

# Arête



Issue 9 | Philippine Olympians Association, December 2022

What a fruitful year it has been for us! We capped off our 8<sup>th</sup> OSLP batch with an amazing gathering of participants at the Palawan State University in October. This came a few months after the passing of our national sports hero Lydia de Vega Mercado, who was a big part of the inspiration for this program. The event was supported by both the PSC and the WOA (find out more in this issue...)

We are encouraged and enthused to continue our work that has blossomed into a podcast that not only documents our sporting history but makes it accessible to all. And this is what we hope to achieve—to share our rich history, to inspire and somehow make the sporting world we live in a smaller and richer space. We welcome all our OLYs to this program and encourage them to share their stories.

Have a blessed Christmas season, we are grateful for the work we do together for Philippine sports and the Olympic Movement, and for our OLYs.

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## OSLP Summit 2022

October 19-22, 2022

By Coach Noli

It will be the first of many. This was a shared decision that Akiko Thomson and I arrived at after seeing close to 200 sports leaders, coaches, Olympians, influencers, students and volunteers gathering in Palawan State University (PSU). From an online experience, our event made it on-site and face to face.



*OSLP participants*

The event in Puerto Princesa City last October 20-22 anchored itself on the same key messages we drove at during our online session - Storytelling, Networking and Systems Thinking. As a community of sports leaders, we reminded our summit participants of our power to shape our sports ecosystem through the stories and information we share and the networks and partnerships we create.

Seeing it unfold was a joy to me. I am grateful for the partnership we forged between the Philippine Olympians Association, Adrenaline Solutions, Mindanao Peace Games and the host school, Palawan State University. Truly, so much can be done if we put the right people and groups together.



*Spotlight speakers*

The event was made easier too having the following individuals and organizations extending their support - Mayor Benjamin “Dinko” Bautista and the Pilipinas Super League; Atty. Albert Agra and the Pilipinas Obstacle Sports Federation; Atty. Margarita “Migs” Nograls and the PBA Party List; Mr. Jude Turcuato and Atty. Oscar “Jang” Moreno of MVP Sports Foundation; and Mr. Jeffrey Tarayao of One Meralco Foundation.





We are grateful as well to Mayor Lucil Bayron of the LGU of Puerto Princesa and to Governor V. Dennis M. Socrates of the Province of Palawan. Their all out support to the event made the OSLP summit an event to remember.



*Zumba session led by OSLPians*

The event in Palawan was a convergence of many bringing with them different kinds of culture and experiences. Our speakers and participants were from the Philippines, Singapore, Canada, Austria and Switzerland. Olympians interacted with sports directors, coaches and athletes.



Volunteers, students and faculty of Palawan State University joined the daily talks and sharing of our speakers. It was enriching to also learn more from our invited speakers - Dr. Elesa Zehndorfer (on the value of Storytelling) and Coach Marc Dagenais (on the value of Networking) as keynote speakers were truly exceptional. Our spotlight speakers made it more insightful and interesting - Ms. Joy Reyes of the National Academy of Sports, Mr. Rocky Chan of Pilipinas Super League, Atty. Migs Nograles of PBA Partylist, Atty. Oca Moreno of the Association of Boxing Alliances in the Philippines, Mr. Monsour del Rosario of the Philippine Olympians Association, Ms. Kaye Samson of Special Olympics Pilipinas and Coach Francis “Kiko” Diaz of the Philippine Paralympic Committee.

We look forward to next year’s summit that will be once again hosted by PSU. However, we will build once again the OSLP tribe through the conduct of our online batches that start on January 21 (OSLP batch 9). More Olympians will be able to share their stories in sports and more coaches and leaders will get the opportunity to learn from it and, at the same time, widen their perspectives and reach in Philippine sports.

Be part of the OSLP network. Be an OSLPian.

