



## THE JOSH GIBSON FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES NEGRO LEAGUES MATTER: A CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

Webinar series to host a range of all-star presenters to discuss the Negro Leagues

**Pittsburgh PA, January 12, 2021** – As part of its continued efforts surrounding the Negro Leagues Centennial Anniversary, The [Josh Gibson Foundation](#) announced today that it will debut a [series of webinars](#) featuring local and national historians, authors and other industry professionals, to discuss various aspects of the Negro Leagues.

The series, ‘[Negro Leagues Matter: A Centennial Celebration](#),’ will debut on Saturday, January 23, 2021 at 12 pm EST with *The Negro Leagues were Major Leagues*, by Ted Knorr who founded the Jerry Malloy Negro League Conference and hosted it four times in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; he also founded annual Negro League celebrations in Harrisburg, Lancaster, and York, Pennsylvania. The series will air monthly through December 2021, leading up to the 2021 Josh Gibson Foundation Gala.

Each episode will be streamed live for audience members in one-hour segments, including time for participant Q&A. Speakers are set to include:

- James Brunson – author of the three-volume work, *Black Baseball, 1858-1900* (2019), and *The Early Image of Black Baseball; Race and Representation in the Popular Press, 1871-1890* (2013).
- Byron Motley – an award-winning singer/songwriter/filmmaker/photographer and author. The son of legendary Negro Leagues umpire Bob Motley, Byron has a deep knowledge of and appreciation for the history and legacy of the Negro Baseball Leagues.
- Leslie A Heaphy – associate chair and associate professor of history at Kent State University at Stark. She is an accomplished writer on Negro Leagues history including her important work *The Negro Leagues, 1869-1960* and has held multiple leadership positions at the Society of American Baseball Research.
- Vanessa Ivy Rose – the granddaughter of Baseball Hall of Famer Norman “Turkey” Stearnes. As she would say, “Standing upon his shoulders”, she is an educator, activist, basketball coach, creative, and storyteller.
- Rob Ruck — a Professor in the History Department at the University of Pittsburgh and author of several important histories on Black baseball in Pittsburgh and baseball in the Dominican Republic.
- Jeremy Beer – author of 2019’s Casey Award and 2020’s Seymour Medal winning book of the year: “Oscar Charleston: The Life and Legend of Baseball’s Greatest Forgotten Player”

- Rick Bush — a Professor of English at Wharton County Junior College’s satellite campus in Sugar Land and in his spare time writes articles for numerous SABR books. He has co-edited three SABR books focused on the Negro Leagues.
- Courtney Michelle Smith – a Professor of History and Political Science at Cabrini University and a lifelong fan of Philadelphia's professional sports teams; she has written several books and articles on baseball in the twentieth century.
- Ike Brooks — his love for the Negro Leagues took form in the 1990s through the prism of Cleveland. Recently, he presented a series of webinars celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Negro Leagues sponsored by the Community Cup Classic Foundation and the Josh Gibson Foundation.
- Rich Puerzer — the Chairperson of the Engineering Department at Hofstra University and has published more than twenty scholarly articles on baseball history and culture, including several articles on Negro League history.
- Claire Smith – an American sportswriter with a principal focus on the baseball beat, over her career she has worked for the Bucks County Courier Times, *Hartford Courant*, *New York Times*, *Philadelphia Inquirer* and ESPN. In 2017, she was awarded the J.G. Taylor Spink Award the highest honor given by the Baseball Writers' Association of America.

“As we continue to celebrate the Negro Leagues Centennial, we wanted to find a way to honor our past and give our supporters unique perspectives and different ways to learn about the Negro Leagues,” said Sean Gibson, Executive Director of Josh Gibson Foundation. “We look forward to welcoming a broad range of speakers who will continue to educate and engage our audience.”

The series will be broadcast to audience members via Zoom. Access to the monthly stream will require a free registration, and donations from patrons will be gratefully accepted.

**Presentation Schedule:** *Live presentations always begin at Noon EST on Saturdays*

- Saturday, January 23, 2021 — Ted Knorr, *The Negro Leagues were Major Leagues*
- February 20, 2021, March 20, 2021, April 10, 2021, May 15, 2021, June 19, 2021, July 24, 2021, August 21, 2021, September 18, 2021, October 16, 2021, November 13, 2021, December 11, 2021

For more information, please visit <https://www.joshgibson.org>.

## **ABOUT THE JOSH GIBSON FOUNDATION**

The Josh Gibson Foundation believes in the endless possibilities for potential in today's youth. By providing academic and athletic programs that foster leadership and scholarship, the skills necessary for tomorrow's successes are created today. Our goal is to carry on the legacy of greatness and accomplishment embodied by Josh Gibson, by developing programs that help children of every level of ability reach their potential, and to create opportunities that set The Josh Gibson Foundation apart from other organizations and provides value for our communities. To learn more, please visit [www.joshgibson.org](http://www.joshgibson.org).