

Antonio A. Oposa Jr.

Antonio A. Oposa Jr. was born in Manila, Philippines and has had a remarkable career as a creative litigator, organizer and activist. He is well-known for his legal work establishing the right to sue on behalf of future generations to stop environmental damage today, and for his work to protect the forests and marine environments in the Philippines.

In 1993, Mr. Oposa made headlines worldwide for his role in the landmark case *Oposa v. Factoran*, where the Philippine Supreme Court held that a group of minors had the right to sue on behalf of succeeding generations because every generation has a responsibility to the next to preserve nature. Mr. Oposa was counsel for 43 Filipino children who initiated an action against the Philippine Government for the misappropriation of the country's forest resources. The trial court dismissed the complaint on the ground of lack of legal personality to sue. In a widely-noted case on inter-generational responsibility, the Philippine Supreme Court upheld the legal standing and the right of the children to initiate the action on their behalf and on behalf of generations yet unborn. It is now known in Philippine and global jurisprudence as the "Oposa Doctrine."

In December 2008, after a ten-year legal battle he waged from the trial court all the way to the Philippine Supreme Court against eleven government agencies, Mr. Oposa won the case to clean up Manila Bay. In a continuing mandamus judgment, the Supreme Court ordered all defendant agencies to implement a time-bound action plan to clean up Manila Bay and to report its progress to the Court every 90 days.

As an enforcement operative, Mr. Oposa has organized and led some of the most daring operations against environmental criminal syndicates. Creatively using rules of criminal procedure, he has jailed environmental criminals within hours from arrest. His enforcement work against illegal fishing syndicates has been featured in a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) documentary film entitled "Blast."

Mr. Oposa founded the SEA Camp (formerly the School of the SEA-Sea and Earth Advocates) in the white-sand shores of Bantayan Island, Cebu in the Central Philippines. The Camp features a free-flying bird sanctuary, a demonstration marine protected area, and a model climate change house. This house is powered by renewable energy and has vertical and roof-deck vegetable gardens to illustrate self-reliance and food sufficiency. The Camp also completely recycles water and solid wastes. Even methane from human waste is captured and converted into cooking gas. As a physical demonstration of the working principles for sustainable living, it has trained thousands of children, out-of-school youths, government officials, fishermen, law enforcement officers, teachers, lawyers, and laymen.

As the convenor of the revolutionary Share-the-Roads Movement in the Philippines, Mr. Oposa unites a group of citizens advocating for the fair sharing of road space, clean air, and walkable and bikeable communities. The network of citizens has filed an ongoing case against the Philippine Government to compel the latter to divide the roads by half lengthwise—half for motorized vehicles and the other half for sidewalks and bikelanes <www.sharetheroads.net>.

In 1997, Mr. Oposa was awarded the highest United Nations honor in the field of environment: the UNEP Global 500 Roll of Honor. "For his path-breaking and passionate crusade to engage Filipinos in acts of enlightened citizenship that maximize the power of the Law to protect and nurture the environment, for themselves, their children, and generations yet unborn," Mr. Oposa received the 2009 Ramon Magsaysay Award. He also received "The Philippines' Outstanding Young Man Award" in 1995 for his work in public interest environmental law.

Mr. Oposa was appointed as Distinguished Visiting Scholar for International Environmental Law at Vermont Law School during July 2013. In 2014, he served as Visiting Lecturer at the University of Hawaii William S. Richardson School of Law.

An outstanding advocate in international law, Mr. Oposa is the author of numerous publications, articles and books. Among them are two internationally acclaimed books "The Laws of Nature and Other Stories" and an authoritative compendium on Environmental Law entitled "A Legal Arsenal for the Philippines Environment."

Mr. Oposa holds a B.S. in Business Administration from De La Salle University, Manila; an LL.B. from the University of the Philippines; and an LL.M. from Harvard Law School.

For recreation, Mr. Oposa is an avid cyclist, open-water scuba diver (advanced level), sailor, swimmer, tennis player, gardener, vocal artist, painter, writer, and a storyteller.