

*William Henry O. Streegan*  
Negros Daily Bulletin

## *TSINOY VOLUNTEERISM IN BACOLOD*

**N**ewspapers, magazines, and even books are full of horror stories of "business irresponsibility," "greed," and "feudal capitalism and imperialism," and more seriously, about the gross indifference of certain individuals and business sectors. People ask: What is the problem? Why is it that some sectors simply do not care about social responsibility?

Social responsibility starts in building a name and a reputation in the community and maintaining a social conscience that does not only reflect on the company — its products and services — but on the processes that bring about such products. However, in recent years, the new concept of social responsibility no longer asks what the limitations on entrepreneurs and businesses are, or what entrepreneurs or business enterprises should be doing for those under its immediate authority. It demands that businessmen take responsibility for social problems and issues, political goals, and that they become the keeper of society's conscience and the solver of society's problems.

Bacolod City is indeed fortunate that Filipinos of Chinese descent in this city have not only become shining examples of moral rectitude but also active exponents of social responsibility through the many projects that they have initiated and continue to implement for the well-being not only of Bacolod but also of other towns and cities in the province.

There are so many Chinese Filipinos in Bacolod City and throughout the province who have contributed more than their share to the improvement of the quality of life of Bacolodnons and Negrenses. However, we can only mention a few because it would take reams of paper to mention all of them.

Among the more prominent Filipinos of Chinese descent are the late Oscar K. Anglo, Benjamin Lopue Sr., the late Amado Dongon, Eusebio "Jack" Po, Msgr. John Liu, Alfonso and Vic Tan, Benjamin Lo, and Robert "Kaishek" Tan. Among the more outstanding volunteer organizations are the Filipino-Chinese Chamber Vol-

unteer Fire Brigade and the Amity Fire Brigade.

### **OSCAR K. ANGLO**

Oscar K. Anglo passed away at the age of 92 on August 11, 1997. He was born in Fujian, China and migrated to the Philippines at the age of 13. He was a loyal member of the Kuomintang Party throughout his lifetime.

Anglo was a very determined and strong-willed businessman who was magnanimous with his material and financial resources. His children claim that he gave away more than what he earned throughout his lifetime. A favorite story which is often repeated whenever his name is mentioned in business circles is:

One day, when he left his office about noontime, there were five beggars waiting for him. As was his usual practice, he reached into his pocket to give the beggars money. One of his sons stopped him and said, "Papa, you have been giving these people money almost everyday. Stop it as they are just taking advantage of your goodness."

On their way home, Oscar K. Anglo told his son, "Do you realize what you did? When we reach home, we will have food waiting for us on our dining table while those unfortunate people have not probably eaten their breakfast and will have nothing for lunch. Think about it and perhaps you will understand why I am generous to these people." From that day on, none of his children ever stopped him again from giving alms to the poor.

During Anglo's active years and even when he was already ailing, he was very involved in community work. His activities covered education, charity work, building memorials, and the strengthening of organizations of Chinese Filipinos in Bacolod City. Whenever calamities struck any town or city — like that in Ilog and Kabankalan towns and even in Bacolod City, as well as many parts in the province and throughout the country — he was always among the first to respond by giving food items, clothing, and financial assistance.

One of his closest friends was the late Ben Gaston of Silay City. Gaston was a Ramon Magsaysay awardee in the field of community development. One of his close relatives was Brig. Gen. Arcadio Lozado.

Anglo was always in the forefront of efforts and activities to help forge the bonds of love and brotherhood among Chinese Filipinos and native Negrenses, regardless of their ideology or religion. He played a major role in strengthening the Bacolod Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Inc. Among his myriad activities and major contributions to the Chinese-Filipino community and fellow Bacolodnons were:

**Education.** He successfully spearheaded the move to make Tay Tung High School what it is today, transferring the institution from its former site on Luzuriaga Street to its present site along Hernandez Street, formerly Libertad Street.

**Chinese Cemetery.** His determination to build a Chinese cemetery in Bacolod City came to fruition with the creation of the Occidental Negros Foundation, Inc. which now owns the Green Hills Memorial Park along Burgos Extension, Bacolod

City.

**Religion.** He was a devoutly religious man and was one of the major contributors in the construction, maintenance, and support of the Queen of Peace Church along Hilado Street. He served several terms as the chairman of the finance committee of the church.

La Salle brothers Alexis and Francis were some of the religious who were the recipients of his generosity. His other major charities were the Bacolod Girl's Home and Boy's Home.

Anglo's professionalism and business acumen enabled him to build a small business empire, which included a sugar farm (a sugar trader for Arca and Company), the field of photography, and a distributor of cigarettes.

He instilled in his children the virtues of honesty, benevolence, love, and concern for the less fortunate in Bacolod City. When he died, many of his friends and former associates donated sums of money. His children, in turn, donated the entire amount to various charities in Bacolod City.

His word was always his bond, and he will always be remembered in this city for his professionalism and ethical business practices. He never took advantage of his business and personal connections with people who were among the business and political leaders of the province.

It may well be said that the success of the late Anglo may not be measured by the stature and position he reached in life, but by his generosity and his humanity. His family, especially his children, can well appreciate the applause and the approval that have made Oscar K. Anglo's memory still fresh in everyone's minds, just as his accomplishments are in everyone's minds today.

#### **BENJAMIN LOPUE SR.**

Benjamin-Lopue Sr. was conferred the title of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, by the University of St. La Salle — "in recognition of his inherent and life-learned gifts of business entrepreneurship and management evidenced by his founding a successful business chain based on core values of honesty and hardwork and thereby making a singular contribution to the socio-economic growth and development of the City of Bacolod and the Province of Negros Occidental" on January 28, 1995. The citation was signed by Lutgarda A. Samaniego, chairperson of the University of St. La Salle and Bro. Rolando R. Dizon, President, and attested by Hon. Ricardo T. Gloria, chairman, Commission on Higher Education.

