



# FICOConnect

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF FICOBANK

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## FICOBANK Marks Its Emerald Year with Historic Events

On its 35th year, FICOBANK commemorated its humble, but noble, beginnings, dating back as far as the mid-1970s, with splendid celebrations held on September 10, 2011 at its Head Office and Corporate Center in Cauayan City, Isabela. The theme "Making a Big Difference" reverberated FICOBANK's corporate identity of being owned by many and servicing the majority, as well as its mission of bringing about the economic ascendancy of the people in the countryside. It, likewise, affirmed its commitment to remain as a bank that really makes a big difference—an oasis for people to turn to in times of tight financial need.

Unlike the previous anniversary celebrations, this year's commemoration of the founding day of FICOBANK was indeed remarkably special, as it was represented by historic events. At eight o'clock in the morning, the blessing and dedication rites of the new FICOBANK Head Office building was held. Rev. Nerissa S. Palafox of the United Methodist Church in Cauayan City, Isabela, took charge of the ceremonial activity. The occasion was honored by the presence of the directors, officers and some staff of the Bank, including invited guests, who are government officials, business/community leaders, former directors and agricultural cooperative development officers, and valued customers.

With its aesthetically-designed structure and comfy banking lobby, the Bank's Head Office has now a competitive edge in offering its customers a refreshing banking experience. It is also well-positioned to support continuously its customers' banking needs with more convenience.



Photo shows the unveiling of the first-ever coffee table book of FICOBANK by the Chairman of the Board, Mr. Flordelino A. Almazan, the President & CEO, Mr. Herminio G. Ocampo, and the Executive Vice President & COO, Ms. Soledad S. Cabantac.

## FICOBANK's Biggest Shots in 2011

The year in review proves to be one of the best years for FICOBANK. Just like the country, the Bank, in particular, had its share of remarkable shots that enhanced its stature and even bolstered its stability. As a year-end tradition, here in *FICOConnect*, we have listed 10 of the biggest events that have redefined FICOBANK as a prominent player in countryside development. Here is a rundown of FICOBANK's biggest shots in 2011:

- 10. Bankwide TODA Loan Rollout.** As FICOBANK's Tricycle Operators and Drivers Assistance (TODA) Loan had its successful pilot testing and rollout in Region 2, it was eventually introduced into the bankwide marketplace on May 2, 2011. With this final rollout, the Bank's first and foremost business objective of capturing a big chunk of the trikers' segment, both in absolute and relative market shares, will not be far-fetched.
- 9. Hosting of Another Study Visit.** FICOBANK—without any dilly-dallying—had gladly granted the request of Tagum Coop for a three-day Study

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## FICOBANK ATMs Are Now Available in Echague and Maddela

As the power of technology continues to invade banking, and as banks are now surrounded by educated, highly-sophisticated and discriminating customers, there is a compelling need for FICOBANK to join the bandwagon in banking by putting up its on-premise automated teller machines (ATMs) in its branches and extension offices.

An ATM, also known as cash point or cash machine, is a computerized telecommunication device that provides the customers of financial institutions with access to 24/7 financial transactions in a public space without the need of a bank teller or cashier. With ATM, the customers can access their respective bank accounts by making cash withdrawals, taking out credit card cash advances and/or checking account balances.

To complement its fee-based services, FICOBANK put up its first-ever through-the-wall ATMs in its banking premises in Echague, Isabela and Maddela, Quirino, after it got a Certification of No Objection from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, and was accredited by BancNet, to offer ATM services through an affiliate switch network. The major reason why the



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The first, second and third floors of the Bank's Corporate Center were filled with members, supporters and friends of the FICOBank family to witness the 35th Founding Anniversary program. A soulful doxology rendition by the Kalibnusan Chorale at 10:00 a.m. signaled the formal opening of the second phase of the said momentous events. It was immediately followed by the singing of the Philippine national anthem and the FICOBank theme song. The Chairman of the Board, Mr. Flordelino A. Almazan, lightened up the air with his simple, yet wit-filled, opening remarks. He aptly gave credit and recognition to the Bank's pioneers and prime movers, as well as those who have been part of the Bank since its inception, for their respective contributions in making FICOBank a prominent and premier cooperative bank in the country for years now. He also called for the utmost unity and cooperation among its now, new and next crop of FICOBankers, so as to achieve greater heights in its banking endeavors.

Five FICOBankers—Mr. Oscar M. Maninantan, Ms. Loida C. Dela Cruz, Mr. Romel B. Ramos, Mr. Leonardo R. Vergara and Mr. Rolando M. Ibay—received Loyalty Awards for their 10 years of dedicated and meritorious service to the Bank. The President & CEO, Mr. Herminio G. Ocampo, along with the Executive Vice President & COO, Ms. Soledad S. Cabantac, and the Chairman of the Board conferred each awardee a 12-karat gold brooch, depicting the Bank's iconic logo.



After witnessing an impressive entertainment number from the event's performers, President Ocampo took the opportunity to deliver his anniversary message. He gave emphasis on the essence of this particular occasion. He also extended his profound gratitude for the tremendous efforts that every FICOBanker, whether as a director or employee, has contributed for the continuing success of the Bank, despite the harsh conditions brought about by various forces and events affecting the economy, in general, and the banking industry, in particular.

The recognition of the Best Performing Branches in 2010 took place afterward, with FICOBank Alicia taking the highest plum—a feat that beat its previous year's place in the list of topnotch performers. FICOBank Roxas (Isabela) and FICOBank Aparri (Cagayan) clinched the

second and third places, respectively. The BMs of these branches in CY 2010 were correspondingly adjudged as the Top Performing Branch Managers.

Regarded as the most-anticipated moment and the highlight of the 35th Founding Anniversary was the official unveiling of the Bank's first-ever Coffee Table Book, titled *Celebrating a Vital Past, Creating a Vibrant Future: Bank. People. Service.* This commemorative picture-story book aimed to chronicle the humble beginnings and the forward-looking path of FICOBank, which were interwoven in textual and visual tapestry of significant events and development highpoints within a space-time continuum. Stuck in every picture were the unforgettable moments of the Bank's significant activities and events, as well as the men and women who devoted the prime years of their lives in bringing fruition to what FICOBank is today—a leader in the Philippine cooperative banking industry.

In his closing remarks during this celebrated annual affair, the Vice Chairman of the Board, Mr. Florentino T. Somera, Jr., presented a memorabilia—a newspaper dated December 12, 1979—announcing the inauguration on January 2, 1980 of the 1000th rural bank of the country, which is widely known today as FICOBank.

The week-long founding anniversary celebrations wound up with a very significant milestone, marking an important point of the Bank's development and growth. FICOBank reached its Php2-billion level of resources—a phenomenal achievement in only three years after hitting the first-billion-peso mark in 2008. The entire FICOBank family is proud of the fact that the Bank has truly become a valuable community asset that it opted to be. The support of the community folks has been overwhelming.

Throughout these 35 remarkable years, the members of the FICOBank family have never strayed from the institutional beliefs and core values passed on by their founders. And they will always remain adherents to the Bank's key corporate-brand promise of staying in the business of banking for good.

— Jackie Juan & Fae Monsanto

## A New Trend in Microfinance

By Marjorie J. Cabigas

As I was beginning to enrich my knowledge in microfinance, the opportunity to attend the Microfinance Council of the Philippines, Inc. (MCPI) Annual Conference came in the way. The conference was held in July 2011 at the Hyatt Hotel in Ermita, Manila and attended by representatives from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), Grameen Foundation,

NGOs, donors, cooperatives and banks.

I was amazed to know the developments in microfinance, as I watched Ms. Piedad Geron, Asian Development Bank's consultant for microfinance, deliver her PowerPoint presentation. From her research, about 15,000 institutions are now providing microfinance services to 5.1 million clients in the country. Those microfinance service-providers include 25 NGOs, 200 banks and 14,700 cooperatives. How far-reaching, I thought. But quickly, it came to my mind the tremendous competition these thousands of MFIs hurdle each day and how FICOBank can withstand such competition for these coming years.

The latter part of Ms. Geron's presentation seems to be the answer to the question at the back of my mind. FICOBank has to be on track with the newest trend in microfinance. MFIs are now inclined toward non-financial services and diversification of MF products. Why, there is now an MF product called "water supply" and some NGOs in Central Luzon are reported to have successfully implemented it.

I remember a conversation with an area manager of the National Livelihood Development Corporation about business development services (BDS) to MF clients, another non-financial service. He said that funders are becoming more and more particular on BDS, as one new requirement for MFI credit lines. Also, recently, our SVP emphasized the importance of financial literacy campaigns to our existing clients, as part of client relationship.

Then I began to think again. I realized that microfinance is not all about competition, outreach and portfolio quality. I almost forgot that microfinance has an important half, its social purpose. Now that the new trend in microfinance is more focus on this aspect, I too must get the sense of it. Thanks for all the information I'm getting from microfinance experts.

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## Developing and Fostering a Passion for Learning and Commitment

*"Intellectual growth should commence at birth and cease only at death."*  
- Albert Einstein

Passion for learning truly evolves and flourishes. Hence, the improvement of one's mental ability to reason and show good judgement.

The Ateneo de Manila University's Center for Continuing Education (CCE) supplements the graduates' competencies with program offerings that are zeroed in on the promotion of excellence, service and ethics in the workplace. By partnering with organizations for the continuing education of their respective officers, the quality and productivity of the growing workplace-based human resources will certainly be enhanced, as they are assured of total quality management.

A number of short-term and non-degree graduate courses are being offered yearly by CCE. Each course may last from a few weeks to several months, but typically less than one year. Yet it produces immediate results, bringing out the best in each participant, as a person and as a professional, thereby, enhancing the performance of tasks in the workplace.

For the 2011 Diploma Program in Banking (DPB) of CCE, two senior officers of FICOBANK, Mr. Emilio U. Rico, Jr., Senior Vice President for Operation and Banking Services, and Atty. Hubert E. Molina, Senior Vice President for Administration and Support Services, were given the opportunity to enroll in this significant non-degree course. The diploma program has been taken on February 16 to June 18, 2011, on a 22-day staggered schedule.

DPB introduced the basic principles of why banks exist. It dealt, in details, with the principles of financial intermediation, the primary and ancillary functions of banks and other financial intermediaries, the important roles that they play in the country's economic development, and the regulatory environment in which they operate. The program, likewise, presented the structure of the Philippine Banking System, including the highlights of the relevant laws, rules and regulations that govern the system's participants.

This intensive program was designed as a career-empowerment vehicle toward the most superior and rewarding career in banking. It offers the participant the opportunity to acquire and develop the skills and competencies required of a banker, the strategic approaches and techniques of a consultant, and the analytical and methodological decision-making abilities of a corporate director.

The program drew heavily on the strength of the module facilitators, who are all recognized as industry practitioners with sterling credentials, and the Ateneo de Manila University, as a learning institution with the highest standards of academic rigor. The three program modules—Principles of Money and Banking; Key Banking Functions, Activities and Services; and Program Integration—made use of training methodologies, such as lectures, interactive discussions, case studies and practical exercises.

The two senior vice presidents of FICOBANK have successfully completed the course requirements of the Diploma Program in Banking of the Center for Continuing Education of the Ateneo de Manila University. As a commitment, they will apply into the workplace all what they have learned from this prestigious school. Not surprisingly, the Bank is now benefiting from its investment on the professional development of its only two SVPs.

- Christian Joy R. Reyes

## Todo Finance Unit Gets Underway

Effective February 2012, the Todo Finance Unit of the Credit Department of FICOBANK, with two loan products under its wings—Microfinance and Todo Ani Loans—will start off performing its official function.

The decision of establishing the Todo Finance Unit has been prompted by the spectacular performance of the Todo Ani Loan and the somewhat-below-par productivity of Microfinance.

Todo Ani Loan has exhibited a great feat in its first six months of operation. Since it was officially included in the list of the Bank's loan products on June 6, 2011, it has already registered a total portfolio of P98.23 million, consisting of 1,511 accounts, with a near-zero past due ratio. This overall performance shows the potential of Todo Ani Loan in becoming another winning product of the Bank. Although it is an unsecured loan, which caters the credit requirements of the underserved segments of the agriculture sector (e.g., small crop-growers, livestock/poultry-raisers and fisherfolk), the guarantee coverage by the Agricultural Guarantee Fund Pool (AGFP) is of massive use in mitigating the risk involved in lending to the collateral-deficient borrowers.

