

Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

EN BANC

REYNALDO M. NGO,
Complainant,

A.M. No. P-21-026
[Formerly OCA IPI No.
11-3659-P]

Present:

- versus -

GESMUNDO, C.J.,
PERLAS-BERNABE,
LEONEN,
CAGUIOA,
HERNANDO,
CARANDANG,
LAZARO-JAVIER,
INTING,
ZALAMEDA,
LOPEZ, M. V.,
GAERLAN,
ROSARIO,
LOPEZ, J. Y., and
DIMAAMPAO, JJ.

ATTY. RENATO E. FRADES,
Respondent.

Promulgated:
November 9, 2021

X-----X

DECISION

PER CURIAM:

In this administrative complaint, complainant Reynaldo M. Ngo (Ngo) charges respondent Atty. Renato E. Frades (Frades), Clerk of Court, Office of the Clerk of Court, Regional Trial Court (RTC), Gapan City, Nueva Ecija, with Falsification and violation of Section 5(a) of Republic Act No. (RA) 6713, the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees.

In his sworn Complaint¹ dated April 1, 2011, Ngo faults Frades for falsely certifying a document submitted in evidence by the spouses Dominador and Guillerma Anatalio (spouses Anatalio) in their appeal to the RTC, Branch 36 of Gapan City, Nueva Ecija from the February 11, 2009 Decision of the Municipal Trial Court in Cities (MTCC), Gapan City Nueva Ecija. The case before the MTCC was an action for Unlawful Detainer filed by Ngo and his brother, Eduardo Ngo, against the spouses Anatalio, docketed as Civil Case No. 5123-08. After the brothers Ngo won the suit, the defendants therein appealed to the RTC which was docketed as Civil Case No. 3624-09.

In their Memorandum of Appeal² filed with the RTC, defendants therein attached a copy of a document denominated as "*Bilihan ng Lupa*"³ which bore a stamp mark "certification of true/photocopy" signed by Frades in his official capacity as Clerk of Court. The Memorandum of Appeal contained the following allegation:

That the said "*Bilihan ng Lupa*", though only a photocopy of which was presented to the lower court, in the interest of justice, the herein defendants now submit the certified true copy of which and attached in this Memorandum as Annex "1", clearly show ownership of the mentioned portion (288 square meters) of the subject property by defendant Francisco Anatalio and Jose Anatalio.⁴

The RTC denied the appeal and accorded greater weight to the Ngos' title over the defendants' unregistered Deed of Sale denominated as "*Bilihan ng Lupa*." Thus, complainant Ngo sought a certification from respondent Clerk of Court to determine the existence of said document in the notarial file of Atty. Godofredo M. Linsangan who purportedly notarized it. However, respondent did not respond to Ngo's letter-request.⁵

In addition, Ngo asserted that upon demands and harassment by respondent, he handed the latter the amount of ₱30,000.00 to cover demolition expenses in the execution of the RTC's Decision. While respondent issued a handwritten acknowledgement receipt, Ngo charged respondent with misappropriation of the amount since the defendants in Civil Case No. 3624-09 had voluntarily demolished their houses. Consequently, no fees were expended.⁶

¹ *Rollo*, pp. 4-7.

² *Id.* at 16-18.

³ *Id.* at 14-15.

⁴ *Id.* at 17.

⁵ *Id.* at 5-6.

⁶ *Id.* at 159-160.

In his Comment,⁷ respondent denied the charges and contended that he issued the certification in his official capacity when it was referred to him for appropriate action. According to respondent, at that time, the RTC, Branch 36 had no Branch Clerk of Court so administrative concerns of the branch, including record certification, were referred to him.

In its Memorandum⁸ dated November 16, 2011, the Office of the Court Administrator (OCA) referred the complaint to Executive Judge Celso O. Baguio (Judge Baguio), RTC, Gapan City, Nueva Ecija, for investigation, report and recommendation.

