

TIME
For **KIDS**

HEROES
of
BLACK
HISTORY

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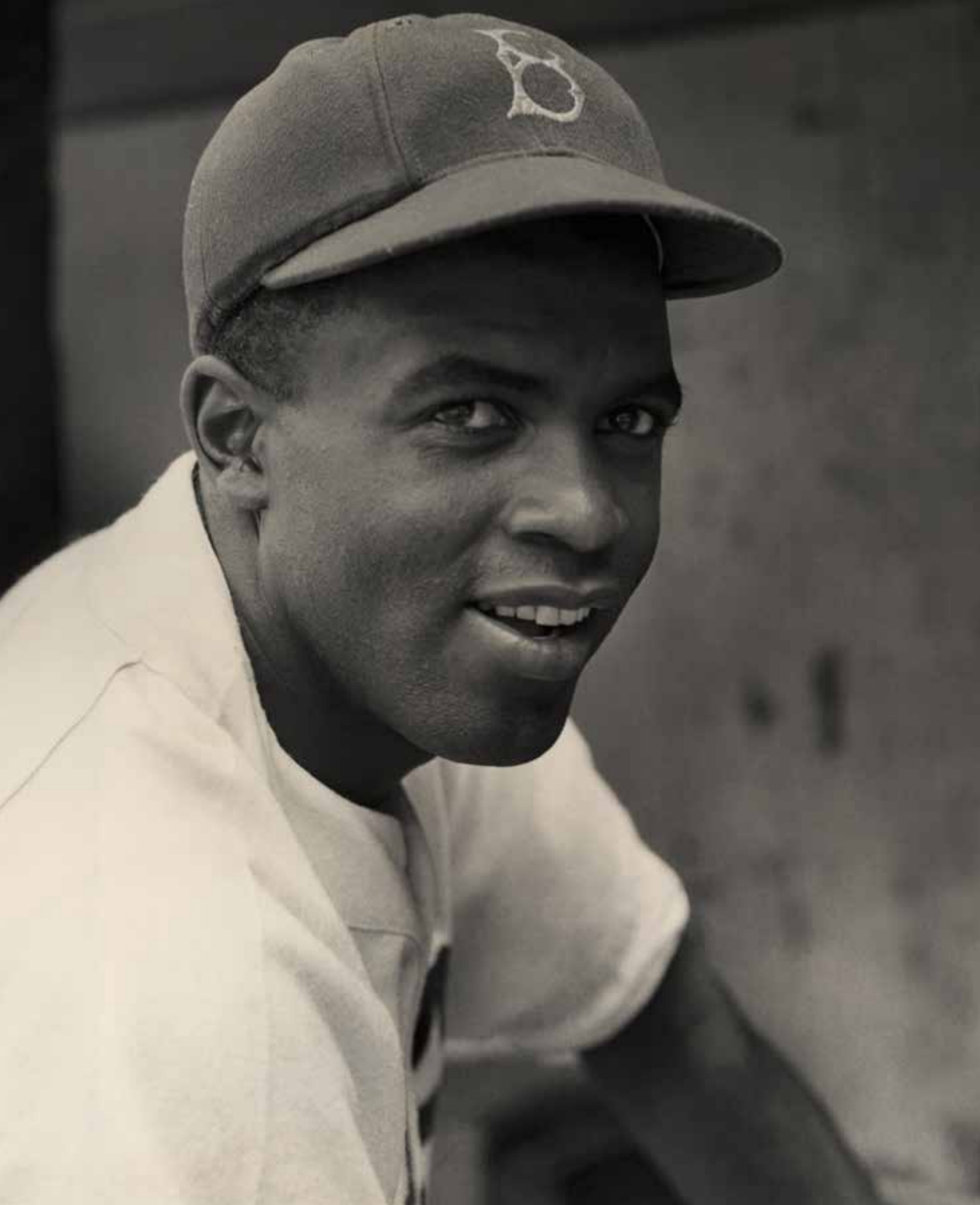
TIME
For **KIDS**

