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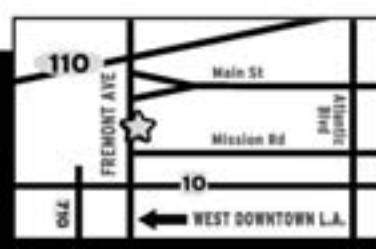
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LARRY YANG is a graduate of Georgetown University Law Center with a master's degree in Law and practices before California State Courts, United States District Courts, the California Appeals for the 9th Circuit and U.S. Bankruptcy Courts.

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2,000 Fil-Ams Attend 111th...

PAGE A3 — not political freedom — but freedom from poverty, and hunger, freedom from fear; we continue to be beset by major insurgencies — communist insurgencies, separatists' insurgency, and of course, the terrorists' threat from some extremists. We are still seeking freedom from ignorance and freedom from disease," Secretary Reyes said.

"The mere fact that you were able to assemble 2,000 Filipinos here — by far the biggest such assembly in the United States — is commendable. It has never been done before. And so I have to congratulate all of you," Reyes said.

"Because this is our Independence Day, let me begin my short speech by using the language used by our national hero, Jose Rizal, in his poem, *Mi Ultimo Adios*, which he wrote in Spanish," declared Senator Escudero, reciting the first two stanzas of Rizal's final adieu. The junior senator from Sorsogon's first district then delivered the rest of his speech in flawless Tagalog.

"My speech will be short, and I will use our national language," he began his speech, paraphrasing from the poems written by the Philippines' national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal. "If the Philippines is really a paradise, why is there so much poverty? *Kung tunay ngang paraisong pinabayaan ang Pilipinas*, when Rizal wrote *Mi Ultimo Adios*, *bakit tila hindi na tayo natuto? At hanggang ngayon, paraiso pa rin patuloy na pinabayaan ang ating bansa?* (If it is true that the Philippines is paradise lost as Dr. Jose Rizal wrote in his poem, *Mi Ultimo Adios*, why is it that we do not seem to learn our lessons? Up to now, that paradise is still lost.)

"*Bakit nga ba sa Pilipinas, walang sumusunod sa batas trapiko?* (Why is it that in the Philip-

ines the Filipinos do not follow traffic rules and regulations?) Escudero posed.

"Many are saying that we should wait for another generation before we can achieve real change in the country. I do not believe that. You are a testament that this is not true," Escudero reasoned.

"We know the difference between right and wrong. We do not have to teach this in our schools and in our homes... Maybe we should ask the present President to give us inspiration so that we could renew our trust in the government; so that we could give our strength, our talents, our skills, wherever we are," Escudero suggested. "The nation needs help, it needs the help of every Filipino wherever they are," he told the 2,000 cheering guests.

"Although we are not at war with the countries that colonized us, we are now fighting against a different opponent. Our nation's enemy right now is poverty, neglect from the government; and not enough assistance being given to the needy, especially those who are disabled," Escudero added.

In closing, the senator said, "My only hope from everyone here is not to forget where we came from. But much more than that, I hope that our so-called second generation of Filipinos, your sons and grandchildren, Filipinos who are American-born for who were raised abroad, Filipinos who were born in the Philippines but were raised in foreign countries; I hope that you do not let them grow not knowing the country where we were born. I hope that you do not let them grow without knowing the country where their parents came from."

Escudero declared: "The word hope pertains to a time that is yet to come. It pertains to a place

that we have yet to reach. It pertains to an individual that is yet to be molded. [In] my mind, the Filipino youth today can be depended on by the nation. For the more or less 92 million Filipinos, there are [young] Filipinos that can be counted on" a clear reference to himself as one of the nation's youngest senators serving in the Philippine Senate today. "This means that if we allow only the older generation to serve our country, there will be fewer Filipinos who will participate for the greater good of our motherland," Escudero said.

"But if every Filipino — young or old — if every Filipino living in the Philippines or outside of it; if every Filipino — man or woman, rich or poor, educated or not; if everyone will pitch in, I believe that there is no reason why we could not overtake the challenges and trials that the country is currently experiencing today."

"Let us pick up lessons from our history; but let us always look ahead to where we intend to go," he said. ■

Mancao's...

PAGE A1 — "Well, I'm worried but at the same time I'm excited I still have trust in justice there in the Philippines. I hope," she said.

"What is important is not the person holding the office but the office (DOJ) itself," added Mrs. Mancao's attorney Arnedo Valera, who is accompanying the family.

Valera said this is the first step for the family to regain a sense of normalcy.

"I think what is important is for normalcy to return to the life of Maricar, Cesar and the family," said Valera. "Hopefully, when his job of telling the truth and serving justice [is done] and there will be no complications, I think Cesar would be a happy man since he fulfilled his mission."

Upon arriving to Manila, Valera, Mrs. Mancao and her family will be met with NBI officers at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

They will go directly to the NBI office to meet with Mancao.

Mrs. Mancao said that the family plans to stay in the Philippines for a month before heading back to the US. ■

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