







Winner of Pulitzer Prize for Tiger Force 

toledoblade.com

TOLEDO, OHIO

SUNNY
70°
Humidity: 56 %
more weather



 [stocks](#)
 [click here](#)
[Place Your Ad Online](#)  [click here](#)
 [monster](#)  [click here](#)

NEWS MARKETplace LEISURE READER SERVICES ADVERTISER SERVICES


advertisement





2007 DODGE
MAGNUM


CHARLIE'S DODGE
ONLINE INVENTORY
www.charliesdodge.com


725 Illinois Ave. Maumee, 419-893-0241

Keyword search 

QwikNav 

Archive search 

Last 30 days search 

Search 

Home » Sports » Amateur/Olympics »

Amateur/Olympics

Article Tools:  Print  Email  Index  Help  XML  RSS

Article published Sunday, August 12, 2007
IN THEIR WORDS: TOM FALVEY

Ex-boxer turned to officiating, running

In Their Words is a weekly feature appearing Sundays in The Blade's sports section. Blade sports reporter Mark Monroe talked with former boxing referee and marathon runner Tom Falvey, who officiated amateur bouts featuring Larry Holmes, Sugar Ray Leonard and Mike Tyson. A tireless volunteer, Falvey grew up in Toledo, now lives in Sylvania and has completed 68 marathons, including the Boston Marathon.

The solitary rewards and disappointments of individual sports have always appealed to Tom Falvey, so boxing and running became his lifelong passions.


"I liked them because if you do well you get credit, and if you don't you can't blame it on a teammate," Falvey said.

A 1954 graduate of DeVilbiss High School, Falvey began boxing when he was a senior. He fought in the Golden Gloves and posted a 20-7 record with 12 knockouts in an amateur career that lasted until he turned 22. After a stint in the Army, Falvey attended the University of Detroit where he roomed with future NBA great Dave DeBusschere, and the pair established a lasting bond.

After his boxing career ended, Falvey remained involved as a referee and judge. He officiated matches for numerous future champions when they were amateurs. He was in the ring for bouts featuring Larry Holmes, Tommy Hearns, Mike Tyson, Marvin Hagler and Sugar Ray Leonard and Michael and Leon Spinks.



Tom Falvey and wife Alice are residents of Sylvania, where Tom founded the 24-hour marathon and directed it for 17 years. (THE BLADE)

 [Zoom](#) | [Photo Reprints](#)

MARKETplace

classifieds and more

- Jobs
- Homes
- For Rent
- Cars
- Notices
- Merchandise
- Service/Repair
- Garage Sales
- Recreation
- Celebrations
- Churches
- New Today
- Snip & Save
- Grocery Coupons
- Shopper's Advantage
- Shop Blade products
- Photo Reprints
- Front Page Reprints

advertisement

Religion

Daily Log

Weather

Special Reports

Lottery

Today's Front Page

Photo Gallery

MARKETplace
classifieds and more

- Jobs
- Homes
- For Rent
- Cars
- Notices
- Business Opportunities
- Merchandise
- Service/Repair
- Garage Sales
- Recreation
- Celebrations
- Churches
- New Today
- Snip & Save
- Grocery Coupons
- Shopper's Advantage
- Shop Blade products
- Photo Reprints
- Front Page Reprints

LEISURE

Worship Guide

Snip & Save

New Car Dealer Guide

Golf Guide

Restaurant Guide

High School Guide

Arts/Events Calendar

TV Listings

Movie Showtimes

Horoscopes

People2People

Online Forums

e.thePeople

Mud Hens Cam

Destinations

Home and Garden

READER SERVICES

RSS News Feeds

Partnerships

About/Contact Us

Educational Services

Customer Services

Email Newsletter

Help/FAQ

Toledo Pros

Find a business

Find a person

Maps and directions

Set as homepage

ADVERTISER SERVICES

In 1968, ABC's Wide World of Sports televised the Olympic Boxing Trials live from the Lucas County Rec Center and Falvey was the ring announcer.

Falvey met his wife, Alice, while he was teaching in the Detroit Public School system. The pair moved to Toledo in 1965 and Tom taught special education at Rogers High School for the next 30 years.



Falvey in 1982

[Zoom](#) | [Photo Reprints](#)

for dozens of events sponsored by the Toledo Roadrunners.

"I STARTED BOXING at the Police Athletic League. I only boxed as an amateur. I really enjoyed it. I won more than I lost, but it was close. I wasn't that good, but I always wanted to have one pro fight.

"I was never knocked out and I was only stopped once. It was at the Sports Arena. I pretended like I didn't want it to be stopped. But I was glad the ref did. I was thoroughly whipped. The guy's name was Jan Haas and we trained at the same gym. I knew him well and had beaten him during sparring sessions. But he was just a tiger.

"My first victory came against a classmate of mine at DeVilbiss. His name was Bob Crawford. I drove us to the weigh-in and I couldn't believe the chances of us meeting. I fought him and I won. It was a very close bout. And then I drove him home.

