

Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

EN BANC

ANONYMOUS,

Complainant,

A.M. No. P-25-307

[Formerly JIB FPI No. 22-163-P]

-versus-

REVELYN O. ESTRERA, Clerk
III, Branch 22, Regional Trial
Court, Kabacan, North Cotabato,
Respondent.

Present:

GESMUNDO, C.J.,
LEONEN,*
CAGUIOA,
HERNANDO,
LAZARO-JAVIER,
INTING,**
ZALAMEDA,
GAERLAN,
ROSARIO,
LOPEZ,
DIMAAMPAO,
MARQUEZ,
KHO, JR.,
SINGH, and
VILLANUEVA, JJ.

Promulgated:

February 11, 2026

x

DECISION

PER CURIAM:

* On official business.
** On leave.

Before the Court is this administrative matter which stemmed from an undated Anonymous Letter¹ addressed to the Judicial Integrity Board (JIB) charging respondent Revelyn O. Estrera (Estrera) with serious dishonesty relative to her civil service eligibility (CSE).

The Antecedents

In the Anonymous Letter, the complainant alleged that Estrera faked her civil service eligibility by having another person take her civil service examination on her behalf. The complainant condemned the unfairness of this situation, emphasizing that Estrera was ineligible for the position and, therefore, had no rightful claim to the salaries and benefits attached to it. Thus, the complainant urged that an investigation be conducted on this matter.²

The Anonymous Letter was thereafter referred to the Office of the General Counsel (OGC) given its anonymous nature.³

Investigation by the OGC

Acting on the Anonymous Letter, the OGC secured from the Office of the Court Administrator-Office of Administrative Services (OCA-OAS), a copy of Estrera's service record. Notably, Estrera's service record did not contain information on her CSE.⁴ Thus, OCA-OAS directed Estrera to submit an authenticated copy of her CSE.⁵ Estrera submitted her CSE, which stated the following facts:

1. That [Estrera] passed the Career Service Professional Examination held in CSC Regional Office XI on May 21, 1997;
2. That [Estrera] received a general rating of Eighty-Seven and 30/100 (87.30%); and
3. That the Certificate of Eligibility was issued on May 21, 1997.⁶

¹ *Rollo*, p. 9.

² *Id.*

³ *Id.* at 85.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.* at 15.

⁶ *Id.* at 11, Certified Authenticated Copy the Certificate of Eligibility of Revelyn O. Estrera. N.B. The Certificate of Eligibility was certified as an authenticated copy by Mr. Christopher B. Pablan, Supervising Human Resource Specialist, Examination Services Division, Civil Service Commission Regional Office No. XI, with OR No. 7995376-4 issued on July 25, 2022.

The OGC requested Civil Service Commission Regional Office No. XI (CSC-RO XI) to verify the authenticity of the CSE submitted by Estrera and to confirm whether she took the examination herself or caused another individual to do so, as alleged.⁷

In response, CSC-RO XI requested a clear copy of Estrera's photograph to verify her identity.⁸ The OGC, in turn, sent a copy of a photograph obtained from Estrera's personal data sheet (PDS) found in her 201 file.⁹

In a Letter¹⁰ dated August 23, 2022, the CSC-RO XI confirmed that the CSE submitted by Estrera was authentic. However, it also noted significant discrepancies between the facial features of the photograph from Estrera's PDS and the photograph affixed on the picture seat plan for the CSE Professional Examinations conducted on May 21, 1997. The PDS photograph likewise differed from Estrera's photograph on her unified multi-purpose identification card (UMID). In particular, the CSC-RO XI pointed out, thus:

Features	Picture Seat Plan	PDS
Shape of the Face	Triangular shape	Oval shape
Nose	Small	Big
Eyebrows	Arching; distance of both brows is closer	Distance of the brows is wider
Ears	Ears are closer to the head	Ears are prominently out
Lips	Thinner	Thicker lips ¹¹

Accordingly, CSC-RO XI recommended that the OGC conduct a further investigation and committed to pursuing a parallel inquiry to ascertain whether impersonation had indeed taken place.¹²

The OGC, in turn, concurred with the observations of the CSC-RO XI. Hence, on September 15, 2022, the OGC formally charged Estrera with serious dishonesty.¹³ Aside from contrasting facial features, the OGC also observed discernible differences in Estrera's handwriting and signature on her PDS and the impersonator's handwriting and signature on the picture seat plan. The signature on the picture seat plan was more compact while Estrera's signature on her PDS appeared to be more scribbles with loops.¹⁴ Taken together, the evidence led to no other conclusion except that someone else took the examination on behalf of Estrera.¹⁵

⁷ *Id.* at 86.

