



"47" Alumni Newsletter



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February is Black History Month



**"47" Alumni Association of the Deaf
celebrates Black History Month
in honor of
Eugene "Silent" Hairston
First Black Deaf Professional Boxer**

Eugene "Silent" Hairston passed away on November 24, 2014 at the age of 85. He was a well-known among the boxing circle for his amazing career as a Middleweight boxer during 1947 to 1952.



Class 2A in 1942 with Mrs. Crandell

Eugene Hairston was born in Harlem on July 1, 1929. At the age of 22 months, he became deaf due to spinal meningitis.

On September 1, 1938, he entered P.S. 47 pursuing his education in all subjects especially in art which he had a talent for drawing. His father, a house painter, wanted him to become an artist. But Eugene had another interest.

At the age of 15, he had to quit school to support his poor family of brothers and sisters. He had several odd jobs like parking cars, pin-spotting in bowling alleys, and shining shoes. During this time, he determined to become a boxer like his idol, Boxer Joe Louis.

After leaving his odd jobs, Hairston decided to get

his training as a boxer at the Tremont Athletic Bronx Gym on Tremont Avenue in the Bronx. There he met the Miele brothers who owned the place. He wrote on a piece of paper, "I want to fight." At first, the Miele brothers refused because of his deafness. But Hairston never gave up; he kept going back every morning. Finally the Miele brothers accepted to give him a chance. They trained him how to box by showing every move using gestures and body language. Because of Hairston's persistence, his strength, and his fierce love of boxing, the Miele brothers welcomed him into the world of boxing.

Throughout his amateur and professional boxing career, Hairston's nick name was "Silent" because of his deafness. He didn't mind because it became part of his identity. Hairston was a hard hitter with both fists. From 1947 to 1952, he won two prestigious titles: New York Golden Gloves Champion, 137lb. Lightweight Open Division, and the Chicago Intercity Golden Gloves Champion, 147lb. Welterweight Open Division. He accomplished a record of 45 wins, 13 loses and five bouts ending in draws. Towards the end of his career, he ranked number **two** in the world in the middleweight classification behind Boxer Sugar Ray Robinson. (To page 3)