



WHY JULY 4TH MATTERS TO FILIPINO AMERICANS IN AMERICA & LAS VEGAS

By: Gloria T. Caoile

July 4th holds a special meaning for Filipino Americans because it marks two freedoms: America's Independence Day and the day the United States formally recognized Philippine Independence on July 4, 1946. It is the foundation of Filipino-American Friendship Day, honoring a bond built through shared sacrifice, wartime alliance, and generations of migration.

For Filipino Americans, July 4th is a reminder of a hard-won sovereignty, a deep friendship between nations, and the opportunities that allowed Filipino families to build new lives across the United States.

WHY JULY 4TH IS ESPECIALLY MEANINGFUL IN LAS VEGAS

Las Vegas is home to one of the fastest-growing Filipino American communities in the United States - a city where Filipino culture, leadership, and service shine brightly.

HERE, JULY 4TH IS NOT JUST A NATIONAL HOLIDAY - IT IS A COMMUNITY CELEBRATION OF:

- Filipino American Civic Leadership
- Our strong presence in hospitality, healthcare, law enforcement, and public service
- The unity of organizations that uplift Nevada through service and heritage
- The deep ties between Las Vegas and Philippine cities and provinces through tourism, trade, and cultural exchange

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PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE DAY GALA '26 - (PIDG '26) A TRIUMPHANT CELEBRATION OF FILIPINO AMERICAN PRESENCE, LEADERSHIP, AND PRIDE

By: Gloria T. Caoile

PIDG '26 emerged as one of the most extraordinary Philippine Independence Day Galas in Nevada's history - a night where culture, diplomacy, civic leadership and community pride converged in a spectacular celebration attended by more than 400 distinguished guests, leaders, and partners across the state.

From the moment the ballroom doors opened, it was clear that PIDG '26 had become a milestone event for the Filipino American community - a gathering that showcased not only heritage, but the growing influence and contributions of Filipino Americans in every sector that strengthens Nevada.

It was a night elevated by distinguished leaders by the presence of some of Nevada's most respected public officials, each offering heartfelt greetings that affirmed the Filipino American community's vital role in the state's progress.

The Hon. Lieutenant Governor Stavros Anthony; The Hon. Mayor Shelley Berkley; The Hon. Joseph Campos (Dean of the Consular Corps, Las Vegas); Rachel Skidmore, Director, Office of Engagement - LV Metropolitan Police Department; Sonny Vinuya, Southern Nevada Outreach Director (representing Nevada Governor).

Each greeting, each handshake, each moment of acknowledgement became a living testimony to the outstanding presence of Filipino Americans in every area that uplift the great State of Nevada.

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WHY JULY 4TH MATTERS TO FILIPINO AMERICANS IN AMERICA & LAS VEGAS

Las Vegas Filipinos and Filipino Americans embody the spirit of July 4th - freedom, opportunity, resilience and friendship!

Every July 4th - we honor the past while building the future. We remember the heroes who fought for freedom, the leaders who forged partnerships, and the families who crossed oceans to build new lives.

JULY 4TH HAS BECOME A POWERFUL REMINDER: WE ARE PART OF AMERICA'S STORY. WE ARE PART OF THE PHILIPPINE'S STORY. AND ON THIS DAY.....WE CELEBRATE BOTH!



NAFFAA PRESIDENT DR. MICHAEL STAJUANA EXPRESSED HIS GRATITUDE TO ALL WHO MADE THE JUNE 13TH - 128TH PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION A SUCCESS.

