



# **Curveball: The Remarkable Story of Toni Stone the First Woman to Play Professional Baseball in the Negro League**

*Martha Ackmann*

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From the time she was a girl growing up in the shadow of Lexington Park in Saint Paul, Minnesota, Toni Stone knew she wanted to play professional baseball. There was only one problem--every card was stacked against her. Curveball tells the inspiring story of baseball's "female Jackie Robinson," a woman whose ambition, courage, and raw talent propelled her from ragtag teams barnstorming across the Dakotas to playing in front of large crowds at Yankee Stadium. Toni Stone was the first woman to play professional baseball on men's teams. After Robinson integrated the major leagues and other black players slowly began to follow, Stone seized an unprecedented opportunity to play professional baseball in the Negro League. She replaced Hank Aaron as the star infielder for the Indianapolis Clowns and later signed with the legendary Kansas City Monarchs. Playing alongside some of the premier athletes of all time including Ernie Banks, Willie Mays, Buck O'Neil, and Satchel Paige, Toni let her talent speak for itself. Curveball chronicles Toni Stone's remarkable career facing down not only fastballs, but jeers, sabotage, and Jim Crow America as well. Her story reveals how far passion, pride, and determination can take one person in pursuit of a dream.

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