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**TRANSCRIPT FROM TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2022: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS
DELIVERS REMARKS AND PRESENTS PROCLAMATION IN HONOR OF LOUIS
FALL**

Ingrid Lewis-Martin, Chief Advisor to the Mayor: For those of you who may not know me, I am Ingrid P. Lewis-Martin, the chief advisor to our mayor, Eric Adams, and today is a great day in the City of New York. New York has an illustrious history of firsts. We celebrate so many firsts and today we get to celebrate a trailblazer who has been forgotten from the annals of history. But today, under the leadership of our mayor and the World's Boxing Council, we have the privilege of introducing to many of you who may be unfamiliar with the world of boxing — a gentleman who was named Louis Fall. He was the first man of African descent — who came from Senegal and he immigrated to America and he resided in New York City — to become the world's boxing champion heavyweight. So he's forgotten in history, but we did not forget about him. A few days ago would've marked his 100th anniversary.

And so it's a pleasure for Mayor Adams, the honorable champ. I know during the campaign, we used to say the champ is here, but the champ is really here. The champ is here. Roy Jones Jr., a world champion in four different divisions. The presidents of the World Boxing Council, who cares? That's the foundational arm, Miss Jill Diamond. And later on we will have a special guest who's running a little bit late to celebrate our dearly departed brother who was a first, who made yet again history. And we have some babies with us from the Eagle Academy. Yes. And their instructor. So we're happy to have you join with us. So without any further ado, I'm going to say

the names of all of the speakers in the order in which they will speak and I'm going to remove myself. So our first speaker will be the world champion, Roy Jones Jr., then we will have our president, Jill Diamond, and hopefully our special guest will be here, and then I will come back to do the honors of properly introducing our mayor. Thank you.

Roy Jones Jr.: Thank you. I just want to say thank you to everybody that's involved, the mayor, his assistant, everybody that had anything to do with this thing. It is so beautiful to honor someone who meant so much to the sport of boxing that we didn't know about. And he really meant so much to the world. He was a trailblazer. And what's so prominent to me is the fact that first, Mauricio Sulaimán, the president of the WBC, asked me to come here to represent WBC. That was the first and foremost honorable thing of all, but to come and represent a guy that was a trailblazer at my weight class, because the only division that I was an undisputed champ was light heavyweight, which was what Battling Siki did. So for him to go through so many things and still to accomplish what he wanted to accomplish, that was a time that people didn't have the right to do the things that he did.

When God says it's for you, no matter what they say, nobody can stop you from getting it. He got it way back then, in 1922. So that's been a hundred years. You understand? So to be the first to blaze a trail like that means more to me than anything because there had been 106 years since somebody that won the middleweight, light heavyweight and heavyweight title. And our goal is to go out and blaze trails. These are the kind of people that set those examples for us. Without people like him, without Battling Siki, without him doing what he did, it wouldn't inspire us to go out and do better or do more than what we do. So he's a perfect example of a person in a time when it should not have happened, did way more than he should have been allowed to do.

And that is a trailblazer for real. So thank God for him. Want to thank New York, thank everybody involved in honoring this guy and I look forward to seeing more of these type of activities down the line. Thank you. God bless y'all. And so good to see you guys here, hope you go back and do your history on this man, because this man is something special to the world, period. Not just the world of sports but the world, period. Because one day, you guys are to going look forward to look upon to blaze the trail at something. You understand me? It's y'all's job now. God bless y'all. Thank you.

Jill Diamond, President of WBC Cares: It's a privilege to be here and to read this letter from WBC President Mauricio Sulaimán. "It is with great joy that the World Boxing Council representing 175 countries celebrates the life of Battling Siki, the first athlete born in Africa to win the world championship in any sport. Our sincere gratitude goes to Mayor Eric Adams for stepping into the ring and recognizing the historic moment which happened 100 years ago. And

we thank his chief advisor, Ingrid Lewis-Martin, who worked passionately to make sure this historic moment took place right here in New York City. Louis Fall, Battling Siki, conquered glory by defeating legendary Georges Carpentier in France, winning inside the ring, but sadly and regrettably losing his life outside of it, he settled in New York, a place he called home. Those times of extreme racism and discrimination must not be forgotten, but must inspire us to continue building bridges of faith and love to make this a better world, a dedicated and talented boxer, a war hero, a person of humor and intelligence, a role model for all and generations to come. This legend must not be forgotten. We thank you all for being here to pay tribute to a champion who rose from the slums, who raged against discrimination and despite all odds, became the king of the ring. Mauricio Sulaimán, WBC president.” Thank you.

