MEMORIES
and Dreams

SUMMER 2020 | VOLUME 42 | NUMBER 3 | THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE HALL OF FAME

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By the Numbers
Baseball’s iconic statistics are a part of the game’s enduring fabric.

Jacob Pomrenke

Streak Times Two
Cal Ripken’s chase of Lou Gehrig’s ‘unbreakable’ record forever linked the ironmen.

Scott Pitoniak

King Henry
In reaching 715 home runs, Henry Aaron eclipsed baseball’s most cherished record.

John Rosenkranz

Four Hundred Strong
With each passing year, Ted Williams’ .406 batting average in 1941 grows in stature.

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Keep ‘Em Coming
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In Memoriam
Al Kaline (1934-2020)

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MEMORIES and Dreams


The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum

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First we learned that Major League Baseball would press pause on Spring Training amid the spread of the Coronavirus. Shortly thereafter, we made the decision to close the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum until it was deemed safe to reopen. And in the time since, we have seen our county, and the world, adapt as never before to a public health crisis of immense magnitude.

In late March, I received a note from Ed Henderson, a respected longtime scout and reporter from Colorado. Remaining in his home following social distancing guidelines, Ed penned some poignant thoughts about our great game in the context of its current interruption. His words expressed sentiments that I am sure millions of baseball fans share. These thoughts were heavy on his heart, and I believe they speak to our collective heartbreak in a spring without baseball:

I miss it. I really miss it.
Maybe I never fully understood what a wonderful game it is until it was gone.
Every year we wait. We wait through the long cold months of winter.
We know that when mid-February arrives we will get that brief glimmer of summer and warm weather as Spring Training gets underway.
Every year it’s there. Every year we count on it. Then just as suddenly as it arrived, it’s gone.
It seems petty (maybe even inappropriate) to be talking about baseball during a time like this, but I miss it. We all miss it.

It’s not just the game itself that we miss. We miss the ballparks. We miss the sights. We miss the sounds. We miss the smells. We miss the unforgettable characters who have been so much a part of our National Pastime. We miss every facet of the baseball experience that makes it so incredibly unique and special.

We miss the laughter and the cheering and the electricity of being inside a ballpark that is vibrating with the collective energy of the fans.
We miss the camaraderie. We miss the competition. We miss the replays. We miss the history. We miss the rivalries and the great plays and the home runs. We miss the experience of being with family and friends. We miss baseball. We miss normal. We need baseball.
Sometimes, hopefully soon, this horrible scourge will pass and we can all begin to re-emerge back into the lives we led before anyone ever heard of Coronavirus.

In front of us, standing ready and waiting, will be baseball.

Ed Henderson
SHORT HOPS

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For more information and news from the Hall of Fame, visit baseballhall.org.

The Museum’s Education Department offers students and teachers free programs that provide interactive and meaningful learning experiences that align with national learning standards.

Connect to Cooperstown via free virtual programs

Connect with the Museum through all the Hall of Fame’s online offerings via Safe at Home, which features educational and cultural resources that include:
• The Museum’s Digital Collection at collection.baseballhall.org, which has historic photographs, scouting reports, audio oral histories and artifact images from the Museum collection;
• Free downloadable educational curriculum, which cover 15 different topics ranging from mathematics to character development and are tailored to three different school levels from elementary to high school;
• Historic and current videos at the Hall of Fame’s YouTube Channel, featuring Hall of Famer biographies, in-depth interviews and highlights of past Hall of Fame Weekends;
• Online exhibits that provide a virtual tour of the Museum, as well as through Google Arts & Culture.

The Baseball Hall of Fame is dedicated to fostering knowledge of the game and its role in our history. The Museum’s Education Department can help facilitate at-home learning through video presentations, fun activities and sharing the Hall’s unparalleled collection.

We offer K-12 students and teachers programs that provide interactive and meaningful learning experiences that align with national learning standards, and also have free printable Hall of Fame activities that include games, coloring projects and reading lists.

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For more info, email our Education Department at education@baseballhall.org or call (607) 547-0349. Explore all the Museum’s online offerings at baseballhall.org/discover/safe-at-home.

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Fans have the opportunity to explore the Hall of Fame through a special program designed to give Cooperstown visitors a VIP Experience. The Museum has partnered with Cooperstown accommodations to offer this unique package, which features behind-the-scenes experiences at the Museum, including a Hall of Fame Sustaining Membership ($125 value), exclusive after-hours access to the Museum on Thursday evening, a Library archive tour, a Museum collections artifact presentation and concludes with a private late-afternoon reception with light refreshments served.

This special package is a great way to learn more about the Museum and baseball history, whether this is your first or your 50th visit to Cooperstown. The VIP Experience is only available for purchase through select Cooperstown Chamber of Commerce accommodations.

For more information and a list of participating accommodations, visit the Hall of Fame website at baseballhall.org/VIPexperience. Dates for upcoming packages include Sept. 10-11 and Nov. 5-6.

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BY THE NUMBERS

BASEBALL'S ICONIC STATISTICS ARE A PART OF THE GAME’S ENDURING FABRIC.

BY JACOB POMRENKE

1.12 ... 42 ... 56 ... 262 ... 383 ... 406 ... 511 ... 715 ... 2,632.

Baseball’s numbers roll off the tongue easily. They are instantly recognizable to generations of fans, who understand their significance without any explanation necessary. The complete history of the game can be told through numbers like Bob Gibson’s ERA (1.12), Cy Young’s win total (511) and Cal Ripken’s consecutive games streak (2,632).

From the Civil War to the sabermetrics, baseball’s greatest players, teams and moments from its earliest origins to the modern era are captured in statistics that still catch our attention. Some stats may be as old as the infield dirt, while others are created with computers using complex mathematical formulas. But they all represent the same pursuit of excellence that drives the best ballplayers from the moment they pick up their first bat or glove.

When we trace the line of baseball’s most treasured records, the numbers can connect us to players we never got to see with our own eyes. When Ichiro Suzuki surpasses George Sisler’s single-season record with his 258th hit or Tony Gwynn spends a summer trying to equal Ted Williams’ .406 batting average, it gives us a better appreciation for Hall of Famers from many years ago – even when their names are no longer at the top of the record books.

The most meaningful numbers transcend greatness on the field to become cultural signifiers, a sign of baseball’s hold on millions of fans throughout the world. Henry Aaron chasing Babe Ruth’s total of 714 career home runs is not just a baseball story: Aaron’s quest is an object lesson on equal opportunity and perseverance over injustice. It is the story of a specific time and place in American history, an African-American man succeeding in the Deep South during the heart of the civil rights movement. The number of home runs hit by the Atlanta Braves star represents so much more than how many baseballs he sent flying over the fence.

These numbers make the game’s history come alive, giving each player’s accomplishments a sense of gravitas and reverence that no other sport can match. How many football fans could tell you which player led the NFL in rushing yards last season? (Derrick Henry with 1,540.) How many basketball fans can rattle off Kareem Abdul-Jabbar’s career points total without looking it up? (It’s 38,387.) But we all know a baseball fan who is willing to engage in a friendly discussion about whether Sandy Koufax’s 1.73 ERA in 1966 is more impressive than Pedro Martínez’s 1.74 ERA in 2000.

Baseball fans have always cared deeply about statistics – we study...
them, we analyze them, we argue about them endlessly – and these numbers are embedded in the lifeblood of what makes the game so special. No matter how popular other sports may be, only baseball has such a wide range of special numbers that tell the story of where we came from and what it might be possible to achieve.

Baseball’s love affair with numbers goes back to the beginning. The first recorded box score was published in 1845 with just two simple notations for each batter: Runs scored and outs made, based on similar records kept for the sport of cricket. Soon, base hits were included, which led to the creation of batting averages. Some fielding statistics like putouts, assists and errors were added to box scores not long after. That basic statistical record of baseball survives to this day.

By the time the National League played its inaugural season in 1876, primitive forms of modern statistics were beginning to flourish: Earned-run average, on-base percentage, slugging average and even a fielding metric that sabermetric pioneer Bill James later called “range factor” were all invented before the end of the 19th century, although some took many more years to catch on.

According to James, the statistics made publicly available by the National League in its early years included: Games played, at-bats, hits, runs, batting average, on-base percentage, putouts, assists, errors, total chances, fielding average, passed balls, batters facing pitcher, runs allowed, hits allowed, opponents’ batting average, walks and wild pitches, plus various per-game averages based on the raw totals.

As baseball developed into the National Pastime, the game’s growing statistical record fed fans’ insatiable desire for more information. At the end of every season, sporting goods manufacturers Albert Spalding (a Hall of Famer elected as an executive who had been a star pitcher in his youth) and A.J. Reach were among those who published popular guidebooks that contained complete player statistics and team standings. This made it easier for fans to keep track of how their favorite players ranked against each other. Those numbers also made it possible for players to strive for statistical milestones such as a .400 batting average, 300 career wins or 3,000 hits.

Because the quality of record-keeping was very poor – all of these records were maintained in hand-written ledgers and subject to human error – not all statistical milestones were known at the time. When Cap Anson of the Chicago Colts (now the Cubs) became the first player to join the 3,000-hit club in 1894, there was little fanfare, in part because no one could find an accurate count of his career record. Ty Cobb’s 3,000th hit in 1921 was barely covered in the Detroit newspapers. Sam Rice of the
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THEIR NUMBERS ARE STILL MAKING BASEBALL HISTORY
Washington Senators retired in 1934 with 2,987 hits, just 13 shy of the magic number.

“The truth of the matter is,” he said later, “I did not even know how many hits I had.”

That’s a problem players of today could never imagine facing. Whenever someone is close to reaching a major milestone or about to break a record, his progress is tracked at every turn – with televised look-ins of each at-bat, intensive questions in postgame press conferences and instant updates for his stats online. His performance is dissected by fans and sportswriters eager to be a part of history when the moment arrives.

Before the widespread dissemination of baseball encyclopedias, some iconic numbers were little more than guessing games. The first statistical milestone to attract public attention, according to baseball historian Peter Morris, was Cy Young’s 500th win in 1910, when the *Sporting Life* newspaper proclaimed it as “a unique feat requiring 21 years of continuous effort, which has no parallel in baseball annals and may never be repeated by any pitcher now before the public.” More than a century later, Young’s mark of 511 wins remains the one to beat.

