

# IN RE NFALA GALA

NOVEMBER 2020



NFALA'S QUARTERLY  
PUBLICATION

VOL. 1 ISSUE 1



NFALA



# THE NEXT LEAP FORWARD

THIS IS "IN RE," NFALA'S NEW QUARTERLY PUBLICATION. EACH ISSUE WILL HAVE A UNIQUE FOCUS AND HIGHLIGHT THE LATEST NFALA NEWS. BEGINNING WITH THE NEXT ISSUE, WE WILL ALSO BE PUBLISHING SUBSTANTIVE LEGAL CONTENT FROM SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS IN THE FIELD. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE A CONTRIBUTOR OR HAVE SOMETHING YOU'D LIKE TO PUBLISH, PLEASE EMAIL [COMMUNICATIONS@NFALA.COM](mailto:COMMUNICATIONS@NFALA.COM).

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IN RE  
NFALA  
GALA



Greetings, NFALA family!

I hope everyone has recovered from the NFALA@NAPABA festivities and the NAPABA Convention earlier this month. NFALA finished the outgoing year with several NAPABA accolades. The Filipino Bar Association of Northern California (FBANC) was named the 2020 NAPABA Affiliate of the Year, while four NFALA members were named to NAPABA's Best Under 40: Rotsen "Chinny" Law, Abigail Rivamonte Mesa, Philip Nulud, and Judge Rizza O'Conner. A huge thanks and congratulations also goes to Phil and the outgoing 2019-2020 NFALA board for a successful year in navigating the organization through a difficult and unexpected transition from an in-person to virtual platform.

NFALA's first ever virtual gala had a strong premiere on November 5th which drew viewers from around the country and back home in the Philippines. The virtual gala also set records in terms of gala sponsorship fundraising and obtaining its first ever \$10,000 Benefactor sponsor with Ogletree Deakins and Vince Verde. If you have not had a chance to watch the NFALA virtual gala, it is still available for viewing through the month of November at [www.nfalagala.com](http://www.nfalagala.com). Several affiliate leaders are featured, and you might even see your name in the list of NFALA lifetime direct members! During November, bonus footage will be released on the site, so keep checking back!

As we head into the holiday season, NFALA has so much to be thankful for even during this pandemic. While it will never take the place of laughing together, sharing a meal, or singing karaoke in person, we NFALA members have adapted to seeing each other through laptops and cellphone cameras. While we hopefully only have to continue with this way of life for a little bit longer and remain encouraged that a vaccine will come sooner rather than later, we as NFALA will continue to evolve in our endeavor to keep our members, affiliates, and the Filipino-American legal community connected as best we can.

I am excited for this coming year in NFALA. We will be working on coalition building, not only with other bar organizations, but with organizations in the legal community and beyond. NFALA has numerous initiatives and projects planned, and I encourage all of you to take part. While much of the heavy lifting will be spearheaded by the 2020-2021 NFALA officers, regional governors, and at-large board members, NFALA will only get stronger if everyone helps and becomes involved as a true family does.

NFALA is an organization for everyone from law students to veteran attorneys, and we welcome anyone who wants to take a more active role in making NFALA an innovative and forward-thinking organization. This year will be one for the books, and I hope you are excited, enthusiastic, and ready to take the next leap forward in NFALA's trajectory.

Now the real work begins. And we can do this together as one #NFALAFamily.

Kristy Gonowon  
President, 2020-2021

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[W]e welcome anyone who wants to take a more active role in making NFALA an innovative and forward-thinking organization.



PATRICK J. BUMATAY



United States Circuit Judge of the  
United States Court of Appeals for the  
Ninth Circuit



# ***2020-2021 EXECUTIVE OFFICERS***

**President | KRISTY GONOWON**

**President-Elect | JERI GONZALES ABRAMS**

**Vice-President for Programs & Operations | LORNA GARCIA DE GUZMAN**

**Vice-President for Membership | ELAINE PASCUA**

**Vice-President for Communications | DENNIS PANGINDIAN**

**Treasurer | CATHERINE ASUNCION**

**Secretary | BRYAN RAMOS**

**Immediate Past President | PHILIP NULUD**



## CATHERINE ASUNCION, TREASURER



Catherine Asuncion is serving her second term as Treasurer of NFALA. She was introduced to NFALA through an inaugural affiliate, the Filipino American Lawyers of San Diego. Catherine is a Past-President of FALSD, and she also served as Treasurer and Direct-at-Large.

Catherine is an Associate Attorney at Haight Brown & Bonesteel LLP, where she is a member of the Appellate, General Liability, Product Liability and Transportation Law Practice Groups.

