Written originally in 2002, this remembrance of Boxing in the 80's was updated and revised on October 22, 2004.

I am 37 years old and I started boxing in 1982. Several years before that, around 1978, I became interested in boxing. I recall watching Sugar Ray Leonard in 1979 against Andy Price and Wilfred Benitez and Ali against Spinks in 1978. When I hit the 7th grade in 1980, I really started watching the fights and reading the magazines and getting into it more and more -- from betting with other kids on the fights right down to organizing our own little neighborhood league (Some of my wins were over the likes of Ron Jensen, Tony Vierra (whom I outweighed by 25 pounds and when I pinned him against his washing machine . . . it was over), Dave Coleman and Greg Szepanski (Greg outweighed ME by about 30 pounds but without his glasses his vision was impaired: I boxed from the outside and coasted!)

I think I am lucky I came along at the time I did. The Eighties were perhaps the best and most memorable time for boxing (Leonard-Duran, Hearns, Hagler and LaLonde were all in the 80's. Hagler-Hearns. Hagler-Mugabi. Pryor-Arguello. Mancini-Pryor. Holmes-Spinks. Ali's final fight against Berbick. Tyson-Berbick. Duran-Barkley and Chacon-Boza-Edwards were all in the 1980's) and I was there watching from the very beginning to the very end. It was a memorable time for other things too, right? Michael Jackson and 'Thriller' came out in 1984. From 1980 to 1989, all through every year of that decade, Michael Jackson was someone you listened to. Maybe not NOW, but admit it! Back then, especially in 1983 and 1984 there was NOBODY bigger than he was. You listened to **Billie Jean** and **Human Nature** and **Say, Say, Say** and you definitely found time to check out the
Thriller
video and some of you even wore the red zipper jacket he wore in the
Beat It
video.

To me, 1983 and 1984 was the most memorable time for pop music. You had Michael at the height of his power. **Madonna** came out. **Prince** and **'Purple Rain' was BIG**. **Lionel Richie. Tina Turner, Cindy Lauper, The Police. Bruce Springsteen. 'We are the World'.**
Duran-Duran. Phil Collins, Phillip Bailey. Tina Turner (without Ike). Billy Ocean!!

Pop Rocks (everybody thought 'Mikey' died from drinking soda with them), **'Dallas'** and **'Knots Landing'**
(who did shoot JR?). My man
Lynn Swann
retired in 1982 and passed the title of "Most Graceful WR in the NFL" on to
John "JJ" Jefferson
of the Chargers, 'The
Super Bowl' Shuffle
came out,

RUN-DMC
, and
The Space Shuttle Challenger
exploding. We watched shows like '
Square Pegs'
,
'Who's the Boss
?',
'Benson', 'ChiPs', 'Charles in Charge',
and '
Airwolf'
as well as tuning in every
SATURDAY NIGHT
to see the young
Eddie Murphy and Joe Piscopo,
Live from NEW YORK !!

Other Eighties icons were **Knight Rider, New Kids on the Block**, **Sheena Easton**, **Miami Vice** (Cro
ckett and Tubbs were THE Coolest guys on TV),
Hill Street Blues,
Leg Warmers and guys walking down the street with Ghetto Blasters on the shoulders up to their ear. Before they had 'Walkmans' they just carried the whole stereo!! Can you believe that?

And where have you gone, Renaldo Nehamiah???

You had kids saying 'WHATCH-U-talking-about, Willis?? We watched **Fame** and **Back to the Future** and **B
eat Street**
. Girls wore those Madonna rubber bands on their wrists and the Olivia Newton-John headbands.

Rambo. Rocky 3. Lethal Weapon. Terminator

I was lucky too and although my fashion sense was not in the top percentile I can lay claim, proudly, to the fact that I came through the 1980's having never....**EVER**...ever, ever having worn a pair of **parachu
te pants**
. I am one of the few lucky ones that got out untouched.

I am sure most of you have your own memories. I started watching Boxing in the late 70's and I started boxing in the early 80's and gave up on all other sports for the most part after I did. Almost all of my best memories from boxing came from the 80's. Here are some you might remember and some I'll never forget.

I remember in October of 1980 I got up for school one morning and read that Muhammad Ali

was stopped by Larry Holmes. I couldn't believe that Ali didn't finish the fight. I remember being in a daze, feeling sad for my hero. I had a hard time accepting that he got stopped. It wasn't until years later that I realized there was and is a very big asterisk next to that result.

