

## Jose F. Abaño, MD (1940-2021)

Joel Anthony G. Abaño, MD

### A Tribute to the Father of Hearing Care in the Philippines

“Please do a good job, let’s continue our mission, and God will take care of us” are some of the words that he has engraved in the hearts of those he has met. He was a mentor to everyone he encountered, known for giving the best words-to-live-by. He was always ready to share his time and his knowledge, some of which were his best qualities.

It was a great honor for everyone to be around Dr. Jose Abano, the Father of Hearing Care in the Philippines. Generous, kind, humble, witty, and wise are just some of the descriptions his family and friends shared about him. He was someone that everyone loved to be around at parties, at home, and even at his workplace. With his broad knowledge born out of years of experience, he left everyone in awe of who he is today. His character was founded on his mission for the hearing-impaired, making him extremely memorable to many.

His reputable knowledge and skills also started from his prestigious experience. He graduated from the University of Santo Tomas College of Medicine and Surgery in 1965. He then took his Otolaryngology Residency Training at the Department of Otolaryngology, Long Island Jewish Medical Center in New York from 1969 to 1973. This is where he saw how advanced the technology was abroad and wanted to bring this to his home country. As a visionary, together with his wife, Mrs. Mabel Abaño, they wanted to serve the hearing-impaired population in the most professional way possible. Soon, this became the reason he was awarded the title of the Father of Hearing Care in the Philippines.

In 1976, Manila Hearing Aid was established—his pride and joy. The first clinic at Quezon Boulevard was a facility for ear and hearing diagnostics, as well as equipment calibration. Over more than 45 years, the humble clinic has multiplied to different areas nationwide to help more and more hearing-impaired Filipinos. Dr. Jose Abaño’s mission has continuously been passed on not only to his children but also to his employees. He was a mentor from whom one would learn great things in a conversation, as he shared his inexplicable wit that made up his interesting storytelling. Not only was he loved for this trait as a mentor,



but it came along with his modesty as an individual, regardless of how accomplished he was.

Outside all his career achievements, he was actually a magician. Why a magician? He would joke that if he wasn’t a doctor, he would be one. Jokes like this were very endearing to our family and friends. He said this because it was like magic that he was able to marry someone like Mommy Mabel Abaño, the love of his life. Little did he know, he really was a magician, someone who brings magic to people’s lives. In parties, he was very accommodating where he would share his plate of *jamon* and select wine sharing his humor around. He made sure everyone was served and would engage himself in conversations to make people feel included. His presence was sometimes quiet

but exuded so much joy and energy. He was a protective family-man, being proud of all his children, and doing simple wholesome acts like locking the doors at his home to ensure the safety of his family. As a husband, when he and Mommy Mabel were far away from each other due to travel, there was not any day that would go by where they would not check on each other, a love that was pure and whole. It was truly an honor to have Dr. Jose Abaño, Dad, friend, husband, in our lives.

In his final months, something never changed, he was still deeply loved. His nurses were very fond of him, they loved taking care of him because of his endearing presence. During the last weeks when he was already unable to communicate, he would make sure to make his children feel that our presence was acknowledged, with the simple raising of his eyebrows. It was a simple gesture, but it still showed that he was a fighter. He endured all the pain and kept fighting. In the end, it is a supposition that he loved mommy so much that he needed to go with her and go back to our Creator.

All his life, he was well-loved as a husband, father, friend, relative, and founder of his great mission – his light always has and always will live in the hearts of those who were served by his mission and are still being served by it. It is safe to say, his legacy will live forever.