



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hopkins, Martin and Swarz immortalized in Sports Hall of Fame

Champion boxer, Kenneth Hopkins, swimmer, Charles Martin and all round talent, Kea Kapulu Swarz are the latest former athletes to be inducted into the Papua New Guinea Sports Hall of Fame.

The ceremony which was held at the Paradise Cinemas in Port Moresby on November 22, was full of emotion and celebration of the life and achievements of these champions.

Now based in Australia, all three represented Papua New Guinea in the 1960s and '70s when the country was still a Territory of Australia.

Hopkins was a dominant boxer in that era while based in Bialla in the West New Britain province with his family.

"I did it because I loved it and I was proud to represent my country, and to be recognized for my achievements and be inducted into the Hall of Fame is phenomenal and I will never forget this," he said.

Hopkins made history by winning PNG's first ever medal at an international sporting event. This was a bronze at the British Empire and Commonwealth Games which was held in Perth, Australia in 1962.

"When you're going to fight, you're going there to win otherwise you're in the wrong business.

"You have to give it your very best all the time, if you lose at least you know that you did your very best," he said.

Hopkins was also a member of the PNG team to the first South Pacific Games which was held in Suva, Fiji in 1963. Hopkins also won a bronze medal in those Games.

Swarz competed in three sports and dominated in all of them. They were netball, athletics and softball.

She was in the same PNG team as Hopkins to the Suva Games in 1963 where she competed in netball and athletics.

Her netball team won the sport's first ever South Pacific Games medal for PNG, a bronze, during those Games.

"Thank you for recognizing us. I am very happy to be among those inducted tonight and I would like to see women taking part in more sports," she said.

Martin joined Hopkins and Swarz in thanking the PNG Olympic Committee and the country for the recognition them saying that it was an honour to represent PNG and to be back to receive the commendations.

“I have been away from my country for 43 years and it’s just good to be back,” said an emotional Martin.

PNG’s Vice Minister for Sports, Wesley Raminai congratulated the inductees and also thanked them for their service and contribution to sport.

He said their achievements and triumphs were an inspiration that contributed to the unification and development of a new nation.

“Great moments are made by great people, these are the moments that shape our history and change our lives. The history of Papua New Guinea is full of such people.

“While their achievements will be recalled for many generations to come, it is their triumph over adversity to achieve their goals that we must also recognize and appreciate,” Raminai said.

The three inductees join 11 others in the PNG Sports Hall of Fame which include former sprinter, Sir John Kaputin and high jumper, Edward Laboran.

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