

The Courier

A Publication of SABR's Negro Leagues Committee

"We are the Ship, All Else the Sea"

Editor, Larry Lester

Memorial Day Issue

June, 2019

In the News

The Sunflower Connection:

William Castone & Bert Wakefield

by Mark E. Eberle
Fort Hays State University
Hays, Kansas

Between 1886 and 1898, nine black ballplayers competed on minor league teams in Colorado, Kansas, and Nebraska. Of this group, only Bud Fowler is well known, but biographies of two of the other ballplayers illustrate how each of their stories can enrich the history of the national pastime.

Missouri native George William Castone (1867–1967) was best known as a pitcher. Kansan Burgess "Bert" Wakefield (1870–1926) was considered an excellent first baseman. They played for prominent black clubs, such as the **Cuban Giants** (Castone) and **Chicago Unions** (Wakefield). In addition, Castone was captain of the Lincoln (NE) Giants, while Wakefield captained the **Algona (IA) Brownies**, two strong semi-pro teams. They also played for several integrated teams, including minor league clubs. Castone competed in the Colorado State League and the Nebraska State League. Wakefield played in the Kansas State League and served as his team's captain. Off the diamond, they both displayed artistic talents. Castone was a painter, and Wakefield played mandolin in an orchestra.

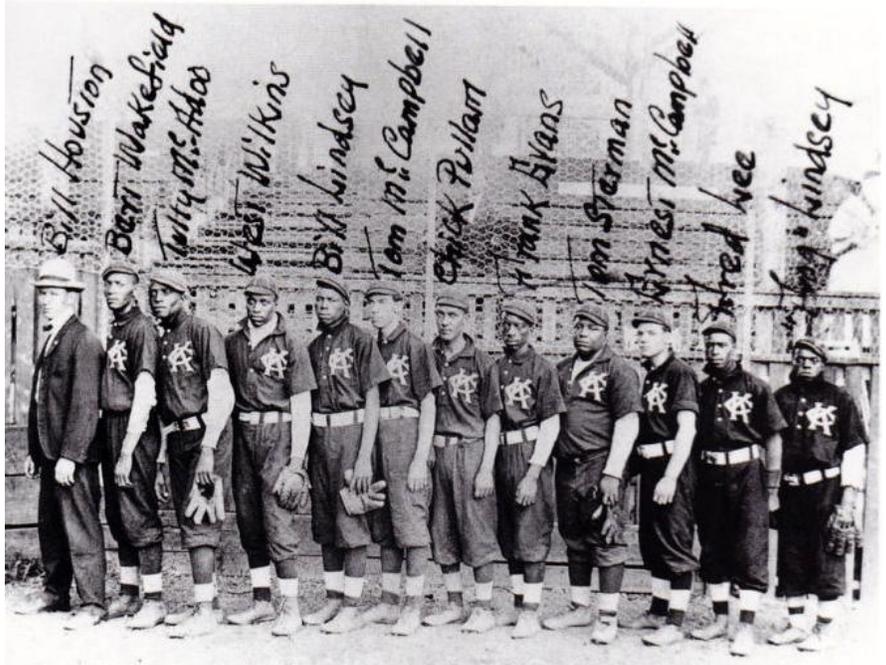
Although neither Castone nor Wakefield had long careers with the top teams of their time, documenting the stories of these and other players during the waning days of integrated baseball in the late 1800s gives us a fuller understanding of history on and off the ball diamond.

To learn more about the unheralded careers of these two pioneers click on the links below.

Sources: *Bert Wakefield and the End of Integrated Minor League Baseball in Kansas*

(https://scholars.fhsu.edu/all_monographs/4/) and *George William Castone: An Integrated Baseball Life at the Close of the Nineteenth Century*

(https://scholars.fhsu.edu/all_monographs/6/)



The **original Kansas City Monarchs** of 1908. **Frog Lindsay** was the ace of the pitching staff, while first baseman **Tully McAdoo** provided the offensive power. Wakefield was a solid defender at first and second base.

