



OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS AND PROMOTIONS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GDOE's Erika Cruz is GCC Distinguished Alumnus

Guam Community College has named Erika Sotto Cruz, Deputy Superintendent of Educational Support & Community Learning at the Guam Department of Education, as its 2017 Distinguished Alumnus. Cruz will be honored at the 40th GCC Commencement on Friday, May 12, at 4:00 p.m. at the UOG Calvo Field House.

Cruz graduated from the former GCC Voc-Tech High School in 1985, where her focus was Computer Science. She was active in the student government, serving as president of her Junior and Senior Class Councils. She went on to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree in Humanities from Chaminade University of Honolulu and a Master of Education degree in Educational Leadership from the University of Portland, where she was selected as the Guam Alumni of the Decade for the University of Portland's School of Education. Cruz has worked for the Guam Department of Education (GDOE) for over 20 years, serving as a middle school teacher, assistant principal, and principal. In her current capacity as Deputy Superintendent for Educational Support and Community Learning, she oversees all of Guam's 41 public schools.

"It is an honor to be selected as the 2017 GCC Distinguished Alumnus," Mrs. Cruz said. "I continue to work in the field of education and always refer back to the education I received from the Guam Community College, which provided me with the leadership, education and work skills necessary to be the person I am today."

Cruz has also served on various accreditation committees in Hawaii. She oversaw GDOE's district accreditation visit, making GDOE the first nationally recognized accredited school district. She currently serves as a commissioner representing the Pacific Islands with the Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS WASC). In addition to her professional accomplishments, Cruz is active in her church and with various charitable events. Along with her husband, she helped establish the Piti Pacers Basketball Club, starting with only 50 players. Currently the team boasts nearly 250 players between the ages of six to 18.

"We are very proud that this year's Distinguished Alumnus is an educator," said Dr. Mary Okada, GCC President. "Erika Cruz is one of the rising stars at GDOE. We thank her for her dedication to improving our educational system, and we look forward to a continued fruitful partnership with Erika and with GDOE," Okada added.

Erika Cruz is married to Frank Cruz, and together they have three children.

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