

## EUGENIA DURAN APOSTOL

SHE is an unlikely crusader in dark times. Of a genteel family background, educated in conservative Catholic schools, petite, cheerful and fun-loving, she seems miscast for the role of fearless fighter for political causes.

Eugenia Duran Apostol belies stereotypes. She has played an important role in recent Philippine political history as an independent-minded and innovative publisher who helped remove from office two disgraced presidents. She has done this not in spite of what people may imagine her to be but because of the way she has constructively lived out her personal circumstances and the kind of person that she is.

EUGENIA Duran Apostol (familiarily called “Eggie”) was born in the town of Sorsogon, capital of the southernmost Luzon province of Sorsogon, on September 29, 1925, the second child and second daughter among eight children of Fernando Ballesteros Duran and Vicenta Obsum.

Of Spanish ancestry, the Durans were an old and prominent family in the Bicol region (one of the region’s “most influential” families in the nineteenth century, according to the American historian Norman Owen). By the time Eggie was born, the Durans had become quite extended and dispersed. Her own immediate family was “middle income, not rich,” Eggie says, owners of modest-sized abaca-growing lands (which was typical of the provincial gentry in early twentieth-century Bicol).

Yet, they were clearly of the provincial elite because of their name, professional standing, and social capital. Eggie’s grandfather, Pedro Duran was a late nineteenth-century *gobernadorcillo* (mayor) of Sorsogon town. Her father, Fernando Duran, was a prominent physician who served two terms as representative of Sorsogon in the National Assembly (1931-34, 1934-35). On her mother’s side, the Obsums of Bulan, Sorsogon, had their own distinction though they were not as prominent as the Durans. Eugenio Obsum, Eggie’s maternal grandfather (after whom she was named), was elected member of the Sorsogon provincial council (as “counselor of the police”) in the interim government formed by the Philippine Republic in 1898, a fact that suggests he may have played a role in the revolution against Spain.

Like women of her class and generation, Vicenta Obsum was schooled in the “feminine” arts of sewing, embroidery, cooking, and music. Bright, she would have gone on to college had she not met and married Fernando Duran, who had just finished medicine at the University of Santo Tomas (UST) in Manila and was about to assume the post of *sanidad* (public health officer) of the town of Donsol in Sorsogon. Eggie remembers her mother fondly. Vicenta was a great homemaker who loved classical music and was active in church and community affairs.

Eggie grew up in the family’s Spanish-colonial style residence, a two-story stone-and-wood house in the center of Sorsogon town. She was a bright, bespectacled girl (she started wearing glasses when she was in the sixth grade), a lively and energetic child who loved to read and tag along with her father in his medical visits to the field. Eggie’s sister, Ella Duran-Nolasco, recalls that the young Eggie was of little help in the kitchen but good at entertaining guests with her repartee and dancing. “She liked entertaining people, and she had a very curious mind,” says Ella of her sister.

After her father won reelection to the National Assembly in 1936, the family moved to Manila and took up modest quarters in Sampaloc district (initially on Zurbaran and, later, Legarda Street) before they moved to a house on Data Street in Sta. Mesa Heights, a newly developed residential district in Quezon City. After Fernando’s stint in the Assembly, he took up an appointment by President Manuel Quezon as superintendent of Quezon Institute, a special government hospital established in 1938 for indigent tuberculosis patients, initially located in Intramuros before it moved to Quezon City. Fernando held this position until his retirement from public service.

Eggie and her sisters attended Holy Ghost College (now College of the Holy Spirit) on Mendiola Street in Manila, a school mostly run by German nuns, members of the Germany-based Missionary Congregation of the Servants of the Holy Spirit (S.Sp.S.). Her brothers attended Dominican-run UST. A “transferee” from the province, Eggie entered Holy Ghost for the final year of her elementary education and promptly finished valedictorian in 1938.

Moving on to high school, still at Holy Ghost, she displayed early a love for the arts and letters, participating in theater and submitting (in her words) “little things” to the school paper, *Action*, her first published writings. Her most memorable high school experience came with Holy Ghost’s production of the annual mission play (at the time, the annual staging of a “mission play” was rotated among the city’s Catholic schools). It was a big thing as shown by the fact that the play that year, staged in the Ateneo auditorium on Padre Faura Street, was written and directed by the time’s rising stars in Philippine theater, Lamberto Avellana and Daisy Hontiveros. It was a play about a Tinguian princess who converted to Christianity and remained true to her newfound faith even as she was stoned to death by her tribe.

Eggie played the role of the Tinguian princess. Many years later, asked about what made her fearless in confronting power, she would recall this event and laughingly reply, “Oh, you know, I’ve got this martyr complex.”

