



PHOTOS BY RINGO H.W. CHIU/LABJ

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**GENE LeBELL**

## Gene LeBell | 80 | Martial arts instructor, Hayastan MMA Academy

**N**OT even age could slow down Gene LeBell's adrenaline-fueled career. In addition to teaching, the 80-year-old martial arts instructor still performs stunts in movies, referees boxing and martial arts matches, test drives motorcycles and sells martial arts clothing.

LeBell said that he's busier now than when he was younger because he doesn't worry about the paychecks. He can pursue what really interests him instead of having to focus on finances.

"I spread myself thin," he said. "I spend my time with anything that interests me. I don't need the money."

LeBell began boxing at the age of 6. His

mother, Aileen, a boxing promoter, owned Olympic Auditorium in downtown Los Angeles, which hosted regular bouts featuring legendary names including Joe Frazier and Sugar Ray Robinson.

In his 20s, he won several judo championships as well as participated in some pro wrestling and boxing competitions.

LeBell parlayed his strength and agility into a career in movies, working as a stuntman with martial arts greats such as **Bruce Lee** and **Chuck Norris**. Since the 1960s, he has worked in more than 1,000 television shows and movies, including "The Planet of the Apes" and "Raging Bull."

LeBell said the best advice he got early

in his career was from his mother, who told him: "The harder you work, the luckier you get."

LeBell still follows that advice today, teaching once a week at the **Hayastan MMA Academy** in North Hollywood and continuing to do stunt work.

LeBell's wife, Midge, shares his love of adventure. She still watches him referee competitions. They used to race motorcycles together when they were younger.

LeBell noted that one of the perks of working into his 80s is lifetime insurance with the Screen Actors Guild.

"If I fall down and get a bloody nose, they'll wipe it off for free," he said.

He acknowledged that his body can't handle some of the stunts that he was once capable of. Instead of rolling cars or crashing bikes like he did in his prime, he jokes that he sticks to easy stunts such as falling down stairs and being set on fire.

How does LeBell stay so spry in a career that demands a lot from his body? He said the secret is staying active and doing something that he enjoys.

"If you don't use it, you lose it," he said. "I've got to be doing one thing or another. When I get on a motorcycle, it makes me feel young."

—Natalie Jarvey

## Harold I. Gould | 83 | Of Counsel, Eminutes, legal services firm

### How many hours a week do you work?

It depends on the season and the work load at any particular time. Right now we're going into our busy season. I try not to put in more than 40 hours, though.

### Why not retire?

I really like what I do and by now I'm pretty good at it. Over the years, I have developed some warm professional relationships. Staying in touch with those clients and still being able to help their businesses grow and prosper is very satisfying to me.

### Does your wife want you to retire?

No. My wife is a busy psychotherapist and we both lead full lives by continuing with our respective professions.

### Best part of working past 80?

Age brings wisdom as well as experience.

### Worst part of working past 80?

There isn't a worst. Being able to work at the age of 83 is a joy. My mother was forced to retire from her job at 65 and I remember she really didn't like that.

### Are you up to date on technology? Do you use email, cellphones or social networking?

Yes. Eminutes has invested well over \$1 million on technology. So you can see we prioritize it in a very substantial way. Plus, using technology

early on actually made it easier for me to extend my career and continue practicing law.

### What's the best advice you ever got?

Find a career or work that makes you happy and validates who you are as a person.

### What advice would you give to people who want to work well past 65?

Embrace technology. It can really help you become more efficient while taking much of the effort out of what you do. And the newest technology is really fascinating to boot. Pun intended.

### What's the secret to staying healthy and active?

Be interested in people, in the arts and in the world. Being in love with and married to the same woman for 56 years is a huge asset. We started taking yoga classes recently, and that's making us both feel younger and more flexible.

### Do you work as much as you used to in your 40s and 50s?

I would say that I work a lot smarter now. It's allowed me to slow down a bit and to enjoy other parts of my life, too.

### How has your work routine changed?

I have been developing a second career as a working actor and I enjoy that very much. So when things are going well my routine gets interrupted a lot, with auditions and jobs.



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**HAROLD I. GOULD**

### What do you miss most from when you were young?

I grew up in Los Angeles so I miss the Helms truck, the Red Car line, the original Angels Flight, being able to drive from downtown to the beach without traffic. And that particular vibrancy that comes with youth.

### What do you see in the future?

I subscribe to Popular Science and read science-fiction in general, so I think much of what I see in those articles and read about is going to be in our future.

—Compiled by Tom Dotan, Howard Fine, Jacquelyn Ryan, Jonathan Polakoff