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MEMORIES *and Dreams*

The Official Magazine of the Hall of Fame

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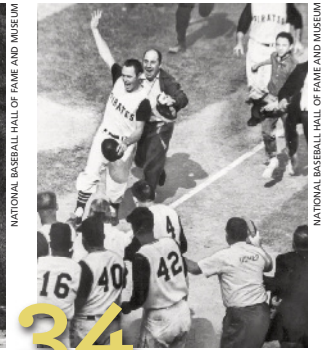
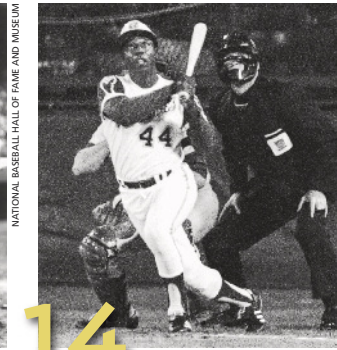
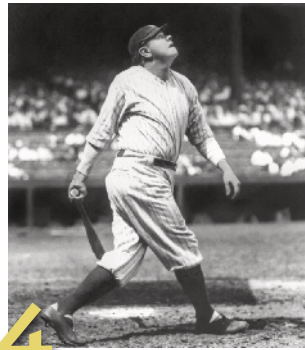
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LINEUP

WINTER 2020 | VOLUME 42 | NUMBER 6



4 HOMER HISTORY

One hundred years ago, Babe Ruth fundamentally changed baseball into what is still today's standard.

SCOTT PITONIAK

8 NAME'S THE SAME

John Franklin 'Home Run' Baker was the most celebrated slugger of his time.

MATT KELLY

10 THE STORY OF '98

Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa's pursuit of Roger Maris' record dazzled a nation.

BILL FRANCIS

14 HOMERS DEFEAT HATE

Hank Aaron overcame bigotry in his pursuit of Babe Ruth's record.

TERENCE MOORE



17 IN MEMORIAM

The Hall of Fame remembers Lou Brock, Whitey Ford, Bob Gibson, Joe Morgan and Tom Seaver.

25 STARTING NINE

This 2020 Museum program highlights nine must-see artifacts on display for each of the 30 MLB teams, with this issue focusing on the National League West.

34 HIT IT TO WIN IT

Bill Mazeroski and Joe Carter hit the most meaningful homers in the game's history.

WAYNE COFFEY

37 A SEASON LIKE NONE OTHER

Historic 2020 campaign is documented through artifacts in Museum's collection.

CRAIG MUDER

38 RARE TATERS

Some of baseball's most iconic moments were defined by unexpected home runs.

JOHN ERARDI

40 JOSHING AROUND

The legend of Josh Gibson's power dwarfs mere statistics and records.

JOHN ROSENGREN

44 PARTY IN JULY

Class of 2020 and any elected members of Class of 2021 to be inducted July 25 in Cooperstown.

CRAIG MUDER

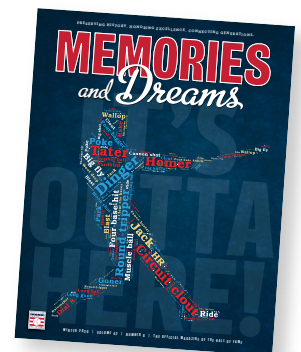
46 OUR MUSEUM IN ACTION

These ongoing projects are just a few of the ways the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum's mission is being supported today.

48 HOMERS HURT

Hitting the long ball was a byproduct of technique and practice.

FRANK THOMAS



ON THE COVER

No matter what you call it, the home run has become baseball's signature offensive feat over the past 100 years. This issue of *Memories & Dreams* examines the history of the homer and how it reached its lofty status.

FROM THE PRESIDENT > TIM MEAD



One swing of the bat can make all the difference. We've all been rocked by emotions set into action by a home run that forever altered the future of our favorite team – good or bad.

When I think about these moments in my career with the Angels, two home runs come to mind. For the first, my emotions remain difficult to express, even to this day. The other helped lead to one of the most satisfying moments of my life.

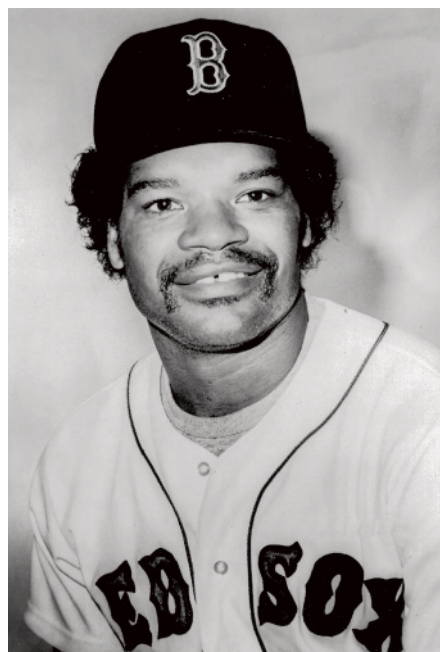
Oct. 12, 1986. Top of the ninth with a 5-2 lead against Boston and three outs away from the first World Series appearance in franchise history. A raucous crowd of 64,223 stood in anticipation of Gene Autry's Angels finishing off the Red Sox and advancing to the Fall Classic.

A one-out, two-run homer by Don Baylor closed the gap to 5-4, suddenly creating unexpected drama at Anaheim Stadium. It only grew from there.

A Dwight Evans foul out, and we were one out away. I had already positioned myself in the clubhouse – now with plastic draping the players' lockers and a stage built for award presentations and interviews – for my postgame duties. The excitement was hard to hide.

Standing in the players' lounge with a few uniformed personnel, we watched on television as starter Mike Witt was removed after 8.2 innings and 123 pitches. He gave way to southpaw Gary Lucas, called upon to retire left-handed hitting catcher Rich Gedman.

One pitch, a hit-batter, a pitching change, and the stage was set for a moment I have never been able to banish from the recesses of my mind.



Dave Henderson's ninth-inning home run in Game 5 of the 1986 ALCS was one of the most dramatic moments in baseball history.

Donnie Moore vs. Dave Henderson. On a 2-2 count and Donnie's seventh offering of the at-bat, Henderson connected on an off-speed pitch and drove the ball over the left field fence for a dramatic two-run homer and a sudden Red Sox lead. A hush befell the crowd like I had never heard before – and have never heard since.

The Angels would tie the score in the ninth, lose the game in the 11th and then travel to Boston, where the Red Sox dominated Games 6 and 7.

For the next 16 years, the Angels found themselves on the outside of October baseball. One home run – one miniscule moment of my life. But I couldn't make it go away.

And then came Oct. 26, 2002.

Trailing three-games-to-two in the World Series against the San Francisco Giants, Angel fans, despite a 5-0 deficit in the seventh inning of Game 6, maintained the strong vocal support they had demonstrated throughout the postseason. After all, they had endured for 42 years to reach the Fall Classic!

After surrendering consecutive one-out singles to Troy Glaus and Brad Fullmer, Giants starter Russ Ortiz was removed in favor of reliever Félix Rodríguez. First baseman Scott Spiezio worked the count full before willing a fly ball just over the short fence in right field for a three-run homer, cutting the deficit to 5-3.

I sat in my press box perch savoring the unbelievable moment, but the professional etiquette of my job called for no outward response. The roar of the crowd was deafening.

With one swing of the bat, momentum had shifted, and everyone on the field and in the stands knew it. The Angels would go on to win the game with a three-run eighth inning, followed by a series-clinching 4-1 victory in Game 7 a day later.

The range of emotions resulting from one singular action, one moment in time – and its lasting effect on so many – is one of the great rewards of being a fan of this game.

Some of baseball's most memorable moments came as a result of home runs. Names like Bill Mazerowski, Carlton Fisk, Bobby Thomson, Kirk Gibson, Bucky Dent and Joe Carter will forever be tied to our shared memory of historic homers that defined the success of one franchise, or the opposing team's dismay.

It is no coincidence that Hank Aaron and Babe Ruth, titans of our game's history, are the only Hall of Fame members with their own exhibits in our Museum. The magic of the home run has long fascinated fans, along with the lore of the greats who can seemingly hit one out of the ballpark at will.

The result of a home run can prove exhilarating or devastating. That's why so many long flies have become a part of the collective baseball conversation.

Which home run sticks out in your memory? Were you watching on TV? At the ballpark? And how many times have you talked about it since?

With regards and respect,

Tim Mead

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SHORT HOPS

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

Experience the Hall of Fame via 192 thrilling pages

Published this fall, “The National Baseball Hall of Fame Collection” by James Buckley features biographies, statistics and photos of more than 175 members of the most exclusive club in the sport in a beautiful book every baseball fan will enjoy.

Separated into chapters by position, “The National Baseball Hall of Fame Collection” highlights the best and most memorable players, events, championships, moments and more. The text is updated through the 2020 Hall of Fame elections, with Derek Jeter, Marvin Miller, Ted Simmons and Larry Walker joining their fellow inductees in a book that features:

- Profiles of more than 175 Hall of Famers
- Photo explorations into rare memorabilia, including game tickets, scouting reports, scorecards and contracts
- Notable awards, records, stats and a complete list of the 333 members of the Hall of Fame
- Full-color photos and informative sidebars

A great holiday gift for the baseball fan in your life, “The National Baseball Hall of Fame Collection” is available for purchase online at shop.baseballhall.org.

Explore the Museum’s education programs

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 aligned with national learning standards.

Free printable Hall of Fame activities for kids of all ages are available, including games, coloring projects and reading lists. An assortment of free lesson plans that use baseball to teach math, science, social studies and the arts for students from grades 3-12 are also available.

For more information, please call (607) 547-0349 or email our Education Department at education@baseballhall.org.

Class of 2020 Inductee Exhibit now on display

As the Hall of Fame Class of 2020 looks forward to its formal Induction on July 25 during Hall of Fame Weekend 2021 in Cooperstown,

STAFF SELECTIONS

Name: Diane Adams

Position: Museum Store Manager

Hall of Fame Debut: June 25, 2007

Hometown: Cooperstown

Favorite Museum Artifact:

So, I walked through the Museum this morning and really feel any of the uniforms or the locker rooms would be my “favorite artifact” because of all the history, the memories and dreams associated with each one. From the shoes with Disney paintings on them to the costumes the fans wore to attend the games to Phil Pohl’s mask (he went to school with my daughter!), it all stirs something in me.... I can imagine the people who wore these things; it makes them human instead of just a piece of history.



Memorable Museum Moment:

Some of my best memories of working here are the Members and fans who come back year after year. Induction is like a family reunion as we see all of the familiar faces and catch up on what they’ve been doing all year. The guests who make their yearly pilgrimage every spring or fall stop to visit and bring home a bat or souvenir to mark this year’s visit. For some, baseball is just a sport, a form of entertainment, but to others it is a religion, a connection to memories from years gone by, the people they have loved and the friendships they have developed through a shared love of baseball and Cooperstown.

the stories of the legendary careers of Derek Jeter, Marvin Miller, Ted Simmons and Larry Walker are already being told at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.

The 2020 *Inductee Exhibit*, located on the Museum’s third floor, is now open and will remain on display through 2021.

Some of the exhibit’s artifact highlights include the Yankees helmet Derek Jeter wore in 2011 when he recorded his 3,000th career hit; a timeline of Marvin Miller’s career as the executive director of the Major League Baseball Players Association; Ted Simmons’ 1982 AL championship ring he won as a member of the Brewers; and a Rockies jersey worn by Larry Walker in 1998 when he led the NL with a .363 batting average.

MILO STEWART JR./NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM

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HOMER HISTORY

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO, BABE RUTH FUNDAMENTALLY CHANGED BASEBALL INTO WHAT IS STILL TODAY'S STANDARD.

BY SCOTT PITONIAK



In the late 1800s and early 1900s, the baseball cognoscenti paid short shrift to the long ball.

“Small ball” was in vogue. Placement rather than distance was emphasized. Many players choked up on the bat and – in the immortal words of 5-foot-4 Hall of Fame outfielder Wee Willie Keeler – tried to “hit ‘em where they ain’t.”

The goal was to scratch out a run through a series of at-bats. Get runners on. Move them along with bunts, stolen bases and hit-and-run plays. Manufacture offense.

Small ball was born out of necessity during this aptly named Dead Ball Era, when a single beaten-to-death-by-the-third-inning baseball would be used throughout the game, no matter how mushy or blackened it became. It was a ball, too, without cork at its core; a spheroid not designed to fly like a current baseball.

That’s not to say home runs didn’t occur in those bygone days. They did, by the hundreds each season. But power ball was considered “stupid” by many. Conventional wisdom said fly balls usually resulted in outs. For the longest time, home runs weren’t even included in box scores. That’s how lowly they were regarded.

Then, on the brink of the Roaring Twenties, a man who would become known as the Sultan of Swat – and at least 50 other nicknames – exploded onto the scene. Babe Ruth would make an indelible impression on horsehides and fans. After decades of being an afterthought, the home run became the most dynamic weapon in baseball and a permanent part of American culture, language and lore.

Ruth’s big bang theory proved once and for all that hitting a homer is the best possible thing a batter can do in an at-bat. With one swing, a slugger could produce a run, and several more, depending on the number of base runners. A home run was instant offense. An exclamation point.

In 1919, Ruth set a single-season Major League Baseball record with 29 homers, breaking Ned Williamson’s 1884 mark by two. The next year, the Bambino obliterated his own standard, hitting 54. To put his otherworldly achievements into perspective, he out-homered all but one

of the other 15 big league teams. And that team, the Philadelphia Phillies, hit 64 home runs in the tiny Baker Bowl.

Fans fell in love with Ruth – and the home run – as his 1920 New York Yankees became the first professional sports team to draw more than a million spectators. And Ruth would have a pied piper effect on other hitters, who followed his lead and began swinging for the fences every time they stepped to the plate.

Today, a century later, baseball’s homer odyssey continues at a dizzying, record-smashing pace. The game that Ruth built saw 6,776 home runs smacked in 2019, exceeding by 671 the previous MLB mark established just two years earlier. And that skyward trend figures to continue, when you factor in bigger, stronger players; smaller, hitter-friendly ballparks; livelier baseballs; and analytics that show an all-or-nothing approach is the best strategy, even if it means a drastic increase in strikeouts.

Thanks to modern-day mashers like Mike Trout, Mookie Betts, Aaron Judge and Fernando Tatis Jr., and data-crunching Sabermetricians obsessed with launch angles and exit velocity, small ball has been sent packing.

To paraphrase some famous home run calls: “It’s gone – and it ain’t coming back. Kiss it goodbye.”

The Babe’s perfect storm

Timing, they say, is everything in life and in baseball, and that certainly was the case with Ruth, whose timing proved impeccable. His arrival coincided with a triple play of good fortune that contributed to him lifting baseballs and his sport to heights not witnessed before.

Certainly, the biggest part of the equation was Ruth’s brutish strength, surgical hand-eye coordination and fluid, left-handed swing reportedly modeled after Shoeless Joe Jackson, one of the marquee hitters of the early 20th century. But the Bambino also benefitted from the introduction of the livelier ball, the elimination of the spitball and other trick pitches, and the frequent replacement of worn baseballs with new ones throughout the game.

The cork-centered baseball was used full-time starting in 1911, and though it didn’t result immediately in a long-ball game, it would set the stage.

Babe Ruth angered purists of his day when he began swinging for the fences during nearly every at-bat. But Ruth’s ability to hit home runs made his Yankees champions and brought millions of new fans to the game.



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Before Babe Ruth changed the game with his prodigious power, hitters like Gavvy Cravath (left) ruled the home run leaderboards. Cravath led the NL in home runs six times in seven seasons from 1913-19 and was the manager of the 1920 Philadelphia Phillies – the only team to hit more homers than Ruth did all by himself that season.

Balls doctored with spit, tobacco juice, gels and other foreign substances gave pitchers a decided edge, so the elimination of this practice in 1920 swung the advantage back to batters. And the accidental beanball death of Ray Chapman on an errant pitch by Carl Mays on Aug. 16, 1920, forced MLB to seek ways to make the game safer. This resulted in smudged balls being thrown out of play and replaced with new ones that were easier for batters to see.

And when he was acquired by the Yankees, Ruth found the short right field fences at the Polo Grounds and Yankee Stadium a perfect fit for his swing.

Ruth's rebellious nature also was a factor. Despite being regarded as the American League's top left-handed pitcher, he insisted on becoming an everyday player so he could do what he enjoyed doing best. His slugging defied the "scientific" small-ball strategy preached by Ty Cobb, Honus Wagner, Napoleon Lajoie and other star players of that era. Cobb, in particular, would ridicule him, but the Babe would get the last laugh.

"If I just tried for them dinky singles, I could've batted around .600," Ruth sneered.

His goal was 60, not .600, and after clubbing 59 homers in 1921, he would reach his magical mark six years later. Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, and Josh Gibson, Jimmie Foxx, Hack Wilson and Lou Gehrig were among the many who began mimicking Ruth. Not surprisingly, home run totals more than doubled during the decade.

"By the fall of 1927, Babe Ruth had completely reshaped the game of baseball, bending it to his will," author Jane Leavy wrote in her bestselling book "The Big Fella: Babe Ruth and the World He Created." "...Subtlety was banished. Clout was all. Ruth had taught America to think big – expect big."

Home run hitters drive Cadillacs

Because of Ruth and the scores of big boppers who followed, the home run became transcendent. It's now a part of who we are, what we strive for as individuals and as a society. "Swing for the fences" is another way of saying, "Shoot for the stars." The words "home run" permeate our language. Merriam-Webster even gave it a second definition, saying it can be used to describe "an impressive success." For example, "The President hit a home run with that speech." Or, "That was a home run of a deal."

And it has sparked a proliferation of synonyms, with words such as "dingers," "taters," "four-baggers," "circuit clouts" and "round-trippers" among the clever substitutes.

Launchers of homers would become baseball's biggest stars. As Fritz Ostermueller opined in a quote often attributed to his Pittsburgh Pirates Hall of Fame teammate Ralph Kiner: "Home run hitters drive Cadillacs; singles hitters drive Fords."

Home run chases would wind up capturing people's fancy, with Roger Maris' pursuit of Ruth's single-season mark in 1961 and Hank Aaron's quest to eclipse the Babe's career record in 1973-74 among all-time favorites. Many credit the record-setting assault by Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa on Maris' mark in 1998 for saving baseball, which was reeling after a strike canceled the World Series just four years earlier.



