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**Filipino Achievers in the USA & Canada**  
*Profiles in Excellence*  
**Isabelo T. Crisostomo**

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**Cover Blurbs**

***Filipino Achievers in the USA and Canada: Profiles in Excellence*** brings to life the Filipino odyssey in North America and examines the lives and times of notable men and women who won against tremendous odds in their own fields of endeavor.

Meet the more than 100 outstanding Filipinos whose significant achievements epitomize the spirit of the American and Canadian democratic ideals.

The achievers profiled in this book are wonderful role models. They have transcended their ethnicity, surmounted various obstacles, and met their destiny. Their lives and accomplishments are a window by which others can view these individuals and the Filipino community. By getting to know and respect their values, cultures, traditions, and characteristics, others can appreciate their strengths and acknowledge their contributions to America's "melting pot" society.

The book is divided into three parts:

**Part I**

*The Filipino Odyssey in North America*, relives and traces the journeys made by Filipinos in America from 1763 to the present. The first arrivals in the United

States, the "Manilamen," established villages in the Louisiana bayous as early as 1763, thereby becoming the first Asians in New Orleans. These pioneering Filipinos jumped ships that sailed between Manila and Mexico during the Spanish galleon trade from 1565 to 1815.

Thereafter, the migration of Filipinos was divided into four periods or "waves."

The "First Wave" (1903-1934) involved "pensionados" (scholars), non-sponsored students, and unskilled workers.

The "Second Wave" (1945-1965) consisted mostly of military personnel who served with the U.S. Armed Forces in the Philippines during the Second World War.

The "Third Wave" (1966-present) has been comprised mostly of professionals: doctors, nurses, lawyers, engineers, and entrepreneurs. Filipinos are now the second fastest-growing segment of the Asian American population.

In Canada, more than 150,000 Filipinos arrived between 1946 and 1990, 89 percent of whom were admitted from 1970 to 1990, due to Canada's liberalizing trend of taking in more diverse nationalities. Latest estimates place the Filipino population there at 200,000.

## **Part II**

*Profiles of Filipino Achievers in the USA and Canada* presents the fascinating and inspiring stories of more than 100 ambitious Filipino men and women. These Filipinos have made history through their stunning accomplishments in every field of human endeavor, including the arts, business and finance, literature and journalism, politics and public affairs, and science and technology.

## **Part III**

*Brief Profiles of Other Filipino Achievers* gives a bird's-eye view of how other Filipino achievers have struggled and triumphed over defeats and frustrations in their own field of dreams.

This pioneering volume describes the life Filipinos made for themselves and highlights their contributions to the United States and Canada.

The achievers profiled in the book have shaped their adopted country's history, culture, and society. They are worthy of both recognition and emulation in their native country and in their adopted country for their world-class achievements, passionate patriotism, and genuine social concern.

Those profiled in *Filipino Achievers in the USA & Canada* include:

- **Pacita Abad**, New York world-class artist
- **Dani D'Umuk Aguila**, ace cartoonist-editor
- **Larry Asera**, noted engineer, entrepreneur & public servant
- **Orlino C. Baldonado**, top scientist-entrepreneur
- **Veltisezar B. Bautista**, pioneering author-publisher
- **Ben Cayetano**, first Filipino U.S. governor
- **Lilia Calderon Clemente**, smart global money manager
- **Dr. Rolando A. De Castro**, famous dental professor-artist
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- **Drs. Jose and Stella Evangelista**, Michigan Hall of Famers
- **Tita Dioso Gillespie**, *Newsweek* magazine general editor
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- **Loida Nicolas Lewis**, head of \$1.8-B business empire
- **Josie Cruz Natori**, international fashion empress
- **Gloria M. Ochoa**, politician with a dream
- **Dr. Enrique Ostrea, Jr.**, famed inventor-researcher
- **Dr. Rey D. Pagtakhan**, Canadian Parliament member
- **Mark V. Pangilinan**, Guam business tycoon/publisher
- **Mel Red Recana**, first Filipino judge in the Western Hemisphere
- **José Romero**, international acrylic-impressionistic artist
- **Ninotchka Rosca**, top U.S. novelist
- **Lea Salonga**, international stage performer-singer
- **Dr. Neonilo A. Tejano**, "flying doctor" of Kansas
- **Eduardo U. Tioseco**, prominent Texas banker
- **David M. Valderrama**, political trailblazer in the U.S.
- **Velma Veloria**, first Filipino solon in Washington State
- **Mona Lisa Yuchengco**, *Filipinas* founder-publisher

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***Filipino Achievers in the USA & Canada: Profiles in Excellence*** by Isabelo T. Crisostomo is a book about the odyssey of Filipinos in North America. Odyssey is defined by the dictionary as "a long series of wanderings or adventures, esp. when filled with notable experiences, hardships, etc."

The odyssey of workers and other Filipino immigrants who came to the United States and Canada is a story of hope, sorrow, bitterness, adventure, prejudice, discrimination, failures, and triumphs.

