

= Sugar Ray Robinson =

Sugar Ray Robinson ( born Walker Smith Jr . ; May 3 , 1921 ? April 12 , 1989 ) was an American professional boxer . Frequently cited as the greatest boxer of all time , Robinson 's performances in the welterweight and middleweight divisions prompted sportswriters to create " pound for pound " rankings , where they compared fighters regardless of weight . He was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 1990 .

Robinson was 85 ? 0 as an amateur with 69 of those victories coming by way of knockout , 40 in the first round . He turned professional in 1940 at the age of 19 and by 1951 had a professional record of 128 ? 1 ? 2 with 84 knockouts . From 1943 to 1951 Robinson went on a 91 fight unbeaten streak , the third longest in professional boxing history . Robinson held the world welterweight title from 1946 to 1951 , and won the world middleweight title in the latter year . He retired in 1952 , only to come back two and a half years later and regain the middleweight title in 1955 . He then became the first boxer in history to win a divisional world championship five times , a feat he accomplished by defeating Carmen Basilio in 1958 to regain the middleweight championship . Robinson was named " fighter of the year " twice : first for his performances in 1942 , then nine years and over 90 fights later , for his efforts in 1951 .

Renowned for his flamboyant lifestyle outside the ring , Robinson is credited with being the originator of the modern sports " entourage " . After his boxing career ended , Robinson attempted a career as an entertainer , but it was not successful . He struggled financially until his death in 1989 . In 2006 , he was featured on a commemorative stamp by the United States Postal Service .

= = Early life = =

Robinson was born Walker Smith Jr. in Ailey , Georgia , to Walker Smith Sr. and Leila Hurst . Robinson was the youngest of three children ; his older sister Marie was born in 1917 and his older sister Evelyn was born in 1919 . His father was a cotton , peanut , and corn farmer in Georgia , who moved the family to Detroit where he initially found work in construction . According to Robinson , Smith Sr. later worked two jobs to support his family ? cement mixer and sewer worker . " He had to get up at six in the morning and he 'd get home close to midnight . Six days a week . The only day I really saw him was Sunday ... I always wanted to be with him more . "

His parents separated and he moved with his mother to the New York City neighborhood of Harlem at the age of twelve . Robinson originally aspired to be a doctor , but after dropping out of De Witt Clinton High school in ninth grade he switched his goal to boxing . When he was 15 , he attempted to enter his first boxing tournament but was told he needed to first obtain an AAU membership card . However , he could not procure one until he was eighteen years old . He received his name when he circumvented the AAU 's age restriction by borrowing a birth certificate from his friend Ray Robinson . Subsequently told that he was " sweet as sugar " by a lady in the audience at a fight in Watertown , New York , Smith Jr. became known as " Sugar " Ray Robinson .

Robinson idolized Henry Armstrong and Joe Louis as a youth , and actually lived on the same block as Louis in Detroit when Robinson was 11 and Louis was 17 . Outside the ring , Robinson got into trouble frequently as a youth , and was involved with a violent street gang . He married at 16 . The couple had one son , Ronnie , and divorced when Robinson was 19 . He finished his amateur career with an 85 ? 0 record with 69 knockouts ? 40 coming in the first round . He won the Golden Gloves featherweight championship in 1939 , and the organization 's lightweight championship in 1940 .

= = Boxing career = =

= = = Early career = = =

Robinson made his professional debut on October 4 , 1940 , winning via second @-@ round knockout over Joe Echevarria . Robinson fought five more times in 1940 , winning each time , with

four wins coming by way of knockout . In 1941 , he defeated world champion Sammy Angott , future champion Marty Servo and former champion Fritz Zivic . The Robinson @-@ Angott fight was held above the lightweight limit , since Angott did not want to risk losing his lightweight title . Robinson defeated Zivic in front of 20 @,@ 551 at Madison Square Garden ? one of the largest crowds in the arena to that date . Robinson won the first five rounds according to The New York Times Joseph C. Nichols , before Zivic came back to land several punches to Robinson 's head in the sixth and seventh rounds . Robinson controlled the next two rounds , and had Zivic wobbly in the ninth . After a close tenth round , Robinson was announced as the winner on all three scorecards .

