

An Analysis of the 1952 Pittsburgh Courier Negro League Baseball Poll by Fredrico

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On Saturday April, 19, 1952 the Pittsburgh Courier Newspaper of Pittsburgh, PA published a poll derived from ballots cast by a panel of experts of Negro League Baseball. In 1998 in Harrisburg, PA at the first National SABR Negro League Conference I gave a presentation about this poll that won the prize for the best presentation at that conference. Much of the following is based on the initial research done for that presentation. Some new information has come to light since that time and I hope this piece helps clear up misconceptions about this poll that have spread through the Negro League research community over the years.

The reason I feel this poll is so important is that the 31 experts that voted are some of most astute baseball men of that time and had eye witness first hand knowledge of many of the Negro League baseball players they were voting on. They lived it ! They were there ! Granted they didn't have the statistical analysis of modern saber-metrics to guide them and there are mostly likely cases of personal bias involved in some of the votes cast. There are some that have said that the poll had an eastern bias and had overlooked some of the players in the west and I will address that issue later. I personally think that there might have been more bias against some of the great Latin players than those of the west.

One of the experts, Lloyd Thompson I think says it best on his ballot :

“ Of course, since there has been so many of our Negro baseball greats down through the years, the human element of personal opinion may be influenced by sentiment when it would take a modern Solomon to decide which player should receive the award for a number of positions.

With the advent of our colored boys into the major leagues, there poses a complex aspect in selecting an All Star baseball team. There are those who are convinced, and probably justifiably so, that our Negro ball players who have made the grade into the big leagues through the acid test, automatically qualify for respective positions. However, to disregard the back-log of players who created the spring-

board for the present Negro major leaguers, would be, shall we say, a glaring over-sight.

When too, it is a bit difficult for the Johnny Come Lately's to appreciate the ability and wax enthusiastic fervor over the diamond deeds of players, many of whom they have never seen, from the past era of hectic days when the veterans of World War One were callow youths. However, to exclude players from the period of 1910 to 1930 would be a gross miscarriage of justice. "

The 31 experts that voted >>>>

You have already met Lloyd Thompson through his eloquent words from his ballot. He was Hilldale's Ed Bolden's right hand man and is the only black executive in the group of 5 former promoters and front office persons to vote in this poll.

The other 4 and the only white voters in the poll are:

Tom Baird Eddie Gottlieb Syd Pollock Abe Saperstein

There are 21 former players and of those 21 players we know for sure that 8 of them didn't vote for themselves because they received no votes. There could be others that didn't vote for themselves, but received votes. There is only one known ballot, that of Thompson's so we do not have a record of the other 30. My attempts to find more ballots through the Courier's Managing Editor William Nunn's son and other former employees came to a dead end as I was told that all the Courier's records were moved to a silo somewhere in West Virginia and no one now knows where it is located. Thompson's son Robert told me his father's papers were in the African American Museum in Philadelphia, PA and I would like to thank one of the curators, Aileen Rosenberg for finding his ballot for me. I don't know if any of the other voters had kept a copy of the ballot they had sent in or not, but I have not been able to find one. If someone out there finds another ballot please contact me. Fredrico7777@AOL.com

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There are no voters from a Latin heritage in this poll. Torriente & Dihigo are first team selections. Minnie Minoso, Jose Mendez, Pelayo Chacon & Lefty Tiant are on the Roll of Honor. These are the only players to get votes that are from a Latin heritage.

The 21 former players are : # = they didn't vote for themselves
* = Hall of Fame

Cool Papa Bell *	Larry Brown #	Oscar Charleston *
Jimmie Crutchfield #	Dizzy Dismukes	Bunny Downs
Frank Forbes #	Vic Harris	Jesse Hubbard #
Judy Johnson *	Fats Jenkins	John Henry Lloyd *
Dave Malarcher	Jack Marshall #	Ted Page
Bill Pierce	Jake Stephens #	Willie Wells *
Chaney White #	Bobby Williams	Bill Yancey #

The 5 sportswriters are : Dan Burley Alvin Moses
Ric Roberts Dr. Rollo Wilson Fay Young

Analyzing the votes

The first thing to take notice to is that the voting is position specific, even the outfield positions. How do we know that? In the prose it says that a tie for right field was broken by using Torriente's total outfield votes. He and Chino Smith had been tied at 10 and Torriente had received an outfield vote at either center or left-field and that vote was used to break the tie. Jud Wilson received at least one vote for both 1B & 3B. Mule Suttles received at least one vote for both 1B & OF. Dandridge received at least 2 votes @ 3B and at least 1 @ 2B. Rogan received 9 votes @ P & at least one for the OF. Willie Wells received 9 votes @ SS & at least one vote @ 2B. Double Duty Radcliffe received at least one vote @ P & C. No vote totals were given for Utility Infielder or Utility Outfielder. We know from Thompson's ballot that he voted for one at each, but in the poll two Utility Infielders are listed for the first team and two are listed for the 2nd team, while there is only one Utility OF listed for the 1st & 2nd team.

A mistake made by many is attempting to make a 3rd team or 4th team or 5th team from this poll. There were only a first team and second team and all others were listed in a Roll of Honor. How do we know that the Roll of Honor is not listed in order of vote totals ? Because in the prose we could conclude that Dandridge finished 3rd in the voting at 3B, but he is not the first listed in the Roll of Honor. Also in the prose Jose Mendez { The Black Diamond } is listed in what appears to be a 3rd team of pitchers, but he is next to last in the Roll of Honor for pitchers. On the other hand it is of interest that Lundy & Dobie Moore are mentioned in the prose as being 3rd or 4th or tied for 3rd

depending on how you interpret the wording and Lundy & Moore are the first two in the Roll of Honor at SS. No matter how you evaluate this data the poll itself only lists a 1st team and 2nd team so any speculation of more than 2 teams is a mute point and the only indications of vote totals beyond those 2 teams can't be assumed unless it appears specific in the prose. Another point of interest is that there is a Roll of Honor only for Utl Inf. and not for Ult OF. Why is this of interest ? Because on Thompson's ballot he lists Rap Dixon as his Utility outfielder and he does not appear in the Roll of Honor under Ult OF, but does appear as the first outfielder mentioned on the Roll of Honor. Dihigo is the first team Utl OF & is also listed as first team Ult Inf. along with Sam Bankhead. The second team Utl OF, Clint Thomas is left off all other published versions of this poll that I have seen and his listing on the actual poll itself and Dihigo's listing are the only mentions of Utl OF. There is no mention of Thompson's vote for Dixon. John Beckwith and Newt Allen are on the 2nd team at Utility Infielder. On the Roll of Honor at Utl Inf in order of listing are :

Emmett Bowman Dick Wallace Walter Cannady Jose Mendez
Another important point to be made about position specific is Monte Irvin being listed as first team in left field. Irvin won LF with only 5 votes, while we know for sure that Chino Smith had gotten 10 votes for RF and we know that this is his total votes for OF because Torriente was first team in RF with a tie breaking vote. Cool Papa Bell got 9 votes for CF, but we don't know if he received other votes for the OF. If the voting would follow the current system used for the Major League All-Star game either Smith or Bell would be on the first team. It is possible Bell could be 2nd or tied for 2nd for most OF votes.

