

# Final Report – Pride and Passion Exhibition

1. **Library Name:** Central Library of Rochester & Monroe County

2. **City/State:** Rochester, New York 14604

**Exhibition Dates:** May 1 – June 14, 2013

### 3. **Exhibition Attendance**

#### **Total # of visitors to exhibit**

Actual: Program attendance 1,438 (minimum)

Total: **179,807** (included Central and Branches May 1 – June 14, 2013)

Central – **93,827** guests

Branches – **85,980** guests

**Source of statistics:** Program Attendance / door counts

#### **Total number of library visitors during exhibit**

Total: **179,807** (includes Central and Branches involved in Pride and Passion Exhibit)

Total: **93,827** (Central only)

Total: **51,766** Door count for Rundel building where exhibit was housed

**Source of statistics:** Door Counts – the panels were self-directed so we can't get a precise count of who stopped and read the panels. We do know our door counts were up 18 percent from the same six week period the previous year, and we're certain hundreds of our 'regulars' viewed the exhibit along with all the new patrons brought in by the exhibit and related programming.

### 4. **Public Programs**

Rochester Public Library's patron base is very diverse. The library was committed to providing a variety of programs for all ages, in multiple locations around the city. We encouraged participation from a variety of organizations including the Rochester City School District, Rochester Red Wings, Rochester Baseball Historical Society, Rocky Simmons Family, church groups and Little League organizations.

We have included companion exhibits and partner support in this section.

Rochester has a rich baseball history. 19<sup>th</sup> Century baseball in Rochester is well documented in a 5-part 'Rochester History' pamphlet series by Priscilla Astifan. Astifan is a baseball historian, who has been published in scholarly journals, books and newspapers – she was instrumental in providing reference support to our early baseball history displays. Scott Pitoniak is a noted sportswriter and author of several books including Johnny Antonelli: a Baseball Memoir and Silver Seasons and a New Frontier: The Story of the Rochester Red Wings. He provided support to the library with content, programs and professional editing.

The Monroe County Library System consists of the Central Library, 10 city branches and 23 town libraries. Geography is always a challenge. Four traveling exhibits were created for our branch locations – we partnered with the Rochester Baseball Historical Society to create a parallel exhibit chronicling the history of baseball in Rochester called 'From Mumford's Meadow to Frontier Field'.

The Rocky Simmons family gave us permission to exhibit a copy of their display (permanently housed in the Rochester Hall of Justice) honoring Rocky. Mr. Simmons was a community activist who played in the Negro Leagues as well as managed the minor league Rochester American Giants.

Our speakers included Dr. Rebecca Edwards (Chair, American History Dept., Rochester Institute of Technology); Joe Territo (President, Rochester Baseball Historical Society); Paul Bielewicz (V.P.,

Rochester Baseball Historical Society); Scott Pitoniak (Author, Columnist and Radio Broadcaster); Johnny Antonelli (former Major League Pitcher); William Johnson Jr. (professor and former Mayor of Rochester); and Greg Kenney (Actor/Writer). Our programs were extremely well attended and covered a variety of topics.

Library Director Patty Uttaro asked each subject division at Central library to host a baseball/integration-related display. The challenge was met with unique and interesting topics:

Business/Social Science: created an Effa Manley display (first female inductee into Baseball Hall of Fame);

Science and History: chronicled the mechanics of baseball. The display included baseball bat billets to museum-quality equipment memorabilia along with an examination of the science/physics of throwing a baseball;

Arts/Recreation/Music: librarians purchased new written material and created a bibliography of Negro League materials. They also showcased a baseball bobble head collection and a vintage baseball uniform display;

Children’s Room: baseball book displays and decorations. A baseball stadium scene was created, complete with an authentic bench seat from Silver Stadium, pennants, peanuts, popcorn and Cracker Jacks, and a family of Teddy Bears decked out in RPL t-shirts, buttons and hats;

Literature /Media: baseball-themed fiction books and DVD displays;

Local History: 19<sup>th</sup> Century baseball memorabilia – including vintage equipment, photos and jerseys. Baseball music from the 19<sup>th</sup> century was also played in the exhibit hallway.