A HOME RUN BY ANY OTHER NAME

There's probably no term in the baseball glossary with more synonyms than home runs.

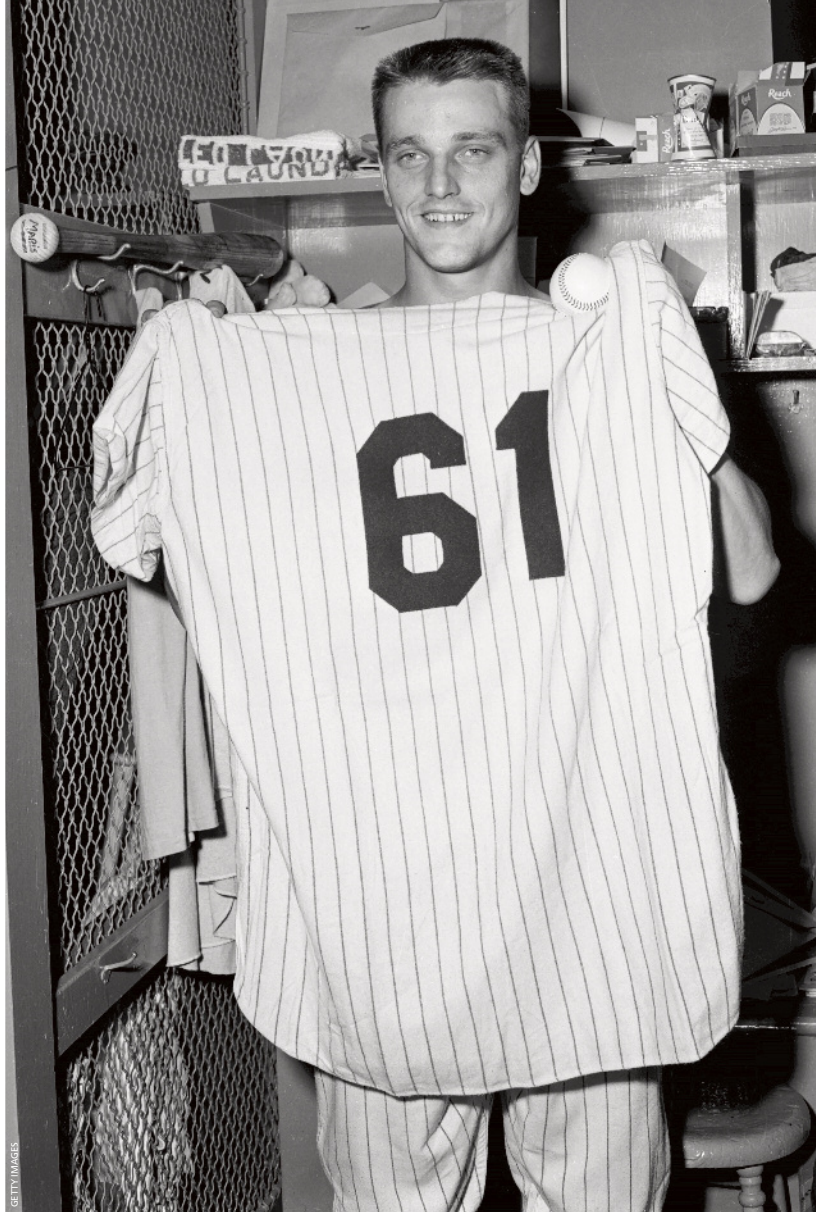
Mention dingers, taters, round-trippers, circuit clouts, jacks, bombs, big flies, four-baggers, homers, wallops, gopher balls, four-base hits, moon shots, grand salamis, long-gones, pokes, big shots, tape-measure blasts, muscle balls, fence-busters and going yard, and players and diehard fans will know what you're talking about.

The funny thing about most home runs is they usually involve jogging rather than running – though, in the sport's early years, before fences were erected at ballparks to keep non-paying fans out, all home runs were of the running variety, like today's inside-the-park homers.

The list of nicknames for home runs keeps expanding. In the 1970s, players began referring to them as taters, which was short for potato, a long-used synonym for baseballs. Dingers also came into vogue during that era. The word was a shortened version of humdinger, referring to something outstanding. Jacks – as in, "He jacked it out of the park" – also is popular, as is going yard, a reference to the ball traveling the entire distance of the field before sailing over the fence.

Through the years, radio calls added sponsors to the nicknames. While broadcasting New York Yankees games in the 1950s and '60s, Ford C. Frick Award winner Mel Allen would remind listeners that was a "Ballentine Blast" or a "White Owl Wallop" after the team's beer and cigar advertisers.

– Scott Pitoniak



Hank Aaron (left) and Roger Maris (right) captured the nation's attention while chasing the lifetime and single-season home run records, respectively, of Babe Ruth. Home runs have captivated fans for more than 100 years. **Below:** The jersey Aaron wore on April 8, 1974, when he hit his record-breaking 715th home run, is on display at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.

McGwire would club 70 and Sosa 66, but their records, as well as the single-season (73) and career (762) standards established by Barry Bonds a few years later, weren't without controversy.

Throughout baseball history, spikes in homers have been greeted with skepticism and, occasionally, derision. No period of home run proliferation would be more controversial than the so-called Steroid Era of the late 1990s and early 2000s. In the first 106 years of MLB, there had been 16 seasons in which players clubbed 50-or-more homers. In the 43 years since, there have been 30 such seasons, including 18 between 1995-2002, the height of the performance-enhancing drug era. More comprehensive testing and stringent fines and suspensions for PED use may have contributed to the substantial drop in the number of homers from 2006 through 2014, but there's been a 38 percent increase since then.

Some attribute the recent rise to a livelier ball – one with lower seams



MILIO STEWART / NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM

and, therefore, less drag to impede it when it takes flight. Others cite the influence of analytics. Employing sophisticated data and cameras, batters are being taught to upper-cut the ball to a certain degree – focused on what's known as “launch angle.” The fact that today's pitchers are throwing harder than ever adds to the equation. What comes in fast goes out fast and, if elevated, will soar over outfield walls. Hence, the term “exit velocity.”

The Babe probably would have dismissed all the scientific explanations for these homer-happy times. After all, when asked to explain his own slugging prowess, he replied: “All I can tell 'em is I pick out a good one and sock it.”

That simple formula worked 714 times for him, helping launch his legend and the legend of the home run. 🏆

Bestselling author Scott Pitoniak resides in Penfield, N.Y. His latest book is “Memories of Swings Past: A Lifetime of Baseball Stories.”



Name's the Same

John Franklin 'Home Run' Baker was the most celebrated slugger of his time.

BY MATT KELLY

Colossal clouts, postseason heroics and national adulation are all things associated with the great Babe Ruth. But those phrases also described one of the men most synonymous with America's favorite play, the home run, before the Bambino came along.

Frank "Home Run" Baker's 96 career round-trippers don't seem like a total worthy of the nickname. But in the pre-1920 Dead Ball Era – when simply lifting the soft, misshapen and darkened ball over the second baseman's head was an accomplishment for most hitters – fans considered a man like Baker, who could wallop a baseball 50 yards past the boundaries, to be a titan.

Baker, known throughout his life as relentlessly modest and self-effacing, simply loved to swing the bat.

Baker developed immense country strength growing up at his family's farm on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Town ball was as big as John McGraw's Baltimore Orioles in the area, and Baker earned \$5 per week playing with future big leaguer Buck Herzog's Ridgely club as his first semipro gig. Herzog devoted extra time toward developing his 19-year-old protégé, moving him from outfield to third base and honing Baker's fielding skills. But his bat hardly needed seasoning. Indeed, one of the only mistakes that Jack Dunn, the same manager who discovered Ruth in Baltimore, ever made in appraising young players was when he passed on Baker, deciding after just 15 at-bats that the youngster "couldn't hit."

Baker impressed with the minor league club



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After sitting out the 1915 season in a contract dispute, Frank Baker was sold to the Yankees and helped New York win AL pennants in 1921 and 1922.

in Reading, Pa., in 1908, earning himself a contract with Connie Mack's Philadelphia A's. Replacing the aging Jimmy Collins at third base, Baker was an instant shot in the arm to the team's offense. The home runs were sparse at the beginning, but each of them made an impression.

His first career dinger was a grand slam (the only one he would hit as a major leaguer), and homer No. 2 came at Philadelphia's brand new Shibe Park – a steel-and-concrete palace so large that one local paper estimated "the first slugger to put a ball over the fence will [ensure] that his name will have a place in baseball history."

Baker became that man, finishing his rookie year of 1909 with a league-leading 19 triples, 85 RBI and the AL's fourth-highest

slugging percentage at .447. He could run, too, despite a bow-legged frame that resembled Honus Wagner – recording the first of five straight seasons with 20-plus steals.

But one of the formative moments of Baker's career came in August 1909, when Tigers superstar Ty Cobb challenged the A's rookie third baseman with one of his trademark spikes-high slides. Cobb's right foot sliced a sizeable gash in Baker's arm, infuriating Mack and inciting a war of words between the Philadelphia and Detroit newspapers for weeks. The *Detroit Free Press* called Baker "a soft-fleshed darling," and questions about Baker's toughness dogged him for several more years.

The suddenly powerful A's finished just behind Cobb's Tigers, but Mack had the makings of his famous "\$100,000 infield" – which included first baseman Stuffie McInnis, second baseman Eddie Collins, shortstop Jack Barry and Baker at third and came to dominate the early 1910s. Baker knocked only two homers in 1910, but he came up big when it mattered most. Philly's big slugger hammered Cubs pitching in the World Series, hitting .409 and driving in four runs as the Mack Men claimed the title. Cubs second baseman Johnny Evers was among the many impressed by the A's slugger, telling the *Washington Post* that Baker "is entitled to all the credit he can get."

The following year would be the most important in Baker's career. Whipping his massive 52-ounce bat with terrifying force, Baker launched 11 homers to earn himself the first of four straight league home run crowns – a streak that only Ruth and Ralph Kiner have matched since.

Baker also hit .334 and even stole 38 bases, propelling the A's to the World Series that would make him famous. McGraw's Giants spent the minutes before Game 1 sharpening their spikes, and center fielder Fred Snodgrass showed that New York meant to use them when he slid into Baker, slicing open both the third baseman's arm and his uniform and forcing Baker to drop the ball.

But Baker would get his revenge. In Game 2, he blasted a sixth-inning moonshot off Giants lefty Rube Marquard that proved the winning difference. Baker smacked a ninth-inning homer off Christy Mathewson the next afternoon, tying Game 3 and sending it to extras. His drives off two future Hall of Famers would inspire a swell of national writers to give

Frank "Home Run" Baker led the American League in homers in each season from 1911-14. Only Babe Ruth has ever led the AL in more consecutive seasons.



NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM

him his famous "Home Run" nickname, and hitting two over-the-fence homers in a single World Series – when fans had seen teams combine for just seven over-the-fence long balls across the first seven Fall Classics – indeed registered as a mythic achievement.

But what happened in the field in the 10th inning of Game 3 proved just as vital to his reputation. Snodgrass slid into third base with his spikes aloft and drew blood again – this time, however, Baker held onto the ball. Wounded but not deterred, Baker had not only slugged the A's to a crucial win, but had shed his "soft" label stemming back to the Cobb incident, too.

Baker completed the A's triumph over the Giants hitting .375 with five RBI, and he would finish with a terrific .363 average, .956 OPS and 18 RBI across his six career World Series appearances. He tallied a career-high 130 RBI in 1912 and led the A's to another Fall


Classic title over the Giants in '13, homering off Marquard again in Game 1. But Baker shied away from his newfound fame as much as he could, returning home to Maryland every offseason and rarely giving reporters quotes on any subject besides hunting and farming.

The strength of Baker's roots shown after the "Miracle Braves" shocked the A's in the 1914 World Series and Mack began selling off pieces of his dynastic club. The manager refused Baker's request for a higher salary, and Baker dug in, stepping away from the big leagues entirely and spending the '15 season playing for local town teams. AL President Ban Johnson pressured Mack to sell Baker's contract to the Yankees, with whom Baker became a veteran clubhouse presence and helped establish a pre-Ruth version of New York's Murderers' Row."

Tragedy struck Baker's home after the 1919 season when his wife, Otilie, succumbed to

scarlet fever. Baker sat out again in '20 before returning to the Yankees and playing a supporting role to Ruth for two more World Series runs. He retired after the '22 Fall Classic, but continued to play for town teams on the Eastern Shore, later taking on managing duties and mentoring the next great slugger in 16-year-old Jimmie Foxx.

Though he helped found the slugging precedent that Ruth and Foxx expanded on, Baker's preferences remained with the Dead Ball Era in which he thrived. Decades later, he told a newspaper: "Of course, homers are nice. But I'll take a good .300 hitter.... You can't drive in many runs batting .225, no matter how many homers you hit."

Baker remained in his beloved Maryland until his passing in 1963, eight years after his election to the Hall of Fame. 

Matt Kelly is a freelance writer from Brooklyn, N.Y.

THE STORY OF '98

MARK MCGWIRE AND SAMMY SOSA'S PURSUIT OF ROGER MARIS' RECORD DAZZLED A NATION.

BY BILL FRANCIS

It seemed as if the entire country was captivated by the home run in the fall of 1998, with two charismatic sluggers making a run at one of the National Pastime's most iconic records.

That September, Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa raced toward eclipsing Roger Maris' 37-year-old record of 61 for most home runs in a season.

Only four years after a strike had marred the game's immediate future in the eyes of fans, here came two ballplayers who helped renew interest in the sport and, not coincidentally, increased attention of the historic work of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.

While the legacies of McGwire and Sosa have since been changed with performance-enhancing drug revelations and speculation, the pair generously donated dozens of artifacts to the Hall of Fame during their pursuit of immortality.

Jeff Idelson, the former president of the Hall of Fame – but back in 1998 the institution's executive director of communications and education – was often on the road that summer to collect artifacts that would tell the story back in Cooperstown.

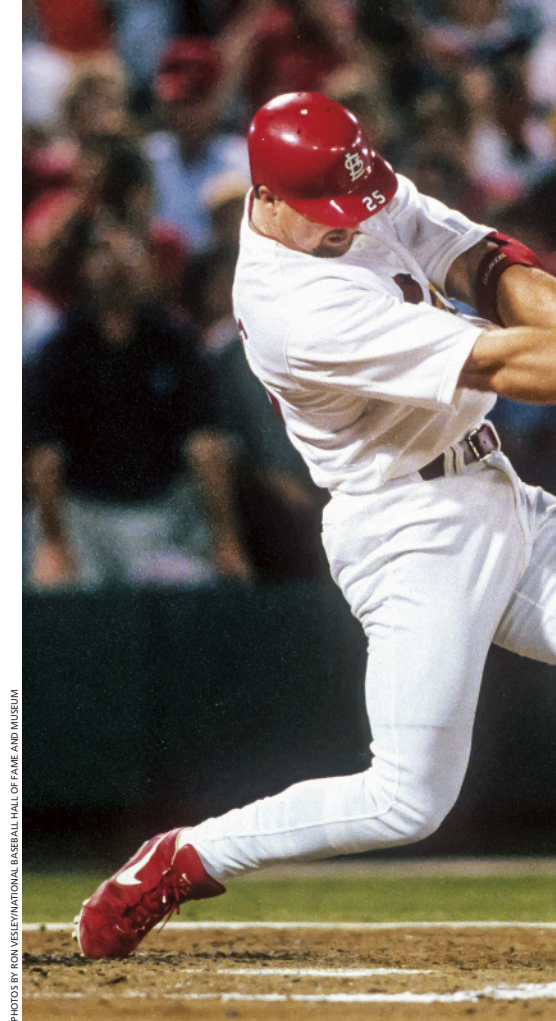
"It was a seminal moment in time for both baseball and the Hall of Fame," said Idelson in a recent interview. "That September, not only did it vault baseball into the spotlight but the Hall of Fame as well."

In early September 1998, the Hall of Fame began chronicling the home run chase with "The March on Maris," an 8 foot by 22 foot scoreboard in the Museum's foyer that showed on a daily basis how McGwire, Sosa and Ken Griffey Jr. were faring compared to Maris' magical 1961 campaign.

"The Hall of Fame was celebrating what was arguably the most exciting single-season record," Idelson remembered. "To have three players in pursuit, we felt that we wanted to make sure our visitors knew what was happening as history was unfolding."

The highlight of that season came when McGwire's Cardinals faced Sosa's Cubs at Busch Stadium on the night of Sept. 8. With more than 43,000 fans in attendance and an enormous national media presence, Big Mac socked his 62nd home run of the season in the fourth inning against righty Steve Trachsel, a 341-foot line drive that barely cleared the wall in the left field corner. Sosa entered the game with 58 round-trippers and went homerless.

"It's hard to explain, but standing there in



PHOTOS BY KIM VESELY/NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM

Busch Stadium when McGwire hit his 62nd home run and seeing everybody on their feet, to me it was as exciting as when man walked on the moon. It riveted the nation in that sense," Idelson said. "It was something that nobody ever thought they would see – Maris' mark being broken or Neil Armstrong setting foot on the moon."

According to Idelson, since the Hall of Fame didn't have a deep relationship with McGwire or Sosa, the thought was to bring the bat Maris used to hit his 61st homer in 1961 to St. Louis to demonstrate how important it would be for them to provide artifacts from this historic time to Cooperstown.

"And the bat worked wonders because both players were enamored when seeing it, and it had a strong emotional connection," Idelson said.

Idelson, who was accompanied by Hall of Fame President Donald Marr, talked with Sosa in the visiting team manager's office, sharing with the outfielder the Maris bat that was 32 ounces and 34½ inches long, the same size Sosa used.

"He immediately jumped up, went to his locker and presented me with the bat that he used to hit his 57th, which broke Hack



Left: Mark McGwire of the Cardinals watches home run No. 60 leave the park during the 1998 season. McGwire finished the campaign with 70 home runs. **Right:** Sammy Sosa won the National League Most Valuable Player Award in 1998 after hitting 66 home runs and recording an MLB-best 158 RBI.

Wilson's team single-season record set in 1930," Idelson said. "He said, 'Take this to Cooperstown, and if I'm lucky enough to pass Maris, I'll make sure to help you.'"

Idelson's pregame visit with McGwire took place in a secluded area of the Cardinals' clubhouse moments before the start of the Sept. 8 contest.

