

INTERVIEW OF DAVID Q. MARATITA

by Howard P. Willens and Deanne C. Siemer

March 29, 1995

- Willens: David Maratita has a long distinguished history with the political institutions of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas and was a delegate to the First Constitutional Convention in 1976. Thank you, David for agreeing to be available for this project.
- Siemer: Could you tell us at the start something about your family background, your father's family and your mother's family?
- Maratita: Okay, first let me start by saying I was born in Rota, one of the islands in the Northern Marianas, on November 2, 1937. Right after the war, in 1950, I went to Guam. I was sponsored by a priest in Guam. There was an arrangement made by the Reverend Father Camalis Murphy who was the pastor in Rota at the time, 1950. Of course, it was the first time for me to be off-island and my father, Delgado and my mother, Anna, were reluctant to let me go because I was young at the time. But it was something that I felt very important because it afforded me the opportunity to be off-island and attend the grade school in Dededo. In 1950 I attended Santa Barbara Catholic Grade School in Dededo at the time. Then in 1955 I moved from there to Sinajana and that is where I attended public school and I graduated from elementary school and then went on to attend George Washington High School, Senior High School. I graduated in 1958 from George Washington High School. I thought about attending the College of Guam at the time. I took several courses in the evening and at the same time I was working in Guam. I became a permanent resident in 1958. At the time, Rota was a separate district and there was opportunity to be granted a scholarship. There were several attempts made by the Commissioner of Rota at the time who was Mr. Mendiola. And he convinced me to apply for a Trust Territory scholarship and then Dr. Gibson who was the Director of Education at the time also encouraged me to apply. Fortunately I was accepted. In 1960 I was granted that general scholarship with the Trust Territory government and I was the first scholarship student coming from Rota to be granted that assistance. I was one of the four students elected out of the Trust Territory, one from Pohnpei, one from Garapan, one from Truk, and me from Rota. We were sent as the first Trust Territory scholarship students to the University of the Philippines. Actually I was hoping that I could get a scholarship and attend college in the States. I was accepted already at the Sate College in Humana. But the only available scholarship for me was for the general scholarship that would have us go to attend the University of the Philippines. So I took that scholarship and I graduated in 1964. There was no job waiting for me in Rota when I returned so I had to go to Saipan in 1964. In January 1965 I began working for the Marianas District. Mr. Gallamore was the Administrator at the time.
- Willens: Who was that?
- Maratita: Mr. Gallamore, Roy Gallamore, was the District Administrator. And then with George Davis who was the Island Development Officer at the time. The Island Development Office is responsible for all of the economic development activities in general. So George Davis was able to hire me. That was my first time working for the Trust Territory government in January 1965. My first involvement in politics was when I was appointed to replace the district legislator from Rota. The First District Legislature began in 1963. Prudencio Manglona was appointed as the Administrator in Rota so he gave up his seat in

that First District Legislature. So I was appointed to replace him and I became a member of the First District Legislature in 1963 representing Rota. That was my time in politics. In 1965 I made Saipan my residence and then in 1968, when the District Legislature election was held for the Second Legislature, I was elected as one of the first three members of what we called then the Territorial Party. At the time, in Saipan you had the Popular Party and the Territorial Party. That was my first elective position. Out of three members of the Territorial Party I was elected one of the top three members of Legislature. And I served there almost all through out the term of the District Legislature. In 1972 I was also serving there in Saipan as District Assistant Economic Development Officer.

Siemer: The District Legislature was part-time at that time?

Maratita: Right.

Willens: As I understand it you were studying at the University of the Philippines from 1960-1964 and then you returned to Saipan in 1965. Were you appointed you fill a vacancy in the District Legislature then in 1965 or 1966?

Maratita: Yes, 1965.

Willens: And you did not have to run for office until 1968?

Maratita: 1968.

Willens: How did it happen that you became affiliated with the Territorial Party?

Maratita: Olympio Borja was very active in politics at the time and we had a close relationship at work. He convinced me to follow him in his political affiliation so I followed him and that's why. Then during the [party] convention, I was one of the people selected to be candidate at the time in 1968.

Siemer: Was the Maratita family a large family in Rota?

Maratita: Yes, the Maratita family is large in Rota.

Siemer: How long had your father's family been in Rota?

Maratita: I think it's been there quite a long time.

Siemer: How about your mother's family, what was their family name?

Maratita: Quitigua. The Quitigua family is not very big. My mother and her three sisters all belong to that Quitigua family.

Siemer: Were there any of your family relatives who were in politics in Rota?

Maratita: I guess we had some cousins, second cousins who were in politics at the time, but I myself was the first to be actively in politics.

Siemer: What did your father do for a living?

Maratita: My father was a police officer at the time; a Trust Territory police officer.

Siemer: What was your first job when you went to work for the TT government?

Maratita: My first job was I was appointed as the Agricultural Economist for the Marianas District.

Siemer: The Agricultural Economist?

Maratita: Yes.

Siemer: Who did you work for then?

