

IMMIGRANT LIVING:
101 AND BEYOND



MONETTE ADEVA MAGLAYA
(Part 2 of 2)

ONE British writer likens the Pacman to a mild-mannered Clark Kent with a boyish smile and who seems harmless in his suits and hats, that is, until he steps into the ring. When the bell rings, he morphs into Superman, a fighter that goes to war, sizes up his opponents, executes a game plan and demolishes them promptly with blazing speed, brutal power and pin-point accuracy.

Like Yoda who trained Luke Skywalker, Freddie Roach has transformed Pacquiao to become a complete fighter — lightning fast with his head, hands and feet and whose ferocity, aggression and impressive arsenal of boxing skills in the ring should give his challengers pause. He has learned well. The humble ones always do. Roach, whose slurred speech, belies a sharp mind claims, “He is my best work.”

But above all that hype when the lights dim and when the silence descends, here’s a fighter whose humility is humbling. Here is one who must deal with massive amounts of adulation, flattery and heady intoxication of fame and fortune and has managed, thus far, to remain centered on who he is and what his purpose is. “I’m just a fighter,” he says, when asked about who he would like to do battle with next time, leaving that for his promoters to map out.

No ordinary fighter — this one. Few have the courage to wear their spirituality on their sleeves for fear of sanction in the ratings game, the mockery of the sophisticated, or the derision of the godless. Devoutly Catholic, he makes no bones about where he draws his spiritual strength and purpose and shows it for all the world to see. He doesn’t go through the motions of his spirituality just for show.

So does his mother Dionisia who chose to pray the rosary in

Pacquiao and the Art of War

“If you know both yourself and your enemy, you can come out of hundreds of battles without danger.”

— Sun Tzu, “The Art of War”

the privacy of her hotel room. The fruit doesn’t really fall far from the tree. Pacquiao meditates in the silence, makes the sign of the cross between bouts, wears his rosary before and during the fight, kisses the crucifix of the rosary which his handler is instructed to hold, kneels at his corner, and just before engaging his opponent, tunes out, for just a few seconds, the raucous crowd while apparently tuning in to a much higher frequency. The more telling aspect is the post-fight when he looks heavenward after each victory, goes to mass and never fails to ascribe his victories to God and the Filipino people.

It is this aspect of the man that resonates with most Filipinos who are no stranger to adversity. In a small way, we see a bit of ourselves in him and vicariously live through him. Through his knockout punches, we also mentally TKO all things we struggle with and glory in his victories. Those who were born and lived in the battered island nation understand this wellspring of deep spirituality completely and without question.

He ascribes his string of successes and of his being to God. The politically correct pundits and sports analysts on the national level, who must cater to the biggest demographic chunks, are loath to dwell on this aspect of the man. I imagine a few squirm in their seats whenever Pacquiao does all that. After all, boxing is rarely for the humble or the deeply spiritual. Boxing is filled with self-absorbed, self-promoting blowhards that form part of the entertainment, right along Floyd Mayweather Sr.’s bluster and braggadocio. All that taunting is just part of the script and the hype of HBO’s 24/7 to ring up public interest and profits.

Pacquiao probably views his bouts as spiritual battles. He is living up to his name. Emmanuel means “God with us.” Or that

Pacquiao, spelled “Pakyaw” in the vernacular means whole-sale. He trains relentlessly, wholeheartedly physically but his spiritual muscles get a workout as well. It is hard to stay focused and on target with all the distractions that buzz about him like bees to honey. This may just be the part where Pacquiao, the pupil, shows Roach, his mentor, about how to tap vast amounts of spiritual reserves.

To the victor goes the spoils of war. Manny has become an Armani suit-wearing money machine with millions of dollars still to be made even during this brutal recession. Ironically, the tougher the times, the higher the need for distraction. The next mega-fight night may involve a \$50 million prize purse, the biggest so far, with grueling negotiations probably underway. Team Pacquiao has the upper hand and in the driver’s seat. They will call the shots this fall.

