

## You Will Be Missed, Emanuel Steward

Written by Michael Woods

Thursday, 25 October 2012 11:52

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*Manny wrapping Wlad's hands in 2008 before the first Tony Thompson fight. He was sometimes dismayed that this era of heavyweights was thin, because he wanted Wlad to be able to prove his true worth. Manny's worth is not to be debated. He was a good one. (Hogan)*

Emanuel Steward is gone, and there is a gaping whole in the world of boxing today, because he was a Hall of Fame trainer, the godfather of the Kronk gym when it was the toughest gym in the

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nation and probably the world, the ace manager, the stellar commentator and most importantly, a damned good guy.

A more than fair fighter himself, who won a Golden Gloves national crown in 1963 while residing in Detroit, Steward rose to widespread prominence when his fighter Thomas Hearns exploded onto the scene in the late 70s. Hilmer Kenty was Manny's first champ, honed in a charmless basement with a thermostat glued to 95 degrees. They didn't "train" at Kronk, which was named after a former city councilman, John F. Kronk, they fought, as Steward acknowledged this sport for what it was and is: a faceoff between two men where the stakes are the ultimate. The loser could lose his life, worst case scenario, so Steward made sure his guys were battled tested.

In recent years, Steward, who was born in West Virginia, was best known for aiding immensely in the reclamation of Wladimir Klitschko, the Ukrainian who had a reputation for being chinny. After getting his beard busted, Klitschko hooked up with Steward and went on a winning streak which will land him in the Hall of Fame. Steward would grumble on the phone every so often that Wlad didn't truly reach his potential as a badass, because he was so wary about getting clipped. Steward would coerce and cajole the boxer to be the aggressor, take on a little bit more of a Kronk mentality, but ultimately, he knew the boxer would choose his own path to walk. He wanted Wlad to overwhelm his foe, and Wlad wanted to break him down, make sure he was faded, before he truly committed to his offense. The 1996 Hall of Fame inductee will be missed by so many of us fightwriters. I used to call him up, and say, "Manny, it's your friend Mike Woods, from Brooklyn," and be cheered by his rich chuckle. I'd weigh in on something I'd seen in a recent fight, like how Wladimir was so clever at using his large paw to shove a foe away a step or two, to get himself out of harm's way, and Steward would congratulate me on picking up on that. His ego was such that he didn't need to correct you, or be the only one dispensing wisdom or insight. That was to his immense credit; he made you feel better about yourself, and that is and was a considerable gift, and a rare one at that.

It helped him bond with boxers, helped them trust him, so that they'd know when he was pushing them in camp, or dispensing technical or strategic advice on fight night, that his was a voice worth listening to. Said one of his prized pupils, ex heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis awhile back, "It's like when you walk into a place, and you meet somebody, and you start speaking to that person, but it's like you've known this person all your life. That's the chemistry between me and Emanuel Steward." Because his guys knew he cared, he could get away with lighting a public fire underneath him more so than a colder soul could. "I can no longer brag about this great talent," Steward said in 2000, before Lewis fought Michael Grant, "if it doesn't come out in this fight." It came out, because Lennox knew that mostly mellow Manny had reached point; he scored a KO2 on Grant, coming out with a Hearnsian intent on mayhem.

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Now, let's not airbrush here. The man, a full-time trainer from 1972, had a street side, for sure, and I enjoyed that as well. We'd joke about his pull with the ladies, and effbombs flew just a couple weeks ago, when we chatted about politics. We both are Obama fans, and shared some ranting about how so much of the nation roots for the other guy for the wrong reasons. He gave no hint at that time that he was anything but healthy, for the record. I recall his late 90s beef with Evander Holyfield, who he trained to beat Riddick Bowe in 1993, when he called Holyfield a "liar" in a tussle over payment. Him and Hearn had fallouts a few times. But that was rare territory; most often, you'd hear "the list" when Manny's name was mentioned. All the champs he trained--Kenny, Hearn, Spinks, Pryor, McCrory, Moorer, McClellan, McCall, Oscar, Chavez, Hamed, Lennox. The 1993 and 1997 Boxing Writer's Association trainer of the year award winner would have won more, if they had had that award up and running before 1989, for sure.

In 1984, he told Sports Illustrated some of what made him an all-time great as a trainer. "There's not as much oxygen in that hot gym and I think it's great for conditioning," he said. "I believe in a lot of boxing. You can train and work on the speed bag and heavy bag, but when you get in the ring with another fighter, it's a different story. Punches are coming at you, there's physical contact, muscle against muscle. It's like a guy shooting baskets. He can sit in the backyard and shoot baskets and he can be a genius at it, and then he gets in an actual game and guys are coming at him from every direction and now he's got to shoot fast, from every position, and it's a different ball game."