- Maratita: I worked for the Marianas District that was Mr. Roy Gallamore who was the District Administrator at the time. The Island Development Office is, as I mentioned, involved economic development, agriculture, natural resources, business, and development.
- Willens: What were your principal challenges as an Agricultural Development Specialist at that point?
- Maratita: We were able to establish the first agriculture cooperatives on Rota, Saipan and Tinian.
- Willens: Was there very much future in agriculture on Saipan?
- Maratita: At the time most of the people there were working for the Trust Territory government in Saipan, and then any of us want to have a job, its available. Agriculture then was sort of just a part-time job for those who, you know, could spare time from working for the government. When we were in agriculture, we tried to insist that, you know, growing your own crops at least for local consumption and also for export. And at the time, Rota, Saipan and Tinian were exporting produce to Guam and we had some sort of an arrangement with the Navy to buy the agricultural produce from all three islands. But Rota and Tinian mostly were the ones with agriculture because Saipan was very developed, you know.
- Willens: Did you have any contact during the 1965, 1966 time period with the study group that was sent out by Robert Nathan and Associates under contract with the TTPI to conduct an overall survey?
- Maratita: Yes, I was there. But they were in headquarters, Trust Territory headquarters. But they did meet some contacts locally in Saipan.
- Willens: Do you have any recollection of the kinds of recommendations that they proposed?
- Maratita: Not off-hand right now but they made some very good recommendations as far as the overall economic development in general in the Trust Territory. I didn't follow it because Mr. Davis was the Island Development Officer they had to consult. You know, we have the District offices and then headquarters so most of the time they spent their time with headquarters and then whatever the districts needed to contribute was channeled through the Trust Territory headquarters. That was Mr. Joe Straker and then Raymond Jeffrey.
- Willens: Was he brought into the TTPI headquarters?
- Maratita: TTPI, right.
- Willens: One of the principal observations of the Nathan study group was that the most promising industry for development on Saipan was the tourist industry. Did you have any sense at the time in the 1960's that tourism might be the most promising area for economic development?
- Maratita: Yes, as a matter of fact I was one of those very first people that viewed tourism as a primary economic development section. I was a member of the Marianas Tourism Commission that was created by the Legislature. I think it was the Second Legislature or Third Marianas Legislature. But I was one of the first five members appointed by the District Administrator to be a member of the Marianas Tourism Commission. I think it is farsighted that the District Legislature created the Marianas District Tourism Bureau and expanded its authority. With the development of tourism in Guam, and we were in contact with Mr. Rex Wills in Guam.
- Willens: Who is this?
- Maratita: Rex Wills, he was the person in charge of tourism in Guam.

- Willens: There were some feelings among the political leaders on Saipan during the 1960's that the TTPI headquarters was not very supportive of aggressive economic development on Saipan. Do you have recollection as to whether there was a difference of view between the TTPI headquarters on the one hand and the Marianas political leadership on the other as to economic development?
- Maratita: Yes, I think there was that because of Saipan being the Trust Territorial ship, you know, the government. There was not much say as far as the participation of the local people. But I think with the creation of the District Legislature that we got more opportunities for the local people to be involved with tourism. We concentrated on that effort, the tourism development.
- Willens: Was it your sense at the time in the middle 1960's that the people on Saipan wanted to move more rapidly than the headquarters personnel wanted them to?
- Maratita: Yes. We would like to move very rapidly. The first hotel was built in Saipan in 1967 and that added the spark for local participation that they want to see something like that. And with the presence of that hotel and then the additional of the shopping center the coming of Townhouse that really added to, you know, to the people who say we can do it if given assistance from the Trust Territory government.
- Willens: One of the differences between the Popular Party and the Territorial Party in the 1960's was that both parties wanted to be part of the United States but the Popular Party wanted to do it via reintegration with Guam and the Territorial Party wanted to do it by direct relationship with the United States. Did you take any position on that issue?
- Maratita: As a matter of fact, I was very vocal at the time about it. I wanted to be affiliated with the United States, but on a more direct path than being affiliated with Guam. At the time it was the thinking of the Territorial Party too, that it was more to our benefit if we were to do it directly with the United States than, you know, with Guam being an unincorporated territory.
- Willens: Why was it that the Territorial Party thought that reintegration with Guam would not be in the interest of the Northern Marianas?
- Maratita: At the time, we failed because of the burden that might be placed on Guam. People were saying that if we were to join with Guam they [the Guamanians] said it would be a burden to them. We indicated to them if that is the case then we would try to deal directly, if we are given the opportunity, with the United States government. In one of the referendums, we were asked that question whether we would like to do that reunite with Guam. And the voters, the Popular Party, you know, they said they want to do that. But then when there was a similar referendum with Guam, I think it was in 1969, it was the reverse. The people say in Guam, they don't want the Marianas. That was the start of a more unified attitude in the Marianas. Our people say okay now that Guam didn't want us to join so let's do it our way and from then on I think even the Popular Party tried to shift their attitude from joining Guam and then do it as the Territorial Party had been advocating earlier.
- Willens: At that point, after 1969, the principal difference between the two parties with respect to political status appears to be whether the Northern Marianas ought to seek its own separate relationship with the United States or whether it would remain part of the Sixth District and seek to achieve some common political relationship with the United States. Did you have any view at the time as to whether the Northern Marianas should take its own separate course or whether it would be better off by staying with the other districts?

- Maratita: Yes. At the time I was in the position of shifting from the Territorial to the Popular Party and I was with the Popular Party feeling that it would be best if we could do it with the Marianas alone rather than being with the rest of the Trust Territory. So that was also the position of the Popular Party, that we can do it ahead of the other Trust Territory districts. We were trying [to negotiate] before it [the other districts] becomes Micronesia. And we felt that if we have to wait for the rest of the Trust Territory to make that decision then I think we should try to do it on our own. And with that, from that feeling, you know 1969, 1970, 1972 finally when this there was a resolution that came from the Congress of Micronesia and also the District Legislature that we can do it our political status and that was the trend.
- Willens: Did you change your affiliation with political parties at about the same time Senator Borja did?
- Maratita: Yes, as a matter of fact, as I said he influenced my joining the Territorial Party, I followed him when he went to the Popular Party. And then after we joined the Popular Party there was a misunderstanding or something happened again, then Senator Borja went back to the Territorial Party. But I didn't follow him. Back then there was less frequent switching, there was stereotyping, you know, that once you changed parties then you don't feel that you can be it. Let's say you cannot be trusted.
- Siemer: Both you and Senator Borja ran for the First Con-Con as Popular Party candidates?
- Maratita: Yes. So but then when he shifted again and rejoined the Territorial Party and I said, "Well I am sorry Oly, I think we still remain friends but I just have to stick to the Popular Party." Since that time I may not have been very active but I am still a Democrat. When we ran for the First Con-Con in 1976 we were saying it was a non-partisan election but candidates from the Republicans and from the Democrats are easily identified as backed by the political party. Yet I mean it was obvious that although it was non-partisan the people were getting support from the two parties.
- Willens: One of the reasons that Senator Borja changed his affiliation was that the Congress of Micronesia representatives rejected as so-called commonwealth proposal that the United States presented in 1970. And although Senator Borja said he didn't agree with all aspects of the commonwealth proposal he thought that it provided a basis for negotiations and that his constituents of the Northern Marianas would support some such relationship with the United States. The Congress of Micronesia took a firmer position and they articulated something called "The Four Principles" and were striving with a relationship called "free association." Did you begin to formulate your views at that time that perhaps the Marianas might be better off going separately?
- Maratita: That was my view. And we at the time said, "If we could do it, maintaining at the same time that it could be done with the other districts if they also could decide that they wanted the same sort of political affiliation." But then as the differences were more apparent, the Marianas were really working towards that goal [affiliation with the United States] and the rest of the Micronesia is not. So I supported the option that the Marianas are taking at the time. And although we were hoping that we could do it as one [political entity], it could not work that way. And as you know, the education for self-government [program in] the Trust Territory was very supportive of Micronesia as a whole, as far as the political status that the people would like to see Micronesia develop.
- Willens: Were you employed by the District Administration at the time?
- Maratita: All the time.