"I explained to Mark about the Maris bat, the significance of it, and he took the bat, he looked at it and he had a tear in his eye. He rubbed the barrel of the Maris bat over his heart, looked up at the ceiling and said, 'Roger, you're going to be with me tonight.'"

McGwire then asked what artifacts the Hall of Fame wanted, to which Idelson said they'd want the 62nd homer bat and also the jersey from his son Matt, a Cardinals bat boy at the time.

"He asked why we'd want Matt's jersey, and I said that baseball is a sport of connecting generations, and it's not often that you might have your son with you when a record of this magnitude would be broken," Idelson said. "He just looked at me and said, 'You've got it.'"

"When I went into the clubhouse after the game, Mark's entire uniform was packed in pitcher Lance Painter's equipment bag, and Matt's uniform was packed, as well as the bat and the baseball. He sent me packing to Cooperstown with everything."

McGwire, in a press conference after hitting his 62nd home run, said getting to hold the Maris bat was important, adding: "I picked the bat up and put it against my heart. Now, my bat will lie next to his, and I'm damn proud of it. It was an unbelievable feeling."

Idelson and Marr returned with their artifact haul the very next day to a surprising celebration. After dealing with thousands of fans and a media crush after landing at Albany International Airport, an estimated 700 people were on hand in Cooperstown, some chanting "62! 62! 62!" as the state police escorted the Hall of Fame employees and the artifacts to the Hall of Fame that afternoon.

"When we drove back into Cooperstown in the middle of September on a weekday, in what normally would be a very, very quiet

Main Street, it was packed with fans who were just dying to see history," Idelson said. "Coming down Lake Road, took a right on Chestnut Street, took a left on Main Street, and approaching the flagpole you can't even drive, there were so many people in front of the post office. A path had to be carved out for us to make our way into the Museum with these historic artifacts."

"This is a particularly monumental day for the Hall of Fame," Marr said at the time. "This speaks volumes about baseball players. They're our greatest supporters. Both players could not have been more generous. Fortunately, the ball was retrieved and given to Mark. We found that refreshing."

On Sept. 11, a new exhibit, *The March on Maris*, was unveiled to the public in the Museum's front lobby.

"It's got to be on display," said Ted Spencer, the Hall of Fame's chief curator at the time. "(In other cases) if someone's cap came in, and we waited a couple of days, probably no one would notice. But not this."



PHOTOS BY MILO STEWART, NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM

“In my 16 years as Hall of Fame curator, I’ve never seen anything like this. The emotion generated by this whole home-run derby phenomenon is bigger than any other moment I can remember. It has reverberated all the way back to Cooperstown.”

When the exhibit opened, more than 200 fans were on hand to see the dozen artifacts from the record-breaking night. Included were McGwire’s cap, jersey, pants, belt, spikes and batting gloves, as well as the bat and ball involved, a scorecard from Cardinals broadcaster Jack Buck, Matt McGwire’s jersey, Sosa’s bat and the bat and ball from Maris’ 61st homer.

“The Hall of Fame staff showed really how nimble it was in creating this exhibit in real time. Everybody on the Hall of Fame staff understood the enormity of what was happening in the game and the importance in providing some context as quickly as possible,” Idelson said. “It helped the Hall of Fame elevate its position as a place where you could revisit history, and it didn’t have to be months or years later. It could be instantaneous.

“I remember talking to visitors often during those first months of the exhibit, and I can’t tell you how many people said they were in the area and going somewhere else but knew Cooperstown was nearby, so they decided to divert what they were doing and come see all of the great artifacts.”

There would be a direct correlation between the excitement and enthusiasm for the National



Top: Mark McGwire wore this cap and batting helmet when he hit his record-breaking 62nd home run of the season on Sept. 8, 1998. The next day, the artifacts were in Cooperstown at the Hall of Fame. **Middle and bottom:** Sammy Sosa used this bat and wore this jersey in 1998 when he and Mark McGwire chased Roger Maris’ single-season home run record. Sosa hit 66 home runs that season and remains the only player in big league history with three seasons with at least 60 home runs.

Pastime as a result of the 1998 home run chase and a subsequent attendance surge at the Hall of Fame with its *The March on Maris* exhibit. New artifacts were added as McGwire ended the season with 70 home runs and Sosa topped out at 66.

Today, if you ask the Hall of Fame’s collections department how many artifacts it has related to the McGwire and Sosa 1998 home run chase,

you get a list with almost 40 items on it.

As that season came to a close, the Hall of Fame continued to receive donations, including McGwire’s bat used for homers 66-70, the glove worn by Expos pitcher Carl Pavano when he gave up McGwire’s 70th home run, a pair of Sosa bats used to hit homers 59-62 and 64-66, and the ball Sosa hit for his 62nd home run.

The Hall of Fame opened a new exhibit in April 1999, *The Great American Home Run Chase*, which chronicled the history of the single-season home run record. Located in the rotunda of the Hall of Fame Plaque Gallery, it included not only recently acquired McGwire and Sosa artifacts, but also those from Maris, Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig and Mickey Mantle, among others.

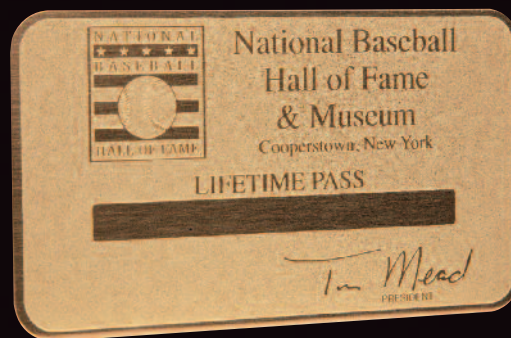
“The home run has historically been the sport’s trademark, and the 1998 home run chase was one of the most exciting stories in baseball history,” Idelson said. “Both Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa understood their place in history and knew, with their generous donations, that they were doing something the public really appreciated.

“The artifacts help tell the story. And short of having a player physically being in the Hall of Fame, that’s the next best thing.”

Bill Francis is the senior research and writing specialist at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.

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HOMERS DEFEAT HATE

HANK AARON OVERCAME BIGOTRY IN HIS PURSUIT OF BABE RUTH'S RECORD.

BY TERENCE MOORE

Somewhere, tucked away in his southwest Atlanta home, Hank Aaron has memories that most folks would rather forget.

Those memories are letters.

Hateful ones.

"I saved quite a few of them," Aaron said recently, referring to the dreadful mail that dominated his life nearly five decades ago as much as the balls he routinely ripped over fences in Major League Baseball ballparks along the way to catching and passing Babe Ruth.

At one point during the 1973 season, with Aaron sprinting toward Ruth's record for career home runs (which he would break the following year), the U.S. Postal Service announced he was receiving more daily mail than anybody in the country not named President Richard Nixon.

Aaron also was receiving something else.

Death threats.

Not only that, but some of those letters claimed they were written by kidnappers with designs on Aaron's children.

"When I think back to those years, yes, I'm disgusted by the things that happened to me that had nothing to do with playing the game

of baseball," Aaron said, pausing to search for the right words.

Here was Aaron's problem for the moment: No matter how much you try, it's difficult to find the definitive thing to say when you're a naturally gentle soul who became a target of racists during much of the early 1970s as a Black man moving toward solidifying your stature among baseball's all-time elite with one of the greatest achievements in sports history.

After Aaron thought more about those times featuring armed bodyguards in his world as much as pitchers and shortstops, he said: "Oh, many times I feared for my life. Many, many times. I thought the safest place for me would be on the baseball field. Anywhere else, I didn't think I had a chance.

"I thought I was doomed, you know. But when I got in the batter's box, I never thought about anything but baseball. The good Lord took care of me in that regard. If it hadn't been for Him, I don't know what I would have done.

"Outside of myself, when it comes to going after a record, nobody else had to go through those kinds of things."

Nobody, indeed, and it began with this: To many, Ruth was The Great White Hope who made "714" not only magical but eternal in their minds. That was his final home run

total, and it remained a baseball record from the moment he retired in 1935 with the Boston Braves – after his legendary stretch with the New York Yankees – through just before Aaron sent No. 715 over the wall in left-center field of Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium on April 8, 1974.

There was "The Chase" for Aaron before that. It involved nearly two years of seclusion in hotel rooms during road trips with his Atlanta Braves, handling those death threats and dealing with those letters.

Tons of them.

"I thought at that time, out of all the things I was doing, that I was only playing the little game of baseball, trying to make people enjoy the whole (experience) while I was out there," Aaron said. "Then I looked around and saw people were getting so irritated and aggravated, only because it was a Black man who was chasing a white man's record that he had for a long time."

Even so, Aaron spent his years before The Chase in the shadows, partly due to playing for average Braves teams in Atlanta after the franchise moved from Milwaukee before the 1966 season.

While in Wisconsin, well, that was a different story. Aaron began his major league career in 1954, with fellow Baseball Hall of Fame teammates Eddie Mathews and Warren Spahn, and they joined Aaron in taking the Braves to consecutive National League pennants in 1957 and 1958, including a world championship over the Yankees after the first one.

Aaron provided one of the most memorable of his 755 homers on Sept. 23, 1957, at Milwaukee County Stadium, where he clinched a World Series trip for the Braves and NL Most Valuable Player honors with his walk-off shot against the St. Louis Cardinals.

The Atlanta years followed, and so did Aaron's home run milestones.

Quietly, though.

Much of the baseball nation kept its focus during the summer of 1968 on things such as Bob Gibson's pitching for the Cardinals, Carl

Hank Aaron hit his 715th career home run on April 8, 1974, at Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium, passing Babe Ruth for No. 1 on the all-time list and ending an arduous journey for the Braves superstar.



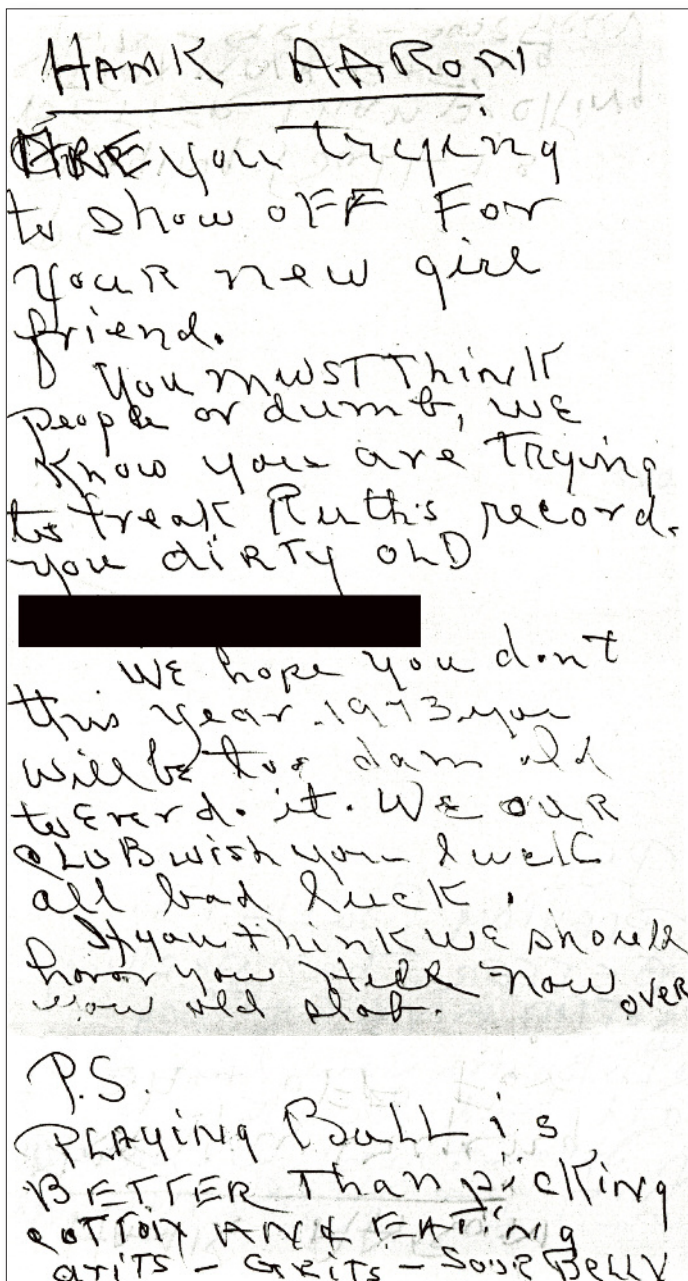
Yastrzemski chasing a batting title for the Boston Red Sox or Mickey Mantle's last season with the Yankees, period. As a result, few noticed on July 14 when Aaron became the second-youngest player ever to rip his 500th career homer.

Speaking of Mantle, Aaron eased past The Mick with homer No. 537 on July 31, 1969, and two years later, Aaron got slightly more notoriety as only the third player at the time with 600 homers on his résumé.

Then came baseball's 1972 strike season, when Aaron surged past Willie Mays on the all-time homer list to have only one guy ahead of him.

THAT guy.

Even though Aaron somehow swung his 39-year-old arms well enough to end 1973 with 40 homers for the season and 713 for his career to sit one shy of Ruth's record, that was the worst of the 23 major league



During his pursuit of the all-time home run record, Hank Aaron received hate mail on a regular basis. This letter is part of the collection at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.



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Hank Aaron methodically moved up the all-time home run list during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Though he never hit more than 47 home runs in one season, Aaron's remarkable consistency eventually moved him into the No. 1 spot on the list.

seasons for the Braves' outfielder-turned-target for bigots everywhere.

"I had run-ins with racist people all the time.... The only thing I thought about when I left that dugout was baseball," Aaron said. "I've often tried to imagine over the years about how many home runs I would have hit if I didn't have all of those other things happening, but I was able to concentrate on what I needed to do at the plate and on the field."

Aaron had to leave the ballpark, though.

During those times, Black teammates Dusty Baker and Ralph Garr operated as Aaron's unofficial secret service men, because as he put it: "They were young kids that I was really fond of, and they didn't fully understand what was going on, but any chance they got, they were right there with me."

Baker was in the on-deck circle at Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium when Aaron walked by on his way to the plate and said during that rainy night in Georgia that he was about to knock No. 715 into history. Aaron did just that against Al Downing of the Los Angeles Dodgers.

The Chase was over, but the hate mail continued.

Aaron still has the proof. 📄

Terence Moore is a freelance writer from Smyrna, Ga.

IN MEMORIAM

On behalf of the entire Hall of Fame staff, we honor these five extraordinary men, who we lost so recently and in such a short period of time – not simply for their on-field accomplishments, but for the totality of their contributions to the game, and lives well lived.

– Tim Mead, President, National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum

LOU BROCK

1939-2020

He was baseball's best catalyst for more than a decade, pressuring opponents with speed and daring on the basepaths. But Lou Brock was much more than a stolen base specialist. And by the end of his spectacular 19-year big league career, Brock was recognized as one of baseball's most complete – and clutch – players of the 20th century.

Brock, 81, passed away Sept. 6, 2020. At the time of his retirement in 1979, he held MLB's single-season and all-time stolen base records and was one of just 14 players with at least 3,000 hits. When he was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1985 in his first year of eligibility, Brock became just the 20th player elected in his first year on the ballot.

"My greatest asset was being able to light the fuse to a ballclub," Brock said. "Someone on every team has to do that to create enthusiasm. Being able to do it with the St. Louis Cardinals gave me a great deal of satisfaction."

Born June 18, 1939, in El Dorado, Ark., Louis Clark Brock played college baseball at Southern University before signing as an amateur free agent with the Cubs in 1960. After a year tearing up the minor leagues, Brock surfaced in Chicago at the tail end of the 1961 season, becoming the Cubs' regular center fielder in 1962. The following year, the 24-year-old Brock played 148 games as Chicago's regular right fielder, scoring 79 runs while stealing 24 bases and hitting .258.

But on June 15, 1964, the Cubs – desperate for pitching – dealt Brock to the Cardinals as part of a trade for Ernie Broglio, an 18-game winner in 1963.



Lou Brock, shown here during the 2011 Parade of Legends, was a constant presence at Induction Weekend.

"I guess that fewer than two percent of the people in baseball thought it was a good trade for us," said Cardinals third baseman Ken Boyer.

Brock proved the doubters wrong, hitting .348 with 81 runs scored and 33 stolen bases in just 103 games for St. Louis while leading the Cardinals to the National League pennant. In the World Series, the Cardinals' new left fielder hit .300 with five RBI to help St. Louis beat the Yankees in seven games.

The next year, Brock began a stretch of 12 seasons during which he averaged 65 steals and 99 runs as the game's premier leadoff hitter.

He led the Cardinals to back-to-back NL pennants in 1967 and 1968 and the World Series title in 1967. Brock hit a combined .439 in those two Fall Classics, which included



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a record 13 hits in the '68 World Series after having 12 the year before.

In 1974, the 35-year-old Brock mounted a successful challenge to Maury Wills' 12-year-old stolen base record, amassing 118 steals while finishing second in the NL Most Valuable Player voting.

Brock continued to be a force well into his 30s, closing in on Ty Cobb's all-time stolen base mark of 892 before passing the Georgia Peach during the 1977 season. He led the NL in steals every year but one between 1966 and 1974.

"There are two things I will remember most about Lou," said former Cardinals teammate and fellow Hall of Famer Ted Simmons. "First was his vibrant smile. Whenever you were in a room with Lou, you couldn't miss it – the biggest, brightest, most vibrant smile on earth. The other was that he was surely hurt numerous times, but never once in my life did I know he was playing hurt."

Brock's final season was 1979, when he made his sixth All-Star Game appearance and batted .304. He totaled 3,023 hits, 1,610 runs, 900 RBI and 938 steals – a stolen base mark that stood until Rickey Henderson surpassed it in 1991.

"Baseball and I have a mutual respect for each other," Brock said. "I have given a lot. It has given me a lot." 🍌

WHITEY FORD

1928-2020

At the heart of baseball is great pitching, the most indispensable part of any team. At the heart of baseball's greatest dynasty was Whitey Ford, possibly the best money pitcher the game has ever known.

Ford, 91, passed away Oct. 8, 2020. He spent more than four decades as a Hall of Famer following his election in 1974. During his 16-year playing career, Ford – along with Yogi Berra and Mickey Mantle – became the embodiment of the New York Yankees team that was baseball for the postwar generation.