In the Lower Link Gallery: the Exhibit team hosted four separate displays:

*The Rocky Simmons tribute* – Framed posters of Mr. Simmons’ life achievements, including his participation in the Negro Leagues and managing the Rochester American Giants. One photo from this exhibit became especially relevant to our library when Walter Williams, our 78-year-old security guard, was identified as a 14-year-old player in the photograph. Walt became an instant celebrity and was given a special ‘breakout’ panel identifying him as RPL’s security guard. Walt went on to have a newspaper article written about him, he was asked to throw out the first pitch at a Red Wings game and actor Greg Kenney made a point of introducing Walt at his shows;

*From Mumford’s Meadow to Frontier Field* – 22 custom-created poster panels depicting Rochester’s Baseball timeline;

*Four display cases of museum-quality memorabilia* – jerseys, hats, balls, bats, bases, etc.;

*Cathedrals of America* – scale models of baseball stadiums. Architect Mark MacEwan unveiled his amazing replica model of Rochester’s own Frontier Field. At the conclusion of the exhibit the model was moved to Frontier Field, where it will be on permanent display.

**Formal programs:**

1. Pride and Passion Exhibit: May 1 – June 14, 2013. The panels were displayed in the Harold Hacker Hall of the Rundel Memorial Library Building. Entrance ways and reference desks were decorated with American Flag pennants and Pride & Passion information. Surrounding the panels were book displays that complemented the display. The Media Department also set up baseball-themed movie displays.

May 1 – 31, 2013 Door Counts - 65,805	Rundel Bldg. door count 18,037
June 1 – 14, 2013 Door Counts - 28,022	Rundel Bldg. door count 7,696
<b>Total 93,827</b>	<b>Total 25,733</b>

2. Traveling exhibit – Lincoln Branch, Maplewood Branch, Sully Branch, Winton Branch, Arnett Branch May 1 – June 14, 2013  
'*From Mumford's Meadow to Frontier Field*' – a timeline of Rochester baseball. This exhibit includes 22 original poster panels created in cooperation with the Rochester Public Library and the Rochester Baseball Historical Society. One panel depicted Tom Alston, the gentleman who broke the Rochester Red Wings color barrier in 1954. The panels also showcased Rocky Simmons, the Rochester activist who played and managed in the Negro Leagues. Adults who visited our branches remembered Rocky and the influence he had on their lives.  
Attendance: the exhibit was located near the library branch entrances, so every patron had an opportunity to view the panels as they entered the library.  
May 1 – 31, 2013 Door counts for these branches -51,373  
June 1 – 14, 2013 Door counts 34,607  
**Total: 85,980 guests**
  
3. Lincoln Branch Library - May 1, 2013  
Baseball Movie Day – *The Jackie Robinson Story*. Visit by Spikes (the Red Wings' mascot), spin wheel with prizes, free snacks.  
Attendance: 6 Adults 23 YA 19 Children **Total 48 guests**
  
4. Winton Branch Library – May 4, 2013  
*Jackie: Cross the Line* performance by Greg Kenney. Visit by Spikes (the Red Wings' mascot), spin wheel with prizes, free snacks.  
Attendance: 6 Adults 0 YA 3 Children **Total 9 guests**
  
5. Maplewood Branch Library – May 4, 2013  
*Jackie: Cross the Line* performance by Greg Kenney. Visit by Spikes (the Red Wings' mascot), spin wheel with prizes, free snacks.  
Attendance: 0 Adults 0 YA 46 Children **Total 46 guests**
  
