



MOUNT CARMEL SCHOOL

Celebrates



Anniversary

70 Years of faith,
service, tradition, and excellence

June 9, 2023

A SAIPAN TRIBUNE SPECIAL ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT



By TERI M. FLORES
CORRESPONDENT

In the heart of Chalan Kanoa lies a sprawling, blue and white painted structure, the Mount Carmel School, which shares the same grounds with the Diocese of Chalan Kanoa.

Considered the oldest Catholic school in the Northern Marianas, the school campus began on the grounds of Chalan Kanoa's old sugar mill factory generator, with one of the school's founders, Fr. Arnold Bendowsky, at the helm and sisters from the Mercedarian Missionar-

Honoring and celebrating a 70-year legacy



ies of Berriz as the school's first group of teachers and administrators. Several village parents helped remodel the facility that became the school's first classrooms.

From these very humble beginnings, MCS has now grown into one of the strongest educational institutions in the Marianas, producing illustrious alumni who go on to become Commonwealth leaders and innovators and leading lights in what has truly become a legacy to be proud of.

Throughout her growth and development, the MCS family went through changes, some of which were enough to crush the faint-hearted, but the MCS family's resiliency, bolstered by their strong faith in Divine Providence, has seen the school and its community weather some of life's greatest challenges.

Natural calamities in the form of super typhoons have wiped out many of the school's infrastructure and destroyed its student's educational resources. In most recent years, the technology that was its link to the rest of the world was damaged. But the most trying of all was the COVID-19 pandemic, whose effects were felt globally as everything shut down for months, with no immediate end in sight.

Through it all, the MCS family would always dust itself off and stand up again and again, with the help of students and their families, the government, and the school's own fundraising efforts, many of them led by their resilient AlumKnights, who are always ready to lend a hand.

MCS families give financial support to many school activities such as the Royal Court, and the AlumKnights are not shy with their contributions—the "Night of the Knights"—the yearly gathering of the school's alumni—remains well attended. This

year, the Class of 1990 was honored for generously contributing to a scholarship foundation benefitting outstanding college-bound students and athletes who want to attend MCS.

MCS AlumKnights have also left indelible marks both in the confines of the school's corridors as scholars and school administrators but, most importantly, as some of the CNMI's leaders and influencers.

MCS is an integral part of the history and landscape of the Northern Marianas. Her main contribution remains consistent—she is the catalyst by which hundreds of the CNMI's Catholic youth have been guided and educated to become "academically competitive individuals guided by humane and Christian values to make the world a better place."

■■■
In this special supplement, get to know the history of Mount Carmel School—the people behind its successes, the school's academic goals, and the activities that form part of an AlumKnight's education.

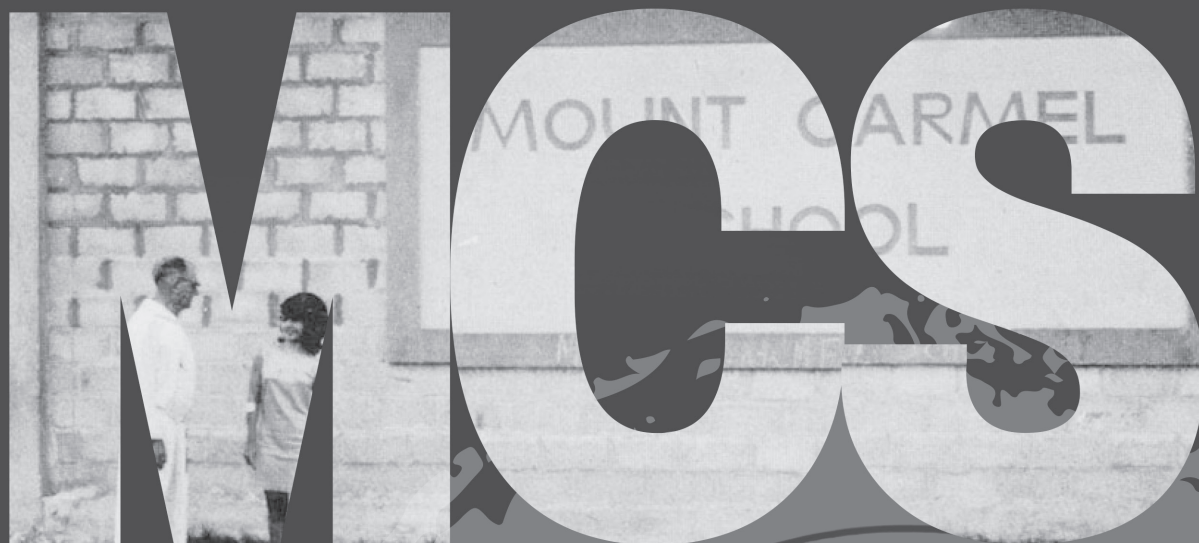
Read about the stories of three AlumKnights—Dr. Galvin S. DeLeon Guerrero, William Hunter and Joseph Guerrero—whose families have kept the MCS spirit alive by passing on the gift of an MCS education thorough generations.

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, Becky Furey, Nicollete Villagomez and Thomas Manglona II share their fondest memories of their time at MCS and recount how their MCS education has influenced their lives.

Get updated on the events marking the school's 70 years, highlighted by the honorees of the "Night of the Knights."

To the Mount Carmel School family, faculty and AlumKnights, congratulations on 70 years of faith, tradition and excellence!

Biba, Mount Carmel School!



1953-2023

Mount Carmel School

Educational excellence abounds in generations of knights.

Happy 70th Anniversary

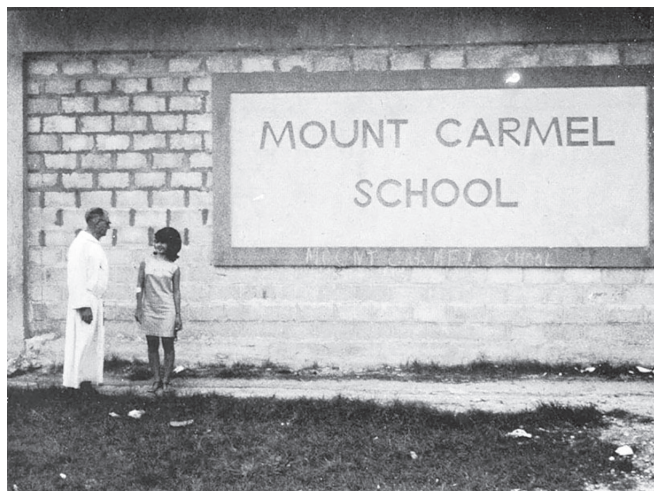
A 70-year history of keeping the faith

By TERI M. FLORES
CORRESPONDENT

As the first private Catholic school in the Northern Marianas, Mount Carmel School continues to carve a future anchored on faith and hope—the virtues that make the school one of the CNMI's oldest educational institutions.

