



United States District Court
District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands
2nd Floor, Horiguchi Building
123 Kopa Di Oru St., Beach Road, Garapan
Saipan, MP 96950

ANNUAL DISTRICT REPORT



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August 17, 2013

**Portrait Unveiling Ceremony
in honor of Hon. Alfred Laureta and Hon. Alex R. Munson
October 31, 2012**

On October 31, 2012 the NMI Bar Association was instrumental in arranging for former Chief Judge Alfred Laureta to return to Saipan for a portrait unveiling at the District Court, along with visiting former Chief Judge Alex R. Munson. These portraits are now installed inside the courtroom in tribute to their service.

CHIEF JUDGE ALFRED LAURETA was born in Hawaii after his parents emigrated there from the Philippines. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Hawaii at Manoa and his law degree from Fordham University School of Law in 1953. In 1967, Governor John Burns appointed him judge of the Hawaii State First Circuit Court One, where he served for ten years. Judge Laureta served as the first Chief Judge of the District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands from 1978 to 1988.

CHIEF JUDGE ALEX R. MUNSON succeeded Chief Judge Laureta in 1988. He received undergraduate and graduate degrees from Long Beach State College and the University of Southern California, and received his law degree from Loyola University School of Law in 1975. He served as Chief Justice of the High Court of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands from 1982 to 1988. Judge Munson served as Chief Judge of the District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands from 1988 to 2010.



**2012 Annual District Conference
Photos from Justice Sotomayor's Visit to Saipan**



U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice Sonia Sotomayor joined the U.S. District Court and the NMI Bar Association for their annual district conference in 2012. The visit marked the first time a sitting U.S. Supreme Court Justice had visited the Commonwealth. Justice Sotomayor enjoyed a luncheon with Chief Judge Manglona, NMI judges and justices and NMI Bar Association members on a beautiful day in January at American Memorial Park. Following lunch, Justice Sotomayor conducted a *conversatorio* in the U.S. District Court courtroom that permitted students who had participated in the mock trial and "We the People" programs to ask questions. Justice Sotomayor's personable and engaging style allowed students to directly interact with the justice, which created an informative and enjoyable session for the students and the bar members.

Designated Judges

The District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands is grateful to Chief Judge Frances Tydingco-Gatewood, District Court of Guam, District Judge David O. Carter, California Central District, Senior Judge Alex R. Munson, District Court of the Northern Mariana Islands, Chief Bankruptcy Judge Robert J. Faris, Hawaii Bankruptcy Court, Magistrate Judge Joaquin V. E. Manibusan, District Court of Guam, Presiding Judge Robert C. Naraja, CNMI Superior Court and Associate Judge David A. Wiseman, CNMI Superior Court, who have generously provided their time to serve this court as designated judges.



Criminal Justice Act Panel Activities

To ensure quality representation to the indigent, CJA panel attorneys have been required to attend training sessions throughout the year to maintain their membership on the panel. Chief Judge Manglona worked with James Sirok (*above*) to provide training sessions on a variety of federal criminal defense topics. These specialized training programs have included: *Challenging a Grand Jury Indictment, CJA Voucher Guidelines, The Speedy Trial Act and Related Issues Under the U.S. Constitution, "Real Time" Court Reporting, Defending Federal Internet Child Pornography Cases* and *Ethical Considerations in Criminal Defense*.



Colin Thompson is the new Lawyer Representative to the 9th Circuit

Sean Frink served as the Lawyer Representative from 2011 to 2013, and was succeeded by Colin Thompson earlier this year. Mr. Thompson will attend the Lawyer Representative Coordinating Committee conference each year on behalf of the NMI and assist with the organization of the annual District Court Conference.

Portrait Unveiling Ceremony in Honor of the Clerks of Court November 2, 2012

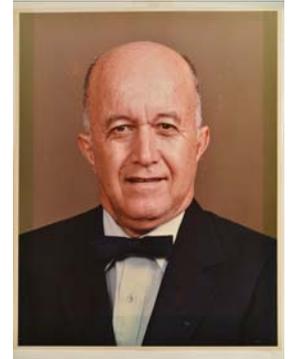
Upon the retirement of Galo L. Perez as Clerk of Court, the District Court honored its past Clerks by hanging portraits to be hung in the lobby of the Clerk's Office.



