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**FILIPINO COMMUNITIES IN TEXAS MARK 128TH ANNIVERSARY OF
PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE**



*Officers and personnel of the Philippine Consulate honor the
128th Anniversary of Philippine Independence.*

HOUSTON, TEXAS — The Philippine Consulate General in Houston marked the 128th Anniversary of the Proclamation of Philippine Independence with a series of commemorative activities on 12-13 June 2026, earmarked by the 2026 Kalayaan Houston Festival that celebrated the Filipino community's enduring heritage, culture, and contributions to the city and the greater State of Texas.

Flag-Raising and Independence Day Messages



*Officers and personnel of the Philippine Consulate at the special flag raising ceremony marking the beginning of a series of activities to commemorate the 128th Anniversary of Philippine Independence.
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Consul Von Ryan Pangwi reads the special message of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Ma. Theresa P. Lazaro, on the occasion of the 128th Anniversary of Philippine Independence.



Vice Consul Tanya Gaurano reads the special Independence Day message of Ambassador Jose Manuel G. Romualdez.

The commemorative activities commenced on 12 June 2026 with a flag-raising ceremony at the Consulate's Mabini Hall. The Independence Day video message of President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. was played, while those of Secretary of Foreign Affairs Ma. Theresa P. Lazaro and

Ambassador Jose Manuel G. Romualdez were read by Consul Von Ryan Pangwi and Vice Consul Tanya Gaurano, respectively. In their messages, the President, Secretary, and Ambassador called on all Filipinos — at home and abroad — to honor the sacrifices of their forebears, uphold the freedoms won through their courage, and to commit to the ongoing work of building a stronger, more united Philippines.



Officers and personnel of the Philippine Consulate partake of Filipino fare to commemorate the 128th Anniversary of Philippine Independence.

Oath-Taking of New Filipino Citizens



Dual citizenship applicants set to take their oath listen to the Independence Day message of President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr.

Following the flag-raising, Consul General Gunther Sales administered the oath of allegiance to seventeen (17) former Filipinos reacquiring their Philippine citizenship under Republic Act 9225 — a fitting affirmation of the enduring bonds that tie every Filipino to their homeland, marked on the country's independence day.



Consul General Gunther Sales addresses the dual citizenship applicants.



Consul General Gunther Sales administers the oath for applicants reacquiring their Filipino citizenship under Republic Act 9225.

2026 Kalayaan Houston Festival



Consul General Gunther Sales delivers his welcome message at the 2026 Kalayaan Houston Festival.

On 13 June 2026, Post joined and supported the 2026 Kalayaan Houston Festival organized by Philippine Kalayaan Houston (PKH), the umbrella organization that has united Filipino-American community organizations in Houston under one banner since 2019. Headlined by celebrated Filipino artist Rachel Alejandro, the festival featured Filipino-owned businesses, cuisine, cultural performances, and a Filipiniana fashion show highlighting traditional attire from across the Philippine archipelago, modeled by Filipino-Americans who have distinguished themselves in their respective fields — among them ABC13-Houston News Reporter Elita Loresca, and Emmy, National Murrow, and Telly Award-winning News and Space Reporter Rose Ann Aragon.



Consul General Gunther Sales (fourth from right) joins Filipino artist, Rachel Alejandro (third from left) and Filipino American trailblazers, Elita Loresca (second from left), ABC13-Houston News Reporter and Rose Ann Aragon (rightmost), Emmy, National Murrow, and Telly-Award winning News and Space Reporter.
(Photo on previous page)

In his message at the event, Consul General Sales celebrated the spirit of unity, gratitude, and community pride that defined the occasion, and drew attention to the three milestone anniversaries converging in 2026: 128 years of Philippine independence, the 80th anniversary of Philippine-U.S. diplomatic relations, and the 250th anniversary of American independence — underscoring the shared aspiration for freedom that has long bound the two nations together as friends, partners, and allies.

Recognition from Harris County



Alice Lee (fourth from left), Chief of Staff to Harris County Precinct 4 Commissioner Lesley Briones, presents Philippine Kalayaan Houston (PKH) with a certificate of recognition.

The Office of Harris County Precinct 4 Commissioner Lesley Briones, represented by her Chief of Staff Alice Lee, presented a certificate of recognition to PKH for its sustained efforts to promote Filipino culture and diaspora engagement in Harris County, alongside a signed copy of the Commissioner's Court Resolution celebrating Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Heritage Month.

Philippine Republic Day Celebration, Inc. Event

Further, also on 13 June 2026, Consul Von Ryan Pangwi represented the Consulate at the annual Gala Night commemorating Philippine Independence, organized by the Philippine Republic Day Celebration, Inc. in Richardson, Texas. The event was likewise attended by Richardson City Mayor Amir Omar, Carrollton City Mayor Steve Babick, and Irving City Mayor Albert Zapanta, the last of whom traces his Filipino roots to Cebu.



Carrollton Mayor Steve Babick (2nd row, center) and other local officials joined Filipino community leaders in commemorating the 128th Anniversary of Philippine Independence in North Texas.



A performance showcases rich Filipino culture and artistry at the gala of the Philippine Republic Day Celebration, Inc.