

The Happy-Sad Anniversary Of The PAD

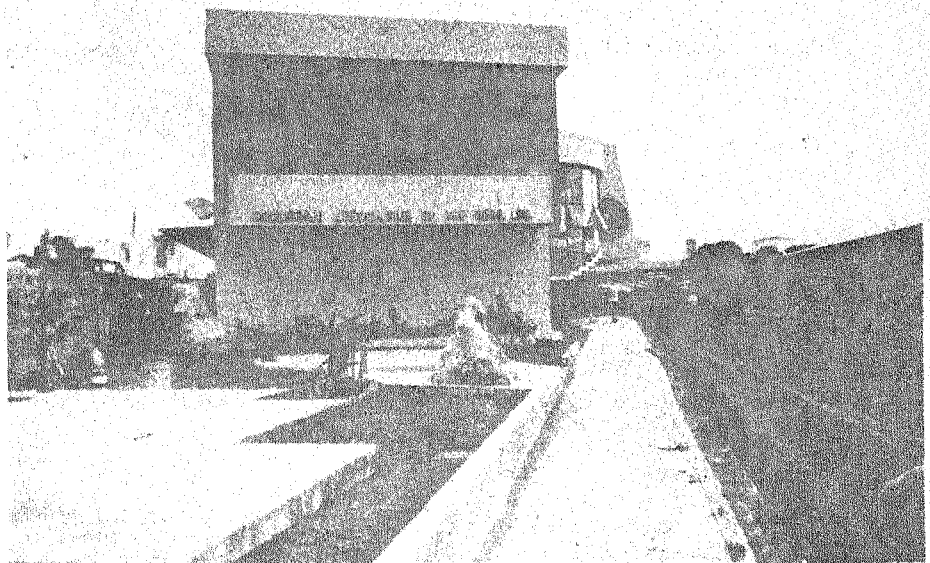
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Faithful DEAF AMERICAN readers have followed our articles in these pages for several years now; many of our deaf friends have visited the Philippines and seen first hand the first telephone-teletypewriter installation for the deaf outside the United States, the unique "Coffee Shop of the Deaf" and the missionary school for the deaf started by the American missionaries Reverends Aimee and Ada Coryell. This time I'd like to share with DA readers another story. This one has a moral, a moral which we hope will never be forgotten by the deaf. It's the story of the "happy-sad" anniversary of the Philippine Association of the Deaf.

Oldtimers will remember Dr. Delight Rice and her pioneering work in education of the Filipino deaf (see "Land of the Morning, Child of the Sun Returning," DEAF AMERICAN, December 1970). The pioneering spirit of this wonderful woman is still remembered by the deaf who have found their way into school. One of Dr. Rice's first students was a boy from a very poor family. The boy, Pedro Santos, turned out to be one of Dr. Rice's most remarkable students. He became the first (and only) Filipino deaf to graduate from Gallaudet College.

Forty-seven years ago last October 17, Pedro Santos established the Philippine Association of the Deaf as the country's first national organization for the deaf. The PAD (patterned after the National Association of the Deaf) was also one of the first organizations in Asia established for the deaf. This year the anniversary of the PAD was a particularly happy one, not just because it saw the 47th year of operation of the Association, but because it marked the inauguration of the Philippine Association of the Deaf's new build-



The new Philippine Association of the Deaf building would put the NAD's Halex House "to shame"—it would have cost more than \$1,000,000 if it had been built in the United States.

ing in Manila's exclusive Makati suburb.

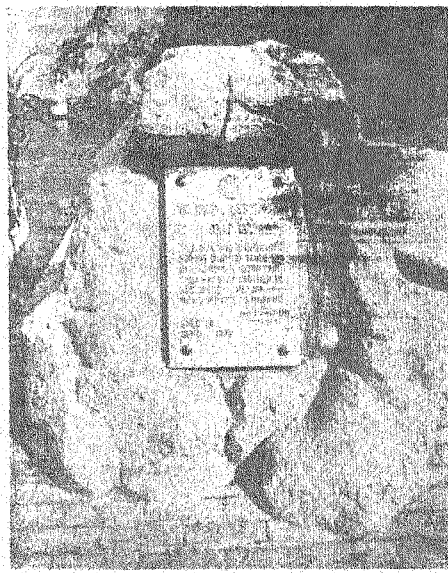
The new PAD building is a dream come true for many people. Years in the planning, it was designed by one of the Philippines' top architects at a cost of over 500,000 pesos (this is nearly \$100,000, but if built in the United States at their high rate for labor and materials it would have cost over one million dollars). Having visited many organizations for the deaf around the world I can say that I've never seen a building to match it (it would put Halex House to shame). The most remarkable thing, of course, is that it was built entirely by the money earned by the deaf from the numerous "Coffee Shops" they have been able to establish in Manila's "Tourist Belt." Operational expenses are minimal since restaurant space is donated by park officials and deaf workers do not receive the government's minimum wage since their work is considered "charity." Material and supplies have also been donated by civic minded businesses and individuals, cutting operational costs to the absolute minimum.