The idyll Filipinos call “peacetime” (the pre-World War II period) ended with the Japanese occupation of the Philippines. With the war, the graduation of students was accelerated and Eggie finished high school in March 1942. She went on to enroll in the two-year Associate in Arts program at UST with the vague notion of taking up medicine, in her father’s footsteps. The Durans continued to live in Manila, studiously keeping away from the Japanese. “We hardly had anything to do with the Japanese,” Eggie recalls.

The Durans struggled to keep an air of normalcy about their lives. Eggie and her sisters went to the movies, attended intimate parties with friends, and kept busy with activities in church, like singing in the choir or decorating the church. She was particularly active in the Legion of Mary of the Balic-balic parish and avidly participated in mission work in the parish. She recalls participating in church-run surveys that monitored how faithfully the parishioners observed their religious obligations. “I guess there was a strong streak of missionary zeal in me. I wanted to reform the world,” she later says in her characteristic lighthearted manner.

As threats of violence and destruction heightened in the later years of the war, with rumors about the imminent return of the Americans and Japanese reprisals, the Durans decided to return to Sorsogon in 1944. By the end of 1944, Allied bombing and guerrilla sabotage work had begun to unsettle the local population in Bicol. When the battle for “liberation” reached Sorsogon town on April 6, 1945, the Durans evacuated to the safety of a farm outside the town. Returning to the town after the fighting was over, the Durans found their home burned. Eggie joined her father and household members who were poking through the ruins of their house. It was then that tragedy struck. An unspent bazooka shell accidentally exploded, hitting Eggie in the stomach with a shrapnel.

In the absence of hospital facilities, a doctor and family friend performed emergency surgery on her in makeshift conditions, illuminated by flashlights, with members of the family assisting. In a stroke of luck, her brother and a cousin were able to secure American blood plasma from a guerrilla base four hours’ walk from the town. Eggie survived. Her near-death experience turned her into a sentimental symbol of the local experience of the war. When Sorsogon celebrated its first *fiesta* (patronal feast) as a “free” town, nineteen-year-old Eggie was named “Miss Liberation” in the festivities.

THE war over, the Durans returned to Manila. Reunited with her friends, Eggie resumed her social life and pursued her personal interests. Back in the University of Santo Tomas, she dropped pre-medicine in favor of a bachelor’s program in arts and letters since, she says, “I seemed to think I liked to write.” She was a popular figure on campus, pretty, friendly, and smart. She studied under teachers like Paz Latorena, one of the leading women writers of the time, and had for classmates some people who would later make names for themselves in journalism and literature (like F. Sionil Jose and Juan C. Tuvera). Eggie graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy and Letters, magna cum laude, in 1949.

After graduation, perhaps because of her religious upbringing, she started her journalistic career by working for the Catholic rather than the secular press, writing a column for *Commonweal*, the national Catholic weekly. For a year, she also had a joyless stint writing advertising copy for Philippine Manufacturing Company (now Procter & Gamble Philippines). She so disliked the job of writing copy for products like soap and lard, she developed strange rashes that disappeared only after she quit. She was also enrolled in graduate studies in literature at UST and, for a time, dreamed of going to India and writing a thesis on Rabindranath Tagore.

If it seems like she was going forth into the world and did not quite know where to begin, what transpired next would give ballast to her life. On February 18, 1950, she got married to Jose (“Peping”) Z. Apostol, a young

engineer she met in an excursion with friends a year earlier. A successful engineer-builder, Peping (and, later, the couple's only child, Carlos) would be a great source of comfort and support for Eggie.

When she got married, Eggie had just returned to journalism when she joined the national newsweekly *Sentinel*, which succeeded *Commonweal* in 1949 as a publication of the Archdiocese of Manila. She assumed the position of the publication's "women's section" editor.

It was at the *Sentinel* that Eggie had her first lesson in "media freedom." The ultraconservative Archbishop of Manila was unhappy over liberal views expressed in the *Sentinel*, at a time when the Church was defensive over criticism from some social sectors about the complicity of the Church in the unjust power structures of Philippine society. The church authorities were not too pleased as well when the employees of the *Sentinel* organized a union. Eggie was elected the union's vice-president. She also had a run-in with the newspaper's owners when she criticized the archbishop's ban on ballet classes and performances in Catholic schools. This was the era of the "Red Scare" and, apparently, it was not just sexuality the archbishop was anxious about but politics as well. The ballet controversy was triggered by the presence of a Russian couple teaching ballet to St. Scholastica students.