I remember that great 1984 U.S. Olympic team that spawned such future Champs as Evander Holyfield, Sweet Pea Whitaker, Mark Breland and Meldrick Taylor. The best fight I saw of that whole tournament was 139lb. Jerry Page's Olympic victory over the guy from Thailand. What a display of non-stop punching!!

I remember that there were some good heavyweights, underachievers more than anything, that were a lot better (certainly potential wise) than some fans want to realize or admit. At their best I think guys like Greg Page, Pinklon Thomas, Tony Tubbs, Tyrell Biggs, Tony Tucker, Tim Witherspoon, Carl 'The Truth' Williams, Trevor Berbick and James 'Bonecrusher' Smith were a solid bunch of Heavyweights. Mike Tyson and his emergence may have gone a long way towards sapping some of these guy's outlook on their chances of ruling the division but at their best they were solid. Every one of them.

The funny thing to me is that, the way Tyson is NOW, people are always dogging him and you have certain fighters calling him out and talking big stuff about him. People have forgotten what a terror he was back from 1986-1989. That was an exciting time for Boxing back then and you didn't see guys calling Mike out like they do now. Some of the bigger name guys of the day called him out, but not too hard. And the lower level fringe contenders never even mentioned Mike's name in public !! Guys today that bash Mike Tyson and call him out with insults wouldn't even look that man in the eye back in 1987.

In many ways I look at my Boxing career as kind of like a dream. I mean, it was almost like they let me play boxer or something. When I was a kid I used to train and watch fights with my friend Chris 'The Cobra' Lombardi. (we called him the 'Cobra' because he had very fast hands AND he was a big fan of Donald Curry) We were both very big boxing fans and the only two kids our age that knew the professional and amateur game and the fighters on such a deep level. He was the only kid I could really talk boxing with. How many other 15 or 16 years old kids in the early 1980's knew who Robin Blake or Tony Baltazar were? Better yet, how many kids our age knew who Tyrell Biggs and Andrew Minsker were? Not many. They knew Muhammad Ali, Larry Holmes and Sugar Ray Leonard but they didn't know Tyrone The Butterfly Crawley, Frank The Animal Fletcher and Joltin' Jeff Chandler. But we did. We watched the Saturday afternoon fights and we watched the HBO fights. We would go to the gym and take white wife-beater T-Shirts and use magic marker to write names on the back to imitate the famous yellow and gold KRONK training tank tops that Hearns, McCrory and all the other KRONK guys wore in the gym. But we wouldn't put OUR names on the back. He had one that said (Rockin' Robin) 'Blake' and I had one that said 'LaRocca' (as in Nino LaRocca). I even remember Chris calling information in certain cities around the Country and getting home numbers for Professional Boxers. We were AMAZED that these guys had their home numbers in the book for anybody to look up. He actually called Robin Blake at his house in Texas and had a good talk with him.

Chris definitely has the gift for gab. At my 1991 fight with Randy Smith Chris walked up to heavyweight Seamous McDonaugh, a guy he never met in his life, and by the end of the night

he not only convinced Seamous that they had met and hung out in Atlantic City in 1990 but that Chris was a top rated welterweight contender "just waiting to get his title shot." Seamous sympathized with his plight and bashed the boxing politics that were prevalent in our sport. He gave Chris his home phone number and told him to let him know when he finally gets his title fight. Chris was so convincing that, at the end of the night, Seamous said to him (in his thick accent) "you know, I gotta' be honest with you. When you first came up to me I didn't even remember you at first. But now I do!" Chris had actually convinced this man that they had, in fact, met before in A.C. and had hung out together!!

The reason I say that my career has kind of a dream feel to it is that, all these years later, I can look back and think of all the guys I watched on TV all those Saturday afternoons on Network TV and Saturday nights on HBO and I can say now that I have met most of them in person, talked to most of them, took pictures with most of them and, in some cases, can even call them friends now. Sparred some of them and even fought one of them (Nunn).

