

## Elvira Geluz Ilano-Colmenar, MD (1930 – 2021)

*Manuel Tomas I. Colmenar, MD*

A fighter through and through, my mother Elvie passed away at the age of 90 in St. Luke's, Quezon City due to cancer. During her last days in the hospital, with nurses and attendings rushing back and forth her room with various equipment, she would often marvel at how medicine has advanced since her younger years. "Iba na talaga ngayon...", she would say, followed by a pained chuckle and a faraway look in her eyes. While times have certainly changed and continue to do so, this did not hinder my mom from being the best doctor she could be.

Born in Imus, Cavite, Elvie was the youngest daughter in a family of eight children. Her father passed when she was just a toddler, so they were raised single-handedly by her mother since then. She was known as 'Tia Elvie' to her nieces and nephews, whom she nurtured and cared for dearly. She finished Medicine at the University of Santo Tomas in 1954, and beauty and brains that she was, was also a candidate for Miss Medicine in that year. She then pursued her residency in Otolaryngology at King's County Hospital, Brooklyn New York in 1960. She married the love of her life, Manolo Colmenar in 1964.

Dr. Colmenar established her practice in St. Luke's, where she joined the staff of the EENT Department at Cathedral Heights, Quezon City and was subsequently appointed the first Chairperson of our very own



ENT-HNS Department in 1987. She worked very hard to establish an accredited residency training program, all while serving as a beacon and guide to our residents and staff. Influenced by her service, my brother Loy and I followed in her footsteps, pursuing our own careers in Dentistry and Medicine later on. She was also a source of inspiration to several of her nieces who later became established physicians in their own fields of specialty, as well as two of her grandchildren who are also pursuing Dentistry and Medicine.

Mom was known for her 30-minute cold knife tonsillectomies, but one thing she would always emphasize was the importance of patient safety over speed. A natural peacemaker, she also served in the hospital ethics committee, where she mediated in settling cases between warring physicians, hospital staff, and patients. This value of hers would also be evident in our clan, as we would always approach her first during times of family crisis. After retirement, she continued her practice at home, mostly for free, until she could no longer do so.

While it broke our hearts to see her go, my mom lived a beautiful and fulfilling life. She will always be remembered as a steadfast doctor, an inspiring mentor, a doting wife, mother, and grandmother, and one of the strongest and most generous women we will ever have the pleasure of knowing. May she rest in peace in the hands of our Lord.