



# **1<sup>st</sup> Virtual Annual Convention of the MetCJAP**

*Ensuring Access to Justice in the New Normal*

September 16-17, 2021



**REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
SUPREME COURT**

**MESSAGE**

Your theme “Judiciary Online: Ensuring Access to Justice in the New Normal” could not be more timely in view of the situation we find ourselves in at the moment. Indeed, times have changed and ensuring access to justice at this time has posed a challenge more difficult than ever before.

However, in this challenge, we found inspiration, and in keeping with the changing times, we are making full use of technology not just to promote efficiency in our processes but also to ensure that justice is accessible to all, even the poor and marginalized.

For starters, we have allowed the conduct of online fully-remote videoconferencing hearings, regardless of physical location in the country. In this regard, we have been quite successful. Thank you to all judges of the MetCJAP for conducting hearings using the Philippine Judiciary 365 platform. In spite of the pandemic, we have kept the wheels of justice turning.

As I have stated on a number of occasions, I am pushing for a technology-driven judiciary. I intend to develop and establish an ICT infrastructure for the Philippine Judiciary. With the support of the other members of the Court, I plan to set up an E-Court system that would enhance court workflow processes and increase virtual access of the courts. This system hopes to cover the whole process from the filing of the complaints to the promulgation and execution of judgments. Truly, technology will play a very significant role in the administration of justice and we all must be ready to adapt to innovations.

I hope that this online event shall allow you to synergize with one another in the pursuit of MetCJAP’s mission of “enhancing the Rule of Law in the context of a sound administration of justice”. My warmest regards to all of you, and as the Supreme Court En Banc gives its full support to all magistrates, officials, and staff of the Philippine Judiciary, I trust in your full support as well as we forge our way ahead towards the new normal.

  
**ALEXANDER G. GESMUNDO**  
Chief Justice





**REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
SUPREME COURT  
OFFICE OF THE COURT ADMINISTRATOR  
MANILA**

## **MESSAGE**

Congratulations to the officers and members of the Metropolitan and City Judges Association of the Philippines, Inc. (MetCJAP) for successfully organizing their virtual convention via Zoom on 16–17 September 2021.

The past year has been a worthy testament to the Judiciary’s resilience in facing the unforeseen consequences of a global health crisis. Not one to back down from a challenge, Your Honors have chosen this year’s theme, Judiciary Online: Ensuring Access to Justice in the New Normal, reinforcing the courts’ enduring commitment to continuously deliver justice to the people.

Transcending the unfortunate effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, Your Honors have remained resolute in ensuring that justice is always within reach of the people. Amidst seemingly insurmountable circumstances brought about by the physical closure of courts, unrestricted access to justice remained at the forefront of technological innovations. Addressing the challenges of predominantly manual processes, we embarked on the implementation of a series of automation initiatives, such as the conduct of videoconferencing hearings, accomplishment of the online reports portal, and access to the e-warrant system, to name a few.

In traversing the new normal, may we collectively benefit from your openness to learn and willingness to adapt to the technological and judicial advancements for the benefit of all the lower courts. And may we effectively work together to bring our judicial system to new and unimaginable heights.

Mabuhay po tayong lahat.

Manila, 27 August 2021.

  
**JOSE MIDAS P. MARQUEZ**  
Court Administrator





**REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
SUPREME COURT  
PHILIPPINE JUDICIAL ACADEMY**



## **MESSAGE**

Warmest greetings to the members of the Metropolitan and City Judges Association of the Philippines (MetCJAP)!

On its 120<sup>th</sup> year of existence, the Judiciary faces a pandemic that challenges our ability to fulfill the constitutional task of administering justice. The Filipino people continue to rely on you, our judges, to resolve the justiciable controversies in our midst despite the grave public health crisis threatening us. As the judiciary's direct and immediate front liners, you carry the brunt of ensuring at the first instance that our citizens are given effective legal recourses – the reason why we are all here. From this perspective, you carry a very heavy burden and you do so as part of the Judiciary that we all represent. Carry your heads high, square your shoulders, and march onwards without flinching; let us show one and all that we can do as the Constitution commands. We fully support you and will always be with you.

I find it very timely that MetCJAP chose the theme *Judiciary Online: Ensuring Access to Justice in the New Normal* for its virtual convention this year. Now more than ever, the Judiciary must adapt to the demands of modern times and go digital to harness the benefits of computer technology. This pandemic is but another opportunity in our history for us to grow as an institution in the name of public service.

In the words of our Chief Justice Alexander G. Gesmundo, “times are quickly changing and the Judiciary must likewise adapt to these changes and transform its ways to be more responsive and effective in addressing the changing demands of our society.” Let us all heed these words and meet the coming challenges with exuberance in our steps and excellence in service in our hearts.

The PHILJA stands together with all of you in this effort to serve despite daunting challenges and in seeking to overcome the hurdles through the wonders of technology. We congratulate the MetCJAP and all its members on this memorable occasion in its history!

**J. ARTURO D. BRION (RET.)**  
Chancellor





## **METROPOLITAN AND CITY JUDGES ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES, INC.**

### **MESSAGE**

**Resilience** – it is a word I am sure most Filipino people are quite familiar with. By definition, it refers to the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties. In simpler terms, it is toughness. With the ongoing challenges caused by the present-day pandemic, resilience has become an increasingly appropriate word to describe humankind.

It is undeniable that the obstacles we faced in the year 2020—and still face in the year 2021—have put the entire world at a standstill. Though these past two years have seemingly forced humanity to its knees, these hardships have also shed light on the strength of our modern day heroes as they take up the cudgels against the unseen enemy.

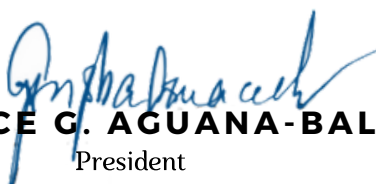
At the forefront of this fight are the heroes of the judiciary— magistrates and court personnel who, in the face of this deadly virus, have persevered in the fulfillment of their respective duties to ensure that justice prevails.

With the amount of unprecedented developments that occurred last year, we were sadly left with no other choice but to postpone the holding of our annual convention. Despite this stumble, tough times will never defeat the unrelenting spirit. Thus, it is with great pride that the Metropolitan and City Judges Association of the Philippines (MetCJAP), in recognition of the fearlessness of our magistrate-members and in homage to the fallen heroes who fought to the end, dedicate this first-ever virtual convention in honoring our tireless efforts in rendering service to the public.