In her spare time, Catherine enjoys running with her rescue dog 'Ilio (which means dog in Hawaiian), learning how to play tennis, and playing soccer (pre-COVID).

## BRYAN RAMOS, SECRETARY

Bryan Ramos is the managing attorney at the Ramos Law Firm, a boutique workers' compensation firm which he founded in 2005 in Atlanta, Georgia. Mr. Ramos is recognized by Martindale-Hubbell as being an AV Preeminent lawyer. In 2020, he earned the designation of being one of the Top 100 Georgia Lawyers by Super Lawyers Magazine; selected as a Fellow of the College of Workers' Compensation Lawyers and appointed to the Georgia Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights. Mr. Ramos serves on the National Board of the Filipino Veterans Recognition and Education Project. He also currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Atlanta Affiliate of Asians Americans Advancing Justice and the Board of Trustees of the Georgia Council on Substance Abuse.



## PHILIP NULUD, IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT



Phil is an attorney at Buchalter and an expert in intellectual property law. His practice focuses on counseling clients in all aspects of intellectual property.

Phil also serves on the Board of Governors for the Loyola Law School Alumni Association and is one of two APA members of that board. Phil is also a founding board member of Cal-APABA, where he has previously served as Treasurer.

Phil is a native Angelino and races cars in his spare time--he actually holds a Guinness World Record for such.



## JERI GONZALES ABRAMS, PRESIDENT-ELECT



Jeri Gonzales Abrams is one of the Managing Partners for her family's mid-size, full-service Immigration law firm, Gonzales, Gonzales & Gonzales Immigration Law Offices. NAPABA selected Jeri's Firm as the 2018 APA-Owned Law Firm of the Year. Jeri's father, Jeffrey, began as a solo practitioner over 35 years ago. Her older brother, JJ, joined their father's practice in 2009. Jeri joined the practice in 2012; and since then, the Firm has grown to 15 attorneys, with offices in Portland, OR and Seattle, WA. Jeri is a Founding Member, Past-President, and current Board Member of FLOW. She is the current President-Elect, Past-VP of Programs & Operations, Past-At-Large Board Member, Past-VP of Membership, Past-Co-Chair of & Presenter at the 2018 NFALA Mid-Year, Past-Secretary, Past-Regional Governor, and Founding Sponsor/Member for NFALA. In her spare time, Jeri enjoys spending time with her family (even though she works for the family business), particularly with her husband and their 5 and 3 year old sons.

## VISION AND GOALS

I am honored to be NFALA's President-Elect for the 2020-2021 Board of Governors. I look forward to continue focusing on how NFALA can best serve and support its members and its current and future affiliates. It is also particularly important for NFALA to continue keeping its members connected and engaged as we are still navigating this unprecedented reality of COVID-19.

As President-Elect, I plan to work closely with President Kristy Gonowon on supporting and assisting with implementation of strategic goals. I also plan to support and assist my fellow Executive Officers and Board Members on the projects and goals they are focusing on. I look forward to helping to represent NFALA at affiliate and/or other professional events, and engaging with supporters of NFALA.

More specifically, I plan to focus on operational goals of NFALA this year. As NFALA continues growing, I plan to focus on helping to formalize various NFALA processes and procedures to help with smoother transitions and growth going forward. I also look forward to continuing the momentum of an extremely successful 2020 NFALA Gala, as we already look ahead to the 2021 NFALA Gala. We hope that we will be able to have an in-person Gala in November 2021; but if it's safer to have a virtual Gala again, we appreciate the solid and impressive foundation that the 2020 Board established for virtual programming.

One of the things I am most proud of, and that I believe I help foster, is that NFALA feels like a family. It is not an organization people join to simply put on their résumé. Rather, it is an organization that you are more than willing to dedicate your time to because it is an opportunity to participate in meaningful activities, events, and discussions, while spending time with your NFALA family. I look forward to NFALA growing and flourishing, and to the opportunity to continue serving NFALA in the capacity of President-Elect during this 2020-2021 administration.



## LORNA GARCIA DE GUZMAN, VP FOR PROGRAMS & OPERATIONS



Lorna Garcia de Guzman is a founding partner for Garcia & Sahni, specializing in creating estate plans for our clients. Graduating Magna Cum Laude, Lorna received dual bachelor degrees in Political Science and Business Administration, with triple concentrations in Management, Finance and Economics from Notre Dame de Namur University. She was also awarded the Presidential Scholar award. She received her Juris Doctorate from Golden Gate University.

Lorna has three children, with whom she and her husband love to travel and try different foods!

