

**COVID-19  
Disrupts  
Lives of  
Graduates**

Seniors voice their challenges.  
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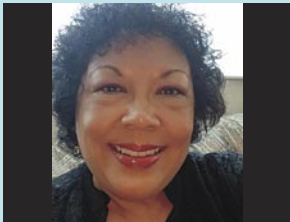


# Fil·Am Voice

Magkaisa Tayong Lahat | "Let Us All Unite"

May 2020 • Vol 4 No5 | FILIPINO AMERICAN VOICE • UPLIFTING OUR COMMUNITY | FREE

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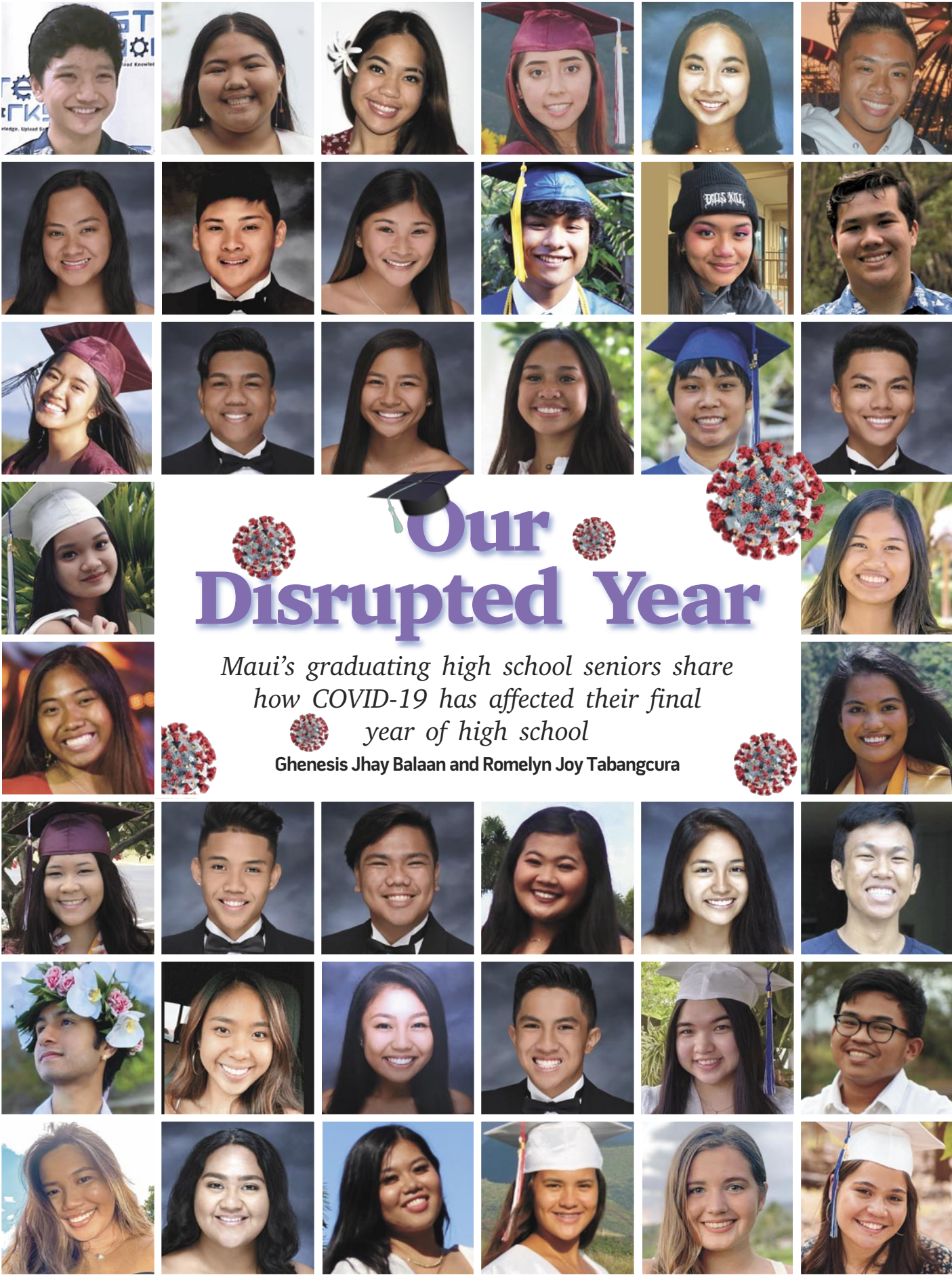
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## Our Disrupted Year

Maui's graduating high school seniors share how COVID-19 has affected their final year of high school

Ghenesis Jhay Balaan and Romelyn Joy Tabangcura

FREE

**P**omp and Circumstance. Walking across the stage in front of your screaming (and overjoyed) family and friends to pick up your diploma and shake the hand of your principal. A big smile for the

photographers. And being lei'd all the way to your neck and in many cases, much higher so your family needs to hold on to the extra lei. Then a graduation party—whether an intimate one at the house, a restaurant or an

extravagant one at Binhi at Ani or one of the community centers. But for us, the Class of 2020, sadly it will not happen. The COVID-19 pandemic saw to that. Spring break was extended; ath-

letic activities and other extra-curricular activities were canceled. On-line classes were instituted and a decision was made that the grades through the 3rd quarter would be the final grades.  
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# Disrupted ...

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And the traditional graduation ceremonies were canceled—not even postponed. Instead, the Department of Education announced virtual graduation ceremonies, with the graduate riding in a car with family to accept their graduation certificate cover.

But it's not the same.

The following first-person statements from our fellow graduating high school seniors from Maui share their thoughts and possible lifestyle changes during the stay at home period.



“SINCE I WAS YOUNG, I knew I wanted to attend a university after high school but I never knew what I would major in. Throughout high school, I have taken numerous health education classes which helped me towards my choice of major. After high school, I will be furthering my education at Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, Arizona. I will be studying to earn a Bachelor's in Science in Nursing. With my education, I will be working towards becoming a registered nurse. Growing up in Hawai'i, it has always been my dream to have a traditional graduation ceremony. Being able to be congratulated for the years of hard work is definitely a milestone every student should be able to experience. The ongoing pandemic not only stripped the class of 2020's graduation and last quarter of high school but also all the memories that would have come with it. These last final months were meant to be enjoyed and full of love. Now, my class is left with what seems like nothing.” **ShandiMarie Agpoon**, Maui High School, daughter of **Sanders Agpoon**.

“ALTHOUGH COVID-19 is seen as a scary and negative thing, I myself as an individual prefer to look at the bright side of things and its positivity. Although it may have suspended our normal activities and canceled our plans that we



may have been looking forward to, it hasn't been all that bad. Even though it has taken away quite a few things from me, such as my senior night for volleyball, hanging out with friends, complaining and procrastinating about the remaining work to do in school during the remainder of my stay and most importantly, graduation. However, with it, I gained quite a few things. These include having quality time with my family although sometimes that can drive people crazy being cooped up like that but regardless I'm still grateful for it. Also being able to work during times like these where instead of asking my parents for money, I am able to buy most of my needs and the things I want therefore they can focus on paying bills and other needs. As for graduation, even though it saddens me that my class won't be able to perform our traditional graduation, there's not much else to do but accept and trust in God's plans and move forward in the future. I believe that He does these things for a greater reason and for the greater good of everyone. After all I believe that our God does things for us, not because we want it or ask for it but because it's what we need and is best for us. As for my future, I still am looking forward to pursuing my enlistment in the United States Marine Corps as an 0231 Intelligence Specialist. However due to the uncontrolled things that are happening right now, it has been delayed. In the meantime, I will be staying at home on Maui, taking college classes here and there from UHMC, continue working and hopefully leave for boot camp by the ending of February next year.” **Kenneth Alba**, Lahainaluna High School, son of **Romeo and Leni Alba**.



“THROUGHOUT THE IMPACT of COVID-19 many major problems and dilemmas have arisen. Cancellation of activities and ceremonies such as Graduation, Awards Night and

face to face schooling has affected thousands of students by not giving them the time and space to recollect all the milestones from the past thirteen years of formal schooling of learners. With COVID-19 around, students were stripped of their right for proper farewells, final memories and gratitude toward each other. The joys of being together with one's family to celebrate educational victories has been shifted to another form. Indeed, this is a new challenge to all of us who will virtually graduate as this academic calendar ends this year. My plan and course after high school has been affected greatly since counselors and advisors are no longer at immediate reach. Currently I plan to stay on Maui and pursue and study a program in the health field to help fight this dreaded COVID-19 disease. With all the chaos from this pandemic that we are all currently fighting through together, I believe that we will bounce back as we always have. For sure, in the end of this academic race, we will triumph as humanity with God's mercy and grace.” **Christian Alonzo**, Maui High School, son of **Luz and Pedro Alonzo**.



“IN LIFE THERE ARE many things that we will go through that will shape who we become. As of right now, we are all going through the COVID-19 pandemic and it's testing our mettle. I am currently a senior at Maui High School and I was supposed to graduate this year. Yeah, I am still graduating but not in the traditional way that I expected. I always dreamed of the large crowd sitting in front of me and my peers but instead I will be seeing a line of cars as my school is having a drive by alternative graduation. I believe this would be an equally memorable experience to live by. I served as class president through all my years in high school and I was really looking forward to leading and presenting the newest graduating class but I will not get the chance to. Even though we will not be recognized in the way we all wanted to be, I will never forget all the hard work I put into my high school years. There is so much we have to look forward to after graduation. My high school experience is definitely an unforgettable one. In the future I plan to major in Elementary Education and become an Elementary School Teacher and create a meaningful difference in Hawai'i's future through the youth. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought a lot of change and uncertainty to the world but one thing I know for sure is that there is always an *after*. And this is where my career will shine through. After quarantine we need to appreciate each other with acts of kindness. After this dark time, we need to see the good in all the small things. After we recover, we will not be the same, but we will be stronger. Together, we shall heal as one country and one humanity.” **Christine Raras Alonzo**, Maui High School, daughter of **Pedro and Luz Alonzo**.



“TOURISM IS A MAJOR aspect of what makes Hawai'i a home to me. Having been born and raised in the islands, I knew I wanted to pursue a career in the travel industry. In the fall of 2020, I will be attending the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and majoring in Travel Industry. At first when news broke out about COVID-19, I wasn't too worried because living in Hawai'i, I didn't expect this pandemic to reach our island home. But when the Hawai'i DOE officially announced that schools statewide would be closed for the remainder of the 2019–2020 school year, I was devastated. As president of two clubs at Maui High School, it saddened me that we couldn't end the school year without having our annual end of the school year banquets and socials. But what saddened me the most was the fact that my class had our last day in school with our friends and teachers without knowing it would be the last time we would see each other.” **Kenneth Alquisalas-Reyes**, Maui High School, son of **Jyrel Alquisalas-Reyes and Anthony Reyes**.

“COVID-19 HAS AFFECTED everyone in different ways. Personally, it's affected all the activities in my life as well as make for a very interesting senior year to say the least. It's really bummed me out to say the least. I actually miss



going to school and seeing my friends, getting to participate in clubs and all the joys that come with senior year. Prom and graduation being canceled was really a blow and I don't think anyone in the class of 2020 is happy about it. I wish there was something we could do but it seems like that's not in the cards. As far as my plans after high school goes, they luckily haven't changed. I am going to UH Maui College to get my Associates degree in Hospitality and Tourism. I might go back after and get a certificate in Hawaiian Studies. I hope this pandemic ends soon so we can all go back to living our normal lives.” **Tihani Arbogast**, Kihei Public Charter School, daughter of **Eric and Patricia Arbogast**.



“AFTER GRADUATING FROM Maui High School, I hope to attend the University of Hawai'i Maui College for two years, working on the side and staying active in Maui's community. I then hope to transfer to a two-year Radiology Program on either the mainland or O'ahu. Then after two years, specializing in Ultrasound. I hope to work and live long term here on Maui but I am open to God's plan on wherever he takes me. I aspire to serve Maui's community and families by being an Ultrasound Technician. COVID-19 has directly impacted my senior year and graduation. I never imagined going into Senior Year that it would be drastically cut short. I never imagined that my last day in the Public DOE system would be a random Friday in March. Never thought that I wouldn't be able to say goodbye to all of my classmates and teachers, whom I've spent countless hours and years with. Having the class of 2020's graduation ceremony cut short has been severely disappointing and emotional. Coming to terms that after thirteen years of schooling, that all of it would end with a virtual goodbye, has been difficult. Having reality sink in that I will not be able to take part in traditional events like Senior Breakfast, Senior Lū'au, or even walking the line, has been complicated. Though, I remain eternally grateful for every experience I have been gifted to have experience. I take courage from parents, friends, and others, who know the importance of this milestone and boldly look towards what the future holds, even if the present is highly unfortunate.” **Victoria Makena-Rose Blando**, Maui High School, daughter of **James and Wanda-Jeanne Blando**.



