

Manila, Philippines (CNN) -- Manny Pacquiao is not a god, but that doesn't stop millions of Filipinos worshipping him.

Since his first professional fight at 16, Pacquiao has amassed a formidable professional record of 54-5-2.

He is arguably the most famous person in the country's history, a world title holder 10 times over and the first person to earn belts in eight separate weight divisions, and in 2012 was one of the highest paid athletes on earth, earning upwards of \$62 million, more than Tiger Woods, Lebron James, Roger Federer and Cristiano Ronaldo.

In addition, he is an actor, TV host and singer. Oh, and in 2010, voters also elected Pacquiao to the Philippines' House of Representatives, where he serves the district of Sarangani.

Pacquiao's story reads something closer to fable than fact.

The man who earned the title "Fighter of the

Decade" in the 2000s by the World Boxing Council (WBC), comes from the humblest of roots.

Born in 1978 in a small village called Kibawe, Pacquiao lived with his mother and five brothers and sisters: "When I was young my parents were jobless. We had no home. Sometimes we can't even afford to have a single meal a day," says Pacquiao.

"When you see my slippers, one is green, one is red. And they had holes. I would walk the streets to sell, that's how I made my living as a kid. I felt sorry for my mother. I wanted so badly to study. I stopped though and pursued boxing."

At 14, Manny moved to Manila where he says he lived for a time under a cardboard box in a city park.

He found work as a servant for a rich man. Luckily, he was treated well, he says. When he began boxing as a teenager, he admits having to put rocks in his pockets to make the minimum weight of 105 pounds (47kg).

When he was 16, Pacquiao decided to pursue a

professional boxing career. At 4'11" and weighing 98 pounds, it's unlikely he struck much fear in those early opponents. But his fast fists and unrelenting toughness quickly earned him respect.

He gained global

recognition in 2001, when as a late replacement, he beat IBF Super Bantamweight title holder Lehlohonolo Ledwaba. Pacquiao won the fight by technical knockout to win the title, his second major boxing world title.

Ten years later, I'm
standing in the middle of
the MGM Grand's casino.

"Do you want to meet
him?" The question
came across the table
from a documentary

film producer, who was
profiling Pacquiao.

It was May 6, 2011, the
night before the

champion would
defend his WBO
Welterweight title
against Shane Mosley.
The Las Vegas strip
buzzed with energy,
gamblers and partiers

just getting started as it neared midnight. Of course, I said yes.

As we got off the elevator and walked down the hallway to

his penthouse suite, I
had the same feeling
you might get when
entering a special,
reverential space.
Two bodyguards
flanked the door.

They recognized my
friend and let us pass.

I had expected a
reverential, ascetic

scene. A peaceful
room dotted with
his family and close
friends speaking in
hush tones, careful
not to disturb their

leader as he
prepared to do
battle in less than
24 hours.

What I found
instead was a
mob. At least 100
people had
packed into his
hotel room. Most

were Filipino
well-wishers. As
we tried to make
our way in,
someone told us
Pacquiao and his

wife, Jinkee, had
retreated to the
bedroom. We left,
but I wasn't
disappointed. I
figured I would

soon get to know
him well in Manila.

That night I had
drinks with his
security guard. I

wanted to get to
know the man I
would be
covering. I wanted
to hear what he
was like from a

person who was
often closest to
him, his
bodyguard, in an
unguarded
moment.

He offered little
dirt. "Manny is a
very nice guy.

Very good to the
people around

him. He believes
he is here for a
purpose. That his
rise means he
has a

responsibility to
take his position
and do
something good
with it."

Pacquiao won
the fight easily. I
watched it from
the media room.
Afterwards,

Pacquiao felt
good enough to
perform a
concert at the
Mandalay Bay

Hotel across
from the MGM
Grand Casino.

He said: "I

consider my
experience in
life as an
advantage in all
that I do. I was

down there and

I have made

my way up

here now. I

have

experienced it
all. I was
trained through
all the
hardships of

life, so I feel
the pain of the
poor."

