

# Yvette Dominguez

## An emerging Fil-Am leader in the satellite industry

by CYNTHIA DE CASTRO / AJPress

FROM an ordinary motorist who got lost and can't find his way home, to a family watching their favorite *Pinoy teleserye*, to a special operations soldier in Iraq running from the enemy, satellites in space provide so much of what the world needs today.

Although initially developed to meet military needs, new ways to use satellites have been expanded to help improve the quality of everyday life. There are the commercial communications satellites that give us the internet, weather forecasting and cable television. We also benefit much from the satellites that make up the Global Positioning System (GPS), which provide precise directions, help save lives and property across the world. And there are the hundreds of military satellites, providing reconnaissance data; communications links for troops on the ground, ships at sea and aircraft in flight; precise targeting data for cruise missiles and smart bombs; and instant warning of missile launches etc. Truly, satellites in space have changed our world and have played such a large role in the lives of individuals and nations.

It would interest every Filipino to know that one of the world's designers of satellites is a fellow kababayan, Yvette Dominguez. She is a manager in Space Systems/Loral (SS/L), one of the world's premier designers, manufacturers, and integrators of powerful geostationary satellites and satellite systems. Headquartered in Palo Alto, California, SS/L designs, builds, and tests satellites, subsystems, and payloads; provides orbital testing; procures insurance and launch services; and manages mission operations for commercial and governmental customers. In alliances and partnerships with leading US and overseas space and communications companies, the company has created a world-class presence in the satellite industry—addressing customer needs today while building the world of tomorrow. Among other honors, SS/L has won the coveted Goddard Contractor Excellence Award from NASA, crediting the company's performance for the agency.

Last Oct 2008, Yvette Dominguez, was one of only three people all over the world awarded by the Society of Satellite Professionals International (SSPI)- the Future Leaders Awards.

The Society of Satellite Professionals International is a nonprofit member-benefit society that serves satellite professionals around the world. Through their annual Awards, SSPI honors



Galing Pinoy showcases the triumph of the Filipino spirit - the Filipino's innate perseverance to rise above. A double entendre, Galing Pinoy literally translates to both coming from (or brought to you by) the Filipino and Filipino ingenuity.



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the extraordinary achievement by satellite professionals and the companies they work for. Yvette Dominguez was honored with the "Promise Awards", which recognizes young leaders in the satellite communications industry. In giving Dominguez the Award, SSPI recognized her distinguished work as having "made a difference in the satellite industry".

A BSEE graduate from the California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, Yvette Dominguez has spent 15 years in the communications systems engineering industry. She served as a payload subsystems engineer at Hughes Space and Communications for several years before working for Space Systems/Loral.

In her ten years at SS/L, Yvette has stepped up to every challenge and opportunity with a dedication to excellence.

Yvette has helped design some of the world's most powerful satellites including EchoStar XI, which was launched in July 2008 and provides 20-kW end of life power. She played a significant role on the front-end risk reduction team on another recent project, providing critical help with the development of the communications payload design and was instrumental in closing out significant technical design challenges. As one of the SS/L's youngest payload managers, she was instrumental in the completion of the EchoStar XI satellite integration and test program and also lead in-orbit-testing of the satellite payload. Yvette demonstrates her leadership ability through mentoring junior engineers and college interns, and ensuring the progress of the engineers under her supervision.

Asked how she got into the satellite industry, Yvette admitted that her interest began when

she was in high school. "I had an interest in engineering and space and thought the satellite industry was a great way to cover both interests. During my senior year in college, the aerospace/satellite industry was recruiting heavily and I felt this was my opportunity to pursue my interests," said Yvette whose work has been to design, analyze, and test satellites.

Yvette admits it's not easy being in the industry. "In satellite manufacturing at SS/L, you cannot take any shortcuts. Everything you do must always be highly reliable, meticulous, and redundant."

In an industry still dominated by men, Yvette has some advice for women interested in entering the field. "Do not limit yourself. There are many opportunities in the industry as there are so many different disciplines and aspects to building a satellite. My advice is to not just gain practical technical skills, but to also cultivate interpersonal skills with peers and management. Be open to new responsibilities and challenges early on and if possible, find a mentor."

Having been given the Future Leaders Award in her industry, Yvette can expect a lot of great things in store for her in the future. "I think there will continue to be a global need for satellite communications providing more digital broadcasting and to even more remote areas," she said.

Yes, the future of satellite communications is as unlimited as our imaginations. New applications will continue to be created as technology evolves. So, for sure, Yvette Dominguez will continue to help make satellites, which, like stars in the sky, will be guiding us well into the next century. ■



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