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# MEMORIES *and Dreams*

The Official Magazine of the Hall of Fame

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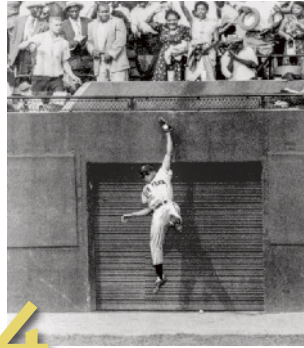
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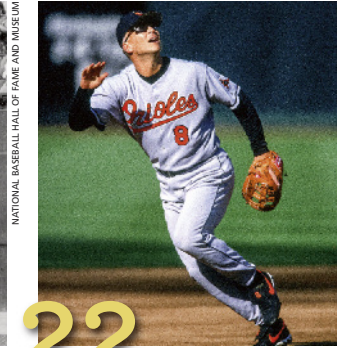
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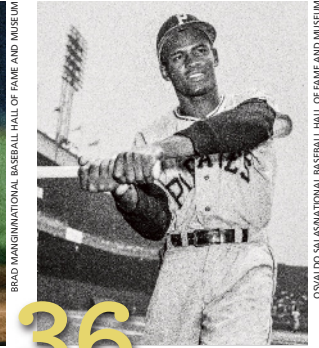
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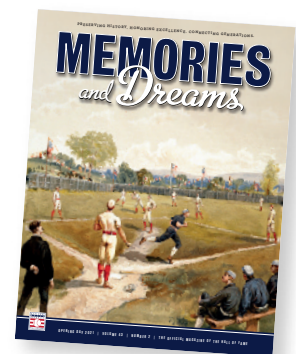
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PAT GILLYCK



## ON THE COVER

While the positions on the baseball field have essentially remained the same since the game's founding, the role of each has changed – the result of strategy, equipment, player development and evolving rules. In this issue of *Memories & Dreams*, we take a trip around the diamond to learn more about these changes.

The cover is a reproduction of an aquarelle print published by L. Prang & Co., Boston (circa 1887).

# FROM THE PRESIDENT > TIM MEAD



**A**t some point this fall, a World Series celebration will occur. Players, coaches, staff and other personnel will rush onto the field to celebrate the conclusion of a marathon that began in Arizona or Florida, culminating the dream of every youngster who's donned a Little League, high school, collegiate or minor league jersey.

As the celebration unfolds on countless television and computer screens across the country, millions of words will be used by broadcasters and media members to describe the moment, the stars of the clinching game and the journey of the new championship team.

There will be a particular focus on the owner, general manager and manager – detailing the challenges and successes of the best team in baseball. The spotlight shines center stage on those triumphantly hoisting the Tiffany trophy. Players hug and shed tears of joy and fulfillment, awaiting the chance to share the moment with family and friends.

Players and staff from organizations not as fortunate to appear in the Fall Classic will watch from home with a certain sense of both envy and inspiration, pushed by their own competitive drive to be a part of the season's final celebration in 2022.

The presentation of the World Series trophy by Commissioner Rob Manfred will signal the conclusion, at least for 2021, of a process that will have been the direct result of one of the most important concepts in sports, on and off the field: Teamwork.

During the course of more than 200 games played from spring through fall, a championship is achieved through collaboration – world-class athletes who understand what is expected of

them, not simply as individual performers, but also as one small part of a greater machine that, when running at peak performance, creates success for their teammates along the way.

Teamwork is one way of separating selfless from selfish. The beauty of baseball is its total reliance on a team-first attitude.

In the sacred confines of our Plaque Gallery in Cooperstown, bronze plaques help preserve the accomplished legacies of 263 former major league players. Their plaques describe individual, team and major league records, along with personal awards attained.

The greatest of the greats share the common bond of placing winning above all else. Yet despite all of their individual success, there are several who never experienced a championship, through no fault of their own. That is because baseball, throughout the course of a single game or an entire season, is not designed to be dominated by any one player. This is one of the primary differences among the major sports.

In my 40 years working for the Angels, I spent 38 seasons watching our teams develop into their own finely tuned machines beginning day one in Spring Training. And make no mistake, that is where the concept of teamwork is seeded, nurtured and takes root for what lies ahead.

In the spring of 1989, 21-year-old rookie Jim Abbott, selected eighth overall in the first round of the amateur draft, joined the California Angels in camp. Born without a right hand, Jim enjoyed a distinguished collegiate career at the University of Michigan, where he was named the nation's best amateur athlete and top amateur baseball player in 1987.

Despite those who questioned his initial selection in the draft and chances for a major league career, Jim's Spring Training performance

earned him a spot on the Opening Day roster. At the time, he was just the 16th player since the initiation of the draft in 1965 to make his professional debut in the major leagues.

What transpired during those very special six weeks in Spring Training was not just Jim's physical performance, but the respect he earned from teammates and staff. They were acutely aware how this young man handled the critics and curiosity of the sports and news media from across the country. With the leadership of future Hall of Famer Bert Blyleven and other established veterans, an incredible chemistry and bond was created among that special group that permeated throughout the campaign.

Babe Ruth once said, "You may have the greatest bunch of individual stars in the world, but if they don't play together, the club won't be worth a dime."

As you read this issue of *Memories & Dreams*, the pursuit and development of teamwork and chemistry is well underway in 30 major league clubhouses, as Spring Training camp has given way to the start of the championship season.

While the focus of each organization begins with the right combination of players to create a winning environment, in the end, successful teamwork and chemistry are achieved and sustained by the players themselves. It is the evolution of understanding one another to a point where the foundation of trust sustains throughout the course of a marathon season.

The commitment to teamwork is not a physical skill set any more than the dynamic of team chemistry. Rather, both are mental and emotional commitments by individuals to something bigger than themselves.

The nuances of baseball are like the collective performance of a symphony orchestra, each understanding their role and working together in harmony. The process might include an energetic solo or sectional performance that stands out, but when each participant executes their score with professionalism and accomplishment, the accolades will be shared by all.

Talent is the primary ingredient for success with any sports team. And when the last pitch of the 2021 season has been thrown, it will be the dynamics of teamwork and team chemistry that will be referenced over and over again as the celebration begins.



# SHORT HOPS

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## Go behind the scenes with the Museum's Custom Tour Experience

The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum is the place where memories and stories are preserved. The timeless legacies of baseball's greatest moments and players are brought to life for fans to experience and cherish.

The Custom Tour Experience is a program that connects fans to their favorite team and memories through a unique experience at the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Participants will enjoy a personalized visit focused around their favorite team – including a private artifact spotlight featuring items currently not on display, followed by a brief guided tour highlighting their favorite team.

A Sustaining Membership (\$125 value) is included with this package and features a great lineup of benefits: *Yearbook*, *Almanac*, *Memories & Dreams* subscription, discounts, free admission to the Museum and more.

The Custom Tour Experience is available

every Monday through Friday between Labor Day and Memorial Day (excluding holidays). A minimum of a two-week advanced reservation is required, with date and time pending approval from the Museum. The maximum party size is four individuals per booking.

To book your visit, call (607) 547-0249 or email [experience@baseballhall.org](mailto:experience@baseballhall.org).

## Corporate Experiences bring Cooperstown to your crew

Share in the game's greatest moments and milestones through a lineup featuring legends and journeys that only the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum can bring to life.

Given the current difficulties with in-person experiences, businesses are searching for new ways to keep their constituents and employees engaged while following health and safety guidelines.

To address this need, the Museum is now offering Corporate Experiences that can help connect with clients or employees at a time when in-person events may not be possible.

## STAFF SELECTIONS



**Name:** Dani Dayton

**Position:** Graphic Designer

**Hall of Fame Debut:** March 6, 2017

**Hometown:** Plattsburgh, N.Y.

**Favorite Museum Artifact:**

Dyersville corn cob from the *Field of Dreams* movie site

**Memorable Museum Moment:**

Part of my job is to design the Induction brand each year, which consists of banners, social graphics, Induction admission tickets and more. One of the ticket sections is called "Stage" – and I didn't realize until the third year I designed these that it literally means that the Hall of Famers, who sit up on the stage, are holding a ticket that I designed to gain admission to the Ceremony. That's pretty cool.

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This diverse lineup of programs includes:

- *Virtual Voices of the Game* – Meet and interact virtually with a Hall of Famer and hear stories about their career, experiences in Cooperstown and what it means to be an all-time great.
- *Cultural Diversity: Diversity in the Dugout* – See how the diversity of baseball makes the game stronger through the *Viva Baseball!* exhibit.
- *Civil Rights: Before You Could Say "Jackie Robinson"* – Better understand racial segregation and its impact on baseball and American society as shown in the *Ideals and Injustices* exhibit.
- *Women's History: Dirt on Their Skirts* – Enjoy the stories told in the *Diamond Dreams* exhibit and discuss how female baseball players have challenged gender stereotypes.
- *Hall of Fame Plaque Gallery* – Take a virtual tour exploring the iconic space that is sacred ground for baseball fans.

Learn more by calling (607) 547-0249 or emailing [experience@baseballhall.org](mailto:experience@baseballhall.org).

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# IN POSITION

THE GAME'S 10 PRIMARY ROLES EVOLVED OVER THE YEARS INTO TODAY'S STANDARDS.

BY SCOTT PITONIAK

**D**aniel “Doc” Adams was in search of a recreational pursuit. So a few years after establishing his medical practice in New York City in 1839, he joined the Knickerbockers Base Ball Club.

The nascent sport was still evolving, and it quickly became Adams’ passion – and patient. His ability to diagnose the young game’s ills and prescribe cures enabled baseball to survive and thrive. Many of his seminal recommendations – including nine fielders per team and the creation of the shortstop position – remain intact. Nearly two centuries later, baseball is still following the good doctor’s orders.

When Adams started playing, rules and regulations were crude and varied from team to team. The number of fielders often depended on how many players showed up. Some days, that might mean as few as seven per side; other days, it could mean as many as a dozen.

Over time, the majority of clubs settled on eight, figuring a pitcher-catcher combo, along with three basemen and three outfielders made the most sense. But thanks to lightweight balls that were difficult to fling long distances and an astute diagnosis by Adams, the sport eventually recognized the error of its ways. Nine, not eight, would become the ideal number of fielders, with a shortstop, initially known as a “short fielder,” added to the mix.

Like many innovations, shortstop was born of necessity. According to historian Richard Hershberger, author of “Strike Four: The Evolution of Baseball,” balls in those days were much lighter than current-day versions, and outfielders had difficulty reaching the infield with their throws. Adams, a Harvard medical school graduate, sagely surmised the addition of a short fielder would aid in relays. Other teams soon followed suit.

As the quality and consistency of the baseballs improved – another Adams innovation – and outfielders’ arms became stronger from more frequent practices and games, the short fielder moved to the infield to cover the holes between second and third or second and first, depending on whether the batter was right- or left-handed. This could be viewed as an early example of analytics, where positioning was based on probability.

In ensuing years and decades, players such as Honus Wagner, Ozzie Smith, Cal Ripken Jr. and Derek Jeter would find homes at shortstop, positioning themselves to become Hall of Famers. Each owes a doff of the cap to Adams, who manned every position but pitcher during his 17 years as a Knickerbockers player/president.

His shortstop invention, as well as recommendations for a 90-foot distance between bases, three outs per inning and nine-inning games, were adopted at an 1857 convention of organized clubs in the New York City area. John Thorn, the Official Historian of Major League Baseball, says Adams’ hand-written “Laws of Base Ball” is one of three documents that form the sport’s “Magna Carta, the Great Charter of Our Game.”

As Thorn notes, the creation and standardization of those rules cemented Adams’ legacy as “the most significant figure in the early history of baseball.” Henceforth, baseball would be “dressed to the nines.” In 1973, with the introduction of the designated hitter after decades of debate, a 10th spot was added.

Although the names of the fielding positions have endured, the role of each has changed – often dramatically. Rule changes, enhanced equipment, bigger, stronger, more agile players, ballpark surfaces and dimensions and data-driven strategy have impacted how positions are played and valued.

What follows is a quick historical trip around the horn.

## Pitcher

Perhaps no position has undergone a greater metamorphosis than pitcher. In the beginning, a hurler played a minor role.

“His job was to deliver the ball to the batter, whose job was to put it in play,” writes Hershberger. “At that point the real fun began, with the interplay between the fielders and runners.”

