

Jacinto appointed as *Sandiganbayan* justice

Assistant Ombudsman Bayani Jacinto of the Office of the Deputy Ombudsman for Luzon forges ahead in his career in the judiciary with his appointment by President Rodrigo

Duterte as associate justice of the *Sandiganbayan* on May 29, 2017.

Filling up the seat vacated by retired justice Roland Jurado, Jacinto brings to the *Sandiganbayan* his deep and solid

background in prosecuting and monitoring criminal and administrative cases at the Office of the Ombudsman.

When the news of the appointment was released, Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales and AO Jacinto were in the same hall attending an Ombudsman event. The Ombudsman took no time in congratulating the appointee to the anti-graft court. "The Ombudsman's loss is the *Sandiganbayan's* gain," said the Ombudsman.

AO Jacinto took his oath before Supreme Court Chief Justice Maria Lourdes PA Sereno on May 30, 2017. The Ateneo Law School alumnus assumed his post as the 67th justice of the *Sandiganbayan* since the court's establishment in 1978.

The *Sandiganbayan* is a collegial court consisting of 21 justices distributed among 7 divisions. Associate Justice Jacinto currently sits as a junior member of the court's 4th division.



Photo credit: Public Information Office, Supreme Court

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tional. As usual, Assistant Special Prosecutors Ryan Rey Quilala and Cristine Hernandez were right up their alley as masters of ceremonies. One

after the other, Deputy Special Prosecutors Mary Susan Guillermo, Cornelio Somido, Manuel Soriano, Jr and Omar Sagadal delivered heartwarming messages. The rank-and-file employees also gave out endearing messages. In fact, the

personal recollection of Ate Precy Barroga-Reyes of her professional and personal relationship with the outgoing Special Prosecutor almost rendered everybody on the verge of tears.

The musical numbers and the running jokes were pregnant with meanings and personal stories. Truly, the woman of the hour has not only served her position well but has gone out of her way to build a family – the OSP. As the program went through its course, not a pair of eyes was dry.

"I thank you from the bottom of my heart," SP Sulit said, her voice crackling, but the trouper that she is, SP Wendell puckered up her emotions and concluded with a signature one-liner joke. She went on dancing away to her favorite punk rock number after wiping off the tears that welled up in her eyes.



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Florencio B. Abad
Former Secretary
Department of Budget & Management

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Ombudsman indicts ex-Budget Sec Abad over DAP

Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales has found probable cause to charge former Secretary Florencio Abad of the Department of Budget and Management with violation of Article 239 (Usurpation of Legislative Powers) of the Revised Penal Code. The charge stems from Abad's unlawful issuance of National Budget Circular (NBC) No. 541 to implement the controversial Disbursement Acceleration Program (DAP) involving P72 billion. NBC No. 541 authorizes the withdrawal of unobligated allotments of agencies with low levels of obligations as of June 30, 2012.

In addition, Abad was found guilty of Simple Misconduct and ordered sus-

pended for three months. However, considering his separation from the service, the penalty is convertible to a fine equivalent to his salary for three months.

The cases arose from the complaint filed by Representative Carlos Isagani Zarate, Renato Reyes, Benjamin Valbuena, Dante LA Jimenez, Mae Paner, Antonio Flores, Gloria Arellano and Bonifacio Carmona, Jr.

During the investigation, the Ombudsman found that by issuing NBC No. 541, Abad unlawfully encroached on the powers of Congress by effectively modifying the provisions on savings of the 2012 General Appropriations Act (GAA).

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Ombudsman dismisses Senators' staff over PDAF involvement

Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales has ordered the dismissal from the service of 21 Senate staff after they were found guilty of Grave Misconduct, Conduct Prejudicial to the Best Interest of the Service and Dishonesty over the illegal utilization of the Priority Development Assistance Funds (PDAF) of former Senators Ramon “Bong” Revilla Jr., Juan Ponce Enrile, and Jose “Jinggoy” Estrada. Included in the order were:

- Jessica Lucila Reyes (Chief of Staff, Office of Senator Juan Ponce Enrile)
- Jose Antonio Evangelista II (Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of Senator Enrile)
- Pauline Therese Mary Labayen (Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of Senator Jose “Jinggoy” Estrada)
- Dennis Cunanan (Director General, Technology Resource Center)
- Antonio Ortiz (Director General, TRC)
- Richard Cambe (Director III, TRC)
- Marivic Jover (Chief Accountant, TRC)

