



APBUHAY
AN
TRABAHAN

GMA
turns
60

By GENALYN D. KABILING

Happy 60th Birthday President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo!



Bayani Ka Gurong Pilipino,
Ang PPSTA, Kumakalinga Sa Iyo!

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If she isn't sitting in Malacanang today, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo could have been driving a public school bus or teaching in school.

Although she is the daughter of a president, Arroyo did not plan on becoming a politician. She would rather follow the footsteps of her father.

The late President Diosdado Macapagal, known as the poor boy from Lubao, wanted his children to become entrepreneurs so they could have stable, comfortable lives. Like his daughter she is, Gloria followed her father's advice, studied economics and eventually graduated from school.

Soon after, Arroyo realized she wanted different goals in life. She wanted to become a pilot, and even a professional working for the government. To realize her ambitions, she went to obtain a Doctorate Degree in Economics from the University of the Philippines.

Armed with an admirable education background and a Macapagal pedigree, Arroyo served as an Economics professor in prestigious schools and later served as a public school teacher.

She may have not flown an airplane, but she has steered the Philippines out of economic crisis many thanks to her intelligence and hard work. With her father as role model for president, she has made the economy the focus of her presidency.

Turning 60 years old today, President Arroyo has more reasons to celebrate than most. As a discount privileges as a senior citizen. After suffering many memorable lows early in her presidency, Arroyo, a petite grandmother dressed in chic business suits, has finally placed the country on a higher growth path.

As she celebrates her 60th birthday, here are 60 things you must know about her life and times with the short fuse.

Mahal naming
Pangulong

GLORIA
MACAPAGAL-
ARROYO

Maligayang
Ika-60
Kaarawan!

Kasama mo kami
sa inyong pangarap
ng isang mas maunlad
na Pilipinas!

RPN kasama
mo

1. Enjoys durian fruit for merienda.
2. Knows Philippine geography like the palm of her hands.
3. Draws inspiration from former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher during the struggle for economic reforms.
4. Married for 38 years to lawyer Jose Miguel Arroyo, her teenage friend.
5. Has four grandchildren.
6. Speaks Spanish and fluent in several dialects including Ilokano, Kapangpangan and Bisaya.
7. Hears mass everyday usually at the St. Joseph's Chapel in the Palace.
8. Reads the Bible everyday.
9. Has a small altar with its own kneeler in her bedroom.
10. Observes fasting during Lent.
11. A fan of Professor Michael Porter of Harvard Business School, a leader in competitive strategy and international competitiveness; sought his advice during her recent visit in Davos, Switzerland.
12. Baguio City is her choice destination during Christmas holiday and New Year.
13. Her favorite color is Marian blue.
14. Spent her childhood life in Lubao, Pampanga with her two older siblings and her father's first marriage.
15. Prompted by jealousy of her new baby brother, a four-year-old Gloria, she was with her maternal grandmother, Doña Evangelina, in Iligan City. She stayed there for three years and then shuttled between Mindanao and Manila until her father's second marriage.
16. A municipality in Oriental Mindoro was named after 10-year-old Gloria.
17. At 14, she moved with her family into Malacanang when her father became president. She spent four of her teenage years living in the Palace.
18. Annoyed by queries related to politics from the media.
19. First President to return to Malacanang as a former resident.
20. First Philippine President to preside over a summit meeting of the United Nations Security Council and the first woman head of state to do so.
21. Graduated valedictorian of her high school class at Assumption College, a Catholic school, magna cum laude at Assumption College in Makati.
22. Obtained a degree in Foreign Service from Georgetown University and a friend and college classmate of former US President Bill Clinton in the 1970s.
23. Enjoys scuba diving.
24. Pursued a Master's Degree in Economics from the Ateneo de Manila University in 1978 and a Doctorate Degree in Economics from the University of the Philippines in 1985.
25. From 1977 to 1987, she held teaching positions in different schools including the University of the Philippines and the Ateneo De Manila University.
26. Government spending was the topic of her doctoral thesis.
27. Not "physically vain." "I like simplicity."
28. Favorite Carpenters tune is "I have you."
29. Recruited by then President Aquino to become assistant secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry in 1987.
30. Elected into the Senate in 1992 and was reelected in 1995, topping the polls with nearly 16 million votes.
31. A strong legislative reformer, authoring over 55 laws on economic development including the Anti-Sexual Harassment Law, the Indigenous People's Rights Act and the Export Development Act and was named outstanding Senator several times.
32. Became the country's first female vice president in 1998 with a total of almost 13 million votes.
33. Catastrophed to the presidency in 2001 after a military-backed power struggle ousted former president Joseph Estrada because of plunder allegations.
34. Elected to a six-year term in 2004 and championed a tough economic recovery agenda.
35. Lives under a principle she learned from her father: "Do what is right and God will take care of the rest."