

Theodore M. Carvajal, MD (1976 - 2025)

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A Tribute to My Dear Friend, Dr. Theodore M. Carvajal

It is with great honor that I write this tribute to my colleague and friend, Dr. Theodore “Tedz” M. Carvajal.

There’s an old saying that death is inevitable, that people come and go, but I never imagined having to say goodbye so soon, at the peak of his career and with so much more to give.

Allow me to recount my journey of meeting this remarkable individual and the profound impact he had on my life.

When I joined the ENT HNS Department at the Jose R. Reyes Memorial Medical Center in Manila in October 2008 as a pre-resident, Tedz was my immediate senior. Despite my initial apprehension, he was one of the first to welcome me,

even though his intimidating appearance and voice made me feel uneasy. However, I soon discovered that he possessed a kind and warm spirit, easing my anxiety.

During our residency training, Tedz consistently guided me on the right path, emphasizing the importance of competence and establishing genuine relationships with our patients. He was always reliable, offering support and kindness at a moment’s notice. He would often show me the ropes and teach me to learn from my mistakes and failures. He would often say to me *“Oks lang yan pards!”* and words of encouragement. For this, I am eternally grateful for the opportunity to have met him.

After residency, Tedz began his practice at Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Sta. Mesa, Manila, just minutes from his ancestral home. His clinic, Room 216 in the Medical Arts building, was a legacy, passed down from his father, the late Dr. Tomas Carvajal, a pioneer ENT surgeon in our country. I would sometimes visit him there and our conversations would flow from medical cases to life itself.

Before the pandemic, we often met, assisting in difficult surgeries, borrowing instruments, attending conventions, or simply sharing a couple of bottles of his favorite San Miguel Light, talking about



everything and nothing.

As a friend, Tedz was unwavering in his loyalty, generosity and unshakable commitment. As a colleague, he was a rock, always ready with words of strength and kindness. He was a compassionate physician, dedicated and caring for his patients with unwavering compassion.

During the pandemic, we stayed connected through calls—sometimes exchanging expert opinions, other times just venting about life’s frustrations. I vividly remember a call in 2022 when he shared the heartbreaking news that his mother was dying. I could hear the sadness and frustration in his voice, yet he remained headstrong and optimistic.

Then, in 2023, he called again with more devastating news—his older brother had passed away. There were no words that could ease his pain, only the comfort of friendship in those difficult moments.

As a devoted family man, Tedz was a loving husband to Yen, a doting father to his son and daughter, and an ever-reliable sibling and son. He was always there to support his family.

The last time Tedz and I saw each other was at the PJOHNS Annual Convention in December 2023. Unfortunately, we lost touch early in 2024 due to our busy schedules. Then, in September 2024, I heard the devastating news—Tedz had been battling Sarcomatoid Renal Cell Carcinoma, undergoing multiple surgeries, and the disease was already in its final stage. True to his nature, he kept his struggle private, even from his closest friends and colleagues. We respected his wishes, giving him the space he needed. He spent his final days with his loving family.

Tedz had a rare gift. He could connect with almost everyone he met, leaving a lasting impact on our lives. His presence brought warmth and light, and though he is no longer with us, his kindness, love, and legacy will live on in our hearts.

Rest in peace, my dear friend. You will never be forgotten.