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## Ringers: Lawyers were competitive collegiate boxers

Two Salvi, Schostok & Pritchard P.C. attorneys learned to fight in the ring, then the courtroom

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Before Patrick A. Salvi II or Brian L. Salvi advocated in court, they learned how to train, respect their opponent and battle somewhere else: the boxing ring.

Patrick, a partner at the personal-injury firm Salvi, Schostok & Pritchard P.C., and his younger brother Brian, an associate at the firm, boxed competitively in the annual Bengal Bouts as University of Notre Dame students. They each won the Dan Adam Award honoring them as the best law student boxers of the year — 2007 for Patrick and 2011 for Brian.

"It's quite the spectacle," Brian said. "It's electric. You can't turn away from it."

One of their younger brothers got them into the sport.

Inspired by Tom Zbikowski, a former professional football player who also boxed professionally, the younger brother bought a heavy bag, thinking boxing might improve his performance on the high school football field. The bag hung in the basement, and Patrick, who was home for the summer between his second and third years of law school, was looking for a new workout.

Brian said he has a vivid memory of Patrick emerging from the basement after working out with the bag, standing in the kitchen, eating a sandwich, drinking a glass of milk and saying, "I think I'm going to do the Bengal Bouts."

The annual charitable competition is big at the University of Notre Dame and recently started

airing on ESPN. The Men's Boxing Club competes, raising funds for the Holy Cross Mission in Bangladesh. About 150 to 200 male boxers, including five to 10 law students, train together from October until the tournament in February.

Patrick spent two hours a day for five or six days a week training and sparring with the rest of the club, which he said made for great camaraderie and would often spend up to another hour on his own to go the extra mile.

The fights, however, were short.

"It's like a month of training per minute," Patrick said.

There were four rounds: the first two lasting only a minute 15 seconds, the third, a minute 30 seconds and the fourth, two minutes.

"That doesn't sound like much, but believe me it's exhausting," Patrick said.

"It's the most exhausting thing you'll ever do," Brian said.

Brian said you can spend months and months training, but only sparring and previous fights can truly prepare you for a fight. That, he said, is similar to studying the law versus having trial experience.

In boxing, Patrick said, you take off the robe and are in your goofy shorts, your headgear and your boots inside a ring against another guy with judges and a big crowd scoring. That's not so different a stage from a trial, he said, where your client is seated right behind you and you have to convince a jury of 12 that you're in the right. Patrick said it's a similar vulnerability.

"Win, lose, succeed, failure, it



Patrick A. Salvi II

falls on one person and it's one person that is up in the ring for everybody to see," Brian said. "So you can't help but have a tremendous amount of respect for your opponent."

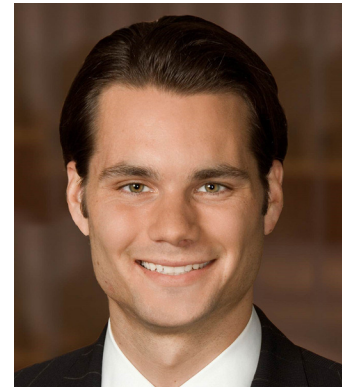
Brian, a sophomore at Notre Dame the year Patrick competed, watched his older brother slug it out against classmates and immediately loved the sport.

"Everything he got out of it was put on display for me sophomore year," Brian said. "So I could see what the benefits were for doing it."

The sport is brutal and animalistic, while also complex and technical, he said. Brian decided to start boxing and compete too.

Brian studied abroad his junior year, and competed for the first time his senior year, took a year off before law school and fought all three years of law school.

The brothers were both tall for their weight classes, so Patrick said he could jab — that is, hit with his



Brian L. Salvi

you get punched in the face."

Patrick agreed.

"You will quickly be exposed by an experienced fighter and it's either learn or you're going to lose and get hit," he said.

Patrick compared getting hit for the first time in a sparring match or a fight to getting the other side's motions and in limine.

"They're trying to bar your expert. They're trying to bar a piece of evidence that's critical to your case. That's kind of the first punch," he said. "It's like, 'Wake up. You've got a fight on your hands.'"

Brian said subjective things always come into play in both law and sport. Amateur boxing, for example, is supposed to be won by whoever has the higher tally of more landed punches. But, Brian said, if one person appears to be controlling the ring and more comfortable, it impacts the way people view the fight.

"Much like a jury," he said. "There's no question that there's a level of subjectivity and presentation that the lawyers have to convey to them."

Patrick said he shouldn't be showing up at depositions with abrasions and bruises on his face, so he's retired permanently from competitive fighting, even if he still enjoys the jump rope and fast and heavy bags for a good workout.

Brian, however, lost his last fight. It was the championship match in his third year of law school and a rare defeat. He said he doesn't have any set plans but he still has an itch not to end his career on a loss.

"The loss never sat well with me, so I don't think I can commit to saying I'll never fight again," he said.

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*"It's (the Bengal Bouts) quite the spectacle. It's electric. You can't turn away from it."*

left hand — to keep his shorter opponent away. Or he could let the opponent tire himself out before he went all in.

Brian said he never felt like he was in a fight until he got hit. Getting punched in the face was a jolt to his system that forced him to wake up and prevent it from happening again.

"It is a sport that requires 100 percent focus," Brian said. "You need to be focused on everything and if you don't, the consequence is