

## IN THE MEDIA: 1979-1980

Meet CV (Caliguri and Viola) Productions. Long before the world was introduced to the Ultimate Fighting Championship, the “sport” of mixed martial arts had already made headlines. It’s been the best kept secret in MMA; that is until now...



**“The biggest fight event of ever... Anything goes! All fighting styles—punching, striking, kicking, grappling and throwing techniques.”**

—*News-Dispatch* (November 17, 1979)

**“March 20<sup>th</sup> was more than the beginning of Spring, it was the birth of what many are calling a new sport... This first-in-history event sold out three consecutive nights.”**

—*News-Dispatch* (April 12, 1980)

**“Frank Caliguri and William Viola, promoters extraordinaire, are billing this unique sporting event as the chance of a lifetime...”**

—Greg Stock, *News-Dispatch* (1980)

**“You’re all about to find out what it’s like: ‘Organized, legalized, street fighting.’”**

—Dave Durian, KDKA Television (April 30, 1980)

**“It’s a chance to be another ‘Rocky’ but this time it will be the ‘Real Thing in the Ring.’”**

—*Stanley Theater Program* (April 18, 1980)

**Competitors feel it is a “legitimate sport and not just a passing fad... They have rules, regulations, and officials.”**

—Jim Isler, *News-Dispatch* (October 31, 1980)

**“No holds barred as Superfighters take over the Civic Center.”**

—Fran Blinebury, *Philadelphia Journal* (June 13, 1980)

**“No one’s talking figures yet, but bidding has begun for network television rights to the finals.”**

—*Holiday Inn Program* (March 20, 1980)

## GODFATHERS OF MMA

**“People have accused us of reverting to barbarism like the Roman Coliseum, but it really isn’t like that at all... there will be rules.”**

–Bill Viola, Original CV Press Release (1979)

**“We are going to take it as far as we legally can.”**

–Frank Caliguri, quoted by *News Dispatch* (March 15, 1980)

**“Amateur Boxing shows don’t draw nearly as well as the pioneering Tough Guy event.”**

–Don Hall, *Standard Observer* (April 15, 1980)

**“The 'Battle of the Super Fighters' came to the Philadelphia... introducing our area to the new, no-holds barred combination of boxing, wrestling, karate, and just about everything else.”**

–Fran Zimniuch, *Philadelphia Times* (June 18, 1980)

**“Have you ever dreamed of fame, fortune and immortality?”**

–Greg Stock, *News-Dispatch* (1980)

**“All will be geared for the first battle of its kind as anything goes including punching, striking, kicking, throwing and ground fighting, all in an organized ring.”**

–*Standard Observer* (1980)

**“Viola cites the reality factor as the chief appeal...This is real.”**

–*News-Dispatch* (April, 12 1980)

**“Pittsburgh will host a unique event, sure to be enshrined in the record books forever.”**

–*Local 1397 News* (February 1980)

**“The event was planned by the Black Belt Barnum and Bailey.”**

–*News-Dispatch* (April 12, 1980)

**“It has become what the promoters are betting will be one of the biggest box office attractions in history.”**

–*CV Program* (March 20, 1980)

**“Battle of the Tough Guys, a sport which blends elements of boxing, wrestling and brawling.”**

–*News-Dispatch* (April 12, 1980)

## GODFATHERS OF MMA

**“What is it... a knock-down one-one anything goes tournament.”**

—*Holiday Inn Program* (March 20, 1980)

**The “Super Brawl.”** —Fran Blinebury, *Philadelphia Journal* (June 13, 1980)

**“The action was hot and heavy. The blows were rapid and continuous. And the saga of 'Rocky' lives on.”**

—*News-Dispatch* (March 21, 1980)

**“Battle of the Brawlers: Last night’s debut of this unique new sport...”**

—*Philadelphia Journal* (June 13, 1980)

**“The contestants love it, their families love it, the paying customers love it. Maybe it sounds like legalized assault, but it seems to be catching on fast.”**

—Don Hall, Sports Writer, *Standard Observer* (April 15, 1980)

**“It was a super idea...After Philly, Viola and Caliguri have plans for Super Fighters to turn up in Biloxi, Miss., Boston, and Phoenix.”**