Name a guy from the early and mid 80's that was a TV fighter and chances are I have ran across him on one level or another over the years. Sparred with Mike McCallum, Doug Dewitt, Marlon Starling and Robbie Sims. Worked in a fighter's corner in Vegas once with Cornelius Boza-Edwards. Been in the gym with guys like Quick Tillis, Trevor Berbick, Charlie "White Lightning" Brown, Sweet Saoul Mamby, Roger Mayweather, Richie Sandoval, Smokin' Joe Frazier. Ran across the good fighters I saw on TV many times, guys like Donald Curry, Tommy Hearns, Aaron Pryor, 'Boom Boom' Mancini, Barry McGuigan, Alex Ramos, Charlie 'White Lightning' Brown, Greg Page, Hilmer Kenty, Sean O'Grady, Herol Graham, Mark Breland, Sweet Pea Whitaker, Meldrick Taylor, Eddie Mustapha Muhammad, Larry Holmes and Marvis Frazier (saw Marvis the other day -September 2004) when I stopped by his gym in North Philly for a visit). I see former lightheavy title challenger Vonzell Johnson whenever I go out to Columbus for the annual Ohio State Fair Boxing tournament. He trains boxers at the gym where the tournament registration is held, the 'Lula Pearl Douglas Center'. Met Milton 'Iceman' McCrory in Las Vegas in 2002 and told him not only am I also nicknamed Iceman but that in a Golden Gloves fight in Lowell in 1986 I used the image of one of his fights to help me on my to victory. I was fighting a real strong kid, the Lowell GG Champion, named Eddie Vazquez. In between the second and third rounds I knew I was ahead in the fight but I was also very tired. Crazy the things that enter your mind during a fight. On the stool before that last round I sat there and thought back to a fight McCrory had the year before when he won the WBC welterweight title against Colin Jones on ABC. In the 12th and final round of the fight Milton was obviously very fatigued but he gutted out the win by digging down and just letting his hands go in fluid combination. Not big forceful shots, just punches that were strong enough to gain points and keep his opponent at bay. He threw a lot of punches that last round and it inspired me enough that here I sat in the corner before the third round of a New England Golden Gloves fight a year later and I thought about it. I dug down and thought of Milton as I did the same exact thing in that fight with Eddie Vazquez and, as a result, I came away with the decision victory. 16 years later, out by the pool at 'Caesars Palace', Milton McCrory seemed to enjoy that story.

I have also been able to visit the sites of many of the great fights that Chris and I watched back in those days. I have been to the Pavilion at Ceasars Palace several times and spent many moments looking at the arena and it's walls, imagining what it must have been like when Larry

Holmes and Kenny Norton went at it in the 15th round of their great fight. Went out the the Caesars pool and tried to guess where it was exactly that Larry jumped into the pool after he was given the decision and WBC title that night. Walked the parking lot at Caesars many times, trying to picture the lot as it was the nights of Hagler-Hearns, Leonard-Hearns, Ali-Holmes

I remember that the 1980's had some of the biggest fights ever and that the build up to them was so immense that it made the pre-fight hype for Tito-Oscar and Tyson-Lewis seem weak by comparison. It seemed to me that the whole world, boxing fans or not, were waiting to see who would win between Leonard and Hearns in 1981, Holmes-Cooney in 1982, Hagler-Hearns in 1985 and Leonard-Hagler in 1987. Back then they were not on HBO or PPV either so you knew if you wanted to see those fights you had to go to the Civic Center and watch it with 10,000 other people. That was cool. I remember being 15 years old when the first Alexis Arguello-Aaron Pryor fight happened in Miami in 1982 and I ran three miles from my father's apartment to my house that night just to see the fight. How big of a boxing fan was I? We didn't even get HBO!! I ran home just so I could **hear it** and **kind of see it** through those squiggly lines you get when you don't have a certain channel. It SOUNDED like a Great fight! As I found out shortly after, it was.

1989 Duran W-12 Barkley

I also remember when Alexis beat "Boom Boom" Mancini in a fight that so many sentimental fans wanted Ray to win. When Alexis stopped him I remember him consoling Ray on TV in the ring right after the fight. That was one of the classiest displays I have ever seen in boxing.

I remember when Sugar Ray defeated Marvin Hagler in 1987. I watched the fight on Closed Circuit and didn't see the fuss about Ray winning. He BOXED Hagler and fought his fight. Period. I was at Hagler's Gym in Brockton the next day getting some sparring in. I remember the gym was real quiet, like a place in mourning. One of the amateurs was there in the dressing room with me and he said, "Man, everybody is so depressed here. Everybody was asking me, "Aren't you upset that Marvin lost?" I said "Upset? I won 50 bucks off that fight last night. You think Marvin cares if I win or lose in the Golden Gloves? I have to go where the money's at."

