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## DUTERTE ALLIES SWEEP PHILIPPINES MIDTERM ELECTIONS

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## EDITORIALS

# Beware of the Philippines' New Supermajority

It's easy for Filipino Americans and abroad to criticize the 2019 Philippine election results that had President Rodrigo Duterte's allies win a clean sweep of the Senate.

It's easy for the international press to condemn strongman tactics when many of the countries these journalists are reporting from do not have to deal with the level of poverty and corruption that have historically crippled the Philippines' growth. Projecting our own values, our own social and economic models onto the rest of the world have always been a high-brow, centrist habit of Americans.

So it's not a surprise that there is a schism of support for Duterte (and his allies) between Filipinos who live in the Philippines and Filipinos who live abroad, particularly in the U.S.

Filipinos in the Philippines see Duterte as a strong reformer and break from the elitist politicians that took over since the EDSA revolution. Many of these pro-Duterte Filipinos have not seen their standard of living improve through the Aquino, Ramos, Estrada, Arroyo-Macapagal, nor Aquino III (all privileged presidents) administrations.

Duterte, a son of Davao City, came from a geographic and cultural origin far from the center of national power, Manila. Likewise, Ilocos son Ferdinand Marcos, the nation's first strongman-autocrat, also had an outsider origin that made him appealing.

It's understandable that Filipinos are drawn to Duterte as a "one-of-us," populist politician; that he is to some the political hero-villain to deliver on all the things disenfranchised Filipinos have been hoping for, no matter how he accomplishes them.

He may also have been successful to some in his first three years in areas such as boosting the country's economy (despite the brief recession) with new sources of foreign investment from China, helping to build infrastructure, and suppressing an uprising in Mindanao.

## Case Against Duterte

But given all these reasons why Duterte could be reasonably seen as an able president, enough for voters to elect his allies in this Duterte-referendum midterm election – the Filipino voters failed to see the bigger picture and the potential harm to Philippine democracy.

There is a clear line between being tough on law and order and exacting terror onto a sector of the population, drug addicts or dealers. There is moral bankruptcy in a leader of a country and citizens who support that leader when a means to an end (winning a drug war) include extrajudicial killing.

Once a line of government-accepted brutality has been crossed, who knows where it could lead. The target might be drug dealers now; but tomorrow it could be political opponents or any other group – this is the slippery slope when dictators and their mob rule.

The idea of "safer" streets with Duterte as president – which is why many support Duterte according to pollsters – couldn't be more blind-sighted and suggests that it's acceptable to kill just as long as those murdered are drug users and dealers (and are not connected to myself and my family).

Filipino voters got it wrong in their political calculus

(continue on page 3)

## FROM THE PUBLISHER

**F**

ilipino communities around the world from the Middle East, Europe, U.S. mainland and Hawaii are still talking about the recent Philippines midterm election that occurred on May 13. Many

of us have strong opinions on both sides of the results that had President Rodrigo Duterte's allies sweep all the available seats in the Senate. Given that the Senate was the only body that had a check on the President, alarmists question if democracy could further slide than it already has.

In our cover story this issue, associate editor Edwin Quinabo writes about what experts believe the midterm election could mean for the country in terms of policies the new supermajority (Duterte-controlled, Senate, House, Supreme Court) would likely pursue. As expected, some of them are controversial like revisions to the Constitution and bringing back the death penalty; as well as extreme measures like making children as young as 9-years old subject to prosecution. Experts say the midterm was a pass for Duterte to continue his highly controversial anti-drug campaign that has brought widespread international condemnation. Voters have even elected Ronald dela Rosa, the chief who spearheaded Duterte's war on drugs, into the Senate. The election, really a referendum on Duterte's performance, wasn't just about his tough stance on crime. Read what experts say are other reasons why Duterte (and his allies) remain popular. The Filipino people have spoken, made their political calculus. Going forward, we can only wish the best for our fellow Filipinos and the country we love.

John Witeck and Seiji Yamada of the Hawaii Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines, contributed an article detailing the increasing number of attacks on human rights advocates, labor, church, community organizers and indigenous people under the Duterte government. They are calling for the U.S. government to put pressure on Philippine officials to investigate and stop the extrajudicial killings. They believe it's time that Hawaii and its large Filipino population speak up against the atrocities.

Also in this issue, Federico Magdalena, PhD, contributes a news feature on three outstanding members in our community who will be honored by the Supreme Council of the Order of the Knights of Rizal (KOR), an international civic organization, during the 9th Dr. Jose P. Rizal Award Gala on August 24 at the Ala Moana Hotel. The trio are Dr. Belinda Aquino, KOR officers Dr. Serafin Colmenares and Dr. Raymund Liongson. All three of them have a long history of civic contributions to both communities in Hawaii and the Philippines. We are pleased that they all happen to be contributing writers to the Hawaii Filipino Chronicle.

In our news sections, read about the Maui Filipino Chamber of Commerce's upcoming Gintong Pamana Leadership Award recipients and banquet; the University of Hawaii's Board of Regents approval to freeze tuition rates through 2021; and the reintroduction of the Filipino Veterans Family Reunification Act introduced in the U.S. Senate and House by Hawaii's Sen. Maize Hirono and Rep. Ed Case.

Lastly, we'd like to remind our Filipino community organizations and clubs to share your upcoming events. The HFC is your community's newspaper. Feel free to send us press releases at least two weeks prior to your event; and your event will be posted on our online community calendar. Visit the Hawaii Filipino Chronicle website to view our past issues that you might have missed.

Thank you to the Filipino community, our readers, and all our loyal advertisers for your continued support. Until next time, warmest *Aloha* and *Mabuhay!*

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EDITORIALS

# Enough Is Enough, Stop The War Train Heading to Iran

**U**.S. Rep. Tulsi Gabbard might have a mixed Progressive Democrat report card ranging from A to C on various issues; but the presidential hopeful scored big approval points from multi-sectors of Americans for her recent outspoken criticism about going to war with Iran. Gabbard, who is a member of the House Armed Services Committee, was spot on her assessment.

She told ABC News she believes actions coming from Trump and national security adviser John Bolton, “are dangerously escalating us closer and closer towards a devastating war with Iran.”

“I think what we’re seeing, unfortunately, is what looks a lot like people in the Trump administration trying to create a pretext or an excuse for us to go to war against Iran.”

She said a war with Iran “would actually undermine our national security, cost us countless American lives, cost civilian lives across the region, exacerbate the refugee crisis in Europe and it would actually make us less safe by strengthening terrorist groups like ISIS and al-Qaeda.”

Gabbard said a war with Iran would prove to be far more costly, far more devastating and dangerous than anything that we saw in the Iraq war.

**Another Trump Lie**

Trump, as a presidential

candidate, appealed to millions of Americans who opposed the hawkish U.S. policy in the Middle East. He criticized the U.S. invasion of Iraq. He criticized the way Americans were lied to in order to justify war with Iraq. He promised no more unnecessary stupid wars.

What do we have now with Trump as president?

**War Drums Beating Louder**

The Trump administration is accusing Iran of planning an attack on U.S. interests in the Middle East and has begun fielding increased military presence near Iran. Warships and bombers have already been sent to the region.

The U.S. also ordered non-essential staff out of its diplomatic posts in Iraq, another sign of moving away from diplomacy and closer to war.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo visited Baghdad and told Iraqi intelligence that the United States had been picking up intelligence that Iran is threatening American interests in the Middle East. But Pompeo had offered no details of the alleged threat.

Trump has as his National Security Advisor John Bolton, one of the chief architects of the invasion of Iraq.

Trump has also selected Patrick Shanahan to be the next secretary of defense, a post usually filled by former military generals. Shanahan has spent decades as a Boeing executive. Boeing is one of the

largest weapons manufacturers in the world that reported revenues in just last year of \$101.127 billion. His appointment should be red-flagged as a conflict of interest and certainly sets the stage for potential war-profiteering.

**Cost of War to date**

The Watson Institute of International and Public Affairs at Brown University released an eye-opening study last year that puts the cost of U.S. wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Pakistan since 2001 at a staggering \$5.9 trillion.

How does that compare to the U.S. federal spending? That total is almost \$2 trillion more than all federal government spending during the recently completed 2017-18 fiscal year.

Between 480,000 to 507,000 people have been killed in those wars.

Even if the wars are ended by 2023, the U.S. is still on track to spend an additional \$808 billion in total to bring the total to \$6.7 trillion.

The study does not even project the cost of future wars such as a conflict with Iran which experts say could be far

more costly, lengthy, and devastating than the Iraq war, and could also broaden to include conflict with Russia.

A war with Iran could potentially triple war expenditures nearing \$20 trillion; and who knows how many more lives lost.

For perspective of what \$20 trillion is. The entire U.S. gross national debt (government debt and public debt combined) is around \$20 trillion.

In other words, a war in Iran could potentially double the nation’s entire national debt.

All this talk by Republicans against spending too much, lowering the national debt, and their reasons against Medicare for All or the Green Deal as being too costly – just wouldn’t make sense should the GOP stand with the President and rally for a war in Iran.

**Enough is Enough**

American foreign policy

in the Middle East and the U.S. push for war in that region have been too costly, chaotic, impulsive, and counterproductive.

