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IN THE SUPERIOR COURT  
FOR THE  
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

ESTATE OF ANTONIO PUA,  
  
Deceased.

CIVIL CASE NO. 19-0015

ORDER DENYING REQUEST TO  
APPROVE PARTITION OF CAROLINIAN  
FAMILY LAND BY QUITCLAIM DEED  
AS EDWARD ATALIG PUA FAILED TO  
GET THE CONSENT OR AGREEMENT  
OF THE FAMILY PURSUANT TO 8 CMC  
SECTION 2909

THIS MATTER came before the Court on January 15, 2021 and February 11, 2021 for an evidentiary hearing on Edward Atalig Pua as the Administrator of *the Estate of Antonio Pua*, filed an Administrator’s Request to Approve Quitclaim Deed. Edward Atalig Pua (“Edward” or “Administrator”) appeared with counsel, Rosemond Santos Sword. Cousin and heir Carlos Pua filed an objection to the Request to Approve the Quitclaim Deed. Carlos Pua appeared at the hearing with his counsel, Cong Nie.

A total of four witnesses testified during the evidentiary hearing: Edward Atalig Pua, Carlos Pua, Erminia Pua, and Ana Mafi. 11 exhibits were admitted.

Based on the filings on the record, testimony and other evidence admitted at the evidentiary hearing, and applicable law, the Court now makes the following findings of fact and conclusions of law.

By order of the Court, Associate Judge Joseph N. Canacho

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1 **II. FINDINGS OF FACT**

- 2 1. Antonio Pua (“Antonio” or “Decedent”) died intestate around 1924.
- 3 2. Antonio was a Carolinian man.
- 4 3. Antonio owned a parcel of land located in Tanapag, Saipan<sup>1</sup>, with the lot number of Lot
- 5 15 B 02.
- 6 4. A Certificate of Title dated December 28, 1977 was issued by the Land Commission of
- 7 the Northern Mariana Islands of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, certifying that
- 8 “the heirs of Antonio Pua, rep. by Juan Pua as Land Trustee<sup>2</sup>” were the fee simple
- 9 owners of Lot 015 B 02, with an area of approximately “3.498 hectares.”<sup>3</sup>
- 10 5. Lot 015 B 02 has never been surveyed for purposes of partitioning or subdividing.
- 11 6. Antonio had at least four<sup>4</sup> children:
- 12 1. Magdalena R. Pua (“Magdalena”),
- 13 2. Vicente N. Pua (“Vicente”),
- 14

15 <sup>1</sup> See Exhibit A (Certificate of Title).

16 <sup>2</sup> The Court notes that the 1977 Certificate of Title referred to Juan as “Land Trustee.”<sup>2</sup> Under the Trust Territory regulation governing land ownership determination:

17 Where an estate is determined to be claimed jointly or in common by the heirs of a deceased  
18 owner . . . the District Land Title Officer may appoint one or more persons to act as trustee or  
19 trustees for the group . . . . The Land Trustee shall act as administrator of lands of deceased  
20 persons, and shall take immediate steps to determine the persons interested in the land as heirs  
21 or otherwise, and to have the land distributed according to law or the desires of the true owners,  
22 subject to approval of the courts in the event of controversy.

19 Land Management Regulation No. 1 of the Office of the Trust Territory High Commissioner § 9(a). On its face, this regulation did not require a land trustee to be a child or heir of a deceased landowner.

20 <sup>3</sup> Neither party has challenged the ownership determination certified in this Certificate of Title. As held in *In re Estate of Dela Cruz*, 2 N. Mar. I. 1, 10-11 (1991), a final determination of ownership made by the Land Commission may not be set aside “unless it was (1) void when issued, or (2) the record is patently inadequate to support the agency’s decision, or if according the ruling res judicata effect would (3) contravene an overriding public policy or (4) result in a manifest injustice.” Pursuant to 67 TTC § 117, the law under which the Certificate of Title was issued, a certificate of title would be issued only after the time for appeal had expired without an appeal being filed or after a filed appeal had been decided. Therefore, the determination certified in the Certificate of Title was final. Neither party has argued or presented evidence to show that any of those exceptions apply in this case.

23 <sup>4</sup> For purposes of this Order, as the Court finds that Edward Atalig Pua did not have legal authority to sign a Quitclaim Deed, at this time the Court need not make a final determination of the heirs of Decedent Antonio Pua.

