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NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY  
DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI

COLLEGE OF ARTS  
AND SCIENCES

## TONY LOVITT '76



**“Today, I appreciate even more my experiences at NMSU—they transcended the classroom and had an indelible impact on my life.”**

—Tony Lovitt '76

Some kids know very early on exactly what they want to be when they grow up—and Tony Lovitt '76 was one of them.

As a youngster, Tony was determined to be a reporter and broadcast journalist. When he was a junior, his high school newspaper sponsor passed along a brochure for the Communications Arts Institute at NMSU. Although he had never heard of NMSU, the brochure was compelling, promising hands-on experience at the campus radio and television stations and newspaper. Tony jumped at the chance, and, while he was here, Dr. Harvey Jacobs, department head for journalism and mass communications, recruited Tony to come to NMSU. Tony recalls how Dr. Jacobs went out of his way to get him a work study job as a student assistant to Everette “Sonny”

Yates in the sports information office—the job Tony calls “the springboard to my career.”

El Paso Pro Sports reached out to Sonny looking for a play-by-play announcer for a new pro volleyball franchise and Tony was tapped—although he knew nothing about volleyball. However, he “was walked through hours of footage by coaches, and it slowly sunk in.” He called his first volleyball broadcast for the El Paso-Juárez Sol team in 1975 and—a mere four years later—became the first play-by-play volleyball announcer for ESPN.

Volleyball was Tony’s ticket to national prominence: He was the lead public address announcer for indoor volleyball at the 1984 and 1996 Olympics, the 1990 Goodwill Games, and the 2011 pre-Olympic volleyball tournament in London. In 2018, Tony received the James E. Coleman USA National Team Award for “performance of excellence and uncompromising commitment to the USA national team programs.”

In addition to volleyball, Tony has been an announcer for indoor soccer and team tennis, and the voice for hundreds of radio and TV commercials. He also appeared in two feature films, *Spiker* and *The Tiger Woods Story*.

A career filled with creative outlets like broadcasting and writing has been the most rewarding part of Tony’s professional journey. Lately, he’s channeled his creativity by authoring two children’s books: *Five Trees for Mina* (published in Spanish as *Cinco Árboles para Mina*), helping children cope with the loss of a pet, and *The Cat with Twenty Toes*, destigmatizing physical differences and celebrating diversity. Both books received an International Firebird Book Award, and a portion of each book sale goes to a fund Tony established in memory of his brother, Brad, at City of Hope, a cancer research and treatment hospital in Los Angeles, California.

Tony’s fondest memories of NMSU include learning from luminaries such as Lou Henson, Mark Medoff, Harvey Jacobs, and Clyde Tombaugh, as well as breakfast in Milton Hall and how the campus in the 1970s was “a great melting pot of cowboys, long-hairs, and hippies.”

His advice to today’s students? “Be true to yourself and investigate every aspect of your intended career before homing in on a discipline. Take it all in—college is a smorgasbord, not a boutique.” ▲