

# The Courier

A Publication of SABR's Negro Leagues Committee

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

Editor, Larry Lester

September, 2009

## In the News

### 2009 Jerry Malloy Negro League Conference

The conference is named after one of the pre-eminent historians of early day baseball, the late Jerry Malloy. He edited a revised edition of "Sol White's History of Colored Baseball," written in 1903, which serves as the primary source for information on black teams and players in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

America's biggest and best black baseball conference made a whistle stop in Pittsburgh on July 16-18, at the Senator John Heinz History Center and the Western Pennsylvania Sports Museum. The sports museum features a stunning collection of one-of-a-kind sports artifacts and more than 70 interactive exhibits while celebrating the homeland victories of the Super Bowl and Stanley Cup champions.

With a proclamation from Mayor Luke Ravenstahl proclaiming the weekend as "**Jerry Malloy Negro League Conference Days**" we kicked off the conference with an educational session on Thursday. The all-day workshop for teachers was led by Dr. Leslie Heaphy and Ph. D. candidate Stephanie Liscio. Each participant received a notebook filled with bibliographies of Negro League adult and youth books, project ideas, lesson plans, puzzles and games, and recommended teaching aids for all grade levels. There are plans to partner with the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown for videoconferencing.

In the near future, our bibliography list of books for adults and children will soon be carried on the newly remodeled Cooperstown Hall of Fame website.

The materials can be used to enrich students' understanding of black baseball and its fundamental role in the social and civil rights history of America.

Thursday evening, Craig Britcher, a member of the SABR's Forbes Field chapter, provided a personal tour of the state-of-the-art Western PA Sports Museum, reliving the rich championship history of the Steel City Crawfords and the Homestead Grays.

On the second day, before a record crowd, Bryan Steverson (from Maryville, TN) opened the conference with an uplifting, contested debate presentation entitled "The Champions: Baseball's Best Team." The momentum was continued with Ball State University professor Geri Strecker's excellent presentation on Greenlee Field. This same presentation was a last minute substitution at the SABR national in Washington, DC, and won second place. Before lunch, we enjoyed a down home speech about a forthcoming book on **Satchel Paige** from Dr. Donald Spivey, history professor from the University of Miami, and an enlightening overview of the **Teenie "One Shot" Harris** photographic collection from archivist Kerin Schellenbarger from the Carnegie Museum. So far, more than 66,000 negatives from the Harris' collection have been catalogued.

Dr. Brian Carroll from Berry College (Mount Berry, Georgia) talked about the shift of executive power in the Negro Leagues from Chicago to Pittsburgh; followed by one of the conference's most popular events, the Player Panel. This year's panel featured **Bill "Ready" Cash** (Philadelphia Stars), **James Cobbin** (New York Black Yankees), **Pedro Sierra** (Detroit Stars), **Jim Robinson** (Kansas City Monarchs), and **Jumpin' Johnny Wilson** (Chicago American Giants).

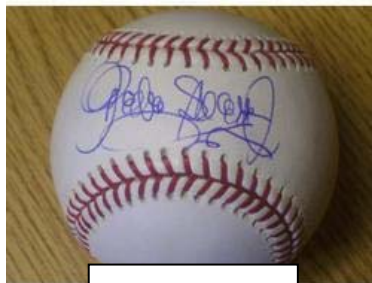
En route to PNC Park to see the Pirates play the San Francisco Giants, we took two tour buses to the Hill District to dedicate a Pennsylvania State Historical Marker for **Greenlee Field** at the intersection of Bedford Avenue and Junilla Street. The well attended event celebrated the legacy of **Gus Greenlee** and his Pittsburgh Crawfords, with remarks from Senator Jim Ferlo and author Rob Ruck.



Later leaving the dedication and arriving at PNC Park, the Malloy attendees were treated with a fine performance from last year's strikeout king and Cy Young winner Tim Lincecum. He struck out 10 Pirates in seven innings, but gave up a solo home run to Garret Jones in the first inning. The Giants tied the game in the 7<sup>th</sup> inning, 1-1, on an unearned run. The rain-delayed game carried on to the 14<sup>th</sup> inning, when Garret Jones muscled up for a walk off home run, this time off Giants pitcher Bob Howry for a Pirate win.