This year's convention theme – Judiciary Online: Ensuring Access to Justice in the New Normal – is a testament to our resilience as we continuously work towards adjusting to the new normal and find innovative ways to dispense justice. With breakthrough technology made available to courts, work-from-home arrangements and fully remote hearings are now possible. Learning about digital signature and brushing up on both judicial etiquette and decorum are relevant topics that will aid us in conducting online hearings. Moreover, with the national elections looming, it is essential that we stay updated on election laws while working in the setting of a pandemic.

Together, let us transcend beyond the limitations brought about by the pandemic as we aim to reach the far corners of the country in our fight for justice.

The MetCJAP salutes all of you modern day heroes.

  
**ANNE BEATRICE G. AGUANA-BALMACEDA**  
President





**METROPOLITAN AND CITY JUDGES  
ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES, INC.**

**MESSAGE**

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the first virtual convention of the Metropolitan and City Judges Association of the Philippines (MetCJAP) with the theme, Judiciary Online: Ensuring Access to Justice in the New Normal.

The global pandemic has brought about uncertainties in our lives, and no matter how prepared we might be, we or our loved ones may be, or already have been, infected with the COVID19 virus. We are confronted with a peculiar predicament more than ever. A series of OCA Circulars, Memorandum Orders, and Administrative Circulars recognize the difficulties we all encounter because of this; for instance, the Wellness Leave acknowledges how crucial it is to look after our mental health; Office closures and work arrangements issued to ensure that health protocols are observed without compromising our productivity and accomplishments; and launched Microsoft Office 365 (Outlook Email & Teams Account) to make sure that court processes and hearings shall continue online.

Let these challenging times be an opportunity for us to embrace the inevitable and accept the impermanence of things. I am optimistic that this too shall pass. This year's theme reminds us to keep up with change, as well as to develop our creativity and resourcefulness in delivering truth, justice, and equity within everyone's reach.

We have an exciting program that will allow members to reflect upon and celebrate our past accomplishments and renew friendships. We hope that you will have a productive and fun-filled time at this very special convention.

Thank you very much to MetCJAP's officers and members for the contributions and support which are the foundation of this convention.

**SHERYL DOLENDOTULABING**

Convention Director  
Executive Vice President





# 1st Virtual Convention-Seminar of the Metropolitan and City Judges Association of the Philippines

September 16 – 17, 2021, via Zoom

“Judiciary Online: Ensuring Access to Justice in the New Normal”

**First Day: Thursday, September 16, 2021**

**Moderator:**

Judge Jose V. Covarrubias III  
*MTCC – Meycauayan City and Assistant Treasurer*

**1:00 Registration**

Welcome Message to Participants

Opening Prayer (piano solo)  
Judge Michelia O. Capadocia  
*MTCC-El Salvador City*

**1:20 MetCJAP Business Meeting**

- a. President's Report  
Judge Anne Beatrice Aguana-Balmaceda
- b. Treasurer's Report  
Judge Remiebel U. Mondia  
*MeTC – Pasay City*
- c. Announcement of Election Mechanics and Candidates  
Judge Don Ace Mariano V. Alagar  
*Election Chairperson, MeTC-Quezon City and VP for NCR*



## **2:00 Recognition for the Newly Promoted Judges, Service Awardees, Retirees**

Judge Rean G. Arizala-Joaquin  
*MTCC-San Pablo City and Assistant Sec-Gen for Luzon*

*In Memoriam*

## **2:30 OCA Hour**

Facilitator:

Judge Christina T. Haw Tay-Jovero  
*MTCC – Cotabato City and Assistant PRO-Mindanao*

Judge Remiebel U. Mondia  
*MeTC – Pasay City and Treasurer*

Hon. Jose Midas P. Marquez  
*Court Administrator*

Hon. Raul B. Villanueva  
*Deputy Court Administrator*

Hon. Jenny Lind Aldecoa-Delorino  
*Deputy Court Administrator*

Hon. Leo Tolentino Madrazo  
*Deputy Court Administrator*

Hon. Lilian Barribal-Co  
*Assistant Court Administrator*

Hon. Maria Regina A.F.M. Ignacio  
*Assistant Court Administrator*





### **3:30 Intermission**

MTV Presentation (Proposed First-level Courts March)

Judge Dionis P. Jacobe  
*MeTC-Pateros*

Video Presentation by Laguna Judges

### **3:45 Oath taking of New Members**

#### **4:00 Announcement of end of voting**

Judge Don Ace Mariano V. Alagar  
*Election Chairperson, MeTC-Quezon City and VP for NCR*

Game

Judge Mederlyn P. Mangalindan  
*MTCC – Cavite City and Asst. Documentation Officer*

Piano solo

Judge Michelia O. Capadocia  
*MTCC-El Salvador City*

#### **4:30 Announcement of winning candidates**

Judge Don Ace Mariano V. Alagar  
*Election Chairperson, MeTC-Quezon City and  
VP for NCR*

Raffle via Spin the Wheel app

Judge Manuel Isidro Rosauo Antonio V. Barrios  
*MTCC – Roxas City and VP for Visayas*



## **Second Day: Friday, September 17, 2021**

### **Moderators:**

Judge Don Ace Mariano V. Alagar  
*MeTC – Quezon City and VP for NCR*

Judge Manuel Isidro Rosauro Antonio V. Barrios  
*MTCC – Roxas City and VP for Visayas*

Judge Jeland Omer L. Pormentilla  
*MeTC – Quezon City and Assistant Sec-Gen for NCR*

### **Morning Session**

#### **8:30 Opening Ceremonies**

Ecumenical Prayer for the Courts  
Virtual Entrance of Colors, Officers and Dignitaries  
Philippine National Anthem  
Supreme Court Hymn  
MetCJAP Hymn

#### **9:00 Opening Remarks**

Judge Sheryll Dolendo Tulabing  
*Convention Director*

#### **9:15 Introduction of the Keynote Speaker**

Judge Marie Estrellita Tolentino-Rojas  
*MTCC – Davao City and Auditor*

#### **9:20 Keynote Address**

Hon. Alexander G. Gesmundo  
*Chief Justice*  
*Supreme Court of the Philippines*

Presentation of Token by MetCJAP  
Judge Sheryll Dolendo Tulabing  
*Convention Director*