- Willens: Do you recall the burning of the Congress of Micronesia buildings in February of 1971?
- Maratita: That's right.
- Willens: What was your reaction to that at the time?
- Maratita: I was working for the Trust Territory in the Public Affairs Department. My reaction when they were burning the place, I think that something was done in the sense that more emphasis was given that the people of the Northern Marianas don't want do it the way the rest of Micronesia is doing it. So I don't know whether that really is an appropriate way of letting the United States know what they desire. It was an action that I think made the people of the Marianas more aware of the political future they want.
- Willens: Did the Marianas leadership in the Popular Party believe that the High Commissioner and his Cabinet were basically opposed to separate status for the Marianas?
- Maratita: Yes. They prefer seeing Micronesia as one [political entity].
- Willens: Who did, the High Commissioner?
- Maratita: Yes, I think the High Commissioner at the time. What was his name?
- Willens: Johnston.
- Maratita: Johnston. That would be more appropriate, the Trust Territory feels. But as I said, there was a demonstration by the people led by the Popular Party at the time.
- Willens: Did District Administrator Ada express any views about whether separate status for the Northern Marianas was a good idea?
- Maratita: No, I don't think he made any public remarks.
- Willens: You don't think he did?
- Maratita: I don't think he did. I am not sure whether Frank did that. But maybe as a government official he had to maintain the status quo of the Trust Territory in general.
- Siemer: What jobs did you have at the Trust Territory at that time?
- Maratita: I was the Public Affairs Officer for the district. I was first employed as a Public Economist, then as the District Economic Development Officer. Then when Camacho was elected to the Congress, the Public Affairs position became vacant. So I was promoted to that position in 1970. I was in Public Affairs in from 1970 until 1978 when the administration became a Commonwealth.
- Siemer: You said that you started out as an agricultural economist. Was that your field of study when you were in the Philippines?
- Maratita: Yes. Of course when you have the opportunity for promotion you take it. I was promoted to Economic Development Officer when Senator Borja left the position for the Congress of Micronesia and it became full-time. In 1969 I was appointed the Economic Development Officer until 1974.
- Siemer: When the District Legislature became full-time then as a Trust Territory employee you couldn't serve as a District Legislator?
- Maratita: Yes. When the District Legislature became full-time, you cannot be working as an employee of the Trust Territory at the same time.
- Willens: Were you a member of the District Legislature in 1972 when it created the Marianas Political Status Commission?

- Maratita: No. I had resigned. But I was there. I was very much involved by way of liaison between the District Administrator and the District Legislature. Public Affairs at the time was set up to have four divisions, Legislative Liaison, Opportunity Development, Civic Affairs, and Broadcasting. So we were handling the four functions of Public Affairs.
- Willens: Who were some of the other Marianas people you worked with in Public Affairs?
- Maratita: In Public Affairs, we had Hugh Adam who is in charge the Division of Community Development, Jack Torres who is in charge of the Legislative Affairs, Rudy Sablan who is in charge of broadcasting, and Sus Sonota in Civic Affairs.
- Willens: What is his name?
- Maratita: Sonota.
- Willens: Did you have an impression at the time in 1972 that the Marianas Political Status Commission was an appropriate mechanism to represent the Marianas people in these negotiations?
- Maratita: Yes.
- Willens: Did you think it was representative of all the interests on the island?
- Maratita: Well, I would say it has a good composition. Of course, at a time when you have various interests, you know, most of the appointments were sort of one-sided or selective. But to me I think it was quite fair representation.
- Willens: There was some feeling expressed at the time that the politics was dominated by the Popular Party and that they were therefore more or less running the affairs.
- Maratita? No, but as I said it was my feeling at the time it was well represented. You have Carolinians, you got Rota, you got Tinian, and that's how at the time I was bringing in public affairs. In general, I think the composition of the Political Status Commission was done appropriately all the time.
- Willens: Just a few questions about the education for self-government program. After the Marianas Political Status Commission had conducted two or three rounds of negotiations the outline of a possible commonwealth relationship became very fairly clear and was published by Joint Communiqués to the public. Education for self-government was a program sponsored and run by the TTPI Administration and necessarily had to present a full array of possible status alternatives to the citizens of all six districts. The documents suggest that there were some conflicts between the ESG program and the goals of the Marianas Political Status Commission within the Northern Marianas. What can you remember about that conflict and how it was resolved?
- Maratita: I chaired the committee for the Marianas District. Knowing that the preparation of the documentation had to be standard for all six districts, we had the feeling that although the Marianas were proposing something different, the education for self-government should be standard. We were explaining on radio and in publications the basis of self-government. But at the same time it was true that [there was a] feeling that we should concentrate [in the Marianas] on something of our own. There was expression during the time from even a few members of the committee saying why are we concentrating ourselves on this ESG for the Trust Territory and not on our own [status proposal]. But I think the mandate at the time that was given to the committee was to prepare materials on the several options that the Trust Territory was looking to.
- Willens: Did you ever make any changes in ESG program for the Northern Marianas?

