

Voltaire

MARAVE

22 November 2023

It just rolls off the tongue. Voltaire Marave. Voltaire Maaaaraaaaveeee.

It's perhaps the most festive (and interesting) name of any Paramount team member that fittingly belongs to Paramount Seattle's dynamic new general manager.

"Well, it's my dad's fault," said Marave who explained that although his dad went on to be a businessman, while in school at University of Washington he had taken two years in philosophy which sparked his interest in the famous philosopher. "And he wanted his son to have a unique name."

Marave was born in Glendale in southern California to Filipino parents where he lived until 1992 before he, his little brother and parents moved to the Philippines for a year, a time he says that helped shape his world view.

"Such a great experience," said Marave. "It was where my dad grew up. And it was humbling because we were used to the luxuries of America. It's just very basic there. Our province had to turn off the water every day at 6 p.m. at night, and it didn't get turned back on until about 6 a.m. in the morning, just to conserve for our little town."

Marave said there was no TV, no telephone and that they relied on walkie talkies to communicate. "It was crazy, but it was good experience." Marave said that attending school during his time there taught him a lot about Filipino culture and history. He said although he can't speak the language, he can still understand it.

After their time in the Philippines, the family moved to Seattle where Marave attended high school and then went on to study at the University of Washington like his dad.

Marave explained that his father had served as vice president of Bank of Tokyo, New York, and Seattle, "so, there were pressures growing up that I needed to be in business. But during my first years in college, I just wasn't passionate about it."

At UW, Marave met a group of friends at the Filipino American Association and began to get involved. Marave explained that within the Filipino community, there was a continual fight for representation. "We were a little bit invisible. I became more socially conscious about a lot of issues with Asian Americans, and we had a lot of dialogue around making sure that Filipinos are represented accurately. We had always thought of ourselves as quiet, subservient. But not now. There's a different light of who we are, especially in Seattle. I really became more conscious about that and learned a lot about myself and the culture."

Inspired by his growing awareness, Marave shifted his academic focus to ethnic studies and sociology, leaning into the machinations of social policy. He graduated in 2003.

Like many new graduates, Marave wasn't sure how or where to start his career, but soon thereafter joined Enterprise Rent-a-Car's management training program. "You learn everything from washing cars, to picking people up, to booking a deal. So, you do everything. You learn the operations and all the different departments, and they actually prepare you to run a branch."

Although Enterprise's culture made Marave more serious about business, management, and leadership, he said its focus was heavily on sales. "I'm not really a salesperson, but I loved the service aspect," he reflected.

In high school Marave had worked in a hotel and said that since that time, he had gravitated back to the industry, so he rejoined the field working at the front desk of a Renaissance Hotel. "The whole operation, different departments, are like a family of a community all inside a building," he said. "I like treating people like family. That's probably why a lot of customers want to work with me because I always treat them with respect and have a good time."

Marave spent five years learning everything from the role of a bellman to front office operations, to night audits and all the departments of customer operation. "And then I got promoted to assistant front office manager."

It was at that point that Marave crossed paths with and came to know Paramount's own Kyle Asher, currently its chief operating officer. "He came in from New York with a different sense of hospitality, delivering really elevated service," said Marave. "It was next level stuff to me. He really impacted my passion so that's why I decided to keep growing my hospitality career."

One day in 2012 while working in the lobby, Marave received a call at the concierge desk from Paramount's Matt Murphy. "I'm not sure how he got my name, but he said they were interviewing for an operations manager position here at the Paramount." Marave accepted the position and, as luck would have it, a year later Asher was hired as its general manager.

"It was a great experience," said Marave of working alongside Asher. "We kept growing our presence. It has always been my goal to be #1 on TripAdvisor and we did it."

While Marave was building his career, he was also building a family, tying the knot in 2013 with his wife Fionna, a nurse. The pair spent their honeymoon at the Maui Coast Hotel and loved both it and the island, so when he was offered a position at Paramount's hotel in Kihei, he and his new wife eagerly relocated.

Two years into living in Maui, he was hired as a rooms division manager for (what is now) Marriott Vacation Worldwide, a 360-room resort on Kaanapali's beach front. Working as the hotel's number two in charge, Marave gained an even deeper understanding operations and continued to garner the wisdom of mentors during a nearly five-year stretch.

But Marave and his wife had always hoped to return to Seattle where Fionna was from and where Marave's brother and his family also lived. A career opportunity for Fionna opened the door for their arrival back to the Emerald City in August of 2019 just months before the COVID pandemic began.

Back in Seattle, Marave went to work for Hilton, then Kimpton, then next to Sonder, a tech-enabled hospitality company founded in San Francisco. "Everything is an on-the-app experience, so you don't really talk to any guests," said Marave. "Some hotels can adapt into that, but I missed the family, I missed the collaboration with other departments, getting to know housekeepers."

Then, early in 2023, Marave learned that Paramount Seattle was in search of a new general manager after its current GM, Ian Adams joined the corporate team as director of revenue. Marave threw his name in the hat for the position and was brought on in July 2023.

"I saw that there was an opportunity to come back here," said Marave. "It kind of feels full circle. Since Mr. Murphy called me at the Renaissance, I've gone through a series of experiences personal and professional, and coming back now and knowing where the company is going, I'm excited to be part of the change."

Marave said that he believes that what he has experienced has given him insight that he can help infuse at Paramount. "The important part is culture. And it's just awesome to just be part of the process."

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