

### **From humble beginning to a respected and famous elder and leader**

Gary, 38, is a private company employee, for him, fostering a culture of caring is “performing any deed, cooperating, and contributing anything big or small even to the extent of sacrificing for the betterment of Baguio City today and for the coming generation to come.”

I don't personally know the man but his achievements in life as a public official speak well of him. He has done and achieved what no Igorot has ever achieved for Baguio City, the summer capital of the Philippines, Is it God's gift, charisma, intelligence, or fate that pushed this man to be where he is today? Nobody knows, but one thing is sure, he worked for it and gained the trust and confidence of majority of Baguioites.

He is Atty. Mauricio “Morris” G. Domogan, the current congressman of Baguio City. Born and raised in Patacan, Ilocos Sur, bordering the municipalities of Besao, Mountain Province and Mankayan, Benguet. As a young boy until his passing the Bar, he has shown the mark of the true leader –the epitome of a genuine statesman of the Cordilleras and Igorotlandia.

### **Mark of a true leader**

What makes this man unique and inspiring to many? As an elected public official, he is action oriented. This is his primordial policy when confronted with problems of the city. He listens very well to his advisers, his “council of elders’ and his conscience. As a lawyer and “man of experience” he knows the consequences of his actions and the legal limitations of his decisions.

Secondly, he is a man of philosophy;” You don't mess with the ideas and answers of this man lest you end up being sorry for yourself” is the common advice to one who tries to discredit him. His words, once spoken, are like dogma. One may try to reverse and malign his thoughts but the end-result would be the same- the so-called X-factor, It is unexplained and inherent in him. Once he speaks, every body listens. Once he listens, everybody listens also. Former president Joseph “Erap” Estrada may have his “Carabao English” to thrill the masses as he speaks to them: Morris has his “Igorot English” as well lacking in fluency but full of substance.

Turning the city around What has Morris done for Baguio City to merit him as the best so far? Everybody knows that the killer earthquake totally ravaged Baguio City in 1990. When he assumed office as chief executive at that time, he was lacking in funds, What he did was prioritize projects and inspire Baguioites. They did respond. The implementation of the provisions of the Local Government Code in 1991 was the turning point of his career. From measly tax funds left for Baguio City, the share of the city multiplied and increased. The rest, of course, was an inundation of infra projects, roads, bridges, and buildings to open the city and deliver basic services to the barangays.

### **Baguio blossomed again**

There was no corruption under his watch. Everything was union and coordination. To his mind,

concreting of roads, widening of roads, protection of roads and slope, and concreting of barangay roads are access to development and investments. They were.

Next was to put Baguio on the map, national of course, He was then called “the janitor of Baguio City as he led in the cleaning and sanitation of the city. Baguio City became the cleanest and greenest in the country. It reached another milestone by being a Hall of Famer as the cleanest and greenest city in the Philippines.

In order to protect the citizenry, he strengthened law enforcement. By constant coordination, funding, and upgrading, the Baguio City Police became the Best Police Office of the country. The city's crime index was the lowest under him.

His achievements are innumerable. It can fill volumes of papers if pieced together.

### **The man who cares**

In one of our visits in his family home in Brookside, Baguio City, he was very accommodating and attentive. This is probably one of the reasons for his political strength. He is meek as a lamb but can turn fierce like a lion if challenged. He always cares for the problems of his constituents. He always cares to resolve them and to please the interest of the majority.

This is a man nurtured by experience in life and in office and possessed with the wisdom of the Cordilleras and the Ilocandias. How did he manage to do it? Only he and the people he governs know. He is the true representative, unblemished and always on the go. He is the source of strength of the Igorots in Baguio City today. I suspect that since he started it all, others will follow his example like drops in a fountain.

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