

A note from author **DOREEN RAPPAPORT**



I was eight years old in 1947, the first year that Jackie Robinson played for the Dodgers. Two years later, I became interested in baseball and turned into an avid Dodgers fan. Every night when my father came through the front door, I grabbed the *New York Post* from him and went first to the baseball statistics in the back of the paper, tracking the previous day's plays by my beloved Dodgers. I knew all the players' names and positions and could reel off their statistics without hesitation.

My father had absolutely no interest in any sport, so I was continually surprised that he would ask how the Dodgers were doing, how Jackie Robinson was doing. Many years later, I realized that it was Jackie Robinson the man who was the focus of my father's interest and admiration. My father perceived and understood his courage, recognized his significance in American history, and was pulling for him.

Jackie Robinson helped transform white Americans' consciousness and views about the abilities and rights of American blacks. He was a beacon of hope for black Americans in an era of extremely limited opportunities. In the magnificent civil rights movement of the 1960s, which also changed American history, tens of thousands of black Americans marched and took part in sit-ins, taking strength and courage from one another. Jackie Robinson, however, forged a path alone. He was a one-person civil rights movement. My father understood that and was cheering on the ballplayer in a way that was very different from the way his ten-year-old daughter was.

DOREEN RAPPAPORT is the author of more than fifty books for children, including *Beyond Courage: The Untold Story of Jewish Resistance During the Holocaust*; *Lady Liberty: A Biography*, illustrated by Matt Tavares; and *Nobody Gonna Turn Me 'Round: Stories and Songs of the Civil Rights Movement*, illustrated by Shane W. Evans. Doreen Rappaport lives in upstate New York.