

Most Honored Elders



INFLUENTIAL ELDERS. *The Asian Reporter Foundation's Most Honored Elders for 2017 are Christine Chin Ryan (left) and Benny Avecilla (right). (AR Photo/Jan Landis)*

Benny Avecilla

Benny Avecilla was born in Sorsogon, the Philippines, the son of Gregorio Madrid Avecilla and Irene Otano. He was married for 54 years to the late Carmen Deona Avecilla, an engineer, and has five daughters: Lorna, Maryanne, Gail, Lynn, and Sheila. While living in the Philippines, he worked for the Emerito Ramos Corporations as an accountant, office manager, and assistant vice president. Benny immigrated to the U.S. in April of 1977 and ended up in Portland via San Francisco. He worked for the West Coast Marine Co. as an accountant, and later was employed by the St Paul Insurance Company until his retirement. He has been an active member of the Filipino-American Association of Portland & Vicinity since 1980 and served as chairman of the board for three years and president for eight years during his nearly four decades with the organization. He volunteers with St. Ignatius Church as well as the Meals on Wheels program of Loaves & Fishes. He is an avid bowler and organized the Fil-Am bowling league. He currently serves as the international director of the Filipino Canadian American (FilCanAm) Bowling Tournament. Benny has five grandchildren, two step-grandchildren, and one great-granddaughter.

Christine Chin Ryan

Christine Chin Ryan was born in Trinidad and Tobago to Alexander and Ann Chin, their fifth of six children. Her parents had immigrated to Trinidad and Tobago from China and in 1966, the family immigrated to New York City when the U.S. increased the number of immigrants allowed from certain countries, including those in the Caribbean. Christine married her husband, Patrick Ryan, in 1979. They have lived in Oregon for nearly 39 years. Christine has run a small business in the technology industry for 29 years. She is a passionate advocate for small businesses and is also very active in politics. Among her many activities, she is an ambassador for the Asian Pacific American Chamber of Commerce (APACC) of Oregon and Southwest Washington and a member of the City of Portland's Small Business Minority Evaluator Program (MEP); moderated candidate forums for the Villages at Mount Hood for the past six years; served as a state organizer for the Women's March on Washington in Oregon in January of this year; volunteered for the presidential campaign of Hillary Clinton; served as secretary for the AAPI Caucus of the Democratic Party of Oregon (DPO) and treasurer of the DPO Environmental Caucus; and more.

Exemplary Community Volunteers



Aguman Capampangan Northwest U.S.A.

Aguman Capampangan Northwest U.S.A., which was founded in 1996 as a social club for Pampangans, is a nonprofit Filipino-American organization based in Portland that promotes Kapampangan and Filipino culture, serves the northwest community, and supports the Philippines through humanitarian work. The organization raises funds through yearly Christmas carolling and a lu'au dinner and dance event, the most recent of which boasted more than 500 attendees. Aguman promotes culture by holding Santa Cruzan events and an annual La Naval Fiesta celebration. The organization sent its tenth mission to the Philippines this past February, providing more than 3,500 people with medical and dental services as well as distributing relief goods in the form of rice, canned food, noodles, slippers, toothbrushes, toothpaste, and more to people in need in Pampanga province. In addition to its work in the Philippines, Aguman also provides assistance locally by feeding homeless people in the Portland area. To learn more, visit <www.agumancapampangan.org>.



Chinese American Citizens Alliance - Portland Lodge

The Chinese American Citizens Alliance (C.A.C.A.) was founded in 1895 in San Francisco as a social club and a national non-partisan organization advocating for Chinese-American empowerment and community service. The Portland chapter — which was established in 1921 — has a membership mailing list of 175. C.A.C.A. Portland has a three-fold mission: to develop leadership, serve the community, and promote civil rights. To this end, the organization hosts the annual Asian American Youth Leadership Conference as well as an annual retreat; awards scholarships to high school seniors; promotes civic engagement with voter registration, ballot measure education, and translating ballots; offers alcohol-server education classes in Mandarin and Cantonese; supports youth basketball with two teams, the Dragons and Tsunamis; donates gift cards to seniors at the Asian Health & Service Center; and many other community-oriented activities. To learn more, visit <www.cacaportland.org>.



Lac Hong Vietnamese School

The Lac Hong Vietnamese School was formed in 2004 to promote and preserve Vietnamese culture, to mentor youth, and to facilitate cooperation among Vietnamese Americans. The language school, which started with 88 students at its inception, has grown to an enrollment of more than 200 students from Pre-K to level seven, who take classes in the Vietnamese language, culture, dance, LEGO robotics, lion dance, and art. The classes, taught by 58 active volunteer teachers, meet at Portland Community College's Rock Creek Campus on Saturday afternoons. In the past year, students at Lac Hong Vietnamese School have performed cultural dances at community events, including Culture Days at Washington Square mall and the Vietnamese Community of Oregon's Lunar New Year celebration. The organization also supports Tieng Hoai Huong, a music group promoting and teaching Asian traditional instruments; True Connection; the Portland State University Vietnamese Student Association; the Asian American Youth Leadership Club at David Douglas High School; Vietnamese Scouts; and the Vietnamese Community of Oregon. In addition, the school also holds a Volunteer Day to support the local Oregon Food Bank. To learn more, visit <www.vscso.org>.

(AR Photos/Jan Landis)

Nomination forms for the 2018 Exemplary Community

Volunteer awards will be available January 1, 2018

and will cover volunteer efforts performed between

April 1, 2017 and March 31, 2018. For more information,

visit <www.ARFoundation.net> or <www.asianreporter.com>.

An online version of this scholarship & awards banquet special issue is available at <www.asianreporter.com>.

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