Lewis-Martin: So timing is always important and our special guest has arrived most timely. We have the consulate general of Senegal, El Hadji Amadou Ndao, who will now say a few words. Please.

El Hadji Amadou Ndao, Consul General of Senegal in New York: Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you. Apologies again for being a bit late — New York traffic, you know? But thank you very much. We are honored again to be here alongside the great mayor of New York, our good friend, a good friend of Africa, Mr. Eric Adams. It's an honor again to be here to celebrate bravery, I would say. Mbarick Fall, aka Battling Siki, he represented bravery. The reason why I say that is that someone who as a teenager in the 19th century who in the early 1900s was able to travel to Europe, to a new setting, to a setting that is not his natural setting, to leave Africa at a time when he was made to believe that his dignity is not that of a human being. For him to thrive and get to a point where he believed in his human capabilities and abilities to get to a point where he got to the top of the world of boxing, I think that needs to be heralded and celebrated. So the fact that the mayor's office recognized that and the mayor himself being here to honor the memory and the achievement of late Battling Siki is something that on behalf of the government of Senegal, the president of Senegal and of on behalf of the people of Senegal, we are grateful.

I would like to say that, Battling Siki, growing up, and I was speaking to my sister, I set a camera up from your office the other day because she said she spent some time in Senegal as a kid. Growing up, there were a box of matches and we all grew up seeing that. The brand of the box of matches was the boxer and then it was the picture of Battling Siki on top of it. We never knew who was Battling Siki because of course we were later generations. But when I told it was actually Battling Siki on it, and then we all went, "Okay, now we know." So he is very well cherished in Senegal and in Africa. And we are honored again to witness here in New York that his bravery and his achievements are recognized. Thank you.

Mayor Eric Adams: Thank you so much. And when I did my DNA, I'm partly from Senegal, so I'm honoring a fighter and in spirit and energy. Doesn't matter if you're the top of the world as a world champ or the top of the world as the mayor of the City of New York, you will overcome obstacles and hurdles. And I think that's why it's so important to have these scholars from the Eagle Academy representative of the symbol of soaring to higher heights and Battling Siki, affectionately known as Louis Fall, the first African to win a championship. Look at the time, you have to think about the time he was born in 1897, not only a different Africa, but a different globe. As a young child in the first World War, he joined the French army receiving two awards for bravery.

It was the indicator of who he was going to become. At 15, he took up boxing and it just really points out how important sports is as we know that, and we want to continue to embrace that. From 1919 to 1922, he won 43 bouts out of 46. He was almost as good as Roy Jones, not as good, but close, but 43 out of 46. He refused to throw a fight. One time he was asked to throw a fight, but he stood up. Not only did he stand up to fights in a ring, but he stood up to fight outside the rings. In front of 40,000 spectators in Paris, the Battling Siki became the new world champion, and he took that fight in spirit, in lifestyle, extremely flamboyant lifestyle. He enjoyed partying or walking his pet lion around Paris. But he was a person that was larger than life.

That was the symbol that he showed. But he also always stood up and fought for what was right, overcoming racism and hardship was at the heart of his short life. In not throwing a match, he exposed the corruption in French boxing, but he also exposed racism that existed. And it's unfortunate, like to so many young people, he too lost his life at a young age, dying at the age of 28. His legacy lives on and it's an inspiring future for so many. And it's imperative that when we think about boxing and those like champ Roy Jones, Muhammad Ali, Mike Tyson, they all look towards him as a symbol of what being in the ring is about and going against the odds in so many levels. Those odds are multiplied by a thousand fold. Looking at the time that he was around, as I stated, a different globe, a different country, and a different place.

But he arose out of all of that. And so today we want to give Louis Battling Siki Fall Day here in New York. On behalf of all New York, 8.8 million New Yorkers, whereas since his shocking, tragic, and untimely passing in 1925 at the age of 28, Fall's legacy continues to live on. Throughout his career, Fall fought to overcome adversity and racism and was known for his humor, intelligence, and natural talent as a boxer. Today, I am immensely proud to honor the life and many achievements of Louis Fall and join in commemorating the 100th anniversary of his world championship victory. I applaud the World Boxing Council for its efforts to celebrate and carry on Battling Siki's inspiring legacy. I, Eric Adams, mayor of the City of New York, congratulations and thank you so much for bringing this history to life. Thank you.

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