Proclamation

In 2009, Congress passed a resolution recognizing October as Filipino American History Month to honor the history, pursuits, and accomplishments of Filipino Americans and celebrate the culture and legacy they bring to our nation.

October was selected because it marks the earliest documented arrival of Filipinos in the continental United States, on October 18, 1587, when eight Filipino sailors, or "Luzones Indios" arrived in Morro Bay, California, aboard a Spanish Galleon, marking nearly four and a half centuries of continuous history and engagement across the American continent.

Early Filipino plantation laborers (*sakadas*) and pioneering labor organizers, such as Pablo Manlapit in Hawaii, led historic agricultural strikes to dismantle oppressive labor contracts and secure humane working conditions.

Filipino Americans also organized and persevered through racial hostility, segregation, and violence, including the Yakima Valley Anti-Filipino Riot of November 1927 in Washington state, which marked one of the earliest major outbreaks of anti-Filipino violence in the United States, and the 1930 Watsonville Riots in California.

During World War II, more than 250,000 Filipinos fought under the United States flag in the Pacific Theater.

Filipino American labor sentinels Philip Vera Cruz, Larry Itliong, and Peter Velasco, and their fellow Filipino farmworkers worked alongside Dolores Huerta, Gilbert Padilla, and other Latino workers to organize the 1965 Delano Grape Strike and build the multi-ethnic agricultural labor movement.

During the 1968 San Francisco State University and UC Berkeley Third World Strikes, Filipino American student organizers and community leaders mobilized to establish Ethnic Studies programs, to achieve educational and cultural parity and self-determination in higher education;

On September 18, 1974, as a result of the mobilization and advocacy of Filipino community leaders and activists in the San Francisco Bay Area, including Nilo Sarmiento and Lem Ignacio, California Assembly Bill 3717 was enacted to legally codify "**Filipino**" as a distinct racial and ethnic category on all state forms and statistical audits **for the first time in state history**;

In 2021, Californians elected Alameda resident Rob Bonta –a former Alameda Vice Mayor and State Assembly Member – to be State Attorney General. Attorney General Bonta is a present-day trailblazer of Filipino ancestry, fighting legal battles nearly every day, including before the U.S. Supreme Court, to safeguard the rights of Californians. Civil rights leader Larry Itliong might have been describing Attorney General Bonta's work when he said, "**We are not just seeking to improve our own condition; we are seeking to build a better society for everyone.**"

As of the 2020 Census, there were 4.4 million Filipino Americans, including multi-racial Americans, living in the United States, making Filipino Americans the third largest Asian American and Pacific Islander group in the United States.

Notably, Filipino American nurses, doctors, medical professionals, and first responders are an indispensable pillar of the United States healthcare infrastructure. One remarkable example is Rear Admiral Dr. Eleanor "Connie" Concepcion Mariano who served as Director of the White House Medical Unit from 1992 to 2001, taking care of three United States Presidents — George H.W. Bush, William J. Clinton, and George W. Bush. Dr. Mariano made history as the first military woman to become a White House doctor, the first female director of the White House Medical Unit, and the first Filipino American in US history to become a Navy Rear Admiral.

Filipino Americans are the second-largest Asian American group in California, which is home to roughly 1.7 million Filipino Americans. Here in the City of Alameda, Filipino Americans comprise ten percent of our community.

And Alameda has a special connection to the Philippines, which began 90 years ago, in September 1936, when Bohol Circle, Inc. — **the first and oldest Filipino American organization in the United States** —was founded in Alameda as a mutual aid society, embodying the Filipino value of Kapwa, or "interdependence." In January 2023, the City honored this pioneering organization by naming a beautiful waterfront park and playground “Bohol Circle Immigrant Park.”

On June 5, 2015, Alameda's cultural connection with the Philippines was deepened when we established a Sister City relationship with the City of Dumaguete, also the hometown of Cynthia Bonta.

Today, we honor and celebrate other notable Alamedans of Filipino ancestry, including City Councilmember and former Vice Mayor Tony Daysog, former Vice Mayor and City Councilmember Malia Vella, Superior Court Judge Ben Reyes, former Assistant City Clerk Irma Glidden, and “honorary” Filipino American, Dr. Stewart Chen who is ethnic Chinese, but was born and grew up in the Philippines.

We also celebrate the entrepreneurial spirit of Filipino Americans whose Filipina- and Filipino-owned businesses enrich Alameda's economic and cultural life. They include Joann Guitarte, owner Café Jolie, Donut Petit, and Café Jolie Petite, and host of Alameda's popular Donut Fun Runs; Henry Awayan, chef, baker, author, and founder of Whisk Cake Creations who brings his love of Filipino flavors to the world of baking; and Pia T. Barton, owner of Malaya Botanicals, a family-run CBD health and wellness company, and host of the Alameda Point Night Market.

Today, Alameda stands in unwavering solidarity with the Filipino American community, and with all immigrant communities, reaffirming our commitment to protecting civil rights, and upholding California's status as a place of refuge and opportunity, because in Alameda, **our motto** — "Everyone Belongs Here" — **is more than words**; **it is an affirmation**.

Now, therefore, be it resolved, that I, Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft, Mayor of the City of Alameda, do hereby proclaim the month of October 2026 as

Filipino American History Month

in the City of Alameda and encourage all Alamedans to celebrate and learn more about the history, culture, and accomplishments of Filipino Americans by attending community events, including:

Filipino Island Fest
Saturday, October 3, 2026 11:00 AM – 8:00 PM 2151 Ferry Point, Alameda, CA 94501

Petit Picasso: Filipino Heritage Month, Ages 8+ May Register Ahead for Art Workshop
Saturday, October 24, 2026 at 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM West End Library

Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft
Mayor