



## Pride in the Grand Manner

“The life of the law has not been logic; it has been experience.”

These words by former US Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. echo the voices in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI+) community who long for ample protection of the law in order to live full and dignified lives. The experiences of Filipino gender minorities reveal a history of repression and exclusion in the legal institutions that the majority of us never had to fight to get access to.

Our experiences as children encouraged us to dream for ourselves, while our LGBTQI+ children had, and continue, to contend with norms that discourage the exploration and expression of who they were as persons. The former was supported by a legal infrastructure that looked out for their best interests while the latter were inhibited by rules that discourage self-identification.

In the words of our Supreme Court, “[t]hose with sexual orientations other than the heteronormative, gender identities that are transgender or fluid, or gender expressions that are not the usual manifestations of the dominant and expected cultural binaries[,] have suffered enough marginalization and discrimination within our society.”\*

We bear responsibilities, as agents of the law, to inform, reform, and animate our legal system with the experiences of our LGBTQI+ citizens. As teachers of fairness and justice, it is our duty to make the command of our Constitution’s Bill of Rights meaningful to the LGBTQI+ community. Equality in rights should mean that everyone, regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity, has full access to services, free from violence, and can found families considered valid in the eyes of the law.

For when we say, again quoting Justice Holmes, that our business is to teach law in the grand manner, we mean the molding of Filipino lawyers who make it their business to make the lives of LGBTQI+ Filipinos just a bit better everyday. Such is Pride in the Grand Manner. Such is the Pride of the UP College of Law.

For freedom and equality, we join and say Happy Pride Month!

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\* *Falcis v. Civil Registrar General*, G.R. No. 217910, September 3, 2019.



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