“ I BELIEVE THAT OUR INTERACTION WITH OUR AFFINITY NETWORKS, COMMITTEES, VOLUNTEERS AND MEMBERS WILL BE INTEGRAL TO NFALA’S CONTINUED SUCCESS.

## VISION AND GOALS

Hello NFALA Family. My name is Lorna Garcia de Guzman, and I am honored to have been elected as your 2020-2021 Vice President of Programming and Operations.

In my role as VP of P&O, I believe that our interaction with our affinity networks, committees, volunteers and members will be integral to NFALA’s continued success. At the most basic level, I will be working with our affinity network heads to coordinate all NFALA programming and activities, to ensure properly managed and executed events. In order to be successful during my term in office, I first intend to identify the core objectives and goals for each affinity network for the coming year. In my role as VP, I also hope to serve to improve and enhance the membership experience by supporting all other areas of operations. This includes providing opportunity for learning, philanthropy, and building of strong relationships through our diverse events coordinated with our affinity networks. I also intend to build partnerships and develop learning and philanthropic programs with other FilAm organizations. If you effectively execute the above key responsibilities, I hope to continue to allow NFALA to continue its upward growth, both in terms of operational excellence as well as in making a strong positive impact on FilAm legal and local communities.



## ELAINE PASCUA, VP FOR MEMBERSHIP



Elaine Edralin Pascua is Director and Assistant General Counsel at TrueBlue, Inc. a leading provider of specialized workforce solutions. Prior to joining TrueBlue, Elaine was a trial attorney for Zurich North America where her winning trial record gained her the nickname of “the Jury Whisperer.” Elaine is currently on the Executive Committee of the Washington State Bar Association’s Corporate Counsel Section, founding/emeritus board member & past President of the Filipino Lawyers of Washington (FLOW), Scholarship Chair for FLOW Foundation, and the Northwest Regional Governor for NAPABA.

Elaine enjoys traveling with her husband Ernest and son Emmanuel. Especially, when it comes to enjoying food! She is also proud of being a shameless baseball, basketball and soccer mom as it has afforded her the opportunity to not let go of her high school/collegiate cheerleading past.

## VISION AND GOALS

As the VP of Membership for NFALA, I have specific goals that I would like to accomplish to contribute to the continued growth and success of our organization:

**Identify the needs of our affiliate members and track progress.** NFALA affiliates are varied in age, size and experience. I will work closely with our NFALA affiliate leaders to learn their strategic plans and goals and see where NFALA could assist in achieving these desired goals. It is by understanding the wants and needs of our membership on an affiliate level that NFALA will be better equipped to recruit and retain members. As the VP of Membership, I want our members to view me as the HR of NFALA. Please do not hesitate to reach me directly if there is anything that I could do to improve your experience as an affiliate and/or direct member.

**Increase direct membership and member engagement.** Who knows what 2021 may bring and when we can all come together again outside of our virtual boxes? So, now more than ever, focus on member engagement is critical. Every member has a role; it takes engagement to get members to step up and play that role! Our membership committee will host 4 membership drives with initiatives to recruit direct members. In fact, our first direct membership drive is already underway, and we are half-way to meeting our goal of 100 Lifetime Direct Members by December 31, 2020. The Lifetime Direct 100 is a \$500 lifetime membership that includes exclusive Lifetime Direct-only events and special-edition NFALA swag. This opportunity is limited, so please email me directly at [epascua@trueblue.com](mailto:epascua@trueblue.com) if you are interested!

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ELAINE PASCUA, VP FOR MEMBERSHIP

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**Celebrate achievements and create historical files of NFALA members and their families.** NFALA is filled with some of the brightest and most caring people I am proud to know and call extended family (#NFALAFAMILY). I want to make sure that the achievements of our members are known and celebrated not only within NFALA but in our larger Filipino community and beyond. I have worked closely with Dorothy Cordova in different capacities through the last 20 plus years I have known her. But, specifically, I have spoken with her about a project to make sure all our members are included in the records of FANHS (Filipino American National Historical Society). This would include working with NFALA affiliates to get mass involvement on securing everything from CVs to articles, programs from each member. In doing so, NFALA will also have historical data on its members to maintain and update moving forward.

Further, on the heels of our President Kristy Gonowon's gala speech, we know that many of us are WHO we are and WHERE we are because of the sacrifices of our loved ones. There was especially a huge response to having family members in the medical field: nurses, doctors, first responders. As such, we are expanding the project to include family of our members.

There is lots of work to be done, but we will accomplish it! If you are interested in joining the Membership Committee and/or working on any of the projects, please contact me. Maraming salamat for your support. I am honored to serve as your VP of Membership and look forward to making your member experience in NFALA meaningful and worthy of your time!



