Dr. Juliana C. Pineda, my mother/mentor, is not a mentor in the classroom, but her influence on me is like the onrushing wave of the ocean with a boundless shore. Hers is an influence from birth, more pervasive than palpable and more discernible in spirit than in utterance.

The life of the exceptionally gifted personality that was Juliana C. Pineda\(^1\) was characterized by a constant and unselfish sharing of worldly possessions, wisdom, and spirituality.

**Educator/Scholar/Writer**

Academic records alone will not suffice to prove the brilliance of my mentor in the world of the mind. Throughout her lifetime, she was the educator incarnate. From grade school on, she was always being asked to be a tutor to her classmates in and out of the classroom. Obtaining the highest honors in all subjects was always expected of her. After finishing Grade Seven, she was informed that she was the Valedictorian even before she knew what the word meant.

Nobody was surprised when she graduated as Valedictorian of the Philippine Normal School (PNS) in 1917. She had made a name for herself by passing exams with a perfect score and reading one book a day, including the fine print from which teachers would draw their tricky problems. Even before she obtained her A.B. and B.S.E. degrees from U.P., she was already assigned to teach in Manila High School, the only high school in Manila at the time. It was only three years later that she received the High School Teachers’ Certificate that fully

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\(^1\)The facts and anecdotes narrated in this account were taken from the autobiography of Juliana C. Pineda titled, *My Life and Times*, ([Manila]: Bookman, Inc., 1998).
qualified her to teach in high school.

Fully occupied as she was with her jobs as principal of Emilio Jacinto Elementary School and later, as Senior Supervisor of the Division of City Schools, and in raising her family of three children almost single-handedly as her husband had passed away in the meantime, it was only when she turned 40 that she was able to go back to U.P. As a working student, she worked for her mastreal degree where her grades were all 1’s. When the Second World War ended, she was immediately appointed Superintendent of Private Schools, the first woman Superintendent in the Department of Education.

After the war, she decided to work for her doctoral degree in Education in Indiana University where her eldest daughter was already enrolled in Mastreal work in Dietetics under a scholarship grant. She traveled to Indiana University under a Fulbright travel grant which made her an exception since she was already 52 when the age limit was 45. An international study grant from the American Association of University Women enabled her to take her Doctorate degree in Education. When she informed my brother who was studying in Oklahoma City University under scholarship about these developments in her academic life, he exclaimed, “From you, I have learned that education is a lifelong affair.” After retirement from government service, she was invited to teach at the graduate school of Far Eastern University.

Indeed, Dr. Pineda’s “lifelong affair” with education which she applied in her own life and that of her children, has kept me pursuing higher degrees in Law. In 1953, it was my turn, upon the urging of my mother, to study in Indiana University under a fellowship grant and work for a Master of Laws degree. The same Law School was to award a Doctor of Laws degree, honoris causa, to this alumna years later.

As a writer, Dr. Pineda wrote several children's books which were approved for use in the public schools, namely books about heroes like Jose Rizal, Burgos, Gomez, and Zamora, for different grade levels in English and Pilipino. The Philippines Free Press called her the “forerunner of short story writing” because it published numerous short stories of hers.

Dr. Pineda was a member of the honor society, Pi Gamma Mu (U.P.) and the Pi Lambda Theta (U.S. Education Honor Society for Women). She was often an organizer and officer of civic and professional
organizations and received numerous awards. An active suffragette when the feminist movement was still unknown, she worked with Josefa Llanes Escoda in the fight for women's suffrage by speaking to groups of people, over the radio, and with Dr. Paz Mendoza Guanzon.

As a Devout Mother

Mrs. Pineda looked upon motherhood as a special privilege and not a sacrifice. Long before Dr. Spock and his followers made their mark in the realm of childrearing, she was already doing what comes naturally to a tender, loving, and understanding mother. Although a conservative at heart, she was nonetheless steeped in the liberal democratic tradition. Her children, young as they were, could give free rein to their thoughts and opinions without getting a figurative slap on the wrist. After she imbied the democratic way of life from her early American teachers and friends, she showed even greater respect for the personality of children. Instead of ordering her children around, she'd resort to suggestions or gentle persuasion, never once raising her voice.

At her feet, we learned about the teachings of Jesus and the need to practice these in daily life. We learned to always be responsive to the material, psychological, and spiritual needs of others. Other lessons learned: treat everyone alike, regardless of social or economic status; hindi baling apihin kaisa mang-api; always share your resources by “tithing”, whether this be your income, time, skills, and others; remain “connected” to God and always thank Him for abundant blessings.

A truly spiritual lady, my mother was an earnest seeker of the Truth, whether in or out of church. From a study of Theosophy, she learned to apply the principles of Universal Brotherhood, respecting the Divine Life in man and animals alike. As a result, we turned vegetarians, shunning the taking of the life of animals for food and practicing nonviolence.

Juliana C. Pineda was such an exemplary mother to her three children that she was recognized by U.P. as Mother of the Year in 1952.

A Woman of Faith

Outside the family, relatives and friends could always be certain
of finding solace and a sympathetic ear in Juliana C. Pineda. Quite often, instead of asking God’s help directly, they would ask for her intercession because, as they put it, *malakas siya sa Diyos*. Quoting from her autobiography: “Once when Flery was seriously ill and I was all alone, I mentally sent an SOS message to Dr. Arcilla while praying earnestly for help. Suddenly the good doctor appeared, apparently on an ordinary house call.” This was in the 1920s when there were no telephones yet and the Pineda residence was standing alone, isolated from all neighbors.

From the same autobiography, she writes: “In the second year of my doctoral course, things were going on smoothly except for the difficulty of finding a typist. One Sunday, I hesitated to go to church because I wanted to go over my thesis again. But I decided to go to the First Presbyterian Church. At the close of the service, a young woman approached me and inquired about my thesis. She was my thesis adviser’s secretary. When I told her the thesis was finished but there was nobody to type it, she offered to type for me and my problem was solved. If I had not gone to church, I would not have met my typist.”

Family members who were sick, in pain or injured, would make a beeline to my mother, knowing that she always kept bottles of “healing water” prayed over by her, which never failed to assuage or relieve their suffering. Examples were her baby grandson who cried endlessly due to stomach trouble until she mixed her healing water with the baby’s milk and the stomach ache disappeared.

There was the other grandson who caught his finger in the door and it bled so badly that a PGH doctor said it would have to be amputated. But after the finger was washed with the healing water, it healed without any scar.

In her twilight years, when she was bed-ridden, she continued her “missionary work”, writing letters and sending cards with healing affirmations and comforting messages to her many friends in the Philippines and abroad.
Justice Flerida Ruth P. Romero was Senior Associate Justice, Supreme Court of the Philippines (ret.), from 1991 to 1999; Judge, Administrative Tribunal, International Labor Organization, (ILO) Geneva; Judge/President, Administrative Tribunal, Asian Development Bank (Manila); Special Assistant to President Corazon C. Aquino from 1986 to 1991; Secretary-General, Constitutional Commission (1986); Professor, College of Law, U.P. for over twenty years. She was awarded The Outstanding Women in the Nation’s Service and The Outstanding Filipino, both in the field of Justice/Law. She is also a columnist of The Philippine Star and The Manila Journal.