Galo L. Perez
September 9, 1991
to
November 2, 2012



Hedwig V. Hofschneider
September 17, 1984
to
June 1, 1991



John Ilalaole Jr.
August 7, 1978
to
September 30, 1984

RETIREMENT OF GALO L. PEREZ

Galo Lujan Perez, Clerk of Court for the United States District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands, retired on November 2, 2012. For forty-eight years, Mr. Perez devoted his working life to service to the judiciary in the Northern Marianas and Guam. He began his career in 1964 as a Deputy Clerk in the Guam Superior Court. In 1969, he joined the federal judiciary at the District Court of Guam, where he became Chief Deputy Clerk. In 1991, Chief Judge Alex R. Munson invited Mr. Perez to join the NMI District Court as Clerk of Court following the untimely passing of Hedwig Hofschneider.



Mr. Perez served the NMI District Court for 21 years and shepherded the Court through the transition from the retirement of Judge Munson in February 2010 through the first year of the tenure of Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona. The District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands gratefully acknowledges Mr. Perez's lifetime contribution and particularly his forty-three years of public service in the administration of justice.



Dan Terzian Joins the Court

In November 2012, we welcomed a new Law Clerk, Dan Terzian. Dan is a graduate of UCLA Law School and California Polytechnic State University, and is admitted to the California State Bar. Dan previously worked at the Peking University School of Transnational Law and at an international NGO.

Dan succeeds QuynhChi Nguyen, whom we thank for her successful term as Law Clerk.



Naturalization Ceremonies

The Court held six naturalization ceremonies this year. In total, it administered the naturalization oath of allegiance to 81 new U.S. citizens. Keynote speakers included Congressman Gregorio Kilili Sablan, Chief Justice Alexandro Castro, United States Attorney Alicia Limtiaco, and Mariano Fajardo of the VFW. On a per capita basis, the number of citizens naturalized in the Northern Mariana Islands exceeded that of 33 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

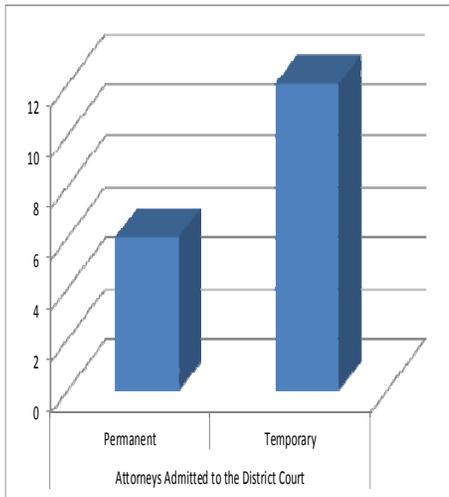


U.S. Constitution Day—September 17, 2012



Veteran's Day—November 13, 2012

Attorneys Admitted to Practice in the District Court for the Period from July 2012 to June 2013



President's Day—February 19, 2013



Law Day—April 22, 2013



Flag Day—June 14, 2013

Electronic Case Records Project

Docket records for all current cases at the District Court are available online through the Case Management / Electronic Case Filing (CM/ECF) System. But what about older cases from before CM/ECF? Those legacy records were only available in the original “paper” case files, but now the District Court is making all its case records available online, going as far back as its inception in 1978.

A team of six persons spent several months scanning and reviewing all 85,000 paper documents (nearly 600,000 pages) from the legacy case files. The scanned files were “OCR’d” (converted into searchable text) and saved as Adobe Acrobat PDF documents. One full-time staff member is now dedicated to the task of docketing legacy cases in CM/ECF, and uploading a PDF document for each legacy docket entry. We anticipate completing this project by the end of 2014.