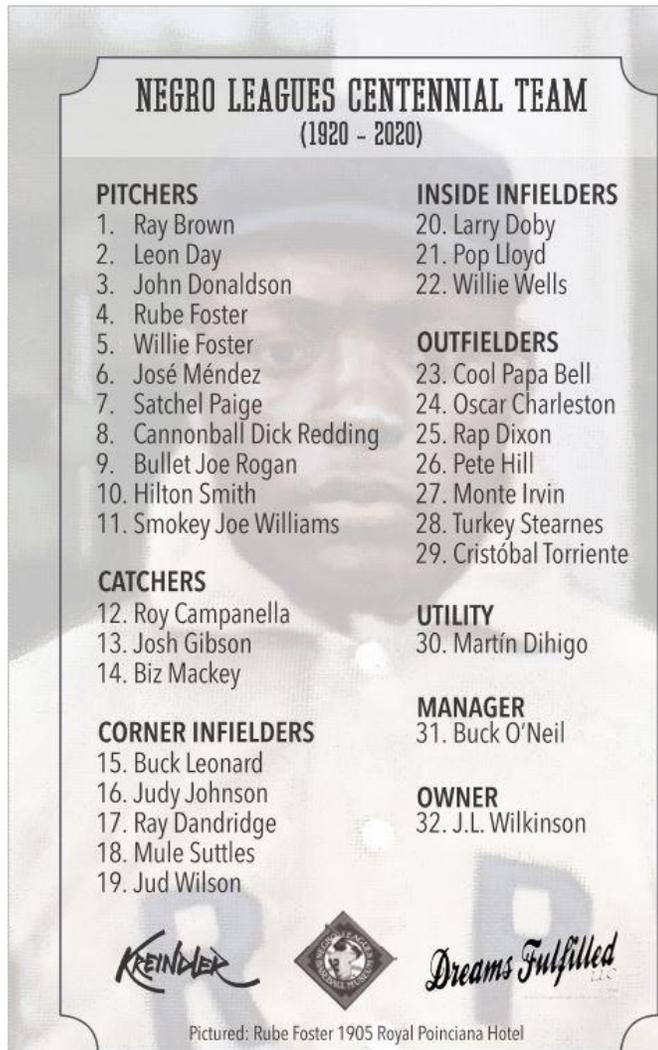
Dr. Eberle is the author of *Kansas Baseball, 1858-1941*, published by the University Press of Kansas in 2017.

Negro Leagues Centennial Team

ALL STAR TEAM BASEBALL CARD SET

In conjunction with the Centennial of the founding of the Negro National League, in 1920, fans voted at

www.facebook.com/negroleagueshistory for a roster of 25 players plus a manager and an owner. The operators of www.negroleagueshistory.com added five additional players. The Negro Leagues Baseball Museum (NLBM) in Kansas City reviewed



and approved the final team.

www.NegroLeaguesHistory.com has produced a 3.5" x 5.5" full color, boxed postcard set of these players featuring portraits painted by **Graig Kreindler**, the **2018 Sports Artist of the Year**. Each set is numbered and limited to 2020 sets.

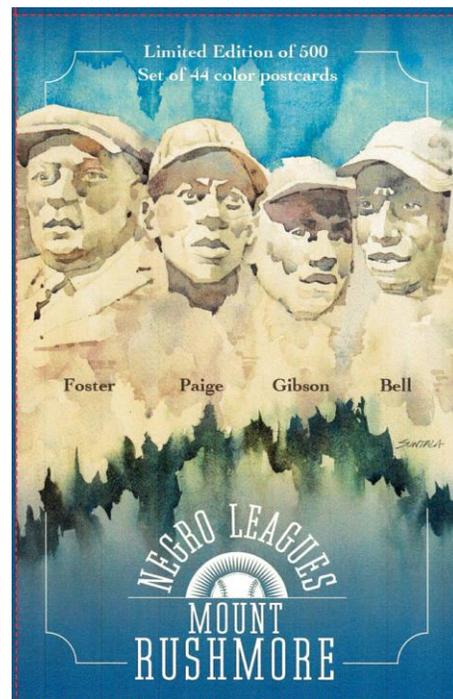
Overall, the artwork is fabulous and the text is brilliantly written and researched by Jay Caldwell.

BOBBLEHEADS

NegroLeaguesHistory.com is also producing a series (also limited to 2020 pieces) of Centennial bobbleheads of each player. Each bobblehead is on a baseball base containing the Paseo YMCA in the background where **Rube Foster** founded the Negro National League on February 13, 1920. New bobbleheads are being released each month with the last bobblehead to be released on February 13, 2020. Bobbleheads for **Satchel Paige**, **Cool Papa Bell**, **Roy Campanella**, **José Méndez** and **Bullet Joe Rogan** and **Josh Gibson** are currently available.