By: Sol Felipe D. Llasos

National Federation of Filipino American Associations of Nevada celebrated in a gala night the 128th Philippine Independence Day Celebration. In his statement sent to News in Photos Stajuana wrote: As President of NaFFAA-NV, I'm honored to express my deepest gratitude to the Fil-Am Community for their vibrant celebration of the 128th Philippine Independence Day in Nevada, which drew over 400 guests and showcased the unifying power of our heritage. Together, we proudly honor our collective identity and share our rich cultural legacy with the world, made possible by the generosity of our esteemed sponsors - Asian Community Development Council, G-Bank, Institut De Brillmont, Neurology Center of Nevada, NU Health Rx, AAPI Chamber, Boyd Gaming, HUMANA; CMC Boutique & CMC Danz Kreativ Studio of Mila Galera Paglinawan, Inspirada Primary Care, KUTIS, Ruby & Rich Scaglione, and Max's Restaurant. Special appreciation to our talented performers - Fil-Am Chorale of Las Vegas, Indak Kultura Dance Ensemble, PHeritage Dancer, Sache Cañete, Michael Laygo, Myka Roxas, Charlene Carabeo Tappeiner; Armi Guzman and the Rigodon Dancers Choreographed by Michelle Slowiak. Heartfelt thanks to our ads sponsors and to the following Fil-Am Organizations - Fil-Am Civic Action International led by Ernie C. Buo, FACAI Foundation's Bing Longakit, FilTown's Bernie A. Benito, Catherine Calonge Cueto Francisco of AAPI Chamber; Olympia Reantillo Ramones of Ilocano American Association, Ruel Rodriguez of Cavite Association of Nevada, Menchie Castro of Bikolnon Association, Luz Sapin Micabalo of Philippine American Charity Foundation, Sid Dela Cruz of Philippine American Association, Dr. Jun Aragon of Filipino American Heritage Foundation-Nevada, Emer Sambo of Philippine Nurses Association of Nevada, Dr. Cecee Guilalas of UNIFIED - NV, UP Alumni Association of Nevada, Philippine Normal University Alumni Association of Nevada, 2026 Most Outstanding Fil-Am Teachers (MOFAT); Elizabeth Torred-Bennett of Phil-Am Dancers, Resty Lopez of Balayan, Cynthia Deriquito of 7 Lakes, Ellen Stokes of Fabulous Filipina, Vida Lin of Asian Com-



Dr. Micael Stajuana



munity Development Council, Leo Belmonte of Fil-Am in Power, Alex Pena of Fil-Vets, Filipiniana Dance Company; Pangasinan Association; Katrina Ojeda of SOFA - Sing Out for Autism and Filipino American Professional Association led by Jacque de Joya. Thank you very much also for gracing the occasion: NV Lt. Governor-Stavros Anthony; Sonny Vinuya; Las Vegas City Mayor Shelly Berkley; Gerri Schroder; Hon. Con Amie Belmonte with the Nevada Consular Corp.; Judge Mari D. Parladè; Duy Nguyen; Judge Bill Henderson and Judge Kisner; NaFFAA - DMR president - Sally Balecha. Emceed by Jacqueline Peralta de Joya, Ferdinand Ponce and Gloria T. Caoile. And finally to all the hardworking officers and members of different working committees Maraming Salamat Po! The Philippine Independence Day Celebration was held at The Orleans Mardigras Ballroom last June 13, 2026.





PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE DAY GALA '26 - (PIDG '26) A TRIUMPHANT CELEBRATION OF FILIPINO AMERICAN PRESENCE, LEADERSHIP, AND PRIDE

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PIDG '26 delivered a breathtaking cultural program that honored tradition while celebrating modern Filipino artistry.

- The Regal RIGODON DE HONOR captivated the room - elegant, dignified, and symbolic of the Filipino spirit of grace and unity!
- An array of outstanding entertainers filled the evening with music, dance and performance that reflected the richness of Filipino culture and the talent thriving within the community.
- The ballroom shimmered with pride as guests witnessed a program that seamlessly blended heritage, creativity, and celebration.

This gala was made possible as well through the generous support of outstanding sponsors, whose partnerships reflect their belief in the Filipino American Community's impact and promise.

PIDG '26 was more than a gala - it was a declaration that Filipino Americans are builders of community; leaders in civic life and that our heritage continues to enrich Nevada's cultural landscape.

