(Standing, Left to Right) Chief Justice Renato C. Corona, Associate Justices Antonio T. Carpio, Presbitero J. Velasco, Jr., Arturo D. Brion, Diosdado M. Peralta, Mariano C. del Castillo, Martin S. Villarama, Jr., and Jose Portugal Perez, (Seated, Left to Right) Conchita Carpio Morales, Antonio Eduardo B. Nachura, Teresita J. Leonardo-de Castro, Lucas P. Bersamin, Roberto A. Abad, Maria Lourdes Aranal Sereno, and Jose Catral Mendoza.
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The Philippine **JUDICIAL SYSTEM**
A first-rate Judiciary. This is something that should be in everyone’s wish list for our country. I say this not just as head of the Judiciary but also as Renato C. Corona, a Filipino citizen. The reason is simple: For the social and economic development of our country to be deep and lasting, the same must be underpinned by the rule of law. The Judiciary stands as the guardian of the rule of law, for it is constitutionally mandated to impartially interpret and apply the law to resolve disputes so that it is the law – not men – that stand supreme.

As my immediate predecessor Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno has eloquently put it, “one cannot have a world-class Judiciary on a shoestring budget.” Historically the Judiciary’s share in the national budget has hovered below one percent. In 2010, for example, of the P1.54 trillion approved national budget, only 0.82% was allocated to the Judiciary. Take note that studies have shown that a two percent share is generally considered ideal; however, with due reverence to budgetary constraints in this recession period, for this year, 2011, the Supreme Court actively sought to get just at least a 1% share in the national budget for, among others, rehabilitation of Halls of Justice nationwide and completion of pilot model courts; the designation of more trial courts as family courts and, if possible, the formal creation of such courts to answer for the rising number of family cases; and upgrading and modernization of the courts’ information and communication technology. Unfortunately, the budget given the Judiciary still fell short by at least P3 billion of what it needed.

The amount of the budget given the Judiciary must also be distinguished from its fiscal autonomy over the same. Bengzon v. Drilon (GR No. 103524, April 15, 1992) defines the constitutionally
guaranteed fiscal autonomy of the Judiciary, as well as of the Civil Service Commission, the Commission on Audit, the Commission on Elections, and the Office of the Ombudsman, as having “full flexibility to allocate and utilize [its] resources with the wisdom and dispatch that [its] needs require. It recognizes the power and authority to levy, assess and collect fees, fix rates of compensation not exceeding the highest rates authorized by law for compensation and pay plans of the government and allocate and disburse such sums as may be provided by law or prescribed by [it] in the course of the discharge of [its] functions.”

I believe the Executive and the Legislative branches should be one with us in our aspirations of achieving a first-rate Judiciary. I believe it is in this spirit that Art. VIII, Sec. 16 of the Constitution requires the Supreme Court to submit to the President and Congress this annual report on the Judiciary’s operation and activities so that they in turn can enact a budget that will enable the Judiciary to significantly improve rather than simply keep its head above water. I believe it could not be otherwise, for in the ultimate analysis, the beneficiary is not the Judiciary but the Filipino people we are all committed to serve.

Renato C. Corona
In his first statement, the new Chief Justice vowed “to improve the Judiciary even further in every aspect possible and strengthen the great institution of the Supreme Court.” He is joined by Justices Antonio T. Carpio, Conchita Carpio Morales, Presbitero J. Velasco, Jr., Antonio Eduardo B. Nachura, Teresita J. Leonardo-De Castro, Arturo D. Brion, Diosdado M. Peralta, Lucas P. Bersamin, Mariano C. del Castillo, Roberto A. Abad, Martin S. Villarama, Jr., Jose P. Perez, Jose C. Mendoza, and Ma. Lourdes P. A. Sereno, the 2010 Corona Court.

**SIGNIFICANT DECISIONS**

In 2010, the Supreme Court promulgated a total of 1,313 decisions and signed resolutions, including the following:

**GR No. 188078, Aldaba v. Commission on Elections (COMELEC), January 25, 2010, Carpio, J.**

The Court declared RA 9591 creating a legislative district for the city of Malolos, Bulacan unconstitutional for being violative of section 5(3), Article VI of the
Constitution and Section 3 of the Ordinance appended thereto as there is no showing that Malolos has attained or will attain a population of 250,000, whether actual or projected, before the May 10, 2010 elections.

**GR No. 184740, Funa v. Ermita, February 11, 2010, Villarama, Jr., J.**

The Court held that the designation of respondent as Officer in Charge of the Maritime Industry Authority, concurrent with the position of Department of Transportation and Communication Undersecretary for Maritime Transport to which she had been appointed, violates the constitutional proscription in Art. VII, sec. 13 of the Constitution against dual or multiple offices for Cabinet members and their deputies and assistants.

**AM No. 08-2-01-0, Re: Petition for Recognition of the Exemption of the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) from Payment of Legal Fees, February 11, 2010, Corona, J.**

The Court denied the petition of the GSIS for recognition of its exemption from the payment of legal fees imposed under Section 22 of Rule 141 of the Rules of Court on government-owned or controlled corporations and local government units under its charter (RA 8291), holding that the 1987 Constitution took away the power of Congress to enact laws or issue orders that effectively repeal, alter, or modify any of the procedural rules promulgated by the Court and also that Congress could not have carved out an exemption for the GSIS from the payment of legal fees without transgressing the Court’s fiscal autonomy.

**GR No. 188920, Atienza v. COMELEC, February 16, 2010, Abad, J.**

The Court held that while under Art. IX-C, sec. 2 of the Constitution, the COMELEC has the power to settle the Liberal Party leadership issue, it cannot rule on the issue of expulsion of certain members of the party as that is an issue of party membership and discipline in which the COMELEC cannot intervene given the limited scope of its power over political parties.

**GR No. 189698, Quinto v. COMELEC, February 22, 2010, Puno, C.J.**

Granting the respondent’s and intervenors’ motions for reconsideration, the Court, among others, declared as not unconstitutional (1) Section 4(a) of COMELEC Resolution No. 8678, (2) the second proviso in the third paragraph of Section 13 of Republic Act No. 9369, and (3) Section 66 of the Omnibus Election Code which deem resigned appointive officials upon their filing of certificates of candidacy. The Court held that the foregoing provisions do not violate the equal protection clause as there are material and significant distinctions between appointive and elected officials.

**GR No. 160756, Chamber of Real Estate and Builders’ Associations, Inc. (CREBA) v. Romulo, March 9, 2010, Corona, J.**

The Court dismissed the petition of CREBA questioning the constitutionality on the ground of due process of section 27 (E) of RA 8424 imposing the minimum corporate income tax (MCIT) on corporations and the revenue regulations (RRs) issued by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) to implement said provision and those involving creditable withholding taxes on sales of real properties classified as ordinary assets.
GR No. 191002, De Castro v. Judicial and Bar Council (JBC); GR No. 191032, Soriano v. JBC; GR No. 191057, Philippine Constitution Association v. JBC; AM No. 10-2-5-SC, In re Applicability of Sec. 15, Article VII of the Constitution to the Appointments to the Judiciary, Estelito P. Mendoza; GR No 191149, Peralta v. JBC; Corvera, Lim, Tan, Jr., National Union of People’s Lawyers, Ubano, Integrated Bar of the Philippines-Davao del Sur Chapter, Boiser, Araullo, Bello, Women Trial Lawyers Organization of the Philippines, Intervenors; GR No. 191420, Tolentino v. JBC, March 17, 2010, Bersamin, J.

Modifying its 1998 Valenzuela ruling, the Court held that appointments to fill a vacancy in the Supreme Court are not covered by the prohibition under Art. VIII, sec. 15 of the Constitution that two months immediately before the next presidential elections and up to the end of his term, a President or Acting President shall not make appointments, except temporary appointments to executive positions when continued vacancies therein will prejudice public service or endanger public safety.

GR No. 189793, Aquino III v. Comelec, April 7, 2010, Perez, J.

The Court declared valid RA 9716, An Act Reapportioning the Composition of the First (1st) and Second (2nd) Legislative Districts in the Province of Camarines Sur and Thereby Creating a New Legislative District From Such Reapportionment. The Court held that Section 5(3) of the Constitution requires a 250,000 minimum population only for a city to be entitled to a representative, but not so for a province.

GR No. 190582, Ang Ladlad LGBT Party v. COMELEC, April 8, 2010, Del Castillo, J.

Granting Ang Ladlad’s petition, the Court ordered the COMELEC to grant the former’s application for party-list accreditation in the May 2010 elections, having had satisfied the exacting standards that the “marginalized and underrepresented sector must demonstrate (1) past subordination or discrimination suffered by the group; (2) an immutable or distinguishing characteristic, attribute, or experience that define them as a discrete group; and (3) present political and/or economic powerlessness.”

GR No. 162230, Vinuya v. Romulo, April 28, 2010, Del Castillo, J.

Dismissing the petition of members of the MALAYA LOLAS, a non-stock, non-profit organization registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission, established for the purpose of providing aid to the victims of rape by Japanese military forces in the Philippines during the Second World War, to, among others, compel the respondent Executive officials to espouse their claims for official apology and other forms of reparations against Japan before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and other international tribunals, the Court held that the Executive Department has the exclusive prerogative to determine whether to espouse petitioners’ claims against Japan.

GR No. 190529, Philippine Guardians Brotherhood, Inc. v. COMELEC, April 29, 2010, Brion, J.

The Court ruled that the disqualification for failure to get 2% party-list votes in two preceding elections should be understood in light of the Banat ruling that party-list groups or organizations garnering less than 2% of the party-list votes may yet qualify for a seat in the allocation of additional seats. Thus, it held that the Philippine Guardians Brotherhood, Inc. is a qualified party-list group candidate in the May 2010 polls.

GR No. 191771, Liberal Party v. COMELEC, Nacionalista Party, and Nationalist People’s Coalition, May 6, 2010, Brion, J.

The Supreme Court ruled that the COMELEC en banc gravely abused its discretion when it disregarded its own deadline in ordering the out-of-time registration of the NP-NPC coalition as its petition for registration as a coalition was time-barred. It also held that political coalitions need to register in accordance with the established norms and procedures, if they are to be recognized as such and be given the benefits accorded by law to registered coalitions.

GR No. 191846, Guingona, Jr. v. COMELEC, May 6, 2010, Carpio, J.

The Court granted petitioners’ prayer to compel the COMELEC to make full public disclosure of its preparations for the May 10, 2010 elections citing in particular, sec. 7, Article III and sec. 28 of Article II of the Constitution that the people’s right to information and the State’s corresponding duty of full public disclosure of all transactions involving public interest, respectively.

GR No. 179431-32, Lokin v. COMELEC, and GR No. 180443, Lokin v. COMELEC, June 22, 2010, Bersamin, J.

The Court declared Section 13 of Resolution No. 7804 of the COMELEC invalid and of no effect to the extent that
it authorizes a party-list organization to withdraw its nomination of a nominee once it has submitted the nomination to the COMELEC.

GR No. 183711, Burgos v. Macapagal-Arroyo, June 22, 2010, Brion, J.
The Supreme Court ordered the Commission on Human Rights to conduct appropriate investigative proceedings to identify the perpetrators and determine the other circumstances surrounding the 2007 abduction of Jonas Joseph T. Burgos, a farmer advocate and a member of Kilusang Magbubukid sa Bulacan.

GR Nos. 162335 & 162605, Manotok IV v. Barque, August 24, 2010, Villarama, Jr., J.
The Court declared Lot 823 of the Piedad Estate, Quezon City, to legally belong to the national government without prejudice to the institution of reversion proceedings by the State through the Office of the Solicitor General.

GR No. 189155, Roxas v. Macapagal-Arroyo, September 7, 2010, Perez, J.
Finding the investigation conducted by the police and the military into petitioner’s abduction and torture deficient under the norm of extraordinary diligence, the Court, among others, directed the Commission on Human Rights to conduct a further investigation.

The Court ruled that to the extent that RA 8762, the Retail Trade Liberalization Act, lessens the restraint on the foreigners’ right to property or to engage in an ordinarily lawful business, it cannot be said that the law amounts to a denial of the Filipinos’ right to property and to due process of law as Filipinos continue to have the right to engage in the kinds of retail business to which the law in question has permitted the entry of foreign investors.

GR No. 189546, Center for People Empowerment in Governance v. Commission on Elections, September 21, 2010, Abad, J.
As the COMELEC has offered no reason not to comply with the requirement of the law, the Court granted the petition for mandamus in this case and directed the COMELEC to make the source codes for the Automated Election System (AES) technologies it selected for implementation pursuant to RA 9369 immediately available to petitioner and all other interested political parties or groups for independent review.

GR No. 182574, The Province of Negros Occidental v. The Commissioners, Commission on Audit, September 28, 2010, Carpio, J.
Consistent with the state policy of local autonomy as guaranteed by the 1987 Constitution, under Section 25, Article II and Section 2, Article X, and the Local Government Code of 1991, the Court held that the grant and release of the hospitalization and health care insurance benefits given to petitioner’s 1,949 officials and employees were validly enacted through an ordinance passed by petitioner’s Sangguniang Panlalawigan.
**GR No. 175573, Office of the Ombudsman v. Samaniego, October 5, 2010, Corona, C. J.**

Upholding the rule-making powers of the Office of the Ombudsman under Art. XI, sec. 13 (8) of the Constitution and secs. 18 and 27 of RA 6770 (the Ombudsman Act of 1989), the Supreme Court held that the execution of the decision of the Office of the Ombudsman suspending a former City Treasurer of Ligao City, Albay is immediately executory and may not be stayed by the filing of the appeal or the issuance of an injunctive writ.


Dismissing all six petitions questioning the constitutionality of RA 9372, the Human Security Act of 2007, the Court held that petitioners have no legal standing to question the validity of the law and failed to present an actual case or controversy. The Court found that petitioners have failed to show that the challenged provisions of RA 9372 forbid constitutionally protected conduct or activity that they seek to do.

**GR No. 164195, Apo Fruits Corporation and Hijo Plantation, Inc. v. Land Bank of the Philippines (Land Bank), October 12, 2010, Brion, J.**

The Supreme Court ordered the Land Bank to pay petitioners Apo Fruits Corporation (AFC) and Hijo Plantation, Inc. (HPI) 12% interest per annum on the unpaid balance of the just compensation due them. The Government took their landholdings on December 9, 1996 for agrarian reform purposes until Land Bank paid on May 9, 2008 the balance on the principal amount. It explained that the rationale for imposing the 12% interest is in order to compensate the petitioners for the income they would have made had they been properly compensated for their properties at the time of the taking.

**AM No. 10-7-17-SC, In the Matter of the Charges of Plagiarism, Etc. Against Associate Justice Mariano C. del Castillo, October 12, 2010, Per Curiam**

The Court dismissed for lack of merit petitioner Vinuya, et al.’s charges of plagiarism, twisting of cited materials, and gross neglect against Justice Mariano C. del Castillo.

**GR No. 166910, Francisco v. Toll Regulatory Board (TRB); GR No. 169917, Marcos v. Republic; GR No. 173630, Gising Kabataan Movement, Inc. v. Republic; GR No. 183599, Republic v. Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs of San Pedro, Laguna, October 19, 2010, Velasco, Jr., J.**

The Court upheld the Supplemental Toll Operation Agreements (STOAs) covering the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX), South Luzon Expressway (SLEX), and the South Metro Manila Skyway (SMMS), ruling that the TRB has been statutorily endowed with the power to grant an authority to operate a toll facility/system and to issue the corresponding toll operating permit as well as the power to enter into contracts for the construction and operation of toll facilities; to issue, modify, and promulgate toll rates; and to rule on petitions relative to toll rates level and increases.

**GR No. 191618, Macalintal v. Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET), November 23, 2010, Nachura, J.**

The Court held that the PET is an institution independent, but not separate, from the judicial department; and that the power wielded by the PET is a derivative of the plenary judicial power.


By a vote of 10-5, the Supreme Court struck down EO No. 1 creating the Philippine Truth Commission of 2010 for violating the equal protection clause of the Constitution as the Truth Commission’s mandate to investigate and find out the truth concerning the reported cases of graft and corruption during the previous administration singles out the latter based on an arbitrary classification. On the issue of the power of the President to create the Truth Commission, the Court, voting 9-6, held that such power is given the President under Section 17, Article VII of the Constitution which imposes upon him the duty to ensure that laws are faithfully executed. This duty justifies the President’s creation of ad hoc investigating bodies which allow inquiry into matters the President is entitled to know so that he can be properly advised and guided in the performance of his duties relative to the execution and enforcement of the laws of the land.

**GR No. 176389, Lejano v. People and GR No. 176864, People v. Webb, December 14, 2010, Abad, J.**

By a vote of 7-4, the Court acquitted accused-appellants Hubert Jeffrey P. Webb, Antonio Lejano, Michael A. Gatchalian, Hospicio Fernandez, Miguel Rodriguez, Peter Estrada and Gerardo Biong of the crimes of which they were charged for failure of the prosecution to prove their guilt beyond reasonable doubt.


The Court, among others, held that “the rotation rule” directing the rotation of the position of Governor of a region among the Chapters is not absolute but subject to waiver as when the chapters in the order of rotation opted not to field or nominate their own candidates for Governor during the election regularly done for that purpose. If a validly nominated candidate obtains the highest number of votes in the election conducted, his electoral mandate deserves to be respected unless obtained through fraud as established by evidence. The “rotation rule” should be applied in harmony with, and not in derogation of, the sovereign will of the electorate as expressed through the ballot.

**SIGNIFICANT RULES**

Art. VIII, sec. 5 of the Constitution grants the Supreme Court the singular power to “promulgate rules concerning the protection and enforcement of constitutional rights, pleading, practice, and procedure in all courts, the admission to the practice of law, the integrated bar, and legal assistance to the under-privileged.”

COURT CLEANSING

Besides adjudicating cases and promulgating rules, the Supreme Court also has the power of administrative supervision over all courts and the personal thereof, including the power to take disciplinary action against them when warranted. (Const., Art. VIII, sec. 6). In 2010, it disciplined 51 Regional Trial Court judges; 19 Metropolitan Trial Court, Municipal Trial Court in Cities, Municipal Trial Court, Municipal Circuit Trial Court judges; and 181 first- and second-level court personnel.

Nor has the Supreme Court spared the rod in its own ranks. In 2010 it administratively disciplined 15 SC employees and dropped three others from the roll for being absent without leave (AWOL). It also administratively disciplined 117 lawyers.

SIGNIFICANT JUDICIAL REFORM PROGRAMS, ACTIVITIES, AGREEMENTS

The Enhanced Justice on Wheels (EJOW) Program, the Court’s most socially relevant judicial reform program, continues to gather momentum in 2010, with Chief Justice Corona committing to continue with this initiative of his predecessors. The EJOW Program’s components include medical and dental missions and free legal aid clinics to detainees; dialogues with justice stakeholders and legal information dissemination to barangay officials on top of hearing cases and providing mediation services which the original Justice on Wheels (JOW) Program already provided. In 2010, the EJOW mobile courts made stops at Kalibo and Roxas City; Trece Martirez and Silang, Cavite; Sta. Cruz, Laguna; Malolos City; Taguig City; Tarlac; Muntinlupa City; La Union; Baguio; Mati, Davao Oriental; General Santos City; Davao City; Nablunturan, Compostela Valley; Tagum, Davao del Norte; Digos, Davao del Norte; Abra; Cagayan de Oro City; Iligan City; Malabalay City; Camiguin Island; Marikina City; Antipolo City; Ililo City; Bacolod City; Dumaguete; Manila (return); Cebu City (return); Danao, Cebu; Bogo, Cebu; Barili, Cebu; Bacoor, Cavite; Biñan, Laguna; Caloocan (return); Oriental Mindoro; Butuan; Surigao; Tagbilaran, Bohol; Trce Martirez, Cavite; Vigan, Ilocos Sur; Laoag, Ilocos Norte; and Rizal. Since 2008 up to December 2010, the EJOW
Program has facilitated the release of/dismissal of cases against 5,270 inmates (2,757 in 2010), settled 6,830 cases (1,337 in 2010) through court-annexed mediation, and provided free legal aid to 2,514 detainees (1,411 in 2010). A total of 10,073 inmates (3,190 in 2010) were provided free medical and dental assistance, while 14,980 barangay officials (3,080 in 2010) have been oriented on the Court’s EJOW and other judicial reform programs and Court rules enhancing human rights.

For the fourth time in four years, the Supreme Court convened another multi-sectoral gathering to address pressing judicial and national concerns. Following its success in addressing issues pertinent to first- and second-generation human rights during the Summit on Extrajudicial Killings and Enforced Disappearances: Searching for Solutions in 2007 and the Forum on Increasing Access to Justice for the Poor: Bridging Gaps, Removing Roadblocks in 2008, respectively, and the third-generation human right to a healthy environment in the Forum on Environmental Justice: Upholding the Right to a Healthful and Balanced Ecology in 2009, the Court on March 12, 2010 held the National Summit on Family Courts. The Summit focused on strengthening the multi-sectoral framework on the protection of women and children to find solutions to the institutional and systemic problems that hinder the regularization of the family courts. During the Summit, various sectors were consulted to identify problems, explore possible solutions, and develop a workable consensus on how to improve access to justice to family courts. The results were summarized into three areas: a) regularization of family courts; b) codification of rules on women and children; and c) law reform.

By the end of last year, the Supreme Court was also set to complete the implementation of an e-payment system in all Metro Manila courts. The e-payment system, which is an in-house developed system of the Supreme Court Management Information System Office (MISO), provides litigants with the convenience of having to pay for only one receipt. This single receipt, which consolidates payment of all the required legal fees, is immediately printed out from the computer upon assessment and cashiering. The system also allows ascertainment of the amount of cash on hand at any time of the day and addresses the problem of lost receipts.

**GREAT ENDEAVOR**

By happy happenstance in 2010, there was a change of leadership in all three branches of government. Cognizant of the high hopes for good governance the same has engendered in our people, Chief Justice Corona has early on called on the other departments to join him and his colleagues in the Supreme Court in the “great endeavor of achieving a first-rate Judiciary” as the Filipino people, “our common master and reason for being, deserve nothing less.” He also has identified his priority areas in judicial reform: 1) the use of alternative dispute resolution to declog court dockets; 2) the modernization of the courts; and 3) the expansion of the Supreme Court’s EJOW Program. All these could only bode well for the coming years of the Corona Court.
Chief Justice Renato C. Corona, the 23rd Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, is one of the youngest magistrates ever to be appointed to the Supreme Court of the Philippines. He was appointed to the highest tribunal on April 9, 2002 as the 150th member of the Supreme Court. His age notwithstanding, he brings with him depth and perspective gained from many years of experience as a law professor, private law practitioner and member of the Cabinet under two Presidents, Fidel V. Ramos and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Chief Justice Corona had a sterling record as a student. He graduated with gold medal honors from the Ateneo de Manila grade school in 1962 and high school in 1966. He obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree, also with honors, from the Ateneo de Manila University in 1970. It was here where he honed his skills in writing and argumentation, the indispensable tools for writing decisions with clarity, persuasion, and sagacity. He was the editor-in-chief of *The Guidon*, the university student newspaper of the Ateneo and was secretary-general of the College Editors Guild of the Philippines from 1968 to 1970. He was also the captain of the overall champion team of the 1970 Annual Debating Tournament of the Ateneo School of Arts and Sciences.

Chief Justice Corona finished his Bachelor of Laws at the Ateneo Law School in 1974. Having married right after college, he held a full-time job in the Office of the Executive Secretary in Malacañang Palace while attending night classes in law school. Despite the heavy demands of work and family, however, he was a consistent honor student, graduating no. 5 in his class. That same year, he placed 25th highest out of 1,965 candidates in the Bar examinations with a grade of 84.6%.

After law school, he pursued the Master of Business Administration course (without thesis) at the Ateneo Professional Schools. In 1981, he was accepted to the Master of Laws program in Harvard Law School where he focused on foreign investment
policies and the regulation of corporate and financial institutions. He was conferred the LL.M. degree by Harvard Law School in 1982.

He graduated with an earned Doctor of Civil Law degree from the University of Santo Tomas summa cum laude and was the class valedictorian. In UST, he was once named as the Most Outstanding Graduate School Student.

As a young lawyer, Chief Justice Corona served as special counsel at the Development Bank of the Philippines. He later became senior vice-president and general counsel of the Commercial Bank of Manila and later, a senior officer of the Tax and Corporate Counseling Group of the Tax Division of Sycip Gorres and Velayo (SGV & Co.).