- Maratita: No, we didn't.
- Siemer: You chaired the committee for the program in the Northern Marianas? Who served with you?
- Maratita: Yes. For the Northern Marianas, it was Ben Fitial, Jack Torres, and also members from Rota and Tinian. We tried to do our very best and I made presentations as to what we had been given as far as the Trust Territory is concerned. We did it objectively in the sense that's what the government wanted us to do. But yet at the same time there was that feeling that if we were allowed to do our own [program] for the Northern Marianas then we could just concentrate on our own [political status] and not bother with the Trust Territory. I think Sam McPhetres, who at the time was also working for the Trust Territory, had the feeling he knew already that there's a feeling that the Northern Marianas want something different but yet we are doing on it on Trust Territory-wide basis. That was in 1974. When we had the Northern Marianas government separated from the Trust Territory government in 1976, then it became our goal in the Northern Marianas to promote what we were aspiring to. When we had the Northern Marianas election in June 1975 we were working with Mr. Canham. So we in public affairs were very active at the time also in promoting the goals of the Northern Marianas.
- Willens: During the negotiations and before the Covenant was signed in February 1975, did you and your public affairs staff have any responsibility to advise the citizens of the Northern Marianas as to what was happening in the negotiations and what the proposal issues are?
- Maratita: Not in the direct sense, because the Political Status Commission had its own public relations staff. But we are in a way expanding what has been developed under the Commission. They had their own presentations they sent people to conduct meetings in the various districts, I mean villages.
- Willens: That was the principal way the Commission tried to ensure citizens of the Northern Marianas were fully informed during the negotiations and before the vote on the Covenant?
- Maratita: Well, I think as far as I am concerned, I say that there's been a fair explanation. I don't know exactly how Rota and Tinian fared at the time because the Political Status Commission had its own staff that goes around and explains the negotiations. And that I think the feeling in Saipan at the time was that they were ready. They are waiting now for whatever the negotiation has agreed upon. There was opposition, you know, those who are not in favor of the negotiations and the status we are going to. Of course, they have their agenda trying to say that they are opposing the negotiations. And likewise I think in Rota and Tinian. In Tinian at the time, Mayor Mendiola was involved in that.
- Willens: Do you recall him as being opposed to the Covenant?
- Maratita: I believe so. James had some way of coming up with a demonstration or something like that. But, they opposed the negotiation. I don't know exactly whether or not because of the agreement reached as far as Tinian is concerned. Perhaps that was the gist of their opposition. But in preparing the Northern Marianas as a whole, I think the Status Commission was successful in informing the people.
- Willens: Did I understand that you were assigned to work with Mr. Canham?
- Maratita: Yes.
- Willens: And that was when he became the Plebiscite Commissioner?
- Maratita: Plebiscite Commissioner.

- Willens: One of the issues that has been raised is whether there was enough time between the signing of the Covenant and the plebiscite in June of 1975 to do the necessary political education to prepare the people to vote on that very important issue.
- Maratita: I think that's a subject that has been much discussed. Perhaps there was quite a lot of education developed between the negotiation and the signing the Covenant and that education prepared the people as to what they were voting on. I feel that there was enough time elapsed, you know, between when the new Covenant was signed and then when the people voted on whether they approved it.
- Willens: What did you do exactly working for Mr. Canham?
- Maratita: We did some radio programming. The radio was government-operated. We had this constant explanation to the people as far as their concerns on the Covenant. We had roles as far as let's say in radio broadcasting and the preparation for the plebiscite itself. The office was very much involved.
- Willens: Could you describe for us your impressions of Mr. Canham and his contribution to this process?
- Maratita: I believe that Mr. Canham was a good choice to be the Resident Commissioner during the transition. I think having a person like that and he more or less conducted the transition from 1975 to 1978 and the time of the establishment of the new government and he represented the United States position I think that was acceptable.
- Willens: Was he generally respected by not only the proponents of the Covenant but also the opponents of the Covenant?
- Maratita: Yes. That's my view of Mr. Canham. As far as directing the affairs of the Northern Marianas District government, I think it was acceptable.
- Willens: What did you perceive to be in 1975 the principal grounds for opposing the Covenant?
- Maratita: I really did not see much in the opposition. In my view at the time the opposition was just created in a sense that they want to oppose. Those who do not want to become part of the United States, and the very benefits of being a American citizen and all that. So it was a feeling that something just had to be, you know, formed, formalized, I mean created so that they would have opposition views that they don't want to be part of the United States.
- Willens: There was some opposition in the Carolinian community. Did you think the majority of the Carolinians were opposed to the future status?
- Maratita: There was perhaps a feeling that they would like to see the whole of Micronesia doing the same thing, not for the Northern Marianas to be separate. I am sure this is part of the affiliation of the Carolinian custom and all that. They still want to maintain that feeling of being part of the rest of Micronesia. That was my view as to why there was heavier opposition on the part of the Carolinians.
- Willens: Some of the opposition seemed to have come from influential business interests in the Northern Marianas who feared that the new status might bring in competition of the kind that they would find challenging. Did you sense that to be the case?
- Maratita: Yes, that was true.
- Willens: How do you think that has unfolded?

