



Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

SECOND DIVISION

PABLITO L. MIRANDA, JR.,
Complainant,

A.C. No. 12196

- versus -

Present:

ATTY. JOSE B. ALVAREZ, SR.,
Respondent.

CARPIO, *J.*, Chairperson,
PERLAS-BERNABE,
CAGUIOA,
A. REYES, JR., and
J. REYES, JR., *JJ.*

Promulgated:

03 SEP 2018

Hernando Perlas-Bernabe

DECISION

PERLAS-BERNABE, *J.*:

This is an administrative case against respondent Atty. Jose B. Alvarez, Sr. (respondent) for disbarment and perpetual disqualification as a notary public on the grounds of gross negligence and grave misconduct, as well as violation of the 2004 Rules on Notarial Practice¹ (Notarial Rules).

The Facts

On January 16, 2012, complainant Pablito L. Miranda, Jr. (complainant) filed a Complaint-Affidavit² before the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) – Commission on Bar Discipline, averring that respondent notarized certain documents during the year 2010 notwithstanding that his notarial commission for and within the jurisdiction of San Pedro, Laguna

* Designated Additional Member per Special Order No. 2587 dated August 28, 2018.

¹ A.M. No. 02-8-13-SC (August 1, 2004).

² Dated January 13, 2012. *Rollo*, pp. 2-7.

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had already expired way back in December 31, 2005 and has yet to be renewed before the Regional Trial Court (RTC) of San Pedro, Laguna (RTC-San Pedro) where he resides and conducts his notarial businesses.³

In support thereof, complainant listed the following addresses, all located in San Pedro, Laguna, where respondent allegedly maintained his notarial offices: (a) Alvarez & Alvarez Law Office at Room 202, 2nd Floor, Fil-Em Building, A. Luna St., Poblacion; (b) Golden Peso Enterprises and Loan Center at Macaria Ave., Pacita Complex; and (c) Pacita Arcade/Commercial Complex in Pacita Complex.⁴ He also presented pictures of respondent's offices in San Pedro, Laguna,⁵ and documents to prove that respondent notarized: (1) a 2010 Application for Business Permit⁶ of one Ronald Castasus Amante (Amante), which, coincidentally, also did not have a valid proof of identification and bore a fictitious address; and (2) a Special Power of Attorney⁷ (SPA), executed by Amante on December 7, 2010.⁸ Likewise, complainant submitted a copy of: (1) Certification No. 11-0067⁹ dated October 5, 2011 (October 5, 2011 Certification) issued by Catherin B. Beran-Baraoidan,¹⁰ Clerk of Court VI (COC Beran-Baraoidan) of the RTC-San Pedro, stating that respondent was commissioned as a notary public for San Pedro, Laguna from 1998 to 2005; and (2) Certification No. 11-0053¹¹ dated September 21, 2011 (September 21, 2011 Certification) issued by COC Beran-Baraoidan, stating that "*no document entitled [SPA] x x x executed by [Amante] x x x notarized by [respondent] for the year 2010, is submitted before this Office.*"¹²

Furthermore, complainant claimed that respondent failed to comply with his duties under the Notarial Rules, particularly: (a) to register one (1) notarial office only; (b) to keep only one (1) active notarial register at any given time; (c) to file monthly notarial books, reports, and copies of the documents notarized in any given month; and (d) to surrender his notarial register and seal upon expiration of his commission.¹³

Also, complainant alleged that respondent authorized unlicensed persons to do notarial acts for him using his signatures, stamps, offices, and notarial register, and that he further violated Section 12, Rule II of the Notarial Rules regarding competent evidence of identity by making untruthful statements in a narration of facts, and causing it to appear that

³ See id. at 2 and 114.

⁴ Id. at 70. See also id. at 114.

⁵ Id. at 9.

⁶ See Doc. No. 706, Page No. 144, Book No. 11, Series of 2010; id. at 11 (including dorsal portion).

⁷ See Doc. No. 6576, Page No. 671, Book No. X, Series of 2010; id. at 13.

⁸ See id. at 115.

⁹ Id. at 8.

¹⁰ Spelled as "Beran-Baraoidan" in some parts of the *rollo*.

¹¹ *Rollo*, p. 10.

¹² Id.

