



# Pinay Powerhouse Conference VII

*March 22, 2024 - March 24, 2024*



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## Pinay Powerhouse Conference VII

### Friday, March 22

6 pm: Meet and Greet with our Speakers at You & Yours Distillery

### Saturday, March 23

8:15 am - 9:15 am

Breakfast

9:15 am - 9:30 am

Welcome Remarks

9:30 am - 10:45 am

Promises of Success: Stories from Flourishing Pinays

11:00 am - 12:30 pm

Promises of Pride and Representation with Keynote Speaker Judge Rohanee Zapanta and Jerrilyn Malana Lunch

1:00 pm - 2:15 pm

Promises of Authenticity and Real Allyship

2:15 pm - 2:30 pm

Meryenda: Sponsored by Flour Atelier

2:30 pm - 4:00 pm

Circles: "Promises"

4:15 pm - 4:30 pm

Video Message from Judge Lim Scholarship Awards

4:30 pm - 5:30 pm

Pinay Powerhouse Conference closing ritual, Group Photo

### Saturday, March 23

6 pm: After party at Nima

### Sunday, March 24

10 am: Brunch at Malibu Farms

### meet our community 10:30 am - 2:30 pm

Coffee & Meryenda: Flour Atelier

Lunch: Gaslamp Lumpia Factory

P'Nai, LLC Apparel and Accessories

Graphics by Momo

Filipinx Author Book Nook: featuring books from FALSD's very own Tracy Badua!

Rooted in Practice Anthology by Pinay Powerhouse Collective

Pinay Powerhouse 501(c)(3)

Pag-Asa Law Clinic

### to-do list

eat great food!

how do you show your pride?

what promises are you making to yourself today?

how can you be authentic while simultaneously being held accountable?

Headshots By Adriane Nicole, photographer 2:15 pm - 2:30 pm

# Promises of Success – Stories from Flourishing Pinays

This panel will focus on the personal experiences of Pinay leaders in navigating and succeeding in fields or industries historically dominated by white males. The panelists will discuss not only the work in that journey, but also the joy and purpose found along the way. Moderated by Jonah Toleno.



Jonah Toleno  
Moderator

Jonah Toleno is Of Counsel with Garcia Hong Law here in San Diego. She specialized in securities litigation and financial services arbitration for nearly 20 years before joining Garcia Hong Law in 2023, representing broker-dealers, registered investment advisors, financial services firms, and financial professionals in securities disputes, regulatory enforcement actions before the SEC and FINRA, and employment and trade secret matters. She also represented institutional and retail investors in high-stakes securities fraud cases.

She also acts as outside general counsel to investment advisory firms and businesses in other industries such as breweries, coffee shops, restaurants, interior design, and art studios. Jonah is a Past President and current Director of FALSD and has been active in NFALA, Lawyers Club of San Diego, the San Diego County Bar Association, and other AAPI bar organizations for several years.

Valerie Garcia Hong is the Founder of Garcia Hong Law, a Southern California law firm that specializes in business litigation, professional negligence, and personal injury. After over a decade as an Equity Partner at a mid-size law firm, Valerie hung up her shingle in 2018. Over the last 6 years, the firm has grown to a team of 7. Valerie has built a diverse team because it increases creativity, adaptability, and problem-solving for their clients. Garcia Hong Law services international companies, Fortune 100 businesses, startups, and "mom & pop shops."

Valerie has been recognized for several awards including Top 50 Lawyers in San Diego for consecutive years by Super Lawyers, San Diego Business Journal's Women of Influence in the Law, and one of the Top 10 Personal Injury lawyers in San Diego by Forbes.

Valerie received her JD from Chicago-Kent College of Law and her BS in Journalism from the University of Illinois.