6. Central Library Opening Reception – May 5, 2013  
The opening reception was held at Central Library, the location of the Pride and Passion panels. Guest speakers included New York State Senator Joseph Robach, Mayor Thomas Richards, Library Director Patty Uttaro and keynote speaker William Johnson Jr. (former Mayor/current professor of urban studies at Rochester Institute of Technology). Mr. Johnson is an avid baseball fan. He grew up in the south and talked about his experiences as a young black man seeing Jackie Robinson play ball. His remarks were touching, reflective and funny. Our reception also recognized *Walter Williams*, a current security guard at Central Library. Walt played in the Rochester Negro Leagues when he was 14 years old; he is now 78 years young. He jokes that he was paid in **food** not money! Actor Greg Kenney performed his amazing one-man show *Jackie: Cross the Line*. Mr. Kenney had a crowd of 400 people mesmerized. He posed for pictures, answered questions and made our reception truly memorable.  
To complement the opening reception we had a spin wheel with baseball prizes, door prizes, a free photo booth with a baseball theme background, free hot dogs, potato chips, soda, cracker jacks and popcorn.  
Attendance: 350 Adults 25 YA 25 Children **Total 400 guests**

7. Central Library Children's Story Hour – May 5, 2013  
The story hour was held in the Children's room. A drawing for a special baseball book was held for the children that attended. Red Wings' mascots Spikes and Mittsy joined the children for the story hour.  
Attendance: 0 Adults   0 YA   11 Children   **Total 11 guests**
  
8. Rochester City School #29 – May 6, 2013  
*Jackie: Cross the Line* performance by Greg Kenney. The library donated this performance to this city school so we could reach an audience in grades 4-7.  
Attendance: 15 Adults   80 YA   80 Children   **Total 175 guests**
  
9. Lincoln Branch Library – May 6, 2013  
*Jackie: Cross the Line* performance by Greg Kenney. Spin wheel with prizes, free snacks.  
Attendance: 5 Adults   20 YA   15 Children   **Total 40 guests**
  
10. Sully Branch Library / Thomas Ryan Recreation Center – May 6, 2013  
Baseball themed 4 corners game. Visit from Spikes (the Red Wings' mascot), prizes and free snacks  
Attendance: 10 Adults   10 YA   40 Children   **Total 60 guests**
  
11. Mt. Hope Cemetery ~ Rochester Baseball Pioneers Mt. Hope Cemetery Tour – May 11, 2013  
Collaboration with the Friends of Mt. Hope Cemetery and members of the Rochester Baseball Historical Society. Tony Brancato and John Foster dressed in period baseball uniforms and conducted tours of the gravesites of some of the first men of baseball. The tour visited the grave of Charles Douglass, son of abolitionist Frederick Douglass. (Charles Douglass played on Rochester's first African American baseball team called the Unexpected, formed in 1866.) Discussions included the evolution of baseball. Information was distributed regarding the *Pride and Passion* exhibit.  
Attendance: 20 Adults   0 YA   0 Children   **Total 20 guests**
  
12. Central Library Teen Central School Tour– May 11. 2013  
*Pride and Passion* tour and scavenger hunt. Theme: How Sports Changed Society. School program with Rochester City School District. Snacks and giveaways.  
Attendance: 2 Adults   10 YA   0 Children   **Total 12 guests**
  
13. Central Library – May 14, 2013  
*Stealing Home: The Continuing Legacy of Negro League Baseball in Major League Baseball Today* – lecture by Dr. Rebecca Edwards. Dr. Edwards teaches the history of American baseball at the Rochester Institute of Technology. Her lecture addressed baseball, the impact of discrimination and segregation and how society resisted change. Door prizes included a Baseball Hall of Fame yearbook and a signed baseball. Popcorn and Cracker Jacks snacks helped set a baseball atmosphere.  
Attendance: 25 Adults   0 YA   0 Children   **Total 25 guests**

14. Central Library School Tour - May 17, 2013  
Pride and Passion tour. Theme: How Sports Changed Society  
School program with Rochester City School District. Snacks and giveaways.  
Attendance: 2 Adults 10 YA 0 Children **Total 12 guests**
  
15. Central Library/Frontier Field - May 17, 2013  
*Pride and Passion Library Night* at Frontier Field. Collaborative effort with the Rochester Red Wings minor league team and the Rochester Baseball Historical Society. The Rochester Red Wings offered discount tickets to library staff and family members. The Rochester Baseball Historical Society participated in a pre-game vintage baseball exhibition. Walt Williams (78-year-old Library security guard that played in the Negro Leagues) threw out the first pitch, and we brought the *Library on the Go* promotion table with spin wheel, prizes and Pride and Passion information.  
Attendance: 125 Adults 0 YA 75 Children **Total 200 guests (Library ticket sales)**  
Attendance: Frontier Field paid admissions **6628 people** (2<sup>nd</sup> best attended game in May)
  