- Maratita: I think it was not proven out. Not many U.S. businesses came in right away and established in Saipan. It was a gradual growth and development. So the fear, I think it was unfounded. If we are allowed to become U.S. citizens, we have a lot of the status that came right away and U.S. businesses came but that didn't happen right away. We were saying that we feared U.S. citizens coming to the Marianas and it's the other way around that we allow non-U.S. citizens or aliens to come here. I think that we cannot blame the political status decisions for that. I think I am safe to say that part of that is the result of our own doing. You know, that the politicians want to have our cake and eat it, too. The problems that we are having now about aliens seem to be out of control. That could be the blamed on our own politicians.
- Willens: David, did you have any responsibilities with respect to the representation of the Marianas before the U.S. Congress when the U.S. Congress was considering whether to approve the Covenant?
- Maratita: No, sir.
- Willens: Did you ever go back as part of a delegation to meet with them?
- Maratita: No.
- Willens: At that time you were still in your position as Public Affairs Officer?
- Maratita: Yes. I never became a part of whatever delegations we had to go to the United States. I was purely on the administrative support side so I did anything that the Resident Commissioner's office was involved in. We would try to provide the input that we were asked for.
- Willens: Did you have any personal experience in dealing with Ambassador Williams or members of the U.S. delegation?
- Maratita: No, not directly.
- Willens: Then did you end up working at any time in 1975 and 1976 with former Congressman Neiman Craley?
- Maratita: Yes, Neiman. Because of his position as Public Affairs Director in the Trust Territory, we became close because I took care of the district level and he was in charge of the Trust Territory level.
- Willens: Was he given responsibilities to work directly with Mr. Canham?
- Maratita: Yes, I think there was an assignment made that Neiman would be helping Mr. Canham. I understand that was through an arrangement with the Department of the Interior. But I worked with him closely.
- Willens: Did Mr. Craley have any definite views as to the wisdom of separate political status for the Northern Marianas?
- Maratita: No, I never had the opportunity to discuss it in our relationship.
- Willens: Okay, why don't we then turn to the Constitutional Convention.
- Siemer: In July of 1975 the Micronesian Constitutional Convention met in Saipan. Did you have anything to do with that?
- Maratita: Well, the responsibility for the Micronesian Constitutional Convention was placed under the Department of Public Affairs in the Trust Territory headquarters. We had a delegation elected from the Northern Marianas. I think Senator Borja was a member of the Micronesian Constitutional Convention. Just on a support basis our office was involved

- because, it was held in Saipan. But as far as any input for the Micronesian Constitutional Convention, we lacked any say-so in that.
- Siemer: Did anything come out of the Micronesian Constitutional Convention that later affected your work with the First Constitutional Convention for the Commonwealth?
- Maratita: No.
- Siemer: There were a number of deadlocks that the Micronesian Constitutional Convention ran into that ultimately they were not able to resolve. Was the Marianas Convention aware that they needed to avoid these kinds of deadlocks and actually get to a Constitution?
- Maratita: I think that in a sense the feeling was carried over. The people who were involved in the First Constitutional Convention were aware that there was that block feeling about the representation of Rota and Tinian at the time. As the result even went into a walk out, you know that. But it is a feeling on my part. I was representing Saipan at the time as a delegate. Being born in Rota, I was kind of caught in between. When they said they wanted to walk out, they asked me "How come you aren't going to walk out with us?" I said to Ben Manglona, "Sorry Ben although I was born in Rota, I am representing Saipan and I have to give [my loyalty] to the people that elected me."
- Siemer: So there was some pressure on you, being born in Rota, to walk out with the Rota delegation?
- Maratita: Yes, there was that pressure but I had to let them know that its a decision that I have to make and I am not going to walk out because I feel that I have to stay in the overall interest of the Convention.
- Siemer: Was it Ben Manglona who approached you about the walk out?
- Maratita: Well, as they were walking out and they said, "How come you are not going to follow?" And then later after that when we meet I said, "I am sorry but I didn't follow you because I am representing Saipan." I told Ben and I said, "Ben, I am sorry I did not go. I was born in Rota, but I am representing Saipan." I knew that they probably have a feeling towards me at the time because I didn't support them. I made it clear that I was representing Saipan.
- Siemer: In 1975, the District Legislature started to consider legislation to establish the Constitutional Convention and there was a good deal of debate about whether representation here in Saipan should be in at-large election or by districts, do you remember any of that?
- Maratita: Yes, I remember that there were several debates as to whether to go by municipal districts. There were 10 districts or 11 districts, 10 districts at that time. I think the argument was that they don't want to sectionalize the representation. They want to make the Convention delegates at-large. I remember that there was a lot of compromise.
- Siemer: One of the results of electing delegates at-large might be that the Carolinians would not get represented.
- Maratita: But again I think that was a mistake. The Territorial Party did a good job of including many Carolinians as candidates; equally the Popular Party also. The Carolinians in the First Con-Con were well represented.
- Siemer: Mr. Canham was particularly concerned about the Carolinian representation, and he vetoed the First Con-Con bill that the Legislature produced. The Legislature went back and produced another one just like it, and he vetoed it again. Did Canham discuss his reasons for doing that?
- Maratita: I cannot recall off-hand.

- Siemer: Was there a difference between the political parties as to whether it should be at-large or by districts?
- Maratita: Yes. I think both parties feared that it would be at-large. If they go by district, the Territorial [Party] was saying they will always have a Carolinian voice in San Jose and Tanapag. These are the two districts where we have Carolinians heavily populated.
- Siemer: What made you decided to run for delegate?
- Maratita: Well, I thought as to the Constitutional Convention that maybe the experience I had so far in political development and the kind of participation that I can contribute will give the people a choice. Here's one person that has had experience working as a member of the District Legislature with legislation and all that. Our office [in the Trust Territory government] was involved in the response to legislation introduced in the District Legislature. I have had some participation in that by putting forward my views on what I feel that the Legislature is about and the legislation is about as well as from the legal aspect, the legal nature of the legislation that would cause perhaps the District Attorney and the Attorney General to look over the bill. But, as I said, I think that I can contribute something and I said to myself, why not? I like to participate if the people so desired me to be their delegate and elected me.
- Siemer: How did you go about becoming a delegate?
- Maratita: You put in your interest that you want to become a candidate and then the Central Committee will recommend you if they feel that you have the potential to be elected. The Central Committee selected you.
- Siemer: What do you recall about the selection process?
- Maratita: I remember there was a gathering and everybody was asked to say something.
- Siemer: So you got up and talked about your background and things like that?
- Maratita: Well, I think that everybody felt that they saw me in action every day. I was in the public affairs position. Anything as far as the district was concerned, I was there.
- Siemer: What you actually do to get elected?
- Maratita: Of course, you have to have your own individual campaigning. But then as a group we had to follow a schedule of campaigning in the municipal districts. You had your supporters so when there was a campaign gathering for Con-Con delegates, obviously all of the members of the Popular Party would be there cheering and all.
- Siemer: Was there somebody who managed that schedule?
- Maratita: Yes, there was a sort of a campaign committee. And, of course, we were making it appear that it is not really a political campaign. We were always careful at the time to say this group is not the campaign for the Popular Party or the campaign for the Territorial Party. Being non-partisan per se, but in principle you have people behind the Democrat, Popular Party and people behind the Territorial Party. So that's how we managed our first Con-Con campaign.
- Siemer: How was your number actually drawn? Did you go down and draw the number yourself?
- Maratita: Yes. The Board of Elections had asked us to come in and pick our number. I remember that I came in about fourth place in the overall standing. But there were more delegates elected from the Territorial Party.