With its fast-paced growth and earning-contribution potential, the Bank deemed it necessary to disintegrate the Todo Ani Loan from the Regular Loans Unit, as the same is already overloaded, and integrate it into another unit of the Credit Department, which has an absorptive capacity. Inasmuch as the Microfinance Unit lags behind in production and the present work of the Account Officers (AOs) permits additional load, aside from the fact that the Todo Ani Loan is designed for micro and small agri, it is simply logical and practical to join Todo Ani and Microfinance together into Todo Finance Unit. This new organizational unit will have P130.80-million loan portfolio and 2,797 accounts to start with.

As laid out in its organizational structure, the unit will be manned by a Unit Head, who will be backstopped by seven Credit Officers (COs), two Credit Assistants (CAs) and twenty-seven Account Officers. The operating units of the Bank will be grouped into seven clusters, with one CO per cluster. A CA and an AO will be assigned in each area office and branch/extension office, respectively.

This integration initiative is expected to maximize the efficiency of the AOs, ensure the complete/appropriate documentation and efficient/effective monitoring of loans, and enhance the combined production, portfolio quality and income of the Microfinance and Todo Ani Loans of the Bank.

- Dionicio A. Marquez, Jr.

## FICOBank Launches Its New Pangarap Savings Account

The primary reason for the existence, permanence and prominence of FICOBank is its customers, and providing them with the best array of financial products and services is its overriding objective. For this reason, the Bank is continuously finding and making ways to create new products or improve existing ones. The Pangarap Savings Account (PSA) is one that recently got major product enhancement. It was redesigned in a way that can satisfy the need of the now underserved, or may be unserved, market of the defunct pre-need companies.

On January 6, 2012, Mr. Emilio U. Rico, Jr., Senior Vice President for Operation & Banking Services, conducted the Product Orientation for all the managers of the three-tiered banking offices (area, branch and extension) of the Bank. It was also attended by the respective staff of the Treasury, Business Development and Internal Audit Departments. Dr. Robert R. Palac, BDD Head, Mr. Rommel M. Lindo, ICTD Head, and Mr. Jackie M. Juan, Marketing Assistant, provided technical support to SVP Rico on matters concerning product guidelines, system management and marketing strategies. To make sure that no cloud of doubts will remain after the orientation, the participants raised several questions about the new Pangarap Savings Account. The resource persons ably shed light on the issues, concerns and needs that were brought out.

The new Pangarap Savings Account, which was officially launched bankwide on January 9, 2012, is a special savings deposit product of FICOBank that offers the best-laid plans so far. It is an exceptional financial solution that aims to help the accountholders in fulfilling their most practical and long-drawn-out dreams—education, housing, retirement, business, travel, wedding, etc. PSA has a competitive edge over those products of similar type that are currently offered in the financial/pre-need market. Specifically, it has these salient features: plan amount ranges from P50,000.00 to P500,000.00; initial deposit is equivalent to one monthly savings of the chosen Pangarap Savings; plan term is one to ten years; with free life insurance (natural or accidental death) equivalent to the plan amount; convertible anytime to Ordinary Savings Account (subject to interest rate adjustment and refund of insurance premium); with highly-competitive interest rate; and fully insured with PDIC. This better-than-before Pangarap Savings Account of the Bank will be distinctively positioned in the minds of its target market as: *"An exceptional financial solution that makes your dream come true."*

Anyone can avail of this best-of-its-class deposit product of FICOBank, provided that he/she is: a natural person who knows how to read and write; at least six years old, but should not exceed the age of 65 at the maturity date of the account; and compliant with the requirements prescribed by the Anti-Money Laundering Act (AMLA).

For all those who wish to make their dreams come true, FICOBank's new Pangarap Savings Account is the key.

- FML Monsanto

## Continuing a Commitment: The FICOBank's 2011 Care and Share Program



Year 2011 is another blessed year for FICOBank, and there's no other way to be thankful for it than to share its blessings to those who are less fortunate in life, especially during the Yuletide season, through the Bank's annual Care and Share Program.

This year's gift-giving activity was held at the Ilagan Provincial Hospital (Gov. Faustino N. Dy, Sr. Memorial Hospital) in Calamagui 2nd, Ilagan, Isabela on December 23, 2011. The respective staff of the Human Resource and Administration Department (HRAD), Business Development Department (BDD) and Ilagan Extension Office of FICOBank, accompanied by some on-the-job trainees from the Isabela State University, worked together for this giving of simple, yet worthy, gifts to the program beneficiaries. The gift packs contained noodles, rice, cereals, biscuits, juices, medicines and canned goods.

The beneficiaries of this corporate-social-responsibility program of the Bank were the indigent patients in the different ward sections of the hospital, especially those in the surgical, maternity and pediatric wards. The smiles on the faces and a lot of "thank you" from the patients and their families, during the distribution of the gift packs, were all worth enough as intangible return on the Bank's CSR-related investment.

The Ilagan Provincial Hospital is owned and operated by the local government unit (LGU) of Isabela. This year's gift-giving program should have not been made possible without the invaluable support of Dr. Felimon Donato, chief doctor of the hospital, and his staff. On their part, they conveyed their heartfelt thanks to management of the Bank for choosing their hospital as the recipient of this 2011 Care and Share Program.

As this program is a continuing CSR commitment of FICOBank, more people who are bereft of resources will surely benefit in the years to come.

- Sharolyn G. Bite & Ma. Josanella Q. Alberto



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your dream  
come true.

## FICOBANK Holds 2011 Christmas Party



Celebrating the breeze of the Yuletide season, the FICOBankers savored a glitz-filled Christmas Party on December 17, 2011 at the Center for Professional Development Building of the University of La Salette (ULS) in Santiago City. The celebration, which had a considerable variation from the prior year, became a bigger event, as the Bank reunited all its employees from across the three regions where it operates. Hours before the party, the employees had the opportunity to greet their peers, get acquainted with new faces and bond with one another.

The Assumpta Chorale, singer-students of ULS, graced the event with a soulful doxology rendition, which was followed by the singing of the national anthem. Fr. Steven G. Munar, Vice President for Student & Spiritual Affairs of the said university, delivered an entertaining, yet enlightening and inspiring, Christmas message that ended with a prayer. Meanwhile, Mr. Herminio G. Ocampo, President & CEO of FICOBANK, did the honor of welcoming the visitors, directors and employees on that year-end event. The Chairman of the Board, Mr. Flordelino A. Almazan, on his part, gave an inspirational message while the Vice Chairman of the Board, Mr. Florentino T. Somera, Jr., wrapped up the opening ceremonies with closing remarks.

The sumptuous lunch, a supposed heavy meal to satiate one's stomach, only turned out as an appetizer to the event's real main dish. Many were already on their special get-ups and make-ups (upon arriving at the venue) for the much-awaited "main course" of the party—the FICOBANK's Christmas Dance Competition. This time, as FICOBANK always yearn for something new, 31 group performers were lined up. These performers were divided into two categories—Category I (17 branches, 3 floors of the corporate office and the area office in Central Luzon) and Category II (extension offices).

Signaling the start of the dance contest was the introduction of the members of the board of judges, who were all Saletenian P.E. instructors. With fully charged-up audience and ready-to-take-shots cameras, the venue was filled with cheers and shouts, as the first group of performers presented its dance number. The Category II performers took the dance floor first; they were followed by the Category I performers. The atmosphere was surrounded by more excitement and anticipation when the presentations—with high level of energy and heaps of props—from each group were shown on stage, one after the other. The number of female spectators tripled during presentations where male officers and staff made

their "sexy moves," with equally "sexy outfits." Indeed, each group performance was an outcome of a rigid preparation.

As FICOBANK's way of giving gifts to its workforce, raffle draws were done in between presentations. Winners of major prizes were: Ms. Cindy P. Del Rosario, Loan Bookkeeper, Concepcion Branch (1st prize – 32-inch Sharp TV); Ms. Ma. Graciela Sacro, Teller, Solano Branch (2nd prize – 7.4-cubic-foot Panasonic Refrigerator); and Mr. Vildomar Torres, AMLD Assistant, Corporate Office (3rd prize – 5.2-kg. Panasonic Washing Machine). More than a hundred consolation prizes were also given away to share merriment to lucky FICOBankers.

As the moment that everyone had been waiting for has finally come, top placers were announced. For Category II, the following were the winning groups: 1st place – Ilagan EO (P40,000.00); 2nd place – Cabagan EO (P20,000.00); and 3rd place – Aurora EO (P10,000.00). On the other hand, the adjudged winners for Category I were: 1st place – 2nd Floor/Corporate Office (P65,000.00), which presented a burlesque-inspired show with a blend of Filipinos' way of celebrating Christmas across the globe, making OFWs as the highlight; 2nd place – 1st Floor/Corporate Office (P45,000.00), which showcased a Las Vegas-inspired show with a mix of futuristic guises; and 3rd place – Cabanatuan Branch (P35,000.00), which entertained the audience with its youngster-like presentation. All group performers were winners nonetheless, as consolation prizes of P2,500.00 and P5,000.00 each were given to other group performers from Category II and Category I, respectively. The awarding of winners was led by Chairman Flordelino A. Almazan, and assisted by President & CEO Herminio G. Ocampo and EVP & COO Soledad S. Cabanac.

Mr. Arvin Alivia, the station manager of Hot FM/DWYE 89.7 KHz of the Alivia Media Services and a long-time media partner of the Bank, masterfully steered FICOBANK's 2011 Christmas Party.

The FICOBANK family dedicates the success of this annual merry-making activity to the most gracious, the birthday celebrant and the primary reason for the celebration of Christmas—Jesus Christ, our Savior.

– FML Monsanto & JM Juan





## The Imperatives of Anti-Money Laundering Compliance Program

In its avowed goal to protect and preserve the integrity and confidentiality of bank accounts, and to ensure that the country will not be used as a money-laundering site for the proceeds of unlawful activities, the Philippine government signed Republic Act No. 9160, otherwise known as the Anti-Money Laundering Act (AMLA), into law in September 2001. It was amended by Republic Act No. 9194 in March 2003. Consistent with foreign policy, the Philippine government is committed to extend cooperation in transnational investigations and prosecutions of persons involved in money-laundering activities.

By virtue of the authority vested on it, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) issued Circular No. 706, re Updated Anti-Money Laundering Rules and Regulations, to implement effectively the provisions of AMLA. As a covered financial institution, we, at FICOBANK, are required by the said BSP circular to adopt and implement an Anti-Money Laundering Compliance Program. Our failure to do so could expose our business to criminal, civil and/or administrative penalties. With it, our Bank has the best defense against becoming unwittingly involved in a possible violation of the provisions of AMLA. We can also use such program to demonstrate that our Bank is a good corporate citizen, which takes reasonable steps to avoid involvement—through willful blindness or otherwise—in legitimizing the proceeds of unlawful activity or in facilitating the financing of terrorism.

Corollary to our Bank's corporate governance and risk management framework, we are duty-bound to adopt and carry out effective money-laundering-and-terrorist-financing-prevention policies and procedures, as part of our overall Anti-Money Laundering Compliance Program (AMLCP). The main objective of our AMLCP is to dovetail the cause of the government to protect and preserve the integrity and confidentiality of bank accounts, and to support its campaign in combating money laundering and terrorist financing.

The "know-your-customer" rule, as a cornerstone principle of our business ethics and banking practices, shall be promoted in full scale to ensure that our Bank shall not, at all times, be used, intentionally or unintentionally, as a money-laundering site for the proceeds of unlawful activities by criminals and terrorists. We shall see to it that our head office, branches and other offices, regardless of geographic location, will not only comply with the rules, regulations and issuances on AMLA, but carry them out in accordance with superior and principled culture of compliance.

Finally, as a matter of principle and commitment, our Board of Directors, together with our Management Team, will—on an ongoing basis—review and revise, as necessary, our AMLCP's objectives, strategies, policies, procedures and processes, so as to remain adherent to AMLA.

*Flordelino A. Almazan*

## Growing Our Business: The Big Picture



FICOBANK has been in the business of banking for over 35 years now. For this span of time, the Bank brought in—directly or indirectly—numerous events, undertakings and accomplishments that have helped it to evolve and mature. They have also, almost invariably, increased its importance and prominence.

FICOBANK per se is a “work in progress.” Its prior-now-and-next development phases reflect its corporate transformation. With our lofty intent to transform FICOBANK into an even bigger, better, sustainable and, above all, a leading countryside bank, which is distinguished as a valuable community asset, we perceive the pressing need to develop an appropriate business model that will enable us to make our Bank’s further transformation a lot easier and faster.

We have noted that, over a considerable period of time, a related organization has become increasingly important to a bank, as the scope of its activities has expanded and the locations of its business operations have multiplied. A related organization or subsidiary can provide opportunities for product diversification, augmentation of customer base, geographic expansion or joint investment. It can likewise increase its consolidated earnings, as long as the bank’s relationship with a related organization will not create conflicts of interest and present complex corporate governance and risk management issues.

