

"It's much more the opposite. Looking at what he did I'm sure was not very popular. Otherwise, he wouldn't have been the only one hanging out there. You could say that what he did was political suicide."

What did emerge after the failed tryout of 1945 was a legitimate friendship between Jackie Robinson and the Muchnick family. When Robinson was signed by the Dodgers, Muchnick wrote him a letter that read in part, "My congratulations and best wishes to you on your well-deserved promotion to the Brooklyn Dodgers! Since the day when you first came here with Wendell Smith of The Pittsburgh Courier and I arranged for you and two other boys to get a tryout with the Boston Red Sox, I have naturally followed your career with great interest. I have every confidence you will make the grade."

The Muchnick house became a regular stop for Robinson when the Dodgers came to town to play the Boston Braves. After Robinson retired, he sent Muchnick a copy of his autobiography with journalist Carl Rowan with the inscription, "To my friend Isadore Muchnick with sincere appreciation for all you meant to my baseball career. I hope you enjoy 'Wait Til Next Year.' Much of it was inspired by your attitudes and beliefs."

Izzy and Jackie remained in frequent contact over the years. Robinson and one of his sons came to Boston at Muchnick's invitation to speak at a father-and-son breakfast at Muchnick's synagogue. The two men engaged in heated debate about the 1960 presidential election. Muchnick was a lifelong Democrat, and Robinson, in a move he would later regret, backed Nixon.

There was a clear spiritual connection between Robinson and Muchnick. Robinson, battered and weary from the fight, died too young of a heart attack in 1972. He was only fifty-three years old. Isadore Muchnick died nine years earlier, in 1963, but he was just as young, fifty-five at the time. His will to live, David Muchnick believed, was enormous. Over his final five years, Muchnick suffered seven heart attacks. On a rainy night in 1957, Muchnick received a frantic call at 5 A.M. from a former city councilor's wife. Her husband had gone out drinking and had not come home that night. Muchnick crawled out of bed and went out into the drizzly Boston night to look for his old colleague. At 9 A.M., Ann Muchnick received a phone call of her own. Izzy had suffered a major heart attack and had been rushed to Massachusetts General Hospital, which sits in Boston's old West End near Izzy Muchnick's boyhood home.

It was Muchnick who used his influence to push the door open, to force the Red Sox and baseball to publicly face itself. Even if Joe Cronin and Eddie Collins weren't paying attention, Branch Rickey most certainly was. Slowly, the landscape began to change.

In 1998, Ann Muchnick died. She was eighty-nine. In prior years, the daughter asked for family information and the mother obliged with poignant recollections. She wrote that her husband "was a wonderful man . . . helped so many, so many abused his help, took advantage of him. I could name dozens, but better forgotten." They also spoke of Jackie Robinson not as the man spurned by the Red Sox, but as their friend. "It was the Red Sox's loss," Ann Muchnick said of the whole tryout affair. "It wasn't his loss. Look at the career he had. He lost nothing. It was the Red Sox who lost everything."

In Robinson's autobiography with Carl Rowan lay another tribute to Muchnick. "Without the pushers and the crusaders, the waiters wait in vain; without people like Damon Runyon, and Branch Rickey, Wendell Smith and Isadore Muchnick, Jackie and the Negro might still be waiting for their hour in organized baseball."

In the end, the Robinson tryout failed because the Boston Red Sox were reticent from the outset. Led by Eddie Collins, the club had no real intention of acting beyond that April morning or as history would show for more than a decade thereafter. Within the organization, there was no guiding force, no catalyst with the vision to make integration a reality, and in years to come this would become the critical characteristic of the Boston Red Sox regarding race. Had there been a central figure in Boston, a Branch Rickey or even a Gussie Busch, who provided some form of vision, the Red Sox script would indeed have been different. It is more than a little damning that the months before the tryout and even after, it was Collins who represented the club and not Tom Yawkey, who stood invisible. At a time when the Red Sox stood at the precipice of baseball history, the team's owner lay deep in the background. Tom Yawkey was the only figure in the organization with the power to act boldly, and whether or not he harbored a personal dislike for blacks is secondary to his silence. That silence, in effect, would become a closing indictment. No different than the curved maze of streets in its city, the Red Sox lacked a clear-cut moral direction on race; against this, the combined pioneering spirit of Isadore Muchnick and Jackie Robinson never stood a chance.