16. Central Library School Tour – June 7, 2013  
Pride and Passion tour. Theme: How Sports Changed Society  
School program with Rochester City School District. Snacks and giveaways  
Attendance: 4 Adults 12 YA 25 Children **Total 41 guests**
  
17. Central Library – June 4, 2013  
*Hallowed Grounds: A History of Rochester’s Field of Dreams* – lecture by Joe Territo (President, Rochester Baseball Historical Society) and Paul Bielewicz (Vice President, Rochester Baseball Historical Society). The evolution of baseball and the local fields that the games were played on. Door prizes and free snacks.  
Attendance: 54 Adults 0 YA 0 Children **Total 54 guests**
  
18. Central Library – June 11, 2013  
*Let’s Talk Baseball with Johnny Antonelli and Scott Pitoniak* – Former major league pitcher and Rochester’s own Johnny Antonelli talked baseball with author Scott Pitoniak. Johnny never played in the minor leagues: he was drafted at the age of 18 to play in the majors. He discussed discrimination in the major leagues and how he pushed the issue of using the same hotels, buses and restaurants for all players. Johnny also participated in a book signing of *Johnny Antonelli: A Memoir*. Door prizes included a Baseball Hall of Fame yearbook and a signed baseball. Popcorn and Cracker Jacks snacks helped set a baseball atmosphere.  
Attendance: 85 Adults 0 YA 0 Children **Total 85 guests**
  
19. Central Library Closing Reception – June 14, 2013  
*Jackie: Cross the Line* performance by Greg Kenney, returned by popular demand. Door prizes included a Baseball Hall of Fame yearbook, signed baseballs and photos. Popcorn and Cracker Jacks snacks helped set a baseball atmosphere. Three classes from the Rochester City School District attended this performance.  
Attendance: 100 Adults YA 100 Children **Total 200 guests**

**Total number of programs: 19**

**Total program attendance: *At least* 1438**

**With door counts and casual viewing: 179,807 guests**

**5. Elementary and High School Involvement**

Total number of Classes: 0 Elementary 8 Middle 1 HS

Total number of classes using exhibit-related themes in their curriculum 0 Elem 8 Middle 1 HS

Description:

The children were studying how sports changed society. Jackie Robinson was the perfect example of how a sport changed America. Discussions included how people reacted to Jackie Robinson, and what he had to deal with on a daily basis. The classes visiting the closing reception to see the *Jackie: Cross the Line* program and had read the autobiography of Jackie Robinson. The library staff took the classes on a tour of all the memorabilia in the library as well as the Pride and Passion panels. A scavenger hunt was created to encourage students to look closely at the displays.

**6. Funding**

a. NEH/ALA Grant	Amount: \$2,500
b. Friends & Foundation of Rochester Public Library	Amount: \$6,485
c. John and Barbara Lovenheim	Amount: \$1,000
d. Eileen Riedman	Amount: \$3,100
e. M&T Bank	Amount: \$1,000
f. M/E Engineering	Amount: \$1,000
g. Popli Design Group	Amount: \$1,000
h. DixonSchwabl Advertising	Amount: \$10,000 donation of 500 free television PSA's (in-kind)
i. Rochester Red Wings	Amount: \$3,000 donation of signed memorabilia, advertising, interview, discounted/free tickets (in-kind)
i. Rochester Baseball Historical Society	Amount: \$10,200 sponsor contribution in time and collaboration—RBHS collaborated with Central Library Graphics department on the creation of display posters 'From Mumford's Meadow to Frontier Field' (this exhibit traveled to branches as a compliment to Pride and Passion), loan of museum-quality artifacts, gave 3 scholarly programs (in-kind)
j. WDKX	Amount: \$5,680 donation of 72 PSA's, web positing, radio interview (in-kind)
k. Mark MacEwan	Amount: \$5,000 sponsor contribution, loan of <i>Cathedrals of America</i> exhibit featuring Frontier Field (in-kind)
l. Cooperstown Baseball Hall of Fame	Amount: \$250 donation of 25 yearbooks for prizes (in-kind)
m. Central Staff Time	Amount: \$52,000 in in-kind staff support: 10 staff members with an avg. salary of \$20/hr dedicating 5 hrs/week for 52 weeks. This amount includes meetings, creation of panels, printing, programming and volunteering
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$102,215 (direct and in-kind support)</b>