Americans have allowed war hawks to lead the nation into war far too frequently for unjustified reasons. Americans should be asking themselves: who really has benefited? Who is profiting? And why are we here once again, at the brink of yet another possible major war?

The fact that Pompeo is not even willing to articulate these alleged threats that Iran is posing to U.S. interests and for the U.S. to have already sent war ships to the region, amplifying aggression -- is unacceptable and reckless.

How much longer will Americans allow this war culture to continue?

Kudos to Gabbard, Hawaii Sen. Mazie Hirono, and other leaders who are saying no to the war train headed to Iran.

**EDITORIALS: BEWARE...**from page 2)

this midterm. Clearly many voters do not condone extrajudicial killing, but turning a blind eye to basic human rights and security by supporting Duterte allies will not make the killings stop. And for what? Because voters might benefit from an economy favorable to them; benefit from free government paid education; benefit from jobs in infrastructure; benefit from potential China deals to enter the country.

What Filipino voters have done is hand over a supermajority (influence of the Senate, House, and Supreme Court) to a dictator who has already proven immoral leadership. The last institutional guard of democracy and justice in that coun-

try is now the Philippine free press, which Duterte has already shown disdain for.

The Philippine midterm had other sub-headlines worth mentioning: the continuity of political dynasties (namely Imee Marcos win in the Senate and the Duterte family wins in Davao), massive vote-buying, widespread violence, malfunctions in automated vote-counting machines, celebrity winners and losers, and voter intimidation – all features not new to Philippine elections.

But the main headline that summarizes the midterm, sadly, is that the “Philippines Voted for Autocracy; Philippine Democracy Is Now in Peril.”



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# Duterte and Allies Win A Supermajority in Midterm

By Edwin Quinabo

**M**

ay 13, 2019 – Philippine democracy freefalls.

*This is how some critics of Asia's most brash autocrat President Rodrigo Duterte, see the Philippines midterm election, claiming that in its aftermath the country could very well be in transition to a democracy in steep slide.*

*To a majority of over 60 million Filipinos who voted for Duterte allies this midterm, they viewed the election less about a waning democracy and more about continuity of what's good in the country.*

*Some say for the fairly bullish economy (overlooking a hiccup recession); some say for "safer" drug-free streets, no matter the cost.*

*Whatever the reason, a majority of Filipino voters have elected to brush off widespread condemnation of Duterte abuses and favor his hardline leadership.*

*Duterte allies won 12 of the 12 open seats in the Senate (11 if counting one independent), giving the president's ally count up to 18 of the 24 total Senate seats. In the House, pro-Duterte allies will keep a 245-seat majority out of 297 seats.*

*Allies of the president are now positioned to hammer the might of a new supermajority. All elected candidates will take office on June 30 this year.*

Critics say the political calculus was a risky one, that Filipino voters have chosen this midterm, considering the nation's post-EDSA style democracy is still nascent (some 30 years).

This midterm rendered to Duterte a strongman's dream, control of all branches of government: the Senate (that was his sole opposition before the midterm), the House, and a Duterte-stacked Supreme Court (he appointed seven justices, including the current Chief Justice in just three years).

## Midterm Election Impact on Future Policies

UH-Manoa Asian Studies professor Patricio Abina-

les, who grew up in the Philippines, forecasts what the midterm election could mean in the way of future policies under a Duterte supermajority.

"At the domestic level it will be a continuation of the war on drugs and more extrajudicial executions, but now with the police or their hired assassins not having to worry about any possible Senate or congressional investigation or the National Bureau of Investigation, the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency and the courts raising questions about legal procedures," said Abinales.

Human Rights Watch estimates Duterte's campaign on drugs had killed more than 12,000 drug suspects, as

of January 2018. The official count based on police records lists 5,000. Human rights groups accuse the President of often carrying out extrajudicial killings in the guise of a drug war.

The president has also been accused of using his anti-drug war to intimidate, even take out, political opponents. Human rights activist, lawyer and Senator Leila de Lima was jailed on drug-trafficking charges, which she says were trumped up charges to silence her. De Lima was chair of a panel investigating extrajudicial killings in the drug war before her arrest.

De Lima condemned the President's drug war, but was made an example of what pol-



Pres. Rodrigo Duterte casts his vote at the Daniel R. Aguinaldo National High School in Davao City on May 13, 2019. Photo credit: www.pcoo.gov.ph

iticians could have happen to them should they go against Duterte, human rights groups claim. In May 2018, Amnesty International conferred to de Lima the first ever "Most Distinguished Human Rights Defender" award.

The abuses, political intimidation – all hadn't imprinted enough for voters to be swayed in the midterm.

Among the 12 Duterte allies elected to the new Senate is Ronald dela Rosa, the chief police who spearheaded Duterte's war on drugs.

Abinales said in terms of foreign policy, the president will now push the Philippines closer to China. "This means an end of an effort to reclaim Philippine sovereignty over the West Philippine Sea, and use of high-interest Chinese loans for President Duterte's infrastructure projects.

"This, in turn, means a considerable downgrading of US-Philippine ties. The Philippine government will of course, not try to anger Filipino-Americans and Filipinos who are mainly pro-American, by just focusing on official issues like reducing the number of joint exercises between the US and Philippine militaries or scaling down and limiting the assistance extended by the US military on the anti-terrorist cam-

paings of the Armed Forces of the Philippines."

He said FII-Ams and pro-American Filipinos will not immediately notice the serious consequences of these official actions as they do not directly impact them. "But in the long term, this erosion of US-Philippine ties will affect them in various ways, including losing their ability to express and convince the Duterte government of how unwise it is to displace these traditional ties."

Other reforms expected from a pro-Duterte legislature include revising the Constitution to end term limits; making children as young as 9-years old subject to prosecution; bringing back the death penalty; lowering corporate taxes; implementing more anti-crime measures.

The pro-Duterte alliance's handbook similarly mirrors other ultraconservative majorities around the world – give a helping hand to corporations and make law and order an urgency. For the latter to work as freedom is not easily traded off, political analysts say heaps of fear are seared into the psyche of the masses to where the masses fear the masses, an orchestration of fear-mongering Duterte has mastered.

Ramon Casiple, executive director of the Institute

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## COVER STORY



The 12 winning senators: Bong Revilla, Francis Tolentino, Lito Lapid, Bato Dela Rosa, Bong Go, Cynthia Villar, Grace Poe, Pia Cayetano, Sonny Angara, Imee Marcos, Koko Pimentel and Nancy Binay

(from page 4)

for Political and Electoral Reform, a Manila advocacy group summed up the election this way, “Whatever he’s doing now, it will be with more confidence.”

Richard Javad Heydarian, a political analyst who teaches at De La Salle University in Manila, said “the more pessimistic assessment is that now President Duterte possesses the supermajority that is necessary to push his authoritarian style of governance to its logical extreme.”

But Heydarian makes an unexpected prediction that the president’s influence in the new Senate might be less strong than what appears. “Most of the 12 apparent victors are tactical allies with their own points of view, not through-and-through Duterte supporters,” he said.

### Duterte’s impact on midterm; failure of Otso Diretso (opposition alliance)

The midterm ultimately was a referendum on Duterte whose approval rating is incredibly high at 79 percent in the first quarter of 2019, according to Social Weather Stations. For perspective, American presidents’ favorable ratings usually hover just under 60 percent, at their best moments.

Some voters like Annie Gobotero said she supports Duterte’s anti-drug campaign so much that she is willing to overlook his vulgarity toward women, his maligning of the Catholic Church.

Pollsters say Duterte’s tough on law governance is why his approval rating is so high.

But to say voters favored his allies for this singular rea-

son alone is not entirely accurate.

In all elections there is an incumbency advantage because of the nature of pork-barrel politics. Money coming one’s direction has always been incentive to vote in the status quo.

Then there also are other reasons.

Abinales said, “Yes, Duterte’s popularity is extremely high, but is it simply because of the war on drugs? His free tuition program, not to mention his anti-imperial Manila pronouncements, his manner of talking, and the fact that he has not reverse the policy of sending Filipinos to work abroad that his predecessors had started are the other possible and viable reasons for this support.”

But if in fact Filipinos are supporting Duterte and his allies for other legitimate reasons, it also means that they are willing to overlook injustices abound.

Abinales explains, “This means that Filipinos are alright if someone else’s son, daughter, husband or wife is killed, as long as these are not their family members. This is a disturbing sentiment for it suggests the extent to which we have become apathetic towards those in need but also on how much we value our own self-interest over that of the larger society.”

The anti-Duterte opposition alliance, known as Otso Diretso (Straight Eight), also got shut out of the Senate for failures of their own, for being “disorganized,” “fragmented,” and for campaigning mostly on their own, critics say.

The loose-knit left is not unique to the Philippines as

left-leaning political parties around the world tend to be broader with different central issues, compared with the cohesiveness of right-leaning alliances.

### Political Dynasties, Violence, and Voting Irregularities

Electing political family dynasties continue to be popular among voters. Most notable is the election of Imee Marcos, the daughter of the late Ferdinand Marcos, to the Senate. She also happens to be one of Duterte’s staunchest supporters.

