

Rob Ruck

Department of History
3507 Posvar Hall
University of Pittsburgh

Academic Background

Ph. D. History 1983 University of Pittsburgh; Thesis: "Sandlot Seasons: Sport in Black Pittsburgh," Adviser: Richard Smethurst

M. A. History 1977 University of Pittsburgh; Thesis: "The Origins of the Seniority System in Steel," Adviser: David Montgomery

B. A. Political Science 1972 Yale University (Departmental Honors, *Cum Laude*)

Teaching and Related Experience

2013—Professor of Transnational Sport History, University of Pittsburgh

2000—2012 Senior Lecturer, History, University of Pittsburgh

2012 Center Affiliate and Visiting Scholar, The Center for the Study of Sport and Leisure in Society, George Mason University

2006—2009 Advisory Group, Baseball Hall of Fame to create *Viva Beisbol!* exhibit on Latin American baseball

2008-2021 Editorial Board, *Black Ball: A Negro Leagues Journal*

2006 Special Committee to Elect Negro and Caribbean Leaguers to Baseball Hall of Fame

2002—2004 Guest Historian, Sen. John Heinz History Center (Museum of Sport History)

1990-2002 President, San Pedro Productions, Ltd.

1991—2000 Instructor, History, University of Pittsburgh

1997—2000 Adjunct Professor of History, Carnegie Mellon University

2003—2009 Board, Sports for Development

1991—2012 Faculty, Center for Latin American Studies, University of Pittsburgh

1999—2012 Advisory Board, Global Links

1998—2004 Pennsylvania Humanities Council

1990—1991 Assistant Professor of History, University of Pittsburgh-Greensburg

1989—1990 and 1993—1996 Instructor, History, Duquesne University

1983—1989 Assistant Professor of History at Chatham College

1975—1976 Producer, weekly public affairs show on WYEP-FM, Pittsburgh

1973—1974 Research Historian and Staff Writer for "Decades of Decision: The American Revolution," National Geographic Society, WQED, Pittsburgh

Projects in Progress

Mal Goode Reporting : The Life and Work of a Black Broadcast Trailblazer, with Liann Tsoukas (forthcoming)

Co-author and collaborator on the Pittsburgh volume of **Crafting Democratic Futures: Situating Colleges and Universities in Community-Based Reparations Solutions**, a three-year project led by Earl Lewis, Director of the Center for Social Solutions, University of Michigan. On-going.

Youth in the Republic of Play: This book-length project is about how youth around the world experience sport. I want to both explain why sport has become such a mixed blessing for youth in many places and describe venues where sport is organized in healthier, more accessible ways and whether they might be models for larger, less affluent societies.

Songs of a Lost Island

I am collaborating on a documentary about Samoans and sport with Adam Sjoeborg and the Troy and Theodora Polamalu Foundation.

**The Souls of the Game: The Voices of Black Baseball, a permanent exhibit at Hall of Fame, Cooperstown, opening May 2024.*

Member of the Curatorial Team for a new permanent exhibit on “Black Baseball” at the National Baseball Museum and Library, Hall of Fame, Cooperstown.

Books

Pittsburgh Rising: From a Frontier Town to the Steel City 1755-1920 (with Edward K. Muller; University of Pittsburgh Press, 2023).

Tropic of Football: The Long and Perilous Journey of Samoans to the NFL, The New Press, (July 2018)

Raceball: How the Major Leagues Colonized the Black and Latin Game (Beacon Press: March 2011)

With Maggie Jones Patterson and Michael Weber, **Rooney: A Sporting Life**, (University of Nebraska Press: April 2010)

The Tropic of Baseball: Baseball in the Dominican Republic, (Westport: Meckler, 1991); (New York: Carroll & Graf, 1993); (With Afterword, University of Nebraska Press: 1999)

Sandlot Seasons: Sport in Black Pittsburgh, (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1987), (With new preface, 1993)

With Steve Nelson and James R. Barrett, **Steve Nelson: American Radical**, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1981 & 1992)

Documentaries

The League – Radical Media, Sam Pollard Director, Questlove, Executive Producer, (Advisor and on-camera), June 2023.

A Long Way From Home - The Untold Story of Baseball's Desegregation, Gasparo Gonzalez/Director, (2018) Advisor.

Roberto Clemente, Bernardo Ruiz/Director, (Released on PBS, April 2008) Advisor/participant.

The Republic of Baseball: Dominican Giants of the American Game, Producer, Writer; (Released on PBS, 2006-2007; featured presentation at the San Diego International Latino Film Festival, the New York International Latino Film Festival, the Boston International Latino Film Festival, The Santo Domingo Global Film Festival).

