

AAPI HERITAGE MONTH

AAPI Heritage Month Spotlight - Alfredo Bismonte

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spotlight

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Alfredo Bismonte
Counsel

Meet Alfredo Bismonte

Alfredo Bismonte is a member of Hoge Fenton's Intellectual Property Practice Group. He is an experienced litigator who specializes in patent litigation, licensing disputes, commercial litigation, insurance coverage, and real estate disputes.

Alfredo is fluent in Tagalog and has deep Pan-Asian roots. He lived and worked in Hong Kong as an attorney. Alfredo also developed real estate in the Philippines. He routinely counsels Asian-based companies involved in litigation in the United States.

How do you identify with the Asian American or Pacific Island community?

I was born in the Philippines with my family immigrating to Chicago when I was young. I am actually a dual citizen of America and the Philippines.

How has your heritage shaped the person you are today?

While I always understood Tagalog/Pilipino, I had forgotten how to speak it fluently as a young person. Of all places, I reacquired speaking the language at the University of Michigan, outside Detroit, where I took undergraduate language classes while in law school. Language learning fosters cultural knowledge and certainly was important when I met my wife who lived in the Philippines until her twenties. Now we have two young adult children and are celebrating our 30th wedding anniversary in 2022.

Does your family have any traditions that are especially important to you?

Formal wear for Filipino men is the “barong tagalog,” essentially a native tuxedo. It is a sheer embroidered shirt typically made of silk and pineapple leaf fibers worn over a white shirt. The barong extends past the waist and is never tucked in because when the Philippines had been a Spanish territory, only the colonial masters were entitled to tuck in their shirts. So today, Filipinos as a point of pride do not tuck in those formal shirts.

When my younger brother got married in Chicago in June 2021, the men wore barong tagalogs as pictured below.



What does AAPI Heritage Month mean to you?

I think it is a reminder that even if AAPIs may not look like they have ancestors from Europe or Africa, AAPIs are still Americans. Last year, my daughter was yelled at a bus stop in Washington, DC since purportedly the “Chinese spread COVID.” My daughter decided it was unhelpful to explain to such a person that she was not Chinese or the science behind the virus. But it is a cautionary tale that standing with allies and fostering an environment of diversity, equity and inclusion is important for the protection and happiness of all.

Primary Contact

- Alfredo A. Bismonte