

A 55-MILE FREEWAY MEMORIAL FOR ALICE BULOS (+)

The State of California honors Alice P. Bulos (+), a celebrated Filipino-American community leader, with a 55-mile Alice Pena Bulos Memorial Freeway extending from San Francisco to Santa Clara in the South. The Freeway, popularly known as Skyline Boulevard, gives a beautiful view of the Pacific ocean and meanders through many cities along the way.



Shown above is Elizabeth Bulos Ramilo, daughter of Alice Bulos.

Highly sought-after political endorsements:

- Alice was a national known doyen of Philippine politics. Bill Clinton and Hillary Clinton sought her endorsements.
- Bill Clinton appointed her as Federal Commissioner for the Aging.
- Bill Clinton invited Alice and her friends (including Aida and I) to his Presidential inaugural dinner at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.
- Thereafter, Bill Clinton would send me personally-signed Christmas cards.
- In an event at the Miyako Hotel in Japan Town, Kamala Harris lobbied the attending Filipino guests to be appointed as the next District Attorney of the City.
- Together, Alice and I (as the Chair for the Filipino-Americans for Willie Brown Committee) lobbied Willie Brown to appoint 10 Fil-Ams as SF Commissioners – which he did. Faithful to his promise.
- She did her political advocacy online through constant telephone calls.
- Many candidates for elective offices in California sought her endorsement.

Global Filipino Nation:

- Alice was a pro-active GFN Convenor.
- She enthusiastically affixed her name to all GFN Statements.
- She supported programs to promote voter registration and dual citizenship for Fil-Ams.
- She gave momentum to the political ascendancy of Fil-Am state candidates.
- She advocated Equal Suffrage Rights for PH duals, given that the Dual Citizenship Law (RA 9225) prohibits duals from running for or be appointed to public office in the Philippines. We cited the examples of many progressive countries to provide Equal Suffrage rights to their duals.

Let us now visit some relevant suffrage issues here.

- Sen. Drilon, the author of the Law, declined from taking the initiative to amend the Law. He said that the prevailing mood among lawmakers was hostile to the idea.

There was no issue about Constitutional conflict of Allegiance. Naysayers would ask: where would the duals' allegiance be in case there is a war between the US and the PH? A low-wit question.

Additionally, naysayers would assert that there is a built-in conflict of interest if a PH law was being considered that involves the US and the PH. The retort was: the legislator or public official concerned should inhibit himself from deliberation concerning the law under consideration. That is standard practice, even in the corporate world.

Naysayers also raise irrational questions like: Why give duals equal suffrage rights since they have abandoned their country? They freely chose to seek greener pastures. Should they have their cake and eat it too? Those who chose to stay in the PH truly love their country. They toil hard to survive or improve lives. The retort would be: those who migrate to other countries are seeking their optimum development and value as individuals and families. The PH has never left their hearts. They yearn to visit the PH often. Many decide to retire in the Philippine. They struggle to earn their keep in their host countries and remit weary-bodies-earned earnings to the PH. Collectively, their remittances help keep the PH economically afloat. Many OFWs in violence-ravaged countries chose to stay in their host countries and face the security risks while eking a minimum residual for their subsistence. I am reminded of a Filipina hotel manager in Vientiane, Lao PDR. She was receiving only \$200 a month in a top-rated hotel partly financed by IFC. Despite her meager earnings, which were aligned with Lao pay scales, she invited me to her home and prepared a Filipino feast! (That's a trait of many OFWs all over the world: even in London, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Romania, India, Pakistan and Uzbekistan. There are OFWs all over the place.) To support her young daughter in the PH, she confided that she had to supplement her earnings by reluctantly acceding to become the mistress of a Thai contractor! Love trumps all personal trials!

Riding the World's Storms:

- Almost 3 decades ago, Alice and I attended a Prayer Breakfast Meeting attended by about 1,000 SF City officials and business executives. The Inspirational Speaker touched the audience. Thereafter, Alice and I concluded that we should form a similar group within the Fil-Am community in San Francisco-Bay Area. Thus was born the San Francisco-Bay Area Ecumenical Prayer Group. The recurring theme of our annual prayer breakfast is "Riding the Roel's Storms".
- Every year, the special theme would be more focused on the contemporary issues of society. We would invite an Inspirational Speaker for each prayer annual meeting. The attendance at the Lower Church of St. Cecilia and other venues was always full. We held the prayer meetings at hotels or at St. Cecilia Parish because it was centrally located in San Francisco, had lots of parking, the Pastor was close to the Filipino community. St. Cecilia is the richest parish in the Archdiocese.
- One of the most memorable prayer meetings we had was when a Jewish Rabbi, a Muslim Imam and a charismatic Catholic priest actually worshiped together – not gave lectures or comments. We spent about three months negotiating the actual wording for the specific theme for the year then. We could not mention the name of Jesus in the wording or any reference to a Jewish or Muslim religious word. After considerable toying and froing, we finally decided on the theme: **"Interfaith Worship and Sharing: Witnessing God's Hand and Blessings in History and Our Lives"**. The event leaflet added: **"A community gathering to unify God's children from different lands and drawn from the Jewish, Muslim and Christian faiths...There are important common threads running through the Jewish, Islamic and Christian faiths. There is a shared belief in and acknowledgment of the God of Abraham."**
- The prayer meeting that involved 3 religions was a remarkable success in the most liberal city in the US! It gained added significance in light of the aborted plan for Pope Paul II to hold an Interfaith Worship Gathering in Jerusalem. That event was cancelled because violence widely flared up in the Holy Land.

- Alice religiously attended our annual breakfast prayers, even when she became frail and attended using a wheelchair. The last prayer she attended was on our 24th year. She quietly joined the Good Lord's Everlasting Life shortly thereafter. After our 25th year, we had to suspend the prayer meetings due to the pandemic,
- This narrative of shining aspects of Alice's life ends with our message:

THANK YOU, ALICE, FOR BEING A STERLING FORCE IN THE FILIPINO-AMERICAN COMMUNITY?



By: Global Filipino Nation