In any case, Eggie, unhappy over prospects in the *Sentinel*, resigned. At this time, Eggie's principled approach to her work was already evident. The economist Sixto K. Roxas III, who was with Eggie in the *Sentinel*, says:

*[Eggie] did not have the look of a radical. She seemed too pretty, charming, cheerful, and relaxed. But underneath there ran a quiet unobtrusive, and determined conviction. An intense and stubborn adherence to principle and a keen sense of justice lurked behind the graciously feminine, Bicolana charm.*

In 1954, after leaving *Sentinel*, she got the job of women's section editor and associate editor of *Sunday Times Magazine*, the supplement of the country's leading daily, *The Manila Times*. She would stay with *Times* for ten years (1954-64), working with both the magazine and the newspaper.

She found light work in handling, as editor and writer, the traditional women's beat of home, fashion, food, and human-interest features, and had a knack for infusing something lively, fresh, and innovative into what would otherwise be "canned" and conventional. Completely at home in her own skin, Eggie did not chafe at being tied to the so-called "soft beats" (fashion, beauty, high society, and the like). She was happy with her work and was a professional respected by her media colleagues.

In 1964, she moved to the *Manila Chronicle* to handle its new Sunday magazine supplement, *Woman and Home*. Eggie envisioned a magazine that would "enter more into the life of the community and not be confined within the four walls of the home." Crafting the magazine as "the intelligent woman's guide to being a Filipino homemaker and career woman," she expanded the content to include consumer issues, civic activities, and broad national concerns. As editor, she introduced innovative features, encouraged good writing and creative design, and gave space to excellent women writers, like Gilda Cordero Fernando and Doreen Fernandez.

While with *Chronicle*, Eggie became more deeply involved in civic causes, particularly consumer advocacy, and church-based associations like the Christian Family Movement. Together with Aida Sevilla-Mendoza and Sylvia Montemayor de Leon, she founded the *Kilusang Mamimili ng Pilipinas* (Consumer Movement of the Philippines) in 1970, and became its president in 1972. With characteristic zest, she embraced the cause, appearing on television to speak on consumer issues and even counting sheets in rolls of toilet paper.

She also got friends in her old home district of Singalong in Manila to organize *Kilusang Singalong*, which organized the youth and raised funds for projects like a community center with a day-care nursery, medical clinic, and a livelihood skills training program. (In later years, she would also stay in touch with her home province by serving, among others, as chairperson of the Sorsogon Heritage Society, organized in 2001, and member of the board of the Sorsogon Museum & Heritage Center.) A friend says, "Eggie was always full of ideas."

When *Woman and Home* was phased out in 1969, she stayed with *Chronicle* as editor of its expanded "Better Living" section. She later left and concentrated on her work as a consumer advocate.

Momentous changes were taking place in the Philippines as the country's economic and political crises deepened. A largely left-inspired popular movement rocked Manila and key cities in the country with student demonstrations and labor strikes. Communist insurgency was on the rise. Political sectors were increasingly polarized as the country drifted towards authoritarianism.

Eggie was about to embark on the greatest challenge of her life as a journalist.

MARTIAL Law was imposed by President Ferdinand Marcos on September 21, 1972. Media establishments were shut down and opposition journalists were arrested. In the days that followed, strict licensing requirements, surveillance, and censorship prevented the return of a free press. Actions were also taken to restrict the operation or circulation of foreign media in the country. The only national dailies that were allowed to operate were four newspapers controlled by Marcos allies or cronies. While oppositionist sentiments found expression in small publications (like the Church-affiliated *Signs of the Times*), these were quickly curtailed. A “climate of fear” reigned.

Though Eggie was not overtly political, she was in time drawn into the vortex of events. In late 1972, she was asked to put out a periodical by a group of journalist-friends, who found themselves jobless after Marcos closed down media outlets and imposed censorship, in a cooperative arrangement in which they would pool their resources. Thus, *Woman’s Home Companion* came out at the close of 1972 with Eggie as editor. A government permit to publish was facilitated not only by the fact that it seemed an innocuous woman’s magazine but also by Eggie’s close friendship with Cristina Ponce-Enrile, the wife of Secretary of National Defense Juan Ponce-Enrile.

It was a very successful venture that was interesting for its attempt to develop a more Filipino content to counter the standard reliance of publications of this kind on foreign syndicated articles. In 1977, however, Eggie’s partners decided to sell their shares to a new owner. While Eggie stayed on for a while, she quit when the new owners interfered with her editorial prerogatives.

In 1978, Eggie and her husband founded a new weekly magazine, *Mr. & Ms.*, with the help of friends and investors like the Enriles. Despite the *Ms.* in its title, the magazine was not self-consciously feminist. While quite liberal in her views about women, Eggie shies away from ideological labels. Confident and unselfconscious about the public roles she assumes, the politics of gender (particularly as this is played out in the West) is not something that has seriously engaged her.

