

REX BOTENGAN

March 10, 1930 - December 13, 2004

The family wishes to thank all those who were able to attend the funeral services and the reception which followed. We also understand that due to the timing of the event, on a weekday during the Holiday Season, many were not able to attend. The following brief description is offered for those who were unable to attend and would like brief synopsis of funeral and interment.

The funeral service took place on Monday afternoon at 2:00pm at the Church of the Recessional in Forest Lawn, Glendale. The mass was based on the traditional burial rite according to the practice of the Episcopal Church (Burial, Rite One). The coffin was draped with an Igorot blanket, which served as a pall and in Rex's hands was a copy of the Book of Common Prayer. Over 350 were in attendance.

Chief Celebrant: The Rt. Rev. Benjamin Botengan
Concelebrants: The Rt. Rev. Artemio Zabala, the Rev. Gregorio Bayaca,
and the Rev. David Duncan
Ushers: Jeffrey Bawayan, Ed Biag, Jr., Chris Cortez, Philip Ferrer, and
Kazan Ngales
Choir Leader: Elvis Gangangan
Choir: Choir of Holy Trinity and St. Benedicts Parish
Organist: Ms. Katrina Saroyan
Opening hymn: "Christ the Victorious"
Reading: Book of Wisdom 3: 1-5, 9 (The souls of the righteous are
in the hands of God) - read by Ed Abeya
Gospel: John 11:21-27 (I am the resurrection and the life)
Homily: The Rt. Rev. Artemio Zabala, Dr. Theo.
Eulogy: Professor Albert Bacdayan, PhD
Family Tribute: Rex Botengan, Jr.
Prayers Leader: Jean Lacerna
Offertory Hymn: "Lift High the Cross"
Offering provided to the Parish of Holy Trinity and St. Benedicts
Lay Ministers: Betty Bagsiao, Dale Basingat, Ed Biag, Fidela Ferrer, and
Charlene Ocab
Acolyte: Glenn Sacoy, Jr.
Pall Bearers: James Bawayan, Benjamin Botengan, Jr., Sammy Catanes,
Glenn Sacoy, Sr., Lambert Sagalla,
and Michael Wandag
Janet's Escort: Dunn Abul Botengan

Communion was offered to all in attendance. During Communion, hymns were sung by the Choir. The choir also sang the Commendation, prior to the dismissal.

At the conclusion of the funeral service, those in attendance were able to pay final farewells to Rex and offer condolences to the family. The family was then able to say

their goodbyes prior to the sealing of the coffin. The casket was borne on a hearse to the burial site, while the assembled congregation walked behind it. It is a short distance from the church to the final interment site.

The interment services was officiated by the Rev. David Duncan. After the blessing of the funeral plot and the final committal, the Lord's Prayer was chanted in the Aplaí dialect. The choir, led by Elvis Gangangan, continued to sing some of Rex's favorite hymns. The youth of Holy Trinity and St. Benedicts also offered a song "Here I am Lord" as a tribute.

The coffin was lowered into the ground and those in attendance were able cover it with flowers and handfuls of earth. As Rex's remains were finally laid to rest, the sun was lowering in the western sky. The beautiful and comforting interment service concluded at the setting of the sun.

"May his soul, and those of all the departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen."

Family Tribute to Rex Botengan delivered during his funeral by Rex Botengan, Jr.

On behalf of my mother, brother, sisters, niece, and nephews, thank you all for coming. We cannot thank you enough for your outpouring of support and expressions of condolence.

I have been asked to talk to you about my father - not as an icon or a leader but as a father, grandfather and husband. To us, his children, he was dad. In talking to my brother and sisters and asking them what they wanted to be said about dad - the common theme is this, we all were very proud of being his children. He was a champion of good causes and a wonderful person to be around.