Duterte had publicly denounced political family dynasties because of their close association to the elite class and power (the Aquinos, Estradas, Marcoses, Ortigas, Roxas, and others). Whether his criticism was done for political gain at first by presenting himself as an outsider alternative is debatable. But his own family is starting a dynastic trend of their own.

Duterte’s daughter, Sara was reelected as Davao City Mayor; his sons are vice mayor and representative in Congress.

Abinales said, “Political dynasties now rule all parts of the country at all levels of government, including the barangay.”

One dynastic political family member lost in the midterm. Senator Paolo Benigno “Bam” Aquino IV, who was the opposition’s best chance to win a Senate seat, failed to make the Magic 12 circle (12 senate seats).

Like political dynasties, the ongoing culture of violence once again plagued the Philippines midterm. The police recorded 20 deaths and 24 injuries during the election

**“I’ve always regarded (Philippine) elections as being driven by money and the desire of voters to sell their votes to the highest bidder.”**

— **PATRICIO ABINALES,**  
*Professor, UH-Manoa Asian Studies*

season. But Police Chief Oscar Albayalde said violence had gone down compared to the last 2016 election.

The Philippines National Police deployed 160,000 officers at polling stations.

Additional security couldn’t prevent the numerous reports of voting irregularities. Polling station observers reported incidences of vote-buying, ballots running out, and exhaustive long lines.

The Philippines adopted an automated election system (AES) in the 2016 election. It was used for a second time this midterm election, but there were widespread reports of malfunctioning ballot-counting machines, even higher than in 2016.

COMELEC spokesperson James Jimenez, said there were 400–600 out of 85,000 vote counting machines (VCMs) across the country that encountered glitches compared to the 188 VCMs in 2016 election.

Voting irregularities in the Philippines has always been a problem, voters say.

Abinales recalls the first time he registered to vote in the Philippines. “I went to the precinct only to find out that another “Patricio Abinales” had voted for me. This was in 1974 when Marcos and the COMELEC manufactured votes and manipulated elections to make the dictatorship look like it had the overwhelming support of the Filipino people. I tried to do the same thing in 1975 and 1977 and again found out that “Patricio Abinales” had already voted for me. In 1986, when Cory Aquino challenged the ailing Marcos, my name was not even in the list anymore.”

### No Pretense of Balance, Any-more

Professor Abinales explains what he believes is new about this midterm: “I’ve always regarded elections as being driven by money and the desire of voters to sell their votes to the highest bidder. Perhaps what is more worrisome in this election is that whereas in the past Filipinos may allow their votes to be bought but when it came to the Senate in particular, they always made sure that along with the mediocre (Paquiao) and the corrupt (Marcos and Enrile), they often insert an honorable candidate (Aquino, Pangilinan, Miriam Santiago) as it to make sure there is some balance (or perhaps to assuage their conscience for having sold their votes).

“But you do not see any of that anymore: plunderers (Marcos, Revilla, Estrada) and mediocrities (Paquiao) are back, and joined by the children of political dynasties (Cayetano; Angara) and new mediocrities (Bato; Go).”

It could be said that a veil has been lifted, starting from the top. The president is notorious worldwide for breaking political norms – saying whatever offensive thought that comes to his mind (too many to mention); or implementing the harshest anti-drug campaign known today. He has done so without shame and hid nothing from the public, hid nothing from voters.

Filipino voters gifting more power to Duterte this midterm by electing his allies in a sweep in light of all that is already known about the president -- leaves at least Filipino-Americans wondering: Why? Is there something we’re missing?

# Philippine Election 2019: The Senate that Would Say Yes

By Federico V. Magdalena, PhD

**T**he recently concluded 2019 senatorial election in the Philippines tells a lot.

Some say it is for change, bannered by the party Hugpong ng Pagbabago (Movement for Change) formed by Sarah Duterte, President Rodrigo Duterte's daughter. But others ask, why do trapos (traditional politicians) dominated the midterm election, as did those with questionable record? These include the likes of Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr. (charged though acquitted of plunder) and Imee Marcos (for lying about her academic credentials).

Some also question political newbies, such as Bong Go (personal assistant of Pres. Duterte) and Bato dela Rosa (the police chief who led the War on Drugs highly criticized by human rights activists). Or one with his acting career (Lito Lapid) as the only visible record of accomplishment to get elected senator.

All but one of the 12 senatorial positions up for grabs during the last election will be occupied by those who received the blessings of President Duterte. (Only exception

is Grace Poe, who ran as independent.) Not a single man or woman from the opposition party, Ocho Derecho, made it to the magic circle!

The bottom line is, the 2019 midterm election sounds like a referendum for President Duterte and his program for governance. He can now confidently push for his pet projects, backed by policies most of which are under protest among his critics. He now basks in a "supermajority" in the Senate, as in the House of the Representatives, to make them happen. In the pipeline are: changing the constitution from presidential to federal, lowering the age of children to 9 years old for criminal prosecution, bringing back the death penalty, siding with China at the expense of the Philippine claim on some islands in the Spratly, and continuing with the same brutality his Drug War.

Above all, the Senate will likely change its being independent, critical body to one that would say Yes to all, or most of Duterte's policies.

Two issues beg scrutiny.

1. Why did the opposition lose during the election? Is there not a single, credible man or woman who



can challenge the Duterte government?

2. Why has Duterte remained popular as president, receiving at least 80 percent favorable rating? Despite his controversial programs, in particular his campaign against dangerous drugs that has killed at least 20,000 (CHR chief Chito Gascon says it could be as high as 27,000).

Analysts are divided on the first. Some argue that the opposition's political strategy failed, targeting Duterte rather than his bets, or instead of propping up the opposition's programs that promise a better governance. Some others say that voters continue to patronize those they know, or who give them goodies for the table to feed their hungry families. This has been documented by reports of massive vote buying during the last elections.

A theory that offers a plausible answer is the so-called Protest Vote. Filipino voters are now disenchanted with politics, which has lost its appeal and meaning to their lives. If not abstain, they cast their votes as protest against the elite, or against those who have held unto power for so long that ordinary citizens are sidelined. This theory is reinforced by political disenchantment or frustration with identified politicians or their party, family background, or ideology. In the Philippines, it animated disliking of the "yellow" politicians (dilawan), as it condemned corruption and deception in high places. This explains why Mar Rox-

as, Jejomar Binay and Grace Poe miserably lost to Duterte in the 2016 presidential elections.

Electing Duterte's candidates may have also meant a rejection of elitism in politics and discontent with political and rich families (unless the affected candidates are endorsed by Duterte himself), while people have not seen meaningful changes around. True, there was People Power to take down a dictator (Marcos) in 1986, but decades of supposed change and democratization under a "liberator" did not make a dent in the lives of the masses. Desperation or feeling "alienated" in Philippine politics has repeatedly surfaced in blog discussions in the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Philippine Star, particularly in "counter" social media supporting Duterte through his "keyboard army".

Remember Mocha Uson? She has enjoyed wide popularity in Facebook, having marshalled millions of supporters in favor of Duterte's presidency. (She recently quit her juicy post in government because of a bungled video or messages that backfired.)

After getting elected, Duterte has successfully weaponized the Internet to his own advantage. Disinformation and fake news inundated cyberspace extolling his accomplishments or policies and actions, while hate messages targeted those who criticize him, according to Rappler reports. No wonder Rappler earned the ire of Duterte, who wields control of many government agencies besides the seemingly abiding NBI and DOJ. Or DILG, to reign in local officials.

A popular line that props up the president is embedded in a symbolic language that demonizes the opposition as "Yellows" (led by Cory Aquino and Fidel Ramos) as well as the leaders (Erap Estrada and Gloria Arroyo) who came after them but still detested by many. They have not brought about real progress, so they say. All share one thing in common, they all come from

elite families. Or geographically from Luzon and the Capital Region.

If the protest vote theory is true, one of its expressions is that voters throw support on somebody who epitomizes the anti-thesis of elitist politics. Doesn't matter if it brings back the authoritarian legacy left by Marcos. Duterte did not hide his Marcos inclination, allowing the latter to be buried in Libingan ng mga Bayani, despite the objection of his critics. Didn't the High Court sustain him in that decision, though it was unpopular?

A strategy that also seemed to have worked for Duterte and the election of his pet senators is his tactic of deflecting public blame at the right time. An example is his "Matrix" (list of drug lords or drug protectors), that consigned many opposition candidates in the local scene to lose.

Beware, even Duterte's constant cursing, or his threats to kill, can cause someone his/her career or even life, as observers have noted. Even priests or bishops critical of his ruthless drug war were exposed to this risk, as many others did (e.g., Senator Delima, SC Justice Sereno, Sr. Fox, etc.). His unconventional language seems to have added flavor to his being a populist president.

Meanwhile in Davao, where he started his political career as mayor, his children tightened their grip of a stronger Duterte dynasty. Sarah is re-elected Mayor, with son Baste as vice mayor. Another son, Polong, is elected Congressman of the city's First District.

With all these things in the horizon about to happen (or already happening), with apparent public approval, who can stop President Duterte from acting like a king? Can the Senate afford to say No?

