

Dedication

*With love and gratitude
to my parents Blanquita and Manolo:
for their continued support and inspiration;
for teaching me that no goal is too lofty given perseverance and dedication;
for their example of courage, integrity, and strength of character;
for showing me by example the importance of
standing up for what you believe is right no matter the risk;
for being my best friends; and
for instilling in me the values that have made me the person I am today.*