## 7. Publicity:

Our goal was to encourage dialogue, make it personal and get our community and staff involved. Our tag line was 'Catch the Passion'.

Staff: The Friends & Foundation of the Rochester Public Library provided funds so that all 256 staff members were given a Team RPL T-shirt and button. Excitement rippled through our halls and in the branches as people started wearing their shirts. The shirts and pins provided an opportunity to start a conversation with patrons about the exhibit. People who normally would not actively participate in programs made a conscious effort to attend.

Each library subject division was charged with creating a baseball-themed display. Staff invested time and energy researching the Negro Leagues, local connections and various aspects of baseball and society. It became personal for them and a source of pride for their divisions.

A banner ad cycled through our homepage every 60 seconds for weeks. Since more than 83,000 people view our homepage every month, this provided tremendous exposure for the exhibit. A link was created to a custom library website dedicated to the Pride and Passion events at the libraries. A story explaining the Pride and Passion exhibit and programs was prominently displayed on our homepage.

Geography can be a challenge for our downtown Central Library, but we were able to find a creative solution to this problem by actively including our branches in this exhibit – we created four traveling baseball exhibits just for them. Each branch was offered special programming that included a visit from the Red Wings mascots, a performance of *Jackie: Cross the Line* and the *Library on the Go* spin wheel and prizes. The RPL T-shirts and RPL pins were a unifying factor.

Our downtown Central Library consists of two buildings: to promote Pride and Passion, oversized banners and posters were placed on the outside of both buildings. People walking or driving by couldn't miss the invitation to come in and see the exhibit. Staff had informational sheets about the exhibit, so questions could be answered and dialogue promoted.

Also, the City of Rochester gave the library permission to hang giant Pride and Passion flag banners from our light poles around the Central Library buildings. This was the first time the library was granted permission to display light pole banners.

Community Partners: We started with a small group of community partners and grew into a diverse network of Pride and Passion enthusiasts. We identified areas that we wanted to target and invited people to help us spread the word.

- a. Dr. James Maddison from the Rochester City School District passed out Pride and Passion packets to all the coaches and children signing up for Little League Baseball.
- b. Dwayne Simmons, son of the late, great Negro League legend Rocky Simmons, spread the word at churches and local businesses. He was our 'man on the street'. He did an excellent job of promoting the exhibit to a very specific older audience.
- c. Derrick Coley, Library Youth Services Coordinator, handed out information at several community meetings, including the RACE: Are We So Different? exhibit at the Rochester Museum & Science Center. Derrick was also a direct link to city recreation centers, schools and youth programs.
- d. The Rochester Baseball Historical Society is heavily invested in the local baseball community. They provided expertise and factual, historical integrity to our exhibits. They handed out information at their events and posted information on their website. They included us in magazine articles and talked about the exhibit on WYSL sports radio. They provided programming and memorabilia. We collaborated on a unique parallel exhibit called 'From Mumford's

Meadow to Frontier Field' which was very well received in our community. They provided valuable connections in the baseball world.

