the man. A deep dive into his resume has been nothing less than awe inspiring! Bert, as he's fondly called, is a business man, an entrepreneur who dared to meet whatever challenges that came his way. More importantly, he's a visionary, an innovator, and a philanthropist. He's quiet, reserved with a clout of mystery about him while ideas simmer in his head.

He's a marketing guru with tentacles far-reaching having touched the unknown and the unexplored. His life experiences all intertwined, woven into an amazing tapestry called life. And yet, despite all his achievements, he has remained unassuming and totally unpretentious.

He is a consummate professional. His impact on the import/export industry is long-lasting. His pioneering spirit has opened doors and has paved the way for others to dare accept the challenges that come their way.

Likewise, his altruistic nature has seen many students and athletes benefit from his generosity.

While most may accomplish their goals in life, I would define a true achiever as one who dared to make a difference; one who has excelled in their field of endeavour; and whose outstanding contributions leave a long lasting impact on a community.

Albert's efforts have been undoubtedly felt on a national and international level. Both the Philippines and Australia, as well as other Asian countries, have benefited from the fruits of his labour. He is an achiever in the truest sense.

As one of the early Filipinos in Australia, I can attest to our craving for authentic Filipino food back in the early seventies. I remember how we would gatecrash an Aunt's parties if only to savour her Filipino dishes. But even if my Aunt was a kitchen wiz, she still had difficulty in finding the right ingredients. Cooking was by trial and error.

The Filipino community in Australia should forever be grateful to Albert for bringing "*the taste of the Philippines*" to Australia. At last, our '*nilaga*' and other Filipino dishes tasted so much better with a few drops of "*patis*", our fish sauce favourite. This is one of his most outstanding contributions to multiculturalism in Australia.

May his life's works be remembered and may it inspire others to dare to dream big, to jump the hurdles, and to swing with a vision that would help shape the community they live in.

This is his enduring legacy.

## Chapter 1

## Yesteryears

The world was just recovering from the devastation brought about by World War II. The Philippines had just gained independence from the United States on 4 July 1946. It was peacetime. Optimism was in the air. It was a time of recovery. It was time to start anew and ample opportunities abounded for those who dared to grab them and willing to venture into the unknown. More importantly, it was an auspicious time to be born.

On 19 November 1947, Albert Maximo Garcia Garcia was born in Manila, Philippines to Señor Don Pacifico Cruz Garcia of San Simon, Pampanga and Doña Salvadora Rodriguez Garcia y Garcia from La Carlota, Bacolod, Negros Occidental. They first resided in Don Quixote Street, Sampaloc, Manila. Albert was the 7th of nine siblings. His father was an educator, turned lawyer. Don Pacifico enjoyed an illustrious reputation as a trial lawyer having obtained his Bachelor of Law degree from the Far Eastern University and Doctorado in the Universidad de Madrid. His thesis was "*Desaucio*," meaning Eviction.

Perhaps, Don Pacifico had envisioned a big family early on when he later built the Garcia family home at 70 Nevada Street, Cubao, Quezon City at a time when Quezon City was waiting to be developed as the nation's capital city. This prime piece of property was part of the Magdalena Estate which was developed early in the 1930s. It was supposed to be an escape from the old bustling city of Manila and came to be known as a residential place for the elite. The Garcia house was a large, four-storey mansion with a charming garden which all the siblings would come to know as the Nevada home despite their Madrid sojourn.





*The house that Don Pacifico Garcia built for his family at 70 Nevada Street, Quezon City. It was home for all the nine siblings.*





*His Mamang with some of his siblings.*



*With their family house helper  
in the Philippines.*



*His father, Señor Don Pacifico Cruz Garcia.*



*His parents, Don Pacifico and Doña Salvadora.*



*Albert with his Mamang, a grand lady who raised nine children.*



*The Garcia Family - Seating left to right: Beng, Angeling, Mamang, Papang, Teresing and Turing. Standing left to right: Bitan, Bomber, Edu and Rene.*



*The Garcia Brothers - left to right: Justo (RIP), Arturo, Isabelo, Rene, Albert, and Edward.*

## FORMATIVE YEARS

In 1952, Don Pacifico decided to pack up his family and move to Spain on the belief that education in Spain would be better and more affordable for his growing brood. He was following the advice of the owners of the Samanillo building, who also happened to be his clients. So off they sailed for 24 days to Spain aboard the French vessel 'Marseilles' with a few stopover adventures along the way.

First port was Saigon and French soldiers came on board. They were just returning home after their defeat in Diem Bien Phu. Then, passing through the Suez Canal and arriving in Marseilles, France on July 14, 1952, Bastille Day. Next was Portbou, Girona, Spain, located on the border of Spain. Finally they reached their ultimate destination - Madrid. The family resided in Calle Fernando el Catolico, Barrio de Arguelles, near Moncloa. This was to be their home for many years before each sibling gradually and individually returned to the Philippines upon completing their university education.

It is in Madrid that Albert experienced his formative years, and as expected, his first language became Spanish. He entered parbulo (kindergarten) at the Colegio de Buen Consejo where he got to kick his first football - a game that was later ingrained in him through the years. Albert was literally a street kid and he remembers well his childhood friend, Manuel.

*Biking with his brother  
in Madrid.*





A few years later, it was about face and back to the Philippines for Albert. This time, aboard the first Pan American Airlines (PANAM) constellation aircraft flight. The flight included many stopovers as there were no direct flights back then. The last stopover was Hong Kong where they experienced the dazzling Chinese New Year fireworks. And finally, it was back to their home in Nevada Street, Quezon City.



*At Madrid Airport returning to the Philippines.*

## SCHOOL DAYS

Since he only spoke the Spanish language, Albert found it difficult to shift to Filipino much less the English language at the start. He was first enrolled in Colegio de San Juan de Letran where he was told that the Spanish language was still being used as the medium of instruction. He could remember sitting in the Letran classroom for almost six months before he could understand anything. He recalls rushing off during recess or lunch breaks to the Spanish friars' quarters if only to speak to someone.

By grade 6, Albert was transferred to De La Salle College, a Christian Brothers run school and one of the prestigious schools in the Philippines which was located along Taft Avenue. This school was in fact the family's alma mater where his older brothers had also studied. The school is now known as De La Salle University. It is in this institution where Albert unmistakably planted his roots and made his mark.

Here at De La Salle he completed his grade school, high school and obtained a Bachelors degree in Business Administration (BSBA). Albert amusingly says that he majored in sports.

For the green and white teams (the school colours), he competed in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) playing the sport he had learned to love from a young age in Madrid - football. He also dabbled in track and field where he excelled in sprints and mid-distances.

From 1963 to 1970, he played for De La Salle's junior and senior football teams and the track team. His early football grounding in Madrid paved the way for his football glory days.

He was a key player of De La Salle's football varsity teams. He was selected to the Philippine National Football Team from 1966

to 1970 and was part of the Philippine Asian Youth football team to Thailand (1966) for the Asian Youth Football Tournament where he scored a goal against Ceylon. Then he played for the President's Cup in Taipei, Taiwan (1967) and many other international caps. Albert was part of the Philippine football team to the Mexico pre-Olympics Qualifications in Tokyo, Japan (1968) where he scored a goal against China.

While visiting the Philippines as a guest of the Philippine Football Association, German Football Coach Dettmar Cramer spotted and selected Albert to train in Germany, all expenses paid, with the Bayern Munich team. However, Albert declined as he chose to finish his university education.