**FEDERICO V. MAGDALENA, PHD**, is currently Associate Specialist and the Deputy Director of the UH Center for Philippine Studies. He is a KOR newbie. Recently, he organized symposia on Mindanao's peacebuilding, the 2017 Marawi war, and Moro sovereignty movement that brought seven professors from Mindanao State University to Honolulu.

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COMMENTARY

# Attacks Mount Against Philippine Human Rights Advocates

By John Witeck & Seiji Yamada, Hawaii Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines

**A**pproximately 300,000 or one-fourth of Hawaii's population is Filipino. Hawaii's substantial economic, personal, and family ties with the Philippines means that all of us here have a great stake in what is happening there. The government of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has been threatening and attacking a growing number of human rights advocates, labor, church and community organizers, and indigenous people and the poor.

Over the past three years, an estimated 27,000 Filipinos, mostly from poor communities, have been killed without trial by police, military officers, and unknown assailants in the name of the Duterte government's so-called "war on drugs." The killings continue on a daily basis despite domestic and international condemnation.

Human rights defenders who have called for an end to the killings have been harassed and detained, including Senator Leila de Lima, jailed for over two years on politically-motivated and false drug charges. News outlet *Rappler* and its CEO Maria Ressa have been harassed by 11 government complaints, and Ressa, *Time Magazine's* Person of the Year, and several other journalists and human rights lawyers have been publicly accused of working to destabilize the government.

Last November human rights attorney Ben Ramos was shot and killed; he was the Secretary-General of the National Union of Peoples Lawyers in Negros. At least 34 human rights and peoples' lawyers have been killed since 2016 when Duterte became president. More than 60 farmers have been killed in Negros alone, including the 14 farmers massacred in Negros Oriental in April; over 205 killings of farmers have been reported nationwide over the past 3 years.

In early 2019, peace talks

consultant Randy Malayao was assassinated. Last May 1 Archad Ayao, an investigator for the Philippine Commission on Human Rights, was shot dead in Cotabato City, southern Philippines, by an unidentified gunman. On April 22, human rights worker and local official Bernardino Patigas was gunned down in Escalante City, Negros Occidental. Hours later, several of his colleagues in the Karapatan human rights organization, including Karapatan Secretary General Cristina Palabay, received threatening text messages from an unknown person warning them that they are targeted to be killed this year.

Besides direct physical violence, human rights defenders have been "red-tagged" and called "communists" by the Philippine military officials, including Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples. She and others have been accused of involvement in "terrorist activities" due to their human rights work. Groups that the Duterte government has "red-tagged" include Karapatan, Rural Missionaries of the Philippines, the Ibon Foundation, the Alliance of Health Workers, and the National Union of People's Lawyers,

which has been giving legal assistance to political prisoners, activists, and relatives of victims of extrajudicial executions sanctioned by Duterte.

The Duterte regime has failed to conduct prompt, effective, and impartial investigations into the attacks on human rights defenders, and to bring those responsible to justice. Amnesty International (AI) recently called on the government to do so, but there has been little response. AI has also called on the government to cease "red-tagging" and threatening human rights

advocates and organizations and to protect them from harm.

It is time that we in Hawaii speak up and insist that our representatives in Congress – Senators Brian Schatz and Mazie Hirono, and Representatives Tulsi Gabbard and Ed Case -- work to halt all aid to the Philippine military and police forces while these atrocities, threats and jailings continue. Last year, the U.S. government provided \$184.5 million in economic aid to the Philippine military and national police, the main perpetrators of the atrocities.

Our Congressional representatives should also urge the US State Department to insist that the Philippine gov-

ernment investigate these killings and stop its attacks against journalists and human rights advocates and cease its extra-judicial killings. These are crimes against humanity and gravely threaten the safety and security of the Filipino people.

*JOHN WITECK is a retired labor unionist and human resources who currently works part-time for the State Department of Education and is a lecturer at the Honolulu Community College. He has been hosted on four occasions by labor, community, and human rights organizations in the Philippines and attended International Solidarity events. He edited the bimonthly periodical Philippine Labor Alert for over a decade.*

*SEIJI YAMADA is a family physician practicing and teaching in Hawaii.*

## HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

### UH Regents Approve Freeze of Tuition Rates Through 2021

**T**he University of Hawaii's Board of Regents (BOR) voted a three-year freeze of undergraduate tuition rates at UH's 10 campuses beginning with the 2020–2021 academic year. The new tuition schedule also decreases general graduate student tuition rates at UH Mānoa.

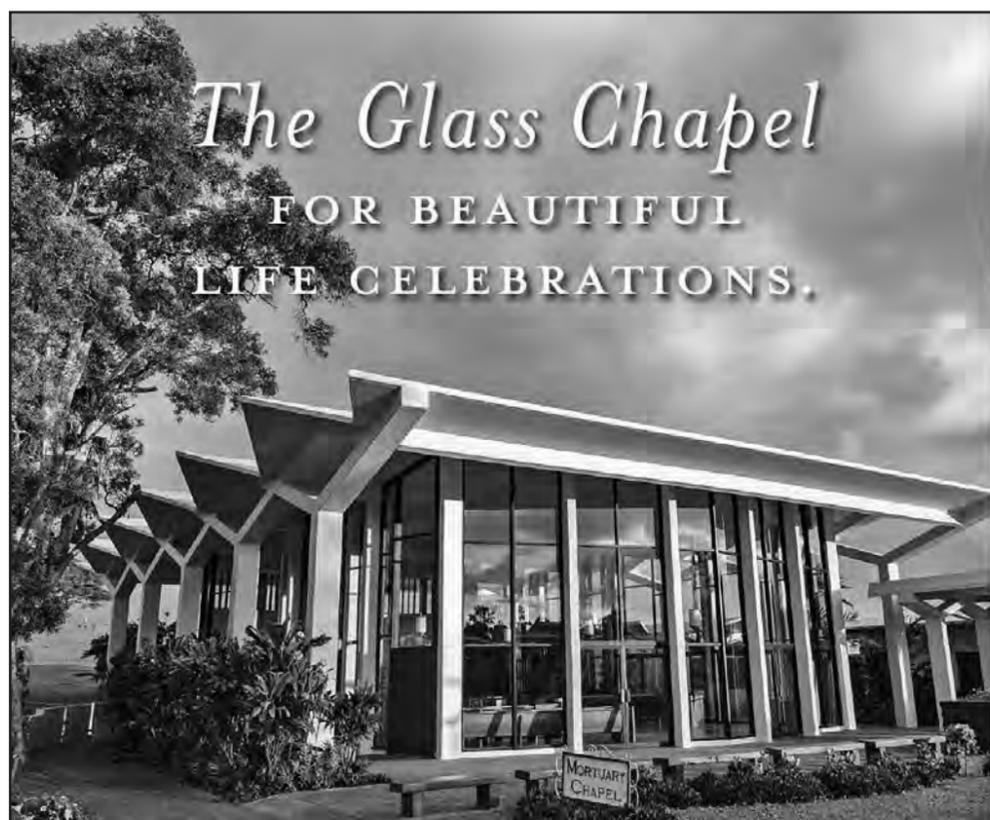
"The new schedule ensures affordable higher education for the people of Hawaii while providing stability over a multi-year period that

will aid student recruitment and retention," said UH President David Lassner. "It also increases our competitiveness in the broader higher education landscape as we strive to provide Hawaii with a more educated workforce and citizenry."

Tuition for UH Manoa undergraduate students for 2019-23 is \$5,652 (resident), \$16,668 (nonresident).

At the UH Community Colleges, for lower division courses, tuition is \$131

per credit hour for residents and \$345 per credit hour for nonresidents. For upper division/300-level courses at UH Maui College's four-year degree programs and Leeward Community College's advanced professional certificate in special education, tuition is \$306 per credit hour for residents and \$846 per credit hour for nonresidents for the 2019–2020 academic year, and is unchanged for the 2020–2023 academic years.



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## Chronicle readers can win \$250, other prizes in special essay contest

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As part of the year-long celebration of our 25th year in publication, the Hawaii Filipino Chronicle is sponsoring a special essay contest where readers can personally express the impact of our newspaper in their lives and on Filipinos in Hawaii.

In an era dominated by online media, traditional print publications seem to be fading. But some community newspapers like the Chronicle are surviving and thriving after 25 years—because of readers like you!

Now you have a chance to tell us and everyone why you read our newspaper and why people should continue reading it for the next 25 years and into the future. You could win \$250 or other prizes for your essay.

Download the official entry form and template from our website at [www.thefilipinochronicle.com](http://www.thefilipinochronicle.com) and enter now to win! Or you can call our office at 808-330-8981 or 808-678-8930 to send you an official entry form.

### SUBMISSIONS INFORMATION

- The essay must be between 400-700 words, typed and double-spaced, using the official entry form and template from our website.
- Judging is based on originality, creativity and

composition. Chronicle staff members will choose their favorites with the publisher/ editor selecting the final winning entry. The full winning essay and excerpts of runner-up essays will be published in a summer edition of the newspaper with their accompanying photo.

- Only one essay entry per person is accepted. All ethnic and age groups are welcome to enter. Relatives of the Chronicle staff are ineligible to participate in this essay contest.
- All entries become the rights of the Chronicle for use in publication and promotions. They may be edited for clarity and space.

