

Vitreo-Retina Society of the Philippines @ 25: Manifesting a Clear Vision of Excellence, Innovation, and Family

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It was a rainy morning, the kind that usually called for staying in bed a little longer, but Dr. Pearl Tamesis-Villalon had already set the table with a hearty brunch of *daing na bangus* and Imus *longganisa*, gifts from a grateful patient whose sight she had saved. The gentle patter of rain against the windows provided a soothing backdrop as we talked, and Dr. Villalon began to recount the journey of the Vitreo-Retina Society of the Philippines (VRSP). The society, which had grown into a cornerstone of ophthalmic excellence in the country, had humble beginnings, marked by the vision and determination of a few key individuals—chief among them Dr. Romeo Espiritu, the society's founding president.

Dr. Espiritu, affectionately known as the "Gentle Giant" of Philippine ophthalmology, was physically imposing and intellectually formidable. He was a towering figure in stature and influence, known for his meticulous approach to surgery and relentless pursuit of knowledge. His contributions to the field, particularly in diabetic retinopathy and retinoblastoma, had already made him a legend among his peers. Yet, his vision for a society would bring together the country's best retina specialists and leave an indelible mark on the landscape of Philippine medicine.

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“One fine day in May 1999, Dr. Espiritu invited Drs. Jaime Lapus, Ildefonso Chan, Arnold Salud, and me to breakfast at the Club Filipino in San Juan to discuss something he referred to as very, very important. He wanted to organize a retina group much like the Philippine Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery (PSCRS). Dr. RBE, as we fondly referred to him, was always ahead of his time, seeing the need to organize his peers not just for professional development but also to foster camaraderie,” Dr. Villalon recalled with a smile.

Dr. Arnold Salud was tasked to “find, communicate with, inform, and get the cooperation” of all ophthalmologists practicing the Retina subspecialty at that point in time. And so, he did. It was an arduous task of finding who was who, and who had real retina training, and getting their cooperation. And it was not at all surprising that the idea was received with great enthusiasm.

Dr. Salud set up the first meeting with the help of Alcon Laboratories Philippines, with Mr. Pete Javier, product specialist at the forefront for Alcon. The first official meeting was held at Chateau 1771, a cozy restaurant in St Francis Square, at the Ortigas Center. There was a big turnout. Everyone who “lived and breathed Retina” was there.

Dr. Yutangco recalled. "We were all there because of Dr. Espiritu's vision. He was chosen unanimously as the first president, and rightly so. We all looked up to him. He was authoring books and working on extensive research, especially on diabetes. It just made sense for him to lead us. The vice president was Dr. Villalon, secretary was Dr. Chan, treasurer was Dr. Salud, and councilors were Drs. Lapus, Romulo Aguilar, and Ronald Yutangco."

Dr. Villalon vividly remembered that fateful evening at Chateau 1771. "It was such a casual, almost impromptu gathering," she said, laughing. "There was no agenda, really. We just knew we wanted to get together and form a society. What to call the group was quite a big but amusing discussion, and ranged from Royal Retina Academy to Retina Club, and anything one can imagine in between... and finally to Vitreoretina Society of the Philippines or VRSP. Hence the RSVP joke ensued, to everyone's delight."

The formation of the VRSP marked a significant turning point in the practice of retina care in the Philippines. "Before the VRSP, retina specialists were scattered, with no real organization to bring us together," Dr. Yutangco explained. "The creation of VRSP was something that was looked upon by other specialties."

In the early meetings of the Vitreo-Retina Society of the Philippines (VRSP), the need for an official logo emerged during one of the board meetings, where discussions began around creating stationery with a distinctive letterhead. The initial idea was straightforward: to include the society's name and the year it was established. However, the board felt that something was missing—something that would capture the character and spirit of the retina specialty.

As the group brainstormed qualities associated with retinal surgeons, descriptions like "challenging," "requiring stamina," "patient," "resilient," "courageous," "determined," and "tenacious" came to the forefront. The effort to distill these traits into a concise design led to a focus on key attributes such as "courage," "patience," and "tenacity," while "perseverance" was ultimately set aside to keep the message clear and simple.

Dr. Ronald Yutangco, who had taken the lead in sketching initial ideas, envisioned a logo that would represent the essence of vitreoretinal surgery by incorporating elements that symbolized the eye in its entirety. The early designs were then submitted to JD Lawrence, known at the time for its embroidery work, for further refinement (**Figure 1**).



