

Solon wants Rizal Day moved to June 19

by LIRA DALANGIN-FERNANDEZ
Inquirer.net

MANILA – Saying the birth of the country's national hero, Jose Rizal, should be commemorated instead of his death, the House of Representatives has taken initiatives to move the observance of Rizal Day to June 19, the date of his birth, from December 30, the date he was executed.

The chamber has approved on third and final reading House Bill 5408 to amend the Administra-

tive Code of 1987 to change the commemoration of the event.

Manila Representative Jaime Lopez, the sponsor of the measure, said June 19 was the appropriate date to observe Rizal Day.

"Dr. Jose Rizal devoted practically all of his 35 years of existence on earth in putting premium on education and knowledge; and not on violence as a means of change," Lopez said.

Rizal's writings awakened Filipinos to unite together to at-

tain the much-needed independence against foreign domination. His death alone did not trigger the 1896 revolution that Filipinos thought catapulted the country to independence, Lopez said.

"It was his life-long accomplishments done during his lifetime that inspired and pushed us Filipinos to fight and work for our greatness as a race," he added.

Laguna Representative Justin Marc Chipeco, another author, said June 19 should be declared a national holiday, a non-working public holiday throughout the country. ■

Low-skilled OFWs top dollar remitters

by VERONICA UY
Inquirer.net

MANILA — Contrary to popular belief, low- and semi-skilled overseas Filipino workers are the top source of dollar remittances of the country, according to an analysis of remittance data made by the Institute for Migration and Development Issues.

In her analysis of the data from the National Statistics Office from 2001 to 2007, Beverly Jane Bulanday, an intern at the institute, found that the collective remittances of male and female low- and semi-skilled OFWs comprise the biggest among the other skills level categories.

She concluded that OFWs who fall under the categories "trades and related workers, plant and machine operators and assemblers, and laborers and unskilled workers" are the "major drivers of the country's 'remittance economy.'"

"Every time government authorities release monthly data on billion-dollar remittances from overseas Filipinos, the rise of these flows of monies is attributed to increasing salaries from professionals and technical workers," Bulanday said.

"But findings from the annual Survey on Overseas Filipinos have always shown that female domestic workers and male production workers are the top overseas Filipino remitters," she said.

The survey shows that from 2001 to 2007, except for 2006, male plant and machine operators and assemblers were the top remitters (P7.92 in 2001, P8.73 billion in 2002, P9.55 billion in 2003, P11.7 billion in 2004, P10.4 billion in 2005, and P14.5 billion in 2007). In 2006, male trade and related workers topped the list, remitting P13.1 billion.

The same survey shows that female laborers and unskilled workers, which is the category of household services, dominated the top remitters list from 2001 to 2007: P6.45 billion in 2001, P7.322 billion in 2002, P7.434 billion in 2003, P9.32 billion in 2004, P9.73 billion in

2005, P12.674 billion in 2006, and P13.08 billion in 2007.

In contrast, male and female "officials of government and special interest organizations, corporate executives, managers, managing proprietors, and supervisors" were remitting only between P46 million and P4 billion through the same period.

Bulanday explained that low- and semi-skilled OFWs contribute the biggest amount of remittances because they comprise the biggest number of migrant Filipino workers.

"This is simply because job markets abroad call for such occupations for foreign workers. This trend will all the more continue even as there are efforts to attract more skilled workers in developing countries, and there are continued restrictions to the movement of low-skilled or semi-skilled labor," she predicted.

As such, Bulanday called on the government and other stakeholders to focus their attention on these workers, especially in terms of protecting their rights and welfare.

"An approach as regards their and their families' management of remittances that understands their being semi-skilled and low-skilled workers abroad is called for. They remit frequently, they also try out micro to small enterprises, and have to repay debts incurred prior to their migration overseas," she said. ■

Ortigas patriarch passes away at 74

by DORIS DUMLAO
Inquirer.net

MANILA – Don Rafael "Rafa" Ortigas, the patriarch of the Spanish-descended Ortigas family, quietly passed away Monday afternoon due to "massive pulmonary embolism" at age 74, a family spokesperson said.

His remains were cremated Tuesday morning and his family, wanting privacy, had chosen not to hold a wake, the spokesperson said.

Ortigas was president of the privately held Ortigas & Co., developer of the Ortigas financial district, Greenhills Shopping Center, Tiendesitas and a number of upscale residential subdivisions. ■

D'ANDREA LAW CORPORATION

PASADENA KOLL CENTER
1055 EAST COLORADO BLVD
SUITE 500
PASADENA, CA 91106



DLC

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Law Office of Daniela Koiman

20700 Ventura Boulevard Suite 230 Woodland Hills, California 91364

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