



## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

### NEWS RELEASE

PO BOX 004  
CONTACT: Jayne O'Connor  
Gene Herman  
(609) 777-2600

TRENTON, NJ 08625  
RELEASE: February 25, 1998



---

## GOV. CHRISTIE WHITMAN DEDICATES JACKIE ROBINSON STATUE; SIGNS PROCLAMATION DESIGNATING FEBRUARY AS AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

Stating that the baseball Hall of Fame member's great courage and leadership inspired millions of Americans, Gov. Christie Whitman today helped dedicate a 12-foot tall bronze statue of Jackie Robinson at the Journal Square PATH Station in Jersey City. Robinson broke the color barrier in organized baseball while playing for the Montreal Royals, a minor league affiliate of the Brooklyn Dodgers, against the Jersey City Giants team in a game at Roosevelt Stadium, Jersey City, on April 18, 1946.

Also at the ceremony, the Governor signed a proclamation marking February as African-American History Month in New Jersey.

"Jackie Robinson energized the civil rights movement," Gov. Whitman said. "And his life brought us closer to the day Martin Luther King envisioned, when every person would be judged by the content of their character, not the color of their skin."

The fund-raising effort for the statue was spearheaded by the New Jersey Sports History Commission in the State Department of Commerce and Economic Development, under the auspices of the Jackie Robinson Foundation. Gov. Whitman created the Commission by an executive order in 1995. The fund-raising effort was co- chaired by Lewis M. Eisenberg, President of Granite Capital of New York City and Chairman of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and Jerry Greco, vice president of First Union Bank of Newark.

"New Jersey -- as one family with many faces -- honors Jackie Robinson's Hall of Fame heroism today with this statue," the Governor said.

Gov. Whitman pointed out the first games of organized baseball, professional basketball and college football were all played in New Jersey.

"In time, we all came to appreciate the way Jackie Robinson came through," Gov. Whitman said. "He broke the color barrier in our national pastime with grace, dignity and awesome talent."

Also participating in the dedication ceremony were Rachel Robinson, widow of the Hall of Fame player; Leonard S. Coleman, Jr., President of the National League of Professional Baseball Clubs and Chair of the Jackie Robinson Foundation, and Bret Schundler, Mayor, Jersey City.

The statue dedication was the culmination of the 50th Anniversary celebration of Jackie Robinson breaking the color barrier in major league baseball in 1947.

The Robinson statue was designed by Susan Wagner, the artist who created the Roberto Clemente memorial statue at Three Rivers Stadium in Pittsburgh. The finished statue is cast in one- quarter inch thick Everdur bronze and consists of 1,500 pounds of bronze reinforced with 1,000 pounds of stainless steel armature and mounting plate. Sponsors include the City of Jersey City; Lewis M. Eisenberg Family; First Union Foundation; Jeremy Jacobs, of Delaware North; John J. McMullen, of Norton Lilly; James S. Regan, Managing General Partner of Harbourton Enterprises, Princeton, and the Schumann Fund for New Jersey.

####