¹³ See id. at 115.

persons have participated in an act or proceeding when they did not in fact so participate.¹⁴ Because of these acts, complainant asserted that respondent committed grave violations of the Notarial Rules.¹⁵

In his Answer¹⁶ dated March 7, 2012, respondent asserted that he was a duly commissioned notary public in 2010 in Biñan, Laguna, as shown by the attached Certification of Notarial Commission No. 2009-21¹⁷ issued by Presiding Judge Marino E. Rubia of the RTC of Biñan, Laguna, Branch 24 (RTC-Biñan).¹⁸

In compliance with the IBP's Order,¹⁹ complainant submitted his Position Paper,²⁰ additionally pointing out that in 1993, respondent notarized a Joint Affidavit²¹ despite the absence of a notarial commission therefor,²² as well as an Affidavit for Death Benefit Claim²³ in April 10, 2012 after his notarial commission for and within Biñan, Laguna had already expired.²⁴

For his part, respondent simply reiterated his defense that he was a duly commissioned notary public in 2010 in Biñan, Laguna.²⁵

The IBP's Report and Recommendation

In a Report and Recommendation²⁶ dated April 19, 2013, the IBP Investigating Commissioner (IBP-IC) found respondent administratively liable for violating the Notarial Rules,²⁷ the Code of Professional Responsibility (CPR), and the Lawyer's Oath, and accordingly, recommended that respondent's notarial commission, if existing, be revoked, that he be barred perpetually as a notary public, and that he be suspended from the practice of law for a period of two (2) years from notice, with a warning that any infraction of the canons or provisions of law in the future shall be dealt with more severely.²⁸

¹⁴ See *id.*

¹⁵ Complainant stated "Notarial Law" in his complaint, albeit clearly referring to the 2004 Rules on Notarial Practice.

¹⁶ *Rollo*, pp. 21-23.

¹⁷ Issued on December 29, 2009. *Id.* at 24.

¹⁸ See *id.* at 21.

¹⁹ Dated August 17, 2012. *Id.* at 68.

²⁰ Dated August 31, 2012. *Id.* at 69-87.

²¹ Dated October 31, 1993. *Id.* at 97.

²² See *id.* at 71.

²³ *Id.* at 98.

²⁴ See *id.* at 71-72.

²⁵ See Position Paper dated December 12, 2012; *id.* at 108-109.

²⁶ *Id.* at 114-117. Penned by Commissioner Honesto A. Villamor.

²⁷ The IBP-IC stated "Notarial Law" in its Report and Recommendation, albeit clearly referring to the 2004 Rules on Notarial Practice.

²⁸ *Rollo*, p. 117.

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In particular, the IBP-IC found that: (a) respondent's three (3) notarial offices, including his residence, are all within the jurisdiction of San Pedro, Laguna, whereas his notarial commission existing in 2010 was not issued by the RTC-San Pedro but by the RTC-Biñan; (b) respondent notarized an Affidavit of Death Benefit Claim and Amante's Application for Business Permit in his notarial offices in San Pedro, Laguna which is outside his notarial jurisdiction; and (c) respondent notarized the Application for Business Permit even though it bore a fictitious address and lacked details regarding the signatory's competent evidence of identity, thus causing it to appear that persons have participated in an act or proceeding when they did not in fact so participate. To the IBP-IC, these facts, taken together, clearly show that respondent violated his oath of office and his duty as a lawyer, and committed unethical behavior as a notary public, for which he should be held administratively liable.²⁹

In a Resolution³⁰ dated May 11, 2013 (1st Resolution), the IBP Board of Governors adopted and approved the above report and recommendation of the IBP-IC with modification, reducing the recommended penalty of suspension to one (1) year, instead of two (2) years.

Dissatisfied, respondent filed a motion for reconsideration,³¹ arguing that he maintains only one (1) notarial office which is located at 888 Lucky Gem Bldg., Brgy. San Antonio, Biñan, Laguna, where he, together with one Atty. Edgardo Salandanan (Atty. Salandanan) as Senior Partner, has been holding office and conducting all his notarial works for several years. He added that the office in San Pedro, Laguna is managed and owned by his son, Atty. Jose L. Alvarez, Jr.³² In his Comment,³³ complainant reiterated his allegations against respondent and insisted that the latter be disbarred.

In a Resolution³⁴ dated May 4, 2014 (2nd Resolution), the IBP Board of Governors partially granted respondent's motion, and accordingly, modified the 1st Resolution by deleting the penalty of suspension "*considering that [r]espondent's violation relates to the Notarial Law.*"³⁵

²⁹ See *id.* at 116-117.

³⁰ See Notice of Resolution in Resolution No. XX-2013-622 signed by National Secretary Nasser A. Marohomsalic; *id.* at 113 (including dorsal portion).

