

Ford's Theatre Student Matinee

PROGRAM

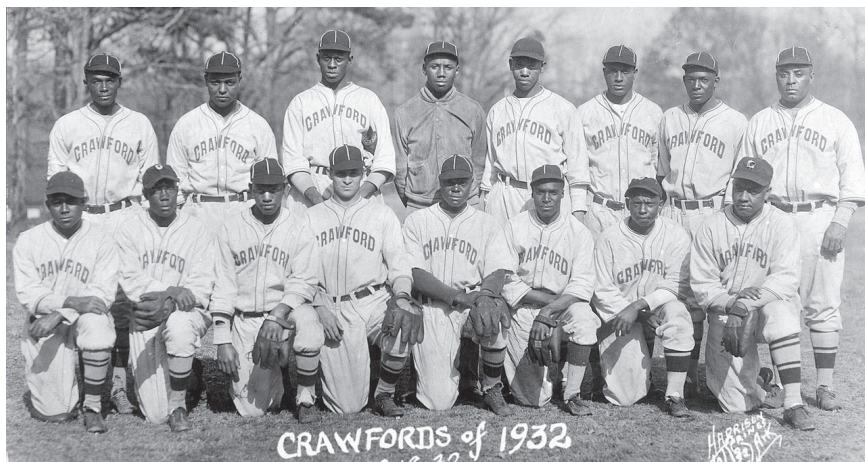


August Wilson's **FENCES**

www.fords.org

The Negro Baseball League

In *Fences*, a big part of Troy's anger comes from his baseball career and never getting to play in the (white) major leagues because of his race. Instead, he played in the Negro Leagues. But what were the Negro Leagues?



The Pittsburgh Crawfords, By Harrison Studio - Heritage Auctions, Public Domain. This team played in the neighborhood where *Fences* takes place.

When baseball first became organized in the 1860's, a small group of African-Americans played alongside white players. But by the end of the 19th century, Jim Crow laws and segregationists shut black ballplayers out of the competition. Still wanting to play, African Americans created their own teams and competed against each other around the country.

DID YOU KNOW?

While these African-American teams drew crowds, white-owned booking agents controlled the baseball fields and passed little of the profits on to the teams. It wasn't till the teams officially formed The Negro National League in 1920 that they controlled their own bookings and finally saw bigger earnings. Soon, other regions formed the Southern Negro League and the Eastern Colored League. The leagues often faced off in the Negro League World Series.

Major League Baseball began to integrate in 1947 when the Kansas City Monarchs' Jackie Robinson joined the Brooklyn Dodgers.

Troy: Good Dad/Bad Dad

Today, some may be surprised that a parent wouldn't want his son to get a football scholarship to college. But Troy's life experiences made him suspicious of white men's promises and he wanted something more secure for his son.

Turn to a friend and ask:

Do you think Troy was a good parent to Corey and Lyons?

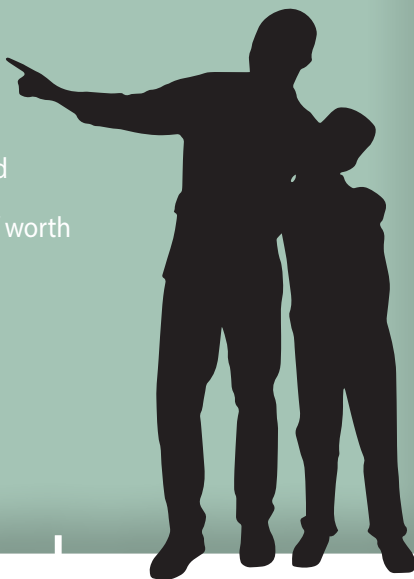
If you say yes, why? And if you say no, what could he have done differently?

What do you think Corey most wanted from his father?

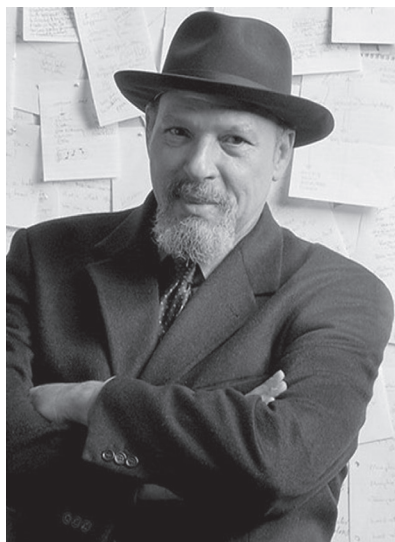
WHAT MAKES A GOOD PARENT?

*Of these, which is the MOST important?
Put them in order.*

- ☐ Providing for your family
- ☐ Being affectionate
- ☐ Spending time with your child
- ☐ Boosting your child's sense of worth
- ☐ Disciplining your child
- ☐ Teaching your child what you know about the world



How Will You Be like August Wilson?



A PLAY PER DECADE

August Wilson wrote ten plays set in Pittsburgh that represent each decade of the 20th century. This was a massive undertaking! Wilson wanted people to know what it was like to be African American in that city. *Fences* represents the 1950's.

Photo of August Wilson by David Cooper.

**HAVE A BELIEF IN
YOURSELF THAT IS
BIGGER THAN
ANYONE'S DISBELIEF."**

– August Wilson

What would you want
people to know about what
it's like to be YOU growing
up where you LIVE?

***Share your thoughts with
us on Twitter @FordsEdu!***



Ford's Theatre education programs are supported by Lead Education Sponsor:



Student Matinees are also supported by the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities, which receives support from the National Endowment for the Arts.