

INTERVIEW OF VICENTE M. MANGLONA

by Howard P. Willens and Deanne C. Siemer

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- Willens: Vicente M. Manglona served as Mayor of Tinian, a delegate from Tinian to the First Constitutional Convention, and also served with the Trust Territory government and the Marianas government for many years as an agricultural extension agent on Tinian. Thank you Mr. Manglona for taking the time to appear with us as part of this historical project so that we can write what we hope will be an accurate and complete story of how the Northern Marianas became a Commonwealth.
- Manglona: Thank you very much. I am happy to be with you and anything you want to ask I will glad to answer.
- Siemer: Tell us if you could first about your own family, your father's family and your mother's family, and how they came to Tinian.
- Manglona: My father is originally from Rota and my mother is originally from Saipan. Before World War II we were on Pohnpei. Then after the war, we came over to see our family to see if everything is okay. My father and my mother decided to stay on Saipan for at least two years. Then, when there was a job opportunity during the Navy time, they called it Navy Cattle Development, my parents have happened to apply for the job to come over to Tinian.
- Siemer: What year was that?
- Manglona: About 1947.
- Siemer: Were you born here in Tinian?
- Manglona: No, I was born in Saipan.
- Siemer: How many brothers and sisters?
- Manglona: I have seven brothers and two sisters.
- Siemer: Where do they all live?
- Manglona: One of my sisters is here, one is in Hawaii right now. And my brothers, three are in Saipan, and four are here. I am sorry, I stand corrected, one in Rota and three are here.
- Siemer: When your family came here in 1947, did they then stay in Tinian the entire time?
- Manglona: No, we first went to Saipan and stayed there at least two years. Then when there was the job opportunity for this Navy Cattle Development on Tinian, my father applied for the job to come over to Tinian.
- Siemer: Then after he moved to Tinian to take that job, did he stay here?
- Manglona: Yes.
- Siemer: Were you educated here on Tinian at first?
- Manglona: No, I was educated in Saipan. We have this cultural adoption in the family. Since I was the oldest in the family, I was adopted by my auntie to stay on Saipan. So I was culturally adopted by my aunties.
- Siemer: Where did you go to school?

- Manglona: In Saipan.
- Siemer: What schools?
- Manglona: We went to up to, we call it intermediate school, up to ninth grade in Saipan. Then after that, after graduation, we went to PICS. I was given a scholarship to go to PICS. They called it Pacific Island Central School.
- Siemer: There several people from here who went down to Truk to school.
- Manglona: Right.
- Willens: When did you go to PICS?
- Manglona: That was in 1954.
- Willens: You were about 18 years old?
- Manglona: About 16.
- Willens: Who were some of your classmates who went from the Northern Marianas to PICS?
- Manglona: One is Lt. Governor Benjamin Manglona, and former Governor Carlos Camacho, and Francisco Chong, who used to be a representative for Tinian, and other friends like Fred Sablan who is a Principal in the Saipan elementary school in San Antonio.
- Willens: What is your family relationship to Ben Manglona, the former Lt. Governor?
- Manglona: He is my first cousin.
- Siemer: Is the Manglona family bigger on Rota than it is on Tinian?
- Manglona: Much, much bigger.
- Siemer: There are Manglonas on Saipan as well?
- Manglona: Actually the Manglonas are originally from Rota. There's a few families in Saipan, but the family is originally from Rota.
- Siemer: After PICS, what did you do next?
- Manglona: Well, I went to Guam.
- Siemer: So you were in Truk for how long?
- Manglona: One year. Because I was kind of a young man, PICS is a lost island for me at that time because of how the people live there. It is not similar to Saipan at that time.
- Siemer: You don't have any relatives down there?
- Manglona: No, we don't have any relatives and I was kind of lost in PICS. So I decided to go Guam because I have relatives in Guam.
- Siemer: What did you do there?
- Manglona: I attended school.
- Siemer: Where was that?
- Manglona: That was George Washington High School.
- Siemer: And then what did you do after that?
- Manglona: After that, unfortunately, my parents died early. My mother died early, so I didn't continue and go on to college. I have to work and help my father and my brothers. The youngest one was six years old when my mother passed away.

- Siemer: Where did you first go to work?
- Manglona: I was working at the Naval Technical Training Unit, the CIA group, as underclerk, as a trainee. And then I worked in the hospital. The Navy trained me. I was offered a scholarship for pre-med school in Suva. Unfortunately, I didn't go to the Suva medical school because I have a lot of things that I had to tend to with my family.
- Siemer: How long did you stay working for the Navy?
- Manglona: Actually, they took me there as a trainee for pre-med school. They trained me, and I worked there for about six months.
- Siemer: Then what did you do next?
- Manglona: After that, there's a job opening over here in Tinian, and I decided to apply as a radio operator.
- Willens: Did you know the function of the Naval Technical Training Unit was?
- Manglona: I knew a little bit. At that time there was a lot of secrecy in the Navy function. They will not put a civilian in some confidential area.
- Willens: But you served as trainee for a clerical position?
- Manglona: Yes.
- Willens: Did you come to know what the purpose of the unit was?
- Manglona: Well, I thought at that time the unit was here just for the purpose of administering the island under the Trusteeship Agreement.
- Willens: What was your general assessment of life under the Navy Administration? Did you think they did a good job in administering the island?
- Manglona: I don't think so. I think that is the worst administration I have seen. I think civilian government is much better.
- Willens: That is an interesting point because many of the people with whom we have spoken have good memories of the Naval Administration because the Navy provided everything.
- Manglona: They made us sort of dependent on them. But I don't believe in being dependent. I am an aggressive person. I want to be independent, working for myself.
- Willens: So were you pleased when the Interior Department took over from the Navy?
- Manglona: Yes.
- Willens: Do you think the Interior Department through the Trust Territory Administration did a better job?
- Manglona: To me yes, because they give us a breather, to breathe. In the Navy time, you cannot do anything. They had all control. School was limited. We go for education, but they only allow certain persons to go college, to apply for scholarships. They limited our education during Navy times. They gave us a lot of goodies, which, to me, it is not beneficial. That is why our people were educated very late during the Navy Administration. When the Interior Department took over, when President Kennedy took over, and gave us the Peace Corps, that is the time our people opened their eyes and voted for further education.
- Willens: During the Navy Administration, they did provide for Municipal Councils and District Commissioners.
- Manglona: Right.

