



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR DAVID M. APATANG

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**A Legacy Sealed in Time:
The Enduring Spirit of the Northern Mariana Islands**

On this historic occasion of the America 250 commemoration, I stand as a humble steward of our heritage to offer these contributions on behalf of the people of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Within this vessel, we entrust more than mere artifacts; we preserve the living breath of our identity, a testament to the endurance, wisdom, and cultural continuity that define us as children of the Pacific.

Among these treasures rests the Chamorro Sinâhi, a crescent-hewn symbol echoing the celestial rhythms of our ancestors. Bearing the name of the "new moon," the Sinâhi is a profound synthesis of astronomical mastery and social order. Traditionally the mantle of the Matao and Maga'lâhi, it served as a silent herald of leadership, prowess, and noble standing. Beyond its aesthetic grace, it encapsulates the spirit of a people who mastered the elements: the architects of the latte stones and the peerless navigators who charted the vast blue wilderness of the Pacific. This specific piece, crafted by the hands of Gordon "Figo" Babauta Salas, bridges the ages. Its spondylus inlay whispers of ancient commerce and the intricate tapestry of traditions that have sustained the Chamorro spirit through the tides of time.

We also offer the Carolinian Lighatúttúr, an exquisite reflection of the ingenuity and refined artistry inherent to our Carolinian community. This craft is a legacy of the earth and sea; once, our ancestors dove into the depths for the rare Fáái Paar stone and gathered

fibers from the shore to weave their stories by hand. While the materials may evolve with the turning of the years, the soul of the practice remains immutable—a vibrant testament to the creativity and unyielding pride of the Carolinian people. This artifact, meticulously produced by Emi Peter-Palican, stands as an enduring tribute to those who came before and an inspiration for those yet to be born.

Together, these offerings weave a narrative of a people sculpted by the ocean, guided by the stars, and fortified by the bonds of community. They serve as a reminder that though the world changes, our cultural foundations remain unshakeable. We consign these artifacts to this capsule with a singular hope: that when you look upon them, you see not merely the relics of a bygone era, but the vibrant pulse of an identity that refused to be forgotten.

May you who unseal this history carry forward the values enshrined here: reverence for the past, unity in the present, and an abiding pride in the diverse cultures that enrich the American story.

With great respect and hope for the future,



David M. Apatang
GOVERNOR

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands