

The Kansas City Monarchs: A rebrand, a partnership and a championship

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Nathan Carl Enserro

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Major Professor
Steven J. Smethers

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Abstract

Despite success on the field, the minor league Kansas City T-Bones baseball team was struggling financially and was suffering from press. As the brand image suffered, the ownership moved to sell the team. The new ownership immediately sought to rebrand the team, at first just by changing the logo and colors. During the COVID-19 pandemic the 2020 season was cancelled, and the ownership group entered into a partnership with the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum (NLBM) to use the historic Kansas City Monarchs' name and brand. The author used in-depth interviews and oral history methodologies to collect stories from members of the Monarchs front office staff to uncover the details behind the Monarchs' rebrand. Applying Scola and Gordon's (2018) Five Practical Areas of Retro Marketing in Sport, the case study provides a retrospective look at the Monarchs first season post rebrand as well as a practical application of theory to a novel and ongoing case.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	v
Dedication	vi
Chapter 1 - ‘They Were a Model Organization’	1
Chapter 2 - Literature Review	10
Chapter 3 - Methodology	22
Chapter 4 - Results	29
Chapter 5 - Discussion	50
Bibliography	56
Appendix A - Interview Transcripts	62

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Dedication

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Chapter 1 - 'They Were a Model Organization'

In May of 2021, Negro Leagues Baseball Museum president Bob Kendrick gave a speech in the locker room of the newly-revived Kansas City Monarchs before the teams' opening day. "I know it's not lost on you what it means to put on that Kansas City Monarchs uniform," Kendrick said. "Because fellas, we're talking about one of the greatest baseball franchises—not in black baseball history, but in baseball history." Kendrick went on to list the accomplishments of the original Kansas City Monarchs. They had one losing season over their 40-year existence. They sent more players to the Major Leagues than any other franchise (KCTV5 News, 2021). They won 12 league titles and two Negro League World Series titles (Bruce, 1987). The National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York features eight individuals who are enshrined with the Monarchs as their primary team ("National Baseball Hall of Fame", n.d.). Jackie Robinson, who would eventually go on to break the Major League color barrier, was a Monarch rookie before he first took the field for the Brooklyn Dodgers (Bruce, 1987 pp. 111). Monarchs shortstop Jesse Williams likened the dream of playing for the Monarchs for a Black boy to that of playing for the Yankees for a white boy (Bruce, 1987 pp. 40).

Black baseball origins and significance

Baseball before 1942 was highly segregated. Not only were Black athletes not allowed to participate in the 'major leagues,' but the top athletes in Black baseball were seen as less-than. Bruce (1987) writes that the *Sporting News* only mentioned a black player twice from 1886 to 1942 (pp. 6). As Black people continued to migrate to the city centers of the industrial north in the early 1900s, Black baseball grew in those cities. Detroit saw its Black population grow by 611 percent during the Great Migration (Bruce, 1987 pp. 11). In Black baseball, teams were often weekend hobbies for the players at first, but eventually grew into professional teams

(Bruce, 1987, pp. 8). Baseball was much more decentralized back then, with teams existing outside of leagues, scheduling their own games and some even forgoing having a home base and opting to barnstorm—traveling from city to city playing exhibitions against whoever they can find. Some of those teams would include other forms of entertainment like bands and wrestling teams (Bruce, 1987 pp. 15).

In February of 1920, Andrew “Rube” Foster lead a group of sportswriters, lawyers and regional team leaders at the YMCA on The Paseo in Kansas City, Missouri—just down the street from where the NLBM stands today—to form a Black baseball league. The National Association of Colored Professional Base Ball Clubs was to be a “parent organization” (pp. 13) for all of Black baseball, with the Negro National League (NNL) to represent the western teams at the highest level of the leagues. It was the first Black baseball league to last more than a couple seasons (Bruce, 1987 pp. 13) and the Kansas City Monarchs were one of eight teams in it from the beginning. Foster’s ultimate goal, according to Kendrick (2021), was that his style of baseball would be so popular across races that it would force Major League Baseball to expand and integrate with the NNL. Black baseball “drew Black and white fans, who sat side-by-side during an era when doing something socially together was virtually unheard of. Negro Leagues baseball brought the two races together” (Kendrick, 2021, 7:01).

The Original Kansas City Monarchs

The Monarchs of the NNL took their name from a short-lived amateur team in Kansas City after J. Leslie Wilkinson—a white man—formed the professional team in 1920. He was the only white team owner in the NNL. This caused some problems early with the league leadership, but not with his players or the Black community in Kansas City which thought highly of him (Bruce, 1987 pp. 14, 18). The team’s stadium was located at 23rd and Brooklyn Avenue which is

near 18th and Vine St. in Kansas City, Missouri. Eighteenth and Vine was considered the “heart of the Black Community in Kansas City” (Bruce, 1987, pp. 38). Those were two major landmarks in the Black neighborhoods of highly-segregated Kansas City. Black society in Kansas City was limited to a rectangle “from Ninth Street south to Twenty-eighth and from Troost east to Indiana Street” (pp. 38), where its Black residents faced significantly higher death rates, poverty and illiteracy rates than their white neighbors on the other side of the Troost Wall (Bruce, 1987 pp. 39). The segregation in Kansas City was so significant that Black people at the time could ride the street car with white people, but nearly every other part of society was separate. The races had separate restaurants, movie theaters and other recreational venues. It in many ways resembled the segregation of the Deep South (Bruce, 1987 pp. 52).

For Kansas City, the Monarchs were also the top baseball team in town. The New York Yankees’ AA team, the Kansas City Blues, had been around since the late 19th Century, but Major League baseball did not come to Kansas City until 1955, when the Philadelphia Athletics (now in Oakland) came to town. The Monarchs beat the all-white Blues in five of six games in 1922 and were dubbed “The New City Champions” by the *Kansas City Star* (Roe, 2018). The win boosted white attendance and legitimized the Monarchs among white populations in Kansas City (Bruce, 1987 pp. 62). This spurred other Black baseball teams to take on the all-white baseball teams in their cities and even All-Star teams after the MLB refused to allow intact teams to play Black teams in fear of more losses that legitimized Black baseball players (Bruce, 1987 pp. 66).

Attendance for the Monarchs was about 50 percent white and 50 percent black in the early 1920s, though that would change over the course of the decade, and the lack of a white crowd put the team in peril by the end of the 1920s. By 1926, only 10 percent of the ticket sales

were to whites and the Blues were outselling the Monarchs by factor of five (Bruce, 1987 pp.45). The Monarchs pulled out of the NNL in 1931 and the league perished soon after, but the Monarchs managed to keep their team alive through the Great Depression by having a portable lighting system built and bringing the novel spectacle of night baseball on the road and beating major league All-Star teams (Bruce, 1987 pp. 68-70). The Monarchs were not the first team to play a night game under lights, but it was still a new enough idea that the MLB was not yet playing night games and they drew as many as 12,000 fans for night games when barnstorming (Bruce, 1987 pp. 71).

Through Wilkinson's wise marketing of the team and the economic boom that occurred during World War Two, the Monarchs—who had joined the Negro American League (NAL) were able to once again get six or seven thousand fans on any given night and upwards of thirty or forty thousand if a real star was playing. Those crowds were integrated and regularly outdrew the Blues. (Bruce, 1987 pp. 101). The Monarchs also brought together the Kansas City Black community, Miss Monarch 1940 Mary Jo Weaver said: "I don't think there was a black person in Kansas City that would miss a game" (Bruce, 1987 pp. 101).

In 1945, the Monarchs signed former UCLA football, baseball and track star Jackie Robinson. According to Bruce (1987) Robinson was the right man at the right time, as the financial and social pressure on Major League baseball to integrate grew late in World War Two and immediately after. Robinson spent less than a season with the Monarchs before being signed by Brooklyn Dodgers general manager Branch Rickey to play in the Dodger's Minor League system. In April 1947, Robinson made his debut for the Dodgers, he scored the winning run in his debut (Schwartz, 2007). Integration and the subsequent drop in Black baseball attendance was the death knell for Black baseball. Black baseball powerhouses like the Homestead Grays

began closing their doors soon after. Television caused baseball's focus to move from local small teams to Major League teams in the 1950s and 60s, which further imperiled independent baseball of all types (Bruce, 1987 pp. 118). The end of the Kansas City iteration of Monarchs came after the 1955 season—which the Monarchs spent nearly all of on the road—when the MLB's Athletics came to town and the Monarchs were sold and moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan due to not being able to afford to play games at Municipal Stadium (Bruce, 1987 pp. 125). They kept the Kansas City Monarchs name due to its popularity but were only playing two games in the city in a season by that point (Bruce 1987, pp. 126). The NAL eventually shuttered in 1962 after moving its East-West All-Star contest to Kansas City for one last game. The Monarchs had won the league eight times.

By the end, the Monarchs' name and brand reached beyond Kansas City due to the teams' travel schedule. Those original Monarchs represented a unified Kansas City in a time when the town was anything but. The *Kansas City Call*, a Black newspaper in Kansas City that covered the Monarchs extensively one wrote: "Doesn't everybody in Kansas City go to the games? Isn't society and all social activities set aside for the games? This is due perhaps because places of amusement in our city are limited and most of social life is 'made.' Hence the great coming together to encourage a club that all Kansas City adores—The Monarchs" (Bruce, 1987, pp. 129).

'Reign Reborn'

In 2020, at a stadium in Wyandotte County, Kansas 24 miles west of where those original Kansas City Monarchs played, a modern-day minor league baseball team—the Kansas City T-Bones—were in financial ruin. Despite a league title in 2018 and a division title in 2019, the T-Bones had fallen on hard times financially. In 2013, the Wyandotte Unified Government (UG)

had purchased the T-Bone's stadium, which at the time was called CommunityAmerica Ballpark, for \$8 million (Babbitt, 2013). In 2017, the ballclub had found themselves owing \$314,000 in utility bills, the Unified Government paid 55 percent of the past due amount to help keep the team in Kansas City. The team, the UG figured, was worth \$4.2 million in direct and indirect economic impact to Kansas City (Wyandotte Daily, 2017). In October 2019 the Wyandotte County government evicted the T-Bones from the county-owned ballpark near The Legends shopping center in Kansas City's Village West entertainment district. The T-Bones now owed \$760,000 in utility payments and rent (Hardy, 2019).

The T-Bones were eventually sold to new ownership group, MaxFun Entertainment, headed by Kansas City businessman Mark Brandmeyer. The club was forced to sit out the 2020 season due to Wyandotte County's restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. When they returned to play in 2021 the ball club had taken the name of the Kansas City Monarchs through a partnership with the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum (Ladson, 2021).

The newly-minted Monarchs found success both on and off the field in their first season of competition in the American Association of Professional Baseball. They won 69 of 100 games enroute to sweeping the Fargo-Moorhead RedHawks in three games in the American Association championship series (Echlin, 2021). The Monarchs drew over 100,000 fans in 49 home games during the regular season in 2021 and had the highest average attendance in the league during the 2021 American Association playoffs at just under 3,000 fans per opening.

Modern baseball structure

The aforementioned shift of the public eye from local, minor league teams to Major League baseball did not kill off all minor league teams. There are multiple types of professional minor league baseball teams. Affiliated teams and independent teams represent the lions' share

of those teams. Affiliated teams or *affiliated baseball* represent those teams who are in a vertical chain from an MLB team. In descending order from the top, each MLB team has a AAA team, a AA team, a high-Class A and a low-Class A as well as various rookie-only teams and developmental teams overseas. The MLB pared the affiliated clubs from 162 to 120 in a process that ended in 2020 (Laques, 2020). Independent teams and leagues exist outside of that chain, though some independent leagues have a partnership with the MLB. Currently there are seven independent leagues, four of which are MLB Partner Leagues (Reichard, September 24, 2020; Dykstra, 2020). The American Association, in which the Monarchs compete, became an MLB Partner League in 2020. While minor league teams are spread across all kinds of cities and small towns, it is not unique that the Monarchs share a metropolitan area with the MLB's Kansas City Royals. The American Association itself has two teams in the Chicago area, two teams in the Milwaukee area and a team in Dallas. All of those areas have MLB teams. The MLB's Minnesota Twins have their AAA affiliate in nearby St. Paul.

COVID-19 and baseball

The global COVID-19 pandemic prevented most of minor league baseball from being played in 2020. Affiliated MiLB clubs saw their entire seasons wiped away, while the MLB shortened its season from the standard 162 games to just 60. Minor league teams scrambled to find any way to make a little money and help ease the financial burden of a lost season (West, 2020). The AA Pensacola Blue Wahoos, for example, converted their stadium into an AirBnB to recoup the costs of keeping their staff employed (Broughton, 2021). The American Association played a six-team, three-city that cut their normal 100-game schedule to just 60, 42 of which were played in that teams' 'hub.' Some teams like the Winnipeg Goldeyes spent their entire season effectively on the road, operating out of Fargo, North Dakota (Reichard, June 12, 2020).

As a whole, affiliated MiLB teams lost \$800 million dollars during the lost season. Teams furloughed staff, received loans from the federal government and found other ways to bring in money and limit costs but still had an average operating loss of \$2-\$3 million. That is a large amount of money relative to the budgets of these teams (Bloom, 2021). By continuing the non-baseball events that teams turned to during the pandemic into the post-pandemic world, baseball clubs have been able to increase their profits. Across a small sample of affiliated MiLB teams, merchandise and food per capita sales were also up in 2021, sometimes as much as much as 25-30 percent (Broughton, 2021). Up to date information on independent clubs like the Monarchs is not readily available due to the relative lack of media attention.

Theory and justification

Drawing on the established brand of the original Kansas City Monarchs, as well as the public backing of the NLBM, the T-Bones were able to pull themselves out of financial ruin. The new ownership partnered with the NLBM to retro-market the Kansas City Monarchs as a revival of those original Monarchs. Retro-marketing is the process of using older elements of a brand to promote a new product, creating “brand-new, old-fashioned offerings” (Brown, Kozinets & Sherry, 2003, pp. 20). Using aspects of the original Monarchs brand and history, the Monarchs created a brand that now serves a dual purpose in Kansas City: they play winning baseball and they pay homage to the great Black baseball stars that played in Kansas City nearly 60 years ago.

While minor league baseball rebrands are not necessarily rare, rebrands of this style—drawing on an old, culturally important brand—are. Partnerships between baseball teams and cultural institutions like the NLBM are even rarer. The Kansas City Monarch’s story represents an unprecedented opportunity for research into a business developing their new brand almost

entirely through retro branding tactics instead of just paying occasional homage long-faded brands.

One hundred and one years after Rube Foster founded the NNL, the new Kansas City Monarchs provide an example of a successful sports rebrand and a successful partnership with a local non-profit. By applying Scola and Gordon's (2018) five aspects of retro marketing in sport to the Monarchs' rebrand, future sports marketers can understand how the club resurrected a long-faded brand identity to save an ailing sports franchise and learn from the Monarchs' example.

This case study records and analyzes the experiences of key stakeholders from the Monarchs' rebrand through the use of in-depth interviews. It poses six research questions, five based on Scola and Gordon (2018) and a sixth based on the cultural partnerships predicted by Kolter (2001) to understand how and why the Kansas City T-Bones became the Monarchs and the inclusion of Kansas City's Negro Leagues Baseball Museum. It finally expands the academic and practical understanding of the nature of retro marketing practices and represents a rare academic window into the business of independent minor league baseball, which has little research devoted to it despite being an important aspect of communities across the country.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Research on brand management and developing brand equity continues to evolve along with public relations, advertising and marketing strategies. While rebranding is a well-studied topic in the world of business and marketing, the vast majority of literature focuses on developing models for future study of organizations in non-sports industries. In research on sports and sports rebrands, there are studies comparing or aggregating cases of rebrands across soccer (Richelieu and Lessard, 2014; Florea, Barbu and Barbu, 2018) and Minor League baseball (Agha, Goldman and Dixon, 2016). There are also case studies of MiLB rebrands (Balloui, Grady and Stewart, 2016), but they tend to focus on affiliated baseball clubs and rebranding towards novel brands.

Researchers often study sports teams as a brand. They rely a system of logos, colors, uniforms and wordmarks to differentiate their product from others within the same sector. In this case, the product is the team both the on-field product as well as the experience of being a fan and the branding differentiates one team from another team. The modern Monarchs in this same way can be understood to be a brand and can be studied as one. For that reason, it is important to start with general brand management literature while recognizing that sports branding differs slightly from branding in other industries due to the nature of the product and the nature of brand loyalty.

Brand management

A brand is a way that potential customers differentiate one product from another through the use of different symbols, names and logos. In a review of influential literature on branding, Wijaya (2013) developed a conceptual model for a brand image that includes five dimensions. Brand identity is the “physical or tangible identities related to the brand” (Wijaya, 2013, pp. 62)

like logos and packaging. The second dimension is brand personality, it is the character or other human aspects of a brand that help differentiate it from similar products. Third is brand association, which deals with the feelings or ideas that consumers associate with the brand. The fourth dimension is the brand's behavior and attitude. The final dimension in the model is competence and benefit, which are the values the brand espouses and the brand's ability to fill consumer needs (Wijaya, 2013). Wijaya (2013) posits that these can be measured as a proxy for the success and strength of the brand.

Managing a brand—or set of brands—is a key to healthy business practices across industries. The study of brand management practices has become more popular over the last 25 years, eventually evolving to match the approach of those studying products. In the last decade, brand management research has focused on emerging global markets, personification of brands and emerging technologies (Veloutsou & Guzman, 2017).

Keller (1993) proposed a model of brand equity measurement that focused on the consumer's perspective. A brand's equity is related to the customer's reaction to the marketing mix and is based on the consumers association with the brand (Keller, 1993). Aaker (1996) developed a ten-point metric for measuring brand success and comparing them to each other. The Brand Equity Ten is a set of ten metrics that measure brand loyalty, perceived quality and leadership, association and differentiation, brand awareness, and market behavior (Aaker 1996).

In small to medium-sized enterprises, brand management and brand image are handled differently than in large organizations, particularly when those smaller enterprises have limited resources. The small organizations that perform the best are those who go 'back to the basics' of marketing and implement the most brand management practices. Successful small organizations

understand their customers, create relatable brands and effectively communicate those brand materials to consumers (Berthon, Ewing and Napoli, 2008).

Rebranding, triggers and aspects of success

Rebrands occur across industries but are most prominent in service sectors and can be triggered by changes to brand ownership (such as mergers), changes in the organizations goals or values, changes in the industry, or changes in the business environment. When it comes to ownership changes, branding and communications often take a back seat to concerns regarding profit but can be a major aspect of success. Employee and stakeholder communication are also important for a rebrand to have a positive impact on the triggering circumstances (Muzellec & Lambkin, 2006).