I also remember back then going to Petronelli's (Hagler's gym) in Brockton and sparring with good fighters like Robbie Sims, Cedric Parsons and "Irish" Steve Collins. I was honored when Stevie beat Sam Storey for the Irish National title at the Boston Garden in 1988 because after the fight, in '**Ring Magazine'**, Stevie mentioned that he had been "sparring with southpaws like Robbie Sims and the great amateur, John Scully, and after them I don't think Sammy could show me anything new." I was suprised and very flattered when Stevie referred to me as 'the great amateur'. Even though I lived over 2 hours away it made me feel like a part of that Gym. As a matter of fact, about 5 months ago, I was in Brockton at the same gym sparring with Richie LaMontagne for his fight with Michael Bennett and Goody Petronelli was telling someone there that I am like a member of his gym. That made me feel good.

Question: Can you imagine if someone told you in 1981 that someday, a good 15 years later, Hector Macho Camacho would STOP Sugar Ray Leonard in a middleweight bout?? You would have said they were CRAZY.

Speaking of the Macho Man.....Remember when Macho Camacho was the young, wicked fast, brilliant, exciting young boxer in the game? (Camacho in 1982 was every bit as good of a Junior Lightweight as the Floyd Mayweather that beat Chico Corrales.)

You know, fans TODAY probably think of Camacho as the guy who hugged and juked and jived his way through fights with Delahoya and Trinidad and as the guy who had two good fights with a very old Duran. There probably weren't too many kids in the 1990's that were imitating Hector the way they did Roy or Oscar or whoever. People forget though that back in the early 1980's he was the flashiest , brashest, fastest, most dazzling boxer in the world. He used to let his hands go in such brilliant combinations....that guy could FIGHT. He could do it all.

HOW GREAT was Boxing in the 1980's ???? Well, if you were there then you were spoiled by ABC, NBC and CBS. You didn't even have to have Cable or PPV and you could watch, for FREE on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, the Best fighters in the world. Fights today that are HBO and SHOWTIME quality fights were on regular TV at 4:00 in the afternoon on weekends !! EVERY weekend. I saw Larry Holmes, Sugar Ray Leonard, Tommy Hearns, Marvin Hagler, Wilfred Benitez, Davey Moore, Donald Curry, Marlon Starling, Tyrone Crawley, Frank 'The Animal' Fletcher, Curtis Parker, "Rockin' Robin Blake, Aaron Pryor, Sweet Saoul Mamby, Buster Drayton, Leroy Haley, Billy Costello, Harry Arroyo, Terrance Alli, Boom Boom Mancini, Barry McGuigan, and Juan Laporte regularly on FREE weekend TV.

Curry-Starling 1 and 2 , Arguello-Mancini, Hearns- Murray Sutherland, Moore-Benitez, Mamby-Haley, Pryor-DuJuan Johnson and Blake- Reuben Munoz were just some of the many great fights on National TV (no cable needed) on the weekends. Back then you could FOLLOW guys career's on National TV without having to have Cable. NBC had Nino LaRocca, Bobby Czyz, 'The Beast' Mugabi and The Animal Fletcher on a few times a year. John Munduga, too. CBS had Starling, Curry and McCrory on many times. Whitacker, Meldrick Taylor, Tyrell Biggs and Breland were all showcased regularly on ABC Wide World of Sports.

Nino LaRocca was first featured on network TV (NBC) in 1983 against Bobby Joe Young. Nobody had ever heard of LaRocca before and I guess they thought his 47-0 record was just a case of him being built up over in Europe. It wasn't. He was AWESOME against Young, stopping him in 8. They called him the 'Italian Ali' and it was great nickname for him. He boxed just like a young Cassius Clay, dancing and throwing those fast 1-2's. He got be 57-0 before losing on bad cuts to Gilles Elbilia. He was never the same after that for some reason. By the time he fought Donald Curry for the WBA 147lb. title in 1984 he was missing something and was stopped kind of easily. He never did much after that.

The fights you saw every single week back then on Network TV....now you have to have either HBO or SHOWTIME or pay for PPV or at least ESPN to see that quality. If you were a fan in those days, now you know that you were SPOILED.

