

World's largest statue of Muhammad Ali unveiled in Lewiston, Maine

New public monument by acclaimed sculptor Zenos Frudakis honors the legacy of 'The Greatest' near site of iconic 1965 rematch with Sonny Liston

LEWISTON, ME, UNITED STATES, June 3, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A 10-foot bronze statue of boxing legend Muhammad Ali—the largest in the world—was unveiled Saturday, May 31, in downtown Lewiston, Maine, near the site of the famous 1965 rematch between Ali and Sonny Liston. The event was attended by community members, city officials, organizers, as well as Governor Janet Mills.

Created by acclaimed Philadelphia sculptor [Zenos Frudakis](#), the statue commemorates not only the anniversary of the historic bout, but also stands as a symbol of resilience for a city still recovering from the 2023 mass shooting that killed 18 people.



(L-R) Architect Tom Platz; President of Bates College Garry Jenkins; Golden Gloves champion Ilyas Bashir; Governor Janet Mills; Mayor Carl Sheline; City Administrator Bryan Kaenrath; artist Charlie Hewitt; and sculptor Zenos Frudakis. Photo: John Xuereb

“This sculpture reflects Ali’s grace, strength, and moral courage,” said Frudakis. “He was a true original—a man who stood firm in his convictions and inspired the world through his words and actions as much as his fists.”

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It’s not about whether you get knocked down—it’s about whether you get back up.”

Zenos Frudakis

The statue is installed at the entrance to Bates Mill No. 5 at 10 Mill St., near the Androscoggin River’s Auburn Bridge, where more than 32,000 vehicles pass daily.

Lewiston artist [Charlie Hewitt](#), who co-initiated the project with architect and developer [Tom](#)

[Platz](#), emphasized the monument's symbol of resilience, transformation, and dignity.

"Ali didn't win every round but he got up and fought every round — and that's how he became arguably the best athlete of the 20th century," said Hewitt "The people of Lewiston get up every morning and fight every round for their families and their communities. They will not be knocked down. That is what we celebrate."

Platz, who attended the 1965 fight as a seventh grader, spearheaded the fundraising efforts through private donations. "Ali was a major part of Lewiston's history," he said. "This statue celebrates our roots in diversity, immigration, and resilience. There's no better time to honor that."

In remarks made during the unveiling, Lewiston City Administrator Bryan Kaenrath said the statue speaks to Lewiston's enduring spirit.

"This is more than bronze and steel. It's a testament to the idea that greatness can emerge in the most unexpected of places—right here in Lewiston," Kaenrath said. "Ali was not only a champion in the ring, but also a global force for justice, dignity, and peace."

Mayor Carl Sheline called the unveiling a moment of shared purpose. "We don't just honor a legend. We recognize a legacy of grit, heart, and the unshakable belief that where you come from doesn't define your destiny—what you fight for does."



"The people of Lewiston get up every morning and fight every round for their families and their communities. They will not be knocked down. That is what we celebrate." - Charlie Hewitt. Photo: John Xuereb



Sculptor Zenos Frudakis with his Muhammad Ali statue in Lewiston, Maine. Photo Credit: Russ Dillingham

Governor Janet Mills reflected on Ali's timeless message.

"When Ali stood over Sonny Liston yelling 'Get up and fight,' he wasn't just talking to his opponent," Mills said. "He was speaking to all of us. And that's what Maine and Lewiston have done—we get up and fight. We'll never get knocked out. We'll never get knocked down. We're still getting up and fighting every day. This is a city that is strong, loud and proud in a state that is strong, loud and proud."

Third-generation Somali American Ilyas Bashir, a Portland Boxing Club fighter and amateur Golden Gloves champion, said Ali's example shaped his own identity.

"Muhammad Ali carried weight in our family—not just because he was a boxing legend, but because he was Black, Muslim, and unapologetically himself," Bashir said. "He showed us what greatness could look like."

Frudakis said he hopes the sculpture serves as lasting inspiration. "It's not about whether you get knocked down—it's about whether you get back up."

The Ali-Liston rematch on May 25, 1965, remains one of the most debated and enduring moments in boxing history. The original bout was relocated to Lewiston after Boston withdrew due to security threats. In just 17 days, local promoter Sam Michael transformed the Central Maine Youth Center (now The Colisée) into a boxing venue, bringing the world's attention to this mill town for one unforgettable night, and forever linking the city to a global sports icon.

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About Zenos Frudakis

Contemporary artist Zenos Frudakis has been a professional working sculptor for nearly five decades. In that time, he has created a diverse range of more than 125 monumental works in public and private collections throughout the U.S. and abroad. His works include the Freedom sculpture in Philadelphia, the U.S. Air Force Memorial Honor Guard in Arlington National Cemetery, and Payne Stewart at Pinehurst, North Carolina, to name a few. An alumnus of Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, he earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts and a master's in fine art from the University of Pennsylvania. Zenos' emphasis has been the figure and the portrait, as demonstrated in his many monumental figure/portrait works, individual portrait busts and bas-reliefs, and animals. He excels at expressing the character and vitality of his subjects while capturing an accurate likeness, with a portfolio of living and historical individuals, and poetic/philosophical sculpture with a socially conscious sensibility. www.zenosfrudakis.com.

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