



UNIVERSITY OF GUAM
UNIBETSEDÁT GUÅHAN
Board of Regents

Resolution No. 22-04

**RELATIVE TO AWARDING THE HONORARY DEGREE OF MASTER OF MICRONESIAN
TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE TO DONALD BENAVENTE MENDIOLA**

WHEREAS, the Board of Regents (BOR) is authorized to confer degrees;

WHEREAS, Donald Benavente Mendiola, is recognized as an indigenous expert providing significant contribution and service in the field of traditional practices as *Yo'ãnte* (Traditional Healer), Master Weaver, and *Fa'Fa'nague* (Teacher) of CHamoru language for over forty-nine (49) years to over 20,000 people throughout the Mariana Islands, the Pacific, and the continental United States;

WHEREAS, Donald Benavente Mendiola, since his early childhood, was recognized by his elders in Guam, Rota, Tinian, and Saipan as having the gift of healing, and took great pride and joy in nurturing his curiosity and desire to learn to commune with ancestors and understand the spiritual elements and healing powers and remedies of the land, ocean, and plants, where by the age of nine (9), he was bestowed the title of Healer and began his service in herbal remedies, massage, and spiritual healing;

WHEREAS, Donald Benavente Mendiola has helped many re-connect in mind, body, and spirit as a counselor and guide with Pineksai Haya, a youth cultural immersion program, increasing their awareness and understanding of who they are and gained more self-confidence, as well with a group of graduate student volunteers of varied ethnicities under a research project sponsored by the Håya Foundation for traditional healing;

WHEREAS, Donald Benavente Mendiola, as an educator for over thirty-three (33) years with the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Island's (CNMI's) Public School System, teaches cultural studies at Hopwood Middle School in Saipan and is the only teacher in the CNMI Public School System who focuses on teaching traditional healing and weaving, and provides training and workshops for other educators. With his mentorship, guidance, and coaching, his students have excelled and have won the University of Guam (UOG) CHamoru Competitions during pre-COVID-19 times;

WHEREAS, Donald Benavente Mendiola, with his mastery of the CHamoru language, has been called upon to translate and interpret for various agencies and organizations, to include the CNMI Courts and Legislature, as well as being a member in the CNMI Dictionary Revision Committee that is completing a dictionary which is scheduled to be published in 2022 to help perpetuate the language;

WHEREAS, Donald Benavente Mendiola, as a master weaver and CHamoru language expert, attended many events to participate and showcase his skills, to include the Masters Weavers Symposium in Papakura, Auckland, New Zealand; the Festival of the Pacific Arts (FESTPAC), and the Pacific Islands Bilingual Bicultural Association meetings;

WHEREAS, in 2009, Donald Benavente Mendiola wrote and published "*Åmot Chamorro, a Historical Snapshot of the CNMI's Medical Herbs and Shrubs*" to address the critical need to promote, perpetuate, and educate future generations with a documented source that pertains to first-hand knowledge about herbal remedies;


WHEREAS, Donald Benavente Mendiola has earned many awards and recognition for his knowledge in traditional healing, weaving, and CHamoru language to include receiving the prestigious Regional Heritage Award sponsored by the Consortium for Pacific Arts and Culture's Regional Office in 1993; being recognized by the House of Representatives of the Northern Marianas Commonwealth for outstanding accomplishments and dedication in the field of arts and crafts in 1994; receiving the CNMI Indigenous Teacher of the Year Award in 1996; receiving the Northern Marianas Humanities Council and Governor's Humanities Award for "Outstanding Humanities Teacher" in 2013; and being the first recipient to be recognized by the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Humanities as a Cultural Icon; and

WHEREAS, Donald Benavente Mendiola's recommendation package has been reviewed by the Honorary Degree Committee; Faculty Senate Standing Committee on Faculty Excellence and Faculty Senate; Deans' Council; Senior Vice President & Provost; UOG President; and the Student Affairs, Scholarship, Alumni Relations, and Honorary Degree Committee, and recommend approval of the Master of Micronesian Traditional Knowledge honorary degree in traditional practices as *Yo'ámte* (Traditional Healer), Master Weaver, and *Fa'Fa'nague* (Teacher) of CHamoru language to the BOR.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the BOR hereby approves to confer the Honorary Degree of Master of Micronesian Traditional Knowledge in traditional practices as *Yo'ámte* (Traditional Healer), Master Weaver, and *Fa'Fa'nague* (Teacher) of CHamoru language upon Donald Benavente Mendiola; and


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the BOR, along with the President of UOG, will confer said Honorary Degree at the Fañomnåkan 2022 commencement.

Adopted this 24th day of February, 2022.



Liza J. Provindo, Chairperson

ATTESTED:



Thomas W. Krise, Ph.D., Executive Secretary