Although not yet recognized by American historians and the general public, the story of Filipinos in North America began in 1763, when Filipino sailors jumped ships during the Spanish galleon trade and settled in the bayous of New Orleans, Louisiana. Such evidence that Manilamen existed and lived in Louisiana was documented by Lafcadio Hearn, who made an observation of the life of the Filipino swamp dwellers. Hearn's article was published in the *Harper's Weekly* issue of March 31, 1883, and reprinted in this book.

According to Filipino historians, Filipinos signed up with the famed French buccaneer Jean Baptiste Lafitte and took part in the Battle of New Orleans during the American Revolution against Britain. Yet this fact has never been recognized by American historians. Or maybe Filipinos and their historians were not able to provide enough proof that Filipinos fought side by side with Americans in their war against Britain.

After the 1924 Exclusion Act, Hawaiian plantation owners started recruiting Asian laborers to work on their expanding farms. Then Filipino workers and students provided labor on plantation and vegetable farms in Hawaii and on the mainland. Others worked as seasonal workers in Alaskan canneries. Communities grew around these plantations and vegetable farms, where new houses, dance halls, stores, restaurants, prostitution centers, and gambling joints were established by enterprising entrepreneurs.

Through sacrifice, perseverance, and determination, Filipinos, particularly the pioneering ones, blazed the trail for succeeding immigrants and the forthcoming generations of Filipinos.

Descendants of the first-generation immigrants and some of the immigrants in the United States and Canada after the passage of the Immigration Act of 1965, when the number of Filipino immigrants increased, have transcended ethnicity and met their destiny. A great number of Filipinos have made history through their impressive accomplishments in every field of human endeavor, including the arts, business and finance, literature and journalism, politics and public affairs, science and technology.

The life stories of these achievers who are role models grace the pages of this book. Their fascinating and inspiring stories serve as an inspiration to Filipinos and other ethnic immigrants.

For instance, there's the story of a woman who since childhood has loved to sing; she became the toast of the entertainment world. There's a young man of 18, who jumped ship off Guam 50 years ago, and then he became one of the island's richest men. There's also the story of a world-traveled, newly married woman who came here 23 years ago from her native land to return to the Philippines in November 1994 with President Clinton, having been appointed as the highest-ranking Filipino American official in the present U.S. administration.

There's the story of the son of an illegal alien whose original family name was Marcos who became the first governor of Filipino descent of a state in the U.S.

A medical doctor, a native of Cavite Province, Philippines, came to Canada to practice his profession. Yet, when he found out that there was a need for Filipinos to participate in the affairs of the government, he came out in the open and became a candidate for a political office. He is the first Filipino to become a member of the Canadian Parliament.

These Filipinos, while venturing in different fields of endeavor, were ordinary citizens who dared to dream, set goals, and pushed on to make their own destiny. One thing is clear: The Filipinos, if they make their own "break" or are given the chance to be of service to humanity, can prosper and become outstanding achievers.

A book of this kind should have been written and published a long time ago. But no one dared to do an extensive research of the Filipino history and lives of outstanding Filipinos in this part of the world--until a professor, journalist, historian, and presidential biographer by the name of Isabelo T. Crisostomo launched this project of great magnitude. Some doubters said it could not be done; they were wrong! Such inspirational stories could be written only by this former award-winning fiction writer, who started his writing career as a poet.

He shared his dream with another ambitious Filipino, Veltisezar B. Bautista, who is the publisher and owner of Bookhaus Publishers, a small but progressive publishing company. This publisher, who is also the author of five nonfiction books sold in bookstores throughout the United States, is the first Asian American to win seven national book publishing awards, including two Benjamin Franklin Awards, the most prestigious book awards in independent publishing in the United States.

To produce a high-quality book, this publisher saw to it that a comprehensive history of Filipino Americans and Filipino Canadians be included in this book. For this reason, he even incorporated his own research work in *Part I: The Filipino*

*Odyssey in North America.* At the time that Crisostomo's manuscript was in his hands, he still accepted some nominations to be sure that every Filipino worthy of being included in this showcase of Filipino achievers was featured in this book. To be sure about the accuracy of facts, the publisher sent proofs for review to all achievers, except to a few who moved and could not be located.

The writing and publishing of history--particularly the Filipino history in North America--is and should be a continuing process. We hope that this is just the beginning!

It is the hope of the publisher that the reader, after examining this work, may have a better grasp of the history, culture, and way of life of Filipinos--one of North America's fast-growing ethnic groups.

To the non-Filipino reader, may this book inspire you to read more about Filipinos.

To the Filipino, may we refer you to what Delegate David M. Valderrama, House of Delegates, Maryland, once said, "I hope this book inspires your readership to move on to greater heights."

If this book can serve as an inspiration and enlightenment to the reader, then the efforts of the writer, the publisher, and those who participated in the book's production will not have been in vain.