On the other hand, when Ruth became the first player to reach 500 home runs, on Aug. 11, 1929, at Cleveland’s League Park, his accomplishment was celebrated in newspaper headlines around the country. By then, every swing of Ruth’s bat had been documented in excruciating detail for years, so there was no question as to how many homers he had actually hit.

Ruth reportedly paid $20 and delivered two autographed baseballs to the lucky fan who caught the home run ball on Lexington Avenue beyond the right field fence. Then he went right back to hitting more home runs, eventually finishing with 714.

While the 500-home run club has almost doubled in size in the past quarter-century, it remains an important milestone in charting the game’s history. The story of baseball can be told by the players who have surpassed that mark, from Ruth to Aaron to Barry Bonds. However, reaching 500 home runs is no longer the “automatic” ticket to immortality it was once considered to be, and that evolution tells its own story, too.

Baseball fans have been blessed with a long and comprehensive statistical record, with numbers that are instantly accessible and easily understood. That makes it possible to compare players from different eras and to measure their accomplishments against the weight of history. The numbers we remember best, the ones we treasure most, are those that stand the test of time.

The most iconic numbers in baseball represent the most memorable players, teams and events from our time and those that have come before us. They have become our cultural shorthand, a shared language that unites baseball fans of all generations.

The records behind those numbers may be broken eventually, but that doesn’t mean they’ll ever be forgotten.

Jacob Pomrenke is the Society for American Baseball Research’s director of editorial content.
“When you break someone’s record, you don’t make people forget them,” Ripken said. “You make people remember them.”

Today – a quarter century after Ripken’s record-setting, faith-in-baseball-restoring night at Baltimore’s Camden Yards – Gehrig’s mark continues to be celebrated. We’re reminded that records may be broken, but legends endure. Any mention of Ripken’s streak automatically evokes memories of Gehrig’s streak. The Iron Man and Iron Horse are forever linked.

Breaking the barrier

The reverence for Gehrig and his amazing streak is rooted in tragedy. We remember how his magnificent career and life were cut short by ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis), a debilitating, fatal neurological disorder now known as Lou Gehrig’s Disease.

But we also think of the Hall of Famer’s courageous response to his death-sentence diagnosis, particularly on July 4, 1939, when he stepped in front of a microphone and proclaimed himself the “luckiest man on the face of the earth” in front of more than 60,000 fans who had packed Yankee Stadium for “Lou Gehrig over the course of more than five decades, the number had achieved sacred status. It had become perhaps the most revered record of them all.

The mere mention of 2,130 instantly prompted almost any baseball fan to think about the number of consecutive games played by legendary New York Yankees first baseman Lou Gehrig. Those four digits and the man associated with them were so beloved that as Cal Ripken Jr. closed in on the mark in early September 1995, some actually suggested the Baltimore Orioles’ Iron Man should pay homage to the late Yankees’ Iron Horse by ending his streak upon tying the record.

They believed that sharing 2,130 would ensure the number remained etched in people’s minds forever.

“When from what I’d learned about Gehrig, I don’t think he would have wanted me to stop,” Ripken said. “He was one of the greatest ballplayers of all time. A fierce competitor. A guy who took great pride in seeing his name on the lineup card every day. Not, by any means, the type of guy who was interested in ties. I think it would have been insulting to his work ethic had I not played on.”

And so Ripken played on. And on. And on. His record of 2,632 consecutive games didn’t diminish 2,130. Or erase it from the memory banks. Instead, it called attention to it, put the Bronx Bomber’s achievement and legacy back in the spotlight.

On Sept. 6, 1995, Cal Ripken officially became baseball’s “Ironman,” eclipsing Lou Gehrig by playing in his 2,131st consecutive game. Ripken’s streak ran three more years and ultimately reached 2,632 games.
Appreciation Day.” His poignant speech became baseball’s “Gettysburg Address” and would be recreated and immortalized by actor Gary Cooper in the film *The Pride of the Yankees*, which hit theaters across America in 1942, just a year after Gehrig’s death at age 37.

Over time, Gehrig’s remarkable streak took on mythic proportions. Like Cy Young’s 511 career victories and Joe DiMaggio’s 56-game hitting streak, 2,130 seemed unbreakable. It would take a supremely talented and driven ballplayer to make a run at it. He would have to play through injuries, illnesses, fatigue, slumps and desires to sit out games against dominating pitchers. He’d need an off-the-charts work ethic and to be consistently productive, game after game, season after season. And he’d need mettle as tough as iron. In others words, he would need to be a modern-day Lou Gehrig.

“As a baseball fan, I knew about the record, but it’s not something I ever set out to break,” Ripken said. “That would have been ludicrous to think about, starting out. It’s really just something that crept up on me, happened over time. It wasn’t until I was closing in on 1,000 games that I started becoming aware of my streak, and that was only because it was a nice, round number and reporters started asking me about it.”

And it wasn’t until he tackled on several more seasons’ worth of games without a day off that Ripken began thinking Gehrig’s mark might be within reach.

There were several moments when the streak appeared in jeopardy. The closest call occurred after Ripken twisted his right knee during a bench-clearing brawl with the Seattle Mariners on June 6, 1993. He woke up the next morning barely able to walk and called his parents to tell them his run probably was over after 1,790 consecutive games. But after undergoing lengthy treatments, his knee loosened up and he was back in lineup.

Ripken’s managers occasionally considered resting him, but the more they contemplated it, the more they realized how indispensable he was.

“There were times when I said, ‘OK, Cal, today’s the day to take a day off,’” said the late Frank Robinson, who managed him for four seasons. “Then, I started looking at the lineup and thought about all the things he did during the course of a game, and I said, ‘I don’t want to be without those things. Those are things that give this ballclub the best chance to win. It’s too big a hole to fill.’”

The impact of Ripken’s streak would be felt well beyond the record books. In fact, some have argued it saved the sport. Just as Babe Ruth’s prodigious home runs allowed the game to emerge from the darkness of the 1919 Black Sox World Series-fixing scandal, Ripken’s dignified pursuit of Gehrig’s durability mark attracted estranged fans back to the sport after labor strife had forced cancellation of the 1994 Fall Classic.
he was shaking hands, doling out high-fives and gazing into the faces of fans fighting back tears.

"During that jaunt, it dawned on me what the streak really meant to people," he said. "I think fans wanted a reason to be able to fall back in love with the game after being turned off by the work stoppage and cancellation of the '94 World Series – and the streak gave them a reason to."

Ripken would play 501 more games in a row before removing himself from the lineup on Sept. 20, 1998. To put his achievement into perspective, 3,713 MLB players went on the disabled list during his 13-year streak. Ripken played his last game in 2001, ending a 21-season career that saw him compile undeniable Hall of Fame numbers: 3,184 hits, 431 home runs, 1,695 RBI, 19 All-Star Game selections and two American League MVP Awards. Fans in a nationwide poll taken at the turn of the 21st century voted the night he broke Gehrig's record as the greatest moment in baseball history.

A few months before his 2007 Hall of Fame induction, Ripken traveled to Cooperstown for his Orientation Tour. During that visit, his forever connection to Gehrig was driven home with the force of a line-drive home run. As he held the Yankees icon's old first baseman's mitt, Ripken grew introspective. He yearned to go back in time and chat with Gehrig.

"You wish you had the chance to ask him what he was thinking, how he went through it," Ripken said. "Was it an extension of his approach? Did the streak happen by accident or did he actually set out to do that? Here, you're able to hold his glove, get a feeling of who he was, but you still don't get to ask the question. From what I've learned, it seemed as though it was a sense of responsibility. It was a sort of an old-fashioned value that was your job, and that's what I hoped it would be."

Though Gehrig died 19 years before Ripken was born – and 40 years before he made his MLB debut – they’ve become kindred spirits: Two magnificent, doggedly determined ballplayers connected by the same thread.

Ripken may have broken Gehrig’s record, but he didn’t eclipse his legacy. Instead, he became a permanent part of it. It is a bond they will share for as long as the game is played.
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or nearly 40 years, 714 was the measure of a hitter’s greatness. It was more powerful than 60 or 61 or .406, which were seasonal marks. Even 4,191, Ty Cobb’s career hit total (later amended to 4,189 but not broken until 1985) bowed to 714. Not only was it easier to remember, 714 marked the number of times one man had thrilled fans with his power.

The number, of course, is synonymous with Babe Ruth. For baseball fans, no explanation is required. The three digits are woven into his legend, same as “The Curse of the Bambino,” his generosity with children, even his appetite for hot dogs.

When Ruth retired in 1935 with 714 home runs, no one else had hit more than 353 (Lou Gehrig). Indeed, he had eclipsed Roger Connor’s record of 138 in 1921 and reigned as the Home Run King while he played. For 14 years, every round-tripper he hit provided another jewel in his crown.

It would be five years after Ruth retired before anyone even reached 500 (Jimmie Foxx), and by 1970, only seven more major league hitters had slugged 500 career long balls: Mel Ott, Ted Williams, Willie Mays, Mickey Mantle, Eddie Mathews, Ernie Banks and Henry Aaron. Even as Mays and Aaron reached 600, they still were far behind Ruth’s total. The number 714 had achieved iconic status and seemed untouchable. No other number in baseball inspired the reverence it did.

It is often lost on fans that Ruth had a .342 lifetime batting average over 22 seasons. And that he had 2,214 career RBI. After Roger Maris broke his single-season home run record of 60 (knocking out 61 in 1961), 714 stood alone as the number that defined Ruth’s greatness. He hit the bulk of those (688) from 1919-1934, which means he averaged 43 home runs a season for 16 straight seasons. No other player had demonstrated such consistent mastery of the long ball. And, it was thought, no player ever would.

But then the unthinkable unfolded. During the summer of 1973, Aaron put himself within reach of 714, the mark many thought would stand forever. He began the season at 673 and steadily edged closer and closer, making the impossible seem possible. If anyone could break Ruth’s record, it seemed Aaron could. Though he never hit more than 47 home runs in one season, Aaron matched Ruth’s consistency, averaging 37 home runs per season over 19 years from 1955 through 1973.

