



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 20-4355, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

HONORING THE PLAYERS AND TEAMS OF THE NEGRO BASEBALL LEAGUES

WHEREAS, African Americans have been playing baseball since it was invented however, on December 11, 1868, Black ballplayers were barred from participation by the National Association of Baseball Players. The association's governing body voted unanimously to forbid any club which was composed of one or more people of color from participating; and

WHEREAS, Blacks began organizing their own professional baseball teams in 1885, the first professional team was the Cuban Giants; and

WHEREAS, The newly formed Black teams played as independent ball clubs until the organization of the first Black league in 1920. That year Rube Foster, known as the father of Black baseball, founded the Negro National League. In 1923, Ed Bolden formed the Eastern Colored League. These two leagues thrived for several years, but eventually declined because of financial difficulties. In 1933, a new Negro National League was formed and the Negro American League was chartered in 1937; and

WHEREAS, six separate baseball leagues, known collectively as the Negro Baseball Leagues, were organized by African Americans between 1920 and 1960; and

WHEREAS, in 1910 Rube Foster and Frank Leland organized the Chicago American Giants; for the first decade of the team's existence, they won every declared western championship; and

WHEREAS, starting in 1933 the Negro Leagues' East-West All Star Game was played annually at Comiskey Park; and

WHEREAS, At their height the Negro Baseball Leagues held World Series and all-star games. They were especially successful in World War II; and

WHEREAS, the Negro Baseball Leagues included exceptionally talented players, such as Richard "Cannonball Dick" Redding, Willie James Wells, Leroy "Satchel" Paige, Hilton Lee Smith, and Larry Doby; and

WHEREAS, many Negro League teams also welcomed women players such as Pearl Barrett, Toni Stone, Mamie "Peanut" Johnson and Constance "Connie" Morgan; and

WHEREAS, Chicago's own Cleveland Walker, has lived on the West and South sides and played in the Negro League; and

WHEREAS, beyond showcasing the talents of African Americans playing baseball, the Negro Baseball Leagues provided thousands of jobs to Black men and women and poured millions of dollars of revenue into Black communities; and

WHEREAS, in 1947 the integration of the baseball leagues started with the signing of Jackie Robinson by the Brooklyn Dodgers. Robinson became the first 20th Century Black baseball player allowed in the all-White professional leagues. After that signing, this was soon followed by the signing of other leading Negro League players, the Negro Baseball Leagues quietly folded; and

WHEREAS, Negro Baseball Leagues were significant in demonstrating the sportsmanship of African Americans and also helped break down racial barriers in all aspects of society

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Cook County recognizes the teams and players of the Negro Baseball Leagues for their achievements, dedication, sacrifices, and commemorates the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Negro Baseball Leagues.