

# Muhammad ali

Literature, Russian Literature



Muhammad Ali Draft refusal Introduction Muhammad Ali, who was born as Cassius Clay in 1942, is one of the greatest boxing icons in the world, whose personality has emerged as controversial, giving him honor and making him vilified at the same time. He changed his name later, after joining a new religious organization which was called the Nation of Islam, established in Detroit Michigan in 1930, to improve the spiritual, the social, the economic and the general welfare of the Africans Americans in the USA (Bingham and Max, 7). Through his exemplary boxing skills, and his wonderful character, he emerged as the most famous athlete in the world, which culminated with his being crowned the Sportsman of the Century and Sports Personality of the Century in 1999, by Sports Illustrated and the BBC respectively (Bingham and Max, 12).

Muhammad Ali childhood and early life in sports

He was born in the year 1942, in Kentucky as the first born in a family of a father who was a painter and a mother who was a housewife (Bingham and Max, 2). He is a predominantly of African-American descent, whose ancestors were the American slaves operating in the South during the pre-civil war period. Despite his father being a Methodist, he allowed his mother to bring up Both Muhammad Ali and his younger brother as Baptists (Bingham and Max, 15). His early boxing career stemmed as a matter of default, when a thief had stolen his bicycle at the age of 12 years, and a boxer policeman advised him to learn boxing, so he could deal with such thieves. He immediately started training two days later with the policeman and went on to win many accolades, until in 1960, where he won his first Olympic gold medal in the 1960 Rome Olympics games, when he was only 18 years old

(Bingham and Max, 37).

### Sports champ

After winning the 1960 Olympic gold medal, it was time for Muhammad Ali to venture into professional boxing and in the same year, he won the first pro fight against a police chief. He ventured into heavyweight boxing immediately after, and won his first heavyweight boxing world champion title in 1964, after defeating the then world champion Sonny Liston (Bingham and Max, 44). In 1971, he challenged the then Boxing Champion Joe Frazier where he lost. In 1974 he fought against George Foreman in the heavyweight championships and once again won, the second heavy weight championship title, after which he went for it the third time against Joe Frazier and emerged the winner in 1975, crowning his as the first three-time heavy weight champion (Bingham and Max, 17).

### Draft refusal

In 1966, at the height of his career, the United States invited Muhammad Ali to join the USA army but he declined the call, citing his religious principles that did not agree with such a move. His faith was against the Vietnam War, for which he was required to go and fight as a member of the US army. The call to join the army was made in 1966, but he objected on the basis of his new faith, Islam, and tried to file appeals for exceptions which failed. In 1967, he went for an army induction test and past all the tests, but finally refused to step forward to symbolize induction (Bingham and Max, 22). Consequently, the New York Athletic Commission stripped him of his World Boxing Association (WBA) Champion title (Bingham and Max, 27). The Commission defended its move by upholding that his refusal to join the

service was against the best interests of boxing sports. He was charged with defying the United States laws regarding selective service, and was sentenced with a 5 year imprisonment, although he was not imprisoned, due to an appeal that he lodged with the Supreme Court which he won, and was consequently reinstated his Boxing Championship titles later in 1971 (Bingham and Max, 52). The Supreme Court observed that he had the right to file for exception to selective service, on the basis of his religion, which was anti-any-form of war.

#### Works Cited

Bingham, Howard L, and Max Wallace. Muhammad Alis Greatest Fight: Cassius Clay Vs. the United States of America. New York: M. Evans, 2000. Print.