“I THINK COVID-19 is something to be dealt with seriously. The potential of this virus has forced many schools and businesses to close its doors. It has also led to the cancellation of many important activities and events such as graduation. Graduation was one of the most important events to take place at the end of our high school journeys. To have graduation canceled was very sad to hear. Us seniors have worked very hard and have waited very long for this moment. My current plans after high school are to attend the University of Hawai'i Maui College and to pursue my degree in liberal arts. This pandemic has not changed my plans after high school.” **Ian Casabay**, Maui High School, son of **Anna Liza Casabay and Ernesto Casabay Jr.**



“I DIDN'T WANT my senior year to end like this but things happened unexpectedly. COVID-19 pandemic has made a huge impact on us, to our livelihood and especially to our education. Many of us are expecting and looking forward to celebrating graduation with friends and family. I was hoping to have a bunch of lei to be given from my friends and relatives. We worked so hard these last four years, we put all our efforts and our very best to complete everything. It is supposed to be one of the most significant moments of our lives and yet COVID-19 took it away from us so quickly. No formal goodbyes from our friends and teachers. It is what it is and



## You are our heroes!

Our warmest mahalo to all the health care professionals, first responders and every essential worker on the front lines of fighting COVID-19.

*Pictured: Bayer employees on Maui printed and donated over 300+ face shields.*

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I hope this pandemic will end very soon and go back to normal. After high school, I plan to attend the University of Hawai'i Maui College and continue to work hard for my future. I hope you don't lose hope because of this. This is just one of the obstacles we have to face and lessons we have to remember through our journey for a successful life. I pray to God for everyone's safety." **Liesel Dagdag**, Maui High School, daughter of **Manny Jun M. Dagdag and Grace B. Dagdag**.



"TO ME, COVID-19 has brought upon a great deal of mourning of canceled activities, not being able to see loved ones on a day-to-day basis and how we used to live our lives. As of now, I believe that this entire pandemic will change our day-to-day lifestyle and how we approach certain things. Though unfortunately graduation got canceled, I think that we owe it to our healthcare workers and the rest of the essential workers to understand the situation. They are continuously providing service to our community and we owe it to them to abide by the regulations. Even with this pandemic occurring, this has not changed my plans for after high school. I still want to become a doctor (specifically a pediatrician), to help save lives and serve my community. I will be majoring in Biochemistry at Seattle University in the fall and am excited for my future to come!" **Joebelle Failano Daludado**, Maui High School, daughter of **Jeffrey Daludado and Amabelle Gay Daludado**.



"I'M HONESTLY REALLY upset that we don't have a traditional graduation this year but it's something we shouldn't focus on right now because there's always a college graduation to look forward to. To everyone, this wasn't what we imagined our senior year to be like, we all wanted to enjoy every little bit of it, from our senior breakfast, to walking the line at graduation. Be-

fore this pandemic, I planned on getting a job to help my family but because of COVID-19, I have to wait until things go back to normal. I plan to attend UHMC with a Liberal Arts in Math then transfer to UH Mānoa to pursue Secondary Education in Math, Engineering, or Architecture." **Bradley Domingo**, Maui High School, son of **Myrna Domingo and Marlie Domingo**.



"THE CANCELLATION OF graduation was definitely a let-down. Not being able to celebrate a major part of high school with my friends and family isn't the greatest feeling in the world but life moves on. The uncertainty of the future may lead to my plans changing, I might have to stay on-island until the pandemic subsides and life can go back to normal. My plan as of right now is to attend a university in the fall in the hopes of having a social and exciting college experience, and not going through another social distancing order in my community. The main thing I miss is hanging out with my friends and family." **Ethan Evangelista**, Maui High School, son of **Edward Evangelista and Susanah Evangelista**.



"MY PLANS AFTER high school are to attend the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa this upcoming fall term to complete my liberals and eventually transfer to a university in the state of Washington to obtain my bachelor's degree and attend a graduate school. My dream school is the University of Washington in Seattle, being one of the top medical schools in the United States. I will be attending college as a Psychology (BS) major, aspiring to become a physician who can help save lives. In college, I plan to take as many opportunities to grow my experience in the healthcare field through research projects and internships, which will further develop my strengths as an aspiring doctor. After the announcement of the rest of the school year being

canceled due to safety precautions for COVID-19, I was in complete shock. I felt like my senior year was stolen away from me and I realized that I took it for granted. I used to put off hanging out with my friends because I found myself too busy with schoolwork and extracurricular activities. I used to think to myself, 'I'll have spring break and the rest of the year to hang out with them,' but with the current stay-at-home order in Hawai'i, this is no longer an option. COVID-19 has forced the 2020 class to resort to alternate graduation options instead of having the amazing recognition and relief from walking down the line and receiving their diplomas. If I'm planning to attend a university in the mainland, I will never be able to celebrate my undergraduate graduation where I would be le'd. Thankfully, 2020 Baldwin High School graduates will be recognized on television for their achievements; however, I still yearn for the traditional graduation I've been waiting my whole life for." **Gem Kyla Cadiz Galapon**, Baldwin High School, daughter of **Gimna and Rogelio Galapon**.



"MY THOUGHTS ON the COVID-19 is a deep and sensitive topic because I feel like I was robbed of my graduation. I'm the youngest in my family and lived through three of my siblings' experiences. Of course, I had it planned from the time I started school. I was going to have all my family there, I planned on having a big celebration and also being able to spend a month traveling to Disneyland, Utah, and then onto Colorado. Well, I guess that's not happening. Even though I might not be able to walk the line like my siblings or parents, I've come to accept that there are greater things I need to worry about. As for college I will not be leaving to start as I so hoped for—classes will be done online for a while which no one is sure of. I won't be meeting with my academic advisor or athletic advisor as we planned due to the COVID-19. It's tough knowing that things are just unsure and no one really is able to say when

my dreams of attending college will really happen." **Taylor Ganer**, Lahainaluna High School, daughter of **Alfred and Charmaine Ganer**.



"I'VE NEVER BEEN ONE for ceremony, so graduation wasn't that big a deal to me in the first place. Yet, after taking the cap and gown pictures for our alternate ceremony, I couldn't help but think 'Is this really it?' I was handed the little embellishments I had worked so hard for, took pictures that hadn't lasted five minutes and was sent out. I wasn't expecting much of the traditional commencement but I didn't feel the sense of closure and accomplishment that comes with graduating. I think it's because I miss having a proper send-off from the daily life of high school. We didn't get those last few months, then weeks, then days of jittery excitement. I miss my friends and teachers. It's like I'm in limbo and all of a sudden I was slapped with a hack-job graduation and two weeks of finals to end my journey. Since COVID-19 was no one person's fault though, I am kind of in a state of lethargic acceptance of what's happening; I can see all the things I am missing, I can feel the dread of oncoming regret but I can't do anything to stop it. So now, I'll just keep pushing forward and look to a better college experience, hopefully at UH Mānoa where I can go Pre-Med. If anything, I am looking forward to our one-year reunion." **K. Liana Garcia**, Baldwin High School, daughter of **Ryan and Krissy Garcia**.



"AFTER HIGH SCHOOL, I plan to go to Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, Arizona. I will be majoring in business studies of hospitality and entrepreneurial studies. After college, I plan to create my own business or work in the business industry. When I first heard about COVID-19, I really didn't believe or think that it would have a negative impact on

see DISRUPTED p.4

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## From the Editor's Desk

Vince Bagoyo, Jr.  
EDITOR & PRESIDENT • FIL-AM VOICE



## Importance of Higher Education

In the words of Nelson Mandela, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

As an iconic world leader whose life demonstrates the power of education to change the world, we look to his example and know that what he says is real. For many of us who have been fortunate and blessed enough to benefit from the rewards of higher education, perhaps we too can provide some leadership to ensure our young people will take advantage of the countless opportunities for schooling beyond high school.

We are sadly aware Filipinos are underrepresented at the college level. As a way to assist youth and give them motivation and incentive to pursue higher education, many of our local Filipino community organizations continue to provide small scholarship grants to deserving high school graduates. In recent years, scholarships have also been awarded for stu-

dents in the Culinary Arts program at the University of Hawai'i Maui campus. There are some successes but it has been slow progress.



Nelson Mandela

As we face this dilemma, some of us wonder what else we can do besides giving these small scholarships. Before we examine some other avenues for assistance, let

us look at some of the positive results that come from attaining higher education. In today's job market, being a high school graduate does not open the doors to as many rewarding careers as it did for past generations. Instead, the U.S. has turned from being an economy that was once manufacturing-based to one that is knowledge-based. In our current economy, career options are declining for those who have not furthered

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## Disrupted ...

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the last semester of my senior year. It was really surprising to think that the last day of school before spring break was the last time I would see all my friends and classmates on campus. After hearing that graduation would be canceled due to the circumstances, I was really heartbroken. Having graduation and seeing all your family and everyone that supported you from the beginning was the only thing I was looking forward to since freshman year and it's a shame I won't be able to see that. But I know that it's just a little set back you'll face in a long life of success." **Althea Garduque**, Maui High School, daughter of **Nelia and Venancio Garduque**.



"THE CORONAVIRUS will change our life as we know it but if we all work together we will come through it stronger. We just have to deal with it and move on. I am disap-

pointed about the traditional graduation ceremony being canceled and not getting to celebrate with my friends but I am more disappointed about the cancellation of my robotics tournaments. Since January, my team has spent countless hours designing and building our 120 lb. robot from scratch. Many of us sacrificed our after school, weekends and holidays. Some of us often didn't get home till 9 p.m., sometimes 11 p.m. We worked really hard and were looking forward to seeing it compete because we felt we had a pretty good robot. As a senior and the team's head build captain, this robot *to me* was the product of the knowledge and expertise I've gained from my seven years of being in robotics. The COVID-19 did not necessarily change my plans after high school. I am still planning on attending UH Mānoa to study engineering and train with the Air Force ROTC." **Alex Macaraeg**, Maui High School, son of **Gener and Nora Macaraeg**.



"AS PART OF THE class of 2020, I am incredibly devastated having my graduation canceled. For twelve years, I watched as each class ahead of mine walked across the stage, grabbed their diploma and received a traditional ceremony celebrating a big milestone in their life. It gave me motivation to complete my courses and be one of those to walk across the stage. It truly breaks my heart as this experience was taken away from the Class of 2020. Although with graduation being canceled causing a lot of discouragement, I am grateful to know that the community still tries their best and let our class know that our hard work is not gonna go unnoticed and still make an alternative ceremony celebrating the Class of 2020. It is still a milestone to complete twelve years of school and moving forward, I will continue my education attending Grand Canyon University to pursue nursing and accomplish more milestones." **Shamae Amber Medrano**, Maui High School, daughter of **Anabelle Medrano and Ernesto Medrano**.



"IT'S VERY SADDENING that the class of 2020 will not be able to experience what is a very important milestone in our lives. Thirteen years of schooling and we didn't even get to the best part of it, which is walking the line. We also won't get to experience our senior lū'au or have our senior breakfast together. Those were some activities that I was really looking forward to this last quarter because it's one of the last times our class will be together. This pandemic is a weird time for all of us and I'm just trying to get through it all like everyone else. Before this pandemic, I had plans of traveling to Canada in the summer to see family that I haven't seen in a long time. But, with everything going on now, that might have to wait until next summer. I was also planning on getting a job for the summer to help my par-

ents ease the stress of finances, but with limited businesses open and the precautions they're taking to prevent the spread of the virus, I don't have many options but to wait until the curve flattens. Due to COVID-19, my family has also dealt with the closure of a company which has led us to having a limited source of income. As for school, I plan on attending UHMC this fall and COVID-19 has not changed that. However, I can't get the help from counselors to help me with this transition as I would've without this pandemic. On the bright side, this stay-at-home order has made me achieve my goal of exercising more." **Jeanine Miranda**, Maui High School, daughter of **Federico Jr. and Rosalie Miranda**.