Saturday brought in award winning author Larry Tye (Boston, MA) with a poignant discussion about his new book on **Satchel Paige**. He was followed by Dr. Dawn Norwood, from University of Tennessee, with her perspective on women in black baseball. Up to bat next was conference regular Todd Peterson (Kansas City, MO) talking about the "the best left handed pitcher in the world," George Wilson. Later Dr. Rick Kenney from the University of Central Florida presented on **Fleetwood Walker's** seldom seen little brother **Welday**. He was followed by Hofstra University professor, Dr. Richard Puerzer's talk on a Pittsburgh star and an unsung hero in the integration of major league baseball, **Gene Baker**. Soon after, the author of "The Early Image of Black Baseball," Dr. James Brunson III, from Northern Illinois University, provided a reconstruction of images from 19<sup>th</sup> century baseball using a variety of mediums providing his audience with a feel and sense of the postbellum period.

After a short break, we hosted a second player panel with the return of the fabulous five: **Cash, Cobbin, Sierra, Robinson** and **Wilson**, along with an autograph session.



Pedro Sierra

Next up was the quartet of Dr. Laurence Glasco and his students from the University of Pittsburgh with an excellent tag team presentation on **Greenlee Field**. We closed out conference presentations with Dr. Michael Hauptert, from the University of Wisconsin, with an analytical view of the **East-West All Star Classic**, using various statistical models.

Some presentations are candidates for the **Black Ball Journal** published by McFarland & Company. Anyone can submit an abstract of their article to: Leslie Heaphy at [lheaphy@kent.edu](mailto:lheaphy@kent.edu). The deadline is **October 1<sup>st</sup>** for the next edition.

McFarland & Company is one of the Conference's prime sponsors. They enjoyed their most successful sales ever of Negro League themed books and publications. We plan at future conferences to add an Authors Panel, to educate, share ideas and learn how-to-publish effectively.

Immediately following Hauptert's presentation was the always popular Trivia contest. After two rounds of intense battle of wit and wisdom, Ted Knorr, from Harrisburg, PA, emerged as winner of several prizes. Meanwhile Bob Bailey and Fred "Fredrico" Brillhart took the silver and bronze.

We closed out the conference, partnering with the Josh Gibson Foundation, to host a banquet with silent and live auctions. Hall of Fame outfielder, and now minister, Rev. Lou Brock was the key note speaker. Several awards were given out, including the **Robert Peterson Recognition** and the **Tweed Webb Lifetime Achievement Awards**. Joseph Mitchell from Wilmington, Delaware, won the highly coveted **Fay Vincent Most Valuable Partner Award**. Previous Vincent MVP winners have been Mike Garvey from Chicago, Illinois, and Michael Hartnagel from Wilmington, DE.



Fay Vincent

Throughout the conference, we were joined by students from the **Boys & Girls Club of Western Pennsylvania**. Mark Charlton, Fatuma Darbane, Pasha Frison, Alexxa Gayle, Zak Kambie, Artrell Knight, Lakia Knight, JaCeka McElligott, Naraya Pope, Azezza Reed, Keionna Smith and Zjanara White each received notebooks filled with information about the Negro Leagues, autographed photographs, and a complimentary copy of the book, "Black Baseball in Pittsburgh." A mentor was assigned to each student to assist them in learning about this engaging sports experience.

All in all, it was another record breaking, successful conference for the Jerry Malloy Leadership Team. Currently, we have various levels of interest from Baltimore, Birmingham, Memphis, Homestead, Indianapolis, Newark and the University of Wisconsin in La Crosse to host the conference. With interest in black baseball history at an all-time high, we hope you can join us at our next whistle stop. *All abroad!*

## William "W" Bell is honored.

In June, the city of El Campo, Texas officially honored the founder of its youth baseball league, farmer, rancher, businessman and organizer of the local NAACP chapter.



**"Willie Bell Park"** honors one of the blue collar pitchers for several Negro League teams, including the Kansas City Monarchs. He pitched three games in the inaugural 1924 Colored World Series between the Monarchs and the Hilldale Club. Bell picked up a win, after a 10-2 W/L season that included eight complete games.

One of the black leagues all time leaders in Wins, Bell's name appeared on the 2006 Cooperstown Hall of Fame ballot as a finalist. A great honor for a great player.