LF >

We know Monte Irvin is first team with 5 votes and Pete Hill is second team with 4 votes. We know from Thompson's ballot that he voted for Larry Doby for LF. Assuming that all 31 voters had complete ballots that would be 21 votes unaccounted for or 20 if Torriente's tie breaking vote came from LF. There are 16 Roll of Honor outfielders that we know had at least one vote each and we know the most LF votes any of them could have is 3.

CF >

Oscar Charleston is first team with 20 votes and Cool Papa Bell is second team with 9 votes. That leaves only 2 possible votes or just

one if Torriente's tie breaking vote came from CF his most played OF position.

RF >

Cristobal Torriente is first team with the tie breaking 11th vote and Chino Smith is second team with 10 votes. Thompson voted for Minoso in RF. That leaves 10 votes for RF open.

Roll of Honor OF > Rap Dixon Larry Doby Fats Jenkins
Jimmie Lyons Mule Suttles Spottswood Poles
[Pete] Frank Duncan Turkey Stearnes Jelly Gardner
Minnie Minoso Jap Payne Blainey Hall
Ted Strong Bullet Joe Rogan Ted Page Vic Harris

As I had said earlier I don't want anyone misconstruing that these are 3rd team, 4th team etc. It is just the order they appear in the paper and there is no proof that they are in order of vote totals. From this list Spottswood Poles and Turkey Stearnes played the most in CF. Rogan when he was not pitching also had played some CF. Larry Doby at the time of the poll was a full time centerfielder in the Majors. Jelly Gardner played the most in RF, but also played some in CF. Most of the others are noted as corner outfielders for their careers.

Third Base >

Oliver "Ghost" Marcelle is the first team selection with 16 votes. That leaves 15 votes unaccounted for. Judy Johnson is listed as the second team selection, but there are no vote totals for him. It appears that the most possible votes he could have received would be 10 and the least possible would be 4. If Ray Dandridge mentioned in the prose is the 3rd highest vote total than we know he would have had to have at least 2 votes and the most possible votes he could have received would have been 5 as there are 4 others mentioned in the Roll of Honor at 3B.

Roll of Honor 3B > Jud Wilson Ray Dandridge
Dave Marlarcher Bill Francis Jim Taylor

Shortstop >

John Henry Lloyd is the first team selection with 14 votes. Willie Wells is the second team selection with 9 votes. That leaves 8 votes unaccounted for. Dick Lundy and Dobie Moore are mentioned in the prose. So the question arises are they tied for 3rd or is Lundy 3rd and Moore 4th ? It would seem most logical that they must have been tied for 3rd

with 2 votes each since 4 votes must be accounted for by the other 4 listed in the Roll of Honor.

Roll of Honor SS > Dick Lundy Dobie Moore Pelayo Chacon
Gerald Williams Bobby Williams Martin "Specs" Clark

Second Base >

Jackie Robinson is the first team selection with 13 votes.

Bingo DeMoss is the second team selection with 7 votes. That leaves 11 votes for 10 Roll of Honor second basemen meaning one of the following got 2 votes or there was one ballot that was blank @ 2B.

Roll of Honor 2B > Bill Monroe George Scales Bunny Downs
Nate Harris Sam Hughes Frank Warfield Ray Dandridge
Willie Wells George Wright Harry Williams

First Base >

Buck Leonard is the first team selection with 14 votes. Ben Taylor is the second team selection with 7 votes. That leaves 10 votes unaccounted for 5 Roll of Honor first basemen. The most votes a 3rd place candidate could receive is 6. The least is two votes if all 5 received 2 votes each & all would then be tied at 3rd in the voting.

Roll of Honor 1B > Jud Wilson Eddie Douglass George Carr
Leroy Grant Mule Suttles

Catcher > from Thompson's ballot we know he voted for 2

Josh Gibson with 23 votes and Biz Mackey with 15 votes were first team selections. Roy Campanella with 10 votes and Bruce Petway with 6 votes are the second team selections. That leaves 8 unaccounted votes left for 6 Roll of Honor catchers, meaning the most the next candidate could have received would have been 3 votes or at least two of them would have had two votes each.

Roll of Honor C > Double Duty Radcliffe Louis Santop
Frank Duncan Bill Pierce Doc Wiley Specks Webster

Pitchers > From Thompson's ballot we know he voted for 4.

1st team vote totals > Smokey Joe Williams 20 Satchel Paige 19

Bullet Joe Rogan 9 tied > John Donaldson & Willie Foster with 7

2nd team vote totals > tied > Dave Brown & Dick Redding with 6

Nip Winters 5 tied > Dizzy Dismukes & Don Newcombe with 4

Mentioned in the prose, but with no vote totals are:

Rube Foster Phil Cockrell Walter Ball

“Black Diamond” [Jose Mendez] Frank Wickware
 Are the above 5 mentioned the 3rd team ? There are 37 unaccounted votes for 17 Roll of Honor pitchers, but Rube Foster & Walter Ball are mentioned in the prose, but not on the Roll of Honor. So does that mean there are 19 pitchers for those 37 votes ? We know the most votes any of these pitchers could have is 3.

Roll of Honor P > Slim Jones Bill Holland Phil Cockrell
 Webster McDonald Bill Byrd Double Duty Radcliffe
 Frank Wickware Dan McClellan Leon Day
 Will Jackman String Bean Williams Ray Brown
 Rats Henderson Lefty Tiant Leroy Matlock
 Jose Mendez Laymon Yokely

Manager >

Rube Foster is first team with 16 votes the only vote total given.
 Cum Posey is second team. Thompson’s ballot didn’t list a coach.

Coach > Dizzy Dismukes and Danny McClellan are first team.
 C.I. Taylor and Dave Malarcher are second team.

