

HAW LIONG, PETITIONER AND APPELLEE, VS. REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES, OPPOSITOR AND APPELLANT.

G.R. No. L-21194. April 29, 1966

Ponente: BAUTISTA ANGELO, J.

Read online (full-text search, related cases, audio case brief): <https://batas.org/library/c0daa67d1355/>

BAUTISTA ANGELO, J.:

Petitioner seeks to change his name from Haw Liong to Alfonso Lantin in a petition filed before the Court of First Instance of Leyte.

He testified that he is 47 years old, married, and an employee of the Leyte Asia Trading Company; that he has been a resident of Tacloban City for more than 20 years; that he wants to change his name to Alfonso Lantin because he is called by his Filipino friends as Alfonso and the name of his father is Placido Lantin; that he wants to have a Filipino name because he will soon be a Filipino citizen; that he came to the Philippines in 1925 and since then his Filipino friends have been calling him Alfonso; that there is no pending case against him as Haw Liong; and that in the event a case will arise against him as Haw Liong he is willing to appear and answer the same.

After hearing, the court a quo allowed petitioner to change his name from Haw Liong to Alfonso Lantin. The government has appealed.

This Court has already had occasion to state the view that the State has an interest in the names borne by individuals for purposes of identification and that a change of name is a privilege and not a matter of right. So that before a person can be authorised to change the name given him either in his certificate of birth or civil registry he must show proper or reasonable cause or any compelling reason which may justify such change. Otherwise, the request should be denied (*Ong Peng Oan vs. Republic*, 102 Phil., 468). The following may be considered, among others, as proper or reasonable causes that may warrant the grant of a petition for change of name: (1) when the name is ridiculous, tainted with dishonor, or is extremely difficult to write or pronounce; (2) when the request for change is a consequence of a change of status, such as when a natural child is acknowledged or legitimated; and (3) when the change is necessary to avoid confusion (*Tolentino*, Civil Code of the Philippines, 1953 ed., Vol. 1, p. 660).

Petitioner has not shown any proper or compelling reason that may justify the request for a change of name other than his desire to adopt the name Alfonso for the reason that he has always been known by that name by his Filipino friends and associates and because that is the family name of his father which he desires to follow to conform with the customs and traditions in the Philippines. But this claim which is merely supported by his own testimony cannot overcome the fact that the name given him from the very beginning is Haw Liong as in fact this is the name that appears in his landing certificate. The fact that he claims to be the son of one Placido Lantin, a Filipino, is of no moment because if the same were true it is strange that the name that was given him upon birth is Haw Liong and he had to file a petition for naturalization to become a Filipino citizen. This indirectly belies his claim that the name that should be given him is Alfonso Lantin because that is the family name of his father "to

conform with the customs and traditions and also for sentimental reason."

The true situation however is, as was disclosed in his cross examination, that in his business dealings with other people he always signed as Haw Liong and never used the name Alfonso Lantin; that he came to be called Alfonso by his friends only when during the Japanese occupation his Filipino friends asked him how he was called and he told them that his name was Alfonso, and since then they started calling him by that name; and that he is known in Tacloban City as Haw Liong and has not contracted with any person under the name Alfonso Lantin. We find, therefore, no proper or compelling reason that may justify the change of name desired by petitioner for his petition does not come under any of the cases above adverted to.

Wherefore, the decision appealed from is set aside. The petition is denied, with costs.

Bengzon, C.J., Concepcion, Reyes, J.B.L., Barrera, Dizon, Regala, Makalintal, Bengzon, J.P., Zaldivar, and Sanchez, JJ., concur.

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.