



HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS THAT CHICAGO  
HAS MADE TO AMERICA'S FAVORITE PASTIME

**CHICAGO BASEBALL MUSEUM SHOWS "BUCK O'NEIL AND BLACK BASEBALL IN CHICAGO" FILM  
AT THE BASEBALL FILM FESTIVAL HELD AT THE HALL OF FAME**

[Chicago – October 5, 2010] The Chicago Baseball Museum showed its critically acclaimed documentary “Buck O’Neil and Black Baseball In Chicago” at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown, New York as part of the 5th annual Baseball Film Festival on Sunday, October 3rd.

CBM President and Executive Producer of the film, Dr. David Fletcher participated in a 30-minute Q&A after the showing of the film.

The Festival opened Friday night October 1st with a *Salute to “61\*”*, a special program featuring Billy Crystal and Bob Costas followed by a special screening of “61\*” as part of the start of a year-long celebration of the 10th anniversary of the film, which premiered on HBO on April 28, 2001. Crystal was joined in Cooperstown by actor Thomas Jane, who portrayed Mickey Mantle in the film; Ross Greenburg, president of HBO Sports and executive producer of *61\**; Hank Steinberg, the writer of *61\**; and Emmy-Award winning broadcaster Bob Costas.

At the opening reception that commemorated the 49th anniversary of Maris' record breaking 61st home run, Dr. Fletcher spoke to Costas about the Buck O'Neil film and the impact Buck O'Neil had on Chicago baseball and our nation.

The 30-minute Q&A after the “Buck O’Neil and Black Baseball in Chicago” showing was a spirited discussion by the 40+ audience members in the Hall of Fame's "Bullpen Theater" who commented repeatedly about the humility and love that Buck O'Neil displayed, especially when O'Neil came to Cooperstown in July 2006 and delivered the acceptance speech for the 17 newly-inducted class of Negro Leaguers, that did not include him, as he missed out being elected to the Hall of Fame by one vote.

The documentary captures a poignant moment when Former Negro League Museum marketing director Bob Kendrick shares on film how O'Neil accepted the news in 2006 that he had missed getting into the Hall of Fame by one vote. "It was a great lesson in dealing with disappointment," said Kendrick.

Fletcher, a white physician who grew up in the western suburbs of Chicago, spoke how he teamed up with African-American filmmaker John Owens to produce “Buck O’Neil and Black Baseball in Chicago” which first premiered on WYCC-TV, Chicago’s public broadcasting television station, on Nov. 9, 2008. "We met at the Negro League Cafe in Bronzeville and John



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told me his idea how to turn his interview with Buck O'Neil that he did part of a 2004 production called "The City's Pastime" about baseball in Chicago into a documentary about minority baseball in Chicago. I believed that the film had the potential to showcase how special Chicago baseball was, especially Old Comiskey Park, which was the epicenter of Black American every summer with the East-West game. We scoured the country doing interviews with former Negro League and MLB players," Fletcher told the film festival audience.

The Chicago Baseball Museum is currently looking for expanded distribution opportunities for "Buck O'Neil and Black Baseball in Chicago". With additional, not-yet-seen, footage including interviews from Lou Brock, Lee Smith and Andre Dawson, the Chicago Baseball Museum is looking for opportunities to produce a Director's Cut Version of the documentary. For more information, please contact Museum Marketing at 708.907.5301.

#### *Film Synopsis*

The Chicago Baseball Museum documentary, shot by filmmaker John Owens, offers a unique look at the early days of black baseball, much of it through the eyes of O'Neil, the one-time Negro League legend. Lookingglass Theatre ensemble member Anthony Fleming III narrates the film.

The film features O'Neil's last known in-depth interview, which took place in Kansas City in 2004, two years before his death at 94 years of age. In the sitdown, he reminisces about Negro League baseball in the days of segregation as well as the Major Leagues in the early stage of integration. That interview, along with recollections from former Negro Leaguers and Major League players touched by O'Neil, is the foundation of "Buck O'Neil and Black Baseball in Chicago." Born in Carabelle, Fla., John (Buck) O'Neil went on to spend more than 30 years with the Cubs as a scout and the first black coach in the Major Leagues. He was instrumental in the development of Cubs stars Ernie Banks, Lou Brock, Lee Smith and Billy Williams among dozens of African-American players. He also had close relationships with Minnie Minoso, Oscar Gamble and other White Sox personnel over the years.

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