THE 2011 TO 2012 CORONA COURT

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The Filipino people, through the 1987 Constitution, place in the Supreme Court a duty much larger than that enjoyed by most, if not all, the highest courts of other countries. This duty is the duty to determine if there has been a grave abuse of discretion amounting to lack or excess of jurisdiction on the part of any branch or instrumentality of the Government. Entrusted with this expanded certiorari jurisdiction, the Supreme Court often cannot avoid conflicts with the two other great political branches of government, and is usually asked to resolve many of the great issues that divide our nation.

Unlike the President or Congress, however, the Supreme Court, or the entire Judiciary for that matter, has neither the power of the sword nor the power of the purse. As Alexander Hamilton put it, the Judiciary “has no influence over either the sword or the purse; no direction either of the strength or of the wealth of the society,” and has “neither FORCE nor WILL, but merely judgment; and must ultimately depend upon the aid of the executive arm even for the efficacy of its judgments.” Wielding only judgment, the Judiciary can fulfill its great duty only with the support of the very people who have entrusted to it its crucial role. Maintaining the public’s trust in the Judiciary, therefore, is an essential precondition to the continued effectiveness of courts in the fulfillment of their role in our representative democracy. This trust is not something that courts should take for granted; it must be built, and once built, it must be maintained.
ensuring to the people a workable representative democracy that protects constitutional rights and guarantees the rule of law. This can be achieved by the Judiciary only by working together with other government institutions and nurturing its relationships with them. The principle of separation of powers does not create exclusive fiefdoms for each of the three great departments of government. It provides merely the conceptual tools and institutional safeguards for preventing the sort of accumulation of power that history has proven to be inimical to the public good.

The Judiciary’s primary endeavor is its duty to decide cases, and it is here where it can better nurture its relationships with the President, Congress, and the rest of government. This it can do by recognizing and taking advantage of the relative competencies of the different government institutions—without of course compromising the courts’ duty to protect constitutional values and fundamental rights. For example, it is a basic principle that courts take into account Congress’ general purposes in enacting a statute whenever its provisions are interpreted and applied to a case. Also, proper deference should be accorded to the specializations and expertise of administrative agencies whenever their decisions are contested before the Court.

Of course, the Judiciary in nurturing these relationships must still always look to its expanded duty under our system of government as a special obligation to the people, which it must never compromise even in the face of the raging passions of the day. It must be resolute in its commitment to the rule of law and to fundamental rights, even when public expediency demands otherwise. This, ultimately, is what gives weight to its judgments, and maintains confidence in the legitimacy of its decisions.
Nonetheless, the Court continues to do its work, specifically to discharge its constitutional duty “to settle actual controversies involving rights which are legally demandable and enforceable, and to determine whether or not there has been a grave abuse of discretion amounting to lack or excess of jurisdiction on the part of any branch or instrumentality of the Government.” (Art. XVIII, sec. 1)

Its primary accomplishment is the disposition of cases imbued with public interest and of national significance. It wrote finis to the following cases:

GR No. 159618, Bayan Muna v. Romulo, February 1, 2011 (Velasco, J.)

The Court dismissed for lack of merit the petition assailing the Non-Surrender Agreement concluded by and between the Republic of the Philippines and the United States of America absent any clear contravention of the law. The Agreement provides in pertinent part that Persons of one Party present in the territory of the other shall not, absent the express consent of the first Party, (a) be surrendered or transferred by any means to any international tribunal for any purpose, unless such tribunal has been established by the UN Security Council or (b) be surrendered or transferred by any means to any other entity or third country, or expelled to a third country, for the purpose of surrender to or transfer to any international tribunal, unless such tribunal has been established by the UN Security Council. The decision became final on April 15, 2011.
After first ruling the assailed laws as constitutional in 2008, and then holding otherwise in 2009, and then reverting to its 2008 ruling in 2010, the Court reconsidered its 2010 ruling and instead held as not violative of the Constitution and the Local Government Code the 16 Cityhood Laws converting the municipalities of Baybay in Leyte; Bogo in Cebu; Catbalogan in Samar; Tandag in Surigao del Sur; Borongan in Eastern Samar; Tayabas in Quezon province; Lamitan in Basilan; Tabuk in Kalinga; Bayugan in Agusan del Sur; Batac in Ilocos Norte; Mati in Davao Oriental; Guihulngan in Negros Oriental; Cabadbaran in Agusan del Norte; Carcar in Cebu; El Salvador in Misamis Oriental; and Naga in Cebu to cities. The aforesaid ruling became final on June 28, 2011.

GR No. 187714, Pimentel v. Senate Committee of the Whole, March 8, 2011 (Carpio, J.)

The Court held that even if publication is not required under the Constitution, publication of the Rules of the Senate Committee of the Whole is required because the Rules expressly mandate their publication. Thus, it ruled that the referral of the subject complaint against a Senator by the Committee on Ethics and Privileges to the Senate Committee of the Whole shall take effect only upon publication of the said Rules. The decision became final on March 30, 2011.

GR No. 172087, Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) v. BIR, March 15, 2011 (Peralta, J.)

The Court held the PAGCOR exempt from value-added tax but not from corporate income tax. The decision became final on August 4, 2011.

GR No. 191560, General v. Arroyo, March 29, 2011 (Brion, J.)

The Court held that publication is required because the Rules expressly mandate their publication. Thus, it ruled that the referral of the subject complaint against a Senator by the Committee on Ethics and Privileges to the Senate Committee of the Whole shall take effect only upon publication of the said Rules. The decision became final on May 5, 2011.

(Signed Res.) GR No. 164195, Apo Fruits Corporation v. Land Bank of the Philippines, April 5, 2011, (Brion, J.)

The Court “denied with absolute finality” Land Bank’s second motion for reconsideration of its October 12, 2010 directing the bank to pay petitioners 12% interest on the amount of just compensation it belatedly paid amounting to P1.3 billion for the petitioners’ expropriated plantations. The said ruling became final on April 15, 2011.

(Signed Res.) GR No. 191618, Macalintal v. Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET), June 7, 2011 (Nachura, J.)

The Court denied petitioner’s motion for reconsideration of its decision dated November 23, 2010 which held the establishment of the PET as constitutional. The decision became final on June 29, 2011.

GR No. 190259, Ampatuan v. Puno, June 7, 2011 (Abad, J.)

The Court upheld the proclamation shortly after the Maguindanao massacre of a state of emergency in Maguindanao, Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat by then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo for failure of petitioners to demonstrate that the proclamation lacked factual bases. The decision attained finality on June 30, 2011.

(Min. Res.) GR No. 192935, Biraogo v. the Philippine Truth Commission and GR No. 193036, Lagman v. Ochoa, July 26, 2011

The Court denied with finality the Solicitor General’s motion for reconsideration of its
December 7, 2010 decision declaring unconstitutional Executive Order No. 1 creating the Philippine Truth Commission tasked to investigate reported cases of graft and corruption allegedly committed during the Arroyo administration insofar as it is violative of the equal protection clause of the Constitution. The decision thus became final on August 11, 2011.

It has also decided the following significant cases in political and constitutional law:

(Signed Res.) GR No. 180050, Navarro v. Ermita, April 12, 2011 (Nachura, J.)

The Court granted the motion for leave to intervene of Congressman Francisco T. Matugas, et al. due to their personal and substantial interest in the case which became manifest only after the case had been decided as well as the said intervenors’ motion to recall entry of judgment. It thus declared valid the provision in Article 9(2) of the Rules and Regulations Implementing the Local Government Code of 1991 stating, “The land area requirement shall not apply where the proposed province is composed of one (1) or more islands”; and RA 9355 (An Act Creating the Province of Dinagat Islands) and the proclamation of the Province of Dinagat Islands and the election of the officials thereof.

AM No. 10-11-5-SC, Re: Petition for Radio and Television Coverage of the Multiple Murder Cases Against Maguindanao Governor Zaldy Ampatuan; AM No. 10-11-7-SC, Re: Letter of President Benigno S. Aquino III, June 14, 2011 (Carpio Morales, J.)

Voting unanimously, the Court partially granted pro hac vice the request for live television and radio broadcast of the trial of the Maguindanao Massacre cases subject to certain guidelines.

GR No. 187167, Magallona v. Ermita, August 16, 2011 (Carpio, J.)

The Court upheld the constitutionality of RA 9552 demarcating the maritime baselines of the Philippines as an archipelagic state in compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

GR No. 196271, Kida v. Senate; GR No. 196305, Mapupuno v. Brillantes; GR No. 197221, Lagman v. Ochoa; GR No. 197280, Tilibah v. COMELEC; GR No. 197282, Macalintal v. COMELEC; GR No. 197392, Birago v. COMELEC; and GR No. 197454, October 18, 2011 (Brion, J.)

The Court upheld in toto the constitutionality of RA 10153 which synchronizes the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) elections, previously set on August 8, 2011, with the May 2013 regular national and local elections as well as authorizes the President to appoint Officers in Charge to replace the ARMM officials whose terms were to expire on September 30, 2011.

(Signed Res.) GR No. 171101, Hacienda Luisita, Inc. (HLI) v. Presidential Agrarian Reform Council (PARC), November 22, 2011 (Velasco, J.)

In line with its finding that control over agricultural lands must always be in the hands of the farmers, the Court reconsidered its July 5, 2011 ruling that the qualified farmworker-beneficiaries (FWBs) of Hacienda Luisita should be given an option to remain as stockholders of HLI, inasmuch as these qualified FWBs will never gain control given the present proportion of shareholdings in HLI. Instead the Court affirmed with modifications PARC Resolution No. 2005-32-01 dated December 22, 2005 and Resolution No. 2006-34-01 dated May 3, 2006, placing the lands subject of HLI’s stock distribution plan under compulsory coverage on mandated land acquisition scheme of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

GR No. 181704, Bureau of Customs Employees Association v. Teves, December 6, 2011 (Villarama, J.)

The Court upheld the constitutionality of RA 9335, the Attrition Act of 2005, which provides a system of rewards and sanctions through the creation of a Rewards and Incentives Fund and a Revenue Performance Evaluation Board and covers all Bureau of Internal Revenue and Bureau of Customs officials with at least six months of service, regardless of employment status.

GR No. 152375, Republic v. Sandiganbayan, December 13, 2011 (Brion, J.)

The Supreme Court, voting 7-7, dismissed for lack of merit the government’s petition that sought to overturn a Sandiganbayan resolution denying the admission of the deposition of Maurice V. Bane as part of its evidence in its ill-gotten wealth case (Civil Case No. 0009) against former President Ferdinand Marcos and his wife Mrs. Imelda R. Marcos and several others in connection with the purchase of the major shareholdings of Cable and Wireless Limited in Eastern Telecommunications Philippines, Inc. (ETPI), among others.

Because of the tied vote in both the December 6 and 13, 2011 En Banc sessions of the Court, the Sandiganbayan ruling is deemed sustained.

In keeping with the principle that public office is a public trust, the Court has rendered the following decisions:
GR Nos. 178701 and 178754, Respicio v. People, June 6, 2011 (Carpio Morales, J.)

The Court upheld the Sandiganbayan’s conviction of a former Immigration Commissioner for graft and corruption in connection with the release in 1994 of 11 Indian nations charged with drug offenses.

GR No. 193677, Veloso v. Commission on Audit, September 8, 2011 (Peralta, J.)

The Supreme Court affirmed the Commission on Audit (COA)’s disallowance of the payment of a monetary reward as part of the Exemplary Public Service Award (EPSA) to former three-term councilors of the City of Manila authorized by City Ordinance No. 8040 on the ground that it amounts to double and additional compensation. However, in line with existing jurisprudence, it did not require refund of the disallowed amount “because all the parties acted in good faith.”

The Court has also rendered the following significant decisions in relation to business and the economy:

GR No. 166859, Republic v. Sandiganbayan; GR No. 169203, Republic v. Sandiganbayan; GR No. 180702, Republic v. Cojuangco, April 12, 2011 (Bersamin, J.)

The Court held that that the block of shares in San Miguel Corporation in the names of respondents Eduardo Cojuangco, et al. subject of Sandiganbayan Civil Case No. 0033-F is their exclusive property as the Republic’s burden to establish by preponderance of evidence that the said shares had been illegally acquired with coconut-levy funds was not discharged.

GR No. 176579, Gamboa v. Teves, June 28, 2011 (Carpio, J.)

The Court held that the term “capital” in Article XII, sec. 11 of the Constitution refers only to shares of stock entitled to vote in the election of directors. It thus directed the Securities and Exchange Commission to investigate the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. for possible violation of the constitutional limit on foreign ownership in utilities using the above definition of “capital.”

GR No. 190795, National Association of Electricity Consumers for Reforms, Inc. v. Energy Regulatory Commission, July 6, 2011 (Sereno, J.)

The Court dismissed the petition filed by an association of several consumer groups assailing the 26.9-centavo increase in the Manila Electric Company’s distribution rate approved by the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC). The Court held, among others, that petitioners had not been denied due process as they were given several opportunities to attend the hearings in the ERC and present their evidence.

GR No. 193007, Diaz v. Secretary of Finance, July 19, 2011 (Abad, J.)

The Court ruled that the Bureau of Internal Revenue can impose value-added tax (VAT) on tollway operators • 2011: UPHOLDING THE RULE OF LAW IN FACE OF UNPRECEDENTED CHALLENGES •
as the VAT covers all kinds of services rendered in the Philippines for a fee.

GR No. 180006, Commissioner of Internal Revenue v. Fortune Tobacco, September 28, 2011 (Brion, J.)

The Court upheld the Court of Tax Appeals ruling granting Fortune Tobacco a P491 million tax refund. Following the 2008 ruling in a similar titled case, the Court held that the revenue regulation on which the excess taxes were erroneously collected was invalid and moreover violated the rule of uniformity of taxation.

The Court has also struck a blow for human rights and civil liberties in the following rulings:


Taking judicial notice of its October 7, 2008 decision in Secretary of National Defense v. Manalo, the Court in these consolidated habeas corpus and amparo cases on appeal ordered military officials, including General Jovito Palparan, to immediately release University of the Philippines students Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeño as well as farmer Manuel Merino from detention.

GR No. 183711, Burgos v. Arroyo; GR No. 183712, Burgos v. Arroyo, GR No. 183713, Burgos v. Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), July 5, 2011 (Brion, J.)

Issuing anew a writ of habeas corpus returnable to the Court of Appeals Presiding Justice, the Supreme Court directed the AFP to produce the person of the missing political activist Jonas Joseph Burgos. The case awaits the compliance also of the Office of the Solicitor General and the Commission on Human Rights with several directives from the Court.

GR No. 191805, Rodriguez v. Arroyo; GR No. 193160, Versoza v. Rodriguez, November 15, 2011 (Sereno, J.)

The Court unanimously affirmed with modification the grant by the Court of Appeals of the writs of amparo and habeas data in favor of Noriel Rodriguez, a member of a peasant organization affiliated with the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP), whom it found to have been abducted, detained, and tortured by soldiers belonging to the 17th Infantry Battalion, 5th Infantry Division of the military. It ordered the dismissal of the case against former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo for lack of evidence of her responsibility or accountability for Rodriguez’s abduction or that she should have known about the violation of his right to life, liberty or security, or that she had failed to investigate, punish or prevent it.

For 2011, the Court En Banc and its three Divisions resolved 10,879 out of 16,592 judicial cases for a healthy disposal rate of 65%.

RULE-MAKING

The Court also flexed its constitutional rule making power concerning pleading, practice, and procedure in all courts by promulgating the following:

(1) AM No. 11-3-6-SC, Amendment of Section 12, Rule 14 of the Rules of Court on Service Upon Foreign Private Juridical Entity, March 15, 2011

Under this amendment, service of summons may now be done, with the permission of the court, on foreign private juridical entities that are either not registered or have no resident agent through any of the following ways:

A) By personal service coursed through the appropriate court in the foreign country with the assistance of the Department of Foreign Affairs;
B) By publication once in a newspaper of general circulation in the country where the defendant may be found and by serving a copy of the summons and the court order by registered mail at the last known address of the defendant;
C) By facsimile or any recognized electronic means that could generate proof of service;
D) By such other means as the court may in its discretion direct.
(2) AM No. 10-3-10-SC, Rules of Procedure for Intellectual Property Rights Cases, October 18, 2011
These Rules shall be observed by the Regional Trial Courts designated as Special Commercial Courts.

BAR REFORM
In 2011, the Court upon the initiative of 2011 Bar Committee Chairperson Justice Roberto A. Abad both approved and implemented significant changes in the Bar examinations.

One change is the use of multiple-choice questions (MCQs) that are to be so constructed as to specifically measure the candidate’s knowledge of and ability to recall the laws, doctrines, and principles that every new lawyer needs in his practice, and to assess the candidate’s understanding of the meaning and significance of those same laws and principles as they apply to specific situations. The answers to the MCQs were checked through the use of optical scan machines.

The Bar examinations also now include essay-type questions which will not be Bar subject specific. In computing a candidate’s final grade in the Bar examinations, the results of the multiple-choice questions examinations will be given a weight of 60 percent, while those of the essay-type examinations will be given a weight of 40 percent.

These reforms resulted in the early release of the 2011 Bar exams results on February 29, 2012, a mere three months after the exams were held, with a passing percentage of 31.95% or 1,913 out 5,987 examinees, the highest in this millennium. (BM No. 2265, Re: Reforms in the 2011 Bar Examinations, January 18, 2011 and BM No. 1161, Re: Proposed Reforms in the Bar Examinations, February 1, 2011)

COURT CLEANSING
Under its constitutional power of administrative supervision over all court personnel, the Court has imposed disciplinary action on 59 judges and 162 lower court personnel and 45 Supreme Court employees.

For 2011, it has disbarred four lawyers and imposed disciplinary action on 140 others

SPEEDING UP COURT OPERATIONS AND ADJUDICATION
With the end in view of speeding up court operations, the Court in 2011 has continued to enhance the computerization of the Judiciary by rolling out to courts
nationwide the E-Payment after implementing the same in the Metro Manila courts in 2010.

The E-Payment system, which is an inhouse developed system of the Supreme Court Management Information Systems Office (MISO), provides litigants with the convenience of having to pay for only one receipt. Such single receipt, which already consolidates all the required legal fees, is immediately printed out from the computer upon assessment and cashiering.

Under the previous manual system, litigants have to pay for seven different receipts upon the filing of a case, namely for payments to the Special Allowance for the Judiciary, the Judiciary Development Fund, the Legal Research Fund, the Victims’ Compensation Fund, the Philippine Mediation Center, the Sheriff’s Trust Fund, and the Land Registration Authority.

The system also allows authorized court personnel to ascertain the cash on hand in their courts at any time of the day as it already keeps a running count, which results in faster recording and accurate reconciliation of legal fees. Reporting of cases are also now more efficient as the problem of lost receipts has been addressed by the computerization of payment.

Furthermore, due to the implementation of this system, the SC would be able to standardize the legal fees in all system-covered courts, and the inconsistencies in collection alleviated.

The E-Payment system is part of the Judiciary Case Management System (JCMS), which is one of the Court’s judicial reform projects aimed at declogging congested dockets and helping solve delays in case management and resolution through the use of information technology. The other components of the JCMS include Electronic Raffling to facilitate distribution of cases across the branches of the trial courts and Case Monitoring and Tracking to organize case events showing status, schedules, statistics, reports, and other case–related activities.

The JCMS is currently being pilot-tested in the 21 courts in Lapu-Lapu City and Pasay City and 34 Office of the Clerks of Court (OCC) in the National Capital Region, Lapu-Lapu City, and Iloilo City.

Indeed the problem of judicial delay is such that the Court is thinking out of the box. It is for instance studying proposed changes to the Rules of Court, such as changing the role of the courts from being a neutral referee between opposing litigants to that of an active participant in the speedy resolution of a case. Another proposed change is to change the approach to litigation from adversarial to inquisitorial. It is hoped that the needed changes to the Rules will be promulgated by 2012.

BENCHBOOK FOR TRIAL COURTS

The Court, through its education and training arm, the Philippine Judicial Academy, continues to exert efforts to develop and enhance the competencies of members of the Bench through the conduct of various seminars and workshops.

On September 12, 2011, the Supreme Court launched the revised and expanded Benchbook for Trial Courts. The Benchbook is intended as primary reference for judges to enhance their efficiency, accountability, and transparency with the end view for them to become great judges.

The nationwide training of judges on the effective use of the Benchbook, with funding assistance from USAID and ABA-ROLI, also commenced in September 2011.

RECORD DECONGESTION

In 2011, for the first time in 50 years, the Court made a serious effort to dispose of unnecessary court records by ordering all judges and clerks of court of all 138 Regional Trial Courts, and 53 Metropolitan Trial Courts and Municipal Trial Courts in the cities of Manila, Makati, Quezon, and Angeles to make an inventory of their dockets to sort and segregate inactive case records, including archived and terminated cases, and those in the dead files, to identify records for immediate destruction through recycling and those for retention, scanning, and digitization. (Administrative Order 103-2011)

Considering its budgetary constraints, the Court hopes to obtain funding support from its development partners so that this pilot run will be soon replicated in all courts nationwide.

