

George Radics
Young Lawyer Scholarship Report
May 31, 2011

I am extremely grateful for the Young Lawyer Scholarship that enabled me to attend the 21st Inter-Pacific Bar Association Annual Meeting and Conference in Kyoto. This year's conference topic, "Innovation," was especially relevant to the Judiciary of Guam because we are one of the youngest appellate jurisdictions in the United States. Exposure to the manner in which law is changing in the region can help us build a more sensitive and responsive jurisprudence. Furthermore, at the conference, I was able to meet some of the most accomplished attorneys in their fields. As a young attorney embarking on a new career, the chance to meet some of these attorneys was truly inspiring.

This year's conference topic, "Innovation," was very current, yet nuanced. Prof. Shinya Yamanaka and Kyoto University President Dr. Hiroshi Matsumoto's opening speeches on their research and approaches to education set the tone for the conference. They spoke about perseverance and a conscientious return to the broader picture. This made sense to me since as the world becomes interconnected, I believe vehicles such as IPBA will become even more important in encouraging collaboration and integration between states. However, although U.S. Ambassador to Japan, John Roos, spoke about what elements were crucial in nurturing entrepreneurship and growth in the U.S., President and CEO of Takeda Pharmaceutical, Mr. Yasuchika Hasegawa, reminded us how in pursuit of such growth, we must always consider local needs and circumstances, and not apply foreign models wholesale.

This theme of "Innovation" while respecting local needs and circumstances was reiterated in other events and panels. One of the most rewarding experiences I had at the conference was the chance to tour a court and law firm in Kyoto. Although certain elements of the Japanese legal system such as juries or the graduate law school model seemed so familiar to me, in practice, they

were completely foreign, exhibiting a hybrid of characteristics from various jurisdictions. Moreover, this was a theme I spotted in many of the panels I attended. For instance, in the panel on “Litigation Systems in Asia,” in spite of the vast differences between jurisdictions, with regards to enforcement of foreign judgments, most of the jurisdictions had similar requirements before a foreign judgment could be domesticated. This, to me, signaled that many courts truly respect the judicial system of neighboring nations. The sad fact is, however, that it is still very difficult to domesticate judgments across boundaries, enunciating the need for further collaboration and integration in the region.

The conference topic of “Innovation” was especially relevant to the Judiciary of Guam. As one of the youngest appellate courts in the United States, the Supreme Court of Guam is slowly building its jurisprudence. Almost every case on appeal entails an issue of first impression. Because Guam is inextricably tied to Asia politically, socially and economically, it is important that our case law is cognizant and sensitive to the manner in which business is done, and law is practiced, throughout the region. Furthermore, although we are essentially bound by US law, as we build our jurisprudence, we must balance the wholesale adoption of stateside legal models, while working to serve local needs. For instance, with the upgrade of our case management system, Guam will synchronize its criminal database with the U.S. Department of Homeland security to ensure that our courts have the most up-to-date information on criminals that pass through the system. At the same time, we are addressing local needs by creating specialized courts and programs that provide adjudicative and therapeutic services for victims of family violence, drug addiction and other life crises. Lastly, IPBA is serving as an important mechanism to enhance Guam’s integration in the region. For instance, the president of the Guam Bar Association has expressed interest in working to expand IPBA membership in Guam. Also, after meeting members

of the Hawaii Bar Association at the conference, discussions on joint projects between Guam and Hawaii have taken place.

Attending this conference was not only relevant to the work I do but it also opened my eyes to the opportunities before me as a young attorney. At the conference, I had the opportunity to learn more about how others built their legal careers. These brilliant and amazing attorneys made an indelible impression on me. The professionalism and sincerity in which they carried out IPBA's duties and responsibilities were inspiring. As I embark on my own career, I hope to carry with me this same sense of duty and professionalism. Attending this conference was rewarding for me career-wise and personally because it has given me career paths and role models to aspire for. I am, therefore, extremely grateful for the chance to have attended this conference, and hope that more young attorneys from Guam will be afforded the same opportunity.