



BEFORE THE 2013 JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF GUAM

RESOLUTION NO. JC 13-012

**RELATIVE TO GRANTING THE 2013 HUSTISIA AWARD TO THE
HONORABLE BENJAMIN J.F. CRUZ**

WHEREAS, as a regular part of Law Week, the Judiciary of Guam presents the Hustisia Award. Modeled on the American Bar Association's Liberty Bell Award, the Guam Judiciary Hustisia Award recognizes a member of our community who has made an outstanding contribution to strengthening the rule and role of law and promoting civic responsibility within our island community.

WHEREAS, in considering the four criteria used in determining worthy recipients, to-wit: (1) promotion of a better understanding of the rule of law; (2) encouraging a greater respect for law and the courts; (3) generating a sense of civic responsibility, and (4) contributing to good government in the island, it is the distinct honor to give this award to the Honorable Benjamin J.F. Cruz, Retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Guam and Vice Speaker of the 32nd Guam Legislature; and

WHEREAS, the span of Vice Speaker Cruz's career in the law comprised the following:

Retired Chief Justice Benjamin J.F. Cruz, son of the late Commissioner of Piti Juan Quenga Cruz and Antonia Franquez, received his Bachelor's Degree from Claremont Men's College in 1972 and his Juris Doctor from the University of Santa Clara in 1975. He began his legal career as Assistant Consumer Counsel for the Office of the Attorney General, and later as legal counsel and director of the Washington office of the late Governor Ricardo J. Bordallo. Cruz also served as minority legal counsel to the Guam Legislature and became involved in Guam's political status movement in such organizations as the Organization of People for Indigenous Rights and PARA-PADA.

Cruz was appointed to the Superior Court of Guam in 1984 by Governor Bordallo, where he spent ten years of his term presiding over Juvenile and Family Court. During his term on the Juvenile and Family Court, then-Judge Cruz took very seriously and personally his role in helping our island's youth escape a life of crime and abuse, rendering hundreds of decisions which changed lives, helped families heal, and taught troubled youth to respect the law. Cruz was elevated to the newly created Guam Supreme Court by Governor Carl T.C. Gutierrez in 1997, becoming the first openly gay Chief Justice of any state court in the United States, standing thus as a pioneer to many beyond Guam's shores.

After retiring from the bench, Cruz was elected Senator in 2004, serving in the 28th through 32nd Guam Legislatures, where he presently serves as Vice Speaker. He is credited with leadership on difficult but non-partisan issues, among which were increasing Guam's minimum wage; strengthening Guam's alcohol, tobacco, and substance abuse laws; and repealing the statute of limitations for the prosecution of criminal sexual offenses against children. Vice Speaker Cruz has been open about his own struggle to overcome childhood sexual abuse, and this struggle in particular has driven his determination to protect children from abuse.

His commitment to championing causes of justice and equality extend beyond his work in the Judiciary and the Legislature, and include his leadership and volunteerism in many non-profit organizations focused on youth services and social justice issues. Among these organizations are the Guam War Claims Review Commission, Sanctuary Inc., Pa'a Taotao Tano, and the Maneggon Memorial Foundation, to name a few.

WHEREAS, in his nearly 40 years of undeterred and courageous government and civic service, Cruz has distinguished himself as a singularly compassionate activist for the young, the vulnerable, and the marginalized. He is a public servant who overlooked no one's rights, and is the true embodiment of the 2013 Law Week Theme: Equality For All.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the 2013 Hustisia Award be given to the Honorable Benjamin J.F. Cruz for his impassioned service to the causes of equality and justice for all. He is a jurist and leader whom the Judiciary proudly acknowledges as representing the 2013 American Bar Association theme of "Realizing the Dream: Equality for All," in honor of all those for whom he made the dream possible.

DULY ADOPTED this 3RD day of May, 2013.

F. PHILIP CARBULLIDO
Chief Justice of Guam &
Chairman, Judicial Council of Guam

ROBERT J. TORRES, Member
Associate Justice, Supreme Court of Guam

KATHERINE A. MARAMAN, Member
Associate Justice, Supreme Court of Guam

ALBERTO C. LAMORENA, III, Member
Presiding Judge, Superior Court of Guam

ARTHUR R. BARCINAS, Member
Judge, Superior Court of Guam