- 1 3. Manuel N. Pua (“Manuel”),  
2 4. Carmen N. Pua (“Carmen”).<sup>5, 6</sup>  
3 5. Juan Roligat Pua (“Juan”).<sup>7</sup>  
4 7. Magdalena, Vicente, Manuel, Carmen, and Juan are deceased.  
5 8. Administrator Edward is a grandson of Juan.  
6 9. On May 22, 2018, Edward executed a Quitclaim Deed basically partitioning from Lot 15  
7 B 02, an area of 15,000 square meters from the 3.498 hectares.  
8 a. The Quitclaim Deed sold to Tomas Castro 15,000 square meters of Lot No. 015 B  
9 02 for the amount of \$2,000,000.00.  
10 b. In return for signing the Quitclaim Deed, Edward received \$1,000,000.00 which  
11 he selectively shared with only certain family members.  
12 c. The balance of the \$2,000,000.00, the remaining \$1,000,000.00 would be paid  
13 upon completion of this probate matter.  
14 10. On May 22, 2018, Edward did not have legal authority from the Court or from the family  
15 members to sign the Quitclaim Deed.  
16 11. Also, Edward is not the Carolinian customary land trustee for Lot 15 B 02.  
17 12. Edward did not inform *all* the heirs of Antonio before signing the Quitclaim Deed.  
18 13. Edward did not get the consent of majority of the family members to sign the Quitclaim  
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20 <sup>5</sup> See Exhibit C (Certificate of Birth and Baptism); Exhibit E (Family Tree).

21 <sup>6</sup> Carlos Pua testified that the name “Neoligan” has different spellings in Carolinian, without similar pronunciations.  
22 For the purposes of resolving the issues before the Court, it is unnecessary to determine if a particular spelling is  
23 correct or should be used, and the Court will use the spelling “Neoligan” shown in the Certificate of Birth and Baptism  
24 of Manuel (Exhibit C). Of those four children, Vicente, Manuel, and Carmen were from the same mother, a person  
named “Maria Neoligan,” who was married to Antonio Pua and whose last name (Neoligan) was used as their middle  
name.

<sup>7</sup> There was testimony that Juan Roligat Pua is not a child of Antonio Pua. For purposes of this Order, the Court  
needed not reach this issue at this time as the Quitclaim Deed signed by Edward Atalig Pua is invalid and without  
legal force.

1 Deed.

2 14. Nine months later, on January 11, 2019, the Probate Action for *the Estate of Antonio*  
3 *Pua*, CV 19-0015 was opened.

4 15. On February 14, 2019, Edward was appointed Administrator for *the Estate of Antonio*  
5 *Pua*.

6 16. At the hearing on the Administrator's Motion to Approve the Quitclaim Deed, some  
7 members of the family testified and objected to the May 22, 2018 Quitclaim Deed.

## 8 I. LEGAL STANDARD

9 At issue is (a) whether the real property in question is Carolinian Family Land, such that 8  
10 CMC Section 2904 applies; (b) whether the requirement of family consent or agreement as  
11 required by 8 CMC Section 2909 to depart from Carolinian custom has been met.

### 12 A. Carolinian Customary Land Trustee

13 At death, a person's real and personal property devolves to the heirs<sup>8</sup>. In Section 2922, the  
14 Commonwealth Code addresses devolution of the estate at death, providing, in relevant part:  
15 "[u]pon the death of a person, his or her real and personal property devolves [...] in the absence  
16 of a testamentary disposition, to the deceased person's heirs, or to those indicated as substitutes  
17 for them in cases involving renunciation or other circumstances affecting devolution of intestate  
18 estates." 8 CMC § 2922.

19 Section 2904 of Title 8 of the Commonwealth Code governs how title to family land passes  
20 to a new customary trustee unless the family consents or agrees otherwise. 8 CMC § 2904(a). If  
21 there is no surviving sister, brother, daughter, or son of the decedent to serve as customary trustee,  
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23 <sup>8</sup> To be clear, Estate Assets are subject to the Probate Code and Probate Rules for the heirs to *fully* realize their real  
24 property and personal property inheritance. For examples such as 8 CMC section 2925. Final Distribution; the Priority  
of Claims. Also, another example is 8 CMC section 2601. Exempt Property.