With the foregoing premise, we seriously consider the creation of our subsidiary company. Through the establishment of the FICOBANK Business-Related Organization, or FICOBRO, which will engage in pawnshop operation and allied services (i.e., money transfer, remittance, foreign exchange, etc.), our Bank can expand the conduct of its business activities and deliver its products and services to an ever-increasing number of customers by means of this subsidiary company. The controlling interest that FICOBANK will own in this business-related organization will be in the form of voting stock. Owning majority shares of stock will give our Bank the right to receive a sizeable proportion of the profits of its allied entity.

What’s more? We will also vigorously pursue our corporative model, as an instrument in furthering our business growth agenda. With our corporative concept, we can raise a lot of virtual permanent funds from our corporative members. We will grow our core business and allied undertakings by fully mobilizing the benefits that are obtainable through their across-the-board financial participation, using the universally-practiced cooperative principles. As such, we will reward their full financial participation through our only-one-of-its-kind corporative participation reward.

I am very sure that FICOBANK will be the only bank to do things this way. As this business model is deeply rooted in our cooperative upbringing, it will remain as our competitive advantage—our winning way.

*Herminio G. Ocampo*

## Executive's Standpoint

Soledad S. Cabantac



In the face of the many disturbances and challenges that were brought about by various factors (global and local, natural and man-made, and so forth), our Bank—through God's grace, goodness and guidance—beat all the odds and ended 2011 on a high note.

On worldwide setting, year 2011 was characterized by the weakening of numerous economies. The political instability and civil strife in Middle East and North Africa triggered the surge in oil prices. The debt crisis in the Euro zone remained a drag on the global economy. The domestic economy of the United States continued to be unstable and vulnerable to distress. The super tsunami in Japan caused major blow to its people, properties and economy. The great flood in Thailand has taken its toll on the local markets, particularly on the automotive industry. These upsetting events, aside from those that happened in other countries, affected the rest of the world.

On its part, the Philippines was not spared from the incidental effects of the roller-coaster economies in Europe and the United States. The harsh impacts that were sparked off by Typhoons Pedring, Quiel and Sendong were terribly felt not only by the affected people but also by the major economic sectors, especially the agriculture sector. Our country's economy, as represented by gross domestic product (GDP), also posted a snail-paced growth due to the underspending of the government and private sectors and the delayed implementation of the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Program.

## Ending 2011 on a High Note

Against the foregoing global and local backdrop that caused a handful of disturbances and challenges in our operations, FICOBank remained at its best. We have proven that our exceptional banking practices could withstand the toughest test of times. Reaching our first billion-peso level of resources in 2008, after three decades, we have done a very significant accomplishment in 2011 by making our Bank's resources twofold in just three years. Our total assets of P2.02 billion, as of end-December 2011, gives a perfect picture of FICOBank as a bigger and stronger bank, ready to get to greater heights next year and in the coming years.

With some adjustments and readjustments—as well as direction and redirection—on our banking operations, we're glad that, in the end, our Bank was able to book a net income of P51.12 million. This 2011's figure represents an increase of P3.51 million, or 7.37 percent, in comparison to the year-earlier period. It is also 1.0225 times higher than the P50.00 million projected net income for the year.

Loan volume also registered a new record high of P6.04 billion. It surpassed the previous year's record of P5.94 billion by 1.68 percent. The increase in loan volume was primarily due to our new financial product, the Todo Ani Loan, which is now emerging as one of our Bank's winning products.

More importantly, our capital accounts, as of the end of the year in review, rose to P283.12 million. It went up by 20.85 percent. This is an indication that our Bank's capital is getting more resilient.

For ending 2011 on a high note, we thank you—our stockholders, funders, customers, directors, officers and staff—for your untiring support to, and unceasing trust on, our Bank.

## Legal Matters

Atty. Hubert E. Molina



I was tempted to write about the ongoing impeachment of Chief Justice Renato Corona,

which is the most talk about topic today. Anybody has his/her own analysis complete with a vivid blow by blow account of what happened every hearing. Everybody wanted to share their points of view on the matter. This is probably because the public was engrossed about the reasons behind, what is at stake, possible outcome and complexities of this controversy. More so that the proceedings are widely publicized, covered live by radio and television networks and even explained in Filipino, as if the voters or the masses are the ultimate judges and not the senators. However, no matter how interesting the topic would be, to discuss further would be too much.

## Live-in Relationships/Arrangements

Let me then discuss another controversial, but not much talk about, issue; i.e., "live-in relationships or arrangements" or what is also known as common-law marriage. To those who are contemplating marriage in the future because they are not yet prepared financially, emotionally, or for some other reasons, they call this as the "trial or warranty period." If the parties' expectations are satisfied during the said period, couples who are both capacitated to marry will seal their permanent union by getting married. An increasing number are liberal enough to agree to such an arrangement because of their fear of being imprisoned in the bond of marriage with someone who is not meant for them. Without the money to seek an annulment in the courts of law, they can be included in the list of countless victims of love, especially so if the relationship turned to violence. For those people who are married, but separated, who cannot afford an annulment, "*harangan man ng pison*," will continue to find their soul mates, and if they finally do, they are certainly forced to resort

## From My Notes & Files

Emilio U. Rico, Jr.



## The Paramount Importance of Business Plans

When you want to establish a business, there are two valid questions that need to be satisfied. The first one would tackle "what business to undertake," while the

other one would focus on "how much capital is needed." Naturally, other minor concerns are also considered as inherent to these two pre-requisites.

Just as they say, starting a business is much easier. What would considerably prove arduous is if it'll make impact on its target market. And if it does, how long will it survive the mainstream? Of course, no specific formula has been invented to assure success in business, as constant changes in the market's behaviors continue to arise. However, some tool could be deemed helpful in directing a good venture—business plan.

For some businesspersons, the phrase "business planning" may invoke a feeling of dread. How are you supposed to know what is going to happen to your business when you haven't even made a sale? On a layman's point of view, this may prove right. However, business *gurus* think the other way.

According to some essays and articles, a business plan is created to explain and illustrate the vision you have for your business, and to motivate or persuade others to help you achieve that vision. To accomplish this, your plan will need to demonstrate on paper that you have a clear visualization of what your business is going to be. It needs to convince others that your business concept can be successful. And that you possess the expertise—alone or collectively—to assure that it will be both successful and profitable.

Taking into account FICOBank's business planning experience, we can conclude that the role of drafting a carefully-studied and

well-researched business plan is very vital for the Bank's direction. To prove this fact, we can draw a comparison of the Bank's performance 30 years ago, when the operation of the Bank, is based merely on a hit-or-missed strategy, as against today when almost all our business undertakings are guided by plans—business plans—that have undergone in-depth analyses and thorough preparation. We may say that the result is amazing, as we have come up with a wider market base, sound financial standing and bigger resources, even reaching our first billion-peso mark in 2008, and doubling it in 2011 in just a matter of three years. Aside from these, we could not belittle our Bank's bottom line, which grew year by year amid the inauspicious economic backdrop, and the deepening trust and confidence that we get from the banking public. Definitely, the impressive financial figures that FICOBank posted in its financial statements in recent years were not merely based on luck, and definitely not a *tsamba*. We could confidently say that these were the results of the top-middle-and-lower management's collaborative effort in laying out the most significant and impact-based plans and programs, even before the new calendar year begins. Along the way, our business plans were never the same, as have been embarked earlier on. We always see to it that we revise them in accordance with the trends and behaviors in the market.

As business plan serves as our reference point to track how far have we actually gone, or how effective were our execution and practices, we welcome the idea of consulting experts to help us reshape our future—a better and bigger FICOBank. We believe that investing in new ideas, with the aid of experts, are vital in our quest for bigness.

As things are readied for our transformation in the coming years, we are firmly focused on our corporate destiny of becoming one of the leading thrift banks in the country. With a well-crafted business plan, who knows, one day, we'll be there on top!

## Proud to be a FICOBanker

Carlyn M. Vilorio



## Cheers for Year 2012! – Looking Forward to a Year of Unprecedented Divine Favor for God's Children

The other year, I wrote that 2010 to 2019 is a decade of "One-Ders" (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013,

2014, 2015, etc.). Dividing this 10-year period to bits of awe and wonder for God's marvelous deeds, I deeply believe that 2012 is a Year of unprecedented Divine Favor for all His children. Perhaps some of you guys reading this are raising eyebrows or running things in your head, asking yourselves, hmmm... is she serious? Well, I am serious from the bottom of my heart. Pardon me for such bravado. But I am a firm believer of the authority and power of God's Word—the Bible. So what do the Scriptures say about the new year?

First, our God is a god of progression. He is never a regression God. Our Father in heaven wants to bless us, so that we all what our FICOBank's family philosophy becomes, that is, "to be better than before." God said in His word in 2Corinthians 3:18 that He wants us to be:

"...changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

In Isaiah 43:18, God commands us to...

"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past." Because on verse 19, "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland."

This Bible passage tells us to leave our yesterdays behind and to be conscious of the NEW and FRESH blessings and miracles (desert and streams in the wasteland) that He will make possible for our lives.

Second point to be so excited for 2012 is the fact that God enjoys blessing His children. According to Psalm 35:27,

"May those who delight in my vindication shout for joy and gladness; may they always say, 'The LORD be exalted, who delights in the well-being of his servant.'"

Wow! What a great and wonderful assurance from our Father, who has in His heart is only our best interest! Bless His name!

And lastly, there is this precious promise of God in Ephesians 3:20 for us all...

Other translation states:

"God is able to do EXCEEDINGLY, ABUNDANTLY, IMMEASURABLY, BEYOND ALL whatever we can ask for or imagine for our lives."



See, now you know why this year of Divine Favor is for you and me. We just need to walk side by side with our God, obeying Him

## Live-in...

from page 8

to live-in relationships this time because of the previous and existing marriage. There are other reasons, but the fact remains that despite its moral implications, the increasing number of lovers who resort to this kind of arrangement is alarming.

Just like other relationships, a problem arises from live-in arrangements. As they always say, money would always be an issue, as money is the root of all evil. Truly, most cases in court involve money or property. So the question is, will those parties of an illicit relationship have rights under the existing law? Acknowledging the presence of this kind of relationship despite the moral issue surrounding the arrangement, the Family Code lays down the property rights of the man and a woman who are entangled in such a relationship. The law, however, made a distinction between: (i) those in such a relationship who are capacitated to marry each other; and (ii) those who are not. Included in the first category are those living together under a void or invalid marriage.

Under the first category, Article 147 of the Family Code provides that their wages and salaries shall be owned by them in equal shares and the property acquired by both of them through their work or industry shall be governed by the rules on co-ownership. In the absence of proof to the contrary, properties acquired while they lived together shall be presumed to have been obtained by their joint efforts, work or industry, and shall be owned by them in equal shares. Further, it is likewise provided that the housekeeper (housewife or househusband) or a party who did not participate in the acquisition by the other party of any property shall be deemed to have contributed jointly in the acquisition thereof, if the former's efforts consisted in the care and maintenance of the family and of the household. Further, and while they are living together, any disposal or encumbrance of their property acquired during their cohabitation and owned in common requires their mutual consent to be valid.

When only one of the parties to a void marriage is in good faith, the share of the party in bad faith in the co-ownership shall be forfeited in favor of their common children. In case of default of or waiver by any or all of the common children or their descendants, each vacant share shall belong to the respective surviving descendants. In the absence of descendants, such share shall belong to the innocent party. In all cases, the forfeiture shall take place upon termination of the cohabitation.

Under the second category, however, Article 148 of the Family Code provides that only the properties acquired by both of the parties through their actual joint contribution of money, property or industry shall be owned by them in common, in proportion to their respective contributions. In the absence of proof to the contrary, their contributions and corresponding shares are presumed to be equal. The same rule and presumption shall apply to joint deposits of money and evidences of credit. If one of the parties is validly married to

another, his or her share in the co-ownership shall accrue to the absolute community or conjugal partnership existing in such valid marriage. If the party who acted in bad faith is not validly married to another, his or her share shall be forfeited in favor of their common children or descendants, if any. If none, to the innocent party.

In other words, under Art. 148, only the properties acquired through their ACTUAL JOINT contribution of money, property or industry shall be owned by them in common (in proportion to their actual contributions). There is no presumption that properties were acquired through the partners' joint effort. Please also note that if one has a prior marriage, his/her share shall be forfeited in favor of that previous marriage (as an aside, the children under the second relationship shall be considered as illegitimate).

Aside from the property relations, there are also other provisions of the Family Code and special laws that deal with the effects of such a relationship.

