

EDITORIAL

By NPDF Executive Director Joseph Occhipinti

NPDF PAST HONOREE IS PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE IN ECUADOR



The National Police Defense Foundation (NPDF), a congressionally recognized and non-profit police organization with over 206,000 members and supporters worldwide, honored Vice President Lenin B. Moreno Garces as their “Man of the Year” on May 7, 2013 in New York City. This prestigious award was in recognition of his lifelong achievements as a businessman, humanitarian, the elected Vice-President of Ecuador from January 15, 2007 to May 24, 2013.

I had the distinct pleasure in meeting Vice President Moreno Garces on January 10, 2013 in Quito, Ecuador where I was presented with the prestigious “Sol de Oro” award in recognition of my humanitarian efforts in Ecuador, over the past twenty years, in providing critical medical care to severely handicapped Ecuadorian police officers and critically ill children.

I was unaware at that time that Vice President Moreno Garces was a paraplegic that resulted in his being a crime victim in an armed robbery incident that occurred in January 3, 1998. Despite his serious wounds, he overcame many obstacles and succeed in being a successful businessman, Ecuador's Vice President, "Special Envoy on Disability Accessibility by United Nations in December 2013 and nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012.

It also explained why he was committed in helping other severely handicapped persons and police officials having experienced himself the pain and suffering of being paralyzed in a wheel chair. It is also historical that he was the only high-level government official in South America who earned numerous awards and honors as Vice-President!

I was further impressed at our May 7, 2013 awards dinner when he offered to help another honoree, Christine Levinson, whose husband retired FBI Special Agent Robert Levinson was kidnapped by terrorists in Iran in 2007. The Vice-President asked to speak to Mrs. Levinson and emotionally felt the pain and suffering that family had endured during his captivity and offered some assistance in trying to secure his release.

I feel confident that if he achieves the Office of President, he will continue in his diplomatic endeavors to help secure Mr. Levinson's release. It is my opinion that Vice President Lenin Moreno Garces would be a great President for all the people of Ecuador will continue to focus all his efforts in helping every Ecuadorian citizen including the poor and handicapped.

In conclusion, I am proud to say I have known Vice President Moreno-Garces and consider him my friend and he should be an inspiration to other world leaders.