By the time he had knocked out No. 700 on July 21, 1973, and joined Ruth in the rarified air only they inhaled as the greatest home run hitters of all time, Aaron had excited fans and electrified the nation. His pursuit created a media circus – such as it was in the days before the 24-hour news cycle, MLB.com and social media. Reporters from national magazines besieged him at the ballpark. An NBC-TV camera crew shadowed him for weeks. When he went fishing in Mobile on a day off, three boats full of reporters and photographers stalked him.

Letters poured in from all over the country, by the hundreds daily. The overwhelming majority were positive, from fans cheering him on. They recognized him as a great player making history and wanted to be witness to it. But some of the letters, about one in nine, were littered with racial slurs and death threats.

Seven-hundred fourteen wasn’t a benign number. It represented the legend of a beloved white man now threatened by a black man. And that exposed bigotry.

“It was just amazing that the myth of Ruth and this home run number was a kind of white supremacy symbol for many people,” Reverend Jesse Jackson observed.

When Aaron went public about the hate mail, he received an outpouring of support from other players and fans, but it did not stop the taunts from the stands or the steady flow of
nasty letters. Nor did it squelch the threats to Aaron and his family. He traveled with two plainclothes policemen as bodyguards, checked into hotels under an alias on the road and feared for his children’s safety.

But Aaron kept hitting. With every home run, he chipped away at ignorance and advanced the cause of a black American hero.

After reaching 700 in late July, however, his pace slowed. Under the glare of national media scrutiny and the daily onslaught of hate mail, he hit only one more dinger in July and five in August. He entered the final month of the 1973 season sitting at 706, eight shy of Ruth’s milestone. It became a race against time, lengthening shadows, deeper bullpens and seasonal fatigue for the 39-year-old Aaron. He knew he didn’t have to reach 714 that

Henry Aaron drives home run No. 715 out of the park in Atlanta on April 8, 1974. With that round-tripper, Aaron surpassed Babe Ruth as baseball’s all-time home run leader. The catcher is the Dodgers’ Joe Ferguson and the umpire is Satch Davidson.
season, but he wanted to so he could relieve himself of the pressure.

When he hit No. 714 on April 8, 1974, with five games left to play, the record seemed within reach, maybe. All that month The New York Times ran a front-page count of Aaron’s progress. NBC interrupted scheduled programming to show his latest home run. By the last week of the season, fans tuned into the heightened drama tensed with anticipation.

But then a week went by before he knocked out No. 713. And, when he hit three singles but no home runs in the Braves’ final game, that’s where he stayed, stalled for a long winter one shy of the mark. It seemed an eternity until he would get another at-bat.

Once he finally did – six months later on Opening Day of the 1974 season in Cincinnati – Aaron promptly satisfied the fans he had tantalized and left suspended by swatting No. 714. Four days later at Atlanta Stadium, Aaron faced Al Downing of the Los Angeles Dodgers in a fourth-inning moment immortalized in the memories of fans of a certain age and preserved for younger ones on YouTube.

On April 8, 1974, when Aaron put a Downing pitch over the left field fence, he trotted around the bases with a brief escort from two young men and hugged his mother at home plate, stepping in front of Ruth and hailed as the new Home Run King.

“What a marvelous moment for baseball,” Vin Scully said on the national broadcast. “What a marvelous moment for the country and the world. A black man is getting a standing ovation in the Deep South for breaking the record of an all-time baseball idol.”

Forty-six years have passed since that night in Atlanta. Aaron hit 40 more home runs to retire with 755. Barry Bonds reached 714 in 2006, passed Aaron a year later, and retired with 762 career home runs.

Yet it seems unlikely 755 or 762 – or some higher number in the future – will ever achieve the legendary stature their forebear the Babe did with his 714.

John Rosengren is a freelance writer from Minneapolis and the author of “THE FIGHT OF THEIR LIVES: How Juan Marichal and John Roseboro Turned Baseball’s Ugliest Brawl into a Story of Forgiveness and Redemption.”

Note: Parts of this article were adapted from John Rosengren’s book “Hammerin Hank, George Almighty and the Say Hey Kid: The Year that Changed Baseball Forever,” which chronicles the 1973 MLB season.
Famous Numbers in Sports:

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Ted Williams hit .406 for the Red Sox at age 23 in 1941. No big leaguer has come closer than 12 points to that mark since.
when the 1941 season began, baseball was America’s unquestioned National Pastime. What no one knew was that within a year the United States would be engaged in a total World War, making 1941 the last “normal” season until 1946.

What fans also didn’t know was that a pair of legends would write such indelible history that their achievements would resolutely withstand the test of time. For this was the season when the Yankees’ Joe DiMaggio hit in 56 consecutive games and the Red Sox’s Ted Williams batted .406.

The numbers remain some of baseball’s most sacred. And while “56” is often mentioned among the “unbreakable” records in the game, “.406” – though not a record – may never be equaled.

Some 220 miles north of Yankee Stadium – where the 26-year-old DiMaggio was already a national star – a 23-year-old wonder named Ted Williams was putting together a season in the shadow of DiMaggio’s streak. This was Year Three for the lefty hitter from San Diego, and he was hot from the start. By the All-Star Game, he was batting .405. And in that game, he hogged the spotlight with a two-out, three-run homer into the right field stands at Detroit’s Briggs Stadium to give the American League a 7-5 triumph.

Batting over .400 was certainly notable, but it was only 11 years since Bill Terry had last crashed the barrier with .401 – and the pursuit just didn’t have the national sizzle of DiMaggio’s streak. Part of the reason was the simple fact that DiMaggio played for the Yankees. The Red Sox are now considered to be one of baseball’s crown jewel franchises, but in 1941 they were a team that had not once seriously contended since winning their fifth World Series in 1918.

Yes, they had finished second in the AL in 1938 and 1939. But they were 17 games behind the Yankees in the latter season, when the Bronx Bombers went on to win their fourth straight Fall Classic. Boston would again finish in second place, 17 games behind the Yankees, in 1941.

Despite the absence of a pennant race, The Boston Globe ran a daily update tracking Williams to Terry’s .401 season back in 1930. But it was pretty much a local story.

Williams sustained an ankle injury right after the All-Star Game and by July 22 his average had “dipped” to .393. But he recovered and continued his amazing pace into September. When the Red Sox concluded their home schedule on Sept. 21, Williams was hitting .406. They would finish with games in Washington and Philadelphia, where the venerable Connie Mack would conceivably have something to say about the outcome.

Ted ran into a little trouble in Washington, his average dropping to .401 by the time he reached Philadelphia for the final three games. Perhaps with his eye on the gate, A’s owner-manager Mack moved the scheduled Friday game to Sunday, creating a season-ending doubleheader.

Meanwhile, you’d think the folks back home would be agog. Not necessarily so. Dave Egan, the noted columnist of The Boston Record, scheduled himself to cover the Boston College football team playing at Tulane on Saturday and the heavyweight championship bout between Joe Louis and Lou Nova in New York on Monday night.

Meanwhile, Mack said he would indeed pitch to Williams, who was 1-for-4 on Saturday, dropping his average to .3995. But Williams wanted no part of a rounded-off .400. (The Sporting News quoted him as saying, “I want to have more than my toenails on the line.”) He was going to play in both games on Sunday, period.

And so a modest gathering of 10,258 at Shibe Park was on hand to see Williams go 4-for-5 in the first game, with a home run. That brought him to .404 and pretty much guaranteed his quest. But he wasn’t done. Williams went 2-for-3 in Game 2, thus finishing at .4057, rounded up to .406, a revered number in Boston – and all of baseball – to this day.

In the years since, the closest anyone has come to DiMaggio’s hallowed streak was a 44-game run by Pete Rose in 1978. The closest anyone has come to Williams’ .406 was Tony Gwynn’s .394 in the strike-shortened 1994 season.

Incidentally, Joe D.’s average during those 56 games: .408.

Bob Ryan is an award-winning sports columnist for The Boston Globe whose love affair with baseball began in 1950 when he was present at Dunn Field in Trenton, N.J., for the Organized Baseball debut of a 19-year-old outfielder named Willie Mays.
JOE DiMAGGIO PRESSED WELL PAST THE MAJOR LEAGUE HITTING STREAK RECORD BEFORE STOPPING AT 56.

BY CHARLES EUCHNER

Joe DiMaggio, the 26-year-old center fielder for the New York Yankees.

And once he broke two records for hitting streaks — first, George Sisler's 1922 American League modern era mark of 41 consecutive games; then Wee Willie Keeler's 1897 major league in-season record of 44 — DiMaggio faced ever more pressure. The whole nation tracked his progress. Radio stations interrupted programming with news updates. Visitors craned their necks to see news scrolls at Times Square, as DiMaggio's streak climbed past 50, up to its final tally of 56 games.

DiMaggio said he wanted the streak to last forever. A more realistic target may have been his own 61-game streak in 1933 for the San Francisco Seals of the Pacific Coast League. That feat, as Joe's brother Dom noted, "might have been good preparation" to deal with the pressure. But it also added more.

Days after breaking Sisler's record, as DiMaggio's streak grew past 50, The Yankee Clipper met the former Browns first baseman in St. Louis before a Yankees-Browns series.

"You try to forget [the pressure], but it can't be done," Sisler said. "It's in your head every time you step to the plate."

Teammates didn't say much and neither did DiMaggio. "He never showed any pressure," Yankees right fielder Tommy Henrich said. "He never talked about it. From what I know of Joe, he wasn't built that way. He never let us in on his inner thoughts."

Meanwhile, the team kept things loose with its own hot play. On July 1, when DiMaggio tied Keeler's in-season record, the Yankees completed a record 25-game in a row with a home run. Henrich and left fielder Charlie Keller were on their way to 30-home run seasons, and rookie Phil Rizzuto was establishing himself as the team's shortstop of the future, batting .307 on the year.

DiMaggio got his share of soft hits early in his streak. He was also shaky in the field, making three errors in a 13-0 loss to the Red Sox on May 30. But as the stakes increased, he slashed the ball harder. From June 2 to June 20, when the streak climbed from 19 games to 33, his slugging percentage was .900.

"Joe D." managed the pressure with an "empty mind," the Zen term for staying in the moment. He sat in front of his locker before games and drank coffee. He accommodated the media, including reporters from national publications. He let bags of fan mail pile up.