No one should begrudge Manny Pacquiao his fame and fortune. We hope though that these do not corrode and change his core being overly much. The possibility he will throw his hat in the political arena is a little unsettling. We do hope he stays away from yet another blood sport— politics— where nearly everyone who dips his toes in its polluted waters, gets tainted somehow. His failed initial political bid should be a warning bell. Show business might be more fun, right along Mom Dionisia’s alley. But in the natural progression of things and oftentimes, by osmosis from the company he keeps, the attraction of achieving political power may just be the next level. Sigh.

But what drives him aside from the obvious motivations? It is said that the Roman Emperor Constantine during the crucial Battle of Milvian Bridge in 1312 looked up to the sun before the battle and saw a cross of light with the Greek words

that meant, “By this sign, conquer.” Constantine commanded his troops to adorn their shields with the Chi-Ro Christian symbol and from thereon, became victorious in every battle. Christian sources record that Constantine, heavily influenced by his deeply religious mother, St. Helena, adopted Christianity which became the dominant religion in the Roman Empire and much of the world up to today, ending 300 years of religious persecution by previous Roman emperors from Christ’s death.

Okay, I know. I know. Boxing to Christianity — it may be too much of a stretch to draw a parallel or build a smooth segue. But it’s fascinating to look back in the last two thousand years of recorded history and pick out discernible patterns in every battle fought in war and every other arena of human endeavor that has a dimension seemingly far above our minds to comprehend. After all, there’s a cycle and a continuity to the human story in the larger sense that can be read in the micro-universe of the boxing arena.

Where does all that jaw-dropping power, speed, timing, accuracy and laser-like focus few could withstand come from? And from such a deceptively looking compact package many of his opponents underestimated to their detriment ... Such things only happen in the movies. But more than that, how does one account for humility, decency and generosity of spirit in the face of victory except in Rocky movies? Pacquiao’s story might be that of a gladiator character set in a 15th century morality play, tenacious in battle yet humble and magnanimous in victory. No wonder many find themselves rooting for him.

Though a sequel is rarely better than the original, this is one story definitely worth following.

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The
of Voice
FilAmerica

Political empowerment is still a treasure that eludes us as a community here in America. While we are the second largest Asian American community in the United States, we have yet to harvest the power that comes from our numbers. The Voice of FilAmerica features elected and appointed officials – regardless of political affiliation – in the different US states who are of Filipino ancestry. As your Filipino American community newspaper, the Asian Journal recognizes the fact that we all have a responsibility towards bringing political empowerment to fruition, especially for our future generations. It is our hope to have our voices heard all over America.

Peter Aduja

1st FilAm to hold major elected office in the US

FILIPINO immigration to the United States started around the 1920s, when many Pinoys went to Hawaii as plantation workers. One of these families who decided to risk everything and pursue the American dream was Peter Aduja’s family. A native of Salindig, Vigan, Ilocos Sur, Peter Aduja came to Hawaii in 1928 at age 8 and grew up on the Big Island in Hakalau, where his father worked as a \$1-a-day sugar plantation worker.

Aduja was an only child who never forgot the hardships of his early life and the sacrifices of his parents. He learned the value of education, did well in school, and fulfilled the hopes of his immigrant parents.

“We came from nothing. ... We slept on plain wooden boards and cooked over an open fire,” Aduja described his early years in Hawaii. He graduated from Hilo High, majored in government and history at the University of Hawaii, and was one of 50 local boys who volunteered in 1944 and served with the U.S. Army’s 1st Filipino Infantry Regiment in the Philippines in 1945.

After his discharge from the military in 1946, Aduja taught briefly at Na’alehu Elementary & Intermediate School on the Big Island before earning his law degree from Boston University School of Law in 1951.

In 1954, Peter Aduja became the first Filipino American elected to public office



in the United States. He won in his bid for a seat in the Hawaii House of Representatives. He served one two-year term and went to work for the Department of Attorney General.