- Consuelo Lilian Espiritu (Budget Officer, TRC)
- Godelina Amata (President, National Livelihood Development Corporation)
- Gregoria Buenaventura (NLDC)
- Emmanuel Alexis Sevidal (Director IV, NLDC)
- Sofia Cruz (Project Development Officer IV, NLDC)
- Chita Jalandoni (Director IV, NLDC)
- Ofelia Ordoñez (Chief Budget Specialist, NLDC)
- Filipina Rodriguez (Budget Officer, NLDC)
- Evelyn Sugang (Director, Accounts Management and Development, NLDC)
- Victor Roman Cacal (General Services Supervisor, National Agribusiness Corporation)
- Rhodora Mendoza (Administrative and Finance Head, NABCOR)
- Maria Niñez Guañizo (OIC-Accounting Division, NABCOR)
- Romulo Relevo (General Services Unit head)
- Ma. Julie Villalarvo-Johnson (Chief Accountant, NABCOR)

Ombudsman meets with Chinese anti-corruption officials

The Office of the Ombudsman welcomed officials from the National Bureau of Corruption Prevention (NBCP) and the Department of International Cooperation of the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and Ministry of Supervision from the People’s Republic of China on April 10, 2017.

Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales received the delegation from the People’s Republic of China including representatives from the China Embassy.

Top ranking officials of the Office of the Ombudsman presented an overview of the functions, powers, initiatives and milestone accomplishments of the Office. The meeting, which was held upon the request of the People’s Republic of China, explored the possibility of conducting bilateral cooperation initiatives between the NBCP and the Ombudsman towards the establishment of the China-ASEAN anti-corruption cooperation mechanism.

The delegation from the People’s Republic of China was headed by Vice Minister Liu Jianchao of the NBCP and Director General of Department of International Cooperation of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and Ministry of Supervision. The Vice Minister was joined by Deputy Chief of Mission He Xiangqi, Division Director Jia Luan, Division Director Wang Qing, Deputy Division Director Ma Jian, Ms. Qian Yangjing and Mr. Chen Qingjie.

Established in 2007, the NBCP aims to monitor the flow of

suspicious assets and corruption activities by establishing an information-sharing system among prosecuting offices, courts, police authorities and banks. NBCP also guides anti-corruption work in companies, public undertakings and non-governmental organizations, help trade associations to establish self-discipline systems and mechanisms, prevent commercial bribery, and extend corruption prevention work to rural organizations as well as urban communities.



(Caloocan City) **Campus “HIT” Crusaders**, Camarin High School, “*SAVE (Student in Action for Values Empowerment)*”, **Caybiga SULONG Integridad**, Caybiga High School, “*Isulong Integridad at Tungkuling Panlipunan Para sa Caybigans*”; (Quezon City) **Kilonians Integrity Promoters**, San Francisco High School, “*K.I.P. (Kabataang may Integridad sa Paaralan ng KIKO)*”; (Valenzuela City) **SFMHS Youth Integrity Fighters**, Sitero Francisco Memorial National High School, “*3Is: Integridad, Ilunsad, Ipalaganap*”; (Parañaque City) **Parañaque Science Youth Crusaders on Honesty, Integrity and Camaraderie (PSYCHIC)**, Parañaque Science High School, “*Project Soar High ParSci!*”; (Pasay City) **KNIGHTS**, Pasay City West High School, “*Friends Zone*”; (Taguig-Pateros) **Association of Students Integrity Alliance**, Gen. Ricardo Papa, Sr. Memorial High School, “*Youth Towards Achievement of Integrity for Development and Transcendence*.”

In his keynote message, Overall Deputy Ombudsman Melchor Arthur Carandang affirmed the crucial role of the CIC program in the anti-corruption advocacy and in the larger context of nation building.

“As multipliers of the Office of the

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accomplishment were impressive: *magna cum laude* in AB Political Science in 1975 and *cum laude* in the Bachelor of Laws program (1980) at the Far Eastern University.

She brought this ethos of excellence in her professional career. In March 1981, she started her career in public service as Assistant Section Chief of the Calendar Section at the *Sandiganbayan*. In no time, she became Senior Attorney which brought her to the inner circle of then Presiding Justice Manuel Pamaran. In December 1982, she became Chief of the Judicial Records Division. After spending more than ten years at the *Sandiganbayan*, the highly-motivated and self-driven lawyer decided to take on

Ombudsman through your projects and activities, you have exhibited your dedication and commitment to the CIC program,” said ODO Carandang.

Such validation coming from an OMB official is important considering that a generation from now, majority of these CIC officers will take on the roles in the country’s local and national leaderships.

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In boxing lexicon, it was a classic prop-push-parry combination.

It is also worth mentioning how the proceedings became so animated and engrossing, thanks to the ace performance of the stand-in witness. The legal stakes were upped by the definitive ‘feigning’ performance of Atty. Maria Melinda Mananghaya-Henson, Director of the Field Investigation Bureau (OMB-Luzon).

The verdict? The members of the adjudication panel said—while they offered two cents’ worth on further refinements in courtroom dynamics—it was too close to call.