(About the writer: Coach Noli Ayo started the OSLP with POA President, Ms. Akiko Thomson-Guevara OLY. He plays two important roles in the sports community of Mindanao - as a Consultant of the Bangsamoro Sports Commission and as Convener of the Mindanao Peace Games. He recently wrote the book, “Mindanao Peace Games: Kalaro Kaibigan, Kasama” that is available via Amazon)



## OSLP Continued...

The OSLP program will continue next year. If you are interested to be part of, please reach out. We hope to run 4 more batches (each with 3-4 OLYs sharing their story) before we embark on another “mini” summit. Do not underestimate the power of your stories. Join us today!



The stories of our OLYs have been made into bite size podcasts, do check us out on these platforms...

Anchor: <https://anchor.fm/oslp-podcast>

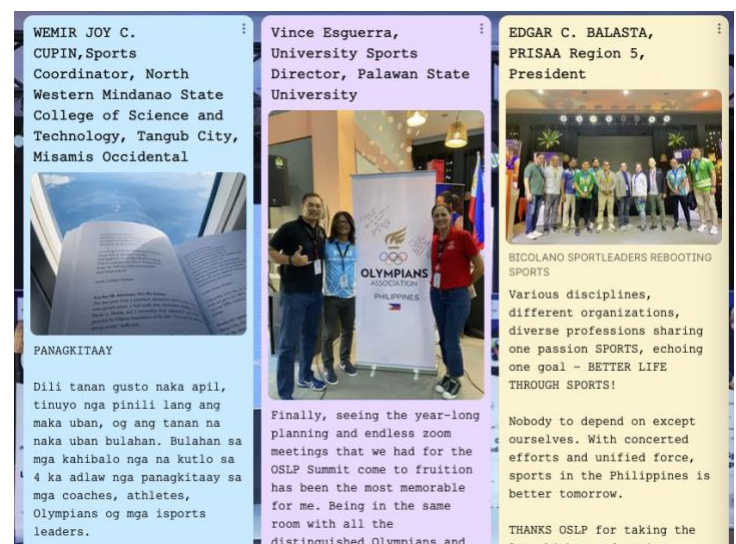
Spotify: <https://spoti.fi/3JykZoo>

Apple Podcast: <https://apple.co/3NhSOfG>

Google Podcast: <https://bit.ly/3kfcgMw>



You can also read about the testimonials of OSLPians from the Summit here:  
<https://padlet.com/noliayo/OSLPsummitTakeaways>





## House Bill 3523

By Cong Eric Buhain OLY

May 2022, I was fortunate enough to be elected as a Representative of the First District of Batangas in the 19<sup>th</sup> Congress of the House of Representatives. From being born with a lung problem to becoming an Olympian at the age of 18 and now a Congressman is truly a blessing from God and some might even think of it as even short from a miracle.

As the only OLY in the House, I believe it is incumbent upon me to help my fellow Olympians so that we can all be better understood by our countrymen on what it took for us to reach the Olympics, which is why I filed House Bill 3523 “An Act Granting Health Care, Retirement, Death Benefits and Other Privileges to Retired Filipino Olympians.” It is my hope that this bill will pass not just for the benefits included in the bill but also to inspire aspiring Olympians to give their best for our country’s honor and be assured that their future will at least be secure.

We are very few in the 100 year history of Philippine participation in the Olympic Games starting in 1924 at only 450 Filipino Olympians with a little over 100 of us OLYs living. Unfortunately, we OLYs are not accorded the security befitting somebody who has brought honor to our beloved country. We sacrificed our lives for the honor of the Philippines and we retire from our sports at a very early age, such is just what is demanded by the echelon of sports – the Olympics. And then we are left fending for ourselves for the rest of our lives by settling for

whatever job is available, often something far from what we are passionate about. Often times ending in failure.

HB 3523 is different from RA 10699 or the “National Athletes and Coaches Benefits and Incentives Act”, as RA 10699 is performance based and thus shall continue to be enjoyed by all OLYs. HB 3523 focuses on the concerns of OLYs in the different stages of our lives, as this bill only aims to give health care, retirement (earlier), death and other benefits.