Albert received the De La Salle highest scorer award in football; a gold medal in the annual college marathons for three consecutive years; 2 gold, 1 silver and 1 bronze medals in the Inter-School Football competition; he was team Captain for four years in the BSBA football championship - 1 year as the runner up and champions for 3 years.

For his many sporting accolades he has been recognized by De La Salle University Alumni Association (DLSAA). He was inducted into the De La Salle's Sport's Hall of Fame Awardees for his sporting achievements in football in 1997. He was one of the first to be recognized after posthumous awardees were given their honours.

In addition to his sporting activities, Albert was elected to Secretary of the Commerce Officers Council (COOFCO) which was abolished when student councils were heavily into demonstrations.

Albert was also a De La Salle Naval Reserve Officers Corp (NROTC), a model Platoon Commander. His platoon

participated and won the Best Marching Award at the Pinaglabanan San Juan Parade, besting all other universities.

He completed his Bachelors degree in Business Administration from De La Salle majoring in marketing. He later took advanced Marketing studies from the University of New South Wales, Australia.



*Albert's first football team in Madrid in 1954..*







*His football days.*



*With the De La Salle College football varsity team.*



*Albert, third from the left with the Philippine team.*



*As platoon commander in the NROTC. Best Marching display at Pinaglabanan, San Juan, Manila..*



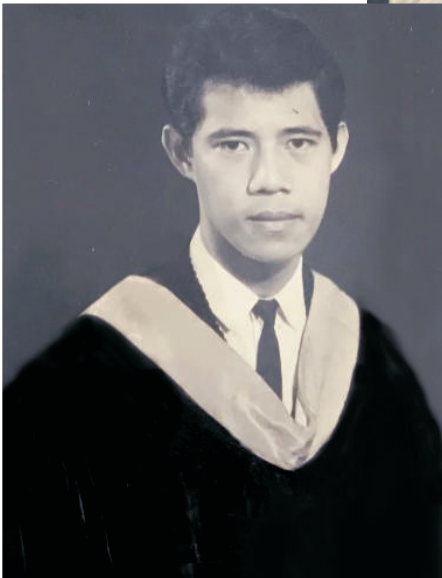
*Family meets Albert at the airport on his return from playing football in the Asian Youth Football Tournament in Bangkok Thailand.*



*Memories of those yesteryears.*



*Forever a "Greenie".  
Graduation photos  
from De La Salle College  
through the years.*





## Chapter 2

# The Working Man

Even while at College, Albert worked part time as a tourist guide for Philippine Travel and Tours. Later for Travel Plan Inc., he looked after inbound and outbound tour groups. It was during this period that Albert enjoyed the benefits of domestic and international travel including the touring of Japanese executives from C. Itoh Corporation throughout the whole of the Philippines - from Banaue to Zamboanga while also looking for potential tourist investment opportunities.

During a tour to the Osaka World Expo, whilst escorting Cuban Maria Juana Castro and family, Albert was introduced to the power and influence of politics. He was thrilled at having privileged access to all VIP entrances of the Eastern Communist Bloc pavilions. Here he had his first taste of the pheasant dish, a rare, luxury delicacy.

Albert joined Ace Compton Advertising Agency as a Trainee Account Executive early in 1971, as Assistant Account Executive with Tom Banguis and Ernie Hernandez as his mentors. He assisted with consumer accounts such as: Proctor & Gamble products, Star margarine, Dari Crème margarine, Safeguard and Camay soaps, with Tina Revilla, the 'Camay Girl' then.

However, the political climate in the Philippines left much to be desired. There was growing civil unrest and political dissent was growing. The people were clamoring for government change. This led to the lifting of habeas corpus in September 1971, followed in 1972, a year after, by the declaration of martial law.

Manila was the center of street demonstrations clamoring for the Marcos reign to end. Marcos had been in power for 20 years and



the people had had enough. With his sense of idealism, Albert empathized with the demonstrators. He actively and frequently joined rallies and demonstrations. Once, he visited a fellow nationalist, Nilo Tayag, the head of "Kabataan Makabayan" (KM-Youth for Country) at Camp Crame where Nilo had been detained. Little did Albert know, this innocent decision to visit a friend would completely change his life.

From 1968, during his college days, Albert's political activism found him in the streets of Manila often in the University belt and frequently at the US Embassy with fist pumps and arms lifted up in the air screaming the mantras for change. Albert's trusted Vauxhall would often be full of Molotov cocktails loaded from the deep recesses of Tondo and surrounds.

He found himself in running fights with the Metrocom (Metropolitan Police) often dodging or being on the receiving end of tear gas and police batons. One such demonstration was at the Port Area demonstrating against US Tobacco Corp.

Likewise, he was in the front lines of Mendiola, a demonstration which came to be known as the "Battle of Mendiola" which resulted to bloodshed. It was more than just an anarchist wanting to topple the Marcos government.

The Marcos government frowned upon political activities and subversiveness had dire consequences. A whiff of suspicion and one could find themselves arrested without cause. At worst, the activist would disappear without a trace. Their phones were being tapped. Albert's name was on the "wanted" list of activists wanting to bring down the Marcos' government. Danger was getting closer and his life was in peril.

His Dad, a lawyer, was privately told that Albert's name was on the "pick-up" list and was advised "get Albert out." Albert and his brand new wife were shipped out of Manila to Australia quickly.

## Chapter 3

# Australia - The Land Down Under

Australia seemed to be a safe haven for those wanting to escape the tyranny of the Marcos regime. It was a land of milk and honey; a land of promise. Opportunities were aplenty and jobs were for the picking. Having been previously employed with Ace Compton Advertising Agency in the Philippines, Albert took the marketing road upon his arrival in Sydney, Australia.

He landed a job as a Senior Account Manager for Canny Gabriel Castle Jackson Advertising handling advertising clients such as: East West Airlines, Shaw Savill Passenger Shipping Lines, TWA Airlines Philippines Airlines, Lindemans Wines Export, News Limited, Columbus, Hyatt Kingsgate Hotel and various other consumer products. The agency later merged with another agency forming Jacques McAskell Advertising Pty Ltd.

While handling Lindeman's Export Wines brands, Albert was asked to undertake a three month wine appreciation course by the Wine and Brandy Association where his understanding of wines greatly improved. His newly acquired taste and appreciation for wine led him to purchase a case of Penfold's Grange Hermitage of the vintage year when each of his children were born, i.e. 1973, 1980 and 1983. These bottles of wine were popped open when each child reached the age of 21 years old. No doubt these spirits contributed to a great 21st birthday celebration each time.

Albert's work in advertising won many awards for their clients like Shaw Savill Shipping Lines given by the Australian Newspaper Council for Best Ad"; East West Airlines 1973 for Golden Halo award by Australian Association of National Advertisers (AANA).



He also clinched the Columbus Line (1974) AANA for Best Export Advertising and an AANA commendation for a Black and White print ad.

In 1974, he was the company representative to the regional advertising conference for TWA airlines in Hong Kong. He also was chosen to be a member of the panel of judges for the 'Brochure of the Year award' for the Australian Federation of Travel Agents convention on the same year.

His travel experience came in handy after he moved to Palanga Shipping Lines as their Marketing Manager responsible for passenger cruises. The company was leasing vessels from the Black Sea Shipping Company and marketing the Pacific cruises and ship/jet travel to the UK via Aeroflot.

After his stint at Palanga Lines, a chance meeting with a friend while in the USA during a world holiday, steered him down the road of importing and exporting. It was a timely move. It was a seminal idea which would germinate and have a huge, long-term impact not only on a personal level but on trade, economy and on the Asian communities in Australia.



