

# The Courier

A Publication of SABR's Negro Leagues Committee

*"We are the Ship, All Else the Sea"*

Editor, Larry Lester

June, 2009

## In the News

### Top 10 Reasons to Attend

the **Society for American Baseball Research's**  
**Jerry Malloy Negro League Conference**

July 16-18, 2009, Pittsburgh, PA

**#10 SEE LOCAL SPORTS HISTORY** at our host facility, the **Senator John Heinz History Center & Western Pennsylvania Sports Museum**.



Legacy Square at PNC Park

**#9 ENHANCE YOUR TEACHING SKILLS** in our Thursday educator's workshop.

**#8 LEARN ABOUT NEGRO LEAGUE LEGENDS** in a series of 12 world-class presentations on Friday &

Saturday.

**#7 HELP US DEDICATE GUS GREENLEE FIELD** with the **Pennsylvania State** historical marker installment at the famous home field of the Pittsburgh Crawfords.

**#6 WATCH THE PITTSBURGH PIRATES** beat the San Francisco Giants at the marvelous new **PNC Park**, and receive a **free** Pirates cap.

**#5 ENJOY A LIVELY BANQUET AND NEGRO LEAGUE MEMORABILIA AUCTION** on Saturday evening, co-sponsored by the **Josh Gibson Foundation**. The keynote speaker will be Hall of Famer and St. Louis Cardinal great **Lou Brock**.

**#4 MEET NEGRO LEAGUE SCHOLARS AND RESEARCHERS** from around America and expand your knowledge & networking contacts.

**#3 BUY AUTHENTIC NEGRO LEAGUE MEMORABILIA, AUTOGRAPHS, APPAREL AND BOOKS** from a number of leading vendors and suppliers.

**#2 MEET NEGRO LEAGUE PLAYERS** and attend two players panels on Friday and Saturday where **Pedro Sierra, Jim Robinson, James Cobbin, Jumpin' Johnny Wilson** and **Bill "Ready" Cash** talk about their experiences and provide their autographs at our expense.

**#1 EXPERIENCE THE BIGGEST & BEST ANNUAL NEGRO LEAGUES CONFERENCE IN THE COUNTRY.**



To get your **Registration and Hotel packet**, go to the last two pages of this newsletter.

To **REGISTER ON LINE** go to:

<http://store.sabr.org/sabrstore.cfm>

To reserve your **HOTEL** rooms at the **Marriott** go to:

<http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/pitdt?groupCode=sbrsbra&app=resvlink&fromDate=7/16/09&toDate=7/19/09>

Ask for **"SABR – Negro League C"** when you call the Marriott.

For additional questions about the conference email: [info@LarryLester42.com](mailto:info@LarryLester42.com).

## Birmingham's New Baseball Museum

From the office of Mayor Larry Langford, a resolution was presented for construction of a Negro Hall of Fame Baseball League Museum on April 7th. Mayor Langford presented a preliminary architectural rendering of the estimated \$7.5 million facility, which includes the renovation of the existing historic Rickwood Field – the oldest baseball field in the country – to members of the City Council.

Council members unanimously agreed to support the concept and authorize the Mayor to find the funding to proceed. Mayor Langford said he would identify the funding from the city's existing capital budget and advance details of the funding to the City Council. The money will be included in the 2010 budget year that begins July 1<sup>st</sup> of this year.

That offers real hope a major part of the plan – significant renovations at Rickwood Field – will be well under way or completed by August 18, 2010, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the legendary ballpark.



Though many people may think Rickwood Field is rarely used anymore since the Barons moved to Hoover in 1987, that's not true. Other than the once-a-year Rickwood Classic, where the Barons host a rival at the park as a fundraiser for the Friends of Rickwood, there are another 200 or so games at the field each year.

Rickwood Field is the primary site for Birmingham city schools baseball. Miles College uses Rickwood Field as its home ballpark. Other baseball tournaments and traveling showcases are held in the park. This summer, the Southern League All-Star game home run derby will be held at Rickwood.

“This Museum has been talked about and talked about and talked about,” Mayor Langford said. “Now, reality is here and it's time we come together to preserve the history of the old Negro league players while they still live.”

“The council's verbal commitment today to the project will allow me to comfortably move ahead with presenting the appropriate resolutions and funding ordinances as soon as possible.”

The Museum will be run by museum professionals and will feature, among other things, the history of the league, highlights of past players who were denied access to professional sports and state-of-the-art conference amenities, Mayor Langford said.