As the stately first lady of the Philippines, Mrs. Imelda Marcos, gave the keynote address at the PAD inauguration ceremony tears welled in the eyes of many. It was indeed a very happy anniversary for the PAD, for the deaf. And where does the sad part come in? Simply this, it was a very happy day for the deaf; it was not their day.

For many years now our beloved friend and confidant, Richard S. West, has been the only deaf officer of the PAD (second vice president) and the only deaf workers are the laborers. The PAD, of course, is not to blame. For many years now (ever since the end of World War II) the only government school for the deaf in the

country has used the "miracle" oral method. Richard West complains that the only "miracle" he sees is that high school graduates from the school are functionally illiterate and must be taught basic arithmetic before they can work in the PAD coffee shops (or else they can't even add up the customer's bill!). For years now I've carried around a folded piece of paper in my wallet. I was sitting with one of the top high school graduates from the school for the deaf one evening at the PAD. Out of curiosity I gave him an elementary school math problem which I had seen in a class for the deaf abroad.

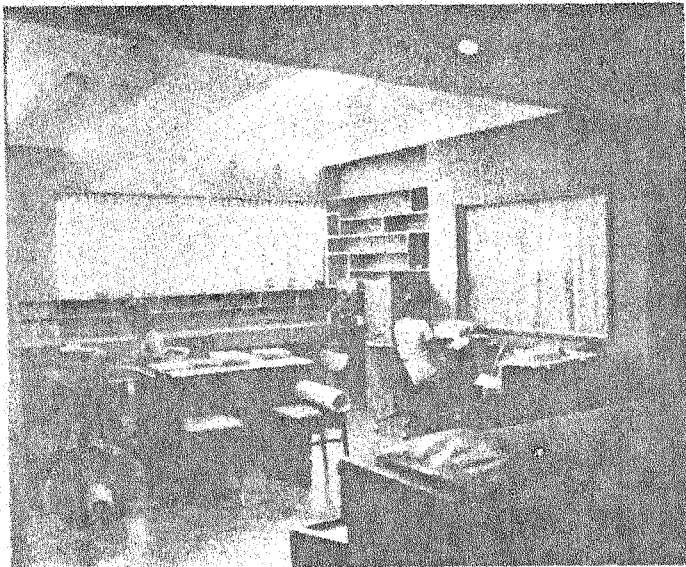
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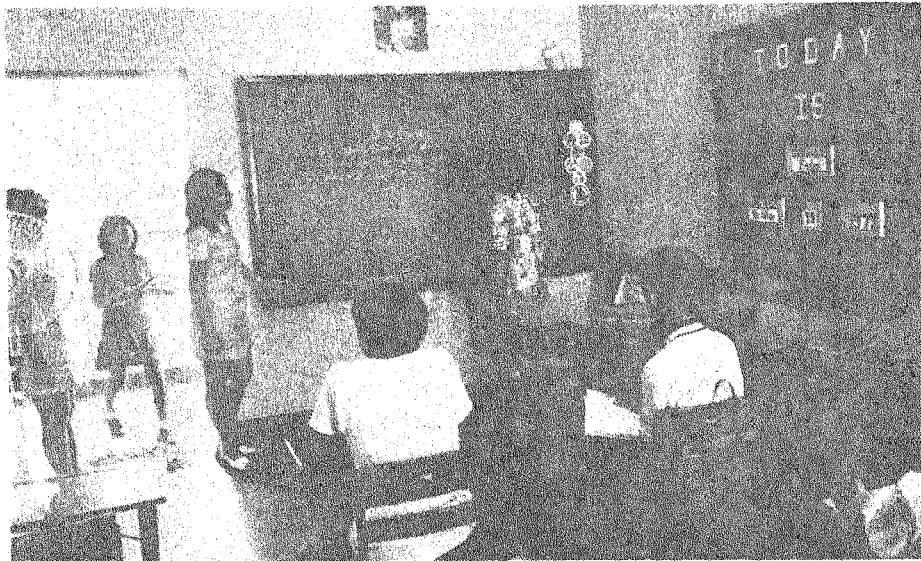
This Philippine Association of the Deaf building was dedicated on October 17, 1973, with the First Lady of the Philippines giving the keynote address.