“SPECIAL” COURTS

The OCA has likewise ordered the establishment of “tourist courts” or night courts in Pasay City and Makati City to expedite the resolution of cases involving tourists (Administrative Order No. 19-2011) and the continuous operation of “special drugs courts” across the country.

MODEL HALLS OF JUSTICE

With support from the World Bank, the Lapu-Lapu City Hall of Justice in Cebu is now operational, while the Angeles City Hall of Justice in Pampanga is set for completion in 2012.
**EJOW AND JUDGMENT DAY**

The Court’s centerpiece program for increasing access to justice through the use of a mobile court bus, the Enhanced Justice on Wheels (EJOW) Program, made 22 stops in 2011. Since its launch in 2008, the EJOW has resulted in the release of 6,470 detainees; giving of free medical and dental attention to 13,385 inmates and of free legal aid to 3,680; the successful mobile court-annexed mediation of 6,970 cases; and legal information dissemination to 18,472 barangay officials.

An offshoot of EJOW, which is Judgment Day, was launched on January 21, 2011 in Las Piñas. The latter has the same activities as EJOW without the mobile court bus.

**SMALL CLAIMS COURTS**

Under the High Court’s Small Claims Project, ordinary Filipinos are empowered to litigate on their own money claims of P100,000 or less by providing them an inexpensive, informal, and simple procedure which dispenses with the need to have legal counsel. All 1,137 first-level courts nationwide, except Shari’a courts, have been designated in 2010 to hear small claims cases.

In 2011, the Court developed and distributed software, computers, and USB broadband wireless modems to the said courts for an efficient monitoring and automated monthly reporting of cases.

So far the Small Claims Court Project has attained a success rate of 89.3% for which the World Bank has given the Supreme Court a rating of “excellent.”

**ESTABLISHING LINKAGES**

Contrary to the view of some, the Court has not set itself in splendid isolation but has reached out to partners both in the international and domestic fronts.

On January 13, 2011, upon invitation by the Court, Chief Justice Robert J. Torres, Jr. of the Supreme Court of Guam gave the initial lecture in the Chief Justice Renato C. Corona Distinguished Lecture Series at the SC En Banc Session Hall. Chief Justice Torres spoke on “Media and the Courts,” with focus on the impact of the social media revolution on the courts.

On February 22, 2011, the Court hosted the first Justice Sector Coordinating Council (JSCC) meeting for 2011. Composed of the Supreme Court, the Department of Justice (DOJ) and its attached agencies, the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) and its attached agencies such as the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), and the Department of Budget and Management, the Justice Sector Coordinating Council (JSCC) serves as a mechanism for the effective coordination and sharing of information in the planning and implementation of shared initiatives towards better administration of justice.
In keeping with its 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” (AM No. 99-4-08-SC, dated August 4, 1999), the Supreme Court Public Information Office hosted on March 30, 2011 the *Media Forum on Judiciary Coverage* for the reporters covering the Supreme Court. The event has been institutionalized as an annual activity.

With the Court as the lead agency, the JSCC held on November 14, 2011, the *2011 Anti-Illlegal Drugs Forum* at the Philippine International Convention Center, CCP Complex, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City. Participants in the *Forum* identified the issues, problems, and gaps in the enforcement, trial, judgment, execution of penalty/corrections, and rehabilitation/prevention in handling illegal drugs cases as well as formulated strategies and action plans among key agencies to solve these problems.

**ESSENTIAL ROLE**

Facing unprecedented challenges both from within and without, the Court refused to waver from doing its mandated duty of upholding the rule of law, mindful that it is essential to the preservation of our people’s civil liberties and democratic way of life.
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.

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, he graduated no. 5 in his class and placed 25th highest out of 1,965 candidates in the Bar Examinations. 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.

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 Sycrip Gorres and Velayo (SGV & Co.) In 1992, he was appointed Assistant Executive Secretary for legal affairs and, concurrently, head of the Malacañang Legal Office under then President Fidel V. Ramos. In 1994, he was promoted to Deputy Executive Secretary and later Presidential Legal Counsel and member of the Cabinet. 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. 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. In 1998, then President Ramos awarded him the Philippine Legion of Honor medal with the rank of officer.
After the term of President Ramos, he was invited by then Vice-President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to become her chief of staff and spokesman. Subsequently, after Arroyo assumed the presidency on January 20, 2001, he was appointed Presidential Chief of Staff, Presidential Spokesman, and later as Acting Executive Secretary.

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. Chief Justice Corona finished his Doctorate in Civil Law at the University of Santo Tomas, summa cum laude and also valedictorian. He was once given the award of Most Outstanding Graduate School Student by UST.

He was conferred the degree of Doctor of Laws honoris causa by the University of Batangas, the University of Cebu, the University of Bohol, and the Angeles University Foundation.

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 in Washington, D.C. in July 2005; the 9th General Assembly of the Asean Law Association in Bangkok, Thailand in November 2006 at which he lectured on class action, public interest litigation, and enforcement of environmental and ancestral domain laws; the inter-regional meeting of a multidisciplinary group of experts on the role of sanctions in ensuring better respect for international humanitarian law, sponsored by the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva, Switzerland in November 2007; the 10th General Assembly of the Asean Law Association on the ASEAN Charter – Taking ASEAN to New Heights in Hanoi, Vietnam in October 2009 where he delivered a speech on judicial reforms in the Philippines and the Asian Development Bank Symposium on the occasion of the Asian Judges Symposium on Environmental Decision-Making, the Rule of Law, and Environmental Justice held at the Asian Development Bank Headquarters, Manila in July 2010. In June 2011, he delivered a speech on “Access to Justice” at the 14th Conference of Chief Justices of Asia and the Pacific, held in Seoul, South Korea. In July 2011, he addressed the International Symposium on Constitutional Democratic State in Jakarta, Indonesia and delivered a scholarly paper on “Constitutional Checks and Balances.” In September 2011, he was invited to deliver the keynote Address at the Fifth China-Asean Forum on Legal Cooperation and Development held in Kuala Lumpur. And in October, he was selected from among the Chief Justices from many different countries, to be the President of the Demonstration Court of the 24th Biennial Conference of the World Jurist Association held in Prague, Czech Republic.

In 2004, the Province of Batangas conferred on him the Dangal ng Batangan award. In 2005, he was chosen as one of the Outstanding Manilans by the capital City of Manila. On October 29, 2010, the Renmin University of China Law School, made him Honorary Professor of Law. In November 2011, he was given the Asian Leader Award for Judicial Excellence and, in the same month, was feted as the Inspiring Leader of the Decade by BizNewsAsia, a leading business news magazine in the Philippines.

Born on October 15, 1948 in Tanauan City, Batangas, he is married to the former Cristina Roco. They are blessed with three grown-up children, and grandchildren, Franco, Santino, Anika, Katrina, Natalia, Caia, and Ethan.
Born in Davao City, Philippines, Justice Antonio T. Carpio was sworn in as member of the Supreme Court on October 26, 2001. Justice Carpio obtained his law degree from the College of Law of the University of the Philippines where he graduated valedictorian and cum laude in 1975. He placed sixth in the 1975 Bar Examinations. He earned his undergraduate degree in Economics from Ateneo de Manila University in 1970.

In his student days, Justice Carpio was Chairman of the Editorial Board of the *Philippine Law Journal* of the UP College of Law. He was Editor-in-Chief of *The Guidon*, the school paper of Ateneo de Manila University. He also served as Managing Editor of the *Philippine Collegian*, the school paper of the University of the Philippines.

Fresh out of law school, Justice Carpio went into private practice until 1992. He was a Professorial Lecturer of the UP College of Law from 1983 until 1992 when he was appointed Chief Presidential Legal Counsel, Office of the President of the Philippines.

Justice Carpio also held other important government positions before assuming office as Supreme Court Justice. He was a member of the Board of Regents of the University of the Philippines from 1993 to 1998. He was a member of the Technology Transfer Board of the Department of Industry from 1978 to 1979. He served as Special Representative of the Department of Trade for textile negotiations from 1980 to 1981. He also served as President of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines Pasay-Makati Chapter (1985-1986), Director of the UP Law Alumni Association (1984-1989), and Director of the Philippine Bar Association (1989-1990).

For his “distinguished and exemplary service” to the Republic, Justice Carpio was awarded in 1998 the *Presidential Medal of Merit* by then President Fidel Ramos. In 1991, Justice Carpio received the *Outstanding Achievement Award in Law* from the Ateneo de Manila Alumni Association. In 2002, he was also the recipient of the *Distinguished Alumnus Award* from the Ateneo de Davao Alumni Association. In 2009, he was conferred a Doctorate of Laws, *honoris causa*, by the Ateneo de Davao University.

Justice Carpio is the Chair of the Second Division and Chair of the Senate Electoral Tribunal.
Justice Conchita Carpio Morales joined the Judiciary in 1983 as Presiding Judge of the Pili, Camarines Sur Regional Trial Court. In 1986, she was transferred to the Pasay Regional Trial Court.

In 1994, she was appointed to the Court of Appeals, and on September 3, 2002, she was elevated 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 Bachelor of Arts (Economics) in 1964 and her Bachelor of Laws in 1968, both from the University of the Philippines.

After graduation from law school, she worked at the Atienza Tabora and Del Rosario Law offices. In 1971, she joined the Department of Justice as Special Assistant to Justice Secretary Vicente Abad Santos. It was after almost 12 years of work in the Department of Justice that she joined the Judiciary in 1983.

A Bar Examiners in Legal Ethics in 2000, she was the Chair of the 2010 Bar Examinations.

During the Centennary of the University of the Philippines (UP) in 2008, the UP Alumni Association conferred on Justice Carpio Morales the Outstanding Award in Championing Justice/Judiciary “for delivering justice with courage and untrammeled integrity” & “a shining paragon to all magistrates, worthy of emulation and respect.”

A frequent speaker/panelist in local and international forums, she was, on the invitation of the World Bank, an interactive panel discussant during its 2009 Celebration of Integrity Day in Washington DC.

Justice Carpio Morales holds the distinction of being the first woman magistrate to administer the oath of office to a President of the Republic of the Philippines.

She was conferred one of the Ten Outstanding Manilans Awards in June 2011.

After her retirement from the Supreme Court, Justice Carpio Morales was appointed Ombudsman by President Benigno Simeon C. Aquino on July 26, 2011.
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 then 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 the 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 Doctorate 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 was the 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 cochaired the Halls 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
PRESBITERO J. VELASCO, JR.

Born on August 8, 1948 in Pasay City, Justice Presbitero J. Velasco, Jr. is a product of the public school system. He went to J. Sumulong Elementary School (First Honorable Mention) and the University of the Philippines (UP) Preparatory School, respectively, for his elementary and high school education.

He obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from UP, finishing the course in only three years. He went on to take up his Bachelor of Laws from the same university. At the UP College of Law, Justice Velasco was a member of the Order of the Purple Feather Honor Society and served on the Editorial Board of the Philippine Law Journal. He graduated eighth in the class of 1971 with a grade of 1.79. He placed sixth in the Bar Exams that same year with a grade of 89.85%.

He engaged in private law practice for 20 years before joining the public sector as a regular member of the Judicial and Bar Council in 1993.

Justice Velasco served as Undersecretary of the Department of Justice from 1995 to April 1998. He was concurrently Commissioner of the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board. He was also Chairman of the Board of Pardons and Parole, Commissioner of the Commission on Settlement and Land Disputes, and Member of the Committee on Privatization.

In 1998, he was appointed Court of Appeals Justice. He was ranked eighth in disposition of cases when he was named Court Administrator in 2001.

Justice Velasco has also served the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) in various capacities: as its National President in 1987, as Commissioner of the IBP Committee on Bar Discipline, and as Honorary Chairperson and Past National Co-Chairperson of the IBP National Committee on Legal Aid. He was a Member of the Board of Governors for the term 1985-87 and Vice President for Southern Tagalog Region. He was also the Cavite IBP Chapter President for the term 1985-1987.

He was the President of the Quezon City “Capitol” Jaycees for 1986-87. It was during his term that the Capitol Jaycees was adjudged the Most Outstanding JC Chapter in Asia-Pacific. In 1988, he was elected the National Executive Vice President (NEVP) of the Philippine Jaycees in charge of Metro Manila.
Justice De Castro was appointed to the Supreme Court on December 4, 2007. She is an alumna of the University of the Philippines (UP) where she was a consistent college and university scholar. She finished in UP, Bachelor of Arts cum laude in 1968 and Bachelor of Law in 1972 at the top four of her class. She was Vice-Chancellor and a consistent member of the UP College of Law honor society, the Order of the Purple Feather. She was elected to lifetime membership in the Phi Kappa Phi International Honor Society and Pi Gamma Mu International Honor Society in the Social Sciences for academic excellence in her Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws degrees. She attended law courses in the International Law Institute in Washington D.C., USA and Harvard Law School’s Program of Instruction for Lawyers in Massachusetts, USA.

Now on her 39th year in government, Justice De Castro’s career in public service began on February 19, 1973, when she was appointed to a law clerk position in the Office of the Clerk of Court of the Supreme Court. From January 1975 to November 1978, she served as a Legal/Judicial Assistant and as member of the technical staff of the late Chief Justice Fred Ruiz Castro. In December 1978, she transferred to the Department of Justice (DOJ) where she served as State Counsel I and rose from the ranks culminating in her appointment in 1997 as Assistant Chief State Counsel. She was designated as one of the international and peace negotiators of President Corazon Cojuangco Aquino and President Fidel V. Ramos from 1988 to 1997. In 1998, she was awarded by then President Fidel V. Ramos with the Presidential Medal of Merit for Exceptionally Meritorious and Valuable Service Rendered and Remarkable Accomplishments that have served the interest of peace, unity and progress in Southern Philippines, earning her the gratitude and admiration of the Filipino nation and the people.

Justice De Castro rejoined the Judiciary as Sandiganbayan Associate Justice on September 23, 1997 and became its Presiding Justice on December 15, 2004. During her incumbency, she spearheaded the establishment of the Computerized Case Management System and the adoption of reforms that contributed to easing of the court docket in the Sandiganbayan and to the professionalization of its work force. For these accomplishments as Presiding Justice of the Sandiganbayan, she was awarded in December 2005 the Chief Justice Hilario G. Davide Judicial Reform Award.
She now holds the position of President-elect, for the term 2012-2014, of the International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ) pursuant to her election in May 2012 at the Biennial Convention of the IAWJ held in London, United Kingdom, which was attended by members of the Chapters of the IAWJ from over 100 countries. She is also currently the President of the Philippine Women Judges Association (PWJA).

In the Supreme Court, Justice De Castro is the Working Chairperson of the First Division, the Chairperson of the Management Committee of the Judicial Reform Support Project, the Working Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on Ethics and Ethical Standards and of the Halls of Justice Coordinating Committee, Chairperson of the Committee on Computerization and Library, the Committee on Gender Responsiveness in the Judiciary, and the Special Committee to Draft Rules on Sexual Harassment in the Judiciary, and Member of the Supreme Court Internal Rules Committee.
JUSTICE
ARTURO D. BRION

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 and showcases the multiple facets of law practice.

He began his law career 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. In 1984, he was elected Mambabatas Pambansa in the Philippine National Assembly where he was Vice-Chair of the Labor and Employment Committee and a member of the Committee on Revision of Laws and Constitutional Amendments. He was also appointed Deputy Minister of Labor for Legal and Legislative Affairs from 1985 to 1986 under the then prevailing semi-parliamentary system of government.

He returned to private practice as Senior Partner of the Natividad, Delos Reyes, Maambong & Brion Law Firm from 1986 to 1988, and subsequently of the Siguion Reyna Law Office from 1995 to 2001. He also 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 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.

From these forays into other areas of law, he went back to full-time government service in 2001 as Undersecretary of Labor for Labor Relations of the Department of Labor and Employment, and a year after, as Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs for Special Projects of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

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 Court of Appeals Associate Justice in July 2003. He was a Senior Member...
of the Appellate Court’s 15th Division until July 2006, when he accepted the task of leading the country’s Department of Labor and Employment as its Secretary. 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.

Although born in Manila on December 29, 1946, Justice Brion considers himself a true son of San Pablo, Laguna, the City of Seven Lakes, where he spent his pre-school, elementary, and high school years. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics degree from the San Pablo Colleges before taking up his law studies at the Ateneo de Manila University.

At law school, he became Editor-in-Chief of the *Ateneo Law Journal*, and finished his Bachelor of Laws degree with the distinction of being *Cum Laude*, Class Valedictorian, and awardee of the *Golden Leaf Award*, *Gold Medal for Academic Excellence*, and *First Honors Gold Medal*. He ranked first place in the Bar Examinations held that same year, with a grade of 91.65%.

Despite his achievements, Justice Brion never ceased in his pursuit of knowledge. In the middle of his legal career, he went 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. While serving as a magistrate of the appellate court, Justice Brion enrolled in Spanish language classes at the Instituto Cervantes where he is now at *Nivel* (level) 13. While in his masteral studies, he worked with the Ontario Ministry of Labor and the Management Board Secretariat, and was Editor-in-Chief of *Legal Update*, a publication of the Legal Services Branch of the Ontario Ministry of Labor from 1992 to 1993.

Justice Brion is married to chemist-lawyer Atty. Antonietta C. Articona-Brion. They are blessed with two similarly multi-skilled children: Antonella A. Brion, graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from York University in Toronto, Canada, but is now both a writer and a painter after her masteral studies in fine arts; 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 for a time, of 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 Mason and is a member of the Teodoro Kalaw Memorial Lodge No 136, Malinaw Lodge No. 25, the Manila Bodies No. 1 (A.&A.S.R.), and the Royal Order of Scotland.
On January 13, 2009, then Sandiganbayan Presiding Justice Diosdado M. Peralta was named as Supreme Court Associate Justice. He is the third Sandiganbayan Presiding Justice to be appointed to the High Tribunal.

Justice Peralta finished his Bachelor of Science degree at the San Juan de Letran in 1974 before pursuing law at the University of Santo Tomas Faculty of Civil Law, where he graduated in 1979. On April 9, 2010, he was conferred the degree of Doctor of Laws Honoris Causa by the Northwestern University, Laoag City, Ilocos Norte.

His government service started in 1987, when he was appointed Third Assistant City Fiscal in Laoag City and, later, assigned to the Prosecutor’s Office in the City of Manila in 1988. As trial prosecutor, he was awarded the Outstanding Public Prosecutor of Manila for the year 1990 – 1991 by the City of Manila on June 21, 1991, and the Most Outstanding Public Prosecutor of the City of Manila on June 9, 1994 by the Department of Justice. Later, he became the Assistant Chief of the Investigation Division, Office of the City Prosecutor.

On September 22, 1994, he was appointed Judge of the Regional Trial Court, Branch 95, Quezon City, which was designated as Special Criminal Court on Heinous Crimes and, later, Drugs Cases. As trial court Judge, he was the recipient of several commendations, two of which were the Special Centennial Awards in the Field of Criminal Law, given by the Integrated Bar of the Philippines and the Supreme Court during its Centennial Celebration on June 6, 2001, and the Judicial Excellence Awards 2002 (Chief Justice Ramon Avanceña Award for Outstanding Regional Trial Court Judge), given by the Foundation for Judicial Excellence on June 14, 2002 which, providentially, was also the same day when he was appointed Associate Justice of the Sandiganbayan. On March 28, 2008, he became the Presiding Justice of the Sandiganbayan.

He was a Bar reviewer, professor, lecturer, and resource person in Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure, Remedial Law, and Trial Technique in notable universities. In recognition of his vast contribution in the field of law, his alma mater gave him several citations, among others, the Award of Distinction and Award in the Foundation for Judicial Excellence on November 23, 2002 for his appointment as Associate
Justice of the Sandiganbayan, Most Outstanding Alumnus of the Year Award in 2008 for being the Presiding Justice of the Sandiganbayan, and also The Outstanding Thomasian Alumni Awards for Law (TOTAL Awardee in Law/Justice) on August 2, 2008, which was the highest award bestowed by the University of Santo Tomas to an alumnus. Other government and civic groups honored him with the Sectoral Ulirang Ama Awardee on Law and Judiciary given by the Ulirang Ama Foundation on June 18, 2006, and the Outstanding Citizen in the Field of Law and Government Service on February 7, 2004 by the City of Laoag.

He attended conferences and study programs abroad, including, among others, Senior Seminar on Financial Underpinnings of Terrorism sponsored by the U.S. State Department in Washington, D.C., U.S.A., from August 6 to 9, 2001; PHILJA Study Tour to Canada with the National Judicial Institute, a Juris Canada project, from June 5 to 20, 2005; Program of Instruction for Lawyers-Program on Negotiation in Harvard Law School, Cambridge, Boston, Massachusetts, from June 9 to 13, 2008; Australasian Conference of Planning and Environmental Courts and Tribunals (ASPECT) in Sydney, Australia, from August 31 to September 3, 2010; and Knowledge Sharing and Exchange Visit with Judiciary of Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, and the International Court of Justice, in Spain and the Netherlands, from July 5 to 17, 2011.

