

For Eleanor de Leon, Being a Diplomat's Wife Requires Responsibility, Adaptability and, of course, Proper Attire

By Amber Katz

Eleanor de Leon's "After hours" have included dinners at Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle, tea with The Queen, and the Royal Ascot. Eleanor is a Senior EMTN Desk Administrator at Moody's London office, but as the wife of London's diplomat of the Republic of the Philippines, she has her own responsibilities and events to attend once the workday has concluded. Aaa caught up with Eleanor to find out more about her experience.

"Being the wife of a diplomat is enjoyable, but loads of work," explains Eleanor. Most rewarding for Eleanor is meeting people from around the globe: royals, high ranking officials, businessmen and media personalities. However, moving to a new post is difficult for Eleanor and her two daughters (Khristine Mae, 14 and Joyce Kathleen, 11) once her husband, Mario, has completed a tour of duty. The family never gets used to leaving behind friends and a city they've come to love. Since emigrating from Manila, the

de Leons have resided in San Francisco, New York, and most recently, London. Eleanor has worked at the latter two cities' local Moody's offices.

As a diplomat, Mario's job includes consular work: passports and visa issuance and legalization of documents. "The Filipino Diaspora [the Filipino population outside of the Philippines] is large — around seven million people worldwide," Eleanor notes.

Mario's career began at Sycip Gorris and Velayo, (SGV) in Manila, then an affiliate of Arthur Anderson.

He then procured a position at the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) where he worked with the United Nations and International Organizations (UNIO). Three years later, Mario was named Vice Consul at the Philippine Consulate General in San Francisco. He has held his current title of Minister and Consul General at the Philippine Embassy in London since 2000.

Mario not only represents the Philippines in the host country to which he is assigned, he is also involved with several international organizations. While assigned to the Philippine Mission to the UN in New York, he served as a rapporteur to the United Nations General Assembly.

As a diplomat's wife, Eleanor has her own unofficial duties. For example, in London, Eleanor is a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Ladies who hold monthly meetings. Spouses are also expected to attend embassy-sponsored fundraisers, numerous diplomatic receptions and dinners. Eleanor dined with The Queen herself at Buckingham Palace and on another occasion at Windsor Castle. Says Eleanor, "In addition

to The Queen, Prince Philip and some other members of the Royal Family were there."

What does one wear to dine with The Queen? "The Queen's dinners' dress code is long gowns with gloves for ladies and evening tails for men," explained Eleanor. At Royal Ascot events, attendees wear hats or their respective national dress. "In short, you have to be appropriately dressed for the occasion to avoid embarrassment," Eleanor advises.

Eleanor has also attended three teas in the back garden of Buckingham Palace. Her most memorable experience, however, was "dancing the waltz with my husband in the Waterloo Room of the Windsor Castle with the Royal Military Band playing. It was quite dreamlike," remembers Eleanor.

The de Leon family will be returning to Manila, where Eleanor had lived several years before moving to San Francisco. While she will miss working at Moody's, we hope Mario's diplomacy will eventually be requested in a city that houses a Moody's outpost so that Eleanor can be a part of Moody's once again. ■



Among Eleanor's fondest memories is betting on a winning horse at the Royal Enclosure while attending the annual Royal Ascot Horserace with her children.