



Reputed to be the fastest player ever to play in the Negro Leagues, outfielder James “Cool Papa” Bell once stole two bases on a single pitch.

the autumn of their careers.

Nathan credits much of the current interest in the Negro Leagues to the tireless efforts of

Buck O’Neil, a “smooth-fielding first baseman” for the champion Kansas City Monarchs who won the Negro American League batting title in 1946 with a .350 batting average, and whom some may recognize as the folksy interlocutor in Burns’s *Baseball*. Many observers are amazed at O’Neil’s lack of anger over the injustices he and others suffered. Nathan believes that there is more to the story than that. Making a hero of O’Neil, deserved though that status may be, is a way of recasting history as a story of individual struggle and minimizing “a national disgrace.” There’s a bit of an edge even to O’Neil’s niceness. At Satchel Paige’s funeral, in 1982, O’Neil remarked that “everyone was saying, ‘isn’t it a shame Satchel didn’t play with all the great athletes of the major leagues?’ But who’s to say he wasn’t, playing with us?”

The Higher Circles

“The Prep-School PC Plague” by Heather Mac Donald, in *City Journal* (Spring 2002), Manhattan Inst., 52 Vanderbilt Ave., 2nd fl., New York, N.Y. 10017.

Within the ivy-covered halls of America’s elite prep schools, such as Exeter and Andover, instructors once instilled in their young charges the high-minded WASP principles of citizenship and patriotism. But now—says Mac Donald, a fellow at the Manhattan Institute and a *City Journal* contributing editor—the emphasis, both in and out of the classroom, is on diversity. All of the top schools employ diversity professionals who specialize in what she calls “multicultural consciousness-raising,” the kind of race- and gender-based teaching that used to be confined to the universities. In the view of Mac Donald, this new prep-

school obsession is “a grievous missed opportunity to create an integrated, color-indifferent society,” and, far from enlightening students about multicultural issues, succeeds only in “creating race-consciousness where none exists.”

This education in differences proceeds whether the students want it or not. Diversity professionals such as Bobby Edwards, dean for community and multicultural development at Andover (also known as Phillips Academy), is incredulous when even “students of color” profess their lives free from racial injustice. Instead of accepting the students’ reported experience,

says Mac Donald, “Edwards chides them: ‘Are you looking at the people following you around in the store?’”

Likewise at Exeter, according to college counselor and dorm adviser Cary Einhaus, “Diversity is absolutely explicit. We talk about it at the dining-room table, at faculty meetings. It’s part of our common language here.” Or, as Mac Donald puts it: “Young people quickly learn that their teachers see an awareness of difference, not commonality, as the highest civic good.” An Indian student at Phillips Academy recounted in the school newspaper how back home in Texas “I was never made to feel that I was any different [from the white students] and the kids never found the need or desire to speak about race relations.”

But at Phillips, her classmates “tend to classify the community into its various racial groups.” All to the good, in the new atmosphere of Phillips: “I have never felt more Indian,” she wrote.

All of the top prep schools actively recruit minorities, despite the fact that black and Hispanic admission test scores

are often lower than those of white and Asian American students. Attempting to empower these students by emphasizing their racial differences is wrong-headed, Mac Donald argues: “A student who is failing trigonometry will be helped by tutoring and hard work,” not by reading books on racial identity.

The race and gender agenda also tends to crowd out traditional learning, Mac Donald says. One English teacher at Exeter told her that “most Exeter graduates have no idea whether Chaucer preceded Yeats.” Literature courses are fractured into “identities,” such as “Gay Voices and Themes in Literature and Film” or “The Voices of Women Writers.”

The private preparatory schools, says Mac Donald, once pulled talented youth “from all classes and all parts of the nation—whom they could fashion into a cadre of informed, public-spirited leaders.” Today, they are in danger of squandering an “unprecedented opportunity: to create an integrated ruling class that will carry us beyond our self-lacerating obsessions with race.”

PRESS & MEDIA

Friendly Fire

“The Civilian Casualty Conundrum” by Lucinda Fleeson, in *American Journalism Review* (Apr. 2002), Univ. of Maryland, 1117 Journalism Bldg., College Park, Md. 20742-7111.

How many civilians did U.S. forces inadvertently kill in the war in Afghanistan? Critics, many eager to show that the number was large—more perhaps than the thousands of Americans killed on September 11—complained that the U.S. news media soft-pedaled civilian deaths and were too slow coming up with a total. Fleeson, a former reporter for *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, is having none of it.

“Obtaining accurate accounts of civilian deaths is one of the most difficult challenges of war reporting,” she writes. “Journalists must weigh conflicting information, exaggerations and lies as they constantly debate: How many sources do we need? How reliable are eyewitnesses, who might be in shock or have political agendas? What good are second-hand accounts?” Compounding the usual

difficulties were Afghanistan’s terrain and “near Stone Age conditions.” Correspondents had to travel in armed convoys and risk encounters with “bandits, warring tribes, land mines and stray bombs.”

Unfazed by the absence of hard data, some American academics used the Internet to gather news accounts from around the world and came up with their own estimates of civilian deaths: 3,767 as of last December 6, said Marc W. Herold, an economist at the University of New Hampshire, Durham. But the studies depended entirely on others’ accounts, including ones that uncritically accepted second-hand reports. Herold, for example, relied on an opinion piece that merely asserted that 400 civilians had been slaughtered and on other reports that repeated unconfirmed Taliban claims. The foreign