

*Cuban delegation to Santiago-
2023 pay tribute to José Ramón
Fernández on the 100th
anniversary of his birth*



Santiago de Chile, November 4 (RHC) - The Cuban delegation participating in the Santiago-2023 Pan American Games paid tribute this Saturday to José Ramón Fernández on the 100th anniversary of his birth.

In a simple and emotional ceremony in the Chilean capital, Cuban sports glories such as Javier Sotomayor and María Caridad Colón, champions and medalists of the continental event, the Cuban ambassador to Chile, Mercedes Sotolongo, and the main directors of the island's sports, gathered to pay tribute to the hero of the Republic of Cuba, considered one of the main promoters of Cuban sport.

Known as "Gallego Fernández", in his life he held different positions in the sports sphere in Cuba and in international entities such as ODECABE and ODEPA.

Several of his colleagues, among them COC vice-president Ruperto Herrera and the head of the Cuban Cycling Federation, José Peláez, evoked the legacy left by Fernández, who was for years president of the COC, is its president for life, and also chaired the Organizing Committee of transcendental sports events held in Cuba such as the Pan American Games of Havana-91, the Central American and Caribbean Games of 1982, and the World Cup of Athletics, in 1992, at times when Cuban sport achieved its main results, especially the fifth Olympic place in Barcelona 92.

"For me Fernandez was a school, a teacher, a capable, intelligent person. I learned everything I know about leadership from Fernandez. He reviewed the tasks in detail and he was a partner of integrity, austere, faithful to Fidel and Raul and characterized by great discipline," said Herrera, who worked for many years with Fernandez in the COC.

"My mother was a teacher and was directed by him, he was an extraordinary person, he covered all sectors of education and we owe him a lot," said the first Olympic champion of Latin America, María Caridad Colón.

Through a video, the president of Panam Sports, Neven Ilic, recalled his meetings with the Cuban leader in Havana, while the head of the Olympic Committee of Nicaragua, Emmett Lang, began his speech by saying that he always says that "the Olympic Committee of Nicaragua is the son of the COC".

During the activity, groups in solidarity with Cuba and graduates of the International School of Sports of San José de las Lajas chanted slogans in support of Cuba, gave cheers to the friendship between the peoples of Cuba and Chile, and chatted with Cuban athletes, while Rodrigo Sepúlveda delighted with anthological songs by Silvio Rodríguez such as "El Necio".

Another emotional moment was when the official announcer informed those present that the Cuban delegation had won another title, its 24th, with José Ramón Pelier in canoeing, a fact that deserved a standing ovation from those present.

Fernández was born in Santiago de Cuba on November 4, 1923 and died on January 6, 2019.

In addition to his fruitful work in the sports sector, he held important positions in the leadership of the country, as vice president of the Council of Ministers, was Minister of Education and as a military man he was one of the heroes of the victory of Playa Girón.

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