"AS A SENIOR, it was astronomically devastating to hear the news about our graduation being canceled. It sucks for everyone to be in this position knowing that we spent

thirteen years of our life going to and striving in school just to throw our hard work in the trash just because of the corona virus that became a worldwide pandemic. I was expecting the HIDOE to postpone instead of cancelling our traditional ceremony because the entire State of Hawai'i would want to see the class of 2020 walking the line and getting their diplomas in their cap and gown instead of doing many alternative graduations just for the safety of ensuring the social distance methods. Besides the cancellation of graduation comes to the other events happening in school such as our Senior Lū'au where we spend the last time together at our school as well as doing song practice for us to practice and sing our class graduation song and also walking out of school for the last time to show how we're leaving high school to go onto our own paths as an individual. I'm already assuming that me and my sister's graduation party is canceled and my college visit to explore my college had to be postponed to the day I have to move in. My plans after high school have stayed the same where I'm planning to attend Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo, California for the upcoming Fall 2020 Quarter where I'm majoring in Food Science." **Sebastian Montero-Quemado**, Maui High School, son of **Antonio Quemado, Jr. and Carmelita Quemado**.



"THE COVID-19 pandemic has changed our way of living for the past couple of months which included us now wearing masks in public places and having a lock down. The

cancellation of our Maui High graduation ceremony has saddened me because participating in the ceremony was going to be a monumental moment for me and my family. I would've been the first in my family to walk the line. I really wanted to see all of my family members congratulate me but now I won't have that opportunity. I'll still be attending college in the fall of this year and if this pandemic is still around then I will have the option of online college courses. I've been managing my extracurricular activities by doing virtual meetings online like Zoom. I miss all my friends and I hope the COVID-19 starts clearing up around the world so I can go back to doing fun activities and spending time with friends and family. We can get through this together." **Nash Murray**, Maui High School, son of **Tonya Murray and James Murray**.



"COVID-19 HAS impacted everyone's lives in the matter of months, there is no doubt about it. From the health care workers that work days on end trying to save lives, to those who no longer have jobs; trying to find ways to support themselves and their family. As for the high school seniors such as myself, we've lost one of the lasting moments in our high school careers. The experiences of senior lū'au, seeing our teachers for the last time as we venture off to find ourselves. And one of the most important experiences of becoming a senior—graduation. Graduation was some-

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Sakada Offspring



Michelle Santos



Pedro de Aquino and Emelia de Aquino during Emelia's birthday.

A beauty pageant or beauty contest is a competition that has traditionally focused on judging and ranking the physical attributes of the contestants. Now these contests have evolved to also incorporate personality traits, intelligence, talent, and a contestant's ability to answer judges' questions on various topics or subjects. This month's featured *Sakada* Offspring, Michelle Santos is an expert on the subject because she has been involved with the Miss Maui Filipina Scholarship Pageant for forty-four years. She truly knows the ins and outs of being in pageants and what it takes to win the contest. She lovingly shares her expertise when she is helping the girls throughout the contests. Michelle does not have children of her own but she is more than a mother to all the Miss Maui Filipina contestants all forty-four years. She is often con-

Michelle L. Santos

Lucy Peros | ALL PHOTOS COURTESY MICHELLE SANTOS

sidered by the pageant contestants as their Auntie Michelle or even their pageant mother. The girls create such great bonding between them and Michelle. Michelle was born in 1957 on the island of Lāna'i where her parents, John Santos, Sr. and Candida Santos were living at that time. Her Dad was working for the Lāna'i Pineapple Company. She was two months old when her family returned to Maui and lived in Pā'ia. She attended Pā'ia Elementary until the 4th grade. In 1967, the entire family moved to Wailuku and Michelle attended Wailuku Elementary from 1967 to 1968. She attended 'Īao Intermediate from 1968 to 1971. Then

she attended St. Anthony High School from 1971 and graduated in 1975. In those days, employment for high school students was extremely limited compared to today where there are a lot of fast foods joints which are continuously looking for employees. Michelle worked for the Maui Pineapple Company cannery. She worked as a trimmer during the summer prior to her senior year and she was able to pay for her entire tuition. After graduating from St. Anthony

in 1975, Michelle attended Maui Community College and majored in Secretarial Science. However, she did not graduate because she was hired by State Farm Insurance and worked there from 1977 through 2010. Besides State Farm Insurance, Michelle also worked for Royal State Insurance (2011–2013), Occidental Underwriters (2013–2015), County of Maui-Office of Mayor Alan Arakawa (2016–2019), and County of Maui-Office of Mayor Michael Victorino (2019–present). Michelle has one brother, John Santos Jr. He also attended St. Anthony High School, Class of 1989. He works at Grand Wailea Hotel. He is married to Capri Santos.

Michelle is a very community-oriented person. She is involved in the following organizations and community activities: Maui Filipino Community Council as Recording Secretary, Miss Maui Filipina Scholarship Pageant as Pageant Director, Binhi At Ani Filipino Community Center as Recording Secretary, Mayor Alan Arakawa Kōkua Community Fund as Recording Secretary, and a member of St. Anthony Church. Michelle received several community affiliated awards: Maui Filipino Community Council as Outstanding member of the Year (2002), Kalayaan Outstanding Leadership Award (2005), Filipino Centennial Celebration Outstanding Contribution Award (2006), Maui Filipino Chamber of

see SANTOS next page



2004 Wedding of Michelle's brother. L to R: John Jr., Mom-Candida Santos, Sister in law-Capri Santos, Dad-John Santos Sr., Michelle Santos.



Back row: Cade Betancourt, Michelle Santos, Capri Santos, Candida Santos, John Santos Jr. Front row: Celise Santos, Emelia de Aquino, Jena Santos

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## Education ...

from p. 4

their education after high school. Technology is fast changing the trajectory of our economy. As an example, artificial intelligence (AI) is taking over many of the jobs that were previously handled by people. These new emerging technological advances like robotics are transforming many of our workplaces that now require higher education.

One of the practical reasons for earning a college degree is it prepares you for an eventual career. Because higher education allows you to pursue a career that interests and inspires you, that freedom to choose your career makes it more likely that you will enjoy it. Even more significant is the reality higher education provides a competitive edge in the career market. As employers recruit for their needs, applicants are ranked by educational standing and their specific fields of expertise: post doctorate (specialization), doctorate, masters, bachelors degrees, in that order. In other words, not only is higher education recognized as a major factor, the completion of higher degrees of education is given commensurate value.

Financial security is everyone's goal, a basic need. In the 21st century, education plays an even more significant role in other aspects of our lives. It is a proven fact gaining a higher education can increase your opportunities in the work world and can improve your overall quality of life. However, not every reason for pursuing a higher education is financial or monetary. Some of the best reasons are related to the personal growth of each person, a way of self-development, to better yourself, to strive always to become the best that you can be. Another option for taking courses towards credits for higher education is online, sometimes known as distance learning. There are many reputable universities and colleges offering this option by providing specific instructions for students on their websites. These online courses may be more financially feasible as compared to the traditional onsite learning. You do not need to leave home to earn a higher education. Perhaps it is also beneficial to mention here that for our young people who grew up on Maui, there are other reasons for studying away from the comfort and easy support near family. Many now believe that spending

some years of learning, working, and living elsewhere results in a broader perspective about the world and that travel is a powerful educational experience. Travel is, in fact, sometimes a source of unexpected discovery of places we have only read about or seen in movies or newscasts, as well as about self, especially in the presence of many who do not share our values, experience or observations, and whose upbringing make them all the more interesting to us.

During this pandemic of COVID-19 many adjustments are being made by everyone about the things we once took for granted. Family and friends have become more precious. Self-reflection has led more people at a younger age to examine their own thoughts about legacy and what is profoundly important to pass on to the next generation. Life itself takes on a new kind of urgency to fulfill personal goals. Dreams for our children and their children have become increasingly intense and focused. In some ways, awareness about every aspect of daily living is seen with a higher, deeper sense of gratitude and that is definitely a good way to push ourselves to become the best that we can be.

Finally, we return to the question of what we can do to encourage and inspire our young Filipinos to seek education beyond high school. In order to maximize our efforts to encourage our youths to pursue higher education, we need to work together as a community. In addition to the scholarships, how about mentoring, career shadowing, leadership training, tutoring, to name a few. Our united mission to encourage our youngsters to strive for education beyond high school will give a clear message that as Filipinos, we give high priority to education as a value and goal for all our young people. We remind ourselves again that the main genesis of building the Binhi At Ani Center is to be a catalyst for higher education of our youth, not only as a wonderful place for social gatherings but more importantly, a place for learning. When we unite collectively in helping our young people in their pursuit of higher education—our potential is limitless, and our community will be a better place! ✨

*Vince Bagoyo*

VINCE BAGOYO, JR. | EDITOR



100th birthday celebration for Michelle's Grandma, Emelia de Aquino.

## Santos ...

from p. 5

Commerce Gintong Pamana Leadership Award (2015), and Maui Filipino Community Council Outstanding Member of the Year Award (2019).

Michelle has several hobbies and interests: cooking, traveling, crafts, event planning, writing and graphic arts. While she chaperones the pageant queens to the Philippines, she gets to see the different parts of the Philippines and truly experiences the rich Filipino culture, and gets to know the people, the different areas, the dialects and the food of each area, just to name a few. Michelle is probably more familiar with the Philippines than most of us who were born there.

Michelle's *Sakada* connection is through her maternal grandfather Pedro de Aquino, originally from Asingan, Pangasinan, Philippines. According to Michelle, her grandfather arrived in Hawai'i in 1924. Pedro is considered as one of the old timers. He was recruited to come to work in the sugar cane fields of Hawai'i and was assigned to work for Wailuku Sugar where he sprayed

insecticide in the sugar cane fields. Pedro and his wife, Emelia Reys lived in Waihe'e, Maui. They raised eight children together including Michelle's mom, Candida. Pedro died in 1998. The close-knit children of Pedro and Emelia de Aquino are Louisa Pacubas (deceased), Patricia Saltiban, Dolores Conroy, Andrew de Aquino (deceased), Fred de Aquino, Leonard de Aquino and Estrelita Marcellus. All of

Michelle's uncles and aunts graduated from St. Anthony High School.

"I became involved with the Miss Maui Filipina Scholarship Pageant in 1976 as a contestant," says Michelle. "I continued as a contestant coordinator and became the pageant director in 1998. It has helped me to become more confident and prouder of my Filipino heritage. Being only half Filipino, I wasn't raised in a traditional Filipino family or environment. Both my grandparents didn't speak the language to

their children but always instilled pride in them about the culture. My involvement with the pageant was mainly to honor my grandparents and to nurture Filipino women to become outstanding citizens. I had the opportunity to go to the Philippines

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**"I became involved with the Miss Maui Filipina Scholarship Pageant in 1976 as a contestant. I continued as a contestant coordinator and became the pageant director in 1998."**

— MICHELLE L. SANTOS



Last Picture of Michelle's Aunts and Uncles (her Mom's Siblings). Back row: Leonard de Aquino and Fred de Aquino. Middle row: Estrelita Marcellus, Dolores Conroy, Patricia Saltiban, Andrew de Aquino. Front row: Louisa Pacubas, Emelia de Aquino, Candida Santos.





Sen. Keith-Agaran delivers the 2017 commencement address at UH Maui College.  
PHOTO: LEON MATSUI



Giving the valedictory address in 1980.  
PHOTO COURTESY GIL KEITH-AGARAN



A congratulatory handshake from DOE Superintendent Darrel Oishi.  
PHOTO COURTESY GIL KEITH-AGARAN

In small towns all over our state and hometown USA, high school graduation rites mark an important milestone for students and their families. Maui is no different. Graduation is both an ending and a beginning, capturing warm memories of the past and big dreams for the future. Former Governor Neil Abercrombie often waxed eloquently about the role of shared rituals in our civic life. Public observances complete one part of our lives while thrusting us into the next phase.

Maui High—the new one in Kahului—is my own alma mater, though I also hold a warm place in my heart for Doris Todd Memorial Christian Day School where I spent my elementary school years.