### PRIZES AND PUBLICATION

Three grand prize winner of \$250 will be awarded to the reader who has submitted an essay that best answers the above questions. There will be one winner from High School (ages 15-18), one from College (ages 19-26) and one from Adult (ages 27-70) entry submissions. Winning entries will be published in full in a summer edition of the Chronicle. Runner-up essays will be excerpted as well.

All those who submit essays are eligible to win additional prizes, such as gift cards (restaurants, gas, stores, discount services, etc.)

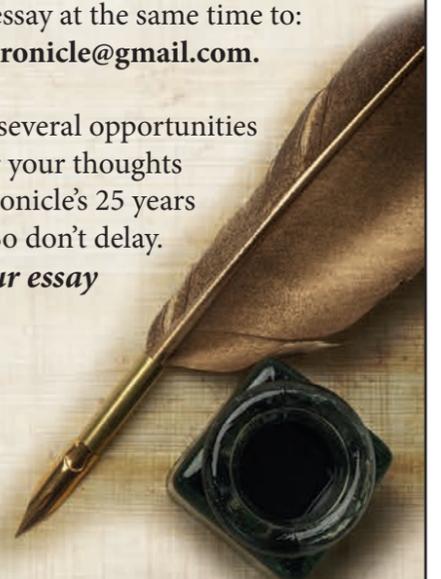
or merchandise from the Chronicle, community and essay contest sponsors. Winners will be notified and may pick up their prizes at the Chronicle office in Waipahu.

### **DEADLINE: JUNE 1, 2019**

Please snail mail a hard copy of your essay on or before June 1. It must be postmarked by May 27 in order to qualify for the deadline. Late submissions will not be accepted. Hawaii Filipino Chronicle 94-356 Waipahu Depot Rd., Flr. 2, Waipahu, Hawaii 96797. In addition, please send an email copy of your essay at the same time to: [filipinochronicle@gmail.com](mailto:filipinochronicle@gmail.com).

There are several opportunities to win just for your thoughts about the Chronicle’s 25 years and beyond. So don’t delay.

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AS I SEE IT

# May Day is Lei-Day in Hawaii, A Special Day



By Elpidio R. Estioko

**B**efore we end the month of May, I need to run this column to pave the way for a very important Hawaiian culture falling on the month of May: Lei-Day! I will be doing injustice to the people of Hawaii if I miss it. This will also be a very important piece of information to tourists visiting our island paradise.

I didn't know lei-making is an important part of Hawaiian culture until we attended a Luau Party at Paradise Cove last year. Yes, I heard of May Day, but I never associated it with anything else until somebody told me May Day is the Hawaiian equivalent of *Lei-Day* on the 1st day of May. This is the day people celebrate the islands' culture with lei-making contests, Hawaiian food and music, and even the crowning of the Lei Queen.

At the luau party, one of the features was lei-making conducted by native Polynesians. My children (May, Tweety, and Paul), who are members of a *halau* (hula

dance group) in Santa Clara, California, pulled me; my wife Delia; my son-in-law Jonathan; my eldest daughter Gigi who is from Sydney, Australia who was vacationing with us in Hawaii; and my other son Jayson who is not a member of any hula group, out from the crowd and went to witness the session being conducted by early descendants making leis and teaching people to make leis. It was fun and we managed to learn the rudiments of lei-making and how it originated and became ingrained in the Hawaiian culture. We were later joined by my eldest son Jojo, his wife Alvi and their children Kayla and Bibay who are from Jacksonville, Florida also vacationing with us in Hawaii. The whole family enjoyed the activities which ended just in time for the *luau* party to begin.

May Day is Lei Day in Hawaii, a special day popularized by writer and poet Don Blanding who first suggested that a holiday should be dedicated to the beautiful Hawaiian tradition of making and wearing lei. But it was Grace Tower Warren, also a writer, who came up with the idea that the holiday should coincide with May Day. Since the first Lei Day was on May 1, 1928, Ha-



waii has continued the annual celebration to this very day.

Oahu hosted the state's largest Lei-Day event this year. No matter which day of the week May 1 falls on, the Lei-Day celebration takes place at Queen Kapiolani Park in Waikiki. The annual event featured live music, a stunning lei contest exhibit, hula performances, demonstrations, craft and food vendors, and more. This event was free and open to the public.

Each year, the Lei Queen and her court preside over the festivities. Lei Queens are selected based on their lei making skills, hula proficiency, and Hawaiian language fluency. People saw the most beautiful lei in the world at the annual Lei Day competition held and displayed at the park. Also played were excellent live music by some of Hawaii's top performers. This year's 92nd Annual Lei Day Celebration was celebrated from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

May Day on Waikiki

Beach showed Keiki (children) dancing hula, a great May Day event right on Waikiki Beach, fronting The Royal Hawaiian: A Luxury Collection Resort and the Outrigger Waikiki Beach Resort. May Day Waikiki, now in its 6th year, took place on Wednesday, May 1, 2019, with a live music concert featuring Henry Kapono and Friends from 4p.m. – 7 p.m. It began with a helicopter flower drop honoring the Waikiki Beach boys. The event was free to the public.

Lei-Day was likewise celebrated in Maui. The Lei-Day Heritage Festival at Hale Hō'ike'ike at the Bailey House (formerly The Bailey House Museum) at 2375A Main St., Wailuku on May 1, was held from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. This was a free community event that featured a lei contest, food (at cost) and live music.

May Day on Hawaii Island, on the Big Island of Hawaii, was held in Hilo at the Kalakaua Park, 150 Kalakaua St., Hilo from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Lei making demonstrations were held at this historic site nestled within downtown Hilo.

Likewise, May Day was celebrated in Kauai. On Kauai, the historic 39th Annual Lei-Day Festival returned to its new home at the Kauai Marriott. The event took place on May 1, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. There were lei-making contests and people learned to make a lei, or win a lei to take home. There were also food vendors and live music. This special event showcased the Walter & Irmalee May Day lei contest which honored Dana Valeriano Kaua Iki Olores in the Marriott Puna Court.

I remember when we arrived at the Daniel K. Inouye International Airport (Honolulu), my daughter Tweety and son-in-law Jonathan, who settled in Mililani, Oahu, HI after their June wedding last year, received us at the airport's baggage area and presented us leis of fresh orchid's flowers! Wow, that's how venerated leis are in the island! I love it!

I also noticed that the leis are a must, whether you are in formal or informal attire/occasions. Leis matter a lot in Hawaiian culture!

*ELPIDIO R. ESTIOKO was a veteran journalist in the Philippines and an award-winning journalist here in the US. For feedbacks, comments... please email the author at estiokoelpidio@gmail.com.*

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## HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

# Gintong Pamana Leadership Award Recipients Chosen

**K**AHULUI, MAUI—The Maui Filipino Chamber of Commerce announced its four recipients of the Gintong Pamana Leadership Awards who will be honored during the Gintong Pamana Leadership and Scholarship Awards banquet on June 12, 2019, which begins at 5:30 p.m. at the Maui Beach Hotel. Event tickets are available at \$65 each.

The Gintong Pamana  
*(continue on page 11)*



CANDID PERSPECTIVES

# Duals Need to Pay Attention Here



By Emil Guillermo

I'd like to say whatever happens in the Philippines stays in the Philippines, but it seems that "nationalistic/authoritarian thing" is racing round the world. And it's not stopping in the Philippines.

In India, Prime Minister Modi has secured another victory in parliament based on a national security-grounded Hindu nationalism. Add China to the mix, and you have the ancestral politics of the Big Three Asian American communities in the U.S. (Chinese, 4.9 million; Asian Indian, 4.1 million; Filipino, 3.9 million).

And isn't it great we're in America?

I still have family ties in the Philippines, but haven't been there in more than 30 years. The last time I was in Asia in 2014, I was in Thailand and Malaysia. Close, but not the Philippines.

Both my parents were naturalized U.S. citizens from the Philippines, but they passed away before I could invoke my right to become a dual citizen. And now I don't know if it would have been worth it.

Does the Philippines even want us to be "bi-" in that way, as in bi-national?

Judging from the latest midterm elections, I'm not sure.

The Philippines sent out ballots to an estimated 228,500

voters in the U.S.--but forgot to pay the postage, according to poll watchers.

The ballots were delayed, and the Philippine government had to send out \$1 million to cover the postage due. On top of that, the ballots were mis-addressed, leaving some dual citizens upset at why their registrations were abruptly changed.

All of this acted as a coincidental monkey wrench in an effort among liberal to moderate left Filipinos to assure a voice in the Philippine Senate that would be strong enough to say no to the resident autocrat, President Rodrigo Duterte.

Of the twelve seats that were open, none of the liberals won a spot. The closest one came in 14th, an incumbent senator, Benigno Bam Aquino, the nephew of People Power's Cory Aquino. The hope is that the U.S. vote, a fraction of the 1.3 million overseas voters might make a difference.

They did not. And so Philippine watchers will wait to see if the new Senate becomes a rubber stamp for the whims of Duterte, who has been talking about a move to a parliamentary style of government. Or if a handful of legislators decide to stand up for the U.S.-style democracy which the Philippines was modeled after since after World War II.

