

**Veronica Jo Baluyot-Onglatco Prasad**  
**(Biochemist and Project Manager)**



Veronica Prasad works as a Pharmaceutical Development and Manufacturing (PDM) Project Manager at Gilead Sciences in Foster City, California. Gilead Sciences is a leading biopharmaceutical company known for developing groundbreaking antiviral medicines, particularly for HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C. They revolutionized treatment by creating single-tablet regimens for HIV and cures for Hepatitis C, while also developing the first approved COVID-19 antiviral treatment, Remdesivir. Veronica has a Bachelor of Science degree in Biochemistry from the University of Santo Tomas (UST) in Manila, Philippines.



**Her science journey** began when Veronica Jo Baluyot Onglatco was born in San Jose, California in 1988. She is the younger of two daughters of Jose MacArthur Onglatco and Maria Corazon Baluyot. She completed her elementary education up to the 4th grade in San Jose before moving with her family to Bataan, Philippines, in 1998.

In Bataan, she studied at St. Michael the Archangel Academy in Orion and later at Bataan Christian School (now Bataan Christian College) in Pilar, where she consistently earned honors. During high

school, she actively participated in provincial competitions in Mathematics, Science, and Journalism. She also served as editor-in-chief of *Rose Plume*, the school's official newspaper.

As a campus journalist, Veronica competed in Editorial Writing and Copyreading and Headline Writing at both the Bataan Division Schools Press Conference (DSPC) and the Region III Regional Schools Press Conference (RSPC). At the 2003 DSPC and RSPC, she won First Place in Copyreading and Headline Writing. She repeated this achievement at the 2004 DSPC, where she again placed First in Copyreading and Headline Writing and was recognized as Outstanding Journalist of the Year. She graduated in 2005 with First Honorable Mention.



She later moved to Manila, Philippines, to pursue her college education at UST. Ever since high school, she had been deeply interested in the sciences, particularly Biology, which was her favorite subject, followed closely by Chemistry. The decision to take up Biochemistry was influenced by her parents, who saw it as a strong foundation and possible pathway to medical school should she choose to pursue it in the future.



One of her greatest challenges in college was adjusting to life in Manila after growing up in the province, as well as learning to live independently. Despite these challenges, she thrived in an academic environment where women played prominent roles. About 80% of her Biochemistry class were female students, and the college dean at the time, Ms. Angelita Sarile, was also a woman with a Biochemistry degree from UST. She was likewise mentored by many female professors

throughout her studies. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Biochemistry in 2009.

## WORK AFTER COLLEGE

After earning her degree, Veronica returned to the United States in 2009 during the height of the ongoing recession, a time when finding employment was particularly difficult, especially for someone without prior work experience. She began her professional career as a Quality Assurance (QA) Floor Inspector at Impax Laboratories in Hayward. In this role, she worked on the manufacturing floor, conducting quality inspections of materials, drug products, and equipment to support continuous 24/7 operations. Impax Laboratories, Inc. was a Hayward, California-based specialty pharmaceutical company founded in 1999, specializing in controlled-release and solid oral-dose generics. In May 2018, it merged with Amneal Pharmaceuticals LLC to form the 5th largest generics business in the U.S. at the time.



She is currently a Pharmaceutical Development and Manufacturing (PDM) Project Manager at Gilead Sciences in Foster City. She has been in this role for the past 7



years. She began as a Quality Control (QC) chemist where she ensured pharmaceutical drug products met strict quality, safety, and purity standards in compliance with FDA and other regulatory guidelines through performing analytical testing (HPLC, UV-Vis, Karl Fischer

titration, etc.). After 2 years, she moved into the Analytical Development department as a Sr. Research Associate II where she worked on the development, optimization, and qualification of analytical methods. She worked on many products that eventually became commercialized such as Stribid, Genvoya, Descovy, Biktarvy. Veronica played a major role in her group to support the

Biktarvy New Drug Application (NDA) filing which eventually led her to the path of project management. (Biktarvy is a complete, 1-pill, once-a-day prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in adults and children who weigh at least 31 pounds. It can either be used in people who have never taken HIV-1 medicines before, or people who have received HIV-1 medicines in the past, or to replace their current HIV-1 medicines, and whose healthcare provider determines they meet certain requirements). It provided an opportunity to further develop project management skills, leading to a 6-month rotation in Project Management supporting analytical working groups and cross-functional product teams.