I can still remember the cadence of the song, sung at football games and assemblies, and finally on graduation night:

*We have come, dear Maui High School,  
In our days of youth,  
Here to find our joy and pleasure  
In the search for truth.*

*Many studies you assign us  
But we like each one;  
And in this, our stride for knowledge  
Leaves no task undone.*

*Maui High, we all do praise thee  
For thy wise and kindly rule;  
'Tis with loving hearts we greet thee  
Our dear island school.*

*Maui High, we all do praise thee  
For thy wise and kindly rule;  
'Tis with loving hearts we greet thee  
Maui High our island school.*

I probably did not appreciate until years later that my marching down the War Memorial Stadium stairs to the strains of Pomp and Circumstance meant as much to my family as it did to me. My father, a *Sakada*, came to Hawai'i with perhaps a sixth-grade education. My grandfather never mentioned how much schooling he had in the Philippines. They both came from

stolid Ilocos Norte farm stock before contracting to work on Hawai'i's plantations. My mother finished a teaching training program but when she came to Hawai'i she settled into a job at the Maui Pine Cannery.

Together, we graduates—uniform in our Saber blue and white caps and gowns—performed Seawind's "Follow Your Road" as our class song, accom-

## DINENGDENG & PINAKBET

*Some hoped to complete the session early but a pandemic doesn't operate on a timetable.*

Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran

panied by a combo of musically gifted classmates. Maui Mayor Hannibal Tavares, as he did for several years in a row in the late-1970s, provided the commencement speech. I am sure he provided us three hundred or so Sabers and the hundreds sitting in the stands great advice. I presented the valedictorian address which was probably too long (the advisor did not give me a time limit). Friends and classmates assured me later that it was memorable and appropriate. My grandfather said it was good. My father grunted approval. My mother cried. My sister said it was probably too long.

That was our traditional high school graduation. Looking back, I realize now it was a relatively new thing. As a kid, I attended an older relative's graduation on the new Maui High School campus rather than the stadium. I re-

member that it rained.

The class of 1978 held the first commencement service at the War Memorial Stadium. I think it rained.

The class before us—the one with all the smart, good kids like Grant Chun and Michael Murata and Jeffrey Shimbo and Darin Okuyama, and my neighbors Daphne Luna and Renette Carpio—commenced at War Memorial Stadium. It rained that night I seem to recall.

Liquid blessings was part of the Maui High graduation tradition. But if it rained on my graduation night I don't recall anymore. My memories are of people—classmates, teachers, family and friends.

College commencement was almost a weeklong series of events, full of traditions and services meant to plant nostalgia into our hearts and graft it into our (fundraising) DNA.

That May, my family traveled to New Haven, Connecticut and saw for the first time the college and town where I spent their hard-earned share

of my tuition. In those days, we had no email or cell phones, let alone smart phones. Term papers were produced on old fashioned typewriters. Later in college, you could input essays on shared computer terminals, sending it to a printer almost a mile away (and you had to make another trip to fetch a corrected document). My mom sent me handwritten letters (sometimes sending me a twenty-dollar bill with her notes). We would speak briefly on the phone every couple of weeks for a few minutes. My sister got a car because they saved money on her tuition.

When I proudly led my family around Old Campus where most freshmen lived, my grandfather grunted and asked why we didn't just pave it over so there would be more parking for visitors. But with the rest of the family, he posed for a photo with the statue that stood in front of Bingham Hall where I lived my freshman year.

Class Day speaker was TV host Dick Cavett. Some classmates provided an insider baseball history of our class that at the time we couldn't help but find groan-funny at times. After Class Day, we went back to our different residential colleges for a more intimate ceremony to receive our diplomas and to have a reception with our family and friends.

By the time I finished law school at Boalt Hall, I got the sense my family thought graduations were old hat. As a change of pace, I wore a New York Mets cap with my gown to receive my diploma. I suspected the clan dutifully flew out so they could explore San Francisco and plan a post-ceremony trip to Los Angeles to see other relatives and then a driving trip to Boulder Dam and *Begas*. They said I would have been welcomed to go along but they advised I need-

see GRADUATION next page




Tour guides say (misleadingly), Nathan Hale went to Yale, Benedict Arnold went to Harvard. L-R: Manuel Coloma, Lino Agaran, Velma Coloma, Lydia Coloma pose on Old Campus during Graduation Week in New Haven.  
PHOTO COURTESY GIL KEITH-AGARAN

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Law School  
graduation with  
mom Lydia Coloma,  
friend Sylvia Hom,  
father Manuel  
Coloma.  
PHOTO COURTESY GIL  
KEITH-AGARAN

## Graduation ...

from p. 7

ed to stay in the Bay Area to study for the California Bar exam. Both the Giants and the A's were in pennant races that summer so my law review books spent as much time in the bleachers as the Berkeley law library.

In retrospect, each graduation marked a progression of changes in my life. I hope I learned something about myself during each stop along the way. Now, years later, I value the small good moments more than I did at the time.

I've had the opportunity to deliver the commencement address twice at the University of Hawai'i Maui College. In 2013, I told the graduates about the shared experiences of my childhood—*guri guri* with beans, party telephone lines, camping on undeveloped shorelines in South Maui. I also stole advice from someone else's speech, urging the graduates to not be afraid to fail spectacularly—because you needed to *chance 'um* sometimes. I took my own advice by reciting 'Ōlelo No'eau, deathly afraid I would mispronounce some phrase or word. I'm told it was a little long.

Despite that, I was asked to give the address in 2017 as well. In that speech, I noted how quickly cultural touchstones had changed in just the four years since my last talk. Then as now, change is simply a given. And the speed of change changes too. I advised them to be *pono* even if no one else is.

I also suggested that the graduates leave Chancellor Lui Hokoana or President David Lassner a tip as they got their degrees. ("One or two bucks to show your appreciation for a job well done, and at a reasonable price.") Lui and David must not have

gotten much; I haven't been invited back since.

For this Class of 2020, the end of school must be somewhat melancholy. I can't help being sad that students will miss the traditional ceremonies. Already, with the County of Maui scheduling repairs to the Wailuku War Memorial Stadium parking lot during the graduation season, this year's classes were facing a different schedule than past years. For several years, I noted King Kekaulike commencing on Thursday, Baldwin High walking on Friday, Maui High finishing on Saturday and Lahainaluna celebrating on Sunday (I never figured out where Seabury Hall, St. Anthony and Kamehameha fit into the rotation). My first world problem this year was planning where I was gonna park for Baldwin and Maui High's graduations.

The COVID-19 pandemic, however, will leave Seniors a different experience from earlier Maui graduates. Instead of sharing the event with their classmates, they will have to observe social distancing throughout whatever ceremony is offered. Some will have a parade of cars on campus to receive their diploma sleeves. Others may have online celebrations. Graduation parties will have to wait until more than ten people can gather at a time.

Over the last year, my classmates and I had been talking about our 40th class reunion this June. (We mainly do that on Facebook because we're old and don't know Instagram and other social media platforms very well.) It's tough to even plan the event with so many classmates living off-island, on the mainland, or even abroad, and travel availability literally up in the air. I'm afraid continuing concerns and restrictions over the

see GRADUATION p.10



In 2013, Sen. Keith-Agaran (2nd from the right) provided the commencement address for the University of Hawai'i Maui College. L-R John Morton (Former Vice President for Community Colleges), Saedene Yee-Ota (Former University of Hawai'i Regent from Maui), Artemio Baxa (Former University of Hawai'i Regent from Maui).

PHOTO COURTESY GIL KEITH-AGARAN





How are you surviving with this pandemic that was brought by the coronavirus? Are you washing your hands like you've never been before? Are you practicing social distancing? Or are you tired of hearing this coronavirus or COVID-19? I want to take this opportunity to thank our front-liners for all the work that they do. Thanks also

# Let's Talk Pinoy!

Dulce Karen Butay

to our essential workers who also sacrifice to serve others. A big Mahalo for all the things you do.

May is supposed to be the month of graduation season. But due to COVID-19, students didn't even have the

chance to bid their goodbyes to their fellow students and especially their teachers. I wonder how they feel about that. Visit us on our facebook page and leave us a comment at [www.facebook.com/filamvoicemaui](https://www.facebook.com/filamvoicemaui). Let's visit our friends Angel and Michael and see what's going on with them this month, shall we?

"YOU CAN JUST DROP ME OFF in front of the post office," Angel interrupted his thoughts.

Drop off a *maganda* (beautiful) lady at a post office? Late at night? "I can drop you to your *bale* (house)." He offered.

"*Indi* (No), here is fine," said Angel who opened the door as soon as the *sakyanan* (car) stopped. "I had a great time today. Thank you," and exited the *sasakyan* (car).

"I'll wait until you get to your *balay* (house)," Michael offered but Angel refused.

Instead, Angel waited for Michael to drive away before she walked towards the *bale* (house) she's staying in.

Heading to the *tahanan* (house), she saw that the lights were still on. She slowly and quietly opened the door.

The minute Lydia saw Angel, she started yelling. "Angel, it's about time you got home. Where did you go the whole day? The dishes are waiting for you. So is the trash. The kitchen is a mess!"

Angel rushed to the kitchen and started cleaning up quietly while the older lady was still yelling at the top of her lungs.

"Where were you? Are you trying to avoid doing chores in this *balay* (house)? Do I have to remind you that you are lucky you are living here instead of being homeless? Do you want to be homeless again?"

Angel started washing dishes and she said, "*Dili* (No), Ma'am."

LYDIA: "You always stay out late and go wherever you want. Do you want me to call the deportation office and have them take you away?"

"There's the threat again," said Angel in her mind. Angel's tears flowed down her cheeks. She was actually panicking and afraid. She felt her entire body trembling.

"*Hindi* (No) ma'am," she replied to Lydia.

LYDIA: "Hurry up and clean the kitchen. You have a lot more things to do. *Bukas* (Tomorrow) you have to cook breakfast because me and Uncle have an important matter to take care of. I expect that the *balay* (house) and

English	Pilipino	Ilokano	Cebuano	Ilonggo	Ibanag	Kapampangan
Hair	Buhok	Buok	Buhok	Buhok	Vu	Bwak
I'm sorry	Pasensya na	Pakawanen nak	Pasayloa ko	Pasensyaha lang ako	Pakoman na	Patawaran yu ku pu
Tomorrow	Bukas	Ton bigat	Ugma	Buwas	Aggaw	Napun
Beautiful	Maganda	Napintas	Gwapa	Maanyag	Makasta	Malagu
House/Home	Bahay/Tahanan	Balay	Balay	Balay	Balay	Bale
Mother	Nanay	Nanang	Inahan	Nanay	Yena	Ima
No	Hindi	Haan	Awan	Indi	Dili	Indi
Friend	Kaibigan	Gayyem	Bai	Miga	Kofun	Kaluguran
Face	Mukha	Rupa	Mukat	Lupa/Arap	Nawong/Dagway	Goya/Nawong

the yard will be clean *ton bigat* (tomorrow) when we get back. And dinner should be ready."

"Yes, ma'am." Wiping the tears away from her *nawong* (face).

Lydia drifts towards her bedroom. The name calling doesn't stop but it becomes distorted as she moves further away.

Suddenly, Lydia pulls her *buhok* (hair) and Angel almost falls backwards. "Why didn't you put away the laundry? It's been a couple days now and my clothes are not yet in my closet."

"*Pasensya na* (I am sorry), Ma'am. I will put it away now."

"*Pakoman na* (I am sorry) again? Every day is sorry! Who do you think you are? You are so useless! You stay out late, probably you are going *holo-holo* (cruising) just to avoid chores! I'm going to pull all your *bwak* (hair) out. She grabs one side of Angel's head and clinches even harder.

"*Haan* (No), please Ma'am, *haan* (No)!" Angel cries in agonizing pain.

Angel whimpering in sorrow and barely able to speak, "Yes, *pakawanen nak* (I'm sorry) Ma'am."

Lydia releases her *buok* (hair) and walks away.

Meanwhile, Michael drives so slowly. His mind is full of questions about Angel. Why doesn't she want me to see or know where she lives? What is she hiding from me? Is she living with someone else? What is this girl doing to me?

He reaches home and sits in his car for a long time. He sees the lights are on inside the *bale* (house) so he

knows his *inahan* (mom) is probably still awake watching her Filipino dramas or *teleserye*.

He draws a deep sigh and slowly opens his *sasakyan* (car) door and walks slowly to the front door.

He quietly unlocks the door and tippy-toes in.

"Is that you Michael?" his *nanay* (mom) asks.

Michael turns around and sees his *nanang* (mom) with the remote control. "Oh hi, *nanay* (mom). Why are you still up this late?"

