



Consulate General of the Republic of the Philippines

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### 15 Outstanding Filipino-Americans honored at 7<sup>th</sup> TOFA Awards



2017 TOFA Awardees and former TOFA awardees with Consul General Ma. Theresa Dizon-De Vega (6<sup>th</sup> from R) and TOFA Founder Elton Lugay (1<sup>st</sup> from L) – photos by NYPCG

2 November 2017, New York – As part of the commemoration of Filipino-American History Month, fifteen Filipino-Americans were honored as The Outstanding Filipinos in America for 2017 (TOFA) on 28 October 2017 at the historic Carnegie Hall in New York City.

The event, co-founded by Mr. Elton Lugay and Cristina Pastor of the Filipino-American Community in New York, recognizes the contributions of the Fil-Ams and their role in elevating the presence of the Filipinos in America in various fields such as arts and culture, community service and advocacy, women empowerment, business and entrepreneurship, health care, sports, fashion, research and technology, senior and youth advocacy, media, entertainment, and public service and politics.

Consul General Theresa Dizon-De Vega and Philippine Ambassador to the United Nations Teodoro L. Locsin, Jr. handed out the awards to the honorees from throughout the United States.

In her message, Consul General Dizon-De Vega thanked the honorees and the organizers for further raising the profile of the Filipino-American Community and for their trailblazing achievements and advocacies. She further enjoined all the guests to set higher goals and definite timetables to ensure that more Filipino-Americans are represented in different fields and policy-making platforms.

For more information, visit [www.newyorkpcg.org](http://www.newyorkpcg.org) and [www.facebook.com/PHConsulateNY](https://www.facebook.com/PHConsulateNY)

Engineer Gil Quinones, President and Chief Executive Officer of the New York Power Authority, represented the Office of New York Governor Andrew Cuomo. Mr. Quinones read a letter from Gov. Cuomo recognizing the thriving community of Filipino-Americans in the US and their many contributions to the diversity and achievements of their respective communities.

The 2017 TOFA awardees are: Ms. Sylvia Buhain (Women Empowerment), Mr. Francis Sison (Senior Advocacy), Amable Yalong (Business and Entrepreneurship), WCBS-TV correspondent Hazel Sanchez (Media and Publishing), Photographer Filbert Kung (Arts and Culture), Bing Cardenas Branigin (Community Service and Advocacy), Jessica Cox (Courage of Conviction awardee), Ms. Saigon star Jon Jon Briones (Entertainment), Rocky Gathercole (Fashion and Style), Dr. Noel Fajardo (Healthcare), Assemblyman Rob Bonta (Public Service and Politics), Christina Laskowski (Research and Technology), Anna Julaton (Sports), Jason Tengco (Youth), and White House Executive Chef Cristeta Pasia Comerford (Heritage Awardee).

The event hosted by popular presenter Mr. Boy Abunda, also featured performances by Fe de los Reyes, Sheryn Regis and Filipino and Filipino-American performers. END



(From L-R) Consul General Ma. Theresa Dizon-De Vega, TOFA Founder Elton Lugay and Representative of NY Governor's Office Engineer Gil Quinones deliver their remarks