As an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, he is the Chairperson on the Committee on the Revision of the Benchbook on the Application, Computation, and Graduation of Penalties. He is a member of the following committees: Committee on the Revision of the Rules of Court; Committee on the Revision of the Philippine Benchbook for Trial Court Judges; Sub-Committee on the Rule of Procedure for Environmental Cases; Judicial Reform Support Project Management Committee and Chairperson of its Component Working Committee for Component D; Committee on Legislative-Executive Relations (LERCOM); Sub-Committee on Evidence; Society for Judicial Excellence; Sub-Committee on the Internal Rules of the Supreme Court; and Sub-Committee on the Rule of Procedure for Intellectual Property Rights Cases. He presently sits as a Member of the House of Representative Electoral Tribunal.

He is a member of the Corps of Professors, Department of Criminal Law of the Philippine Judicial Academy (PHILJA) of the Supreme Court where he is the regular lecturer and resource person in the seminars conducted for judges and Judiciary officials and also, in the Mandatory Continuing Legal Education program for lawyers in the country and those based abroad.

He is the second in a brood of four siblings of the late Judge Elviro L. Peralta, then Court of First Instance Judge of Manila, and Catalina Madarang Peralta, a retired public school teacher. He is married to Court of Appeals Associate Justice Fernanda C. Lampas Peralta, with whom he has four children, namely, Dorothy, John Christopher, Timothy John, and John Isaac.
Justice Lucas P. Bersamin was serving as Court of Appeals Associate Justice since March 2003 when he was appointed to the Supreme Court.

Prior to his CA post, he was the Presiding Judge of the Quezon City Regional Trial Court, Branch 96. He had engaged in private legal practice before he was appointed as RTC judge in November 1986.

He was the recipient of the Chief Justice Jose Abad Santos Award (Outstanding RTC Judge for 2002) during the 11th Judicial Excellence Awards (JEA). In the 2000 JEA, he bagged the Best Decision in Civil Law and Best Decision in Criminal Law awards, an unprecedented achievement that has yet to be duplicated.

He finished his law studies at the University of the East in 1973. He placed ninth in the Bar Examinations given that same year with an average of 86.3%. He is a fellow at the Commonwealth Judicial Education Institute in Dalhousie University in Halifax, Canada.

In 2006, he was recognized as one of UE’s 60 Most Outstanding Alumni Awardees during UE’s Diamond Jubilee Awards. He was UE’s Outstanding Alumnus in the Judiciary in 2001. In 1991, he was cited as Outstanding Alumnus in Government Service, Judiciary and Outstanding Alumnus in the Field of Law by the UE Alumni Association, Inc.

He was a professor at the Ateneo School of Law, the UE College of Law, and the University of Santo Tomas (UST) Faculty of Civil Law. He was special lecturer at the College of Law, University of Cebu in 2006. He continues to lecture for the Philippine Judicial Academy.
Justice Mariano C. Del Castillo obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree major in Political Science from the San Beda College in 1971 and graduated from the Ateneo de Manila University College of Law with a degree of Bachelor of Laws in 1976. He passed the Bar Examinations in the same year.

After practicing law, a brief stint in banking and working with the Araneta Group of Companies, he joined the Judiciary in 1989 as Municipal Trial Court Judge of San Mateo, Rizal. He was promoted to Regional Trial Court (RTC) Judge of Angeles City in 1992, and in 1995, was named RTC Judge of Quezon City where he was appointed First Vice-Executive Judge until his appointment as Court of Appeals (CA) Justice in August 2001. In the CA, he was the Chairman of the Eleventh Division. In 2005, he was conferred by the Rotary Club of Manila the Justice George A. Malcolm Award as best performing CA Justice. In 2006, he was recognized by the Presiding Justice of the CA for outstanding performance for achieving zero backlog in the disposition of cases, which he maintained up to his appointment to the Supreme Court. He also became the Editor-In-Chief of the Court of Appeals Journal from 2006 up to his promotion to the Supreme Court on July 29, 2009. Presently, Justice Del Castillo chairs the Enhanced Justice on Wheels and the International Humanitarian Law Committees as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court.

Justice Del Castillo has held various positions in religious and civic organizations and in non-government organizations and received various awards and distinctions. He was also active in the Philippine Judges Association where he became Director, Vice-President for Administration, Senior Vice-President, and Executive Vice-President. He has lectured for the Philippine Judicial Academy (PHILJA) and for the MCLE (Ateneo, Center for Law Advocacy and Specialized Studies and Chan Robles). He taught Practice Court I and II at the Ateneo College of Law. In 2007, he was the Governor for Legal of the Bel-Air Village Association.

He is married to former Ateneo Law Dean Cynthia del Castillo, with whom he has two children, who both became lawyers. He was born on July 29, 1949.
Justice Abad was a Dean’s Lister at the Ateneo de Manila University where he earned his law degree. He first engaged in private practice, working for about a year at the Jose W. Diokno Law Office in 1968 before he joined the government working as Technical Assistant (1969-1973) and Associate Attorney (1974-1975) at the Supreme Court, supervised by then Chief Justice Fred Ruiz Castro.

In 1975, he joined the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG). In 1985, he was promoted to Assistant Solicitor General, a post he held for about a year before putting up his own law firm. He has been engaged in the private practice of law for over 22 years.

He joined the legal academy when no less than the late Chief Justice Roberto C. Concepcion, the first UST law graduate to top the Bar examinations and then Law Dean of the University of Santo Tomas, recruited Justice Abad from the OSG in 1978 to teach Political Law at the UST. Subsequently, he also taught Constitutional Law, Administrative Law, Election Law, Law on Public Corporation, and Public International Law. And he also became a Bar Reviewer in Political Law.

From 1988-1990, he worked as legal consultant for the Presidential Committee on the Nuclear Power Plant under the late Justice Secretary Sedfrey Ordoñez. Later, he worked as counsel for the Equitable Banking Corp. and its officers and branch managers during the impeachment trial of former President Joseph E. Estrada.

He authored two books, _Practical Book in Legal Writing_ in 2002 and _Fundamentals of Legal Writing_ in 2004. He was a contributing staff editor in the _Supreme Court Reports Annotated_ (SCRA) from 1972 to 1996.

He has conducted a _Seminar-Workshop in Legal Writing and Research_ in 2007 for lawyers and investigators of the Office of the Ombudsman upon the invitation of the Philippine Judicial Academy (PHILJA), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Rule of Law Effectiveness (ROLE), and CD Technologies Asia, Inc. Likewise, he lectured to the research attorneys of the Sandiganbayan and the Court of Tax Appeals regarding the preparation of judicial memoranda.

He has also rendered free legal aid for the Free Legal Assistance Group (FLAG), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and the Angels of Hope.
Orphanage, Pulong Bunga, Silang, Cavite. He occasionally conducts weekend training for lay and religious catechists for the Archdiocese of Manila.

Justice Abad served as the Chairperson of the 2011 Bar Examinations which implemented radical reforms in the conduct of the exams. Because of these reforms he is referred to by Dean Andres D. Bautista of the Far Eastern University Institute of Law as the “Father of the Modern Bar Exams.”

At present, Justice Abad heads the following committees in the Supreme Court: Sub-Committee on the Revision of the Rules on Civil Procedure, Committee on Internal Rules of the Supreme Court, Committee on Continuing Legal Education and Bar Matters, Chief Justice Committee to Address Case Congestions and Delay in the Lower Courts, and Committee for the Decongestion of Provincial, City and Municipal jails. He is also the Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law and a member of the Committee on Ethics and Ethical Standards and the Sub-Committee on Rules of Procedure for Intellectual Property Rights.

Justice Abad is married to Atty. Victoria Martinez-Abad. He has four children with the late Lilia Beth B. Abad: Liliarosa, Ma. Leila, Rex Niño, and Blessilda.
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 the 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.

His appointment as SC Justice is a homecoming of sorts 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. 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 Award 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 the 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.

Born on April 14, 1946, Manila, Justice Villarama is married to former SC En Banc Clerk of Court Atty. Ma. Luisa Dizon-Villarama. They have two children: Dra. Clarissa D. Villarama-Cellona, a dermatologist, and Carlo D. Villarama, a court attorney.
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 Chief Justice Fred Ruiz Castro; 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, 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 retired human resource management 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 Philippine Air Force (PAF) officer, and Teresa Catral Mendoza, a mother engaged in poultry-raising. He is the eldest of their eight children. Of his seven siblings, two are priests, two are PAF generals, one a Philippine Airlines pilot, one a parish assistant, and the only girl, a 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 rejoining 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 Award. 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 RTC Quezon City’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
MARIA LOURDES P.A. SERENO

Lawyer-academician Maria Lourdes P. A. Sereno was appointed on August 16, 2010 as the 169th Justice of the Supreme Court. Born on July 2, 1960, the then 50-year old Justice is the youngest to be appointed to the SC in this century. She may also be one of the longest-serving justices ever, as she is to mandatorily retire in 2030 after serving a 20-year term.

Despite her family’s humble means, Justice Sereno’s parents were able to nurture in her a passion for learning and personal excellence during her formative years. Her father, a native of Siasi, Sulu, and her mother, a public school teacher, saved what little money they had to buy second-hand books that she would eagerly read. Her appetite for literature and reflection served her well during her primary schooling and enabled her to graduate with honors at the Kamuning Elementary School and Quezon City High School. She was then awarded generous scholarships by the government and several private institutions that allowed her to earn an Economics degree at the Ateneo de Manila University, and a Bachelor of Laws degree at the University of the Philippines.

After graduating valedictorian from the UP College of Law in 1984, Justice Sereno joined the largest law firm in the country. While she enjoyed her very challenging work in the law firm, her family started to grow. Choosing to spend more time with her two young children and her husband, she opted to leave the law firm in 1986.

She joined the UP College of Law where she was able to mold young men and women in the principles of Civil and Commercial law. From being one of the youngest faculty members, she would eventually go on to lead and administer two institutions based in the UP Law Center – the Institute of International Legal Studies and the Information and Publication Division. She was a professor at the UP College of Law for nearly 20 years. At one point, she also became Deputy Commissioner of the Commission on Human Rights and was partly responsible for writing the organizational plans for the Commission. She has also taught at the Philippine Judicial Academy and several international academies.

In 1992, Justice Sereno was awarded a De Witte Fellowship and a Ford-Rockefeller Scholarship to pursue her Masters of Laws at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, where she developed her proficiency in law and economics and international trade law. When she and her family returned to the Philippines, she played a key role in developing those fields of law.
At the age of 38, she was appointed as legal counsel at the World Trade Organizations’ Appellate Body Secretariat in Geneva. Her international experience and her pioneering achievements in the legal profession were recognized when she was selected as one of *The Outstanding Women in the Nation’s Service* (TOWNS) for law.

At the age of 39, she was chosen as the only female member of the 1999 Preparatory Commission on Constitutional Reform where she was elected Chairperson of the Commission’s Steering Committee. Here, she helped the various sectoral committees identify key constitutional issues, and integrated their findings into a common framework for analysis of the various constitutional provisions. In the same year, together with Justice Jose Campos, Commissioner Haydee Yorac, and other professors from the UP College of Law, she co-founded Accesslaw, a corporation that provided the first annotated electronic research system in Philippine law.

Access to justice is one of the centerpiece advocacies of Justice Sereno. One of her earlier works in law school included a review of the interface between domestic laws and indigenous customary laws. The United Nations Development Program would commission her to write a paper on judicial reform, which would eventually become the basis for the first external reform program that was welcomed by the Supreme Court. Among the activities the project birthed was the first-ever dialogue between the Members of the Supreme Court and representatives of the basic sectors. She also assisted in the High Tribunal’s pilot projects on mediation and judicial case management systems, and wrote a widely-quoted survey-based paper on justice and the cost of doing business, together with professors from the UP School of Economics.

Prior to her joining the Court, she was engaged in major international litigation as co-counsel for the Republic, after which she joined the Asian Institute of Management as Executive Director of its think-tank - the AIM Policy Center - where she pursued her interest in policy reform and its impact on governance and the economy.

Believing in what she could deliver for justice and judicial reform, President Benigno C. Aquino III made her his first appointee to the Supreme Court.

She is married to Mario Jose E. Sereno. They are blessed with two children, Maria Sophia and Jose Lorenzo.
Supreme Court Associate Justice Bienvenido L. Reyes was born in Obando, Bulacan on July 6, 1947 to Fidel Reyes and Timotea Lorenzo Reyes. He is married to Teresita Jacinta Reyes and they are blessed with two sons — Dennis Michael (with whom he has a beautiful granddaughter named Mary Dominique), and Benson Michael.

He obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Santo Tomas in 1967. Immediately after college, he went to pursue his Bachelor of Laws degree at San Beda College and finished the same in 1971. He passed the Bar Examinations in the same year with a rating of 81.6 percent.

During his younger years, he engaged in private practice and became a partner at Albano Reyes and Sansano Law Offices from 1972 to 1974. A year after, he became a Media Specialist at the Department of Public Information in Malacanang, Manila. Thereafter, he held various positions in private corporations such as Vice President for Corporate and Legal Affairs of the R.C. Silverio Group of Companies (1976-1981) consisting of the following: Sterling Life Assurance Corporation, Flirters Guaranty Assurance Corporation, Philippine Underwriters’ Finance Corporation, Phlfinance Securities Corporation, Silver Lines, Inc., Silvertrade Inc., and Celebrity Sports Plaza. From 1977 to 1990, he engaged in the formulation of policies, objectives, and guidelines relative to the operations of various firms either as Director, Corporate Secretary and Legal Counsel in the following firms: Core Finance & Leasing Corporation, Triple One Management and Development Corporation, Intra Strata Assurance Corporation, Best Security Agency, Sterling Properties, Inc., Intent Pacific Management Corporation, Dupels, Inc., Aurorama, Inc., and Railwayana, Inc.

Justice Reyes also became Managing Partner at the Reyes Daway Lim Bernardo Lindo and Rosales Law Offices in 1981 to 1990; He was Board Secretary and Vice President of the National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation from 1988 to 1990, and Chairman of the Board of the Celebrity Sports Plaza (1990-1996).

In 1990, he took on the challenge of public service and began his career in the Judiciary as Presiding Judge of the Regional Trial Court, Malabon City. On August 8, 2000, he was appointed Associate Justice of the Court of Appeals.

While treading his way towards his remarkable career as a lawyer, Justice Reyes was a recipient of various awards and recognitions from different organizations and institutions which stood witness to his enduring commitment to the profession. In 1998,
he was awarded the Most Outstanding Alumnus by his high school alma mater, Colegio de San Pascual Baylon. Two years after, he was given the Plaque of Distinction for Outstanding Achievement in the Field of Law and Jurisprudence by the Lex Talionis Fraternitas Inc. and a Certificate of Recognition by the Integrated Bar of the Philippines Calmana Chapter for his exemplary achievement as an RTC Judge of Malabon. He was also given a Certificate of Recognition in the field of Law and Jurisprudence by the San Beda College of Law in July 2002. In 2003, he was recipient of Gawad Dangal ng Obando, Natatanging Obandeño Award for being the Most Outstanding Citizen of Obando, Bulacan in the field of law.

In 2011, he received the following: Gawad Bilang Kasaping Pandangal (IBP Gat Marcelo H. del Pilar Bulacan Chapter); Fraternal Scroll of Distinction (Lex Talionis Fraternitas, Inc.); Pagkilala - Sangguniang Panlalawigan ng Bulacan; and the Outstanding Bedan Law Alumni Award. The most recent award he received is the 2012 Distinguished Bedan Award.

During his stint as Associate Justice of the Court of Appeals, he received a recognition for having achieved Zero Backlog in his docket as of November 2010. Ninety five percent of his decisions which were elevated to the Supreme Court were affirmed. He left the Court of Appeals on August 23, 2011 when he was appointed Associate Justice of the Supreme Court by His Excellency President Benigno Aquino III with a very clean docket.
On September 16, 2011, the appointment of then Court of Appeals Justice Estela M. Perlas-Bernabe as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court completed the 15-member High Tribunal before the year ended.

Justice Perlas-Bernabe replaced Justice Conchita Carpio Morales who, after retiring in June 2011, has since been named Ombudsman.


The year 1996 signaled her return to the Judiciary as she was named Metropolitan Trial Court Judge of the Makati City, Branch 66. In 2000, she was promoted to Regional Trial Court, Makati City, Branch 142. She was promoted to the CA on March 15, 2004.

She has been teaching Practice Court and Evidence at the Ateneo College of Law since 2009. Among her many awards are the Court of Appeals Award for Exemplary Performance, CA Award of Recognition for Outstanding Performance in Case Disposition; Best Written Decision-Municipal/Metropolitan Trial Court from the Philippine Women Judges Association; Natatanging Babaeng Hukom-Municipality of Plaridel, Bulacan; and Gawad Parangal 2008 as Outstanding Alumna for Dedicated Service to Country and People-St. Paul University Manila; and Huwaran Anak ng Bulakan and Gat Marcelo H. del Pilar Awards in 2011.

She was the Bar Examiner in Mercantile Law in 2007.

She is married to Ricardo C. Bernabe, Jr. with whom she has two children, namely Ericia and Ricardo III.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITION</th>
<th>FIRST NAME</th>
<th>MI</th>
<th>LAST NAME</th>
<th>DATE OF OATH ASSUMPTION</th>
<th>BIRTHDATE</th>
<th>DATE OF RETIREMENT/END OF TERM</th>
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<tr>
<td>CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT</td>
<td>RENATO</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>CORONA</td>
<td>05/17/2010</td>
<td>10/15/1948</td>
<td>05/29/2012</td>
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<td>ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT</td>
<td>RENATO</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>CORONA</td>
<td>04/09/2002</td>
<td></td>
<td>05/16/2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT</td>
<td>CONCHITA</td>
<td></td>
<td>CARPIO MORALES</td>
<td>09/03/2002</td>
<td>06/19/1941</td>
<td>06/19/2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>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>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>
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<td>ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT</td>
<td>TERESITA</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>LEONARDO-DE CASTRO</td>
<td>12/04/2007</td>
<td>10/08/1948</td>
<td>10/08/2018</td>
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<td>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>
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<td>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>
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<td>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>
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<td>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>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>ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT</td>
<td>MARIA LOURDES</td>
<td>P.A.</td>
<td>SERENO</td>
<td>08/16/2010</td>
<td>07/02/1960</td>
<td>07/02/2030</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT</td>
<td>BIENVENIDO</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>REYES</td>
<td>08/23/2011</td>
<td>07/06/1948</td>
<td>08/23/2018</td>
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<td>ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT</td>
<td>ESTELA</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>PERLAS-BERNABE</td>
<td>09/16/2011</td>
<td>05/14/1952</td>
<td>05/14/2022</td>
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Source: SC-OAS
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CY 2013 BUDGET PROPOSALS
SUPREME COURT OF THE PHILIPPINES AND THE LOWER COURTS (SCPLC)

The national government requires accountability and transparency in spending. Accountability is to performance as transparency is to information. A sound information and performance can only be to the extent possible and within the limits of authority and resources an agency has. It is on this premise that the budget proposals of the Supreme Court is crafted. Every effort made in the course of the administration of justice is worth the resources to be spent.

The Budget Proposal of the Supreme Court of the Philippines and the Lower Courts (SCPLC) for Calendar Year (CY) 2013 requires an estimated P18,444,154,000.00 (Net of Retirement and Life Insurance Premiums) or an increase amounting to P5,088,390,000.00 or 38.10% over CY 2011 Approved Appropriations of P13,355,764,000.00. Inclusive of Retirement and Life Insurance Premiums, The proposed budget will amount to P19,239,215,000.00 or an increase of P5,309,433,000.00 with 38.12% increase over the CY 2012 budget of P13,929,572,000.00. The proposed budget will ensure the continuity of major projects as follows:

1. Improvement of case administration and access to justice
2. Enhancement of institutional integrity
3. Strengthening of institutional capacity
4. Support to stakeholders of reforms.

