

**Investiture Ceremony of
Justice Frances Marie Tydingco-Gatewood
Friday, February 8, 2002 at 4:00 P.M.
Justice Monessa G. Lujan Appellate Courtroom
Judicial Address
By
The Honorable Frances Tydingco-Gatewood
Associate Justice
Supreme Court of Guam**

Chief Justice Siguenza, Justice Carbullido, Justice Manglona, Presiding Judge Lamorena, esteemed brothers and sisters from the Guam Superior Court, Governor Gutierrez and First Lady, Speaker Unpingco, Judiciary Committee Chairman and Former Governor Ada, Majority Leader Forbes, Minority Leader Pangelinan, Senators of the 26th Guam Legislature, Archbishop Apuron, Honorable Mayors, Judicial Predecessors from the Supreme and Superior Courts, Former Guam Senators, distinguished brothers and sisters from the benches of the Northern Marianas, Republic of Belau, Kosrae State, Chuuk State, Members of the Guam Bar, my dear family from near and far, distinguished friends.....

On behalf of my family and self, Hafa Adai and Good Afternoon. Let me say at the outset that I am truly appreciative of the votes of confidence cast by Governor Gutierrez and the 26th Guam Legislature for my appointment and unanimous confirmation to the Supreme Court of Guam.

While you have bestowed this duty and entrusted me to serve on the Island's High Court, I must note that none of this would have been possible without the blessings of God and the good fortune He provided me: My husband, Robert, of 21 years, our 3 sons, my parents, brothers and sister, other family members, true friends, and loyal staff both from the Prosecution Division and the Superior Court. It is these people who have shaped and molded me into the public servant you have come to know. And it is them who made me the private citizen of this great land who so loves and cherishes her people, as well as life itself.

As an amalgamation of them, I am merely a tangible symbol. In trying to understand what my new role will be, I think back to what I am, who I am, what I have to do.

Each and every day, as far back as I can remember, my parents instilled very simple, yet very clear and extremely powerful values in my siblings, Phillip, Julie, Dan, and myself. They are core values that I am trying to impress upon and instill in my three sons, Daniel, Michael, and Stephen.

Up until the day he passed away, my Dad, always reminded us to "take pride in all we do." My mother, Francesca who is with me today still echoes this same message. They polished that pearl of wisdom by repeatedly telling us that "if we're not going to do it right, then we shouldn't do it at all." And, they always underscored it with the need to bring out the best in people and to let people bring out the best in us.

These are simple, yet clear, precise and eloquent words of wisdom. Wisdom that is applicable to each and everything we should do every day. I have used these as compass points to guide me in everything that I do. So far, I believe I have been headed in the right direction.

In my seven- and a half years tenure as a trial judge on the Superior Court bench, I have had to make use of that compass on a very frequent basis whenever I donned that black robe. Having had a front row seat to the joys and sorrows of our people, I have seen and heard our people shed tears of joy and weep tears of sorrow.

I have seen and heard first-hand the stories of passion bloom and passion gone awry: brother killing brother; big-hearted parents making room by adopting an innocent baby; childhood friends ripping each other off in a business deal; loving couples falling in love and getting married; loving couples falling out of love and getting divorced; government officials talking at each other instead of listening to each other; children and their neighbors being gripped by drugs and not realizing their lives are spiraling out of control.

These are the daily sagas that I, as well as all of my judicial brethren, have been witness to on a daily basis. Whether good, bad or ugly, throughout all these experiences, I have used that compass given to me by my parents to make sure I don't get lost. Along the way, my wonderful husband, family members and loyal staff have helped me to make sure that that compass is grounded and centered.

And interestingly, I have always found that there is always hope at the end of the road. Whether hope at the outset or hope for recovery, our people, despite good or bad times, seem to find it. As judges or justices, it's our job to help them along the way.

As I move to this new station in life, I cannot help but say that it will be somewhat bittersweet. I will miss being in the trenches working with the attorneys and clients on a daily basis trying to figure out where hope lies for them individually. When Governor Gutierrez interviewed me for this position, he asked me if I was bored being a judge. I responded, "No, I really do enjoy my job." It was like when I was a Chief Prosecutor and moving to the Trial Judge Position, the question was asked of me would I miss all of the action? I liked being at the front lines. But now, I know it's time for me to move on.

I do look forward to this new position, working at an intensely different level with the active legal minds of Chief Justice Siguenza and Justices Carbullido and Manglona.

In looking at today's assembly of leaders, at all levels, Governor, Speaker, Legislators, Judges, Justices, Mayors, Business and Civic People, I must express a personal hope of my own.

Having been at the front, in front of the bench as a prosecutor for 10 years or sitting behind it as a trial judge for 7 and a half years, I hope someday, in the very near future, for a unified judiciary...a Judiciary like all other Judiciaries that has the Guam Supreme Court as the rightful head. This is not something that I'm just now saying because I'm coming to the high court bench. It's something that I've advocated from the beginning and throughout my legal career.

It's not a novel idea invented by me or a few others. It's something that has worked for 226 years throughout our nation. It's something that most want and believe is needed. From the author of the Court

Reorganization Act, Senator Pilar Lujan, and her colleagues, to legal practitioners who appear in the courts, to the public-at-large, to the rank-and-file staff of this court system, I believe I can sincerely say that Guam needs a Unified Judiciary.

A unified Judiciary that is economically efficient and effective with consolidated administrative functions and duties.

A unified Judiciary that does not have separate Maintenance crews.

A Unified Judiciary that does not have separate computer personnel.

A Unified Judiciary that does not have separate Marshall Divisions.

A Unified Judiciary that does not have separate Human Resources.

A Unified Judiciary that does not have separate infrastructures.

A Unified Judiciary that does not have needless walls and barriers erected, and serve only to frustrate the common good.

A unified Judiciary that will beam with pride in what it does by doing the right thing at all times.

A unified Judiciary that shares the same roof and the same goals of serving the public.

A unified Judiciary that strives at all times to bring out the best in those who appear before us.

A unified judiciary that listens to those who we serve so they can bring out the best in us.

In addition to tackling the new tasks before me as an appellate Justice, I will continue to vigorously work towards the realization of securing a Unified Judiciary. I pray and hope for your support in achieving this for Guam's people.

In closing, I would like to express a sincere *si yu'us ma'ase* to Governor Gutierrez for his confidence in my abilities to serve our island by appointing me to the Supreme Court of Guam. And to Former Governor Joseph A da, who had faith in me 8 years ago and appointed me to the Superior Court bench, I thank you. To both the 22nd and the 26th Guam Legislatures, *dangkulo na si yu'us ma'ase* for your unanimous votes of confidence in confirming me. I am grateful to all of you. To all of my wonderful relatives here today Mom, and the rest of the family, and to those who have come from off island, I thank you for sharing this special day with me.

And Finally, Thank you to my best friend, my husband Robert, my sons, Daniel who came in last night from college, Michael, and Stephen and to God—I am so very blessed.

May my hope for a UNIFIED JUDICIARY become your hope. It has been said, "In union there is strength." I believe this. I believe in TEAM JUDICIARY.

Mr. Chief Justice of Guam, reporting for duty, sir.

Si Yu'us Ma'ase.