Seasoned by time, made stronger by the ravages of World War II, economic downturns, natural calamities like devastating typhoons, and until just one year ago, the COVID-19 pandemic, MCS continues to grow in its mission of preparing its students to become “academically competitive individuals guided by humane and Christian values to make the world a better place.”

MCS' history is a master class in overcoming adversity, serving as a testament to the resilience of its founders, which it continues to pass on to generations of students.



The foundation of this educational institution that will later become Mount Carmel School was laid in 1927 when five members of the Mercedarian Missionaries of Berriz—Sisters Loreto Zubia, Inocencia Urizar, Pilar Lorenzo, Maria Teresa Cortazar, and Aurora Chopitea—sailed from Spain to Saipan, a yearlong journey across three continents. They arrived on Saipan on March 4, 1928.

In 1951, out of the ravages of World War II, the sisters

established the Our Lady of Mercy Kindergarten, which is now known as the Sister Remedios Early Childhood Development Center. This Kindergarten will be the precursor of what today is Mount Carmel School, which began offering first grade classes in 1952.

Within the same year, Fr. Arnold Bendowsky, along with the help of several parents, remodeled the old sugar mill factory generator house in Chalan Kanoa to become

Continued on Next Page

Congratulations

Saipan International School celebrates the 70th anniversary of MCS with great pride and admiration and looks forward to continuing our close partnership in the years to come.

70th Anniversary

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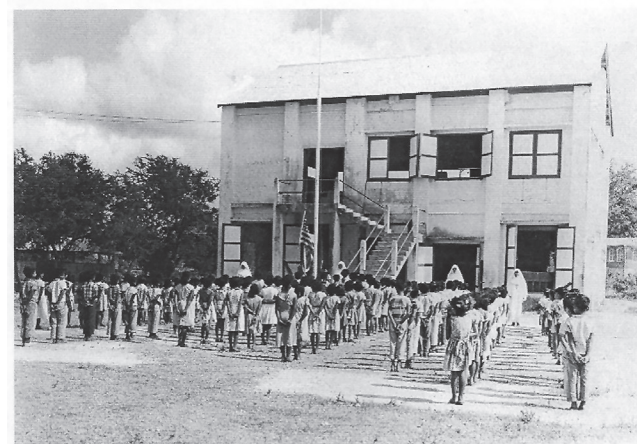
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the first structure that will house MCS' first classrooms. In 1953, the Mercedarian sisters were again called to serve as the school's first administrators. Sr. Ana Maria became the first school superior while Srs. Dolores Larranaga and Pia Goicoechea became its first teachers. Sr. Bertha Salazar became the first principal and taught second grade. In the next two years, Srs. Soledad Castro, Mary Margaret, and Concepcion Borja joined the teaching faculty.

In 1956, Sr. Rosario Velasco and Fr. Raymond Demers, who was the superior of the Capuchins on Saipan, established what will be MCS' high school department, the first secondary school in the Northern Marianas. The following year, Sr. Felisia Plaza welcomed 41 sophomores who were to become Mount Carmel's first high school students.

In 1960, the school saw its first double graduation in the senior Class of 1960 and 8th grade graduates, the future senior class of 1964, with then-Deacon Tomas A. Camacho, the future Bishop of the Diocese of Chalan Kanoa, serving as the school's first commencement speaker.



As the school entered its third decade, MCS reaffirmed its commitment to do what it does best—preparing its students for the challenges of life, both within the walls of academia and outside in the local community where its "AlumKnights" are some of today's trailblazers and leaders.



Playing a major role in the history and growth of MCS' as an educational institution are the challenges it had to bear in the face of typhoons that would see the school's classrooms damaged and destroyed and its resources stretched.

In 1960, Typhoon Olive struck and damaged several classrooms while demolishing the school library. From the rubble of this typhoon rose a new library and reading room in the Chalan Kanoa convent.

Six years later in 1966, Typhoon Jane—which in the annals of Northern Marianas' recorded history was the most damaging typhoon that has ever hit the islands at that time—saw some of the school's classrooms completely leveled, with countless books and school supplies destroyed in its aftermath.

While these natural catastrophes would certainly deflate the spirit of anyone, Fr. Arnold would always take the first steps to begin the process of recovery. At the same time, armed with his trademark laughter and his disarming spirit, Fr. Arnold would encourage the school's family to rebuild and move forward to the future.

In most recent years, 2015 proved to be one of the most challenging years for the CNMI, with two major occurrences that will see widespread devastation on the islands. Mount Carmel was not spared.

In July 2015, the CNMI lost almost all of its connections to the outside world when the sole fiber-optic cable connectivity broke, cutting off all communications. The school's operations and administrative services were disrupted with the loss of internet access. August 2015 saw the CNMI besieged by

Super Typhoon Soudelor, which left the islands in shambles and full recovery only happened after more than one year of rebuilding.

It was during these trying times when the MCS community again banded together to ensure that classes will continue despite trying circumstances. Industrial grade generators and MCS was able to run its IT infrastructure, provide running water, and turn on one unit of air conditioning per classroom so that teachers can resume their classes in an environment conducive to learning. Above all these, many students helped with campus beautification projects and participated in various volunteer activities for the community.

2018's Super Typhoon Yutu damaged the library and the gymcafetorium—the large school facility that functioned as a gym, café, and auditorium. Thanks to the help of federal funds, MCS reopened the "gymcafetorium" in school year 2020-2021 while the library is set to reopen in school year 2023-2024.

