

RECEIVED
JAN 21 2020

BY: XCA
TIME: 3:14 PM



Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

SECOND DIVISION

VENSON R. ANG,
Complainant,

A.C. No. 12408

Present:

PERLAS-BERNABE, J.,
Chairperson,
REYES, A., JR.,
HERNANDO,
INTING, and
DELOS SANTOS, JJ.

- versus -

ATTY. SALVADOR B.
BELARO, JR.,
Respondent.

Promulgated:

11 DEC 2019

X-----X

DECISION

HERNANDO, J.:

Complainant Venson R. Ang (Venson) seeks the disbarment of respondent Atty. Salvador B. Belaro, Jr. (Atty. Belaro) for violation of Administrative Matter No. 02-8-13-SC or the 2004 Rules on Notarial Practice (Notarial Rules) and the Code of Professional Responsibility (CPR).

The Factual Antecedents

The late Peregrina Dela Rosa (Peregrina) owned a parcel of land with a building erected thereon which is covered by Transfer Certificate of Title No. 52899¹ situated in San Francisco del Monte, Quezon City. In 1982, she appointed complainant Venson as the administrator of the subject property. Upon Peregrina's demise on November 24, 2002, the property was inherited by complainant Venson and his siblings namely: Virginia Ang Ting, Venhart Dela Rosa Ang, Villy Ang Teng Him Buenaventura (Villy), and Vermont

¹ Rollo, pp. 32-33.

Dela Rosa Ang (Vermont). The siblings never partitioned the property or assigned their rights to any of the co-owners.

On March 6, 2015, complainant Venson and his siblings were surprised to learn that Peregrina's title to the subject property was already cancelled by virtue of an Extrajudicial Settlement of Estate Among Heirs with Waiver of Rights² (Extrajudicial Settlement) which they allegedly executed on March 26, 2014. The Extrajudicial Settlement was notarized by respondent Atty. Belaro on March 26, 2014 before whom complainant Venson and his siblings purportedly personally appeared and subscribed therein. Complainant Venson and his siblings also discovered two other versions of the same document that were submitted to the Manila Electric Company (MERALCO)³ and the Office of the Clerk of Court, Regional Trial Court (RTC) of Quezon City⁴ that were likewise notarized by respondent Atty. Belaro.

Perusal of the three versions of the Extrajudicial Settlement showed several irregularities therein. These are: (a) the name of Virginia Dela Rosa Ang-Ting was misspelled as Verginia Rosa Ang-Ting; (b) the husband of Villy was not stated therein; (c) the Extrajudicial Settlement instrument was allegedly executed on March 26, 2014, but the subject property remained in the name of Peregrina as of July 2014; (d) only the version of the instrument that was submitted to the Land Registration Authority (LRA) showed the date of death of Peregrina and that it was published under the law; (e) Villy was indicated as a signatory therein despite her demise on April 5, 2012, two years before it was executed; and (f) the Extrajudicial Settlement submitted to MERALCO bore no witnesses while the LRA's copy was signed by two unknown witnesses, and the instrument submitted to the RTC-Quezon City indicated Ma. Shiela Dioneda (Dioneda⁵), the alleged secretary of respondent Atty. Belaro, as the sole witness therein.⁶

Complainant Venson and his siblings also discovered that respondent Atty. Belaro notarized a Deed of Absolute Sale⁷ dated December 16, 2014 which was purportedly executed by and between Vermont and Rowena Ang (Rowena) as sellers, and Lou Aldrin Ridad, Louzelle Ann Ridad, Louise May Ridad, Louie Aaron Ridad, and Louissa Liendle Ridad as buyers.

An Acknowledgement Receipt⁸ dated December 16, 2014 was likewise notarized by respondent Atty. Belaro showing that Vermont and Rowena allegedly received ₱5,000,000.00 from the buyers in consideration of the purported sale of the subject property.

² *Id.* at 12-13.

³ *Id.* at 25-26.

⁴ *Id.* at 30-31.

⁵ Also spelled as Ma. Shiela Dloneda.

⁶ *Rollo*, p. 5.

⁷ *Id.* at 15-17.

⁸ *Id.* at 18.

As a result thereof, complainant Venson filed the instant letter-complaint.⁹ Attached to the complaint were the reproduction copies of the questioned documents, the specimen signatures¹⁰ of respondent Atty. Belaro that were requested from the office of the Executive Judge of RTC-Quezon City, and a Certification¹¹ dated March 20, 2015 issued by the Office of the Clerk of Court of the said trial court.