One Shot: The Life and Times of Teenie Harris, Project Historian, (Premiere, November 9, 2001)

Kings on the Hill: Baseball's Forgotten Men, (Project Director, Producer, & Writer); a 57-minute documentary about the Negro Leagues and the role of sport in the black community (released: May 1993) Broadcast NBC, July 25, 1995, WQED, 1993 — 1995, PBS affiliates & US Armed Forces Television, 1997-2001

Glory Days: The Industrial Baseball League of Cambria County, Writer & Historian, Portage Historical Society (1998)

Selected Awards

PEN-ESPN Literary Sportswriting Award (Long List), **Tropic of Football: The Long and Perilous Journey of Samoans to the NFL**, The New Press, (July 2018)

PEN-ESPN Literary Sportswriting Award (runner-up), **Raceball: How the Major Leagues Colonized the Black and Latin Game**, 2012

“African-American Historian of Pittsburgh,” CMU’s Center for African American Urban Studies and the Economy, September 10, 2010

Kings on the Hill: Baseball's Forgotten Men

--Emmy, Mid-Atlantic Region of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences for Outstanding Cultural Programming, 1994

--Gold Apple, National Educational Film & Video Festival, 1994

--Certificate of Merit, San Francisco International Film Festival, 1994

--Certificate of Merit, International Communication Film & Video Festival, 1993

SABR’s Robert Peterson Recognition Award, 1998

Golden Quills, 1993 & 1997 (The Press Club of Western Pennsylvania)

La Roche College Presidential Medal for Contributions to the Cultural and Social History of Black Pittsburgh, April 1993

MacMillan-SABR Award (1991) **The Tropic of Baseball: Baseball in the Dominican Republic**

Black Image Achievement Award Triedstone Baptist Church, Aliquippa, 1989

Selected Grants

- *Provost's Grant (\$10,000) for *Mal Goode: The Mouth Almighty* (2016)
- *Global Studies Center Faculty Grant (\$3,750) for "*Fa'a Samoa: Football on American Samoa and Among the Samoan Diaspora*" February 2012
- *World History Center Faculty Grant (\$2,000) for "Football on American Samoa and Among the Diaspora: *Fa'a Samoa* or NFL Hegemony?" April 2011
- *Hewlett International Small Grant (\$1,826) for "The Diamond Empire: Major League Baseball's Takeover in the Caribbean and Black America," University of Pittsburgh, 2010
- *Hewlett International Small Grant (\$1,750) for "*Los Cocolos* de San Pedro de Macoris," University Center for International Studies, University of Pittsburgh, Spring 2008
- *Central Research Development Fund (\$3,315) for "Art Rooney and the Pittsburgh Steelers," University of Pittsburgh, 2003
- *Hewlett International Small Grant (\$1,673) for "Republic of Baseball," University Center for International Studies, University of Pittsburgh, 2001
- *Heinz Endowments and other foundations (\$50,000) for **Pittsburgh: A City and Its People**, with Edward K. Muller (work-in-progress) 1998-1999
- *National Endowment for the Arts/AFI Mid-Atlantic Region Media Arts Fellowship (\$2,000) for "The Tropic of Baseball: A Documentary," 1994
- *National Endowment for the Arts/AFI Mid-Atlantic Region Media Arts Fellowship (\$2,000) for "Kings on the Hill: Baseball's Forgotten Men," 1991
- *Grants totaling over \$200,000 for the making and distribution of **Kings on the Hill: Baseball's Forgotten Men** including: Pennsylvania Humanities Council (June 1990 and June 1992); Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (1990, 1992); Challenge Grants from The Pittsburgh and Heinz Foundations (1990, 1992); the Westinghouse Foundation, The Giant Eagle Foundation, The Maurice Falk Medical Fund, The Hunt Foundation, The Laurel Foundation, The Eberly Foundation, BridgeBuilders, Duquesne Light Company, and Major League Baseball
- *Advanced Research Grant from the Latin American and Caribbean Division of the Social Science Research Council (\$12,650), "A Social History of Baseball in the Caribbean," 1988
- *Summer Stipend from the National Endowment for the Humanities, (\$1,500) "A Social History of Baseball in the Caribbean: The Dominican Republic," June 1987 — September 1987

*Co-Director (with David Montgomery) Research Division Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (\$16,708) “More Than A Minstrel Show: Baseball in the Black Community,” May 1980 — April 1981

*Project Co-Director with James Barrett, National Endowment for the Humanities Youthgrant, \$3,410) “The Nelson Project,” May 1978 — April 1979

Selected Publications

*“Troy Polamalu’s Hall of Fame Induction is a Celebration of the Samoan Culture,” *The Undeclared*, August 6, 2021, <https://theundeclared.com/features/troy-polamalul-hall-of-fame-induction-is-a-celebration-of-the-samoan-culture/>

*“Reflections on African Americans in Baseball: No Longer the Vanguard of Change,” *Race and Social Problems*, July 2021, <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12552-021-09333-4>

*“The Tropic of Baseball: Dominican Talent and the MLB,” *Australian Outlook*, February 27, 2020; <http://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/the-tropic-of-baseball-dominican-talent-and-the-mlb/>

“On the 100th anniversary of the Negro Leagues, a look back at what was lost,” *The Conversation*, February 13, 2020.