- Siemer: What do you recall of your own interaction with the Pre-Convention Committee? Did you tell them what committee you wanted to be on?
- Maratita: It was kind of political. The Territorial Party was given the chairmanship and they assigned people where they wanted in the various committees. I would have liked to have been in some of the committees. But it was kind of frustrating if you are from the Popular Party. And we found ourselves meeting, calling ourselves together and saying this is not fair and I think we ought to not attend the committee meetings and all that. Of course, that was as a group but then you still have the individual participation. You still you feel you have to be there. Not as a member of the Democratic Party, but as an elected delegate representing the people who elected you.
- Siemer: You personally proposed a number of delegate proposals that were key to the debates and I wanted to ask you about a couple of them. One very controversial proposal that you made was No. 32 that prohibited local government.
- Maratita: Okay this was to prohibit having Saipan, Tinian and Rota in existence as separate units. And my feeling at the time was that if we can maintain the central government rather than you are Saipan, Tinian or Rota we can treat the whole unit as one and provide the same services in Saipan, Rota and Tinian. So that was my feeling at the time; prohibit local government and have one unit of central government.
- Siemer: Do you remember when you made this proposal you made quite a lengthy and elegant speech on the floor. And there was immediate response from Ben Manglona and Joe Cruz and others. Did they also talk to you in private to try to dissuade from this proposal?
- Maratita: They said, I don't think we going to get equal treatment. They didn't see it the way I saw it at the time, that Rota would be getting same treatment as Tinian. They had the view that it has been established during the District Legislature that Rota and Tinian are always are getting the blunt end. Saipan has always had better treatment. My feeling at the time was that Rota or Tinian or Saipan didn't have that feeling of togetherness. In other words, if they didn't have a local government, they wouldn't get their share. You couldn't just have one central government that is responsible for all. That's why we got rid of the municipal councils in the first Con-Con.
- Siemer: You were successful in part because you did get rid of the Municipal Councils. This proposal was sent to the Finance Committee you will recall which was chaired by Ben Fitial. Several of the young Saipanese delegates thought this proposal was wonderful and they fought very hard to get your proposal through. But in the end the Finance Committee endorsed a proposal which was a compromise between your proposal and a proposal for full local government by having only mayors.
- Maratita: Yes, I remember that. That was the compromise. But I said since I am in a small island community, I thought that we should no longer view ourselves as the Rota or Tinian or Saipan local government. We created a Commonwealth, so instead of creating another layer of government we have to have one government. Right now we have a mayor, the municipal councils, the resident department heads and all that.
- Siemer: What did you think the chances were for this proposal when you first made it?
- Maratita: I saw a really great chance. But I remember that we when we went to debate that, the number of senators became a key question. We were drawing so many magic numbers as to what we need for representation, whether one needs two or three or five. We came down to three.

- Siemer: You made a proposal with respect to that as well which was successful. This is proposal No. 15 in which you outline what you thought the Legislative Branch should look like and by in large that proposal was enacted. You were the one you proposed the 3-3-3 composition for the Senate and once that was proposed there was relatively little opposition to that. Was it your view at the time that the 3-3-3 composition of the Senate would protect the smaller islands sufficiently?
- Maratita: As I said we were throwing around what number really would be appropriate. Let's say being the U.S. Congress has two senators from each state, we would also draw the composition of the Senate to be two from Rota, two from Saipan, two from Tinian. And I said perhaps maybe if I offered three maybe that could work. Others favored a different composition that you have three, I mean why not five or why not two. So it was just a compromise that I requested three from each island.
- Siemer: The Government Institutions Committee that you sat on adopted your proposal for the upper house and proposed for the lower house in the first instance a 25-3-2 plan, 25 for Saipan, three for Rota, two for Tinian because of the one man, one vote requirements. What do you recall of the public hearings with respect to that proposal? Did you attend the public hearings?
- Maratita: Yes, I think that again was just a compromise. What I mean is if we have to do it by population, why not only one one Rota, one Tinian.
- Siemer: What was the response from the Rota and Tinian delegates when the one [House member limit] was proposed?
- Maratita: They wanted four, I think. Four Rota, four Tinian. I remember quite clearly Joe Cruz said if we elect one, we elect Joe. Joe was drawing on his experience in the District Legislature, and his experience that as just one member from Tinian, it was hard to accomplish anything. I think when we were establishing the representatives in our districts, we were using the number of 1,000 [population] per representative.
- Siemer: We were trying to balance the one man, one vote requirements with the desires of the Rota and Tinian delegates for more than one representative. When you made your local government proposal to do away with local government, the leadership of the Rota and Tinian delegations immediately came back with a proposal for elected lieutenant governors for each island. Do you remember that?
- Maratita: I remember that. Again you know if we have to accept the lieutenant governor proposal, then we will get rid of the mayors. We decided on that position among ourselves, the Democrats. I remember Governor Camacho brought us together and said, "Let's try to counteract this. If we have to have elected lieutenant governors, then let's rid of the mayors. Why do we have both elected lieutenant governors, when you have the mayors?"
- Siemer: Did the Popular Party delegates generally favor a smaller government?
- Maratita: Yes.
- Siemer: And that was certainly thrown out when the . . .
- Maratita: I think I remember Delegate Villagomez was very strong on that.
- Siemer: He was responsible for consistently bringing up a smaller lower house which ultimately became the issue on which Rota and Tinian walked out.
- Maratita: I remember that.
- Siemer: Can you remember the rationale that the Rota and Tinian folks had for preferring a

