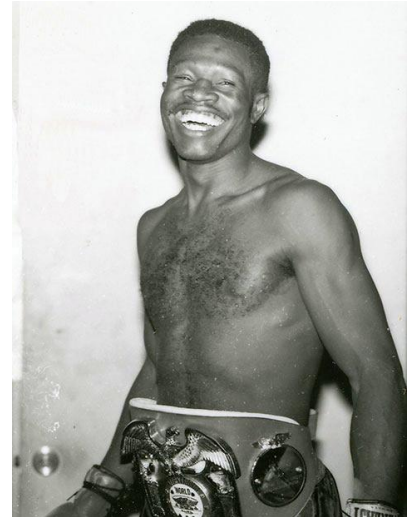


## FORMER CHAMP BUSTER DRAYTON PASSES

Story by John DiSanto - [PhillyBoxingHistory.com](http://PhillyBoxingHistory.com)

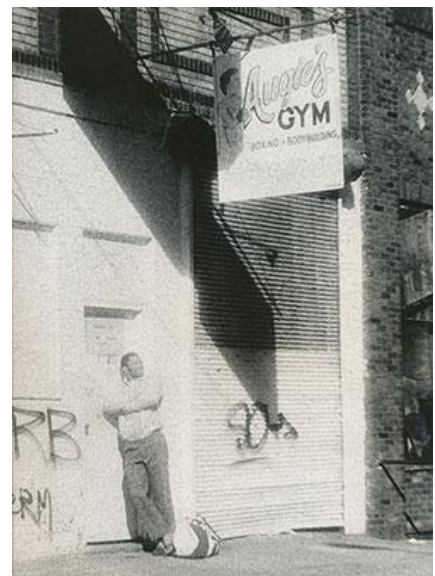
Former IBF junior middleweight champion Moses Buster Drayton died on November 20 at age 70. He had a long and distinguished boxing career against top opponents and held the world title for just over one year (1986-87). His ring nickname, The Demon, fit his fighting style well. He was a hard punching, determined warrior in the ring. However, if you met Drayton outside the ring, you would never bet that anyone could refer to him as a “Demon.” If there was a nicer, happier former boxer, then I have never met him. Buster Drayton had the ability to light up every room he entered. His massive smile and trademark tuxedo were common at the Briscoe Awards, Hall of Fame banquets, and other functions. He was a fun, happy guy to be around and he will be sorely missed by all of us in the boxing community.



When Drayton was growing up in South Philly, he showed little interest in the sport of boxing. It was not until he was serving in the US Marines that Drayton began to box. He competed as an amateur in the service and did well. As his four-year term in the Marines was ending in 1976, the Marine Team wanted him to stick around and extend his time as a Marine boxer. Instead, Sergeant Drayton opted to leave the service but returned to Philly with boxing on his mind.

He continued as an amateur and won the Philadelphia Golden Gloves Tournament before turning professional on November 9, 1978. In his debut, Drayton drew with Charles Carey at the Dome, in Virginia Beach. The draw hinted that his boxing career would not be a breeze, but Buster trudged on and won his next seven bouts.

In 1980, Drayton lost for the first time as a pro in a bout with fellow-Philadelphian Kevin Perry at Resorts in Atlantic City. The fight was part of the ESPN Boxing Tournament and Perry stopped Drayton in the third round. After bouncing back with a TKO of “Dancing” Dan Snyder, Drayton dropped a pair of decisions to Mark Holmes (L6) and Mario Maldonado (L8). Drayton won his next three bouts against Tyrone Demby, DC Walker, and a rematch with Dan Snyder, but then lost a 10-round decision over Lindell Holmes.



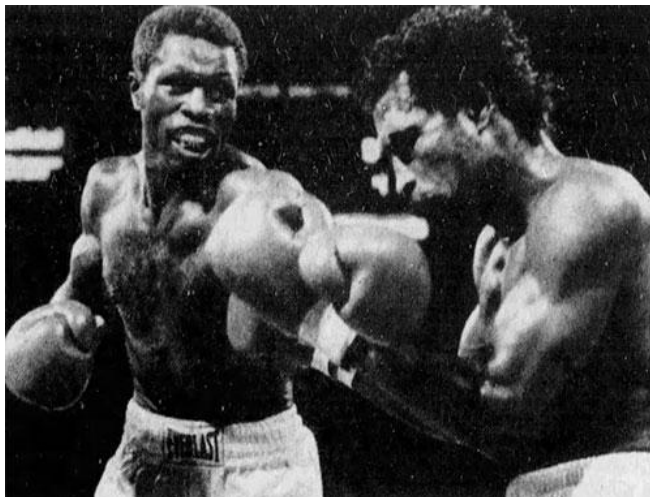
This was the pattern of Drayton’s career. He would build momentum with nice wins, but then suffer a slow-down with a defeat or two. Still, Drayton slowly rose through the ranks. He

defeated Duane Thomas and Bruce Johnson, but then lost to Sumbu Kalambay. Victories over Clint Jackson and Patricio Diaz were balanced with losses to Mario Maldonado and Fred Hutchings.

