

STOCKTONSpeaks!

P. FILOMENA HUFANA

Football games, pep rallies, basketball games, dances...these are the memories that Filomena Juanitas Hufana cherishes most about her past. In a household with seven children, there was always *something* going on. Attending cultural events, along with high school activities, was a significant part of life for Filomena, and it is something that she still treasures today.

The life that Filomena enjoyed growing up was very different from that experienced by her parents. Her father emigrated to Hawaii from the Philippines in 1913. Three more years would pass before he would leave Hawaii for the United States mainland, eventually arriving in Stockton, California. In 1936, her mother left her home in the Philippines to sail across the ocean to her final destination in Stockton. The twenty-year time difference between their migration periods is typical, since few women were a part of the early Filipino immigration to the United States from 1900 to 1930. Often, families could afford to pay for only one member—usually a male—to become established in the United States, with the hope that, one day, others could follow.

Filipino immigrants typically worked in agriculture when they arrived in the United States. Agricultural labor was very intense and demanding, and her parents had the traits required to do that kind of work successfully. But it was those same traits—perseverance and a willingness to work hard—that allowed them to realize their goal of getting an education and moving to another line of work.

Filomena's father eventually carved out a new career as a hotel owner. Her mother, who had overcome obstacles while in the Philippines to become a trained nurse, was able to find employment in Stockton at a local hospital, initially as an admissions clerk and eventually as a registered nurse.

Imbued by her parents with a spirit of perseverance and dedication, Filomena, as well as her two sisters, followed their mother's footsteps into the field of nursing. With her parents as role models, Filomena has been inspired to succeed in her own profession. Growing up was very fun and exciting time for Filomena. Though her parents were strict in many ways, they also gave her the freedom to make her own choices and to participate in many different activities. She quickly learned how to prioritize her life so that there would be time for fun and relaxation—but only after her work was completed. For Filomena, this is a very desirable skill that applies to all areas of life.

Filomena was raised in a very proud Filipino household. She was taught to be proud of her heritage and to keep it close to her always. She and her family often attended Filipino cultural events, including Stockton's annual Barrio Fiesta which celebrates the arts, dance, music and foods of the Philippines. With her parents leading the way, she learned the importance of keeping traditions alive so that the next generation would be aware of their cultural heritage.

Today, she still participates in cultural events but now *she* is the parent teaching her children the same thing that she was taught:

"Be proud of your heritage and keep your values intact." For Filomena Hufana, these are words to live by.

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Generation: Middle