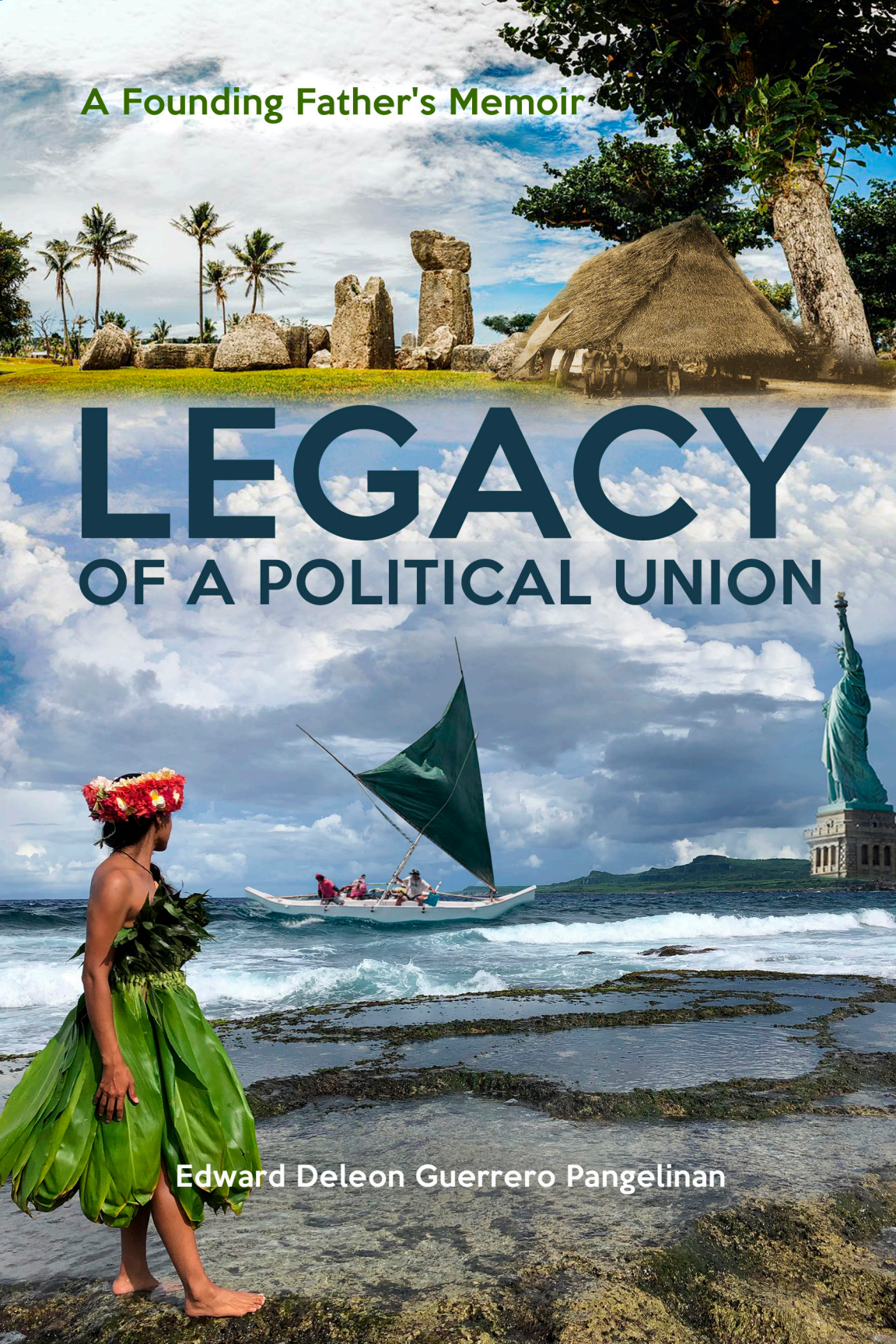


A Founding Father's Memoir

# LEGACY OF A POLITICAL UNION

Edward Deleon Guerrero Pangelinan



# **LEGACY**

**OF A POLITICAL UNION**

**Edward Deleon Guerrero Pangelinan**



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P.O. Box 506437  
Saipan, MP 96950  
(670) 235-4785  
info@nmhcouncil.org

[www.nmhcouncil.org](http://www.nmhcouncil.org)

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**Editors:**

Juan N. Babauta, Frank A. Sobolewski,  
Leo G. Pangelinan, Joseph E. Pangelinan,  
Jackie F. Pangelinan, and Victoria-Lola M. Leon Guerrero

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Nhorleen Bitco-Lilles

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## *Foreword*

The author of this memoir describes the critical efforts of the early politicians and community leaders of the former Marianas District located in the Micronesian region and a part of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands under the United States in accordance with the mandate of the United Nations Trusteeship Agreement.

This memoir describes a critical turning point in the political history of the former Marianas District in Micronesia. Under the mandate of the United Nations Trusteeship Agreement, the former Marianas District was one of the six island groups that formed the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. The trajectory toward political self-determination for the six island groups including the former Marianas District gave rise to a group of leaders with a deep commitment to lay the framework for their respective political aspirations after centuries of colonial existence. One of these leaders from the Marianas District is Edward DeLeon Guerrero Pangelinan, affectionately known by many people, and especially by his Saipan Intermediate School Class of 1957, as Eddie, or simply Ed.

We were very close neighbors, about three houses apart living in what was then known as District number 2 in the “old days”. We were also close relatives as his grandfather on his dad’s side and my grandmother on my dad’s side were cousins.

I personally knew Ed starting from our teen days, growing up and attending school. We were classmates and we graduated together from elementary, intermediate, and high schools. First, we graduated from the Saipan Elementary School, then the Saipan Intermediate School, and lastly after attending Guam’s George Washington High for a year, we transferred to a new high school in Guam, namely Guam’s Tumon Junior-Senior High School, later named John F. Kennedy High School. We spent at least two years in Guam and while attending schools we also spent many hours roaming around Guam’s villages during Sundays visiting patron saints’ religious fiestas to partake in their free meals.

After Guam, Ed and I parted company. He went on to attend a U.S. mainland university while I attended university in paradise—Hawaii. We continued our friendship after returning to Saipan upon our respective graduation from universities overseas. Ed was a particularly gifted individual with a keen understanding and appreciation of how important education is to our people. His passion for education was one objective that led him to pursue our affiliation with the United States because of, among other things, the advantageous offerings of unlimited education in the US as compared to other areas. After all, as he would always remind me, “Pete we grew up with an American educational background and appreciation, so it makes so much sense to join the US as our partner on behalf of our people, right?”

Ed helped set the stage through his leadership and intimate knowledge about our people for the long awaited step toward self-determination starting with the political status negotiations. This was one of the most important historical events for the islands in Micronesia.

Through this memoir, Ed documented his views and understanding about the complexity of the negotiation not only within the former Marianas District people but also among the respective islands in the rest of Micronesia.

The political union negotiation was the most important historical event, and the story was documented by one individual who played a major and critical role. Through his pure determination and resilience, he ensured that the mission to form a political status in union with the United States of America as desired by the people of the Marianas District would be achieved, despite the enormous political and ethnic differences; personalities; and family feuds and challenges ahead of the difficult political union mandate of our people.

During the days of our negotiation with the of U.S. negotiators led by Ambassador F. Haydn Williams, and his crew of experts from the Departments of State and Defense, Ed demonstrated true leadership and the ability to anticipate what the other side was up to. Our competent lawyers too, led by Howard Willens, were so helpful and generous with their legal assistance.