- e. The Rochester Red Wings is our hometown minor league baseball team. They already had a demographic that would be interested in our display. In the startup hustle of the season they agreed to post 30 Pride and Passion posters around Frontier Field and put an insert in thousands of their programs that listed all the events. They let us set up two *Library on the Go* tables with Pride and Passion information, prizes and general library information. They invited us to do a radio interview with them about the exhibit. They also provided prizes for our events, including signed baseballs and pictures
- f. WDKX is a family-owned radio station that appeals to the contemporary urban population (the call letters honor black heroes Frederick Douglass, Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X). The radio station did web postings of events and donated 72 PSA's. They invited us to participate in their popular *People to People* radio show.
- g. Blue Cross Arena displayed a Pride and Passion banner in their auditorium. The Arena has a seating capacity of 19,000 people. They host a variety of programs from concerts and sports to graduations.
- h. We hand-delivered information to neighborhood organizations including Action for a Better Community and the Urban League so we could promote the events in person.
- i. The City of Rochester Communications Department sent out an email blast to all city employees announcing the closing reception and repeat performance of *Jackie: Cross the Line* and more than 200 people attended.
- j. TimeWarnerCable ran 500 TV PSA's, courtesy of DixonSchwabl Advertising.
- k. Rochester's newspaper, the Democrat & Chronicle, ran a front page story on Walt Williams, our security guard that played in the Negro Leagues. People made a special trip to the library to meet Walt. They also covered our Opening Reception. (articles included)
- l. We advertised in the City Newspaper, Minority Reporter, Metropolitan Magazine and The Challenger newspaper (mostly targeted to the area's urban black population).
- m. We paid for prominent advertisements on 10 city buses. Routes were selected that would promote the exhibit to a diverse population.

Our publicity strategy was a success. During the exhibit period, our door counts increased 18 percent. We had much favorable feedback on our many programs and events. People had fun! We revisited a part of America's past and its ability to change one person at a time, and we encouraged discussion and reflection.

This has been a life-altering experience for many of us in the library. We found a personal connection when we discovered that our 78-year-old security guard played for the Negro Leagues when he was 14 years old. It brought the message of segregation closer to home. Walt is an accomplished man with a sweet smile—no one would ever suspect that his life was not always easy or fair. He talks fondly of Rocky Simmons and how sports were a vehicle to a better life for him, and recounted the time he met both Jackie Robinson and Jesse Owens in Rochester. Walt went on to teach physical education and was the first black basketball coach in the Rochester city schools. He is a testament to 'Crossing the Line'. The staff rallied around Walt and treated him like a celebrity: he is **our** Jackie Robinson.



We encouraged our staff to become involved and they did. Team RPL T-shirts became a wardrobe staple. Staff members attended programs when their schedules permitted and they took great pride in everything we did. When the exhibit was closing several people asked if we could keep it up longer. We all felt the six weeks flew by, and would have been proud to host it for another month.

When we think about this exhibit, we realize that we had a special opportunity to connect with our patrons. Our programming was diverse, it was fun and we had something for everyone. Programs were unique and subject appropriate. Rochester's own Johnny Antonelli (former major league pitcher who played for Boston, Milwaukee, New York and San Francisco) talked about how he moved integration along by advocating against discrimination against the black players on his teams (staying in the same hotels as the white players, traveling with the team and eating meals together, etc.). He pushed the issue until the teams treated everyone equally. As a Rochesterian, Johnny knew discrimination was not an option—too many civil rights activists had walked our streets (abolitionist hero Frederick Douglass is buried in Mt. Hope cemetery here). The Rochester area has 1.1 million people, yet in many ways we are a small community. Even today when Antonelli talks about the segregation that occurred in baseball, he shakes his head in sadness.

This exhibit encouraged dialogue and created a new level of social awareness. People wanted to see what Pride and Passion was all about. Our door counts were up 18 percent, with thousands of people being touched by the exhibit. When writer/actor Greg Kenney performed *Jackie: Cross the Line*, people shook their heads in disbelief and tears trickled down the cheeks. Former Rochester Mayor Bill Johnson revisited his childhood memories, as he watched Greg portray Jackie Robinson. Greg Kenney brought the struggles and triumphs of Jackie Robinson to life. He made it *personal*.

The Rochester Public Library was awarded this grant in 2008, so we waited a long time for our turn. But it was worth the wait. Our history of social activism in Rochester is legendary. Susan B. Anthony, Frederick Douglass and Elizabeth Cady Stanton walked our streets. We had many pioneers who crossed social barriers and changed the world. It seems fitting that we were the last library to host this exhibit before it returned home to Cooperstown. We like to believe you saved the best for last.

