

National Scientist Perla D. Santos-Ocampo

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The latest to join the August roster of National Scientists of the country is Dr. Perla D. Santos-Ocampo through Proclamation No. 2099 issued by Malacañang on June 23, 2010. This is the highest honor the Philippine Government can bestow on a Filipino scientist for her outstanding contributions to science and technology. Dr. Santos-Ocampo is recognized for her excellent contributions as scientist in the field of pediatrics, as medical educator-leader and mentor, institution builder and advocate for the better health of the Filipino people, particularly, the children.

Her research achievements in diarrheal diseases resulted in the development of a super oral rehydration solution and provided the basis for diarrhea-related policies of the Department of Health. Her researches on malnutrition's effects on the growth and development of children led to the rational management of nutritional problems among Filipino children. These researches were published in over 100 articles in peer-reviewed local and international journals.

Dr. Santos-Ocampo is known for her dedicated and sterling service as medical educator, mentor, adviser, administrator and institution builder at the University of the Philippines (UP) Manila and throughout the nation. She developed academic programs to enhance the quality and number of experts, among which are the first pediatric fellowship program in UP Manila which trained trainors in various subspecialties in pediatric centers abroad and who formed the core of trainors training the bulk of child care specialists in the country and the institution of distance study courses especially for health professionals in remote areas.

During her term as Chancellor of UP Manila, she led the establishment of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in 1998 through the enactment of Republic Act 8503, the National Graduate School for the Health Sciences and the National Telehealth Center. The NIH is now recognized as one of the four core agencies of the Philippine National Health Research System and recognized as a training center for research ethics, and good clinical practice in the Asia Pacific region.

She served as President of the Philippine Pediatric Society, the International Pediatric Association, and Chair, Medical Association of the Southeast Asian Nations and continues as Emeritus President of these organizations. Her outstanding, dynamic and charismatic leadership qualities put forward the best in the Filipino and have been highly esteemed by local and international health and medical organizations.

Dr. Santos-Ocampo is the recipient of numerous local and international awards and recognition including five honorary fellowship or membership awards from five national pediatrics societies. In 1994, she was admitted to the National Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) Philippines. In May 2010, the NAST general assembly of academicians and National Scientists elected her National Scientist and endorsed to President GM Arroyo the conferment of the award. Of the current 61 members of the NAST, only 14 bear the exalted rank and title of National Scientist.