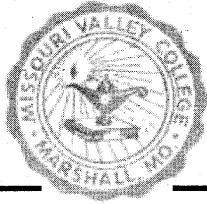


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News

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Black History Month features baseball presentations

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In the spirit of celebrating Black History Month, Murrell Memorial Library coordinated different activities on Feb. 4 to honor achievements by African-Americans.

Two distinguished guests gave different lectures on black baseball players. There were about 200 people in attendance for the two presentations.

Carrie Strodtman Flaspohler, serials librarian and adjunct psychology professor, organized both events and was happy for their success.

"I was pleased for the great turnout," Flaspohler said. "Both speakers did an excellent job."

Flaspohler said that it was fitting that Phil S. Dixon, an internationally known historian and author of four books, an African-American, gave his inspiring background for the audience interested in Black history.

"I did not like baseball before, but now I do," Marquia Caldwell, junior, said. She said that both presentations led her to have an interest in baseball.

Peter Gorton, a baseball historian and winner of the 2005 Sporting News/SABR Baseball Research Award, presented information on black pitcher John Wesley Donaldson.

Gorton narrated the challenges Donaldson went through before being recognized.

"Donaldson's greatness came at a time when racial stereotypes and barriers depicted him negatively," Gorton

said. "If he's great, somebody needs to bring it out there."

Gorton has been working on the story of John Donaldson since 2000. The reason he continues to research him is because, according to Gorton, he has been nearly forgotten to history. He said that Donaldson was a great example to all, showing how respect for people can bring success in life.

"As I've studied him, time and again, his experiences have astounded me," Gorton said. "He was a great ball player but an equally great man."

Gorton has given several speeches over the years and has received encouragement from audiences everywhere.

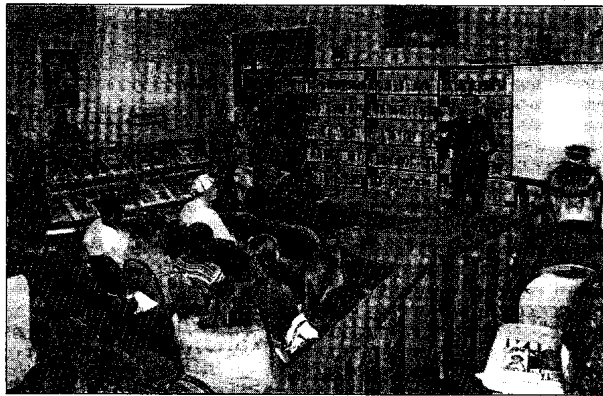
"Continually, I'm amazed at how little is known about Donaldson's career, and how eager people are to hear his wonderful story," Gorton said.

Dixon talked about the achievements of black baseball players in the Negro League before and after integration.

Dixon, who had interests in baseball since he was young, spoke about baseball in the past, present and future. He talked about the history of black players, the teams they played for, the way they were promoted, their achievements and the challenges they faced.

Dixon's presentation was preceded by a documentary, "They Were All Stars," which highlighted a short history of the Negro Baseball League.

Dixon challenged those in atten-



Peter Gorton discusses baseball for Black History Month.

Devon Wade/The Delta

dance to pursue their goals and reach for what they have a passion for.

Caldwell said that her great grandfather played for the Memphis Red Sox under the Negro League and she plans to meet with Dixon in Kansas City and ask him more about her grandfather, whose career is not yet documented.

Both Gorton and Dixon were later available at the reception in Murrell Library to answer questions and sign autographs. The library served "ballpark style" food including mini corn dogs, nachos, peanuts, popcorn and root beer.

Elsewhere, Tim Baumann, associate professor of anthropology and archaeology, hosted a presentation

discussing "soul food" and the impact it has on the African-American culture.

The term "soul food" was coined in the 1960s as an outgrowth of ethnic pride and revitalization of African-Americans.

Baumann said that everyone needs to realize that all cultures and different heritages have soul food.

"Food is at the center of everything," Baumann said. "It reinforces our identity regardless of our racial and ethnic backgrounds."

Baumann also made a presentation at the Missouri History Museum in Forest Park, highlighting how burials are carried out within the African-American community.