Well, it’s like a legal drama based on real life events: two veteran and crafty counsels arguing an open-and-shut case.

The first one to blink loses.

another challenge when she transferred to the Office of the Ombudsman in 1991. Nineteen years later, she broke the glass ceiling by becoming its first woman Special Prosecutor in March 2010.

So on the last day of her 7-year term, SP Sulit was her usual upbeat self. But there was something in her eyes that betrayed her nonchalance. It was Friday and everyone was gearing up for some fun.

The testimonial program in her honor reminisced the good old times – her 7-year journey with her OSP family. The OSP was family for 7 years and no “controversy” could erase that fact. For the mother and her children, there was nothing more liberating than having been vindicated in the end.

Thus, the celebration was doubly emotional. See **ENDING** page 16

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Maria Karen Veloso, Almeda Sakima Vinluan, Juliever Lamug, Josephine Mae Rosapapan, Claire Señase-Adriano, Roscoe Agcaoili, Sandy Alcantara, Niña Richa Gayeta, Sir Frederick Aguilar II, Jiorg Michael Atutubo, Ryan Mervin Ferrer and Winston Oscaris.

“The national passing rate for the 2016 Bar Examinations is 59.06%, the highest since 1954 (75.17%),” revealed Supreme Court Justice Presbitero Velasco, Jr., the 2016 Bar Examinations chairperson.

The new lawyers took their oath on May 22, 2017 at the Mall of Asia Arena before a special *en banc* session of the Supreme Court.

Manindigan Kontra Katiwalian

INTEGRITY WATCH

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the Ombudsman and the student organizations in the different school divisions in the National Capital Region. The whole gamut of the social media structure—of which Facebook and Twitter have become indispensable—serves as a node of integrity, where learning from each others’ insights and activities has become instantaneous.

A case-in-point: Anna Kristina Mutuc of Garcian Integrity Movers, whose Share-A-Wisdom project seeks to impart nuggets of wisdom from the lens of a student leader, has this to say:

“(It) is one of my favorite activities because as President of the organization, I am given the chance to speak during flag raising ceremony. *Ipinapalaganap*

ko po sa mga kapwa mag-aaral ng aming paaralan ang tungkol sa kahulugan, katuturan at kahalagahan ng integridad sa poamamagitan ng paglalahad ng mga kuwento hango sa totoong buhay,” relayed the student leader in her testimonial speech as representative of one of the outstanding student organizations. Mutuc’s compelling prose, especially the part where she relates ‘real life insights,’ takes on a ‘life of its own’ when mediated by the power of Facebook and Twitter.

“With the active involvement of the officers of the Campus Integrity Crusaders in their respective schools/campuses and with the support of social media through the CIC Fan Page, these young leaders are able to understand and identify with the values of integrity and social responsibility,” said the Office of the

Ombudsman’s Community Coordination Bureau (CCB) Acting Director Rhodora Galicia.

Aside from the lectures and project syntheses, the *Third Campus Integrity Crusaders Congress* also served as an opportune time for affirming the students’ noble pursuits. This year’s roster of outstanding student organizations includes: (Manila) **Monsay Integrity Movers**, Ramon Magsaysay High School, “*Kultura ng Katapatan Pinanday sa Paaralan Para sa Malinis na Bayan*”, **Garcian Integrity Movers**, Carlos P. Garcia High School, “*TAMA KA GARCIAN (Turuan, Akayin sa Mabuting Asal Kabataang GARCIAN)*”, **Rectonian Integrity Movers**, Claro M. Recto High School, “*Kabataang May Integridad: Kabataang May Responsibilidad*”;

Apart from the dismissal, the respondents were also permanently banned from holding public office and their retirement benefits forfeited. In the event of their separation from the service, the penalty would be converted to a fine equivalent to their salary for one year.

The dismissed employees are also being tried before the Sandiganbayan for their involvement in the anomalous utilization of the PDAF of the former solons.

From 2007 to 2009, the amounts of P517,000,000, P345,000,000, and P278,000,000 were released by the Department of Budget and Management as part of the PDAF of Revilla, Enrile, and Estrada. After the fund release, the former lawmakers identified the NABCOR, NLDC and TRC as implementing agencies. They authorized their high-ranking staff members to act for them, deal with, and sign documents necessary for the immediate and timely implementation of the PDAF-funded projects to facilitate the scam.

Their multi-million fund was allegedly used to buy materials, products, and services needed for each of their NGOs project-beneficiaries.

Actual field validation conducted by the Ombudsman revealed that no delivery was made to the supposed beneficiaries.

Mayors and municipal agriculturists denied receiving any of the items from the office Senator Revilla, Enrile, and Estrada, the implementing agencies or any of the NGOs.

The Ombudsman highlighted “the extraordinary speed attendant to the examination, processing and approval by the concerned NABCOR, NLDC and TRC officers of the PDAF releases to the Napoles-affiliated or controlled NGOs.”

