

The Courier

A Publication of SABR's Negro Leagues Committee

"We are the Ship, All Else the Sea"

Editor, Larry Lester

December, 2014

In the News

UCLA honors Jackie Robinson by retiring No. 42 for all athletic teams

On November 22, the UCLA Bruins honored Jackie Robinson by retiring the former four-sport athlete's iconic No. 42 for all of its athletic teams.



The school announced the honor Saturday night during the Bruins' football game against Southern California.

Robinson played baseball, basketball and football and ran track at UCLA from 1939-41 before breaking baseball's color barrier with the Brooklyn Dodgers. The No. 42 was painted on the Rose Bowl turf.

Although Robinson wore **No. 28** as a UCLA football player, the school chose his historic Dodgers number for the program-wide honor.

UCLA is honoring the 75th anniversary of Robinson's arrival on campus. On November 21st, the school collectively named **22 sports facilities** the **Jackie Robinson Athletics and Recreation Complex**.

The facilities include **Pauley Pavilion**, the **Los Angeles Tennis Center**, the **J.D. Morgan Athletics Center** and numerous pools and gyms on UCLA's Westwood campus.

UCLA is honoring Robinson on the 75th anniversary of his arrival at the school. Robinson's widow, **Rachel**, attended a naming ceremony at the school's track and field stadium.

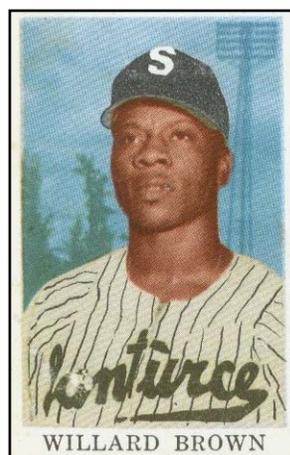
Robinson played baseball, football and basketball and ran track at UCLA from 1939-41. The UCLA football team will wear Robinson's iconic No. 42 on its helmets for Saturday's game on November 29, against Southern California at the Rose Bowl.

Three UCLA athletes who currently wear No. 42 will continue to wear it until they graduate.

Sancture Sports Hall of Fame 2014 Inductees

Board Director **Jorge Colon Delgado** reported on October 6, at a Press Conference at **Sixto Escobar Stadium**, in San Juan, Puerto Rico, the **Sancture Sports Hall of Fame** announced eight inductees. Among them, were two well known Negro League players, **Willard "Home Run" Brown** and **Bob Thurman**.

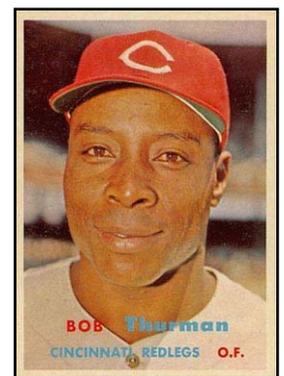
Brown was the best hitter in the Puerto Rican Professional Baseball League. He won the triple crown, twice (1947/48 and 1949/50), and was



selected MVP in 1949/50. He is the record holder for lifetime batting average (.350) and slugging percentage (.604). He also established a record for home runs in a season with 27, and run batted in with 97. He is the only imported player to bat more than .400 at two positions: second base and outfield.

Although he played in the shadow of Willard Brown, Bob Thurman is the lifetime leader in Home Runs (120) and Runs Batted In (566). He batted over .400 once, and as a pitcher, he had a W/L record of 39-32. Thurman played 12 seasons in Puerto Rico; 11 with Sancture and his last season with **Ponce**.

In 2013, Brown and Thurman were selected among the 75 best players from the Puerto Rican League. A list that includes such greats as **Reggie Jackson**, **Willie Mays** and **Roberto Clemente**.



Dick Clark, R.I.P.

There were two real McCoys from Ypsilanti, Michigan: Elijah McCoy and Richard Clifford Clark. Dick Clark was the most genuine person known to mankind. Liked by all, respected by many. Diogenes stopped looking for an honest man, when he met Sir Richard. He was charming, brilliant, and bitter - sometimes all at the same time. Clark's opinions were honest and sometimes unfiltered. You have to respect a man for that! As many of us who knew him, we are better men, fathers and husbands for knowing him.

He was a dog's best friend. And he was this dog's best friend. Richard "Dick" Clark, 68 years old, my mentor, my buddy, my homey, my roomy, uncle to my daughters, even ate my wife's cooking, and an inspirational leader to many, passed away Monday morning, December 8th.

Like our mutual friend **Jerry Malloy**, he was someone who didn't compromise on being the person only he could be. Dick Clark was someone who didn't hold back on sharing his gifts to research, fact check or befriend a ball player or historian in need. He was a Negro League savant. No one, absolutely no one, knew more about Negro League history than Dick Clark. We had to ban him from Trivia Contests because he knew the answers before the questions were asked. He had a mathematical mind palace, and probably could have moon walked with Einstein or Tesla. Dick's brilliancy often shined thru his unique sense of humor.

