

## Chiropractic Fight Doctor

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Back in the old days (before television) there was radio. It would sit in the living room like a friend that the family would gather around as it would tell stories and bring the world into your home.

Some of my earliest memories were of the "Lone Ranger" and "The Shadow." But more than any other memory was that of the first Joe Louis/Billy Conn fight. The announcer, with his gravely voiced intensity, created a picture in my young mind of two great warriors battling to the death. It was one of the epic fights in boxing history and I was transported to the ringside on the verbal wings of imagination. It carved into me the love of boxing that remains to this day.

Not long ago I was watching a fight between Rocky Lockridge and Tony "The Tiger" Lopez. While I had heard of Lopez, I'd never watched him fight. It was a war, with Lopez emerging bloody, but victorious. With a fight like this I usually wait around for the post-fight interviews. The camera turned to the champion, Lopez, who was still in his corner. He started to come out, then suddenly returned and put on a baseball cap. There on the cap in large gold letters, for all the world to see, read "Geiger CHIROPRACTIC." For a moment I thought I was seeing things. The camera was being jostled around by the crowd in the ring. Just let me see that again! Sure enough, the camera settled down and there it was, "CHIROPRACTIC." What a beautiful word to see. A chiropractic "crown" on the head of the I.B.F. Junior Lightweight Champion of the world.

But who was the "Geiger" of "Geiger CHIROPRACTIC?" All I knew was that the champion and his doctor were from the Sacramento, California area. Since I now practice there and wanted to meet him, I was indeed in luck.

Soon I was in the Roseville office of Dr. Ron Geiger and his associate, Dr. Lynn Johnson, an office that's filled with the pictures of their many famous patients.

"I've always loved sports," said Geiger, "and soon after my graduation from Palmer-West in 1968 I was lucky enough to associate in practice with Dr. Nick Athens. Before you know it, I was busy adjusting such great athletes as Joe Montana, Jerry Rice, and Roger Craig of the 49ers."

He stood up. "Let me show you around the office." As we toured his modern facility with its gallery of athletes on almost every wall, I asked, "Isn't that the golfing great "Chi Chi" Rodriguez?"

"Yes," he replied, "he's a patient, as is the world champion kickboxer Dennis Alexio.

We returned to his consultation room and he pointed out some other photos.

"Isn't that giant with the Sacramento Kings?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied, "and I also treat some bodybuilding champs and national figure skating competitors."

Then he pulled a photo from his desk. "Recognize this gentleman next to me in the picture?" he asked. It was the well-known NBC fight commentator Ferdie Pacheco, M.D., the "Fight Doctor."

"That's a great shot," I said, "but what did he think of you being a DC?"

Geiger smiled, "In a picture that's presently being framed he inscribed it, 'From one fight doctor to another.' I guess that says it all."

With that he pulled out one more picture. My mouth must have hit the floor.

"Isn't that ..."

"Yes," he nodded. "The undisputed heavyweight boxing champion of the world -- Evander Holyfield."

"And you ..."

"Yes," he continued, "I just came back from Las Vegas where I was adjusting him right up until fight time."

The famous fight trainer, Lou Duva, was astounded when Lopez successfully defended his title against his fighter, Rocky Lockridge. "I didn't think anyone could beat my man," said Duva. "Then I figured Lopez's secret must be in his physical condition, so I wanted the doctor that had worked with him. I wanted him to help my fighter get ready for his fight with Buster Douglas."

The rest is now in the history of the fight game. As I looked at the picture of Geiger and Holyfield together I realized that I was looking at the direct successor to Joe Louis. A crown that had been worn by such immortals as John L. Sullivan, Jack Dempsey, Jack Johnson, and Rocky Marciano.

As I drove away from Geiger's office, I realized that I was a bit jealous. Then I was reminded of the words that John L. Sullivan was supposed to have said, after he'd lost his title to "Gentleman Jim" Corbett. "If I had to lose -- I'm glad it was to an American." This made me smile. Ron Geiger certainly was a gentleman and if I couldn't treat the likes of Holyfield, I was certainly glad such an exemplary member of my profession was.

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