

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO.279

Reps. Scott, Witwer, Weiss, Neeley, Brabec, Garza, Liberati, Steenland, Coleman, Steckloff, Tyrone Carter, Breen, Hope, Haadsma, Brixie, O'Neal, Hood, Rogers, Koleszar, Ellison, LaGrand, Clemente, Bolden, Manoogian, Cavanagh, Morse, Young, Camilleri, Puri, Brenda Carter, Kuppa, Sabo, Hertel, Thanedar, Bezotte, Slagh, Jones, Peterson, Tate, Yancey, Aiyash and Anthony offered the following resolution:

1 A resolution to declare April 28, 2022, as Negro Leaguers
2 Baseball Day in the state of Michigan.

3 Whereas, Even though African-Americans were excluded from
4 playing in the Major Leagues of their time with their white
5 counterparts, the desire of many African-Americans to play baseball
6 could not be repressed; and

1 Whereas, Major League Baseball did not fully integrate its
2 leagues until July 1959; and

3 Whereas, African-Americans began organizing their own
4 professional baseball teams in 1885; and

5 Whereas, The skills and abilities of Negro League players
6 eventually made Major League Baseball realize the need to integrate
7 the sport; and

8 Whereas, Seven separate baseball leagues, known collectively
9 as the "Negro Baseball Leagues", were organized by African-
10 Americans between 1920 and 1960; and

11 Whereas, The Negro Baseball Leagues included exceptionally
12 talented players who played the game at its highest level; and

13 Whereas, On May 2, 1920, the Negro National League, the first
14 successful Negro League, played its first game; and

15 Whereas, Andrew "Rube" Foster founded the Negro National
16 League on February 13, 1920, at the Paseo YMCA in Kansas City,
17 Missouri, and also managed and played for the Chicago American
18 Giants, and was later inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame; and

19 Whereas, Leroy "Satchel" Paige, who began his long career in
20 the Negro Leagues and did not make his Major League debut until the
21 age of 42, is considered one of the greatest pitchers the game has
22 ever seen. During his long career, Paige thrilled millions of
23 baseball fans with his skill and legendary showboating. His
24 exemplary tenure began with winning his first big league victory in
25 his first game on July 15, 1948. This momentous moment helped the
26 Cleveland Indians on the road to winning the pennant the same year.
27 He was later inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame; and

28 Whereas, Josh Gibson, who was the greatest slugger of the
29 Negro Leagues, tragically died months before the integration of

1 baseball, and was later inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame;
2 and

3 Whereas, Jackie Robinson, whose career began with the Negro
4 League Kansas City Monarchs, became the first African-American to
5 play in the Major Leagues in April 1947, was named Major League
6 Baseball Rookie of the Year in 1947, subsequently led the Brooklyn
7 Dodgers to 6 National League pennants and a World Series
8 championship, and was later inducted into the Baseball Hall of
9 Fame; and

10 Whereas, Larry Doby, whose career began with the Negro League
11 Newark Eagles, became the first African-American to play in the
12 American League in July 1947, was an All-Star 7 times in the Major
13 Leagues and 2-time American league home run leader, and was later
14 inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame; and

15 Whereas, John Jordan "Buck" O'Neil was a player and manager of
16 the Negro League Kansas City Monarchs, became the first African-
17 American coach in the Major Leagues with the Chicago Cubs in 1962,
18 served on the Veterans Committee of the National Baseball Hall of
19 Fame, chaired the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum Board of Directors,
20 and worked tirelessly to promote the history of the Negro Leagues;
21 and

22 Whereas, James "Cool Papa" Bell played, coached, and managed
23 in the Negro Leagues from 1922 to 1950, discovered, trained, and
24 assisted numerous Negro League players into the Major Leagues, and
25 was later inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame; and

26 Whereas, Minnie Minoso, the "Cuban Comet," played on the New
27 York Cubans when they won the Negro League World Series, broke the
28 color barrier on the Chicago White Sox when he joined the team in
29 1951, and was the first black Latino to play in the Major Leagues;

1 and

2 Whereas, The talents of such players as Josh Gibson, James
3 "Cool Papa" Bell, and Oscar Charleston earned them recognition in
4 the Baseball Hall of Fame as well as the Sporting News List of
5 Baseball Greatest Players; and

6 Whereas, Auto Zone Park in Memphis, Tennessee, hosted the
7 inaugural Civil Rights Game between the defending World Champion
8 St. Louis Cardinals and the Cleveland Indians in commemoration of
9 the civil rights movement, on March 31, 2007; and

10 Whereas, Michigan made significant contributions to the Negro
11 Leagues. The Detroit Stars, founded in 1919 by Tenny Blount and the
12 father of black baseball Rube Foster, was a prominent charter
13 member of the league. All but two of the seasons they played were
14 winning seasons. They produced numerous Hall of Fame inductees,
15 including Turkey Stearnes and Andy "Lefty" Cooper; and

16 Whereas, By achieving success on the baseball field, African-
17 American baseball players helped break down color barriers and
18 integrate African-Americans into all aspects of society in the
19 United States: now, therefore, be it

20 Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the members of
21 this legislative body declare April 28, 2022, as Negro Leaguers
22 Baseball Day in the state of Michigan. We recognize the teams and
23 players of the Negro Baseball Leagues for their achievements,
24 dedication, sacrifices, and contributions to both baseball and our
25 nation.