

- Historic Saranac Lake officials, especially Executive Director Amy Catania
- Saranac Lake Area Chamber of Commerce members
- Kalayaan 1521, Sol and Mary Ann Kapunan and Cheryl Hoyer,
- Filipino Community organizations in Schenectady, the Adirondacks and the North Country, and the rest of the great state of NY

Thank you for the support

- The Council of the Town of Harrietstown led by Supervisor Jordanna Mallach;
- Mayor Jimmy Williams and the Board of Trustees of the Village of Saranac Lake,
- New York State Assembly Members, Billy Jones and our very own Steven Raga
- All the sponsors, performers, vendors and exhibitors, and to all of you who are here instead of on the water with a fishing rod

Importance of commemorations like this

- In our constant preoccupation in the here and now, and in our compelling desire to propel ourselves into the future, we sometimes forget to look back
- Necessary to look back to remember that many of the things we enjoy now and often take for granted are the result of the valiant efforts and sacrifices of our forebears, some of whom made the ultimate sacrifice to gain these things for us and future generations.
- The importance of looking back is that it reminds us that we are where we are today because we stand on the shoulders of giants.
- In PH history, one of those giants is Manuel Luis Quezon, our second president, but the first to be popularly elected.
- In the summers of 1943 and 1944, President Quezon's journey brought him to Saranac Lake, a journey marked by both necessity and resilience. Seeking respite and healing from the debilitating effects of tuberculosis while leading a government in exile during the tumultuous years of World War II, he came to this tranquil haven seeking the pure air and calm that this place offered.
- Saranac Lake holds a special significance in the final chapter of this great leader's life. It is fitting, therefore, that we honor him here, in the very place that provided him comfort and strength, to pay tribute to his indomitable spirit and his unyielding commitment to the Filipino people.
- During those crucial wartime summers, even as he battled his declining health, Quezon continued to work tirelessly for the Philippine cause. Here in the Adirondacks, he held meetings with his cabinet, corresponded with Allied leaders, and planned for the post-war reconstruction of the Philippines. Quezon's time in Saranac Lake came at the culmination of a life dedicated to public service and nation-building.
- By this point, he had already achieved numerous milestones: championing Philippine independence, establishing the national language, instituting land reform, promoting women's suffrage,

laying the groundwork for a robust public education system, and creating the Philippine Army. Yet even in these final months, he continued to lead and inspire.

- Perhaps one of Quezon's most remarkable achievements, which resonates deeply with the spirit of compassion he encountered in Saranac Lake, was his earlier decision to open the doors of the Philippines to Jewish refugees fleeing the Holocaust. In 1939, when many nations were closing their borders, Quezon offered sanctuary to 10,000 Jews. This humanitarian gesture reflected the compassion and moral courage of the Filipino people.

- Commemorating Quezon's achievements and his final days spent in Saranac Lake is not just about remembering a great leader, it is about how the spirit of healing and compassion embodied here in Saranac Lake provided solace to a leader carrying the weight of a nation's future, it is about recognizing how the kindness of a community in a small village in upstate New York can have a far-reaching impact on the world.

- More importantly, President Quezon History Day serves as a powerful symbol of the enduring friendship between the Philippines and the United States. It represents a shared history of mutual support, cultural exchange, and common values, particularly poignant during the challenges of World War II and continuing to this day, only growing stronger like tempered steel.

- To the people of Saranac Lake, thank you for preserving this important piece of shared history. Your efforts to honor President Quezon's memory strengthen the bonds between our nations and communities.

- Let us carry forward President Quezon's legacy of dedication to public service, his commitment to social justice, and his vision of a free and prosperous Philippines, inspired by the enduring connection between Saranac Lake and the Philippines.

- Thank you, and Mabuhay!