

A Tribute to Dr. Ariston G. Bautista (1921-2014) “The ENT Man”

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One can never really say all that is in one's heart about a person who has passed on, in a given limited time. But from my experience, such endearing memories come in patches, when you're alone, when you hear a particular strain of music or when you visit a certain place – glimpses of memories. And so this afternoon, I stand here before you in behalf of the ENT department, the department that Dr. Ariston Gella Bautista spearheaded and formed in 1982. The department has trained and since then graduated 30 or so doctors who benefited from his strict but fatherly training until the day he fell ill. Now these same doctors after having examined their frontals and hearts have these to say of Dr. Ariston, all their experiences, funny, naughty and professional as a fitting tribute to Dr. Bautista-the doctor, the mentor, the man, our MMC father.

Boss, *Papang*, *Tito*, as he was fondly called by us, was a reserved person – very professional in his interaction and relationship with patients and doctors. He was gentlemanly and good-looking. If ladies fell for his charms, it was not his fault but he was totally Rañing's man. In the '60s when he was with UERM, he was “*crush ng bayan*,” I was told, “*pinag-fantasyahan si doc Titong naming mga nurses noon dahil malumanay siya magsalita*” by one of them.

He had an engaging wit. When a young patient asked him what AGB meant, he told the boy with a glint in his eyes, AGB is Ariston Good Boy.

We learned the proper etiquette of patient care from him. He treated every ear and nostril that he examined and cleaned like they were eggshells, so gently lest they break. We never heard him make a comment on how icky or how big and dirty these crevices were. We as Ariston's angels emulated this. And proud to say we learned it from him.

But it was also in the out-patient clinic that we discovered the naughty side of AGB, Ariston Good Boy.

Residents had to do preceptorials with him. The females of course were his angels but the male residents were otherwise. They were the “*promoters ng mga kalokohan*,” adding color to Boss Papang's daily clinic routine and I believe adding more years to his life, they were his wellspring, his fountain of youth. About maybe 5-or-so years ago (he must have been 87 then), these residents who are now board-certified ENTs were once caught by AGB in the clinic watching a video of an actress caught in a compromising situation: “*Ano yan?*” “*Eh boss si ano, andito sa iPad?*” “*Patingin, pero bantay ka sa pinto*” (saying to one



of the boys), “*at baka dumating si Rañing.*” So as these naughty doctors watched, “*Eh biglang boss, boss, si ma'am padating.*” *Naku*, they immediately closed the iPad *at si doctor*, sat in front of his TV, looking like an angel when ma'am Rañing entered. (Sorry, no more secrets, our lips are sealed.)

I had a patient two days ago who requested me to add his memory of Dr. Bautista. He was an old patient of AGB and when he consulted around 1994 for a sore throat. He was told his tonsils were surgically removed, perfectly. He was then asked who did the surgery. *Sagot nya “doc pinagawa ko ito sa UEnung 1964, etalagang magaling yung doctor, kayo po doc ang nag-opera sa akin.” “Ah, ganun ba?”* And he smiled.

His patients were loyal to him, following him all the way to MMC.

As a surgeon, he was composed, quiet, unfazed in the OR. His surgical skills were beyond reproach. He taught us everything that we should know, step by step. We watched and we learned. Those of us who were lucky enough to have scrubbed for him learned surgery the *Papang's way*. “*Turo ni Papang yan*” we always say when we do surgeries. He motivated us to do our very best in our patient care.

He was the best, and in turn we will try our very best to train the future MMC ENT the *Papang's way*, *kasi kung ano ang puno, siya ang bunga. Lalayo pa ba kami?*

As for us, the most precious gift that Boss *Papang* left us, his ENT children, is this: he treated us as his very own and made us one family. He taught us how to iron out all our differences, to love each other unconditionally, to accept each other's fault, swallow the bitter pill. And so, if you notice the camaraderie we often have, it's because we are a family.

And personally, what have I learned in the 32 years with him? Humility. By his example, I learned the meaning of humility, for despite his being unequalled in the field, he was never boastful, never heard him ridicule or insult those who are lesser than him in ability and intelligence-- rather he taught them how to do it the right way, helped them correct surgical errors without any insulting words. Never heard him talk maliciously about a person behind his back. He knew how to count his blessings.

This December will be our first Christmas celebration as a department without Boss *Papang*. Though feeling orphaned, we will always remember him, for he lives in each one of us, in our hearts and our minds, in our work, in our skills and lessons learned. Who and what we are now, we owe to dear Boss *Papang* Ariston Good Boy.

Thank you.