The Fiscal Program
In comparison with the budgets of CY 2011 and CY 2012, the Court hereby proposes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>CY 2011 Actual</th>
<th>CY 2012 Approved</th>
<th>CY 2013 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>9,972,984</td>
<td>10,072,841</td>
<td>14,151,857</td>
<td>4,079,043</td>
<td>40.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>M O E</td>
<td>2,677,376</td>
<td>3,096,930</td>
<td>4,147,946</td>
<td>1,051,016</td>
<td>33.94</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital Outlay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>156,020</td>
<td>109,000</td>
<td>(47,020)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture and Equipment</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5,351</td>
<td>5,351</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>156,020</td>
<td>114,351</td>
<td>(41,669)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Programs</td>
<td>12,650,360</td>
<td>13,325,764</td>
<td>18,444,154</td>
<td>5,088,390</td>
<td>38.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add: Project</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Appropriations</td>
<td>12,680,360</td>
<td>13,355,764</td>
<td>18,444,154</td>
<td>5,088,390</td>
<td>38.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Add: Retirement &amp; Life Insurance Premiers (RLIP)</td>
<td>731,298</td>
<td>573,808</td>
<td>795,061</td>
<td>221,253</td>
<td>38.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total SCPLC Budget</td>
<td>13,411,658</td>
<td>13,929,572</td>
<td>19,239,215</td>
<td>5,309,643</td>
<td>38.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### SUMMARY OF INCREASES

(In thousand pesos)

#### A. PROGRAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. PERSONAL SERVICES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Increased salaries due to incorporation of the 3rd Tranche under Salary Standardization Law (SSL) III inclusive of unfilled positions and inclusion of newly created courts per RA 9848, RA 10123, and RA 9986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Deletion of the line item for salaries of unfilled positions for a net of …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Implementation of the 4th Tranche under SSL III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Additional amount for the restructuring of positions (Scrap and Build) under the Office of the Clerk of Court I to complement the Internal Audit Service (from 27 to 31 positions) per A.M. No. 09-8-13-SC and RA 3456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Increased provision for wages of Halls of Justice (HOJ) casual employees nationwide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Proposed creation of new positions in the Philippine Judicial Academy (PHILJA) (62 positions), Judicial Training Center in Tagaytay City (80 positions), and 172 Child and Family Courts (3,089 positions per RA 8369)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Increased step increments and longevity pay to personnel and members of the bench for additional three (3) years and five (5) years length of service, respectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Upward adjustments for authorized positions (filled and unfilled) of Employees Compensation Insurance Premium (ECIP), Home Development Mutual Fund (HDMF), Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth), Representation and Transportation Allowance (RATA) consistent with prevailing rates; Bonus and Cash Gift of one (1) month salary and additional P5,000 each per annum, Personnel Economic Relief Allowance (PERA) – P2,000 each per month, Uniform and Clothing Allowance – P5,000 each per annum, and Productivity Incentive Benefit – P2,000 each per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Increased provision for pension due to approved survivors benefits under RA 9946 and increased rates due to inclusion of Special Allowance of Justices/Judges and those with judicial rank (RA 9227)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Provision of Laundry and Subsistence Allowance and Hazard Pay to Public Health Workers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL INCREASE IN PERSONAL SERVICES**

4,079,043

#### II. MAINTENANCE AND OTHER OPERATING EXPENSES (MOOE)

The increase in maintenance and other operating expenses arising from the implementation of judicial reforms in the SCPLC could provide only for the barest of MOOE, considering the present condition of the HOJs nationwide and the damages brought about by several typhoons and earthquakes. Increased recurring expenses attached to the implementation of reform activities will be more felt with the increase in the price of supplies, gas, oil, and services. The proposed budget for CY 2013 aims to sustain not only judicial reforms but also the regular activities of the Court contributory to achievement of quality administration of justice like the conduct of bar examinations, attendance in local and international conferences, computerization of courts, printing of Philippine Reports, establishment of the PHILJA, operations of the Judicial and Bar Council, maintenance of the HOJs, supervision of lower courts, improvement of mandatory continuing legal education, and interpretation of Muslim Laws.

The increase will also provide for activities related to Gender and Development and the Senior Citizens and Differently-Abled.

**TOTAL INCREASE IN MOOE**

1,051,016
REVENUES
For CY 2011, total collections stood at P1,943,700,000.00 but is estimated to decrease in CY 2012 with a total income of P1,891,381,000.00. Projection for CY 2013 is P1,968,317,000.00. Income is self-administered and is being dispensed in accordance with the provisions of PD 1949 and RA 9227.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS
The Supreme Court is saddled by problems and challenges and is, therefore, determined to craft a budget that is transparent of its actions with accomplishments accounted for every step of the way. Our fiscal program deals not only with what we receive but more of what we can offer in service. Actual accomplishments for CY 2011 in terms of cases disposed of is 267,393 cases while estimates for CY 2012 is 302,197 cases. This will gradually grow to 335,151 disposed cases by CY 2013.

The above premises considered, the Court will continue to take concrete steps to establish a strong foundation for improvement and development.
The State of the 2011 Judiciary

Budget Overview

For 2011, the President signed a P1.645T budget¹ that committed the 11th largest amount to the Judiciary. A total of P13.621B² went to the Supreme Court, the third-level and lower courts, and the Presidential Electoral Tribunal or 0.83% of the total national budget (total obligations).³

2. Id.
3. From the Total New Appropriations of P1.001T, the share of the budget for the Judiciary is 1.36%.
By agency, the biggest recipient of government spending was the Department of Education (₱192.3B) followed by the Department of National Defense (₱104.5B); Department of Public Works and Highways (₱100.8B); Department of Interior and Local Government (₱86.9B); Department of Agriculture (₱34.8B); Department of Social Welfare and Development (₱34.3B); Department of Health (₱32.4B); Department of Transportation and Communications (₱31.2B); State Universities and Colleges (₱22B); and the Department of Agrarian Reform (₱16.4B).

While the allotted ₱13,621,518,000.00 to the Judiciary for 2011 represented a one million peso increase from the prior year, the allocation for the Judiciary remained below one percent of the national budget pie at 0.83%.

Though the budget for the Judiciary increased from 2010 to 2011 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, the past years have seen only minimal increases for the judicial budget and, at one point, even a reduction, as what happened in 2010 and can be seen in the following table:
Thus in 2011, the Supreme Court sought anew to get at least a 1% share in the national budget proposing an increase of ₱4,200,989.00 or 32.86% in the 2012 total budget estimate of ₱16,984,333,000.00 (inclusive of retirement and life insurance premiums). 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 2012 General Appropriations Act allocated to the Judiciary only ₱15,075,891,000.00 or almost ₱2B short of the funds it needed.


Personnel and Budget Breakdown

At the end of 2011, 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 26,433 people, including judges and non-judicial staff. Personal Services accounted for 75% of the SC and lower courts budget, with a total allotment of ₱9.13B, while Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses represented 25% at ₱3.03B. There was no allocation, however, for Capital Outlay.

5. Data from the Office of Administrative Services, Supreme Court.
6. Data from the Office of Administrative Services, Office of the Court Administrator.
Vacancy Rates

At the end of 2010, the vacancy rate of the positions for judges and justices was at 25.26% with 586 vacancies among the 2,320 positions available.7

In 2011, the JBC En Banc processed 2,969 applications for 195 judicial positions in the Supreme Court, the third-level courts, and the lower courts.8


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 2011, the vacancy rate was at 27%, with 595 vacancies out of 2,198 judicial positions.9

9. Data from the Court Management Office, Office of the Court Administrator.

BREAKDOWN OF 2011 JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SC</th>
<th>CA</th>
<th>SB</th>
<th>CTA</th>
<th>RTC</th>
<th>MoNC</th>
<th>MTCC</th>
<th>MTC</th>
<th>MTC</th>
<th>OMBC</th>
<th>LE8</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>100</td>
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</table>

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

In 2011, 348,355 new cases were filed with the lower courts, an increase of 23,629 from the previous year. Overall, the case input for 2011 increased, reaching a total of 995,178 cases. Despite this huge number, however, the lower courts were able to dispose of 384,296 cases, posting a slight increase in its case disposal rate at 39%. By December 31, 2011, there were 605,397 pending cases with the lower courts.10

LOWER COURTS’ CASE INFLOW 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURTS</th>
<th>PENDING CASES AS OF 12/31/10</th>
<th>NEWLY FILED</th>
<th>REVIVED /REOPENED</th>
<th>RCVD FROM OTHER SALAS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RTCs</td>
<td>376,947</td>
<td>181,787</td>
<td>12,833</td>
<td>7,609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MeTCs</td>
<td>82,209</td>
<td>56,561</td>
<td>9,409</td>
<td>2,983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTCCs</td>
<td>72,537</td>
<td>67,661</td>
<td>8,043</td>
<td>2,352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTCs</td>
<td>35,237</td>
<td>23,801</td>
<td>8,043</td>
<td>2,352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCTCs</td>
<td>28,611</td>
<td>18,069</td>
<td>1,428</td>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDCs</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCCs</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>596,091</td>
<td>348,355</td>
<td>34,052</td>
<td>16,680</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LOWER COURTS’ CASE OUTFLOW 2011

<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>

With the continuation of administrative and judicial reforms such as the Enhanced Justice on Wheels Program, the Small Claims Project, and the Judiciary Case Management System with its components eAssessment and eCashing system, Electronic Raffling, and Case Monitoring and Tracking, it is hoped that further improvement in the lower courts’ case disposal rate will be achieved in 2012.

LOWER COURTS’ CASE DISPOSAL 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURTS</th>
<th>Case Input11</th>
<th>CASE OUTPUT12</th>
<th>% OF CASE DISPOSALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RTCs</td>
<td>582,206</td>
<td>190,187</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MeTCs</td>
<td>149,847</td>
<td>66,862</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTCCs</td>
<td>151,045</td>
<td>76,539</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTCs</td>
<td>61,797</td>
<td>26,483</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCTCs</td>
<td>49,244</td>
<td>23,564</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDCs</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCCs</td>
<td>926</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>995,178</td>
<td>384,296</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Total number of pending cases as of December 31, 2010 (beginning balance), newly filed cases, revived/reopened cases, and cases received from other salas.
12. 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 13,054 cases disposed in 2011. The Court of Tax Appeals for its part disposed of 358 cases by the end of 2011, adjudicating in favor of the government and the taxpayers a total of Php12B in taxes and duties litigated in 2011. The Sandiganbayan, on the other hand, disposed of 430 cases within the same period, an increase of 183 from the previous year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CASE INPUT</th>
<th>CASE OUTPUT</th>
<th>% OF CASE DISPOSAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Court of Appeals</td>
<td>33,320</td>
<td>13,054</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandiganbayan</td>
<td>2,658</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court of Tax Appeals</td>
<td>1,183</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>39,161</td>
<td>13,842</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. Case Input for Judicial Matters includes pending judicial matters as of December 31, 2010 (beginning balance), new cases, transferred cases, referred cases, and reinstated cases.
14. Case Output for Judicial Matters includes petitions denied/dismissed by minute/extended resolutions, denied motions for extension of time to file petitions, transferred cases to En Banc/Divisions or other courts, and cases disposed of by decisions/signed resolutions.

The Supreme Court

More cases were filed in the Supreme Court in 2011 than in the previous year. A total of 23,509 cases were filed in the High Tribunal in 2011. Of these, 16,952 were judicial cases or cases invoking the SC’s adjudicative power, while 6,107 were administrative cases, or those decided under the Court’s power of administrative supervision. In the same year, 4,676 judicial cases and 2,028 administrative cases were disposed, for a total of 6,704 disposed cases. The High Court thus posted a 42% judicial case disposal rate and a 46% administrative case disposal rate.15


JUDICIAL MATTERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CASE INPUT</th>
<th>CASE OUTPUT</th>
<th>% OF CASE DISPOSAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EN BANC</td>
<td>564</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Division</td>
<td>3,628</td>
<td>1,455</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Division</td>
<td>3,382</td>
<td>1,674</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Division</td>
<td>3,446</td>
<td>1,321</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>11,020</td>
<td>4,676</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. Case Input for Judicial Matters includes pending judicial matters as of December 31, 2010 (beginning balance), new cases, and reinstated cases.
17. Case Output for Judicial Matters includes petitions denied/dismissed by minute/extended resolutions, denied motions for extension of time to file petitions, transferred cases to other courts, and cases disposed of by decisions/signed resolutions.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CASE INPUT</th>
<th>CASE OUTPUT</th>
<th>% OF CASE DISPOSAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EN BANC</td>
<td>Administrative Matters</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Division</td>
<td>Administrative Matters</td>
<td>991</td>
<td>574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Division</td>
<td>Administrative Matters</td>
<td>1,672</td>
<td>555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Division</td>
<td>Administrative Matters</td>
<td>1,115</td>
<td>453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>4,393</td>
<td>2,028</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18. Case Input for Administrative Matters includes pending administrative cases as of December 31, 2010 (beginning balance), new administrative matters, and reinstated cases.
19. 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.
JUDICIAL REFORM PROJECTS

INTRODUCTION

In 2011, the Court sought to improve already established judicial reform programs by either adding new components or enhancing aspects of the original programs to provide better judicial services to the public.

DECONGESTING COURTS AND JAILS,
INCREASING ACCESS TO JUSTICE

ENHANCED JUSTICE ON WHEELS PROGRAM

The Enhanced Justice on Wheels (EJOW) Program remains one of the Court’s innovative measures to further speed up the administration of justice. Inspired by the mobile courts of Guatemala, the EJOW now deploys nine buses nationwide. Six of them have been procured with financial assistance from the World Bank, while three were donated by the Sarangani Province, the Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc. (FCCCI), and the local government of Santiago City, respectively.

To further develop the Program, the Office of the Court Administrator, under OCA Memorandum Order No. 07-2011 dated March 2, 2011, created the Technical Working Group for the Enhanced Justice on Wheels, composed of representatives from the Office of the Court Administrator, Deputy Court Administrators, and Assistant Court Administrators to implement the EJOW program in a more effective and efficient manner.

Another development was the addition of the Team Building for Lower Court Employees component. This new component also helps in jail decongestion, the main purpose of the EJOW Program, by providing the court employees information and values which help them to be more efficient, and thus provide better services to the public.

By the end of 2011, the EJOW Program has facilitated the release of 6,470 inmates; settled 6,970 cases through court-annexed mediation; and provided free legal aid to 3,680 detainees. A total of 13,385 inmates were provided free medical and dental assistance, while 18,472 barangay officials
participated in the information dissemination seminars by lecturers from the Philippine Judicial Academy.

In 2011, the *EJOW Program* was nominated to the Liberal Project of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF). The Liberal Project aims to recognize outstanding initiatives that promote the liberal values of good governance, human rights and free trade.

**JUDGMENT DAY**

*Judgment Day*, a pilot project and an off-shoot of the Court’s *EJOW Program*, was launched on January 21, 2011 at the Las Piñas City Hall of Justice.

An initiative of the Las Pinas City judges and local government officials in coordination with the Supreme Court, *Judgment Day* is the simultaneous disposition of cases in one day. This pilot project replicates the *EJOW Program* without the mobile court buses to further speed up the administration of justice.

The *Judgment Day* launch resulted in the release of five inmates, acquittal of 46 accused, conviction of eight accused, and hearing of civil 31 civil cases.

In 2010, all 1,137 first-level courts nationwide, except Shari’ah Circuit Courts, were designated to hear small claims cases.

In September 6, 2011, the Supreme Court launched the *Small Claims Case Monitoring System (SC2MS)*, which seeks to enable the Judiciary to better integrate its processes by shifting from manual to faster electronic processes. The *SC2MS*, a project of the Supreme Court and the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) and funded by USAID, aims to make it easier for small claims courts to provide the High Court with detailed, consistent, and integrated case information. It will also improve data systems across localities and regions. The new system will save staff time, streamline the reporting process, reduce human errors, and thus increase the Judiciary’s accountability. Its key features include an automatic display of daily tasks, programmed custom reports, real-time case tracking, and an audit log that captures the case history.

The Court, through USAID and World Bank funding, distributed software, computers, and USB Broadband wireless modems to the said courts to facilitate the electronic submission of monthly small claims reports. The Office of the Court Administrator issued OCA Circular No. 78-2011 relative to the guidelines and pertinent instructions on the said distribution and use of computers and printers in all first-level courts with the pre-installed *SC2MS* software. These computers and printers shall be used exclusively for small claims cases. So far the Project has attained an 89.3% success rate for which the World Bank has given the Supreme Court a rating of “excellent.”

**COURT-ANNEXED MEDIATION**

The Philippine Mediation Center Office (PMCO) is committed to assist the Court in decongesting dockets by way of expansion, development, implementation, monitoring, and sustainability of the Supreme Court Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanisms through court-annexed mediation. In 2011, a series of training programs and activities for the local PMCO unit employees were conducted in Samar, Southern Leyte, Biliran, and Isabela. The Court also rolled out three *EJOW* mobile court buses
to be utilized by PMCO units in Cavite, Rizal, and Lanao del Norte.

**JUDICIARY CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

In March 2011, the Committee on Computerization and Library directed the assessment of the Judicial Court Management System (JCMS) to determine the suitability of the technical development and implementation vis-à-vis the operational procedures of the three existing modules, namely: (1) electronic assessment and cashiering (eAssessment and eCashiering Systems), (2) electronic raffling, and (3) case monitoring and tracking.

The JCMS aims to (1) manage cases effectively, (2) standardize and streamline processes while maintaining data integrity, (3) monitor case-related activities, (4) make information available to various offices involved in the process, (5) maintain confidentiality of sensitive information through security features, and (6) provide public access and transparency through online publishing of selected information.

The system is currently being pilot-tested in the 21 courts in Lapu-Lapu City and Pasay City, while the eAssessment and eCashiering Systems are implemented in the National Capital Region, Lapu Lapu City, Iloilo City, Baguio City, Malolos City, Cagayan de Oro City, and Davao City.

**ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND ENHANCING ACCESS TO THE PILLARS OF JUSTICE**


While the Supreme Court has been extensively involved in justice reform projects with the UNDP for many years, it was only in February 2009 that it has accepted the invitation of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and the UNDP to assume a greater role as Implementing Partner of the Project. The Project aims to contribute to the CPAP Governance Outcome of “The poor especially the disadvantaged women and indigenous peoples are able to exercise their human rights, engage in governance processes, empowered to have greater access to justice, and enjoy the benefits of basic services through more transparent, accountable and rights-based democratic institutions.”

During its 3rd year of implementation in 2011, the Project continued to build on the strategic initiatives and gains in the previous years, with emphasis on increasing access to justice by the poor and the marginalized with the elements of gender equality, human rights, and environment protection integrated therein. Among others, the Project supported the 7th Multi-Sectoral Capacity Building on Environmental Laws and Rules of Procedures for Environmental Cases covering Region 11 held from July 27-29, 2011 at the East Asia Royal Hotel in General Santos City. The printing of the book *Access to Environmental Justice: A Sourcebook on Environmental Rights and Legal Remedies* was completed in May 2011 and launched during the Court’s 113th Anniversary celebration the following month. The *Rule of Law* exemplars were officially turned over to the Department of Education (DepEd) in March 2011 for adoption in the elementary and high school curricula.

**KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND ESTABLISHING LINKAGES**

**CJ CORONA DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES**

On January 13, 2011, upon invitation by the Court, Chief Justice Robert J. Torres, Jr. of the Supreme Court of Guam gave the initial lecture in the Chief Justice Renato C. Corona Distinguished Lecture Series at the SC En Banc Session Hall. Chief Justice Torres spoke on “Media and the Courts,” with focus on the impact of the social media revolution on the courts.

**JUSTICE SECTOR COORDINATING COUNCIL (JSCC)**

The Justice Sector Coordinating Council was organized by justice sector agencies in recognition of the interdependence of their functions and a
wide range of shared interests, as well as cross-cutting and sector-wide issues and concerns. On April 30, 2010, a Joint Declaration was signed by the heads of justice sector agencies. Such contains the Sector’s guiding principles, approaches to policy making, planning and operations, together with the JSCC’s composition, functions and implementation arrangements.

Composed of the Supreme Court, the Department of Justice and its attached agencies, the Department of Interior and Local Government and its attached agencies (the Philippine National Police and the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology), and the Department of Budget and Management, the JSCC serves as a mechanism for the effective coordination and sharing of information in the planning and implementation of shared initiatives towards better administration of justice.

The justice sector agencies, through this Council, have successfully planned and organized a number of fora and other Sector-wide activities such as the 2011 Forum on Illegal Drugs held on November 14, 2011 at the Philippine International Convention Center, CCP Complex, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City and the National Criminal Justice Summit held on December 5-6, 2011 at the historic Manila Hotel.

STRENGTHENING INTEGRITY AND JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE

FORMULATION OF THE RULE ON WHISTLEBLOWING AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE HUMAN RESOURCE MANUAL

Taking off from the outputs developed under the Strengthening the Integrity of the Judiciary (SIJ) Project during the stewardship of ret. Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno, the Sub Committee B of the Judicial Reform Support Project (JRSP) chaired by Justice Arturo D. Brion produced the draft Rule on Whistleblowing and the Human Resource (HR) Manual of the Supreme Court. The HR Manual has been approved by the Supreme Court En Banc on January 31, 2012 (A.M. No. 00-6-1-SC), while the Rule is still pending review by the Court En Banc.

SUPPORTING GOVERNANCE IN JUSTICE SECTOR REFORM IN THE PHILIPPINES (TA 7210-PHI)

Designated as TA 7210-PHI, this technical assistance grant from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) aims to support the implementation of the Governance in Justice Sector Reform Program (GJSRP) of the ADB and the Philippine Government. The GJSRP, a $300 million program loan from the ADB for budget support for justice sector agencies, is aimed at strengthening judicial fiscal autonomy, improving justice sector accountability and access to resources, enhancing justice sector integrity, and improving justice sector efficiency. The TA is worth $1.5 million with an additional $500,000 earmarked for gender and development-related activities.

To realize these Program objectives, the TA grant has supported various activities intended to prepare the justice sector agencies, particularly the Judiciary, by enhancing its capacity and improving its operations.