## THE TASTE OF THE PHILIPPINES

Filipinos in Australia in the 70's were starved for Filipino cuisine. Only home cooking was enjoyed and even those who could cook had difficulty matching the right ingredients or finding alternatives to capture the authentic taste of Filipino dishes. Except for wicker furniture and native baskets, no food products were allowed into Australia.

He entertained the idea of having his own business and importing Filipino food products to Australia. It was a challenge he would take on. Before Albert could realize his goal, he had to accept the reality of starting a business without any funding. He now had a family to support. It meant buckling down and confronting the harsh reality of hard work. Emboldened only by sheer guts, he plunged head on and juggled three jobs.

He would deliver newspapers seven days using his VW Beetle and was paid \$20 a week; then take his newly born son to a baby sitter complete with the baby formulas; then start his daily grind in his office/warehouse at Buckingham Street, Surry Hills with a mail box at Strawberry Hills. In the afternoon, he would stock supermarket shelves at Grace Brothers in Broadway until 9 p.m., then dash to a French restaurant to wash dishes till midnight.

With the help of his wife, Stella, he survived this gruelling routine for one whole year and that included weekends! That is how his rent and food was paid until his importing business started to pay off. It was 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration which all proved worthwhile.

Albert was the first to bring ***"The Taste of the Philippines"*** to Australia from 1976. He established Philippine Food Products Pty. Ltd. - importers, wholesalers and distributors of Philippine food products which lasted for 25 years. Albert alone can claim to be the first commercial importer and marketer of Philippine

food products in Australia as well as Indonesian, Thailand, Malaysian, Vietnamese and Korean food items.

Bottled, canned, wrapped and frozen, he brought the food products into Australia and satisfied the cravings of the Filipino community. He was the exclusive importers of Rufina '*Patis*' Fish Sauce" for more than two decades. The agreement with the Rufina Patis owner, Jesus Lucas was sealed with a simple handshake, the old school way of doing business with honor.

Other Filipino food items he brought in included: Knorr, Lady's Choice, Mama Sita's ready-mix sauces, MY San Biscuits, Magnolia, Stanfood, Barrio Fiesta, ABC, Silver Swan, Newton Food products, Marca Piña, Jack & Jill , Granny Goose, and Stork. He was also the importer of Freshway Agro Marine products for 25 years.

He recalls how Susan Jones of Pagasa Asian Food Imports attempted later to bring in Rufina '*Patis*' fish sauce but with a change of label. As Albert was the first and the exclusive distributors of Rufina '*patis*,' a legal battle ensued. Albert won the case. The court ordered that all of Pagasa's '*patis*' products be destroyed. Albert stood on the sidelines and watched a whole container of '*patis*' bulldozed to the ground.

Albert later expanded his product range to include product lines from other Asian countries. He added products from California Manufacturing Corp, RFM Philippines and SAFI (Southeast Asian Foods Inc); ABC and Indomie (Indonesia); Universal Food (Thailand); Verkade Biscuits (Indonesia); Lotte, Miwon, and Nongshim (Korean).

Of course, Albert being Albert, went one step further and developed his own brands which included: Lasang Pinoy (Filipino foods), Dragon Bow (rice, sauces, noodles, MSG etc), Pescador (marine products fresh frozen and processed),

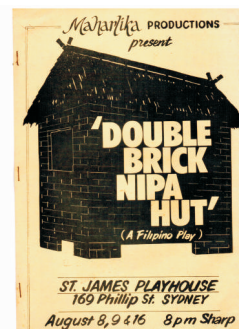
Tropical Harvest (tropical fruits and juices etc), Palm Tree, Wayang (Indonesian), Yangban (Korean), Kopiko coffee candies (1980), Indomie noodles (1980), Hanggul and many others, even canned mackerel from Chile. Early foray into mainstream outlets such as Franklins and David Jones proved to be ground breaking.

By 1980, he took another giant step and entered the world of retailing. He established Mr. Wong's Asian & Oriental Groceries chain of stores with him as the Managing Director. He opened five branches: Warringah Mall, Brookvale, Carlingford Mall, Hornsby and Westfield Hurstville.

In a joint business venture with his best friend Jose M Corpus Jr., they manufactured and marketed Krunchie Munchies, a branded flavored pork crackling and the heart-pumping Filipino all-time favorite - '*chicharon*.' It was another first in the Philippine market which was sold at SM Supermarkets back then. Sadly, Jose Corpuz passed away in Albert's arms while playing golf.

Albert also ventured into the garment industry from 1996 to 1998 and was President and CEO of Industrias Filipinas, a garment export company. Together with a textile expert, they linked up with the largest textile and garment manufacturers in the Philippines namely Crispa, Litton and Unico. His efforts resulted in penetrating the Australian market with brands such as GDA and Southern Comfort including in-store brands for their main Australian client, Gowing's Department store located in Sydney.

Despite his hectic daily routine, Albert found time to be involved with the Filipino Cooperative organization and in other Filipino community affairs. He advised and volunteered for charitable fundraising



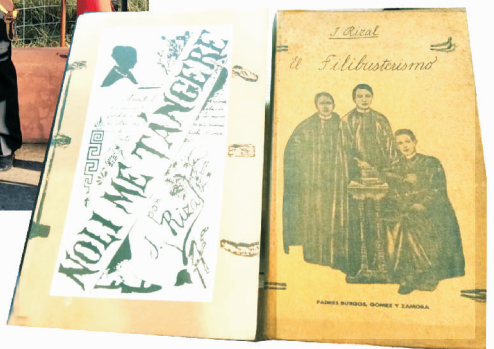
projects. As an aspiring playwright and thespian, his creative juices flowed as he wrote and acted in plays such as "Double Brick Nipa Hut," "Juan de la Cruz" and "The Classmates." All plays were staged in Sydney.

Albert also donated his personal reproduction copies of Dr Jose P. Rizal's books, "Noli Me Tangere" and "El Filibusterismo" to the Knights of Rizal, Sydney Chapter for their memorabilia collection. More importantly, he had hoped that these historical manuscripts would provide the next generation insights into Rizal's writings.

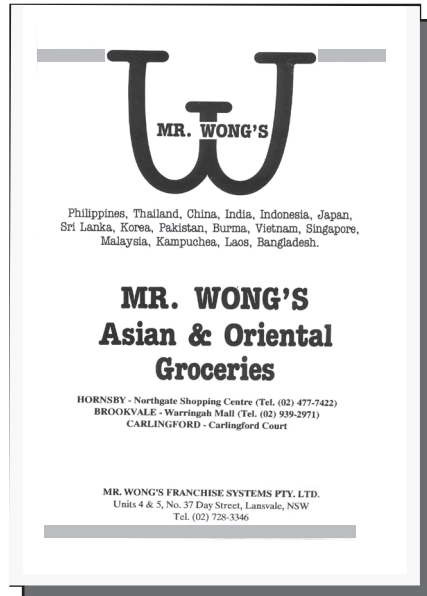
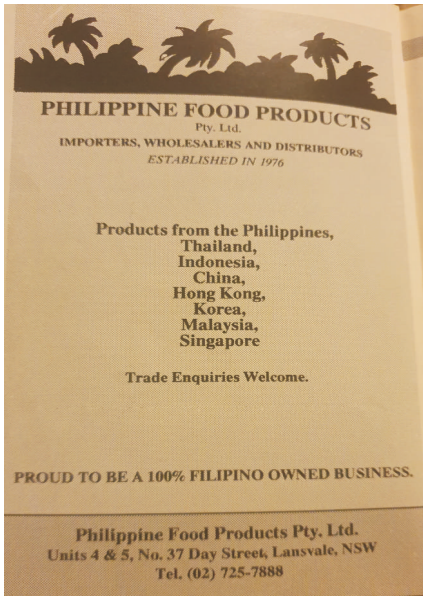
To ensure his legacy, Albert's family donated an authentic Filipino ice cream cart, a cultural icon, to the Philippine Consulate in Sydney. The Garcia's Special Ice Cream cart can be seen on display at the annual Fiesta and during other special Philippine events in Sydney.



