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Former Alouettes QB Calvillo among new inductees to Quebec Sports Hall of Fame

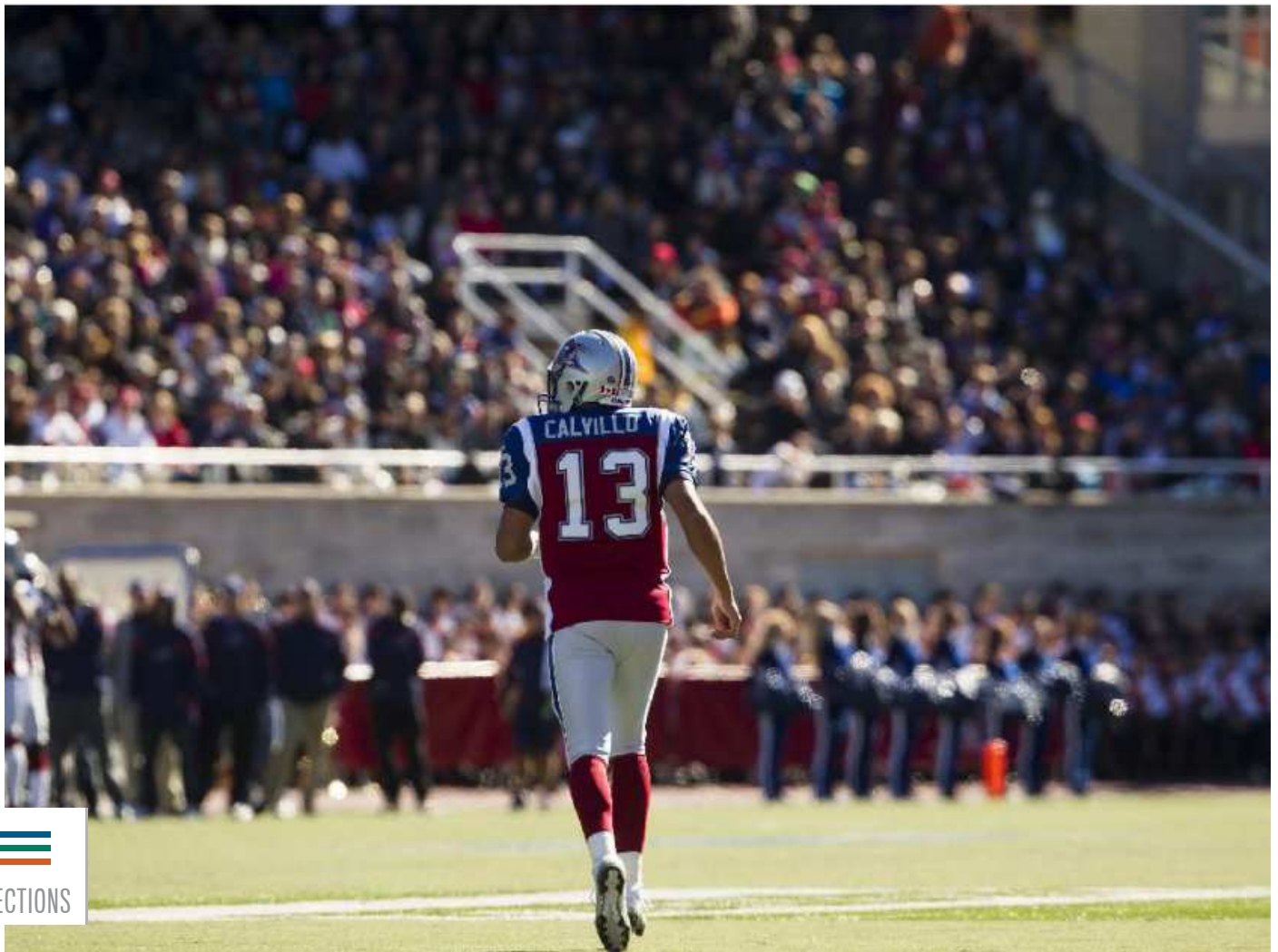


STU COWAN, MONTREAL GAZETTE

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SECTIONS

Alouettes quarterback Anthony Calvillo runs off the field during the first half of CFL game against the Winnipeg Blue Bombers at Montreal's Molson Stadium on Oct. 8, 2012. *DARIO AYALA / MONTREAL GAZETTE*

The Quebec Sports Hall of Fame announced the names of its seven new inductees for this year on June 22 and it's an impressive list.

