

The First USTFMS Department of Medicine Stethoscope Tagging Ceremony



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ABSTRACT

It is just fitting for the oldest medical school in the Philippines, the UST Faculty of Medicine & Surgery, which just celebrated its sesquicentennial year, to initiate this trailblazing stethoscope tagging ceremony for 418 second-year medical students belonging to USTFMS Batch 2026. This activity is aligned with enhancing the Thomasian identity (one of the strategic directional areas [SDA 2] of the university) once they graduate, the Thomasian Physician identity. The stethoscope remains the symbolic representation of physician and patient care. The innovative and pivotal activity, completely different from other international medical schools' rite of passage, was marked with meaningful symbolisms unique to USTFMS. This rite also involved a pledge to the patroness of the Department of Medicine, Mary Untier of Knots, who would thus qualify for a robust faith formation program of the university (key result area [KRA 1]). Indeed, this would be the beginning of an annual celebration of strengthening faith, hope, and charity (patient care advocacy), TRIA HAEC, the three virtues of St. Paul that comprise the core values of Thomasian education.

The first UST Faculty of Medicine & Surgery, Department of Medicine Stethoscope Tagging Ceremony was held last August 14-16, 2023, for 418 second-year medical students (4 sections) belonging to USTFMS Batch 2026 taking physical diagnosis course (Medicine 1). (Figure 1) This historical rite of passage served as a welcoming activity to the clinical world for the students and also served as a celebration for choosing Thomasian medical education in their journey to becoming a physician with 152 years of excellence in medical education.[1] This activity is aligned with enhancing the Thomasian identity (one of the strategic directional areas [SDA 2] of the university) once they graduate, the Thomasian Physician identity.[2]

The solemn rite was initiated by the USTFMS Department of Medicine Chair, Dr. Melvin R. Marcial, and seamlessly executed by Medicine 1 Supervisor Dr. Irene Joson-Vergara and Asst. Medicine 1 Supervisors Dr. Julie Ann Tapisipan and Dr. Caroline Bernadette Ignacio. Dean Maria

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Figure 1. Poster of the first Stethoscope Tagging Ceremony



Figure 2. Department of Medicine Chair Dr. Melvin Marcial lighting his candle from the lighted candle in front of Patroness Mary, Untier of Knots, symbolizing the facilitator shall obtain guidance and knowledge from Her.

Lourdes Maglinao, Asst. Dean Remedios Dee-Chan, Faculty Secretary Clifton Pe, and Father Regent Angel Aparicio delivered inspirational messages. Father Aparicio has blessed the stethoscope tags days prior to the activity and dedicated it to Mary.

The stethoscope remains the symbolic representation of physician and patient care. The innovative and pivotal activity, in three parts, is completely different from other international medical schools' rite of passage and was marked with meaningful symbolisms unique to USTFMS.[3,4]

The first part was the **candle lighting**. As each facilitator was introduced, they got one unlighted candle placed on a candelabra from their respective tray, then approached Mary, Untier of Knots, the Patroness of the Department of Medicine, and lighted their candle from the lighted altar candle in front of Her,... symbolizing that the facilitator shall obtain guidance and knowledge from Her (Figure 2). With a blazing candle in hand, the facilitator approached his/her assigned group, and each medical student lighted their individual candle from the candle held by their facilitator... symbolizing the passage of guidance and knowledge (Figure 3). After which, their candles were made to stand on an assigned plate for the group by melting the bottom of their candles from the facilitators' lit candles symbolizing the support the facilitators shall provide to his/her students (Figure 4A, 4B).

The second part was a stethoscope tagging ceremony proper, wherein each student received a personalized leatherette stethoscope in golden yellow, the official color of UST FMS. At the back



Figure 3. Former Department of Medicine Chair Dr. Maria Piedad Natividad lights the candle of her students symbolizing the passage of guidance and knowledge.



Figure 4. A. Lighted candles were made to stand on an assigned plate for the group by melting the bottom of their candles from the facilitators' lighted candles, symbolizing the support the facilitators shall provide to his/her students. **B.** Dr. Maria Victoria Garcia's group is shown.

of the tag is written "IM THOMASIAN MD 2023." "IM" stands for the training given by the Department of Internal Medicine and the year they were under the Department (Figure 5A, 5B).

This was followed by a step-by-step recital made by the group leaders while handling their individual stethoscopes, as described below.

Step 1. OPENING THE MEDICAL BAG AND GETTING THE STETHOSCOPE FROM IT..... the medical bag symbolizes the chest of medical knowledge opening oneself to the world of healing the sick and getting the most important armamentarium to heal ... the stethoscope (Figure 6).

