

# Buck O'Neil

- ❑ Played in the Negro leagues with the Kansas City Monarchs.
- ❑ Served in the US Navy in WWII.
- ❑ First African American to coach in the Major Leagues. He remained with the Chicago Cubs in various capacities for 33 years.
- ❑ Serves on the Veterans Committee at the Baseball Hall of Fame.
- ❑ Has been instrumental in the formation of the Negro League Baseball Museum in Kansas City, Missouri.
- ❑ Mr. O'Neil is probably best known for his contribution to Ken Burns' PBS documentary on the history of Baseball.

Buck O'Neil is not a bitter man. Asked if he wishes that he had been born 20 years later so that he could have had the chance to play in the big leagues, he remarks that he is proud to have laid the groundwork for others to follow. He was saddened years ago when no one talked about the Negro Leagues, as if their memory was too difficult to recall and embrace. Buck O'Neil wants us to know and to see and to remember the Negro Leagues and the men who played on those teams, not the reasons that they were not allowed to participate with their white contemporaries. Buck O'Neil grew up thinking that the big leagues were just for white men. But he came to know that some of his teammates *did* belong there and *should* have been given the opportunity. The game of Baseball, to O'Neil, is too great, too much fun to exclude anyone. He says, "Baseball is the most beautiful game ever invented. It brings people together and teaches them to live by the rules and play as a team." Buck still lives baseball every day, with a rich, undying smile at the age of 88.