

# GSM ALUMNI MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE BANKING WORLD

*Three GSM graduates share their experiences in the international, national, and local banking industries*

**F**or Sebastian Santiago, Jill Casselman, and Al De Grassi, all vice presidents in the banking industry, receiving their M.B.A.'s from the Graduate School of Management has been the first step in very successful and challenging careers in institutional finance.

Born and raised in Manila in the Philippines, Sebastian Santiago discovered UCI while visiting relatives in Irvine. He received his M.B.A. in 1976 after specializing in business administration and returned to the Philippines to work for a local merchant bank.

"Having a graduate degree from an American university, especially a part of the University of California system, opened many doors for me back home," says Santiago. "In the United States, the level of competition is higher than in Manila, and I quickly learned I had to be more assertive and aggressive if I wanted to get myself heard."

Sebastian joined Chase Manhattan's operations in Manila eight years ago and is currently Vice President of Corporate Finance and Arbitrage. He focuses on creating a market for the trading of Third World debt, especially that of Latin America. His clients, which include corporations investing in the Philippines and financial institutions repaying debt in the Philippines, often need assistance in identifying transactions where debt can be restructured to add value.



Jill Casselman ('85) Assistant Vice President and Team Leader, Citicorp North America

"My course work at GSM was especially helpful in the beginning with financial projections and other aspects of the job," explains Santiago. "Today, my goal is to get our relative position at Chase Manhattan higher in the marketplace and to capture a bigger percentage of the trading."

A Social Ecology undergraduate major at UCI, Jill Casselman earned her master's degree from GSM in 1985

and entered a corporate banker development program with Bank of America.

"My graduate experience was most helpful in the areas of finance, accounting, and organizational behavior," says Casselman. "It taught me how to see the big picture while analyzing and solving problems. It also was a boost to my self-esteem and helped me open the door into the world of finance."

Jill is currently an Assistant Vice President and Team Leader at CitiCorp North America in Irvine. CitiCorp is organized around niche markets, and her area of concentration is the fast-food industry.

"We work with franchise operators of national chains such as Pizza Hut, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and Taco Bell who might own and operate 30 to 70 restaurants," she explains. "They need loans — in the \$5 million to \$25 million range — for acquisitions, refinancing, or ongoing development. It's very innovative and entrepreneurial, and is a challenge in this changing economic environment."

Casselmann, who also teaches a banking course at Cal State Fullerton, believes the banking industry is getting more complex every day.

"Our unit specializes in creative transaction structures which provide a competitive edge in today's financial world," she says. "There's also a big move toward consolidation in the banking industry. We have more big players from the East now in