Roll of Honor Manager > { no roll of honor for coach }
 Ed Bolden Oscar Charleston Vic Harris

More facts about the poll > I find it curious that famed sports-writers Wendell Smith and Sam Lacey were not among the experts. They would later be among the 10 selected for the 1971 Hall of Fame committee, which poll voters Judy Johnson, Bill Yancey, Frank Forbes & Eddie Gottlieb would be members. Also on that committee would be first team LF Monte Irvin and 2nd team catcher Roy Campanella. Of the 24 players selected by that committee for consideration for HOF induction only Chet Brewer didn’t get a vote in the Courier poll.

Some have said that there was an east coast bias in the Courier voting. Examining the 31 voters I have surmised that 14 could have had an east coast lean, 10 would be of a neutral nature and 7 could have had a west coast lean. Of the 21 players who voted 14 are from the live ball era (1920 +). 4 are split half & half. 2 are $\frac{3}{4}$ live ball era and $\frac{1}{4}$ dead ball era and one from the dead ball era (pre-1920). Among the 21 former players voting are 5 future Hall of Famers and among the panel 13 received votes in the poll. 4 future Hall of Fame players didn’t get one vote in the poll, they are Willard Brown, Hilton Smith, Andy Cooper (these three played mostly in the west) and 19th

Century star, Frank Grant. These four were also not on the 1971 list of 24 candidates mentioned above.

I am surprised that former Negro League star and the 1950 National League Rookie of the Year, Sam Jethroe didn't receive one Courier poll vote. Also Luke Easter had hit 28 home runs in 1950 and 27 in 1951 for the Cleveland Indians and he didn't get a vote. Maybe his glove work had something to do with it. He was a natural born DH.

As I had previously alluded to there are many Latin players that had great Negro League careers as well as in the winter leagues missing from the poll like: Pancho Coimbre, Alejandro Oms, Tetelo Vargas, Silvio Garcia, Bernardo Baro & Valentin Dreke, just to mention a few. On a Syd Pollock all-time team he had Vargas as his 3rd outfielder. Apparently in this voting he had not come to that conclusion yet, but he is most likely the vote for Lefty Tiant & could be the source for the String Bean Williams vote. I find it curious that U.S. home grown stars like Grant "Home Run" Johnson, Oscar "Heavy" Johnson, & Bill Wright did not receive one vote. Shortstop Bus Clarkson who served 3 years in the military during WWII & had batted over .350 for his career in the Negro Leagues plus was a star in Mexico like Wright also was { out of sight, out of mind ? }, didn't receive a vote. Bus tore it up in the American Association in 1951 with Milwaukee batting .343. He wouldn't get his cup of coffee with the Boston Braves until after this poll was published in 1952. Satchel Paige once intentionally walked Clarkson with the bases loaded. The last .400 hitter in the Negro Leagues, SS Artie Wilson didn't get a vote either. I guess his problems trying to pull the ball without a thumb against the shift deployed against him during his cup of coffee with the NY Giants in 1951, got him a cold shoulder with the voters. First baseman Bob Boyd had a career .362BA in 5 years in the Negro League with Memphis and somewhere about mid-way during the 1950 season went to organized ball with Colorado Springs and hit .373 for the remainder of the season. The next season in 1951 he played in the highest minors, in the PCL with Sacramento and batted .342 and led the league in stolen bases with 41. He was called up to the Chicago White Sox and only hit .167 in 18AB. Maybe because he didn't break from spring training with the White Sox in 1952 he was shunned by the voters ? He would go on to lead the PCL in BA in 1952. I wonder if they were not going to vote for someone that didn't break out of gate with im-

pact in the Majors ? Was that the acid test that Lloyd Thompson was talking about ?

Pop Lloyd had two teams in a 1953 published all-time teams selections, separated between the current stars and the old. Charleston was his favorite in CF in his old time selections, but he also had Jap Payne in RF & might be the source of that vote, but apparently didn't vote for his choice in LF Chaney White. I will assume he voted for one of his 3 selected current outfielders instead, either Irvin-LF, Minoso-RF or Doby-CF could have been his Courier selection for LF. The reason I bring this up now is that it is a direct reflection of the changing landscape. Pop Lloyd felt the need to have two separate teams. Most of the new black stars of merit were now in that acid test of making it in what was called organized baseball. With the advent of Jackie Robinson & others the Negro Leagues were no longer the only option for black ballplayers. At the time of the Courier Poll, things were in transition and even though there were successes, the grand experiment was not a done deal. On the same page with the poll there was a small mention that aging veteran Trouppe might get sent down. He didn't break camp with the Cleveland Indians, but did get called up on April 30th eleven days after the poll was published. His only cup of coffee in the Majors was 10AB [.100BA] in 6 games at the age of 39. What impact did the struggles to make it to the big show have upon the voters in the poll ? They did not have the parallax view we now have 57 years later. To put it into context, Rosa Parks would not give up her seat on a Montgomery bus until three years later and Martin Luther King's I have a dream speech was eleven year away.

Hall of Fame

There are only 3 players on the first team of the Courier Poll that are not in the HOF. Donaldson-P, Marcelle-3B & Bankhead-Utl-Inf. In my opinion Donaldson should be a no brainer shoo-in and a good case could be made for both Marcelle & Bankhead. There are 6 players from the 2nd team now in the HOF. There are 16 first team players (Dihigo had 2 spots) and 17 second team players. That makes 19 of the 33 players from those team selections are honored in the HOF. Rube Foster is 1st team manager and Cum Posey is 2nd team manager and they are both in the HOF. None of the four coaches are yet enshrined. That means 21 of the selected 39 first & second team are in the HOF. There are 9 players from the Roll of Honor's 63 in the HOF.

Mistakes in the published version >

There are several name spelling errors that I will not bother to address since we know who they mean. Key mistakes that I feel are worthy of notice are: Buck Leonard threw LH and was not RH as the poll states. Rube Foster was a RHP and not a southpaw. Apparently someone had his handedness confused with his brother Willie a LHP. John Henry Lloyd was a LH hitter and didn't bat RH as printed in the poll. Another thing that is strange is that the writer of the prose of the article does not have a by-line so we don't know who they are. Several of Lloyd Thompson's comments from his ballot are used and they are not credited. I wonder why the 2nd team players had a team they played for associated with them & the 1st team selections didn't ?

Who are these guys anyway ??????????