I remember in 1987 and 1988 at the National Golden Gloves I fought future WBC #1 contender Lamar "Kidfire" Parks twice and beat him both times by decision. I boxed him, gave him a lot of lateral movement. Later on, as pros, we sparred at Times Square Gym in New York City and we went 8 rounds one day and 6 rounds the next day. Lamar was what you'd call "heavy handed."

When he and I fought I didn't realize it as much because I boxed and moved more than when I sparred. Also, in a real fight, your adrenaline hypes you up more. But, as pros, when you settle down and throw harder shots and pace yourself more, especially in the gym, you see more of a man's total arsenal. Punch-for-punch, Lamar had as much power or more than just about anybody I ever boxed.

That same year that I fought Lamar in '87, I saw a kid on his Knoxville team for the very first time. He was in tournaments with me before but I never paid much attention to him. That year, because his home team franchise holder hosted the fights, he was in the papers every day and the crowd was behind him. I remember that what stood out about him was that before he fought, before the winner was announced between the two guys that had just fought he would get in the ring and loosen up. I remember thinking "Look at this guy. His home team is the host so they just let him do what he wants. If I tried to get in the ring like that they would kick me out." Anyway, he wore an all white uniform - white shoes, trunks, shirt and headgear. He was real flashy. Very poised and relaxed. I remember he moved a lot and in his five fights on the week he hardly got touched on his way to the 156-pound title.

That year, he beat Ray McElroy in the finals. I remember going home and telling my father, "You should see this kid from Knoxville. He is going to make the Olympics. His name is Roy L. Jones, Jr."

(I didn't realize at the time that he was actually out of Pensacola, Florida. In the Nationals you represent your Golden Gloves franchise. His was Knoxville, TN. The 'L' is for Lee. They always used to announce him back then as 'Roy L. Jones, Jr.')

One year later in the National Golden Gloves in Omaha, Nebraska I saw Roy attempt to win his third straight National Golden Gloves title. He beat Thomas Tate by decision early in the tournament and stopped Future NABF Champ Fabian Williams later on. But it was his fourth fight of the week that caught everybody's attention. Too bad nobody filmed it because it was a WAR. I was getting ready to go into a different ring in a few minutes (there are three fights going at once at a National tournament) but the fight between Roy and Gerald McClellan was so exciting I hardly had time to warm up. I remember Roy being backed to the ropes a lot during the fight but he would fight off hard with furious flurries. Gerald was strong too, though, and would retaliate the same way. Nice flurries and combinations of hard punches for all three rounds. It was like a professional fight. Those two together was like a world class professional match. The decision was a close one and hard to call but, in the end, Gerald won the decision that would end up as the greatest victory of his amateur career. The fight was tough for Gerald, though, so much so that a month later in camp with Sugar Ray Leonard, he wasn't sparring yet because his jaw was still sore from the fight with Roy.

I officially started boxing in 1982 but in the previous few years I used to do some Boxing with friends of mine from School and from the neighborhood. In those beginning years I didn't quite understand the difference between amateur Boxing and Pro Boxing. During those early years I would sometimes run across footage of fights and I remember that whenever I saw the clip of Tommy Hearns KO'ing Pipino Cuevas from 1980 I used to think "If THAT is what Boxing is really like then I don't think that I am ready to be a boxer"

MARK BRELAND

I remember when **Mark Breland** was the "King" of Amateur Boxing in the early 1980's. Nowadays, I see a lot of guys come out of the amateurs and their promoters hype them up and tell of great records like "125-3" and "212-5" etc. And I can tell you that the great majority of those records are not accurate. When you are a top-level amateur and you fight so often, the chances are that you will be a highly decorated amateur and you will STILL accumulate 10 or 12 or more losses. I know of future Olympians and pro champions-to-be that have lost 4 and 5 matches in ONE year. Yet, when they go pro, they are listed as having records like I mentioned previously. Mark Breland was different. He was such a glorified and sought after amateur that his every move was under the spotlight. As far back as 1982, a full two years before he even made the Olympic team, he was in the movie, 'Lords of Discipline' and was featured in 'People Magazine.'