In his Memorandum⁹ submitted to Judge Baguio, respondent maintained that he certified the document "*Bilihan ng Lupa*" as a "Certified True/Xerox Copy" after referral of the case record of Civil Case No. 3624-09 to him for action. Respondent insisted that the certification was in performance of his lawful duty as Clerk of Court in the absence of a Branch Clerk of Court. Respondent further explained that his certification only contemplated certifying the existence of such a document attached to the record of the case, and did not cover certifying that the copy of the "*Bilihan ng Lupa*" was a faithful reproduction of the original document.

As regards the charge of *estafa*, respondent denied that he misappropriated the amount of ₱30,000.00 for demolition expenses or that he used the money for personal gain. Respondent averred that he gave the amount to defendant Dominador Anatalio to cover his and his co-defendants' voluntary demolition of their houses. The arrangement was confirmed by Sheriff Ernesto Mendoza, the sheriff assigned to implement the writ of execution.

Judge Baguio likewise discussed the matter with Judge Wilfredo L. Maynigo (Judge Maynigo), Pairing Judge of RTC, Branch 36, and who rendered the decision in Civil Case No. 3624-09. Contrary to the assertion of respondent, Judge Maynigo denied that he referred the case to respondent for certification of the "*Bilihan ng Lupa*" as such an act equates to the court looking for evidence in favor of the defendants-appellants therein. Judge Maynigo likewise denied respondent's claim that he performed administrative tasks for RTC, Branch 36 since such functions were performed by its Officer-in-Charge, Branch Clerk of Court, Atty. Reynaldo Dungca (Atty. Dungca).¹⁰

In his Investigation Report¹¹ dated April 20, 2012, Judge Baguio made an extensive finding pointing to respondent's culpability for the charges and

⁷ Id. at 150-155.

⁸ Id. at 192.

⁹ Id. at 197-208.

¹⁰ Id. at 238-239.

¹¹ Id. at 236-244.

recommended the imposition of appropriate administrative sanctions against respondent:

True enough, respondent's attempt to justify his wrongdoing is misplaced. Firstly, the document "Bilihan ng Lupa" had been declared by the MTCC-Gapan City as a mere photocopy. On appeal, however, the defendants/appellants attached to their Appeal Memorandum the same photocopy, but this time, it was already stamp-marked with the words "Certified True/Xerox Copy" bearing the name and signature of the respondent. The Memorandum on Appeal found on page 140 of the record clearly proves that the certified true copy of the "Bilihan ng Lupa" was submitted to Branch 36 by defendants-appellants in Civil Case No. 3624-09. This fact alone totally debunks respondent's claim that it was Branch 36 that referred the document to him for certification. To lend credence to such argument is to say that the court or its pairing judge was the one who produced the document in favor of the appellants in that case for the purpose of disproving the conclusion of the MTCC that the same was a mere photocopy.

x x x x

More important, the investigation shows that the Office of the Clerk of Court did not have in its custody either the original copy or any other copy of the "Bilihan ng Lupa" at the time respondent issued the certification. Neither did it have the notarial register of Atty. Godofredo Linsangan who appears to have notarized the said document. This explains the claim of the complainant that respondent did not act on his request for certification as to the authenticity of his signature on the photocopy of the "Bilihan ng Lupa" which he stamped-marked with the words "Certified True/Xerox Copy".

x x x x

xxx As admitted by respondent and attested to by Sheriff Mendoza, the respondent negotiated with and received the sum of P30,000.00 from the winning plaintiffs in Civil Case No. 3624 as expenses for demolition without first submitting an estimate of such expenses for approval by the court. Worse, the said amount was not actually spent for demolition because admittedly the losing defendants voluntarily demolished their houses after the money was given to them through defendant Dominador Anatalio. Neither respondent nor Sheriff Mendoza rendered a liquidation report on said expenses.

In his statement, Sheriff Mendoza explained that he did not have any participation in the negotiations between respondent and the winning plaintiffs, complainant [Ngo] herein included, in Civil Case No. 3624. He, however, attested to the fact that after respondent received the said amount from the plaintiffs, the former delivered the same to Anatalio who promised that he and his co-defendants would spend the money in the conduct of their voluntary demolition.