Regarding the giving of gifts or donations whether direct or indirect between both married couples and common-law partners during their cohabitation, the provisions of Article 87 of the Family Code declares any such act as void, except the giving of moderate gifts on the occasion of family rejoicing. The rationale behind the provision of the law is to avoid the more dominating spouse or partner unjustly influence or taking advantage over the weaker spouse or partner, who, by reason of love and affection is likely to give in.

Republic Act 9262, otherwise known as the "Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004," likewise provide added rights to women in common-law relationships. They, as well as their children, are extended the same measure of protection and relief granted to married women and their legitimate children. This is without any form of distinction on the basis of their relationship.

In the event that a child is borne out of such a relationship, the child is considered illegitimate. Prior to the enactment of the new law, such child may only use the surname of the mother and, regardless of any circumstances, is prohibited from using the father's surname. Under Republic Act No. 9255, also known as "An Act Allowing Illegitimate Children to Use the Surname of their Father," illegitimate children can now use their father's surname. The law intends to remove (or diminish) the shame and stigma which accompanies illegitimacy. The benefit applies to everyone, whether born before or after the effectivity of the law, and includes registered and unregistered births.

More and more are into live-in arrangements nowadays, knowing fully well the moral, legal and other implications thereof. It's a risk going into such a relationship, but what can we say, many are blinded and cannot resist the powers of love. They are victims of love and the law, *favoring no one*, looks kindly on them.

## Cheers for Year 2012...

from page 9

cheerfully and trusting Him wholeheartedly, in our exciting journey this 2012!

Let's enjoy His unprecedented blessings for our lives!



### Living a Long and Satisfying Life



Granny Gloria Cabral Franco with her eight great grandchildren.

We were privileged to be invited to the 90th birthday celebration of an exceptional woman, whom we fondly call—**Granny Glory**. Celebrating her 90th birthday was indeed a cause of celebration because months before that, she suffered a stroke. Like most elderly at her age, she was just confined in her bed with caregivers attending to her. It was during that time that family and friends would flock to their house to visit and pray for her. I had a chance to see her in that state. I was so sad because she couldn't anymore embrace me tightly, as she used to. But being with her, even in that condition, was still a blessing. Because even with a very weak and slur speech, she was still able to pray for me. Imagine that! In a heart-tugging moment, her oldest great grandchild (aged 8) told her, "Granny, many people care about you." Indeed, many people knocked at heaven's gate for her healing. I believe that because of the surge of fervent prayers that swarmed Zion (God's dwelling place), God didn't have the heart to say no. So, Granny Glory recovered from her stroke and improved daily, from strength to strength, in her spirits. What a miracle!

Attending her 90th birthday celebration was more than a blessing for us than perhaps for her. Her birthday party was packed with many people from all walks of life. I saw prominent politicians, wealthy business people, Christians from different Churches, and even the one doing Granny Glory's hair in the parlor was there! All of them were the souls that Granny Glory has touched and made an impact all these years. During her speech, she said that she lives by **FAITH**. An acronym for her as, **For In All I Trust Him**. What a testament of a well-lived life—a life of meaning and significance not only for herself but for the many lives that she led to the Lord, in one way or the other.

My Pastor's wife said that God really preserves His saints for a purpose. In Granny Glory's case, I believe it is to inspire the young generations to dedicate their lives for God and live only for His glory. I also believe that God used Granny Glory's life to give people a glimpse of a glorious future for those who will follow the

Lord, and live their lives to the best life, which God intended for all of us. Years ago, when Granny Glory was 85 years old, I would see her leaving their house to attend Bible studies and does ministry work to advance God's Kingdom. I would kid her and told her that like Caleb, she still has the strength of a 45-year-old! But as the years toil by her fragile body, she could not anymore be mobile, as she was before. I asked her once if what she is doing now that she can't go out of their house as often as before to lead spiritual activities. She told me that she would spend most of the time to pray. She was praying for the country, the government officials, her unsaved friends and families, and many other petitions that she would like to bring to God's feet. I told to myself, what a praying Saint she is. Yes, she has lived a life of trust and prayer to Lord and with that, God blessed her with a **long and satisfying life**.



### Tribute to My First Boss – AURORA GACAYAN JUCAR (Part 2)

Last 2010, in my feature on Heroes, I wrote about my first Boss, whom I considered as one of my life's heroes, particularly in my professional upbringing. She trained her people, us, how to love and be passionate about our job, enjoy learning, and have exposed us to different professional gatherings, so as to contribute to our values and ethics as professionals. She also taught us what public service is all about. Well, I am again writing about her because I was able to resume contacts with her, thanks to Facebook (God bless Mark Elliot Zuckerberg!). She now works as the Executive Director of Molte Aries International Foundation in her hometown, La Union.

Ms. Jucar, whom I wrote about as the fierce lioness in the jungle is now a dedicated Christian consumed in God's works. Wow! Heavens must have overly rejoiced when she gave her life to Christ as her Lord and Saviour! Twenty years ago, this is something unimaginable. She used to smoke, drink, exhibit rage, say foul language and would many times offend people. All that in the office setting! I used to think that Christianity would be a hard sale for her. I was wrong. God's rays of love penetrate even to the coldest and hardest of hearts. Her life is a great testimony on how God can change the hearts of men. I happen to talk to her on some occasions recently over the phone, and still recognize that familiar chuckle of laughter that is her brand. Only now it is a more blissful brand! We were able to talk about her new faith and how God's grace changes her from glory to glory. She told me that she is humbled and honored that the people she trained before are now occupying managerial positions, both in the government and the private sectors. She said that her passion to coach all of us then paid off. To my mind, it is us who are now reaping the rewards of all what she did for us. I know my gratitude would not be enough to thank her for the patience (and impatience) she showered us then. Thank God that the seeds she planted grew and continue to flourish even in harsh conditions.

She is especially happy that I am now with FICOBank. According to her, based on her knowledge of the Bank, our FICOBank is a company that she can look up to as an organization composed of highly competent and very professional people. This remark coming from a seasoned manager with wide-reaching exposures here and abroad makes me beam with pride. This makes me really PROUD TO BE A FICOBANKER.

## FICOBank's First Branch Celebrates Its 16th Anniversary



FICOBank Roxas had its 16th anniversary celebration on September 30, 2011 at its new branch building located at the corner of Leal and Jara Streets in Bantug, Roxas, Isabela. The celebration was highlighted by the official blessing and dedication of the branch's two-storey building, which was officiated by Pastor Angel Guillermo of the Assemblies of God. The valued patrons, prospective clients and business allies of FICOBank Roxas were invited to celebrate the big event with the directors, officers and staff of the Bank.

FICOBank Roxas, the first branch of the Bank, was opened in September 1995. The persons at the helm of the branch were Ms. Edna R. Baniqued (1995-1996), Mr. Ernesto P. Pascua (1996-2000), Ms. Zorina S. Aradanas (2000-2010) and Mr. Jimmy R. Parongan (2010-2011). Each Branch Manager had his/her particular contribution to the growth and success of the branch. It cannot be refuted, however, that under the dynamic watch of Ms. Aradanas, FICOBank Roxas had successfully gained impressive headway, with long list of achievements, despite the intense competition in the Western District of Isabela due to the presence of giant players in the banking industry. It was, at this point in its history, when FICOBank Roxas had been hailed as the "Best Performing Branch" for nine consecutive years. Its winning streak was only interrupted in 2010 when it placed second in the bankwide ranking.

This biggest branch of the Bank, with total resources of about Php240 million (as of end-September 2011), has two extension offices (EOs), which

are strategically located in the municipalities of Aurora and Ilagan (Isabela). These EOs serve as the branch and clients' link-up points for banking information and services. It is part of the business strategy to grow the Bank's market footprint at locations that bring it closer to its clients. And through this "near-you" servicing strategy, FICOBank Roxas is even made more accessible to its target segments of the market. By the way, FICOBank Ilagan is now a full-fledged branch.

For 16 years, the branch stayed at the first floor of RMPC Building, which is of the same corner streets, but opposite its new site. Celebrating its 16th anniversary at its own building is indeed exciting. This reflects the next chapter, where FICOBank Roxas gives emphasis to its commitment of being there in the community for its customers. The new building of the branch will significantly boost the competitiveness and enhance the prominence of the Bank. It would also mean better banking experience to the clients and employees alike.

FICOBank Roxas has a significant market share for many of the financial products and services of the Bank, and is continuing to see more opportunities to grow further. The branch team, which is now headed by Engr. Tolentino D. Tabago, Jr., has a clear and consistent growth strategy. The branch is always open for business, as it intends to support continually the diverse financial needs of its existing and prospective clients. It remains committed to being there for them—through thriving and trying times.

– Leo E. Limbos

## Ilagan and Tuguegarao Extension Offices Are Now Full-Fledged Branches



After their conversion was authorized by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), the extension offices of the Bank in Ilagan, Isabela and Tuguegarao City, Cagayan are now full-fledged branches. It made a record in FICOBank's history as the first two out of the nine extension offices that eventually turned into regular branches.

It was on August 20, 2008 when FICOBank Ilagan was inaugurated as a field office (FO), under the domain of Roxas Branch. Subsequently, it became an extension office (EO) when BSP granted its authority to operate as an EO on March 2, 2010. On the other hand, the Tuguegarao Extension Office, which used to be attached to Solana Branch, held its grand opening on December 3, 2010. This significant development in the banking landscape of Ilagan and Tuguegarao EOs is in line with the branch network re-engineering thrust of the Bank.

FICOBank Ilagan and FICOBank Tuguegarao are now the Bank's

18th and 19th branches, respectively. The latter is a stand-alone branch, with no EO, while the former has now the jurisdiction over Tumauini and Cagayan EOs. These extension offices were previously attached to FICOBank Head Office (Cauayan City). It becomes the servicing branch of these EOs because of the proximity of their locations to the said branch. BSP approved the attachment of these EOs to the Ilagan Branch as well.

Ilagan is the capital town of Isabela while Tuguegarao is the city capital of Cagayan and the regional capital of the Cagayan Valley Region. They are both thickly populated, and are among the few primary growth centers of Region 2. These two host commercial centers of the said branches provide the Bank a greater opportunity to expand further its banking operations.

For Ilagan and Tuguegarao Branches, moving to a higher notch will enable them to have greater competitiveness, better performance and bigger income, as they offer full banking services with the right product repertoire to the right customer segments. They are now well-positioned to support continuously the banking needs of the local populace. Most importantly, these new branches of the Bank intend to build and maintain partnerships with the customers in a way and at a level that will benefit their respective business-and-personal banking goals and/or interests.

– Leo Limbos & Fae Monsanto

## New Place Houses FICOBank Aurora



After a couple of months of renovation, FICOBank Aurora finally occupied its new home on December 1, 2011 at WDN Bldg., National Hwy., San Jose, Aurora, Isabela, just a few meters away from its original office, also in the same municipality.

With this tactical move, the management, as well as the staff of the said banking unit, is more confident in achieving better performance, as it offers a cozy and more spacious office that could accommodate greater number of transacting and visiting customers. Likewise, it has a very strategic location. As its site is along the busiest foot-traffic lane in Aurora's commercial hub, the extension office has a competitive advantage in mounting the sales of its broad spectrum of financial products and services.

FICOBank Aurora has been established on July 18, 2007. It was originally one of the Bank's field offices before the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas approved its conversion into an extension office on February 3, 2011. Among the nine extension offices of the Bank, it clinched the first place in loan volume and loan portfolio, with aggregate amounts of P140.32 million and P37.58 million (as of end-2011), respectively. With net income of P4.32 million, it ranked second to FICOBank Echague, having a bottom line of P5.41 million. And it is among the top five in deposit generation for the year that has just ended.

Giving life on its operation is its dynamic, talented and goal-driven staff led by Mr. Vivencio Paquito S. Domingo. FICOBank Aurora is under the administrative and functional supervision of FICOBank Roxas—its servicing branch.

– Katrina Ann Alip-Bolo

## Making Our Mark

By Nelson R. Clemente

The second branch of FICOBank to set market foothold in the province of Pangasinan, our Malasiqui Branch is now making its significant mark not only to our Bank but also to its clients and the community, as it is successfully making remarkable developments happen.

Formally opened to serve the banking public two-and-a-half years ago, promoting and positioning the Bank as a major and relevant player in the area is quite tough, yet challenging, for our branch team. The stability of FICOBank is still the foremost concern by a big number of skeptic prospective clients in Malasiqui and neighboring towns due to the closure of some banks in the area, especially the smaller players like cooperative and rural banks.



Celebrating the branch anniversary through community involvement.

The foregoing challenge, however, further fanned the flames of our branch team to work doubly hard in getting our business tasks done. Modesty aside, among the four branches of the Bank in the province, we secured the highest overall ranking in terms of operational and financial performance. We got the first place in loan volume (P136.73 million), loan portfolio (P32.84 million) and net income (P2.56 million), as of December 31, 2011. With total deposits of P20.58 million, for the same period, we ranked second to Urdaneta Branch (P25.66 million). These outstanding achievements for CY 2011 reflect our

smooth-sailing and getting-better-and-bigger banking operation.