*Handing over Rizal's books to members of the Knights of Rizal, Philip Ranoso & Cesar Bartolome, at the Rizal Bust in Blacktown, NSW.*







*The ads for Philippine Food Products and Mr. Wong's retail chain in the late 80s.*



*Albert with his best friend and Krunchie Munchies partner, Jose 'Jun' Magsaysay Corpus Jr. Sadly, Jun died of a heart failure during a golf game. Despite Albert's efforts to revive him, Jun passed away in his arms.*



*At the Philippine Consulate, Sydney with Consul Manny Guzman along with Philippine Australian Business Council (PABC) members posing with the iconic ice cream cart.*

## Chapter 4

# Back to the Philippines

General McArthur said it best when he declared to the Filipino people, "I shall return." Albert did too. He was yanked out of his youthful days in the Philippines and there was still a lot he could offer his homeland. It was time to return.

By this time, Albert had amassed from 1975 to 1995, a wealth of knowledge and three decades of commercial experience in Australia, South East Asia and Indo-China.

After 25 years in Australia, Albert returned to the Philippines in 1995. It was a strategic move aimed at maximizing commercial opportunities arising from the growing interests in the region, as well as capitalizing on the wealth of South East Asia.

Having accumulated over 30 years of skills and experience in the importing and exporting of fast moving consumer goods (FMCG), new market development, trade and international liaison, it was time to offer his services as marketing management consultant. more importantly, had the appreciation of cross cultural considerations having penetrated the markets of Australia, South East Asia, and Indo-China, He revived Garsworth Marketing Australasia, an old family company to offer his invaluable services as marketing and management consultant.

Garsworth Consulting (Philippines) re-established full time presence in the Philippines from 1995. In the past years, Garsworth Consulting has represented and undertaken projects for international and local companies including trade component delivery of bilateral and multilateral agreements.



He also established Whealth Inc., a health food and marketing company for health supplements such as C-Lium Fibre, CranUTI and Megafiber, Goutritis, Brain Master, ABW Leaves of Life, GARGOL, and a range of other health products which was distributed nationwide by Mercury Drugstores. Albert also ventured into marketing Nyte-E, a vitamin E and lavender based herbal based cosmetic lotion which was sold at Rustan's department store.

With the market success of C-Lium Fibre, there was tremendous interest to acquire the brand by Pascual Laboratories which was sold for a substantial amount. After a five year lockout period, Albert returned to the marketplace with another fiber brand called MEGAFIBER and the rest is history.

In addition to running Whealth Inc. as President and CEO, he provided marketing consultancy services for companies such as: Mapecom (Phil), Rosbank Rural Bank, Philippine Gum Paste Inc (food), and Freshway Argo Marine Inc.

Albert introduced Roselle or Hibiscus Sabdariffa to the Philippine Department of Agriculture as a potential export product with an international market. Roselle, a species of edible hibiscus is used by the herbal tea industry as a bulking agent. An experimental farm of four hectares proved successful in growing Roselle in the Philippines. Regrettably Department of Agriculture did not fully understand the export potential of Roselle. All globally marketed teas contain Roselle as a bulking agent.

He was also a marketing consultant for Greater Union Cinemas International in Australia; Philippine German Export Development project (GTZ); in Vietnam for the implementation of bilateral economic agreements Philippines & Germany; and for Kemwerke Inc., a chemical paint industry.

Albert maintained his Australian connections and served as a

consultant for the South Australian Water Corporation (SA Water) on a BOT project in Tacloban, Leyte, the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), Melbourne; Western Australia Water Corporation (Watercorp) and for Climax Arimco Mining Corporation.

His knowledge and expertise were sought after by government agencies. He was a project consultant for the Philippine visit of China's Minister for Disabled Sports, Deng Pufang, the son of China Chairman Deng Xiao Ping.

Albert was a resource person to the Philippine Department of Trade and Industry for the State visit to Australia of President Fidel Ramos in 1995 and for the Republic of Colombia Pacific Basin Economic Council (PBEC) 30th International General Meeting in 1997.

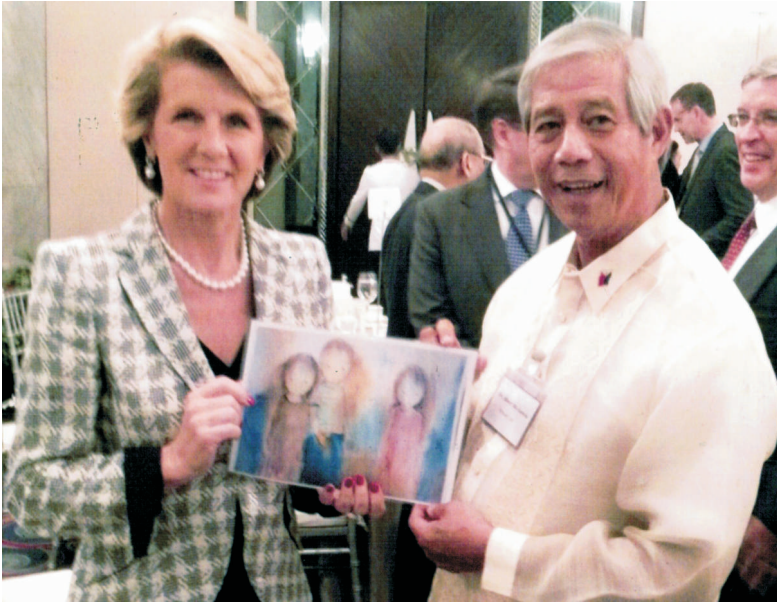
With his wealth of knowledge and experience he was hand-picked as a resource speaker for Training courses/forums in the Philippines:

- South East Asia Business Development Council -  
"How To Do Business With Vietnam" (June 1995)
- Philippine Trade Training Center (PTTC)  
Dept of Trade and Industry
- "How To Do Business With Australia & New Zealand"  
This was in connection with President Fidel Ramos' state visit to Australia (August 1995) with co-speakers Australian Ambassador Richard J Smith and New Zealand Ambassador Colin Bell.

- Technology & Livelihood Resource Center (TLRC) Courses: “Entrepreneurship,” “Doing Business in South East Asia,” “Doing Business with Australia,” “Marketing and Management.”
- Resource speaker on Export and Marketing for the 22nd Philippine Business Conference in October 1996, Davao City
- Import & Export Opportunities BIMP-EAGA  
Philippine Export Seminar - General Santos City,  
South Cotabato



*With former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd (2007-2013).*



*With former Australian Foreign Affairs Minister, Julie Bishop (2013-2018).*



*With Australian Ambassador to the Philippines, Amanda Gorley (2016) at Shangrila Hotel, Makati.*



*With former President Fidel V. Ramos (1995).*



*With former Philippine President Joseph Ejercito Estrada (1996).*





*With Cardinal Sin of the Philippines.*



*With Alma Argayoso, Commercial Consul of Philippine Department of Trade and Industry.*





*With Deng Pufang, China's Minister for Disabled Sports. Albert was gifted with the rare antique vase.*



*An impersonator of Diego Maradona, an Argentine football great, in Caminito, Buenos Aires, Argentina.*

## Chapter 5

# Sports

Albert's love of sports and marketing know-how were priceless for the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC). He advised and assisted in various capacities: adviser to the PSC Chairman, Philip "Popoy" Juico on obtaining international funds for Filipino athletes; special adviser for international policy and development and headed the International desk; sectoral planning for the PSC. He also initiated projects for partnership programs for sports (PPSA); a plan for disabled sports; and a master plan for Basketball Philippines.