On April 8, 2015, the Commission on Bar Discipline (**CBD**) of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (**IBP**), through Director Dominic C.M. Solis, issued an Order¹² directing the parties to file their respective verified position papers. The Investigating Commissioner thereafter set the mandatory conference on June 25, 2015.¹³ However, only complainant Venson appeared during the mandatory conference.¹⁴

Respondent Atty. Belaro then filed an undated Manifestation with Motion for Reinvestigation¹⁵ informing the CBD that he belatedly received the copy of its Order as it was sent to the school where he reports only on weekends. Also, the annexes mentioned in the complaint were not attached therein. Thus, respondent Atty. Belaro requested the CBD for 10 days within which to file his answer or position paper and to photocopy the annexes of the complaint.

Pending the resolution of his Manifestation with Motion for Reinvestigation, respondent Atty. Belaro filed his Answer¹⁶ to the letter complaint denying that he notarized the questioned documents involving the subject property. He claimed that his alleged signatures found therein were forgeries as evidenced by his specimen signatures submitted before the RTC-Quezon City when he applied for a notarial commission. Respondent Atty. Belaro also denied having caused the filing of the questioned notarized documents before the government agencies concerned. He further averred that he did not know the differences and alterations made in the different versions of the Extrajudicial Settlement instrument which were submitted to MERALCO, the LRA, and the Clerk of Court of RTC-Quezon City. Lastly, he claimed that he does not personally know Dioneda and that she was never employed as his secretary.

Subsequently, the parties filed a Joint Motion to Dismiss¹⁷ before the CBD seeking the dismissal of the complaint claiming that it arose from a misapprehension of facts. Attached to the joint motion is an Affidavit of

⁹ *Id.* at 2-9.

¹⁰ *Id.* at 34.

¹¹ *Id.* at 35.

¹² *Id.* at 36.

¹³ *Id.* at 37.

¹⁴ *Id.* at 38.

¹⁵ *Id.* at 40-41.

¹⁶ *Id.* at 97-103.

¹⁷ *Id.* at 42-43.

7

Desistance¹⁸ executed by complainant Venson. Respondent Atty. Belaro also informed the CBD of his intention to withdraw his Motion for Reinvestigation.

Report and Recommendation of the Investigating Commissioner

In a Report and Recommendation¹⁹ dated July 30, 2014, Investigating Commissioner Arsenio P. Adriano noted that the signatures of respondent Atty. Belaro in the Extrajudicial Settlement instrument appear to be falsified as these were different from his genuine signatures submitted to the Executive Judge of RTC-Quezon City when he applied for a notarial commission. Despite the alleged forgery, his notarial seal was used in the documents. Based on this, the Investigating Commissioner concluded that respondent Atty. Belaro failed to properly secure the same since no other person was allowed to use it other than him.²⁰

Anent the signatures of respondent Atty. Belaro in the Deed of Absolute Sale and in the Acknowledgement Receipt, the Investigating Commissioner found that these were similar to his admitted genuine signatures. Nonetheless, respondent Atty. Belaro was found negligent since he failed to require Rowena, the alleged vendor in the deed, and Vermont, the recipient of the purchase price in the Acknowledgement Receipt, to produce competent evidence of their identities because he merely relied on their respective community tax certificates. Moreover, while both documents appeared to be executed on December 16, 2014, their entries in the Notarial Registry Book were however strikingly apart from each other. The Deed of Absolute Sale was entered in his Notarial Register as Document No. 226, page no. 42, Book No. VI, series of 2014, while the Acknowledgement Receipt was entered as Document No. 258, page no. 48, Book No. VII, series of 2014.²¹

The Investigating Commissioner therefore found respondent Atty. Belaro negligent in the performance of his duties and obligations as a notary public. He thus recommended that respondent Atty. Belaro be suspended from the practice of law for six months and ineligible for being commissioned as notary public for a period of one year.²²

The IBP Board of Governors' (BOG) Recommendation

On April 29, 2016, the IBP-BOG issued Resolution No. XXII-2016-280²³ which adopted and approved the Report and Recommendation of the Investigating Commissioner, with the modification that respondent Atty. Belaro be instead meted the penalty of revocation of his existing notarial

¹⁸ *Id.* at 44.

