

RESOLUTION NO. 061147

Recognizing John Jordan “Buck” O’Neil on the occasion of his death and declaring Saturday, October 14, 2006, as “Buck O’Neil Day”.

WHEREAS, the great Buck O’Neil was a standout first baseman and manager of the Kansas City Monarchs from 1937 to 1955. Many years later, O’Neil became a scout for the Chicago Cubs, and signed future Hall of Famers Ernie Banks and Lou Brock to their first major league contracts. O’Neil was the first African-American coach in the Major Leagues, and he was certainly a driving force in preserving the history of the Negro Leagues. As cofounder and chairman of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, Buck O’Neil did more than anyone to see that the stories of the Negro Leagues great players are not forgotten; and

WHEREAS, John Jordan “Buck” O’Neil now belongs to the ages, but while he was alive, he was a treasure. Famous for his ability on the baseball field as player, coach and scout, Buck O’Neil never expressed bitterness at the racism that kept black ballplayers from playing in Major League Baseball. He never complained about the wrongs of the past. Even this year, when he was not chosen for the Hall of Fame, O’Neil was probably the only person in Kansas City who wasn’t angry about this affront. In fact he said “Shed no tears for Buck. I couldn’t attend Sarasota High School. That hurt. I couldn’t attend the University of Florida. That hurt. But not going into the Hall of Fame, that ain’t going to hurt me that much, no. Before, I wouldn’t even have had a chance, but this time I had that chance. I was on the ballot, man. Just keep loving old Buck.”; and

WHEREAS, Kansas City loved Buck O’Neil, a man who gave so much to the great game of baseball. The Negro Leagues Baseball Museum is just one part of Buck’s legacy. Perhaps the greater legacy is the genuine goodness and grace that marked his life. Buck O’Neil will be long-remembered as a great ambassador for the game, and we are all better for having known him; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF KANSAS CITY:

That the Mayor and Council hereby recognize John Jordan “Buck” O’Neil on the occasion of his death and declaring Saturday, October 14, 2006, as “Buck O’Neil Day”; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution be spread upon the Minutes of the Council in testimony thereof and that copies hereof be presented to representatives of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in token of the sadness felt by the Mayor, Council and all citizens of Kansas City, Missouri, on this occasion.

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