

SENATE
P. S. R. No. 1602

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION
EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE
TO NOMINATE WANG-OD OGGAY AND LIGAYA FERNANDO AMILBANGSA FOR
THE *MANLILIKHA NG BAYAN* AWARD, THEREBY RECOGNIZING THEM AS
NATIONAL LIVING TREASURES FOR THEIR IMMENSE CONTRIBUTIONS IN
PRESERVING TRADITIONAL FILIPINO ART

1 WHEREAS, the Constitution provides, in Article 14, Sections 14 and 15:

2 Section 14. The State shall foster the preservation, enrichment, and
3 dynamic evolution of a Filipino national culture based on the principle of unity in
4 diversity in a climate of free artistic and intellectual expression.

5 Section 15. Arts and letters shall enjoy the patronage of the State. The
6 State shall conserve, promote, and popularize the nation's historical and cultural
7 heritage and resources, as well as artistic creations.

8 WHEREAS, Republic Act No. 7355, also known as the "Manlilikha ng Bayan Act,"
9 states:

10 Section 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For the purpose of this Act, "Manlilikha
11 ng Bayan" shall mean a citizen or a group of citizens engaged in any traditional
12 art uniquely Filipino, whose distinctive skills have reached such a high level of
13 technical and artistic excellence and have been passed on to and widely practiced
14 by the present generation in his/her community with the same degree of technical
15 and artistic competence.

16 "Traditional Folk Art" refers to expressions of distinctiveness and artistic
17 quality created to serve a decorative and/or utilitarian or sociocultural functions of
18 traditional folk artists commonly known for such works.

19 WHEREAS, Wang-Od Oggay is said to be the last known *mambabatuk* or native tattoo
20 artist in Kalinga;

21 WHEREAS, for many years, Filipinos from all over the country, as well as foreign
22 tourists, have been flocking to Wang-Od's village of Buscalan to be marked with the *batuk*,
23 ancient marks once worn by women of the Cordilleras as symbols of beauty, and by male
24 headhunters as marks of a strong warrior;

1 WHEREAS, Wang-Od strives to keep the native tattoo tradition alive despite her old age
2 of 97;

3 WHEREAS, her work has not only preserved an important cultural heritage among
4 Filipinos, but has also created for her community a source of livelihood by attracting tourists;

5 WHEREAS, a social media campaign has recently been launched to have Wang-Od
6 nominated as National Artist;

7 WHEREAS, Ligaya Fernando Amilbangsa has meanwhile gained wide acclaim for
8 working to preserve *Pangalay*, a traditional Filipino dance believed to have spread from India to
9 the southern Philippines even before Islam and Christianity arrived;

10 WHEREAS, *Pangalay* allegedly means “temple dancing” in Sanskrit, but for Filipinos in
11 the Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan areas who have adapted the dance, the local meaning of “gift
12 offering” applies;

13 WHEREAS, after witnessing the *Pangalay* performed in 1969, Amilbangsa has
14 thoroughly studied the dance by interviewing elderly villagers to codify the gestures, and even
15 by watching her own shadow on a wall;

16 WHEREAS, Amilbangsa, 71, has traveled all over the country and across Asia both to
17 study and teach the dance, and has published a book on *Pangalay* in 1983;

18 WHEREAS, in August, Amilbangsa was given the Ramon Magsaysay Award, also
19 known as the Asian Nobel Prize, for “her single-minded crusade in preserving the endangered
20 artistic heritage of the southern Philippines”;

21 WHEREAS, both Wang-Od and Amilbangsa fulfill the minimum requirements to be
22 honored as National Living Treasures, which, according to the *Manlilikha ng Bayan Act*, are:

23 Technical and creative skill – The candidate must possess a mastery of the
24 tools and materials needed by the art, and must have an established reputation in
25 the art as master and maker of works of extraordinary technical quality;

26 Artistic quality – The work of the candidate must be outstanding
27 aesthetically, and he/she must have consistently produced over a significant
28 period, works of superior quality;

29 Community tradition -- The candidate must have transferred and/or willing
30 to transfer to other members of the community, skills in the folk art for which the
31 community has become nationally known.

32 Folk art tradition – The candidate must have engaged in a folk art tradition
33 that has been in existence and documented for at least fifty (50) years; and

1 Character and integrity – As a precious treasure of the country, the
2 candidate must command the respect and admiration of the country for his
3 character and integrity.

4 WHEREAS, the Senate, as a government institution, may nominate individuals or groups
5 for the *Manlilikha ng Bayan* Award, subject to a selection process administered by the National
6 Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA);

7 WHEREAS, the *Manlilikha ng Bayan* Act imposes no limit on the number of nominees
8 or awardees for any given year;

9 WHEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE PHILIPPINE SENATE to
10 express the sense of the Senate to nominate Wang-Od Oggay and Ligaya Fernando Amilbangsa
11 for the *Manlilikha ng Bayan* Award, thereby recognizing them as National Living Treasures for
12 their immense contributions in preserving traditional Filipino art;

13 RESOLVED FURTHER, that the NCCA be furnished a copy of this resolution.

Adopted,


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO
for