



# JOE "Baby Joe" MESI

HEAVYWEIGHT

1997-2007

Baby Joe began his boxing career at the age of twenty, following in the foot steps of his grandfather, uncle and brother. Joe began training for the 1996 Olympics, in February of 1995. As a late entry he had to overcome every boxing and political opponent on his way to the Olympic Box-Offs, becoming the 1996 Super Heavyweight Boxing Alternate.

Joe made his pro debut with a big knockout in the Apollo Theater in Harlem, New York in November 1997. He won the New York State Heavyweight Title September 17, 1999 at the Flickenger Center in Buffalo, New York. Joe remained undefeated along the way gathering wins against Jorge Luis Gonzalez, Burt Cooper, and David Izon. On June 24, 2003 Joe faced Robert Davis at HSBC arena in front of a sold out crowd. Mesi dispatched Davis in 90 seconds of the first round and now owned the NABF Heavy weight title.

Joe signed to do a four (4) fight contract on HBO, the first of which was DaVarryl Williamson (aka The Touch of Sleep) at HSBC Arena in front of 18,000 fans in September 2003. To the best of our knowledge, the biggest boxing crowd ever gathered in Buffalo. Joe was now positioned in the top world rankings and went on to beat Monty Barrett in Madison Square Garden on December 6, 2003. He then faced and beat Vassilly Jirov on March 13, 2004 in Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas. This win placed Joe as the number one Heavyweight Contender in the world. The Jirov fight resulted in a much publicized injury, which sidelined Joe in court for four (4) years. After winning the legal battle he began his comeback fighting on April 1, 2006 in Puerto Rico.

Joe compiled seven (7) wins in his comeback taking place in three different countries. His last fight was against Shannon Miller where he scored a first round knockout capturing the USNBC Heavyweight title on October 12, 2007. Joe's record stands at 36-wins, 29-knockouts and he is to date the only undefeated number one (#1) ranked Heavyweight contender since Rocky Marciano.

Commissioner Melvina Lathan of the NYS Athletic Commission has recently appointed Joe Mesi NYS Deputy Commissioner of Boxing.

Phrases such as unshakable, adaptability and high standards can easily be applied to Joe and his boxing career. These same statements, however, can also be applied to his commitment to his community and the WNY area. Joe recognized the unique opportunity that boxing gave him to make a difference in WNY. Joe is passionate about working with children to stand up against Bullying and why they should stay focused on reaching their goals. Joe also has served as honorary chairman of the Variety Club of Buffalo and the Autism Foundation. Joe volunteers his time at Women's and Children's Hospital Buffalo, Roswell Park Cancer Institute, Make a Wish Foundation, Lupus Association of WNY, the F.A.T.H.E.R.S. organization and Northwest Community Center and Independent Living Project.

The cause that has been closest to Joe's heart is the National Kidney Foundation. Joe created his own foundation for organ donations due to the loss of his late cousin Genelle's struggle with end stage kidney disease.

Joe believes; "Helping those in need is bigger than boxing and bigger than any sport. In the end, it won't matter how many knockouts, touch downs, or home runs you have, but rather who you helped along the way".

This love of community inspired him to run for the New York State Senate in 2008. The commitment and positive impact that he has had on the community both professionally and personally make Joe a very worthy recipient of this honor.

Tonight Ring 44 of The National Veteran Boxers Association is proud to induct Joe Mesi into the 2011 Buffalo Boxing Hall of Fame.