The decisions states that, “based on testimonial and documentary evidence presented, the widespread misuse of the PDAF allotted to a legislator was coursed through a complex scheme basically involving projects supposed to have been funded by said PDAF which turned out to be inexistent or “ghost projects.”

According to Ombudsman Morales, “in most instances, the disbursement vouchers (DV) were accomplished, signed and approved on the same day. Certainly, the required careful examination of the transaction’s supporting documents could not have taken place if the DV was processed and approved in one day.

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According to Ombudsman Morales, “NBC No. 541 provided the principal bases for the withdrawal of unobligated allotments which were declared as savings and used to fund PAPs (programs, activities and projects) under the DAP. The issuance of this circular is an act of usurpation. This is contrary to law.”

It will be recalled that in 2014, the Supreme Court declared as unconstitutional the following acts committed in pursuance of the DAP: (1) withdrawal of unobligated allotments from the implementing agencies; and the declaration of the withdrawn unobligated allotments and unreleased appropriations as savings prior to the end of the fiscal year without complying with the statutory definition of savings contained in the GAA; and (2) the cross-border transfers of the savings of the Executive to augment the appropriations of other offices outside the executive.

Under Article 239 of the RPC, the penalties of *prison correccional* in its minimum period and temporary special disqualification, shall be imposed upon an executive or judicial officer who shall encroach upon the powers of the legislative branch of the Government, either by making general rules or regulations beyond the scope of his authority, or by attempting to repeal a law or suspending the execution thereof.