Ed's leadership helped motivate some of our less active and shy members to speak up and to show some interest. Although the group disagreed at times, Ed found legitimate reasons to provide all participants their rights despite the concerns that doing so would cause delays, frustrating the U.S. team and ending the negotiations. Ed was mindful of this but he managed to keep everybody focused on the importance of this process which resulted in the continuation of the negotiation and the resulting formal agreement signed by all except two of the status negotiation members.

Throughout his memoir, Ed described the ingenious ways he helped to ensure that the Marianas team worked together as one. Being mindful of the opposition in the team and the possibility of the derailment of the negotiations, Ed kept the group from disintegrating while allowing for open and at times, unavoidably heated discussions. Despite this and other obstacles, the conclusion of the negotiation for the Covenant with the United States is testament of Ed's and the whole political status negotiation team's effort toward political self-determination.

This book is not only about how Ed's unique leadership shined amid our internal conflicts in the negotiations, but also about his love for his islands and people, his friends, and his foremost dedication to his family responsibilities, which were the priority for Ed. How he balanced family concerns and responsibilities and the most critical negotiation for the future of our people was genuine and exceedingly admirable. All these attributes helped form Ed's character and passion to craft a unique, and enduring political, economic, social, and educational agreement second to none.

The Covenant was agreed upon on the premise that it would be for the benefit of the present and future generations within the permanent and enduring political relationship between the people of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas and the United States of America.

Ed's unique personality came across in his passion and in his quest for a political agreement that afforded maximum protection and benefits for all ethnic groups of the new Commonwealth. He was generous in his admiration of his colleagues in the commission, giving them the well-deserved credits that had helped Ed succeed as a chairman throughout the negotiation. His chairmanship throughout the status negotiation process was a reflection of his respect for and acknowledgment of the valuable contributions of his fellow negotiators. Such is Ed Pangelinan's true character, and this attribute comes across throughout his memoir.

God bless you, Ed.

Pete A. Tenorio, a friend forever

January 2024

*Pedro Agulto Tenorio was a senator in the Congress of Micronesia and member of the Marianas Political Status Commission during the political status negotiations between the Marianas District of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and the U.S. Government. Mr. Tenorio subsequently served two terms as a Lt. Governor and two terms as a Resident Representative to the United States for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.*





# *Introduction*

Written on the following pages is a collection of experiences, opportunities, and contributions that have defined my life as a Founding Father of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. It is my fervent hope that my fellow United States citizens find words of inspiration in this document. A nation cannot survive for long if its citizens forget that its freedoms and liberty are gifts from God. Citizenship defines our national identity as members of this proud and great nation. Millions of our fellow citizens who have gone before us made sacrifices, many the ultimate and supreme sacrifice of their lives, to preserve and secure freedom and liberty for present and future generations of America's citizens. We, as citizens, are responsible for providing our share of sacrifice for the protection of the nation. We must stand proud and tall as Americans belonging to the strongest and richest nation in the world.



# *Legacy of the Founding Fathers of the Commonwealth to Our People*

*Originally published in the Marianas Variety on September 24, 2020*



On September 15, 2020, the Democratic Party of the Northern Mariana Islands honored the founding fathers of the Commonwealth with a commemorative resolution “for their monumental contribution and unselfish dedication to improving the quality of life for the people of the CNMI.” The resolution further states that “while the Covenant was not a perfect document, our Commonwealth negotiators, through their diligent efforts, professionalism, dedication and commitment, produced a historic and binding agreement that has served and protected our interests for the past 42 years.” As one of the four living recipients of the resolution, I was deeply moved, honored, and grateful to the NMI Democratic Party officials, members and candidates for their magnanimous and generous remembrance of our Founding Fathers.

I was privileged to serve as the Chairman of the Marianas Political Status Commission (MPSC) beginning in August 1972 when it was instituted by District Law 3-124. There were 15 original members of the MPSC appointed representing as follows:

Vicente N. Santos and Felipe A. Salas, Mariana Islands District Legislature  
Edward DLG Pangelinan [myself] and Herman Q. Guerrero, Congress of Micronesia

Benjamin T. Manglona and Joannes R. Taimanao, Rota Municipal Council  
Herman M. Manglona and Francisco A. Hocog, Tinian Municipal Council

Daniel T. Muna and Vicente T. Camacho, Saipan Municipal Council  
Olympio T. Borja, Northern Islands

Joaquin (Mitch) I. Pangelinan, Popular Party

Francisco T. Palacios, Territorial Party

Felix F. Rabauliman, United Carolinians Association

Jose (Joeten) C. Tenorio, the Business Association

During the course of the two and a half years of political status negotiations with the president of the United States' personal representative, 21 of our citizens served and participated in the deliberations of the negotiations as members of the MPSC. After several of the original members resigned from the Commission due to personal reasons, the following citizens joined: Juan L.G. Cabrera, Pedro A. Tenorio, Oscar C. Rasa, Jose R. Cruz, Bernard V. Hofschneider, and Manuel A. Sablan.

As a Founding Father of the Commonwealth, I am profoundly grateful to our Lord for keeping me alive these past 42 years so that I may bear witness to all the benefits that our people are now enjoying under the Covenant. The commemorative resolution has given me the opportunity to reminisce about the men who accepted the awesome responsibility to change the course of our destiny. I can hear clearly the voices and see vividly the faces of all my colleagues on the MPSC. And I am grateful for the rare privilege and opportunity to work with these honorable men of our islands, each possessing impeccable integrity, honesty, humility, friendship, spiritual upbringing, remarkable sense of humor, and dedication to the negotiations of the Covenant.

The first session of the Status Negotiations began at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, December 13, 1972, in the auditorium of Mount Carmel High School on Saipan. Here the members of the MPSC first met the members of the United States Delegation. The Delegation consisted of the Honorable Ambassador Franklin Haydn Williams, who was the personal representative of the President of the United States; Mr. James M. Wilson, the deputy chairman of the U.S. Delegation; Captain William J. Crowe, Jr., USN; Captain Gordon J. Schuller, USN; Stanley S. Carpenter from the Department of the Interior; Herman Marcuse from the Department of Justice; Adrian de Graffenried from the Department of the Interior, and Mary Vance Trent from the Department of State.

At the time, the impression of the enormous advantage the U.S. Delegation had in comparison to our tiny MPSC was overwhelming. Standing before us were the representatives of the federal government, supported by the full resources of the United States of America. On our MPSC side were 15 common citizens, supported by our brilliant legal counsel, Howard P. Willens of the Washington law firm of Wilmer, Cutler & Pickering; our resourceful and talented economist James R. Leonard of James R. Leonard Associates,

Inc.; our capable executive director, James E. White; Joseph F. Screen; and a few staff.

Although we were supported by meager financial resources, standing with my team, I stood tall and very proud. We were ordinary citizens, but each of us fully understood our history. Our people had endured 300 years of colonization and subjugation by the Spanish, Germans, and Japanese. We firmly believed our people deserved a better and decent life for present and future generations.

Several of the members of the commission experienced and witnessed the horror of the invasion of Saipan during World War II. We knew what it felt like to leave home for extended periods of time to seek advanced education, far from the Northern Mariana Islands. We survived the trials, tribulations, and challenges living under the administration of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. We now stood ready, able, and willing to embark on an historic journey to secure what was in the best interest of all our citizens.

At this time, I believe it is useful to review the basic motivations guiding our negotiations for a separate status for the Marianas between 1972 and 1975.

First, the people of the Marianas did not want the United Nations Trusteeship Agreement to go on indefinitely. Our people felt strongly that the present status of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands—no matter how well intended—was outmoded and inappropriate. Change was necessary despite the inevitable risks. We believed that our people had the sovereign right of self-determination and the ability to exercise that right as do other people in the world.

