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CHICO VEJAR, GASPER ORTEGA HEAD UP CONNECTICUT BOXING HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

Dinner to honor six will be held December 1st at Foxwoods

The 1950s were considered the golden years for boxing, and two Connecticut legends played prominent roles during that era. Chico Vejar of Stamford was a middleweight who ducked no one, and Gaspar Ortega of New Haven was a middleweight who also took on all comers. Vejar and Ortega, who had more than 200 fights between them, are two of the six inductees who will be honored at the 2nd annual Connecticut Boxing Hall of Fame dinner to be held Dec. 1 at the Foxwoods Resort Casino.

The remaining inductees are former heavyweight contender Nathan Mann of New Haven, former middleweight contender Lou Bogash Sr. of Bridgeport, longtime promoter and manager Manny Liebert of West Hartford, and former state boxing director John Burns of Windsor.

Vejar finished his pro career with a record of 92-20-4 with 43 knockouts. He was once ranked the No. 7 middleweight in the world. Vejar twice fought former world champion Joey Giardello, losing both times, once by split decision. Vejar also fought former world champion Gene Fullmer as well as Kid Gavilan. Vejar lost decisions to both. Vejar, 74, ended his career in 1961 with a six-fight winning streak.

Inducted into the World Boxing Hall of Fame in 1995, Ortega compiled a record of 131-39-6 with 69 knockouts. Ortega fought some of the best middleweights of his era, including Emile Griffith, Benny "Kid" Paret, Carmen Basilio, Gavilan and Tony DeMarco. Ortega, 70, beat Paret by unanimous decision in 1959 and then did it again two years later. Ortega, who was born in Mexico, has a son Michael who is one of the state's top referees.

Mann had a world heavyweight title fight against Joe Louis in 1938 at Madison Square Garden in New York. Louis scored a third-round knockout, but Mann went on to claim the New England heavyweight title by winning a decision over George Fitch in a bout in West Haven in 1940. Mann finished with a career record of 74-11-4. He had 44 knockouts. Mann died in 1995 at the age of 84.

Bogash had a world title shot in 1920, losing a decision to Jack Britton. Bogash also fought for the New England welterweight title, losing a decision to Jack Delaney in 1922. Bogash finished his career with a 100-16-13 record with 39 knockouts. Bogash died in 1978 at age 77. His son Lou was a long-time referee.

Since 1929, Liebert has been a manager, promoter, trainer and a second in the corner. Among the fighters Liebert managed were Tyrone Booze and Eddie Olivera. Liebert was a driving force behind boxing's revival in Connecticut in 1973 after the sport had been banned in the state for eight years. Liebert was one of the founders of the Connecticut Boxing Guild, which was active from 1948-2004. Liebert, 93, remains a member of the state boxing commission.

Burns, 70, has been involved in boxing since 1955 when he was a Hartford police officer. Burns was a supervisor for the Hartford Police Athletic League boxing program. Director of consumer protection Mary Heslin appointed Burns to the position of boxing inspector in 1972. Burns later became the state director of boxing in 1987, a position he held until 2000. Burns was also an advisor to the Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun boxing commissions.

The inaugural class of inductees in 2005 included Willie Pep, Marlon Starling, Louis "Kid" Kaplan, Maxie Rosenbloom, Johnny Duke & Bat Battalino.

Ticket information will be announced at a later date.

For further information on the Connecticut Boxing Hall of Fame please call the president of the CTBHOF, Glenn Feldman at 860-930-0434 or visit www.ctboxinghof.com.