HEROES *of* BLACK HISTORY

Biographies of Four Great Americans

By the Editors of TIME For Kids Magazine
With an Introduction by Charlayne Hunter-Gault





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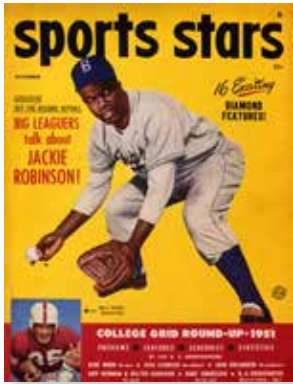
Introduction

It's been a long time since I was a child, but history lessons I learned back then have followed me throughout my life. They helped me navigate places where, initially, the color of my skin kept me out and created challenges. It was history—what I call my “invisible armor”—that enabled me to meet those challenges and realize my dreams.

At my all-black high school in Atlanta, Georgia, my fellow students and I were inspired by many black freedom fighters, including Henry McNeal Turner, a hero from an earlier time for whom our school was named. And one of the heroes in our own time, Rosa Parks, helped inform us as we challenged separate and unequal places in the late 1950s and early 60s. Rosa Parks was the mother of the freedom movement. She helped her “children” in Atlanta and all over the South move it closer to freedom and justice for all.



My armor enabled me to face hostile white mobs who yelled ugly words at me, and the rock thrown through my dormitory window, when I was entering the University of Georgia. That armor was created in part by the history of giants like Harriet Tubman, whose commitment to freedom and justice for all led her on missions far more dangerous than mine.



Hamilton Holmes, the classmate who entered the University of Georgia with me, shared more than a few traits with Jackie Robinson. Hamilton came from an athletic family, and I have no doubt that Jackie Robinson's breakthrough as the first African American to play Major League Baseball was an inspiration to them. Hamilton was an athlete himself, but the lessons passed on to him through greats like Robinson also had an impact on his

demeanor. Even when he was yelled at with harsh, racist words, Hamilton never shouted back or reacted. He was always calm, cool, and collected, and despite the ugly distractions went on to graduate with the distinction of Phi Beta Kappa, the institution's highest academic honor.

It's important to know our history, not just for people who look like me, but for all people who want to be good citizens. For generations—even before the adoption of the Constitution—there have been people who have invested their time and energy in seeing to it that every human being in this country enjoys freedom, justice, and equality.

We can all learn from Barack Obama, who said, when he was running for president the first time, "I stand on the shoulders of giants." He, too, wore the armor his white mother gave him, all the way to the White House. And there were many other white people who helped in our stride toward freedom.



We have indeed taken amazing strides toward realizing the promise of our Constitution, but we all still need to be vigilant. That means staying true to our country's promise, as demonstrated in the examples

of the people whose stories are contained in this book; or, remembering the time when there were challenges to our better selves, or our freedoms, philosopher George Santayana once warned, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

We have a great country, despite its challenges, and it will be up to the generation reading this book to use its lessons to keep it that way—knowing that regardless of race, creed, or color, they, like these Heroes of Black History, are protected by history's armor.

Charlayne Hunter-Gault

2017

In 1961, Charlayne Hunter was one of two black students to enter the all-white University of Georgia. Along with her high school classmate Hamilton Holmes, Charlayne fought, and won, a legal battle to be admitted into a school that had been all white for almost two centuries. Many white students at the university did not want African Americans to attend. Charlayne and Hamilton were frequently harassed by students and even by police. A riot broke out outside Charlayne's first-floor dorm room one night, and someone threw a rock through her window. Charlayne and Hamilton were even suspended from school for a time—"for their own safety," as school officials put it.



Charlayne Hunter (center) and Hamilton Holmes (right center) are mobbed by reporters on the grounds of the University of Georgia, January 1961.

Charlayne—later assuming her married name, Hunter-Gault—went on to become a successful journalist and correspondent, and worked for the *New Yorker* magazine, the *New York Times*, the PBS NewsHour, National Public Radio, and CNN. She has also written three books.