Figure 1. The prototype for what would become VRSP's logo was designed by Dr. Ronald Yutangco.

The resulting logo (**Figure 2**) became more than just an emblem; it encapsulated the values that define the society and the profession—combining anatomical focus with the resilience and dedication essential to the field. The design process was a collaborative effort that aimed to blend artistry with the practical demands of the specialty.



Figure 2. The current logo of the vitreoretinal society of the Philippines (VRSP). The VRSP logo captures the essence of retinal surgery with a cross-section of the eye undergoing retinal surgery. The image highlights vitrectomy instrumentation in action, repairing a complex retinal detachment with a giant tear—a testament to the dedication and expertise required in the field of vitreoretinal surgery.

A critical aspect of the VRSP's early mission was distinguishing retina specialists from other ophthalmologists. "We knew that only retina specialists should operate on the retina, and that had to be clear to everyone," Dr. Villalon explained. "Back then, it wasn't uncommon for general ophthalmologists to attempt retina surgeries, but that led to complications. We wanted to ensure the right specialists were doing the correct procedures." This focus on specialization was one of the driving forces behind the formation of the VRSP, ensuring that patients received the best possible care from experts in the field.

Dr. Espiritu's leadership was instrumental in setting the tone for the new society. His approach was always about collaboration, innovation, and a relentless pursuit of excellence. "He was the kind of leader who didn't just tell you what to do—he inspired you to be better, to see beyond the obvious, to push the boundaries of what was possible in our field," Dr. Villalon reflected. "For many of us, he wasn't just a mentor; he was a guiding light and a friend."

As the VRSP began to take shape, its leaders focused on expanding its reach and influence locally and internationally. The foundation laid by Dr. Espiritu and his colleagues would influence generations of retina specialists, setting a standard of excellence that continues to define the VRSP to this day.

Fulfilling the vision

Dr. Pearl Villalon's leadership extended beyond her role as founding vice president (2000-2003), as she also served as the president of the VRSP for two terms from 2004 to 2007. This period was marked by significant societal growth and change as the VRSP transitioned from its formative years into a more established organization. "We were a small group back then, with only about 60 members, and it was a critical time to redefine our programs," she recalled.

One of the key initiatives during her presidency was the establishment of stricter guidelines for membership and training, a crucial step in ensuring that the VRSP maintained its commitment to excellence even as it expanded. "We had to be very

careful about who we accepted into the society and how we trained our members," Dr. Villalon explained. "It was important that we upheld the highest standards in everything we did, be it medical management or surgery, or research. We were very particular about what prospective members trained on and where. The Certificate of Training was all so important. The prospective member had to present their research paper at a VRSP dinner in front of all the members," she shared.

Under Dr. Villalon's leadership, the VRSP became more active in international collaborations, inviting foreign guest speakers to lecture on special topics, especially topics that were very new and "cutting edge." "Eventually, we made good friends with many of them, and this collaboration paid off in time. We found ourselves invited as well," she recounted.

During her term, the VRSP hosted annual cocktails, highly anticipated events that featured special guest lectures and the induction of new members. These gatherings not only fostered camaraderie but also served as platforms for knowledge sharing and inspiration. The cocktails also provided a venue for the general membership meetings and biennial elections of new officers, ensuring the continued vitality of the VRSP.

"And if anyone is wondering about the midnight blue blazer, with khaki pants or skirt, and the VRSP logo on the blazer... It was at this time that the practice was born. Everyone attended the cocktails wearing the 'uniform.' Elitist, others might say, but it was unique and classy, and the members loved it. Imagine this annual event, with these men and women in that beautiful VRSP outfit, nonchalantly sipping red or white wine while standing around cocktail tables and listening to a lecture. The ambiance was all so different, so elegant. Soon, other subspecialty societies followed suit with their own blazers and patches and colors," Dr. Villalon fondly recalled.

As the VRSP established itself, its leaders focused on expanding its reach and influence locally and internationally. By the time Dr. Chan served as president (2008-2011), the VRSP had become more established, with a growing number of retina specialists joining its ranks. The society's commitment to keeping rigorous standards for

membership and training contributed to its reputation as the leading authority in retina care in the Philippines.

During this time, the VRSP played a crucial role in advancing research in retina care, particularly in adapting international innovations to the local context. "As a rule, we must admit that most innovations come from developed countries. But not all the things that they do apply to local conditions," Dr. Chan explained. VRSP members conducted local studies to figure out if treatments and technologies from abroad were effective for Filipino patients, thus ensuring that the society's recommendations were based on local data and experiences.

