Dear Friend of the GW Jackie Robinson Project:

On April 15, 1947, major league baseball began something that our country is still trying to fully achieve – racial integration. Few know how Jackie Robinson felt as he endured tremendous hardships both on and off the baseball field. And even today very few understand Jackie Robinson’s role as an informal civil rights leader not only in sport, but as one who paved the way for integration in other aspects of American society. Since 1996, the impact and social significance of Jackie Robinson’s integration of major league baseball has been celebrated and remembered by The George Washington University (GW) through The Jackie Robinson Project.

On Thursday evening, April 14, the George Washington University Jackie and Rachel Robinson Society will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Jackie Robinson Project at GW. The program will be held in the Grand Ballroom of the Marvin Center, 800 21st Street, NW, on the GW campus, from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm.

PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO READ THE REST OF THIS MESSAGE. IT WILL EXPLAIN MORE ABOUT OUR EFFORTS OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS AND WHY SUPPORTING OUR PROGRAMS IS SO IMPORTANT.

By joining us on April 14 you will be demonstrating your continuing support of our GW Jackie Robinson Lecture Series, our Museum Exhibit, and our Educational Initiative. We are now actively involved with 55 schools, libraries, and community centers in ten states, the District of Columbia, and Japan. Jackie Robinson Project staff have met face to face with 5,469 students and 240 teachers and administrators as part of our efforts to preserve and promote the Robinson legacy.

Exploring the connection between race and sports in America is an effective means for engaging teenagers, college students, and the general public in the need for continuing social change. This is the mission of The Jackie Robinson Project. Through academic coursework and outreach to GW students and the residents of the District of Columbia, including guest lectures, forums, discussions, and community service projects, The Jackie Robinson Project inspires the human capacity for change.

Jackie Robinson Project has been recognized by The Jackie Robinson Foundation for its special events, seminars, and workshops that have engaged students and the broader public in the scholarly study of Jackie Robinson’s life and times and his profound influence on civil rights in America. The following comments received from program participants vividly illustrate the ways in which students have been stirred:

-- “It is now clear to me that baseball reflected race relations in America. Not only did Jackie Robinson face most of the same feelings and situations that have been part of my life; he did so with large crowds booing him and with what seemed like most of society against him. He had the physical talent and mental endurance to become the best due to the sheer strength of his own will. His story has propelled me out of my banal existence and caused me to realize how important it is not to treat life as a spectator sport.”

-- “All America watched Jackie to see how he would react to the tremendous pressure he faced on a daily basis. Jackie Robinson got the ball moving for civil rights. He began to destroy the barriers of racial segregation by standing to every inequality in his way – not by fighting, but by not fighting.”
“Jackie Robinson Week has begun to renew my faith in myself and in the human capacity for change. Although I will never have the strength to with the caliber of a Jackie Robinson, nor will I have to face the adversities of his life, it is because of him that I have the will to move on and do what I can to move society toward a better place.”

Since 1996, GW’s Jackie Robinson Project has developed ongoing tributes to Jackie Robinson. An undergraduate sociology course (“Jackie Robinson: Race, Sports, and the American Dream”) is offered each fall. It examines how Robinson transformed the American and political scene as an athlete, informal civil rights leader, and American hero. A lecture series, open to the general public, has featured academicians, journalists, political and civil rights figures, and athletes who explore Jackie Robinson’s breaking of professional baseball’s color barrier within the context of America’s political, social, and cultural history. A traveling museum exhibit has been displayed at libraries and public schools throughout the mid-Atlantic region, and at GW’s Gelman Library in March and April of 2006 and in the School of Media and Public Affairs in 2007. Many of these efforts have been made possible through the efforts of a voluntary group of GW students and faculty known as The Jackie and Rachel Robinson Society.

During the 2016-2017 academic year, The Jackie Robinson Project plans to expand its impact and outreach to the public and we invite you to make a contribution to support these efforts. Although The Jackie Robinson Project has received support from many organizations and individuals, we need to raise approximately $7,500 every year to secure speakers for the fall course and evening lecture series, market the program to the public, and cover the costs of a reception on one of the evenings of Jackie Robinson Week. Our April, 2017 program will commemorate the 70th anniversary of Jackie Robinson’s historic breakthrough. We anticipate that more than 1,000 persons will participate in this year’s events.

The Jackie Robinson Project is honored to share the story of an American legend in a scholarly, thought provoking way that is helping to drive the spirit of people of all ages from young teenagers to older adults. We hope you will be able to join us on Thursday evening, April 14 and also make a contribution to support our work in the months and years ahead.

Sincerely,

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PLEASE MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO THE GW JACKIE ROBINSON PROJECT AND MAIL THEM TO:

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