Looking Back & Moving Forward

By SEDFREY M. CANDELARIA

Three years have gone so swiftly at the Law School with even a list of daunting tasks ahead of us. But we could not move on to the next three years without reviewing the building blocks entrenched by the Law School Administration in line with the University’s Strategic Thrust and Concerns. These would not have been possible without the collective effort of our faculty, students, and staff.

On formation, ALS engaged the Bulatao Center early on to conduct a study on the profile of the Ateneo Law Student (TALSS). This study gave us a baseline information and perspective on the needs of our students. School programs, both curricular and co-curricular, were eventually anchored on the specific findings of the study. The initial phase of Lawyers-in-Balance was rolled out through the Ethics classes and selected elective offerings (e.g. Leadership, Human Rights, Judicial Mind, among others). Our annual Jesuit Legal Education (JLE) workshops progressed in content and participation. The inclusion of beadlewidth widened the pool of potential student leaders. There is also more synergy between student activities and the ALS curricular calendar. It is heartening to note the increased involvement of our faculty in the design and conduct of the JLE. ALS also conducted the first Parents Orientation Seminar for the parents of the first year students in 2013. We have received positive feedback on the orientation from the parents.

On research and development, ALS realized the establishment of the Graduate Legal Studies Institute (GLSI) intended to consolidate programs related to the enhancement of the Juris Doctor (J.D.) curriculum and the Master of Laws Program (LL.M.). GLSI was initially tasked to gather syllabi of core and elective courses. Syllabi templates were then developed for common offerings in order to address the need for uniformity in course content and coverage. These exercises provided the tools to sharpen the J.D. curriculum preparatory to a tracking system of electives dovetailing with the LL.M. specialized fields in International Law. Thus, the door towards internationalization had, finally, been opened and, consequently, provided the opportunity to pursue dual degree programs with Kyushu University, Coventry University, and Malaga University. The level of competitiveness of our faculty has been raised to a greater height with the proposed student and faculty exchange programs. I am hoping that our faculty members could avail of these programs to broaden comparative law perspectives, which are essential in a globalized legal education today. ALS will continue to pursue this direction hand in hand with the strengthening of the core bar-oriented subjects. A healthy balance will be struck between the core and tracked electives for a more holistic approach in the preparation of our students for both domestic and international law practice. Students were exposed the past three years to visiting lecturers and eminent persons who discussed a wide range of issues, such as, sovereign debt crisis, comparative civil law, environmental concerns, maritime dispute, arbitration, and human rights. The annual student study tours among

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To help ensure that programs and activities are more responsive to the needs of the students, ALS commissions Bulatao Center to study the profile of a law student. The results of the Ateneo Law School Study (TALSS) were launched the following year.

The Tenchavezic Center is re-designated as a Center for the Rule of Law.

The Graduate Legal Studies Institute (GLSI) is established to serve as a resource center for academic research and studies in various fields of law and law reform and to enhance the research capacity of students in producing quality theses and other academic papers.

ALS offers Eminent Person Lecture Series and Liberty and Prosperity Series.

ALS launches the Masters of Human Rights and Development in partnership with University of Sydney.

Students of University of San Francisco go to ALS for externship.

ALS goes a step further into internationalization with its first student exchange program in partnership with Kyushu University.

Infrastructure and systems development take place, such as the renovation of the Ateneo Legal Services Center, Thesis Center, student organization rooms; installation of faculty work stations; and digitalization of school records.

ALS conducts the Public International Law Lecture Series.

ALS pilot tests the tracking system and holds summer classes as it transitions to a new academic calendar that starts in August and ends in May.

"Fully aware of the distinction of the Professional Schools at Rockwell from the other units of the University, I will define my vision of a Law School and suggest a point-by-point mapping of how my vision and the University Strategic Concerns may be located in the following aspects of Law School life—formation, research and development, and infrastructure and systems development.”

Dean Sedfrey M. Candeleria

The Ateneo Law School starts AT 2015-2016 by refining its mission statement. Moving forward, the Ateneo legal education will be guided by its mission to form lawyers who are spiritually developed, academically competent and excellent, socially involved, and culturally rooted global citizens.

- Students, faculty, and staff undergo an Ignatian spirituality formation program consisting of recollections, retreats, immersion, and exposure trips.
- Students are assigned advisers who guide them to faculty and students.
- The bar review is reinforced with faculty-generated review materials, mock bar exams, spiritual and psychological care, and logistical support.