I'd say judging from the election results, the voice of the people was heard and it was resounding in its support for Duterte.

That's the way the people see it.

It leaves me less than optimistic that the liberal forces, so thoroughly thrashed in the election, will have the sway needed to challenge any moves by Duterte.

As an American Filipino, I'm concerned.

But I have a greater sentimental sense of right and wrong and the rule of law. I want what's right for the Filipino people as well. But they are the ultimate arbiters and seem to be moving toward an "ends-justifies the means" autocracy ready to embrace whatever Duterte wants.

Extrajudicial killings of drug dealers? Even if it fills the prisons and even kills an innocent person or two or three?

It's something that Trump has publicly says he admires.

It's the reason the Rappler journalist Maria Ressa said prior to the election that the Philippine mid-terms would also be a cautionary tale on democracy for the U.S. and the world.

She warned that if the liberals can't win enough seats to mount a strong opposition to Duterte, fundamental changes can come quickly.

That may be the case but it may be time to turn your attention to the U.S. part of the equation.

Maybe it's time we finally say "Let the Philippines be the Philippines without us." Duterte's extrajudicial killings are affronts to freedom and democracy, sure. But have you noticed, we have our own democracy troubles here?

President Trump's stonewalling on subpoenas are a

clear challenge to Congress which has oversight on the executive branch.

Already two federal judges have upheld the idea that Congress and investigators have a right to see financial documents of Donald Trump, even from before his presidency.

The issue is whether Trump has continued to profit from his businesses while being president, or whether he's been in receipt of "emoluments."

Watch for that word. It means any kind of compensation or payment that Trump may have received as president that may be considered a conflict of interest.

There's a lot of that sort of thing in Asian countries where the rule of law is not so strong. Rule of personal/political will generally prevails. That's also called corruption, and it's abundant in societies and governments where democracies are not quite as strong as that of the United States.

We should be concerned about all of it: How Trump and his lawyers comply or not with the court's upholding of Congressional scrutiny. How other's subpoenaed come forward or not (including Robert Mueller). How Trump stonewalls Congress and creates a defacto state that puts him above the law.

That's not where a president is supposed to sit.

Ordinarily, we can sit under our palm trees and read about the Washington shenanigans and feel apart from it all.

But this is fundamental U.S. government stuff.

If the Trump stonewall continues our democracy is diminished until good people push back.

It's been said that Nancy Pelosi is slow-rolling impeachment based on the polls. But there's enough evidence of Trump's misconduct just from the Mueller Report to go ahead.

We didn't really need the Trump tantrum last week on infrastructure, though that's a fairly good reminder of what kind of person we're dealing with.

So you see, if you're a dual citizen, it's time to focus on our own problems in the U.S.

The fight for democracy is on multiple fronts.

But perhaps it's time to let the Philippines be the Philippines without us, lest the U.S. becomes something else without us.

EMIL GUILLERMO is a veteran journalist and commentator. He was a member of the Honolulu Advertiser editorial board. Listen to him on Apple Podcasts. Twitter @emilamok.

HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS: GINTONG PAMANA...from page 10

Leadership Award is given to leaders who've made outstanding contributions to the community.

The four awardees are Melen Agcolicol, owner and operator of Copy Services; Dionicia Cabias, staff supervisor at Hale Makua Health Services; Greg "Jay" Peros, general manager of the Maui Beach Hotel; and Tante Urban, owner & president of Tante's Island Cuisine.

"We are grateful to have this opportunity to honor our outstanding community leaders of Filipino ancestry and express our gratitude to each of them." said Dulce Butay, event chair and board member of the Maui Filipino Chamber of Commerce.

Past honorees have included first Filipino-American elected in public office Richard Caldito (2006), Senator Gilbert Keith-Aga-

ran (1995), and former Maui County Councilmember Don Guzman (2012).

The Maui Filipino Chamber of Commerce Foundation also announced it will be giving out a record breaking 19 scholarships to students for 2019.

For information on tickets or the event, contact Dulce Butay at (808) 268-5354 or visit www.mauifilipinochamber.com.



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# AQUINO, COLMENARES AND LIONGSON TO RECEIVE TOP KNIGHTS OF RIZAL AWARDS

By Federico V. Magdalena, PhD

**O**t sounds like a “Triumvirate,” or a “Gang of Three,” one female and two other male professionals from Hawaii will receive top honors from the Supreme Council of the Order of the Knights of Rizal (KOR) based in Manila following a decision made by the Council on March 21. An official from the Manila Council will be presenting the awards.

Dr. Belinda Aquino will receive the Teodora Alonso Medal Award, named after the distinguished mother of Dr. Jose Rizal, the Philippine National Hero. It is the “Highest Award given to a woman in recognition of her outstanding contributions in the promotion of Rizalian ideas, principles, and services to the Filipino people.” It will be conferred to Dr. Aquino on August 24 on the occasion of the First Rizal International Conference in Honolulu and the 9th Jose P. Rizal Award for Peace and Social Justice Gala.

Dr. Serafin Colmenares, Jr. and Dr. Raymund Ll. Liongson, both KOR Hawaii officers, will be elevated to the Knight Grand Cross 5th Degree Rank. The Rank is the highest that can be conferred to outstanding officers of a KOR chapter.

All three awardees have pursued distinguished careers in academia and professional fields since their arrival in Honolulu as immigrants from the

Philippines. They are actively involved in various programs and projects designed to promote and perpetuate Filipino culture and values in the larger community. At least two common denominators they all share include these: they are regular contributors to Hawaii Filipino Chronicle, and were appointed in 2006 by Governor Benjamin J. Cayetano as Commissioners of the Hawaii Filipino Centennial Celebration to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the arrival of 15 sakada workers from the Philippines.

The awards will be formally bestowed upon these honorees by Sir Lutgardo Barbo, Deputy Supreme Commander of KOR during the 9th Dr. Jose P. Rizal Award Gala on August 24, 2019 at Ala Moana Hotel in Honolulu.

KOR is an international fraternal organization that aims to promote and propagate the ideals and teachings of Philippine national hero, Dr. Jose P. Rizal. It is a “civic, patriotic, cultural, non-partisan, non-sectarian and non-profit organization.” Based in Manila, it was founded in 1911 and chartered under Republic Act 646. Since the beginning, the Order, as KOR is also known, has expanded with the formation of chapters in the Philippines, in Asia, Europe, Middle East, Australia, Canada and the United States.

The Teodora Alonso Medal is the highest award given to women by KOR. It is named



(L-R) Dr. Aquino, Dr. Colmenares and Dr. Liongson

after Teodoro Realonda Alonso, the mother of the Philippines’ national hero, Dr. Jose P. Rizal. Among its recipients are former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and other outstanding Filipino women leaders, educators, and scientists.

For those not inclined to reading Philippine history, Teodora Alonso (sometimes spelled as Alonzo) was born on November 9, 1827 from well-to-do parents in Laguna but later resided permanently in Binondo, Manila. She was a disciplinarian, and was Rizal’s first teacher. Unusual for women of her time, Teodora studied at Colegio de Sta. Rosa in Manila. From her, Rizal imbibed values and attitudes that molded his character leading him to become a scholar. A victim of Spanish injustice, she was imprisoned for more than two years. In 1906, the American government offered her a lifetime pension as a token of gratitude for services rendered by her family to the country. She refused, saying: “My family has never been patriotic for the money.” The Teodora Alonso Award is therefore given to

women who exhibit Teodora Alonso’s passion for education, hard work, family, and love of country.

The first awardee from Hawaii is Dr. Belinda A. Aquino. She is Professor Emeritus at the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa, where she served as professor of Political Science and Asian Studies, and was founding director of the Center for Philippine Studies (1975-2009). She was also the first recipient of Dr. Jose P. Rizal Award for Peace and Social Justice given by the Knights of Rizal-Hawaii Chapter (KOR-Hawaii).

Dr. Aquino holds a PhD in Government with a minor in Southeast Asian Studies from Cornell University under a Ford Foundation fellowship, and an MA in the same field from UH Mānoa as an East-West Center scholar.

Lindy, as her friends call her, is well-known and respected in the academe for her writings especially on the deposed Philippine leader Ferdinand Marcos, who had lived and died in Hawaii as an exile. She has written books, notably the Politics of Plunder: The Philippines Under Marcos, (translated in Japanese by Professor Minako Ito under a Toyota Foundation grant) which narrates Marcos’s deeds (and misdeeds), and hundreds of articles on Philippine politics, women, and Ilokans, among other topics. She has also testified in Hawaii court against Marcos, and in favor of human rights victims for damages suffered during Martial Law era.

Herself an “exile” in Hawaii during Martial Law, she returned to the Manila to serve

as UP Vice-President for Public Affairs and Professor of Political Science/Public Administration in 1989-1991 under Dr. Jose V. Abueva, president. Lindy was in the faculty of this prestigious university before she joined UH Mānoa.

But these are not all that Lindy did to shine and earn the Teodora Alonso Award. She is currently Chair of the Rizalian Women Council, an integral organization of KOR-Hawaii. Her scholarly achievements include publications of numerous articles in international journals. She also served in editorial boards from local and international publishers.