Eggie struggled to keep *Mr. & Ms.* going in its first years (even selling a solitaire diamond ring given by her husband on their silver wedding anniversary to pay for salaries). The magazine broke even on its fifth year and started to be profitable, in part because *Mr. & Ms.* also produced and sold printed materials like cookbooks, children’s books, and calendars.

It can be said that, up to this point, Eggie—despite her own personal aversion to authoritarianism—had managed to keep her distance from the darker realities of martial rule. A member of what may be called Manila’s prosperous upper middle-class, living in Dasmariñas Village, one of the toniest residential subdivisions in Metro Manila, she was a family and career woman engaged in “light” journalism. She was, moreover, not unconnected to power: her husband was a favorite building contractor of the Enrile family and her son had a job in one of the companies of Eduardo Cojuangco, one of Marcos’ most influential cronies.

Yet, Eggie was her own person, completely disinterested and ethical in her approach to her work. This was what would drive her to take the risks she took in the years that followed.

*MR. & MS.* took an unexpected turn in 1981 after Marcos announced a new policy of tolerance in the guise of “lifting” martial law while keeping his coercive powers in place. Testing the new policy, *Mr. & Ms.* started to publish political articles and commentaries by a mix of independents and anti-dictatorship critics (like Salvador P. Lopez, Reuben Canoy, and Marcos’ former information minister Francisco Tatad). Journalist Alice Villadolid observes:

*It was very dangerous when [Eggie] started doing it. Nobody else was doing what she was doing. It was considered very risky to write anything that could upset the Marcoses.*

The remark is not quite accurate. There were others who were also pushing the limits of dissent in the press. This is illustrated in the case of Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc who was forced to resign from the editorship of *Panorama* magazine for writing an acerbic editorial on the “New Republic” that angered Marcos. Together with *Mr. & Ms.*, an “alternative press” had started to emerge with publications like the Burgos family’s *We Forum*, which was

shut down, its journalists arrested and offices padlocked, in 1982. *Business Day* (published by Raul Locsin) and *Veritas* (a publication identified with the Church and supported by a group led by businessman Jaime Ongpin) were publishing independent or critical reports.

Despite Marcos' claim that martial law had been "lifted," the dangers of dissent remained. Eggie had a taste of it when she was summoned to appear before the National Intelligence Board in Fort Bonifacio on January 12, 1983 to reply to questions by a military tribunal. Also summoned to appear before the tribunal was a remarkable group of women journalists: Jo-Ann Q. Maglipon, Ma. Ceres Doyo, Arlene Babst, Ninez Cacho-Olivares, Domini Torrevillas Suarez, Lorna Kalaw-Tirol, and Doris N. Nuyda.

Thirteen days later, Eggie and her colleagues, joined by twenty-one other journalists, filed a petition with the Supreme Court to stop the interrogations. Before the case could be argued in court, however, the military terminated the interrogations. Eggie interpreted the interrogations as "scare tactics" and was completely unfazed.

The women would later recount the military interrogation as almost farcical. Eggie recalls, "they were questioned on everything, from their private life, their religious beliefs, their income from writing, and also asked, 'By the way, are you a member of the Communist Party of the Philippines?'" The reality, however, was that in a dictatorial regime of arbitrary power the danger was real.

If Eggie took the risks she did it was not out of a firmly-defined partisan position. She was driven by a sense of independence, a streak of social activism, and a devotion to what she saw was her duty to the profession of journalism. Later, asked about her turn to "politics," she will simply say: "I was just doing what should have been done. Journalists have to tell the truth." Her friend Gilda Cordero-Fernando says, "Eggie is a fighter. Give her a good cause and she will fight.

If, at this point, she was still testing the limits of dissent, the tragedy of August 21, 1983 would push her to pull all stops. On this day, Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr., Marcos' leading critic, was assassinated on the tarmac of the Manila International Airport upon his arrival from exile in the United States. Government (and mainstream media) put a lid on the coverage of the murder and the mammoth outpouring of anger and grief at Aquino's funeral. Though the funeral drew over two million people (perhaps the biggest manifestation of its kind in Philippine history), it was ignored by the established media.

Eggie remembers how angry she was:

*Next day, I said: "What's this? Not a single photo of the funeral in the papers, as if nothing happened." What really got me was the Times Journal [owned by Benjamin Romualdez, brother of Mrs. Imelda Marcos]. What they printed was the photo of the spectator who was hit by lightning—that was their top news!*

Fuming, Eggie decided that something had to be done. She instructed her staff to put out a special report on Aquino in the September 2, 1983 issue of *Mr. & Ms.* and, more important, a special sixteen-page supplement about the funeral. The supplement sold 750,000 copies and had a significant impact in arousing public anger at the dictatorship.