1 “title passes to the decedent’s grandchildren,” first to the eldest surviving granddaughter or, if there  
2 is no surviving granddaughter, to the eldest surviving grandson. 8 CMC § 2904(a)(5). Section 2909  
3 of Title 8 of the Commonwealth Code similarly permits skipping of a deceased generation as to  
4 the procedures for granting consent with regarding to Carolinian family land: it provides that the  
5 requirement of family consent or agreement is met “if the customary trustee and [her] surviving  
6 brothers and sisters consent; provided, that the children, if any, of a dead brother or sister of the  
7 customary trustee may exercise the consent rights of the decedent.” 8 CMC § 2909. Thus, where  
8 a sibling of the customary trustee is deceased, the surviving children of that deceased sibling may  
9 exercise the consent rights in her place.

## 10 **B. Applicable Law of Intestacy: Carolinian Custom and Family Land**

### 11 **(1) Custom Codified in the Commonwealth Code**

12 A decedent’s estate passes according to the descent provisions of the law applicable and in  
13 effect at the time of death. The effective date of the CNMI Probate Code, as contained in the  
14 Commonwealth Code, is February 15, 1984. 8 CMC § 2101.

### 15 **(2) The Court Must Determine Whether the Land is Carolinian Family Land**

16 In applying Carolinian customary law in probating the estate of a Carolinian, the Court will  
17 look to: “(1) whether the property at issue is Carolinian family land; and (2) if the land is not family  
18 land, whether the land is transferred to the heirs individually or pursuant to Carolinian custom.” *In*  
19 *re Estate of Ogumoro*, 4 NMI 124, 128 (1994). For example, the Supreme Court of the  
20 Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (the “Supreme Court”) found, in *In re Estate of*  
21 *Lairopi*, that the ownership and use histories of the land in question was “in keeping with  
22 customary Carolinian land tenure” in that “title vested matrilineally, though use of the land is  
23 shared by the entire clan.” *In re Estate of Lairopi*, 2002 MP at ¶ 20. Commonwealth Courts  
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1 presume that land originally owned by a Carolinian is Carolinian family land owned according to  
2 the traditional Carolinian custom. *Id.*, at ¶¶ 10-13.

3 In the case *In re Estate of Kaipat*, the Supreme Court held that the determination of family  
4 land should begin with a finding that the land in question is owned by the head of the lineage, e.g.,  
5 the mother of the title holder. Once that fact is established, a presumption that the property is  
6 Carolinian family land arises, notwithstanding that the land is held solely in the title holder's name.  
7 *In re Estate of Kaipat*, 3 N.M.I. at 499. If the original owner is Carolinian, "the court will distribute  
8 the probated estate in accordance with Carolinian custom unless the original owner clearly  
9 decide[d] to depart from customary law." *In re Estate of Kaipat*, 3 N.M.I. 494, 498 (1993); *In re*  
10 *Estate of Igitol*, 3 CR 906 (N.M.I. Super. Ct. 1989); 8 CMC § 2904; *In re Estate of Lairopi*, 2002  
11 MP 10 ¶ 12. To support a claim that land forming part of the estate of a Carolinian who died  
12 intestate should not pass according to custom, one must show that there has been "some significant  
13 and discernable departure from Carolinian customs of use." *In re Estate of Lairopi*, *id.*, at ¶ 16  
14 (citing *In re Estate of Kaipat*, 3 N.M.I. at 498-500; *In re Estate of Rangamar*, 4 N.M.I. at 77; *In re*  
15 *Estate of Ogumoro*, 4 N.M.I. 124, 128 (1994)). In *Estate of Teregeyo*, the Supreme Court upheld  
16 the Superior Court's determination that property held exclusively by the male decedent was not  
17 Carolinian family land because "(1) the matrilineal system of collective ownership requires a  
18 female family member to hold the land title as trustee, and (2) use of the land was inconsistent  
19 with Carolinian custom use of the land." *Estate of Teregeyo*, 1997 MP 14 ¶ 13.

### 20 (3) Carolinian Customary Law and Family Land

21 In general, Carolinian land tenure is matrilineal and descends by matrilineal lineage, i.e.,  
22 from mother to daughter. *In re Estate of Ogumoro*, 4 N.M.I. at 127 (quoting *In re Estate of*  
23 *Rangamar*, 4 N.M.I. at 76). The term "Carolinian family land" refers specifically to "land owned  
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1 by a Carolinian family subject to the traditional Carolinian custom of matrilineal land ownership.  
2 Likened to a corporate group, the matrilineal lineage ‘own[s] and control[s]’ the land.” *Id.* (quoting  
3 *In re Estate of Rangamar, id.*).

