

Fine tradition marks the

# Omar's Restaurant

By Samuel Ayyub Bilal

The atmosphere and food at Omar-On-The-Nile Restaurant on Chicago's South Side is delightful, and the service is improving every day. Omar's, once known as the Salaam Restaurant, is located at the busy intersection of 83rd and Cottage Grove Ave.

The menu is highlighted by New York strip steak, southern fried chicken, baked meatloaf, broiled fish, bean soup, cheese and bean pies, and Omar-On-The-Nile punch.

Frequent meetings, banquets and luncheon parties are held at the restaurant by business groups, schools, community organizations, religious gatherings, such as the Seventh Day Adventists and others.

It's going to be that way for a long, long time if owner Henry Omar continues to be the kind of restaurateur and Muslim he has been for several years as a member of the World Community of Islam in the West (WCIW).

During many of those years, Henry Omar was one of the main builders of the Nation of Islam (NOI) showcase, the Salaam Restaurant. He worked there as manager, maitre d' waiter and general man-on-the-job until the

restaurant virtually closed in 1976. But it was a temporary closing, as the NOI was shifting into the more excellently directed WCIW under the leadership of Emam Wallace D. Muhammad.

Mr. Omar became the recent recipient of a partnership in the restaurant which Emam Muhammad allows him to operate as a private owner because private ownership of Muslim-owned businesses allows a more flexible and proper relationship with the community's organizational structure, a better and more efficient service notwithstanding.

As a recent recipient of a National Small Business Association certificate of merit, Mr. Omar exemplifies the emerging Muslim businessmen who follow the leadership of Emam Wallace D. Muhammad.

A brief look at his lifelong business career suggests how the quality of life for the average WCIW member has improved under Emam Muhammad's leadership. That look shows also the WCIW not to be ignoring the institutional and business development of the Bilalian community.

The WCIW community is in fact gearing itself to become even more

effective in the building of the business, economic and human life in the Bilalian community.

Mr. Omar, along with other WCIW business leaders, affirms that Emam Muhammad's leadership is pointedly directing the community towards an improved business, economic and human life.

Mr. Omar's business career is

reaching a new crescendo at Omar's Restaurant where one recent Sunday afternoon the following, typical scene was observed.

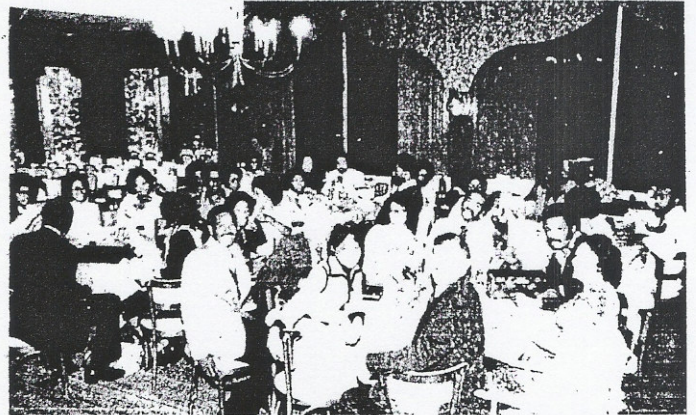
The weekly lecture at Masjid Elijah Muhammad on Stony Island Avenue had ended, and several Muslims and non-Muslims joined an already mixed gathering of diners at the spacious but tidy and polished establishment.

"It's just like it used to be," a patron sitting with others at a table said.

But it was not quite as it used to be, the reality suggested.

During the Salaam's early 1970s heydays, the restaurant's atmosphere was more strained and artificial. Today, Mr. Omar's patrons, hosts and

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HENRY OMAR, seated left of center, operator of Omar's Restaurant, formerly of the Salaam Restaurant, recently hosted the annual holiday party for the Shiloh Seventh Day Adventist teachers.

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