- Willens: Did you think that those developments were favorable?
- Manglona: Well, they used us like it is a puppet government. I am sorry, but I will frank with you.
- Willens: That is the purpose of this interview, Mr. Manglona.
- Manglona: We are used as a puppet government. Actually, under the Trusteeship Agreement, the Navy should foster the economy and education. But as to education, we are paying our own people. You see the municipalities are getting meager taxes from the people and paying our own teachers during that time. But when the Interior Department took over, we have a secondary education, high school. In the Navy time, we can go only to the ninth grade. They send a few people to PICS, for instance, but you have to be academically scholastic to be there. And they limit it to only five people every year.
- Willens: Five people from the Marianas?
- Manglona: Marianas.
- Willens: In the early 1960's, President Kennedy adopted a new program for the Trust Territory. It included among other things removal of some of the security requirements for people to come into the Northern Marianas. Did you support the opening up of the Marianas to outsiders?
- Manglona: Of course. That is the main thing I did when the Interior Department was here, when we have this economic instability in Tinian. I was voted to become Mayor on Tinian in 1964. The first thing I did was introduce investors from United States. At that time, even the Interior Department didn't want to give us the opportunity to bring investors from the outside too. Even the headquarters didn't like that.
- Willens: Why was that?
- Manglona: I don't know.
- Willens: I've certainly heard that from others.
- Manglona: I don't know. Maybe because they might lose an opportunity of jobs, I really don't know what is the reason. I don't know what is the motive about that.
- Willens: Was that the beginning of your political career as a Mayor in 1964?
- Manglona: Right.
- Willens: Had you ever run for office before?
- Manglona: No.
- Siemer: How old were at the time?
- Manglona: I was 25 years old. I am the youngest mayor in the CNMI.
- Siemer: What political party were you with at that time?
- Manglona: No, there's no party at that time. It is a straightforward race. I was supported by the older people.
- Willens: By the older people?
- Manglona: The older people supported me.
- Willens: Why do you think that was?
- Manglona: Maybe they think I am the best candidate, or it is better to have a young candidate. You know, in our tradition, when you have respect for those people, they give you credit. We

have this extended family over in Tinian. The Chamorros have an extended family. The families, they talk among themselves, which is the best son and daughter. But now the political party makes a difference. Because even if you don't like the guy, so long as you are in that political party and you are strong in that political party, you support the guy.

Willens: Why?

Manglona: That's the difference.

Willens: In 1964, on Saipan there were Popular and Territorial parties. But from what you say those parties had not extended to Tinian yet?

Manglona: Not yet.

Willens: When did they ultimately develop?

Manglona: That was extended when Joe Cruz came in 1967 or 1968, that was the time. Because Joe Cruz came over here.

Willens: The Congress of Micronesia was formed in 1965. As I recall, Joe Cruz ran for the Congress of Micronesia.

Manglona: For two years.

Willens: And was he representing Tinian in that capacity?

Manglona: Yes.

Willens: So was he someone that you were a supporter of or were on the opposite side politically?

Manglona: At that time I was supporting the Republican side, Territorial not Popular.

Willens: So he was a . . .

Manglona: Yes, he was a Popular Party. That's a Democrat in reality. I was supporting the Territorial Party. That's the Republican side.

Willens: Did you ever run for the Marianas District Legislature?

Manglona: No, my brother did. The Mayor now.

Willens: Did you ever run for the Congress of Micronesia?

Manglona: No.

Siemer: How long did you serve as Mayor that first time?

Manglona: I served for four years. Then I became bored.

Willens: What did you decide to do?

Manglona: I decided to become a businessman because, at that time, the economy was very down. Becoming a politician at that time, you will not be a family provider because instead of providing for your family, you are providing for your constituents. That is the bad habit over here now.

Siemer: What business did you go into?

Manglona: Retail business and farming. My father is by trade a farmer, so I learned from him how to do it. It is not modern farming, but it's the ordinary farming things that he had taught me.

Siemer: Where were your lands located?

Manglona: Well, the Marpo area and some on the up on the Tajit area.

- Willens: That's the northern area?
- Manglona: On the middle part of Tinian, up on the plateau.
- Willens: During the 1960's when you were Mayor, the federal government started increasing the funding for the Trust Territory very substantially.
- Manglona: Right.
- Willens: They embarked upon the building of school houses and so forth. Did you as a Mayor on Tinian feel that some of these expenditures were beneficial to the people on Tinian?
- Manglona: Of course, because building the school is beneficial to Tinian and that would improve things. You see our secret here in the Northern Marianas is education. That is the key for our children to have a better life.
- Willens: During the 1960's there were often complaints that Tinian and Rota were not getting a fair share of the available funds.
- Manglona: That's very true. Well let's be realistic, our population is not so big in comparison. Saipan has a bigger population and the share that they have been given is because the central government has mostly all the employment there. Whereby Tinian and Rota have limited activities for the government, so they would not send equipment that is not useable for full-time activities.
- Siemer: You are talking about things like road grading equipment?
- Manglona: Yes, like that. In Tinian, it is much better because of its proximity about five miles in line and port to port about 20 miles. They can put it on the boat and bring it over here and then bring it back to Saipan. But normally they have short- changed us. The new things that belong to Tinian are taken to Saipan, then they review something and send it over. That's happened because the honchos in Saipan want to use the new one that belongs to Tinian.
- Willens: During the 1960's, the Marianas District Legislature and the Saipan Municipal Council kept passing resolutions asking for a political relationship with the United States after the end of the Trusteeship?
- Manglona: Right.
- Willens: When did you first become aware of this desire for a close political relationship with the United States?
- Manglona: Well, we tried first actually in the late 60's to reintegrate with Guam.
- Willens: Did you support that effort?
- Manglona: I did support that effort. I think overwhelmingly the Marianas supported that effort, but Guam turned it down.
- Willens: Did you change your mind at that point?
- Manglona: I think we got a better deal now.
- Willens: You said you were in the Territorial Party at the time. The Territorial Party never wanted to reintegrate with Guam.
- Manglona: But that is not the way I feel because as I say I have relatives in Guam. Guam at that time was more advanced in economics.
- Willens: Is that what was so attractive about Guam?

