Ed Schuyler Jr. covered his first fight for the Associated Press in 1963. He was named the AP's national boxing writer in 1970, a position that he held until April 2002. During that time he traversed the globe with the Muhammad Ali circus, covering his three fights with Joe Frazier, as well as his upset of George Foreman.

He was also ringside for 39 of Larry Holmes's bouts, including his epic battles against Ken Norton and Gerry Cooney, and the sensational round-robin involving Roberto Duran, Marvin Hagler, Thomas Hearns and Sugar Ray Leonard in the 1980s.

During this time he also covered horse racing, which he compares to boxing because of the endless array of characters that inhabit the sport.

Thirty-three times Schuyler covered the Kentucky Derby. He missed one of them, in 1976, because he was in Landover, Maryland, for a Muhammad Ali title defense.

While Schuyler has enjoyed a longtime love affair with both sports, he says that boxing has always been much easier to cover.

"To cover a big fight, you basically have just two people you have to write about. In horse racing you have about 20," said Schuyler. "But the two sports have many similarities, the most obvious being all of the characters. They might not be good people, but they are all colorful. That's what links the two sports more than anything else."

The colorful characters were not always the fighters themselves. In many cases they were the promoters, managers or hangers-on such as the gaudy Mr. T., who shot to prominence in the late 1970s, first as the bodyguard to Leon Spinks and later as the ultimate Hollywood villain.

"Don't cross Mr. T.," quipped Schuyler at the time. "If you do, he'll dot both of your I's (eyes)."

Along with promoter Wilfried Sauerland, matchmaker Bruce Trampler, referee/commissioner Larry Hazzard, and manager Shelly Finkel, Schuyler will be inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in the Non-Participant category during the IBHOF's 21st annual induction weekend in June.

"It's a good feeling," said the 75-year-old Schuyler from his home in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, where he covers high school and college football and writes about boxing's old-timers for his own amusement. "It's nice to see your career recognized. It pleases me very much."

Schuyler began his journalistic career as a summer intern in Pittsburgh. He jokes that the internship "lasted 42 years." Among the first bouts he covered was Rubin "Hurricane" Carter's shocking first round knockout of Emile Griffith at the city's Civic Arena in December 1963.

For a young man who had been a boxing fan since he was a kid, Schuyler couldn't believe his good fortune.

"Griffith had just been named Fighter of the Year by The RING magazine, so that was a big deal at the time," recalled Schuyler.

After a short stint in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Schuyler arrived in New York in 1965. At the time Jack Hand and Murray Rose covered boxing in eloquent fashion. When Hand took a job with the National Football League in 1970, Schuyler became the AP's national boxing writer. That job eventually took him to 18 countries, as well as Puerto Rico. It also filled him with enough memories for several lifetimes.

He says the first Leonard-Hearns fight was the best fight he ever covered, and he admits to still getting excited when he thinks about it or sees clips of it on television. Most memorable was the Ali-Frazier trilogy. Schuyler has great respect for Frazier, but says that, "Ali was bigger than life and the most charismatic athlete ever, in any sport."

For him and scores of other ringside scribes, the fight where Holmes dispensed a brutal beating to an aging and overmatched Ali was "a sad, sad night."

Schuyler also found the Larry Holmes-Ken Norton and Holmes-Cooney fights to be extremely memorable. When asked if he ever found a better story in the loser's dressing room, Schuyler said that was rarely the case, unless the loser was someone as charismatic and compelling as Ali or Roberto Duran.

That certainly was the case after Holmes destroyed Ali, as well as the post-fight setting in Duran's quarters after the No Mas debacle.

"The hardest story to write is always the follow-up story, but in those cases it was easy," said Schuyler.

Schuyler also vividly recalls entering the dressing room of George Chuvalo after the rugged Canadian had lost a decision to Oscar Bonavena. Chuvalo was laying on a table, in obvious discomfort.

"I asked George what was next and his manager, Irving Unger, jumped up and said, "We're not retiring,'" said Schuyler. "His guy just got murdered, for God's sake, and Unger was answering for him."

Truth be told, Schuyler rarely wrote about boxing. Because he was usually on deadline, he most often dictated his words back to the AP offices and they compiled the actual story. After the Thrilla in Manila, the dramatic third fight between Ali and Frazier, Schuyler said he dictated a couple of hundred words a round, which was much more than usual.

"The fight was such a war, there was so much to say," he said. "Nobody expected this type of effort from either man. The dramatic ending, with Eddie Futch stopping the fight and Ali saying

he had been close to death, resulted in me dictating about 4,000 words."

When Mike Tyson fought Lou Savarese in Scotland in 2000, a fierce rainstorm sent nearly all of the ringside reporters scurrying for cover. Photographer Teddy B. Blackburn remembers seeing Schuyler, completely alone and adorned in a hooded parka, dictating into the phone during the less than epic battle.

