



UPD Lantern Parade 2013. Photo by Leonardo A. Reyes, UPDIO

In living color — life in UP

BY BINO C. GAMBA

Living in UP Diliman (UPD) is not at all blue.



In fact, it is vividly colorful. Between the campus' vast green spaces and the maroon-clad, bravely principled Iskos and Iskas, there is a myriad of shades in this unique community.

Playing Filipino street games with neighbors and friends and going house to house singing Christmas carols are just a few of Rachel R. Azul's fond memories of growing up in UPD.

Azul, a veterinarian at the Bureau of Animal Industry of the Department of Agriculture, grew up in UP Village A, more popularly known as White House. Her family lived in one of the row house units, which, according to her, was painted white—a clue as to how the place got its name. Back then, Azul said, there were not too many houses in the area.

"We came to live there because my father was a UP employee. Since these houses are the row house type, I became close friends with my neighbors," said Azul.

One can say that Azul is a true-blue Maroon. She finished elementary in 1977 and high school in 1981, both from the UP Integrated School.

Azul belonged to the last batch of veterinary medicine majors to graduate from UPD (1988), before the UP College of Veterinary Medicine (VetMed) permanently transferred to UP Los Baños. The grounds along E. Jacinto Street, where the College of Fine Arts now stands, used to be VetMed's.

Remembering her childhood, Azul said she always looked forward to playing

with friends after her classes. They loved hanging out at the UP Playground, where they would ride the swing and seesaw, and slide down the concrete slide — a creation of National Artist for Visual Arts Napoleon Abueva. Aside from playing at the UP Playground, Azul said she and her friends loved to play Filipino games in their neighborhood.

“Most of the time, we played ‘piko,’ Chinese garter, ‘agawan-base,’ ‘luksong baka,’ and ‘luksong tinik,’ while at nighttime, we played ‘taguan’ or ‘patintero,’” she said.

Other areas that Azul and her friends regularly visited were the UP Lagoon and the open UP Amphitheater behind Quezon Hall. They would usually stroll, have a picnic, and have their photos taken. She also confessed that they would sneak out at times from their afternoon nap to stroll around the campus to pick flowers and fruits.

During Holy Week, Azul, though not a Catholic, used to join the “Pabasa” with her friends. “Pabasa” is a religious ritual chanting of the “Pasyon,” a narrative book that contains the life and passion of the Christ.

“We participate during the evening until the wee hours the following day. We liked chanting the ‘Pasyon.’ We were also looking forward to the snacks served, which were usually ‘sopas,’ ‘goto,’ or ‘lugaw,’” Azul said.

The Christmas season is the most unforgettable time of the year for Azul. Every year, she, her siblings, and friends would look forward to the colorful and merry UP Lantern Parade.

“After the Lantern Parade, we would get ready to go caroling every night,” she said.

When Azul got married, things changed a bit. She and her husband transferred to



Azul. Photo from Azul

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Krus na Ligas, but she still regularly visited their house to spend time with her parents (when they were still alive) and siblings. Their family would gather together every Christmas and New Year’s Day.

“We would visit them whenever there are occasions, and even up to now, I still visit the place because my eldest brother and his family are still residing in Village A,” she said.

Asked about her thoughts about the significant changes in UPD, Azul said she noticed the abrupt increase in the number of people living on campus.

“I just hope that the campus would still be clean and green, and most of all, remain safe and peaceful.”



Top: Entrance of the UP Playground by Abueva (at present). Photo by Jerald DJ. Caranza, UPDIO

Right: Concrete slide by Abueva (at present). Photo by Jerald DJ. Caranza, UPDIO

