



FILIPINO-AMERICAN Association of Greater Columbia

MILESTONES OF A GROWING ORGANIZATION

... *THIRTY + years (so far) and more to come* ...

Accomplishments, Achievements & Moments in Time as Columbia FIL-AMs Make an Impact in the Community



June 9, 1991 Formal organization of the Association when its By-law are approved and adopted.

June 15, 1991 First election of officers, with **Eva Rigney** elected as first FAAGC president.

July 11, 1991 FAAGC becomes officially incorporated in South Carolina.

Sept. 7, 1991 First annual gala and inaugural ball.

March 1992 FAAGC sends funds from various fund-raisers to Mt. Pinatubo victims in an Angeles City orphanage.

June 14, 1992 During the second election of officers, **Minnie Wheedleton** is elected FAAGC president.

Dec 5, 1992 FAAGC participates in *Carolina Carillon*, the first time the Filipino-American community in the state is represented in SC's premier parade.

May 7, 1993 FAAGC starts its continuing participation in the annual *Asian/Pacific American Heritage* celebrations at Ft. Jackson, SC.

June 5, 1993 **Minnie Wheedleton** is re-elected president.

June 19, 1993 FAAGC and the Philippine Cultural Society of Charleston (*Hiyas-Min*) present "*Karilagan* (beauty) -- The Philippine Cultural Show" at the Koger Center for the Arts -- a first-of-its-kind-show in Columbia.



Oct. 9, 1993 FAAGC participates in the Florence First International Festival.

Nov. 6, 1993 The *Columbia Fil-Am Cultural Dance Troupe* makes first public appearance (outside of FAAGC's own affairs) at an international festival in Columbia.

Dec. 4, 1993 FAAGC's "*Christmas in the Philippines*" float wins the **Grand Marshal's Award** as best overall entry in the 40th annual *Carolina Carillon*, South Carolina's premier holiday parade.



"Grand Marshall's Award" As Best Overall Entry
40th Carolina Carillon Christmas Parade (Dec. 4, 1993)

April 16, 1994 **Helen Alon** is elected FAAGC president.

May 30, 1994 FAAGC presents cultural show and educational exhibits at *Mayfest*, Columbia's premier spring festival, a first-time involvement of the area Fil-Am community.

Sept. 24, 1994 FAAGC presents cultural show at *Autumnfest*, Columbia's fall festival of arts and heritage — another first-ever Fil-Am participation.

October 1994 FAAGC donates Philippine reference books to public schools and libraries; Start of continuing cultural mini-shows and educational exhibits at area schools, companies and community events.

April 16, 1995 **Helen Alon** is re-elected FAAGC president.

May 8, 1995 Internal Revenue Service (IRS) officially recognizes FAAGC as tax-exempt, non-profit organization under Section 501(c)(4).

Dec. 31, 1995 FAAGC presents two cultural shows at *First Night Columbia*, a first-ever involvement in the city's New Year's Eve event.

Mar. 30, 1996 FAAGC participates for the first time in *Kids Day Columbia*.

April 6, 1996 **Helen Alon** is re-elected to a third term as FAAGC president.

June 16, 1996 FAAGC's Philippine display wins "best country exhibit" at the *First Columbia Inter-National Festival* held at the State Fair-grounds.



Dec. 7, 1996 The *Columbia Fil-Am Dance Troupe* performs for the first time outside the state at a special holiday festival in Charlotte, NC.

April 3, 1997 FAAGC member **Dr. Francisco Sy**, a Fil-Am public health professor at USC, is named "1997 *International Professional of the Year*" at the 2nd annual Columbia International Festival.

May 9, 1997 Ushering in a series of events to celebrate the *Philippine Independence Centennial*, FAAGC sponsors the stage presentation "*The Philippines — Yesterday, Today and Forever*" performed by the Manila-based, world-touring Philippine Centennial Youth Delegation at the Ridge View High School auditorium.

May 18, 1997 **Nieves McNulty** is elected first two-year-term FAAGC president.

Nov. 21-23, 1997 The *Columbia Fil-Am Dance Troupe* performs for the first time at the *Festival of Trees*, the annual fund-raising event for the Children's Hospital of Richland Memorial Hospital.

Mar. 31, 1998 FAAGC charter member **Noel Alon** is named the "1998 *International Volunteer of the Year*" at the 3rd annual Columbia International Festival.