It was a defining moment for Eggie. As her friend and colleague Lorna Kalaw-Tirol says, "It changed her life." Another friend, writer Doreen Fernandez, adds, "When she went political, she just did it. No fear."

The supplement launched the weekly *Mr. & Ms. Special Edition*, with respected journalist Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc as editor. In the days that followed, Eggie grew bolder. The special edition's masthead declared its commitment to "justice and reconciliation in the aftermath of the Aquino assassination." Focused on the Aquino assassination and its aftermath, the paper carried detailed coverage of the government-created Corazon Agrava Fact-Finding Board's investigation of the murder. It also reported on other human rights abuses in the country.

The paper worked out of an abandoned space near the *Mr. & Ms.* offices, disguised with a sign on the door reading "LJM Garments Factory" (after the editor's initials). Working under threat, the editorial staff shuttled between Eggie's home, the editorial office, and other locations to escape surveillance and arrest. At this time too, feeling that it was no longer tenable for her son Carlos to continue working in a company owned by a Marcos crony, Eggie consented to have him leave for a job in the U.S.

There were other publications that covered the Aquino assassination and its aftermath, like *WHO*, *Business Day*, and *Malaya*. These papers helped enlarge the sphere of public information and stoke the spirit of democratic dissent. The *Mr. & Ms. Special Edition*, however, was the most effective in reaching a broad readership because of its bold, almost tabloidish, design (with its heavy use of photographs and cartoons), aggressive reportage, and energetic writing. It was unique in the manner in which it gave free play to the burgeoning culture of popular resistance with its in-your-face reportage (its maiden issue featured a blow-up of Aquino's bloodied face), cartoons,

and feature articles on phenomena like the epidemic of gallows humor and political jokes that came in the wake of the assassination.

The public response to the forty-page, black-and-white weekly was phenomenal. Sales rose from two hundred thousand to half-a-million copies, numbers unprecedented in the country. The appearance of the publication was a high moment in the campaign against the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines.

IN February 1985, the trial of the military personnel accused in the Aquino murder commenced, conducted by the *Sandiganbayan*, a special court for officers of the state. Eggie saw the need for a separate publication to take the place of the “special editions.” With Eggie as publisher and editor-in-chief and top journalists as contributors, *Philippine Inquirer*, a tabloid-size weekly, was launched on February 4, 1985. Initially focused on the trial, it acquired all the elements of a regular paper. Its final issue came out on December 2, 1985 after the Sandiganbayan handed down its controversial decision acquitting the accused.

It gave way to the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, which came out on December 9, 1985. The decision to turn *Inquirer* into a daily newspaper was instigated by President Marcos’ announcement in November 1985 of a snap presidential election for February 1986. Mounting popular opposition had pressured Marcos to call for an election to defuse tensions and validate his presidency.

It was going to be a momentous election, Eggie knew, and there was a need for a daily broadsheet to counter government propaganda. Seeing it as an opportunity for a concerted anti-dictatorship campaign, Eggie invited some of the country’s biggest mass-media publishers to breakfast in her home. The group was made up of Joaquin “Chino” Roces (*Manila Times*), Teodoro Locsin Sr. and Jr. (*Philippines Free Press*), Raul Locsin (*Business Day*), Jose Burgos (*Malaya*), and Betty Go-Belmonte (*Fookien Times*). She tried to convince them to collaborate in launching a common daily newspaper but—perhaps less “innocent” than Eggie about the perils of such a paper—they were not as optimistic as Eggie about the feasibility and prospects of the project.

Undeterred, Eggie pushed ahead with a seed capital of a million pesos that came from *Mr. & Ms.* and the use of the printery of Betty Go-Belmonte’s family. At the outset, Eggie envisioned a cooperative-owned newspaper but, to fast-track implementation because of the pressure of events, *Philippine Daily Inquirer (PDI)* was registered as a corporation, with the stipulation that only permanent employees could own stocks in the paper.

*PDI* was headed by Eggie as chair of the board of management. Betty Go-Belmonte (of a venerable Chinese-Filipino publishing family) acted as vice-chair. The newspaper started with a staff of forty in a hundred-square-meter office and a circulation of thirty thousand copies limited largely to Metro Manila. Aided by the high excitement surrounding the election campaign, *PDI*’s growth was dramatic. Its circulation quickly ballooned to a peak of half-a-million copies daily. In just three months after its appearance, it became the leading Philippine broadsheet, accounting for 22.3 percent of the Metro Manila market, making it the country’s number one daily in terms of circulation. Demand was so great that production had to be done by five different printers in separate locations in the city.

