

THE NEGRO LEAGUES COURIER

Newsletter of SABR's Negro League Committee

"We are the Ship; All Else Are the Sea"

August 2005

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Editor: Col. Sammy J. Miller

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## Hall of Fame Announces Plans for Negro League Inductions

### Voting Committees Drawn From NLC and NLRAG

The following is taken from a statement released July 26, 2005:

COOPERSTOWN, N.Y.: The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum's Board of Directors approved holding a special election of Negro leagues and pre-Negro leagues candidates to the Hall of Fame in 2006. The announcement comes on the heels of the completion of a landmark study on the history of African Americans in Baseball, from 1860-1960. Based on the results of that important study, the Board of Directors felt it was the right time to hold a special election.

"The record of the African-American contribution to our National Pastime was largely missing until recently," said Hall of Fame Chairman Jane Forbes Clark. "With extensive research and a statistical analysis now complete, the Board felt it was the right time to review Negro Leagues and pre-Negro leagues individuals with regards to Hall of Fame election. The guidelines adopted will allow for any worthy candidates to have another chance at election in 2006."

Earlier this month, the Board appointed screening and voting committees. Under the guidelines established, a Screening Committee will construct ballots and a Voting Committee will meet to vote on the ballots. Former Major League Baseball Commissioner Fay Vincent will serve as the non-voting chairman of both committees. Frank Robinson, a Hall of Famer and Board member, has been asked to offer his advice and assistance to Vincent and both committees. Any candidates elected by the Voting Committee in February 2006 would be inducted in Cooperstown during Hall of Fame Weekend in July 2006.

Written recommendations for inclusion on the ballots from fans, and historians not a part of the committees, will be accepted through the month of October. Recommendations can be sent by e-mail to [info@baseballhalloffame.org](mailto:info@baseballhalloffame.org), or can be submitted by mail to: Committee on African-American Baseball, 25 Main Street, Cooperstown, NY 13326. A letter or e-mail of receipt will acknowledge all proposals. All proposals will be made available to the Screening Committee and a final set will be kept for archival purposes.

The five-member Screening Committee appointed by the Board of Directors will meet in November to develop two ballots: One ballot of Negro leagues players, managers, umpires, executives; and one ballot of candidates who preceded the formation of Negro leagues. The Screening Committee will use the statistics and narrative from the landmark study to determine the ballots. The Screening Committee members include Adrian Burgos, Dick Clark, Larry Hogan, Larry Lester and Jim Overmyer, each of whom contributed to the reports and have a deep knowledge of the subject matter. Complete biographies of the five committee members can be found at [www.baseballhalloffame.org](http://www.baseballhalloffame.org).

A 12-member Voting Committee, inclusive of the Screening Committee, appointed by the Board of Directors, will meet in February 2006 to review the final ballots of candidates. After open discussions over two days, committee members will cast paper ballots and vote "yes" or "no" for each candidate. Any candidate with "yes" votes on at least 75% of ballots cast will earn election to the Hall of Fame. The twelve voting committee members and their areas of expertise in African-American baseball history include:

Todd Bolton, Latin America  
 Greg Bond, 19<sup>th</sup> Century  
 Adrian Burgos, Latin America  
 Dick Clark, Negro Leagues  
 Ray Doswell, overall knowledge  
 Leslie Heaphy, women's history, Negro Leagues  
 Larry Hogan, overall knowledge  
 Neil Lanctot, Negro Leagues Eastern teams  
 Larry Lester, Negro Leagues  
 Sammy Miller, Eastern and Western teams  
 Jim Overmyer, Eastern teams and 19<sup>th</sup> century  
 Robert Peterson, overall knowledge.

Dick Clark, who will sit on both the Selection Committee and the Voting Committee sent the following statement to the office of *The Negro Leagues Courier* shortly after the statement by the Hall of Fame was released.

"I, along with everyone else devoted to this part of baseball history, am indeed thrilled with this announcement. For too long, due a lack of reliable statistics, the Negro Leagues were sorely under represented at the Hall of Fame.

Due to the work made possible by the Hall of Fame grant for the study of African American baseball history, this situation can be corrected and I am honored beyond words at being chosen as one of the individuals for this monumental task.

I can honestly say that never in my wildest dreams ever believe such a thing would ever happen. Since it has, I am going to do my utmost to insure that all deserving players find a place in the Hall of Fame."

