



State of the JUDICIARY

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HAGATNA, GUAM
Chief Justice Robert J. Torres
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Introduction

Håfa Ådai and good evening Governor Eddie Baza Calvo, Lt. Governor Ray Tenorio, Congresswoman Madeline Z. Bordallo, Speaker Judith Won Pat, Vice Speaker and retired Chief Justice B.J. Cruz, our oversight chairman, Senator Frank Aguon, and senators of the 33rd Guam Legislature . . . thank you for once again hosting us in your legislative hall and giving me the opportunity to speak to our island community about the state of our Judiciary. To my brothers and sisters on the bench, my fellow Judiciary employees, family, honored guests, and the people of Guam – thank you for being here tonight.

I would also like to take a moment to thank the Perez sisters for sharing their lovely voices with us tonight. It reminds me of another young Perez girl who sang the National Anthem at my State of the Judiciary address nearly a decade ago. Although I still remember her as a Perez girl, the rest of you might now know her as Pia Mia! So to the young ladies who sang tonight – you just never know what this gig might lead to!

As your Chief Justice and head of the Judicial Branch of government, my job tonight is to report to you on our achievements of this past year, and the challenges that lie ahead. I am pleased to report that the state of Guam's Judiciary is sound, dynamic, and pioneering. But we did not get here by contentedly accepting accolades. We got to where we are today because we continually strive to be more accessible to the people we serve through innovation and efficacy, doing so in a way that is accountable and transparent.

And I want to take this time to especially thank the Legislature for their contribution to that state of affairs, and for the partnership we have forged in our common goal of serving the people. The Legislature has been supportive of our branch on many levels, and so much of the progress the Judiciary has been able to make has been because you were responsive to our requests for resources to fulfill our mission. And recognizing there is a constant struggle for funding, the Judicial Branch has endeavored to use those funds wisely, strategically, and more efficiently than ever before. You have been extraordinary friends to the court system during my time as Chief Justice, and I am very grateful for your leadership and for your support for our branch. I also

want to personally thank all of the Senators I visited with this past year, all of whom were kind and gracious and attentive to my message.

The past several months have really been a new frontier of sorts in our justice system. We have undertaken an unprecedented number of broad reform efforts and have seized opportunities to make our services – and consequently, justice – more accessible to our people through modernization and productivity.

Progress

When I came before you last year, I spoke about the Judiciary's efforts to think anew and act anew. I revealed the important steps we were taking to shift the entire paradigm through which we view juvenile justice. I mentioned the launch of our Veterans Court and our plans to offer greater services to our manamko' by taking a more proactive approach to guardianships and elder issues. I discussed our increasing use of technology to optimize our delivery of justice and augment the business of the courts. And I spoke about the growing need to invest in court security and in our marshals and probation officers – to ensure they achieve full Peace Officer Standards and Training, or POST, compliance, and that our building, staff, and patrons are as safe and secure as possible. Today, I am very proud of the tremendous progress we've made in these and other areas.

Strategic Plan

Our strategic momentum is summed up in four letters: P-L-A-N. The biggest single factor in our ability to achieve our goals is our commitment to strategic management, working with a clear and purposed plan to guide us. Beginning in the summer of 2015, it was time once again to renew our process of self-evaluation and thinking critically about where we as a judicial system currently stand, where we would like to go in the next 3-5 years, and what we need to do to get there. We conducted a comprehensive survey of employees, court users, attorneys, and external partners to obtain an honest assessment of our strengths, our challenges, and areas where we can improve. One of the smartest and most responsible ways that any organization – be it private or government – should forge ahead into the future is to do so in a well thought-out, structured, and strategic process.

We recently completed these efforts and launched “Pursuing Excellence,” the Judiciary’s 2016-2019 Strategic Plan. “Pursuing Excellence” offers a blueprint for continued progress, a defined path for delivery of services, and the best assurance of success. As with our previous strategic plans, this plan contains not only our long-range goals, but breaks those goals down into five strategic focus areas and twenty-five strategic projects. By accomplishing these more “bite-size” pieces of the plan, we are able to work more effectively toward our broader goals. This formula has served us well in the past, and we are committed to proceeding in this fashion once again. The recommendations include a wide range of initiatives that will continue the Judiciary’s tradition of providing justice in a way that is effective, efficient, and accessible to those we serve.

