



LT. COL MATT "The Ghost" URBAN AMATEUR BOXER/COACH/TRAINER

Matt Urban (Urbanowitz) was born on August 25, 1919 and raised at 1153 Broadway. He attended School 57 and East High School. Urban graduated from Cornell University in 1941, "The Class that Went to War". America's most decorated combat soldier was given the name "The Ghost" by enemy soldiers during World War II; however that title could also be very applicable to his prowess in the Sport of boxing. President Carter while presenting him with Congressional Medal of Honor described the Col. as "The Greatest Soldier in American History". In addition to the Medal of Honor, Urban had previously received the Silver and Bronze Combat Stars, the Legion of Merit, Purple Heart, The French and Belgian Croix de Guerre and seven other awards. Yet due to his humility he was proud that his military history overshadowed most of his other accomplishments.

Boxing and Track were his two favorite sports; among the many that he excelled in at the College level and during his military years as well as afterwards. He was often quoted as saying that participating in these two sports contributed to his ability to be a successful soldier. The ability to run is essential in combat and you must run to achieve success in boxing and you must run to win in track. While attending Cornell University, Urban won the All-University Boxing Championship in the 165, 175, and heavyweight classes during two consecutive years. Although it is still unclear why he sometimes chose to compete in higher weight classes. In 1941 Matt went all the way to the finals in the Eastern Intercollegiate Championship. In a highly touted match he faced the three-time champion at Syracuse University. The decision of the three judges came back a draw. And after a lengthy conference, it was determined that a champion must be recognized. Ten or Fifteen minutes lapsed before Woyceisjes of Syracuse was declared the winner. There was immediate pandemonium in the arena and later the newly crowned Champ made his way to Urban's dressing room. His exact words were "Some Bull, Matty! They sure did rob you"

Boxing was a primary attraction when the military Regimental pride always was on the line. Matt's team "The Fighting Ninth" overcame an outbreak of measles and won the Carolina Golden Gloves Tournament. They reached prominence as team champions in the European Theatre of Operations. While recovering from his various wounds and preparing to return to the front lines he would set up exhibition fights for other wounded soldiers. He even set up a ring and put on exhibition bouts on a battleship. He actually befriended former world's champ Joe Louis who joined in with him on promoting exhibition bouts for the soldiers. This ultimately led to him spending some time as a Director of USO and he wrote articles for military newspapers.

Upon returning home and relocating to Michigan, Lt. Col Matt Urban trained several National Golden Gloves Champions. He was a member of the Golden Gloves and the AAU Midwest Committees. And became Chairman of the Michigan State Olympic Boxing Committee. Coach Urban was aligned with many of boxing's elite and was one of three administer-trainers to accompany the Midwest champions to the Olympic tryouts. Among the young amateurs was a youngster named Cassius Clay.

While living in Holland, Michigan Urban was a recreation director as well as doing volunteer work for the Boys Club, Boy Scouts and Red Cross. He also ran a camp for underprivileged children. He opened a sporting good store in Monroe Mich. and Holland Mich. He would donate equipment to organizations that sponsored children in challenging economic conditions. A recreational park was named for him in each city. In addition he also found the time to author "THE MATT URBAN STORY". After a meritorious and celebrated life he died on March 4, 1990.

Tonight Ring 44 of the National Veteran Boxers Association is proud to induct Lt Col. Matt Urban into the 2012 Buffalo Boxing Hall of Fame.