In 1942 , Robinson knocked out Zivic in the tenth round in a January rematch . The knockout loss was only the second of Zivic 's career in more than 150 fights . Robinson knocked him down in the ninth and tenth rounds before the referee stopped the fight . Zivic and his corner protested the stoppage ; James P. Dawson of The New York Times stated " [ t ] hey were criticizing a humane act . The battle had been a slaughter , for want of a more delicate word . " Robinson then won four consecutive bouts by knockout , before defeating Servo in a controversial split decision in their May rematch . After winning three more fights , Robinson faced Jake LaMotta , who would become one of his more prominent rivals , for the first time in October . He defeated LaMotta via unanimous decision , although he failed to get Jake down . Robinson weighed 145 lb ( 66 kg ) compared to 157 @.@ 5 for LaMotta , but he was able to control the fight from the outside for the entire bout , and actually landed the harder punches during the fight . Robinson then won four more fights , including two against Izzy Jannazzo , from October 19 to December 14 . For his performances , Robinson was named " Fighter of the Year " . He finished 1942 with a total of 14 wins and no losses .

Robinson built a record of 40 ? 0 before losing for the first time to LaMotta in a 10 @-@ round re @-@ match . LaMotta , who had a 16 lb ( 7 @.@ 3 kg ) weight advantage over Robinson , knocked Robinson out of the ring in the eighth round , and won the fight by decision . The fight took place in Robinson 's former home town of Detroit , and attracted a record crowd . After being controlled by Robinson in the early portions of the fight , LaMotta came back to take control in the later rounds . After winning the third LaMotta fight less than three weeks later , Robinson then defeated his childhood idol : former champion Henry Armstrong . Robinson fought Armstrong only because Armstrong was in need of money . By now Armstrong was an old fighter , and Robinson later stated that he carried Armstrong .

On February 27 , 1943 , Robinson was inducted into the United States Army , where he was again referred to as Walker Smith . Robinson had a 15 @-@ month military career . Robinson served with Joe Louis , and the pair went on tours where they performed exhibition bouts in front of US troops . Robinson got into trouble several times while in the military . He argued with superiors who he felt were discriminatory against him , and refused to fight exhibitions when he was told African American soldiers were not allowed to watch them . In late March , 1944 , Robinson was stationed at Fort Hamilton in Brooklyn , waiting to ship out to Europe , where he was scheduled to perform more exhibition matches . But on March 29 , Robinson disappeared from his barracks . When he woke up on April 5 in Fort Jay Hospital on Governor 's Island , he had missed his sailing for Europe and was under suspicion of deserting . He himself reported falling down the stairs in his barracks on the 29th , but said that he had complete amnesia , and he could not remember any events from that moment until the 5th . According to his file , a stranger had found him in the street on 1 April and helped him to a hospital . In his examination report , a doctor at Fort Jay concluded that Robinson 's version of events was sincere . He was examined by military authorities , who claimed he suffered from a mental deficiency . Robinson was granted an honorable discharge on June 3 , 1944 . He later wrote that unfair press coverage of the incident had " branded " him as a " deserter " . Robinson maintained his close friendship with Louis from their time in military service , and the two went into business together after the war . They planned to start a liquor distribution business in New York City , but were denied a license due to their race .

Besides the loss in the LaMotta rematch , the only other mark on Robinson 's record during this period was a 10 @-@ round draw against José Basora in 1945 .

= = = Welterweight champion = = =

By 1946 , Robinson had fought 75 fights to a 73 ? 1 ? 1 record , and beaten every top contender in the welterweight division . However , he refused to cooperate with the Mafia , which controlled much of boxing at the time , and was denied a chance to fight for the welterweight championship . Robinson was finally given a chance to win a title against Tommy Bell on December 20 , 1946 . Robinson had already beaten Bell once via decision in 1945 . The two fought for the title vacated by Servo , who had himself lost twice to Robinson in non @-@ title bouts . In the fight , Robinson , who only a month before had been involved in a 10 @-@ round brawl with Artie Levine , was knocked down by Bell . The fight was called a " war , " but Robinson was able to pull out a close 15 round decision , winning the vacant welterweight title .

In June 1947 , after four non @-@ title bouts , Robinson was scheduled to defend his title for the first time in a bout against Jimmy Doyle . Robinson initially backed out of the fight because he had a dream that he was going to kill Doyle . A priest and a minister convinced him to fight . Sadly , his dream proved true . On June 25 , 1947 Robinson dominated Doyle and scored a decisive knockout in the eighth round that knocked Doyle unconscious and resulted in Doyle 's death later that night . Robinson said that the impact of Doyle 's death was " very trying " .