We invested a lot of time, money and passion in this exhibit. Our payback can't be measured in dollars and cents or numbers. Yes, we had increased library attendance, and the community spirit and support was amazing, but perhaps the biggest return is an increased sensitivity and awareness to segregation and social issues. When we see Walt Williams, we can't help but think about his life, and the struggles he endured. I don't think we will ever think of baseball quite the same. For that we thank you.

**8. Publicity Samples** ~ see attached

## **9. Comments About the Exhibition**

Patty Uttaro – Director, Rochester Public Library & Monroe County Library System, the Central Library of Rochester & Monroe County.

Pride and Passion was a huge success for the Central Library of Rochester & Monroe County due to an enthusiastic team that put our events together, and the extraordinary talent assembled by the program developers. The exhibit couldn't have been timed better – the movie '42' had just opened and was getting rave reviews locally and nationally, which contributed to the excitement and popularity of our exhibit. Countless people told me they hadn't been to the Central Library in decades, and they were thrilled with what they found here. Pride and Passion helped many Rochesterians rediscover their local library.

Ned Davis – Executive Director, Friends & Foundation of the Rochester Public Library (lead sponsor of Pride and Passion)

Pride and Passion at Rochester's Central Library was an extraordinary success and achievement for the Library and the community. The traveling exhibit itself is so well done, and it connected to so many areas within the Library and inspired the staff to really go above and beyond to share the inspirational, educational and emotional message of Pride and Passion.

Colleen Farley – Patron

KUDOS! to the library director, staff and volunteers who helped put on the 'Pride and Passion' Opening Reception today. Very well done! In particular, Greg Kenney was superb - his interactions with the audience, especially the children, was fantastic. I learned so much about Jackie Robinson and hope to learn more thru the books discussed today and by seeing '42'. Be proud of a job well done!

William Johnson – Former Mayor, University professor, Keynote speaker

I am glad that I was able to participate. Greg Kinney made it a very special occasion...I also appreciate the effort the Library put into making this an authentic experience for the young people. Your particular efforts paid off handsomely.

Joe Territo – President, Rochester Baseball Historical Society

The Rochester Baseball Historical Society was pleased to partner with the Rochester Public Library on the recent exhibit, Pride and Passion: The African-American Baseball Experience. This exhibit offered our not-for-profit organization a perfect tie-in and opportunity to share the story of Rochester baseball history through our own exhibit entitled *Rochester Baseball: From Mumford's Meadow to Frontier Field*. I feel our Rochester Baseball exhibit gave the community a unique venue and chance to learn about Rochester's rich baseball history as never before. Since educating the public is a focus of the Rochester Baseball Historical Society's mission, this project, along with our affiliation with the Rochester Public Library, was extremely important to us.

Greg Kenney – Actor, Artistic Director of Educate Us Productions

The Pride and Passion exhibit has been an incredible experience for me. It has taken me from Cleveland to Minneapolis to Casper, Wyoming and many more stops on this incredible journey. The last stop of the tour was in Rochester, New York. It was a wonderful place to end a tour of the exhibit. The library personnel were fantastic. Leading the way was Mrs. Anita Wahl, who set up the library tour over a four day period, having me present in schools and other branch libraries, and working with me very closely.

The crowds in Rochester were excited and very receptive of the exhibit and also very supportive of my performance of Jackie Robinson. It was so well supported that I was asked to return later to close the exhibit on the 14th of June. It was also an honor to meet a man, Walter Williams, who had joined the Negro League Rochester team at the age of 14.

However, without the support of the library and Mrs. Wahl, David Creek and the Executive Director of the Friends & Foundation of RPL Mr. Ned Davis and their wonderful staff, the exhibit would not have been the huge success it was. Both programs were packed at the library, each accommodating well over 200 people, which is a fantastic crowd and perhaps the largest that I have experienced for an individual program. My hat is off to all who were involved in a very successful event. I would love to return to the library any time they would want to have me for any of my programs. Thank you very much Rochester and thank you from the bottom of my heart to all the staff and volunteers and especially Mrs. Wahl for making the last tour of the exhibit extremely special and memorable.

Submitted By: Anita Wahl

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