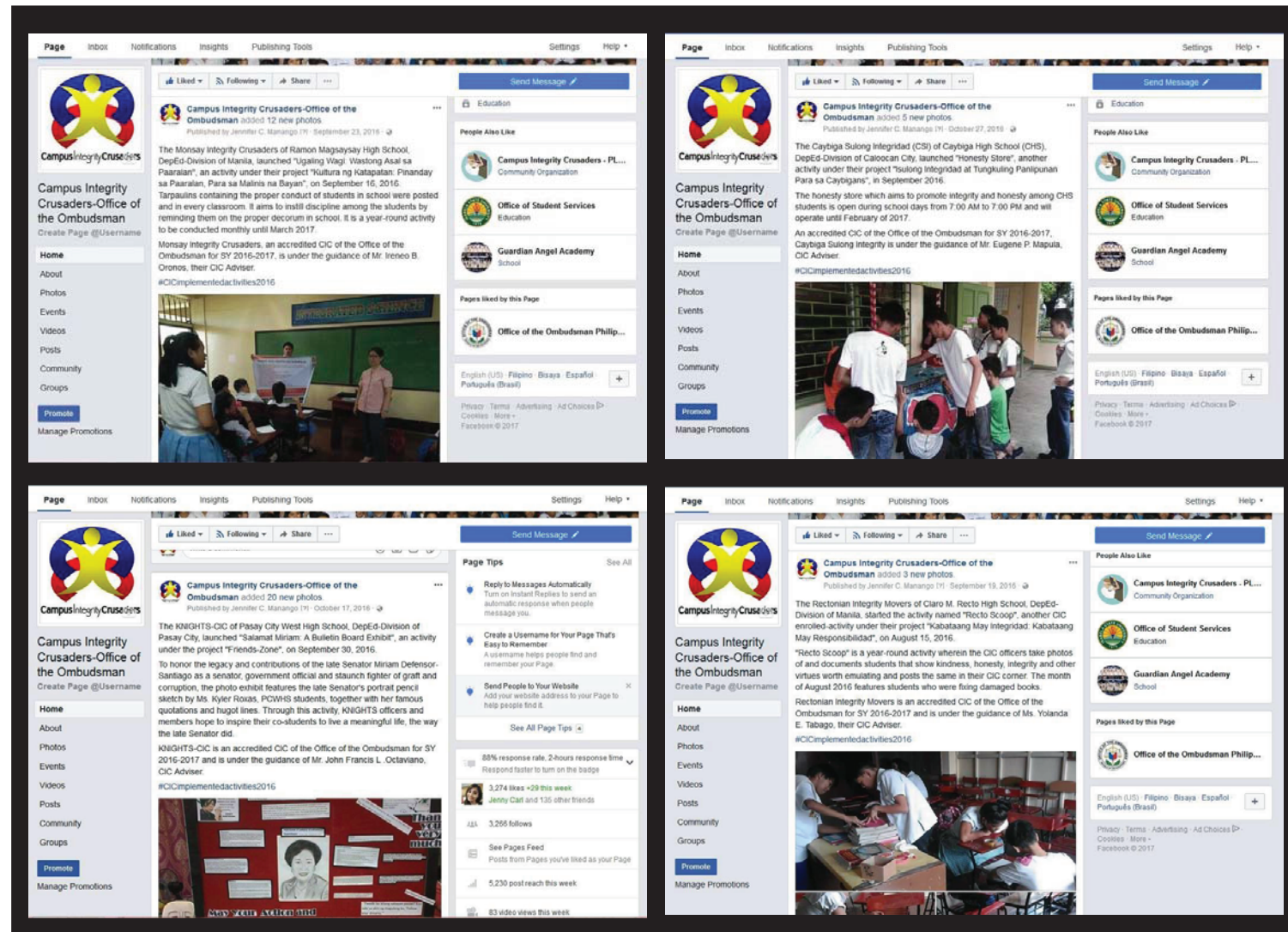
OMB lauds 21 bar passers

Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales led the traditional recognition rites for the 21 new lawyers coming from the different sectoral offices of the Office of the Ombudsman on May 15, 2017 during the opening program of the Office’s 29th anniversary.

Assistant Ombudsman Leilanie Bernadette Cabras of the General Administration Office presented the 21 Ombudsman lawyers who are among the 3,747 successful examinees of the 2016 Bar Examinations.

The new Ombudsman lawyers are Moses Buzmion, Arbel Dumayag, Corinne Joie Garillo, Carmelo Gines, Jr., Albert Leynes, Maria Obbania, Raphael Lorenzo Pangalangan, Teddy Parado, Jr., Aris Voltaire Tominez,

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News Flashes

OMB LUZON, MOLEO put up Gender Info Desk

The Gender and Development (GAD) program has found new operational hubs in two more sectoral offices of the Office of the Ombudsman: the Office of the Deputy Ombudsman for Military and Other Law Enforcement Offices (MOLEO) and the Office of the Deputy Ombudsman for Luzon (OMB Luzon).

Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales led the inauguration of OMB-MOLEO and OMB Luzon's Gender Information Desks (GIDs) on March 8 and June 28, 2017, respectively. These recent developments brought to completion the establishment of GIDs in all public assistance-oriented sectoral offices of the Office of the Ombudsman.

In 2016, the Offices of the Deputy Ombudsman for Visayas and Mindanao took the lead in this GAD-related program.



Ombudsman meets with foreign correspondents

Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales granted one-on-one interviews with two respected foreign journalists: James Chambers of the Hongkong-based *Monocle* magazine and Kimi Aoki of NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation).

Chambers' interview with Ombudsman Morales came out in *Monocle's* March 2017 issue, which ran a story on the current peace and order situation in the country vis-à-vis the ongoing anti-drug operations of the administration of President Rodrigo Duterte.

Aoki's biographical documentary on Ombudsman Morales dealt with the latter's anti-corruption advocacy. The 30-minute interview, shot in May 2017 at the Ombudsman's office, for NHK's television special touched on the facets of the present administration's anti-corruption drive, alongside the

mechanisms to ensure the fast resolution of cases in the Office.



NHK's documentary program has its signature thematic treatment where guests share their favorite quotes. Ombudsman Morales shows her personal mantra which says, "One who does not dare or take the risk will never achieve her goal."

Ending it in Style

The Honorable Special Prosecutor's surname means 'worth it' or 'of value' in Filipino and there's no denying that her work ethics and legal acumen has ennobled the Office of the Special Prosecutor since her appointment to the post in March 2010. As her constitutionally mandated term of 7 years comes to a close, she leaves behind a legacy that is steeped in integrity and magnanimity

There was no indication of a special event that was coming up that Friday at the Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP). The whole 4th floor spanning the OSP was bathed in the usual mix of office flurry and buzz. Except for an inconspicuous tarpaulin, everything was subdued and low-key. From the looks of it, it was the way the OSP family was coping with separation anxiety. The term of its *de facto* mother has come to an end, and unfortunate it may be, the show must go on.

By mid afternoon, however, the mood has transformed into a party vibe, and surprisingly, the toast of the celebration was the first one to be seen at the venue in her usual scarf-draped power dressing en-

semble of blazer and suit pants. And as soon as everybody has settled in, the flurry of activities took on the form of a *despedida* affair for OSP's beloved head, the Honorable Special Prosecutor Wendell Barreras-Sulit.

When one comes to know her in a more in-depth and personal level, however, it is not her flair for fashion nor her well-coiffed up 'do that will strike you. It is her inherent goodness that draws one into her orbit of magnanimity.

One could say that her charisma is disarming; her personality: maternal, nurturing and compassionate. She commands respect as head of the Office of the Special Prosecutor, the prosecutorial arm of the Office of the Ombudsman, and deliv-

ers the goods, as they say, when it comes to personalities for indictment and cases up for trial. There's no other way to describe this career professional but assiduous and uncompromising.

