Tommy Morrison, Former Heavyweight Champion, Dies

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Tommy Morrison, the former professional boxer who tested positive for HIV and later denied having the virus, has died, The Associated Press (AP) reports. He was 44. His family has not disclosed the cause of death. Before his death, Diana Morrison, his mother, told ESPN.com that she believed her son had AIDS. Trisha Morrison, his wife, told the sports channel that she did not believe he had HIV.

In the late 1980s and into the mid-1990s, his boxing career and fame were on a steady rise. In 1990, Morrison costarred in Rocky V with Sylvester Stallone. In 1993, he beat the former heavyweight champion George Forman in a unanimous decision to win the World Boxing Organization heavyweight title. After Morrison tested HIV positive in 1996, Nevada suspended his boxing license and all other sanctioning bodies upheld the ban.

Over the years, he dealt with weapons charges and multiple incidents of driving under the influence. He was sentenced to two years in prison in 2000, and another year was added in 2002 for violating parole. After his release, Morrison said his HIV tests had resulted in false positives. He fought professionally twice more for a record of 48 wins, three losses and one draw. POZ featured Morrison on the cover of its July 1997 issue.

To read the AP article, click here.

To read the ESPN.com article, click here.

To read the 1997 POZ article, click here.

For more on Morrison's death by POZ blogger Shawn Decker, click here.

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