Joe DiMaggio broke Willie Keeler's longstanding in-season record of 44 straight games with a hit on July 2, 1941. DiMaggio would extend his hitting streak to 56 games before it ended on July 17 in Cleveland.
45
CRACKS RECORD
DiMaggio didn’t even get upset when a fan stole his bat. He used his backup bat and kept getting hits. Someone found the bat in Newark and arranged for its return.

Unlike Ted Williams, in the midst of his history-making .406 season for the Red Sox, DiMaggio didn’t theorize about hitting. He took an open stance, kept his head steady and drove his 36-inch, 35½-ounce bat forward. He moved his front foot just a few inches. Balance was the key.

“It doesn’t pay to get excited in this game,” DiMaggio told one reporter. “Whether I break that record or not, there will just be a lot of ball games. It’s my job. I do the best I can.”

His biggest asset was pitcher Lefty Gomez – like DiMaggio, a child of immigrants in San Francisco. Gomez countered DiMaggio’s taciturn ways with his playful personality. They were constant companions. For home games, they commuted to the stadium together; Lefty waved a white towel from his apartment to signal that he would pick up Joe D. On the road, when reporters and photographers and fans knocked on their hotel room door, “El Goofo” told them Joe wasn’t around – and then returned to their room-service dinner while DiMaggio read Superman comic books.

“Gomez kept me loose during the streak,” DiMaggio said. “He kept people away from me, but was always there to needle me if I was getting too serious.”

DiMaggio enjoyed bars and nightclubs, but usually sat with two or three teammates. In New York, he went to Toots Shor’s, where he blended in with other celebrities – and Toots protected him. To avoid attention, Toots guided him out a side door and walked the streets with him.

At Fenway Park, brother Dom got streak updates from his best friend – and Joe D.’s rival – Williams. The scoreboard operator updated Williams on DiMaggio’s at-bats, and Williams relayed the news: “Dommie! Joe got a hit!”

Opposing pitchers usually worked hard to beat DiMaggio, some by avoidance. Earlier in the streak, the Athletics’ Johnny Babich, a former Pacific Coast League rival, walked him twice and then went 3-0 before Joe D. reached across the plate to poke an outside pitch into the outfield. DiMaggio got revenge on Babich on July 6 with two hits as part of a 4-for-5 day that upped his streak to 47.

As he extended his record, DiMaggio needed luck only once. In Game 54, on July 14, he dribbled a ball down third that went for an infield single.


Also around that time, tabloids featured flashy headlines. Life and The Saturday Evening Post ran spreads. The Chicago Tribune imagined the gods on Mount Olympus welcoming DiMaggio. Hollywood released a quickie biopic.

Only later did DiMaggio acknowledge the tension that gave him ulcers. Speaking of the media frenzy, he wrote in a diary: “If I thought this would be taking place, I would have stopped the hitting streak at 40.”

He once glared back at the umpire after a strike call. “Honest to gawd, Joe, it was right down the middle,” the umpire said. The apologetic tone, DiMaggio confessed, “eased the strain.”

The streak ended at Cleveland’s Municipal Stadium on July 17. With 67,468 fans on hand, Indians third baseman Ken Keltner twice snared hard slashes and threw out DiMaggio. The first time, Joe D. struggled to get a good jump to first base because of the muddy hitter’s box.

With Keltner playing in shallow left field, DiMaggio could have bunted for a hit. But he never bunted during the streak, and he wasn’t going to start then. In the eighth, Indians shortstop Lou Boudreau reacted quickly to a bad hop on a smash, grabbing it off his shoulder to turn a 6-4-3 double play. In the ninth, the Tribe almost tied the game – which might have allowed DiMaggio another at-bat – but fell short and lost, 4-3.

The Yankees clubhouse was quiet after the game. When DiMaggio acknowledged the broken streak, teammates pelted him with congrats. “When they take ‘em away from you like that, there’s nothing you can do,” DiMaggio said. “Anyway, it’s all over now.”

Failing to extend his streak another day, he joked, cost him a $10,000 promotional deal for Heinz 57 for its “57 Varieties” ketchup. He wondered aloud if his All-Star Game hit back on July 8 at Detroit’s Briggs Stadium should count, which would leave his total at 57.

DiMaggio left the stadium two hours after the end of the game with Rizzuto. After walking blocks in silence, DiMaggio realized he forgot his wallet. He asked Rizzuto to lend him some cash. When Rizzuto started to follow him to a bar, DiMaggio said no; he wanted to be alone to think.

The next day, he got a hit against Bob Feller of the Indians to begin a 16-game hitting streak.

During the 56-game hitting streak, DiMaggio hit .408 (91 for 223) with 15 home runs, 21 walks and 55 RBI. He struck out just five times – and not once in his last 149 at-bats.

Charles Euchner, who teaches writing at Columbia University, has authored books about topics ranging from the art of writing to the civil rights movement to baseball, including “The Last Nine Innings” and “Little League, Big Dreams.”
For 21 seasons—including five in Milwaukee—Ted Simmons personified greatness both on and off the field.

The Milwaukee Brewers are proud to congratulate Ted, as well as the entire legendary 2020 class, on their well-deserved induction into the National Baseball Hall of Fame.
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Third Base

CHIPPER JONES
Elected: 2018 • Born: April 24, 1972, DeLand, Fla.
Batted: Both • Threw: Right • Height: 6'4" • Weight: 210

“If he went 0-for-4 one night, he was in the cage hitting after the game. He seemed to just want it more than the rest of the hitters.” – BRAVES TEAMMATE GREG MADDUX

“He had the desire to want to be great. He wasn’t afraid of the moment.” – BRAVES TEAMMATE DAVID JUSTICE

“I felt like he beat you with his mind more than his physical tools. He simplified the game.” – MLB NETWORK ANALYST AND FORMER TEAMMATE MARK DEROSA

... that Chipper Jones is one of only nine players in history with at least 400 home runs, a .300 batting average, a .400 on-base percentage and a .500 slugging percentage?

... that among players who appeared in at least half their games at third base, Jones is the only major leaguer to record at least 1,600 RBI and score at least 1,600 runs?

... that when he retired, Jones’ 1,623 RBI were the most of any player whose primary position was third base?

DID YOU KNOW...

WHAT THEY SAY...
Al Kaline never saw the minor leagues.

In fact, just after midnight on June 19, 1953 – the night of his high school graduation – Kaline was signed by Detroit scout Ed Katalinas and joined the Tigers directly.

Kaline debuted six days later on June 25 as a defensive replacement, and recorded the first of his 3,007 big league hits on July 8.

Kaline, who passed away on April 6, 2020, at the age of 85, was only 18 years old when he entered the major leagues. But he was ready for the challenge.

“Al Kaline was an icon, not only to the Tigers organization, but to all of baseball,” said Hall of Famer Alan Trammell, who played 20 seasons with Detroit. “He meant a great deal to me coming up through the Tigers organization. I was smart enough to watch and learn from the way he carried himself, both off the field and on it. He was as good as they come.”

Kaline became just the 12th player to join the 3,000-hit club and won 10 Gold Glove Awards in the outfield. On the field, there was little he could not do.

“Baseball is a great job,” Kaline said. “You play six months a year and people do everything for you.”

Albert William Kaline was born on Dec. 19, 1934, in Baltimore, Md., the only son of Nicholas Kaline, a former semipro catcher, and Naomi Kaline.

At the age of 20, he nabbed his first batting title with the 1955 Detroit team when he hit .340 – becoming the youngest batting champion in the history of Major League Baseball, a record that still stands.

“There’s a hitter. In my book, he’s the greatest right-handed hitter in the league,” said Hall of Famer Ted Williams.

Along with all-time batting average leader Ty Cobb, Kaline is the only ballplayer to spend 22 seasons in a Tigers uniform, earning the nickname “Mr. Tiger.”

“He was a gentleman. It would have to be a real borderline pitch for him to even turn his head,” said umpire Larry McCoy.

But despite the accolades, Kaline found ways to remain humble.

In 1971, the Tigers offered him the club’s first six-figure contract of $100,000 – which he declined until the next year.

“I don’t deserve such a salary. I didn’t have a good season last year,” said Kaline, after batting .278 in 1970.

“This ballclub has been so fair and so decent to me that I prefer to have [them] give it to me when I rate it.”

In his only World Series appearance, in 1968, Kaline rose to the occasion and hit .379 with a pair of home runs, helping the Tigers defeat the St. Louis Cardinals in seven games.

He recorded his 3,000th career hit late in the 1974 season and then retired, serving as a color commentator for Tigers television broadcasts from 1975-2002 and a Spring Training instructor for years after that.

Al Kaline brought such dignity and grace to our game, and to the Hall of Fame,” said Jane Forbes Clark, Chairman of the Board of the National Baseball Hall of Fame. “As one of baseball’s greatest right fielders, every new generation of Hall of Fame Members were in awe of Al, not only as the player he was, but also as the true gentleman that he was. He will be missed throughout the game – and honored forever at the Hall of Fame.

“We join the Detroit Tigers and the entire baseball community in mourning the passing of a true legend, and we extend our deepest sympathies to the Kaline family.”
t was the spring of 1972. Major League Baseball players were on strike for the first time. Nolan Ryan, his career far from memorable at that point, had been traded from the Mets to the Angels during the offseason. His first son, Reid, was born the previous November. And Ryan had to make a life-defining decision.

“I had no money,” Ryan said. “You didn’t know how long the strike was going to last. We were in the position where the best thing we could do is get home.

“I called my banker up and told him, ‘I have a tax refund coming,’” Ryan remembered. “And he lent me $1,800 against my tax refund. If it hadn’t been for that, I probably would have had to go home.”

And the rest is history – baseball history.

With the tutelage of Tom Morgan, his first pitching coach with the Angels, Ryan went from a thrower to a pitcher and, eventually, a Hall of Famer. His 27-year career was filled with several record-setting efforts, including an incredible seven no-hitters, in which he had seven different catchers behind the plate.

That’s three more no-hitters than his boyhood favorite, Sandy Koufax, who is second on the all-time no-hitter list with four.

The last two came in the twilight of Ryan’s career, with the Texas Rangers, at the ages of 43 and 44, making him both the oldest and second-oldest pitcher to throw a no-hitter.

Each of Ryan’s seven no-hitters had their own memorable storylines.

