



Smithsonian

Anacostia Community Museum

Billy Banks papers

ACMA.06-145

ACM Staff

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Anacostia Community Museum Archives
Title:	Billy Banks Papers
Date:	1930s-1940s
Identifier:	ACMA.06-145
Extent:	6.46 Linear feet (2 boxes and 3 oversize folders.)
Language:	English .
Summary:	This collection, which dates from the 1930s to the 1940s, contains the personal papers of William "Billy" Banks and documents his short career as a successful amateur boxer and his business pursuits. Materials include photographs, newspaper clippings, programs, audiovisual materials, and scrapbooks.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Donated by Cristellyn Banks in 2023.

Preferred Citation

Billy Banks papers, Anacostia Community Museum, Smithsonian Institution. Gift of Cristellyn Banks.

Restrictions

Use of the materials requires an appointment. Please contact the archivist at acmarchives@si.edu.

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical

William "Billy" Banks (1921-2006) was a promising African American professional featherweight and lightweight boxer from Washington, DC who fought locally and regionally in the 1930s and 1940s. Banks is recognized as the first boxer in Washington, DC to break the segregation line when he fought an undercard fight against Joe Sole at Griffiths Stadium on June 19, 1940, a fight he also won. The fight was one of two that night that desegregated boxing with the city.

Mr. Banks was renowned locally and regionally for his boxing skill and career. He was a successful amateur boxer in the 1930s and a title-contending professional boxer whose career was shorten by an eye-injury that eventually led to the removal of his left eye years after his retirement from the sport. Often referred to as a gentleman and a role-model in the press during his fighting career, Banks transitioned into managing local boxers in the late 1940s

and early 1950s after retiring from fighting. He worked within the federal government during his fighting career and used his winnings as a fighter and status within the city to open a men's clothing store on U Street in the early 1950s. He later owned and managed restaurants and bars in the city, including Chuck and Billy's Bar and Grill on Georgia Ave near Howard University.

William "Billy" Banks was inducted into the Washington, D.C. Boxing Hall of Fame in 1980.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- African American athletes -- Washington (D.C.)
- African American boxers -- 1930-1940
- African American men
- Afro-Caribbean
- Boxers (Sports) -- 1930-1950

Types of Materials:

- Awards