

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 1997

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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1081

Sponsors: Senators Shaw of Cumberland, Cooper; Albertson, Allran, Ballantine, Blust, Carpenter, Carrington, Clark, Cochrane, Dalton, Dannelly, East, Forrester, Foxx, Garwood, Gulley, Hoyle, Jenkins, Kerr, Kincaid, Kinnaird, Ledbetter, Lucas, Martin of Pitt, Martin of Guilford, McDaniel, Page, Phillips, Rand, Rucho, Shaw of Guilford, Warren, Webster, Weinstein, Wellons, and Winner.

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate.

June 5, 1997

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

9 Whereas, Buck Leonard was always a fan favorite; and

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

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

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

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

20 Whereas, Buck Leonard continues to reside in Rocky Mount;

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

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

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

28 Section 3. This resolution is effective upon ratification.