The Mayor added there will be emphasizes on the Southern leagues, the Industrial Leagues and renovation of Rickwood Field to fully capture the essence of baseball in the south. Rickwood's claim as the oldest professional baseball park in the nation already gives it special status; no doubt a renovated Rickwood will attract even more events.

The Mayor has also identified, Dallas resident Dr. Layton Revel, who has the largest collection of African American baseball memorabilia valued at more than \$4 million dollars. The memorabilia of game-worn jerseys and equipment, vintage broadsides and photographs will be donated to the city for use at the museum.

The 39 page business plan presented by Dr. Revel identifies the scope of the project as, “The Alabama Negro League Baseball Museum Foundation and the Center for Negro League Baseball Research (CNLBR) have adopted a very broad definition of Negro League baseball. We feel that all levels of black baseball are important and have made major contributions to the game of baseball and society in America. Negro League



baseball is defined by this project to include the Negro “league” teams, barnstorming teams, independent teams, Negro “Minor” league teams, winter league baseball teams, industrial league teams, town/local teams, black baseball in the military and black college teams.”

14th ANNUAL JUDY JOHNSON NIGHT  
A TRIBUTE TO NEGRO LEAGUE  
BASEBALL TO BE HELD SATURDAY,  
AUGUST 15th in WILMINGTON, DE

The first organized league of black professional baseball players — the **Negro National League** — was founded



in 1920 under the leadership of Hall of Famer **Rube Foster**. The motto of this Midwestern league was “**We are the Ship — All else the Sea**”, symbolizing the league’s relationship with the all-white major and minor baseball leagues. In 1923, the **Eastern Colored League** was formed, and the first Colored World Series was held between the two leagues in 1924. That year, in an exciting 10-game series, the legendary **Kansas City Monarchs** defeated the **Hilldale Club** of Philadelphia five games to four with one tie. Of note, long-time Wilmington-area resident **William (Judy) Johnson** (1899–1989), an exceptional defensive third baseman and clutch hitter who batted over .300 lifetime, played for Hilldale in that inaugural World Series.

On **Saturday, August 15th**, the **State of Delaware** and **City of Wilmington** will co-sponsor the **FOURTEENTH ANNUAL JUDY JOHNSON NIGHT — A TRIBUTE TO NEGRO LEAGUE BASEBALL**, honoring the memory and legacy of **Judy Johnson**. The Carolina League (Class A) game between the **Wilmington Blue Rocks** (Kansas City) and the **Potomac Nationals** (Washington DC) will be played at Wilmington’s **Judy Johnson Field** at Daniel S. Frawley Stadium, with pregame ceremonies beginning at **5:35 PM**.

The **Judy Johnson Memorial Foundation** plans a number of special activities and events for this year’s Judy Johnson Night. As in past years, there will be an on field introduction of former players of the Negro Leagues. This year’s honoree will be **Mamie (Peanut) Johnson**, a former pitcher for the **Indianapolis Clowns** and one of only three women to have played in the Negro Leagues.

Past honorees of Judy Johnson Night have included **Judy Johnson** (1996), **Buck O’Neil** (1997), **Gene Benson** (1998), **Josh Gibson** (1999), **Leroy (Toots) Ferrell** (2000), **Leon Day** (2001), **Jackie Robinson** (2002), **Buck Leonard** (2003), **Ted (Double Duty) Radcliffe** (2004), **Bill (Ready) Cash** (2005), **Mahlon Duckett** (2006), **Harold Gould** (2007), and **Stanley (Doc) Glenn** (2008). Other planned highlights will include autograph sessions with former Negro League players, a commemorative postal cancellation issued by the US Postal Service, a silent auction of Negro League and sports memorabilia and collectibles, and a sale of Negro League memorabilia. On the field, players and coaches of the **Blue Rocks** and **Nationals** will be wearing replica uniforms of Negro League teams. In addition, two college bound high school seniors will be awarded **Judy Johnson Memorial Scholarships**. These awards are based on sportsmanship, and recipients are selected from participants in the Annual Blue-Gold (Delaware) All-Star Baseball Game.