To enhance justice sector integrity, the Judicial and Bar Council (JBC) for its part has adopted clear and objective criteria that measure integrity, probity, and independence of judicial nominees and applicants, which criteria are publicly announced during the shortlisting of nominees; and developed and is operating its own website which displays the rules on transparency on judicial vacancies and appointments. The JBC sends out questionnaires to persons who have knowledge of the qualifications or character of the applicants to vacant judicial posts. The feedback or information gathered from the public are held with utmost confidentiality and are tabulated and calculated based on a set criteria and formula. The survey results are then submitted to the JBC Council and serve as a guide in the evaluation of candidates.

BENCHBOOK FOR PHILIPPINE TRIAL COURTS (REVISED AND EXPANDED)

The Benchbook for Philippine Trial Courts (Revised and Expanded) was launched on September 12, 2011 at the Session Hall, New Supreme Court Building by the High Court.
and its education arm, the Philippine Judicial Academy (PHILJA), in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the American Bar Association—Rule of Law Initiative (ABA-ROLI). The Benchbook is intended as primary reference for judges to enhance their efficiency, accountability, and transparency with an end view for them to become great judges. The launching was subsequently followed by the nationwide training of judges on the effective use of the Benchbook, with funding assistance from USAID and ABA-ROLI.

The Benchbook Committee is composed of the following for Volume 1: Court of Appeals Justice Magdangal M. De Leon (Outline of Jurisdiction and Civil Procedure), Atty. Rita Linda Jimeno (Provisional Remedies and Special Civil Actions), (+) Deputy Court Administrator Nimfa C. Vilches (Special Proceedings), Sandiganbayan Justice Alexander G. Gesmundo (Evidence), former National Amnesty Commission Chairperson Alfredo F. Tadiar (Summary Procedures and The Katarungang Pambarangay Law and Alternative Dispute Resolution), and Professor Myrna S. Feliciano (Index); and for Volume 2: SC Justice Diosdado M. Peralta (Criminal Procedure), Dr. Antonio G.M. La Viña (Environmental Law and Procedural Rules), retired CA Justice Hilarion L. Aquino (Judicial Ethics), Professor Myrna S. Feliciano (Legal Research, Glossary of Legal Terms Index, and Index), SC Justice Lucas P. Bersamin (Decision Writing), and Judge Marivic Daray (Trial Court Performance and Management Systems).

MAINTAINING THE HALLS OF JUSTICE

On June 28, 2011, the High Court and R.R. Encabo Constructors and Traders inked a contract for the construction of the annex building and repair and rehabilitation of the model Hall of Justice, the Angeles City HOJ in Angeles City, Pampanga, including a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF). The project completion was originally scheduled on December 31, 2011 but was later moved to May 31, 2012 following some changes in the scope of works.

In CY 2011, various goods were also procured including computers and equipment for the different offices of the High Court and for the Philippine Judicial Academy (PHILJA) Development Center in the total amount of ₱39,905,062.
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 agencies.

OFFICES OF THE DIVISION CLERKS OF COURT

The three Offices of the Division Clerk of Court perform the same functions as the Office of the Clerk of Court En Banc in providing technical support to the Court’s First, Second, and Third Divisions.
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

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 2011, the OAS conducted 83 training activities for SC employees, with a total of 2,261 participants. The OAS also received 26 administrative cases against SC employees, which were eventually resolved by the Court.

FISCAL MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET OFFICE

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 the year 2011, 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 2012.

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.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ATTORNEY

The Office of the Chief Attorney (OCAT) is the legal research arm of the Supreme Court. It performs adjudicative support functions, such as planning and coordinating, including reviewing, research, and case studies. When the need arises, it performs tasks specifically assigned by the Court, the Chief Justice, the Associate Justices, and the Clerks of Court. In aid of legal research, the Office has an information retrieval system, both electronic and traditional, for jurisprudence, laws, and issuance of other government agencies.

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 containing index cards.

In 2011, the OCAT prepared 53 reports, comments, and memoranda; and 40 official letters and other communications, and indexed 1,815 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 syllabi for the same, and also comes out with the Office of the Reporter’s Case Index.

In 2011, the Office submitted 20 volumes of the Philippine Reports for publication to the Printing Services, and 118 significant decisions for publication in the Official Gazette to the National Printing Office. The Office also sorted out 1,172 decisions promulgated from November 2010 to December 2011, and prepared 940 syllabi.

The Office’s income generating activities include issuance of certifications and collection of research fees amounting to Php97,700, photocopies of loose-leaf decisions amounting to Php129,869, sale of Philippine Reports amounting to Php96,800, and sale of case indices amounting to Php119,200, totaling Php443,569.

**ATTY. DOUGLAS F. ANAMA**
Assistant Chief
(June 29, 2012 - 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 coordinates with 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 2011, the MISO developed new systems such as the 2010 Bar Examination Topics Generator, a databank of different topics per subject that generates a list of randomly-selected items based on a given set of criteria which was used by the examiners as basis for the formulation of multiple choice questions (MCQs); 2010 Bar Examinations Multiple Choice Questionnaire Databank, a databank of MCQs formulated by the examiners based on a list of topics generated by the Bar Exams Topic Generator; Supreme Court Health and Welfare Plan System, which facilitates the processing of claims of lower court personnel for burial assistance and for reimbursement of hospitalization and other medical expenses; and the Office of the Court Administrator-Court Management Office (OCA-CMO) Court Issuance Archiving System, a searchable database of court issuances originally in paper form which digitized and archived through scanning.

The MISO was also actively involved in the Small Claims Case Monitoring System (SC2MS) in all first level courts in the country. The MISO installed the computers being used during the conduct of the nationwide SC2MS training programs, provided personnel as trainers and facilitators during the training, and provided technical assistance to end-users through the helpdesk system.

In 2011, the ePayment System was implemented in the Metropolitan Trial Courts of Manila, Malolos City, Baguio City, Cagayan de Oro City, and Davao City. Further, the system is now being used in all Officers of the Clerks of Court in Metro Manila. With the successful roll-out, the system may now be implemented in selected key cities in other regions.

**ATTY. EMMANUEL L. CAPARAS**
Chief
(March 17, 2008 - June 1, 2011)
OFFICE OF THE BAR CONFIDANT

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 2011, the OBC received 2,614 administrative cases for disbarment, and 818 Bar matters, which are complaints against Bar examinees and successful examinees.

A total of 6,210 applications of Bar candidates to take the 2011 Bar Examinations were processed and reported by the OBC. A total of 6,200 candidates were admitted to take the Bar Examinations. However, only 5,987 took the examinations.

The OBC administered and supervised the 2011 Bar Examinations held at the University of Santo Tomas on November 13, 17, 20 and 27. 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.

The 2011 Bar Examinations composed of two types of examinations, namely: the Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ) and Essay-Type Questions. The results of the MCQ and the Essay-Type Examinations were given weights of 60% and 40%, respectively, in the computation of the candidate’s final grade.

Statistics by subject and school, the committee report, and other pertinent data were compiled by the OBC. The final report of the 2011 Committee on Bar Examinations was submitted to the Court. Upon order of the Court, the names of the 1,913 out of 5,987 examinees passed the 2010 Bar Examinations, representing a 31.95% passing percentage, were released and published on February 29, 2012.

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 1,899 successful Bar candidates took their oath on March 21, 2012 at the Plenary Hall of the Philippine International Convention Center. However, only 1,897 were able to sign the Roll of Attorneys at the SC and thereafter, were 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.

JUDICIAL RECORDS OFFICE

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 2011, the JRO received a total of 46,529 pleadings, consisting mostly of motions for reconsideration, comments, replies, rejoinders, sur-rejoinders, motions for extension, and manifestations.
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 whole Judiciary and for judicial reform. It has maintained and further improved its standards of being the state of the art law library.

The Library’s DSL cable connection enables the researchers from the court legal staff and other court employees quick access to the WESTLAW subscription, and other important local websites in the Internet. The SC Library is now wireless.

As of 2011, the collection of the Library Services has increased by 2,833 volumes divided as follows: 1,952 books, 839 donations, and 43 pamphlets. The total collection of the library is 99,839 volumes consisting of 76,631 books, 2,552 bound legal periodicals, 9,061 pamphlets, and 12,331 volumes of book donations.

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 may be used by the Library’s clientele. The new version of the E-Library will be up in 2012 together with the OPAC—online catalogue of books found in the Library. The newspaper clipping database containing images of newspaper clippings relevant to the Judiciary is searchable by author, title, and subject.

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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). It also provides medical services during official court activities, such as the Bar examinations and provincial seminars. The primary form of service is by consultation and treatment. Other services rendered are pre-employment and annual physical examinations, laboratory testing, psychological testing, and physical therapy.

The service also conducted lectures on diabetes, hypertension, pulmonary tuberculosis, and nutrition; facilitated anti-flu and anti-pneumonia vaccinations; and initiated voluntary blood-letting activities.

For the year 2011, consultations at the SC Clinic totaled to 15,630. 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 2,763. 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, the Court of Appeals, the Sandiganbayan, the Court of Tax Appeals, and the lower courts, including attached institutions such as the Philippine Judicial Academy, Judicial and Bar Council, and the Mandatory Continuing Legal Education Office.

For the year 2011, 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 4,096 copies and the Notarial Register in 4,693 copies, and paperbacks, such as the Monthly Case Digest of Supreme Court Decisions in 15,750 copies, PHILJA Journal in 5,689 copies, and the Case Index in 12,435 copies. The service also printed out 12 issues of the Benchmark, three issues of the PHILJA Bulletin, and two issues of the Court of Appeals Journal.

For the non-regular publications, the service printed out 1,938 copies of nine sets of hardbound books, 3,482 copies of six sets of paperbacks, and various pamphlets totaling to 3,226 copies.
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 2011, the PIO issued a total of 113 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 2011, the PIO provided photo coverage of 354 Court Activities and events, and video coverage for 125 of the same. The PIO also provided court tours for 62 groups from foreign and local organizations and schools.

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 2011, the PIO produced the Benchmark, a monthly newspaper on judicial events and important Court issuances; the Supreme Court Annual Report; the 2012 Court Calendar; and the 2012 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.

The PIO also spearheads or assists in organizing and managing several Court activities and events. In 2011, it spearheaded the holding of the Forum for Media on Judiciary Coverage at the Baguio Country Club, Baguio City on March 30, pursuant to its mandate under A.M. No. 99-4-08-SC 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 Forum was attended by 22 participants who are Manila-based print, radio and television broadcast and online media persons who are members of the Justice and Court Reporters Association (JUCRA) and the Justice Reporters Organization (JUORF). The topics during the Forum include an analysis of significant Court decisions and issuances on libel, contempt, and the right to privacy; court reporting do’s and don’ts; and court-media relations issues.
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 2011, 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 improving their physical facilities, 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.

The PMO was also instrumental in the procurement of 838 units of desktop computers and 851 dot matrix printers under the Judicial Reform Support Project (JRSP) for the development of the Small Claims Case Monitoring System (SC2MS). It also provided support for the activities of the Justice Sector Coordinating Council (JSCC).
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.
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 2011 Awarding Ceremonies for Outstanding Judges and Clerks of Court, organized by the SJE, were held on September 19, 2011 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 2011 Search for Judicial Excellence are Judge Jeoffre Willkom Acebido, Regional Trial Court (RTC), Br. 41, Cagayan De Oro City, Chief Justice Cayetano Arellano Award; Judge Dante Luz Nayra Viacrusis, RTC, Br. 6, Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur, Chief Justice Jose Abad-Santos Award; Judge Maria Rowena Modesto-San Pedro, RTC, Br. 158, Pasig City, Chief Justice Ramon Aveçanteña Award; and Atty. Nelison U. Pajarillo-Salcedo, RTC, Br. 41, Cagayan De Oro City, Outstanding Clerk of Court. All of the awardees are from the second level courts.
Attached Institutions
The Philippine Judicial Academy

The regular programs of the PHILJA include the following: Pre-Judicature Program (PJP); Orientation Seminar-Workshop for Newly Appointed Judges; Regional Career Enhancement Program (RJCEP); and Orientation Seminar-Workshop for Court Personnel. The Academy also has special focus programs for newly appointed clerks of court in order to prepare them for assumption of office and for the discharge of their duties. It also organizes and hosts various convention seminars, development programs for court personnel, programs for quasi-judicial agencies, professorial competency programs, and discussion sessions.

PHILJA also regularly releases several publications such as the PHILJA Bulletin, the PHILJA Judicial Journal, and monthly Online Fax and Electronic Alerts on recent Court issuances and decisions on selected administrative cases, and occasionally comes out with special publications tackling PHILJA lectures, and focusing on relevant jurisprudence and other legal materials that can be used as valuable references by judges and other members of the judiciary.

The Academy kicked off the year 2011 with a Roundtable Discussion on Anti-Trafficking in Persons in January. It then began a series of Career Development Programs for Court Legal Researchers and concluded its Seminar on Speedy Trial and Disposition of Cases both in August of the same year. Lastly, following the launch of its Benchbook for Philippine Trial Courts, the Academy successfully completed its Seminar on Increasing Judicial Efficiency in December of 2011.

These programs were organized and conducted along with 82 special focus programs dealing with the topics of environmental law protection and enhancement, agrarian justice, CEDAW and gender sensitivity, alternative dispute resolution, and the rules of procedure for small claims cases, among others.

The Academy also continued its court-annexed mediation programs and mobile court-annexed mediation in various the provinces of the country, along with its regular activities on Appeals Court Mediation, Judicial Dispute Resolution, and Court of Tax Appeals Mediation.

This year also saw the first batch of participants ever to use the newly-constructed PHILJA Training Center in Tagaytay City as the Academy held its 60th Orientation Seminar-Workshop for Newly Appointed Judges on a 12-day training in October of 2011.

PHILJA Chancellor and Retired Justice Adolfo S. Azcuna also represented the Academy at the end of the year in the International Organization for Judicial Training (IOJT) Conference in Bourdeaux, France, where he delivered a talk on “Media and the Courts” and on the “Personal Security of Philippine Judges,” sharing with the foreign delegates the PHILJA’s Manual Guide for the Judiciary in Dealing with the Media and the highlights of the Academy’s Personal Security Training Programs for Judges.

All these the Academy has done as part of its efforts to consistently maintain and progressively enhance judicial competence and efficiency in the Philippine Judiciary.
Judicial and Bar Council

An innovation of the 1987 Philippine Constitution “in response to the public clamor in favor of eliminating politics from the appointment of judges,” the Judicial and Bar Council (JBC) was created and charged with the principal function of nominating appointments to the Judiciary. It is composed of the Chief Justice as ex officio Chairman, the Secretary of Justice, and a representative of Congress as ex officio members. A representative of the Integrated Bar, a professor of law, a retired member of the Supreme Court, and a representative of the private sector completes the composition as regular members.

In 2011, the Council was composed of the following: Chief Justice Renato C. Corona as ex officio Chairman, and Secretary Leila M. De Lima and Congressman Niel C. Tupas, Jr. as ex officio members; and Retired Justice Regino C. Hermosisima, Jr., Atty. Jose V. Mejia, Justice Aurora Santiago-Lagman, and Atty. Maria Milagros Fernan-Cayosa as regular members.

The Council’s regular activities include the following: inventory and assessment of judicial vacancies, publication, and dissemination of announcements of the opening of vacancies, processing of applications, preliminary screening of applications of recommendations, publication and dissemination of lists of judicial applicants, conduct of background check on applicants, conduct of psychological and psychiatric tests, conduct of interviews, third preliminary evaluation of candidates, and final evaluation and selection of nominees.

In 2011, the JBC was able to finalize 710 nominations out of 1,859 applicants for 151 positions in various courts, boards, and offices in the Judiciary. From January to December 2011, a total of 105 judicial appointments have been issued by the Office of the President: two in the Supreme Court, eight in the Court of Appeals, two in the Sandiganbayan, 50 in the Regional Trial Courts, one in the Metropolitan Trial Courts, 16 in the Municipal Trial Courts in Cities, 13 in the Municipal Trial Court, 13 in the Municipal Circuit Trial Courts, two in the Office of the Ombudsman, and one in the Legal Education Board.

The Council held its annual Strategic and Operations Planning Workshop on August 11, 2011, participated in by no less than the Chief Justice. Further, it adopted a Manual for JBC Officials and Employees, second only to its internal rules in guiding the Council’s members and staff towards efficiency in operations and in the discharge of their functions. It also held public consultations on the proposed amendments to the JBC Disqualification Rule as embodied in Sec. 5 Rule 4 of the JBC Rules. Lastly, it undertook the restructuring of the institution’s website to make the latter more accessible and user-friendly.
Presidential Electoral Tribunal

The question as to who had jurisdiction to hear and resolve election controversies concerning the President and Vice-President first arose under the 1935 Philippine Constitution. In the landmark case of Lopez vs. Roxas (No. L-25716, July 28, 1966), the Supreme Court held that the silence of the Constitution on the matter the absence of a statute empowering a judicial body to act as the judge over such election contests means that “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.” The Court thus decreed controversies of this nature as “not justiciable.”

To remedy the situation, Congress passed RA 1793 on June 21, 1957 which categorically pointed to the Supreme Court as the electoral tribunal for and sole judge of all presidential and vice-presidential contests. However, this law was implicitly repealed with the adoption of the 1973 Constitution, the former’s postulates being incompatible with a parliamentary system of government, and was still not restored under the reconstituted presidential system.

Meanwhile, BP 884, promulgated on December 3, 1985, created an independent Presidential Electoral Tribunal to try, hear, and decide election contests in the Office of the President and the Vice-President. The adoption of the 1987 Constitution finally and definitively gave legal justification for the creation and continued existence of the tribunal. Section 4, Article VII thereof 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.”

In Macalintal vs. PET (G.R. No. 191618, September 23, 2010), the Court had the occasion to rule on the constitutionality of the PET. Holding in the affirmative, the Court upheld the tribunal’s plenary power to judge presidential and vice-presidential election contests and to promulgate the rules of procedure in connection thereto. “The establishment of PET simply constitutionalized what was statutory before the 1987 Constitution,” it held. Thus, the Supreme Court was re-established and re-affirmed as the decisive tribunal with jurisdiction over all contests pertaining to the positions of President and Vice-President of the Philippines.

The PET is composed of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court as Chairperson and the 14 Associate Justices as members, with the Clerk of Court of the Supreme Court supervising and administering the tribunal’s activities.
In 2011, the Supreme Court wrote *finis* to the following cases:

**GR No. 159618, Bayan Muna v. Romulo, February 1, 2011 (Velasco, J.)**

The Court dismissed for lack of merit the petition assailing the Non-Surrender Agreement concluded by and between the Republic of the Philippines and the United States of America absent any clear contravention of the law. The Agreement provides in pertinent part that Persons of one Party present in the territory of the other shall not, absent the express consent of the first Party, (a) be surrendered or transferred by any means to any international tribunal for any purpose, unless such tribunal has been established by the UN Security Council or (b) be surrendered or transferred by any means to any other entity or third country, or expelled to a third country, for the purpose of surrender to or transfer to any international tribunal, unless such tribunal has been established by the UN Security Council. The decision became final on April 15, 2011.

**(Signed Res.) GR No. 176951, League of Cities of the Philippines (LCP) v. COMELEC; GR No. 177499, LCP v. COMELEC; and GR No. 178056, LCP v. COMELEC, February 15, 2011 (Bersamin, J.)**

After first ruling the assailed laws as constitutional in 2008, and then holding otherwise in 2009, and then reverting to its 2008 ruling in 2010, the Court reconsidered its 2010 ruling and instead held as not violative of the Constitution and the *Local Government Code* the 16 Cityhood Laws converting the municipalities of Baybay in Leyte; Bogo in Cebu; Catbalogan in Samar; Tandag in Surigao del Sur; Borongan in Eastern Samar; Tayabas in Quezon province; Lamitan in Basilan; Tabuk in Kalinga; Bayugan in Agusan del Sur; Batac in Ilocos Norte; Mati in Davao Oriental; Guihulngan in Negros Oriental; Cabadbaran in Agusan del Norte; Carcar in Cebu; El Salvador in Misamis, Oriental and Naga in Cebu.
to cities. The aforesaid ruling became final on June 28, 2011.

GR No. 187714, Pimentel v. Senate Committee of the Whole, March 8, 2011 (Carpio, J.)

The Court held that even if publication is not required under the Constitution, publication of the Rules of the Senate Committee of the Whole is required because the Rules expressly mandate their publication. Thus, it ruled that the referral of the subject complaint against a Senator by the Committee on Ethics and Privileges to the Senate Committee of the Whole shall take effect only upon publication of the said Rules. The decision became final on March 30, 2011.

GR No. 172087, Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) v. BIR, March 15, 2011 (Peralta, J.)

The Court held the PAGCOR exempt from value-added tax but not from corporate income tax. The decision became final on August 4, 2011.

GR No. 191560, General v. Arroyo, March 29, 2011 (Brion, J.)

The Court dismissed the petition assailing the appointment of two National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) Commissioners on the ground that the same violates the constitutional ban on “midnight” appointments as petitioner himself has not established his right to the office to give cause of action to his petition for quo warranto. The decision attained finality on May 5, 2011.