Valerie Garcia Hong  
Speaker

Education has become a very important pursuit for Gelli. As a young child, she dreamt of becoming a first-grade teacher. However, her experiences working as a student assistant and leader in her undergraduate institution shifted her passion towards working with college students and alumni. After working in higher education, Gelli pivoted to the legal industry where she is currently working as the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Specialist at Snell & Wilmer focusing on DE&I programs firm-wide, pipeline programs with high school, colleges and universities for aspiring attorneys, and recruiting efforts. Celli has found a passion of advocating for the underserved and broadly underrepresented populations by creating access, visibility and space for storytelling.

Her research interests include: access and retention of first-generation students and professionals, identity development, and holistic health. Celli also hopes to continue her desire of teaching by being a professor at a university, and developing her global education through traveling. Gelli is determined to give back to the greater community and serve as a role model to folks about tapping into their strengths to reach their goals and dreams.



Gelli Ann Dayrit  
Speaker

Chris Gunn (she/they/siya) is a legal and energy professional with over 20-years' experience principally in energy law and policy with a current emphasis in leading national policy discussions on equity and energy justice. She is highly regarded for her leadership, board expertise, innovative ideas, and contributions to grid innovation.

Currently, they serve as the Director for Equity, Labor, and Economic Prosperity at the Department of Energy as well as Senior Advisor in the Office of Energy Justice and Equity. Their role involves spearheading efforts to ensure that equity considerations are integrated into federal grants via Community Benefit Plans. Chris previously served as an Attorney-Advisor for the Bonneville Power Administration and ended her decade plus tenure as Acting Assistant General Counsel for Transmission in the Office of General Counsel. Alongside their professional pursuits, Chris is passionate about mentoring law students and young attorneys and supporting their professional growth. Chris is currently serving as President of the Oregon Filipino American Lawyers Association. She loves nothing more than spending time with her family by the ocean.



Chris Gunn  
Speaker

Wendy has been influential at Calidi as both the Chief Legal Officer and Chief Diversity Officer. Celebrated as one of the "Power Women of San Diego" by Discover Magazine, showcasing her expertise as a seasoned corporate attorney and her passion for digital health advocacy. Wendy joined Calidi's leadership due to her passion for its cancer cure mission, overseeing its global legal strategy and implementation. She also serves as Calidi's Corporate Secretary.

Wendy brings over two decades of experience in corporate and business law. Since 2010, she has led California Law Partners, a boutique law firm she founded to serve as general and corporate counsel, and lead crisis manager for high net worth multi-family offices. Wendy remains engaged in her community as a leader and volunteer, contributing to non-profit boards such as Rady Children's Hospital Auxiliary, where she has taken roles as a unit officer, board member, and lifetime member.

Wendy holds a J.D. from the Harvard Law School, M.S.T. from the University of Oxford, and M.A. and B.A. from Yale University. She is proficient in Spanish, Italian and Tagalog. Wendy is a member of the State Bar of California and U.S. District Court, Southern District of California.



Wendy Pizarro  
Speaker

# Promises of Pride and Representation

Powerchat with Judge Rohanee Zapanta with Jerrilyn Malana



**Judge Rohanee Zapanta**  
**Keynote Speaker**

Judge Rohanee Zapanta was appointed in 2018 by Governor Brown as the second Filipina American to serve as Superior Court Judge for San Diego County. Judge Zapanta was recently awarded in October 2023 as one of the Most Influential Filipina Women in the World by Filipina Women's Network. She believes in empowering students of diverse backgrounds through celebrating their cultural core values.

Judge Zapanta is co-chair and co-founder of the youth project - Brown Faces to the Sun, which celebrates Filipinx-American core values through student workshops and music. She is also co-chair and co-founder of the California Judges Association's Ethics & Wellness Workshops for first generation law students.

Judge Zapanta sits on the Diversity Equity and Inclusion Task Force for the University of San Diego Alumni Board of Directors. She is also a Chief Editor of The Bench - the official journal of the California Judges Association where she regularly contributes a self-assessment column on identity and wellness.