But a change in pitching philosophy and several decades worth of rule changes in the 19th century would turn pitcher into the most influential position. Hurlers went from delivering eminently hittable pitches underhand from a flat box about 45 feet from home plate to throwing fast, twisting, deceptive pitches overhand atop a 10-to-15-inch-high mound, 60 feet,





**Top left:** Doc Adams helped establish the modern positions of the game of baseball. **Top right:** James Creighton, who played for the Brooklyn Excelsiors in the 1860s, was one of the game's first pitching masters. **Bottom:** The positioning of fielders has remained mostly unchanged over the past 150 years. In this photo of the 1936 World Series at the Polo Grounds, the Giants' Mel Ott is at bat while fellow future Hall of Famer Lou Gehrig plays first base.

six inches away. With the required calling of balls and strikes in 1864, the duel between pitcher and batter became the game's focal point.

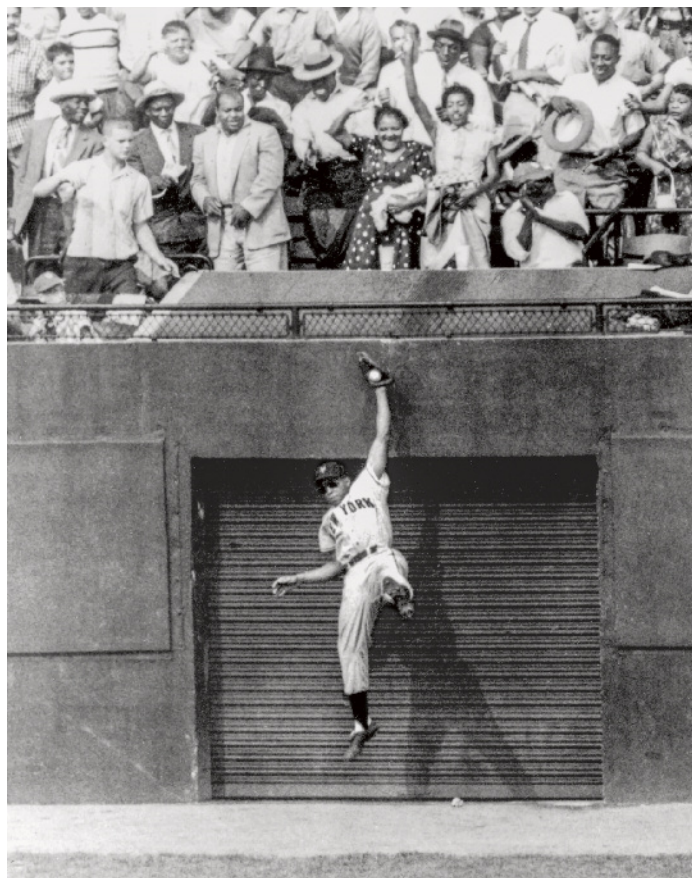
Hershberger credits 19th-century pioneer James Creighton for igniting the revolution, calling him the first pitcher to put everything together – speed, pitch movement, trickery and control. Though he played only briefly before passing away at age 21 in 1862, Creighton initiated a movement that Hershberger says “changed the underlying nature of the game, from a competition between batters and fielders, and between fielders and runners, to a competition between pitchers and batters. This was a radically new approach to the game, and the rules were ill-equipped for it. This put in motion a cycle of revision and accommodation, followed by further revisions, that would last four decades.”

That revolution continues today, with dominating starting pitchers joined by hard-throwing relief specialists. The modern duel between hurler and hitter has resulted in a record number of strikeouts and home runs, and a dramatic reduction in fielded balls.

## Catcher

During baseball's early, bare-handed fielding days, catchers survived because pitches weren't thrown hard and backstops could position themselves several feet behind home plate. But once pitchers began increasing velocity and rule changes required catchers to align themselves just behind the plate, the need for gloves and protective gear, such as masks and chest protectors, became necessary. The development of those so-called “tools of ignorance” occurred during the 1870s and 1880s.

Over time, catching became the most physically demanding position



Willie Mays won 12 Gold Glove Awards for his prowess in center field despite playing four full seasons before the awards were first presented in 1957.

and one of its most mentally challenging jobs, too, as catchers became responsible for calling pitches. They also were called upon to throw out would-be base stealers, so a strong arm and quick release became prerequisites.

Though secondary in importance, a number of catchers also have excelled as hitters, with the likes of Mickey Cochrane, Yogi Berra, Josh Gibson, Gary Carter, Johnny Bench and Iván Rodríguez among the 19 backstops to compile Hall of Fame-worthy batting stats.

## First base

Since less range is required than other infield positions, first base traditionally has been a spot where you can “hide” a slugger who's not a great fielder. That's not to say the position isn't of defensive importance. First basemen usually record the most putouts during a game. And a nimble gloveman, such as 11-time Gold Glove Award winner Keith Hernandez, can save runs by scooping errant throws, turning double plays and robbing potential extra base hits down the line.

That said, it's always been more of an offensive position, its hitting legacy propelled by big boppers such as Lou Gehrig, Hank Greenberg, Mule Suttles, Eddie Murray, Frank Thomas and Harmon Killebrew.

## Second base

This has long been regarded as a defensive position, with Hall of Famers Bobby Doerr, Bill Mazerowski, Joe Gordon and Nellie Fox feted as much for their ability to turn two as to drive in two. While some of the game's greatest hitters have played second base – Rogers Hornsby (.358 career batting average) and Rod Carew (seven batting titles) starred at the position – only a few second-sackers have been able to combine fielding, hitting, speed and power.

## Shortstop

Pittsburgh Pirates great Honus Wagner, 19th-century standout Hughie Jennings and Chicago Cubs fan favorite Ernie Banks were powerful exceptions, but for much of the 19th and 20th centuries, this position was manned by short, speedy players with superb gloves and accurate arms. Offense (particularly home runs) was an added bonus. That all began to change with Hall of Fame manager Earl Weaver's decision to go against conventional wisdom and switch 6-foot-4 Cal Ripken Jr. from third to short. Ripken enjoyed a legendary career, opening the door for Derek Jeter, Álex Rodríguez and other tall men to play the position.

## Third base

Because of its proximity to right-handed batters and the potential for screaming line drives and ground balls, this position became known as the “hot corner.” In addition to quick reflexes, third basemen also have to be nimble enough to charge in to field bunts and slow rollers and throw out swift-footed runners. Like first base, this corner infield spot often is manned by sluggers. Few combined hitting and fielding any better than Mike Schmidt, who hit more homers (548) than any third-sacker while also earning 10 Gold Glove Awards.

## Right field

Since the game's early years, strong arms have been a prerequisite of right fielders because they're called upon to throw out runners going from first to third. Perhaps no one possessed a stronger cannon or played the

NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM





Honus Wagner (right) was one of the few power-hitting shortstops in the big leagues during his time, but provided the blueprint for future players at the position. John McGraw (left), meanwhile, helped redefine the defensive role of the third baseman during the 1890s with the National League's Baltimore Orioles before beginning his Hall of Fame managerial career.

position with greater elegance than Roberto Clemente, the Pirates legend who also was sublime at the plate with a .317 career average. Clemente, Henry Aaron, Babe Ruth and Frank Robinson are among the 26 right fielders enshrined in Cooperstown.

## Center field

No one covers more ground than a center fielder, who also serves as the captain of the outfield. Speed and a strong arm are necessities. The position has featured some of the game's greatest athletes, among them Ty Cobb, Joe DiMaggio, Mickey Mantle, Ken Griffey Jr. and Mike Trout. The standard-bearer, though, may be Willie Mays, who spent his career roaming the spacious confines of New York's Polo Grounds (483 feet to dead center) and the windy confines of San Francisco's Candlestick Park. Jim Murray, a 1987 BBWAA Career Excellence Award winner, summed up the Say Hey Kid's defensive prowess this way: "Willie Mays' glove is where triples go to die."

## Left field

Perhaps the least demanding of the three outfield positions, left field doesn't require a strong arm because the throw to third is shorter. Ballpark

dimensions can add to the position's difficulty, particularly in places such as Boston's Fenway Park, where the 37-foot-high Green Monster can lead to embarrassing, off-the-wall bounces. No one tamed the Monster like Hall of Famer Carl Yastrzemski, who had an uncanny knack for anticipating the angles of the ricochets while also delivering at the plate as one of his era's greatest batters.

## Designated hitter

In an effort to infuse more offense by taking the bat out of pitchers' hands, the American League adopted the designated hitter rule 48 years ago, with the Yankees' Ron Blomberg the first DH to bat in a regular-season game. The rule has extended the careers of numerous sluggers no longer capable of playing in the field, and the National League used the DH for the first time in 2020. In 2019, Harold Baines and Edgar Martinez became the first designated hitters inducted into the Hall of Fame, a trend that's sure to continue. 📌

*Best-selling author Scott Pitoniak resides in Penfield, N.Y. His latest book is "Memories of Swings Past: A Lifetime of Baseball Stories."*





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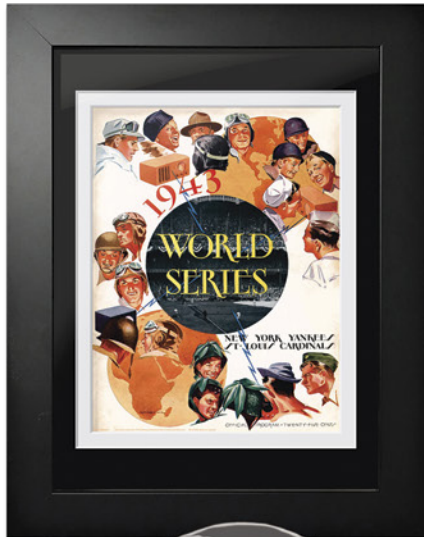
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Catfish Hunter joined the Yankees on Dec. 31, 1974, signing a five-year, \$3.25 million contract that set the standard for future free agents. Hunter helped the team win three American League pennants and two World Series titles.



# HOOKING CATFISH

## THE YANKEES' SIGNING OF CY YOUNG AWARD WINNER CATFISH HUNTER SIGNALLED THE BEGINNING OF THE FREE AGENCY ERA.

BY STEVE BUCKLEY

**T**he signing of a big-name, big-bucks free agent usually merits a lavish, heavily scripted press conference.

The affair begins with hors d'oeuvres and kibitzing as a lead-up to the big moment when the new guy tries on the shirt he'll be wearing for the next six, seven or eight years with a club option for...well, you never really know when and how it will end. But you know when it's going to begin, because sometimes these pressers are carried on live television and the local stations need to know when to break away from their daytime programming lineup.

But the proceedings were decidedly different on the night of Dec. 31, 1974 – that's right, New Year's Eve – when right-handed pitcher Jim "Catfish" Hunter, a member of three consecutive World Series-winning editions of the Oakland A's, was introduced as the newest member of the New York Yankees.

Beat writers, sportscasters and photographers – as well as employees of the Yankees – had to abandon whatever plans they had for their New Year's Eve and then wait around for a



When an arbitrator ruled that Athletics owner Charlie Finley had not fulfilled Catfish Hunter's contract, the Oakland ace was declared a free agent – setting off what was then the biggest bidding war in the game's history.

couple of hours while the final details of Hunter's contract were worked out. When the press conference finally began, the bells and whistles included the new Yankees ace being presented a fiberglass fishing pole, valued at

\$13, by a representative of New York Mayor Abe Beame.

But what this New Year's Eve New York baseball moment lacked in pomp and circumstance, it delivered in historic ramifications. For not only was Hunter the first big-name, big-bucks free agent signing in the game's history, he joined the Yankees at a time when baseball's reserve clause was still in force and modern-day free agency as we now know it did not yet exist.

