



CONVERSATION CORNER

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Share Your Prize

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IMSHOF Honor Swimmer Inductee 2015*

The notice of my induction into the International Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame came as a total surprise. It had been many years since Steven Munatones had recommended me. Different feelings and thoughts arose at the time, but there were two in particular that I enjoyed tremendously.

Firstly, the induction would be an opportunity to thank my family for all their support during my life, first as a competitive swimmer, and later as an open water swimmer and sports enthusiast.

More importantly, I would be able to dedicate this day to my mother.

Secondly, I was excited about the fact that the ceremony would take place in California, the place to which I migrated 40 years ago in search of the Olympic dream. I never made it to the Olympics, so this award felt like a long-earned prize for my perseverance in the sport.

Three generations of my family, along with my fourth brother and my coach, sat at our table as I delivered my speech. I started thanking my mother in Spanish, since she never learned English.



I knew this would make her feel special and included even though she would not understand the rest. I recounted how she had taken me to practice at 5 am for many years, and how she had bought me a car so I could keep up with school and make it to practice in a chaotic city like Mexico.

Most importantly, I expressed my gratitude for her unwavering support when I decided to leave Mexico for California at the age of 17 hoping to become an Olympic swimmer.

The words I dedicated to my son and daughter explained my passion for the sport and how it had taken me to places I had never even imagined. It was also the opportunity to remind them that I want to be a grandfather soon.

My niece, only 6 years old at the time, had the privilege of travelling alone with her father for the first time in order to see her old uncle being awarded the “biggest prize in the world,” a claim that her teacher had to check with her mother to make sure she was not making things up.

As the oldest brother in my family, I was responsible for looking after my siblings since we were kids. They always looked up to me, and this day was not different. They felt proud, and I felt proud.

Finally, my wife Lucía has had to endure many swimming vacations and training weekends, as well as my hectic everyday life schedule.

Here was the occasion to let her know how much I appreciated her support and express my love for her.

As we drove back to our hotel I was happy for my induction, but I was even happier to have been given the opportunity to share the prize with all the people in the car as if it had been theirs.