“Whitey Ford anchored the great Yankees teams of the 1950s and '60s and was the winningest pitcher in the team's storied history,” said Jane Forbes Clark, Chairman of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. “A six-time champion and the owner of the most World Series wins by any pitcher, Whitey loved the Hall of Fame, Cooperstown and the legacy that he and his teammates built during the game's golden era. We extend our deepest condolences to his family, and we will celebrate his life in Cooperstown forever.”

Edward Charles Ford was born Oct. 21, 1928, in New York City. Signed to an amateur free contract by the Yankees prior to the 1947 season, Ford quickly rose through the minor leagues – surfacing in New York in the summer of 1950. The 5-foot-10, 181-pound Ford immediately established himself in a Yankees rotation filled with veterans Vic Raschi, Eddie Lopat and Allie Reynolds. In 20 games, Ford went 9-1 with a 2.81 ERA and finished second in the AL Rookie of the Year voting.

In the World Series, Ford started Game 4



The 1961 Cy Young Award winner, Whitey Ford posted a career winning percentage of .690 – the best mark of any modern era pitcher with at least 200 wins.

and recorded 26 of the 27 outs, earning a 5-2 victory against the Philadelphia Phillies that clinched the Series for the Bronx Bombers.

Ford spent the next two seasons in the Army, returning in 1953 after two more Fall Classic wins by the Yankees. Ford picked up where he left off, going 18-6 while helping New York win its fifth straight World Series championship – a record that has not been approached since.

“I don't care what the situation was, how high the stakes were – the bases could be loaded and the pennant riding on every pitch, it never bothered Whitey,” said Mantle. “He pitched his game.”

Over the next seven seasons, Ford averaged 15 wins per year despite manager Casey Stengel's cautious use. Ford never pitched more than



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255 innings a season during that span but did appear in 11 World Series games, winning six en route to a record 10 Fall Classic wins.

“He was my banty rooster,” Stengel said. “Whitey used to stick out his chest and walk out to the mound against any of those big pitchers.”

Stengel was dismissed following the Yankees' 1960 World Series loss to Pittsburgh. The next season, new manager Ralph Houk began pitching Ford every fourth day – and the little lefty thrived on the extra work, going 25-4 to win his first Cy Young Award.

From 1961-65 – starting at the age of 32 – Ford averaged 260 innings per season. When he retired before the 1968 season, Ford's final mark was 236-106 – good for an unbelievable .690 winning percentage that is the best among modern era pitchers with at least 200 victories.

In the postseason, Ford was 10-8 with a 2.71 ERA. He set a record with a stretch of 33 1/3 shutout innings and was named the World Series Most Valuable Player in 1961.

Ford was a 10-time All-Star and led the AL in wins three times and ERA twice. His career 2.75 ERA – the lowest of any live ball era pitcher with at least 2,500 innings worked – was bolstered by 45 shutouts.

But even those gaudy numbers don't do justice to Ford, who made winning look easier than it was ever meant to be.

“Cool. Crafty. Nerves of steel,” said Mantle of his longtime teammate. “That was Whitey.”

BOB GIBSON

1935-2020

Bob Gibson induced fear during his 17 big league seasons, but not with his blazing fastball or intense glare or incredible stamina. Gibson intimidated with sheer determination, instilling in opponents the belief that he simply would not allow himself to fail.

It was a skill that made Gibson one of the most successful and respected pitchers in baseball history.

Gibson passed away Oct. 2, 2020, at the age of 84. A nine-time All-Star, Gibson was at his best when it mattered most, going 7-2 with eight complete games over nine starts in three World Series – two of which his St. Louis Cardinals won.

Born Nov. 9, 1935, in Omaha, Neb., Gibson starred in basketball and baseball in high school despite his many childhood health issues. He attended Creighton University on a basketball scholarship before signing with the Cardinals in 1957. He was sent to Triple-A Omaha and also played basketball for the Harlem Globetrotters that year.

But once the Cardinals asked him to commit to baseball – and gave him a raise – Gibson devoted his life to the National Pastime. After finding his footing in the Cardinals' rotation, Gibson began dominating and posted win totals of 15, 18, 19, 20 and 21 from 1962-66. He averaged 230 strikeouts per year during that span.

In 1964, the Cardinals won their first NL pennant in 18 years – Gibson went 9-2 down the stretch as St. Louis overtook the Phillies – and faced the Yankees in the World Series. Gibson started and lost Game 2 then returned to pitch 10 innings in Game 5, striking out 13 to lead St. Louis to a 5-2 win.



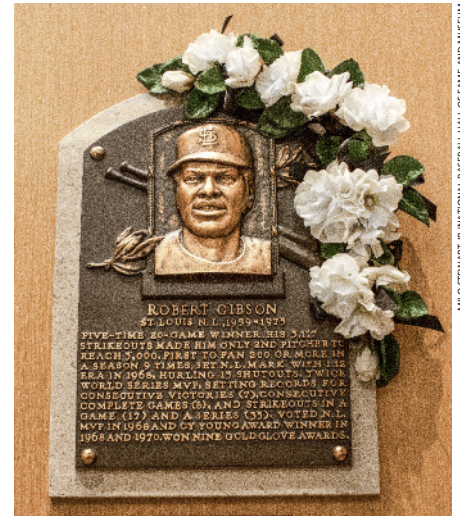
Bob Gibson pitched 17 big league seasons with the Cardinals, winning two NL Cy Young Awards, two World Series Most Valuable Player Awards and the 1968 National League MVP.

Cardinals manager Johnny Keane tabbed Gibson to start Game 7 on just two days' rest. St. Louis led 7-3 going to the ninth inning, but a tiring Gibson allowed home runs to Clete Boyer and Phil Linz that cut the margin to two runs.

Keane, however, stuck with his ace. Gibson responded by finishing the complete game and wrapping up the World Series.

"I had a commitment to his heart," Keane explained after the game.

In 1967, Gibson was 10-6 on July 15 when a fourth-inning line drive by Pittsburgh's Roberto Clemente broke his leg. Incredibly, Gibson faced three more batters before leaving the game – then returned to the rotation on Sept. 7, winning three of his last four



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decisions while leading St. Louis to the National League pennant.

In the World Series against the Red Sox, Gibson allowed just three earned runs over 27 innings, winning Games 1, 4 and 7 as the Cardinals captured the title.

"Pride, intensity, talent, respect, dedication. You need them all to describe Bob Gibson," former teammate Joe Torre said.

His best season came in 1968. The hard-throwing right-hander went 22-9 with a league-leading 268 strikeouts and a 1.12 ERA, the lowest figure since 1914. For his performance that season, he won the National League Cy Young and MVP awards. Gibson was also the MVP of both the 1964 and 1967 World Series.

"He's one of the finest athletes and human beings I've ever met," said Hall of Famer Ernie Banks. "He instills the competitive drive in others. His overall approach is to win."

On Aug. 14, 1971, Gibson tossed a no-hitter against the Pittsburgh Pirates despite being slowed by a torn thigh muscle.

Gibson played his entire big league career in St. Louis and finished with 3,117 strikeouts – becoming only the second pitcher to reach the 3,000-strikeout milestone. He was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1981.

"One thing I've always been proud of is the fact that I've never intentionally cheated anybody out of what they came to the ballpark to see," Gibson said. "But most of all, I'm proud of the fact that whatever I did, I did it my way." 🍌

NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM

JOE MORGAN

1943-2020

He stood unassuming in his left-handed batting stance at home plate – save for his ever-twitching left elbow and steely glare. At five foot, seven inches tall, Joe Morgan did not strike fear into opposing pitchers – until he made contact.

Then, after working the count into what usually became a line drive or a base on balls, Morgan took over the game. And once on base, few ever negotiated 90 feet any better.

Morgan passed away Oct. 11, 2020, at the age of 77.

“Joe Morgan has been uniquely and powerfully influential to the Hall of Fame, not only as a Member, but as its Vice-Chairman of the Board,” said Jane Forbes Clark, Chairman of the Board of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. “During his career, he was singularly committed to becoming the absolute best at his craft, combining his natural and developed skills with a model dedication in pursuit of his dream to become a major league player. Along the way, he inspired, he motivated and he influenced the success of those around him. We shall always be grateful for Joe’s leadership on and off the field. We send our prayers and condolences to Theresa and the Morgan family.”

Joe Leonard Morgan, born Sept. 19, 1943, in Bonham, Texas, overcame the odds his whole career. After growing up in Oakland, Calif., Morgan parlayed his terrific speed and quick hands into a free agent contract with the expansion Houston Colt .45s in 1962. By the following year, Morgan was in the major leagues – and by 1965 had become the regular second baseman for the newly christened Astros.

In his first full season, Morgan led the



Joe Morgan was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1990 and served on the Hall of Fame’s Board of Directors for 27 years.

National League in walks for the first of four times and finished second in the NL Rookie of the Year vote. He earned the first of his 10 All-Star Game selections in 1966 and another in 1970, establishing himself as one of the game’s most versatile second basemen. But following the 1971 season, the Astros – in need of power in their young lineup – traded Morgan to the Cincinnati Reds.

Immediately after the trade, Reds manager Sparky Anderson told general manager Bob Howsam: “You just won the pennant for the Cincinnati Reds.”

Anderson proved correct and then some, as Morgan blossomed into one of baseball’s best all-around players. From 1972-77, Morgan averaged 113 runs, 21 home runs, 84 RBI, 118 walks and 59 stolen bases a year. He won



NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM

five straight Gold Glove Awards from 1973-77 and was named the NL’s Most Valuable Player in both 1975 and 1976, leading the Reds to World Series titles in both seasons.

“Joe wasn’t just the best second baseman in baseball history, he was the best player I ever saw and one of the best people I’ve ever known,” said fellow Hall of Famer and Reds teammate Johnny Bench. “He was a dedicated father and husband, and a day won’t go by that I won’t think about his wisdom and friendship. He left the world a better, fairer and more equal place than he found it, and inspired millions along the way.”

Morgan would return to Houston and later had stops in San Francisco, Philadelphia and Oakland. He scored 1,650 runs, stole 689 bases and drew 1,865 walks – the fifth-most all time. His 268 homers were a record for second basemen upon his retirement following the 1984 season.

Morgan entered broadcasting in 1985. He served as an analyst with the Reds, Giants, ABC and NBC before securing a position at ESPN that would last 21 years, most notably on *Sunday Night Baseball*, and broadcast both league championship series and the World Series.

Morgan was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1990 and served on the Museum’s Board of Directors for 27 years. He later served as the Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Hall of Fame.

“I did have fun and it was great,” Morgan said of his 22-year baseball career. “But it seemed like it went all too quickly.”

TOM SEAVER

1944-2020

In its perfect form, the word “pitcher” evokes images of baseball’s finest elements: Power, finesse, intelligence and durability.

George Thomas Seaver possessed them all, and the resultant mix produced one of the game’s most complete hurlers.

Seaver passed away Aug. 31, 2020, at the age of 75. As the face of the New York Mets from the moment he arrived in the majors in 1967, Seaver grew into one of the most recognizable players of the 1970s.

Along the way, he captured three Cy Young Awards, earned 12 All-Star Game selections and posted five 20-win seasons.

Seaver was “the best I’ve caught over a period of time,” said Johnny Bench, who was Seaver’s teammate with the Cincinnati Reds. “I never knew a pitcher with such great knowledge of pitching. He had such a great mind, he could out-think the hitters.”

Born Nov. 17, 1944, in Fresno, Calif., Seaver attended Fresno City College and then the University of Southern California. He went 10-2 for the Trojans in 1965 and was taken by the Dodgers in the 10th round of that summer’s draft, but opted to return to school.

The Braves then selected Seaver in the first round of the January 1966 draft, but did not sign him until USC’s season was under way. This violated MLB rules, and Commissioner William “Spike” Eckert voided Seaver’s contract and decreed any team that matched Atlanta’s offer of \$51,500 for Seaver would be placed into a lottery – with the winner earning the right to sign the young right-hander.

On April 3, 1966, the Mets won the rights to a player who would forever change their



From 1969-76 with the Mets, Tom Seaver won three Cy Young Awards, three National League ERA titles and five NL strikeout crowns.

fortunes. Seaver debuted in the majors in 1967 and won NL Rookie of the Year honors after going 16-13 with a 2.76 ERA, bringing credibility to a franchise that had averaged 109 losses per season in its first five years.

Two years later, Seaver and the Mets captivated the sports world by winning the World Series. Seaver won the 1969 NL Cy Young Award and finished second in the MVP race after going 25-7 with a 2.21 ERA. In the postseason, Seaver won two more games – including the critical Game 4 matchup in the World Series against the Orioles when he pitched all 10 innings of New York’s 2-1 victory.

On July 8, 1969, Seaver retired the first 25 Cubs he faced in what became known as his “Imperfect Game.” The following season, he struck out 19 San Diego Padres, including the



last 10 in a row, to set a new MLB standard. And in 1971, Seaver set career bests for ERA (1.76) and strikeouts (289) en route to a second-place finish in Cy Young Award voting.

Seaver captured his third ERA title in 1973, leading the Mets to the NL pennant before they fell to the Oakland A’s in the World Series. He won his second Cy Young Award that year, then captured his third Cy Young in 1975.

But on June 15, 1977, the Mets shocked the world by trading Tom Terrific to the Reds. Seaver finished the 1977 season with a 21-6 record and finally threw his elusive no-hitter on June 16, 1978, against the St. Louis Cardinals. In 1979, while helping the Reds to the NL West title, Seaver won 14 of his final 15 decisions. He then won an MLB-best 14 games in the strike-shortened ’81 campaign.

Seaver returned to the Mets in 1983 and later pitched for the White Sox, where he won his 300th game, and the Red Sox, helping Boston to the 1986 AL East title. His final totals: 311 victories, 3,640 strikeouts and a 2.86 ERA. His 16 Opening Day starts are the most by any pitcher.

Seaver was elected to the Hall of Fame in his first year eligible in 1992 with a then-record 98.84 percent of the vote.

“My children,” Seaver told the *Daily News* on the day he was elected to the Hall of Fame, “will be able to take their children to the Hall of Fame and say: ‘There’s your grandfather. In his day, he was pretty good.’”

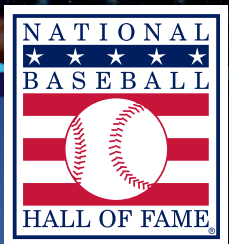
“That’s a wonderful thing to think about.”



IN MEMORIAM
GEORGE THOMAS SEAVER
"THE FRANCHISE"
1944 - 2020



**CLASS
OF
2000**



Catcher

CARLTON FISK

CARLTON ERNEST FISK



Elected: 2000 • Born: Dec. 26, 1947, Bellows Falls, Vt.
 Batted: Right Threw: Right • Height: 6'3" Weight: 200 pounds
 Played for: Boston Red Sox (1969, 1971-80); Chicago White Sox (1981-93)

Year	Team	G	PA	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BB	BA	SLG
1969	BOS	2	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000
1971	BOS	14	49	48	7	15	2	1	2	6	0	1	.393	.521
1972	BOS	131	514	457	74	134	28	9	22	61	5	52	.293	.538
1973	BOS	135	558	508	65	125	21	0	26	71	7	37	.246	.441
1974	BOS	52	216	187	36	56	12	1	11	26	5	24	.299	.551
1975	BOS	79	294	263	47	87	17	4	10	52	4	27	.331	.529
1976	BOS	134	557	487	76	124	14	5	17	58	12	56	.255	.415
1977	BOS	152	632	536	106	169	26	3	26	102	7	75	.315	.521
1978	BOS	157	658	571	94	162	39	5	20	88	7	71	.284	.475
1979	BOS	91	340	320	49	87	23	2	10	42	3	10	.272	.450
1980	BOS	131	530	478	73	138	25	3	18	62	11	36	.289	.467
1981	CWS	96	394	338	44	89	12	0	7	45	3	38	.263	.361
1982	CWS	135	536	476	66	127	17	3	14	65	17	46	.267	.403
1983	CWS	138	545	488	85	141	26	4	26	86	9	46	.289	.518
1984	CWS	102	395	359	54	83	20	1	21	43	6	26	.231	.468
1985	CWS	153	620	543	85	129	23	1	37	107	17	52	.298	.488
1986	CWS	125	491	457	42	101	11	0	14	63	2	22	.221	.337
1987	CWS	135	508	454	68	116	22	1	19	71	1	39	.256	.460
1988	CWS	76	298	253	37	70	8	1	23	50	0	37	.277	.542
1989	CWS	103	419	375	47	110	25	2	13	88	1	36	.293	.475
1990	CWS	137	521	452	65	129	21	0	18	65	7	61	.285	.451
1991	CWS	134	501	460	42	111	25	0	18	74	1	32	.241	.413
1992	CWS	62	214	188	12	43	4	1	3	21	3	23	.229	.309
1993	CWS	25	58	53	2	10	0	0	1	4	0	2	.189	.245
24 Years		2499	9853	8756	1276	2356	421	47	376	1330	128	849	.269	.457

All statistics are from baseball-reference.com • All bolded marks are league-leading totals • Bolded and italicized marks are major league-best totals
Awards & Records: 1972 American League Rookie of the Year • 11-time All-Star • 3-time Silver Slugger Award Winner

DID YOU KNOW...

- ★ ... that Carlton Fisk is the only catcher in American League history to lead the league in triples, having paced the AL with nine triples in 1972?
- ★ ... that Fisk retired as the all-time leader in games caught with 2,226?
- ★ ... that at age 38 in 1986, Fisk played 31 games in left field and finished fifth among all AL left fielders with six assists?

WHAT THEY SAY...

- ★ “He played the game the right way. Both behind the plate and at the plate.”
 – TEAMMATE AND FELLOW HALL OF FAMER CARL YASTRZEMSKI
- ★ “‘Pudge’ works harder than anyone I know, because he sets goals for himself and then follows through. I think he’s the ultimate professional.” – MANAGER JIM FREGOSI
- ★ “The reason this is so exciting from a manager’s point of view is he adds completeness to our ball club.”
 – HALL OF FAME MANAGER TONY LA RUSSA ON FISK JOINING THE WHITE SOX



FRONT OF CARD: NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM



CARLTON ERNEST FISK
 “PUDDGE”
 BOSTON, A.L., 1969, 1971-80
 CHICAGO, A.L., 1981-93
 A COMMANDING FIGURE BEHIND THE PLATE FOR A RECORD 24 SEASONS, FISK WAS ONE OF THE MOST RELIABLE AND VALUABLE PLAYERS OF HIS ERA. HIS SKILL AND BOLDNESS IN THE COMPETITIVE FIRE HE EARNED HIM THE RESPECT OF TEAMMATES AND OPPOSING PLAYERS ALIKE. A STUNNING TRAINING REGIMEN EXTENDED HIS CAREER TO HIS 38TH BIRTHDAY AND HIS DETERMINATION TO WIN GAME SIX OF THE 1975 WORLD SERIES IS ONE OF BASEBALL'S UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS. WAS THE 1972 AMERICAN LEAGUE ROOKIE OF THE YEAR AND AN 11-TIME ALL-STAR.

