



Welcoming All

Lessons from Filipino Holiday Traditions for Our Legal Community

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YLS President

As fall settled over Oregon and law firms geared up for year-end deadlines, Christmas quietly snuck in, at least if you ask any Filipino. In the Philippines, September through January signal a celebration so long

you could probably pass one or two bar exams before it's over. In fact, Filipino Christmas is often called the world's longest holiday season. By September, Filipino households around the world are already dusting off their Christmas decorations and Mariah Carey's "All I Want for Christmas" tune is on repeat. If you ever feel like binge-eating comfort food until New Year's Day (and maybe beyond), you're in good company. During the five-month Christmas marathon, Filipino dinner tables overflow with pancit noodles for long life, lechon (because what says "holiday" more than an entire roast pig?), bibingka rice cakes, and fruit salad made with enough condensed milk to make any dentist flinch.

But beneath the Christmas decorations multiplying faster than case deadlines after Thanksgiving, the heart of Filipino Christmas is hospitality. The holiday spirit means inviting anyone who passes by into one's home. No RSVP? No problem. The door is always open and so is the fridge.

At the Oregon Filipino American Lawyers Association's October Gala, I was reminded of "kapwa" - a concept meaning shared identity or togetherness - which my Lola (grandmother) used to summarize as "If there isn't room at the table, just add another chair." It means everyone has value by simply being present together in community.

For Filipinos abroad (including a small, but mighty group of Oregon's lawyers), the tradition persists through potlucks where nobody leaves hungry, invitations sent far beyond immediate circles, and making sure each guest feels cared for whether they can pronounce bibingka (bi-BEENG-kah) or not.

In ordinary times these traditions would be reason enough to reflect on hospitality, but today's political climate makes them downright essential. National conversations have become charged and often divisive. Many live in fear because of who they love, the color of their skin, or where they were born. Extending genuine welcome sends a powerful message now more than ever: You belong here not only as a colleague, but also as a neighbor and a fellow Oregonian, regardless of your background or belief. We offer steadiness amidst uncertainty when we practice openness instead of retreating behind closed doors.

What if we brought this spirit into our own professional gatherings? The MBA YLS worked hard to support new attorneys joining our legal family last year - from networking events, fantastic CLE topics, community outreach like the Imprint Project, and partnering with SOAR Immigration Legal Services to assist with an influx of recent cases. But we can all admit that walking into your first

networking event feels less festive than pulling an all-nighter to draft an MSJ while under-caffeinated.

In the spirit of kapwa and adding more chairs to the table, seasoned lawyers can offer mentorship proactively to those who might be standing awkwardly near the hors d'oeuvres hoping someone will say hello. The holidays may also inspire gratitude, but genuine inclusion means sustaining those impulses throughout all 12 months. Consider these approaches:

- 1. Early and Long-Lasting Outreach:** Assign mentors before new associates begin work and offer mentorship all year long. Host informal lunches so questions can be asked without the added pressure of formality.
- 2. Creating Space:** Encourage true open-door policies by actively inviting new attorneys into professional discussions. Schedule regular events, including small-group happy hours where relationships grow naturally. Check on newer members regularly and remember, a simple "how are you doing?" goes further when delivered with donuts.
- 3. Feeding Minds (and Sometimes Bodies):** Share resources generously, from sample motions to coffee meet-ups to talk a new attorney's ear off about your practice. It is also important to remember that offering lunch may forge connections faster than exchanging business cards.
- 4. Extending Invitations Broadly:** Do not wait for someone else. Involve everyone possible when it comes to any legal events and make sure no one feels left behind.
- 5. Practicing Radical Hospitality:** Make introductions between unfamiliar colleagues whenever possible, even if they practice wildly different areas. Advocate together against isolation - whether someone feels out of place because of their background, area of practice, or newness as an attorney.

Filipino traditions remind us that hospitality does not need to be complicated. It can be as easy as sharing coffee with a new attorney

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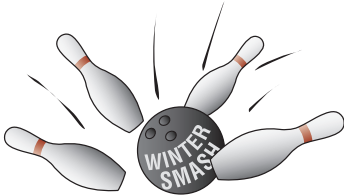
who just moved from out-of-state or making space at your table during your firm holiday party, so nobody sits alone (unless they really want peace and quiet). By drawing lessons from Filipino holiday traditions, we can build resilience against burnout while also growing stronger through shared stories

around both literal and metaphorical tables. Let us greet every member warmly and feed minds generously with mentorships lasting far past the New Year's Eve ball drop. In doing so, we create not only better lawyers, but better neighbors within Oregon's legal landscape all year long.

REGISTER TODAY!

**MBA 22nd Annual
WinterSmash**

A Family-Friendly Bowling Event



**Saturday, February 21
10 a.m.-1 p.m.**

**KingPins
3550 SE 92nd Avenue
Portland**

*A Multnomah Bar Foundation CourtCare,
CourtConnect and CourtSupport fundraiser.*

See page 2 for details.

Register at www.mbabar.org

mba | CLE

See details on p. 3. Visit www.mbabar.org/cle and log in during checkout to register at the member rate.

JANUARY

1.13 Tuesday
Oregon Driver License Suspension: Helping Clients Get Their License Back
Lexi Slotterback

1.16 Friday
Get to Know Your New Judges
Judge Elisa Dozono
Judge Adele Ridenour

1.21 Wednesday
Mandatory Elder and Child Abuse Reporting
Dani Huck

1.30 Friday
Using AI in Your Practice
Jordan Couch

FEBRUARY

2.2 Monday
Bar Update: Ethical Issues and Trends Affecting Oregon Lawyers
Nik Chourey

2.3 Tuesday
How Practicing Mindfulness Can Make You a Better Lawyer and a Healthier Person
John Devlin

2.10 Tuesday
Appellate Law Update
Justice Jack Landau

2.17 Tuesday
All Is Not Lost: Preserving Consumer Claims and Getting Paid Before and After Bankruptcy
Theodore Piteo

2.27 Friday
Multnomah County Presiding Court Update
Presiding Judge Judith Matarazzo
Barbara Marcille

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