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MAMIE "PEANUT" JOHNSON, A STRONG RIGHT ARM

Date:

Fri, 1935-09-27

Mamie Johnson was born on this date in 1935. She was an African American baseball player. "Peanut" Johnson was one of three women, and the first female pitcher, to play in the Negro Leagues.

She was born in Ridgeway, S.C., the daughter of Gentry Harrison and Della Belton Havelow. When she was only seven years old, she would play baseball every day. When she left South Carolina to pursue her college education in 1943, she refused to let anyone or anything interfere with her love of playing baseball. She practiced while pursuing her studies at New York University.

She played with the Alexandria All-Stars, St. Cyprians, and other semi-pro baseball teams around the Washington, D.C. In 1953, at the age of 19, she became a member of the Indianapolis Clowns baseball club, and pitched for three years. That year, 1953, Johnson finished with an 11-3 record. In 1954, she went 10-1, and in 1955, she finished 12-4. She hit between .252 and .284 in each season. When she wasn't pitching, she played second base. During her tenure, she won 33 games and lost 8 games. Her batting average ranged from .262 to .284. Of this opportunity, she exclaimed, "Just to know that you were among some of the best male ball players that ever picked up the bat, made all of my baseball moments great moments."

For two seasons as a member of the Clowns, Johnson was a teammate of future home run leader Hank Aaron. She also credits her pitching success to a lesson she learned from "Satchel" Paige who taught Johnson to throw her curve ball. "He just showed me how to grip the ball to keep from throwing my arm away, 'cause I was so little."

When she was 17 years old, Ms. Johnson was rejected as a team member by the White Female Baseball League. This unfair treatment and prejudice became her own victory. She proclaimed, "If I had played with white girls, I would have been just another player, but now I am somebody who has done something that no other woman has done." The Women's Professional Baseball League had inspired the movie "A League of Their Own."

She is the subject of the book, "A Strong Right Arm," describing her life growing up and the obstacles to her becoming a professional Negro League baseball player.

She was a licensed nurse for 30 years after her baseball playing days. She runs the Negro League's Baseball Shops in Bowie, Md., which specializes in hats, memorabilia, and clothes honoring Negro League stars.

Reference:

The Negro Baseball Leagues: A Photographic History
By Phil Dixon with Patrick J. Hannigan
Copyright 1992, Jed Clauss and Joanna Paulsen
Ameron House Publishing
ISBN 0-88488-0425-2

[To become a Professional Athlete](#)

Person / name:

Johnson, Mamie

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Mamie Johnson

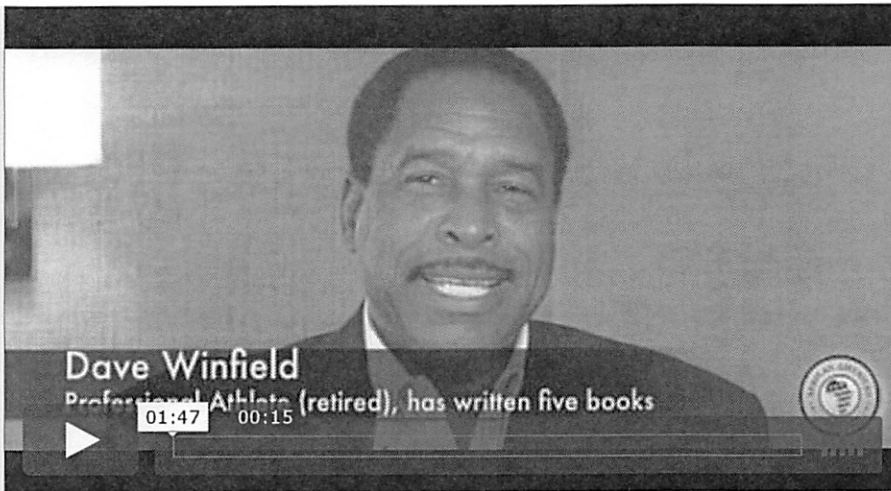
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