

Elegant Ed Brings A Touch Of Class To The Game

Written by Robert Mladinich
Wednesday, 05 May 2010 15:00

As the owner of Spartan ring apparel, Ed Post, born Ed Eposti, has “dressed many high-profile fighters over the years, most notably George Foreman, Zab Judah, Arturo Gatti, Roger Mayweather, Mike McCallum, Tim Witherspoon, Vivian Harris, Tony Tubbs, Burt Cooper, Greg Page and scores of others.

Post took the company, which had been started in the 1950s, over in 1983. He has an office at Gleason’s Gym, but sub-contracts the manufacturing of the attire to a nearby factory.

While people are very familiar with his beautiful ring garb, they are less familiar with just how far back his boxing history goes.

As an amateur fighter Post, who was born, raised and still lives in Brooklyn, New York, first entered the New York City Golden Gloves tournament in 1966. He never made it to the competition, however, because he was drafted and served two years in Vietnam as a door gunner on a chopper.

He took part in over 600 combat missions, earning 12 Air Medals for Flying in Combat and the Air Medal with a V for Valor. Returning home in 1968, he re-entered the Gloves the following year but was eliminated after two victories.

The New York Daily News, which has sponsored the tournament since its inception, christened Post with the nickname “Elegant Ed.

“That was because of the outfits I used to wear, and the flashy way I fought in the ring, explained the now 64-year-old but still youthfully handsome Post. “I always liked the finesse of boxing, to hit and not get hit.

Post was ranked the number-one welterweight in the city in 1970, and considered the favorite to win the Gloves title that year. But his father-in-law passed away on Christmas night and with the cemetery workers on strike it took about a month until he could be buried. Post needed to stay close to his devastated family.

Post participated in the 1972 Olympic Trials in Cincinnati, where he lost to the murderous punching “Slamming Sammy Nesmith. Prior to the fight, Aaron Pryor had told Post that he could outpoint Nesmith but he could never outpunch him.

“I thought I had him out but I threw a wide left hook and got hit by a right hand, recalled Elegant Ed. “I went down, got up, but the fight was over. An article headline said, ‘Elegant Ed, no place to be in.’

Four years later Post was in Detroit, hoping to earn a spot on the 1976 Olympic team. At 30-years-old, he was the oldest competitor there. He lost his second fight at 178 pounds, the

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division in which Leon Spinks would go on to win the gold medal.

He also squared off at the Ohio State Fair, against Rufus "Hurricane Hadley, who later became a comedian that Post saw perform in Las Vegas.

Even while leading a somewhat conventional lifestyle, Post always kept boxing close to his heart. While running a company called Wall Street Petroleum Oil and Gas Ventures, he boxed a Paine Webber executive in a charity match at Madison Square Garden.

The following year he squared off against the legendary champion Emile Griffith in another charity exhibition, also at MSG.

Post remembers Griffith asking him, "Why do you think you can fight me?" to which Post replied, "Because I love Nino Benvenuti and he beat you two out of three times. I think I fight like Benvenuti.

While waiting for the bell to ring, Chuck Wepner, who was in the ring, whispered in Post's ear, "I don't know much about you Eddie Post, but you got some pair of balls to box this six-time world champion.

Post remembers hitting Griffith with a good right hand, but admits to getting on his "bicycle so Griffith "wouldn't rip my head off. But, he adds, "It was still an honor to just go through the motions with him.

While working as a state narcotics investigator, Post set up the first boxing program ever in the New York State prison system. But due to massive layoffs because of a budget crunch, he got the pink slip after seven years.

He was elated when given the opportunity to take over Spartan. It has enabled him to travel the world, where he is a regular presence at ringside. Some of his fondest memories are of his relationship with George Foreman, who he admits can be a discerning client.

"George is a beautiful guy, but he always wanted five shorts to pick from, said Post. "He'd pick one, and then give the rest to a charity to be auctioned off. His trunks had to have red, white and blue, designed in different ways. I had a lot of fun with George.

When Foreman fought Lou Savarese in 1997, Post took his mother Mary, who was then in her eighties, to the weigh-in. As soon as Foreman spotted her, he walked right over, picked her up, flashed the smile that has sold a million grills, and said, "Now I know where this man got his character.

Mary passed away in August 2008 at the age of 95. Post still credits her with giving him the "backbone to be the man that he is. He needed all of that backbone when he was diagnosed with throat cancer in 2005, and spent the better part of the next few years battling the insidious disease.

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“She did so much with her life, said Post. “She was an inspiration to me, and I miss her terribly.

These days Post spends as much time as he can with Vivian, his lovely wife of 15 years, as well as at the gym where he loves working with young fighters. He still participates in several charitable endeavors, for which NY State Senator Marty Golden of Brooklyn presented him with a Humanitarian Award in November 2009.

Last Veteran’s Day, Post traveled to Brandon, Missouri, a reunion of the 227th Aviation Assault Helicopter Battalion, A First Cavalry Division, where he saw so many of his colleagues for the first time in 42 years. The unit had received a First Presidential Unit Award from President Lyndon Johnson in 1967-68.

There were 53 surviving men in his outfit, and many of them were present. Post couldn’t help but think back to how those “fighting days had helped shape him as a boxer and as a man.

He compared his fellow soldiers to many of the fighters he has been associated with in one way or another over the years.

Describing soldiers and boxers as “good, decent, proud, humble men, he said, “When you’re around people like that, you always feel better.