



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

**IN RE THE ESTATE OF  
 ANTONIO SANTOS SALAS,  
 Deceased.**

**CIVIL ACTION NO. 25-0180**

**ORDER FINDING THAT  
 CLARENCE ANTHONY ONG LEE  
 IS THE NATURAL AND BIOLOGICAL  
 CHILD OF ANTONIO SANTOS SALAS  
 AND THEREFORE IS OF  
 NORTHERN MARIANAS DESCENT  
 AND ENTITLED TO ALL RIGHTS  
 AND CLAIMS THEREIN**

**THIS MATTER** came before the Court for an Evidentiary hearing on February 19, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. upon the Administratrix’s Petition for Final Distribution and for a Declaration of Paternity and Change of Name concerning Clarence Anthony Ong Lee. Present at the hearing was the Administratrix, Rosalina Manabat Ong Salas; her counsel, Stephen J. Nutting; and Clarence Anthony Ong Lee.

Rosalina Manabat Ong Salas was the only testifying witness. Six exhibits were admitted into evidence.

The Court, having reviewed the pleadings and file herein, having heard sworn testimony and the exhibits admitted as evidence, and with good cause appearing therefore, makes the following findings of fact and conclusions of law:

**I. FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. Antonio Santos Salas (“Antonio”) was a Northern Marianas descent (“NMD”) Chamorro adult male and a CNMI government retiree.
2. Antonio had two daughters from prior relationships.

*By order of the Court, Judge Joseph N. Camacho*

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3. In 2003, Rosalina Manabat Ong Lee (“Rosalina”) came to Saipan and worked for Antonio as a house worker and caretaker.
4. Rosalina was married to another man.
5. Rosalina’s husband was residing in the Philippines.
6. Antonio and Rosalina started an intimate relationship.
7. In early 2006, Rosalina traveled back to the Philippines.
8. While in the Philippines, Rosalina had intimate relations with her husband.
9. In May 2026, Rosalina returned to Saipan.
10. Antonio and Rosalina continued to have intimate relations.
11. Eleven months later, on April 9, 2007, Rosalina gave birth to Clarence Anthony Ong Lee (“Clarence”).
12. As Rosalina was still married to her husband in the Philippines, Clarence’s birth certificate did not indicate the name of the father.
13. Rosalina divorced her husband in the Philippines.
14. On September 18, 2009, Antonio and Rosalina got married.
15. Rosalina’s married name is Rosalina Manabat Ong Salas.
16. On July 30, 2010, Antonio through a Deed of Gift, deeded Clarence Lot No. 031 D 36.
17. On September 15, 2013, Rosalina gave birth to Jhon Joseph Ong Salas (“Jhon”). Jhon’s birth certificate states “Antonio Santos Salas” as the father.
18. On May 26, 2017, Antonio died.
19. At the time of Antonio’s death, Antonio and Rosalina had two children, namely Clarence and Jhon.

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## II. PROCEDURAL HISTORY

This case was first filed as a Paternity Action with the Family Court, and was transferred to the Probate Court as the Family Court determined it did not have jurisdiction over the action as it related to the declaration of paternity of the alleged father who was deceased.

On February 19, 2026 the Court held an evidentiary hearing for Administratrix’s petition for declaration of paternity of Clarence Anthony Ong Lee. The following exhibits were admitted into evidence:

1. Antonio Santos Salas Certificate of Death (Exhibit 1.1)
2. Antonio Salas and Rosalina Ong Record of Marriage (Exhibit 2.1)
3. Clarence Anthony Lee Certificate of Live Birth (Exhibit 3.1)
4. Jhon Joseph Salas Birth Certificate (Exhibit 4.1)
5. Deed of Gift (Exhibit 5.1-5.2)
6. Assorted Family Photos (Exhibit 6.1)

## III. LEGAL AUTHORITY

NMI Const. Art. XII § 1 restricts the acquisition of permanent and long-term interests in real property to persons of Northern Marianas Descent (“NMD”). NMD is defined as:

. . . a person who is a citizen or national of the United States and who has at least some degree of Northern Marianas Chamorro or Northern Marianas Carolinian blood or a combination thereof. NMI Const. Art. XII § 4.