He also served as a District Court judge from 1960 to 1962.

After statehood was achieved, he was elected three times, first in 1966, to the Hawaii House of Representatives. He also was elected as a delegate to the 1968 Constitutional Convention.

Peter A. Aduja was an attorney, patriot, politician and community volunteer who was a distinguished example of an American dream come true for Filipino immigrants. He maintained steadfast commitments to The Salvation Army’s adult rehabilitation center, Boys Scouts of America, Big Brothers of Hawai’i and more than 30 other community organizations.

Aduja married Melodie “Lesing” Cabalona and had two children, Jay Peter and Melodie, who eventually became a Hawaii State Senator. He died in 2007. ■

Should I save my property or let it go into foreclosure?

ments alone every month are \$4200. Their total net income is about \$6000 monthly. They have 2 car payments and have credit card debts of about \$60,000. Their house has no equity. When I asked them how they were able to make their mortgage payments in the past when they also had all these other huge monthly expenses, they said that the only reason they were able to pay in the past was by using their credit cards!!! And after the credit cards got maxed out, they simply started falling behind on their mortgage payments. OK, now you don’t have to be an attorney to know just by looking at the facts that this couple could not afford to keep this house from the time they bought it if they had to rely on using credit cards just to be able to make the payments! Does this make any sense?

Now, don’t get me wrong. Of course, every situation is different. There are cases where saving the home is not only possible but is advisable. Factors to consider are income, availability of options (bankruptcy and non-bankruptcy alternatives), equity in the property and how everything fits in your total financial picture and future goals. My suggestion is to keep an open mind and to consider

all possibilities. Being closed-minded creates shortsightedness or an inability to have a vision for the future. If you are in foreclosure, you are no doubt faced with some serious decisions that you have to make.

Is your home an asset you or simply a huge liability that you are better off without? How can you wipe the slate clean and start over? Is filing bankruptcy necessary or can it be avoided? Are non-bankruptcy options such as a loan modification, forbearance, repayment plan or a short sale possible? If you don’t know the answers, you may feel very frustrated at the moment. But frustration can be a good thing if it propels you to take the needed action to do something about your situation. As a first step, I suggest you consult with an attorney who can advise you regarding your rights and help you implement a plan that works for you. Remember that in foreclosure, time is of the essence and every day you waste without taking action only makes your situation worse.

For a free consultation, call Toll-Free 1-866-477-7772. Let us evaluate your situation and recommend possible options. We have offices in Glendale, Cerritos and West Covina.

None of the information herein is intended to give legal advice for any specific situation. Atty. Ray Bulaon has successfully helped over 4,000 clients in getting out of debt. For a free attorney evaluation of your situation, please call Ray Bulaon Law Offices at TOLL FREE 1-866-477-7772.

MINDING
YOUR FINANCES

ATTY. RAYMOND BULAON

A LOT of homeowners who are behind on their mortgage payments are asking me: Is it better to lose your house to foreclosure or file for bankruptcy protection and try to save it? What are the effects of both on my credit? Will I be able to buy another home again with a foreclosure or bankruptcy on my credit record? Of course, these are important questions to ask yourself if you are in this situation. But I think that the more important question to ask is: What is the most realistic option I have under the circumstances and do I have any contingency or back-up plans if things don’t work out as expected? In other words, hope for the best but prepare for the worst. As everything in life, there are no guarantees.

The first thing you need to do is to take a good, hard look at your finances and ask yourself if you can really afford to keep your home. Some people are simply unrealistic about their situation and so they end up making the wrong decision. For example, a couple came to me the other day and told me that their home was in foreclosure but that they were “determined” to keep it no matter what happens. But look at the facts: They are 5 months behind on their mortgage payments and property taxes. They need about \$25,000 just to get current. Their mortgage pay-

“The first thing you need to do is to take a good, hard look at your finances and ask yourself if you can really afford to keep your home. Some people are simply unrealistic about their situation and so they end up making the wrong decision.”

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