



News

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NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM SELECTS RESEARCH TEAM TO COMPLETE AFRICAN-AMERICAN BASEBALL HISTORY STUDY

(COOPERSTOWN, NY.) The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum today announced that it has selected “The Negro Leagues Researchers/Authors Group” research team, led by Dr. Lawrence Hogan of Union County College (NJ), Richard Clark of Ypsilanti, MI, and Larry Lester of Kansas City, MO, to conduct a comprehensive study on the history of African Americans in Baseball, from 1860-1960. Hogan, Clark and Lester will lead an extremely diverse group of authors, researcher and historians in this first-of-its-kind academic study. The study, which will allow the Museum to expand the scope and depth of its knowledge and historical collection on Baseball and American culture, is being funded by a grant from Major League Baseball.

“The documentary record of the African-American contribution to our National Pastime is incomplete and this endeavor will go a long way toward filling those gaps,” said Hall of Fame President Dale Petroskey. “This is an extremely important research project, allowing us to further our mission as an educational institution, and we could not be happier with the selection of Dr. Hogan, Dick Clark and Larry Lester and their team.”

“We are excited,” Hogan noted, “by the possibilities this project offers to document and tell an important - and for too long neglected - baseball story, as well as a chapter in our nation’s history that reaches far beyond the playing field of Negro Leagues baseball. Each of us involved in this project has been researching, writing about, studying, and speaking about the topic for many years. The members of our team are very grateful for the opportunity that the Hall of Fame and Major League Baseball has presented to us – to bring an important chapter in American history, one that has become an important part of our personal and professional lives, into the mainstream of American history.”

Hogan is a senior professor of history at Union County College. He has served as visiting professor of American Studies at the University of Notre Dame and is presently associated with a major exhibit project on the history of the African-American athlete with the Scholar Athlete Hall of Fame and the Institute for International Sport, located at the University of Rhode Island. Dr. Hogan has authored a major book on the history of African-American press, has numerous scholarly and popular articles to his credit, and has produced two documentaries, including with film director Thomas C. Guy Jr. -- the highly regarded “Before You Can Say Jackie Robinson: Black Baseball in America in the Era of the Color Line.” His touring exhibit on the history of black baseball has been displayed at a variety of locations across the nation, and he has served as guest curator for numerous exhibits on the history of black baseball.

Richard Clark, along with Larry Lester, is co-chairman of the Society for American Baseball Research’s (SABR) Negro Leagues Committee, a position he assumed in 1985. As committee chair, he has been instrumental in building a remarkable network of scholars, researchers and writers that is a model for cooperative scholarship and research. With Lester, Clark is co-editor of The Negro Leagues Book, and has contributed to over 30 books on Negro Leagues history.

Larry Lester is one of the founders of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City, MO, where he served as research director and treasurer for many years. He was instrumental in developing the museum’s business plan, designing its original exhibits and creating its licensing program. He has authored several books on the history of black baseball, served as a consultant on several baseball documentaries and has contributed research to more than 36 publications.

This is the first time in the Museum’s 61-year history that an academic research study has been sponsored. A request for proposals was disseminated throughout the academic and research community. This multi-year project is scheduled to be completed sometime in 2003. The committee that selected Dr. Hogan consists of the following members of the Hall of Fame Board of Directors: Bill White (former

player and National League president), Ed Stack, Major League Baseball President Paul Beeston and former executive John McHale. Sam Lacy, a long-time editor and journalist and the 1997 J.G. Taylor Spink Award-winner, was also a member of the group.

Once completed, the project will provide a comprehensive, objective and properly documented historical narrative on the history of African-American baseball between the years 1860 and 1960; a compilation of reliable and documented statistical data on the various leagues, teams and players; a compilation of biographical essays on members of the African-American community who participated in or contributed to this baseball experience; a comprehensive bibliography of resources and a comprehensive resource guide to these sources; the identification of artifacts which may be available for exhibition or display by the museum; the creation of an oral history collection in support of this study; and curriculum materials on the topic of black baseball for use in elementary and secondary schools, as well as on the college level.

“The Hall of Fame Library has the most complete Baseball archive in the world, with more than 2.5 million documents,” said Major League Baseball Commissioner Allen H. (Bud) Selig last July upon awarding the funding to the Hall of Fame. “Just like all great research facilities, the quest for greater knowledge is ongoing. The Hall of Fame’s collections on the history of African Americans in Baseball is unsurpassed, but there is a lot about this subject that is not known – information that needs to be professionally researched and documented. What’s learned over the next few years will greatly expand our knowledge about African-American baseball history.”

The Museum’s collections contain more than 35,000 three-dimensional artifacts representing all facets of the game, from its inception in the mid-19th century, to present. Three-dimensional artifacts include bats, baseballs, uniforms, player equipment, ballpark artifacts, awards, artwork, textiles, tickets, collectibles and assorted memorabilia. In addition, the Institution’s archives contain in excess of 130,000 Baseball cards and 2.6 million Library items, including photographs, books, magazines, newspaper clippings, films, video and audio tapes.

Located on Main Street in the heart of picturesque Cooperstown, New York, the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum is one of the country’s major tourist destinations and is surely the best-known sports shrine in the world. Opening its doors for the first time on June 12, 1939, the Hall of Fame has stood as the definitive repository of the game’s treasures and as a symbol of the most profound individual honor bestowed on an athlete. It is every fan’s “Field of Dreams,” with its stories, legends and magic to be passed on from generation to generation.

Open seven days a week the year round, with the exception of Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s day, the Hall of Fame’s hours of operation are from 9:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. from May 1st until September 30th and from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. from October 1st through April 30th. The Museum remains open until 8:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturday evenings in April, October, November and December.

Ticket prices are \$9.50 for adults (13 and over), \$8.00 for seniors (65 and over) and \$4.00 for juniors (ages 7-12). Members are always admitted free of charge and there is no charge for children six years of age or younger. A discount is available for “AAA” members. The Museum is handicap accessible and video programs are captioned for the hearing impaired. For information about our programs, membership opportunities, group rates or driving directions, please visit our Web site at baseballhalloffame.org, or, call 888-HALL-OF-FAME. (888-425-5633) or 607-547-7200.

The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum is an independent not-for-profit educational institution, dedicated to fostering an appreciation of the historical development of baseball and its impact on our culture by collecting, preserving, exhibiting and interpreting its collections for a global audience as well as honoring those who have made outstanding contributions to our National Pastime.