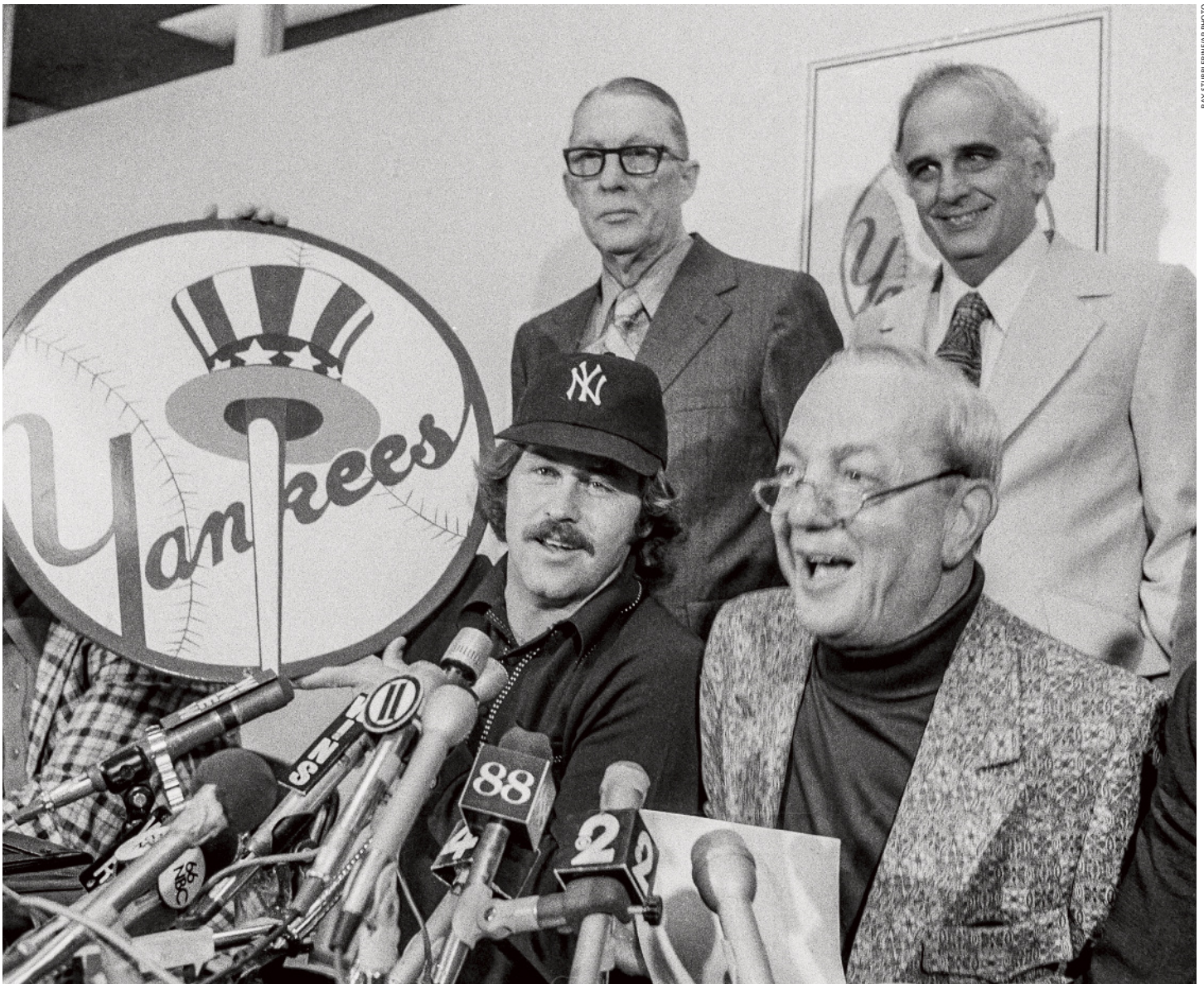
Hunter had been granted free agency in December 1974 after an arbitrator ruled that Oakland A's owner Charles O. Finley failed to deliver on a deferred payment that had been written into the pitcher's contract with the A's. The three-member panel mulling the case consisted of impartial arbitrator Peter Seitz, plus John Gaherin representing the owners and the forward-looking head of the players union, Marvin Miller.

But it's not how Catfish Hunter became a free agent that turned his arrival in New York into a history-making event. Miller had long advocated for free agency, believing players would attract suitors anxious to bid for their services. Here now was the test case that proved Miller correct: The five-year, \$3.25 million contract Hunter signed with the Yankees was the highest in the game's history up to that point and, indeed, among the highest in sports history.

Just about every team in baseball showed interest in Hunter, who was 28 years old and coming off his fourth consecutive season with 20-or-more victories. Calvin Griffith, the famously frugal owner of the Minnesota Twins, was reportedly interested until the money eclipsed \$2 million. The Philadelphia Phillies made a \$2.6 million offer. The Red Sox dropped out, according to a *United Press International* report quoting a club official, because "the unlimited bidding process is inconsistent with the best interests of the Boston club." Translation: Such was the clamor for Catfish Hunter that the price tag became too hot to touch.

It was later said the Yankees had the inside

DOUG MILLER/NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM



At a Dec. 31, 1974, press conference, Yankees President Gabe Paul (seated right) announces the signing of pitcher Jim “Catfish” Hunter (seated left). Hunter was in the midst of five consecutive 20-win seasons from 1971-75, and was coming off a 1974 campaign that saw him lead MLB with 25 victories and have an AL-best 2.49 ERA with the Oakland A’s.

track because Clyde Kluttz, a baseball lifer working in the team’s front office, had signed Hunter to his first pro contract when he was working for the A’s and the team was still based in Kansas City. Plus, Hunter and Kluttz were both natives of North Carolina.

It certainly didn’t hurt that the Yankees had a friendly face to make a pitch to the pitcher. But Miller had it right: Teams would line up to sign players whose talents fit their needs. And the Yankees had needs; they hadn’t won a pennant since 1964, and the legends of the greatest dynasty the game has known – Mickey Mantle, Whitey Ford, Yogi Berra – were long retired.

What the Yankees did, then, was invest in Hunter as a means to build a new dynasty.

The terms of Hunter’s contract may not sound like much by today’s standards, but they signaled to the world that the Yankees were back in business. And while longtime Yankees owner George Steinbrenner wasn’t directly involved in the negotiations – he was sitting out a suspension at the time – it was in keeping with his plans for the club.

Playing their second straight season at Shea Stadium while Yankee Stadium was being refurbished, the 1975 Yankees didn’t make it to the postseason – despite Hunter going 23-14 with a 2.58 ERA in 39 starts. But everything changed in 1976. The Yankees moved back to the Bronx, drew 2,012,434 fans and won their first of three consecutive pennants. They were World Series champions

in 1977 and ’78. As promised, the Yankees were back in business.

Hunter was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1987. He passed away Sept. 9, 1999 – at only 53 years of age – after a long battle with Lou Gehrig’s disease.

Marvin Miller was 95 when he died in 2012. He was elected to the Hall of Fame in 2020.

Hunter had the arm. Miller had the vision. On New Year’s Eve in 1974, their lives intersected in a way that would forever change baseball. 🍎

*Steve Buckley is the columnist for The Athletic – Boston and a longtime member of the Baseball Writers’ Association of America.*



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# INVENTION CATCHES ON

## HALL OF FAME BACKSTOP ROGER BRESNAHAN FOUGHT CUSTOM AND PRIDE TO INTRODUCE SHIN GUARDS TO THE GAME.

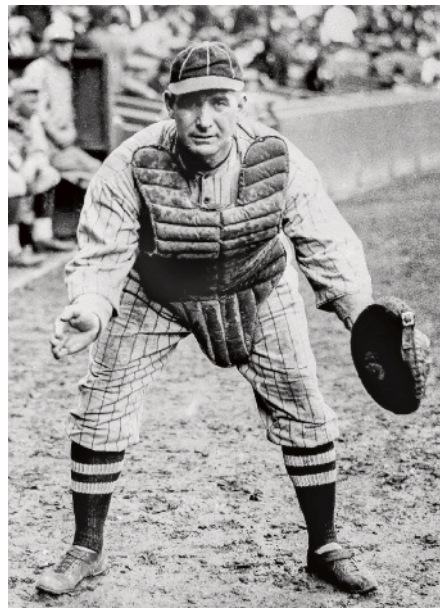
BY MATT KELLY

**R**oger Bresnahan might have been modern baseball's first "Renaissance Man." The second catcher ever elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame, Bresnahan pitched a six-hit shutout in his major league debut, appeared at all nine positions during his career and became one of the first backstops to bat leadoff.

But it was Bresnahan's courage to protect himself behind the plate – an idea that many catchers before him had dismissed – that is now as identifiable as any on-field achievement on his résumé.

The New York Giants had to forfeit their season opener on April 11, 1907, when Hall of Fame umpire Bill Klem couldn't clear the playing field of rowdy fans in the top of the ninth inning. But the Giants' catcher, Bresnahan, caused another stir hours earlier when he emerged from the dugout wearing something the majors had never seen before.

"Bresnahan created somewhat of a sensation when he appeared behind the bat for the start of play by donning cricket leg guards," read the



As the starting catcher for the 1905 World Series champion New York Giants, Roger Bresnahan was one of the most respected backstops in the game. He was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1945.

next day's *New York Times*. "As he displayed himself, togged in mask, protector and guards, he presented no vulnerable surface for a wild ball to strike.

"The spectators rather fancied the innovation,"

the *Times* continued. "They howled with delight when a foul tip in the fifth inning rapped the protectors sharply."

Given the punishment catchers take from errant foul balls, baserunners' cleats, hitters' backswings and everything else in between, Bresnahan's attire sounds like a no-brainer today. But it was a different climate in 1907; catchers were expected to take their poundings with pride, and those poundings were so severe that clubs often went through more backstops than pitchers in a season. As a poem from Harry Ellard's "The Reds of Sixty-Nine," written in the 1880s, described:

*"We used no mattress on our hands,  
No cage upon our face;  
We stood right up and caught the ball,  
With courage and with grace."*

Such words were more apropos in baseball's earliest days, when catchers stood several feet back of home plate. But as pitching rules evolved and backstops moved closer to catch the ball, protective equipment was gradually brought into the game. In 1877, Fred Thayer introduced a modified fencer's mask to the catchers on the Harvard baseball team, an example of which is preserved in the Hall of Fame's collection.

The round catcher's mitt we recognize today was first patented near the turn of the century. The first chest protectors (made from sheepskin or rubber) cropped up in the 1880s, but catchers often wore them under their uniforms to maintain their tough reputations.

Shin guards took a little longer, and Bresnahan wasn't technically the first catcher to protect his legs. Bud Fowler, regarded as the first professional Black ballplayer, fashioned a pair of wooden slats to cover his shins from the raised spikes of white opponents. Another Black catcher, Chappie Johnson, wore shin guards for the Leland Giants, right around when Bresnahan first donned them in New York.

Indeed, Phillies catcher Red Dooïn claimed that Bresnahan got his idea after sliding into





**Above:** Roger Bresnahan caused a sensation in 1907 when he used cricket leg protectors as some of the first shin guards in baseball history. Soon, Bresnahan's invention would become standard throughout the National Pastime. **Right:** Modern catcher's equipment has evolved with time and technology, but the principles remain the same as they were when Bresnahan helped revolutionize the position. Shin guards worn by the Red Sox's Jason Varitek during teammate Jon Lester's no-hitter on May 19, 2008, and a catcher's mask worn by the Giants' Buster Posey during the 2010 World Series are just some of the catcher's gear featured in the Hall of Fame's collection.



Dooins' legs and noticing the Philly backstop had papier-mâché stuffed under his stockings.

But it was Bresnahan's leg coverings that ruffled the most feathers. Pirates manager Fred Clarke even raised an unsuccessful protest to the National League president, claiming that the guards posed a danger to the incoming legs of the baserunner.

"The first season I used shin guards, I took an awful razzing all around the circuit," Bresnahan later recalled. "Fans called me everything from 'Sissie' to 'Cream Puff.'"

Nevertheless, Bresnahan insisted on wearing his bulky new pads, and reason eventually prevailed. By 1914, Rawlings was listing two different models of canvas-covered cane rib shin guards in its catalog.

Bresnahan wasn't done innovating. Just

months after he debuted his shin guards, he was hit behind the ear by an errant pitch from Cincinnati's Andy Coakley and knocked unconscious for 10 minutes at the batter's box.

Bresnahan was hospitalized and missed a month of action, but he returned with a "pneumatic head protector," one of the earliest forms of the batting helmet. This protector, which required a teammate to inflate by blowing into a rubber tube, was a little too unwieldy, and Bresnahan didn't use it for long.

But he also adopted a leather-padded catcher's mask behind the plate, showing again that he was more willing than many of his peers to look out for his own well-being.

Despite the ridicule he received, Bresnahan was anything but delicate. His original position was on the mound, but that changed when John

McGraw's Baltimore Orioles were down to a third-string catcher who couldn't throw the ball back to Bresnahan. When Bresnahan asked McGraw, "Why don't you get us a catcher?" the manager snapped that his pitcher go back there himself – and that's exactly what Bresnahan did.

Soon, Bresnahan was known for being as fiery as his mentor McGraw, and his conviction in himself helped introduce the catcher's gear we see today.

