LOCAL HISTORY

Sugar Ray defended his title at the dome

Each week, the Onondaga Historical Association looks back at important events:

Sugar Ray Leonard is ruled the winner by TKO on March 28, 1981, in the Carrier Dome. (David Lassman / The Post-Standard)

35 years ago: On March 28, 1981, Sugar Ray Leonard successfully defended his World Boxing Council welterweight title against Larry Bonds in the Carrier Dome. A crowd of 21,000, paying between $10 and $60 for a ticket, was on hand. The fight was also shown live on HBO. Leonard was in control for most of the fight, but Bonds, the 29-year-old southpaw, put up a better fight than most people expected against the younger Leonard. In the end, Sugar Ray earned the win with a technical knockout moments after knocking Bonds down in the 10th round. It was the biggest boxing match in Syracuse since Carmen Basilio knocked out Johnny Saxon for the World Welterweight crown in 1956.

— *Dan Connors for the OHA*