While natural calamities have become a part of the island's way of life, no one had foreseen the damage the COVID-19 global pandemic will bring not just to the islands, but to the world, when every human interaction and activity known to mankind stopped from 2020 to 2022, to stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Despite the known possibility that enrollment would drop due to the pandemic, MCS earned a reputation as an exemplary school under the leadership of AlumKnight Dr. Galvin DeLeon Guerrero and current president Frances T. Taimanao. Under their leadership, MCS was able to successfully resume optional face-to-face learning by school year 2020-2021.



Like the proverbial phoenix, MCS will see itself rising above adversity—keeping its faith in God, hoping for a better tomorrow while having love for everyone in the family. It is in this spirit that MCS is knight-strong and faith-tested.



Congratulations

to MCS on reaching such a significant milestone. Your focus on innovation, exploration, and inclusion has made a profound impact on the lives of students and faculty alike.

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A well-rounded education



By TERI M. FLORES
CORRESPONDENT

For 70 years now, Mount Carmel School has been home to numerous students and faculty who have embraced a philosophy of life and learning anchored on faith and servitude while pursuing academic excellence.

MCS principal Filmah Buenaflor explained that, as a Catholic family, "we respect each individual for the personal gifts that each person brings into our community. This appreciation for culture and respect for diversity exemplifies a life in concurrence with Catholic teachings. With justice and love, we share the values of Jesus Christ. Supported by our positive and

nurturing community, each member develops a capacity for mature responsibility."

To live up to its philosophy and mission of educating the whole person within a Catholic community, Buenaflor said the school offers a challenging curriculum that focuses on college preparatory courses, Catholic enrichment and educational programs, extracurricular activities and social, emotional learning programs, and activities.

Through these programs, Knights, as MCS students are collectively known, get an education that incorporates the basics of education (reading, writing, and math), the sciences, and the humanities.

The school also offers a wide range of elective courses aimed at developing a stu-

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GO KNIGHTS!

70th Anniversary

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Congratulations

MCS on achieving 70 years of excellence in education. Your commitment to academic and personal development has had a profound impact on countless individuals and communities.

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As you celebrate 70 years of providing quality education, we applaud your unwavering commitment to academic excellence and community service. You have set a standard for generations to come.



From the Office of Senator
Jude Untalan Hofschneider
2nd Senatorial District, Tinian

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dent's life skills. These include courses on creative writing, history, computer science and communications.

On the lighter side, students also get to participate in programs that encourage leadership, sportsmanship and the appreciation for culture and the arts. The school's athletic program sees students participating in soccer, volleyball and cross-country racing. The school's strong athletics program has produced outstanding student athletes who have represented the CNMI in major sporting competitions—basketball, soccer and tennis.

Knights are also encouraged and are known to take up volunteer work as part of the school's aim of promoting positive change in the community.

Buenafior said many Knights volunteer their time to assist local community organizations such as the Mariana Islands Nature Alliance, the Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence, the Commonwealth Cancer Association, Saipan Cares for Animals, the Diocese of Chalan Kanoa, Karidat Social Services, and 4-H Marianas, among many others.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, MCS has also strengthened their wellness programs that include retreats and workshops to help Knights cope with the current demands of society.

"Each of these programs is geared toward achieving the school's Expected Schoolwide Learning Results, or ESLR, which sets the standards for the conduct of Knights in the way they communicate, lead and practice the Catholic principles they have gained at MCS," said Buenafior.

With a challenging academic program backed by a strong Catholic foundation, MCS has prepared and molded its Knights who have become some of the CNMI's great minds and talents.

"Mount Carmel School's legacy is seen in many of its graduates who are now prominent leaders and stewards in the local community and abroad. Our MCS AlumKnights can be found leading in government, business, education, health, and non-profit organizations. This legacy of an MCS' education continues to be shared and extended to as many AlumKnights who also choose to provide their own children with a well-rounded Catholic education," said Buenafior.



*Congratulations
Mount Carmel School
on your 70th Anniversary!*

We look forward to our continued partnership and many years to come!

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A LEGACY OF DISTINCTION



It matters to the DeLeon Guerreros that their children attend MCS. The Lion Warrior Knights as the DeLeon Guerreros call themselves, from left to right, Velma, youngest daughter Mary Shelley, Galvin, Victoria and William Blake DeLeon Guerrero.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

GALVIN S. DELEON GUERRERO

One former student who carries the torch of distinction for Mount Carmel School is Dr. Galvin S. DeLeon Guerrero, the current president of the Northern Marianas College and a third generation

AlumKnight.

DeLeon Guerrero is a highly respected educator who has taught, shaped, and mentored some of the CNMI's present and future leaders.

DeLeon Guerrero's MCS education has left a profound impact on his perspective and

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It is with great pride and admiration that we offer our congratulations to MCS on its 70th anniversary. Your commitment to providing a rigorous and supportive academic environment is truly commendable.



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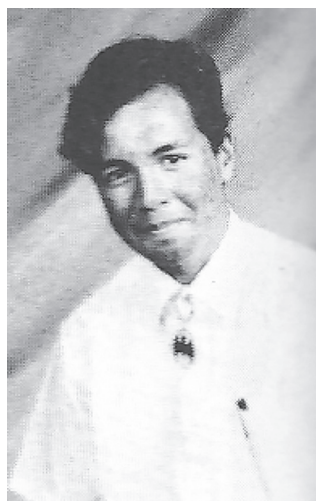
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outlook in life, so much so that he aspires to make the school's mission a part of his daily life. "I have embraced the school's mission to educate the whole person to see with Christ's eyes as the core of how I live and work. This means that I strive to understand the world with the deep wisdom that informs Jesus' perspective and engages the world with the compassionate love that drives Jesus' ministry."

This legacy of servitude and compassion has been common thread across four generations of the DeLeon Guerrero family, beginning with his grandfather, Jesus Diaz Sablan. "He helped found the school in 1952 by driving around Susupe and Chalan Kanoa with a megaphone on hand, selling raffle tickets for the school's inaugural fundraiser."

Sablan's daughter, Jessica, followed suit and became one of the graduates of the Class of 1972. DeLeon Guerrero found himself next in line to become an AlumKnight. Including his studies at Sr. Remedios, DeLeon Guerrero spent all 14 years of elementary and secondary education at MCS, graduating with the Class of 1991. DeLeon Guer-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Galvin DeLeon Guerrero in high school. This AlumKnight distinguished himself as an outstanding student and as the AlumKnight of the Year when he graduated as part of MCS's Class of 1991.

rero graduated with honors, receiving the school's most distinguished graduate award.

