

When Jackie Robinson was signed by Branch Rickey of the Brooklyn Dodgers, he became the first African-American to play major league baseball. "Number 42" became the target of considerable racist hatred and death threats. Branch Rickey had warned him that things would be tough and that he should learn to turn the other cheek. Prior to one game, however, Jackie received a telephone call that brought him to his tipping point. He was so devastated he couldn't concentrate of the game and struck out with the bases loaded. In another inning he made a fielding error. The crowd escalated their obscenities.



Then Pee Wee Reese, the white, shortstop from Kentucky and Jackie's teammate called a time-out. Pee Wee put his arm around Robinson and said, "Jackie, let me tell you something. I believe in you. You are the greatest ballplayer I have ever seen. You can do it. I know that. And I know something else: One of these days you are going into the Hall of Fame. So, hold your head up high and play ball like only you can do it." Robinson was uplifted by those words and went on to deliver the game-winning hit for his team.



Many years later when he was inducted into the Hall of Fame, Robinson recalled that day on the field with Pee Wee. "He saved my life and my career that day. I had lost my confidence, and Pee Wee picked me up with his words of encouragement. He gave me hope when all hope was gone."