(Signed Res.) GR No. 164195, Apo Fruits Corporation v. Land Bank of the Philippines, April 5, 2011, (Brion, J.)

The Court “denied with absolute finality” Land Bank’s second motion for reconsideration of its October 12, 2010 directing the bank to pay petitioners 12% interest on the amount of just compensation it belatedly paid amounting to P1.3 billion for the petitioners’ expropriated plantations. The said ruling became final on April 15, 2011

GR No. 190259, Ampatuan v. Puno, June 7, 2011 (Abad, J.)

The Court upheld the proclamation shortly after the Maguindanao massacre of a state of emergency in Maguindanao, Cotabato, and Sultan Kudarat by then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo for failure of petitioners to demonstrate that the proclamation lacked factual bases. The decision attained finality on June 30, 2011.

(Signed Res.) GR No. 191618, Macalintal v. Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET), June 7, 2011 (Nachura, J.)

The Court denied petitioner’s motion for reconsideration of its decision dated November 23, 2010 which held the establishment of the PET as constitutional. The decision became final on June 29, 2011.
The Court dismissed for lack of merit the petition for certiorari and the supplemental petition for mandamus assailing, among others, the privatization of the NPC. The decision attained finality on November 15, 2011.

It has also decided the following significant cases in political and constitutional law:

(Signed Res.) GR No. 180050, Navarro v. Ermita, April 12, 2011 (Nachura, J.)

The Court granted the motion for leave to intervene of Congressman Francisco T. Matugas, et al. due to their personal and substantial interest in the case which became manifest only after the case had been decided as well as the said intervenors’ motion to recall entry of judgment. It thus declared valid the provision in Article 9(2) of the Rules and Regulations Implementing the Local Government Code of 1991 stating, “The land area requirement shall not apply where the proposed province is composed of one (1) or more islands”; and RA 9355 (An Act Creating the Province of Dinagat Islands) and the proclamation of the Province of Dinagat Islands and the election of the officials thereof.

AM No. 10-11-5-SC, Re: Petition for Radio and Television Coverage of the Multiple Murder Cases Against Maguindanao Governor Zaldy Ampatuan; AM No. 10-11-7-SC, Re: Letter of President Benigno S. Aquino III, June 14, 2011 (Carpio Morales, J.)

Voting unanimously, the Court partially granted pro hac vice the request for live television and radio broadcast of the trial of the Maguindanao Massacre cases subject to certain guidelines.

GR No. 187167, Magallona v. Ermita, August 16, 2011 (Carpio, J.)

The Court upheld the constitutionality of RA 9552 demarcating the maritime baselines of the Philippines as an archipelagic state in compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

GR No. 192147 and 192149, Vilando v. House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal (HRET), August 23, 2011 (Mendoza, J.)

The Court affirmed the decision of the HRET declaring that Jocelyn Sy Limkaichong is a natural-born Filipino citizen and not disqualified as member of the House of Representatives representing the First District, Negros Oriental.

GR No. 196271, Kida v. Senate; GR No. 196305, Mapupuno v. Brillantes; GR No. 197221, Lagman v. Ochoa; GR No. 197280, Tilleh v. COMELEC; GR No. 197282, Macalintal v. COMELEC; GR No. 197392, Biraogo v. COMELEC; and GR No. 197454, October 18, 2011 (Brion, J.)

The Court upheld in toto the constitutionality of RA 10153 which synchronizes the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) elections, previously set on August 8, 2011, with the May 2013 regular national and local elections as well as authorizes the President to appoint Officers in Charge to replace the ARMM officials whose terms were to expire on September 30, 2011.

(Signed Res.) GR No. 171101, Hacienda Luisita, Inc. (HLI) v. Presidential Agrarian Reform Council (PARC), November 22, 2011 (Velasco, J.)

In line with its finding that control over agricultural lands must always be in the hands of the farmers, the Court reconsidered its July 5, 2011 ruling that the qualified farmworker-beneficiaries (FWBs) of Hacienda Luisita should be given an option to remain as stockholders of HLI, inasmuch as these qualified FWBs will never gain control given the present proportion of shareholdings in HLI. Instead the Court affirmed with modifications PARC Resolution No. 2005-32-01 dated December 22, 2005 and Resolution No. 2006-34-01 dated May 3, 2006, placing the lands subject of HLI’s stock distribution plan under compulsory coverage on mandated land acquisition scheme of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

GR No. 181704, Bureau of Customs Employees Association v. Teves, December 6, 2011 (Villarama, J.)

The Court upheld the constitutionality of RA 9335, the Attrition Act of 2005, which provides a system of rewards and sanctions through the
creation of a Rewards and Incentives Fund and a Revenue Performance Evaluation Board and covers all Bureau of Internal Revenue and Bureau of Customs officials with at least six months of service, regardless of employment status.

GR No. 152375, Republic v. Sandiganbayan, December 13, 2011 (Brion, J.)

The Supreme Court, voting 7-7, dismissed for lack of merit the government’s petition that sought to overturn a Sandiganbayan resolution denying the admission of the deposition of Maurice V. Bane as part of its evidence in its ill-gotten wealth case (Civil Case No. 0009) against former President Ferdinand Marcos and his wife Mrs. Imelda R. Marcos and several others in connection with the purchase of the major shareholdings of Cable and Wireless Limited in Eastern Telecommunications Philippines, Inc. (ETPI), among others.

Because of the tied vote in both the December 6 and 13, 2011 En Banc sessions of the Court, the Sandiganbayan ruling is deemed sustained.

In keeping with the principle that public office is a public trust, the Court has rendered the following decisions:

(Signed Res.) GR No. 190529, Philippine Guardians Brotherhood Inc. v. COMELEC, March 22, 2011 (Brion, J.)

The Court severely reprimanded the COMELEC Chair and Members for indirect contempt of court for their disobedience to the Court’s Status Quo Order dated February 2, 2010 which would have included the Philippine Guardians Brotherhood, Inc. (PGBI) in the list of registered and accredited party-list organizations vying for congressional seats in the May 10, 2010 elections pending adjudication of the case.

GR Nos. 178701 and 178754, Respicio v. People, June 6, 2011 (Carpio Morales, J.)

The Court upheld the Sandiganbayan’s conviction of a former Immigration Commissioner for graft and corruption in connection with the release in 1994 of 11 Indian nations charged with drug offenses.

GR No. 193677, Veloso v. Commission on Audit, September 8, 2011 (Peralta, J.)

The Supreme Court affirmed the Commission on Audit (COA)’s disallowance of the payment of a monetary reward as part of the Exemplary Public Service Award (EPSA) to former three-term councilors of the City of Manila authorized by City Ordinance No. 8040 on the ground that it amounts to double and additional compensation. However, in line with existing jurisprudence, it did not
require refund of the disallowed amount “because all the parties acted in good faith.”

The Court has also rendered the following significant decisions in relation to business and the economy:

**GR No. 166859, Republic v. Sandiganbayan; GR No. 169203, Republic v. Sandiganbayan; GR No. 180702, Republic v. Cojuangco, April 12, 2011 (Bersamin, J.)**

The Court held that that the block of shares in San Miguel Corporation in the names of respondents Eduardo Cojuangco, et al. subject of Sandiganbayan Civil Case No. 0033-F is their exclusive property as the Republic’s burden to establish by preponderance of evidence that the said shares had been illegally acquired with coconut-levy funds was not discharged.

**GR No. 164321, Skechers, USA v. Inter Pacific Industrial Trading Corp., March 28, 2011 (Peralta, J.)**

Reconsidering its earlier decision, the Court, applying the “dominancy test” ruled that there was infringement of petitioner’s trademark by the Strong rubber shoes of the respondents.

**GR No. 176579, Gamboa v. Teves, June 28, 2011 (Carpio, J.)**

The Court held that the term “capital” in Article XII, sec. 11 of the Constitution refers only to shares of stock entitled to vote in the election of directors. It thus directed the Securities and Exchange Commission to investigate the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. for possible violation of the constitutional limit on foreign ownership in utilities using the above definition of “capital.”

**GR No. 190795, National Association of Electricity Consumers for Reforms, Inc. v. Energy Regulatory Commission, July 6, 2011 (Sereno, J.)**

The Court dismissed the petition filed by an association of several consumer groups assailing the 26.9-centavo increase in the Manila Electric Company’s distribution rate approved by the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC). The Court held, among others, that petitioners had not been denied due process as they were given several opportunities to attend the hearings in the ERC and present their evidence.

**GR No. 193007, Diaz v. Secretary of Finance, July 19, 2011 (Abad, J.)**

The Court ruled that the Bureau of Internal Revenue can impose value-added tax (VAT) on tollway operators as the VAT covers all kinds of services rendered in the Philippines for a fee.

**GR No. 179593, UE v. UEEA, September 14, 2011 (Mendoza, J.)**

The Supreme Court upheld the revised scheme of the University of the East (UE) in distributing, among its employees, the 70% incremental
proceeds from tuition fee increases for the school year (SY) 1994-1995, as there was no diminution of benefits in changing the previous equal sharing scheme to percentage of salaries scheme.

GR No. 180006, Commissioner of Internal Revenue v. Fortune Tobacco, September 28, 2011 (Brion, J.)

The Court upheld the Court of Tax Appeals ruling granting Fortune Tobacco a P491 million tax refund. Following the 2008 ruling in a similarly titled case, the Court held that the revenue regulation on which the excess taxes were erroneously collected was invalid and moreover violated the rule of uniformity of taxation.

The Court has also struck a blow for human rights and civil liberties in the following rulings:


Taking judicial notice of its October 7, 2008 decision in Secretary of National Defense v. Manalo, the Court in these consolidated habeas corpus and amparo cases on appeal ordered military officials, including General Jovito Palparan, to immediately release University of the Philippines students Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeño as well as farmer Manuel Merino from detention.

GR No. 183711, Burgos v. Arroyo, GR No. 183712, Burgos v. Arroyo, GR No. 183713, Burgos v. Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), July 5, 2011 (Brion, J.)

Issuing anew a writ of habeas corpus returnable to the Court of Appeals Presiding Justice, the Supreme Court directed the AFP to produce the person of the missing political activist Jonas Joseph Burgos. The case awaits the compliance also of the Office of the Solicitor General and the Commission on Human Rights with several directives from the Court.

GR No. 191805, Rodriguez v. Arroyo; GR No. 193160, Versoza v. Rodriguez, November 15, 2011 (Sereno, J.)

The Court unanimously affirmed with modification the grant by the Court of Appeals of the writs of amparo and habeas data in favor of Noriel Rodriguez, a member of a peasant organization affiliated with the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP), whom it found to have been abducted, detained and tortured by soldiers belonging to the 17th Infantry Battalion, 5th Infantry Division of the military. It ordered the dismissal of the case against former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo for lack of evidence of her responsibility or accountability for Rodriguez’s abduction or that she should have known about the violation of his right to life, liberty or security, or that she had failed to investigate, punish or prevent it.
2011 Significant Rules

The Court also flexed its constitutional rule making power concerning pleading, practice, and procedure in all courts by promulgating the following:

(1)  AM No. 11-3-6-SC, Amendment of Section 12, Rule 14 of the Rules of Court on Service Upon Foreign Private Juridical Entity, March 15, 2011; published in the March 24, 2011 issue of the Philippine Star, effective April 8, 2011

Under this amendment, service of summons may now be done, with the permission of the court, on foreign private juridical entities that are either not registered or have no resident agent through any of the following ways:
A) By personal service coursed through the appropriate court in the foreign country with the assistance of the Department of Foreign Affairs;
B) By publication once in a newspaper of general circulation in the country where the defendant may be found and by serving a copy of the summons and the court order by registered mail at the last known address of the defendant;
C) By facsimile or any recognized electronic means that could generate proof of service;
D) By such other means as the court may in its discretion direct.

Per former President and CEO and Director of the Philippine Stock Exchange Atty. Francis Ed. Lim, “The new rule makes our long arm statute more sensible and practical, designed as it is to prevent injustice to local plaintiffs who are disadvantaged vis-a-vis their foreign counterparts in terms of seeking redress against foreign entities in the courts of their own country.”


These Rules shall be observed by the Regional Trial Courts designated by the Supreme Court as Special Commercial Courts. They shall govern all civil and criminal actions for violations of intellectual property rights provided for in RA 8293, The Intellectual Property Code (IPC), as amended.

When the court determines that the civil or criminal action involves complex issues, it shall issue a special order that the regular procedure prescribed in the Rules of Court shall apply, stating the reason therefor. Where applicable, the Rules of Court shall apply suppletorily to proceedings under these Rules.

Under the Rules, authority is given to Special Commercial Courts in Quezon City, Manila, Makati, and Pasig to act on applications for search and seizure warrants in actions for violations of the IPC which shall be enforceable nationwide. Any order under the new Rules shall be immediately executory, unless restrained by a superior court.
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 2011.

The SC Program on Awards and Incentives for Service Excellence (PRAISE) gave the following employees recognition for their service to the Court: Auralyn V. Veloso, Supervisory Level; Olivia S. A. Buhion, Non-Supervisory Level; Atty. Eduardo C. Tolentino, Professional Level; Vito R. Raquid, Commitment to Service Award; Romulo M. Abancio, Jr., Communications Excellence Award; Atty. Zenaida D. Perucho, Leadership Award; Benjamin T. Anonuevo, Joseph Arvin S. Cruz, and Atty. Jo-Ann Marie G. Nulud, Innovation Award; and Excelino S. Bautista, Kasipagan Award.

The Kasipagan Award was included pursuant to Administrative Circular No. 17-2011 dated March 4, 2011. This additional special award is intended for the employees in the lowest echelon of the organizational chart, who may have little chance against employees performing more intricate tasks.

There were also 29 Service Awards given to compulsory and optional retirees of the Court. The service award conferred on compulsory and optional retirees is composed of (1) 30,000 cash award; (2) memorabilia; and (3) a certificate of appreciation. The awardees were Teresita V. Nuevo, Silverio F. Benologa, Remedios L. Patricio, Veronica I. Anciano, Susana E. Agulto, Exequiel C. Rojas, Edmundo N. Moredo, Carmelito G. Sityar, Raquel S. Dimabuyu, Emilia L. Sityar, Hon. Antonio Eduardo B. Nachura, Hon. Conchita Carpio Morales, Danilo E. Songlingco, Aladin C. Paño, Gloria P. Kasilag, Senando G. Calapati, Rosita P. Jacinto, Jose D. Aquino, Cosme F. Corpuz, Elsa S. Agito, Gabriel P. Figuracion, Bernardo P. Cajandig, Florideliza S. Cruz, Evelyn C. Lim, Ma. Luisa L. Laurea, Reynaldo M. Arguelles, Pedro B. Jorolan, Jr., Mila T. Ballicud, and Buenaventura D. De Keyser.
In keeping with the Supreme Court’s mission for excellence in service, various court offices participated in the 2011 SC Christmas Outreach, in which court officials and employees distributed relief goods to the typhoon victims in various towns in Bulacan, and conducted fun activities for the children housed in charitable institutions. On December 2, 2011, the Public Information Office (PIO), Office of the Chief Justice (OCJ), Offices of the Associate Justices, Office of the Clerk of Court, Judicial Records Office, Printing Services, Mandatory Continuing Legal Education Office, Medical and Dental Services, and the Judicial and Bar Council conducted outreach activities in Sapang Bayan, Bulacan. On the same date, the Philippine Judicial Academy went to Frances, Bulacan; the Office of the Chief Attorney, Management and Information Systems Office, Office of the Bar Confidant, and the Office of the Reporter to Meyto, Bulacan; and the Fiscal Management and Budget Office to Panducot, Calumpit, Bulacan. On December 7, 2011, the Office of the Administrative Services and the Office of the Court Administrator went to the towns of San Miguel and Meyulsalo in Bulacan respectively. And on December 9, 2011, the Office of the Chief Justice cluster (composed of the OCJ, PIO, Project Management Office, Internal Audit Division, and the Financial Services Division) went to the Sisters of Mary Girlstown and Boystown in Silang, Cavite.

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 were 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.

The Personnel Development Committee (PDC) approved 53 requests for the availment of study leaves, local trainings and seminars, foreign scholarships, and foreign short-term trainings.

The Grievance Committee received two complaints for the year, and was able to resolve one of such complaints.

For the year 2011, the Committee on Gender Responsiveness in the Judiciary (CGRJ) was able to collate the following gender statistics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURT</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>Total Incumbent Judges</th>
<th>Total Number of Vacancies</th>
<th>Total Number of Judicial Positions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supreme Court</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court of Appeals</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>69</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sandiganbayan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court of Tax Appeals</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional Trial Court</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>765</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Trial Court</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Trial Court in Cities</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Trial Court</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>384</td>
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<tr>
<td>Municipal Circuit Trial Court</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>472</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shari’a District Court</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shari’a Circuit Court</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRAND TOTAL</td>
<td>621</td>
<td>1,080</td>
<td>1,701</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>2,301</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistical Reports Division, Court Management Office, Office of the Court Administrator
GENDER STATISTICS OF EMPLOYEES OF THE SUPREME COURT AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL

as of December 31, 2011

**SUPREME COURT:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Permanent</th>
<th>Coterminous</th>
<th>Temporary</th>
<th>Casual</th>
<th>Full Time</th>
<th>Part Time</th>
<th>Contractual</th>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>669</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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<td><strong>504</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
<td><strong>292</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
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</table>

**PRESIDENTIAL ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL:**

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<th></th>
<th>Permanent</th>
<th>Coterminous</th>
<th>Casual</th>
<th>Contractual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>64</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Office of Administrative Services, Supreme Court

GENDER STATISTICS OF MALE AND FEMALE PERSONNEL OF FIRST AND SECOND LEVEL COURTS

as of December 31, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURT</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>Total Incumbent Personnel</th>
<th>Total Number of Vacancies</th>
<th>Total Number of Personnel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional Trial Court</td>
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<td>4729</td>
<td>13292</td>
<td>1868</td>
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<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Trial Court</td>
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<tr>
<td>Municipal Trial Court in Cities</td>
<td>1568</td>
<td>1111</td>
<td>2679</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>3228</td>
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<tr>
<td>Municipal Trial Court</td>
<td>1721</td>
<td>973</td>
<td>2694</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>3052</td>
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<tr>
<td>Municipal Circuit Trial Court</td>
<td>2125</td>
<td>1248</td>
<td>3373</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>3738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shari’a District Court</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shari’a Circuit Court</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRAND TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>14716</td>
<td>8680</td>
<td>23396</td>
<td>3765</td>
<td>27161</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Office of Administrative Services, Office of the Court Administrator

SEX-DISAGGREGATED DATA FOR JUSTICES, JUDGES AND LAWYERS

For the Academic Year 2011

• with allowance for duplication of participants
• pax composed of incumbent and retired/resigned judges/lawyers.

**DATA FOR 2011**

Source: Philippine Judicial Academy
2011 Significant Fora, Conferences, Seminars, and Workshops

CHIEF JUSTICE RENATO C. CORONA
DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES,
January 13, 2011, SC New Session Hall, Manila

Titled Media and the Courts, the first of the Chief Justice Renato C. Corona Lecture Series, was given by Supreme Court of Guam Chief Justice Robert J. Torres Jr. on January 13 at the SC New Session Hall in Manila.

Guam Chief Justice Torres underscored the responsibility of court representatives, such as court spokespersons and media/community relations officers, “to reach out and interact with all aspects of the community to enhance and reinforce the public perception of and trust in the system of justice.” He gave general guidelines for media interviews and tips for crisis communication.

Guam Chief Justice Torres described the impact the social media revolution has had on judicial ethics and on the dissemination of court information. The public’s methods for accessing information have been transformed by the 24/7 internet and social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. He then cited the Florida Judicial Ethics Advisory Committee’s prohibition against judges adding lawyer who appear before them as “friends” in social networking sites. On the other hand, he mentioned how social networking can be used to enhance accessibility to court information, as in the case of the Tennessee court system which has 900 followers on Twitter.

Attending the lecture were Philippine Chief Justice Renato C. Corona, other jurists, law practitioners, and developmental aid partners. Participating in the proceedings through video-conferencing were judges in Cebu City and in Cagayan de Oro City.

The event was held under the auspices of the SC, the Philippine Judicial Academy (PHILJA), and the SC Program Management Office.
The Supreme Court played host to several high-ranking officials of all three branches of government and various development partners to discuss issues of common interest on the performance of the justice sector in the Justice Sector Coordinating Council First Meeting for 2011 on February 22, 2011 at the SC New Session Hall in Manila.

The Justice Sector Coordinating Council (JSCC) is composed of the SC, the Department of Justice and its attached agencies, the Department of Interior and Local Government and its attached agencies, such as the Philippine National Police and the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, and the Department of Budget and Management. The Council also serves as a mechanism for the effective coordination and sharing of information in the planning and implementation of shared initiatives towards better administration of justice.


The judges were oriented on, among other topics, basic first aid, and actual instructions on firearms and marksmanship through both lectures and marksmanship training.