⁸ *Id.* at 21.

⁹ *Id.* at 25.

¹⁰ *Id.* at 22-23.

¹¹ *Id.* at 22.

¹² *Id.* at 23.

¹³ *Id.* at 2-7, Complaint dated September 15, 2022 signed by General Counsel Romulo A. Paras, Jr.

¹⁴ *Id.* at 6.

¹⁵ *Id.* at 5-6.

The JIB required Estrera to submit her verified comment within 10 days from notice.¹⁶

On November 16, 2022, Estrera filed a Motion for Extension of Time to File Comment¹⁷ requesting for an additional 10 days, citing the limited time within which she had to gather the pieces of evidence to be used in her defense. In a Letter,¹⁸ dated November 17, 2022, the JIB allowed Estrera to file her verified comment until November 27, 2022.

On November 22, 2022, Estrera filed her Comment,¹⁹ praying that the charges against her be dismissed for being frivolous and false.

In her defense, Estrera insisted that she personally took the civil service examinations in 1997. As proof, she attached photographs taken on dates nearer to the time she took the civil service examination which included, among others, a Comelec ID, a photograph taken when she was still an employee of the Christ the King Multipurpose Cooperative, and a graduation picture.²⁰ To counter the allegation that the handwriting and signature on the picture seat plan differed from her signature on her PDS, she attached several documents. This included a Special Power of Attorney executed on January 26, 1998, Deed of Mortgage executed on February 15, 1998, a promissory note executed on July 21, 1999, Performance Appraisal Rating, and Barangay Clearance.²¹ Further, she expressed her willingness to submit the aforementioned documents to a handwriting expert to refute the accusation against her.²² Finally, she maintained that she has served the Judiciary with honesty and integrity for more than 20 years, starting from 2002 as a utility worker until she was promoted to her present position in 2005.²³

Report and Recommendation of the JIB

In his Report and Recommendation,²⁴ Acting Executive Director Atty. Eduardo Tolentino (AED Tolentino) of the JIB recommended that Estrera be found guilty of serious dishonesty.

¹⁶ *Id.* at 28, 1st Indorsement dated September 28, 2022.

¹⁷ *Id.* at 44-46.

¹⁸ *Id.* at 47.

¹⁹ *Id.* at 29-34.

²⁰ *Id.* at 36-38.

²¹ *Id.* at 39-43.

²² *Id.* at 33.

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ *Id.* at 56-64. The August 12, 2024 Report and Recommendation was signed by Atty. Eduardo C. Tolentino, Acting Executive Director of the Judicial Integrity Board, Manila.

IN VIEW OF THE FOREGOING, it is respectfully submitted for the consideration of the Honorable Board that the following be recommended to the Supreme Court:

1. The instant administrative complaint against **Revelyn O. Estrera, Clerk III**, Branch 22, Regional



In an Amended Report and Recommendation,²⁵ the Acting Executive Director of the JIB reiterated his earlier recommendation, thus:

IN VIEW OF THE FOREGOING, it is respectfully submitted for the consideration of the Honorable Board that the following be recommended to the Supreme Court:

1. The instant administrative Complaint against **Revelyn O. Estrera**, Clerk III, Branch 22, Regional Trial Court, Kabacan, North Cotabato, be **RE-DOCKETED** as a regular administrative matter; and
2. Respondent Estrera be found **GUILTY** of serious dishonesty and be **DISMISSED** from the service, with cancellation of [c]ivil [s]ervice [e]ligibility, forfeiture of all benefits, except accrued leave credits, and disqualification for reemployment in the government service, including government-owned or controlled corporations, without prejudice to any criminal and/or civil service liability in a proper action.²⁶ (Emphasis in the original)

In a Resolution²⁷ dated September 18, 2025, the JIB adopted the Amended Report and Recommendation.

The Issue

The issue posed for resolution is whether the respondent can be held administratively liable for serious dishonesty.

The Court's Ruling

The Court rules in the affirmative.