- Manglona: Yes, at that time.
- Willens: Did people want to be U.S. citizens for other reasons?
- Manglona: Yes, for employment, because before we cannot work in Guam during that time. This a limit. Because we are not U.S. citizens, we cannot go to Guam and stay and work there. When they give us a chance when there's a typhoon, we offer our services and that is the breakthrough for our people to go to Guam.
- Siemer: Is that one of the reasons that Guam turned down reintegration? They were afraid all of you folks would come over there?
- Manglona: Yes, that is like what is happening now with the FSM. That is what Guam worried about. I think this is the same situation. I suspect that this is the same thing that they were thinking.
- Willens: You are referring to the influx into the Marianas of people from the FSM?
- Manglona: No, influx of the Marianas to Guam. Guam was worried about that, even requesting the federal government to give them some assistance or grants to meet all the necessities for the other islands, our neighbor islands.
- Willens: Did you personally become active in any of the political status activities?
- Manglona: In Guam?
- Willens: No, here on Tinian?
- Manglona: No, actually I hadn't quite settled down. I was working for the Trust Territory government. I was not too active at that time when they changed our political status. I was kind of a little modest, staying between and listening to pros and cons.
- Willens: Your brother, Herman, was appointed to the Marianas Political Status Commission, I believe, by the Municipal Council.
- Manglona: Yes.
- Willens: Do you recall the circumstances under which he was selected?
- Manglona: He was in the District Legislature and was very active in the Municipal Council.
- Willens: So he was a popular political leader at the time?
- Manglona: Yes, right.
- Willens: Also Mr. Frank Hocog?
- Manglona: Frank Hocog was selected because he was one of the members of the Municipal Council at that time too.
- Willens: I see.
- Manglona: That's why he was elected. At that time I'm doing a small business plus I am working with Trust Territory government. So I just don't want to bother with it.
- Siemer: What were you doing with the Trust Territory government?
- Manglona: I was working as an Administrative Assistant.
- Siemer: To the . . .
- Manglona: To the Naval representative during that time.
- Siemer: To the Naval representative here on Tinian?

- Manglona: In the Trust Territory. And the DistAd Rep, that is the District Administrator for the Trust Territory, I was working for him.
- Siemer: How long did you continue with that?
- Manglona: I was working all the way until I became Mayor.
- Siemer: How long was that?
- Manglona: That was in the 60's until 1964 I worked there.
- Siemer: Then after you became Mayor, you were Mayor for four years, right?
- Manglona: Right.
- Siemer: And then you went back to your other position?
- Manglona: Yes, they asked me to work in the Agricultural Department of the Trust Territory, too. So I continued my job there.
- Siemer: At the Trust Territory.
- Manglona: Yes.
- Siemer: Did you do that while you were Mayor?
- Manglona: No, I was doing part-time farming when I was the Mayor. So the District Agriculturalist there knew my ability in part-time farming. I had a big farm during that time. So he asked me to work as extension agent.
- Siemer: When did you start doing that?
- Manglona: That is, let's see, 1969 I worked as an extension leader.
- Siemer: And how long did you keep on working?
- Manglona: I continued until my retirement.
- Siemer: When was that?
- Manglona: In 1989.
- Willens: When the political status negotiations began with the United States in 1972 and got underway seriously in 1973, the United States revealed for the first time its desire to essentially takeover the entire island of Tinian for contingent military purposes and to lease-back to the people one-third of the island. Did you have any reaction at the time to this request?
- Manglona: I did. I was so disappointed because of the way our political leaders exercised their political views. When the military took this one, I had an assumption that they will not utilize the island. They will just take it as a pay off to our becoming U.S. citizens.
- Willens: Well, Ambassador Williams and his delegation came over here on at least two occasions to present detailed plans about a large scale military facility to provide employment and other opportunities for the people of Tinian.
- Manglona: That's very true, but it was never realized.
- Willens: Do you recall attending any public meetings?
- Manglona: I did.
- Willens: Do you recall questioning Ambassador Williams or any of his military aides about their plans?

- Manglona: We questioned Eddie Pangelinan, the chief negotiator for the Commonwealth. The Ambassador was there. We asked questions, pro and con. They have a nice blueprint. They planned so well and prepared and they offered us those things, but they were never realized.
- Willens: It is certainly true that they were not realized. I was at one or two of those meetings, although much of the exchange was in Chamorro. But the Ambassador and his staff had very beautiful charts. Did you think at the time it would be beneficial to the people of Tinian?
- Manglona: Of course. If that is true, it will help the economy. It helps especially when we don't have much employment at that point of time. It will really be beneficial to our local people.
- Willens: Now, the Mayor at the time, Mayor Mendiola, was viewed as opposed to the request and he and others said that the people of Tinian would permit one-third of the island to be used for military purposes, but not more than that.
- Manglona: I was a consultant to Mayor Mendiola at that time.
- Willens: Were you?
- Manglona: It was behind the scenes consulting.
- Willens: Did you support that position that he took?
- Manglona: Yes, I supported the Mayor's position.
- Siemer: What was his theory about the one-third?
- Manglona: Well, Mayor Mendiola is thinking about our generations to come. Another theory is that we can develop our own island. Like now what is happening investors come in and put a large sum of money in developing our land. That was his theory because he was educated in Japan and he knows those Japanese offering investment to the Marianas at that time, if the Marianas become independent or become self-ruled.
- Siemer: He thought that the Japanese would be back?
- Manglona: Yes, that is the view that he has in his mind. But it is true, it is coming back. The Japanese are coming in for investment. Not actually managing the country, but they are being investors over here. You know what happened in Saipan. A lot of big Japanese investors [came in]. The hotels and golf courses and everything are Japanese.
- Willens: Well, that's right. One of the things that the documents suggest is that Japanese investors would be attracted to a place that was under U.S. sovereignty and where U.S. laws apply. Do you agree with that proposition?
- Manglona: That's true, because this is stability in government. Japanese like that because the U.S. government is very stable. And judicially, politically, the U.S. is I think more kind.
- Willens: Did Mayor Mendiola agree with the proposition that U.S. sovereignty would be good for investment but he wanted to reserve more land for civilian development and not give it to the military?
- Manglona: It is a good day that the military gives us now. They give us the surplus land to pay back and there is land that they give us for lease-back. I think this the way Mayor Mendiola wanted it.
- Siemer: You think it is back to the way Mayor Mendiola wanted it?

