

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
1997 SESSION
RATIFIED BILL

RESOLUTION 29
SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1081

A JOINT RESOLUTION HONORING THE MEMORY OF JACKIE ROBINSON AND
RECOGNIZING WALTER FENNER "BUCK" LEONARD ON THE FIFTIETH
ANNIVERSARY OF JACKIE ROBINSON'S BREAKING THE COLOR BARRIER
IN MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL.

Whereas, Walter Fenner "Buck" Leonard, one of baseball's most outstanding players, played baseball with Jackie Robinson, Willie Mays, Satchel Page, Josh Gibson, and Cool Papa Bell; and

Whereas, on the fiftieth anniversary of Jackie Robinson's breaking the color barrier in Major League Baseball, it is only fitting to honor Buck Leonard, one of baseball's greatest players and a native of North Carolina; and

Whereas, Buck Leonard was born on September 8, 1907, in Rocky Mount; and

Whereas, Buck Leonard began playing semiprofessional baseball in 1921, with the Rocky Mount Elks and the Rocky Mount Black Swans; and

Whereas, after losing his job due to the Depression, Buck Leonard decided to pursue full-time professional baseball; and

Whereas, from 1934 through 1950, Buck Leonard played first base for the Homestead Grays in the Negro League, where he amassed impressive records; and

Whereas, Buck Leonard compiled a career batting average of over .340 and an average of over .380 during Major League exhibition games; and

Whereas, for several seasons, Buck Leonard averaged 34 home runs per year; and

Whereas, from 1937 to 1945, Buck Leonard helped lead the Homestead Grays to nine consecutive Negro League Championships; and

Whereas, Buck Leonard was selected to play in the Negro League's East-West All Star Game 11 times, an All Star record; and

Whereas, Buck Leonard was always a fan favorite; and

Whereas, from 1951 through 1955, Buck Leonard played baseball in Mexico; and

Whereas, after his baseball career, Buck Leonard returned to Rocky Mount, where he worked as a truant officer with the Rocky Mount school system, operated his own real estate agency, and served as an officer with the Rocky Mount Leafs in the Class-A Carolina League; and

Whereas, Buck Leonard was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1972, and is the oldest living member of the Baseball Hall of Fame; and

Whereas, on March 21, 1981, Buck Leonard was honored at the White House by President Reagan; and

Whereas, Buck Leonard continues to reside in Rocky Mount;

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring:

Section 1. The General Assembly honors the memory of Jackie Robinson and expresses its appreciation to Walter Fenner "Buck" Leonard for his outstanding contributions to the sport of baseball on the fiftieth anniversary of Jackie Robinson's integration of Major League Baseball.

Section 2. The Secretary of State shall transmit a certified copy of this resolution to Walter Fenner "Buck" Leonard.

Section 3. This resolution is effective upon ratification.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 12th day of August, 1997.

Marc Basnight
President Pro Tempore of the Senate

Harold J. Brubaker
Speaker of the House of Representatives