NFALA IS FILLED WITH SOME OF THE BRIGHTEST AND MOST CARING PEOPLE I AM PROUD TO KNOW AND CALL EXTENDED FAMILY (#NFALAFAMILY). I WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF OUR MEMBERS ARE KNOWN AND CELEBRATED NOT ONLY WITHIN NFALA BUT IN OUR LARGER FILIPINO COMMUNITY AND BEYOND.



## DENNIS PANGINDIAN, VP FOR COMMUNICATIONS



Dennis Pangindian is an Associate Counsel in the Office of Counsel to the Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. He represents HHS in civil and administrative actions relating to fraud and abuse in Federal health care programs. In law school, he was the Editor in Chief of Loyola University Chicago School of Law's health law and policy journal. Dennis was also the inaugural recipient of FALA Chicago's law student scholarship.

Dennis also serves as an At-Large Rep for FALA DC and was previously the Chairman for the Board of Directors of Family Hope Charity, Inc., a nonprofit working to fight poverty in Africa.

In his spare time, Dennis performs improv comedy. He performed at Second City in Chicago and currently performs at Washington Improv Theater in Washington, D.C.

## VISION AND GOALS

I have three broad goals that I hope to achieve this year: inform, engage, and inspire.

### INFORM

Through mediums such as this newsletter, weekly emails, and social media, my primary goal is to keep the general membership of NFALA informed about all the happenings of NFALA. Whether it be communicating messages from the Board of Governors to sharing information about events being hosted by NFALA, its affinity networks, affiliates, or partners, I aim to ensure that everyone is in the know about what is going on with the #NFALAFamily. If you have information you'd like to share with NFALA, please email it to [communications@nfala.com](mailto:communications@nfala.com).

### ENGAGE

2020 was a year of challenges for NFALA. However, it allowed us to explore new ways to engage with one another. I intend to build on the lessons learned from this year to develop innovative ways for us to connect and interact with each other in meaningful ways. From creating value for our members through increased functionality of the website to creating an "NFALA Social Media Street Team" to take a more dynamic approach to social media engagement, this will be the year of sophistication and intentionality for NFALA Communications. All of this is done with an eye towards engaging with YOU!

### INSPIRE

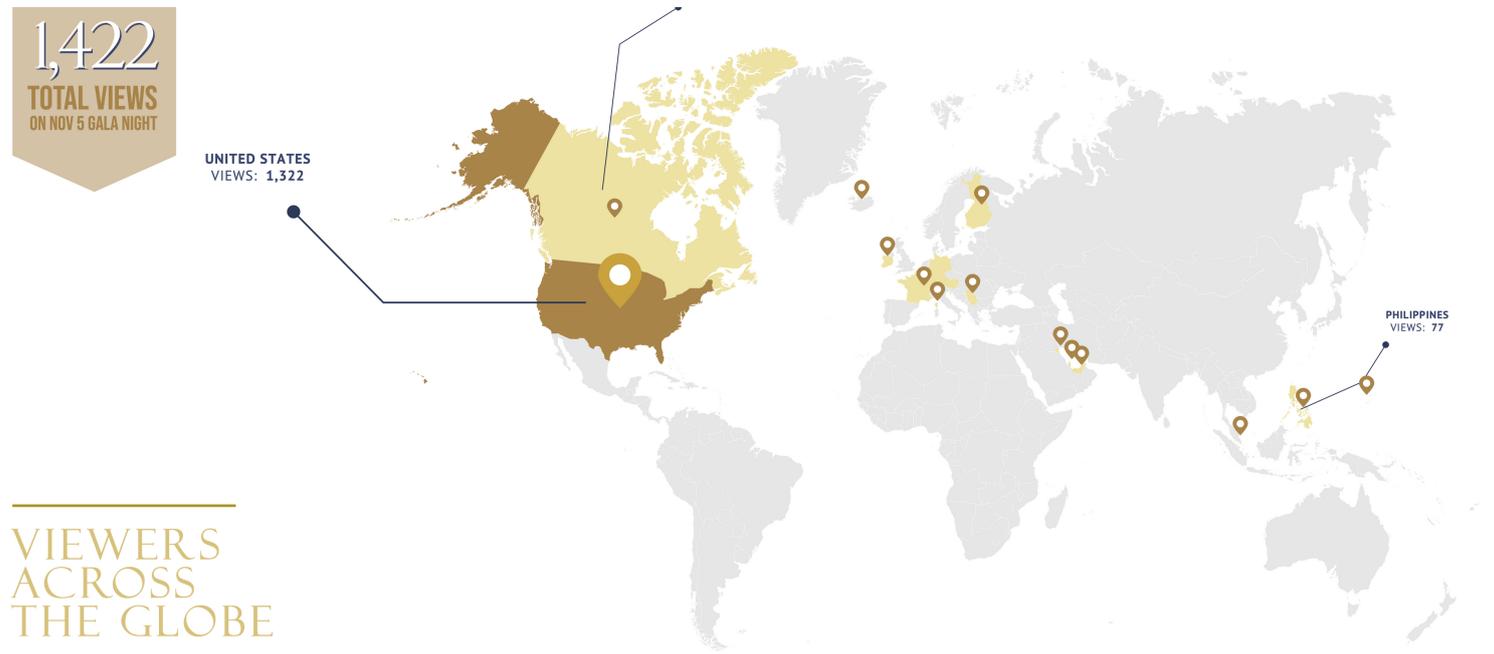
NFALA's strength has always been the diversity, creativity, and intelligence of our members. By fostering increased communication and engagement, I hope to inspire and enable people just like you to share your time and talent with the #NFALAFamily in whatever way you are called. In doing so, NFALA will take the Next Leap Forward.