Anyone interested in attending this special event should contact the Blue Rocks’ Ticket Office at **302-888-BLUE (2583)**. Requests from the media should be addressed to **Chris Kemple**, c/o the **Wilmington Blue Rocks**, 801 S. Madison Street, Wilmington, DE 19801; **Phone:** 302-888-2015; **Fax:** 302-888-2032; **E-mail:** [info@bluerocks.com](mailto:info@bluerocks.com) **Web:** [www.bluerocks.com](http://www.bluerocks.com)

#### About William (Judy) Johnson

**Judy Johnson** began his professional baseball career in 1921 and spent 16 years in the Negro Leagues, mostly with Hilldale and the **Pittsburgh Crawfords**. In 1935, **Johnson** captained the Negro National League champion Crawfords, which boasted four other future Hall of Famers — **Satchel Paige**, **Josh Gibson**, **Oscar Charleston**, and **Cool Papa Bell**. Many baseball researchers and historians consider the 1935 Pittsburgh Crawfords to be the most talented team ever in the Negro Leagues. **Johnson** retired from playing baseball after the 1936 season, but he remained active as a scout and coach for the **Philadelphia Athletics** and **Phillies** for nearly 50 years. In 1975, **Johnson** was inducted into the **National Baseball Hall of Fame** in Cooperstown, New York. For over 5 decades, **Johnson** and his wife, **Anita**, lived in **Marshallton, Delaware**. In 1995, their Marshallton home on Kiamensi Avenue was added to the **National Register of Historic Places**.

For additional information, please contact **Gregg Truitt** at 801 Partridge Court, Hockessin, DE 19707 **Phone:** 302-886-7519; **Fax:** 302-885-5343; **E-mail:** [gregg.truitt@astrazeneca.com](mailto:gregg.truitt@astrazeneca.com)

The **Judy Johnson Memorial Foundation** is a 501(c3) organization (ID# 72-1523250).

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Civil Rights Game

Major League Baseball and the Cincinnati Reds announced that Great American Ball Park will host the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Civil Rights Game against the Chicago White Sox on June 20, 2009. This marks the first time that the historic game will be a regular season game and played at a major league ballpark.

The **Civil Rights Game**, held in Memphis the last two years, pays tribute to one of the country's most significant eras of social change and honors Major League Baseball's involvement in this historic struggle through which legendary African American players broke barriers and made important contributions to American society.



# CIVIL RIGHTS GAME

The game will culminate two days of events commemorating the Civil Rights Movement. Cincinnati a city

rich with civil rights history, once served as heavily traveled hidden trails, which became known as the “**Underground Railroad**,” in which many slaves escaped to freedom. The Great American Ball Park is a stone's throw away from the Underground Railroad Freedom Center, which opened in 2004.

Proceeds from the banquet and game events will be donated to charity. Be mindful that the **Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**, once said, “**Jackie Robinson made it possible for me in the first place. Without him, I would never have been able to do what I did.**”

In April, the event grew in stature when the Reds, Major League Baseball and the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center announced that Muhammad Ali, Bill Cosby and Hank Aaron will be part of the festivities.

The trio will receive the MLB's Beacon Award which recognizes individuals whose lives reflect the Civil Rights Movement's spirit. They will be honored at a luncheon at Duke Energy Convention Center before the game.

“**Those are three heavy hitters right there,**” said Frank Robinson, a past Beacon Award winner. The three Beacon Awards are for **Hope** (Cosby), **Change** (Ali) and **Life** (Aaron).

Reds president and chief executive officer Robert Castellini expressed, “**Cincinnati . . . has played a significant role throughout our country's journey toward civil equality.**”

The luncheon was attended by former Negro League legends, **Tom Turner, Charlie Davis and Ron Warren.**

## Mule Suttles Lumber Company . . .

The **Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory** has uncovered a one-of-a-kind artifact that proves Hillerich & Bradsby Company created bats for Negro League players. While company lore indicated that Louisville Slugger did business with the Negro Leagues, no evidence in the form of contracts, bat record cards, or other paperwork was known to exist.

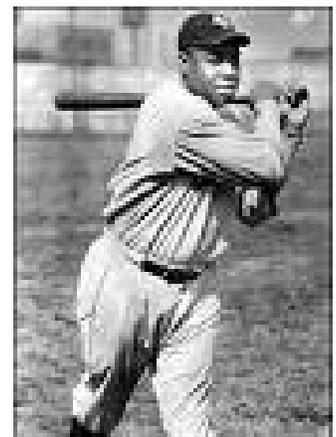
That changed on February 5, when Tour and Programming Director, P.J. Shelley, noticed a connection between the S128 Model and Mule Suttles, a former player with the Birmingham Black Barons, Baltimore Black Sox, Chicago American Giants, St. Louis Stars, Newark Eagles and other Negro League teams. Investigating the clue with Curator Dan Cohen, they discovered a bat record card for Suttles that dated back to 1937. On the back of the card were the measurements for the S128 Model which was created specifically for Suttles.