In 1992, he joined the administration of then President Fidel V. Ramos as Assistant Executive Secretary for Legal Affairs, concurrently head of the Malacañang Legal Office. In 1994, he was promoted to Deputy Executive Secretary and later Chief Presidential Legal Counsel and member of the Cabinet.

While serving in Malacañang during the Ramos administration, he earned the rare distinction of having solved the perennial backlog of cases in the Legal Office. As head of that critical agency, he not only served as one of the President’s legal advisers but also wrote decisions and recommendations which showed an insightful and exceptional understanding of legal issues, as well as a mastery of the diverse options for resolving them.

As legal counsel to President Ramos, then Secretary Corona held, in concurrent capacity, the positions of Vice-Chairman of the Presidential Anti-Crime Commission; member of the Presidential Committee on Bail, Release and Pardon, the Cabinet Consultative Committee on the Government of the Republic of the Philippines- National Democratic Front (GRP-NDF) Peace Talks, and the Cabinet Committee on National Security. He likewise chaired the Appeals Committee of the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) as well as various other presidential committees.

Committed to the principles of integrity, decency, and simplicity, Chief Justice Corona and his accomplishments in the public service have merited public recognition. He was honored with a special award by the Harvard University/Kennedy School of Government Alumni Association and was given recognition as an outstanding alumnus by the Harvard Club of the Philippines. In 1998, then President Ramos awarded him the distinctive Philippine Legion of Honor medal with the rank of officer.

After the term of President Ramos ended in 1998, he was invited by then Vice-President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to become her chief of staff and spokesman. It was in that capacity that he became deeply involved in the burning political issues of the day and, when Arroyo assumed the presidency on January 20, 2001, he played a crucial role in the new administration as Presidential Chief of Staff, Presidential Spokesman, and later as Acting Executive Secretary.

A legal scholar at heart, he served as a member of the faculty of the Ateneo Law School for 17 years, teaching Commercial Law, Taxation, and Corporation Law, the same subjects that became the focus of his many articles and columns in several newspapers. He also wrote for the Ateneo Law Journal. He teaches International Law at the Graduate School of the University of Sto. Tomas.

His competence in the field of law is recognized in the Philippines and abroad. In 2006, he was conferred the degree of Doctor of Laws honoris causa by the University of Batangas for his “legal scholarship, professional integrity and judicial independence.” In 2007, he was again honored with another Doctor of Laws honoris causa degree, this time by the University of Cebu. In 2011, the University of Bohol conferred on him his third Doctor of Laws degree honoris causa. A fourth honorary Doctor of Laws degree was granted him by the Angeles University Foundation, also in 2011.

He has lectured and presented scholarly papers before several international law conferences and seminars, some of which were: the program on Intellectual Property Rights at the Academy for the Judiciary Cont. on page 30
Senior Justice Carpio was appointed on October 26, 2001 as the 148th member of the Supreme Court. Justice Carpio obtained his law degree from the College of Law of the University of the Philippines (UP) where he graduated valedictorian and cum laude in 1975. He placed sixth in the 1975 Bar examinations with a grade of 85.7%. He earned his undergraduate degree in Economics from the Ateneo de Manila University in 1970.

During his student days, Justice Carpio was Editor in Chief of The Guidon, the school paper of the Ateneo de Manila University. He also served as managing editor of The Philippine Collegian, the school paper of UP, and was Chairperson of the Editorial Board of the Philippine Law Journal of the UP College of Law.

Fresh out of law school, Justice Carpio went into private practice and put up his own law office, the Carpio Villaraza and Cruz law firm. He was also a Professorial Lecturer in the UP College of Law. He was appointed Chief Presidential Legal Counsel in 1992 with Cabinet rank.

Before joining the Supreme Court, Justice Carpio served as member of the Board of Regents of the University of the Philippines, member of the Technology Transfer Board of the Department of Industry, and Special Trade Representative of the Department of Trade for textile negotiations. In addition, he served as President of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines Pasay-Makati Chapter, Director of the University of the Philippines Law Alumni Association, and Director of the Philippine Bar Association.

Justice Carpio received in 1991 the Outstanding Achievement Award in Law from the Ateneo de Manila Alumni Association. For his “distinguished and exemplary service” to the Republic, Justice Carpio was awarded in 1998 the Presidential Medal of Merit by President Fidel V. Ramos. He was also the recipient in 2002 of the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the Ateneo de Davao Alumni Association, and was conferred in 2009 an Honorary Doctorate in Laws by the Ateneo de Davao University, where he finished his grade school and high school.

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Four Presidents oversaw the rise of Justice Carpio Morales in the Judiciary. In 1983, President Ferdinand E. Marcos appointed her as Presiding Judge of the Pili, Camarines Sur Regional Trial Court. In 1986, President Corazon C. Aquino appointed her as Presiding Judge of the Pasay Regional Trial Court. In 1994, President Fidel V. Ramos appointed her to the Court of Appeals. And finally, on September 3, 2002, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo appointed her as the 151st member of the Supreme Court.

Justice Carpio Morales graduated valedictorian in elementary and in high school at Paoay Elementary School and Paoay North Institute, respectively. She earned her degree in Economics in 1964 and her Bachelor of Laws in 1968, both from the University of the Philippines.

Justice Carpio Morales went into private practice as an assistant attorney at the Atienza Tabora and Del Rosario law offices after passing the Bar in 1969. She thereafter worked at the Department of Justice as Special Assistant to Justice Secretary Vicente Abad Santos in 1971. Later on, she was appointed as a State Counsel in 1976 and Senior State Counsel in 1981 at the Justice Department, prior to joining the Judiciary.

She was the Bar examiner in Legal Ethics in 2000. She is the Chairperson of Gender Responsiveness in the Judiciary. She is also a member of the Senate Electoral Tribunal.

Justice Carpio Morales was conferred the 2001 Ulirang Ina Award for Law and the Judiciary by the Father’s Day and Mother’s Day Foundation of the Philippines, Incorporated and the Outstanding Award in Championing Judiciary “for having distinguished herself as a fair and effective trial court judge, delivering justice with courage and untrammeled integrity” by the UP Alumni Association in 2008.

A native of Paoay, Ilocos Norte, Justice Carpio Morales is married to Eugenio T. Morales, Jr. with whom she has two sons: Eugenio III and Umberto.
Justice Presbitero J. Velasco, Jr. was appointed as the 157th member of the Supreme Court on March 31, 2006. He was the fourth Court Administrator to be elevated to the High Court.

Born on August 8, 1948 in Pasay City, Justice Velasco is a product of the public school system. He graduated first honorable mention from Sumulong Elementary School and finished high school at the University of the Philippines Preparatory School. He obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from the University of the Philippines after only three years, and his Bachelor of Laws degree from the same university as eighth in his class with a grade of 1.79. At the UP College of Law, he was a member of the Order of the Purple Feather Honor Society and the Editorial Board of the *Philippine Law Journal*. He placed sixth in the 1971 Bar examinations with a rating of 89.5%.

Justice Velasco engaged in private law practice for 20 years. During this period, he served the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) in various capacities, including as its National President in 1987, as Commissioner of the IBP Committee on Bar Discipline, and as Honorary Chairman and former National Co-Chair of the IBP National Committee on Legal Aid.

He joined the public sector in 1993 as a regular member of the Judicial and Bar Council. He served as Undersecretary of the Department of Justice from 1995 to 1998 and was concurrently Commissioner of the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board, Commissioner of the Commission on Settlement of Land Disputes, and Chairman of the Board of Pardons and Parole.

Justice Velasco was appointed to the Court of Appeals in 1998 and as Court Administrator in 2001. He was awarded *Most Outstanding Jurist* by the Consumers Union of the Philippines in 2000.

Justice Velasco is the Chairman of the Third Division, the Chairman of the House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal, and a member of the Presidential Electoral Tribunal.

Justice Velasco is also currently the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee on the Manila Bay Clean-up and a member of various committees.

A native of Cavite, Justice Velasco is married to Lorna Quinto-Velasco with whom he has three children: Vincent Michael, Lord Allan Jay, and Tricia Nicole. His second son is at present the Congressman of the Lone District of Marinduque.
Justice Nachura held two posts in the Executive Department prior to his appointment on February 7, 2007 as the 158th member of the Supreme Court. He was first named by President Arroyo as Chief Presidential Legal Counsel in 2006 and shortly later, as Solicitor General.

Justice Nachura was the Dean of the Arellano University School of Law for two years before he was appointed Undersecretary of the Department of Education, Culture, and Sports (DECS) in 1994. Thereafter, in 1998, he was elected as Representative of Samar’s Second District in the House of Representatives serving in the 11th and 12th Congress. He was also a prosecutor during the 2001 Impeachment trial of former President Joseph E. Estrada. While in Congress, he authored the National Service Training Program Act, the Basic Education Reform Act, and the Samar State University Act. He also co-authored the Securities Regulation Code, the Joint Resolution calling for amendments to the Constitution, and Republic Act 9227, “An Act Granting Additional Compensation in the Form of Special Allowances to Members of the Judiciary.”

Justice Nachura graduated first honorable mention from San Beda College of Law, and placed seventh in the 1967 Bar examinations with a grade of 85.7%. He served as member of the University of the Philippines Board of Regents, and holds a Doctor in Public Management degree from the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila.

In 2001, he was named among the Bedans of the Century by his alma mater.

He is the present Chairperson of the Committee on Internal Rules, the Committee on Legal Education and Bar Matters, and the Sub-Committee on the Revision of Rules on Special Proceedings. He co-chairs the Hall of Justice Coordinating Committee. He is a member of the Committees on the Revision of the Rules of Court and on Legislative-Executive Relations. He was also the Chairperson of the 2009 Bar Examinations Committee.

A native of Catbalogan, Samar, he is married to Conchita Sison-Nachura with whom he has four children: Hazel Annalou, Katherine Joy, Raymond, and Antonio, Jr.
Justice De Castro was appointed on December 3, 2007 as the 160th member of the Supreme Court. Her career in public service began in 1973 when she worked as a law clerk in the Supreme Court and served as a Judicial Assistant and member of the technical staff of the 11th Chief Justice, the late Chief Justice Fred Ruiz Castro.

She transferred to the Department of Justice as State Counsel in 1978 and slowly rose from the ranks, culminating in her appointment as the Assistant Chief State Counsel in 1997.

Justice De Castro rejoined the Judiciary in 1997 as Sandiganbayan Associate Justice and became the anti-graft court’s Presiding Justice in 2004. During her incumbency, she spearheaded the establishment of the Computerized Case Management System and the adoption of reforms that contributed to the easing of the docket of the Sandiganbayan and professionalization of its workforce.

She is an alumna of the University of the Philippines (UP) where she finished her Bachelor of Arts cum laude in 1968 and Bachelor of Laws in 1972, graduating in the top four of her class. She was Vice-Chancellor and consistent member of the UP Law’s honor society, the Order of the Purple Feather, and staff member of the Philippine Law Journal. For her outstanding role as legal adviser to the government panel in the Mindanao peace talks, she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Merit by President Fidel V. Ramos in 1998. She was also awarded Outstanding Jurist in the 18th Annual National Consumers Award in 2007. She is the sole 2009 University of the Philippines Outstanding Alumna Awardee for Championing Justice/Judiciary.

Justice De Castro is the Working Chairperson of the Court’s First Division, Chairperson of the Management Committee of the Judicial Reform Support Project (JRSP), the JRSP Component A Working Committee on Improving Case Adjudication and Access to Justice, and the Committee on Computerization and Library. She is also the Working Chairperson of the Halls of Justice Coordinating Committee and the Working Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on Ethics and Ethical Standards as well as a Member of the Committee on the Internal Rules of the Supreme Court.

She is presently the President of the Philippine Women Judges Association and Vice-President of the International Association of Women Judges.

A native of Parañaque City, Justice De Castro is married to Eduardo De Castro with whom she has three children: Ma. Cherell, Christine Genevive, and Edouard Anthony.
After a two-year stint as Secretary of Labor and Employment, former Court of Appeals (CA) Associate Justice Arturo D. Brion came home to the Judiciary upon taking his oath as the Highest Court’s 161st magistrate on March 17, 2008 before Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno.

Justice Brion’s work experience cuts a swath across the three branches of government, as well as showcases the multiple facets of law practice.

He began his law career by engaging in private law practice, mostly in labor law, with the Siguion Reyna Montecillo & Ongsiako Law Offices from 1975 to 1982. At the same time, he shared his legal knowledge in the academe as a member of the Ateneo de Manila University Faculty of Law from 1976 to 1981, and in 1986. He entered government service in 1982 as Executive Director of the Institute of Labor and Manpower Studies under the Philippine Ministry of Labor until 1984, when he went on to become Vice-Chair of the Labor and Employment Committee of the Mambabatas Pambansa, Philippine National Assembly. He became Deputy Minister of Labor for Legal and Legislative Affairs from 1985 to 1986 before returning to private practice as Senior Partner of the Natividad Delos Reyes Maambong & Brion Law Firm from 1986 to 1988, and subsequently of Siguion Reyna from 1995 to 2001. During this time, he worked as a consultant for the Civil Service Commission on public sector unionism, leading to the paper “Public Sector Unionism – a Proposed Reconfiguration,” and returned to teach at Ateneo Law from 1995 to 1997. He went back to full-time government service in 2001 when he was appointed Undersecretary of Labor for Labor Relations of the Department of Labor and Employment and subsequently Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs for Special Projects of the Department of Foreign Affairs a year after. He likewise taught at the University of the Philippines School of Labor and Industrial Relations from 2001 to 2002 and the Far Eastern University Institute of Law from 2005 to 2006.

Justice Brion, the son of retired Regional Trial Court Judge Edon B. Brion and Laura S. Dizon, crossed from Bar to Bench when he was appointed CA Associate Justice in July 2003. He remained a Senior Member of the Appellate Court’s 15th Division until June 2006, before accepting the task
On January 13, 2009, then Sandiganbayan Presiding Justice Diosdado M. Peralta was named as the 162nd member of the Supreme Court. He is the third Sandiganbayan Presiding Justice to be appointed to the High Court.

Justice Peralta first served as an assistant city fiscal in Laoag City, Ilocos Norte and later as assistant public prosecutor in the City of Manila before he was appointed as a Presiding Judge of the Quezon City Regional Trial Court in 1994. He was appointed to the Sandiganbayan in 2002 and became its Presiding Justice in 2008. He was a member of the Special Division of the Sandiganbayan which convicted former President Joseph Estrada of plunder.

Justice Peralta finished his Bachelor of Science degree at the San Juan de Letran before pursuing law at the University of Santo Tomas Faculty of Civil Law. He was a professor and Bar reviewer in Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure at the UST Faculty of Civil Law, the Ateneo de Manila University, San Beda College, and the University of the East, among others.

He was conferred the Special Centennial Award in Criminal Law by the Integrated Bar of the Philippines and the Supreme Court in 2001 during the SC Centenary Celebration, and was recipient of the Chief Justice Ramon Avanceña Award for Outstanding RTC Judge during the 2002 Judicial Excellence Awards. He was also given the Ulirang Ama Sectoral Award on Law and Judiciary from the Ulirang Ama Foundation in 2006 and was awarded as The Outstanding Thomasian Alumni by the University of Santo Tomas Alumni Association in 2008. In April 2010, he was conferred the degree of Doctor of Laws Honoris Causa by the Northwestern University, Laoag City.

Justice Peralta is the Chairperson of the Working Committee for Component D of the Judicial Reform Support Project Management and the Society for Judicial Excellence. He is also a member of the Committees on the Judicial Reform Support Project Management, the Revision of the Rules of Court, the Revision of the Philippine Benchbook for Trial Judges, Legislative-Executive Relations, the Sub-Committee on Rule of Procedure for Environmental Cases, and the Sub-Committee on Evidence. He is also a member of the Corps of Professors under the Department of Criminal Law, and lecturer of the Philippine Judicial Academy (PHILJA).

A native of Laoag, Ilocos Norte, Justice Peralta is married to Court of Appeals Justice Fernanda Lampas-Peralta with whom he has four children: Dorothy, John Christopher, Timothy John, and John Isaac.
Justice Lucas P. Bersamin had been serving as Court of Appeals Associate Justice for six years when he was appointed on April 3, 2009 as the 163rd member of the Supreme Court.

He engaged in private legal practice for over 12 years as a partner in the Purugganan, Bersamin and Lizardo Law Offices before joining the Judiciary. Prior to being appointed to the Court of Appeals in 2003, he served as a Presiding Judge of the Quezon City Regional Trial Court for nearly 17 years.

Justice Bersamin graduated valedictorian in elementary and high school. He finished his Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of the Philippines in 1968, and earned his law degree from the University of the East in 1973, placing ninth in the Bar examinations given in 1973 with an average of 86.3%. He is a fellow of the Commonwealth Judicial Education Institute in Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada.

Justice Bersamin has received several citations from his alma mater and judicial award-giving bodies. He has been named Outstanding Alumnus in Government Service and Outstanding Alumnus in the Field of Law in 1991, and Outstanding Alumnus in the Judiciary in 2001 by the University of the East Alumni Association. He was also a recipient of the UE’s The 60 Most Outstanding Alumni Award during UE’s Diamond Jubilee Awards in 2006.

He was awarded the Chief Justice Jose Abad Santos Award (Outstanding Regional Trial Court Judge) during the 11th Judicial Excellence Awards in 2008 and bagged the awards for Best Decision in Civil Law and Best Decision in Criminal Law in the 2000 Judicial Excellence Awards, the only trial judge to be so recognized.

He was a professor in the Ateneo School of Law, the UE College of Law, and the University of Santo Tomas Faculty of Civil Law, and a special lecturer at the College of Law, University of Cebu in 2006. He served as the Remedial Law Examiner in the 2008 Bar examinations. He lectured in the MCLE in the University of the Philippines Law Center and other legal institutes.

He is currently the Working Chairperson of the Committee on the Revision of the Rules of Court as well as the Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on Judicial Reform Support Project and the Committee on the Revision of the Benchbook on the Application, Computation, and Graduation of Penalties. He is a member of the Sub-Committee on the Rule of Procedure for Environmental Cases, and the Sub-Committee on Evidence.

A native of Bangued, Abra, Justice Bersamin is married to Aurora Bagares-Bersamin, a business owner, with whom he has four children: Pia Cristina, Luis Isidro, Lucas Riel, and Karissa Dominique.
Justice Del Castillo was a Court of Appeals Associate Justice for eight years before he was appointed on July 29, 2009 as the 164th member of the Supreme Court.

He obtained his Political Science degree from San Beda College in 1971. He thereafter pursued his Bachelor of Laws degree in Ateneo de Manila School of Law graduating thereat in 1976.

Justice Del Castillo first joined the Judiciary in 1989 as a Municipal Trial Court Judge of San Mateo, Rizal before he was promoted to Regional Trial Court Judge of Angeles City in 1992 and later, as Regional Trial Court Judge of Quezon City in 1995, where he was designated as First Vice-Executive Judge.


He has also held various positions in religious, civic, community, and non-governmental organizations such as Governor for Legal of the Bel-Air Village Association in 2008. He taught Practice Court II at the Ateneo School of Law and lectured at the Mandatory Continuing Legal Education and Philippine Judicial Academy seminars. He was also a pre-Bar reviewer in Legal Ethics and was the Chairperson and Editor in Chief of the Court of Appeals Journal from 2006-2009.

Justice Del Castillo was chosen as the Best Performing Court of Appeals Justice for 2004 and conferred the Justice George A. Malcolm Award by the Rotary Club of Manila in 2005 for deciding all his pending cases as of October 2004. He was likewise conferred the Presiding Justice Award for Outstanding Performance by the Court of Appeals in 2007. Justice Del Castillo had a zero backlog in the Court of Appeals prior to his appointment to the Supreme Court.

Presently, Justice Del Castillo chairs the Enhanced Justice on Wheels and the Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Committees of the Supreme Court. He is a member of the Court’s First Division.

A native of Mandaue, Cebu, Justice Del Castillo is married to former Ateneo Law Dean Atty. Cynthia Roxas-Del Castillo with whom he has two children: the late Anna Patricia and Xavier Paolo, both lawyers.
JUSTICE ROBERTO A. ABAD

Justice Abad, the 165\textsuperscript{th} member of the Supreme Court, was appointed on August 7, 2009. Justice Abad attained his law degree at the Ateneo de Manila University where he was a consistent Dean’s Lister.


In 1988, he worked as consultant for the Presidential Committee on the Nuclear Power Plant under the late Justice Secretary Sedfrey Ordoñez. He served as counsel for the Equitable Banking Corporation during the 2001 Impeachment trial of former President Joseph E. Estrada. Through his practice, he developed his skill in writing and was recognized by Chief Justice Artemio V. Panganiban in his book *The Bio-Age Dawns on the Judiciary* (2003) as one of the few “distinguished advocates” who have practiced before the high court.

His career as an academe began in 1978 when the late Chief Justice Roberto C. Concepcion, then UST Faculty of Civil Law Dean, recruited Justice Abad to teach Political Law at the University of Santo Tomas. Subsequently, he also taught Constitutional Law, Administrative Law, Election Law, Law on Public Corporation, and Public International Law. He also taught at the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila, and served as a Bar reviewer at the Ateneo de Manila University and the University of Santo Tomas.

Beyond the walls of these law schools, Justice Abad also gives lectures and conducts seminar-workshops to different groups such as the Office of the Solicitor General, the attorneys and investigators of the Office of the Ombudsman, and the catechists for the Archdiocese of Manila.


As a litigation lawyer, Justice Abad is a rare addition to the Supreme Court. He brings with him a wealth of experience from years of practice as a litigation lawyer.

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Justice Martin S. Villarama, Jr. has been serving as Court of Appeals Justice for over a decade when he was appointed on November 3, 2009 as 166th member of the Supreme Court.

Justice Villarama obtained his Bachelor of Laws degree from the Manuel L. Quezon University (MLQU) after completing BS in Business Administration from De La Salle University.

Having begun his law career in 1970 as a technical assistant in the Legal Research Division (now Office of the Chief Attorney) of the High Court, his appointment as SC Justice is a homecoming of sorts. He then later worked as legal counsel/corporate secretary for various companies.

In 1986, he rejoined the Judiciary after being appointed Regional Trial Court Judge of Pasig City. He served as its Executive Judge from 1992 to 1996. He was a recipient of the Ulirang Ama Award for Law and Judiciary and the Katangi-tanging Anak ng Angat, Bulacan in 2003.

On March 11, 1998, he was promoted to the CA where he had served as chair of its Fifth Division and supervising justice of the Judicial Records Division.

He has served as examiner of Labor and Social Legislation in the 2004 Bar examinations. He has also received recognition as one of the justices with zero or least pending cases during the 71st Anniversary of CA in 2007.

Justice Villarama is also a member of the SC Sub-Committee on the Revision of Rules on Criminal Procedure and a lecturer in the School of Law of MLQU.

He has attended the 36th Program of Instruction for Lawyers conducted by Harvard Law School’s Faculty at Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, among others.

Justice Perez has the distinction of being the Supreme Court’s first “homegrown” Justice, having spent all the years of his professional life in the Court’s storied halls before assuming office as SC Associate Justice on December 26, 2009, replacing Senior Justice Leonardo A. Quisumbing.

Born on December 14, 1946, Justice Perez graduated in the top ten of his class in both his political science and law studies at the University of the Philippines. His academic achievements gained him entry to the Phi Kappa Phi and Phi Gamma Mu Honor Societies as well as the Order of the Purple Feather, the UP Law Honor Society.

Fresh out of law school in 1971, the young Justice Perez first worked in the Court as a legal assistant in the Office of the Reporter. In 1977 he became a confidential attorney in the Office of the Chief Justice Fred Ruiz Castro; and in 1980, supervising attorney in the Office of the Chief Attorney where he rose to the position of Assistant Chief. In 1987, he was promoted to Deputy Clerk of Court and Chief of the Office of the Reporter.

In 1996, he was named Assistant Court Administrator, and in 2000, he was appointed Deputy Court Administrator. In 2008, he was promoted to Court Administrator.

Justice Perez was valedictorian of the Batangas City High School in 1963 and salutatorian of Saint Bridget’s College (elementary) in 1959. He is married to Expedita Perez (née Sabile), a supervising administrative officer in the Department of Assessment of the City of Manila. They are blessed with three children – Jerico, Zernan, and Donnabelle.
A native of Lipa City, Justice Jose Catral Mendoza was born on August 13, 1947 to Col. Ibarra S. Mendoza, a retired PAF officer, and Teresa Catral Mendoza, a poultry-raiser. He is the eldest of their eight children. Of his seven siblings, two are priests, two PAF generals, one a Philippine Airlines (PAL) pilot, one a parish assistant, and the only girl, a certified public accountant (CPA) and currently Philippine International Trading Corporation Vice-President.