During the pendency of this case, A.M. No. 25-06-11-SC, otherwise known as "The 2025 Code of Conduct and Accountability for Court Officials

Trial Court, Kabacan, North Cotabato, be **RE-DOCKETED** as a regular administrative matter; and

2. Respondent Estrera be found **GUILTY** of **Serious Dishonesty** and be **DISMISSED** from the service, with cancellation of civil service eligibility, forfeiture of all benefits, except accrued leave credits, and disqualification for reemployment in the government service, including government-owned or controlled corporations, without prejudice to any criminal and/or civil service liability in a proper action.²⁴ (Emphasis in the original)

²⁵ *Id.* at 85–91. The September 15, 2025 Report and Recommendation was signed by Atty. Eduardo C. Tolentino, Acting Executive Director of the Judicial Integrity Board, Manila.

²⁶ *Id.* at 90–91.

²⁷ *Id.* at 92. The September 18, 2025 Resolution was signed by Acting Chairperson Justice Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez (Ret.), and Third Regular Member Justice Cielito N. Mindaro-Grulla (Ret.), of the Judicial Integrity Board, Manila.

and Personnel,” took effect²⁸ superseding Rule 140 of the Rules of Court.²⁹ Hence, the respondent’s liability shall be determined in accordance with these provisions.

Respondent is liable for serious dishonesty, a serious charge

The Court adopts the findings and recommendation of the JIB to dismiss the respondent from the service for serious dishonesty.

Jurisprudence has defined dishonesty as follows:

... “intentionally making a false statement in any material fact, or practicing or attempting to practice any deception or *fraud in securing his [or her] examination, registration, appointment or promotion.*” It implies a disposition to lie, cheat, deceive, or defraud; unworthiness; lack of integrity; lack of honesty, probity or integrity in principle; lack of fairness and straightforwardness; disposition to defraud, deceive or betray.

Hence, “like bad faith, [dishonesty] is not simply bad judgment or negligence . . . [it] is a question of intention. In ascertaining the intention of a person accused of dishonesty, consideration must be taken not only of the facts and circumstances which gave rise to the act committed by the respondent, but also of his [or her] state of mind at the time the offense was committed, the time he [or she] might have had at his [or her] disposal for the purpose of meditating on the consequences of his [or her] act, and the degree of reasoning he [or she] could have had at that moment.” In other words, *dishonesty is a willful and voluntary act which cannot be justified under the guise of negligence or ignorance.*³⁰ (Emphasis supplied, citations omitted)

In several cases,³¹ the Court has been consistent in ruling that a case of impersonation—allowing one person to take the civil service examination on behalf of another to ensure a passing mark—is a form of dishonesty.

²⁸ A.M. No. 25-06-11-SC, took effect on December 21, 2025.

²⁹ A.M. No. 25-06-11-SC, General Provisions, SECTION 2. *Repealing clause.* — All rules, administrative circulars, issuances, orders, and principles established in the decisions of the Supreme Court that are inconsistent with the provisions of this Code are repealed, amended, and superseded accordingly.

³⁰ *Re: Alleged Dishonesty and Grave Misconduct committed by Nestor D. Bulaong*, 900 Phil. 372, 374–375 (2021) [*Per Curiam, En Banc*].

³¹ *Id.*; *Alleged Examination Irregularity Committed by Court Stenographer I Norhata A. Abubacar, Shari’a Circuit Court, Lumbatan, Lanao del Sur*, 887 Phil. 267 (2020) [*Per Curiam, En Banc*]; *Re: Alleged Civil Service Examinations Irregularity of Mr. Bautista et al.*, 886 Phil. 544 (2020) [*Per Curiam, En Banc*]; *Civil Service Commission v. Hadji Ali*, 711 Phil. 376 (2013) [*Per Curiam, En Banc*]; *Re: Complaint of CSC, CAR, Baguio City Against Chulyao, MCTC-Barlig, Mountain Province*, 646 Phil. 34 (2010) [*Per Curiam, En Banc*].

Moreover, under Section 3 of the Civil Service Rules, dishonesty is classified as serious when it is qualified by any of the following circumstances:

- a. The dishonest act causes serious damage and grave prejudice to the government.
- b. The respondent gravely abused his [or her] authority in order to commit the dishonest act.
- c. Where the respondent is an accountable officer, the dishonest act directly involves property, accountable forms or money for which he [or she] is directly accountable and the respondent shows an intent to commit material gain, graft and corruption.
- d. The dishonest act exhibits moral depravity on the part of the respondent.
- e. The respondent employed fraud and/or falsification of official documents in the commission of the dishonest act related to his/her employment.
- f. The dishonest act was committed several times or in various occasions.
- g. *The dishonest act involves a Civil Service examination, irregularity or fake Civil Service eligibility such as, but not limited to, impersonation, cheating and use of crib sheets.*
- h. Other analogous circumstances.³² (Emphasis supplied)

Evidently, the respondent's conduct is classified as serious, rather than mere simple dishonesty. As will be further discussed below, the respondent's misrepresentation that she personally took the May 1997 civil service examinations despite substantial evidence to the contrary constitutes serious dishonesty.