*When Benjamin K. Lopue Sr. put up his tiangge 50 years ago, he probably never imagined that he was laying the foundation for what was to become a landmark for Negrenses within 10 years. Lopue Sr.'s has grown into a multi-million peso business (today). — Visayan Daily Star*

Lopue's Department Store, Inc. is noted for its concern for its employees and patrons. It is the only department store in Bacolod City, and in fact, throughout the province, which has set up an extensive housing project for its employees.

He and his children are involved in the field of education having set up a professorial chair at USLS for Chinese Studies. They are involved in charity work at the Bacolod Boy's Home, the Girl's Home, and St. Vincent's Home for the Aged in Bacolod City. They are also involved in Christian renewal programs, funding some religious organizations, implementing outreach activities, north and south of Bacolod City.

Lopue Sr., as he is fondly called by his colleagues and friends, is well-known throughout the province and especially in Bacolod City for his benevolent and humanitarian work among the underprivileged. Atty. Dominador Lopez, a retired school superintendent, says that "he is a very simple man, very honest, hardworking, and above all, one with a social conscience."

#### **AMADO DONGON AND THE BACOLOD CHAMBER VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADE**

The late Amado Dongon was a very tenacious and extraordinary businessman. He was the president of the Bacolod Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Inc. for 20 years. One of his most outstanding accomplishments was the organization of the Chamber Volunteer Fire Brigade. He was also the first fire chief of the brigade.

If the chamber is where it is today, they owe it all to the late Amado Dongon. He had the capability to unite and marshal the Chinese Filipinos in Bacolod City as a formidable force to reckon with in the promotion and implementation of community projects.

The Brigade did not only fight fires but also responded positively to the needs of the victims of calamities and disasters. When the Brigade celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary recently, he was among the pioneers of the fire-fighting unit that was given a posthumous award. His wife Conchita, who had always been very supportive of all his activities, received the award on his behalf.

#### **EUSEBIO "JACK" PO**

Eusebio "Jack" Po was one of the outstanding Bacolodnons who were honored during the '97 Charter Day celebration of Bacolod City.

His volunteer work for the benefit of cataract patients not only in Bacolod City but also in the entire province of Negros Occidental and Panay islands spans 15 years of dedication to the cause of the underprivileged who would have gone blind had they not been operated on for their eye ailments. He is presently the president of the Cataract Foundation Inc. of Negros Occidental and was an outstanding past president of the Rotary Club of Bacolod North.

Jack was also the fire chief of the Chamber Volunteer Fire Brigade for many years, and his work for the thousands of poverty-stricken people in the entire province is now a legend. He is also a very ethical businessman with national and international connections. He truly deserves the award granted to him during the Chamber's anniversary on September 21, 1997.

### **MSGR. JOHN LIU**

Monsignor John Liu, the president of the St. John's High School and parish priest of the Queen of Peace Church, could well be the "rock" among the Chinese Filipinos in Bacolod City and the entire province.

He has always been an inspiration and the "guiding light" of all Chinese-Filipino Catholics in this area. His accomplishments as an educator and preacher of the Good Word in God's vineyard is very extraordinary.

His distinguished work and his profound influence in the field of education and among Catholics have accorded him a unique reputation among the people. The late Oscar K. Anglo is reputed to have said that virtue may be its own reward but that the virtuosity of Monsignor Liu deserves a more concrete and tangible form of recognition.

### **THE AMITY FIRE BRIGADE**

The Amity Fire Brigade deserves a lot of recognition for its herculean and humanitarian work through the years in Bacolod City and in many towns and cities in the province. Several members of the Brigade lost their lives while quelling fires and when engaged in rescue missions.

Millions of pesos of property and countless lives could have been lost had the Brigade not speedily responded to the public's call for their assistance. The response of their "911 ambulance" in rescuing victims of disaster, calamities, and accidents is extraordinary. They readily respond to the needs of the entire community especially when their services have been urgently needed.

There are many more Chinese-Filipino "heroes" in the field of volunteerism in Bacolod City and each of them crossed political party lines, religion, ideologies, and gender — all in order to help their fellowmen. We may mention Ong Hong Te, former president of the Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Inc., its incumbent President Alfonso Luis Tan and his brother Vicente Tan, the incumbent Fire Chief of the Volunteer Fire Brigade Benjamin Lo and his entire family, and very good friend Roberto "Kaishek" Tan — all have discharged their social responsibility through volunteerism in our society and have made Bacolod City a better place to live in. However, as I earlier said, it would take reams of paper as well as many hours to simply mention their names and accomplishments. We are pledging to this body that by next year's gathering, we will launch a book to chronicle their names and their achievements.

Many of those who have contributed immensely to Bacolod City's progress and development have already transferred to the "great beyond." "Memory," said Cicero, "is the treasury and guardian of all things." "Praising what is lost and cherishing what we have gained," said Shakespeare, "makes the remembrance dear."

We believe that we are gathered here today and tomorrow in that spirit. We are gathered to treasure and praise the history and accomplishments of a large segment of our society — those who are still with us and even those who are no longer with us, and thereby making the memory even more meaningful.

Different people have different ways to memorialize and remember those who have preceded us to the ultimate reward. Some build monuments of stone or statuary; some erect shrines; some keep the shrines in their hearts. But every human being, every ethnic group leaves another memorial of their own building. It is the impact of one's lifetime of good works on those lives that follow.

What distinguishes humanity from the beasts of the fields is not the construction of monuments nor the composition of epitaphs, but rather the privilege of memory. Memorials can be found in many places and many times, but principally in our hearts.