For me, what will stand out, his top attribute, was that ability to make people feel better about themselves. His fighters, the writers, people around him....There is a hole in the boxing world today, and it will not be filled. We miss you, Emanuel.

[Comment on this article](#)

### **Radam G says:**

Great copy! Greatest condolences to GBG Manny S's family. Editor Mike said it all! GBG Manny S was real and the whole deal. And we are going to really miss him, and how he dealt lessons of the reality of pugilism and life.

I'll see you at the crossroad, Manny. Holla!

### **tlig says:**

Now they're saying he isn't dead. Apparently his sister has issued a statement making that claim.

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### **dino da vinci says:**

The above post gave me a glimmer of hope, but it appears the great one has passed. Certainly no secret that Emmanuel was insanely knowledgeable and boxing loses yet another true legend. To all those who also admired the man, we share your sadness.  
RIP Champ.

### **Condor says:**

Very, very sad news. I loved Emanuel's commentary and just found him so likable. He absolutely elevated HBO's telecasts. Man, just sad news that choked me up and compelled me to come here.

Emanuel Steward, RIP.

### **ultimoshogun says:**

Bummed to hear the confirmation after conflicting reports earlier. Manny seemed like a genuine good guy. It's cool that EM knew him well enough to see his "street" side, I too will miss his commentary. Here's a nice tribute I found on youtube...RIP Manny.

[url][http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gyo39v4-FaU&feature=youtube\\_gdata\\_player](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gyo39v4-FaU&feature=youtube_gdata_player)

### **amayseng says:**

Just devastating news for boxing and life as Emanuel seemed very genuine and was likable to all he came across. If anyone was born to do what he did it was Emanuel. I'm just shook, I did not realize the severity of Emanuel's illness. I have heard rumors of cancer, and if it's true that just shows what a warrior Emanuel has been working broadcasts and training camps till the very end. What a sad day for boxing.

He was fantastic and the best HBO commentator they ever had.

### **riverside says:**

Manny Steward was a true boxing pioneer who set the standards of what we all follow, always optimistic and down to the truth...we will miss you!

### **Eros Arrows says:**

Wasn't around for his era as an elite trainer but I can speak to the quality and expertise he always showed when broadcasting for HBO. May he rest in peace.

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### **SouthPaul says:**

Good words by everyone, including the editor and commander of TSS.

Dead in life but forever alive in boxing legend and spirit.

War To The Immortal Kronk Father!

### **brownsugar says:**

That's the way to go... the man did what he loved, until the day he died. No vacation,... no long hospice... just a very productive life up until the last. That's the way I want to go... Never retire... just live until I can't function in the mortal plane... what more could you ask..

Have a beautiful and blessed journey... I never knew you but I feel like you were a friend. you will be sorely missed.

### **the Roast says:**

Sad day today for Boxing. I shed a few tears for a man I never met and only saw on TV. Emanuel Steward was always there for my entire life as a boxing fan. Hard to believe we won't be hearing his words of wisdom anymore. It will be a very emotional 10 bells this weekend on the HBO card. I will shed a few more tears I'm sure. R.I.P. one of the all time greats.

### **ali says:**

Boxing has lost a legend you will be miss .

### **GANZ says:**

Brutal to have lost legendary trainers Angelo Dundee and Emanuel Steward in the same year. Very sad day.

Boxing has lost another legend, a great broadcaster, a caring teacher and an exemplary ambassador for the sport.

R.I.P.

### **mortcola says:**

A man who defined the teaching of boxing, and the higher values of the sport, in our era as much as any other person. Not just respected for his expertise, but loved. A man who brought out the best in his fighters, helping them to overcome. A piece of my boxing youth is over, and I never even met the man. RIP, Manny. Honor his memory in all you do, Wlad, and all Manny's students.

### **Shoulder Roll Defense says:**

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Manny is arguably the best trainer of this generation and will be deeply missed. My condolences to his family and the boxing community.

### **Schteeve says:**

[QUOTE=dino da vinci;21429]The above post gave me a glimmer of hope, but it appears the great one has passed. Certainly no secret that Emmanuel was insanely knowledgeable and boxing loses yet another true legend. To all those who also admired the man, we share your sadness.

RIP Champ.[/QUOTE]

Beautifully written.

I learned a lot about the sweet science from listening to Emmanuel's commentary.