

Floated like a butterfly, stung like a bee

● **1942:** Born **Cassius Marcellus Clay** in Louisville, Kentucky

● **1960:** Olympic light-heavyweight champion, turns professional

● **1964:** Wins world heavyweight championship after holder **Sonny Liston** fails to come out for eighth round. Joins Black Muslims, changes name to **Muhammad Ali**. Marries first wife, model **Sonji Roi**

● **1965:** Retains title by knocking out Liston with controversial "phantom punch"

● **1967:** Refuses to be inducted into U.S. army, claiming *"I ain't got no quarrel with them Vietcong. No Vietcong ever called me nigger."* Sentenced to five years in prison and fined \$100,000. Saved from jail on appeal, but stripped of title, boxing licence revoked and passport impounded. Begins three years in sporting wilderness

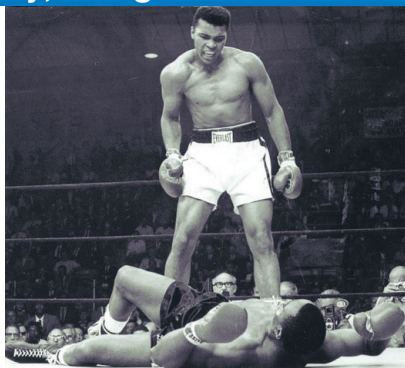
● **1970:** Licence restored after Supreme Court overturns conviction, returns to ring with three-round demolition of **Jerry Quarry**

● **1971:** Ali and new world champion **Joe Frazier** meet at Madison Square Garden in one of the greatest heavyweight fights of all time. Frazier wins on points

● **1974:** Ali wins unanimous points decision in return against Frazier – who had lost title to **George Foreman** – in richest non-title fight in history. Regains heavyweight title in Zaire with extraordinary display of courage and endurance against Foreman in *"the rumble in the jungle"*

● **1975:** Decisive meeting between Ali and Frazier ends when Frazier fails to come out for final round of gruelling *"thriller in Manila"*

● **1977:** Shows first signs of illness but refuses to heed growing clamour to quit.



● **1978:** Grossly overweight and out of condition, he loses title to **Leon Spinks** on split decision but wins it back to become first man to take boxing's greatest prize three times

● **1980:** Clearly past his prime, he is battered to 11th-round knock-out by **Larry Holmes**

● **1981:** Increasingly desperate pleas to quit are again ignored as Ali enters ring for final time on verge of 40th birthday. Loses 10-round decision against **Trevor Berbick**

● **1982:** Diagnosed with Parkinson's Syndrome. Speech becomes slurred, movements slow and uncertain. Retires to Michigan farm with fourth wife **Lonnie** and his nine children. Founds charity WORLD (World Organisation for Right, Liberty and Dignity)

● **1985:** Tries to secure release of four kidnapped Americans in Lebanon

● **1996:** Olympic committee asks him to light Olympic flame at **Atlanta** games

● **2000:** President **Bill Clinton** presents him with lifetime achievement award

● **January 17, 2002:** Muhammad Ali celebrates his 60th birthday

Picture: Popperfoto

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