

President's Report

THE PBA YEAR THAT WAS: 2014 – 2015



On 30 September 2014, Atty. Emerico O. De Guzman took his oath before Senate President Franklin M. Drilon as the 48th President of the Philippine Bar Association, the oldest and largest voluntary association of lawyers in the country.



(Senate President Drilon with PBA Officers)



(Atty. De Guzman with Senate President Drilon)

During Atty. De Guzman's inaugural address, he announced that the Association's thrust during his term as President would be to bridge a partnership between law and business; so that through PBA, lawyers may properly understand the importance of correctly implementing various laws impacting on business, thereby promoting economic and national development.

On 5 December 2014, Atty. De Guzman participated in the forum on Facing Challenges to Judicial Integrity and Accountability hosted by Konrad Adenauer-Stiftung and Center Law. The conference focused on corruption in the judicial process and specific issues of prevention.



(Ateneo Prof. Marlon Manuel, IBP President Atty. Vicente Joyas, U.P. Law Professor Harry Roque, and Atty. De Guzman)

On 11 December 2014, the PBA Board of Trustees and Advisers, Officers, past Presidents and staff held a Christmas Party at the East-West Room of the Manila Golf & Country Club.



On 24 February 2015, Department of Foreign Affairs Assistant Secretary Eduardo Jose A. De Vega and Professor Cielito F. Habito, former Secretary of Socioeconomic Planning/Secretary-General of the National Economic and Development Authority, were invited as guests of honor and speakers to discuss the Legal and Economic Aspects of ASEAN Integration held at the Manila Golf & Country Club.



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(L-R; Atty. Alfonso Victorio G. Reyno III, DFA Assistant Secretary Eduardo Jose A. De Vega, PBA President Emerico O. De Guzman and Past President Lew Llanillo)



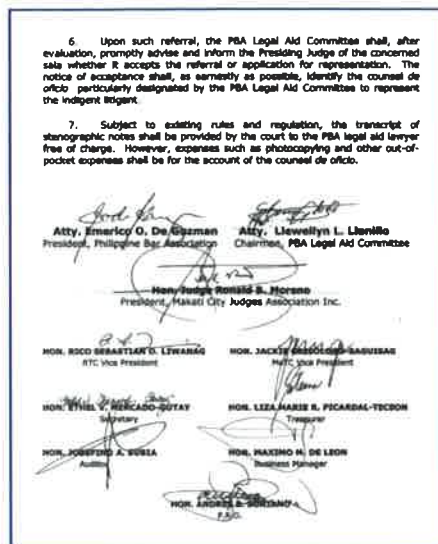
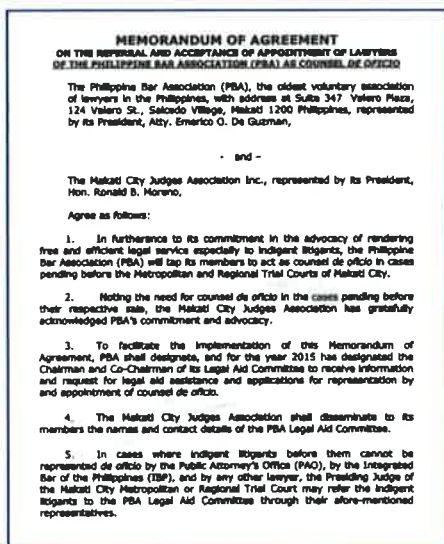
(PBA Past Presidents and current officers)

(With members of the diplomatic corps)



(Former Press Secretary Mike Toledo greeting Asec. De Vega)

On 4 May 2015, the PBA and the Makati Judges Association, represented by its President, Hon. Ronald B. Moreno, signed a Memorandum of Agreement on the referral, acceptance and appointment of lawyers of the PBA as counsel de officio in cases pending before the salas of the Metropolitan and Regional Trial Courts of Makati City.



The MOA promotes PBA's commitment and advocacy of rendering free and efficient legal services especially to indigent litigants designated by the Makati Courts. The PBA will tap its members to act as counsel de officio in cases pending before the different branches of said courts.