After MCS, DeLeon Guerrero continued his studies at the University of Puget Sound where he graduated with cum laude honors in English Literature in 1996. In 1998, DeLeon Guerrero went full circle and returned to his high school alma mater where, for the past 25 years, he has held several key administrative positions starting as the school's vice principal to becoming MCS

president, which he served for nine years.

As an AlumKnight, DeLeon Guerrero shares several insights about his experiences, beginning as a student to being a parent to three students—Victoria Ann, William Blake and Mary Shelley—who are the current generation of AlumKnights.

"In the 6th grade, then monsignor and later bishop emeritus Tomas Camacho was delivering a homily at a school Mass. Pointing to the Pascal Candle, he asked the entire student body assembled if anyone could tell him what a beacon was. No one raised their hand. Until I did. He invited me up to the amble. As nervous as I was, I made my way to him, and he asked me to share my answer on the microphone. I said, 'A beacon is a light that gives hope.' He then told me, 'You are correct, faithful servant.' After that, he became a trusted mentor and a close friend until he passed away. And since that moment in the 6th grade, I have continued trying to be a faithful servant that radiates the light of hope everywhere I go."

As a parent, DeLeon Guerrero has witnessed his children learn "and grow into the amazing wonders that

they are today. As a teacher, he says he has had the privilege "to work with students and colleagues to tell amazing stories on stage or in film, deliver important messages in speech competitions, and help cultivate generations of AlumKnights who make a difference in the world." And as an AlumKnight, he has been proud to share "a great legacy with countless AlumKnights who lead and serve our community."

"What I see, both in my own family and in my former students, are AlumKnights who have yielded an exponential return on the investment in their education at MCS. AlumKnights receive the academic education they need to get into some of the world's best colleges, but they also receive the kind of character and leadership education that they need to come back and give back to their home islands."

On top of what DeLeon Guerrero describes as a robust education, he said MCS also places Catholic faith at the center of its education, ensuring that Catholic sacraments and traditions are embedded into students' lives.

"As devout Catholics, this matters to me and my



MCS Class of 1990 graduate William Hunter with his mom, Gloria Hunter.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

wife," he said.

WILLIAM HUNTER

William Hunter, a second generation MCS AlumKnight, says both the Sr. Remedios school and Mount Carmel School have become the educational pathway of choice for his parents, particularly his mother, who is an AlumKnight herself.

Hunter, who is the distance learning education coordinator at the Northern Marianas College, said his mother strongly believed that it was important for them to have a strong Christian education. "And with her being an AlumKnight herself, she knew MCS would be a good school for

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myself and my siblings."

Three generations of Hunter's family have attended MCS, beginning with his mother, Gloria Worswick Hunter. Born and raised in Palau, Gloria Hunter had to leave her family in Palau if she wanted to get an education higher than 9th grade. In 1963, armed with a scholarship from the Mercedarian Missionaries of Berriz, Gloria Hunter moved to Saipan to join her best friend and cousin, the late Valeria Blau to study at MCS.

William Hunter narrates that when it came time to choose where he and his siblings will attend school, both his parents were resolute in their decision to send them to MCS.

A graduate of the Class of 1990, Hunter joined his three other siblings at MCS—his eldest brother, Robert, who graduated in 1987; sister Tamara from Class of 1988; and his youngest brother, Glen, from the Class of 1991.

Following in his family's footsteps are Hunter's children, Brianna from the Class of 2017; Class of 2021 graduate Brandee; and Brissa, who will be graduating with the Class of 2023 this June.

Hunter has fond memo-

ries of his 12 years at MCS, with one of them being the time his class fundraised for their senior year trip to Australia, an event that he said left him with a lasting lesson on teamwork. "I still see the same synergy in the Class of 1990 today and it is a reason why our batch is one of the many alums that, to this day, continues to give back to MCS."

Also, it was in Virgil Abueme's computer class that sparked Hunter's interest in computers for more than just gaming. "It was the era of the Apple II and the five-and-quarter floppy disk and it was in this class where I started grasping the role technology will play in improving productivity and efficiency."

Over anything else, Hunter values the relationships that were honed during his 12 years at MCS, which until now remain strong. Aside from the values that he learned from his mom, Hunter attributes the nurturing environment at MCS for shaping who he is today. "Over 30 years later, I still connect with many of my classmates today."

Hunter credits his MCS education for building the foundation that has set the course of his life. "It is important to invest in build-

ing a foundation that is built on a strong value system and one that will help you navigate life. I highly recommend MCS to future generations. My daughters had a wonderful experience studying at MCS and I hope that the same opportunity will be given to future generations. While my wife and I had to make some sacrifices to ensure that our daughters could attend MCS, we would do it all over again if we had to.

"A sincere thank you to everyone who has had a hand in MCS' success over the last 70 years. This includes Bishop Ryan Jimenez and the Diocese of Chalan Kanoa, as well as past and present school board members, presidents, principals, teachers and administrative and support staffs. Most especially, kudos to all the parents, including mine, who provided us with an amazing learning opportunity that has helped mold us into who we are today. Please continue to support MCS and help carry it through another 70 years."

JOSEPH C. GUERRERO

His family's belief in MCS' values and their support of Catholic education are the reasons why three generations of the Guerreros have



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

MCS AlumKnight and Saipan businessman Joseph Guerrero.

considered the school their alma mater.

The legacy of an MCS education began with Joseph C. Guerrero's mother, Rita, who graduated with the Class of 1968. Following suit were his siblings—Anthony, Class of 1988; Bettina, Class of 1990; Patrick, Class of 1996; and Teresa Class of 2006. His wife, Eleanor T. Cabrera, attended MCS from the 1st through 11th grade, while Guerrero himself studied at MCS between

1980 and 1991 before moving to Pullman High School in Washington to complete his high school education.

The current generation of AlumKnights are represented by the children of Guerrero's siblings and his two sons Christian, Class of 2022, and Ruben who will be graduating with the Class of 2024.