The Strategic Plan and companion document containing the Strategic Focus Areas, Goals, Objectives, and Strategic Projects will be provided to you and are also available on the Judiciary’s website. I am pleased to say that many of its recommended action items are already proceeding and hope that you will take the opportunity to view our plan, “Pursuing Excellence.”

Criminal Justice Strategic Agenda

In a coordinated effort, the Office of the Attorney General and the Public Defender Service Corporation concurrently developed what would be their first strategic plans. They utilized the data, the surveys, and similar processes to individually develop their own paths forward, but this occasion also provided us with an unprecedented opportunity to develop a criminal justice strategic agenda. We collaborated closely with the AG, the PD, the Department of Corrections, the Guam Police Department, the Department of Youth Affairs, the Guam Bar Association, and other entities within the criminal justice system, as well as with a dedicated team of employees from all ranks of the AG, PD, and Judiciary workforce. The Criminal Justice Strategic agenda will be released in the next few weeks and I am certain that it will be well received by the public.

Juvenile Justice Reform

Last year, I spent some time speaking about our juvenile justice reform efforts. This year, I am happy to report that our efforts are well underway, and many share credit for the progress we are

making. I am truly heartened by the success of our efforts to usher in fundamental reform in the juvenile justice system, and I am pleased that all three branches of government are working together to bring about positive change. Recognizing that Guam has a high number of juvenile detainees as compared to other jurisdictions, we launched our reform initiative, focusing on systems change to better serve court-involved youth. We now have a clearer understanding of the needs of this vulnerable population, and, together with our stakeholders, are better able to deliver services and provide programs to address their needs.

Juvenile justice reform involves developing a system that is more tailored to the individual juvenile – taking into account their developmental maturity and the presence of certain risk factors, and determining what level of discipline or services each requires. We are focusing on ways to reduce reliance on detention and provide meaningful responses and appropriate treatment to youth offenders. We have been working closely with the Robert F. Kennedy Children’s Action Corps and the National Resource Center on Juvenile Justice to help us access the best tools and practices. In September of last year, the RFK group completed our Juvenile Probation Review, which resulted in 15 recommendations that are now being implemented. The most important of these recommendations is the universal screening of all youth entering the juvenile justice system to determine their level of risk, mindful that low risk youth will be far better served by diversion from the system.

Some of the validated risk- and needs-assessment tools now at our disposal for the very first time are the Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth, or SAVRY, and the MAYSI-2 Mental Health Screening. We engaged the National Youth Screening Partners to conduct training for our juvenile probation officers, DYA staff, therapists from our Client Services and Family Counseling Division, court interpreters, and CPS caseworkers. Implementing this recommendation also requires collaboration and training for GPD and the AG’s office, and juvenile defenders.

These screening tools will enable all those involved in various aspects of juvenile justice to share information and implement individualized case plans that focus on the top 2 or 3 criminogenic needs of the juvenile – such as education, family structure, substance abuse, prevalence of

violence, and other anti-social behaviors. And the Department of Education is stepping forward to fill some gaps in children's mental health through the involvement of school counselors in the direct treatment of court-involved youth.

In addition, the tools will help identify the top protective factors that should be nurtured and encouraged – like academic achievement, involvement in sports and other pro-social activities, community involvement, and family and social networks. I thank our service providers for their commitment to seeing this effort through. And I want to especially acknowledge the work of Sanctuary in treating children suffering from addiction, and helping the court improve its family-engagement strategies.

I mentioned earlier that low risk youth are better off being diverted from the court system. We can start at the beginning, by reducing court referrals of juveniles. We have been working with the Department of Education to improve the screening process for truancy cases, ensuring that they are carefully assessed before the juvenile becomes involved in the court system. I'm pleased to report that we have seen a decrease in the number of court referrals, with truancy cases dropping by more than half, from 319 in 2012 to 151 last year. We hope to pursue greater opportunities to work in conjunction with the agencies to share information. I want to especially thank DOE Superintendent Jon Fernandez and Deputy Superintendent Chris Anderson, Attorney General Elizabeth Barrett-Anderson and Deputy Assistant AG Carol Hinkle-Sanchez, Chief of Police Joseph Cruz, and Juvenile Investigations Division Sgt. John Bagaforo for establishing diversion programs, reducing the number of juveniles involved in the court system, and being innovative in helping our children.