"Boy, they sure called me lots of names when I tried on those shin guards," said Bresnahan, who also sported a .279 career batting average across 17 MLB seasons. "They must have been a good idea at that, though, because they tell me catchers still wear them." 🍌

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

# GLOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

## THE EVOLUTION OF THE FIRST BASEMAN'S MITT CHANGED INFIELD PLAY FOREVER.

BY JOHN ERARDI

*"You got a first baseman?"*

*"Certainly."*

*"Who's playing first?"*

*"That's right."*

— *Abbott and Costello, "Who's on First?"*

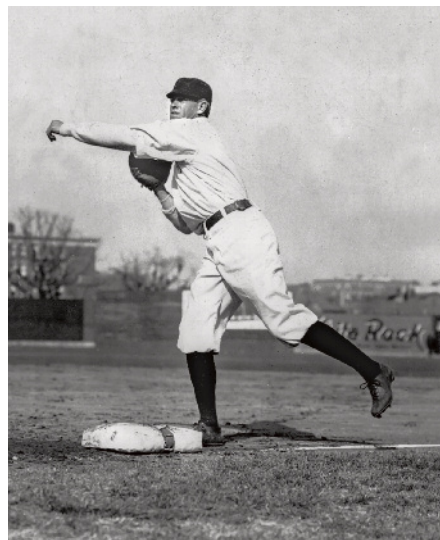
In one of the early versions of "Who's on First," Bud Abbott carries a bat over his shoulder, a bat Lou Costello quickly commandeers.

A different type of act, a more scholarly performance, would require a first baseman's mitt, the objet d'art that truly revolutionized the position.

In that context, the real answer to "Who's on First?" is Hall of Famer Hank Greenberg, because the man who hit 58 home runs in 1938 also began a "mitt" revolution that year, borne of his own ingenuity.

"It was a 'lobsta-claw' mitt, not the T-70 Trapper that (renowned glove designer) Harry Latina applied for a patent on in 1940," explained glove historian and collector Jim Daniel. "Greenberg had modified the web of the mitt to accommodate a massive fish-net style webbing, so the idea was there, but not the actual design."

Prior to Greenberg's primitive but effective



One of the earliest defensive stars at first base, Hal Chase demonstrated the advantage of being a left-handed thrower at the position.

modification, first basemen used the "oven mitt" of the 1920s – and a somewhat streamlined, pre-claw-like mitt in the early to mid-1930s that allowed some of the more dexterous first basemen to catch the ball one-handed.

The beauty of Rawlings/Latina's "Trapper" is in this advertisement: "Clever design and construction cause both sides of the mitt to close over the ball when the ball hits the center panel (and) forms a positive trap."

The trapper/claw made possible better

fielding, a slicker game and more exciting bang-bang plays.

Further modifications were added to the mitt via Rawlings' RY series in the 1950s, with "the mitt's life extended even into the 1970s...with the Boog Powell Trapper," noted "The Glove Collector Newsletter" in its May-June 1994 issue. Vintage baseball collector Tracy Martin says the first baseman mitt-style used today is no different in efficiency than the mitt of the 1960s.

That makes sense: The game of the 1960s has the same defensive stylings as today's game, except for the dramatic use of shifts.

Yet it isn't just the mitts, but the men who have worn them. Baseball has had a lot of first basemen since Charlie Gould of the Cincinnati Red Stockings, the team that made baseball famous. Gould fit what would become the position's prototype: Tall, especially for the times (6-foot), sure-handed and, even without a glove, more adept than most at scooping up low throws. His nickname was "Bushel Basket."

But it was somebody who didn't fit the prototype – 5-foot-9, quick and nimble Joe Start – who played like our modern-day first basemen. "Old Reliable's" career spanned from 1860-86, underhand pitching to overhand. He had feet like a dancer.

"It was Start who made first base a fielding position," wrote William Rankin in 1910. "(Second baseman) Freddy Crane...would cover first when Joe played deep," sometimes as deep as 30 feet into right field.

Apart from Start, it was the late 1870s before first base positioning began resembling something closer to what it is today.

First baseman George Carey earned the nickname "Scoops" in the late 1890s; the book "Game of Inches" by Peter Morris cites a 1904 article from *Sporting Life* in which Philadelphia's Harry Davis makes one-handed stops of errant throws.

First base as an art form probably began with Hal Chase in the 1910s. His combination of mitt-work, footwork and athleticism took it beyond even Start. Chase's reputation, however, was forever besmirched by gambling allegations.

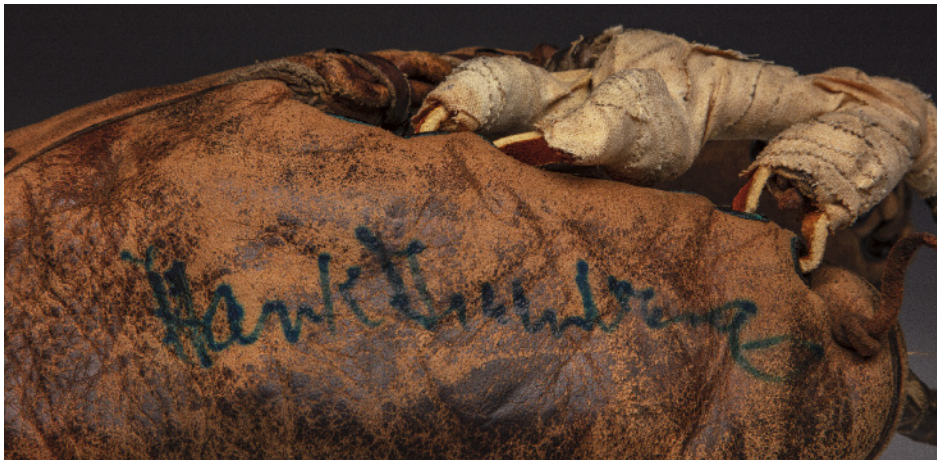
Chase, a left-handed thrower, elaborated

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MIL STEWART JR. NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM



MIL STEWART JR. NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM



NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM

By modifying his “oven mitt” style glove with webbing, Hank Greenberg (right) helped redefine which defensive plays were possible – such as snaring short hops – by first basemen. The Hall of Fame’s collection contains an example of Greenberg’s work.

upon what Henry Chadwick first wrote in 1863, that the left-hander was “just the man” for first base. The “snap throw” to second or third, said Chase, is “much easier” for the left-hander because he faces them. On a sacrifice bunt, Chase always tried for – and usually got – the lead runner. As the bunt has fallen out of favor, so has some of the advantage of the left-handed first baseman.

Hall of Famer George Sisler was a much better hitter than Chase, and almost as

good a fielder, just not as flashy.

George McQuinn bought a Sisler-model first baseman’s mitt when he was 12. Future President George H.W. Bush (Yale University captain and first baseman, 1947-48) kept his McQuinn-model glove in his desk in the Oval Office and would occasionally bring it out when talking with visitors and smack his fist in the pocket.

After McQuinn, no matter how one charts the best- and fanciest-fielding first basemen

from the 1960s forward – Vic Power, Wes Parker, Keith Hernandez (11 Gold Glove Awards), Don Mattingly, Mark Grace, Todd Helton, J.T. Snow and Mark Teixeira among them – the mitt is basically the same.

The revolution is over. It’s the men who make the position now. 🍎

*John Erardi is a freelance writer from Crescent Springs, Ky., who played first base in college. He has authored eight baseball books.*





# SECOND TO NONE

## TONI STONE BROKE BARRIERS AS THE FIRST WOMAN TO PLAY IN THE NEGRO LEAGUES.

BY CARROLL ROGERS WALTON

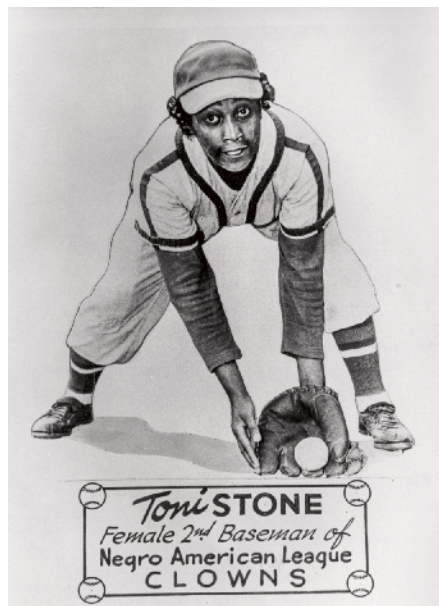
**A** lifetime before the Marlins hired Kim Ng to become the major leagues' first general manager, or the Red Sox made Bianca Smith the first Black woman to coach in the minors, or the Giants sent Alyssa Nakken out to coach first base in a Spring Training game, there were three women who did one better than that.

Toni Stone, Mamie Johnson and Connie Morgan actually played big-time professional baseball – in the Negro Leagues.

Six years after Jackie Robinson left the Negro Leagues to break the segregated white major league color barrier, the Indianapolis Clowns signed Stone to play second base. She replaced future Hall of Famer Hank Aaron, who had just signed with the Boston Braves.

Johnson joined the Clowns later in 1953, becoming the league's first female pitcher, and Morgan suited up for them in 1954, taking over at second base for Stone, whose contract was purchased by the Kansas City Monarchs.

"Here's a league born out of exclusion, that became perhaps this nation's most inclusive entity," said Bob Kendrick, president of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City.



During her two seasons in the Negro Leagues (1953-54), Toni Stone's ability at second base and in the batter's box impressed teammates and opponents alike.

"They didn't care what color you were, and they didn't care what gender you were. 'Can you play?' 'Do you have something to offer?' 'Can you bring something to the table?' 'All right, let's do it.'"

What Clowns owner Syd Pollock saw in Stone was a gate attraction. With the exodus of players such as Robinson, Larry Doby, Monte Irvin and Don Newcombe to the American League

and National League, the Negro Leagues were failing. Signing a woman who Pollock discovered barnstorming with the New Orleans Creoles – a minor Negro Leagues team – would draw fans to the ballpark, even if only out of curiosity.

The 5-foot-7, 135-pound Stone grew up in St. Paul, Minn., where she was known as "Tomboy" and played many sports, including basketball, track and even football. But her first love was baseball. She'd been playing organized baseball since she was 12, and her parish priest helped her land a spot in the Catholic boys' baseball league.

Now in her early 30s (though Pollock thought she was in her early 20s), she batted an estimated .243 in two seasons in the Negro Leagues, all while enduring the racism of Jim Crow and sexism from fans, opponents and even some teammates.

Stone's story was chronicled in the biography "Curveball: The Remarkable Story of Toni Stone." Author Martha Ackmann uses the imagery of Stone "stepping into" her obstacles like a good hitter would a curveball.

"Toni knew she was being used as a gate attraction," Ackmann said. "She was not deceived about that. She knew this was going to be her best chance to play baseball at a high level, and that's what she wanted more than anything else in life..."

"The thing with Toni was, fans would come to see her play, but if she didn't play well, they'd come only once, so she played well," Ackmann continued. "Even given that situation, given the jeers of some of the fans, given the way that other players treated her – some treated her well, not all of them – with all of those imperfect qualities of what she was hoping to do, she still stepped into it."

Once during a shutout loss when Stone got her team's only hit, a resentful teammate fed her a double play ball late and low that left her vulnerable to being spiked. It was so obvious that manager Bunny Downs warned the team afterward that sabotage against Stone could get them released. Another time, according to Ackmann, Downs left the policing up to Stone when she told him a teammate was sexually

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# FEMININE STARS



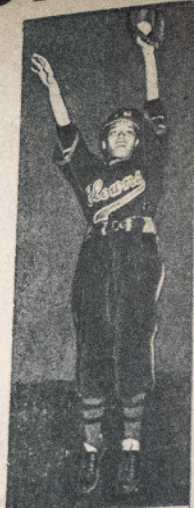
Miss **TONI STONE**  
Monarchs

This is Miss Stone's second season in the Negro American League. Is famous as the first girl to play in the League and was sold during the winter months by the Indianapolis Clowns to the Kansas City Monarchs. Her usual position is second base.  
Age 23, born St. Paul, Minn.  
Height 5-7 1/4".  
Weight 146 lbs.  
Bats, Throws: Right Handed.  
Miss Stone is a graduate of Roosevelt High School, in St. Paul, Minn. At the age of 15 Miss Stone deserted the Girls Highlex Softball Club in her home town for a regular position with a men's team and is a seasoned performer in professional baseball.



MISS **MAMIE ("Peanut") JOHNSON**

**Clowns**  
Peanuts for her size and weight pound for pound throws as hard as many men pitchers. She not only pitches but is used in utility roles.  
Age 22, born Sept. 27, 1932, at Long Branch, N. J., resides in Washington, D. C.  
Height 5-4".  
Weight 120 lbs.  
Bats, Throws: Right Handed.  
Miss Johnson attended Long Branch High School, also N. Y. U., where she studied Medics and Post Engineering. In high school she played sports with boys, even football. Her hobbies are: Reading, Bowling and Skating.



MISS **CONNIE MORGAN**  
Clowns

Miss Connie Morgan, Clowns' new second base female sensation.  
Age 19, born Oct. 17, 1935, at Philadelphia, Pa.  
Height 5-4".  
Weight 110 lbs.  
Bats, Throws: Right Handed.  
Attended John Bartram High School; William Penn Business School.  
Played last 5 years with the North Philadelphia Honey Drippers (all-girl baseball team) as catcher, infielder and outfielder. Batted .268 for past five seasons. She plays basketball during the winter months. Signed for a two-year contract with the Indianapolis Clowns.

