

Boxer Omar Henry's Passing Still Impacts Sport 10 Years Later

Feb 1, 2023 marks the 10-year anniversary of the untimely death of Team Mayweather affiliate and Top Rank alumni Omar Henry, a Chicago-born boxer of Puerto Rican & African American descent who rose to stardom on social media before succumbing to gallbladder cancer.

After scrapping his way through the poverty stricken "Wild 100s" neighborhood, and later moving to live with his older sister in Texas, Omar was 16 years old when he started his boxing journey. He trained daily at Savannah's Boxing Gym, and would eventually go on to become a four-time Texas Golden Gloves Champion, a 2007 Golden Gloves national quarter finalist, and a member of the USA Elite Boxing Program. He amassed an amateur boxing record of 60-5 before turning pro and signing with Top Rank in 2008.

Despite a relatively limited ring presence (his professional record was 12-0-1 with nine KO victories), he somehow found much success in the social arena; at one point reaching over 170,000 Twitter followers and regularly hobnobbing with the likes of Justin Bieber and President Obama. His spirited attitude and socialite adventures alone could have easily caused one to question his focus as a pugilist; but nevertheless, the upper echelon of boxing's talent scouts knew better. After all, it was Omar's ring talents that managed to impress the folks at Don King Productions, ultimately signing him onto the team in 2011

. Not long afterward, Showtime Boxing executives handpicked Omar to main event Showtime's "Next Generation of Boxing" event, which was scheduled for Nov 16th, 2012. With his talent

and charisma, it appeared Omar was on his way to becoming a household name, but tragically, days before the fight, Omar suddenly fell ill. Diagnosed with stage 3 gallbladder cancer, his days in the ring would take a sidestep, as he began fighting for his life – a contest he ultimately would lose. Omar passed away on Feb 1st, 2013, seven days before his 26th birthday

Because Omar always brought smiles and positive energy to everyone he met, it was only fitting his homegoing ceremony in Chicago felt more like a celebration than a somber affair, with hundreds of his closest friends, family, and fans meeting to honor his life and say their final goodbyes.

Despite passing away at a young age, Omar's legacy continues to live on. Omar was posthumously named Universal Boxing Federation's first ever honorary champion, validating the fighter he had the potential to become. In 2013, a Chicago Sun-Times article titled "Fighter to The End" detailing Omar's journey won the prestigious Peter Lisagor award for sports writing.

Coming soon... Fans should be on the lookout for a film project based on Omar's rollercoaster career and the final days of his life. It's being spearheaded by Atlanta producer Rashad Mubarak and TV