A law degree holder from the San Beda College of Law, he is married to the former Livia Rojas, with whom he has a son, Barleon Rojas Mendoza.

After passing the 1971 Bar Examinations, he engaged in private practice and served as a legal officer of the Philippine Banking Corporation, the Manila Electric Co., and the Gokongwei Group of Companies. Before joining the Judiciary as Research Attorney in the Court of Appeals in 1977, he also served as Senior Consular Investigator in the United States Embassy.

After three years, he re-entered the private sector and worked as an Associate of the Alampay Alvero Alampay Law Office before joining the Judiciary anew in the Supreme Court in 1985, first in the Office of Justice Nestor B. Alampay and later in that of Justice Abdulwahid A. Bidin.

In 1989, Justice Mendoza became a member of the Bench when he was appointed Presiding Judge of Branch 26, RTC, Sta. Cruz, Laguna. In 1992, he was named Executive Judge of that station.

After almost five years in the province, in 1994, he was transferred as the Presiding Judge of Branch 219, RTC, Quezon City, which was designated as a special court for heinous crimes. For his fair handling of the sensational cases assigned to him, he was nominated by the IBP, Quezon City, for the Judicial Excellence Awards. The Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC) and the Crusade Against Violence (CAV) recognized and commended him on how he was dispensing justice. In 2002, the VACC bestowed on him the Outstanding Judge award. In 2003, he was appointed as the station’s Executive Judge.

On July 4, 2003, he was appointed Associate Justice of the Court of Appeals. He is most remembered for penning the decision on the reinstatement of the criminal charges against Dante Tan, and for writing the decision granting the petition for a writ of amparo filed by the families of University of the Philippines students Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeño, who were abducted allegedly by members of the military way back in 2006.
JUSTICE
LOURDES ARANAL SERENO

Lawyer-academician Justice Sereno is the 169th Justice of the Supreme Court and the first appointee of President Benigno Simeon “Noynoy” Cojuangco Aquino III to the Court of Last Resort.

Born July 2, 1960, the 50-year old Justice is the youngest to be appointed to the High Court in this Century, and also seen to be one of the longest-serving justices as she is set to mandatorily retire in 2030.

Justice Sereno brings to the court deep and diverse legal experience with her 23 active years in law practice in the field of local appellate and international arbitration, and notable scholastic undertakings.

Prior to her SC appointment on August 13, 2010, Justice Sereno was Executive Director of the Policy Thinktank of the Asian Institute of Management (AIM); and President of the Acesslaw, Inc. She was also a University of the Philippines (UP) Law professor for 20 years. She also worked as consultant for Judicial Reform, working with the United Nations Development Program, the World Bank, and the United States Agency for International Development.

Justice Sereno also taught Law and Economics at the Philippine Judicial Academy; International Trade Law at the Hague Academy of International Law, the University of Western Australia, and Murdoch University; Electronic Commerce Law at the AIM; and International Trade Law at the Department of Foreign Affairs-Foreign Service Institute.

She also acted as legal counsel for various government agencies, including the Office of the President. She handled various international trade and investment law disputes in the WTO in Geneva, International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) in Washington DC, and the International Chamber of Commerce’s International Court of Arbitration (ICC-ICA) in Singapore and in Paris.

Justice Sereno had a short stint as Commissioner and Chair of the Steering Committee in the Preparatory Commission on Constitutional Reform. She was also a Director at the Institute of Legal Studies in UP. She also served as Deputy

On October 29, 2010, the Renmin University of China Law School, the no. 1 law school in the People’s Republic of China, made him Honorary Professor of Law in recognition of his legal scholarship and expertise in international law. He was the first foreign dignitary to be given such honor by Renmin Law School in its 60-year history.

In 2004, the Province of Batangas conferred on him the Dangal ng Batangas award, the highest and coveted honor reserved by the province for its distinguished sons and daughters. And in 2005, he was chosen as one of the Outstanding Manilans by the capital City of Manila. In 2010, he was given the Ulirang Ama award, his most treasured award.

At present, he has limited his active participation to three organizations: the Harvard Law School Association of the Philippines (where he sits as Chairman of the Board of Trustees), the Ateneo Law Alumni Association (of which he was once Chairman), and the Asean Law Association of which he is the Chairman of both the ALA Philippines and the ALA Philippine National Committee.

In the Supreme Court, he headed the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) Oversight Committee, the Legislative-Executive Relations Committee, the Committee on the Revision of the Rules of Court, the Management Committee of the Judicial Reform Support Project, the Committee on Public Information, the Administrative Concerns Committee, Security Committee, the Halls of Justice Coordinating Committee, the SC Selection and Promotion Board, the Committee on Ethics and Ethical Standards, and the Plantilla Committee. He is the Chairman of both the Judicial and Bar Council and the Philippine Judicial Academy.

His judicial philosophy is centered on his commitment to uphold the Constitution and the law in order that the rights of every man, woman and child are protected and enhanced. When the voice of the weak and the oppressed is inaudible and unheeded, he believes that every effort must be exerted to provide them a forum where they can be heard and their rights recognized. He is deeply committed to the cause of protecting and helping oppressed and abused street-children, and the rehabilitation of former inmates as useful members of society.

His personal advocacies include the formation of strong moral and ethical values in the legal profession, specially among the young lawyers. He was Chairman of the Supreme Court Program on Strengthening the Integrity of the Judiciary in partnership with the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative.

Born on October 15, 1948 in Tanauan City, Batangas, the self-effacing and hard-working Chief Justice Corona is married to the former Cristina Roco. They are blessed with three grown-up children, graduates of the Ateneo de Manila University and the University of the Philippines.

He is the proud and doting “Grandpa” to the jewels of his life — Franco, Santino, Anika, Katrina, Natalia, and Caia.

Justice Carpio is the Chairperson of the Second Division and the Committee on Strengthening the Institutional Capacity of the Judiciary, and the Vice-Chairperson of the Committees on Legal Education and Bar Matters and on Public Information. He is a member of the Management Committee for the Judicial Reform Support Project and the Committee on Security for the Judiciary. He is also the Chairperson of the Senate Electoral Tribunal.

A native of Davao City, Justice Carpio is married to Ruth Nguyen-Carpio with whom he has two children: Ronaldo and Audrey.
of leading the country’s Department of Labor and Employment that July. He has since joined the Judiciary anew to complete the 15-member High Tribunal, filling in the vacancy left by the retirement of Justice Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez last February 27.

Although born in Manila on December 29, 1946, Justice Brion is a true-born son of San Pablo, Laguna, the City of Seven Lakes, whose people value the pursuit of excellence in all fields. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics degree from the San Pablo Colleges before going on to take his law studies at the Ateneo de Manila University, where he became Editor in Chief of the *Ateneo Law Journal*. He graduated with a Bachelor of Laws degree from the Ateneo in 1974 *cum laude* as well as class valedictorian and awardee of the Golden Leaf Award, Gold Medal for Academic Excellence, and First Honors Gold Medal. He went on to place first in the Bar Examinations held that same year, with a grade of 91.65%.

Despite this seeming pinnacle of achievement, Justice Brion never ceased in his pursuit of knowledge. In the midst of a burgeoning legal career, he went on to obtain his Master of Laws degree at the Osgoode Hall Law School of York University in Toronto, Canada in 1994, with Labor Law as his main area of study. There, he became the Editor in Chief of *Legal Update*, a publication of the Legal Services Branch of the Ontario Ministry of Labor from 1992 to 1993. While serving as a magistrate of the appellate court, Justice Brion enrolled in Spanish language classes at the Instituto Cervantes de Manila, from 2005 to 2006, finishing *Nivel* (level) 10.

Justice Brion is married to chemist-lawyer Atty. Antonietta C. Articona-Brion. They are blessed with two similarly multi-skilled children, Antonella A. Brion, a historian with a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from York University in Toronto, Canada, presently engaged in Information Technology, and Arturo Brion, Jr., a computer engineering graduate of McMaster University and Bachelor of Laws degree holder from the University of New Brunswick, now engaged in Intellectual Property Law Practice in Ottawa, Canada.

Justice Brion is a member of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, Philippine Bar Association, and the Law Society of Upper Canada. He was Chapter President of the IBP, Laguna Chapter from 1981 to 1983, National President of the YMCA of the Philippines in 1985, and a member of its National Board in 2006. He is also a member of the Free and Accepted Masons.

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both for the government and for private individuals. This legal background explains his passion for judicial reforms particularly for improving court procedures and resolving court congestion as Chairman of the Supreme Court Sub-Committee for the Revision of Rules on Civil Procedure and Working Vice-Chairman of the Chief Justice Committee to Address Case Congestions and Delays in the Lower Courts.

Meanwhile, as a long time member of the academe, Justice Abad also seeks to improve legal education by reforming the old system of the Bar Examinations by shifting from purely essay to the Multiple Choice Question system complimented with Practical Essay Exam to qualify who must be admitted to the practice of law. He implements the change as Chairman of the 2011 Bar Examinations.

Justice Abad is married to Victoria H. Martinez-Abad, a lawyer. Meanwhile he has four children with the late Liliabeth B. Abad: Lilia Rosa, Ma. Leila, Rex Niño, and Blessilda.

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Commissioner of the Commission on Human Rights and drafted the legal framework for the operations of the first paperless trading of securities in the country for the Bureau of Treasury.

Justice Sereno holds a Master of Laws degree from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA and has units in the Master of Arts in Economics Program from the University of the Philippines School of Economics. An economics major from the Ateneo de Manila University, Justice Sereno studied Law in UP where she graduated valedictorian and *cum laude* in 1984, placing 14th in the Bar exams held that same year.

Justice Sereno is married to Mario Jose E. Sereno. They have two children, Maria Sophia and Jose Lorenzo.
# Members of the Supreme Court of the Philippines 2010

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<td>CARPIO MORALES</td>
<td>09/03/2002</td>
<td>06/19/1941</td>
<td>06/19/2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Associate Justice of the Supreme Court</td>
<td>PRESBITERO</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>VELASCO, JR.</td>
<td>03/31/2006</td>
<td>08/08/1948</td>
<td>08/08/2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Associate Justice of the Supreme Court</td>
<td>ANTONIO EDUARDO</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>NACHURA</td>
<td>02/12/2007</td>
<td>06/13/1941</td>
<td>06/13/2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Associate Justice of the Supreme Court</td>
<td>TERESITA</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>LEONARDO-DECASTRO</td>
<td>12/04/2007</td>
<td>10/08/1948</td>
<td>10/08/2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Associate Justice of the Supreme Court</td>
<td>ARTURO</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>BRION</td>
<td>03/17/2008</td>
<td>12/29/1946</td>
<td>12/29/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Associate Justice of the Supreme Court</td>
<td>DIOSDADO</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>PERALTA</td>
<td>01/16/2009</td>
<td>03/27/1952</td>
<td>03/27/2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Associate Justice of the Supreme Court</td>
<td>LUCAS</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>BERSAMIN</td>
<td>04/03/2009</td>
<td>10/18/1949</td>
<td>10/18/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Associate Justice of the Supreme Court</td>
<td>MARIANO</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>DEL CASTILLO</td>
<td>08/06/2009</td>
<td>07/29/1949</td>
<td>07/29/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Associate Justice of the Supreme Court</td>
<td>ROBERTO</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>ABAD</td>
<td>08/07/2009</td>
<td>05/22/1944</td>
<td>05/22/2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Associate Justice of the Supreme Court</td>
<td>MARTIN</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>VILLARAMA, JR.</td>
<td>11/07/2009</td>
<td>04/14/1946</td>
<td>04/14/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Associate Justice of the Supreme Court</td>
<td>JOSE</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>PEREZ</td>
<td>12/26/2009</td>
<td>12/14/1946</td>
<td>12/14/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Associate Justice of the Supreme Court</td>
<td>JOSE</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>MENDOZA</td>
<td>01/05/2010</td>
<td>08/13/1947</td>
<td>08/13/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Associate Justice of the Supreme Court</td>
<td>MARIALOURDES</td>
<td>P A</td>
<td>SERENO</td>
<td>08/16/2010</td>
<td>07/02/1960</td>
<td>07/02/2030</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SC-OAS
HIGHLIGHTS OF CY 2012 BUDGET PROPOSALS
SUPREME COURT OF THE PHILIPPINES AND LOWER COURTS (SCPL)

The proposed CY 2012 budget was formulated as an effective tool in the delivery of swift and impartial justice. Efficient and effective adjudication of cases remains the priority area. Beyond this, the Supreme Court shall focus on ways and means to improve access to justice especially by the poor through modernization of the courts, declogging of court dockets, and the further enhancement of the Justice on Wheels project. The Supreme Court will pursue aggressive but strategic spending while remaining committed to the policy of prudent spending.

The Budget Proposal of the Supreme Court and the Lower Courts for CY 2012 amounts to P16,289,279,000.16 (Net of Retirement and Life Insurance Premiums) or an increase amounting to P4,123,128,000.00 or 33.92% over CY 2011 Approved Budget (RA 10147) of P12,163,151,000.00. Inclusive of Retirement and Life Insurance Premiums, proposed budget of P16,984,333,000.00 will register an increase amounting to P4,200,989.00 or 32.86% over CY 2011 budget, broken down as follows:

THE FISCAL PROGRAM
In comparison with the previous year’s budget, the Court hereby proposes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>CY 2010 Actual</th>
<th>CY 2011 Approved</th>
<th>CY 2012 Proposed</th>
<th>Inc./ (Dec.)</th>
<th>% of Inc./ (Dec.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Services</td>
<td>9,059,842</td>
<td>8,018,143</td>
<td>10,309,283</td>
<td>2,291,140</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M O O E</td>
<td>2,802,051</td>
<td>2,998,941</td>
<td>4,717,538</td>
<td>1,718,597</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Outlay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>158,595</td>
<td>158,595</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture and Equipment</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>42,867</td>
<td>42,867</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Outlay</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>201,462</td>
<td>201,462</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Programs</td>
<td>11,862,044</td>
<td>12,133,151</td>
<td>16,259,279</td>
<td>4,126,128</td>
<td>34.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add: Project</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locally-Funded Project (IBP)</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Appropriations</td>
<td>11,892,044</td>
<td>12,163,151</td>
<td>16,289,279</td>
<td>4,126,128</td>
<td>33.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add: Retirement &amp; Life Insurance Premium (RLIP)</td>
<td>554,330</td>
<td>620,193</td>
<td>695,054</td>
<td>74,861</td>
<td>12.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total SCPLC Budget</td>
<td>12,446,374</td>
<td>12,783,344</td>
<td>16,984,333</td>
<td>4,200,989</td>
<td>32.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## PROGRAM

### PERSONAL SERVICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount (in thousand pesos)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Increased salaries of authorized SCPLC positions including 2rd Tranche of Salary Standardization Law III (Executive Order No. 900)</td>
<td>941,359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal creation of additional eleven (11) Metropolitan Trial Court salas in Mandaluyong City</td>
<td>987,699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Increased wages of 478 casual employees under EO 900 in the Halls of Justice nationwide</td>
<td>80,157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Lump-sum for the creation of new positions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Proposed restructuring of the Judicial and Bar Council (JBC)</td>
<td>12,869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Restructuring of the Philippine Judicial Academy (PHILJA)</td>
<td>44,392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Proposed Internal Audit Division</td>
<td>1,431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Proposed new positions for the pilot Regional Court Administration Office – Region 7 (RCAO-7)</td>
<td>22,933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Organization of the Child and Family Courts per Republic Act No. 9498, dated October 28, 1997, composed of 172 salas with 3,089 positions</td>
<td>983,157 1,064,782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Longevity Pay/Step Increment of justices, judges and personnel entitled to an increase of 5% of salary for every five (5) years continuous service/next step of salary grade for every three (3) years</td>
<td>14,055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Upward adjustments of Employees Compensation Insurance Premium (ECIP), Home Development Mutual Fund (HDMF), Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PHIC) and Representation and Transportation Allowance (RATA), consistent with prevailing rates and adjusted number of personnel; Personnel Relief Allowance (PERA) – (P2,000 per month); Clothing Allowance - (P4,000 per annum) and Productivity Incentive Benefits - (P2,000 per annum)</td>
<td>147,807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Consequential increase in Bonus and Cash Gift due to integration of the 2nd Tranche on basic salaries and Special Allowance under RA 9227</td>
<td>84,773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Pension Gratuity increased as a result of the implementation of RA 9946 on survivorship benefits and the inclusion of the Special Allowance component in the computation of annuities of retired justices and judges</td>
<td>150,056</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL INCREASE IN PERSONAL SERVICES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount (in thousand pesos)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2,529,329</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### MAINTENANCE AND OTHER OPERATING EXPENSES (MOOE)

There are proposed increases on expenses incidental to special activities of the Supreme Court and Lower Courts, such as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount (in thousand pesos)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Conduct of Bar Examination</td>
<td>18,372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Seminars and Conferences</td>
<td>3,132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Printing of Philippine Reports</td>
<td>4,323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Improvement of Court Library</td>
<td>16,087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. GAD related activities of the Committee on Gender Responsiveness in the Judiciary</td>
<td>14,637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Enhanced Justice on Wheels</td>
<td>5,156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Maintenance of Halls of Justice</td>
<td>10,069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Operationalization of the pilot RCAO and Lower Courts in Region 7</td>
<td>13,471 85,247</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The increase in the price of gas and oil will undeniably affect all recurring expenses brought about by latest instituted reforms like Judiciary Case Management Information System, Small Claims, Access to Justice for Poor, Public Education on the Rule of Law, Integrity Development Review, and the e-Payment. As part of the modernization of the Judiciary, the e-Payment will be soon implemented in all courts in all key cities in the country. It could only be expected that mandatory expenses like traveling, rent, light and water, communication and other incidental expenses in all operating units of the Supreme Court (JBC, PHILJA, OCA, MCLE and the Supreme Court proper) and the Lower Courts will be soaring high. Such increases will be covered by the remaining P1,310,090,000.00, net of proposed increments for special activities. Proposed MOOE increases will keep the wheels of justice running swiftly and smoothly.

**TOTAL INCREASE IN MOOE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount (in thousand pesos)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,395,337</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I submit this budget for consideration. No matter what the odds, the Supreme Court under my watch will be an active partner of the Filipino people. The Constitution will be upheld and justice will be dispensed to every man, woman and child. The Judiciary will be as efficient and effective as ever, and accessible to our people especially the poor.

RENATO C. CORONA
Chief Justice
HIGHLIGHTS OF CY 2012 BUDGET PROPOSALS
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTORIAL TRIBUNAL

The CY 2012 proposed budget of the Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET) will provide for the reasonable requirements in order to carry out the latest post-election protest procedures of PET Case No. 004 (Manuel A. Roxas vs. Jejomar C. Binay), the Tribunal will conduct researches and studies and will engage in the review and updating of its rules.

For CY 2012, the proposal of the PET in the total amount of P76,849,000.00 will show an increase of P14,108,000.00 or 22.49% over CY 2011 approved appropriations of P62,741,000.00. Inclusive of automatic appropriations for Retirement and Life Insurance Premium (RLIP), the proposal of P81,995,000.00 registers a total increase of P14,618,000.00 or 21.70% over the total CY 2011 budget of P67,377,000.00.

(In thousand pesos)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>CY 2010 Actual</th>
<th>CY 2011 Approved</th>
<th>CY 2012 Proposed</th>
<th>Inc./ (Dec.)</th>
<th>% of Inc./ (Dec.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Services</td>
<td>41,720</td>
<td>50,435</td>
<td>55,200</td>
<td>4,765</td>
<td>9.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M O O E</td>
<td>13,217</td>
<td>12,306</td>
<td>19,149</td>
<td>6,843</td>
<td>55.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Outlay</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Appropriations</td>
<td>54,937</td>
<td>62,741</td>
<td>76,849</td>
<td>14,108</td>
<td>22.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add: Retirement &amp; Life Insurance Premiums (RLIP)</td>
<td>3,620</td>
<td>4,636</td>
<td>5,146</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>11.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total PET Budget</td>
<td>58,557</td>
<td>67,377</td>
<td>81,995</td>
<td>14,618</td>
<td>21.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given the needed budget, we will be kept abreast with the latest information technology for a more transparent, fast and accurate post-election process.

RENATO C. CORONA
Chief Justice & PET Chairman
The State of the 2010 Judiciary

Budget Overview

Of the Php 1.54T budget\(^1\) approved in 2010, 0.82% was allocated to the Judiciary. With a total appropriation of Php 12.663B,\(^2\) for the Supreme Court, the third-level and lower courts and the Presidential Electoral Tribunal, the Judiciary ranked 12th in the allocation among government agencies after ranking 10\(^{th}\) in the previous year.

By agency, the biggest recipient of government spending was the Department of Education (Php161.4B) followed by the Department of Public Works and Highways (Php126.9B); Department of Interior and Local Government (Php65.6B); Department of National Defense (Php57.7B); Department of Agriculture (Php39.2B); Department of Health (Php28.7B); State Universities and Colleges (Php22.4B); Department of Agrarian Reform (Php20.8B); Department of Transportation and Communications (Php16.6B); Department of Social Welfare.

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1 RA 9970, 2010 General Appropriations Act.
2 Id. Net of Retirement and Life Insurance Premiums
The allotted Php 12,662,661,000.00 to the Judiciary for 2010 represented a decrease of Php17,383,000.00 from the prior year. Thus the allocation for the Judiciary not only remained below one percent of the national budget pie, it also became smaller: from 0.89% in 2009 to 0.82% in 2010.

The steady increase in annual allocations for the Judiciary, in line with Article VII, Section 3 of the Constitution which prohibits Congress from reducing appropriations for the judicial branch below the amount appropriated for the previous year, was halted in 2010 as can be seen from the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURT</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SC, PET, and Lower Courts</td>
<td>8,215,118,000</td>
<td>9,052,246,000</td>
<td>11,120,579,000</td>
<td>11,214,143,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court of Appeals</td>
<td>712,733,000</td>
<td>722,874,000</td>
<td>970,135,000</td>
<td>954,399,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandiganbayan</td>
<td>230,367,000</td>
<td>301,403,000</td>
<td>344,513,000</td>
<td>334,333,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court of Tax Appeals</td>
<td>197,553,000</td>
<td>198,275,000</td>
<td>244,817,000</td>
<td>159,786,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>9,355,771,000</td>
<td>10,274,771,000</td>
<td>12,680,044,000</td>
<td>12,662,661,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thus in the same year, the Supreme Court sought anew to get at least 1% share in the national budget proposing an increase of Php5,683,659,000.00 or 50.94% in the 2011 total budget estimate of Php16,841,831,000.00 (exclusive of retirement and terminal leave). This proposed budget for the Judiciary would sustain reforms and activities by the Court such as: rehabilitation of Halls of Justice nationwide and completion of pilot model courts; designation of more trial courts as family courts and, if possible, the formal creation of such courts to answer for the rising number of family cases; upgrading and development of Information and Communication Technology; decentralization of courts; strengthening the integrity of the Judiciary; accessibility of the poor to justice; ensuring the safety of the Court’s environment through the rehabilitation of the electrical and alarm system; and the best effort to increase the compensation of the members of the bench and those with judicial ranking. Unfortunately, the 2011 General Appropriations Act allocated to the Judiciary only Php13,621,518,000.00 or more than Php3B short of the funds it needed.

PERSONNEL AND BUDGET BREAKDOWN

At the end of 2010, the Supreme Court, together with the lower courts it supervises—Metropolitan Trial Courts (MeTCs), Municipal Trial Courts in Cities (MTCCs), Municipal Trial Courts (MTCs), Municipal Circuit Trial Courts (MCTCs), Shari’a Circuit Courts (SCCs), Regional Trial Courts (RTCs), and Shari’a District Courts (SDCs)—employed a total of 25,475 people, including judges and non-judicial staff. Personal Services accounted for 69.5% of the SC budget, with a total allotment of Php8.8B, while Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses represented 27.64% at Php3.5B. The remaining 2.86% went to Capital Outlay which was allotted Php362.55M.

VACANCY RATES

At the end of 2009, the vacancy rate of the positions for judges and justices was at 22.7% with 521 vacancies among the 2,295 positions available. In 2010, the JBC En Banc processed 2,406 applications for 142 judicial positions in the Supreme Court, the third-level courts, and the lower courts.

While there had been a huge volume of applications for judgeship positions, the JBC balanced the need to fill the gap and the need to find quality magistrates. By the end of 2010, the vacancy rate was at 25.26%, with 586 vacancies out of the 2,320 judicial positions.
ADJUDICATION: CASELOAD AND DISPOSITION

While the same problems such as insufficient number of judges and limited facilities continued to create difficulties in the adjudication of cases, our trial courts posted gains in reducing the number of pending cases.

