

## 15-year-old beauty is PIDCI Diwa ng Kalayaan

Written by Tambi Wycoco  
Tuesday, 16 May 2017 13:14

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**RAMONA MUNSAYAC**  
*Diwa ng Kalayaan 2017*

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The grand commemoration of the 119th anniversary of the declaration of Philippine Independence in the New York region continued when the producers and directors of the annual celebration, the Philippine Independence Day Council, Inc. (PIDCI), held the Diwa ng Kalayaan (Spirit of Independence) Selection and Coronation Pageant and Gala at the plush Grand Ballroom of the Double Tree by Hilton Hotel in Fort Lee, N.J. on May 6, 2017.

A sellout crowd of the cream of the Filipino and Filipino-American communities of the Northeastern United States all dressed to their nines, the ladies in their posh ternos and the gentlemen in their formal Barong Tagalog were witness to the evening's merrymaking and ceremonies.

Towards the end of the evening, the judges picked 15-year-old Ramona Munsayac, a freshman at the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, Luralton Hall, an all-girls Catholic school in Milford, Connecticut, as winner of the top, much-coveted title of Diwa ng Kalayaan (Spirit of Independence).

As Diwa ng Kalayaan, Ramona will reign as Queen of all the festivities of the 119th Commemoration till its final commemorative event, the Philippine Independence Ball, on the evening of Saturday, June 10, 2017.

Ramona has four siblings, three sisters and a brother.

She is the most recent immigrant among the candidates, having come to New York only in 2014.

Even as early as her freshman year in high school, Ramona already has her sights set on being a law graduate of Harvard University.

Along with her grand prize of a round trip airline ticket to the Philippines, Ramona was also awarded a check for \$500 donated by the volunteer community organization Alliance Of Manila and Philippine Islanders, for her "pocket money" when she takes her trip to the homeland.

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The check was handed to Ramona by this writer (Alliance president).

Other Alliance officers Boy Echavez, vice president; Salve Stamatelaky, secretary; and Nanette Wright, treasurer, chipped in to bring the prize to \$500.

The Alliance of Manila and Philippine Islanders organization was organized some years ago at the instance of the then-Mayor of Manila Lito Atienza to promote Manila and the Philippine islands in terms of tourism, foreign investments, and economic development.

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**DENISE SANTACRUZ**, 15, the reigning South Sardinian beauty, is crowned the 2017 PIDCI Diwa ng Kalayaan.

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READY TO BE A BEAUTY QUEEN? The 15-year-old beauty is PIDCI Diwa ng Kalayaan. She is wearing a white tiara with intricate floral designs and a sash with red, white, and blue stripes. She has dark hair styled in a bun and is smiling slightly.

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~~15-year-old beauty is PIDCI Diwa ng Kalayaan (She is Miss Philippines) and she is a~~