- The J.D. curriculum has enhanced core subjects that are offered with tracked or specialized electives.
- Academic departments provide mentoring to faculty and students.
- Ethics is infused in the curriculum.
- Social involvement is integrated in the curriculum through courses offering in-service learning and apprenticeship with the Ateneo Human Rights Center, Ateneo Legal Services Center, and partner institutions.
- Students are encouraged to focus their J.D. theses on social justice and human rights issues.

- The thrust of the Law School is to build lasting academic partnerships with global universities and international organizations.
- Opportunities for student and faculty exchange are offered in cooperation with partner universities in the U.S., Asia, and Europe.
- J.D. graduates may pursue a double degree with an international partner university.

SPRITUALLY DEVELOPED

ACADEMICALLY COMPETENT & EXCELLENT

SOCIALLY INVOLVED & CULTURALLY ROOTED

GLOBAL CITIZEN
ALS holds legal mission in Payatas

On June 27, 2015, the Ateneo Law School, through the initiative of the Ateneo de Manila Law Alumni Association, Inc. (ALAAL), sent a team of 88 volunteer lawyers and students to participate in the legal aid mission held at the Justice Cecilia Muñoz Palma High School in Payatas, Quezon City. The purpose of the mission was to provide free legal advice and education to the Payatas community.

More than 300 residents of Payatas, divided into smaller groups, participated in the legal mission. Volunteer lawyers were assigned to each group and discussed the basic laws on Marriage and Family, Succession, Violence against Women and Children, and Registration.

Representatives from the Public Attorney's Office (PAO) also explained to the participants how they can seek legal aid from the PAO.

After the lectures, participants were given time to have one-on-one consultations with volunteer lawyers from the Ateneo Human Rights Center (AHRC), Ateneo Legal Services Center (ALSC), Gender and Sexualities Studies Center (GSSC), and ALAAI. The concerns of the residents were mostly about corrections to birth certificates and issues on land ownership, succession, and support. While the consultations were ongoing, the young children of the participants enjoyed storytelling and games with their Ateneo AUJAus and ates.

After the consultation, the participants were treated to lunch and a program prepared by the GSE firm. At the end of the program, the school's Acting Principal, Ms. Juanita C. Aljar, thanked all the volunteers who shared their knowledge and time for the activity.

The legal aid mission is a project of the ALAAI in cooperation with the GSE firm and is now on its sixth year.

Ateneo Stetson team wins Best Memorial

By ANNA ISABEL F. CASTELO

Last April, Stetson University College of Law held its 19th International Environmental moot Court Competition (IEMCC) in Gulfport, Florida. This year’s topic involved the growing concern of shark finning and the development of the practice of shark finning. The Ateneo team, comprised of Mike Gerald David (IA), Perpetua Callipio Ngo (IA), Mary Grace Hiban (IA), and Charience Ann Mercado (IA), won overall Best Memorial, reaching the semifinals with Hicban winning 5th Best Orator. The team was guided by their coaches, Atty. Patrick Simon Perillo (J.D. ’08) and Atty. Marvin Edgar Hadauc (J.D. ’13). The same team was previously adjudged Best Team, Best Memorial and Best Orator in the Final Round (Hicban) in the Southeast Asian Round Robin of the IEMCC earlier in January.

For the preliminary rounds, the team went against University of Jammu, Jammu and Kashmir (India), NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad (India), and Law School of China University of Political Science and Law. The team later went against National Law University, Indore (India) for the power match, later advancing to the quarterfinals and winning the match against Wake Forest School of Law (USA). They made it to the semifinals against the Law Society of Ireland, the team who eventually won as Champion of the Competition.

Ateneo has consistently qualified for the international rounds of the Stetson competition, winning First Runner-Up for the Stetson International rounds in 2007.

AHRC conducts Foundational Course on Children's Rights in Bangkok

By KRISTINE C. BORJA

Last June 15-18, 2015, the Ateneo Human Rights Center (AHRC) with Save the Children conducted a seminar course entitled Foundational Course on Children’s Rights. Held in Bangkok, Thailand, the course was attended by some 30 participants representing different civil society organizations (CSOs) advocating for children’s rights from the different member-states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The Foundational Course on Children’s Rights aimed to provide the participants with an overview of international laws and regional mechanisms on children. It included lectures on the evolution of these laws and the recent legal developments and issues facing children’s rights. The course’s objectives were to create a network of civil society organizations advocating for children’s rights and empower the CSOs to apply what they learn when they return to their respective countries.

The participants had a field trip as part of the course where they visited Ban Kanchanapisek, a juvenile vocational training center for young male offenders. The center is known for practicing restorative justice—a community-based approach involving wrongdoers and their victims.