## Voices from baseball's past

"The best coach during my baseball career was a gentleman by the name of Joe Echols, head baseball coach at North Carolina A&T State Univ. During my freshman year, Coach Echols worked with me on fundamentals and gradually worked me into the starting lineup by mid season.

Coach Echols had played briefly with the Newark Eagles in 1939. A good friend of Cal and Monte Irvin, Coach Echols was best known as an outstanding football player at Virginia St. College. His calm manner was the key in helping me gain confidence in myself throughout my baseball and professional work career."

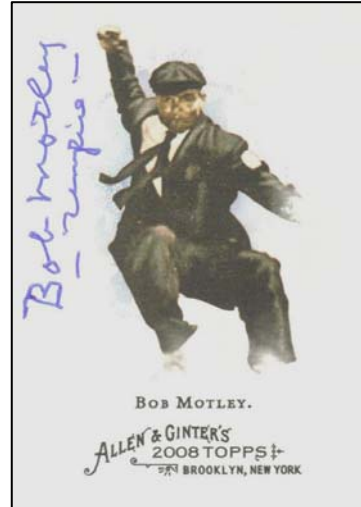
### Jim Robinson,

1952-53, 56-58--ss, 3b, 2b, Philadelphia Stars, Indianapolis Clowns, Kansas City Monarchs, Memphis Red Sox



**This is a NEW feature for *The Courier*. Each quarter we will hear from a former Negro League player.**

## Motley into the Hall of Fame



In June, umpire **Bob Motley** was one of six inductees into the **Calhoun County Sports Hall of Fame** in Anniston, Alabama. He umpired in the Negro Leagues for 10 years. As a blind umpire, he witnessed some of the game's greatest players of color; **Willard Brown, Satchel Paige, Buck O'Neil, Ernie Banks, Hank Aaron, Willie Mays, Larry**

**Doby and Roy Campanella.** He served as the league's chief umpire for eight seasons and called "balls and strikes" for several East-West all-star classics.

After his days in the black leagues, Motley had a brief stint in the Class AAA Pacific Coast League. Although the flamboyant arbitrator never got an invitation to the Show, he never lost his passion for the game.

He later worked in public relations for the Kansas City Royals and became one of their leading season ticket sellers. The Royals Lancer is also an active member on the Board of Directors for the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum and co-author with his son Bryon on the **"Ruling Over Monarchs, Giants & Stars: Umpiring in the Negro Leagues & Beyond"** by [www.SportsPublishingLLC.com](http://www.SportsPublishingLLC.com).

## Bridgeforth into the Hall of Fame

**William Sousa "Sue" Bridgeforth**, along with Bobby Marlow, Max Kelley, Jerry Wayne Christopher and Jimmy Beasley were inducted into the **Limestone County Hall of Fame** in Athens, Alabama, on June 6<sup>th</sup>. The ceremony took place on the campus of Athens State University.

Bridgeforth, a native of Tanner, Alabama, was an owner of the Birmingham Black Barons and the Baltimore Elite Giants from 1950 to 1954. He purchased the Elite Giants for \$11,000 which included the team bus.

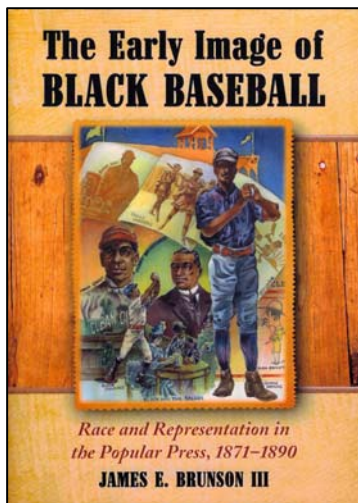
Bridgeforth later bought the Black Barons for a reported \$5,000, a team that included future country music star **Charley Pride**, who sang on the bus.

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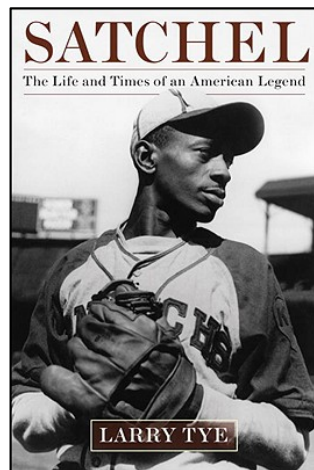
## Dugout Reading . . . . .

