

Senate Resolution 106 - Introduced

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 106

BY HATCH, HOGG, MATHIS, DVORSKY, HORN, DEARDEN,
FRAISE, GRONSTAL, KIBBIE, BLACK, McCOY, BEALL,
WILHELM, QUIRMBACH, RAGAN, BOWMAN, SENG,
SCHOENJAHN, BOLKCOM, DOTZLER, DANIELSON, RIELLY,
and JOCHUM

1 A Resolution honoring Art Pennington, an American
2 baseball great.

3 WHEREAS, only rarely does the Senate have the
4 opportunity to celebrate the life and work of an
5 American who still lives among us, a man, not just a
6 memory; and

7 WHEREAS, Arthur D. Pennington now lives quietly
8 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, but 70 years ago, long before
9 Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier, Mr. Pennington
10 was known as "Superman" and was a star of the Negro
11 baseball leagues; and

12 WHEREAS, as a black man, Mr. Pennington was denied
13 an opportunity to play major league baseball, but
14 for almost 20 years, Mr. Pennington played the game
15 throughout the Americas, including Havana, Cuba, and
16 Caracas, Venezuela; and

17 WHEREAS, at 17, Mr. Pennington traveled to Chicago,
18 joining the Chicago American Giants of the Negro
19 league; and

20 WHEREAS, the "Superman" was one of the Negro
21 league's brightest stars and played in the prestigious
22 Negro League East/West All-Star Game in 1942, 1946, and
23 1950; and

24 WHEREAS, Mr. Pennington was an All-Star during the

1 golden era of the Negro leagues and maintained an
2 eight-year batting average of .336, emerging as a Negro
3 league star in 1945, batting .359 and .500 as the first
4 baseman for the Giants; and

5 WHEREAS, over the following decades, Mr. Pennington
6 played with some of the greatest baseball players of
7 all time including Jackie Robinson, Satchel Paige,
8 Josh Gibson, Hank Aaron, Buck O'Neil, James Thomas
9 "Cool Papa" Bell, Willie Mays, Roy Campanella, and many
10 others; and

11 WHEREAS, it was during this period of time, his
12 prime years, that much of his statistical data was
13 lost because of limited record keeping for the Negro
14 leagues; and

15 WHEREAS, in 1949, Mr. Pennington returned to the
16 United States with his wife Anita, a Caucasian woman of
17 Spanish origin, at a time when in some states it was
18 still illegal for African Americans and Caucasians to
19 marry; the implications of their interracial marriage
20 had unforeseen repercussions on his baseball career and
21 quite possibly prevented him from playing Major League
22 baseball; and

23 WHEREAS, in 1959, Mr. Pennington retired from the
24 game he loved so much and made a home and a new life in
25 Cedar Rapids, where he worked at Collins Radio for many
26 years, played on the company baseball team, and ran for
27 several political offices including sheriff, mayor, and
28 safety commissioner; and

29 WHEREAS, featured in the books *Baseball's Forgotten*
30 *Heroes* and *The Complete Book of Baseball's Negro*

1 *Leagues* and in the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, Art
2 Pennington was a great American baseball player; and
3 WHEREAS, to this day Mr. Pennington is a living
4 reminder of the challenges that African Americans faced
5 in our country based not on their skill but on the
6 color of their skin, and while some African Americans
7 succeeded in their pursuits during this shameful period
8 in our country's history, others still had to endure
9 discrimination and prejudice and were prevented from
10 fulfilling their goals; for Mr. Pennington that goal
11 was playing in the major leagues; NOW THEREFORE,

12 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE, That the Senate honors
13 the "Superman", Arthur D. Pennington, one of America's
14 finest baseball players and a civil rights pioneer
15 whose life and contributions have for too long been
16 overlooked, and

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That because of the racial
18 divides of the 1940s and 1950s, Mr. Pennington never
19 received the recognition he deserved, therefore the
20 Senate urges that he be considered for admission to the
21 Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York.