Cool Papa Bell was a true legend of the game & most likely the fastest man to ever play baseball. It is reported in his prime that he could circle the bases in 12 seconds. Satchel Paige use to say that Cool Papa could turn off a light switch and be in bed before the room got dark. One night on the road a hotel room had a faulty light switch and the legend became a fact. Muhammad Ali picked up on Satchel's slogan and used it for his own. Cool Papa taught Lou Brock how to read pitchers to steal bases. In 1974 Bell was inducted into the HOF. His career was from 1922-46 with his most notable stops being in St. Louis where he would pass on in 1991 and in Pittsburgh both with the Crawfords and the Homestead Grays. His top 4 pitchers on his all-time team were Satchel, Smokey Joe, Bullet Joe and Bill Holland (is that where the Holland vote came from ?) In his OF he had Charleston, Torriente and Stearnes. Judy @ 3B, Wells @ SS, Hughes & DeMoss @ 2B, Buck @ 1B & Josh & Biz @ C.

Larry Brown might have caught more games than any catcher in history. From 1919-49 he was behind the plate for 31 years. He caught 234 games in the 1930 season for the NY Lincoln Giants. He was an Iron Man wearing the iron mask that he never flipped on pop ups. Larry played 17 seasons for Memphis [the town he would die in] which is among the 10+ teams he played for. He was a great defensive catcher, but was not known for his bat, even though he hit .308 in 6 All-Star games & .390 in 5 games vs ML pitching.

Oscar Charleston went into the HOF in 1976. Bill James in his last Abstract rates him the 4th greatest baseball player of all-time be-

hind only Ruth, Wagner & Mays. On Lloyd Thompson's ballot he called him " the greyhound of the garden and the sports world is still looking for a center fielder to fill his shoes. " That line was used in the published version of the poll. He played from 1915-41 & managed to 1954. His main stops were with the Indianapolis ABCs [He was called the Hoosier Comet] , Harrisburg Giants [where he met his wife], the Grays and the Crawfords in Pittsburgh. Oscar is also most likely the greatest hitter in Cuban baseball history batting .361 in 9 seasons there. In 1949 the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin published Oscar's all-time team. Torriente, Rap Dixon & Dihigo were in his OF. Marcelle @ 3B, Lloyd @ SS, DeMoss @ 2B, B.Taylor @ 1B Gibson & Santop @ C { if he kept that sentiment that would be a 2nd vote for Santop because we know Thompson voted for him } Charlie's pics for P are Julio LeBlanc { he didn't get a poll vote } Paige, Rogan, Pat Dougherty { he didn't get a poll vote } & Dismukes. I wonder if in those 3 years Newcombe's rise in the Majors grabbed Charlie's attention ? LeBlanc must have been to Charleston like Curt Simmons was to Hank Aaron, someone that had their number. Maybe Dismukes rose above Dougherty in Charleston's mind by the time of the poll in 1952 ?

Jimmie Crutchfield played from 1930-45 and was called the black Lloyd Waner. Jimmie played CF & RF with very fine defensive skills and was a fast hustling spark plug kind of player. He is best known for his years with the Pittsburgh Crawfords where he started in 3 straight All-Star games. A well respected team player by teammates and opponents alike.

Dizzy Dismukes pitched from 1910-30 & was one of the best in the Negro Leagues in the dead ball era. He was a very smart baseball man who had also gone to college. He would go on to manage until 1951. He was a veteran of WW I. He taught the submarine delivery to Webster McDonald and to Major Leaguer Carl Mays. His selection as first team coach & 2nd team pitcher is a testament to his career. Combining those two attributes in my eyes makes him a very viable candidate for the HOF.

McKinley "Bunny" Downs was a veteran of WWI. Bunny played from 1916-28 & was in baseball until 1955. He was the captain for the Hilldale team and was a fine fielding second baseman who turned the DP well and he was good #2 hitter. He had gone to Morehouse College and was a smart baseball man. In 1923 he shot and killed a

woman that was trying shoot him. As business manager for the Indianapolis Clowns he signed Hank Aaron.

Frank “Joe” Forbes was a shortstop from 1913-19 mostly with the NY Lincoln Giants. He was fast and was good on defense, but was not known for his bat. Joe also played professional basketball and was a prize fighter. He would be an umpire and a promoter in the Negro National League as well as spending time as the NY Cubans business manager. Joe was one of the 10 on the 1971 Hall of Fame Committee.

Vic Harris was one of the most hard nosed intense players of the game and a feared base runner. He once spit in an umpire’s face when he lost control in a moment of reckless abandonment. His career spanned from 1923-50 mostly with the Homestead Grays. Vic was a stalwart leftfielder who batted over .300 eight times. In post season play he batted .318 in 110AB. He played in 6 All-Star games. As a manager he won 9 pennants.

Jesse Hubbard was a RHP & a decent LH hitter that played from 1917-34 mostly with the Brooklyn Royal Giants. He served in WWI. He was noted for his variety of deliveries and junk ball pitches. Jesse pitched batting practice to Lou Gehrig at Columbia U. He was part Indian and the NY Giants tried to pass him as white with their Massena NY farm team.

Judy Johnson was inducted into the HOF in 1974 and became just the 4th third baseman so honored. A strong armed sure handed fielder and a line drive hitter that had a .300+BA for his career which was from 1918-37. Hilldale & the Pittsburgh Crawfords are the teams he is best remembered playing for. After Jackie Robinson broke the color line Judy became a scout for the Philadelphia As. He had Aaron, Minoso and Dolby lined up for their outfield, but the front office didn’t take his advice. Maybe if they had listened to him the As would still be playing in Philadelphia. He would later scout for the Braves and their centerfielder Bill Bruton would become Judy’s son in law. Judy was among the 10 on the 1971 HOF Committee.

Fats Jenkins was very fast and played LF from 1920-40. He is best know for his time with the NY Black Yankees and the Harrisburg Giants batting over .330 for his career. Fats is in the Basketball Hall of Fame and was the captain for eleven years for the Renaissance 5

team that had an 88 game win streak. He was also a boxing ref and played the piano with skill.

John Henry Lloyd had the nickname “Pop” later in life. He was inducted into the HOF in 1977. Babe Ruth called him the greatest player of all time. He was called the black Honus Wagner and when Wagner heard about it said it was an honor to be compared to such a great player. Earlier I had mentioned some of his picks for a 1953 piece. He is a legendary SS that played from 1906-32 and is best known for his time with the NY Lincoln Giants.

Dave Malarcher played from 1916-34 and played the most with the storied Chicago American Giants. He was called the best third baseman in black baseball in 1920. A switch-hitter noted for his bat control and clutch hitting he was the optimum team player. Voted 2nd team coach along with one of his mentors C.I. Taylor on the poll, he was a very intelligent baseball man that had also attended both Dillard U. & Xavier College which is an amazing feat since Dave’s mother was a former slave and he had to overcome the hardships of poverty growing up. He served in the military in WWI. “Gentleman Dave” later in life would become a poet & a real estate executive.