Second, we felt that our people were ready for self-government. The members of the Mariana Islands District Legislature and the MPSC were well aware that self-government carries with it new burdens and responsibilities, as well as new opportunities and challenges. We looked forward to the day when our people controlled our own destiny.

Third, the political status negotiations reflected the high value we placed on the freedoms and the democratic form of government of the American political system. We wanted a government that assured these rights and freedoms as well as the recognition of the fundamental equality of all people under the law.

Fourth, the Marianas Political Status Commission was created to plan for the future—not to relive the past. The Commission was striving to create a political status designed to meet the pressing demands of the present and the unknown demands of the future. The members of the Commission were fully aware and recognized the practical limitations of a small island community dealing with the anticipated problems of the 21st century and beyond. For this reason, the Commission was charged with the responsibility of designing a relationship with the United States of America that offered support and security for our people, as well as the opportunity for development and self-government.

As a result, the Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America has been fully implemented. We have a functioning and dynamic self-government and our people are United States citizens with an elected representative in the United States Congress. The Northern Mariana Islands is now the fifth permanently inhabited territory of the United States. Our people and our islands have contributed to the expansion of the United States jurisdiction with over 240,000 square miles of the Western Pacific Ocean.

Our people are blessed with unlimited opportunities and benefits as citizens of the United States of America. Over these past 42 years, the CNMI has received several billion dollars in direct and indirect financial support from the federal government for the benefit of all our citizens. This financial commitment continues annually and will remain so for an indefinite period.

Moreover, as American citizens, there are unlimited opportunities for education, employment, business, investment, career, recreation and relaxation, as well as military and public service. The geographic boundary of the CNMI is no longer limited to the boundaries of the islands' lagoons; it now extends beyond the CNMI to American Samoa, Hawai'i, the continental United States, and to the American Caribbean of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Our lands are among the most beautiful and scenic on this planet.

Finally, our indigenous Chamorro and Carolinian people are members of a much larger community of over 300 million Americans. We benefit from the cultural and ethnic diversity of the greater American population. Our people have proven themselves good citizens of the United States. We possess the virtues of compassion, friendship, good will and hospitality, with diligent, loyal, fervent, and firm patriotism in defense of our nation.

I wish to add that our Founding Fathers were men of faith and acknowledged the divine guidance and blessings we sought in our endeavor. In response to our request for spiritual guidance, at the opening day ceremonies of the status negotiations on December 13, 1972 the following invocation was delivered by His Excellency Felixberto Flores, Bishop of the Diocese of Agana:

Let us pray. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. O, Heavenly Father, through your Son, Jesus Christ, you have assured us that whatever we ask for in His Name will be granted to us. Behold us here gathered today to initiate an historic event which will affect every facet of our lives, your children, the people of the Marianas. We humbly beseech your guidance and direction from beginning to end in the discussion pertaining to our political aspirations to be a part of a great nation dedicated to uphold and sustain the God-given rights of every individual within its family. Watch over us during these days that we may be open in our deliberations, prudent in our expressions of what we are seeking, not only for ourselves, but for those who will in the future be the heirs of what we now seek. By your benevolent Providence grant us the blessing of your favor, that what we aspire to, will be for the common good of all the people of the Marianas. Grant us, too, the blessings that we, your Christian people of the Marianas may, through our meager resources, bring further growth and development of our American community. We ask all of these in the name of your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

It is with honor and great joy to have lived this long, to witness the enormous and significant benefits our citizens now enjoy as a result of the implementation of our Covenant. I am particularly thankful to the families of the members of the MPSC who gave their blessings and support to the successful conclusion of the Covenant. I owe a debt of gratitude to my loving wife, Dulce G. Pangelinan, who almost single-handedly raised our six kids so that I could devote my time and energy to the Covenant.

God Bless the people of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and our country, the United States of America.

## *The First Time Meeting an American Citizen*

I was a small child living on the island of Saipan during World War II. Our land was up on a hill overlooking the lagoon and the Pacific Ocean. At that time, the island was occupied by the Japanese. There were 30,000 Japanese soldiers occupying the island waiting for the Americans. The United States launched an invasion to eradicate the Japanese on June 15, 1944. My memory is of my dad on our farm looking out into the ocean and seeing the harbor filled with hundreds of warships. My father saw the ships and said, “Oh my God. It’s a war.”

When the bombs started falling close to our house on our farmland, my father took our bull cart, what we jokingly called our “Cadillac,” and piled our family in it and headed to the middle of the island to Jesus Tudela’s farmland at Kannat Täbla. His farmland was at the center of the island, situated behind a mountain with a lot of caves where we could hide from the bombardment. The bombs could not reach us there. The American forces then sent in a massive amphibious assault onto the island with tens of thousands of marines, soldiers, and sailors.

We hid in a cave in the mountain while the island was totally destroyed. There were bombs exploding all around. Before the war, the Japanese started a propaganda effort telling the islanders that when the Americans come to the island, they will all be black and they will shoot and kill you. We were very fortunate. I do not know how we survived the bombardment other than through a lot of prayers.

Days later, an American Marine arrived and started shouting into the cave “Come out!” and “Surrender!” When he heard the command, my father went out of the cave saying, “I’m not a soldier.” My father saw that the large Marine was an African American. My father told the man there were other native people in the cave—80 of us hiding inside the cave.

The rest of us started to emerge from the cave. When the Marine saw me running out of the cave, he turned, put down his rifle, and asked my father, “Sir, can I hug your boy?” He picked me up, held me, and said to my father,

“My son was only one year old when I left him back home. I haven’t seen him in two years.” With a warm smile and tears in his eyes, the soldier hugged me close to his chest. He held me for a while and then returned me to my father, thanking my father for the privilege of holding his son. He then assigned three of his men to accompany all of us from the cave to the safer American-controlled area. The Marine’s actions surprised my father because here was a combat veteran who, instead of killing us like the Japanese warned, asked to hug his son. The Marine also asked if there were other natives. My father said “Yes, there are so many natives on the island. I can help you.”

After that, my father became one of 64 local boys who went into the jungle to scout for the U.S. Marine Corps, leading other native people to safety.



# The Marianas Marine Scouts

*Exerpts from “Now for Then: The Marianas Marine Scouts,” published by the CNMI Office of the Resident Representative to the United States.*

## *Editor’s Note:*

*“As Special Assistant to the CNMI Resident Representative to the U.S., Ed played a major role in stewarding the difficult and complicated process for obtaining official recognition for the Marianas Marine Scouts, which included researching applicable U.S. laws, interviewing surviving members, and filing the application. Ed’s father, Joaquin B. Pangelinan, served as a Marine Scout and this fact contributed to his unyielding passion and commitment to ensuring that their stories, service, and sacrifice live on as part of the historical legacy of our political union with the United States.”*

*Juan N. Babauta*

*Former CNMI Resident Representative to the United States*

**T**he destruction brought by war touches every aspect of the society in which it takes place. War can displace entire populations, tear families apart, and decimate towns and homes, to say nothing of the psychological and spiritual damage it may cause ... for war takes a terrible toll on the human spirit as well. Yet it does have another side. War often leads to incredible acts of courage, selflessness, bravery, and even kindness. And war can make a man out of a boy, and a hero out of a man.

In 1944, on the tropical island of Saipan in the western Pacific Ocean, 64 young native men were part of an extraordinary group. In many ways they are without peers, yet their stories are little known. In this, the 60th anniversary year of the Battle for Saipan and of the formation of this group of men, it is fitting that their story be told for all to hear ... and remember.

