

One Philippines Texas Exclusive

# Philippine Independence Day



**A**lthough spread out in all corners of a state geographically bigger than California, Texas Filipinos did not forget the nation's history and the noble legacy left by their national heroes and martyrs. With hearts beaming with patriotic fervor, the major Filipino communities in Texas from North to South and from East to West celebrated the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Philippine

## Independence in the month of June.

It was on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of June, 1898, 120 years ago, when Filipino revolutionary forces led by General Emilio Aguinaldo proclaimed the independence of the Filipino people from the balcony of his residence

in Kawit, Cavite. The Declaration of Independence was signed by 98 delegates. The National Flag was unfurled for the first time and the Marcha Filipino Magdalo, now our national anthem Lupang Hinirang was first played.

That declaration was never recognized by the United States or Spain. Spain ceded the Philippines to the US in the Treaty of Paris of 1898. After almost 400 years under Spain, the US proceeded to govern the Philippines in the next half-century (except for three years of the Japanese Occupation), until it withdrew and gave the Philippines its independence from the U.S. on July 4, 1946.

Filipinos celebrated Independence Day on July 4 for many years afterwards, until 1964 when President Diosdado Macapagal, in a true act of national independence, signed Republic Act 4106 designating June 12 as Philippine Independence Day, a sacred event that we have been celebrating every year in all parts of the world. At these celebrations, Filipinos in Texas pay tribute not only to the national heroes of the Philippine revolution, but also to heroes and martyrs of World War II.

In Dallas, a large crowd of Filipinos and special guests

gathered in Carrollton on June 12<sup>th</sup> and celebrated with a ceremonial flag-raising followed by patriotic speeches, songs and dances. The flag-raising was attended by Mayor Pro-Tem Kim Young of the city of Carrollton who read a Mayor's proclamation. The sponsoring organization was the newly-formed Filipino Leaders Coalition of North Texas (FILCON) led by its new President Myrna Carreon. The event was put together by a Programs Committee led by Edith McCoy, VP for Programs. Venue host is Rev. Pastor Bernard Bassig of the Cosmopolitan Church of Carrollton.

In Grand Prairie, a Pista sa Nasyon was held on June 2, 2018 in the Trader's Village and featured different musical numbers and regional folk dances performed by the Maharlika Dance Troupe, the Ed Macarangel Dance Company and the Grace Evangelista Hula Dancers. There were singing and talent contests and Filipino food booths.

In Houston, the Filipinos held separate celebrations. One was sponsored on June 10 at the Notre Dame Catholic Church Community Center by the Philippine Cultural Foundation. The group was founded by Juliet Ringer Awitan and is currently headed by Atty.



**Organizers of the OFT Independence Day Celebration in San Antonio with leaders of PACC Texas in Houston and Dallas**

# Welcome

## EDUTHUN

THE SINGING BOHOLANO PRIESTS  
USA CONCERT TOUR 2018



Dallas - Saturday, August 11, 2018  
Contact Persons:  
Manny Malana Tel. 915-256-1975  
Alice Decker Tel. 817-366-3858  
Edith McCoy Tel. 469-502-8661  
Remel Victoriano Tel. 214-207-3099

San Antonio - Sunday, August 12, 2018  
Contact Persons:  
Yoly Moy - Tel. 210-827-8057  
Robert Sibug - Tel. 210-460-9664

Houston - Saturday, August 18, 2018  
Contact Persons:  
Belinda Aranas - Tel. 713-478-1932  
Pee Varrera - Tel. 281-250-2404  
Shirley Camacho - Tel. 713-894-9235

Proceeds from this event will go to the **Balay Kabos Foundation** for building houses for the poor and other humanitarian projects.



By Gus Mercado. Photography by Gus Mercado, Ricky Guinhawa and Remel Victoriano

# Celebrated by Filipino Texans Statewide



**Gus Mercado paying tribute to the gallantry of Filipino soldiers**

Fulgencio Duremdes and this year featured a colorful BIBAK indigenous dances from the mountain region. The other was the Kalayaan Gala on June 16<sup>th</sup> that was hosted by the Filipino American Council of Texas, headed by Belle Datu. Invited guest speaker was Texas senatorial candidate Beto O'Rourke. In the same evening, One Philippines celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> year anniversary with a musical extravaganza.

