

## SECOND DIVISION

[ A.M. No. P-99-1338, November 18, 1999 ]

**ESTELA P. VALLES, COMPLAINANT, VS. NILA ARZAGA-QUIJANO,  
CLERK OF COURT II, MCTC ARACELI-DUMARAN, PALAWAN,  
RESPONDENT.**

### D E C I S I O N

**BUENA, J.:**

Complainant Estela P. Valles, in a sworn letter-complaint<sup>[1]</sup> dated June 2, 1997 addressed to the Court Administrator, Supreme Court charged respondent Nila Arzaga-Quijano, Clerk of Court II, MCTC Araceli-Dumaran, Palawan with malfeasance, abuse of authority and graft and corrupt practices.

Complainant claims that respondent together with two hundred (200) others filed a Petition<sup>[2]</sup> before the Palawan Division Superintendent of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) to remove her as teacher of the Araceli National High School and that the petition was subscribed and sworn before respondent Nila Arzaga-Quijano notwithstanding the fact that she is one of the signatories to the said petition.

On November 24, 1997<sup>[3]</sup>, the letter-complaint was referred to the respondent for her Comment.

The pertinent portions of the respondent's Comment read:

"Admittedly, my signature among other signatures, appears in the petition-letter. But significantly, the signatures are a part of the body of the petition and hence, the person represented by the signatures are not the signatories to the petition. Evidently, the petition-letter itself shows that the signatory is the Parents Teachers Community Association of Araceli National High School. Needless to state that the signatures do not even come under the complimentary close of the petition-letter.

"In the honest belief that the PTCA President was the signatory-representative of the Parents Teachers Community Association, I administered the oath, including those of other affiants in other affidavits of witnesses in a case for Malicious mischief against Ms. Estela P. Valles, et al. pending in our sala. Thus, there is nothing wrong in having administered the oath while my signature appears in the body of the letter.

"The environmental circumstances surrounding the administration of the subscription and oath must also be considered. When the PTCA President