In 1983 he was the first, and from what I know, the only amateur to this day, the only boxer to be featured on the Cover of 'KO Magazine.' Mark's record as an Amateur ended up at 110-1 with over 70 stoppages. He won the 1982 World Amateur title, he won five N.Y. City Golden Gloves titles and he won the Gold Medal at the 1984 Olympics. He beat the Russians and the Cubans and the best this country had to offer. One year in the NYC Golden Gloves Finals when he was only 16 years old he scored a one-punch stoppage over his 23 year old Championship bout opponent (I have the tape). Some say Teofilo Stevenson, Johnny Bumphus or Felix Savon were the greatest amateurs ever but, to me, Mark's record stands for itself. Only one man beat him and that was more than 2 and-a-half years before he even made the Olympics. (He avenged that loss to Darryl Anthony with a 3rd round KO as a professional). Mark Breland dominated his class and beat many of the world's best with ease. It's hard to argue when a guy went 18-0 in international matches.

SUGAR RAY LEONARD

I remember, in 1988, after coming home from the Gym one day getting a message on the kitchen table that said Sugar Ray Leonard had called. Of course, that is not something you expect to get at 20 years old from one of the greatest boxers of all time and a guy you have watched since you were a kid. I remember in 1981, the night of September 16th, being outside playing with other kids and all I could think of was that in a few hours there would only be one 147-pound world champion. A kid at my school, L.P. Wilson in Windsor, had a shirt that said 'The Showdown'. That fight was huge! I stayed up real late that night just so I could get some word from ESPN to see what happened. Seven years later I am getting messages that he called me! Well, I called the number left for me and it was actually J.D. Brown, Ray's assistant, that called to see if I would be interested in going to a Pre-Olympic Trials camp that Ray was organizing. It took me no time at all to say 'YES'. I went to camp with them in Maryland and I was there for a couple weeks with people like Roy Jones, Jr., Ray Lathon, Gerald McClellan, Razz Chapin, Michael Ward and David Sewell. The first day there, I was in the dressing room and someone came in and introduced me to Ray. I am talking to him and I am thinking, "This is Sugar Ray Leonard talking to me." A week or so later I was invited to his house and I went with my coach. I have a video of myself, my coach and Sugar Ray walking all around his house, talking and laughing. And the whole time I am there I am thinking to myself, "I am walking around Sugar Ray Leonard's house with him....now I am watching TV with SUGAR....RAY...LEONARD....I am holding Sugar Ray Leonard's Gold Medal NOW." I

remember over a dozen years ago I saw Mike Tyson on the 'Arsenio Hall show' with Ray and Ali. And Tyson was, even as a popular champion, still in awe of these two guys. He was telling Arsenio something to the effect of, " I don't know. Sometimes I still can't believe that I am here with the Greatest and the Sugar Man." I always thought what he meant was, he grew up watching these guys and now he can't really grasp that he is here with them in more of a position than as just a fan of theirs asking for an autograph. And I know what he means...I mean, being a boxer for all these years I have had the opportunity to befriend many boxers and meet many of them and hang out with them and sometimes I think to myself how cool it is for me, just a kid from Windsor, CT that used to box in his backyard with other kids from the neighborhood, that I became a professional boxer that has met some of the guys I read about and watched as a boy. I mean, one minute I am fighting Tony Vierra in his basement with K-Mart boxing gloves as a 13-year old and the next I am competing in the U.S. Olympic Trials with Sugar Ray Leonard cheering for me in the front row. I am sure you can't blame me that it is one of my most cherished highlights for me after 20 years of boxing. Sugar Ray Leonard cheering me on from ringside.

(I also remember that Sugar Ray was the first guy I saw that ran across the ring after a victory to the neutral corner and jumped on the ropes and the corner cushion to be high above the crowd. He did when Duran surrendered in the 'No Mas' fight among others. When I was a young pro, in late 1988, I was fighting in Rochester on an Aaron Pryor undercard when I stopped Rahim Muhammad in the fourth round. It was a sudden and exciting ending to a good fight. The crowd was really going crazy and I thought of Ray as I ran towards the ropes and planned to jump on them like he did after he beat Duran. The only thing was I didn't go to a corner, I went in the middle of the ring along the apron so when I jumped on the ropes there was no way the rope strand could hold my 165 pound body and I ended up STANDING there looking out at the crowd with the bottom strand of rope under my feet pressed flat on the canvas. I did NOT look smooth, believe me.)

