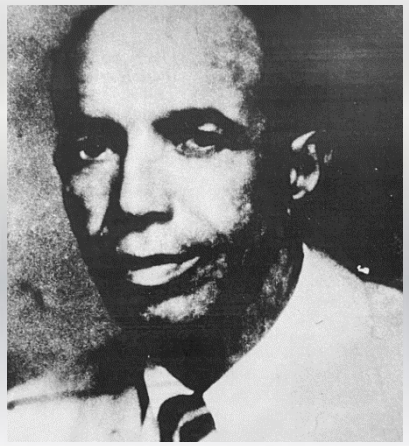
First Citizens Sports Foundation

HALL OF FAME



John Massiah Douglas

Administrator

Inducted in 1985

Few sports rely on the king-making ability of managers as much as boxing. In that regard, John Douglas was one of the very best. He married his knowledge of the sport from his own competing days, to a business nous required for the professional game and, perhaps his greatest asset of all, his scouting eye for real talent.

Born in St. Lucia, Douglas came to Trinidad as a teenager who had taken part in amateur boxing, with a record that was favourable but also lacking proper opposition. The status of his family, with his father being a Customs Officer, meant that there was little reason or drive for the young Douglas to pursue a boxing career amongst the paid ranks. But, he still retained a deep passion for the sport and decided to open a gym in 1928 on the Belmont Circular Road in east Port of Spain.

He was deeply involved with the local area, taking a job teaching shoemaking at the Belmont Orphanage, and the combination of his gym, and access to teaching the boys at the orphanage the skills of boxing, began to produce results.

By 1930, Douglas was producing a conveyer belt of local champions, the first being Chico Greaves who beat Bob St. Laurent to take the Lightweight crown. He would produce another fine lightweight champion in Boswell St. Louis, but it was in the Heavyweight division that he achieved his greatest success.

Douglas spotted Daniel James at the orphanage and convinced the youth to step into the ring. Douglas carefully managed James' amateur career but kept it brief so that he could get into the pro ranks as quickly as possible. In early 1945, 'Gentle' Daniel James won his first professional fight. Within six weeks, Douglas had James fight Cuban Rene Sanchez for the West Indian Light Heavyweight title, which James won, becoming regional champion in a short space of time and immediately increasing his earning potential.

Douglas wasted no time; Daniel fought an incredible nine fights in his first year. He would later go on to fight in the USA and across the Caribbean region. His success was a fine example of the skill that Douglas possessed as a manager, with a level of professionalism that was ahead of its time for the Caribbean. As such, John Massiah Douglas was inducted into the Trinidad and Tobago Sports Hall of Fame in 1985.