

LEADER'S digest

Leaders are made, not born. The political arena is always in constant need of good leaders, a potential endeavor that is yet to be tapped by Filipinos here in the United States. As the second largest Asian American community in America, we still have yet to harvest the fruits of being politically empowered—one that can only be achieved in numbers. Leader's Digest features elected and appointed officials—regardless of political affiliation—in the different US states who are of Filipino ancestry. The Asian Journal recognizes its social responsibility in bringing political empowerment to Filipino Americans, especially for future generations. As your Filipino American community newspaper, this is our way of waving our banner proudly and making our voices heard all over America.

Carlos Sinnung Civic leader

by MOMAR G. VISAYA
AJP/Press



Carlos Sinnung has been pushing for the Filipino community's participation in the political process, and he believes that his election to the Board of Education in Passaic back in 2001 is a step in the right direction.

The veteran civic leader and accountant topped the school board elections in the City of Passaic, NJ, back then as he bested eight other candidates in a hotly contested race. A native of Pamplona town in Cagayan Valley, Sinnung came to the United States in 1969.

"I started putting people together when I came here. Because of my experience and the experiences of my friends, we felt that the only way that we can get a piece of the recognition, inclusion and respect is to band together and do social work first," Sinnung told the Asian Journal.

He organized social activities in the city, among them the annual Philippine Day parade and festival as a way to show the strength and numbers of the Filipinos in the area.

It is also a little-known fact that their group has always highlighted the cause of the Filipino war veterans and that they have a monument in Passaic to honor these veterans. "We knew already the importance of highlighting that so

that the public will know that we Filipinos have been serving this country even during the war," he shared.

After laying the groundwork came the next step, a seat at the local school board, which was to test the strength and the level of acceptance in the community. Sinnung holds a Bachelor's Degree in Commerce from the Far Eastern University and worked in the field of accounting and auditing.

He is actively involved in numerous organizations, and was the founder of the Filipino Association of Northern New Jersey, the Filipino-American Voters' League of Passaic and Philippine Day Organizing Council.

"I am very pleased to share to the city that I can do the job, and I am happy that they are confident that I can do it. As an accountant and auditor, I show to the public that my line of work is proper and appropriate to safeguard the use of education monies," Sinnung shared.

Sinnung takes pride in the fact that members of the Filipino community in Passaic work together to make sure that their voices are heard.

"Through political empowerment, we are able to fight for the jobs. Filipinos are qualified and must be given a chance to apply for different kinds of jobs—from the cafeteria to teachers to custodians and up to the controllership," he added. According to the 2000 U.S. census, there are 95,063 people in New Jersey reported Filipino descent. In Passaic County, that number was 4,505. Close to 900 lived in the city of Passaic, according to the census results. ■

Rodel E. Rodis

Trustee,
San Francisco
Community
College Board



by MALOU L. AGUILAR
AJP/Press

have the money to support candidates for public office," he said and added, "When I thought - about running for the state assembly representing San Francisco, Colma and Daly City, I realized that I couldn't financially compete with the other announced candidates."

However, he still keeps an optimistic view and encourages younger FilAms to be more involved in issues and in the mainstream political scene. "Right now, they're doing it," he said and explained, "Hundreds, if not thousands of young FilAms throughout the US (including my three sons) are actively involved in the Filipinos for Obama campaign. They're fighting for their future." This, he says, can hopefully inspire them to become involved in local politics.

But for Rodis, his biggest achievement is being a part in building the National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA) in 1997. He pitched in the proposal to Alex Esclamado, former publisher of Philippine News and Loida Nicolas Lewis, CEO of TLC

HE has served as President of the Board of Trustees of the San Francisco Community College during 2005, but previously, he also served as President in 1998 and 2002. Since 1991, Rodel Rodis has been elected to the Board by the voters of San Francisco four times—in 1992, 1996, 2000 and 2004—each time receiving more than 100,000 votes.

When asked if he is considering aspiring for higher political office, Rodis shares this sad reality, "The problem about aspiring for higher political office is that our community does not

Beatrice.

"They liked the concept and together we organized the NaFFAA in Washington DC in August of 1997." Last September 24, NaFFAA held its 8th biennial National Empowerment Conference in Seattle and was attended by over 500 delegates from the 12 national regions of NaFFAA.

At present, he serves as State Chair of the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), as well as the National President of the Association of Asian/Pacific Islander Community College

Trustees. ACCT represents the 6,500 community college trustees in 1,200 community colleges in North America and the United Kingdom.

Born and raised in the Philippines, Rodis is also an attorney in private practice with a special emphasis on immigration law and civil litigation. He has also taught Philippine History and Political Science in the School of Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State University for six years and was an instructor of Asian American History at Laney College in Oakland. ■

La Maharlika Lions Club Presents 'Filipiniana Fashion Icons'

THE Los Angeles Maharlika Lions Club proudly presents 'Filipiniana Fashion Icons,' who will be modeling elegant Filipiniana ternos & gowns on Saturday, October 18, 2008 at the DoubleTree Hotel, 100 City Drive, Orange, CA. to support the many projects of the Lions Club. At this event we will also be recogniz-

ing the "2008 Community Leaders". Music will be provided by Willie Manaca & The Midnight Motion Band. Tickets are available through Lion Lisa Santos (951) 217-4089; Lion Dr. Teri Pastor (310) 707-8480; Lion Ellen Abejuela (909) 861-3358; Lion Susan Aquino (909) 816-2920 or Lion Heidi Stone (909) 902-5813.

LI Alumni Dinner-Dance Party

THE Lian Institute Alumni Association (Lian, Batangas) will hold their Hawaiian Dance Party at the Arcadia Community Center on Saturday, October 11, 2008. The coordinator of this year's event is Paul Vergara (562) 818-9540. Music will be provided by Willie Manaca & The Midnight Motion Band. For other related info, please call the advisers: Danny Mundo (626) 833-8272; Ining Ignacio (858) 220-5550; Ding Abratique; Myra Masipag or Efrén Abratique at (213) 251-5960.

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