As the Battle for Saipan drew to a close, more than 3,000 Chamorro and Carolinian people had been placed in Camp Susupe. The large camp was divided into sections that housed native civilians, approximately 9,100 Japanese and 1,100 Korean civilians, and some 1,700 Japanese and Korean prisoners of war.

Although Saipan had been declared secure, Japanese holdouts in the jungle terrain continued to be a problem. Several hundred enemy soldiers, along with an unknown number of civilians, remained in hiding. Some were armed and continued to harass the American forces with nighttime raids and sniper attacks. U.S. Marines and soldiers were constantly placed on patrol to search for Japanese stragglers. The Americans had a difficult problem on their hands and little time to spend on it. The American commander of the military government on Saipan decided to delegate the responsibility for combat patrols to a group of local men.

The main objective in recruiting local residents was to relieve the U.S. armed forces so they could devote their energies to the war effort. Some 100 young Chamorro and Carolinian men said goodbye to their families in Camp Susupe after being recruited to help the 2nd Marine Division. Some became the native police assigned to help the 811<sup>th</sup> Military Police Company (of the Army) guard prisoners and maintain law and order in Camp Susupe. These recruits were trained by the Army military police and were responsible for guarding the entire camp. This meant enforcing all general orders and regulations issued for the civilian camp and preventing unauthorized civilians from entering or leaving.

In early August of 1944, 50 Chamorro and Carolinian men were selected by the military government for a special mission with the Marine Corps 6th Provisional Military Police Battalion. They were chosen, in part, because of their familiarity with the locations of Japanese fortifications on Saipan. They knew these locations because, earlier, the Japanese had conscripted many of them to do the work of building tunnels, enlarging caves, and constructing gun emplacements and other potential hideouts. They were also selected for their general knowledge of the Saipan terrain and for their fluent command of the Japanese language.

The group was taken to the I-Denni area of central Saipan, about five miles from their families and friends in Camp Susupe. Upon arrival at the Marine camp, the company was divided into five platoons of 10 men each, issued uniforms and gear, and given extensive training in military tactics. The men believed they were being trained to become United States Marines.

The initial assignment for each of these five groups—known collectively as the Marine Scouts—was to go on combat patrols and undertake mopping-

up operations around Mt. Tapochau, down to the hilly areas of Laulau and the Kagman Peninsula, and northward on the ridges to Mt. Marpi. On these patrol missions, they destroyed virtually all human-made caves, tunnels, bunkers, and military hideouts to ensure that any snipers or Japanese holdouts remaining on Saipan would be forced to turn themselves in.

On one of these combat patrol missions around the Talafofo area on the eastern coast of Saipan, a platoon captured three Japanese snipers who were hiding in a cave. On two separate occasions, several platoons of Marine Scouts joined expeditions to the Northern Islands, hundreds of miles away, in order to remove Japanese soldiers stationed on those islands. Marine Scouts engaged Japanese snipers in the Lake Susupe area and fought alongside American Marines in a section of Saipan that would come to be known as Death Valley.

When hostilities ceased and Japan formally surrendered on September 2, 1945, the Marianas Marine Scouts were released from duty with the 6th Provisional Military Police Battalion. Not one had died during their service as Marines in the war. The young men returned to their families at Camp Susupe.

Without compensation, other than a quick goodbye to the Chamorro and Carolinian Marine Scouts, the United States Armed Forces left Saipan in 1945 and turned over the administration of the Northern Marianas to an interim government under the American flag. For over 50 years, the Marine Scouts spoke of their wartime experiences with family members and friends, and each year, residents of the Northern Mariana Islands remembered the men in ceremonies for veterans. Still, something was missing: official recognition from the U.S. military, and the veterans benefits the men should have received as U.S. servicemen, but which they were never offered.

For many years, this oversight bothered Juan N. Babauta and Edward Deleon Guerrero Pangelinan, sons of two of the scouts. The two discussed the matter frequently over the years and wondered what could be done. After Babauta was elected in 1989 as the CNMI's Resident Representative to the United States in Washington, D.C., he and his special adviser Edward Pangelinan had the opportunity to do something for the Scouts. Together with Babauta's staff, the two men researched various U.S. laws and read thousands of pages of declassified military archives. They also collected affidavits from 11 of the

Scouts still living. In 1997, a 100-page petition for official recognition of the Scouts as United States veterans was filed with the Secretary of the Air Force. It would take a further two long years of research and review before the Civilian/Military Service Review Board decided in favor of the application. The official memorandum from the Board stated that the Marianas Marine Scouts' service "should be equated to active military duty."

On September 30, 1999 the Department of Defense made it official, and on January 31, 2000—55 years after the fact—the Marine Scouts' service in the U.S. Armed Forces was formally recognized. In an emotional ceremony held in the Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe on Saipan, each Scout was inducted into the Marine Corps with the rank of corporal ... awarded the Asiatic Campaign Medal and the World War II Victory Medal ... and received an honorable discharge from active duty. CNMI Governor Pedro P. Tenorio, Resident Representative to the United States Juan N. Babauta and his staff, members of the 12<sup>th</sup> NMI Legislature, U.S. military officers, and officials from veterans groups were on hand to witness the event, joining hundreds of family members and well-wishers from the community. Some members of the Scouts who could not attend the ceremony due to their frail health were later visited by USMC Brigadier General Ralph E. Parker, U.S. District Court Judge Alex R. Munson (who administered the oath of induction), Governor Tenorio, and Resident Representative Babauta, with each Scout receiving a certificate of service, medals, and an official discharge.

As General Parker said in his address to the Scouts at the recognition ceremony, "This recognition is a long time coming, but your contribution to the mission of the United States Marine Corps was clearly demonstrated over fifty years ago. To sacrifice your life for freedom and democracy, as reflected in the flag of the United States of America, represents the greatest contribution that a citizen can make to the future of this great nation. Your country applauds you. Your recognition as United States Marines today ensures that this generation, and generations to come, will remember your service to the United States of America."

Every year on November 11, veterans from the Northern Marianas, their families, friends, and a significant number of active duty and reserve service members visiting Saipan go to the Veterans Memorial Cemetery to remember and honor all of our veterans who have served our country.

# *Associate Justice of the Supreme Court Thurgood Marshall*

**A**fter graduating from college, I considered whether to attend law school at George Washington University, where I received my undergraduate degree, or Howard University. Both universities are in Washington, D.C. It was during this time that I had the privilege to visit Supreme Court Associate Justice Thurgood Marshall in his chambers. He was the first African American to serve as a justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. I asked him for his guidance with my impending law school decision. The justice looked at me and said, “Well, one justice of the Supreme Court attended Howard University Law School, and I don’t see anyone else.” I then enrolled at Howard University Law School and attended lectures given by Associate Justice Thurgood Marshall. I chose Howard because, in addition to this personal recommendation, many leaders of the Civil Rights Movement had been educated at this historic university, and I wanted to learn from them the right way to lead change.



# *Micronesian Negotiations with the United States*

On August 5, 1967, the Congress of Micronesia established the Joint Committee on Future Political Status for Micronesia. Representative Herman Q. Guerrero and I were selected to represent the people of the Mariana Islands District on this Joint Committee. I was delighted to have Congressman Herman Q. Guerrero as my partner on the Joint Committee. Herman Q. was one of the most respected political leaders in the Mariana Islands District, with the passion and firm conviction that the Northern Marianas would become a member of the United States political family. I asked him to be our spokesperson in the committee, but he reminded me that I would be the only lawyer in the committee, and with my legal training and experience I would be able to stand up against the more respected, powerful, and ambitious Micronesian members such as Senators Lazarus Salii of Palau, Andon Amaraich of Chuuk, Bailey Olter of Phonpei, and John Mangefel of Yap. I thanked him for his confidence in me, and we proceeded to plan for our participation in the Joint Committee.