The course ended with the participants presenting a draft policy proposal to address the children’s rights issues in their jurisdictions. The four-day session was moderated by Atty. Krilene Estorninos, the head of the Children’s Rights Desk of AHRC.

Teehankee Center visits Justice Carpio

By LUIS ALFONSO S. SEÑA and DANIELLE M. ZERRURO

"Research is priceless information." This was one of the many ideas shared by Supreme Court Justice Antonio Carpio when the Teehankee Center for the Rule of Law (TCRL) made a courtesy call to the office of the esteemed adjudicator last June 29, 2015. The contingent from TCRL was composed of Ambassador Manuel A. Teehankee and the TCRL members.

Known for his extensive knowledge on International Law, Justice Carpio shared his ideas as to how members of the academy and students can contribute to the resolution of the dispute involving the West Philippine Sea. He stressed the need for institutions that are knowledgeable on the historical background and substance of the claims of various countries involved in the dispute. He believes that this endeavor would greatly contribute to the protection of our country’s interest.

During the courtesy call, Justice Carpio showcased his personal collection of maps of the Philippine archipelago. The summer intern of the TCRL, also presented to Justice Carpio the TCRL’s own collection of Philippine maps, which they plan to exhibit sometime this year.

Justice Carpio told the students that he will be attending as an observer the oral arguments in the Hague this July concerning the West Philippine Sea dispute. Although the upcoming hearing is expected to settle the issue on the jurisdiction of the UN tribunal, Justice Carpio said that the ruling would only be a first step to the peaceful resolution of the dispute. It would take several generations dedicated to research and negotiations to form the world opinion that would eventually resolve the issue. He urged the students to pursue their interest in the matter and eventually aid the establishment of more think tanks in the country.
Twenty-two participate in AHRC Summer Internship Program

By MARIA PATRICIA R. CERVANTES-POCO
Photos by MARIA PATRICIA R. CERVANTES-POCO and ANNE MAUREEN B. MANINGBAS

Chief among the missions of the Ateneo Human Rights Center (AHRC) is forming and sustaining human rights lawyers and advocates in the Philippines – kindling not only passion for the law, but in the words of Fr. Joaquin Bernas, S.J., “more importantly, for the human faces and communities which such law should serve.” The AHRC is able to fulfill this mission primarily through its Internship Program, which produced its first batch of interns in the summer of 1987. Twenty-eight years and close to a hundred alumni later, the program continues to prove its relevance.

This summer, a total of 22 students participated in the AHRC Summer Internship Program. Joining the students from the Ateneo Law School (ALS) were eight students from St. Mary’s University Nueva Vizcaya, Ateneo de Zamboanga University, and Western Mindanao State University. These eight students took part in the program as “replicate interns,” in the hope that they will eventually be able to organize an internship program in their respective law school similar to what they have experienced with the AHRC.

The program commenced with a five-day Basic Orientation Seminar (BOS) conducted in Antipolo City. A series of lectures exposed the interns to issues faced by marginalized groups. To complement what they learned from the lectures, the interns also participated in workshops on paralegal training, popular education, client interview, and affidavit-making.

The BOS was followed by a week-long immersion with the Aeta communities in Batolus, Zambales. The interns walked across over 40 kilometers of lahar to reach their assigned communities, equipped with only the most basic of necessities. Stripped of their usual comforts and mobile devices, the interns learned to eat, work, and sleep as the Aetas do. Some interns took the opportunity to explain to the Aetas what their rights are, particularly under the Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act.

Upon returning from their immersion, the interns were assigned as paralegals to various non-government organisations (NGOs). A total of 13 NGOs opened their doors to this program, including our very own AHRC and the Ateneo Legal Services Center (ALSC). While most of the NGOs were situated in Metro Manila, a few interns were sent to NGOs in Palawan, Iloilo, Cebu, and Cagayan de Oro.

Supporting the ALS in this program were the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Friedrich Naumann Foundation.

Simple & Ordinary

Testimonial and Address delivered by Justice Mariano C. Del Castillo at the
69th Commencement Exercises

Photos by Franciscolangueste Gutierrez

His Eminence, Luis Antonio G. Cardinal Tagle; Reverend Father Jose Ramon T. Villarin, President of the Ateneo de Manila University; Reverend Father Joaquin G. Bernas, Dean Emeritus of the Ateneo de Manila School of Law; and the other distinguished personalities here on the stage; members of the faculty; graduates of the Class of 2015, their parents, and guests; fellow Ateneans, good afternoon,

