

WBC President Jose Sulaiman Has Died

Written by Michael Woods
Thursday, 16 January 2014 21:21



The president of the World Boxing Council, Jose Sulaiman, has passed away. The head of that sanctioning body, who held his post since 1975, was 82 years old.

To say Sulaiman was a character, and that he leaves behind a mixed legacy are both understatements. He was based in Mexico, and many of those who knew him spoke fondly of his commitment to the sport, and his work in advancing the sport. He lobbied for fights to be reduced from a max of 15 rounds down to 12, for example. He'd intermittently find himself

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stepping in it, such as when he publicly came to the defense of Floyd Mayweather, who was facing charges for a physical altercation with his ex girlfriend, in 2011. "Beating a lady" is not considered a "major crime," the WBC boss told a reporter. Subsequently, he had to dial back his comment and explain that he meant no harm by the word choice, and blamed his imperfect grasp of English.

When he chose to communicate in grandiose fashion, such as when he said, in 1981, "The WBC is above the law..that is, any law but its own," legions of fightpress and fans could be heard hooting. But then again, many a titleholder who adored their green belt spoke in glowing fashion of the leader. To be sure, he made the job of fellas like me easier, with his ability to provoke, such as when he told reporters, after all witnessed Oliver McCall's in-ring breakdown in a rematch bout with Lennox Lewis in 1997, "I think his mental state is just fine."

Here is the release sent out by the WBC upon the passing of their chief, who'd undergone heart bypass surgery in October, and had lapsed into a coma, woken up, but was unable to get back to his feet:

Jose Sulaiman will be remembered as a man of integrity, honorability and pure heart. Inspired by his heroes, believed in unbreakable values and principles and lived a life to the fullest and he did it his way, as Frank Sinatra would sing on "My Way".

Always successful, a natural leader who would never give up, "there are no impossible tasks, some just take a bit longer". That was the spirit of Don Jose. His life dedicated to the service of others, inspired by his parents education and example, led to a life full of satisfactions, he took tremendous joy by helping others, specially the underprivileged and the discriminated.

Many call him the father of boxing; he certainly treated all fighters as his sons and daughters, he suffered from their problems and worked every single day of his life to try to make boxing better and safer. Regardless if the boxer was an amateur or if he was Mike Tyson or Chavez, he would treat them the same and would relentlessly try to help each one at all times.

Nelson Mandela inspired him to fight against discrimination, battled Apartheid and always struggled to prevent the abuse of power, which hurt the lesser gifted. He led many actions towards dignifying the sport of boxing, the female practice of boxing and the justice for trainers,

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managers, promoters and specially boxers.

Pope John Paul II inspired him to be a better human being every day and to be humble, to serve and love. Pope Francis brought faith back to him in these few months as God's representative on earth and the Virgin of Guadalupe remained by his side at all times while Jesus Christ was his greatest guide and inspiration.

Our dear father fought the last 12 rounds of his life, inspired by his hero Muhammad Ali, his corner formed by many doctors, nurses, care partners, therapist, lift team and staff at 7ICU at UCLA and with thousands cheering him from all over the world...

The final bell rang; Jose Sulaiman, winner by unanimous decision!

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Radam G says:

My deepest condolences. Holla!

ArneK. says:

Years ago I determined that if the word "integrity" is invoked over and over again at a man's funeral, then the decedent was a scoundrel. This frothy eulogy, the flight of a windbag, is another case in point.