

## Nathan Lee 1939-2014

Written by Thomas Hauser  
Thursday, 20 February 2014 10:08

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*This is a sad time. On February 14, Felix Figueroa (chief inspector for the New York State Athletic Commission) died. Now comes word that, one day earlier, Nathan Lee passed away.*

*The article below, written in 2009, speaks to Nathan's goodness. He will be missed.*

Whenever there's a big fight at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, Nathan Lee and La Mont Starks can be found sitting at a desk outside the media center.

Nathan was born in Arkansas in 1939. When he was nine, his family moved to California. In the 1960s and early '70s, he was a station manager for Hughes Air West. Then the station closed and he relocated to Las Vegas, where he was a supervisor at McCarran Airport. He retired in 1996 and, a year later, took a parttime job at the MGM Grand.

La Mont Starks ("remember the first four letters of my last name," he says) was born in Los Angeles in 1942. His professional resume includes a stint as the varsity basketball coach at Verbum Dei High School. He also taught political science and economics. He left teaching in 1977, went into sales, and moved to Las Vegas in 1989. After retiring in 2004, he went to work on a parttime basis for the MGM Grand.

Nathan and La Mont work big fights and other special events. During fight week, they're on duty outside the media center from 8:45 AM to 6:15 PM on Tuesday through Thursday and 8:45 AM to 8:15 PM on Friday and Saturday. They eat at the desk and leave only for restroom breaks.

"Our job," Nathan explains, "is to make sure that anyone who enters the media center has the proper credential. Most of the people we deal with are nice. We never have difficulty with the people who belong. They adhere to the rules. If they need a credential, they go where they're supposed to go and get the credential."

That sounds simple enough. But what about people who don't belong?

“Most of the people who aren't allowed into the media center accept it,” La Mont says. “Very few of them tell us they're going in whether we like it or not. If they try to play hardball, we talk with them on a logical basis. We tell them, ‘Look; we have rules and regulations, and we expect you to follow them. You came to Las Vegas to have a good time; not to wind up in trouble. If this turns into a problem, it won't be the two of us that deal with it.’ That always defuses the situation.”

Nathan and La Mont are incredibly nice. They have a kind word for everyone. There are times when circumstances require them to be firm, but they're never confrontational.

“And we like each other,” Nathan notes.

“Yes, we do,” La Mont says, seconding the notion. “The job would be less fun without each other.”

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:**

Deepest condolences. Holla!

**amayseng says:**

another day another death it seems.....

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RIP