Guerrero, who, with his wife Eleanor, are the co-owners of Transcends LLC, which operates the Naked

Fish Bar and Grill, Hafa Adai Realty, and Transcends Consulting, said that kindness and compassion are the greatest lessons he learned from MCS.

"The school has taught me the importance of helping others in our community and to share my time and talents as gifts from God," he said.

Guerrero recalls days of school assemblies and sporting events as treasured memories of his time at MCS. "Pep rallies were so much fun and allowed us to be creative and display school spirit. My favorite subject was lunch break where we enjoyed playing everything—dodgeball, football, basketball and volleyball."

The gift of lasting bonds of friendship are what Guerrero considers is the legacy of his MCS education. "The lifelong relationships with my classmates and many other AlumKnights are an important part of my personal life and professional life."

"As a proud AlumKnight, I am grateful to MCS for all that it has offered to me and my family and pray for its continued success in building a strong community bound together by Christian values."



Celebrating 70 years of empowering individuals and our communities by providing quality education to students in the CNMI.

BIBA KNIGHTS!

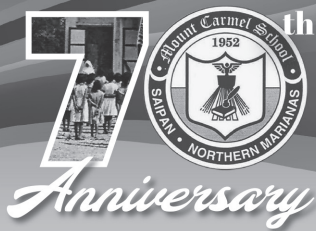


Congratulations

to the management, faculty, and staff of the Mt. Carmel School for reaching this milestone.

From the management and staff of





Congratulations

to MCS on achieving this incredible milestone. Your commitment to empowering students to become leaders and changemakers in their communities is a testament to your visionary approach to education.

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School traditions that foster fond memories

By TERI M. FLORES
CORRESPONDENT

Keeping the school's traditions alive is part of the well-rounded education that Mount Carmel School students—called Knights—receive.

"The traditions at Mount Carmel School are core events that symbolize our identity as a school and what our values are. Observing these traditions gives our Knights long-lasting memories of their time with their peers and their teachers at MCS. To this very day, AlumKnights at MCS can look back with fondness to these traditions that helped make their stay at MCS an unforgettable experience," said Victoria Deleon Guerrero, who is the school's director of Institutional Development.

The school's traditions are a combination of Catholic holy days of obligations, holidays and academic events that often see a gathering of past and present Knights.

Starting the calendar year off is the celebration of Catholic Schools Week, which is held every year, between January to Feb-

ruary. Thus, the event is celebrated in conjunction with Catholic schools all over the United States. Different aspects of the week is highlighted depending on the theme for the year's celebration. One highlight of the event is the awarding of the school's Teacher and Support Staff of the year.

A much-anticipated yearly event is the "Night with the Knights," an occasion celebrated in honor of MCS graduates, who are known as "AlumKnights." This fun-filled night comes with dancing, music and good food, all taken in the spirit of a school reunion that also serves as a school fundraiser. This evening is marked with the recognition of the AlumKnight of the Year, Class of the Year, Legacy Teacher of the Year, and the Millennial Falcon of the Year awards.

The Feast of the Immaculate Conception is a Catholic holy day of obligation that the MCS community takes part in partnership with the Diocese of Chalan Kanoa. The school's community may be seen assist in singing, reading, altar serving, and other services. Traditionally, MCS seniors are tasked to escort and transport the image of

the Virgin Mary around the village of Chalan Kania and then back to the Mount Carmel Cathedral.

The school helps usher in the holidays beginning with the Thanksgiving Feast, in which the entire school community participates in various events and activities to give thanks. Spearheading the collection of canned food and clothes that are donated to Karidat Social Services are the school's leadership team, student council and National Honor Society.

Marking the Christmas season is the school's Christmas program, which is a family favorite of the Knight community.

MCS hosts a yearly STEM/Science Fair, which is an opportunity to showcase the exceptional work of students in science, technology and engineering, arts, and math.

Also, for more than 10 years now, MCS has hosted a student leadership workshop that prepares student leaders to lead their organizations by providing them with information on school policies and best practices.

MCS also hold pep rallies for its Knights to develop school spirit and camaraderie. Held twice a year, these rallies also showcase the Knight's artistry, creativity, and talent with performances and works of art judged and winners named.



Congratulations



As you mark your 70th anniversary, we commend MCS for the impact you have made on countless individuals and communities. Your unwavering commitment to fostering critical thinking and personal growth has truly changed lives.



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Exemplary AlumKnights

By TERI M. FLORES
CORRESPONDENT

AlumKnight is a noun that refers to an individual who has attended Mount Carmel School for their Kindergarten, primary or secondary education. It is portmanteau of the words "alumni" and "Knight," which is what Mount Carmel School calls its students. Thus, an "AlumKnight" is a someone who is a graduate of MCS, known for the qualities of humility, loyalty, and servant leadership.

As a Catholic institution in the Marianas, MCS prepares its AlumKnights by educating "the whole person to see with Christ's eye and grow within a Catholic community." Following this philosophy, AlumKnights are expected to integrate the values of their Catholic faith with the way they interact with their families and their community, according to Victoria Deleon Guerrero, who is the school's director of Institutional Development.

Throughout its 70 years, MCS has contributed the skills and expertise of AlumKnights who have distinguished themselves in all as-

pects and areas of the CNMI community.

BECKY ADA FUREY Class of 2003

Becky Furey is a second generation AlumKnight who attended MCS when she was in the 8th grade until her graduation in 2003. Furey shares the same story as that of numerous MCS alumni whose ties with the school span several generations.

"My parents thought it'd be best to attend MCS for multiple reasons, but mainly because it is my mother's alma mater that provides a Catholic education and will strengthen my Catholic faith. The same reason goes for today with my daughter. She is currently a student at MCS, and I am happy that we can share in this legacy together."

As an AlumKnight, Furey believes her student peers and the senior students during her time influenced her the most. "The fact that we all desired to strive for further excellence after high school fueled me to try my best to achieve at the next level."

Now the program director of the Mariana Islands Nature Alliance since 2013, Furey's advocacy is on conservation

and environmental protection, a passion nurtured after watching and listening to the experiences of her father who is an island ecologist. With her daughter as her inspiration, this AlumKnight pursued a Master of Science degree in Environmental Policy & Management, which comes handy in Furey's mission to continue conservation efforts throughout the CNMI.