- lieutenant governor who could coordinate services on the island as opposed to a mayor who could propose budget?
- Maratita: I think by having a lieutenant governor on the Tinian and Rota it elevated the status. And by having a lieutenant governor on Tinian and Rota then with Saipan where you have the governor, dealing with lieutenant governors, they have that direct linkage of communication.
- Siemer: So they thought it was a higher status.
- Maratita: Right. Basically that is what happened to Governor Camacho having to establish an office of the governor's representative. They want to deal directly with the governor, not the mayor. By establishing the lieutenant governor's office and elevating the status there, you don't deal with the mayor.
- Siemer: That issue proved to be very difficult to resolve it came up in a number of different ways and came up in a number of different contexts. Who were the Saipan delegates who in your view helped the most to get that issue resolved?
- Maratita: I remember Danny Muna for one and I don't know about Frank Palacios but I remember that he was involved.
- Siemer: In the final analysis one of the only provisions of the Constitution that you voted against in the recorded votes which affected the final Constitution was Article 14 which has to do with natural resources. Do you recall why you voted against that?
- Maratita: Natural resources?
- Siemer: Was there a particular issue that you were concerned about at the time?
- Maratita: I don't recall. I did oppose the Carolinian office.
- Siemer: The Executive Assistant for the Carolinian Affairs. Tell us about your position with respect to that.
- Maratita: Well, my position was based on principle in the sense if we were recognize a minority by the establishment of an office in the Governor's discretion, that is okay, but not a constitutional provision. By establishing a constitutional office in essence my view at the time was that we are recognizing one particular ethnic group that would further its position say relative others in our society. You know if we have to establish a Carolinian Affairs Office, then later we will have to have Chamorro Affairs Office then we will have other said offices. So my contention at the time was that I don't think we should provide something in the Constitution that would indicate that we are segregating groups. You know there is no need for an ethnic group to have special recognition in the Constitution.
- Siemer: You had a lot of support for that position.
- Maratita: Yes, but then finally in the voting I think it was only myself and a few others who opposed.
- Siemer: There was very little emphasis on special treatment for the Carolinians in the first part of the Constitutional Convention when the committees were working and drafts were being proposed. It seemed that all of those provisions came after the public hearings. Was there something that occurred during that period that affected the Carolinian outlook on what they should get out of the Constitution?

- Maratita: Yes, I think during the public hearings that there were remarks or questions raised by the Carolinians. The way I personally felt during all of the public meetings is that we should not look ourselves as starting some sort of division. We are all the same, we are as one people Chamorro or Carolinian. I remember speaking in Chamorro and I said, "My brothers-in-law are Carolinians. Both of my twin sisters are married to Carolinians but I don't look at them as Carolinian. I treat as an equal anyone who is married to my sisters." So I said remember this. Felix Rabauliman said we have to cooperate on the Constitution.
- Siemer: Was there any expression of a view that the Carolinians might vote against the Constitution in a public referendum if they didn't get something like this?
- Maratita: Well, it came up that they may not support the Constitution if there's no good provision like that. I remember Ben Fitial and Luis Limas were in our group, the Democrats. And then they expressed that too. I think they have to have something in the Constitution. That became, I think, more or less an emotional view that they just have to have something there.
- Siemer: A symbolic something for the Carolinians in the Constitution that was specifically theirs?
- Maratita: Yes.
- Siemer: What was your position on the various proposals that would have imposed a Chamorro language requirement?
- Maratita: In my view, if we have to come up with what we can call an official language, everybody understands English so that could be the official language. Some speak in Chamorro, some speak in Carolinian. So if we have to have something that is in the Constitution, there's heavy debate on that. And I think it was the Second Constitution they put all of the three languages English, Chamorro, and Carolinian as the official languages.
- Siemer: One of the interesting issues brought up at the time by Oscar Rasa and Henry Hofschneider was a proposal that the Legislature be part-time. They wanted people to have other occupations and to allow a wide variety of people to be in the Legislature. And it appears from the record that you supported that time part-time Legislature, is that correct?
- Maratita: Well, at the time I was feeling that perhaps any person that really wants to be a legislator may do that on his own. Let's say he feels that he can be a member of the Legislature not relying that he is going to be paid full-time, that's the feeling I had. And then later on when we had a meeting we decided we had to separate the Legislature and the Executive Branch. If you are working for the Executive Branch you see, and you become a member of Legislature, then you are not being fair to yourself because you always have that feeling, that you are working the Executive Branch and now you are holding a role as a Legislator and you always have that conflict of how you are going to sponsor legislation and then find yourself in your Executive position as being opposed to that.
- Siemer: Did that persuade you to go for a full-time legislator?
- Maratita: Yes, that somehow convinced me that we have to have the separation of legislative power and the executive power in the two branches of government. But initially I would say, it was my position that we don't pay the legislators full-time, only when they are really working. But if there were a provision that you cannot be a member of the Legislature if you are employed by the Executive Branch, then that is a different story.