1,422

TOTAL VIEWS  
ON NOV 5 GALA NIGHT

UNITED STATES  
VIEWS: 1,322



VIEWERS  
ACROSS  
THE GLOBE

- |               |        |         |           |             |         |         |
|---------------|--------|---------|-----------|-------------|---------|---------|
| UNITED STATES | CANADA | GERMANY | GUAM      | QATAR       | FRANCE  | BELGIUM |
| PHILIPPINES   | KUWAIT | UAE     | SINGAPORE | SWITZERLAND | IRELAND | OTHERS  |

NFALA GALA  
statistics:

- 1,422 total live views worldwide
- 370+ watch hours
- streamed over 843 devices
- NFALA's 1st benefactor sponsorship
- Launch of the LGBTQ+ Scholarship (see page 11)

As a response to COVID-19, NFALA converted all in-person programs to virtual ones, including the annual Installation gala on November 5th. It was an online virtual event with the features of a real-life gala, a VIP guest list, national anthem performances, sponsors, and a substantive program of speeches, greetings, performances, & sponsors messages. We thank you all who joined in. We were especially moved by the several watch parties hosted by NFALA affiliates. We also thank our generous sponsors and Chicago Asian Network who helped make this all possible.

This year has been filled with challenges for us all. We are grateful that, for at least one night, we were able to come together as a family despite the distance between us to celebrate who we are and what we stand for. NFALA stands as ready as ever to serve our members and the Filipino American community in the coming year.

Visit [www.nfalagala.com](http://www.nfalagala.com) to re-live the event.



# NFALA

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## FOUNDATION



ROBIN  
MANGASER  
TIZON

MEMORIAL  
SCHOLARSHIP

The NFALA Foundation, in collaboration with FALA New York, is excited to announce that applications for the Robin Mangaser Tizon Memorial Law Scholarship are now open! The scholarship will be awarded to a current law student who demonstrates an exceptional aptitude for the study of law and strong commitment to serve or contribute to the Filipino-American community as future leaders in the legal profession, particularly in the New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania areas. The Robin Mangaser Tizon Memorial Law Scholarship was established to honor Robin's memory and support talented law students who embody her spirit and commitment to service. Each scholarship recipient will receive \$800 to \$1,000, depending on the number of recipients selected in a given year. **Applications are due Monday, November 30th.**

[Visit www.nfala.com/robin to download the application.](http://www.nfala.com/robin)

NFALA Foundation and the NFALA LGBTQ+ Affinity Network is also proud to announce the launch of its LGBTQ+ Law Student Scholarship fundraising drive. Donate now through the end of November and NFALA will match up to \$2,500! Help us to ensure that the LGBTQ+ Scholarship is off to a great start! For further information, contact us at [scholarships@nfalafoundation.org](mailto:scholarships@nfalafoundation.org).

[Click here to donate or use the QR code to the right.](#)



*Formed in 2018, the NFALA Foundation is the nonprofit 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable organization that works closely with the National Filipino American Lawyers Association (NFALA) to cultivate a pipeline of leaders through scholarship and financial aid to students interested in the legal profession, as well as spearheading fundraising efforts to support these programs. The NFALA Foundation is led by Noel Vales, Esq., President; Elaine Calderon, Esq., Treasurer; and Ray Sagun, Esq., Secretary; board members David Mesa, Esq. and Marc Pilotin, Esq.; and serving in ex officio capacities, Kristy Gonowon, Esq. (NFALA President), Jeri Gonzales Abrams (NFALA President-Elect), and Catherine Asuncion, Esq. (NFALA Treasurer).*