**10:00 Presentation of New Set of Officers**

*Judge Don Ace Mariano V. Alagar*

*Election Chairperson, MeTC-Quezon City and VP for NCR*

Oath Taking of New Set of Officers before the Chief Justice

**10:30 Break / Games**

*Judge Jarley D. Sulay*

*MTCC – Bayugan City and Assistant Sec-Gen for Mindanao*

**11:00 Introduction of Inspirational Speaker**

*Judge Anne Beatrice Aguana-Balmaceda*

*President*

**11:05 Inspirational Message**

*Hon. Estela M. Perlas-Bernabe*

*Senior Associate Justice*

*Supreme Court of the Philippines*

**11:35 Presentation of token by MetCJAP**

*Judge Anne Beatrice Aguana-Balmaceda*

*President*

**11:45 Lunch Break**

**12:30 Games / Raffle (Minor Prizes)**

*Judge Mederlyn P. Mangalindan*

*MTCC – Cavite City and Asst. Documentation Officer*

*Judge Manuel Isidro Rosauro Antonio V. Barrios*

*MTCC – Roxas City and VP for Visayas*

**Afternoon Session**

**12:45 Introduction of Speaker**

*Judge Don Ace Mariano V. Alagar*

*MeTC – Quezon City and VP for NCR*



## **Lecture 1: Digital Signature**

Speaker: Ms. Jeniffer B. Canlas

*Information Technology Officer*

*Digital Certificate Division, Cybersecurity Bureau*

*Department of Information and Communications Technology*

**Session Objective:** With the current guidelines in the conduct of videoconference hearings and adoption of work-from-home arrangements, the need to secure the integrity of court documents and exchange of information over digital networks is imperative. The lecture aims to provide judges with knowledge on the concept of digital signature to expedite and secure online transactions.

### **1:45 Open Forum/Questions**

Judge Don Ace Mariano V. Alagar

*MeTC – Quezon City and VP for NCR*

### **2:00 Introduction of Speaker**

Judge Jeland Omer L. Pormentilla

*MeTC – Quezon City and Assistant Sec-Gen for NCR*

## **Lecture 2: Judicial Etiquette and Decorum**

Judge Roy Ferguson

*Presiding Judge*

*Texas 394th District Court*

**Session Objective:** The lecture aims to give participants insight on the conduct of video conference hearings in foreign jurisdictions and practices observed in handling technical issues and preserving the integrity and solemnity of court proceedings.

### **3:10 Humor Break**

Atty. Ed Chico

Raffle (Major Prize)

Judge Manuel Isidro Rosauo Antonio V. Barrios

*MTCC – Roxas City and VP for Visayas*





### **3:20 Introduction of Speaker**

Judge Manuel Isidro Rosauo Antonio V. Barrios  
*MTCC – Roxas City and VP for Visayas*

### **Lecture 3: Updates on Election Laws**

ASP Ryan Rey Quilala  
*Office of the Special Prosecutor*  
*Office of the Ombudsman*

**Session Objective:** In view of the upcoming electoral exercises, the lecture aims to apprise judges of the recent updates on election laws, election-related issuances and jurisprudence.

### **4:20 Open Forum/Questions**

Judge Manuel Isidro Rosauo Antonio V. Barrios  
*MTCC – Roxas City and VP for Visayas*

### **4:35 Break / Game / Raffle (Grand Prize)**

Judge Jarley D. Sulay  
*MTCC – Bayugan City and Assistant Sec-Gen for Mindanao*

### **4:50 Closing Ceremonies**

Introduction of Speaker

Judge Karen Canullas-Armada  
*MeTC – Las Piñas City and Liaison Officer for International Affairs*

Speaker

Justice Andres B. Reyes, Jr.  
*Associate Justice (Ret.)*  
*Supreme Court of the Philippines*

Closing Prayer

The Philippine Judiciary Hymn

***End of Program***



# Convention Speakers

**Ms. Jeniffer B. Canlas**  
***Digital Certificate Division***  
***Cybersecurity Bureau, DICT***

A planning officer with a demonstrated history of working in the government administration industry, Ms. Canlas graduated from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines with latin honors. She will present an overview on digital signature and encryption of work documents through the Philippine National Public Key Infrastructure (PNPKI) as well as the requirements for application of PNPKI individual digital certificates.

**Judge Roy Ferguson**  
***394<sup>th</sup> Judicial District of Texas***

Judge Ferguson presides over the 394th District Court (Brewster, Culberson, Hudspeth, Jeff Davis and Presidio Counties), the largest judicial district in Texas. An avid proponent of equal access to justice, he is a frequent educational speaker to lawyers and judges across the United States. Judge Ferguson easily adopted to the conduct of virtual hearings during the pandemic, having presided over 1,000 virtual hearings, including a full virtual jury trial and grand jury empanelments.

**ASP Ryan Rey S. Quilala**  
***Office of the Ombudsman***

Atty. Quilala is an Assistant Special Prosecutor at the Office of the Ombudsman. He is a law professor, Bar reviewer, and MCLE lecturer on election laws and anti-corruption laws. He graduated from the San Sebastian College of Law in 1998 and served as its Associate Dean from 2003 to 2007.

# Service Awardees

## 10 Years

**Judge Racquel R. Aglaura**

*MTCC Br. 1, Tuguegarao City, Cagayan*  
October 22, 2008

**Judge Carlo Martin R. Alcala**

*MTCC Br. 3, Zamboanga City, Zamboanga Del Sur*  
March 24, 2011

**Judge Margaret N. Armea**

*MTCC Br. 2, Naga City, Camarines Sur*  
July 21, 2011

**Judge Evelyn D. Arsenio**

*MTCC S.S., Victorias City, Negros Occidental*  
April 21, 2009

**Judge Jeanette L. Bilan-Capili**

*MTCC Br. 1, San Pedro, Laguna*  
August 17, 2011

**Judge Imelda P. Cosalan**

*MTCC Br. 1, San Fernando City, La Union*  
October 29, 2009

**Judge Fe Jimeno Dajao**

*MTCC Br. 1, Iligan City, Lanao Del Norte*  
May 09, 2011

**Judge Alexander V. De Guzman**

*MTCC Br. 2, Santiago City, Isabela*  
March 04, 2010

**Judge Maita Grace A. Deray-Israel**

*MTCC Br. 3, Tuguegarao City, Cagayan*  
August 28, 2009

**Judge Derela D. Devera-Tamaray**

*MTCC Br. 1, Lucena City, Quezon*  
October 27, 2009

**Judge Teresita A. Lacandula-Rodriguez**

*MeTC Br. 81, Valenzuela City, Metro Manila*  
July 24, 2011

**Judge Rosite Papandayan Macaraya**

*MTCC Br. 3, Iligan City, Lanao Del Norte*  
August 17, 2011

**Judge Carissa Anne O. Manook-Frondoza**

*MeTC Br. 7, Manila, Metro Manila*  
February 22, 2010

**Judge Jamel T. Mamutuk**

*MTCC Br. 4, Iligan City, Lanao Del Norte*  
August 17, 2011

**Judge Chad M. Paler**

*MTCC Br. 1, Dipolog City, Zamboanga Del Norte*  
December 14, 2009

**Judge Francisco S. Pando**

*MTCC Br. 4, Tacloban City, Leyte*  
February 16, 2006

**Judge Evelyn Manuel Pascua-Lee**

*MTCC Br. 3, City of San Fernando, Pampanga*  
October 27, 2009

**Judge Charina N. Quijano**

*MTCC Br. 2, Talisay City, Cebu*  
August 17, 2011

**Judge Ronaldo B. Reyes**

*MeTC Br. 58, San Juan City, Metro Manila*  
February 16, 2010

**Judge Earl Charito J. Ruelo**

*MTCC Br. 5, Iligan City, Lanao Del Norte*  
August 17, 2011

**Judge Flordeliza Mallorca Silao**

*MeTC Br. 59, Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila*  
December 02, 2010





