



Fellow Advocates in Child Protection,

There are ways in which the city of Manila is little changed since I first arrived as a Fulbright Scholar in 1977. Manila Bay is magnificent. EDSA is a nightmare. A grand dame of the city - in whose home I lived, Jessie Lichauco, died only last November, age 109. There was President Marcos then. And, now.

Here, I want to honor another enduring truth: the unsurpassed accomplishments of the Philippine woman. Just arriving, age 24, I was instructed in this fact, helpfully by women themselves. To live in Manila for that year was to come to appreciate it with my own eyes. The Philippine woman is one of God's great forces of nature. I see that fact most clearly in the creation of the Philippine General Hospital - Child Protection Unit (PGH-CPU) and the national Child Protection Network (CPN) that followed.

Women and young girls are the overwhelming majority suffering abuse in the Philippines - as in the rest of the world. And, it is women, almost entirely, who have created the Philippine response. My thought partner and co-founder of the child abuse movement here is one of UP College of Medicine's graduates, Victoria L.M. Herrera, MD. The CPN board president, and my friend of 40 years, is the arrestingly-effective Irene Martel Francisco. Retaining a few male board members, including me, as a figleaf of diversity, Irene has architected a largely-female board and one unsurpassed in my board experience. Even the co-editors of today's special issue all are female.

The great figure in this field, someday the "father" of child abuse protection in the Philippines, is Bernadette J. Madrid, MD, executive director of the PGH-CPU and CPN. I think I speak on behalf of my fellow board members in saying that Dr. Madrid is the only essential figure among us in establishing the first Philippine child abuse center in 1997 and the more than 100 regional centers, across 58 provinces, that followed. Dr. Madrid and her (overwhelmingly female) staff designed emergency room clinics, established medical, social work, and legal protocols, negotiated and seeded clinics in the diaspora of Philippine hospitals, and trained thousands of doctors, nurses, social workers, police, attorneys, judges and justices in a PGH child abuse curriculum. Child abuse professionals from around the world visit Manila to study the vast work that Dr. Madrid and her colleagues have accomplished.

(It is no incidental matter that the Philippines' storied litigator, Attorney Katrina T. Legarda, has been Dr. Madrid's professional partner from the first.)

Now, I want to close this note as I should have begun. That is to extend my congratulations, paired with admiration, to Dr. Madrid and her colleagues for a lifetime's work completed in only 25 years.

With high regard,

David G. Bradley
Chairman of the Board
Child Protection Network Foundation - Philippines