

# PRESS RELEASE

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## ***RICHARD “DICK” GRODON, Senator, Republic Of The Philippines and Chairman Of The Philippine National Red Cross is Unanimously Selected As One Of The 2009 Twenty Outstanding Filipinos Abroad (TOFA)***

**OLONGAPO CITY, PHILIPPINES June 01, 2009 - (PinoyGlobal) Richard “Dick” Gordon, Senator, Republic Of The Philippines and Chairman Of The Philippine National Red Cross is unanimously selected as one of the 2009 Twenty Outstanding Filipinos Abroad (TOFA) by the TOFA Panel Board of Judges headed by Nonoy & Aida Mendoza of the FILIPINO IMAGE MAGAZINE (FILIM) and the PINOY GLOBAL ONLINE NEWS (PGON), and the ROXANNE ANDREA MENDOZA (RAM) MEMORIAL FOUNDATION.**

The *TOFA* project was initiated in 1990 and have been commended by the governments of the United States, Canada and the Philippines. The bio-data of the 320 Past TOFA Awardees are found in the *PINOY GLOBAL ON LINE NEWS*: [HTTP://WWW.FILAMIMAGE.COM](http://www.filamimage.com), a 24/7 global web site.

The *CRITERIA, HISTORY* and other *TOFA* informations are found in the popular website. A complete copy issue of *FILIPINO IMAGE Magazine*'s 2006, 2007 & 2008 Souvenir Journals, detailing more one hundred pages of bio-data of the *2009 TOFA* awardees and photographs; VIP Special Messages and including all the Congratulatory Messages and ADs, in full color, are in the website and free for all to read globally. An unprecedented feat in Filipino journalism.

The 3-day 14th annual event starts on *Thursday, Aug. 27, 2009* with an informal get-together for the awardees and their special guests. The following, *Friday, Aug. 28th*, the VIP Luncheon at JW Marriott Hotel, and at night, the fabulous welcome dinner reception at the *Philippine Embassy*. The following day, *Saturday, Aug. 29th*, a sight-seeing tour, and photo opportunity around the Nations' Capital, capped with a memorable VIP Dim Sum Luncheon. At night, *Saturday, Aug. 29, 2009*, is a formal gala Banquet and Ball Award Ceremony. After the gala is the traditional Filipino breakfast which will end the whirlwind social functions.

Dick Gordon is best known for overcoming great odds in the Philippines.

In the 2004 national elections when he ran as senator of the Philippines, despite the initial low public opinion surveys, Gordon won and received the fifth highest number of votes from the electorate even without sectoral and religious command vote support. Filipinos warmly received his very positive personality and track record of achievements.

He passed the very first law in the 13th Congress, Republic Act No. 9333, fixing the regular elections at the Autono-



**Richard “Dick” Gordon**  
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mous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), and several other important laws, including Republic Act No. 9369, the New Automated Election System law; Republic Act No. 9334, the Sin Tax Law, Republic Act Nos. 9399 and 9400, fixing the tax regime in Special Economic Zones and Freeports in Clark in Pampanga, Poro Point in La Union; and John Hay in Baguio; Republic Act No. 9346, the abolition of the death penalty law; and Republic Act No. 9367, the Biofuels Act of 2007.

Furthermore, as Chairman of the Senate Committee of Constitutional Amendments and Revision of Laws, he upheld the supremacy of the Constitution at all times. Though he may not have voted for the ratification of the 1987 Constitution, he took an oath to preserve and defend it. He insisted on the lawful process of charter change only according to the process set forth in the Constitution. He opposed the unconstitutional People's Initiative and was one of the triumphant parties in the case of Lambino and Aumentado vs. COMELEC, G.R. No. 174153, October 25, 2006.

He also preserved the separation of powers in government and asserted the Senate's constitutional right and duty to conduct inquiries in aid of legislation against Executive

Order No. 464 in Senate, et al. vs. Ermita, G.R. No. 169777, April 20, 2006, and Executive Order No. 1 in Sabio vs. Gordon, et al., G.R. No. 174340, October 17, 2006.

In 2001, he transformed the moribund Philippines Tourism industry: plagued by a negative image of kidnappings and SARS disease and complicated by an era of continued threat of terrorism. As Secretary of Tourism he accomplished this with his campaign: "WOW Philippines! More than the usual!"; This resulted to increased tourist arrivals that rejuvenated the industry, becoming the country's acknowledged fastest way to address poverty and unemployment. In addition, in his capacity as World Tourism Organization (WTO) Commissioner for East Asia and the Pacific in 2002 and Chair of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) for 2003, he became the chief advocate of Third World countries that have been unduly affected in tourism and trade by unfair Travel Advisories imposed by Western governments.

In 1992, he led the successful conversion of the former United States' naval facility in Subic Bay. He turned it into the Philippines' primary trade zone. This was when the Philippine Senate rejected a treaty extension ending a century of US military presence in the country. He lobbied in Congress for the passage of a bill he drafted based on an old plan to convert the American naval and air force facilities in Subic and Clark respectively into economic enclaves by the creation of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA).

