



News Release

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WESTERN COMMENCEMENT CEREMONIES MAY 13

St. Joseph, Mo. —May 3, 2006—Missouri Western State University will hold its commencement ceremonies at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. May 13 in the M.O. Looney Complex. “Buck” O’Neil, baseball player in the Negro American League in the 1940s, will be the speaker at each ceremony.

Other events on commencement day include a pinning ceremony for nursing graduates at 9 a.m. in the Thompson E. Potter Hall theater, and receptions for graduates and their families following each ceremony on the lawn of the Looney Complex.

Graduates from the following departments will take part in the 11 a.m. ceremony: art, communication studies/theatre, criminal justice/legal studies, education, English/foreign languages/journalism, government/social work/sociology, physical education/recreation, history/philosophy/geography, music, nursing, bachelor of interdisciplinary studies, and bachelor of science in technology 2+2.

Graduates in the 3 p.m. ceremony include: biology, business, chemistry, computer science/mathematics/physics, economics, engineering technology, and psychology.

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O'Neil, chair of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum Board of Directors and member of the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame, played briefly for the Memphis Red Sox in 1937 before joining the Kansas City Monarchs, where he stayed for the remainder of his baseball career. Only a two-year tour with the U.S. Navy interrupted his career.

In 1942, O'Neil led the Monarchs to a Negro American League title, and faced the Homestead Grays in the Negro World Series. Buck hit a .353, as the Monarchs swept the Grays in four games. O'Neil won batting titles in 1940 and 1946 with averages of .345 and .350. He was named to the East-West All-Star Classic in 1942, 1943 and 1949. He also managed the West squad in 1950, 1953, 1954 and 1955.

In 1948, O'Neil became the manager of the Monarchs, managing the team until 1955. The team had league titles in 1948, 1950, 1951 and 1953. In 1956, he was hired by the Chicago Cubs as a scout, and in 1962, he became the first African-American coach in the Major Leagues for the Cubs. After 33 years with the Cubs, he became a scout for the Kansas City Royals in 1988.

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Missouri Western State University is a four-year public institution providing a blend of traditional liberal arts and professional degree programs. The university offers student-centered, high quality instruction that focuses on experience-based learning, community service, and state-of-the-art technology. Western is located in St. Joseph, Mo. and is committed to the educational, economic, cultural and social development of the region it serves.