



Remembering a Legend



He was one of Australia's all-time great sporting legends. Fifty-four years after his passing, a ceremony was held to honour the great Dave Sands.

Boxing legend Dave Sands was part of one of Australia's most famous sporting families, the Fighting Sands Brothers.



Clem, Ritchie, George, Dave, Alfie and Russell Sands were all renowned in Australian boxing at the time, but Dave stood out from the others as something truly special.

Dave went on to become Australian middleweight, light-heavyweight and heavyweight champion, and Australasian light-heavyweight and British Empire middleweight champion between 1946 and 1952.

During this time he quickly became one of the most popular sportsmen in the country. So when he died in a truck accident at the age of only 26, Australia mourned the loss of a true sporting hero.

At the time of his passing, Dave's record stood at 110

fights for 97 victories and one draw.

To mark what would have been Dave's 80th year, a plaque in his honour which has stood on a busy intersection in inner-city Sydney was restored and re-unveiled in a special ceremony which celebrated Dave's amazing life.

Over 100 people attended, including friends and family, fans, former opponents and members of the boxing community.

The plaque was originally put in place in 1952 by one of Dave's close friends, Tom Laming Snr. Tom's son Tom Jnr was on hand to pay his respects.

"When Dave came to Sydney, he trained at our gym," Tom told the crowd. "My dad said people would come to the gym to watch him train. He said it was like he was a movie star."

"When he went running in the park across the street, people would stop; buses would stop; people would get out of their cars just to watch him run."

"My dad erected this monument to a very good friend, a very good fighter and a very good gentleman."

Among the former boxers in attendance was fellow Indigenous

fighting legend George Bracken.

"When I first joined the Jimmy Sharman Boxing Tent, I thought I was finally going to meet Dave," George said. "Unfortunately the accident happened and I never got to meet him."

"During my career I happened to fight Russell Sands, and I was so worried about fighting him because I had so much respect for the Sands brothers and for Dave."



Bob Mirovic, George Bracken and Lyall Munro at the ceremony.

Of all the Aboriginal boxing legends that have emerged over the years, Dave Sands remains an unforgettable icon.

"He was the first Australian boxer, black or white, to venture overseas and achieve success," said Michael J. Clarke, a close friend of Dave's and author of *The Fighting History of the Sands Brothers*. "Those that had gone before brought no gold or title home with them, but Dave came home with the middleweight championship of the British Empire and a reputation as the most feared fighter in the world."

"I suppose it's quite possible for God to create a greater sportsman, a greater middleweight and a greater champion, but so far he hasn't."





PREPARATION BEFORE READING

This report tells us that boxing legend Dave Sands was recently honoured as one of Australia's greatest sportsmen, 54 years after his death. During his short career, he held championships in Australia and the British Empire.

Dave Sands was highly respected as the first Australian boxer to achieve success overseas.

Read Remembering a Legend on page 11.

ACTIVITY 1: SCANNING FOR SPECIFIC INFORMATION

(You will need scissors and glue)

Cut out the following information about Dave Sands and his life and glue into the boxes below under the correct headings.

Fact Sheet

Aboriginal boxer Dave Sands was one of Australia's all-time boxing legends.

Dave Sands was part of one of Australia's most famous boxing families, the Fighting Sands Brothers.

Dave went on to become Australian middleweight, light-heavyweight and heavyweight champion, and Australian light-heavyweight and British Empire middleweight champion between 1946 and 1952.

Dave died in a truck accident near Dungog on August 11, 1952 aged 26.

During his boxing career, Dave's record stood at 110 fights for 97 wins (two thirds by knockout) and one draw.

A plaque was recently erected in his honour on the corner of Broadway and Glebe Point Road in inner-city Glebe, Sydney.



Extra information

He was a Dunghutti man, born at Burnt Bridge Aboriginal Settlement near Kempsey NSW on February 24, 1926.

Dave lived and trained at Tom Maguire's gym in Newcastle and had his first fight at Newcastle Stadium in August 1941.

In 1998, he was inducted into the International Sporting Hall of Fame. He is also in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sports Hall of Fame.

Dave married Bessie Burns in 1945. They had one son and three daughters.

He was voted the most popular sportsman in Australia in 1950 and 1951.

Putting it together: Dave Sands Biography

Introduction	
Family	
Achievements and Awards	
Fight record	
Untimely death	
How he's honoured today	



For more information about Dave Sands' life, search your town or school library for a copy of *Remembering Aboriginal Heroes* by John Ramsland and Christopher Mooney.

ACTIVITY 2: UNDERSTANDING WORDS IN CONTEXT

Write your own meaning for the words from the article in the boxes below.

(Read the words from the article as well as the sentences around them).

Words from the article	My words that mean the same thing
"in memorium".	
Dave and his brothers were all renowned in Australian boxing.	
Of all the Aboriginal boxing legends that have emerged over the years, Dave Sands remains an unforgettable icon.	

ACTIVITY 3: BOXING SIMILES

Similes liken something or a person to another thing or person using the words "as" or "like" to make literal or imaginative comparisons, for example: The boxer was as light on his feet as a butterfly settling on flowers.

Think of your own similes to describe boxers and write them in the spaces below.



As fit as _____

As strong as _____

As tough as _____

The boxer grinned like _____

Muscles like _____

Determined to win like _____



ACTIVITY 4: BOXING POETRY

Read the following poem *The Boxer* by Anson Pine.

The Boxer

Boxing is the sport of kings
You can have your baseball, football or hockey
With their bling-bling championship rings
Boxing is the sport of Rocky
The victors wear a big shiny belt
A battle of one on one
Until their body is a complete welt

Two souls pounding away
Blood, sweat and from one's eye a tear
Coming in second is the only fear
As tough as an ox
Moves like a ballet dancer
Smart as a fox
As destructive as cancer

All in an effort to win the crown

Anson Pine

1. List four similes from this poem.

2. Choose the simile that you like best and explain how it creates an effective image of a boxer in the ring.

Simile _____

This simile is effective because _____



ACTIVITY 5: WRITE YOUR OWN POEM ABOUT BOXING.

You could use Anson pines' poem as a guide for writing your own.

Include similes to connect ideas and images about boxing.

Think about what is happening in the ring, and use interesting words and images to describe what the boxer looks like, how he feels etc.

Draw an illustration or search the internet for an image to illustrate your poem.