¹⁹ *Id.* at 49-51.

²⁰ *Id.* at 50.

²¹ *Id.* at 50-51.

²² *Id.* at 51.

²³ *Id.* at 47-48.

commission, disqualification from appointment as notary public for two years, and suspension from the practice of law for three months. An Extended Resolution²⁴ was issued by the IBP-BOG with respect to the said modification of the recommended penalties to be imposed against respondent Atty. Belaro.

Aggrieved, respondent Atty. Belaro filed a Motion for Reconsideration²⁵ before the IBP-BOG. He claimed that the findings of the IBP were not based on substantial evidence; that it merely relied on complainant's evidence; and that his motion for reinvestigation was not even acted upon or considered prior to the disposition of the complaint against him. Hence, he was not given a chance to present his own evidence which would have shown that he was a victim of the conspiracy perpetrated by the sibling of complainant Venson.

Respondent Atty. Belaro also alleged that, at present, he was elected as the representative of 1-Ang Edukasyon Party-List in the House of Representatives. As a result, thereof, the penalties imposed by the IBP may have been mooted because he is not in the active practice of law.

Acting on respondent Atty. Belaro's Motion for Reconsideration, the IBP-BOG issued a Resolution²⁶ on June 29, 2018 modifying its recommended penalty, viz.:

RESOLVED to PARTIALLY GRANT the Respondent's Motion for Reconsideration by imposing the penalty of DISQUALIFICATION FROM BEING COMMISSIONED AS NOTARY PUBLIC FOR TWO (2) YEARS, in lieu of the penalty of Suspension from the practice of law for three (3) months considering that – (i) the complainant had executed an Affidavit of Desistance and ii) this is Respondent's first offense.²⁷

The Issues

In essence, the issues for resolution are:

- (a) whether the IBP violated respondent Atty. Belaro's right to due process;
- (b) whether the findings and recommendations of the IBP were proper; and
- (c) assuming that respondent Atty. Belaro is indeed liable, whether his subsequent election in the House of Representatives as a party-list representative mooted the imposition of penalty.

²⁴ *Id.* at 52-59.

²⁵ *Id.* at 60-82.

²⁶ *Id.* at 190.

²⁷ *Id.*

7

The Court's Ruling

After a careful deliberation, We modify the findings of the IBP and the sanctions to be imposed against respondent Atty. Belaro.

I.

There was no violation of respondent Atty. Belaro's right to due process

The right to be heard is the most basic principle of due process. It is a settled rule that there is no denial of due process when a party has been given an opportunity to be heard and to present his case. There is only denial of due process when there is total absence or lack of opportunity to be heard or to have one's day in court.²⁸

Respondent Atty. Belaro claims that the IBP violated his right to due process because the case was already submitted for resolution when it came to his knowledge. He also insists that the IBP's resolution was solely based on complainant Venson's evidence as the IBP did not act on his motion for reinvestigation.

We disagree.

Technical rules of procedure are not strictly applied in administrative proceedings and administrative due process cannot be fully equated with due process in its strict judicial sense.²⁹ In *Ledesma v. Court of Appeals*,³⁰ the Court defined administrative due process in this wise:

Due process, as a constitutional precept, does not always and in all situations require a trial-type proceeding. Due process is satisfied when a person is notified of the charge against him and given an opportunity to explain or defend himself. In administrative proceedings, the filing of charges and giving reasonable opportunity for the person so charged to answer the accusations against him constitute the minimum requirements of due process. The essence of due process is simply to be heard, or as applied to administrative proceedings, an opportunity to explain one's side, or an opportunity to seek a reconsideration of the action or ruling complained of.³¹ (Citations omitted)

A thorough examination of the records shows that respondent Atty. Belaro was accorded ample opportunity to defend himself and adduce his own evidence. The IBP duly notified him of the proceedings by sending the notices via registered mail to St. Dominic Savio College of Law, where he used to

²⁸ *Ylaya v. Gacott*, 702 Phil. 390, 403 (2013), citing *Alliance of Democratic Free Labor Organization v. Laguesma*, 325 Phil. 13, 26-27 (1996).