Dr. Antonio Say, who served as president from 2012 to 2013, was at the forefront of this active adaption of innovative practices. His leadership was characterized by a relentless pursuit of excellence and a vision for the VRSP as a global leader in retina care.

"The VRSP is one of the most important specialty societies within the Philippine Academy of Ophthalmology," Dr. Say stressed in a Zoom interview, his voice steady and assured. "It has significantly improved our training programs and the provision of vitreo-retina services across the country."

A focus on continuing education and international collaboration marked Dr. Say's tenure. "We wanted to ensure that our members were always at the forefront of the latest advancements in retina care," he explained. "This focus on education was not limited to local specialists; we wanted the VRSP to be recognized internationally as a hub for retina training."

The expansion of the VRSP during Dr. Say's presidency was not just about numbers but quality as well. "Before the VRSP was formed, all our trainees had to go abroad for training, where they were often limited to observation rather than hands-on experience. With the VRSP, we developed local training programs that allow our young ophthalmologists to gain practical experience and address the needs of our society," he explained.

This focus on localized training has been instrumental in improving the quality of retina care in the Philippines, particularly for prevalent

conditions in the region. "Our training here is more attuned to our needs in the country. We see a lot of proliferative diabetic retinopathy, which is less common in developed countries, so our training programs are designed to address these specific challenges," Dr. Say noted. This tailored approach has ensured that the VRSP members are well-equipped to manage the unique needs of Filipino patients.

Dr. Milagros Herrera-Arroyo, who succeeded Dr. Say as president from 2014 to 2017, continued to build on these foundations. Ever the busy doctor, Dr. Herrera-Arroyo shared tidbits of the VRSP's history through several Viber chats.

"Shortly after returning from my fellowship, I became involved in establishing the VRSP," she recalled. "One of my early contributions was advocating for the inclusion of 'Vitreous' in the society's name. My contribution was encouraging the name to include 'VITREO'... explaining the need to understand its role in posterior *and* anterior segment surgery." This addition, she emphasized, was crucial in highlighting the comprehensive nature of retina care.

During her tenure, Dr. Herrera-Arroyo was instrumental in setting up the quarterly Retina Fellow's Forum that advanced the practice of Continuing Medical Education (CME) among retina specialists.

Dr. Herrera-Arroyo's tenure was marked by significant advancements in the field of vitreoretinal surgery, particularly with regard to anti-vascular endothelial growth factor (anti-VEGF) treatments. VRSP meetings and conventions during this period featured numerous updates on the use of these innovative therapies in conditions such as age-related macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy, solidifying the society's role in promoting cutting-edge retinal care practices in the Philippines.

A hallmark of Dr. Herrera-Arroyo's leadership was her emphasis on scientific research, collaboration, and education. During this time, the VRSP developed comprehensive clinical guidelines for managing Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD), Diabetic Macular Edema (DME), Retinal Vein Occlusion (RVO), and intravitreal injections. Additionally, the society forged a stronger

partnership with the Philippine College of Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism (PCEDM), resulting in enhanced collaborative efforts in public education initiatives focused on diabetic retinopathy.

To further elevate the standards of vitreoretinal training, the VRSP took proactive steps to standardize fellowship programs. This included developing streamlined guidelines and establishing minimum requirements for VR fellowship procedures. The fellowship interview process was also refined to include comprehensive evaluations of clinical skills, research experience, and subspecialty knowledge. To foster a culture of continuous learning, the society launched the VR Fellows Forum, a dedicated platform for retina specialists to engage in professional development and exchange knowledge.

Reflecting on the field's evolution, Dr. Herrera-Arroyo noted the advancements in diagnostic and surgical techniques that have transformed retina care. "Before, scleral buckling took a lot of time... now it's almost a lost art," she said, acknowledging how newer techniques have replaced older methods. "The field has grown tremendously, and being a part of that growth has been exciting."

Dr. Herrera-Arroyo's tenure was also marked by the introduction of a qualifying examination for new members, which was part of the effort to ensure that only the highest-caliber specialists joined the VRSP. However, this rigorous process eventually evolved into a more comprehensive interview system.

"We realized that while exams are important, they don't always capture the full range of a candidate's skills and potential," explained Dr. Villalon, reflecting on the period. "The interviews gave us a better sense of their clinical acumen, commitment to the field, and ability to contribute to the society," Dr. Villalon shared.