Step 2. PLACING THE STETHOSCOPE AROUND ONE'S SHOULDER.... symbolizes the responsibility

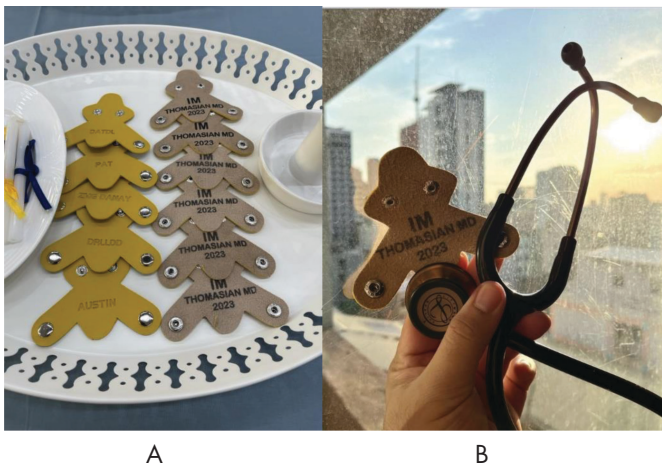


Figure 5. A., B. Personalized leatherette stethoscope in golden yellow, with “IM THOMASIAN MD 2023” mentioned at the back.



Figure 6. Opened medical bag bearing the stethoscope.



Figure 7. A., B. Former Assistant Dean Dr. Estrellita Ruiz and Former Department of Medicine Chair Dr. Leilani Asis placing the stethoscope on the students’ shoulders.

that entails the profession of healing. Not only getting ready to see and talk to the sick but also to listen well and analyze the situation by studying the case well. Patients treat their doctors like HEROES, thus it entails responsibility and commitment (Figure 7A, 7B).

Step 3. PLACING THE STETHOSCOPE TO THE EARSto listen and be ready to analyze what he/



Figure 8. Medicine 1 Supervisor Dr. Irene Joson-Vergara placed the stethoscope to her student’s ears.



Figure 9. A., B. Placing the bell to the heart of the facilitator (representing the parents/guardians or loved ones or classmates)

she hears... the readiness that he/she will gain as he/she listens to the mentors, the wisdom that they impart shutting the other nuances and giving full attention to the best teacher of all ... the patients (Figure 8).

STEP 4. PLACING THE BELL TO THE HEART OF THE FACILITATOR (REPRESENTING THE PARENTS/GUARDIANS OR LOVED ONES OR CLASSMATES) symbolizing the purest intention to heal in consonance with the Hippocratic oath and the mantra “Primum Non-Nocere” (first do no harm) since we cannot really harm our loved ones and do only what is good for them ...in this case, it emphasizes that we must treat our patients as our relatives or loved ones, the facilitator represented the parents/loved ones being the guardian of the medical students at the medical school (Figure 9A, 9B).

STEP 5. STETHOSCOPE TAGGING PROPER. Each student was individually “tagged” by his/her

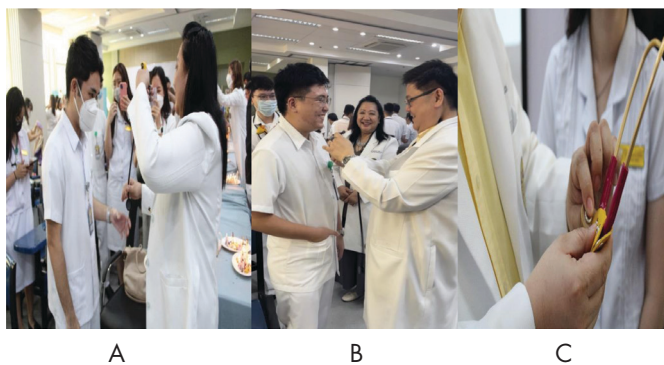


Figure 10. A., B., C. Each student was individually “tagged” at the center of the stethoscope by his/her respective facilitator.



Figure 11. Pledge to Mary, Untier of Knots.

respective facilitator. It was placed in the center of the stethoscope forming a triangle that stands for the three Cs of Thomasian Education, ie, COMPETENCE, COMPASSION, and COMMITMENT (Figure 10A, 10B, 10C).



Figure 12. A stethoscope that is tagged with three virtues of St. Paul in front of the Medicine building.

The final part was a pledge led by the Class President in front of the statue of Mary, Untier of Knots, the Department of Medicine Patroness, stating the students’ promise to study diligently and treat their patients with COMPETENCE, COMPASSION, and COMMITMENT (Figure 11).

Indeed, it was just fitting for the oldest medical school in the Philippines, known for producing the best and brightest THOMASIAN PHYSICIANS, to initiate this kind of trailblazing, symbolic, and heartwarming rite of passage. The Thomasian physician spirit has been rekindled in each faculty staff and has been implanted in all the second-year medical students. Looking forward to this annual celebration of strengthening faith, hope, and charity (patient care advocacy), TRIA HAEC, the three virtues of St. Paul that comprise the core values of Thomasian education (Figure 12).

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