It is encouraging to report that the number of detained youth at DYA has also dropped. However, the reality is that, as much as we aim to divert youth away from the system, there are still some juveniles whose risk levels or alleged offenses are such that their involvement in the system is inescapable. For these youth, we aim to raise the bar, if you will, when it comes to the vigorousness and zealousness of the advocacy for juveniles charged with delinquency. Thanks in part to the assistance we received from the RFK group, the Judiciary obtained a technical assistance grant through the National Center for State Courts to help improve juvenile defense

standards. Just a few weeks ago, Attorney Timothy Curry, Director of Training and Technical Assistance for the National Juvenile Defender Center, made a site visit to our courts, and conducted working and training sessions with our family court judges and members of the bar. We are thankful to have the assistance of the NJDC, and are very hopeful that we will soon have a juvenile justice system that truly serves the best interest of the child.

Guardianships and Elder Issues

In addition to juveniles, another truly vulnerable sector of our island population are those with mental health conditions or other life circumstances that render them unable to care for themselves or to properly look after their own finances. While the work of the Office of the Public Guardian is commendable, the office remains overwhelmed with the sheer number of wards under its care.

We recently obtained a grant, working with the National Guardianship Network, to establish the WINGS initiative in Guam, which stands for Working Interdisciplinary Networks of Guardianship Stakeholders. The aim of this initiative includes reforming the Public Guardianship Review Board into a coordinated partnership between the local government and the community. We will create a guardian training program utilizing identified best practices, in the hope of improving the oversight of guardians and preventing fraud against the elderly and incapacitated.

Providing standardized training will empower new, or potential, guardians with the information and skills they need to carry out their duties and responsibilities, and put them in touch with other support services in the community.

Pretrial Reform

Earlier, I mentioned surveying our employees, external partners, and court users, and overall timeliness was chief among their concerns. We recognize that the strides we have made thus far with respect to time standards and judicial efficiency have not been enough, and that we needed to examine other factors that might be contributing to this concern over timeliness. Thanks to the Legislature's funding and statutory amendments, the Judiciary will soon have a second magistrate. I have transmitted the name of current referee Benjamin Sison to be the new

Magistrate. Let's congratulate him on his appointment. Now, with the expanded statutory duties of our two magistrates, it is our firm belief that the wheels of justice will move more quickly and efficiently, with much of the time-consuming preliminary work being handled by these magistrates, enabling our trial court judges to handle the more complex stages of a case. But this is not enough.

Additionally, the Judiciary convened an exploratory committee, which met extensively with the trial court judges and conducted a survey of Guam bar members to assess whether there was a need for an additional trial court judge, the last additional judge having been authorized in 1994 - more than two decades ago. After many weeks of consideration, and based on the responses received from the trial judges and the bar, as well as on the caseload data trends for the Superior Court, the committee conveyed their recommendation to the Judicial Council that an additional trial court judge was necessary. The need for an additional judge was based on a variety of factors including: the increasing number of therapeutic courts and the cultural diversity of litigants, defendants, and witnesses appearing in court proceedings requiring interpretation both of which results in more lengthy hearings and trials; the increased number of felony jury trials which take priority over all other matters; and the significant differences in waiting time to have motions heard or cases tried in civil and family cases because priority must be given to criminal dockets.

The Judicial Council, therefore, recently voted to certify the need for an eighth full-time judicial officer to properly address the growing caseloads our trial courts have been dealing with. The Report of the Committee was completed just today and I will formally notify the Governor tomorrow and transmit the proposed legislation for the eighth judge. I trust that he will concur and expeditiously act to nominate a new judge.

We have also embarked on a path to revamp our case flow management, focusing on systemic backlog at the beginning of the case. In particular, we are working with our sister branches on a criminal justice system review of pretrial detention and bail practices. As it currently stands, more than one-third of all those detained at the Department of Corrections are individuals in pretrial detention. This highlights the need to revisit our pretrial policies. I thank Senator Michael San Nicolas for agreeing to give the courts an opportunity to examine pre-trial detention and not push the cash bail schedule bill he previously introduced.

