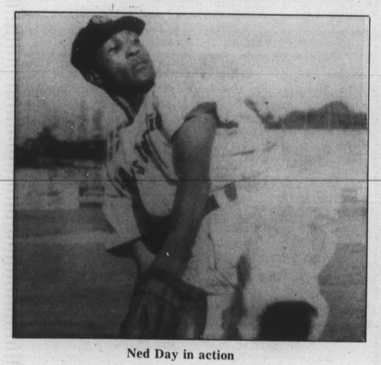
The Baltimore Elite Giants baseball team, which played its home games at Bugle Field. Leon Day is fourth from the left.

Salute to a local legend



Ned Day in action

By Fred Lindsey
Local Sports Editor

In Atlanta, Georgia, recently, the professional baseball Braves and the Southern Bell Telephone Company gave a reunion for the Black Living Legends of Negro Baseball.

Unfortunately, for many of us, we never got to see what baseball was like before Jackie Robinson and the early 1950s, when the major leagues were segregated and blacks had to play their own brand of baseball.

Satchel Paige, Smokey Joe Williams, Mule Suttles and John Beckwith were but a few black baseball players who help pave the way for today's Henry Aaron.

A baseball player cut from the same mold of several of the black greats is Baltimore's Leon Day.

Day, a professional, who played for the Baltimore Elite Giants, Newark Eagles and other teams in the Negro Leagues from 1935-1946, is living quietly in West Baltimore reliving the days of his youth.

As a pitcher primarily, Day enjoyed his finest season in 1937, when he was 12-0 in league play and one lost the entire year.

When Day was not pitching, he was catching flyballs in the outfield and making putouts in the outfield, in accordance with the custom of "being able to play everywhere."

"The Negro League was a great experience," Day said. "It was fun to play. It always felt good being able to play against some of the best talent that baseball has ever known."

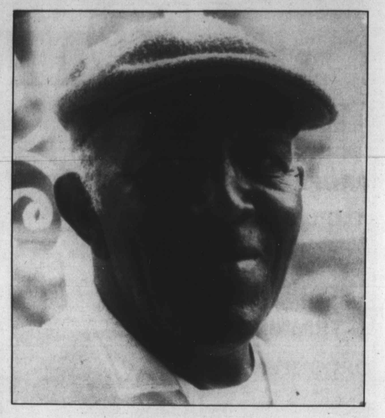
At 72, Day is one of about 100 black legends to be honored.

He says he can vividly recall the days when he played against Willie Mays, Roy Campenella, Larry Doby and Monte Irvin, all Hall of Famers in the National Baseball League, who got their starts as members of black professional teams.

"I don't have as many memories as I should have," Day said, "but playing against those guys is something that will always be with me."

Long since retired, Day still prefers a time to "have fun" on the town and to watch baseball on televison. However, Day insists that many of today's major leaguers would have had problems in his league.

The Braves' week-end event, to honor the surviving members of the Negro Baseball League, was a special occasion that was long overdue.



Ned Day as he looks today.

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SPORTSCENE

By Fred Lindsey

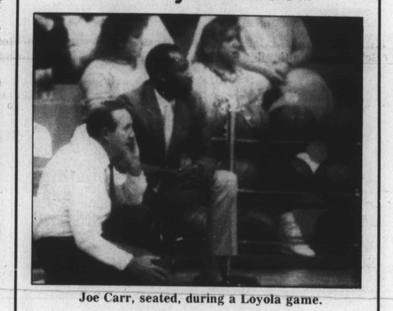
Honors at Towson State

Towson State University junior Kennell Jones (Poly H.S.) of the men's basketball team was recently honored with the Male Souris Award as the outstanding junior scholar-athlete.

Jones, a business administration major with a 3.07 gpa (grade point average) helped the Tiger to 19 victories this season.

The make Rookie of the Year Award went to Devin Boyd (Walbrook H.S.). Boyd was the ECC Eastern Collegiate Conference "Rookie Of The Year" for the basketball team while averaging 13.7 points and 5 assists per game.

New Loyola coach



Joe Carr, seated, during a Loyola game.

Former local basketball standout Joe Carr has been named as a part-time assistant basketball coach for the Loyola College men's basketball program. Carr's appointment completes new head coach Tom Schneider's staff for the 1989-90 season.

Carr served as the top assistant coach for the Loyola women's basketball team for the past two years. He was also an assistant for the Towson Catholic High School boys' team from 1984-86.

The 32-year-old Carr played for current Loyola head women's basketball coach Frank Szymanski at the University of Baltimore during the late 1970's. Considered a fine shooting guard, Carr earned first-team All-State honors before graduating from U of B in 1980.

Carr, a Towson, Maryland native, played two years at the Community College of Baltimore under head coach Jerry Phipps. He is currently in graduate school at Coppin State College.

Basketball clinic

Former Washington Bullets player Phil Chenier and Dave Dupree, NBA editor for USA-Today, are holding basketball clinics at Howard Community College, this summer, for three consecutive weeks, beginning July 10 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., daily.