MOUNT RUSHMORE CARD SET

In May, **NegroLeaguesHistory.com** is releasing a set of 44 color postcard portraits painted by **Graig Kreindler**. The set, entitled *The Negro Leagues Mount Rushmore* features eight portraits of Cool Papa Bell in different uniforms that he wore throughout his career, nine portraits of Rube Foster, ten of Josh Gibson and fifteen of Satchel Paige. The card backs contain a brief "back story" on the player in that uniform. For the Gibson cards, we also go through the methodology we used to estimate a range of how many MLB home runs he might have hit had he been allowed to play. There is also an introductory card written by Larry Lester and a checklist card. This product is limited to 500 numbered sets.



All products can be ordered at:

www.negroleagueshistory.com/shop.

The Other Boys of Summer

Tumbleweed Pictures presents a documentary about racism, segregation and civil rights in America, told through the lives of the Negro League baseball players.

The Other Boys of Summer premiered in New York City on January 31st, the 100th anniversary of Jackie Robinson's birth. Regular attendees at the Jerry Malloy Negro League Conference, **Jim Robinson** and **Pedro Sierra** (pictured below), two of the three surviving players from the film joined Lauren Meyer for a panel discussion following the film.

Since the premier *The Other Boys of Summer* has been on a grassroots barnstorming tour as part of a Diversity & Inclusion/Team Building program. The program features a screening of the film as well as a panel discussion and a Q&A session.

The program has been used by Proctor & Gamble, GE Aviation, The **Cincinnati Reds** Urban Youth Academy as well as many others. In April, the program was invited to be part of **The Jazz & Jackie Celebration** hosted by the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City, Missouri. There was a free community program as well as a program for high school athletes on April 15. The **Texas Rangers** hosted the program at their Youth Academy and **Delino DeShields, Jr.**, and **Darren Oliver** joined director Lauren Meyer as guest panelists for a free community event.

Lauren was also invited to **The National Center of Civil & Human Rights**, in Atlanta, GA, to be part of a program called "Catalyst for Change" which explored the Negro League's impact on society.

As the number of Negro League players continues to dwindle it's important that their stories are not forgotten. *The Other Boys of Summer* is making a positive impact by bringing people together, preserving the legacy of the Negro Leaguers and their role as Civil Rights trailblazers, motivating and inspiring. The program is available as a D&I / Team Building program for companies, communities, schools and universities.

Links to media coverage can be found at: <https://www.theotherboysofsummer.com/press-media>

The program is currently seeking Sponsors for a college/university tour as well as to continue to provide FREE community programs around the country.

Additional information available at www.theotherboysofsummer.com
Contact: Lauren@Tumbleweedprod.com

About The Film

Where did it begin?

The idea for *The Other Boys of Summer* originated many years ago when Lauren's Mom, an elementary school teacher, was sharing her lesson plans for Black history month. The idea of segregation was something that never made sense to Lauren. So she decided to explore the subject matter from a unique perspective. What was it like to pursue your dreams when you were not permitted to go into certain places, sit in certain seats or play on certain teams?

Lauren began to take out books from the library and read about the Negro League players. She wrote letters to many hoping to have the chance to meet them. When she started making contact and hearing their stories she knew she had to make a film to shine the spotlight on these humble men (and women) who endured terrible treatment yet remained gracious and thankful to the opportunities they had. In spite of the

injustice they faced daily, while sharing their stories not one of the men were bitter. They were thankful for the chance to play the game they loved. This just made the story that much more intriguing to Lauren.

About the Director

Lauren Meyer is an Emmy nominated Director with over 20 years in the business.

Highly respected as a strong storyteller, Lauren's passion for sharing personal stories and shining a spotlight on the underdog was recently acknowledged with a 2017 Emmy Award nomination.

Her work has aired on dozens of TV networks, cable channels and digital platforms. Growing up a Mets fan she is well versed in patience and perseverance. She began filming *The Other Boys of Summer* as a passion project in 2007 when she realized if she didn't go and interview the players now, their personal stories would be lost forever.

