

# *Sotomayor honored in Cuba for his Panam Sports Legend Award*

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Havana, January 4 (RHC) - The best high jumper in history, Cuban Javier Sotomayor, was honored in Havana for his Legend of the Americas award, conferred on him in December by the governing body of the sport in the continent, Panam Sports.

At Bar 2.45, owned by the illustrious sportsman, his work team surprised him with a surprise party, attended by sports glories, sports personalities, friends and journalists, which the so-called Prince of the

Heights, or rather the king, enjoyed to the fullest.

Among the guests were stars such as María Caridad Colón, Dayron Robles, Yumilka Ruiz, Anier García and Yoelbis Quesada, among others, the famous actor Jorge Perugorria, and the main directors of the Cuban Olympic Committee, led by its president Roberto León Richards.

Also several generations of high jumpers such as Jorge Luis Alfaro, Luis Zayas and Puerto Rican Luis Castro, who revealed that for them Soto has been an inspiration and jokingly urged him to reveal the "magic formula" to be able to fly.

Through videos, congratulatory messages were sent to him by the president of Panam Sports, Neven Illic, athletics glories such as Carl Lewis, Serguei Bubka, Mutaz Barshim and Ana Fidelia Quiros, his coach Guillermo de la Torre, and several of his friends from his athletics days, such as Marino Drake, Lázaro Betancourt jr, and Lázaro Martínez.

Also on the 2.45 screen were images of Soto's achievements and his life, even as a child when he started athletics in his native Limonar (Matanzas province), inspired, above all, by his paternal grandparents, who always called him "champion".

Excited, joking, smiling and with the award in his hands, the Olympic champion, world record holder and several times world champion thanked the tokens of affection and recalled passages of his career.

The celebration was enlivened by the popular group Maikel Blanco y Salsa Mayor, which the world record holder promoted in its beginnings, almost two decades ago.

The 56-year-old Sotomayor received last December 9 in Miami the Legend of the Americas award, in a ceremony where the best of the sport in the continent was honored in 11 categories.

In addition to Soto, other sports stars in the continent, such as swimmers Mark Spitz (USA) and Thiago Pereira (Brazil), and hurdler Félix Sánchez (Dominican Republic), were also nominated in the legend category.

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