"I KEPT INVOLVED with boxing by first becoming an announcer. In 1968, ABC's Wide World of Sports televised live from the Lucas County Rec Center. George Foreman was here and won three bouts. I was the PA announcer and made sure I would call the heavyweight bout. It was live TV and I dragged out the names as long as I could.

"Then I got into judging and refereeing. I refereed for Larry Holmes, Tommy Hearns, Mike Tyson, the Spinks brothers, Marvin Hagler and Sugar Ray Leonard. Leon Spinks was the most difficult to ref. He was so rough. He would shove and push and elbow. "I'd heard things about Tyson when he was coming up. The only guys who could spar with him were pros. His trainer then was Cus D'Amato. He let Tyson get away with a lot. I met Cus and ate dinner with him. He was extremely knowledgeable about boxing, but he was very goofy. He thought the mob was out to get him. He was a strange guy. If Tyson would have been disciplined, he could have been the best heavyweight champion. But he turned out to be an awful person. It ruined his career.

"Dave DeBusschere was named one of the 50 greatest NBA players of all time. We hit it off right away. Dave also pitched for the White Sox. The Pistons made him a coach at 24. He was the youngest coach or manager in any major sport. Through knowing Dave, I've had a beer with Bill Russell and [John] Havlicek. Most of those guys were just so great to be around.

"DeBusschere and Cassius Clay were the two most natural athletes I've ever known personally. Clay always recognized me when I'd see him at national tournaments. He knew I was friends with Skeeter McClure. They fought alongside each other in the 1960 Olympics.

"I ALWAYS USED to run in boots. I read that boxers would always run in army boots — like Clay always had. Then I discovered running shoes when I was at Rogers. Boy, what a difference. It was like having feathers on my feet.

"That's when I started to run in a few races in 1977. I found out it was fun. I did my first marathon in June of 1978. I ran in Detroit and then I ran one in Illinois. The race director told me it was a flat course. But when I got there it was nothing but rolling hills. I was so angry at him. I decided I would go and tell him off. But then I was told that I had qualified for the Boston Marathon by 41 seconds and I was happy and

They had two daughters and a son, all who have since passed away after battling cystic fibrosis. Their daughter Anne was 27, son Christopher was 22 and youngest daughter Mary was 7. Falvey served as president of the Cystic Fibrosis Chapter of northwest Ohio in the 1970s. The couple has been married for 42 years.

Falvey also was president of the Toledo Golden Gloves organization from 1974-81. In 1977, Tom took up running and qualified for the Boston Marathon the very next year. He has completed 68 marathons, including races in Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Pittsburgh, Chicago and Atlanta. His best time is 3 hours and 15 minutes. Although he has never won a race, Falvey's best time in a 10K is 39:50.

Falvey founded the annual 24-hour marathon held at Olander Park in Sylvania. He was the race director for the event for 17 years. In 2004, Falvey presided over the largest 24-hour race ever held.

Now 70, Falvey still competes in races and serves as a volunteer

Golf Guide

All

Search by course:

[find course](#)

TOLEDO STORM
[Stories, Scores, Highlights.](#)

TOLEDO MUD HENS
[Stories, Scores, Highlights.](#)

Classified
The Blade
toledoblade.com
Mechanical Specs
Special Sections
TOMA
Advertiser Proofs

forgot all about it.

"The Boston Marathon was a terrible experience. The weather was awful. It was 38 degrees, windy, raining and cold. The only thing I wanted to do was get warm and eat a bowl of beef stew. After the race, I couldn't stop shivering and the beef stew was gone.

"I still run and walk 25 miles per week. In 1998, I had a New Year's resolution and I ride my lifecycle 45 minutes every other day. I do 547 sit-ups every other day. I write it all down. It works out to 100,000 sit-ups per year.

"ALICE IS MY best pal. She's very intelligent and has a good sense of humor. She is a Life Master in bridge. So early on, I told her, 'You don't have to run marathons if I don't have to play bridge.' She's the best thing that ever happened to me."

Contact Mark Monroe at:mmonroe@theblade.com or 419-724-6354.

RECENT RELATED ARTICLES

- [Vargas' future undecided](#) | 07/08/2007
- [Vargas set for Reno super middleweight bout](#) | 07/06/2007
- [Exhibit set for McKart in Monroe](#) | 06/28/2007
- [Mayweather wins split decision over De La Hoya](#) | 05/06/2007
- [Vargas cancels Las Vegas fight](#) | 04/28/2007

[More related articles »](#)

▼ advertisement ▼



© 2007 The Blade. By using this service, you accept the terms of our privacy statement and our visitor agreement. Please read them.
The Toledo Blade Company, 541 N. Superior St., Toledo, OH 43660 , (419) 724-6000

To contact a specific department or an individual person, click here.

The Toledo Times ®