²⁹ *Palao v. Florentino III International, Inc.*, 803 Phil. 393, 399 (2017), citing *Samalio v. Court of Appeals*, 494 Phil. 456, 464 (2005); *Bantolino v. Coca-Cola Bottlers Phils., Inc.*, 451 Phil. 839, 846 (2003); *De los Santos v. National Labor Relations Commission*, 423 Phil. 1020, 1034 (2001); and *Emin v. De Leon*, 428 Phil. 172, 186-187 (2002).

³⁰ 565 Phil. 731 (2007).

³¹ *Id.* at 740.

teach and was the College Dean. While respondent Atty. Belaro claimed that the notices were not sent to his registered address of place of business, such bare assertion deserves scant consideration as he failed to sufficiently prove that the service of notices was highly irregular.

Notably, upon being informed of the notices, respondent Atty. Belaro filed a Manifestation with Motion for Reinvestigation and a subsequent Answer to Letter-Complaint Requesting for Formal Investigation dated September 22, 2015. He even filed a Motion for Reconsideration before the IBP assailing the April 29, 2016 Resolution which was in fact given due course by the IBP. Therefore, the minimum requirements of administrative due process have been observed and met by the IBP.

III.

Respondent Atty. Belaro is liable for breach of notarial law and for violation of the Code of Professional Responsibility

The act of notarization is not an ordinary routine but is imbued with substantive public interest. It converts a private document into a public document resulting in the document's admissibility in evidence without further proof of its authenticity. A notarial document is therefore entitled to full faith and credit on its face and by law.³²

It is the duty of notaries public to observe utmost care in complying with the formalities intended to protect the integrity of the notarized document and the act or acts it embodies.³³ The Court, in *Gonzales v. Ramos*,³⁴ elucidated the importance of notarization, to wit:

By affixing his notarial seal on the instrument, the respondent converted the Deed of Absolute Sale, from a private document into a public document. Such act is no empty gesture. The principal function of a notary public is to authenticate documents. When a notary public certifies to the due execution and delivery of a document under his hand and seal, he gives the document the force of evidence. Indeed, one of the purposes of requiring documents to be acknowledged before a notary public, in addition to the solemnity which should surround the execution and delivery of documents, is to authorize such documents to be given without further proof of their execution and delivery. 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 acknowledgement executed before a notary public and appended to a private instrument. Hence, a notary public must discharge his powers and duties, which are impressed with public interest, with accuracy and fidelity.³⁵ (Citation omitted)

³² *Fabay v. Resuena*, 779 Phil. 151, 158 (2016).

³³ *Traya, Jr. v. Villamor*, 466 Phil. 919, 923 (2004).

³⁴ 499 Phil. 345, 350 (2005).

³⁵ *Id.* at 350.

We agree with the IBP that the signatures of respondent Atty. Belaro found in the three versions of the Extrajudicial Settlement were indeed forgeries. The signatures were strikingly dissimilar to his specimen signatures submitted before the RTC-Quezon City when he applied for notarial commission. However, our conclusion differs as regards his alleged signatures appearing in the Deed of Absolute Sale and the Acknowledgement Receipt.

Contrary to the findings of the IBP, the questioned signatures were different from respondent Atty. Belaro's specimen signatures on file with the RTC-Quezon City even to the naked eye. *First*, the middle initial letter "B" in the specimen signatures was in a downward to upward stroke compared to the questioned signatures which showed that the letter "B" was close to being unrecognizable. *Second*, the first strokes in the specimen signatures were pointed downwards whereas in the questioned signatures these were cursive. *Third*, anent the signature stroke of respondent Atty. Belaro's surname, the first downward strokes in the specimen signatures were pointed at the end compared to the questioned signatures which were circular. *Fourth*, the strokes of the first letter in the surname in the specimen signatures appeared to be more of a letter R or B compared to the questioned signatures which significantly looked like letter N. *Fifth*, the tips of the end strokes in the specimen signatures were cursive or round unlike in the questioned signatures which were both pointed. *Sixth*, the strokes in the surname in the specimen signatures were not drawn as one straight line as compared to the questioned signatures. *Lastly*, the specimen signatures appeared to be executed in a free rapid continuous stroke unlike in the questioned signatures which showed a slow upward stroke resembling hesitation on the part of the person signing the documents. Clearly, the signatures in the Deed of Absolute Sale and in the Acknowledgement Receipt were not the genuine signatures of respondent Atty. Belaro.

