Some people in boxing know her as “The Dragon Lady’’ and they fear her. They should. Others know her as “Mom’’ and they love her. They should. Gladly I have always found myself in the latter category when it comes to Lorraine Chargin, who is the better half of Don and Lorraine Chargin Productions and arguably the best person in boxing.

Lorraine Chargin is a fighter. Has been all her life. It’s the only way a woman from New Haven could survive a family with 13 kids, including six brothers, and later not only survive but thrive in the machismo-drenched world of prize fighting. You wanted a fight, Lorraine would oblige. You wanted to be real, Lorraine was your girl.

I once saw her threaten to throw Don King out of Arco Arena in Sacramento, Ca. because he showed up without tickets or credentials to a show she was running and thought he could just sweep through the back gate and into the building. He thought being Don King would be enough. Lorraine was at the gate. He should have known better.

By the time Lorraine was finished dressing King down, even his hair was flat. The Dragon Lady could do that to you if she felt the need, but she never did it to flex her promotional muscle or because it was her husband’s show or because she was smarter than you were or had more authority than you did. She did it because you didn’t act right or you thought the world owed you something like a free ticket or, well, because you were an asshole. If you weren’t any of those things, you never would have a problem with Lorraine.

Her husband was deservedly inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 2001 but when he got his fist casted his right hand was missing. Lorraine was beaming from the sidelines but that’s about the only time she was in that position. Almost from the first day she met Don in Oakland in 1957, she was right next to him. If she hadn’t been, Lord knows where he’d be today, but not likely in the Hall of Fame.

This was a fact never lost on Don, which is why after 49 years they have a marriage that seems to operate as if it just started a week ago. That they love each other is obvious. That they respect each other is just as obvious and frankly just as important.

“Everyone knows that I'm a terrible, terrible details person,’’ Chargin said during his induction speech that June day in Canastota, N.Y. “I love to make the matches but my wife Lorraine does all the work. She does everything. I'm not saying anything that everybody doesn't know. She's been doing this for 40 years and I think we have a great, great team. I wish Lorraine would stand up..."

She didn’t want to do it but she deserved to be standing right next to him that day, just like she’s been for over 50 years. These days she’s having a little trouble standing though and so Don is supporting her now. She knows the end is coming faster than it should, way too fast for a world that cannot afford to lose a person of her character, laughter and integrity. That it is going to

come is a harsh reality, because Lorraine Chargin is in a battle with terminal cancer and time is running out.

She's in a lot of pain but she accepts that. She's throwing punches the way Frazier did at the end in Manila against Ali. Hell bent on fighting even when all she can do is throw blind shots and hope. She probably knows she's not going to win this time but she'd be the first to say, "Who does?'' and then go on about her business. Self-pity was never something Lorraine Chargin was interested in.

Everyone loses the final fight. Everyone ultimately goes down for the count, just the way so many of her boxers did at times. The important thing is what you did when you were on your feet and Lorraine Chargin has done plenty. She did the right thing. How many of us would love to be able to say that about ourselves?

She loved fights and fighters from the time she was a kid going to Madison Square Garden with her father. She loved them in general but most of all she loved fighters who deserved to be loved. That's probably why for years she's always said it was not someone like Oscar De La Hoya or Ray Leonard that she loved most among the thousands of fighters she's dealt with but rather Loreto Garza, who was briefly WBA light welterweight champion.

The Chargins brought him up in boxing, turning Sacramento into a hot bed for a while with Tony Lopez, Willie Jorrin, Garza and quite a few others, but it was Garza she loved best. Not because he took a fight with two week's notice in 1988 and flew to Nice, France and came back a world champion after beating then champion Juan Coggi. She didn't love him because he won (although that didn't hurt). She loved him because of who he was.

Garza's first title defense was back home in Sacramento against Vinny Paz, who was struggling to make the 140 pound weight and didn't really do it. He fooled the scale but not his body, starving himself in the process, and was no match for Garza's counter punching skills when the time to fight arrived. Paz grew so frustrated by this that he finally picked Garza up and slammed him into the ring post in the 11th round, leading to his disqualification.

It's a good thing he was DQd because if he hadn't been Lorraine was heading in his direction. It would not have been pretty.

"I loved him because he was a splendid human being,'' Lorraine would always say when asked why Garza was her favorite. She didn't talk about his winning a championship or his boxing skills or any of that. She talked about the kind of person he was. If we're honest about it, isn't that really all that matters?

In the end we all end up in a fight we can't win. It's what life hands us. But what's important is not that we all go down but what we did when we were upright and no one has done more than Lorraine Chargin. No one in boxing has done more good or cared more about people or caused more folks to laugh or think or, occasionally, duck. As legacies go that, plus Don, is pretty good.

I first met her when she was promoting boxing in Sacramento and I was beginning to write

about the sport. I didn't know anything and so I asked a lot of questions. She knew I didn't know anything but never mentioned it, instead always acting glad to answer my queries. Her husband was still running shows in southern California as well as up north and often he'd stage them at both ends of the state at the same time. Somebody had to take care of the details in the state capital and Chargin understood there was no one he could trust more than Lorraine.

At first, more than a few boxing types tried to take advantage of this woman standing outside the ropes. They tried once. They didn't try twice because by the time she was done with them the first time you either called the EMTs or the cops because they needed help. She only needed Don…and maybe a couple of prospects with talent.

The same year Don was inducted into the Hall of Fame, the two of them received the 2001 James J. Walker Award for long and meritorious service to boxing from the Boxing Writers Association of America. The BWAA doesn't always get things right but it was as on target as a Manny Pacquiao combination that time. Both their names were on the hardware and both of them came to the podium to receive the award. They were a team that night and every night for more than half a decade. They're still a team now, when it counts most.

There's not much you can say at a time like this except that Lorraine Chargin is and always has been a hell of a boxing person and one of my favorite people for the same reason she loved Loreto Garza so. She is a splendid human being.