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This scholarly work by **James E. Brunson, III**, gathers artwork and written accounts of the popular press. From contemporary postbellum articles, illustrations, photographs and woodcuts, a unique image of the black athlete emerges, one that was not always positive but was nonetheless central in understanding the evolving black image in American culture.



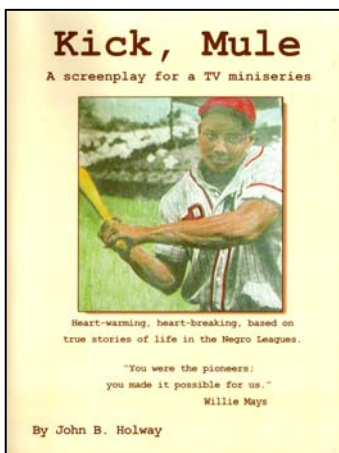
Order your copy today from [www.mcfarlandpub.com](http://www.mcfarlandpub.com) .



Through dogged detective work, award-winning author and journalist **Larry Tye** has tracked down the truth about this majestic and enigmatic pitcher, interviewing more than 200 players and family members. Separating the truth from the legend, *Satchel* is a remarkable accomplishment, as large as this larger-than-life man. This saga is published by

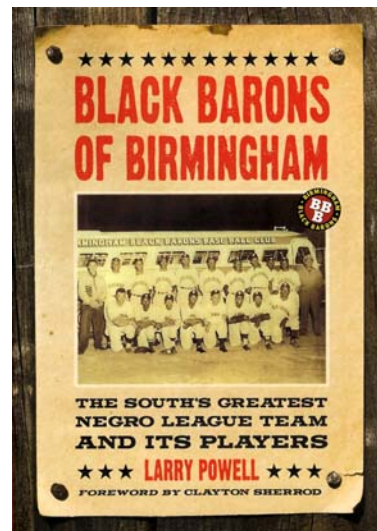
Random House, New York.

**John Holway's** latest work is a screenplay for a TV miniseries. He combines the travels of two Hall of Fame sluggers; **Mule Suttles** and **Josh Gibson**. Read the fictional account of Mule Sable's journey in segregated America, from Lord Fairfax Press in Burke, Virginia.



**Larry Powell**, a professor of communication studies at the University of Alabama in Birmingham, offers a unique approach to the history of the best Negro League team in the south. The first half of the book covers the leagues and players from the 1920s, the 1930s and 1940s. The second half is devoted to the Black Barons of subsequent decades who were invited to tryout camps, signed to minor league contracts and others who got a cup of coffee in the Big Leagues.

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## Brewers Honor NL Legends

In Miller Park, on July 25, 2009, the Milwaukee Brewers hosted the Atlanta Braves. The Brewers wore replica jerseys of the Milwaukee Bears and the Braves strutted in replica Atlanta Black Crackers uniforms. This was the third annual Negro Leagues Tribute Day.



The Brewers inducted two legends to their Wall of Fame; **Harold "Buster" Hair, Jr.**, and **James "Jim P" Tillman, Sr.** Unfortunately, Deacon Tillman passed away a few weeks before the induction ceremony. The former catcher for the Homestead Grays had received congressional recognition from State Representative Sheila Jackson-Lee from Houston, Texas, in July of 2004.

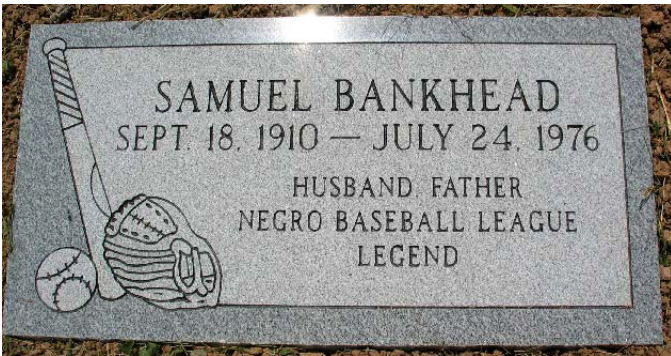
In 1978, Rev. Hair became a full-fledged minister after receiving his master's degree in Administration from the University of Florida.