Ruth, the eldest, relates the story of going to a restaurant and mentioning to a Filipino waitress that she is an Igorot. The waitress replied "Oh, I didn't know Igorots are pretty." It was an ugly and ignorant comment... before Ruth could reply the waitress was gone. What Ruth would have said is what our father had taught us, Igorots are not only pretty - we are educated and hard working. It was our father's constant reminders to us whenever we heard those comments - and we did hear these things from elementary school to even the most recent times. These ignorant and hurtful comments might have encouraged us to stop identifying ourselves as Igorots - but our father taught us differently - none of us would ever deny our Igorot culture and heritage. He made us proud of who we are.

With my brother Tim, he was a mentor and guiding force - the most influential man in my brother's life. My brother admired him so. Tim wants you to be sure to notice the two items on his coffin - the Book of Common Prayer and the native blanket. These two symbols represent the love for his Church and his love of the Igorot people. And whether

it was for his Church, the Igorot community or his family, he was always dreaming, thinking ahead and making plans.

For my sister, Eunice, my father treated her as a trusted confidant - this was such a special gift to her. My sister and father could talk about anything. He would relate his younger days when he did many wild and typically youthful things. She also remembers the little things that made her feel special and loved. When Eunice was dad's receptionist at his old Jarex Realty Company he would take her to fancy restaurants and when she came home from college, dad would have ice cream waiting for her in the fridge - and the good ice cream too.

For me, I remember how loud and animated he was. His voice could be heard in a crowded room talking and laughing. And in the back of my mind I can still hear his booming voice when we sing hymns. He even snored and sneezed very loudly. But as thunderous as he was, I never heard him yell anything cruel or hateful and I don't remember a time when he shouted an obscenity out of spite or maliciousness. He was a giant - but a gentle and kind one. Even now I think how strange this past week has been to have so many gathered Igorots and not hear his voice.

As a grandfather - he was to my niece and nephews, their wonderful Ampa - a man who would do anything you asked of him; the one who would make for them the tastiest adobo. Julien and Lyla, the two older ones, are lucky to have spent time with him, been baby sat by him and been spoiled by him - they will have fond memories of their doting Ampa. But the youngest will probably not remember his Ampa - and that's too bad - but he does have a permanent legacy from the old man. When EB was pregnant with Ben, she and Paul were still deciding names when Dad pointed to the still-yet-unborn Ben and said Galeled - so the latest member of our family was baptized Benjamin Galeled Stapp.

We all loved hearing his stories about the old days. Dad's stories about when he courted the most beautiful lady from Lepanto were always stories we liked to hear. My parent's life together is truly a great love story. I have met few people that were so happy being together as my mom and dad - in good and in difficult times. Situations that would have broken other unions only made them stronger as a couple because when one was weak the other would become stronger.

This Wednesday will mark their 46th wedding anniversary - my mom was hoping at least to make it to their golden anniversary - to have a little more time in what dad called the Jarex hideaway (Jarex was the name of his Real Estate office - but it is an acronym for Janet Rex). But even though they had three short months together in Henderson, my mom calls it a blessing. Though they had to endure the enervating and time consuming dialysis treatments three times a week, they were both so very happy being together. It was a time just for them... a time to talk about their younger days and do whatever they wanted.

Dad your family misses you so much - but we also remember your abiding faith and what you reminded us when you were the one to present a eulogy - you reminded us that death

is not the end. Although he did not like his birth-name - Resurreccion Layugan Botengan - it is fitting that we remember that name "Resurreccion" today... because when my father was alive he was bound with Christ and lived the life of a Christian as best he could. And even today - though his mortal life is at an end - he is still alive with Christ.

As we sang in the entrance hymn - "give to your servants rest with your saints in the regions of light." I'd like to think that he went first so that when it is our time, we will see a friendly face when we die... I can imagine him among the others who have gone before - in that region of light, where there is no pain or grief, waiting for us with a bottle of his favorite drink and a plate of his famous adobo for pulutan. So until we meet again dad, drink a toast to us.

The following was delivered during "Time for Remembrances", December 18, 2005, Church of the Recessional, Forest Lawn Memorial Parks, Glendale, California.

Rex Botengan – The Igorot Icon
(By Marshall A. Wandag)

Good evening!

Thank you very much manang Janet and the Botengan family for allowing me to participate in this historic moment of sharing.

