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BOTELLO JIMENEZ TO RECEIVE 2023 RON DAWS AMBASSADOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

Won Grandma's Marathon Men's Wheelchair Title in 2007

(DULUTH, MINN.) --- Former Grandma's Marathon wheelchair champion Rafael Botello Jimenez has been named the 2023 Ron Daws Ambassador of the Year Award recipient, it was announced today by Grandma's Marathon.

This year will mark the 13th time competing at Grandma's Marathon for Botello Jimenez, who won the men's wheelchair race in 2007 and four times has finished as the runner-up.

The 2007 race was not only Botello Jimenez's first in Duluth, but also his first time visiting or racing anywhere in the United States – he was born and still lives in Spain.

"Duluth is a very important city in my sporting and personal career," Botello Jimenez said. "I am speechless about receiving this award. I never thought I would receive such an important honor from a marathon for which I have so much affection and that has created such good memories for me."

Botello Jimenez has been instrumental in the growth and development of the Grandma's Marathon wheelchair division, which has nearly doubled in size since his first race in 2007 and now attracts some of the best wheelchair athletes from around the world. Botello Jimenez has personally recruited several top wheelers from Latin America and Europe to come race in Duluth.

Aside from his 2007 victory, Botello Jimenez points to the 2012 Grandma's Marathon as perhaps his most important memory from this race weekend.

"I finished third that year, but my time qualified me for the Paralympic Games in London," he remembers. "I did not stop crying as I called my family and friends to tell them I was going to my second Paralympics!"



Botello Jimenez will officially receive his award at the 2023 Grandma's Marathon Awards Luncheon, which is scheduled for 12:00 p.m. on Friday, June 16 at The Garden Event Center.

The award is named after Ron Daws, who was a 1968 Olympian and instrumental to the development of road racing in Minnesota. It's presented each year to an individual or group who has been a leader in the development and growth of long-distance running and who has shared a commitment toward Grandma's Marathon and the City of Duluth.

For any questions or interview requests, please contact Marketing & Public Relations Director Zach Schneider via phone at (218) 343-9874 or via email at zach@grandmamarathon.com.

PREVIOUS RON DAWS AMBASSADOR OF THE YEAR AWARD RECIPIENTS

2022 – Katie McGee	2007 – Doris Windsand-Dausman
2021 – n/a	2006 – Dan 'Digger' Carlson
2020 – n/a	2005 – Ed Hermel
2019 – Dan Conway	2004 – Kelly Keeler
2018 – Patricia Goodwin	2003 – Bill Andberg
2017 – Austin Jarrow Sports	2002 – Terry Lundberg
2016 – Brian Larsen	2001 – Richard Braun
2015 – Peter Graves & Michael Pinocci	2000 – Rob Link
2014 – Joanie Holst	1999 – John Goldfine
2013 – Huck Andresen	1998 – Kerry Rodd
2012 – Jon Anderson	1997 – Doug Kurtis
2011 – Gloria Jansen	1996 – Garry Bjorklund
2010 – Martha Firling	1995 – Dick Beardsley
2009 – Dr. James Kirkham	1994 – Dorothy Spencer
2008 – Carolyn Mather	1993 – Alex Ratelle

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ABOUT GRANDMA'S MARATHON

Grandma's Marathon began in 1977 when a group of local runners planned a scenic road race from Two Harbors to Duluth, Minnesota. After seeing just 150 participants that year, the race weekend has now grown into one of the largest in the United States and welcomes more than 20,000 participants for its three-race event each June.

The race got its name from the Duluth-based group of famous Grandma's Restaurants, the first major sponsor of the marathon. In addition to the 26.2-mile race, the organization has now added the Garry Bjorklund Half Marathon and William A. Irvin 5K to its weekend offerings.

As the popularity of Grandma's Marathon has grown, our mission has stayed the same – to organize, promote, and deliver annual events and programs that cultivate running, educational, social, and charitable opportunities to our communities.

Grandma's Marathon-Duluth, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization with a nine-person, full-time staff and a 17-member Board of Directors.



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