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Beyond NUMBERS

2025 ISSUE NO. 003 | SPECIAL ISSUE

#AOCWinStories:
a **WOMAN** *of* **PURPOSE**



Celebrating Women of Purpose: A Special Issue of Beyond Numbers

In celebration of Women’s Month, we proudly present this special issue of Beyond Numbers, dedicated to honoring the remarkable women within the AOC community.

This issue highlights inspiring women who embody purpose – individuals whose dedication, resilience, and achievements have made a meaningful impact in both their personal and professional lives.



With women comprising **80%** of our firm, each one carries a unique story – narratives of strength, perseverance, and unwavering commitment. Among these extraordinary individuals is our Founding Partner and CEO, **Marycris S. Oplas** – a true embodiment of a woman of purpose. From starting her journey as a staff member to becoming a distinguished leader with a global presence, her path reflects courage, vision, and the determination to break boundaries. Her inspiring journey continues to motivate the women of AOC to pursue excellence and embrace their own paths with confidence.

As you explore the pages of this special edition, we invite you to celebrate the powerful stories of the women who shape our firm’s success – women who uplift, lead, and make a lasting impact every day.

Here’s to the women of purpose who continue to inspire us all.



A WOMAN OF PURPOSE:

GLESIE R. MARTINEZ

Senior Partner



As a Senior Partner at Alas Oplas & Co., CPAs, her journey from an Associate to Senior Partner is truly inspiring. Starting with audit work at the Makati Office, she has risen to lead one of the firm's highest revenue-generating branches and supervise new branches across the Philippines. Despite resigning from AOC in more than one occasion, her unwavering dedication to the firm and her passion for the practice have always drawn her back, driven by her commitment to bring glory to Alas Oplas & Co., CPAs.

Throughout her career, Glesie has overcome several challenges. One notable challenge was handling a first-time client who had previously worked with one of the Big Four accounting firms. This experience was pivotal in her development, as it required her to quickly adapt and deliver high-quality service despite having very little information about the engagement. This situation helped her become tougher and always ready to tackle any new engagement with confidence and resilience.

Another significant milestone in her career was the challenging journey of setting up a new branch in Cavite. Starting with nothing, she faced years of battling negative balances and very few engagements. However, through her perseverance and leadership, the Cavite branch has become the biggest in terms of revenue and is now an employer of choice across Southern Luzon. Glesie's ability to navigate such demanding circumstances has significantly contributed to her success and leadership within the firm.

As Glesie herself says, "everyone should strive to be a person of value." This quote encapsulates her belief in the potential of every individual to achieve remarkable success.

By: **Jenny C. Catapang,**
Managing Director, Human Resource



A WOMAN OF PURPOSE:

LORAIN C. SAN PEDRO-SOTTO

Partner, Makati and Cabanatuan Branch



In the bustling world of statutory audit, where numbers and deadlines often overshadow personal stories, Loraine San Pedro-Sotto stands out as a beacon of resilience and purpose. Her journey from an Associate Auditor to the head of the Audit and Assurance Team in both Makati and Cabanatuan offices is a testament to her unwavering dedication and strength.

Loraine began her career at AOC as an Associate Auditor, a role that demanded precision, integrity, and a keen eye for detail. Her commitment to excellence quickly caught the attention of her superiors, and she was soon entrusted with more significant responsibilities. Her rise through the ranks was not just a result

of her professional skills but also her ability to remain calm and composed in the face of adversity.

Throughout her over ten-year career, Loraine faced numerous hardships. While on secondment abroad, she received the devastating news of her mother's passing. The pain of losing a loved one while being miles away from home was immense, yet Loraine managed to channel her grief into her work, honoring her mother's memory through her dedication.

The pandemic brought another wave of sorrow as she lost her then-boyfriend. The isolation and uncertainty of the times could have easily overwhelmed her, but Loraine's resilience shone through. She continued to lead her team with grace, providing support and stability to those around her.

Despite the challenges, Loraine's perseverance was rewarded. She found joy and solace in her family, blessed with two adorable daughters and an amazing husband. Her personal life flourished alongside her professional achievements, creating a balance that many strive for but few achieve.



A WOMAN OF PURPOSE:

LORAIN C. SAN PEDRO-SOTTO

Partner, Makati and Cabanatuan Branch

continuation

Today, Loraine heads the Audit and Assurance Team in both Makati and Cabanatuan offices, a role that allows her to mentor and inspire others. Her story is not just about professional success but about the strength of character and the power of purpose. She embodies the idea that true leadership is not just about guiding others but also about overcoming personal trials with grace and determination.

Lorraine's journey is a powerful reminder that even in the face of life's toughest challenges, one can find purpose and emerge stronger. Her story inspires us all to remain resilient, compassionate, and dedicated to our goals, no matter the obstacles we encounter.

