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**Negro Leagues Baseball Museum Announces
“Thanks a Million Buck” Grassroots Campaign to Raise Funds
For the Buck O’Neil Education & Research Center**

*\$15 Million Renovation of Paseo YMCA, the Original Home of Negro Leagues Baseball,
Will House O’Neil Center and Museum Expansion*

Kansas City, Mo. (August 4, 2006) – In response to thousands of requests from people around the country about how they can help recognize Buck O’Neil’s lifetime of contributions to the game of baseball, the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum (NLBM) today launched the “Thanks a Million Buck” grassroots campaign to raise funds for the John “Buck” O’Neil Education and Research Center. The Education and Research Center will be part of an expansion of the NLBM to be built at the historic Paseo YMCA, the birthplace of the Negro Leagues.

The NLBM’s goal is to raise \$15 million to renovate and expand the Paseo YMCA, with a minimum of \$1 million to be contributed through individual donations by Buck’s 95th birthday on November 13. The \$15 million includes funds for construction, renovation, exhibits and an operating endowment. Incorporating the latest in interactive technology and state-of-the-art research equipment, the expanded NLBM and Buck O’Neil Education and Research Center will allow visitors, students, researchers and baseball fans to study every aspect of the Negro Leagues.

“The outpouring of love and support I have received this year after not being voted into the Hall of Fame has been overwhelming to me and inspiring at the same time,” O’Neil said. “Many folks have asked me what they could do to help recognize me and preserve the history of the Negro Leagues. Nothing is more important to me than education and this new education and research center is much more important to me than any Hall of Fame election. I’m hoping people will make a contribution to help me build Buck’s Hall of Education.”

How to Donate

Tax-deductible contributions to the NLBM, a 501(c)3 organization, and the Buck O’Neil Education and Research Center can be made by visiting www.NLBM.com and clicking on the “Thanks a Million Buck” logo, or by mailing a check made payable to the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum to 1616 East 18th St., Kansas City, MO, 64108.

Through the efforts of Missouri Senator Jim Talent and U.S. Representatives Emanuel Cleaver (MO-5) and Sam Graves (MO-3), Congress recently passed a resolution designating the NLBM as America’s National Negro Leagues Baseball Museum.

Opening in Late 2007

Currently scheduled for completion in late 2007, the renovated Paseo YMCA at 18th Street and Paseo Boulevard in Kansas City will house more than 45,000 square feet of archives, educational areas, exhibits, conference facilities and administrative offices. The Paseo YMCA was built in 1914 as one of 25 YMCAs in America designed to serve the needs of the local African-American community. On February 12, 1920, Andrew “Rube” Foster, the owner of the Chicago American Giants Baseball Club,

and seven other independent black baseball team owners met at the Paseo YMCA to form the Negro National League.

The renovated Paseo YMCA will include a lower level featuring educational learning areas and a new ground floor addition where visitors will enter the Buck O'Neil Education and Research Center. Other floors will house archived historic documents, interactive exhibits, classrooms, conference facilities and administrative offices.

Math and Science Curriculum

Kansas State University and local school districts are partnering with the NLBM in developing the educational curriculum that will expand and enhance existing programs for school-aged children and guests who attend the Center from around the country. The Center will feature the Double-Play Action Center, which is being developed in partnership with the Learning Exchange and will utilize baseball to engage students and groups in lessons of math and science

The O'Neil Center also will feature interactive gaming areas to support the educational curriculum along with a baseball academy. The baseball academy will include batting cages, pitcher's mounds, radar-gun pitching, fielding areas and other elements for players of all ages to improve their skills.

The development of plans, design and architectural drawings for the NLBM expansion and O'Neil Center were initiated with a \$500,000 federal grant awarded with the support of Missouri Senator Kit Bond. Other organizations are joining in the *Thanks a Million Buck* fund-raising efforts, including the Kansas City Royals and the Kansas City T-Bones, and a group of students from Seattle's Chief Sealth High School who arrived Friday in Kansas City after riding bicycles all the way from Seattle to raise funds for the Buck O'Neil Education and Research Center.

"I am truly humbled by all the support and love I have received in my life," O'Neil said. "There are so many examples I can cite, but none more inspiring than these young people. In the spirit of the old Negro Leagues, these youngsters turned their disappointment into action. It makes me feel so good that these young people rode half-way across the country for ol' Buck. I thank them and everyone who supports me and the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum."

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