The logo, name, wordmarks and colors—or corporate visual identity—of an organization also has an impact on the perceptions of employees and consumers. Internally, the identity of the organization will impact the visual identity and vice versa in a bidirectional manner. Employees may perceive a change in corporate identity after a change in the visual identity. Communicating about the change with internal stakeholders is a crucial aspect of any identity change. The impact on consumer attitude about a logo visual identity change is also directly related to a customer's attitude about the organization (Bolhuis, et al, 2015). It had already been shown that consumers with a lower level of brand commitment had more positive reactions to logo changes (Walsh, et. al 2010). While the effects of a rebrand on internal and external stakeholders can be hard to predict, they are more likely to be positive if the rebrand is well-communicated and stakeholders are informed about the purpose and background of the rebrand (Bolhuis et. al, 2015).

Sports brand management

Branding is a key aspect of developing and maintaining successful sports franchises. In a study of successful European football (soccer) clubs, Richelieu and Lessard (2014) found in their sample of 19 clubs across 15 countries that there were three universal aspects of success described by managers of those clubs. Those factors were on-field performance, authenticity and integrity, and strategic brand management. Representatives from the sample as pointed out the importance of sports—and a team's branding—to other aspects of fans' lives (Richelieu and Lessard, 2014).

Traditional sports brand models like those of Aaker (1996) and Keller (1993) are difficult to apply to spectator sports because sports organizations rely more heavily on consumer experience to build brand equity and the importance customer service plays in managing consumer perceptions (Ross 2006). Ross (2006)'s model includes three types of antecedents: organization induced, market induced, and experience induced. Those impact brand awareness and brand association (both are important to Aaker's (1996) and Keller's (1993) respective models) and lead to consequences like team loyalty, media exposure and revenue.

Basing research on Keller (1993), Gladden and Funk (2002) created the Team Association Model which provides a 16-dimensional measurement model. It differentiated from past literature by identifying consumer perceptions of the competency of team management as a novel aspect of brand equity. It also provided empirical support for the idea that a brands' logo contributes to brand equity. A team's logo, uniform and even colors elicit brand associations in the minds of consumers.

Retro-marketing and nostalgia

Nostalgia is a deep longing or memory of the past. It can be triggered by sensory experiences like music and smells and the people around the subject and can be shared among a

group of people (Slavich, Dwyer and Hungenburg, 2019). Utilizing nostalgia in marketing of music (Gelgile, 2021), food and drink (Wohl, 2021) and sports (Slavich, Dwyer and Hungenburg, 2019). Wohl (2021) writes: “while nostalgia has long been used to connect with older brand loyalists, marketers are using new ways such as QR codes and augmented reality to reach younger audiences who may be less familiar with their products' storied pasts.” The author also warns brands to be sure to maintain a broad appeal for potential consumers who do not have the cultural literacy to understand the historical context and to have fun with nostalgic marketing practices.

Nostalgic marketing can take the form of nostalgic cues in advertisements, historic or original packaging, store decoration. It also can be used to target specific demographics who may experience more profound nostalgia for brand imagery from days gone by. Retro branding can even be used to evoke the brands trustworthiness and experience in the industry (Gelgile, 2021).

Retro marketing is not a novel strategy and has been studied in detail over the past two decades. Retro brands focus on drawing on the previous success of a brand (Eleonora and Carolina, 2012) and nostalgia for the past (Scola and Gordon, 2019) to develop a safer alternative to a completely fresh brand. While Eleonora and Carolina (2012) argue that nostalgia is not the main reason consumers pick one brand over another, they found an updated version of the product that draws on the nostalgia in its marketing strategy can be highly successful. They define *retro products* as “a combination of old-fashioned forms with the most advanced functions” (Eleonora and Carolina, 2012 pp 685).

Restaurants in Taiwan have been turning to nostalgic, retro branded themes to boost their sales. A study of those restaurants found that nostalgia had a positive effect on the experience, which in turn positively impacted the restaurant image, which caused respondents to have a

higher consumption intention for those restaurants. The nostalgia was a direct factor in people's willingness to eat at the restaurant (Chen, et al. 2014).

Retro-marketing in sports

The usage of retro-marketing usage in sports was recognized in Major League Baseball as early as 2002 (Hiestand, 2002 as cited in Scola and Gordon, 2019). Sports retro marketing often takes the form of throwback uniforms, retro merchandise, revival of old logos, “turn back the clock nights” and events that evoke team history (Scola and Gordon, 2019). They found a consistency with Eleonor and Carolina's (2012) definition of retro products in sports marketing. Teams were likely to create new versions of their products that still generated nostalgia for historic events.

Scola and Gordon (2018) identified five areas of retro marketing in sport. Those areas were imagery, merchandising, venue, gameday promotions and advertising. Teams using throwback uniforms, logos or playing field designs fall into the imagery category. The Golden State Warriors and Toronto Maple Leafs (sic) are held up as examples of teams that brought back old imagery as a permanent, main logo. Merchandising is a natural extension of imagery and brands have popped up that specifically offer licensed retro merchandise. Teams also point to the age and history of their venue in marketing materials and introduce historical displays as in-venue entertainment. This includes in-stadium museums, statues of great players and team-specific Halls of Fame. Gameday promotions include giving away items and promotional nights that honor players and events from the teams' past. Advertising anniversaries of retro events is folded into retro marketing, as well (Scola and Gordon, 2018).

The National Basketball Association's (NBA) Charlotte Hornets' 2014 rebrand provides an example of a resurrected legacy brand. In this case, the Charlotte franchise used a brand from

an entirely different franchise after the team in New Orleans abandoned the brand. The original Hornets left Charlotte for New Orleans in 2002 and became the New Orleans Hornets. The NBA placed an expansion team—the Bobcats—in Charlotte in 2004. When the New Orleans Hornets became the Pelicans in 2013, Charlotte’s franchise acquired the name and history of the Bobcats. The Hornets’ brand resurrection relied heavily on local nostalgia and passion for the original Hornets. The Hornets’ marketing team also recognized a future need for further brand development because the nostalgia would only last so long (Wear, Collins & Heere, 2018).

Using the example of Romanian football (soccer) clubs who resurrected old brands, Florea, Barbu and Barbu (2018) developed a model for successful sports brand resurrection. They applied fan perceptions to Keller’s (2008) brand resonance model, finding that rebrands are more successful when fans perceive: a good relationship between old and new ownership, use of the old brand rather than just a reference to it, the old brand has an “unrivaled and inimitable legacy of glory and tradition,” (Florea, Barbu and Barbu, 2018, pp. 139) and the club builds a relationship with fans of the old brand. They also found that fans sometimes view the resurrected brand as inauthentic and a copy, discrediting the successes of the new iteration of the brand. They recommend for “faded” brands to “target the most loyal fans of the old faded brand” and “elicit the support and involvement of some of the club’s most legendary figures” (Florea, Barbu and Barbu, 2018, pp. 140).

Specific to Minor League baseball, research indicates that nostalgic experiences that are specific to MiLB games increased fan pleasure at the ball park. The social interaction of attending a minor league game triggered nostalgia for experiences with friends and family and yielded positive results. The visual stimuli of the stadium, including the views that lie beyond the

outfield wall, and the taste stimuli of ballpark food both contributed to positive nostalgic experiences (Slavich, Dwyer & Hungenberg, 2019).

Sports Rebranding

Williams, Walsh & Parks (2021) draw a distinction between evolutionary and revolutionary rebrands. An evolutionary rebrand refreshes the brand through small changes to match modern styles. It is better suited to long-lasting brands with a substantial history and nostalgia. A revolutionary brand strategy is suited to brands undergoing major structural changes or brands that do not have as much brand recognition already built. Revolutionary rebranding is also a strategy for sports brands facing negative fan and media interactions (Williams, Walsh & Parks, 2021).

A rebrand can also be as simple as designing a new logo for the sports organization. That can be a revolutionary logo change, like Iowa State University switching from a cardinal/tornado hybrid to a block letter design in 2007, or an evolutionary change, like Vanderbilt University simply changing the font of the block 'V' they use in 2022. Logo changes are not always successful and can be high-risk. The fan interaction varies with the degree of change (Williams, Walsh & Parks, 2021).

Logo redesign without any other change is a common way to rebrand a team and provide a refreshed version of the brand's image for consumers. Based on an experimental design using the same revolutionary vs evolutionary dichotomy of Williams, Walsh & Parks (2021), Williams and Son (2021) found that fans were less likely to react negatively to an evolutionary change in logo that did not include a color change, those fans also had lower purchase intention and purchase intention was more highly related to the degree to which fans identify with the brand than the degree of the logo change.

Sports rebranding examples

There have been numerous sports rebrands over the past few years. Most notably the National Football League's (NFL) Washington Redskins transitioned to the Washington Commanders and went by the Washington Football Team in the interim (Segal, 2022). Similarly, Major League Baseball's (MLB) Cleveland Indians ditched their stereotyped Native American logo starting in the 2019 season (Waldstein, 2018) and eventually changed their team name to the Cleveland Guardians for the 2022 season (Bell, 2021). Those teams largely did so to do away with the racial controversy of using Native Americans as sports mascots and the rebrands are too recent for analysis of success.

In the world of Minor League Baseball, rebrands occur more often and for a multitude of reasons including "ownership, venue, franchise affiliation, and regional location" (Balloui, Grady & Stewart, 2016 p. 219). In the affiliated minor leagues—teams associated with player development for specific MLB franchises—nine teams rebranded during the 2019-20 offseason, 42 total teams rebranded over the five-year period leading up to that offseason (Hill, 2020). The Monarchs play in one of seven independent minor league baseball leagues.

Balloui, Grady and Stewart (2016) provide a case study of the Winston-Salem Warthogs' rebrand from a business perspective, only some of which deals with public relations and brand management. The Richmond Flying Squirrels used a name-the-team contest to name a brand-new franchise that formed in Richmond following the departure of the MLB-affiliated Richmond Braves (Dwyer et al. 2011). Other teams—like the Warthogs and Monarchs—have consulted with marketing and public relations firms for their rebranding efforts.

In a study of 475 Minor League Baseball rebrands from 1980-2011, Agha, Goldman & Dixon (2016) found that MiLB rebranding generally results in a decrease in club revenues and

negative reactions among consumers. When teams abandon local names—especially if they do so to share a team name with their MLB organization—the study found that attendance decreased. Teams that rebrand away from popular brand names risk losing fans and the public goodwill that comes along with those fan relationships. The most successful rebrands in minor league baseball are those that see the adoption of a local name. Rebrands that move a team from one local name to another—like the T-Bones rebranding to the Monarchs—create positive effects on merchandising sales, but potentially negative effects in attendance. Agha, Goldman and Dixon (2016) ultimately argue that rebranding toward local names are better than using the name of the MLB team the team was affiliated with for long-term financial success. The study focused on affiliated franchises.

The present case study differs from existing literature because it focuses on the case of an independent baseball club utilizing retro-branding and a partnership with a local museum. Little research has been done on independent baseball teams, who have disadvantages compared to affiliated baseball teams. This case in particular is novel due to the museum partnership, the COVID-19 pandemic and the historic nature of the newly revised brand. The study of the case contributes to the body of literature by reinforcing the understanding of successful retro-marketing and rebranding as well as providing practical applications to the fields of public relations, advertising and marketing.

The body of literature on sports rebrands and minor league baseball is growing, and the present study adds to the growing understanding of the phenomenon of sports rebrands and retro-marketing. Studying this specific case develops academic and practical knowledge of branding and gives future scholars and sports marketers an understanding of a novel and ongoing rebrand in minor league baseball.

Research Questions

The following research questions based on Scola and Gordon's (2018) model of retro branding in sports were posed:

RQ1: How did the modern Monarchs utilize the original Monarchs in their brand imagery?

RQ2: How did the modern Monarchs utilize concepts from the original Monarchs in their brand merchandising?

RQ3: How did the modern Monarchs utilize the original Monarchs in the design of their venue?

RQ4: How did the modern Monarchs utilize the original Monarchs in their gameday promotions?

RQ5: How did the modern Monarchs utilize the original Monarchs in their advertising?

In addition to Scola and Gordon' (2018) model, another research question was posed to understand the role that the museum played in the Monarchs rebrand and the unique partnership between the museum and the modern Monarchs. Museums hold a key role in the cultural make-up of an area, but also face real challenges in their business interests especially small and medium-sized museums (Kolter, 2001). The Monarchs' rebrand and partnership with the museum is an important part of understanding the nature of the rebrand. Thus, the additional research question:

RQ6: How do members of the modern Monarchs staff view the rebrand and partnership with the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum?

Through answering these theory-based research questions, the aspects of retro-marketing present in the Monarchs rebrand as well as a narrative of the modern Monarchs' story and values

can be developed to add to the academic and in-industry body of knowledge for rebranding and retro-marketing.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

This case study uses oral histories as a method to revisit ownership decision to rebrand a minor league baseball team in Kansas City, using retro-marketing strategies. In-depth interviews are used to uncover the underlying themes of the Monarchs' rebrand and apply it to Scola and Gordon's (2018) model of retro-marketing in sports. Identifying the modern Monarchs use of the original Monarchs' brand in their imagery, merchandising, venue, gameday promotions and advertising, the present study seeks to evaluate the success of the modern Monarchs retro-marketing efforts.

Qualitative case studies

Case studies are a broad category of research analysis that can employ many actual research methods to examine specific phenomena. Case studies can be qualitative or quantitative or even a mix of the two approaches, and are an exercise in *what* to study, not *how* to study it. Case studies investigate scholarly issues and answer formal research questions, but they also focus on the context and experience of the phenomena under study (Stake, 2005).

Qualitative case study research has been a source of knowledge across many fields of social science as well as professional fields including marketing and business (Yin, 2009). Through the use of a case study, researchers can develop a "thorough knowledge of an individual" (Patten, 2005 p.9) to understand what their experience can offer to the greater body of knowledge. They provide an "opportunity for the researcher to gain a deep, holistic view of the research problem and may facilitate describing, understanding and explaining and research problem or situation" (Baškarada, 2014). Case studies have been used for a long time—at least since the 1800s—in the classroom to help guide students through concepts (Guess, 2014) as well

as by people practicing their craft to understand the successes and failures of their efforts (Baškarada, 2014).

Bonoma (1985) describes how research in marketing trended away from quantitative research toward qualitative methods in the late 1970s and into the 1980s. Research problems that are of low theoretical knowledge and high complexity are well-suited to qualitative research methods. The same author argues in favor of case research in cases where: 1) “the phenomenon is broad and complex,” 2) “the existing body of knowledge is insufficient to permit the posing of causal questions” and 3) “a phenomenon cannot be studied outside the context in which it naturally occurs” (p. 207). Case studies can be used to study healthy and successful organizations rather than just failures (Bonoma, 1985).

Single-case studies

Single-case studies are unobtrusive investigations of a unique phenomenon that relies on multiple sources of evidence to develop an understanding of the phenomenon. While there is a general guideline of principles for case-study research, the uniqueness of each case requires that each methodology be unique as well. In general, a case study researcher’s job is similar to that of a journalist: identify the historic and contemporary context of the case, gather evidence via interviews and corroborate that evidence, identify unique features of the case and report them (Hsia, 1988).

Much like the aforementioned journalist, a case study researcher is an observer in the field of activity. Researchers spend time in personal contact with those actively involved in the phenomenon and are constantly recording, analyzing and revising their understandings of the processes they observe or uncover via method. Case studies are often performed by researchers with a specific, intrinsic interest in the case (Stake, 2005).

Single cases studies can be either intrinsic or instrumental. An intrinsic study focuses on a case for the sake of simply understanding the case. Intrinsic studies are not used to develop or advance a theory or attempt to explain a concept, issue or construct. An instrumental case study uses the case to shed light on a greater issue or external interest. A single case may be used to analyze a larger phenomenon and multiple cases can be combined to build toward a model or theory. An intrinsic study is about what is important about the case itself, while an instrumental case study focuses on “how the concerns of researchers and theorists manifest in the case,” (Stake, 2005 pp. 450).

Case studies are not without their faults. Detractors from the practice focus on issues of generalization, rigor, researcher bias and contradicting cases. However, through careful design and if care is taken during interpretation, issues of bias and rigor can be mitigated. Cases can be thoroughly studied, and all relevant sources of data can be used (Hsia, 1988). Intrinsic or instrumental cases contradicting each other can be used in the theory-building process to test and retest ideas about the nature of the greater phenomenon and context.

A single-case study is justified for the present research because the case in question represents a unique example of a phenomenon that has garnered academic interest. Defining the particulars of the case can shed light on the generalized ideas of the theoretical component of the research. The present study is both an intrinsic and instrumental study due to the intrinsic value in studying the Monarchs’ rebrand mixed with the instrumental value in advancing the theoretical understanding of retro-marketing and rebranding.

In-Depth Interviews

Deciding on a method for data collection and analysis is an early decision in research design. Researchers often begin by thinking about the ideal set of methods to achieve their

research aims. If the researcher finds that the array of methods is not possible due to practical issues with carrying them out, it should be noted for future research plans (Galletta & Cross, 2013). Interviews go beyond the ‘what’ to answer the ‘how’s of life. Interviews are used across industries and types of research to understand individuals and groups (Fontana & Frey, 2005).

A key feature of the case study is the qualitative interview rather than a survey or other means of data collection (Patten, 2005). Patten (2005) describes “semi-structured interviews” as the “most widely used instrument for collecting data” in qualitative research (p.147). Those interviews are typically recorded, one-on-one interviews (Patten, 2005). Bonoma (1985) extends the range of case study data beyond the interview to include some quantitative metrics like market performance data and financial data. This allows data to be triangulated (Rashid et al, 2019).

There are different types of interviews. Structured interviews are interviews in which all participants are asked the same questions in the same order with the same wording. Structured interviews limit bias and increase efficiency, but they do not allow room to personalize the interview to the interviewee’s responses or experiences. Unstructured interviews include no prewritten questions. The researcher instead focuses on themes and travels from the broad to the particular. While unstructured interviews are less restrictive, they are also more complicated in terms of interpreting results. The middle ground approach to conducting interviews, is the semi-structured approach, which utilizes prewritten questions but do not limit the researcher to just those questions. This method allows for flexibility and makes room for depth in each interview, allowing the researcher to tailor interview questions to the individuals being interviewed (Doody & Noonan, 2013). Contextual issues surrounding the researcher, subject and content should also be considered when choosing an interview method. For some studies, an approach that marries

multiple methods is the most effective. Research like the present study that is formal with the researcher in the field taking a semi-directive role in the question design is best suited to a semi-structured format (Fontana & Frey, 2005).

Interviews are less susceptible to bias than other methods of quantitative data collection. Stokes and Bergin (2006) found that focus groups were unable to uncover the depth of information that an interview could. The group nature of focus groups also pressured subjects into consensuses they may not otherwise achieve. Interviews were suggested for research in which there is a “specific, well-defined issue to investigate” (Stokes & Bergin, 2006 pp. 35).