"The Marianas is and will always be home. My grandparents instilled in our family the pursuit of education and dedication to public service. I always knew that after receiving my degree from university, that I will return and serve my island community. My experiences and passion to protect and support our islands' natural resources so that my daughter could enjoy the beauty of our home inspired me to attain graduate studies. This decision was not only as a CNMI native but as a shared concerned resident of our local environment with a call to duty. I have been humbled to serve our community, along with our community partners and amazing colleagues with a shared passion for serving

Continued on Next Page



From the management and staff of



We offer our heartfelt congratulations to MCS on 70 years of preparing students for success in all areas of life. Your focus on intellectual curiosity, creativity, and personal growth has made a lasting impact on the world.

We join the MCS community in celebrating 70 years of academic and personal excellence. Your legacy of compassion, integrity, and service will continue to make a difference in the world.



70th
Anniversary



FROM THE OFFICE OF
Rep. Roy Christopher A. Ada
CNMI House of Representatives
Precinct #1

Congratulations

Mount Carmel School for 70 years of faith,
service, tradition and excellence in education.

GO KNIGHTS!



Representative Edwin K. Propst
Floor Leader
CNMI 23rd Legislature



From Page 23

our islands' way of life."

Furey extends a happy 70th anniversary to MCS and shares the message that "our...fathers acknowledged the importance of taking care of our environment, saying that respect for human beings and nature are one and that the concern for the environment needs to be out of sincere love for our neighbor. Everyone has their part to play in our islands' future, we are all called to action."

GOV. ARNOLD I. PALACIOS
Class of 1979

One Mount Carmel School AlumKnight who has done the school proud is the CNMI's incumbent governor, Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, who credits the education he received at MCS as a cornerstone of his life.

"It instilled in me resilience and perseverance, a yearning for consistent progress, and an ability to envision the future with clarity and discernment," he said.

Palacios believes that being an AlumKnight testifies to the power of disciplined education and a nurturing environment that shapes not just minds, but also hearts.

Palacios and his siblings

are all AlumKnights—a decision his parents made for all their children because they want them to gain a solid foundation built on the values of faith and servitude.

"Despite the challenges, [our parents] prioritized [our] education, making sacrifices along the way to ensure we had the merits of an education steeped in discipline, Catholic values, and academic excellence. Above all these, my parents saw in Mount Carmel a sanctuary of learning, of growth, and of becoming," according to the governor.

Palacios recalls with admiration and respect the influence his MCS mentors has had on his life. "Throughout my time at MCS, many mentors influenced my life path, among them a cadre of dedicated educators, from the likes of Sr. Bertha, Sr. Rosa—or Auntie Chailang, as we fondly call[ed] her—Sr. Ana, to the Capuchin priests and many other nuns who stood at the helm of the classroom. ...Then there were our Peace Corps volunteers, particularly Mr. Leachman and Mr. Whitbeck, who, alongside their counterparts, sparked our curiosity and instilled in us a desire to learn," the governor recalled.

Palacios began his career as a public servant soon af-

Continued on Next Page



Congratulations

MOUNT CARMEL SCHOOL

*on reaching this
tremendous milestone!*

From your partner in education,
CNMI Public School System



From Page 24

ter returning from Oregon where he completed his business studies at Portland State University, first joining the CNMI Department of Lands and Natural Resources where he rose through the ranks within nearly two decades.

"Before I started on my journey of public service, my career took an unexpected but enriching detour. I found myself with a business degree in hand, working in the Department of Lands and Natural Resources. While I had initially envisioned a future at Commerce, my dad and destiny guided me toward DLNR. As fate would have it, I rose from a humble position as a data manager and statistician, later becoming the director of Fisheries and eventually appointed secretary of DLNR—this would span over close to two decades," the governor said.

It was the desire to make a difference that eventually compelled Palacios to consider running for elected office—a decision that he said was not taken lightly. "It stemmed from a desire to make a difference, to not merely be an onlooker but a contributor. It occurred to me to stop standing on the sidelines, to cease voicing complaints, and instead, to take charge, roll up my sleeves, and serve our beloved CNMI community," said the governor.

As MCS celebrates its 70th anniversary this year, Palacios has this to share: "May you continue to embrace the tenets of discipline, academic excellence, and Catholic values that MCS has stood for these seven decades. Keep striving for excellence, set bold goals, and let the light of knowledge guide you in the pursuit of your dreams. Here's to 70 more years of creating servant leaders, innovators, and changemakers!"

NICOLLETTE VILLAGOMEZ Class of 2007

Nicollette Villagomez attended MCS as a first-grade student and then became a returning alumnus during late fall semester of her freshman year, when Villagomez went back to MCS upon the desire of her mom, an AlumKnight herself, who wanted her to continue the family tradition of being a Knight.

A civil engineering graduate of the Boise State University, Villagomez decided to pursue studies in the applied sciences to cultivate her interest in the fields of design and construction. After completing her studies abroad, Villagomez returned to the Northern Marianas by first joining EFC Engineers and



Architects and before joining the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. She has been with CUC, which for almost 10 years she has been with the corporation's Water & Wastewater Engineering Division as a junior engineer.

When asked how her education at MCS influenced her outlook in life, Nicollette Villagomez has this to say: "My overall outlook in life is solidified by the Catholic principles that were instilled in me at Mt. Carmel. Also, being an AlumKnight has helped pave the way for me to achieve the necessary training for my advanced collegiate studies."

As one of the CNMI's budding professionals, Villagomez had always known she wanted to return home after studying and gaining experience abroad. "Our island community is a special place and returning home as an engineer to help improve the quality of life for our people is the biggest motivation for me. As a CNMI resident, we don't have many local engineers, so returning home to a field that is slowly growing with local engineers is promising."

"Congratulations Mount Carmel School on 70 years. To my fellow AlumKnights, remember the values of the faith and knowledge shared in the halls and Cathedral!"

ESTHER L. MUNA Class of 1984

Credited for a strong leadership that has brought vast improvements in both the administration and operation of the Commonwealth HealthCare Corp., this AlumKnight's love for family, the local culture, and the community had made her stay for the long haul.

CHCC's chief executive officer, Esther L. Muña, returned to the CNMI following her work overseas because she wanted to help improve the local community's access to healthcare through effective healthcare administration.