Toni Stone, Mamie Johnson and Connie Morgan each played in the Negro Leagues, helping break barriers for female athletes. Their story is told in the Museum's *Diamond Dreams* exhibit.

harassing her on the bus. Her choice for retaliation was hitting the player with a bat.

Stone spent many nights on the road in brothels after boarding house owners ushered her in their direction, assuming the only woman getting off a bus full of men was a prostitute. Stone found a way to make it a positive, viewing them as clean places to stay where she could wash clothes. She could also relate to the women there who felt like outsiders.

Stone's mental toughness served her well on the field, too. She played 50 games for the Clowns in 1953, often being pulled for a male teammate in the middle innings. The highlight of her career – something Stone talked about until she died at age 75 in 1996 – was getting a base hit off of Satchel Paige in an exhibition game. There is no box score to corroborate her story, but Negro Leagues experts see no reason not to believe it.

"It was her favorite story; Toni told it a lot, and she never wavered in the way she told it," said Ackmann, who researched the book for three years. "I never caught Toni in a lie."

By the time Stone retired from the Monarchs in 1954, dismayed by a lack of playing time, she had earned begrudging respect from baseball

writers, teammates and opposing Negro Leaguers alike. Hall of Famer Ernie Banks described her as "smooth" to Ackmann.

"They knew that Pollock and (fellow Negro Leagues owner Abe) Saperstein loved to have gimmicks out on the field," said Adrian Burgos, a University of Illinois history professor who specializes in Negro Leagues research. "But the gimmick was not just that she was a woman playing baseball. The gimmick was that she was a talented ballplayer who had earned a place to be there and kept it."

Stone's example opened the door for Mamie "Peanut" Johnson, a 5-foot-4 right-hander from Ridgeway, S.C., who grew up playing baseball with the boys on her grandparents' 80-acre farm. She pitched with a swagger that served her well in parts of three seasons with the Clowns. She went 33-8 from 1953-55, according to reports.

Philadelphia native Connie Morgan signed in 1954 and played for two seasons. Perhaps the best pure athlete of the three, she also is the least known, preferring privacy and letting her play do her talking.

All three women were out of the game by 1956 and had faded back into obscurity when

the Negro Leagues disbanded in 1960. Thirty years later, the Baseball Hall of Fame invited 75 Negro Leaguers, including Stone, for a reunion in 1991 in its first-ever salute to the Negro Leagues.

Johnson lived the longest of the three women, passing in 2017 at age 82. She visited the White House, attended the unveiling of bronze busts of the three women at the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, got ceremoniously drafted by the Washington Nationals, met with Little League sensation Mo'ne Davis and more.

But now, even among those who might recognize names like "Ng" and "Nakken," there are many unaware of Stone, Johnson and Morgan. Ackmann said she hears that all the time from readers, who wonder why they'd never heard of Stone before reading her book. The same goes for playwright Lydia Diamond, who learned about Stone when someone gave her a copy of "Curveball." She spent the next nine years writing a play about Stone, which debuted off Broadway in 2019. (Scheduled openings in San Francisco, Washington, D.C., and Milwaukee were cancelled due to COVID-19.)

"There always has to be a woman who is banging on the door first, but very often that's not the person that gets to go through," Ackmann said. "I think Toni's life underscores that."

Last December's announcement that Major League Baseball was recognizing seven Negro Leagues as major leagues might help. Even though MLB will only incorporate Negro Leagues stats up until 1948, historians hope it will bring more recognition for Stone, Johnson and Morgan.

Kendrick said the three are a big part of a "Negro Leagues 101" educational initiative the museum is introducing to celebrate the 101st anniversary of the Negro Leagues' founding. The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum also focuses an educational spotlight on the play of women in baseball.

"The inspirational value of the story of the Negro Leagues is just as important as its educational value," Kendrick said. "That comes across triumphantly when we see the look on young girls' faces when they come in and see that there were women who played professionally. It plants a little seed of hope." 📖

*Carroll Rogers Walton covered the Braves for 11 years with the Atlanta Journal-Constitution and is currently a freelance writer based in Charlotte.*



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# LONG AND SHORT

## HALL OF FAMER CAL RIPKEN JR. REDEFINED WHAT KIND OF ATHLETE COULD SUCCEED AT SHORTSTOP.

BY MIKE DIGIOVANNA

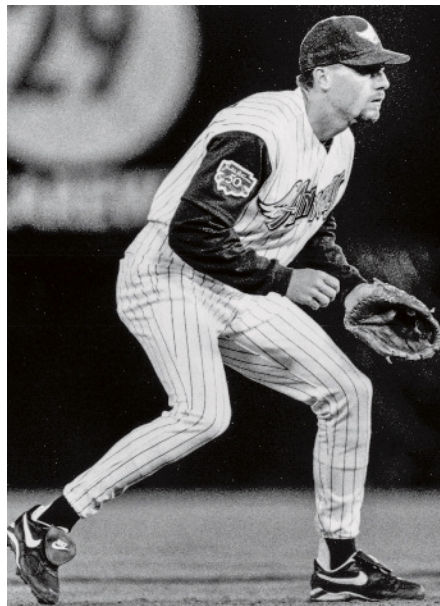
**G**ary DiSarcina was a rail of a rookie, all of 6-foot-1 and 170 pounds, when he barreled into Baltimore Orioles shortstop Cal Ripken Jr. in an attempt to break up a double play in 1992.

It was a move the former Angels shortstop regretted the moment he crashed into the 6-4, 200-pound Ripken.

“It was the very first time I realized how big the man was, because I slid into him and folded up like an accordion,” DiSarcina said. “It was like sliding into an oak tree. I remember thinking, ‘Man, I’m not going to be doing that again. It’s just not worth it.’ I limped around for six more innings.”

It was rare for defending shortstops to get the best of such middle-infield collisions before Ripken broke into the big leagues in 1981. For a century, the position was usually reserved for diminutive, slap-hitting, fleet-of-foot defensive specialists, guys with nicknames like “Pee Wee,” “Rabbit” and “Scooter.”

Of the 26 shortstops inducted into the Hall of Fame, only three are taller than 6-foot, two weigh more than 195 pounds, and just seven hit at least 150 homers. Defensive whiz Ozzie Smith



At 6-foot-1 and 170 pounds, Gary DiSarcina was bigger than average for shortstops of his era. But Cal Ripken Jr. (opposite) had three inches and 30 pounds on DiSarcina – and redefined what was possible for oversized shortstops.

checked in at 5-11, 150 pounds. Yankees great Phil Rizzuto was a mere 5-6, 150 pounds.

And then along came Ripken, who had the build of an NFL tight end, the power of a cleanup hitter, the defensive abilities of a Gold Glover and the durability of an Iron Man.

Ripken helped revolutionize the position by playing it so well at such a large size for so long, paving the way for big-bodied, power-hitting shortstops such as Carlos Correa, Alex Rodriguez, Corey Seager and Fernando Tatis Jr. to follow.

“At that time, it was unheard of for a guy that big to play shortstop,” said Larry Bowa, the 5-10, 155-pound shortstop whose 16-year career (1970-85) with the Phillies, Cubs and Mets overlapped with Ripken. “Even if a guy that big was good enough to play short, you’d put him at third base and count on his bat.”

Case in point: Bowa’s former Phillies teammate, Mike Schmidt. Drafted as a shortstop in 1971, the 6-2, 195-pound Schmidt played his first minor league season there before moving to third in 1972. Schmidt hit 548 homers in an 18-year Hall of Fame career.

Ripken actually opened his rookie season in 1982 at third after the Orioles had traded Doug DeCinces to the Angels. But on July 1 of that season, then-Baltimore manager Earl Weaver moved Ripken to short, reasoning that it was harder to find a shortstop with middle-of-the-order power than a third baseman.

“You never know,” Weaver told author Harvey Rosenfeld for a 1995 biography on Ripken, “Rip might be a great shortstop.”

Ripken became one of the greatest all-around shortstops in baseball history. He amassed 3,184 hits, 431 homers, 1,695 RBI and two Gold Glove Awards in a 21-year career that culminated with his 2007 induction into the Hall of Fame.

The 19-time All-Star and two-time American League MVP (1983, 1991) also appeared in 2,632 consecutive games, obliterating Lou Gehrig’s “unbreakable” mark of 2,130.

“He was the first shortstop that hit third or fourth in the lineup and did damage with home runs, doubles and RBI at the plate,” said DiSarcina, now the Mets’ third base coach. “At the same time, he was a positive on the infield – not neutral or negative, he was a positive.”

Ripken was not flashy in the field. He did not have exceptional range. But what he lacked in quickness he made up for with an

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Cal Ripken Jr.'s ability to field his position – despite his 6-foot-4 frame – convinced teams to take a chance on larger shortstops. The change injected offensive power into a position that had long been a defense-first spot on the diamond.

encyclopedic knowledge of opposing hitters, great positioning, instincts and reads off the bat, efficient routes to the ball and a strong arm. In 1990, he set a record (among shortstops who played in at least 150 games in any season) by committing only three errors all year.

He was good enough to play 15 seasons at shortstop before moving to third as a 36-year-old in 1997.

“He was always in the right spot at the right time,” DiSarcina said. “There were so many times I’d hit a ball and think it was a base hit. He’d be one step in the hole and get me out by a half-step, and I’d go, ‘Geez, how’d he do that?’

“He also knew his pitchers. He paid attention to sign sequences and knew what the pitcher was changing to. Guys don’t do that anymore. They expect the infield coach to put them where they’re supposed to be all the time.”

Ripken’s success made it easier for the Mariners and Rangers to keep the 6-3, 230-pound Rodríguez at shortstop for the first 10 years of a 22-year career in which he hit 696 homers, and the Athletics, Orioles and Astros to keep 5-9, 220-pound slugger Miguel Tejada at short for 13 years.

Some of the top stars in the game today – including Tatis (6-3, 217), Seager (6-4, 215), Correa (6-4, 220), Trevor Story (6-2, 213),

Gleyber Torres (6-1, 205), Didi Gregorius (6-3, 205) and Xander Bogaerts (6-2, 218) – are big shortstops.

“Cal stopped these other guys from having to face so many questions,” DiSarcina said. “A-Rod comes in, and it’s, ‘All right, Cal can do it, A-Rod can do it.’ It’s not, ‘Well, he can’t move, he doesn’t have the arm, he doesn’t have the foot speed.’

“All the questions that go into the making of a good shortstop, Cal absolutely blew those out of the water. He was the pioneer, one of the first to do it and be successful at it.” 📌

*Mike DiGiovanna covers baseball for the Los Angeles Times.*



**CLASS  
OF  
1998**



**NATIONAL**  
\*\*\*\*\*

**Pitcher**

**DON SUTTON**

# DONALD HOWARD SUTTON

Elected: 1998 • Born: April 2, 1945, Clio, Ala. • Died: Jan. 19, 2021, Rancho Mirage, Calif.  
 Batted: Right Threw: Right • Height: 6'1" Weight: 185 pounds  
 Played for: Los Angeles Dodgers (1966-80, 1988); Houston Astros (1981-82);  
 Milwaukee Brewers (1982-84); Oakland Athletics (1985); California Angels (1985-87)



