



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TUNA, KALI AND STEWART IMMORTALISED.

The Papua New Guinea Olympic Committee (PNGOC) hosted its 6th PNG Sports Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony on Thursday 10th December 2020 at the Port Moresby Arts Theater, Port Moresby where three (3) Papua New Guinean sporting icons were immortalized as the 2020 PNG Sports Hall of Fame inductees.

This year's inductees were Takale Tuna from the sport of Athletics who becomes Inductee #18, Wavala Kali from the sport of Athletics who becomes Inductee #19 and Late Robert Stewart from the sport of Shooting who becomes Inductee #20.

Takale Tuna was one of PNG's fastest men in the sprint events of 100m, 200m and 400m and represented PNG outstandingly in his career which spanned over 7 years at the top level winning 13 National Titles, 6 Gold Medals and 3 Silver Medals (South Pacific Games) in the late 1980s and early 1990s. He represented PNG at the 1985 Mini South Pacific Games in Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 1991 South Pacific Games in Port Moresby, 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul, Korea and many other international competitions where he performed remarkably. He was indeed one of PNG's best ever sprinter in his prime.

Wavala Kali too was also an excellent sprinter in the 1970s. His exploits made him a top sprinter for PNG in the sprint events of 100m, 200m and 400m and represented PNG over a period of 6 years including the 1976 Olympic Games in Montreal, Canada, 1979 South Pacific Games in Suva, Fiji and 1975 South Pacific Games in Guam, USA where he won 1 Gold and 1 Silver. He was also Papua New Guinea's First Flag Bearer at the Olympic Games. A great champion indeed.

Late Robert Stewart was PNG's first silver medallist at the 1966 British Empire and Commonwealth Games in Kingston, Jamaica now known as the Commonwealth Games in the Rifle Shooting event. He also represented PNG at the 1974 British Commonwealth Games in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Their talent made them champions, history has made them Legends and they are now immortalised through the PNG Sports Hall of Fame.

The President for PNGOC, Sir John Dawanincura, in his opening remarks acknowledged the three champions as sporting icons of Papua New Guinea.

"They are pioneers of sports in PNG whose remarkable achievements should not be lost but their legacy lives on". "These are great men and women who have represented Papua New Guinea on the international sports arena. They have earned people's respect for the sacrifices they made and the achievements accomplished for their country and for themselves".

New Minister for Sports, Infrastructure and National Gaming Control Board, Wesley Raminai, in his speech re-iterated that Sports is a powerful vehicle that can inspire and unite Papua New Guinea and we as a government will continue to support its development to ensure our young men and women are given the opportunity to represent PNG.

This event is an initiative of the PNGOC to honour and preserve sporting moments by recognizing the legacy of individuals who excelled in the past, giving recognition to sporting accomplishment that

brought pride and distinction to Papua New Guinea and have contributed to the development and success of sport in PNG.

The PNG Sports Hall of Fame recognises individuals who have significantly contributed to sport in PNG through their achievements and this event was to celebrate their achievements and honour their contribution.

Nominees were those who represented PNG, have been superior achievers at the elite level of competition in their chosen sport, and have the support of their peers.

The PNGOC invited National Federations to nominate individuals from their sport while at the same time does its own research into its sporting records to identify suitable candidates.

The 2020 PNG Sports Hall Fame Induction Ceremony was the 6th time the PNG Olympic Committee has hosted the event.

In 2011, PNGOC inducted its first two Hall of Famers, Sir John Kaputin and Edward Laboran at this event's inaugural induction ceremony coinciding with celebrations of PNGOC's 50th Anniversary.

The next Sports Hall of Fame induction ceremony occurred in 2016 where five inductees were recognised.

Outstanding boxer, Olympian and South Pacific Games Gold medallist, Tumat Sogolik, PNG's first swimming sensation, Nigel Cluer, South Pacific Games Gold medallists David Seeto and his brother Jackson Seeto from weightlifting and our first female Hall of Fame inductee and athletics legend Salitia Pitpit.

In 2017 the sport of athletics provided all four Hall of Fame inductees; the late John Kokinai a phenomenal distance runner; the second female inductee, Naomi Polum; the late Oe Ivaharia PNG's only ever Javelin Gold Medallist; and gold medal decathlete Raki Leka.

In 2018 the PNG Sports Hall of Fame Induction ceremony saw swimming sensation Charles Martin, all round sporting talent Kea Kapulu Scharz and our nation's first ever medal winner boxer Kenneth Hopkins become our 12th, 13th and 14th Hall of Fame Inductees.

Last year we recognised the queen of the athletics Iammo Launa, PNG's first Commonwealth Games Gold Medallist Geua Tau and PNG's first ever weightlifting medallist the late Sibona Oka.

Those in attendance to witness this special occasion included past inductees, National Federations representatives, sponsors and partners of PNGOC, PNGOC Board Members and PNG Sports Foundation Board and Inductee's families.

The event was proudly supported by, Coral Sea Hotel, SP Brewery, Trophy Haus, Blue7Team and Coca Cola Amatil.

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