



NAPOLEON C. EJERCITO, MD

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Strong Pillar, Dedicated Leader and Trailblazer

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A Strong Pillar

After completing his residency training program in the United States, Dr. Napoleon Ejercito came back to join the faculty of the then combined Department of Eye Ear Nose and Throat (EENT) at the Philippine General Hospital. Unhappy with the fact that ORL in the Philippines was not yet a separate and distinct specialty with no existing standard and organized form of training, Dr. Ejercito and seven other optimistic and young ENT surgeons gathered together to form the Otolaryngology Society of the Philippines under the leadership of Dr. Tierry Garcia. These men became the historic pillars of the society.

With the birth of this society, the development and maturation of the specialty was simply a matter of time.

Fifteen years later, Dr. Ejercito spearheaded the founding of the Philippine Board of Otolaryngology and Bronchoesophagology in order to standardize and professionalize the practice of ORL. Initially composed of diplomates and candidates of the American Board of Otorhinolaryngology, the rigorous process of accreditation and qualification was patterned after the American Board. This organization was subsequently incorporated and evolved into what is now known as the Philippine Board of Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery. This board became his youngest child whose growth he fostered and whose interests he promoted and protected.

A Dedicated Leader

Dr. Ejercito was Chairman of the Department of ORL of the UP-PGH from 1970 to 1974, when Martial Law was declared. He was a staunch critic of the Marcos regime, but the repression did not deter him from leading the department in achieving its goals.

During his time as chair of the department, only a total of 12 residency slots were available. It was Dr. Ejercito who pioneered the restructuring of the residency training program into three ORL residents per year level. Furthermore, it was during Dr. Ejercito's term that a post-residency graduate was chosen as the chief resident.

His integrity was beyond question. Rather than face the possibility of naming his eldest son as chief resident, he compelled his son to seek further fellowship abroad.

A Trailblazer

Dr. Napoleon Ejercito can be called the father of head and neck surgery in the Philippines. While Dr. Tierry Garcia initiated the expansion of the specialty of Otorhinolaryngology to include head and neck surgery, it was Dr. Ejercito who nurtured and strengthened it to what it is today. As a testament to Dr. Ejercito's legacy, the stipend of the fellow of the Head and Neck Program of the Department of ORL –PGH was made available by an alumnus of the department, and was named after him.

His dedication to the discipline was beyond comparison. Even when he was the Chair, Dr. Ejercito continued to operate on charity patients and demonstrated operative procedures to residents on a regular basis.

His retirement did not dampen his zeal to further the cause of ORL. He continued to support the different programs of the society and attended society conventions and departmental conferences whenever possible, which gained the admiration of younger generation of residents.

Dr. Napoelon Ejercito: A strong pillar, a dedicated leader, a trailblazer. Such a man will truly be missed.