

“Direct to the Point” Column

By Ka Larry G. Pelayo

What Is in a Name? Or a “Title” Such as the Fictional “Mayor of (the Fictitious) Philippine Town”?

A lot of people and individuals do not feel affected by how you call them. Often people are forgiving even if their names are mispronounced.

Simply stated, what matters is if you recognize their presence in any gathering or celebration. It is a simple way of telling them you know that they exist and that whatever good work they have done to the community is always appreciated.

Written by Larry G. Pelayo

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I remember one American during a visit to a big coffee shop in Downtown Los Angeles, California. He allowed me to be ahead of the line and said “Go ahead, sir, you earned your stripes.” Initially I didn’t understand him, and when I politely asked what he meant, he said, “That’s the kind of respect we give senior citizens who spent their productive years working for our country.” Maybe he saw my government-issued ID hanging on my neck.

However, when some individuals or associations go too far if only to be recognized and identified as occupying a high-ranking position – when even the mentioned position is questionable per se. When such misrepresentation happens, a scandal happens, if not a crime is actually committed.

Many people notice the misrepresentations by some Filipino Americans that continue to ail our communities. There are those who claim and continue to claim they are “battle-tested lawyers” from the Philippines when in fact they are “bottle-tested” *pala* alcoholic with bottles of wine in their hands everywhere they go.

That brings to mind somebody who used to advertise himself as a CPA, tax preparer and consultant. Somebody knew that he was not a CPA here in America or California to be specific. His attention was called by the regulatory board and ergo, his next advertisement showed “CPA Philippine Practice.” I respected and honored this guy who officially took later the California CPA Board exam and is now duly certified here. Another doctor from the Philippines worked here as a “cartero” or letter carrier. When he criticized me for not introducing him as a doctor during a party, I agreed and ultimately called him “Doctor Carter” (as in *cartero*)

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). It took three persons to intervene and prevent us from having a bloody fist fight.

We know people worked hard to earn college degrees back home as I did. But when the profession calls for government accreditation and certification here in the United States, any person should not advertise his or her title or profession unless he or she is Board-certified here.

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is a country of laws. Yes, laws that we have to observe and follow for our own protection.

Many Filipinos are concerned about the way their names are pronounced. They ended up changing these to suit the American twang. Remember the names Casimiro Bucaycay which was changed to Cashmere Bouquet, Eleuterio Ignacio to Electronic Ignition, Totoy Bato to Jack Stone or Romano Borje to Roman Bordjé (to give a French impact) even if he looks more like a fossilized caricature.

The Fictional “Mayor of (the Fictitious) Philippine Town”

Comes now a *kababayan* who had been flaunted by his publicist as the “Mayor of Philippine Town.” He has been called in public also as the “first elected Filipino-American Mayor of Philippine Town” and lately was introduced as the “Honorary Mayor of Historic Filipinotown.”

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These instances of misinformation had been going on since 2002 during the formation year of the “Philippine Town, Incorporated” or PTI for short. Among the incorporators were the initial seventeen (17) elected councilmen (directors) of the PTI. When they met to elect who among themselves would be their executive officers, the group took a long time debating over the choice between the use of the title “president” or “mayor” in describing the position of the association’s head honcho. The now-deceased Bob von Weber and journalist-and-community advocate Bobby Reyes opposed the use of the title “mayor” but the duo was outnumbered and outvoted. Their reason was plain and simple. Whoever will be the officer that carried the title “mayor” or “councilman” would be the laughing stock of the community.

Pagtatawanan lang

. It happens even today. The “mayor” is now called by many wags as the “mayordomo.”

So much confusion was created by many who did not find time to determine the real name assigned to the territory bounded by Hoover Street, Freeway 101, Glendale Boulevard and Beverly Boulevard

. People are misled by implying that the “Philippine Town” is the equivalent of “
China
Town
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Several years ago, a Filipina community leader who was working then with the Mayor’s office came up with a public correction of this misinterpretation. Her statement was published by a now-defunct Fil-Am newspaper. She said: “The jurisdiction over the Historic Filipinotown falls under the Mayor of Los Angeles. To date, there is no announcement from the City Mayor’s Office or a resolution from the City Council that declared any person as the ‘Honorary Mayor of Historic Filipinotown’.” In short, no such position exists.

What Is in a Name? Or a “Title” Such as the Fictional “Mayor of (the Fictitious) Philippine Town”? - Mabuhay

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The truth is that there is no “Philippine Town” or “Pilipino (sic) Town.” Nada. What we have is the “Historic Filipinotown.” It is commonly referred to as the “HIFI,” which was declared by the Los Angeles City Council on Aug. 2, 2002. Consequently after the HIFI’s declaration and recognition through a council resolution, another entity sprouted like a mushroom from the open arena, the “Historic Filipino Town, Inc.,” which is also a private corporation. Please take note of the word “Incorporated.”

As far as PTI is concerned, it has its own “mayor.” A “mayor” (sic) of a non-existing geographical territory but simply of an association. The problem here is that a publicist often designates in his press releases a certain individual as the “Mayor of Philippine Town,” forgetting conveniently to include the word “Inc.” The designation literally leads many individuals to believe it is a position representing a geographical area or that it was an elective political position. To wit, even the pretender to the position “Mayor” of Philippine Town corrected introductions to him as the “President of Philippine Town” by saying “I am the first elected Filipino-American Mayor of Philippine Town.” Remember the word “Incorporated” was never mentioned in introducing the (former) head of “Philippine Town.”

The following three questions always raised eyebrows: (1) Is there already an “Honorary Mayor” of Historic Filipinotown; (2) Is there a “mayor” of Philippine Town; and (3) Was there a duly-elected “Mayor” of Philippine Town.

The answer to all three questions is a BIG NO.

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Leo Pandac of the Pilipino (sic) American Networking and Advocacy (PANA) and some civic organizations at the HIFI are coming up with a declaration that nobody has been named the “Honorary Mayor of Historic Filipinotown” yet. There will NEVER be a “mayor of Philippine Town” because this town does not exist although there is the “Historic Filipinotown” District. Who in his right mind will agree to represent a non-existing territory? Your answer is as good as mine.

Bobby Reyes said, “Maybe the ‘Honorary Mayorship’ refers to the ‘Pre-Historic’ Filipinotown.” Meaning, during the years of the dinosaurs at La Brea Tar Pits. As for me,
nuong hindi pa masyadong uso ang tao

Philippine Town, **Incorporated** (PTI), has a mayor (sic) who should not be introduced by dropping “Inc.” from his official title as the “Mayor of the Philippine Town, Inc.” Nor should he be seated, for *delicadeza* or scruple’s sake, with or in the middle of real-and-elected public officials of Los Angeles and other neighboring cities. I will be the first one to stand and clap my hands if the PTI’s officer will be introduced as the “Mayor of Philippine Town, **Incorporated**.” For at least there would be honesty in the said introduction. # # #

{xtypo_quote} **Editor’s Note:** Please read a satire about the same topic, [Wags Humiliate Filipino-American Pretenders to “Public Offices” in Los Angeles](#)
{/xtypo_quote}

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