

Ali known worldwide as leader, humanitarian

By Kalandra Gray

Muhammad Ali is influential, inspirational, powerful, charming and a true jester. He is a three-time world boxing champion. Some simply call him "The Greatest."

Ali is known for his fighting style, which he described as "Float like a butterfly. Sting like a bee." One of his greatest fights was in 1974 when he defeated champion George Foreman in the "Rumble in the Jungle."

Ali was born in Louisville, Ky. on January 17, 1942 as Cassius Clay. On October 29, 1960, Clay won his first professional fight. From the period of 1960-1963 he held a record of 19-0 with 15 knockouts.

Clay won six Kentucky Golden Gloves titles, two National Golden Gloves titles, an Amateur Athletic Union national title, and the Light Heavyweight gold medal in the 1960 Summer Olympics in Rome. His amateur record was 100 wins with 5 losses.

"I'm young, I'm handsome, I can't be beat," Clay said. That quote, along with many others, is inscribed in the Muhammad Ali Center, which opened in 2005 in Louisville, Ky. The center honors the life of Ali, who changed his name to Muhammad Ali in 1964 after joining the Nation of Islam.

Ali became a controversial figure when he spoke out against the Viet Nam War. "War is against the teachings of the Holy Qur'an," Ali said.

In 1967, he refused three times to step forward in the induction calling for the armed services and was arrested. Ali wasn't allowed to fight and lost his title. In the same year he gave up his championship belt as a civil rights and religious protest. "How can I kill somebody when I pray five times a day for peace," Ali protested. On July 28, 1967, Ali was found guilty for refusing

induction and the case was sent to the U.S. Supreme Court. In 1971, the Supreme Court reversed Ali's conviction for refusing induction by a unanimous decision.

His stand against war made Ali a peace spokesperson and humanitarian leader. More fans began to support Ali both in and out of the ring. He regained his title when he fought Foreman. He went on to complete a world record boxing career. In 1981 Ali retired from boxing but is still to this day an active civil rights activist and peace leader.

In 1984, Ali was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, which is a disease that affects the movement, muscle control and balance. It is a continuous battle Ali fights with but doesn't let stop him. "God gave me this physical impairment to remind me I am not The Greatest -- He is," Ali said.

Throughout his life Ali has become one of the most inspirational and outspoken figures recognized worldwide. In 1991 Ali received a Spirit of America award calling him the most recognized American in the world.

Ali has received many honors, awards and commendations for his humanitarian acts across the world. He is still active in the Civil Rights movement. At Major League Baseball's Civil Rights Game in Cincinnati in June 2009, Ali received the Beacon of Change award, given to individuals who impact society through words and actions.

Ali is married to Lonnie Ali and is the father of nine children. He continues to fight for peace and freedom across the world every day and is still known as "The Champ."

"Champions are made from something they have deep inside them -- a desire, a dream, a vision," the words of Muhammad Ali, "The Champ."



Photo By Sara Fletcher

Exhibits at the Muhammad Ali Center in Ali's hometown of Louisville, Ky., portray both Ali the boxing champ and Ali the civil rights leader, peace activist and humanitarian.

The Muhammad Ali Center honors "The Greatest"

By Parys Grigsby

Muhammad Ali once said, "Champions are made from something they have inside them -- a desire, a dream, a vision." Through his work as a world-renowned athlete and humanitarian he has proved himself to truly be a champion. Because of his great achievements both inside and outside of the ring, the Muhammad Ali Center was founded in downtown Louisville, Ky.

The Ali Center's mission is "to preserve and share the legacy and ideals of Muhammad Ali, to promote respect, hope, and understanding, and to inspire adults and children everywhere to be as great as they can be."

Because of the depth in which the sports, civil rights and humanitarian aspects of Ali's life are explored at the Center, his achievements will be studied for many generations to come. His core values of peace, social responsibility, respect and personal growth are expressed in ways that even the smallest of children can understand. After one visit every visitor should be inspired to become half as great a person as Muhammad Ali.

