

By former Board of Investments Gov. Ben Sanchez

Today, let me post two stories about some of our Overseas-Filipino Workers (OFWs). I selected these two articles because I thought my friends (and MabuhayRadio readers) will find it interesting to read. Perhaps I may turn this into a series of success stories about our OFWs.

Filipina Maid Inherits Millions from Singaporean Employer

Source: Agence France-Presse via *Philippine Daily Inquirer*

SINGAPORE—A devoted Filipina maid inherited six-million Singapore dollars (more-than four-million US dollars) from her late employer after more than 20-years of service, a newspaper report said Wednesday.

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"I am the luckiest maid in Singapore, with or without the money," the 47-year-old single woman – identified only by the pseudonym "Christine" – told the *Strait Times* in an interview.

The windfall, including cash and a luxury apartment near the Orchard Road shopping belt, came from the estate of her employer Quek Kai Miew, a medical doctor and philanthropist who died last year at 66.

The maid had also taken care of the doctor's late mother, and was told that she would be a beneficiary of her employer's will when it was drawn up in 2008.

"There were no secrets between us. I was not surprised at all when she told me how much I was going to get," the maid recalled.

"Christine" was devastated when Quek died a year ago, as the two were inseparable, and temporarily moved in with the doctor's nephew for solace.

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"It was heartbreaking for me as I saw more years with Doctor Quek than with my own mother. I would break down every time I thought about her. I could not be by myself," she said.

"I was always beside her. Wherever she went, I was with her."

The maid, who is now applying for permanent residency in Singapore, said her newfound wealth had not changed her lifestyle.

"I do not really think much about the money I got. I just live my life as I did before, and not as a rich person," the maid, dressed simply in a blouse and slacks with short-cropped hair, was quoted as saying.

"I am still who I was before. I cannot behave differently because I have money now. Even my Filipino maid friends here still treat me the same."

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{xtypo_quote} Nearly 200,000 foreign maids, mostly from the Philippines and Indonesia, work in affluent Singapore, which has a population of five-million. {/xtypo_quote}

Here is the second story, this time from the Big Apple.

NAFCON-US Demands Justice for 4 Filipino Nurses Fired for Speaking Tagalog at Work

From a Press Release Issued by NAFCON-US

New York— The National Alliance for Filipino Concerns (NAFCON-US) expresses solidarity with the Four Filipino nurses who claimed they were fired by the Bon Secours Baltimore Health System for speaking Tagalog at work. NAFCON applauds the nurses for their courage in filing a discrimination complaint before the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

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The nurses, Corina Capunitan Yap, Anna Rowena Rosales, Hachelle Natano, and Jazziel Granada claimed their employer terminated them without due process and dismissed them solely for speaking in their native tongue. The nurses are being represented by the Migrant Heritage Commission, a member of NAFCON-US.

According to their Attorney Arnedo Valera, “The hospital’s policy states that English is the principal language of their customers and must be the exclusive language spoken and written by all employees while on duty in the emergency department. However, the nurses say that they do not recall speaking in Tagalog in front or while providing patient care in the Emergency Department. They admit speaking in their native language only during breaks at the Nurses Station.”

Valera asked the EEOC to investigate the complaint and if the hospital’s English-only rule in the workplace violates the Civil Rights Act.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is a federal law that protects individuals from discrimination based upon national origin and race. Some courts and governmental agencies have said that discrimination based on language is a form of national origin discrimination because primary language is closely related to the place a person comes from. “Should the EEOC find probable cause in the nurses’ complaint,” Valera explains, “the EEOC will issue a right to sue, after which they will file a case against Bon Secours Baltimore Health System before the district court and seek punitive damages of up to \$500,000 for all four nurses.

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There are over 4-million Filipinos in the United States, the largest Filipino population outside of the Philippines.

Fr. Benjamin Alforque, NAFCON President states, "The case of these Four Filipina Nurses is yet another example of how Filipino immigrants are discriminated against in the U.S. Corina Capunitan Yap, Anna Rowena Rosales, Hachelle Natano, and Jazziel Granada deserve justice. The Filipino community must come together in solidarity and demand that the Bon Secours Baltimore Health System eliminate discriminatory policies that violate our civil rights. # # #

Editor's Note: If readers know of any human-interest stories about our OFWs, please send them c/o the Editor at mediabcla@aol.com . Or readers can reach Governor Sanchez directly at altez91@gmail.com . He welcomes readers' feedbacks as hearing from them interest him a lot.