

# Markham Filipino Community Commemorates Rizal's 126th Martyrdom

By Nandy F. Diaz

As Filipinos everywhere commemorated Rizal's Martyrdom on Dec. 30th, so did the Filipino community in Markham. The locals gathered at the Jose Rizal Monument in Markham, Ontario, to celebrate the occasion for the 4th year in a row since the famous landmark was unveiled in 2019.

The Philippine national Hero was honored with the usual wreath offering, officiated by Yoly Ladines and Ramon Ombao, past Co-Chairs of the MFFC (Markham Federation of Filipino Canadians), which organized the event. The designer and creator of the Monument, Sculptor Mogi Mogado, in his brief remarks, spoke of the significance of the Martyrdom commemoration, and how remarkable that it continues to be celebrated at the Markham Rizal Monument.

"We in Markham started the traditions of celebrating Filipino heritage and culture in Canada. Through the initiatives of the late Councilor Alex Chiu and MFFC, we held the first Independence Day flagraising events here, with programs and folk dancing presentation and picnics, including the first Rizal birth and martyrdom commemorations, in the early 80s," said Mogado.

"It is significant because, in addition, our Markham Filipino community aspired to create the first Filipino institutions here, and we have done that- the first Rizal Avenue, the first Filipino community center, and the first full statue Rizal Monument, among our major accomplishments. Up to this day, we are still celebrating on our own, by ourselves, with guests or without them. It was completely a Markham Filipino community initiative when we started, it still is to this day. What is remarkable is that now our celebrations have been copied by many others, all over Canada," he added.

Along with commemorating Rizal's martyrdom, it was also an occasion to



***The core group of Markham Filipinos have been celebrating Rizal events since the early 80s, the first in Canada, a heritage project started by the late Councilor Alex Chiu.***

memorialize important MFFC personalities who have shared its early days but have passed on, including past Founding Directors Alex Chiu, Geny Toribio, Ros Bustamante, Zen Edralin, and others.\*\*\*\*