Though President Marcos had initially dismissed oppositionist papers like *Inquirer*, *Malaya*, and *We Forum* as the “mosquito press,” it was evident that the *Inquirer* had become a threat to the regime. A secret military plan was leaked to the press in which opposition figures were to be arrested after a Marcos post-election inauguration and detained on Corregidor Island. Rumor was that they would be “dropped into the sea in the dead of night to feed the sharks.” Eggie Apostol’s name was at the top of the list. Asked about it, the unflappable Eggie dismissed the honor, saying, “It was alphabetical.”

Things came to a head with the stirring “People Power” revolt of February 22-25, 1986 that ousted Marcos and installed Corazon Aquino as president. For four days in February, the situation was tense and fluid as Eggie shuttled between the *PDI* offices and the safehouse where she kept her friend Cristina Ponce-Enrile company. (Juan Ponce-Enrile, Cristina’s husband, was one of the leaders of the attempted coup that triggered the popular uprising.) For a time, it was touch-and-go as millions of unarmed, ordinary Filipinos gathered on Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA) to manifest their opposition to the regime. No one knew how things would turn out.

The days of dangerous uncertainty ended when Marcos fled the country on the night of February 25. In the morning of that day, in a hurried gathering at a private clubhouse in the city, Corazon Aquino took her oath as President of the Philippines.

Though she played an important role in fostering the climate of public opinion that led to the change of government, Eggie remained, first and foremost, a journalist. Despite their support for Corazon Aquino in the electoral campaign, Eggie and *PDI* maintained their journalistic independence after Aquino became president.

Under Eggie, *PDI* has not balked at criticizing presidents, members of Congress, big advertisers, and even those with financial interests in the paper. For its independence, the newspaper has been harassed with bomb threats, libel suits, tax audits, and withdrawal of advertising.

The paper's independence was demonstrated in the series of military coup attempts in the early years of Aquino's presidency. Though Juan Ponce-Enrile, a key player in these attempts, was a friend of the Apostols and a shareholder in *Mr. & Ms.*, Eggie and *PDI* firmly opposed military interventionism. This occasioned a suit later brought against Eggie by Enrile, through his corporation, alleging that Eggie had diverted funds from *Mr. & Ms.* to establish the *Inquirer*. (This refers to the use of *Mr. & Ms.* money to capitalize *PDI*, a loan that was in fact paid back.) The case was dismissed in 1994 but continued until the Supreme Court finally ruled in Eggie's favor in 1998.

Eggie also had to fend off a challenge for control within *PDI*, led by a group of newspaper professionals she had brought in to help in managing the paper's business. *PDI*'s financial success had made it a coveted prize.

Concerned that the battle for corporate control hampered the paper's growth, Eggie decided to sever all her corporate and editorial ties with *PDI*, resigning from the board and retiring from the paper on January 26, 1994.

Eggie had always been more interested in the mission of journalism than matters of profit and proprietorship. Her original plan when she founded *PDI* was of a cooperative-type newspaper owned by the media workers themselves, but this did not prosper since most of the workers opted for the shorter-term benefits of unionism. Even as she staked a considerable part of her family's money on the papers she founded, she was largely inattentive to the minutiae of stocks and dividends, a fact she wrote about in a self-deprecating, lighthearted piece entitled, "How to Mismanage a Newspaper" (2001).

Her lack of proprietary interest is shown in her advocacy that newspapers be owned by media workers and be responsible only to the public. She believes that it is in this way that newspapers can be shielded from the intervention and influence of owners with business interests to protect as well as advertisers. Critical of revenue-driven and advertising-dominated media, she rues, for instance, the proliferation of shampoo ads on television: "Don't Filipinos do anything else besides washing their hair?" Her concern about media ownership is borne out of the many cases in the history of Philippine journalism in which the business interests of owners have compromised the independence of media.

LEAVING *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, Eggie Apostol remained as positive and energetic as always.

On January 9, 1996, she founded the Foundation for Worldwide People Power (FWWPP), organized to propagate the values of democracy and freedom exemplified in the People Power Revolt of 1986. In launching FWPP, she was helped by a group of highly respected professionals that included journalist Amando Doronila, former University of the Philippines president Jose V. Abueva, Asian Institute of Management professor Edilberto de Jesus, scholar-author Doreen Fernandez, lawyer Felicitas Aquino-Arroyo, and others.

Journalism, however, remains an abiding concern for Eggie. As her sister Ella says, "media is her apostolate." Eggie served as board member of the Philippine Press Institute and continues to be a vocal advocate for journalistic ethics and media freedom. Under her stewardship, *PDI* promulgated a manual of editorial policies as guide for its employees, who are also required to sign the Philippine Journalist's Code of Ethics formulated by the Philippine Press Institute and National Press Club. *PDI* also led the way in appointing a resident ombudsman or reader's advocate to ensure observance of the manual of policies and code of ethics.