Jerrilyn Malana is a Chief Deputy District Attorney with the San Diego County District Attorney's Office, where she serves as chief of human resources and diversity, equity & inclusion; and serves as special counsel. Prior to joining the DA's Office, Jerri served as an Employment Law attorney and Shareholder with the global employment law firm of Littler Mendelson, PC. At Littler, she represented Fortune 500 clients and local businesses in employment-related litigation. Jerri is a dynamic public speaker, and an effective and engaging trainer on employment law topics. She regularly speaks on equity, diversity and inclusion matters including strategies to address bias in the workplace.

Jerri is passionate about community service and civics education, and helping the next generation to succeed. Jerri was the first Asian Pacific American attorney to serve as President of the San Diego County Bar Association, which is the region's oldest and largest legal organization. She is a past President of Pan Asian Lawyers of San Diego. Jerri is the immediate past Chair of the Civic Engagement & Outreach (CEO) Committee for the California Lawyers Association. She currently serves as Vice President of the California Lawyers Foundation. Over the course of her successful career, Jerri has served on multiple local, state, and national boards and committees. Jerri was inducted into the San Diego County Women's Hall of Fame as a "Trailblazer." She was also named a "Trailblazer" by the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA). Jerri was honored as one of the "100 Most Influential Filipina Women in the World" by the Filipina Women's Network.

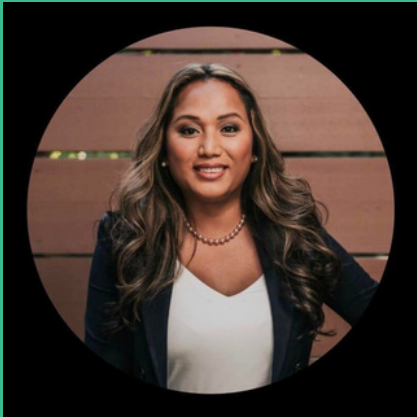


**Jerrilyn Malana**



# Promises of Authenticity and Real Allyship

In this discussion, our Powerhouses will talk about queerness and culture. We will also delve into the importance of language, struggles of identifying as LGBTIA+ within our community to meet cultural and religious expectations and norms, and when attempts to protect ourselves and our loved ones may end up doing more harm than good.



**Maria Hinayon**

Accomplished higher education professional with extensive experience in legal, ethics, and compliance work. Restorative, level-headed, and solutions-focused. Leads with kindness, fairness, and transparency, and values honesty, humility, and love of learning. Thrives in a team environment based on mutual respect, trust, and growth. A believer in the "Shine Theory" of success: "I don't shine if you don't shine."

As a first-generation Filipina American and survivor of poverty, violence, and homelessness, I am a living testament to the transformative power of education and hard work to positively change the course of one's life. The focus of my work is to ensure that learning and working spaces everywhere remain safe, inclusive, and accessible for all.

Candice Custodio-Tan also known as Dr. DJ Kuttin Kandi, is internationally known as a legendary "People's Hip Hop DJ Scholar" who was born and raised in Queens, NY. Kandi is a disabled queer gender-fluid femme Filipinx-Pin[a/x]ly-American Writer, Poet, Theater Performer, Educator, Hip Hop Feminist, and Community Organizer for over 25 years. DJ Kuttin Kandi is a Global Hip Hop and Cultural Ambassador by Next Level's Meridian International Center, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs where Kandi served as a Site Manager for the diplomacy program Next Level. Kandi is a Co-Founder and Executive Director of Asian Solidarity Collective (ASC) and its newly launched center, The Asian Advocacy, Community & Action Center (The Action Center). Likewise, Kandi has co-founded several other local grassroots organizations such as Families for Justice in Education San Diego, the Dede McClure Community Bail Fund, We All We Got San Diego and so much more. Further, Kandi is the Co-Founder of national organizations People's Collective for Justice and Liberation and the University for Justice and Liberation (UJL). In 2021, Kandi served on both the San Diego County Board of Supervisors, Committee for Persons with Disabilities and as a Human Relations Commissioner of Chula Vista. In 2020, DJ Kuttin Kandi received an Honorary Doctorate in Pinayism from six professors in the discipline who hail from five universities for their endless dedication to radical sisterhood, critical praxis, and transformative solidarity. In April 2024, Dr. DJ Kuttin Kandi will be inducted into San Diego Women's Hall of Fame with the Spirit of the Hall of Fame Award.