After his death , criminal charges were threatened against Robinson in Cleveland , up to and including manslaughter , though none actually materialized . After learning of Doyle 's intentions of using the bout 's money to buy his mother a house , Robinson gave Doyle 's mother the money from his next four bouts so she could purchase herself a home , fulfilling her son 's intention .

In 1948 , Robinson fought five times , but only one bout was a title defense . Among the fighters he defeated in those non @-@ title bouts was future world champion Kid Gavilán in a close , controversial 10 @-@ round fight . Gavilán hurt Robinson several times in the fight , but Robinson controlled the final rounds with a series of jabs and left hooks . In 1949 , he boxed 16 times , but again only defended his title once . In that title fight , a rematch with Gavilán , Robinson again won via decision . The first half of the bout was very close , but Robinson took control in the second half . Gavilán would have to wait two more years to begin his own historic reign as welterweight champion . The only boxer to match Robinson that year was Henry Brimm , who fought him to a 10 @-@ round draw in Buffalo .

Robinson fought 19 times in 1950 . He successfully defended his welterweight title for the last time against Charley Fusari . Robinson won a lopsided 15 round decision , knocking Fusari down once . Robinson donated all but \$ 1 of his purse for the Fusari fight to cancer research . In 1950 , Robinson fought George Costner , who had also taken to calling himself " Sugar " and stated in the weeks leading up to the fight that he was the rightful deserver of the name . " We better touch gloves , because this is the only round , " Robinson said as the fighters were introduced at the center of the ring . " Your name ain 't Sugar , mine is . " Robinson then knocked Costner out in 2 minutes and 49 seconds .

= = = Middleweight champion = = =

Robinson stated in his autobiography that one of the main considerations for his move up to middleweight was the increasing difficulty he was having in making the 147 lb ( 67 kg ) welterweight weight limit . However , the move up would also prove beneficial financially , as the division then contained some of the biggest names in boxing . Vying for the Pennsylvania state middleweight title in 1950 , Robinson defeated Robert Villemain . Later that year , in defense of that crown , he defeated Jose Basora , with whom he had previously drawn . Robinson 's 50 @-@ second first round knockout of Basora set a record that would stand for 38 years . In October 1950 , Robinson knocked out Bobo Olson a future middleweight title holder .

On February 14 , 1951 , Robinson and LaMotta met for the sixth time . The fight would become known as The St. Valentine 's Day Massacre . Robinson won the undisputed world middleweight title with a 13th round technical knockout . Robinson outboxed LaMotta for the first 10 rounds , then unleashed a series of savage combinations on LaMotta for three rounds , finally stopping the champion for the first time in their legendary six @-@ bout series ? and dealing LaMotta his first

legitimate knockout loss in 95 professional bouts . LaMotta had lost by knockout to Billy Fox earlier in his career . However , that fight was later ruled to have been fixed and LaMotta was sanctioned for letting Fox win . That bout , and some of the other bouts in the six @-@ fight Robinson @-@ LaMotta rivalry , was depicted in the Martin Scorsese film Raging Bull . " I fought Sugar Ray so often , I almost got diabetes , " LaMotta later said . Robinson won five of his six bouts with LaMotta .

After winning his second world title , he embarked on a European tour which took him all over the Continent . Robinson traveled with his flamingo @-@ pink Cadillac , which caused quite a stir in Paris , and an entourage of 13 people , some included " just for laughs " . He was a hero in France due to his recent defeat of LaMotta ? the French hated LaMotta for defeating Marcel Cerdan in 1949 and taking his championship belt ( Cerdan died in a plane crash en route to a rematch with LaMotta ) . Robinson met President of France Vincent Auriol at a ceremony attended by France 's social upper crust . During his fight in Berlin against Gerhard Hecht , Robinson was disqualified when he knocked his opponent with a punch to the kidney : a punch legal in the US , but not Europe . The fight was later declared a no @-@ contest . In London , Robinson lost the world middleweight title to British boxer Randolph Turpin in a sensational bout . Three months later in a rematch in front of 60 @,@ 000 fans at the Polo Grounds , he knocked Turpin out in ten rounds to recover the title . In that bout Robinson was leading on the cards but was cut by Turpin . With the fight in jeopardy , Robinson let loose on Turpin , knocking him down , then getting him to the ropes and unleashing a series of punches that caused the referee to stop the bout . Following Robinson 's victory , residents of Harlem danced in the streets . In 1951 , Robinson was named Ring Magazine 's " Fighter of the Year " for the second time .