William “Jack” Marshall was the quintessential utility infielder glove man that played from 1926-44 mostly for mid-west teams. He became a tournament bowler and was partners with Ted Page in bowling ventures.

Ted Page played [mostly RF] from 1923-37 and was very fast until an injury in 1934 took away the key of his game. He had the reputation of a roughhouse vicious slider and third baseman Tom Finley died from hemorrhaging after an encounter with Page on the base path. Ted hit Major League pitchers at a .380+ clip. He had played for both the Grays and the Crawfords and would live in Pittsburgh after his playing days and in 1984 he would be killed there with a baseball bat. It was either a robbery or a dispute over pay with a handyman according to the conflicting reports of his death. In an interview with John Holway he said that he hit Satchel like a cousin, but couldn’t hit Matlock. { I wonder if he voted for Matlock ? } In 1971 he said that Dick Seay was the best defensive second baseman he ever saw and he made it clear he saw Maz. Seay didn’t get a vote in the poll. Ted also said that he had played with a gun in his jock strap. That gives

new meaning to that famous Mae West line: “ Is that a pistol in your pocket or are you just happy to see me. “

Bill Pierce was a catcher that also played some first base & OF in a career that was from 1910-26. He had played in Chicago & NY and would later become an umpire. Gee, I wonder who voted for Bill Pierce at catcher in the poll?

Jake Stephens was a great fielding shortstop that was also a superb bunter and very fast, but he had problems hitting the curve ball. He played from 1921-37 and was with Hilldale from 1921-29. One winter’s day on his way to grade school he was throwing snowballs at a group of girl schoolmates, one of which was my maternal grandmother. Years after he retired he would transport car titles to the PA state BMV for a relative of mine that owned a car salvage business. Jake remained good friends with both Judy Johnson & Lloyd Thompson and would ride with them to Cooperstown for the day of Judy’s induction. Most likely he voted for Judy as did Lloyd in the poll.

Willie Wells went into the HOF in 1997 & played 1924-49.

“ Don’t hit it to shortstop, because The Devil is playing out there “ was a slogan that opposition players would say in Mexico.

Was with the St. Louis Stars 1924-31 & roommate with Cool Papa. Newark Eagles 1936-39,42,45 One of the few players to use a hickory bat. Was he the first to wear a batting helmet ?

Batted .330+ in the Negro Leagues & close to .400 vs ML pitchers.

“ The greatest money player in the game. “- Cum Posey

“ Without a doubt, Willie Wells was the greatest player I ever played with.“- Double Duty Radcliffe “ If you think anything of yourself you’ve got to do what is right. “ – Willie Wells

Chaney White played 1919-36 Hilldale 1919-22, 28, 30-32

Atlantic City Bacharach Giants 1923-29 He ran the 100-yd dash in 10 seconds. Former players described him as –“Built like King Kong, but runs like Jesse Owens.” He played the most in LF [weak throwing arm], but also played in CF. Had a career .347BA in Cuba & .300+BA in the Negro Leagues.

Bobby Williams played 1918-34 & was a great glove shortstop & utility infielder. Was fast & a good bunter, but hitting was not his forte. Chicago American Giants 1918-25,28 Did he vote for himself ?

Bill Yancey had a good arm and was a solid heads up player from 1923-36 at shortstop and utility infielder. He is in the Basketball HOF and was a teammate with Fats Jenkins on the Renaissance 5.

Was one of the 10 on the 1971 Hall of Fame Committee.

The Writers >

Dan Burley died in 1962 and Ebony Magazine said in a 1963 tribute that he might have been the best known black journalist in the U.S. His work for the Amsterdam News, The Chicago Defender, The NY Age, Jet and Ebony are a legacy of Apollonian proportions. He was a songwriter and pianist. His father was a former slave & later became a Baptist evangelist and his mother had worked for Booker T. Washington as a teacher at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. An excerpt from a June 25, 1947 Amsterdam News piece written by Dan: “ The boys who are sure to follow Robinson in the big show will have to be big enough to shake off the discomfort at being called something they don’t like, and to take such terms in stride, and to concentrate on being a great player, as in Robinson, and as are Greenberg, the Italians, the Poles, the Irish, the Germans, the Hungarians, the Czechs, the French, the Swedes, the Bohemians and others who have made baseball a racial polyglot of personalities, religion, race and background. “

Alvin Moses was a syndicated columnist that had also spent time at the NY Age.

Ric Roberts had worked at the Atlanta World, The Pittsburgh Courier and the Afro-American.

Dr. Rollo Wilson wrote for the Pittsburgh Courier & The Philadelphia Tribune. He had served as commissioner of the Negro National League and was the deputy commissioner of the PA Athletic Commission. Dr. Wilson was also a chemist for the city of Philadelphia, plus he had served in the Medical Corps during World War I. He was a graduate of both Temple U. & the U. of Pittsburgh Pharmacy. He passed on in 1956 at the age of 65 just outside of Connie Mack Stadium after leaving an Eagles vs Steelers football game. In a July 14, 1923 Courier article he talks about The Cuban Giants: “ The only thing that keeps men like Baro, Chacon, Fernandez and Oscar out of the big leagues is their color. Oscar can make a baseball do everything but talk. “ Oscar Levis was a LH spit ball pitcher. The only one

of these fore mentioned four to get a vote in the poll is Chacon. (was that Wilson's vote ?)

Frank "Fay" Young was the sports editor for The Chicago Defender. He also was the Negro American League secretary for 5 years & was later the director of publicity. He would pass on in 1957.

The front office & promoter guys >

Tom Baird was a business officer & co-owner with Wilkinson of the Kansas City Monarchs. In 1948 he had bought out Wilkinson's interest in the team. He was also a noted promoter.

In 1954 he selected an all-time Monarch team >

Buck O'Neil- manager & 1B Newt Allen-2B Dobie Moore-SS
Bartolo Portundo-3B Hurley McNair-LF John Donaldson-CF
Heavy Johnson-RF Frank Duncan & TJ Young-C

Satchel Paige & Bullet Joe Rogan-P Jose Mendez-Utility

In the Courier Poll Newt Allen was 2nd team utility, but did not make the Roll of Honor @ 2B. Mendez did make the Roll of Honor @ Utl. as did Frank Duncan @ C & Dobie Moore @ SS. What is of interest is that on his all-time Monarch team he spelled Dobie as Doby which I had corrected in the list above. The improper spelling also appears in the Courier Roll of Honor & in the prose. Could have the Courier picked up the incorrect spelling from Baird's ballot ? What is also interesting is that on his 1954 team he had written Pep Young instead of TJ. Pep Young had caught for KC, but only for one season and TJ was a star catcher for them for over 11 seasons. He had also called Bartolo by the name of Juan, which as far as I know was not his given name or a nickname that he ever had.