Although we maintained stringent credit standards, due to our branch's inferior portfolio quality in the past, we still kept our aggressiveness in lending, with the aim of



School teacher-depositors of FICOBank Malasiqui.

fulfilling our Bank's commitment to address the multidimensional credit needs of its multisectoral clientele. Our branch continued to increase its loan volume in agricultural, commercial, providential and other types of loans. The developmental impacts of our cumulative loan

## Serving the Bank for the Second Time



As has been repeatedly expressed, "Love is sweeter the second time around." This is the state of affairs of Mr. Romeo "Romy" C. Gatan with FICOBANK.

After a decade (1995-2005) of stint with FICOBANK—which started from the position of a Data Encoder, that gradually rose to (one after the other) Loan Bookkeeper, Assistant General Bookkeeper, General Bookkeeper, Accounting Assistant, Assistant to the Executive Vice President (EVP) and

Acting Branch Manager—Mr. Gatan availed of an early retirement program, in mid-2005, to find his luck as an overseas Filipino worker (OFW) in Japan. Subsequent to his more than two years in a drifting situation, he made no second thoughts but to rekindle his passion to work with FICOBANK, upon learning from a good friend that it will be putting up additional branches outside Region 2. "There's no place like home. As for me, I consider FICOBANK as my second family. I was very grateful when FICOBANK wholeheartedly opened its door, once again, for me," he says. With his sincere desire to serve the Bank for the second time, which was backstopped by his good track records and willingness to be assigned anywhere, the Board and Management gladly accepted his proposition.

Prior to his current assignment as Extension Office Manager (EOM) of FICOBANK Cabagan, Mgr. Romy has occupied several positions in the Bank, such as: Accounting Assistant of the Accounting Department; Branch Service Officer of Alicia Branch; Acting Manager of Solana Branch; Executive Assistant to the Office of the Executive Vice President & COO; Assistant Branch Manager of Urdaneta Branch; and Roving Technical Assistant of some of the Bank's operating units in Northeast, Central and Northwest Luzon. These transpired in only about five years since he came back in January 2007. "It was indeed a great adventure, and a learning experience, to be assigned to the different branches and extension offices of the Bank. In every stop, I picked up lessons that built the foundation of my banking career," he recalls.

At present, he and his team members at the Cabagan Extension Office carefully plan and properly carry out their individual responsibilities to hit all the targets of their banking unit. "We see to it that teamwork and enthusiasm, and the desire to succeed, push us in furthering the performance of our team. And everyday is a worthy day if you have accomplished something, no matter how small or big it is," he explains.

By the way, Mgr. Romy obtained in 1992 his bachelor's degree in Business Administration (BSBA), major in Accounting, from the St. Ferdinand College in Ilagan, Isabela. His quest for advanced studies resulted to a master's degree in Business Management (MBM) from the Graduate School of the University of La Salette in 1998. He also holds a professional civil service eligibility.

He hails from Lullutan, Ilagan, Isabela. It was also where he spent his years of elementary-and-high-school education and met his better half, Luzviminda. "At that time, I was in third year college while she was in her senior year in high school. We became friends and that friendship turned into a serious relationship. The rest, of course, is history," he giggly claims. Their marriage has been blessed with two angels—Romy, Jr. and Reymond. "I remember those days when our family had a great time together, and I couldn't ask for more. But God has a plan for all of us. In October 1998, a heartbreaking event came about. My son Reymond joined our Father in heaven because of leukemia. Our hearts bled beyond measure at that point. I just thought that it may be God's plan, and that, at least, we had three treasured years with him. There's no other way but to move on, and life must go on right? I know and I'm sure that he, our dear Reymond, is our angel now, who continues to guide and love us," he shares with a peaceful heart. Romy, Jr. is now seven years old, a Grade 1 pupil at the Naguilian

## Just Believe You Can, Positive Attitude Counts!

By Donna Jane F. Empania



"A man without a vision is like a boat without a rod." This principle urged me to live a life with a sense of direction, leading me to gain rewarding things in life. Since I was young, I really dreamed to be a "banker," with no other things in mind, aside from the perception that someone who works in a bank is dignified and respected. And, truly, God honors our little desires when the things we hoped for are entrusted to Him.

If I would have to describe myself, I would humbly declare that I am optimistic, enthusiastic and family-oriented. These

three simple qualities made my life quite meaningful. I was raised in a family that is bound together by a very tight relationship. Our family's financial needs were sustained through the determination and courage of our parents, who have been, and are still, striving so hard just to provide us the best of what they can give. My family is one of the most precious blessings that I treasured the most. The values that I've learned from them had greatly contributed to the totality of who I am right now.

Since I was 13 years old, I am already a member and one of the leaders of the Kristiyanong Kabataan para sa Bayan (KKB) Movement, the youth-arm of the Jesus is Lord Church. This dynamic youth movement molded me to become a person of character. It enabled me to have a passion for excellence as well. I believe that *if the object of a working person is truly to please God, the working person cannot help but excel*. Excellence is not perfection, but rather means giving more than what you can ordinarily do when you are at your best.

I believe that everything happens for a reason; and whatever that reason may be, it is always for the best. FICOBANK is the first institution that has given me the chance to unleash what's within me, believed in my potential, and accepted me with open arms. Right after my graduation in 2009, I was hired as a Rediscounting Officer and subsequently assigned as one of the pioneers in the banking operation of Central and Northwest Luzon Area Office. Since the area office was still starting then, we also served as Credit Analysts in concurrent capacity. Such multitasked placement enabled me to learn many things, especially the virtue of working more than what is required and giving more than what is expected from me. After more than a year, I was assigned as the Executive Assistant (EA) to the Area Manager for Regions 1 and 3. With this post, I had been exposed to the various facets of banking operation. I was trained to uphold continuously the different strategies for the betterment of our area-wide operation, as I worked, hand in hand, with the Area Manager and the operating units. At that point, and on that matter, I believed that I have acquired the necessary work attributes, as well as the Bank's organizational culture, that contributed to my growth as a FICOBANKER.

Another year had passed and I was tapped to lead the operation of Guimba Branch, as Branch Manager-Trainee, after its erstwhile person-in-charge, BM Tol, has been assigned to manage FICOBANK Roxas in Isabela. Having been entrusted with a higher position calls for a greater sense of responsibility. Leading the operation of Guimba Branch, aside from being the youngest among its employees, is a big challenge for me. But, as David Viscott says, *"The only thing that stands between the person and what he wants from life is merely the will to try and the faith to believe he can."* I believe that you cannot achieve something you do not believe.

Being a FICOBANKER for almost three years now, and having been entrusted with this challenging task, is something I am truly very grateful of.

## What It Takes to be the Branch Manager of FICOBank Roxas

By Tolentino D. Tabago, Jr.



Having been assigned as the Branch Manager of the then newly-opened FICOBank Dinalupihan (Bataan), in June 2008, was a great opportunity and challenge for me. I wasn't even sure, at that time, if I would go for it or not, as I imagined myself being far away from my family and a stranger in a place—particularly, its people and its culture—that I'm not familiar with. Eventually, I said to myself, why not give it a shot, grab that once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and take it as a blessing. After all, this would also be for the sake of my family. Within that three-year stay in

Bataan, through God's grace, I can proudly say that I made the right decision, as I attained worthwhile rewards—earned the management's commendation for a mission well-accomplished, and chronicled a number of forever-will-be-kept memories.

My next managerial assignment was in FICOBank Cabanatuan (Nueva Ecija). I stayed there, as BM, for barely two weeks, as I was subsequently reassigned to FICOBank Guimba, with the same post. Expectedly, these assignments in Nueva Ecija were not that easy inasmuch as I've already been well-attached to Bataan, my second home province, and these would require another adjustment. Be that as it may, I took these as means of access for more opportunities, greater challenges, new teammates and another worth-remembering experience, apart from the thought that, at least, I will be quite near to my loved ones. And each of these brainwaves reached its wished-for point.

As people often say, "Life is full of surprises." Just after my six-month stint at the Guimba Branch, I received an Inter-Office Memorandum stating that I will be reassigned to Roxas Branch in Isabela, effective October 10, 2011. Upon knowing my next, and most challenging so far, place of assignment, I felt both ecstatic and hesitant. On one hand, I have the feeling of being ecstatic because after a long time, at last, I will be with my family. On the other hand, hesitant because being the Branch Manager of the Bank's first, biggest and top-ranked branch is a "wow-thing," requiring top-quality leadership, first-rate management and extra-hard work that I feared I might not be able to do at once. But I have to bite the bullet, as I have to follow the directive of the Management.

We all know that Roxas Branch is a perennial top-performing branch of the Bank. It is consistently at its zenith in terms of financial performance. And this is all due to the dynamic and able leadership of Ms. Zorina "Ponet" Aradanas, who is now the Area Manager of Northeast Luzon's operating units. Her successor, Mr. Jimmy Parongan, belongs to the same genre of BMs as well.

From the first day I took over the steerage of the branch operation of FICOBank Roxas, there's no single moment that I haven't been thinking on how I could maintain the stature of Roxas Branch that has been steadily and steely upheld by my two predecessors. It is a big question for me that, until now, I still have to find out the answer. Every minute, every hour and every day that passed by, I never stopped from learning things because I believe that experiences are still our great teachers. As has been often said, "Lessons are not given, they are taken." The lessons learned out of our good or bad experiences allow us to make the right decisions and the right actions, not only in our job, but also in our day-to-day life.

Fully aware of the distinct honor that Roxas Branch has been treasuring for many years now, I'll see to it that all my decisions and actions in leading/managing this branch will principally stand on continuing its

tradition of being the *Numero Uno*, in terms of operational and financial performances, among the operating units of FICOBank. Barring any unforeseen events, I am sure that through the full support of my branch team, along with the supervision of Madam Ponet and guidance of Sir Emil, and with God's grace and goodness, Roxas Branch will—as always—meet (or even beat) its targeted levels of loans, deposits, income, preferred shares and past due accounts. Of course, under my watch, Roxas Branch will always be compliant with all the standing policies, rules and regulations of our Bank.

## Hurdling the Rigid Tests of Life and Work



"Forward ever, backward never." This is my basic guiding principle in life. It serves as my key to success. I came from a poor family, but I strove to finish my studies and reach my dreams," she asserts.

Ms. Geraldine D. Abrasaldo, nicknamed "Aldine," is a true-blue Santiagueña, born and raised in Santiago City, Philippines, the premier city of Northeast Luzon. She is the youngest among the four children of the former Ms. Lydia Domingo and Mr. Geronimo Abrasaldo. She was a consistent academic achiever when she took her elementary, high school and college education in different schools in Santiago

City. She was also among the top 10 of Class 1995 when she graduated in BS Accountancy from the University of La Salette. A year later, she took Master in Business Management (MBM) in a graduate school of the same university, and earned some units in MBM—an added feather in her cap.

She made her entry into the corporate world immediately after graduation through the Consolidated Rural Bank (ConsolBank), Santiago Branch, as a Bookkeeper. Her instant employment, getting in the way, had caused her to miss the opportunity of taking up the review and licensure exams for accountants. "I stayed at ConsolBank up to 1998. I tendered my irrevocable resignation after there was a change in the management of the said bank," she recalls.

Soon after, she experienced a life that had been full of trials, and this was a litmus test for how she could ably cope with such life's challenges. Having entered into a relationship that went sour brought her misery and heartaches. But she managed to keep her head above water despite the adversity. Out of the affair, Kimberly Claire, her daughter and her "saving grace," came forth. At present, Kimberly is already a 12-year-old freshman student of Santiago Cultural Institute in Santiago City. "As a single parent, I have to be strong in facing a number of harsh realities and difficulties in life. I know that more hurdles would come my way. However, having a daughter, who gives me sheer inspiration, enables me to face life fearlessly. As I was destined to face such fate head-on, I have to do all that I can to make life less burdensome. And it's a must-do task for me to press forward and make the most out of the available opportunities. After all, these lofty undertakings are all worth enough in the end," Ms. Aldine declares.

Being a person who will not cry over "spilled milk," Ms. Aldine sought other employment opportunities in the community. Lucky enough, she joined the local government unit of Santiago City, as an Accounting Clerk, in its spanking city hall. After two years, she transferred to the nearby National Food Authority, a Philippine government agency under the Department of Agriculture, which is responsible for ensuring the country's food security and the stability of supply and price of grains. She occupied the same position and stayed there for another two years.

