

John 'Buck' O'Neil: 1911 - 2006

*Negro leagues standout
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SPORTS: SECOND OPINIONS



John "Buck" O'Neil, the charismatic Negro leagues ambassador who barnstormed with Satchel Paige and fell one vote shy of the Hall of Fame, died Friday night. He was 94. Bob Kendrick, marketing director for the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, said O'Neil died at a Kansas City hospital. O'Neil had appeared strong until early August, when he was hospitalized for what was described as "fatigue." He was released a few days later but readmitted Sept. 17. Friends said he had lost his voice along with his strength. No cause of death was immediately given. O'Neil joined the Cubs as a scout in 1956 and became the first

African-American coach in the big leagues in 1962. He stayed in the Cubs organization until 1988, when he returned home to scout for the Royals. Always projecting warmth, wit and a sunny optimism that sometimes seemed surprising for a man who lived in a climate of racial injustice for so long, O'Neil remained remarkably vigorous well into his 90s. A good-hitting, slick-fielding first baseman, he barnstormed with Paige in his youth, twice won a Negro leagues batting title, then became a pennant-winning manager of the Kansas City Monarchs.

Abstract (Document Summary)

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