No. 1: May 15, 1973 – Angels at Kansas City Royals, 3-0 (catcher Jeff Torborg)

“I wasn’t a no-hit pitcher,” Ryan said. “I had one in Little League and one in high school. That was the farthest thing from my mind. I think I was amazed as anybody that it happened.”

No. 2: July 15, 1973 – Angels at Detroit Tigers, 6-0 (catcher Art Kusnyer)

“When I came out of the [bullpen],” Ryan said, “I told Tom Morgan, ‘If I ever throw a no-hitter, it might be today.’ That’s the kind of stuff I had, the best command.”

There was a lengthy top of the eighth, however, with the Angels scoring five runs to take a 6-0 lead.

“When I went back out, I didn’t have the stuff I had the first seven innings,” he said. “They brought up Gates Brown (in the bottom of the ninth) and he hit a blind shot to Rudy Meoli at shortstop. If the ball is two or three feet either way, it’s a base hit, but it was right at him. And then Norm (Cash) came up for the last out of the game with a table leg.

“I should have gone ahead and pitched to him, but I walked up to home plate and said to the umpire, ‘Ron (Luciano), he can’t hit with that.’ He said, ‘What are you talking about?’ I said, ‘Check his bat.’ He looked at the bat and Norm goes, ‘I can’t hit him anyway, what difference does it make?”

No. 3: Sept. 28, 1974 – Angels vs. Minnesota Twins, 4-0 (catcher Tom Egan)

In his final start of the year, at Anaheim Stadium, Ryan struck out 15, but also walked eight. It was the final statement on a season in which he struck out 367 batters, becoming the
first pitcher in the modern era with three consecutive 300-strikeout seasons, and struck out 19 hitters in a game three times.

He not only fanned Bobby Darwin, Larry Hisle and Pat Bourque three times each, but he got Rod Carew, who struck out only 49 times that entire season and batted an MLB-leading .364, twice on strikes.

“Maybe because it was so late in the season, I have less recall of that no-hitter than any of them,” Ryan said.

No. 4: June 1, 1975 – Angels vs. Baltimore Orioles, 1-0
(catcher Ellie Rodriguez)

This one came to an end when – on a 3-2 pitch with two out in the top of the ninth – Ryan struck out Bobby Grich, looking, on a changeup.

Two years later, Grich became an Angels teammate of Ryan.

“How could you throw me a changeup?” Grich asked Ryan one day.

“What did you think I was going to throw?” Ryan replied.

“Fastball,” Grich said.

Ryan smiled. He had thrown two fastballs in that at-bat, and Grich fouled off both.

“I felt if I got the change over, I got him,” said Ryan, who retired Grich for the out that allowed him to tie Koufax’s record of four no-hitters.
Not only does Nolan Ryan hold the record with seven no-hitters, his 27-year career — spent with the Mets, Angels, Astros and Rangers — is tied for the longest in MLB history.

No. 5: Sept. 26, 1981 — Astros vs. Dodgers, 5-0
(catcher Alan Ashby)

In his second year with the Astros, Ryan broke the record for career no-hitters against Koufax’s former team, which was also the team the Astros battled annually for the NL West title.

“We always had a lot of competition against the Dodgers, so that made it more rewarding, no-hitting them,” Ryan said. And they were Koufax’s team.

“When I tied the record, I was very proud because I was a big Sandy Koufax fan in high school,” Ryan said. “To tie a record like he had — and then to break that record — was really rewarding to me.”

No. 6: June 11, 1990 — Rangers at Oakland, 5-0
(catcher John Russell)

Ryan caught the A’s off-guard. He was known for his overpowering fastball.

But on that day in Oakland...

“I had an extremely good changeup,” he said.

And he had two big defensive plays.

“One of them was (in the fourth inning) by Pete Incaviglia on a fly ball to left field that he ran down,” said Ryan. “Willie Randolph hit it, and when the ball left the bat I thought it was a double. Then in the ninth inning, Rickey Henderson topped the fifth pitch in the infield. Jeff Huson made as good a play as any shortstop could make to throw Rickey out at first. That’s when I thought I was going to throw a no-hitter — with two out in the ninth.”

No. 7: May 1, 1991 — Rangers vs. Blue Jays, 3-0
(catcher Mike Stanley)

“I had really good stuff that night,” Ryan said, “and Toronto had quite a few right-handed hitters in that lineup.”

It put the exclamation point on Ryan’s Cooperstown-quality career.

“They do stand out,” Ryan said. “The thing about no-hitters, you never anticipate being in that position. It’s just one of those magical games where everything comes together. Because of that, they are really special.”

Nobody knows how special more than Nolan Ryan.

Tracy Ringolsby, the winner of the BBWAA’s J.G. Taylor Spink Award in 2005, has covered baseball since 1976.
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Take it from a man who laundered six home versions of them — and an untold number of visiting ones — there is nothing quite like a retired jersey number.

“It’s the fans’ way, the franchise’s way, of saying, ‘We love you,’” said former San Francisco Giants clubhouse manager Mike “Murph” Murphy.

He’s right, of course. Election to the National Baseball Hall of Fame is baseball’s highest honor, but it is largely determined by the worthiness of the honoree’s numbers.

But the number — singular — is where honor goes to hang in forever glory in the honoree’s home ballpark.

“Look at that, good kid. I made it. Top of the World!” the late No. 20, the 91-year-old Monte Irvin, told Murph, who was the “good kid” that Monte first called him when they met in 1962 — and called him that again on the day the Giants retired Irvin’s number in 2010.

Irvin’s “20” is baseball’s most frequently retired number: 11 times. Baltimore’s Frank Robinson was first (Spring Training, 1972) — barely beating out Pittsburgh’s Pie Traynor (Opening Day, 1972) — and also the most recent (2017, Cleveland, where he was baseball’s first African-American manager). In between, Robinson’s number was retired in 1998 (Cincinnati).

The other retired 20s include Luis Gonzalez (Arizona), Frank White (Kansas City), Don Sutton (Los Angeles Dodgers), Jorge Posada (New York Yankees), Mike Schmidt (Philadelphia), Lou Brock (St. Louis) and Irvin.

Back in the day, Willie Mays would order — by the bushel-load — the most famous No. 24.
jersey of them all, and trade them for the No. 24 uniforms of visiting players, even offering to buy the number right off their backs for $1,000 apiece.

No doubt Mays made that offer to Houston’s Jimmy Wynn, who didn’t take him up on it, but the late All-Star outfielder distinguished No. 24 nonetheless. The Astros retired his number in 2005.

Hall of Fame second baseman Joe Morgan, whose No. 8 was retired by the Reds, reflected on Wynn’s passing in March to recognize his road roomie for the first seven years of his career as a “great person… and a true five-tool player.”

Mays inspired at least two generations of young ballplayers, especially those who fancied themselves as center fielders, to wear the double dozen. Ken Griffey Jr. is the “24” today’s players often emulate. The tradition lives on.

“Somewhere, Willie has a closet full of those 24s,” said Murphy, chuckling at the memory.

“Players like their numbers,” he added.

“You (used to) see players wear the numbers on a chain around their neck, fans with the numbers on their back. There’s just something about baseball numbers. The number becomes who that player is to the fans and is forever associated with him.”

Most baseball fans know that the first baseball number retired was Lou Gehrig’s No. 4, on July 4, 1939, the day of his famous “Luckiest Man” speech. But only the seam-iest of seamheads know – heck, not even many Cincinnati Reds fans know – that the second baseball number retired was that of former Reds catcher Willard Hershberger, who
When we got our uniforms that year, we only got the pants, caps and stirrup socks because the jerseys were still being sewn for the sponsor, Thomas Funeral Home.

The coach told the players, “For the first game, just put a number on a white t-shirt.”

For that first Saturday, “five of the nine players showed up in No. 14 (Pete Rose) and four in No. 5 (Johnny Bench),” Grob recalled.

The retired-number craze didn’t kick in big-time until the 1970s. From 1939 through 1970, only 19 MLB numbers were retired. There are now 199 retired numbers, not counting executives, broadcasters and “The Fans” (Cleveland Indians).

“It started out as something only certain teams did, and the others didn’t,” wrote Chris Jaffe of The Hardball Times. “Once more and more franchises got into it… it became expected that all franchises got into the act.”

And, yes, every franchise has retired Jackie Robinson’s “42,” but the Yankees (Mariano Rivera) and the St. Louis Cardinals (Bruce Sutter) have retired it twice, given that Rivera and Sutter wore the number before it was retired MLB-wide in 1997.

Sometimes it really is all about the numbers.
The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum’s collection of more than 40,000 three-dimensional pieces contains artifacts that tell the story of the game’s legendary players, moments and triumphs. For a limited time through December 2020, the Museum will share some of those memorable artifacts through a new experience: Starting Nine.

Featuring the nine must-see artifacts from each of the 30 current MLB franchises, Starting Nine is being showcased in each of the six issues of Memories and Dreams in 2020. This issue features the AL Central.

**SHORT STOPS**

When Bill Veeck returned as the Chicago White Sox owner in 1975, he promised to bring some excitement to a franchise that had posted only one winning season since 1967.

One of the first steps was a radical uniform idea that still makes fans smile more than 40 years later.

Veeck announced during Spring Training in 1976 that the White Sox would wear shorts as part of their uniform during games that season. In an Aug. 8 contest against the Royals at Comiskey Park, Veeck made good on his promise when his club wore navy blue shorts – along with the team’s white shirt with an oversized collar – in the first game of a doubleheader.

Playing in front of a Sunday crowd of 15,997, the Sox defeated the Royals, 5-2.

The 62-year-old Veeck modeled the uniform before the game.

“Look at that,” Veeck told the Associated Press while rubbing his artificial right leg. “Perfect contour.”

Many White Sox players expressed their satisfaction with the uniforms, including second baseman Jack Brohamer, whose two-run single in the sixth inning extended Chicago’s lead to 3-0.

“I like them, they’re very comfortable,” Brohamer told the AP. “Everybody seems to like them.”

White Sox manager Paul Richards had his team return to their traditional uniforms in the second game of the doubleheader – and the White Sox lost, 7-1.

“From now on, it’s up to Richards to decide when they’ll wear them,” Veeck said. “When it gets hot enough, I’m sure they’ll want to wear them.”

The Sox wore the shorts uniforms in two more games that season, going 1-1 in those contests. After that, they were retired for good.