In our justice system, accused individuals enjoy constitutional guarantees of fair adjudication, founded upon the bedrock principle that every accused person is innocent until proven guilty. Unfortunately, in Guam, this principle has not translated to pretrial detention. We currently rely heavily on a wealth-based, instead of a risk-based, system to determine whether accused defendants will be held in jail or released before their trials – even before there has been any determination as to guilt or innocence.

The result is a lack of any rational justice in our pretrial justice system, where clearly dangerous defendants or those who pose substantial flight risks can buy their way out of jail if they have access to the money or land required to secure their presumption of innocence, while large numbers of less wealthy or indigent defendants who are neither dangerous nor flight risks are held in jail simply for lack of financial resources, with substantial harm done to them, their families, their employers, and the taxpayers who must pay for housing, feeding, guarding, medicating, and caring for them.

But if our society really believes that justice in our courts should not depend on a party's wealth or poverty, but that all should stand equally before the bar of justice, we must be willing to reexamine whether our practices live up to those ideals. If justice is not available to all, true justice cannot be provided to anyone, because unequal justice is simply not justice.

In just a few days, I will be chairing the Conference of Chief Justices/Conference of State Court Administrators Western Region Summit on Pretrial Justice in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Accompanying me will be Presiding Judge Lamorena, Administrator of the Courts Joshua Tenorio, Attorney General Barrett-Anderson, Chief Probation Officer John Lizama, and the newly-selected Executive Director of the Public Defender Service Corporation, Stephen Hattori. Among the topics we will be covering are the legal and practical approaches to developing pretrial reform strategies for our individual jurisdictions, and the national perspective and public expectations regarding pretrial release.

As part of our review of bail and detention practices, several months ago, I began communicating with the Pretrial Justice Institute to submit an application to join the 3 Days

Count campaign that will set a new national standard for pretrial justice in 20 states by 2020. The program is a pretrial justice campaign to reduce unnecessary confinement that destabilizes families and communities; to replace discriminatory cash bail with practical, risk-based decision-making; and to enable transparent detention for the small number of defendants who pose a genuine threat to public safety. I am optimistic that our application will be favorably received and that Guam will be one of 20 jurisdictions accepted into the 3 Days Count Solution. When we are accepted, we will receive support and funding opportunities to promote commonsense solutions to longstanding pretrial justice system challenges that discriminate against the poor, fail to protect individual and community safety, and squander public resources.

The rewards will be clear and tangible: a reduced numbers of confinements, a decrease in cases with inappropriate pretrial detention, the replacement of a cash bail system for a system based on risk analysis, and the use of limited and safeguarded detention based on assessed risk. We at the courts recognize that so much of what we do affects other law enforcement agencies, particularly with respect to detention. As a member of the Blue Ribbon Commission chaired by Lt. Governor Tenorio, we have the opportunity to help bring resolutions to the pressing concerns of DOC overcrowding, including developing a strategy to utilize and deploy electronic monitoring as part of this effort.

Reentry Court

There is another initiative we are embarking on that will serve interests similar to those served by our pretrial reform effort, but focusing instead on the other end of the spectrum: And that's closing the proverbial revolving door of criminal justice. Last year, the Judiciary was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, to plan and implement the Guam Reentry Court Program. This will be a specialized court that is intended to help reduce recidivism rates and improve public safety through the use of judicial oversight. I would like to thank Presiding Judge Lamorena for the tremendous energy and effort he's investing in helping to develop our reentry court.

Modeled after therapeutic courts, the Guam Adult Reentry Court Program will provide individualized treatment and services, supervision, and monitoring for medium and high risk

offenders. Services will be provided to participants while they are still incarcerated, and will continue after release and through completion of the program. The Reentry Court judge, will be actively engaged in overseeing the transition of the offender back into the community, with an aim toward addressing the holistic needs of the offender. Our goal is to reduce the recidivism rates of inmates after they are released back into the community.

The Judiciary has also secured the support of the National Institute of Corrections, which will provide subject matter experts in probation services. The NIC will provide technical assistance by conducting a review of the current state of our adult probation. We are looking forward to their recommendation report, as well as an analysis of probation data for use in program planning and development.