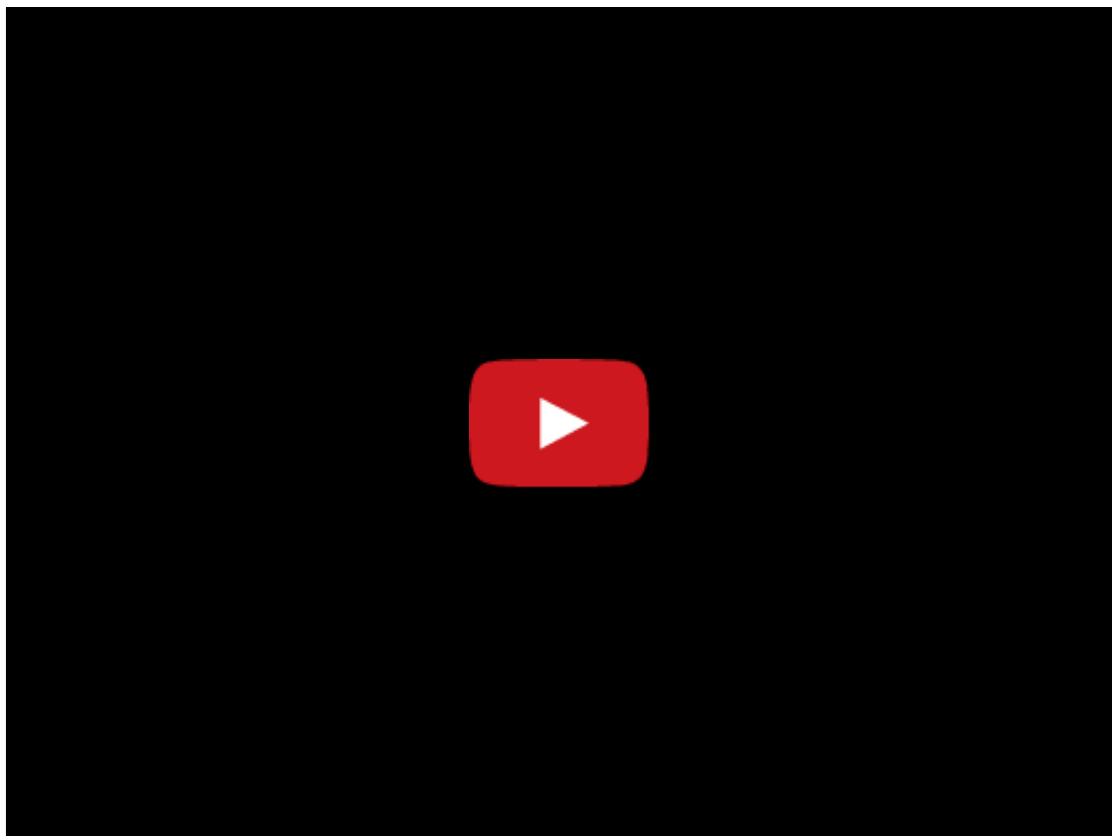
Joining the Hall in the athletes category are former Alouettes quarterback Anthony Calvillo, future Hockey Hall of Famer Martin Brodeur, freestyle moguls skiers Alexandre Bilodeau and Jennifer Heil, who both have Olympic gold medals, and diver Alexandre Despatie.

Joining the Hall in the builders' category are former Alouettes player and president Larry Smith, and synchronized swimming coach Julie Sauvé.

The seven new members will be honoured at the 25th edition of the Induction Gala to be held at the Club de Golf Métropolitain Anjou on Wednesday, Sept. 30. Canadiens general manager Marc Bergevin will be the honorary president for the event. Tickets cost \$275 each for the gala. For more information: pantheonessports@gmail.com (<mailto:pantheonessports@gmail.com>)

For more information on the Quebec Sports Hall of Fame and the new inductees, click [here](http://www.pantheonessports.ca/) (<http://www.pantheonessports.ca/>).

