

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with William Blair, Jr.

PERSON

Blair, William, 1921-2014

Alternative Names: William Blair, Jr.; Bill Blair;
William (Bill) Blair

Life Dates: October 17, 1921-April 20, 2014

Place of Birth: Dallas, Texas, USA

Work: Dallas, TX

Occupations: Baseball Player; Newspaper Publisher;

Biographical Note

Baseball player and newspaper publisher William Blair, Jr., was born on October 17, 1921. A former Negro League baseball player turned newspaper publisher, Blair has been a community voice in Dallas for over forty years. Blair attended Booker T. Washington High School and Prairie View A&M University. After six months at Prairie View A&M, Blair enlisted in the United States Army and became the youngest black first sergeant in the United States

Army during World War II.

Blair, a Negro League Baseball Museum inductee, pitched from 1946 to 1951 for the Indianapolis Clowns and other Negro League baseball teams. His baseball career included pitching a no-hitter in the Denver Post Tournament, playing with the late Winfield Welch, Jesse “Hoss” Walker, and Buster Haywood, and touring with Jesse Owens and the Harlem Globetrotters. Blair was instrumental in the development of the African American Museum’s Texas Sports Hall of Fame and serves on its advisory board. He was inducted in 1996 as a member of its inaugural class.

Blair founded the Highlight News (1947-1957). He also later founded the Southwest Sports News, a newspaper that specialized in publishing scores from Black college games throughout the United States. The paper was renamed The Elite News in 1960. One of the most influential black newspapers in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, Elite News created “The Elite News Awards Night,” which was the first African American awards ceremony in Dallas when it began in 1975.

Blair had been a civil rights activist for more than six decades. In 1986, Blair launched the first Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Day Parade, and this parade is now an institution in Dallas. Blair was a major force in local and state politics and was also an advocate for the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance. In 2004, he founded the Religious Hall of Fame to honor African American ministers.

Blair lived in Dallas, Texas with Mozelle, his wife of sixty-three years. All of his children were involved in the family business.

Blair passed away on April 20, 2014 at age 92.

Related Entries

Booker T. Washington High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Prairie View A&M University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

B.F. Darrell Elementary School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

U.S. Army [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

First Sergeant

Negro League Baseball [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Pitcher

Elite News Religious Hall of Fame [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Founder