

# Luis Salinas Awarded Outstanding Career Achievement Award

## By Caleb S. Brown

Luis Salinas, who unfortunately died earlier this year, was posthumously awarded the Outstanding Career Achievement Award in this year's annual US Chess awards, recognizing decades of service as an organizer, tournament director and volunteer.

The Outstanding Career Achievement Award is the highest US Chess award for volunteer service outside of formal US Chess governance. The Recognitions Committee is responsible for making recommendations for this award to the Executive Board which makes the final decision. The award will be officially presented on August 2 at the awards reception held in conjunction with the U.S. Open in Norfolk, Virginia.

This award comes only shortly after 139 players attended the Luis Salinas Memorial Texas State & Amateur Championship, which was held over Memorial Day Weekend in Fort Worth. Rob Jones suggested the idea of renaming the tournament after Salinas and indeed only five days after Salinas's death the renaming was announced at the South junior chess meeting on March 16, according to the meeting minutes.

It is fitting that the State & Amateur bears Salinas's name considering that he organized it every year it was held from 1998 through 2023, according to [uschess.org](http://uschess.org). Indeed, the 2023 State & Amateur was the very last of 2566 rated events at which Salinas directed since the dawn of online rating records in 1991. Salinas, who was a Senior TD, FIDE Arbiter and International Organizer, received the US Chess Tournament Director of the Year Award in 2011.

Former TCA President Tom Crane said Salinas "was responsible for running every big TCA event for as long as I can remember," including the State Scholastic Championships, the Grade Championships and the Southwest Open.

Crane said that Salinas dedicated most of his adult life to chess, adding that his impact on chess was "immeasurable." Salinas did so mainly through the Dallas Chess Club, which drew over 100 players to its tournaments every Friday night in its heyday, Crane said. Salinas was the DCC President.

"I told my students as they were coming up that the measuring stick for progress was the DCC Friday night tournament," Crane said.

He also said that Salinas mentored almost every tournament director in North Texas as well as many others across the state.

"If you had a question about a policy or rule you could always call his cell and he would help you out," Crane said. "If you needed advice regarding negotiating with a hotel for a big tournament you could just call him. He knew all the hotels that would give you favorable deals and what they would negotiate on."

Crane also said that any article about Salinas's impact would be remiss without crediting the work of TCA and DCC Treasurer Barbara Swafford "as she was the administrative arm that made all things Dallas Chess Club and major tournaments possible."

Carmen Chairez, who played in many tournaments Salinas organized, shared similar sentiments. He said that Salinas was so well respected as an organizer and a person that many people would want to help him when he asked.

He recalled a time when a tournament hall was filled with over 600 elementary students. "The teachers and parents have never seen so many children so quiet," Chairez said.

"He was so well organized that players flocked to his tournaments," he said. "Once you mentioned Luis Salinas, that was the tournament to go to."

TCA Webmaster Chris Wood described Salinas in his en passant announcement on [texaschess.org](http://texaschess.org) as one of the most prolific organizers and tournament directors in the country.

"His impact on chess in DFW and Texas cannot be overstated," Wood said.

Salinas also had a major impact on chess through his cumulative efforts across dozens of TCA membership meetings starting in the early 1990s if not sooner. He successfully proposed creating the annual junior chess meeting, according to the 1994 special meeting minutes. He also proposed the successful division of the State Scholastic Championship into two separate events, one for North Texas and one for South Texas, according to the 2014 annual meeting minutes. He was also responsible for setting the voting age at 16, according to the 2009 annual meeting minutes. Indeed, even though membership meetings are usually held only twice a year, he attended at least 42 meetings and made at least 82 motions.

The minutes also show his activity in other ways. Salinas was elected TCA Vice President in 1994 in

what may have been the only tied election in TCA history (his opponent conceded because his candidacy was erroneously advertised at an Austin chess club and he was too busy for the position), according to the 1994 annual meeting minutes. In addition to two years as TCA Vice President, Salinas served as a US Chess Regional Vice President in 1995, a US Chess Delegate for six years and a TCA Regional Director for two years, according to meeting minutes from the 1990s and early 2000s.

Salinas was also active in the college chess community. After serving honorably in the Navy he attended Texas A&M to study electrical engineering and be-

came club president, according to an article by former TCA Vice President Jim Hollingsworth on [texaschess.org](http://texaschess.org). Later Salinas worked as Assistant Chess Program Director at The University of Texas at Dallas for over 18 years, according to his LinkedIn profile.

Hollingsworth described Salinas as a man of renown and a friend to all chess players in the article. "Few are as knowledgeable as he about Texas Chess Association Bylaws, bidding procedures, and tournament administration," Hollingsworth said.

"He didn't do it for the money," Crane said. "He did it for the love of the game and his passion for people."

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## Review: The Chessnut EVO Electronic Chess Set

By Jeff French

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If you have paid any attention at all to electronic chess sets over the last few years, you have probably realized that there are a number of new players in the industry. Most e-board manufacturers like Fidelity, Novag, Saitek, etc. don't even exist anymore (with the exception of DGT and Millenium). Now you will find names like ChessGo, Chessnut, ChessUp, and others. But, DGT and Millenium are both exceptions in that they have both been around for quite a while and both have moved into the newer online capable general consumer electronic chess set manufacturing.

I have provided reviews for a couple of these newer boards in prior issues of *Texas Knights*. In particular, the Square Off Pro, the Chessnut Air, and two DGT models: the online-capable Pegasus and the stand-alone Centaur.

The *Chessnut EVO* is the subject of this review. This board is, at its simplest definition, an electronic chess board with an Android tablet attached. It has a wooden enclosure, weighing in at around 10 lbs. It can be used offline to play against different engines, analyze games, etc. and also has online options. In fact, the EVO allows using the physical board with current, and likely future, websites, videos, books, periodicals, and Android apps.

Chess.com and LiChess.org, Chesskid, and Chessable are all directly supported. And, with the built-in Chessnut Vision Service, chess website and app support extend far beyond just those. In fact, I have found that Gameknot.com, ChessWorld.net, and even sites more aimed at training, like AimChess, Chess King Learn, Chessvis, and Chess Lab, also work with the Chessnut Vision Service enabled on the EVO.

'Supported' in this case means you can play or study on these sites using the physical board. I haven't found any other electronic sets that even come close to doing what the EVO is capable of. But, in reality, the app support (also means you can read, for example, ebooks or PDFs by following along on the physical board. Plus, sites and apps providing interactive chess books from New in Chess, Quality Chess (Forward Chess), and others can also make use of the EVO physical board to follow along with their interactive diagrams while reading chess books. Add that same support for videos, whether streamed or played in a local media player, and you have the ability to follow along on the physical board with pretty much any chess media available (books, periodicals, and videos) both online or off.

The Chessnut Vision Service is totally unique to the Chessnut EVO compared to any other boards I have reviewed or read about to date.

Add to the list of features already mentioned, like support for chess engines (Maia, Stockfish, and Lc0 are already installed) with the ability to download other engines. Creating personalities is also an option. You can capture OTB games with an opponent. And there is also an 'Improve your ELO' training option. Basically, the EVO is a chess partner that should be able to assist in improving your chess prowess in any form you prefer while playing or training.

Analysis on the EVO is both realtime move-by-move and a recently added game review feature. There is the ability to start at the opening position (i.e., the initial start position), from a setup position and moving pieces on the physical board, or by loading a