

AROUND THE WORLD

NEWS IN BRIEF

FOREMAN SEEKS REMATCH AFTER KNEE SURGERY

NEW YORK - Yuri Foreman says he wants a rematch with Miguel Cotto of Puerto Rico following surgery to repair the torn meniscus he suffered in their first bout.

Referee Arthur Mercante Jr stopped Saturday's World Boxing Association super-welterweight title match at Yankee Stadium in the ninth round when the champion Foreman could not continue because of the injury to his right knee. Foreman, an Orthodox Jew and rabbinical student, had wrenched the knee two rounds earlier in an awkward fall.

"Yes, I want a rematch," Foreman told the New York Post. "My last performance was not what it could have been. It was far

from my potential."

According to the Post, Foreman suffered a torn meniscus and stretched a ligament in his right knee.

"The surgery will show if I also need surgery on the ligament in the front of the knee," Foreman said.

Foreman, a Belarus native now living in Brooklyn, New York, lost his first bout after going 28-0 with one no decision. He was trailing on all three judges' cards when the fight was stopped.

The knee injury prevented Foreman from his trademark side-to-side movement and left him vulnerable against the hard-hitting Cotto, now a four-time champion. (JTA)

HELEN THOMAS QUILTS JOB WITH HEARST

WASHINGTON - Helen Thomas has quit her job with Hearst in the wake of mounting outrage over her assertion that Israeli Jews should "return" to Poland, Germany and the United States.

"Helen Thomas announced on Monday that she is retiring, effective immediately," said a statement issued the Hearst Corp. "Her decision came after her controversial comments about Israel and the Palestinians were captured on videotape and widely disseminated on the Internet."

Thomas, 89, was asked by Rabbi David Nesenoff on May 27 if she had "any comments on Israel".

"Tell them to get the hell out of Palestine," she said. Thomas has been reporting since 1960 and was considered the doyenne of the Washington press corps.

Nesenoff, who was attending the first Jewish American Heritage Month event at the White House, asked where Jews

should go

"Go home," Thomas said. Asked to elaborate, she said: "Poland, Germany and America, and everywhere else."

Nesenoff did not post his video to his website, RabbiLIVE.com, until last week. Subsequent to its release a number of Jewish groups and figures asked for Thomas' removal, if not from Hearst as a columnist then from her front-row centre perch in the White House press room.

Thomas has since apologised for the comment, but some critics said the apology was evasive.

"I deeply regret my comments I made last week regarding the Israelis and the Palestinians," said the apology posted on her website. "They do not reflect my heart-felt belief that peace will come to the Middle East only when all parties recognise the need for mutual respect and tolerance. May that day come soon." (JTA)

MADRID PROTESTERS ATTACK ISRAELI BUSINESSMEN

MADRID - Several Israeli businessmen were attacked by pro-Palestinian protesters at a conference at a Madrid university.

One of the Israelis was injured on Monday at the start of the Spain-Israel Chamber of Commerce's conference at Autonomous University.

About 200 students threw stones at the Israelis, chanted "murderers" and broke the window of the police car in which

they took refuge, according to reports.

The students were protesting the deaths of nine activists on a Gaza-bound flotilla that was intercepted by Israeli naval commandos.

Following the violence, the university called off the conference.

Police said most of the rioters were Muslim, Ynet reported. No arrests have been made in the assaults. (JTA)

VENEZUELA'S CHAVEZ CALLS ISRAEL 'A GENOCIDAL STATE'

CARACAS, Venezuela - Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez has called Israel a "genocidal state" during nationally broadcast comments following violent clashes aboard a Gaza-bound flotilla.

Chavez called Israel a "cursed terrorist and murderous state" amid shouts of iLong live Palestinei during a June 1 speech, the day after Israeli Navy commandos boarded a Gaza-bound ship and nine people were killed in the ensuing violence. He also accused Israel of supporting the local opposition against his government.

"Israel is financing the Venezuelan opposition. There are even groups of Israeli terrorists, of the Mossad, who are after me trying to kill me," he said.

In response, the American Jewish Committee said in a media release last Friday that the Organisation of American States should condemn the comments in the "strongest possible terms".

"These baseless accusations by President Chavez are downright

dangerous and are used by him to bolster his own political standing," said AJC Executive Director David Harris

In the same speech, Chavez sent his "greetings and respect" to the local Jewish community.

"They know they have our affection and respect," he said, adding later that "I doubt very much that a Venezuelan Jew would support such an atrocity".

The local Jewish community has had a strained relationship with the government following a spate of attacks against Jewish houses of worship last year, including an assault against the city's main synagogue.

Other Latin American nations closely aligned with Chavez have come out strongly against the Jewish state. Ecuador's President Rafael Correa recalled his country's ambassador from Tel Aviv, while Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega said he was suspending diplomatic relations between the two nations.

Venezuela ruptured its diplomatic ties with Israel last year following the war in Gaza. (JTA)

Ethel Walt - much more than the sum of her work

PAT SCHWARTZ

IF EVER there was a living definition of "a woman of valour" it was Ethel Walt (pictured), who passed away on Thursday June 3 as a result of injuries sustained in a traffic accident two weeks earlier.

Walt, a former Transvaal chairwoman of the Black Sash and a founding trustee of the Black Sash Trust, was a person of multiple parts - activist, homemaker, devoted wife (she and her husband, Alex, celebrated 60 years of marriage in March), proud mother and grandmother, a creative and caring human being with time for everybody.