The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) in collaboration with the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) consulted him on international policy making. Price Waterhouse Urwick, Canberra were also engaged and together they produced the Master Development Plan for Philippine Sports and Basketball Australia. He also provided marketing consultancy service for Golf Strategies of South Australia.

Albert was involved in the formation of Philippine Sports for Differently Abled Athletes (PHILSPADA).

In 1997, the Philippine Sports Commission honoured him with a recognition award for his outstanding achievements in the field of sport and for his outstanding contribution to the development of Philippine sports.

As a runner, Albert took to the streets and participated in numerous marathon events: in Australia - the Sydney Half Marathon, the Sydney City to Surf and the Sutherland Shire Run. In the Philippines - the Manila Puma Marathon and the Sustagen Manila runs.

His love of sports and his athleticism was not limited on the ground. His innate desire for adventure found him challenging high altitudes, scouring the mountains of Mt. Apo, Mt. Makiling, Mt. Pulag, Mt. Banahaw, Mt. Pinatubo, Mt. Makulot, Mt. Kinabalu (Malaysia) and Mt Kosciusko (NSW Australia) together with the "*Social Climbers*", his mountain climbing group.

And if he wasn't participating in the event, he would be behind the scenes, supporting , sponsoring and cheering athletes from the sidelines. He supported the MEGAFIBER Runners in the Philippines, a collection of dedicated runners who regularly and frequently participate in marathons and super marathons; the MEGAFIBER Football Team, composed of De La Salle Alumni Football players.

The MEGAFIBER Golf Team is a long-standing participant in the FILAM Golf Tournament which is held annually in Baguio City. They've been consistent champions in the Senior Division for a number of years. He has participated in the FILAM Golf for over 20 years represented by various company teams such as C-Lium Fibre and ABW Leaves of Life.

Likewise, Whealth Inc. brands such as MEGAFIBER and CranUTI were regular sponsors of golf tournaments and various nationwide events.

Albert is also a regular team member of the Federation of Philippine Amateur Senior Golfers Inc (FPASGI) as part of CASGA Confederation of ASEAN Senior Golfers Association and the Asian Senior Golfers Association (ASGA). Both groups play in ASEAN international golf tournaments.

His love of adventure must have rubbed off on the rest of his whole family. All are avid snow skiers having all grown up in the slopes of Perisher Valley, Blue Cow Mountain in the Snowy Mountains and even venturing on the international slopes of Utah

and Colorado. To cater for the family's love of outdoor adventure, a seven-room mountain chalet, called 'Montana' was constructed in Jindabyne, NSW as a country home for the family's winter and summer activities. It was designed by architect Sergio Palomo, a good friend and also a skiing enthusiast.

In 2006, Albert founded "BRAFE Golf - Golfing for Education" in honour and respect for his Grade 7 teacher at De La Salle College, Brother Rafael Donato FSC. This is an ongoing advocacy of raising scholarship funds for talented high school graduates of Public Schools. The scholarship provides students a four-year university scholarship at De La Salle University, Lipa, Batangas.

In Australia, Albert founded the super active Kalabaw Super Senior Golfers Australia Inc. to promote golf to the Filipino senior citizens. The group further aims to encourage the seniors to lead an active life, to socialize, thus helping improve the lives of Filipinos through sports and camaraderie.

Albert is an active member of Kogarah Golf Club and various other social golfing groups in Sydney.

Albert still hopes to realize his tour ambition and only Myanmar remains on the list to complete his Asean tour. He has played in North & South America, Europe, the Orient and East Asia.



*With Ramoncito Campos Jr,  
three-time Olympian and  
fellow Sports Hall of Fame  
of De La Salle Alumni  
Association.*



*With Lim Eng Beng, fellow awardee of De La Salle University Alumni Association Sports Hall of Fame.*



*De La Salle University Alumni Association Sports Hall of Fame awardees Lim Eng Beng (Basketball), Ramoncito Campos Jr. (Basketball & three-time Olympian), and Albert M.G. Garcia (Football).*






*DLSUAA Sports Hall of Fame.*



*His countless trophies.*



The Board of Directors of

 De La Salle Alumni Association






presents

# 2015 ONE LA SALLE NIGHT OF EXCELLENCE








April 24, 2015 De La Salle University Manila

in honor of the









## DLSAA Distinguished Lasallian Awardees

				
NATIONAL ARTIST CIRILO F. BAUTISTA	BR. GUS L. BOQUER FSC	SENATOR RAMON B. MAGSAYSAY JR.	JUSTICE TEODORO R. PADILLA	HANS T. SY






## DLSAA Sports Hall of Fame Awardees

						
ALFRED "ALFIE" P. ALMARIO	ERIC B. BUHAN	ENRIQUE MA. R. LLAMAS	DANIEL M. MORAN	MICHAEL M. MORAN	BR. BERNIL S. OCA FSC	HANS-PETER V. SMIT


## DLSAA Lasallian Achievement Awardees


							
ANA KRISTINA M. ARCE	RAUL V. DESTURA, M.D.	RENATO "BING" T. DE GUZMAN	ALEJANDRO T. ESCANO	JOSIAH L. GO	FRANZ G. ONTAL	TERESO S. TULLAO JR., PH.D.	CATHY Y. YANG

## DLSAA Lasallian Sports Achievement Awardees


				
CHARLEEN ABIGAIL R. CRUZ	JAN JOCELYN P. FRONDA	LUIS GABRIEL M. MORINO	MA. REGINA D. SANTIAGO	ANTHONY R. SUNTAY

## DLSAA President's Awardee



MANUEL M. BLANCO




1975 USGH NCAA  
JUNIOR FOOTBALL TEAM



1976-1978 DLSU  
WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM



BR. RAFA GOLF CORE GROUP



DLSAA 100  
1916-2016  
Celebrating 100 Years of Service to Society



*BRAFE Golf Core Group - Golfing for Education since 2006 to provide public high school students scholarships at De La Salle, Lipa, Batangas.*





*The BRAFE Golf Core Group - Golfing for Education was established in 2006 by Albert M.G. Garcia in the name of Bro. Rafael Donato FSC. It provides a four year scholarship for students from public schools to study in De La Salle, Lipa, Batangas.*







Continuing the tradition of Golfing for Education with BRAFE Golf 16 in October 2023 in Antipolo, Rizal. The BRAFE golf Core Group includes: Bong Africa, George Elazegui, Albert M.G. Garcia, Ting Puzon-Yupangco, Chair Jr. Hernandez, Randy Nonato and Roy Roy F. Peña.