An example of the uniform is on display in the Hall of Fame’s Whole New Ballgame exhibit.
Joe Charboneau appeared in 201 career games over three seasons for the Cleveland Indians, barely a footnote worth of production for a franchise that dates back to 1901.

But for a few months in 1980, there was no bigger star in Northeast Ohio – and few larger in baseball itself – than Super Joe.

A virtual afterthought when he reported to the Indians’ Spring Training facility in Tucson, Ariz., in 1980, Charboneau was a second-round draft choice of the Phillies in 1976 who quit the game the following year when he felt he wasn’t getting enough playing time. But he returned to the Phillies in 1978 and posted batting averages of better than .349 in Class A in 1978 and Double-A in 1979 – the latter season coming with the Chattanooga Lookouts after he was traded to the Indians following the 1978 campaign.

After a knee injury put Indians designated hitter Andre Thornton out for the season late in Spring Training in 1980, Charboneau took advantage and earned the job as Cleveland’s Opening Day left fielder. By the end of April, Charboneau was batting .354 and had electrified a fan base that had endured 25 years without a pennant.

Stories of Charboneau’s off-the-field antics began to spread as well, including a tale of him opening a beer bottle with his eye socket in college and pulling his own teeth (both confirmed by Charboneau).

“People got caught up in [the stories],” Charboneau told the Associated Press. “The fans really identified with them. And they identified with me.”

Charboneau became so popular that a local group called “Section 36” put out a 45 rpm recording called “Go Joe Charboneau,” which climbed into the Top 5 on the Cleveland charts. A copy of that record is on display in the Hall of Fame’s Whole New Ballgame exhibit.

Charboneau was hobbled by a pelvis injury that limited him to a pinch hitting role for the final two weeks of the season, but he still hit .289 with 23 home runs and 87 RBI. He was the landslide winner of the American League Rookie of the Year Award, totaling 62 more points than runner-up Dave Stapleton of the Red Sox.

A back injury limited him to 48 games in 1981, and in 1982 he appeared in just 22 games before being sent to the minors in early June. He never returned to the big leagues.

But for those who remember the summer of 1980, Joe Charboneau remains part of baseball lore.
HOME RUN AND A TRIPLE

On his way to the American League Triple Crown, Miguel Cabrera joined some elite company in Detroit.

On Sept. 18, 2012, Cabrera hit two home runs in the Tigers’ 12-2 win over the Oakland A’s at Comerica Park. The second home run, an eighth-inning grand slam off the Athletics’ Jesse Chavez, was Cabrera’s 40th home run on the year.

With that, he joined Hank Greenberg (four times), Norm Cash, Rocky Colavito, Darrell Evans and Cecil Fielder (two times) as the only Tigers players to reach the 40-home run mark.

“It’s amazing,” Cabrera told the Detroit Free Press following the game.

After his grand slam, Cabrera was greeted with a chant of “MVP” from the 31,243 fans in attendance. And with two weeks left in the season, it looked like a Triple Crown was in Cabrera’s reach.

On Oct. 3, Cabrera fulfilled that destiny when he finished the season leading the American League in batting (.330), home runs (44) and RBI (139). He became the first player to win the Triple Crown since the Red Sox’s Carl Yastrzemski led the AL in all three categories in 1967.

“All I could think of then was, ‘Wow, I really did it,’” Cabrera told the Free Press after the Tigers’ final game. “It was great that I could share it with my teammates. I don’t do it without them.”

Cabrera, who had also won the AL batting title in 2011, went on to capture his third straight batting crown in 2013. He was named the AL’s Most Valuable Player in his Triple Crown season and the following year as well.

The bat Cabrera used to hit his 40th home run in 2012 is on display in the Whole New Ballgame exhibit at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.
BO KNOWS HOME RUNS

It was the bottom of the first inning at the 1989 All-Star Game in Anaheim, Calif., and NBC's Vin Scully was chatting with a special guest in the booth: Former United States President Ronald Reagan.

The Royals' Bo Jackson settled into the batter's box to lead off the frame, and took the first pitch from the Giants' Rick Reuschel low for ball one.

"That's a pretty interesting hobby he has for his vacation," President Reagan said, referring to Jackson's other pro career as a running back for the Los Angeles Raiders.

Reuschel then delivered his second pitch, which was also a bit low and slightly more inside, missing the outside target of Padres catcher Benito Santiago.

Jackson put his head down and swung.

"He's remarkable... and look at that one!" Scully said as Reds center fielder Eric Davis turned, took a few steps and then futilely watched the ball nearly clear the batter's eye in center field. "Bo Jackson says hello!"

For Jackson – who entered the game tied for the AL lead in home runs with 21 – it was another in a string of "wow" moments that defined his career.

Jackson was in the middle of his third full season with the Royals when he was named to his first All-Star Game in 1988. He put together his best MLB season that year, hitting 32 home runs, scoring 86 runs, totaling 105 RBI and stealing 26 bases.

In addition to his 448-foot home run, Jackson had a single and an RBI groundout in the All-Star Game, earning Most Valuable Player honors in the American League's 5-3 victory.

Though a severe hip injury he suffered with the Raiders interrupted his MLB career, Jackson played eight seasons – including two with an artificial hip.

The cap Jackson wore during the 1989 All-Star Game is on display in the Museum's Whole New Ballgame exhibit.

KANSAS CITY ROYALS

1. Bo Jackson cap from 1989 All-Star Game
2. Salvador Pérez mitt from 2015 World Series when he was named Most Valuable Player
3. 2015 World Series ring
4. Darryl Motley bat used to hit two-run home run in Game 7 of 1985 World Series
5. George Brett bat used to hit his "Pine Tar Home Run" on July 24, 1983
6. Buck O'Neil Award statue
7. Justin Maxwell bat from walk-off grand slam on Sept. 22, 2013, that guaranteed the Royals their first winning season in a decade
8. Ned Yost jersey from 2014 when he led the Royals to a record eight straight wins to start the Postseason
9. Eric Hosmer jersey from Game 5 of 2015 World Series when his ninth-inning dash home sent the game to extra innings
On Oct. 27, 1991, the Minnesota Twins’ Jack Morris took the mound at the Metrodome in Minneapolis for Game 7 of the 1991 World Series. The result would be one of the greatest performances in World Series history.

Morris and Atlanta Braves starter John Smoltz rolled through the first four innings before Morris ran into trouble in the fifth. Mark Lemke singled to lead off and advanced to third base on a Rafael Belliard sacrifice bunt and Lonnie Smith’s bunt single.

But Terry Pendleton popped out to shallow left field and Ron Gant struck out looking on a 3-2 pitch to end the inning.

Later – as the tension built in a scoreless game – both teams had prime scoring chances in the eighth.

In the top of the inning, Morris allowed a leadoff single to Smith and Pendleton followed with a double. After Gant grounded out, Twins manager Tom Kelly visited the mound and decided to intentionally walk David Justice to pitch to Sid Bream.

With one out and the bases loaded, Bream worked the count to 1-2 before he hit a ground ball to Twins first baseman Kent Hrbek, who started a 3-2-3 double play to end the Braves threat.

In the home half of the inning, pinch-hitter Randy Bush led off with a single and was pinch-run for by Al Newman. Dan Gladden flew out, but Chuck Knoblauch singled to put runners on the corners with one away.

But after reliever Mike Stanton intentionally walked Kirby Puckett to load the bases, Hrbek lined out to Lemke at second base, starting a double play as Knoblauch was doubled off to retire the side.

Neither team could push across a run in the ninth, although Minnesota had two on no outs before Atlanta turned a double play. After nine full innings, Kelly told Morris he was going to take him out, but after a dugout conference the decision was made to leave the 36-year-old workhorse on the mound.

“I want to know one thing: Who was going to take [Morris] out of this game? Who would have had the courage to say, ‘Jack, you’re done.’” Twins outfielder Randy Bush asked Sports Illustrated. “I don’t think anyone would have done it. If it was [Tom Kelly], Jack would have punched him, kicked him – he might have killed him.”

Morris retired the Braves in order in the top of 10th, and in the bottom of the inning Atlanta hurler Alejandro Peña allowed a leadoff double to Gladden. Knoblauch bunted Gladden to third and the Braves chose to walk Puckett and Hrbek intentionally to load the bases with one out.

Gene Larkin would step in as a pinch-hitter and hit the first pitch he saw to left field for a World Series-winning single, as the Twins won their second championship in four years.

Morris’ pitching line for Game 7: 10 innings, seven hits, no runs, two walks, eight strikeouts and 126 pitches. A ball from the game – later signed by Morris – is on display in the Hall of Fame’s Whole New Ballgame exhibit.
Meetings in December 1980 with that in mind. He found a willing trade partner in St. Louis’ Whitey Herzog, working out a seven-player deal that brought right-hander Pete Vuckovich, reliever Rollie Fingers and catcher Ted Simmons to Milwaukee.

Dalton believed those three veterans would make a huge difference, on and off the field, and their impact was undeniable. In the strike-split ’81 season, the Brewers – now led by manager Buck Rodgers – captured the second-half division title and finally made the playoffs, though they bowed to first-half winner New York in a tightly contested five-game division series.

Fingers, who helped Oakland win three consecutive World Series titles in the mid ’70s, proved to be a true difference-maker, posting a 1.04 ERA over 47 games and leading the AL with 28 saves. The man with the rubber arm and handlebar moustache not only was voted the league’s Cy Young Award winner, he also claimed MVP honors, a rare daily double.

“We were a good team in ’78, ’79 and ’80, but we didn’t have a dominant closer,” said Jim Gantner, the Brewers’ savvy and gritty second baseman. “Getting Rollie was huge. When we had a late lead with Rollie, we knew we would win. And with that lineup, we had a lot of leads.”

As it turned out, Dalton acquired two Cy Young Award winners in that trade. Vuckovich claimed that honor in 1982 by leading the Brewers to their first pennant and, to date, lone World Series appearance, against, ironically, St. Louis. Pitching down the stretch with a damaged shoulder, Vuckovich posted an 18-6 record and 3.34 ERA in 30 starts and continued to take the ball in the Postseason when many pitchers would have stayed in the trainer’s room.

Simmons, 32 at the time, also did what was expected of him that season, on both sides of the ball. He started 120 games behind the plate, deftly handling an improved pitching staff, and was a steady contributor with the bat, smacking 23 homers and driving in 97 runs.

