

Norbert Reyes Unpingco

40年以上にわたりグアムの魅力を
発信し続けるミスターグアムツーリズム

ノーバート・アンピンコ

Story by : Cindy Hanson

Anyone who lives on Guam will tell you it is a gorgeous tropical island with beautiful beaches, first class accommodations, excellent restaurants, a rich cultural history, and plenty of activities to keep you entertained for weeks, let alone days – but, there are few people who can relate that message quite as eloquently or as passionately as Norbert Reyes Unpingco. For more than forty years, Bert Unpingco has been vigorously involved in tourism and the promotion of Guam as an idyllic destination and at 78 years old, he shows no signs that he's planning on slowing down any time soon.

His passion and willingness to speak out publicly about Guam's role as a tourism destination has made him a well recognized figure, both within the local hospitality and tourism industry as well as within the community at large. He is "Uncle Bert" to many of us, regardless of whether or not we're biologically related, as is the local custom to refer to your

elders as auntie or uncle. He has earned many names over the years, having served the community in a variety of civic and charitable organizations, where he is often elected to a position of leadership – but Uncle Bert's favorite name is "Mr. Guam Tourism."

Although he was born in the island's capital of Hagåtña, Bert did not begin his career in tourism in Guam, but in the state of Alabama. This is also where he attended school, obtaining a degree in Management and Human Relations from the University of Alabama. After a career in the United States Air Force, Bert became the first Executive Director of the Alabama Mountain Lakes Association, where he immersed himself in learning all that he could about the tourism industry so he could bring that experience back home to Guam.

During his time in Alabama, the state was recognized with the Discover America Award, a prestigious award recognizing tourism offices for their

outstanding work promoting travel to, from and within the United States. Under his guidance, tourism in northern Alabama grew from nothing to an industry that earns nearly two billion dollars per year. In 2004, Bert was the guest of honor at the 40th Anniversary celebration of the Alabama Mountain Lakes Association, where he was recognized as a pioneer in that regions tourism industry.

Bert is also recognized as a pioneer in Guam's tourism history. He returned to Guam in the 70s, at the request of the governor, and began serving the island in a number of capacities, including Managing Director of the Guam Visitors Bureau (GVB) from 1970 to 1982 and as its General Manager from 1977 to 1982. In 1976, Guam received the Discover America Award under Bert's tutelage, just like Alabama had years before. Today, Bert remains involved with GVB, most recently serving as a member of its board.

It is his passion for Guam that fuels



(Left) 1985: About one hundred Guamanians visited Lourdes France for the beatification of Diego Luis de San Vitores. (Right) Early 1970's: Conference in Tokyo, Japan with Martin Prey, Bert Unpingco and PATA Chairman of the Board Mr. Kanematsu.
(左) 1985年、約100名のグアムの人々が宣教師ディエゴ・サンビトレスのビューティフィケーションのためフランスの南西部の町ルルドを訪れた。(右) 1970年代前半、パシフィックエリア・トラベル・アソシエーション会議のため東京を訪れた際の一枚。

his creativity in promoting the island. In 1976, he founded with the First Lady Madeleine Bordallo, the Guam Beautification Task Force, establishing the official village flowers and encouraging village pride throughout the island. The task force remains very active today and Uncle Bert is a regular guest at the various annual village activities that take place, encouraging the feeling of pride amongst his fellow islanders.

Bert believes if the people who live here appreciate all it has to offer, it is easier to share that information with visitors. He believes that the connection between people makes all the difference. A belief he capitalized on when he created his WAVE campaign, one of the most popular and successful local marketing campaigns in Guam's history.

WAVE stands for Welcome All Visitors Enthusiastically. Through an advertising campaign, the local community was encouraged to wave at every visitor they saw and it worked. The people embraced the idea wholeheartedly and Guam's reputation for hospitality soared. Today, Guam is known as one of the most hospitable and friendly destinations for travel and its due in no small part to Bert Unpingco recognizing the power behind a simple smile and wave of the hand.

All of Bert's ideas focus on providing a service that is positive for everyone. In 2004, he developed the Guam Tourist & Recreation Map, which includes dive sites, scenic points, and interesting facts about the island. All of the villages and roadways are clearly marked, so

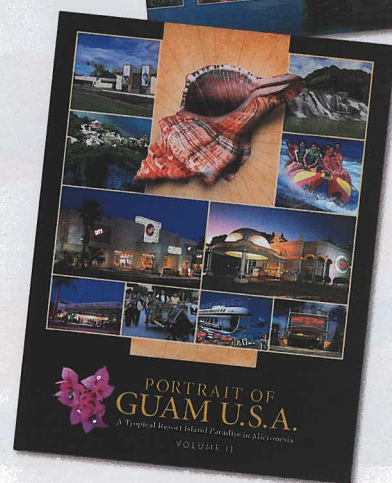
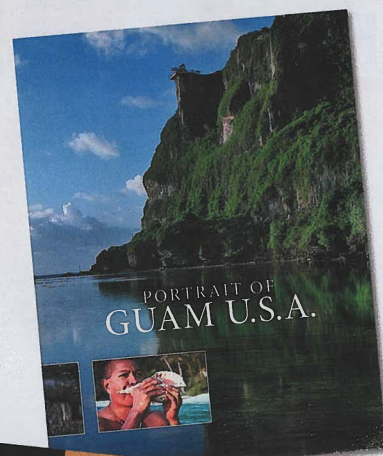
it is an accurate roadmap as well as an informative guide for sightseers.

He is tireless in his efforts to share Guam with the world and to make it, in his words, "a good place to live, work, and play." In 1972, he released his first book, Guam USA, followed by his second in 1974 and third in 1977, both called "Glimpses of Guam and Micronesia." While all three books featured pictures of Guam, they were merely a preamble to Bert's greatest literary triumphs.

In 2008, Bert unveiled "Portraits of Guam U.S.A.," a glossy, full color pictorial of Guam filled with page after page of stunning beauty. The book covered every village, every aspect of life on Guam in rich detail, from the churches we attend to the food that we eat. The book was a hit; flying off the bookshelves faster than it could be restocked.

"Portraits of Guam U.S.A." was so popular that Volume II was released in 2010. Like the original, the second book features unique imagery but focuses more on who the people of Guam are and what we like to do. Volume II is an interesting mix of history and culture balanced with Guam's sophisticated, more cosmopolitan side. Both books are a testament to Bert Unpingco's grasp on Guam's diverse nature.

Today, Uncle Bert continues to sit on many boards and committees related to the hospitality industry. He has been recognized with dozens of awards and honors over the years for his work in the industry and within the community.



"Portraits of Guam U.S.A." books were unveiled in 2008 and 2010 and also won GVB's Best Tourism Project for 2008 and 2010. 2008年、2010年に出版された、グアムの魅力が詰まった「ポートレート オブ グアム USA」。

He is active in the church and belongs to many different organizations. He is happily married to his wife Virginia, with whom he has raised nine children, who in turn have provided him with 27 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Bert Unpingco is undoubtedly a busy man, but he is never too busy to tell you how wonderful Guam is. Bert is Guam's biggest fan and also its greatest personal tourist. He has explored and delighted in every nook and cranny of his island home and is eager to share it with others. If you are ever looking for information about what to do on Guam and have a chance to talk to Uncle Bert, you should. After all, Uncle Bert is "Mr. Guam Tourism" who "Aspires to Inspire before he Expires; to see Guam become a World Class Destination".