Sources:

I. Willie O’Ree

II. Babe Zaharias

III. Paul Robeson
    a. Paul Robeson: Artist and Citizen, by Jeffrey C. Stewart

IV. Peter Westbrook

V. Charles Sifford

VI. Wyomia Tyus
    b. Notable Black American Women by Jessie Carney Smith
AFRO ON ICE

In 1958, Willie O’Ree became the first black player in the National Hockey League. He played in the minor leagues and then joined the Boston Bruins for two seasons. After O’Ree left in 1961, a black did not skate on NHL ice for another 13 years.

A native of Fredericton, New Brunswick, he grew up in a diverse small city. “I think my living around whites made me feel I could play in the pros,” O’Ree said.

O’Ree suffered a freak accident when he was 20. He was struck with a puck to his right eye. He lost 95% of his sight in his right eye. He adjusted his play and learned to play relying mainly on his left eye.

LIGHTNING FAST

Born Aug. 29, 1945, in Griffin, Ga., Wyomia Tyus would become one of the most established track and field runners the world has ever seen. Her signature races were the 100-meter and the 200.

She was the first Olympian, male or female, to defend her 100-meter dash title consecutively. In 1964, she won the 100 and in 1968, she won the 100 once more, this time in world record fashion with a time of 11.08 seconds. She was a product of Ed Temple’s famous Tennessee State “Tigerbelles.”

“You can be the best in the world and not be recognized. ... A lot of it has to do with breaks. If a coach at Tennessee State hadn’t given me a break at 14, I never would have been in the Olympic Games,” Tyus said.

STORIES FOR A LIFETIME

Have you ever thought about who was the first black athlete to break the color barrier for hockey? Did you think Tiger was the first to earn a PGA title? Can professionals play multiple sports?

We have the answer to your questions.

There are many interesting items in the pictures. No photoshop material is on the photographs. Please allow your imagination to go wild, and make your dreams come true.

The intent of this brochure is to expose youth from urban communities to information about great forgotten black and female athletes from the past. Please take your time reading and have the adventure of a lifetime!

Forgotten Souls

6 PROPHETIC ATHLETES WHO FOREVER CHANGED SPORTS

KARLTON MITCHELL

830 Westview Drive
Unit 143270
Atlanta, GA 30314
As a girl she played baseball, eventually being coined the nickname “Babe” after Babe Ruth. She played AAU basketball, earning All-American honors from 1930-32. She played many sports – basketball, track, golf, baseball, tennis, swimming, diving, boxing, volleyball, handball, bowling, skating, and cycling.

She won two gold medals and one silver medal for the U.S. Track and Field team in the 1932 Olympics. She won over 80 gold tournaments as an amateur and professional golfer. The Associated Press voted her the greatest female athlete of the first half of the 20th century.

“My goal was to be the greatest athlete who ever lived,” she said. Words will never express the talents which Babe Didrikson Zaharias possessed. She passed away at age of 45 in 1956.

He was the third African-American to attend Rutgers University. His name is in the College Football Hall of Fame. He graduated valedictorian from Rutgers, and earned a law degree from Columbia University.

Paul Robeson was the renaissance man of the 20th century. The gifted athlete, who was a two-time All-American at Rutgers, was born in Princeton, N.J., on April 9, 1898. His father was a runaway slave, and his mother helped with the Underground Railroad.

With the mindset of wanting to always work hard and pursue valuable goals, he would go on to learn 15 different languages, become a singer, an established Hollywood actor and a powerful civil rights activist. With each new venture, he continued to shatter stereotypical barriers.

Born in 1952 to a biracial couple, Peter Westbrook grew up with his mother in the projects of Newark, N.J. His Japanese mother persuaded him to look into the sport of sabre fencing to keep him out of trouble. Westbrook had a tremendous buildup of anger over problems that he could not control, such as his father leaving, his poverty status, and his biracial genes.

He learned to channel his anger towards fencing, and over time he evolved into a skilled competitor in the sport. In 1984, he became the first American to medal in the sport in the Olympics in 25 years. Before his retirement in 1996, he qualified for five different Olympics.

Westbrook and Olympic teammate Mika’il Sankofa created an organization, Peter Westbrook Foundation, dedicated to exposing urban youth from the inner city of New York to fencing. The PWF has produced 12 national champions and two Olympic medalists since its initiation in 1991.

In 2003, the number 103 marked the total number of males inducted in the World Golf Hall of Fame. In 2004, inductee 104 was the first African American added to this prestigious list. Charles Sifford was born on June 2, 1922, in Charlotte, N.C.

In 1961, the Professional Golf Association dropped their “Caucasian only” membership clause. Sifford would change American sports landscape forever by becoming the first black player on the PGA Tour that same year. He encountered many obstacles on his journey, understanding that he had to be successful with what he was trying to do.

“I made up my mind I was going to do it. Everything worked out perfect, I think,” Sifford said. He stayed on the tour until 1975, the same year Tiger Woods was born.