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Operator Jose Marquez and his family, who left El Salvador to avoid civil war, have prospered in the United States.

Division 2's Jose Marquez: A Father's Sacrifice is Rewarded

By DAVID HERSHENSON

(April 13, 2005) Jose Marquez, a Crossroads Depot Division 2 operator, gave up a prestigious position 25 years ago to provide a better life for his family. He was a professor of sociology at the University of El Salvador in 1980 when civil war was tearing apart the country.

"Although I loved my country, I had to find a way to get out of El Salvador at that time," says Marquez. "The army came in and closed down the university, people were killing each other – it was not a safe place to raise a family."

Marquez gave up his job and moved with his wife and four children to Pasadena, where he was offered a place to stay with his sister-in-law. The family eventually moved into their own place in Altadena and he worked several jobs to support his family, including assembling electronics boards, teaching mentally disabled students, and working as a supervisor at an electronics company.

A few years ago, a Metro Red Line operator friend suggested that Marquez consider applying for a job driving a Metro Bus. He followed up on the advice and began working as a Metro Bus operator in 1996.

Marquez hosted somewhat of a family reunion a few weeks ago when relatives from El Salvador, Costa Rica, Houston and New York joined him and his family to celebrate the outstanding accomplishment of his youngest son, Frank.

Distinguished medical student

In addition to earning a medical degree from the University of Southern California, Frank was awarded the Dr. Edward Zampanta award as the most distinguished Latino medical student at USC Keck School of Medicine. The award was presented at the USC Mexican American Alumni Association Scholarship Dinner.

Carlos Rodriguez, a principal budget analyst in Metro's Office of Management and Budget, attended the dinner and was impressed with the sacrifice Marquez made for his family and the appreciation his son

demonstrated in his acceptance speech.

"Frank thanked his father for showing him the value of hard work and humility and explained that his father showed him the meaning of commitment and hard work by working as an MTA driver and taking pride in his work," says Rodriguez. "Jose Marquez's son is not only the most distinguished Latino medical student, but is one of the top medical students at USC."

Dr. Frank Marquez will begin his residency at UCLA Medical Center this June.

"I am so proud of Frank and all of my children," says Marquez. "I really love my family."

Reasons to be proud

His other children have all given him reasons to be proud. Marlon, his eldest son, earned a degree in electrical engineering from UCLA and is working in the aerospace industry. Daughter Nancy also received her degree from ULCA in international economics and works as a supervisor in the insurance business.

Marquez's second youngest, David, is a counselor for the Pasadena Unified School District and received his degree from LaVerne University. Marquez's wife, Sylvia, whom he met while attending college in El Salvador, is a counselor for Pasadena's Head Start program.

Transportation Manager Thom Pelk says Marquez is a valuable member of the Division 2 team.

"His reliability and commitment to his job are apparent and reflective in his employment record," says Pelk. "We are very fortunate to have Mr. Marquez on our team."

Jose Marquez's sacrifice to provide a better life for his family has certainly been rewarded.