

Rest In Peace, STANLEY LEVIN

Written by Ron Borges
Thursday, 16 April 2009 19:00

Stanley Levin died the way he lived. He went quietly.

Last Friday the 70-year-old Pensacola, Fla. attorney breathed his last, finally giving in to what had been years of bad health. Boxing barely noticed his passing but that would be fine with him because unlike most of the people who become a part of the sport, Levin was never looking for headlines or TV cameras. He was never even looking for money, to be honest about it. All he was looking for was the best interest of his client, Roy Jones, Jr.

For about a decade Levin and his brother, famed Florida litigator Fred Levin, co-managed Jones, if such a thing was ever possible. Fred was the man in front of the camera or at the podium. Stanley was the guy in the back with the neck brace and the check list.

“He was the ideal guy for a boxer to work with,” said Chicago attorney and long-time boxing legal advisor John Hornewer, who worked with Levin during those years and remained close to him after he left boxing. “He didn’t need the money. He was there when Roy was an amateur because his son was in the same gym (Escambia County Boys and Girls Club) and he began to think of Roy as another son. That never changed.”

Neither did Stanley Levin. The business of boxing has the opposite effect on most people. They come to it with good intentions but encounter so many people with bad ones that it changes them at their core. Stanley Levin never changed.

When he finally walked away from Jones about 10 years ago he was sad and disappointed but neither angry nor vengeful. He left because he felt Jones had let so many other forces into his boxing life that he could no longer perform what he felt was his sole obligation. He couldn’t watch Jones’ back and so he just turned his back and walked away.

Generally in boxing breakups lead to harsh words, lawsuits and broken friendships. Stanley Levin didn’t want or need any of that so he just turned away from two things he loved – Roy Jones, Jr. and boxing. He went quietly, disappointed but not demonstrative.

“Stanley loved being around boxing,” said Hornewer, who last spoke to Levin the day before he died with no thought it would be their last conversation. “He was one of the greatest friends a fighter could have. Sometimes he was perhaps too much of an advocate for Roy but he was proud that he felt he always did things morally. He knew if he had a different fighter, a less talented guy, maybe he couldn’t be that way but he made people put up with the good rather than putting up with evil.

“Sometimes he’d let Roy’s critics get to him. Even if they had a point he’d argue for Roy. But he always had Roy’s best interest at heart. That’s why he finally left.

“Stanley and Fred had set up Square Ring to be a promotional company that Roy ran. It was his

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company but there came a point where Stanley got very concerned with the decisions Roy was making. Roy felt there needed to be other promoters involved like Murad Muhammad. Stanley felt he wasn't getting access to all the numbers. He felt he wasn't being allowed to do his job to protect Roy. Unlike most guys in boxing, he wasn't going to stay just to stay, so he left.

"It ate at him until his dying days. He was always concerned for Roy. He wanted him to be the exception rather than the rule. He didn't want him to end up as a fighter who lost his money. He really looked at Roy like one of his kids. The way it ended was really a disappointment to him but walking away was not that hard because of the circumstances. He couldn't work in a gray area. Stanley could only work in the light."

Jones was not the only fighter Levin helped. In fact, there were many, but none rose to the heights of Jones. That never concerned Levin either, according to former super middleweight and light heavyweight contender John Scully, because he was there to help, not get famous. Scully sent Sweet Science an e-mail to that effect when he learned of Levin's passing and his words, from a fighter to a man who looked out for him long after he was no longer fighting for Square Ring, spoke to who Stanley Levin was in boxing.

"Stanley Levin was a very, very, very well respected boxing person," Scully wrote. "He handled much more from the very beginning of Roy's pro career than just his fight contracts. Stan the Man (that's what RJ always called him) was a friend on the business and the personal side to many, many fighters in the boxing game.

"I'm sure they will all tell you that Stanley Levin was DEFINITELY one of the most honest and friendly people in the boxing game. In my opinion, Stanley was TOO GOOD for the boxing game."

In the end, maybe that's all that needs to be said about him. Very few people in boxing or outside of it will remember him, even though in 1995 he was named co-manager of the year along with his brother by the Boxing Writers Association of America. But the fighters whose interest he looked after always will. What they will remember is that he was, in boxing and in life, something kinda different.

"Stanley was a wills and trusts guy for old ladies in Pensacola," Hornewer said with a laugh. "That was his profession. Boxing, Roy and his son were his love. He was honest and fair to his clients and his boxers. Early in Roy's career he made sure his purses were at least \$50,000 even if the card didn't make that kind of money. Later in his career he called me one day and said he'd written a second sanctioning check to the WBC because more money than expected had come in on a show and the fee was supposed to be based on the total revenue. That was Stanley. He had a unique outlook on our sport."

And on life.