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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Call for Nominations: Guam Masters Award – “Guam National Treasure” for Heritage Arts

Hagåtña, Guam (June 12, 2026) – The Guam Council on the Arts and Humanities Agency (CAHA) is pleased to announce that nomination packets for the Guam Masters Award, “Guam National Treasure” for Heritage Arts are now available. Packets may be picked up at the CAHA office located at 238 Archbishop Flores Street, DNA Building, Suite 202, in Hagåtña, or downloaded from the CAHA website at www.guamcaha.org.

The Guam Masters Award, “Guam National Treasure,” created through Public Law 30-139, was established in 2010 to recognize master practitioners of Guam’s Heritage Arts. To honor and preserve Guam’s indigenous cultural heritage, the Guam Council on the Arts and Humanities Agency awards the Guam Masters Award, “Guam National Treasure” once every four (4) years to master traditional artists. The award gives due recognition to these master practitioners for their artistry, craftsmanship, and their continuing efforts to preserve Guam’s rich history and cultural traditions through the practice and perpetuation of their arts.

Since its establishment in 2010, the Guam Masters Award has honored master practitioners whose dedication, artistry, and cultural knowledge have contributed to the preservation and perpetuation of Guam’s traditional arts and cultural heritage. Today, Guam Masters Award recipients continue to share their knowledge, artistry, and cultural traditions with our community, inspiring future generations and ensuring that Guam’s cultural legacy endures.

On May 11, 2026, Guam Masters Award recipients gathered at the Guam Council on the Arts and Humanities Agency to discuss the future of the program and its continued role in preserving Guam’s cultural heritage. The Masters Committee meeting, was chaired by Master Storyteller Peter Robert Onedera and Master of CHamoru Dance Frank Rabon, with participation from other esteemed Guam Masters Award recipients. During the gathering, the Masters expressed their appreciation for the ongoing efforts to sustain the program and their excitement that the nomination process is moving forward once again. They welcomed the opportunity to recognize a new generation of master practitioners whose dedication and contributions will help carry Guam’s cultural traditions into the future.

CAHA Director Angie Taitague emphasized the significance of the award, stating, “The Guam Masters Award recognizes individuals whose lifelong dedication to traditional arts has helped preserve the cultural identity of our island. These master practitioners are more than artists; they are teachers, storytellers, and guardians of knowledge whose contributions ensure that our customs, values, and traditions continue to be passed on to future generations. It was especially meaningful to meet with our Guam Masters earlier this year and hear their enthusiasm for the future of the program. We encourage the community to help us identify and nominate deserving individuals whose work has enriched Guam and strengthened our cultural heritage.”

CAHA Board Chair Monica Guzman added, “Our Master practitioners represent the living legacy of our ancestors. By recognizing their achievements and honoring their commitment to cultural preservation, we celebrate the enduring traditions that connect our communities and help define who we are as a people. The Guam Masters Award serves as an important reminder that our cultural heritage is strengthened when knowledge is shared and passed on to future generations.”

The deadline to submit nomination packets with supporting materials to the Guam Council on the Arts and Humanities Agency is **4:00 pm., Friday, August 28, 2026**. Nomination packets must be addressed to Mrs. Angie Taitague, CAHA Director, and must be submitted directly to the Offices of the Guam Council on the Arts and Humanities Agency located at the DNA Building, Suite 202, in Hagåtña. No mailed or emailed submissions will be accepted.

For inquiries regarding the Guam Masters Award, call (671) 300-1206/8 or (671) 300-7582/4, or send an email to info@caha.guam.gov.

For further details, contact Jackie Balbas, CAHA Program Coordinator IV, at (671) 300-7584 or (671) 456-5387, or via email at jacqueline.balbas@caha.guam.gov.

Photo Caption: Attached is a photograph of Guam Masters Award recipients who attended the May 11, 2026 meeting at the Guam Council on the Arts and Humanities Agency to discuss the future of the Guam Masters Award, “Guam National Treasure” program and the upcoming call for nominations. [From Left to Right: Leonard Iriarte (Master of CHamoru Chant), Maria Yatar McDonald (Master Tattoo Artist), Frank Rabon (Master of CHamoru Dance), Rosita San Nicolas (Master Shrimp Trap Maker), Vicente “Ben” Meno, (Master Kantan CHamorita), Rosalia “Mama Chai” Fejeran Mateo (Master Traditional Healer), Peter Robert Onedera (Master Storyteller), Julie “Jill” Benavente (Master Carver, Body Ornamentation), and Vince Reyes (Master of CHamoru Dance)].