

Creating your own Ming Dynasty

*More today than yesterday, when she was our First Lady, Mrs. Ming Ramos is still a 'grande dame' - a modern woman before her time, independent and self-reliant. She recognizes this reliability in others, and has leaned on **Rentokil** to help her in house management and pest control.*

By PHILIP CU-UNJIENG



While known for being low-key and ready to operate 'under the radar' while her husband, President Fidel Ramos, was President of our nation, Mrs. Ming Ramos was already then also perceived as someone fiercely independent and made of sterner stuff. All throughout President Ramos' term, she steadfastly held on to her job at the International School Manila. Life and a career in the academe were just not to be placed on hold simply because she was the First Lady. It is this quality in Mrs. Ramos; her knowing what she wants out of Life and moving to get it regardless of the circumstances surrounding her, that has made her such a paragon of constancy. Small wonder then that till today, as it was in yesteryears; she is ruled by a routine of her own making.

So what is a typical week for the former First Lady today? Mondays to Wednesdays find her at the International School Manila, where on her 61st year attached to the educational institution, she is now a Consultant, working in High School Guidance Counseling. From 1955 to this day, the ISM has been her home away from home, a place where she finds fulfillment and meaning. Thursdays are her Beauty Parlor day, and she laughs, quipping how to this day, she is hopeless in doing her own hair. Friday is reserved for her Ming's Garden Center in Silang, Cavite; a very precious time as lunch is spent with her 3rd daughter who, some years ago, figured in a road accident and finds the trip to the countryside therapeutic. Saturday is supermarket day, while Sunday dinner is family time, when children and grandchildren all come together for their 'weekly scolding'. She smiles at her own joke; explaining how while the grandchildren are all well-behaved, it doesn't stop her and Pres. Ramos from pitching in when it comes to discipline and inculcating the right values. She recalls how, in the old days, a military life meant there were periods of time that her husband would be away; and she would double as driver, plumber, electrician, and/or carpenter for the family. Whether for the nation or for family, this kind of commitment

and selfless devotion, are the hallmarks of what she would like her children and grandchildren to always keep close to heart.

'One thing I have observed through the years and feel bad about is how in general, we just aren't nationalistic enough.' Prodded by this writer to say something about the ongoing elections, Mrs. Ramos would just remark that the state of politics today is sadly a far cry from how it was during their time. Rather than mere popularity, we really should look for the good points of the candidates, and decide if they will truly share that with the country, and do good. For Mrs. Ramos, the youth should never underestimate the role they have to play, how at stake is their future. And she is proud of how one grandson, Yale graduate Sam Ramos-Jones came up with a website along with friends called Pampubliko - a viral forum that encourages policy discussion, attempting to take local politics and issues out of the simplistic quagmire of popularity.


Moving on to domestic matters - and not as it is used in a political context - Mrs. Ramos the housekeeper, has 6 properties to maintain and look after. A stickler for cleanliness, hygiene, and termite control; she relies on **Rentokil** and their Termite Control monthly service to ensure that certain standards in home care are maintained. Besides the compound in Ayala Alabang where one daughter's home also stands, there is the simple, summer house in Tagaytay, and the Silang Garden Center and Coffee Shop. She confesses to having hired another pest control firm at one time; but never let go of their **Rentokil** service. Satisfaction, reliability, and impeccable service standards are clearly what drove Mrs. Ramos to stay with **Rentokil**, and become one of their more illustrious long-time customers. 'I just keep renewing, that's all there is to it, and that in itself speaks volumes of how I regard **Rentokil**. And she smiles!

The Tagaytay summer house was one of true testing grounds for what **Rentokil** came to represent

to Mrs. Ramos. Bobby Manosa was the architect, and while a classic example of Manosa's very Filipino approach to architectural design, the bamboo floors coupled with the strong humidity of Tagaytay meant termites became perennial issues. When those issues were addressed, **Rentokil** became her 'best friend' in ensuring that the problem did not reappear.

It is interesting to note how some of the causes and advocacies she was known for when she was our First Lady still carry resonance in her life today. She started playing badminton at the age of 7, and in her teenage years, was a Singles Runner-Up champion and a Doubles Champion. Her involvement in recent decades with the Philippine Badminton Association is proof positive of how such an involvement can be a 'crusade' that is lifetime in nature. In fact, while no longer involved with the Association, there is a grass roots program, the Ming's Junior Badminton Tournament, that she still oversees and lends time to. Looking at the international success of neighboring ASEAN countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia in the sport leaves her wistful about the kind of development that is still so sorely lacking in a sport we genuinely have the chance to excel in. It is not for nothing that Mrs. Ramos graduated with a degree in Physical Education. She has witnessed how achievement in sports can be a source of national pride; and has always held the notion that we have to be wise in choosing the sports we strive to excel in.

Speaking of constancy, an attribute we can glean Mrs. Ramos has in spades; she had this comment to make in the course of our afternoon together, 'What I have observed is that when the new Administration comes in, even the good things started or created by the outgoing President are discontinued, and that is unfortunate, as it means we are always in a state of new beginnings'. I look at our infrastructure situation, the daily mess of our Metro Manila road system, and I can so sympathize with the sentiments of Mrs. Ramos. And perhaps, it is this talent for recognizing a good thing when it stares you in the face that has helped make her such a loyal **Rentokil** client.

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