

ARLENE G. LAPUZ-URETA

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Chief Legal Counsel | Strategic Legal Advisor Regulatory Compliance Authority | Risk & Governance Expert

Dynamic and results-driven legal executive with over 37 years of leadership experience within the banking and financial services sector, the government and in private law firms. Recognized for delivering strategic legal counsel to executive teams and boards, ensuring robust regulatory compliance and minimizing enterprise risk. Deep expertise in corporate governance, government regulations, mergers and acquisitions, contract law, and litigation oversight. Adept at navigating complex legal frameworks while enabling business growth and protecting institutional integrity.

EDUCATION

2020 - 2022

Master of Laws (LL.M.), International Commercial Law
University of Salford, United Kingdom

1983 - 1987

Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.)
University of the Philippines (U.P.), Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines
Dean's Medal, Ranked 13th in a class of 137 students

1979 - 1983

Bachelor of Arts (Major in Political Science)
University of the Philippines (U.P.), Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines

HONORS & AWARDS

- **March 2018:** Included in Legal 500's GC Powerlist for leading one of the best in-house legal teams in Southeast Asia
 - **1987:** Dean's Medal, U.P. College of Law
 - **1983 - 1987:** College Scholar, U.P. College of Law
 - **1982 - 1983:** College Scholar, College of Arts and Sciences, University of the Philippines
 - **1979 - 1980:** Entrance Scholar, University of the Philippines
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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

ASYLUM APPLICATION ASSISTANT

New York City Asylum Application Help Center — New York, USA

July 2023 – June, 2025

- Interview asylum applicants, assess applicant's eligibility and review supporting documents.
- Prepare and submit applications for asylum, temporary protection status, and employment authorization, including preparing and coordinating related requests with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS)
- Contributed to the New York City Application Help Center's recognition as recipient of the 2024 American Bar Association's Hodson Award for distinguished public service.

SENIOR LEGAL COUNSEL & HEAD, COMPLIANCE AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

Nissan Philippines, Inc. — Taguig City, Philippines

February 2019 – September 2022

- Led the legal documentation and litigation affairs of the company: drafted, reviewed and negotiated various commercial contracts and agreements with distributors and vendors including those on procurement-related transactions
- Headed the litigation department and represented the company in commercial lawsuits before courts of justice and administrative and arbitral bodies, coordinating legal strategy with external and in-house counsel
- Provided legal advice to senior management on litigation issues, corporate governance, business and litigation strategies and compliance matters, advising, and coordinating closely with officers of parent Japanese multinational company, Nissan Motors Limited, and its various subsidiaries including those in the United States
- Managed internal legal, administrative/human resources issues and provided legal support to corporate and financial affairs, including drawing up of new policies and guidelines
- Represented the company in proposing and drafting new laws and regulations affecting the automotive industry

SENIOR PROFESSORIAL LECTURER

University of the Philippines College of Law — Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines

January 2018 – July, 2022

- Prepared curriculum and taught courses on Banking and Financial Laws, Legal Method, and Torts and Damages.
- Led the Constitution Review Project as Vice-Chair/Co-Lead Consultant and the Revision of Rules Governing Notarial Practice as member of the Supreme Court Sub-Committee for said project
- Conducted in-depth research on the constitution and laws of the US and other countries and drafted, reviewed and revised proposed constitutional amendments and rules of court procedure.

SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT, GENERAL COUNSEL & HEAD, LEGAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company (Metrobank) — Makati City, Philippines

July 2010 - February 2018

- Headed a team of lawyers, garnishment and paralegal assistants and managed the Bank's legal operations, including contract preparation and review/revision and contract negotiation of agreements in various bank transactions with clients, such as loans, mortgages, mergers and acquisitions and other commercial transactions
- Led commercial litigation strategies planning and handled litigation cost management; prepared, reviewed and revised numerous complaints and other pleadings in court in coordination with in-house and external counsel
- Provided advice and support to senior management on legal and compliance matters including revision of various internal policies and procedures to ensure compliance with regulatory standards and corporate governance practices
- As member of the Special Action Committee, conducted review and analysis of audit and investigation reports and prepared decisions, with recommended appropriate legal action, on administrative and disciplinary cases, including fraud, discrimination and sexual harassment cases.
- Caused the arrest through a sting operation of one of the largest embezzlers in Philippine banking and the filing of criminal and civil cases, including freezing of assets under the Anti-Money Laundering laws