Listed with the 1954 all-time team under the category - A Few Monarch Players Who Went Into Organized Ball - were 17 other Monarchs with Satchel being the only one to make his all-time team. Among them are 3 future Hall of Famers that didn't make his 1954 all-time Monarch team list : Jackie Robinson, Ernie Banks & Willard Brown. Jackie had played there for only one season & Ernie for two, but Brown was one of the keys to the Monarch's success for many seasons and I find his omission very curious. Is this omission by Baird in his 1954 selections telling us something why Brown didn't get one vote in the Courier Poll ? Is there some reason beyond his spilled ML cup of coffee with the St.L Browns ? There are stories that Willard might predate Manny being Manny, but still with that being said, I still find it hard to fathom that a player with that much talent didn't get one

vote in the Courier Poll. Another question that arises from Baird's 1954 team selections of pitchers Paige & Rogan as one & two, who was Baird's 3rd & 4th pitching selections in the Courier Poll ? Future HOF pitchers Hilton Smith and Andy Cooper didn't get one vote in the Courier Poll. Even though they were Monarchs, Baird didn't vote for them ? Could he have voted for Donaldson or maybe Mendez or both at pitcher ? I think it might be a good bet that Mendez's utility vote came from Baird assuming such from his selection at that spot in Baird's 1954 team. Wilkinson is in the HOF and he and Baird were the architects of one of baseball's all-time great franchises. Baird's all-time Monarch team selections could have some Negro League pundits scratching their heads, but he and Wilkinson were at the helm of the front office and the pundits weren't. His selection of Donaldson in CF has got to have some heads spinning. I wonder why he didn't go beyond 2 pitchers in his selections, especially since two years earlier he voted in a poll that had a 4 pitcher format. I for one get his message loud and clear, Donaldson was just not a great pitcher, but he was a great all around ball player.

Eddie Gottlieb was one of the key promoters and booking agents in the game from 1936-50, He also owned the Philadelphia Stars and served as secretary of the Negro National League. He was no fan of Effa Manley's and he might have rolled over in his grave the day she was selected for the HOF.

Syd Pollock twice was awarded plaques from The National Baseball Congress for his outstanding contributions to baseball. From 1926-50 he was a promoter, executive and owner. He is best known as the owner of the Clowns, Hank Aaron's first professional team. His all-time selections were discussed earlier.

Abe Saperstein was president of the Negro Midwestern League and the West Coast Negro Baseball Association. He ran the Birmingham Black Barons several years. He is best known for his worldwide legendary basketball team, The Harlem Globetrotters.

Lloyd Thompson was a SS for Hilldale from 1910-17 and became involved in the front office and helped Ed Bolden build the franchise to one the best in baseball. He was the cog that kept the team rolling even after Bolden's hospitalization and departure. Here is more of his ballot writing that was used by the Courier in the prose. This is from his comment on Mackey. "If any receiver is entitled to the Nonpareil

of the wire mask, give the token to Mackey.” He had a way with words and was quite prolific, but what is funny is that he never really learned to type and would write on his typewriter using the two finger technique. One of his sons Bob, is a friend of mine & he told me they gave him the nickname of Two-Finger Thompson. I have spent time in the finely crafted home that Lloyd & his eldest son had built by hand & is still in the family. What a marvel of a man he was. I have the utmost respect for Lloyd Thompson & his legacy.

Where are the Say-Hey Kid, Hammerin Hank & Mr. Cub -

let's play two ? At the time of the poll Willie Mays had one Major League season under his belt where he hit 20 HR & batted .274. He had played in the Negro Leagues with Birmingham in 1948 >.262BA, 1949 >.311BA & in 1950 he had a .330BA in 106AB before he went to the minors with Trenton and finished the season there with a .353BA in 306AB. In 1951 he exploded in the American Association with Minneapolis hitting .477 in 149AB before being called up to the NY Giants. He was on his way, but a stint in the military delayed his rise until 1954 when he really broke out batting .345 with 41HR for the Giants.

Hank Aaron didn't get started in the Negro Leagues until after the poll was published in 1952 and he had a .427BA with the Indianapolis Clowns in 75AB before going into the minors with Eau Claire where he hit .336. In 1953 he played with Jacksonville and had a .362BA with 22HR. The next season he was in the Majors to stay. In 1956 he won his first batting title and in 1957 his first HR title.

Ernie Banks first played with the K.C.Monarchs in 1950 and had a .255BA. Uncle Sam came calling from 1951-52 and when he got back in 1953 he had a .347BA with the Monarchs before Buck O'Neil hooked him up with the Chicago Cubs where he had a .315 BA in 35AB. In 1954 he had a fine rookie season with the Cubs hitting 19HR with a .275BA. In 1955 he really broke out hitting 44HR with a .295BA.

Ranking the vote totals >

- 1- Josh Gibson > 23 votes @ .742% but 2 catchers selected
- 2- Oscar Charleston > 20 Votes @ .645%
Smokey Joe Williams > 20 votes @ .645% but 4 P selected
- 4- Satchel Paige > 19 votes @ .613% but 4 P selected
- 5- Ghost Marcelle > 16 votes @ .516%
- 6- Biz Mackey > 15 votes @ .484% but 2 catchers selected

- 7- Buck Leonard > 14 votes @ .452%
 John Henry Lloyd > 14 votes @ .452%
- 9- Jackie Robinson > 13 votes @ .419%
- 10-Cristobal Torrente > 11 votes @ .355% but 1 vote is tiebreaker
- 11-Chino Smith > 10 votes @ .322%
 Roy Campanella > 10 votes @ .322% but 2 catchers selected
- 13- Cool Papa Bell > 9 votes @ .290% + ?
 Willie Wells > 9 votes @ .290% + one @ 2B
 Bullet Joe Rogan > 9 votes @ .290% but 4 P selected + 1 @OF
- 16- Bingo DeMoss > 7 votes @ .226%
 Ben Taylor > 7 votes @ .226%
 John Donaldson > 7 votes @ .226% but 4 P selected
 Willie Foster > 7 votes @ .226% but 4 P selected