Eggie's readiness to engage in causes she believes in was demonstrated when moves were made to revise the Philippine Constitution to extend the presidential term of office, during the presidency of Fidel Ramos. Eggie returned to the fray by publishing a sixteen-page, tabloid-size satirical weekly called *Hu! Ha!*, to oppose charter change and expose regressive political practices. The weekly covered the 1998 elections and ran from September 20, 1997 to May 16, 1998.

In 1999, Eggie again returned to publishing, alarmed by threats to media freedom when President Joseph Estrada called for an advertising boycott of *PDI* and sued *Manila Times* over a corruption story. This time, Eggie saw the need for a popular tabloid for the "common people" (the *masa*, or masses in English, the base constituency of the populist president). Written in everyday, conversational Filipino (the urban lingua franca), the new paper, called *Pinoy Times*, aimed to deliver quality journalism with the size, price, and liveliness of a tabloid.

In launching the paper, Eggie told her staff that tabloids typically “stripped the girls.” *Pinoy Times*, she said, would “strip the politicians.” The paper was innovative. Its staffers called it “a tabloid, and yet not a tabloid,” “a serious tabloid,” because it did not sensationalize (compared to the other tabloids in the market). It carried news, features, and commentaries as good as those in the broadsheets, written by top journalists and contributors. It had the flexibility to respond to events by issuing quick “special editions.” It pursued an educative role by providing contextual articles and features to make it easy for its readers to understand topical issues like the stock market and the impeachment process.

Capitalized by the Apostols, *Pinoy Times* was run by independent-minded professionals that included Vicente G. Tirol as publisher, Chit Estella as editor-in-chief, and journalists who had just resigned from *Manila Times* after its owners apologized to Estrada for its critical articles and sold the paper to a presidential crony.

For over two years (from September 15, 1999 to December 21, 2001), *Pinoy Times* covered the events surrounding the fall of Joseph Estrada, from the revelations of gambling payoffs, stock manipulation, immorality, and unexplained wealth, to the dramatic impeachment proceedings, to the popular demonstrations (called “EDSA II”) that led to the ouster of Estrada and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo’s assumption of the presidency on January 20, 2001. In all this, Eggie was not a desk-bound owner. She pitched in to help the reporters, going to the field, a well-dressed septuagenarian evading security guards to take pictures on the sly of President Estrada’s secret mansions.

*Pinoy Times* was more than a chronicler of events: it published commentaries, editorials, and investigative reports, and presented them in a language and form that reached out to a broad readership in Metro Manila and key cities in the country. From an initial run of thirty thousand copies, its regular five-days-a-week edition rose to a circulation of 170,000 in just eighteen months. Its weekend *Special Edition* sold as many as half-a-million copies. Its effectivity was such that the paper was harassed with bomb threats, hate mail, libel suits, and a “dirty tricks” attempt by the pro-Estrada camp to issue an imitation tabloid to undercut *Pinoy Times*.

*Pinoy Times* folded after the crisis that gave birth to it passed. In part, this was occasioned by financial losses the paper incurred despite its impressive circulation. The paper paid high salaries to its staff (relative to the other tabloids), sold cheaply, and maintained circulation levels beyond what was economic.

As a newspaper, *Pinoy Times* was an interesting experiment. In contemporary Philippine print media, there is a divide between daily broadsheets and tabloids: on one hand, English-language dailies with a readership typically urban, male, educated and middle-class; on the other hand, more widely-circulated vernacular sheets that cater to the so-called “C” and “D” markets with a sensational mix of scandal, sex, and crime. While it did not last, *Pinoy Times* was an important attempt to bridge the divide and could be a model for needed innovations to address the political and cultural problems created by the segmentation of the public in media.

AFTER having played a role in two changes of government and witnessed how a change of leaders does not necessarily lead to substantive changes in society, Eggie appreciates the need to lay the bases for meaningful, long-term social transformation. She says, “It’s not just the leadership that must change. The people, too, must change.”

This realization is behind her work as founder and board chairman of the Foundation for Worldwide People Power. (Current FWWPP president is Maria Lim-Ayuyao.) In its first projects, FWWPP documented the 1986 EDSA revolt to preserve its lessons for future generations as well as provide an inspiring model for “people power” for the rest of the world. Towards this end, FWWPP produced video documentaries and publications that include the two-volume *Duet for EDSA: Angela Stuart Santiago’s Chronology of a Revolution* (1996) and *Looking Back, Looking Forward* (1995), edited by Lorna Kalaw-Tirol, which assessed the impact of the EDSA Revolution; and Conrado de Quiros’ *Dead Aim: How Marcos Ambushed Philippine Democracy* (1997), a history of the martial law experience for general readers.