VICE-PRESIDENT/ASSISTANT VICE-PRESIDENT, HEAD, LEGAL AFFAIRS DIVISION

Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation (RCBC) — Makati City, Philippines

October 2006 - June 2010

- Oversaw the legal affairs division, handling legal documentation and litigation management; prepared numerous contracts and agreements and revised template bank forms
- Provided legal advice on banking operations and managed the work of in-house counsel.

ACTIVE LAW PRACTITIONER

The Law Firm of Arlene G. Lapuz-Ureta — Mandaluyong City, Philippines

January 2004 - September 2006

- Offered legal services under retainer agreements, including contract preparation, legal document review, and financial restructuring matters.
- Handled various cases in court and administrative tribunals

SENIOR PARTNER

Foria & Ureta Law Offices — Pasig City, Philippines

November 2001 - December 2003

- Acted as corporate secretary for a real estate group and served as in-house counsel of client corporation, drafting contracts and legal documents.
- Provided legal services for real estate development projects and other corporate transactions.

PARTNER, THE LAW FIRM OF GIMENEZ REYES FORIA URETA

Quezon City, Philippines

February 1999 - 2001

- Handled a wide range of legal cases, including criminal, civil, labor, and administrative matters.
- Consulted on legislative bills and attended Senate Blue Ribbon investigations.

Manager and Head, Legal Department

Union Bank of the Philippines

Makati City, Philippines

May 1, 1998 – February 1999

- Took charge of the overall handling of various bank cases, providing legal guidance and ensuring the bank's compliance with legal requirements.
- Managed legal documentation and provided legal assistance for various branches and divisions of the bank.

Manager/Senior Assistant Manager and Head, Corporate Policy Research Division

Security Bank Corporation

Security Bank Center, 6776 Ayala Avenue, Makati City

March 1996 – April 30, 1998

- Led legal review processes for various loan documents, agreements, and policies concerning client accounts and the bank's transactions.
- Managed cases filed by or against the bank in court and administrative bodies.

Solicitor/Associate Solicitor

Office of the Solicitor General (OSG)

134 Amorsolo St., Legaspi Village, Makati City, Philippines

June 1989 – March 1996

- Represented the government in all courts, administrative, and quasi-judicial agencies, including prosecution and defense in various government cases.
- Attended official missions abroad in relation to government cases and legal matters.

Attorney/Technical Assistant

Supreme Court of the Philippines

Padre Faura St., Ermita, Manila, Philippines

October 1987 – May 1989

- Clerked and acted as a legal researcher and technical assistant to Justice Irene R. Cortes.
- Reviewed cases pending before the Supreme Court and prepared draft decisions and resolutions for the Court to be authored by Justice Cortes.

SKILLS

- Legal Documentation & Case Handling
 - Litigation & Court Representation
 - Corporate Policy & Legal Research
 - Legal Assistance & Advice
 - Legal Drafting & Resolution Preparation
 - Adept in multitasking, communication and organizational problem-solving
 - Proficient in legal research, case analysis, and documentation.
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VOLUNTEER WORK EXPERIENCE

- As President of the University of the Philippines Women Lawyers' Circle, led lectures, seminars, and legal missions to support women and children affected by abuse, sexual harassment, and discrimination. Also coordinated with local and international partners, including UN Women, and Philippine embassies abroad to advance the organization's advocacy for gender equality and legal protection.
- As Chairman of the Legal Management Council of the Philippines, the organization of in-house lawyers in the Philippines and as Secretary-General of the Asia Pacific Corporate Counsel Alliance, led the conduct of webinars and forums to promote and advance the professional growth of in-house counsel in the Asia-Pacific region and advocated for policies and legislation to promote freedom of information and other legal rights.
- As Global Head, Legal Strategy and Operations and member of the law office of Partners for Patients, an international humanitarian organization based in Switzerland, negotiated and finalized the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Pan African Parliament to co-create an African patient-focused healthcare access agenda.