

Chacon, McGuigan, Norris lead Boxing Hall of Fame Class of '05

Written by Robert Cassidy Jr.
Wednesday, 05 January 2005 18:00

Featherweight champions Bobby Chacon and Barry McGuigan, both immensely popular fighters in their respective eras, headline a class of 10 new inductees to the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, New York.

"We're extremely excited about the Class of 2005. The new inductees highlight the international aspect of the sport of boxing and of the Hall of Fame," said Executive Director Edward Brophy. "All living inductees are anticipated to attend and participate in 2005 Hall of Fame Weekend festivities."

Joining McGuigan and Chacon are junior welterweight champion Duilio Loi and junior middleweight champion Terry Norris from the modern era. Writer Bert Randolph Sugar and matchmaker Don Fraser were also voted into boxing's hallowed halls.

Inducted posthumously will be featherweight champion Eugene Criqui, bantamweightweight champions Joe Lynch and Charles "Bud" Taylor and middleweight champion Marcel Thil in the Old-Timer Category; manager / film historian Bill Cayton and manager / promoter Lope Sarreal in the Non-Participant Category; writer Jersey Jones and Boxing News editor Harry Mullan in the Observer Category; and Jack Randall in the Pioneer Category.

"Of all the great fighters in the world, I'm now one of them," said Chacon. "It's amazing. I can't believe it. I feel great. This is one of the greatest thrills in my entire boxing career and my life."

Chacon turned pro in 1972 and was a boxing staple on the Los Angeles circuit. He engaged in thrilling shootouts with Ruben Olivares (going 1-2 in three fights), Danny "Little Red" Lopez, Alexis Arguello and Rafael "Bazooka" Limon (going 2-1-1 in four fights).

Chacon, 59-7-1 (47) over the course of his career, captured the WBC featherweight title in 1974 by stopping Alfredo Marcano in nine rounds. He would relinquish the crown to Olivares, another Hall of Famer, two fights later. Chacon won the WBC super featherweight title with a unanimous decision over Limon in 1982. That fight and his decision over Corneilous Boza Edwards in 1983 were named "Fight of the Year" by Ring magazine.

"Bobby Chacon is what I call a promoter's insurance policy," said Hall of Fame trainer Angelo Dundee. "Every time he was on the bill you knew you had a great fight and the fans got their money's worth win, lose or draw. And most of them were wins."

McGuigan, 32-3 (28), turned pro in 1981 after representing Ireland at the 1980 Olympics. He won the WBA featherweight title in 1985 by decisioning fellow Hall of Famer, Eusebio Pedroza. He made two title defenses before losing the crown via decision to Stevie Cruz in 1986, which was voted the Ring's "Fight of the Year."

His title reign may have been brief, but McGuigan's impact on Northern Ireland and "the

Chacon, McGuigan, Norris lead Boxing Hall of Fame Class of '05

Written by Robert Cassidy Jr.

Wednesday, 05 January 2005 18:00

troubles" that have plagued the region for a century, was enormous. When he was in the ring, Protestants and Catholics were united for a common cause – to root for McGuigan. During that time, the peace slogan was, "Let Barry do the fighting."

Although McGuigan, a Catholic, upset political hardliners by marrying a Protestant, his popularity never waned. On the night he won the title, he did not fly the flag of Ireland or Britain. Instead, he raised a blue flag with a white dove, symbolizing peace.

"This honor makes all the hard hours of training, all the work and commitment that one puts into boxing worthwhile and makes me very proud," said McGuigan. "I'm over the moon. I'm overwhelmed and delighted to be in Canastota with such exalted company. What a great way to start 2005. "

Norris was the dominant junior middleweight champion of his era. He was quick and powerful, but most of his biggest victories came against welterweights such as Meldrick Taylor, Donald Curry and Sugar Ray Leonard.

"This is a great honor," said Norris. "This was a dream of my Dad's. If not for him, I would not have been a true champion. I thank my Dad and I feel truly great about this accomplishment. This is better than winning the world championship."

Inductees are voted in by members of the Boxing Writers Association and a panel of international boxing historians.

The 16th Annual Hall of Fame Weekend is scheduled for June 9-12th in Canastota, NY. Over 20 events, including a golf tournament, banquet, professional boxing show, parade and autograph card show, are planned. A celebrity lineup of over 50 boxing greats of yesterday and today will attend this year's Induction Weekend. The highlight of the weekend will be the Official Enshrinement Ceremony on the Hall of Fame Museum Grounds in Canastota, New York on Sunday, June 12th to welcome the newest members.