Muhammad Ali wanted the Ali Center to be more than a museum and chose to found it in Louisville, Ky. because the city on the Ohio River is both his and his wife's hometown. The Muhammad Ali Center held its grand opening gala on November 19, 2005 after three years of construction. The Center has been open to the public since November 20 of the same year. All construction was finally completed on the

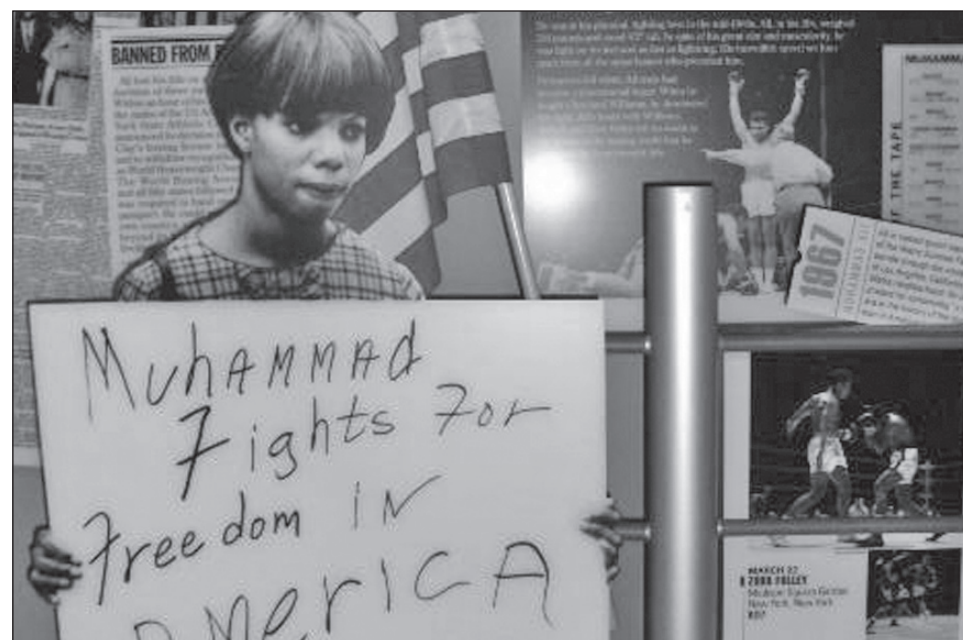


Photo By Larkin Walker

Several areas in the Muhammad Ali Center focus on Ali's work fighting for peace, including his refusal to fight in Viet Nam. While his case was being appealed, Ali toured the country, speaking out against the war on college campuses nationwide.

Center in 2008. It is a non-profit organization and is funded by revenue from admissions and retail sales, memberships and personal donations.

The Muhammad Ali Center boasts six levels devoted to Ali and includes classrooms, art exhibits, and a fantastic view of the Ohio River. Visitors can participate in many interactive activities including a replica diner counter, which illustrates the segregation that Ali had to suffer along

with the other African-Americans in the Louisville area.

There is also a library and archive that offer books, films and documents that relate to Ali. In the fourth level exhibit, "The Greatest," 15 of Ali's best fights can be viewed at six different stations. The aforementioned and more all bring visitors closer to understanding the man behind the gloves.

The first and second levels of the Center

contain classrooms and a gift shop with Muhammad Ali memorabilia, respectively. The third floor begins the journey through Ali's life. The Library and Archives are located on this level along with the Howard L. Bingham Gallery, which features more than 30 pictures from the tumultuous time in America in the 1960s and '70s.

Along with "The Greatest," the fourth floor displays the torch Ali carried in the 1996 Olympics with the intent to inspire visitors to light their own path. This level also has the "Hope & Dream Wall." More than 5000 pictures illustrated by children from nearly 150 countries are displayed in the exhibit.