Appearing in the investigation, Dominador Anatalio asserted that his real name is Domingo Anatalio as shown by his signature on the ["Kasunduan"] dated 11 June 2011. One of the losing defendants in Civil Case No. 3624, Anatalio admitted having received the amount of P20,000.00 from the respondent and not

the P30,000.00 stated in the document. According to the witness, what he received was the amount of P20,000.00 on 11 June 2011, contrary to what is stated in the [*"Kasunduan"*] that the sum of P30,000.00 was received by him in two installments. These claims were corroborated by Sheriff Mendoza in his testimony.

Responding to the question of the court, Anatalio stated that the [*"Kasunduan"*] was already prepared when it was handed to him by respondent who then required him to affix his signatures thereon. Accordingly, he did not notice that the amount stated therein was the amount of money that he actually received from respondent. Anatalio likewise clarified that contrary to what the document suggests, Sheriff Mendoza was not present when he received the money from respondent.

In light of the foregoing, this investigation finds respondent to have grossly violated the requirements prescribed in Rule 141. Foremost, he should not have taken active part in the enforcement of the special writ of demolition. The responsibility belongs to Sheriff Mendoza who also has the responsibility to prepare an estimate of expenses for demolition, subject to the approval of the court. Respondent's role was limited to requiring the winning plaintiff to make a deposit of the estimated expenses and thereafter disburse it to his Sheriff. For reasons of his own, respondent assumed the responsibilities of Mendoza in wanton derogation of the law.

In sum, this investigation finds respondent to have committed the following wrong acts:

1. By stamp-marking, under the seal of his office, the photocopy of the document "*Bilihan ng Lupa*" dated 27 July 1987 with the words "certified true/Xerox copy", he falsely certified that the original copy of the document was under his official custody or of the Office of the Clerk of Court, RTC-Multiple Sala, Gapan City.

2. Wrongfully assuming the functions of his subordinate Sheriff Ernesto Mendoza by directly implementing the Special Writ of Demolition issued by this court's Branch 36, personally negotiating with the parties in Civil Case No. 3624 with regard to the fixing of the demolition expenses, and spending the money according to his own discretion, all in gross violation of the procedural requirements of Rule 141 of the Rules of Court.

3. Pocketing the amount of P10,000.00 taken from the amount given him by the plaintiffs in the aforesaid case in the sum of P30,000.00 without lawful authority.

4. Making false representations in a document denominated as [*"Kasunduan"*] dated 11 June 2011 and offering the same as evidence in this administrative case where he is a respondent for the purpose of subverting the truth.¹²

¹² Id. at 239-243.

In its Memorandum¹³ submitted on April 21, 2014, the OCA fully agreed with the findings of the Investigating Judge and recommended that:

a) The instant administrative complaint against Atty. Renato E. Frades, Clerk of Court, Office of the Clerk of Court, RTC, Gapan City, Nueva Ecija, be **RE-DOCKETED** as a regular administrative matter; and

b) Respondent Frades be found **GUILTY** of Serious Dishonesty, Gross Neglect of Duty and Grave Misconduct penalized under Section 46(A), Rule 10, of the Revised Rules on Administrative Cases in the Civil Service, and be **DISMISSED** from the service with forfeiture of retirement benefits except accrued leave credits, and perpetual disqualification from holding public office in any branch or instrumentality of the government, including government-owned or controlled corporations.¹⁴

Issue

Whether respondent should be held liable for Serious Dishonesty, Gross Neglect of Duty and Grave Misconduct.

Our Ruling

We adopt and accept the OCA's findings and recommendation.

Misconduct is a transgression of some established and definite rule of action, more particularly, unlawful behavior or gross negligence by the public officer.¹⁵

To warrant dismissal from the service, the misconduct must be grave, serious, important, weighty, momentous, and not trifling. The misconduct must imply wrongful intention and not a mere error of judgment and must also have a direct relation to and be connected with the performance of the public officer's official duties amounting either to maladministration or willful, intentional neglect, or failure to discharge the duties of the office. In order to differentiate gross misconduct from simple misconduct, the elements of corruption, clear intent to violate the law, or flagrant disregard of established rule, must be manifest in the former.¹⁶

Dishonesty is defined as a disposition to lie, cheat, deceive, or defraud; unworthiness; lack of integrity; lack of honesty, probity or integrity in principle; lack of fairness and straightforwardness; disposition to defraud, deceive, or betray.¹⁷

¹³ Id. at 217-225.

