



With his father's painting of Jack Dempsey hanging on the wall, Gabe Perillo Jr., right, chats with curator James J. Houlihan recently.

NAME GAME

Perillo's Dempsey painting a hit all over the world

By DANIEL O'LEARY
STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

Even seven years after his death, the art of Gabe Perillo Sr. lives on to see the world.

Perillo's portrait of boxing legend Jack Dempsey has made its way around the Northeast and now, has traveled all the way to Ireland as part of the "Fighting Irish Exhibit: A Celebration of the Celtic Warrior," run by curator James J. Houlihan.

According to Gabe Perillo Jr., his father's Dempsey work is now somewhere near County Tyrone in Northern Ireland for patrons to enjoy.

"It really is an honor," said Perillo Jr., of his father's paintings to be coveted by Houlihan and actor Liam

Neeson, who is the chairperson of the exhibit. "They're both very nice guys. And Liam Neeson, he loves boxing."

And while Perillo Sr. painted the greats in nearly every sport from Babe Ruth to Bill Russell to Wayne Gretzky to Tiger Woods, boxing has always been his first love. He boxed in the Navy and later nurtured his artistic skill through the G.I. Bill before becoming the house artist for "Ring" magazine.

Perillo was approached about giving out a few loaners to the Irish exhibit and was happy to oblige, handing over Dempsey, Gerry Cooney and "Irish" Jerry Quarry, he said.

The exhibit was on display

at the Irish Arts Center in Manhattan in late 2006, then moved to the South Street Seaport in '07 before stopping at the John J. Burns Library at Boston College in 2008.

The exhibit went across the sea this May and Perillo's Dempsey portrait followed.

"They keep sending me papers to sign, so they can hold on to (the paintings)," said Perillo. "I don't mind. They sent me a great picture of the Dempsey with a heavy bag hanging alongside it."

"The exhibit was great. They had John L. Sullivan's fur coat... just some really rare stuff," added Perillo. "I have no idea when it will end, but to see my father's work displayed, it really is an honor."