

UPF and FICA Staged 1st Outstanding Parents' Awards and Gala in Newark, NJ

Emiljun Rapada
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Newark, NJ – The Filipino International Community of America (FICA) hosted the 1st Outstanding Parents' Award and Gala on Saturday, July 22 at the Ramada Plaza Hotel. The event was participated in by more than 140 people from babies to oldies. The program commemorates the US national holiday of Parents' Day as declared by law in 1994. Every 4th Sunday of July is a recurring and perennial day of celebration to strengthen families and to honor exemplary couples who have given sacrificially of their lives, including their time, financial and emotional resources, and more, to fulfill that uniquely special and God-given role of being a father and a mother.

This first year's awardees are the following:



Mrs. Julia Agulan



Mrs. Josefina George



Rev. Yasuhiro and Mrs. Jocelyn Hori



Mr. Masaru and Mrs. Guillerma Kondo



Atty. Wilfredo and Mrs. Trinidad Macaraeg



Mrs. Esther Manila



Mr. Daniel and Mrs. Maria-April Martin



Mr. Eduardo and Mrs. Emilia Molleno



Mr. Ruben and Mrs. Rosario Olgado



Bishop Giovanni and Mrs. Akemi Paquit



Mr. Romeo and Mrs. Mariejoie Pastor



Mr. Ramon and Mrs. Rachel Ramos



Mr. Conrado and Mrs. Magdalena Rapada



Sir Francis and Lady Evelyn Sison



Pastor John and Bishop Joy Theriot



Mr. Ricardo and Mrs. Magdalena Velasco

After a sumptuous buffet lunch, the program was opened by the singing of the national anthems of the Republic of the Philippines and United States of America by Grammy Award singer and songwriter, Dennis Sy and singing sensation Kirby Asunto, respectively. Rev Manoj Jacob, District Pastor of FFWPU gave the invocation followed by Engr. Emiljun Rapada, the President of FICA who gave the opening remarks. In his speech, he narrated the significance of Parents Day in America and the importance of recognizing and appreciating the role of parents. He also thanked the members of the FICA Board especially the executive officers who worked hard to make the event possible and acknowledged the partners and sponsors of the event. He announced that the Outstanding Parents' Award and Gala will be an annual event which will be scheduled every July of each year.

Consul Arman Talbo of the Philippine Consulate General of New York was the guest speaker. He emphasized the importance of discipline and respect to parents for which he recounted his younger years when his parents would use a whip stick (pamalo) to teach him a lesson when he misbehaves. Rev. Ricardo de Sena, President of UPF USA gave the Toast of Love while Sir Francis Sison, the Regional Commander of the Knights of Rizal USA gave the response representing all the awardees. He said, "Tender loving care or T.L.C. is the key to a lasting marriage and successful parenting". And then he also reminded all the children, young and old alike, to always show their love to their parents because "you never know when their chairs would be empty", he ended.

Wrapping up the program, Dennis Sy serenaded the awardees with his still to be launched new single and Mrs. Elena Bahian, the Vice President for External Affairs of FICA gave the closing remarks and words of thanks. Emiljun Rapada and Marivir Montebon, the publisher of OSM Online Magazine co-hosted the program. The gala concluded with couple's dance and nonstop line dancing pieces.

This maiden event was in partnership with the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) USA and the Universal Peace Federation (UFP) USA. This year's major sponsors include Western Union, GMA Pinoy TV, Jollibee New Jersey, and Babata New York.