

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Hitting a Home Run on Stamps for Pioneering Baseball League *Father of Negro Leagues Baseball Honored*



High-resolution images of the stamps are available for [media use only](mailto:roy.a.betts@usps.gov) by contacting roy.a.betts@usps.gov

KANSAS CITY, MO — The baseball league that helped spark integration of American professional sports is being honored today on a 44-cent U.S. postage stamp being issued at the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum.

The Negro Leagues Baseball stamps pay tribute to the all-black professional baseball leagues that operated from 1920 to about 1960. A second commemorative stamp features the league's founder, Andrew "Rube" Foster, who is considered the "father" of Negro Leagues Baseball. In 1981, Foster was honored by the National Baseball Hall of Fame as the "foremost manager and executive" of Negro Leagues baseball.

"The United States Postal Service is honored to be dedicating two stamps today in commemoration of Negro Leagues Baseball," said Thurgood Marshall Jr., the Postal Service's Board of Governors vice chairman. "In 1920, the first of several black leagues of the modern era was formed right here in Kansas City. It was called the Negro National League," Marshall noted. "With the issuance of these stamps, the rich legacy of the Negro Leagues will travel far and wide, throughout this nation."

Vice Chairman Marshall's remarks highlighted the legendary baseball giants who played in the Negro Leagues, including Satchel Paige, Josh Gibson, James "Cool Papa" Bell and Jackie Robinson, who broke the color barrier in Major League Baseball in 1947 and opened doors for former Negro League players and Hall of Famers Willie Mays, Hank Aaron, Larry Doby and many others.

Marshall also gave a special salute to Birmingham, AL, postal employee Cleophus Brown, who played in the Negro Leagues for the Birmingham Black Barons and the Louisville Clippers. Brown, 76, has been a motor vehicle driver for the

Postal Service for the past 30 years.

Joining Marshall and Brown to unveil the stamps were Negro Leagues Baseball Museum President Gregory Baker, Stamp Artist Kadir Nelson, who designed the stamps, and former Negro leagues player Mamie “Peanut” Johnson.

“As we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, we are thrilled that the U.S. Postal Service has chosen to recognize and honor the men and women of the Negro Leagues who set aside the challenges of their time and empowered themselves to become the most positive examples of leadership, character, creativity and determination ever imagined in our modern day,” said Greg Baker, president, Negro Leagues Baseball Museum. “In turn, the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum has nominated the U.S. Postal Service for a United Nations NGO Positive Peace Award to honor them for celebrating the league’s legacy.”

Working in conjunction with non-government organizations within the United Nations, and viewed as a 21st century peace prize, these awards recognize companies that are making a difference in the world through their support of local, national and international nonprofit organizations.

The stamps go on sale nationwide today in Post Offices or may be purchased at the online Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop and by calling 800-STAMP-24.

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses, and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

Ordering the First-Day-of-Issue Postmark

Customers have 60 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at their local Post Office facility, at The Postal Store website at www.usps.com/shop or by calling 800-STAMP-24. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes (to themselves or others), and place them in a larger envelope addressed to:

Negro Leagues Baseball Stamp
Postmaster
300 W. Pershing Road
Kansas City, MO 64108-9998

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by Sept. 15, 2010.

Ordering First-Day Covers

Stamp Fulfillment Services also offers first-day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items post-marked with the official first-day-of-issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly *USA Philatelic Catalog*. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-STAMP-24 or writing to:

Information Fulfillment
Dept. 6270
U.S. Postal Service
PO Box 219014
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

Philatelic Products

Negro Leagues Baseball Folio

With this **commemorative folio**, the U.S. Postal Service honors *Negro Leagues Baseball*, which from 1920 to about 1960 drew some of the most remarkable athletes ever to play baseball and ultimately sparked the integration of American sports. This colorful folio pays tribute to the Negro leagues and their “father”, Andrew “Rube” Foster. The folio includes illustrations by stamp artist Kadir Nelson, a historical timeline of the Negro leagues, plus a list of its “all star” players, and a pane of 20 Negro Leagues Baseball stamps (Item 465274, \$16.95).



Negro Leagues Baseball Stamps Package

This special package from the U.S. Postal Service includes *We Are the Ship*, an 88-page hardcover book by Kadir Nelson, plus a pane of 20 *Negro Leagues Baseball* stamps (Item 465273, \$18.95).



There are five other philatelic products available for this stamp issue:

- 465263, First-Day Cover Set of 2, \$1.64.
- 465268, Digital Color Postmark Set of 2, \$3.00.
- 465276, Cultural Diary Page, \$12.95.
- 465291, Ceremony Program, \$6.95.
- 465299, Digital Color Postmark w/Full-Pane Keepsake, \$11.95.

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A self-supporting government enterprise, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation, 150 million residences, businesses and Post Office Boxes. The Postal Service receives no direct support from taxpayers. With 36,000 retail locations and the most frequently visited website in the federal government, the Postal Service relies on the sale of postage, products and services to pay for operating expenses. Named the Most Trusted Government Agency five consecutive years and the sixth Most Trusted Business in the nation by the Ponemon Institute, the Postal Service has annual revenue of more than \$68 billion and delivers nearly half the world's mail. If it were a private sector company, the U.S. Postal Service would rank 28th in the 2009 Fortune 500.

About NLMB:

Through the inspiration of Horace M. Peterson III (1945-1992), founder of the Black Archives of Mid-America, a group of local historians, business leaders, and former baseball players came together to create the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in the early 1990s. The museum has also welcomed several thousand visitors and dignitaries, including Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, General (Ret.) Colin Powell, Jesse Jackson, Maya Angelou, Judith Jamison, Mike Dukakis, Walter Cronkite, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Barry Bonds, Tony Larussa, Isaac Hayes, Ossie Davis, Sinbad, and many, many others. For more information, visit www.nlbm.com.

About Kadir Nelson:

Illustrator of the award-winning book about the Negro Leagues, "We Are the Ship," and "Testing the Ice: A True Story about Jackie Robinson," Kadir Nelson previously illustrated stamps celebrating activist Anna Julia Cooper and author Richard Wright. Many of Nelson's paintings are found in the collections of notable institutions and museums, including the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, the National Baseball Hall of Fame and the U.S. House of Representatives; as well as in the collections of Hollywood and sports legends. Nelson's works are instantly recognizable by the emotion and strength of his varied subject matter. "My focus is to create images of people who demonstrate a sense of hope and nobility. I want to show the strength and integrity of the human being and the human spirit."