

EMMA J. CASTILLO, COMPLAINANT, VS. JUDGE MANUEL M. CALANOG, JR., RESPONDENT.*A.M. No. RTJ-90-447. December 16, 1994*

Ponente: MENDOZA, J.

Read online (full-text search, related cases, audio case brief): <https://batas.org/library/66d4f36ad141/>**MENDOZA, J.:**

This refers to the "plea for judicial clemency and compassion" of Atty. Manuel M. Calanog, Jr. Atty. Calanog was formerly judge of the Regional Trial Court of Quezon City (Branch 7). In the decision of this Court of July 12, 1991 in this case, he was found guilty of immorality and ordered dismissed from the service "with prejudice to his reinstatement or appointment to any public office including a government-owned or controlled corporation, and forfeiture of retirement benefits, if any." He seeks, by his present petition, (1) a review of his dismissal for the purpose of being considered as having merely resigned from his position as an RTC judge; (2) the lifting of the penalty of perpetual disqualification from appointment to any public office or to any government-owned or controlled corporation; and (3) the nullification of forfeiture of his retirement benefits.

Atty. Calanog does not seek a reconsideration of the decision in this case considering that his motion to this effect was denied on October 1, 1991 and the decision against him is now final. Rather he pleads for mercy, to be exempted from further service of the penalty imposed on him. In support of his petition he alleges that sufficient time has elapsed since his dismissal and that since then he has been "sufficiently punished and disciplined;" that he has undergone moral reformation and he promises never again to be involved "wittingly or unwittingly with any person or activity which may adversely affect his character and integrity;" and that except for this case he had an otherwise exemplary record as an RTC judge.

Concerned with safeguarding the integrity of the judiciary, this Court has come down hard on erring judges, and justifiably so. Atty. Calanog accepts this as merited punishment for such judges. He asks, however, that in his case justice be tempered with mercy. Indeed the Court does not rule out the possibility of reformation which, when proven and considered together with the subject's potentiality and promise, may earn for him the Court's compassion. This is such a case.

As proof of his moral regeneration, Atty. Calanog alleges that he has become active in religious and civic activities. He cites his membership in the Pag-Ibig sa Dios Catholic Community and Bibliarasal; participation in the Life in the Spirit Seminar and Marriage Encounter Class 148; his membership in the Board of Directors of the Rotary Club of Mandaluyong and of the Guaranteed Education, Inc., his being corporate secretary of Classic Plans, Inc., which offers educational plans to students at all levels of education, and his being legal counsel of United Mutual Benefit Association, Inc., Trustee of the Foundation for Sharing La Sallian Education of the De La Salle University, and auditor of the Philippine Federation of Pre-Need Plan Companies, Inc.

In support of his allegations, he has submitted testimonials by Atty. Amado M. Santiago, Advising Elder of the Pag-Ibig sa Diyos Catholic Community; Brother Rafael S. Donato of the De La Salle University; Jose B. Uy, president of the Rotary Club of Mandaluyong; Mr. and Mrs. Roberto C. Albar of the Lord's Vineyard; Ernesto C.

Hernandez, president of Classic Plans, Inc., and the Philippine Judges Association.

Atty. Calanog appears to be sincerely repentant. He describes the effect of the decision in this case as a "healing surgery" for him.

Atty. Calanog is a relatively young man of 54. If his contributions^[1] during the four years that he was an RTC judge were any measure of his potentiality for public service, he has productive years still ahead of him which should not be foreclosed. The penalty of disqualification from appointment to any public office should be lifted so that the opportunity for public service in other fields may be opened to him. His return to the judiciary may not be feasible at this time considering the recency of our decision,^[2] but certainly in the vast field of public service there should be room for the gainful employment of his talents. Indeed in the past this Court showed compassion in imposing penalties, taking into account the peculiar circumstances of the case. In one instance^[3] it modified a judgment of dismissal and ordered the reinstatement of a judge.

As for the forfeiture of retirement benefits as ordered in our decision, Atty. Calanog is not really entitled to any having only rendered four years, seven months, and twenty four days of service in the government as RTC judge from November 18, 1986 to July 12, 1991. There is, therefore, no basis for his request for payment of retirement benefits to him.

WHEREFORE, the petition for clemency and compassion of Atty. Manuel M. Calanog, Jr. is GRANTED and the penalty of disqualification from public office imposed on him is LIFTED.

SO ORDERED.

Narvasa, C.J., Padilla, Bidin, Regalado, Romero, Bellosillo, Melo, Quiason, Puno, Vitug, and Kapunan, JJ., concur.

Feliciano, J., on leave.

Davide, Jr., J., no part.

[1] Atty. Calanog's contributions as a judge is summarized in the separate opinion of Justice Hugo Gutierrez, Jr. dissenting as to penalty imposed in the decision of July 12, 1991, as follows:

Judge Calanog has positive accomplishments in his favor. We are not aware of any other shortcoming or offense committed by him. As a member of the Judiciary Planning Development and Implementation Office (JPDIO), he has with talent and resourcefulness represented Judges all over the country, bringing their problems to the JPDIO and the Court's attention. Judicial reforms are more readily implemented because of close coordination between the Office of the Court Administrator and the Philippine Judges Association (PJA) which the respondent headed until recently. The respondent initiated the College Assurance Plan for children of Judges and a modest insurance plan which gives death benefits to qualified members. He has tried his best these past few years to push through a housing development for members of the bench and apparently his efforts are about to bear fruit. He and the other officers of the PJA have shown unfailing respect for and cooperation with this Court. Respondent Calanog has rallied all Judges to stand behind the Court when we were unfairly charged or subjected to senseless vituperation. The respect which members of the bench and bar have accorded to the respondent is shown by the warm receptions extended to him in Cebu, Bacolod, Davao, and other parts of the country when the PJA officers visit their fellow Judges or attend judicial conferences and conventions.

[2] Atty. Calanog himself concedes that a return to the judiciary may not be opportune.

[3] In Re: Petition for the Dismissal from Service and/or Disbarment of Judge Baltazar R. Dizon, 173 SCRA 721

(1989).

ABOUT BATAS.ORG

Study smarter at BATAS.org

The Philippine bar review and law-school companion built around how your brain actually remembers.

The complete Philippine law library - free for everyone.

More than 100,000 Supreme Court decisions, Republic Acts, and executive issuances - full-text searchable, browsable by category and year, and always free. No paywall, no login. This PDF came from it.

Audio case-brief lectures.

Any decision becomes a podcast-style lecture - facts, issues, ruling, and doctrine - with read-along highlighting and a hands-free presentation mode. Study while commuting, working out, or resting your eyes.

Bar review built on the science of memory.

Complete, sequenced courses for all eight bar subjects, narrated like podcasts and reinforced with retrieval practice and spaced review - the study techniques with the strongest evidence behind them.

The full law-school curriculum.

One subscription unlocks the entire J.D. curriculum - every subject, every lesson, with your progress tracked down to the paragraph so you can pick up exactly where you left off, on any device.

Mock exams that tell you where you stand.

Timed multiple-choice exams graded instantly, with per-subject score breakdowns and focus suggestions that point you at your weakest topics first.

A study planner that keeps you on pace.

Set your schedule and BATAS tells you every day whether you are on track for bar day - and exactly which lesson to take next.

Start free at <https://batas.org>

The law library is free forever - and your first lesson is one click away.

The text of this document is an official public record and remains in the public domain. Formatting, presentation, and compilation © 2026 batas.org.

Downloaded free from the batas.org Law Library. Share it freely - the library is free for every law student, bar reviewee, and practitioner.