4           However, during the period of German administration of the Northern Mariana Islands  
5 from 1899-1914, Carolinian men received title to homestead land, recorded in their individual  
6 names. This practice was continued by the subsequent Japanese administration from 1914-1944,  
7 which registered both individually and matrilineally-held Carolinian lands. *In re Estate of*  
8 *Ogumoro, id.* Despite the fact that “this practice of placing land title in the name of a Carolinian  
9 man is inconsistent with the Carolinian matrilineal system, it has continued to the present day and  
10 may have effected a change in the Carolinian land tenure system.” *Id.*, at 127, n. 7.

### 11           **C. Consent of the Family Required to Depart from Carolinian Custom**

12           Section 2904 of Title 8 of the Commonwealth Code concerning Carolinian custom for  
13 family land provides as follows:

14           (a) Unless the family consents or agrees otherwise, family land passes to a new customary  
15 trustee in the following manner:

16                   (1) Upon the death of the customary trustee, title passes to the oldest surviving sister  
17 of the decedent;

18                   (2) If there is no surviving sister, the oldest surviving brother of the decedent obtains  
19 title;

20                   (3) If there is no surviving sister, or surviving brother, title passes to the oldest  
21 surviving daughter of the decedent and of his brothers and sisters;

22                   (4) If there is no surviving sister, brother, or daughter, title passes to the oldest  
23 surviving son of the decedent and of his brothers and sisters;

24                   (5) If there is no person capable of taking title listed above, title passes to the  
decedent’s grandchildren in the same manner as that set forth in subsection (a)(3)  
and (4) of this section.

(6) In the event the court determines that no person is designated by subsection (a)  
of this section to hold title, the members of the family with use rights to the land  
shall select a customary owner who shall serve as customary trustee of the land. In  
the event the members of the family with use rights to the land are unable to agree  
upon a customary trustee, the court shall select a customary trustee in accordance  
with the customs of the Carolinian people.

(b) All members of the family shall have the same equal rights to the use of the land as the  
customary trustee has.

1 (c) Unless the family consents or agrees otherwise, family land shall not be passed on by  
2 will, devised, sold, leased, exchanged, mortgaged, partitioned, or otherwise disposed of by  
the customary trustee.

3 8 CMC § 2904.

4 Furthermore, Section 2909 of Title 8 of the Commonwealth Code contains the procedures  
5 for granting consent with respect to Carolinian custom, which provides as follows:

6 Unless the family consents or agrees otherwise, the requirement in this law that all of the  
7 members of the family with title to or use rights in the land consent is met if the customary  
8 trustee and [her] surviving brothers and sisters consent; provided, that the children, if any,  
of a dead brother or sister of the customary trustee may exercise the consent rights of the  
decedent. The children shall determine by majority consent/vote among themselves if  
consent will be granted. Unless otherwise agreed, the oldest child of the decedent shall give  
the consent in accordance with the determination made by the majority of the children.

9 8 CMC § 2909.

## 10 II. DISCUSSION

11 Antonio died intestate around 1924. However, February 15, 1984 is the effective date of  
12 the CNMI Probate Code. 8 CMC § 2101. Furthermore, Antonio is a Carolinian man. The probate  
13 of the *Estate of Antonio Pua* will therefore be done in accordance with the provisions of the CNMI  
14 Probate Code concerning intestacy of a Carolinian.

### 15 A. Carolinian Customary Land Trustee

16 At death, a person's real and personal property devolves to the heirs<sup>9</sup>. With respect to real  
17 property, "the general rule is that real estate becomes vested on the death of the owner in [her]  
18 heirs and devisees." *In re the Estate of Kaipat*, 2010 MP 17 ¶ 17 (citing *Muna v. Camacho*, 2 CR  
19 10, 12-13 (1984); *Sablan v. Iginoif*, 3 CR 860, 874 (1989)) (finding that an adopted child's right  
20 to inherit from her natural parent vested upon that parent's death).

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23 <sup>9</sup> Again, to be clear, Estate Assets are subject to the Probate Code and Probate Rules for the heirs to *fully* realize their  
24 real property and personal property inheritance. For examples such as 8 CMC section 2925. Final Distribution; the  
Priority of Claims. Also, another example is 8 CMC section 2601. Exempt Property.