I am both honored and humbled to be speaking to you this afternoon. I am not the typical speaker that a graduating law class would normally have. While I have reached the highest court of the land, the road getting there was not an easy one for someone ordinary like me...
ALS in Japan:
Endless Discovery of Old and New
By OSCAR CARLO F. CAJUCOM
Photos by MARIA PATRICIA R. CERVANTES-POCO, KLARSE ANNE C. ESTORINOS, and ROWENA L. SORIANO-DIONISIO

On May 24 to 25, 2015, members of the law school faculty, staff, and their families and friends visited Japan for the 2015 Faculty Development Seminar. After a productive and grueling discussion the night before at the Faculty Development Business Meeting, the group arrived very early at the airport to take the red eye to Kansai International Airport in Osaka, Japan. It was mid-afternoon when the group arrived at Kansai Airport, where they were greeted by the renowned efficiency of the Japanese. While the immigration line was quite long, you get the sense that things were always moving with no unnecessary delay.

At the parking area outside the terminal, the group was divided into two buses, with one tour guide each. Both guides were soft-spoken ladies in contrast to one of the drivers who sounded angry each time he spoke. (But it seemed that was just his usual demeanor as in the end he thanked and gave a nice parting message to the group.)

The group first headed to Kyoto, a former capital of Japan and famous destination for tourists looking to experience true Japanese scenery, history, and culture. Ironically, dinner for most of the group was at a ramen place where you order food through a vending machine. The ramen was authentic and flavorful, and it showed from the long line at the entrance stretching out into the street.

It was early when the group arrived in Osaka. The first destination the following day was Kyomizu-Dera, a Buddhist temple located at Mt. Otowa. Within the temple grounds is the Kyomizu Stage, a 12-meter high veranda overlooking a precipice. Its wooden pillars were assembled without using a single nail. They say that if one were to survive jumping from this terrace, one’s wish would be granted. None of the professors risked life and limb for the sake of a wish.

Right below the Stage is the Otowa Waterfall, where the flowing water was divided into three streams tourists can drink from. Each stream is believed to respectively bring success, love, or longevity. One of the tour guides cautioned the group, however, not to drink from all three streams as this could be seen as being greedy. Some members of the group cheerily lined up to have a drink from their chosen streams.

The group then went to the historic Heian Jingu Shrine. Behind it is a beautiful garden where tourists walked around taking pictures and feeding the fish in the pond.

After having the sumptuous hotpot lunch, the group took the bus to Nara, the first permanent capital of Japan, to visit the Todaji Temple and the nearby Nara Deer Park. The Todaji is an imposing Buddhist temple whose main hall — one of the world’s largest wooden buildings — houses a giant-sized bronze statue of Buddha. Also inside the main hall is a pillar with a rectangular hole near its base, about 2-feet tall and 1-foot wide. It is said to be as big as one of the giant Buddha’s nostrils. The belief is that anyone who manages to squeeze through the hole will achieve enlightenment in the next life. Atty. George Carmona, all 6 feet or so of him, took the challenge. While he was struggling halfway through the post, some of the spectators probably wondered which of the two would be chopped off if he got stuck — the pillar or his tarsals! But that remained to be a mystery, thankfully, as Atty. Carmona successfully wriggled out in one piece. Another faculty member followed suit inspired by Atty. Carmona’s success and the promise of enlightenment. He went in the hole as Atty. Tonyray Ortuera; and soon after coming out of it, he emerged as Judge Ortuera — enlightenment, indeed!

Meanwhile, at the park fronting the temple, the group interacted and took pictures with the friendly, free-roaming deer. The group had dinner at the Nara Nagomikan then shopped for treats at the store located conveniently below the restaurant. After a long day of touring, the group went back to Kyoto, where most went out to explore or shop before the nearby stores closed. Some capped the night with fine Japanese whisky.

The next day, the group’s first stop was the Kinkakuji or Golden Pavilion, a Zen temple partially covered in gold leaf and overlooking a pond. The temple had been burned down several times, the latest in 1950 by a fanatic monk supposedly because the pavilion was too beautiful. 

Next, the group went to another Zen temple, the Ryoanjji Temple, which features the famous rock garden — a rectangular space of white pebbles with 15 rocks artistically placed at different spots.

After lunch, the group went to Arashiyama, where they marveled at the tall bamboo stalls that lined up the pathway. The group then went back early to the city to have some time for shopping. After another enjoyable dinner, they attended mass celebrated separately by Fr. Artemio Ferrer, S.J. and Fr. Luke David, S.J. in two hotel rooms. Then, most of the group got some rest or a bit of work done while others sneaked out to enjoy Kyoto’s Saturday night lures.