The PAD teaching staff, left to right: Josefina Valentin, Norma Lopez, Linda Villacorta and Mencie Yaguti.



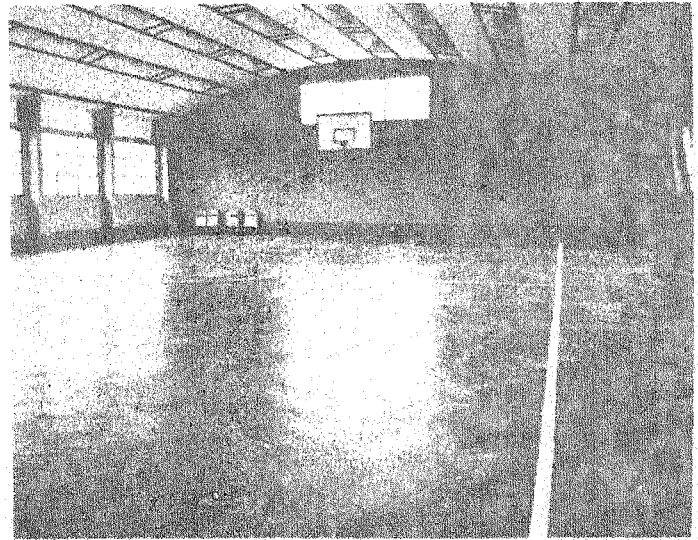
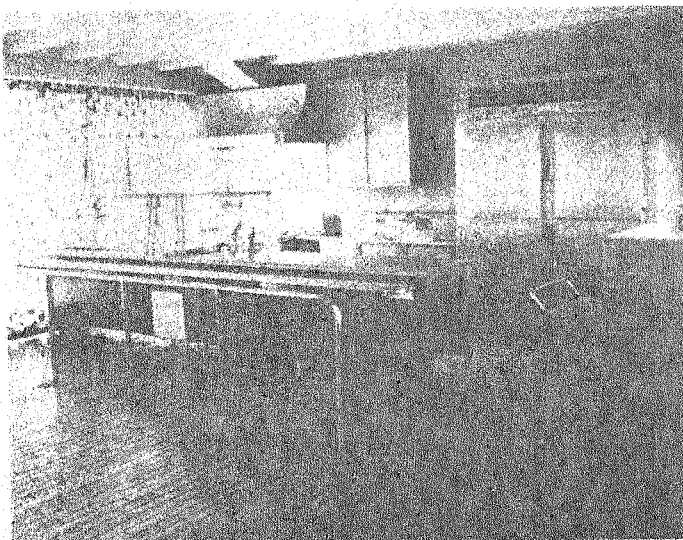
Left: PAD administrative functions are carried on in this single office, the remainder of the building being devoted to other facilities for the deaf. Right: Richard S. West, the only deaf officer of the Philippine Association of the Deaf, is shown outside the new building with Maria Flebeth O. Valera, member of the PAD board of directors.



Trying to make high school "graduates" functionally literate is the focus of work in this adult education classroom. Students who graduate from the only government school for the deaf come to the Philippine Association of the Deaf virtually illiterate. They must be taught basic arithmetic before they can work in one of the Association's "Coffee Shops."



Paula Guiterrex, the first deaf student in the Philippines, works six-day weeks for about one dollar a day. DEAF AMERICAN readers will remember Paula from previous articles about the deaf in the Philippines.



Left: A cafeteria furnished with ultra modern equipment serves as another source of income for the Philippine Association of the Deaf. Right: the new PAD building has a regulation size gymnasium which converts to an auditorium that can seat 1000 people.

The problem read: If one robin can eat two worms, then five robins can eat how many worms? First he asked me what a robin was (after all, we don't have robins in the Philippines). Then he asked me what a worm was (we *do* have worms). He pondered for more than 10 minutes and finally scribbled his answer onto a piece of paper which I've kept ever since. His reply: "Five robins can eat maybe about three worms and to pull one half of worm." I want to remind the reader that this young man was (and still is) one of the best products of our educational system.

The PAD is trying to undo some of the damage by establishing an educational program, but only a handful of students participate and finding trained teachers is not easy. Some of us have a dream that somehow, some day in some way we will see the Filipino deaf stand up for themselves, educate their own all over the country (not just in the Manila area) and become the masters of their destiny. This was the dream of Pedro Santos when he established the Luzon Association of the Deaf (which died with him in 1970).

It was a happy anniversary—the faces of those wonderful, well-intentioned hearing people who made the PAD building a reality reflected that happiness. But the faces of our deaf, some showing bewilderment, apathy or just plain blank . . . that was the sad part, so very, very sad.