



Chicagoan Angel Saez shines in spotlight of Mr. Gay USofA competition

By Ross Forman

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Angel L. Saez came this close to capturing the 2017 Mr. Gay USofA championship and bringing the prestigious title back to Chicago, his home for the past five years.

Saez, 41, who lives in Albany Park and works as a Zumba instructor at the Chicago Athletic Club and the East Bank Club, was tied for first-place late in the competition, held Oct. 18-20 in Houston, Texas, but the crown ultimately went to Dione Kelly.

Saez is still ecstatic with memories his near-victory.

"It was an amazing experience," said Saez, who performs regularly at The [Baton Show Lounge](#) in Chicago. "I was treated like royalty and got to meet a lot people, make a bunch of new friends."

Saez and Kelly were tied for first-place after the competition, and the talent category was used to break the tie.

Mr. Gay USofA was started in 2008 and has more than 30 local, state and regional contests. Mr. Gay USofA offers integrity, excellence, competition and recognition for the male leads in the entertainment community, the event boasts. Contestants compete in interview, club wear and talent. Mr. Gay USofA is a talent-based contest with talent being worth 50 percent, interview 25 percent and club wear 25 percent.

"In the event, (there) was mixed emotions; some people were happy, some people were disappointed," Saez said. "(Ultimately), you win some, you lose some, (and then) you just need to know what to take home with you.

"I took it as a great experience and learned a lot about myself."

Saez said one of the highlights of the event was simply being backstage, helping others achieve their dreams."

Saez, who was born and raised in Puerto Rico, qualified for the national stage during a preliminary contest this past July at [Hamburg Hamburger Mary's](#) Chicago.

"What's (still) left to say about the competition," Saez said, "(It was) three long days of hard-work. It all pays off, depending on how much you put into package (what) you're willing to share with others; this competition (helped) me learn a lot about myself."

A Little More About Angel L. Saez

Drink Of Choice: Whiskey Sour or Mimosa

Favorite Chicago Restaurant: The Cheesecake Factory

One Celebrity He'd Like To Meet: Madonna

Dream Vacation: "Five days in a luxury hotel where I don't have to do anything, just get up to eat. I would get massages, (manicures), pedicures and shop. (It wouldn't) matter where in the world (it would be)."

Now Playing, At The Gym: "Actually, I just (wear) my headset to get some silence; I do not listen to any music when I'm working out; that's my moment to not think of anything."

Preferred Pizza Ingredients: Bacon, sausage, chicken and pepperoni.

(Complete This Sentence): Even my close friends will be surprised to learn ... "That I really am sensitive and emotional."

At Work In Chicago: "Work for me is fun; I get to put (on) any costume I want and choose the music that I want to (use, listen to)."

Best Part Of Your Job: "Seeing people having fun and smiling."

Boxers or Briefs: Neither – "I prefer to be comfortable." Noted that he does like boxer-briefs, though.