"Understanding how individuals access health through the medical claims made me want to learn more and explore how I can improve healthcare here. I realized my passion for healthcare administration while doing medical billing and coding."

Muña's innovative spirit, combined with her grit and perseverance, are some of the qualities she employs to ensure CHCC's effectiveness and viability as the CNMI's

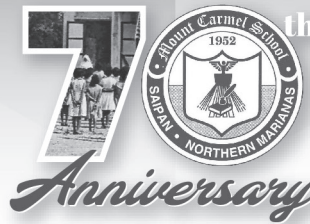
primary healthcare facility.

"The industry is complex. It evolves very quickly, and it requires a lot of investment and flexibility. It's very challenging, especially when it is not financially supported. So you constantly read about the new ideas and best practices and that's why I chose it. It keeps me on my toes, for sure."

Muña attended MCS beginning in 5th grade. Aside from integrating the Catholic faith into her education, Muña's parents believed that an MCS education would help in her personal development. "They wanted that for their 13 children. I remember my parents always praying for us to always do the right thing in life and I loved listening to my mom speak of the advice she gets from the priests and nuns at MCS. She trusted MCS and the people that worked there."

To the young Muña, biology teacher Luz Buccat's approach to critical thinking inspired her love for the sciences. "Science and faith sometimes don't agree and

Continued on Next Page



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MCS

on this historic milestone.

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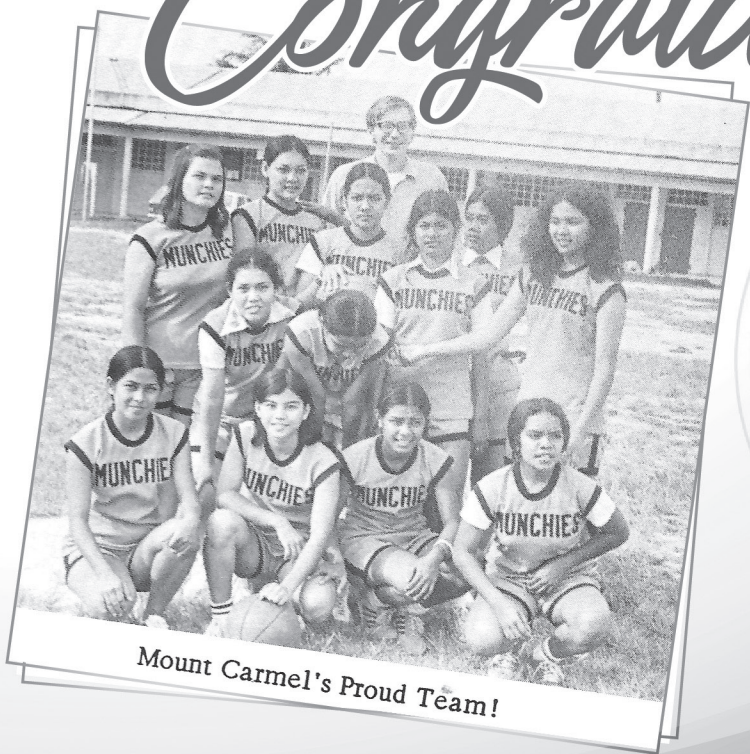
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MCS has been a shining beacon of education for 70 years, and we celebrate this milestone with you.

Your commitment to preparing students for success in all areas of life is a testament to your unwavering dedication and passion.

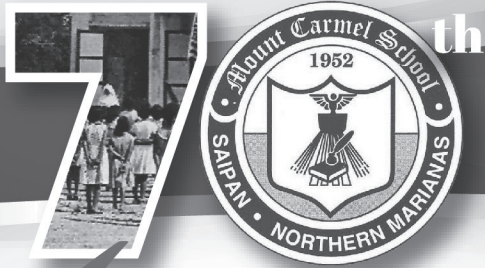
Congratulations



Mount Carmel's Proud Team!

MCS on achieving
70 years

of excellence in education.
Your commitment to academic
and personal development
has had a profound impact
on countless individuals
and communities.



Anniversary

From the Management & Staff of
Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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it's important to share both perspectives. To be open to all perspectives is significant in life and her teachings helped me to be more understanding in my home and at work."

Looking back, Muña believes her MCS education left a positive impact on her beliefs and outlook in life. "An MCS education synthesizes faith, family and education. I pray every day for guidance and for me to do the right thing, especially when facing the challenges of leading a team of almost 1,000 staff and providing health services to the entire community. I know I can't solve all the health problems of this community and especially when the problems stem from external factors. But, as an AlumKnight, I bring it and always will."

"Congratulations to MCS faculty, staff, students, and AlumKnights! Let us take pride in our MCS education by practicing what we learned and by lifting others. Not all can attend MCS, but all can see what it does by how we live and how we act toward one another. God bless you, MCS, always and God bless the CNMI!"

THOMAS MANGLONA II
Class of 2016

If Thomas Manglona II were to describe the education he received from Mount Carmel School, his response would be: "MCS taught me that nothing is beyond reach if your heart is in the right place and full of faith."

A native of Rota, Manglona moved to Saipan to continue his high school education and, following his parent's decision, he enrolled at MCS in 2012 as a freshman. "MCS provided a well-rounded and faith-centered education and environment," said Manglona.

For Manglona, former MCS president Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero stands out as one of his mentors. "He created a welcoming environment, supported my goals, and encouraged a community-first approach to education. He taught me to be a lifelong learner and to never stop chasing my dreams."

As one of the CNMI's current crop of local talents and influencers, Manglona became aware of the need for journalism in sharing the community's stories and its people. A multimedia journalist and the current chief CNMI correspondent for regional news source KUAM, Manglona returned home **See ALUMKNIGHTS on Page 28**



Anniversary



CONGRATULATIONS

MCS for 70 years of shaping young minds
and fostering a love of learning. Your impact
on the lives of students and the wider
community is immeasurable.

From the management and staff of



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Congratulations

to the MCS Community on
your 70th anniversary. We are
grateful for your partnership
over the years. May God
continue to strengthen you
as you move forward in your
mission of 'educating the whole
person to see with Christ's eyes.'



