



Hi!
Society

SAN FRANCISCO

By MONET LU

Princess Robertson A royalty in words and deeds



is similar to her own. From humble beginnings, success was achieved through perseverance and honesty. I couldn't agree with her more!

I consider Princess as one of our community's most generous Patroness of the Arts. She has consistently supported efforts by our Fil-Am artists to showcase their work, such as designer Dave Tupaz, Celestial Beauties, TFC Star Magic concert, and countless more.

With everything that her incredible success has brought her, she has never forgotten to share her blessings.

What more can I say except that I admire her elegance, passion and resilience.

She has weathered more than her share of challenges but to this day, she stands regally tall.

According to Princess, she never looks back. She obviously doesn't believe in regrets. What's past is over and life is too short to dwell on what you cannot change, she says.

And that's why the lady is called a Princess...

Ruffa-John Lloyd Tribute Video on Youtube!

I was on Youtube the other day and stumbled across a video montage apparently made by a fan of the Ruffa-John Lloyd love team. (This is the link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1XFkmlrcE>)

I couldn't help but be amused. Does this mean that some fans are now coming to terms with the Ruffa and John Lloyd "secret relationship"?

Well, it seems that this so-called rumored romance between Ruffa and John Lloyd is slowly gaining acceptance despite early objections.

Stay tuned! I'll try to keep you updated about the latest on our friend Ruffa.

In the meantime, Ruffa girl, be in love, live life and be happy!

The author is a Marikina-born, award-winning celebrity beauty stylist with his own chain of salons across Southern California and Las Vegas, Nevada. Ultimately, Monet is known as an all-around artiste who produces sold-out fashion and awards shows as well as unforgettable marketing campaigns. Monet is also the founder of the revolutionary all-natural beauty products available at www.skinbymonet.com. He supports many humanitarian efforts to include projects in his native Marikina, The Bantay Bata Foundation, and many more. To contact Monet, please visit www.monetsalon.com for more information.

'Citizen Pinoy': 100 episodes and still going strong

by GAYLE GATCHALIAN
AJPress

ONE would think that after doing the same thing 100 times, the doer would be tired. Uninspired. Not Atty. Michael J. Gurfinkel. During the taping of his popular show *Citizen Pinoy*, this rock star immigration lawyer was, 100 episodes later, still on fire.

And he has every reason to be. Immigration law usually leaves a bad taste in people's mouths. It's complicated and difficult and good intentions don't automatically return good results. The show *Citizen Pinoy*, which airs on TFC is watched widely by Filipinos for the free immigration advice it offers. From tourist visas to obscure paragraph 5 section D technicalities, Gurfinkel has and probably will talk about it. The show is a "service," he insisted in between camera breaks. Sitting there amongst a crowd of fellow migrants desperately seeking answers that could explain the why, what and how of getting the United States, I couldn't help but agree more.

Citizen Pinoy is a weekly program hosted by immigration lawyer-to-the-stars, Michael J. Gurfinkel. He has a reputation among Filipinos for being a true ally in the case of immigration (see feature on Gurfinkel in the April 2009 edition of *Balikbayan Magazine*) and this show is an opportunity for him spread his assistance to a wider audience. It is rare to see a man so genuinely sympathetic declaiming in front of a television camera but with Gurfinkel, the sincerity is palpable. The man truly cares and for those people who need his help, a caring lawyer giving pro bono advice is more than they could ever ask for.

The bonus? He's funny and easygoing too. When the crew gesticulate wildly and directions

are yelled back and forth leaving the audience confused as to what is precisely going on here, he smiles and explains that he is confused too. Curious why he is changing his shirt or why some tech is fiddling with the screen? He's right there giving you the 411. And that's just the mechanics of taping a show! Gurfinkel makes you feel like he's right there with you, from the struggle of getting through the hours of taping one show to the real reason why you're there: immigration problems.

One of the most important parts of *Citizen Pinoy* is the question and answer portion called *Your tanong, My sagot*. People from all over come in the hopes that their question might get picked. To have one's question selected is like winning the golden egg. A colleague I was with had been to a taping of the show before and shared that some of the stories people tell are tear jerking, others, downright appalling. She mentioned that previously, a woman had broken out in tears after telling Gurfinkel how she had been the subject of deportation and now has no way to be with her husband in the US. My colleague was sketchy on the details, we are dealing with the law after all, but that one example is enough to prove how vital the service this show provides is. Immigration has become a pivotal issue in the lives of our countrymen and unfortunately, the odds are against us. It's heartbreaking when the law comes between love and family and everyday, countless Filipinos



face the uncertainty of whether or not they can get on that plane to fulfill their dreams.

Of course, Gurfinkel isn't just a man to commiserate with you. He is still a lawyer after all and he gets down to business once the audience puts him to task. He offers practical advice while kindly explaining the reason why the questioner's application was denied and so forth. He doesn't shy away from discussing those sneaky moves some intending immigrants make to get to the US (like paying to get married to a US citizen or declaring singlehood to get approved) which end up complicating the grander plan of a legal immigration. But he is also going to be the first to tell you if you did something bad. Take this one man who was chosen to ask a question that day. In sum, Jose (name has been changed to protect his privacy) had an H1-B work visa for teaching in the US. He had a wife and two children who he petitioned to get

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