# Service Awardees

## 15 Years

### **Judge Josephus Joannes H. Asis**

*MeTC Br. 40, Quezon City, Metro Manila*  
February 05, 2006

### **Judge Jonathan A. Asuncion**

*MTCC Br. 2, Laoag City, Ilocos Norte*  
February 24, 2004

### **Judge Jose Paolo G. Ariola**

*MTCC Br.1, Bacolod City, Negros Occidental*  
November 16, 2006

### **Judge Jeffrey Julian Cabasal**

*MTCC S.S., Ilagan City, Isabela*  
December 22, 2005

### **Judge Lourdes Magpantay Casco**

*MTCC S.S., Tayabas City, Quezon*  
October 15, 2005

### **Judge Semiramis Bituin C. Castro**

*MTCC Br. S.S.City Of Mati, Davao Oriental*  
May 02, 2006

### **Judge Michelia O. Capadocia**

*MTCC Br. S.S., City Of El Salvador, Misamis Oriental*  
July 11, 2005

### **Judge Anita M. Fernandez**

*MTCC S.S., Sta. Cruz, Davao Del Sur*  
August 01, 2005

### **Judge Joel A. Lucasan**

*MeTC Br. 27, Manila, Metro Manila*  
December 21, 2004

### **Judge Cesar A. Merlas**

*MTCC Br. 1, Cagayan De Oro City, Misamis Oriental*  
October 15, 2005

### **Judge Sylvia Z. Pocpoc-Lamoste**

*MTCC Br. 1, Tacloban City, Leyte*  
February 16, 2006

### **Judge Rolando Gimeno Sandigan**

*MTCC S.S., Masbate City, Masbate*  
December 17, 2003

### **Judge Marianito C. Santos**

*MeTC Br. 57, San Juan City, Metro Manila*  
November 02, 2004

### **Judge Mary Jane E. Socam-Soriano**

*MTCC S.S., Cauayan City, Isabela*  
August 23, 2005

### **Judge Ma. Rowena Pangalangan Socrates**

*MTCC S.S., Puerto Princesa City, Palawan*  
October 29, 2003

### **Judge Cecilia S. Talapian**

*MTCC Br. 2, Meycauayan, Bulacan*  
July 11, 2005

### **Judge Enrique Z. Trespeces**

*MTCC Br. 10, Iloilo City, Iloilo*  
September 28, 2006

### **Judge Rosalinda Torrefiel Ybañez**

*MTCC S.S., Bayawan City, Negros Oriental*  
October 11, 2004



# Service Awardees

## 20 Years

**Judge Debbie Ann L. Alerre-Vallega**

*MTCC S.S., Tanjay City, Negros Oriental*

February 18, 2000

**Judge Gonzalo Q. Mapili, Jr.**

*MTCC S.S., Trece Martirez City, Cavite*

December 02, 2000

**Judge Eleuteria Badoles Algodon**

*MTCC Br. 2, Cagayan De Oro City, Misamis Oriental*

June 01, 2001

**Judge Ma. Cleofe Veloso Militante**

*MTCC S.S., Baybay City, Leyte*

June 11, 2001

**Judge Elmer R. Bernardo**

*MTCC Batac City, Ilocos Norte*

May 07, 2001

**Judge Miriam Orquieza-Angot**

*MTCC Br. 1, Ozamis City, Misamis Occidental*

January 19, 2000

**Judge Jorge Emmanuel M. Lorredo**

*MeTC Br. 26, Manila, Metro Manila*

June 11, 2001

**Judge Arlinda G. Resari**

*MTCC Br. 1, Legazpi City, Albay*

August 27, 1999

## 25 Years

**Judge Kennedy I. Duka**

*MTCC S.S., Guihulngan City, Negros Oriental*

November 10, 1994

**Judge Marie Ellengrid S. Llido-Baliguat**

*MTCC Br. 1, General Santos City, South Cotabato*

September 16, 1996

**Judge Carlos C. Fernando**

*MTCC Br. 2, Mandaue City, Cebu*

August 12, 1996

**Judge Mario V. Manayon**

*MTCC Br.1, Talisay, Cebu*

May 31, 1993

## 30 Years

**Judge Rebecca Elena B. De Leon**

*MTCC S.S., Kidapawan City, North Cotabato*

August 30, 1991

**Judge Merinnisa O. Ligaya**

*MTCC Br. 1, Olongapo City, Zambales*

June 21, 1989





# Promoted Judges

## METC

**Judge Marie Lynn J. Aborte-Andal**  
*RTC, Br. 139, Antipolo City, Rizal*  
October 09, 2018

**Judge Leilani Marie D. Grimares**  
*RTC, Br. 294, Parañaque City*  
December 02, 2019

**Judge Bernard P. Bernal**  
*RTC, Br. 70, Taguig*  
December 02, 2019

**Judge Harold Cesar C. Huliganga**  
*RTC, Br. 254, Las Piñas City*  
December 02, 2019

**Judge Dolly Rose R. Bolante-Prado**  
*RTC, Br. 306, Quezon City*  
December 02, 2019

**Judge Ma. Christina De Pio Lim**  
*RTC, Br. 264, Pasig City*  
December 02, 2019

**Judge Belen S. Carasig**  
*RTC, Br. 296, Parañaque City*  
December 02, 2019

**Judge Joel Socrates S. Lopena**  
*RTC, Br. 80, Quezon City*  
December 02, 2019

**Judge Christian P. Castañeda**  
*RTC, Br. 109, Pasay City*  
December 02, 2019

**Judge Shirley L. Magsipoc-Pagalilauan**  
*RTC, Br. 181, Manila*  
December 02, 2019

**Judge Ana Teresa T. Cornejo-Tomacruz**  
*RTC, Br. 157, Pasig City*  
December 02, 2019

**Judge John Benedict D. Medina**  
*RTC, Br. 186, Manila*  
December 02, 2019

**Judge Jean Susan V. Desuasido-Gill**  
*RTC, Br. 131, Trece Martirez, Cavite*  
August 29, 2018

**Judge Jacob M. Montesa II**  
*RTC, Br 63, Makati City*  
December 02, 2019

**Judge Sheryll Dolendo-Tulabing**  
*RTC, Br. 28, Manila*

**Judge Analie B. Oga-Bruar**  
*RTC, Br. 138, Makati City*

**Judge Nestor V. Gapuzan**  
*RTC, Br. 78, Morong, Rizal*  
October 09, 2018

**Judge Maria Cecilia Ty Pantua**  
*RTC, Br. 104, Calamba City, Laguna*  
August 29, 2018



# Promoted Judges

## METC

**Judge Christian Emmanuel G. Pimentel**

*RTC, Br. 180, Manila*

December 02, 2019

**Judge James T. Sy**

*RTC, Br. 187, Manila*

December 02, 2019

**Judge Dennis J. Rafa**

*RTC, Br. 154, Biñan City, Laguna*

August 29, 2018

**Judge Karen Matti Sy**

*RTC, Br. 145, Makati City*

**Judge Lady Rochelle S. Saymo-Llabares**

*RTC, Br. 10, Manila*

December 02, 2019

**Judge Manuel Gerard C. Tomacruz**

*RTC, Br. 158, Pasig City*

**Judge Maria Zoraida S. Zabat-Tuazon**

*RTC, Br 90, Quezon City*

December 02, 2019

## MTCC

**Judge Anne Beatrice G. Aguana-Balmaceda**

*RTC, Br. 200, Las Piñas City*

