

Sadrud-Din Ali:

A hallmark of consistency and devotion

By Salim Muwakkil

In the days when the World Community of Islam in the West (W.C.I.W.) was the Nation of Islam, Lieutenant Raymond X (Boyd) was one of the most highly-regarded officers in the organization, but one could never tell by his actions — he never acted important.

Today, Sadrud-Din Ali is one of the most highly-regarded men in the W.C.I.W., and although his name has been changed from Raymond Boyd, his actions remain the same.

"I never try to put myself above the average person," Ali explained during a recent Bilalian News interview. "You see," he pointed out, "I know that what I have is not really mine — it is Allah's and I'm just using it."

"I have been taught since I was a child that regardless of what you have or what you get, you must always keep God before you."

Ali grew up in Mississippi during a time when manners in personal relationships were stressed much more than they are today.

"I came up under a strict, religious family," he noted. "They taught me the best according to their knowledge. We would always sit down at dinner and talk about the things of the world."

"My parents taught me quite a bit of how to treat people and how to get along with them," Ali recalled.

HUMANISTIC VALUES STRESSED

It was his parents' stress of humanistic values that led to his interest in the Nation of Islam.

"The Honorable Master Elijah Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be Upon Him) was teaching many of the things I was taught about how to treat people; and I could see that America was not living up to its own principles. So the Master's teachings appealed to me," Ali said.

"My father had always told me that whenever you try to do right, a lot of people will be against you. All of my friends were against me for entering the Nation of Islam, but their objections were foolish and I knew it."

"I made the decision in 1963 to live the life of a Muslim and I thank Allah that me and my wife, Aminah, made that decision. In fact, it was my wife, who through her strong support, helped keep me strong during some rough times," Ali recounted. He had

been married to Sis. Inez — her name at that time — for four years before entering the Nation.

"When we came into the Nation, she had to go through more changes than I did. You know, with the dress code and everything...."

"But there was one thing that really impressed me. The second time I attended the mosque (as it was then called) the Master invited us to his home for dinner. Now, I thought: 'All this time I've been going to Christian churches and the preacher has never invited me to dinner. Even in Mississippi when we would invite the preacher to dinner, he would never invite us.'

"Now, here I was, a nothing, and this man, who at the time I thought was the world's greatest man, invited me and my wife and my baby daughter, Belinda, to dinner."

Belinda is now 27 and her name is now Khalilah. For 10 years she was married to the most famous man in the world, Muhammad Ali.

"One day she came to me and told me she wanted to get married. I asked her who it was she had in mind and she told me, 'Muhammad Ali.' I said, 'Is that right?'"

"I wanted her to finish her education first, but she said marriage wouldn't stop her from going to school. So, after Muhammad came and asked me for her hand, and I saw how sincere both of them were I agreed."

"When I told Muhammad 'okay,' he jumped up and down screaming, 'All praise is due to Allah, I've won again!'"

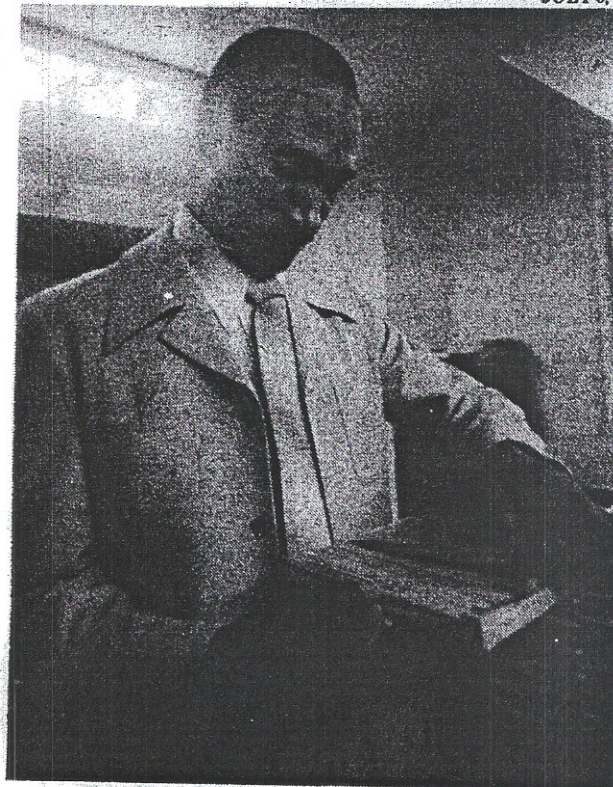
He said that despite the differences between his daughter and the Champ ("that's their business"), "Muhammad and I are better friends than ever."

In addition to Khalilah, he has two daughters: Rasheda (who works in A.R. Leaks' Funeral Home as a mortician), and Shabera (who recently graduated from Flossmoor, Ill. High School); and one son, Komawi (who is assistant manager of a Chicago clothing store).

"Allah has blessed me with a beautiful family and we are very close. None of my four children has caused me one penny's worth of trouble, and I attribute this to Al-Islam."

CONSISTENCY PERSONIFIED

It's difficult for any Chicago-area



(Photo by Wali A. Muhammad)

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W.C.I.W. member to think of the front lobby of Masjid Elijah Muhammad No. 2 without thinking of Ali. He is a fixture at his security post.

"It's something I look upon as simply my duty," he said succinctly, matter-of-factly explaining away something that is considered one of the most hard-to-develop personal habits: consistency.

"In the Nation of Islam, we were always taught to be consistent. Besides, I was working straight days if I weren't sick there was no other place for me to be but in the mosque."

"There was nothing out in the streets that I could have been doing, because I had already done all the things that were supposed to be 'hip' and that was nothing."

MORE DETERMINED

"Now the Emam, W.D. Muhammad, has taken Islam to a higher level and I'm even more determined to stay on this path," Ali declared.

A member of the Nation of Islam for 21 years before the passing of Master Elijah Muhammad, Ali said the impact of Master Muhammad's absence was hard at first.

"When something like that happens, it strikes you pretty hard. It

touches you deeply. But from my understanding of what we had been taught, I knew it would happen sooner or later," Ali explained.

"When Emam W.D. Muhammad, or the Chief Minister, as he was known then, took over, it wasn't a surprise because we had been taught that he would eventually take over that position. So when he came into office, me and my family got together and discussed our feelings and our understanding of things. They eventually understood as I did, and now I see nothing but progress under the leadership of Emam W.D. Muhammad."

"In fact, everything that Emam Muhammad is doing, we were taught he would do. And what I want to do is help him in any way I can. I work with the Blight Arrest Pioneer Patrol (BAPP), and I do everything else I can to assist the Emam in his mission to remake the world," he said.

"When the Emam gave me the name of Sadrud-Din in 1975, at a dinner for W.C.I.W. pioneers, and told me that it meant 'devotion to the community of religion,' I knew that I had to live up to that name."

For a man whose face has virtually become a part of the lobby decor at Masjid Elijah Muhammad No. 2, it's hard to think of a more appropriate name.