As founding Chair and Administrator of the SBMA, he inspired an army of 8,000 volunteers who protected and preserved the U.S.\$ 8 billion facility. Together with the volunteers, he successfully transformed Subic into a premier investment hub that hosted the 4th APEC Leaders Summit in 1996. By the time he left in 1998, SBMA had over 300 investors including notable American companies: Federal Express, Coastal Petroleum and Enron. It even had British firms, BICC Cables and Shell Exploration as well as Taiwan's Acer Computers and France's Thompson Audio. All in all his management provided for 70,000 jobs and almost US\$ 3 Billion in investments.

Dick Gordon is a humanitarian volunteer.

He is an active volunteer of the Red Cross in the disaster-prone Philippines for the last 25 years and has recently been elected member of the Governing Board of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. He personally led numerous relief, rescue and rehabilitation operations. This include earthquakes in the 1990's that hit Manila, Cabanatuan and Baguio cities in Luzon; typhoons and floods in Silay and Ormoc cities in Central and Western Visayas; volcanic eruptions of

Mt. Mayon in 1993 and 2000 and the 1991 eruption of the century of Mt. Pinatubo where he led thousands of Aeta aborigines to safety. In March 2000, he worked out with the local Red Crescent chapter of Basilan Island for the release without ransom of eighteen Filipino hostages from the Abu Sayyaf. Likewise, even as Secretary of Tourism, he assisted the Red Cross team in putting out the fires that razed the Philippine International Convention Center and the Manor Hotel in 2001. Currently he is engaged in continuing rehabilitation of flashflood and landslide affected areas of Aurora and Quezon in 2004 and Ginsaugon, Southern Leyte in 2006 as well as the typhoon ravaged Southern Luzon and Bicol provinces early this year.

He initiated the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) Millennium Fund in 2000 from corporate donors to sustain training of volunteers and for purchase of necessary disaster and rescue equipment.

Dick Gordon is a visionary.

A young achiever, he was only twenty-four, a law student of the University of the Philippines when he served as the youngest delegate to the 1971 Constitutional Convention of the Philippines. He already espoused the idea of a Freeport akin to that Hong Kong and Singapore that would be the alternative to the U.S. naval facility in Subic Bay, Olongapo. This, he realized after witnessing the displacement of Filipino workers during the U.S. Navy pullout at Sangley Point, Cavite that same year.

Being the youngest city mayor of Olongapo in 1980 he drafted a joint-use plan of Subic Bay by the Philippine and US governments, with commercial enterprises that eventually phased in as the U.S. Navy withdrew from the base. He was also the brilliant man responsible for transforming Olongapo's "Sin City" image into the Philippines' model city. This he achieved through innovative yet simple programs involving an active citizenry in solving crime, ensuring police accountability, efficient garbage collection, proper health and sanitation and orderly public transport and traffic.

As early as 1997, he initiated the creation of an Asian Disaster Training and Logistics Center in Subic Bay to help plan, prepare for and to mitigate calamities and disasters in the region.

With his vast experience, Richard Gordon has been invited to share his knowledge in bases conversion and volunteerism with governments and communities like Panama, Iran, Vietnam, Okinawa in Japan, Guam in the U.S. and by multilateral institutions like the Asian Development Bank and World Bank to name a few that hosted or contained military facilities. The most recent of this was the United Nations' International Colloquium on Regional Governance in February 2002 before regional leaders in Cancun, Mexico as well as mayors worldwide in the World Bank's 2nd World Competitive Cities Congress in Washington D.C in May 2000.

He has also shared his views in politics and economy in Asia at the Georgetown University Leadership Seminars (1986);

the Stanford University Asia-Pacific Roundtable Conferences (1994 and 1997); the Asia Society Conferences (1993 and 1997); the 6th Asia-Pacific Regional Conferences of the International Association of Volunteer Effort (IAVE) in Seoul, South Korea (1996); the Pacific Rim Forum in Hong Kong; the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland (1996); and the U.S. Business Council Convention in Williamsburg, Virginia (1997).

For his efforts and contributions to public service, Richard Gordon received numerous awards and recognition. The PNRC conveyed to him the Silver Humanitarian Award in 2001 for voluntary efforts in alleviating human suffering. The Philippines' premier state university -- U.P. recognized him as an Outstanding Alumnus in Public Administration in 1984 and later bestowed him its highest recognition as The Most Distinguished Alumnus for 1997. He was named one of the Ten Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) in 1982 and the youngest to be conferred as The Outstanding Filipino (TOFIL) in 1996.

Asahi Shimbun recognized him as one of the "50 Young Leaders of Asia" in 1994. Asiaweek in its 20th Anniversary issue included him as one of the "20 Great Asians for the Future" while Japan's NHK TV featured him as one of "Asia's Who's Who" in 1995. The South China Morning Post (24 July 2001) coined his task as Tourism Minister as "Mission Impossible". The Asian Wall Street Journal (8 August 2001) and Singapore Straits Times (8 October 2001) featured his innovative "WOW Philippines" campaign to address the Philippines' negative image. The Economist (7-13 October 1995) featured him as "The Chairman of Subic", Singapore Business Times (18-19 February 2001) distinguished him as the "Shogun of Subic" in 1995, Asia Magazine (6-8 October 1995) addressed him the "Messiah of Subic", Far Eastern Economic Review (14 December 1995) hailed him the "Sultan of Subic", the Hong Kong Standard (27 May 1995) called him "Flash Gordon of the Philippines".

Dick Gordon graduated from U.P. with a Bachelor of Laws in 1975 and an A.B. in History and Government from the Jesuit institution -- Ateneo de Manila University in 1966.