¹⁴ Id. at 225.

¹⁵ *Duque v. Calpo*, A.M. No. P-16-3505, January 22, 2019.

¹⁶ *Office of the Court Administrator v. Viesca*, 758 Phil. 16, 27 (2015).

¹⁷ Id.

Gross Neglect of Duty, on the other hand, is characterized by want of even the slightest care, or by conscious indifference to the consequences, or by flagrant and palpable breach of duty.¹⁸

Based on the foregoing definitions, the comprehensive report of the Investigating Judge, found by the OCA to be supported by evidence, is well-taken. Respondent's actions made under the pretext of lawful performance of duty as clerk of court, undermined the effective and efficient administration of justice.

Ironically, in a case involving respondent as complainant, *Frades v. Gabriel*,¹⁹ We had occasion to emphasize the exacting standards for work in the Judiciary, thus:

A clerk of court's office is the hub of activities, and he or she is expected to be assiduous in performing official duties and in supervising and managing the court's dockets, records and exhibits. The image of the Judiciary is the shadow of its officers and employees. A simple misfeasance or nonfeasance may have disastrous repercussions on that image.²⁰

Respondent's false certification *per se* may have constituted an innocuous mistake and would have at best made him liable for simple neglect of duty which We have defined as the failure of an employee to give proper attention to a required task or to discharge a duty due to carelessness or indifference.²¹ Regrettably however, respondent's misfeasance was further exposed by the lie he propounded to the Investigating Judge that he was simply performing his lawful duty and had been tasked to certify documents on record, a falsity made more grievous by the fact that it was made to a judge no less.

As correctly pointed out by the Investigating Judge, respondent's act of certification does not even fall within his administrative functions since RTC, Branch 36 had an Officer-in-Charge, Atty. Dungca. Moreover, as emphasized by Judge Maynigo, requiring such a certification is equivalent to the court procuring evidence for one of the parties in the case, defendants therein.

Respondent's receipt of money from a litigant to cover demolition fees violated Section 10, Rule 141 of the Rules of Court as the amount and expenses were not approved by the court nor was any liquidation of the amount received. In this regard, the Court notes that the alleged recipient, defendant therein, declared that he only received ₱20,000.00 instead of the full amount of ₱30,000.00 given by respondent from Ngo.

¹⁸ Id. at 26.

¹⁹ 821 Phil. 36 (2017).

²⁰ Id. at 52.

²¹ *Office of the Court Administrator v. Viesca*, supra note 16 at 26.

Atto

Clerks of Court — as is Frades — are the chief administrative officers of their respective courts; with regard to the collection of legal fees, they perform a delicate function as judicial officers entrusted with the correct and effective implementation of regulations thereon. Even the undue delay in the remittances of amounts collected by them at the very least constitutes misfeasance.²² As custodians of court funds and revenues, Clerks of Court have the duty to immediately deposit the various funds received by them to the authorized government depositories for they are not supposed to keep funds in their custody.²³ Respondent had not the slightest regard for these precepts.

Undoubtedly, by any stretch of the imagination, the actuations of respondent cannot be justified. They constitute, in all respects, acts of serious dishonesty and grave misconduct.

Under Section 46, Rule 10 of the Revised Rules on Administrative Cases in the Civil Service, serious dishonesty and grave misconduct are classified as grave offenses punishable by dismissal from service even if the offense was committed for the first time. Under Section 52 of the same rule, “the penalty of dismissal shall carry with it cancellation of eligibility, forfeiture of retirement benefits, perpetual disqualification from holding public office, and bar from taking civil service examinations.” In addition, Section 49 thereof provides that:

Section 50. Penalty for The Most Serious Offense. If the respondent is guilty of two (2) or more charges or counts, the penalty to be imposed should be that corresponding to the most serious charge and the rest shall be considered as aggravating circumstances.

