

Rest In Peace, Jimmy O'Pharrow

Written by Dmitriy Salita

Tuesday, 22 February 2011 14:56

With sadness and tears in my eyes my friend and mentor who was and is a huge influence on my life passed away on Sunday night. The great and one of a kind Jimmy O'Pharrow, who was affectionately known as Jimmy O. Jimmy O was 85 years old and is survived by his wife of over sixty two years Ailean, and his two sons Mark and CJ.

What happened is not a tragedy as Jimmy lived productively and actively every day of his life to the fullest. He was motivated, passionate and enthusiastic about his life until the last day. What happened is very sad, that such a great human being is gone.

Jimmy literally influenced the lives of thousands of kids, through a special place that he called his sanctuary Starret City Boxing Club. There were many Golden Gloves champions, Olympians, World Champions and top contenders over the 33 years since the gyms opening. More importantly there are countless lives that Jimmy touched and influenced and whom he helped be champions in life. Jimmy O is a true urban legend.

Jimmy O had tremendous impact on me personally. I have learned a great deal from Jimmy. Lessons and experienced that will stay with me for the rest of my life. I met Jimmy the first day that I went to Starret City Boxing Club when I was 13 years old. He was there from my first amateur fight until I won the Golden Gloves, from my first professional fights to a world title shot, we traveled together to the White House to meet the President and shared in the joy of my wedding day. Jimmy took special care of me when my mother passed away. Jimmy was constantly teaching me life lessons wherever we went, especially through the eyes of different people and their different experiences. He took me to tournaments when I had no money to pay for room and board, talked to my teachers when I missed school to be with my mom in the hospital, and most importantly, he believed in me!

There are many stories and experiences that I shared with Jimmy O. One of Jimmy's favorite quotes was that "G-D works in strange ways" I believe that Jimmy was my guardian angel. We shared 15 years together. Jimmy's influence helped strengthen my connection to G-d and Judaism, and his continuous and constant support allowed me to become an increasingly religious Jew, despite the challenges it presented to my boxing career. Jimmy saw and helped me through my most important stages and experiences in life. Just last week I went to see Jimmy O with my wife Alona and newly born baby girl who is named Mila Leah in the honor of my mom. He kissed her and gave her a pair of earrings. We talked about some of our boxing trips, the gym and life. In the past Jimmy use to say to me "I got you covered like a blanket". As I was leaving Jimmy O gave me a hug and said "you are doing all right old man, my job with you is done I will look out but you are doing good"

I love you Jimmy! Thank you for all that you have done for me. Your lessons, influence, care and love will forever stay with me. I know that the Lord has a special place for you my Gumba.

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The wake is at Guarino Funeral Home (9222 Flatlands Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11236, Phone Number: (718) 257-2890) on Thursday April 24, 2011 from 4-9PM and funeral is on Friday at St. Laurence Church.

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