I am joined by another Champion in Congress, Congresswoman Margarita “Migs” Nograles of the PBA Partylist, in supporting our hero Olympians by also filing a similar bill in Congress.

We both are positive that our colleagues in the 19<sup>th</sup> Congress will support our bill.



(About the writer: Cong Eric Buhain OLY competed in swimming at the 1988 and 1992 Games and was Chairman of both the Philippine Sports Commission and the Games and Amusement Board)



## Blended General Assembly 2022

November 29, 2022



The POA had their blended General Assembly at the East Ocean Palace. The event was hosted by the POC who encouraged us to have a face-to-face component. This was the first time since Covid that the POA Olympians have gathered physically. OLYs from Canada, Italy and the US logged on, while a majority of those physically with us were boxers and swimmers. DSG Bones Floro and recently elected Cong Eric Buhain OLY also joined the luncheon, while WOA Asia Rep Jovina Choo OLY and Arenaline Solutions Noli Ayo were virtually present.

Mr Ayo shared the achievements and dreams of the recently held OSLP summit in Palawan. And in the spirit of the Be OLY campaign, marking the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the launch of OLY in 2017, the POA also awarded 9 OLY certificates that day.



OLYs receiving their certificates



The POA board minus Ral Rosario and Stephen Fernandez



Group shot, virtual and live participants



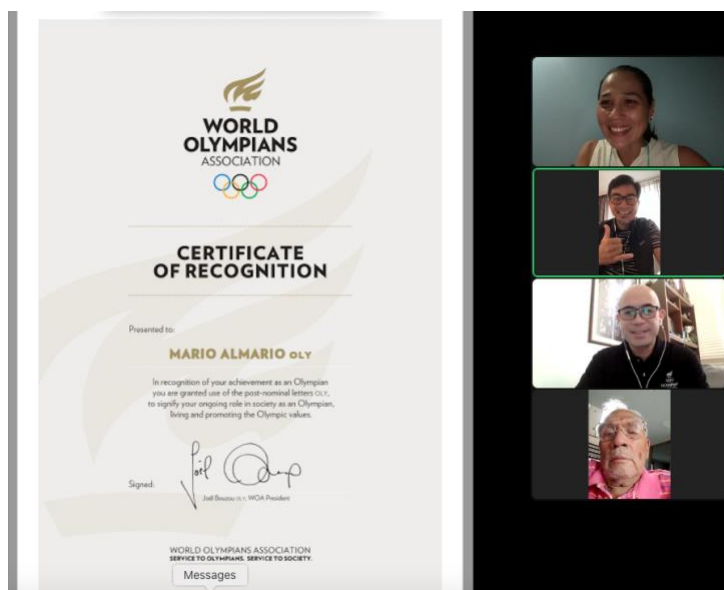


# Celebrating Olympians

## Mario Almario OLY

July 8, 2022

The WOA board presented the OLY certificate to Mario Almario OLY who competed at the 1972 Munich, 1976 Montreal and 1992 Barcelona Games. Mario has not been physically well and so it was meaningful for us to reconnect and share this with him. All present on the zoom call where teammates of Mario at the 1992 Barcelona Games.



## Chairman Freddie at 80!



Our beloved Chairman Freddie Webb celebrated a milestone birthday November 24, 2022.

The octogenarian has become everyone's peg on how to age gracefully and well. The 60's themed celebration was attended by friends from all the chapters of our Chairman's life—from the Senate, to the POA, to the wives of his teammates, and his family of course who prepared an entertaining dance number for all the guests. We are grateful for our Chairman, thankful for the inspiration he is and wish him many years of continued good health.



In loving memory...



## LYDIA DE VEGA- MERCADO

DECEMBER 26, 1964 - AUGUST 10, 2022

*"Our deepest gratitude and thanks to everyone  
that supported and prayed for her"*



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