

International Women's Boxing Hall of Fame Announces 2014 Inductees

(JUL 10, 2014) Ft. Lauderdale, FL- The newly formed International Women's Boxing Hall of Fame (IWBHF) inducted its first class of awardees today at a ceremony in Ft. Lauderdale, FL. **Barbara Buttrick, Bonnie Canino, Jo-Ann Hagen** (posthumous), **Christy Halbert, Regina Halmich, Christy Martin, and Lucia Rijker** were selected based on their contributions to the emergence and growth of the sport of women's boxing over the past decades.

Dr. Christy Halbert is considered an authority on women's Olympic boxing, and is a leader in national and international movements in amateur boxing. Halbert enters the Hall of Fame based on her merits as an accomplished international coach and one of the driving forces behind the successful effort to bring women into the Olympic boxing ring. A former boxer herself, the Olympic coach is the Director of Boxing Resource Center in Nashville, Tennessee, and became the first researcher to publish on the social experiences of women boxers in an scholarly article published in 1997, "Tough Enough and Woman Enough."

In her acceptance speech, Halbert noted that Claressa Shields, the U.S. middleweight boxer who claimed an Olympic gold medal in 2012, had an advantage that most in attendance had not enjoyed. "It's interesting that Claressa was born at a time when she never knew she couldn't box," Halbert said. "It's because of the work of these women, their pioneering spirit, that women are able to box today as amateurs and professionals. The boxers being honored today represent boxers everywhere who are lacing up gloves. All of us are pioneers. Every time we climb through the ropes, we are representing something a little bigger than ourselves. We are pushing that envelope together. Sometimes that can be lonely work. I know we've all felt that from time to time. So an event like this is even more special because we're celebrating the work. I'm honored to be here."

An appearance by U.S. Olympic gold-medal winner Claressa Shields capped the induction of the first-ever class of seven women at ceremonies in Ft. Lauderdale, as part of the festivities during the 2014 Women's National Golden Gloves championships.

"I had to go through a lot to make it to where I am, but to know there are women who paved the way, it makes me feel a lot better," Shields said. "I feel like I'm not by myself. They understand the struggle, how hard it is to be a female fighter, and be recognized. They never had the chance to go to the Olympics, so this is going to give me a lot of motivation going into Rio in 2016."

Halbert enters the IWBHF along with Christy Martin and Lucia Rijker, two of the most highly regarded professional boxers during the 1990/2000 era; Barbara Buttrick, a pioneer female boxer in the 1940s and 50s; Bonnie Canino, a highly ranked professional boxer during the mid-1990's and early 2000's, who has organized national women's events; and Jo-Ann Hagen, a top ranked professional boxer during the 1950s, whose award was accepted posthumously.

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