- Siemer: Once you came around to the idea of a full-time Legislature, what was your position with respect to the salaries?
- Maratita: I didn't want to put a cap in the Constitution at the time. I think I spoke against that. Even the salary of the Governor, we should not put anything in there and let that be for the Legislature. But the Convention did put something in the Constitution that says \$8,000 for members of the Legislature and \$20,000 for the Governor.
- Siemer: There seemed to be a feeling that there might be a runaway legislature that would appropriate lots of monies for salaries. Was that one of the things that was happening?
- Maratita: That was what they said. They wanted to put a ceiling on it. They would put on a cap so that the Legislature may not increase the salary for the Governor or the Legislature if they do it their own way. And that's why they have that the provision in the Constitution. But on the contrary, I feel that should be provided by the Legislature.
- Siemer: Was that your general view that you wanted to leave as much to the Legislature as you could?
- Maratita: Yes. I think in general we should just provide the basic provisions of the Constitution, what the Legislature has to do, what they can't do, you know. Then allow the Legislature to provide for all the details.
- Siemer: During your service as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention, did you have people outside of the Convention come to you and urge you that particular thing should or should not be done?
- Maratita: No. The proposals I had submitted went through the political process in the District Legislature and all that. Having developed a basis for government, I think we should have Constitution provisions that are simple and basic. The Legislature will stay within more basic provisions. I think that how I looked at it myself as a delegate.
- Siemer: Your committee had a lot of those issues. The Governmental Institutions Committee was flooded with proposals in essence to legislate one thing or another, and your Committee seemed to function quite well in rejecting proposals. Was the Committee fairly cohesive about that?
- Maratita: Yes, I think we were saying that this could very well be taken care of in the Legislature. I think as having experience in the Legislature, I shared my experience with them and I said this provision perhaps could be as provided by law, not here in the Constitution.
- Siemer: How did the Chairman do in your view in running the Committee?
- Maratita: I think Joe took it personally that we have got to see that many of these provisions are not in the Constitution.
- Siemer: Did he give everybody time to talk?
- Maratita: I think, yes, there's a wide participation. There were times when I felt he didn't give us enough time to say what is on our minds. But I think the Committee did what it had to do as far as being representative.
- Siemer: In the course of your work as a delegate you were supplied with some briefing papers by the consultants and the Governmental Institutions Committee had the three basic branches of government, the Executive, the Legislative and Judicial and it had the Washington Representative to deal with. What do you recall about those briefing papers and that whole process by which delegates were given information or helped to see where the issues were?

- Maratita: I think it did something for me. Going through these briefing papers gave me let's say an overview of what is to be expected and I think that gave me at least some way to know what to expect in contributing to the process. It was helpful in a way.
- Siemer: You were accustomed to dealing with large papers in your job. Did you have the sense that for some delegates the briefing papers were not very effective because they weren't use to dealing with that much paper?
- Maratita: Well, I don't know exactly. But I thought each delegate should have taken the time to look through the briefing papers. Sometimes during the debate you find delegates not really in tune as to what they were supposed to do. I feel that my gosh he should spend some time, I would say to myself, he should spend some time and read, browse through to learn what is expected to be done. You might notice that there were some delegates talking in general terms and not being specific and sometimes some delegates would feel what do you call it "bored" and then we would fight among ourselves as, you know, back talking with others.
- Siemer: How did you feel about having lawyers from the outside come in and work with the Constitutional Convention?
- Maratita: When we had you as counsels in the first Con-Con because of your participation in the status negotiations. We look at you as already having the experience of what took place in the [status] negotiations and then responding further in the establishing of the Constitution. So there was that relationship that you already had. And I feel that many of the [Covenant] provisions that had been talked about involved the main body of the Constitution.
- Siemer: When the Rota and Tinian delegates actually walked out of the Convention in the First Con-Con, were you surprised that they did that?
- Maratita: No, I kind of expected that. During the discussion particularly on the composition of the lower house, I expected that something would happen. When there's no agreement reached, then I sensed that it was time for them to walk out.
- Siemer: Had the leaders of the Rota and Tinian delegation been talking about the possibility of that they would walk out?
- Maratita: Yes. But then as you noticed that some of the delegates from Rota, Dela Cruz, Atalig, Cabrera, I think stayed. There were seven, right, seven representatives?
- Siemer: There were eight of them. Pedro Atalig, David Atalig, Greg Calvo, Pedro Dela Cruz, Ben Manglona, and Vicente Manglona.
- Maratita: Pedro Ogo, Leon Taisacan. So, actually three people, Vicente and Ben Manglona and Leon Taisacan, were the ones that actually walked out. And Joe Cruz from Tinian. Steven King stayed behind.
- Siemer: All the Tinian delegates . . .
- Maratita: Hilario Diaz stayed behind.
- Siemer: And Henry Hofschneider?
- Maratita: Only Joe Dela Cruz.
- Siemer: Why did Cruz and Manglona walk out if they couldn't stop the Constitution? They must have known that they didn't have all of their delegates with them.

- Maratita: I think it was just a matter of their acknowledging that we don't agree with what is being done.
- Siemer: Were there any efforts made to get them to come back after they walked out?
- Maratita: I really don't know. But I suppose that it was predetermined already if they walked out they were not coming back and sign the Constitution, and essentially that's what happened.
- Siemer: After the Constitutional Convention was finished, did you work on the campaign?
- Maratita: Yes, for the First Con-Con.
- Siemer: What were your responsibilities in respect to that?
- Maratita: We had to have that thing translated and the Committee went around and did public education.
- Siemer: Were you on the Committee that did the public education?
- Maratita: Yes, right. We produced a film meant for television. We even went down to Guam and we put it on cable TV, Saipan Cable TV at the time. We had it done in Guam. We appeared explaining in English and Chamorro and Carolinian. I think Ben Fitial was a member of the committee.
- Siemer: At the time you were doing that campaign did you sense that there was opposition coming from particular segments in the community?
- Maratita: Not that we were aware of. I didn't see any opposition or any objection to what we were doing here. I think it was just a matter of our putting this thing out and helping people to understand what they are going to be voting on, you know. So we saw what happened. The voting was overwhelming.
- Willens: That concludes our questions. David, thank you very much for your time and excellent memory.
- Maratita: I am glad to help.