³¹ Dated September 16, 2013. *Id.* at 118-121. Respondent signed his address at "Alvarez & Alvarez Law Office, 888 Lucky Gem Bldg., Brgy. San Antonio, Biñan, Laguna." See also respondent's Motion For Extension of Time to File Motion for Reconsideration [of] the Resolution of the Honorable Commission dated August 28, 2013 (*id.* at 130-131); and Reply [to] the Comment, dated December 4, 2013 (*id.* at 152-153), wherein he signed his address at "Alvarez & Alvarez Law Office, Rm. 202 Fil-Em Bldg., Luna St., San Pedro, Laguna."

³² See *id.* at 118.

³³ Dated November 24, 2013. *Id.* at 133-139.

³⁴ See Notice of Resolution in Resolution No. XX1-2014-323; *id.* at 160-161. See also Extended Resolution dated June 2, 2014, signed by Director for Bar Discipline Dominic C.M. Solis; *id.* at 162-164.

³⁵ *Id.* at 160 and 164.

This time it was complainant who moved for reconsideration,³⁶ seeking respondent's disbarment. Notably, in his motion, complainant further pointed out that, as per the Certification³⁷ dated May 7, 2015 issued by the Office of the Bar Confidant (OBC), respondent "*has been suspended from the practice of law for five (5) months x x x effective upon receipt of the Resolution of the Court dated December 04, 2000 in G.R. No. 126025 x x x and re-docketed as an Administrative Case No. 9723 x x x. Said Resolution was received by the respondent on January 09, 2001*" and "[t]o date, the said order of suspension has not yet been lifted by the Court."

Complying with the IBP Board of Governors' Order³⁸ to comment, respondent merely insisted that he is a full-fledged lawyer with Roll No. 20776, and that complainant filed this administrative case simply to extort money from him.³⁹

The IBP Board of Governors denied complainant's motion in a Resolution⁴⁰ dated August 31, 2017.

The Issue Before the Court

The issue for the Court's resolution is whether or not the IBP correctly found respondent administratively liable.

³⁶ See Motion for Reconsideration in the Light of the New Evidence dated January 11, 2016; *id.* at 165-166.

³⁷ *Id.* at 168. Signed by Deputy Clerk of Court and Bar Confidant Ma. Cristina B. Layusa. The Certification pertinently reads:

"THIS IS TO CERTIFY that, according to the records of this Office, **ATTY. JOSE B. ALVAREZ** of San Pedro, Laguna has been **SUSPENDED** from the practice of law for five (5) months, and to pay a fine of P3,000.00, effective upon receipt of the Resolution of the Court dated December 4, 2000 in G.R. No. 126025 x x x and re-docketed as an Administrative Case No. 9723 (Re: Resolution of the Court dated December 04, 2000 in G.R. No. 126025 vs. Atty. Jose B. Alvarez). Said Resolution was received by the respondent on January 09, 2001.

To date, the said order of suspension has not yet been lifted by the Court.
x x x x"

See also the Certification dated March 30, 2015 (*id.* at 169) issued by the OBC, stating that "*according to the records of this Office, MR. JOSE B. ALVAREZ, SR. using Roll of Attorney's No. 51160 is not a member of the Philippine Bar;*" copy of receipts issued between 2013 and 2015 under the name "Alvarez Law Office" for acceptance fees (*id.* at 172-174); and letter dated June 25, 2014 signed by respondent as counsel for Spouses Caridad Capistrano and Renato Bagtas (*id.* at 175).

³⁸ Dated February 9, 2016, signed by Director for Bar Discipline Ramon S. Esguerra; *id.* at 178.

³⁹ See undated Comment on the Motion for Reconsideration; *id.* at 179-180. Respondent no longer indicated any address and simply signed his name and Roll Number.

⁴⁰ See Notice of Resolution in Resolution No. XXIII-2017-029 signed by Assistant National Secretary Doroteo B. Aguila; *id.* at 184-185.

The Court's Ruling

I.

Time and again, the Court has held “[t]hat notarization of a document is not an empty act or routine. **It is invested with substantive public interest, such that only those who are qualified or authorized may act as notaries public.** Notarization converts a private document into a public document, thus, making that document admissible in evidence without further proof of its authenticity. A notarial document is by law entitled to full faith and credit upon its face. Courts, administrative agencies[,] and the public at large must be able to rely upon the acknowledgment executed by a notary public and appended to a private instrument. For this reason, notaries public must observe with the utmost care the basic requirements in the performance of their duties. Otherwise, the confidence of the public in the integrity of this form of conveyance would be undermined.”⁴¹

The basic requirements a notary public must observe in the performance of his duties are presently laid down in the 2004 Rules on Notarial Practice. The failure to observe the requirements and/or comply with the duties prescribed therein shall constitute grounds for the revocation of the notarial commission of, as well as the imposition of the appropriate administrative sanction/s against, the erring notary public.⁴²

In this case, the Court finds that respondent committed the following violations of the Notarial Rules:

First, respondent performed notarial acts without the proper notarial commission therefor.

