

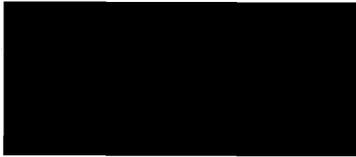


U.S. Department of Justice

Immigration and Naturalization Service

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OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS  
425 Eye Street N.W.  
ULLB, 3rd Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20536



File: WAC-99-254-50486 Office: California Service Center Date: **MAR - 7 2001**

IN RE: Petitioner:   
Beneficiary:

Petition: Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker Pursuant to § 101(a)(15)(O)(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(O)(i)

IN BEHALF OF PETITIONER:

Identifying data should be  
prevent clearly unwarranted  
invasion of personal privacy

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

This is the decision in your case. All documents have been returned to the office which originally decided your case. Any further inquiry must be made to that office.

If you believe the law was inappropriately applied or the analysis used in reaching the decision was inconsistent with the information provided or with precedent decisions, you may file a motion to reconsider. Such a motion must state the reasons for reconsideration and be supported by any pertinent precedent decisions. Any motion to reconsider must be filed within 30 days of the decision that the motion seeks to reconsider, as required under 8 C.F.R. 103.5(a)(1)(i).

If you have new or additional information which you wish to have considered, you may file a motion to reopen. Such a motion must state the new facts to be proved at the reopened proceeding and be supported by affidavits or other documentary evidence. Any motion to reopen must be filed within 30 days of the decision that the motion seeks to reopen, except that failure to file before this period expires may be excused in the discretion of the Service where it is demonstrated that the delay was reasonable and beyond the control of the applicant or petitioner. Id.

Any motion must be filed with the office which originally decided your case along with a fee of \$110 as required under 8 C.F.R. 103.7.

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FOR THE ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER,  
EXAMINATIONS

*Robert P. Wiemann*  
Robert P. Wiemann, Acting Director  
Administrative Appeals Office

**DISCUSSION:** The nonimmigrant visa petition was denied by the Director, California Service Center, and is now before the Associate Commissioner for Examinations on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed.

The petitioner in this matter is a dance studio. The beneficiary is described as a professional ballroom dancer. The petitioner seeks O-1 classification of the beneficiary, as an alien with extraordinary ability in athletics under section 101(a)(15)(O)(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the "Act"), in order to sponsor him as a competitive ballroom dancer in the United States for a period of one year.

The director denied the petition finding that the petitioner failed to establish that the beneficiary met the regulatory standard for an alien with extraordinary ability in athletics.

On appeal, counsel for the petitioner argued that the brief and additional documentation submitted will establish that the alien satisfies the criteria to be accorded the nonimmigrant visa sought.

Section 101(a)(15)(O)(i) of the Act provides classification to a qualified alien who has extraordinary ability in the sciences, arts, education, business, or athletics which has been demonstrated by sustained national or international acclaim, whose achievements have been recognized in the field through extensive documentation, and who seeks to enter the United States to continue work in the area of extraordinary ability.

The issue raised by the director in this proceeding is whether the petitioner has shown that the beneficiary qualifies for classification as an alien of extraordinary ability in athletics.

8 C.F.R. 214.2(o)(3)(ii) defines, in pertinent part:

*Extraordinary ability in the field of science, education, business, or athletics means a level of expertise indicating that the person is one of the small percentage who have arisen to the very top of the field of endeavor.*

8 C.F.R. 214.2(o)(3)(iii) states, in pertinent part, that:

*Evidentiary criteria for an O-1 alien of extraordinary ability in the fields of science, education, business, or athletics. An alien of extraordinary ability in the fields of science, education, business, or athletics must demonstrate sustained national or international acclaim and recognition for achievements in the field of expertise by providing evidence of:*

(A) Receipt of a major, internationally recognized award, such as the Nobel Prize; or

(B) At least three of the following forms of documentation:

(1) Documentation of the alien's receipt of nationally or internationally recognized prizes or awards for excellence in the field of endeavor;

(2) Documentation of the alien's membership in associations in the field for which classification is sought, which require outstanding achievements of their members, as judged by recognized national or international experts in their disciplines or fields;