Design and conducting interviews

Regardless of style of interview, the researcher should still prepare for the interview by developing a plan of questioning. Generally, researchers should move from more basic, easily answered questions to tougher or more sensitive questions (Doody & Noonan, 2013). The first questions should be designed to build rapport with the subject before moving on to more in-depth questions (Patten, 2005). Individual questions do not have to be prewritten. In a semi structured interview methodology, the level of detail and the focus on interviews may evolve as the project continues and more interviews are conducted (Arsel, 2017).

Still, even a well-planned interview and research structure can change over the course of the research (Doody & Noonan, 2013; Galletta & Cross, 2013). Arsel (2017) calls the interview protocol an “ever-evolving document” because “the conversation will take a life of its own.” It is important for the researcher to pay attention to the narrative during each interview and adjust the plan to meet the story that the subject is telling. Researchers also should have the participants tell the story, clarify details, reflect and develop meaning in their responses. This process is called

reciprocity (Galletta & Cross, 2013). Researchers should “actively listen and ask questions that fulfill the research objective (Doody & Noonan, 2013, pp. 32).

Analysis Plan

After the interview, it is important to reflect and write down notes and thoughts that can help when analyzing the data for themes and patterns (Doody & Noonan, 2013). The analysis “occurs alongside the collection” as the researcher circles back on the data again and again to immerse themselves in the themes and ideas of the interview results (Galletta & Cross, 2013 pp. 119).

Aronson (1995) lays out steps to thematic analysis of interview data. The first step, in concurrence with Galletta & Cross (2013), occurs during data collection where patterns are identified. Next, all data points that apply to those patterns are identified through a systematic review of the collected data. Those patterns are then further divided into themes and sub-themes and those themes form a “comprehensive picture of [the subjects] collective experience.” Finally, the researcher uses those themes to develop an argument or narrative of the topic by going back to the extant literature (Aronson, 1995).

Galletta & Cross (2013) provides a similar process for data analysis. The beginning of analysis involves reflection, organization, accuracy checks and the early stages of developing “thematic codes,” (pp. 121). Themes reveal themselves throughout the reflection, organization and transcription process. Galletta and Cross (2013) call these themes *codes* and recommend that they be explored without reference to theoretical implications despite the fact that theory should drive the planning process. Codes should be examined across multiple interviews as they are analyzed. Codes then get categorized and their relationships to each other are explored through

analysis of the interviews. The data are then synthesized towards thematic patterns that can help develop or support a theoretical model (Galletta & Cross, 2013).

For this study, the author used in-depth semi structured interviews with key decision makers in and departments in the Monarchs' organization to understand the role each played in the decision making, conception and execution of the branding as the organization switched from the T-Bones to the Monarchs. Interview topics and questions were tailored to the subjects' roles within the organization and their experiences in the rebrand efforts. The interviews were transcribed using Zoom's transcription service and then checked against the physical recording for accuracy by the author. Using thematic analysis techniques laid out by Aronson (1995) and Galletta & Cross (2013), data within the responses were applied to Scola and Gordon (2018)'s Five Practical Areas of Retro Marketing in Sport and patterns of data were analyzed to uncover the degree to which the Monarchs rebrand fits to the present model.

Chapter 4 - Results

Based on Scola and Gordon's (2018) Five Practical Areas of Retro Marketing in Sports, five research questions were posed to identify the way that the modern day team use aspects of the historic Monarchs name in their brand identity. Those five applications of retro marketing are imagery, merchandise, venue, gameday promotions and advertising, which represent a typology of branding tactics for retro-marketing. The Scola and Gordon model focuses on existing sports brands incorporating retro marketing into their brands, for example when the Golden State Warriors used aspects of their old branding in creating a new logo. The present research applies that model to the development of a new brand based on a historic team. An additional research question was posed to unlock the narrative of the modern Monarchs' rebrand and their unique museum partnership, based on Kolter's (2001) prediction of partnerships between museums and other "cultural institutions" (pp. 425).

RQ1: How did the modern Monarchs utilize the original Monarchs in their brand imagery?

Imagery includes everything from logos and uniform design to the use of throwback uniforms. This aspect of branding overlaps with other aspects of brand identity, but imagery is distinct in that it focuses on the brand and not merchandise or fan experience (Scola and Gordon, 2018).

It is important to note that the original Monarchs did not have a consistent brand or logo, but the modern Monarchs based much of their logo, wordmark and logo design on what the original Monarchs used over the years:

You know, we didn't have a graphic designer when we decided to rebrand, we had to have a company help us. And so we all sat down and we studied the Negro Leagues. I

mean I've studied up on it well enough to know a lot about it. ... we learned that there were eight teams in the League, and so our logo has the eight stars on it, which represents each team in the League. Then we wanted to tie in the crown because the old uniforms they had a crown on top of the KC, and so we obviously wanted the crown. Like the colors back then, it was red and white or red and cream and we were like 'Oh, we really liked the red and we were like the cream, but what if we added navy, because it was richer, it would pop better.' So, we did that. They had the cursive fonts back in the day and we were like 'Oh, we love the cursive' obviously every baseball team loves that cursive baseball writing. We wanted to modify it and make it more modern, so we carried that over. (Morgan Kolenda, Director of Game Day Production, Digital Content and Social Media)

The modern Monarchs developed their own logo based on elements of original Monarch imagery. "We created our own logo. The round logo and then the script essentially. You know, modeling after—We were inspired by different things that we've seen over the years, the KC and so on" (Mark McKee, CEO and Partner).

The Monarchs have also based their uniforms on aspects of the original Monarchs' uniform designs. The original Monarchs' uniforms were inconsistent in design year-to-year. Wilkinson changed the design, layout and even colors of the uniforms that he provided for the team regularly. "At various times the team was outfitted in suits of gray with maroon pinstriping, gray pinstripes, white with maroon trim (saved for home games), black and white, blue, and gray with navy trim. The uniforms usually had 'Monarchs' across the chest and 'KC' on the sleeves" (Bruce, 1987 pp. 27). The modern Monarchs uniforms fit that description as well, even if they aren't exact copies of what the originals wore. The following images of the modern Monarchs

three 2021 uniforms illustrates the use of original Monarchs designs (Kansas City Monarchs, 2021).



In the future, the Monarchs plan to roll out even more specific throwback uniforms that are closer to what the original Monarchs wore. Jay Hinrichs, General Manager and President of the Monarchs explained the similarities and differences:

People got into it and they and they love the uniforms, you know we're going to debut a couple of new uniforms that are really, really close to what the 1942 Monarchs wore at home here at old Municipal Stadium, I guess it was Muehlebach Field back then. And then the 1945 gray roads are coming out when we go on the road in the American Association, so that will continue to drive the name that it says Kansas City. (Hinrichs)

Based on comments provided by Hinrichs and McKee, it can be concluded that the modern Monarchs use original Monarchs brand elements in their imagery by taking 'inspiration' from the original branding and adding a modern twist to those decades-old styles while still paying homage to them.

RQ2: How did the modern Monarchs utilize concepts from the original Monarchs in their brand merchandising?

Merchandising in this case is about taking advantage of fan nostalgia through the sale of retro-looking items. There is a distinction between merchandising and the throwback uniforms worn by players. “A team may very well use the same throwback jersey to change their imagery by having their team wear it and in their merchandising as they sell it to fans, but it is the action involved with the jersey (team wearing it or selling to consumer) that differentiates the two” (Scola and Gordon, 2018 pp. 202).

The Monarchs market team retro merchandise in the team store at the stadium, the museum and pop-up stores at the nearby Legends Shopping Center, and other brands have worked with the museum to sell retro Monarchs merchandise that doesn’t match the teams’ new retro brand. Dan Vaughan, Director of Broadcasting and Media Relations mentioned how widespread the Monarchs merchandise is in Kansas City:

So, you can't go anywhere in Kansas City without knowing about the museum, you said, your Monarchs’ jerseys, all the throwback jerseys. Having been to the museum a bunch of times, I knew that. ... We had a built-in merch store already without even having to open up the gate. I mean we had all the old throwbacks yeah even the Ebbets Field stuff, the museum stuff. I mean we really have a built-in that no other team in the world has. There's no team in our league that has what we have, I mean granted not all of our merchandise is official Monarchs, but I don't know— ... So that was exciting and knowing that part of the merchandise side, which is kind of a hobby I don't really delve into. I've always been a fan of merchandise, you can see on my wall. That was exciting and then you start throwing the history in there. (Vaughan)

The online team store offers retro-designed and retro-inspired jerseys, hats, windbreakers and sweatshirts for sell and the retro-inspired logo and cursive wordmark can also be found on

novelty items like mugs, baseballs, knitted pennants and flags (Monarchs Team Store, n.d.). The modern Monarchs offer some modern designs, but due to their brand imagery being heavily influenced by the original Monarchs, the team relies heavily on the retro look for their merchandise sales.

RQ3: How did the modern Monarchs utilize the original Monarchs in the design of their venue?

Teams input attractions and other stadium aspects to highlight team history. This can be team museums, halls of fame or historic facts about the team or venue spread throughout the stadium. Teams also retire numbers or build statues to honor significant contributions from past players. This practice honors those player and team accomplishments and also reminds patrons of the heritage and tradition of the brand (Scola and Gordon, 2018).

The modern Monarchs do not play in the same stadium that the original Monarchs inhabited. Municipal Stadium in Kansas City, Missouri, no longer stands, but the modern Monarchs have incorporated the history into their stadium in Kansas City, Kansas. Even the name—Legends Field—is a play on the name of the nearby shopping center and alludes to the legends that once played for the Monarchs (Dan Vaughan, personal communication April 26, 2022).

The Monarchs also have a NLBM satellite museum at the stadium that includes information about original Monarchs players and events. They also create opportunities for guests to speak to the crowd about the original Monarchs:

You know, we have that little kind of satellite you know pop-up museum that we have at the stadium which eventually, our goal is to have a mini-museum out there. Kind of satellite museum. That would you know, promote the main museum. You know, we bring

Bob Kendrick out a lot to speak this year we're doing a special Buck O'Neil Day to retire number and to pay homage to his induction in the Hall of Fame. (McKee)

In the future, the Monarchs hope to have a 'travelling museum' or set up a pop-up store on the concourses when they travel. That will help bring the Monarchs' brand and original Monarchs stories to other venues and continue the educational aspect of the Monarchs and museum partnership. Retiring Buck O'Neil's number 22, which the organization plans to do this spring, will also add a visual reminder in the outfield of the former Monarch and baseball Hall of Famer.

RQ4: How did the modern Monarchs utilize the original Monarchs in their gameday promotions?

Game day promotions in retro marketing usually take the form of giveaways, special events or theme nights that invoke the old brand. Those can include turn-back-the-clock nights, games where players wear throwback uniforms or retro pricing nights (Scola and Gordon, 2018).

The Monarchs had a set of games where they wore the maroon throwback uniforms and their opponents wore throwbacks of the Homestead Grays (another long-term Negro National League member.) McKee acknowledged that the team could do better in promoting those events and plans to do more of them in the future:

I think we could do a better job of that. I think we did it last year a couple times and I don't think we did a good job of telling a story and making sure people understood. And the players were kind of half-dressed and half-not, I mean, I think... This year we're going to try to do a little bit more, we might bring an old organ out and have organ music and try to do other things, to make it feel thrown back. (McKee)

In the next season, the Monarch's promotional schedule includes a Buck O'Neil Day on May 22 to celebrate the newly-elected baseball Hall of Famer who wore the number 22 for the Monarchs:

We have coming up here we're on the May 22nd—you know 22 was Buck's number—so that'll be our Buck O'Neil Day and we've already got Ken Burns going to do a video for us, which you did the 'Baseball' documentary, which is incredible. Bob Costas is going to do a video for us and we're going to have Bob Kendrick down there on home base, you know with the microphone on a barstool for 10 minutes just telling stories. You know so try to be kind of creative in the ways that we can you know, help the museum and continue to further the further their mission too. (McKee)

According to the Monarchs' promotional schedule, Buck O'Neil Day will feature 'Buck' priced beer and hot dogs, an O'Neil poster and a celebration of O'Neil's induction into the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Discussion with McKee and others shows that the modern Monarchs use of original Monarchs branding and stories in the gameday promotions is limited, but they intend to expand those opportunities in future seasons.

RQ5: How did the modern Monarchs utilize the original Monarchs in their advertising?

Scola and Gordon (2018) identified advertising as the overarching marketing scheme. They identified two main ways that retro brands can show up in the club's advertising strategy: using aspects in original campaigns and creating new campaigns to celebrate milestones

The Monarchs developed their 2021 season theme "Reign Reborn" around the central idea of bringing back the old Monarchs and they utilized historic imagery to evoke that rebirth:

It's really more historic imagery you know I mean we've got to be you know... And the reason to do that is just to remind people that we have this wonderful, beautiful history, you know and we try to do that through some of the black and white imagery that you'll see in some of our marketing and the programming that we build into our- And then how we've advertised and marketed our programming. (McKee)

A part of that programming is including original Monarchs content in the modern Monarchs' broadcasts and auxiliary programming. Vaughan said he tries to utilize the original Monarchs in every piece of content:

I try to work it in every broadcast. Everything I do. The first thing I did when I realized what an opportunity it was, I revamped my pregame show. ... We sold a Flashback Moment to Coors Light and I think they're doing again this year, where we did a Flashback Moment. I did a thing I thought was important I'm still doing this, a Monarchs 101. ... I've had some fun with it, and where I've gone through and told a story Bullet Joe Rogan, or I did- ... During my last three of the shows this year I did J.L. Wilkinson [the original Monarchs owner] the story in detail. What was this story? ... I did Peanut Johnson, who was a- She wasn't a Monarch, but she played for the Indianapolis Clowns, but one of the first female professional players. I did her story last show and I try to- But every radio broadcast I did two segments in the pre-game, so I taped 200 of those. (Vaughan)

Vaughan also does a podcast and what he calls "Monarchs 101" that celebrates the original Monarchs while promoting the modern Monarchs' brand. He researches and reports the original Monarchs stories.

I bought a subscription to newspapers.com and just do a do a generic search for July 2nd and Monarchs and all the things that come up from that from 1930, 1920 I mean there's some great stuff out there and I only scratched the surface. So, I'm doing something every broadcast for me. And I try to remember that that you know that story... I'm going to be doing a podcast here in a little while where I'm going to be talking about Jackie Robinson and his Monarchs time so I mean. I'm always out there, doing that and it's important to me. It's important that we go on the road, that I try to keep something in our game notes, you know a lot of it is stuff that everybody sees at home, but I throw something in there about the Monarchs history, about the museum. I think it's important as a brand ambassador that I have to tell that story and I want to make sure that first day on the road, I give them a packet to their media person to give their writer, the Tribune or wherever in Chicago. That all tells our story, because I think it's important to know what Mark Brandmeyer and Bob Kendrick have done. (Vaughan)

On social media, the Monarchs work aspects of the original Monarchs' history into their post design to celebrate and shed light on the original Monarchs. Kolenda highlighted social media campaigns and strategies that utilize original Monarchs stories and branding.

You know, we had Black History Month and all month, you know, every Monday, we would do a Monarchs Monday post about the previous 1942 winning Monarchs. Whether it was Jackie Robinson, anyone like that that would really hone in and tie people to the name, but also bring awareness to, you know... We weren't just thought of, this was all done before us and we're bringing it back to life because we think it's important to educate people on why we decided to do it. (Kolenda)

For the 2022 season, the Monarchs are going to celebrate their 2021 American Association Championship as well as the anniversary of the original Monarchs' 1942 Negro League World Series championship.

Then you know going into 2022 the Monarchs won in 1942, they won their championship. In 2022, we're calling it like the 'Year of Buck [O'Neil]' because Buck's number was 22. And so, we're tying everything together to not only celebrate the 1942 Monarchs, who didn't get a celebration. They didn't get a parade they didn't get any of that, and we're going to tie that into this year and really focus on tying the past with the present. You know, they had players go to the Major Leagues, we had what 24 or 25 go to the majors last year, and so it's hooking past with present. (Kolenda)

The partnership with the museum and the mission to help educate people about the original Monarchs influence that overall advertising strategy. Vaughan says he has a duty to use the platform given to him to tell the original Monarchs' story:

Well I think it's my responsibility to Dr. [Martin Luther] King [Jr.] and the legacy of civil rights. As the guy [white moderates] who he was writing to [in his Letters from Birmingham Jail], to be able to make sure I'm telling the story of Reign Reborn and those racial injustices and the social injustices and just how far we've come and we still got a long way to go. And you know I used to think- Initially I was like 'I don't think that's a role for me,' but the more I read [King's] letters, the more my pastor has talked about it with our involvement in the community in Dallas, I think it's my place and I really believe that. I was put in this place to tell the story, so I don't shy away from it. And it may make some people kind of uncomfortable but good if you're uncomfortable, because uncomfortable subjects are what's going to make us change our thinking. Because there's

still people out there that think guys like me are NUTS. They still think black and white, I don't think that way. So, you know I take real pride in the opportunity and really, it's a blessing. ... I mean, no broadcaster has the opportunity that I have to tell the story.

(Vaughan)

According to Vaughan, McKee and Kolenda, the modern Monarchs heavily utilize aspects of the original Monarchs in their advertising through multiple avenues including their broadcasts, social media and efforts to further the museum's educational mission.

RQ6: How do members of the modern Monarchs staff view the rebrand and partnership with the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum?

As previously mentioned, the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum has played a vital role in the rebrand, and that role is a key part of understanding the scope of the rebrand. To understand the case at hand, it is important to understand how the rebrand came about and how the museum came to be such a large part of the baseball team's marketing strategy.

The T-Bones' brand was struggling after the Wyandotte County Unified Government locked them out of the stadium during the 2019 season, but it had been weakening over the years prior. Vaughan, who had been the Gary SouthShore RailCats' broadcaster since 2013 and would have visited the T-Bones as a member of the Northern League and American Association, was in a unique place to see the brand degradation.

When I got there in 2017, though—and I began to notice this a little bit as I come in with the Gary team in 15 and especially 16—I noticed that little things at the ballpark was sort of not as clean as it once was. I shouldn't say "clean," it was a little rougher shape. ... It was obvious, you can kind of tell when people put new paint on something or when they really take the time to fix some of the issues and you can tell that they just slapped a little

paint on here, there and they hadn't really... It wasn't the brand, it wasn't so much the people working there. They had really kept the ballpark and I didn't dawn on me until I got there that the brand seemed a little bit-- that I hadn't really been propped up like it probably should have been. (Vaughan)

The T-Bones' brand had also been portrayed negatively in the local media due to financial issues that hung over the team during their run to a 2019 division championship. According to Hinrichs, they had failed to pay bills and owed \$760,000 in overdue rent on their stadium and utility bills.