- Manglona: Yes, this is what he wanted. He wanted to just give one-third to them. This is what we wanted, one-third. But I argued with Joe Cruz on what I feel about this. But I fight with him verbally in Chamorro. I told him you are trying to sell Tinian for just U.S. citizenship, and your negotiations are too big. You know what Joe Cruz told me? "This land does not belong to your mother because this is our heritage."
- Willens: This is what you said to him?
- Manglona: He told me that this land does not belong to my mother. Joe Cruz told me that.
- Willens: What did he mean, that you didn't have any rights to the land?
- Manglona: Yes, that is what he thinks. This belongs to Americans, he told me, because they win the war. "You are stupid. What kind of leader are you?"
- Willens: Do you think he was always prepared to agree to whatever the United States wanted?
- Manglona: I think Joe Cruz is pro-American.
- Willens: That was a criticism of him in those days?
- Manglona: Even now they are still criticizing him for giving up two-thirds of the land.
- Siemer: How long had Joe Cruz's family been on Tinian at that time?
- Manglona: Joe Cruz came in around 1968.
- Siemer: Came here from Saipan?
- Manglona: Yes, Saipan.
- Willens: So he lived on Saipan when he was elected to the Congress of Micronesia to represent Tinian?
- Manglona: Represent Tinian, Saipan and Rota.
- Willens: That was all one . . .
- Manglona: That was one district.
- Willens: I see. So he really was not regarded as resident here until 1968.
- Manglona: Right.
- Willens: There were other members of the Marianas Political Status Commission. Your brother was a member for awhile and then he was replaced by Joe Cruz.
- Manglona: Yes, I think so, because they resigned. I think they resigned.
- Willens: I see.
- Manglona: Maybe I talk too much; maybe that is why. I don't know exactly what happened. I didn't ask him. But I am very vocal on things about the political status. And maybe he heard something that I disagree on these things. Because I am the oldest in the family, sometimes I get mad at younger brothers.
- Willens: Your younger brothers and sisters would consult with you for wisdom. I am the youngest so I have to consult all the time. The United States originally proposed relocating the village of San Jose.
- Manglona: Right.
- Willens: And that was represented to the people as providing them with an opportunity for new houses, new utilities, new facilities of all kinds.

- Manglona: What they really wanted to do, they wanted us to be concentrated on that hill only. And they were going to fence the port.
- Willens: You thought it was all a maneuver to preserve the port exclusively for military use?
- Manglona: Yes, they were going to give us only a part of this area. They are going to put in phones; they offered everything. But the people don't like it. They want freedom, access to the port.
- Willens: You were opposed to relocation?
- Manglona: I opposed the relocation.
- Willens: At some of the public meetings, some of the older people present at the meetings, according to the reports, were in favor of relocating the village.
- Manglona: Because it is going to be a nice concrete house and, because they are getting old, they need that shelter. Because they are getting old, they want to have shelter for the future of their kids.
- Willens: But you disagreed with that?
- Manglona: I disagreed. Because I know we can have better shelter than that up there where you can be concentrated like a jail.
- Willens: You thought it was an effort by the military to compartmentalize the civilian community?
- Manglona: Yes. And if we want to come down here, we have to have a lot of red tape.
- Willens: Sometime later on, the United States changed its plan and decided it no longer needed to relocate the village because it was going deal with ammunition at another location in the northern area.
- Manglona: In the middle part.
- Willens: Were you more favorably inclined to the military request once they decided not to relocate?
- Manglona: I favored that, to put on more docks down at the I don't what they call it that Coca Cola dump area. I was in favor of that.
- Willens: But you still opposed the amount of the plan.
- Manglona: Right.
- Willens: And you were still of the view that it should be reduced to one-third?
- Manglona: One-third.
- Willens: Did you think that if you argued strongly for one-third and if Joe Cruz and others would change their minds?
- Manglona: I don't think we can get it.
- Willens: If you had argued, do you think that there would be a Commonwealth today?
- Manglona: We did a lot of demonstrations, but we cannot make it. The people decided to become U.S. citizens. That is the offer that that they gave, and they sacrificed Tinian.
- Willens: Even the people on Tinian ultimately voted in favor of the Commonwealth?
- Manglona: Yes, because they wanted to become U.S. citizens, so we can have free access to go to Guam or to the United States.

