

Sports

Top U of M rugby player Andutan is a pride of Filipinos in Michigan

He hopes to play for PHL rugby team in the future

Aiken Angelo Andutan, who is "Kenny" to his friends and family, is living the American dream. An incoming senior majoring in mechanical engineering, Kenny has been a member of the University of Michigan Rugby by Football Club (UMRFC) since he was a freshman.

Recently, he was elected team captain of the university rugby team. He was once referred to as the "Philippine dream" by his fellow Filipino teammate, Michael Manzano.

Kenny, his siblings and mother, Attorney Maria Rita Reyes-Stuby, lived in Grand Rapids, Michigan when he was still a shy six-year-old. He attended different schools in Grand Rapids and graduated from the Grandville High School. He took an interest in rugby as a freshman at Grandville HS, learned to love it and tried out at the University of Michigan (U of M) when he was a freshman.

Starting as a full back, a position he played in high school (he weighed 150 pounds and was fairly small for a standard player), Kenny developed mass and soon joined the forwards, gradually earning the title as the "speedy flanker."



Kenny Andutan is shown running with ball during a recent match held at U of M.

As a junior in 2012, he was chosen as the "November Player of the Month" of UMRFC.

Kenny has "been a consistent source of inspiration for his teammates. Whether it's crushing an opposing forward or making a 50-meter run, Aiken

is always fun to watch on the pitch."

He continues to be a "Filipino pride," having been chosen one of only six U of M Rugby players who made it to the "Big Ten Universities" (BTU) all-conference teams - a special team composed of rugby players chosen from the top 10 universities in the mid-west that have rugby teams. These universities include University of Indiana, University of Wisconsin and Ohio State University.

Kenny was chosen member of the "all BTU- 2nd Team." His team will play against other university teams all over the country.

The BTU will take an all-conference team to Philadelphia and play an All-Atlantic Coast Rugby League team during the Collegiate Rugby Championship next month (June).

He hopes to be invited in the future to play for the Philippine National Rugby team known as "The Volcanoes."



U.S. SENATE HEARING. Willie Dechavez (right), commissioner of the Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission (MAPAAC), is shown in photo with Filipino World War II veteran Celestino Almeda (left, with cap) while they were listening to the discussion during a US Senate hearing on immigration reforms in the Hart building in Washington, D.C. Dechavez visited the nation's capital last May 9 to join the celebration of Asian Heritage Month at the White House.

State gov't encouraging...

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have been doing for the State of Michigan," he said.

He noted that hundreds of thousands of Michiganders are Asian Americans.

The governor said that the state government continues to push hard its program to create jobs for Michiganders and generate opportunities that enable small businesses to grow.

Snyder disclosed some projects that are expected to generate jobs. These include, he said, a plan of Consumer Energy to spend \$7 billion for projects in the next five years.

Snyder's speech was followed by the keynote address of White House official Kiran Ahuja, who came all the way from Washington, DC, to join the celebration.

A second-generation Indian American, Ahuja talked about the racial "challenges" she had faced while she was growing up in the Deep South. "As a child, you don't want to feel different," she said.

She said she had learned to love her Indian heritage when, at age 24, she went to India and immersed herself in the culture in which her parents had grown.

A lawyer, Ahuja said that her appointment as executive director of WHIAAPI is "a tremendous honor for me." She said that as one of the officials involved in the formulation of policies, she realizes that there is much "we need to learn" about the challenges facing AAPIs.

"It is important that we appreciate the growing diversity and demographics" of AAPIs," she emphasized.

She said that among the programs being undertaken by her office is about the plight of Filipino World War II veterans. She noted that the aging Filipino soldiers who fought side by side with the Americans during World War II "just

want their services to be recognized" by the US government.

For serving as keynote speaker, Ahuja received a certificate of appreciation from MAPAAC Chairperson Sook Wilkinson.

In her opening remarks, Wilkinson also cited the importance of celebrating Asian American Heritage Month.

She said, "Today, we're here to honor, treasure and celebrate that heritage. We're here to pay tribute to the generations of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders before us."

She thanked the MAPAAC commissioners for their efforts at helping MAPAAC fulfill its mandate.

The two Filipino MAPAAC commissioners are Dr. Ernie Mac and Willie Dechavez. Both attended the celebration.

During a reception that followed the program, Wilkinson gave "a special thank you" to Dechavez for a job well done. For the last three years, Dechavez has chaired the MAPAAC committee that made preparations for the celebration of the Asian American Heritage Month.

Wilkinson also thanked Filipino-American girl Antoinette Joseph for singing the US National Anthem at the start of the program. She likewise thanked a group of Filipino ladies, who are members of the West Michigan Filipino-American Association, for performing a Philippine folk dance ("Itik-itik") that entertained the guests.

Wilkinson acknowledged the presence of representatives of the program sponsors, who included Iqbal Singh of DTE Energy and Mamatha Chamarthi of CMS Energy.

The master of ceremonies was Fox 4 News reporter Roop Raj.

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