Year	Team	W	L	PCT	ERA	G	GS	CG	SHO	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
1966	LAD	12	12	.500	2.99	37	35	6	2	0	225.2	192	82	75	52	209
1967	LAD	11	15	.423	3.95	37	34	11	3	1	232.2	223	106	102	57	189
1968	LAD	11	15	.423	2.80	35	27	7	2	1	207.2	179	64	60	59	182
1969	LAD	17	18	.486	3.47	41	41	11	4	0	293.1	269	123	113	91	217
1970	LAD	15	13	.536	4.08	38	38	10	4	0	280.1	251	127	118	78	201
1971	LAD	17	12	.586	2.54	38	37	12	4	1	265.1	231	85	75	55	194
1972	LAD	19	9	.679	2.08	33	33	18	9	0	272.2	186	78	63	63	207
1973	LAD	18	10	.643	2.42	33	33	14	3	0	256.1	196	78	69	56	200
1974	LAD	19	9	.679	3.23	40	40	10	5	0	276.0	241	111	99	80	179
1975	LAD	16	13	.552	2.87	35	35	11	4	0	254.1	202	87	81	62	175
1976	LAD	21	10	.677	3.06	35	34	15	4	0	267.2	231	98	91	82	161
1977	LAD	14	8	.636	3.18	33	33	9	3	0	240.1	207	93	85	69	150
1978	LAD	15	11	.577	3.55	34	34	12	2	0	238.1	228	109	94	54	154
1979	LAD	12	15	.444	3.82	33	32	6	1	1	226.0	201	109	96	61	146
1980	LAD	13	5	.722	2.20	32	31	4	2	1	212.1	163	56	52	47	128
1981	HOU	11	9	.550	2.61	23	23	6	3	0	158.2	132	51	46	29	104
1982	HOU/MIL	17	9	.654	3.06	34	34	6	1	0	249.2	224	96	85	64	175
1983	MIL	8	13	.381	4.08	31	31	4	0	0	220.1	209	109	100	54	134
1984	MIL	14	12	.538	3.77	33	33	3	1	0	212.2	224	103	89	51	143
1985	OAK/CAL	15	10	.600	3.86	34	34	1	1	0	226.0	221	101	97	59	107
1986	CAL	15	11	.577	3.74	34	34	3	1	0	207.0	192	93	86	49	116
1987	CAL	11	11	.500	4.70	35	34	1	0	0	191.2	199	101	100	41	99
1988	LAD	3	6	.333	3.82	16	16	0	0	0	87.1	91	44	38	30	44
<b>23 Years</b>		<b>324</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>.559</b>	<b>3.26</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>756</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5282.1</b>	<b>4692</b>	<b>2104</b>	<b>1914</b>	<b>1343</b>	<b>3574</b>

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:** 1977 All-Star Game Most Valuable Player • Led National League in WHIP in four seasons (1972, 1975, 1980-81) • Four-time All-Star (1972-73, 1975, 1977)

## DID YOU KNOW...

- ★ ...that Don Sutton never missed a turn in the rotation in 23 seasons and was never on the disabled list?
- ★ ...that Sutton's 756 career starts rank third all time behind only Cy Young and Nolan Ryan?
- ★ ...that Sutton made several appearances as a panelist on the game show *Match Game* in the 1970s?

FRONT OF CARD: RICH PILLING/NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM



## WHAT THEY SAY...

- ★ "When you gave him the ball, you knew one thing: Your pitcher was going to give you everything he had." – HALL OF FAME MANAGER TOMMY LASORDA
- ★ "I know Don would be the first to tell you he didn't have the greatest stuff. But that's a testament to him. It's a testament to his competitiveness, to his intelligence when it comes to pitching." – HALL OF FAME TOM GLAVINE
- ★ "It's incredible what Don accomplished when you consider all the factors that go into winning a baseball game." – HALL OF FAME JOHN SMOLTZ



# RULE OF THIRDS

## RAY DANDRIDGE'S PLAY AT THE HOT CORNER EARNED HIM A SPOT IN COOPERSTOWN.

BY BILL FRANCIS

Introduced at his 1987 National Baseball Hall of Fame induction by Commissioner Peter Ueberroth as “the greatest third baseman to never play in the major leagues,” Ray Dandridge, a Negro Leagues star of the 1930s and '40s, had no idea at the time how the reality of that statement would radically change more than three decades later.

By all accounts, Dandridge, whose hands were as legendary as his arm, wanted nothing more in life than to get the chance to participate in a big league game.

“I just wanted a cup of coffee,” Dandridge once said. “I just wanted my foot in the door.”

But in an announcement this past December, Major League Baseball declared the Negro Leagues would now have “major league” status. This allowed the approximately 3,400 players who saw action between 1920 and 1948, including Dandridge, to be remembered as major league-caliber ballplayers.

The news, while celebrated by many, came too late for the deceased Dandridge to enjoy. Richmond, Va., born and Buffalo, N.Y., raised, he had no thoughts of playing in the majors when his professional baseball career began with the Negro National League's Detroit Stars in 1933, 14 years before Jackie Robinson would break the sport's color barrier.

“I was 19 years old in 1933 when Jim Taylor, one of the great managers of Negro



Ray Dandridge played for the Pacific Coast League's Oakland Oaks in 1953 at the age of 39. In five Triple-A seasons from 1949-53, Dandridge hit .312 with 343 runs scored.

baseball, picked me up to play for the Detroit Stars,” remembered Dandridge, nicknamed “Squat” because he was bow-legged and stood only 5-foot-7. “I was an outfielder and a long-ball hitter then, and it was Taylor who taught me to play the infield and made a real hitter out of me.”

Dandridge's evolution as a stellar third baseman began the next season when he played

for the Newark Dodgers under the tutelage of Dick Lundy.

“[Lundy] was our manager, and when our third baseman was late reporting to Spring Training, Lundy said, ‘Ray, you work out at third,’” Dandridge recalled. “By the time the third baseman got there, Lundy told him, ‘You can go home now. I’ve got a third baseman.’”

Hall of Famer Cumberland Posey, a longtime Negro Leagues executive, once said: “There simply never was a smoother functioning master at third base than Dandridge, and he can hit that apple, too.”

Jimmy Powers of the *New York Daily News* made big news in the Black baseball world when in a September 1938 sports column he unabashedly advocated for the inclusion of Negro Leagues ballplayers – including Dandridge – on major league rosters.

“If I could have a magic wand and break down race prejudice, I’d put this Giant team on the field next Spring and guarantee a winner,” he wrote.

Powers speculated on a possible 1939 New York Giants team that would include holdovers Jo-Jo Moore in left, Mel Ott in right and Harry Danning catching, along with Negro Leaguers Dandridge (third base), Josh Gibson (catcher), Ray Brown (pitcher), Barney Brown (pitcher), Buck Leonard (first base), Pat Patterson (second base) and Sam Bankhead (center).

The barrel-chested Dandridge's successful baseball journey began in North America but included sojourns in South America and Central America. No matter if it was in the United States, Mexico, Venezuela, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic or Cuba, everywhere he went he showed he could play with the best of them.

“My preference was to stay in the States with my wife and family,” Dandridge once said, “but after failure to agree with the club and so many Mexican pesos were being waved to me. I, naturally, was lured away.”

The globetrotting third sacker left the Newark Eagles in 1939 and 1944 for the financial security a foreign country offered.

“Sal Maglie and Danny Gardella (a pair of white big leaguers who joined the Mexican League) came down to Mexico, and they saw

DOUG MCWILLIAMS/NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM



Mexico

SOL



me play and said, ‘Man, where did you come from?’” Dandridge said. “I told them, ‘Same country you did.’”

Unfortunately, Dandridge’s immense talents never would blossom before a mass audience. Instead, his playing career ended in the minor leagues. In 1949, the 35-year-old joined the New York Giants’ Triple-A farm club, the American Association’s Minneapolis Millers.

“After Jackie Robinson got in the big leagues, I figured it was time to come back from Mexico and try to get into the majors, too,” Dandridge said. “So I signed to [manage] the New York Cubans, a colored team owned by Alexander Pompez. He was also a scout for the Giants on the side.

“Well, he called me one day when we were on the road and asked me if I wanted to play in the big leagues before I quit, and I told him, ‘Sure.’ So he said, ‘You and Bill Barnhill pack up and get on the plane to Minneapolis,’ which was the Giants’ top farm club.”

Despite Dandridge’s success with the Millers, such as being named the American Association’s Rookie of the Year in 1949 when he batted .362 – and the following season, when he turned 37, capturing the loop’s MVP Award by batting .311 with 11 home runs, 80 RBI and 106 runs scored – he never realized his dream to play in the big leagues.

“How I would have hated to pitch against Dandridge when he was 21 years old,” said Millers general manager Rosy Ryan, a former New York Giants ace. “There’s a fellow you can knock down, and he’ll get right back up and knock that ball down your throat.”

But it was with his glove, not his bat, that Dandridge impressed people most of all.

“He was the worst-built human being you ever saw. He was a little, short, bowlegged guy who just had a terrific pair of hands,” said Millers teammate Otey Clark. “And no matter who hit the ball to him, he always made it a close play at first. It was like a little game of his. He almost always got the guy at first, but he liked to make it close. I remember the first baseman used to say, ‘Ray, you’re gonna get me killed.’”

Dandridge explained: “I had six different ways of throwing over to first base, and I always got the guy by a step.”

A number of factors played into the fact that Dandridge never got his shot in the big leagues after his success with the Millers. Whether it was his advanced age, being too

good a drawing card in Minneapolis or an unwritten quota of Black players at the time, there was no opportunity for him in the majors.

“The Phillies wanted to buy my contract from Minneapolis in



Born Aug. 31, 1913, Ray Dandridge played in the Negro Leagues and Mexican League during his prime – which occurred in the years prior to Jackie Robinson breaking the color barrier in the National League. **Inset:** The jersey worn by Dandridge when he played third base for the Mexico City Red Devils is preserved at the Hall of Fame.

the American Association and bring me right up in 1950,” said Dandridge. “The Giants wouldn’t do it. Not getting that chance was a big disappointment. They say now I was too old then. But you and I know that wasn’t the truth... It wasn’t that I was too old, it was my color.”

Monte Irvin, who played with Dandridge with the Eagles in the late 1930s, described his



teammate as a “superstar,” adding, “He was a natural third baseman because he was short, stocky and quick as a cat.

“You almost couldn’t hit a ball past him. He made very few errors, and he was flashy. People would come just to see him play third.”

Upon leaving Minneapolis after the 1952 season, Dandridge’s minor league career came to an end with the Pacific Coast League’s Oakland and Sacramento squads in 1953. Thirty-three years later, Dandridge received a bronze plaque in Cooperstown.

On a bright, sun-splashed afternoon in Cooper Park on the steps of the Hall of Fame Library, Dandridge’s induction speech was heartfelt and knowing.

“This is probably the happiest day of my life,” he said on that summer day. “I’m sad in one way and glad in another way. I’m sad that I wasn’t in my prime when the (race) barrier was broke. When the barrier was broke, I was in the twilight of my career. And I hope that some of you out there have seen me play.

“I want to sincerely thank each and every veteran on the committee for allowing me to smell the roses,” added Dandridge, who would pass away in 1994 at the age of 80. “My only question is: Why did you take so long?”

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





# LEFT THEIR MARK

## LOU BROCK AND RICKEY HENDERSON HELPED CHANGE WHAT COULD BE EXPECTED FROM A LEADOFF HITTER.

BY PHIL ROGERS

**L**ou Brock was desperate to interest a team in signing him and down to his last \$10. He'd ridden a bus from New Orleans to St. Louis, where he tried out for the Cardinals, and when they passed he headed to Chicago.

Brock stayed with a friend from Southern University in Chicago during that trip in August 1960, briefly working as a janitor at a YMCA while awaiting the Wrigley Field tryout arranged by Buck O'Neil. When he found himself in the National League a little more than a year later, Brock couldn't have cared less where the Cubs put him in the outfield. He was in the same lineup as two of his heroes: Ernie Banks and Billy Williams.

But the speedy Brock sputtered in the Windy City, first as a center fielder and then as a right fielder, battling both the sun and one of the best generations of pitchers ever. His Hall of Fame career took off only after he was traded to St. Louis midway through the 1964 season – and was moved to left field.

There are 22 primary left fielders enshrined in Cooperstown, and most of them earned their spot by hitting home runs, consistently

batting over .300, or doing both. The list of Hall of Fame left fielders includes Ted Williams, Stan Musial, Al Simmons, Willie Stargell, Ralph Kiner, Joe Medwick, Billy Williams, Carl Yastrzemski and Jim Rice. But for decades, left field was also the home of the fastest men in baseball – many of whom hit leadoff.

Today, speed in the leadoff spot is a superfluous commodity. Teams are looking

for on-base wizards with home run power – and the stolen base has been relegated to fringe status. But Brock, with his power, and Rickey Henderson, with power and on-base skills, served as a bridge to the new era.

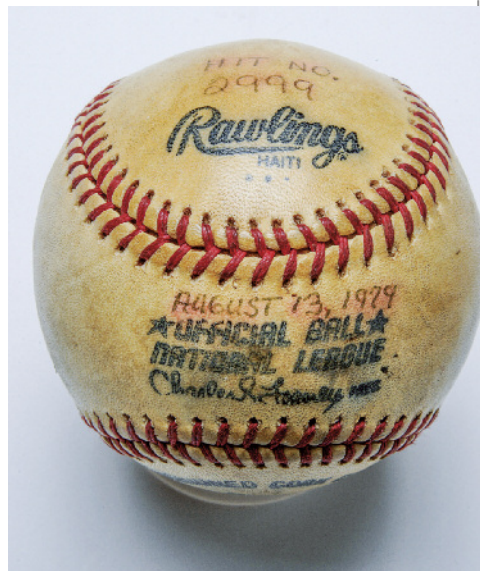
After signing with the Cubs in 1960, Brock was rushed from the Class C Northern League to the majors at the end of the 1961 season. The Cubs didn't have the patience to let him build his confidence over a period of years, and he was inconsistent both at the plate and in the outfield.