At that time, the Congress of Micronesia received official notice from the White House that President Richard Nixon on March 13, 1971 had selected Dr. Franklin Haydn Williams, who was then the President of the Asia Foundation in San Francisco, to be his personal representative, with the rank of ambassador, to the Micronesian future status negotiations.

After consultation with Ambassador Williams, the Joint Committee set a date for the first meeting of the Micronesian status negotiations with the U.S. delegation that was led by Ambassador Williams. The United States negotiating team selected Hana on the Hawaiian island of Maui as the venue. It was a remote town that was difficult to reach, far from the distractions of civilization, but it was considered an ideal venue for such a sensitive issue as political status. Hana's inhabitants were largely native Hawaiians, most hospitable and friendly.

In preparation for the trip to Hana, Herman Q. and I consulted with the political leaders in the Northern Mariana Islands to determine if there was interest and support for the Northern Mariana Islands to pursue its own

close and permanent political association with the United States of America. We arrived in Hana with a briefcase filled with evidence of this interest in the form of petitions, communication with the United Nations, and formal testimony to the U.S. Congress.

On October 4, 1971, the first day of the formal meeting in Hana, after the traditional protocol of greetings and introduction of the delegation members, Ambassador Williams advised the Joint Committee that his authority in these negotiations was limited to Micronesia in its entirety, not to individual districts. The ambassador then presented a complete proposal for a commonwealth for the people of Micronesia for the Joint Committee to consider. A member of the Joint Committee joked that Ambassador Williams arrived with the complete proposal for a commonwealth in his left pocket with the mistaken impression the Joint Committee would accept the proposal with enthusiasm. However, without any consideration of this completed proposal, the Joint Committee rejected it outright. The Joint Committee then presented to Ambassador Williams its own proposal for an agreement for free association status with the United States. The ambassador agreed to begin negotiations for a new proposal.

Following the first day of negotiations, Herman Q. and I attended a spiritual service at a Baptist Church and after service sat on a bench in the Hawaiian cemetery connected to the church. The cemetery was the burial ground of the original Hawaiian settlers in Hana. Herman Q. Guerrero and I sat on the bench for a while as we were trying to meditate and contemplate on this first day of Micronesian status negotiations. I looked at Herman and found him to be in a state of rejection, quiet and perspiring. To break the monotony of the moment, I shared with him my sadness and fears that our efforts were no longer valid and there was no way forward for the people of the Northern Marianas to join the United States. Like those buried at the cemetery, our quest was now dead and buried in Hana. I looked back at the cemetery and found myself filled with inspiration thinking of the early Hawaiian settlers and the many difficult trials, problems, and challenges they faced to undertake their journey from the other Hawaiian Islands and to come to this remote, beautiful, and peaceful village of Hana. I found a new determination and inspiration to devote all my energy and talents. I was firmly committed to continuing the quest for United States citizenship on behalf of our people.

After this moving time in the cemetery, Representative Herman Q. and I officially advised the Joint Committee of the intent of the people of the Mariana Islands District to pursue a separate status of close and permanent association with the United States.

Over the years, I returned to Hana many times. The first time I was able to return, I visited the Hawaiian cemetery. The cemetery was as well-maintained as I remembered, only the bench where Herman Q. and I once sat was no longer there. I found myself standing in front of the cemetery, filled with a peaceful feeling knowing it was hallowed ground. I said prayers of thanksgiving and sent my big mahalo to my Hawaiian friends.



## *Heads of the Delegations to the Status Negotiations*



*Left to Right: Resident Commissioner Erwin D. Canham; Senator Edward Pangelinan; Ambassador F. Hadyn Williams; Vicente Santos.*

**For the United States:** The U.S. president's personal representative, Ambassador Franklin Haydn Williams

**For the Northern Mariana Islands:** Edward DLG Pangelinan, chairman of the Marianas Political Status Commission (MPSC), and Vicente N. Santos, president of the Mariana Islands District Legislature and vice chairman of the MPSC

## *Wilmer Cutler Pickering & Hale*

**I**t is with gratitude and appreciation that I acknowledge the Washington law firm of Wilmer Cutler Pickering & Hale for its pro bono service for the people of the Commonwealth during their negotiations for the Covenant with the United States. Associate partner Howard P. Willens with Deanne C. Siemer (and other associates) were commissioned to undertake the difficult task of researching the legal and relevant status issues. They also assisted the members of the Marianas Political Status Commission in their negotiations with the delegation from the United States. The law firm should take pride as the generous pro bono contributions ushered in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands as the fifth territory of the United States. Every day the American flag is flown proudly on the shores of our Commonwealth.

# *The Kennedy Compound*

Back home in Saipan after the Hana meetings, Herman Q. Guerrero and I started a series of consultations with members of the Mariana Islands District Legislature and local leaders of the Northern Mariana Islands on the issue of the Northern Marianas' close and permanent association with the United States. The association was achieved in the Covenant. The Covenant was signed on February 15, 1975 in a ceremony at the Mt. Carmel High School auditorium on Saipan. Vincente N. Santos and I signed the Covenant "for the people of the Northern Marianas Islands" in our capacities as the Vice Chairman and Chairman, respectively, of the Marianas Political Status Commission. Section 1001 of the Covenant specified the steps required for the Covenant to be approved, and Sections 1002 and 1003 of the Covenant specified how the different parts of the Covenant would come into full force and effect. Pursuant to Section 1001(a), on February 20, 1975 the Mariana Islands District Legislature approved the Covenant by unanimous vote, and on June 17, 1975, the Covenant was approved by the people of the Northern Mariana Islands in a plebiscite by 78.8 percent of the votes cast.

In March and July 1975 and in February 1976, Pete A. Tenorio and I held marathon consultation sessions with members of the United States Congress to gain support for permanent association with the United States. We welcomed the decision of Congressman Phillip Burton of San Francisco to sponsor a House Joint Resolution approving the Covenant (House Joint Resolution 549), which he introduced on July 10, 1975. The Congress then commenced a series of committee hearings to discuss the merits of the matter.

Pete A. Tenorio and I returned to Washington to participate in the congressional hearings. In between the hearings, we spent considerable time knocking on the doors of members of the House and Senate to gain their support for our cause. We were particularly disappointed and distraught to learn that Senator Ted Kennedy of Massachusetts did not support our efforts and preferred the status of Northern Marianas' independence. In February 1976, Pete A. Tenorio, Manuel A. Sablan, and I travelled to Hyannis Port in Cape Cod, determined to convince Senator Kennedy to support the Northern Marianas' permanent relationship with the United States. However, when we arrived, the senator was no longer able to meet us.

As a consolation, a representative of the Kennedy family took us to the Kennedy Compound on Nantucket Sound in Hyannis Port to visit the home of President John F. Kennedy and see where he recuperated from the injuries he sustained on a PT-109 boat in the South Pacific Ocean during World War II. There, I sat on the bed of the former president and reminisced on his bravery, courage, and firm patriotism as he almost gave the ultimate and supreme sacrifice of his life in service to our country. Afterwards, I was able to walk on the beach on the Kennedy's waterfront. The trip was a most meaningful experience for my fellow Saipanese and me.