THE LOWER COURTS

At the end of 2009 our lower courts had a total of 617,704 pending cases. By December 31, 2010, that number stood at 614,888 even with 324,726 new cases filed that year.8

LOWER COURTS’ CASE INFLOW 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURTS</th>
<th>PENDING CASES AS OF 12/31/08</th>
<th>NEWLY FILED</th>
<th>REVIVED /REOPENED</th>
<th>RCVD FROM OTHER SALAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RTCs</td>
<td>357,491</td>
<td>174,621</td>
<td>12,833</td>
<td>7,609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MeTCs</td>
<td>96,684</td>
<td>54,337</td>
<td>9,409</td>
<td>2,983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTCCs</td>
<td>70,080</td>
<td>55,338</td>
<td>8,043</td>
<td>2,352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTCs</td>
<td>46,703</td>
<td>55,338</td>
<td>8,043</td>
<td>2,352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCTCs</td>
<td>46,298</td>
<td>18,364</td>
<td>1,428</td>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDCs</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCCs</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>617,704</td>
<td>324,726</td>
<td>34,855</td>
<td>15,532</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The lower courts have posted modest gains in case disposition. In 2010 it disposed of 377,935 cases broken down as follows: 257,005 cases decided or resolved; 104,201 archived; and 16,729 transferred to other courts, posting a total increase from the previous year of 14,638 cases disposed.9 Further increase is hoped for 2011 with the continuation of administrative and judicial reform programs such as the Enhanced Justice on Wheels Program, the Small Claims Courts, the Judiciary Case Management System, the ePayment System and the Court Administration and Management Information System.

LOWER COURTS’ CASE OUTFLOW 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURTS</th>
<th>DECIDED / RESOLVED</th>
<th>ARCHIVED</th>
<th>TRANSFERRED TO OTHER SALAS</th>
<th>PENDING CASES AS OF 12/31/09</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RTCs</td>
<td>125,378</td>
<td>45,059</td>
<td>10,092</td>
<td>372,025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MeTCs</td>
<td>44,221</td>
<td>26,570</td>
<td>2,648</td>
<td>89,974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTCCs</td>
<td>48,593</td>
<td>21,431</td>
<td>2,582</td>
<td>63,207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTCs</td>
<td>20,817</td>
<td>7,816</td>
<td>848</td>
<td>44,143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCTCs</td>
<td>17,670</td>
<td>3,220</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>45,001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDCs</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCCs</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>257,005</td>
<td>104,201</td>
<td>16,729</td>
<td>614,888</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8 Summary Report of Cases from January to December 2010, Statistical Reports Division, Court Management Office, Office of the Court Administrator.
9 Id
LOWER COURTS’ CASE DISPOSAL 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURTS</th>
<th>CASE INPUT</th>
<th>CASE OUTPUT</th>
<th>% OF CASE DISPOSALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RTCs</td>
<td>552,554</td>
<td>180,529</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MeTCs</td>
<td>163,413</td>
<td>73,439</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTCCs</td>
<td>135,813</td>
<td>72,606</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTCs</td>
<td>73,624</td>
<td>29,481</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCTCs</td>
<td>66,532</td>
<td>21,441</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDCs</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCCs</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>36,504</td>
<td>13,804</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 Total number of pending cases as of December 31, 2009 (beginning balance), newly filed cases, revived/reopened cases, and cases received from other salas.
11 Total number of decided/resolved cases, archived cases, and cases transferred to other salas.

THE THIRD-LEVEL COURTS
The Court of Appeals posted an output of 13,241 cases disposed in 2010, an increase from the previous year’s 2,353 disposed cases. The Court of Tax Appeals disposed of 315 cases by the end of 2010, adjudicating in favor of the government and the taxpayers a total of Php 17.3B in taxes and duties litigated in 2010, or double the amount in 2009. The Sandiganbayan, on the other hand, disposed of 247 cases within the same period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURTS</th>
<th>CASE INPUT</th>
<th>CASE OUTPUT</th>
<th>% OF CASE DISPOSAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Court of Appeals</td>
<td>33,032</td>
<td>13,241</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandiganbayan</td>
<td>2,405</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court of Tax</td>
<td>1,067</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>36,504</td>
<td>13,804</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12 Case Input for Judicial Matters includes pending judicial matters as of December 31, 2006 (beginning balance), new cases, transferred cases, referred cases, and reinstated cases.
13 Case Output for Judicial Matters includes petitions denied/dismissed by minute/extended resolutions, denied motions for extension of time to file petitions, transferred cases disposed of by decisions/signed resolutions.

THE SUPREME COURT
For 2010, the Supreme Court continued to post an increase in its case disposal rate. Of the 22,547 cases filed before the High Tribunal in 2010, it disposed 14,507 for a case disposal rate of 62.35%, an increase from 59.31% in 2009, and 44.9.% in 2008.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EN BANC</th>
<th>CASE INPUT</th>
<th>CASE OUTPUT</th>
<th>% OF CASE DISPOSAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Judicial Matters</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Matters</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Division</td>
<td>Judicial Matters</td>
<td>4,479</td>
<td>2,479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Matters</td>
<td>1,342</td>
<td>904</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Division</td>
<td>Judicial Matters</td>
<td>5,436</td>
<td>3,604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Matters</td>
<td>2,323</td>
<td>1,177</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Division</td>
<td>Judicial Matters</td>
<td>5,871</td>
<td>4,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Matters</td>
<td>1,712</td>
<td>1,078</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>22,547</td>
<td>14,057</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15 Case Input for Judicial Matters includes pending judicial matters as of December 31, 2006 (beginning balance), new cases, transferred cases, referred cases, and reinstated cases. Case Input for Administrative Matters includes pending administrative cases as of December 31, 2006 (beginning balance), new cases, transferred cases, referred cases, and reinstated cases.
16 Case Output for Judicial Matters includes petitions denied/dismissed by minute/extended resolutions, denied motions for extension of time to file petitions, transferred cases disposed of by decisions/signed resolutions. Case Output for Administrative Matters includes minute/extended resolutions disposing of complaints against justices, judges, and court personnel; matters on their retirement; and other miscellaneous administrative matters, complaints against lawyers and other bar matters; and administrative matters disposed of by decisions/signed resolutions.
Supreme Court Reform Projects

JUDICIAL REFORM PROGRAMS, PROJECTS, AND ACTIVITIES IN THE SUPREME COURT FOR 2010

When Chief Justice Renato C. Corona took over the leadership of the Court in May of 2010, he vowed “to improve the judiciary even further in every aspect possible and strengthen the great institution of the Supreme Court.” Two thousand and ten saw the enhancement of several judicial reform programs, projects, and activities as well as the institution of new ones.

ENHANCED JUSTICE ON WHEELS (EJOW)

To allow the wheels of justice to move faster, the management and execution of the EJOW Program have been redistributed to the three deputy court administrators and two assistant court administrators each of whom are assigned certain judicial regions. Thus the EJOW Program could now take place simultaneously in several areas. In 2010, the EJOW Program has racked up the following numbers: release/termination of cases of 2,757 inmates; 3,190 inmates given medical and dental attention; 1,411 inmates provided free legal aid by members of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines; 1,337 mobile court annexed-mediation cases successfully mediated; and 3,080 barangay officials participants in legal information dissemination.

From 2008-2010, the EJOW Program has resulted in the release of 5,270 inmates while 10,073 inmates were given medical and dental attention and 2,514 free legal aid; the successful court-annexed mediation of 6,830 cases; and the participation of 14,980 barangay officials in legal information dissemination.
JUDGMENT DAY
Essentially the EJOW Program without the mobile court, Judgment Day was pilot-tested in Las Piñas City in 2010 resulting in the release of five inmates, acquittal of 46 accused, conviction of eight suspects, and hearing of 31 civil cases. Just like the EJOW, Judgment Day also includes a dialogue among justice stakeholders. The roll-out of a nationwide Judgment Day is now being finalized.

SMALL CLAIMS COURTS
The Small Claims Cases Rules of Procedure were first launched in October of 2008 to provide more access to justice for the poor and is now practiced in all first-level courts. To further promote its use, the Public Information Office and the Program Management Office of the Supreme Court have launched a campaign to orient the public on the small claims procedure. The same provides for an expeditious way to litigate money claims not exceeding PhP100,000 without need of lawyers and using ready-made forms. Judges also take an active part in having the parties reach an amicable settlement. The Court has conducted seminars-workshops on the Rules of Procedure for Small Claims Cases in Manila, Cebu City, Tacloban City, Laoag City, Cagayan de Oro City, Davao City, Pampanga, and Zamboanga del Norte. The American Bar Association-Rule of Law Initiative has been funding this information drive which includes dialogues with the public as well as the commissioning of an audio-visual presentation to help the public be more familiar with the Small Claims Rules. Seminars and workshops have also been organized and conducted by the Philippines Judicial Academy for first-level judges.

COURT-ANNEXED MEDIATION
Mediation and other modes of alternative dispute resolution have not been confined to small claims cases resolved by first-level courts as the Regional Trial Court and the Court of Appeals have also resorted to alternative dispute resolution, specifically court-annexed mediation in resolving their cases. The Philippine Judicial Academy, the SC’s education arm, has trained more than 2,000 judges and court personnel, and 600 mediators across the country. Overall, the success rate of court-annexed mediation is presently pegged at approximately 70-80%.

JUDICIARY CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
The JCMS was established to manage cases effectively, standardize and streamline processes without compromising data integrity, monitor case-related activities, make information more accessible to offices involved in the process, secure sensitive information and provide transparency. Now being tested in 21 courts around the nation, the Committee on Computerization and Library continues to assess and develop the system for better implementation of its current modules.

CASE DECONGESTION AND DELAY REDUCTION PROJECT
To provide better focus on solving the problems of congestion in both our dockets and jails, the Office of the Court Administrator, together with the Program Management Office, put together this project to reduce a court’s caseload to an ideal number by identifying problems of judges and court personnel in tackling their pending cases and developing a case management plan for each branch. The project was pilot-tested in the courts of Lapu-Lapu city and has been successful with its initial results as disposition rate increased from 6.68% to 12.19%.

CHIEF JUSTICE COMMITTEE TO ADDRESS CASE CONGESTIONS AND DELAYS IN THE LOWER COURTS
The Chief Justice Committee to Address Case Congestions and Delays in the Lower Courts was created to provide rationale and policy guidance to all the docket decongestion and delay reduction efforts of the Supreme Court. It is a “high-level Committee composed of associate justices and other officials of the SC and agencies in the justice sector to oversee the Court’s case decongestion efforts that will significantly cut down the number of pending cases clogging the system.” The Committee’s duties include conducting an inventory and profile of case congestions and delays in the lower court and investigation of its causes.

E-PAYMENT OF FILING FEES
Implemented in all the courts of Metro Manila in 2010, the electronic payment (E-Payment) of filing fees will soon be rolled to the key cities in the country. Prior to its implementation, a litigant pays for seven different receipts when filing a case. With the E-Payment, only one receipt is printed out and given, and the payment for the seven different fees is automatically distributed and registered to the different funds, practically eliminating opportunities for malversation of public funds.

E-LIBRARY
The Supreme Court Electronic Library (E-Library) Project has been revived and updated. The SC E-
Library contains the Court’s decisions and resolutions and serves as the database of all Court rules, circulars, and administrative issuances. It has been considered a good research tool and search engine, providing justices, judges, and law clerks on-line data aiding them in their research and adjudicative functions.

IMPROVEMENT AND MODERNIZATION OF COURTROOMS AND PHYSICAL FACILITIES

During the first year of Chief Justice Corona’s leadership, the Court has geared for the final completion of two model courthouses in Lapu-Lapu City and Angeles City, which will serve as the standard for the construction of all future halls of justice in the country. The Court is also finalizing the construction of the Philippine Judicial Academy Training Facilities in Tagaytay City. This will complete the housing facilities for judges undergoing training and the Global Distance Learning Facility.

Memoranda of agreement have also been forged between the local governments of Alabel, Sarangani, Lapu-Lapu City and Socorro, Oriental Mindoro, for the donation and grant of usufructuary rights to the Court for the future construction of halls of justice in the said areas. Meanwhile, general repairs and rehabilitations also continue to be undertaken in, among others, the Halls of Justice of Dagupan, Batangas, Catarman, Bacolod, Ormoc, San Mateo and Quezon City, including electrical upgrades in the Halls of Justice of Maasin, Palayan, Nasugbu, Las Piñas, and Ormoc. Court furniture and equipment such as filing cabinets for data and evidence-storage, desks, chairs, tables and benches have also been procured for the first-level courts of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) with assistance from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the Office of the Court Administrator. Also, fire extinguishers have been supplied and refilled, elevators have been provided and maintenance materials have been furnished to select Halls of Justice all across the country.

The computerization of all the third-level courts has also been successfully completed in the last year.
The Office of the Clerk of Court (OCC) En Banc is the core of the administrative machinery of the Court. Its function is to assist the Court in its delicate task of adjudicating with finality all justiciable disputes, both public and private. Its primary task is the preparation of the agenda for the Court En Banc weekly sessions. This office is headed by the Clerk of Court whose main responsibilities include the implementation of policies formulated and the work programs set by the Court through the Chief Justice; the general supervision over personnel and administrative matters; and the recommendation of courses of action on various matters ranging from personnel to non-judicial concerns. Besides these, the Clerk of Court also acts as the custodian of the Court's funds, revenues, properties, and premises and is usually the liaison officer in all official matters in relation to other government offices.
The Office of Administrative Services (OAS) plans, recommends, and implements personnel management and development programs, and handles the administrative service functions of the Supreme Court, including the Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET), Judicial and Bar Council (JBC), the Philippine Judicial Academy (PHILJA), the PHILJA Development Center, Maintenance Sections of the Halls of Justice, and the Mandatory Continuing Legal Education Office (MCLEO).

The OAS has nine divisions, namely the Personnel Division, Training Division, Leave Division, Employee Welfare and Benefits Division, Complaints and Investigation Division, Records Control Division, Security Division, Maintenance Division, and Property Division.

In 2010, the OAS conducted 69 training activities for SC employees, with a total of 2,195 participants. The OAS also received 23 administrative cases against SC employees, which were eventually resolved by the Court.

The Fiscal Management and Budget Office (FMBO) takes charge of the fiscal, budget, accounting, and cashiering activities of the Court. This includes planning the budget, accounting work methods and procedure, preparing the estimates of the expenditures of the Judiciary, managing the court expenditures, and submitting budget estimates and financial reports. It is tasked with all financial transactions of the Supreme Court including those of the JBC, the Office of the Court Administrator (OCA), all Halls of Justice, PHILJA, PET, and the MCLEO.

In 2010, the FMBO prepared and processed vouchers to cover payment of salaries, allowances, office supplies, equipment and other sundry expenses, utilities, janitorial and security services and maintenance and other operating expenses and issues the corresponding checks therefore. It also prepared and submitted to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and the House of Representatives and Senate the proposed budget of the Supreme Court and lower courts including pertinent schedules for 2010.

Payrolls with corresponding salary checks were processed bi-monthly. Salary and policy loans from the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) and Pag-Ibig were coursed through the FMBO. The FMBO also prepared and submitted consolidated financial statements and reports to the Commission on Audit (COA), DBM, Bureau of Treasury, and the Congress of the Philippines.

The Office of the Chief Attorney (OCAT) is the legal research office of the Supreme Court. It renders adjudicative and administrative support functions on matters that require in-depth research and study, as the Court, the Chief Justice, the members of the Court, and other offices of the SC may assign to it.

The OCAT is currently engaged in the continuing project to digitize its records of studies, memoranda, and reports, as well as the indices of cases typewritten in index cards that have been on file since the 1960s. The digitization project is designed to achieve quick retrieval of information and to address lack of storage space for cabinets of index cards.

In 2010, the OCAT prepared 50 reports, comments, and memoranda; and 41 official letters and other communications, and indexed 1,153 decisions, laws, and issuances.
OFFICE OF THE REPORTER

The Office of the Reporter is tasked with the publication of the Philippine Reports, containing the decisions of the Supreme Court. It also prepares synopses, syllabi, and topical indices for the Philippine Reports, Monthly Decisions, and Monthly Digests.

In 2010, the Office submitted 24 volumes of the Philippine Reports for publication to the Printing Services, and 112 significant decisions for publication in the Official Gazette to the National Printing Office. The Office also sorted out 1,259 decisions promulgated in 2009, and prepared 1,148 syllabi.

The Office’s income generating activities include issuance of 550 certifications amounting to PhP115,900, and sale of 1,684 loose leaf decisions amounting to PhP138,160, 660 volumes of Philippine Reports amounting to PhP264,000, and photocopies amounting to PhP117,833.01.

The Office is also in the process of publishing case indices covering the period January 2008 to present.

ATTY. EDNA B. CAMBA
Chief
(February 19, 2010 - Present)

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS OFFICE

The Management and Information Systems Office (MISO) is the information technology arm of the Supreme Court. It provides the technical expertise behind the formulation of systems design studies and application system development as well as support services on hardware maintenance. Its goal is to support and guide the Court in establishing state-of-the-art information technology infrastructure to further its modernization program. It consults the Committee on Computerization on policies and implementation of new technology and the improvement of systems already used in the Supreme Court and in the lower courts.

For the year 2010, the MISO developed new systems such as the Justitia et Lex (JeLex), an electronic and searchable compilation of Philippine laws being developed by MISO for the Philippine Judicial Academy (PHILJA); Philippine Reports Online, an electronic compilation of SC decisions and resolutions in searchable text and scanned image formats; Office of the Court Administrator (OCA) website, which provides information about OCA, its officials and organizational structure; and the PHILJA and Philippine Mediation Center (PMC) Payroll System, which facilitates the preparation of the payroll of salaries, allowances and professional fees of PHILJA lecturers, facilitators, moderators, resource persons, and documentors as well as PMC staff and mediators.

The MISO also developed the e-Pass for Equipment, which automates the clearing and issuance of a gate pass for various ICT equipment to be brought out from the SC premises thru the use of a bar code system; and the Bar Examinations Seat Raffling System, which randomly assigns seats to examinees for each examination day and prints the seating plan that is being used on the actual examination day.

In 2010, the ePayment System was also implemented in Makati City, Pasig City, Muntinlupa City, Taguig, Pateros, Mandaluyong, Valenzuela, San Juan, Parañaque, Malabon, Navotas, and Las Piñas City. The implementation of the ePayment System now covers all cities and municipalities in Metro Manila.

ATTY. EMMANUEL L. CAPARAS
Chief
(March 17, 2008 - May 31, 2011)

COL. ALEXANDER M. AREVALO
Chief Justice Staff Head and Acting Chief
The Office of the Bar Confidant (OBC) manages the conduct of the annual Bar examinations and takes custody of the Bar records and personnel record of lawyers. It helps the Court in disciplining lawyers by directly supervising the investigation of complaints against Bar candidates. The OBC is also tasked to monitor, update, and maintain Court statistical data pertaining to the Bar examinations and related matters, as well as to update the list of the members of the Bar.

In the year 2010, the OBC received 2,014 administrative cases for disbarment, and 662 Bar matters, which are complaints against Bar examinees and successful examinees.

A total of 5,038 applications of Bar candidates to take the 2010 Bar Examinations were processed and reported by the OBC. A total of 5,031 candidates were admitted to take the Bar Examinations. However, only 4,856 took the examinations.

The OBC administered and supervised the 2010 Bar Examinations held at the De La Salle University on 5, 12, 19 and 26 September 2010. The officials and staff were actively involved in the preparations and operations of the examinations from the start of the filing of the petitions to take the examinations up to the signing of the roll of attorneys.

Statistics by subject and school, the committee report, and other pertinent data were compiled by the OBC. The final report of the 2010 Committee on Bar Examinations was submitted to the Court. Upon order of the Court, the names of the 982 out of 4,847 examinees passed the 2010 Bar Examinations, representing a 20.26% passing percentage, were released and published on 17 March 2011.

Prior to their oath-taking, clearances were issued to the successful Bar examinees who were required to pay admission fees to the Bar and membership dues to the Integrated Bar of the Philippines. A total of 965 successful Bar candidates took their oath on 14 April 2011 at the Plenary Hall of the Philippine International Convention Center and thereafter, signed the Roll of Attorneys at the SC. They were then issued their oaths and certificates of membership to the Bar.

Officials and staff of the OBC likewise attended to queries and requests concerning administrative cases and Bar matters, the Bar examinations, and other miscellaneous matters.

The Judicial Records Office (JRO) manages and superintends activities in connection with the judicial process from the filing of cases to the promulgation of decisions, entry of judgment, and the remand of records of cases disposed of. It also controls the receipt, processing, reporting, and distribution of pleadings filed before the Court. Besides this, the JRO takes custody of the rollos, and records of cases, including transcript and exhibits; and prepares and keeps data or statistics on judicial cases.

In the year 2010, the JRO received a total of 45,200 pleadings, consisting mostly of motions for reconsideration, comments, replies, rejoinders, sur-rejoinders, motions...
LIBRARY SERVICES

The Supreme Court Library Services continuously evolves towards maintaining the highest standard of collection and services for the mission/vision of the Supreme Court and the whole Judiciary and for judicial reform. It has maintained and further improved its standards of being the Model Centennial Law Library.

As of 2010, the collection of the Library Services has increased by 2,153 volumes divided as follows: 1,417 books, 685 donations, and 51 bound subscriptions. The total collection of the library is 97,005 volumes consisting of 74,679 books, 2,552 bound legal periodicals, 9,018 pamphlets, and 11,492 volumes of book donations.

Digitization of the resources of the Library has expanded from the Electronic Digital Library facility to digital archives. Important collections, such as the “Japanese War Trial” which is the only copy in the whole Philippines and the basis of the command responsibility theory, are being processed digitally.

The Library continuously distributes quarterly E-Library CDs for the entire judiciary due to their request and pressing needs, especially from the lower courts. The content of the E-Library, namely jurisprudence, laws, executive issuances, and court circulars, is up-to-date and are available in the Library’s LAN which may be used by the Library’s clientele.

MEDICAL AND DENTAL SERVICES

The Medical and Dental Services attends to the medical and dental needs of Supreme Court justices, judges, officials, and employees as well as its component bodies such as the Office of the Court Administrator (OCA), Judicial and Bar Council (JBC), Philippine Judicial Academy (PHILJA), Mandatory Continuing Legal Education Office (MCLEO), and the Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET). They also provide medical services during official court activities, such as the Bar examinations and provincial seminars. The primary form of service is by consultation and treatment. Medications are dispensed free whenever appropriate. Other services rendered are pre-employment and annual physical examinations, laboratory testing, psychological testing, and physical therapy.

For the year 2010, consultations at the SC Clinic totaled to 14,926, averaging at 62 patients per day. Such consultations include, among others, blood pressure monitoring, request for medical certificates, and availment of medications at the Clinic pharmacy. As for dental consultations, the number reached 3,687, averaging at 15 patients per day. Such consultations involve simple extraction, tooth filling, and gum treatment.

PRINTING SERVICES

The Printing Services Office addresses the printing requirements of different offices of the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, Office of the Court Administrator (OCA), Philippine Judicial Academy (PHILJA), Judicial and Bar Council (JBC), lower courts, and other offices including the Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET), Senate Electoral Tribunal (SET), House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal (HRET), Halls of Justice (HOJ), Mandatory Continuing Legal Education Office (MCLE), and the Office of Judicial Excellence (OJE). Its services are also availed of by the Philippine Women Judges Association (PWJA), and the different committees and organizations of judges and personnel, with the approval of the Chief Justice.

For the year 2010, the Printing Services Office printed out various regular and non-regular publications. For the regular publications, the service printed out hardbound volumes, such as the Philippine Reports in 5,553 copies and the Notarial Register in 5,132 copies, and paperbacks, such as the Monthly Case Digest of Supreme Court Decisions in 28,350 copies and the Court Systems Journal in 4,500 copies. The service also printed out 10 issues of the Benchmark, two issues of the PHILJA Bulletin, and two issues of the Court of Appeals Journal.

For the non-regular publications, the service printed out 3,663 copies of nine sets of hardbound books, 4,466 copies of nine sets of paperbacks, and various pamphlets totaling to 17,732 copies.

The service also printed programs, invitations, brochures, stickers, tickets, complimentary cards, calling cards, index cards, time cards, stationary, security seals, posters, folders, documentary envelops, and other documents. It also performed typesetting and book binding jobs.
The Public Information Office (PIO)’s primary task is to promptly disseminate as widely as possible, news and jurisprudence from the Supreme Court. The primary objective of the PIO is to bring the Court closer to the people. It is an information-based office which cultivates the Court’s good relations with the media and the general public. It provides photo and video coverage of oral arguments and other important Court activities, conducts court tours, and produces information, education, and communication (IEC) materials about the Judiciary.