During the early part of Drayton's career, he began working as a sparring partner for middleweight champion Marvelous Marvin Hagler. Drayton called the four-year assignment the greatest learning experience as a boxer.

After his loss to Hutchings, Drayton strung together seven wins, including upsets against hometown Brits Jimmy Cable and Mark Kaylor in London. A loss to James Kinchen interrupted his winning streak, but Buster added another four wins afterward.

This string pushed Drayton up in the rankings and earned him a bout with Puerto Rican Carlos Santos for the vacant IBF 154-pound world title on June 4, 1986. At age 32, with a lumpy record of 27-9-1, 20 KOs, 1 NC, Drayton won the world championship with a 15-round majority decision at Meadowlands Arena, in New Brunswick, NJ.



As champion, Drayton traveled to France to defend his crown. First, he warmed up with a sixth-round TKO of Benito Fernandez in a non-title bout. Then on August 24, 1986, he defeated former world champion Davey Moore by tenth-round TKO.

The following year, Drayton returned to France for another non-title fight (KO2 Juan Alonso Villa) before making his second defense on March 27, 1987, against Said Skouma with another tenth-round TKO.



Three months later, Drayton lost his belt to Matthew Hilton by 15-round decision, on June 27, 1987, at the Forum in Montreal. Drayton continued fighting and after one tune-up bout, challenged Julian Jackson for the WBA world junior middleweight crown. The bout was a two-way, free-swinging punchout with Jackson scoring two knockdowns en route to a third-round TKO victory.

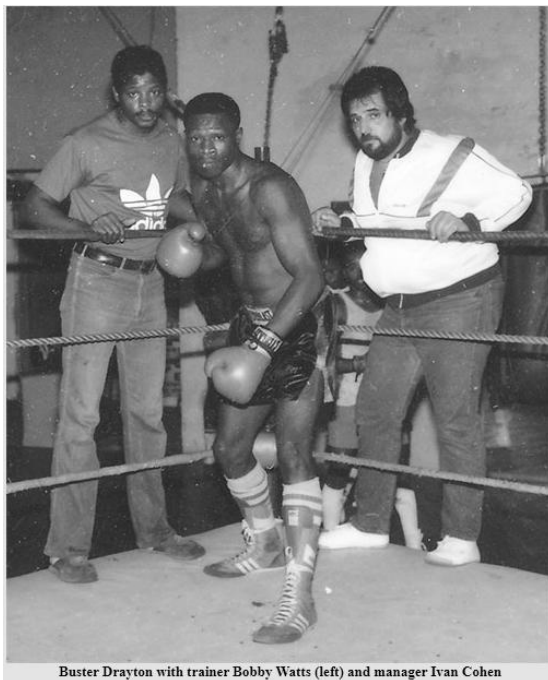
In his next bout, Drayton, who was managed by Ivan Cohen throughout his career, lost a 12-round decision to future world champion Terry Norris in a fight for the NABF regional title. The defeat

dimmed Drayton's status as a top-level fighter, but still went 7-3 in his final ten bouts. After dropping a 12-round decision over Derrick Rolon in a battle for the USBA North Atlantic regional middleweight title, Drayton retired from the ring on June 10, 1995. Buster's overall record was a solid 40-15-1, with 28 KOs and 1 No Contest.

After his boxing days, Drayton became a Philadelphia Police Officer in 1995 and launched a whole new career that lasted 20 years.

Drayton's boxing career earned him spots in both the Pennsylvania Boxing Hall of Fame (in 2003) and the New Jersey Boxing Hall of Fame (in 2009). This year, Drayton made it to the ballot for the 2023 Atlantic City Boxing Hall of Fame. Those results will be announced next year.

Losing a guy like Buster Drayton is tough. Of course, it is a reminder that our boxing heroes are getting older and going away. More importantly, Drayton's passing chips another piece from our family. Drayton frequently attended boxing banquets and live boxing events. His presence was a bright spot for all local boxing fans. He was the friendliest and happiest former fighter most of us ever met. I will miss Buster, and so will everyone else. We all loved the guy.



Buster Drayton with trainer Bobby Watts (left) and manager Ivan Cohen