## *Oval Office Meeting with President Gerald R. Ford*

**O**n the morning of March 19, 1975, Pete A. Tenorio and I received a call from the White House on behalf of President Gerald R. Ford requesting our presence that afternoon for an informal meeting with the president in the Oval Office. The president's schedule was heavy, we were told, and our meeting would last no longer than five minutes. "One minute with the president would be most welcome," I replied. There to meet Pete and I when we arrived in the Oval Office were Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger, Secretary of the Interior Rogers C.B. Morton, Secretary of the Treasury William B. Simon, and Attorney General William B. Saxbe. We were then introduced to President Ford, who welcomed us warmly. The president said he wanted to get to know the representatives of the Marianas who had taken such a bold, historic, epic, and novel journey to become a part of the United States. I thanked the president for the commitment of the United States to the United Nations Trusteeship Agreement, providing the people of the Northern Marianas the sovereign right of self-determination and the ability to exercise that right as had other people in the world. What we thought was to be a short, informal meeting became a lively discussion lasting longer than an hour.

President Ford mentioned that he was a U.S. Naval officer during World War II in the Western Caroline Islands but did not go to the Northern Marianas. It was because of his experiences in the Pacific that he understood the importance of the Northern Mariana Islands to the defense of the nation. He asked for clarification: What was the main reason and objective of the people of the Northern Marianas in joining the United States? I responded with deep sincerity that our people cherished and held sacred the liberties enshrined in the Constitution of the United States. We understood liberty, life, and love to be God's gifts to humanity. Under the United Nations Trusteeship Agreement, the United States upheld the sovereign right of the people of the Northern Marianas to self-determination and the ability to freely exercise that right.

The United Nations established eleven trusteeships administered by different nations for former colonies. In the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands exercised its right of sovereign self-

determination to join permanently with the United States. No other colony joined their administering authority.

The actions of the people of the Northern Marianas declared to the world that the United States' democratic system was most advantageous to our people. The Northern Marianas was not coming into the United States empty handed. By joining we would convey the full resources of our 14 islands with its territorial sovereignty to the United States. The Northern Marianas granted over 240,000 square miles of the Western Pacific Ocean to serve the national defense under the sovereign jurisdiction of the United States. The President shared with Pete and me how he looked forward to welcoming future Americans into the United States, who would add the rich Chamorro and Carolinian customs, traditions, and heritage of the Northern Marianas to the American cultural fabric.

The president conveyed his delight in meeting us. The following year he set March 24, 1976 as the date for the signing ceremony approving the Covenant and enacting it into law. He invited the people of the Northern Marianas to witness the approval of the Covenant and to celebrate this historic and monumental occasion. Before leaving the meeting, Secretary Kissinger called to attention our young age. Pete and I were both thirty years of age at the time of this meeting and Kissinger remarked, "What a remarkable achievement, these gentlemen are just kids compared to us but had the courage and the bold, firm determination to lead their people to join the United States as political members of the union."





*March 19, 1975 Oval Office Meeting with President Gerald R. Ford and Marianas Political Status Commission Member Pete A. Tenorio and Commission Chairman Edward DLG Pangelinan (President Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library).*

March 19, 1975

Office of the White House Press Secretary

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NOTICE TO THE PRESS

Pool for Wednesday, March 19, 1975

4:15 p.m. Edward Pangelinan, Chairman of the Marianas  
Political Status Commission

THE OVAL OFFICE

The Wires  
NBC Correspondent  
Mutual Correspondent  
Gannett  
Newsweek  
Photographers and cameramen

###

*Office of the White House Press Secretary Notice to the Press for the March 19, 1975  
meeting with President Gerald R. Ford (Ford Presidential Library & Museum).*



MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~/GDS

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

**PARTICIPANTS:** President Ford  
Edward Pangelinan, Chairman of Northern  
Marianas Political Status Commission  
Senator P. A. Tenorio, Northern Marianas  
Senator  
James M. Wilson, Jr., Deputy Representative  
for Micronesian Status Negotiations  
Lt. General Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant  
to the President for National Security Affairs

**DATE AND TIME:** Wednesday, March 19, 1975  
4:15 p. m.

**PLACE:** The Oval Office

Pangelinan: We are very pleased to have the opportunity to exercise our rights under the UN Trusteeship Council and have a plebiscite.

President: We are pleased at this development and we trust that the plebiscite will be favorable. Where are you two from?

Tenorio: We both are from Saipan.

President: What are the islands in the Northern Marianas?

Tenorio: Saipan forms Tinian and Rota.

President: What is the population?

Tenorio: About 14,000. Most of the people live on Saipan.

Wilson: They live in a very beautiful place. I was in Tinian and saw the plaques during World War II.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~/GDS



DECLASSIFIED  
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5  
NSC Memo, 11/24/98, State Dept. Guidelines  
By HR, NARA, Date 10/2/99  
~~TOP SECRET - XGDS (S)~~  
CLASSIFIED BY: HENRY A. KISSINGER



*CNMI founding fathers Pete A. Tenorio, left, and Edward DLG Pangelinan, right. In a moment of relaxation, Pete and Ed enjoy singing Chamorro and Carolinian folk music. Pete is an accomplished ukulele player.*



# Signing of H. J. Res. 549 Approving the Northern Marianas Covenant

Every year on March 24, we celebrate Covenant Day as a holiday in the Northern Mariana Islands. On this day in 1976, President Ford approved and signed the Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States. We also honor and commemorate President Gerald Ford, calling him "Our President" as it is because of him that the Covenant is now Public Law 94-241, 90 Stat. 263.

Digitized from Box 23 of the White House Press Releases at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library

March 24, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary

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## NOTICE TO THE PRESS

1:00 p. m.

Signing of H. J. Res. 549 - Marianas Covenant.

The East Room

(Standing behind the President)

Representative Joe Skubitz  
Senator Bennett Johnston  
Representative Don Clausen  
Senator Ted Stevens  
Senator Hiram Fong  
Representative Phil Burton  
Representative Spark Matsunaga  
Representative Shirley Pettis  
F. Haydn Williams, Ambassador  
Senator Paul Fannin  
Senator Howard Baker  
Vincente Santos, President of the Marianas District Legislature  
Edward D. L. G. Pangellinan, Chairman of the Marianas Political Status Commission  
(Presented wood carving to the President)  
Howard Willens, Former Consul to the Marianas  
Representative James Haley

*Office of the White House Press Secretary Notice to the Press for the March 24, 1976 signing ceremony with President Gerald R. Ford (Ford Presidential Library & Museum).*



*President Gerald R. Ford signing H. J. Res. 549 Marianas Covenant in the East Room of the White House (President Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library).*



*President Gerald R. Ford looking at Edward DLG Pangelinan after signing H. J. Res. 549 Marianas Covenant (President Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library).*

# *Funeral of President Gerald R. Ford*

Gerald Rudolph Ford, the 38th President of the United States, died at his home in Rancho Mirage, California on December 26, 2006. His importance to the people of the Northern Marianas is celebrated annually, but it was an honor to be especially connected to him during that time. A few days before his funeral service in Washington, D.C., I received a personal invitation from the office of former First Lady Elizabeth “Betty” Ford on behalf of her and her family, extending an invitation to me on behalf of the people of the Northern Mariana Islands to attend the former president’s funeral service at the Washington National Cathedral. Upon my arrival at the cathedral, a major in the United States Army escorted me to my seat. I was seated in the pews reserved for the president’s family, friends, and special guests. It was an honor. I was humbled and grateful for this magnanimous gesture of the invitation by the former first lady.