But the Cardinals plugged him into left field and left him alone after the historic trade that sent Ernie Broglio to Chicago. Brock had been hitting .251 with a pedestrian .640 OPS for the Cubs in mid-June but finished the '64 season batting .315 with an .821 OPS. He helped Johnny Keane's Cardinals win the pennant and upset the Yankees in the World Series.

Brock never forgot one of his new teammates asking him if he was the same guy they watched play for the Cubs.

"I had gone to another dimension as a ball player," Brock said. "When you go to another dimension, you may be the same guy, look the same, act the same, but you play a lot different."

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



**Opposite:** Lou Brock's ability to hit for power while remaining a prolific base stealer put baseball on course for a new brand of leadoff hitter. **Left:** Brock struck this baseball when he recorded his 2,999th career hit on Aug. 13, 1979. Brock finished his career with 3,023 hits. **Right:** Brock wore these spikes when he stole his 893rd career base on Aug. 29, 1977.



The spikes Rickey Henderson wore on Aug. 27, 1982 – when he set a new modern single-season stolen base record with his 119th steal – are now part of the Hall of Fame collection, along with the base from that record.

That dimension was left field. Four of the top six career stolen base leaders were primarily left fielders, with Brock paving the way for Hall of Famers Rickey Henderson and Tim Lincecum, along with fellow Cardinal Vince Coleman.

Brock stole 50-plus bases 12 years in a row, beginning in 1965, his first full year in St. Louis. He set the single-season record of 118 in 1974, one of eight times he led the NL in steals. Brock broke Ty Cobb's career record for stolen bases before retiring with 938 steals and earning a date in Cooperstown in 1985.

Brock made it cool to run. But from 1964-70 – when he won four of his eight career NL stolen base titles – Brock also averaged 33 doubles and 14 home runs a year while slugging .441, a combination of statistics that few leadoff hitters had ever approached.

Henderson, meanwhile, hit the ground running as a 20-year-old for his hometown Oakland A's in 1979. He was an All-Star under Billy Martin in his first full season, stealing 100 bases and scoring 111 runs in 1980.

He created a phenomenon by scoring what he called "Rickey runs." He would walk, steal second and third base, and then score on a fly ball or a groundout.

"It wasn't until I saw Rickey that I understood what baseball was about," Oakland teammate Mitchell Page said. "Rickey Henderson is a run, man."

Henderson was an on-base machine almost from the get-go, reaching the .400 OBP mark in 14 of his first 19 seasons – with another three seasons in that stretch at .394 or better. From 1982-93, Henderson averaged 17 home runs per season and slugged .454.

Henderson played until he was 44, piling up a record 1,406 steals to go with a .401 on-base percentage and 297 home runs on his way to the Hall of Fame. His stolen base record seems almost as safe as Cy Young's win total, given the direction of the game today.

But it was his on-base/power combination that was the blueprint for the new generation of leadoff hitters. 📌

*Phil Rogers is a freelance writer living in Utah who has covered baseball since 1984.*



Rickey Henderson holds up the base from his 939th career steal. He shattered Lou Brock's career stolen base mark on May 1, 1991, in a game against the Yankees. Henderson combined power, on-base skills and speed like few before or since, producing MLB standards for career runs scored (2,295), stolen bases (1,406) and unintentional walks (2,190) that made him the prototype for all leadoff hitters.

PHOTOS BY MILO STEWART / NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME

BRAD MANGIN / NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM



# CENTER OF ATTENTION

## CRAIG BIGGIO AND ROBIN YOUNT EACH EMBRACED A POSITION CHANGE TO HELP THEIR TEAMS WIN.

BY RICHARD JUSTICE

**R**obin Yount and Craig Biggio use some of the same words and phrases all these years later in discussing the distinctive footnotes of their Hall of Fame journeys. That is, in the prime of their careers, both changed positions.

Neither was exactly in love with the idea of moving, and in Biggio's case, it was the first of two. In the end, though, new positions didn't interrupt their paths to Cooperstown or change the larger story of their careers.

"I was still competing and playing the great game of baseball," Yount said. "You do what you have to do. In simple terms, I loved playing the game. I loved competing."

That's the bottom line for both of these Hall of Famers. Yount won his first American League MVP Award as a shortstop for the Brewers in 1982 and another as a center fielder in 1989. Biggio was coming off an All-Star season at catcher in 1991 when the Astros asked him to play second base. He promptly made the National League All-Star team at the new position in 1992 and would win four straight Gold Glove Awards there from 1994-97. He spent two seasons in the outfield late in his

career before finishing up back at second and collecting the last of his 3,060 hits.

Biggio is proud that he was part of a group – along with another Hall of Famer,

Jeff Bagwell – that led the Astros to six postseason appearances in nine seasons between 1997 and 2005. That's three more postseason berths than the Astros collected in their first 35 seasons of existence.

"The ultimate goal is winning, and I think we changed the culture of the Astros," Biggio said.

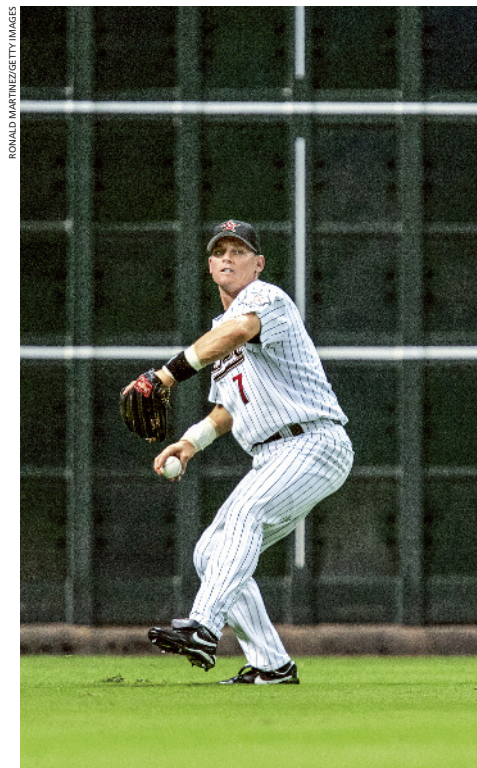
Yount and Biggio are effusive in their praise of the teammates and coaches who assisted with their moves. They're a reminder that nothing happens in a vacuum, even for the best of the best.

First, Yount.

His major league career began with 1,479 games at shortstop between 1974 and 1984. Besides being the 1982 AL MVP, he played in three All-Star Games and won a Gold Glove Award and two Silver Slugger Awards in that time.

But when he arrived at Spring Training in 1985, he had to confront the reality that two rotator cuff surgeries had robbed him of his ability to make the throws shortstops must make.

"I couldn't throw a baseball anymore," he



Craig Biggio (left) and Robin Yount (right) each transitioned to center field during their career, learning on the fly how to play one of the game's most demanding positions.





In 20 big league seasons, Craig Biggio (left) played 1,989 games at second base, 428 at catcher and 255 in center field en route to seven All-Star Game selections and four Gold Glove Awards. Robin Yount (right) began his big league career as a shortstop and then moved to center field due to a shoulder injury. He is the only player in history to win league MVP awards both at shortstop and in center field.





said bluntly. “I couldn’t throw it across the diamond to play shortstop. It was obvious I wasn’t able to play shortstop. So the next alternative was: ‘Let’s try to hide him in the outfield somewhere.’”

“It was very frustrating. It was certainly not a choice of mine. It’s the last thing I wanted to do. But it was better than not playing.”

He opened the 1985 season in left field but never got comfortable. “I hated it,” he said.

Then in July, Yount was shifted to center – and stayed there even with the presence of Gold Glove Award winner Rick Manning. Yount immediately felt more at home in center and asked Manning if he’d consider playing left field.

“I’m actually doing fairly well (in center) for the limited experience,” Yount said. “I had a conversation with (Rick). He couldn’t have been more gracious and accepting. This is a Gold Glove center fielder giving up his position so that I could play center field because it was much easier for me. And I thought that was a fabulous gesture on his part, and it made us a better team because he could play anywhere in the outfield in his sleep.”

Yount believed the switch was temporary. When his ailing shoulder healed, he figured he’d go back to the position he had played since Little League.

“I had no anticipation that I would not come back to shortstop,” he said. “It was a number of years before I came to the realization that I wasn’t going back.”

He’d play nine total seasons in the outfield and finish his career with 1,479 games at short, 1,218 in the outfield, 137 at designated hitter and 12 at first base.

First base?

“Now, that’s a whole other story,” he said. “I had no idea what I was doing there.”

The thing is, these defensive changes never impacted his offense. Four of his six seasons with a .300-or-better batting average came after his move to center field.

“Well, I think it was stubbornness,” he said. “Nobody wants to embarrass themselves, right? So you’re working as hard as you can to be the best you can be.”

Biggio’s story is different. He was a catcher at Seton Hall and taken by the Astros in the first round of the 1987 draft to play there. He played just 141 minor league games before making his debut in the Astrodome on June 26, 1988.

PHOTOS BY MLO STEWART IN NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM



**Left:** This Astros jersey worn on Opening Day 2003 by Craig Biggio honors the crew of the space shuttle Columbia. **Right:** Robin Yount was wearing this batting helmet on Sept. 9, 1992, when he collected his 3,000th career hit in a game against Cleveland.

He won a Silver Slugger Award in his first full season (1989) and made the NL All-Star Team in 1991. He also stole 65 bases in those first three full seasons, which prompted an interesting conversation with manager Art Howe during that offseason.

Would he consider moving to second base? Howe knew that Biggio loved catching, that he loved seeing the entire game. So he sold it this way: We’ll be a better team with you at second base because your speed will be more of a weapon.

“It had never been done before,” Biggio said. “No one had ever made that kind of switch, from catcher to the middle infield.”

That offseason, without being asked, Reds second baseman Bill Doran, a former Astro, flew to Houston, drew up a diamond in the rodeo dirt of the Astrodome and worked with his former teammate on the finer points of second base.

The following spring, Astros coach Matt Galante and Biggio would hit the back fields just after dawn for drills that sometimes didn’t end until near dark.

Among the drills: Galante had Biggio play second base with a wooden paddle instead of a regular glove.

“That paddle taught me to have soft hands, to be in the proper position and not to cut any corners,” Biggio said. “Otherwise, the ball would go flying.”

When Biggio won his first Gold Glove Award in 1994, he gave it to Galante.

“I was a lucky man to have a guy like that

to work with,” Biggio said. “I don’t win a Gold Glove without Matt. It doesn’t happen without all those hours he worked with me. I was a good student, but he was a great teacher. I’m so proud of that relationship I had with him and what we did together.”

Biggio became one of the NL’s best players at his new position, averaging 40 doubles, 34 stolen bases and 116 runs between 1993 and 1999.

There was another switch in 2003 and 2004 when the Astros signed Jeff Kent and asked Biggio to play center field. He moved back to second for his final three seasons.

“The one thing I take a lot of pride in is that I did everything the organization ever asked me to do,” he said. “No one had ever played those three positions for a full season.

“And that’s the point. If it gives us the best chance to win, I’m going to do it. That’s why I feel great about my career. I had great teammates. I got to play in the big leagues for 20 years. But the ultimate goal is winning, and I think we did that.”

Biggio and Yount occasionally sit beside one another at Hall of Fame dinners, and when the topic of changing positions comes up, they speak the same language.

“Robin will tell you the same thing,” Biggio said. “It was about winning and doing what you had to do for the team.” 🍌

*Richard Justice covered the Astros for two decades with the Houston Chronicle and MLB.com.*



# RIGHT ON TARGET

## ROBERTO CLEMENTE'S ARM MADE HIM A LEGEND IN RIGHT FIELD.

BY JOHN PERROTTO

**O**ne must rely on eyewitness accounts to understand the strength of Roberto Clemente's arm.

The Hall of Famer played right field for the Pittsburgh Pirates from 1955-72 in what was then a different world. There was no MLB Network, no Web Gems, no social media, no YouTube. It was a time when less than half the major leagues games were televised.

While some film and video exist of Clemente's throws, there is not as much visual evidence of his defensive prowess like that of the stars of today.

However, we can take the trusted word of veteran baseball men like Bill Virdon.

"If he played today, he'd be on all the highlight shows," Virdon said. "He had the best arm of any outfielder I've ever seen, and it really isn't even close."