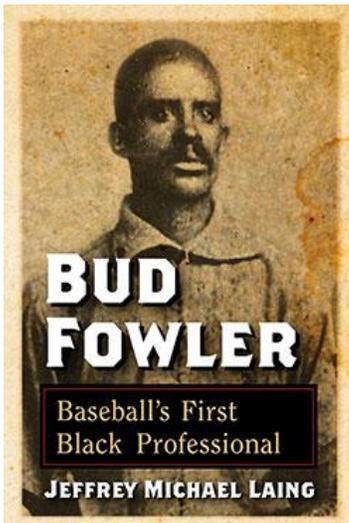
In a time where civil rights are in headlines daily, Lauren is more determined than ever to show a different perspective to the reality of civil rights in America. With class and perseverance these unsung American heroes changed baseball and changed America.



MOHAWK VALLEY BASEBALL HOF INDUCTS “BUD” FOWLER

On February 26, 2019, the Mohawk Valley Baseball Hall of Fame announced that its third inductee to the Class of 2019 is **John W. “Bud” Fowler**, the earliest known professional baseball player of African-American descent. The ceremony took place at the Travel Lodge in Little Fall, NY on April 12, 2019. Former National League Most Valuable Player **George Foster** was the keynote speaker.

Fowler, a native of Fort Plain, NY, played more seasons and more games in organized baseball than any other African American until **Jackie Robinson** finally broke the game’s color barrier once and for all.



“It is truly an honor and a privilege to announce this inductee into the Mohawk Valley Baseball Hall of Fame during this month of commemoration of African American heritage and the contribution made by African Americans to our great game and country,” said Travis Heiser, owner and general manager of the **Mohawk Valley**

Diamond Dawgs which administers the MVBHOF. “Bud Fowler is truly an American icon from our area, and his inclusion in the Hall of Fame makes the Hall a better organization overall.”

The son of a fugitive hop-picker and barber, Fowler was christened John W. Jackson. His father had escaped from slavery and migrated to New York. In 1859, his family moved from Fort Plain to Cooperstown. He learned to play baseball during his youth in Cooperstown – the iconic home to the history of the game.

Fowler first played for an all-white professional team based out of New Castle, Pennsylvania in 1872, when he was 14 years old. He is documented as playing for another professional team on July 21, 1877, when he was 19. On April 24, 1878, he pitched a game for the Picked Nine, who defeated the Boston Red Caps, champions of the National League in 1877. He pitched some more for the Chelsea team, then finished that season with the Worcester club. Largely supporting himself as a barber, Fowler continued to play for baseball teams in New England and Canada for the next four years.

In 1883, Fowler played for a team in Niles, Ohio; in 1884, he played for Stillwater, Minnesota, in the Northwestern League; Keokuk Indians in Iowa, in 1885 and, in 1888, he played for a team in Terre Haute, Indiana.

Keokuk, Iowa had not had a professional baseball team since 1875. However, in 1885, local businessman R. W. “Nick” Curtis was the chief force behind starting a new team and hired Bud Fowler for it. He became the most popular player on the team. The local newspaper, the *Keokuk Gate City and Constitution*, said of him, “a good ball player, a hard worker, a genius on the ball field, intelligent, gentlemanly in his conduct and deserving of the good opinion entertained for him by base ball admirers here.”

After the Western League folded that season due to financial reasons, Fowler moved on to play with a team in Pueblo, Colorado. In 1886, he played for a team in Topeka, Kansas. That team won the pennant behind Fowler’s .309 Batting Average. He also led the league in triples. Eventually, Fowler moved first to Binghamton, New York, where he experienced racial tensions and had teammates that refused play with him, then in 1892 he played in Kearney, Nebraska for the Nebraska State League. In 1895, he and **Grant “Home Run” Johnson** formed the Page Fence Giants in Adrian, Michigan. From 1894-1904, Fowler played and/or managed the **Page Fence Giants, Cuban Giants, the Smoky City Giants, the All-American Black Tourists**, and the **Kansas City Stars**.

Fowler died in Frankfort, New York, on February 26, 1913. In his last years, he suffered from illness and poverty which was covered by national media. **His grave was unmarked until 1987 when the SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN BASEBALL RESEARCH placed a memorial on his grave to memorialize and honor his successes as the first professional African-American baseball player.**

Let's also mention a recent generous donation to the Grave Marker Project from Arline Abdalian with THE FRIENDS OF POMONOK LIBRARY in Flushing, NY, which recently featured a program entitled "Negro League Baseball .311" with author & historian Philip Ross of Jamaica, NY.

SABR's Negro Leagues Committee

Larry Lester, chairman, LarryLester42@gmail.com or NTresearch@comcast.net

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](#).

