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of the
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**A Tribute to The Honorable Camillo Noket,
Chief Justice of the Chuuk State Supreme Court**

By Chief Justice Dennis K. Yamase, FSM Supreme Court
May 18, 2020

On Monday, May 11, 2020, the Supreme Court of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), received the very sad news of the passing of the Honorable Camillo Noket, Chief Justice (CJ) of the Chuuk State Supreme Court (CSSC) in Manila, Philippines on May 4, 2020.

All of the FSM Supreme Court Justices and staff share in the sorrow of CJ Noket's unexpected and untimely passing. CJ Noket served on many FSM Supreme Court appeals when our constitutionally appointed Justices were unable to serve due to conflicts. In addition to being the Chief Justice of the Chuuk State Supreme Court (CSSC), CJ Noket was an important and integral part of our Court as well, and we will all miss him greatly.



Chief Justice Yamase and Chief Justice Noket

CJ Noket accomplished so much as the Chief Justice of the Chuuk State Supreme Court. I remember when he first took over the leadership of the CSSC in 2006. The Court had been struggling with a lack of leadership and was encountering problems of corruption. As soon as CJ Noket took over as Chief Justice, he took strong and effective action to immediately prevent any more unethical conduct in his court. In a very short time he dealt with the problem and stopped it completely. I credit him for taking this action and setting his court's operations back on track. Only a man with strong leadership skills and the respect of his community could have taken this kind of decisive and effective action.

Recently, Chief Justice Noket had undertaken a new and important project to upgrade his court's facilities. He had renovated most, if not all, of the court's courtrooms, offices, and meeting rooms. When he opened his newly renovated court facilities those of us who were there marveled at the changes he had managed to make. It was like a brand new court building. It was only with his vision and expectations for the future of his court that he had managed to accomplish so much, so quickly, with so little.

For many years, CJ Noket had exhibited his leadership skills as the Federated States of Micronesia Attorney General, the Directing Attorney of Micronesian Legal Services Corporation (MLSC) office in Chuuk State, and as a member and President of the Pacific Judicial Council (PJC). At the time of his passing he was serving as the President of the PJC.

As President, he worked very hard to help organize and conduct numerous training programs for the judges of our immediate area in the Pacific. He himself attended many training programs of the PJC, the National Judicial College (NJC), the Micronesian Legal Services Corporation (MLSC), the Pacific Judicial Strengthening Initiative (PJSI)(run by the Federal Court of Australia and with funding support by New Zealand), the University of Hawai'i Richardson School of Law, the American College of Trial Lawyers, and the FSM Supreme Court.

Chief Justice Noket understood the importance of continued legal education to help advance the skills of the judges and attorneys in the region. Especially those who like himself had not had the benefit of a formal legal education. He had himself benefited from these kinds of programs in being the first FSM citizen who had passed the FSM Bar Exam without having graduated from a law school. He was also the first FSM citizen trial assistant to be admitted to practice law before the Trust Territory High Court as an attorney by Chief Justice Alex R. Munson.

He was the FSM Attorney General at a time when I was the Legislative Counsel of the FSM Congress and it was during this time that I got to know CJ Noket well and I came to respect his actions as the Nation's top law enforcement officer. Even though he and I might have disagreed at times, I always found that his actions as the Attorney General were sound and fair. He was always a very level headed leader and always carefully considered both sides of an issue before making a decision.

I think it was CJ Nocket's various experiences that made him such an effective leader for his court and his beloved State of Chuuk. He had worked for many years in both the executive and judicial branches of his state and the national government, he had headed the MLSC office in Chuuk for many years, and he was a high traditional leader. All of these experiences helped to hone his skills as an effective leader and judge for the State of Chuuk and the FSM.

I will be one of his many friends who will miss his leadership and sense of humor dearly. Very simply, things will not be the same without him. To his wife Anna and family, and the people of Chuuk, my Court and I, express our sincere condolences and we share in your sorrow over the loss of a great judge and leader.