



**OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER
I MINA TRENTAI UNU NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN
JUDITH T. WON PAT, Ed.D.**

**31st Guam Legislature Inaugural Ceremony
INAUGURAL ADDRESS
By Speaker Judith T. Won Pat
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Today marks the start of a new year. As elected leaders it is important to understand that we are guardians of our people, but like any good parent, we must first learn to listen before we can speak. As parents, many of us forget that though our children need guidance and direction, they are not helpless. Though we may discipline and police them, we will always put their needs ahead of ours. Though they may respect and regard us, we love them more than we love ourselves. You see, a strong family understands the importance of balance, it understands that each member is accountable to the whole and no one member is bigger than the rest.

It seems at times, we have forgotten that we are a family. Finding ways to distance ourselves from each other. Using labels like pro and anti, liberal and conservative. Forgetting that we are all fighting under the same stars for the

same future. Forgetting that we are all “pro-Guahan” and “anti-oppression.” We have forgotten that this island is only 33 miles long and about 6-8 miles wide and like it or not, there isn’t enough room for us NOT to be a family.

Our ancestors understood that we had to be a compassionate community to survive on these islands so they lived by the laws of “Inafa’maolek,” which literally means “to make good.” Inafa’maolek is the foundation of Chamoru culture. It teaches us the importance of learning to understand how others feel and act on those feelings with care and concern. This concept of restoring harmony through genuine compassion and altruism upholds six traditional Chamoru values: Che’lu, Manginge, Patgon, Respetu, Chenchule, and Umitde. It is my vision that as a government, we embrace these values and remember what it means to be a family again.

Man’ma ñe’lu’hit todū ginen i mātān I saina-ta

We’re all brothers and sisters in the eyes of God.

Our family ties may not be forged in blood but they are bound by love for this island and our unique way of life. And if your love for this special place is enough to motivate you to defend it, then we are truly brothers and sisters regardless of race, class, or religion. We toil together under the same hot sun trying to provide our children with the opportunities that we never had. By recognizing each

individual's right to equality and respect, not only will we learn to embrace each other as a family, but we will honor our elders; those who came before us, who sacrificed everything to provide us with hope for more than just survival, but prosperity.

i fina'naguen I guelo'ta ni para ta onra i mai na ñata

A teaching from our ancestors to honor our elders.

Just like in the practice of Manginge, we must inhale our elders' fighting spirit and never lose hope that brighter days lay just over the horizon. But to embody their strength and courage, we must go further and honor them by showing that we can learn from their mistakes. When we ignore the struggles of the past, we become lost in the present, leaving our children's future in jeopardy.

Ginen i fama'guhon'ta na ta sodda' probe-cho-ta, ya ginen i probe-cho-ta na ta abonsa mona i famagu'onta yan i lina'lã'ta

From our children we will find prosperity and from our prosperity, we will further ensure their future as well as ours.

Our children deserve government that serves the people...government that can be trusted and respected. They deserve leaders who will fight for them with the passion of a parent, with the love of a family. The nature of the electoral process

distracts us from our priorities, placing so much importance on eligible voters that we forget our most important constituents are those who are too young to cast a ballot. These are the people who are most affected by the political games we play. They are the ones to bear the burden of our bickering and everyday they lose hope in us. We cannot allow this to continue, we cannot allow our differences to taint their futures. As parents, we often forget that our children reflect who we are as leaders and as teachers...they are the gauges of our successes and losses. When they hurt, we hurt. When they triumph, we triumph. No amount of prosperity or success will help us sleep at night when our people, our children, are suffering.

fan nǎ-i respeta yanggin mala'go hao ma respeta

You must give respect to get respect.

We don't have to like each other, but without respect, injustice will run rampant. In the past, our government has lost the respect of our people. We must earn it back. We must show them that faith in our government can be restored. But... as leaders we must be accountable, responsible, honest, and fair. We must remember that our people have given us the responsibility of protecting our quality of life. It is crucial that we respect their wishes and fight in their best

interest, because it is the will of the people that separates bureaucracy and democracy.

Na umitde yan na geftao hao para i taotao-siha gi tano'ta.

Be humble and unselfish to the people of the land.

I am reminded of my father's humble beginnings, dropping out of school to make money for his family. Though he accomplished many things in his life time and was revered for his hard work and dedication, he always remained humble, never forgetting where he came from. As a government, this is how we will remain connected to the pulse of the people. We will remember that we are all a part of this community and at the end of the day, even the most powerful man in the world can find himself in need of **chenchule**.

Regalu para ayudu yan minagof i korason-ta

A gift to help wholeheartedly.

Many of us tend to think of chenchule as a gift of money, a donation, or some form of charity, but it is more than that: chenchule is the act of being there for someone in need, offering your help in hard times. None of us are strangers to struggle and it is during these turbulent moments that our community shows its true fortitude. In my last inaugural address, I spoke of a storm brewing in our

oceans, threatening to wreak havoc on our island. But we have faced countless typhoons and managed to thrive in the midst of such adversity. We do this better than most communities because we are at our best in times of disaster. We are a family with fierce determination and we will survive by helping each other in times of need, knowing that someone will do the same for us.

So whatever the weather, maila ta-fandana; lets come together. Let's come together to celebrate and to mourn...in times of victory and in defeat. Let's come together as a family bound by unconditional support for one another. Just as I commit to ensure the well-being of my children, I commit to ensure the well-being of our community. Just as I commit to never betray the trust of my own brothers and sisters, I commit to protect the bond of trust between our island and its leaders. Just as I commit to honor the legacy and reputation of my parents, I commit to respect the dignity of our heritage. Just as I commit to opening my heart to new friendships, I commit to building healthy relationships within our island family.

As a family, we will strive to maintain unity in our hearts, in our homes, and in our government. Our sakman will not sail in a new direction if we do not paddle in unison. We have to steer this canoe together...and so this legislature pledges to work with our new administration for the betterment of our family.