

Interview Transcript- January 20, 2014

-What do you remember about what your father said to you about the Delano Grape Strike?

There was quite a bit, but he did say it was a fight for the people to get a better wage, for basic human needs; water, lunch breaks, shade, bathrooms.

- What memories do you have of your father's involvement during the start of the Delano Grape Strike?

Well, then in the Filipino Hall in Delano which was the headquarters for the grape strike in the beginning, there was the camaraderie and the electricity in the air of getting ready to strike. There was also the fear when you go on strike since you do not make any money. At that time, the AWOC did not have the money to pay its union members but they were ready to strike because they knew that they were doing something right.

- What hardships did your father's generation of farm workers have?

There were many hardships, and what you should do, when you're talking about the Filipinos, you should call them the agricultural workers because they did not just work in the grape fields or farms but they worked in all agribusiness. About the hardships, there were the anti-miscegenation laws, it's hard for them to marry since only males came before into the United States, they couldn't vote, buy a house, or own property. There was a lot of racism.

- How about their achievements, what were they?

Well many things...They fought for their own dignity to be recognized as human beings, as persons. Aside from the fact that they got higher wages, they were able to build community centers for people and what came out of the grape strike too was the Forty Acres. It had the clinic, babysitting center for the kids, an educational center, and the Agbayani Village for the retirees.

-What would you consider the greatest contribution of your father to the agricultural workers and to the history of Filipino-Americans in the United States?

His being a labor leader and his union organizing.

-What lessons can the present generation of Filipino-Americans learn from the struggles of your father?

To have respect for yourself and other people, to stand up for those who cannot stand up, and speak for those who cannot speak.

-What is the responsibility of the present generation of Filipino-Americans in preserving

the legacy of your father and his generation?

Well what you're doing, you have to educate others and become leaders yourselves. You also have to come together as a community, not just as a Filipino community, but as part of the American community.

-What commemorative memorials, like murals, centers, days of commemoration, of your father and the Filipino agricultural workers do you know of? Where are these?

Well, I have taken part in leading the first recognition of The Delano Manongs Day in the city of Los Angeles in 2010. Following that same year, we had the Larry Itliong Day in the city of Carson on October 25th. Shortly after that, we got the Larry Itliong Day in the county of Los Angeles. If you also look at Eliseo Art Silva, he has had several murals throughout the years. There were several where he put Larry on the mural. The largest Filipino-American mural is in historic Filipino Town in downtown LA. He is working on one in Carson, and he finished one in Philadelphia. It seems he is doing another one in Los Angeles. But also at the Milpitas Library, there was a mural that was recently done too. I went to the dedication of that. The first school named after Filipinos, the Philip Vera Cruz - Larry Itliong Middle School in Daly City. Also in Los Angeles, the Larry Itliong Village just opened with the Pilipino Workers Center.

-Do you know what your father's favorite Filipino song was?

"Dahil sa Iyo"