However, the recent case of *Dela Rama v. De Leon*²⁴ teaches that if the application of Rule 140, Rules of Court, as amended, is favorable to herein respondent, then it must be applied, viz.:

When De Leon committed the offense in 2011, the URACCS, which was promulgated on September 14, 1999, was still in effect. Section 52 of URACCS provides that:

SEC. 52. *Classification of Offenses.* — Administrative offenses with corresponding penalties are classified into grave, less grave or light, depending on their gravity or depravity and effects on the government service.

A. The following are grave offenses with their corresponding penalties:

x x x x

²² Id. at 23.

²³ See *Office of the Court Administrator v. Laranjo*, A.M. No. P-18-3859, June 4, 2019.

²⁴ A.M. No. P-14-3240, March 2, 2021.

Ordo

3. Grave Misconduct
1st offense — Dismissal

Given the gravity of the offense, the URACCS classifies Grave Misconduct as a grave offense punishable by dismissal from service for the first offense. In *Ombudsman Carpio-Morales v. Regalado*, the Court explained:

The fact that an offender was caught for the first time does not, in any way, abate the gravity of what he or she actually committed. Grave misconduct is not a question of frequency, but as its own name suggests, of gravity or weight. One who commits grave misconduct is one who, by the mere fact of misconduct, has proven himself or herself unworthy of the continuing confidence of the public. By his or her very commission of that grave offense, the offender forfeits any right to hold public office.

The misconduct is grave if it involves any of the additional elements of corruption, willful intent to violate the law, or to disregard established rules, which must be established by substantial evidence. As distinguished from simple misconduct, the elements of corruption, clear intent to violate the law, or flagrant disregard of established rule, must be manifest in a charge of grave misconduct. Corruption, as an element of grave misconduct, consists in the act of an official or fiduciary person who unlawfully and wrongfully uses his station or character to procure some benefit for himself or for another person, contrary to duty and the rights of others.

Section 58 (a) of the URACCS further shows the seriousness of the offense in that it provides for additional administrative disabilities inherent with dismissal. To wit:

The penalty of dismissal shall carry with it that of cancellation of eligibility, forfeiture of retirement benefits, and the perpetual disqualification for reemployment in the government service, unless otherwise provided in the decision.

On October 2, 2018, the Court promulgated A.M. No. 18-01-05-SC which amended Rule 140 of the Rules of Court, reiterating that members of the Judiciary must be of proven competence, integrity, probity, and independence pursuant to Section 7 (3), Article VIII of the 1987 Constitution. The pertinent portions of which read:

NOW, THEREFORE, the Court resolved to:
xxx xxx xxx

2. APPROVE the recommendation of the Technical Working Group to amend Rule 140 of the Rules of Court, subject to the following modifications under Sections 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 11, 12 thereof:

x x x x

Rule 140

DISCIPLINE OF JUDGES OF REGULAR AND
SPECIAL COURTS, JUSTICES OF THE COURT OF
APPEALS, THE SANDIGANBAYAN, COURT OF TAX
APPEALS, COURT ADMINISTRATOR, DEPUTY
COURT ADMINISTRATOR AND ASSISTANT COURT
ADMINISTRATOR

Section 1. *How Instituted.* — Proceedings for the discipline of Justices of the Court of Appeals, the Sandiganbayan, Court of Tax Appeals and Judges and personnel of the lower courts, including the Shari'a Courts, and the officials and employees of the Office of the Jurisconsult, Court Administrator, Deputy Court Administrator, Assistant Court Administrator and their personnel, may be instituted, *motu proprio*, by the Supreme Court, in the Judicial Integrity Board.

x x x x

Section 21. *Classification of Charges.* — Administrative charges are classified as serious, less serious, or light.

