



Filipino American Society of Iowa



FIRST QUARTER NEWSLETTER

LEADERSHIP CHANGES 2020



2020 not only launched a new decade it also saw a change in leadership for FAS. Lanie Cross, who had serviced the Central Iowa Filipino-American community for many years as FAS President retired from that position to focus his time and attention on caring for a family member. Lanie's contributions to FAS over the years were celebrated at FAS's 2019 Christmas Event. His leadership was very valuable and helped FAS reach the level that it now has achieved.

FAS Board of Directors approved promoting Barbara "Bobbie" Vida Van Roekel, FAS Vice President and member of the Vida Sisters musical group to the role of FAS President beginning January 2020. Active FAS Associate and frequent event singer Paul Smith was selected to fill Bobbie's previous role and serve as FAS Vice President.



COVID-DRIVEN DECISIONS & CHANGES

The COVID-19 pandemic that swept the world prompted significant changes to our daily lives. The Filipino-American Society of Iowa, like most other organizations and businesses, determined that we could not continue with the events that had been planned for 2020. While FAS and our community look forward to our annual activities, we needed to be mindful of the safety and health of everyone involved.

As a result of these changes, the only event FAS was able to hold in 2020 was our annual Valentine's Ball. The event was held at the Des Moines Airport Holiday Inn and had a 'Roaring 20s' theme which included prizes for best outfits / costumes. Pepsij Santchi received the 2020 FAS Sweetheart of The Year, and Dr. Loy Avila and Mary Ann Avila received the 2020 FAS Couple of The Year. It was a wonderful, elegant evening of fun, food, and dancing for all who attended.



Gemmaline Riley, who was crowned our Ms. Philippines at our 2019 Pista sa Nayon celebration, helped present these titles. It was also decided that Gemma will continue to hold the Ms. Philippines title through 2020, due to the cancellation of the 2020 Pista sa Nayon.



All of the remainder of our in-person events scheduled for 2020 had to be cancelled due to COVID-19 precautions, but FAS still sought to have an impact on our community. Rather than holding our annual summer Picnic and Pig Roast, we instead partnered with the Creative Visions program in Des Moines to prepare and deliver over 400 authentic Filipino meals in May to those in need in the community and called it our Pagtulong Day.

This event was very well received, so FAS hosted another Pagtulong Day in October in partnership with New Hope United Methodist Church at which prepared Filipino meals were distributed to cars through drive-up.



Recently on January 13th all of our officers and their families all met at Meals from The Heartland Packaging Center and packaged over 1,116 hearty pack meals which will serve 6,696 meals around the world.

Another highlight of FAS' events each year has been the Honoring Our Veterans event in November. Even though it too was cancelled due to COVID-19, we still felt strongly about acknowledging our Veterans became a virtual event, with individual spotlighting of each nominating veterans on the FAS Facebook page and featuring a brief video salute prepared especially for this event which featured: Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds, the Iowa National Guard Color Guard, Paul Smith performing the National Anthem at the Iowa Cubs stadium, former US Representative & US Army National Guard Major Tulsie Gabbard, and FAS' own Founder & Co-Executive Director Luisita Dona Thompson.



We were not able to do all that we had originally planned to do in 2020, but we still sought to do as much as we were still able to do in support of our community and to continue to celebrate Filipino-Americans in Iowa!

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The FAS Scholarship team awarded scholarships in June for the 2020/2021 school year to Matthew Riley, Kayla Terejo and Jocelyn Hurley. In November, we posted an article on our Facebook page (Filipino American Society Scholarship Program) with how the students were doing and some of the challenges they have been facing. We would like to thank all of those that have made donations to the scholarship program this last year. It is by your generosity that we are able to award scholarships to the students in the FAS community.



Mathew Riley
University of Northern Iowa
Degree in Movement and Exercise Science



Kayla Terejo
Aurora University
Degree in Nursing



Jocelyn Hurley
DMACC
Degree in Dental Assistant

THE ROAD AHEAD IN 2021

Though COVID-19 remains a very serious reality for us all, we are hopeful that we can begin looking at returning to some element of “normal” as 2021 gets underway. With that in mind, the FAS leadership team have mapped out the following events for the coming year. **Be sure to mark your calendars!**

SUMMER GALA

The leadership team has opted not to host a Valentine's Ball in 2021 because the COVID-19 positive rates remain too high at this start of the year. However, we will seek to replace that event in 2021 with this “Summer Gala” on **June 26**. This will be a formal event, with dinner and dancing. It will also feature an emphasis on being a fun and romantic evening for couples with gifts and prizes that celebrate relationships and couple-focused competitive activities.

