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I wish to reminisce about “you”, the Manila Bay of my past and present.

My parents used to bring us to Luneta Park, the closest park to the homes of most Manilans. Most big political, religious, and entertainment events happened in this area by your Bay. About five years old then, during the Red Cross Final Draw of winners, Rosa Rosal, the Philippine Red Cross Lady (according to my mother), noticed me sitting on the front row. She requested me to draw with her one of the final winners and that was my first not so clear memory of a big happening at the Luneta Park, very near the Quirino Grandstand. Our family never went to any of the political rallies held in the area, which we thought would be very risky because of the crowd could become unruly. One thing that we did almost every weekend or Sunday was: watching Manila Bay’s beautiful sunset and the ships passing or docked at your ports.

Manila Bay waters, to my mind during those days were relatively clean and safe; my parents though never allowed us to join the others swimming in the area but it was fun enough to wade our feet in the shoreline waters. I remember, we also used to buy blue mussels or “tahong” by the Paranaque area and there were no fears then of what would be known or called as “Red Tide”.

My early experiences as a Marine Scientist started at Manila Bay where I sampled the *Gracilaria* in the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources farm in the vicinity of Parañaque coastal waters to study their reproductive biology. National Scientist Gavino C. Trono, Jr., my thesis adviser, years after I finished my MS, reported the presence of the new species *Gracilariopsis manilaensis* which I simply called this in my thesis as *Gracilaria* sp., after analyzing that it could be a new species.

A good number of Filipinos have known and feared the phenomenon referred commonly as the “Red Tide”. This started with the toxic algal blooms that incurred health and economic problems particularly in the Samar-Leyte-Sorsogon areas in 1983. Bigger national attention was drawn and covered the headlines for weeks and months in 1987 when your coastal areas had the first reported cases and deaths from Paralytic Shellfish Poisonings (PSP) from the same causative organism. Monitoring and management measures were initiated by BFAR and research undertaken particularly by the University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute (UPMSI). The technical and non-technical publications from several interdisciplinary “Red Tide” Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) research that we did in Manila Bay and other areas in the country and the trips that we had to undertake field sampling and communicating with the locals and the public interest on red tide or HAB, somehow made me earn the moniker “red tide lady of the Philippines”.

My colleagues in Japan and a former student, Garry Benico even named an HAB organism, *Karlodinium azanzae* Benico et. al, for the novel species first collected in Manila Bay in 2019. What a great honor indeed.

At present, I hope we could continue supporting you, “my bay” with the project that we are undertaking with several NGOs, primarily OCEANA and national government agencies on the development of new management tools for your transformation considering the pillars of sustainability, namely: social, economic and environmental. The “Philippine Coast and Ocean Sustainability and Transformation” Project (Phil COAST) which is part of the Global Belmont COAST card project, is focusing on Manila Bay and I have been visiting you more often particularly now that the travel restrictions of the pandemic have been lifted.

My Manila Bay has been a significant part of my life. And I am proud to tell the world:
LOVE YOU MANILA BAY.