So, at the end of the season, even during the course of the stretch run to 2019 Playoffs there was rumors and innuendo that they were going to kick them out of the ballpark. I know this because, you know visiting with our manager, who was on-site during this. ... So, I learned a little bit about that, I knew we had to fix the community reputation of this organization or we were going to always be carrying that burden, even though it's a new ownership group. (Hinrichs)

The new ownership group headed by owner Mark Brandmeyer and CEO Mark McKee considered several options to rebrand the T-Bones or recover from the bad press and negative fan interactions that accumulated over the previous few seasons. They were unable to revive the T-Bones' brand in the early going:

There was just too much baggage with the T-Bones, you know they left unceremoniously and got locked out by the Unified Government. We were kind of tired of trying to tell people that we were we weren't the old T-Bones. (McKee)

Hinrichs had a similar outlook on the T-Bones brand, saying that "quite honestly: I wasn't going to be involved in the T-Bones, I said 'we've got to be something else.' Now I don't have a

document that says that, but I said: ‘if I’m going to bring our talents to the ballclub, we have to rebrand.’”

According to Vaughan, the team considered simply changing the T-Bones’ brand, adding dark blue and altering the logo and fonts to match. They also considered changing to a more stereotypical Minor League name that plays off Kansas City’s reputation for barbecue or fountains or the city’s tradition of naming cities after rulers (Chiefs, Royals, Kings).

We were we were thinking very kind of comical type names. I mean like the Burnt Ends, or you know something kind of barbecue-related you know? I mean, we’re in the entertainment business as much as we are the baseball business and so let’s try to make the team fun and you know, like the [Savannah] Bananas have done or the St Paul Saints, I mean we just kind of had that in mind. (McKee)

Ultimately, the decision to become the Monarchs actually came from outside the organization in a chance encounter between McKee and a T-Bones fan.

Well it’s funny the idea came because my guy was here doing work on my HVAC at my house and he was a T-Bones fan, and I told him I was thinking about re-naming the team he goes “what about the Monarchs?” Like [laughs] The idea when... That’s a great idea. (McKee)

The ownership had decided to become the Monarchs but had to get permission from the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum (NLBM) and Museum President Bob Kendrick to use the name and likeness of the original Kansas City Monarchs. That led to a partnership with the NLBM. Hinrichs explained some of the details of the two organizations’ agreement.

So, we probably did that around November of 2020. And started having those conversations with Bob [Kendrick] and Tom Bush, their attorney. ... after the first

conversations and it was it took a little bit of time for Bob [Kendrick] to loosen up that brand now Bob [Kendrick] was representing the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum. But they understood, and they had the rights to that the Monarchs, so it was, it was important to get buy in from him for his support. Now any negotiation, you're smart enough to understand, [goes to] 'okay let's get to the money.' Now, you know that we're not going to disclose that amount of money, but it's easy to say that part of your ticket costs that goes out here goes to support the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum and that's a good thing to say. (Hinrichs)

The Monarchs' staff approached NLBM with a video they produced to show the vision that they had for the baseball team, new brand and the strategic partnership with the museum. With the season on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization had time to come up with new branding materials to support the rebrand. They contracted Will Gregory PR, a Kansas City-based Public Relations firm, to handle to rebrand and help with the rollout. The Monarchs also turned to staff to help execute the rollout according to Kolenda.

I've done our social media for years and I've handled all of that, but I've also you know... I event plan: that's my job. I plan game days and so who better to plan the rebranding press conference than myself and our PR firm? So, I worked very closely with them to make sure that it was executed well. I worked with the Negro Leagues Museum and their Community Engagement Manager and made sure everything, you know, everything was crossed, and the 'I's were dotted, and we really worked together to make it as successful as we could. Again, it's right off of a pandemic, so you can only have so many things that you could do. (Kolenda)

The roll-out was covered by local and national media after the press conference due to the Monarchs' strategy of 'teasing' a big announcement at an upcoming press conference. According to Vaughan, the tease was so good that the Monarchs had the rest of the league guessing wrong about what was coming.

What's fun about it was we kind of teased it. Now and Morgan may have mentioned this to you a little. I don't think I've even told the story on the air, but we send out--and Morgan did a really good job of sending out a little teaser—you know, 'something's coming.' ... and so from an independent standpoint they were like, "Woah, who are they signing" and Steve Montgomery, who is the manager at Sioux City was texting me going 'Tell me who you're signing, tell me you're signing' and 'what's going on? who are you signing?' And I'm like 'Steve,' and he's convinced we're signing some big-name star. ... Some folks knew, a lot of folks didn't have a clue. Kevin Luckow with This Week in the American Association thought of a name change, he was convinced—I can't remember the name he thought it was. ... No one was guessing Monarchs, but I had you know, had Steve Montgomery, and other people, the League asking me: 'Who are you guys signing?' ... There were all these rumors going around that there was going to be something like [celebrity ownership or a big-name signing] but, again, no one really no one nailed it. No one had a clue and I thought was hilarious because it sort of made... I guess it makes too much sense that no one guessed it. (Vaughan)

According to Vaughan, every local TV station was in attendance. The Monarchs and Will Gregory PR had let them know enough to send not just their sports reporters, but their news reporters as well down to the NLBM at 18th and Vine in Kansas City, MO for the press conference. Vaughan also let the staff of "This Week in the American Association"—the

league's self-produced news show—the details on the rebrand with enough time that they would be able to release content immediately after the announcement. They got an immediate reaction from fans and members of the industry.

Everyone loved it and I maybe had I don't know four or five negative things to say. I think, you know, you're going to have some people that are you know really set in their ways and they're just used to the T-Bones. (Kolenda)

Vaughan, who went on the road with the team and regularly interacted with staff from other American Association teams and American Association league staff, provided a perspective on the industry reaction:

Industry loved it. No brainer. I mean the League, you know Joshua Schaub and Josh Buckholtz, you know the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner, they were all for it. League-wide all the folks league-wide were like “man that's so cool” and, especially, they realize you're connecting the dots with the museum. What I think people didn't realize the museum and the Monarchs that whole marriage. It wasn't just taking a name, you're also taking the legacy and the museum story. ... We were we were picking up a name, plus the museum and all their backing too which was unique. So that that was huge amongst the League. Locally, you know there's a small segment and you're always going to have that and I'm just guessing here: 10 to 15% and that may be a little high on 15. ... It was a great. Overall positive, the curmudgeons stand out because it was so rare, and they were vocal, but it was so rare. (Vaughan)

Hinrichs echoed Vaughan's impression of the American Association's opinion of the rebrand:

We'll talk about the 11 other teams in the American Association. They couldn't believe it. They couldn't you know—From being the, even though we were successful baseball wise, we weren't the model organization. I'm not disparaging previous employees or the ownership group, I'm just saying we didn't have that reputation with our 11 other clubs, nor did we have it with the League Office, but all of a sudden, you become the Kansas City Monarchs and it's like you got some credibility here. (Hinrichs)

One year in, the Monarchs have a league title, one of the league's best offenses, a track-record of sending players to affiliated baseball clubs and an increase in traditional revenue-related metrics like ticket and merchandise sales to show for their rebranding efforts. Hinrichs described the transition from the T-Bones to the Monarchs from the eyes of the modern Monarchs' peer teams.

It helps a lot to have the trophy behind us. We set... 14 records when it comes to playing in the American Association. You know, Manager of the Year, two All-Stars, a Rookie of the Year, we did some wonderful things our first year in that. Quite honestly, other clubs are going like 'how in the world, do you do that? I mean it just walk in here when they got padlocks on the door one day and a championship trophy the next?' (Hinrichs)

From ownership's perspective, the Monarchs' rebrand has been a success for the club's bottom line:

I think, part of it is top-line sales, I mean we sell more merchandise than anybody else in our league, by far. And that's, not just because of the Monarchs, it is, and we also have good design and good variety and just you know, good quality. You know, and our ticket sales are going up and group sales are going up, and all that and that's because you know

we think that we deliver on the field, you know? And we deliver fun and you know that's probably the measurement is, you know, butts in seats, really. You know, and so yeah to that end, I mean our everything we've done is up significantly over last year. (McKee)

The Monarchs had to secure the support of the NLBM in their rebrand efforts for practical purposes. They also used the opportunity to create a partnership between the museum and the baseball club. The partnership is a shared strategic arrangement where the museum and the baseball club support each other, according to Hinrichs.

We're helping 18th and Vine grow and we're helping people keep talking about not only the Kansas City Monarchs, but the Homestead Grays and the rest of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum. And I'll betcha 17 cents, you could call them there and get their attendance from 2020-2021 and I bet it's up. But you got to kind of filter that in because we had the pandemic so but I bet you it's up and I bet it's, 'I never knew you were here,' we hear it on the concourse all the time--you've heard it—]God, I wish I'd known you were here before, this is a lot of fun.' (Hinrichs)

Vaughan echoed Hinrichs' statements about the relative credibility that the partnership with the NLBM has lent to the Monarchs' brand:

Well, no one would ever have been talking about the Monarchs if it wasn't for this—and I mean the Monarchs, our Monarchs the ballclub in the American Association—would never been getting any publicity at all if it wasn't for Bob Kendrick and him being on ESPN Sunday Night Baseball and every time you see a Monday Night Football or Sunday Night Football for the Chiefs or national broadcast they're showing the museum, which, in turn, you know granted it does connect the dots. They don't always say 'Kansas City,' but one of the broadcasts, they said 'well, now Negro League Museum and the

Monarchs name is back in Kansas City as well with the minor league team.' That was mentioned as well on one of the broadcasts. (Vaughan)

From a marketing perspective, the Monarchs and the NLBM share similar goals and use their respective platforms to drive a shared message and drive potential patrons to the museum and the ballpark.

We meet with them, speaking on my behalf, you know I meet with him a few times a year and we kind of touch base on everything, and what our marketing efforts are going to be. We met with them last month just about the upcoming season and what we plan on doing you know from a digital standpoint, creativity ideas. You know, what we would like to see done, you know, during the season, you know, 'we want you to do a first pitch' and 'we want you guys to be out here for this night' and 'how can we join forces for you know Juneteenth?' and you know, then we're doing a Buck O'Neil Day on May 22, so 'how can we join forces with that?' And so, our marketing efforts, we try to meet on to make sure that we're bringing the same message to both of our platforms, because they're different but they're also very similar. ... So, we're two different entities, but we come together for a common goal when it comes to you know the Monarchs and promoting that brand and making it successful. So, I think it's a strong relationship that we have and, you know, as we get moving forward, and the more success we have the stronger it's going to be. (Kolenda)

The club's ownership has also used the importance of the Monarchs brand to the community and partnership with the museum to work on philanthropic endeavors. The Monarchs are working to develop a Monarchs Youth Academy based on the Royals Urban Youth Academy model. The goal is to use baseball and softball to help young people develop the leadership and

personal skills. The academy is not running yet, but McKee says it is one of the baseball club's long-term goals.

Because we're the Monarchs, I think it comes from the certain level of responsibility.

And, you know we created the Monarchs Youth Academy which we're still getting off the ground and lots of other kind of initiatives tied to diversity, equity and inclusion that you know, we would have probably done anyway, but probably take a little bit more serious look at it as the Monarchs than we would have otherwise. ... Well, you know I mean both Mark [Brandmeyer] and myself come from doing a lot of philanthropic and charitable work in the city. It's just part of our DNA, if you will, and so we—Going into this, we knew we wanted to give back to the community. And so, you know that's first and foremost, and then and then it's 'Okay, we want to do that, how are you going to do it?' And 'How you do it responsibly?' So, you know we met with the Royals about their Urban Youth Academy to learn about that model, which is really on the Missouri side of the state line and so we kind of aspire to try to grow our Monarchs Youth Academy to something that eventually might have fields over on the [Kansas City, Kansas] side that we work with to inspire young boys and girls through baseball, softball and mentoring. You know it's not something that you can do overnight. Takes a while you know, and so but that's—Any kind of organization, you have to have goals, and this is one of our goals is to try to do that. (McKee)

The Monarchs also help provide a revenue stream to the museum that helps support the education of future generations of baseball fans about the Negro Leagues and the original Monarchs:

I do want it to put some sustainable support toward the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum. I don't want them to have to go month-to-month, hand-to-mouth, fundraiser-to-fundraiser because you really can't plan to educate five-year-olds, 10-year-olds, 15-year-olds about what the Negro Leagues were. See, I can remember them, I'm old enough to know that, but if I don't tell my son of about them and he doesn't tell his son or his daughter, it's going to just lose itself. Sure, you can watch all the YouTube you want, but just do people want to do that? So, I think it had a meaningful impact because it changed the trajectory and gave the people supporting the museum a physical sense of pride in something to connect to out here. I mean it's a real baseball team. (Hinrichs)

Kolter (2001) described the importance of museums to “elevat[ing] the cultural life of communities” (pp. 423) and wrote that they “are integral parts of a cultural mosaic” (pp. 424). In writing about the developments in museum marketing, they foresaw this type of partnership between “cultural institutions” (pp. 425) to help alleviate the financial issues museums often face.

The modern Monarchs' rebrand and partnership provide added stability to a museum of cultural importance to Kansas City, according to McKee and Hinrichs. Through the use of the original Monarchs' brand, the museum and the baseball team serve to prop each other up and support each other's marketing endeavors.

Chapter 5 - Discussion

This study set out to answer six research questions related to the Kansas City Monarchs' rebrand and retro branding activities. The first five were based on Scola and Gordon's (2018) work and the last one was about the rebrand and the relationship with the museum. Through a purposive sampling technique, four interviewees with primary knowledge of the rebrand agreed to participate in the study and provided their perspective on the modern Monarchs' rebrand, marketing efforts and the museum partnership. Those interviews were analyzed to answer the research questions through a thematic analysis.

Interpretations

Scola and Gordon (2018)'s Five Practical Areas of Retro Marketing in Sports provides a typology of advertising, marketing and public relations tactics that relate to the overarching strategy of utilizing a team's established history to evolve the current brand. They arrived at the five categories through the use of many cases across levels and sports. While Major League teams are included in their sample, there is no indication of the presence of minor league or independent baseball teams. The model also identified individual marketing activities rather than a new brand entirely built on a historic brand.

The new iteration of the Kansas City Monarchs utilizes tactics from each of the five categories to differing extents in their new retro-brand. Most significantly, the original Monarchs' brand shows up in their imagery and logo design, gameday promotions and advertising and in-house media. The Monarchs made an effort in their first year to include retro-branding in their venue and merchandising, but not to the extent that they did with the other categories. Based on responses, the Monarchs plan to further develop opportunities for fans to

experience aspects of the original Monarchs in their venue—and other league venues—in the future.

Some of what we try to do is to create repeat opportunities, you know so. And what I mean by that is you know Bob Kendrick kind of fireside chats you know? We'll do two of those issues here and we'll have him come back and do two more so we kind of build on the success of programming elements and every year try to you know make this better and bigger and get more people there for them. (McKee)

Each of the five model-based research questions showed that the Monarchs use a variety of tactics to invoke the team's history. Many of the respondents also reported a desire and responsibility to use the baseball teams' platform to educate fans about the museum and the stories of the original Monarchs. Those efforts to educate often overlap and underpin the club's branding, marketing, public relations and advertising efforts. That desire fed into the interpretation of the sixth research question. The modern Monarchs' staff showed a desire to educate key stakeholders about the original Monarchs and the Negro Leagues in general, in line with the partnership with the NLBM.

The modern Monarchs brand, marketing and public relations efforts are not limited to the original Monarchs-related tactics outlined in Chapter 4. For example, the Monarchs gameday promotions schedule for 2022 includes several non-Monarchs related throwback nights and other theme nights and events that do not relate to the teams' retro-branding efforts. The fledgling Monarchs Urban Youth Academy and the team's effort to improve the inclusivity of the stadium's facilities (Kolenda, 2022) also represent modern Monarchs brand-based efforts.

Implications

The research provides support for Scola and Gordon's (2018) understanding of retro marketing activities in sports. It provides a holistic understanding of one specific teams' usage of a faded brand to drive their own marketing efforts. It extends on the model by applying it to a retro brand that is 1) a revival of a brand after a long period of inactivity and 2) the basis of the new brand is entirely in the salience of the old brand. The modern Monarchs represent a departure from the bulk of cases Scola and Gordon (2018) identified for their research because the modern Monarchs rely more heavily on the old Monarchs in their everyday imagery and advertising than most of those cases. The modern Monarchs are doing more than the occasional throwback jersey night or championship anniversary by basing their primary logo, uniforms, promotions and advertising on the original Monarchs.

The narrative that ends Chapter 4 tells the story of the Monarchs' rebrand from the downfall of the T-Bone's brand, the acquisition of the team by Mark Brandmeyer and the decision to rebrand. It also records the rollout and reactions from the league and team. It serves as a report on the Monarchs' novel partnership with the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, as well. Those stories are significant enough to bear telling for their own sake, but this case study has practical applications because it can provide an example for future sports marketers looking to utilize retro marketing tactics in the development of their strategies. It also provides an example of a partnership that cultural organizations can utilize to strengthen their standing and continue to contribute to the local culture.

The answers to the research questions provide theoretical insight and advance the academic understanding of the practice of retro-marking. An in-depth study of a unique case of retro-marketing provides further evidence supporting the typology of Scola and Gordon's (2018) model for practical retro-marketing. It also represents a case that is outside of the scope that has

already been researched by academia in general. Research on the phenomena of independent baseball is lacking and this case study represents an entry into the research of that area of athletics branding. For structural reasons mentioned previously, independent baseball teams tend to require innovative marketing strategies to survive and the continued research of independent baseball can shed light on the work being done by the folks in charge of that effort.

This study in general provides examples for marketing professionals looking to include retro marketing in their brand or looking to rebrand. Practically, this research can aid in the creative process and show future sports marketers what can work to extend their brand, develop brand awareness, rebrand, or add retro marketing aspects to an existing brand.

Limitations

Patton (1999) describes the advantages and limitations of purposive sampling, specifically when using the method to study highly successful cases. Purposive sampling leads to a limited ability for the research to be generalizable but allows for a focus on “illuminating important cases” (Patton, 1999 pp 1197). Thus, this study should not be read as generalizable to other cases, but rather represents an important case that can be studied to learn about the Monarchs and potentially provide advice for future retro branding endeavors. While, this research is not generalizable to other sports organizations, it is one study in an ocean of potential cases. The global sports industry is projected to reach \$501.43 billion in 2022 (“Sports global market report 2022”, 2022). While the story is interesting and significant for academic and practical applications, it represents a drop in the bucket for a massive global industry. The Monarchs’ branding reach is primarily limited to the Kansas City area, the areas around other American Association teams, and fans of independent baseball in general.