Moreover, 47 judges from the first- and second-level courts from the 6th, 7th, and 8th Judicial Regions attended the Personal Security Training for Judges from August 15 to 18, 2011 at the Grand Regal Hotel, Bacolod City (August 16 to 17), and Camp Alfredo Montelibano Sr. Firing Range, Camingawin, Bacolod City (August 18), Negros Occidental; December 6 to 8, 2011, General Santos City; East Asia Royale Hotel, General Santos City (December 6 to 7); and Camp Fermin G. Lira, Jr. Firing Range, General Santos City (December 8).

On December 6 to 8, 2011, a total of 44 first- and second-level court judges from the 11th and 12th Judicial Regions were oriented on threats assessments, crime prevention, facts on firearms, and personal security
measures during the Personal Security Training for Judges in General Santos City. The training was held at the East Asia Royale Hotel, (December 6 to 7); and Camp Fermin G. Lira, Jr. Firing Range (December 8), both in General Santos City.

The Training, which gave the judges a clearer understanding of the basic precepts of safety and security precautions, was conducted by the SC through the PHILJA, and the SC-Committee on Security, and the Office of the Court Administrator, in coordination with the National Bureau of Investigation.

The Trainings are being conducted in accordance with the Memorandum of Agreement on Judicial Security between the SC and the National Bureau of Investigation signed in January 2008.

2011 FORUM FOR MEDIA ON JUDICIARY COVERAGE, March 30, 2011, Baguio Country Club, Baguio City

To “demystify” the SC and its procedures, the Public Information Office (PIO), with support from the Program Management Office, conducted the 2011 Forum for Media on Judiciary Coverage on March 30, 2011, at the Baguio Country Club in Baguio City.

The Forum was participated in by Manila-based print, radio, television, and online media personnel, who are members of the Justice and Court Reporters Association and of the Justice Reporters Organization.

Atty. Maria Victoria Gleoresty Sp. Guerra, Director IV and Assistant PIO Chief and editor-in-chief of the Benchmark, the official publication of the SC PIO, presented a summary and analysis of significant Court decisions and issuances on libel, contempt, and the right to privacy. Manila Bulletin senior reporter Reynaldo G. Panaligan, on behalf of Manila Bulletin Managing Director Fil C. Sionil, discussed the do’s and don’ts of court reporting. Mr. Panaligan added valuable personal inputs and insights anchored in his 34 years of experience in covering the justice and courts beat.

Philippine Judicial Academy Professor (PHILJA) retired Assistant Court Administrator Atty. Ismael G. Khan, Jr. gave a lecture on court-media relations issues, such as the lack of understanding of the judicial process and the use of legalese in court decisions. Atty. Khan is the first Chief of the PIO.

PIO Chief and Court Administrator Jose Midas P. Marquez spoke on the roles of the Court and its Justices, highlighting the procedural traditions involved in the appointment and in the discharge of functions of the 15-strong high tribunal.

INCREASING JUDICIAL EFFICIENCY: SEMINAR-WORKSHOP FOR JUDGES ON THE EFFECTIVE USE OF THE BENCHBOOK FOR PHILIPPINES TRIAL COURTS (REVISED AND EXPANDED), September 20, 2011, Traders Hotel, Pasay City; November 17, 2011, Traders Hotel, Pasay City; November 21, 2011, Garden Orchard Hotel, Zamboanga City; December 2, 2011, Leyte Park Hotel, Tacloban City; December 13, 2011, Marco Polo Plaza Cebu, Cebu City
The Increasing Judicial Efficiency: Seminar-Workshop For Judges On The Effective Use Of The Benchbook For Philippines Trial Courts (Revised And Expanded) was attended by a total of 391 first- and second-level judges.

Held in six batches, the Seminar-Workshop, aimed to help judges render decisions more speedily, expeditiously, and consistently. The first and second batches, for judges in the National Capital Judicial Region, were held on September 20, 2011, at the Traders Hotel in Pasay City. The third batch, for judges in the 10th, 11th, and 12th Judicial Region, was held on November 17 also at the Traders Hotel in Pasay City. The fourth batch, for judges in the 9th Judicial Region, was held on November 21, 2011, at the Garden Orchid Hotel, Zamboanga City; fifth batch, for judges in the 8th Judicial Region, on December 2, 2011, at the Leyte Park Hotel, Tacloban City; sixth batch, for judges in the 7th Judicial Region, on December 13, 2011, at the Marco Polo Plaza Cebu, Cebu City.

The Seminar-Workshop was held by the SC, through the PHILJA, with support from the Office of the Court Administrator, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the American Bar Association-Rule of Law Initiative.

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION ON COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE PHILIPPINES FOR SELECTED APPELLATE COURT JUSTICES (MANILA, CEBU, AND CAGAYAN DE ORO), September 22, 2011, Century Park Hotel, Manila

A total of 45 select participants attended the Roundtable Discussion On Combating Human Trafficking In The Philippines For Selected Appellate Court Justices (Manila, Cebu, and Cagayan De Oro) on September 22, 2011 at the Century Park Hotel in Manila.

The Discussion was led by PHILJA Chancellor Adolfo S. Azcuna, PHILJA Academic Affairs Office Chief Delilah Vidalion-Magtolis, and Court of Appeals Presiding justice Andres B. Reyes.

In his speech, United States Ambassador Harry K. Thomas Jr. reiterated the US government’s commitment of continued support for the efforts of the Philippine government to stop the evils of trafficking. He also lauded the Philippine courts for prioritizing and expediting human trafficking cases. He added that the prosecution of human traffickers is one part of the solution.

Organized by the PHILJA and the CA, in partnership with the US Department of Justice Criminal Division, through its OPDAT, the Discussion sought to address the problem areas in handling human trafficking cases, and to enhance the appellate court justices’ knowledge of the law and practices on human trafficking.

The Discussion is a follow-up activity of the series of Seminar-Workshops on Combating Human Trafficking in the Philippines, which was designed to improve the competencies of judges and prosecutors in handling human trafficking cases.

4TH HAGUE CONFERENCE ON PRIVATE INTERNATIONAL LAW ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL CONFERENCE (MANILA CONFERENCE), October 26 to 28, 2011, Mandarin Hotel, Makati City

Lauded for its “successful conduct” and “exceptional organization,” the 4th Hague Conference on Private International Law Asia-Pacific Regional Conference (Manila Conference) held on October 26 to 28, 2011 at the Mandarin Hotel bore fruits beyond expectations.

The approved Conclusions and Recommendations Chief Justice Diana Bryant of the Family Court of Australia presented to the plenary at the final day of the Manila Conference also welcomed the Philippines as the newest member of the Hague Conference in the Asia-Pacific Region. The Conclusions and Recommendations also included statements hailing the increase in the number of Asia-Pacific States that have become Contracting States to the Hague Conventions.

The Hague Conventions discussed during the Manila Conference include the Intercountry Adoption Convention, the Apostille (Abolition of Legalization) Convention, the Service Convention, the Evidence Convention, the International Child Protection Convention, the International Recovery of Child and Family Support Convention and Ongoing Work on Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Judgment, and the Access to Justice Convention.

The Manila Conference was held jointly by the Supreme Court and the PHILJA, the High Court’s education and training arm, in partnership with the Department of Foreign Affairs and the University of the Philippines College of Law. More than 230 international law experts, senior foreign affairs and justice officials, and members of the academe and non-governmental organizations from 26 countries participated in the Conference.

The Hague Conference on Private International Law is a global inter-governmental organization with 72 Members (71 States and the European Union) working for the progressive unification of private international rules.

WORKSHOP ON IMPLEMENTING THE INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR COURT EXCELLENCE, November 2 to 4, 2011, PHILJA Training Center, Tagaytay City

Chie Justice Robert J. Torres of the Supreme Court of Guam facilitated the Workshop on Implementing the International Framework for Court Excellence to at least
60 judges from the National Capital Judicial Region and the 4th Judicial Region on November 2 to 4, 2011 at the PHILJA Training Center in Tagaytay City. National Center for State Courts (NCSC) Vice President for Court Consulting Services Daniel J. Hall assisted Chief Justice Torres in the workshop.

The Workshop aims to enhance the capabilities of the Philippine courts by helping reduce court backlogs and overly complex procedures which detract from court quality and efficiency and aid in improving their performance. It also seeks to develop innovative ways for addressing issues, improving transparency and clarity, and enhancing access.

The Workshop is a project of the Supreme Court through the PHILJA, in partnership with the USAID and the NCSC.

2011 ANTI-ILLEGAL DRUGS FORUM, NOVEMBER 14, 2011, Philippine International Convention Center, CCP Complex, Pasay City

Sponsored by the Justice Sector Coordinating Council, which is led by the Supreme Court with the Department of Justice and the Department of Interior and Local Government, the 2011 Anti-Ilegal Drugs Forum was held at the Philippine International Convention Center, CCP Complex, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City.

The Forum aimed to identify the issues, problems, and gaps in the enforcement, trial, judgment, execution of penalty/corrections, and rehabilitation/prevention in handling illegal drugs cases. It also aimed to formulate strategies and action plans among key agencies as solutions to these problems. It also initiated commitments among the key agencies toward the implementation of the strategies and action plans.

Towards the end of the Forum, representatives from various concerned agencies signed the Multisectoral Declaration of the Justice Sector Agencies in Support of the Campaign Against Illegal Drugs. In the Declaration, they vowed to, among others, “continue to adopt a coordinated approach through the Member-Agencies of the JSCC in the campaign against illegal drugs.” Each sector also vowed “to fulfill its legal mandate in the government’s anti-crime and anti-illegal drugs efforts” and “to commit to extend any and all assistance possible to each other in the course of fulfilling their respective legal mandates as well as in the implementation of their respective Action Plans.”

1ST NATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE SUMMIT, December 5 to 11, 2011, Manila Hotel, Manila

Chief Justice Renato C. Corona, Justice Secretary Leila M. De Lima, and Interior Secretary Jesse M. Robredo inked their commitment to justice reform during the 1st National Criminal Justice Summit sponsored by the Justice Sector Coordinating Council held December 5 to 11, 2011 at the Manila Hotel in Manila.

All three, in the Declaration for Justice Reform, made a commitment to “work together, respecting the independence while acknowledging the interdependence of the three branches of the government and the constitutional bodies, in the pursuit of a just and peaceful society.”
2011 PROFESSORIAL CHAIR LECTURE, December 9, 2011, Court of Appeals, Manila

The 2011 Metrobank Foundation Professorial Chair Lecture, titled Legal Nuances to the Philippine Ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court was delivered by Professor Herrnino Harry L. Roque, Jr. on December 9, 2011 at the Court of Appeals Auditorium, Centennial Bldg., Court of Appeals in Manila.

Sponsored by the Metrobank Foundation, the Lecture was attended by officials of the Supreme Court and the Philippine Judicial Academy, Metrobank Foundation, judges.

VARIOUS CONVENTION-SEMINARS FOR JUDGES AND COURT PERSONNEL

Four convention-seminars for judges, attended by more than a thousand participants, were held in 2011: the 16th National Convention and Seminar of the Philippine Women Judges Association held on March 2 to 4 in Cebu City; the 13th Convention and Seminar of the Metropolitan and City Judges Association of the Philippines, September 13 to 15, held in Olongapo City; the National Convention and Election of Officers and Directors of the Philippine Judges’ Association held on October 12 to 14, in Makati City; and 18th National Convention-Seminar and Election of the Philippine Trial Judges’ League, November 17 to 19, Dumaguete City.

Not to be missed were five convention-seminars for court personnel: Convention and Seminar and Election of Officers of the Sheriff’s Confederation of the Philippines, April 5 to 7, Legazpi City; 8th National Convention and Election of Officers of the Process Servers Association of the Philippines, April 13 to 15, Davao City; 6th National Convention and Seminar of the Court Stenographers Association of the Philippines, May 18 to 20, Davao City; Convention and Seminar of the Court Librarians of the Philippines, Inc., May 25 to 27, Davaugete City; 10th National Convention and Seminar of the Regional Trial Court Clerks of Court Association of the Philippines, August 23 to 25, Cebu City.

OTHER SEMINAR-WORKSHOPS

The following core programs of the PHILJA, which benefitted almost a thousand attendees, were also conducted in 2011: Orientation Seminar-Workshop for Newly Appointed Judges, Orientation Seminar-Workshop for Newly Appointed Clerks of Court, Pre-Judicature Program, Career Enhancement Program for Clerks of Court, and Career Development Program for Court Legal Researchers.

OTHER SPECIAL FOCUS PROGRAMS

Thousands of stakeholders attended other special focus programs held by the Supreme Court, through the PHILJA: the ASEAN Awareness Program on Trafficking in Persons for Judges and Prosecutors, participated in by judges and prosecutors; Competency Enhancement Training for Family Court Judges and Personnel Handling Child Abuse Cases, attended by judges, clerks of court, legal researchers, interpreters, prosecutors and Public Attorneys Office (PAO) lawyers; Enhanced Justice on Wheels (EJOW): Information Dissemination Through a Dialogue Between Barangay and Court Officials, attended by barangay officials; Multi-Sectoral Seminar-Workshop on Public-Private Partnership, participated in by executive and vice-executive judges from the National Capital Judicial Region; representatives from the Bases Conversion Development Authority, Department of Finance, Department of Public Works and Highways, Energy Regulatory Board, Laguna Lake Development Authority, USAID, and Maritime Industry Authority; and Orientation Seminar-Workshop on Comparative Analysis Between the Family Code and the Code of Muslim Personal Laws, attended by judges, and representatives from the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, PAO, National Bureau of Investigation, Philippine National Police, Coast Guard, Philippine Navy, and Commission on Muslim Filipinos.

Other seminars conducted in 2011 include Seminar-Workshop on Agrarian Justice; Seminar-Workshop on CEDAW and Gender Sensitivity; Seminar Workshop on Combating Human Trafficking in the Philippines; Seminar-Workshop on Dangerous Drugs for Judges, Prosecutors and Law Enforcers; Seminar-Workshop on Land Valuation and Just Compensation for Special Agrarian Court Judges; Seminar-Workshop on the Rule of Procedure for Small Claims Cases; Training on the Small Claims Case Monitoring System; Workshop on Implementing the International Framework for Court Excellence; Seminar-Workshop on the Special Rules of Court on Alternative Dispute Resolution; Forum on the Philippine Membership to the Permanent Court Arbitration; and Seminar-Workshop on Public-Private Partnership.
2011 Significant Administrative Rulings

Emphasizing that “no position exacts a greater demand for moral righteousness and uprightness of an individual than a seat in the Judiciary,” the Supreme Court in 2011 continued to discipline erring members of the Bench and the Bar; as well as court personnel who violated the norms of public accountability or diminished the faith of the people in the Judiciary.

For failure to decide within the constitutionally required 90-day period, a judge of the Regional Trial Court (RTC), Banaue, Ifugao was found guilty of undue delay in the disposition of cases. She was fined ₱10,000, with a stern warning considering that this is her first infraction and that most of the cases involved were inherited cases. (AM No. RTJ-09-2188, Tilan v. Piscoso-Flor, January 10, 2011)

A court interpreter of the Municipal Trial Court in Tagkawayan, Quezon was fined ₱3,000 for simple neglect, for failing to make an accurate record of the minutes of the hearings in a civil case. The Court emphasized that “A court interpreter is duty-bound to prepare and sign the minutes of court sessions which is an important document, for it gives a brief summary of the events that take place therein including a statement of the date and time of the session; the name of the judge, clerk of court, court stenographer, and court interpreter who are present; the names of the counsel for the parties who appear; the parties presenting evidence; the names of the witnesses who testified; the documentary evidence marked; and the date of the next hearing.” (AM No. P-09-2696, Reyes v. Pabilane, January 12, 2011)

A clerk of court and a court stenographer of the Municipal Circuit Trial Court (MCTC), Ilog-Candoni, Negros Occidental were found guilty of gross neglect of duties for the irregularities in the administration of court funds, including failure to deposit court collections, unauthorized withdrawals from undeposited collections, improper recording of the court’s financial transactions, and shortages and the loss or misplacement of receipts. A fine of ₱5,000 each was imposed, after due restitution and considering that they have already retired from office. (AM No. P-06-2179, OCA v. Cuachon, January 12, 2011)

The Court found a retired judge and a clerk of court of the RTC, Urdaneta, Pangasinan individually and collectively guilty of mismanagement of case records which led to their branch’s inability to dispose of many pending matters. They were thus held liable for the less serious charge of violation of Supreme Court rules, directives, and circulars, and were ordered to pay fines of ₱20,000 and ₱8,000, respectively. Additionally, the judge was likewise found guilty of the less serious charge of simple misconduct for failure to investigate a bundy card incident reported by the judicial audit team, for which the judge was fined ₱12,000. (AM No. 08-4-253-RTC, In re: Report on the Judicial Audit Conducted in the Regional Trial Court, Branch 45, Urdaneta City, Pangasinan, and Report on the Incident at Branch 49, Same Court, January 12, 2011)

A clerk of court from the MCTC, San Fabian-San Jacinto, Pangasinan was found guilty of dishonesty and grave misconduct for failing to report and remit collections, in violation of OCA Circulars 50-95 and 26-97. Consequently, he was dismissed from the service, effective immediately, with all benefits forfeited and with prejudice to re-employment in the government service. (AM No. P-10-2799, OCA v. Dion, January 18, 2011)

For motu proprio reversing a final and executory order of another judge, a judge from RTC, Baguio City was dismissed for gross ignorance of the law. (AM No. RTJ-07-2062, Marcos v. Pamintuan, January 18, 2011)

A judge from the RTC, Koronadal City was dismissed from service for gross misconduct in violation of Canon 3 of the New Code of Judicial

• 2011 SIGNIFICANT ADMINISTRATIVE RULINGS •
Conduct for obtaining commodity loans from a party litigant in his court in the form of building materials for the construction of his house. The Court also found the judge in violation of Canon 1, Canon 2, and Canon 4 of the said Code, which respectively highlights the judge’s independence, promotes a judge’s integrity, and mandates a judge to observe and maintain proper decorum and its appearance in his public office, including impropriety in talking with litigants outside court proceedings, in absence of the opposing litigants and their counsel. (AM No. RTJ-09-2189, Sy v. Dinopol, January 18, 2011)

A sheriff from the RTC, Angeles City was found liable for grave misconduct and dismissed for his refusal to implement the writ of execution in a civil case, and for interposing obstacles in the enforcement of the writ on grounds not within the scope of his duty. In the same case, an OIC branch clerk of court and a clerk in charge of civil cases of RTC Binangonan, Rizal, were respectively imposed one year suspension without pay for conduct prejudicial to the service for, among others, the former’s delay in issuing the writ, which was, on its face, defective, including inaction of the latter in the delay of the release of the order granting a motion for execution. (AM No. P-03-1730, Judge Iturralde v. Ramirez, January 18, 2011)

A deputy sheriff of RTC, Makati City was dismissed for gross misconduct in negligently implementing a writ in a civil case because he was not given a 35% share in the collections from the writ’s implementation. Corollary to this, he was earlier found criminally liable for violation of RA 3019 in relation to the same case. (AM P-90-488, OCA v. Ramano, January 25, 2011)

For soliciting and receiving donations for a religious celebration from a private lawyer and a public prosecutor, a judge of the RTC, Catarman, Northern Samar was found guilty of impropriety and unbecoming conduct and was fined P10,000.00 with a warning that a repetition of the same or similar act shall be dealt with more severely. (AM No. RTJ-11-2270, Perfecto v. Desales-Esidera, January 31, 2011)

For her failure to immediately account for the excess in the cash bond she had received; issue appropriate receipts; safekeep monies received; and remit/deposit cash bonds in the government depository upon receipt, a Clerk of Court II of the Municipal Trial Court (MTC), Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija, was found guilty for dishonesty and grave misconduct. The Court emphasized that these infractions which deserve dismissal from service. (AM No. P-11-2887, OCA v. Angeles, AM No. P-10-2880, Judge Aldea-Arocena v. Angeles, January 18, 2011)

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Two court stenographers of the RTC, Guagua, Pampanga were dismissed from service for falsification of
A retired judge of the RTC, Panabo City was found guilty of undue delay in taking more than a year to resolve a motion for reconsideration, thus violating Rule 1.02, Canon 1 and Rule 3.05, Canon 3 of the Code of Judicial Conduct. He was fined P5,000, to be deducted from his retirement benefits. (AM No. RTJ-10-2220, Angelia v. Grageda, February 7, 2011)

For conducting a preliminary investigation of a criminal complaint when under AM No. 05-8-26-SC, amending Rules 112 and 114 of the Revised Rules on Criminal Procedure, MTC judges are clearly no longer authorized to conduct the same, and considering that this is his offense, a judge of the MTC, Bocao, Bulacan was found guilty of gross ignorance of the law and was suspended for six months without salary and other benefits, with a stern warning that a repetition of the same or similar acts will warrant a more severe penalty. (AM No. P-09-2677, Lim v. Aromin, March 9, 2011)

