

REMARKS

By

The Honorable Robert J. Torres

Chief Justice of Guam

Installation Ceremony

Tuesday, January 15, 2008

10:00 a.m.

Guam Judicial Center Atrium

Hafa Adai. My first duty as Chief Justice is to welcome those who have graced the Judiciary with their attendance here this morning. Thank you all for taking time from your busy schedules to be with us on this occasion. The presence of this large gathering reveals the respect which you hold for this Court and the Office which I just assumed.

I cannot tell you what an honor and how humbling it is to be standing here before all of you – my wife Mary, my children and grandchildren, my mother & mother-in-law, Governor Camacho, former Chief Justices Peter Siguenza & B.J. Cruz, senators, the various dignitaries, the rest of my friends & family, members of the Guam Bar -- all of the people who in their own way and with their own words have enriched my life over the years.

During the 4 years that I've been on the Supreme Court I have had the opportunity to sit on case panels with CJ Carbullido, former justice now chief judge FTG and other

esteemed pro temp justices such as Justice Richard Benson, CNMI Chief justice Miguel Demapan, justice Alex Castro and justice John Manglona. In approximately one month we will be joined by our newest member, Justice Designate Katherine A. Maraman. I want to thank them for unselfishly sharing with me their wisdom and total commitment to justice for all of Guam's citizens. To share in the rigorous debates in this Court with colleagues who bear mutual respect for the intellectual integrity and independence of one another is a continuing satisfaction. I assume this office with gratitude for their friendship and support.

In addition to the fellowship that I have enjoyed with my colleagues on the Supreme Court bench, I consider myself fortunate to have served my tenure as a jurist under the exemplary leadership of Chief Justice F. Philip Carbullido. Justice Carbullido, as all who know him would anticipate, has been extraordinarily generous and supportive of me. No successor could wish for a better inheritance. (PLEASE JOIN ME IN GIVING HIM A RESOUNDING ROUND OF APPLAUSE) The Judiciary of Guam is unified and is in good shape because of the leadership of Justice Carbullido.

During his administration we developed a strategic plan appropriately entitled "Justice with a Vision". This plan which is available on our web site outlines the Judiciary's mission and goals through the year 2010. We will continue to implement this strategic plan under my leadership... And I am not talking about a strategic plan that is published amid great fanfare and then is put on a shelf in a back closet. We have an action-oriented strategic plan that will actually make a difference in people's lives.

The hardworking judges and referees of the Judiciary also deserve special credit, Presiding Judge Lamorena, Judge Unpingco, Judge Barret Anderson, Judge Bordallo, Judge Sukola, Judge Barcinas, Admin Hearing officer Ingles and Referee Cruz, are on the front lines during this time of change that will affect our island now and well into the 21st century. Our judges address the complex issues they face with unswerving dedication to the ideals of judicial independence, profound integrity in the performance of their judicial duties, and with the ability to listen, to empathize and, in the end, to decide. In order to do the work required of me as Chief Justice, I will need their continued assistance and cooperation.

I also want to specifically acknowledge and thank the many diverse and dedicated employees who comprise the Guam Judiciary. We will be prepared to meet the challenges ahead because of the talent, energy and integrity of our employees. In the three years that I will have to serve as Chief Justice, my success or lack thereof will be largely dependent on their efforts.

Whether you are in Procurement and Facilities, General Administration, Courts and Ministerial, Client Services and Family Counseling, Marshals, or Probation each of you as a member of the Judicial Family has something to contribute.

As a team we will have to work cooperatively toward a common vision and direct individual accomplishments into organizational objectives. I am confident our employees

will be up to the task. I now ask that all our judiciary employees please stand up and be recognized (APPLAUSE)

Finally, I want to honor the members of the armed forces. . Just a few short weeks ago we held our Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony in this very atrium with a theme of “We support our Troops”. The decorated trees were symbolic of the respective branches of the armed forces & our veterans. The reality is that, ultimately, the rule of law, the strength of the Judiciary and of our democracy, are secured by these men and women. We are forever grateful for their service so let them hear our gratitude (Shouts Claps Whistles Cheers Hoorah)

With the swearing in of a new chief justice, it is only natural to wish to look ahead to see what the future might hold for Guam’s courts.

Nevertheless, because I would like to keep my remarks brief, my detailed thoughts for the future of Judiciary of Guam must necessarily await another, more appropriate time. I would be remiss however if I did not outline some objectives and so as not to disappoint those who view me as the techno savvy justice, to at least make some mention of technology .

As far as technology is concerned, through grants and other resources we have updated the personal computers and networks for many court personnel, and rolled out e-filing and videoconferencing technology for certain adult and juvenile proceedings. The court has also developed and upgraded our website to provide information to practitioners and the general public. The use of technology in the justice system is changing the

relationship between the courts, and other branches of government and the public. But what we have done is not enough

We have to develop an integrated case management system with some degree of sophistication which allows wider availability of on-line court information; greater use of electronic transactions; accommodation of real time docketing and calendaring; enhanced use of in court technologies; and improved data and statistics. Bringing advanced technology to our courts is an absolute business necessity.

Our courts now contend with greater challenges than ever before, in terms of both the volume of cases filed and the complexity of cases heard, however, the successful use of technology will make our courts more accessible, more accountable, transparent and more effective & efficient

Looking ahead to other objectives during my term as Chief Justice one obvious endeavor is to persist in the development of a body of local law that clearly and concisely communicates to litigants, lawyers, and trial judges the standards to be used to achieve the just and timely resolution of disputes.

In addition, I will strive to maintain the public's trust and confidence in our judicial system and in the character of those entrusted with its authority.

As Chief Justice I will also seek to ensure that the Judiciary, as a separate and co-equal branch of government, continues to receive the resources necessary to fulfill its mandates and responsibilities but at the same time that we remain accountable for the use of those resources.

It is evidently with enormous gratitude that I accept the office of Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. The challenges ahead are many, but so are the opportunities... I am

confident that our dedicated judicial and nonjudicial personnel, working collaboratively with the Guam Bar and with our partners in government, the executive and legislative branches, will successfully confront the challenges ahead .. And as we meet and move beyond these challenges the Judiciary of Guam will remain strong and vibrant, delivering justice and protecting values that are fundamental to this wonderful island of freedom and opportunity for all.

In closing, I would again like to thank you all for being a part of this installation ceremony. The Chief Justice has been referred to as the “first among equals” and he exercises a unique leadership role as the presiding officer of the Supreme Court, as the Administrative manager of the Judiciary’s overall operations, and as head of the judicial branch of government.

But, as Chief justice of the Supreme Court I am merely a trustee of the seat I now occupy, and I have a greater responsibility linked to the durability of this treasured office and to the Judicial branch of Government that it represents. You can be assured I will discharge my fiduciary duties as Chief Justice responsibly and with integrity, doing the best job I possibly can do

Thank you, Dangkalu na Si Yuus Maase para todos hamyu, Maraming salamat po. GOD BLESS.