In the Rio Grande Valley, a Filipino Festival was held in the Edinburg City Hall Courtyard on June 8, 2018 under the auspices of the Filipinos' umbrella organization, the "Araw ng Ating Kalayaan" or A.N.A.K. led by its President Marilene Balotro. Major parts of the program were contributed by officers of the Arnulfo Tatoy Foundation, the Sanlahi Dance Troupe, PACC RGV Region, the Jubilee

Christian Fellowship, among others. Edinburg Mayor Richard Molina welcomed and paid tribute to the Filipinos in his region and their guests. The highlight of the celebration, which made the entire front page of the regional newspaper the RGV Monitor, was a spectacular fashion show of the regional costumes in the Philippines participated in by the united Filipino community leaders in the region.

Philippine Honorary Consul Ethel Reyes-Mercado was the keynote speaker at the Rio Grande Valley event. She articulated year's theme of the worldwide celebration: "Pagbabagong ipinaglaban, laban, handog sa masaganang kinabukasan", translated "Change that we fought for, a gift to a prosperous future." Consul Mercado said that "the theme significantly points to the fact that despite the freedom

that we enjoy, efforts to achieve positive changes in our society must be sustained for a brighter tomorrow." She added: "We owe it to the future generation to safeguard and uphold the liberty that we have gained through the selfless efforts and sacrifices of the valiant men and women of our country's history." In San Antonio, the Organization of Filipinos in Texas (San Antonio) led a simple but elegant and very well-attended gala celebration on June 9, 2018 where every part of the program – the singing, the dancing, the poetry and the elocution – had a patriotic flavor to it. The oldest and biggest organization in the city is now headed by millennials, led by President Karen Gonzales and VP Rachel Clark. Live Oak Mayor Mary Dennis opened the celebrations by proclaiming June 12 as Philippine Day in the City of Live Oak.

The keynote speaker was Gus Mercado, State Executive Director of the Philippine-American Chamber of Commerce of Texas,

now the biggest Filipino-American Chamber in the U.S. and winner of NaFFAA's Alex Esclamado Memorial Award as Top Filipino Organization in the Nation. In his address, Gus reminded the Filipinos of San Antonio of many things that they should be proud of: San Antonio being not only the prettiest and best tourist destination city in Texas but also the most historic. He shared the historical fact that in the 1700's, the lower half of the state used to be called "Nueva Filipinas" or New Philippines, also named



**Welcome Address from Edinburg Mayor Richard Molina**



**Celebrating in Plano with One Philippines Publisher Bhong Sauza and celebrity comedian Ray Kilay**



**Guest speaker Hon. Consul Ethel R. Mercado sharing the national theme of the 120th Independence Day.**

after King Felipe II of Spain by their earliest Spanish settlers and friars who came to the shores of the region from the Philippines. He wished that the name had not been changed to Texas which is just a native Indian name for "friends". Our great state would be called "New Philippines" today.

Gus Mercado also congratulated the Filipinos of San Antonio for having a new mayor who is part-Filipino, Honorable Ron Niremburg. Another distinguished resident of San Antonio is Gina Ortiz Jones, who is running for the U.S. Congress in November with an excellent chance of winning. She would be the first Filipino-American to win a seat in the U.S. Congress in Washington DC. Gina was represented in the celebration by her Filipina mother, Ms. Vickie Ortiz.



**Officers of powerhouse Phil-Am Chambers of Commerce of North Texas, Greater Houston and San Antonio.**



# This 4<sup>th</sup> of July, let's be thankful for another American freedom--to dream!

By Gus Mercado

**T**oday of all days, we know we are free. We see American flags flying — those we've hoisted onto our own frontporches, or those that real-estate agents have stuck into our yards.

We hear patriotic music every time we turn on the radio. During neighborhood parades and picnics at the park, we sweat through our red, white and blue T-shirts and feel pretty darned lucky.

Years ago at a flea market, we bought four antique Norman Rockwell plates, each representing one of the Four Freedoms that President Franklin Roosevelt had spoken of: Freedom from Want. Freedom from Fear. Freedom of Worship. Freedom of Speech. I look at them, especially the one of the man watching his children as they sleep, and still get goosebumps.

But as important as all those obvious freedoms are, this country has some we might not think about — or not often enough.

We have freedom to believe, and not just the kind of beliefs that fall under freedom of worship. Freedom to believe for a child means putting a little white tooth under your pillow and knowing without a doubt that, in the morning, a dollar will be in its place.

It means believing with all your heart that surgery will heal your grandmother's back pain forever, that someone you love will get a longed-for job, that you really will save enough money to take that trip to Europe, a cruise through the Caribbean, or to go "Balikbayan" yet again for Christmas or Holy Week.

Sometimes, we may get so caught up in the basics of life that we forget our freedom to dream.

Mainstream Americans should think of the immigrants who have left behind the place they were born, the familiar beds and familiar voices, who brought with them only empty pockets, optimistic hearts — and dreams they never dared voice until now.

