

### ***March with Fearless Filipinas***

**As part of women's history month, Dr. Erika Legara is celebrated in new book about modern Pinay heroes, *Fearless Filipinas: 12 Women Who Dared to be Different*.**

Filipino history has a pantheon of great Filipina leaders, such as Gabriela Silang and Melchora Aquino. In addition to these historical heroes, there are many modern Filipino women that have succeeded spectacularly in their respective fields, broken the glass ceiling, and still strive to give back to their communities.

These Filipinas deserve to have their stories documented at length, so that other women can gain inspiration from not only what they achieved, but how they overcame the many obstacles that once stood in their way. Such was the spirit behind the new book, *Fearless Filipinas: 12 Women Who Dared to be Different*, which features the story of none other than Dr. Erika Legara.

Known of course for founding Asian Institute of Management's (AIM) Master of Science in Data Science program, Dr. Legara was one of only twelve women featured in the book, and notably the only academic chair. She shared her story beginning as a young student still struggling with which school to attend, all the way up to the present day, where she is not only the Aboitiz Chair for Data Science at AIM, but one of the nation's leading thought leaders in data science.

The book opens with a foreword from Vice President Leni Robredo, who noted that stories like Dr. Legara's can be a catalyst for readers.

"While all of the women featured here hail from different fields, they are all united in their demonstration of 'fearlessness' in the face of adversity, prejudice, or even the status quo. Celebrating their lives—and indeed, their individual moments of fearlessness—should serve as a rallying cry to all women: We are all capable of the courage it takes to achieve unprecedented greatness," wrote VP Robredo.

The women featured in *Fearless Filipinas* indeed span a broad range of fields, including entertainment, sports, academe, arts, business, and more. According to the book's editorial team, Dr. Legara was chosen to represent academe because of her emphasis on data science as a nation-builder.

"Data science has of course become one of the most in-demand professions in the Philippines and around the world. What separates Dr. Legara was her ability to cut through the popularity to distill its *raison d'être* for both her students and the general public: Because data science can help tens of millions of Filipinos across every aspect of day-to-day life," said said Kyle Nate, the deputy editorial director of [Bookshelf PH](#), the publisher behind the book, which specializes in titles in [business](#), [education](#), and other genres.

The other eleven women featured in the book include:

- Angel Locsin, the prominent TV and film actress and philanthropist;
- Dr. Reina Reyes, the Princeton PhD who confirmed Einstein's theory of relativity;
- Kim Lato, the founder and CEO of Kimstore, [one of the pioneering e-commerce retailers in the Philippines](#);
- Elda Rotor, the Vice President and Publisher of Penguin Classics who brought Filipino authors like Nick Joaquin to a global audience;
- Kaizen Dela Serna, a Southeast Asian Games gold medalist in the burgeoning sport of obstacle course racing (OCR);
- Stella Abrera, the first Filipina American Principal Dancer of the American Ballet Theatre, playing roles such as Juliet, Giselle, and Princess Aurora;
- Jessica Cox, a motivational speaker and the world's first licensed armless pilot and blackbelt in the American Taekwondo Association;
- Jessie Sincioco, the President of The Manna Cuisine Corporation and the chef who served Pope Francis on his visit to the Philippines in 2015;
- Dzi Gervacio, co-founder of the Beach Volleyball Republic (BVR) and a SEA Games beach volleyball bronze medalist;
- Asia Jackson, a Filipina American actress in Hollywood who started the #MagandangMorenx movement to combat colorism in the Filipino community;
- Merlee Jayme, the "chairmom" and chief creative officer of Dentsu Jayme Syfu.

*Fearless Filipinas* was written by Monica Padillo, Pancho Dizon, and Mica Magsanoc; edited by Kyle Nate; and illustrated by Chloe Gaw.

*Fearless Filipinas* is slated for the release at the end of March, and is available for pre-order here: <https://bookshelf.com.ph/?ref=Bookaholics1>

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