



Name: Floyd Patterson

Years: January 4, 1935 to May 11, 2006

Residence: New Paltz, New York

Brief Biography: Born into a poor family in Waco, North Carolina, Patterson was the youngest of eleven children and experienced an insular and troubled childhood. His family moved to Brooklyn, New York, where Floyd was a truant and petty thief. At age ten, he was sent to the Wiltwyck School for Boys, a reform school in upstate New York, which he credited with turning his life around.

At age fourteen he started to box, trained by Cus D'Amato at his Gramercy Gym. At 17, Patterson won the Gold medal in the 1952 Helsinki Olympics as a middleweight. In addition to Olympic gold, Patterson also won the National Amateur Middleweight Championship and New York Golden Gloves Middleweight championship in 1952.

Patterson turned pro and steadily rose through the ranks, his only early defeat being an eight-round decision to former light heavyweight champion Joey Maxim. Although

Patterson fought around the light heavyweight limit for much of his early career, he and manager Cus D'Amato always had plans to fight for the heavyweight championship.

Patterson got his change in 1956, when Rocky Marciano retired from boxing. Floyd ranked in the top six in a tournament set to crown a new heavyweight champion. Patterson defeated Tommy Jackson in an elimination fight then proceeded to go on to the championship fight where he defeated Archie Moore by knockout in five rounds. His tournament victory made him the first Olympic gold medalist to become heavyweight champion.

He won the following four fights in his title defense before losing to Ingemar Johansson in 1959. About a year later Patterson defeated Ingemar to become a two time heavyweight champion. In 1962, Floyd fought Sonny Liston and lost by KO in the first round. A year later, Patterson got his rematch against Liston just to get knocked out in the first round again. Even though he never won back the heavyweight championship again, Patterson had many notable fights, including two losses against Muhammad Ali and a fight to the draw, later described as one of the best fights of the '60s, with Jerry Quarry.

Patterson finished his career with a professional record of 55 wins (40 knockouts, 15 decisions), 8 losses, and 1 draw. He retired from boxing in 1972 and was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame. Patterson retired in New Paltz, New York, where he was a Latin Rite Catholic convert and a member of the Knights of Columbus. His adopted son, Tracy Harris Patterson, was a world champion boxer in the 1990s and was trained by Floyd during part of his career. The New Paltz High School football field was named "Floyd Patterson Field" in 1985. Floyd passed away in 2006 at the age of 71 from prostate cancer. He is buried at New Paltz Rural Cemetery in New Paltz, Ulster County, New York.

Major Accomplishments: New York City Golden Gloves Champion (1950), National Amateur Athletic Union middleweight champion (1952), Middleweight boxing gold medalist (1952 Olympics), World heavyweight boxing champion (1956-59, 1960-62), Inducted into the Olympic Hall of Fame (1987), and Inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame, 1991.

Resources: <http://sports.jrank.org/pages/3648/Patterson-Floyd.html>,

<http://www.hickoksports.com/biograph/pattersonfloyd.shtml>