

He left a legacy

He was one of our own. When he joined the staff of Muhammad Speaks in the early 1970s, he infused an already eager and productive crew with new, youthful vitality. Once firmly on board, Harold Muhammad began to display a quality of genius found only rarely among American journalists, even those of long honorable standing. Indeed, he was more than a journalist. He was a believer in One God, and a dedicated member of the World Community of Al-Islam. He was an inspiration to us all. He left a legacy for us, and we are sure he would be proud of our commitment to carry on the kind of journalism he brought to us and shared with our public.



Harold Muhammad

Harold Muhammad

As I Knew Him

By Curtis Sharif

Tall, gangly, redboned and broadshouldered, curly black hair mingled with gray—his face splashed with a wide toothy smile—this was Harold Muhammad.

"Brother Curtis! As-Salaam-Alaikum," he would greet me. "Wa-Alaikum-Salaam." I would reply, feeling, for some reason, conscious of duty. He was Harold 4X then, Harold 4X Andrews.

We first met in 1971, the year we both became Muslims and members of the then-Nation of Islam. I can see him now, striding, stretching his long legs (and big feet) with a swiftness that seemed to be gaining a step on time.

We first talked in the temple. He was an accountant by profession, but a writer at heart. He was studying Journalism at Georgia State and worked on the school paper where he learned every phase of newspaper production.



Fard Ali Muhammad, son of Harold Muhammad, presents family picture to Emam W.D. Muhammad at Ethnic Survival Day in Atlanta.

—The Staff

The Harold I knew was hard-working, selfless, prolific and productive, an eternal optimist. He wasted no time in putting his thoughts into action and investing effort to turn his dreams into reality.

In rapid-fire order, he joined the Nation of Islam, married a Muslim sister—Ameenah—started two businesses—a Steak 'N' Take and A Dairy Queen—and began writing for **Muhammad Speaks**. Unsalariated and covering his expenses out of his pocket, he fast became one of **Muhammad Speaks'** most prolific and popular reporters. He thoroughly covered the Atlanta news scene while he criss-crossed the South reporting original stories from their origins.

He seemed to live—successfully—on pure faith (though I often wonder whether he saw real things that were beyond the vision of the rest of us). He eventually dissolved the businesses he started and began doing professionally and full time, what he loved most—writing for the benefit of the Bilalian people.

Muhammad Speaks made him a salaried staff member and later appointed him, Atlanta Bureau Chief. He wrote like he talked, with giant swiftness and purpose. His work glowed with an earthy warmth, tempered by a broad, well-developed sense of humor. Harold's creativeness was near-genius. He conceived and produced a tremendously successful exhibition bout between Muhammad Ali and Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson.

Under his guidance and editorship, a monthly community paper, **This is Black Atlanta**, was published and the Black Atlanta Businessman's Association was formed.

On top of this, he found time to do some creative writing: a motion picture screenplay, short stories and poems.

Harold, to me, was a leader by nature who led by example. I often thought of him as a general without an army. In 1975, he got his army under the new leadership of Emam Wallace D. Muhammad—he was appointed minister of the Little Rock, Arkansas Masjid. Islam flourished in Arkansas under his ministry. Within eight months, 14 new masjid were established throughout the state.

Harold Muhammad was killed in an automobile accident, July 3, 1976. His funeral was officiated by Chicago based Sheikh James Shabazz and Mayor Maynard Jackson, and **Bilalian News** officials were among the throng that came to pay their respects.

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Table of Contents

The views of Emam Wallace D. Muhammad are not necessarily expressed in articles and columns in this paper, except those in which he is directly quoted or in items bearing his by-line.

Palestine: Whose rights to the land?	4	Youth Thrust	18
Many Japanese return to Al-Islam	9	Govt. to probe "junk calls"	20
Nurse with a strong community spirit	11	Health and Nutrition	23
Voice from the Campus	13	A short history of Palestine	25
In the Public Interest	15	Words	27
Weddings in Al-Islam	16	Cultural Arts	28-29

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