1 The Trust Territory Code provides that custom has “the full force and effect of law where  
2 not in conflict with other laws.”<sup>10</sup> 1 TTC § 102; *In re Estate of Rangamar*, 4 N.M.I. 72, 75 (1993).  
3 Therefore, for the distribution of the estate of a person of Carolinian descent who died intestate,  
4 the Court turns to Carolinian custom. *Id.* Custom regarding Carolinian family land is codified in  
5 Section 2904 of Title 8 of the Commonwealth Code. While it was not in effect prior to 1984, as a  
6 codification of custom, it nevertheless embodies Carolinian custom and may be used to show what  
7 that custom is. Section 2904 reveals the custom for how title to family land passes to a new  
8 customary trustee unless the family consents or agrees otherwise. 8 CMC § 2904(a). If there is no  
9 surviving sister, brother, daughter, or son of the decedent to serve as customary trustee, “title  
10 passes to the decedent’s grandchildren,” first to the eldest surviving granddaughter or, if there is  
11 no surviving granddaughter, to the eldest surviving grandson. 8 CMC § 2904(a)(5).

#### 12 **B. The Property, Lot 15 B 02 is Carolinian Family Land**

13 In accordance with the Supreme Court’s instructions in the case *In re Estate of Kaipat*, the  
14 Court shall begin its determination of family land by looking at whether the land in question is  
15 owned by the head of the lineage, i.e., the mother of the title holder, to determine whether a  
16 presumption then arises that the property is Carolinian family land. *In re Estate of Kaipat*, 3 N.M.I.  
17 at 499.

18 Here, the Court did not receive any evidence as to when or how Antonio came to own Lot  
19 15 B 02, and most importantly, whether the land had been in the family prior to the time during  
20 which he held title to that land. However, it appears that Antonio, a Carolinian man, held title to  
21 the property, as shown by the Determination of Ownership for Lot 15 B 02, according to the

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23 <sup>10</sup> The laws listed in 1 TTC Section 101 with which custom may not conflict are: (1) the Trusteeship Agreement; (2)  
24 United States laws in effect in the Trust Territory; (3) Trust Territory laws and their amendments; (4) district orders  
and emergency district orders; (5) Trust Territory legislation; and (6) municipal ordinances.

1 Certificate of Title dated December 28, 1977 was issued by the Land Commission of the Northern  
2 Mariana Islands of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, certifying that “the heirs of Antonio  
3 Pua, rep. by Juan Pua as Land Trustee<sup>11</sup>” were the fee simple owners of Lot 015 B 02, with an area  
4 of approximately 3.498 hectares.

5 On its face, the fact that title was held by a man suggests a possible departure from  
6 customary Carolinian land tenure, in which title vests matrilineally.

7 However, Commonwealth Courts presume that land originally owned by a Carolinian is  
8 Carolinian family land in accordance with Carolinian custom. *In re Estate of Lairopi*, 2002 MP at  
9 ¶¶ 10-13. Here, Lot 15 B 02 was originally owned by Antonio, a Carolinian, as demonstrated by  
10 the Determination of Ownership. Consequently, even though the original owner is a man, the Court  
11 may presume that the land originally owned by Antonio is Carolinian family land, unless “the  
12 original owner clearly decide[d] to depart from customary law” or it can be shown that there has  
13 been “some significant and discernable departure from Carolinian customs of use.” *In re Estate of*  
14 *Kaipat*, 3 N.M.I. at 498; *In re Estate of Lairopi*, 2002 MP at ¶ 16. In the present case, there is  
15 nothing to indicate that Antonio clearly decided to depart from customary law. Antonio left no will  
16 and there is no evidence of any use of the land inconsistent with customary law.

17 Furthermore, there is nothing to indicate any significant and discernable departure from  
18 Carolinian customs of use of the land.

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20 <sup>11</sup> The Court notes that the 1977 Certificate of Title referred to Juan as “Land Trustee.”<sup>11</sup> Under the Trust Territory  
regulation governing land ownership determination:

21 Where an estate is determined to be claimed jointly or in common by the heirs of a deceased  
22 owner . . . the District Land Title Officer may appoint one or more persons to act as trustee or  
23 trustees for the group . . . . The Land Trustee shall act as administrator of lands of deceased  
persons, and shall take immediate steps to determine the persons interested in the land as heirs  
or otherwise, and to have the land distributed according to law or the desires of the true owners,  
subject to approval of the courts in the event of controversy.