By: **Jenny C. Catapang,**
Managing Director, Human Resource



A WOMAN OF PURPOSE:

MEG D. PALOYO

Partner In Charge, Bulacan Branch



Mary Grace Paloyo, also known as Meg Paloyo, is a remarkable figure at Alas Oplas & Co., CPAs. Starting her journey as a Junior Accountant in 2014, she has risen to the position of Partner at the Bulacan Branch. Her leadership has transformed a small outsourcing team into one of the firm's most successful branches, now comprising three subunits that serve both local and international clients.

Aside from running her own branch, which now comprises close to 80 personnel, Meg is a dedicated mother of two adorable children, whom she ably looks after with the support of her responsible husband. Despite the challenges she faces as a mother, she remains highly positive, believing that God will give her the strength she needs.

Her transition from the banking industry to an accounting firm was made even more inspiring when her former boss accepted a call for a greater purpose outside the practice, leaving her with no option but to lead the team. This situation truly highlights her dedication and commitment to her work, as well as her ability to turn challenges into opportunities for growth. Meg's achievements and her role in expanding the firm's services make her a true woman of purpose. Her ability to foster an environment of support and well-being is evident in the effectiveness and success of her team, which now serves both local and international clients.

By: **Jenny C. Catapang,**
Managing Director, Human Resource



A WOMAN OF PURPOSE:

JENNY C. CATAPANG

Managing Director, Human Resource



I want to take a moment to express my deep admiration and gratitude for Ms. Jenny Catapang. Though she may be simple and humble, she is truly a woman of purpose, serving beyond her job and giving wholeheartedly to those around her.

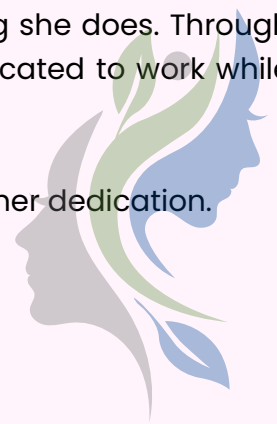
Without her mentorship, I wouldn't have gained the experience I have today. She has pushed me beyond my limits, helping me achieve things I once thought were impossible. Every conversation with her has been a learning experience, even in the most random moments. Her love and dedication extend not just to her family but to the entire AOC community. Whether it's a weekend or a holiday, she always fulfills her responsibilities with unwavering dedication.

I will always remember how she has shown that dedication knows no limits. Regardless of the day, she was always ready to fulfill her responsibilities whenever work required. There were times when we were out in the field with her family by her side. Despite having her own family, she always made sure to be there for her father (whom I also call Tatay because being with her family makes you feel like part of it), especially since her mother and sister were working abroad. She does her best to keep their family connected, showing the same love and commitment to her loved ones as she does in her profession.

Her efforts did not go unnoticed. In a beautiful twist of fate, God made a way to reunite her family. Through her dedication and hard work, she was sent by AOC for training to a location where her mother and sister were living. Not only did she embrace the opportunity, but she also brought her family with her to restore their bond. Distance had separated them for years, and she made it her mission to bring them back together. This is a testament to how beautifully she balances her roles as a mother, wife, sister, daughter, and HR professional. No matter how busy she is, she remains present for the people she loves while giving her best in everything she does. Through her example, she has shown me that it is possible to be fully dedicated to work while also being fully dedicated to family.

I am truly grateful to have learned from her and to have witnessed her dedication.

By: **Rogielyn Barroga**, *HR Specialist*



A WOMAN OF PURPOSE:

QUEENIE ESTER C. LAZARO

Audit and Assurance, Ortigas Branch



A Heart of Strength and Purpose

Queenie Lazaro's strength isn't just about facing challenges, it's about pushing through them with unwavering determination. A devoted daughter, sister, and friend, she has always put others first, sometimes to the point of being misunderstood. She longs for connection and belonging, navigating life with quiet perseverance. Even in her toughest moments, she remains strong, showing resilience in its purest form.

She was a hardworking and dedicated professional, balancing her career with quiet strength and taking on challenges without hesitation. Before 2024, she was in good

health and worked tirelessly, but everything changed when she was diagnosed with Atrial Tachycardia a condition that causes dangerously fast heartbeats, difficulty breathing, and a high risk of sudden cardiac arrest. Despite this, she never let it hold her back, staying committed to her work.

As an internal auditor at Healthy Options, she managed fieldwork while silently battling her condition. Frequent ER visits made onsite work tough, so the company allowed her to work from home. Her supervisor admired her dedication and even reassured her they'd fight to keep her on a work-from-home setup. But after two months, management decided to end her engagement, requiring an onsite auditor in good health. The decision left her anxious about mounting medical expenses, but she found strength in the unwavering support of her colleagues. Sir Ryan, Sir Kim, Ms. Nica, and Ms. Lili reminded her that at the Ortigas Branch, she was valued far beyond just her job title. As her partner, watching her go through all this made me feel helpless. I couldn't provide everything she needed medically, yet she continued working despite her condition. After witnessing her struggles, it was finally confirmed that the cause of her episodes was myocarditis, making everything even more challenging.