**Judge Manasseh S. Bastes**

*RTC Judge-at-Large*

December 09, 2020

**Judge Franco Paulo R. Arago**

*RTC, Br. 88, Cavite City, Cavite*

July 23, 2018

**Judge Evangeline C. Cabochan-Santos**

*RTC, Br. 304, Quezon City*

December 02, 2019

**Judge Ralph S. Arellano**

*RTC, Br. 132, Naic, Cavite*

July 23, 2018

**Judge Elenita C. Dimaguila**

*RTC, Br. 298, Pasay City*

December 02, 2019

**Judge Ma. Rowena Mojares Arevalo**

*RTC, Br. 17, Cavite City, Cavite*

July 23, 2018

**Judge Renato Noel C. Echague**

*RTC, Br. 4, Dolores Eastern Samar*

May 20, 2019





# Promoted Judges

## MTEC

**Judge Gemma Theresa B. Hilario-Logronio**

*RTC, Br. 12-FC, Olongapo City, Zambales*

**Judge Albie Carmelo R. Pescadero**

*RTC, Br. 12-FC, Naga City, Cebu*

April 27, 2020

**Judge Criselda M. Lamong-Bumacod**

*RTC, Br. 11-FC, Bauang, La Union*

April 20, 2020

**Judge Francis L. Rafil**

*RTC, Br. 4, Butuan City*

October 06, 2020

**Judge Nanette Gustilo Lemana**

*RTC, Br. 11, Davao City*

October 06, 2020

**Judge Barry Boy A. Salvador**

*RTC, Branch 185, Manila*

December 02, 2019

**Judge Adeliza H. Magno-Guingoyon**

*RTC Br. 4-FC, Imus, Cavite*

October 09, 2018

**Judge Zarah R. Sanchez-Fernandez**

*RTC, Br. 15-FC, Dagupan City, Pangasinan*

April 20, 2020

**Judge Aileen Liza P. Mamasabulod-David**

*RTC, Br. 137, Antipolo City, Rizal*

October 09, 2018

**Judge Ma. Luzy B. Torres-Clasio**

*RTC, Br. 8-FC, Pili, Camarines Sur*

April 27, 2020

**Judge Rochelle Santos Manuel**

*RTC, Br. 97, Quezon City*

December 02, 2019

**Judge Gerlyn S. Turingan-De Los Reyes**

*RTC, Br. 305, Quezon City*

December 02, 2019

**Judge Glenda T. Ortiz-Soriano**

*RTC Judge-At-Large*

December 09, 2020

**Judge John Voltaire C. Venturina**

*RTC, Br. 30, Cabanatuan, Nueva Ecija*

May 08, 2018

**Judge Irma B. Panahon-Abad**

*RTC, Branch 113, Pasay City*

June 08, 2020

**Judge Joel C. Vercide**

*RTC, Br. 37, Ipil, Zamboanga, Sibugay*

February 11, 2020



# Retired Judges

**Judge Oscar D. Andrino**

*MTCC Br. 5, Cebu City, Cebu*

January 12, 2020

Compulsory Retirement

**Judge Francisco A. Ante, Jr.**

*MTCC S.S., Vigan City, Ilocos*

November 7, 2017

Compulsory Retirement

**Judge Ma. Ruby Bithao-Camarista**

*MeTC, Br. 1, Manila, Metro Manila*

May 17, 2020

Compulsory Retirement

**Judge Zenaida N. Bragais**

*MTCC Br. 3, Naga City, Camarines Sur*

July 17, 2020

Compulsory Retirement

**Judge Norma R. Calatrava**

*MTCC S.S., Digos City, Davao Del Sur*

January 31, 2021

Compulsory Retirement

**Judge Napoleon S. Diamante**

*MTCC Br. 3, Bacolod City, Negros*

*Occidental*

February 02, 2019

Compulsory Retirement

**Judge Dialinda S. Dominguez**

*MTCC S.S., Himamaylan City, Negros*

*Occidental*

January 01, 2021

Optional Retirement

**Judge Wenie D. Espinosa**

*MTCC S.S., Sipalay City, Negros*

*Occidental*

January 17, 2021

Compulsory Retirement

**Judge Cynthia G. Falcotelo-Fortes**

*MTCC Br. 2, Sorsogon City, Sorsogon*

Optional Retirement

**Judge Yolanda Marasigan**

**Leonardo**

*MeTC Br. 9, Manila*

December 18, 2020

Optional Retirement

**Judge Santiago J. Marcella, Jr.**

*MTCC Br. 3, Dagupan City, Pangasinan*

Compulsory Retirement

**Judge Montano C. Medel, Jr.**

*MTCC Br. 2, Bacolod City Negros*

*Occidental*

August 01, 2021

Optional Retirement



# Retired Judges

**Judge Marina G. Mejorada**

*MeTC Br. 70, Pasig City*

May 26, 2020

Compulsory Retirement

**Judge Maria Clarita Casuga Tabin**

*MTCC Br. 4, Baguio City, Benguet*

April 01, 2020

Optional Retirement

**Judge Angel M. Merez, Jr.**

*MTCC S.S., Palayan City, Nueva Ecija*

Optional Retirement

**Judge Monalila Silva Tecson**

*MTCC Br. 1, Cebu City, Cebu*

June 10, 2021

Compulsory Retirement

**Judge Peter Z. Parco**

*MTCC S.S., San Carlos City Negros*

*Occidental*

November 26, 2018

Compulsory Retirement

**Judge Debbie Ann A. Vallega**

*MTCC S.S., Tanjay City, Negros*

*Occidental*

December 31, 2019

Optional Retirement

**Judge Ramsey Domingo G. Pichay**

*MeTC Br. 25, Parañaque City*

August 16, 2021

Compulsory Retirement

**Judge Grace Orma E. Ypil**

*MTCC S.S., Carcar City, Cebu*

January 04, 2021

Compulsory Retirement

**Judge Romeo Amigo Rabaca**

*MeTC Br. 25, Manila, Metro Manila*

July 21, 2019

Compulsory Retirement

**Judge Alexis A. Zerrudo**

*MTCC Br. 3, Iloilo City, Iloilo*

March 01, 2020

Compulsory Retirement

**Judge Francisco A. Seville, Jr.**

*MTCC, Br. 7, Cebu City, Cebu*

April 25, 2020

Compulsory Retirement





# In Memoriam



**Judge RENATO M. CASTILLO**  
MTCC, Branch 1, Lipa City, Batangas



**Judge JOSELITO P. TAMARAY**  
MTCC, Branch 2, Lucena City, Quezon

## There Is No Death *Anonymous*

*There is a plan far greater than the plan you know;  
There is a landscape broader than the one you see.  
There is a haven where storm-tossed souls may go--  
You call it death--we, immortality.*

*You call it death--this seeming endless sleep;  
We call it birth--the soul at last set free.  
'Tis hampered not by time or space--you weep.  
Why weep at death? 'Tis immortality.*

*Farewell, dear voyageur--'twill not be long.  
Your work is done--now may peace rest with thee.  
