On Saturday afternoon, October 10, 2026, just one day shy of his 93rd birthday, we lost our friend “Spider” Joe Burke, who peacefully passed away at home surrounded by family.

Spider began his boxing career at the Olympic Club at age 19, and spent over 50 years training countless young fighters at Newman’s Gym, King’s Gym in Oakland, and, most recently, at Fire In The Ring. The most important quality in a fighter, Spider often said, was that s/he be “coachable” — although that first black eye he gave a young Danny Maguire at Newman’s was a lesson in itself, a story worthy of being recounted by both men, again and again.

In addition to working as a boxing promoter, Spider also served as NCVBA’s Secretary-Treasurer from 1995 through 2025, a role that included overseeing the publication of our quarterly newsletter, “Keep Punching!” Proud owner of a two-tone red-and-white truck that was plastered with politically incorrect stickers, and equally proud of the fact that he had never owned a cellphone, Joe was definitely one-of-a-kind. His wise insights, unique sense of humor, and generous heart will truly be missed. 🥊 Keep punching, dear Joe!