

## PINAY TEEN WINS SILVER IN INTERNATIONAL MATH OLYMPIAD (IMO)



L to R: Deputy Team Leader Mr. Glen C. Ong, Honorable Mention awardee Henry Jefferson C. Morco, Silver Medalist Carmela Antoinette S. Lao, Honorable Mention awardee Zheng Rong S. Wu, and Team Leader Dr. Ian June L. Garces

Carmela Antoinette S. Lao, a fourth year high school student of Saint Jude Catholic School, ended a drought of 21 years for the Philippines by winning a silver medal at the recent International Mathematical Olympiad, held last July 2-14 2010 in Astana, Kazakhstan. Her teammates, Henry Jefferson C. Morco, a third year high school student of Chiang Kai Shek College, and Zheng Rong S. Wu, a graduate of Zamboanga Chung Hua High School, both won Honorable Mention awards.

The first and heretofore only time the Philippines garnered the silver medal in the IMO was way back in 1989 when Jerome Khohayting won it at the 30th IMO. Lao is thus only the second Filipino to gain the much-coveted silver medal. Last year, she was awarded the bronze medal at the 50th IMO held in Bremen, Germany.

The International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO) is the oldest, the most prestigious, and the most difficult of all mathematics competitions for high school students. Considered as the "World Cup" of mathematics contests, it is held annually in a different country. This year, 517 math wizards from 96 countries participated in the 51st IMO.

Dr. Ian June L. Garces, an associate professor of mathematics at the Ateneo de Manila University, headed the Philippine delegation to the IMO, while Mr. Glen Mackenzie C. Ong, a math enthusiast and former Philippine representative to the IMO, was the deputy team leader. Lao, Morco, and Wu were selected from over 3000 aspiring high school students nationwide who participated in the Philippine Mathematical Olympiad (PMO). They were among the top 20 finalists of the PMO, who underwent rigorous training in mathematical problem-solving through the Mathematical Olympiad Summer Camp (MOSC), a month long summer training program held at the Ateneo.

The Philippine participation in the IMO and the MOSC were under the auspices of the Department of Science and Technology Science Education Institute (DOST-SEI) headed by Dr. Ester B. Ogena, and the Mathematical Society of the Philippines (MSP) headed by Dr. Fidel R. Nemenzo of the University of the Philippines. Dr. Garces and Mr. Ong were ably assisted in the MOSC by Mr. Alva Benedict C. Balbuena of the University of the Philippines Diliman, Mr. Rey A. Barcelon of Misys International Banking System, Dr. Job A. Nable and Mr. Winfer C. Tabares of the Ateneo.

Dr. Garces noted that the Philippines' recent performance of one silver medal and two honorable mention awards is the best Philippine performance in the IMO to date. He hopes that with the continued support of the government through the DOST-SEI and MSP, our country can scale greater heights at the 52nd IMO to be held in Amsterdam, the Netherlands in 2011.