

Edgardo Javier Angara
Government of Philippines
East Asia - Philippines

An educator, legislator, lawyer, farmer, banker, art patron, former Secretary of Agriculture and former Executive Secretary, Senator Edgardo J. Angara, more popularly known as Edong, has come a long way from his humble beginnings in Baler, Aurora. And in all of these, Angara has stood out and made his mark, rising up the ladder of the law profession, the academe, and public service to emerge as one of the country's top leaders.

A graduate of the University of the Philippines (Bachelor of Laws, 1958), and the University of Michigan (Masters of Law, 1964), he founded in the early 70's what eventually became the country's most prestigious law firm– the Angara, Concepcion, Cruz, Regala and Abello Law Offices, better known as ACCRA Law.

Angara gained recognition during his stint as President of the University of the Philippines from 1981 to 1987, where he defended the University's tradition of dissent and significantly improved its financial and human resources. In his term, he raised the salaries of the deserving U.P. faculty and upgraded all the facilities making U.P. a world class University.

His achievements as U.P. President and his active involvement in the citizens group NAMFREL during the 1986 snap elections pushed Angara to national prominence. He placed 5th in the senatorial election in 1987, the first free election after martial law, and was named "the No. 1 Senator" of the 8th Congress by the UP Institute of Strategic and Development Studies.

In the 1992 senatorial elections Angara placed 3rd and from 1993 to 1995 served as Senate President, the third highest post in the land.

During his term as Senate President, the chamber was an activist and reformist institution, pushing the passage of over 100 laws that turned the economy around and created the environment for economic dynamism and growth.

As a legislator, Angara has authored and sponsored many landmark laws in education, health, the arts, culture, social welfare and agriculture. There is free high school education for every Filipino in the country because of Angara, who authored the Free High School Act. He also authored another breakthrough law in education, the GASTPE or Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education.

Angara, known as "Mr. Education", also headed the Congressional Commission on Education that restructured and instituted major reforms in the country's educational system.

Two laws sponsored by Angara created the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), enabling the Department of Education to focus on the main concern of basic education for the Filipino.

For the welfare of our lolos and lolas (grandparents), he authored the Senior Citizens Act, now known as The Angara Law, which grants benefits for the country's more than seven million senior citizens, such as discounts in drugstores, restaurants, transportation, and even in movie houses.

Angara has also authored the Generics Drug Law, the Magna Carta for Public Health Workers, the Breast Feeding Act and the law that created PHILHEALTH, the national healthcare program for Filipinos.

A committed patron of the arts, Angara was responsible for the creation of the new National Museum and the National Commission on Culture and the Arts. The law on the country's National Living Treasures, also authored by him, bestows great honor on the Filipino folk and traditional artists.

Recently, the Government Procurement Reform Act, principally The country's biggest anti-corruption measure in history, this law will save the government about 22 billion pesos a year, which can be used to build more classrooms and other infrastructure.

And as Chairman of the Committee of Constitutional Amendments, he has shepherded the landmark Absentee Voting Law, giving the millions of overseas Filipinos the right to vote in the elections.

Angara once again proved to be an excellent leader when he became the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture. Under his stewardship, the agricultural sector rose to great heights as the government, after years of neglect, made agriculture the number one priority for development.

Food security, research and development, seed and crop production became the hallmarks of his programs. Angara fought hard for the welfare of the country's farmers and fisherfolk and ardently pushed for the entry of Philippine agricultural products in international markets. Even today, under the present administration, the strides recently achieved by the agricultural sector for the country's economy are largely attributed to Angara's leadership.

Having taken his oath on January 6, 2001 as the Executive Secretary of the country's 13th president, Angara served for only 13 days with the 13th day lasting two days long. He was one of the few committed officials who stayed with President Joseph Estrada until the very end. Angara, because of his unwavering commitment to serve the country, was responsible for the peaceful transition of power after Edsa Dos.

Before joining the Estrada cabinet on May 25, 1999, he served as Chairman of the Philippine National Bank.

He was elected again as Senator of the Philippines in the May 2001 elections, garnering the most number of votes from the opposition. In this present Congress, Angara continues to promote very important measures such as Political Party Development Act (Campaign Finance Reform), Electoral Modernization and issues concerning our environment and natural resources.

Angara is a highly regarded Filipino leader by the international community. Over the past years, he has represented the country in many important international conferences and congresses. Just recently, he was elected to the International Board of the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC), representing South East Asia. Today, Senator Edgardo J. Angara continues to advocate issues that will give every Filipino a fighting chance.

He is married to Gloria Manalang Angara, the former chairperson of the Cultural Center of the Philippines. They have four children.