- Willens: When it came down to it, if I may ask, did you support the Covenant?
- Manglona: I am telling you the truth, I did not.
- Willens: You are entitled. Lots of my good friends out here did not. So you were one of those. Did you speak up in the campaign?
- Manglona: No, I just keep quiet. I just let the people make a decision. We already speak up in meetings, but people don't listen. They want to be U.S. citizens, so let it be.
- Willens: Did you think the people on Tinian were informed about the provisions of the Covenant and what kind of deal was being made here with respect to the land on Tinian?
- Manglona: Well, we did. There's a lot of information that was passed to us. People mentioned about job opportunities and all those things that have been offered. And the people are willing to sacrifice because they need to develop the island of Tinian.
- Willens: For example some of the Tinian people had homesteads up in the land that the U.S. was going to take for military purposes.
- Manglona: That is part of what happened. Even my father-in-law has been given a price that he didn't accept.
- Willens: I don't understand you.
- Manglona: The price on the land.
- Willens: He was given a price . . .
- Manglona: On the land, that they don't even accept it up there when the military took two-thirds already. Because it looked like they forced us. See, the people who assessed the land value up there, they said only this much value, so that is the land value that we have to be paid.
- Willens: But your father-in-law rejected that amount of money?
- Manglona: No, they did not reject it because he can't help anything. Even if you reject it, you are still going to get that much money.
- Willens: I see.
- Manglona: So the family decided okay we just get that land for \$10.00 during the time when they work it out. So \$2.17 for a square meter is acceptable by the family. So they accepted it.
- Willens: Could they have asked to exchange the land for land on Saipan?
- Manglona: Yes, they can do that. Some people they do it. Some people want money.
- Willens: Did you think the people on Tinian were treated fairly with respect to the homestead lands?
- Manglona: I don't know. But if that was my land, I wouldn't have accepted that. Because that land the military is taking is prime land for cultivation. It is some of the best land for farming.
- Willens: Did they lease-back some of that good land as part of these negotiations?
- Manglona: Some of that, yes, would go back to these families. Some were taken by the military one-third, and I think practically all that land is leased back.
- Willens: Just one question about the Ken Jones ranch. That was an ongoing economic adventure here during the 60's and the early 70's. Did you and others support their project?

- Manglona: I did. I was the Mayor at that time when Ken Jones came in. I was the one who introduced outside investors in order to have employment opportunity.
- Willens: So was he the investor you referred to earlier?
- Manglona: No, he's not the one. That's the one the Trust Territorial appointed. There were three applicants for investment. I support Moran, Carl Moran from Texas, who offered a better deal.
- Siemer: They were a competitor?
- Manglona: Yes, a competitor. They offered a better deal. But the Trust Territory government gave it to Ken Jones because Ken Jones is in Guam at that time. They know him better than Moran in Texas. But Moran offered a better deal to the community.
- Siemer: What made you decide to run for the Constitutional Convention once the Covenant had been ratified?
- Manglona: Well, since this is going to be a new government, chartered for supreme government, I decided to help working on the framework of the Constitution. That is the main reason, I just decided to work on that.
- Siemer: At the time, the Constitutional Convention bill gave 25 seats to Saipan, eight to Rota and five to Tinian. The five assigned to Tinian were a lot more than Tinian's population would have justified if there were a one man, one vote rule in effect at that time. Did the Tinian folks here think that was generally a good deal to have five representatives elected to Constitutional Convention?
- Manglona: Well, when they made that decision, they passed on the legislative positions that they have at the present moment. So they think the legislature made a decision that they have more senatorial districts, I don't mean senatorial, precinct districts, than Tinian. Tinian only has one precinct district.
- Siemer: Tinian always voted at-large? The whole island?
- Manglona: Yes, at-large. Saipan had maybe about six precinct districts, and they have more population. Basically, they took that from the framework of the organization of the Legislature.
- Siemer: So they just adopted basically the same pattern that the Legislature had?
- Manglona: I think so.
- Siemer: And the Tinian folks here thought that was a fair way to go about it?
- Manglona: Well, we had our own representatives and our representatives made the decision. Maybe they thought it was reasonable and that's why they accepted it.
- Siemer: Once you and Mr. Diaz and Mr. Hofschneider and Mr. King and Mr. Cruz were elected, did you get together to talk about what you were going to try to do for Tinian in the Constitutional Convention?
- Manglona: Yes, we did. But during the sessions, I think our counselor knew exactly what is happening. We fight on this decentralization of the government, local matters. And my colleague, Joe Cruz, he is not satisfied with what is now happening. This is what is happening now, the Rota Mayor and the Governor are fighting. In our previous decision, I think that is the most wise way to do it. You see, when there is a second Constitutional Convention, then they made Amendment 25 and that just makes it worse. I have the idea that is going to be happening, this is now happening.
- Siemer: You had the idea during the first Constitutional Convention?

- Manglona: Because I was against that in the First Constitution. I favored that “may be” not “shall be.” I favored that the Governor has the prerogative to make his decisions whether he will delegate to the Mayor or delegate to another person to represent him in his chief executive position. That’s why I supported “may be”. But Joe Cruz and my cousin happened to be two cousins against me about it. But I stayed, and some of these young delegates fresh from college, they stayed with us and we made a decision. But you see what happened when the Second Constitutional Convention came up, they made an amendment that they are trying to put mini-governors in Rota or Tinian.
- Siemer: When you were first elected to the Constitutional Convention and your delegates from Tinian got together, if you recall, what were your principal objectives? What were you going to try to do in Constitutional Convention? Did you have some primary things you were after?
- Manglona: Well, the primary thing on which we made a decision was the decentralization of government. That is our primary thing. But during all of these reviews of the Constitution, and all the rebuttals, you know, the sessions I was in, I found out that that is not a workable measure we have to accomplish.
- Siemer: Before you went to the Convention, did you talk about other issues with respect to what Tinian might need? Were there things other than public services that were important at the time?
- Manglona: Not at that time.
- Siemer: When you went to the sessions over in Saipan and you were assigned to a committee, did you have an opportunity to say which committee you wanted to be on?
- Manglona: Yes, we did.
- Siemer: And how did you split yourselves up?
- Manglona: As the chairman of the delegation, we have identified all of the committees that we are supposed to be on in the Con-Con. Everyone chose which ones they wanted to take. Every one of our delegates chose which one they wanted to take, to be part of that committee.
- Siemer: What do you recall about how your basic position paper was developed?
- Manglona: Well, we what we did actually, we met with the Rota delegates and we discussed our position in the First Constitutional Convention. Then we met with the leadership on Saipan, who has a greater vote in the party, and we discussed our position paper.
- Siemer: You met in the Territorial Party after your position paper was put together?
- Manglona: Yes, we met together. And at that time then we gave the position paper to Mr. Ben Manglona, the Lieutenant Governor, to be the spokesman on that position paper.
- Siemer: Then he made a speech on on the floor stating what your position was.
- Manglona: Right.
- Siemer: What was the reaction of the Territorial leaders in Saipan as to your position paper?
- Manglona: We had already toned it down. We had all gotten together already [for that purpose]. So, their reactions, some will be reacting badly, but we got the majority.
- Siemer: So you thought, at the time, that you had the votes to put your position through?
- Manglona: Yes.
- Siemer: When your spokesman, Ben Manglona from Rota, got up and gave his speech about what