Later on February 25, the Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory recreated the hand-crafted Mule Suttles S128 to be added to its bat vault.

“**It is especially fitting that we uncovered this exciting piece of history during Black History Month,**” said Anne Jewell, Executive Director. “**The Negro Leagues were loaded with fantastic baseball players and unfortunately, compared to their contemporaries in the all-white major leagues, not as much is known about them. We're proud to offer up some additional information, especially about such a remarkable hitter as Mule Suttles.**”

The historic bat record card details orders Suttles placed with Louisville Slugger from July 3, 1937 to July 31, 1939. Bat measurements were not released by the Museum.

In the 1935 East-West All-Star game, after three intentional walks, Mule connected for the game-winning hit, with two on and two outs in the bottom of the eleventh inning to capture a thrilling 11-8 victory for the West squad. At every dangerous opportunity, pitchers sought to give this Mule of a Man, a courtesy pass to first base.



When asked by his pitcher how to throw to Suttles during an exhibition game, Hall of Fame manager Leo Durocher replied, “**Just throw the ball and pray.**”

## Sunrises!

Send your favorite Negro Leaguer a birthday card.

### JUNE

1<sup>ST</sup> - JOHN "STONY" JACKSON - 81  
8<sup>TH</sup> - LIONEL EVELYN - 80, KENNETH FREE - 73  
14<sup>TH</sup> - DON NEWCOMBE - 83  
19<sup>TH</sup> - HANK MASON - 77  
20<sup>TH</sup> - AL CARTMILL, JR. - 79  
21<sup>ST</sup> - ART SIMMONS - 72  
22<sup>ND</sup> - TOMMY TURNER - 92, BOB SCOTT - 79  
23<sup>RD</sup> - ULYSSES HOLLIMON - 78  
24<sup>TH</sup> - NEALE "BOBO" HENDERSON - 79  
27<sup>TH</sup> - CECIL KAISER - 93  
20<sup>TH</sup> - NAT PEEPLES - 83  
30<sup>TH</sup> - OTHA BAILEY - 79, RENDON MARBURY - 72

### JULY

1<sup>ST</sup> - DONNIE HARRIS - 73, FRANK  
ENSLEY - 82  
7<sup>TH</sup> - "JUMPING" JOHNNY WILSON - 82  
12<sup>TH</sup> - JIM COLZIE - 89  
16<sup>TH</sup> - CLIFF DUBOSE - 72  
18<sup>TH</sup> - BILLY HARRELL - 81  
19<sup>TH</sup> - JOHNNY FAIRLEY - 68  
24<sup>TH</sup> - "BIRMINGHAM" SAM BRISON - 69  
26<sup>TH</sup> - PEDRO SIERRA - 71  
27<sup>TH</sup> - ART HAMILTON - 75  
28<sup>TH</sup> - ROSS "SACHEL" DAVIS - 91  
29<sup>TH</sup> - EDDIE DERRICK - 85  
30<sup>TH</sup> - WILLIAM BELL - 79  
31<sup>ST</sup> - DON JOHNSON - 83, POP DURHAM - 78



### AUGUST

1<sup>ST</sup> - A.J. JACKSON - 76  
5<sup>TH</sup> - SONNY RANDALL - 94, IRA MCKNIGHT, JR. - 74  
8<sup>TH</sup> - GRADY MONTGOMERY - 78  
11<sup>TH</sup> - JOHN "MULE" MILES - 87  
12<sup>TH</sup> - RAYMOND LACY - 87  
19<sup>TH</sup> - WALT "COACH O" OWENS - 76  
22<sup>ND</sup> - CARL HOLDEN - 68  
25<sup>TH</sup> - CLARENCE "CHOO CHOO" COLEMAN - 72  
26<sup>TH</sup> - FRANK BARNES - 83, IKE WELCH - 89,  
AL SPEARMAN - 83  
29<sup>TH</sup> - RICH BOOKER - 80, HERB SIMPSON - 89  
31<sup>ST</sup> - JAKE SANDERS - 75

**CONGRATULATIONS** to Nonagenarians: **TOMMY TURNER, CECIL KAISER, SONNY RANDALL & ROSS "SACHEL" DAVIS**

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## Sunsets . . . .