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Send all correspondence, both Committee and Newsletter related, to Committee Co-Chair Dick Clark, 1080 Hull, Ypsilanti, MI 48198-0472, Home (734) 487-5273. E-mail: TSTEARNES@aol.com. All \*\* are available for postage and a SASE from Dick Clark. Please be sure to include enough postage, usually stamp/4 pages.

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### Contributors

Despite the fact that I do all the work, I am FORCED by the powers that be to acknowledge EVERYONE that contributes to our humble rag. They are: Todd Bolton, Dick Clark, Leslie Heaphy, Lou Hunsinger, Ted Knorr, Jeremy Krock, Larry Lester, Jerry Malloy, Gary Maurer, Bob Peterson, Bill Platt, Jay Sanford, Lucky Smith, Wayne Stivers, and Lyle Wilson.

### Committee News & Research Requests

Larry Lester would like our readers and committee members to answer the following question for him if they would be so kind. What four athletes, or four Negro Leaguers, or four baseball players would you put on Mount Rushmore? And why? You can send your answers to Larry at [noritech@gbonline.com](mailto:noritech@gbonline.com). Be sure to make the title of your e-mail Mt. Rushmore.

Adrian Burgos had a piece in the 2/05 issue of the JOURNAL OF SPORT & SOCIAL ISSUES entitled "Entering Cuba's Other Playing Field: Cuban Baseball and the Choice Between Race and Nation, 1887-1912."

The Negro Leagues Committee Annual Report is available. \*\*1pp

### Obituaries

Lyman Bostock, former member of the Birmingham Black Barons, passed away on June 24, 2005. He was 88.

Clyde Henry Williams, Sr., former pitcher for the 1947-50 Cleveland Buckeyes died in Detroit, MI, June 5, 2005. He was born April 9, 1920 in Clarksdale, MS

### Negro League Related Articles

THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER  
 6/23/05, "A Chat With Buck O'Neil Inspires Awe" \*\*3pp

THE STAR TRIBUNE, 6/29/05,  
 "O'Neil Finds Joy In Past and Present" \*\*2pp

ST. PAUL PIONEER PRESS, 6/28/05  
 "They Played to Prove Something" \*\*2pp

THE DETROIT NEWS, "Negro Leagues Are Part of Detroit Lore" \*\*2pp

THE DEMOCRAT-LEADER, 6/15/05,  
 "Glasgow Celebrates John Wesley Donaldson Day" \*\*3pp

COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE,  
6/11/05, "Restoration of a Lost Legacy: Glasgow  
Honors Former Standout of Negro Leagues"  
\*\*6pp

"Remembering Jackman" \*\*2pp  
FOXSPORTS.COM, "Ranking  
Baseball's All Time Greatest Catchers" \*\*2pp  
KCROYALS.COM, 07/10/2005,  
"Negro League Greats honored IN KC", \*\*2pp  
TWINSBASEBALL.COM, 07/10/2005,  
"Saluting the Negro Leagues", \*\*2pp  
PHILLY.COM, 6/28/05,  
"Neighborhood Remembers Negro Leagues",  
\*\*3pp

KANSAS CITY CALL, 5/27/05,  
"Negro Leagues Takes It Show On the Road -  
Kansas City Is Next Stop on Mobile Tour"  
\*\*1pp. A complete schedule of this traveling  
exhibit can be found at  
[www.roadway.com/baseball/tour\\_stops.html](http://www.roadway.com/baseball/tour_stops.html)

### Recent Events

The following report on the recent Jerry  
Malloy Research Conference in Chicago was  
supplied by Ted Knorr and Leslie Heaphy:

"Nearly 70 people gathered in Chicago  
from June 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> for the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Jerry  
Malloy Negro league Conference. I (Ted)  
traveled with Lou Hunsinger via Amtrak and met  
Bob Bailey there to form our room. The  
highlights of the trip to Chi-town were, on the  
positive side, a nice meal with cool jazz at the  
Crawford grille in Pittsburgh and, on the negative  
side, the train departing two and a half hours late  
and losing another ninety minutes the rest of the  
way.

The conference opened with, so I heard,  
an excellent presentation on integrating (no pun  
intended) Negro league Baseball into secondary  
education curriculums. Leslie Heaphy, Larry  
Lester, and our host Eddie Bedford were the  
presenters.