The Reentry Court project, just like our juvenile justice reform efforts, is considered a Second Chance Act project by the federal government. I would like to give special thanks to Vice Speaker B.J. Cruz, Senator Rory Respicio, and Senator Mary Camacho Torres (who secretly remains my favorite Senator) for introducing and passing legislation that will truly give a second chance to many members of our community who completed drug treatment prior to 2005 and have not since been convicted of any other drug offense, violent misdemeanor, or felony. The legislation authorizes expunging their record and removes barriers for employment and other activities. Other initiatives should also be considered, such as “banning the box,” which removes questions about criminal history from the front end of the hiring process.

I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to acknowledge the Judiciary’s working partnership with the Department of Corrections – which is truly one of the most important partnerships we have. Together, we are sharing our institutional cultures, coordinating procedures, improving inmate and detainee management and information, and, above all, raising the professional standard of operations. One tangible result of our efforts is the Judiciary’s purchase of videoconferencing equipment for DOC’s Mangilao and Hagatna facilities, which will reduce the manpower and risk involved in inmate and detainee transports between DOC and the court. Leading these efforts is the Judiciary’s MIS division, along with Cpt. Joey Terlaje and Sgt. Vince Naputi of the Marshals division, as well as DOC Director Jose San Agustin, Deputy Director Carla Borja, and Warden Alan Borja.

Other Partners and Stakeholders

Aside from DOC, there are other partners and stakeholders with whom the Judiciary has collaborated in the past year. To name just a few examples: We have been working with Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness Center to conduct DWI assessments, in addition to training for risk and needs assessments used to refine practices in children's mental health referrals. We have also continued to work with GPD to upgrade the Law Enforcement Records Management System, the Virtual Computerized Criminal History system, as well as the crime lab.

The Judiciary is also doing its part for the upcoming Festival of the Pacific Arts. We have committed our law enforcement officers to provide security for the events, and our Courts and Ministerial staff is processing over 500 court clearances for the Guam delegation.

JusticeCorps

Another partnership I'm very proud of is the Judiciary's partnership with the Serve Guam Commission and AmeriCorps program. Last year, we welcomed our inaugural batch of 20 JusticeCorps members. We've recently embarked on our second year, with 30 Corps members energized and eager to serve. Corps members function in many capacities, and work in several court divisions. They maintain the Judicial Service Center, and assist those underserved populations, including veterans and their families, probationers, juveniles, and self-represented litigants. They assist patrons with filling out forms; they help educate probation clients on current employability practices and soft skills education; and they assist therapeutic courts in recreation therapy.

The backgrounds of these members are as varied as the services they provide. Most are college students majoring in criminal justice, political science, social work, education and other fields from the Guam Community College and the University of Guam. The fact that they're called JusticeCorps makes them sound like they're super heroes – which they kind of are, in my view, because they help people understand the judicial system and navigate their way through it. And it reminds me that the judicial system's strength relies on the public's understanding of us. Please help me recognize our JusticeCorps members who are with us tonight.

Security and Technology

Across the nation and in our island, safety and security – both physical and cyber – remain prominent concerns. For the Judiciary, these concerns span a panoply of issues: How secure are our buildings? Do we have enough law enforcement personnel to adequately handle day-to-day security plus any specific threats? Are our servers, networks, and data safeguarded from systems crashes or, worse, from tech-savvy individuals with nefarious intentions? Will our marshals and probation officers achieve full compliance with POST once those standards become mandatory beginning this December and through 2017?

As with all other concerns, we in the courts have always tried to take a very proactive approach to address our impending needs. We know full well that a sound infrastructure is what will allow us to function safely and efficiently in the modern world. A workable infrastructure includes modern information systems that can efficiently process the thousands of transactions per month, systems that can access and share information, secure court buildings that will keep patrons and employees safe, adequate numbers of judicial officers and staff to avoid excessive delays, and video technology to conserve personnel resources while still affording defendants and litigants meaningful access to justice. Our courts are constantly evaluating and refining business processes, technology, administration, and services. Thanks to the security assessment conducted by the National Center for State Courts, we have identified key improvements and investments that we need to make in terms of securing our facilities.