Hair played shortstop and the hot corner for the Birmingham Black Barons and the Kansas City Monarchs in the mid-fifties. This is the 14<sup>th</sup> year the Milwaukee Brewers have inducted former Negro leaguers into their Wall of Fame.

## The Krock Watch

Recently on July 13<sup>th</sup>, in Pittsburgh at Greenwood Cemetery, headstones were installed for three unmarked graves of former Negro Leaguers. With donations from several SABR members, Jeremy Krock and Bob Weir, president of Greenwood Cemetery, installed headstones for former Homestead Grays players **Gable Patterson**, **Rob Gaston** and **Sam Bankhead**.

Bankhead, **Josh Gibson's** closest friend on the Grays, had been without a headstone for more than 30 years.



With a large number of volunteer hours, the Negro Leagues Player's Grave Marker Project remains active and effective. Led by Bob Bailey, from Gainesville, Florida, we have had many volunteers researching, locating and documenting players' graves, both marked and unmarked. The Jerry Malloy Negro League Committee and Jeremy Krock would like to thank Tom Perry, Raymond Buck, Kent Frederickson, Jan Finkel, Mike Garvey, Ron Marcelle, David Chase, Leslie Heaphy, Doug Kenison, Trey Strecker, Dennis Bidwell, Philip Ross, Donald Fairchild and Joe Mitchell for their donations in making this humanitarian effort possible.

If you wish to make a tax-free donation go to SABR's **Negro Leagues Restoration Headstone Program** at this weblink: <http://store.sabr.org/sabrstore.cfm?a=dnt>

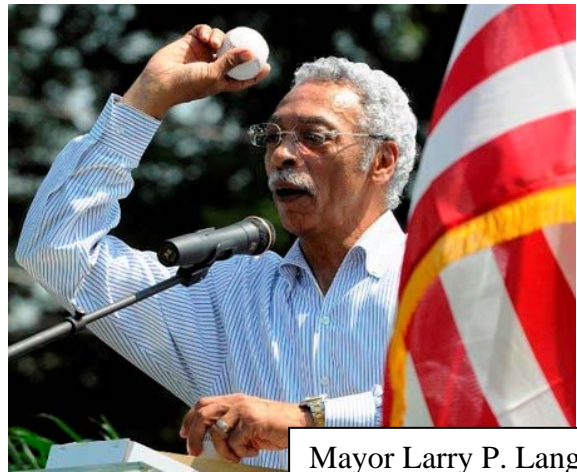
Since 2004, we have raised funds for 20 headstones with more installments scheduled later this year. If you know of a Negro League veteran buried in an unmarked grave, please email information to Jeremy Krock at: [jlkrock@comcast.net](mailto:jlkrock@comcast.net)

By the way, the search for the burial site of Hall of Famer **John Preston "Pete" Hill** continues. Also note, **William Binga's** unmarked grave has been identified in Crystal Lake Cemetery in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

## Rickwood Field/Museum Break Ground

Birmingham Mayor Larry Langford, along with a host of more than two dozen former players, city officials, fans and friends gathered at Rickwood Field on August 13<sup>th</sup> for a ceremonial ground breaking. The newly proposed museum will showcase the Negro Baseball Leagues and the Southern League, with special emphasis on the Birmingham Barons and the Black Barons.

In May, the City Council of Birmingham approved expenditures of \$7.5 million to restore America's oldest ball park (built in 1910) and build a museum adjacent to the former playground for Hall of Famers such as Babe Ruth, Honus Wagner, Christy Mathewson, Reggie Jackson, **Willie Mays**, **Satchel Paige** and Dizzy Dean.



Mayor Larry P. Langford

The museum is scheduled to house the massive Negro League collection of Dr. Layton Revel, estimated at more than \$4 million which includes vintage uniforms, signed contracts, bats and various equipment types.

With emphasis on the Negro and Southern Leagues, the suggested galleries may include memorabilia on the independent and barnstorming teams, the industrial leagues, minor leagues, military baseball along with the rich Latin American baseball heritage.



## Sunrises!

SEND YOUR FAVORITE NEGRO LEAGUER A BIRTHDAY CARD.