There are NO deaths to report this quarter.

**NOTE:** As of June, 2009, we currently know of 237 living Negro League veterans around the world.

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## Josh Gibson is Granitized . . . .

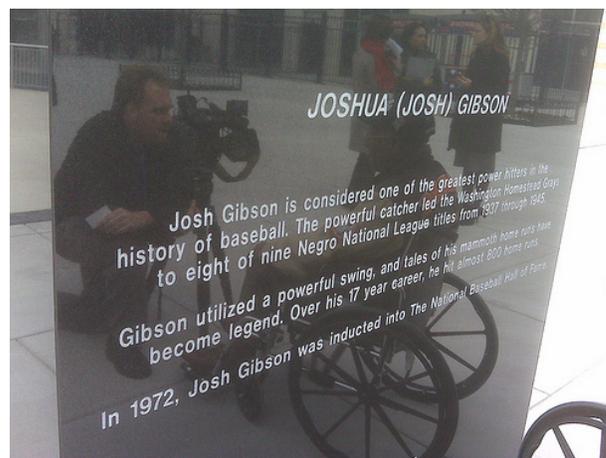
On April 8th, an unveiling at Nationals Park of the **Josh Gibson statue** was another step to keep history alive and increase awareness of African Americans that played professional baseball, before Jackie Robinson's debut with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947.



Joltin' Josh Gibson joins Ernie Banks, James "Cool Papa" Bell, Minnie Minoso, Willie Mays, Hank Aaron, Satchel Paige, Buck Leonard, Judy Johnson, Oscar Charleston & Smokey Joe Williams as former Negro Leaguers with statues at Major League ball parks.

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Other statues dedicated during the public ceremony were of Washington Senators Frank Howard and Walter "Big Train" Johnson.



Research Finds . . . . .

On August 23, 1901, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported, “**X-Giants Win Under Glare of Electric Lights.**” This is almost three decades before the Negro and Major Leagues played under artificial sun.

The press reported, “*Under the glistening glare of seventeen electric arc lights the Cuban X-Giants defeated Frankford last night at Wistar Park by a score of 10 to 6. There were over 1800 people within the grounds when the game started and the powerful rays of the lights gave the spectators a fairly distinguishable view of the plays and players. The lights were arranged within a foot of the right and left field foul lines, extending past first and third bases about fifteen feet, whence they were run in a semi-circle around the infield, giving the outfielder a few yards in which to move around.*”



More interestingly, the press claimed “*The ball used was about twice the size of the regulation sphere, being soft and elastic, and when swatted*

*by the batsmen it gave forth a sound very similar to that of an overripe cantaloupe hurtled by a mischievous boy at an old man’s high hat.*”

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July 29, 2009 – The 39<sup>th</sup> annual **Society for American Baseball Research (SABR)** Convention will be held in Washington, DC at the J.W. Marriott Hotel.



SABR’s mission is to foster the study of baseball past and present, and to provide an outlet for educational, historical and research information about the game.

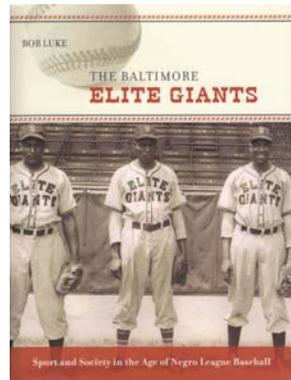
Reservations are going fast, so hurry for a fun time in the Nation’s

capital.

“*First in war, first in peace and last in the American League*”

To register online go to:  
<http://store.sabr.org/sabrstore.cfm?a=prd&scid=22>

Dugout Reading . . . . .



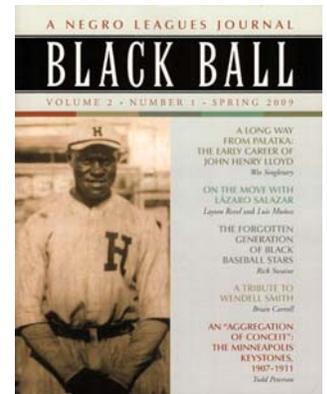
At last, a history about one of the best known teams in the Negro Leagues. Bob Luke narrates the untold story of the team and its interaction with the city and its peoples during the long years of segregation.

He introduces the team’s eventual major league stars: Roy Campanella, Joe Black and Junior Gilliam. Luke also describes the often contentious relationship between the team and major league baseball before, during and after the Majors integrated.