The coed clinics are designed to improve confidence, skill levels and physical condition of students ages 8-15. The cost per week is $120.

For more information, call 992-4869 or 992-4804.

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Summer basketball

The 1989 summer NBA PRO AM basketball League for men will open at Dunbar High School on Saturday, July 1st.

NBA rules prohibit any players with N.C.A.A. eligibility from participation. Eight teams will play two games each week for a minimum of 10 games during the regular season.

Games will be played on Saturdays and Sundays. Team registration fee is $300 and must be paid no later than Wednesday, June 28, 1989 by money order payable to Opportunity, Inc., 2729 N. Calvert St., Baltimore, Md., 21218.

For information call Vernon Wolst at 542-1322.

Sam Lacy

Frank

In mid-February, my favorite columnist wrote that the 1989 Orioles would make Baltimore baseball fans forget the horrors of 1987 and 1988 at Memorial Stadium . . . . that the club (1) would gain respect from the rest of the American League, and (2) would improve by at least 16 games over the embarrassing 54-107 record at last season's end.

It seems appropriate to point out here that, despite claims by the Baltimore media that *nobody* could foresee this, the *AFRO did!*

No real risk

Frankly, going into print with such a prediction *only four months* after the 1988 disaster, was risky business . . . . But this desk never has been distracted by risk-taking . . . . It has been wrong so frequently that it enjoys sending invitations to the post-guess kidders.

Actually, predictions of improvement were not as risky as they appear . . . . After 1987-88, there was no place to go in the standings but up.

Sharing

The caption here says merely "Frank" . . . . But with space allowed, it should read "Frank & Rollie," for they both deserve to share any kudos offered.

It was Roland Hemond who master-minded the meshing of rejuvenated veterans and brash, young *arrogants* who day after day take the field with chins poked out and eyes saying "dare-ya!"

These Birds reflect the bulldog (bad metaphor) tenacity of the Hemond-Robinson team . . . . and it is just what was needed . . . . Since their championship season of 1983, the Orioles had lost 346 games . . . . Someone had to stop the bleeding . . . . Rollie applied the tourniquet and Frank began the transfusion.

Most honored

With things going as they are, it could be that Robinson will emerge in 1989 as the most decorated man in baseball history . . . . Not *one of the most,* but *the most.*

The multiple honors already acquired include:

(1) the only player in the annals of the sport to capture MVP awards in both leagues (National '61) and American '66);

(2) inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame at Cooperstown, N.Y. ('82);

(3) first black to be named manager of a major league team (Cleveland '75);

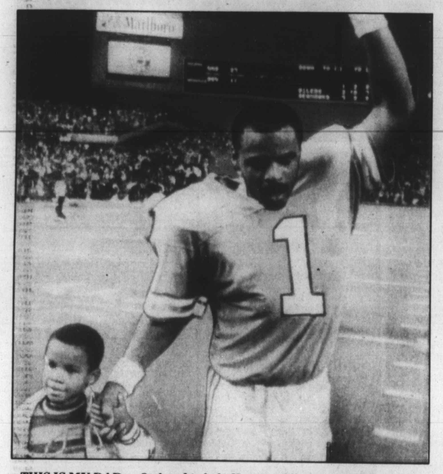
(4) among first blacks selected for a baseball front office (O's VP '86).

Add to these another distinction that could be forthcoming: Frank Robinson, manager of the year.

Notable quotable

Washington Bullets General Manager Bob Ferry on retiring Kareem Abdul-Jabbar of the Los Angeles Lakers:

"We were never afraid of him. He put his pants on the same as we do, except four feet higher."



THIS IS MY DAD — On hand to help Houston Oilers QB Warren Moon celebrate his multi-million-dollar contract in January was son Joshua, 6.

SPORTS

One for father

There's a Smile Week and a Prune Week,
And we're very glad to say
That though Father gets no June Week
He at least gets one whole day.

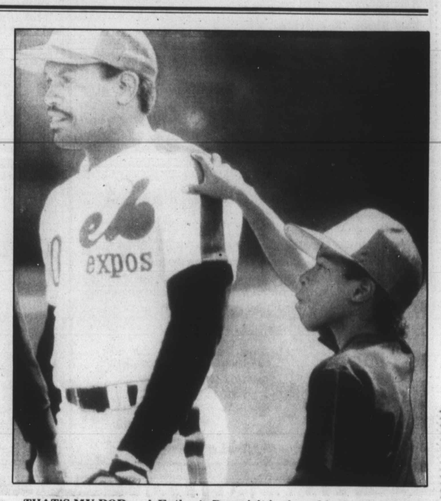
Now for once he's prince, not peasant,
And the worm, for once, has turned.
He may even get a present
With the money he has earned.

Now the wife and son and daughter
Shop through stores and peer at shelves,
Buying something nice for Father,
Something nicer for themselves.