She knows that she is fair game for criticism on account of the position she occupies, but SP Sulit's gracious demeanor betrays her determined spirit in bringing corrupt public officials to justice.

This comes as no surprise. Even at a young age, she has already imbibed the values of professionalism and excellence. As a student of political science and law, SP Sulit's academic

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#WEMakeChangeWorkforWomen

The hashtag meme couldn't have been more appropriate as the diversity of this year's activities could only be matched by their effectiveness. In celebrating the 2017 National Women's Month, the Office of the Ombudsman endeavors to gain progress in ensuring that life's delicate balance works in everyone's favor – including the men

The Executive Committee (ExeCom) of the Gender and Development Focal Point System (GFPS) of the Office of the Ombudsman took the celebration of the 2017 International and National Women's Month to another level by offering a wealth of options for mental and physical stress-busters.

Its advocacy for the wholistic mind and body well-being of employees has prompted the ExeCom to invite professional experts on dental care, diet management, lecture on

computer vision syndrome and safe use of medicines. The lecture series was supplemented by a trade fair and bazaar which offered a wide array of organic products. Apart from food products, other kiosks offered discounted gym memberships and insurance services.

The GFPS also saw it fit to include a series of group exercise routines which included an Adult Ballet Trial Class, Yoga for Beginners, Body Combat Training and Zumba.

The celebration was also a perfect venue for the screening of the multi-

awarded documentary *Sunday Beauty Queen* helmed by the Chevening scholar, UP Film Institute lecturer and film director Baby Ruth Villarama-Gutierrez. In attendance was *Direk* Baby herself and Mylyn Jacobo, one of the featured beauty queens of the documentary. *Direk* Baby and Mylyn engaged the audience in a post-screening question-and-answer segment where issues on women and other concomitant concerns such as family dynamics and labor policy were articulated and discussed.



Sunday Beauty Queen (SBQ) director Baby Ruth Villarama-Gutierrez shares her experience in filming the documentary in Hongkong. SBQ had a morning and an afternoon screening at the Office of the Ombudsman

OMB launches video challenge competition

The Office of the Ombudsman, in cooperation with Jollibee Foods Corporation, launched the 2017 Integrity Video Challenge contest at the EDSA Shangri-La Hotel on May 28, 2017. The competition is part of the Integrity Caravan Program (ICP) of the Office of the Ombudsman which seeks to highlight the preventive aspect of its anti-corruption mandate.

The contest calls for film enthusiasts and integrity champions (teams of three) among college students (18-23 years old) to tap into their creative juices and come up with short films (2-3 minutes), infomercials and video campaigns on the importance of maintaining integrity and honesty.

The contest is giving away cash prizes for the top winners (P100,00 for the grand prize, P50,000 and P30,000 for the runners-up).

The contest is expected to draw hundreds of entries from universities and colleges all over the country.



Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales, her deputies and project management director are joined by Mr. Daniel Rafael Ramon Gomez III (left most), VP for Corporate Marketing of Jollibee Foods Corporation (JFC) and Ms. Pauline Lao (2nd from right), Head of Media and Corporate Communications of JFC.

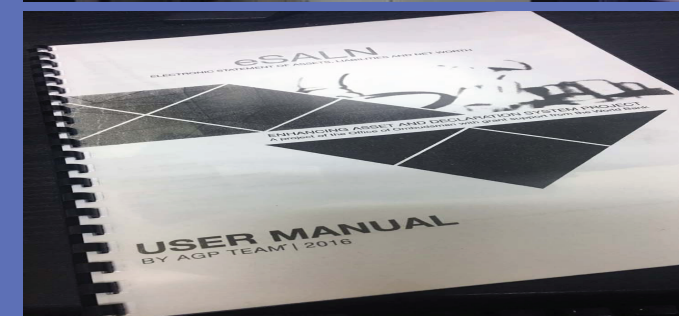
OMB takes lead in e-SALN initial rollout



As a major repository of the Statements of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth (SALNs) of the bureaucracy, the Office of the Ombudsman participated in the initial rollout of the electronic SALN program.

Officials and employees of the Office trooped to the Treston International College in Taguig City for the 2-day training workshop on E-SALN on May 29-30, 2017.

The E-SALN program is designed to make the submission of the SALN not only centralized, but also easier and faster. It is expected to foster greater transparency among officials and employees of the whole bureaucracy.



News Flashes

OMB, PCC conduct joint exploratory talks

Top officials of the Office of the Ombudsman and the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) held exploratory talks on the crafting of a Memorandum of Understanding on June 28, 2017 at the Conference Room of the OMB Proper.

Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales led the OMB contingent. Other officials who made their recommendations during the roundtable talks were Overall Deputy Ombudsman Melchor Arthur Carandang, Deputy Ombudsman for Luzon Gerard Mosquera, Deputy Ombudsman for the MOLEO Cyril Ramos, Deputy Special Prosecutor Omar Sagadal,

Assistant Ombudsman Jennifer Jardin-Manalili (OMB Proper), Assistant Ombudsman Edna Diño (OMB Proper), Assistant Ombudsman Asryman Rafanan (Office of Legal affairs) and Assistant Ombudsman Joselito Fangon (Field Investigation Office).

The PCC delegation was led by Chairman Arsenio Balisacan and Commissioners Stella Luz Quimbo, Amabelle Asuncion and Johannes Benjamin Bernabe.

The expected output seeks to harness the agencies' anti-corruption mandates. Specifically, the PCC is tasked by Republic Act 10667 or the Philippine Competition Act to promote fair market competition and prevent the commission of anti-competitive agreements, mergers and acquisitions.



OMB, COA ink MOA on joint investigation of grand corruption cases

The Office of the Ombudsman and the Commission on Audit (COA) inked anew a Memorandum of Agreement to strengthen their institutional partnership on the Joint Investigation Team Cases (JIT cases).

Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales and COA Chairman Michael Aguinaldo signed the MOA in a simple ceremony held at the EDSA Shangri-La in Mandaluyong City on 28 February 2017. Deputy Special Prosecutor Mary Susan Guillermo and Assistant Commissioner Alexander Juliano witnessed

the signing ceremony. Also present during the signing were high ranking officials from both agencies, development partners and anti-corruption stakeholders.

In her keynote address, Ombudsman Morales said that she expects the fast tracking of JIT cases to meet the people's expectation for speedy disposition of graft and corruption related offenses. Meanwhile, Chairman Aguinaldo thanked the Ombudsman and the USAID Integrity for Investments Initiative (i3) as development partner, as he underscored the

importance of the institutional collaboration especially for high value, high profile cases which require prioritization.

Under the MOA, JIT cases are fraud audit-related complaints or reports involving at least P100M or its equivalent in kind or in other currencies, graft and corruption cases investigated by the Congress, and other cases imbued with public interest regardless of the amount. In addition, it provided for the establishment of a "JIT Priority Lane" in the Office of the Ombudsman where JIT cases shall be immediately filed,

docketed and subjected to preliminary investigation.

The MOA is part of the anti-corruption initiatives of the Inter-Agency Anti-Graft Coordinating Council presently chaired by Aguinaldo. It will be recalled that in 2012, former COA Chair Grace Pulido-Tan and Ombudsman Morales also signed a MOA to ensure the efficient and successful filing, investigation and prosecution of cases involving graft, corruption and violations of the ethical code of conduct for public officials and government employees. The program ran for three years.

INTEGRITY, CIC and the 'THIRD SPACE'

As could be gleaned from snapshots of their so-called 'lived spaces' (the home and the school), millennial students have shown keen interest in the Office of the Ombudsman's Campus Integrity Crusaders (CIC) program. From the initial 118 accredited organizations in 2013, the number has increased to 194 (as of midyear 2017). Moreover, their discourse on integrity has spilled-over to cyberspace; their social media presence translates to thousands of likes and shares and hundreds of photos. Indeed, the millennial notion of 'integrity' has claimed its own—to borrow the term coined by language critic Homi Bhabha—'third space'.

The event is known as 'Third Campus Integrity Crusaders Congress'; in millennial-speak, it goes by the meme 'CIC 3.0'. Either way, its message has remained as compelling as ever and over the years, has resonated with much deeper meaning, *i.e.*, anti-corruption advocacy flows from the values one develops from interactions in the home, school and community.

The *Campus Integrity Crusaders* Program, a brainchild of Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales, is the platform through which the Office realizes the pro-

active and preventive approach of the anti-corruption drive. The program engages the youth, through their school organizations, to create local impact on anti-corruption. The overarching narrative is that: by virtue of the collective force of these school-based integrity-based projects, the millennial notion of 'national integrity' could emerge.

By the looks of it, these millennials have taken the ownership of the grand narrative.

On February 15, 2017, close to 700 secondary high school students took part

in the 'Third Campus Integrity Crusaders Congress' at the Philippine Science High School (PSHS) Gymnasium. Accompanied by their respective teacher-advisers, the congress was an opportune time to renew their commitment to cascade the values of integrity, honesty, transparency and accountability in what Bhabha termed as 'hybrid lived spaces.'

In any case, social media has played a pivotal role in strengthening the relationship between the Office of

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No one blinked

Prosecutors and lawyers agree on one painful truth: prosecution of corruption cases is a tad difficult task. But they also know one hornbook rule in litigation: practice makes perfect. So when it comes to ensuring that every corruption case is airtight, expect all hands on deck from the Office of the Ombudsman and the Commission on Audit (COA).