### SEPTEMBER

3<sup>RD</sup> – REV. BILL GREASON – 85  
4<sup>TH</sup> – JOSE SANTIAGO – 81  
5<sup>TH</sup> – BILLY RAY HAGGINS – 80  
7<sup>TH</sup> – RICKY MAROTO – 77  
9<sup>TH</sup> – JIM PROCTOR – 74  
11<sup>TH</sup> – CLYDE PARRIS – 87  
16<sup>TH</sup> – OLLIE BRANTLEY – 78  
19<sup>TH</sup> – STANLEY “DOC” GLENN – 83  
21<sup>ST</sup> – LOUIS CLARIZIO – 78  
22<sup>ND</sup> – SWEET LOU JOHNSON – 75  
26<sup>TH</sup> – EMILIO NAVARRO – 104  
27<sup>TH</sup> – MAMIE “PEANUT” JOHNSON – 74  
28<sup>TH</sup> – WILLIAM DECK – 94  
29<sup>TH</sup> – HAROLD GOULD – 85  
30<sup>TH</sup> – ARCHIE YOUNG – 79

### OCTOBER

2<sup>ND</sup> – JOE B. SCOTT – 89  
7<sup>TH</sup> – HANK PRESSWOOD – 88, RAY MADDIX – 81  
13<sup>TH</sup> – DIRK GIBBONS – 81  
17<sup>TH</sup> – BILL BLAIR – 88  
19<sup>TH</sup> – LEE CARTER – 89  
20<sup>TH</sup> – REV. CLIFF LAYTON – 80  
25<sup>TH</sup> – WARREN O’NEIL – 92  
28<sup>TH</sup> – ARTIE WILSON – 89

### NOVEMBER

2<sup>ND</sup> – BUTCH MCCORD – 84  
4<sup>TH</sup> – ERNIE “SCHOOLBOY” JOHNSON – 81  
12<sup>TH</sup> – MARVIN JONES – 76  
13<sup>TH</sup> – B.G. STEVENS – 74  
16<sup>TH</sup> – NORMAN “SKEETER” BANKS – 89  
17<sup>TH</sup> – ROBERT ROSELL WILLIAMS – 77  
18<sup>TH</sup> – JAMES “RED” MOORE – 93, BOB  
“PEACHEAD” MITCHELL – 77  
20<sup>TH</sup> – BUDDY OWENS – 82  
23<sup>RD</sup> – WILLIAM “BABA” RICHARDSON – 75  
25<sup>TH</sup> – CLEO BROWN – 76  
28<sup>TH</sup> – CAL IRVIN – 85  
29<sup>TH</sup> – MINNIE MINOSO – 87  
30<sup>TH</sup> – ERNIE WESTFIELD – 70

**CONGRATULATIONS** to Nonagenarians: **EMILIO NAVARRO, JAMES “RED” MOORE, WARREN O’NEIL, & WILLIAM DECK**

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## Sunsets . . . .



**JAMES “JIM P.” TILLMAN**, 89, died May 31, 2009, in Capitol Heights, MD. Selected in the 2008 Major League Baseball’s special draft by the Pittsburgh Pirates, Tillman was a catcher for the 1941-43 champion Homestead Grays.

**JOSE “POTATO” PILOTO**, 83, died June 22, 2009, in Brandywine, MD. Piloto known for his hidden ball trick was a pitcher for the 1948-50 Memphis Red Sox.

**CISCERO “LEFTY” WARREN, SR.**, 89, died June 25, 2009 in Mountainside, NJ. Warren pitched from 1946-48, for the Homestead Grays, Memphis Red Sox, and the Raleigh Tigers.

**HUBERT “BERT” SIMMONS**, 85, died July 8, 2009, in Tarboro, NC. The founder of the new black baseball museum in Baltimore was selected by the Baltimore Orioles in the Special Negro League Draft by MLB in 2008. Simmons pitched for the 1950 Baltimore Elite Giants.

**SIDNEY T. BUNCH, JR.**, 78, died July 13, 2009, in Nashville, TN. An outfielder in 1949-50, 1954-55, Bunch starred for the Baltimore Elite Giants and the Birmingham Black Barons.

**D.L. “CURTIS” WILLIAMS**, 70, died July 18, 2009, in Harlem, NY. The clever lefty pitched in 1958-59 and 1963 for the Memphis Red Sox and the Birmingham Black Barons.

### 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).

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