Under the Notarial Rules, “a person commissioned as a notary public may perform notarial acts in any place within the territorial jurisdiction of the commissioning court for a period of two (2) years commencing the first day of January of the year in which the commissioning is made. Commission either means the grant of authority to perform notarial [acts] or the written evidence of authority.”⁴³ **“Without a commission, a lawyer is unauthorized to perform any of the notarial acts. A lawyer who acts as a notary public without the necessary notarial commission is remiss in his professional duties and responsibilities.”**⁴⁴ Moreover, it should be emphasized that “[u]nder the rule, only persons who are commissioned as

⁴¹ *Spouses Gacuya v. Spouses Solbita*, A.C. No. 8840, March 8, 2016, 785 SCRA 590, 595; citations omitted.

⁴² See Section 1, Rule XI of the Notarial Rules.

⁴³ *Japitana v. Parado*, 779 Phil. 182, 188 (2016). See also Section 3, Rule II of the Notarial Rules.

⁴⁴ *Japitana v. Parado*, id. at 189.

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notary public may perform notarial acts **within the territorial jurisdiction of the court which granted the commission.**⁴⁵

In this case, it was established that respondent notarized a Joint Affidavit⁴⁶ in **1993** and an Application for Business Permit,⁴⁷ as well as the SPA⁴⁸ of Amante, in **2010**, all in **San Pedro, Laguna**. However, as per the October 5, 2011 Certification⁴⁹ issued by COC Beran-Baraoidan of the RTC-San Pedro, respondent was commissioned as a notary public for and within San Pedro, Laguna only from **1998 to 2005**, and that the said commission has not been renewed in 2010 and therefore, already expired.

Furthermore, it was shown that although respondent has been issued a notarial commission by the RTC-Biñan (which was valid from **January 1, 2010 until December 31, 2011**), he: **(a)** conducted business as a notary public during such time not only in his Biñan, Laguna law office (which he shared with a certain Atty. Salandanan) but also in his other law offices in San Pedro, Laguna, and thus, performed notarial acts beyond the territorial jurisdiction of the said commissioning court; and **(b)** notarized an Affidavit for Death Benefit Claim⁵⁰ in **Biñan, Laguna** on **April 10, 2012**, during which time the said commission had already expired.

Second, respondent notarized a document that is bereft of any details regarding the identity of the signatory.

Under the Notarial Rules, “a notary public should not notarize a document unless the signatory to the document is in the notary’s presence personally at the time of the notarization, and personally known to the notary public or otherwise identified through competent evidence of identity. At the time of notarization, the signatory shall sign or affix with a thumb or mark the notary public’s notarial register. The purpose of these requirements is to enable the notary public to verify the genuineness of the signature and to ascertain that the document is the signatory’s free act and deed. If the signatory is not acting of his or her own free will, a notary public is mandated to refuse to perform a notarial act.”⁵¹

In *Gaddi v. Velasco*,⁵² the Court ruled that a notary public who notarizes a document despite the missing details anent the signatory’s competent evidence of identity not only fails in his duty to ascertain the

⁴⁵ *Re: Violation of Rules on Notarial Practice*, 751 Phil. 10, 15 (2015).

⁴⁶ *Rollo*, p. 97.

⁴⁷ *Id.* at 11 (including dorsal portion).

⁴⁸ *Id.* at 13.

⁴⁹ *Id.* at 8.

⁵⁰ *Id.* at 98.

⁵¹ *Gaddi v. Velasco*, 742 Phil. 810, 815-816 (2014).