A WOMAN OF PURPOSE:

QUEENIE ESTER C. LAZARO

Audit and Assurance, Ortigas Branch

continuation

On August 30, 2024, during an MRI to confirm myocarditis, she suddenly started vomiting and feeling dizzy. At first, it seemed like minor discomfort, but it quickly escalated into Ventricular Tachycardia—a life-threatening heart rhythm disorder. She was rushed to the emergency room and later admitted to the Cardiac Telemetry Unit, adding even more weight to our financial worries.

I was falling apart, too. I felt the hopelessness, the fear, the doubt. But then I saw her how she refused to give up, how she pushed forward despite everything. Her grit, her strength, it woke something in me. She inspired me to keep going.

She refuses to let her condition define her. Seeing her fight every day has changed me both personally and professionally. At work, I've learned to handle stress with a new perspective, knowing that no challenge compares to what she faces daily. In life, she's shown me that real strength isn't just about surviving hardships, it's about facing them with courage and grace.

Even from a hospital bed, she stays dedicated to her work. Afraid of losing her job, she pushes herself beyond her limits, yet she also finds purpose in sharing her journey with Atrial Tachycardia, helping others understand what it's like to live with the condition. She embraces life fully, proving that obstacles don't have to define one's purpose.

Her story isn't just about survival, it's about living with faith, hope, and determination. Through her, I've learned that resilience isn't just about enduring tough times but rising above them with an unwavering spirit.

Right now, we're preparing for her operation at the Philippine Heart Center, likely in the second quarter of 2025. Please keep us in your prayers. As Matthew 19:26 says, "With God, all things are possible."

By: **Darryl Jamiel Jacob**,
Junior Associate, Ortigas Branch



SOFIA C. ROSAL

Managing Director, Shared Services



Hi, I just want to share the story of my one and only mentor and friend, Ms. Sofia Rosal.

Our journey began in school, where we were part of the same group projects but had minimal interaction. One day, she asked me to join her office as an OJT (On-the-Job Trainee). Initially, I was skeptical—why me? We barely talked. But she saw something in me that I hadn't seen in myself.

During my OJT days, I was incredibly nervous, unsure of what to expect or what to do. But she was there for me, guiding me every step of the way. I'll never forget how she defended me when I made a mistake preparing a deposit slip and was scolded by someone. Her support gave me the confidence that

she wouldn't abandon me and would help me learn and grow.

As my OJT period came to an end, one of her staff asked if I wanted to stay. I confidently said yes, not knowing that she had already vouched for me. It felt like I had hired myself—just kidding!

Over time, I witnessed her strength and ability to address and solve issues. Some staff might have thought she was strict or uncaring, but they were wrong. I saw how she fought for them, cared for them, and loved them. I'm incredibly thankful for everything she taught me. Her patience and guidance have made me confident and proficient in my work.

We've been confidants for almost eight years now, and I'm deeply grateful for everything. I always tell her, "You're our shield, protector, and motivator whenever we face downfalls or discouragement in life." She has guided me through every problem, struggle, and funding mix-up. Though she may appear strict on the outside, she is very loving deep down.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share and appreciate the people who have influenced us.

By: **Jaraha Masing**, *Shared Services*



A WOMAN OF PURPOSE:

RACQUEL O. VILLARANTE

Managing Director, Business Set Up and Compliance Services



In the fast-paced world of business, few stories shine as brightly as that of Ms. Racquel Villarante (ROV). Her remarkable journey from receptionist to Managing Director of the Business Set Up Compliance team at AOC is a testament to her dedication, resilience, and grace—all while embracing her roles as a loving wife and devoted mother.

ROV began her career at AOC with quiet determination, making a lasting impression with her warmth, keen attention to detail, and natural ability to connect with people. Recognizing her potential, Chairman and Founding Partner Donnies Alas became her mentor, guiding her through various roles in finance, administration, and human resources. Her adaptability and strong work ethic allowed her to thrive, managing complex responsibilities with patience and poise.

Her journey to leadership was not just about professional growth—it was about embracing challenges with humility and perseverance. Now, as Managing Director, she plays a pivotal role in ensuring compliance, fostering client relationships, and cultivating a culture of excellence. Despite her demanding career, ROV remains deeply committed to her family, skillfully balancing work and personal life with warmth and care.

Through her kindness, dedication, and ability to uplift those around her, ROV has become an inspiration to many. She proves that true leadership is not just about success but about compassion, integrity, and the courage to keep growing. With the right support and unwavering determination, she continues to pave the way for future generations of women leaders at AOC and beyond.

By: **Mary Ann A. Duguran,**
Managing Director, Corporate Communication





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Beyond Numbers by:

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

We welcome your comments and feedback.

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Website: www.alaso plascpas.com

Beyond Numbers is a periodic e-newsletter of Alas Oplas & Co., CPAs, which underscores its people, its services, and the events, occasions, and activities it conducts and participates in. The e-newsletter aims to reflect the Firm's culture, commitments, values, and practices and is solely directed for communication purposes.