Asked about the trade that did exactly what the Brewers hoped, Simmons said: “It changed every one of us. ‘Vuke’ became the Cy Young Award winner. We went to the seventh game of the World Series. Rollie became what he became. It changed everything in Milwaukee. It was a wonderful, wonderful experience.”
Before that ’82 season was done, Dalton made one more deal that had a major impact. Looking for another experienced arm to add to his rotation, he traded for 37-year-old right-hander Don Sutton, who went 6-1 with a 3.29 ERA over seven starts down the stretch, none more important than the final day of the season in Baltimore when Sutton outpitched Jim Palmer and Yount homered twice in a 10-2 romp that secured the AL East crown.

Yount would give the Brewers yet another MVP that season with a brilliant offensive performance in which he batted .331 with 29 home runs and 114 RBI while leading the league with a .578 slugging percentage, 367 total bases, 210 hits, 46 doubles and .957 OPS.

Molitor, earning the nickname “The Ignitor” because of his impact as a leadoff hitter, led the AL with 136 runs scored while stealing 41 bases, collecting 201 hits and batting .302.

The season ended in disappointment for the Brewers, who took a three-games-to-two lead to St. Louis for Games 6 and 7 of the World Series, only to fall short. But Milwaukee still held a parade worthy of a champion down Wisconsin Avenue, the main thoroughfare of the city.

“You looked around on the field and you knew we had a lot of great players,” Molitor said. “I don’t know if you thought about future Hall of Famers at the time, but we knew we had a lot of talent. We all had the same goal of trying to win the World Series. Unfortunately, we fell one game short.

“We had a couple of good years before Harry made that trade,” Molitor added. “We were trending in the right direction. I was a big fan of Rollie already from what he had done in Oakland. I considered Teddy probably the best offensive catcher in the National League, other than maybe Johnny Bench. ‘Vuke’ was a little more unknown, but was starting to tap into what he would eventually become.

“It was nice to see a small-market team like the Brewers go out and bring in these big-name players. It gave us a big boost, all coming in one deal. The excitement it brought to the city was tremendous. When we came back (from two games down) to beat the Angels (in the ALCS) and win the pennant, the city went crazy.”

Yount, who played all 20 of his big league seasons with Milwaukee, and Molitor, a teammate for 15 seasons, became the first players to represent the Brewers in Cooperstown. Members of the 3,000-hit club, Yount (inducted in 1999) and Molitor (2004) both were elected in their first year on the BBWAA ballot.

Fingers, who spent nine of his 17 seasons with the A’s and was MLB’s career saves leader with 341 when he retired, entered Cooperstown in 1992. Sutton, who exceeded 300 wins and 3,000 strikeouts — with his biggest body of work with the Los Angeles Dodgers — was the lone player elected by the BBWAA in 1998.

The fifth member of the ’82 Brewers to find his way to Cooperstown had the longest wait. Simmons fell off the BBWAA ballot after only one year in 1994 by not getting the requisite five percent of the vote to remain eligible. What many baseball insiders considered an injustice for one of the most productive catchers in the game’s history was corrected last December when Simmons was elected to the Hall of Fame by the Modern Baseball Era Committee.

Former batterymate Vuckovich was on hand that day when Simmons was introduced at the Winter Meetings in San Diego and said “a travesty” finally had been corrected.

“I prayed for this to happen,” he said. “He knows he belongs there. He’s been waiting for years. He’s happy the day finally came, and he’s so deserving. I can’t say enough about him.

“If you were pitching to him, you didn’t have to think. Just bang the glove. He wasn’t given enough credit for that.”

As Molitor put it, “You realized when you talked with Teddy just how smart he was. He had a unique way of thinking. A lot of it was above most of us, to be honest. He influenced the game in a lot of ways.

“I played with Teddy and knew how he influenced the team, and his leadership, but it wasn’t until I took a good look at his career numbers and how they compared to other players that I realized what a great career he had.”

Yount, who became very close to Simmons over the years, echoed that sentiment, saying, “He was caught in the ‘perfect storm’ when he fell off the ballot after his first year. And when you fall off the ballot, you’re forgotten about by a lot of people, really. People didn’t realize Ted was Hall of Fame quality until it came back around to the Modern Era committee.

“The wonderful thing about this is he finally got his due. It just (took) a lot longer than it should have. He’s finally in the Hall of Fame, where he belonged all along.”

A four-time Wisconsin Sportswriter of the Year, Tom Haubrich covers the Brewers for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. He has written five books on the team, including this year’s “Turning 50: The Brewers Celebrate A Half-Century in Milwaukee.”
WHAT WE’VE DONE TOGETHER

#COOPERSTOWNMEMORIES

We know your lives have been disrupted. From the routine day-to-day habits to the simple joys of gearing up for another baseball season, many things in the world are on pause.

And as history has shown us time and time again, baseball has a tremendous impact on families and friends everywhere, often serving to heal us during our challenges.

During these uncertain times, one thing that the entire staff at the Museum is sure of: Together we will continue to preserve the game’s greatest stories – and our own baseball memories.

As baseball fans, we all have stories: Our first trip to Cooperstown, meeting a Hall of Famer during Hall of Fame Weekend, seeing an exhibit that brings our own memories flooding back, stepping into the Plaque Gallery and feeling the connection to the game’s all-time greats – the memories are countless. We would love for you to share your #CooperstownMemories with us.

Simply send an email that includes your story and your name to development@baseballhall.org and we’ll share selected ones with our “baseball family.”

Here are a few recent stories shared with us from supporters like you:

>>> To understand my Cooperstown story, you have to go back to my childhood. My father was an avid baseball fan. He followed the Reds growing up because that was the closest team to his hometown in Georgia (the Braves didn’t come to Atlanta in 1966, which was the year I was born). I have never personally known anyone who loved baseball more than my father. He coached Little League for many years. He went to Spring Training. He listened to games on the radio. He LOVED baseball. And he passed that love down to me.

He taught me how to read a box score. He taught me how to calculate ERA. He taught me everything I know about baseball. Every year when Spring Training begins, I feel as though all is right with the world.

Because of my father, I, too, love baseball. So, visiting Cooperstown was on my bucket list.

Last June (2019), my husband made that dream come true. We, along with our 17-year-old son, came to Cooperstown.

When I entered those hallowed walls, I wept. I wept because it was a dream come true. But it was more than that. My father passed away in 2004 without achieving his dream of going to Cooperstown. So I wept for him. I wept because I was entering a place that I knew he would have loved. I would have loved to have been able to share that experience with him.

I hope one day to return to Cooperstown because it was a magical experience for me. Yesterday would have been the Braves’ home opener. With all that is going on in the world, I miss baseball. There is a void in my heart because the sport I have loved my entire life is on hold. But this, too, shall pass and baseball will return. Until then, I thank Cooperstown for all you have done and are doing to keep the legacy of baseball alive.

Ann Hunt
Member since 2019

>>> My girlfriend and I have been members of the Hall since 2015. I’m a Red Sox fan, she is a Cardinals fan, so we have to alternate which team we choose for our membership card.

Cooperstown is about a 3 1/2-hour drive from our New Hampshire home, so we try to make the trip once a year, usually in the spring. While every trip is memorable, last May I made the drive with an engagement ring in my pocket. I dropped to one knee in the Plaque Gallery, which is one step below a holy site for us. Luckily she said yes, and we continued our tour in a haze. Our wedding is planned for October of this year, with some good-natured bets on which of our teams might be still playing ball. The baseball theme is sure to be on display somewhere at the reception.

We are thankful for all the Hall does, and look forward to being able to travel there again soon.

Randall Rhoades
Member since 2015

>>> The summer of 2018 began like any other summer, but would become one of the most memorable summers of our lives.

We started our journey in Pass Christian, Miss., our hometown. My husband and I embarked on the greatest baseball journey with our 16- and 11-year-old sons, as well as our two nephews, ages 16 and 13. The goal of our trip was to see as many MLB games as possible within a three-week period. The planning was extensive. We were able to see 13 games
Photos to be digitally preserved

Thanks to a number of generous donors, photographs from our archive will be digitally preserved and added to our online digital collection, which you can browse at collection.baseballhall.org.

They include:

- **Jim Bottomley** – Thanks to a gift from John Rankin
- **Steve Carlton** – Thanks to a gift from R.G. Scherman
- **George Davis** – Thanks to a gift from B. J. Ferneau
- **Ned Hanlon** – Thanks to a gift from John Rankin
- **William Hulbert** – Thanks to a gift from John Rankin
- **Reggie Jackson** – Thanks to a gift from Thomas J. Frawley
- **Fergie Jenkins** – Thanks to gifts from Linda Cullen, Thomas J. Frawley and Steven Rothschild
- **Tommy Lasorda** – Thanks to a gift from Peter O’Malley
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Frank Basami, Brandon Borzelli, Steven M. Johnson, Paul Lauth, John Miseros, James W. Rook, Jonathan Waters, Gary Whaley and B-R-S Baseball Museum

**Mike Schmidt** – Thanks to a gift from Ed Balderston

**Tom Seaver** – Thanks to a gift from Michael Schucht

**Don Sutton** – Thanks to a gift from Peter O’Malley

**Paul Waner** – Thanks to gifts from Larry and Trish Buffkin, Robert Fiscus, Ian Laczynski and David L. McKinney

**Billy Williams** – Thanks to a gift from Joy Harvey

**Cy Young** – Thanks to gifts from Lou Boyd, Alan Brown, Michael Dempsey, William Ehrman, Jonathan Epstein, Bryan Fritz, Mike Lane, Chad LaPlante, Scott Longert, David L. McKinney, Joseph O’Connor, Kim Vennachio and William P. Waldron

**WHAT YOU CAN HELP US DO**

**Baseball Card Collection Care Project**

Baseball cards.

These rectangular pieces of cardstock have captivated fans of all ages for more than 125 years – simple treasures that are hunted, traded, pored over and organized.

We also included Cooperstown in our trip. It was there that we learned that we were lucky to survive intact after wearing our Red Sox gear to Yankee Stadium. It was also there that we felt the importance of this great game called baseball, feeling an overwhelming sense of reverence in those hallowed walls.

These boys who “hate reading” spent hours reading every plaque, every stat, and asked for pictures to be taken with every hero.