The orientation movie on the fifth floor shows Ali as an athlete, humanitarian and civil rights activist, but a majority of the floor is focused on his work outside of the boxing ring. The "Ali the Artist" exhibit presents his poetry and drawings while the "Spirituality" exhibit allows visitors to gain a deeper insight into his devotion to Islam. The entire level enlightens visitors about Ali's dedication to his work, his spirit of giving and the confidence that he always exuded.

Finally, the sixth floor holds a 6700-square-foot area available for private use. There is a view of the Ohio River and downtown Louisville from this level. Along with the fantastic views there is an outdoor terrace and a catering staff available for use.

In comments on the Ali Center Web site Ali said, "For many years I have dreamed of creating a place to share, teach, and inspire people to be their dreams." The center is the embodiment of Ali's dream.

Ali fans respect the champ's commitment to integrity

By Ashley Scoby

The great boxer Muhammad Ali's fans span the entire globe, and many of them go to one particular place in order to show their respect for the worldwide hero -- the Muhammad Ali Center in Louisville, Ky. Ali's best-known quality was his perseverance, and this quality helped him achieve the superstar status that he still possesses today. Despite racial bigotry, segregation and losses in the boxing ring, Muhammad Ali fought through, earning him the respect of everyone he encountered.

When asked why Ali had endured as such a significant sports figure for a long period of time, Mike Elledge, a visitor to the center on June 23, mentioned Ali's "magnetic personality" and his ability to "draw people" to him. These qualities not only helped Ali in the boxing ring and in the sporting world, but also in his future endeavors as a humanitarian. Simply helping people, whether it was African-Americans or underprivileged youth, became Ali's focus after his retirement.

Perhaps the most significant work of Ali's career, however, came in the Civil Rights movement. He continually fought for blacks'

civil rights in the United States, and he never failed to speak his mind about what was going on during the 1960s (segregation, prejudice, etc). "Ali started out just as a boxer, but gradually became an activist, and he just began to stand out as an African-American," Charles Baylor, an out-of-town visitor to the Ali Center, said.

Throughout his life, Ali brought "integrity" to the sport of boxing and became "a world-known leader and a folk-hero in the city of Louisville," Baylor said.

In order to become the leader that he was, Muhammad Ali earned the respect of the entire African-American population by working tirelessly to achieve rights for them. Elledge said that one of Ali's greatest achievements was "opening up doors to make everybody equal."

For years, Muhammad Ali has been considered one of the greatest, if not the greatest, in boxing history. But his legacy lives on in another field -- humanitarianism. His caring personality and the work that he did for people across the globe are the main reasons for creating a center dedicated to Ali in his hometown of Louisville, Ky. This particular part of his legacy is also what his fans, such as Charles Baylor and Mike Elledge, remember and respect the best.

Fans still watching the bouts and cheering "Ali!"

By Jessica Borchers

Pictures flashing left and right, and the crowds cheering. Standing in the center of the ring is none other than the HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION OF THE WORLD, MUHAMMAD ALI!!!

Those are the images viewers can see at the Muhammad Ali Center in Louisville, Ky. People from all over the world come to this museum in order to learn about Ali and his life.

From his exciting boxing career to his refusal to be drafted into the Viet Nam War to his work in ending hunger, Muhammad Ali has kept the crowds cheering years after the matches ended.

Jake Brenner, a visitor from Wisconsin and Ali fan, said, "I appreciate Ali because he was good at his job." This was Brenner's first time at the Ali Center. "So far, I've really enjoyed the orientation film and the film in the center ring. It really gave a good timeline of his life all in one."

It was also a first visit for Ruth Rooney. "I really enjoyed watching Muhammad box," Rooney said. "I've hardly seen any exhibits yet. I just arrived, however I must say that what I've seen is pretty impressive so far." She wanted to prove to herself that there is much more to Ali than just boxing.

Both visitors planned to soak up as much as they could on Ali.