

Obituary RIP

Perla Limbaga Manapol

Apr 10, 1940
Tanjay

Sep 6, 2016
California

She is survived by her children Ken, Jeannie and Terry and siblings Pablito, Isit and Boy, as shown in picture at the bottom.

Her ashes will be brought to the Philippines.
Her son Ken made a write-up reproduced below.

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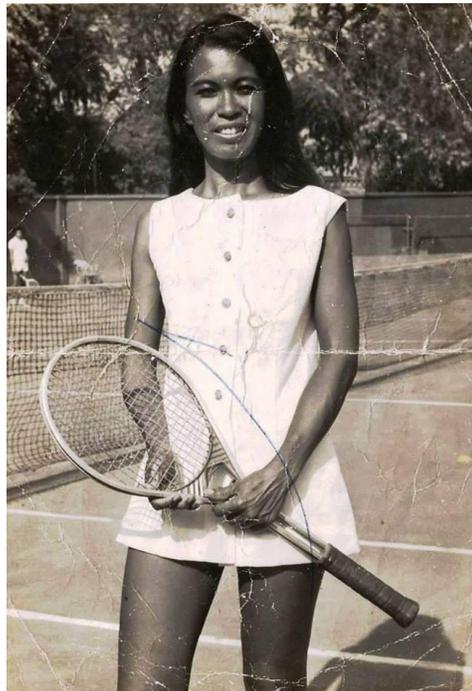
Perla's Passages

Passage: the act or process of moving through, under, over, or past something on the way from one place to another.

My mom's life was marked by many passages. Some were not by choice – like way back when she and her family fled Japanese occupation in the Philippines, or, more recently, her dying from pancreatic cancer in a hospital bed in Southern California. However, the vast majority of her passages were deliberate choices by an active, intelligent, determined and independent woman. In general, my mom did not *let* things happen to her; she *made* them happen.

Here is my list of the roles she chose, in rough chronological order:

- High-school tennis star
- Foreign exchange student and program administrator
- Young bride
- Emigrant
- Farmer's wife
- Mom³ (for 55+ years)



College student
Collegiate squash champion
Tennis star
Divorcee
Working single mom
Grad student
College coach
Tennis star (USTA #1 in singles and doubles
in New England)
International Davis Cup tennis coach (*total
tennis career spanned ~20 years*)
U.S. diplomat (*15 years*)
International aircraft leasing partner
Real estate developer
Grandma³ extraordinaire (*20 years*)
International consultant on renewable energy and community development (*24 years*)

This list is impressive not only from its length and diversity, but also from the gusto to which she pursued each and excelled in them. For example, you might think that “grandma” was a role handed to her, but not her version of “gwamma”. For each grandchild, for long periods of time, she played chief caregiver, playmate and storyteller. In the words of her grandkids, she was “legendary,” “amazing,” “awesome.” But when it was time to move on, she moved on.

One big regret about my mom’s unexpected passing, is that there is no written record of how she negotiated these passages – how she rationalized each change, what emotions she felt, what obstacles she faced, how she executed each transition. There is no official history, even though she spent much of her life writing. And I seem to be mostly to blame: a moving box filled with her writings and diaries were destroyed in a basement flood at my Columbus home in the mid-1990s.

When I questioned her early this summer about her upcoming plans, and she said she would work on two things -- finishing her book, [It’s More Pun in the Philippines](#), and starting her memoir -- I hatched a plan. On her next visit East, I was going to sit down with her and, with my iPhone voice recorder, interview her for hours and hours about the significant moments in her life. And then, with a transcription app, provide her with a transcript of our conversations. Instead, I ended up travelling west. By the time I spent days and days by her side in the hospital’s ICU in late August/early September, it was too late.

Over the past few years, mom had just been “Ma.” She was less independent, her memory less reliable; she was a bit slower mentally and a lot slower physically. She was increasingly hard of hearing and her jokes seemed to be cornier than ever. She was less needed by my teenage/early-adult son. She stopped challenging me in tennis and in shooting best-of-ten free throws. My sisters were tiring of boarding her. Yeah, she was getting old. I knew there was an interesting person there somewhere, but I was too preoccupied with my own stuff to think much about that.

It is only now, in reviewing this list of passages, do I start to appreciate what an extraordinary woman she was. For example, I now see incredible courageousness. She headed to the United States alone as a teenager, made a life here, ended a

marriage, took sole custody of three kids, finished grad school, and headed back overseas as a tennis coach. What life did she see for us? How did she know it would turn out well? Did she know that there was a comfortable middle-class life ahead for all of us? Was she ever saddened, desperate, or frightened at her and her family's prospects? She cried alone, I know, but to us she projected strength and confidence. She not once drew from a boyfriend or partner to make us more secure. She led her family from the farm, to food stamps, to the Foreign Service.

My mom could at times seem overly boastful and to unnecessarily embellish her stories, especially to strangers. I wonder whether this partly stemmed from her -- tiny, brown, accented and aged -- wanting to be taken more seriously. Another part, I'm sure, was her insuppressible imagination. For her grandkids, she'd spin endless stories of spells and spirits, with no tell on what was true or not. And she clearly had enough imagination to envision and enable our futures filled with promise and love.

I do not exaggerate, then, when I say that it took tremendous inventiveness, tenacity and skill to help build -- from very humble beginnings and a re-boot or two -- incredible lives and passages for us all.

Thanks, mom.

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Pablito

Isit

Perla

Boy

--oo0oo—

Posted by:
The ATN Staff
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