The call of the banking industry, however, was too loud to ignore, as 'twas her "first love." In September 2003, at FICOBank Santiago, she rekindled her interest in banking, as she held the post of a CA/SA Bookkeeper. Ms. Aldine's years of exposure on the different operational

## Simply Doing His Work with Love and Loyalty



It is always his belief that by doing one's work with LOVE—as the main element of a formula for a successful career—will build a positive disposition, create a clear vision and cause a more harmonious relationship with co-workers and customers.

Mr. Darwin B. Mendoza officially joined the growing workforce of FICOBank on March 1, 2011. Immediately after signing his appointment as Branch Manager, in a probationary capacity, he went through a short-term exposure in FICOBanking at the

Corporate Office and selected branches of the Bank. Subsequent to the satisfactory completion of his three-week preparation, as he already has enough experience in countryside banking, he was sent to the soon-to-open branch of FICOBank in Guimba, Nueva Ecija to spearhead its pre-opening activities. FICOBank Guimba held its grand-opening rites on March 28, 2011. The promotion of the Bank, as well as the marketing of its financial products and services, in the locality was not a difficult task for him, as he had previously led the branch operation of a defunct cooperative bank in Guimba. He only has a brief stint, however, as BM of the said branch, as he was assigned afterward as branch head of FICOBank Cabanatuan.

BM Darwin traced back his roots in Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija. His birthday falls on the 13th day of August, and he just turned 39 in 2011. He is one of the four children of the former Ms. Erlinda Borja and Mr. Aquino Mendoza. "When I was a kid, my parents, aside from being government employees, operated a small business and tilled a seven-hectare rice farm. Comparing our family with others, we're fortunate enough that we've had a better source of living," he proudly exclaims. His mother joined the Almighty when he was barely two years old. So, his father took the sole responsibility of rearing his children until they reached their own independent status. His siblings are all overseas workers—one is in Australia while two are in the United Kingdom.

He received his diploma in BS Agribusiness Management from the Central Luzon State University in April 1993. It was in the same school where he met his better half, the former Ms. Myraflor Reyes, a secondary school teacher. In pursuit of educational advancement, he took a graduate study in Master in Business Management from the Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology. Though short of completing the academic requirements, he, however, earned nine units. This added credential would later enable him to move a notch higher, after another, in the corporate ladder.

After his graduation in college, he was hired as a Loan and Discount Clerk by the Cooperative Bank of Nueva Ecija (CBNE). At CBNE, he rose through the ranks—from a clerical rank up to the post of a General Manager. His 17-year stint with CBNE concluded when the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC) took receivership of the said bank. He relates, "The closure of CBNE by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) was not due to liquidity problem, as our coop bank didn't only meet, but even beat, the liquidity reserve required by it. It was caused by the 'loan loss provisioning' that was imposed by BSP." With such imposition, the capital of CBNE was depleted. "Our coop-stockholders could not infuse additional capital, as most of them were already operationally extinct. With the full backing of FICOBank, we submitted a Rehabilitation Plan for CBNE, but, until now, we haven't heard of the decision of PDIC," he adds.

Being the BM of FICOBank Cabanatuan, he wants to improve more the operation of the branch by bringing its growth potential to the fullest. He also aims to contribute significantly to the success and growth of the Bank. How to make the branch team cohesively working together for the attainment of its target is one of the challenges that BM Darwin faces today. But for him, this challenge also develops mutual relationship among his

## Stepping Up to Greater Success



Just like a coin having two sides, the face of poverty can also be gleaned from two standpoints. One side can be taken to mean accepting a life of perpetual impoverishment, and do nothing at all, while the flipside can mean as a beacon of light for a better-off life, and do everything to succeed. Mr. Vivencio Paquito "Kits" S. Domingo opted the latter in living his life.

Mgr. Kits considered poverty as an inspiration and a stepladder in achieving a better and fuller life. He was born to indigent parents in the remote barangay of Diarao in Jones, Isabela.

At a very young age, he had already experienced the difficulty of working in the cornfields. He was able to finish his secondary schooling through the financial support of some relatives in Angadanan, Isabela. Similarly, he got monetary, as well as non-monetary, assistance when he entered the Isabela State University, Echague Campus. After four years of no-nonsense schoolwork, at last, he obtained a degree in Business Administration, major in Accounting, in 1993. "Even if we were quite unfortunate in life, at that time, I still feel blessed because of the kindness and help of our relatives in sending me to school. I am very, and will always be, thankful to them," he gratefully recalls.

As his first step on his ladder to success, and as a way of showing gratitude to what his relatives had given to him, Mgr. Kits aggressively sought for a suitable employment. He landed his first job as an Assistant Stock Comptroller of the Equity Machineries, Inc. in Cauayan City, Isabela. In just a few months, he became its Warehouseman, and was assigned as the Internal Auditor of the said company afterward.

In search of better opportunities, he turned his sights on FICOBank, which was then starting to make its presence felt in the province. Starting off, in January 1997, as Bookkeeper, he later assumed various positions, such as, Accountant, Branch Service Officer, Special Project Officer and Assistant Branch Manager (ABM)/Officer-in-Charge. Indefatigably, he had made the rounds of the Accounting, Credit (Microfinance) and Information & Communication Technology Departments at the Corporate Office and the branches in Jones and Roxas (Isabela), Maddela (Quirino), and Concepcion and Paniqui (Tarlac). When FICOBank Paniqui opened in November 2007, he was one of the firsts that were assigned there. He handled the ICT Special Project on the parallel testing of the new Telling System. Afterward, he became the ABM of the same operating unit. He even became its Acting Branch Manager for a brief period. At present, he is the Extension Office Manager of FICOBank Aurora. This growth in his career, as a FICOBanker, serves as the many steps, and counting, on his way up to greater success.

He is patient and supportive to what his co-employees suggest. "Having been assigned to manage FICOBank Aurora is my greatest challenge so far, for it is bestowed upon my hand the responsibility to take the lead in carrying out, effectively and efficiently, the team's task to attain the annual targets of the extension office, as laid down in its five-pronged performance indicators. I'm sure that my team can make it, knowing well that I lead by example, and that we work as a cohesive team—united in mission, united in action. I never fail in motivating my teammates. In the same way, I never fade in appreciating their respective accomplishments. Thus, more salvos are expected to be unleashed by our extension office team," he confidently claims. "We also have fun in executing our periodic marketing activities. These fun-filled and output-driven group activities have helped us cement the firmness of our relationship. As for me, pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work," he adds.

Being brought up in a rustic setting has left deep imprints in Mgr. Kits' way of life. His being a banker is not a hindrance in his passion for farming. Several hectares of riceland with fishponds provide, not only additional income, but, also a place of solace on weekends or during vacations. He is

## Remembering BM Johnson Pascual

By Jackie M. Juan



It was a shocking Friday morning, on October 7, 2011, for every FICOBanker upon hearing the news. BM JP was shot dead. The news caused tears for those who knew him very well—a fun-loving man with a generous heart.

Almost three years ago, I had my first taste of encounter with this noble man, so to speak. I was, back then, a new employee of the Bank. I could still clearly remember how he first approached me—very funny yet professional. We were then working for the second edition of our branch's operations manual, along with the members of the OPCOM and

MANCOM. Being the Executive Assistant of Madam Sol, at that time, he took over the final touches of the technical writing. But a couple of months before the completion of the manual, he was sent to Maddela Branch to replace BM Jimmy, who assumed the managerial post in Roxas Branch.

Since then, I could only see him when there are meetings among his fellow officers, or when there are training activities or special occasions at the Corporate Office. He never failed to greet everybody, most of whom were his former companions in the same department or branches. He often called me *parekoy*—a term he usually used in referring to his younger peers, which includes his male staff in his offices in Maddela and Diffun. This was always accompanied with wide smile drawn in his face and a firm handshake.

When we were working on the production of our very first coffee table book, I was asked to do the write-up that featured him. I felt honored, as he himself was a good writer. In fact, he was the editor-in-chief of some local publications in Isabela and in Region 2. He also used to be the co-host of the Bank's radio program called "*Kayo at ang FICOBank*" initially aired over DWDY-AM in Cauayan City, Isabela. He was also a regular contributor of *FICOnnect*, the official newsletter of FICOBank, where he had contributed eight news articles from its maiden issue in December 2006 to its July 2011 issue. The first article, which he wrote, that I was able to read was the one featuring Jun Lugod, a newspaper boy in Cabanatuan City and a Batang Masinop accountholder in our Cabanatuan Branch. Through BM JP's initiative (when he handled the Cabanatuan Branch as its first Branch Manager), Jun Lugod was able to save part of his daily earnings from vending newspapers. This also led to the featuring of the kid's life story in the Kapuso Network's Saturday program *Wish Ko Lang*. Through it, the kid became a recipient of financial aid for his education and livelihood support for his family. Indeed, he was instrumental for the kid's life-changing luck.

Also, one of his articles was a Tagalog-written article entitled "*Sa Kuko ng Kahinapan*," which exposed the plight of a young school girl, a daughter of a vegetable vendor in Maddela Public Market, just some feet away from our branch. Having seen the child's determination to study while helping her parents in their livelihood, he encouraged the child to open a savings account in the branch by putting up the initial deposit from his own pocket. Every week, he added a hundred peso to the child's account, so as to help build her savings. It is noteworthy to mention that the child's joy was more than enough as reward for his generosity.

Weeks before the tragic incident, I had the chance to have a conversation with him over the telephone. I could hear ecstatic voice at the other end of the line, as we were talking about the Bank's Jewelry Loan

product. He gave me tidbits about the promotional approaches he had when he was still the Head of the Marketing Department of the Bank. I appreciated it very much.

In mid-2006, he initiated the airing of radio advertisements among local AM/FM radio stations in the region; the most notable of which was the Ilocano advertisement of the Jewelry Loan product, with voices of talents from Saleng Productions—the company that produces radio dramas for Bombo Radyo. This could be deemed as one of his legacies, as, since then, the use of Ilocano radio advertisements has been widely utilized to reach out majority of the Bank's target market in its Jewelry Loan product. Increase awareness has brought material upswing in the Bank's loan portfolio.

Aside from being a good FICOBanker, BM JP was also actively involved in social activities. He usually graced community ceremonies, as guest speaker, whether in fiestas, sports events or special activities that promoted the unity, progress, health and well-being of the people in the community. These could be attested by the last articles he contributed to the July 2011 issue of *FICOnnect*, particularly his trip in Bagnen, Bauko, Mountain Province. Stunning adjectives were used to describe the places, people, plants, foods and culture in his travel experience at the last frontier, which, according to him, couldn't be forgotten even after death. He closed this piece of writing with an intention to go back to Bagnen, if there will be another opportunity. But only to find out later that it was his last.

Until now, the whole FICOBank family is still in shock of this man's fate. Though the reason behind his doom remains unclear, we are sure that only the good memories of him remain clear to everyone's heart, as we could only testify to the good deeds and legacies that he had contributed to the banking circle, especially here in FICOBank. May his soul find solace in the caress of the Almighty.

## 14 New FICOBankers Join the Family

To be at par with FICOBank's continuously expanding network of business and longer list of clients, the Bank also continues to bring in new people with competitive skills and goal-oriented stance. As the Bank promotes effective and efficient employment, having a harmonious employee-employer relationship is a sure thing. "Hire character. Train skill," as Peter Schutz said.

With open doors, the Bank warmly welcomes 14 newest FICOBankers to join its list of dedicated and hardworking workforce, for the period of July 2011 to February 2012. And they are:

Name	Position
1. Joey Feliciano	Treasury Assistant for Clearing
2. Carlito Cura, Jr.	Driver
3. Guy Jeric Valdez	Loan Officer
4. Mark Paul Garingan	Roving Technical Assistant
5. Rex Felipe	Bank Messenger
6. Ernesto Francisco	Driver
7. Maricar Joson	Teller
8. Sienna Dy	Loan Bookkeeper
9. Jestony O. Baracao	Loan Officer
10. Julie Easter G. Castañeda	Roving Technical Assistant
11. Giennes B. Rosario	General Clerk
12. Ronalyn S. Pagaling	Roving Technical Assistant
13. Rio S. Benigno	Accounting Assistant
14. Lara Angelie P. Manzano	Executive Assistant to the SVP for Administration & Support Services

Congratulations and be proud to be a FICOBanker!

– Nicole Kay C. James

## A Flavorsome Slice of Success

The Story of Adoracion A. Tabile



Full-of-Flavor Products of AAA Native Cakes

Once upon a time, her dreams were placed in a small *bilao* while strutting her way toward the people who await her native delicacies. Having only the courage to succeed and her tenderly-baked rice cakes, Adoracion Agustin Tabile put all her best efforts in her microenterprise despite the many intricacies coming in her way. Today, at her alexandrite years, she is enjoying a flavorsome slice of success, which she had warmly baked for a very long time with her family. And just like any other fairy tale, she lives her life happily...