The PIO produces and disseminates press releases and briefings which are subsumed under the heading Court News Flash. In 2010, the PIO issued a total of 145 Court News Flash reports. The PIO Chief also regularly holds press briefings to explain landmark decisions of the Court or announce important Court activities.

In 2010, the PIO provided photo coverage of 403 Court activities and events, and video coverage for 152 of the same.

The PIO has also prepared materials for magazines, journals, and periodicals which are customized according to a specific publication’s editorial policies and styles; and wrote to publishers and editors of the major broadsheets to correct inaccurate information about the Court or to provide additional information that can help readers arrive at an informed decision about an issue concerning the Judiciary.

In the year 2010, the PIO published the Benchmark, a monthly newspaper on judicial events and important Court issuances; the Supreme Court Annual Report; the 2011 Court Calendar; and the 2011 Supreme Court Planner.

The PIO also continued with the administration of the SC website (sc.judiciary.gov.ph), and regularly uploaded promulgated decisions, issuances, and announcements of the Court; Bar results; online Benchmark and Court News Flash reports and photo releases; and updated lists of accredited bonding companies for civil and criminal cases and special proceedings. In 2010, the SC website has generated 911,936 page loads with 693,333 unique visitors; 324,132 first time visitors; and 369,201 returning visitors.

The PIO also spearheads or assists in organizing and managing several Court activities and events. In 2010, it spearheaded the Forum for Media Covering the Judiciary during the Court’s summer session at the Baguio Country Club, Baguio City on April 14.

The PIO also acted as the Secretariat of The Court Systems Journal, and has produced the book Completing the Circle of Human Rights: The Puno Initiative in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme.
The Program Management Office (PMO) was created by the Supreme Court to coordinate and manage the implementation of the technical and administrative aspects of the Judicial Reform Program. Its activities focus on project development, resource mobilization, advocacy for reform, procurement and contract management, project implementation, and monitoring, financial management, as well as administrative management.

In 2010, the PMO has been instrumental in the Supreme Court’s numerous reform initiatives relating to environmental justice, informal and formal justice systems, and access to justice for the poor. The PMO also actively participated in projects geared towards decongesting courts, and promoting integrity and professionalism in the Judiciary. Various knowledge sharing activities with the judiciaries of other countries have also been spearheaded by the PMO.

Mr. Edilberto A. Davis
Deputy Judicial Reform Program Administrator
Acting Judicial Reform Program Administrator
(March 3, 2008 - March 8, 2010)

Judge Geraldine Faith A. Econg
Judicial Reform Program Administrator
(March 9, 2010 - present)

JUDGE GERALDINE FAITH A. ECONG
Judicial Reform Program Administrator
(March 9, 2010 - present)
Pursuant to Article VIII, section 6 of the 1987 Constitution, the Supreme Court exercises administrative supervision over all lower courts. To properly discharge the constitutional mandate, the Court is assisted by the Office of the Court Administrator (OCA), which was created under PD 828, as amended by PD 842, and further strengthened in a Resolution of the Supreme Court dated October 24, 1996. The OCA is tasked with the supervision and administration of the lower courts all over the country and all of their personnel. It likewise reports and recommends to the Supreme Court all actions that affect lower court management, personnel and financial administration, and administrative discipline. Jose Midas P. Marquez heads the OCA.

The mission of the OCA is to ensure that judges shall administer justice in a manner truly compatible with the independence, impartiality, integrity, competence, and promptness required of them. The OCA likewise aims to provide these judges with the sustained appropriate working environment that would fully enable them to discharge their adjudicative and administrative responsibilities efficiently and effectively.

The OCA is assisted by five line offices: the Office of the Administrative Services (OAS), the Court Management Office (CMO), the Financial Management Office (FMO), the Legal Office (LEGO), and the Office on the Halls of Justice (OHOJ).

The primary role of the OAS is to provide prompt, efficient, effective, and economical delivery of essential support services to all the lower courts. These support services encompass the management of personnel, leave matters, employees’ welfare and benefit as well as property and records management, among others.

The CMO provides services relating to judicial supervision and monitoring, judicial audit and inspection, judicial assignments and placements, circuitization or decircuitization of courts, and delineation of the territorial areas of lower courts. It is also responsible for the compilation, analysis and validation of case data gathered, fiscal monitoring, audits, and reconciliation of books of accountable officers. It also reviews work systems, procedures and processes, and formulates plans and strategies for the OCA and the lower courts.

The FMO essentially performs the following functions: (1) budget preparation, allotment, and control for lower courts; (2) processing and control of staff salaries and other financial concerns; (3) accounting and monitoring of all lower court financial transactions, revenues, collections, and remittance; (4) cash disbursement, checks preparation, issuance of official receipts for various funds; and (5) check releasing, records of miscellaneous matters and transactions.

The LEGO receives, processes, and evaluates administrative complaints filed against Justices of the Court of Appeals and the Sandiganbayan, judges of the first and second level courts, and lower court personnel. This office submits its findings to the SC by way of Agenda Reports. It also takes charge of the reports and recommendations for administrative complaints referred by the Court to the OCA for evaluation, report, and recommendation. Whenever warranted, the LEGO likewise initiates and prosecutes administrative complaints against judicial officers and employees.

The OHOJ is in charge of the inspection and assessment of the repair or renovation requirements of the HOJs all over the country. It supervises civil works projects, and provides office furniture and equipment to the courts, and maintenance tools and supplies to the maintenance units in the HOJs. The OHOJ also supervises security and janitorial service contracts; processes utilities, securities, and janitorial bills; and attends to the monthly bills for payments of rentals of temporary HOJs.
DEPUTY AND ASSISTANT COURT ADMINISTRATORS

HON. NIMFA C. VILCHES  
Deputy Court Administrator

HON. EDWIN A. VILLASOR  
Deputy Court Administrator  
(October 27, 2009 - March 30, 2011)

HON. RAUL B. VILLANUEVA  
Deputy Court Administrator  
(March 8, 2010 - present)

HON. THELMA C. BAHIA  
Assistant Court Administrator

HON. JENNY LIND A. DELORINO  
Assistant Court Administrator  
(January 16, 2010 - present)

ATTY. CARIDAD A. PABELLO  
Chief  
OCA Office of Administrative Services

ATTY. WILHELMINA D. GERONGA  
Chief  
OCA Legal Office

ATTY. LILIAN BARRIBAL - CO  
Chief  
OCA Fiscal Management Office

ATTY. NICANDRO A. CRUZ  
OIC  
OCA Court Management Office

ATTY. REGINA ADORACION FILOMENA M. IGNACIO  
Chief  
OCA Office on Halls of Justice  
(March 8, 2010 - present)  
Acting Chief  
(May 22, 2009 - March 7, 2010)

OCA CHIEFS OF OFFICE
The Society for Judicial Excellence (SJE) is in charge of the annual Judicial Excellence Awards for outstanding members of the Judiciary. In choosing the awardees, the Society, though its Board of Judges, considers the nominees based on criteria that determines their efficiency and effectiveness in carrying out their duties and responsibilities; their initiative, innovativeness, and resourcefulness in meeting the exigencies of the service; public perception in upholding judicial integrity and independence; their noteworthy contributions to the administration of justice; and leadership in the Judiciary and the community.

The 2010 Awarding Ceremonies for Outstanding Judges and Clerks of Court, organized by the SJE, were held on 17 September 2010 at the Manila Hotel. Gracing the occasion were the Justices of the Supreme Court, members of the Board of Judges and the Screening Committees, benefactors, donors and members of the SJE as well as the families and friends of the awardees.

The awardees of the 2010 Search for Judicial Excellence are Judge Victoria Isabel Alvarez Paredes, Regional Trial Court (RTC), Branch 124, Caloocan City, Chief Justice Cayetano Arellano Award; Judge Iluminada Padillo Cabato, RTC, Br. 59, Baguio City, Chief Justice Jose Abad-Santos Award; Judge Carmelita Salandanan-Manahan, RTC, Br. 16, Manila; Chief Justice Ramon Avaricia Award, and Atty. Gail M. Bacbac-Del Isen, RTC, Br. 3, Baguio City, Outstanding Clerk of Court. All of the awardees are from the second level courts.

The Court promulgated Administrative Order No. 113-2003 creating a Mandatory Continuing Legal Education Office (MCLEO) to carry out the objectives of the mandatory continuing legal education program. The MCLEO also sets the schedule of MCLE fees in consultation with the IBP Board of Governors, with the approval of the Supreme Court.

In the year 2010, 67 out of 180 accredited MCLE providers were able to conduct MCLE activities. These 67 accredited MCLE providers presented a total of 2,866 activities or programs in Metro Manila and other major cities in the Philippines. In terms of number of activities or programs presented since the start of the MCLE program in 2001, the year 2010 posted the highest number thus far.

The number of programs presented in 2010 focused on the following subject areas, updates on substantive and procedural laws and jurisprudence, legal ethics, alternative dispute resolution, legal writing and oral advocacy, trial and pre-trial skills, international law and conventions, and MCLE-prescribed subjects.

Aside from monitoring the numerous MCLE activities nationwide, the MCLEO continued to perform its function of receiving, evaluating and processing the Attorney’s MCLE Compliance Reports; applications for exemption, accreditation of MCLE Providers, approval of seminar programs, and credit units; and requests for reconsideration of earned credit units. The MCLEO also attended to the queries of lawyers regarding their MCLE requirements, subject areas and the credit units, schedules of accredited legal education seminars and providers, grounds for exemption and the required attachments to the application, non-participatory credit units, and their compliance status.

The number of programs presented in 2010 focused on the following subject areas, updates on substantive and procedural laws and jurisprudence, legal ethics, alternative dispute resolution, legal writing and oral advocacy, trial and pre-trial skills, international law and conventions, and MCLE-prescribed subjects.
Maintaining and enhancing judicial competence and efficiency has always been a premier thrust of the Judiciary. Thus, in the year 2010, the Academy has conducted seminars and seminar-workshops on mediation, pre-judicature orientation, speedy trial and the speedy disposition of cases, small claims cases, agrarian justice, deposit insurance, banking practices, the Dangerous Drugs Law, election law and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and gender sensitivity; as well as multi-sectoral capacity-building trainings on environmental laws and workshops on the comparative analysis between the Family Code and the Code of Muslim Personal Laws. It has also organized discussions on peace agreements, anti-trafficking in persons, court leadership, and the criminal justice system.

In the field of human rights awareness, the Academy has produced a helpbook on human rights, conducted seminars and competency enhancement trainings for judges and court personnel on human trafficking and of sextortion, and facilitated a knowledge sharing on the Human Security Act in relation to extrajudicial killings.

Enjoying the patronage and support of the Supreme Court, the Academy has also organized convention-seminars for the Court Legal Researchers Association of the Philippines, the First-Level Clerks of Court Association of the Philippines, the Metropolitan and City Judges Association of the Philippines, the Philippine Association of Court Interpreters, the Philippine Judges’ Association and the Philippine Trial Judges League; orientation seminar-workshops for newly-appointed clerks of court and judges; competency enhancement training program reviews and trainings on the security of judges and the courts.

On May 7, 2010, the Academy’s Training Center located in Tagaytay City was inaugurated, with the ceremonies being led by former President Gloria-Macapagal Arroyo, with the assistance of PHILJA Chancellor Adolfo Azcuna, Japanese Ambassador Makoto Katsura, Tagaytay City Mayor Abraham Tolentino, former Supreme Court Chief Justices Artemio Panganiban and Reynato Puno and PHILJA Founding Chancellor Ameurfina Melencio Herrera. With the construction of this facility, Philippine judges can better receive their appropriate judicial education.

Judicial and Bar Council

It has been said by JBC member former Justice Regino Hermosisisma, Jr. that “the effectiveness of any judicial organization, no matter how it is planned or structured, will suffer if it is unable to get honest, dedicated and competent judges.” Proper judicial selection was established as key to dispensing quality justice and having a competent, credible, and effective Philippine Judiciary.

Thus, the creation of an “independent and efficient” Judicial and Bar Council which will be a “proactive sentinel of judicial service” under the 1987 Constitution epitomized efforts towards attaining, maintaining and enhancing the independence of the Judiciary.

The JBC is composed of the Chief Justice acting as Chairman, the Secretary of Justice and a representative of Congress as ex-officio
members; a representative of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, a Professor of Law, a retired Justice of the Supreme Court and a representative of the private sector as regular members and the Clerk of the Supreme Court as ex-officio secretary.

In 2010, the JBC was able to finalize 323 nominations out of 1,023 applicants for 100 vacancies in various courts, boards, and offices in the Judiciary. From January to December 2010, a total of 130 appointments have been issued: 3 in the Supreme Court, 5 in the Court of Appeals, 4 in the Sandiganbayan, 73 in the Regional Trial Courts, 8 in the Metropolitan Trial Courts, 3 in the Municipal Trial Courts in Cities, 19 in the Municipal Trial Court, 11 in the Municipal Circuit Trial Courts, 2 in the Office of the Ombudsman, and 1 in the Legal Education Board.

To promote transparency in the judicial selection process and provide for a feedback mechanism for the public, the JBC also in 2010 launched its official website http://jbc.supremecourt.gov.ph. The site gives its readers general information on the screening and selection of nominees for judicial posts; the list of names and pertinent information of the incumbent Justices, Judges, Ombudsman and Deputy Ombudsmen; the rules of the JBC; application guidelines and requirements; downloadable documents such as JBC Form 1 and the checklist of application requirements; announcement of vacancies; list of applicants and nominees; schedule of interviews and status of applications.

The JBC also held its annual Strategic and Operations Planning Workshop which allows the Council to formulate its annual plans and activities. For the year 2010, the Council discussed and resolved some JBC policy issues and identified specific activities to be pursued for the year.

On January 22, 2010, the Council held a Conference with the Tanzanian Supreme Court Delegates on the Judicial Selection Process. The conference discussed processes and systems to improve the judicial selection process for both jurisdictions.

Also, on May 12, 2010, the JBC Marker inscribed with its vision and mission, was unveiled in a ceremony attended by former Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno and other officials of the JBC and the Supreme Court.

Finally, the JBC held a tribute for its 2010 retirees to show the Council’s appreciation for their invaluable contributions in the discharge of the delicate task of nominating candidates for the Court and other sensitive positions.

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**Presidential Electoral Tribunal**

Under the 1935 Constitution, the question as to who had jurisdiction to hear and resolve election controversies concerning the President and Vice-President arose. In *Lopez vs. Roxas* (No. L-25716, 28 July 1966), the Court held that the Constitution being silent on the matter and in the absence of a statute empowering a judicial body to act as the judge over such election contests, “any candidate for President or Vice-President who believed that he was the candidate who obtained the largest number of votes for either office, despite the proclamation by Congress of another candidate as the President- or Vice-President-elect, had no legal right to demand by election protest a recount of the votes cast for the office concerned, to establish his right thereto.” Thus, according to the Court, controversies of this nature were not justiciable.

Reacting to the situation, Congress then passed Republic Act No. 1793 constituting the Supreme Court as the electoral tribunal for presidential and vice-presidential contests. However, said law was implicitly repealed with the adoption of the 1973 Constitution based on the former’s incompatibility with a parliamentary system of government and was still not restored under the reconstituted presidential system.

With the emergence of the 1987 Constitution, the question was finally put to rest. Section 4, Article VII of the fundamental law states that “the Supreme Court, sitting en banc, shall be the sole judge of all contests relating to the elections, returns and qualifications of the President or Vice-President, and may promulgate its rules for the purpose.”
2010 Significant Decisions

In 2010, the Supreme Court promulgated a total of 1,313 decisions and signed resolutions, including the following landmark rulings:

**GR No. 188078, Aldaba v. Commission on Elections (COMELEC), January 25, 2010, Carpio, J.**

The Court declared RA 9591 creating a legislative district for the city of Malolos, Bulacan unconstitutional for being violative of section 5(3), Article VI of the Constitution and Section 3 of the Ordinance appended thereto as there is no showing that Malolos has attained or will attain a population of 250,000, whether actual or projected, before the May 10, 2010 elections.

**GR No. 168785, Dacasin v. Dacasin, February 5, 2010, Carpio, J.**

In a case filed to enforce a post-foreign divorce child custody agreement, the Court reversed the trial court’s order of dismissal for lack of jurisdiction and remanded the case for further proceedings. The Court held that as the question of custody is already before the trial court and the child’s parents, by executing the agreement, initially showed inclination to share custody, it is in the interest of swift and efficient rendition of justice to allow the parties to take advantage of the court’s jurisdiction, submit evidence on the custodial arrangement best serving the child’s interest, and let the trial court render judgment.


The Court held RA 9355, creating the Province of Dinagat Islands, unconstitutional because it failed to comply with either the territorial or the population requirement prescribed in the Local Government Code (LGC) as required by Article X, sec. 10 of the Constitution. The Court likewise held null and void the provision in Art. 9(2) of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the LGC exempting the said proposed province composed of one or more islands from the land-area requirement as it cannot be considered an executive construction of the criteria prescribed by the LGC.

**GR No. 177857-58, Philippine Coconut Producers Federation, Inc. (COCOFED) v. Republic of the Philippines; GR No. 178193, Urusa v. Republic of the Philippines; GR No. 180705 Cojuangco v. Republic of the Philippines, February 11, 2010, Velasco, Jr., J.**

The Court approved the conversion of the 753,848,312 SMC Common Shares registered in the name of Coconut Industry Investment Fund CiIF companies to SMC series 1 preferred shares.
GR No. 184740, Funa v. Ermita, February 11, 2010, Villarama, Jr., J.

The Court held that the designation of respondent as Officer in Charge of the Maritime Industry Authority, concurrent with the position of Department of Transportation and Communication Undersecretary for Maritime Transport to which she had been appointed, violates the constitutional prescription in Art. VII, sec. 13 of the Constitution against dual or multiple offices for Cabinet members and their deputies and assistants.


The Court held that for purposes of the beneficial application of Art. 332(1) of the Revised Penal Code, the relationship by affinity created between the surviving spouse and the blood relatives of the deceased spouse survives the death of either party to the marriage which created the affinity.


The Court denied the petition of the GSIS for recognition of its exemption from the payment of legal fees imposed under Section 22 of Rule 141 of the Rules of Court on government-owned or controlled corporations and local government units under its charter (RA 8291), holding that the 1987 Constitution took away the power of Congress to enact laws or issue orders that effectively repeal, alter, or modify any of the procedural rules promulgated by the Court and also that Congress could not have carved out an exemption for the GSIS from the payment of legal fees without transgressing the Court’s fiscal autonomy.

GR No. 188920, Atienza v. COMELEC, February 16, 2010, Abad, J.

The Court held that while under Art. IX-C, sec. 2 of the Constitution, the COMELEC has the power to settle the Liberal Party leadership issue, it cannot rule on the issue of expulsion of certain members of the party as that is an issue of party membership and discipline in which the COMELEC cannot intervene given the limited scope of its power over political parties.

GR No. 176707, Obiasca v. Basallote, February 17, 2010, Corona, J.

The Court held that Section 12, Book V of EO 292 amended Section 9(h) of PD 807 by deleting the requirement that all appointments subject to Civil Service Commission (CSC) approval be submitted to it within 30 days.

GR No. 189698, Quinto v. COMELEC, February 22, 2010, Puno, C.J.

Granting the respondent’s and intervenors’ motions for reconsideration, the Court, among others, declared as not unconstitutional (1) Section 4(a) of COMELEC Resolution No. 8678, (2) the second proviso in the third paragraph of Section 13 of RA 9369, and (3) Section 66 of the Omnibus Election Code which deems resigned appointive officials upon their filing of certificates of candidacy. The Court held that the foregoing provisions do not violate the equal protection clause as there are material and significant distinctions between appointive and elected officials.


The Court held Jose “Lito” Atienza to have committed grave abuse of discretion when he, as then Mayor of the City of Manila, issued a rally permit to petitioner Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) for Plaza Miranda and not Mendiola Bridge, which was the venue applied for, without indicating how he had arrived at modifying the terms of the permit against the standard of a clear and present danger test which is an indispensable condition to such modification.


The Court held that a criminal complaint for violation of Section 3(e) of RA 3019, based on the legal correctness of the official acts of Justices of the Supreme Court, cannot prosper and should not be entertained; and that as provided by the Constitution, the appropriate recourse against them is to seek their removal from office if they are guilty of culpable violation of the Constitution, treason, bribery, graft and corruption, other high crimes, or betrayal of public trust. Only after removal can they be criminally proceeded against for their transgressions.

GR No. 169202, Remo v. Secretary of Foreign Affairs, March 5, 2010, Carpio, J.

The Court upheld the decision of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs denying petitioner’s request to revert to the use of her maiden name in her replacement passport. Citing section 5(d) of RA 8239, the Philippine Passport Act of 2006, it ruled that once a married woman opted to adopt her husband’s surname in her passport, she may not revert to the use of her maiden name, except in the case of (1) death of husband, (2) divorce, (3) annulment, or (4) nullity of marriage. Otherwise stated, a married woman’s reversion to the use of her maiden name must be based only on the severance of the marriage. The Court further held that even assuming RA 8239 conflicts with the Civil Code, the provisions of RA 8239 which is a special law specifically dealing with passport issuance must prevail over the provisions of Title XIII of the Civil Code which is the general law on the use of surnames.

GR No. 160756, Chamber of Real Estate and Builders’ Associations, Inc. (CREBA) v. Romulo, March 9, 2010, Corona, J.

The Court dismissed the petition of CREBA questioning the constitutionality on the ground of due process of section 27 (E) of RA 8424 imposing the minimum corporate income tax on corporations and the revenue regulations (RRs) issued by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) to implement said provision and those involving creditable withholding taxes on sales of real properties classified as ordinary assets.

GR No. 191002, De Castro v. Judicial and Bar Council (JBC); GR No. 191032, Soriano v. JBC; GR No. 191057, Philippine Constitution Association v. JBC; AM No. 10-2-5-SC, In re
Applicability of Sec. 15, Article VII of the Constitution to the Appointments to the Judiciary, Estelito P. Mendoza; GR No 191149, Peralta v. JBC; Corvera, Lim, Tan, Jr., National Union of People’s Lawyers, Ubano, Integrated Bar of the Philippines-Davao del Sur Chapter, Boise, Araullo, Bello, Women Trial Lawyers Organization of the Philippines, Intervenors; GR No. 191420, Tolentino v. JBC, March 17, 2010, Bersamin, J.

Modifying its 1998 Valenzuela ruling, the Court held that the prohibition under Art. VIII, sec. 15 of the Constitution that two months immediately before the next presidential elections and up to the end of this term, a President or Acting President shall not make appointments, except temporary appointments to executive positions when continued vacancies therein will prejudice public service or endanger public safety does not apply to appointments to fill a vacancy in the Supreme Court.

GR No. 153266, Gutierrez v. Department of Budget and Management (DBM); GR No. 159907, Amponin v. Commission on Audit; GR No. 159029, Nieves v. DBM; GR No. 170084, Kapisanan Ng Mga Manggagawa Sa Bureau of Agricultural Statistics (KMB) v. DBM; GR No. 172713, National Housing Authority v. Recana; GR No. 173119, Insurance Commission Officers and Employees v. DBM; GR No. 176477, Fiber Industry Development Authority Employees Association v. DBM; GR No. 177990, Bureau of Animal Industry Employees Association (BAIEA) v. DBM; AM No. 06-4-02-SB, Re: Request of Sandiganbayan for Authority to Use Their Savings to Pay Their COLA Differential From July 1, 1989 to March 16, 1999, March 18, 2010, Abad, J.

The Court held that the cost of living allowance (COLA), as a benefit intended to cover increases in the cost of living, is and should be integrated into the standardized salary rates under RA 6758. Be that as it may, it upheld the continued grant of COLA to uniformed personnel, pointing out that since their basic pay does not vary based on location, the continued grant of COLA is intended to help them offset the effects of living in higher cost areas.

GR No. 169726, DBM v. Leones, March 18, 2010, Carpio, J.

The Court held that after her reassignment to the La Union treasurer’s office, respondent, the treasurer of Bacnotan, was entitled to receive representation and transportation allowance (RATA) as no law justifies denial of RATA for reassigned local government officials.

GR No. 191084, Mendoza v. COMELEC, March 25, 2010, Perez, J.

