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## In Memoriam

Doreen G. Fernandez

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**In Memoriam:  
Doreen G. Fernandez**

Before she died last 24 June 2002, Doreen G. Fernandez was named editor-in-chief of *Philippine Studies*. She had been an associate editor of the journal as well as a contributor of many articles, notes, and reviews, among which were "From Ritual to Realism" (1980), "The Jesuits and Early Philippine Theater" (1981), "*Pompas y Solemnidades*: Church Celebrations in Spanish Manila and the Native Theater" (1988), and "Zarzuela to *Sarswela*" (1993). Her last book review appeared in the third quarter issue of 2002, the first and only issue of *Philippine Studies* that she edited.

Aside from her involvement in *Philippine Studies*, Fernandez was a full professor at the Ateneo de Manila University, where she was at different times chair of its English and Communication Departments and director of its Interdisciplinary Studies Program (now a department). As teacher, she was well loved by her students and colleagues, among whom are some of the promising, if not leading, figures in the field of Philippine studies and literature today.

Her own field of interest is theater, both foreign and Filipino. Her master's thesis (completed in 1956) was on Christopher Fry. Later, realizing the importance of studying native culture, she wrote her dissertation on the indigenization of the Spanish zarzuela, a theatrical form, into the Iloilo *sarswela*. She related its rise in the early years of the twentieth century and its decline in the 1930s to the economic vicissitudes in Iloilo, as well as the emergence of other forms of entertainment brought in by American colonization. The dissertation was published as

*The Iloilo Zarzuela: 1903–1930* by the Ateneo de Manila University Press in 1976. *Palabas: Essays on Philippine Theater* (1996) gathers together her work on Philippine theater after that time.

In the 1980s, she and Edilberto Alegre pioneered in using the method of oral history to chronicle the development of Philippine literature in English. In so doing, they unearthed and preserved a wealth of precious primary data otherwise unobtainable. The writers they interviewed belonged to the first and second generations of Filipinos writing professionally in English. They were the leading lights in their time and the icons of the present: Paz Marquez Benitez, Loreto Paras Sulit, Angela Manalang Gloria, Jose Garcia Villa, Bienvenido Santos, N. V. M. Gonzalez, Francisco Arcellana, Edith Tiempo, and Nick Joaquin, among many others. Their reminiscences, analyses, and, in a manner of speaking, their voices are recorded in the two-volume *Writers and Their Milieu* (1982 and 1987), which has proved indispensable to Filipino and foreign scholars interested in Philippine literature in English.

Fernandez was best known, however, as a food scholar because of her column in the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. The food column was begun with her late husband, interior designer Wili Fernandez, in 1969 but was eventually penned by her alone. Like her work in Philippine theater and literature, Fernandez's food research is related to the bigger project of understanding Filipino identity and culture. The books *Sarap: Essays on Philippine Food* (1988), coauthored by Alegre, *Tikim: Essays on Philippine Food Culture* (1994), and *Palayok: Philippine Food through Time, on Site, in the Pot* (2000) gather together the best of her columns, scholarly articles, and papers, delivered at local and international conferences, in this area.

Despite her failing health, Fernandez was seemingly indefatigable, especially in the cause of Philippine studies. She cofounded the Babaylan Theater Group (with Nicanor G. Tiongson, another important scholar in the field of native theater) and the Cultural Research Association of the Philippines. Throughout her thirty-year career, she taught, did research, read papers at conferences in the Philippines and abroad, conducted teacher training workshops and seminars, translated Philippine literature in the local languages into English, sat in the boards and committees of local, national, and international organizations related to the study and promotion of Philippine culture, including the Cultural Cen-

ter of the Philippines, the Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards, and the Ramon Magsaysay Foundation. In 1994, she edited the theater volume of the *CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Art*, while contributing articles to the other volumes; and in 1998, she coedited *Kasaysayan: The History of the Filipino People*.

Fernandez's efforts have not been ignored. She was one of the recipients of the Centennial Honors for the Arts given by the Cultural Center of the Philippines in 1999, and she was named Outstanding Teacher by the Metrobank Foundation in 1998. In 2000, a festschrift in her honor entitled *Feasts and Feats*, edited by Jonathan Chua, was published by the Office of Research and Publications of the Ateneo de Manila University.

Without a doubt, she was a force in the development of the formal discipline we call Philippine studies and an inspiration to generations of scholars, teachers, students, and writers. She is and will be missed, not only by her family and friends, but also by the larger academic community in the Philippines and abroad.