Thirty years ago, I joined the **Society for American Baseball Research** (SABR) with Dick Clark serving as chairman of the Negro Leagues Committee. Before technology took over, he welcomed me to the organization, and each week we faithfully wrote, and also ran up some significant long distance telephone bills. Back in the day, you had to have lots of postage stamps to keep up with his correspondences. Two years

later, we met in person for the first time in Washington, DC, at the 17th SABR National Convention, and became best-buds immediately.

The avid diet-Pepsi drinker was my co-editor (or co-pilot) for *The Negro Leagues Book*, called by some the bible of black baseball. He also contributed to more than 100 books on Negro Leagues history. Some of his last words from his hospital bed were, "I'm Sorry Larry, but I'm Going Home!" Dick, **Wayne Stivers** and myself wanted to complete the ultimate Negro League Encyclopedia, before either of us were called home.

Our constant companion, **Rick Meister**, who had been on bedside watch since day one, was part of the quartet that often broke bread together. We had sleepovers at each of our homes. The Four Tops worked on several committees, conferences, letter-writing campaigns, and through collaborative efforts with like-minded

Clark with Ron Teasley, Ernie Nimmons, Minnie Forbes, Pedro Sierra & Walt Owens, August 2014



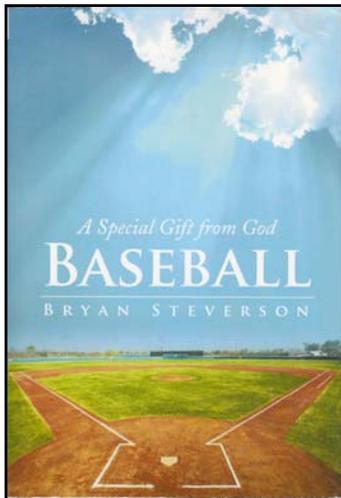
individuals, we reopened the doors of Cooperstown in 1987, to get 25 more black ball veterans in the National Baseball Hall of Fame, beginning with **Ray Dandridge**.

However, all good things must come to an end. We all have a reservation in the upper room, without the privilege of cancellation. Despite our best game, Father Time is still undefeated.

Well the dogs are now whistling a new tune, barking at the new moon. I will miss my dear friend, and will carry his thoughts with me each and every day, until my call to home comes. Clark was as fine a gentleman as one could meet.

From his hospice bed Dick whispered that any donations be sent to the **SABR**, 4455 E. Camelback Road, Suite D-140, Phoenix, Arizona 85018, with funds earmarked to the **Jerry Malloy Conference**. Or click here to donate: <https://sabr.site-ym.com/donations/donate.asp?id=6149> Clark's last cry was, "Please keep the legacy alive!"

A Special Gift from God: Baseball by **Bryan Steverson**. Scripture becomes evident in baseball, if we only look. As a special gift from God, many examples are herein detailed.



If we can find God's Word in baseball, we can find it elsewhere also.

Baseball is one of many observable archetypes. Bryan's book attempts to capture how scripture and our Lord's Word can be seen in everyday life. The word, theophany is a manifestation of

God in the Bible that is tangible to the human senses. In its most restrictive sense, it is a visible appearance of God in the Old Testament, often, but not always, in human form. Some of these theophanies are founded throughout the game of baseball as suggested in his book.

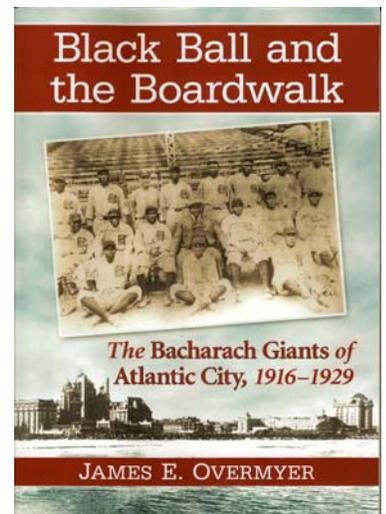
Reading this work reveals the wonderful biblical connections with several players including; **Jackie Robinson, Gil Hodges, Charlie Gehringer, Sandy Koufax, Hank Greenberg, Bobby Thomson, Hank Aaron, Satchel Paige, Stan Musial, Willie Stargell, Dale Murphy, Roberto Clemente**, and others. If you are not afraid of an epiphany or a revelation, I challenge you to read this inspirational book.

Steverson is a member of SABR, the National Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, a regular presenter at the Jerry Malloy Negro League Conference, and author of the 2011 book, **Amazing Baseball Heroes**. He provides presentations on baseball to numerous organizations, universities, and national conference. Steverson is married with five children and nine grandchildren.

