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The Black World Series Begins on Tuesday

(Richmond, VA)- The Metropolitan Junior Baseball League (MJBL) is running its 33rd annual championships competition Tuesday, July 30 through Sunday, August 4, with the 2024 Bobby Bonds Memorial Symposium on the first afternoon in Washington, DC. The symposium starts at 3:00 pm at the Congressional Auditorium on Capitol Hill and this year's theme is "Reconnecting Baseball to the African American Community." Congresswoman Jennifer McClellan (VA-5 District) is hosting with Congressman Donald Davis (NC-1st District) offering remarks. It is a panel-driven think tank addressing issues that plague youth in inner-city communities and how the game of baseball and education help alleviate some of the problems.

Games will begin at Maury Wills field in NW Washington to open the 33rd MJBL Inner City Classic/Black World Series at 6:00 pm. The Heritage Rebels will face the Bowie Bucks in the 19 years and under competition and the Richmond MJBL All-Stars will compete against the DC Grays in the 10-under division. The DC ballpark was home to Howard University Bison's baseball team before it was discontinued in 2002. Jimmy Williams, the coach, will be on hand to throw out the first pitch.

On Wednesday, July 31, at 7:00 pm, the opening ceremony will occur at the Diamond home of the Richmond Flying Squirrels, the San Francisco Giants AA affiliate. Out of Nassau, Bahamas, Freedom Farm will play Team TEA from Orlando, FL. Richmond 3rd District City Councilwoman Ann-Francis Lambert will be there to give remarks and throw out the first pitch. On Thursday, August 1, the classic will feature two games in nearby Petersburg, VA, at the Virginia State University Trojans baseball field.

There will be 40 teams in over 100 games being played on those fields and other fields in Henrico County. The event will crown champions in ages eight through 19 for baseball and 14-under and 18-under age groups for female softball.

Some states involved in the championships include Virginia, Maryland, Washington, DC, Connecticut, Florida, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Nassau, Bahamas. On Saturday, championship games will be played in the eight-under, 10-under, 12-under, and 14-under.

The female final competitions and the 16-under and 19-under championships will end this year's extravaganza on Sunday, August 4. The Ken Free Most Valuable Player Classic Scholarship will be awarded to the top 19-under player. The Charles "Pee Wee" Robinson Award winner will be selected in the 12-under or 10-under players. All registered players receive a free pass to nearby Kings Dominion Theme Park.

MJBL was founded in 1966 by Dr. William M.T. Forrester, the late father of current MJBL Executive Director William "Bill" Forrester, Jr. The league was established in Richmond during the days of

segregation when there were limited opportunities for Black youngsters to participate in organized baseball. While open to everyone, MJBL continues to be the only national youth league geared toward inner-city Black athletes. Forrester Jr.'s recently released book, *Black World Series*, reveals the story of this incredible 58-year journey for inclusion and equality through baseball.

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