FAS GOLF TOURNAMENT/PIG ROAST PICNIC

The first golf outing in 2019 was a great success and we look to resume it in the morning of **July 31**, with the annual Pig Roast Picnic taking place in the afternoon and evening.

PISTA SA NAYON

Our annual celebration of the Filipino culture will be held this year on **October 2**.

HONORING OUR VETERANS

We look forward to returning to the in-person event that salutes and recognizes those who have proudly served our country in uniform on **November 13**.

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

By the end of 2021 we sincerely hope that we will all be able to look back on 2021 and be able to embrace the joy of our lives moving beyond the world we've been living in for this past year. We will be joining together to share food, sing Christmas carols, and even have a visit from Santa himself on **December 11**.

GETTING TO KNOW OUR COMMUNITY

FAS will be launching a new use of social media in 2021 that is intended to help our Filipino-American community get to know each other better, and to help our neighbors at large get to know all of us better. The “Getting to Know Our Community” series will be short video interviews posted monthly. There will be two categories: one for FAS Associate spotlights and one to spotlight Filipino businesses and business owners. These will be posted to the FAS Facebook page – so be watching! (If you have not already “liked” the FAS Facebook page, be sure to get that done so you don't miss any announcements.)

FAS Needs You!

From Paul Smith, FAS Vice President

The Filipino-American Society of Iowa exists to promote a maintaining, preserving, and promoting of Filipino heritage as Filipino-Americans integrate into an American heritage. This is a wonderful, inspiring, and educational journey. But it also costs – in both money and time.

Prior to 2020, FAS Associates knew that when they joined or renewed with the organization that their dues would be used to help fund the various events and activities which FAS did during the year. But in 2020 most of those things were cancelled. This also meant that some FAS Associates may have felt that being an FAS Associate would not matter as much until we started doing events again. It's completely understandable why some might feel this way, but I just wanted to share why FAS needs it's Associates now more than ever.

As we look at resuming activities and events in 2021, those efforts will take money and they will take volunteers. While FAS does have funds in our account, it often takes much more money upfront to host an event that a lot of people realize. We do try to cover some of the expenses through sponsorships or contributions, sometimes we even have a ticket or admission price. All of this is necessary to make sure the activities can happen and that FAS remains financially health and fiscally responsible with Associate's money.

2020 did slow us down quite a bit. Not only were not able to host events, some of which do bring in funds, but we also were unable to remain in close communication with everyone which means we've started to lose connection and recruiting of volunteers to help make the events flourish. Now as we prepare to hopefully begin being more active and doing more things – we need our FAS Associates to stand with us and renew.

We also want to extend a very warm, welcoming hand of friendship to those who are part of the Central Iowa Filipino-American community who may not currently be FAS Associates. We would LOVE to have you join us, too! Together we can relaunch our efforts in 2021 with a renewed energy and fire that will truly capture the excitement of the Filipino heritage that we seek to maintain, preserve, and promote!

Mabuhay!

-Paul Smith, FAS VP

Board of Directors & Officers



Luisita Dona Thompson
Founder & Exec Board Chairman



Larry McBurney
Executive Co-Chairman



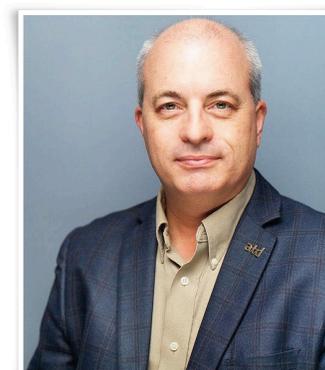
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Board Member



Carmelita Heyne
Board Member



Bobbie Van Roekel
President & Board Member



Paul Smith
Vice President & Scholarship Co-Chairman



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Secretary



Ernesto Puzon III
Treasurer



AnnaLyn Catipon Vida
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Divina Gerdeman
Public Relations



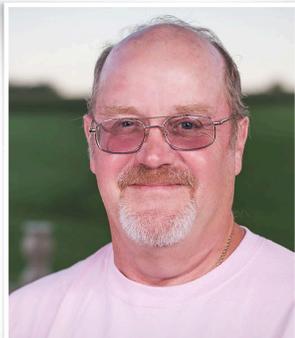
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Scholarship Program Chairman



Melissa Eckert
Scholarship Committee



Kristine Marticio Estayo
Scholarship Committee



Richard Meador
Sgt at Arms



Thomas Benoit
Sgt at Arms



Justin Meador
Sgt at Arms

FILIPINO AMERICAN SOCIETY OF IOWA

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