

DENVER CITY COUNCIL



Proclamation No. 25-0164

Honoring Denver's Role in Negro Baseball League History and Its Connection to Denver Historic Five Points

WHEREAS, Denver, Colorado, holds a significant place in the history of professional baseball, being the first location in the United States where high-level professional baseball was played on an integrated field, showcasing the talent of both white and Black teams; and

WHEREAS, during the 1920s and 1930s, professional baseball opportunities for fans in the western United States were limited, inspiring the Denver Post to organize a landmark tournament known as "The Little World Series of the West," offering substantial prize money and drawing some of the finest baseball talent from across the nation; and

WHEREAS, in 1934, Charles "Poss" Parsons, sports editor of the Denver Post, demonstrated bold leadership and vision by inviting Negro League teams to participate in the tournament, despite the challenges posed by the racial climate of the time, when Colorado's government was significantly influenced by the Ku Klux Klan; and

WHEREAS, the inclusion of Negro League All-Stars such as Satchel Paige, Josh Gibson, Buck Leonard, and Cool Papa Bell not only elevated the quality of competition but also represented a courageous step toward integration in sports, inspiring progress amidst systemic racial barriers; and

WHEREAS, these All-Star players stayed at The Rossonian Hotel in Five Points, a historic neighborhood known as the cultural heart of Denver's Black community, where they enjoyed the vibrant jazz scene and nightlife by night, while making a name for themselves by winning baseball games by day and playing in front of sportswriters from across the country; and

WHEREAS, Denver's all-Black team, The White Elephants, sponsored by businessman A.H.W. Ross, played for 21 years representing Five Points, whose legacy of excellence, resilience, and cultural pride during an era of segregation and discrimination continues to inspire future generations; and

WHEREAS, the African American Heritage Calendar highlighted important historic moments within the African American community including the impact of the Negro Leagues in Denver; and

WHEREAS, the African American Heritage Calendar was produced and distributed free of charge since 1980 until the early 2000's, serving as an important cultural and historical resource; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Walter Wedgeworth and Mr. Moses Brewer played a pivotal role in the distribution of the African American Heritage Calendar, ensuring that this valuable cultural and historical resource reached communities far and wide, educating and inspiring generations to come; and

WHEREAS, the African American Heritage Calendar was widely recognized for its excellence, winning 17 Communications Excellence in Black Advertising (CEBA) awards and receiving national recognition, including a feature on the Today Show; and

WHEREAS, these initiatives exemplify a dedication to education, cultural preservation, and the recognition of African American achievements in history, sports, and beyond; and

WHEREAS, the calendar's impact grew significantly, expanding from its original 3,000 copies distributed across metro Denver to an impressive 90,000 calendars shipped nationwide each year; and



WHEREAS, building on Denver’s reputation as a champion for both baseball and civil rights; In 2021, Major League Baseball moved the All-Star Game out of Atlanta to Denver in response to a Georgia law that many believed would make it more difficult for minorities, particularly African Americans, to vote; and

WHEREAS, the Five Points Business Improvement District and Historic Five Points neighborhood commemorated the 2021 Denver All-Star weekend by displaying banners of Negro League players at the historic Sonny Lawson Park ballfield.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE DENVER CITY COUNCIL:

Section 1. That the Denver City Council recognize and honor the outstanding contributions of Mr. Moses Brewer and Mr. Walter Wedgeworth for their tireless efforts in distributing the African American Heritage Calendar, preserving history, commemorating Five Points’ role in the Negro Leagues, and fostering cultural awareness within all of our communities.

Section 2. That the Clerk and Recorder of the City and County of Denver shall affix the seal of the City and County of Denver to this proclamation and that a copy be transmitted to the Honorable Elbra Wedgeworth and to the Denver Historic Five Points Business Improvement District.

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL February 10, 2025

PRESIDENT