Nonetheless, respondent Atty. Belaro is not exculpated from administrative liability. As observed by the IBP, the Extrajudicial Settlement bore his notarial seal. The 2004 Rules on Notarial Practice³⁶ clearly states that, when not in use, the official seal of the notary public must be kept safe and secure and shall be accessible only to him or the person duly authorized by him.³⁷

Here, respondent Atty. Belaro utterly failed to sufficiently provide any laudable explanation why his notarial seal was found in the documents. He simply asserted in his Answer to the Letter-Complaint that the signatures of the notary public found in the subject instruments were not his, that he did not cause the filing of these documents to any government agencies, and that he never employed Dioneda as his secretary. Indubitably, respondent Atty. Belaro did not properly secure and keep his notarial seal in a safe place inaccessible to other persons so as to ensure that nobody can use the same

³⁶ A.M. No. 02-8-13-SC.

³⁷ Rule VII, Section 2(c).

without his authority. Had he done so, his notarial seal would not have been affixed to the Extrajudicial Settlement which converted the same from a private document into a public document. Thus, respondent Atty. Belaro has been remiss in his duty to exercise utmost diligence in the performance of his functions as a notary public and to comply with the mandates of law.

In being careless in failing to secure and keep his notarial seal in a safe place away from any person not authorized to use the same, respondent Atty. Belaro committed a transgression of the Notarial Law and the Code of Professional Responsibility (CPR).

The negligence of respondent Atty. Belaro likewise extended to his reportorial duties as Notary Public. Although he appeared not to have notarized the Deed of Absolute Sale and the Acknowledgement Receipt yet he entered the same in his Notarial Registry Book. Had respondent Atty. Belaro been meticulous and cautious in the performance of his duties as Notary Public, he would have noticed from the start that he did not notarize the subject instruments and excluded the same from his Notarial Registry Book.

Undoubtedly, respondent Atty. Belaro failed to discharge with fidelity the sacred duties of his office which are dictated by public policy and impressed with public interest.³⁸ His negligence therefore not only caused damage to those directly affected by the notarized documents but also undermined the integrity of a notary public and degraded the function of notarization.³⁹ Hence, it is but proper to hold respondent Atty. Belaro liable for his negligence as a notary public and as a lawyer.

III.

Appropriate penalty to be imposed

On the aspect of the penalty to be imposed, the Court holds that respondent Atty. Belaro should be meted the penalty of suspension and revocation of his notarial commission for having violated the 2004 Rules on Notarial Practice. In line with current jurisprudence, and as recommended by the IBP, his disqualification from being commissioned as notary public for two years is in order. The revocation of his incumbent notarial commission, if any, is likewise called for.⁴⁰

Furthermore, for his negligence to secure and keep safe his notarial seal which facilitated the cancellation of the title to the subject property and the subsequent transfer thereof, the Court finds that a suspension from the practice of law for six months is warranted.

³⁸ *Iringan v. Gumangan*, 816 Phil. 820, 837 (2017).

³⁹ *Dela Cruz-Sillano v. Pangan*, 592 Phil. 219, 228 (2008).

⁴⁰ *Iringan v. Gumangan*, supra note 38 at 839.

IV.

The filing of a joint motion to dismiss containing complainant Venson's Affidavit of Desistance and the election of respondent Atty. Belaro as a member of the House of Representatives do not warrant the dismissal of the complaint, much less the imposition of the penalty.

Respondent Atty. Belaro in an attempt to escape liability, argues that the filing of the Joint Motion to Dismiss and the execution of the Affidavit of Desistance by complainant Venson should be treated not as a compromise agreement between them as parties. Instead, these showed that the administrative complaint which complainant filed against him lacked factual basis. Thus, respondent Atty. Belaro asserts that sanctions cannot be imposed in the absence of substantial evidence that he is administratively liable.

We disagree.