From the management and staff of



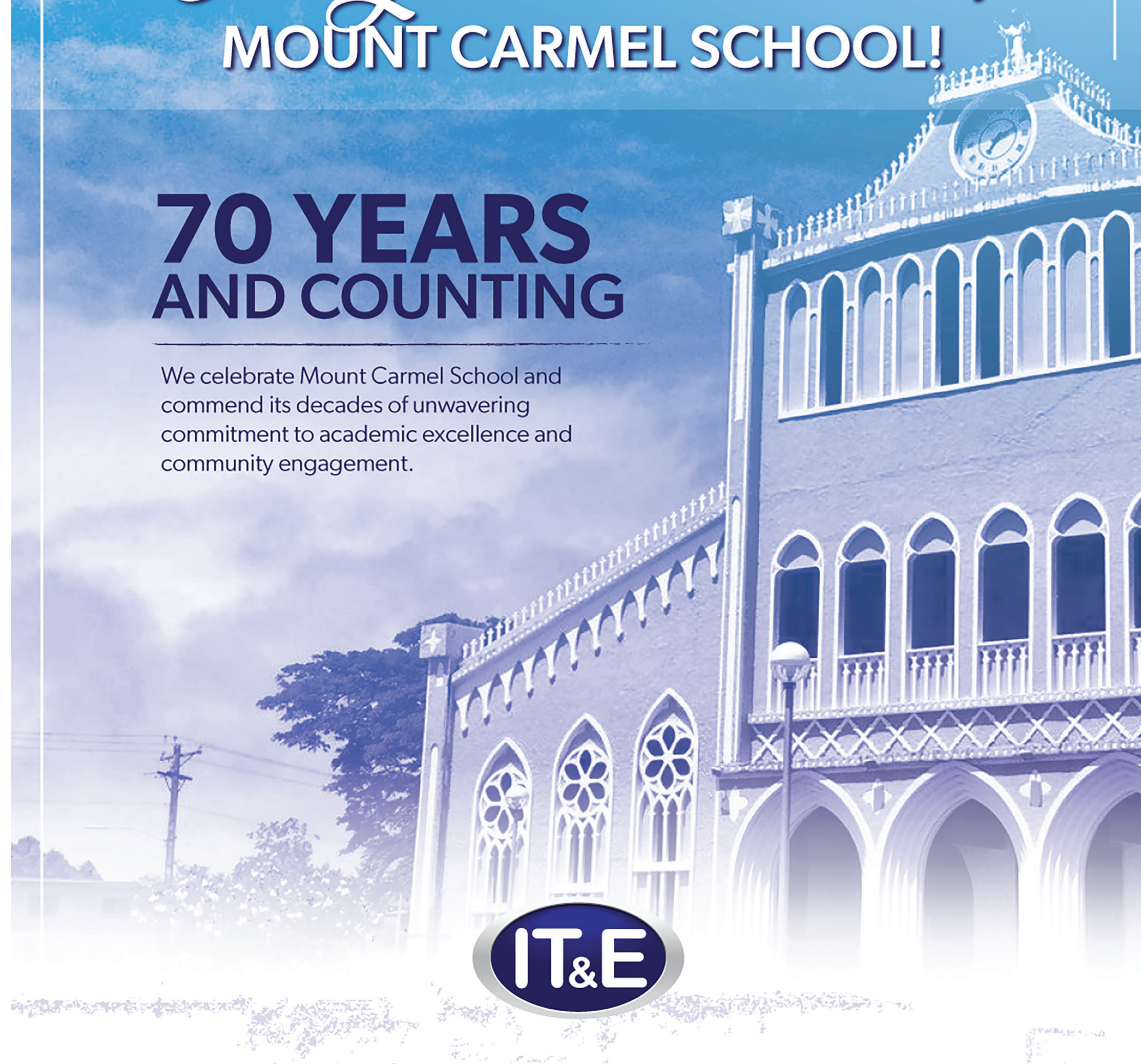
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Congratulations, MOUNT CARMEL SCHOOL!

70 YEARS AND COUNTING

We celebrate Mount Carmel School and commend its decades of unwavering commitment to academic excellence and community engagement.





Congratulations

to the MCS community on this historic occasion. Your commitment to fostering a culture of diversity and inclusion, while maintaining high academic standards, is an inspiration to us all.



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ALUMKNIGHTS

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upon completing his Media Studies degree at the University of California at Berkeley where he graduated with high distinction and from Stanford University where he completed his master's degree in journalism.

It was always Manglona's goal to return home to the CNMI to practice his craft. "I wanted to provide a more complicated and fuller picture of my island home. Growing up, no newspaper was printed, and no reporter lived on Rota. The lack of media allowed politics to go unchecked. It also meant that the good news of our community was not being shared," he said. "I want to share that good news."

■■■

In its 70 years as a Catholic school, MCS has shaped the minds and hearts of these "AlumKnights of the Year"—the leaders and trailblazers who are contributing to the growth of our community:

■ Sister Isabel T. Semann 1963

■ Former governor Benigno Fitial, 1964

■ Former lieutenant governor and retired justice Jesus C. Borja, 1967

■ Former governor + Eloy Inos, 1967

■ Former representative Felicidad Ogumor 1968

■ Business pioneer Mr. Jesus V. "J. M." Deleon Guerrero, 1968

■ Architect and entrepreneur Efrain F. Camachom 1969

■ School leader + Rita Kazuma-Guerrero, 1969

■ Delegate Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan, 1973

■ Business leader Merced Marcie M. Tomokane, 1973

■ Attorney, Lucia Blanco-Maratita 1977

■ Former lieutenant governor Diego T. Benavente, 1978

■ Attorney Brien Sers Nicholas 1979

■ Physician Dr. Norma Ada, 1984

■ Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. CEO Dr. Esther Lizama Muña, 1984

■ Business leader and entrepreneur Vicente "Ben" Babauta, 1985

■ Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada, 1986

■ Educator Dr. Debra Tudela Cabrera, 1990

■ Law professor and dean Rose Cuison-Villazor, 1991

■ Education leader Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero, 1991

■ Educator Elaine Cabrera Dela Cruz, 1997

■ Former representative Christina Marie Sablan, 1999



As you mark this momentous anniversary, we salute the MCS community for its unwavering commitment to creating a better world through education. Congratulations on 70 years of making a difference.



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