Under 8 CMC § 1704(a)(3)-(4) a man is presumed to be the natural father of a child if “after the child’s birth, he and child’s natural mother have married” or if “while the child is under the age of majority, he receives the child into his home and openly holds out the

1 child as his natural child.” This presumption can be rebutted by clear and convincing  
2 evidence. 8 CMC § 1704(b).

3 Where there is a conflict between NMI Const. Art. XII and CNMI statutory law,  
4 Article XII voids any interests made contrary to its provisions. “Persons who are not of  
5 Northern Marianas descent are prohibited from acquiring such interests by ‘sale, lease, gift,  
6 inheritance or other means.’ Article XII, § 2. Any transaction violating the constitutional  
7 restriction is void ab initio--void from the beginning, as if it had never occurred. Article XII,  
8 § 6.” *Aldan-Pierce v. Mafnas*, 2 NMI 122, 143 (1991).

#### 9 10 **IV. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

11 Rosalina, the Administratrix of the Estate was the wife of Antonio at the time of his  
12 death. Antonio is a person of Northern Marianas Descent (“NMD”), therefore any of his  
13 natural-born children would also be considered persons of NMD. Two children were born  
14 to Antonio and Rosalina. Clarence was born prior to their marriage, and Antonio was not  
15 named on the birth certificate. Rosalina testified that the father was listed as “not stated”  
16 because at that time she was then still married to her prior husband, a Filipino man still  
17 living in the Philippines, and their divorce had not yet become final.

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19 Rosalina testified that she had no intimate relations with anyone other than Antonio  
20 more than eleven (11) months prior to the birth of Clarence. The court finds her testimony  
21 credible. Moreover, Rosalina’s testimony and admitted Exhibits reveal that Antonio had  
22 “receive[d] the child into his home and openly held the child as his own,” which created a  
23 presumption of paternity pursuant to 8 CMC § 1704(a)(4)<sup>1</sup>. This was also shown by pictures  
24 of Antonio and his family’s attendance at the baptism of Clarence when he was only 3  
25 months old. (Exhibit 6).  
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<sup>1</sup> “A man is presumed to be the natural father of a child if: . . . While the child is under the age of majority, he receives the child into his home and openly holds out the child as his natural child.” 8 CMC § 1704(a)(4).

1 Evidence of paternity was also shown in a Deed of Gift to real property that Antonio  
2 gave to Clarence when he was three (3) years old. That Deed of Gift specifically stated:  
3 “That I, Antonio Santos Salas, grantor, for and in consideration of natural love and affection  
4 I have unto my son, Clarence Anthony Ong Lee does by these presents . . .” (Exhibit 5.1-  
5 5.2). Only persons of NMD may own real property in the Northern Mariana Islands.  
6 Antonio owned in fee simple Lot No. 031 D 36 (Part of Lot No. 031 D 01). See Exhibit 2.1  
7 Application of Marriage License and Record of Marriage. Antonio is listed as Chamorro.  
8 See Exhibit 1.1. CNMI Death Certificate list Antonio as Chamorro.  
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10 From the evidence received as described above, the Court finds that Clarence  
11 Anthony Ong Lee (b. April 9, 2007) is the natural and biological son of Antonio Santos  
12 Salas (deceased) and Rosalina Ong Salas. Clarence is, therefore, entitled to all rights as a  
13 NMD Chamorro heir of Antonio, including the right to take and hold title to property in the  
14 CNMI as a person of Northern Marianas Descent pursuant to Article XII of the CNMI  
15 Constitution. Therefore, the Court finds that the July 30, 2010 Deed of Gift from Antonio to  
16 Clarence is a proper transfer and thus ratified.  
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18 Furthermore, the Court finds that Clarence Anthony Ong Lee (b. April 9, 2007) is the  
19 natural and biological son of Antonio Santos Salas (deceased) and Rosalina Ong Salas.  
20 Clarence is, therefore, entitled to all rights a child of Antonio and for Clarence to make a  
21 claim of his share of Antonio’s retirement benefits, if any.  
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## 23 **V. ORDER**

24 **THEREFORE**, it is hereby **ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED**:

- 25 1. Clarence Anthony Ong Lee (b. April 9, 2007) is hereby declared the natural  
26 and biological son of Antonio Santos Salas (deceased) and Rosalina Ong  
Salas.

