

# Adventist Academy Bacolod

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Adventist Academy-Bacolod (AA-B), formerly Negros Mission Academy (NMA), is part of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist educational system.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the school received full accreditation by the Adventist Accreditation Agency<sup>2</sup> from April 2013 to April 2016<sup>3</sup> and a level II accreditation from the Association of Christian Schools, Colleges, and Universities–Accrediting Agency Incorporated (ACSU–AAI)<sup>4</sup> from November 10, 2013, to December 31, 2014.<sup>5</sup> The location of NMA is in the central part of the known city of Bacolod in Negros Island, at Taculing, Bacolod City—the capital city of Negros Occidental and the Sugar Bowl of the Philippines<sup>6</sup> with a population, as of 2015, of 39,891, 7.1 percent of the population of Bacolod City.<sup>7</sup> Negros Island is composed of two provinces. The Negros Oriental occupies the central and eastern part of the island as part of the Region 7–Central Visayas, while the Negros Occidental, situated in the northern half of the central and the southern area of the region, belongs to Region 6–Western Visayas.<sup>8</sup> Bacolod celebrates Masskara, a festivity that attracts tourists from all over the world and that culminates every fourth Sunday of October.<sup>9</sup> The city is the lone district, with a legislator as representative to the congress, composed of 61 barangays, with a land area of 62.8 square miles (162.67 square kilometers).<sup>10</sup> NMA is approximately three miles (five kilometers) away from the heart of the city. The academy is managed and operated by the Central Philippine Union Conference (CPUC).<sup>11</sup>

In the present school year (2019–2020), 392 students are enrolled: 294 in junior high school, with ten teachers, and 98 in senior high school, with five teachers. NMA's junior high school includes grades 7 to 10. The senior high school includes degrees 11 and 12, with STEM, ABM, and GAS academic strands.<sup>12</sup>

## Development and Establishment

Asia is one of seven continents of the world, with 60 percent of the world's population.<sup>13</sup> There are five regions in Asia: Southeast Asia, Central Asia, East Asia, South Asia, and Western Asia, with 48 countries, and approximately 17 million square miles (49.5 million square kilometers) in land area, with more than 4.5 billion people.<sup>14</sup> The Philippines is part of Southeast Asia and is one of the most strategic places for world military defense.<sup>15</sup> This is the reason the U.S. has “Balikatan,” or “shoulder-to-shoulder,” military exercises every year as part of the treaty called the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement.<sup>16</sup> The country has been allied to the United Nations since 1945.<sup>17</sup>

The Philippines, the world's largest archipelago, lies in Southeast Asia in the western Pacific Ocean. There are three main island groups of the Philippines archipelago—in the north is Luzon, in the center is the Visayas, and in the south is Mindanao.<sup>18</sup> Recently geographers listed 7,641 islands in the Philippines.<sup>19</sup> It has a total area of 111,830 square miles (307,055 square kilometers) situated in the Pacific Rim of Southeast Asia.<sup>20</sup> It is primarily known as a diverse country in the world, particularly with a high percentage of fauna and flora.<sup>21</sup>

Philippines was the republic that was named in honor of King Philip II of Spain in 1543.<sup>22</sup> It was under the colonial regime of Spain (1521–1898) and the United States (1898–1946),<sup>23</sup> and the Japanese occupied some areas in the archipelago during World War II.<sup>24</sup>

The Philippines has a variety of cultural influences, but the two major cultural influences derived from Spain and the United States.<sup>25</sup> Its religion is influenced mainly by Spain; it is one of two primarily Christian countries in the Asia-Pacific region (the other is East Timor).<sup>26</sup> Eighty-six percent of the population are Roman Catholic Christians, 6 percent are nationalized Christian cults, 4 percent are Islam, and the remainder are other religions and beliefs, including Protestant denominations.<sup>27</sup>

Abraham La Rue brought bundles of literature to the Philippines from Hong Kong.<sup>28</sup> In the year 1905 the president of the Australian Union Conference, G. A. Irwin, found the place fruitful for the proclamation of the Word of God as he dropped by Manila going to the General Conference session.<sup>29</sup> In August of the same year Robert A. Caldwell, a literature evangelist, received a call from the church headquarters in Maryland, U.S.A., to go to the Philippines.<sup>30</sup> The Advent message was extended to the central and southern parts of the Philippines. The Southern Philippine Union Conference (SPUC) was first organized 1951 and was reorganized in 1964;<sup>31</sup> then the Central Philippine Union Conference was separated from the SPUC and organized in 1964 and reorganized in 1996.<sup>32</sup> The CPUC is composed of seven missions and conferences: the East Visayan Conference, Central Visayan Conference, West Visayan Conference, Negros Occidental Conference, Romblon Adventist Mission, Negros Oriental-Siquijor Mission, and Samar Adventist Mission.<sup>33</sup>

