

Recollections of personal experiences with Dr. Howard McKaughan

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Howard McKaughan is a scary person. He allows no quarter for the shy and uncertain. Freshly turned eighteen, I was living in the Philippines for one year accompanying my parents while they established a high school at Bethany Christian Home for Children in Talakag, Bukidnon. During Christmas break (1960—do the math), we visited the Summer Institute of Linguistics southern research center in Nasuli, Malaybalay, Bukidnon. We were guests of Bobie and Howard McKaughan, a house full of kids, and a Filipino couple who were assisting the McKaughans in some way. Dinner over, Howard got out the family Bible for devotional reading. But there was a catch. Everyone present had to listen closely enough *to learn something unique*. At the end of the reading, each person had to recall and state one thing remembered that was unmentioned by anyone else. Being at least fourteenth in the seating arrangement, I felt like Dr. McKaughan was mining my mind for nuggets that, if present at all, were unreachable.

Howard McKaughan is a showman. Pick up the calendar again, several issues forward, to the mid 1990s. The second edition of the Maranao dictionary (McKaughan & Macaraya 1967/1996) was to be launched at the Marawi campus of Mindanao State University. Having migrated in my own career from a community doctor at Bethany Christian Home in Talakag, to public health educator with SIL Philippines at Nasuli, Malaybalay, Bukidnon, I was, at the time of the dictionary launching, the southern regional director for SIL Philippines. It was my responsibility to make arrangements for the celebratory program. There were many guests at the affair, including a delegation of at least six Malaysian government officials visiting the University for other reasons. The expected comments were made by the appropriate people. The Malaysian guests, seated on the platform, started to nod off. And then Dr. McKaughan had his spot in the program and recited Iranun poetry of East Malaysia (a language closely related to Maranao) and interpreted it. See Smith (this volume) as well as Hassin & McKaughan (2002). The Malaysians and all else were spellbound by Howard's humor, quizzical smile, and astuteness at drawing on indigenous wisdom for the metaphor of the moment. With words aged to vintage excellence, Dr. McKaughan succeeded to win friends with a book in his hand and a sincere offering of personal pleasure and challenge on his face.

References

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