⁵² *Id.*

signatory's identity but also improperly notarizes an incomplete notarial certificate, viz.:

In the present case, contrary to [Atty.] Velasco's claim that Gaddi appeared before him and presented two identification cards as proof of her identity, the notarial certificate, in rubber stamp, itself indicates: "SUBSCRIBE AND SWORN TO BEFORE ME THIS APR 22, 2010 x x x AT MAKATI CITY. AFFIANT EXHIBITING TO ME HIS/HER C.T.C. NO. _____ ISSUED AT/ON _____." **The unfilled spaces clearly establish that Velasco had been remiss in his duty of ascertaining the identity of the signatory to the document.** Velasco did not comply with the most basic function that a notary public must do, that is, to require the presence of Gaddi; otherwise, he could have ascertained that the handwritten admission was executed involuntarily and refused to notarize the document. **Furthermore, Velasco affixed his signature in an incomplete notarial certificate.** x x x⁵³ (Emphases supplied)

Similar to this case, the *jurat* of the 2010 Application for Business Permit which respondent notarized did not bear the details of the competent evidence of identity of its principal-signatory. While this application appears to be a ready-made form issued by the Municipality of San Pedro, Laguna, this fact alone cannot justify respondent's non-compliance with his duties under the Notarial Rules.

And third, respondent failed to forward to the Clerk of Court (COC) of the commissioning court a certified copy of each month's entries and a duplicate original copy of any instrument acknowledged before him.

Under the Notarial Rules, a notary public must forward to the Clerk of Court, within the first ten (10) days of the month following, a certified copy of each month's entries and a duplicate original copy of any instrument acknowledged before the notary public.⁵⁴ According to case law, failure to comply with this requirement is "[a] ground for revocation of a notary public's commission."⁵⁵

As per the September 21, 2011 Certification⁵⁶ issued by COC Beran-Baraoidan, a copy of the SPA executed by Amante was not submitted before the Office of the COC of the RTC-San Pedro. This omission comes as no surprise considering that, as previously discussed, his notarial commission therefor had already expired.

Accordingly, in view of respondent's numerous violations of the Notarial Rules, the Court upholds the IBP's recommendation to revoke his

⁵³ Id. at 816.

⁵⁴ See Section 2 (h), Rule VI of the Notarial Rules.

⁵⁵ *Peña v. Paterno*, 710 Phil. 582, 595-596 (2013).

⁵⁶ *Rollo*, p. 10.

incumbent notarial commission, if any, as well as to perpetually disqualify him from being commissioned as a notary public.

However, the Court cannot affirm the IBP's deletion of the penalty of suspension from the practice of law, which penalty was originally recommended by the IBP-IC. It should be emphasized that respondent's transgressions of the Notarial Rules also have a bearing on his standing as a lawyer. As a member of the Bar, respondent is expected at all times to uphold the integrity and dignity of the legal profession and refrain from any act or omission which might erode the trust and confidence reposed by the public in the integrity of the legal profession.⁵⁷ By flouting the Notarial Rules on numerous occasions, respondent engaged in unlawful conduct which renders him liable for violation of the following provisions of the CPR:

CANON 1 – A lawyer shall uphold the constitution, obey the laws of the land and promote respect for law and legal processes.

Rule 1.01 – A lawyer shall not engage in unlawful, dishonest, immoral or deceitful conduct.

CANON 7 – A lawyer shall at all times uphold the integrity and dignity of the legal profession and support the activities of the integrated bar.

Thus, aside from the above-stated penalties, the Court further suspends respondent from the practice of law for a period of two (2) years, consistent with prevailing jurisprudence on the subject matter.⁵⁸

II.

Separately, in his Motion for Reconsideration in the Light of the New Evidence,⁵⁹ complainant pointed out that, as per the May 7, 2015 Certification⁶⁰ issued by the OBC, respondent had previously been suspended by the Court for five (5) months in "*Resolution x x x dated December 04, 2000 in G.R. No. 126025 x x x and re-docketed as an Administrative Case No. 9723.*" Records of the OBC show that respondent received the Order of Suspension (Resolution in G.R. No. 126025⁶¹ and re-docketed as Administrative Case No. 9723) on January 9, 2001.⁶² However,

⁵⁷ See Canon 7 of the CPR. See also *Re: Violation of Rules on Notarial Practice*, supra note 45, at 16; *Zoreta v. Simpliciano*, 485 Phil. 395 (2004); and *Spouses Gacuya v. Solbita*, supra note 41, at 596.

⁵⁸ See the following cases where the Court imposed a similar penalty for violation of the Notarial Rules: *Re: Violation of Rules on Notarial Practice*, id.; *Spouses Gacuya v. Solbita*, id.; *Japitana v. Parado*, supra note 43; and *Zoreta v. Simpliciano*, id. See also *Nunga v. Viray*, 366 Phil. 155 (1999) where the Court suspended the lawyer for three (3) years for notarizing an instrument without a commission.