As long-time but still excited immigrants to this country, our lifetime dream is to someday drop everything we're doing and to cross the country in our mini-van, visiting every state, every



majestic mountain and every fruited plain, travel from sea to shining sea in this blessed country. We know exactly what we want to see and every so often we'll incorporate something new in our itinerary.

"Hey, Dad," my youngest said some years ago when he graduated from college: "You've been talking about this trip since I was 5, when are we really going to do it?" "It's our dream, I tell him. I believe that one day it will come true, but until then we can just have fun planning it."

We Filipino-Americans have equal freedom in this country to choose: Coke or Pepsi. Bowling or a movie. Your house or ours. TFC or GMA. Netflix or DVD. Apple I-phone or Samsung. Mustard or ketchup. Paper or plastic. Sedan or SUV. Chocolate or Vanilla. Manila or Europe.

Every day, every moment in this country celebrates an essence of freedom. We have the freedom to put flowers on a loved one's grave, to freely sing off-key into a Karaoke machine, to spend the weekend wherever and however we want. To mow the yard, play golf, have a drink with the boys, watch an old movie, or just cozy up and hold hands with your loved ones at home.

We can apply for whatever job we want. We're free to run for officer of our local organization,

or just be a follower. We can freely speak for Donald Trump, or against him. Support Immigration, or oppose it. We can write letters to the editor. We can post strong opinions on Facebook. We have the freedom to disagree, or be disagreeable. We can say no. Freedom.

Freedom to dream. It lets us dream of a peaceful, prosperous and corruption-free Philippines in which to spend the twilight of our lives. It lets us dream of a world that is free from trouble and strife, no hunger, no wars.

Freedom lets us laugh at something funny during inopportune times (in church during a serious sermon, at grocery-store lines, staff meetings) and to suffer no more than a private embarrassment.

With that freedom to laugh comes freedom to cry — while reading a favorite author's description of something as simple as the smell of jasmine, or the taste of lemonade; hearing a song that reminds you of your first love, or a heart-rending patriotic song like "Bayan Ko" or "Pilipinas Kong Mahal" as we remember our father or grandfather who sacrificed his life so we could enjoy these freedoms; hugging your dog for what you know will be the last time. When your grandchild calls you to the window to see the pink of the sky as the sun sets, you have the freedom to cry, or to just give him a big hug.

It also lets you cry when you read about another monstrous natural catastrophe that just claimed innocent lives in our beloved homeland.

Today, as you and I watch the July 4th parade, or clap to

the beat of drums, we have the freedom to reach out, to touch the flag and to utter a heartfelt thank-you. Thank you for letting freedom ring in our hearts and in our souls. Thank you to America for embracing us as immigrants when we came to its shores with nothing but dreams. And tonight, if we're out in the country and have stopped at those three-for-one fireworks stands, we have the freedom to hold onto a sparkler and to write our names in the sky, and dream of a better world.

Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July! Happy Birthday, America!



*About the Author: Gus Mercado is a multiple award-winning writer, publisher and community leader from Dallas, Texas. In the '90s, he and his wife published Business Horizons, the only Filipino-owned international business magazine in America, with circulation in 92 countries. Gus now owns and manages Datalogix, a high-tech company in Texas and Silicon Valley that has employed hundreds of Filipino engineers in 20 states. Gus is a recipient of the Presidential Banaag Award for outstanding stewardship of Filipinos in America and for exemplary business and community leadership. As National Chair of NaFFAA's Committee on Racial Profiling against Filipinos, he led a successful crusade to free the "Texas 10", the innocent Filipino airline mechanics who were unjustly arrested and detained in Texas prisons for six months following 9/11. He is currently State Executive Director of PACC Texas, the largest Philippine-American Chamber of Commerce in the U.S. Gus graduated with honors from De La Salle College and worked for San Miguel Corporation in Manila prior to immigrating to the U.S. in August 1972. He retired from Caltex Global Head Office, Rockwell and Sprint International. He is married to Texas Honorary Consul Ethel Reyes-Mercado with whom he has 4 children and 5 grandchildren.*

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## 15 of the most flavorful years of Filipiniana

**C**elebrate fifteen flavorful years of the best of Filipiniana Filipino Restaurant at Bissonnet St., Congratulations for Sharing your Filipino Foods with 15 years of your Dedicated Service and Quality Foods to your Customers! "Tangkilikin Ang Sariling Atin"! Many More Quality Filipino Foods to Share! Cheers!



