

Testimonial Cocktails for Brod Art Brion '70

Contributed by VR
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PROGRAM

4 August 2006, 6PM

Makati Skyline

World Trade Center

Roxas Blvd., Pasay City

- Invocation - Deputy Executive Secretary Jose Tale
- National Anthem
- Welcome Remarks - Resident President
- Announcements - Atty. Antonio M. Bernardo
- Introduction of Honoree - Cong. Leopoldo San Buenaventura
- Presentation of Plaque to the Honoree - Deputy Executive Secretary Ricardo Blancaflor and the Resident President
- Response by the Honoree - Secretary Arturo Brion, DOLE
- Closing remarks - Deputy Executive Secretary Ricardo Blancaflor
- Utopia Hymn

Master of Ceremonies - VR

ABOUT BROD ART BRION

Labor and Employment Secretary Arturo D. Brion is a lawyer by training and experience, with years of hands on exposure to labor relations and, in his later years in the Department, to employment.

Brion came to the Department academically prepared. He topped the Bar examinations of 1974 with a grade of 91.65%

after finishing his Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) at the Ateneo University as Cum Laude, Class Valedictorian, and recipient of the Ateneo's Gold Medal for Academic Excellence.

He was born in Manila on December 29, 1946 to Edon B. Brion (a retired trial court judge) and Laura S. Dizon. He grew up and undertook his primary, secondary and part of his tertiary studies in San Pablo City, a mainly agricultural community 87 kilometers southwest of Manila. Life for him in San Pablo was uncomplicated and serene, and he carries his simple provincial ways even to this day.

The Labor Department Chief is adept both in numbers and in words. Prior to his law degree, Brion finished Bachelor of Arts, majoring in Mathematics, at the San Pablo Colleges. He was, however, destined to go beyond numbers and became a lawyer in 1974. His ease and skill with words were tested as Editor-in-Chief of the Ateneo Law Journal, and much later, at the Legal Services of the Ontario Ministry of Labour when he edited the Legal Update, the technical publication of that office. Interestingly, Brion is not alone in his family in his mixed interests in law and mathematics. His wife, Antonietta, is a chemist-lawyer (B.S. Chem, College of the Holy Spirit, and LL.B., Ateneo Law School), while his son, Arturo, Jr., is a computer engineer-lawyer (Computer Engineering, McMaster University, Ontario; LL.B., University of New Brunswick School of Law) engaged in Intellectual Property Law practice in Ottawa. His other child, Antonella, is a B.S. History graduate at York University (Toronto), but is now into computers.

After his Bar exam in 1975, Brion practised law at the Siguon Reyna, Montecillo, and Ongsiako Law Offices. The call to public service beckoned seven years later when he joined the Philippine Ministry of Labor (under Minister of Labor Blas F. Ople) as Executive Director of the Institute of Labor and Manpower Studies (ILMS). The ILMS was the research, training and policy formulation arm of the Ministry. He left the Ministry in 1984 to run for the position of Assemblyman in the Philippine National Assembly. He won and, after election, returned to the Ministry of Labor as Deputy Minister for Legal and Legislative affairs. He served in the Philippine National Assembly as the labor and employment committee vice-chair, and as member of the committee on revision of laws and constitutional amendments.

In 1986, Brion returned to private law practice with the Natividad, Delos Reyes, Maambong, and Brion but soon left private practice to be with his family in Canada where his children completed their tertiary education.

Brion continued to pursue his interest in law and in labor in Canada. He took up masteral studies in law at the York University Osgoode Hall while completing his law equivalency program to qualify him for law practice in Ontario. His masteral thesis was "The Right to Refuse Unsafe Work in Ontario," underscoring his dedication to the cause of workers' welfare. He subsequently worked as Solicitor at the Legal Services Branch of the Ontario Ministry of Labour and at the Ontario Management Board Secretariat.

Unable to shake off thoughts of his homeland and of the role he could possibly play in its development, Brion returned to the Philippines in 1995. He initially went back to the practice of law at his old law firm - the Siguon Reyna, Montecillo, and Ongsiako Law Offices - from where he retired in 2001. The public service welcomed him back in March 2001 as Undersecretary for Labor Relations at the Department of Labor and Employment - the area of public service closest to his heart.

When his oldtime mentor, then Senator Blas F. Ople, left the Philippine Senate to head the Department of Foreign Affairs, Ople tapped Brion as his Undersecretary for Special Concerns, one of the leading special concerns then being the absentee voting for overseas Filipinos. From this assignment, Brion was subsequently elevated to the Court of Appeals as Associate Justice in 2003. He had his second homecoming with DOLE when he was handpicked in July 2006 to occupy the post vacated by former Labor and Employment Secretary Patricia A. Sto. Tomas, another Ople protégé. "I am opting for the DOLE," he said when made to choose between the relative comfort and security of the appellate court, and the tenurial uncertainties of a cabinet position in a Department whose concerns and responsibilities

are now worldwide because of the overseas Filipino workers whose recruitment, placement and welfare the Department regulates. Brion easily qualifies for this post, however, because he comes to the position after having served all three branches of government – the Executive, the Legislative and the Judiciary – in senior positions. Even if only in that respect, he is unique in the Philippine public service.

Brion is affiliated with the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP), the Philippine Bar Association, and, while in Canada, with the Law Society of Upper Canada. He was the chapter president of the IBP chapter in Laguna in 1981-1983. He taught at the Ateneo University College of Law and at the Far Eastern University Institute of Law at various times, becoming the Bar Examiner in Political and International Law in 2004. He also briefly served in 1976 as consultant at the Civil Service Commission on public sector unionism. He says that his vision for public sector unionism, outlined in his paper “Public Sector Unionism – a Proposed Configuration”, remains a dream but he believes that his ideas, sooner or later, will become relevant and will come to pass

He is guided by two standards in dealing with the private sector unionism that he now regulates. He believes that the standards of balance and fairness, if properly and steadfastly applied, cannot but lead to the industrial peace and harmony that the Philippines needs in its quest for economic stability and progress.