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How Wife of Late Olympic Champ took MMA Company to next level



(Mon, January 28, 2017)– When Glen Cove native and Olympic boxing hero Howard Davis Jr. died of lung cancer Dec. 30, 2015, his wife, Karla Guadamuz-Davis, was faced to ponder the future of the MMA promotional company they founded together in South Florida.



“I honestly didn’t know what was going to happen,” she told The Post recently. “Was I going to be able to keep this up? Was a big investor going to come in? It was a weird feeling. People were coming up to me trying to buy the company. I was like, ‘Let me grieve. Let me take a deep breath.’ Then I thought about: What do I do? It’s a lot of hard work dealing with managers, fighters and different personalities. It’s tough.”

With the help of her staff, Guadamuz-Davis decided to “move forward,” and by the end of 2016, Fight Time Promotions had showcased six events, a total that was more than any other boxing or MMA promotional company in Florida. Her work so impressed the executives at Alliance MMA that the publicly traded company (NASDAQ: AMMA) acquired Fight Time Promotions earlier this month, making it the eighth regional company to join its growing network.

“This one in particular has made everybody quite happy,” Paul Danner, the CEO of Alliance MMA, told The Post. “Karla is a pretty special person. We hope the rest of the acquisitions can be as good as this one.”

Guadamuz-Davis still will run the day-to-day operations, but welcomes the support she will receive from Alliance MMA, which became MMA’s only publicly-traded company last October.

“It’s like opening a mom-and-pop pharmacy and now having CVS helping me,” she said. “It’s a fantastic opportunity to be able to grow with a legitimate company that is doing the right thing for the sport.”

It also ensures she will keep her husband’s legacy alive. Howard Davis was a member of the legendary 1976 U.S. Olympic Boxing team. Sugar Ray Leonard; the Spinks brothers, Michael and Leon; Leo Randolph and Davis all won gold in Montreal – with Davis winning the Val Barker Trophy as the most outstanding boxer.

The Long Island native eventually settled in South Florida, where he and his wife founded Fight Time Promotions in 2010 and began staging events in Miami and Ft. Lauderdale.



1976 Olympic gold medalist Howard Davis Jr. (left) and commentator Steve Farhood at the Boxing Hall of Fame in 2015. Howard Davis Jr. Foundation

All was going well until Davis was diagnosed with Stage 4 lung cancer in February 2015. He was 59 when he died.

“It was a tough go initially,” Guadamuz-Davis said. “There were a couple of shows where we broke even and a couple of shows where we did pretty well. It was tough.”

She will have help now. Alliance MMA will assist with administrative tasks, insurance allocation, video production, branding and accounting.

“Our overarching objective is to take as many functions off their back as possible so they can focus on putting on the best possible promotions,” Danner said. “We also want them to focus on matchmaking, the relationships they have with venues, the state athletic commission, local gym owners, fighters and sponsors.”

Alliance MMA has no affiliation with UFC or Bellator, but projects itself as a feeder system to the major MMA promotional companies.

“We view our role similar to the NCAA relationship with the NFL,” Danner said. “The more people we move up, the more valuable we become and the better the sport is.”

Cage Fury, based in New Jersey, is among the eight regional companies already under the Alliance MMA umbrella. The goal is to acquire one promotional company in each of the top 20 media markets.

“The fan base is very passionate at the regional level,” Danner said. “The fighters sell most of the tickets and tend to fight in the same venues until their record warrants moving up or retiring.”

Guadamuz-Davis said every Fight Time show creates “a string of emotions,” especially when video highlights of Howard Davis’ career are featured.

“I still consider him my husband,” she said. “I don’t say widow.”

The next show is Feb. 17 in Miami.

<http://www.fightbookmma.com/how-wife-of-late-olympic-champ-took-mma-company-to-next-level/>