## Were you victimized by dealers of illegal FilStream pirate boxes?

**A**BS-CBN to continue to prosecute dealers of illegal FilStream pirate boxes in the U.S. including Texas; GMA7 may follow suit. Officials of the Daly City based ABS-CBN International stated that they are continuing to hunt down unscrupulous dealers who sold the illegal FilStream boxes in the U.S. including Texas. Documents received from Texas Filipinos who were solicited to buy or distribute the FilStream boxes showed that the illegal sales in Texas continued even after the many warnings sent out by ABS-CBN last year.

In an effort to improve their struggling viewership, a small ethnic TV station in Houston, Texas with a regular viewership of less than 100 Filipinos reportedly actively marketed the illegal box and solicited new dealers in Houston, San Antonio and other Texas cities saying that "their TV station was a part of the FilStream family where people can watch BIG Filipino channels in the Philippines like GMA 7, TV 5, News 5 and ABS-CBN for free with a one-time fee of only \$220.00." The small TV station also claimed in their solicitation letters that the buyer could also access their fledgling weekly program as well with the use of the box.

A sample of the marketing materials that distributors of the illegal FilStream box posted on Facebook and direct mail: "Piracy is a cancer in the content industry" ABS-CBN Global COO Raffy Lopez was very clear about the company's stand against piracy.

"The management of ABS-CBN has absolutely no tolerance for content piracy. We will continue to do everything in our power to prosecute all who would attempt to pirate our content," said Lopez. "Piracy is like a cancer in the content industry. The pirates, in their selfish pursuit of short-term profits, have absolutely no regard for their negative impact on the industry. We will continue our vigilance in finding and prosecuting all pirates regardless of the cost."

According to ABS-CBN's AVP & Head of Global Anti-Piracy Elisha Lawrence, "ABS-CBN/TFC distributes its content through cable providers, its own TFC IPTV boxes, as well as via digitally on tfc.tv. Filstream's distributors contacted ABS-CBN's distributors throughout the US, Canada, Australia and Europe, soliciting them to be Filstream's distributors. They contacted customers of ABS-CBN offering their boxes in lieu of ABS-CBN's legitimate IPTV boxes. They blatantly confused customers by using ABS-CBN's registered trademarks and logos on their websites and social media sites. Their actions were despicable."

Lawrence revealed also that ABS-CBN plans to continue to initiate and enforce criminal and civil actions against anyone who steals its movies and TV shows and offers them via IPTV box, free websites or on Youtube, Daily Motion and Facebook. "ABS-CBN spends millions of dollars each year producing these TV

shows and movies and we will not allow these pirates to give them away for free," Lawrence explained.

Jun Del Rosario of ABS-CBN International also subsequently confirmed that their lawyers are reviewing newly-reported cases and will go after the dealers. Manufacturers of Illegal FilStream boxes arrested and imprisoned. Owners and operators of a factory in Shenzhen China that illegally programmed the pirate FilStream boxes to stream ABS-CBN and other pirated content have been raided by Shenzhen Police and fully shut down. Owners Alan Zhou, Roland Lu, and 2 senior programmers were arrested and are facing 7-year jail time in China.

The arrests in China were the culmination of year-long worldwide investigation spearheaded by the Philippine media and entertainment network ABS-CBN. To date, the investigation has resulted in the arrest and seizure of Filstream box distributors in Illinois and Florida. The criminal arrest and prosecution of additional distributors in multiple locations around the United States and Canada is ongoing as they receive more reports of illegal sales.

Relief for the Scam Victims

Innocent victims of the FilStream scammers will not be prosecuted. And according to Nerissa M. Fernandez, Head of ABS-CBN Global Corporate Affairs & Public Relations, all victims who purchased the

Filstream boxes, may call 1-866-746-6988 to tell their story and receive one month FREE TFC subscription or visit [www.tfc-usa.com/tfcbox](http://www.tfc-usa.com/tfcbox) for details.

Texas lawyers are also giving free legal advice to the victims that they can contact whoever sold them the illegal pirate boxes and demand a full refund of the \$220.00 or \$240.00 that they paid for the banned box. Since this is fraud, there is no time limit for demanding the refund from the scammer. Felony fraud has no statute of limitations. And if the dealer refuses to give the refunds, those who were ripped off can inform the investigative team of ABS-CBN and also file complaints with the following government agencies:

- Contact the State of Texas Attorney General Consumer Protection Division and file a complaint – Consumer Protection Division Consumer Protection Hotline: 1-800-621-0508. Note that all complaints become part of the public record.

- Contact the Harris County District Attorney's Office, Economic Crimes & Consumer Fraud Unit to explore possible criminal prosecution: Hotline: 713-274-5555