Aug. 29, 1998 The *Columbia Fil-Am Dance Troupe* serves as the opening act of the *FASA Philippine Showcase: Remembering The Past, Envisioning The Future.* A first-of-its-kind-show in Columbia (and the Southeast), the production, featuring the West Coast-based Fil-Am recording artists **Pinay**, was promoted by FAAGC member **Fred Balangue** under the sponsorship of the USC Filipino American Student Association (FASA).



April 18, 1999 **Nieves McNulty** is re-elected FAAGC president.



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June 12, 1999 FAAGC and Charleston's *Hiyas-Min* present "Kalayaan (*Cry for Freedom*)," a joint cultural showcase to celebrate the "Centennial plus One" anniversary of Philippine Independence, at Columbia's Richland 2 District Auditorium (*June 12*) and at Charleston Southern University's Lightsey Chapel Auditorium (*Aug. 21*).

Oct. 11, 1999 At the invitation of fair organizers, FAAGC presents two cultural shows at the *130th South Carolina Annual State Fair*, a first-ever Fil-Am participation.

Mar. 17, 2001 FAAGC president **Nieves McNulty** is named "2001 *International Professional of the Year*" at the 6th annual *Columbia International Festival*.

April 15, 2001 **Peter Liunoras** is elected fifth (and first male) FAAGC president.

Nov. 16, 2001 FAAGC co-hosts with the USC FASA a post-performance reception for *Bayanihan*, the world-renowned Philippine National Dance Company, after its cultural show at the Koger Center for the Performing Arts.

Mar. 30, 2002 FAAGC charter member **Grace Collins** is named "2002 *International Volunteer of the Year*" at the 7th annual *Columbia International Festival*.

April 20, 2003 **Grace Collins** is elected FAAGC president.

Sept. 13, 2003 FAAGC presents the first *Columbia Fil-Am Scholarship* award to **Raymund Elamparo**.

Mar. 6, 2004 The Sumter area Fil-Am community, led by FAAGC members **Polly Pearson** and **Lilian Sheedy**, participates for the first time at the annual *Sumter Multi-Cultural Celebration*.

Mar. 25, 2004 FAAGC past president **Peter Liunoras** is named "2004 *International Volunteer of the Year*" at the 9th annual *Columbia International Festival*.

April, 2004 The Ridge View High School (RVHS) Fil-Am Youth Club is formed under the direction of FAAGC past president **Peter Liunoras**. The club is instrumental in raising funds for the *Fil-Am Scholarship* project.

June 2004 By invitation of the Charlotte-based Philippine-American Association of the Carolinas (PAAC), FAAGC, through its 1st VP **Alan Geoghegan**, presents Filipiniana display at the Charlotte *AsiaFest*.

June 12, 2004 The *Columbia Fil-Am Cultural Dance Troupe* performs at the first gala of the Filipino-American Association of Beaufort, Hampton and Jasper Counties of SC (FAABHJ) in Hilton Head.

February 2005 *Filipinas Magazine*, the internationally-circulated "magazine for all Filipinos," features an article on FAAGC written by 1st VP **Alan Geoghegan** (with editorial help from **N. Alon**).

Mar. 19, 2005 The USC Filipino American Student Association (FASA) presents *FASA Night: A Philippine Cultural Showcase*, a first-of-its-kind event at USC featuring traditional and modern aspects of Filipino and Filipino-American cultures. **AJ Alon**, a pioneer *Columbia Fil-Am Cultural Dance Troupe* performer, serves as FASA president with FAAGC treasurer **George McNulty** as the faculty adviser.

Mar. 27, 2005 **Alan Geoghegan** is elected FAAGC president.

May 1, 2005 FAAGC's Philippine display featuring a *sari-sari* (variety) store and motorcab motif wins "best exhibit" award at the 10th Annual *Columbia International Festival*.

Dec. 23, 2005 The Columbia Fil-Am community and Philippine folk dances, cuisine and Christmas traditions are featured live on "Live with Lucas" segments of *WIS News 10 Sunrise* show.

Mar. 23, 2006 FAAGC three-term treasurer **George McNulty** is named "2006 *International Community Ambassador of the Year*" at the 11th annual *Columbia International Festival*.

April 8, 2007 **Alan Geoghegan** is re-elected FAAGC president.

June 23, 2007 FAAGC participates for the first time in *World Refugee Day* celebration in Columbia.

