

100 New Orleans Students to Descend on Birmingham, Alabama To Attend 14th Annual Rickwood Classic Baseball Game

*New Orleans City Council Vice President Arnie Fielkow,
State Representative Cedric Richmond & Orleans Parish Criminal Sheriff Marlin Gusman Sponsoring
Trip That Also Includes Guided Tour of Birmingham Civil Rights Institute*

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- On Wednesday, May 27th, 100 middle school students from across New Orleans will get an opportunity to witness a unique part of American history by attending the 14th Annual Rickwood Baseball Classic in Birmingham, Alabama.

Rickwood Field is America's oldest ballpark, and played host to iconic baseball teams and players over the past 99 years. The field served as the home park for the Birmingham Barons and the Birmingham Black Barons of the Negro League. Baseball legends including Babe Ruth, Satchel Paige and Willie Mays all played on Rickwood Field.

Immediately following the minor-league baseball game, the students will be taken on a private, guided tour of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute before returning to New Orleans that evening. The trip is sponsored by New Orleans City Council Vice President Arnie Fielkow, State Representative Cedric Richmond (District 101) and Orleans Parish Criminal Sheriff Marlin Gusman. WBOK-AM radio and Sylvain Solutions are the media sponsors.

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Council Vice President Fielkow said, "Rickwood Field is a historic ballpark where some of baseball's greats once played." Fielkow continued, "The impact of the Rickwood Classic extends far beyond baseball. It represents our nation's civil rights history and the impact that baseball had in desegregating this country. I am so excited to share this unique opportunity with New Orleans students."

The Recovery School District (RSD), Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) and the Algiers Charter School Association (ACSA) are all participating. Students will be chosen to attend this trip by their respective school districts, based upon high academic and behavioral criteria set by the three school districts.


The Rickwood Classic pays homage to the 1982 season when the Atlanta Braves traveled to Birmingham to play a mid-summer exhibition against the Southern League All-Stars. Prior to moving to New Orleans, Council Vice President Fielkow served as President of the historic Southern League. The 1982 season was the last time prior to this one that Birmingham hosted the league's annual All-Star event. The 2009 game, featuring the Birmingham Barons versus Southern League division rival Mississippi Braves, will feature the players wearing the uniforms worn by both teams in the early 1980's. The Classic is considered one of the best opportunities to experience a regulation ballgame in a historic ballpark that remains true to its original and traditional appearance.

"Our local kids have been through so much trauma in recent years," said Representative Cedric Richmond. "From the hurricane, to long evacuations, to their schools and daily routines being constantly changed, this trip is a reward for the hard work these students have performed over the school year. This trip is not just about baseball - it's about showing these kids a living piece of history and how good, clean sports can help change the world."

Sheriff Marlin Gusman said, "This trip is a tremendous opportunity to share the joy of a national past time with our kids, as well as an opportunity for them to appreciate the sacrifices made by earlier generations in the name of equality for all."

The game begins at 12:30 p.m. Immediately following the game, the New Orleans group will be taken on a private, guided tour of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute.

Hotard Coaches will pick-up the students and chaperones in front of New Orleans City Hall on Perdido Street at 6:00 a.m. on Wednesday, May 27th. The buses will travel to Rickwood Field for the 12:30 p.m. game. At approximately 3:00 p.m., the group will re-board the buses and travel to the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute for a 1 hour guided tour. The buses will return to New Orleans by 10:00 p.m.



NOTE TO EDITORS: We are inviting you to send a reporter and photographer on this trip with us. Please notify Kate Schneiderman by Tuesday, May 26th. We will provide free transportation and access to the baseball game and museum tour and will be happy to provide an invoice to you of the travel expenses, if you need this documentation or a stated value of the trip, for your records.

New Orleans City Council

The New Orleans City Council is the legislative branch of New Orleans City government. The Council considers and enacts all local laws that govern the City of New Orleans. The Council also approves the operating and capital budgets for the City, as recommended by the mayor, and continually monitors revenues and expenditures for local government operations. The City Council is also the regulatory body for public utilities. It also reviews and has final say on many land use and zoning matters, as well as considers major economic development projects for the City. As a Board of Review for Orleans Parish, the Council examines appeals of property tax assessments for real estate taxes, and certifies tax rolls to the Louisiana Tax Commission. Other responsibilities of the Council include overseeing the operation of the public access television in Orleans Parish.

The City Council is comprised of five districts and two councilmembers-at-large. Council President and Councilmember-at-Large Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson; Council Vice-President and Councilmember-at-Large Arnie Fielkow; District "A" Councilmember Shelley Midura; District "B" Councilmember Stacy S. Head; District "C" Councilmember James Carter; District "D" Councilmember Cynthia Hedge-Morrell; and District "E" Councilmember Cynthia Willard-Lewis.