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*Honoring and Preserving the Sports History of Chautauqua County*

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## **Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame**

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*15 West Third Street - Jamestown, NY 14701*

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*January 2014*

### **2014 CSHOF BANQUET SPEAKER**

#### **Jackie Robinson's Daughter**



**Sharon Robinson**, daughter of baseball legend Jackie Robinson, will be the featured speaker at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Induction Banquet of the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame on February 17 at the Lakewood Rod & Gun Club.

“We are excited to have Sharon as the guest speaker for our induction dinner,” said Randy Anderson, CSHOF president. “The impact of Jackie Robinson on the game of baseball and race relations in America cannot be overstated. To have Sharon reflect on her experiences growing up as Jackie’s daughter will be a

special opportunity for our county. Her appearance will add a special touch to the induction of Vincent Calarco Geza Farkas, Dan Lunetta, Cindy Miller, Al Muck, Tom Precht, Tom Priester and Jack Wigley.”

Sharon Robinson has captivated readers with her memoir *Stealing Home*, her recounting of growing up in the public eye, and *Jackie's Nine*, a book for young readers about the nine heartfelt, hard-won values that helped her father, Jackie Robinson, achieve his goals. Her photographic biography for children, *Promises to Keep: How Jackie Robinson Changed America* received rave reviews. Her fiction novels include *Safe At Home* and *Slam Dunk!* Her first picture book, *Testing the Ice: A True Story About Jackie Robinson*, honors her extraordinary father's memory with her warm, graceful storytelling.

In addition to her writing career, Ms. Robinson is an educational consultant for Major League Baseball. In this capacity, she oversees school and community-based educational programs. *Breaking Barriers, In Sports, In Life* is the department's core program; it is a national character education program designed to empower students with strategies to help them face obstacles in their lives. The message is delivered by examining the values demonstrated in the lives of Jackie Robinson and many of today's baseball stars; since its

inception in 1997, the program has reached over fourteen million children across the United States, Puerto Rico, and Canada.



Prior to joining Major League Baseball, Ms. Robinson had a 20-year career as a nurse-midwife and educator. She taught at such prestigious universities as Yale, Columbia, Howard and Georgetown. In addition to her work in midwifery, she directed the *PUSH for Excellence* program from 1985 to 1990 and was a fundraiser for *The United Negro College Fund* and *A Better Chance*.

Ms. Robinson is Vice Chairman of the Jackie Robinson Foundation and serves on the boards for the Roberto Clemente Sports City Complex in Carolina, PR, Metropolitan Opera, Urban America, and Omnicom Diversity Committee.

Sharon Robinson received her Bachelor's degree from Howard University in 1973 and her Master's degree from Columbia University in 1976. She went on to receive a post-Master's Certificate in Teaching from the School of Nursing at the University of Pennsylvania. Ms. Robinson has honorary degrees from Medaille College (1998), Dowling College (2004), and Monmouth College (2005).

The CSHOF induction banquet on February 17 at the Lakewood Rod and Gun Club will begin with a hospitality session at 5:00 p.m. with dinner at 6:30.

The official ticket distribution sites are Fredonia Food Mart on Temple Street in Fredonia, Calarco's Restaurant on Market Street in Westfield, plus Jamestown Cycle Shop on Harrison Street and the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame on Third Street, both in Jamestown. Tickets can also be ordered by phoning Chip Johnson at 716-485-6991. The price per ticket is \$50. CSHOF members receive a \$5 discount.

## **Two Jackie Robinson Films at Jackson Center**

In honor of Sharon Robinson's appearance at our induction banquet, the CSHOF is teaming with our community partners, the James Prendergast Library, the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation, and the Robert H. Jackson Center to show two biopic films on the life of Baseball Hall of Famer Jackie Robinson. Both films are open to the public with no admission charge.

