

The mother of Modern Arnis

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Before the martial law was proclaimed in September 1972, various foreign martial arts were making a major ingress to the archipelago. Japanese Karate, Korean Tae Kwon Do, Chinese Kung FU, to name a few. Capturing the hearts of many Filipino Martial Arts practitioners. Many soon noticed that its own Martial Art, its Indigenous Filipino Martial Art, Arnis, was already taking a backseat in the Martial Arts Scene. Many were about to give up, others preferred to shut up. But not Grandmaster Remy Presas or the Professor, as others would call him.

Grandmaster Remy Presas revolutionized the thought of all the Arnis Masters nationwide. He asserted that nothing else should dominate the Filipino hearts except anything Filipino as well.

And according to the Professor, Arnis is not just one of them. It is the ONE!



Soon enough, he was traveling all over the world, promoting the Filipino Art of Stick Fighting. From country to country. State to state. Island to island. Remy Presas eventually became a household name. And Modern Arnis, became the yardstick of all Arnis system.

Many insisted that perhaps, if he still lives, he would still be doing the same thing. After all, Arnis was his life; it was all he ever cared for. The name Remy Presas is already synonymous to Arnis. His great success is one for the books.

But certainly, just as everyone adores him, many would still insist that, there must somebody responsible for his uphill climb. After all, no man is an island No man was, no man will ever be. And like they say behind every success of a man, is a woman. And the Professor, undoubtedly, is no exception to the rule.

Before he reunite with God on August 28, 2001 in Canada. He was extremely ill. He was in great pain! During those times, he was not getting any medications, and perhaps he never needed to. He was calling out one name. Just one name. "Inday". The only thing he ever needed is to see her. The woman he first fell in love with. The woman he married. The one whose dreams he chased were all dedicated to. The one who shaped him up. The one who helped him got there. The one who was left behind. The one who suffered. But remained silent, only to come out in oblivion, in his death. So she could finish what together, they have started. That one is the brain, the inspiration. The Mother of Modern Arnis Mrs. Rosemary Presas!

Born in December 27, 1939, in the peaceful city of Bacolod, Negros Occidental, the sugar capital of the archipelago, Inday was Ms. Rosemary Lopez Pascual.

Rosemary was an instant hit in younger years being constantly drafted as a basketball team muse, in every part of the island. Wherever she goes, so go the boys.

In West Negros High School at 16, she was a famous band majorette, what with her stunning beauty and excellent ability to twirl the baton with either her left or right hand, or both at a time. Surely, every man would get captivated. That's why when Remy Presas first saw her, he had a friend introduced them to each other. From then on, Remy became the self-appointed personal bodyguard of Rosemary. Remy was working as a gym instructor aside from practicing judo, jujitsu, karate and bodybuilding. They would soon tie the knot in July 27, 1961. Rosemary was 18 then.

Rosemary went on to finish her studies, Bachelor of Science in Education, major in High School Education and History, Bachelor of Arts major in Political Science and a Master of Arts in Guidance Counseling. Remy started training Arnis with his father and uncle. It was during their first year that they started to shape up a dream of making it big in the martial arts business. But he did not know how to get started.

And just as every Filipino mother is a light to every home, Rosemary taught Remy how to get started, she showed him the way. After Remy returned from series of trips to other islands expanding his Arnis repertoire from renowned masters that time, Rosemary started her thing.

Rosemary made innovations in every training pattern he amassed. She drafted a module of training that is to become the present generation' widely accepted syllabus. Every time he learns something, she would change it. In fact, everything he learned, she modified it. From two sticks to single stick, the short stick, to the long and short combination, to the empty hand drills. Rosemary would give those names, every technique, every step and every pattern. From one strike to another, one step to the next, the blocks, the counters. Everything! She insisted that the old ways must be changed. In order to encourage more practitioners, more people to get involved with the then already dying art, she created for him to teach and propagate Modern Arnis! The Professor took it from there. And he took it all the way to the top! Now the whole world knows, the Professor is Modern Arnis. And Modern Arnis is the Professor!

But his contemporaries here would insist that even at the beginning, the Professor was never at a loss for praises for his wife! The way she moved him. The manner she supported him. The Filipino Martial Arts community and the Philippine archipelago likewise, acknowledge the contributions made by the "Mother" to the success of the "Professor".

In fact, even the Philippine government, did not fail to acknowledge Mrs. Rosemary Presas for what has become of Modern Arnis.

Little did everyone knew, it was Mrs. Presas, who orchestrated the idea of sending Arnis instructors to Japan to conduct exhibition in the 1978 Osaka International Trade Fair. Mrs. Presas was a very good "broker" having successfully sold the idea of learning Arnis to various Military units, governmental bureaus and private institutions. Among those that responded to her



call are the Composite Military Police training in Camp Aguinaldo, the Philippine Coast Guard in Manila, Military Police in Sangley Point in Cavite, the Philippine Navy – BNS, Mobil Patrol of the Western Police District, DECS (Department of Education, Culture & Sports) seminars in schools nationwide, Castillejos National High School, Central Luzon State University, Ifugao State University, Teachers Camp in Baguio City.

In fact, just recently, PTA (Philippine Tourism Authority) & PIGSSAI (Philippine Indigenous Games & Sports Savers Association, Inc.) has given her the Certificate of Recognition for Valuable Contribution to the Propagation of Modern Arnis. It was given in December 2005, in front of an overflowing crowd at the Rizal Park, witnessed by Arnis Masters, locally and internationally.

Mrs. Rosemary Presas, the Mother of Modern Arnis.