Our cyber security concerns remain – and are becoming increasingly important as we move toward conducting more and more of our court business electronically. We already have online payment of certain fines and fees, and soon will be adding to the list of matters that may be processed and paid online. We launched our new e-filing in the Supreme Court in October of last year, and are piloting certain Superior Court cases, beginning with civil collections and small claims cases. While these advancements make things more accessible and user-friendly, they also make us more vulnerable to crashes and attacks on our data and systems.

In addition to working to ensure our own security, the Judiciary has also partnered with various local and federal law enforcement agencies to address security concerns of a broader nature. The Guam Criminal Justice Automation Commission, or CJAC, is comprised of all of Guam's law

enforcement agencies. The role of the commission is to ensure the accuracy, completeness, and timeliness of Guam's Criminal Justice Records System, known as CJIS. While both the executive and judicial branches have demonstrated their commitment to working together to build Guam's criminal justice information system, we recognize that in order to progress, a codified governing body is required. I am currently working with Frank Lujan, the Chief Technology Officer of the Executive Branch, to draft legislation for this effort.

And just as an aside, I mentioned last year that, in support of our law enforcement officers, I would train alongside them to achieve POST compliance. Several people have asked me whether I have been keeping up with that promise. And the answer is yes! Both Senator Torres and I have been training vigorously for nearly a year, and I fully expect to pass by this summer, at least 6 months before POST becomes mandatory. For a man of my young age, passing means that I will be able to do 28 sit-ups in 1 minute, 15 pushups in 1 minute, run 1.5 miles in 16 minutes, and keep my waistline under 39 inches. While my participation may not have any great impact on making our courts safer, I hope that, at the least, it is a reminder for all Guam's law enforcement officers that POST compliance is totally possible if they put their minds and hearts to it. And I hope it helped assure our marshals and probation officers that their leader was most definitely standing and running with them, every step of the way.

Facilities

As you can imagine, a big part of ensuring our general security is ensuring that our physical structure is sound and adequately equipped with the technology we need to operate within the reality of our time. Twenty-five years ago, when our Judicial Center was built, it was meant to house 5 courtrooms and a limited number of detainees in our holding cells. At present, we have 7 full-time judicial officers, two referees, and soon, a second magistrate, and hopefully an 8th judge. The truth is we have simply outgrown our facility as currently designed.

We must focus on repairing the Historic Court House next to the Guam Judicial Center. I am pleased that the Guam Historic Preservation Review Board has placed the Historic Court House on the Guam List of Historic Places. In a few years, the building will also be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. I want to thank the Legislature for authorizing the Judiciary

to refinance the Judicial Building Fund in order to obtain loan funds to repair, improve, and expand the court's facilities.

The most recent addition to our Judiciary management team is our new Procurement and Facilities Management Administrator Gloria Long, who has had to hit the ground running, having joined the Judiciary at a time when we have many important projects either already underway or on the horizon.

Budget

Today, the Judiciary transmitted our FY 2017 budget request to the Legislature. We are asking for a small increase, attributed mostly to personnel expenses to cover increments, our contract with GCC for POST training of our law enforcement officers, the costs associated with the eighth judge, and to a smaller degree, therapeutic services, primarily for juveniles but also for some adults in our specialty courts.

Although there is an increase in our budgetary request, what we are asking for actually represents an even smaller percentage of the overall GovGuam budget than what was appropriated to us for this fiscal year. The Judiciary has always been and remains a good, prudent, and responsible steward of the public monies allocated to our branch. I am confident we have proven to you that we exercise frugality and consistently seek out innovative ways to do business, which not only increases efficiency, but reduces cost. We appreciate the support the Legislature has given us in the past, and we look forward to your favorable consideration of our request for the coming fiscal year.

Law Week

This year marks not only the 25th birthday of our Judicial Center, but also the 20th anniversary of the creation of the Supreme Court of Guam. I'm sure that retired Chief Justice Peter Siguenza, retired Chief Justice B.J. Cruz, Justice Phil Carbullido, Justice Katherine Maraman, and the other justices who have had the privilege of shaping Guam case law are as proud as I am with how Guam's jurisprudence has developed and matured since our high court was established.

Indeed, this is something we should all be proud of. We will maintain the respect and stature that comes with being the highest court of our island, building upon the pioneering work of the members of our high court who preceded us. And we will raise awareness and respect for the rule of law in our community.