July 27, 2007 FAAGC delivers donation from various fundraisers and matching Association funds to *Hospicio de San Jose*, a Manila orphanage.

Dec. 19, 2007 FAAGC delivers donation from the 2007 gala fundraiser and matching Association funds to *Hospicio de San Jose*, the *Asilo de San Vicente de Paul*, the ERDA (Educational Research and Development Assistance) Foundation (all in Manila), and the SOS Children's Village in Tacloban City, Leyte.

Feb. 9, 2009 FAAGC delivers donation from the 2008 gala fundraiser and matching Association funds to the Philippine National Red Cross.



FAAGC officers Leah Cuaresma (left) and Myrna Whitmire (right) pose with the assistant director and some staffers and children of the *Hospicio de San Jose* during their visit to deliver FAAGC's 2007 donation to the Manila hospice.

Photo: Manny Cuaresma



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April 12, 2009 **Marj Peña** is elected FAAGC president.

Aug. 29, 2009 **The City of Columbia proclaims this date as Filipino-American Day.**

Aug. 29, 2009 Philippine Ambassador to the U.S. Willy C. Gaa and Columbia City Councilman Kirkman Finlay III (representing Mayor Robert Coble) attend the *19th Annual Gala*, the first-time either a Philippine Ambassador or an official city representative is in attendance.



Ambassador Gaa

Nov. 2009 FAAGC delivers donation from the 2009 Gala fundraiser and matching Association funds to the Philippine calamity victims through the Catholic Relief Services.

April 24, 2011 **Marj Peña** is re-elected FAAGC president.

Sept. 10, 2011 At its *20th Anniversary Gala*, FAAGC honors 18 families who have been members continuously since 1991 by naming them as *Lifetime Sustaining Charter Members*.

Sept. 21, 2011 FAAGC member Imelda Go establishes the *Friends of Internationals Scholarship Fund* at USC to help meritorious international students having financial hardships at USC.

Sept. 26, 2011 **Noel & Helen Alon** deliver 20-year (from 1991 to 2011) documentation of FAAGC to the Library of Congress (LoC) for its Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Collection.



Reme Grefalda (right), the LoC AAPI Collection founding curator, receives FAAGC documents.

The LoC documentation consists of copies of all the issues of the Fil-Am newsletter (April 1991 to Summer 2011), souvenir programs of all galas and cultural shows (*Karilagan* and *Kalayaan*), By-laws booklets, *Directory of Members* booklets, Christmas Party programs, and a DVD of 1991-92 original computer files and digitized photos.

Oct. 15, 2011 FAAGC sponsors the very first *Columbia Fil-Am Basketball Invitational Tournament* involving six Fil-Am teams from Georgia and South Carolina at the Polo Road Park Recreation Center gym.



Mar. 31, 2012 FAAGC president **Marj Peña** is named "2012 *International Professional of the Year*" at the 17th annual *Columbia International Festival*.

April 13, 2013 FAAGC member **Alma Robichaud** is named "2013 *International Volunteer of the Year*" at the 18th annual *Columbia International Festival*.

April 24, 2013 **Cecille Jacobsen** is elected FAAGC president.

June 24, 2013 FAAGC delivers donation from various fund-raisers and matching Association funds to the Philippine National Red Cross.

Jan. 2, 2014 FAAGC delivers donation from various fund-raisers and matching Association funds for Typhoon Hainan (Yolanda) victims to the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in Manila.

July 1, 2014 FAAGC delivers additional donation from various fund-raisers to assist Typhoon Hainan (Yolanda) victims to the ABS-CBN Foundation *Sagip Kapamilya*.



April 5, 2015 **Cecille Jacobsen** is re-elected FAAGC president.

April 18-19, 2015 The Philippines is the featured country at the 20th annual *Columbia International Festival*.



Aug. 9, 2015 FAAGC receives

commendation from the State of South Carolina and the Southeast Network for the White House Initiative on Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) in recognition of its work with the Filipino American community in the Columbia, SC area.



Oct. 19, 2015 FAAGC makes cash donation to the Columbia Harvest Hope Food Bank to help the October 2015 flood victims in South Carolina.