24 Land Management Regulation No. 1 of the Office of the Trust Territory High Commissioner § 9(a). On its face, this  
regulation did not require a land trustee to be a child or heir of a deceased landowner.

1           The Court therefore concludes that the land originally owned by Antonio, namely Lot 15  
2 B 02, is Carolinian family land.

3           **C. The Requirement of Consent or Agreement of the Family Has Not Been Met**

4           Section 2904 of Title 8 of the Commonwealth Code concerning Carolinian custom for  
5 family land permits deviation from Carolinian custom where the family consents or agrees  
6 otherwise, both with respect to the family land passing to a new customary trustee and also with  
7 respect to the prohibition on land being passed on by will, devise, sale, lease, exchange, mortgage,  
8 partition, or other disposition by the customary trustee. 8 CMC § 2904. To depart from Carolinian  
9 custom, the family must consent or agree otherwise, meaning that by majority vote/consent the  
10 family members must consent or agree.

11           Here, there was no meeting with the family members to seek at least a majority of the  
12 family member's consent or approval. Also, there is no Stipulation of Heirs or any other written  
13 document signed by a majority of the existing heirs and expressing their consent or agreement.  
14 Furthermore, Edward testified that he has not meet with all the family members and have not  
15 received the consent of majority the existing heirs. Instead, Edward only met or conferred with  
16 some members of the family and relies only on this small number of the family members as  
17 grounds that all the family members have orally consent or agree.

18           Edward stated that he did not hear any objections from other family members even though  
19 he has not met or conferred with all of them. Here, Edward assumes that the vast majority of  
20 family members' silence should be viewed as consent or agreement. The Court disagrees – the  
21 family members must affirmatively consent or agree. Edward has not met or conferred with all  
22 the family members who have title or use rights in the Family Land. Thus, there can be no consent  
23 or agreement from the family members.

1 During Carlos Pua's testimony, it was revealed that Edward had not spoken with all  
2 members of the family and did not get a majority of the family's consent or agreement. While  
3 some members of the family are no longer residing in the Commonwealth and have moved to  
4 other parts of the United States, the statute does not limit the requirement of family consent or  
5 agreement to only those family members present in the Commonwealth: family members "with  
6 title to or use rights in the land" must consent or agree. 8 CMC § 2909. Based on the evidence  
7 received in Court, not all family members were consulted. This is not consistent with the  
8 requirements of the procedure for family consent or agreement, which requires a majority to  
9 consent or agree. *Id.*

10 Moreover, some of the family members testified at the hearing and have raised concerns  
11 or objections. Simply put the requirements of family consent or agreement have not been met.

12 Based on the evidence presented, including the testimony of family members, the Court  
13 finds that not all family members have been consulted, and neither has at least a majority of family  
14 members consented or agreed to the subdivision of Carolinian family land.

15 The Court therefore finds that the heirs of Antonio have not consented or agreed to the  
16 partition of Carolinian family land, as required by Section 2909 of Title 8 of the Commonwealth  
17 Code, and therefore the land cannot be divided, as such the Court declines to Approve or Ratify  
18 the Quitclaim Deed signed by Edward.

### 19 III. CONCLUSION

20 Pursuant to Carolinian customary law, the Court determines that the land, Lot 15 B 02 is  
21 Carolinian family land. Additionally, the Court finds that the requirement of the family's consent  
22 or agreement, as required by 8 CMC Section 2909 to depart from Carolinian custom so that the  
23 family land can be partitioned such as by Quitclaim Deed, has not been met because not all the  
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1 heirs of Antonio Pua have been consulted nor have a majority of the family members given their  
2 affirmative consent or agreement. Accordingly, the Request to Approve or Ratify the Quitclaim  
3 Deed signed by Edward Atalig Pua is DENIED<sup>12</sup>.

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5 **IT IS SO ORDERED** this 5<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2021.

6  
7 /s/  
8 **JOSEPH N. CAMACHO**, Associate Judge

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24 <sup>12</sup> The Court is cognizant that there are several legal issues raised by the Parties that are not addressed by this Order. However, as the issue before the Court is the Motion to Approve the Quitclaim Deed, the Court will limit its Order to just that issue.