

INNOVATION AND GIFTEDNESS

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I'd like to thank the Asia CEO Forum for this prestigious award, and extend my congratulations to all the awardees here today. I am simultaneously glad and humbled that both the Asia CEO Forum and their partners have chosen me for this honor. Although this award bears my name, it also honors all those who've had a hand in shaping my biological and social DNA – my organization, The Medical City (TMC), and my family, most of all. On their behalf, I thank you for the honor you bestow upon us.

This is a Lifetime Achievement Award. When I reflect on the achievements of my lifetime, I find that they emerge from just two deeply held core beliefs. Those beliefs eventually have found their way into themes that have animated not only the work I've done, but the way I've tried to live my life. Allow me then to share these two core beliefs with you.

My first core belief is that “Magaling ang Pilipino.” I've been fortunate enough to serve our nation and our people in many different capacities, from the exercise of my profession to government service to the private sector. In the course of that journey I've encountered many different peoples and cultures as well, and I've come away from those encounters firmly convinced that the Filipino has what it takes to compete successfully on the world stage. This belief has led to a driving theme in my life: that the task of leadership is primarily to build institutions which enable our people to realize their inherent excellence, in essence to reveal them to themselves.

I'm proud to be able to say that over the years The Medical City has become such an institution. Driven by the excellence of its people, TMC has come a long way from its humble beginnings. We have become a world leader in the pioneering field of regenerative medicine which harnesses the power of stem cells and other biomaterials to meet head on the challenge of severe disease that defy standards of care. Moreover, in partnership with the Ateneo School of Medicine & Public Health (ASMPH), we have created a model of medical education like no other, one that integrates management and medicine in shaping doctors of the future to provide the leadership in refashioning society's understanding of and behavior on health.

How do we unleash excellence in the Filipino? This leads to my second core belief: we must have the passion to always find a better way – to innovate, if you will – not just to build a better mousetrap or redefine a business model, but ultimately to empower others, and do so on a progressively wider scale.

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This is the spirit that drives The Medical City's value proposition of Patient Partnership, which recognizes that the patient must be elevated from his traditional role as a passive recipient of care to a full, equal, and empowered partner with his providers – doctors, hospitals, and other health care specialists – in achieving his health goals. Fidelity to this vision has required us, first of all, to build within ourselves a new mindset and heartset by which to think, feel and behave with regard to health, and to relentlessly insist on that new paradigm to drive everything we do, from the conduct of the individual health care provider in his interactions with the patient, to back-office processes and systems that make our operations run. As important, fidelity to this vision commits us to helping the patient be co-accountable for his own health by developing the knowledge, maturity and confidence to choose – and then to demand – what is best for his health and his life, bearing in mind that each patient is the unique synergy of his genetic makeup, history and lifestyle.

We are so committed to the promise of patient partnership, and to widening its scale, that we have developed the first national network of health facilities operating under *this single brand*, and have taken that brand *global*, as the first non-US healthcare organization to build a hospital on US soil, the Guam Regional Medical City.

Having been animated by these two core beliefs, I truly believe that we Filipinos have the giftedness to bring things of great value to the world. And so we carry the obligation to stand as equals with the world's other great nations and people. For those of you who have grown up with this as an article of faith, it may seem like a strange thing to articulate, given how basic a belief it should be. But all of us who love this country and her people – and I include our adopted Filipinos in this audience as well – will realize how relatively new the growth of this facet of our national consciousness is. How exciting it is to see it being born.

Fr. Catalino G. Arevalo, SJ, a lifelong mentor and family friend, has taught me that “All life, and all in life, including adversity, is a gift.” I've been blessed with many gifts in my lifetime, and among the greatest of those has been the grace of having been able to see these core beliefs come to life. So to be presented with an award for what after all have been gifts of grace is a profound experience.

On behalf of my family, my organization, our people and our nation, I humbly and gratefully accept this Lifetime Achievement Award. Good evening.