Her academic pursuits left behind two important legacies: the UH Center for Philippine Studies which she founded, and an endowment known as the Belinda A. Aquino International Philippine Studies Endowment, to benefit UH students and faculty with interest in the Philippines or Filipinos in the diaspora. (This is on top of a Professorial Chair that she put up at UP College of Nursing in honor of her mother, who studied there before World War II.) At least three generations of Filipino Americans in Hawaii and other places are beneficiaries of these legacies. They now appreciate their cultural heritage, identify with their fellow kababayan in the homeland, and have pursued research on the Philippines with support.

The two other honorees are Dr. Serafin S. Colmenares and Dr. Raymund Ll. Liongson. They are the first from Hawaii to receive this much coveted rank as Knight Grand Cross of Rizal (KGCR), the highest (5th Degree) rank within the Order. It is bestowed on all male Philippine Presidents, Supreme Commanders of KOR, and other individuals who have outstanding achievements for, or rendered exemplary service to, the Philippines or the Order in the advancement of Rizalian values and principles.

Dr. Colmenares, or Sir Jun, is rising to the rank of KGCR

(continue on page 14)



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LEGAL NOTES

# Changing to F or M Student Status



By Atty. Reuben S. Seguritan

**F**-1 (academic student) or M-1 (vocational student) visas are available for foreigners who want to study in the United States. It is important to acquire the F-1 or M-1 visa first, before enrolling and studying in the US. If a foreigner enrolls in a class without first acquiring the F-1 or M-1 visa, then he has committed a violation of his status.

If a foreigner is in the US with a valid nonimmigrant visa and he would like to

enroll in a class, he does not need to leave the US in order to change his status to F-1 or M-1. However, he must meet the following requirements: 1. He was lawfully admitted to the US with a nonimmigrant status; 2. His nonimmigrant status remains valid; 3. He has not violated the conditions of his nonimmigrant status; and 4. He has not committed any crimes or engaged in any other actions that would make him ineligible to change his status. Once the foreigner applies with the USCIS to change his status to F-1 or M-1, he must wait for the approval notice from the USCIS. Hence, the foreigner should not enroll in classes or begin his studies until the USCIS has approved the change of status. Also, if

the foreigner is in the US on a M-1 visa, he may not change to F status while he is in the US.

Before the USCIS may approve the application, the following steps must be taken: 1. Apply to and receive acceptance from a US Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)-certified school; 2. Obtain an initial Form I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status, from the SEVP-certified school. The Designated School Official (DSO) should give change of status in the Issue Reason section of the Form I-20; 3. Pay the I-901 SEVIS Fee and 4. File a Form I-539, Application to extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status with the USCIS.

If the USCIS has not made a decision on the application at least 15 days before the program start date as indicated on the Form I-20, the foreigner should contact the DSO at the school. If the USCIS does not grant the application prior to the start of classes, the foreigner must defer attendance and wait until the next school term to begin his studies with the valid F-1 or M-1 visa. Furthermore, all applicants must maintain a valid nonimmigrant status in the US while their applications are pending.

If there is a gap of time between the date the current nonimmigrant status will expire and the date when the F-1 or M-1 program will start, and the foreigner would like to remain the US, he must find a way to obtain valid status for these days up to the date that is 30 days before the school program begins. This is known as “bridge the gap.” This “bridge the gap” can be obtained by filing a new Form I-539 application to request to extend the current status or change to another nonimmigrant status. If the foreigner fails to file this new Form I-539, the USCIS will deny the first Form I-539 filed to change to F-1 or M-1 student status. Hence, the foreigner may need to file

multiple Form I-539 applications in order to ensure that there is no gap time wherein he did not have a valid status in the US. If it would be burdensome to remain in the US while the F-1 or M-1 visa applications are pending, it would be better for the foreigner to return to his home country and apply through consular processing.

Applying for the F-1 or M-1 visa while in the home country of the foreigner, requires the following: 1. Apply to and receive acceptance from a SEVP-certified school; 2. Receive a new initial Form I-20 from the DSO; 3. Pay the I-901 SEVIS fess; and 4. Apply at a US Consulate or Embassy for an F-1 or M-1 visa to travel to the US to study and be admitted as a student. If a visa is not required for the foreigner to enter the US, he may proceed directly to a US port of entry or a US pre-clearance/ pre-flight inspection station and apply for admission to the US as an F-1 or M-1 student. Once admitted by an immigration officer as an F-1 or M-1 status, he may begin his studies.

**REUBEN S. SEGURITAN** has been practicing law for over 30 years. For further information, you may call him at (212) 695 5281 or log on to his website at [www.seguritan.com](http://www.seguritan.com)

## HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

### Rep Mizuno Concerned with Possible Medicaid Violations

**R**epresentative John M. Mizuno, Chair of the House Health Committee, said he plans on submitting a letter to the State Attorney General’s office, the Department of Health, and the Department of Human Services to secure clarification and review of an incident in which a Community Care Family Foster Home (CCFFH), a Medicaid care home, tried to force a current private pay patient to leave its three-patient facility because that patient is transitioning from private pay status to Medicaid pay status.

“I was contacted by a person concerned that his father, who is a private pay client in a Medicaid community care home, would be kicked out of his current care home because he will become a Medicaid status patient,” Rep. Mizuno said.

Mizuno said the fee that homes can charge Medicaid patients each month is less than they charge a private patient. But Hawai‘i Revised Statutes Sec. 321-481 provides in part, “The department, in its discretion, may certify a [community Medicaid] home for a third adult who is at the nursing facility level of care and is

a Medicaid recipient.”

“What this means is that Medicaid care homes are allowed no more than two patients, however, if in the discretion of the health department such a Medicaid care home is allowed a third patient, such a patient MUST be a Medicaid patient,” Mizuno said.

“If a Medicaid care home ‘dumps’ a private pay patient because he/she will become a Medicaid patient, this action circumvents the entire foundation of legally certifying Medicaid care homes in our state. This may be a violation of the law,” Mizuno said.

### AARP Seeks 2019 Andrus Award for Community Service Nominees

**A**ARP Hawai‘i is now accepting nominations for its 2019 Andrus Award for Community Service, which honors Hawai‘i residents 50+ who are sharing their experience, talent, and skills to enrich the lives of their community members.

“AARPHawai‘i is excited to shine a light on Hawai‘i’s exceptional volunteers who are using what they’ve learned

in life to make a difference in the lives around them,” said Jackie Boland, AARP Hawai‘i Outreach Director.

Nominees do not have to be AARP volunteers, but their service should reflect AARP’s vision and mission to empower Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age.

The award recipient will be announced later this year

and AARP Hawai‘i will donate \$500 to an organization of the recipient’s choice.

More information and application forms are available at [aarp.org/AndrusAward](http://aarp.org/AndrusAward). You can also email Ida Holtsinger at [ida-aarp@hawaiiantel.net](mailto:ida-aarp@hawaiiantel.net) or 808-545-6025 for further information and a nomination form. The application deadline is July 15, 2019.





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NEWS FEATURE

(AQUINO, COLMENARES AND LIONGSON...from page 12)

in recognition of his years of service and achievements as Knight of Rizal, and as community leader. A member of KOR for 20 years, he is now Knight Grand Officer of Rizal (KGOR) and is also the chair of the KOR-Hawaii Council of Elders. In addition, he has held various positions within the Order, as Chapter Commander, Area Commander, and USA Deputy Regional Commander. He is active in various activities that promote the ideals of Dr. Jose Rizal, especially among the youth through leadership trainings under the Rizalian Youth Leadership Institute, and in initiating the annual Dr. Jose P. Rizal Award.

Sir Jun holds an MA and PhD degrees in Political Science from the University of Delhi in India, a Master's in Public Health at UH Mānoa, and an AB in Political Science at Mindanao State University where he was a professor before he moved to Hawaii.

He has held various positions in both government and community organizations. He works currently as Comprehensive Health Planning Coordinator at the Hawaii State Department of Health. He previously served as Executive Director of

the Office of Language Access, which established programs for Hawaii individuals with limited English proficiency.

Sir Jun was elected president of the Congress of Visayan Organizations (COVO) for four years and served as its Executive Director for 10 years. He rode on these positions to promote Visayan (and Filipino) history, culture and the arts, offered scholarships to students, and encouraged unity and cooperation among Filipino community organizations in Hawaii.

He served as Commissioner of the Hawaii Filipino Centennial Celebration in 2006. He also got involved in the activities of the Filipino Community Center as member of its Board of Directors, and was founding chair and member of the Philippine Celebrations Coordinating Committee of Hawaii (PC-CCH) in partnership with the Philippine Consulate General in various festivals. His leadership carried him through humanitarian work, such as fund raising about \$200,000 for victims of Typhon Haiyan and two previous devastating typhoons. This is one trait of Freemasons – charity - that

Sir Jun is imbued with, being one of their kind.

Dr. Raymund L. Liongson, the third honoree, will also receive the rank of Knight Grand Cross of Rizal. At present, he is the Area Commander for KOR-Hawaii, a post he has occupied twice (2014-2016, and 2018-2020). He also held various positions in this august body that include Chapter Commander and member of the Council of Elders, KOR-Hawaii.

