

## Feature Story

### A China Doll in a Tiger's Den

不入虎穴焉得虎子 or Bù rù hǔ xué yān dé hǔ zǐ is a Chinese proverb about striving toward success. Its direct English translation is “*Not enter tiger den, how get tiger cub?*”

There is a China doll at ITDI who ventured into a tiger's den for she believes that great rewards require great risks. Thus, fortune favored her bravery.

With her light, clear skin and almond eyes, she looks a lot like a China doll. Beautiful and pleasing to the eyes, soft spoken and charming, these fair traits belie grit, strength, and resilience.

#### Transforming the China Doll



Dr. Rosalinda C. Torres  
Chief Science Research Specialist  
and Scientist I

Born on October 22, 1956 in Hamtic or Karay-a in Antique, ITDI's China doll is the fourth of eight children of Capt. Jose Martinez Cabañero, a ship captain, and Petra Yap Gonzaga, a housewife. Baptized as Rosalinda Cabañero, Linda, as family and friends call her, took on bluntly her dream.

By disproving her name sense, this doll-like beauty proved to be a law unto herself when she promptly chose to travel more than 600 kilometers in 1973 to the University of Sto. Tomas in Manila. There she took as her undergraduate course Biochemistry.

Historical records trace the study of the first enzyme, diastase (today called amylase), in 1833 by Anselme Payen while others considered Eduard Buchner's first demonstration of a complex alcoholic fermentation in cell-free extracts in 1897 to be the birth of biochemistry.

It does not matter though because 76 years later after Buchner's demonstration, “*I was 15 years-old and ecstatic to be given the chance to dabble in the wonders of chemistry,*” the young Linda said.

Some 36 years hence of consecutive and thorough studying as a part time DOST Scholar will hone her, allowing her to draw on the techniques of analytical, organic, and physical chemistry, as

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well as, those of physiologists concerned with the molecular basis of vital processes in living matter.

Thirty-nine years, a doting husband, three beautiful daughters (a second child named Camille Rose died just before her ninth birthday), and one very good-looking son after a college degree, the beautiful Linda Cabañero, now Dr. Rosalinda Cabañero-Torres, scored a double wham last 2017.

However, that is hitching the horse before the carriage.

## **Great Minds Take Long Walks**

In 2009, she finally got her Doctor of Philosophy degree, again in chemistry. A wife and mother first, it took her 13 years of part time studying as a DOST scholar to get this. At times, she was not hopeful that she would get it and often thought of not pursuing it anymore, if not for her friends' encouragement. Earlier, she completed her masteral program in Chemistry for seven years, again because her priority was, and still is, being wife and mother.

Thus, grit and persistence were her two constant companions in her career and family life. Add to these a resilient spirit, which allowed her to bounce back each time as she tried to carve a niche for her passion – chemistry.

In 2017, with a fiercely roaring difference, the China doll has not only ventured into the tiger's den – she entered dead center into its lair, took the tiger's face between her hands and softly stroked it!

On February 13, the Industrial Technology Development Institute (DOST-ITDI) appointed her as the new Chief Science Research Specialist of the Standards and Testing Division (STD).

A technical service division, STD conducts chemical, physical, and biological tests and analyses of food and feeds; fine chemicals, solvents, and solutions; fats and oils; plastics, rubber, leather, and other polymers; and fuels and petroleum products, among others. STD further conducts studies on test methods, product quality/ performance, and other similar studies for various industry sectors.

On April 26, Civil Service Commissioner and Scientific Career Council Chair Hon. Alicia Dela Rosa-Bala, through SCC Executive Secretary and National Academy of Science and Technology Director Luningning E. Samarita-Domingo, announced conferment of the Scientist 1 rank to a delighted Dr. Torres.

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*“Seemingly, like a dream,” she stressed, “My conferment was dated to have taken effect last February 27, 2017.”*

One of five new Scientist I at the science agency, two others, also from ITDI, are Officer-in-Charge of the Office of the Director Dr. Annabelle V. Briones and Advanced Materials Section Head-Materials Science Division Dr. Marissa A. Paglicawan.

Two from the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute (DOST-PNRI), namely, Fernando B. Aurigue and Glenda B. Obra complete the list.

Meanwhile, the Scientific Career System (SCS), established on March 17, 1982 by the late President Ferdinand E. Marcos, is a recognition program under the CSC and DOST for full-time researchers in the government, the University of the Philippines System, and state colleges and universities.

*“We are called career scientists through SCS’s unique recruitment process for qualified researchers so that we may progress in our careers, and be recognized and rewarded for exemplary public service,”* Dr. Torres explained.



With a body of 33 scientific research papers listed in 7 international and 6 national journals, Dr. Torres has successfully captured the tiger as early as 1993. Then, one of her researches was published in the Flavour and Fragrance Journal, a bimonthly peer-reviewed scientific journal published since 1985 by John Wiley & Sons. The Flavour and Fragrance Journal is indexed in *Journal Citation Reports (JCR)* of Thomson Reuters.

According to the Institute for Scientific Information JCR, being listed here means that the work of Dr. Torres enjoys a 2016 Journal Impact Factor (JIF) of 1.644. JIF is the average number of citations received per paper published in that journal during the preceding two years. In 2016, JCR ranked the Flavour and Fragrance Journal as belonging to the upper

44% (32/72) of journals in Chemistry Applied and upper 46% (61/130) in journals on Food Science and Technology.

Indeed, the doll has tamed the feral jungle cat and claimed it as her own.

Aside from her awards given by other bodies, if publication in reputed journals is one of the criteria used to evaluate the excellence of her life’s works, then Dr. Torres far surpasses the metric to evaluate the merits of one.

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*"When I told my husband of my conferment, he told me, I am truly admirable. My heart swelled with pride and contentment. I did not just receive an award; I have conquered my fears and weaknesses. I feel strong. I stand strong," she ended. (AMGuevarra\ ITDI S&T Media Service)*

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