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Negro League Player Remembered

Artie Wilson was one of the best hitters in baseball

His Lord said unto him, "Well done, good and faithful servant" and Arthur "Artie" Lee Wilson, 90, answered the call 4:29 a.m. on Sunday, Oct. 31, 2010 in Portland.

Artie Wilson was born on Oct. 28, 1920 to Martha Wilson and Lonnie Hicks in Springfield, Ala. He attended school in Tarrant City, Ala. and after high school graduation went to work for the American Cast and Iron Pipe Company in Birmingham. While working there he joined the company's baseball team. What a fortuitous opportunity the simple act of joining the company team turned in to.

While working at American Cast and Iron k Artie met and married Miss Tommie Glenn in 1938 and to this union was born one daughter, Jean Arthur.

In 1942, after a successful baseball career in the Birmingham Industrial League, he was asked to join the Birmingham Black Barons of the Negro American League and played with them until the big leagues came calling.

Wilson played for the Birmingham Black Barons of the Negro American League from 1942 to 1948. He was considered the league's best shortstop and was named the starting shortstop of the league All-Star team four times from 1944 to 1948. During his time with the Barons, the team won the league championship three times and advanced to play in the Negro League World Series.

In the 1948 regular season, Wilson batted .402, and is credited as being the last player in a professional league to bat over .400. In 1948 Wilson mentored a young Willie Mays, who was just breaking into baseball while playing on the Barons.

Following the 1948 Negro World Series, Wilson played for the Mayaguez Indians of the Puerto Rican Professional Baseball League, leading them to their first championship title in 1949.

While in Puerto Rico, the New York Yankees purchased Wilson's contract and he was assigned to their Newark Bears minor league team. However, the Cleveland Indians also wanted to sign Wilson to a major league contract of which he agreed to. The dispute between the Yankees and the Indians for the talents of Artie Wilson was eventually settled by then commissioner Happy Chandler who voided the Cleveland Indians deal with Wilson and awarded his rights to the New York Yankees.

Shortly thereafter on May 17, 1949, the Yankees sold his contract to the Oakland Oaks of the Pacific Coast League. He then became the first Black player of the Oakland Oaks and roommate of future major league player and manager Billy Martin. With Oakland, Wilson won the PCL batting title with a .348 average and also led the league in stolen bases with 47. In 1950, he led the PCL in runs with 168 and hits with 264, helping the Oaks to the 1950 PCL championship.

Wilson's accomplishments were noticed by another New York major league team, and he was called up by the New York Giants for the 1951 season. Not wanting to share playing time, he soon returned to the Pacific Coast League to play again for the Oaks. During his PCL career, he also played for the Seattle Rainiers, the Sacramento Solons and the Portland Beavers, retiring from baseball in 1962 while playing for

along with his beloved in-laws, D. Frank and Annie W. Daniels, settled in Portland.

As a Portlander for over 55 years, Artie was involved in his community. He was an active member of the Gladstone/Oak Grove Kiwanis, and served as a trustee, choir member and Sunday School volunteer at Allen Temple CME. But all of his community work was secondary to his family. Oh how he loved his children and grandchildren and supported their every activity - and there were many! He also had a special place in his heart for all young people. He was a great encourager and mentor for many young men in the Portland area.

After retiring from the automotive business, Artie did what he enjoyed the most - sports. If he was not on the golf course, he could be found watching whatever sporting event he could find.

Artie leaves to cherish his memory, his wife Dorothy F.; daughters Jean Walden (Al) of Youngstown, Ohio and Zoe Wilson Price (Jesse) of Forsyth, Ill.; son Artie of Honolulu, Hawaii; Grandson Brian C. Walden of Cleveland, Ohio; and granddaughters Danielle L., Chloe N. and Madison N. Wilson of Honolulu; nine great-grandsons; one great-granddaughter; cousins Monique Manley of Beaverton; Mary Mahan, Lucy Hood, Linda Manley, Brenda Smith, the Rev. Gary Robinson, Larry Robinson, Rosie M. Pinckney, Elaine Johnson, and Betty Scott all of Birmingham, Ala.; Carolyn Allen of Taylor, Mich.; and a host of Godchildren, family, friends and fans.

He was preceded in death by his parents; first wife; uncle and aunt, Richard and Virginia Wilson (known as Uncle Son and Aunt Love); and beloved in-laws, D. Frank and Annie W. Daniels.

A Celebration of Life service will begin at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 17 at Mt. Olivet Baptist Church, 8501 N. Chautauqua Blvd., with Dr. Leroy Haines officiating. The family is being served by Zellers Chapel of the Roses.

In lieu of flowers, make donations to the Alzheimer's Association, the American Heart Association or Housecall Providers, Inc.

The family of Artie Wilson would like to extend their heartfelt thanks to Housecall Providers, Inc.; Hawthorne Gardens Senior Living; Odyssey Hospice; and LaVonne Rice for their love and compassion during the final weeks of his life. A very special thank you to Nurse Becky Parker for her presence and comfort during his final hours.

Please express your condolences and memories to the family of Artie Wilson by visiting zellerchapeloftheroses.com.



Artie Wilson

Hodge Comprehensive Counseling Service

Portland Congress Center

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