Your kindly thoughts and deeds--they will live on.  
This is not death--'tis immortality.*

*Farewell, dear voyageur--the river winds and turns;  
The cadence of your song wafts near to me,  
And now you know the thing that all men learn:  
There is no death--there's immortality.*



**Judge MARIO B. CAPELLAN**  
MTCC, Branch 1, Malolos City, Bulacan



**Judge RICHARD O. PASCUAL**  
MeTC Br. 5, Taguig City, Metro Manila



**Judge VICTOR A. DALANAO**  
MTCC S.S., Tabuk City, Kalinga



**Judge NAPOLEON A. MONSOD**  
MTCC S.S., General Trias City, Cavite



**Judge JACINTO C. GONZALES**  
MTCC Br. 2, Olongapo City, Zambales



**Judge REMEGIO V. ROJO**  
MTCC, Branch 5, Bacolod City, Negros Occidental



# METCJAP 2019-2021 Board's Report

**Petronila P. Tañas-Arguelles**  
**VP for Luzon**

Unabashedly, the current board is the most dynamic and most adaptive Board that MetCJAP has ever had. Before rolling those eyes, Your Honors, the following are the reasons for claiming so.

**First**, we have seen the promotion of eight members of the Board of Trustees as RTC judges namely: Judge Joel Vercide, Trustee for Mindanao; our past president Judge Leilani Marie Dacanay-Grimares, Judges Sheryl Dolendo Tulabing, Belen Salespara-Carasig, Ma. Christina De Pio Lim, and Bernard Bernal, all Trustees for the NCJR; Judge Zarah Sanchez-Fernandez, Trustee for Luzon; and our outgoing president, Judge Anne Beatrice G. Aguana-Balmaceda, Trustee for Visayas. Likewise, our Trustee for Mindanao, Judge Norma Calatrava, retired from the judiciary after more than 15 years of service. In accordance with our By-Laws, the Board appointed judges from the regions where the respective vacancies occurred with our colleagues who are willing to serve MetCJAP especially during these challenging times.

We welcomed as members of the Board of Trustees the following: Judges Cristina Haw Tay-Jovero and Marie Estrellita Tolentino-Rojas, Trustees for Mindanao; Judges Ma. Victoria Padilla, Karen Canullas-Armada, and Katlyn Anne Aguilar-Bilgera as Trustees for NCJR; and our Past President, Judge Cesar Merlas, as Officer-at-Large.

**Second**, this Board, which we named in our messenger group chat as **Covid Board**, is one with the world in adapting to a seemingly insurmountable plague that has been beleaguering us for more than a year, the COVID-19. Our meetings were conducted via video conferences, updates were done through social media groups, while those tasks that demand physical presence despite the travel restrictions, health protocols, and safety concerns were performed by the selected members of the Board to fulfil our obligation to the association and to you, Your Honors.

Allow us to walk you through what the MetCJAP Board 2019-2021 has been doing.

The Board worked for and delivered excellent conventions, not only in terms of the most opportune topics in this noble profession discussed by our legal luminaries, but also the string of exciting activities that would sustain Your Honors' interests. Themed fellowship nights and amazing eco-tours that followed were results of months-long planning, focusing on the members' comfort and convenience, and the indefatigable spirits of the convention directors and hosts who went their extra mile in requesting assistance from their Local Government Units in order to stage a meaningful gathering of the country's metropolitan and city judges. These annual conventions are generally organized not only for our continuing legal education, but moreso as a welcome respite from the intense atmosphere in our courtrooms.



The daunting task of the MetCJAP Board 2019-2021 is to give you, Your Honors, a convention experience better than the previous. Our Dumaguete City Convention on September 11 to 13, 2019 reigns supreme for two years now—spearheaded by the energetic Judge Bernal, together with the invaluable support of our co-convention directors, Judges Dinah Tabada Chu and Coy Calimbayan Gadugdug. The decorations that adorned the lobby of Bravo Hotel in the town of Sibulan, and the mouth-watering native delicacies were punctuated by themed fellowship nights. It was here that the present Board of Trustees was elected and took their oath of office before then Chief Justice Lucas Bersamin. Past President Grimares, who had spiralled the association into greater heights during her incumbency, turned over the “key” of MetcJAP to Judge Anne Beatrice Aguana-Balmaceda, who was likewise crowned Best in Latin Costume that night together with now retired Judge Alexis Zerrudo, both of MTCC Iloilo City.



Mayor Felipe Antonio Remollo had us taste the hospitality of the City of the Gentle People when he accommodated us in his home during the Luau-themed party, a spectacular evening despite the heavy rains.



Literally right after the convention, President Balmaceda, Past President Grimares, Liaison Officer for International Affairs Belen Salespara-Carasig, Liaison Officer for the Supreme Court Christina De Pio Lim, Executive Vice President Sheryll Dolendo Tulabing and former Trustee Maria Clarita Tabin prepared for their flight to attend the 62nd Annual Meeting of the International Association of Judges (IAJ) held in Nur-Sultan (Astana) on September 15-19, as representatives of the association.