Sir Raymund is a Professor in the Arts and Humanities and Coordinator of the Philippine Studies Program at UH Leeward Community College. He obtained a PhD (Education), from the University of the Philippines as both UP and San Miguel Educational Foundation scholar.

As KOR officer, he has contributed immensely to its activities and growth, the list being almost endless. The 1st Hawaii Rizalian Conference is his brainchild. He was also instrumental (together with Sir Jun Colmenares) in implementing the 1st Dr. Jose Rizal Award for Peace and Social Justice in 2011, including the Paciano Rizal Award for non-KOR members as well as the

4th Hawaii USA Regional Assembly. He has participated in numerous panel discussions on the life, works and ideals of Dr. Jose Rizal. Sir Raymund also organized the Rizalian Youth Council (KAPARIZ-Hawaii) where he serves as its adviser, and the seminar director for its annual summer Rizal Youth Leadership Institute (RYLI).

Sir Raymund was appointed as a Commissioner of the Hawaii Civil Rights Commission. Also a Freemason and a Rotarian, he is equally active in other Filipino organizations, such as the UP Alumni Chapter in Hawaii, Philippine Celebrations Coordinating Committee of Hawaii, Commissioner on Hawaii Filipino Centennial Celebration, and Board Member of Filipino Community Center, among others.

Academically, he is active in publications and presenting papers for conferences. He co-edited (with Dr. Serafin Colmenares Jr.) Rizal's Legacy and Nation Building, and wrote a chapter in the said book. He likewise authored numerous articles.

Sir Raymund's activities have extended to organizing conferences, such as the NAKEM International Confer-

ences (in collaboration with Dr. Aurelio Agcaoili of UH Mānoa), and hosting speakers at Leeward from the Philippines (e.g., on Muslim sovereignty issues). Above all, he helped secure grants for research and educational advancement of students. Among them is the \$638K federal funding for Su-long Aral, a 2010 program designed to help students of Filipino ancestry at UH Leeward complete higher education, and small grants from UH Student Equity, Excellence, and Diversity.

Finally, both Sir Raymund and Sir Jun were primary movers in renaming a portion of the College Walk in Downtown Honolulu, where Rizal's monument stands now as Dr. Jose P. Rizal Square. They are also working on another anthology of essays around the life and works of the national hero (forthcoming publication).

**FEDERICO V. MAGDALENA, PHD**, is currently Associate Specialist and the Deputy Director of the UH Center for Philippine Studies. He is a KOR newbie. Recently, he organized symposia on Mindanao's peacebuilding, the 2017 Marawi war, and Moro sovereignty movement that brought seven professors from Mindanao State University to Honolulu.

(Sagot sa Krosword Blg. 5 | May 18, 2019)

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**COMMUNITY CALENDAR**

**OAHU FILIPINO COMMUNITY COUNCIL (OFCC) PRESENTS THE MISS OAHU FILIPINA 2019** | June 1, 2019; 6:00 PM | Marriot Waikiki Beach Resort | For more details call: Calvin Bagaosan at 266-4334, Maricelle Redona at 295-5233, Raymond Sebastian at 799-6080

Ballroom I For more details call: Lolita Echaz Ching at 387-7635, Luanne Long at 754-0594

**PHILIPPINE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION IN HAWAII (PWAH) PRESENTS FILIPINIANA BALL 2019** | August 30, 2019; 6:00 PM | Hibiscus Ballroom, Ala Moana Hotel | Call details call: Letty Saban: 255-9429, Lina Mercado: 382-7751, Carlota Ader: 797 4381, Mimi Gozar: 312-0778

**FILIPINO NURSES ORGANIZATION OF HAWAII (FNOH) EXCELLENCE IN NURSING AWARDS** | August 10, 2019; 6:00 PM | Hilton Hawaiian Village Resorts Coral

**MAINLAND NEWS**

**Filipino Veterans Family Reunification Act Reintroduced**

WASHINGTON, D.C.-- Senators Mazie K. Hirono (D-Hawaii) and Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) introduced the Filipino Veterans Family Reunification Act, a bill that would expedite the visa process for children of Filipino World War II veterans.

Representatives Ed Case (D-Hawaii) and Don Young (R-Alaska) introduced companion legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives.

"During World War II, Filipino soldiers stepped up and answered the call to service, fighting and sacrificing alongside American service-

members," Senator Hirono said. "However, because these family members have been stuck in a decades-long visa backlog, they have not been able to reunite with their relatives in the United States. The Filipino Veterans Family Reunification Act would fulfill our nation's promise to honor Filipino World War II veterans' service to our country and reunite these families."

"The time to reunite our brave Filipino American World War II veterans with their families is running out," Brendan Flores, National Chairman of the National Federation of Filipino American Associations, said. "We commend Senator

Hirono for her unwavering commitment to these veterans, as she reintroduces the Filipino Veterans Family Reunification Act in Congress. We remain prepared to support any efforts to ensure that this time-sensitive legislation comes to fruition."

Current data shows there are fewer than 6,000 Filipino World War II veterans residing in the United States who would be able to take advantage of the benefits bestowed by the Filipino Veterans Family Reunification Act.

More than 260,000 Filipino soldiers followed America's call to fight under the American flag in World War II.

**Bill Introduced to Grant U.S. Citizenship to Internationally-Adopted Children of U.S. Citizens**

Senator Mazie K. Hirono co-introduced the Adoptee Citizenship Act of 2019 – a bipartisan legislation to close a loophole in the Child Citizenship Act of 2000 that prevented internationally-adopted children from receiving U.S. citizen-

ship despite being legally adopted by U.S. citizens.

"Due to a loophole in the Child Citizenship Act, thousands of internationally-adopted children, who were raised by American parents, have been denied the same rights of

citizenship as biological children," Senator Hirono said.

Joining Senator Hirono (D-Hawaii) in introducing the Act are Roy Blunt (R-Mo.), Susan Collins (R-Maine), and Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.)

**CROSSWORD** No. 6  
by Carlito Lalicon

**ACROSS**

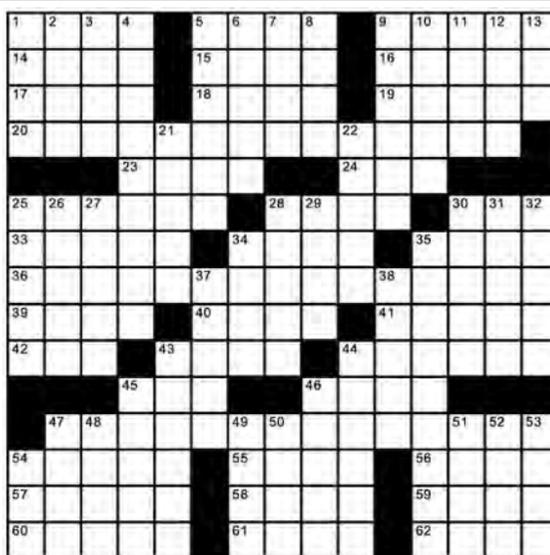
- 1. Earth
- 5. Egg on
- 9. Razor sharpener
- 14. Small dark purple fruit
- 15. Musical instrument
- 16. Motif
- 17. Camera diaphragm
- 18. Add to the pot
- 19. Support person
- 20. Former Senator from Bulacan
- 23. Numerous
- 24. 3rd man in the ring
- 25. Hare
- 28. Extol
- 30. Butter holder
- 33. Bulbous plant

- 34. Speech problem
- 35. Border
- 36. Poisonous vine
- 39. Abounding with elms
- 40. Hurting
- 41. Telegram sender
- 42. Jeans brand
- 43. Assist a criminal
- 44. Double star
- 45. Buddy
- 46. Female genitals as a symbol of Shakti (Hinduism)
- 47. Unhurriedness
- 54. Capital of Capiz
- 55. Ball material
- 56. And others, for short
- 57. Staring

**DOWN**

- 1. Flock member
- 2. Farm division
- 3. Artless one
- 4. Free from a body or physical form or reality
- 5. Gripe
- 6. Not set
- 7. One of four Holy Roman emperors
- 8. Act
- 9. Urinated (of cattle and horses)

- 10. Stealer
- 11. Change
- 12. Augur
- 13. KPH word
- 21. Wet, weather-wise
- 22. Blow
- 25. Part of a spur
- 26. Insectivorous lizard
- 27. Ecological community
- 28. Illuminate
- 29. Far from ruddy



- 58. Toward shelter
- 59. One province in ARMM
- 60. Maidenhead
- 61. Cast
- 62. Locale

- 30. Beauty pageant wears
- 31. Milk dispenser
- 32. Drunken
- 34. Vermin
- 35. Luster
- 37. Bigwig
- 38. Lowlife
- 43. Come to light
- 44. "Robot Network"
- 45. Strong flame that burns brightly
- 46. Capital of Nauru
- 47. Motherless calf
- 48. Final, e.g.
- 49. Unfledged or nestling hawk
- 50. Respiratory sound
- 51. Decorative case
- 52. Preserve, in a way
- 53. Turn sharply
- 54. "Hooray!"

(Solution will be on the next issue of the Chronicle)

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