

## Oscar Frias; hydrologist, field engineer



Mekong Circle International lost another member. OSCAR FRIAS, who was diagnosed with a Cerebro Vascular Accident (CVA) last February 27, 1991, died on March 26, 2009 due to kidney failure complications. As a CVA patient, he was confined at the Trillium Health Hospital in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada for 15 years. In compliance with his final wish and through his insistence, he spent the last 4 years of his life in his hometown of Basista, Pangasinan, Philippines. He was laid to rest on April 5, 2009 in Basista, next to his father's grave. He was 66 years old. Oscar was a graduate of the University of the East, Department of Engineering.

Oscar is survived by his wife, Connie dela Pena Frias and three children (Janet, Robert and Oscar, Jr.). Although affiliated with USAID (Connie was the Administrative Associate in the General Service Office), both have strong OBI connections. Lydia Palma sung at their wedding on December 30, 1967 with Father Matt Menger as the officiating priest, and Pol Custodio serving as the altar assistant. Connie is a second cousin of Jojo Pablo.

Oscar worked as an Hydrologist in the Pamong Project of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation in Vientiane, Laos for a year, before serving as Field Engineer in the Agriculture Division of USAID/Laos. When Laos fell to the communist, both went to Iran - Oscar in December 1975 and Connie, who took the last Air France flight out of Vientiane in April 1976. In Iran, they were hired by Fluor Corporation; Oscar as the Field Engineer and Connie, the Executive Assistant to the Manager of the Ahwaz Office of Flour Iran, Ltd. After 4 years, they moved to Abu Dhabi, UAE. Once again, Oscar served as the Field Engineer and Connie was at the front office of Fluor Continental, Ltd.

Connie joined the United Nations in New York in 1984, while Oscar stayed in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia with Fluor Arabia, Ltd. In 1986, Oscar joined Connie in the U.S. and worked in the Engineering Department of a hospital in Paramus, New Jersey. Two years later, Oscar moved to Canada as an immigrant and had their 3 children later joined them. Connie continued working for the United Nations in New York and commuted every so often to be with the family in Ontario, Canada and vice-versa. The commute from New York to Canada became more often after Oscar suffered a stroke. She brave the New York thruway for a one-way 10 hours trip in her van every other weekend to be with Oscar and her children, making sure that his medical needs and documentation were properly attended to. While confined in the hospital with CVA, a memorable event happened to Oscar which he would proudly relate to his relatives and friends in the Philippines over and over again. On May 16, 1993, a Judge of the City of Mississauga, Ontario personally visited him at the Trillium Health Hospital and after a session of Canadian History, conferred on Oscar his Canadian citizenship.

When Oscar returned to the Philippines, his medical expenses went up and Connie came out of her retirement to work for the United Nations again. She accepted UN mission assignments in dangerous countries for more pay for the sustenance of her husband. She is presently on assignment in Kosovo. If you want to get in touch with her, she can be reached at [frias9596@rogers.com](mailto:frias9596@rogers.com).

(Obituary by Dr. [Raul de Jesus](#))