

****Title:** Maria Cano vs. Director of Lands, Eustaquia Guerrero, et al.**

****Facts:****

1. Maria Cano, a widow and resident of Juban, Sorsogon, filed an application for the registration of Lots Nos. 1798 and 1799 in the Juban Cadastre.
2. In the Court of First Instance of Sorsogon, Land Registration Case No. 12, G.L.R.O. Rec. No. 2835, Cano's title to these lands was decreed registrable under law on October 9, 1951. The registration decision included a note that Lot No. 1799 was subject to reserve rights in favor of Eustaquia Guerrero under Article 891 of the Civil Code.
3. This decision became final without an appeal being filed, resulting in the issuance of a decree and Certificate of Title No. 0-20 in Maria Cano's name, subject to the reservation in favor of Eustaquia Guerrero.
4. In October 1955, Eustaquia Guerrero's counsel filed a motion based on Maria Cano's death on September 8, 1955, to cancel the original Certificate of Title and issue a new one in Guerrero's name, claiming right to possession.
5. The motion was opposed by Jose and Teotimo Fernandez, Cano's sons, who argued that the application of the reserva troncal should be addressed in an ordinary court, not a registration court.
6. Despite the opposition, the Cadastral Court granted Guerrero's motion to issue a new certificate, citing her status as the sole reservatario troncal due to the death of Maria Cano.
7. The Fernandez siblings appealed the decision, asserting that ownership under reserva troncal needed to be established through judicial proceedings due to questions regarding the existence of certain requisites.

****Issues:****

1. Whether the ownership of the reservatario can be decreed in a proceeding under Section 112 of Act 496, or if a judicial proceeding is required.
2. Whether the elements of a reserva troncal must be re-established despite being identified in the initial registration decree.
3. The implications of the reservatario status and inheritance rights under the Civil Code

concerning reservable property.

Court's Decision:

1. The Supreme Court affirmed that the Cadastral Court could issue a new certificate of title in favor of Eustaquia Guerrero based on the reservation rights noted in the registration decree, which had become final and executable.
2. The court noted that the elements required for a reserva troncal had already been adjudged to exist. The final registration decree recognized Eustaquia Guerrero's rights, negating the need for a separate legal proceeding to re-establish these elements.
3. The reservatario's right to property upon the death of the reservista does not involve succession laws requiring administration proceedings. Instead, title passes automatically by law to the reservatario of the closest degree.

Doctrine:

- The reservatario becomes the owner of the reservable property upon the reservista's death by operation of law, not by succession or inheritance laws.
- The final registration decree serves as conclusive evidence of the constituent elements of a reserva troncal.

Class Notes:

- **Reserva Troncal Elements:** Gratuitous title property received by a descendant; descendant dies without issue; property inherited by another ascendant by law; existence of relatives within the third degree from the property's origin.
- **Legal Principle:** Upon the reservista's demise, the reservatario nearest to the original property line automatically gains ownership, as the property is excluded from the reservista's estate.
- **Relevant Statutes:**
 - Article 891, Civil Code: Governs reserva troncal.
 - Section 112, Act 496: Related to Land Registration Process - establishes the context of registration decrees.

Historical Background:

This case highlights the early application of the Civil Code's reserva troncal provision. It underscores legal transitions in land ownership post-registration and illustrates procedural clarity in adjudicating rights tied to conditions rather than direct succession, forming a foundation for understanding property rights in postcolonial Philippine jurisprudence.