

Dick Clark, R.I.P.

There were two real McCoys from Ypsilanti, Michigan: Elijah McCoy and Richard Clifford Clark. Dick Clark was the most genuine person known to mankind. Liked by all, respected by many. Diogenes stopped looking for an honest man, when he met Sir Richard. He was charming, brilliant, and bitter - sometimes all at the same time. Clark's opinions were honest and sometimes unfiltered. You have to respect a man for that! As many of us who knew him, we are better men, fathers and husbands for knowing him.

He was a dog's best friend. And he was this dog's best friend. Richard "Dick" Clark, 68 years old, my mentor, my buddy, my homey, my roomy, uncle to my daughters, even ate my wife's cooking, and an inspirational leader to many, passed away Monday morning, December 8th.

Like our mutual friend **Jerry Malloy**, he was someone who didn't compromise on being the person only he could be. Dick Clark was someone who didn't hold back on sharing his gifts to research, fact check or befriend a ball player or historian in need. He was a Negro League savant. No one, absolutely no one, knew more about Negro League history than Dick Clark. We had to ban him from Trivia Contests because he knew the answers before the questions were asked. He had a mathematical mind palace, and probably could have moon walked with Einstein or Tesla. Dick's brilliancy often shined thru his unique sense of humor.

Thirty years ago, I joined the **Society for American Baseball Research** (SABR) with Dick Clark serving as chairman of the Negro Leagues Committee. Before technology took over, he welcomed me to the organization, and each week we faithfully wrote, and also ran up some significant long distance telephone bills. Back in the day, you had to have lots of postage stamps to keep up with his correspondences. Two years

later, we met in person for the first time in Washington, DC, at the 17th SABR National Convention, and became best-buds immediately.

The avid diet-Pepsi drinker was my co-editor (or co-pilot) for *The Negro Leagues Book*, called by some the bible of black baseball. He also contributed to more than 100 books on Negro Leagues history. Some of his last words from his hospital bed were, "I'm Sorry Larry, but I'm Going Home!" Dick, **Wayne Stivers** and myself wanted to complete the ultimate Negro League Encyclopedia, before either of us were called home.

Our constant companion, **Rick Meister**, who had been on bedside watch since day one, was part of the quartet that often broke bread together. We had sleepovers at each of our homes. The Four Tops worked on several committees, conferences, letter-writing campaigns, and through collaborative efforts with like-minded

Clark with Ron Teasley, Ernie Nimmons, Minnie Forbes, Pedro Sierra & Walt Owens, August 2014



individuals, we re-opened the doors of Cooperstown in 1987, to get 25 more black ball veterans in the National Baseball Hall of Fame, beginning with **Ray Dandridge**.

However, all good things must come to an end. We all have a reservation in the upper room, without the privilege of cancellation. Despite our best game, Father Time is still undefeated.

Well the dogs are now whistling a new tune, barking at the new moon. I will miss my dear friend, and will carry his thoughts with me each and every day, until my call to home comes. Clark was as fine a gentleman as one could meet.

From his hospice bed Dick whispered that any donations be sent to the **SABR**, 4455 E. Camelback Road, Suite D-140, Phoenix, Arizona 85018, with funds earmarked to the **Jerry Malloy Conference**. Or click here to donate: <https://sabr.site-ym.com/donations/donate.asp?id=6149> Clark's last cry was, "Please keep the legacy alive!"