- your position was or what should happen, shortly after that David Maratita got up and proposed that local government be done away with altogether, do you remember that?
- Manglona: Yes, David is on the opposite side of the Party. He's not with us at that time. And he is still on the opposite of my Party. I don't blame him. We are good friends. He recognized our needs, he recognized the needs of Saipan, but he was representing Saipan. He has to be vocal for the Saipan area.
- Siemer: At the time, the Rota and Tinian position with respect to the upper house was that you should have four, each island should have four representatives, right?
- Manglona: Yes, right. But during our rebuttal back and forth, we came down to three.
- Siemer: And that was acceptable?
- Manglona: That is acceptable because it is close to having four representatives in the upper house. We are talking about the economic standpoint in that area. We actually, we make it three because when we have a delegation, you see, you can vote, two can vote and one make a decision. So that is actually the idea of putting three instead of four.
- Siemer: So you won't have a deadlock?
- Manglona: Yes.
- Siemer: So the first part of your proposal was with respect to the upper house and that got modified and that was acceptable to your delegation?
- Manglona: Yes.
- Siemer: And the second part of your proposal had to do with the lower house. And there, as I understand it, you wanted to have the same as the District Legislature, which then was 25?
- Manglona: Saipan wants the same, but we argued that. Saipan argued one man, one vote for the lower house. But, you see, if you go one man, one vote, Rota and Tinian will have no representation at that time because the population, when compared to Saipan, that number does not meet the one man, one vote [requirement]. So I think, in apportionment, we get one vote.
- Siemer: In the initial proposal, you had two votes, it was 25-3-2?
- Manglona: But they argued that too. The Saipan delegation argued that very strongly. Because that is not an equal representation.
- Siemer: Then they moved to 16-2-1.
- Manglona: And that was the time when Rota is getting mad, starting getting mad, Rota and Tinian getting mad, because that's not the way we make a deal before. Even the Republican Party in Saipan was supporting Saipan on that deal. So that's where the disagreement came in.
- Siemer: So the Republican Party leadership had agreed to the 25-3-2 formula?
- Manglona: Yes, that's originally. Then they changed down to one [seat for Tinian].
- Siemer: When the proposal that took it down to 16 and two for Rota and one for Tinian, when you got down to one representative, was that acceptable to the Tinian delegation?
- Manglona: Well, no it isn't. But like I said the Tinian voters want to sacrifice. That is what I think. Our heart is big enough to sacrifice for Rota.
- Siemer: What did the Tinian delegates think about the one man, one vote argument?

- Manglona: Well, I think they have some logical points from the delegation from Saipan. Because of the economic position, Saipan is always emphasized. See, when I look back to the history of United States, and the State legislatures, the salary and the number of people are less than in United States [Congress]. And you see, when we have a big number in the delegation, a lot of things will be happening. Even the work is going to be longer with more [members in the] delegation. If [there are fewer members in the] delegation the job will be shortening. That's my theory and I agreed to limit the number of people to be in the Legislature.
- Siemer: So was the proposal that was 16 for Saipan, giving Rota two and giving Tinian one, was that basically acceptable?
- Manglona: Acceptable for Tinian, but during the fight then they argue again that Rota be put down to one. That's the argument that we always disagree on. Because you know I think we feel that Saipan does not agree. It just wants to have Rota have one [representative] because of the number of population Rota has, compared to the Saipan numbers.
- Siemer: Then it was Ray Villagomez and some other Democrats who wanted the 12-1-1 formula?
- Manglona: Yes. That's the formula that's the best for me. The reason why, its less cost for the legislature.
- Siemer: And you, in fact, ultimately supported that?
- Manglona: I did.
- Siemer: Did you know that Ben Manglona and Joe Cruz were planning to walk out over that?
- Manglona: I already know. Joe Cruz signaled me to walk out, but no.
- Siemer: Tell me what happened about that walk out, what do you remember about it?
- Manglona: If we walk out, there will be no Constitution. That's the whole thing; that is the only thing. If we walk out, there will be no Constitution for the Islands of the Northern Marianas.
- Siemer: Had Joe Cruz and Ben Manglona been talking about a walk out with the Rota and Tinian delegates before this happened?
- Manglona: Yes, there's a conspiracy, but they don't tell me because I am one of the leaders, but I am disagreeing.
- Siemer: What was happening at the time?
- Manglona: Well, fortunately one of our colleagues, my colleague on Tinian, told me that we are going to walk out if Saipan doesn't give us what we need for Rota and Tinian. I said, what for? Since I'm the leader of the group and they bring the information, one of my colleagues brings me this, this is the plan for Rota. And Joe Cruz, one of the vocal leaders, he wants to walk out too with Rota. Because Joe Cruz always emphasized that we have been, Tinian has been shortchanged. We understand that. Because he is from Saipan, he knows what is happening to Tinian and even Rota.
- Siemer: But Tinian had only one representative under either proposal, right?
- Manglona: Yes, right, and that the point. Finally when they decided walk out, we had an executive session, remember at that time? We did have an executive session, and we discussed that in vernacular. Only all of you went out, all the consultants, remember that? Then we kind of reformed, we discussed, and ironed out our differences and everything. And that time we agreed. But the last part when they walked out, the reason why they walked out is the