The Court held that Rule 18, Section 6 of the COMELEC Rules of Procedure, providing that “When the Commission en banc is equally divided in opinion, or the necessary majority cannot be had, the case shall be reheard, and if on rehearing no decision is reached, the action or proceeding shall be dismissed if originally commenced in the Commission; in appealed cases, the judgment or order appealed from shall stand affirmed; and in all incidental matters, the petition or motion shall be denied,” follows, is in conformity with, and is in implementation of Section 3 of Article IX(C) of the Constitution.

GR No. 191846, Guingona v. Commission on Elections, May 6, 2010, Carpio, J.

The Court found that petitioners’ prayer to compel COMELEC to explain fully its preparations for the coming May 10, 2010 elections finds overwhelming support in the Constitution, specifically under Section 7 of Article III and Section 28 of Article II on the people’s right to information and the State’s corresponding duty of full public disclosure of all transactions involving public interest; the jurisprudential doctrines laid down in Valmonte v. Belmonte, Jr., Legaspi v. Civil Service Commission, and Akbayan Citizens Action Party v. Aquino; as well as Section 52(j) of Batas Pambansa Blg. 881, otherwise known as the Omnibus Election Code; Section 5(e) of RA 6713, otherwise known as the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees; Section 3 of RA 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act; Sections 1, 11, and 12 of RA 9369, otherwise known as An Act Amending Republic Act No. 8436; and Section 2 of RA 9525, otherwise known as An Act Appropriating P11 Billion as Supplemental Appropriations for an Automated Election System.

GR No. 189793, Aquino iii v. COMELEC, April 7, 2010, Perez, J.

The Court declared valid RA 9716, An Act Reapportioning the Composition of the First (1st) and Second (2nd) Legislative Districts in the Province of Camarines Sur and Thereby Creating a New Legislative District From Such Reapportionment. IT held that Section 5(3) of the Constitution requires a 250,000 minimum population only for a city to be entitled to a representative, but not so for a province.

GR No. 190582, Ang Ladlad LGBT Party v. COMELEC, April 8, 2010, Del Castillo, J.

Granting Ang Ladlad’s petition, the Court ordered the COMELEC to grant Ang Ladlad’s application for party-list accreditation in the May 2010 elections, having had satisfied the exacting standards that the “marginalized and underrepresented sector must demonstrate (1) past subordination or discrimination suffered by the group; (2) an immutable or distinguishing characteristic, attribute, or experience that define them as a discrete group; and (3) present political and/or economic powerlessness.”

GR No. 162230, Vinuya v. Romulo, April 28, 2010, Del Castillo, J.

Dismissing the petition of members of the MALAYA LOLAS, a non-stock, non-profit organization registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission, established for the purpose of providing aid to the victims of rape by Japanese military forces in the Philippines during the Second World War, to, among others, compel the respondent Executive officials to espouse their claims for official apology and other forms of reparations against Japan before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and other international tribunals, the Court held that the Executive Department has the exclusive prerogative to determine whether to espouse petitioners’ claims against Japan.
GR No. 190529, Philippine Guardians Brotherhood, Inc. v. COMELEC, April 29, 2010, Brion, J.

The Court ruled that the disqualification for failure to get 2% party-list votes in two preceding elections should be understood in light of the Banat ruling that party-list groups or organizations garnering less than 2% of the party-list votes may yet qualify for a seat in the allocation of additional seats. Thus, it held that the Philippine Guardians Brotherhood, Inc. is a qualified party-list group candidate in the May 2010 polls.

GR No. 191771, Liberal Party v. COMELEC, Nacionalista Party (NP), and Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC), May 6, 2010, Brion, J.

The Supreme Court ruled that the COMELEC en banc gravely abused its discretion when it disregarded its own deadline in ordering the out-of-time registration of the NP-NPC coalition as its petition for registration as a coalition was time-barred. It also held that political coalitions need to register in accordance with the established norms and procedures, if they are to be recognized as such and be given the benefits accorded by law to registered coalitions.

GR No. 184800, Bonifacio v. Regional Trial Court of Makati, Branch 49, May 5, 2010, Carpio Morales, J.

The Court held that the allegation in the amended information for libel in this case that the defamatory article was accessed in Makati is insufficient to vest jurisdiction in the Makati courts. It held that equating “access” to the defamatory article on petitioners’ website in Makati with the “printing and first publication” rule as to venue would open the floodgates to the libel suit being filed in all other locations where the website is likewise accessed or capable of being accessed.

GR No. 191846, Guingona, Jr. v. COMELEC, May 6, 2010, Carpio, J.

The Court granted petitioners’ prayer to compel the COMELEC to make full public disclosure of its preparations for the May 10, 2010 elections citing in particular, sec. 7, Article III and sec. 28 of Article II of the Constitution, respectively.


The Court upheld the dismissal of a Davao City government doctor for his failure to respond to a bombing incident at the Davao International Airport in 2003 allegedly because he had to attend to the needs of his family.

GR No. 179431-32, Lokin v. COMELEC, and GR No. 180443, Lokin v. COMELEC, June 22, 2010, Bersamin, J.

The Court declared Section 13 of Resolution No. 7804 of the COMELEC invalid and of no effect to the extent that it authorizes a party-list organization to withdraw its nomination of a nominee once it has submitted the nomination to the COMELEC.

GR No. 180564, Disini v. Sandiganbayan, June 22, 2010, Abad, J.

By a 7-4 vote, the Court upheld the Immunity Agreement between state witness Jesus P. Disini and the Philippine Commission on Good Government (PCGG) which gave Disini immunity from prosecution and against being compelled to stand as witness in cases other than the civil and arbitration cases identified in the Agreement.

GR No. 183711, Burgos v. Macapagal-Arroyo, June 22, 2010, Brion, J.

The Supreme Court ordered the Commission on Human Rights to conduct appropriate investigative proceedings to identify the perpetrators and determine the other circumstances surrounding the 2007 abduction of Jonas Joseph T. Burgos, a farmer advocate and a member of Kilusang Magbubukid sa Bulacan.

GR No. 187972, PAGCOR v. Fontana Development Corporation, June 29, 2010, Velasco, Jr., J.

The Supreme Court has upheld the validity of the December 23, 1999 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) and Fontana Development Corporation (FDC) granting the latter the authority to operate a casino inside the Clark Special Economic Zone (CSEZ).

GR No. 191938, Mitra v. Comelec, July 2, 2010, Brion, J.

The Court ruled that winning Palawan gubernatorial candidate Abraham Kahlil Mitra did not commit any material misrepresentation in his Certificate of Candidacy.

GR No. 160422, Manila Electric Company (MERALCO) v. Chua, July 5, 2010, Brion, J.

The Supreme Court ordered Meralco to restore the electric power connection of a couple and pay them PhP100,000 as moral damages after the power firm failed to present proof that it ever caught the couple or anyone acting in the couple’s behalf, in the act of tampering with their electric meter.

G.R. No. 184088, Iglesia Evangelica Metodista En Las Islas Filipinas (Corporation Sole) v. Lazaro, July 6, 2010, Abad, J.

The Court held that while the Corporation Code provides no specific mechanism for amending the articles of incorporation of a corporation sole, Section 109 of the Corporation Code allows the application to religious corporations of the general provisions governing non-stock corporations. Although a non-stock corporation has a personality that is distinct from those of its members who established it, its articles of incorporation cannot be amended solely through the action of its board of trustees. The amendment needs the concurrence of at least two-thirds of its membership. If such approval mechanism is made to operate in a corporation sole, its one member in whom all the powers of the corporation technically belongs, needs to get the concurrence of two-thirds of its membership. The one member, in this case the General Superintendent, is but a trustee, according to Section 110 of the Corporation Code, of its membership.
GR No. 171925, Solidbank Corporation v. Permanent Homes, Inc., July 23, 2010, Carpio, J.
The Court held that although interest rates are no longer subject to a ceiling, the lender still does not have an unbridled license to impose increased interest rates and that the lender and the borrower should agree on the imposed rate, and such imposed rate should be in writing. While it found that in this case that the stipulations on interest rate repricing are valid, it ruled that Solidbank’s computation of the interest due from Permanent should be adjusted to take effect only upon Permanent’s receipt of the written notice from Solidbank.

GR No. 167526, People v. Tan, July 26, 2010, Peralta, J.
The Court found that the trial court did not commit grave abuse of discretion in granting businessman Dante Tan’s demurrer to evidence in the two criminal cases for violation of the Revised Securities Act filed against him.

GR No. 165554, Pasco v. Heirs of De Guzman, Del Castillo, J.
The Court found the 5% monthly interest rate stipulated in the parties’ Compromise Agreement to be iniquitous and unconscionable and accordingly, reduced the same to the legal interest of 12% per annum.

GR No. 183133, Ma v. Fernandez, July 26, 2010, Perez, J.
The Court ruled that three children of a Taiwanese father and a Filipino mother are still entitled to Filipino citizenship despite their failure to immediately register with the local civil registry after electing Filipino citizenship upon reaching the age of majority. It held that the three can still comply with the law on election of Philippine citizenship by using the legal remedy of late registration since they timely took their oath of allegiance to the Philippines.

The Supreme Court denied the petition of Kilosbayan Foundation and Bantay Katarungan Foundation questioning several rulings of a Pasig City Regional Trial Court (RTC) judge, including that recognizing Sandiganbayan Justice Gregory S. Ong as a natural-born citizen of the Philippines. The Court noted that as to the merits of the case of petitioners, the trial court was left with nothing to assess since they did not file any Opposition to Ong’s Petition despite the grant to them of extension of time for the purpose and their various submissions to the trial court all related to peripheral issues.

GR No. 182677, Leviste v. Alameda, August 3, 2010, Carpio Morales, J.
The Supreme Court denied the petition of former Batangas governor Jose Antonio C. Leviste, which assailed the orders of the Regional Trial Court (RTC) which allowed upon motion of the private complainant, reinvestigation of his homicide case and its amendment to murder even after the information has been filed. It ruled that such amendment of the Information is considered substantial,
which would make it not just a right but a duty of the prosecution to ask for a preliminary investigation.

GR No. 1537383, Garcia v. Molina; GR No. 174137, Garcia v. Molina, August 10, 2010, Nachura, J.

The Court held that the filing by petitioner of formal charges against the respondents without complying with the mandated preliminary investigation or at least giving the respondents the opportunity to comment violated the latter’s right to due process.

GR Nos. 162335 & 162605, Manotok IV v. Barque, August 24, 2010, Villarama, Jr., J.

The Court declared Lot 823 of the Piedad Estate, Quezon City, to legally belong to the national government without prejudice to the institution of reversion proceedings by the State through the Office of the Solicitor General.

AM No. 08-19-SB-J, Jamsani-Rodriguez v. Ong, August 24, 2010, Bersamin, J.

The Court found that the procedure adopted by respondent Justices of separately conducting hearings was in blatant disregard of PD 1606, as amended, the Rules of Court, and the Revised Internal Rules of the Sandiganbayan and arbitrarily denied the benefit of a hearing before a duly constituted Division of the Sandiganbayan to all the affected litigants, including the State.

GR No. 176657, Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) v. Falcon, September 1, 2010, Leonardo-De Castro, J.

Granting the petition of the DFA and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), the Supreme Court set aside the order of the Pasig City Regional Trial Court (RTC), Branch 71 that earlier granted BCA International Corporation (BCA) a writ of preliminary injunction as well as the corresponding writ itself against the implementation of the e-Passport Project.


The Supreme Court affirmed the conviction of five men, whom the media had tagged as the “Abadilla 5,” for the murder of Col. Rolando N. Abadilla, former Chief of the Metropolitan Command Intelligence and Security Group of the Philippine Constabulary, now the Philippine National Police, who was ambushed in broad daylight while driving his car along Katipunan Avenue, Quezon City in 1996.
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GR No. 189155, Roxas v. Macapagal-Arroyo, September 7, 2010, Perez, J.

Finding the investigation conducted by the police and the military into petitioner’s abduction and torture deficient under the norm of extraordinary diligence, the Court, among others, directed the Commission on Human Rights to conduct a further investigation.

GR No. 159588, Calinisan v. Roaquin, September 15, 2010, Abad, J.

The Court held that while the PNP may have validly suspended respondent police officer from the service pending the adjudication of the criminal case for murder against him, he was entitled after his acquittal not only to reinstatement but also to payment of the salaries, allowances, and other benefits withheld from him by reason of his discharge from the service under secs. 46, 47, and 48 of RA 6975 and considering that there had been no administrative case filed against him.


The Court ruled that to the extent that RA 8762, the Retail Trade Liberalization Act, lessens the restraint on the foreigners’ right to property or to engage in an ordinarily lawful business, it cannot be said that the law amounts to a denial of the Filipinos’ right to property and to due process of law as Filipinos continue to have the right to engage in the kinds of retail business to which the law in question has permitted the entry of foreign investors.

GR No. 184869, Central Mindanao University v. Executive Secretary, September 21, 2010, Abad, J.

The Supreme Court En Banc held as unconstitutional Presidential Proclamation (PP) 310 which appropriated lands of Central Mindanao University (CMU) for distribution to indigenous peoples and cultural communities in Bukidnon. It ruled that the moment former President Carlos P. Garcia dedicated under PP 476 the lands for CMU’s use in scientific and technological research in the field of agriculture in 1958 the said lands have become inalienable.

GR No. 189546, Center for People Empowerment in Governance v. COMELEC, September 21, 2010, Abad, J.

As the COMELEC has offered no reason not to comply with the requirement of the law, the Court granted the petition for mandamus in this case and directed the COMELEC to make the source codes for the Automated Election System (AES) technologies it selected for implementation pursuant to RA 9369 immediately available to petitioner and all other interested political parties or groups for independent review.

GR No. 182574, The Province of Negros Occidental v. The Commissioners, Commission on Audit, September 28, 2010, Carpio, J.

Consistent with the state policy of local autonomy as guaranteed by the 1987 Constitution, under Section 25, Article II and Section 2, Article X, and the Local Government Code of 1991, the Court held that the grant and release of the hospitalization and health care insurance benefits given to petitioner’s 1,949 officials and employees were validly enacted through an ordinance passed by petitioner’s Sangguniang Panlalawigan.

(Signed Res.) GR No. 175573, Office of the Ombudsman v. Samaniego, October 5, 2010, Corona, C. J.

Upholding the rule-making powers of the Office of the Ombudsman under Art. XI, sec. 13 (8) of the Constitution and secs. 18 and 27 of RA 6770 (the Ombudsman Act of 1989), the Supreme Court held that the execution of the decision of the Office of the Ombudsman suspending a former City Treasurer of Ligao City, Albay is immediately executory and may not be stayed by the filing of the appeal or the issuance of an injunctive writ.


Dismissing all six petitions questioning the constitutionality of RA 9372, the Human Security Act of 2007, the Court held that petitioners have no legal standing to question the validity of the law and failed to present an actual case or controversy. The Court found that petitioners have failed to show that the challenged
provisions of RA 9372 forbid constitutionally protected conduct or activity that they seek to do.

GR No. 164195, Apo Fruits Corporation and Hijo Plantation, Inc. v. Land Bank of the Philippines (Land Bank), October 12, 2010, Brion, J.

The Supreme Court ordered the Land Bank to pay petitioners Apo Fruits Corporation (AFC) and Hijo Plantation, Inc. (HPI) 12% interest per annum on the unpaid balance of the just compensation due them computed from the date the Government took their landholdings on December 9, 1996 for agrarian reform purposes until Land Bank paid on May 9, 2008 the balance on the principal amount. It explained that the rationale for imposing the 12% interest is in order to compensate the petitioners for the income they would have made had they been properly compensated for their properties at the time of the taking.

The Court also ruled that in this case, its primordial and most important duty to render substantial justice compels it to re-examine even a final and executory judgment as a constitutional limitation, guaranteed under no less than the all-important Bill of Rights, is at stake in this case, i.e., the amount of just compensation in an eminent domain case when the payment for the compensation for property already taken has been unreasonably delayed.

AM No. 10-7-17-SC, In the Matter of the Charges of Plagiarism, Etc. Against Associate Justice Mariano C. del Castillo, October 12, 2010, Per Curiam

The Court dismissed for lack of merit petitioner Vinuya, et al.’s charges of plagiarism, twisting of cited materials, and gross neglect against Justice Mariano C. del Castillo.

GR No. 166910, Francisco v. Toll Regulatory Board (TRB); GR No. 169917, Marcos v. Republic; GR No. 173630, Gising Kabataan Movement, Inc. v. Republic; GR No. 183599, Republic v. Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs of San Pedro, Laguna, October 19, 2010, Velasco, Jr., J.

The Court upheld the Supplemental Toll Operation Agreements (STOAs) covering the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX), South Luzon Expressway (SLEX), and the South Metro Manila Skyway (SMMSS), ruling that the TRB has been statutorily endowed with the power to grant an authority to operate a toll facility/system and to issue the corresponding toll operating permit as well as the power to enter into contracts for the construction and operation of toll facilities; to issue, modify, and promulgate toll rates; and to rule on petitions relative to toll rates level and increases.

GR No. 186560, Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) v. De Leon, November 17, 2010, Nachura, J.

The Court ordered the GSIS to pay respondent Fernando P. de Leon, who had retired in 1992 as Chief State Prosecutor of the Department of Justice (DOJ), retirement benefits in accordance with PD 1146, subject to deductions, if any, computed from the time the same were withheld until April 7, 2010 as well as retirement benefits in accordance with RA 910, computed from April 8, 2010 onwards. The Court held that retirement laws should be liberally construed and administered in favor of the persons intended to be benefited, and all doubts are resolved in favor of the retiree to achieve their humanitarian purpose.

GR No. 191618, Macalintal v. Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET), November 23, 2010, Nachura, J.

The Court upheld the constitutionality of the PET, ruling that it is an institution independent, but not separate, from the judicial department; and that the power wielded by it is a derivative of the plenary judicial power.

(Signed Res.) GR No. 191998, Pormento v. Estrada, December 7, 2010, Corona, C.J.

The Court dismissed for mootness the petition asking whether private respondent Joseph Ejercito Estrada is covered by the ban on the President from “any reelection” for lack of an actual case or controversy since private respondent was not elected President for the second time.


By a vote of 10-5, the Supreme Court struck down EO No. 1 creating the Philippine Truth Commission of 2010 for violating the equal protection clause of the Constitution as the Truth Commission’s mandate to investigate and find out the truth concerning the reported cases of graft and corruption during the previous administration singles out the latter based on an arbitrary classification. On the issue of the power of the President to create the Truth Commission, the Court, voting 9-6, held that such power is given the President under Section 17, Article VII of the Constitution which imposes upon him the duty to ensure that laws are faithfully executed. This duty justifies the President’s creation of ad hoc investigating bodies which allow inquiry into matters the President is entitled to know so that he can be properly advised and guided in the performance of his duties relative to the execution and enforcement of the laws of the land.

GR No. 176389, Lejano v. People and GR No. 176864, People v. Webb, December 14, 2010, Abad, J.

By a vote of 7-4, the Court acquitted accused-appellants Hubert Jeffrey P. Webb, Antonio Lejano, Michael A. Gatchalian, Hospicio Fernandez, Miguel Rodriguez, Peter Estrada and Gerardo Biong of the crimes of which they were charged for failure of the prosecution to prove their guilt beyond reasonable doubt.


The Court, among others, held that “the rotation rule” directing the rotation of the position of Governor of a region among the Chapters is not absolute but subject to waiver as when the chapters in the order of rotation opted not to field or nominate their own candidates for Governor during the election regularly done for that purpose. If a validly nominated candidate obtains the highest number of votes in the election conducted, his electoral mandate deserves to be respected unless obtained through fraud as established by evidence. The “rotation rule” should be applied in harmony with, and not in derogation of, the sovereign will of the electorate as expressed through the ballot.
2010 Significant Rules, Guidelines, and Orders

Administrative Circular No. 81-2010, Guidelines on the Implementation of Republic Act No. 9946 (An Act Granting Additional Retirement, Survivorship, and Other Benefits to the Members of the Judiciary, Amending for the Purpose Republic Act No. 910, as Amended, Providing Funds Therefor and for Other Purposes), November 3, 2010

These guidelines set out the policies and procedures to be observed regarding the implementation of the grant of additional retirement, survivorship, and other benefits to the members of the Judiciary as provided under RA 9946 amending RA. 910, which shall apply to all Justices of the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals, the Sandiganbayan, the Court of Tax Appeals, and Judges of the Regional Trial Court, Metropolitan Trial Court, Municipal Trial Court in Cities, Municipal Trial Court, Municipal Circuit Trial Court, Shari’a District Court, Shari’a Circuit Court, or any other court established thereafter.

AM No. 09-6-8-SC, Rules of Procedure for Environmental Cases, April 13, 2010; effective April 29, 2010

These Rules apply to environmental cases arising from laws that relate to the conservation, development, preservation, protection and utilization of the environment and natural resources. These may include environmental laws and those laws that may contain provisions that relate to the environment but are not environmental laws per se.

The promulgation of the Rules have been highly-anticipated by both the international and domestic community since the Supreme Court held its widely-commended Forum on Environmental Justice last April 16-17, 2009 simultaneously through video-conferencing at the University of the Cordilleras, Baguio City, University of the Philippines-Visayas, Iloilo City, and Ateneo de Davao University, Davao City. The Forum enabled the Judiciary to receive inputs directly from the different stakeholders in the justice system, primarily aimed at determining ways on how the courts can help in the protection and preservation of the environment. It was supported by various development partners which include the Asian Development Bank (ADB), American Bar Association-Rule of Law Initiative (ABA-ROLI), the Hanns Seidel Foundation, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the United States Department of the Interior, and the World Bank.

Highlights of the Rules include provisions on: (1) citizen suits, (2) consent decree, (3) environmental protection order, (4) writ of kalikasan, (5) writ of continuing mandamus, (6) strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPP) and (7) the precautionary principle.

The provision on citizen suits liberalizes standing for all cases filed enforcing environmental laws. Citizen suits have proven critical in forcing government and its agencies to act on its duty to protect and preserve the environment. The terminology of the text reflects the doctrine first enunciated in Oposa v. Factoran (G.R. No. 101083, July 30,
1993). To further encourage the protection of the environment, the Rules enable litigants enforcing environmental rights to file their cases as citizen suits. As a procedural device, citizen suits permit deferred payment of filing fees until after the judgment.

The use of a consent decree is an innovative way to resolve environmental cases. It allows for a compromise agreement between two parties in environmental litigation over issues that would normally be litigated in court, and other matters that may not necessarily be of issue in court.

An environmental protection order refers to an order issued by the court directing or enjoining any person or government agency to perform or desist from performing an act in order to protect, preserve or rehabilitate the environment. It integrates both prohibitive and mandatory remedies in order to appropriately address the factual circumstances surrounding the case. This remedial measure can also be prayed for in the writs of kalikasan and continuing mandamus.

Similar to the writs of habeas corpus, amparo and habeas data, the issuance of the writ of kalikasan is immediate in nature. It contains a very specific set of remedies which may be availed of individually or cumulatively, to wit – it is available to a natural or juridical person, entity authorized by law, people’s organization, non-governmental organization, or any public interest group accredited by or registered with any government agency, on behalf of persons whose constitutional right to a balanced and healthful ecology is violated, or threatened with violation by an unlawful act or omission of a public official or employee, or private individual or entity, involving environmental damage of such magnitude as to prejudice the life, health or property of inhabitants in two or more cities or provinces. The petition for the issuance of a writ of kalikasan can be filed with the Supreme Court or with any of the stations of the Court of Appeals. Likewise, the summary process leading to the issuance of the writ of kalikasan dispenses with extensive litigation; this facilitates the prompt disposition of matters before the court.

Another innovation is the rule on the writ of continuing mandamus which integrates the ruling in Concerned Residents of Manila Bay v. MMDA (G.R. Nos. 171947-48, December 8, 2008) and the existing rule on the issuance of the writ of mandamus. Procedurally, its filing before the courts is similar to the filing of an ordinary writ of mandamus. However, the issuance of a Temporary Environmental Protection Order is made available as an auxiliary remedy prior to the issuance of the writ itself.

The first-ever petition for the issuance of writ of kalikasan was filed by Makati and Pasay residents against the installation of high-tension wires in their barangays. In their petition, residents of Magallanes Village in Makati and Barangay 183 near the Villamor Air Base in Pasay City asked the Court of Appeals to issue a TEPO, with the purpose of stopping the Manila Electric Company from conducting excavations, erecting electric posts and mounting transmission lines in their area.

AM No. 10-4-1-SC, 2010 Rules of Procedure in Election Contests Before the Courts Involving Elective Municipal Officials, April 27, 2010; effective May 15, 2010

As the Filipinos witnessed a first in the Philippines’ history, a successful completion of its first automated election, the Court promulgated these rules, which applies to election contests under the Automated Election System using the Precinct Count Optical Scan, and shall govern the filing of pleadings, practice and procedure in these contests.