### Personal Background

Adoracion A. Tabile is a 56-year-old microentrepreneur who hails from Ipil, Echague, Isabela. Born to a poor couple, she wasn't able to stride in college because of the financial constraint besetting her family. Instead, she worked hard as a vendor to help her family in easing the financial burden that they were into, knowing that her father was so sick then. Years later, she married Lorenzo Tabile, a former chairman of their barangay, and they were blessed with three children. Having a good husband-and-wife tandem and the same wavelength in almost all facets of life, especially in education, the couple was able to send their children to college. All of them have their own stable jobs now.

Earlier in her married life, Adoracion would often bake rice cakes and sell these to the community folks. As a natural cook, in her own right, she was able to capture every person's palate, particularly those who had tasted her products. And the rest, as they say, was an inspiring past, with a promising future, for her and her family.

### Business Milieu

Adoracion began her journey as a microentrepreneur in the late '70s. Carrying only a *bilao* that was filled with fresh vegetables and, of course, her homemade rice cakes, she walked along every lane to vend her foodstuffs. On the following years, her children, who were then attending their schools, at times, were also given rice cakes to sell among their schoolmates.

Her lucky fate begun in mid-1990s, when the government employees in their place started making huge orders of her rice cakes, every time social and family gatherings have to be held. By

year 1997, Adoracion had already been supplying the small vendors in their town, thus, enabling people from faraway areas to taste her delicacies. This led to the birth of Doring's Bibingka.

When her earnings grew, Adoracion purchased better equipment to increase her production. She also hired additional workers, aside from her household members, to hasten the process of making rice cakes. Little by little, Doring's Bibingka drew product-brand recognition among the people because of its distinct taste and quality.

A decade later, Doring's Bibingka has been given a rebirth through its official registration with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in 2007. With the suggestion of her children, who, at that time, have already finished their studies, the former business name was changed to AAA Native Cakes. The name itself was inspired by her own name (Adoracion) and that of her two children's names—Alma and Albert. AAA is not just a three-letter acronym. In business jargon, it means high-quality, premier or excellent.

When Adoracion put up an outlet along the National Highway in Ipil, Echague, she realized the need to source out an additional capital to boost further her business. In 2008, through her child's advice, she visited FICOBank (Jones Branch) and sought any possible financial assistance that she could get. There she learned about the Bank's Microfinance Program and applied for a first-cycle loan. She was granted with an initial Kabayan (Microfinance) Loan of P25,000.00, which she used to buy additional baking equipment and raw materials.

In the course of her business operation, Adoracion also encountered problems; foremost of which are the short shelf life of her products and the perishability of some of her raw materials. To compensate with the possible losses, she put up a piggery that will consume her spoilage. She also converted her backyard into a garden, so she could make use of the bio-degradable wastes of her rice-cake production.

Today, AAA Native Cakes is drawing trade-name recall and popularity not only among the people of Echague but also the travelers on board private and public vehicles for their snacks and *pasalubong*. Her available products for the day are always sold out in the late afternoon.

### Business Plans

In order to increase her usual production and sales, Adoracion is planning to attend seminars in cake-making and other training programs that will be sponsored by the Department of Science and Technology (DOST). She also intends to establish another store outlet in a nearby town to reach out to her customers outside her hometown.

### Success Factor

Adoracion said that even if she wasn't able to get formal training from school, she is happy to have gained business momentum through her rice-cake production. She believes that



From Rhem's Collections

## Let's Make Life Light

### Layoff

The manager was having difficulty with profits and fixed costs, so, there was only one solution—more layoffs. But there were only two possibilities, Jack and Mary. This was going to be a hard decision. They were both excellent workers, and equally qualified, but one had to go. He was obviously going to interview them both and then decide.

He called Mary in first. "I'm sorry," he began. "I've got some bad news. I'm going to lay you or Jack off."

She looked at him for a moment in silence then replied: "Well, can you jack off? I've got a terrible headache."

### 12-Pack

A father and his son go into the grocery store when they happen upon the condom aisle. The son asks his father why there are so many different boxes of condoms. The father replies, "Well, you see that 3-pack? That's for when you're in high school. You have 2 for Friday night and 1 for Saturday night." The son then asks his father, "What's the 6-pack for?" The father replies, "Well, that's for when you're in college. You have 2 for Friday night, 2 for Saturday night, and 2 for Sunday morning." Then the son asks his father what the 12-pack is for. The father replies, "Well, that's for when you're married. You have one for January, one for February, one for March, one for..."

### Three Kinds

A family is at the dinner table. The son asks his father, "Dad, how many kinds of boobs are there?" The father, surprised, answers, "Well, son, there's three kinds of breasts. In her twenties, a woman's breasts are like melons, round and firm. In her thirties to forties, they are like pears, still nice but hanging a bit. After fifty, they are like onions." "Onions?" asks the boy. "Yes," said the father, "You see them and they make you cry." This infuriated his wife and daughter, so the daughter asked, "Mom, how many kinds of willies are there?" The mother, surprised, smiles and answers, "Well dear, a man goes through three phases. In his twenties, his willie is like an oak tree, mighty and hard. In his thirties and forties, it is a birch, flexible but still reliable. After his fifties, it is like an old Christmas tree." "A Christmas tree?" "Yes, dead from the root up and the balls are for decoration only."

### Three Women

There were three women who were at the gynecologist having pre-natal checkups.

The doctor asked the first woman, "In what position was the baby conceived?" "He was on top," she replied. "You will have a boy!" the doctor exclaimed.

The second woman was asked the same question. "I was on top," replied the second woman. "You will have a baby girl," said the doctor.

With this, the third woman, a blonde, burst into tears. "What's the matter?" asked the doc. "Am I going to have puppies?"

### Three Guys

Three guys get captured. The bandits that caught them tell the guys that they are going to kill them.

The guys beg for their lives, so the bandits tell them if they want to live they must go into the forest and pick out 10 fruits each. The 10 fruits have to be the same. The bandits swear they will release them if they do. Obviously wanting to live, they set out.

Ten minutes later, the first guy returns with 10 apples. The bandits smile and tell him that he has to stick the apples up his ass, one by one, or they kill him. If he makes any sound or shows pain he dies. He starts... gets in 1...2...3...4...5! Then can't help it, groans and they shoot him.

Five minutes later, the second guy comes back with 10 berries. The bandits tell him that he has to shove it up his ass or they kill him. If he shows any kind of pain or makes a sound, then he dies. He starts... gets in 1...2...3...4...5...6...7...8...9! And on the ninth one, he bursts out laughing suddenly and they shoot him.

The APPLE guy meets the BERRY guy in heaven. The apple guy says, "Dude, you had one more to go, why would you get yourself killed?" The berry guy replies, "I couldn't help it. I saw the last guy and he was coming with 10 pineapples."

### Will Power

Man at 33 quits smoking. Will Power;  
At 43, quits drinking. Will Power;  
At 53, quits gambling. Will Power;  
At 63, quits having sex. Power Failure.



Source: [www.101funjokes.com](http://www.101funjokes.com); [www.ahajokes.com](http://www.ahajokes.com)

## FICOBank's Biggest...

from page 1

Visit on February 21-23, 2011. The Bank's top authorities generously shared to the visiting delegates the essential principles and practices that the Bank has long been espousing and/or championing in its banking operations. As this particular Study Visit was a learn-and-share activity, the General Manager of the visiting coop also presented the Tagum Cooperative's profile and best practices to the ADSCOM members of the Bank. The inter-cooperation between the two cooperative organizations has been mutually beneficial in many operational aspects.

8. **BSP Approval of FICOBank's Extension Offices.** Starting out as field offices (FOs), with common function of making loans, as they're restricted in taking deposits and servicing withdrawals, the remaining FOs of FICOBank in the municipalities of Aurora, San Mateo and Tumauni—all in Isabela—are now officially converted into extension offices (EOs). They moved a notch higher after the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) approved their conversion from FOs to EOs on February 3, 2011. Today, these four banking units are geared toward becoming better fund-generating and income-producing arms of the Bank.

7. **Conversion of Ilagan EO into Branch.** After its application for conversion was authorized by BSP on November 16, 2011, the extension office of the Bank in Ilagan, Isabela has become a full-fledged branch. It made a record in FICOBank's history as the first-ever extension office that eventually turned into a regular branch. Ilagan Branch, the 18th branch of FICOBank, has now the jurisdiction over Tumauni and Cabagan EOs. For FICOBank Ilagan, moving to a higher notch means greater competitiveness, better performance and bigger income, as it offers full banking services with the right product repertoire to the right customer segment.

6. **Embarking on a Business Partnership with International Organization.** Through the strong recommendation of Maybridge Asia, Inc., FICOBank was chosen by Bridge, an international resource provider and builder of better banks, as one of the potential partner countryside banks in the Philippines, as it meets the latter's eligibility criteria for a partner bank. As FICOBank is firmly focused on its 2011-2015 transformation journey, it ought to select a reliable partner that could help it reach its planned corporate destination; acquire the needed capital and expertise to execute its strategies for transformation; and grow fast into a new breed of a countryside banking institution—as a corporative thrift bank—built to last and able to make the most out of the opportunities.

5. **Setting Market Foothold in Guimba, Nueva Ecija.** With a sense of worthy purpose, FICOBank transferred its Umingan (Pangasinan) Branch to Guimba, Nueva Ecija, one of the first-class municipalities of the province, on March 28, 2011. FICOBank's comprehensive mix of deposit and loan products, as well as fee-based services, can be accessed by the townsfolk of the host and neighboring municipalities at its Guimba Branch, which is strategically located at Plaza Carlota, Afan Salvador St., Santo Cristo, Guimba, Nueva Ecija. Development-wise, the transfer of the aforementioned branch will definitely and significantly benefit the recognized major stakeholders—the Bank and the municipality of Guimba, together with its constituents.

4. **Introduction of New Loan Product.** In addition to its broad selection of loan products, FICOBank introduced its Todo Ani Loan to its target market in Northeast, Central and Northwest Luzon on June 6, 2011. This latest agricultural loan product of the Bank was designed for small farmers and fisherfolk who are engaged in food production projects/activities. With the Todo Ani Loan, the underserved segments of the agriculture sector—the small crop-growers, the small livestock- and poultry-raisers, and the small fisherfolk—that are long neglected by the banking institutions will be able to get enough financial assistance (without any hard collateral) for any demand-driven agri-fishery project from FICOBank.

3. **Launching of FICOBank's Coffee Table Book.** To hark back to FICOBank's 34 remarkable years of existence, the first-ever coffee table book, titled *Celebrating a Vital Past, Creating a Vibrant Future: Bank. People. Service.* was launched on September 10, 2011. This commemorative picture-story book aimed to chronicle the humble beginnings and the forward-looking path of FICOBank, which were interwoven in textual and visual tapestry of significant events and development highpoints within a space-time continuum. Stuck in every picture were the unforgettable moments of the Bank's significant activities and events, as well as the men and women who devoted the prime years of their lives in bringing fruition to what FICOBank is today—a leader in the Philippine cooperative banking industry.

2. **Refuting Malicious and Defamatory Information.** Out of the blue, FICOBank has been hit "below the belt" and beyond ethical principles by some people just to tarnish the Bank's reputation in favor of others. Defamatory and malicious text messages were sent, to many persons and were shared to an even greater number of people, by the perpetrators of this smear campaign who aimed to put FICOBank down. However, the damage and jitters that these people wanted to inflict against the Bank did not happen at all. The detractors' attempt to disrupt and destabilize the operations of the Bank has been an exercise in futility. Its long-established and success-laden partnership with its employees and customers, which is even getting stronger as time goes by, serves as the Bank's vital power to stay in business.

1. **Ending 2011 on a High Note.** Despite the unfavorable economic backdrop that was brought about by various factors (local and global, natural and man-made, etc.), the Bank—through God's grace, goodness and guidance—beat all odds. It has also proven that its exceptional banking practices could withstand the toughest test of times. Reaching its first billion-peso level of resources after three decades in 2008, FICOBank made a significant milestone in 2011 by doubling its resources in just three years. Today, its total assets, which stood at two-billion pesos, gives a picture of a bigger and stronger FICOBank that is even ready to get to greater heights next year and in the coming years.

– Jackie M. Juan

## FICOBank ATMs...

from page 1

Bank has to house initially its first two ATMs in these operating units is that these municipalities have lesser number of ATMs. The other operating units, however, will have their onsite ATMs later. With this practical decision, the Bank can expect a higher volume of cash-dispensing transactions.

