

The Honorary Graduand: Jamie Sanigar

Doctor of Education

Jamie Sanigar is a recognised social entrepreneur and the co-founder of the multi award-winning organisation Empire Fighting Chance. Born in London, Jamie moved to Bristol at the age of six. He grew up in Easton, just streets away from the Empire Amateur Boxing Club and attended Colston's School as a boarder before studying Business at Middlesex University.

Jamie has spent his entire career immersed in boxing, working side-by-side with his father, Chris Sanigar, to transform the sport across Bristol, the West Country, and South Wales. Together they have built Bristol Boxing Gym and Sanigar Events into the leading force for professional boxing in the region.

Jamie has managed a stable of professional boxers, guiding many from their debuts to British, European and World championship success, including Ross Hale, Glenn Catley, Lee Haskins and Lee Selby. As a promoter, he has staged hundreds of events, ranging from grassroots small-hall shows to large-scale arena spectacles featuring global stars such as Frank Bruno, Joe Calzaghe, Ricky Hatton and Tyson Fury.

Alongside co-founder Martin Bisp, Jamie helped establish Empire Fighting Chance following a pivotal moment at the Empire Amateur Boxing Club in St Pauls, Bristol. After witnessing a drug deal involving local young people and intervening, the pair were struck by the challenges those young people faced and invited them back to the gym. That encounter became the catalyst for an organisation that has since transformed thousands of lives.

Empire Fighting Chance developed an innovative approach combining non-contact boxing, psychology, and therapeutic support to engage young people facing challenges including poor mental health, school exclusion, urban violence and knife crime. What began as a local initiative in Bristol has become a nationally recognised model for violence prevention and youth intervention.

Over the past two decades the organisation has supported tens of thousands of young people and generated significant social impact. Its success led to a national training network, with more than 150 organisations across the UK now delivering the Empire model.

In the past year alone, this work reached more than 20,000 young people, with international partnerships now developing in Canada and the United States. Jamie has become a respected voice on the role of sport in addressing social inequality, violence prevention and mental health.

Outside of his professional work, Jamie is married to Liz and is raising their four daughters Isabella, Holly, Phoebe and Florence. He volunteers as a qualified executive coach supporting charity leaders.

Jamie's lifelong dedication to boxing, both as a high-performance sport and as a powerful vehicle for youth empowerment and social change, has had a profound impact on thousands of young lives in Bristol and far beyond. This outstanding contribution to education and community development makes him a most deserving recipient of the Honorary Doctor of Education from the University of the West of England.