FRONT OF CARD: NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM

HALL of FAME STARTING NINE

The Must-See Artifacts from Your Team



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, the Museum is sharing some of those memorable artifacts through a new experience: *Starting Nine*.

Featuring 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 NL West.



National League West

SWING STATE

Luis Gonzalez was facing Mariano Rivera with the World Series on the line. Both did their job. But it was Gonzalez and his Arizona Diamondbacks who walked off with the title.

The D-backs and the Yankees squared off in Game 7 of the World Series on Nov. 4, 2001, at Bank One Ballpark in Phoenix. Starting pitchers Curt Schilling and Roger Clemens put up zeros through five innings before the Diamondbacks took a 1-0 lead in the sixth on a Danny Bautista double that scored Steve Finley.

But the Yankees responded immediately in the top of the seventh when Derek Jeter scored on an RBI single by Tino Martinez. Then in the eighth, Alfonso Soriano led off the inning with a home run, putting New York ahead, 2-1, and setting the stage for a well-rested Rivera, who had not pitched since Game 5 on Nov. 1.

Rivera struck out the side in the eighth, with Gonzalez fanning to start the frame. But with two outs, Finley singled - advancing the batting order one place to give Gonzalez a date with destiny in the ninth.

After Randy Johnson retired the Yankees in order in the ninth, Mark Grace singled off Rivera to start the bottom of the inning. David Dellucci pinch ran for Grace and advanced to second when Rivera threw wildly to second on Damien Miller's bunt, putting two on with no one out.

Rivera recorded an out at third base when Dellucci was forced out on a Jay Bell bunt attempt. But with Midre Cummings now on second base as a pinch runner for Miller, Tony Womack lashed a double down the right field line, scoring Cummings to tie the game and sending Bell to third.

Rivera then hit Craig Counsell with a pitch to bring up Gonzalez, who had homered 57 times during the regular season. With Jeter drawn onto the infield grass at shortstop to cut down the runner at home, Gonzalez lifted a flare over the infield that barely reached the outfield grass, scoring Bell with the World Series-winning run.

The pitch was a classic cutter from Rivera, placed perfectly near the top inside half of the strike zone where the batter cannot drive it. But with the infield in, all Gonzalez needed was soft contact.

Hitless in four at-bats in the game to that point, Gonzalez fouled off the first pitch he saw - a fastball down the middle. Just prior to the second pitch, FOX's Tim McCarver pointed out to the TV audience that, "The one problem is Rivera throws inside to left-handers, and left-handers get a lot of broken-bat hits into... the shallow part of the outfield. That's the danger of bringing the infield in with a guy like Rivera on the mound."

On the next pitch, Gonzalez fulfilled McCarver's prediction.

"Stepping up to the plate there, ninth inning, is what everybody dreams about," Gonzalez said. "That's the first time I choked up on the bat all year, just looking in on everything, and I got jammed. I knew the infield was playing in and I didn't have to try to hit it hard, just loop something out there and get it in play."

The bat Gonzalez used for his World Series-winning hit is on display in the Museum's *Autumn Glory* exhibit.



ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS

- 1 Luis Gonzalez bat from game-winning hit in Game 7 of 2001 World Series
- 2 Paul Goldschmidt jersey from 2015 season
- 3 Aaron Hill spikes worn when he hit for the cycle on June 29, 2012
- 4 Edwin Jackson cap worn when he pitched a no-hitter on June 25, 2010
- 5 Ball thrown by Randy Johnson during his 20-strikeout game on May 8, 2001
- 6 J.D. Martinez bat used to hit four home runs on Sept. 4, 2017
- 7 Wade Miley spikes worn March 22, 2014, when he threw first pitch in MLB's first-ever game played in Australia
- 8 Curt Schilling cap worn during 2001 World Series when he was named co-MVP
- 9 2001 Diamondbacks World Series ring

ALL PHOTOS BY MILO STEWART JR./NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM



COLORADO ROCKIES

- 1 Jamie Moyer glove from game on April 17, 2012, when he became oldest MLB pitcher to record a victory
- 2 Cowboy hat worn by Rockies beat writer and Spink Award winner Tracy Ringolsby
- 3 Eric Young Sr. pants worn when he stole six bases in one game on June 30, 1996
- 4 Charlie Blackmon star-spangled socks from July 4, 2017
- 5 Todd Helton bat used for his final home run on Sept. 25 2013
- 6 Ubaldo Jiménez cap worn during no-hitter on April 17, 2010
- 7 Trevor Story jersey from 2018 when he became first shortstop with 40 doubles, 30 homers and 25 stolen bases in one season
- 8 Troy Tulowitzki cap worn when he recorded an unassisted triple play on April 29, 2007
- 9 Rockies pennant from inaugural season of 1993 when they set a record by drawing 4.4 million fans

ALL PHOTOS BY TIMMO STEWART FOR NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM



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FINE AGED LEATHER

When Jamie Moyer took the mound for the Colorado Rockies against the Padres on April 17, 2012, the first batter he faced was San Diego's Cameron Maybin - who was born April 4, 1987.

By that date, Moyer already had seven wins and 16 starts on his big league résumé. The 49-year-old Moyer, however, was still good enough to induce Maybin into a harmless groundout to second base.

Less than three hours later, Moyer had become the oldest pitcher in history to record a big league victory.

At 49 years and 150 days old, Moyer pitched seven innings, allowing six hits and no earned runs in Colorado's 5-3 win. The previous mark of 49 years, 70 days was set by Jack Quinn of the Dodgers on Sept. 13, 1932.

"I wish I was a baseball historian," Moyer told the *Associated Press*, acknowledging that he didn't know much about Quinn - who won 247 games over 23 seasons and was born on July 1, 1883, in Slovakia. "As players, we should know more about the game, the history of the game. You need to respect the game and the people that came before you."

Moyer showed his immense respect for the game for 25 seasons, logging 269 victories despite not even being drafted out of high school. But Moyer continually refined his craft - first at Philadelphia's St. Joseph's University and then after becoming the Cubs' sixth-round pick in the 1984 MLB Draft.

Without a blazing fastball, the left-handed Moyer persevered through several difficult seasons in his 20s before finding a home in Seattle with the Mariners in the late 1990s. From 1997-2003, Moyer won 113 games while posting a 3.75 ERA, baffling batters with change-of-speed offerings.

After a trade to his hometown Phillies in 2006, Moyer became a rotation stalwart on a rising National League powerhouse. At age 45, he went 16-7 in 2008 to help Philadelphia win the World Series.

Then in 2010, Moyer left a start on July 20 against the Cardinals after pitching just one inning. He was eventually diagnosed with a torn ulna collateral ligament, but Moyer pressed on - opting for Tommy John surgery to repair his arm. The Rockies signed him to a free agent contract on Jan. 18, 2012, and he went 2-5 in 10 starts for Colorado before retiring midway through the 2012 season.

"As my wife told me a few years back when I was in Seattle: 'Enjoy it. You're playing on borrowed time,'" Moyer told the *Palm Beach Post*.

After a resilient career that repeatedly saw him defy the odds, Moyer more than repaid the game.

The glove Moyer wore in his record-setting game is on display in the Museum's *Your Team Today* exhibit.



CATCH OF THE YEAR

Roy Campanella was already a four-time All-Star and a Most Valuable Player Award winner when the 1953 season began.

Eight months later, Campanella had raised his game to the point where many were calling him the greatest catcher of all time.

On Nov. 19, 1953, Campanella was named the National League's Most Valuable Player - earning 17 of 24 first-place votes in balloting by the Baseball Writers' Association of America. Campanella outdistanced runner-up Eddie Mathews of the Braves (297-216) following a season where he set a new standard with 40 home runs as a catcher.

"I can't really find the words to say how I really feel about winning the award," Campanella told the *United Press*. "Getting it once is a big thrill, but winning it twice is out of this world. And winning it on my birthday gave me something special to celebrate."

Born Nov. 19, 1921, in Philadelphia, Campanella was a teenage prodigy who was playing in the Negro Leagues by age 15. Signed by the Brooklyn Dodgers prior to the 1946 season, Campanella debuted in the majors in 1948 and was named to his first All-Star Game the following year.

In 1951, Campanella hit .325 with 33 home runs and 108 RBI to win the NL MVP. He helped the Dodgers win the NL pennant a year later, then compiled a season for the ages in 1953 with a .312 batting average, 41 home runs (one came as a pinch-hitter) and an NL-best 142 RBI. Hitting fourth or fifth in the powerful Dodgers lineup for most of the season, Campanella was one of six Dodgers hitters with at least 100 runs scored.

The Dodgers' 955 runs scored were the fifth-most in NL history to that point. The team won 105 games and finished 13 games ahead of runner-up Milwaukee in the NL pennant race. Brooklyn would fall to the Yankees in six games in the '53 World Series.

"The main thing was that I kept playing regularly," Campanella told the *International News Service* of the 144 games in which he appeared that year. "(I) had no injury to keep me out of the lineup any length of time."

A force behind the plate as well as in the field, Campanella threw out 53.7 percent of runners who tried to steal on him in 1953 - the second-best mark in the NL behind only the Giants' Wes Westrum at 54.5 percent. It was the first season of his career that Campanella did not lead the NL in caught stealing percentage.

Campanella also set a single-season record for catchers with 807 putouts.

Campanella became the third NL player to win more than one BBWAA Most Valuable Player Award, joining Carl Hubbell (1933, '36) and Stan Musial (1943, '46, '48). He would go on to win a third MVP in 1955, leading Brooklyn to its first-and-only World Series title.

Campanella was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1969. A bat he used during the 1953 season is on display in the Museum's *Timeline*.

LOS ANGELES DODGERS

- 1 Roy Campanella bat used during MVP season of 1953
- 2 Cy Young Award won by Sandy Koufax following 1965 season
- 3 Jackie Robinson cap worn during 1955 World Series
- 4 Cody Bellinger jersey worn Aug. 5, 2017, when he hit his 31st homer of the season en route to an NL rookie record of 39
- 5 Baseballs thrown by Don Drysdale during his 58.2-inning scoreless streak in 1968
- 6 Shawn Green bat from May 23, 2002, when he hit four home runs and set a single-game record with 19 total bases
- 7 Clayton Kershaw spikes worn during Cy Young Award season of 2013
- 8 Ball thrown by Orel Hershiser to record the final out of the 1988 World Series
- 9 Pennant displayed at luncheon the day before opening of Dodger Stadium on April 9, 1962



SAN DIEGO PADRES

- 1 Glove used by Ozzie Smith in 1980 when he set a record for shortstops with 621 assists
- 2 Trevor Hoffman spikes worn when he recorded his 500th save on June 6, 2007
- 3 Tony Gwynn jersey worn in 1994 when he hit .394
- 4 Tony Gwynn batting helmet worn for his 3,000th hit on Aug. 6, 1999
- 5 Nate Colbert bat used to hit five home runs in a doubleheader on Aug. 1, 1972
- 6 Ball hit by Rickey Henderson for a home run when he scored his record 2,246 run on Oct. 4, 2001
- 7 Greg Maddux jersey from his 350th victory on May 10, 2008
- 8 San Diego Chicken costume
- 9 Padded cap worn by pitcher Álex Torres on June 21, 2014

ALL PHOTOS BY TIMMO STEWART FOR NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM



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AT YOUR ASSISTANCE

The newspapers of the day are filled with photos of his acrobatics, and the grainy VHS video from the time dots the highlight reels on social media sites.

But to really know how good Ozzie Smith was at shortstop, you had to see it.

"He didn't just catch the ball. He turned it into a double play," Pirates manager Jim Leyland told the *Pittsburgh Press* about a 1986 would-be single turned into a double play by Smith. "That play couldn't be made, but he made it."

On Sept. 26, 1980, Smith was part of a 4-6-3 double play when the Dodgers' Steve Yeager grounded to Padres second baseman Tim Flannery with the bases loaded and one out in the fourth inning. Smith leaped over oncoming Dodgers runner Jay Johnstone to make the throw to first baseman Broderick Perkins to double up Yeager, recording his 601st assist of the season. That tied Glenn Wright's record set in 1924 with the Pirates.

In the sixth inning, Yeager grounded to Smith - who threw on to Perkins to record the record-setting 602nd assist. When umpire Jim Quick signaled the out, the 14,836 in attendance at San Diego Stadium gave Smith a standing ovation.

Smith would finish the season with 621 assists. Only Cal Ripken Jr. - with 583 assists in 1984 - has come within 40 assists of Smith's mark since.

Smith won the first of his 13 Gold Glove Awards after the 1980 season. His defensive WAR (Wins Above Replacement player) was 3.5 that season - the first of five seasons where he reached the 3.0 mark en route to a career total of 44.2, the top figure for any player at any position in history.

"All three years [his first in the big leagues], I've improved on my fielding percentage," Smith told the *Los Angeles Times* while referencing the standard defensive evaluation statistic of his time. "I get a lot of satisfaction out of that. The thing I always try to stress is making the routine play. The other things that come along with it are icing on the cake."

Smith finished his 19-year big league career with a record 8,375 assists and 1,590 double plays. His assists record still stands, while only Omar Vizquel "turned two" more often. Few have ever been able to emulate the player known as the Wizard of Oz.

"If a shortstop tries to copy Ozzie Smith," said Pirates manager Chuck Tanner, "he's only hurting himself."

Smith's fielder's glove used during the 1980 season is displayed in the *One for the Books* exhibit at the Hall of Fame.



VIC WERTZ'S FLY BALL

From his seat right behind home plate, Joe DiMaggio had a perfect view of Vic Wertz's eighth-inning blast to center field in Game 1 of the 1954 World Series.

"I'm something of an expert on World Series catches," DiMaggio wrote in a syndicated column that appeared in newspapers the next day, "because in 1947 little Al Gionfriddo of the Dodgers went practically out of Yankee Stadium to take a home run away from me.

"Mays made one of the finest catches I ever saw."

In what became an instant classic, the Giants' Willie Mays robbed Wertz of extra bases and RBI - and likely the game from Wertz's Cleveland Indians - when he hauled in a ball hit to the deepest part of center field at the Polo Grounds. With Larry Doby on second, Al Rosen on first and no one out in a 2-2 game, lefty reliever Don Liddle - called on specifically to face the left-handed hitting Wertz - served up a pitch that Wertz drove high and deep to center field.

Mays sprinted after the ball with his back to home plate, with Liddle turning to watch and then running to back up third base. Doby headed back to the bag at first then hesitated, standing about three steps off the base while watching Mays chase the ball.

Tracking it all the way, Mays caught the ball over his left shoulder, then turned and fired the ball back toward the infield. Doby was able to tag up and advance to third base, but Mays had kept the game tied.

Giants manager Leo Durocher then replaced Liddle with Marv Grissom, who walked Dale Mitchell to load the bases. But Grissom struck out pinch hitter Dave Pope and got Jim Hegan to fly out to left field to end the inning.

Grissom put two runners on base in both the ninth and the 10th but escaped without damage. Then in the bottom of the 10th, Giants pinch-hitter Dusty Rhodes homered down the short right field line at the Polo Grounds, scoring Mays and Hank Thompson to give the Giants a 5-2 victory.

DiMaggio - and the rest of the baseball world - believed they had just witnessed the impossible.

"As remarkable as the ground Willie had to cover to make the catch - and he did just get to the ball - was the judgment he showed in not letting the fence scare him off," DiMaggio wrote. "All summer long, I wondered how the Giants managed to stay on top in the National League. Yesterday at the Polo Grounds, I found out."

Throughout the subsequent years, some have stated that Mays' catch in the 1954 World Series was not the best of his career. And even Durocher said after Game 1 that Mays had made a better grab that summer off the bat of the Pirates' Bob Skinner.

For Mays, it was all part of a day's work at the ballpark.

"I had a good lead on it all the way," Mays told the *United Press*. "So I just ran until I got it. Anyway, any ball that is hit that high ought to be caught."

The glove Mays used to make "The Catch" is displayed in the *Autumn Glory* exhibit at the Hall of Fame.

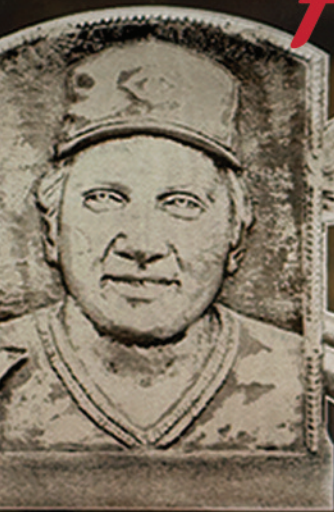
SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS

- 1 Glove worn by Willie Mays while making "The Catch" in 1954 World Series
- 2 Buster Posey catcher's mask worn during 2010 World Series
- 3 Pocket watch given to Christy Mathewson by his Giants teammates in October 1910
- 4 Barry Bonds helmet worn when he hit his 756th home run on Aug. 7, 2007
- 5 Madison Bumgarner cap worn during 2014 World Series when he was named MVP
- 6 Brandon Crawford bat used to record seven hits in one game on Aug. 8, 2016
- 7 Juan Marichal cap worn during 1969 season
- 8 Willie McCovey spikes worn during his final big league season in 1980
- 9 Bobby Thomson bat used to hit NL pennant-winning home run on Oct. 3, 1951



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HIT IT TO WIN IT

BILL MAZEROSKI AND JOE CARTER HIT THE MOST MEANINGFUL HOMERS IN THE GAME'S HISTORY.

BY WAYNE COFFEY

Hitting a baseball over a wall entitles a batter to make a 360-foot trip around the bases, counterclockwise, at the pace of his choosing. It is one of the greatest thrills a ballplayer can have – a feat so mythic that it has spawned a popular American idiom to describe a great performance:

You hit it out of the park.