I come from the Kalinga group of the Igorot hill tribes of Northern Philippines. In my tribe, a great man who passes away to the next life gets the most tributes from villagers, and the tributes focus more on celebrating his life than mourning for him. Allow me to join the throng of men, women and children paying tribute from around the world, to this man we unequivocally call an Igorot Icon of international stature.

Lucky I was indeed that for the past twenty years, I have worked along with Manong Rex since my family joined the Los Angeles BIBAK organization back in 1983. Through all those years, he showed a tireless appetite to promote, preserve and perpetuate whatever is Igorot. He was a visionary who did not just dream but went on to pursue those dreams to realization. They were acts way beyond the call of duty, and I have never seen one compared to him who stood tall and proud among the chosen few from the many called.

He did not just talk the talk as most do. He walked the walk. Let me walk you through those twenty years with him – how his actions spoke louder than words, how he has greatly and widely impacted our Igorot community, domestic and international – a legacy he left behind for us and coming generations of Igorots. He was in fact the Prime Mover of the following undertakings I want to highlight. I have to refer to my notes to be accurate in justice to him. Along with those endeavors of course came great personal sacrifices of personal money, time and effort on his part.

The BIBAK Organization- Los Angeles: *BIBAK is an association of Filipino-Americans deriving ancestry from the Igorot hill tribes of the Philippines and for Southern*

California or specifically Los Angeles, it was born in the 60s. It was then a loose and informal grouping. He joined to move for formal organization. When we joined in 1983, we came to know that he was once an active President and thereafter has consistently been involved as a member of the Board or executive council officer till the late 90s. He actually worked for the organization being registered as a non-profit public service corporation and tax-exempt under the Internal Revenue Service. According to him, it took him about 2 years for all that work. What a real sacrifice.

The St. Benedict's Episcopal Mission: He was the main catalyst in the establishment of the first Episcopal Mission in the U.S.A. with a congregation predominantly composed of Igorots in Los Angeles. The mission has truly impacted the spiritual lives of many Igorots like us, all worshipping under one roof as one big family. It was then that I happened to be the president of BIBAK Los Angeles and in unanimous decision of our executive council, we awarded him a plaque of recognition as "Pangat" of the Year, or distinction of a great leader in our tribes.

The BIBAK Seniors Club of Southern California & The Death Assistance Program: He also was the initiator in the organization of the BIBAK Seniors' Club of Los Angeles, now BIBAK Seniors Club of Southern California, which became one active functionary of BIBAK Los Angeles. He was the first President. During his term, he organized the most fitting program for the members, the Death Assistance Program or DAP. He became the DAP Administrator. The program truly preserved our Igorot tradition of helping each other in time of death or any adversity. Many of our departed loved ones have been beneficiaries of the program. Then today, by the Grace of God, the DAP creator is now the DAP beneficiary. December of last year, he asked me if I could replace him as DAP administrator since he wants to retire due to the aging process. I told him, just please wait about a year until I am done with some pressing matters. He waited and what an irony, this month I have no choice but to fulfill my promise to him – I volunteered to be DAP administrator. Manong Rex, you can now rest and I will try to do the work you left behind.

The Igorot International Consultations: Igorots are all over the world. BIBAK organizations have flourished not just in the USA but in other continents like Europe, Southeast Asia and Australia. A visionary as he is, he was again the main originator in organizing reunions for Igorots every two years which we now know as the Igorot International Consultations or IIC. We just had the 5th IIC last July 2004 in St. Louis, Missouri, and the 6th to be held 2006 in Melbourne, Australia. For the first five consultations, he consistently held the IIC chairmanship. It was in the 2nd IIC held in Virginia that one Congressman told manong Rex that he is greater than him even he is a Congressman, because he was elected as an international leader and he, the Congressman, was just elected by one province.

The IGOROT QUARTERLY Magazine: Even prior to his vision for a bi-annual reunion of Igorots around the world, he personally led the creation of a publication that could link Igorots and even non-Igorot friends and supporters on an international scale. He became the volunteer editor-in-chief of the Igorot Quarterly magazine. You surely know

how the publication have been applauded worldwide, thanks to the efforts of manong Rex and his staff. Even as he goes, he made sure that some volunteers will take over the task.