On Thursday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, *The Jackie Robinson Story* will be screened at 7:00 p.m., at the Robert H. Jackson Center in Jamestown. This 1950 film stars Jackie Robinson as himself. Incidentally, Jackie began the filming of this movie shortly after the birth of Sharon. His wife Rachel and infant daughter flew to Hollywood to be with Jackie on the set.



*The Jackie Robinson Story* is one of the best and most convincing baseball biopics ever filmed. The film traces Robinson's career from his college days, when he excelled as a track star at Pasadena College and as UCLA's All-Sports record holder. Upon his graduation, Robinson tries to get a coaching job, but this is the 1940s and most doors are closed to black athletes.

After serving in the Army, Robinson plays in the Negro Baseball League, where his uncanny skills attract the attention of Branch Rickey, general manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers. Anxious to break down the color barrier that exists in major league baseball, Rickey chooses Robinson in 1946 to play for the Brooklyn farm team in Montreal. In a harrowing sequence, Rickey lets Robinson

know what he is in for by bombarding him with insults and racial slurs. The general manager is merely testing Robinson's ability to withstand the pressure. He wants a black ballplayer "with guts enough to not fight back."

Despite experiencing instances of unabashed hatred, Robinson steadfastly continues to turn the other cheek and in 1947 is promoted to the Brooklyn lineup. After a slow start, Robinson justifies the faith put in him by Rickey. He becomes an outstanding player and slowly but surely the ban on black players vanishes in the big leagues.

Though a model of restraint by current movie standards, *The Jackie Robinson Story* is surprisingly frank in its detailing of racial tensions of its era.

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Two weeks later, on Thursday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, the 2013 blockbuster *42* will light up the Jackson Center auditorium.



Hero is a word we hear often in sports, but heroism is not always about achievements on the field of play. *42* tells the story of two men - the great Jackie Robinson and legendary Brooklyn Dodgers GM Branch Rickey - whose brave stand against prejudice forever changed the world by changing the game of baseball. In 1946, Branch Rickey put himself at the forefront of history when he signed Jackie Robinson to the team, breaking Major League Baseball's infamous color line. But the deal also put Robinson and Rickey in the firing line of the public, the press and even the players. Facing unabashed racism from every side, Robinson was forced to demonstrate tremendous courage and restraint by not reacting in kind, knowing that any incident could destroy his and Rickey's hopes.

Instead, Number 42 let his talent on the field do the talking – ultimately winning over fans and his teammates and silencing his critics, and paving the way for others to follow.

## **Jackie Robinson Was in Jamestown**



Sharon Robinson will be following in the footsteps of her famous father when she attends the CSHOF's sports dinner. Fifty-eight years earlier, Jackie Robinson was a speaker at the 5<sup>th</sup> Temple Hese Abraham sports dinner held February 6, 1956 at the Hotel Jamestown. Two other guests that year were Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz. Seated next to Robinson at the head table was a lineman from the University of Pittsburgh, Jamestown's own, Jim McCusker. Following are excerpts from a Post-Journal story written by Frank Hyde:

*Jackie Robinson, Brooklyn infielder and the first Negro to break organized baseball's color barrier, talked baseball - but he also dwelt to some lengths on the problems of his race and its progress toward recognition.*

*"We," Robinson said in speaking of the Negro race, "have made wonderful advances and have pushed aside many obstacles. We never ease the fight until we have eliminated the obstacles that now face us and continue to put America in a bad light with the rest of the world."*

*Jackie emphasized the importance of the present moves toward non-segregation on the world's diplomatic stage.*

*"The entire world is wondering," he said in a quiet, well-modulated voice that arose only when he wished to drive home a point. "We can preach democracy as much as we wish, but the world will never truly and fully accept our democracy as long as racial discrimination exists, for no nation is stronger than its weakest link."*



*Robinson traced his baseball career briefly and his trials as a professional player. He lauded Branch Rickey, now retired president of the Pittsburgh Pirates, who, as general manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers, brought Robinson into the major leagues.*

*"Mr. Rickey's guidance and assurance, many times volunteered by long distance telephone, helped me over the bad spots," he added.*