*“The Samoan Way of Football,” *Wall Street Journal*, July 20, 2018
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-samoan-way-of-football-1532094948> (behind a firewall)

*“NFL should help American Samoa improve football programs,” *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*, October 9, 2018.

*“Baseball’s Global Diffusion,” eds. Robert Edelman and Wayne Wilson, **Oxford Handbook of Sports History**, 2017.

*“Race & Ethnicity in American Sport,” John Nauright and David Wiggins, eds., **Routledge Handbook of Race and Ethnicity in Sport**, 2017

*“Cold War Baseball in the Caribbean,” Robert Edelman and Christopher Young, eds., **The Global History of Sport in the Cold War**, Stanford University Press, 2021.

*“Roberto Clemente: Transcending Nation,” in **Chasing Dreams: Baseball and Becoming American**, National Museum of American Jewish History: 2014.

*“Response to the State of the Field of Sport History,” *Journal of American History*, 2014.

*“Caribbean Baseball: At a Crossroads,” *ReVista, the Harvard Review of Latin America*, Spring 2012.

*“Baseball’s Recruitment Abuses,” *Americas Quarterly*, Summer 2011, pp. 96-102.
Co-authored with Maggie Patterson, “When Labor Peace Meant Prosperity for All,” *New York Times*, September 11, 2011.

*“Where Have All the African-American Baseball Players Gone,” *Salon.com*, March 5, 2011.

*“Sport and Black Pittsburgh, 1900—1930,” in Patrick B. Miller and David K. Wiggins, Eds, **Sport and the Color Line: Black Athletes and Race Relations in Twentieth Century America** (Routledge, New York: 2004)

*“Art Rooney and the Pittsburgh Steelers,” and “Harold Tinker” chapters in **Pittsburgh Sports: Stories of the Steel City**, (University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh: 2000)

- *"Three Kings Day in Consuelo: Cricket, Baseball, and the *Cocolos* in San Pedro de Macoris," *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture*, pp. 129-42, (Vol. 13, 1994)
- *"Japanese Turning Dominican *Beisbol* into *Besuboru*," July 21, 1992 *The Washington Post*
- *"A Celebration of Sport: Baseball, Race, and Community in San Pedro de Macoris," *Urban Resources*, Vol. 5, No. 3, Spring 1989, pp. 9-14
- *"*La Flor y Nata del Atletismo Hemisferico: Los Juegos Panamericanos*," *Americas*, July — August 1987)

Selected Papers and Presentations

- *A Symposium on **The Tropic of Football: The Long and Perilous Journey of Samoans to the NFL**, with Theodora Polamalu, Penny Semaia, Rich Scaglione, Marcus Rediker, and Rob Ruck, hosted by the Department of History, University of Pittsburgh, September 20, 2019.
- *"The Republic of Play in Pittsburgh and American Samoa," Inaugural Nathaniel Winschel Memorial Lecture, The Winchester Thurston School, Pittsburgh, April 15, 2019.
- *"Distinguished Visiting Scholar: Presentation at the University of Hawai'i West O'ahu
- *"The Tropic of Football & the Republic of Play," the John R. Betts Honors Address, North American Society for the Study of History, California State University Fullerton, May 27, 2017.
- *"Raceball: How the Major Leagues Colonized the Black and Latin Game," 21st Arturo A. Schomburg Symposium, *Taller Puertorriqueno*, February 25, 2017.
- *"Baseball, Race, and the Caribbean Basin," Centre for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Newcastle University, October 20, 2016.
- *"American Football and Fa'a Samoa," History Department, Newcastle University, October 19, 2016, Research Seminar, October 20, 2016.
- *Keynote Address at the Presidential Luncheon, North American Society for Sport Marketing, Pittsburgh, May 30, 2014.
- *Seminars & lectures about "Baseball, Race, and the Caribbean," February 21-25, 2011 in Nicaragua for the U. S. Embassy in Bluefields, Managua, Leon, *Instituto Nicaragüense de Cultura Hispanica*, and *Fundacion Salón de la Fama del Deporte Nicaragüense*.
- *"Redeeming the Latin Game," & "Conversation with Pedro Martínez: Baseball's Impact on Development & Social Change in the Americas," Inter-American Development Bank, Washington, D. C., March 25, 2011.
- *Keynote address, "*Nos vemos en el play: Béisbol y cultural en la República Dominicana*" exhibit on the history of Dominican baseball at *Centro Cultural Eduardo Leon Jimenes*, Santiago, D.R.
- *"The Tropic of Baseball," Fourth Annual Montesinos Lecture, Montesinos Center, Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska, March 26, 2001.
- *Keynote Address, Nine Conference, "Baseball and Community: From Pittsburgh's Hill to San Pedro's Canefields," March 7, 1997, Phoenix, AZ.
- *"The Cultural Significance of the Negro Leagues," American Studies Association, panel with Gerald Early, Buck O'Neil, Ken Burns, and David Bradley, Pittsburgh, PA, October 1995.