*Federation of Philippine Senior Amateur Golfers Philippines Inc  
In front is Albert M G Garcia who also served as emcee during the  
awarding proceedings held in Eagleridge Golf Club Trece Martires,  
Cavite, Philippines.*



*Asean Golf Tournament. Albert in the centre, in the front row.*

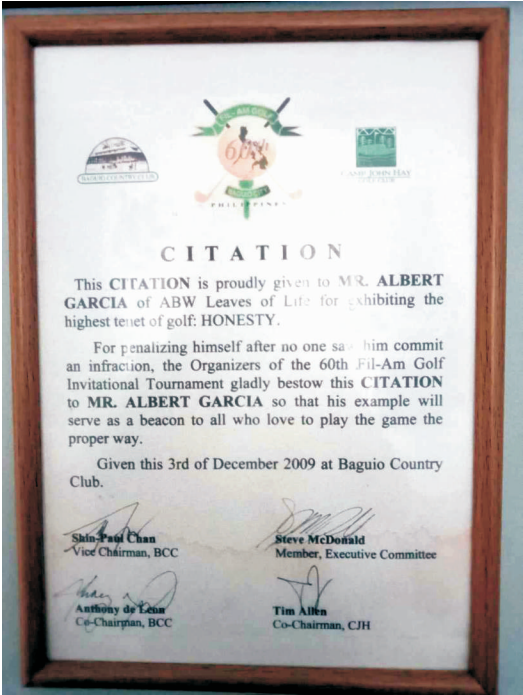


*Handing over of the donation to De La Salle University for the Albert M.G. Garcia football scholarship.*



*With PABC Directors and Consul Manny Guzman (far right) at the Philippine Consulate, Sydney.*





*Of all his many awards, he is proudest of this certificate.*



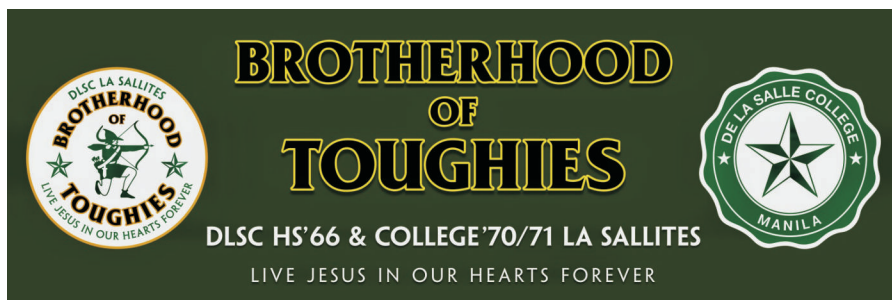
*The swing.*



*The Philippines Australia Business Council (PABC) Golf Tournament. Left to right: Tom Aquino, Dennis Quintero, Albert M G Garcia, Leo Dominguez and Antonio Enriquez*



*The Philippines Australia Business Council Trustees during a golf tournament (L-R) Tom Aquino, Albert M G Garcia, Dennis Quintero, Michelle Searby, Janvi Hernandez, Violy Searby, Antonio Enriquez and Leo Dominguez*



*The “Toughies” are batchmates from Grade school, High school and College - all graduates of DLSU, Taft Avenue.*



*Megafiber Football Team.*



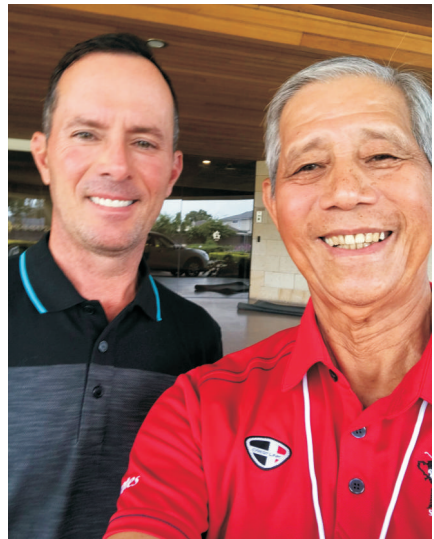


*MegaFiber football teams.*

*Bumping into famous people on the golf course.  
Right: Former President Fidel Ramos.*



*The Garcia golfers -Albert and well known golfer, Sergio Garcia.*



*Mike Weir, famous Canadian golfer.*



*The 32nd Asean Golf Tournament.in Thailand.*



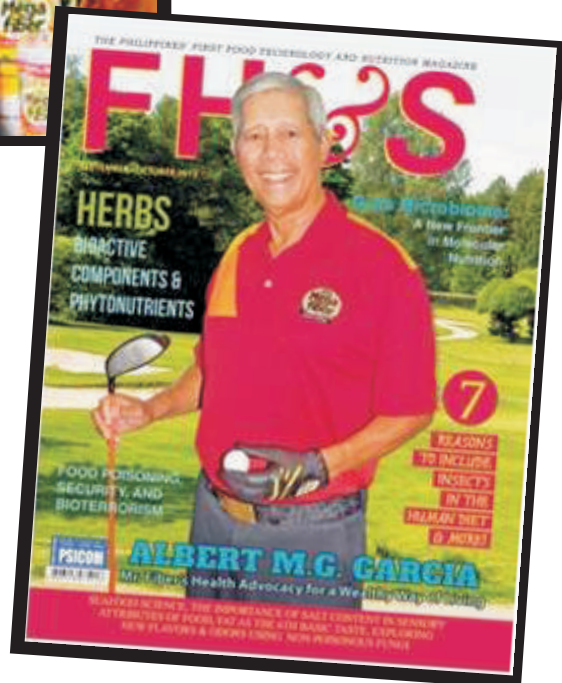


*The Asean Golf Tournament in Indonesia.*





Gracing the covers of leading health and fitness magazines in the Philippines for Megafiber.



## MEGAFIBER Golf Teams

*Left to right:  
Rene Unson, Bing Bunye,  
Albert M.G. Garcia  
and Tony Olives.*



*Left to right: Bing Bunye,  
Rene Unson  
Rolly Viray,  
Man Hechanova  
and Dave Hernandez.*



*Left to right: Benigno Alcantara, Rex Goquingco,  
M.G. Garcia, Bing Bunye and Fernando de los Reyes.*





*Professional Golfers, Friends of MEGAFIBER.*

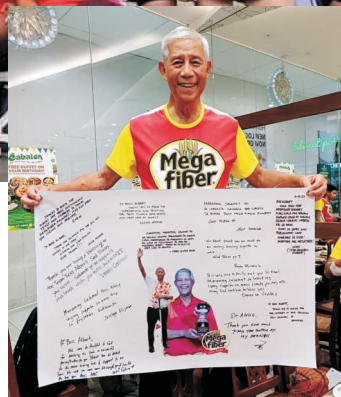


*That winning Megafiber feeling!*



*The Megafiber Runners competing at a marathon in Sitio Wawa Barangay San Rafael Rodriguez, Rizal in October 2023.*

*A token of appreciation from the runners.*







*Catching up with his Rotary family in 2023.*

The power of persuasion and Albert's marketing skills at work when he persuades locals in Peru to hold the Megafiber jar.







Megafiber team





*The Sherwood Bandidos includes:  
Bong Arguelles, Joey Arguelles, Erol Dy,  
Nico Sevilla, Nestor Sevilla, Arnel Romero,  
Raymond Bonquin and Albert M.G. Garcia.*





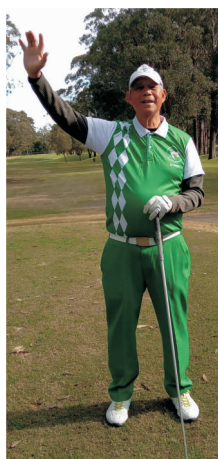


*The Kalabaw originals: Albert M.G. Garcia, Lito Mercado, Danny Garcia, Ric de Vera, Manny Castillo and Carlos Perez.*





In various hues and shades he fronts up on the greens, in either matching team colours, in contrasting colours or blending in with the background. Then, a little wave for good luck.





