

STOCKTONSpeaks!

EUDOSIA JUANITAS

Eudosa Juanitas was a registered nurse, just one medical professional in a family of physicians, pharmacists, and scientists. At first glance, it might appear that Eudosa simply took advantage of the opportunities presented to a woman in a privileged family. However, deeper inspection reveals a woman who has fought against difficult odds to create a life of realized dreams.

In 1911, little Eudosa was born, the seventh of 11 children. She was raised in a bilingual family in the Philippine Islands. Although Visayan is her native tongue, English was the predominant language spoken in her household. As a part of a large family, she had to work very hard to get attention. She constantly felt the opposing positive and negative forces of such a large group. While there were many moments of disagreement and discordance, as with any family, the camaraderie she shared with her siblings is something she has held close to her heart all her life.

While her parents worked very hard to provide for their children, supporting such a large family was not an easy task. Her parents' earnings allowed the family only their basic necessities. Both parents held jobs to support themselves and their children. Eudosa's father was a merchant, and his business demanded so much of his time that he had little time left over. Whatever spare time he did have, however, was spent with his beloved family.

Eudosa's mother was also in business. Though her main occupation was caring for the family, Eudosa's mom would often buy and sell property or rent out property. And like many of the population in their area, she would also work in the sugar and rice mills. Eudosa and her siblings learned from the work ethic modeled by their parents. Eudosa was determined to utilize the same work ethic to make her own dreams a reality.

Education and religion went hand-in-hand for Eudosa. Though

Catholicism was not practiced in her home, it was still present in Eudosa's family life. Her early schooling was at a Catholic institution in the Philippines. Where she completed grammar school. Eudosa then went on to attend high school at St. Mary's Church. Graduation from high school was supposed to be the end of her schooling in the Philippines; Eudosa's parents could no longer afford to pay tuition for her to continue her education. In the Philippine culture of the times, men took precedence in receiving finances for schooling beyond high school. Thus, Eudosa had to take the back seat to her brothers' educational interests. In fact, her brothers went on to pursue higher education, eventually embarking on careers in the professions. One younger brother was on the team of chemical scientists that developed dishwashing detergent.

However disappointing it was to know that her parents could not pay for her further education, Eudosa was not discouraged. She had career goals and was determined not to have any setbacks, which would hinder her efforts. She knew she would get more education somehow, some day.

And, just as she dreamed, she got a jumpstart on her career path soon after graduating from high school. Eudosa's brother called, telling her of an opening for a student nurse at St. Paul's Hospital in Manila. Eudosa was immediately thrilled at the prospects of moving forward toward her career goal. She knew she must step into adulthood and that it was now her responsibility to provide for her own livelihood. The thought of having her own career was exciting, and Eudosa thrived on the thought of achievement.

She was excited to enroll in the nursing program and to start a profession of helping others. At St. Paul's nursing school, she trained to be a midwife and a public health nurse. She learned much in the three-year program, gaining invaluable experience working with others. Eudosa earned a license in midwifery, which proved to be very important later on in life.

Eudosa's career as a nurse took her all over the Philippines and eventually to the United States. She was granted entry into the United States because of her fluency in English and her valuable experience as a nurse and midwife.

When Eudisia came to the U.S. in 1936, she moved directly to Stockton, California. Her first few years in the country were not easy. The U.S. economy was still struggling with the Great Depression and war was on the horizon in Asia and Europe. Moreover, federal law at the time barred Filipinos from obtaining American citizenship. Without naturalization, Eudisia could not get a job as a nurse. She had to settle for a position in the admissions department of a hospital.

Finally, in 1942, the ban on naturalization was lifted. Immediately, Eudisia filed for her citizenship papers and soon thereafter became an American citizen. After her brief stint in hospital administration, Eudisia was finally able to utilize her training and skills as a nurse. She found the field of psychiatric medicine a compelling interest and became a psychiatric nurse. Because she was able to form personal relationships with many of her patients, Eudisia found this work particularly rewarding.

Eudisia feels that she had become an adult before she came to America. However, she recognizes that this country has helped her grow in many different ways. Career ambitions have had the greatest influence on her life. But more important, the United States has given Eudisia the opportunity to reach her ultimate goal—providing a better life for her children. Just as she followed her own dream, Eudisia also wanted to make sure that her family has the means, through her, to follow theirs.

Eudisia's perceptions about her life have changed over time. Looking back on her own life, she contends that advice often is either ignored or considered irrelevant. Eudisia postulates that a person at a young age knows very little and foolishly turns away from advice. However, as a person grows older, he or she learns to derive greater meaning from life experiences and becomes open to advice—ironically, at a time when circumstances might render the advice no longer useful.

Eudisia has never felt pressured to conform to what her parents wanted

for her life. Her parents taught her to follow her own path toward adulthood. Eudosia has many happy memories about growing up in such a large family, but what she cherishes most is the guidance and modeling she received from her parents. Her experiences with them and with her siblings have created the background for her own place in time and her unique story. Eudosia will always be thankful for the part they played in letting her follow her dreams.

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Ethnic Group: Filipino
Generation: Elder

