

Editorials

Jackie Robinson

Sports, albeit at times reluctantly, has often led the way for minority people to gain equality in the United States. For instance, earlier this month in Cooperstown, two black men were among four inductees to baseball's Hall of Fame.



Both, Henry Aaron and Frank Robinson, merited the award because of their personal accomplishments. Yet as they were honored it was impossible not to dwell on the memory of the man who most directly made it possible for those two players to receive their just recognition.

So it is fitting that the Postal Service has issued a

stamp in honor of Jackie Robinson, the player who broke baseball's color barrier only some 30 years ago. Of course, he couldn't do so single-handedly and thank God some whites shared in the accomplishment, most notably Branch Rickey of the Brooklyn Dodgers who defied the other team owners to end once and for all time baseball's repugnant caste system.

Anyone who follows baseball even from a distance knows that Jackie Robinson justified Rickey's confidence in him. During the years when he was establishing himself in the public mind, he withstood the taunts, jibes and insults from other players despite his personal fiery temperament. He endured intolerance among his own team members. The nation owes Rickey a debt of gratitude not only for his courage but also for his sense in choosing for this chore a man with more intelligence than most of his peers.

The picture of Robinson chosen for the stamp shows him in his early days as a Dodger. One look at the youthful countenance, tugs at the heart strings of

anyone who appreciates "the boys of summer." An inset shows one of Robinson's dazzling steals of home.

The whole scenario brings to mind one bitter and irreversible fact and that is how bigotry robs us all. Because of racial prejudice, the huge majority of baseball fans in this country never got to see the legendary greats of "the Negro leagues." The Josh Gibsons are passed on to history only through word of mouth and shoddily-kept records. Americans only got to know Leroy Satchel Paige late in his career as a 40-some-odd-year-old rookie. Bias injures the bigot more than the object of his hatred.

Fortunately, however, baseball aficionados did get to enjoy the career of Jackie Robinson, from his UCLA days right up to the Hall of Fame. And because of him and Rickey, fans also were treated to Larry Doby, Roy Campanella, Harry Suitcase Simpson, Henry Aaron and hundreds of other black stars who might have wasted their careers in twilight games in small parks. Just to think of the loss is shattering.

and Opinions

Conable Wrong On Tax Credit

Editor:

Barber Conable, representative from the 35th Congressional District, completely misunderstands President Reagan's tuition tax credit legislation. This was clear when the executive director of Citizens for Educational Freedom and I discussed the matter with him in Washington recently.

Conable's misinformation is not surprising, since fundamental errors with respect to the funding of education are common among parish councils, parish boards of education and diocesan leaders. The general problem can be stated in one sentence: Those Catholics, Protestants and Jews who send their children to public schools (PUSCS) have been, and are, ripping off those Jews, Protestants and Catholics who send their children to parochial schools (PARSCS). The PUSCS have, for many decades, been getting a free ride — as far as educational expenses are concerned — at the expense of the PARSCS. This is easy to show, but not within the limitations of a letter to the editor.

In general, Catholic PUSCS have no understanding of the problem — an ignorance confirmed by lack of educational effort at the pastoral, and especially at the diocesan, level. When the vote of New York's ConCon election was analyzed, for example, it was found that the Catholics of the borough of Queens, New York City, had voted against the proposed new constitution for the states on the grounds that they were happy with the public schools and believed that a vote for the new constitution would cause their taxes to rise. Instead of speaking against this injustice, the state bishops promptly went to sleep.

President Reagan is the first president who has lived up to his campaign promises to give some measure of tax relief to the PARSCS — those parents who follow their conscience and the dictates of sound educational philosophy by choosing a God-centered school, where possible.

That the president has done this when the budget has been cut for various desirable social

measures has enabled the public school establishment to divert attention from the issue. The National Education Association, e.g., is spending about \$15 million to defeat the tuition tax credit proposal.

The issue is not, as Mr. Conable seems to think, that a new constituency for spending would be created, but that an end is being sought to a long-standing injustice with respect to education taxes. The PARSCS are currently subsidizing the PUSCS to the tune of about \$8 billion per year nationwide. Tuition tax credits give some measure of relief, long overdue.

It is essential that the constituents of all congressmen enlighten them promptly on this point. Tuition tax credits NOW!

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Teen: Abortion Is Murder

Editor:

I am 14 years old and because I have looked up information and we have had speakers come to school. I have learned much about abortion, infanticide and euthanasia. I believe all are wrong and are to be considered murder. It is hard for me to believe that intelligent adults think that a fetus is not human until it is nine months old, when it is born. Everyone should realize that a woman cannot bear a human being unless the fetus is human. People should also realize that a woman cannot carry anything but a human fetus.

Pro-abortionists have said to me that is okay to have an abortion because the baby can feel no pain until it is born. These people are wrong in two ways. First, they are approving of one type of murder by saying it is okay to kill a fetus because it won't feel anything. Then, they are also wrong because a fetus can feel pain from at least six weeks.