The first half of the year has been particularly busy for fact-finding and investigation teams. As part of their continuing training on investigation and prosecution, the lawyers had to complete a series of trainings designed to improve case analyses, strengthen litigation strategies, hone legal hermeneutics and refine courtroom dynamics.

Integrity Watch News was right in the middle of the action, so to speak,

when it covered the second leg of the training series at the Park Inn (Raddison Clark) in Angeles City, Pampanga on June 2, 2017.

It was intense, to say the least.

The function room was transformed into a virtual courtroom. Excitement was very much palpable. The room, while abuzz with activity, had an aural tinge of formality, sometimes punctuated by muted laughter but more often powered by a cacophony of legal jargons. Some faces looked pensive; others wore anxious smiles. But one thing was certain: everybody was thoughtfully serious on winging (and winning) the moot court.

Then the case was called by the three-person adjudication panel whose members are, by no means, lacking in intellectual and legal heft: Overall Deputy Ombudsman Melchor Arthur Carandang, COA Chairperson Michael Aguinaldo and

Sandiganbayan Presiding Justice Amparo Cabotaje-Tang. The case at bar? A ‘hypothetical’ corruption case, the ultimate facts of which are based from an actual case undergoing trial.

And then, the courtroom tussle ensued.

The prosecution chose a seasoned lawyer as its lead prosecutor, Director Emma Suarez of the Prosecution and Monitoring Bureau of the Office of the Ombudsman while the defense argued its case through Atty. Alfred Yann Oguis, officer-in-charge of the Field Investigation Office (OMB-Visayas).

The legal sparks showed. The direct examination, cross examination and the redirect examination were a showcase of decades’ worth of litigation experience. The questioning was probing; the sequencing, seamless and the posturing, dignified.

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OMB Management, OMBEA seal breakthrough agreement

Fourteen years after initial efforts were made to craft a Collective Negotiation Agreement (CNA), a newly-minted CNA had been finally adopted by the Office of the Ombudsman and the Ombudsman Employees Association (OMBEA).

In a signing ceremony held on February 27, 2017, Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales and members of the negotiating panels witnessed the signing of the CNA between Overall Deputy Ombudsman Melchor Arthur Carandang and OMBEA President Nolasco Ducay.

“It’s good that the negotiations didn’t fall apart. I commend the members of the negotiating panels for successfully leading the talks to their rightful conclusion,” said Ombudsman Morales when sought for a reaction after the historic signing.

The members of the negotiating panel for the Office of the Ombudsman include Deputy

Ombudsman (DO) for the MOLEO Cyril Ramos, DO for Luzon Gerard Mosquera, DO for Visayas Paul Elmer Clemente, DO for Mindanao Rodolfo Elman, Assistant Ombudsman (AO) Edna Diño, AO Leilanie Bernadette Cabras and AO Weomark Ryan Layson while their counterparts from the OMBEA are Harry Crisanto Ravelo, Lionell Donato, Noel Valencia, Joanna Mae Alberto, Roderick Angeles and Gerhard Basco.

In an *Integrity Watch News* interview, OMBEA Secretary Bernadette Cunanan said that in 2004, a similar CNA was approved although it was not registered with the Civil Service Commission as required by law. “So the approval and registration of the 2017 CNA is a welcome development and we thank the present management under Ombudsman Morales for supporting the CNA,” said Cunanan.

The 2017 CNA embodies the rights, privileges and incentives that members of the OMBEA can avail of. Its salient features include provisions

which strengthen the employees’ security of tenure and clearer guidelines on the settlement of grievances. The CNA also provides for a CNA incentive, subject to pertinent rules and availability of funds, to “association members, rank-and-file employees who are not members of the Association, and those performing managerial functions.”

Meanwhile, the provision on flexible office hours under the “Employee Welfare and Professional Development” clause of the CNA has already been implemented effective April 3, 2017.





The overarching theme of the 29th anniversary celebration could be distilled into one phrase: **The Ombudsman and The Nation**. The famous quote of writer Benedict Anderson that “a nation is an imagined community” comes to mind as the Office celebrates its anniversary this year. It is through this sense of oneness and camaraderie that we are able to fulfill our mandate.

We share kindred spirits in fighting corruption and in working tirelessly to make headway in the prevention of wrongdoings and the prosecution of corruption cases. Our discourse is hinged on integrity and this is reflected in the quality of our work, in dealing with our publics, and even in showcasing our talents.

Taking the cue from Anderson when he says that it is through the “deep imaginings” that we fight for the welfare of the “people in the community”, we are emboldened to protect the independence of the Office. As we celebrate the prelude to our Pearl Anniversary in 2018, we recommit ourselves to upholding the mandate of the Office through our dedicated service and indomitable spirits.

One in
Mind:
Believing that
Unwavering and
Dedicated
Service
Makes
A
Nation

