

# Senior Associate Justice Josue Nicholas B. Bellosillo: Legal Luminary and Pride of Capiz

Senior Associate Justice Josue N. Bellosillo, called by family and friends as "Nonoy", was born on November 13, 1933, in the Poblacion of Capiz (now Roxas City).

Justice Nonoy is the 4th of 6 children of Jose Bermejo Bellosillo and Rita Benlirio Blanco, both from Pan-ay Town. His siblings are Rosa (Mrs. Cantiller), Oscar, Anisia (Mrs. Fagutao), Onilda (Mrs. Dasal), and Dr. Adolfo. He is married to the former Victoria Dinglasan of Roxas City. They have 1 child named Clifton Kent Jose Ramon.

## Childhood in Capiz Stellar Student Leader who was Valedictorian of His Class

As a child, one of Justice Nonoy's significant experience in Capiz was when he was 7 years old, during World War 2. He and his family moved from Roxas City to Pan-ay Town for safety. In between hiding stints, he would paddle a boat from their Anhaon Farm to go to Pan-ay Swamps. There, he would have fun catching crabs in creeks, with nets called bintol, ta-on and tapangan.

When classes resumed after the war, being a bright student, Justice Nonoy was accelerated from Grades 3 to Grade 5 instead of going to Grade 2. He spent a total of 4 years only in elementary school.

At 12 years old, Nonoy went to Capiz High School. Towards end of the year, his school burned down and there were no class rooms for all 21 sections in high school. He had to transfer to Colegiodela Purisima Concepcion on his 2nd year of high school, where he spent his 3 remaining high school years.

In high school, he found himself joining debates and oratorical contests. He was the President of his 1st Year High School batch and every year thereafter. He fondly remembers campaigning in his short pants. His involvement in high school politics paved his way into becoming a lawyer. He was a model boy both at home and in school, so he had to strive to live up to the expectations. For an exam given for all 1st to 4th year students, he landed in second place.

Consistent with Nonoy's performance as an accelerated elementary student, finishing high school in four (4) years only and with honors, he graduated class valedictorian in high school.

As a kid, Justice Nonoy wanted to be an engineer and a doctor. His engineering interest was inspired by wooden toys he saw at Capiz Trade School. Being sickly when he was small, inspired by his godparent doctor, he also thought of becoming a doctor. But during high school, leadership as President of his class gave birth to his dream to be a lawyer.

## Life at the State University – Launching Pad for Nobler Aspirations

It was at the University of the Philippines (UP) where this dream was sealed – he was qualified into the university's 2-year Bachelor of Liberal Arts Program, and eventually the 4-year Bachelor of Law degree.

At 17 years old in UP, Justice Nonoy's competence in debate and oration became noticeable. His growing interest in studying law made his parents support his desire to finish law. He finished law in UP in 1957 and passed the Bar on the same year.

Another significant moment in his college life was during the Upsilon Fraternity Batch 1952's initiation. During the fraternity's final rites, Upsilonian Ninoy Aquino (that time on his 2nd year in UP College of Law) drove him to his dormitory in UP Diliman. Ninoy Aquino jokingly said to Justice Nonoy, "Goodbye, Brod, Future Justice of the Supreme Court". Coincidentally, it was Ninoy's wife, President Cory, who appointed Justice Nonoy to the Supreme Court. His appointment was a result of Justice Nonoy's excellent track record and work experiences.

## Studies and Exposure Abroad – Preparation for Judiciary Roles

Justice Nonoy has studied abroad in between stints as a lawyer, public servant, and judge in the Philippines.

In 1981, he graduated with a degree in international law from The Academy of American and International Law in Dallas,

Texas, USA. At the end of his study, he was elected Secretary General of its Alumni Association. In 1985, he studied in California Judicial College, Berkeley, California, USA. In spite his international exposure, he came back to the Philippines after his stints in the USA.

His studies, including a 2.5-month exposure in Taiwan on agrarian reform, have prepared him all the more for the profession that he was destined to be in.