I remember being 15 years old and waiting for the upcoming Davey Moore-Roberto Duran fight. It seemed like everybody was picking against Duran. Moore was a top flight amateur that had turned pro and won the world title in only his 12th fight. Duran had lost the "no mas" fight to Ray and had also been beaten by Kirkland Laing. However he had just recently scored a knockout over Former Champ Pipino Cuevas and I had read in the Ring about how wicked Pipino had been as a champion. If I then what I know now I probably would have picked Moore to win but being a kid and not knowing Boxing like I do NOW, I chose Duran to win. Beating Cuevas a few years earlier would have been more impressive but I didn't know better. Cuevas was Cuevas and that is all that matter to me. It shows that sometimes Boxing is not that hard to figure. I was 15 and not yet an 'expert' but I chose Duran because Duran had beaten Cuevas and Moore only had 12 bouts. It seemed obvious to me. That was before I knew so much that I would analyze every aspect of the fight instead of just going with my gut instinct. The older I get and the more knowledgeable I become, the WORSE my fight picking ability becomes.

Duran won that fight on a night that those in attendance say was one of the most 'electric' boxing nights ever, almost on par with Ali-Frazier in 1971. Remember?

ARCHIE MOORE

Another guy who I read about as a boy and later became friends with was the late Archie Moore. It would not seem probable or even possible that the two of us would become friends but we did and this is how. When I was 15 years old in **1983** there used to be a section in Ring Magazine called "Boxer's Beat" and in it they would have addresses of former boxers and I used to pick out certain guys to request Autographs from. I wrote to Tommy Hearns and got back a form letter reply with a nice picture. Artie Levine sent me a signed picture too. But Archie Moore's reply? Not only did Archie Moore write back to me, but he offered his services to be my "Advisor through the mails." I agreed of course and, all the way to his passing, Archie Moore and I would write to each other. When I got my first letter from him I had never had a real boxing match in my life. And Archie Moore advised me all the way from my first fight in May of 1983 as a 15-year old Junior Olympian to well into my professional career. I have many, many letters handwritten by him here at my house. I also have a short video tape from a Boxing dinner in 1989 in Massachusetts that we both attended. During his speech to the crowd he started telling the story of how this young 15-year old contacted him through the mail and how they have been keeping in touch all these years and how "he is 8-0 now as pro and he is a Beautiful young man." Then he called me to the stage, telling me to "Hurry! Hurry up now!" as I approached the stage. I have it all on video, with he and I hugging each other. I kind of realized it at the time but not really until now. It is really pretty cool and amazing when you think about it. One of the greatest, if not THE greatest light heavyweight Champion EVER, and one of the Greatest Legends of the game befriended a 15-year old kid through the mail that only wanted an autograph. Befriended him in 1983 and called him on the phone and wrote to him and sent him pictures and clippings and advice and love through the mail all those years. He made friends with me when I was a kid, not knowing that I would ever really grow up to be a pro boxer. For all he knew I was just a kid trying to box and after two or three junior fights I would be through. But he took the time to encourage me to stay in school, to listen to my parents and my coach. He gave some great boxing advice, even stuff that was very unorthodox like 'yelling in your opponent's ear during a clinch. That will confuse him.' He called me at my house all the way from California just to say ' Hi' and to see how I was doing.

The Internet is amazing. Allows me to keep in contact with old friends, new friends, boxers, etc. It has also allowed me to make contact with one of the Mongoose's Daughters, J'Marie. I keep in touch with her on-line and I feel in a way that it is almost like keeping in touch with him, too. Anyone that knows her, knows she talks like her dad. I am 35 now and I don't carry a whole bunch of things in my wallet. I have pictures of the four kids I train (Orlando, Sammy, Greg and Dwayne), I have some credit cards (they just GIVE those things away, don't they??), a driver's license and I have a white plastic card with black lettering. It was given to me by one of the greatest boxers the world has ever known. Archie gave it to me and said it was one of the last, and maybe the last card, given out to someone that wasn't an actual member of his program in San Diego. Archie told me the requirements for being in his group. He gave me the membership card and I still carry it with me today. The greatest 175-pounder of all-time gave it to me himself and he said I deserved it. The card says, **"ABC Club - Any Boy Can."** And if they live by the rules and ways that Archie Moore did, they probably can.

To close up this trip down the 80's memory lane, I will hit you all with a flurry (trying to steal the round as some call it) of 80's thoughts that will close the show.....