Section 22. *Serious Charges.* — Serious charges include:

x x x x

3. Gross misconduct constituting violations of the Code of Judicial Conduct;

x x x x

Section 25. *Sanctions.* —

A. If the respondent is guilty of a serious charge, any of the following sanctions may be imposed:

1. Dismissal from the service, forfeiture of all or part of the benefits as the Court may determine, and disqualification from reinstatement or appointment to any public office, including government-owned or controlled corporations. Provided, however, that the forfeiture of benefits shall in no case include accrued leave credits;

2. Suspension from office without salary and other benefits for more than three (3) months but not exceeding six (6) months; or

3. A fine of more than P20,000.00 but not exceeding P40,000.00.

On July 7, 2020, the Court promulgated a supplemental Resolution to A.M. No. 18-01-05-SC dated October 2, 2018, highlighting the mandate of the Supreme Court to have administrative supervision over all courts and the personnel thereof. It further amends pertinent sections of Rule 140 of the Rules of Court which now read as follows:

**AMENDMENTS TO RULE 140
OF THE REVISED RULES OF COURT**

RULE 140

DISCIPLINE OF JUDGES OF REGULAR, SPECIAL OR *SHARI'AH* COURTS, PRESIDING JUSTICES AND ASSOCIATE JUSTICES OF THE COURT OF APPEALS, THE SANDIGANBAYAN, COURT OF TAX APPEALS, AND *SHARI'AH* HIGH COURT, COURT ADMINISTRATOR, DEPUTY COURT ADMINISTRATORS AND ASSISTANT COURT ADMINISTRATORS, AND PERSONNEL OF THE JUDICIARY.

SEC. 1. *How Instituted.* — Proceedings for the discipline of the Presiding Justices and Associate Justices of the Court of Appeals, the Sandiganbayan, the Court of Tax Appeals, the *Shari'ah* High Court and Judges of the lower courts, including the *Shari'ah* District or Circuit Courts, and the officials and employees of the Judiciary, Court Administrator, Deputy Court Administrators, Assistant Court Administrators and their personnel, may be instituted, *motu proprio*, by the Supreme Court, in the Judicial Integrity Board.

x x x x

SEC. 22. *Serious Charges.* — Serious charges include:

x x x x

3. Gross misconduct constituting violations of the Code of Judicial Conduct or of the Code of Conduct for Court Personnel, and grave offenses under the Civil Service Laws and Rule[.]

Notably, Rule 140 has its own nomenclature and classification of penalties different from the URACCS. As applied to this case, De Leon's offense would be labelled as "grave misconduct" under the URACCS, while it would be "gross misconduct" under Rule 140 of the Rules of Court. The latest amendment of Rule 140 of the Revised Rules of Court, however, is clear that grave offenses under the Civil Service Laws and Rules is tantamount to a gross misconduct.

In the interest of a uniform application of charges and imposition of penalties in administrative cases involving Judiciary personnel, we will apply Rule 140 of the Revised Rules of Court since it is the prevailing rule at present, unless the retroactive application of Rule 140 would not be favorable to the employee. Otherwise stated, if the application of Rule 140, as amended would be

prejudicial to the employee, then the framework of rules prevailing at the time of the commission of the offense should apply (*e.g.*, the URACCS in this case). This mirrors the rule in Criminal Law that penal laws shall have a retroactive effect if the same is favorable to the accused—which the Court, as a matter of policy now adopts.

Close scrutiny and comparison of Section 25, Rule 140 of the Revised Rules of Court and Section 58 (a) of the URACCS will lead us to the conclusion that Rule 140 is not prejudicial to herein respondent, and thus, must be applied to this instant case. To emphasize, under Section 58 (a) of the URACCS, the penalty of dismissal carries with it the following accessory penalties:

- a. cancellation of eligibility;
- b. forfeiture of retirement benefits; and
- c. perpetual disqualification for reemployment in the government service, unless otherwise provided in the decision. (Emphasis supplied)

While the exemption from forfeiture of accrued leave credits is not explicit in the URACCS, case law is nevertheless consistent that the same is not included in the forfeited benefits as it is considered as earned remuneration similar to salaries.