Here, it has been established that the photograph on the picture seat plan submitted by the CSC-RO XI does not bear any semblance to the facial features of the respondent as shown in the photographs on her PDS and UMID. The discrepancy is apparent, which even an ordinary person could easily discern. Such differences in the face shape, nose, eyes, ears, and lips between the respondent's photographs give rise to the reasonable conclusion that another person had taken the civil service examination on her behalf.

To refute this, the respondent attached older photographs to her Comment, which she claims were taken nearer the date of the civil service

³² CSC Resolution No. 06-0538 (2006), sec. 3.

examinations to prove that she personally took it. However, the Court remains unconvinced. Even upon the Court's re-evaluation, the respondent failed to overturn the consistent findings of the CSC-RO IX, the OGC, and the JIB that these older photographs were not similar to the one appearing on the picture seat plan for the May 1997 civil service examinations. A closer examination of the respondent's PDS, presumably submitted in 1998 or close to 1998 because the form used was the CS Form No. 212 (revised August 1998) leads Us to the same conclusion.³³ Further, as aptly observed by the OGC,³⁴ there were discernible differences in the handwriting, and the signature in the respondent's PDS and that affixed on the picture seat plan.

It is bears emphasizing at the this point that Our reliance on the picture seat plan submitted by the CSC-RO XI is grounded in the presumption that CSC officials regularly and properly perform their official duties, particularly in relation to the conduct of civil service examinations,³⁵ thus:

We cannot even consider the possibility that the CSC officials who supervised the examinations committed a mistake in matching the pictures and signatures vis-à-vis the examinees . . .

It should be stressed that as a matter of procedure, the room examiners assigned to supervise the conduct of a Civil Service examination closely examine the pictures submitted and affixed on the [picture seat plan] (CSC Resolution No. 95-3694, Obedencio, Jaime A.). The examiners carefully compare the appearance of each of the examinees with the person in the picture submitted and affixed on the [picture seat plan]. In cases where the examinee does not look like the person in the picture submitted and attached on the [picture seat plan], the examiner will not allow the said person to take the examination (CSC Resolution No. 95-5195, Taguinay, Ma. Theresa).³⁶ (Emphasis supplied)

Thus, unless there is evidence to the contrary presented by the respondent, the presumption that the CSC officials who administered the May 1997 civil service examinations regularly performed their duties prevails.

Additionally, the CSC records are presumed to be accurate and to have been prepared in the regular course of official business. Correspondingly, the Court has recognized a picture seat plan as a public document which is admissible in evidence without the necessity of further proof of its authenticity

³³ *Rollo*, pp. 88-89.

³⁴ *Id.* at 89.

³⁵ *Civil Service Commission v. Dasco*, 587 Phil. 558, 565 (2008) [*Per Curiam, En Banc*].

³⁶ *Id.* citing *Cruz v Civil Service Commission*, 422 Phil. 236, 245 (2001) [*Per J. Kapunan, En Banc*].

and due execution.³⁷ Consequently, the entries therein, having been made in the performance of official duties, constitute *prima facie* evidence of the facts stated therein.³⁸

Indeed, this is not a case of first impression. In *Anonymous Complaint, Re: Fake Certificates of Civil Service Eligibility of Marivic B. Ragel*,³⁹ two stenographers were found guilty of dishonesty after a comparison of the photographs appearing on the picture seat plan with those in their respective PDSs submitted near the time of the civil service examinations revealed glaring differences in their facial features. Likewise considered was the variance of their signatures appearing in the same documents. Taken together, these circumstances convinced the Court therein as to their culpability. Similarly, in the case of *Civil Service Commission v. Dasco*,⁴⁰ a stenographer was found guilty of dishonesty by the Court after considering the same object evidence.

