

Icon. Muhammad Ali.

The conviction and courage Muhammad Ali has shown throughout his life continues to inspire millions of people around the world. Ali's work to promote respect, hope and understanding, has empowered adults and children everywhere to be as great as they can be. On the occasion of **Muhammad Ali's 70th Birthday**, join us to celebrate a true hero who has never betrayed his principles.

"I'm not the greatest; I'm the double greatest. Not only do I knock 'em out, I pick the round."

Take Nelson Mandela's statesmanship, Brian Clough's mouth, Oscar Wilde's wit and Cary Grant's charm. Add them to the greatest boxer that ever lived and you have some idea of Muhammad Ali's legend. Ali wasn't just the greatest sportsperson of the last century, he was one of the leading figures of the post-war world. His story isn't just about the history he made in the ring, but the obstacles he had to overcome along the way. Ali was born in the South in 1942 when racism was still rife.

He discovered success did not necessarily make people colour blind and tells a story of how he threw his Olympic gold medal, won at the 1960 Games in Rome, into the Ohio River when he was denied entry into a whites-only restaurant.

He had to overcome huge prejudice in his professional career and Americans initially had no time for this brash, trash-talking young fighter. Despite beating Sonny Liston to become world heavyweight champion in 1964, aged just 22, he was castigated when he revealed he had converted to Islam and changed his name from Cassius Clay Junior (what he called his slave name) to Muhammad Ali.

The hate directed towards Ali reached a high in 1967 when he refused to answer the draft to serve in the US Army, as he put it: "I ain't got no quarrel with the Viet Cong... No Viet Cong ever called me nigger."

"I am the greatest! I told you!" A crowd cheers boxing legend Muhammad Ali as he celebrates his 70th birthday at a party in his home town of Louisville, Kentucky. Ali, with his wife Lonnie and sister-in law, met well-wishers for several minutes from a balcony overlooking the lobby of the Muhammad Ali Centre. Partygoers responded with cheers and chants.

Ali Bumaye! Ali Buymaye!

Happy Birthday Muhammad. You will always be the Greatest.