



The theme for this term was expressed in my speech on Law Day Celebration and Induction on September 26, 2012, that the Rule of Law as a requisite of good governance is necessary for economic growth and Philippine Bar Association (PBA) must put in its share to contribute to the country's progress now when good governance is shown to be the compelling factor in the country's improved credit rating and market competitiveness.

LAW DAY CELEBRATION:

My term officially started on Law Day Celebration and Induction when I took my oath as President of Philippine Bar Association (PBA) before Ombudsman Conchita C. Carpio Morales, Guest Speaker and Inducting Officer. The new Board of Trustees took their oaths and thirty new members were inducted to the PBA.

In her speech, the Ombudsman announced her plan of action: give highest priority to the disposition of grand corruption cases; reduce the docket with the goal of achieving a zero-backlog over her seven-year term; improve the quality of fact-finding investigations; improve the assessment of evidence where prosecutors will be involved in fact-finding panels; provide a system of monitoring compliance of decisions by government agencies, among other initiatives.

Ombudsman Carpio-Morales called on the PBA "to contribute to the aggregate of tiny pushes and mighty shoves" and on all lawyers to be "at the forefront of the advocacy for good governance".

Law Day Celebration and Induction was held at the Intercontinental Hotel, Makati City.

LUNCHEON FELLOWSHIPS:

The Luncheon fellowship is a hallmark PBA activity. We held four during this term, at which the speakers talked about issues that related to the

Rule of Law, good governance or the distribution of economic benefits. An Open Forum was held on each luncheon fellowship.

The Fellowship Committee (Past President Marites Sison Go) prepared pre-forum pointers on each subject matter and put context to the speeches.

Legal Education Committee (Trustee Fina de la Cuesta Tantuico) was responsible for the accreditation of two of the speeches as Mandatory Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) courses.

The following Luncheon Fellowship Guest Speakers spoke on their respective areas of interest:

1. Justice Marvic M.V.F. Leonen on The Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro (November 23, 2012)

Chief Negotiator for the Government Peace Panel Dean and later Supreme Court Associate Justice Marvic M.V.F. Leonen, discussed the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro signed between the Government and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) on October 15, 2012. The Agreement laid the groundwork for a final peace agreement in conflict areas in Mindanao.

PBA issued a Statement in support of the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro. The Statement is posted on the website of the Office of the Presidential Assistant on the Peace Process (OPAPP) and the PBA website.

The Statement commended the commitment of the peace panels to forge the foundation for lasting peace in Mindanao conflict areas and supported the Framework Agreement for taking the first steps



toward peace as it acknowledged the Bangsamoro identity and reaffirmed the sovereignty of the nation and the integrity of the Constitution. It cited the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro for demonstrating the sobering patient hard work necessary for the triumph of the Rule of Law.

The luncheon fellowship was held at the McKinley Room, Manila Polo Club, McKinley Road, Forbes Park, Makati City, where OPAPP Secretary Teresita Q. Deles was in attendance.

2. Senator Pia S. Cayetano – on the Reproductive Health (RH) Law (January 30, 2013)

Senator Pia S. Cayetano, co-sponsor of the RH bill that later became law, talked about provisions of the RH Law and about the long and difficult process that the bill went through before it was finally passed in Congress.

PBA members were witness to the debates since the bill's introduction more than a decade ago and acknowledged that Sen. Cayetano played an important role in steering and defending the bill until ratification and signing into law on Dec 21, 2012. Arguably, the RH Law is as remarkable for what it guarantees as for what it went through before it became law.

The speech was accredited as an MCLE course.

The luncheon fellowship was held at the McKinley Room, Manila Polo Club, McKinley Road, Forbes Park, Makati City.

3. Department of Social Work and Development (DSWD) Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Juliano-Soliman – on the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Conditional Cash Transfer Program (March 20, 2013)

DSWD Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman discussed the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program or "4P's", the Conditional Cash Transfer program of the government aimed at alleviating the effects of poverty and breaking the cycle of poverty in poor families.

Sec. Soliman inspired the government in 2010 to expand coverage of the 4P's program to more than 3 million families (March, 2013) nationwide. The government and its partners World Bank, AusAID and ADB determined that the program was on track and continued financial support. PBA acknowledged that the 4P's program owed much of its credibility and acceptance to the leadership of Sec. Soliman.

