

RotaryAnn and Honorary Rotarian Anabela Fátima Xavier Sales Ritchie The First Woman President of the Legislative Assembly of Macao

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The Honourable Anabela Fátima Xavier Sales Ritchie (林綺濤) is a Macanese politician in Macao (澳門). She is the widow of the late Dr. Alfredo Maria Sales Ritchie (李治醫生) (1946-2019) who had served the Rotary Club of Macau (澳門扶輪社) two times as Club President in 1987-1988 and 2001-2002. For more than 2 decades, RotaryAnn Anabela Ritchie has been elected Honorary Member of the Club until today.

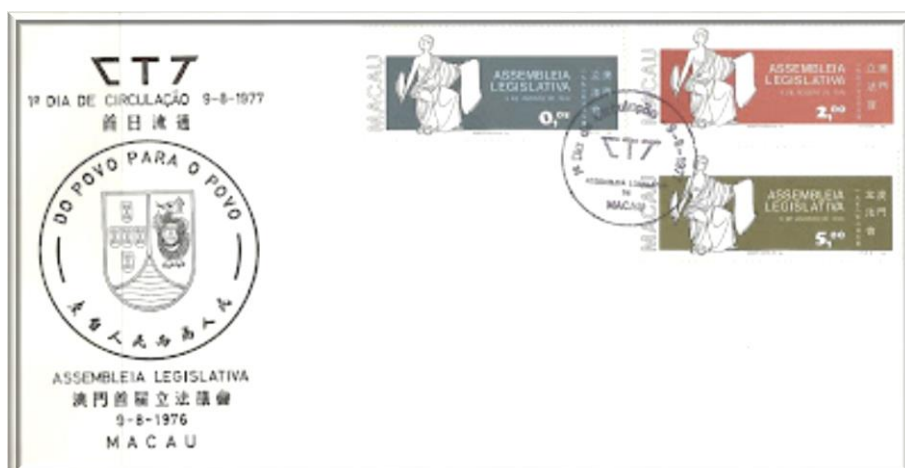
Rotarian Anabela Ritchie was elected to serve as President of the Legislative Assembly of Macao (Presidente da Assembleia Legislativa de Macau) (澳門立法議會主席) from 1992 until 1999, the first woman to hold such position in the history of the Legislative Assembly inaugurated since 1976.

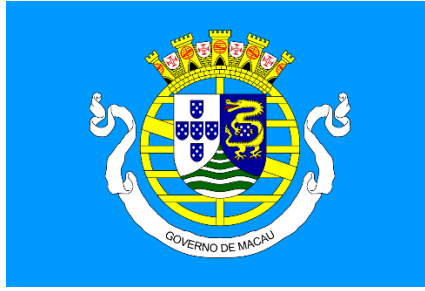
Anabela was born in Macao to a family with both Chinese and Portuguese ancestry; both of her grandmothers were full-blooded Chinese. Her parents, both Macanese, were civil servants. She gained a master's degree in Germanic Philology from the University of Lisbon, Portugal, in 1971, following with a Diploma in Pedagogic Sciences from the same institution. She was a teacher in Lisbon from 1971 until 1974 before returning to Macao, where she continued teaching from 1975 until 1986. In that year she was appointed to a seat on the Legislative Assembly, of which she served as Vice-President.

In 1992 Dr. Carlos Augusto Corrêa Paes D'Assumpção (宋玉生博士), then serving as President of the Assembly, died suddenly in Hong Kong due to serious sickness. Anabela was elected to succeed him. She served in the post until the handover of Macao to China in December 1999, when she was required to relinquish the position because she opted to keep her Portuguese nationality.

Anabela was succeeded by Md. Susana Chou (曹其真女士) as Assembly President, but remained a member of the Assembly until 2001, serving six terms in total. During her career in the Assembly, Anabela was often accused of being too pro-Chinese in her outlook. Since the end of her political career she has remained involving in local affairs---acting as a Council Member of the University of Macau (澳門大學); Member of the Curators Council of the Macau Foundation; Member of the Consultative Commission for Women's Affairs; Member of the Judiciary Magistrates Council; and 1987 Grand Prix Organizing Committee Chairman, etc.

Anabela's services was recognized by the Portuguese Government in conferring Medalha de Valor (英勇勳章) on 25 May 1999 by Macao Governor Vasco Rocha Vieira (澳門總督韋奇立將軍).





Legislative Assembly of the Portuguese Territory Macao

In the early days of Macao since 1557, the Portuguese Parliament and the Governor had great legislative power over Macao. It was not until 1917 that the authorities established a Government Council (Conselho do Governo) composed of officials and members of the public, which, in addition to administrative work, also had some legislative powers. In 1920, the Council of State was split into the Legislative Council (Conselho Legislativo) and the Executive Council (Conselho Executivo) to assist the Governor in governing Macao. The Legislative Council also had greater legislative power than the original Council of State. However, in 1926, the authorities merged the Legislative Affairs Bureau and the Executive Bureau and re-established the Executive Council. Since then, the composition, formation method and legislative powers of the Executive Council have been revised over the years.

In 1963, the authorities separated the Legislative Council (Conselho Legislativo, the same name as the Legislative Bureau) from the Administrative Affairs Council. Its status was higher than that of the Administrative Affairs Council and it was the predecessor of the later Legislative Assembly. According to the 1972 Political and Administrative Statutes of the Province of Macao, the Legislative Council and the Administrative Council were reorganized into the Legislative Assembly (Assembleia Legislativa) and the Provincial Consultative Council (Junta Consultiva Provincial) respectively starting from the following year. However, the two institutions were soon dissolved due to the Portuguese military coup in 1974, and their powers were taken over by a temporary advisory committee.

In 1976, the Portuguese Government promulgated the “Organization Statutes of Macao” to reorganize the Legislative Assembly of Macao (Assembleia Legislativa de Macau), and its legislative power was greatly expanded compared to the previous Legislative Assembly, Legislative Committee and Administrative Affairs Committee. According to the Macao Organization Charter, the new Legislative Assembly would no longer be chaired by the Governor. Instead, the Legislative Assembly would consist of 17 members. There were three ways to select these 17 members: 5 members would be nominated by the Governor from among the residents who enjoyed considerable reputation in the local community; 6 members would be elected by direct universal suffrage; and 6 members would be elected by indirect voting. From this it could be seen that in Macao, Legislative Assembly members were elected by direct, indirect and appointment. This was not a new institutional arrangement suddenly established by the Macao Basic Law. This method has continued without change until the transfer of Macao’s sovereignty on 20 December 1999.