There have been more than 300,000 home runs in MLB history. Many of them are iconic, whether because of the distance they traveled (Mickey Mantle's shot at Griffith Stadium in Washington, D.C., in 1953, estimated to have gone 565 feet) or the hysteria they produced (Bobby Thomson's Shot Heard 'Round the World to win the 1951 pennant for the New York Giants), or the sheer improbability of the event (gimpy pinch-hitter Kirk Gibson's game-winner off the all-but-untouchable Dennis Eckersley in Game 1 of the 1988 World Series).

But in the more than 100 years of World Series history, only two home runs have ended the season, the final swing of the final at-bat of the final game. Bill Mazeroski and Joe Carter are the only two men ever to hit Series-winning home runs. They did it 33 years

apart: Mazeroski for the Pittsburgh Pirates at Forbes Field against the Yankees in Game 7 in 1960; Carter for the Toronto Blue Jays at SkyDome in Game 6 in 1993.

Mazeroski's home run came off of 24-year-old right-hander Ralph Terry, leading off the bottom of the ninth of a tie game. Carter, who was born seven months before Mazeroski stepped to the plate that October afternoon, hit his off of 28-year-old lefthander Mitch Williams with one out in the bottom of the ninth, the Blue Jays trailing the Phillies, 6-5. A couple of Hall of Fame ducks, Rickey Henderson and Paul Molitor, were on the pond for Carter's round-tripper.

Mazeroski was a 24-year-old second baseman and No. 8 hitter, known mostly for his defense. Carter was a 33-year-old right fielder, a cleanup hitter who had 33 home runs and 121 RBI that year. Mazeroski hit a 1-0 pitch, a fastball up. Carter hit a 2-2 pitch, a fastball in, just above the knees.

The situations were very different, the emotions very much the same.

"We beat the Yankees! We beat the great Yankees," Mazeroski told the Hall of Fame of his thoughts as he rounded the bases.

"They haven't made up the word yet to describe what the feeling is," Carter said,

after leaping over and over on his way home.

The '60 Pirates and '93 Blue Jays both won 95 games in the regular season (the Pirates did it in 154 games), but the similarity in their histories ends there. The last time the Pirates had won a World Series was 1925, when future Hall of Fame outfielder Max Carey hit .458 to lead his club over the Washington Senators. The last time the Blue Jays had won was the year before, over the Atlanta Braves.

Finale at Forbes

Mazeroski's home run was the culmination of one of the most bizarre Series in baseball annals. Going into Game 7, the Yankees hadn't just outscored the Pirates, 46 to 17; they nearly had more runs in Game 2 (16) than the Pirates had through six games. In their three victories, the Yankees scored 38 runs to the Pirates' 3.

So what? The Series was tied, 3-3. That was Mazeroski's perspective.

"I've always thought it was better to get blown out than lose 3-2 or 5-4," Mazeroski said. "When a team scores a lot of runs, it seems like the next day they don't score a lot of runs."

The Pirates got off to a strong start in the Series, winning Game 1 at home, 6-4, scoring three times in the bottom of the first, and getting a clutch home run from... Bill Mazeroski. Two blowout losses followed before the Pirates answered by winning Games 4 and 5 in Yankee Stadium to take a 3-2 lead. Yankees ace Whitey Ford shut down the Pirates in a 12-0 rout to force a seventh game at Pittsburgh's Forbes Field.

The Pirates scored twice in each of the first two innings and led 4-1 through five, and then the offensive onslaught began. The Yankees scored four in the sixth, three of them on Yogi Berra's blast over the right field wall, and added two more in the eighth. Down 7-4 with only six outs left in their season, the Pirates touched up the Yankees' bullpen for five runs, capped by Hal Smith's three-run shot to left to push the Pirates into a 9-7 lead. Smith, a platoon catcher, had only entered the game that inning.

Smith instantly became an iconic World Series hero.

For an inning.

“It’s the biggest forgotten home run in baseball history, in my opinion,” said Dick Groat, the Pirates shortstop who would win the National League MVP that season.

But the Yankees were not finished.

Bobby Richardson, the Yankees second baseman who would be named Series MVP – the only one in history from a losing team – led off the top of the ninth with a single. Dale Long singled behind him. With one out, Mickey Mantle hit another single to score Richardson, Long advancing to third. Then with pinch-runner Gil McDougald on third, Berra grounded to first base – with Mantle making a terrific base running play to remain at first while Berra was forced out, giving McDougald time to score the tying run.

Mazeroski, 41 years away from his induction into the Hall of Fame, came up to begin the bottom of the ninth. Terry, the Yankees’ Game 4 starter, struck Mazeroski out and popped him up in his only two official at-bats against him. Terry, who grew up in Oklahoma throwing corn cobs and rocks before switching over to baseballs, fired a fastball that Mazeroski took for ball one.

Though Mazeroski had homered in Game 1 – the Pirates hit only four home runs in the Series – he had hit just two homers since July. Ending the World Series with one swing wasn’t on his mind.

All he was thinking was to get on base.

With a 1-0 count and knowing Terry wanted no part of walking the leadoff hitter in the bottom of the ninth of Game 7, Mazeroski figured he’d get another fastball.

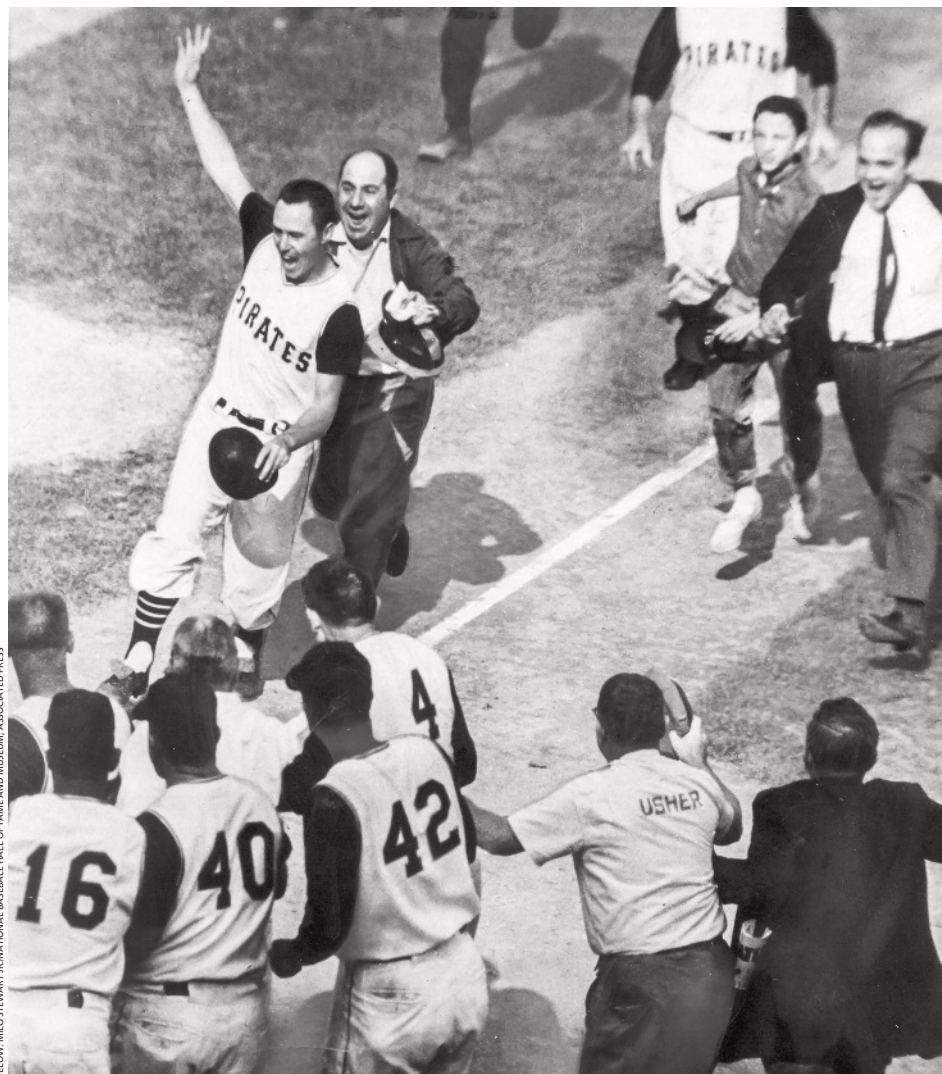
“There was no use looking for a curve because I knew I couldn’t hit it anyway,” Mazeroski told a reporter on the 25th anniversary of his homer.

Yankees catcher John Blanchard went out to the mound, telling Terry to keep the ball down, because Mazeroski liked it up. Terry went into his windup, rocked back and did indeed come with a fastball, this one over the middle, not quite as high.

Mazeroski swung and hit a drive to left. He knew it was over Berra’s head, but didn’t know if it had enough to get over the ivy-covered wall. He ran hard out of the box.

“Keep going. Keep going,” he told the ball.

When the umpire signaled the ball was



BELOW: MILO STEWART/NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM/ASSOCIATED PRESS



Top: The Pirates’ Bill Mazeroski celebrates as he crosses home plate at Forbes Field on Oct. 13, 1960, after hitting a walk-off home run in Game 7 of the World Series. **Bottom:** The helmet Bill Mazeroski wore when he hit his Series-ending blast against the Yankees is now a part of the Hall of Fame collection.

gone, Mazerowski, approaching second, began wheeling his arm over his head, helmet in hand. By the time he got to third, he was mobbed by fans and now all he was thinking was: I have to get to home plate or the run doesn't count. He was mobbed, pounded, slapped and hugged – and he loved it.

“It felt as if I'd gone 10 rounds with the heavyweight champion of the world,” Mazerowski said. “It was an unbelievable experience.”

Joe Carter would not argue.

A Dream in the Dome

The Blue Jays had taken a 3-1 Series lead after winning Game 4, 15-14, the highest-scoring postseason game in MLB history. One of the Phillies' relievers torched during a six-run eighth that night was Mitch Williams.

But Curt Schilling shut out Toronto on five hits to force a Game 6 in Canada. Back at SkyDome, the late rally came from the Phillies, who scored five in the seventh to take a 6-5 lead. It held up until the bottom of ninth.

Henderson walked on four pitches. After Williams got Devon White on a deep fly to left, Molitor singled, bringing up Carter.

Williams threw a slider that Carter flailed at, missing badly. The count was 2-2. Carter was sure Williams would come back with the slider. When catcher Darren Daulton put the sign down, Williams shook his head. Carter believed it was a decoy – just a way to get in his head and think he wasn't throwing a slider.

But it wasn't. Williams unleashed a fastball inside, just above the knees. Carter turned on it and rocketed a line drive to left. He lost it in the lights for a time.

“I wasn't sure it would be out,” he said.

The ball flew over the 328-foot sign and the party was on in SkyDome, fireworks exploding all over. Carter talked about how many times he'd dreamed of being in such a situation as a kid.

“It's probably a number with a lot of zeroes after it,” he said.

After the champagne-spraying and clubhouse celebrations finally were over, Bill Mazerowski and Joe Carter wanted to savor their epic achievements more quietly. While downtown Pittsburgh was in deep revelry the afternoon of Oct. 13, 1960, Mazerowski and his wife, Milene, went to a park in the Squirrel Hill neighborhood of Pittsburgh and sat on a bench.



Joe Carter of the Blue Jays watches his World Series-winning home run in Game 6 of the 1993 Fall Classic at SkyDome against the Phillies. Carter became just the second player to hit a home run that ended a World Series.

It was still daylight, about six o'clock.

“We were just sitting there, relaxing. And then we went home,” Mazerowski told the Hall of Fame.

Carter still hadn't gotten a good look at the biggest hit of his life, so he felt an urge to relive it with his wife, Diana. At about 12:30 in the morning, the Carters found a quiet spot in the Blue Jays' video room. They cued up the tape. They got to see a 2-2 fastball

get roped to left. It went over the wall, just as it did the first time, ending the season, putting Carter alongside Mazerowski in the most select club of all. 🍌

Wayne Coffey is the author of more than 30 books, including “They Said It Couldn't Be Done,” a 50th anniversary chronicle of the 1969 Mets. He beat out a lot of infield hits, but never had a walk-off homer, even in Little League.



A Season Like None Other

Historic 2020 campaign is documented through artifacts in Museum's collection.

BY CRAIG MUDER

When the 2020 Major League Baseball season began on July 23, no one knew what games played during a pandemic might look like.

Turns out – despite unprecedented changes to ensure the safety of all involved – the game retained its singular ability to produce magic and memories.

The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum documented the 2020 season on and off the field with many artifacts, including:

- A ball used in the July 18 exhibition game between the Nationals and the Pirates, the first game between two teams in the Summer Camp period
- The ball thrown by the Nationals' Max Scherzer for the first pitch of the 2020 season on July 23 at Nationals Park
- A bat used by the Giants' Hunter Pence on



This cap was worn by White Sox pitcher Lucas Giolito during his Aug. 25 no-hitter against the Pirates.

July 23, when he became the first designated hitter to come to bat in an NL vs. NL game

- A jersey worn during warm-ups by the Giants' Alyssa Nakken on July 23, when she became the first female coach in an MLB game
- Second base from the July 24 game between the Angels and the Athletics, the first game



The 2020 season featured pioneers that included Giants coach Alyssa Nakken, who wore this jersey July 23 when she became the first on-field female coach in MLB history.

in which a runner was placed on second base in extra innings

- An unused baseball produced for Minor League Baseball's 2020 Opening Day, a season that was ultimately canceled
- The cap worn by the Tigers' Tyler Alexander on Aug. 2 against the Reds, when he set a new record for relievers and tied the overall American League record with nine straight strikeouts
- The spikes worn by the Marlins' Eddy Alvarez on Aug. 5, when he debuted in the big leagues to become the first Winter Olympics medalist to also play in an MLB game
- The bat used by the White Sox's Eloy Jiménez when he homered against the Cardinals on Aug. 16, giving the White Sox a record-tying four home runs in a row
- The cap worn by the White Sox's Lucas Giolito and a ball thrown by him during his Aug. 25 no-hitter against the Pirates
- The Washington Nationals mask worn by Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, when he testified before Congress



This mask, now part of the Hall of Fame collection, was worn by Dr. Anthony Fauci when he testified before Congress during the coronavirus pandemic.

Craig Muder is the director of communications for the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.



Rare Taters

Some of baseball's most iconic moments were defined by unexpected home runs.

BY JOHN ERARDI

This is a story about shockingly unexpected home runs.

When the shockingly unexpected meets the iconic, it makes our list.

A home run can be incredibly dramatic, downright iconic, without it being shockingly unexpected.

Think Bobby Thomson's Shot Heard 'Round the World. Thomson hit 32 homers that season, tied for fourth-best in the National League. It's not shockingly unexpected that Thomson would trigger Russ Hodges' call of, "The Giants Win the Pennant! The Giants Win the Pennant!"

Think Carlton Fisk's 12th-inning home run to win Game 6 of the 1975 World Series. Sure, Fisk had hit only 10 homers in that injury-shortened season, but he'd led the Red Sox with 26 two years earlier when he'd had twice the at-bats. It wasn't shockingly unexpected that his arm-waving, foul-pole shot would trigger the playing of the "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's *Messiah* by Fenway Park organist John Kiley as Fisk rounded the bases.

So – in no particular order – here are three of the most Unexpectedly Iconic Home Runs:



Kirk Gibson: Two-out, two-run, pinch-hit homer, bottom of the ninth, Dodger Stadium,

Game 1, 1988 World Series.

Gibson was a star, of that there is no question. But it was the physical condition of this star when he hit his famously unexpected home run on Oct. 15 that puts him on our list.

Vin Scully described it well, as he did everything, in the network telecast.

Scully: "And look who's coming up," as Gibson hobbled from the dugout, bat in hand. Scully waited a full 38 seconds to let the crowd at Dodger Stadium vent. "With two bad legs – the bad left hamstring and the swollen right knee... talk about a roll of the dice..."

The 3-2 pitch from Oakland closer Dennis Eckersley....

"High fly ball into right field, she... is... gone!"

Scully, after a one-minute and 14-second pause to let the scene play out and the crowd crescendo to dissipate just enough, finally spoke: "In a year that has been so improbable, the impossible has happened."

On radio, Jack Buck famously observed (three times): "I don't believe what I just saw!"



Bucky Dent, seventh inning, Game 163, 1978 American League East Playoff, Fenway Park.

It wasn't just the home run, it was the two-month buildup. In mid-July, the Yankees were 14 games behind the front-running Red Sox.

On July 23, Yankees manager Billy Martin publicly criticized both slugger Reggie Jackson and team owner George Steinbrenner.

Martin resigned the next day; the Yankees were 52-42, 10 games back. Bob Lemon was tabbed to replace him, and by Sept. 10, after the Yankees swept the BoSox in a four-game series at Fenway Park, they were tied in first place at 86-56. After 162 games, they still were tied at 99-63, necessitating a one-game playoff.

Dent had hit only four regular-season home runs until that fifth one over the Green Monster in Game 163. He hit only 40 in his career over 12 seasons, none in his 89 postseason plate appearances.

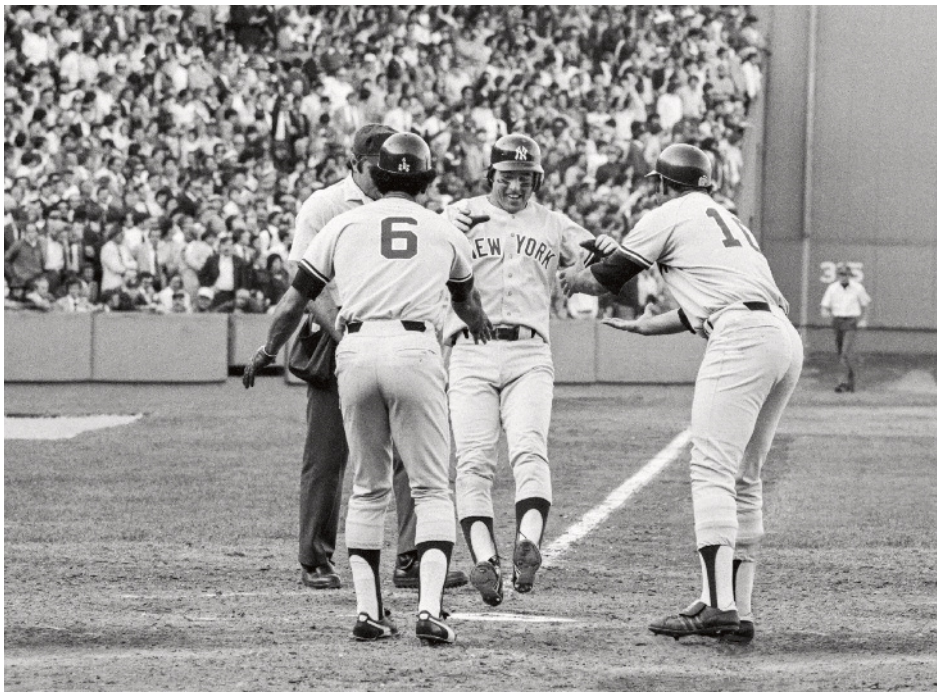
The Yankees trailed 2-0 going into the seventh inning, but after Chris Chambliss and Roy White singled and Jim Spencer flied out, up stepped Dent.