Six years after the Negros Mission (now Negros Occidental Conference) was organized as a separate mission in 1962, and was reorganized in 1994 and 1997,<sup>34</sup> the leadership of the church conceived of building an academy for the youth in the territory, because West Visayan Academy was in Bongco Pototan, Iloilo, in the island of Panay.<sup>35</sup>

## The Founding of Adventist Academy

On the outskirts of the city of Bacolod, in Taculing, land in front of the Adventist Medical Center-Bacolod (AMC-B), previously Bacolod Sanitarium and Hospital (BHS), stands a monument of faith, dedication, and courage<sup>36</sup> to the pioneers who had the common objective to herald the “everlasting good news of the kingdom, to make people ready for Christ’s imminent return, to train and educate their children and youth in the concept of Adventist Christian education”<sup>37</sup> and who established Negros Mission Academy in 1968.<sup>38</sup>

This school was owned and managed by the West Visayan Mission now West Visayan Conference under the Central Philippine Union Mission (now Central Philippine Union Conference).<sup>39</sup> The union president was E. A. Capobres.<sup>40</sup> The churches expanded in the territory, and the members multiplied; the Negros Island region became part of the West Visayan Conference. This new attached field was called Negros Mission (now Negros Occidental Conference, or NOC), located at C. V. Ramos, Taculing, Bacolod City. The church school, a complete elementary grade school located at Luzuriaga Street, in Bacolod City, was moved to C. V. Ramos, Taculing, Bacolod City, next to the academy.<sup>41</sup>

It started with 84 pupils in elementary and 54 students in junior high (first and second year only), a total of 138 students. Five volunteer teachers were employed by the Mission and Bacolod Sanitarium and Hospital, and six were regularly employed by the school.<sup>42</sup> The first academy board chair was D. C. Sabrine, who was the president of the mission.<sup>43</sup> David Recalde was the pioneering school principal; treasurer, Eufinio Ibesate; registrar, Emma Gentapanan. The elementary teachers were Aurora Rivera, Pacita Zamora, and Felma Tubillara. The part-time teachers were, in English, Eleanor Dick; Bible, Hector Gayares, Sr.; home economics, Adelfa Recalde; woodworking, Jethro Tanamal, and vocational-girls, Marcela Garilva. In the following school year, 1969-1970, another teacher was added because there were 16 new students enrolled. The next school year, 1970-1971, the administration added two more teachers, making a total of nine, and all of them were full-time as the enrollment soared to 236 students. At the beginning of the 1971-1972 school year, NMA was granted complete secondary status by the government, with two more additional full-time teachers. On April 22, 1972, was the first graduation, with thirty-three graduates and a total of 11 faculty.<sup>44</sup>

The Honorable Juan Manuel, secretary of education, awarded to NMA on August 7, 1973, a full government recognition with Government Recognition No. 153, series of 1973.<sup>45</sup>

The name Negros Mission Academy (NMA) Incorporated was changed to Adventist Academy Bacolod Incorporated in compliance to the action made by the Central Philippine Union Conference in regard to the names of the academies in the territory with academy board action number 2019-66.<sup>46</sup> It was voted by a majority of the board of trustees and two thirds of the members of the corporation on June 25, 2019. It was filed and accepted by the Security and Exchange Commission dated July 30, 2019, by Russell I. Ildesa, officer in charge of the said commission<sup>47</sup>.

## AA-B History

Leaders of the CPUM (now CPUC) had their third biennial session for leaders in the territory. The leaders' burning passion for extending the redemptive plan of Christ through education in the island of Negros was part of the item discussed. During this six-day session B. R. Arit, the CPUM secretary, urged the leaders of the church attending during the session not to forget the mission academies in its building and reconstruction. The union president was E. A. Capobres, and the Negros Mission president was D. C. Sabrine<sup>48</sup>.

On February 4, 1970, a year after Negros Mission Academy was organized, the union executive committee made a covering action, with action number 70-23, to assign to NMA an amount of \$5,000 from the 1969 Ingathering fund.<sup>49</sup> Action 70-26 recommended to the Far Eastern Division (now Southern Asia-Pacific Division) to upgrade the Negros Mission Academy to offer third-year classes at the start of the school year 1970-1971.<sup>50</sup> The Ingathering goal and projects in the year 1971 went to NMA with the appropriation budget of \$15,000. As it was voted during the Central Philippine Union Mission executive committee meeting on September 2, 1970, as Action 70-216.<sup>51</sup>

