

Dr. Rolando V. del Carmen Obit

Dr. Rolando V. del Carmen, Distinguished Professor Emeritus, Regents' Professor Emeritus, and long-time benefactor of the College of Criminal Justice at Sam Houston State University, died on October 31 in his Huntsville home after a lengthy battle with pancreatic cancer. He was 88.

"Although Professor del Carmen will be greatly missed within the university community, he leaves behind a lasting and significant legacy in the students and colleagues whose lives he touched so profoundly and positively," said Dr. Phillip Lyons, dean of the College of Criminal Justice and director of the Criminal Justice Center. "We would not be who we are today, but for his presence over the decades; and we will not be the same without him. On behalf of the faculty, staff, and students I extend our most heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the del Carmen family."

Dr. del Carmen, a beloved member of the Sam Houston State University faculty, has generously supported the College throughout his tenure and donated hundreds of thousands of dollars for scholarships. He has two scholarships in his name and recently contributed a gift annuity in honor of Dean Phillip Lyons.

"He loved Sam Houston State University. He devoted his whole life to this place. Any conversation with him concerned the future of the College," said Dr. Solomon Zhao, a professor in the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology.

In 2003, he created the Rolando, Josefa, and Jocelyn del Carmen Criminal Justice Endowment Scholarship, which provides a \$1,000 scholarship to a Ph.D. student annually. In 2005, former students and friends launched the Rolando V. del Carmen Criminal Justice Endowed Scholarship. It, too, provides a \$1,000 scholarship annually for a graduate student at the College of Criminal Justice.

In addition to these perpetual scholarship funds, Dr. del Carmen has provided intermittent scholarships for students in need. Just this semester, he contributed a \$1,000 scholarship for an international undergraduate criminal justice major from Singapore, a member of the SHSU award-winning bowling team.

Over the years, when an international or out-of-state student needed financial assistance to receive in-state tuition, Dr. del Carmen would provide them with a \$1,000 scholarship; almost all of these students he had never previously met.

When asked why he was so generous, he said that he would have never made it in the U.S. as an international student from the Philippines if he had not received scholarships along the way. "To me, it is an investment in the person and in the future of the College of Criminal Justice," Dr. del Carmen said.

"I never met a kinder or more gentlemanly soul," expressed Dr. Jim Dozier, Clinical Professor and Internship Coordinator in the College of Criminal Justice.

Dr. del Carmen joined the faculty as an assistant professor in 1974, was named Distinguished Professor in 1995, and named Regents' Professor in 2007. He continued to be one of the leading experts in criminal justice law in the country even after his retirement in 2012, and is revered by

students, alumni, and fellow faculty members. His expertise is recognized worldwide, and he has written prominent books and articles in the field, many of which have been translated into other languages, including Chinese, Japanese, and Korean.

One of his most enduring legacies is that he served as a mentor to many graduate students, helping them publish academic articles and advance legal scholarship in the academic discipline of criminal justice. Since 2006, Drs. del Carmen and Michael S. Vaughn have served as Co-Directors of the Institute for Legal Studies in Criminal Justice at Sam Houston, an entity designed principally to assist graduate students publish legally-oriented articles.

Dr. Vaughn, a former student of Dr. del Carmen's, said that "Rolando was more than a mentor. He treated everyone respectfully. He always said that students will forget what they learned in your class, but they will never forget how you treated them." As Dr. del Carmen was known for his kindness and self-effacing demeanor, Dr. Vaughn remarked that "Dr. del Carmen's habit was to celebrate others' success. Rolando would take a colleague or a graduate student to lunch when they published an article. He valued the life of the mind."

At the same time, Dr. Vaughn emphasized that, "Dr. del Carmen was no shrinking violet. He taught the most difficult class in the doctoral program. Students dreaded his course, but by the end of the semester, they held a tremendous respect for him. He was an academic's academic. A walking encyclopedia of criminal justice law, he had an incredibly inquisitive mind. He constantly read the literature, frequently producing ideas for new research projects."