The study used four interviews that were identified via a purposive sampling method, rather than a truly random sample. Members of the Monarchs' staff who could best provide valuable insight were identified by the researcher. Respondents also helped identify other individuals to interview in a form of purposive sampling. More potential interviewees were identified, but due to scheduling issues or non-response, those interviews were not conducted. The four interviews that were conducted approached the point of saturation, where the interviews were providing similar responses and there was little to be gained by conducting further interviews.

Due to a general lack of in-season media coverage surrounding the T-Bones and Monarchs, press clippings outside of Monarchs press releases, were hard to obtain for background. The results of this study relied heavily on the interviews with Monarchs staff members, but also the field observations of the researcher, who experienced the 2021 season as an intern in the media relations department. The museum and the Monarchs' Public Relations firm were contacted, but neither were able to be interviewed.

Future research

Similar studies and methodologies can be applied to the Monarchs' American Association peer club the Cleburne (Texas) Railroaders. The Railroaders derived their name and logo from a short-term independent team founded in 1906. The original Railroaders had been gone for over a century when the new team was founded as an American Association expansion team in 2016 ("It's Official: Cleburne Railroaders join American Association", 2016). There are significant differences between that brand and the Monarchs' rebrand that would allow for a space for more research to be conducted.

To build on the Monarchs-specific retro marketing literature, future studies could poll fans, analyze social media engagement and interview other stakeholders to study any aspect of the Monarchs' retro marketing tactics. Research on the effect of the Monarchs' rebrand rollout, their retro branded merchandise or their original Monarchs-based gameday promotions would be most prescient. Future research could also do a thematic analysis of Monarchs' marketing mix materials to further understand the extent of and nature of retro marketing in the case of the Monarchs.

Finally, this research focuses on a rebrand that is just one year old. McKee described their first season as “drinking from a firehose” in terms of both the operations and branding of a minor league baseball team. It would be prudent for researchers to check in several years down the line to see how the Monarchs have continued their partnership with NLBM and their retro marketing efforts. The relative success of the rebrand and partnership could also be better understood and identified after five or ten years as the Kansas City Monarchs.

Acknowledgment of Interest

The researcher acknowledges that he worked for the Monarchs for one season as an intern. His experience in the field and his observations provided a basis for this research and sparked the interest in the case. He also had a pre-existing professional relationship with the respondents after working with them for the duration of the 2021 season. The researcher reported to Vaughan directly during his internship.

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Appendix A - Interview Transcripts

Jay Hinrichs

Nathan Enserro: So, the first thing that I'll need is your name and your role with the Monarchs and how long you been with the organization.

Jay Hinrichs: Okay I'm Jay Hinrichs I'm the President and General Manager of the Monarchs. I joined the organization in September of 2020.

Nathan Enserro: Okay, so when you brought on it, or when you were brought on it was still the T-Bones right?

Jay Hinrichs: It was, it was, we rebranded in January of 21.

Nathan Enserro: Okay, so what would you say was the state of the of the T-Bone brand and its interaction with fans when you were brought on? I know they didn't play the 2020 season.

Jay Hinrichs: Right. Right. Well, of course, you know that they-- by doing your homework there's been a little bit of discourse between the Unified Government, the previous ownership, the Ehlert ownership group. They were the champions in 2008 up in Duluth-- or 2008 here, 2018 here again, and in 19 when everything went the other direction, with the Unified Government and they started getting the bad press, there was some definite hold over on that as to 'oh you're with the T bones', you could feel it in the community, when you introduced yourself.

Nathan Enserro: So, you think it was just bad press that had to do with the issues with the Wyandotte County Government or was there...

Jay Hinrichs: Yeah well, I don't know that it was the government exactly but we had a situation with the BPU--which is our utility for electric and water here within Wyandotte County and the Unified Government, Wyandotte County, Kansas City, Kansas. And to my homework, it was we

hadn't really pay the light bill. And when I say that 'we' it's the universal 'we,' the 2019 T-Bones. So, at the end of the season, even during the course of the stretch run to 2019 playoffs there was rumors and innuendo that they were going to kick them out of the ballpark. I know this because, you know visiting with our manager, who was on site doing this and you know, Joe as well as anybody. So, I learned a little bit about that, I knew we had to fix the community reputation of this organization or we were going to always be carrying that burden, even though it's a new ownership group.

Nathan Enserro: So when the idea to rebrand came around in 2020, did you have a part in that?

Jay Hinrichs: We did. So, when I was getting recruited in the summer of 2020—and I didn't join till September. Quite honestly: I wasn't going to be involved in the T-Bones, I said “we got to be something else.” Now I don't have a document that says that, but I said: “if I'm going to bring our talents to the ballclub, we have to rebrand” and you know we started that summer talking about what it is, and there was only one name. There is clear from anybody who's done work in Kansas City, it just had to be the Monarchs. We said we rebranded in 20 in January. But that was work ever since we got involved in September, was working with the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum and Bob Kendrick and their attorneys and seeing what the partnership would be like.

Nathan Enserro: I will get back to the partnership and in a little bit, so you said there's only really one name.

Jay Hinrichs: It had to be. It had to be. You weren't going to be the—make it up—the Railroaders, even though you can't be that because there's another team in our league. You can't be the Rivers, it just, it wouldn't make any sense. I mean if you're in Kansas City somebody's got to be the Monarchs.

Nathan Enserro: So Obviously, there was the 2021 season last season was successful on the field, but how about off the field? You think the rebrand had a big impact on the crowds?

Jay Hinrichs: I think if you did a look, a snapshot of the demographic of our guests in 2018, 2019 verses 2021. I think anybody would notice it's a different demographic. Not only different ethnic demographic, but a different family demographic. You get your true baseball fans that came out to watch the T-Bones, but there were families here. You experienced it, you saw who was here. Now, I would have liked three times that amount at the game every night, you know me I'm a little... I want more people in this ballpark. I want more guests. But I think the-- and we're probably going to stumble on this a little bit later in the conversation-- but you know better than anybody, everybody had a Monarchs shirt on. Everybody had that pinstripe uniform top on. I've never—of course, Chiefs is different everybody wears the uniform top right? When you go to when you go to Arrowhead. But, you don't see that at Royals, you see an occasional blue jersey right? But here, everywhere you look somebody wearing a uniform top or a ballcap.

Nathan Enserro: So you mentioned merch sales and merchandising, but what other kind of metrics do you use to measure fan engagement, brand awareness that kind of stuff?

Jay Hinrichs: Well, of course, you can dive into your social media aspects and how many people are following you and how many likes on the posts. I tell you that other aspect that probably don't have any true measurements, but this ballclub couldn't wait to put the uniform top on. I mean, these are you know 22-26 year old people who didn't really understand what a Monarch was until we taught them a little bit about it, but man then all of a sudden they're part of this they're part of the the Negro Leagues most popular team and the team that put the most people in the major leagues came out of Kansas City.

Nathan Enserro: So what kind of comments did you get from fans and other people in the industry as well about the rebrand kind of after it was all rolled out.

Jay Hinrichs: Well, let me just talk about our peer group. We'll talk about the 11 other teams in the American Association they couldn't believe it. They couldn't you know. From being the, even though we were successful baseball wise, we weren't the model organization. I'm not disparaging previous employees or the ownership group, I'm just saying we didn't have that reputation with our 11 other clubs, nor did we have it with the League Office, but all of a sudden, you become

the Kansas City Monarchs and it's like you got some credibility here. You got to go back to 1965, but still. Everything has grown in terms of what you know the Baseball movie came out and Buck O'Neil and all of that. Now the timing was a decade apart, but it seemed to take us back in time. When Ken Burns was doing that film and all of a sudden, this organization this franchise has history. It wasn't really us, you know, it really wasn't but we took it we took that persona.

Nathan Enserro: So, when you talk about a rebrand of a baseball team, what would you consider a success?

Jay Hinrichs: Well, I'm biased. I'm all about money, so you know I sure I love it and I love the fact that people are commenting in this new social world that I know about this much, but if we can sell more uniform tops and get more people to come out here and somebody believes in what Legends Field is now. That's going to help us. Then I just don't want to make the money to be profitable, I want to make the money to support this ballclub and to get better every single day.

Nathan Enserro: And one year in, do you think you're on the right road?

Jay Hinrichs: I do you know it, it helps a lot to have the trophy behind us. We set what 14 records when it comes to playing in the American Association. You know, Manager of the Year, two All-Stars, a rookie of the year, we did some wonderful things our first year in that. Quite honestly, other clubs are going like 'how in the world, do you do that? I mean it just walk in here when they got padlocks on the door one day and a championship trophy the next?'

Nathan Enserro: So, on to the partnership with the museum. When did they get involved?

Jay Hinrichs: So, we probably did that around November of 2020. And started having those conversations with Bob [Kendrick] and Tom Bush, their attorney. Tom's a licensing attorney by trade, and so I knew him from my career at the Royals, trademarking our merchandise and our uniforms. Again, everybody in Kansas City kind of knows somebody once you get introduced to

them. So, after the first conversations and it was it took a little bit of time for Bob [Kendrick] to loosen up that brand now Bob [Kendrick] was representing the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum. But they understood, and they had the rights to that the Monarchs so it was, it was important to get buy in from him for his support. Now any negotiation, you're smart enough to understand, 'okay let's get to the money.' Now, you know that we're not going to disclose that amount of money, but it's easy to say that part of your ticket costs that goes out here goes to support the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum and that's a good thing to say. Because we're helping 18th and Vine grow and we're helping people keep talking about not only the Kansas City Monarchs, but the Homestead Grays and the rest of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum. And I'll betcha 17 cents, you could call them there and get their attendance from 2020-2021 and I bet it's up. But you got to kind of filter that in because we had the pandemic so but I bet you it's up and I bet it's, 'I never knew you were here,' we hear it on the concourse all the time--you've heard it—"God, I wish I'd known you were here before, this is a lot of fun." I'm not sure everybody knows that that we're here or they're down to 18 to buy.

Nathan Enserro: So Jesse used to talk a lot to the interns about... kind of connecting east and west Kansas City. What part of the vision for that partnership is kind of that all-encompassing connecting Kansas City?

Jay Hinrichs: Yeah, well the Kansas City community... I don't break them down into east, we have a saying here in Wyandotte County. We have an east and west Wyandotte County and they call it the red line, it's 635 that takes you from east and you know downtown Kansas City, 635 and then us. Two completely different worlds, yes? I mean compared to the legends compared to what's happening down at City Hall. But it does connect the community, and it is Kansas City. Nobody's putting a comma and a state: MO, KS. Nobody's doing that here. You're part of the community. And something that everybody was worried about was: is there enough room between the Royals and the Monarchs to have two baseball teams? Of course, there is. It's a big community. It's a different market. It's a different price point. It's a different talent of players. You know they're a good team, but we're the ones that won the whole thing. So, you know so I'm a little bit, again I'm a little bit biased when it comes to our baseball team.

Nathan Enserro: And so you talked a little bit about, from a legal aspect, getting the museum's permission to use the Monarchs' name. But more from a community relations aspect how has that partnership with the museum help the baseball team and how do you think it's helped the museum?

Jay Hinrichs: Well, you know I'm not gonna be able to speak to the museum side of things, again I probably can assume there's more attendance. Maybe there's a little bit more merchandise purchase down at their store down there at the at the museum. I can't speak to that, but I can speak to what happens out here and that it's a true partnership, yes there's a financial aspect that goes into support their mission and what their strategic plan wants them to do. You know the Board of Directors that runs that museum they're engaged out here. They want to come to the game, because they now have a team. They certainly think it's their team, too and when that doesn't hurt anybody. Might as well think it's your team. So how it's going, I think you know everything can always be better, but we certainly didn't have any bumps. We didn't have any 'what the heck are you doing?' People got into it and they and they love the uniforms, you know we're going to debut a couple of new uniforms that are really, really close to what the 1942 Monarchs wore at home here at old Municipal Stadium, I guess, was Muehlebach Field back then. And then the 1945 gray roads are coming out. When we when we go on the road in the American Association, so that will continue to drive the name that it says Kansas City. And, and you know we hope someday we have a traveling museum that goes with the team, or we can set up a pop-up on the concourses at the other stadiums. The Chicago Dogs did a throwback night they became the Homestead Grays for a night they wanted to be the Chicago American Giants, they just couldn't get the name wrestled away from legal so they'd be... As you saw, we had six Homestead Grays nights here when the visiting team wore the proud uniform top of Grays.

Nathan Enserro: You're my first interview. I supposed to talk to Morgan on Tuesday, but we had to reschedule. I'm planning on asking everyone this: How do you think the return of the Monarchs has impacted Kansas City and how do you hope the Monarchs can impact Kansas City in the future?

Jay Hinrichs: Well, I do want it to put some sustainable support toward the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum. I don't want them to have to go month-to-month, hand-to-mouth, fundraiser-to-fundraiser because you really can't plan to educate five-year olds, 10-year olds. 15-year olds about what the Negro Leagues were. See, I can remember them I'm old enough to know that, but if I don't tell my son of about them and he doesn't tell his son or his daughter, it's going to just lose itself. Sure, you can watch all the YouTube you want, but just do people want to do that? So, I think it had a meaningful impact because it changed the trajectory and gave the people, supporting the museum a physical sense of pride in something to connect to out here. I mean it's a real baseball team.

Nathan Enserro: Okay, all right, I think that that's all the questions I had um. Thank you so much for for talking to me i'm going to turn recording off.

Jay Hinrichs: Oh that's good coffee.

Morgan Kolenda

Nathan Enserro: Alright So the first thing I'm going to need you to do is say your name and your position and kind of how long you've been with the organization.

Morgan Kolenda: My name is Morgan Kolenda and I am in charge of Game Day Production and digital content and social media. I have been with the Kansas City Monarchs for three years. Part of the rebrand, but I was formerly with the T-Bones before we rebranded this will be going into my 15th season so total I've been here, probably about 14 years and 15 seasons.

Nathan Enserro: What would you say the state of the T-Bones brand was prior to the couple seasons running up to the rebrand or towards Mark Brandmeyer buying the team?

Morgan Kolenda: Um I think you know it was up and down. I definitely think you know in 2018 we won the championship, which was really beneficial and was very helpful and it kind of got the team excited. We were really on an uphill climb to be successful, we had a great coaching staff, the players were great. And I think that definitely helped. I think you know, the economy and all the things that were happening kind of behind the scenes definitely pretty much stunk for

us, and that word got out after that year happened and that's kind of when we saw the decline. I just think there was a positive and a negative to it. When the Brandmeyer family came in and kind of became our you know our knight in shining armor it definitely helped bring the name back up and I think we're finally back in a place that is great. You know, financially and in the public eye, it's a lot better. I just think there was a lot of stuff behind the scenes that I personally can't speak upon because I don't know what it was that just put us kind of in a rut and it was hard for us to get back out of that.

Nathan Enserro: From your perspective working with fans and stuff, what do you think that their impressions of the T-Bones when that all this stuff started coming out and the club got evicted and all that kind of stuff?

Morgan Kolenda: Like the overall impression of what they might have thought about it?

Nathan Enserro: yeah well the fans, their impressions of the brand or their... I guess that's... yeah their brand associations that kind of stuff?

Morgan Kolenda: Yeah, I definitely think you know the T-Bones were... it's a fun name, you know everyone loved the name and it was fun to kind of to pick up on and I think the thing that set us apart, obviously, you know we were a professional baseball team, but we didn't really see much success until the last couple of years that we were the T-Bones, you know when Joe [Calfapietra] came in and was the manager. I mean the team went back-to-back-to-back-to-back playoff appearances instantly and I think that definitely helped. You know, get our name out there and people kind of started showing up, but then when all that bad stuff started getting into the public that definitely put a rain on the parade and I think people, you know, that definitely affected people's opinions on it, because of you know just the news that was out there and that stunk, for you know staff, like myself, and, like others, that I work with. That, you know, they had we had to deal with it, and we were like we're not personally the problem it's just the things that are underlying that were the issue and I think it definitely scared people off and pushed them away a little bit, but you know, like I said, you know what Brandmeyer coming in and really revamping everything and taking it to the next level I think we're finally right back on where we

needed to be and where we could be. Especially coming off of another championship season, I think that's definitely lighting some fire and paving a path for success. So hopefully, you know, with the T-Bones' I don't want to say failures, but failures in a few aspects or a few areas, they are now successes.

Nathan Enserro: So when the new ownership group wanted to rebrand the franchise, what was your role in that process?

Morgan Kolenda: You know they only carried over a few of us. I think I'm one of I think three or four that were carried over from the T-Bones. It was an extensive process to they had to get to know us they asked us a ton of questions: 'what can you bring to the table?' and you know what 'are your strengths and your weaknesses?' just to make sure that we were fitting into a role that they needed and then they had the right person in that role and it was definitely... I remember it was a lengthy week of conversations and being asked questions, and you know mapping out everything that I can do and you know they kind of dwindled down. I was doing a lot with the T-Bones we weren't—we did not have a full staff like we do with the Monarchs now. I mean it was half of what we had you know Monarchs we have over 10, T-Bones in the offseason there was maybe five or six of us. So with that brand a lot of us were wearing 50 different hats and doing 50 different jobs. With the Monarchs you know you get to kind of hone in on your specific job, obviously in minor league baseball you're going to be doing a couple of other things on the side as well, but I think that's definitely kind of helped you know when they sat us down and they asked us what we can do and what we're good at, they put us in positions where they know that we'll succeed and will be like 'Okay, she can handle this and he can do this and then all of the boxes are going to get checked in the offseason,' Whereas the T-Bones, and we were doing everything year around all by ourselves handling everything, so this is just a little bit different.

Nathan Enserro: So they decided they wanted to become the Monarchs, did they consult with the people that they carried over and kind of what were those conversations like?

Morgan Kolenda: They kind of did. Honestly, you know it wasn't really up to us, it wasn't really our decision as, you know, staff to make. When they wanted to rebrand we were coming off of

the pandemic, so, none of us have really been together at all. We were all kind of working remotely so there wasn't really a time for us to be together. I think you know ownership just kind of took it took the bull by the horns and was like 'you know what? What better time to rebrand a team than coming off of the pandemic, where we haven't been together for a year. So why wouldn't we change it?' you know, and I think switching the name and the brand-- still having that family fun atmosphere and the focus is on that. I think they wanted to keep that but they they felt like the T-Bones' name was getting kind of tarnished a little bit and they wanted to separate it they didn't want... 'That has anything to do with us, I want to focus on, you know the Monarchs' and 'how can I make the Monarchs better and bring a better value to that brand?' I think that's kind of what led the decision. But we weren't really involved in it, you know people that are kind of in the same supervising role as I am. That was an ownership decision they definitely talk to us about it, but it wasn't like 'okay everyone raise your hand if you're for it or against it,' it was: 'this is what we're doing, and this is how we're going to make it successful and you're along for the ride great and if you're not well we'll go find somebody that is going to be along for the ride.' So that's just what we've kind of adapted.