In 1952 , he fought a rematch with Olson , winning by a decision . He next defeated former champion Rocky Graziano by a third @-@ round knockout , then challenged world light heavyweight champion Joey Maxim . In the Yankee Stadium bout with Maxim , Robinson built a lead on all three judges ' scorecards , but the 103 ° F ( 39 ° C ) temperature in the ring took its toll . The referee , Ruby Goldstein , was the first victim of the heat , and had to be replaced by referee Ray Miller . The fast @-@ moving Robinson was the heat 's next victim ? at the end of round 13 , he collapsed and failed to answer the bell for the next round , suffering the only knockout of his career .

On June 25 , 1952 after the Maxim bout , Robinson gave up his title and retired with a record of 131 ? 3 ? 1 ? 1 . He began a career in show business , singing and tap dancing . After about three years , the decline of his businesses and the lack of success in his performing career made him decide to return to boxing . He resumed training in 1954 .

= = = Comeback = = =

In 1955 , Robinson returned to the ring . Although he had been inactive for two and a half years , his work as a dancer kept him in peak physical condition : in his autobiography , Robinson states that in the weeks leading up to his debut for a dancing engagement in France , he ran five miles every morning , and then danced for five hours each night . Robinson even stated that the training he did in his attempts to establish a career as a dancer were harder than any he undertook during his boxing career . He won five fights in 1955 , before losing a decision to Ralph ' Tiger ' Jones . He bounced back , however , and defeated Rocky Castellani by a split decision , then challenged Bobo Olson for the world middleweight title . He won the middleweight championship for the third time via a second round knockout ? his third victory over Olson . After his comeback performance in 1955 , Robinson expected to be named fighter of the year . However , the title went to welterweight Carmen Basilio . Basilio 's handlers had lobbied heavily for it on the basis that he had never won the award , and Robinson later described this as the biggest disappointment of his professional career . " I haven 't forgotten it to this day , and I never will " , Robinson wrote in his autobiography . They fought for the last time in 1956 , and Robinson closed the four fight series with a fourth round knockout .

In 1957 , Robinson lost his title to Gene Fullmer . Fullmer used his aggressive , forward moving style to control Robinson , and knocked him down in the fight . Robinson , however , noticed that Fullmer was vulnerable to the left hook . Fullmer headed into their May rematch as a 3 ? 1 favorite .

In the first two rounds Robinson followed Fullmer around the ring , however in the third round he changed tactics and made Fullmer come to him . At the start of the fourth round Robinson came out on the attack and stunned Fullmer , and when Fullmer returned with his own punches , Robinson traded with him , as opposed to clinching as he had done in their earlier fight . The fight was fairly even after four rounds . But in the fifth , Robinson was able to win the title back for a fourth time by knocking out Fullmer with a lightning fast , powerful left hook . Boxing critics have referred to the left @-@ hook which knocked out Fullmer as " the perfect punch " . It marked the first time in 44 career fights that Fullmer had been knocked out , and when someone asked Robinson after the fight how far the left hook had travelled , Robinson replied : " I can 't say . But he got the message . "

Later that year , he lost his title to Basilio in a rugged 15 round fight in front of 38 @,@ 000 at Yankee Stadium , but regained it for a record fifth time when he beat Basilio in the rematch . Robinson struggled to make weight , and had to go without food for nearly 20 hours leading up to the bout . He badly damaged Basilio 's eye early the fight , and by the seventh round it was swollen shut . The two judges gave the fight to Robinson by wide margins : 72 ? 64 and 71 ? 64 . The referee scored the fight for Basilio 69 ? 64 , and was booed loudly by the crowd of 19 @,@ 000 when his decision was announced . The first fight won the " Fight of the Year " award from The Ring magazine for 1957 and the second fight won the " Fight of the Year " award for 1958 .

= = = Decline = = =

Robinson knocked out Bob Young in the second round in Boston in his only fight in 1959 . A year later , he defended his title against Paul Pender . Robinson entered the fight as a 5 ? 1 favorite , but lost a split decision in front of 10 @,@ 608 at Boston Garden . The day before the fight Pender commented that he planned to start slowly , before coming on late . He did just that and outlasted the aging Robinson , who , despite opening a cut over Pender 's eye in the eighth round , was largely ineffective in the later rounds . An attempt to regain the crown for an unheard of sixth time proved beyond Robinson . Despite Robinson 's efforts , Pender won by decision in that rematch . On December 3 of that year , Robinson and Fullmer fought a 15 @-@ round draw for the WBA middleweight title , which Fullmer retained . In 1961 , Robinson and Fullmer fought for a fourth time , with Fullmer retaining the WBA middleweight title by a unanimous decision . The fight would be Robinson 's last title bout .

