

## Jolina Magdangal: 20 & counting

Written by RICARDO F. LO

Friday, 26 November 2010 10:43

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### ☐☐☐ JOLINA MAGDANGAL

Before Lady Gaga, there was Jolina Magdangal making her unique fashion statement with clothes — and accessories — that bordered on “outlandish.” It was fun while it lasted.

At 32, Jolina has mellowed fashion — and otherwise. She marked her milestone on Nov. 6 with a party-cum exhibit of 32 (from hundreds in her file) photos which the camera-bug birthday girl herself has taken.

This year, Jolina is also celebrating her 20th anniversary in showbiz, marking it with a change of managers. For 20 years, it was Jolina’s dad Jun Magdangal who steered her career (and, sometimes, her life). Now, she’s managed by Perry Lansigan.

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“It was a very fulfilling and fruitful 20 years,” said Jun, “with a few bumps along the way. It was timely that Jolina wanted to be independent and I have to be on top of a new business venture in Tagaytay, the Memory Lane Country Diner, Beauty Salon & Gift Shop.”

At 32, hasn't Jolina seriously thought about settling down with boyfriend Mark Escueta (drummer and leader of Rivermaya)?

“No details yet,” said Jolina, “at hindi pa naman siya nagpo-propose. But Mark and I often talk about family life.”

As a nod to her 20th-year celebration, we asked Jolina to make a list of the “20 milestones in her career” (which wouldn't have been possible, according to Jolina, “kung hindi sa effort ng manager-daddy ko”).

1. Being a member of 14-K. It started my career as a professional entertainer and when my natural talents were further honed by Ryan Cayabyab in singing, Douglas Nierras in dancing and Gina Alajar in acting.
2. Being chosen as Walt Disney-Universal's First Recording Artist in the Philippines. From among hundreds of aspiring singers, I was unanimously chosen after a series of auditions. That was also when I did my first recording album, Jolina, A Wish Comes True.
3. Being a member of Ang TV. Under director Johnny Manahan's tutelage, the show highlighted my singing, dancing, hosting and comedic talents. It gave me ample exposure and I was noticed by advertisers who simultaneously acquired my services as an effective endorser. ABS-CBN cast me in various prime time and noontime shows first as support and then as lead actress. Star Cinema followed suit by giving me tailored-fit roles in hit movies.
4. Finishing high school with honors through regular schooling. While my showbiz colleagues chose home-study program, I opted to attend normal classes despite my busy schedule. After high school, I attended a theater-arts course at the University of the Philippines. This was cut short when AMA University offered me to be its endorser for three consecutive years and gave

me a scholarship in computer science. I received Outstanding Student and Star Student Awards and at the same time passed the Personal Computer Driving Test given by the National Computer Center of the United Kingdom.

5. Signing up with Star Records. My and Daddy's collaboration with Star Records executives produced hit songs and multi-platinum records. My first album, Jolina, under the label earned a quintuple platinum record award and my second, Jolina On Memory Lane, was a quadruple platinum.

6. The establishment of Jolina's Fashion Gallery. This is my first business venture together with my family — the manufacturing and selling of fashion accessories, clothes and other knick knacks which I myself designed. It has branched out into 12 franchise stores nationwide and one in California. I also launched Jolina Dolls series made from my own likeness, the first and only one-of-its-kind so far in Philippine entertainment. I set the trend in multi-colored hair and nails, butterfly trinkets among other fashion accessories and constantly changing hairstyles. The "Jolina Look" was born. Because of this, I was dubbed a fashion trendsetter.

7. Concerts at the Araneta Coliseum and Cuneta Astrodome. I was the first young artist to perform and fill up the proverbial last frontier of concert artists in the Philippines. I also performed with seasoned artists such as Gary Valenciano, Martin Nievera and David Pomeranz.

8. Overseas concert tours. I have performed in concerts, either solo or with other artists, in major cities in the U.S. East and West Coasts, Hawaii, Guam, Saipan, Canada, Australia, Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

9. Chosen Ambassadors of Goodwill by the Children's Hour and Make A Wish Foundation, and partner of GMA Kapuso Foundation. It was a great honor for me to have been chosen by these prestigious organizations. It was also a humbling experience for me to help these entities in pursuing humanitarian endeavors while doing my own charitable works. These are some of the reasons why I was called the youth icon and role model.

10. Leaving ABS-CBN. It was a difficult decision but there were many career and personal reasons that have been considered. I actually did not move out. I simply wanted to become a

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freelance artist but the network executives did not like the idea. I then joined GMA in a non-exclusive and on a per-project basis but remained loyal and dedicated to the network, the same way I was when I was still with ABS-CBN.

11. GMA Network produced my own Jolina Christmas Special. I starred and hosted my first Christmas Special with my showbiz friends and colleagues as guests.

12. Appointed the country's national youth advocate by then Pres. Joseph Ejercito Estrada and host of The Working President, the weekly news-magazine TV show of then Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. I was the first young showbiz personality to have worked inside Malacañang. I also worked with the late former Pres. Corazon C. Aquino in The Children's Hour (Madame Aquino was the chairperson and I was the ambassadress of goodwill).

13. Received the most-coveted Catholic Mass Media Award (CMMA). The CMMA committee bestowed on me the prestigious Jaime Cardinal Sin Serviam Award, declaring me a "Paragon of a Socially-Conscious Performing Artist." The CMMA elevated me through this award "for consistently making herself as a model of responsible behavior and her active participation in humanitarian endeavors benefiting the youth, the needy and the hopeless."

14. Working with the legendary King of Comedy Dolphy. The Comedy King chose me to work with him in the Metro Manila Film Festival movie "Home Along Da Riber." It was a drama-comedy-musical that pitted my dramatic and comedic talents with the Comedy King. Dolphy himself called me "ang babaeng Dolphy." Also, there had been discussions between the late Fernando Poe Jr. and my father for a movie project. It was on the verge of completion when FPJ entered politics.

15. Accumulating numerous awards. I have garnered an unprecedented number of awards, citations and recognitions from the academic, socio-civic, government, humanitarian and entertainment sectors not only in the Philippines but also overseas.

16. Being cast as one of the co-hosts of "Unang Hirit." It was my first hosting stint with the News and Public Affairs group. It was memorable for me because of the experience and camaraderie of the group.

17. Being declared by the United States Department of Homeland Security as “an alien of extraordinary ability.” This is in recognition of my abilities and achievements not only in the Philippines, my own country but also overseas particularly in the U.S.

18. Being cast as one of the lead actors in GMA’s prime time telenovela “I Luv New York.” It was a first-of-its-kind local telenovela that was shot almost entirely in New York. It was my reunion with Marvin Agustin as a love team.

19. The making of GMA Films’ “I.T.A.L.Y. (I Trust And Love You).” It was also a first-of-its-kind in the local movie industry in terms of concept, shot almost entirely aboard the luxury cruise ship Costa Magica covering three continents. The filming was also done in major European cities such as Milan, Genoa, Venice, Naples, Savona, Palma de Mallorca, Barcelona, Tunisia and Marseille.

20. Change of manager. After 20 years of being managed by my dad, I chose to be independent. I got the services of a new manager, Perry Lansigan. Now I have a free hand in choosing my projects and planning my career.