The IAJ was founded in Salzburg (Austria) in 1953 with headquarters in Rome. It is a professional, non-political, international organization, bringing together national associations of judges, not individual judges, and with members coming from 92 countries. Its aim is to safeguard the independence of the judiciary, guaranteeing human rights and freedom. IAJ organizes annual conferences of study groups, serves as an avenue to discuss urgent problems and effective solutions, and strengthens professional contacts. MetCJAP has been applying for membership in this prestigious international organization and has been invited as an Observer together with Gabon, Yemen, New Zealand and Lebanon. MetCJAP thru Judges Carasig, Treasurer Remie Mondia, and VP for Mindanao Eileen Pakino-Bonghanoy attended webinars conducted by the IAJ.



After being subjected to the tedious process of review of our judicial system, on 11 September 2021, the present members of the IAJ have found the Philippines qualified to become a member of such a prestigious organization.





On October 15, 2019, Judges Petronila Tañas-Arguelles, Rean Arizala-Joaquin, and Christina Lim handed the association's token to CJ Bersamin during the Testimonial Program in his honor in the Supreme Court grounds.

On November 21-22, 2019, the Board travelled to Angeles City, and Clarkfield,

Pampanga, the first considered choice for the holding of our 2020 Convention. The Board was welcomed by Angeles City Mayor Carmelo Lazatin, Jr. and Congressman Carmelo Lazatin II who expressed their enthusiasm in hosting our convention. The Board conducted an ocular inspection of the possible convention halls, hotel accommodations and tourism landmarks. On the second day, the group met with Clark Development Corporation President and CEO Noel Manankil who likewise extended their commitment to partner with the LGUs in receiving metropolitan and city judges in the Philippines come September.



On November 26, 2019, MetCJAP had signed its fifth Memorandum of Agreement with the Philippine Chinese Charitable Association, Inc. (PCCAI). This partnership started in 2010 wherein Your Honors can avail of a 50% discount on certain medical and hospital expenses at the Chinese General Hospital and Medical Center. Present in this event were Dr. James Dy, President of PCCAI, and other officers, while our association was represented by our President together with Judges Carasig, Tulabing, Lim, VP for NCJR Don Ace Alagar and Asst. Documentation Officer Mederlyn Magalindan.





The advent of the coronavirus pandemic had shocked the country in 2020. Then known as the NCov, there were information that Clark Freeport and Special Economic Zone, Pampanga, was being considered as one of the quarantine facilities. To allay fears from the delegates, the Board resolved to change the venue of the 2020 Convention. In the 1st Quarterly Meeting (QM) of the Board on February 24, 2020 in Davao City, it was unanimously approved that Cagayan De Oro City, Northern Mindanao would be the site of our next convention, with the theme: **“Judicial Education and Training: MetCJAP and the Court’s Ten-Point Agenda”** taking into account then Chief Justice Diosdado Peralta’s programs.

In that QM, the following were also tackled: **1.** SC- Computerization and Library, **2.** Health Care Service Provider, **3.** MetCJAP Newsletter, **4.** SEC registration on the amended By-laws, and **5.** Committee on Security congressional hearings. More importantly, **Resolution 2020-02** was approved giving financial assistance in case of illness, physical disability or death in the amount of ₱20,000.00 for incumbent members, and ₱10,000.00 for retired members.



A Testimonial Dinner for CJ Peralta in Rizal Hotel, Manila was likewise finalized. But due to the pandemic, this did not push through. In its stead, Judge Mondia, amidst the restrictions and protocols, bravely represented MetCJAP in handing our token to the Chief Justice on March 24, 2021. Likewise, a video presentation tribute was prepared by Judge Jarley Sulay and posted on the MetCJAP website.





Judges Alagar, Mondia and Anne Rivera-Sia, PRO, who were actively representing MetCJAP in committee hearings before the House of representatives and the Senate reported that MetCJAP is: 1) pushing for the inclusion of hazard pay for the first level court judges in the annual GAA; 2) requesting for the increase in the number of court staff via permanent appointment of Court Decongestion Officers and additional process servers; 3) attending congressional hearings on the increase in the jurisdictional amount of the first level courts in civil cases; 4) supporting the creation of Judiciary Marshals concerning threats peculiar to members of the judiciary.



The Philippine Judiciary Bill authored by Congressman Ruffy Biazon was approved by Lower House on June 2, 2021. Reliance on other government agencies on security matters will be minimized as the Judiciary will have its own force to protect persons, property, court proceedings and counter threats. Further, as we are aware Your Honors, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte has signed into law R.A. 11576 expanding the jurisdiction of the first level courts. We need to roll up our sleeves a bit higher as the threshold amount for civil actions involving real property is up to ₱400,000.00; while other civil actions, probate proceedings, admiralty and maritime actions where the demand or claim does not exceed ₱2M is now within our exclusive jurisdiction.

Refreshing our memory, on March 9, 2020, Pres. Duterte issued Proclamation No. 922, declaring the country under **a state of public health emergency**. On March 16, the entire Luzon was placed under an "Enhanced Community Quarantine" (ECQ). The Supreme Court, for the first time in history, has declared the physical closure of all courts nationwide.

On April 13, 2020, with the appointment of Chief Justice Alexander Gesmundo at the helm, the first-ever virtual Town Hall Meeting with the Chief Justice and the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court with about 2000 judges in the Philippines was held using the live event feature of the Judiciary 365 platform. CJ Gesmundo



assures to actively look into the pressing concerns brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Immediately, the grant of communication allowance for internet connectivity, and permission for judges to hold hearing *via* videoconferencing anywhere they may be in the Philippines, among others, were approved.

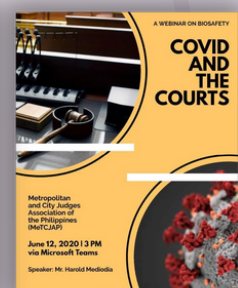
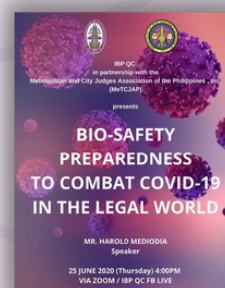
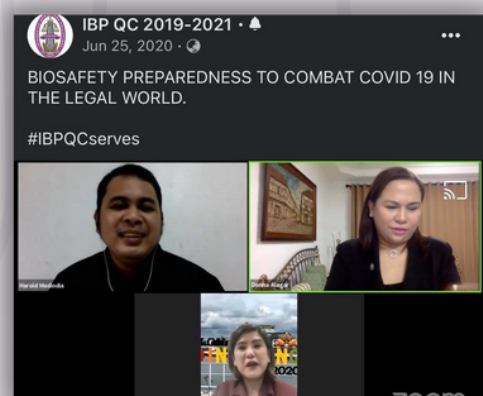


Thus, the 2nd QM set on April 16 and 17, 2020 in CDO for the usual ocular inspection and event planning did not materialize. However, the Board's commitment to the association remains unwavering. Travel restrictions, quarantine classifications, and health protocols relegated our much-awaited physical congregation into an on-line meeting *via* Zoom. With primordial consideration for the health and safety of the members of the Association, with various places under ECQ/GCQ, the Board unanimously voted to cancel last year's convention. In its stead, the

Board brainstormed on web-based seminars relevant to the revolutionary change on the conduct of court hearings, best court practices amidst COVID-19, and other topics tailored-fit for the judges were done. Further, members of the Board distributed "care packages" composed of mask, face shield, alcohol to members.