The society's growth during this period was not just in numbers but also in influence. Dr. Sherman Valero, who served as president from 2018 to 2019, reflected on this expansion with a sense of achievement. "During my time, we were getting a lot more members because a lot more people were training from abroad and locally," he recalled. Dr. Valero's leadership was marked by an emphasis on

maintaining high standards for membership while expanding the society's role in national healthcare policy discussions.

During this time, the VRSP began to engage more actively in national policy discussions, advocating for the needs of retina specialists and their patients. "At that time, we started becoming a little bit more involved in policymaking—national policymaking," Dr. Valero shared. This involvement marked a new era for the VRSP, as the society began to assert its voice in essential healthcare decisions that directly changed retina care in the Philippines. This was made possible through the arduous work of officers and members of the VRSP, who would tirelessly attend meetings with other agencies to promote their advocacies.

One of the key achievements during Dr. Valero's tenure was the society's involvement in discussions with PhilHealth about the coverage of retina treatments. "We didn't just wait for the government to decide—we actively participated in shaping the policies that affect our practice," Dr. Valero said. The task was often difficult and frustrating, but this proactive approach ensured that the voices of retina specialists were heard in the corridors of power, leading to improved access to essential retina procedures for patients nationwide.

Expanding the view: Through the pandemic and beyond

The COVID-19 pandemic was an unprecedented challenge for the world, and the VRSP was no exception. As the pandemic unfolded, the society had to quickly adapt to ensure that its members could continue their work and that patients continued to receive care. Dr. Marie Joan Loy and Dr. Harvey Uy, both of whom led the VRSP during this tumultuous period, were at the forefront of these efforts.

Dr. Loy, who served as president from 2020 to 2021, was interviewed via Zoom—a platform that proved essential during her tenure. Her background was an unpretentious home office, reflecting the new reality that many professionals faced during the pandemic. "We were really confused about how to go about it. Suddenly, we could not go out, and

everything was so uncertain," Dr. Loy recalled, her face illuminated by the soft glow of her computer screen. "But we knew we had to keep going. We had to keep our members engaged and connected, even if it was only virtually."

Despite the challenges, Dr. Loy and her team quickly adapted, transitioning the VRSP's activities to virtual platforms. "To maintain our CME activities, we launched the VR Channel," she explained. The VR Channel was an online platform where international retina specialists could engage in continuous medical education, share insights, and discuss the latest advancements in the field. "Instead of being limited by our movement, we actually gained more access to other experts all over the world," Dr. Loy added, emphasizing the unexpected advantages of this new format.

The VR Channel quickly became a cornerstone of the VRSP's efforts to continue educating its members during the pandemic. "It was our baby project during my term, and we've continued it beyond the pandemic," Dr. Loy proudly noted. The channel's content ranged from lectures by international experts to case discussions and updates on the latest technologies in retina care. Topics covered included advancements in retinal imaging, the latest surgical techniques, and updates on pharmacological treatments for retinal diseases such as age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and diabetic retinopathy.

One of the significant outcomes of this initiative was the increased accessibility of high-quality education for VRSP members. "Before the pandemic, we were somewhat limited in our ability to bring in international speakers regularly, but with the VR Channel, we could connect with experts from Canada, the U.S., and Europe without the logistical challenges," Dr. Loy remarked. This increased accessibility helped elevate the education standard for VRSP members, ensuring they remained at the forefront of the latest developments in retina care. For this, Dr. Loy acknowledged the tremendous role that her vice-president Ricardo Tobias Papa played as the continuing medical officer.

The pandemic era also saw the VRSP's expansion online, with the society becoming active in most social media platforms that were used to launch awareness campaigns such as the month-long "Sight

Saving Month" campaign during August, "World Sight Day" in October, and "World Diabetes Day" in November.

Faced with the challenges of the pandemic, Dr. Loy's tenure has also been actively involved in disseminating information on COVID-related issues involving the retina, particularly the impact of hydroxychloroquine, a drug widely used during the pandemic. "We developed guidelines on what to expect with hydroxychloroquine use and its effects on the eyes, which was crucial given how widely the drug was used during the pandemic," Dr. Loy shared.

VRSP was also at the forefront of developing comprehensive safety guidelines during surgery. These guidelines published in the Philippine Journal of Ophthalmology addressed the heightened infection risks, outlining measures such as enhanced use of personal protective equipment, stricter sterilization protocols, and modified surgical procedures to protect patients and healthcare workers. The VRSP's initiative ensured the continuation of safe retina care during the pandemic and set a high standard for ophthalmic practices, highlighting the society's commitment to patient and provider safety in challenging times.

