

TOFA HISTORY & CRITERIA



HISTORY OF TOFA -

The current successful project, *Twenty Outstanding Filipino-Americans (TOFA)* in the United States and Canada, was first launched in July 4, 1990. *FIL-AM IMAGE*, the Filipino-American Magazine, established in 1987, is the initiator and founder of the TOFA project. Nonoy Mendoza, editor and publisher of the magazine conceived the idea with his wife, Aida Mendoza and three daughters, Rochelle, Rhonda and late Roxanne, assisting.

The popular project is now known as *Twenty Outstanding Filipinos Abroad (TOFA)* and is slated early Spring annually with the planned venue at the prestigious J.W. Marriott Hotel in Washington, D.C., a walking distance to the White House. It is usually a 3-day of scheduled memorable and fun-filled festivities. The TOFA Project is sponsored by the *Filipino Image Magazine (FILIM)*, *Pinoy Global Online News (PGON)*, and the *Roxanne Andrea Mendoza memorial Foundation (RAM)*.

SELECTION PROCESS -

In the first three years, the TOFA awardees were selected with advice and assistance from the Philippine Embassy, consular offices and the Filipino centers-of-influence. The fourth year of the TOFA project, TOFA Past Awardees and/or TOFA Panel Board of Judges are the one responsible for recommending prospective awardees. Names are submitted to a Panel of Judges headed by Nonoy and Aida Mendoza as far back as 12 months for the Awarding Ceremony.

CRITERIA OF AWARDEE -

There three (3) major CRITERIA: (1) One must be able to personally attend the planned functions in Washington, D.C., no proxy. (2) One must highlight positive Filipino image. (3) One must be an achiever and visible in one's community or profession. *Bio-data of awardee and press releases are permanently removed from the web site when unable to attend the Awarding Ceremony. Unless approved by the Panel of Judges, once an awardee is removed, he or she can not be included again the Project as an awardee.*

MAIN PURPOSES OF TOFA PROJECT -

There are two simple reasons for the TOFA project. (1) To inform the powers-that-be in the world, specially from Washington, D.C., that there are Filipinos who are achievers and that Filipinos are composed of varied talents and abilities. This is primarily done by global press releases and announcements to the mainstream and the media. (2) For the awardees to serve as role model and inspiration to others, specially to the Filipino youth abroad and in the Philippines - "*basta Pinoy, puede!*"

NO COST TO AWARDEE -

Except for transportation and hotel accommodations, CURRENT awardees are special VIP guests-of-honor and are free of all charges to all *TOFA Planned Schedule of Activities* of at least five (5) major social functions; including the formal Gala Banquet and Ball Receptions; Certificate Plaque of Honor; Medal; all new press releases; and other souvenir items for the Awardee, including copies of the Souvenir Journal.

NUMBER OF CURRENT AWARDEES-

By the end of the year 2008, there will be a total of three hundred sixty (360) Filipino centers-of-influence and high achievers. Awardee's bio-data and photo is available in the 24/7 global web site: WWW.FILAMIMAGE.COM. Also available in the web site are the awardees starting in 2006 of the *Chicago Filipino Hall of Fame*. Among the men and women awardees are physicians, nurses, dentists, architects, scientists, engineers, lawyers, accountants, politicians, business persons, entrepreneurs, professionals, community and civic leaders.... just to mention a few.

The elite "*Circle of Leaders*," as the awardees call themselves, come from several states including: Hawaii, Guam, Alaska, California, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, Louisiana, Ohio, Michigan, Washington, Wisconsin, Tennessee, Delaware, Mississippi, Kentucky, Kansas, Texas, New Orleans, Georgia, Alabama, Arizona, Illinois, West Virginia, as well as several provinces in Canada and the U.S. Virgin Islands. *Now, globally* from the Middle East, Europe, Americas, Asia, including the Philippines.

FINANCING THE TOFA -

Nonoy and Aida Mendoza are the major financial backers of the TOFA project from the first day of its inception in 1990. Additional financial assistance comes from the Roxanne Andrea Mendoza (RAM) Foundation based in Washington, D.C. Another source of incomes are Individuals & Corporate Sponsors solicited to insert Company's Ad or Congratulatory ADs. Admission Donations to planned activities are another source of income.

As a tradition, Net Proceeds of the TOFA projects are donated to charitable and worthy organizations helping the Filipinos in the Philippines.

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