On the last day, the party went straight to Osaka Castle, a tower with modern facilities and a museum inside. The castle was surrounded outside by old citadels, stone walls, and moats. The group had sushi/kaya for lunch then had time to do last minute shopping in downtown Osaka.

After a short trip, the group was back at Kansai Airport for the first leg of their flight home. The sun was still shining and just about to set when the plane took off. Out the window, the Osaka Bay Area fronted the sprawling city and the scenic mountainside from afar — a fitting last view to recap a weekend of sensational blending of historic treasures and modern spectacles.
The Reinventing Us Project

By CYNDY P. DELA CRUZ

In 2013, Kyushu University launched "The Reinventing Japan Project", a short-term student exchange program in partnership with the Ateneo Law School (ALS) and other universities in the region. The aim of the project is to foster greater interaction among the Japanese and the ASEAN students. This year's theme was Cultural Heritage where the participants were made to experience traditional culture and learn about cultural preservation from a legal perspective.

I was privileged to be part of this year's delegates from ALS together with Julian Elizar D. Torcator, Harvey A. Bilang, and Isa Marie N. Avancena. Our first stop was at the Kyushu University for an introduction to the study trip. We watched the anime movie, "Princess Mononoke". The setting of this movie is the very island that we visited the next day, the Yakushima Island, a UNESCO World Heritage Site for Natural Resources.

We left early for our morning flight to Yakushima Island. The view of the island from the plane is a thing of pure beauty - nature at its finest. The whole stretch of the island is covered with lush forests and spectacular landscapes. Upon arriving, we went straight to the Yakushima Island Environmental and Cultural Village Center where we attended a lecture on the present ecological situation and legal issues concerning the island. Several issues like the increasing deer population, which is a threat to the preservation of the forests, and the implementation of regulations concerning deer hunting were discussed.

The next day, we went to the deer shop where we actually witnessed how deer are butchered. The deer hunting activity is encouraged in order to answer for the increasing deer population in the island. After the gruesome encounter, we were all sat for our 150-minute trek in the forest. It was a rainy trek but we were equipped with our raincoats and trekking shoes. Trekking was actually a first for all five of us but we braved the challenging trails with this end in mind: to take picturesque photos and post it in Instagram! Tired is an understatement after 150 minutes of trekking. After the trek, we all got a taste, quite literally, of the deer situation in Yakushima. Dinner was a scrumptious meal of deer meat. Oh deer!

On our last day in the island, we attended two more lectures: an in-depth discussion of the issues in Yakushima Island, including the problems of tourism, and a discussion on the selection process made by UNESCO. To cap off our trip, we visited the Senpiro Falls for a photo op.

The next few days, we set off to Kyushu University for a lecture on the appreciation of Japanese Architecture. We also went to the Warashio Rice Terraces for an appreciation of the beauty and the genius behind the Japanese rice paddies. Issues such as the balance between preservation of culture and the need for change in order to pave the way for preservation were discussed.

After two days of study trips and lectures, we visited the new campus of Kyushu University. Kyushu University is known for its efforts to preserve nature and culture, and the construction of its new campus in Itto, Fukuoka is a great example of such effort. Kyushu University made it a point to reinvent the campus and at the same time, preserve the way of life of the community where the campus stands.

The last few days were devoted to a presentation of the study trip. We were tasked to make two presentations: a country presentation for the Japanese high school students and a mixed group university level presentation about everything we learned from the trip. We are proud to report that we gave the best country presentation (at least that was what the Japanese students said). We reinvented the usual boring presentation into an interactive appreciation of the Philippines. We devised different games, all having a symbolic meaning and representation of the Philippine perspective.

Our 10-day Fukuoka experience was really something we ticked off from our bucket list: "go somewhere life-changing". Not only did we learn from the Japanese perspective on preserving solutions to the many issues on natural and cultural heritage, we also learned to appreciate our own country's beauty and culture more. As a bonus, we met the most wonderful friends from Japan, Singapore, and Thailand. Our trip was not just about reinventing Japan; more importantly, it definitely reinvented us.
that rock building, that we all chromatographically out. We then ran into Fr. B who just came out of his office shouting. “Who wants to confess?! Who wants to confess?!?”

I am sure you all have your own stories to tell about this living legend, the quintessential teacher, lawyer, counselor and constitutionalist, affectionately known to many of us as Fr. B. To the parents and family of our graduates and our guests here who are not familiar with him, although I am sure that there are very few of you who don’t know him), join us as we honor this man who has touched the lives of thousands of Ateneo lawyers and students. If you can, please rise to give him a big round of applause. Fr. B, thank you for everything you have done for us, and the Ateneo Law School. It has been a great privilege and we will eternally be grateful.

