

**The 44th FEU-DNRSMAF U.S. Alumni Homecoming:
A Joyous Celebration of Legacy and Camaraderie
Las Vegas, Nevada
June 8-10, 2025**

By: Cerelyn E. Dacula, MD

It was both an honor and heartfelt joy to attend the 44th FEU-Dr. Nicanor Reyes School of Medicine Alumni Foundation (FEU-DNRSMAF) annual homecoming. By virtue of luck, I was tasked by our madam President to be the representative of the local alumni officers and Board of Trustees of the FEU-NRMF Medical Alumni Society (FEU-NRMF MAS).

The reunion was held in the radiant summer heat of Las Vegas, Nevada. The three-day event, hosted from June 8 to 10, 2025, was nothing short of spectacular—a tapestry of culture, legacy, gratitude, and shared memories that reaffirmed the indomitable Tamaraw spirit.

Day 1: Western Cowboy Welcome Dinner



The evening set the tone for the entire celebration—a warm, welcoming spirit of joy and unity that would carry through the 3-day event.

The celebration began with a lively **Western Welcome Dinner**, where boots, denim, and cowboy hats filled the venue with rustic charm and spirited energy. Against a backdrop of country tunes and hearty laughter, alumni embraced old friends and made new memories.



The program opened with the US and Philippine National Anthems. To me, it was a reminder of where each of us began while embracing the limitless opportunities that every alumnus may have... wherever we may be. The nostalgia intensifies even more when all the alumni sang the FEU Hymn with gusto, led by the FEUMAANI and FEU Nevada Chapter.

Dr. Grace Averilla-Obena, Class '85, VP and Convention Chair, welcomed everyone with heartfelt remarks, setting the tone for a night of joy and nostalgia. That night, the FEU-DNRSMAF Nevada Chapter officers were also inducted, led by their President Dr. Gerardo Guzman, Class '63.

Entertainment filled the ballroom with lively spirit—dance performance by the LV chapter in the tune of Cotton-Eyed Joe followed by a short parody of the Western cum Filipino cowboy, brought the house down.

It was truly an evening of camaraderie, celebration, and cowboy flair!



Day 2: Scientific Convention and Filipiniana Gala

The second day commenced with the **Scientific Convention** under the theme “*Innovations and Advances in Patient-Centered Care 2025.*” Moderated by Dr. Leilanie Mon and Dr. Richard Mon, the CME sessions showcased the expertise and research of our distinguished alumni:

Dr. Juan “Jim” Sanchez, Jr. delivered the 16th **Jesus B. Nolasco Memorial Lecture: *Hospital on Wheels program.*** It was a moving reminder to us all of the evolving impact of



medicine on lives and communities. Armed with just \$100 worth of medical supplies, The Hospital on Wheels enables a child... a person... to speak well, eat well, and laugh heartily with their repaired cleft lip, and other medical-surgical interventions delivered right in their community.



- Dr. Manuel Malicay shared updates on **Management of Diabetes Mellitus in Adults**.
- Dr. Beda Espineda presented **The Colostomy Freedom Project**.
- Dr. Anna Garcia Wertz discussed **Personalized Medicine for Obstructive Sleep Apnea**.
- Dr. Rossano Bangasan tackled **Cognitive Decline**, followed by Dr. Amador Dizon on **Adult and Child ADHD**.
- Dr. Herminigildo Angeles explored **Alzheimer's Dementia: Updates in Diagnosis and Treatment**.

- Dr. Ananias Diokno concluded with the 25th **Dr. Nicanor Reyes Jr. Memorial Lecture** on *Preventing Hypogonadism in Aging Men: A New Paradigm*

The convention was not only educational but also deeply inspiring, bridging generations of practitioners through shared knowledge and advocacy.

Later in the evening, the **Filipiniana Gala** honored the **Sapphire (Class '80)**, **Ruby (Class '85)**, **Coral (Class '90)**, and **Pearl (Class '95)** jubilarians alongside the Classes of 2005, 2010, and 2015. The grand entrance was a resplendent sea of barongs and ternos. The ballroom shimmered with tradition and pride.



Our Vice-President for Academic Affairs Dr. Magdalena F. Natividad shared the message from our President and COO,

Mr. Juan Enrique J. Reyes, highlighting the invaluable support of US alumni, whose generosity and commitment have helped sustain vital school activities and scholarship programs.

I was also humbled to give a short tribute on behalf of our local alumni society. In my speech, I reflected on the power of continuity and shared purpose -- on the strength of where our alma mater lies; not only in the excellence of its graduates, but in



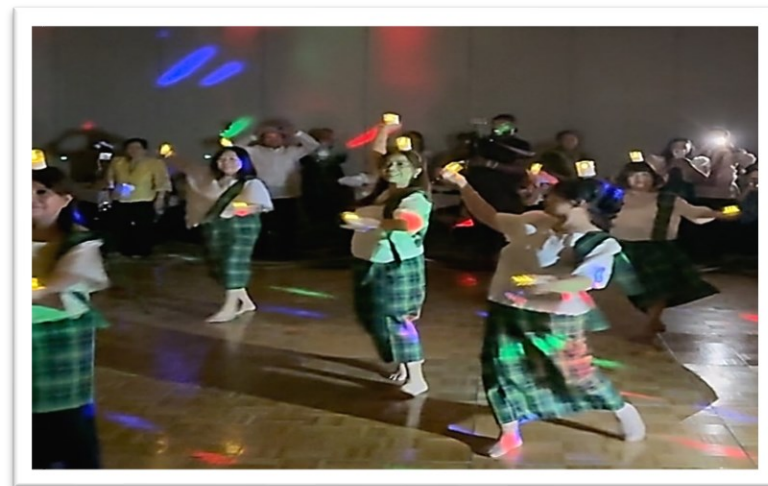
the enduring connection we share—across time, across borders, and across generations. I honored the class celebrants for theirs was not just a milestone—it was a



mission fulfilled. Their legacy isn't just measured in headlines but in lives touched, students supported, and futures they've helped shaped.