I am a physician caring for patients during this difficult time of COVID-19. Being able to recall these memories has allowed me to escape the worries of today, if just for a moment. I will forever be grateful for the respite.

Take care. See you at the stadium.

Erin Dewitt, M.D.
Member since 2018

**Member since 2018**
Baseball cards connect us to the game we love. The Hall knows that first-hand based on the excitement around and the generous support toward the new exhibit that opened last year.

In May 2019, the Museum opened Shoebox Treasures, an exhibit that tells the story of the history of collectors’ cards, dating back to the mid-19th century. The exhibit features more than 2,000 of the Museum’s unparalleled collection of almost 200,000 baseball cards.

But the ongoing work to care for the card collection is not done.

Our team is ready to begin a new project to catalog and rehouse our entire baseball card collection. To do this, we need to secure funds to purchase new archival-quality materials that meet the highest standard in Museum collection care.

Make a gift today toward the new project to ensure these cardboard gems are preserved for generations of fans to enjoy.

**Estimate for collection care materials for the entire project: $28,175**

**Digitally preserve historic photos**

We need your help to continue our work to digitally preserve the Museum’s photo collection, which contains more than 300,000 images. Thanks to you, nearly 90 percent of the inductees from the classes of 1936 to 1969 have been funded in full. Below are the Hall of Famers that still need support.

Cost to digitally preserve images of:

**1930s**

- Frankie Frisch (398 images): $1,904*
- Kenesaw M. Landis (154 images): $855*

**1950s**

- Ed Barrow (85 images): $445
- Joe Cronin (251 images): $974*
- Gabby Hartnett (180 images): $688*
- Rabbit Maranville (78 images): $305*
- Joe McCarthy (256 images): $1,370
- Dazzy Vance (70 images): $300*
- Zack Wheat (94 images): $440*

**1960s**

- Red Faber (48 images): $240
- Waite Hoyt (368 images): $1,855*
- Heinie Manush (55 images): $235*
- Casey Stengel (913 images): $4,625*
- Ted Williams (551 images): $1,386*

*Notes that the digital preservation project has received contributions toward the original goal. The amounts shown here are balances as of April 9, 2020.*

**Additional projects online**

We are grateful for all our donors and Museum Members who’ve helped us to preserve baseball history. We have accomplished a lot together, but there is more to be done.

Explore additional projects, including artifacts, photographs and Library documents that are in need of conservation and preservation, at our website.

**baseballhall.org/museuminaction**

For more information – or to make a donation of any amount toward one of the projects – visit baseballhall.org/museuminaction or contact our Development Team at (607) 547-0385 or development@baseballhall.org.
The late David Montgomery, who worked his way up in the Philadelphia Phillies organization to become one of the most respected and admired executives in baseball, will be honored with one of the sport’s most prestigious awards.

The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum’s Board of Directors announced in March that it had selected Montgomery as the 2020 recipient of the Museum’s John Jordan “Buck” O’Neil Lifetime Achievement Award.

“It’s a well-deserved honor. I surely wish he could be here to accept it,” said Phillies third base legend and Hall of Famer Mike Schmidt. “Dave was one of the finest men I ever knew. Totally dedicated to his family and to his association with the Phillies. Loved people and people loved him.”

Presented not more than once every three years, the award pays tribute to the legacy of O’Neil, the Negro Leagues legend whose baseball contributions spanned eight decades.

It is given to “honour an individual whose extraordinary efforts enhanced baseball’s positive impact on society, broadened the game’s appeal, and whose character, integrity and dignity are comparable to the qualities exhibited by O’Neil.”

BUCK O’NEIL AWARD WINNERS

2008 – Buck O’Neil
2011 – Roland Hemond
2014 – Joe Garagiola
2017 – Rachel Robinson
2020 – David Montgomery

The Award was first given in 2008, with O’Neil being the first recipient.

Montgomery, born and bred in the Philadelphia area, began his career in the Phillies’ sales office selling season and group tickets just prior to the opening of Veterans Stadium in 1971. Soon enough, he was the team’s marketing director and director of sales before becoming executive vice president following the 1981 season.

After being named chief operating officer in 1992, Montgomery was designated as co-general partner and acquired an ownership interest in the team in 1994. In June 1997, he succeeded Bill Giles as general partner, president and chief executive officer, then assumed the position of chairman in 2015.

“Dave was the kind of guy who could walk around the stadium during a game and say hello to the ushers and the vendors,” Schmidt said. “He knew them by name and it seemed like he knew something about everybody. He was the kind of man that I think we all want to be.”

Montgomery, who passed away on May 8, 2019, at the age of 72, will be honored as part of Hall of Fame Weekend 2020.

In his role as Phillies president and CEO, Montgomery not only became the face of the team’s front office, but under his leadership the
Phillies captured five consecutive National League East titles from 2007 to 2011, won two NL pennants and the World Series crown in 2008. He also led the construction of the team’s current home, Citizens Bank Park, which opened in 2004.

“You just can’t stop a guy like that. You can’t stop Dave Montgomery because Dave Montgomery is so special,” said Schmidt, selected by the Phillies in the 1971 amateur draft, the same year Montgomery began working with the team. “A guy like that seemed to have been in line for whatever position at the higher level opened up with the Phillies until he actually got right at the top.

“It sounds so simple, but all he wanted to be was a normal person. All he wanted to be was one of the citizens of Philadelphia dedicated to the city, his job and his family. The best way you can describe him is ‘Citizen Dave.’”

Montgomery also was an active participant in issues facing and involving Major League Baseball, serving on the organization’s Executive Council, Business and Media Committee, Labor Policy Committee and Competition Committee.

“David’s approach to running the franchise and serving its fans was to treat everyone like family. He set an outstanding example in Philadelphia and throughout our game,” said MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred in a statement following Montgomery’s passing. “David was one of my mentors in baseball and was universally regarded as an industry expert and leader.

“I will remember David Montgomery as a gentleman and a man of great integrity.”

Montgomery becomes the fifth winner of the Buck O’Neil Award, with the others, besides the namesake, being Roland Hemond (2011), Joe Garagiola (2014) and Rachel Robinson (2017).

“He’s a very, very easy man to celebrate. It’s challenged all of us to want to be the kind of person that Dave Montgomery was,” a reflective Schmidt said. “When I pass, to be remembered in the same light as Dave Montgomery would be a great honor.

“I may be remembered for some other things, some home runs and some awards that I received, but I’d rather be remembered as Dave Montgomery is remembered than some athlete with a lot of sports accolades.”

Bill Francis is the senior research and writing specialist at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.
LOU’S RUN
Lou Brock captured the nation’s attention when he set a new stolen base record in 1974.

BY RICK HUMMEL

At age 34 going on 35, Lou Brock didn’t necessarily aspire to steal 105 bases or more in 1974. A year earlier, he had swiped 70 – and that seemed quite enough.

But then, in April 1974, Henry Aaron broke Babe Ruth’s home run record and Brock joked that the National League office implored him to create some “commotion” and try to break Maury Wills’ mark of 104 stolen bases set with the Dodgers in 1962.

The “Base Burglar,” as St. Louis Post-Dispatch sports editor Bob Broeg called him, started out with consistency. He stole 13 bases in April, then 17 in May, 18 in June and 17 in July. Unable to swing the bat with his full authority, Brock wasn’t able to hit for extra bases as much as in the past. So he took the extra base himself.

Brock then went nuts in August, swiping four bases against Philadelphia on Aug. 4 and accumulating 29 for the month. The Phillies would become an important party-of-the-second-part about five weeks later.

At the end of August, the count was up to 94 and Brock seemed almost sure to fracture Wills’ record. He then stole four bases against the San Francisco Giants on the first day of September. Sure, the Cardinals were in a race for a division title, but all eyes were on Brock.

As game time approached on Sept. 10, Brock, now just one off the mark at 103, had extra motivation. The Cardinals were starting a three-city trip the next night and it appeared likely he would break the mark on the road.

“The only pressure was that which I’d put on myself – by saying I wanted to do this at home,” Brock said.

The result of the Sept. 10 game, a score long forgotten, was an 8-2 win by the Phillies. Brock, as usual, “stole” the show. He singled to open the bottom of the first and swiped second base against a throw from catcher Bob Boone that hit Brock in the back and bounced into left field. He opened the bottom of the seventh with another single and was soon off to second base – and a new stolen base standard – as Boone’s throw was in the dirt and wide of the bag.

“On 105, I felt my legs swaying just before I reached the base,” Brock said. “I didn’t even have enough energy to pop up with my slide. I guess I was pretty well spent.”

The game was stopped and Brock was honored in impromptu ceremonies. St Louis native James “Cool Papa” Bell, a Negro Leagues speedster who had been inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame four weeks earlier, presented Brock with the second base bag, saying: “We decided to give him his 105th base because if we didn’t, he was going to steal it anyway.”

But there would be no No. 106 that night. In the ninth, Brock tried to steal second and Boone threw him out.

Brock, who also broke Max Carey’s National League career record of 740 steals that night, would finish the season with 118 steals: 112 of second base with his patented, hard pop-up slide and six of third.

As the years went on, I became a close friend – and still am – of Brock, who has battled a diabetic condition that causes him an assortment of ills.

I saw him at the top of his career, then at the bottom when he batted .221 in 1978 and his manager, Ken Boyer, suggested that Brock might have reached the end of the line.

He allowed me to accompany him on his final ride – to 3,000 hits, a bounce-back batting average of .304, his sixth-and-final All-Star Game selection and adulation everywhere after announcing he’d retire following the 1979 season, when he would be 40 years old.

I accompanied him to Boys’ Clubs around the National League. I watched as he singled off the leg of Chicago’s Dennis Lamp for his 3,000th hit.

Rick Hummel covers the Cardinals for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and is the 2006 winner of the Baseball Writers’ Association of America’s J.G. Taylor Spink Award.
CONGRATS HAWK

THE CHICAGO WHITE SOX ARE PROUD TO CELEBRATE
KEN “HAWK” HARRELSON 2020 FORD C. FRICK AWARD WINNER

KEN “HAWK” HARRELSON
2020 FORD C. FRICK AWARD

THE CHICAGO WHITE SOX

CONGRATS HAWK
The return of spring brought daffodils and blooming forsythias to Otsego County.