An affidavit of desistance executed by the complainant or the withdrawal of the complaint is not sufficient cause to warrant the dismissal of an administrative complaint.⁴¹ It remains true notwithstanding the reasons raised by the complainant as to the execution of the affidavit or withdrawal of the complaint. The main objective of disciplinary proceedings is to determine the fitness of a member to remain in the Bar. It is conducted for the public welfare and the desistance of the complainant is irrelevant. What matters is whether the charge in the complaint has been proven on the basis of the facts borne out by the record.⁴² This was exhaustively emphasized by the Court in *Loberes-Pintal v. Baylosis*,⁴³ citing *Bautista v. Bernabe*,⁴⁴ to wit:

A case of suspension or disbarment may proceed regardless of interest or lack of interest of the complainant. What matters is whether, on the basis of the facts borne out by the record, the charge of deceit and grossly immoral conduct has been proven. This rule is premised on the nature of disciplinary proceedings. A proceeding for suspension or disbarment is not a civil action where the complainant is a plaintiff and the respondent lawyer is a defendant. Disciplinary proceedings involve no private interest and afford no redress for private grievance. They are undertaken and prosecuted solely for the public welfare. They are undertaken for the purpose of preserving courts of justice from the official ministrations of persons unfit to practice in them. The attorney is called to answer to the court for his conduct as an officer of the court. The complainant or the person who called the attention of the court to the attorney's alleged misconduct is in no sense a party, and has generally no interest in the outcome except as all good citizens may have in the proper administration of justice.⁴⁵ (Citation omitted)

⁴¹ *Loberes-Pintal v. Baylosis*, 804 Phil. 14, 20 (2017).

⁴² *Bautista v. Bernabe*, 517 Phil. 236, 241 (2006).

⁴³ *Loberes-Pintal v. Baylosis*, supra note 41 at 20.

⁴⁴ *Bautista v. Bernabe*, supra note 42 at 241.

⁴⁵ *Loberes-Pintal v. Baylosis*, supra note 41 at 20.

Moreover, the fact that respondent Atty. Belaro is not in the active practice of law by reason of his election in the House of Representatives as a party-list representative of 1-Ang Edukasyon Party-List in the 2016 National Election, is irrelevant.

The Court takes judicial notice that the Mid-Year Election has been conducted in May 2019 which has changed the sitting members in the House of Representatives including the party-list representatives. Based on the 2019 election results, the 1-Ang Edukasyon Party-List failed to win any seat in Congress. Hence, respondent Atty. Belaro's argument has been rendered moot and academic.

Besides, assuming *arguendo* that respondent Atty. Belaro remains to be a Representative, he still cannot escape liability on the ground that he is not in the active practice of law. To begin with, no law or statute provides that the penalties against an erring lawyer cannot be imposed if said lawyer is inactive in the practice of law by any reason such as election in public office. Despite his being inactive in the practice of law, the fact remains that he is still a member of the legal profession. Hence, the Court is not precluded from conducting disciplinary investigations against him or imposing disciplinary sanctions if so warranted. It is in accordance with the Court's power to call upon a member of the Bar to account for his actuations as an officer of the Court in order to preserve the purity of the legal profession and the proper and honest administration of justice. The Court may therefore strip off the profession of members or impose other forms of sanctions upon them who by their misconduct have proved themselves no longer worthy to be entrusted with the duties and responsibilities pertaining to the office of an attorney.⁴⁶

WHEREFORE, respondent Atty. Salvador B. Belaro, Jr. is found **GUILTY** of violating the 2004 Rules on Notarial Practice and the Code of Professional Responsibility. He is hereby **SUSPENDED** from the practice of law for a period of **SIX MONTHS**, effective upon receipt of copy of this Decision. Moreover, his notarial commission, if any, is hereby **REVOKED**, and he is **DISQUALIFIED** from reappointment as a notary public for a period of two years from finality of this Decision.

Atty. Belaro is **DIRECTED** to immediately file a Manifestation to the Court that his suspension has started, copy furnished all courts and quasi-judicial bodies where he has entered his appearance as counsel.

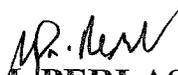
Let copies of this Decision be attached to Atty. Belaro's record in this Court as attorney. Further, let copies of this Decision be furnished to the Integrated Bar of the Philippines and the Office of the Court Administrator which is directed to circulate them to all the courts in the country for their information and guidance.

⁴⁶ *Ylaya v. Gacott*, supra note 28 at 407.

SO ORDERED.

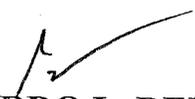

RAMON PAUL L. HERNANDO
Associate Justice

WE CONCUR:


ESTELA M. PERLAS-BERNABE
Senior Associate Justice
Chairperson


ANDRES B. REYES, JR.
Associate Justice


HENRI JEAN PAUL B. INTING
Associate Justice


EDGARDO L. DELOS SANTOS
Associate Justice