

Arthur Benjamin "Art ... Golden Boy" Aragon

Born November 13, 1927, in Belen, New Mexico

Died March 25, 2008, Northridge, California

High School: Roosevelt High School (California) 1946.

Art Aragon was born on his parents' humble cattle ranch, in 1927. He was the 6th of 13 children. When his father realized he had more kids than steers, as a youth Art was packed off to an aunt in Los Angeles.

"In high school, I worked at the Knudsen creamery. I got in a fight one day there, and the boss wouldn't stop it. He liked the way I was whackin' this guy. So, I became a fighter, and the boss, Lee Boren, became my manager. Since he was still in high school in 1944, Art boxed professional under an assumed name.

On fight nights in Los Angeles at standing room audiences at the Olympic Auditorium. He also fought at Wrigley Field and Legion Stadium. Longtime boxing publicist Bill Caplan said Aragon, who memorably entered the ring wearing a gold robe and gold trunks, will be remembered as "the top drawing card in L.A. boxing history. Aragon's outstanding left hook made him a top-ranked lightweight.

His popularity grew in 1950 after he twice scored technical knockout victories over Angeleno favorite Enrique Bolanos of Mexico at the Olympic. Caplan stated, "The crowd loved Bolanos and booed Artie when it was over, but he thumbed his nose at them," Caplan said. "It then became a tradition to boo Aragon." Art relished the spotlight, becoming a prime gate attention.

Professional

- Lightweight and welterweight boxing contender from 1944 to 1960.
- Won 90 fights (61 by knockout), lost 20 and had 6 draws, fighting until 1960, according to the International Boxing Research Organization.
- Aragon's first professional fight, a points win in May 1944, was against Frenchy Rene at the Olympic Auditorium in Los Angeles.
- Won his first eleven fights before dropping a decision to Bert White in October 1944.
- Faced ever-tougher competition as his career progressed, eventually facing many of the great names from his era, including Tommy Campbell, Jesse Flores, Redtop Davis, Jimmy Carter and Carmen Basilio. Aragon also held victories over such men as Enrique Bolanos, Johnny Gonsalves, future lightweight champion Lauro Salas, future welterweight champion Don Jordan, Danny Giovanelli and Chico.
- 1944 Suspended by California Athletic Commission because he was boxing professional under the age of 18. He continued to fight.
- 1951 Had one title bout, a bout television broadcasters said was the first fight televised live from coast to coast. He lost his bid for Jimmy Carter's lightweight championship on a unanimous 15-round decision in November 1951 at Los Angeles. He defeated lightweight champion Jimmy Carter in a non-title bout three months earlier. Art lost a rematch to Carter for the title in a bout in which he reportedly struggled to make weight. He defeated Carter once again five years later after Carter had been dethroned.
- From September 1954 to September 1958, Aragon was 21-1 with two victories over eventual world welterweight champion Don Jordan and a second triumph over Carter. He then fought former middleweight and welterweight champ Carmen Basilio at Wrigley Field and suffered a

punishing eighth-round TKO loss.

- Aragon fought leading boxers like Carmen Basilio, Don Jordan, Billy Graham, Chuck Davey and Chico Vejar. Basilio, a former welterweight and middleweight champion when they met, stopped him in the eighth round of their September 1958 bout.
- After retiring from boxing, Aragon was a bail bondsman in the Los Angeles area.
- Acted in Hollywood films and TV show.
 - 1952 *"The Ring"*, tells the story of a Mexican-American male who becomes a boxer, believing this kind of achievement will gain him respect among the English-speaking white majority.
 - 1952 *"Off Limits,"* a Bob Hope boxing comedy.
 - 1954 *"Dragnet,"* Los Angeles police detective Sergeant Joe Friday hunts down the killer of a mobster.
 - 1955 *"To Hell and Back,"* the story of the World War II hero Audie Murphy.
 - 1956 *"World in My Corner,"* the story of an up and coming ambitious boxer Tommy Shea must choose between making dishonest money with crooked promoter Harry Cram or honestly winning a title.
 - 1961 *"The Ladies Man,"* a comedy film by Jerry Lewis.
 - 1972 *"Fat City,"* directed by John Huston, in which he played a punchy boxing trainer.
 - 1979 *"Barnaby Jones,"* TV episode, *"A Desperate Pursuit"*.

Honors

- 1990 Inducted into the World Boxing Hall of Fame

Community

Family

- Married four times.
- Sons, Brad and Audie.
- Daughters Georgiana Betita, Mindy Aragon, and Nancy Henderson.
- Brothers Ambrosio, Manuel and Paul.
- Sister, Ruth Harrison.
- Six grandchildren.