



BERNIE BLACHER

MANAGER, TRAINER, PROMOTER

1950's to 1960's

Bernie Blacher was a very successful local businessman. He owned furniture stores on South Park Avenue, Broadway at Bailey and Broadway. He also sold furniture directly out of his van, making sales right at the customer's home. He had regular customers who could not leave their homes and most of them paid on time.

Blacher also owned various rental properties, both business and residential.

His most successful business venture was that of a phonograph operator. After 23 years in the business which brought him to the top of his field, Blacher was named sales manager of the Buffalo office of the Davis Distributing Corporation. At this time in 1958 Bernie Blacher lived with his wife Bette and son Allen at 83 Tennyson Avenue.

Blacher's greatest passion although probably not his greatest source of income was boxing. He served boxing in many ways; manager, trainer, promoter, operator of a gym and occasionally as a boxer when a replacement was necessary. He even ran the Butler Mitchell boxing bouts that were sponsored by the Squirt Bottling Company.

Bernie remained in excellent condition. He had to be as he as he frequently sparred with many of his fighters. He ran five miles a day and jumped rope for an hour. He stood 5'7" and weighed 142 pounds. His chest measured 42" while possessing a 28" waist.

Buffalo had a number of boxing clubs over the years. Blacher was a key official in the Hudson Boxing Club. When Junior Singer moved to San Diego, Blacher became involved in the rescue of Singer's Gym. When urban renewal took Singer's he moved the operations to Mickey's and renamed it Singer's Gym. Johnny Sudac did much of the maintenance while Blacher handled the financing, sometimes lending money to a fighter without interest if he lacked money when fees were due.

Bernie Blacher served as a manager, trainer, promoter as well as serving in other capacities for many top local fighters including Joey Giambra, Ed, Phil and Dick Wipperman, Vic Brown, Al and Manny Quinney, the Hall Brothers, Stan Fitzgerald, Willie Cole, Bobby Worthem, Tommy Quick and others. His fighters had bouts throughout New York State, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Ontario and even fights in St. Paul, Des Moines, San Diego and San Francisco.

What did his fighters think of him? Bernie Blacher managed Joey Giambra in 1958. In a recent telephone call Giambra referred to Blacher as, "very generous, very honest, very thoughtful, very helpful and definitely very deserving of induction into the Buffalo Boxing Hall of Fame. Joey mentioned the story that when Bernie sold his contract for \$15,000, he gave Joey \$5,000.

Charlie Ferraro, a well-known local trainer said that Blacher was one of the best trainers of his time. He was also "a real gentleman."

Few people knew Bernie Blacher as well as Dick Wipperman. A series of conversations and telephone interviews provided a glimpse of the man that kept boxing alive in Buffalo in the 1950's and 1960's. Dick reminded me that many boxers in the Buffalo Boxing Hall of Fame owe their success to Blacher. According to Wipperman, "boxing would not have survived without him. He was the cement that held local boxing together."

Bernie had numerous businesses interests. When one of his fighters needed money, he hired him to do maintenance work. As Wipperman said, "if a fighter needed help, a place to stay, a little bit of money or some guidance you went to Bernie."

Dick summed it all up for a man that he respected as a father. Bernie Blacher was a very unique individual. "He was a "good human being with a great attitude on life. He was honest, articulate and very sensitive. His boxers believed in him. He avoided turmoil and he sincerely believed that you had to take responsibility for everything that you did."