Given our lateness we missed several  
presenters, in addition to the opening session on  
secondary education, including 1960 East-West  
game starter Ernest Whitfield's poetry, Amy  
Essington's talk on John Ritchey in the Pacific  
Coast League, and the first player panel featuring  
Ted "Double Duty" Radcliffe.

We arrived, however, just in timeto hear  
a fantastic presentation by Adrain Burgos on

Alex Pompez. It turns out Pompez was much  
more influential in Negro and organized ball than  
most of us imagined.

Next, after a much needed shower, was  
a trip to New Comiskey, er...U.S. Cellular Field,  
for the Dodgers-White Sox game. The all you  
can eat buffet was very welcome by Lou and I as  
our long Amtrak journey, mercifully, did not  
include much food. I had three hamburgers, a  
couple of hot dogs, various salads and a few  
beers. The Dodgers fared worse, getting shut out  
quickly by Mark Buerhle. Ernest Whitfield had  
the honor of throwing out the first pitch. We all  
got free 1959 Go Go Sox caps and the Big Hurt,  
Frank Thomas, treated us all to the 441<sup>st</sup> home  
run of his career.

After the game we visited the Negro  
League Café in a God forsaken section of  
Southside Chicago. Nice spot. A player panel  
there featured Ted Radcliffe, Minnie Minoso,  
and Ernest Whifield.

Saturday morning opened with John  
Freyer, who was pinch hitting for some  
individuals who were unable to attend, recapping  
early Chicago baseball. He was followed by a  
reading of Tim Rives paper on three Negro  
League players paroled from Leavenworth to the  
custody of Rube Foster's American Giants.

Leslie Heaphy wrapped up the morning  
with a review of Frank Leland's Giants to end the  
research presentation portion of the conference.  
She then continued to hold the podium as she  
conducted a trivia contest which, after my pack  
leading 7 of 10 in round one, I failed to qualify  
for the finals. Bob Bailey, Paul Debono, and  
three time champion Dick Clark all advanced.

Another player panel was held which  
featured Johnny Washington, Al Pressman,  
Charles Johnson, and Walt Owens.

In addition to the main events all those  
attending had plenty of opportunity to network  
and buy. A number of vendors brought their  
wares as well as three artists, Dane Tilghman,  
Elise Dodelis, and Dominic Denaro, who showed  
off their Negro League work. Larry Lester  
shared a number of excellent displays about the  
East West Classic and women in the Nedgro  
Leagues.

The highlight of the conference, for  
many of us, was the unveiling of eight  
gravestones for Negro League players whose  
graves had been up until now unmarked. They  
are buried at Chicago's Burr Oak Cemetery with  
other Negro League players of great athletic and  
heroic merit. We visited the graves of John

Donaldson, Jimmie Crutchfield, Bingo DeMoss, writer Wendell Smith and Dan Burley among others. Ted Trent's was the featured site where a very nice memorial was held which was very humbled by being able to participate.

In addition to the player's graves we found those of Ezzard Charles, Dinal Washington, Willie Dixon and, perhaps the most moving, the recently exhumed and reburied Emmett Till. Words cannot convey.

Later that evening, a very nice soul food banquet was held and I got to do the invocation. Afterwards Dick Clark won the trivia contest and Lloyd Johnson won the very brief APBA contest utilizing the 1942 Kansas City Monarchs behind the excellent twirling of Satchel Paige.

Sunday featured a Malloy Conference Executive Committee meeting in which some needed direction and groundwork was provided to ensure a solid future for this now 9 year old conference. It appears that Portsmouth, VA, Birmingham, Chicago, Memphis, Harrisburg, and Homestead, PA all have some interest in hosting future conferences.

The Negro Leagues Committee held it's meeting which drew about 23 attendees. Dick Clark briefed us on the research project and handed out Robert Peterson Awards to Joe Mitchell and Gregg Truitt for the annual Judy Johnson Night, Jeremy Krock for the Cemetery Marker project and Wayne Stivers for his continued biographical research.

Dave Stevens presented a nice talk on William White, born a slave in 1860, who was likely the first player of African American descent in major league baseball.

Eddie then wrapped up the conference and Lou and I headed home anxious for Kansas City in 2006 which will commemorate Satchel Paige's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.