"He was a pillar in the Center and the College and a model colleague," shared Dr. Bill King, Associate Dean for Research and Program Development in the College of Criminal Justice.

Dr. del Carmen's generosity was not limited to Sam Houston State University. He also supported his alma mater, Silliman University in the Philippines, with student scholarships, faculty fellowships and grants to broaden and sustain quality education. His contributions recently culminated in the construction of the Rolando Villanueva del Carmen Honor Hall at Silliman University, providing free housing for the university's top 28 students with financial need, and working to develop programming to help expand their views of life. The only thing he asked in return is that these graduates consider giving back to the University once they succeed in life.

Among his other contributions at Silliman are the Dr. Jovito R. Salonga Center for Law and Development, the Angelo King Center for Research and Environmental Management, the College of Business Administration, the Senior High School Programs, and scholarships for high performing students.

Dr. del Carmen also earned accolades in the academic discipline of criminal justice, and was one of only three scholars to be recognized with all three top awards from the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, the national organization of criminal justice professors: the Founder's Award (2005), the Bruce Smith Sr. Award (1997), and the Academy Fellow Award (1990). In addition to being designated a Distinguished Professor at Sam Houston State University in 1995 and a Regents' Professor by the Texas State University System in 2007, Dr. del Carmen was also named a Piper Professor in 1998, a highly prestigious award, which recognizes the state's top college and university faculty instructors.

“I’m really just giving back the blessings I have received throughout all these years at Sam Houston,” said Dr. del Carmen. “Like many others, I want to leave this place an even better place for generations of students to come.”

Dr. del Carmen received his Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws degrees at Silliman University. He was a Fulbright Scholar at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, where he earned a Master of Comparative Law. Accompanied by his wife, Josie, Rolando attended the University of California-Berkeley, where he received a Master of Laws degree. Their only child, Jocelyn, was born there. From Berkeley, the family went to the University of Illinois, in Urbana, where they stayed for three years while Rolando finished his Doctorate of the Science of Law degree. The del Carmen family then moved to the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh in 1969, where Rolando taught and Josie worked as secretary in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. In 1974, they moved to Huntsville, Texas. Josie worked for 18 years in the Psychology and Philosophy Department and then in the Division of Student Life at Sam Houston.

“It’s hard to put into words what Dr. del Carmen has meant to our program and the broader field of academic criminal justice,” Dr. Vaughn opined. “Dr. del Carmen spent his professional life working diligently to fulfill the legislative mandate of the Criminal Justice Center. He has educated thousands of undergraduates who have had distinguished careers in criminal justice; he has provided in-service training to personnel who work at every level and in every field of the criminal justice system; he has helped professionalize local, state, and national criminal justice organizations within constitutional and legal mandates; he has produced extensive scholarship; and he has mentored dozens of doctoral students into careers within criminal justice academia.”

Dr. del Carmen was preceded in death in 2011 by his wife of 45 years, Josefa “Josie.” He is survived by his second wife, Erlyn; daughter Jocelyn (Chris) Tanabe, and grandchildren Josie and Linus of Palo Alto, CA. He is also survived by siblings Divina Himaya, Cirilo DelCarmen, Jr., Grace Nishidera, Ben del Carmen, and Gloria Dechawan; and extended family in the Philippines, United States, Canada, Australia, and Europe.

A service celebrating Dr. del Carmen’s life will be held on Monday, November 19, at 11:00 a.m. at the First United Methodist Church in Huntsville. Another memorial service will be held at a later time in the Philippines. He will be interred at the Texas State Cemetery in Austin on Wednesday, November 21, at 11:00 a. m.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that in-memoriam donations may be made to the United Board for the support of Silliman University. Donations can be made online: <https://donatenow.networkforgood.org/unitedboard>; or checks, payable to “United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia” (please indicate in memo line that this gift is in memory of Dr. Rolando del Carmen) can be mailed to either of two offices: The United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia, 475 Riverside Drive, Suite 1221, New York, NY 10115; or, United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia, 1/F, Chung Chi College Administration Building, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shatin, New Territories, Hong Kong.