As the project progresses, you will find the legacy cases and docket sheets available online through CM/ECF. However, only documents filed after September 21, 2004 will be downloadable onto your own computer. Cases and docket entries all the way back to 1978 will be displayed in CM/ECF, but the attached documents prior to September 21, 2004 are considered “unredacted” and potentially could have sensitive information (SS numbers, birth dates, addresses etc.), and are therefore restricted from worldwide publication through CM/ECF. To view the attached documents for older cases you will still need to come to the District Court and access the document on our public terminals inside the courthouse. You can print these legacy documents (10¢ per page) at the District Court, but you cannot obtain the document in electronic form.

Despite this access restriction, you will still find it useful to view the docket sheets of legacy cases in CM/ECF. This will streamline your research at the District Court when you (or your staff) come to use our public terminals to view or print legacy case documents.



Technicians scanning legacy criminal cases.



Heather L. Kennedy Appointed Clerk of Court

On April 15, 2013, Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona appointed Heather L. Kennedy to serve as Clerk of Court at the District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands. Kennedy was selected from a field of highly qualified professionals from throughout the United States, who were vetted by a three-member merit selection panel. She succeeded Galo L. Perez, who retired in November, 2012 after serving twenty-one years at the District Court.

Heather Kennedy Sworn in as the First-ever Magistrate Judge for the District Court.

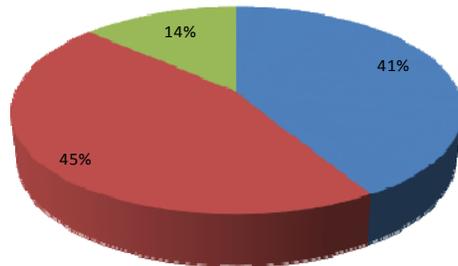
Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona appointed Heather Kennedy to serve as the first-ever Magistrate Judge for the District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands. Magistrate Judge Kennedy took her oath of office during a public investiture ceremony on Tuesday, June 11, 2013 with judicial officials, bar members, family and friends in attendance. Magistrate judges are authorized to perform a range of judicial functions including issuing arrest and search warrants and presiding over preliminary criminal proceedings, such as initial appearances and detention hearings. For civil cases, Judge Kennedy will assist Chief Judge Manglona, when assigned, by handling preliminary matters, including discovery and settlement conferences. As Clerk of Court/Magistrate Judge, Kennedy becomes only the third in the nation to hold this combined position.



STATISTICS

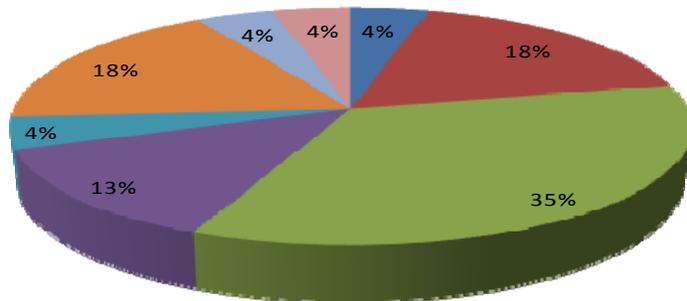
Types of Cases Filed

■ Criminal ■ Civil ■ Bankruptcy



Criminal Filings: Nature of Case

■ Firearms/Explosives
 ■ Drugs
 ■ Immigration Crimes
 ■ Sex Crimes (Child Pornography/Trafficking)
 ■ Environmental
 ■ Fraud/Embezzlement/Currency Crimes
 ■ Obstruction of Justice
 ■ Other



New Federal Office Building

For many years there have been on-and-off plans to relocate the NMI District Court, U.S. Probation Office, U.S. Marshal Service, and U.S. Attorney to a new building. Although we have been happy tenants of the Horiguchi Building, it

is not possible to meet the physical security requirements for federal offices in our current location. Presently we are working with the General Services Administration (GSA) to move to a new leased space that will meet federal security standards. The formal contracting process is within GSA's hands, and a number of respondents and proposed sites have been pre-qualified to submit lease proposals. The location of the new building has not been determined as the selection process is currently on-going. The new lease should be awarded in early 2014, with occupancy expected in late 2015.

District Court's New and Improved Website

In September 2012, the District Court launched its new website. The site features news and announcements on the home page and improved access to vital resources and information for lawyers, jurors, and the public.