(Atty. Elmar B. Galacio, CMT Law Senior Partner; Atty. De Guzman and Judge Moreno)



(PBA Officers and the Makati Judges)

The Honorable Feliciano R. Belmonte, Jr., Speaker of the House of Representatives, was the Guest of Honor during the PBA Luncheon Forum on 14 May 2015. Speaker Belmonte discussed the Economic Reform Agenda of the House of Representatives and its impact on businesses.



(Speaker Belmonte with Atty. De Guzman)



(The PBA Officers with Speaker Belmonte)



(PBA Past Presidents Tessie Sison, Rolly Vinluan and Sonny Marcelo in a huddle)



(Past President Rico Agcaoili pursuing a query)

On 26 May 2015, the PBA hosted the 10th PBA Golf Cup at the West Course, Wack-Wack Golf & Country Club, Mandaluyong City as an event meant to foster camaraderie and raise funds for the Association. With about eighty (80) players who participated, and no less than 26 sponsors pitching in, the tournament proved to be not only a fun-filled event, but a fruitful one for the Association.



(The PBA President with Atty. Mon Samson, the Special Projects/Golf Committee Chair)



(PBA members and guests during the 2015 Golf Tournament)

On 11 June 2015, PBA First Vice-President Atty. Jose Luis Agcaoili, on behalf of PBA, signed the Partners' Covenant with ABS-CBN in its projected coverage for the Halalan 2016 National Elections. The covenant signing was held at the Maxims Hotel, Resorts World Manila.



On 30 June 2015, Chairman Andres D. Bautista of the Commission of Elections was the Guest of Honor and Speaker at the 124th Foundation Day Celebration of the PBA held at the Manila Polo Club, Forbes Park, Makati City. Chairman Bautista highlighted the importance of election reform and the challenges he is facing in ensuring honest, clean, orderly and transparent national elections in 2016.



(Chairman Bautista joining and greeting PBA members)



(PBA officers with Comelec Chairman Bautista)



On 26 August 2015, Senator Paolo Benigno "Bam" Aquino IV was the Guest of Honor and Speaker at the PBA Luncheon Forum on the Philippine Competition Act held at the Manila Golf & Country Club, Forbes Park, Makati City. Senator Aquino firmly believes that Republic Act No. 10667 or the Philippine Competition Act will usher in a new era of doing business in the Philippines since business, whether big or small, will now be on equal footing because the law punishes anti-competitive agreements and abuse of dominant players.



(Atty. Ramon Samson, ACCRALAW Litigation Head)



(Atty. Rachele Santos, Congressman Dax Cua, Senator Bam Aquino and Atty. De Guzman)



(Attys. Francis Lim, Perry Pe, and Rocky Reyes)



(PMFTC's William Varias)



The following other continuing activities were pursued by the Association and/or its Committees this past year:

- a. Labor Committee tie-up with the Management Association of the Philippines (MAP). The PBA Labor Committee headed by Attys. Dante Cadiz and Neptali Salvanera have been attending the public hearings called by the House/Senate Committees on Labor to represent the PBA and MAP.
- b. The Intellectual Property (IP) Committee headed by Atty. Rico Domingo briefed recently a visiting Vietnamese delegation of IP practitioners on the salient aspects of Philippine IP Law. The Committee likewise forged a relationship with the ASEAN IP Association to pursue collaborative activities within the framework of ASEAN Integration.
- c. On Ways and Means, Committee Chair Charito Cruz, supported by Atty. Domingo, initiated a Sustaining Membership Program that has been recently rolled out directed at PBA Past Presidents and notable Lifetime Members who may be able to contribute towards enhancing the financial resources of the Association to support its administration and various projects and activities. Quite a number of Past Presidents/Members have already favorably responded to this initiative.
- d. On Membership Development, in an effort to widen the reach of the Association, the Board passed a Resolution opening up PBA membership to all members of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines of good moral character, deleting the requirement of a prior three (3) years practice. This amendment of the By-Laws is to be presented and approved at a General Membership meeting duly called for the purpose.

With the foregoing, the 2014-15 Board has thus tried to address the pressing concerns and opportunities of the Association.

The President wishes to thank the 2014-15 Board, its Advisers, and the Chairpersons of the various Committees who have gone out of their way and contributed their valuable time, talent and resources to ensure a most fruitful term this past year.

Congratulations and best wishes to the new leadership of our beloved Association.