

Modified Model Essay: Branch Rickey

Branch Rickey was a leader in baseball. As president of the Brooklyn Dodgers, he was one of the first to propose integrating Major League Baseball. Rickey eventually chose Jackie Robinson to break the color barrier in Major League Baseball. There were many factors that led to Rickey's success, but it was support from others in baseball that was most important.

One person who was very important in Branch Rickey's success in integrating baseball was the commissioner of baseball at the time, A. B. (Happy) Chandler. Chandler supported Rickey's plan to break the color barrier. The commissioner of baseball when Rickey first proposed desegregating the major leagues was "firmly against it." (p. 27). When Chandler became commissioner, Rickey again proposed desegregating baseball, and Chandler agreed. With someone so high up agreeing to integrate baseball, Chandler was a key person in Rickey's success.

Another group of people that led to Rickey's success were sportswriters. They were some of the first people to say segregation in baseball needed to stop and supported Rickey and Robinson. In *Promises to Keep*, Sharon Robinson wrote that some sportswriters of the time "wrote daily articles on the injustice of segregation within professional sports" (p. 24). They asked their readers and the American public: "Could baseball truly be considered America's pastime when black ballplayers and white ballplayers couldn't play on the same field?" (p. 25). When choosing a player to bring into the major leagues, Rickey asked the sportswriters and they all agreed that Jackie Robinson was the right man for the job. Without the help and support of the sportswriters of the time, Rickey may not have found Jackie Robinson.

There were other factors to Rickey's success, like his strong personality. But it was the support from other decision makers in baseball that was the most important to his success. Branch Rickey knew the strongest teams would include both black and white players, and he and many others worked to bring Jackie Robinson to the major leagues and break the color barrier in baseball.

Source:

Robinson, S. *Promises to Keep*. New York: Scholastic Press, 2004