To the Graduates, you are lucky to have been taught by a teacher like Fr. B. The future generations who will not have this privilege will look upon you with envy.

As we thank Fr. B, also give thanks to your parents, your teachers, and other mentors. They stand by you during your four years in law school. But you are here because of you, and not because of anyone else. While we give tribute to your parents, this day would not have come if you did not want this, and worked hard to get you to where you are today.

Any lawyer knows what I speak of: a law student’s life is being trapped in a boiling teapot – ready to burst anytime.

On this occasion, as you join the world out there, it will perhaps be right and fitting for us to state that the first, ordinary people are capable of achieving extraordinary feats; and second, that there is nothing to be ashamed of by being ordinary. I was, and still am, ordinary. I was part of the 90% ordinary people in my class. I really worked, really hard knowing that I was ordinary. If there is any disadvantage to being ordinary, it is that you have to work harder than the extraordinary people. But when you achieve what extraordinary people achieve, there is greater satisfaction, more pride, and greater glory in what you have accomplished.

So with the indulgence of the Indecisive Extraordinary people of this graduating class, let me address the ordinary people of this graduating class.

Based on my own experience as a working student, as someone without pedigree and birthright, and as someone who rose from the ranks, let me share with you a few life lessons:

First lesson: The possibilities are limitless.

Armed with a law school diploma from the Ateneo Law School, you can choose to be anyone, because you have learned “transferable” skills, and you have been chiseled into a fine work of art, having gone, as they say, through the eye of a needle. The Ateneo has honed you into scholars, researchers, thinkers, speakers, and writers and has strengthened your character. It has taught you to be God-fearing and I am sure you have called upon God many times during recitations and exams! It is right to call on God during these difficult times provided that you have done your best and, when you have done everything within your means, you can leave the rest to God.

You may decide to become business and commercial lawyers, trial lawyers, join government, or like me, join the judiciary. If you have the calling, you may pursue alternative lawyering or work as NGOs, or it may even happen that some of you may not end up in legal practice, as you may then choose to be in other non-legal careers. But whatever you do after becoming lawyers, do it with passion, with dignity and with honor.

Only then can you claim that you have put your Ateneo legal education into good use, and still claim success.

Apply the law and justice in your chosencaller’s and in your daily lives. If you end up as full-fledged housewives or househusbands, at least you know you have given your legal resource under the law.

Second Lesson: Prepare for disillusionment, as many will come your way.

Nevertheless you have to do your job, and do what is right.

You will encounter the real lawyer’s world out there. The philosophical experiences you’ve enjoyed in your alma mater will not be offered outside. You will deal with bankruptcies, dissolved government agencies or courtrooms, no elevators, no air conditioners, no computers, no internet, no lex libris, no Wi-Fi. You will see the pathetic conditions in the detention centers, of jails, and of the prisoners.

This is the real world out there, and you need to be prepared for it. And even while the physical amenities are there, are real, hard, and difficult choices to be made. There are a lot of conflicts and crossroads, and you may have to make decisions on your own. It is a law and justice. Many times you will face disappointments and failures – but you have to carry on. You have a duty to perform, whether as a member of the bar or the bench.

At the very bottom, I started from the very bottom. I started as an MTC judge in an obscure place in San Mateo, Rizal. I wanted to be in the judiciary, but without a pedigree, birthright, sponsors, or padrinos, I had to start from the very bottom.

I had only my small jams that I also used as my courtroom as it was assigned to me in the common comfort room that I used down the hallway was without refrigeration. I also displayed a politician, the only air conditioning unit in my chambers was in the GSIS office and not in the comfort room, particularly during summer. That would have broken my spirit and made me an easy buck for all encounters, but I persevered.

I worked my way up and was later promoted to Regional Trial Court in Caloocan City. All in all, I was a happy judge.

Once I issued a warrant of arrest against a politician’s relative, and soon enough, I was stripped of the regular monthly allowance given by the local government to judges. It was a difficult life, as I had to drive close to a hundred kilometers each day to report to my station. Let’s face it, it was a difficult time.

My children were growing up at that time, but every time I went to court and had to spend the night in my chambers, as I would fall asleep during drafting decisions. Nighttime and weekends are the only time for these decision as judges are supposed to hear cases morning and afternoon, Monday to Friday.

After a few years, I was transferred to the Trial Court of Quezon City. While this brought me closer to home and family, the big city was a haven for more crimes, more vices, and more life-threatening conflicts. It was here that I faced threats on my and my family’s lives. I had to combat fear, and God knows how much I prayed for guidance. The offer of bribes and other material benefits was easy money NO to my wife, lucky me, made more than enough to support our family. But danger to our lives will always be there, you would have broken anyone’s back. I do not know how I survived through this, but I kept my faith and did not waver.

