

## SPECIAL ARTICLE

### A Tribute to Dr Delfin A. Tan (1939 – 2024)

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Dr. Delfin Tan, or “DT” to us who knew him - often described himself as an average child. He spent his early years barefoot on the streets of San Francisco, Del Monte, with his days revolving around school and, more importantly to him, play. Left to his own devices, he might have pursued a career in journalism. But fate, guided by his parents’ insistence on medical school, had other plans - and thankfully so.

It was in medicine that DT discovered what many around him had long suspected: he was anything but ordinary. Offered a Pathology residency in the United States, he instead accepted a rare opportunity at the Far Eastern University (FEU) Hospital, where he became an assistant professor and the youngest chief of clinics. These early roles laid the foundation for his leadership of two major institutions: the FEU-NRMF Medical Center and the United Doctors Medical Center (UDMC).

In an era when subspecialty medicine was still emerging, DT was a trailblazer. He played key roles in the establishment of the Philippine Society of Reproductive Medicine (PSRM), the Philippine Society of Climacteric Medicine (PSCM), and the Philippine Society for Fertility Preservation (PSFP). DT was one of five local reproductive endocrinology experts who established the PSRM in 1994, alongside Dr Florante Gonzaga, Dr Leonardo Almeda, Dr Rosalinda Arceo and Dr. Janet Roa. DT served as the third president of PSRM in 1998. He likewise served as the second president of PSCM from 1995 to 1996.

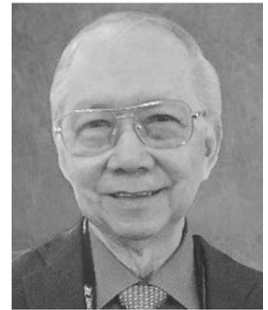
It was his vision that created the Philippine Society for Gynecologic Endoscopy (PSGE), where he served as founding president (2004-2006). Under his leadership, the PSGE was recognized as an affiliate society of the Asia Pacific Association in Gynecologic Endoscopy (APAGE).

In 1998, he also served as president of the Philippine Obstetrical and Gynecological Society (POGS).

His influence extended beyond national borders. Internationally, he was a respected academic and speaker, serving on the Editorial Board of Climacteric, the journal of the International Menopause Society (IMS), and on the society’s executive committee. In 2024, Dr Tan was the recipient of the Wulf Utian IMS/CAMS Award for Achievement in Furthering Women’s Health. This award was given in recognition of DT’s exceptional efforts to further education on menopause in the local setting.

DT had a rare gift for translating complex medical ideas into clear, tangible concepts. More than that, he was a generous educator who freely shared his meticulously crafted lectures.

From 2009 to 2018, DT headed the Section of Reproductive Medicine at St. Luke’s Medical Center. His students had the rare chance to assist in IVF cases



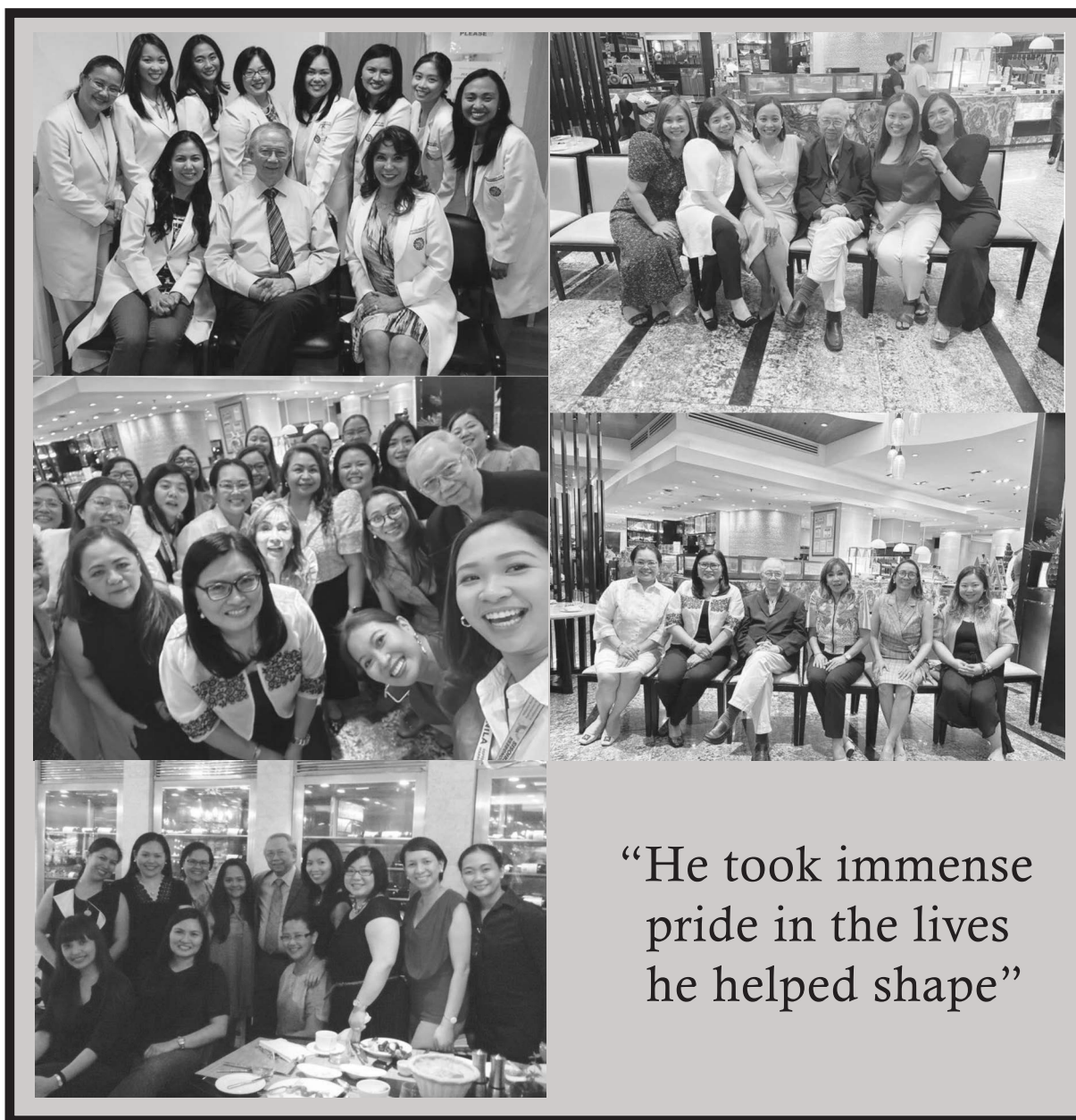
**Editor’s note:** PJREI is starting a series of tribute articles to PSRM past presidents and leaders, to honor their legacy in the fields of Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility, Minimally Invasive Gynecologic Surgery, and Menopause.

at a time when Assisted Reproductive Technology was still in its early stages. He was also the country's most prodigious endometriosis surgeon, inspiring generations of trainees to emulate the precision and care they saw in him.

DT didn't just teach medicine. He embodied its values. As a colleague, you caught a glimpse of your own potential through his kind, discerning eyes. He fostered a collegial environment where hierarchy took a back seat to ideas, and debate was always

encouraged. In fact, he enjoyed being challenged - the best testament to his legendary humility.

Above all, DT was a builder - not just of departments, hospitals, and societies, but of people. He took immense pride in the lives he helped shape. His eyes would light up when he spoke of his children - though his children would flippantly say, his eyes shone even more brightly when talking about his grandchildren. His countless students felt that same pride. To him, each was special—a unique facet of his enduring legacy.



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