- decentralization of the government. They wanted the Mayor to be the mini-governor on Rota or the Lieutenant Governor.
- Siemer: That's what was really bothering them?
- Manglona: Yes.
- Siemer: And none of the Tinian delegates walked out except Joe?
- Manglona: Joe Cruz and Steve King. Steve King walked out, but I told him to come back. And he came back.
- Siemer: He came back.
- Manglona: He came back in the afternoon. I told him, "Don't get stupid. Don't follow Joe." Joe is different.
- Willens: Do you think that Joe [Cruz] and Ben Manglona were going to walk out even though they knew that some of you would stay behind so that the Convention would go forward?
- Manglona: Ben never believed that I would stay.
- Siemer: They thought once they got up and walked that you would have to go too?
- Manglona: That I would have to go too. They never believed that I would stay. My cousin never believed me that I would stay.
- Siemer: But some of your members like Henry Hofschneider had already made speeches saying that they were in favor of 12-1-1 and that they were going to vote for it.
- Manglona: Yes. That's why they don't walk out.
- Siemer: But Ben [Manglona] thought nonetheless that you would leave and they would go. So what happened in the conspiracy. You found out about it?
- Manglona: I found out about it. It's easy. Bamboo newspaper in the Marianas very easy to communicate.
- Siemer: Did you and the other members of the Territorial Party from the Tinian Delegation meet and talk about what to do about this?
- Manglona: Yes, we did. And that's why, like I said, when Joe Cruz and Ben [Manglona] walked out for that reason, for that Amendment 25 for the Governor, we stayed and I talked to our President, the former Governor [Larry] Guerrero. We like now to discuss this, you know, our differences, and he's very receptive to our request with other Rota delegation [members].
- Siemer: Did anybody make any effort to get Joe Cruz and Ben Manglona to come back?
- Manglona: Yes, we did. I did.
- Siemer: What did you do?
- Manglona: I asked them to come back. But they expressed their discontent with what Saipan is trying to do. They expressed their discontent.
- Siemer: Were they discontented with the whole document?
- Manglona: No, only on that certain area.
- Siemer: Just the local government and the powers of the Mayor and things like that?
- Manglona: Yes, that's right, that's the only area. The others, they are okay.

- Siemer: They knew now that the Constitution was going to go ahead anyway, right?
- Manglona: Right.
- Siemer: After that walk out was over, then it was clear that there was going to be a Constitution.
- Manglona: There will be, yes.
- Siemer: It was going to be finished.
- Manglona: They never came in after that. They never showed up; they just left. Rota had four delegates left. Mostly the pro-Republican [delegates] on Rota, they left.
- Siemer: Let me ask you about a couple of other things that were part of the Rota and Tinian proposals. One was the proposal that favored capital punishment. Do you remember that one?
- Manglona: Well, you see, I think basically the idea is to prevent further higher crimes like murder. Most of the time our parents tell us that the Japanese are very harsh in their punishment and our parents are more well-behaved. They have better discipline during the Japanese time. Now it is very open for a kid and discipline is not so good.
- Siemer: That was the thought behind it?
- Manglona: Yes.
- Siemer: Another one was a proposal, this is Number 76, let me just show you this one. This is a proposal that required that all of the government meetings be opened to the public and also required that all documents that any government agency acted upon be available to everyone.
- Manglona: Well, that's an open government. And we have that kind of proposal right now in the legislation, Sunshine in Government.
- Siemer: What were you concerned about with respect to the documents? Were there things that you couldn't get from the government?
- Manglona: That is true, that is very true. Even now with Sunshine in Government, I don't think Governor Froilan Camacho Tenorio will give us the opportunity to go in and ask him about a document unless we have to pull him into court.
- Siemer: So you were concerned about that even back then?
- Manglona: Yes. During that time we are really concerned because we want the people to feel that we have an honest government.
- Siemer: Was there a sense that once you took over the government yourselves, and you were the government, that you would still have this problem that the government would not turn over papers and would not have open sessions?
- Manglona: We have experience, that's why they put in the legislation, the sunshine law. Sometimes the legislature has a session and we asked them for a document, they give us the run around to get it. Sometimes it takes a week or two to get run around, to get the document. So that's why, at the end of Governor [Pete P.] Tenorio's term, they put in the Sunshine in Government [law]. Even then, the Legislature amended the Sunshine in Government [law] for their area, for their legislative body.
- Siemer: Taking them out?
- Manglona: Away, that's what I am saying. And now the governor has to adhere to the Sunshine in

- Government and the agencies have to adhere to the Sunshine in Government, everybody except the legislature.
- Siemer: Which does not?
- Manglona: No.
- Siemer: Like our government in Washington. We have the same problem. Another one of the proposals that Rota and Tinian delegates put forward was a proposal with respect to Chamorro and Carolinian and English languages, making certain requirements with respect to those some with respect to government jobs and others with respect to education there were a number of those kinds of proposals. Were you concerned at the time that the Chamorro or Carolinian languages might die out or might become less used?
- Manglona: Yes, right now my grandchildren don't know how to speak Chamorro.
- Siemer: Your grandchildren?
- Manglona: Yes, and I get mad at my daughter who did speak good Chamorro and my grandchildren don't know how to speak Chamorro.
- Siemer: Your grandchildren speak back in English?
- Manglona: Yes, in English only. I say no, this is not right.
- Siemer: Those proposals were all sent to the Finance Committee where Ben Fitial chaired that committee. And they were all turned down. There seemed to be a general view on that committee that language requirements would not be put in the Constitution. Were your folks from Tinian satisfied with that?
- Manglona: Because at that time our leaders think that we should learn more English language. But not for our late leader, Dr. Palacios; he wants to keep the three languages still on as the official languages for the Chamorro, Carolinians and English. Dr. Palacios happened to be of Carolinian descent and Chamorro descent. And Ben Fitial is of this Carolinian descent. So in order to preserve the language of Chamorro and Carolinian, they make it possible that there is three languages that have to be spoken in the Marianas.
- Siemer: One of the other interesting pieces of the Rota and Tinian position had to do with collective bargaining and unions. The Rota delegation seemed to want to have unions in the public sector for government employees, and the Tinian delegates seemed to oppose that totally and would not sign up, although the Tinian delegates were in favor of collective bargaining in the private sector. What was it that caused that division in the two delegations?
- Manglona: As a leader of the Constitution Convention, our rationale is that if we put collective bargaining in the government, that would hamper a lot of these urgency things. But Rota [delegates] don't see that area.
- Siemer: Collective bargaining in the government can cause a lot of difficulty with the police for example or firefighters.
- Manglona: Yes, firefighters. When we need all of those emergency things, they will stop because they are on strike. And if there is a riot or fire or anything, they are going to stop. We don't believe that in government they should have unions. What they should have is their own internal policies so, if anything is wrong, the internal management policy that government should make it right, instead of going through collective bargaining by representatives to deal with with your status. I didn't believe in that.