"I am watching my Filipino shows, Michael. I am your *inahan* (mother) after all! Why, I cannot watch? You know I work all day and take care of you and your dad after, can I not relax too? Watching my *teleserye* is my way of relaxing. Why are you asking about me? I am supposed to be asking about you?" He stood there as his *yena* (mom) lectured him.

MOM: What did you do today?

MICHAEL: Ah, you know ... errands for the office.

MOM: Errands for the office until late night?

MICHAEL: Yes, then went out cruising.

MOM: Cruising? By yourself?

MICHAEL: With a *kaibigan* (friend).

MOM: A girlfriend?

MICHAEL: No, *ima* (mom). Just a *gayyem* (friend) .

MOM: Ah ... a *kaluguran* (friend). A *maanyag* (beautiful) girl. Yeah, your uncle just told me about it. He saw you with a *napintas* (beautiful) girl tonight.

Michael turns bright red with embarrassment. He clears his throat and coughs.

MICHAEL: Uncle Ray called you?

Michael reaches for a cup in the drawer.

MOM: Of course, he called me Michael. He told me about your *kofun* (friend). How would I know about you and a *miga* (friend) that's strolling in the park late at night. First Date? I hope you didn't get in trouble with her parents. Did you drop her home? Where does she live? What is her name? What is her family name? Maybe I know her parents? Maui is a small island. Did you kiss her? Tell your mother. When will I have grand-kids! I'm getting old!

Michael drops his plastic cup on the kitchen floor and bumps into the rice dispenser.

MICHAEL: Yes, *nanay* (mom), I dropped her home ... *Haan* (No), it wasn't a date. Why so many questions? I have no answers for you.

Michael's *rupa* (face) turns red as he rushes to his room.

see LET'S TALK PINOY next page

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Ating Kabuhayan

# Commencements Are About Beginnings — “New Beginnings”

John A.H. Tomosot



Onset of COVID-19 has changed graduates' outlook on adapting to today's new normal.

Our lives are full of commencements, full of beginnings. I like having to experience a beginning. For instance, I feel like this worldwide COVID-19 pandemic affords us, in a positive way, to experience a new beginning; of living a more healthy, physically distant life, one in which we will be less susceptible to catching germs and viruses that live all around us. You know, the world has known many pandemics. Hopefully, we will be learning a lot from these pandemics, especially from the 1918 Influenza (Spanish Flu) pandemic, which killed an estimated 50 million people. It is estimated that because of this pandemic, the average life expectancy in the U.S. dropped by 12 years! Think of the beginnings that flowed from that aftermath!

We are in the season of Commencements for students in our schools and colleges. They are in a time of New Beginnings. Each student can look forward to the rest of their life, having graduated and commencing into something new. Yet, this COVID-19 pandemic has put a cap on celebrating this milestone, in a way that has seen the virtual celebration becoming the norm; no crowds, no dressing and proudly marching in caps and gowns, no walking across the stage to cheers of family and friends, no lei piled high and above bouncing heads. But these are commencements, beginnings, nonetheless. What do these mean as we live through this pandemic, which has inexorably changed our lives into what is being called a new normal?

Commencements are about beginnings. But they have always been about starting something new and getting into a new normal, with a new set of expectations, rules, routines, obligations and responsibilities. With the COVID-19 pandemic and with government intervention and public health policies, per more robust and comprehensive data collection and analytics, the depth and breadth of our knowledge and understanding is unprecedented. It is unprecedented in the way that it has not only changed

our outlook on health but also on how we are to be relating to, in relationship with one another. For our students, the COVID-19 pandemic means a lot, especially if we breakdown the new set cited above.

Expectations

Social (Physical) Distance has already entered the lexicon of everyday speech. Expect that folk will look at you to make sure that you are far enough away. The idea of personal space is being redefined. Can this lead to the profession one enters or the job one wants to have?

Rules

Social and cultural norms are being redefined as well. Here in Hawai'i, where our social experiences of how close we come to each other; hugging, kissing, shaking hands, exchanging breath (the Hawaiian practice of greeting called *honi*), opening doors for someone else and sitting close and next to each other are now being seen as perhaps, unhealthy. Think of the new job descriptions that must be written or rewritten; the workspaces and work environments that must be rebuilt. Restaurants wanting to re-open must make their dining rooms less dense and more expansive but with less chairs and tables.

Routines

Daily routines will now have to include ensuring that washing, grooming, and clothing/vesturing comply with new health and social parameters. Walking, biking, drive and bus time schedules need to be recalibrated. There are schools and other educational institutions now scheduling virtual classes to replace what heretofore was physical proximity and gathering together. Working virtually is already a routine for many.

Obligations

Taking care of one another has taken on a more intimately demanding, less rushed reality. Perhaps, in more ways than one, the obligations we all have, as we continue to live with each other and to build community and stability, will still need to be

see COMMENCEMENT p.14



Sen. Keith-Agaran returned to provide the 2017 commencement address at UH Maui College.

PHOTO COURTESY GIL KEITH-AGARAN

## Graduation ...

from p. 8

pandemic may require us to postpone or even cancel our plans. Like the Class of 2020, celebrating our time together at Maui High might have to be done in a different way.

Years from now, I hope their graduation day will not be full of regrets. Instead, I hope they have a measure of pride about living through these strange second semester of their Senior Year. They saw what Maui looks like with less traffic and fewer people on the beaches. They experienced the simple pleasures of spending time with family (with appropriate physical spacing) or not. They learned to love the internet too much. They likely came to appreciate the comforts of gatherings of friends and family and perhaps, as Maui gradually resumes normal, value the way the community cooperated in flattening the proverbial curve.

In a time when sacrifice might be a seldom used notion, the Class of 2020 may have glimpsed a little of what past generations experienced in coming to

the islands for the dream of a better life. I would hope, however, that these moments will someday provide the same nostalgia for the moments shared with classmates as my own. More importantly, I trust these young adults can look back and reflect on their parents' dreams and love for them. Regardless of how the Class of 2020 keeps the commencement rituals, it will become as much their tradition as what my class lived as ours. This brief moment of disappointment should not and will never diminish their accomplishments or their shared memories.

Congratulations to the Class of 2020. Keep moving forward. Dream big dreams. ✨

**Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran** has walked in three commencement ceremonies—Maui High, Yale College and Boalt Hall School of Law, the University of California at Berkeley. He has represented Central Maui in the State Legislature since 2009.



After delivering the 2017 UH Maui College commencement address, Sen. Keith-Agaran (2nd from right) posed with family members: L-R Kazaundra, Romel Gamit, Abegail Tahilan, Lydia Coloma, graduate Bernadette Gamit, Kallie Keith-Agaran, Elizabeth Gamit.

PHOTO COURTESY GIL KEITH-AGARAN

## Let's Talk Pinoy! Cont'd from p. 9

How is he going to explain to his inahan (mom) that he dropped Angel off in front of Pā'ia Post Office? He doesn't know where she lives; how is he going to invite her? He doesn't have a phone number for her. How is he going to see her again?

Panic overcomes him.

Find out and keep an eye out for my article every issue. I'm Dulce, helping you to master your Filipino Languages. Like always, let's laugh, let's makinig (listen), and Let's Talk Pinoy! Hanggang sa muli! (Until next time!) Ingat! (Take care!) ✨

**Dulce Karen Butay** was graduated from Maui High School and earned her Associate in Arts degree in Liberal Arts from Maui Community College and her Bachelors of Science in

Business Administration, specializing in Accounting, from the University of Hawai'i—West O'ahu. She is currently the Administrative Officer at the County of Maui, Department of Finance.

Butay is a licensed Resident Producer of Life Insurance with World Financial Group and an Independent Consultant of Saladmaster. She is now part of the Travel Club of Saladmaster and won an all-ex-



penses paid trip to Cancun, Mexico with the love of her life, Paul Manzano. Butay has traveled to Texas, the Philippines and Thailand as one of the delegates from Island Healthy Solutions, a Saladmaster dealer here on Maui.





From  
Postal Mail  
to Zoom,  
Facetime and  
WhatsApp?

The Evolution of Long-Distance Communication.

Liza of “A Maui Blog”

Back in the day, writing letters was a big deal. That’s how we communicated with our loved ones who were far away. For example, the soldiers in World Wars I and II received encouragement from their family and friends through written letters. Those were precious.

There was also the popularity of pen pals where people met and got to know each other through the exchange of letters via postal mail.

Then the telephone was invented. While it’s delightful to read letters, especially love letters, it seemed to be more exciting to hear the voices of our loved ones, so telephone became popular (later mobile phones and cellular phones were invented and offered more flexibility and use).

Email entered limited use in the 1960s. At that time users could only send to users of the same computer and some early email systems required the author and the recipient to both be online simultaneously, similar to instant messaging. In 1971, the first system able to send mail between users on different hosts across the ARPANET, using the @ sign to link the username with a destination server was invented by Ray Tomlinson. By the mid-1970s, this was the form recognized as email.

Email is like writing letters but it’s faster. Of course, you will need a computer and an email provider but people enjoyed using it. Computers slowly became part of many offices and home. People enjoyed getting email fast and the postal mail was nicknamed snail mail.

Skype was created in 2003 at a company founded by Niklas Zennström and Janus Friis. As Skype became available to mainstream users, it was a gift to many who are nurturing long distance relationships. Oh, it is nice to hear the voices of our loved ones over the phone but it is even better to see them too! Skype was used by many Filipinos who work overseas.

In 2006, Facebook was introduced to the public and social media became mainstream. It opened a new way of communication for families and friends. It even enabled us to get connected with long-time friends and forgotten family members who we have not spoken to for



Facebook Messenger has become my family’s video-conferencing communication tool-of-choice during this pandemic.


a very long time. Then FaceTime entered our world in 2010 through the iPhone. While similar to Skype, it is easier to use if both you and the person you are communicating with have the required device, which is an iPhone. FaceTime Video uses the device’s front-facing camera to show the caller to the receiver and vice versa. For many years, FaceTime only supported direct, person-to-person video calls but as of iOS 12.1, you can make group calls with FaceTime. In January 2018, WhatsApp released a standalone business app targeted at small business owners, called WhatsApp Business, to allow companies to communicate with customers who use the standard WhatsApp client. WhatsApp was acquired by Facebook in February 2014. It became the world’s most popular messaging application by 2015 and has over 2 billion users worldwide as of February 2020. It is very popular because it is not limited to iPhone. Even Android users can use it.

Around this time, Facebook’s messenger also utilized the video conferencing technology and many families were able to communicate via video conferencing without having to pay extra nor a subscription fee. Currently, this is my family in the Philippine’s choice of communication too (as you can see in the photos above). Fast Forward to 2020, when the coronavirus pandemic entered our world and Zoom became the Long Distance Communication Tool of choice. Zoom conferences became a common practice when the Stay At Home ordinances were proclaimed in many places around the world. Founded in 2011, Zoom helps businesses and organizations bring their teams together in a frictionless environment to get more done. Schools started using Zoom for on-line classrooms, families starting using them to nurture their relationships while social distancing. Oh, we have come a long ways with our long-distance communication technology! The questions now arise. Are we using these tools and technologies to nurture relationships? Are we using them to benefit us instead of distracting us? It is up

to us to make the best use of technologies and our time. Let’s make the best of it. \* **Liza Pierce** of A Maui Blog is an Interactive Media Strategist in Hawai’i. She started blogging in 2006 and she loves talking story on-line and spreading aloha around the world. She’s lived on Maui since 1994 and considers Maui her home. A wife, a mother, a friend and so much more. She loves Jesus; Maui Sunsets Catcher; Crazy About Rainbow; End Alzheimer’s Advocate. Her life is full and exciting here on the is-

land of Maui. Liza is currently the Interactive Media Strategist with Wailea Realty Corp.

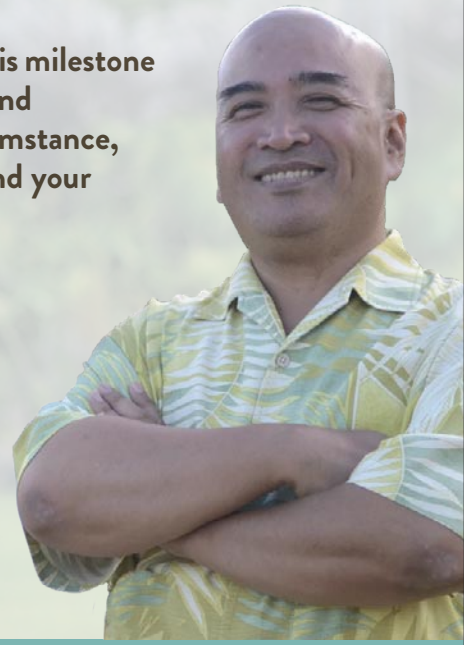




# CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2020

While you cannot mark this milestone by walking in your caps and gowns to pomp and circumstance, your accomplishments and your memories remain real.