During this period, when traditional in-person consultations were not always possible, the VRSP "worked closely with the Philippine Academy of Ophthalmology to create guidelines for teleophthalmology, which was particularly challenging because our field is so instrument-dependent," Dr. Loy explained. These guidelines helped retina specialists navigate the complexities of remote consultations while ensuring that patients received the best possible care.

With the hardworking VRSP board members, Dr. Loy's tenure was also marked by the launch of the "Mulat Mata Diabetic Retinopathy Project," a comprehensive program focused on patient awareness, early diagnosis, and treatment of diabetic retinopathy (DR). "We received a grant for the 'Mulat Mata' project during the pandemic. It is a diabetic retinopathy program that focuses on screening and raising awareness," Dr. Loy explained. While the campaign was started during the pandemic under the stewardship of Drs. Jubaida Aquino, the actual screening for DR began after the lockdown, under the stewardship of Dr. Junn Pajarillo, when it was

considered safe to go out again, albeit with precautions, she added.

"The goal of 'Mulat Mata' is to reduce the incidence of blindness from diabetic retinopathy by catching it early. We have already seen some success with the program, and we are hopeful it will continue to grow," Dr. Loy said.

Dr. Loy's tenure also saw the VRSP's formal registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission, which solidified the society's legal standing.

Following Dr. Loy's tenure, Dr. Harvey Uy took the helm as president from 2022 to 2023. Also interviewed via Zoom, Dr. Uy recalled the difficulties of bouncing back post-pandemic. "During the pandemic, the VRSP played a very important role with regard to professional practice," Dr. Uy reflected. "We had to rethink how we delivered care, how we connected with our patients, and how we supported our members. It was a challenging time but it also pushed us to innovate in ways we hadn't considered before."

Under his leadership, the society successfully transitioned from virtual quarterly and annual meetings back to in-person events, ensuring that members could reconnect and continue their professional development. "There's something irreplaceable about face-to-face interactions," Dr. Uy said. "But we also learned a lot from our time online—lessons that we can carry forward to make the VRSP even stronger."

One of the key achievements during Dr. Uy's tenure was the development of a national registry of retinal diseases. "We started a national registry of retinal diseases...so any retina specialist in any part of the Philippines can upload their patient data into a database," Dr. Uy explained. This registry aims to provide valuable insights into the prevalence and demographics of retinal diseases across the country, potentially guiding future public health interventions and research.

Dr. Uy's presidency was also marked by a strong emphasis on advancing research and education in retina care. "Early detection and timely treatment are crucial in preventing vision loss from diabetic retinopathy," Dr. Uy emphasized. "We organized

several workshops and seminars, including the quarterly Fellows' Forum and Meetings, focused on educating both doctors and patients about the importance of early intervention. It's all about ensuring that our members are equipped with the latest knowledge and tools to provide the best care possible."

Another hallmark of Dr. Harvey's tenure was the successful organization of the society's first ever PAO Mid-Year conference in collaboration with the Central Luzon Society of Ophthalmology at the Marriott Hotel Clark Freeport in April 2023. This gathering marked a significant milestone as the first in-person summer meeting following the pandemic. The thoughtfully curated topics and esteemed faculty, led by Vice-President Darby Santiago, contributed to the conference's resounding success. The conference served as a valuable rehearsal for the VRSP's upcoming hosting of the Asia-Pacific Vitreo-Retina Society (APVRS) Congress Manila in 2025.

Beyond managing the immediate challenges of the pandemic, Dr. Uy also focused on the long-term goals of the society. "Camaraderie followed by continuing medical education and then public health and then gathering data... that's the gradual evolution of the VRSP," he observed, summarizing the society's journey under his stewardship. His vision for the VRSP was one of steady growth and increasing responsibility, reflecting the society's expanding role in the field of ophthalmology in the Philippines.

The VRSP's advances continue up to the present, with the current president, Dr. Jeffrey Lim, continuing to propel the organization to new heights of excellence. With a strong focus on incorporating advanced technologies and enhancing training programs, Dr. Lim shepherded the VRSP towards enhancing both domestic and international collaborations, innovative research, and using data to improve patient outcomes, ensuring the VRSP continues to lead in ophthalmic advancements and professional development.

