

Vallejo is grateful for...

Mel Orpilla



Mel gives a presentation about traditional Filipino tattoos for the US Forest Service.

Place of birth: Born at Vallejo General Hospital in 1961.

Occupation: Senior district representative for Congressman Mike Thompson.

Language: English. Can understand Ilocano and Spanish.

What is your special talent? My special talent or skill is Balintawak Arnis, a traditional Filipino martial art, which I teach locally.

Special memory of Vallejo? So many but the most recent one was the presentation of the Filipino WWII Congressional Gold Medal to several living veterans and posthumously

to about 20 families. This happened at the Filipino Community Center in October 2018. Congressman Mike Thompson and General Tony Taguba presented the medals.

What do you appreciate about your Vallejo neighborhood? I live in the Grant Mahoney Park neighborhood. I love the quaint storybook houses and sycamore-lined streets. The best time of year to visit is Halloween and Christmas because everyone decorates their homes.

What is a favorite place to hang out in Vallejo? The Vallejo waterfront because the views of Mare Island remind me of our naval history. I love to run along the promenade and see so many people enjoying the waterfront as well.

What is your favorite Vallejo community event? Pista Sa Nayon on the first Saturday of every June on the Vallejo waterfront. This free event showcases the beauty of the rich Filipino culture and community.

What is your favorite food or drink at a Vallejo establishment? Anything and everything from Kehaulani's.

What do you hope for yourself and for Vallejo in the next 10 years? I hope to be able to help use my knowledge and resources to help people in Vallejo. I hope all the economic development projects in the planning stages today will be completed and add to our tax base.

What have you done during the pandemic to help the community? I've been supporting local small businesses like Alibi Bookshop. Patronizing local restaurants. Helping people resolve issues with federal agencies.

What is one silver lining to the pandemic? More time to build my martial arts business.

What person in Vallejo do you really appreciate? Benjamin and Mary Ann Buggs of Faith Food Fridays.