One of the most captivating moments of the evening was the performance of “Pandanggo sa Ilaw”, a traditional Filipino folk dance beautifully prepared by the convention committee. With



grace and precision, the dancers moved rhythmically with lighted candles delicately balanced on their heads and hands—symbolizing elegance, discipline, and Filipino artistry. The flicker of candlelight against the Filipiniana silhouettes brought a sense of nostalgia and cultural pride, casting a warm glow that transcended generations in the ballroom.

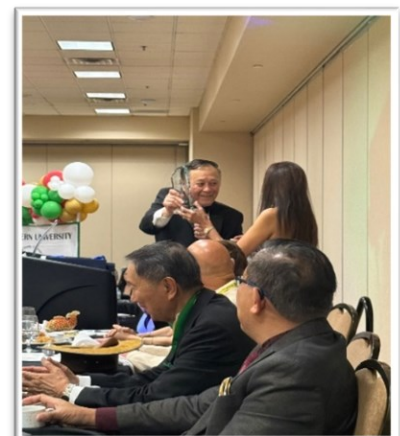
The evening gracefully transitioned from formal tributes to festive celebration. The ballroom lit up with spontaneous dancing, heartfelt singing, and shared laughter. Alumni from different batches took turns leading classic tunes and line dances, while others cheered them on, capturing photos and creating new memories. It was a beautiful reminder that beyond titles and timelines, what truly binds us is the enduring sense of community and camaraderie. The night closed not just in song, but in soul—carrying with it the warmth of belonging that only the Tamaraw family can bring.



Day 3: The Grand Ball

The final evening culminated in the glamorous **Grand Alumni Ball**. It was an evening of celebration—and transition—as the newly elected officers of the FEU-DNRSMAF Board of Trustees were inducted. Headed by the first woman Chairman of the Board after 44 years, **Dr. Nida Blankas-Hernaez**, the new set of officers were:

President:	Dr. Grace Averilla -Obena
Vice President:	Dr. Vincent Santangelo
Secretary:	Dr. Leilanie Narcelles-Mon
Treasurer:	Dr. Richard Mon
Asst. Tres:	Dr. Amethyst Cureg
Executive Director:	Dr. Rosemary Aquiler-Angeles
Asst. Executive Director:	Dr. Hernani Tansuche
Auditor:	Dr. Dionisia Sy
Past Chairman:	Dr. Manuel Malicay
Past President:	Dr. Nida Blankas-Hernaez



A fresh wave of leadership began, rooted in the same values that built our alumni foundation.

The night also paid heartfelt tribute to the **Diamond (Class '65), Emerald (Class '70), Golden (Class '75), and Silver (Class '2000) jubilarians**. I am truly in awe

standing in their presence. They are living embodiments of what it means to serve with integrity, lead with compassion, and live with purpose. The decades they represent are rich with stories of healing, sacrifice, and excellence.

Through their unwavering support to the alumni foundation, their mentorship to the younger generations, and their lifelong dedication to the ideals of FEU-NRMF, they have become beacons of what it means to be a Tamaraw.



The Awards and Medallion Ceremony highlighted the exceptional lives and contributions of our most senior alumni. Their lives and careers are marked not just by personal success, but by a legacy of giving... their contributions may not always make headlines—but they have changed lives. It reminded me that real success is not just about reaching the top—it's about lifting others as we rise.

A hush fell over the room as the **Diamond Jubilarians** waltzed with grace and pride. It was a graceful testament to timeless elegance and enduring spirit. As they glided across the floor with poise and dignity, their synchronized steps told stories of resilience, wisdom, and decades of camaraderie. Each movement echoed a lifetime of dedication, not only to their noble profession but to the legacy of our alma mater. Watching them waltz was like witnessing history in motion—refined, inspiring, and deeply moving. It was a moment that reminded us all that true grace only grows more radiant with time.



The **Golden Jubilarians** followed and brought the house down with their spirited rendition of “*Sweet Tamaraws*”—a nostalgic and joyful twist of “*Sweet Caroline*.” With infectious energy and playful confidence, they owned the stage, turning the classic anthem into a heartfelt tribute to their alma mater. Their voices rang out with pride, their lyrics laced with wit and school spirit, igniting a chorus of cheers and



laughter from the audience. It was more than just a performance—it was a declaration that their golden years shine brighter than ever, marked by creativity, camaraderie, and an undying Tamaraw pride that refuses to fade.



Carrying the Flame Forward: Ad Astra Per Aspera *Through Hardships, to the Stars*

Each day of the reunion reminded me that we are part of something greater—a family rooted in service, excellence, and unity.

Thank you for reminding me—and all of us—what it means to serve with grace, to give with purpose, and to reconnect with joy. Through themed celebrations, cultural pride, and emotional tributes, this year’s reunion brought together generations of Tamaraws in a celebration of shared purpose.

As I return to the Philippines, my heart is full—not only from the celebration but from the conversations, stories, and shared pride that made the 44th U.S. Alumni Homecoming so memorable.

To my fellow alumni in the U.S., thank you for the warmth, generosity, and example you continue to set. May we carry this light forward—into our homes, our hospitals, and our hallways of learning.

Ad Astra Per Aspera

Through hardships, you’ve reached the stars—and brought many with you.

Maraming salamat po and see you again soon!