Finally, in the more recent case of *Office of the Court Administrator v. Trinilla*,⁴¹ a Clerk III was found guilty of serious dishonesty after it was ruled that an imposter took the examination on her behalf. It was discovered that the photograph attached to the picture seat plan above the name and signature of the Clerk III did not bear any semblance to her actual facial features. The Court therein even held that while there may have been similarities in the signatures of the picture seat plan and the PDS, the fact that the impostor had studied and copied the Clerk III's signature to pass herself off as the latter, is not far-fetched.

Notably, in the aforementioned cases, the Court determined the culpability of the respondent court employee even in the absence of a handwriting expert. The Court made its own determination and observed that, even upon mere ocular inspection, the signature appearing on the respondent's PDS, on the one hand, and that affixed on the picture seat plan, on the other, could not have been executed by one and the same person. Accordingly, the Court finds no need to secure the services of a handwriting expert as insisted upon by the respondent, to establish that she caused another person to take the civil service examinations on her behalf.⁴²

*Insufficient evidence for a charge of
falsification of public document to prosper*

³⁷ *In Re: Alleged Civil Service Examinations Irregularity of Mr. Bautista*, 886 Phil. 544, 554 (2020) [*Per Curiam, En Banc*].

³⁸ *Id.*

³⁹ 821 Phil. 781 (2017) [*Per Curiam, En Banc*].

⁴⁰ 587 Phil. 558 (2008) [*Per Curiam, En Banc*].

⁴¹ 908 Phil. 564, 570-571 (2021) [*Per Curiam, En Banc*].

⁴² *Rollo*, p. 89.

Certainly, it was the respondent's duty to indicate in her PDS her corresponding CSE if she were in fact, civil service eligible. The PDS is a public document, required of government employees and officials by the CSC.⁴³ It serves as a repository of all information about any government employee or official, including their personal background, qualification, and eligibility.⁴⁴

However, the copy of the respondent's PDS submitted as evidence did not state that she was civil service eligible.⁴⁵ Thus, the respondent committed no misrepresentation that could support an additional charge for falsification of public document against her.

Dismissal from the service is the proper penalty under the attendant circumstances

Court personnel serve as sentinels of justice and any act of impropriety on their part immeasurably affects the honor and dignity of the Judiciary and the people's confidence in it.⁴⁶ Indeed, parties seeking redress from the courts for their grievances look upon court personnel, from the lowliest employee to any position lower than a judge or justice, as part of the Judiciary and involved in the dispensation of justice.⁴⁷ Hence, any conduct by court personnel, whether in their official or private capacities, which tarnishes the court's reputation cannot go unpunished.

As the Court has previously observed, the offense of impersonation would not have been possible without the active participation of both the respondent and the other person who took the examination in her name.⁴⁸ Certainly, another person could have used the respondent's name in taking the examinations only with her knowledge and consent. More significantly, the respondent derived benefit from the passing result of the said examination.⁴⁹ The respondent's misrepresentation of her civil service eligibility is a material fact that enabled her to secure a permanent appointment as a Clerk III.

Dismissal from the service is one of the imposable penalties⁵⁰ for serious dishonesty, which is classified as a serious offense under Section 19(e)

⁴³ *Pagaduan v. Civil Service Commission*, 747 Phil. 590,606 (2014) [Per J. Mendoza, Second Division].

⁴⁴ *Id.*

⁴⁵ *Rollo*, p. 27.

⁴⁶ See SC Administrative Matter No. 03-06-13-SC (2004), Code of Conduct of Court Personnel, 4th whereas clause.

⁴⁷ See SC Administrative Matter No. 03-06-13-SC (2004), Code of Conduct of Court Personnel, 3rd whereas clause.

⁴⁸ 900 Phil. 372, 374, 375-376 (2021) [*Per Curiam, En Banc*].

⁴⁹ See *Id.*

⁵⁰ A.M. No. 25-06-11-SC, sec. 22(1) states [as follows]:

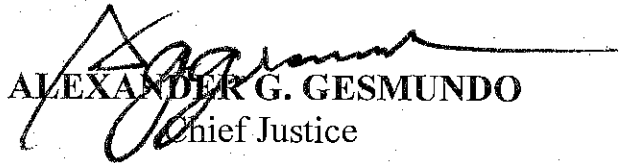
(1) If the respondent is found guilty of a Serious Offense, any of the following penalties shall be imposed:

under A.M. No. 25-06-11-SC. Under the attendant circumstances, the Court deems this as the proper penalty. "Although every office in the government service is a public trust, no position exacts a greater demand for moral righteousness and uprightness from an individual than in the [J]udiciary."⁵¹ Having falsely obtained a certificate of eligibility, the respondent prejudiced other applicants who were truly and rightfully qualified for the position. Indeed, the respondent's conduct, aimed at securing an unwarranted advantage over other more qualified applicants, constitutes a clear violation of the standards of integrity and conduct required of a public servant. The respondent is clearly unfit to continue serving in the Judiciary.