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The following report concerning some of the events that took place during All Star Weekend in Detroit were submitted by Dick Clark:

Negro Leaguers were much in evidence throughout the recent 2005 Major League All-Star Game celebration from July 8th through July 12th.

On Saturday the 9th, a Negro Leagues Brunch & Conversation was held at the Museum of African American History, in Detroit. It was held in conjunction with SHADES OF GREATNESS: Art Inspired By Negro Leagues

Baseball, on display at the museum. A truly fabulous exhibit with terrific art work covering various forms. You should see it if the opportunity arises.

Louis Manley Jr and Lucky Smith, co-founders of the Michigan Chapter of Negro League Baseball Players were given the task of having players at all the many events of the weekend. Mel Duncan, Cecil Kaiser, and Ron Teasley were on hand for the brunch and the panel discussion. It was extremely successful and all had a wonderful time. Many Detroit Tiger officials were on hand. A surprise visitor was Sharon Robinson, Jackie's daughter, I completely enjoyed myself as did everyone in attendance.

Later that day stopped by Tony Dee's, In Oak Park, Michigan and picked up some nice Negro League shirts. Tony really has a lot of great items. Some I have never seen anywhere else. Check out his web site at [www.TONYDEESNEGROLEAGUE.com](http://www.TONYDEESNEGROLEAGUE.com).

On Saturday night Ron Teasley was a featured speaker at a church gathering.

Sunday evening NIKE put on FROM THE SHADOWS TO THE SPOTLIGHT: Honoring American Baseball's Negro Leagues. This was an invite only affair and was held at the African American Museum. Players in attendance were Ron Teasley, Cecil Kaiser, Mel Duncan, Alton King, Foster Graham, Joe Douse, plus Wally Triplett, the first Black football player who was drafted and signed with an NFL team (The Detroit Lions).

Buck O'Neil was there also with Raymond Doswell and Bob Kendrick from the Negro League Baseball Museum. Buck was the host for a short program that evening. The biggest thrill for myself was that Nettie Stearnes was there with daughters Rosilyn and Joyce and family, a real treat for me.

Hardy congratulations to Lucky Smith and Louis Manley Jr. for doing proman work on behalf of all involved. Also, thanks go to Larry Harlow and Julie Holloway of the NIKE for a wonderful evening.

On Monday, Louis and Lucky accompanied Mel Duncan, Cecil Kaiser and William Barnes to The All-Star FanFest. They signed autographs and enthralled the crowd once again. I sure was happy to be able to be a part of the festivities.

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The following report on SABR 35 was submitted by Dick Clark:

SABR 35 was held in Toronto from August 4-7th. This is why our newsletter is a little late. The convention was very successful and hats are off to the organizers for an excellent job. Our committee meeting was later for a change (6:00PM) and was attended by 36. I read The Hall Of Fame press release (about half the folks were unaware of it) and then fielded questions for the remainder of the time. Many were very challenging and I believe everyone was much more informed after the meeting concluded.

The highlights of the convention were Larry Lester's poster presentation on the East-West All-Star Game was the winner and Peter Morris again was the best for oral presentation. Hardest congratulations to both.

The convention publication DOMINIONBALL: Baseball Above the 49th and edited by Jane Finnan Dorward, has several NLC related articles. Integration in Quebec: More than Jackie; Jim Crow Comes North; and The Man-Dak League, 1950 - 1957, are worth contacting the SABR office to purchase the 124 page book.

Going on the same weekend as I was in Canada was the 11th Annual Negro Leagues Tribute Game, at Comerica Park. The Michigan Chapter of Negro League Baseball Players worked with the Detroit Tigers. Ten players were honored, Joe Douse, Mel Duncan, Herald Gordon, Gene Johnson, Marvin Jones, Cecil Kaiser, Alton King, Jim Moore, Ralph Palmer, and Ron Teasley were introduced on the field by Mason of 105.9 KISS FM (Cecil was on his Saturday morning radio show). Nettie Stearnes and daughters, Joyce and Rosilyn were also there. Tiger President David Dombrowski spent some time with the players, as well. Tony Dee also successfully promoted the Negro Leagues with a wealth of merchandise offerings. A truly great night for all. Thanks to Lucky Smith and Louis Manley for their efforts and this report.

### **The Final Pitch**

I would like to add a single comment about the Hall of Fame announcement and my being named to the voting Committee. YES!

Col. Sammy J. Miller