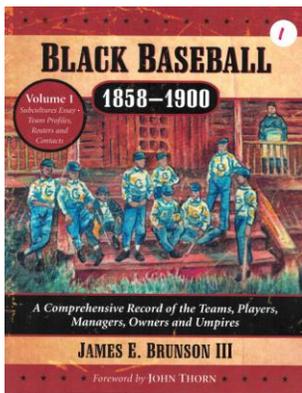
To receive your personal copies of this newsletter please join SABR by [clicking here](#).

For more information about SABR's Negro Leagues Committee [click here](#).

Copyright © 2019 SABR. All Rights Reserved.

Dugout Reading:

Black Baseball, 1858-1900: Volume 1 - Subcultures Essay - Team Profiles, Rosters and Contacts by James E. Brunson III



Notes from the preface reveal: The essay that leads off Volume 1, "They Covered Themselves in Glory: The Lost Base Ball World of the New Negro," explores the urban beginnings of Black baseball. Following the essay are team profiles that include historical information on hundreds of Black baseball teams of the

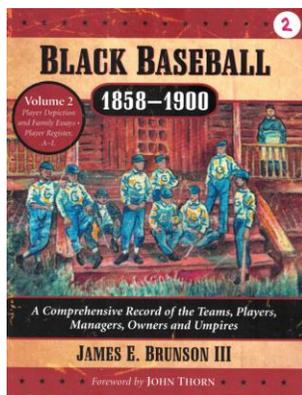
second half of the 19th century. The profiles are supplemented by a listing of rosters for all teams and a directory of team-contact information.

Black Baseball, 1858-1900: Volume 2 - Player Depiction and Family Essays - Player Register, A-L by James E. Brunson III

The essay "Brothers and Brotherhood: Black Baseball's Family Networks," found at the beginning of Volume II, explores something very important to our understanding of Black cultural life. Historian [Dr.] Michael Lomax has traced the roots of Black baseball's organizational structure to the rise of mutual aid societies. Literary societies, fraternal and secret organizations can be added to the list. Novelist Herman Melville wrote about fraternal orders in 19th century America, and while Melville cared little for them, his work reveals how powerful and firmly entrenched they were in American life.

Volume III includes the essay "A Matter of Ability, and Not Color: The Rise of Black Umpires." "No one really knows," write baseball historians Joel Zoss and John Bowman in *Diamonds in the Rough*, "the name of the first umpire of even a fairly well-organized American baseball." The name of the first Black umpire is equally obscure.

Brunson adds, "Researching this book has been a humbling experience. Documenting the lived experiences of men and women who played the game has evoked a range of human emotions: shock, sadness, disgust, humor and jubilation."



Black Baseball, 1858-1900: Volume 3 - Umpire and Musician Essays - Player Register, M-Z by James E. Brunson III

The product of more than three decades of research, this monumental work provides a comprehensive look at Black participation in the national pastime from 1858 to 1900. Among its reference sections are a register of more than 9,000 players, profiles of more than 1,300 teams, a chronologically and geographically organized list of rosters, a list of team contact information, and a chronology of games officiated by Black umpires. Much of this information has never been published.

Essays frame the reference material, focusing on the social and cultural aspects of 19th-century Black baseball. The reader learns that waiters and barbers, later joined by musicians and porters, formed some of the earliest organized clubs and developed local, regional and national circuits. Players sometimes belonged to White teams in addition to Black ones, and umpires officiated Black, White and interracial games. High schools and mutual-aid societies nurtured young players and transformed them into powerhouse teams. And artists, some of them Black players themselves, created illustrations, paintings and sculptures depicting the people and events of Black baseball.

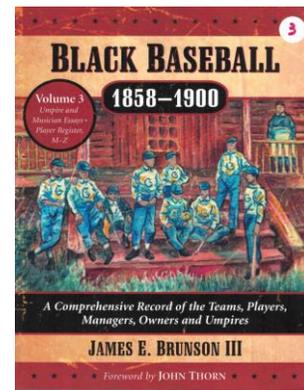
Also note the outstanding foreword by Major League Baseball's Official Historian John Thorn which adds so much value to this historic work of research.

Dr. Brunson is a regular attendee at the JERRY MALLOY NEGRO LEAGUE CONFERENCE and is an art historian who specializes in American modernism. Brunson is also author of *The Early Image of Black Baseball* (2013) and his articles have been published in *NINE: A Journal of Baseball History and Culture*, and *Base Ball: A Journal of the Early Game*. A practicing artist who specializes in watercolor painting, he taught visual culture at Northern Illinois University. Also note, the cover illustration is done by the author.