City of Columbia Proclaims

The proclamation reads as follows:

City of Columbia

A Proclamation

WHEREAS, Filipino-Americans have made many valuable contributions to Columbia and they continue to influence and enrich our city economically, socially and intellectually. The Filipino-American population has been instrumental in enhancing cultural diversity, and education; and

WHEREAS, the Filipino-American Association of Greater Columbia (FAAGC) is a non-profit organization that was started in June of 1991 to bring awareness, understanding, and promote cultural diversity in the Midlands; and

WHEREAS, the FAAGC has donated funds to organizations in need that support education and cultural activities in Columbia and abroad such as the Hospicio de San Jose, a Manila orphanage; and

WHEREAS, the FAAGC has participated in many area city-wide events through the years including the Carolina Carillon, Columbia International Festival, and Kids Day; and

WHEREAS, the FAAGC is currently raising funds to build their own cultural center to serve as a resource for the community to learn about the Philippines and its culture.

NOW, THEREFORE I, Robert D. Coble, Mayor of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, along with my fellow members of Columbia City Council, do hereby proclaim **August 29, 2009**, as

FILIPINO-AMERICAN DAY

in the City of Columbia and urge my fellow citizens to recognize and participate in its observance.

(signed)

Robert D. Coble
Mayor

(signed)

Kirkman Finlay III
District IV Council Member





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Sept. 24, 2016 At its *25th Anniversary Gala*, FAAGC confers *Honorary Lifetime Memberships* to **Eva Rigney, Remie Morales-Sarmiento** and **Minerva Wheedleton** who were instrumental in establishing and guiding FAAGC during its early years.

April 16, 2017 **Gina Castañeda** is elected FAAGC president.

Sept. 28-29, 2018 FAAGC participates for the first time in the *Okra Strut Festival*, Irmo, SC and debuts its new *bahay kubo* (bamboo hut)

Dec. 1, 2018 FAAGC's new *bahay kubo* made its televised participation at the 65th Annual *Carolina Carillon*, South Carolina's premier holiday parade.



Dec. 2, 2018 FAAGC's new *bahay kubo* entered as the "Magical

Cubed House" won first prize as "Best Themed Decorated Float" at the Town of Prosperity *Christmas Parade*.

April 21, 2019 **Gina Castañeda** is re-elected FAAGC president.

Dec. 11, 2020 **FAAGC officially becomes an IRS-approved Section 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, public charity organization, allowing donors to make tax-deductible donations.**

April 17, 2022 **Reyna Funderburk** is elected FAAGC president.

Oct. 22, 2022 In collaboration with the SC Commission for Minority Affairs and the Columbia Museum of Art, FAAGC celebrates *Filipino American History Month celebration* with a showcase of Filipino folk dances, food tasting, exhibits and make-your-own *parol* (Christmas lantern) during *Soda City Market* at the CMA Boyd Plaza in Columbia's Main Street District.



2022-2024 FAAGC Executive Board



Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service
Tax Exempt and Government Entities
P.O. Box 2508
Cincinnati, OH 45201

FILIPINO-AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF GREATER COLUMBIA SC
375 CHARTER OAK COURT
LEXINGTON, SC 29072

Date: 05/20/2021
Employer ID number: 57-0942802
Person to contact: Name: Suzanne Dragoo
ID number: 50750
Telephone: 877-829-5500
Accounting period ending: June 30
Public charity status: 509(a)(2)
Form 990 / 990-EZ / 990-N required: Yes
Effective date of exemption: December 11, 2020
Contribution deductibility: Yes
Addendum applies: No
DLN: 26053750001380

Dear Applicant:

We're pleased to tell you we determined you're exempt from federal income tax under Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 501(c)(3). Donors can deduct contributions they make to you under IRC Section 170. You're also qualified to receive tax deductible bequests, devises, transfers or gifts under Section 2055, 2106, or 2522. This letter could help resolve questions on your exempt status. Please keep it for your records.

Organizations exempt under IRC Section 501(c)(3) are further classified as either public charities or private foundations. We determined you're a public charity under the IRC Section listed at the top of this letter. Your exemption under IRC Section 501(c)(3) is effective as of the date listed at the top of this letter. You were exempt under Section 501(c)(4) prior to this date.

If we indicated at the top of this letter that you're required to file Form 990/990-EZ/990-N, our records show you're required to file an annual information return (Form 990 or Form 990-EZ) or electronic notice (Form 990-N, the e-Postcard). If you don't file a required return or notice for three consecutive years, your exempt status will be automatically revoked.

If we indicated at the top of this letter that an addendum applies, the enclosed addendum is an integral part of this letter.

