



**ERIC
GARCETTI**
President, Los Angeles City Council
COUNCIL DISTRICT 13



200 N. Spring St. Room 470 • Los Angeles • CA 90012

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 13, 2006

Contact: Josh Kamensky (213) 473-7013
Photographs available

GARCETTI UNVEILS NATION'S FIRST FILIPINO VETERANS MEMORIAL

Council President Eric Garcetti joined Filipino veterans from around the country in unveiling the first monument dedicated to Filipino soldiers who fought for the United States in World War II. Located at Lake Street Park in the heart of Los Angeles' Historic Filipinotown, the monument consists of five slabs of polished black granite that commemorate the history of the Filipino veterans, from WWII to immigration to their subsequent fight for equality. A matching bench that reads Kagitingan, Tagalog for "valor", sits in front of the slabs of granite.

"The sacrifices made by Filipino Americans, and the U.S. government's unpaid debt to them, is one of the untold stories of the Second World War," said Garcetti, who in 2002 officially christened the area Historic Filipinotown. "This monument is a testament to those sacrifices, and reminds us of their continuing struggle for equality in this country and around the world."

"Bataan was not our last battlefield," said Faustino "Peping" Baclig, referring to a valiant last stand made by Filipino and American soldiers in 1942 as Japanese forces invaded the province located in the Filipino Island of Luzon. "We are still fighting for equity."

The monument was designed by local artist Cheri Gaulke, who has worked on other public arts projects for Los Angeles, including the permanent street medallions in Silver Lake and the Gold Line Station located in Pasadena. "As a public artist, I tell stories about people and places, to uncover lost history about our community and where we live," commented Gaulke. "I am honored to tell these veterans' stories and permanently memorialize their service and sacrifice to this country."

More than 120,000 Filipino soldiers served under the command of General Douglas MacArthur as enlisted soldiers in the U.S. Armed Services during World War II. However, after the war, the U.S. Congress stripped those soldiers of their U.S. veteran status and the benefits promised them under the G.I. Bill of Rights. The memorial is the first of its kind in the United States.

Council District 13 is home to the highest concentration of Filipino Veterans in the city. Funded by a Community Development Block Grant, the monument represents the fulfillment of a Garcetti campaign pledge made in 2001. The unveiling of the monument kicked-off the Historic Filipinotown's Veteran's Day Parade, an annual event that attracts participants from around the country.

###