—Fran Blinebury, *Philadelphia Journal* (June 13, 1980)

**“Fighting Tactics: The martial arts way of fighting as it’s done in the Orient. Now here in the U.S.!”** —*Stanley Theater Program* (1980)

**“Some of us walk to the beat of a different drummer. Others walk to the beat of an entirely different band. Then there are those few who are just plain out of their minds. Presumably, members of that slim but whacky minority are now busy signing up to compete in the Battle of the Super Fighters.”**

—Fred Edelstein, *Philadelphia Journal* (1980)

**“The last time this many lunatics were together in one room was during medication time at the infamous Bedlam asylum in London.”**

—Fran Blinebury, *Philadelphia Journal* (June 13, 1980)

**“And remember, you don’t have to be crazy to enter. It just helps.”**

—Greg Stock, *News-Dispatch* (1980)

## GODFATHERS OF MMA

**“It’s wild and crazy, like two gladiators going at it.”**

–Dave Jones, quoted by Don Hall, *Standard Observer* (April 15, 1980)

**“Entrants cited many reasons for entering...underlying it all is a sense of making sports history.”**

–*News-Dispatch* (April 12, 1980)

**“Some of the fighters have karate training, some boxing, some wrestling. Some of them just come at you like street fighters... You don’t have any idea what you’ll be going up against.”**

–Frank Tigano, quoted by Don Hall, Sports Writer, *Standard Observer* (1980)

**“The squeamish may shudder, but if Viola’s forecast is correct, if a sellout throng of screaming fans fill the Stanley Theater Friday night, we may be witnessing the evolution of a new national sports craze.”**

–Don Hall, Sports Writer, *Standard Observer* (April, 15 1980)

**“The bout proper consists of three-two minute rounds of catch-as-catch-can action with elements of boxing, wrestling, karate, kickboxing, judo and mayhem mixed in [Mixed Martial Arts].”**

–Jim Isler, Sports Editor, *News-Dispatch* (October 31, 1980)

### Why Mixed Martial Arts?

“ You hear people saying, who would win  
if a boxer fought a wrestler?

Or if a kickboxer fought a boxer?

What would happen if

Bruno Sammartino fought Muhammad Ali?

Well, we’re going to bring that to life... ”

–Bill Viola, co-creator of the sport of MMA

\*Quoted by Jack McCaffery in the *Philadelphia Journal* (June 6, 1980)

# GODFATHERS OF MMA

Godfathers of MMA

Copyright © 2012 by Dr. Fred Adams and Bill Viola Jr.

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law. For permission requests, write to the publisher, addressed "Attention: Permissions Coordinator," at the address below.

Pittsburgh MMA Inc.

400 Daily Dr.

North Huntingdon, PA 15642

[www.cvproductionsinc.com](http://www.cvproductionsinc.com)

Marketing Information:

Please contact Kumite Classic Entertainment: Tel: (724) 861-5162

\*Advance preview copy: December 2014

# GODFATHERS OF MMA

## Table of Contents

1.....	Author's Note
3.....	Author's Note 2
5.....	Foreword
13.....	Preface
17.....	Introduction
27.....	Chapter 1: Tough Guys
33.....	Chapter 2: Parallel Lives
58.....	Chapter 3: Steel City
67.....	Chapter 4: First Fight Genesis
111.....	Chapter 5: The Name Game
123.....	Chapter 6: The Real Thing in the Ring
156.....	Chapter 7: Hold That Tiger
177.....	Chapter 8: The League
192.....	Chapter 9: Enemy Territory
217.....	Chapter 10: Standing Eight Count
245.....	Chapter 11: The Final Bell
270.....	Chapter 12: The Hollywood Effect
282.....	Chapter 13: Paradigm Shift
305.....	Chapter 14: The Long and Winding Road
317.....	Chapter 15: Fact or Fiction
337.....	Chapter 16: Respect
354.....	Afterword: Bill Viola, Jr.
366.....	Appendix 1: Looking Back
374.....	Appendix 2: An Ultimate Irony
376.....	Appendix 3: WMAFA
377.....	Appendix 4: Stats
378.....	Where Are They Now
382.....	Epilogue: Dana Doubleday
387.....	MMA Milestones: The Firsts
388.....	Pittsburgh MMA