A sheriff of the RTC, Butuan City was found liable for gross misconduct, dishonesty, and neglect of duty; and was suspended for six months for failure to execute a writ of execution, as well as causing the lifting of the notices of garnishment earlier served upon the judgment obligors despite the absence of any court directive for the purpose from the court. (AM No. P-11-2914, Dy Teban Trading Co., Inc. v. Verga, March 16, 2011)

A lawyer was disbarred for gross misconduct and willful disobedience of the Court’s orders after it was found that she continued to practice law despite a five-year suspension order, and even misrepresented herself to be another person to evade said penalty, and for failure to comply with the Court’s resolutions. (AC No. 8253, Tarog v. Ricafort, March 15, 2011)

For continued performance of his judicial functions and receipt of his salaries as judge after having already filed a certificate of candidacy in the May 1998 elections, a judge of 10th Shari’a Circuit Court SCC, Tamparan, Lanao del Sur was found guilty of gross misconduct and dishonesty, and was accordingly dismissed with forfeiture of all benefits as well as barred from re-employment in the government. He was likewise ordered to refund the salaries, allowances, and other benefits he received from March 26, 1998 to November 30, 1998, without prejudice to appropriate criminal and civil cases that may be filed against him. (AM No. SCC-98-4, Alauya v. Limbona, March 22, 2011)

A court stenographer of the RTC, Malolos City, Bulacan was suspended from service for six
months without pay for having been found guilty of immorality in carrying out an illicit relationship with a sheriff in the same city. For having been declared AWOL, however, the said sheriff was held beyond the jurisdiction of the Court. (AM No. P-09-2651, Gibas, Jr. v. Gibas, March 23, 2011)

For gross negligence of duty for transmitting court records two years from the order directing the transmittal of the same to the Court of Appeals, Cagayan de Oro in one case, and after six years in another, a branch clerk of court of RTC, Davao City was found guilty of gross negligence of duty and was fined P20,000 with a warning that a repetition of the same or similar act shall be dealt with more severely. (AM No. P-10-2791, Fuentes v. Fabro, April 6, 2011)

“A court personnel is prohibited from disclosing confidential information to any unauthorized person,” reminded the Court after finding a legal researcher of RTC, Borongan, Eastern Samar guilty of simple misconduct for informing a movant of his submission of the draft resolution of a motion to dismiss to the judge, which is violative of the confidentiality required under Section 1, Canon II of the New Code of Judicial Conduct for Court Personnel. In view of his retirement, said legal researcher was fined P20,000 to be deducted from his retirement benefits. (AM No. P-11-2919, Tan v. Quitorio, May 31, 2011)

A branch clerk of court and court clerk were suspended for three months and a month and a day, respectively, for simple misconduct. The branch clerk of court was found to have asked for a commissioner’s fee, while the branch clerk of court was found to have not faithfully accomplished her daily time record. The branch clerk of court was likewise found guilty of simple neglect of duty for losing the attendance logbook of the court. (AM No. P-05-1970, An Anonymous Complaint Against Atty. Portia Diesta, Branch Clerk Of Court, Regional Trial Court, Branch 263, Pasig City and Luz Santos-Tacla, Clerk III, Same Court, May 30, 2011)

For prolonged delay in the service of a copy of a warrant of arrest in a criminal case to the police authorities resulting in the failure to arrest the accused, a court clerk of the RTC, Morong, Rizal was declared liable for conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the service and was suspended for one year without pay, with warning that a similar offense in the future shall be dealt with more severely. (AM No. P-10-2794, Sonido v. Ilocso, June 1, 2011)

A sheriff of the RTC, Sorsogon City was suspended for six months without pay for gross misconduct for (1) failure to make a sheriff’s return of the writ of execution within the period provided by the Rules of Court; and (2) failure to turn over the checks amounting to P118,000 which he had received by virtue of the implementation of the writ; and worse, encashing one of the checks for P60,000, without having been authorized to do so. (AM No. P-09-2715, OCA v. Tolosa, June 13, 2011)

A lawyer who was a former member of the legal staff of a retired justice was suspended from the practice of law for six months for taking the rollo of a case involving himself outside court premises through misrepresentation and abuse of position and without the court’s consent; and returning the same only upon discovery after almost 12 years. (AC No. 6683, Re: Resolution of the Court Dated 1 June 2004 in GR No. 72954 Against Atty. Victor C. Avecilla, June 21, 2011)

A sheriff who accepted money from litigants without prior court approval as well as failed to make a timely report on the status of the execution of judgment in favor of the litigants was dismissed from service. The Court upheld the finding of the Office of the Court Administrator that the sheriff had demanded from a party P5,000 to defray his
expenses in the implementation of the writ of execution in that party’s favor; and after a few months, demanded another P2,000, allegedly to defray his gasoline expenses. (AM No. P-11-2896, Anico v. Pilipña, August 2, 2011)

The High Court found three employees of the MTC of Santiago City, Isabela liable for misconduct for illegally tape-recording a conversation with a counsel and his client regarding the receipt by their co-employee of money for safekeeping, and thereafter filing a complaint for alleged illegal deposit against said co-employee before the Court. The Court stressed that “[m]aking false accusations and sowing intrigues are acts unbecoming of a public servant. They run against the principles of public service envisioned by the 1987 Constitution and by the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials & Employees (RA 6713).” (AM No. P-04-1771, Capuchino v. Apolonio, September 5, 2011)

The Court revoked a lawyer’s notarial commission, indefinitely suspended his reappointment as a notary public, and suspended him from the practice of law for one year, but only for humanitarian reasons, for violation of the Notarial Law, the 2004 Rules on Notarial Practice, and the Code of Professional Responsibility after he was found to have notarized documents “either without the presence of the affiants or with their forged signatures.” The Court held that it is no excuse that the said lawyer was an octogenarian and insulin dependent: “[T]he respondent’s age and sickness cannot be cited as reasons to disregard the serious lapses he committed in the performance of his duties as a lawyer and as a notary public.” (AC No. 6689, Gemina v. Madamba, August 24, 2011)

For failing to file his Statement of Assets and Liabilities, and Net Worth for the years 2004 to 2008, a judge of the of the Shari’a Circuit Court, Pagadian City was ordered to pay a fine of P2,000, allegedly to defray his gasoline expenses. (AM No. P-11-2896, Anico v. Pilipña, August 2, 2011)

A Sarangani RTC judge who had granted bail to the accused in a murder case without first conducting a hearing was fined P20,000 for gross ignorance of the law and the Rules of Court. The Court found no merit in the judge’s contention that a bail hearing was not necessary because the accused did not file an application for bail and because the public prosecutor had recommended bail. It reiterated that a bail hearing was mandatory, whether bail is a matter of right or discretion. (AM No. RTJ-04-1845, Gacal v. Infante, October 5, 2011)

A lawyer was suspended from the practice of law for one year for violating Rule 11.03, Canon 11 of the Code of Professional Responsibility. The Court found the acts of the said lawyer - shouting at the judge during court proceedings, threatening him “Judge, I will file gross ignorance against you! I am not afraid of you;” challenging the judge to fight, and, after being cited for contempt, even returning to the courtroom and disrupting the ongoing proceedings - were not only against the person, the position, and the stature of the judge, “but against the court as well whose proceedings were openly and flagrantly disrupted, and brought to disrepute by the respondent.” (AC No. 8920, Baculi v. Battung, September 28, 2011)

For obtaining money from a client without rendering proper legal services and appropriating for herself the insurance proceeds of the client’s husband, a lawyer was meted the ultimate administrative penalty of disbarment for gross misconduct. She was also ordered to turn over to the complainant the proceeds of her deceased husband’s insurance policies remitted to the former by two insurance companies in London, United Kingdom, which was approximately equivalent to P700,000. (AC No. 6246, Freeman v. Reyes, November 15, 2011)

The Court disbarred a former judge who had previously been dismissed from service in 2000 for entertaining a Petition for Declaratory Relief despite his being a judge of a first-level court. “Displaying an utter lack of familiarity with the rules, he in effect erodes the public’s confidence in the competence of our courts. Moreover, he demonstrates his ignorance of the power and responsibility that attach to the processes and issuances of a judge, and that he as a member of the bar should know,” the Court stressed. (AC No. 5355, OCA v. Liangco, December 13, 2011)

For having incurred a total of 61 counts of tardiness from July 2010 to October 2010, a Clerk of Court V from the Lucena City RTC was found administratively liable for habitual tardiness and was reprimanded by the High Court. “Such administrative offense seriously compromises work efficiency and hampers public service. By being habitually tardy, he has fallen short of the stringent standard of conduct demanded from everyone connected with the administration of justice,” emphasized the Court. (AM No. P-11-2945, Leave Division, OAS-OCA v. Pua, Jr., July 13, 2011)

“Any errant behaviour on the part of a lawyer, be it in his public or private activities, which tends to show him deficient in moral character, honesty, probity or good demeanor, is sufficient to warrant his suspension or disbarment.” Thus said the Court as it ordered the disbarment of a lawyer who had admitted his illicit relationship with a woman married to his client. (AC No. 4428, Tiong v. Florendo, December 12, 2011)

A judge in a Cotabato City court was found guilty of gross misconduct for committing violations
of the Code of Judicial Conduct and was fined P25,000, while his branch clerk of court was found guilty of neglect of duty and was suspended for two months. The Court found that the judge failed to exert due diligence required of him to ascertain the facts of a case before granting an ex parte petition for the issuance of a writ of possession to revive a case which had already been nullified and set aside by the Court of Appeals. On the other hand, the Court found that the clerk of court was remiss in his duty to inform the respondent judge of the existence of the Court of Appeals and Supreme Court decisions which have nullified and set aside the case in question. (AM No. RTJ-07-2069, Espina and Madarang, Co. & Makar Agricultural and Dev’t. Corp. v. Indar and Amilil, December 14, 2011)

A Kabacan, North Cotabato RTC clerk of court was dismissed from service and was ordered to restitute the amount of P1,747,715.02 representing shortages in judiciary funds. The Supreme Court found that a number of accountable documents under the responsibility of the clerk of court (such as official receipts, deposit and withdrawal slips, cashbooks, and passbooks) were missing. (AM No. P-05-2082, OCA v. Marasigan, December 12, 2011)

"In the judiciary, 'moral integrity is more than a virtue; it is a necessity.' A court employee who has fallen short of the exacting standards of morality and decency has to face the consequences, even after the embers have died and the scars have faded.” This was highlighted by the Court in imposing a fine of P50,000 on a Quezon City RTC Interpreter III who maintained an illicit relationship with a married man. (AM No. P-11-3011, Banaag v. Espeleta, December 16, 2011)

Suspension from the practice of law for six months was the penalty imposed by the Supreme Court on a lawyer who had assisted his paralegal, who was not member of the Philippine Bar, in the latter’s illegal practice of law by allowing her to sign the minutes of the court proceedings of a civil case. (AC No. 7269, Noe-Lacsamana v. Busmente, November 23, 2011)

A clerk of court from the Liloan, Southern Leyte Municipal Trial Court who used the letterhead of the court and of her official designation in eight demand letters she prepared for private entities, acting as “counsel” and collecting agent was found guilty of misconduct and was dismissed from service. (AM No. P-11-3000, Gabon v. Merka, December 14, 2011)

Data on Administrative Complaints

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### LOWER COURT JUDGES

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<tr>
<td>Warned</td>
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<td>Court Personnel</td>
<td>RTC, MeTC, MTCC, MTC, &amp; MCTC</td>
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<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cases Filed</td>
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<td>Complaint Dismissed</td>
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**PENALTY / ACTION**

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<th>Action</th>
<th>SDC Personnel</th>
<th>SCC Personnel</th>
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<tr>
<td>Admonished</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benefits Forfeited</td>
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<td>Dismissed from Service</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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**Source:** Office of the Bar Confidant

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

| Source: Docket and Clearance Division; Legal Office, OCA; and the Complaints and Investigation Division, OAS

**LAWYERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Penalty / Action</th>
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<tr>
<td>Disbarred</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suspended from Practice of Law</td>
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<td>Suspended Notarial Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suspended from Practice Law and Suspended Notarial Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reprimanded</td>
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<td>Admonished</td>
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<td>Fined</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fined and Admonished</td>
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<td>Fined and Warned</td>
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<td>Fined and Sternly Warned</td>
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<td>Ordered Arrested/Detained</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>144</strong></td>
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</table>

**Source:** Office of the Bar Confidant

**Note:** Admonition and Warning are not penalties.
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 (ADCOM)
Upon assumption of duty, each employee receives Personal Economic Relief Assistance of ₱500, and Additional Compensation of ₱1,500 per month. In accordance to the Department of Budget Management’s Budget Circular No. 2009-3, the PERA and ADCOM have been combined as PERA in the amount of ₱2,000.

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. The rates of the additional cost of living allowance are based on salary brackets, so that those with a basic monthly salary of ₱14,000 or less are given the biggest share, next are those receiving more than ₱14,000 to ₱21,000, and those receiving more than ₱21,000, the least 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.

For 2011, the total collections of the JDF as of December 31 amounted to ₱992,865,700.89. The Court also had the beginning balance of ₱1,046,685,618.11 in the JDF as of January 1, 2011. The total disbursements of the JDF in 2011 amounted to ₱867,449,097.97.

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 the equivalent rank of a Court of Appeals justice or Regional Trial Court judge. 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.

For 2011, the Court was able to collect the total amount of ₱1,120,444,539.01 funding for the SAJ as of December 31. On top of this figure, the Court also had a beginning balance in January 2011, the amount of ₱564,363,870.67. The total disbursement of the SAJ fund in 2011 was ₱1,522,696,023.60.

LONGEVITY PAY
Pursuant to Section 42, BP 129, justices, judges, and employees of similar rank are granted longevity pay equivalent to five percent of their monthly basic pay, for every five years of continuous and commendable service rendered in the Judiciary, provided, that the total salary of each justice or judge concerned, after this longevity pay is added, does not exceed the salary of the justice or judge next in rank.

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.

PRODUCTIVITY ENHANCEMENT INCENTIVE
This benefit is granted to members and personnel of the Judiciary, in recognition of the commendable performance and contribution of its workforce in achieving efficiency in the operations of the courts.

FRINGE BENEFITS
Fringe benefits in the form of rice subsidy allowance, grocery expense, and emergency economic allowance are
granted to employees to alleviate them from their present economic condition arising from the prevailing economic crisis in the country. The fringe benefit in the form of anniversary bonus is given to officials and personnel of the High Court and the appellate courts, on the occasion of the founding anniversary of the Supreme Court, chargeable against the respective savings from the regular appropriations of the courts.

YEAR-END BENEFITS 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 P5,000, as provided under RA 6686, as amended by RA 8441. 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. Employees may avail one half (1/2) of the amount, as an interest free loan during midyear, pursuant to the General Provisions of the General Appropriations Act of Fiscal Year 2011 or RA 10147.

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 continuous and satisfactory service in the government and every five years thereafter. The award, given in cash, shall be in accordance with the allowable rates at the time of the grant. In addition, a token of appreciation shall be given to the qualified employees.

For purposes of granting the loyalty award, services rendered in other government agencies prior to January 1, 2002 shall be not considered. Likewise, an official or employee who earned a total of not more than 50 days authorized vacation leave without pay within the ten-year period shall be considered as having rendered continuous service, for the grant of the loyalty award.

SPECIAL BENEFITS OF EMPLOYEES OF THE SC MEDICAL SERVICES AS PUBLIC HEALTH WORKERS
The Court’s Health Workers may avail of the benefits provided under the Magna Carta of Public Health Workers, subject to the requirements or conditions set forth therein.

Additionally, three (3) months prior to their compulsory retirement at age 65, they are entitled to an automatic grant of one (1) salary range or grade higher than the basic salary, and the retirement benefits shall be computed on the basis of the upgraded salary, provided that they have fulfilled the age and service requirements under existing laws.

SHUTTLE BUS SERVICE (FOR SC EMPLOYEES)
To extend additional economic benefits to Supreme 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 23,242 various medical services in 2011, of which 15,630 were medical consultations/treatment, 2,763 were dental consultations/treatment, 1,207 were laboratory services, and 2,872 were physical therapy.
Five hundred seventy-six underwent psychological testing, and 68 subjects had neuropsychiatric evaluations made for pre-employment purposes, disability retirement and diagnostic purposes. The SC Clinic also conducted 126 pre-employment physical examinations.

Of the 16 ailments commonly encountered at the SC Clinic, respiratory tract infections and cardiovascular complaints were the most common cause of consultation, with 3,783 cases and 3,659 cases, respectively. These were followed by endocrine/metabolic ailments comprising 3,349 reported cases. Other common ailments experienced by the employees were musculoskeletal, gastrointestinal, dermatological, neurologic, and urogenital/renal, and ophthalmologic in nature.

In addition, the SC Clinic conducted a total of 2,763 various dental services last year, of which 675 were gingivitis/gum treatment, 574 were permanent filling, 389 were oral prophylaxis, and 315 were simple extraction.

The Clinic staff attended to 270 post-operative cases, 200 procedural cases, 204 cases of temporary tooth filling, 97 cases of oral consultations, and one difficult extraction.

Out of the 213 requests received by the SC Clinic, 108 were evaluated for 

**SC HEALTHCARE SERVICES AGREEMENT**

In addition to its local healthcare services made available through the SC Medical and Dental Services, the Supreme Court since 2009, has entered into annual healthcare services agreements with healthcare providers. Under its Healthcare Services Project, the 15 Supreme Court justices, and all other officials and employees, regardless of status of appointment, are covered by the health care program, as long as they are in the service as of the date of the contract’s effectivity. The healthcare services and benefits under the Project include out-patient services, preventive services, emergency care services, hospitalization/in-patient services, dental care services, and annual physical examination.

**SUPREME COURT MOTORCYCLE, COMPUTER AND HANDGUN ACQUISITION PROGRAM (SC-MCHAP)**

The Court offers interest-free loans for the acquisition of motorcycle, computer and handgun under the Supreme Court Motorcycle, Computer, and Handgun Acquisition Program (SC-MCHAP). These loans are charged against the 20 percent of the JDF where the said portion of the Fund shall be used for office equipment and facilities of the Courts located where the legal fees are collected.

**A. Motorcycle Acquisition Program (MAP)**

grants a loan of P50,000.00 which can be paid initially in installment of three years pursuant to the Resolution of the Court En Banc No. A.M. 99-8-12 SC dated October 19, 1999, however the installment payment terms was extended to five years through OCA Circular No. 15-2002 dated June 7, 2002.

As provided under the En Banc Resolution on MAP, the loan applicant shall have the option to choose the mode of payment he wants – either through salary deduction or his share in the JDF.

**B. Computer Acquisition Program (CAP) 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. Pursuant to the Resolution of the Court En Banc in A.M. No. 05-09-18 SC dated September 20, 2005, the CAP offers a loan of P36,000.00, which can be paid with a monthly deduction of P1,000.00 from the monthly JDF allowance.
The CAP for other qualified court employees grants a loan for a maximum amount of ₱30,000.00 with a payment term of 30 monthly installments pursuant to Court En Banc Resolution A.M. No. 05-5-17 SC dated June 7, 2005, as amended by the En Banc Resolution of the Court dated June 20, 2006. Loans not exceeding ₱24,000.00 shall be paid in 24 equal monthly installments.

C. Handgun Acquisition Program (HAP) offers loan to judges in an amount not exceeding ₱50,000.00 which is payable in 36 monthly installments, pursuant to Court En Banc Resolution A.M. No. 08-3-13 –SC dated September 30, 2008.

PERMISSION TO TEACH
In accordance to En Banc Resolution dated June 3, 1974 and Circular No. 62-97 dated October 19, 1997 of the Office of the Court Administrator, all judges and personnel of the courts may be allowed to teach, subject to the rules and regulations specified therein.

GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE SYSTEM (GSIS) BENEFITS
All employees who have not reached the compulsory retirement age, regardless of employment status, are required to avail the membership in the GSIS, to be covered with life insurance upon entrance to duty.

PAG-IBIG FUND BENEFITS
Membership in the PAG-IBIG Fund is compulsory upon all employees covered by the GSIS, irrespective of their employment status, and their employers. Members can avail of benefits such as dividends, return of contributions, portability of membership, optional withdrawal of contributions, housing features, death benefits, and various short-term loans and other benefits programs.

PHILHEALTH BENEFITS
Employees with PhilHealth ID card can benefit from quality and affordable healthcare services through PhilHealth’s administration of the National Health Insurance Program.

EMPLOYEES’ COMPENSATION AND STATE INSURANCE FUND BENEFITS
Created under PD No. 626 which took effect on January 1, 1975, the Employees’ Compensation benefits or disability benefits comes as a compensation package for both public and private sector employees and their dependents in the event of work-related injury, sickness, disability or death. The employee is not obliged to contribute any amount to the program as it is a purely employer-based contribution benefit. The GSIS administers the program for the public sector, and the Social Security System for the private sector.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS
Retirement benefits of justices, judges and officials with judicial rank are governed by RA 910, as amended by RA 9946, while RA 660, RA 1616, and RA 8291 amending PD 1146 are laws governing the retirement of employees. Revised Administrative Circular No. 81-2010 laid out the guidelines on the implementation of RA 9946.
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.