The 19 year old Tony 'El Torito' Ayala brought some excitement, didn't he???

Atlantic City was HOT back in the 80's . ESPN did a ton of fights from there. Sal Marciano used to say, when a guy got KO'd, "Goodnight, Sweet Prince!! When you got a fight in A.C., whether it was 4 rounds or 10, you knew you were going to be in a tough one. Don Elbaum used to do the series of bouts from the Tropicana. The big title fights, like Tyson-Spinks, were in the Convention Center. In my eyes there were four spots you wanted to fight if you were a Professional boxer: Las Vegas, of course (Caesars Palace), Madison Square Garden (The Felt Forum was good enough), The Blue Horizon in Philly. Or Atlantic City. I was lucky enough to get to fight at three of the four.

The Wars between my friend Cornelius Boza-Edwards and Bobby Chacon? Vampire Johnson coming in the ring in a coffin?? The Felt Forum in the basement of Madison Square Garden in NYC? Buddy McGirt?

Remember when Salvador Sanchez died in a car crash in the prime of his career? 23 years old and just coming off that big KO-15 over Azumah Nelson. Ray Leonard getting beat by Duran only to come back and humiliate him a few months later. And wasn't it real cool when Ray Charles sang "America The Beautiful" before the fight...remember that?

Remember when Marlon Starling came from behind to shock everybody by beating Breland for the WBA Welterweight title? Remember when Donald Curry was beaten in a huge upset by Lloyd Honeyghan? Remember John Munduga, Wilfred Scypion, Milton Guest, Michael 'The Silk' Olijiade, Charlie "White Lightning" Brown? You forget NOW, but do you remember how exciting the rise of Mike Tyson really was? Remember "Rockin" Robbie Sims? Murray Sutherland? The ESPN tournaments? James Scott fighting in prison? Remember how good Michael Spinks was as a light heavy? Little Dwight Braxton? The excitement that Matthew Saad Muhammad brought? Saad was every bit as dramatic and exciting as Arturo Gatti is today.

Remember Jose "The Threat" Baret, Marvis Frazier, Mark Medal, Buster Drayton, Colin Jones, John Conteh, Gerrie Coetzee and his "bionic right hand," Wilbur "Vampire" Johnson, Lupe Pintor, Dennis Andries, Bazooka Limon, Reuben Munoz, and Howard Davis Jr. who came SO CLOSE to winning a world championship against Edwin Rosario?? I remember Donald Curry dismantling Colin Jones, Nino LaRocca and Marlon Starling in title defenses and unifying the WBA and WBC welterweight titles (when that MEANT something) with his big victory over Milton McCory

The fights with Barry McGuigan and Eusebio Pedroza, Holmes-Witherspoon when the young Witherspoon came SO close to beating Larry. Spinks beating Holmes controversially when Holmes was ONE fight away from tying Marciano's record.

Sean O'Grady having over 80 pro fights by the time he was 23 years old?

Do you remember the awesome counter hook that Curry hit McCrory with? Or the wicked hook that McCallum caught Curry with? How about the counter left hand that Michael Nunn blasted Sumbu Kalambay with? The shot Barkley caught Hearns with? The three right hands that

Tommy Hearns caught Pipino Cuevas, Roberto Duran and James Shuler with???? The ONE Tyson punch that dropped Trevor Berbick three times ? The nasty uppercut that Tyson caught Marvis Frazier with? The after-the-bell overhand right that Tomas Molinares caught Marlon Starling with? How about the title winning left hook that Marlon caught a battle-weakened (11th round) Breland with?

Remember Tony Sibson, Fulgencio "Fully Obel" Obelmejias, Randy Shields, Stevie Cruz, "Joltin" Jeff Chandler? Ronnie Shields, John Collins, the young Vinny Pazienza making them crazy for him in Rhode Island ?? How about Paz' nonstop punch out with Greg Haugen in 1987? The Young Bobby Czyz with sideburns on NBC. Mustapha Hamsho. Davey and Matthew Hilton. Wilfredo Gomez. Carlos Zarate. John Munduga. The WAR with Hagler and the Beast Mugabi.

How's that for names from the past?

Did you remember those times, places and names from the 1980's? Did you witness them? Were you there live?

If you do...if you did...if you were...then you are LUCKY.