

# *Twenty Outstanding Filipinos Abroad*

## HISTORY OF TOFA -

The current successful project, *Twenty Outstanding Filipino-Americans* (TOFA 1) 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, assisting him.

The popular project is now known as TOFA 2 - *Twenty Outstanding Filipinos Abroad* and is slated in August 2007. Exact dates will be announced later. The planned venue is at the prestigious J.W. Marriott Hotel in Washington, D.C. in a five days of scheduled festivities. To be invited are both Philippine and United States government officials to be invited.

## SELECTION PROCESS -

In the first three years, the TOFA awardees were selected with advice and assistance from the Philippine Embassy and its consular offices as well as from the Filipino centers-of-influence residing in areas where they are concentrated. Starting the fourth year, past and former TOFA awardees recommended prospective awardees. Names are submitted to a panel of judges headed by Nonoy and Aida Mendoza assisted by lawyers and former awardees. Currently, global selection will be headed by the original group and by selected Philippine Government officials.

## CRITERIA OF AWARDEE -

The criteria of selection awardees is simplified to four. (1) One must highlight positive Filipino image. (2) One must be outstanding and visible in one's community. (3) One must be visibly active in promoting things Philippines, and in assisting the Philippines. (4) One must be able to personally attend the planned functions in Washington, D.C. In the initial stage of the global project, eight will come from diplomatic posts of the Department of Foreign Affairs, and two from the Philippines to be selected only by the original panel of judges based in the United States.

## MAIN PURPOSES OF TOFA PROJECT -

There are two simple reasons for the TOFA project. (1) To inform the powers-that-be in the world and 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 direct global press releases and/or announcements to the mainstream media; to the U.S. Federal and State Officials, to the business associates, friends and relatives of the awardees; and to a selected

CEOs of the Fortune 500 corporations: that a Filipino is being bestowed a distinct honor at the Nation's Capital.

(2) For the awardees to serve as role model and inspiration to others specially the Filipino youth abroad and in the Philippines - "*basta Pinoy, puede!*"

## NO COST TO AWARDEE -

Except for transportation and hotel accommodations, present awardees are special VIP guests-of-honor to all planned activities. They are free of all charges, including a dinner reception at the Philippine Embassy; VIP brunch at the National Press Club; reception at the VIP suite of the Mendozas; and a historic photo opportunity sessions with a brief city tour of the Nation's Capital on board a chartered bus.

## NUMBER OF CURRENT AWARDEES-

Including the 2007 awardees, there are a total of two hundred and sixty (260) Filipino centers-of-influence high achievers. Each awardee's bio-data and photo is available in the website: [WWW.FILAMIMAGE.COM](http://WWW.FILAMIMAGE.COM). Among the men and women awardees are physicians, nurses, dentists, scientists, engineers, lawyers, accountants, politicians, businesspersons, professionals, civic leaders 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, Georgia, Alabama, Arizona, Illinois, West Virginia, as well as from Canada and the U.S. Virgin Islands and now the globe: Middle East, Europe, Americas, Asia including the Philippines.

## FINANCING THE TOFA -

Nonoy and Aida Mendoza have been financial backers of the TOFA project from the first day of its inception. Additional financial assistance comes from the Roxanne Andrea Mendoza (RAM) Foundation based in Washington, D.C. Net proceeds are donated to several charitable organizations in the Philippines.

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