I went through eight years in Caloocan and working hardly and finally achieving zero backlog in my caseload in my third year. I was not afraid even to the last time that I finished a case, I felt that somehow, I have given justice to someone else. I am in the Supreme Court, and I would like to believe that I am here because I worked really hard and with a clear conscience to thwart the ends of justice through corruption or threats.

Second Lesson: The possibilities are limitless.

Becoming a lawyer is no license to become supercilious. You have to interact with all kinds of people. Mingle well and don’t be reincarnated by God and has his own virtues. Be kind but firm. You may know a lot of things, but not enough to know that don’t. Please display humility by acknowledging your own limits. When you take pride, share the credit with the people who worked with you. Regardless of the field you will be in, I appeal to your sense of humanity. I ask you to remember that there are differences in your own little way. I encourage you to give back. You can work pro bono, or use your talents, and devote your time and your financial resources to noble causes. Men will respect and remember you not because you gave the best of your love and influence and intellectual, but they will remember you because you lightened and delivered them justice that they deserved.

First lesson: Be ethical professionals.

As Benjamin Franklin once said, and as some perhaps work to build a good reputation, and only one bad one to lose.”

I will not lecture you on ethics today, as I am confident that the Ateneo Law School has given you a good grounding in ethics. Use this advantage to the utmost.

For those with high academic grades, you have earned it and you have worked for it.

For those with lower academic grades, all is not lost. We all have our God-given gifts, and some, as they may be, smarter than others. But life experiences have shown that being smarter than others does not necessarily make you better than others, or that the smarter ones will succeed and the others will fail. Each person has to look to himself or herself and view yourself as equals. All of you have displayed strength and skills and surprisingly this makes you acceptable to the Ateneo School in the first place.

When you take pride, share the credit with the people who worked with you. Regardless of the field you will be in, I appeal to your sense of humanity. I ask you to remember that there are differences in your own little way. I encourage you to give back. You can work pro bono, or use your

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Testimonial and Address delivered by Justice Mariano C. Del Castillo at the 69th Commencement Exercises

Photos by Francisco Solangoste Guirienne
Keeping the Spirit of Volunteerism Alive: Bar Operations 2015

By CLARRISA.S. VILLANUEVA

Why volunteer for Bar Operations (Bar Ops) if it goes in your way of studies and prevents you from being able to do the things you really need to do at this time?

Geelo Arayata, Administration Head, shared that his volunteering formally started when a friend invited him to join. Not even knowing what it is about, he just joined the group as a favor to that friend. Three years in the Bar Ops, Geelo, however, learned to enjoy the work and is now one of the most involved heads actively recruiting members and meticulously ensuring that the materials are printed and delivered on time, among his other work.

Fondevilla, Subject Head in Criminal Law said he initially volunteered for Bar Ops because he wanted to improve his knowledge in Criminal Law and though that Bar Ops was a good way of doing it. Diego Santiago, Legal Ethics Subject Head, said he was first approached by the previous Subject Heads, two upperclassmen (Jumi Agas and Carlo Sanchez), whom he looked up to in the law school. “Their dedication to the bar operations, motivated me to look into them as a potential understudy, encouraged me to join and commit. It also helped that the faculty head of Ethics at that time, Atty. Jess Lopez, was known to me as one of the best professors in the law school,” said another, Er Runggo, Subject Head for Civil Law, admitted that he originally wanted to build his credentials. As he would frankly put it, “pampagama ng resume.”

But when he got in, he realized that the engagement actually has more responsibilities than merely perks or privileges. Yet, he carries on because he knows that the job is important. “I know that there are a lot of improvements to make. It is a very crucial role we need to play well because the barristers are relying on the materials we will make and it may mean for them the difference between passing or failing the Bar,” he said.

Concisely put, it’s an important role we need to play well because the barristers are relying on the materials we will make and it may mean for them the difference between passing or failing the Bar.”