In 2010, shortly

after being
elected as a
congressman
from Sarangani
district, he had

given a speech
in which he
argued the
country must
do more to

organize and
fund the
efforts of
anti-trafficking
agencies.

Immediately,
he began
working with
the Visayan
Forum, at the

time, the
largest
anti-trafficking
charity in the
country.

"I think Manny
is a very
important
milestone in

our fight
against human
trafficking here
in the

Philippines

because young

people

actually

believe and
listen to
Manny," says
Cecilia

Flores-Oeband
a, executive
director of the
Visayan Forum

Foundation, a
charity
founded in
1991 to help

victims of
domestic
servitude and
forced

prostitution.

"He's a

hard-working
guy, he came
from a very
poor family.

He inspires a
lot of people.
Of course,
everybody

wants Manny
in their own
campaign,
but I'm happy

Manny is
joining our
fight."

Pacquiao

arrived at the

Visayan

Forum

headquarters

to hear

first-hand

from girls

who had
been
victimized.

He spoke to
three
rescued girls,
all under the

age of 12.

They had

been forced

to perform

sexual acts

in a video

chat room

for a number

of foreign
men. Some
of the men
demanded

they perform

sexual acts

with men

pulled off

the street,

drink their

own urine

and other

even more

awful acts. A

man

off-camera

would force

the girl's

compliance.

Pacquiao

left shaken.

"Now that

I'm here as
a
congressma
n, I know

what to do.

I know what

I can do to

help

people.

"These

traffickers

have now

been

warned. We
just need
to be

vigilant in
order to
sustain this.

We also
need
funding

from

Congress. In

addition,

we need

close

coordinatio

n between
government
agencies.

Likewise,
we need
coordinatio

n within

various

local

government

s," said

Pacquiao.

In February 2012, Pacquiao

delivered a
speech to
congress in

which he

outlined

the

necessity

to stop

human

trafficking.

"During my

visit to the Visayan Forum I

talked to

children as

young as

9-years-old
who are
trafficked

for

prostitutio

n,"

Pacquiao

told

Congress.

"As
politicians,
we need

to be true

to our

words and

actions.

We need

to send a

clear

message;

that

Filipinos
are not for
sale."

Now more
than a
year later,

the

Philippines

is in the

midst of
an
election.

Congressm

an

Pacquiao

is again on
the
campaign

trail -- this

time

hoping to

parlay his
popularity
into a

victory for
his wife,
Jinkee,

who is
running to
become

vice

governor

of

Sarangani district.

Campaigning with his wife is one

step

toward life

after

boxing.

And

rumors of

the boxing
champ's
own

political

ambitions

push

beyond the House of

Represent atives.

Now,
fresh off
his

stunning

loss to

Juan

Manuel

Marquez,

in which

he was

knocked

unconscious

us and lay
face-down
for several

seconds

before

being

helped to
his corner,
Pacquiao

is looking
toward his
future.

Thirty-four
is old
for a

boxer.

With

more

than 60
profession
al fights

under his
belt, the
fear

among
those in
his circle

is that he

will stay

too long

in the
game,
and do

permanen
t damage
to his

standing.

Speaking

to a CNN
producer
in

Tagalog,
Pacquiao
says: "In

boxing, I

don't

think

people
will forget
me after I

retire. But

I really

want

people to

remembe

r me as a

public
servant,
who is

good,
who is a
champion

for the
people."

Less than
two
months

after his
loss to
Marquez,

Pacquiao
scored an
equally

stunning
victory.

On
February
13, 2013,

Philippin

es's

President

Benigno

Aquino

III, signed

the

Anti-Traffi

cking bill

Pacquiao

had been

champion

ning, into
law.

For
thousan
ds of

vulnerab

le

Filipinos

whose

lives

may be

changed

or even

saved,

this

Pacquiao

fight is

one

whose

legacy

will last

far

beyond

the ring.

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nts on}

Manny Pacquiao rises for toughest fight.

เขียนโดย Administrator

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