Yesterday, May 1, was jointly proclaimed Law Day by our three branches – a day to commemorate the importance of the rule of law and of the ideals and demands of justice for all. In Guam, “Law Day” has grown into a two-week celebration, with more and more activities taking place and more and more schools and organizations wanting to get involved. A favorite of everyone is always the fairytale mock trial plays, but we also had the Race Judicata Color Run and Law Fair this weekend, and the appellate outreach argument this morning at Okkodo High School.

Nearly 500 students attended our oral argument at Okkodo and it certainly was the largest audience I’ve seen attend an oral argument. Afterward, the members of the court met with students to answer questions, and the response from students and faculty was incredibly positive. We are excited about providing this unique educational opportunity for so many students, and anticipate holding similar hearings at other schools across the island in the future. By going directly to the schools, the students and teachers gain an understanding of the Judiciary’s mission of providing equal justice for all. This mission may start in our courtrooms, but it doesn’t end there. By resolving cases, we solve problems – helping to heal families that are being torn apart, making our communities safer, and bringing closure to disputes between our citizens.

Also as part of our Law Week events, we celebrated Juror Appreciation Week. Thousands of jurors report to the courts for jury service annually. As and as part of our efforts to improve jury service, we launched our Jury Plus Express Self Check-In kiosks. The kiosk speeds up the time for jurors to check in when reporting for jury duty.

Law Week is also when we acknowledge a person or entity that has championed causes of justice, fostered respect for the rule of law, and made an impact on the lives of our people in the area of justice. Please join me in recognizing the recipient of the 2016 Hustisia Award – the Public Defender Service Corporation. The right to counsel regardless of one’s ability to pay is

fundamental, and the zealous advocacy for all persons accused of a crime is an essential component of a fair and impartial criminal justice system. To this extent, the Public Defender has played a key role in ensuring that “justice for all” is not merely a slogan, but that it is truly the way our justice system operates in Guam.

The 2016 American Bar Association National Law Day Theme is “Miranda: More Than Words,” a tribute to the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case of *Miranda v. Arizona*. It is therefore fitting that we recognize the Public Defender for its decades of service, helping to ensure that *Miranda* and all our constitutional and legal protections are most assuredly *more than words*.

Concluding Thoughts

I hope that during the last hour, I’ve been able to give you a good snapshot of the progress we are making. Our work is innovative and ever-evolving, as the demands of our times have changed. And none of it would be possible without the solid workforce that makes up the Judiciary – from clerks, to marshals; from probation officers, to therapists; from jurists, to case managers; from maintenance staff, to our management team.

It’s been said that the difference between success and failure is a great team. In my 12 years as a justice of the Supreme Court, and in my two terms as Chief Justice, I have seen first-hand how true this is. When I told you earlier that the state of your Judiciary is sound, dynamic, and pioneering, know that this is true because of the individuals who make up our team. I have been blessed to be a part of an extremely intelligent, motivated, and committed cadre at the Judiciary.

We have endured and even thrived during the bleakest of financial times; we have led the way in reforming critical areas of criminal and juvenile justice; we have reached out beyond ourselves and offered the expertise of our law enforcement officers to help train other branches and organizations to be better prepared; and, of course, we have continued to fulfill our most fundamental mandate of providing equal access to justice for all our people. I am optimistic about the direction and state of the courts. We still have challenges to be sure, but we have a structure, a leadership team, and a strategic plan that will allow us to meet those challenges and continually improve the delivery of justice to the people of the Guam.

This is the last year of my second term as Chief Justice, and it has always been an honor to speak with you. I will be forever grateful for the time, attention, and courtesy you have extended to me.

I'd like to close my address as your Chief Justice by personally addressing the employees of the Judiciary of Guam. I am humbled and extremely gratified to have had this opportunity to work with you and, together, to serve our people. I know from meeting and working with all of you that our goals are the same, and our commitment is the same. We all want a justice system that is the best it can be. Benjamin Franklin once said, "Well done is better than well said." To my team of managers and employees – indeed, to my court family – *well done*. It truly has been an inspiration for me to be your Chief! You will forever have my admiration, my respect, and my love.

Dangkolu na si Yu'os Ma'ase. Maraming salamat po. And thank you for listening.