Nearly all, they expressed their concern, some even their dismay— from faculty members, alumni, residents, and even outsiders. I’m personally not a fan of people who babble a lot about something but are not willing to work in order to improve the situation. Cliché as it may sound, but it will help, in whatever capacity we may have, we will be able to recover from the situation. Bar Ops is definitely one avenue where we can all contribute to regain what was lost and eventually, bring back the glory days of Ateneo Law School. Ateneo Law 100% fit! (By BLYTHE M. LUMAGUE)

ATTY. ROMMEL A. ABARIA

Atty. Rommel “Jyi” Abarria is the Executive Director of the Humanitarian Legal Assistance Foundation. He attained his LL.M. in Criminal Justice in 2014, with distinction from the University of Kent, Canterbury, United Kingdom. His dissertation entitled “Imprisonment and Human Rights: an Integrated Overview of the Development and Concept of Imprisonment” (with special focus on the Philippines), was passed with distinction. He presently, Jyi (see note) from the Ateneo de Manila University in 2008 where he graduated with honors and was bestowed the Bobbi Gana Service Award. He was admitted to the Philippine Bar in 2005. He obtained an A.B. Liberal Arts degree from the Our Lady of Loreto Seminary-Scholastic, Springfield, Ohio in 2000.

Atty. Ababria teaches Special Penal Laws at ALS. He also teaches at Far Eastern University Institute of Law, De La Salle University – Do澳门/?n/¬/n, Cebu, and Pamantasan ng Luugod ng Maynila.

ATTY. ANGELI C. HABIBI

Atty. Ma. Aracel "Ara" Habibi is an experienced mediator and arbitrator, and is currently connected with possibilities at De La Salle University. She is an associate mediator of the Singapore Mediation Centre since 2012. She is also a member of LEADR- Mediation Center since 2010. She has been employed as a legal consultant for nine years to various development and government organizations and as a corporate counsel of KPMG, Roxas Group of Companies, for five years.

Habibi obtained her Master’s Degree in Dispute Resolution from the University of New South Wales in 2013. She earned her J.D. from the Ateneo de Manila University in 1999 and was admitted to the Philippine Bar in 2000. Atty. Habibi teaches an elective, Mediation, at the ALS. She also teaches at De La Salle University.

ATTY. JOYCE MELCAR T. TAN

Atty. Joyce Tan obtained her MSc in Environment and Development in 2014 from The University of Edinburgh as a Chevening Scholar and Generalized her L.H. in 2008, graduating with honors, from the Ateneo de Manila University where she also took her AB European Studies, Minor in Hispanic Studies in 2004. In 2003-2005, she was an undergraduate year at Saint Louis University Madrid, Spain, as a visiting student. Tan was an Associate at the Syra Saladang Humanitarian Law Unit, Inc. (2010-2013). She has been admitted to the Philippine Bar in 2010 and to the New Bar in 2015. Tan teaches the elective, Ethics, at the ALS. She also teaches International Law at Ateneo Law School.
Looking Back & Moving Forward

By SEDFREY M. CANDELARIA

Kyushu University and Ateneo law students have facilitated cultural exchanges with lasting memories and impact on their worldview. Avenues for research have also been pursued by our faculty and students through the extension of at least fourteen grants in the past two years. We also experienced a more energized system of bar review through the development of review materials under the close supervision of the Bar Review Committee. Our bar operations had attracted a team of dedicated volunteers who have exhibited servant leadership among kindred spirits. This intensified interest has also been triggered by the declining passing percentages in the national bar examinations for the past three years when adjustments in the type of examinations were instituted by the different Bar Chairpersons. ALS vows to bounce back with renewed confidence among our bar candidates.

On infrastructure and systems development, the Ateneo Law Alumni Association, Inc. (ALAAI), through Class ’89, sponsored the project on digitization of school records which now allows quick and convenient access to personal academic files of resident students and alumni. The reorganization of the Office of the APS Registrar has reinforced the move to enhance the J.D. curriculum through a more efficient process of tracking courses for students upon reaching junior year. A series of renovations had been undertaken covering the Thesis Center, student organization rooms, Legal Services Center, faculty work stations, faculty and staff lounges, and the Bernas Center. A classroom had been dedicated in honor of the late Judge Voltaire Rosales.

The move to a new academic calendar beginning August 2015 places us in sync with the leading universities in North America, Europe, and Asia. ALS utilized the transition months for a deeper stock-taking through an administrators’ strategic planning exercise. Our vision of an Ateneo law graduate is anchored upon four pillars: (a) spiritually developed, (b) academically excellent and competent, (c) culturally rooted, and (d) a global citizen.

It is our hope that with the formal launch of the Enhanced J.D./LL.M. Curriculum the bar of excellence in legal education would once again be raised as we did twenty-five years ago when we shifted from LL.B. to J.D. We are fully aware of the challenges confronting our “Philennial” law students as one resource person shared during our Jesuit Higher Education Conference recently. But we are consoled by the guiding words of the Jesuit Provincial when he invited Jesuit universities to be “apostolic, responsive, and creative” in our mission. These are our instruments towards discovering new energies in our pursuit of higher education today.