



ANTHONY PANEPINTO

TRAINER - 30 Years

["He was without question one of the most dedicated men I have ever met in boxing, amateur or professional. He sought no personal financial gain in boxing; instead he sought to help others, young boxers especially. He gave generously of his time and money, in this project."] -Homily by Monsignor Franklin Kelliher.

Anthony Panepinto better known as Tony Pinto was born in Buffalo on December 12, 1911 and passed away all too soon on September 25, 1970. From 1935 to 1970 he worked at the Tonawanda Chevy plant during the day and trained boxers at night. Tony made sure that his family had dinner precisely at 4:30 in order for him to get to the gym on time.

Pinto started as an amateur boxer in the 1920's as most lower west side kids did and had some success. In January 1930, he won two matches in one night to win the city 126 lb division title at

the Saturn Club. In September of the same year he equaled that feat with two more wins on the same night at the Elks Club. In October of 1930, at the Broadway Auditorium Tony knocked out his first two opponents and had to fight a third match for the finals. There, he met Joe Sansone in what was described in the newspapers as "one of the greatest bouts ever conducted in an amateur tournament at the Broadway Auditorium."

During this time Tony volunteered with Sammy Sacco at the Butler Mitchell Boys Club, educating the youth in the art of boxing. Tony taught the purist form of boxing, Olympic style boxing, to hit and not get hit. In the 1940's, Pinto began training Golden Gloves boxers and help smooth and polish young boxers, many into champions. Tony became the lead trainer for longtime manager of amateur fighters, Sal Licata. "Tony was one of the finest corner men I have ever seen in action anywhere" claimed Licata in 1958. Pinto was held in such high regard that manager Bernie Blacher made Tony his head trainer for his stable of professional boxers. Fighters that Tony trained at one time or another are a "who's who" of local boxing. Such names as Mario Calandra, Dick Hall, Pancho Padilla, Tom Quick, the Mejia brothers, Paulie Wielopowski, Dick Wipperman, Rocky Fumerelle and Joey Giambra to name but a few.

Pinto not only trained his boxers but many times he had to clothe them and feed them. A usual scene at the Pinto household on Efner and Virginia Sts. were fighters both black and white sitting around the table on Sunday sauce night. If a poor boxer had no shoes or no place to sleep that night the Pinto household was open to them.

In the 1960's Pinto continue to train many of the local professionals as well as the amateur boxers in the area. On the day of his death from a heart attack, Tony was working with Rocky Cudney and Eddie Niemann at Singers gym above the Flair Lounge on Main St. Pinto as he always did, was in the ring with Niemann working with him on the medicine ball. Pinto complained of a stomach ache and said he was going home but not before imploring the fighters to do their pushups and sit-ups. Anthony Panepinto went home and died that night, just days before he was to work the corner of Dick Topinko, leaving many fighters losing not just a trainer but a father figure as well.

At his funeral at Spano's Funeral Parlor on Niagara Street the place was quiet when a large man carrying his young son entered the room. Most people recognized him, heavyweight Vic Brown. Brown stood in the middle of the room and with a booming voice declared, "I want you to all know that Tony was the greatest man that ever lived."

Tonight Ring #44 is honored to enshrine Anthony "Tony Pinto" Panepinto in the Buffalo Boxing Hall of Fame.