

**M**ike Joyce is the loving husband of

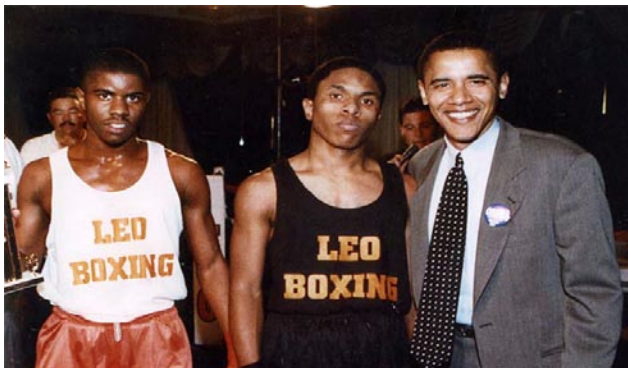
Jamillah Ali, the daughter of legendary boxing champ Muhammad Ali. They are the proud parents of two daughters, Nadia and Amira and one son, Jake.

Mike is a successful attorney, a former champion boxer and a humanitarian. He is also a proud "Leo Man".

Leo High School has been one of the most reputable Catholic schools on the south side of Chicago since first opening their doors in 1926. Leo earned it's great reputation because of their strong academic programs,



excellent sports teams and Leo's focus on developing the Christian spirit in students. Leo has now become famous for keeping its doors and offering the same high quality educational opportunities to the Leo students who now are almost exclusively African



American.

Mike Joyce attended Leo High School in the mid eighties. As a student at Leo, Mike Joyce played football, boxed, served on the student council, was a member of the National Honor Society and graduated as class Salutatorian. As a Leo alumnus Mike serves on the Leo Advisory Board, served as a volunteer football coach and developed a nationally respected amateur boxing program.

"Mike is very passionate about boxing and he has developed dozens of champion boxers during his twenty years of coaching. More importantly, Mike has used boxing to develop hundreds of young men into champions in life," said his wife, Jamillah Ali-Joyce.

Mike loves the City of Chicago, the people of Chicago and the neighborhoods of Chicago. Mike has taken a special interest in the Englewood Community. "It is one of the worst areas in the city, which is precisely why kids in the community need a helping hand" he said. Crime is at an all-time high; the murder rate, drug traffic and gang



activities are some of the major reasons for the impoverishment in the area. A problem that prohibits economic development and growth; companies are not willing to invest in the area, resulting in poor living conditions, abandoned buildings, high unemployment, etc.... However, Mike did not shut up his bowels of compassion. He refused to allow the conditions of the community to prohibit him from investing his time, talent and money.

In 1997, Mike and John Bitoy founded The West Englewood Boys Club. Today, the club serves as a safe haven from gangs, guns, drugs and violence for both boys and girls. Young people from the neighborhood train right alongside of Chicago and Cook County Police Officers and Cook County State's Attorneys. These law enforcement members in turn serve as role models and mentors. Many residents of the inner city community look upon law enforcement officials with contempt and as a group not to be trusted.

Through his Police Athletic League (PAL) boxing clubs Mike Joyce is trying to dispel the notion that all members of law enforcement are brutes. In fact, Mike is known for his big, soft heart, as someone who will reach down and take a person by the hand and pull them up and out. Heavyweight professional boxer Thomas

Hayes is not only a success story but one of the grateful recipients of Mike's compassion.

"I don't know where I would be today, if it was not for this man," said Thomas Hayes. "Before I met Mike Joyce I was full of rage and trusted nobody. He would pick me up from my house and take me to practice. He showed me how to box. He took me places. He showed me how to do things for myself. Mike Joyce never asked me for anything for helping me. People in the neighborhood used to always say, "What does that white man want with you?" Where I came from no man had ever shown any real concern for me and certainly no white man. As I got to know Mike Joyce better I started opening myself up to him. He would stress to me the importance of staying in school and out of trouble. What I know now is that Mike Joyce was setting me up. He was setting me up for success."

It was obvious that Thomas Hayes loved and respected Mike. He was grateful that Mike mentored and befriended him. Thomas Hayes completed a very successful boxing career and became the first person in his family to graduate from college. Currently, Thomas Hayes is giving back to others in his capacity as the Director of the Chicago Park District Boxing Program, which is the world's largest youth boxing program.

In 1993 Mike Joyce founded the Chicago Celtic Boxing Club in the Mt. Greenwood/Beverly Hills neighborhood. It is a place where young people can go and learn how to box while under the watchful eye of older people who who drink coffee and tell tall tales about how it was "back in the day".

Mike Joyce is not only the son in law of Muhammad Ali, he is also the son of

Jeremiah E. Joyce, one of the most influential political figures in Illinois. Senator Jeremiah Joyce was a Chicago Public School Teacher, a Chicago Police Officer, a Cook County States Attorney, a Chicago Alderman and an Illinois State Senator. Jeremiah Joyce is a member of Mensa and a brilliant strategist who is credited with Richard M. Daley becoming Mayor of Chicago. Senator Joyce is also the first public official on record as touting Barack Obama as the first African American President of the United States. Mike Joyce recognizes the fact it was his father's work in public service which made him feel obligated to use his talents to help those less fortunate.

## My Personal Touch

I had the privilege of meeting Mike Joyce in person. He was accompanied by his wife Jamillah, son Jake and Thomas Hayes. We met at Vindicated Magazine First Year Anniversary. The event was held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Glenn Ellyn, IL on July 25-27, 2014. Prior to the formal introduction, I met him over the phone. My colleague (Geneva Baker-Cotton) was extremely excited about the introduction. She went on-and-on about how Mike Joyce was a tremendous blessing in the community. She talked about his wife and



father-in-law who we both were huge fans of "Muhammad Ali." She continued to push the meeting..."Dr. Harris, he is someone you



need to know. He is someone you need to interview, she said." Okay, I thought, let me hurry up and meet him before I am harassed to the point that I can't get my work done, I thought to myself (lol). I hung up the phone



and laid back in my chair. Wow! That would be great to meet Muhammad Ali's son-in-law. A few days later, I made the call and was extremely surprised to hear a soft spoken man, who knew how to quickly captivate you, drawing you into his world.

During the telephone interview, I learned that Mike had just lost a family member, but he was gracious enough to complete the interview. My heart was touched because most people would cancel all their appointments for the day. He didn't waste

words, but gave a very thought provoking interview.

At the end of the interview, I was thanking Geneva. She was right about Mike; he was a very nice person. I discerned his heart immediately. It was big and what was even more interesting is that his love had no color. I did not detect an ounce of racism. I understand why Thomas Hayes loves and respects him. And he was definitely someone our Vindicated readers needed to know. They needed to know that "Someone Still Cares."

There are people in this world and yes, even in Chicago that care about people and are willing to sacrifice their time, talent and money to propel others into their destiny. Mike truly is one of those people. He is an excellent role model, mentor, coach and friend. His reputation in the community speaks for itself. On the inside of that rough exterior is a wonderful, God fearing person. Mike has the heart of the Lamb.

And I didn't give it a second thought when he was nominated to receive the "Kingdom of Excellence Award." I was looking forward to presenting the award.

On another note, his son Jake stole the hearts of the people during the meeting. Jovial, like all the children in attendance and doing what every child does well...play.

Mike was every bit dad with one eye on Jake who was trying his best to get away from mom; yet focused on what he would say, when called to accept his award. It was a beautiful sight. I could tell just from the way he handled Jake that he was a great dad.

By Dr. Michelle Harris



**Jeremiah Joyce and Jake Joyce**