Your parents, friends, teachers and your community are proud of you and remain hopeful and confident about your futures. Make the new world your own.



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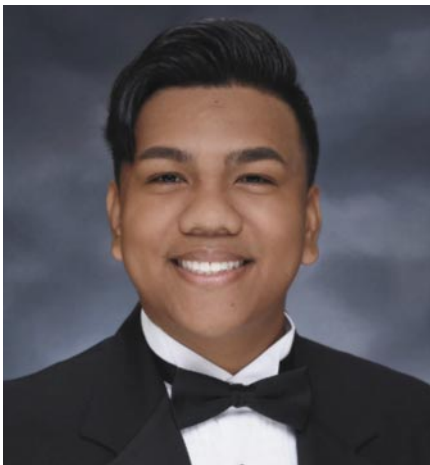




Glenn Prieto



Stacy Woodson



Ghenesis Balaan



Romelyn Tabangcura

To curb the spread of the infamous COVID-19 that has been sweeping nations off their feet, many have turned to alternative platforms to meet the demands of modern life. Operating using platforms such as Zoom, WebEx, and Skype, the world has become creative in their ways to unite while keeping their distance. From meetings to concerts to conferences, virtual communication is on the rise and changing life as we know it. In this scary time of stay-at-home orders, face masks, and social distancing, technology is what brings society together.

Schools across the state have been taking advantage of these virtual plat-

forms to keep students engaged but of course it is completely different from what would have been the rest of the school year. To protect the safety of students and their families, schools communicate with their students virtually and seek ways to give students

the health and safety of students and teachers alike, is this mode of schooling effectively getting through to students? The staff and students of Maui schools continue to explore and live through this topic.

**Glenn Prieto**, a business teacher at Maui High School shares his take on the effects of COVID-19 on school. The advisor of Maui High school's DECA Chapter, Prieto helps his students prepare for a future in business, preparing them for competitions and setting them up for success in the business world. After placing at the Career and Technical Student Organizations conference and qualifying for the International DECA Conference, Prieto and his students were faced with a disappointing reality right as the virus started to make its mark on the United States. "We were planning a trip in April for Maui High DECA students who qualified to compete at the International DECA Conference, which was canceled." The news did not stop there. As the state started making extensions to spring break as the virus took on Hawai'i, Prieto was left to question what would happen over the course of the rest of the school year. "Then came the subsequent extension of Spring Break followed by the Stay-at-Home order. Questions started to race through my mind with regards to grades, school work, and what will happen with the kids; graduation; end of year Business Academy events." With the introduction of distance learning, some of Prieto's questions were answered and teachers had to face the reality of the situation. "Once the reality settled in, it came down to how can we continue some form of continuity of learning and sense of normalcy to ease anxiety and any other emotions that students may be feeling," Prieto says. Though new for many students across the state, Prieto is no stranger to distance learning. "I for one had earned my graduate degree mostly through distance learning, it was difficult at first. It takes a lot of preparation on the part of the teacher and a lot of discipline and follow-through for the student. The positive side of it is that it offers flexibility and can happen from anywhere and at any time." Prieto's success proves the effectiveness of distance learning on his part but he agrees that, for his students, it is not comparable to traditional classroom learning. "I cannot speak for all students, but for my students, the benefit is not there." Much

of Prieto's lessons involve engaging his students in real-world situations in their area of learning: business. "It includes hands-on real-world experiences where, for example, finance students operate a satellite branch of a credit union or entrepreneurship students run their own pop-up businesses on campus. Students can learn and interact virtually through distance learning but the hands-on, learn-by-doing experience is not there." Through these difficult times, Prieto makes sure to utilize the tools that he is provided with to give his students the best online learning experience he can. "I have extended the time usually demanded to allow students the flexibility and time to complete the learning activities. Live sessions are conducted as needed or by appointment and I make myself available through 'office hour' times, throughout the hours of the usual school day." As the virus starts to calm down in the state, Prieto has high hopes for the upcoming school year. "The hope for next school year is that we are still able to offer the same level of learning and activities as well as support for students, no matter what form of schooling will be like. It has been challenging thus far and it will continue to be that way until the pandemic can be faced head-on either through treatment or a vaccine."

The School-Community Relations Coordinator of Maui High School, **Stacy Woodson** looks at her view of the virus' impact on school life. As the Department of Education responded to the virus as the situation escalated, Woodson found a sense of understanding, especially considering the novelty of it all. "This is uncharted territory. I understand that as much as possible they want to make decisions based on information and data that comes in. It's a great big balancing act. Making informed decisions is best and yet at the same time sometimes you just have to make the best call with the information you have in front of you and run with it." Woodson agrees traditional classroom learning is the best but she also makes sure to consider what is best for the current climate. "For most situations, I feel learning will be more successful in a physical school or educational setting but I feel distance learning was the best alternative and almost the only alternative next to not having any kind of learning at all." Distance learning is the best alternative to none but

*Operating using platforms such as Zoom, WebEx, and Skype, the world has become creative in their ways to unite while keeping their distance.*

see DISTANCE p.14

# Google® Is Not Everything...

*Gone virtual: How C'OID-19 has affected school life*

Alexis Joy Vilorio | MAUI HIGH SCHOOL

the school experience they deserve the best way they can with virtual events and classes. Dubbed "Distance Learning," teachers can schedule and hold classes with their students via programs such as Zoom. Though vital to



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Disrupted ...

from p. 4

thing I have always dreamed of having, not only was it because it meant we were done with school but it was a milestone we could proudly say we accomplished by simply walking down the line. Although this has created a barrier of negativity on seniors, as they lose motivation, I still plan on continuing my academic goals. Even though the world has come to a stop, it doesn't mean your life has to. I still plan to go to Pacific University located in Forest Grove, Oregon where I plan to stay for the next six to eight years getting my Ph.D. in Psychology to eventually become a clinical psychologist. I hope every other senior has the motivation to continue and realize we are a part of history and everyone's eyes are on us now. It just matters how you use the spotlight." **Daniza Faith Nono**, Maui High School, daughter of **Liza and Danilo Nono**.



"WHEN I THINK OF COVID-19 all I think about is loss. COVID-19 has taught us that we should be mindful of our actions because although our actions may be little they can cause a ripple effect which creates major consequences. All we can do as a society is to do our best to prevent the spread of this virus. We need to practice social distancing and follow the laws that were set in place to keep us safe. The cancellation of activities is heartbreaking but it is necessary. Not having a graduation ceremony was the most disappointing thing to have happened to our class. Throughout the years we've worked so hard to get to the place we are today. I am so proud of our diligence and perseverance. My plans for after high school are still in place. I have already registered for classes. I will be attending UHMC to get my Associate's degree in Liberal Arts. Then taking it one step at a time to see what I am passionate about." **Hazel Mae Patrocinio**, Maui High School, daughter of **Carmelit Patrocinio and Jose Patrocinio**.



"THE COVID-19 IS a really unfortunate event that happened at an unfortunate time, especially for the class of 2020. As a result of this pandemic, the rest of the school year has been canceled, including our graduation ceremony. This ceremony was a chance to be with all my fellow students one last time and to celebrate our achievements together. We were all excited to have the graduation experience, like walking the line while people are cheering and being drowned in a bunch of lei. In addition to that, I never got to have my senior night for the extracurricular activities I was a part of. It is quite upsetting that we didn't get to experience our senior year to the fullest extent. After high school, I planned on attending San Diego State University to major in advertising. If this pandemic is still ongoing, however, we are unsure how that plan is going to play out. But despite this, we will remain strong and continue to be thankful for what we have." **Jillian Ped**, Maui High School, daughter of **Richard Ped and Isabelita Ped**.



"HIGH SCHOOL WAS a crazy ride to be on, with many ups and downs. Through the hardships, the class of 2020 has learned to bounce back and reap the rewards that await in the future. Moving forward into college is going to be a bittersweet, yet exciting transition. I plan to attend Hawai'i Pacific University majoring in Electrical Engineering. Without a set choice of a career, I am still optimistic and look forward to what will come after college. COVID-19 has really shaken the world and has pushed humanity in a state of fear and uncertainty. Even during our time spent away from our loved ones, we will remain strong and have faith in God that this pandemic will pass and cause us to look at the good in all the chaos. With the absence of having traditional graduation, it was saddening

to hear that we will not be walking down the same line that the previous classes had before us. But life will move forward anyhow. I wish the best to my fellow classmates and that we will be strong as we move into the real world." **Matthew Poe**, Maui High School, son of **Beth and Barry Poe**.



"AFTER HIGH SCHOOL, I plan to attend Northern Arizona University, where I will be graduating with a bachelor's degree in business management. After college, I actually want to pursue a career as a stewardess for United Airlines because I love traveling and this career has always been one of my long-term dreams. As of right now, I am not completely sure as to where exactly I would want to live to pursue this dream but either California, Colorado or O'ahu. Then, I will move into the business field as I want to have my own business in the fashion industry because I think it would be a really fun experience and I love clothes. My thoughts on COVID-19 as a senior in high school are probably just about the same as any other seniors' thoughts. Personally, I am really devastated that I am not having a graduation ceremony and I won't be able to say that I had the full high school experience. I miss being able to see my friends and spending these last few moments with them. However, this pandemic has taught me that if I can overcome such an impactful and harmful moment in history I will be able to overcome anything else I come across. All in all, I am very grateful for the people I do have in my life who have kept me motivated during this outbreak." **Araeli Prado-Rodriguez**, Baldwin High School, daughter of **Flora Rodriguez Maya and Arturo Prado Vivero**.



"AFTER HIGH SCHOOL, I will be attending Grand Canyon University and will be majoring in Nursing. I have not fully decided on what type of nurse I want to be but I am interested in being a Trauma Nurse. I like the challenge which will encourage me to do a lot of critical thinking. After acquiring the education I need to become a Trauma Nurse, I plan to move back here on Maui and work at Maui Memorial Hospital. At first, I didn't think much about how COVID-19 could affect my senior year of high school. But when school was canceled, I knew that this was a serious issue the global community would be facing. I am sure that the government made a very tough decision of canceling traditional graduation ceremonies but it still pains me that I won't get to experience this special day. Unlike the past, the class of 2020 won't know the feeling of their loved ones cheering when our name gets called, walking up the stage to grab our diploma and having lei around our necks to the point we can no longer see. Not only did our graduation get taken away from us but also the last few months of high school that is usually spent to honor us, the seniors. Because of COVID-19, we won't be experiencing Senior Breakfast, Senior Walk, Graduation Practices, and most of all, the last day of school. We were not given the chance to say our goodbyes to our favorite teachers, to attend our last class of each subject and to sit next to the people who we just spent the last four years with for the last time. We had our last day of school without even knowing it." **Nicole Abigail Rabanal**, Maui High School, daughter of **Clarita and Nelson Rabanal**.



"COVID-19 HAS AFFECTED everyone in many ways. Our average daily life has stopped. We have to stay home and avoid gatherings for everyone to be safe. Also, us students stopped going to school, which made our last year of high school sad. My classmates and I never had proper goodbyes, final walk at school, and a traditional graduation. It's disappointing but it was for everyone's safety. After high school, I still plan to go to University of Hawai'i Maui College." **Sherille Rafael**, Maui High School, daughter of **Merlinda Rafael and Felix Rafael**.

"AFTER HIGH SCHOOL, I plan on attending

# Agluto Taya!

"Let's Cook!"  
Pinoy Recipe of the Month  
COMPILED BY **Lucy Peros**

Courtesy of  
**Shirley Evangelista**

## Lauya Pig's Feet Soup

This recipe took 1st place Award at the Maui County Fair 1973 University of Hawai'i Extension Women section for their theme "Uses of Papaya."

**Lauya** can also be made using beef.

3 lbs. Pigs Feet, cut up	6 cups Water
2 med. Green Papaya, cubed	4 cloves Garlic, crushed
1 med. Round Onion, sliced	1 Tbsp. Peppercorns
2 Bay Leaves, optional	1/4 cup Vinegar
Salt to taste	Ajinomoto®, optional

### Ingredients

### Procedure

Put pig's feet, garlic, onions, peppercorns and water in large pot. Add salt to taste. Let it boil for about an hour or until pork is soft or tender. Add vinegar. Peel and remove seeds of papayas. Cut into cubes and add into the pot. Cook until done. Do not overcook. If you do not have green papayas, use chayote fruits or two potatoes and half of a medium cabbage, chopped.

