



DANNY O. LEADERSHIP A W A R D

The Danny O. Leadership Award recognizes the excellence of leadership in not only sports but in life. This annual award will be presented to the Player, Coach, Team Manager, Hockey Mom/Dad nominated that best represents the three qualities that describe Danny O., Determined, Genial and Obliging. At the end of the Bio, you will have an opportunity to nominate someone by filling out the short form. Please be sure to include as much information and examples as possible on your nominee. Once you click on submit, your submission will be received by Danny's wife Gabby and his two daughters, Sofia and Lianna. They will be reviewing all the submissions and will select the winner. The winner will receive the Danny O. Leadership Award with their name engraved and a prize of \$250.00. Please make sure to nominate someone that will be attending the 2024 Amerigol Latam Cup.



BIO:

Daniel Gustavo Otero, a father, a husband, a son, a brother, and most importantly a great leader was a role model to his family, friends, and his community. He left a legacy that can only be described using the initials of his name: **DGO**. It not only represented his name but also his attributes: determined, genial, and obliging.

The **“D”** represented his determination. From a young age, Danny was determined to overcome his challenges; and he did so, through Martial Arts, specifically in Taekwondo and Jui Jitsu. Many young children who experience challenging times do not know how to cope. Danny's challenges in his youth involved the divorce of his parents, a speech disorder at an early age and bullying. With the support of his family, Danny overcame his difficulties through Martial Arts. Through hard work, he won first place in numerous competitions; one being the

His passion for teaching developed during this time. With the support of his family, he attended the University of Miami and graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and Psychology, in 2001. He was hired by Miami Dade Public Schools in 2002. Throughout his teaching career, from 2002 to 2020, his professional performance as a teacher was consistently admired. His philosophy was that all children can succeed with consistent discipline, organization, and determination. These ideas stemmed from his martial arts experience. As a reading and language arts teacher, he helped push his students' reading levels very high. He also was very dedicated to extracurricular activities that involved students and teachers. As a reflection of this, he obtained prestigious awards, such as, Rookie Teacher of the Year and Teacher of the Year. He taught and gave from his heart. He had afterschool programs that involved exercise activities for the students and teachers, karate, safety patrol, and tutoring. His work did not end at the end of the school day.



Parents loved his “open door” policy of communication, his organizational skills via the homework folders he used to update parents daily, and the behavior chart he used to incentivize the children. He would place his karate medals on a student weekly for student of the week, give pizza parties, monthly gift cards for the most improved students, and last but not least, throw his most talked about VIP luau at the end of the year. His name became well-known by people in the community, going back even 30 years, due to martial arts. Lastly, his determination grew greater when he received the most dreadful news in November of 2017, he was diagnosed with brain cancer. Like many cancer patients, he was a hero. He went through it all: surgeries, radiation, and chemo; and despite it all, he continued working as a teacher and teaching martial arts after school, all while spending time with his family. He fulfilled all of his goals because of his determination.

The **“G”** represents how genial he was. There isn't one person who can say anything negative about Danny. He was everyone's friend, from the gardener who he had just met while doing his landscaping to the stranger who he paid to get his car detailed. A person's eyes would light up at the sound of his name. If anyone was upset, he was a peacemaker. He had a lot of compassion, self-control, discipline, kindness, and patience, like no other. He always found a way to ease the tension in a room by changing a negative remark into a heart-warming joke, by patting the sadness away, or by just staying silent. As a true leader, he was an example to how people should get along, solve problems, and try to move on.



Lastly, the **“O”** represents obliging. Danny's name should have probably been placed as a synonym in the dictionary for this word. According to Dictionary.com, this word means, “...someone who is willing or eager to politely do things for others, such as performing favors or services for them...” His service to family, friends, and even strangers was exemplary. Despite having family and career responsibilities, if anyone needed a helping hand, Danny was there. Even through his chemo, he would drive to far places as tired as he was to help a family member, in need. He would take his nap, his power shake, and get back out. We believe that helping others was his calling. His love for others was greatly reflected in what many of us would say are sacrifices, but to Danny they were not sacrifices. His obliging nature was dictated by the compassion he had for others. He was kind and loving. He knew how to sooth the rough edges.



To end, his spirit lives stronger than ever. Deep admiration has been expressed from those who shared heart-felt stories. Parents, teachers, students, friends, and family recognize this great loss, but know that his legacy will move mountains. They are stories of strength and inspiration. If one reflects upon Danny's life, he or she will say that his life had great richness. It was about making a positive impact in many people's lives including those of children. He demonstrated courage in the last stage of his life. His passing humbled many, and strengthened those who may have felt weak. The hope is that his legacy helps students, athletes, or any adults be the best they can be by carrying the torch of leadership. These three qualities represented in his name: **DGO** seem so simple, yet powerful. We will never forget you Danny for showing us how important it is to be: determined, genial, and obliging.