Nathan Enserro: When the organization decided to roll out the rebrand you decided to tell fans about it, and everything you can tell that story and kind of what your role in that was?

Morgan Kolenda: I've done our social media for years and I've handled all of that, but I've also you know, I event plan: that's my job. You know, I plan game days and so who better to plan the rebranding press conference than myself and our PR firm? So, I worked very closely with them to make sure that it was executed well. I worked with the Negro Leagues Museum and their Community Engagement Manager and made sure everything, you know, everything was crossed, and the 'I's were dotted, and we really worked together to make it as successful as we could again it's right off of a pandemic, so you can only have so many things that you could do. But, I think you know when that happened, I definitely played a huge role in it, because I was one of maybe two or three people that was back in the office full time. So, we didn't have our full-time office yet. That was difficult because I was kind of operating by myself, I didn't have any help. I was given this product and saying 'Okay, we want these people there, we want this person here,

we want a schedule like this' and so I kind of just played off of it and just channeled my game-day attitude and kind of went to town on it.

Nathan Enserro: Beyond a press conferences, where other strategies did you all use to roll out the rebrand?

Morgan Kolenda: We partnered, and we sat down with Negro Leagues Museum before we decided to rebrand we pitched it to them first, because the Monarchs is such a valuable name to the city and to the Negro Leagues itself it wouldn't be a thing, without the Negro Leagues, to be honest. So I remember it was I think they had pitched the idea to them in the fall before we had decided to rebrand and it was like an all-day conversation and I was the only one here, and so I remember you know I go in and I give them lunches and everything and that took place months prior to when they wanted to rebrand and then there was a follow up meeting a couple of months later-- kind of around Christmas time-- to set it all out, get the finances lined up, everything like that, and then they finally were like 'Now this is what we're going to do. The partnership's going to be good, we were all on board with it.' The main thing was to get the Negro Leagues involved as actively as possible, because you know it benefits them too. It's a huge thing for them and we wanted it to be a big thing for them and for the city, and once we announced the rebrand I mean it was it just took off from there. Everyone loved it and it's just been a great partnership working with them, because you know they share our marketing efforts we share theirs, and it just it took a lot of conversation [laughs] That I know of.

Nathan Enserro: You have a very fan-facing job, both in the ballpark and on social media, what kind of reactions from fans, did you get after the rebrand?

Morgan Kolenda: Everyone loved it and I maybe had I don't know four or five negative things to say. I think, you know, you're going to have some people that are you know really set in their ways and they're just used to the T-Bones. You know 'oh the T-Bones did this' and the 'T-Bones had this' and 'oh, we miss the T-Bones' and 'what about Sizzle (the mascot).' You're going to have those fans that do that it's like if you change the Royals' name to add on something random. 'Oh my gosh, what am I going to do with all my Royals stuff? What about Alex Gordon?' Like

all these things. You're going to have people that are like that. They're just baseball people, that's with anything that's going to happen. You know, Washington Redskins changed their names to the Commanders and people are like 'what the heck is that?' You know what I mean? I think that's what they did. But you know what I mean so you're going to have people that are just set in their ways which is fine, but were they negative towards the name change? Absolutely not I don't think anyone was like: 'Oh my God, they're Monarchs, how terrible.' No, like the Monarchs is such a sacred name in the city that you can't help but appreciate it, and like it because, eventually, one of the sports teams in this city was going to be the Monarchs. We just happen to get lucky and get chosen or get approved to do it, I guess, not chosen.

Nathan Enserro: So, part of resurrecting a brand like the Monarchs is going back into what their brand was originally and refreshing it. So, how does what the original Monarchs did with their logos and their name and that all of the aspects of a brand guided what you all, are doing from a marketing perspective?

Morgan Kolenda: Yeah, so we sat down obviously you know with Bob Kendrick at the Negro Leagues and we've kind of put our heads together. We had a marketing team that was out, you know out-resourced from us and they kind of helped bring this to life. You know, we didn't have a graphic designer when we decided to rebrand, we had to have a company help us. And so we all sat down and we studied the Negro Leagues. I mean I've studied up on it well enough to know a lot about it. Never as much as Bob Kendrick knows, but when you work in it, you kind of have to have a knowledge of who the players are and so we studied on it and we learned that there were eight teams in the League, and so our logo has the eight stars on it, which represents each team in the League. Then we wanted to tie in the crown because the old uniforms they had a crown on top of the KC, and so we obviously wanted the crown. Like the colors back then, it was red and white or red and cream and we were like 'Oh, we really liked the red and we were like the cream, but what if we added navy, because it was richer, it would pop better.' So we did that they had the cursive fonts back in the day and we were like 'Oh, we love the cursive' obviously every baseball team loves that cursive baseball writing. We wanted to modify it and make it more modern, so we carried that over. Then you know going into 2022 the Monarchs won in 1942, they won their championship. In 2022, we're calling it like the 'Year of Buck [O'Neil]'

because Buck's number was 22. And so we're tying everything together to one, not only celebrate the 1942 Monarchs who didn't get you know, a celebration. They didn't get a parade they didn't get any of that, and we're going to tie that into this year and really focus on tying the past with the present and you know they had players go to the Major Leagues, we had what 24-25 go to the majors last year, and so it's hooking past with present. You know, we had Black History Month and all month, you know, every Monday, we would do a Monarchs Monday post about the previous 1942 winning Monarchs. Whether it was Jackie Robinson, anyone like that that would really hone in and tie people to the name, but also bring awareness to, you know... We weren't just thought of, this was all done before us and we're bringing it back to life because we think it's important to educate people on why we decided to do it. We don't do it for the clout, we're doing it to bring awareness, to the fact that this team was really good back then, and they deserve to be brought up so that was kind of the drive behind it.

Nathan Enserro: And then moving a little bit on to the relationship with the museum, can you kind of describe the nature of that a little bit?

Morgan Kolenda: Yeah, I think it's a positive one. It's exciting to... We meet with them, speaking on my behalf, you know I meet with him a few times a year and we kind of touch base on everything, and what our marketing efforts are going to be. We met with them last month just about the upcoming season and what we plan on doing you know from a digital standpoint, creativity ideas. You know, what we would like to see done, you know, during the season, you know, 'we want you to do a first pitch' and 'we want you guys to be out here for this night' and 'how can we join forces for you know Juneteenth?' and you know, then we're doing a Buck O'Neil Day on May 22, so 'how can we join forces with that?' And so, our marketing efforts, we try to meet on to make sure that we're bringing the same message to both of our platforms, because they're different but they're also very similar. And then you know they give us like... they're working on getting the grant for Municipal Stadium, and so they share that with us, and so we kind of just cross reference everything. Granted, there are some things that they do the you know their full focus is on that and our full focus is on, you know, like single game tickets they're not going to be 100% focused on helping us sell single game tickets, because they're a business too and they're trying to promote their business, just like we are with ours. So we're two

different entities, but we come together for a common goal when it comes to you know the Monarchs and promoting that brand and making it successful. So, I think it's a strong relationship that we have and, you know, as we get moving forward, and the more success we have the stronger it's going to be.

Nathan Enserro: Do you use any metrics to measure the success of the brand or of the kind of messages that you're putting out both on digital and otherwise?

Morgan Kolenda: yeah so um we use a couple of different platforms so like all of our posts generally, if they're thought of in advance-- which usually they are. We use Sprout Social and that measures all of the digital analytics that tells me, you know, the top-10 cities that people are looking at our posts and where... It just helps me a lot with target marketing just because I can see, you know, people your age are looking at this specific post, so we need to post more things for that age group. Whenever we post merchandise, I can geofence a certain area to where it reaches a certain area, and I can see who's buying what item and what is really catching people's eyes. I utilize that and it's really you know my job has... I learn something new every day about it because I didn't know anything about digital analytics when I stepped into this role with the Monarchs and I have learned so much about it. I know how to access it, and so I think that's definitely helping with our posts, and especially with the website as well. We do our SEO analysis and we check our data just to see you know who's passing through and who's Googling the Monarchs and we can we can track that and we can look at that, which is kind of creepy, but it's actually really helpful in marketing because we're like 'oh, Nathan typed in the Monarchs that means he's interested so let's include him in our next, you know, our next post. Let's make sure it pops up for him' so that he's like 'oh yeah I Googled that last week, cool!' It's is kind of creepy how you look at your phone you're like 'okay I searched baseball yesterday and now I'm getting ads for baseball' that's all part of the SEO algorithm that everything's it's creepy but it's cool.

Nathan Enserro: How have you seen those numbers grow over the last year and a half or so?

Morgan Kolenda: Exponentially, I mean they have just... I was just talking about this in our meeting, the other day, you know, Facebook's our number one driver for digital content,

obviously. You can post anything on Facebook, because that's the most used platform in the world. And then Instagram obviously is a byproduct Facebook now, so that's definitely helpful but Twitter is up and coming with everything. That's our second most popular. And so with our Twitter I posted something on Friday and we got 574 more followers over the weekend in just 48 hours so it's all about what your messaging is and what you're putting out there for people, and you know our brand is just... Ever since we've changed from the Monarchs it has just skyrocketed and we are just super-duper exceeding, everywhere on social media.

Nathan Enserro: What would you consider a success when you're when you're talking about rebranding a team, and do you think it's been successful so far?

Morgan Kolenda: um please restate the question, one more time.

Nathan Enserro: What would it what would you consider a success when you're rebranding the team or in marketing the team in general? And do you think you've been successful leading the Organization has been successful so far?

Morgan Kolenda: I think being successful with the rebrand... I think we've definitely been successful with it. We're doing everything we can to get our name out there, you know, reaching out to companies and to you know the local news stations and really trying to make sure that we're well known. I think overall, it's been good. Hopefully I'm answering the question right, what was the first part of it?

Nathan Enserro: Just what you would consider a success.

Morgan Kolenda: I honestly just think this has been a great decision to do. I think you know, I worked for the T-Bones a really long time and I loved it, I loved every second of it. I think it was time for kind of a redo a refreshing thing for people, even though it's hard to let go of it. I think it was time it was well overdue and so I think the entire rebrand itself has just been successful digitally. It's been a success on the field, you know when you know, Dan our broadcaster travels to games he gets asked about why we decided to do it, and he does a great job educating people

as to why we're doing this with the Negro Leagues. I think it helps also with the Negro Leagues, because we're talking about them on the road and we're telling that story. I mean, the story is literally being written as we go on in which each game, so I think it's definitely been successful across the board.

Nathan Enserro: This might be more of a Dan question, I'll make sure to ask him as well, but do you have like numbers on media placements and stuff from when you did the rebrand?

Morgan Kolenda: Dan might have it, I might have a few it just to I mean it depends like he was here for the rebrand but it all kind of just depends on what necessarily you're looking for.

Nathan Enserro: And i'm talking to Dan tomorrow so i'll ask him as well, but I think I think that's all I've got for you.

Mark McKee

Nathan Enserro: So the first thing that I'll need from you. Is your name and your role with the monarchs and when you started in that role.

Mark McKee: So Mark McKee, CEO and partner, and gosh it's been two years. You know November of two years ago. We bought the-- Mark [Brandmeyer] bought the T-Bone's AND I joined him to run the run the company and became a partner so.

Nathan Enserro: So you've been involved for as long as Mr. Brandmeyer's has been the owner?

Mark McKee: Yes.

Nathan Enserro: Okay, and what duties does your role entail?

Mark McKee: What does it entail? You know it's part strategic, part operations, part marketing. Try to kind of keep the business kind of on course and growing revenue-wise. Don't really focus on baseball too much because Jay Hinrichs is much better at that than I am, so we leave that to

him and Joe [Calfapietra]. And I kind of take care of everything else, we also manage the stadium so it's you know producing revenue in non-baseball events also.

Nathan Enserro: Okay, and so from your perspective, what was the state of the T-Bones' brand when Mark [Brandmeyer] bought the club?

Mark McKee: You know, when he bought it we we've made a decision, at the very least, we were going to change the logo and we had kind of toyed with trying to change the whole brand and you know we really didn't have the time. However, then COVID hits and we had a decision to make. The league gave us an option to either play or not play so half the teams playing. We decided not to. That gave us that time to rebrand, so we approached the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum to get to licensing rights, and it was you know, made all the difference in the world. There was just too much baggage with the T-Bones, you know they left unceremoniously you know I got locked out by the Unified Government, you know, and we were kind of tired of trying to tell people that we were we weren't the old T-Bones. You know and then having the opportunity to do this with the Monarchs and bring a brand back that's so important to the community and to the hits a history in general, you know. It's really an honor to be able to have done that.

Nathan Enserro: So what was your role in the rebranding efforts in the ideas process and then in execution?

Mark McKee: Well it's funny the idea came because my guy was here doing work on my HVAC at my house and he was a T-Bones fan, and I told him I was thinking about re-naming the team he goes "what about the Monarchs?" Like [laughs] The idea when... That's a great idea, and so we went from there to producing a video to kind of share our vision, which you've probably seen the video before and took that to their board of directors and Bob Kendrick and they embraced it, saw the vision, you know. And then from there, it was just a matter of... We had some time because we didn't have our season, so we started down the pathway of you know, the rebrand, of the uniforms to marketing to anything that had to do with that. Of course, our first season, you know we didn't have... We hardly had any group sales because of COVID. season tickets were

minimal because of COVID. This year I mean we're 10 times higher than we were before, so you know. And then it didn't you know it helps that we won the championship last year too, right?

Nathan Enserro: So I know you considered just switching up the T-Bones brand and Dan showed me a little bit of some of that stuff, but did you consider any other potential team names seriously before?

Mark McKee: We were we were thinking very kind of comical type names. I mean like the Burnt Ends, or you know something kind of Barbecue related you know I mean we're in the entertainment business as much as we are the baseball business and so let's try to make the team fun and you know, like the Bananas have done or the St Paul Saints, I mean we just kind of had that in mind. But you know when we got the opportunity to do it as the Monarchs that was kind of a no brainer for us.

Nathan Enserro: Yeah, so what aspects of the original Monarchs history and branding have you folded into the modern Monarchs brand?

Mark McKee: Well, we try to tell stories. You know, we have that little kind of satellite you know pop-up museum that we have at the stadium which eventually, our goal is to have a mini-museum out there. Kind of satellite museum. That would you know, promote the main museum. You know, we bring Bob Kendrick out a lot to speak this year we're doing a special Buck O'Neil Day to retire his number and to pay homage to his induction in the Hall of Fame. And, and you know this year we'll do a lot more content creation of pieces that tell the story. That's really that's really kind of storytelling is really trying to do what we can do. You'll see more imagery in the ballpark from the history of it, working on that as well.

Nathan Enserro: So from a merchandising perspective, how do you decide... or, I guess, who's in charge of deciding what logos from the old monarchs to use and how do you kind of go about that?

Mark McKee: So we created our own logo. The round logo and then the script essentially. You know, modeling after... We were inspired by different things that we've seen over the years, the KC and so on. And then we have a licensing arrangement with the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum so that means we have to get approval on things that sell and they make a little bit of money on everything that we... every ticket that sold and every T shirt that's sold the museum makes a little bit of money on that.

Nathan Enserro: And then, when you do the throwback game with the Monarchs versus the Homestead Grays, where did where did that idea come from and how do you think fans react to that?

Mark McKee: You know, I think we could do a better job of that. I think we did it last year, a couple times and I don't think we we did a good job of telling a story and making sure people understood. And the players were kind of half-dressed and half-not, I mean, I think... This year we're going to try to do a little bit more, we might bring an old organ out and have organ music and try to do other things, to make it feel thrown back... hey let me go get my charger him about running out of juice here.

[recording paused]

Nathan Enserro: So, we were talking about the throwback nights.

Mark McKee: Yeah so I mean I just I just feel like you know... what's been interesting you know, last year was you know we were drinking from the firehose figuring it all out what works what doesn't. You know, which is good, you know, so this year there's a lot more time and thought and attention to details going into all of our different nights. You know I mean, I'm looking forward to next year because we'll fine tune this year, you know, but the amount of work we're putting in this year is really significant including what we're doing the throwback games.

Nathan Enserro: So tell me the story of how you announced the rebrand and rolled it out?

Mark McKee: So what we did was we did it as a press conference. We had Frank White there who you know had been the first base coach, of course, you know Royals Hall of Famer and Bob Kendrick and several other folks from the museum board. We had the media there, and you know we had produced a video that kind of helped tell the story, and so we shared that. Those are really the things that we did I mean we're you know... You do a press conference you know you hope that everybody will pick it up and that was kind of it was kind of a cool story and it got picked up around the country for sure, and even bigger than that because it was such a unique story that the Monarchs were coming back.

Nathan Enserro: So what kind of comments you get from fans and other people in the baseball industry about the the new brand?

Mark McKee: I think 99% of it was really positive. We tried to do it in a way that was very respectful that we didn't... You know we weren't just trying to exploit this you know. I mean we... You know, we could kind of take it, you know if we were the Burnt Ends's you know how we would probably be less serious right now on things that we do and decisions we make. But because we're the Monarchs you know I think it comes from the certain level of responsibility And to you know we created the Monarchs Youth Academy which we're still getting off the ground and lots of other kind of initiatives tied to diversity, equity and inclusion that you know, we would have probably done it anyway, but probably take a little bit more serious look at it as the Monarchs than we would have otherwise.

Nathan Enserro: Tell me a little bit about how the brand of the Monarchs kind of impacts the team's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion and the community aspect of running a baseball team?

Mark McKee: Well, you know I mean both Mark [Brandmeyer] and myself come from doing a lot of philanthropic and charitable work in the city. It's just part of our DNA, if you will, and so we... Going into this, we knew we wanted to give back to the community. And so, you know that's first and foremost, and then and then it's "Okay, we want to do that, how are you going to do it? and how you do it responsibly?" So, you know we met with the Royals about their urban

youth academy to learn about that model, which is really on the Missouri side of the state line and so we kind of aspire to try to grow our Monarchs Youth Academy to something that eventually might have fields over on the KCK side that we work with to inspire young boys and girls through baseball, softball and mentoring. You know it's not something that you can do overnight. Takes a while you know, and in so but that's you know any kind of organization, you have to have goals, and this is one of our goals is to try to do that.

Nathan Enserro: So, something else that's in in your DNA and Mr. Brandmeyer's and Jay's is being really KC-rooted, how do you think the return of the Monarchs has impacted Kansas City and the KC-area and how do you hope that you can continue to impact the city in the future?