For your copy contact Steverson at: steverson@carter.net

Black Ball and the Boardwalk: The Bacharach Giants of Atlantic City, 1916-1929 by **James E. Overmyer**. The Giants' accomplishments took place against an historical backdrop of a change in the African-American experience. The original players from Jacksonville, Florida, joined the northward and black migration during World War I. The team was named after **Harry Bacharach** -- an Atlantic City politician running for mayor -- as a way to keep his name before the city's black community. The Giants were immediately successful, and soon played the best semi-professional teams in their region, as well as the top black teams from the East and Midwest. They entered the first Negro League on the East Coast in 1923, and won the league championship twice before the decade ended. This book chronicles the Giants' pivotal role in the development of black baseball in Prohibition Era Atlantic City, and the careers of the men who made it possible.

Along with the narrative, Overmyer has included a game by game won-lost log of each Bacharach season. Also included are complete seasonal rosters with positions played; complete seasonal pitching and batting records, broken down between all games played and league games only.



In his well researched book, discover the greatness of players like; **Sir Richard Lundy, John Henry "Pop" Lloyd, Oliver "Ghost" Marcell**, and pitchers **Dick "Cannonball" Redding, Luther "Red" Ferrell**, and **Claude "Red" Grier**.

Jim Overmyer, a SABR member, and frequent contributor to the **Jerry Malloy Conference**, writes and lectures on baseball history, with a primary focus on African-Americans.

Copies are available at: jimovermyer@verizon.net

Sunrises!

SEND YOUR FAVORITE NEGRO LEAGUER A **BIRTHDAY CARD**.

DECEMBER

2ND - HENRY ELMORE - 73
3RD - **BILL HAYDEN - 90**
4TH - TED TOLES, JR. - 89
6TH - **BILL LITTLE - 80**
7TH - ENRIQUE MAROTO - 82
9TH - CLIFFORD "QUACK" BROWN - 84
14TH - HENRY SAVERSON - 85
16TH - JOE MARBURY - 76
20TH - **MALHON DUCKETT - 92**
21ST - CHARLES WELLS - 83, PAUL CASANOVA - 73
23RD - MAYNARD JORDAN - 86
25TH - JOHN MITCHELL - 77
26TH - **ORLANDO O'FARRILL - 92, REGGIE HOWARD 80**
27TH - **JIM COBBIN - 80**

JANUARY

8TH - DAVEY WHITNEY - 85
9TH - FRANK MARSH - 84
21ST - **PORTER REED - 92**, JIM ROBINSON - 85
26TH - RON TEASLEY - 88
27TH - SAM TAYLOR - 86
28TH - TOMMY TAYLOR - 77
30TH - LONNIE HARRIS - 84
31ST - ERNIE BANKS - 84



FEBRUARY

4TH - ERNIE NIMMONS - 85
5TH - HANK AARON - 81
9TH - MIKE HOULEMARD - 82
12TH - BILL DUMPSON - 85
20TH - **WALTER MCCOY - 92**
23RD - WILLIE SHEELOR - 87
25TH - **MONTE IRVIN - 96**

SABR's Negro Leagues Committee

Larry Lester Co-chair, LarryLester42@gmail.com

Dick Clark Co-chair (in spirit)

The Courier is a quarterly newsletter published by the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR); in March, June, September and December. Inquiries, submissions and research requests can be sent to Larry Lester. Back issues can be found [HERE](#).

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Sunsets . . .

NETTIE MAE STEARNES, 96, died December 6, 2014, at the home of her daughter Joyce (& Malcolm) Thompson, in Auburn Hills, Michigan. Mrs. Stearnes, the oldest of 12 children, was born in Shepherdsville, Alabama, on St. Patrick's Day in 1918, to the late Cazzie and Olga (nee Radcliffe) McArthur. The always energetic and feisty lady was the widow



of the Norman "Turkey" Stearnes, the Negro Leagues' career home run leader. She was also the niece of Ted "Double Duty" Radcliffe. But more importantly, she and her immediate family were the star attraction at the **Detroit Jerry Malloy Negro League Conference** in August. Mrs. Stearnes attended a majority of the presentations, the dedication of historic **Hamtramck Stadium**, spoke lovingly about her experiences during the Stearnes hour, and later did a little jig at the Awards Banquet. Precious moments that will always be cherished. She was an awesome lady with an awesome spirit. Her memorial service will be on Saturday, January 17th at 11:00 a.m. **Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church**, 5631 North Adams Road in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan.

1946 Newark Eagles

A new BioProject book is currently underway for SABR members to write about the Negro World Series champion 1946 **Newark Eagles**. The project needs writers for player biographies, a timeline, and team history. If you have interest in writing for this project contact both **Dr. Rich Puerzer** (richard.j.puerzer@hofstra.edu) and **Dr. Leslie Heaphy** (lheaphy@kent.edu) for a list of candidates.

Deadlines for the first draft of articles is **August 1st, 2015**.