U.S. Boxing Great Muhammad Ali Dies at the Age of 74

Phoenix, June 4 (RHC)-- U.S. heavyweight boxing champion Muhammad Ali died Friday evening in Phoenix, Arizona, where he had been hospitalized and treated for respiratory complications. He was 74 years old.

Ali had suffered for over 30 years from Parkinson's Disease, a progressive neurological condition that slowly robbed him of both his legendary verbal grace and his physical dexterity. A funeral service is reportedly planned in his hometown of Louisville, Kentucky.

Even as his health declined, Ali did not shy from politics or controversy, releasing a statement in December criticizing Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump's proposal to ban Muslims from entering the United States.

Born Cassius Clay, he changed his name to Muhammad Ali when he converted to Islam and refused to serve in the Vietnam War, saying that no Vietnamese had ever called him "nigger." Muhammand Ali became an emblem of strength, eloquence, conscience and courage. His fight was not only in the boxing ring, but in society as a whole, struggling against racism and working for a better world.

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