Robinson spent the rest of the 1960s fighting 10 @-@ round contests . In October 1961 , Robinson defeated future world champion Denny Moyer via unanimous decision . A 12 ? 5 favorite , the 41 @-@ year @-@ old Robinson defeated the 22 @-@ year @-@ old Moyer by staying on the outside , rather than engaging him . In their rematch four months later , Moyer defeated Robinson on points , as he pressed the action and made Robinson back up throughout the fight . Moyer won 7 ? 3 on all three judges scorecards . Robinson lost twice more in 1962 , before winning six consecutive fights against mostly lesser opposition . In February 1963 , Robinson lost via unanimous decision to former world champion and fellow Hall of Famer Joey Giardello . Giardello knocked Robinson down in the fourth round , and the 43 @-@ year @-@ old took until the count of nine to rise to his feet . Robinson was also nearly knocked down in the sixth round , but was saved by the bell . He rallied in the seventh and eight rounds , before struggling in the final two . Robinson then embarked on an 18 @-@ month boxing tour of Europe .

Robinson 's second no @-@ contest bout came in September , 1965 in Norfolk , Virginia in a match with an opponent who turned out to be an impostor . Boxer Neil Morrison , at the time a fugitive and accused robber , signed up for the fight as Bill Henderson , a capable club fighter . The fight was a fiasco , with Morrison being knocked down twice in the first round and once in the second before the disgusted referee , who said " Henderson put up no fight " , walked out of the ring . Robinson was initially given a TKO in 1 : 20 of the second round after the " obviously frightened " Morrison laid himself down on the canvas . Robinson fought for the final time in 1965 . He lost via unanimous decision to Joey Archer . Famed sports author Pete Hamill mentioned that one of the saddest experiences of his life was watching Robinson lose to Archer . He was even knocked down and Hamill pointed out that Archer had no knockout punch at all ; Archer admitted afterward that it was

only the second time he had knocked an opponent down in his career . The crowd of 9 @, @ 023 at the Civic Arena in Pittsburgh gave Robinson several standing ovations , even while he was being thoroughly outperformed by Archer .

On November 11 , 1965 , Robinson announced his retirement from boxing , saying : " I hate to go too long campaigning for another chance . " Robinson retired from boxing with a record of 173 ? 19 ? 6 ( 2 no contests ) with 108 knockouts in 200 professional bouts , ranking him among the all @-@ time leaders in knockouts .

= = After retiring as a boxer = =

In his autobiography , Robinson states that by 1965 he was broke , having spent all of the \$ 4 million in earnings he made inside and out of the ring in his career . A month after his last fight , Robinson was honored with a Sugar Ray Robinson Night on December 10 , 1965 in New York 's Madison Square Garden . During the ceremony , he was honored with a massive trophy . However , there was not a piece of furniture in his small Manhattan apartment with legs strong enough to support it . Robinson was elected to the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 1967 , two years after he retired . In the late 1960s he acted in some television shows , like Mission : Impossible . An episode of Land of the Giants called " Giants and All That Jazz " had Sugar as a washed up boxer opening a nightclub . He also appeared in a few films including the Frank Sinatra cop movie The Detective ( 1968 ) , the cult classic Candy ( 1968 ) , and the thriller The Todd Killings ( 1971 ) as a police officer . In 1969 , he founded the Sugar Ray Robinson Youth Foundation for the inner @-@ city Los Angeles area . The foundation does not sponsor a boxing program . He was diagnosed with diabetes mellitus that was treated with insulin . In Robinson 's last years , he was diagnosed with Alzheimer 's disease . He died in Los Angeles at the age of 67 and was interred in the Inglewood Park Cemetery , Inglewood , California .

= = Personal life = =

Robinson married Marjorie Joseph in 1938 ; the marriage was annulled the same year . Their son , Ronnie Smith , was born in 1939 . Robinson met his second wife Edna Mae Holly , a noted dancer who performed at the Cotton Club and toured Europe with Duke Ellington and Cab Calloway , in 1940 . According to Robinson , he met her at a local pool he frequented after his boxing workouts . In an attempt to get her attention he pushed her into the pool one day , and claimed it was an accident . After this attempt was met with disdain , he appeared at the nightclub she danced at and introduced himself . Soon the couple were dating and they married in 1943 . They had one son , Ray Robinson Jr . ( born 1949 ) and divorced in 1960 . She appeared on the first cover of Jet magazine in 1951 . In April 1959 , Robinson 's eldest sister Marie died of cancer at the age of 41 .