In contrast, Section 25 (A) (1), Rule 140 of the Revised Rules of Court provides:

1. Dismissal from the service; forfeiture of all or part of the benefits as the Court may determine, and disqualification from reinstatement or appointment to any public office, including government-owned or controlled corporations. *Provided, however, that the forfeiture of benefits shall in no case include accrued leave credits.* (Emphasis supplied)

Thus, since the application of Rule 140, as amended is not unfavorable to herein respondent, then it must be applied in this case.²⁵

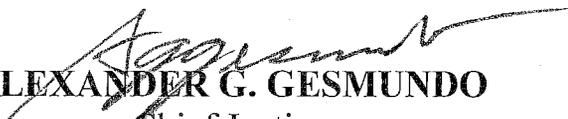
The foregoing pronouncement squarely applies in this case. Thus, We apply Rule 140, as amended, the same being favorable to respondent

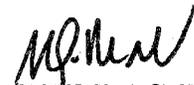
WHEREFORE, respondent Atty. Renato E. Frades, Clerk of Court, Office of the Clerk of Court, Regional Trial Court, Gapan City, Nueva Ecija, is found **GUILTY** of Gross Misconduct, Gross Neglect of Duty and Dishonesty. Accordingly, he is sanctioned with **DISMISSAL** from the service, **FORFEITURE** of all benefits **EXCEPT ACCRUED LEAVE CREDITS**, and **DISQUALIFICATION** from reinstatement or appointment to any public office, including government-owned or controlled corporations.

²⁵ *Id.*

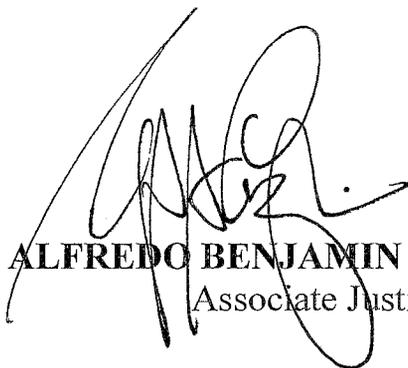
Amc

SO ORDERED.

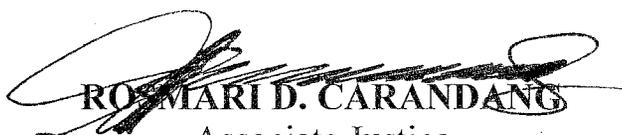

ALEXANDER G. GESMUNDO
Chief Justice

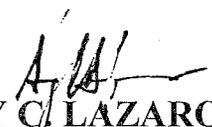

ESTELA M. PERLAS-BERNABE
Associate Justice


MARIO M. V. F. LEONEN
Associate Justice


ALFREDO BENJAMIN S. CAGUIOA
Associate Justice

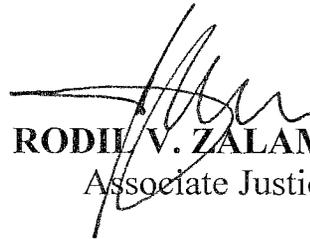

RAMON PAUL L. HERNANDO
Associate Justice


ROSMARI D. CARANDANG
Associate Justice

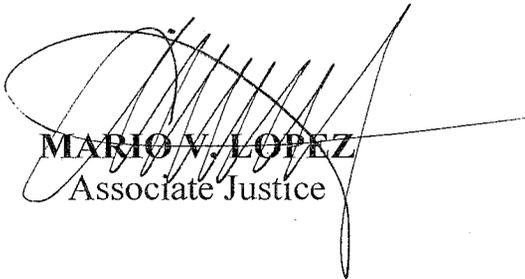

AMY C. LAZARO-JAVIER
Associate Justice



HENRI JEAN PAUL B. INTING
Associate Justice



RODIL V. ZALAMEDA
Associate Justice



MARIO V. LOPEZ
Associate Justice



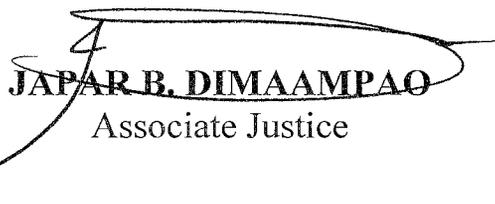
SAMUEL H. GAERLAN
Associate Justice



RICARDO R. ROSARIO
Associate Justice



JHOSEP Y. LOPEZ
Associate Justice



JAPAR B. DIMAAMPAO
Associate Justice