- 20- Bruce Petway > 6 votes @ .194% but 2 catchers selected
 Dave Brown > 6 votes @ .194% but 4 P selected
 Dick Redding > 6 votes @ .194% but 4 P selected
- 23- Monte Irvin > 5 votes @ .161%
 Nip Wintners > 5 votes @ .161% but 4 P selected
- 25- Pete Hill > 4 votes @ .129%
 Dizzy Dismukes > 4 votes @ .129% but 4 P selected
 Don Newcombe > 4 votes @ .129% but 4 P selected

Judy Johnson > 4 votes is the least amount he could have received & 10 votes are the most he could have received

Rube Foster > 16 votes for Manager @ .516%

The 1st team & 2nd team Utility outfielders & infielders we have no vote totals for. Dihigo was 1st team @ both OF & Inf and is in the HOF. Not in HOF >>> Bankhead >1st U-Inf Thomas >2nd U-OF
 Beckwith & Allen > 2nd U-Inf [are not listed below]

The top vote getters not in the HOF with known totals >

- 1st - Marcelle 16 votes @ 3B 1st team
- 2nd - C. Smith 10 votes @ RF 2nd team
- T-3rd - DeMoss 7 votes @ 2B 2nd team
 Donaldson 7 votes @ P 1st team
- T-5th - Petway 6 votes @ C 2nd team
 Brown & Redding 6 votes @ P 2nd team
- 8th - Winters 5 votes @ P 2nd team
- T-9th - Dismukes & Newcombe 4 votes @ P 2nd team

Dismukes 1st team coach { no vote totals given }

Oliver “ Ghost “ Marcelle was part Creole Indian & was born in Louisiana. He had more votes than 22 future HOF members that got votes in this poll + 4 future Negro League HOF candidates that were elected that didn't get a vote in the poll. Marcelle is in the Cuban HOF. Why did Judy Johnson, Ray Dandridge and later Jud Wilson jump in front of him in future HOF voting ? Wilson was a far superior hitter than Judy, Ray or the Ghost, but he was a suspect fielder at 3rd and had spent time at 1st base. The Ghost was not a power hitter as neither were Ray or Judy, but Judy had more gap power than Ray or Marcelle. By any way we look at Marcelle's record he was a good hitter, a .300+BA in the Negro Leagues, .305BA in Cuba and his number vs ML pitchers is a .330+BA. At the time of the poll 3rd base was still a primary fielding position in the minds of many and Marcelle, Johnson & Dandridge appear to be the best glove men at the hot corner in Negro League history. That a third basemen should also hit for power was just coming into vogue in baseball. In 1952 Dandridge was still an active player in the twilight of his career, Judy Johnson was still alive, but Marcelle had died in 1949 in poverty in Denver. Not knowing the exact vote totals for Judy & Ray adds to the mystery of how much did Marcelle dominate in this poll ? As I had mentioned earlier we do know that the most votes Judy could have had as 2nd team 3rd basemen is 10 and the least is 4. It is noted that Marcelle was a known hot head with a temper and lost part of his nose when Frank Warfield bit it off after being punched by Marcelle after Warfield refused to give him money to continue gambling after Warfield had won all of Marcelle's money. Marcelle was never the same player as he wore a patch over his missing nostril parts after the incident. Did those factors come into play for future HOF voting ? There are those in the HOF that had a rough & tumble reputation with Ty Cobb's name coming to the forefront. Marcelle & Wickware were with Dave Brown that fateful night when it is alleged that he killed a man and they were both called in by the police for questioning as Dave Brown slipped away from the spotlight and played under several aliases in the wildernesses of baseball never to return to the stage of top rung Negro League baseball. Also did the fact that both Judy & Ray were still alive when Negro League stars

would be considered and had time to improve their status with future HOF voters come into play ? In 1952 it appears that the majority of the voters in the poll did not have a problem of giving the prize for the best @ 3rd base to the Ghost.

John Donaldson in this poll was tied with Willie Foster as the greatest LHP & tied for the 4th best overall pitcher in Negro League history. For years I had envisioned him to be a LH version of Bob Gibson because of oral & written descriptions I had heard or read. My vision became reality in my mind after seeing the rare film footage that was recently discovered of Donaldson. Go to JohnDonaldson.bravehost.com and see for yourself. HOF manager John McGraw once said about Donaldson: " I think he is the greatest I've ever seen. " Here are some stats that could keep growing as more box scores are still being discovered:

350+W .740+WL% below a 1.40 ERA 4,500K

He had over 20K a game 26 times & 3 no-hitters in a row & he was a complete ball player that hit with a .330+BA & was also an outstanding outfielder + he served his country during WW I. In my opinion he is the greatest pitcher not in the HOF that is eligible including any of the fine ML pitchers that are still not in also.

Sam Bankhead was first team utility infielder, but we have no vote totals for him. Sam was selected for 7 Negro League All-Star games & had a .346BA in them. He started at 5 different positions: SS, 2B & all 3 OF spots. Sam had a .340+BA vs ML pitching and in 3 seasons in the CaWL he batted .351. He hit for a .335BA in MX + had a .300+ Caribbean BA combining Cuba, DR & the PRWL. In the Negro Leagues he played the most in Pittsburgh with the Crawfords & the Grays. Sam had an incredible throwing arm and was very fast giving him range and base stealing abilities. He played the most @ SS & the 2nd most games in CF, so in some ways he is like an earlier version of Robin Yount, but with a stronger arm & more speed. He played the 3rd most games @ 2B & also had played both corner OF spots as well as 3B. In 1951 in Canada he became the first black to manage a white team. After Josh Gibson's death he became Josh Jr.'s surrogate father. It is widely believed that he was the influence for the character Troy Maxson in the Broadway play, "Fences". Some could say that in his later years his disappointments of not being allowed to play ML baseball led him to drown his sorrow, which might have contrib-

uted to him being shot & killed in 1976 during an argument with someone he allegedly knew.

Chino Smith was one of the greatest hitters in baseball history. He died most likely from the after effects of a bout with Yellow Fever on Jan. 16, 1932 before his 30th birthday & after his aborted 7th season in 1931. There is some question of what effect a nasty colulusion during the 1930 playoffs might have had upon him also. Chino hit for a .400+BA in the Negro Leagues & vs ML pitchers. He also had a .335BA in 5 seasons in Cuba. Chino was a contact hitter that hit 3rd in the batting order. Chino hit to all fields, ran the bases very well and was a stolen base threat. He was also a solid defensive outfielder with a good arm, catching many runners taking a too wide of turn at 1st base. Satchel Paige said that after Josh Gibson, Chino & Jud Wilson were the greatest hitters that he had faced. In Chino's only two seasons with the NY Lincoln Giants he led the league in BA with astronomical numbers. 1929 >.464BA + led the league in HR. 1930 >.468BA to .492BA depending on who's box score's count you use. He was just beginning to peak when fate stepped in.

