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NFALA CONGRATULATES AUDRA IBARRA AND ROHANEZ ZAPANTA ON THEIR HISTORIC APPOINTMENTS TO THE CALIFORNIA SUPERIOR COURT BENCH

SAN FRANCISCO — The National Filipino American Lawyers Association (NFALA) congratulates Audra Ibarra and Rohanee Zapanta on their appointments to serve as California Superior Court judges. Audra will be the first ever Filipino-American Judge to serve on the Santa Clara County bench and the first ever Filipino-American woman to serve as Judge in the nine San Francisco Bay Area counties. Rohanee will be the second ever Filipino-American Judge on the San Diego County bench. Today, California Governor Edmund G. Brown announced these two historic appointments.

Audra has been counsel at the firm California Appellate Law Group in San Francisco since 2012 and a certified appellate specialist. Prior to that, she was a supervising Assistant U.S. Attorney and deputy chief of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force at the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Northern District of California (2001-2006), and an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Southern District of California (1999-2001). She was a litigator at Pillsbury Madison & Sutro in San Francisco (1994-1996), and a deputy district attorney at the Solano County District Attorney's Office (1997-1999). She has tried over 40 jury trials and 50 bench trials. She served as a member of the California Judicial Council and is co-author of *California Objections Civil and Criminal*, Revisions 13 and 14, with Judge Gregory H. Ward (ret.), distributed by James Publishing. Audra is a member of NFALA and its affiliate, Filipino Bar Association of Northern California (FBANC).

Rohanee has been a public defender with the San Diego County Public Defender's Office for thirteen years where she has specialized working with indigent clients diagnosed with serious mental illness and developmental disabilities. She has tried over 40 cases to verdict or judgment, including serious felonies and homicides. Prior to her work as a public defender, she worked as a bankruptcy attorney. She is county certified bilingual in Tagalog where she uses her language skills to assist the Filipino community. Rohanee is a member of NFALA and its affiliate, Filipino American Lawyers of San Diego (FALSD).

"We congratulate Audra and Rohanee on their historic appointments," said David Mesa, Immediate Past President of the National Filipino American Lawyers Association (NFALA) and co-chair of its Judicial Executive Nominations and Appointments Committee (JENAC). "Both will be tremendous and welcome additions to the bench, especially where Santa Clara County is almost 5% Filipino and boasts the largest Filipino population in the Bay Area and San Diego County is similarly almost 5% Filipino and boasts the largest concentration of Filipino-Americans in the United States."

NFALA applauds Governor Brown for appointing Audra and Rohanee and for his commitment to create a bench that is not only comprised of exceptional judges, but is reflective of California's diverse population.

NFALA is the national voice for the Filipino-American legal profession. It advocates for justice, civil rights, and equal opportunity for the Filipino-American community. It cultivates high standards of integrity and professionalism among its members and strives for the advancement and success of Filipino-Americans within the profession. NFALA is a family, comprised of members throughout the United States, with the shared goal of increasing its national growth, impact, and visibility while also celebrating its members' cultural heritage.

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