

Ali

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tion.

"He held the torch with the world watching and, somehow, his disability enhanced his persona," said Tom Owen, a Louisville historian and professor. "He continues to have an energetic spirit. You see that man ascending to light the Olympic torch. What city wouldn't want to embrace a native son like that?"

Longtime friend Howard Bingham, a *Life* magazine photographer who has shot hundreds of pictures of Ali since the 1960s, said it was one of the champ's defining moments.

"I told him, 'Ali, this is a time when the world is saying thank you for what you have done and sacrificed, and how you've helped people throughout your life,'" Bingham said.

In a hands-on area de-

signed to look like Ali's training camp in Deer Lake, Pa., visitors can learn how to shadowbox and hit a speed bag.

Onlookers can gawk at the Olympic gold medal Ali he received in Atlanta to replace the one from 1960.

There is also hope the center will become a place where world leaders can come, share their viewpoints and cultivate peace. The Muhammad Ali Institute for Peace and Justice, based at the University of Louisville, plans to hold seminars at the

center to promote peacemaking and conflict resolution.

"We are not a world capital. But I believe they have hope that disputing peoples will come here," Owen said. "I would love to see Muhammad Ali come back

and put his blessing and his encouragement at those tables of reconciliation."

Ali, who currently lives in Michigan with his wife, Lonnie, has long hinted at moving back to the city where he grew up.

"He is the most recognized figure in the history of this city and when visitors ask about him, I point to the center," Owen said. "We hope he has a long and continuing life and hopefully, one day, he will come home."

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