"It was a monsoon and all of the other writers were nowhere to be found," said Blackburn. "Fast Eddie acted like it was just another day at the office. I always admired him, but he really got my respect that day."

Actually, says Schuyler, Tim Smith of the New York Daily News and a few other hearty souls, returned to ringside for the main event. So did Ferdie Pacheco, who wound up tripping over and disconnecting Schuyler's phone cord.

Events such as that, which might seem catastrophic at the moment, are all sources of amusement for Schuyler as he recounts them today. It is obvious that he loved boxing, and looks at every day of his career with nostalgia, reverence, and in some cases, sadness.

He laments the fact that junior middleweight Tony Ayala Jr., who he describes as "the nicest guy to interview," was tortured by demons that came out when he drank and resulted in him beginning a long prison sentence for rape and kidnapping just as he was on the cusp of boxing superstardom.

"He was a really special fighter," said Schuyler. "His whole life was ruined because he couldn't handle a couple of drinks."

He described Holmes as "hardest, most dedicated trainer" that he ever met. He has a special fondness for the longtime heavyweight champion because of his fierce work ethic and tremendous belief in himself.

"Larry had this great desire to learn," said Schuyler. "He sparred with Ali, Norton and even Joe Frazier a little bit. But he never became a sparring partner, never developed that mentality. I admire him for that."

While Schuyler concedes that racial and ethnic rivalries have always propelled boxing, he still found the Holmes-Cooney promotion to be "disturbing and unsettling, the most racist thing I ever covered."

"The promoter (Don King) was black, and he didn't shy away from it," said Schuyler. "Lots of little things came up, like Cooney being on the cover of Sports Illustrated even though he was the challenger, and the rumor about President Reagan putting a phone in Cooney's dressing room in case he won. I've never been able to prove if that is true or not.

"It wasn't Larry or Gerry's fault," he added. "People really wanted Cooney to win. He could punch like crazy, and he was a really nice guy."

Other less prominent “nice guys” that Schuyler had the pleasure of covering were heavyweights Chuck Wepner and Randy Neumann. He still chuckles over the fact that, in 1974, they fought at MSG in New York for the New Jersey heavyweight title. Wepner was known as the Bayonne Bleeder for his propensity to bleed in nearly every fight he engaged in.

When referee Arthur Mercante stopped the fight in the sixth round, Wepner pleaded with him to let it go on. Mercante informed him that he was stopping the bout because of Neumann’s blood, not his.

“It was probably the only time in history a Wepner fight was stopped because of the other guy’s blood,” laughs Schuyler.

As much as Schuyler admires boxers, he purposely never got too close to them. “I never wanted to be an insider, I wanted to be a reporter,” he explained. “Someday I might be in a position to have to write something negative about them.”

He garnered the first interview that Mike Tyson granted after his release from prison, and still feels for all of Tyson’s travails.

“Between 1986 and 1989, he was brilliant,” said Schuyler. “His hand speed and reflexes were something. He would have given Ali fits. If Joe Frazier gave Ali fits, so would Tyson. But I think he would have had trouble with Foreman, just like Frazier did. Tyson was a crowd pleaser, and that’s what the heavyweight division needs. But he had no friends when he needed them most.”

Unlike most observers, Schuyler considers Floyd Mayweather Jr. a crowd pleaser. “He is a very technical fighter, who uses his speed and defense very well,” he said. “I don’t have to see a bloodbath in every fight. Sometimes I want to see artistry, and he gives you artistry.”

While Schuyler would eagerly anticipate a bout between Mayweather and Manny Pacquiao, he has problems with the fact that the general public considers the Pac Man a champion in seven weight divisions.

“He didn’t win titles in all of those divisions, he won pieces of the titles,” he explained. “You don’t need four weights between 105 and 112 pounds. If you can’t make 112, fight at 108 for God’s sake.”

Schuyler also has problems with the practice of not weighing in on the day of the fight. He cites the 1997 bout between Gabe Ruelas and the late Arturo Gatti that was supposed to be contested at 130 pounds. Both made weight the day before the fight, but entered the ring within two pounds of the welterweight limit.

“People weren’t paying to see two welterweights,” he opined. “Making weight is supposed to mean something.”

Having been honored by the Boxing Writers Association of America for “Excellence in Boxing Journalism” in 1970, Schuyler is arguably the dean of living boxing writers. Not the least bit

curmudgeonly, he is polite, gracious and sharp, just as he was on the boxing beat when surrounded by young and brash writers, many of whom had no comprehension what the term “beat writer” meant.

He is grateful for having had the privilege of doing something he loved for so long, as well as for the lasting impact and enduring legacy he left.

“If you can’t write about boxing, you should be selling shoes,” he said. “It’s a writer’s sport. Because the material is so rich, the stories write themselves.”

This year’s IBHOF induction weekend will be held from June 10-13, 2009. For more information, log onto: www.ibhof.com or call 315-697-7095.