On October 12, 2002, FWWPP launched what it calls the “Education Revolution,” a movement that redefines people power by focusing on public education. Availing of provisions under Republic Act 8525, the adopt-a-school law, FWWPP has partnered with corporations, non-government organizations, and other groups in harnessing the resources of the private sector and local communities for school upgrading projects. These projects build and rehabilitate schoolhouses and provide them with facilities like computers, books, and libraries. As of 2005, FWWPP has facilitated the adoption of over two hundred schools in various parts of the country.

Together with the “adopt-a-school” program, the “second leg” of FWWPP’s intervention in public education is “mentoring the mentors,” which conducts professional skills improvement seminars for teachers, produces instructional aids, and conducts monitoring and evaluation of teacher performance. As of 2005, FWWPP



has helped over six hundred principals and teachers in the provinces of Iloilo, Cebu, Negros Occidental, and Pampanga.

Stressing private-sector activism and local community participation, FWWPP aims to foster “people power” in the crucial field of public education. It shifts the focus of “people power” away from the popular image of mass actions to change leaders towards the imperatives of building civil society and empowering local communities in effecting their social transformation. It is a needed shift since the post-1986 period saw many cases of politicians and groups appropriating “people power” by mobilizing mass demonstrations and protest actions for sectarian ends.

Eggie has not retired from media. She continues to keep a watchful eye on the state of media in the country. She gives talks on the causes that are close to her: civic involvement in public education and the importance of an independent press. She continues to advocate the vision she had of an independent, broadly-based, and ethical newspaper when she founded *PDI*, today’s most-read English daily in the Philippines:

*... an institution for and of professionals, through responsible broad-based media ownership, with an editorial policy of fairness, commitment to information and the courage to stand for issues that have meaning in the lives of Filipinos.*

Called the “grand dame of journalism” in the Philippines, she was the first recipient of the Knight International Press Fellowship Lifetime Achievement Award, given by the International Center for Journalists (a network of more than twelve thousand journalists in 170 countries), in Washington, D.C. on October 9, 2001. On July 4, 2004, she was honored with the *Gawad Plaridel* (a prestigious journalism award given by the country’s state university, the University of the Philippines) for the “body of her publications and works which have been consistently marked by excellence, integrity, and social responsibility.” In 2006, she was named, together with her feisty colleague Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc, among the “Asian Heroes” of the past sixty years by the Asian edition of *Time Magazine* (November 13, 2006).

In June 2005, she revived *Mr. & Ms. Magazine* as a monthly for “the Body, the Mind, and the Spirit,” because, she explains, there is in the country a great need for “more spirituality.” Despite the secular battles into which she has been thrust, there is still about her so much of that church-going, religious-educated girl who wanted to “reform the world.”

EUGENIA Duran-Apostol remains as youthful and ebullient as ever, this woman so petite that (of her early days in the newsroom) she is said to prop herself up on her chair with a telephone book so she is not dwarfed by her desk. She loves her favorite diversions—ballroom dancing, parties for friends, and long trips on cruise ships to exotic places. She is, despite her sallies into the world, very much a woman of the home, fond of her son Carlos and three grandchildren. (Her husband Peping passed away on August 14, 2004.)

This does not seem to be the portrait of a person who (as the journalist Conrado de Quiros hails) “exemplifies both the physical courage, the capacity to act under the most perilous circumstances... and the moral courage, the capacity to take the path not trodden armed only with the conviction that it is the right thing to do.”

Eggie’s friend Gilda Cordero-Fernando has a more intimate comment on the paradox:

*What makes a great Eggie? The ability to doze when the tanks are coming; to look after a young son studying in [the De La Salle University branch in] Lipa at the cost of her job in a magazine (so she founded her own which morphed into the Inquirer!); to be a cool editor, never quarreling with her writers (only rich publishers, ministers, Presidents, and such); to prefer makopa and other fruit trees to rosebushes in her garden; to combine frou-frou with genius, scatterbrain with vision. Please don’t ask me how it’s done!*

Eggie herself says, of her time fighting Marcos, that she wasn’t really heroic, she was just lucky “to be at the right place at the right time,” with the “knack for starting small things that end up doing big things.” A woman of quick wit and a wry sense of humor, Eggie amazes friends and colleagues with how she can be cool and playful even in the most difficult situations.

Apart from the practical effects she has had on her society as one of the country's most influential newspaper publishers, Eggie is a refreshing reminder of the surprising forms and elemental simplicities of courage and virtue.

Resil B. Mojares

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