In 2002, he also garnered Doctor of Laws (honoriscausa) in Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila, and Doctor of Laws (honoriscausa) in the University of the East in 2003.

Private and Government Practice for the Service of the Country

Justice Nonoy covered Provinces of Antique and Iloilo as Branch 1 Judge at the Court of Agrarian Relations.

In Roxas City, Capiz and other parts of the Philippines, during summer sessions, Justice Nonoy was handling cases that professionally honed his expertise. It helped not just Capiznons, but also other Filipinos in their legal cases. His expertise as a trial lawyer even helped people for free in defense of justice. It all the more honed his talent and wisdom in handling various cases.

After college, Justice Nonoy immediately went to private practice until his appointment to the bench for the following public positions:

- Judge, Court of Agrarian Relations, Iloilo (1971-1975),
- Court of First Instance, Iloilo (1975-1982),
- Court of First Instance, Rizal (1982-1983),
- RTC NCJR Pasig, Metro Manila (1983-1986),
- Associate Justice, Intermediate Appellate Court (1986),
- Associate Appellate Justice, Court of Appeals (1986-1991),
- Court Administrator, Supreme Court (1991-1992) and
- Senior Justice, Supreme Court (1992-2003).

At present, Justice Nonoy occupies the following important functions:

- Vice Chairman and Corporate Counsel of PHILTRUST Bank;
- Dean of the CEU School of Law and Jurisprudence;
- Chairman of the Supreme Court Committee, Revision of the Rules on Criminal Procedure; and
- Managing Partner, Juris Praesidium Secundum (an MCLE or Mandatory Continuing Legal Education provider).

Justice Nonoy retired from the Supreme Court with an outstanding record of disposing of all his cases submitted for decision, that is, he retired with "zero backlog upon retirement" a rare feat indeed!

Accomplishments, Accolades and recently, a UP Outstanding Alumnus Award

In 2001, Justice Nonoy received the Grand Achievement Award for Law and Justice, The Who's Who in the Philippines Awards of Parangalng Bayan Foundation. He was also recognized as the Most Outstanding Capiceño in the Field of Law, a Halaran Award, in 1988, Most Outstanding Ilonggo of the Katilingban Sang Mgallonggosa Pilipinas, Inc. in 1994, and One of the Most Outstanding Citizens of Western Visayas, Panay News, in 1991. He was also a Fellowship Grantee of the International and Comparative Law Center in 1981, The Asia Foundation, Inc. in 1985, The United States Information Agency in 1991; and The Natural Resources Management and Development Project of Australia in 1992.

He is the author of books such as Effective Pre-Trial Technique (1990 Edition); Leave Us Alone (2003 Edition); Effective Pre-Trial Technique (2011 Edition); and he is also a co-author of several law books.

His Alma Mater shall be awarding Justice Nonoy as one of the "Outstanding UP Alumni" in June 2016 in Quezon City. Congratulations to him and his family for a well-deserved recognition!

Justice's Dream for Country and Capiz

For his beloved Philippines, he is a firm believer in countryside development. He is blessed to see Capiz improving especially with the township development of Pueblo de Panay;

Having been among the youngest at the Judiciary at 36 years, Justice Nonoy has a good advice to youth: Live life so well that even death would love to see you alive.

Justice Nonoy's inclinations in poetry is apparent in his fluent communication skills. Although his hectic legal profession

left him with no chance to be a poet, he maintains a group of poet friends. An artist in words, he had no chance on painting except at Grade 5 when he attempted to sketch Fr. Burgos.

To the youth who are as shy as Senior Associate Justice Josue Nicholas B. Bellosillo as a child, like him, you can reach your potentials by virtue of intelligence and talents for a greater responsibility in the future. The country needs noble-hearted citizens in the land, not just in the field of justice and education, where the good Justice has excelled.

It is indeed an honor that an outstanding model child from Capiz is a silent leader to behold. May our youth be inspired by his articulate, noble, and brave character in public service. May they be motivated to likewise discover the extent of one's potentials in service of others. We are proud of you, Justice Nonoy!