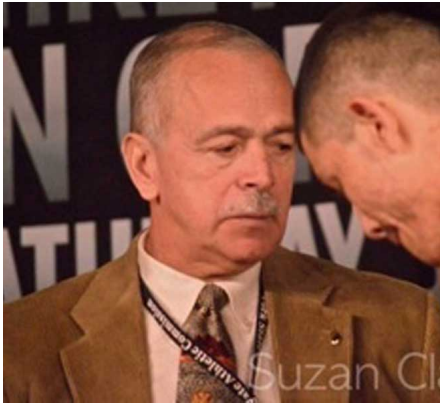


## Rest in Peace, Felix Figueroa

Written by Thomas Hauser  
Saturday, 15 February 2014 15:53

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Something horrible happened on Valentines Day. Felix Figueroa died.

Felix was chief inspector for the New York State Athletic Commission. On fight night, inspectors are the eyes and ears of the commission in the dressing room and at ringside. Without inspectors, fight cards don't take place.

Felix was a model inspector. He performed his job as well as anyone in the business and was a calming presence amidst the chaos of fight night. His bilingual skills made him all the more valuable.

Felix was scheduled to work a fight card in Huntington, New York, on February 14. Late that morning, he telephoned fellow inspector George Ward and told him, "I'm not feeling good. I have a little shortness of breath. I think I'm coming down with a cold. Could you cover for me tonight?"

"Why don't you go to the hospital and get yourself checked out," Ward suggested.

Felix went to the hospital. The doctors found a coronary blockage. There was emergency surgery. He died on the operating table.

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I saw Felix for the last time when he worked the fight card at Roseland on February 12. The New York State Athletic Commission is in a state of transition. The determination has been made that things aren't functioning the way they should. The governor's office has decided to create a new position: executive director. The executive director will be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the commission and play a role similar to that played by Marc Ratner, Keith Kizer, Larry Hazzard, and Greg Sirb in other states.

The New York Secretary of State (which oversees the commission) has received many applications for the job. Some are from qualified applicants; others aren't. Some are from knowledgeable, well-intentioned people; others from hustlers and hacks.

Felix retired several years ago from his job as a station head for the United States Postal Service. That position spoke to his credentials. He was a sound administrator and understood how government agencies function. He had a good pension. He was enjoying his retirement. But the idea of serving as executive director for the commission intrigued him.

"I think I can make a difference," Felix told me in January. "There's so much they do at the commission that can be done better. If I came in, even if it was just for a year or two, I could turn things around and leave things better than when I found them. But before I do something like that, I'd have to talk with my family."

As I was leaving Roseland shortly before midnight on February 12, Felix approached me.

"Tommy," he said.

Felix and my aunt (who died several years ago) were the last two people who called me Tommy.

"I've been thinking some more about that job. Can we talk sometime next week?"

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“Sure.”

“I’ll give you a call.”

He was 62 years old.

George Ward served as an inspector with Felix for many years. Like Felix, George is one of the best.

“I’m struggling to come to grips with this,” Ward said on Saturday morning. “Felix was a great guy. And he was a professional. He was always reliable. He always went the extra mile to help people out. He worked hard his entire life. This is horrible.”

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at [thauser@rcn.com](mailto:thauser@rcn.com). His most recent book (*Straight Writes and Jabs: An Inside Look at Another Year in Boxing*) has just been published by the University of Arkansas Press.

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**Radam G says:**

Greatest condolences to his family and love ones. Holla!

**amayseng says:**

Terribly sad news. RIP Felix

**dino da vinci says:**

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Rip.

### **deepwater2 says:**

He was a good boxing man. Ward is a good guy too,he lives in Suffolk next to my best friend. We shared many a ride on the lirr after a fight at barclays or msg.Politics ruined nys boxing commission and the lady in charge is as political as you come. I was told to donate to the democratic party if I wanted to get my foot in the door. Forget that. Mr Felix Figueroa was a boxing man and could give a flying f about politics. God bless Felix