

NEWS RELEASE

Oakland Museum of California

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SPORTS: BREAKING RECORDS, BREAKING BARRIERS

Stories & Legends That Transformed the Sports World
Oakland Museum of California Sept 23, 2006 – Jan 6, 2007

Althea. Ali. Pelé. Jackie. Mia. Lance. The dynamic interaction of athletes, audiences, and the media has had an extraordinary impact on American life over the past century and a half. *Sports: Breaking Records, Breaking Barriers*, a traveling exhibition from the Smithsonian Institution, looks at athletes whose achievements shaped—and were shaped by—moments of social and historical change in the U.S.

Sports: Breaking Records, Breaking Barriers opens at the Oakland Museum of California on Saturday, **September 23, 2006**, and continues through Sunday, **January 6, 2007**. Oakland is the seventh stop on the exhibition's ten-city, three-year national tour.

"The history of breaking records and barriers in Bay Area sports runs long and deep," said Mark Medeiros, deputy director, Oakland Museum of California. "It's evident in *Sports*, with Oakland's own Bill Russell chosen as exhibition ambassador. The museum will highlight local athletes' stories to supplement this outstanding national show."

The exhibition focuses on 35 history-making athletes and their performances in 17 different sports. Women's changing roles, racial and ethnic integration, the emergence of sports celebrities and superstars, nationalism, perceptions about physical limitations, and technological breakthroughs that enhanced performance are among the issues covered in the show.

"The exhibition vividly portrays the men and women who pioneered, excelled, and influenced their sport; championed their country, race, or gender; and helped others to achieve," stated Ellen Roney Hughes, the exhibition's curator and a cultural historian at the Museum of American History. "These individuals broke records for themselves and for us all."

Sports is divided into six sections: Firsts; Olympians; Game Makers; Barrier Removers; More Than Sports Champions; and Superstars. Each section profiles specific athletes, with their photographs, medals, jerseys, and gear.

Spotlighting the Smithsonian's sports collection, the exhibition opens with Abraham Lincoln's handball and closes with Michael Jordan's basketball jersey. Gertrude Ederle's English Channel swim goggles, Sandy Koufax's baseball glove, Lance Armstrong's yellow jersey, and a "Miracle on Ice" hockey shirt are among the other artifacts.

The exhibition also features a short video that further explores the athletes featured in the section “More than Sports Champions.” Produced and donated by The History Channel, the video is narrated by basketball legend and Oakland native **Bill Russell**. It looks at athletes, such as Billie Jean King, Roberto Clemente, and Mohammad Ali, who took their roles as public figures seriously and moved beyond being sports champions to become champions for a cause.

An interactive Web site includes a virtual tour of the exhibition, resource lists, a historical timeline, and sports trivia. Visit the virtual exhibition at www.americanhistory.si.edu/sports. A small-format, full-color book by Hughes, *Sports: Breaking Records, Breaking Barriers* (Scala Publishers), with a foreword by Bill Russell, accompanies the exhibition.

Sports was developed by the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History and the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES). Audi is the exclusive national sponsor of the exhibition.

SITES has shared the wealth of Smithsonian collections and research programs with millions of people outside Washington, D.C., for more than 50 years. SITES connects Americans to their shared cultural heritage through a wide range of exhibitions about art, science and history, which are shown wherever people live, work and play, including museums, libraries, science centers, historical societies, community centers, botanical gardens, schools and shopping malls. Exhibition descriptions and tour schedules are available at www.sites.si.edu.

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The Oakland Museum of California is located at Oak and 10th Streets in Oakland, one block from the Lake Merritt BART. Museum hours are Wednesday to Saturday, 10 to 5; Sunday, noon to 5; first Friday of the month open until 9. Admission is \$8 for adults, \$5 seniors and students with ID, free for kids five and under and members. General admission is free the second Sunday of the month. For information, call 510/238-2200 or visit www.museumca.org.

Media Advisory

High-resolution images from *Sports: Breaking Records, Breaking Barriers* are available at www.museumca.org/press_images/sports.html

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