In 1965 , Robinson married Millie Wiggins Bruce and the couple settled in Los Angeles . When Robinson was sick with his various ailments , his son accused Robinson 's wife of keeping him under the influence of medication to manipulate him . According to Ray Robinson Jr . , when Sugar Ray 's mother died , Sugar Ray could not attend his mother 's funeral because Millie was drugging and controlling him . However , Robinson had been hospitalized the day before his mother 's death due to agitation which caused his blood pressure to rise . Robinson Jr. and Edna Mae also claimed that they were kept away from Robinson by Millie during the last years of his life .

He was a Freemason , a membership shared with a number of other athletes , including fellow boxer Jack Dempsey .

Robinson was a Christian .

= = Boxing style = =

Rhythm is everything in boxing . Every move you make starts with your heart , and that 's in rhythm or you 're in trouble .

Robinson was the modern definition of a boxer puncher . He was able to fight almost any style : he

could come out one round brawling , the next counter punching , and the next fighting on the outside . Robinson also possessed great speed and knockout power . He fought a very conventional way with a firm jab , but threw hooks and uppercuts in flurries in an unconventional way . He possessed tremendous versatility ? according to boxing analyst Bert Sugar , " Robinson could deliver a knockout blow going backward . " Robinson was efficient with both hands , and he displayed a variety of effective punches ? according to a TIME magazine article in 1951 , " Robinson 's repertoire , thrown with equal speed and power by either hand , includes every standard punch from a bolo to a hook ? and a few he makes up on the spur of the moment . " Robinson commented that once a fighter has trained to a certain level , their techniques and responses become almost reflexive . " You don 't think . It 's all instinct . If you stop to think , you 're gone . "

= = Legacy = =

Robinson has been ranked as the greatest boxer of all time by sportswriters , fellow boxers , and trainers . The phrase " pound for pound " , was created by sportswriters for him during his career as a way to compare boxers irrespective of weight . Hall of Fame fighters such as Muhammad Ali , Joe Louis , Roberto Durán and Sugar Ray Leonard have ranked Robinson as the greatest pound for pound boxer in history . In 1997 , The Ring ranked him as the best pound for pound fighter in history , and in 1999 , he was named " welterweight of the century , " " middleweight of the century , " and overall " fighter of the century " by the Associated Press . In 2007 , ESPN.com featured the piece " 50 Greatest Boxers of All Time " , in which it named Robinson the top boxer in history . In 2003 , The Ring magazine ranked him number 11 in the list of all @-@ time greatest punchers . Robinson was also ranked as the # 1 welterweight and the # 1 pound for pound boxer of all @-@ time by the International Boxing Research Organization .

Robinson was one of the first African Americans to establish himself as a star outside sports . He was an integral part of the New York social scene in the 1940s and 1950s . His glamorous restaurant , Sugar Ray 's , hosted stars such as Frank Sinatra , Jackie Gleason , Nat " King " Cole , Joe Louis , and Lena Horne among others . Robinson was known as a flamboyant personality outside the ring . He combined striking good looks , with charisma , and a flair for the dramatic : He drove a flamingo @-@ pink Cadillac , and was an accomplished singer and dancer , who once pursued a career in the entertainment industry . According to ESPN.com 's Ron Flatter : " He was the pioneer of boxing 's bigger @-@ than @-@ life entourages , including a secretary , barber , masseur , voice coach , a coterie of trainers , beautiful women , a dwarf mascot and lifelong manager George Gainford . " When Robinson first traveled to Paris , a steward referred to his companions as his " entourage " . Although Robinson said he did not like the word 's literal definition of " attendants " , since he felt they were his friends , he liked the word itself and began to use it in regular conversation when referring to them . In 1962 , in an effort to persuade Robinson to return to Paris ? where he was still a national hero ? the French promised to bring over his masseur , his hairdresser , a man who would whistle while he trained , and his trademark Cadillac . This larger than life persona made him the idol of millions of African American youths in the 1950s . Robinson inspired several other fighters who took the nickname " Sugar " in homage to him such as Sugar Ray Leonard , Sugar Shane Mosley , and MMA fighter " Suga " Rashad Evans .

= = Professional boxing record = =