I believe that a person’s true impact is measured not by what they achieved for themselves, but by what they achieved for others. No woman in baseball history demonstrates this quality better than Effa Manley. While attending a World Series game in 1932, Effa Bishop met her future husband Abe Manley. Once they married, the couple bought a Negro Leagues team together, which they named the Eagles. It was through this team that Effa made an impact not just on the Eagles, but her players, the Negro Leagues as a whole, and even civil rights issues.

Effa had a very active role in the team as an owner. Although her husband was at the time considered the head of the team, it was known by both Abe and the players that the team truly belonged to Effa. Effa controlled the majority of the team’s operations, including the finances, travel arrangements, and the team’s publicity. Additionally, proved herself to be a good judge of talent with signings like Larry Doby, Monte Irvin, and Don Newcombe. Additionally, while Abe was officially the treasurer of the National Negro League, Effa handled the league’s finances as well. Effa eventually pushed her team to their greatest success—on September 29, 1946 the Newark Eagles defeated the famed Kansas City Monarchs in the seventh game of the Negro League World Series.

Players in the Negro Leagues did not enjoy the same conditions as the white men in the Major Leagues. Effa Manley believed that her players deserved the same luxuries as other players, and worked to get her players better salaries and schedules. Worrying about what her players would do in the offseason, Effa and Abe also sponsored a winter team in Puerto Rico that employed their players. Her deep personal connection with the players led to a strong bond. She gave Monte Irvin a loan for his first house, and was the godmother of Larry Doby’s first child.
James Walker, a pitcher for the Eagles, reported that players could go to Effa for their personal issues. This close relationship with her players continued throughout her life, and truly showed the impact she had on everyone she connected with.

Although Effa Manley was white, she was raised by a black stepfather with half-black siblings, and many assumed she was a light-skinned black person. This upbringing led to Effa being very interested in civil rights issues, and she worked to promote equality throughout her lifetime. In 1934, she organized a boycott of department stores in Harlem that refused to employ black people to be salesclerks. After six weeks, the store owners relented and within a year, hundreds of black people were employed by these stores. Manley also served as the treasurer for the Newark chapter of the NAACP, and would even use Eagles games in order to promote her civic causes. In one notable case, she held an Anti-Lynching Day at the stadium. Truly, Effa Manley used the resources she had in order to make a positive impact on civil rights in America.

In 1945, when Jackie Robinson left the Kansas City Monarchs, Dodgers manager Branch Rickey didn’t compensate the Kansas City Monarchs. When Rickey recruited pitcher Don Newcombe from the Eagles, he again gave nothing to the team. This infuriated Effa Manley, who demanded compensation. She reportedly sent many heated letters to Rickey, but he never paid the Eagles for taking their player. However, thanks to Effa’s protests, Negro Leagues teams did begin to receive compensation for their players, and several more Eagles moved to the Major Leagues including Larry Doby and Monte Irvin. Black players moving to the Major Leagues, along with other factors, signalled the end of the Negro Leagues, and Effa and Abe sold the Eagles in 1948.
Abe Manley died only a few years after they sold the team, but Effa continued to dedicate her life to the Negro Leagues until the end of her life. In 1976, she published a book entitled *Negro Baseball... Before Integration*. The book included a list of 73 players from the Negro Leagues that she felt were qualified for the Baseball Hall of Fame.² She also wrote many letters to the Baseball Hall of Fame as well as sporting publications in order to urge recognition for Negro Leagues players.² Her scrapbook was also put on permanent display at the Baseball Hall of Fame.⁴ When she died in 1981, she had the words “She Loved Baseball” etched on her gravestone.⁷ As a final testament to her influence on the sport, in 2006, Effa was added to the Baseball Hall of Fame, as the first woman to be recognized by the Hall of Fame.⁵ Effa Manley’s impact is not to be overlooked. Her dedication and care for the sport of baseball showed in everything she did, and she worked tirelessly to help not just herself, but others from the Negro Leagues to receive the recognition and treatment they deserved.
Works Cited