Collection of golf balls over the years autographed by Philippine professional golfers.





*"Hole in One" at Hole No. 18 on  
13 August, 2023 at Intramuros Golf Club.  
The first one was at Fox Hill Golf Course  
at Toongabbie, NSW.*





*The view from the top at Machu Picchu, Peru..*



*With his son, Paolo in Machu Picchu, Peru. They traveled together to Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil.*



*That 'top of the world' feeling with his 'Social Climbers' mountain climbing group conquering Mt. Apo, Davao.*



*To the top!*



*The adrenalin rush when  
skiing down the ski slopes.*



*With his adventure loving friends, the 'social climbers.*

*A passion for skiing translated into a ski chalet for the family's getaway in Jindabyne, Snowy Mountains, NSW.*



## Chapter 6

# Beyond the Call of Duty

Always going beyond his work commitments, Albert immersed himself in various civic and charitable organizations.

His benevolent nature has touched the lives of the less fortunate. From scholarships for students in public schools to the free '*Lugaw Lunes*' feeding programs at Zapanta, Singalong "*talipapa*." This is an ongoing activity for many years.

At Christmas, he would invite 1,800 orphans, abused children and the aged to watch a matinee presentation of Ballet Philippines at the Cultural Centre, of the Philippines, then treat them to snacks after the show. Sharing his blessings was his way of giving back.

He took on active roles such as Chairman of the Chamber of Herbal Industries of the Philippines Inc. (CHIFI), Past President of the Rotary Club of Forbes Park; and the Chairman and Administrator of Rotary Watch. Rotary Watch was a national campaign of the Rotary in partnership with the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Local Government Units (LGU) to assist in maintaining peace and order. This project would allow all Rotarians to provide the additional eyes and ears to support the community.

For his Rotarian services, he was awarded the Most Outstanding Rotarian in 2000, the Presidential Award in 2001, and the Presidential Leadership Award in 2002.

From 2008 to 2012, he was Chairman of the Philippines Australia Business Council (PABC) forging trade, economic and bilateral relations between the Philippines and Australia.



He was also appointed the Honorary Investment and Trade Representative by the Philippine Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

Albert was bestowed the title of Honorary Datu Tumangong for his services to the community by Tausug Datu Harpa Hanh of the Sultanate of Jolo.



*His ongoing "Lugaw Lunes" feeding program in Zapanta, Singalong.*



*A tricycle donation for a Vietnamese man from Hoi An, Vietnam who had mobility problems.*





*The team behind the special  
Christmas treat for kids.*





*The cast of Ballet Philippines sharing the spirit of Christmas with down syndrome kids.*



*Over 1,800 kids are treated to Ballet Philippines' matinee show at Cultural Centre of the Philippines.*



## Chapter 7

### Today

Although his career has seen him hobnobbing with the affluent and those in the upper echelon of government circles, he has remained ever so humble. He continues his philanthropic activities for the less fortunate. Behind the serious, astute businessman is a gentle, caring soul; a resilient man gifted with wit and humour.

He commutes between the Philippines and Australia and travels wherever the wind blows or wherever a golf game calls. As an intrepid traveler and a nature lover, he continues to explore the unknown in search of new adventures and to commune with nature. Wherever he goes, he soaks up the history and culture of the place, mixing with locals at every chance. Every trip turns to a meaningful, learning experience.

Being well traveled, he has learned to appreciate and embrace the diverse cultures of the countries he did business with. His appreciation turned to passion and he beams with pride as an antique collector.

Over four decades, Albert has collected over 255 artifacts from China, Vietnam Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines some of which are shown in the following pages.

Another facet of his character is being a lover of animals, be it his favourite pet dog, Elvis, thoroughbreds, fine feathered friends or those slippery pythons. He's been rescuing pythons and releasing them in the forests of Calatagan. Over fifteen pythons owe their lives to him for having allowed them to to crawl back to the wild to seek sanctuary.



And just when you thought, he's done it all, he surprisingly announces one more facet of his personality. Having been exposed to different cuisines, he relishes cooking and even finds it quite therapeutic. Yes, to tempt your taste buds, he can prepare a mean meal. A top favourite - *Arroz a la Maligaya*, a variation of the original dish, *Arroz a la Cubana*

Likewise, he continues to be a staunch supporter of his beloved sport and alma mater. He established the Albert M.G. Garcia Football Scholarship fund for the university's promising athletes. The De La Salle University Science Foundation manages the scholarship fund.

Albert is an adopted Hontiveros. He "adopted" the late Alejandro Pardo Hontiveros as a Dad who when he was still alive was his golfing partner, mentor and a regular companion along with the rest of the family on their holidays in Matuod, Batangas.

Above all, he is a devoted father of three children: Laurindo, Carmela and Paolo. All were born in Sydney, Australia. Laurindo is married to Alan Seah and is the regional director for Netflix and advocates for the LGBTQ community. Carmela is a computer science teacher residing in Sydney and is involved in many church and civic activities, Paolo resides in New York City with his wife Lindsay Bourget and their son, Aurelio "Rio", the first grandchild. Paolo is a freelance motion graphic designer handling accounts such as IBM, National Geographic etc.

Indeed, Albert has lived a rich and fruitful life - a life well lived! His enduring legacy is nothing short of inspiring.

Needless to say he continues to enjoy the greens. He explores the golf courses in the Philippines, Australia and other Asian countries or should we say, wherever his travels may take him. For him, the grass is always greener wherever he may be.

*Albert's first family - with his children, Laurindo, Carmela and Paolo..*





*Laurindo and Alan*



*Albert with son Laurindo.*



*Father & only daughter, Carmela.*







*The Extended Family, Albert, Alan, Laurindo, Tellie, Dick, Carmela, Lindsay and Paolo.*



Above the extended family

Right: the latest addition to the Garcia family - Rio, his first grandchild.







*A place called home, his humble abode in Maligaya Street, Quezon City, Philippines.*



*With the late Alejandro Pardo Hontiveros, his adopted Dad.*

*Some of his precious antique collection.*



*The clock is a precious family heirloom that has been handed down over three generations. Made by Ansona Clock co, New York, USA.*





*Finding peace with his canine friends - Rottweilers, Belgian Malinois, etc. But Elvis (below), the English Mastiff is Albert's favourite.*



*As if needing a little excitement or simply fearless. Albert started saving pythons and releasing them to the wild in Calatagan. Approximately 15 pythons owe their lives to him for allowing them to crawl back to the sanctuary.*

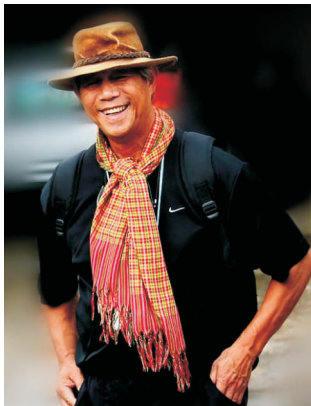


*His adventures with these slippery, creepy crawlies.*





*Feeding his fine feathered friends.*



*Albert wearing his Cambodian scarf which dates back to 1991 and it's always part of his travelling attire.*



