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**U.S. Amerasian Research in Angeles City Comprises 'A
Pioneering Effort' Says UP-Diliman Asian Center
Professor**

QUEZON CITY. METRO MANILA, The Philippines - Dr. Carolyn I. Sobritchea, Ph.D., co-author of the last significant study on economic and social poverty and discrimination facing Filipino Amerasians, praised the latest U.S.-based research on the topic "as a pioneering effort describing and analyzing the state of emotional and mental health of our Filipino Amerasians." Dr. Sobritchea, a renowned anthropologist and professor of Philippine Studies at the Asian Center at UP's Diliman campus in Quezon City maintained, "The study should be widely disseminated especially to organizations working directly with this sector in our society."

Dr. P.C. "Pete" Kutschera, Ph.D., of Albany, New York USA and Cebu Province, RP, a retired U.S. Army (Reserve Forces) lieutenant colonel and author of the 266-page study titled, "*Stigma, Psychosocial Risk and Mental Health Symptomatology Among Amerasians in the Philippines: A Multiple-Case Study*" cited Sobritchea's previous research "as the last significant empirical study done on the subject of Filipino Amerasians, both in the U.S. and the Philippines in more than a decade. It is symbolic of the work academia needs to be doing to contemporize this topic for today and the future." Dr. Sobritchea co-authored an exhaustive quantitative study and analysis (Gastardo-Conaco. & Sobritchea, 1999) titled "*Filipino Amerasians: Living in the Margins*", focusing on more than 400 economically marginalized and socially at risk Amerasians living in Luzon, Metro Manila, Cebu and Leyte.

The latest U.S.-based finding showed that 62.5 percent of the sample polled experienced severe levels of depression and anxiety and to a lesser degree stress, relating in part to psychosocial risk and stress factors influenced by stigma and discrimination. "Through the use of multiple- case study methodology, he (Dr. Kutschera) examined Filipino Amerasians' various experiences of social stigmatization

and ethnic discrimination and the effects of such experiences on the psychosocial aspects of their daily lives. He likewise looked into the relationship of stigma and discrimination to the core elements of mental health symptomatology including depression, anxiety and stress," Dr. Sobritchea stated. "Indeed, his findings are very revealing and valuable. Gender identity and racial characteristics, among other factors, influence the extent to which Filipino Amerasians experience stigma and discrimination. Stigmatization occurs in various social locations and (are) acted upon even by individuals and groups that are supposed to protect them from harm and abuse," the professor related.

"Dr. Kutschera calls for the review and improvement of U.S. military policies and accountability practice as well as strengthening of local psychosocial support (and social welfare) services for Filipino Amerasians. He strongly asserts that 'mental health problems found in these populations require innovative programs to deal with the chronic and long-term effects of debilitating depression, including anxiety, somatic illness, biracial identity, conflict and confusion, low self-esteem, and alcohol and drug abuse,'" Dr. Sobritchea observed.

Kutschera's findings, based on in-depth field case study interviews with 16 African and Anglo Amerasians in field research taking nearly three years at a site near the former Clark air force base in Angeles City, Pampanga, demonstrate clearly that the majority of Amerasians experienced intense stigmatization and discrimination in the course of their lifetimes. Such conditions were largely based on skin color and physical feature differences and cultural disparities including their diminished status as offspring of U.S. servicemen and government and corporate sector contract employee fathers who mostly abandoned them and their Filipina mothers - an unknown number of whom were impoverished and engaged in sex and entertainment industry occupations. Subjects for the study were drawn from the Philippine Children's Fund of America Amerasian outreach program at the Clark Economic Development Zone and the Pearl S. Buck International (PSBI) Amerasian field program in Angeles City. "The combination of these stigmatizing psychosocial risk factors contributed to elevated and often severely high levels of anxiety, depression and stress trauma. These states were self-reported by sample participants and validated through the use of an internationally recognized mental health inventory, the DASS-21 (Depression, Anxiety Stress Scales)."

The benchmark Gastardo-Conano and Sobritchea (1999) Filipino Amerasian study examined 443 Amerasians ranging from minors to middle-aged adults using a personal survey, an interview instrument and a focus group. The study, sponsored and published by the UP Women's Studies Foundation and PSBI, found marked levels discrimination including two primary types of discrimination: 1. Being perceived or in reality as the product of a transient or possibly immoral relationship (i.e., prostitution liaison, and 2. Being categorized as African Amerasians. The study concluded that African Amerasians, as opposed to Anglos, "appeared to be doubly discriminated against."

Dr. Sobritchea served as Director of the UP Center for Women's Studies from 2000-2007. She is past President of the Women's Studies Association of Asia and helped establish women's gender studies programs of the various at various universities throughout the archipelago and Southeast Asia. She has authored and edited several books, numerous research articles, policy papers and advocacy materials on women's issues. She was an official delegate to the Fourth 1995 Beijing Conference on Women among numerous accomplishments.