⁵⁹ *Rollo*, pp. 165-166.

⁶⁰ Id. at 168.

⁶¹ *People v. Almendral*, 477 Phil. 521 (2004).

⁶² *Rollo*, p. 168.

it does not appear that the said suspension has already been lifted following the prescribed procedure therefor.⁶³

In *Ladim v. Ramirez*,⁶⁴ the Court explained that the lifting of a lawyer's suspension is not automatic upon the expiration of the suspension period. The lawyer must still file before the Court the necessary motion to lift suspension and other pertinent documents, which include certifications from the Office of the Executive Judge of the court where he practices his legal profession and from the IBP's Local Chapter where he is affiliated affirming that he ceased and desisted from the practice of law and has not appeared in court as counsel during the period of his suspension.⁶⁵ Thereafter, the Court, after evaluation, and upon a favorable recommendation from the OBC, will issue a resolution lifting the order of suspension and thus allow him to resume the practice of law.⁶⁶ Prior thereto, the "suspension stands until he has satisfactorily shown to the Court his compliance therewith."⁶⁷

Records do not show that respondent complied with the foregoing process. And yet, as complainant averred, respondent has been practicing law, as demonstrated by photos taken of court calendar of cases wherein respondent appeared as counsel for the accused in two (2) criminal cases,⁶⁸ receipts issued bearing the Alvarez Law Office logo for the payment of acceptance fee,⁶⁹ and a letter dated June 25, 2014 addressed to the COC & Ex-Oficio Sheriff of the RTC-San Pedro signed by respondent as counsel for a certain Spouses Caridad Capistrano and Renato Bagtas.⁷⁰

Thus, in view of the foregoing, the Court hereby requires respondent to show cause within ten (10) days from notice why he should not be held in contempt of court and/or further disciplined for allegedly practicing law although his suspension therefor has yet to be lifted.

WHEREFORE, the Court hereby finds respondent Atty. Jose B. Alvarez, Sr. (respondent) **GUILTY** of violation of the 2004 Rules on Notarial Practice and of the Code of Professional Responsibility. Accordingly, effective immediately, the Court: **SUSPENDS** him from the practice of law for two (2) years; **REVOKES** his incumbent commission as a notary public, if any; and, perpetually **DISQUALIFIES** him from being commissioned as a notary public. He is **WARNED** that a repetition of the same offense or similar acts in the future shall be dealt with more severely.

⁶³ Id.

⁶⁴ See Minute Resolution in A.C. No. 10372, August 1, 2016.

⁶⁵ See id.

⁶⁶ See *Maniago v. De Dios*, 631 Phil. 139, 144-145 (2010).

⁶⁷ See Minute Resolution in *Balagtas v. Fernandez*, A.C. No. 10313, April 20, 2016.

⁶⁸ *Rollo*, p. 171.

⁶⁹ Id. at 172-174.

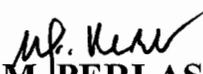
⁷⁰ Id. at 175.

He is **DIRECTED** to report to this Court the date of his receipt of this Decision to enable it to determine when his suspension from the practice of law, the revocation of his notarial commission, and his disqualification from being commissioned as a notary public shall take effect.

Further, respondent is **DIRECTED** to **SHOW CAUSE** within ten (10) days from notice why he should not be held in contempt of court and/or further disciplined for allegedly practicing law despite the suspension therefor as discussed in this Decision.

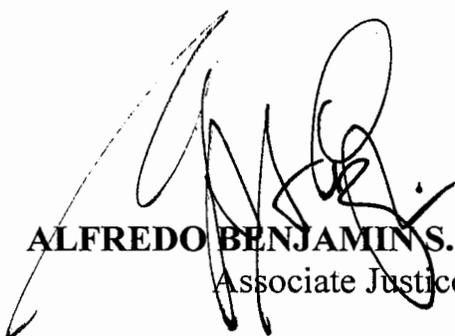
Let copies of this Decision be furnished to: (1) the Office of the Bar Confidant to be appended to respondent's personal record as an attorney; (2) the Integrated Bar of the Philippines for its information and guidance; and, (3) the Office of the Court Administrator for circulation to all courts in the country.

SO ORDERED.


ESTELA M. PERLAS-BERNABE
Associate Justice

WE CONCUR:


ANTONIO T. CARPIO
Senior Associate Justice
Chairperson


ALFREDO BENJAMIN S. CAGUIOA
Associate Justice


ANDRES B. REYES, JR.
Associate Justice


JOSE C. REYES, JR.
Associate Justice