Mark McKee: Well, I think we're you know again we're in a unique role, because we are tied to the museum and a historic name like this. Where we have players like Jackie Robinson and Satchel Paige play on our team. So, you know I think we continue to look at opportunities to give back. I think it's impacted the city--it sure help winning the championship, you know. And our field is something that's fun and entertaining and you know not as... it's serious baseball obviously but it's you know it's not you know we're not Major League. You know, we're trying to help these kids get into the Major Leagues or get back into the Major Leagues. So, there's a mission there to: to help these younger, you know young athletes to try to get back and realize their dreams.

Nathan Enserro: And then, a little bit about the partnership with the museum, how do you think that that relationship with the Museum has helped with the success of the rebrand beyond just like the fact that you needed their legal permission to use that name?

Mark McKee: It's a credibility thing you know and a certain legitimacy, you know Bob Kendrick is... I mean he's the best storyteller there is and an unbelievable ambassador for the museum, so Kansas City is very fortunate to have him. You know Buck O'Neil's not around anymore, you know, and you got Bob Kendrick stepped up into that, so I think we try to find ways that we can highlight Bob Kendrick and the museum and find avenues to drive traffic to the museum and give them exposure. You know, we have coming up here we're on the May 22nd-- you know 22

was Buck's number-- so that'll be our Buck O'Neil Day and we've already got Ken Burns is going to do a video for us, which you did the Baseball documentary which is incredible. Bob Costas is going to do a video for us and we're going to have Bob Kendrick down there on home base, you know with the microphone on a barstool for 10 minutes just telling stories. You know so try to be kind of creative in the ways that we can you know, help the museum and continue to further the further their mission too.

Nathan Enserro: So i'm basing my study around a model developed by--actually a KU guy-- their names are Scola and Gordon and so their model identified Five Practical Areas of Retro Marketing in Sports and retro marketing is the idea of using an old brand or reviving an old brand and so we've already kind of talked about imagery, merchandising, the venue, gameday promotions, but we haven't talked too much about advertising. So from that perspective, what elements of the original Monarchs do you use in your advertising outside the ballpark?

Mark McKee: It's you know. It's really more historic imagery you know I mean we've got to be you know... We're not because... And the reason to do that is just to remind people that we have this wonderful, beautiful history, you know and we try to do that through some of the black and white imagery that you'll see in some of our marketing and the programming that we build into our... And then how we've advertised in marketed out programming. Does that answer your question?

Nathan Enserro: yeah I've got kind of a two-parter and for you, so what would you consider a success in rebranding the team, and do you think you've been successful so far?

Mark McKee: Yeah I think we have been successful so far. I think, part of it is top-line sales, I mean we sell more merchandise than anybody else in our league, by far. And that's, not just because of the Monarchs, it is, and we also have good design and good variety and just you know, good quality. You know, and our ticket sales are going up and group sales are going up, and all that and that's because you know we think that we deliver on the field, you know? And we deliver fun and You know that's probably the measurement is you know, butts in seats really.

You know, and so yeah to that end, I mean our everything we've done is up significantly over last year.

Nathan Enserro: Awesome, is there is there anything else about the original Monarchs or the modern iteration of the Monarchs that you wanted to share before we kind of finish up here?

Mark McKee: No, you know I just... Like I said I think it's we kind of take it as a personal responsibility to you know protect the brand. You know and so everything we do is kind of... that's in the back of our minds and the decisions we make "is this right for the brand? is this respectful to the brand?" you know? So I think it's always in our in our minds as we message, whatever we're going to message I mean we got a lot of messages we had a lot of stuff going out there, you know. So, you try to kind of find ways. Some of what we try to do is to create repeat opportunities, you know so. And what I mean by that is you know Bob Kendrick kind of fireside chats you know? We'll do two of those issues here and we'll have him come back and do two more so we kind of build on the success of programming elements and every year try to you know make this better and bigger and get more people there for them.

Nathan Enserro: Cool. Thank you so much.

Dan Vaughan

Nathan Enserro: The first thing I'm gonna need you to do before we start is just state your name and your position with the Monarchs and how long you've been with the organization.

Dan Vaughan: All right, you ready? My name is Dan Vaughan, V-A-U-G-H-A-N, and I am the play-by-play broadcaster, Voice the Monarchs. That's kind of my unofficial title but Director Broadcasting and Media Relations would be the official title, but the play-by-play voice the Monarchs.

Nathan Enserro: Okay, and you've been with the Monarchs/T-Bones since 2017?

Dan Vaughan: Yes, I started March-- gosh my anniversary of working there-- but Spring Break of 2017. Got the job with the T-Bones very late in the offseason, with about less than a month

before I was supposed to report the Gary Southshore RailCats and been there's since. I was one of the few... I think there were only two full-time holdovers or three, I guess, if you count Casey, because Casey left and came back so she... I'm sorry, Nick's still there, Morgan, myself and Casey, so four. Casey left and came back, yes.

Nathan Enserro: Yeah, that's what Morgan told me as well. So, what was the state of the T-Bones brand when you were hired in 2017?

Dan Vaughan: I had a unique situation, where I was able to watch it from another team. So, in 2013 I came to the American Association with the Gary SouthShore RailCats so I saw it from an opponent's point of view or rival or member, league Member or whatever. And my impression early was-- because I knew some of the people there-- I always thought it was a cool place to go. It's a great location there in the Legends area. The ballpark when I first started going there and 13 and 14 was pretty nice. It wasn't the nicest in the league, but it wasn't the worst. It was probably top-- Probably outside of St. Paul and Winnipeg, probably third or fourth best ballpark in the league at the time. It seemed to me from a distance that it was a cool name. Everybody to the team and it seemed like, my from my distance. When I got there 17, though-- And I began to notice this a little bit as I come in with a Gary team in 15 and especially 16-- I noticed that little things at the ballpark was sort of not as clean as it once was. I shouldn't say "clean," it was a little rougher shape. They hadn't-- It was obvious, you can kind of tell when people put new paint on something or when they really take the time to fix some of the issues and you can tell that they just slapped a little paint on here, there and they hadn't really... It wasn't the brand, it wasn't so much the people working there. They had really kept the ballpark and I didn't dawn on me until I got there that the brand seemed a little bit-- that I hadn't really been propped up like it probably should have been. I think part of that was because of the situation, the time the ownership was in a battle, the ownership at that time, the Ehlers were in a-- and you can go back and look at the newspaper articles, you probably have-- there was a battle going on between Wyandotte County and the ballclub. Outstanding electric bills and things like that, so there was a lot of he said she said going on. I didn't realize that, and it wasn't something I was concerned about, because my wife and I made the decision to go to Kansas City, because it was closer to home in Dallas, closer for her we had family there, first cousins there, so a lot of things that went

into that for us. And I didn't really... What the ownership of the city were doing was not my concern. It probably should have been, but it wasn't my concern. My concern is to stay in my lane and do my job and promote and do the best I can but it was clearly obvious once 17 rolled in. Little things they like you know, we had cool uniforms but they hadn't been upgraded in a while. I mean we were wearing 17-18-19. I mean, some of our BP (batting practice) jerseys and some of our jerseys I mean... There was sets... We couldn't wear complete sets. Our dark T-Bones jersey that had seen better days. I mean, even in the 19 season, we were wearing... I don't know if you know GoBlow(?) charities Mike Martin who's based in Kansas City, we did a gold glove charity night for wearing a special Jersey. And we just wore those jerseys at home the rest of the year, because they look good and they were newer. I mean it was one of those deals like that, so you know, to answer your question: I saw some cracks but it's not those things when you notice right away. I'm like 'okay there's a there's some cobwebs here on the elevator' or you know 'I think that could use a little dusting,' 'boy, the carpets a little worn, the suites are a little worn' and I think that translated to the brand. The brand... what you saw at the ballpark from an aesthetic point of view, was also sort of the brand the brand and sort of been worn a little bit and largely due in part to the goings on in the media, because when I said, there was articles... Right, for I took over in 17 there was a couple back and forths, but it really was never mentioned to us. I never heard of it mentioned to us at all any of our meetings until we got-- you may remember this, the Star and couple of TV stations jumped all over the story-- when we got locked out or... we didn't get locked out right away we were threatened get locked out and kicked out of the ballpark during... that was a 2019 season, 2018 we go to the playoffs, win the championship, and the week before we start the playoffs: The Ehlerts tell us they're selling the ballclub that so that was hanging over our heads. So there was some of that, and so the team has kind of for sale, so we didn't put a lot more in the brand then... They don't sell the team after the 19 or 18. We go to the 19 season and we see here a little bit more that hubbub with the city and what was going on with the with the owners, again... It never was came up in any meetings and by the time the end of the season came in 19, the media had been over the story of us getting locked out--you may have seen all that-- and by that time I mean your brand took a beating it took a beating, you know, with the facilities and took a meeting with neglect by not putting money back into the ballclub from you know... I don't know, I'm only speaking from a former employee, I'm not [speaking] for those owners. I can't tell you why there was no money put back in. I can't tell you

the reasons behind any of that, because I don't know but it's clearly obvious and you don't take care of your brand. it's like a car you don't rotate the tires but air in them and your tires, you're going to have a bad time. If you don't change the oil in your engine, you're going to... your engines going to go out. And they had done that, and then you throw the other things that went on the brand took a real beating. About time 2019 came around, the T-Bones were not something that really was a sustainable brand in the market, because... not so much... It wasn't the mascot, it wasn't the colors, wasn't any that, the name itself... Those things were all great people still loved that name and the mascot. It's kind of a cute name and the T with the little bone in it was great. But it taken such neglect all around and beating in the media, and all that that it was not a sustainable item a Sustainable name rather. So that was kind of a storyline that I saw for my seat right and again, not knowing the financial ramifications of it, but you can go back and read what they owed and kind of put the-- connect dots from there.

Nathan Enserro: So, 2020 rolls around and the MaxFun Entertainment/Brandmeyers ownership group takes over and they tell you guys that they want to rebrand. What was your reaction?

Dan Vaughan: Well, the first thing was we didn't rebrand right away. When Mr. Brandmeyer, Mark, brought the club, we had a meeting and everybody was still the old T-Bones, who was you know, it was... We cause we thought I remember this is pre-pandemic so, the 19 season, we finished in the postseason lose the first round to Sioux City. We go into on the off-season, the team basically sold in October. We meet in November couple weeks before. The tail end of October, early November, we meet there in Leawood (Kansas) and kind of get an idea what's going on and we're told that there's gonna be... and they show us the new the new logo not... it's the same T-Bones logo and I don't know if you ever saw it, but there was a different... You know the old T-Bones colors were the maroonish red this one was a red, white, blue. The bull now was redder, there was a blue involved in it. Basically the Monarchs colors coming from going forward, but it hadn't been told, yet. We didn't know anything about it because Mark [Brandmeyer] hadn't even started the whole negotiation, yet. So, this is the fall of 19, we go on the off season, I did a whole bunch... We had a whole new logo, new color scheme and all that which was exciting, you know, and I... Somewhere, I've got an old... You know one of the only pullovers I ever got for the new... with the old new logo... and colors can be tweaked. The logo

is little less cartoonish a little more bullish and I don't know... I don't know if you ever, did your see that, by the way? Here, so the old. Okay, I can send you a... After i'm done here, i'll send you a comparison. It wasn't a major difference, you can see the difference in the logo and what is became. A lot more blue and red, I redesigned all my stuff my shows everything Blah blah blah so... We go into the 20 season, thinking we're gonna be the T-Bones. Now, we knew there was probably going to be a change of name at some point. We didn't know what that was going to be, we were sort of teased with that. We were going into the 20 season... because it does take, you know, considerable time. You just can't flip a switch you got to, you know, there's all... Especially with the Monarchs thing you couldn't flip a switch because you have the Negro Leagues museum and a lot of legacy there yet, a lot of people involved, a lot of trademarks and legalese that had to be crossed, and all that. So we went in the 20 seasons that we thought we were going to play, and we were going to be the T-Bones, and so we get in to March and the pandemic hits in 20. And then we, we realize we're going to start the season late, keep pushing back eventually Wyandotte shuts down and we're not able to play at all. And so we go to a pause right there, so the 20 season, they play. The Association plays with six teams, but we didn't play. We were still the T-Bones and matter of fact, I did all summer... I did a T-Bones Greatest Hits show. I did Steakhouse Bites, where I did a little bits and pieces of things for social media during the... And highlights of guys who were playing for other teams that we had, Darnell Sweeney, for example. that summer of 20 and then it wasn't until the fall of 20 about... again, almost a year after the team was purchased that we get this 'hey we're going to rebrand' and I knew the name of the team. I'd known... I knew what it was, they told us. We didn't we didn't make the announcement, though until January of 2021. so we had to sit in that you know October, November, December into the offseason. And it was exciting, knowing that we're going to do that and we did announce until 21. So my first reaction was 'wow no brainer.' And then I began to realize that it just because of the reason. You, know pandemic is what caused it and Mark Brandmeyer talked about this before, he said it to me on the air bunch of times and in public. In the pandemic, there were a lot of negatives. This is an opportunity: if the pandemic doesn't happen, we probably go in as the T-Bones. Do we salvage that name? Do we right the ship? Do we stay the T-Bones? Do we go become something else? But the pandemic gave them chance to work with Bob Kendrick and the museum and work out something during that offseason or during that season, we didn't play. And if we don't have the pandemic we're probably not the

Monarchs, so out of a negative came a great opportunity and I was excited because I mean. If you can't be... You know this as a Kansas City guy, you walk around KC you see people wearing the Monarchs hats, the old school pinwheels, The K and the C, the heart, all that came from the Monarchs. That was before the Royals were the KC, that was the Monarchs and before the A's wore it, that's what was worn. People wore that. That was a well-known logo, even the Blues borrowed that when they were the triple-a club borrowed that same look. So, you can't go anywhere in Kansas City without knowing about the museum, you said, your Monarchs' jerseys, all the throwback jerseys. Having been to the museum a bunch of times, I knew that... we had a built-in merch store already without even having to open up the gate. I mean we had all the old throwbacks yeah even the Ebbets Field stuff, the museum stuff. I mean we really have a built-in that no other team in the world has. There's no team in our league that has what we have, I mean granted not all of our merchandise is official Monarchs, but I don't know... The Winnipeg Goldeyes are a cute little mascot, they just redid their mascot and all. The that little fish. But you're not you're not going to go to Chicago and see a Winnipeg Goldeye cap. You can go to Chicago to a game at Wrigley and there's a person wearing a Monarch shirt or a cap. they're all anywhere you go. So that was exciting and knowing that part of the merchandise side, which is kind of a hobby I don't really delve into. I've always been a fan of merchandise, you can see on my wall. That was exciting and then you start throwing the history in there, I mean. I step back and go "man I have a whole..." it'd be like... it's like becoming a citizen of a country you've never been to, but part of the deal is you got to learn the history and I suddenly. I thought I knew... Obviously, we all know the Jackie Robinson story that's the basics. But I didn't know all the Jackie Robinson story, heck I didn't know the... I didn't know that... I'd assumed he played with the Monarchs for 10 years. I didn't know he played for five months and wore number five. You know, I knew Satchel Paige played in the Negro Leagues, but I didn't know his story and Willard Brown and you know. I didn't know J. L. Wilkinson, who was the you know the white founder of the Monarchs--original Monarchs. I didn't know anything about his story: flamed out ballplayer, showman, businessman who didn't see race he just saw opportunity to entertain. I mean I didn't know his story, you know, and I know so as we're going along I'm diving in and going... so I grabbed a book and [looks for book] it's down here. When you have this little book here. This is like my first textbook and I use it as a textbook. it's the textbook of the Monarchs I use it for our broadcast. I tell people about it because it's kind of like... It's like the intro. it's like

when you go to U.S. history, this is your intro text, but this is the same thing with the Monarchs. Because it was a good walk through the whole thing and I'm like 'It only scratched the surface.' Then I started, you know... so you know that you've got a built-in story to tell, and I was excited because in all... You know, I love the history of baseball there's not a lot of... Like I was in Gary, for example. The RailCats I guess came in in 2002. There was no RailCats from 1920, you know? There are some cities that there was history there. Sioux Falls, for example. They've been playing baseball there for hundreds of years, but we didn't have... We had history in Kansas City, but not this kind of history, now we were that history. So now that whole door opens, so you throw all that into the mix, I mean I was fired up. I mean, I was just like wow. I knew... I could see... I had vision in my head on my broadcast were gonna go and they're still evolving. I'm still in that same mode. I see how it goes and I'm telling you, I'm not exaggerating the lessons I learned and almost on a daily basis during the season I'll dig something new up. And I'll be looking for one thing I find something else. It's amazing, and so the whole thing was just like "wow This is great," The city was gonna love us. I knew the opportunity for the area, the history, all that. I mean there's like wow and I'm thinking: 'yeah those are cute logos in the Appalachian League, but they don't have anything on this.' This logo's not cute is not against that you know, Monty is not the... he's not the cute new mascot, that's not the point. The Monarchs are the point. The Monarch's story is the point that's the thing that's a cool.

Nathan Enserro: So, Jay told me that there was only one name and Morgan kind of said it was a no brainer and that eventually, there will be a team in Kansas City that was the Monarchs and it ended up being you all what's kind of your perspective on that? Do you think that there were other names considered? Do you know of other names that were considered beyond just rebranding the T-Bones?

Dan Vaughan: I don't know what... I know there are a couple of things sort of tossed out, I mean they're always... Here in Kansas City there's always you know, the Beef, you know, obviously the Royal line anything Royal you know that line goes back... You know, American Royal that all the the fountains all that whole feeling of you know, of a royal city goes back a long ways. And then, of course, you throw in any kind of cow town, Barbecue. There's all those connections there that were all that I never really heard of anything necessarily that was really banded about.

I think Monarchs was the focus. That was Mark's [Brandmeyer] focus and Mark McKee's focus, I think that was the focus was how to make that work. And how to make it work and if you've heard him and Bob Kendrick talk about it, how to make it work for both sides. Because Bob [Kendrick] even said in his initial press conference and he said it several times that says, that's his baby. The Monarchs are his flagship baby in the Negro Leagues Museum and how to make that work, but you know, I find it interesting, this is one of the interesting about it: Buck O'Neil's name used to adorn in the outfield wall with the old T-Bones, his name and number were up there from his time because he did back in the 2006 season and I think it was, he played for the All-Star game and American--or that time it was the Northern League-- and he played for both teams, and so it was a little connection with Buck O'Neil already with baseball the community, I think it is all made sense, as one of those deals where-- and I'm only speaking for myself-- but you look at it, it all made sense. But to connect those things was not easy and they made it work because it made sense, and I think that was the thing. That was a target, and I think eventually whether it had been 2021 or 22 whenever, the Monarchs would have been the name. That's the impression I get.