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UHMC and take liberal arts. At this age, I am still trying to figure out what I plan on taking for a career. I am still experimenting and researching about the different career paths this world has to offer. After this pandemic is over, I plan on being an intern for people with different professions to find out more about my likes and dislikes when it comes to the workforce. I think that the COVID-19 occurring at this time is very depressing for everyone, not just for us seniors. Due to this virus, many of our plans got canceled and are forced to stay indoors. However, if it weren't for this virus I would not really have gotten to spend time with my family and I would not have learned the value of the things I had or could do before, such as getting to hug my friends and seeing my cousins from the other side of the island. I realized that I took a lot of things for granted and it is really accurate when people say that 'you don't realize the value of something until it is gone.' Obviously I am devastated that I couldn't experience the traditional way of graduation and the time I had left of school has been cut off. However, I understand that it is a necessary decision to keep our families safe." **Luzcilla Roflo Rumbaoa**, Maui High School, daughter of **Amado Rumbaoa, Jr. and Luzviminda Rumbaoa**.



"HOW BAD COULD it get?" was my first thought when all of this started. Now, at arm's length away, I'm trying to stay optimistic and mindful of my family's health and others. Striving to deal with this whole situation is challenging but I am finding that as long as I do my part and others do theirs, this should be all over soon, right? Yes, at first I was bummed about graduation and unable to enjoy my last months as a senior with my friends and teachers. But this didn't stop me from moving forward and being grateful for what I have already done and worked hard for. My plans after high school are

the same, continuing my education at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I intend to study in Medical Technology and lend my set of hands towards our community's healthcare. Inevitably, we cannot go back to how things were. And whether I continue my studies virtually or in a distanced face-to-face setting, I know that I will learn nonetheless. And whatever happens, I know that I can surmount anything." **Aubrey Santiago**, Maui High School, daughter of **Alexander Santiago and Myrla Santiago**.



"THE COVID-19 pandemic is very unfortunate. Not only are lives being affected but many important events such as graduation are canceled. Many seniors, including myself, are saddened by this decision but the safety for our community is the priority. Although there is the pandemic going on, my plans for college—attending the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and majoring in pre-medicine—still remain." **Princess Santiago**, Maui High School, daughter of **Nancy and Jerry Santiago**.



"THE ONGOING COVID-19 pandemic will certainly be one of the most bizarre events that I have witnessed throughout my life. You would imagine that staying home all day and not going to school or work is a dream but I can most certainly tell you that it's not! Especially for those who value daily routines and are used to having set schedules, this virus has truly disrupted the balance of our lives. The cancellation of many events, including graduations, due to the pandemic was something that I knew would happen but I'm still terribly upset over. Obviously there isn't much we can do but follow the stay-home orders and practice social distancing but it truly is heartbreaking for myself and many other seniors that were looking forward to a traditional graduation ceremony. Many graduating seniors look forward to these

see **DISRUPTED** p.15



# Santos ...

from p. 6

twelve times and each time I become more grateful and humble.”

In 2010, Michelle was diagnosed with breast cancer. She bravely battled the disease with flying colors which makes her cancer free, her 10th year anniversary this year. What a cancer survivor! With God’s grace and Divine Mercy, Michelle is with us today helping us in the Filipino community with optimum capacity especially with the Miss Maui Filipina Scholarship Pageant.

In 2017, Michelle was the primary caregiver for her mom until she died in 2018. She claims her greatest joy is her two nieces, Celise and Jena. Michelle said she always dreamt of going into Culinary school but never



Michelle as a 1976 Miss Maui Filipina Scholarship Pageant contestant.

found the time to do so. So instead, she cooks for her family and friends.

Michelle’s favorite motto is, “Treat

others the way you want to be treated.”

Her best advice to the girls who are thinking of entering the pageant is, “We will teach all of you to be queens and provide you with important tools to help you grow in life and become successful citizens of this community. It doesn’t matter whether you win or lose for it’s not the crown on your head that counts, it’s how you wear it in your heart.”

Michelle Santos, we salute you! ✨

**Lucy Peros** is a retired school teacher, having taught at St. Anthony Grade School and Waihe’e Elementary School.



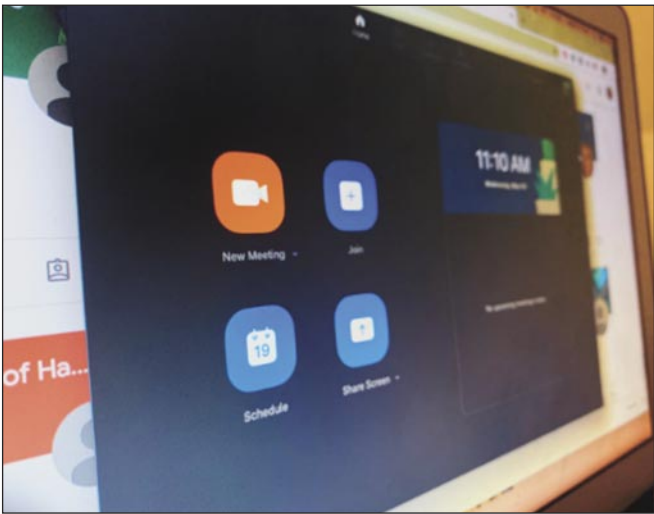
Both of her parents, Elpidio Cachero Cabalo (a 1946 Sakada) and Alejandra Cabudoy Cabalo of Hāli’imaile worked for Maui Land and Pine Company. Lucy now enjoys retirement and has time to join other seniors in the Enhance Fitness Program under the Department of Aging three times a week. She also attends the line dancing class and other activities at Kaunoa and joins other Waihe’e School retirees when help is needed at the school. Lucy also devotes some of her time to activities at Christ The King Catholic Church. She enjoys writing and reading in her spare time.

tends the line dancing class and other activities at Kaunoa and joins other Waihe’e School retirees when help is needed at the school. Lucy also devotes some of her time to activities at Christ The King Catholic Church. She enjoys writing and reading in her spare time.

# Distance ...

from p. 12

there are challenges that can arise out of it. “There are many, many difficulties with trying to make a sudden transition to online learning, especially for a state-wide public school system. Some of the main issues that come up with an abrupt transition to distance learning are access to technology for everyone, technology learning curve, technical issues/malfunctions and then, of course, things like a limitation on what teaching strategies can be utilized when teaching over the internet versus face to face, weakened communication and engagement, etc.” In this evolving situation, Woodson knows everyone is contributing to their best ability. “I think leadership, teachers, parents, students collectively are doing



Dubbed “Distance Learning,” teachers can schedule and hold classes with their students via programs such as Zoom.

the best they can in the midst of this historic global pandemic.” As her school’s School-Community Relations Coordinator, Woodson is a seasoned user of technology when it comes to her career where she interacts with

much of the community through social media platforms but for other school employees, the transition to virtual working is new territory that can potentially bring long-term benefits. “Many who are not as accustomed to tech in their daily activities have had to take the long-resisted plunge to embrace and utilize technology in new ways due to Corona. In a way, that may be one plus coming out of all of this.” Though she sees the positives in this digital revolution, Woodson also sees some difficulty. “A tough part about it in our current situation is that EVERY ASPECT is digital now. There is very little break from technology in the daily routine since it is currently our only source of information, collaboration, socialization, entertainment, etc.” Because of the virus, many school events were canceled, including the beloved graduation of our Seniors. “As far as school events, many of those were just flat out canceled. Graduation is the biggest heartbreak of them all. Any virtual variation that we can think up will still pale in comparison to a traditional ceremony. It is among the biggest heartbreaks caused by COVID in the Education sector.” Alongside our Seniors, Woodson took the time to honor all the individuals in school who were affected. “Ultimately I hope the upcoming school year shows us how quickly we can bounce back from major setbacks like the many that COVID-19 has thrown at us.” Amidst these trying times, Woodson shares her words for the community. “Let’s work together, be understanding, be cooperative, be resilient, don’t complain, be resourceful, be

hopeful, help others where you can.” New alumnus of Maui High School **Ghenesis Balaan** shares his thoughts regarding the many changes that COVID-19 has prompted in his life. As a Senior, Ghenesis was looking forward to finally getting to walk on the graduation stage but he already knew that the pandemic had other plans. “When I first heard about the possibility of school being closed due to the coronavirus, I instantly knew that the cancellation of the traditional graduation commencement for the class of 2020 would follow. When the Hawai’i DOE officially announced the news, I was distraught; we had our last day at school without even knowing it.” Ghenesis knew this decision was best for the safety and health of his state, even if that meant sacrificing all he had been waiting for. “I know this was a difficult decision for our government to make. Although my senior year didn’t end the way I expected it to, I’m glad our government was able to act fast and make a decision to keep our state safe.” In place of a traditional graduation ceremony, schools in the Baldwin-Kekaulike-Maui complex have resulted to another alternative. Although unorthodox for a Hawai’i graduation, Ghenesis keeps in mind the safety of the community. “Maui High School will be doing a drive-through graduation commencement. It’s not what I envisioned my graduation to be but it’s going to be the most we’ll get our schools to do to ensure a safe environment for us all.” Placing first at the Career and Technical Student Organizations conventions held in Honolulu, Ghenesis was looking forward to ending his HOSA career with a bang in Houston, Texas after placing at the International level in the year prior. “Having been one of the Hawai’i delegates at the HOSA International Leadership conference in the previous year, I can personally say that nothing can compare to an in-person conference. As a result of last year’s conference, I was able to capture a bronze medal with my partner Breanna Alviedo and the moment we were up on the stage was so magical that we looked forward to attending the next year’s conference.” Like many other big events worldwide, the Inter-see DISTANCE back page

# Ating Kabuhayan

Cont'd from p. 10

## Commencement ...

from p. 10

accountable but in a more lingering and less by-the-clock way. How one graduates from high school, from college or from training for a job or a career, will now be measured on how one sees his or her obligation to bring others along.

### Responsibilities

We all need to be accountable to each but this mutual courtesy of being responsible and respectful to each other, now needs to include the thinking that all of this is not about you but about others around you. That face mask you need to wear now is about keeping those around you healthy. Earning that college degree or getting that job, will now depend on how responsible you are for the sake of others.

We are, indeed, commencing into a new way of life, a new normal. Plagues—this pandemic—does not discriminate. It is rampant in urban and rural, even isolated areas, from the densely to the sparsely populated. In the 1918 pan-

demic, young adults, usually unaffected by these types of infectious diseases, were among the hardest hit groups along with the elderly and young children.

We congratulate our graduates and wish them every success. But we must caution them that as they commence into this new normal, to be safe and healthy, thinking of others, especially those they live closely with, their family and loved ones. As they commence, we ask them to think of the responsibilities that come with their academic accomplishments. In May in the year 2020 this **at the very least**, includes wearing a face mask when going out and about. ✨



**John A. Hau'oli Tomoso** is a Priest in the Episcopal Diocese of Hawai'i and a retired Social Worker, with 42 years of licensed practice. Born and raised on Maui, he lives in Kahului with his wife, Susan D.

Tomoso, who is a retired Educator, with 30 years of teaching experience.



# Disrupted ...

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ceremonies because this experience is like no other compared to other states. The virus hasn't changed my future plans at all. Unless it develops into a much more serious situation (which I hope it doesn't) I will be following through with going to college at UHMC to prepare for my dream career as a freelance graphic designer."

**Cathleen Sijalbo**, Maui High School, daughter of **Leonila and Romeo Sijalbo**.



"DURING THIS PANDEMIC, everything has changed for me. Since this is my last year of high school and as the youngest of three brothers and being the only girl in my family, it has really affected me. Being the last in my family to graduate, I really wanted my parents to see their only daughter walk the line on May 17th, but due to COVID-19, I can no longer do that. The day they announced that we can no longer have traditional graduation, I was just shocked and frustrated. Having thirteen years of education and not celebrating it with my classmates, it really is devastating and hard to believe. But we do need to take this virus seriously, we need to stay home and stay healthy. This is how we can move forward and get past this. As for myself, this has not changed my decision after high school, which is to attend UHMC (undecided major) or to join the Army National Guard." **Haley Marie Sumibcay**, Maui High School, daughter of **Constance and Rosanna Sumibcay**.