*A moment of prayer with monks.*

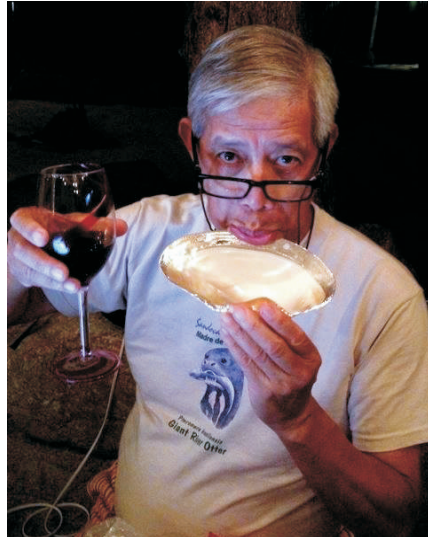
*Whether it's up on the mountains or by the beachside, Albert escapes the bustle of the daily grind to commune with nature.*



*In Matuod Batangas, his weekend getaway with the Hontiveros family.*



The many faces of Albert, the man.  
Unleashing *the relaxed, witty and sometimes  
comical man.*



*Hats to define the man.*



*Simply relaxing  
at a sidewalk café  
or in a celebratory  
Happy New Year mood.*





Albert continues to be an intrepid traveler. He explores his surrounds. He soaks up the history and culture of a place and interacts with locals to learn and have a meaningful experience.





*An artist's impression of the man by Jackie Hontiveros*



*Caricature by Princess Fiona.*



## **BIOGRAPHY**

Below is an abridged version of his resume, highlighting his skills and experience:

- Marketing and Administration
- Consulting Skills and Training
- International Consultancy
- High Level Liaison with Governments
- Import and Export Marketing
- International Trading
- Australia and South East Asia
- Product Development Consumer Marketing

### **Consultancy Profession**

He has provided consultancy services for a diverse range of industries:

- Health Foods - Water & Waste water
- Food & Agriculture
- Commodities
- Consumer Products
- Advertising & Promotions
- Cinema & Entertainment
- Sports Development
- Travel and Tourism

### **Education:**

De La Salle College - Elementary 1962, High School 1966  
& College 1970 - Bachelor of Science in  
Business Administration (BSBA)  
University of New South Wales Australia -  
Advanced Marketing Studies

## **Professional Experience**

- 1969-1970    Travelplan Inc, Manila - Tourist & Travel agency  
Supervisor - In Bound tours & travel -
- 1970 - 1971    Ace Compton Advertising Agency, Manila  
Advertising Account Executive -  
Account management control of Procter & Gamble  
products such as Star Margarine, Safeguard soaps,  
Camay Soap,    Dari Creme margarine.
- 1971-1972    Canny Gabriel Castle Jackson Advertising Sydney  
Account Director/Advertising management of national and  
international brands TWA Airlines, Lindemans Wines Export,  
Columbus Shipping, News Ltd, Philippine Airlines, and  
various consumer goods.
- 1972-1973    Jacques McAskell Advertising Agency, Sydney  
Senior Account management
- 1973 - 1976    Palanga Shipping Company, Sydney  
Marketing Manager - - Passenger Cruise Shipping Lines  
National and International marketing of Russian cruises  
originating from Australia.
- 1976 - 1993    Philippine Food Products Pty Limited, Sydney  
Managing Director - Food Import/Wholesale Company;  
International marketing of Asian food products, national  
management, and distribution. of products from the  
Philippines, Thailand, Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia,  
Singapore, Vietnam to supermarkets and the grocery trade.  
retail chain of food stores based in New South Wales  
emphasis on franchise management

- 1976 to 1995 Garsworth Consulting - Principal Consultant  
International Marketing & Management Consultants  
Consultancy services to Australian and South East Asian  
businesses for marketing development, new product  
launches, export and import development, promotions
- 1976 to 1995 Garsworth Marketing Inc. (Philippines)  
Marketing and Distribution of Health Food Products  
Import - Export, International trading - consumer products.  
Representative agents.
- 1995 to 1999 J&B Marketmasters Inc  
President & CEO  
Food manufacturing company specialising in snack products  
for local and export markets. National distribution to  
supermarkets, convenience stores, groceries and chains.  
Brand names: Krunchie Munchies, Diskettes, Nibbles
- 1996 to 1998 Filipinas Industrias (GdA) President and CEO -  
Garment Export Company.....Representing some  
of the largest textile and garment manufacturers in the  
Philippines such as Crispa, Litton, Unico Export markets -  
Australia, ASEAN
- 1995 to 1998 -Philippine Sports Commission  
Adviser to the Chairman  
International Sports Policy and Development  
Head - International Desk, Philippine Sports Commission
- 1995 to Retirement Whealth Inc - President & CEO  
Marketers of health supplements such as C-Lium Fibre,  
CranUTI, MEGAFIBER, GOUTRITIS, BRAIN MASTER,  
GARGOL, Nyte-E, ABW and a range of preventive health  
care products, nationwide.

### **Sports Participation And Awards:**

- DSLUAA Sports Hall of Fame Awardee - Football
- Philippine Youth Football Team to Asian Youth Football Tournament Bangkok Thailand
- Philippine National Football Team 1966-1970
- Philippine Team - 1968 Mexico Pre-Olympics Elimination Tokyo Japan,
- Philippine Team Presidents Cup Taipei Taiwan,
- Numerous International Football Caps 1966- 1971
- DLSC Varsity NCAA Football 1966-1970,
- DLSC Varsity NCAA Track & Field 1966-1970
- Forest Rangers Football Team - Sydney
- Lane Cove West Football Team- Playing Coach.

### **Associations:**

- Past President / Chairman Chamber of Herbal Industries of the Philippines Inc (CHUPI)
- Past Chairman - Philippines Australia Business Council (PABC)
- Past President - Rotary Club of Forbes Park
- Honorary Investment and Trade Representative - Dept of Trade & Industry (DTI)
- Honorary Datu Tumangong Awarded by Tausug Datu Harpa Hanh of the Sultanate of Jolo - for Services to the Community.

Founder: BRAFE GOLF - fund raiser for scholarships for the Foundation "For Sharing a La Sallian Education" (FSLE)

Member, Megafiber Golf Team

Member, Sherwood Bandidos Golf Group

Member, Asian Senior Golfers Association (ASGA)

Member, - Amateur Senior Golfers Association of the Philippines .

Member, - Manila Southwoods Golf Club

Member,,: Sherwood Hills Golf Club

Member, Kogarah Golf Club & other social golf Clubs, Sydney,Australia

Founder, Kalabaw Super Senior Golfers - Sydney Australia



## About the Author



Ms. Benjie de Ubago is a communications graduate of University of Santo Tomas. She is an advertising professional in Australia with over 40 years experience in the industry.

She has worked in the Philippines in Department of Public Information, Malacañang and Advertising & Marketing Associates. In Australia, she did PR and advertising for Channels 7 & 9, Leo Burnett Advertising, Paddy's Markets and managed her own advertising boutique, Ideas for Sale.

She's involved in the Filipino community in Australia and is a regular columnist for Filipino community newspapers. She also maintains her own website, [www.filipin-oz.com](http://www.filipin-oz.com)

She has published the "Filipino-Oz Directory" for the Filipino community in Australia; and has written books, "When in Doubt Salute! Surviving Martial Law in Malacañang" (2016) and "Filipino Pioneers and Achievers in Australia" (2021).

She was the recipient of the NSW Premier's Multicultural Communications Award in 2020.

## Acknowledgement

*With* much gratitude to

**Mr. Albert M. G. Garcia**

for sharing his precious time over Yam Cha lunches  
and for opening up his treasure chest of memories;  
that we may be able to record his life  
and that it may serve as an inspiration for others.



