



Former MLB stars to give back at youth all star game during the MLK holiday weekend

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Richmond, VA - Former [Major League Baseball Stars](#), Mookie Wilson, Gary Sheffield, Mike Easler and others have joined forces with the Metropolitan Junior Baseball League's (MJBL) with their 4th Annual All Star Game. The event will be hosted by the City of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida on January 14th - 16th 2012. The games will begin January 14th at Floyd Hull Stadium and Florida Memorial University. MJBL is partnering with Florida Memorial University to feature the 2012 All Star Game that will include three age groups - 12 and under, 16 and under and 19 and under. MJBL is a 46 year old non-profit organization established during the days of segregation when there were very limited opportunities for African-American youngsters to play baseball. In recognition of the Martin Luther King, Jr. legacy and his fight for equality, the games will be held over the MLK holiday. Today, MJBL provides baseball, educational and cultural enrichment opportunities to primarily African American youth across the country with teams in twenty states, Bahamas and Puerto Rico. It has been well documented that there is a significant decline in African American interest and participation in the game of baseball at all levels. Fred Plump, MJBL's national commissioner, from Birmingham Alabama said, "I grew up in Birmingham and experienced civil rights marches organized by Dr. King. There couldn't be a better way to demonstrate our concern for our youth than to have our all star game on his holiday weekend. This will undoubtedly bring attention to MJBL's efforts to reunite our youth to the benefits the game of baseball has to offer".

Sheffield, Easler and Mookie Wilson will be joined by Wilson's son Preston Wilson, Tony Scott, Tom McGraw and former Negro League Player, Ken Free. They will serve as managers for the six all star teams and conduct practices to help fine tune the players fundamentals prior to the games. The coaching staff will bring over a half a century MLB playing experience and numerous years of professional coaching experience. "It disturbs me seeing our youth walking away from the game of baseball. I believe that working with programs like MJBL can help steer our kids back to baseball. It's going to take nurturing, mentoring and teaching them the positive attributes that come from playing the game. The game has taught me life time lessons. I'm thankful that I now have the opportunity to share what I learned with these youth," said Mookie Wilson. The Big Leaguers along with former Florida Memorial President, Dr. Albert E. Smith will then participate in the Bobby Bonds Memorial Symposium that will be held Saturday, January 14th at 2:00 pm on the campus of Florida Memorial University. The symposium is designed to address issues that face youth in African American communities and discuss how baseball and education can be an integral part of the solution to these issues. The symposium topic this year will be: Baseball - Could this be a part of "The Dream"? MJBL's national championship, the Inner City Classic featuring the Black World Series will be held July 31st -Aug 5th in Richmond Virginia. The winners of the Black World Series will win free passes to Kings Dominion amusement park in Doswell Virginia.