The leadership of NMA in its infancy conceived a method of augmenting their financial capacity by utilizing the 7.4 acres (three hectares) of land at the academy for rice and vegetable farming, and a woodworking shop manufacturing bulletin boards that the students may sell to churches on a commission basis.<sup>52</sup> It was during this session that David Recalde, as an educational superintendent of Negros Mission, was moved to NMA as principal. It was on July 8, 1969, that the first permanent building started its construction with only 20,000 pledges and a cash donation. The construction was under the supervision of Eliezer Roca, an SDA civil engineer who charged only a minimal fee for his services, and gave back 50 percent of his salary to the NMA. As the spirit of service burning in the heart of the workers, some of the teachers and students brought some money to help the academy building project. Singing bands and the "flight of dimes campaign" were also the means of augmenting the academy finances. To date, 19,872 dimes have been contributed, and 50,000 dimes are expected.<sup>53</sup>

In the school year 1972-1973, Danny Dial organized the school choir.<sup>54</sup> That has continued until the present, with different directors and choir members. There were momentous changes in the administrative helm of leadership from the years 1973 to 1983, from D. Recalde to Eduardo Palma, and later Abraham Neri. These were the names of those who keep the finances of NMA: Oseas Zamora, E. I. Ibisate, Rudy Corpus, and Rufo Gasapo. The following teachers in elementary and high school were Marlou Ordonia, Ninfa Billones, Emma Genis, Mr. Popilo, Melvin Tan, Linda P. Anacleto, Mr. and Mrs. Abraham Neri, Mrs. J. C. Solis, and Edith Jondonero.<sup>55</sup> In the following school year of 1983-1984 Abraham Neri was replaced by Loreto Maypa, and Mrs. Maypa was both the school registrar and an English teacher. During the next school calendar year the school population had a substantial increase, and the chapel was sometimes used by Miss Elizabeth Albaladejo, an English teacher, using the microphone or the megaphone for her classes.<sup>56</sup> During the school year 1985-1986 NMA offered preschool, and Emily Monte was the new teacher added. Her husband, Teodoro Monte, was the new treasurer.

The school year 1987-1988 was the twentieth founding year anniversary celebration, and Joan Tiblero joined the teaching force as an English teacher. The highlight of the ceremony was the competition of the ten singing groups and the big building cakes decorated with twenty candles. During this school year the Student Association constructed the basketball court through solicitation. During the same year Melba Caagbay was sent to the U.S. to fund the NMA elementary school building, and the construction started after she left. Another volunteer, Manny Digidigan, taught social studies III.<sup>57</sup>

The enrollment soared in the year 1988-1989. A mathematics teacher and boys' dormitory dean, Steven de la Rama, joined the forces. Students' numbers expanded; offices were utilized to accommodate the students. When the fund from the U.S. arrived, the elementary main building was finished with six classrooms, and all elementary pupils and teachers transferred to the new building. All the secondary levels split into two sections:<sup>58</sup>

The school year 1989-1990 was the time that NMA elementary had separate management after it was fully established. Projects of the Student Association added the structures to the original building. The porch benches, the shed, and the stage are all still functional today. During this year the administrative and business offices, the faculty room, and the IMC (Instructional Media Center/Library) were enhanced. The birth or the revival of the different clubs and organizations were also in this era: the Order of Shakespeare Club, the CHA (Cultural Heritage and Arts) Club, the Sigma Mu Club, and the Filipiniana Club. The new school accountant who came to help the treasurer in the business office was Gloria Diel. A typing course was offered, and the instructor was Marietta Leopoldo.<sup>59</sup>

The school year 1990-1991 was one of triumphs. The annex building was completed where the offices and IMC were fixed, followed by the groundbreaking ceremonies of the YDT and CAT office building. Enrollment reached 450-plus, all high school students. Computers and printers arrived. The teachers were Theodore Monte and Gloria Diel, who taught the students about Lotus and Wordstar. The old chapel was reconstructed as the insurance aid arrived after Typhoon Rufing destroyed it. It is a blessing in disguise.<sup>60</sup>

The school year came and went. The year 1991-1992 was called the "year of firsts." The first of all, the academy in the territory of CPUC with separate YDT and CAT offices. Joan Daffodil Moffitt was the top Ingatherer from the first year to the fourth. The same year was the first batch of graduates with a class name, a class song, and a yearbook (Prism '92-Sweven). Wenna Diesto was the first editor in chief, and class PIO was Wenna Diesto. She represented the school at the Philippine SDA Writers Seminar Workshop in Cagayan de Oro City, sponsored by the Philippine Publishing House. It was the first celebration of the "boys and girls" week.<sup>61</sup>