This book is available from McFarland Publishers, www.mcfarlandpub.com

"A comprehensive collection of biographies . . . with many think pieces bemoaning the overwhelming 'whiteness' of the national pastime, this title on the Black experience with baseball, between the years 1858 and 1900, is timely . . . Essays explore historical and cultural events that impacted the sport."

-- Library Journal



Sunrises!

JUNE

8TH – LIONEL EVELYN - 90
19TH – HANK MASON - 88
20TH – AL CARTMILL, JR. - 89
21ST – ART SIMMONS - 82
22ND – BOB SCOTT - 89
23RD – ULYSSES HOLLIMON – 88
24TH – NEALE "BOBO" HENDERSON – 89
30TH – RENDON MARBURY - 82

JULY

1ST – FRANK ENSLEY - 92
16TH – CLIFF DUBOSE - 82
19TH – JOHNNY FAIRLEY – 78
26TH – PEDRO SIERRA – 81
30TH – WILLIAM BELL – 89



AUGUST

1ST – A.J. JACKSON - 86
8TH – GRADY MONTGOMERY – 88
19TH – WALT "COACH O" OWENS – 86
26TH – IKE WELCH – 99
29TH – RICH BOOKER – 90
31ST – JAKE SANDERS - 85

CONGRATULATIONS to Nonagenarians, **FRANK ENSLEY, LIONEL EVELYN, RICH BOOKER, & IKE WELCH.**

Sunsets

JOHN EDWARD "JUMPIN JOHNNY" WILSON, SR., 91, died January 11, 2019, in Virginia.

The native of Anderson, Indiana, played the outfield for the 1948 and 1949 **Chicago American Giants**. However, he is better known as a basketball player. According to an April 3, 1948 *Chicago Defender* article, "Wilson of **Anderson College** made the all-Indiana State first team by an unanimous choice of the eight coaches in the conference." The paper added, "He broke the state scoring record for the second time."

Upon leaving the American Giants, he took his talents to the **Harlem Globetrotters** from 1949 to 1954, playing with Marques Haynes, Sweetwater Clifton and other Trotters.

Wilson would later coach for eight years at **Wood High School** in Indianapolis and later 16 years as head coach and athletic director at **Malcolm X College**. He also served as assistant coach for **Anderson College, Anderson High School, and Lock Haven University.**

Anderson High School has honored Wilson (in 2016) with a nine-foot high bronze statue.



For more information about this regular star at the **Jerry Malloy Negro League Conference**, check out his life story in the 2007 book, *Jump, Johnny, Jump* by Dick Burdette, published by AuthorHouse.

CHARLES BYRON "CHUCK" HARMON, 94, died March 19, 2019 in Golf Manor, Ohio.

The native of Washington, Indiana, helped the Washington High Hatchets win back-to-back Indiana State basketball championships in 1941 and 1942. He was also a star baseball and basketball player for the University of Toledo. After his freshman year at Toledo, he was assigned to the Great Lakes Naval Station in Illinois and joined its baseball team. He roomed with **Larry Doby** at the naval base.

After a three-year military hitch, Harmon returned to Toledo. To protect his amateur NCAA status he played outfield for the 1947 Indianapolis Clowns, as "**Charlie Fine.**" While with the Clowns, it was fellow hardwood Globetrotter **Goose Tatum** that provided Chuck with this alias.

Chuck Harmon would become the first African American to play for the Cincinnati Reds with his debut on April 17, 1954, at the age of 29.

Harmon would play three seasons with the Reds, hitting .242 with seven home runs. He would go on to play for the **St. Louis Cardinals** and the **Philadelphia Phillies**. In four Major League seasons, Harmon played in 289 games and hit .238.

In 1977, Harmon was inducted into the inaugural class of the **University of Toledo Athletic Hall of Fame**. He is also a member of the **Indiana Baseball Hall of Fame** (1995) and later, in 1997, a street in Cincy was renamed "**Chuck Harmon Way.**"

Other honors include, in 2004, the Reds held "**Chuck Harmon Recognition Night.**" More recently, in 2015, a statue of Harmon was installed at the Reds' urban youth baseball academy in Roselawn, Ohio.