ECLK Solutions, Inc. (ESI), an affiliate switch network of BancNet, is the Bank's service provider. FICOBank's ATMs are connected to the switch and monitoring system of ESI, under an agreed terms and conditions. All transactions acquired by these ATMs shall pass through the said switch, and shall be routed to BancNet switch. The said ATM units can be accessed by all ATM cards and selected credit cards (i.e., BancNet, MegaLink, UnionPay, Visa, MasterCard, etc.). Through the straight leasing arrangement with ESI, the Bank will enjoy to get all the net revenue from fees.

The said ATMs have a brand topper of "FICOBank ecCASH" (ecCASH is a trademark of ESI ATM unit). As the Bank shall provide the appropriate casing for the ATM, it has the right to put its own corporate logo, graphic signature and product advertisements on it. Similarly, FICOBank and ESI have jointly approved the idle screens and other built-in advertisings for the ATM unit.

As soon as the Online Banking System of FICOBank will be completed by its Information and Communication Technology Department, it will implement both acquiring and issuing transactions. This implies that a huge volume of convenience banking transactions is on the horizon. And the multisectoral clientele of the Bank has been expecting to get more out of it—account information flow, greater speed, more convenience and, possibly, even greater movement and management of their funds.

– Katrina Ann Alip-Bolo

## Making...

disbursements of over P0.4 billion, since mid-2009, on the lives of our clients and their respective families and communities are certainly of greater magnitude and relevance.



FICOBank Chess Tournament participated by elementary pupils.

anniversary, we get ourselves involved in community development activities by providing school supplies to the day care centers of poverty-stricken barangays, sponsoring chess tournament for the pupils of the different elementary schools, and embarking on a financial literacy program for the townsfolk. These CSR-related initiatives are made possible through our branch's special fund. With such, we have laid the cornerstones of FICOBanking in various places of the locality.



A day care center receiving school supplies.

Making this mark is not an easy task, a no small feat either. It is for this reason that I wish to express my sincerest gratitude and profound appreciation to: my teammates, for their immeasurable patience, invaluable assistance and laudable efforts; our Area Manager, for his no-nonsense supervision and all-out support; our SVP for Operation & Banking Services, for his very motivating advice and intellectual guidance; our President/CEO, EVP/COO, other senior officers and fellow FICOBankers, for being so kind and supportive; our families, for being understanding to the nature of our works; our clients, for their patronage and loyalty; and, above all, our Heavenly Father, for His providential guidance and love, which we can only acknowledge but can never repay.

## Serving the Bank...

Norte Elementary School in Ilagan, Isabela.

Since year 2004, Mgr. Romy is actively involved in several organizations. Currently, he is the Vice Chairman of both the Bumal Development

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FICOBank is now gradually becoming the people's choice in Malasiqui because of the extraordinary charisma that our branch has imprinted in the eyes, minds and hearts of its growing number of depositors, borrowers and fee-based clients. We always bear in mind that the best salespersons are the satisfied clients. FICOBank has also the hallmark of being the friendliest bank—a socially-responsible corporate citizen—in town, as perceived by the community folks. Instead of spending much for the celebration of our branch

Cooperative, a parish-based cooperative in Ilagan, Isabela, and the Bunggoy ti Mannalon ti Parokya ni Sta. Isabel, an organic farmers group. Moreover, he is involved with the laity, as a member of the Pastoral Council of the St. Elizabeth of Portugal Parish in the capital town of Isabela.

Each person has his/her own ups and downs in every aspect of life, be it about family, work/career and the like. But it's a matter of how one handles them that counts. The tragedy that befell his family has been somewhat eased by Mgr. Romy's rise as a banker. He knows adversity, hardship and pain. And he is, as has been, always resolute. Essentially, life is a gift, and it offers each one the privilege, opportunity and responsibility to give something in return. "No one should let yesterday use up too much of today," he points out.

"As Greg Hickman says, 'Opportunity is just success looking for a place to happen.' Opportunity often comes in disguise—usually, in the form of misfortune or temporary defeat. Don't just let the opportunities pass by. Grab them as you move forward in your journey, called LIFE," Mgr. Romy concludes.

– JM Juan & FML Monsanto

## Just Believe...

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Being a BM-Trainee, I knew that the call of duty is quite different. It requires me to run an extra mile, since it is far from the duties and responsibilities that I have previously performed. Even so, I can see that the stance of my teammates in the branch will greatly contribute to ease the struggles and the different circumstances that we may encounter, as we pave our way to success.

I believe that my journey has only just begun. Just as how I started it with a single step, I'll continue pressing toward what lies ahead, not just to achieve what I want, but, more so, to surpass the ordinary abilities and be stretched beyond the limits of my capacity to become a better person. Right perception and positive outlook in life are of the important things that I consider the most. They serve as the keys that unlock the doors of success. Failure comes not in the non-achievement of what you want in life, but in stopping to look forward for another thing to be achieved. Therefore, never stop aiming. And when you aim for something, be sure that you are aiming for something great. Work for it!

Remember, nobody who gave his/her best regretted it. The measure of real success is not on how much a person has achieved, but on how well he/she has been throughout the journey of attaining success. And if there is something really most important in succeeding in life, that is learning to acknowledge and honor the One who's the author of absolutely everything we have—GOD.

*"Whoever wants to boast must boast about what the Lord has done. For it is when the Lord thinks well of us that we are really approved and not when we think well of ourselves."* 2 Cor. 10:17-18

## Hurdling The Rigid Tests...

## from page 15

aspects of rural banking, albeit not that far-reaching, enabled her to make a smooth transition in cooperative banking. Actually, rural bank and cooperative bank are both in the category of a community/countryside bank, with almost similar types of financial products/services, customer segments and banking operations, but with distinctive types of ownership.

With her innate intellect and ability to perform competently, which are complemented by her hard work and dedication, she was given the opportunity to occupy other positions in FICOBank, such as Treasury Assistant, Accountant and Cashier. It was not long before she was given a break to apply for the then Branch Service Officer (BSO) position. "Fortunately, I hurdled the rigid tests and finished my on-the-job training,"

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## Hurdling The Rigid Tests... *from page 21*

she beams. To date, she has made the rounds of the Bank's branches/offices in Santiago, Dupax, Solano, Alicia, Jones, Aurora and the Treasury Department at the Corporate Office. It was on February 15, 2010 when she assumed the position of an Assistant Branch Manager in FICOBank Concepcion for over six months. At present, she is stationed at FICOBank Roxas with the same post.

As to her relationship with her co-employees, the latter address her as "Mudra" (short for "Mudragon"), being a small and terrible person. "For me, by saying 'terrible' would only mean a well-disciplined and a good leader," she positively explains. "With this kind of working attitude that I possess, our branch team gains respect and cooperation from one another. Accomplishing the daily, weekly, semi-monthly and monthly reports, and getting the congratulations of the bosses for a job well done are the worthwhile fruits of such laudable team efforts," she adds.

"I consider myself as a good soldier. That's why I go—without expressing doubts and raising objections—wherever the Management sends me. I have had a long, but exciting, journey, in different places and with different people. Every journey that I made has left a significant mark in my heart, registering an experience worth remembering. Even if it remains plainly as a wish, I do hope that someday, I'll be assigned to the place where my loved ones reside," Ms. Aldine closes.

- Fae Marie Louise L. Monsanto

## Simply Doing... *from page 16*

team members, a vital factor in the attainment of their branch's goals. He points out, "We sit down and talk about our goals openly. I solicit their opinions and suggestions; then, we come up with plans and strategies, and see how to make the same work. Basically, our team works as solid as rock, committed and responsible, and always ready to provide more legwork."

He is described by his subordinates as strict, but very approachable. "It's okay with me because it's my way of gaining their respect. With it, we were able to increase the volume of our transactions and improve the profitability level of our branch," he says. "We also have fun, as we carryout our scheduled group-marketing activities," he adds.

Coming up with big decisions in life is not an easy task, and grabbing an opportunity is not always an option for BM Darwin. "I've experienced to turnaround an offer from another company, even with higher compensation and better benefits, because only FICOBank can give me the chance to develop my skills, enhance my knowledge and boost my self-confidence. Most importantly, I am, up to now, enamored with and still loyal to the cause of cooperative banking. And LOYALTY means a lot to me," he reveals with honesty.

"There are ten rules to follow to gain success; first is hard work and the other nine are more works." This is the guiding principle of BM Darwin. It is the reason why he is on his position right now. "It is a common knowledge to us that most of the people who become successful in life have experienced harsh realities and grave adversities. But because of their hard work and strong determination to succeed, they eventually emerged victorious," he explains.

Mistakes are bound to happen, but there's always a lesson to learn from each mistake. Due to indiscretion and overconfidence, lapses are oftentimes committed. To be able to get rid of operational lapses, he learned to be prudent at all times—make awareness/adherence to internal policies and procedures, and external rules and regulations, a top priority. "Constant consultation with my immediate superior is indispensable," he says.

BM Darwin is, indeed, an exemplar of a distinct breed of leader. He wants to impart these words of wisdom to his fellow FICOBankers, "LOVE YOUR WORK and WORK WITH LOVE." He explains, "When we are

working out of LOVE, we can create an atmosphere that is conducive to a better working relationship with our superiors and subordinates or peers, as well as a finer business relationship with our customers and their respective communities. Of course, this will eventually redound to the continuing success and growth of our Bank, in general, and the benefit and progress of our own families, in particular."

- FML Monsanto

## Stepping Up... *from page 16*

also an active member of the Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines.

Mgr. Kits shares a happy home with his wife, the former Ms. Helen Baguistan, and two wonderful children—Aaron Paul and Kate Pauleen—who are both studying at the San Manuel Central School. His wife is also a degree holder and is currently employed as Accountant at the Rural Bank of San Manuel (Isabela). The couple hopes to provide for the needs of their children, especially their college education.

His family goes to the Jesus is Lord (JIL) Church in San Manuel, Isabela. "It is through JIL where I've really experienced how God greatly transformed my life. The Lord says, 'What profit of a man if he gained the whole treasure of the world but lost his soul in eternity.' Our life's journey in this earth is just only temporary, as our permanent residence is Heaven," he shares, adding:

"Be a blessing to many. Do not weary in doing good, for in due time, you shall reap." This serves as his guiding principle in life. "For me, I thank fate for having made me born poor. Poverty taught me the true value of the gifts useful to life. To a man with an empty stomach, food is GOD."

- Fae Marie Louise L. Monsanto

## A Flavoursome Slice... *from page 18*

every person who aspires to become a successful microentrepreneur must learn first to discipline himself/herself the way a beginner Chinese entrepreneur did early on. She also added that loving what you are doing gives you a better edge in fulfilling your dream.

### Social Responsibility

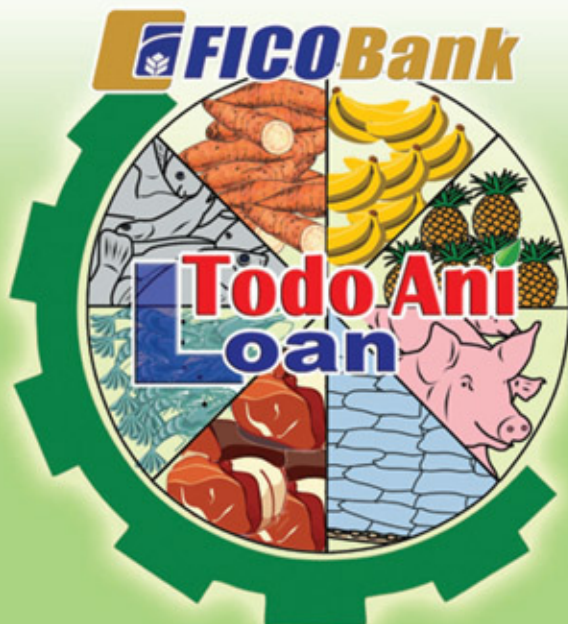
Adoracion is truly a model citizen to the younger generation, in particular, and to the whole community, in general. She has helped a lot of people, especially in their neighborhood, by making them employed or self-employed through her foray in native cake production. She is also the lender of last resort of the people who need petty financial assistance in their place. Even if she doesn't hold any political post, she is an active assistant nutritionist in their barangay. As such, she provides assistance in tracking down the children's health in their locality.

As a bank borrower, she is noted for her creditworthiness, as she was never late in the repayment of her loan amortizations.

Just like her business' triple-A name, her overall personality can be equated to an A+. She is not just smart, but a street-smart; she can't have gotten that far and that high if she weren't. Indeed, she is a paragon of strength, dedication and kindness that is worthy of emulation by others.

Ms. Adoracion A. Tabile made it to the semi-finals of the Microentrepreneur of the Year (MOTY), under the Masikap Award category in 2010.

- Jackie Juan



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- ☒ Retirement
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