- Siemer: You were successful, because it died and never went anywhere. Another interesting provision that the Tinian delegation supported was a classic sunset provision that all government agencies and all programs would die after three years unless they were affirmatively reauthorized by the Legislature. What was the force behind that, whose idea was that?
- Manglona: I don't recall but I am not one of that [group].
- Siemer: Let me see if I can show it to you.
- Manglona: We're talking about the 1970's to say the least.
- Siemer: I know it's a long time ago.
- Manglona: You've got more time to look into that.
- Siemer: It is Number 93 and it provides that all the government programs have to be redone, rejustified, or reauthorized every three years.
- Manglona: Joe Cruz offered this and we go through him. At the time, he made an offer. Is that actually the original offer? I see Joe Cruz [signed it] and we supported him. He asked me to support him on that.
- Siemer: Another proposal that the Tinian delegates made was that a good deal of the revenue that would be derived from various things that happened on Tinian, such as the Tinian lease, would stay on Tinian.
- Manglona: We were kind of greedy at that time. To be frank with you, we were kind of greedy. We needed that money for our development, infrastructure, you know. At that time we had, I think, the most land among the Marianas right now. But we don't have those things available on the island for infrastructure.
- Siemer: Did you think you had any chance of getting them?
- Manglona: We are getting them little by little. And now Uncle Sam would not give us any grant because of our Governor. I think he made a sorrowful decision that he doesn't need the money from the federal government and now we have to look into getting the all the money for our infrastructure. We don't have a sewer system right now although Saipan has and Rota has.
- Siemer: In the final votes on the Constitutional provisions, one of the only things that it appears that you voted against was Article 12.
- Manglona: What was Article 12?
- Siemer: Article 12 was land alienation.
- Manglona: Yes, Article 12 on land alienation.
- Siemer: What was your position on that?
- Manglona: I don't know why I voted against that one before.
- Siemer: One of the issues was how long leases ought to be.
- Manglona: Yes, yes okay. Because we want the lease to come up to 40 years at that time and where some people recommended for 25 years or 30 years. That is why.
- Siemer: You were in favor of a longer lease?
- Manglona: That is why we don't vote for that.

- Siemer: Were there other things that we haven't talked about within the First Constitutional Convention that were particularly important to you as a delegate? Other issues, different kinds of things that were particularly important? You were key in many of the discussions we have already covered, local government and how the Executive Branch would be put together. There were some other things like natural resources.
- Manglona: We think about that area, but we want to put under the statute. We like to limit the Constitution to a framework, and put it under statute. A lot of things can be put under the statutes. So we don't push too much on things that we need. We can regulate that through legislation. That's why we don't go further than that. And our good advisors, they give us all the things that we need to frame the Constitution. They gave us a lot of briefing papers on what is not necessary and we can go through the statute. What is necessary for the Constitution, we put in. So we basically gained our knowledge through that briefing paper.
- Siemer: How did you feel about those briefing papers when you received them?
- Manglona: Well, it's very thick and very complicated. It's mostly legal methodologies. You know, you have to be lawyer to be very comprehensive on that briefing paper.
- Siemer: Did you think at the time there was a better way to do that, to get all that information across to the delegates?
- Manglona: We think that briefing paper was prepared very well, but we haven't got much time to review that briefing paper, because of our limit. There is that legislation that we have to be done in Con-Con in 60 days. They should actually give us like a pre-convention study on that briefing paper. But then we are in a hurry to get all these things to come up. I think the briefing paper is a very good knowledgeable thing that we apply in our framing of our Constitution.
- Siemer: It was a lot of material though, wasn't it?
- Manglona: Yes, it was a lot of material and then fortunately we have the best lawyer maybe from the States. That he gives us all this information that we need.
- Willens: I gather from what you said that you were generally pleased with the work of the First Constitutional Convention.
- Manglona: Of course. I think amendment was so many in the Second Constitutional Convention, which was not necessary for amendment. There's an amendment there I don't agree to put in the Constitution like the five years bonus for the retirees. I think it is not necessary in the Con-Con.
- Willens: Just a stepping back now, I guess you had 20 plus years of experience when you were in the Constitutional Convention and now another 20 years have passed by. Do you generally think that the Covenant and the Constitution for the Commonwealth have been successful here?
- Manglona: Well, the Covenant is a little bit shaky because the United States is unilaterally changing the Covenant, without mutual agreement between the two governments.
- Willens: What are you referring to?
- Manglona: Well, like the legislation just to change right away without consulting leaders like immigration, they just took it away. See Mr. Gallegly, a Congressman in the States, a representative, wants to take it away without openly talking with the proper, appropriate leaders on the islands.

- Willens: I see.
- Manglona: Because that is supposed to be mutually agreed upon.
- Willens: Well, there is certainly is that threat. Do you think that the quality life in Tinian has improved?
- Manglona: Of course.
- Willens: What do you think have been the principal failures of the Covenant and the Commonwealth government?
- Manglona: Well, the failure I think, is in communication between the federal government and our state government. There is a communication problem.
- Willens: And how about the political functioning of the Executive Branch and Legislative Branch of the Commonwealth?
- Manglona: Well, you know, I will be honest with you. We Chamorros are very adaptable to what the United States wants or any nation. If that is reasonable for us, we will be accepting it. We are not that selfish. I think our leaders are not selfish to contradict the federal government.
- Willens: All right. We will conclude the interview. Thank you very much for your time and effort. Your memory is terrific and it's been a very, very enjoyable and productive interview.
- Manglona: Well, I am very pleased to be interviewed. Thank you very much.