IN HONOR AND REMEMBRANCE OF  
SERGEANT MICHAEL FINKE, JR.

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 2, 2005*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and remembrance of United States Marine Corps Sergeant Michael Finke, Jr., who courageously and selflessly rose to the call to duty and made the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of our country.

Sergeant Finke was an exceptional United States Marine and was an equally exceptional human being. His life was characterized by his unwavering sense of duty and commitment to our nation, and above all, his life reflected a deep dedication to, and steadfast focus on his family—his beloved wife Heather, his parents, sisters, brother, grandparents and many friends.

Sergeant Finke grew up in Medina, and shortly after high school graduation, he fulfilled his childhood dream by enlisting in the Marines. His eleven years of service was framed by honor, bravery and duty. Throughout his military journey, Sergeant Finke carried with him a strong foundation of faith, family and community. He quickly ascended through the ranks, and attained the title of Sergeant. His strong intellect and solid sense of integrity evenly matched his exceptional sense of humor and kindness toward others. Sergeant Finke's entire life—civilian and military, reflected his generous heart and sincere concern for the welfare of others. He often and easily offered his assistance to anyone in need, asking for nothing in return.

Mr. Speaker and Colleagues, please join me in honor and remembrance of Sergeant Michael Finke, Jr., whose heroic actions, commitment and bravery will be remembered always. I extend my deepest condolences to the family of Sergeant Finke—his beloved wife Heather; his beloved parents, Sally and Michael Sr.; his beloved stepparents Geoffrey

and Nadine; his beloved sisters and brother, Trisha, Tonia and Tim; his beloved grandparents, Wayne Finke and Donna Thompson; and his extended family and friends.

The significant honor, sacrifice, service, and courage that defined the life of Sergeant Michael Finke, Jr., will be forever honored and remembered by the entire Cleveland community and the entire nation. And within the hearts of his family and friends, the bonds of love and memories created in life by Sergeant Finke will never be broken, and will live on for all time.

INTRODUCTION OF A RESOLUTION  
TO ALLOW HOUSE TO OBTAIN  
CRITICAL INFORMATION ON OUR  
NATION'S SINGLE EMPLOYER  
PENSION PLANS

**HON. GEORGE MILLER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 2, 2005*

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. I rise to introduce a resolution for the purpose of allowing the House to obtain critical information about the financial status of our nation's single employer pension plans. Current law requires this valuable information about pension plans to be kept secret. This is wrong. Employees and investors should know all the facts. Employees should be fully informed about financial health of their own plan, and use that information as part of their overall retirement planning. The President says he supports making the information public. I have introduced legislation making this information public. I hope Congress will act on this proposal when we take up pension legislation later this year.

For now, Congress should be fully aware of the financial health of the nation's top pension plans as it debates ways to strengthen defined benefit pension plans. This resolution will insure we get the data to make informed decisions. Recently, the GAO put the Pension Benefits Guaranty Corporation, PBGC, on its "watch list" for the second time in a row. The PBGC recently reported a \$23 billion deficit for last year. Overall, PBGC reports that private pension plans are underfunded by some \$450 billion, the largest amount in history. The Bush administration recently proposed hiking pension plan insurance premiums by \$15 billion over the next 5 years, and proposes billions of dollars in accelerated pension contributions. And yet, we are being asked to consider such a proposal without current and accurate information about any individual company's funding status. This resolution requests the administration to provide us this information within 14 days, while protecting any proprietary information related to the sponsoring company.

IN HONOR OF DR. DONALD P.  
BARICH

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 2, 2005*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and recognition of Dr. Donald P. Barich,