Below is column I wrote about a documentary on Calvillo's life titled The Kid From La Puente:



The real Calvillo story

PUBLISHED ON OCT. 13, 2012

STU COWAN

MONTREAL GAZETTE

If you're not already a fan of Alouettes quarterback Anthony Calvillo, you almost certainly will be if you watch *The Kid From La Puente*.

Shelley Saywell admits she knew nothing about Calvillo and was not a football fan before being hired by TSN to direct the documentary, which will premiere at 9 p.m. Thursday as part of the *Engraved on a Nation* series celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Grey Cup.

"My husband is amazed that in the last couple of Alouettes games I've been glued to the couch," Saywell said Friday. "So I have become an Alouettes/Anthony Calvillo fan."

Saywell is known in the film world for her documentaries on armed conflict and human-rights issues, winning six Gemini Awards, two Best Canadian Feature Awards at Hot Docs and an Emmy for Outstanding Investigative Journalism. But she had never done a film about sports.

"I didn't even know his name," she added about Calvillo. "I didn't watch CFL football. At first I thought they had the wrong person when they called me, and then when they started to tell me a little about Anthony's backstory I said, 'OK, I can wrap my head around that because I've done a lot of films in conflict zones.' I thought there was a real human drama to this story."

The documentary starts with the Alouettes game on Thanksgiving Day last year when Calvillo became football's passing leader with 72,429 career yards, breaking the record held by former CFL great Damon Allen. It then follows Calvillo back to the streets of East Los Angeles where he grew up.

The film is narrated by Calvillo's younger brother, Mario, who describes "a gang-ridden 'hood where just going to the laundromat could get you shot. But to us it was just home."

"My brother Anthony wears No. 13 proudly," Mario says. "Though there were times it seemed jinxed, one thing's for sure — it wasn't

luck that got him here. He's led the Alouettes to three Grey Cup victories, and though people may know Calvillo the quarterback they don't know the whole story. The kid from La Puente, with all the odds stacked against him, it's amazing that he got here at all."

Mario adds in the documentary that Calvillo's trip after breaking the record was more than a celebration.

"There are things our family has never talked about before," he says. "Anthony's journey back is more than a celebration. It's about confronting what happened here."

Calvillo's parents were both popular in high school and were married as teenagers. His mother, Tina, gave birth to David when she was only 16 and Anthony when she was 17.

Tina recalls her husband hanging out with gangs and breaking into stores. When he was home, he physically abused his wife. The last straw was when he threw a knife at Tina.

"I didn't know any of that when I sat down to interview her," Saywell said. "She was not the first interview I did ... I did it on my second trip to California, actually. All I knew about her is that she had these two sons that had gone in different directions and that life was I'm sure somewhat tough for her.

"When we were filming this I was literally gobsmacked because I didn't know that was going to come out. ... It was kind of intense."

As a result of the family violence, David had to grow up quickly and was the one who defended his mother. He became a father figure as a 13-year-old when his parents finally separated.

Anthony was focused on sports and always had some kind of a ball in his hand, with youth coach Bob Bojorquez recalling him being able to throw a football 35-40 yards as a 7-year-old. David went the other way and eventually joined the Puente 13 gang that controlled the park, but he made sure the gang stayed away from his younger brothers.

David was eventually arrested for gang activity and charged with

attempted murder, receiving a 16-year sentence of which he served eight years. David's girlfriend was pregnant with twins when he went to jail and Anthony, who never abandoned his brother, recalls bringing the 4-day-old babies to see their father through a glass partition in jail. David also recalls Anthony waiting for him when he was released from jail and his little brother taking over the father-figure role, warning him not to screw up again.

"In the film, the family is just so wonderful and open, but they hadn't talked about a lot of things before and they didn't know what the others were saying (for the film)," Saywell said.

And she can't say enough about Anthony Calvillo.

"First of all, every single person I interviewed in the film at one point or another cries, and they don't cry because they're telling a sad story," she said. "They always cried at the point where I'd say, 'You must really love Anthony?' or 'What does Anthony mean to you?'"

"He's just a remarkable guy who broke a cycle of violence. ... And he's so humble. I just think he's an inspirational figure because he puts the things that are important first.

"What matters to him now is being a great dad and being the guy and the husband he's always wanted to be. I just find that really heartwarming.

"I hope this film helps fill in the gaps for his fans and they'll be able to watch him differently now and respect him even more."

I know I do.