AM No. 10-4-20-SC, The Internal Rules of the Supreme Court, May 4, 2010; effective May 22, 2010

These Internal Rules shall govern the internal operations of the Supreme Court and guide its exercise of judicial and administrative functions. They shall be cited as The Internal Rules of the Supreme Court. The Internal Rules took effect May 22, 2010 after its May 7, 2010 publication in the Manila Bulletin. Nothing in the internal rules shall be interpreted to preclude or limit the powers of the Court under the Constitution, applicable laws, and the Rules of Court.

AM No. 10-4-29-SC, The 2010 Rules of the Presidential Electoral Tribunal, May 4, 2010; effective May 22, 2010

Following the provisions of Article VII, section 4 of the Constitution that “the Supreme Court, sitting en banc, shall be the sole judge of all contests relating to the election, returns, and qualifications of the President or Vice-President, and may promulgate its rules for the purpose,” the Court acting on the recommendation of the Sub-Committee on The Internal Rules approved this Rule.

AM No. 10-4-16-SC, Re: Rule on Court-Annexed Family Mediation and Code of Ethical Standards for Mediators, June 22, 2010; effective July 18, 2010

This rule amended the Rules on Court-Annexed Mediation and the corresponding Code of Ethical Standards for Mediators, and directs the referral of the following cases to family mediation:

- All issues under the Family Code and other laws in relation to support, custody, visitation, property relations, guardianship of minor child, and other issues which can be subject of a compromise agreement, except:
  1) Those covered by:
     (a) Republic Act 9262 (Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act)
     (b) Republic Act 7610 (Special Protection of Children against Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination Act)
     (c) Republic Act 8353 (Anti-Rape Law)
     (d) Republic Act 9208 (Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act)
     (e) Republic Act 9775 (Anti-Child Pornography Law)
  2) Civil status of persons
  3) Validity of marriage
  4) Future support
  5) Jurisdiction
  6) Grounds for legal separation
  7) Future legitime
  b) Settlement of estates
Guidelines for Investigation of the Committee on Ethics and Ethical Standards, August 2, 2010

Pursuant to Rule 2, Section 13 of The Internal Rules of the Supreme Court creating a Committee on Ethics and Ethical Standards and Memorandum Order No. 35-2010 dated July 27, 2010, Organizing the Committee on Ethics and Ethical Standards (the Ethics Committee), the following Guidelines for Investigation shall be observed by the Ethics Committee in the performance of its tasks:

1. The Ethics Committee shall take cognizance only of cases or administrative matters referred to it by the Court En Banc.
2. The proceedings before the Ethics Committee shall be confidential in nature.
3. The Ethics Committee may require the submission of such verified (there seems to be a missing part)
4. The Ethics Committee may call interested parties or their witnesses to appear before it in order to provide statements or to answer clarificatory questions.
5. The applicable requirements of due process shall be observed in the proceedings of the Ethics Committee.
6. A record of the proceedings of the Ethics Committee shall be kept in the custody of the Clerk of Court.
7. The Ethics Committee shall, upon completion of its investigation and after deliberation, submit its findings and recommendations to the Court En Banc for the latter’s final disposition of the case.

8. The Rules of Court shall apply suppletorily as may be deemed appropriate by the Ethics Committee.

Administrative Circular No 51-2010, Amending the Guidelines on Local Travel For Officials and Employees, July 7, 2010

Recognizing the need to rationalize travel expenses to make them fair and equitable to court officials and employees, Chief Justice Renato C. Corona has approved the proposed amendments to the Guidelines on Local Travel for Officials and Employees of the Judiciary which, among others, increased the travel allowance of officials and employees, regardless of rank and destination, from PhP800 to PhP1,500 per day, among others. The said allowance shall no longer require submission of official receipts during liquidation.

OCA Circular No. 151-2010, October 26, 2010

Upon the instruction of Chief Justice Corona, the Office of the Court Administrator issued this Circular was issued ordering all trial courts to expedite the disposition of cases involving violations of RA 9208, otherwise known as The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003. Human trafficking cases are now mandated to be heard continuously with hearing dates being spaced not more than two weeks apart. These cases should be given priority and decided with dispatch, while newly-raffled ones should be heard and decided within 180 days from arraignment of the accused.
Significant Accomplishments of SC Committees and Technical Working Groups

The Standing and Ad Hoc Committees, and Technical Working Groups of the Court continued to make substantial contributions to the dispensation of its constitutionally mandated responsibilities in 2010.

The Committee on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law met with Elaine Pearson, Acting Director for Asia Division of Human Rights Watch on 22 July 2010. The members of the Committee, with Chief Justice Renato C. Corona, discussed with Ms. Pearson matters concerning human rights here in the Philippines, particularly the awareness of the police and the military on basic human rights and how they observe these rights and factors affecting the delay in the resolution of human rights cases.

The Committee also met with former Senator Wigberto “Bobby” E. Tanada, Chair of the Philippine Working Group on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Mechanism for Human Rights. During the meeting, an ASEAN Chief Justices’ Conference focusing on the rule of law and legal frameworks was proposed. The proposed conference aims to strengthen intergovernmental cooperation among the judiciaries in ASEAN and to understand the common concerns and challenges in the region while still recognizing the legal and operational framework of individual states. The committee is optimistic that the planned conference will push through in 2011.

The Committee on Legal Education and Legal Matters proposed reforms in the conduct of the bar examinations. Justice Abad, the main proponent of the proposed changes, recommended that the scope of the bar examinations be redefined by listing down the laws and rules that a particular subject will cover. Further, Justice Abad proposed the division of the bar examination into two
types, multiple choice questions (which will comprise 60% of the examinations) and essay-type examinations (which will comprise 40% of the examinations). The Multiple Choice Questions aim to measure the examinee’s knowledge of the law and its basic principles and his ability to recall them. The essay-type questions, on the other hand, aim to measure the examinee's lawyering skills. It will cover one or two legal issues on which the examinee will be required to write on paper. The Court en Banc approved the proposal submitted by the Committee adopting the proposals of Justice Abad. The changes will be implemented in the 2011 Bar examinations.

The Committee also drafted the proposed guidelines on the Pilot On-the-Job training (OJT) Program for law students in the First and Second Level Courts pursuant to the request of the University of Sto. Tomas for approval of their OJT program. The Court en Banc adopted the proposed guidelines on 2 March 2010. Also, upon recommendation of the committee, the Office of the Chief Justice approved Ateneo’s application for accreditation to be included in the list of accredited law schools in line with the Legal Apprenticeship Program. Finally, upon recommendation of the Committee, the Court denied the petitions filed by Mr. Johnny Sy, Mr. Feliciano Oliveros, and Atty. Salvador A. Poquiz to lift the five strike rule.

To extend additional economic benefits to court employees, the Shuttle Bus Committee provided 10 shuttle buses which help Court personnel save on transportation expenses. Each shuttle bus has a fixed route in the areas of Las Pinas, Cainta, Valenzuela, Novaliches, Fairview, Laguna, Cavite and Marikina.

The shuttle buses are also utilized to ferry court officials and personnel to and from different official events of the Court. This year, the buses have been utilized for several outreach programs, team building activities, and other events in the judiciary such as inaugurations and oath takings.

This year, the SC Program on Awards and Incentives for Service Excellence (PRAISE) gave the following employees recognition for their service to the Court: Alex S. Montinola, Supervisory Level; Manuel V. Lim, Non-Supervisory Level; Atty. Misael Domingo C. Battung III,
Professional Level; Elisa S. Agito, Commitment to Service Award; Willy M. Mercado, Innovation Award; Atty. Ma. Consolacion G. Cruzada, Communications Excellence Award; Atty. Ramon G. Llamas, Leadership Award.

Upon the initiative of the SC PRAISE Committee, two administrative circulars were issued by the Court which enhanced the search for deserving employees for the model employee award. The first is AC No. 15-2009, which created a third category of employees, the professional level, after considering the unique functions performed by professionals in the Court which are distinct and different from those of the existing categories. The second is AC No. 18-2009, which prescribed guidelines in the nomination of model employees and special awardees.

In the year 2010, there are also 15 Service Awards given to Compulsory and Optional Retirees of the Court. The service award conferred on compulsory and optional retirees is composed of (1) a 30,000 cash award; (2) a memorabilia and (3) a certificate of appreciation. The awardees are Soledad G. Roson, Rodrigo A. Javier, Myrna R. Manzanilla, Zosimo M. Bautista, Gonzalo C. Sanchez, Hon. Renato S. Puno, Adoracion S. Yulo, Josefina V. Palon, Atty. Ma. Luisa D. Villarama, Rodrigo C. Valdez, Hon. Jesus Edwin A. Villasor, Cecilia D. Anonuevo, Rolando L. Ibaan, Dr. Ramon S. Armedilla, Ms. Aurora E. Quintos.

The Integrity Development Review (IDR) Committee, an initiative of the Court to eliminate opportunities for corruption within the administrative aspect of the Judiciary by systematically examining its integrity measures, identifying institutional weaknesses that impinge on the over-all performance of the judicial branch, and assessing the functions of the courts in terms of their vulnerability to corruption, conducted the cascading activity, “Strengthening the Integrity of the Judiciary,” in the following areas: Region I and the Provinces of Cagayan, Ifugao, Quirino, and Kalinga; National Capital Judicial Region; Region II, Region IV-B; and Region V; and in the third-level courts, namely, the Court of Appeals, Sandiganbayan, and the Court of Tax Appeals, and the Court of Appeals in Cebu City and Cagayan De Oro City.

The SC Bids and Awards Committee for Goods and Services (SC BAC-GS) awarded 25 contracts for procurement of goods, 11 contracts for the procurement of services, and extended two contracts of services. The procured goods include printer toners, pre-printed SC forms, printing supplies and materials, basic office supplies, laptop and desktop computers, semi-automatic pistols, and medicines. The procured services include pest and termite control services, comprehensive health care package of the SC, freight forwarding services, photocopying services, and printing of the 2011 Court Calendar.

The Sub-Committee on the Revision of the Rules on Special Proceedings prepared a draft of the proposed rules on Special Proceedings. The draft is currently subject to revisions on style and form by Atty. Jaime N. Soriano, a member of the Sub-Committee.

The Personnel Development Committee (PDC) approved 86 requests for the availment of study leaves, local trainings and seminars, foreign scholarships, and foreign short-term trainings.

The SC Committee on Gender Responsiveness in the Judiciary took part in the 2010 gender sensitivity trainings for judges and court personnel in Dumaguete, Palawan, and Metro Manila; and in the staging of the National Summit on Family Courts: Strengthening the Multi-Sectoral Framework in the Protection of Family, Women, and Children on March 12, 2010 at the Manila Hotel.
Significant Fora, Conferences, Seminars, and Workshops

Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno 3rd Lecture Series

Attended by the Association of South East Asian Nations Law Association (ASEAN-ALA) delegates, the Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno 3rd Lecture Series held on February 19, 2010 featured Ambassador Rosario Gonzales-Manalo, who spoke on the ASEAN Charter. The lecture marked ALA’s 30th anniversary.

Reactors were European Commission to the Philippines delegation head Ambassador Alistair MacDonald and Singapore Deputy Solicitor General Jeffrey Chan Wah Teck. Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno, in his closing remarks, cited as roadblocks to the integration of the ASEAN member-states trust issues with foreign intervention due to the states’ “long histories of colonial exploitation by western countries” and differing viewpoints on human rights.

The ALA delegates were in the country from February 17 to 20 for a series of activities in line with the ALA Philippines 30th anniversary celebration, culminating in the ALA’s 32nd Governing Council Meeting at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel, Makati City.

NATIONAL SUMMIT ON FAMILY COURTS

On March 12, more than 200 stakeholders gathered at the National Summit on Family Courts: Strengthening the Multi-Sectoral Framework in the Protection of Family, Women, and Children at the Manila Hotel.

Family court judges, select branch clerks of court, interpreters, social workers, prosecutors, public attorneys, representatives from the Executive and the Legislative Departments, civil society groups, international organizations, and the media validated action points, proposed legal and policy instruments, and pertinent recommendations on the regularization of family courts, codification of rules on women and children, and law reform which had been generated by three regional conferences and pre-Summit meetings spread over a year-long consultation process in the National Capital Region, Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

The Summit was made possible through joint efforts of the Supreme Court of the Philippines, the Philippine Judicial Academy (PHILJA), in partnership with the Committee on Gender Responsiveness in the Judiciary Sub-Committee on Training and Capacity Building and the Philippine Judges Association (PJA).

The Summit is the fourth convened by the SC in four years, all in the term of Chief Justice Puno. The Court earlier

FORUM FOR MEDIA COVERING THE JUDICIARY
In fulfillment of the SC Public Information Office’s mandate to offer periodic workshops or seminars that are designed to inform members of the media about the work of the Court and its procedures, the Supreme Court conducted the Forum for Media Covering the Judiciary at the Baguio Country Club, Baguio City on April 14, 2010.

The Forum, organized by the PIO with support from the Program Management Office, gave the members of the media an overview of the Philippine Judiciary and provided them guidelines and suggestions in covering Judiciary-related cases and issues.

ORIENTATION-SEMINAR FOR NEWLY APPOINTED CLERKS OF COURT
The PHILJA conducted the 19th Orientation-Seminar for Newly Appointed Clerks of Court at the Century Park Hotel, Manila on July 27 to 30.

COURTROOM SECURITY TRAINING SEMINAR FOR JUDGES
The SC, through the PHILJA, conducted the Courtroom Security Training for Judges Seminar at the Imperial Palace Suites in Quezon City on October 12, 2010.

The first held this year, the Training gave the participant judges tips on crime prevention and document and communication security; basics on counter surveillance, and an orientation on firearm marksmanship and technical proficiency. Participating judges also had a better understanding and assessment of courtroom security, emergency scenarios, surveillance, and important facts on firearms and explosives.

The seminar was a joint project of the SC Committee on Security, the PHILJA, the OCA, in coordination with
the NBI and in partnership with the European Union-Philippines Justice Support Programme.

7th PERSONAL SECURITY TRAINING FOR JUDGES

Fifty-two select judges from second-level and first-level courts in Judicial Regions 6, 7, and 8 participated in the Personal Security Training for Judges at the Waterfront Hotel in Mactan, Cebu from August 17 to 19.

The Training, which was conducted by the Supreme Court, through the PHILJA, and the Office of the Court Administrator, in coordination with the National Bureau of Investigation oriented the judges on threats assessment, crime prevention and basic first aid. The judges were also given actual trainings on firearms orientation and marksmanship.

The Training is aimed at developing in the judges a clear understanding of the basic precepts of safety and security precautions. PHILJA Chancellor Adolfo S. Azcuna underscored the importance of situational awareness among the judges as an important factor in assessing and ensuring their security.

The Training is the seventh of its kind since the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement on Judicial Security between the Supreme Court and the NBI in January 2008.

LEADERSHIP TOWARDS TRANSFORMATIONAL ORGANIZATION TRAINING SEMINARS

The Office of the Administrative Services conducted three Leadership Towards Transformational Organization Training Seminars on August 25 to 27, October 13 to 15, and October 27 to 29, to further strengthen and identify its participants’ leadership strengths, weaknesses, and help them apply practices of exemplary leadership.

ENVIRONMENTAL SEMINAR

More than a hundred representatives from different sectors of the society participated in the three-day Third Multi-Sectoral Capacity-Building on Environmental Laws and the Rules of Procedure for Environmental Cases held from September 15 to 17, 2010 at the Pryce Plaza Hotel in Cagayan de Oro City.

A similar event was earlier held in Palawan and Cebu City.

The event was organized by the PHILJA, in partnership with the PMO, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the Department of the Interior and Local Government.

Attendees include judges, clerks of court, prosecutors, lawyers from the Public Attorneys Office, officials from the Department of Energy and Natural Resources, the Department of Interior and Local Government, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, representatives from civil society, and guest observers.

Seminar-Workshops in Preparation for the 2011 Bar Exams

Aimed at ensuring the successful implementation of the 2011 Bar Examinations reforms, Supreme Court Justice Roberto A. Abad, Chairperson of the Committee on the 2011 Bar Examinations, led Preparing for the 2011 Bar Exams and Beyond Seminar-Workshops nationwide.

Thousands of law deans and professors of law across the archipelago attended the Seminar-Workshops, which introduced and explained the following SC-approved changes to the Bar exams: a redefinition of the exam coverage; the measurement of legal knowledge through multiple-choice type of questions (MCQs), and essay exams that will gauge the examinees’ lawyering skills.

Justice Abad also discussed how law professors can help develop the skills needed by the students to cope with these changes.

The first two Seminar-Workshops, which were intended for law professors from the National Capital Region and Central Luzon, were held at the Ateneo de Manila School of Law on July 30, the University of Santo Tomas and the University of the East on July 31, respectively. Law professors from South Luzon and nearby Visayan provinces attended the August 7 Seminar-Workshop at the University of the Cordilleras in Baguio. The Seminar-Workshop for law faculty in the Bicol Region was held at the Aquinas
University on August 14. This was followed by three separate Seminar-Workshops held at the University of San Carlos in Cebu on August 21; University of Iloilo in Bacolod on August 28; University of Negros Occidental-Recoletos in Bacolod on September 17; and Xavier University in Mindanao on August 22, respectively.

NATIONWIDE PUBLIC ORIENTATION AND DIALOGUE ON THE SMALL CLAIMS COURTS

The SC launched the nationwide Public Orientation and Dialogue on the Small Claims Courts on August 25, 2010 at the Marco Polo Hotel in Davao City. The campaign seeks to promote and popularize the small claims courts and inform the public regarding the Rules of Procedure for Small Claims Cases using the local dialect, visits to local radio and television stations, and conduct of public dialogues to provide basic knowledge about the new procedures, and to explain the Rules’ importance and benefits.

The activity was funded by the American Bar Association-Rule of Law Initiative, and spearheaded by the PIO and the PMO.

SEMINAR-WORKSHOPS ON THE RULE OF PROCEDURE FOR SMALL CLAIMS CASES

The Court conducted 16 Seminar-Workshops on the Rules of Procedure for Small Claims Cases, which were attended by a total of 1622 participants (first-level judges and clerks of court). The Rules took effect on March 18.

Seminar-Workshops were held for the National Capital Judicial Region in Manila on March 25 and 26; for Region 7 in Cebu City on April 21; for Region 8 in Tacloban City on May 19; for Region 1 in Laoag City on June 15 and 17; for those Region 10 in Cagayan de Oro City on June 24; for Region 4 in Pasay City on July 13 and 15; for Region 11 in Davao City on August 3; for Region 12 in Davao City on August 5; for Region 3 in Pampanga on September 14 and 16; for Region 9 in Zamboanga del Norte on October 14; and for Region 6 in Bacolod City on November 16 and 18.

The Seminar-Workshops were conducted by the SC, the PHILJA, and the OCA in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development and the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative.

OTHER PHILJA PROGRAMS

Two other core programs of the PHILJA – the Pre-Judicature Program and the Continuing Legal Education Program – had a total of 555 attendees.

The PHILJA also conducted the following special focus programs: Competency Enhancement Training for Family Court Judges and Personnel in Handling Child Abuse Cases, Training the Trainers, CET Program Review, Seminar on Speedy Trial and Disposition of Cases, Multi-Sectoral Seminar-Workshop on Dangerous Drugs Law for Judges, Prosecutors, and Law Enforcers, Seminar-Workshop on Combating Judicial Corruption and Strengthening the Rule of Law, Seminar on
Election Laws for Judge of the Regional Trial Courts, Seminar Workshop on CEDAW and Gender Sensitivity for Court of Appeals Lawyers and Employees.

Aside from the Courtroom Security Training for Judges and the Personal Security Training for Judges previously mentioned, the other trainings were Orientation Seminar-Workshop on Comparative Analysis Between the Family Code and the Code of Muslim Personal Laws; Multi-Sectoral Seminar-Workshop on Agrarian Justice; Information Dissemination Through a Dialogue Between the Barangay Officials and the Chief Justice with other Court Officials; Seminar-Workshop on Combating Human Trafficking in the Philippines; Seminar-Workshop on the Improved Use of International Labor Standards in the Judiciary; Seminar-Workshop on Deposit Insurance, Banking Practices, and Bank Conservatorship, Receivership, and Liquidation; Seminar-Workshop on the Development of Sextortion Toolkit; and Final Validation of the Sextortion Toolkit.

A total of 37 seminars on alternative dispute resolution were also held: Court Annexed Medication Programs (Basic Medication Course, 14 Refresher Course for Mediators and Seminar-Workshop on the Special Rules of Court on Alternative Dispute Resolution); Mobile Court-Annexed Mediation Program (Launch of EJOW); Judicial Dispute Resolution Programs (Judicial Dispute Resolution Trainers Conference, JDR Workshop, and four Judicial Settlement Conference for Judges on JDR).

Convention-seminars for various employees associations of all courts nationwide were likewise held. These were the 15th National Convention-Seminar and General Meeting of the Philippine Women Judges Association; the 14th National Convention and Seminar of the Philippine Association of Court Employees; 7th Convention-Seminar of the Judiciary Association of the Clerks of the Philippines, 12th Convention-Seminar of the Metropolitan and City Judges Association of the Philippines; Midterm National Convention of the PJA; 10th National Convention and Seminar of the First-level Clerks of Court Association of the Philippines, 8th Biennial National Convention and Seminar-Workshop of the Court Legal Researchers Association of the Philippines, Inc., 16th National Convention-Seminar of the Philippine Trial Judges League, Inc., and the 6th National Convention and Seminar of the Philippine Association of Court Interpreters.

SPECIAL LECTURES
Aside from the Distinguished Lectures series on the ASEAN Charter and the Judicial Philosophy of the Puno Court, the Metrobank Professorial Chair Lecture on Corporate Rehabilitation in the Philippines was also held.
2010 Significant Administrative Rulings

The year 2010 saw the Supreme Court standing firm in its commitment to increase public trust and confidence in the Judiciary as it continued with its drive against erring members of the bench, the bar, and court personnel. It also clarified administrative matters for the orderly administration of justice.