Kandi first gained global reverence by competing in over 30 DJ competitions which eventually led them to being the first femme DJ to compete in the 1998 DMC USA Finals and winning the 1998 Source Magazine DJ Championships. Moreover, Kandi is the Co-Editor of the books "Empire of Funk: Hip Hop & Representation in Filipino/a America" and newly released anthology, "Closer to Liberation: Pin[a/x]ly Activism on Theory and Practice." When Kandi is not performing, they are community organizing, speaking, writing or lecturing. Kandi worked at UC San Diego Women's Center for seven years and at Diablo Valley College in Student Life specializing in social justice & diversity programming for two years. Kandi is involved with the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance - San Diego, the Intersectional Feminist Collective, the F.I.E.R.C.E Coalition, Filipino American Educators Association of California, and organizes with various other organizations and coalitions throughout San Diego and across the United States. In addition, Kandi is a strong Disability Justice and Special Education advocate with a Dis/Crit practice. Today, DJ Kuttin Kandi continues to do community organizing work and provides various lectures on diversity, gender & sexuality, race, disability justice, organizational leadership & development, coaching for liberation and Hip Hop Feminism.



**Dr. DJ Kuttin Kandi**



Kapag May Itinanin,  
May Aanihin



Valerie Garcia Hong



Jonah A. Toleno



Christina Bernstein



Coleman Alguire



Mark Simpliciano



Dorothy Grafilo



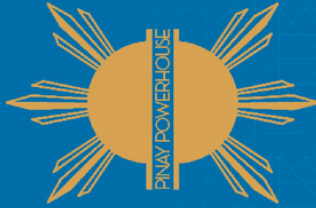
IF YOU HAVE PLANTED SOMETHING, YOU WILL HARVEST SOMETHING

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# MABUHAY

## PINAY POWERHOUSE '24



**Carina Dayondon was the 1st Pinay to climb 7 of the tallest summits.**

**TOGETHER WE MOVE MOUNTAINS.**

Marivel M. Zialcita, CalWest '02 Alumni, & Current  
CalWest Alumni Foundation Board of Director



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*Thank you to the planning committee that made this Pinay Powerhouse VII possible*



Andrella Gonzalez



Christine Start



Pauline Villanueva



Kristine Avena



Vanessa Candelaria



Gervilyn Cadimas



Rolaine Castro



Michelle Gastil



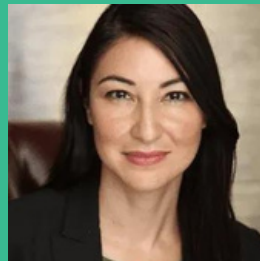
Gabriela Kula



Diana Laranang



Christine Lopez



Frances Prizzia



Yvonne Ricardo



Emiliza San Diego



Cheryl Shitabata

# Pinay Powerhouse (c)(3)



## Mission

Pinay Powerhouse 501(c)(3), a nonprofit educational charity organization under U.S. Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3), is committed to empowering Pinay lawyers, future lawyers, JD+ and legal professional to lead as their whole authentic selves.

## Vision

Our vision is to support the Pinay Powerhouse to live towards authentic liberation, leading by example through embodying their dreams, power, and values, while transforming their communities in kapwa.



*Pinay Powerhouse  
Conference VII*

# Notes



# Salamat!



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100  
YEARS

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