



## *Ring 44 Inductee*

# DUMMY BURNS

*Heavyweight 1912-1925*



His real name Charles E. Comerford, born on August 23, 1886, was raised and lived in the same house his whole life in Buffalo's First Ward section. A very active youth at the age of 14, Charles went swimming one day in the Buffalo River and dove off the grain elevators and unfortunately the water pressure had broken his ear drums. His youthful strength and determination never wavered. He was very athletic in many sports over the years, playing semi-pro football with the Oakdales, Cazenovia and Lancasters. He also rowed with the Mutual Athletic Rowing Club and umpired many baseball games.

But it was in 1910, at the age of 24 when Charlie took up boxing and acquired the moniker of Dummy Burns. Though he was deaf, he quickly earned a reputation for being one of the toughest fighters in Buffalo, as this city fostered club fighters in the rings heyday, previous to and during the roaring 1920's. Dummy had 3 straight knockouts in his first three fights in 1911. Never weighing more than 180 pounds, Dummy fought some of the best heavyweights of his time and was never knocked out. He was stopped a few times for bad facial cuts and broken bones but the local slugger never had ten counted over him. In a ring career that lasted for more than 15 years, his most memorable fights were with Jack "Twin" Sullivan and Jack "Gunboat" Smith, to name a few. Burns was also sparring partner for Mike "Twin" Sullivan and Jess Willard at the Independent AC at 349 Louisiana Street where Burns trained.

In January of 1919, Dummy was to fight Dick O'Brien in Charleston, West Virginia. It was that fight that a young beautiful lady named Cora Wills heard about a deaf boxer coming to town to fight. She sent a letter to his manager, Marty McGowan, asking to meet him. She too was also deaf having contracted spinal meningitis in childhood. Love struck and the two would eventually marry in 1921 in Charleston but move to Buffalo, where they had 10 children, with 4 robust sons, all of whom served in World Wars.

Brimful of confidence, Dummy always bet on himself to win, but after fighting Rochester's tough Mike Conroy in 1924, he would fight two more times and retire the gloves for good. After fighting, Dummy worked at the grain mill as a grain handler for many years. Tough as nails but the kindest man you would ever meet. Dummy Burns passed away from a heart condition on February 3, 1961 at the age of 75.

His fame and his name Dummy Burns, will never be forgotten as tonight we are proud to induct him into Ring #44's Buffalo Boxing Hall of Fame.