The Court clarified the issue of seniority among four Court of Appeals (CA) Justices whose appointments papers were transmitted by the Office of the President to the High Court on the same day. It held that the date the commission has been signed by the President (which is the date appearing on the face of such document) is the date of the appointment and will determine the seniority of the members of the Court of Appeals in connection with Section 3, Chapter I of BP 129, as amended by RA 8246. Thus, the earlier the date of the commission of an appointee, the more senior he/she is over the other subsequent appointees. (AM No. 10-4-22-SC, Re: Seniority Among the Four Most Recent Appointments to the Position of Associate Justices of the CA, September 28, 2010)

The Court fined a judge PhP11, 000.00 for undue delay in rendering a decision three years after the case was submitted for decision. The Court held that “[A judge] should be mindful that failure to resolve cases submitted for decision within the period fixed by law constitutes a serious violation of the constitutional right of the parties to the speedy disposition of their cases [under Article VIII, Section 15(1) of the Constitution.” It also suspended the clerk of court for two months without salary and benefits for failing to transfer the case records to the appellate court in due time without any justifiable reason. (AM No. RTJ-08-2152, Delos Reyes v. Cruz, January 18, 2010)

For failure to decide and act on current and inherited cases, as well as to resolve incidents in various cases pending before him within the reglementary period provided by law, a judge was found guilty of gross inefficiency and violation of Section 5, Canon 6 of the New Code of Judicial Conduct for the Philippine Judiciary, and violation of Canons 1 and 12 as well as Rules 1.03, 10.03 and 12.04 of the Code of Professional Responsibility for which he was fined in the amount of PhP20,000 and PhP10,000, respectively. (AM No. RTJ-07-2045, OCA v. Ismael, January 19, 2010)

A utility worker of RTC Baler, Aurora was found guilty of dishonesty and grave misconduct for stealing a part of the Yamaha motorcycle submitted as evidence in a criminal case and replaced it with a damaged one to prevent detection. (AM No. P-05-2085, Ferreras v. Eclipse, January 20, 2010)
Two lawyers were disbarred by the Court for gross immorality, violation of the Lawyer’s Oath; and violation of Rule 1.01, Canon 7 and Rule 7.03 of the Code of Professional Responsibility. Said lawyers contracted their marriage in Hongkong during the subsistence of two prior marriages of the male lawyer, the female lawyer apparently being fully aware of the same, at least of the second prior marriage. The Court noted that the male lawyer “violated the law and distorted it to cater to his own personal needs and selfish motives, [and thus,] he discredited the legal profession and created the public impression that laws are mere tools of convenience that can be used, bended and abused to satisfy personal whims and desires. In this case, he also used the law to free him from unwanted relationships [...] The records show the parties’ pattern of grave and immoral misconduct that demonstrates their lack of mental and emotional fitness and moral character to qualify them for the responsibilities and duties imposed on lawyers as professionals and as officers of the court.” (AC No. 6593, Garrido v. Garrido, February 4, 2010)

A clerk of court of Quezon City RTC, as a government employee, dismissed from the service for cause, is entitled to recover the personal contributions paid to the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS). The Court ruled that “[t]o allow forfeiture of these personal contributions in favour of the GSIS would condone undue enrichment.” (AM No. P-95-1167, Lledo v. Lledo, February 9, 2010)

For tampering with their bundy cards by punching in “‘19:30’ and ‘19:31,’ respectively, in the mistake (sic) belief that it would register as ‘7:30 a.m.’ and ‘7:31 a.m.’” and making it appear that they were present for the whole day, and for leaving the court premises without a travel order, two social welfare officers of Angeles City RTC were suspended for six months without pay. (AM No. P-10-2763, Re: Irregularity in the Use of Bundy Clock by Castro and Tayag, February 10, 2010)

A clerk of court of RTC Kidapawan, North Cotabato was meted the penalty of dismissal for having “been remiss in the performance of her administrative responsibilities.” It was found that she (1) encashed her personal checks and those of other employees from the collections of the court; (2) issued acknowledgment receipts for the amounts received as sheriff’s expenses, instead of official receipts; (3) failed to present proofs that any excess in the amounts collected as sheriff’s expenses was refunded to the parties making the deposit; (4) failed to present proofs of liquidation as to where the amounts covered by the acknowledgment receipts were disbursed; (5) failed to present any amount on the cash count on May 17, 2004, representing collections for sheriff’s expenses, considering that she did not maintain an account with the Land Bank of the Philippines for these collections; (6) failed to present remittances to the Judiciary Development Fund (JDF) after withdrawing confiscated cash bonds from the Fiduciary Fund account of the court; (7) failed to remit interest earned from the Fiduciary Fund deposits to the account of JDF; and (8) failed to account for the shortages she incurred in General
Fund and the Fiduciary Fund in the amounts of PhP8,197.96 and PhP32,385.04, respectively. (AM No. P-05-2064, OCA v. Caballero, March 2, 2010)

For marrying each other during the subsistence of their previous marriages and for receiving payment in misrepresentation that they could either influence the outcome of a case or help set a case for agenda by the Court En Banc, a Supreme Court employee was dismissed and the other, who previously resigned, had her benefits forfeited. Both were also ordered by the Court barred from reemployment in the government. (AM No. 2008-20-SC, Re: Complaints of Salvador against Spouses Serafico, March 15, 2010)

“The practice of law is a privilege heavily burdened with conditions. The attorney is a vanguard of our legal system, and, as such, is expected to maintain not only legal proficiency but also a very high standard of morality, honesty, integrity, and fair dealing in order that the people’s faith and confidence in the legal system are ensured. Thus, he must conduct himself, whether in dealing with his clients or with the public at large, as to be beyond reproach at all times. Any violation of the high moral standards of the legal profession justifies the imposition on the attorney of the appropriate penalty, including suspension and disbarment.” This was emphasized by the Court when it disbarred a lawyer for “conspiring” with a judge by personally arranging a meeting between the judge and his clients and for not only communicating to the complainants the judge's illegal reason for the meeting but likewise assisting the judge in siphoning money from his clients, and even retaining a part of said money, to ensure a favourable decision. In a separate case, the subject judge meted the penalty of dismissal. (AC No. 4973, Spouses Rafols, Jr. v. Barrios Jr., March 15, 2010)

For disparaging another lawyer in the presence of lawyers, court personnel, and litigants waiting for the start of hearing in court; and unjustifiably accusing the said lawyer of falsification, among others, a lawyer was suspended for one year from the practice of law. (AC No. 5768, Barandon, Jr. v. Ferrer, Sr., March 26, 2010)

Due to her illegal assessment and collection of PhP400,000.00 as filing fees for three (3) cases of BP 22 when the proper legal fees should only be PhP75,525.00, and for her failure to remit said collected amount in full and issue official receipts thereto, claiming to have lost said receipts, a clerk of court of MTC Sta. Cruz, Laguna was found guilty of gross dishonesty and grave misconduct. The Court ordered the forfeiture of her retirement benefits and the initiation of appropriate criminal proceedings against her. (AM No. P-07-2338, Rebong v. Tengco, April 7, 2010)

A process server in a Davao court was suspended for three months without pay for simple negligence for failure serve court notices to a lawyer and his client. Because of the said negligence, the latter incurred unnecessary expenses in coming to the court for cancelled hearings. Also, another client of the same lawyer was unable to participate in the presentation of evidence and cross-examination of witness due to delayed service of the court’s notices. (AM No. 07-2410, Talento-Fuentes v. Galindez, June 18, 2010)

A court cashier in Mandaluyong City was found guilty of simple misconduct for shouting and uttering invectives at another court employee during office hours and within the vicinity of the court, and grabbing her by the hair and dragging her outside the office while taunting her to fight. The Court stressed that any fighting or misunderstanding between and among court personnel becomes a disgraceful sight reflecting adversely on the good image of the Judiciary. (AM No. 09-2632, OCA v. Caya, June 18, 2010)

The Supreme Court ordered the disbarment of a lawyer who, after being given a one-year suspension from the practice of law by the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP), filed a barrage of cases against his former client and family as well as their family corporation, the chair and members of the IBP Board of Governors who voted to recommend his suspension, and others. The Court found that the disbarred lawyer not only filed frivolous and unfounded lawsuits that violated his duties as an officer of the court in aiding in the proper administration of justice but that he also did so against a former client to whom he owes loyalty and fidelity. (AC No. 5859, Alcantara v. De Vera, November 23, 2010)

A Calamba City RTC judge was fined twice in a month in separate cases: first, in the amount of PhP10,000, for conduct unbecoming a judge, after he used intemperate language and inappropriate actions in dealing with counsels appearing in his sala; and second, in the amount of PhP11,000, for violating Section 4 of Canon 1 and Section 1 of Canon 4 of the New Code of Judicial Conduct for the Philippine Judiciary, for using his letterhead to promote his personal interests in his letters to government officials and employees. (AM No. RTJ-10-2242, Correa v. Belen, August 6, 2010; AM No. RTJ-08-213, Belen v. Belen, August 9, 2010)

A lawyer was disbarred and perpetually disqualified from being commissioned as a notary public after he engaged in dishonest conduct because he falsely represented in his Acknowledgment that the persons who appeared before him were “known to him” to be the same persons who executed the Deed of Donation, despite the fact that he did not know them and did not ascertain their identities as he had attested. (AC No. 6258, Lustestica v. Bernabe, August 24, 2010)

For failing to account for the amount of PhP792,213 representing Clerk of Court General Fund, Special Allowance for the Judiciary, Judiciary Development Fund, Fiduciary Fund, and Marriage solemnization fees, a former clerk of court/officer-in-charge of the Municipal Trial Court in Cities, San Jose del Monte City, Bulacan was dismissed for gross misconduct, dishonesty, and gross neglect of duty and was ordered to pay the shortages he incurred. (AM No. P-06-2221, OCA v. Marcelo, October 5, 2010)
The Supreme Court fined a former Utility Worker II of the Hall of Justice, Municipal Trial Court, La Paz, Leyte PhP30,000 for immorality for maintaining an illicit relationship with a woman not his wife. (AM No. HOJ-10-03, Babante-Caples v. Caples, November 15, 2010)

The High Court dismissed a sheriff of the Caloocan City MeTC after he incurred unauthorized absences from the years 2005 to 2008, to wit: “65 days from June to December 2005, 130 days in 2006, 131.5 days in 2007, and 97 days in 2008. Notably, in September 2005, he was absent for 19 days; in 2006, he was absent for 19.5 days in January, and 20.5 days in March; in 2007, he was absent for 19 days in January, 20 days in February, and 22 days in March; and in 2008, he was absent for 18 days in January, 19 days in February, 23.5 days in March, and 20 days in April.” (AM No. P-09-2603, Re: Habitual Absenteeism of Mr. Nelson G. Marcos, Sheriff III, Metropolitan Trial Court, Office of the Clerk of Court, Caloocan City; November 23, 2010)

Five members of the IBP were found guilty of grave professional misconduct arising from their actuations in connection with the controversies in the elections in the IBP last April 25, 2009 and May 9, 2009, and were disqualified to run as national officers of the IBP in any subsequent election. The Supreme Court also upheld the elections of Attys. Manuel M. Maramba, Erwin M. Fortunato, and Nasser A. Marohomsalic as Governors for the Greater Manila Region, Western Visayas Region, and Western Mindanao Region of the IBP, and ordered a special election to elect the IBP Executive Vice President for the 2009-2011 term to be held under the supervision of the Court. (AM No. 09-5-2-SC, In the Matter of the Brewing Controversies in the Election in the IBP; AC No. 8292, Magsino v. Vinluan; December 14, 2010)

A Mandaluyong City MeTC Judge was ordered dismissed from service, with the court saying that “the magnitude of her transgressions in the present consolidated cases - gross inefficiency, gross ignorance of the law, dereliction of duty, violation of the Code of Judicial Conduct, and insubordination, taken collectively, cast a heavy shadow on her moral, intellectual and attitudinal competence. She has shown herself unworthy of the judicial robe and place of honor reserved for guardians of justice. Thus, the Court is constrained to impose upon her the severest of administrative penalties – dismissal from the service, to assure the people’s faith in the judiciary and the speedy administration of justice.” (AM No. MTJ-08-1719, Lugares v. Gutierrez-Torres, November 23, 2010)

### Data on Administrative Complaints

#### JUSTICES

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<tr>
<td>Non-Renewal of Casual Appointment</td>
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<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>18</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Court Personnel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RTC, MeTC, MTCC, MTC, &amp; MCTC</th>
<th>SDC Personnel</th>
<th>SCC Personnel</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cases Filed</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complaint Dismissed</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PENALTY / ACTION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admonished</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits Forfeited</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Censured</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dismissed from Service</td>
<td>24</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fined</td>
<td>54</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reprimanded</td>
<td>46</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suspended</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>181</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Docket and Clearance Division, Legal Office, OCA and the Complaints and Investigation Division, OAS*
LAWYERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PENALTY / ACTION</th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
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<tr>
<td>Disbarred</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Suspended Notarial Commission</td>
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<td>Suspended from Practice of Law and</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suspended Notarial Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suspended from Practice of Law and Warned</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reprimanded</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reprimanded and Warned</td>
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<tr>
<td>Admonished</td>
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<tr>
<td>Admonished and Warned</td>
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<td>Censured</td>
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<td>Fined</td>
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<td>Fined and Reprimanded</td>
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<td>Fined and Admonished</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fined and Warned</td>
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<td>Fined and Sternly Warned</td>
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<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>117</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Office of the Bar Confidant

**Note:** Admonition and Warning are not penalties.

- **SC** – Supreme Court
- **CA** – Court of Appeals
- **CTA** – Court of Tax Appeal
- **RTC** – Regional Trial Court
- **MeTC** – Metropolitan Trial Court
- **MTCC** – Municipal Trial Court in Cities
- **MTC** – Municipal Trial Court
- **MCTC** – Municipal Circuit Trial Court
- **SDC** – Shari’a District Court
- **SCC** – Shari’a Circuit Court
Employee Welfare and Benefits

Clothing Allowance

Regardless of employment status, employees who have been in the service for at least six consecutive months are granted the annual clothing allowance, in cash or in kind, provided that they remain in the service for another six months from the day the clothing allowance was given.

Representation and Transportation Allowance

RATA is given to employees whose positions are expressly authorized by the General Appropriations Act to receive such allowance, those of equivalent rank as determined by the Department of Budget and Management, and those who have been duly designated by the appointing authority to a vacant position entitled to RATA. Since the RATA is attached to the position, employees entitled to the said allowance must render actual service incident to or in connection with the discharge of their official duties. Hence, employees who go on a leave for more than a month are not entitled to receive such allowance.

Personal Economic Relief Assistance (PERA) and Additional Compensation

Upon assumption of duty, each employee receives Personal Economic Relief Assistance of Php500, and Additional Compensation of Php1,500 per month.

Additional Cost of Living Allowance from the Judiciary Development Fund (JDF)

The JDF was established in 1984 by PD 1949 for the benefit of the members and personnel of the Judiciary, to help ensure and guarantee the independence of the Judiciary as mandated by the Constitution and public policy and required by the impartial administration of justice. Derived from the increase in legal fees and from other sources, such as Bar examination fees, interest on deposits of its income, confiscated bail bonds, income from publications of the Supreme Court Printing Press, and rentals of facilities in the Halls of Justice, the JDF is used to augment the allowances of members and personnel of the Judiciary and to finance the acquisition, maintenance, and repair of office equipment and facilities. PD 1949 provides that at least 80 percent of the JDF shall be used for cost of living allowances, and that no more than 20 percent of the said Fund shall be used for office equipment and facilities.

The 80 percent of the JDF is given monthly to all qualified employees in proportion to their basic monthly salaries. Employees with a basic monthly salary of less than Php11,000 are given the biggest share. The JDF allocated for employees of the same salary grade is the same across all courts. Court employees who have rendered at least six months of service in the Judiciary are entitled to the full...
amount of the allowance, while court personnel who have rendered less than six months of service as of the cut-off date are entitled to the pro-rated amounts of the JDF.

**Special Allowance for the Judiciary (SAJ)**

The SAJ is a special allowance equivalent to the 100 percent individual basic monthly salaries under the Salary Standardization Law, granted to justices, judges and other Judiciary officials holding a similar rank. Created in 2003 by RA 9227, An Act Granting a Special Allowance for Justices, Judges, and those Holding Ranks Equivalent to Justices of the Court of Appeals and the Regional Trial Court, the SAJ was implemented over the span of four years, spreading uniformly the special allowance in amounts equivalent to 25 percent of the basic salaries covered for each installment.

As provided by RA 9227, the surplus from the collections in excess of the amount needed to fund the special allowances granted to justices, judges, and all other positions in the Judiciary with the equivalent rank of justices of the Court of Appeals and judges of the Regional Trial Court may be used by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court to grant additional allowances exclusively to other court personnel not covered by the benefits granted under the said law.

Funding for the SAJ is derived from the legal fees originally prescribed, imposed, and collected under Rule 141 of the Rules of Court prior to the promulgation of the amendments under PD 1949, Judiciary Development Fund Decree, and increases in 1989 current fees and new fees which may be imposed by the Supreme Court after the effectivity of RA 9227 on November 11, 2003.

**Longevity Pay**

For every five years of continuous and commendable service rendered in the judiciary, justices, judges, and employees of similar rank are granted longevity pay equivalent to five percent of their monthly basic pay.

**Productivity Incentive Benefit**

This benefit is based on the productivity and performance of employees, as evaluated by the heads of their respective offices. Entitled to this benefit are court employees who have had a performance rating of at least “satisfactory” and have rendered actual government service for at least one year.

**Year-End Bonus and Cash Gift**

Every December, Court employees receive a bonus equivalent to the actual base monthly salary as of October
31, and a cash gift of PhP5,000. Employees who have been in the service from January 1 to October 31, and those who have rendered at least four months of service inclusive of leaves of absence with pay are entitled to this benefit.

**Step Increment**

Step increment is given to employees who have been in continuous service for the last three years in a particular position. Likewise, justices, judges and employees of similar rank are entitled to step increment, in addition to their longevity pay.

**Loyalty Award**

The *Loyalty Award* is conferred to Court employees who have rendered an initial 10 years of service in the Judiciary and every five years thereafter.

**Shuttle Bus Service**

To extend additional economic benefits to Court employees, the Supreme Court provided 10 shuttle buses which help Court personnel save on transportation expenses. Each shuttle bus has a fixed route in the areas of Bulacan, Las Piñas, Cainta, Valenzuela, Novaliches, Fairview, Laguna, Cavite, and Marikina.

The shuttle buses are also utilized to provide transportation to Court officials and personnel to and from different official events of the Court, especially during outreach programs.

**Medical and Dental Services**

The SC Clinic provided a total of 24,030 various medical services in 2010, of which 14,926 were medical consultations/treatment, 3,687 were dental consultations/treatment, 1,733 were laboratory services, and 2,936 were physical therapy.

Five hundred sixty-three underwent psychological testing, and 42 subjects had neuro-psychiatric evaluations made for pre-employment purposes, disability retirement and diagnostic purposes. The SC Clinic also conducted 138 pre-employment physical examinations.

Of the 15 ailments commonly encountered at the SC Clinic, respiratory tract infections and musculo-skeletal complaints were the most common cause of consultation, with 20.49 percent and 11.04 percent, respectively. These were followed by cardiovascular ailments comprising 8.23 percent of reported cases. Other common ailments experienced by the employees were neurologic, gastrointestinal, and dermatological, urogenital/renal, and ophthalmologic.

Hypertension and diabetes remain the two conditions which required repeated check-up and monitoring.

Likewise, the SC Clinic conducted a total of 3,687 various dental services last year, of which 795 were gingiva/gum treatment, 593 were permanent filling, and 507 were tooth treatment.

The Clinic staff performed simple tooth extraction on 364 employees, and attended to 470 procedural cases, 377 cases of oral prophylaxis, 288 cases of temporary tooth filling, 133 post-operative cases, 159 cases of oral consultations, and one difficult extraction.

Out of the 122 requests received by the SC Clinic, 38 were evaluated for disability retirement, 47 were for maternity leave, 25 were for sick leave, and one was for rehabilitation leave.

In 2010, the SC Clinic organized special activities for charity. These included two mass blood-letting activities which were conducted in cooperation with the Philippine General Hospital-Blood Bank on May 28, and the Philippine National Red Cross on August 26. The SC Clinic also participated in the medical mission in partnership with the United Methodist Church in San Antonio Heights, Quezon City last October.

Through Fortune Medicare, Inc., the Court’s healthcare provider, the SC Clinic also organized anti-flu vaccinations to some 1,557 employees on May 4, 5, 13 and 14, 2010.

**Computer Acquisition Program for Lawyers, Justices, and Judges**

This program offers financial assistance to qualified justices, judges, and court attorneys who wish to acquire a computer through loans and staggered payment schemes.
The Philippine Judicial System

First Level

Occupying the first level of the hierarchy are the first-level courts comprised of the Metropolitan Trial Courts (MeTCs), which are established in Metropolitan Manila; the Municipal Trial Courts in Cities (MTCCs), in every city which does not form part of Metropolitan Manila; the Municipal Trial Courts (MTCs) established in each of the other cities or municipalities; and Municipal Circuit Trial Courts (MCTCs), created in each circuit comprising such cities and/or municipalities as grouped by law.

At the same level are the Shari’a Circuit Courts (SCC). Shari’a Courts have been established in Islamic regions and provinces to interpret and apply the Code of Muslim Personal Laws (PD 1083). Their decisions are appealable to the Shari’a Appellate Court, which, however, is yet to be organized.

Second Level

The second tier consists of the Regional Trial Courts (RTCs) established in each of the 13 regions in the Philippines. Each RTC may be single-sala or composed of several branches. RTCs act as trial courts and may receive evidence from the parties of the case. They also exercise appellate jurisdiction over decisions of the MeTCs, MTCCs, MTCs, and MCTCs in their respective territorial jurisdictions.

Also at the same level are the Shari’a District Courts (SDC). Their decisions are appealable to the Shari’a Appellate Court.

Since the Shari’a Appellate Court has not yet been organized, decisions of SDCs may be brought to the Supreme Court through a special civil action of certiorari if the issue is one of jurisdiction or through a petition for review on certiorari as a mode of appeal under Rule 45. (GR No. 159210, Macaraig v. Balindong, September 20, 2006)

Third Level

Court of Appeals

At the third level is the Court of Appeals (CA), which exercises its powers, functions, and duties through 23 Divisions of three members each. The CA’s 18th, 19th, and 20th Divisions comprise the CA Visayas, located in Cebu City; while the 21st, 22nd, and 23rd Divisions make up CA Mindanao, situated in Cagayan de Oro City. The CA is assigned to review cases elevated to it from the RTCs as well as quasi-judicial agencies such as the Civil Service Commission, Securities and Exchange Commission,
National Labor Relations Commission, and the Land Registration Authority.

The CA also reviews cases where the sentence is *reclusion perpetua* or life imprisonment, as well as decisions of the Office of the Ombudsman in administrative disciplinary cases. The CA is a collegiate court and may sit *en banc* only for the purpose of exercising administrative, ceremonial, or other non-adjudicatory functions. Being essentially an appellate court, it generally resolves cases only on the basis of records, but in certain instances, it may also try cases, conduct hearings, and receive evidence.

The Philippine Judicial System also includes two special courts: the Sandiganbayan and the Court of Tax Appeals.

**SANDIGANBAYAN**

The Sandiganbayan is an anti-graft court that tries public officers with a salary grade of 27 and above – including their co-accused private persons – charged with criminal cases involving graft and corrupt practices as well as corresponding civil cases for the recovery of civil liability. The Sandiganbayan is composed of a Presiding Justice and 14 Associate Justices who sit in five divisions of three Justices each. Like the CA, its decisions are directly appealable to the Supreme Court.

**COURT OF TAX APPEALS**

Under RA 9503, the CTA is composed of a Presiding Justice and eight Associate Justices, and may sit *en banc* or in three divisions of three justices each. Republic Act 9282, which took effect on March 30, 2004, has elevated the status of the CTA to that of the CA. It has exclusive jurisdiction to review on appeal decisions in cases involving disputed assessments, refunds of internal revenue taxes, fees, or other charges, penalties in relation thereto, or other matters arising under the *National Internal Revenue Code* or *Tariff and Customs Code*. It also exercises original jurisdiction over all criminal offenses arising from violations of the *Tax or Tariff Codes* and other laws administered by the Bureau of Internal Revenue or the Bureau of Customs.

**FOURTH LEVEL**

**SUPREME COURT**

At the apex of the judicial hierarchy is the Supreme Court. It is composed of a Chief Justice and 14 Associate Justices who currently sit *En Banc* or in three divisions of five members each. It has the power to settle actual controversies involving rights that are legally demandable and enforceable, and to determine whether or not there has been grave abuse of discretion amounting to lack or excess of jurisdiction on the part of any branch or instrumentality of the government.

The Supreme Court is considered “the court of last resort” since no more appeals can be made from a judgment or decision on the merits rendered by this court. A decision of a Supreme Court division is considered a decision of the entire Court. Decisions of the Supreme Court are considered as part of the law of the land.
Judicial Map of the Philippines

1ST JUDICIAL REGION
- Abra
- Benguet
- Ilocos Norte
- Ilocos Sur
- La Union
- Mountain Province
- Pangasinan

3RD JUDICIAL REGION
- Aurora
- Bataan
- Bulacan
- Nueva Ecija
- Pampanga
- Tarlac
- Zambales

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION
- Manila
- Quezon City
- Pasay City
- Kalookan City
- Makati City
- Pasa City
- Malabon City

4TH JUDICIAL REGION-A
- Batangas
- Cavite
- Laguna
- Quezon
- Rizal

4TH JUDICIAL REGION-B
- Marinduque
- Mindoro Oriental
- Mindore Occidental
- Palawan
- Romblon

5TH JUDICIAL REGION
- Albay
- Camarines Norte
- Camarines Sur
- Catanduanes
- Masbate
- Sorsogon

6TH JUDICIAL REGION
- Albay
- Antique
- Capiz
- Iloilo
- Negros Occidental

7TH JUDICIAL REGION
- Bohol
- Cebu
- Negros Oriental
- Siquijor

8TH JUDICIAL REGION
- Eastern Samar
- Leyte
- Samar
- Northern Samar
- Northern Leyte
- Southern Leyte

9TH JUDICIAL REGION
- Basilan
- Jolo
- Sulu
- Tawi-Tawi
- Zamboanga del Norte

10TH JUDICIAL REGION
- Agusan del Norte
- Bukidnon
- Butuan
- Misamis Occidental
- Misamis Oriental
- Surigao del Norte

11TH JUDICIAL REGION
- Compostella Valley
- Davao del Norte
- Davao del Sur
- Davao Oriental
- Sarangani
- South Cotabato
- Surigao del Sur

12TH JUDICIAL REGION
- Lanao del Norte
- Lanao del Sur
- Maguindanao
- Sultan Kudarat

I
II
III
IV-A
IV-B
V
VI
VII
VIII
IX
X
XI
XII
NCR