As the night concluded, one truth stood clear:

PIDG '26 set a new standard for celebration, recognition, and representation.

It was a shining moment that honored the past, celebrated the present, and inspired the future!



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In 1983, after graduating from college, Emilia moved to San Francisco, California, where she lived with her parents. While working as a Montessori School Teacher, she earned her Associate Degree in Business from Heald Business College.

She began her banking career as a Bank Teller and, through hard work and dedication, spent nearly 30 years in the banking industry. Her career culminated in the role of Branch Manager and Assistant Vice President at U.S. Bank in San Francisco California.

Drawing from her background in Psychology, Business, and Banking Leadership, Emilia later transitioned into real estate. Today, she proudly serves Las Vegas and other cities of Clark County NV as a Realtor, helping individuals and families achieve their homeownership goals with the same commitment, integrity, and care that guided her throughout her professional career thereby making her one of the top Real Estate Professional who represents and advocates for the buyer throughout the home-buying process specializing in new home construction and first time home buyers around Clark County NV. I also collaborate with trusted lending professionals to help first time home buyers access down payment assistance and loan products that best fit their financial needs and homeownership goals.

Raised in a nurturing and disciplined environment, Amy attended several exclusive girls' schools. After going from one girls' school to another Amy finally completed her high school education at La Consolacion School, where she stood out as the only student among approximately 200 batchmates whose primary language was Ilocano rather than Tagalog. While learning Tagalog presented challenges, the experience strengthened her determination, adaptability, and perseverance and today she collaborates with election officials to support language access initiatives that help Filipino speaking voters understand the voting process and exercise their right to vote in their preferred language.

Amy continued her educational journey at the College of the Holy Spirit in Manila, Philippines where she earned her bachelor's degree in psychology. Guided by her parents' strong emphasis on education and personal excellence, she worked diligently throughout her academic career, consistently striving to earn a place on the Dean's List and make her family proud.

In 2004, Amy married David Goldberg, a Senior Loan Underwriter with KB Home, and together they made Las Vegas, Nevada their home for the past 22 years.. Building on her extensive experience in banking and finance, Emilia transitioned into a successful career in real estate, where she continues to help individuals and families achieve their dreams of homeownership.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Emilia is passionate about serving her community. She currently serves as the Filipino Voter Coordinator for NaFFAA Nevada and as Vice President of the Filipino American Chamber of Commerce Greater Nevada. She also volunteers as a translator for the Elections Department, helping translate voting materials to make election information more accessible to Filipino voters.

When she is not working or volunteering, Emilia enjoys staying active through Zumba, spending time with her beloved dog named Felonie, travelling with friends and husband and participating in community and cultural events. Guided by a lifelong commitment to service, leadership, and community engagement, she continues to make a positive impact both professionally and personally.

ON THE SPOTLIGHT

AMY NICOLAS-GOLDBERG

Fil-Am Votes Coordinator

EMILIA NICOLAS FONDLY CALLED AND KNOWN IN THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AS “AMY”

is the youngest of five children born to Mr. and Mrs. Miguel Nicolas. Her father, a retired Army Lieutenant, later became a successful businessman who managed the family lands inherited from their ancestors in Nappaccu Grande, Reina Mercedes, Isabela, Philippines. Her family legacy is connected to farming, land stewardship and community leadership in Isabela. Growing up, Amy watched her father lead and oversee the family farm and business operations, an experience that greatly influenced her understanding of leadership, responsibility, and management.

From an early age, Amy displayed natural leadership qualities. She was frequently elected to student leadership positions throughout her elementary school years. Although she was often too shy to tell her parents about her accomplishments, she took her responsibilities seriously and looked forward to sharing special treats with her fellow students during officer inauguration celebrations.



The values instilled by her parents' hard work, integrity, humility, and service—continue to guide Amy both personally and professionally.

Her upbringing, education, and leadership experience have shaped her commitment to helping others, building meaningful relationships, and making a positive impact on the communities she serves.

