



L.A. PCG's Kalayaan 2019, A Bold Celebration of the Filipino's Courage, Compassion and Talent



(Left Photo) Consul General Cruz embraces Nanay Fedelina after honoring her during the reception. (Right photo) Consul General Cruz poses with Nanay Fedelina and the members of the Pilipino Workers Center.

18 June 2019, Los Angeles – This year's Independence Day theme, “*Kalayaan 2019: Tapang ng Bayan, Malasakit sa Mamamayan* (Courage of the Nation: Compassion for the People)”, was brought to the fore during the Independence Day reception of the Philippine Consulate General in Los Angeles, held on 13 June 2019 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. Highlights include the powerful narrative of a former Filipino “slave”, Nanay Fedelina who was freed in 2018, and the success stories of Filipino-American talents and brands in the west coast.

During the reception, Consul General Cruz gave due recognition to Nanay Fedelina who was kept in slave-like conditions for decades by a Filipino-American family who brought her to the United States around the 1970s. To many Filipino-Americans in Southern California, Nanay Fedelina is a symbol of courage and freedom, the very essence of the annual celebration of Philippine Independence.

Amidst a standing ovation, Consul General Cruz said, “Nanay Fedelina, so many people here in this room love you, we will always be here to help you and support you. Always remember you are loved by the Filipino community.”



(Left Photo) Chef Coco Cruz launches her video featuring her signature dishes. (Right photo) Mr. Marvin dela Cruz discusses how U-hop will operate in California.

Filipino-American talents and brands from the United States Southwest, namely, Chef Coco, the first Filipino exotic “fuzion” chef in the world; U-Hop, a Filipino-owned ride-hailing app; and renowned Filipino fashion designers Carl Andrada and David Tupaz made the evening more colorful and vibrant.

Chef Coco is a native of Pangasinan, Philippines and migrated to the United States in the late '90s. She climbed her way to success through hard work and sheer determination. Chef Coco earned a culinary scholarship at the Culinary Academy of Las Vegas and will soon air a cooking show in KXLA.

U-Hop, owned by Filipino entrepreneur Marvin dela Cruz, will soon operate in Los Angeles. It aims not just to rival the more popular Uber and Grab, but to inspire many more Filipinos to social entrepreneurship.



Filipino-American models walk in their modernized Philippine dress.

The fashion shows featuring the beautiful couture creations of Filipino fashion designers, Messrs. Carl Andrada and David Tupaz wowed the guests, including foreign government officials and members of the consular corps.

Designers Andrada and Tupaz are known for ingeniously combining Philippine traditional clothing designs with modern trends.



(Left Photo) Consul General Cruz (leftmost) and his wife Madame Catherine Cruz conferred a citation and handed a bouquet of flowers to Mr. David Tupaz (third from the left). (Second Photo) Mr. Carl Andrada thanks the audience after the conclusion of his fashion show.

Through these notable Filipino talents, the evolving Filipino fashion, delectable Filipino cuisine and Filipino ingenuity were put on spotlight as a proud reflection of the country's cultural identity.

“The Consulate General provides platforms to our Filipino talents marking our freedom to celebrate and promote our cultural identity as Filipinos wherever we may be in the world,” the Consul General said.

Local Filipino-American singers Shekinah Paguirigan and Felson Palad rendered *Lupang Hinirang* and the *Star Spangled Banner*, respectively.

The City of Artesia honored the Consulate General with a City Resolution commemorating the 121st Philippine Independence Day anniversary.

The reception was attended by Batangas Governor Hermilando Mandanas and his lovely spouse Regina Mandanas, and about 400 guests from various local city governments and Filipino-American community organizations in Southern California. END.



(Left Photo) Mr. Felson Palad serenades guests with his own rendition of “Ikaw”, an OPM song popularized by Sharon Cuneta (Right photo) Guests line up for crisp lechon (photo right).