ACCORDINGLY, the Court finds respondent Revelyn O. Estrera, Clerk III, Branch 22, Regional Trial Court, Kabacan, North Cotabato **GUILTY** of serious dishonesty pursuant to Section 19(e) of A.M. No. 25-06-11-SC. She is **DISMISSED** from the service effective immediately, with the cancellation of civil service eligibility. Her retirement benefits, except accrued leave credits, are **FORFEITED**. She is **PERPETUALLY DISQUALIFIED** from reemployment in any government agency or instrumentality, including any government-owned or controlled corporations.

Let a copy of this Decision be furnished to the Office of the Court Administrator to be attached to the records of the respondent.

SO ORDERED.


ALEXANDER G. GESMUNDO
Chief Justice

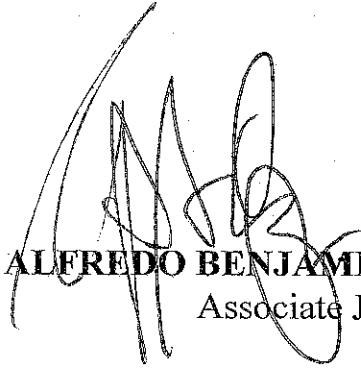
(a) Dismissal from service, forfeiture of all or part of the benefits as the Supreme Court may determine, and disqualification from reinstatement or appointment to any public office, including government-owned or -controlled corporations. *Provided, however*, that the forfeiture of benefits shall in no case include accrued leave credits;

(b) Suspension from office without salary and other benefits for one year and one day up to two years; and/or

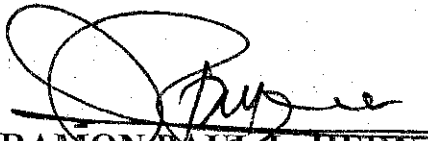
(c) A fine of more than PHP 101,000.00 but not more than PHP 500,000.00.

⁵¹ *Civil Service Commission v. Dasco*, 587 Phil. 558, 567 (2008) [*Per Curiam, En Banc*].

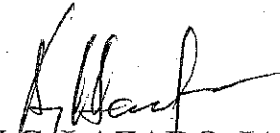
(ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS)
MARVIC M.V.F. LEONEN
Senior Associate Justice



ALFREDO BENJAMIN S. CAGUIOA
Associate Justice

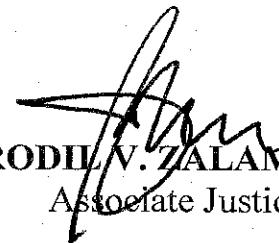


RAMON PAUL L. HERNANDO
Associate Justice

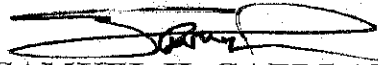


AMY C. LAZARO-JAVIER
Associate Justice

(ON LEAVE)
HENRI JEAN PAUL B. INTING
Associate Justice




RODIL V. ZALAMEDA
Associate Justice



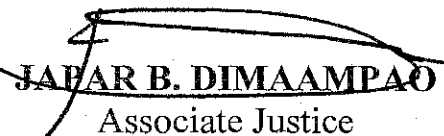
SAMUEL H. GAERLAN
Associate Justice



RICARDO R. ROSARIO
Associate Justice



JHOSEP Y. LOPEZ
Associate Justice



JAPAR B. DIMAAMPAO
Associate Justice



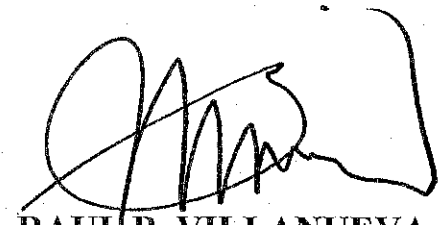
JOSE MIDAS P. MARQUEZ
Associate Justice



ANTONIO T. KHO, JR.
Associate Justice



MARIA FILOMENA D. SINGH
Associate Justice



RAUL B. VILLANUEVA
Associate Justice