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Press Release
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Nanay Fedelina Lugasán, 1936-2020 **Human Trafficking Survivor, Anti-Trafficking Advocate**



Amb. Romualdez with Nanay Fedelina at the Consulate General in Los Angeles on 15 Sept 2019

13 June 2020, Los Angeles, California – The Philippine Consulate General (PCG) in Los Angeles conveys its sincerest condolences to the family and friends of Ms. Fedelina Lugasán, the Filipina human trafficking survivor whose story captured the hearts of many, on her passing in the afternoon of 11 June 2020 in Long Beach, CA. She was 83.

Hailing from Leyte and Samar, *Nanay Fedelina* was in her teens when she was hired as a domestic helper in Manila. Her employer then brought her to the United States in the 1970s. She was passed on to family members who kept her in servitude under slave-like conditions for more than four decades. She was rescued only in 2018 when a hospital staffer reported her as a possible trafficking case. She was then being looked at by health care professionals after she complained of dizziness due to not eating for two days while attending to her sickly employer who was also hospitalized. *Nanay Fedelina* eventually won a settlement against her employer.

The Pilipino Workers Center (PWC) of Southern California, together with the Philippine Consulate General in Los Angeles, U.S. law enforcement, as well as senior care

facility owners and personnel assisted *Nanay Fedelina* in her transition from slavery to freedom.

Nanay's story was featured in various publications and was the subject of a documentary produced by Mr. Steve Angeles of The Filipino Channel's *Balitang Amerika* entitled "*Kept: Six Decades of Servitude*", which recently won in the 49th Annual Northern California Area EMMY Awards under the Human Interest Program/Special category.

Her reunification with long-lost relatives from the Philippines is also the subject of a docu-story to be released by ABS-CBN in July 2020. The Consulate General, the Philippine Embassy in Washington, D.C., and PWC played a crucial role in arranging the emotional reunification a reality March 2020. *Nanay Fedelina* was reunited with her sister Leonila Cinco, along with her niece Luz Alabado, and Luz's daughter Tiny who made the trip from the Philippines to southern California.

Nanay Fedelina's journey from victim to human trafficking advocate was witnessed by many of her close friends in the community. She dreamt of visiting the Philippines and help human trafficking survivors fight for their rights here in Los Angeles as she considers this country her home, and her rescuers and fellow survivors, her family.

She was able to personally meet Philippine Ambassador to the United States, Jose Manuel G. Romualdez when he visited Los Angeles on 15 September 2019. She expressed her desire to visit Malacañang Palace and asked Amb. Romualdez to help trafficking victims like herself. Amb. Romualdez replied to her that "The President instructed government officials abroad to prioritize Overseas Filipinos. We must do our best to safeguard their welfare."

During the reunification with her PHL-based relatives at PCG on 09 March 2020, *Nanay Fedelina* conveyed her sincerest gratitude to the President, Amb. Romualdez and the PHL government for all the assistance extended to them, especially in making the reunification a reality.

In reacting to the sad news, Consul General Adelio Angelito S. Cruz said "I am extremely saddened by the news of *Nanay Fedelina's* death and I extend my deepest sympathies to *Nanay's* family and friends". *Nanay Fedelina* was also PCG's special guest in last year's Independence Day gala.

The Consulate General is coordinating with PWC in arranging for *Nanay's* memorial, which will be announced as soon as funeral arrangements are in place. END.