

**PASSAGE****LIBORIO L. MANGUBAT, MD**

1924 to 2006



The *Philippine Journal of Ophthalmology* pays tribute to one of the pioneers of Philippine ophthalmology, Dr. Leonardo L. Mangubat, who died on December 2, 2006 at the age of 84. He left behind his wife, Trinidad; children Leonardo, Ma. Rosario, Liborio Jr., Leopoldo, Lauro, and Luis; and their families.

Dr. Mangubat served as managing editor of the

*Philippine Journal of Ophthalmology* from 1969 to 1975, helping nurture the journal in its infancy.

He graduated from the University of the Philippines College of Medicine in 1948, completed his residency in ophthalmology and otolaryngology at the UP-Philippine General Hospital (UP-PGH) in 1952 and his postgraduate studies at the New York Polyclinic Medical School and Hospital in 1955.

As a researcher and author, Dr. Mangubat published 46 scientific papers in various journals and books and served as editor of the Transactions of the First Congress of the Asia Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology in 1960 in Manila.

**In memory of the man**

*By Angeles M. de Leon, MD*

*Excerpts from the First Liborio L. Mangubat Memorial Lecture  
delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Philippine Academy of Ophthalmology,  
December 2007*

WHEN I was asked to give the first Liborio L. Mangubat Memorial Lecture at the annual meeting of the Philippine Academy of Ophthalmology in December 2007, I decided to talk on the history of oculoplastic surgery in the Philippines. It was befitting the memory of the man who left us a legacy in the field of oculoplasty. In 1999, when oculoplasty was the topic of the postgraduate course at East Avenue Medical Center, I invited him to be the keynote speaker and introduced him as a revered academic, an ophthalmologist par excellance, a civic leader, and a gentleman.

As a revered academician, Dr. Mangubat spent 34 years with the Department of Ophthalmology, College of Medicine, University of the Philippines Manila, initially as an instructor and rising to the rank of full professor. He served as department chairman for 8 years (1969 to 1976) and introduced several innovations in teaching and learning. He started (1961) and nurtured the oculoplasty service at the Philippine General Hospital which he headed for 28 years. Currently known as the Plastic and Lacrimal Service, it is the oldest in the Philippines and

one of the best referral centers for eyelid disorders and malposition, tumors, and lacrimal problems, servicing many patients from all over the country. He published and presented almost a hundred scientific papers, and trained oculoplastic specialists who are leaders in other eye centers.

As an ophthalmologist par excellance, Dr. Mangubat was respected by the ophthalmology community. He was a diplomate of both the American and the Philippine Board of Ophthalmology. As President of the Philippine Ophthalmological Society from 1967 to 1970, he was instrumental in the merger of the two eye societies (Philippine Ophthalmological Society and Ophthalmological Society of the Philippines) existing at that time to become the Philippine Society of Ophthalmology. In recognition of his contribution to Philippine ophthalmology, he was chosen as the XI Jose P. Rizal Memorial Lecturer during the 1975 Philippine Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology annual meeting.

Dr. Mangubat is a pillar of the Philippine Society of Cosmetic Surgery, having served as its President for 8 years

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(1987-1994). After his retirement from the University of the Philippines, he founded the Philippine Society of Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery in 1992. Its main aims were to provide specialty updates and a venue for exchange of ideas among its members and conduct symposiums and courses during the annual meeting of the Philippine Academy of Ophthalmology.

His civic concern was manifested by his involvement as an active member of the San Juan Lions' Club, establishment of a charity eye clinic at the St. Martin de Pores Charity Hospital, and serving as president and

chairman of the Dr. Jose P. Rizal Memorial Foundation which runs a 100-bed charity hospital in Cavite.

For all his achievements, Dr. Mangubat had time for his wife and 6 children, who are all successful in their chosen careers, one of whom also became a successful ophthalmologist and a leading oculoplastic specialist. He had time for his colleagues, especially those in the same field such as myself who had known him since my residency days. As my mentor, he had traveled with me to participate in international conferences where he had exhibited himself time and again to be a true gentleman.

## Doctor, father, husband

By Leonardo R. Mangubat, MD

*Past President (1999–2000), Philippine Society of Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery*

LIBORIO "Boying" Lacson Mangubat was born and raised in Dasmariñas, Cavite. He was the youngest child and only son of Leoncio and Catalina Mangubat. Being disciplinarians as they were, my grandparents instilled into their children the values of hard work and respect, which our father, in turn, handed over to us.

When I was in the Ateneo High School, my father would often ask me to accompany him during his outreach programs in the provinces. He taught me how to assist him in screening patients for eye problems. I would watch him intently and with great curiosity as he treated his patients. I watched in awe as his patients got better. He treated them to the best of his ability whether or not they had the capacity to pay. He earned the love and respect of his patients well. It was with his example that I decided to embark on a medical career myself, wanting to be an ophthalmologist as well.

Papa had an eye for beauty. He was an artist in his own way. Long before the cosmetic industry became the trend that it is today, my father blazed the trail by specializing in cosmetic surgery. He liked "fixing" people's faces, whether it was that of a trauma patient seeking reconstruction or a chinky-eyed person seeking a more western look. Whether it was for function or aesthetics, Papa tried to make his patients happier. And he was quite successful in making many people happy! Again, as witness to all these, I decided that oculoplasty was also for me.

My father was a very dedicated ophthalmologist and professor. He loved to teach and headed the Department of Ophthalmology of the University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital for 8 years. He listened to his students and taught them well. It was during his chairmanship that he began to allow residents-in-training

the freedom to operate on charity patients. He was also the one who started the department's regular morning conferences on Tuesdays and Thursdays, as well as the basic and clinical training courses for the residents. I was extremely proud to be his son and his student, feeling more so when I joined the ranks of the residents as well. He taught me my formative skills and ingrained upon me the discipline and integrity that came with being a good physician.

Papa was a good father and provider. Despite his hectic schedule, he always made time to listen to our concerns. Sundays were devoted to family time—Sunday mass followed by trips to our grandparents'. That was, after he had finished making his rounds!

Papa tried to give us everything that he could afford and yet never failed to make us deserve what we had. We knew he could give us what we wanted, but we always had to earn it first. He taught us the value of discipline and the importance of cherishing what we had.

He was also a loving husband. He never missed out on special occasions. He loved to surprise Mama with gifts and flowers. Mama was an only child who was spoiled by her parents and Papa continued to spoil her as his wife. Together, they raised 5 sons and 1 daughter and I was fortunate to be his eldest child and the heir to his legacy.

When he passed away last December 2, 2006, I felt a great sense of loss and emptiness. I shall miss his presence in the clinic, at home, but most especially in my heart. I am very glad that I chose to become an ophthalmologist and oculoplastic surgeon like Papa. I hope to pass on his legacy as well to my patients and students. I am what I am today because of him, and for that, I will be forever grateful.