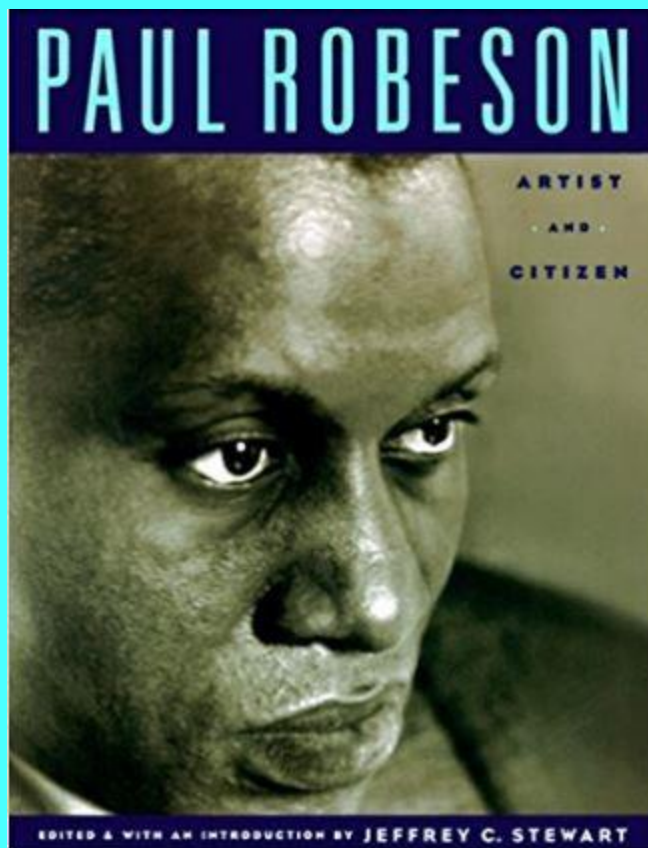


Paul Robeson, the towering six-foot six athlete, orator, actor, singer, intellectual, and activist, was arguably one of the most



simultaneously loved and loathed American personalities of the 20th century. This collection, edited by George Mason University professor Jeffrey Stewart to serve as a companion to a traveling exhibition marking the centennial anniversary of his birth on April 9, 1898, brings together 18 scholars and historians to the most detailed and balanced look at Robeson to date.

Francis C. Harris details Robeson's career as an

multilettered athlete at Rutgers University, where he endured gang tackles, a dislocated shoulder, and a broken nose. In "Paul Robeson, Musician," Doris Evans McGinty and Wayne D. Shirley highlight the centrality of Negro spirituals and folk songs in Robeson's repertoire. Robeson biographer Martin Duberman chronicles the social and sexual implications of Robeson's portrayals of Shakespeare's Othello, while Charles Musser reveals the complexities of Robeson's friendship with playwright Eugene O'Neill as well as his difficulties with African American filmmaker Oscar Micheaux.

The entries dealing with Robeson's political activities show his courage to speak out against injustice and the price he paid for it. Lawyer-writer Derrick Bell examines Robeson's "small service" to

the cause of African American justice. David Levering Lewis looks at Robeson's deep, albeit naive views on the Soviet Union, which dovetailed into his support of American workers, the subject of Mark D. Naison's contribution.