



Veeck Legacy Is That of 'Real Abe Lincoln'

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The achievements of Bill Veeck were many, but the most significant came as a leader in the integration of major league baseball.

It was Veeck who signed Negro Leagues star Larry Doby, the first African-American player in American League history. He didn't stop there. The Cleveland Indians owner understood that, not only could black athletes improve the product on the field, but their up-tempo brand of ball could help sell tickets as well.

By 1949, the defending world champions had 14 black players in their organization. Six were in the major league camp – Doby, infielders Artie Wilson and Minnie Minoso and pitchers Satchel Paige, Jose Santiago and Roy Welmaker. All except Welmaker reached the major leagues, and Doby and Minoso became perennial All-Star candidates.

As Sun-Times sportswriter Edgar Munzel wrote in *The Sporting News* that spring, "Before long Bill Veeck probably will be recognized as the real Abe Lincoln of the game."

For tickets to our symposium *One Family, Two Teams: The Impact of the Veecks on Chicago Baseball*, see details on this site.