Nathan Enserro: So, when it came time to roll out the rebrand and, you said in January. Kind of what strategies, did you use and what what's the story on how that rollout happened?

Dan Vaughan: As far as..- i'm sorry what was that?

Nathan Enserro: Just announcing to the public the rebrand?

Dan Vaughan: What's fun about it was we kind of teased it. Now and Morgan may have mentioned this to you a little. [pauses to send email] I don't think I've even told the story on the air, but we send out--and Morgan did a really good job of sending out a little teaser—you know, "something's coming." I even flew up. I flew from Dallas you know and flew up I think it was a Thursday was the press conference I think I flew up Wednesday morning, maybe. Spent Wednesday the office over in Leawood and then stayed over and flew back Thursday night after the press conference but. She kind of teased it out to all the... We teased all the media locally that something was coming and most people I think thought... Well, I can't speak for all the

Kansas City folks necessarily, but the impression I got from around the league was around baseball was “who are you signing? What big player?” Because we have a reputation for signing some pretty big names. We'd had Daniel Nava Who, if you remember Daniel Dava played for the Red Sox and played for us, for the T-Bones in 19. Nava hit the home run on a walk off winner after the bombings in Boston that year, a few years back at the Boston marathon bombings. Anyway, you know we'd had... We were loaded... and so from an independent standpoint they were like, “Whoah, who are they signing” and Steve Montgomery, who is the manager at Sioux City was texting me going “tell me who you're signing. tell me you're signing and what's going on, who you're signing?” And i'm like “Steve,” I said it and he's convinced we were signing some big name star. He didn't know what was going to be, he was convinced. We kept on this thing out there “something's coming”, and so everybody... the natural assumption was it was a player because who's going to change... now from the outside, from Sioux City's standpoint, “why would you change the T-Bones name?” They weren't in Kansas City, knowing that need that name had really taking a beating. some folks knew a lot of folks didn't have a clue. Kevin Luca with This Week in the American Association thought of a name change, he was convinced, I can't remember the name, he thought it was... he thought that was a name change we didn't know what he... No one was guessing Monarchs but I had you know, had Steve Montgomery, and other people, the League asking me: “Who are you guys signing?” And they were all... so we roll this whole tease out and no one knew it wasn't like “hey...” But I think the good thing was... What Morgan did was say “yes something was coming,” but she didn't say what. We didn't leak what we just said something was coming. Major announcement we've never really done that before and that's... Of course what down tp the museum and had the announcement down there and It was it was it was a big hit, but I don't think anybody... no one really knew what... I mean they thought, maybe... Some folks I thought was something about the stadium or whatever, maybe celebrity ownership. There was some rumor-- I think there was a rumor going around that might be, because you know Mark McKee has connections and there was some... The fall before the Chiefs games on the Nfl Network or it Fox or... I think it was Fox or CBS but they had a you know the celebrities of two teams, it was Kansas City and they had a one of the... it was Eric Stonestreet was wearing it was wearing a T-Bones cop or something like that you know. There was all these rumors going around that there was going to be something like but,

again, no one really no one nailed it. No one had a clue and I thought was hilarious because it sort of made... I guess it makes too much sense that no one guessed it.

Nathan Enserro: So I asked Morgan this and she said you might have better a better answer, but do you know, like media placements and impression numbers on the rebrand from the press conference?

Dan Vaughan: You know, not off the top my head. I can tell you that every... well I knew this every TV station was there and that was something that Will Gregory worked so hard about--the local PR firm. we had every TV station was there. Obviously the Star, the Royals were there they had people for the front office there. The museum did a good job of getting people out that they that they deal with because they have a little bit of a different. You know, Bob has sports connections, but also news connections, where maybe we didn't have as many of his connections. So all the connections came together they worked some of their angle, we worked our angle, we did send out release to everybody out there on our list of people. Will Gregory's group sent out their group, but I do know every TV station was there. The Kansas City Star was there, there were a handful their little daily publications there in the area, one of them is... I can't remember the name of it, the Kansas City Globe was there, you know another publication there. And I did tip off slightly before the show, before we went on, we did the thing live, I did tell this with the Association, let those guys Rob Paneer (SP?) and Kevin Luca who have done a lot for our league. I let them know. Gave them the tidbit a little a few hour... enough hours before they had it before we actually announced it. So they want to do something and record it by the time they got it recorded it'd be... They'd be the first ones will announce it and even though we would already... Even though we announced it at one o'clock, Their next show will be the first one to have it out, and so they had they had it that day, but I teased it for them, just to give them a little heads up but. Every TV station was there and they weren't it wasn't just the sports, it was the news people because I guess what what we did is we let the news people know "hey this is..." Once we got close enough that night before. I believe what Will did, and I know I had a couple people asked me, you know, it was not player related this was brand related so we can't let that leak out to make sure the news people were there. And so you know I go back and look at those old photos and it was not just the sports guys, the news people were there. Because it was a it

was a newsworthy event for... It was things that got buried in the three minutes of sports, but can be run during the news as well.

Nathan Enserro: So, after the rollout what kind of comments did you get from fans and then from folks within the industry and in the League and that kind of stuff about the rebrand?

Dan Vaughan: Industry loved it. No brainer. I mean the League, you know Joshua Schaub and Josh Buckholtz, you know the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner, they were all for it. League-wide all the folks league-wide were like “man that's so cool” and, especially, they realize you're connecting the dots with the museum. What I think people didn't realize the museum and the Monarchs that whole marriage. It wasn't just taking a name, you're also taking the legacy and the museum story and there's an if there was an important that's an important part of the whole rebrand was that wasn't just a “okay we're getting a brand new name. And we're going to be, you know...” God forbid the Chiefs move to Lincoln or something you take the Lincoln Chiefs. See I'm saying? We were we were picking up a name, plus the museum and all their backing too which was unique. So that that was huge amongst the League. Locally, you know there's a small segment and you're always going to have that and I'm just guessing here: 10 to 15% and that may be a little high on 15. 12%: “Oh, I miss the T-Bones!” You're always going to have a curmudgeon who doesn't want change. There's always gonna be that group who who... Usually the ones who had the most T-Bone gear and didn't what the change, they didn't understand the change, they didn't see it like we did. Maybe it was more people that were-- even some of the host parents were like “Well...” You know because they have all the gear. Now the folks who didn't have the gear had the gear. Does that make sense? Suddenly you've got folks in the community who don't have T-Bones gear, but they've got Monarchs gear, thought “oh wow.” And it's kind of cool. I've been to a wedding in Hawaii fall of 19, when the team was sold, and I remember in the wedding I went to, it was my cousin in Kansas City's daughter, my second cousin. So all these people were in the wedding party were all KC people in the most part. She went to Missouri but you know all her friends you know high school there in KC. So, she has people from Kansas City at this wedding in Hawaii. And they're all talking about the Monarchs and I remember having a conversation at the pub out there, watching some football-- Chiefs are on one screen the Cowboys on the other guess what I was watching-- they were all talking “oh, I

used to love the T-Bones games, but I haven't been so long.” So I remember that conversation, now I’m fast forwarding to 2021 and everybody's going “I can't wait to get out there.” I got my cousins, or you know my cousin, messaged me going “I can't wait to get out to a game when I’m in town” or my cousin who lives there: “I can't wait to get out to a game, I hadn’t been out to a game since I worked there.” You know, people were wanting to come out to a game now you saw that more it wasn't just: “I can't wait for the season to start” that's what you get you know for repeat fans. You have people saying “I can't wait to get out there. This is gonna be exciting I’ve never been out there. I want to see this,” so you saw that whole energy of a whole new breath of fresh air. You still have that group of people “I miss the T-Bones” and you're going to have that no matter... I don't care what you change, I mean if the Royals change colors the green, you're going to have people going to miss... You know what i'm saying? It's just going to be... You're not gonna make everybody happy, I guess, probably a bad example, but you’re not going to make everybody happy. I mean there's always be somebody out there that’s going to be a hold-out, but by and large, I would say it was positive all the way around but for different reasons. You know around the league they were like envious because I think. If you've been in baseball long enough and you knew the what the what the opportunity was for merchandise--which i'm sure you've heard our merchandise sales, you know were great-- you're thinking “wow that's a whole new revenue stream” and the possibilities are endless with the museum and all that built-in. I mean you started seeing all the possibilities. I think the League from a standpoint like that, they saw. And I think locally fans were welcoming the change, and they were welcoming the fact that the Monarchs from back-- that name was back and then the name is a very proud name. People now had a chance to talk about the Monarchs again granted, we’d gone away for a long time, but you have a whole generation of fans all they've ever heard about is how great the Monarchs were and now they're going to chance to experience it so. It was a great... overall positive the one the curmudgeons stand out because it was so rare and they were vocal, but it was so rare.

Nathan Enserro: How much of the original Monarchs branding and stories do you try to work into your job?

Dan Vaughan: I try to work it in every broadcast. Everything I do. The first thing I did when I realized what an opportunity it was, I revamped my pregame show, or I put a... We sold a Flashback Moment to Coors Light and I think they're doing again this year, where we did a Flashback Moment. I did a thing I thought was important I'm still doing this, a Monarchs 101. Because I really believe a lot of folks don't quite... They're like me, if I'm a baseball guy and I don't know the history of the Monarchs, well shame on me for not learning well I'm trying to help us all get caught up. So, I showed the book a while ago but, Monarchs 101, I've had some fun with it, and where I've gone through and told a story Bullet Joe Rogan, or I did... Most recently I've done for my shows... During my last three of the shows this year I did J.L. Wilkinson the story in detail. What was this story? now we're kind of like... I did Peanut Johnson, who was a... She wasn't a Monarch, but she played for the Indianapolis Clowns, but one of the first female professional players. I did her story last show and I try to... But every radio broadcast I did two segments in the pre-game, so I taped 200 of those. A hundred games last year, that includes double headers so if we do a double header I very rarely re-racked them, sometimes... I had a couple of greatest hits ones, so when I say 200, it might be like 190. That's the ones that were really-- people wanted to hear it again, so I replayed them usually between double headers and during my live shows... Monarchs Live show and my Reign Reborn show, I don't always... I try to do something every show. Last week, I had two guests on my show, so I had to move them my podcast. So, podcast had a 101 and a Flashback but everything I do, I try to have something. [unintelligible] it's sometimes hard to do if the show goes too long, but my podcast always... Anything I ever do for the team it's almost always gonna have a segment, but I really dove into that. You know, I bought a subscription to newspapers.com and just do a do a generic search for July 2nd and Monarchs and all the things that come up from that from 1930, 1920 I mean there's some great stuff out there and I only scratched the surface. So, I'm doing something every broadcast for me. And I try to remember that that you know that story... I'm going to be doing a podcast here in a little while where I'm going to be talking about Jackie Robinson and his Monarchs time so I mean. I'm always out there, doing that and it's important to me. It's important that we go on the road, that I try to keep something in our game notes, you know a lot of it is stuff that everybody sees at home, but I throw something in there about the Monarchs history, about the museum. I think it's important as a brand ambassador that I have to tell that story and I want to make sure that first day on the road, I give them a packet to their

media person to give their writer, the Tribune or wherever in Chicago. That all tells our story, because I think it's important to know what Mark Brandmeyer and Bob Kendrick have done. I think it's important to let people know that. And as you know... I firmly believe, too as a white evangelical I don't hide the fact that I'm a believer and I don't hide that fact. I don't think... It's not like I'm talking about the air, but you know, Dr King was talking to me for the Letters from the Birmingham Jail and we know that story. He was talking about the white moderate, you know the white moderate was the one who's had... it wasn't the Ku Klux Klan, it was the white moderates, the the guys like me, who have the responsibility to make sure that we are doing right by society race relations-wise. I take that very important very, very important responsibility that... You kind of think "well, I'm a white guy. Why am I talking about the Negro Leagues?" Well I think it's my responsibility to Dr. [Martin Luther] King [Jr] and the legacy of civil rights. As the guy who he was writing to, to be able to make sure I'm telling the story of Reign Reborn and those racial injustices and the social injustices and just how far we've come and we still got a long way to go. And you know I used to think... Initially I was like "I don't think that's a role for me," but the more I read his letters, the more my pastor has talked about it with our involvement in the community in Dallas, I think it's my place and I really believe that. I was put in this place to tell the story, so I don't shy away from it. And it may make some people kind of uncomfortable but good if you're uncomfortable, because uncomfortable subjects is what's going to make us change our thinking. Because there's still people out there that think guys, like me are NUTS. They still think black and white, I don't think that way. So, you know I take real pride in the opportunity and really it's a blessing, I mean no broadcaster, I know you know this, I've told you this, but for your recording... I mean, no broadcaster has the opportunity that I have to tell the story. I know I have a fantastic opportunity that nobody else gets and I'm going to take every minute of an opportunity to tell that story, and if it makes us better people and that's why... You know, I've always talked about being better the next day and showing more love and I believe that, because that's how we're going to come back: race relations. How we're going to come back: wars in Ukraine and things like that. I know it sounds really evangelical, but you don't have to be a believer to know that love and treating mankind like you want to be treated is what we should be doing, and we should be celebrating that. So, you throw all those things together, I am the greatest position as a broadcaster to talk about that and then every chance I get, I'm going to talk about it because it's built-in, it's part of the brand.

You know if you're you know you're telling the K-State as a a graduate, I'm telling the Texas Tech story and as a monarch I'm telling the Monarchs story. We tell those brand stories and they're important to us, and if you're not... If you're not studying what we're doing as a brand—and that could be any team you work for-- then you're not doing your job and I think I'm doing the best I can do.

Nathan Enserro: So, the partnership with the museum. My understanding of the situation was basically: Mr. Brandmeyer went to the museum and wanted to use the Monarchs name and they kind of worked out a partnership, where it's a shared marketing strategy between the museum and the Monarchs. Can you tell me a little bit about kind of how the museum and the baseball club have impacted each other over the last two years or so?

Dan Vaughan: Well, no one would ever have been talking about the Monarchs if it it was wasn't for this-- and I mean the Monarchs, our Monarchs the ballclub in the American Association-- would never been getting any publicity at all if it wasn't for Bob Kendrick and him being on ESPN Sunday Night Baseball and every time you see a Monday Night Football or Sunday Night Football for the Chiefs or national broadcast they're showing the museum, which, in turn, you know granted it does connect the dots. They don't always say "Kansas City" but one of the broadcasts, they said "well, now Negro League Museum and the Monarchs name is back in Kansas City as well the minor league team." That was mentioned as well on one of the broadcast. I mean these little extras, you know, you're seeing it and I think that the museum... It's unique partnership, because it's not again we're not changing to a name we're not reinventing the wheel. They didn't just give us the name and say "Okay, well, here it is." With that name came responsibility and we... Both sides, I mean their responsibility to promote us, our responsibility to promote the. And all the points in between. And when people go to the museum we hope they'll buy a Monarch shirt or a jersey, hope they'll come to see a game. When they come to the game, they'll see the displays, they'll here as celebrating Reign Reborn, they'll want to go see the museum and vice versa. So the opportunity is built in you can't... When I see Bob Kendrick now on TV, or whatever he's doing, his Black Diamonds Podcast, I'm like "that's our guy" and I hope they do the same thing I hope Kiona Sinks and Bob [Kendrick] see me doing something or Mr. Brandmeyer doing something or Jay Hinrichs or whoever--Morgan. That's out

there saying the same thing. I think they do: "Those are our folks" and it's one big huge baseball family and that you're seeing, I mean you cannot help but see that. No other team in the Association, no other minor league team in baseball has what we have. The only team that has what we have are the major league teams, even they don't all have this kind of brand and this kind of story. So it... Only a handful of the legacy teams, maybe, but I mean. Nothing against the San Diego Padres, that's probably a bad example. I'll use the Texas Rangers. I love the Rangers that my team, but nothing against them, but is that story and that legacy better than what we have in the Monarchs? Absolutely not. And I think they would admit that, it's not the same, but we have such a unique situation that no one else has.

Nathan Enserro: So a lot of the reading that I've been doing about retro marketing and bringing back old sports team names, a major impact on the success of those rebrand is generally nostalgia for the brand. We talked about the [Charlotte] Bobcats earlier and they had a recent history, and so there were a lot of fans of the old Bobcats that were able to connect to a new brand. The Monarchs don't really have that, because the Negro Leagues and the Kansas City Monarchs-- the original ones-- were so long ago. So, what do you think... What kind of aspects of the brand have developed that nostalgia, do you think that there's a nostalgia for the original Monarchs that developed through the throwback uniforms and all that kind of stuff? And then, what do you think kind of I guess replaces that aspect of success for old rebranding?

Dan Vaughan: Well, the thing is the Monarchs even though they went away. The jerseys in the heart Kansas City and all those things never went away. People still wear those t-shirts, that's the thing that makes us so unique. It's not like you know when the Chiefs became... the Chiefs were the Texans in Dallas and Houston then went to Kansas City and no one in Dallas... The Texans are a team from Houston to us now, but in Dallas I grew up as a... I grew up knowing about the Dallas Texans, but I never saw them play and the Cowboys overshadowed them and you don't see the wearing Dallas Texans t-shirts walking around Dallas trying to bring that brand back. You always... As long as I've been going to Kansas City I've been seeing Kansas City Monarchs shirts and caps and jerseys from a bygone era. That history is always been celebrated. So I think first off, that brand meant so much to the community for so long, went for 1920 to the 1960s and granted they left going to Michigan in the late 50s. But that history was so ingrained,

not just in black society, but also white society. I mean you had... Even though there's the city was segregated, there was a good section of white fans who follow them and they were well-known, I mean everybody knew who Satchel Paige was and everybody knew these guys. These are well known, people everybody knew their story. I think Buck O'Neil's story, because Buck O'Neil kept the Negro Leagues alive, with the museum, with his story and being an ambassador. That helped too. That kept things... Granted there's a whole three generations of people me included that never saw the Monarchs play, but it was kind of bubbling in the background. It was kinda on the heater. You know, it was warm there and all you gotta do is just put the right ingredient in there to get the thing that the fire going, and that's what made it so unique because it did mean so much the community, and you know junior heard it from his dad who heard it from his dad you know that kind of deal. You know "I never saw him play, but my granddad did" you know that kind of deal and that's important. You know, in a town the size of Kansas City that's not too big not too small, that was the first thing that really helped us dramatically. You know it really just basically all you do is just turn the fire back on. It's all you had to do and then people are like going "Okay, all right, this means something" because I think the Monarchs' name means something to that community and to our community, and I think that that was the thing and just had to be turned on.

Nathan Enserro: Okay awesome I'm going to let you run because you've got your next meeting and i'm out of questions for now, but.

Dan Vaughan: Did this help you?

Nathan Enserro: Oh yeah, a whole lot, yeah.

Nathan Enserro: I will let you know if I come up with anything else I'm going to stop recording.