And let's hope these kindly mamas
And their breed will get the guy
Shoes or slacks or silk pajamas
Or a shirt or shorts or tie,

Or a hat, if he should glance up
And be blinded by the sun,
Or a belt to keep his pants up
When the fellow's on the run.

For so threadbare his apparel
Even with his day of clover,
He can't discard his barrel
'Cause the day will soon be over.



THAT'S MY POP — A Father's Day visit is shared by Montreal Expos outfielder Tim Raines and proud 9-year-old Tim, Jr.

The fight: surprise but no surprise

The Monday night bout between Sugar Ray Leonard and Thomas Hearns turned out to be a surprise on one hand, and no surprise on the other.

In the first place, it was a well-contested battle between two relatively adept foes. Their legitimacy had been widely questioned. Both answered the question.

It was no surprise, however, at the end. Skeptics remained convinced that, whatever the outcome, there would be a setup for yet another rematch.

As for the actual fight, Hearns answered all the questions hanging over his head, and raised some questions about Leonard.

In the view of many, Sugar Ray should be happy with the draw decision.

Hearns proved he had enough punching power and a good enough chin to stand up to and knock down Leonard in their 12-round draw.

Does Leonard still have either power or a chin?

After going down twice against Hearns, Leonard has been decked four times in his last four fights. Kevin Howard dropped him in 1984 and Donny Lalonde did it last year. Leonard came back to stop both of them, and had Hearns holding on in the final round.

But he went through his first 32 bouts without going down. Whether he wants to admit it or not, Leonard is slipping at 33.

"All of a sudden Thomas Hearns is a greater fighter than was expected," Leonard said. "The legs were there, his chin was there. All the attributes that you said were not there, I think you should apologize to Tommy."

The "you" Leonard addressed were those who thought Hearns was shot at age 30. Of course, Leonard forgot he said in January, "Tommy is shot." He had that notion knocked out of him by Hearns.

Still, it was only a year ago that Hearns was knocked out by Iran Barkley. In November, he was dropped by James Kinchen and lucky to win a decision. Hearns decked neither Barkley nor Kinchen, yet put Leonard down with right hands in the third and 11th rounds Monday night.

Leonard spoke the same way after his ninth-round knockout against Lalonde last November: instead of admitting he was slipping, he claimed Lalonde was underrated.

— —

Now it appears Leonard has gone back a long way since he stunned the boxing world by winning a 12-round decision over Marvin Hagler in 1987. His speed, power, and chin are deteriorating. Only his champion's heart keeps him going.

"This man came back," Hearns said. "He showed me he has heart. I didn't think he had such a big heart.

"I answered a lot of critics' questions. I think I answered this question too, about the chin . . . about the old legs. They are still in working condition."

TAKE ONE AND GIVE ONE — That was the way things went Monday night in Las Vegas when Sugar Ray Leonard and Thomas Hearns fought to a 12-round draw in their rematch of a 1981 battle in the same ring. In left panel here, Leonard bounces a left hook over the ear of Hearns in an eleventh-round exchange. Moments later, (right) Thomas stings Sugar Ray with a jab to the chin. In the give-and-take skirmish that subsequently was ruled a draw by officials, Leonard landed 232 punches to Hearns's 221, but the latter held the advantage in jabs, 121-80, and registered the fight's only knockdowns, two.

Down the road of growing up

I remember this guy fondly; he's my Dad

I remember —

How he taught me to watch a hot ground ball into my glove so I wouldn't catch so many with my nose.

I remember —

Chicago — When he was on loan to the Defender — my every Wednesday Jitney ride to his office, where we departed for Riverview Amusement Park where I enjoyed my two greatest loves, a ride on the Ferris Wheel and a speed boat excursion on Lake Michigan.

I remember —

His trek through a westbound train out of Chicago enroute to Tucson, Ariz., looking for his errant 10-year-old, only to find me in the club car with Mickey Vernon and others of the Cleveland Indians baseball team.

I remember —

His surprise as he exited a NY subway and noticed his son was still on the train and his further surprise as he waited for the next train to go in pursuit of the youngster to hear "Hey Dad" from the other side of the track, as the youth had gotten off at the next station and returned on the next train.

I remember —

Getting lost became a way of life for him during my four summers at camp. He averaged three trips a month for four straight summers and never came the same way twice.

I remember —

His patience as the youth — a young man now — stood on the tee of a 215-yard par 3 golf hole over water, and emptied his bag trying to negotiate the troublesome hazzard.

I remember —

His suggestion that since my golf skills had grown and his had diminished that I might want to pass on our weekly matches and play with some of my friends who might give me a better game, and his smile when I said I am playing with my best friend now.

I remember —

His joy at the realization that as the father-son relationship grew apart the friendship grew stronger.

I remember —

Our daily calls when I pick up the phone in my office and hear him say, "How's my favorite son" (as though he would shake me up by implying that there are others).

Happy Father's Day, Sam.