*The casket of former President Gerald R. Ford is carried by military pallbearers to the front of the National Cathedral during his state funeral in Washington, D.C., January 2, 2007. White House photo by Paul Morse.*

## *My American Dude*

On November 3, 1986, President Ronald Reagan signed Presidential Proclamation 5564, 101 Stat. 207 terminating the United Nations Trusteeship Agreement for the Pacific Islands for the CNMI, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and putting into full force and effect those parts of the Covenant that had not yet come into full force and effect, pursuant to Section 1003(c) of the Covenant. This proclamation also officially confirmed United States citizenship to the people of the Northern Mariana Islands pursuant to Section 301 of the Covenant. I received a call prior to this from the White House alerting me of President Reagan's intent and the scheduled date. At the time, I shared with my friends in the State Department that as soon as the proclamation was signed, I would go to the State Department's Passport Office to apply for my U.S. passport. When my wife Dulce and I arrived at the Passport Office, we observed some excitement on the part of the staff. They were excited to meet the very first applicants for U.S. passports from the Northern Mariana Islands. A senior official of the office handed over our passports, saying "Welcome to America." Holding her newly minted passport, Dulce, with tears in her eyes, hugged and kissed me and thanked me for all my efforts in making this wonderful day a reality. With a broad smile on her face, she then looked at me and said, "You are now my American Dude!"

## *First Generation United States Citizens of Northern Mariana Islands Ancestry*

**A**s American citizens, we have unlimited opportunities for education, employment, business, career, and military and public service. Dulce and I took advantage of the education opportunities and encouraged and supported our six children in attending the best educational institutions in the United States that we could afford. Each of our six children has graduated from college, and each has worked to achieve their own American dream. Each has excelled in their respective careers and is raising their own families.

Our eldest son, Dr. Michael Pangelinan, is a chiropractor in Los Angeles, California; Jenny McGuire is a travel consultant; Captain Joseph Pangelinan is a pilot for American Airlines; James Pangelinan is a Colonel in the United States Army; Dr. Melissa Pangelinan is an Associate Professor at Indianapolis State University, Indiana; and Matthew Pangelinan is a technician at Pearl Harbor Naval Station in Hawai'i.

What follows is a short account among the many experiences of our third son, Colonel James Pangelinan. James is the first person from the Northern Mariana Islands to attend and graduate from the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York.

During the Iraqi War in 2003, James was a Captain stationed at the Army's Schofield Barracks in Oahu, Hawai'i. In preparation for his deployment in the Iraqi War, James was named a light infantry rifle company commander in the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division at Schofield Barracks in Hawai'i. Many of the people under his command were of Pacific Island descent. James' height measures 5-foot-7-inches tall, while the average height of the men in his command was taller.

During their time in Iraq, James and his company fought and experienced the challenge of modern combat. He worked hard to lead and protect the soldiers under his command. Not one of the soldiers in his company died during this 14-month deployment. Whenever anyone asked the soldiers for the name of their company commander, it is said the soldiers would point to James and say, "That officer is our company commander. He may be the shortest of us but he is a great leader." When I later asked James of his

impression of the Polynesian soldiers, he told me that he trusted each of them with his life and they could trust him with their lives as well. He was proud of his service to the United States during his 14-month tour in Iraq and two-year tour in Afghanistan.

James went on to attend and graduate from the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Prior to his graduation, he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel. Currently, James is the director of the Army's School for Command Preparation at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. As a colonel, he is the highest-ranking member of the U.S. Army of Northern Marianas descent. Although he has reached retirement age from the Army, he decided to continue his service to the country for an indefinite time and loves his duties and responsibilities at Fort Leavenworth.

I take pride and joy in witnessing the enormous achievements of our first-generation Americans in our commonwealth. So many of them have achieved their American dream, and excelled in their respective careers, and have become proud and outstanding citizens. In the public sector, we find them participating in various positions as members of our commonwealth legislature, judges and justices in the judiciary, (one is a federal district court judge), and so many are federal civil servants in the various departments and agencies of the federal government. In the military, our citizens have risen to the ranks of colonel in the U.S. Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps, and captain in the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard. They have achieved the highest ranks in the Non-Commissioned Officer Corps in all the services. In the private sector, they are participating in the legal profession as lawyers; in the medical field as doctors, nurses, dentists, and other health care professionals; in the commercial sector as bankers, infrastructure developers, insurance brokers, and entrepreneurs in the tourism, hotel and restaurant industries; and others have become entertainers, artists, and professionals in various sports activities.

Most recently, a son of Founding Father Dr. Francisco T. Palacios, the Lieutenant Governor and Governor-Elect Arnold I. Palacios, became the Governor of the commonwealth on January 9, 2023, on the 45th anniversary of the inauguration of our first Commonwealth Governor Dr. Carlos S. Camacho. These are remarkable and incredible achievements of our first-generation Americans. For all intents and purposes, the first generation has rebuilt the commonwealth as a dynamic, functioning and beautiful



American community worthy of its status as the fifth territory of the United States, in the Western Pacific Ocean. Our people are men and women of goodwill; are friendly, compassionate, and generous; are possessed with the spirit of firm patriotism for the defense of our nation; and are proud and grateful to be citizens of the greatest nation in the world.



*The Pangelinan Family: (back row) Matthew Pangelinan, Captain Joe Pangelinan, Colonel James Pangelinan, (middle row) Dr. Melissa Pangelinan, (front row) Jenny McGuire holding Pilar McGuire, Dulce Pangelinan, Dr. Michael Pangelinan, and Edward DLG Pangelinan.*



*Colonel James Pangelinan and Edward DLG Pangelinan at the graduation of the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, PA.*



*Dulce and Edward Pangelinan with Colonel James Pangelinan and Susannah Pangelinan at the office of the Congressional delegate of the CNMI, the Honorable Gregorio Kili Camacho Sablan, where Colonel Pangelinan received a commendation in the Congressional Record.*

# Biography



## Edward DLG Pangelinan

**A**uthor Edward DLG Pangelinan is a Founding Father of the Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America. The son of Joaquin Benaventura Pangelinan and Magdalena DeLeon Guerrero Pangelinan, he was born on October 24, 1941 on the island of Saipan. During World War II, he witnessed first-hand the horror and total devastation of his island. He grew up on Saipan during the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands Administration. Because of the island's limited opportunities for education, he attended high school in Guam. After graduating second in his class, Ed took a leap of faith into the unknown, accepting a scholarship to pursue his education in the United States. Away from home and studying for more than seven years, he graduated with his undergraduate degree from George Washington University, followed by his law degree from Howard University Law School. Ed is the first person from the Northern Mariana Islands to obtain a law degree.

He returned to Saipan, becoming an assistant attorney general for the Trust Territory. He also served as assistant legislative counsel for the Congress of Micronesia. In 1970 Ed was elected senator to represent the people of the Mariana Islands District in the Congress of Micronesia. Two years later, he was elected chairman of the Marianas Political Status Commission, leading the political status negotiations with the United States. The Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States was signed after two and a half years of negotiations. Ed attributed the success of the Covenant in large measure due to the full support of the people of the islands, and to the blessings and support of his loving wife, Dulce Gatabonton Pangelinan.

In addition to loving support, Dulce was interested in the important issues included in the Covenant and provided thoughtful counsel. During the status negotiations, the members of the MPSC received an enormous number of documents covering the numerous issues to be deliberated during the negotiations. Dulce is a dynamic and well-educated woman and provided keen foresight. During the negotiations, she was particularly focused on the issue of non-alienation of land. After researching and studying this issue, she was convinced that non-alienation of land should be a significant and important section of the Covenant for two compelling reasons. First, the experience of the people of the U.S. Virgin Islands when the government sold the beautiful island of St. John to the John D. Rockefeller Foundation. The island was developed as a resort, but the people of the Virgin Islands lost access and control of the rich resources of what was once their land.



