

FIRST ever Gold medal for the South Pacific – won by Fijian Paralympian

ILIESA Delana was, up until September 4th 2012, a relatively unknown Fijian disabled sportsman. That is until by the grace of God he rose to national hero status by winning a Gold medal at the London Paralympics on this day.

Iliesa is a humble and unassuming young man who asked his mother to sincerely pray for him as he was focused on winning that medal for the glory of God Almighty. His beautiful mother encouraged him just before his jump and blessed him in the name of the Lord to go forth and be victorious !

Pastor had the privilege to meet Iliesa on his Fijian national day of honour dedicated to him on the 13th September for such a glorious win, not only for himself but for Fiji and the whole of the South Pacific. Pastor having spoken with Iliesa congratulated him on his win and Iliesa testified that it was truly only by having faith in the Lord that allowed him to achieve this milestone for the nation. He acknowledged it emphatically and was overwhelmed at the attention afforded him by the nation due to his win but was humble enough to take it all in his stride and graciously accept the accolades but give all glory to the Lord.

God bless him as he is a wonderful role model for many youth in Fiji and the South Pacific for what can be done with faith, focus and humility. God bless you Iliesa!



President attributes win to spiritual strength, confidence ..

Nanise Loanakadavu Friday, September 14, 2012 FijiTimes
the Vodafone Arena yesterday. Picture: IVAMERE ROKOVESA



ILIESA Delana's victory has become a victory for his family, for Fiji and for the Pacific.

"You have made all of us extremely proud," said President Ratu Epeli Nailatikau yesterday.

While welcoming Delana to the celebrations at the Vodafone Arena, Ratu Epeli said the entire nation had been joining hands since September 4 to celebrate an unprecedented achievement in the history of the country.

"I am deeply honoured and moved to speak on all our behalf in thanking Iliesa Delana for his outstanding performance in winning a gold medal at the 2012 Paralympic Games in London," Ratu Epeli said.

"Iliesa, today I convey to you on behalf of all the people of Fiji — those here and those abroad — and our brothers and sisters from the Pacific, our collective sincere gratitude and profound appreciation for your victory.

"Iliesa's win at the world's highest level of competition is not only the first for Fiji but it is also the first gold medal for the Pacific Island countries."

Ratu Epeli said many people could relate to and understand the sacrifices Delana had to make and the numerous challenges he faced.

"You have had to endure — most of which would have derailed your focus from being the best in the world," he said. "A lesser person would have succumbed."

He said many people who were present yesterday would understand Delana's unwavering commitment to his training, his strong and burning desire and his will to win.

Indeed, he said Delana's spiritual strength, his faith and confidence, both in himself and in God, paved the way for the historic win.

<http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?ref=archive&id=211767>

Win for Fiji: Delana

Timoci Vula Thursday, September 13, 2012 Fiji Times

Update: 11:23AM PARALYMPIC champion Iliesa Delana has just delivered his first official speech after the historical win in London earlier this month.

I dedicate this win to the Almighty God for His blessing, to beloved Fiji and beloved citizens, fellow disability colleagues, the *vanua* Nakuruvakarua, Nadroga the Turaga na Ka Levu, and to those I have not acknowledged, thank you, Delana said.

This win is for you. God bless Fiji, he said.

<http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?ref=archive&id=211755>



President congratulates Delana

Timoci Vula Thursday, September 13, 2012 Fiji Times

Update: 11:29AM ILIESA Delana, welcome home.

I am deeply honoured and like many here today to speak on all our behalf in thanking Iliesa Delana in his outstanding performance in winning a gold medal in the 2012 Paralympic Games in London, President Ratu Epeli Nailatikau said in his address at the celebration in Suva.

Iliesas win at the worlds highest level competition is not only the first for Fiji, but also the first gold medal for the Pacific. I am told pacific islands are also celebrating Iliesasa achievement, he says.

Today, I convey to you on behalf of all the people of Fiji, our brothers and sisters from the pacific, our collective sincere gratitude and profound appreciation of your victory.

Your victory is Fijis and the Pacific victory. You have made all of us extremely proud, Ratu Epeli told the 27-year old.

<http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?ref=archive&id=211756>

City halts for Delana

Nanise Loanakadavu Friday, September 14, 2012 Fiji Times

ILIESA Delana's achievement at the 2012 Paralympic Games in London was unexpected.

Speaking in the iTaukei language, Delana's matanivanua Isireli Lasaqa said no one in Fiji had dreamt about wining a gold medal at the international arena like the Paralympics.

He said Delana had shown the people of Fiji that nothing was impossible when the heart was willing.

Mr Lasaqa said while the nation rejoiced they should also think of the better days ahead when people would need to be committed if they wanted to achieve something in life.

He thanked the military and government officials for the traditional welcome ceremony

accorded to Delana.

He said they did not expect any of it when they were told the nation would celebrate Delana's achievement.

He said this was the true image of the people of Fiji — full of joy and happiness.

Mr Lasaqa said they were grateful to the people for recognising Delana's achievements and for making Fiji recognised at the Paralympic Games level.

The celebrations were telecast live throughout Fiji and across the Pacific.

<http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?ref=archive&id=211815>



Defining moment for 'dot' in the Pacific

Nanise Loanakadavu Friday, September 14, 2012 Fiji Times

"THIS is a defining moment for all of us."

President Ratu Epeli Nailatikau made the comment yesterday to celebrate Iliesa Delana's win at the London Paralympics.

He said the win had elevated the country, a small dot in the vast Pacific Ocean to the same pedestal as other big, powerful and resource-rich countries that had produced world champions.

Ratu Epeli said Fiji should take extra pride in marching together with the giants of the Paralympic Games.

"Like you, Iliesa Delana, Fiji will not waver from its commitment to achieve its ultimate vision for supporting disabled people," Ratu Epeli said. "We will not be swayed from laying a firm foundation that will bring a greater and brighter future for all our children, irrespective of race, colour or creed, embracing unity in every sense of the word."

The President said Fiji was built on respect for one another, tolerance, faith and trust.

"A Fiji that will ensure the equitable sharing of resources and the reduction of the disparity between the rich and the disadvantaged," he said.

Ratu Epeli said Fiji's philosophy was to ensure no one was marginalised or left out or given preferential treatment.

"Today, Fiji takes inspiration from Iliesa Delana's victory," Ratu Epeli said.

"Like Iliesa Delana, we must persevere as a nation, we must work together to shape our future and to allow our children to take Fiji to greater heights."

<http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?ref=archive&id=211764>