"MY PLANS AFTER high school is to attend a four-year university to study civil engineering or possibly education. As for a career, I would probably want to work in the Department of Transportation. Although I am sad about not having a traditional graduation, I am looking forward to becoming a Maui High School Alumnus." **Jayson Tagala**, Maui High School, son of **Elymar and Lourdes Tagala**.



"THE WORLD WE live in is a constantly changing world, so while COVID-19 was a big shocker, my friends and I found that we were able to quickly adapt to daily life at home. Being a senior, this meant that events such as the graduation ceremony or Project Grad had been postponed or cancelled. When I received this news, I was disappointed but I'd much rather be safe than sorry. The state of the pandemic is very serious, and it would be much better to have a late or possibly alternate commencement ceremony if it means that the health of the students, staff, their families, and their friends will remain safe. Coincidentally enough, I've actually had plans to become an infectious disease doctor even before this whole pandemic. For the longest time, I've had an interest in pathogens, so I've been closely following the news of the virus. My post high school plans are to attend Seattle University on a Pre-Med track and after that, hopefully get accepted into medical school. After completing my education, I wish to return to Maui and continue to help my community and my school. Even with the virus, none of my plans have changed and if anything, I have found a stronger desire to help others suffering from illnesses. Although COVID-19 has impacted us greatly, I think that this terrible event will teach us a lot of things, helping the medical field prevent something like this in the future. I hope that one day, I can also join that fight against disease." **Daniel Tongson**, Saint

Anthony High School, son of **Angeles and Veranio Tongson**.



"COVID-19 IS impacting the whole world. At first, I thought this virus wasn't that big of a deal. Towards the end of my 3rd quarter of school, it started to get worse. I started to get worried about my parents because they fall in the high-risk category. I've been working five days a week since I'm the only one working in the family as of now. People should really take this pandemic very seriously. I've been seeing a high amount of content of this pandemic every single day on my social media and I've learned that almost 8,000 Americans have been dying A DAY. I've found myself buying high quantities of essential supplies, strongly driven by fear from my surroundings whenever going out in public. So, everyone please stay safe and healthy. Not sharing is now caring. I'm part of the Maui High School Band and this pandemic has canceled our most important concerts of the quarter, our Spring and Aloha Concerts. The band has been rehearsing hard for the Spring Concert because the Color Guard also performs. It's really sad that the Aloha Concert is canceled too because it's the last concert with the seniors and it also acknowledges their accomplishments and their future. Big mahalos to the best band director, Mr. Kerry Wasano. Maui High's traditional Graduation Ceremony is also canceled along with the rest of Hawai'i's public schools. I was really looking forward to graduation since it's a huge milestone for the high school seniors. I've seen a lot of friends and family walk across the stage and graduate with their classmates for the last time and see their families very proud of them. I'm sad to say that we won't be experiencing that. I know that we still have an alternative graduation but it just won't feel the same. I'm just making the best of it until I'm officially an alumnae. I'm part of student government and I am Senior Class Treasurer and every class council is making ways to stay positive throughout this pandemic. My plan after graduation is to enlist into the military. I am currently in the process now with my local recruiting station and COVID-19 may change that in the future but that is still to be determined. I'm glad to say that I'm thankful that I joined Student Government and Band and thankful for all the friends I've made throughout high school. Despite all the hardships that our class has been through, we are 'ohana and we are strong. #2020STRONG." **Anna Mae Tumacder**, Maui High School, daughter of **Macario "Mac" Tumacder and Aniceta "Annie" Tumacder**.



"COVID-19 HAS changed many lives. In the beginning I was like many and didn't think this pandemic would change a whole lot or last that long and I didn't think much of it. Until I saw and heard everything that happened. People lost their jobs and lives. Curfews were put into place. Social distancing and wearing protective clothing became the new normal. Many people can no longer enjoy the activities they love such as playing sports, shopping, going to parties, or even going to the beach. My fellow classmates and I can no longer have a proper graduation ceremony. The virus stopped me from seeing all of my friends at school and canceled my practices and competitions with my Army JROTC Raider team. I can no longer go to the beach and enjoy sitting in the sand or even go out and hangout with my friends like we used to. I won't be able to make more high school memories since school has been canceled. I know I'm not the only one who's been missing

school even if it's just for the social experience. I am extremely disappointed I won't be able to have a graduation ceremony and walk the line with all my friends and receive lei with them from our families. All of my hard work won't be able to be properly celebrated with everyone. As of right now COVID-19 hasn't canceled my future plan of enlisting into the United States Army. That is one thing that I still look forward to after this whole pandemic." **Reece H. Ugalino**, Baldwin High School, son of **Michelle Kaopuiki and Efren Ugalino**.



"I WAS REALLY EXCITED to be a senior and spend the last year of high school with everyone and make the best memories, unfortunately the coronavirus had other plans. This virus really took us to a different and chaotic path. At first, we all suspected that it will eventually die down and not affect the islands. But as soon as word got out there were a few people infected, our school academic competitions, sports competitions and club socials all got canceled. Then the next thing I knew was that the rest of the semester was canceled. Our senior lū'au got canceled, prom got canceled, and lastly our graduation got canceled. I have been waiting to walk down that aisle with my cap and gown ready to be handed my diploma since I started middle school. We have all been working so hard throughout these four years of high school yet we don't get to have our traditional graduation. We don't even get say goodbye to our teachers and to our classmates who we grew up with since elementary school. It's all been very rough and depressing throughout this whole pandemic but I'm glad we're taking precautions to keep everybody safe. After high school I plan to go Northern Arizona University and major in the medical field. Unfortunately, orientation has been canceled and moved online. So instead of being able to visit the university, meet other students, and talk to someone about the school face-to-face, all of it is now virtual. But thankfully, the university will be open in the fall se-

mester so the students will be able to attend to their classes then." **Juliane Venezuela**, Baldwin High School, daughter of **Luz Venezuela**.

Mahalo to the *Fil-Am Voice* for allowing us to share our stories.

Congratulations to our fellow graduates—the Class of 2020 for your achievements and we wish you well in your future endeavors. We hope you will always remember that Maui will always be home and that we're rooting for your success.

The challenges we faced during our last year of high school are overwhelming ... and unfair. We are deprived of certain traditions through no fault of our own. Our families and friends were also deprived of the joy of participating in our graduation ceremonies and parties.


Yes, Life isn't fair but Life must go on. As we struggle to meet the challenges of COVID-19 and work for a new normal, remember we are all in this together.



**Ghenesis Jhay Balaan**, is a member of the Class of 2020 at Maui High School and attended its Culinary and Health CTE Pathway. He is a three-year member of Maui High HOSA-Future Health Professionals and served as its Council Treasurer in 2017-2018. Ghenesis hopes to become a respiratory therapist in the future. He is the eldest son of Benjamin V. Ballesteros Jr. and Jerameelyn B. Ballesteros.



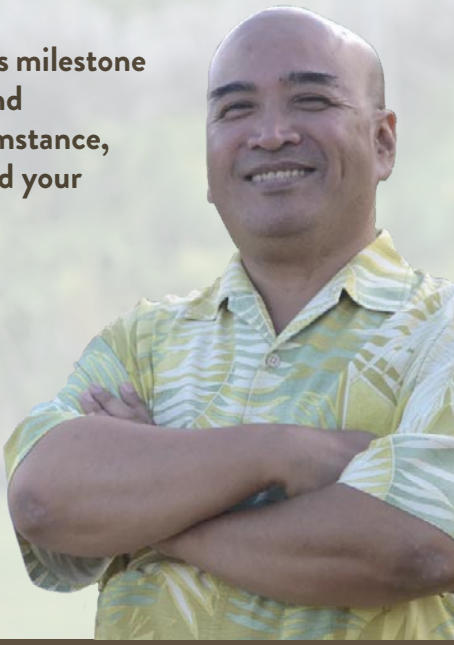
**Romelyn Joy Tabangcura**, is a member of the Class of 2020 at Maui High School. She is the current president of Maui High HOSA-Future Health Professionals and is also a member of the National Honor Society, a prestigious organization of students who show scholarship, leadership, service and character. Romelyn aspires to be a nurse practitioner one day and serve the people of Hawai'i. She is the daughter of Romeo and Roselyn Tabangcura. ✨



## CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2020

While you cannot mark this milestone by walking in your caps and gowns to pomp and circumstance, your accomplishments and your memories remain real.

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 **Fil-Am Voice**



Distance ...

from p. 14

national Leadership Conference was canceled because of the virus. Instead, convention planners opted for a virtual event where all competition and seminars would be held online via various testing platforms and virtual conference applications. Ghenesis, however, thinks this solution does not make up for the real experience. “Honestly, when I heard the HOSA International Leadership Conference was taking the virtual route, I was disappointed. I would rather have them cancel it instead and offer the next year of attendees a much better experience in person. In other words, I was less motivated to attend.” Though there to compete, Ghenesis believes there is a whole other purpose of being at the conference as well. “The whole hype of the HOSA Future Health Professionals International Leadership Conference was to meet people from all over the world who share the same passion you do about the healthcare field in person.” Planning on entering the University of Hawai‘i Maui College in the fall, Ghenesis is hopeful for a smooth transition even with COVID-19 taking its toll on the world. “I believe that the University of Hawai‘i Maui College will do its absolute best to make sure my transition from high

school to college is seamless amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. However, I am expecting most of my classes and sessions with my professors online.” Even with its challenges, Ghenesis hopes all students will do their part to make the transition as seamless as possible. “Because our colleges/universities are changing their methods of teaching, I believe we, as students, should also put in the effort to adapt to their changes for the university to run a smooth operation.” Class of 2020 graduate **Romelyn Tabangcura** recounts how she felt when the virus took on her Senior year. When news got out that traditional classroom learning would be discontinued for the rest of the school year, Romelyn was distraught to know what would happen to the last stretch of her time at Maui High. “When I heard that school was canceled for the rest of the year, I was sad at the fact that I wouldn’t be able to experience the last few months of my senior year with people I’ve grown up with,” Tabangcura says. Alongside her life-long bonds are her connections with the respected teachers of her school, a proper goodbye abruptly taken by the pandemic. “I also developed good friendships with a few of my teachers so I’m sad I couldn’t say a proper goodbye to them before I go to college.” When it comes to graduation,

her feelings are no different. “I’m sad that the class of 2020 won’t be able to experience graduation that we’ve waited twelve years for. It is the one-time event that marks the end of a chapter and opens a new one as we step into the adult world.” Thankfully, though, as her school organizes a drive-through graduation, Romelyn knows she is getting the best she can in these circumstances. “Although it is not the same as a traditional ceremony, we should still make the most of the situation and keep in mind we are all in this together.” As the president of her school’s HOSA chapter, Romelyn has placed at the state level in Human Growth and Development for almost her whole time in HOSA and, like Ghenesis, has qualified to go to the International Leadership Conference in Houston, Texas. Though committed to her event and her future, Romelyn has her own reservations regarding the virtual convention. “When I first heard about ILC being converted to a virtual conference, I was pretty sad because the physical experience of attending conferences, meeting new people and sharing and creating memories with my peers won’t be the same as participating in a virtual conference.” Despite the untraditional approach, Romelyn shared her gratitude towards the opportunity to represent her chapter and her state. “However, I am grateful that we are still given the opportunity to showcase our skills and abilities even though it

may not be the traditional way of doing so.” Admittedly, the pandemic that we are all living through does not make for the best climate when it comes to school and even life in general but members of the community are making the best out of the situation. From distance learning to virtual events, all we can do is be grateful for the measures that the world is taking to protect the health and wellbeing of society. While essential workers risk their health for the sake of our community, we all can do them justice by staying home and doing whatever we can to keep both ourselves and others safe. Distance learning and virtual platforms have given everyone the opportunity to do so amidst a time where everyone is facing difficulty. ✨ **Google® Is Not Everything** is a monthly column authored by high school students. The title of the column emphasizes that education is more than just googling a topic. Google® is a registered trademark. This month’s guest columnist is **Alexis Joy Viloria**, a Junior at Maui High School. She is the founder and President of Maui High’s SaberScribes, their journalism club. Alexis is also a committed member of HOSA-Future Health Professional as the Secondary Representative of the Hawai‘i HOSA Executive Council and a state gold medalist. Alexis hopes to one day become a Pediatric Physician. She is the daughter of Alex and Juvy Viloria.



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