She loves her current job! She has a front seat view of how each group within her department functions. She co-pilots cross-functional teams to advance Chemistry, Manufacturing, and Controls (CMC) strategies from technical development through commercialization focusing on managing program risks, aligning cross-functional priorities, and ensuring timely delivery of critical CMC milestones for small molecule and biologic products.

She would love to obtain a Project Management Professional (PMP) certificate or pursue further education that can help her grow further in her role as PDM Project Manager. In addition, she would love to move into a program manager role that is more strategic with a high impact leadership role. With the changing times, she would also like to transition into a “Human-AI Hybrid PM specialist” who can apply new technology/automation while leveraging high Emotional Intelligence (EQ) for complex and human-centric decisions.



## **WORK-LIFE BALANCE**

Veronica maintains a healthy work-life balance by intentionally setting boundaries between dedicated work hours and personal time. She’s grateful for the flexibility at Gilead Sciences, where there are no strict core working hours, but rather core

collaboration days (Tuesday through Thursday) when employees are expected to be most available for team collaboration, particularly onsite.



Her family is her top priority, so she makes a conscious effort to keep work and personal life separate whenever possible. She prioritizes quality time with her 5-year-old, whether it be through morning routines, school drop-off and pick-up, volunteering at school, or supporting extracurricular activities such as karate and swimming (just a few among the many privileges of being a mother which is truly her favorite role).

Veronica and her husband, Shamal, are fortunate to have both mothers living with them, which provides valuable support with household responsibilities and occasional childcare. This allows for opportunities to spend intentional time together, whether enjoying a movie night or dinner for special occasions.

She also makes time for herself by focusing on personal well-being, including spiritual growth, self-care, and hobbies she enjoys, such as crafting.

## **ADVICE FOR NEW GRADUATES**

Her advice to new graduates is to *embrace flexibility*. You may have a set goal on the career you desire but be open to pivoting across roles that can help you discover your passion, enhance your skills, or even help you discover new ones! *Be vulnerable!* Don't be afraid to show you are learning. Trust and good relationships are built by being open, asking for critique, and demonstrating respect. These relationships are vital to help you identify a mentor to guide you in your career growth. *Find your voice!* Do not underestimate the power you have! Be proactive and confident in exercising leadership even if you are early in your career.

## **HOW CAN WE GET YOUNG GIRLS INTERESTED IN SCIENCE?**

Encouraging more girls to pursue science starts with early exposure and visibility. Providing access to STEM programs, internships, workshops, guest speaker events, and hands-on learning opportunities can help young girls see science as exciting, accessible, and relevant to their lives. It's important to showcase the wide range of career paths within science—not just traditional lab roles, but also opportunities in healthcare, biotechnology, engineering, research, project management, data science, and beyond.

Representation also plays a major role. Highlighting the achievements and contributions of female scientists, both past and present, helps young girls envision themselves in these careers. Seeing women succeed in STEM fields can break down stereotypes and reinforce the message that science is a space where they belong.

The more we normalize conversations around science - whether in schools, communities, media, or at home - the more we can spark curiosity and confidence in young girls. By making science visible, relatable, and inclusive, we can inspire the next generation of female innovators, researchers, and leaders.

## **HER SCIENCE JOURNEY**

1988- Veronica Jo Baluyot Onglatco was born in San Jose, California

1998 - Relocated to Bataan, Philippines

2003 - First Place Copyreading and Headline Writing, Bataan DSPC; First Place Copyreading and Headline Writing, Region III RSPC

2004 - First Place Copyreading and Headline Writing, Outstanding Journalist of the Year, Bataan DSPC

2005 - Graduated from high school with First Honorable Mention

- Went to Manila for college

2009 - Received her Bachelor of Science degree in Biochemistry from the University of Santo Tomas in Manila, Philippines

- Moved back to the United States
- First job as a Quality Assurance Inspector at Impax Laboratories in Hayward, California

2011- Worked at Gilead Sciences in Foster City, California as a Quality Control Chemist

2013 - Worked at Gilead Sciences in Foster City, California as a Research Associate II in Analytical Development

2017 - Married Shamal Prasad at St. Francis of Assisi Parish (San Jose) and Sunnyvale Hindu Temple

2019 - Began PDM Project Management career at Gilead Sciences in Foster City, California

2021 - Moved to Livermore, CA during her 6th month of pregnancy

- Oldest son, Vihaan Matthew O. Prasad was born in San Jose, CA

2026 - Expecting second son in the Summer of 2026