The luncheon fellowship was held at the McKinley Room, Manila Polo Club, Makati City.

4. Senior Associate Justice Antonio T. Carpio – on the Rule of Law in the West Philippine Sea Dispute (August 29, 2013)

Senior Associate Justice Antonio T. Carpio, former member of the board of trustees of the Philippine Bar Association, was guest speaker at the luncheon fellowship. Justice Carpio talked about the Philippines' sovereign and maritime rights in the West Philippine Sea under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

The subject matter is timely and of great import at this time of Chinese military incursions in disputed areas. Justice Carpio discussed the basis, significance and status of the Philippines' claim in the arbitration suit under the UNCLOS, saying that the compulsory arbitration on the maritime aspect of China's 9-dashed line was the best option for the Philippines, concluding that the dispute is an inter-generational struggle and that Filipinos must continue to defend its territory for the long term.

The speech was accredited as an MCLE course.

The luncheon fellowship was held at the Fairways Room, Manila Golf Club, Makati City.

FOUNDATION DAY:

The 122nd PBA Foundation Day celebration was held on June 19, 2013 with Department of Budget & Management (DBM) Secretary Florencio B. Abad as Guest of Honor and Speaker. Sec. Abad spoke on the National Budget as a mechanism for the advancement of the government's programs and "Daang Matuwid" policy. He explained that the budget is a key tool to rebuild public trust in the way government allocates and spends public funds, and in the context of this government's reform program to put the country back on track "on the historical continuum of People power". Sec. Abad described the zero-based budgeting and bottom-up budgeting processes that have been put in place to ensure that priorities of government are being funded and that people are allowed to have a say in the process through their communities and local governments.

On this occasion, seven more new members were inducted to the PBA.



President's Report

The Foundation Day celebration was held at the McKinley Room, Manila Polo Club, McKinley Road, Makati City

PROGRAMS :

PBA Website Program:

Communication is becoming more and more digital. To equip PBA with the necessary tools to better connect with members, generate interest and engage members in various activities, we set up a working website and provided the organizational structure to ensure that information will be uploaded correctly, securely and in timely manner, thus:

Administration and maintenance: Cyberspace committee (Trustee Rico Limpingco) will enhance security and protect the integrity of the website; secure the PBA domain name and safeguard the password and administrative keys and be prepared to administer the website anytime.

Policy and direction: Information Committee (Adviser Antonio R. Velicaria) will have oversight on how fast and how much info or interactivity will be provided on the website.

Uploading content: Special Committee on Website and Social Media (Secretay Vida Alindogan) will serve as inter-committee coordinator to manage the site's day-to-day operations and push content to the website on a monthly basis or more often, when necessary.

Amnesty Program:

The board on the recommendation of Ways and Means Committee (Trustee Jose Luis V. Agcaoili), approved an amnesty program for delinquent members which was set in place until March 30, 2013, later extended to June 30, 2013.

The ad hoc Committee on Membership (Advisers Manuel A. Barcelona Jr. and Carlos G. Platon) subsequently drew up rules for the implementation of Sec. 8 of the By-Laws, which provides the cancellation of membership and membership certificates for non-payment of dues.

The board approved the cancellation of membership of those delinquent in the payment of dues for five (5) consecutive years. After the lapse of the amnesty period, the members' Directory was

accordingly amended. The members' Directory as it appears in the 2013 PBA Yearbook is the new updated version. The same Directory appears on the new refurbished PBA website.

Petition against Cybercrime Law:

The Public Issues Committee (3rd VP Rodel A. Cruz) and Cyberspace Committee (Past President Ronald Olivar Solis and Trustee Rico A. Limpingco) took responsibility for the filing of a Petition with the Supreme Court on October 5, 2012 questioning specific provisions of the Cybercrime Prevention Act, specifically:

Section 4(c)(a) – which refers to the unlawful or prohibited acts of libel committed through a computer system or similar means;

Section 5 – which refers to abetting or aiding in the commission of any of the offenses enumerated under the Cybercrime Law and/or the attempt thereof;

Section 6 – which refers to the crimes committed by, through and with the use of information and communication technologies;

Section 7 – which refers to the prosecution of offenses under the Cybercrime Law without prejudice to any liability for violation of any provision of the Revised Penal Code;

Section 12 – which refers to the authorization given to law enforcement authorities to collect and/or record traffic data in real-time without prior judicial warrant;

Section 19) – which refers to the power of the Dept of Justice (DOJ) to restrict or block access to computer data upon prima facie finding of violation

Drafting the Petition and preparing for Oral Arguments required long and tedious work. For this, members Arthur Alicer, Joe Nathan Tenefrancia, Kristoffer James Púrsima, Ramon Manolo Alcasabas and others provided valuable support.