What's a great moment without some suspense? Dent fouled a pitch off his left instep, necessitating a 57-second delay for the application of ethyl chloride and a new bat



RICH PELLING/GETTY IMAGES

Injuries to both legs limited Kirk Gibson to one at-bat in the 1988 World Series for the Dodgers. But his pinch-hit home run was the defining moment in Los Angeles' eventual championship.



BETTMANNGETTY IMAGES

With one swing in the 1978 AL East playoff at Fenway Park, the Yankees' Bucky Dent entered the history books.



MARBY MILLANGETTY IMAGES

Ozzie Smith's first left-handed home run of his big league career won Game 5 of the 1985 NLCS for the Cardinals against the Dodgers.

from Mickey Rivers, who noticed a crack in the original.

Bill White on the call: "The count is one-and-one, two outs, two on... Deep to left (voice rising), Yastrzemski will not get it! It's a home run, a three-run home run for Bucky Dent!... The last guy on the ballclub you'd expect to hit a home run just hit one into the screen!"

>>>

Ozzie Smith, walk-off home run, Game 5, 1985 National League Championship Series.

Looking back on it, one can easily imagine that the only person who was not shocked by Smith's homer was Cardinals manager Whitey Herzog.

Herzog had rebuilt the Birds, who in the 13 seasons from the end of their glory years in the 1960s (three NL pennants, two World Series titles) had only four second-place finishes to show for it. Acquiring Smith from San Diego after the 1981 season for shortstop Garry Templeton was one of the keys to the Cardinals' turnaround.

In a 2020 documentary titled, "Birds of a Different Game," Herzog said he about fell out of his seat after the 1981 season when San Diego manager Dick Williams asked if he was still interested in a Templeton-for-Smith trade.

Smith helped the Cardinals win the World Championship in 1982. But when he came to the plate in the ninth inning of Game 5 of the 1985 NLCS to face Dodgers right-handed reliever Tom Niedenfuer, the switch-hitting Smith still hadn't homered from the left side in all 3,009 of his left-handed major league at-bats. Heck, he had hit only 13 HRs from his natural right side in eight big league seasons.

The 1-2 pitch from Niedenfuer...

Jack Buck's call: "Smith corks one into right, down the line, it may go... Go crazy

DON'T FORGET THESE IMPROBABLE HOME RUNS

DAVID FREESE, Game 6, 2011 World Series. True, Freese didn't sneak up on anybody. He was the Most Valuable Player of the National League Championship Series, batting .545 with three homers and nine RBI in six games for the Cardinals. But he'd already tied the game with a two-RBI triple in the bottom of the ninth on a 1-2 count from the Rangers' Neftali Feliz. Now, to win Game 6 two innings later with a home run? As a 28-year-old late bloomer with only 184 regular-season games under his belt? Shockingly unexpected and iconic.

DUSTY RHODES, pinch-hit three-run homer, Game 1, 1954 World Series. Rhodes' blast off Bob Lemon had the same effect on his team that the Cincinnati Reds' Eric Davis' first-inning home run off the Oakland A's Dave Stewart had on his team 36 years later. The Giants - and Reds - swept their highly favored opponents.

AARON BOONE, Game 7, 2003 ALCS. The 30-year-old trade deadline acquisition went into his 11th-inning at-bat against Tim Wakefield hitting under .200 for the ALCS. But his walk-off blast on the first pitch drove another Yankees dagger into the then-still-Bambino-cursed Boston Red Sox. The bat Boone used to hit his historic home run is preserved in Cooperstown.

BERNIE CARBO, three-run pinch-hit home run, Game 6, 1975 World Series. Carbo's eighth-inning shot to tie up the iconic game was shockingly unexpected. Even though the former Reds outfielder had hit a home run in Game 3 in Cincinnati, and had hit 15 HR in 319 at-bats in 1975, he looked overmatched in his first two swings off Reds reliever Rawly Eastwick. Without Carbo, there is no Fisk and no "Hallelujah Chorus."

- John Erardi

folks, go crazy! It's a home run! And the Cardinals have won the game by the score of 3-2 on a home run by the Wizard!"

John Erardi has been a Baseball Writers' Association of America voter for the National Baseball Hall of Fame since 1996. He has written eight baseball books.

JOSHING AROUND

THE LEGEND OF JOSH GIBSON'S POWER DWARFS MERE STATISTICS AND RECORDS.

BY JOHN ROSENGREN

Once upon a time in Pittsburgh, Josh Gibson clobbered a ball so mightily in the bottom of the ninth inning that it disappeared into the twilight. The next day, with his team in Washington for a home-and-home series, a ball tumbled from the sky before the game began.

When the Washington outfielder caught it, the ump yelled to Gibson, "You're out! In Pittsburgh, yesterday!"

Or so goes the story. Gibson's talent was so large, the only way to describe it accurately is through hyperbole.

There are reports of Gibson hitting 84, even 90 home runs in a year. His plaque at the National Baseball Hall of Fame credits him with "almost 800" home runs. Bill James believes the power-hitting catcher would have hit more than 500 if he'd been allowed to play in the major leagues (that's at least 100 more than Hall of Famer Mike Piazza's 396, the record for a catcher).

His stats page on baseball-reference.com lists 113 home runs over 16 seasons of official Negro Leagues games with the Homestead Grays and Pittsburgh Crawfords. Other sites

credit him with 168 home runs during his time with those two teams. Add in 44 roundtrippers during two seasons in the Mexican League, and that gives him 212 for his career. Research by the Committee on Negro Baseball Leagues that examined Gibson's case for consideration of his induction into the Hall of Fame uncovered 224 career homers.

But it's not about the numbers. Playing in the Negro Leagues throughout the 1930s and '40s, plus several other leagues in Puerto Rico, Mexico and the Dominican Republic, Gibson impressed fans, teammates and opponents with his talent.

"There is a catcher that any big league club would like to buy for \$200,000," Walter Johnson, the Washington Senators' great pitcher, said. "His name is Gibson. He can do everything. He hits the ball a mile. He catches so easy he might as well be in a rocking chair. Throws like a rifle. Too bad this Gibson is a colored fellow."

Alas, as a Black man who died only three months before Jackie Robinson integrated Major League Baseball, Gibson played at a time and in places where records were not neatly kept. We can't go back and scour the box scores or scorecards from each of his games to tally up an exact total of his home

runs because they don't exist. But the truth of his talent is not to be found in the statistics; it's in the testimony of those like Johnson who saw him play.

Monte Irvin said his Negro Leagues contemporary Gibson had "an eye like Ted Williams and the power of Babe Ruth." Hall of Fame owner Bill Veeck called Gibson the greatest hitter he ever saw. Roy Campanella took it a step further, declaring Gibson was "not only the greatest catcher but the greatest ballplayer I ever saw."

Indeed, when they played together as teammates, it was Gibson behind the plate and Campy relegated to third base.

"Everything I could do, Josh could do better," Campanella said.

Those testimonials carried weight. In 1972, Gibson was elected to the Hall of Fame.

The Gibson legend began before his first professional game. Born Dec. 21, 1911, in Buena Vista, Georgia, to a sharecropper turned steelworker who moved his family to Pittsburgh in 1926, Gibson had grown to 6-foot-1 and 200 pounds by age 16. Tales of his power-hitting with the semipro Crawford Colored Giants attracted the attention of Homestead Grays player/coach Judy Johnson.

"I had never seen him play, but we had heard so much about him," Johnson said. "Every time you'd look at the paper, you'd see where he hit a ball 400 feet, 500 feet."

So perhaps it was not a surprise on July 25, 1930, when the Grays' catcher broke a finger in a night game (and the backup catcher was playing the outfield) that the team summoned the 18-year-old Gibson out of the stands to fill in. He finished the season with the team.

A man of tremendous strength, Gibson swung a 41-ounce bat, heavier than most, which put an exclamation point on the balls he hit. Buck O'Neil, the Kansas City Monarchs legend, said there was a distinct sound of the ball coming off Gibson's bat that he had heard only one other man make: Babe Ruth. Years later, O'Neil heard Bo Jackson make the same sound hitting a ball.

Indeed, a little more than two months



Debuting with the Homestead Grays in 1930 at the age of 18, Josh Gibson defined power and strength for a generation of baseball players.

after his debut with the Grays, Gibson announced himself with a bomb during the playoffs that was the first ever to clear Forbes Field's 457-foot center field fence. Two days later, on Sept. 27, Judy Johnson was among those who insist they saw him hit a shot out at Yankee Stadium that went over the roof. Not even Ruth managed such a feat.

Gibson didn't bloop fly balls over the outfield fence – he blasted them into history. He crushed one ball into the distant reaches of the Polo Grounds. He clobbered a 500-foot shot in St. Louis' Sportsman's Park. He nailed a 540-foot homer in Cleveland's Municipal Stadium. He launched a rocket over the roof of Philadelphia's Shibe Park. And he baked a tater in Puerto Rico estimated at 600 feet.

The distances were estimated by eyewitness accounts, which may have stretched them beyond their actual length. Had he hit those balls today and they'd fallen under the scrutiny of more precise estimates based on dozens of measurements paired with ball velocity and height data, the distances would no doubt come up shorter. But it wasn't the eye-popping numbers that impressed Gibson's contemporaries as much the enormity of his skills.

Gibson obviously didn't hit the ball an actual mile – as Walter Johnson claimed – but he clouted it with such force that it seemed to travel that far.

"If someone had told me that Josh hit the ball a mile, I would have believed them," said Sam Jethroe, the center fielder whose Negro Leagues career overlapped Gibson's.

When Gibson came to the plate, others expected him to deliver – not simply a hit, but a bomb. Another story, probably apocryphal, underscores the point. One day in the Mexican League, Gibson had four hits, including a double and a triple. Afterward, team owner Jorge Pasquel asked, "What's wrong?"

"What do you mean?" Gibson replied. "I went 4-for-4."

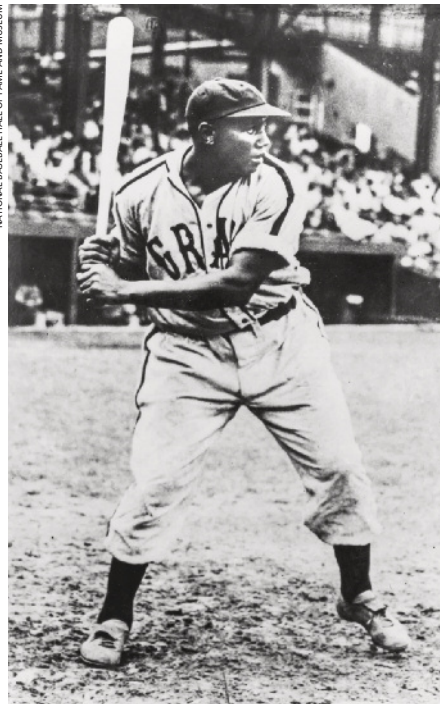
"I got Willie Wells and Ray Dandridge for doubles and singles," Pasquel said. "I got you for home runs."

You can't pull up Gibson's home run highlights on YouTube or MLB.com – he played before color television became popular – so we have to rely on testimony from those who saw him play in person. Like Satchel Paige, whose career spanned 30 years and thousands of batters, who said: "Josh was the

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greatest hitter I ever pitched to."

Or Irvin: "I played with Willie Mays and against Hank Aaron," Irvin said. "They were tremendous players, but they were no Josh Gibson."

On Jan. 1, 1943, Gibson had a seizure and passed out. He ended up in the hospital. The press reported he had suffered a nervous

breakdown, but the true cause was eventually diagnosed as a brain tumor. Gibson had known early heartbreak. In August 1930, less than three weeks after his debut with the Grays, his wife died giving birth to the couple's twins. He was considered the Negro Leagues' most dangerous hitter and also regarded as one of the finest defensive catchers of his era. Gibson is credited with 113 home runs in official Negro Leagues games, but his career total is likely at least five times that number – with the official records of thousands of games lost to history.

By the '40s, his drinking and substance use had intensified. He endured frequent headaches and gained weight. Though he continued to hit consistently – averaging .380 from 1943-46 – and with power, his body gave out on him Jan. 20, 1947.

Gibson died at age 35. Had he lived and stayed healthy, he no doubt would have played longer and hit more home runs to bolster his legend. Still, even though his career ended early, accounts credit him with more home runs – and with greater force – than perhaps any other man to play the game in North America.

And that will be remembered long beyond the numbers. 🍌

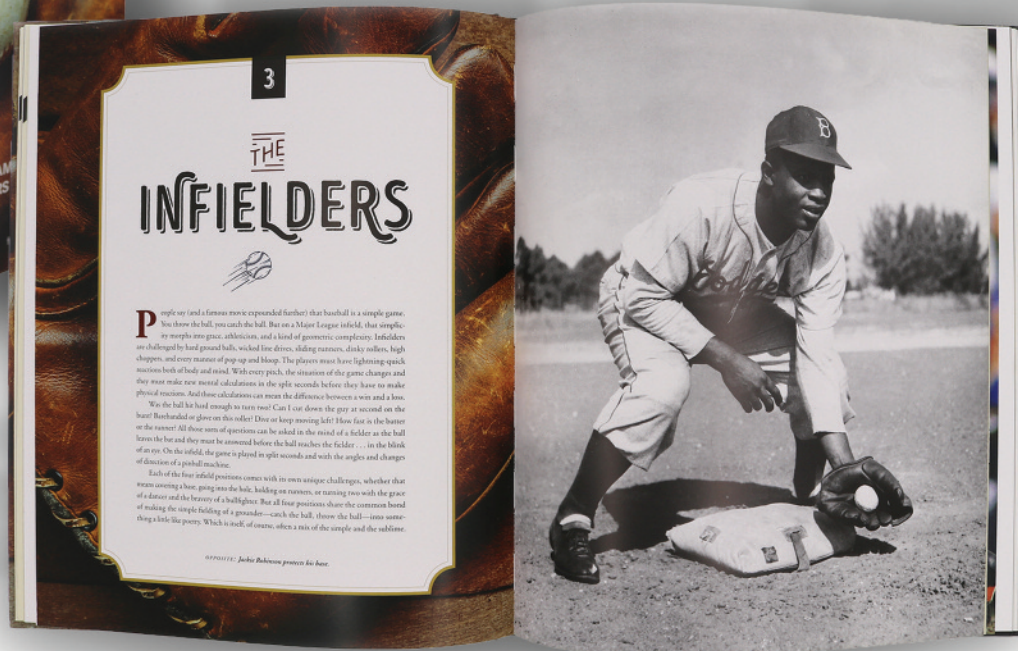
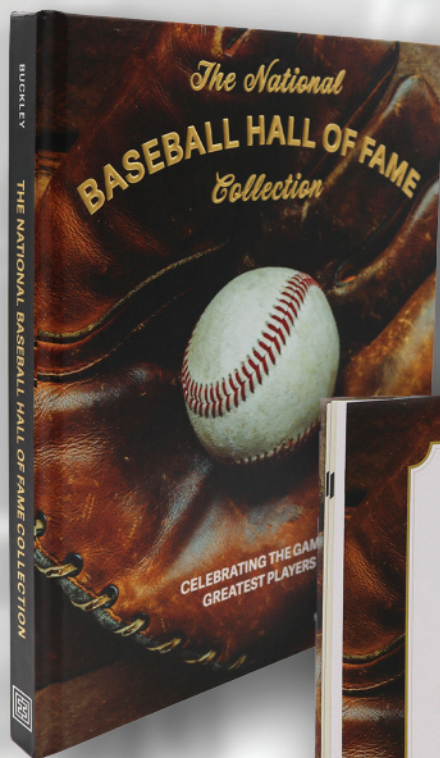
John Rosengren is a freelance writer from Minneapolis.



The National Baseball Hall of Fame Collection: Celebrating the Game's Greatest Players

The National Baseball Hall of Fame Collection compiles biographies, statistics, and photos of over 175 Hall of Famers all in a single book that every baseball fan should own. Separated into chapters by position, the book highlights baseball's memorable players, moments, championships, and more. Meet the greats of the game from baseball's early days in the 19th century to the legends of the modern game. Researched and written by sports author James Buckley Jr. with an introductory foreword by Cal Ripken Jr., the book also includes:

- Profiles of more than 175 legendary Hall of Famers—including the Class of 2020
- Photo explorations into rare memorabilia, including replica tickets, scouting reports, scorecards, and contracts
- Notable awards, records, stats, and a complete list of all 333 Hall of Fame Members
- Full-color photos and informative sidebars throughout



People say (and I am sure you've expanded further) that baseball is a simple game. You throw the ball, you catch the ball. But on a Major League infield, that simple, so-much-easy game, abduction, and a kind of geometric complexity. Infielders are challenged by hard ground balls, wicked line drives, sliding runners, dirty rollers, high choppers, and every manner of pop-up and bloop. The players must have lightning-quick reactions both of body and mind. With every pitch, the situation of the game changes and they must make new mental calculations in the split seconds before they have to make physical reactions. And those calculations can mean the difference between a win and a loss.

Was the ball hit hard enough to turn back? Can I cut down the gap at second on the hard line drive or glove on the roller? Don't keep moving left! How fast is the batter on the bases? All these sorts of questions can be asked in the mind of a fielder as the ball leaves the bat and they must be answered before the ball reaches the fielder... in the blink of an eye. On the infield, the game is played in split seconds and with the angles and changes of direction of pop-ups and bloop.