For important information about your responsibilities as a tax-exempt organization, go to www.irs.gov/charities. Enter "4221-PC" in the search bar to view Publication 4221-PC, Compliance Guide for 501(c)(3) Public Charities, which describes your recordkeeping, reporting, and disclosure requirements.

We sent a copy of this letter to your representative as indicated in your power of attorney.

Sincerely,

Stephen A. Martin

Stephen A. Martin
Director, Exempt Organizations
Rulings and Agreements



"Together We Make A Difference"



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At the **20TH ANNIVERSARY GALA** on Sept. 10, 2011, the **Columbia Fil-Am Association** honored those who had steadfastly supported and continuously sustained **FAAGC** from its beginning through its first **TWENTY (20) years** by recognizing them as **LIFETIME MEMBERS** (♦).

Others have or can become *Lifetime Members* if they have paid or willing to pay the equivalent of 20 years of membership (#).

At the **25TH ANNIVERSARY GALA** on Sept. 24, 2016, the **Columbia Fil-Am Association** honored those who were instrumental in establishing and guiding **FAAGC** during its early years by recognizing them as **HONORARY LIFETIME MEMBERS** (★).

♦ Lifetime Sustaining Charter Members Continuous Members since 1991

- ♦ Rita Houston ALCANTARA
- ♦ Noel & Helen ALON
- ♦ Edith ALSTON
- ♦ Lulu ANDERSON
- ♦ Ruben Matias BAGNAL
- ♦ James & Edith BARKER
- ♦ Linda BROWN
- ♦ Grace COLLINS
- ♦ Manny & Leah CUARESMA
- ♦ Tony & Tessie DeCASTRO
- ♦ Gene & Sally ELLIS
- ♦ Jim & Tessie KENERSON
- ♦ Juliet MARTIN
- ♦ George & Nieves McNULTY
- ♦ Marvin & Beth NOBLE
- ♦ Alfonso & Susana PASICATAN
- ♦ Naty AKANA ROBERTS
- ♦ David & Cindy TEFFT

★ Honorary Lifetime Members

- ★ Eva RIGNEY
(FAAGC President, 1991-1992)
- ★ Remie MORALES-SARMIENTO &
(FAAGC Treasurer, 1991-1992)
- ★ Minerva WHEEDLETON
(FAAGC President, 1992-1994)

Lifetime Sustaining Members Members for 20 years or more

- # Charles & Bev GOYENECHÉ (since 1991)
- # Lee & Polly PEARSON (since 1992)
- # Ranjel & Judy Salvador ASIS (1992-98, since 2001)
- # Joy CLARK (since 1993)
- # Jim & Juvie LOWDER (since 1993)
- # Imelda GO (1993-94, since 1996)
- # Jojo & Joette FLORA (1993-96, since 2010)
- # Ben & Aida DAQUIOAG (1994-99, since 2011)
- # Butch & Dhel ELAMPARO (since 1995)
- # Peter & Olga LIUNORAS (since 1995)
- # Charles & Precy WALKER (since 1995)
- # Terry & Judy BERENDS (1996-1999, since 2004)
- # Philip & Anna RABACA (since 1997)
- # Brian & Cecile STRICKLAND (since 1997)
- # Warren & Myrna WHITMIRE (since 1997)
- # Alan & Maria Cecilia GEOGHEGAN (since 1999)
- # Lu & Merlyn BAJAMUNDE (since 2000)
- # Edsel & Marj PEÑA (since 2000)
- # Dan & Tess ADCOCK (since 2001)
- # Ronald & Faye COLLEY (since 2001)
- # Jon & Gina CASTANEDA (since 2002)
- # Don & Evelyn LIESTER (since 2003)
- # Art & Cecille BOMAN (2004-2007, since 2011)
- # David & Odess BRINKMAN (since 2004)
- # Alan MATIENZO (since 2004)
- # Richard & Tessie BANNISTER (since 2005)
- # Carlton & Carmelisa EDWARDS (since 2006)
- # Terry & Reyna FUNDERBURK (since 2006)
- # Pete & Cecille JACOBSEN (since 2006)
- # Carlton, Jr. & Amy EDWARDS (since 2007)
- # Joseph & Celyn SZOKE (since 2007)
- # Neil & Maribel TIJING (since 2007)
- # Mark & Prescy RAMIREZ (since 2008)
- # David & Alma ROBICHAUD (since 2009)
- # Maria SILVER (since 2009)
- # Walter & Tess HILL (since 2012)



*Together We
Make A Difference*