The Igorot Global Organization: The IIC events were then basically social get-togethers. He then thought that in such events, substantive issues affecting the Igorots around the world could be considered. He again was the main originator in the establishment of what we now know as the Igorot Global Organization or IGO and became the chairman of the governing Council of Elders up to this year. Truly, the IGO has tackled and continue to tackle substantive issues.

Igorot Cultural & Educational Center & Center for Igorot Studies: It was sometime just after the IICs started that he again became the prime mover for an Igorot Cultural and Educational Center or ICEC which he dreamed to be a specific repository or museum for anything Igorot. Coupled with this project was his organizing the Center for Igorot Studies or CIS, a non-profit corporation meant to cater specifically to people who would want to learn more about Igorot history, arts and culture. These two projects are still alive and will be continued by us. Manong Rex, we now have a whole generation of Igorots determined to pursue your dreams.

The Igorot Youth Exchange: High school students of Wydown Middle School in St. Louis, Missouri, had as their mascot the “Igorotte.” They did a research and lo and behold, there are indeed Igorots tribal peoples around. You will remember the 1904 St. Louis Exposition that showcased some of our Igorot ancestors as the savages and barbarians of the Philippines. Our folks suffered much and some even died. The students search the internet and found Rex Botengan. As one would expect, he organized an exchange – our BIBAK youth of Los Angeles and the students of Wydown. The rest is history. It was in fact one reason that opened the door in planning the 5th IIC that was held in that city last July.

BIBAKs Around the World: Knowing his expertise and being a very helpful elder, he was consulted by several Igorot groups around the world such as in Europe, Southeast Asia and even in the USA. There he was personally helping them write their constitutions and bylaws, including their basic programs and projects. Those BIBAK groups could attest how he guided them. With all his unselfish acts beyond the call of duty, he has garnered several awards and citations by various BIBAK groups, including the Igorot Global Organization, during the last decade up to this year.

The Kalingas-North America Network: Now on a personal note, sometime late year 2000, we Kalingas of the USA and Canada organized the Kalingas-North America Network or KANA, meant to showcase the indigenous arts and culture of the Kalinga hill tribe. I being the president and chairman of the Board, I worked on the filing of necessary governmental requirements to make our organization a non-profit, public-service corporation. Even not knowing the ropes, I was confident I could do the work since my good friend manong Rex was there when needed most. On my request, he practically dug all his files and provided me detailed samples of filings and the needed procedures with the State of California. Then came the most tedious of them all, the task

of filing for tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service. Manong Rex was again with me time and again. Voluminous requirements were demanded of me for almost a year and I almost gave up. But he kept saying, “anusam pay bassit, malpas to latta” – just keep hanging on, it will somehow be done.

Last April, we finally got our tax-exempt status and I immediately called manong Rex and we were both elated. I asked him how much I owed him and he said, just raise me a white carabao, the water buffalo and a bottle of “tapey” rice wine. I told him, I will have to search for the carabao but will be ready with the wine come Christmas when we visit you in Henderson, Nevada, after a Christmas casino trip at Las Vegas. Well, he wasn’t able to wait for me. Anyway, I will still have that “tapey” every Christmas and will share with him, a glass for me and a glass for him.

There you go my dear friends. As you have seen and heard, he has achieved beyond his own expectations. He will long be remembered by all generations of Igorots from this day forward. As we continue living our daily lives, we will always feel the presence of his handiworks beyond forgetting. Lets all stand proud in salute to Rex Botengan, a “Kaboniyon” created Igorot Icon.

Manong Rex, I leave you with a heavy heart. “Adi ka madangan tay ila-ek met laeng sik-a,” – don’t worry, I will one day be with you again in the life after death, not just for two decades as we had, but for a zillion of years. Someday, somehow, those beautiful shores will beckon me. Farewell my dearest friend, fare the well.