*First-elected resident representative of the CNMI to the United States. Taken in front of the United States Capitol, Washington, DC.*



*Congress of Micronesia and the 1975 Micronesian Constitutional Convention. Dulce Gatbonton Pangelinan pictured seated second row, left. Edward DLG Pangelinan pictured standing, right. (University of Hawai'i Archives)*

Second, because she witnessed the Micronesian decision not to join the United States because they feared a loss of access and control of their land under U.S. sovereignty, Dulce insisted that a major section of the Covenant should be devoted to non-alienation of land. The merits of non-alienation of land were deliberated before the MPSC members voted on the issue. Of the 15 members on the Commission, 7 were in favor while 7 were against inclusion of a non-alienation section in the Covenant. As chairman, my vote would resolve the matter. Before casting my vote, I took a moment to silently thank Dulce for her contributions then voted a resounding YES for inclusion of a non-alienation section (Section 805) in the Covenant.



*Edward and Dulce Pangelinan photographed at their 50th wedding anniversary celebration on November 8, 2015.*

## Acknowledgements

I owe an enormous debt of gratitude and appreciation to the thousands of fellow citizens throughout the country who had shared their lives with me and extended friendship, goodwill, and generosity. Each has enriched my life throughout the many years of my walk and journey on this beautiful and wonderful planet Earth. I consider each one of them a close personal friend and thank them for their acceptance of me as theirs as well. I extend my profound appreciation and gratitude, and offer my best wishes to each of them with these words from a favorite prayer:

*May the road rise up to meet you  
May the wind always be at your back,  
May the sun shine warm upon your face,  
And rains fall soft upon your fields.  
And until we meet again,  
May God hold you  
In the palm of his hand.  
The Lord bless and keep you;  
the Lord make his face to shine upon you,  
and be gracious to you;  
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you  
and give you peace.*

# *Northern Marianas Humanities Council Resolution 2023-01*

A RESOLUTION IN RECOGNITION OF EDWARD DLG. PANGELINAN  
FOR HIS CONTRIBUTIONS AND SERVICE TO THE PEOPLE OF THE  
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

**W**HEREAS, Edward Deleon Guerrero Pangelinan was born on Saipan in 1941 with ancestral roots on the island stretching back to his maternal great-great grandfather who was raised on Saipan during the Spanish era and his paternal grandfather who migrated to Saipan in the early 1900s; and

WHEREAS, Edward DLG Pangelinan was the first person from the Northern Mariana Islands to earn a Juris Doctor Degree. He graduated from Howard University School of Law in 1969, a historically Black research institution, and was subsequently the first person from the Northern Mariana Islands to be admitted to the bar of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands; and

WHEREAS, in 1970, Edward DLG Pangelinan was elected a senator for the Congress of Micronesia and on April 11, 1972 presented a letter to U.S. Ambassador F. Haydn Williams requesting for separate political status negotiations with the United States on behalf of the Mariana Islands District Legislature; and

WHEREAS, Edward DLG Pangelinan co-wrote legislation for the Mariana Islands District Legislature that would establish the Marianas Political Status Commission (MPSC) on May 18, 1972 consisting of 15 members who would then represent the Northern Mariana Islands in negotiations regarding its political status with the U.S. Government; and

WHEREAS, Edward DLG Pangelinan stood before the U.N. Trusteeship Council in 1972 together with a delegation of two members of the Mariana Islands District Legislature and one other member of the Congress of Micronesia to make the case for separate political status negotiations between the Northern Mariana Islands and the United States amidst serious opposition from the Trusteeship Council; and



WHEREAS, Edward DLG Pangelinan was elected chairman of the MPSC on September 7, 1972; and

WHEREAS, over the period of 27 months between December 1972 through February 1975, Edward DLG Pangelinan led MPSC negotiations with the United States over the course of five rounds of formal negotiation sessions resulting in a mutual agreement as to the future political status of the Marianas District; and

WHEREAS, the people of the Northern Mariana Islands voted in a plebiscite on June 17, 1975 for approval of this mutual agreement dubbed the “Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America”; and

WHEREAS, on March 24, 1976, President Gerald Ford signed into law House Joint Resolution 549 (U.S. Public Law 94-241), approving the Covenant; and

WHEREAS, in December 1978, Edward DLG Pangelinan was elected as the first Resident Representative of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) to the United States and served in that capacity from 1978 to 1984; and

WHEREAS, as CNMI Resident Representative to the United States, Edward DLG Pangelinan worked to steward the enactment of U.S. Public Law 95-348 on August 18, 1978 which authorized \$12,000,000 for “the acquisition and construction of a power plant for the Northern Mariana Islands together with upgrading, rehabilitation, or replacement of distribution facilities”; and

WHEREAS, as CNMI Resident Representative to the United States, Edward DLG Pangelinan worked to steward the enactment of U.S. Public Law 96-205 on March 12, 1980 which authorized a \$24,400,000 grant to the CNMI for the construction of a new hospital on Saipan; and

WHEREAS, as CNMI Resident Representative to the United States, Edward DLG Pangelinan worked to steward the enactment of subsequent U.S. laws that would put into effect certain provisions of the Covenant; and

WHEREAS, Edward DLG Pangelinan, in his role as legal counsel and special advisor to Resident Representative Juan N. Babauta, served a critical role in a mission to have the U.S. Department of Defense recognize the Marianas Marine Scouts as active service members of the U.S. Armed Services.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Northern Marianas Humanities Council on behalf of an appreciative people of the CNMI, extends its greatest Si Yu'us Ma'āsi', Ghilisow, Maraming Salamat Po, and Thank You to the Honorable Edward DLG Pangelinan for his service, contributions, and dedication to expressing and advocating for the will of the people of Northern Mariana Islands to exercise self-determination and form a novel political relationship with the United States; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Northern Marianas Humanities Council expresses its deepest gratitude to the Honorable Edward DLG Pangelinan for leaving an indelible imprint on the foundations of our democracy that continues to preserve our rights to local self-government, provide the economic benefits and protections of U.S. citizenship, and reflect our collective desire to remain in control of our own lives.

SO RESOLVED AND UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED this 27th day of February, 2023 on Saipan, CNMI before the Northern Marianas Humanities Council.

/s/ Dr. Bobby J.A. Cruz, Chair

/s/Gretchen A. Smith, Vice Chair

/s/Leonard Leon, Secretary/Treasurer





## Cover Art

The cover art is a collage of images and symbols of the Chamorro and Carolinian people, culture, and heritage. At the top left are the ancient Chamorro latti' stone ruins of Chief Taga's House on Tinian. To the immediate right is a traditional Carolinian útt or canoe house used to build and store canoes and perpetuate the knowledge of traditional navigation. The image of the woman in traditional regalia symbolizes the strength and resilience of Chamorro identity and culture. The sailing canoe at the center is an image of a modern Chamorro proa constructed by 500 Sails as part of its mission to revive, promote, and preserve the maritime cultural traditions of the Mariana Islands. The vessel is also called sakman in the Chamorro language and symbolizes the journey of the people of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Chamorro and Carolinian people of the Northern Mariana Islands embarked on an epic journey to join the United States of America, bringing with them their unique customs, traditions, and heritage and bolstered by the rich resources of these islands. The story of this journey, the vast natural resources of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the deep culture of the Chamorro and Carolinian people are now integral threads, strengthening the American national fabric.

The image of the Statue of Liberty is one of the many prominent landmarks in the United States. To Edward DLG Pangelinan, the statue represented American democracy, equality, and the opportunities available to the people of the Northern Mariana Islands at the enactment of the Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America.



NORTHERN MARIANAS  
**HUMANITIES**  
COUNCIL

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