(3) Published material in professional or major trade publications or major media about the alien, relating to the alien's work in the field for which classification is sought, which shall include the title, date, and author of such published material, and any necessary translation;

(4) Evidence of the alien's participation on a panel, or individually, as a judge of the work of others in the same or in an allied field of specialization to that for which classification is sought;

(5) Evidence of the alien's original scientific, scholarly, or business-related contributions of major significance in the field;

(6) Evidence of the alien's authorship of scholarly articles in the field, in professional journals, or other major media;

(7) Evidence that the alien has been employed in a critical or essential capacity for organizations and establishments that have a distinguished reputation;

(8) Evidence that the alien has either commanded a high salary or will command a high salary or other remuneration for services, evidenced by contracts or other reliable evidence.

(C) If the criteria in paragraph (o)(3)(iii) of this section do not readily apply to the beneficiary's occupation, the petitioner may submit comparable evidence in order to establish the beneficiary's eligibility.

8 C.F.R. 214.2(o)(5)(i)(A) requires, in pertinent part:

Consultation with an appropriate U.S. peer group (which could include a person or persons with expertise in the field), labor and/or management organization regarding the nature of the work to be done and the alien's qualifications is mandatory before a petition for O-1 or O-2 classification can be approved.

The beneficiary is a native and citizen of Poland who last entered the United States on March 24, 1999, as a B-2 visitor. In support of the petition, the petitioner submitted, in pertinent part, five letters from dance adjudicators and dance studios attesting to their knowledge that the beneficiary is a highly talented dancer and supporting his visa petition. The director concluded that the attestation letters were insufficient to establish that the regulatory standard had been satisfied.

On appeal, counsel submitted additional attestations and argued that the beneficiary satisfies the criteria at 8 C.F.R. 214.2(o)(3)(iv).

After careful review of the record, it must be concluded that the petitioner has failed to overcome the director's objections.

First, counsel addressed the standard set forth at 8 C.F.R. 214.2(o)(3)(iv) which pertains to the arts. Competitive ballroom dancing is considered a field of athletics and the controlling relations are found at 8 C.F.R. 214.2(o)(3)(iii).

Second, there is no evidence that the beneficiary has received a major international award equivalent to that listed at 8 C.F.R. 214.2(o)(3)(iii)(A). Nor is the record persuasive in demonstrating that the beneficiary met at least three of the criteria at 8 C.F.R. 214.2(o)(3)(iii)(B). It must be noted that these provisions are only documentary requirements and merely addressing them does not establish eligibility for the benefit sought.

Counsel argued that the beneficiary has won regional competitions in Poland and has competed internationally. However, there is no evidence that the beneficiary has won any nationally or internationally recognized prizes for excellence in the field. Nor is there any evidence that the beneficiary is internationally ranked in the sport by any of the leading governing organizations. Counsel also submitted a variety of favorable press clippings about the beneficiary. However, the petitioner did not submit any published material from a major trade publication recognizing the beneficiary as one of the top competitors in his field. The petitioner also failed to submit any evidence that the beneficiary has commanded a high salary in the sport.

Finally, the petitioner failed to submit a consultation letter from an organization governing the sport verifying the alien's

qualifications. Such a consultation letter is mandatory. The petition may not be approved on this basis alone.

The extraordinary ability provisions of this visa classification are intended to be highly restrictive. In order to establish eligibility for extraordinary ability classification the statute requires proof of "sustained" national or international acclaim and a demonstration that the alien's achievements have been recognized in the field of endeavor through "extensive documentation." The petitioner has not established that the beneficiary's abilities have been so recognized.

In addition, the regulations specifically state that O-1 classification is available only to a "small percentage" of athletes who have arisen to the "very top" of their field of endeavor. The record shows that the beneficiary is a rising competitor in the sport, but does not establish that he is one of a small percentage of competitive dancers who have risen to the very top of the sport. Therefore, it must be concluded that the petitioner has failed to overcome the director's objection.

The denial of this petition is without prejudice to the beneficiary pursuing any other immigration benefit for which he may be eligible.

The burden of proof in these proceedings rests solely with the petitioner. § 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. 1361. Here, the petitioner has not met that burden.

**ORDER:** The appeal is dismissed.