The year of "hello and goodbye" was the school year 1992-1993, when Marlou Ordonia left for the Adventist University of the Philippines with a Southern Asia-Pacific Division scholarship grant, and Sol Felipe Llasos took his place as CAT commandant and Pathfinder director. Michael Daro replaced Theodore Monte as treasurer. Joel Solis moved to AMC-B as chaplain and later to Negros Occidental Conference as education director and was replaced by Josue Anacleto in Bible classes. Meriam Estores took the work left by Marieta Leopoldo as she was called to NOC as secretary. In this school year a singing group was organized named the Hedystrills (meaning "sweet song").<sup>62</sup>

In the years from 1993 to 2010 many teachers have come and gone. They had been part and parcel to AA-B; they made lots of contributions to its development and in training our youth to be leaders in our church and to the world. In 2010-2011 Flosie T. Abibuag took over the leadership as the officer in charge of the school. The treasurer was still Nelson V. Jamotillo, and Joan T. Lumaga was the registrar-philanthropic director.<sup>63</sup>

The school year 2011-2012 was the year that Joan Lumaga was appointed planning and development director. Sadly, that school year she passed away because of breast cancer. There were no changes in the administration. In 2012 the constituency met. The nominating committee voted Winnie Toledanes as the new principal until the next constituency meeting.<sup>64</sup> On September 6, 2012, Felipe Llasos re-created the school song as requested by NMA because no copy of the old song could be found.<sup>65</sup>

From 2013 to 2016 the number of enrollees increased with a new church chaplain, Hospocio Legria, and with Ranzam M. Tiansay's help as an English teacher. Joebert Gonzales joined in place of Ranzam Tiansay (2014-2015), but was recalled the year after (2015-2016) by the principal.<sup>66</sup>

In 2016, in NOC's constituency meeting, the nominating committee members voted for Israel Entima to be the next principal of AA-B. Cherry Lyn C. Jamotillo replaced her husband, Nelson Jamotillo, as academy treasurer. Also, during this year the K-12 program, or the senior high school program of DepEd, started, with more classrooms added for the senior high school students.<sup>67</sup>

August 1-7, 2018, was the fiftieth founding anniversary of formerly known NMA at the school compound.<sup>68</sup> Today it bears the name Adventist Academy-Bacolod (AA-B).<sup>69</sup> One hundred thirty-two teachers had been part of the teaching force during the first fifty years, and there have been more added to the roster. These people have sacrificed their time and effort to share in the "molding and nurturing" of our children and to live up to the "mission and vision" of Adventist Academy-Bacolod. Administrators, faculty, and staff have come and gone, but NMA, the institution where they labored, stands as a monument of truth, a credit to everyone who, in one way or another, made a difference to AA-B, and above all to our God, who guided this institution from its humble beginning to the present.<sup>70</sup>

## The Role of AA-B in the Community

In the school year 1986-1987 NMA joined the Anti-Drug Poster Contest and won the prize.<sup>71</sup>

The school year 1992-1993 was the most significant moment for the Hedystriils to win first place and in the singing group category in the Negros Occidental Private Schools Sports, Culture, and Education Association (NOPSSCEA) literary-cultural contest.<sup>72</sup>

From 1994 to 2000, according to the administrator, Marlou Ordon, in every summer vacation they held Vacation Bible School in the surrounding Barangays, ten-day evangelistic efforts in Barangay Magsungay, Bacolod City, with Davis Rodrigo, a former faculty member of NMA. They also have an outreach program in the school chapel for the non-SDA students. There have been singing bands every Saturday in the former Bacolod Sanitarium and Hospital (now Adventist Medical Center Bacolod [AMC-B]).<sup>73</sup>

At present the educational institution is known as "the refuge of our youth,"<sup>74</sup> and is conducting church outreach visitation and school promotion with the students as speakers.<sup>75</sup>

Every year there is a competition of all the private schools in Negros Occidental, and NMA is always participating in the intensifying relationship of all private schools through education, sports, culture, and social responsibilities. AA-B supports the Negros Occidental Private Schools Sports, Culture and Education Association (NOPSSCEA) and the Western Visayas Private Schools Athletic Association.<sup>76</sup>

## List of School Heads, Principals, and Administrators

David J. Recalde, MA (1968-1975); Eduardo F. Palma, PhD (1975-1977); David J. Recalde, MA (1977-1980); Abraham O. Neri, PhD (1980-1983); Loreto T. Maypa, MA (1983-1994); Marlou D. Ordonia, MA (1994-2000); Sol Felipe D. Llasos, MA (2000-2002); Lawrence L. Domingo, EdD (2002-2003); Melba C. Caagbay, MA (2003-2006); Marlou D. Ordonia, MA (2006-December 2008); Joan T. Lumaga (OIC) (January 2009-May 2009); Gladys R. Fuentes, PhD (2009-2010); Ma. Flosie T. Abibuag, MAT (OIC) (2010-2011); Winnie M. Toledanes, MA (2011-2016); Israel G. Entima, Ph.D. (2016-present).<sup>77</sup>

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