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Curt Crawford is the owner Curt's Ultimate Fitness and Fighting Arts at Northeast Halsey and 111th Avenue in the Gateway District. The gym trains men and women in boxing, mixed martial arts and other sports and is open to those of any level. PHOTO BY MIKE BIVINS/PORTLAND OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Curt's Ultimate Fitness and Fighting Arts

Kickboxer turns sport into his business with training center

BY MIKE BIVINS
PORTLAND OBSERVER
CONTRIBUTOR

The first time I heard the name Curtis Crawford was in 2007. I was at my friend's house and we were watching the International Fight League. The IFL is a defunct mixed martial arts promotion which had a Portland-based team called the Wolfpack. They were not on this night. The Seattle Tiger Sharks were on this card and their heavy-

weight, a 41-year-old Curtis Crawford was fighting.

My buddy remarked that Crawford owned a small gym in the Gateway area. An interesting tidbit, but I was more interested in the fight. The 5'11 Crawford gave his much larger and younger opponent, 30-year-old and 6'2 Antoine Jaoude all he could handle. Never out of the fight, we were holding our breath waiting for Crawford to deliver a knockout—but the knockout never

came, and Curt would go on to lose the fight by unanimous decision.

Northeast Halsey and 111th Avenue is not an area you would usually associate with greatness. This often forgotten part of town is a place you would never think a world champion once trained in. Curt's Ultimate Fitness and Fighting Arts is the former home to the late, great Ultimate Fighting Championship Middleweight Champion Evan

Tanner. Tanner won his title in 2005 while under Crawford's tutelage. Crawford met Tanner while training at Gresham's Team Quest in the early 2000's where the two became friends, and when Crawford opened his gym in 2004, the friends teamed up, and the rest is history.

Although Tanner met his untimely demise in 2008, his fighting spirit lives on at Curt's, and I stopped into the gym to see how things were going.

Two fighters, Anthony Barrera, 19, and Isaac Shelton, 26, were sparring in the ring. The heavily muscled Crawford looked younger and fitter than his now 48 years would lead you to believe. Although he has slimmed down from his normal fighting weight of 240 to 220 to help some of his smaller fighters train—he hasn't lost a step.

Curt excuses himself to spar with his fighters, but promises we will chat after. He asked

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