**--Veltisezar B. Bautista  
Publisher**

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### **Here's What They Say About Filipino Achievers in the USA & Canada**

*"Libraries serving the Filipino community will want a copy of this book about a little-known and influential ethnic group."*

**--Booklist (RBB, 06/01/96 and 06/05/96 special double issue)**

*"This is a very beautiful book! I'm very pleased to commend you for your significant work which gives well-deserved recognition to our countrymen who have succeeded abroad in spite of many obstacles."*

**--remarked President Fidel Ramos of the Philippines to the author, Isabelo T. Crisostomo, as he presented a copy to the President at a press conference at the Malacanang Palace in Manila.**

***"What a production! Congratulations on a job well done-- something that should be on every coffee table, bookshelf, and library of those who appreciate Filipino history."***

**--Larry Asera, well-known engineer, entrepreneur and public servant, Vallejo, California**

***"It warms the heart to know that Filipinos appear to have become part of mainstream North America...I hope this book inspires your readership to move on to greater heights."***

**--David M. Valderrama, Delegate, House of Delegates Maryland State Assembly, Annapolis, Maryland**

***"I hope that the Filipino Achievers book can serve to illuminate what is the best in all Filipinos, so that all who read it can be inspired to strive for the best in themselves."***

**--Jon Amores, Member, House of Delegates, West Virginia Legislature, Charleston, West Virginia**

***"I am very much impressed with your professional style and format as a publisher. No wonder, Bookhaus is an award-winning publishing company."***

**--Eliodoro G. Robles, Ph.D., Richmond, California**

***"We love your book."***

**--Lourdes C. Ungson, Ph.D., Los Angeles, California**

***"Congratulations on a job well done!"***

**--Vic Bacho, Seattle, Washington**

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### **About the Author**

**Professor Isabelo T. Crisostomo** is a prominent Filipino author, biographer, and historian. His biographies include those of former Philippine Presidents Ferdinand Marcos (*Marcos the Revolutionary*) and Corazon C. Aquino (*Aquino, Profile of a President*) and of former First Lady Imelda R. Marcos (*Heart of the Revolution*). Additionally, his ***Modern Advertising for Filipinos*** and ***Advertising: Background, Theory, and Practice*** are well-respected university textbooks.

Crisostomo, who visits the U.S. occasionally, lives with this wife in Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines.

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## Brief Facts About Filipinos in the USA & Canada

1. The first conventional wisdom is that Filipinos were among the first, if not the first Asians to settle in America in 1903 on the West Coast. That's not the case. It was as early as 1763. "Manilamen" jumped ships that sailed between Manila and Mexico during the Spanish galleon trade from 1565 to 1815 and settled in the bayous of Louisiana.
2. The ways of life of these early Filipinos were narrated in a descriptive article in the March 31, 1883, issue of *Harper's Weekly*. Written by journalist Lafcadio Hearn, the article is reprinted in full, for the first time, in the book ***Filipino Achievers in the USA & Canada*** by Isabelo T. Crisostomo.
3. Filipino historians claim that many of these Manilamen participated in the revolution against Britain. According to the claim, Filipinos signed up with the famed French buccaneer, Jean Baptiste Lafitte, and took part in the Battle of New Orleans during the War of 1812. This fact is ignored by American historians and unrecognized by the U.S. government.
4. Filipino workers provided cheap labor as farm workers on the U.S. mainland and on sugarcane plantations in Hawaii during the 1920s and 1930s.
5. Filipinos were once "nationals" of the United States. Under the provisions of the Treaty of Paris signed on December 10, 1898, transferring the ownership of the Philippine Islands from Spain to America, Filipinos had acquired the status of "nationals"; that is, they were nationals of the United States. They were supposed to be inhabitants of the islands under U.S. sovereignty (from 1898 to 1934) entitled to its protection, but events proved they were abused, harassed, and discriminated against as "nationals" of the United States.
6. At present, there are about 2,200,000 Filipinos in the United States. They are now the second largest Asian American group in the U.S.
7. Despite the tremendous odds, Filipinos have excelled in different fields of endeavor.

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Among the outstanding Filipino achievers in the United States and Canada are: Ben Cayetano, governor of Hawaii; Maria Luisa Mabilangan Haley, a director of the U.S. Export-Import Bank, becoming the highest-ranking Filipino American official in the Clinton Administration; Irene Natividad, famed political activist, who once headed the powerful National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC); David M. Valderrama, member of the Maryland General Assembly; Velma Veloria, First Filipino solon in Washington State House of Representatives; Rey D. Pagtakhan, member of the Canadian parliament; Lea Salonga, Tony Aware

winner, for her performance as Kim in *Miss Saigon* on Broadway; Lilia Calderon Clemente, Wonder Woman on Wall Street, etc.

The only book that chronicles the migration of Filipinos to the USA & Canada. It examines the life & times of more than 100 notable men & women who won against the odds in every field of endeavor. Their lives & accomplishments are a mirror by which others can view the Filipino community & learn more about their values, culture & traditions. This book is not only about history; it also shows how these achievers have endured hardships, transcended their ethnicity & met their destiny.