A woman of steadfast courage and conviction, she could, like most other white, middle-class South African women, have settled for a life of leisure and privilege, sheltered from the realities of apartheid South Africa, but that was not her way.

Walt was born in 1925 in the small dorp of Bothaville in the then Orange Free State, the heart of Afrikanerdom, where the family had a milking cow in the yard. It was in Bothaville, in the 1990s a centre of extreme right-wing Afrikaner Weerstandbeweging activity, that she and I, sent by the Independent Electoral Commission to monitor the voting process, rejoiced on April 27 1994 in our first view of the new South African flag, waving proudly over, of all unexpected places, the local police station.

Her family relocated to Yeoville, Johannesburg, when she was a young girl and in 1950 she moved to Cape Town when she married Alex, a born-and-bred Capetonian, whom she met while on holiday.

There she raised her three daughters, Janet, Andrea, and Vivienne, and became a psychologist, practising at the University of Cape Town's Child Guidance Clinic for many years, until she and Alex moved to Johannesburg in 1978.

Walt continued her psychology practice in Johannesburg, but her true interest became politics, and she eventually gave up psychology to devote her time fully to the Black Sash. Asked by an Israeli human rights worker why she hadn't simply enjoyed the good life, Walt responded: "There's no choice. You wake up and read the newspaper, and you have to act."

Much of her work was concentrated on battling the forced removal of whole communities under apartheid legislation. A founder of the Transvaal Rural Action Committee (TRAC) she is immortalised by a map displaying the communities that were under threat.

In an effort to educate people and lobby against forced removals, "Ethel," recalls one-time TRAC fieldworker Marj Brown, "spent many hours meticulously drawing arrows from the areas that were under threat of removal in the 1980s to the areas in the homelands they were to be removed to."



A woman of action - determined, fast-paced, with exacting standards - Ethel Walt was, writes former Black Sash President Mary Burton, "dedicated and hard working and an energetic and successful fundraiser".

Thinking way ahead of her time, she co-wrote (with Gita Dyzenhaus) an article published in the Black Sash magazine in August 1980, advocating a Bill of Rights for South Africa.

But she was so much more than the sum of her work and achievements. Warm and empathetic, humorous and loving, an entirely loyal and caring friend, Ethel was a unique human being.

Artistic, and a lover of beautiful things, her hands never still, she created exquisite needlework projects - wall hangings, cushions, bedspreads, tablecloths and blankets for her grandchildren. She was a superb cook and an enthusiastic gardener, her flat filled, in season, with the full-blown perfumed roses she nurtured. Her parties were legendary - wonderful food shared by always interesting, opinionated and vocal guests.

She is survived by her husband, Alex, her three daughters and five grandchildren.

Human rights is synonymous with David Soggot

ALISON GOLDBERG

CIVIL RIGHTS lawyer David Soggot (pictured), ranked with the greatest of South African legal minds, passed away on May 24 at the age of 78 leaving his wife Greta, son Mungo and daughter Katya as well as two daughters from a previous marriage, Thea and Paula.

A journalist for The Guardian & The Observer, David Beresford, described Soggot "as one of the leaders of the South African Bar (who) ranked with the greatest of them - Kentridge, Chaskalson, Mahomed, and Bizos among others.

"Essentially a defence lawyer, the names of the clients Soggot represented and the judicial hearings in which he was involved, echo through the pages of recent South African history: Biko, (Winnie) Mandela, Delmas, Broederstroom, Mayekiso, Goldstone, the Sharpeville Six.

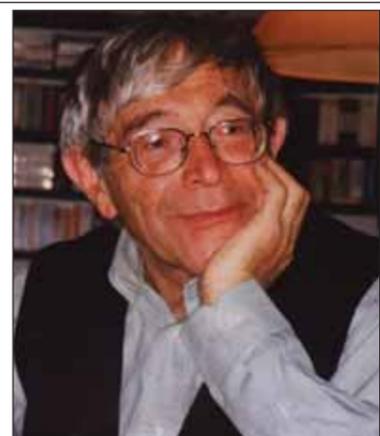
"Soggot found much of his legal practice in what was then South West Africa (now Namibia) where he established a particu-

larly close association with Swapo (the South West African Peoples' Organisation).

He made his reputation in the protectorate through a case rigged by the Special Branch - popularly known as the case of the "Kaiser Street Matahari" in which the security police were caught planting an agent as a typist on his defence team.

The trial, which involved two death sentences, was vitiated by the Appeal Court in Bloemfontein, by a bench led by then Chief Justice Rumpff. When the news got back to Windhoek, there was dancing in the street of Katutura township."

In one of the letters of condolence to his family - this from Ambassador Ndalikutalah Thomas Kamati (Che) to Windhoek - Kamati says "among the many legal battles which he fought and won against the racist establishment, Advocate Soggot relentlessly fought to put a definite end to the brutal humiliating system of public flogging instituted and enforced by the racist colonial authorities in



Namibia through tribal puppet chiefs and headmen during the 1970s.

"I was one of the victims of this barbarism. I was privileged to work with him representing the Swapo of Namibia, and together with the Rt Reverend Bishop Richard Wood of the Namibian Diocese of the Anglican Church and supported by Bishop Leonard Auala of the Lutheran Evangelical Church in Namibia, in instituting legal proceedings in the High Court of South West Africa against such barbaric floggings.

"Advocate Soggot won the case and since then, public flogging of political opponents of the system was completely banished in Namibia."

Another letter of condolence, this time from the Prime Minister of Namibia, Naha Angula, describes Soggot as a "giant defender of human rights" and a "true humanist".

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