

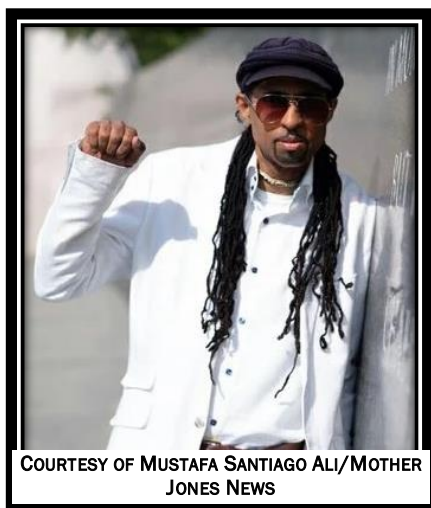
PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

MUSTAFA SANTIAGO ALI

policy maker, international speaker, professor

"If you look at all the great movements, the social justice movements, the civil rights movements, they were all anchored in culture and in the arts. It was what gathered people together, it's what solidified them, and it's also what helped to bring about change."

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Background Information

Ali's involvement in social justice issues organically occurred. He descended from a long line of family members dedicated to social justice and civil rights issues.ⁱ His dad focused on workers' rights and expected his children to be involved in activism.ⁱⁱ Ali developed an interest in environmental justice. At 16, he joined Environmental Careers Organization (ECO), an Environmental Protection Agency program that specifically focused on minority students gaining experience in environmental activism.ⁱⁱⁱ

Ali's Resistance

During Ali's time at the Environmental Careers Organization, he was a founding member of the EPA's Office of Environmental Justice. He remained at the organization for 24 years.^{iv} Ali focused on creating programs that prevented or alleviated the toxic pollution load in Black, Indigenous, and low-income communities.^v Ali joined and worked at organizations focused on environmental justice issues. He also shared his ecological expertise with professors and the Hip Hop Caucus senior vice president.^{vi} Ali's environmental justice field experiences focused on the voices of marginalized communities. Ali used community-based research rather than approaches that solely centered on Western scientific knowledge.^{vii} Mustafa Ali's work as a national speaker, policymaker, and facilitator focused on educating communities worldwide about environmental justice.

Achievements

Ali's work highlighted how making environmental justice knowledge accessible is crucial for political participation in the most impacted communities.^{viii} Most importantly, Ali stressed using holistic approaches besides Western empirical knowledge to revitalize historically marginalized and excluded communities.

Essential Questions

1. How did Mustafa Santiago Ali become involved in environmental justice issues?

2. How did Mustafa Santiago Ali's various roles in environmental organizations prepare him to change the way African Americans viewed environmental justice?

3. ***"All the significant, influential social justice and civil rights movements were anchored in culture and the arts. It was what gathered people together, it is what solidified them, and it is also what helped to bring about change."***
 - a. How is art a revolutionary tool in unifying people in social movements?

ⁱ Oklahoma Energy Today. "Former Longtime EPA Worker Explains His Resignation While Pruitt Headed the Agency," February 29, 2020. <http://www.okenergytoday.com/2020/02/former-longtime-epa-worker-explains-his-resignation-while-pruitt-headed-the-agency/>.

ⁱⁱ Segerstrom, "A Former EPA Program Leader Describes the Path Forward for Environmental Justice"

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^{iv} Segerstrom, "A Former EPA Program Leader Describes the Path Forward for Environmental Justice"

^v Segerstrom, Carl. "A Former EPA Program Leader Describes the Path Forward for Environmental Justice." *Mother Jones* (blog).

<https://www.motherjones.com/environment/2020/12/mustafa-santiago-ali-describes-the-path-forward-for-environmental-justice/>.

^{vi} "A Former EPA Program Leader Describes the Path Forward for Environmental Justice"

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^{viii} "Former Longtime EPA Worker Explains His Resignation While Pruitt Headed the Agency"