Each of the four infield positions comes with its own unique challenges, whether that means covering a base, going into the hole, backing on runners, or turning two with the grace of a dancer and the tenacity of a bulldog. But all four positions share the common bond of making the simple thing of a groundball—catch the ball, throw the ball—into something a little like poetry. Which is what, of course, when a man of the simple and the sublime.

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Party in July

Class of 2020 and any elected members of Class of 2021 to be inducted July 25 in Cooperstown.

BY CRAIG MUDER

The celebration is set for July 25 in Cooperstown.

The Class of 2020 will find out in January who might join them at baseball's biggest party.

Induction Weekend 2021 will be held July 23-26, with the *Induction Ceremony* scheduled for Sunday, July 25, on the grounds of the Clark Sports Center in Cooperstown. Class of 2020 members Derek Jeter, Marvin Miller, Ted Simmons and Larry Walker will be inducted along with any candidates who appear on at least 75 percent of all ballots cast in the 2021 Baseball Writers' Association of America election.

The 2020 *Induction Ceremony* was postponed until 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2021 BBWAA Hall of Fame ballot will be announced later this fall. First-time eligible candidates include Mark Buehrle, A.J. Burnett, Michael Cuddyer, Dan Haren, Tim Hudson, Torii Hunter, Adam LaRoche, Aramis Ramírez, Álex Ríos, Nick Swisher, Dan Uggla, Shane Victorino and Barry Zito.

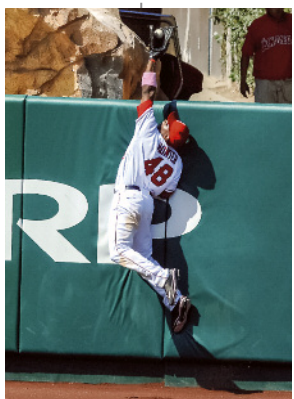
Of the candidates not elected by the BBWAA in 2020 who are returning to the ballot, Curt Schilling received the most votes, earning 70.0 percent of the 397 votes cast while falling 20 votes short of election. Schilling will be on

the BBWAA ballot for the ninth time.

Other candidates returning to the ballot include (in order of 2020 vote percentage, with 2021 year on the ballot): Roger Clemens (61.0 percent, on ballot for ninth year), Barry Bonds (60.7, ninth year), Omar Vizquel (52.6, fourth year), Scott Rolen (35.3, fourth year), Billy Wagner (31.7, sixth year), Gary Sheffield (30.5, seventh year), Todd Helton (29.2, third year), Manny Ramírez (28.2, fifth year), Jeff Kent (27.5, eighth year), Andruw Jones (19.4, fourth year), Sammy Sosa (13.9, ninth year), Andy Pettitte (11.3, third year) and Bobby Abreu (5.5, second year).



The Hall of Fame announced Aug. 24 that its Board of Directors has voted unanimously to reschedule this winter's two Era Committee elections as a result of uncertainties associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.



Top: Mark Buehrle of the White Sox delivers a pitch during his July 23, 2009, perfect game against the Rays. Buehrle, the owner of 214 big league victories, will be eligible for the BBWAA Hall of Fame ballot for the first time this fall.

Bottom: Torii Hunter of the Angels reaches over the fence at Angel Stadium of Anaheim to catch a potential home run. Hunter, a nine-time Gold Glove Award winner, is eligible for Hall of Fame consideration for the first time this year.

“With the nation’s safety concerns, the travel restrictions and the limitations on group gatherings in effect for many regions, it is not possible to ensure that we can safely and effectively hold these committee meetings,” said Jane Forbes Clark, Chairman of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. “The Era Committee process, which has been so effective in evaluating Hall of Fame candidates, requires an open, yet confidential conversation and an in-person dialogue involving the members of the 16-person voting committee. In view of these concerns, the Board of Directors has decided that the Golden Days Committee and the Early Days Committee will instead meet during the fall of 2021.”

The Golden Days Era Committee considers Hall of Fame candidates whose primary contribution to the game came from 1950 to 1969, and the Early Baseball Era Committee considers candidates whose primary contribution came prior to 1950.

Each committee will consider a ballot of 10 candidates, compiled by the Baseball Writers’ Association of America’s Historical Overview Committee, which will be announced in the autumn of 2021. Both committees, which are reconstituted each time they meet, will consider these ballots later that year. Any candidates elected will be enshrined as part of the Hall of Fame’s Class of 2022.

The updated schedule of Era Committee meetings is as follows:

- **Golden Days Era Committee and Early Baseball Era Committee:** To meet in fall of 2021 for the Class of 2022
- **Today’s Game Era Committee:** To meet in fall of 2022 for the Class of 2023 (considering candidates whose primary contribution came from 1988 to the present)
- **Modern Baseball Era Committee:** To meet in fall of 2023 for the Class of 2024 (considering candidates whose primary contribution came from 1970 to 1987)
- **Today’s Game Era Committee:** To meet in fall of 2024 for the Class of 2025
- **Modern Baseball Era Committee:** To meet in fall of 2025 for the Class of 2026
- **Golden Days Era Committee:** To meet in fall of 2026 for the Class of 2027

Craig Muder is the director of communications for the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.

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Our Museum in Action

These ongoing projects are just a few of the ways the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum's mission is being supported today.

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PHOTOS BY MILO STEWART, JR./NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM

The Museum's baseball card collection will find a new home as these four cards and the hundreds of thousands more will be rehoused in archival-quality binder boxes and Ultra PRO pages.

WHAT WE'VE DONE TOGETHER

Baseball Card Collection Care Project

Thanks to generous gifts from Chris Burns, Kathy and Michael Gallichio, M.D., Peter Hand, Andrew Nuzum, James M. O'Brien, Brian G. Smooke and Ultra PRO International, our Baseball Card Collection Care Project to catalog and rehouse our entire baseball card collection has been completely funded.

The new archival-quality materials, which meet the highest standards in Museum collection care, will ensure that the 200,000 cardboard gems within our collection are preserved for generations to come.

Museum benches

Thanks to a generous gift from Michelle Hoffman and Family in memory of Richard LoPresti, a new bench has been added to the Museum.

There are a limited number of benches still available through this program, both within the Museum and on the grounds. Each bench helps enhance the visitor experience, allowing visitors a chance to relax and reflect during their time at the Hall of Fame.

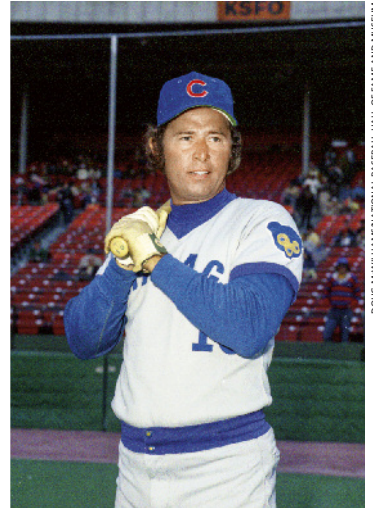
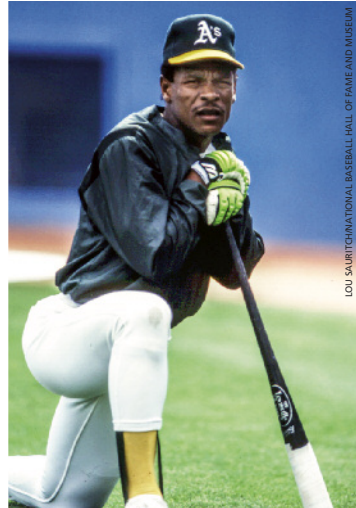
Donors supporting the installation of a bench with a gift of \$2,500 will be recognized with an engraved 8" x 2" brass plaque on the bench. The message on the plaque is personalized and a great way to honor a loved one or your favorite all-time great.

You can learn more about the Museum Bench Program by calling our development office at (607) 547-0385 or visiting baseballhall.org/benchprogram.



MILO STEWART, JR./NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM

A lasting tribute for a loved one or your favorite all-time player, a limited number of benches are available for sponsorship inside and outside the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.



Left to right: Photos of Hall of Famers Roberto Alomar, Rickey Henderson, Whitey Herzog and Ron Santo are among those from the Museum collection in need of digital preservation.

Photos to be digitally preserved

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

They include:

- **Sparky Anderson** – Thanks to a gift from Robert S. Crotty
- **George Brett** – Thanks to gifts from Jewell Gould and Terrill Jannsen
- **Orlando Cepeda** – Thanks to a gift from Wilson Curle
- **Happy Chandler** – Thanks to a gift from Keith Limbach
- **Red Faber** – Thanks to a gift from Peter Hand
- **Carlton Fisk** – Thanks to a gift from Peter Hand
- **Tony Lazzeri** – Thanks to a gift from Paul Phillips
- **Freddie Lindstrom** – Thanks to gifts from anonymous donors
- **Tony Pérez** – Thanks to a gift from Robert S. Crotty
- **Kirby Puckett** – Thanks to a gift from an anonymous donor
- **Nolan Ryan** – Thanks to a gift from an anonymous donor
- **Earl Weaver** – Thanks to a gift from Mark R. McCallum
- **Mickey Welch** – Thanks to a gift from an anonymous donor
- **Robin Yount** – Thanks to a gift from Jeffrey R. Wollitz

WHAT YOU CAN HELP US DO

Digitally preserve historic photos of the Hall of Fame classes of 2006 through 2013

We need your help to continue our work to digitally preserve the Museum's photo collection, which contains more than 300,000 images. You can help us to preserve the images of the Classes of 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013.

Cost to digitally preserve images of:

Class of 2006**

Bruce Sutter (26 images):.....\$130

Class of 2007

Tony GwynnFUNDED

Cal Ripken, Jr.FUNDED

Class of 2008

Barney Dreyfuss (12 images):.....\$60

Goose Gosage.....FUNDED

Bowie Kuhn (47 images):\$265

Walter O'Malley (39 images):.....\$195

Billy Southworth (118 images):\$590

Dick Williams (91 images):\$455

Class of 2009

Joe Gordon (125 images):.....\$625

Rickey Henderson (77 images):\$385

Jim Rice (44 images):.....\$230

Class of 2010

Andre Dawson (84 images).....\$420

Doug Harvey (3 images):.....\$15

Whitey Herzog (49 images):.....\$255

Class of 2011

Roberto Alomar (57 images):.....\$285

Bert BlylevenFUNDED

Pat Gillick (22 images):\$110

Class of 2012

Barry Larkin (46 images):\$230

Ron Santo (85 images):\$425

Class of 2013

Hank O'Day (7 images):\$35

Jacob Ruppert (23 images):.....\$115

Deacon White (4 images):\$20

***Images of the other 17 members from the Class of 2006 have been funded in full*

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/museumination

For more information – or to make a donation of any amount toward one of the projects – visit baseballhall.org/museumination or contact our Development Team at (607) 547-0385 or development@baseballhall.org.

HOMERS HURT

For me, hitting the long ball was a byproduct of technique and practice.

BY FRANK THOMAS

I hit 521 home runs in my career, but I never considered myself a home run hitter. I always just considered myself a *hitter*. I cared more about hitting for a high average – trying to hit the ball hard and getting base hits – and the power took care of itself.

A lot of guys nowadays only care about hitting home runs. I never approached it that way. My focus was to get a hit every time. Home runs were only on my mind in the batter's box about 20 percent of the time, when we needed a big home run either to tie it or to win it. For the other 80 percent, my focus was hitting line drives, driving in runs, getting on base and not trying to do too much.

I focused on technique and practice, really

putting in the work on barreling the ball. As a result, good things – like leaving the yard – would happen. I practiced the same way every day, and I took the same approach into games, every day for 20 years. That's why I had a lot of doubles, a lot of hits and, ultimately, a lot of home runs.

Home runs come in bunches. When you hit a couple, the next thing you know you've hit five or six. When you find your home run swing, and the barrel of the bat, you have to hold onto that for as long as you can. You repeat it, over and over until, as I call it, you fall out of that tree. You get in that tree sometimes, and when it's hard to fall out, that's a hot streak. You try to hit in the game the same way you practice so you don't fall out of that tree.

I found myself in that tree once or twice in a season. Those times are where the big home run numbers come from. First you find that groove, then you have to stick to that groove – and the home runs just keep coming. You go two or three weeks and you've hit a dozen or more home runs.

You really don't feel the ball off the bat when you crush one – it's a great feeling. When I hit a home run, I wanted to get around the bases in a hurry because I didn't want the other team to focus on it. It happened and it's over – let's move on. I was taught that's what being a pro is all about. You hit a home run, act like you've been there, get around the bases and start thinking about your next at-bat.

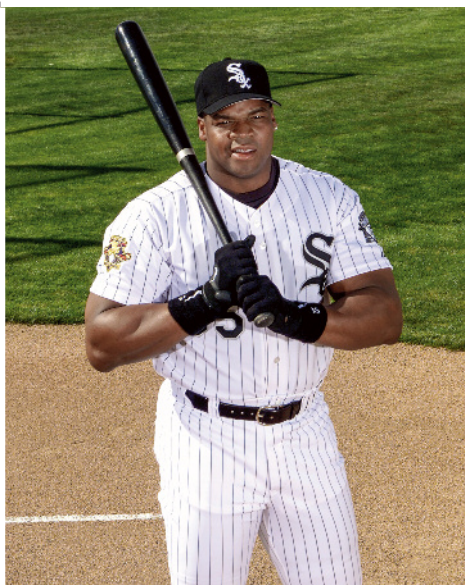
Growing up in Columbus, Ga., I watched the Braves religiously. I got to see Hank Aaron, Bob Horner, Dale Murphy – some of the great home run hitters of their day – and Claudell Washington and Chris Chambliss, great hitters who had a lot of success getting the ball out of the ballpark.

I met Hank Aaron in my first year at the Hall of Fame. He's legendary where I come from – a mountain of a man. I'd seen him once or twice when I was playing, but I was always nervous to talk to him. When we did talk, I was like a kid in a candy store. He and his wife, Billye, knew I grew up in Georgia. She could see how much I was hoping to have a conversation with him and said, "Get over here," and connected us.

Our newly elected Frick Award winner, (former White Sox broadcaster) Hawk Harrelson, was the first to call me the Big Hurt back in '92 or '93. He said, "This big kid keeps hurting the baseball, so I'm going to call him the Big Hurt."

I always wanted to be my best at home, and Chicago was my favorite place to hit. I wanted to excite the fans in Chicago – to feel when they came to the ballpark that we were going to win the game, and that I was going to do something big. 🍌

Frank Thomas hit 521 career home runs and was elected to the Hall of Fame in 2014.



PHOTOS BY RON VESELY/NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM

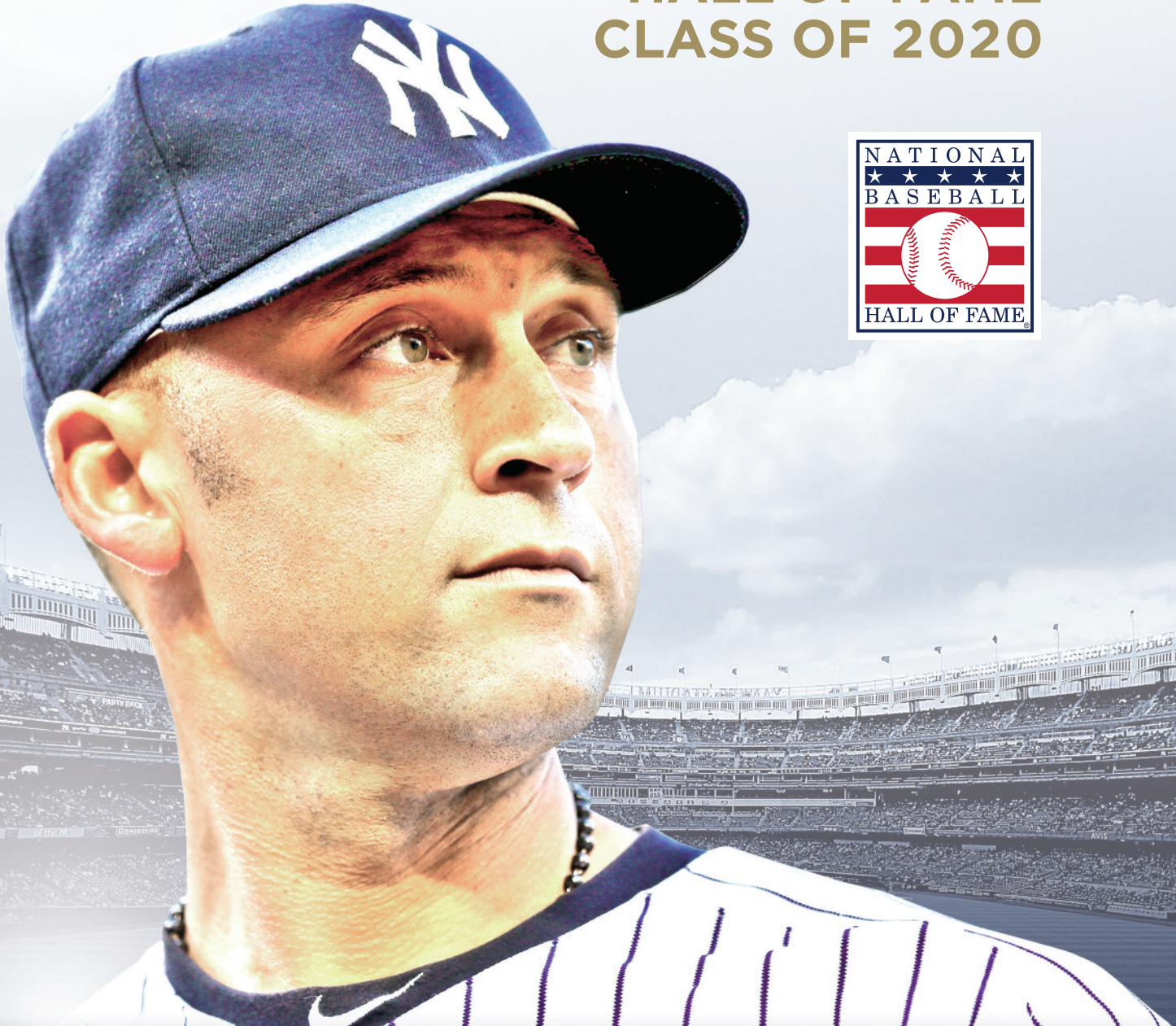
On June 28, 2007, Frank Thomas became the 22nd player to reach 500 career home runs.

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