Sighting the future: Messages and challenges

One of the VRSP's defining achievements was its ability to grow and thrive despite limited resources. Initially reliant solely on membership dues, the society carefully managed its finances during its

early years. A turning point came under Dr. Valero's leadership when the VRSP began organizing Retina Sessions during the Philippine Academy of Ophthalmology's Annual Meetings. These sessions, though modest in terms of revenue, marked the beginning of the society's ability to generate added income, contributing to its financial sustainability.

Dr. Loy's tenure marked a significant improvement in the society's financial standing with the successful launch of the VR Channel. This online platform generated substantial sponsorship revenue, enabling the VRSP to expand its initiatives and organize larger-scale events like the 25th-anniversary celebrations. From its modest beginnings, the society has evolved into a financially stable organization with a solid foundation to support its ongoing activities and future growth.

When asked what the VRSP represents in her life, Dr. Loy quickly answered, "For me, it's family. The VRSP is not just an academic institution, nor a scientific society. It is a place where we support each other, learn from each other, and grow together. The connections we've built over the years are as important as the professional achievements."

This sense of family and mutual support has been at the heart of the VRSP since its inception. It is a community where members push each other to see beyond the immediate challenges, innovate, and continuously improve.

Dr. Villalon speaks to this culture of pushing boundaries, especially in how her colleagues, such as Dr. Uy, challenge her to try new things. "One thing I treasure about the VRSP is how my colleagues constantly challenge me to improve and try new things," she says, her eyes lighting up. "Harvey, for instance, is always pushing the envelope, always asking, 'Why not try this?' or 'Have you considered that?' That environment makes us all better—better doctors, better people."

This collaborative spirit is echoed throughout the society's leadership. Dr. Say emphasized the importance of the relationships formed within the VRSP. "I see VRSP expanding its borders and taking the stage in international mentorship," he shared, "but at its core, the VRSP is about the people. It is about the relationships we have built and the support

we give each other, both professionally and personally."

Dr. Chan, reflecting on the society's early days, agreed. "It started off as a socially oriented venue for retina specialists to get together, share some experiences... like that," he said. "But it evolved into something much more meaningful. We've become a community, a family, where we look out for each other."

As the VRSP looks toward the future, fostering an intense sense of community will be paramount in overcoming the challenges ahead. Dr. Valero envisions the society continuing to play a pivotal role in advancing retina care in the Philippines while upholding its core values. "The practice of retina in the Philippines has evolved significantly over the past 25 years," he remarked. "While much progress has been made, our aspiration is to gain worldwide recognition as experts in the field. And this ambition is rooted in the strong relationships within our VRSP community."

Looking ahead, the VRSP is furthering its preparations to host the prestigious APVRS Congress in 2025, a significant international event that will further solidify its position as a leader in regional retina care. This opportunity, a result of the dedicated efforts of past presidents, reflects the society's unwavering commitment to advancing vitreoretinal medicine and maintaining its influence both domestically and internationally.

The VRSP's leaders see a future where the society continues to grow and adapt, but always with a focus on the people who make it possible. "Together, we can further grow the organization to benefit physicians and our patients," Dr. Uy concluded. His vision is one of collaboration and continuous learning, where each member contributes to the society's mission of advancing retina care in the Philippines.

As the VRSP moves into its next quarter-century, it does so with a sturdy foundation laid by its visionary leaders. The society's commitment to excellence, education, and patient care ensures that it will remain at the forefront of retina care in the Philippines and make significant contributions to the global ophthalmology community. Through its members' dedication and hard work, the VRSP is

poised to tackle future challenges, such as the standardization of retina fellowship programs, and continue its legacy of innovation and excellence in vitreoretinal medicine.

But most importantly, the VRSP will continue to be a family—a place where professionals come together to advance their careers and support each other, learn from each other, and grow together. It is this sense of family that will carry the VRSP forward into the future, ensuring that the society stays a beacon of excellence, innovation, and camaraderie for years to come.

About the Author and Contributors

Writer: Marjohara Tucay crafted this historical account of the VRSP with careful attention to the society's milestones and impact on vitreoretinal surgery in the Philippines.

Reviewer and Editor: Dr. Darby Santiago, through insightful edits and contributions, helped shape this narrative to accurately reflect the society's journey and legacy.

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Proofreaders: Drs. Ricardo Papa, Ray Valenzuela, Florentina Gomez, Gregory Germar, Roberto Maliwat, Louie de Grano, and Junn Pajarillo, reviewed the content to ensure accuracy and clarity, preserving the integrity of this historical record.

This collaborative effort pays tribute to the legacy of the VRSP and its pioneering contributions to the field of retinal surgery.