The book is published by John Hopkins University Press. Go to [www.press.jhu.edu](http://www.press.jhu.edu) to order.

The latest edition of “**Black Ball: A Negro Leagues Journal**” is now available.

The Spring issue features articles on John Henry “Pop” Lloyd, Lazaro Salazar, HOF writer Wendell Smith, the Minneapolis Keystones and an excellent article on the forgotten generation of black baseball stars.



Order your copy today from [www.mcfarlandpub.com](http://www.mcfarlandpub.com).

**SABR’s Negro Leagues Committee**

Larry Lester Co-chair, Editor  
 Dick Clark Co-chair (Tstearnes@comcast.net)

**The Courier** is a quarterly newsletter published by the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR); March, June, September and December. Inquiries, submissions and research requests can be sent to Larry Lester at [NTresearch@comcast.net](mailto:NTresearch@comcast.net) or [info@LarryLester42.com](mailto:info@LarryLester42.com).

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July 16-18, 2009

The Western Pennsylvania Sports Museum at the Senator John Heinz History Center
1212 Smallman Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
412-454-6000

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE & ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

REGISTRATION FEE (by July 8th)

Full conference registration (Fri-Sat) \_\_\_\_\_ \$135 X \_\_\_ person(s) \_\_\_\_\_
(Includes all conference events, Pirates game, Dinner, Sports Museum)

Full Student registration (with ID) \_\_\_\_\_ \$85 X \_\_\_ person(s) \_\_\_\_\_
(Includes all conference events, Pirates game, Dinner, Sports Museum)

Thursday's Educational Program only (all day) \_\_\_\_\_ \$65 X \_\_\_ person(s) \_\_\_\_\_
(includes materials and boxed lunch)

Single Day registration (Fri. or Sat.) \_\_\_\_\_ \$65 X \_\_\_ person(s) \_\_\_\_\_
(Includes conference presentations, but does not include dinner or ballgame)

COMBO - Thursday, Friday and Saturday SPECIAL \_\_\_\_\_ \$180 X \_\_\_ person(s) \_\_\_\_\_
The first 175 registrants will receive a souvenir booklet entitled "Crossroads of Black Baseball".

ADDITIONAL COSTS for Guests and those not getting Full Registration

Saturday Night Dinner \_\_\_\_\_ \$45 X \_\_\_ person(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Friday Night BB Game, Field Box, Sec 125 \_\_\_\_\_ \$24 X \_\_\_ person(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*After July 8th -- \$25 late registration fee.

YOU MAY REGISTER FOR THE CONFERENCE at SABR's WEBSITE

http://store.sabr.org/sabrstore.cfm

Or pay by mail: Make your checks or money orders out to SABR - Malloy Conference.
C/o John Zajc - 812 Huron Road Ste 719 - Cleveland, OH 44115 - (216) 575-0500



Hotel reservations should be made directly with the

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Pittsburgh, PA 15219

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888-456-6600 Toll Free

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Download Hotel Fact Sheet below:

<http://www.marriott.com/hotels/fact-sheet/travel/pitdt-pittsburgh-marriott-city-center/>

**Room rates for this Four-Star Hotel are:**

Single: \$109 a night *plus tax*

Double: \$109 a night *plus tax*

Additional Person: \$20

Ask for “**SABR – Negro League C**” when you call.

**Amenities Include:**

- Complimentary high speed internet access
- Complimentary access to fitness center
- Complimentary shuttle service to Heinz History Center

**Shuttle Hours to the Heinz History Center:**

Monday through Friday: 6:30 am until 10:30 AM and resume from 4 PM to 11 PM.

Saturday: The shuttle is available from 9:00 AM to 11: PM

**Parking:**

The Hotel does not own or operate the parking garage. Self parking is available and can be billed to your guest room. Valet parking is also available and can be charged to your room.

**Directions from Pittsburgh International Airport - PIT**

- Hotel direction: 17 miles SE
- Driving directions: Follow signs for 60 South to 279 North to Pittsburgh. Going through the Fort Pitt Tunnels and over the Fort Pitt Bridge--Follow signs to 376 East Monroeville--Take the Grant Street Exit (stay on Grant Street) make a right on 6th Avenue--Go two lights and make a left onto Centre Avenue--Go to the first light and make a right onto Washington Place. Make the very next right into the Marriott.
- Estimated taxi fare: \$37.00 (one way)