A temporary Restraining Order (TRO) was granted and stands until further orders of the Court.

Partnership with GMA Network in the 2013 elections:

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was signed between GMA Network and PBA and various organizations on November 8, 2012 and its signing aired on GMA 7 newscasts, to provide information on



the 2013 elections and discuss issues with senatorial candidates. Present at the signing were Trustees Beda G. Fajardo, Manuel Barcelona III and Rachelle Aileen Santos.

Past Presidents Victor P. Lazatin, Simeon V. Marcelo and Rita Linda V. Jimeno took active participation in this partnership. They drew up questions for all senatorial candidates and personally appeared together with "Mareng Winnie" Monsod and host Arnold Clavio in the "Unang Hirit" program of GMA-7 aired on January 24, 2013 and February 7, 2013, to ask senatorial candidates questions on national issues.

FUND-RAISING :

8TH PBA Golf Cup -

A fund-raising event is necessary for every organization. In the case of PBA this year, the fund-raiser was the 8th PBA Golf Cup held on May 9, 2013 at the West Course of the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club. Tee-off was at 8:30 A.M. with Past Presidents Avelino J. Cruz, Jr. and Carlos G. Platon making the ceremonial tee-off. Trustee Alfonso Victorio G. Reyno III won the Class A Championship and Atty. Sonny Tan of Sycip Law won the major raffle prize. Raffle prizes were aplenty, and everyone went home with a raffle prize.

The Committee on Special Projects (Trustees Ramon G. Samson and Alfonso Victorio G. Reyno III) organized the event, which netted P764,189.72, a sizeable amount that will go a long way in helping PBA continue to pursue its objectives

The major sponsors of the tournament were: Aboitiz Power Corporation, Galeo Equipment, Federal Land, Inc., PAGCOR, and Union Bank of the Philippines.

SOCIAL EVENTS :

Visit to the PBA-GK Village:

The PBA - GK Village constructed in 2007 under then President Jose "Boy" Feria Jr. in partnership with the Gawad Kalinga Foundation comprises 52 family homes located on A. Ponce Street (Masagana), Barangay Sta. Ana, Pateros. Trustee Benjamin Bacorro of the Legal Aid Committee organized a community

visit on Saturday, February 2, 2013. After breakfast at the CVC Law Center hosted by Trustee Rodol Cruz, the officers and members proceeded to the site. The residents prepared a short program consisting of a dance number, a narrative by a resident on how she was enabled through the PBA-GK project to leave her shack in the "babuyan" and a report by the DSWD coordinator on the livelihood projects primarily balut and tinapa businesses both indigenous industries, that the residents were taught. Highlight of the visit was the unveiling of the new PBA-GK Village signage at the front entrance.

Pateros Mayor Joey Molina hospitably provided fiesta food, which we shared with community leaders. In true Filipino hospitality, the community sent us home with "pabaon" of balut and itlog maalat.

Christmas Party:

The Christmas Party for officers, trustees, advisers, past presidents and staff was held on December 11, 2012 at the East-West Room of the Manila Golf & Country Club.

It was a quiet dinner with good music provided by flutist Ernani 'Jong' Cuenco, Jr. and lively conversation. A raffle of prizes was held. Past President Boy Lazatin introduced a game of inverse lottery, where a person whose name was selected was disqualified from winning the pot. Trustee Marites Sison Go went home with a fortune that night.

MESSAGE OF THANKS:

The trustees and advisers have been very supportive and ready to help me in every way and in every activity, and I sincerely thank them for their support;

I am grateful to friends who attended or participated in the activities I organized and/or bought advertisements and sponsorships on Law Day and the Golf Tournament fundraiser.

I turn over the helm of Philippine Bar Association in the good hands of Incoming President Beda Fajardo. I wish him the best.