Elwood "Bingo" DeMoss was a SS that hurt his arm pitching and switched to 2B for the shorter throw. The great Bill Monroe died in 1915 and in that season Bingo really came into his own and would be considered the best at 2B for around another decade. Also in 1915 he & rookie teammate Oscar Charleston would be thrown in jail for an altercation with an umpire during an exhibition game vs the Donie Bush [ML SS] All-Stars. C.I. Taylor the Indianapolis ABCs manager had to bail them out so they could leave with the team to play in Cuba. Oscar had Bingo on his all-time team published in 1949 and most likely voted for him in the Courier Poll as did Pop Lloyd as well as one of Bingo's DP partners, Bobby Williams. There is a good chance that Bingo and years later Bill Mazerowski were the two best @ 2B turning the DP. Bingo & Maz both had similar life time batting averages and they both hit in pitcher's ball parks in pitcher's eras. That is where the similarity ends as Maz had more power, but Bingo had much more speed and was a great base stealer. Bingo could also be ranked as one of the elite bunters of all-time and HOF umpire Jocko Conlan said DeMoss could bunt on a dime. Bingo was also a great # 2 hitter with bat control to hit behind the runner or foul off pitchers if

the lead-off man was on first & didn't get a good jump. He was a master of little ball and his value with a bat doesn't show up well in the stats. Jackie Robinson's rise to fame in some ways has thrown a shadow over the other great second basemen of the Negro Leagues and it is amazing that Bingo even got 7 votes in the poll. Jackie only played one year in the Negro Leagues and he and 19th Century star Frank Grant are the only two second basemen associated with the Negro Leagues in the HOF. Dihigo is sometimes mentioned @ 2B, but he really is better know as a multi-positional star. I think a good case could be made for: Monroe, Hughes, Allen, Scales & DeMoss for the HOF @ 2B.

Smokey Joe beats Satchel by one vote ????

Some might find this the most curious of the vote totals in the poll. As great as Smokey Joe was Satchel was the biggest star in Negro League history. He was the highest paid player and he drew the largest crowds. For 12 panelist to say he was not one of the four greatest pitchers in black baseball at the time of the poll is quite interesting and needs to be examined. Let's fast forward to the SABR Negro League vote tally in a poll taken of members in 1998. In that poll Buck Leonard had the most votes beating the likes of Satchel, Josh Gibson & Oscar Charleston. I know for a fact that several of the voters in that poll didn't vote for those three thinking that they were the obvious choices and that someone else's vote would cover them and they were trying to get their favorites a higher ranking in the poll. I wonder how many of the 12 that didn't vote for Satch in 1952 were thinking like the SABR voters ? One year Ted Williams lost the MVP to Joe DiMaggio because one sports writer left Ted completely off of his ballot. At the time of the SABR vote Buck was still alive and well loved by all, but was he a better player than the big three ? Feelings of sentiment and rooting for the home team are part of us and I am not saying that is bad, but sometimes it could cloud our logical analytical thoughts. To bring up a previous quote from Lloyd Thompson's ballot, " it would take a modern Solomon to decide which player

should receive the award “ and even on Thompson’s own ballot the home team spirit of loyalty emerges as he voted for Phil Cockrell, Nip Winters & Webster McDonald all who were in that Philadelphia circle of Thompson’s. Lloyd’s other vote was for Don Newcombe who had past the acid test of organized ball in Lloyd’s eyes by having 3 great seasons for the Dodgers winning the Rookie of Year in 1949 and becoming the first black Major League 20 game winner in 1951. What is also of interest is that only 3 others voted for Newcombe with Thompson. I wonder how many others would have joined the band wagon if the poll was taken after the 1956 season when Newk was the Cy Young winner and the MVP? Newcombe is the only player in baseball history to win a ROY, CY & MVP. In 1948 Satchel had a fine rookie season for the Cleveland Indians and he became the first black to pitch in a World Series. He and Larry Dolby would become the first of African-American heritage to win World Series rings that year.

In the 1951 season Satchel didn’t have a good year with the Browns and to many it looked like he was on his way out. Could that have influenced any of the voters that might have had a what have you done for me lately attitude? I wonder if there was any jealous vendettas at play with any of the 12? Satchel was a Prima Donna in some eyes and that could have fueled resentment. In some ways he was bigger than the Negro Leagues and he knew it and they begrudgingly knew it also. Satchel would sometimes show up for a game with only 5 minutes to spare giving some promoters anxiety attacks. An example of the magnitude of his fame is in the fact that he is listed in a book written by Harry Grayson titled “ They Played The Game “ that was copyrighted in 1944. The book was picked as one that would be part of the Armed Services Editions sent the troops fighting in WW II. In that book Grayson picks all-time greats and does a bio on each. In that book there is only one black player and that is Leroy (Satchel) Paige. An excerpt from that book : “ By many, especially of his race, Ol’ Satch is regarded as the greatest pitcher who ever lived. None disputes that he is a remarkable hurler. Earning \$ 40,000 annually, he is the highest paid pitcher active today. He is by far the foremost showman in the game, one of its top attractions.”

In some ways Satchel Paige broke the color line in spirit before Jackie Robinson did it physically. Satchel had star power that

might have only been out-shined by Babe Ruth in baseball history. When Satchel was billed to pitch even in the all-white Podunkvilles that are off the map, traffic stopped, shops closed, people would spend their hard earned money to see the living legend pitch. When he took the mound it didn't matter if he was black or white. There were games most likely that Satchel Paige was the first black man that some had ever seen. Smokey Joe Williams was a great pitcher and I am amazed that 11 voters didn't think he was one of the 4 greatest Negro League pitchers, but Smokey Joe was no Satchel Paige. Satchel was in another league in a pantheon of black sports legends with the likes of Jack Johnson, Jesse Owens, Joe Louis and later joined by Ali, Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods for pure star power that transcends racial confines and the constraints of a mere mortal existence. There are others that could be included, but I chose these few to make a point about Satchel's impact on the social fabric of his time like those mentioned. For him not to be the #1 pitcher I find as the strangest quirk of the poll.