SHORT TITLE: Honoring the memory of Jackie Robinson; recognizing him as an American hero; directing distribution.

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

1st Session of the 46th Legislature (1997)

SENATE CONCURRENT
RESOLUTION NO. 9

By: Taylor of the Senate

and

Benson of the House

AS INTRODUCED

A Concurrent Resolution honoring the memory of Jackie Robinson; recognizing Jackie Robinson as an American hero; and directing distribution.

WHEREAS, Jack "Jackie" Roosevelt Robinson was born January 31, 1919, in Cairo, Georgia, the youngest son of sharecroppers Jerry and Mallie McGriff Robinson. The family subsequently moved to Pasadena, California. Jackie Robinson's athletic abilities allowed him to excel at track, baseball, football, basketball and tennis at Muir Technical High School and Pasadena Junior College. At the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), Robinson was the first athlete to win varsity letters in four sports--baseball, basketball, football and track. In 1941 he was named to the All-American football team; and

WHEREAS, after a brief stint playing professional football, Jackie Robinson enlisted in the United States Army in 1942. Robinson was commissioned as a second lieutenant but his opposition to racial discrimination by refusing to sit in the black section of a military bus in Fort Hood, Texas, led to a court martial. He was acquitted and was honorably discharged in 1944; and

WHEREAS, after military service, Jackie Robinson played with the Kansas City Monarchs in a segregated baseball league. In 1946, at the urging of Branch Rickey, Jackie Robinson signed a contract with the Brooklyn Dodgers. On April 15, 1947, he played first base with

the Dodgers despite controversy, insults, hate mail, and death threats, thus becoming the first black to play professional baseball in the modern major leagues. Robinson won the Rookie of the Year honors by batting .297, leading the league with 29 stolen bases as well as helping the Dodgers win the National League pennant. The Dodgers celebrated with a "Jackie Robinson Day" while sports writers named him the "Black Meteor"; and

WHEREAS, during his major league baseball career, Jackie Robinson continued to play as an intelligent player who refused to be intimidated despite being spiked by base runners, having pitches thrown directly at his head and fellow players refusing to shake his hand. Robinson led the National League in stolen bases in 1949; captured the 1949 batting title with a .342 average; was the National League's Most Valuable Player in 1949; was a National League All-Star from 1949 through 1954; and was a member of the 1955 Dodgers Championship Team; and

WHEREAS, Jackie Robinson was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962, his first year of eligibility. On August 2, 1982, Robinson became the first baseball player to be depicted on a U.S. postage stamp. In 1987, the Rookie of the Year award was renamed after Robinson. When Jackie Robinson died in 1972, he was a national celebrity, known and honored by all; and

WHEREAS, major league baseball officials have announced that the 1997 baseball season will be dedicated to the late Jackie Robinson in honor of the 50th anniversary of his breaking the color barrier in major league baseball. The sport will donate $1,000,000.00 to the Jackie Robinson Foundation, established after his death by his widow, Rachel, to provide scholarships for deserving minority students. Professional baseball players in all 28 teams and major league umpires will wear "Breaking Barriers" arm patches and teams will use balls with commemorative logos in home openers. The U.S. Mint will sell 100,000 gold and 200,000 silver commemorative coins

honoring his athletic and civil rights activities. This year there is a national essay contest for high school students to express their views on how Jackie Robinson changed the game of baseball.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE 1ST SESSION OF THE 46TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN:

THAT the Oklahoma Legislature honors the memory of Jackie Robinson.

THAT the Oklahoma Legislature recognizes Jackie Robinson as an American hero.

THAT a copy of this resolution be distributed to Jackie Robinson's family; the Jackie Robinson Foundation; and the Commissioner's Office of Major League Baseball.

46-1-1285 THC