



Grave of Juanito R. Obregon and wife, Soledad.

Photo courtesy of Ancestors. Source: *Find a Grave*, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/144919431/juanito-r-obregon>

Obregon, Juanito Rivera (1921–2010)

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Juanito Rivera Obregon was an Adventist teacher, pastor, writer, translator, and church administrator in the Philippines.

Early Life, Education and Marriage

Juanito Rivera Obregon was the son of Nicolas and Petra Rivera-Obregon, both from Cebu City, Philippines. Obregon was born on March 28, 1921, in Davao City, Philippines.¹ He studied and completed his elementary

education at Davao City Central School between 1927 and 1934.² Through the influence of his godly parents, Obregon accepted the Adventist faith and was baptized on July 24, 1934.³

Obregon attended Davao City High School for his secondary education from 1935 to 1938. He later moved to East Visayan Academy (now Adventist Academy, Cebu) in 1939-1940.⁴ Although money was limited, Obregon with little help from his father worked his way through high school.⁵ During the summers of 1940 and 1954, Obregon attended class sessions at Philippine Union College.⁶

A year after his graduation from East Visayan Academy, Obregon married Soledad Pilapil Danlag (born July 29, 1941).⁷ Their marriage was blessed by three children: Percy John, who later became a pastor, Merly Randi, and Marvin Louise.⁸

Ministry

Obregon entered denominational work on June 4, 1940. He started his ministry at Mindanao Mission as a teacher, office secretary, and Bible worker from 1940 to 1946.⁹ Mindanao Mission was the first mission field in Mindanao, which was at that time supervised by the Philippine Union Mission based in Manila. In May 1946, Obregon was called to work as a district pastor in the same mission field. The following year he was elected as the secretary of the Missionary Volunteer (MV) and education department of Mindanao Mission. In 1950, the Mindanao Mission was divided into two entities. The original mission was renamed Northern Mindanao Mission with offices in the same location, while the newly created mission was named the Southern Mindanao Mission and set up its headquarters at Davao City.¹⁰ After the reorganization, Obregon held the same position in the new Northern Mindanao Mission from January 1950 to May 1951.¹¹

In 1951, Obregon was elected to serve as the Missionary Volunteer, temperance, and National Service Organization (NSO) secretary of the newly established union—the South Philippine Union Mission in Cebu City. He served in that capacity from June 1951 to December 1957.¹² Obregon was ordained to the ministry in December 1956.¹³ In 1958, he was appointed to serve as the first president of the Western Mindanao Mission where he remained until December 1959.¹⁴ In 1960, he was called to be president of the East Visayan Mission in Cebu City (January 1960-December 1961). From January 1962 to December 1963, he again served as the secretary of the MV, temperance, and NSO departments of the South Philippine Union Mission.¹⁵

When the South Philippine Union Mission was divided into two unions—the Central Philippine Union Mission, based in Cebu City, and the South Philippine Union Mission, based in Davao, Mindanao—Obregon was elected to serve as the MV, NSO secretary, and editor of *Mizpa* and *Gaceta* (the official publications of the union) for the Central Philippine Union Mission from January 1964 to December 1969.¹⁶ In 1970, during the third biennial session of Central Philippine Union Mission, he was elected to serve as the president of the Central Visayas Mission from January 1, 1970, to December 31, 1973.¹⁷

Prior to his retirement, Obregon was asked to serve as student chaplain for the Central Philippine Union from January 1, 1974, to June 6, 1974. After serving the Adventist Church for thirty-three years and five months, he retired from service on June 4, 1974.¹⁸

Juanito Rivera Obregon served as a member of the Mountain View College board from its inception until he retired in 1974. He was also a member of the Philippine Publishing House (PPH) board for many years. From the PPH, he translated from Sabbath School quarterlies English to Cebuan. After his official retirement, he returned to East Visayan Academy to teach physics, Bible, algebra, and trigonometry.¹⁹

Later Life and Contribution

In 1986, Obregon and his wife moved to the United States with their daughter and son-in-law. Though retired, Obregon returned to the Philippines every two years to conduct revival meetings.

Juanito R. Obregon was a dedicated and faithful minister. As a result of his committed translation work for the Philippine Publishing House, he translated twelve of Ellen G. White's books from English to Cebuan. Obregon also wrote his own book, *He's Always There for Me*, filled with humor and spiritual inspiration. It was a first-person account of God's miraculous guidance in Obregon's life.²⁰ Furthermore, he was inspired to re-translate eighty-five songs in the *Church Hymnal* from English to Cebuan.

In his last years, Obregon wanted to be with his son, a minister in the Philippines. While in the Philippines, Obregon fell and broke his hip. He was bedridden and his health deteriorated until he died on May 18, 2010. His ashes were brought back to the United States to be with his wife's remains.²¹

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NOTES

1. Personal Service Record, Juanito R. Obregon, Southern-Asia Pacific Division Archives.

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9. Ibid.
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21. Marvin Louise O. Dodge, daughter of Juanito R. Obregon, email to Segundino R. Asoy, June 28, 2020.

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