

Labor day tribute:

Department of Labor celebrates decades of employee dedication

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As the nation came together to honor the contributions of workers on this year's Labor Day, the Department of Labor took the opportunity to shine a spotlight on its own dedicated workforce.

Against a backdrop of gratitude and respect, Secretary of Labor Leila F. Staffler remarked that "This holiday is a testament to the remarkable commitment displayed by our staff members. These individuals, who have dedicated a significant portion of their lives to public service, have played an instrumental role in shaping the department's mission and accomplishments."

Maria Lee Labadan



Frances Torres



James Ulloa



Jeffrey Camacho



Manases "Manny" Iguel



Rio B. Mostales



James Ulloa (32 years)

JAMES Ulloa has forged a remarkable career path, now culminating in his role as Labor Certification Supervisor. He commenced his journey as a Procurement and Supply Officer at Guam's Fort Sam Houston Bank, followed by a stint at DHL, alongside managing his father's retail and construction business.

In his early 20s, James transitioned to the Department of Labor as a Labor Tech, marking the start of a 32-year journey aligning with Saipan's flourishing garment and tourism sectors. Recollections of paper-laden desks during those bustling times contrast sharply with today's streamlined processes, a result of technology's march.

James attributes his achievements to patience and attentive listening, guiding his interactions with clients to offer effective, empathetic solutions. These qualities propelled him to his current position, reflecting personal growth within the department.

Jeffrey Camacho (32 years)

JEFFREY Camacho, a proud Chamorro native of Saipan, recounts his professional journey that led him to the Department of Labor. After a decade in various private companies, he transitioned to labor in 1991, initially as a labor application reviewer, then advancing to become a supervisor.

His earlier roles included positions such as a stocker, cashier, and even a bank manager. Notably, he found inspiration in the longest-serving veteran employee, William Jones, whom he observed and admired. William's 33-year tenure ignited Jeffrey's determination to surpass that milestone. Upon William's retirement, Jeffrey pledged to achieve 34 years, a promise he has faithfully maintained. He is currently in his 32nd year in DOL.

Married and the proud father of two daughters working in significant roles at NMC and Homeland Security, Jeffrey's proudest moments are rooted in his work family. He finds joy in welcoming new staff and imparting his knowledge, shaping his path to his current role.

Maria Lee "Mary" B. Labadan (31 years)

With a career rooted in the Department of Labor since 1992, Maria Lee Bignayan Labadan has risen from an Administrative Assistant to the esteemed role of Executive Secretary for the Secretary of Labor. She navigated

six different administrations, demonstrating dedication under leaders like the late Governor Lorenzo DL. Guerrero, Governor Juan Nekai Babauta, and more. Her responsibilities span divisions like Enforcement and the Director's office, reflecting her versatile expertise.

Outside her professional realm, Mary Labadan, originally from Iloilo, studied at San Agustin University, is a single mother of six boys, with two serving in the US Navy, one retired US Navy, and the remaining three flourishing in various private sector roles across the states. At 61, Mary's 31 years of service in the Department of Labor coexist with her passion for Zumba dancing during leisure moments. Her commitment, both professionally and personally, defines her vibrant journey.

Rio Mostales (26 years)

RIO Mostales, originally from Tanza, Cavite, embarked on his Saipan journey as an accountant. Joining the Department of Labor 26 years ago as an Administrative Assistant, his affinity for numbers and documents have propelled his commitment.

Realizing his initial dream of being an accountant, Rio's dedication to his current role is evident. He has been in charge of the Department of Labor's finances for the last 25 years. Stressing the importance of maintaining good work relationships and patience, he remains steadfast. Working for his family's betterment, Rio eagerly looks forward to contributing more years of service.

Manases Iguel (25 years)

MANASES Iguel's 25-year journey within the Department began as an immigration inspector trainee, traversing roles at LIIDS and deportation officer, culminating his work in Employment Services. He started as a labor law enforcement trainee, investigating violations and now serves as a Job Placement Officer. Encouraged by Bill Jones in 2008, he found purpose in assisting families through job placements. Guided by respect, logic, and common sense, he weathered challenges from typhoons to the pandemic. Building relationships with organizations like the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation remains his vision. He advocates understanding departmental laws, respecting diverse perspectives, and upholding inclusivity to ensure a fair workforce.

Arlene V. Rafanan (20 years)

COMMENCING her journey from Harrison Road Ba-

guio, Arlene V. Rafanan started her career as a cashier for Foreign Exchange in Duty-Free. Bolstering her skills with a Computer Secretary Education course from St. Paul College, QC, and two years nursing units from St. Louis University, Baguio, she solidified her expertise. As a stalwart member of the Enforcement Division, Arlene's steadfast dedication spans two decades. She values her role in aiding CNMI employees and resolving employer-related matters. Outside her professional realm, Arlene is a devoted wife and mother of two, embodying her diverse roles and contributions with equal grace.

Frances Torres (14 years)

WITH over a decade of unwavering dedication, Frances Torres has left an indelible mark on the realm of workforce development. From her humble beginnings as a Case Manager, Frances's journey has been defined by growth, adaptability, and a steadfast commitment to empowering individuals.

Having ascended to the role of Director, she has honed her skills in program management and strategic leadership, steering initiatives that impact countless lives. Frances's career reflects a deep empathy for job seekers' challenges, propelling her to advocate for continuous learning, technological acumen, and the building of meaningful connections.

As she envisions the future, Frances foresees a workforce development landscape characterized by innovation and inclusivity, and she stands as a beacon of inspiration within the Department of Labor, championing progress and fostering a thriving workforce ecosystem.

Celebrating also their long-term years in the Department of Labor are: Lenice Kapileo (17 years), Dennis Cabrera (15 years), Elaine Pangelinan (15 years), and Donyale C. Deleon Guerrero (10 years), Mariana Coates (8 years), Eugene Tebuteb (6 years), Alicia B. Agulto (6 years), Elaine Rosario (6 years), Olinka Cabrera (6 years), Labian Muna (6 years), Patricia Camacho (5 years).

"These dedicated DOL employees are the foundation that have weathered the many changes brought on by federalization," Staffler added.

"They possess historical and institutional knowledge of how our islands' workforce and labor have changed. They continue to serve in effort to ensure that all employees and employers are provided equal and fair treatment and have opportunities for growth and advancement."