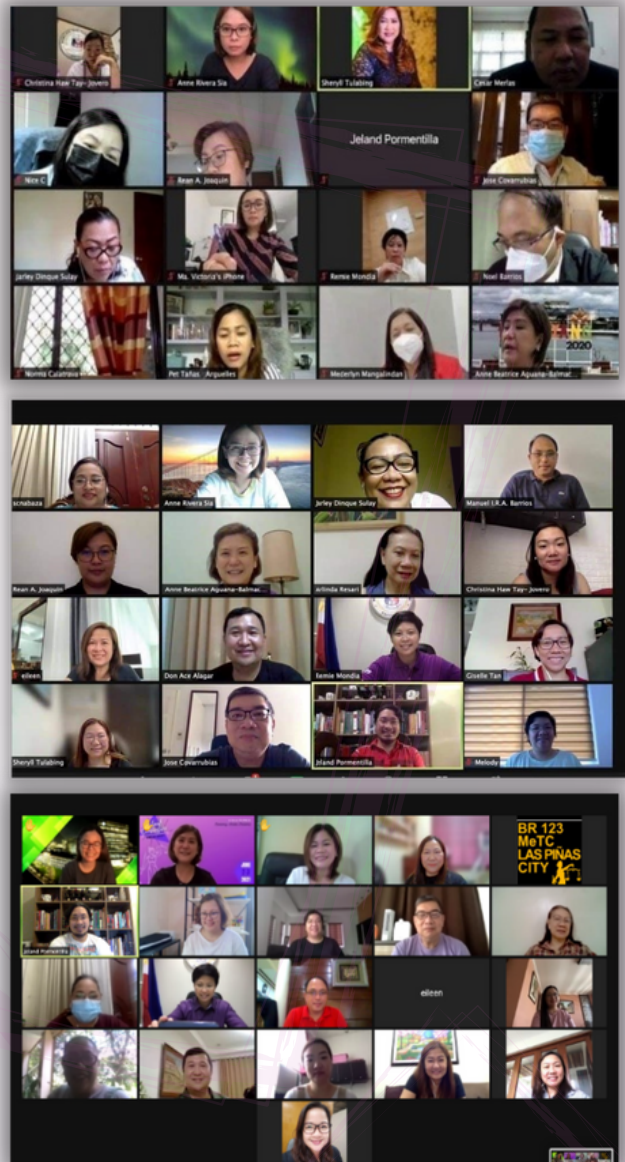
Hence, on June 12, 2020, the Board had called on a special meeting *via* Zoom to iron out the last details of the webinar that afternoon. Spearheaded by Judge Jeland Omer L. Pomentilla, Asst. Secretary-General for NCJR, and Judge Sia, we launched a **Webinar on Biosafety: Covid and the Courts** *via* Microsoft Teams. The Supreme Court readily allowed the association to use the latter App as the platform for the conference.

Considering then that the App has a limit of 250 persons, for maximum sharing of much needed information, the Board shared the webinar *via* FB livestream. In connection with this, the IBP-Quezon City Chapter, headed by its President, Atty. Donna Alagar, had partnered with MetCJAP to bring the topic on Biosafety to a larger audience on June 25, 2020 *via* Zoom.





The year 2021 ushered the Board to a series of monthly/bimonthly online meetings in preparation for the September blended virtual convention. Discussion on themes, topics, provisions, venues, registration, information dissemination, invitation; creation of committees; coordination with PHILJA, resource persons, and guests; and finalization of program flow, physical and technical arrangements, among other things. This is in addition to the almost daily updates, and consultations done by the Board through FB messenger group chat.



As was with all our previous conventions, the Board conducts an Outreach Program in the host city. Considering that for the first time we are conducting our gathering virtually, the Board through Judge Tulabing, her staff, and the BJMP of Malabon represented MetCJAP in this year's Outreach Program at Hospicio de San Jose, Manila.

To the more than 300 members of MetCJAP, Your Honors, we are humbly endorsing to you the MetCJAP Board 2019-2021's accomplishments. Thank you very much for your trust.



# MetCJAP Board of Trustees



**Anne Beatrice G. Aguana-Balmaceda**  
*President*



**Sheryll Dolendo Tulabing**  
*Executive Vice President*



**Don Ace Mariano V. Alagar**  
*Vice President - NCRJ*



**Petronila P. Tanas-Arguelles**  
*Vice President - Luzon*



**Manuel Isidro Rosauro Antonio V. Barrios**  
*Vice President - Visayas*



**Eileen Joy T. Pakino-Bonghanoy**  
*Vice President - Mindanao*



**Suzanne D. Cobarrubias-Nabaza**  
*Secretary General*



**Jeland Omer L. Pormentilla**  
*ASG - NCRJ*



**Rean G. Arizala-Joaquin**  
*ASG - Luzon*



**Eunice Tan Cuansing**  
*ASG - Visayas*



**Jarley D. Sulay**  
*ASG - Mindanao*



**Remiebel U. Mondia**  
*Treasurer*



**Jose V. Covarrubias III**  
*Assistant Treasurer*



**Marie Estrellita S. Tolentino-Rojas**  
*Auditor*



**Melody G. Restituto**  
*Asst. Auditor*



**Anne Perpetual S. Rivera-Sia**  
*PRO*



**Ma. Victoria Q. Padilla**  
*PRO - NCRJ*



**VACANT**  
*PRO-Luzon*



**Ma. Gisella Janina Sanchez Tan**  
*PRO - Visayas*



**Christina T. Haw Tay- Jovero**  
*PRO - Mindanao*



**Arlinda G. Resari**  
*Documentation Officer*



**Mederlyn P. Mangalindan**  
*Assistant DO*



**Karen S. Canullas-Armada**  
*Liaison Officer for International Affairs*



**Katlyn Anne C. Aguilar-Bilgera**  
*Liaison Officer for the Supreme Court*



**Elmer R. Bernardo**  
*Liaison Officer for Legislative*



**Dakila Dante U. Barcenas**  
*Liaison Officer for Other Government Agencies and Instrumentalities*



**Cesar A. Merlas**  
*Officer-at-Large*