

Muhammad Ali Center set to open in Louisville

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) - The relationship between this city and native son Muhammad Ali always comes back to a story of the brash Olympic boxing champ, then known as Cassius Clay, tossing his 1960 gold medal into the Ohio River in disgust over entrenched racism.

But the story may be apocryphal — Ali later told friends he simply misplaced the medal — and as the years passed, Louisville and Ali eventually came to appreciate each other.

Now, Ali's hometown is ready to unveil a lasting tribute, a museum celebrating the life of one of the 20th century's most recognizable figures.

The Muhammad Ali Center opens Nov. 21, chronicling the life of "The Greatest" inside and outside the

ring, emphasizing his peaceful values and vision of global tolerance, and setting the record straight about that infamous gold medal.

"People will be surprised when they visit the Ali center," said museum spokeswoman Jeanie Kahnke. "Many people only know of Ali as a boxer and a three-time heavyweight champion of the world. What they may not know about him is how he has been a charitable individual for most of his life. That has only grown since he has retired from the ring."

Ali, now 63 and battling Parkinson's Disease, is expected to attend a star-studded opening gala Nov. 19, along with celebrities Will Smith, Angelina Jolie, Jamie Foxx, Jim Carrey, James Taylor and B.B. King. The event is attracting guests from England, New Zealand, Australia,



Muhammad Ali is shown next to the model of the Muhammad Ali Center, June 30, 2003, in Louisville, Ky. The museum celebrating the life of one of the 20th century's most recognizable figures is to open Nov. 21, 2005.

lia, Pakistan, South Africa, Jamaica and Barbados.

"There are very few in the world who affect people the way Ali does," Kahnke said. "We've heard from people

who are suffering from diseases and young kids who were born 15 years after Ali's last fight. Ali gives them the strength to achieve their own goals and fight for their own beliefs."

Ali retired in 1981 with a 56-5 record, 37 knockouts and an Olympic gold medal. By then, the legendary fighting career was only part of his story.

He became the world's best-known Muslim, took a peaceful stand against the

Vietnam War that cost him his heavyweight title and has worked in his later years as a United Nations peace ambassador, helping raise awareness and money for the world's poorest nations.

Organizers broke ground on the \$75 million, 93,000-square-foot project in 2002. Experts on the Vietnam War, Islam, civil rights and other areas helped create a center related intimately to Ali's life. Some of the exhibits were reviewed by longtime

Ali coach Angelo Dundee and biographers Robert Lipsyte and Thomas Hauser.

"When you think about boxing, you just see the athlete on a stage," said curator Susan Shaffer Nahmias. "For many years, Ali's story stopped at the ring. This center shows a picture of Ali through a voice that isn't a sports writer."

Numerous exhibits highlight parts of Ali's life often buried beneath his athletic prowess.

One exhibit aims to set the record straight about the story in Ali's autobiography of him flinging his light heavyweight Olympic gold medal into the river. His since-denied story says he tossed the medal in disgust over continued racism in his hometown after he was refused service in a restaurant and harassed by a group of racist motorcyclists.

Other displays recall the lighting of the Olympic flame at the 1996 Atlanta Games, when a trembling Ali hoisted a golden torch as spectators frantically clicked cameras and stood to give him a loud, emotional ovation. (See Ali, Page 11)

Trump roasts King at Friars Club in New York

NEW YORK (AP) - Ridiculous hair. A talent for overstatement. There was more than enough of both to go around Friday as Donald Trump led a roast of Don King at the Friars Club.

The boxing promoter merrily withstood a barrage of jabs, hooks and uppercuts. While King's electrified 'do seemed the obvious avenue of attack for Trump and the 12 roasting friends and comics, they instead began with a smoking gun.

"I have a catch phrase: 'You're fired,'" Trump said. "Don King has a catch phrase: 'Not Guilty.'"

In 1954, King shot a man who was trying to rob one of his gambling houses and it was ruled a justifiable homicide. In 1966, he was convicted of killing an employee who owed him money, but his sentence was reduced to non-negligent manslaughter.

Comedian Colin Quinn said that having grown up in Cleveland, Ohio, King's subsequent prison term was "upward mobility." He added that the hair of King, Trump and Rev. Al Sharpton, who was also there, "look like the three stages of a forest fire."

But few could resist the comparison of the two Dons.

"We have two slicksters up here today," said Sharpton. "One they call a mogul, the other they call a mugger. That's race in America."



Donald Trump, left, and boxing promoter Don King pose for photos at the Friars Club Roast, Friday in New York.

There were several boxers in attendance for King, who has a reputation for swindling the fighters he promotes. "Smokin'" Joe Frazier, who fought Muhammad Ali in the King-promoted "Thrilla in Manila," was there — but no Mike Tyson.

"I know Mike Tyson is a little annoyed with Don King — he told me while parking my car last night," said Jackie Martling.

"Don King is a big ... thief, and everyone in this room knows it," said Trump. The "Apprentice" star couldn't help comparing his roast last year to King's. He boasted that his drew an audience 600 people larger, though comedian Pat Cooper later insisted Trump's guests had been "comped." As is custom, the affair was filled with bad language, vulgarity and most known racial slurs. After one especially lewd joke, Martling said, "I'm glad you

laughed at that joke. Pat O'Brien left it on my answering machine."

O'Brien was one of the many guests of honor — a lineup that Lisa Lampanelli called "the cast of 'The Surreal Life.'" They included former New York mayor David Dinkins, Gilbert Gottfried, actor Abe Vigoda and even Federico Castelluccio, who played the ponytailed Furio on "The Sopranos."

All the while, the 72-year-old King chuckled along. When it came time for him to take the podium, King lapsed into his trademark flurry of adjectives, including claims that he was "the father of hip-hop" and that "George Walker Bush is a revolutionary."

He did, though, seem to express his overriding philosophy in one emphatic statement: "Performing is what it's all about, but GET THE MONEY."

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