We have laws against murder and special officers to handle murder cases, but

Courier Feedback
London Official Replies to Letter

Editor's Note: The Courier-Journal early this year ran a letter asking readers to contact the British home secretary regarding the imprisoned Father Patrick Fell. Margaret K. Hendry of Rochester did so and received this reply:

I have been asked to reply to your letter of 8 February to the home secretary about Father Patrick Fell.

I am afraid it is not our practice to discuss the treatment of an individual prisoner with anyone other than a close relative or legal or parliamentary representative. However, I can assure you that there is no foundation in the allegation that Father Fell has been maltreated in prison. His treatment, in common with all other prisoners, has been strictly in accordance with the statutory Prison Rules, and his general health is good.

Prior to 1 December 1981 and the introduction of revised arrangements for handling prisoners' correspondence, mail from persons not approved to correspond with Father Fell was withheld. This restriction no longer applies.

A prisoner serving a determinate sentence of more than 5 days may, on the grounds of his industry and good conduct, be granted remission not exceeding one third of the actual term of his imprisonment. In 1976, Father Fell was ordered to forfeit 570 days remissions following his part in a very serious disciplinary offense at the prison in which he was then located.

There is statutory provision, however, for disciplinary awards to be remitted or mitigated and one of the ways in which these powers are used is to restore lost remission in cases where an inmate's behaviour has shown a significant improvement over a considerable period suggesting

where are the laws and officers to protect the unborn, the infants and the elderly? Since when do we have the right to take a life because that life is an inconvenience?

Now we have the chance to correct the error made by the Supreme Court on Jan. 22, 1973, by asking our legislators to vote FOR the Hatch

that he has undergone a genuine change of attitude which is likely to be sustained.

Since the imposition of the reward a total of 120 days remission have been restored to him and Father Fell's current date of release is 9 July 1982. (Editor's Note: the letter was written before July 9 so it is unknown if Father Fell has been released.)

On 1 November 1973, at Birmingham Crown Court, Father Fell was convicted of conspiracy to commit arson, conspiracy to commit criminal damage and of taking part in the management of an association (the IRA) contrary to section 2 (i) (b) of the Public Order Act 1956. A charge of conspiracy to cause an explosion was ordered by the judge to be left on the file. Father Fell was sentenced to a total of 12 years' imprisonment. He subsequently exercised his right to seek leave to appeal against sentence but his appeal was refused by the full Court of Appeal on 20 June 1974.

As you will appreciate, it was for the jury, who were able to see and hear the witnesses giving their evidence, to decide whether the charges against Father Fell were proved or not. On conviction, the sentence to be imposed in a particular case is, within the limits provided by law and subject to the right of appeal, which Father Fell exercised, a matter for the Court to decide. The Home Secretary cannot recommend interference with a sentence which the Court, in the full knowledge of all the circumstances which were before the court on each occasion; newspapers are not normally able to report fully all the factors which the court takes into consideration in reaching its decision in a particular case.

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Human Life Amendment.

By the time I am 21, I hope I haven't been totally corrupted by the so-called "perfect examples" some adults are setting.

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Sex Education
Parental Duty

Editor:

I would like to list some helpful information for Catholic parents who may have children in the local public or private schools regarding the so-called sex education and their "inalienable" rights as parents.

The National Federation of Catholic Physicians Guild affirms that "a child learns about sex primarily by responding effectively to his parents' effective behavior; and therefore healthy sexuality cannot be taught in the classroom, it cannot be taught by strangers, it cannot be taught apart from the family... The National Federation of Catholic Physicians Guild supports sex education for parents. We oppose distinct, formal programs of sex education for children as inherently puritanical, as a damaging invasion of the privacy of children, and as a usurpation of the rights of parents."

Pope John Paul II has recently stated: "Sex education, which is a basic right and duty of parents, must always be carried out under their attentive guidance whether at home or in educational centers chosen and controlled by them... In this regard (sex education), the Church reaffirms the law of subsidiarity, which the school is bound to observe when it cooperates in sex education, by entering into the same spirit that animates the

parents. In this context education for chastity is absolutely essential... the Church is firmly opposed to an often widespread form of imparting sex information dissociated from moral principles... If ideologies opposed to the Christian Faith are taught in the schools, the family must join with other families, if possible through family associations, and with all its strength and with wisdom help the young not to depart from the Faith... those in society who are in charge of schools must never forget that the parents have been appointed by God Himself as the first and principal educators of their children and that their right is completely inalienable." (Apostolic Exhortation, "Familiaris Consortio," Part III, issued on the Feast of Christ the King, Nov. 22, 1981)

Thus there is no power on earth that can force parents to have their children be taught any sex education. If any such power or authority attempts this, the parents have the God-given right to rise up and boldly reassert their parental authority. I urge all parents to be absolutely sure that their parental rights have not been usurped. If they have not been, better check again, because it would indeed be unique.

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