That is saying something because Virdon has seen a lot of great outfielders in his time and was a Gold Glove center fielder himself. He was the National League Rookie of the Year with the St. Louis Cardinals in 1955, spent the next 10 seasons as a key member of the Pirates then managed four different

major league teams for a total of 13 seasons.

Clemente was a four-time National League batting champion who finished his career with 3,000 hits. A lifetime .317 batter, Clemente won the 1966 NL MVP Award and was one of the most feared hitters of his era.

But his arm strength remains his calling card – and remains the standard against which all others are judged.

"Roberto just made the throws look effortless," Virdon said. "It never looked like he was ever straining. He got to the ball quickly and had a very quick release. He made it look so natural and smooth. And his throws were almost always right on target.

"You see some outfielders with strong arms, and they can't control their throws. They overthrow the base or their throws are wide of the bag. But Roberto's throws were almost always right on the money."

Of course, you would be hard pressed to find any of Clemente's teammates who did not think he had the strongest arm of any outfielder.

Roberto Clemente's all-around game made him a Hall of Famer. His arm in right field made him a legend. In 18 big league seasons, Clemente won 12 Gold Glove Awards in right field. His 255 assists as a right fielder rank first among all players whose careers began in the Live Ball Era (post 1919).

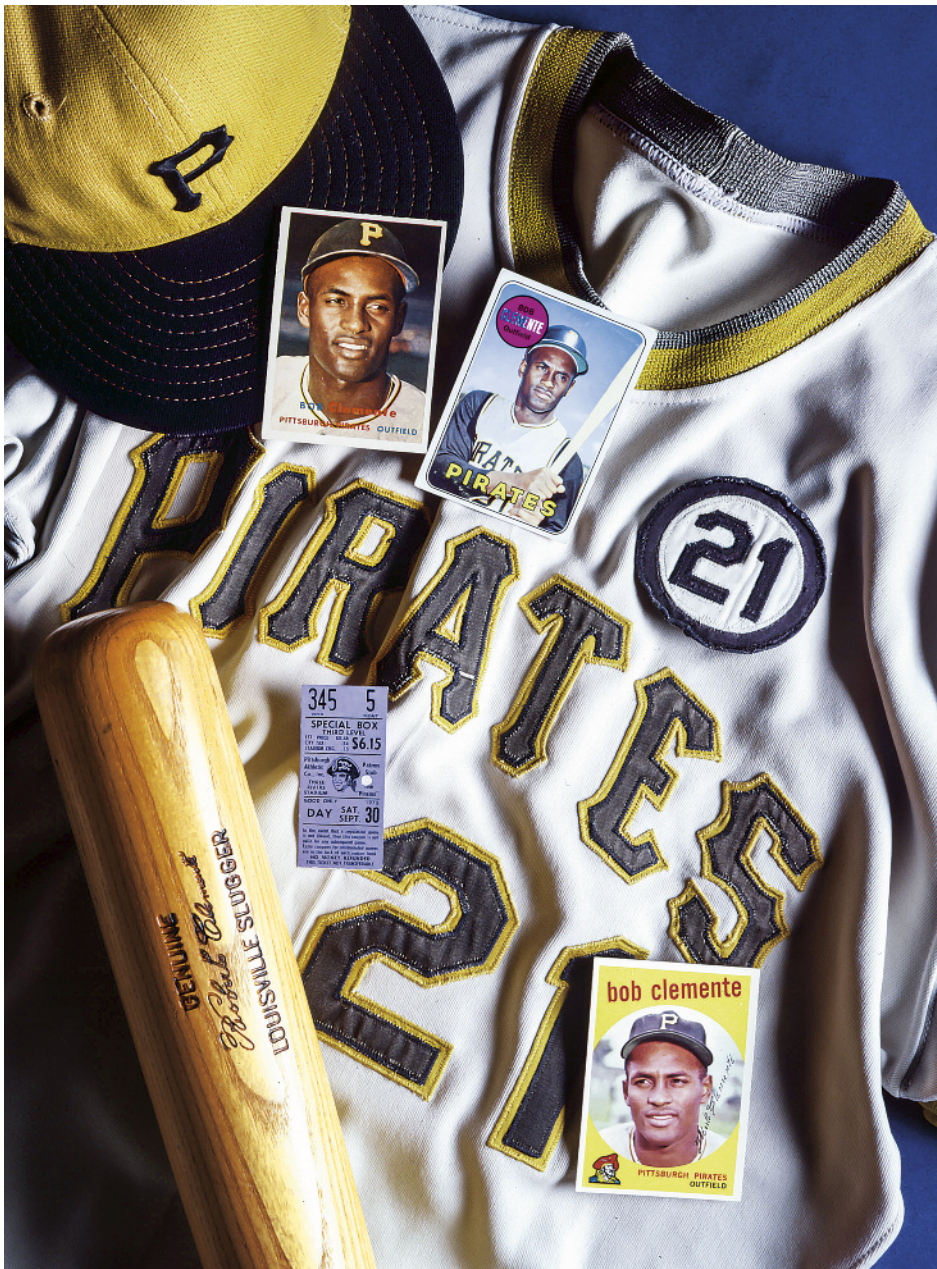
OSVALDO SALAS/NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM











MICHELE BART JR./NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME

This collage of artifacts depicts items in the Museum's collection representing Roberto Clemente, who in 1973 became the first Latin American elected to the Hall of Fame.

Catcher Manny Sanguillén was teammates with Clemente late in the superstar's career and they became close friends. Sanguillén saw up close the impact of Clemente's throws.

"A lot of guys wouldn't even think about trying to score from second base on a single when the ball was hit to Clemente," Sanguillén said. "They would just automatically stop at third, even with two outs a lot of times. They wouldn't take any chances."

When baserunners decided to take the risk, it often turned out to be a bad idea.

Clemente had 266 assists over his 18-year career, and his 255 assists as a right fielder rank

second behind only the 335 of Hall of Famer Harry Hooper.

Clemente led National League right fielders in assists six times, including twice in back-to-back seasons – 1960-61 and 1966-67 – during an incredible 13-season span from 1955-67.

Clemente threw out so many runners that one specific play does not necessarily stand out in many of his former teammates' minds.

"It became commonplace," Virdon said. "I don't want to say you took it for granted, but you came to expect it."

One of Clemente's most memorable assists came on April 13, 1968, when he threw out

the great Willie Mays, who was trying to go from first to third base on a single, in the seventh inning of a game against the Giants at Candlestick Park.

This is how the *San Francisco Chronicle* described the play:

"When Willie McCovey, the next hitter, bounced a single over (first baseman) Donn Clendenon's outstretched glove into right field, it appeared the dam had broken and the runs would flow. Then came the key play of the game. Mays rounded second base and slowed down to draw a throw from right fielder Roberto Clemente. Mays, either overestimating his own speed or underestimating the power and accuracy of Clemente's arm, was thrown out trying to reach third. Maury Wills tagged him as he slid by."

The throw proved pivotal as it preserved a 2-0 lead in a game the Pirates won, 2-1. It was a prime example of the impact of Clemente's throwing.

Clemente also put his arm to good use on baseball's grandest stage, even when he did not throw anybody out. He made two remarkable throws in the 1971 World Series, which the Pirates went on to win in seven games over the Baltimore Orioles and where Clemente was selected the Most Valuable Player.

The first one came in Game 2 when Clemente caught a fifth-inning fly ball off the bat of Frank Robinson, spun and fired to third base. The runner, Merv Rettenmund, was called safe, but many who were at Memorial Stadium in Baltimore that day insist that umpire Jim Odom missed the call.

The second, in the ninth inning of Game 6, was a throw all the way on the fly to home plate to keep Mark Belanger from scoring from first base – on a double to right by Don Buford – with what would have been the game's winning run. The Orioles went on to win the game in the 10th inning, but Clemente's legend was secure – especially after the Pirates won Game 7.

"The greatest throw I ever saw," said the Pirates' Richie Hebner, the third baseman who was on the receiving end of the throw where Rettenmund was called safe. "It was perfect. Just like most of his throws."

And one other thing.

"Rettenmund was out," Hebner said. 📌

*John Perrotto is a freelance writer from Beaver Falls, Pa.*



# DESIGNATED HISTORY

## THE YANKEES' RON BLOMBERG CARVED HIS NAME INTO THE BASEBALL TABLEAU BY BECOMING THE FIRST DESIGNATED HITTER IN 1973.

BY MARTY APPEL

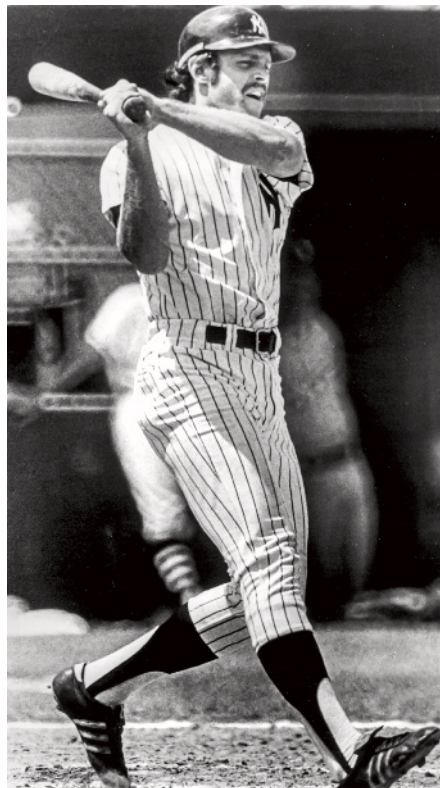
**O**n April 6, 1973, Fenway Park public address announcer Sherm Feller cleared his throat and said, “Batting sixth, the designated hitter, number 12, Ron Blomberg, number 12.”

After eight decades of debate, baseball history was about to be made.

Even in the Dead Ball Era, no advanced analytics were required to know that pitchers were, almost without exception, terrible hitters. The evidence was there in their batting averages, which seldom topped .200.

There were articles published as early as 1887 advocating for what we now call the DH. Pittsburgh owner William Chase Temple (who also donated the Temple Cup to the annual world championship team) strongly urged the idea in 1891. Connie Mack pushed for it as a young manager after the turn of the century.

Yet on into the 20th century, there was no real movement toward sending up a pinch hitter for the pitcher – perhaps the same pinch hitter – without removing the pitcher from the game.



Ron Blomberg became the first designated hitter in American League history on April 6, 1973, when he came to bat in the first inning against the Red Sox on Opening Day at Fenway Park.

But after 1968, the “Year of the Pitcher,” in which the major league batting average was only .237 (.230 in the American League), talk of a DH began to gain traction. In 1969, the Triple-A International League tried it. There, the league’s batting average proceeded to jump from .252 to .269, but it was dropped after just that one season. The game’s old guard, mainly National League team owners, found it too radical a concept. Three NL teams had their top farm clubs in the International League, and they wanted their pitching prospects batting.

“We used an outfielder as a DH for most of the season,” recalled Héctor López, the former Yankees and A’s outfielder/infielder who managed Buffalo that season, a Washington farm club. “But he thought he was hurting his chances to move up by not playing in the field. And the pitchers missed hitting. But I liked it.”

“I liked it a lot,” said Frank Tepedino, who played for the Yankees’ farm club at Syracuse. “I wasn’t going to get to the big leagues with my glove; it was perfect for me.”

Given the National League’s opposition, it caught many by surprise when the American League green-lighted the “designated pinch hitter” rule on Jan. 11, 1973, just a month before Spring Training. It was to be a three-year experiment. The AL would go it alone, feeling that its product was in need of an offensive boost. The league batting average for 1972 was only .239.

The Yankees were on their winter press caravan in southern New Jersey when the news of the DH rule broke, and one reporter asked manager Ralph Houk that day how often he planned to use this novelty. As it turned out, Yankees pitchers would have only two plate appearances in 1973.

The impact was immediate; the two major leagues would be playing under different rules.

AL teams had to quickly adjust their rosters. Oakland had released Orlando Cepeda on Dec. 18. He thought his career was over. But now he had a new life and was signed by Boston. Suddenly players like Frank Robinson, Tony Oliva, Frank Howard and Tommy Davis had career extensions.

NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM







The No. 1 overall pick in the 1967 MLB Draft, Ron Blomberg was one of the Yankees' top prospects of his era and went on to play eight seasons in the big leagues. **Above:** Blomberg used this bat when he came to the plate as the first designated hitter in American League history on April 6, 1973.

The DH was used throughout Spring Training (except in National League parks), and the first game to employ it in the regular season would be New York at Boston on Friday, April 6, thanks to an early start in the Eastern Time Zone.

For the Yankees, it was Tepedino who figured to get the assignment, even though the role seemed to be going to veteran players on most clubs.

But Ron Blomberg, 24, was hurt near the end of Spring Training and could not play the field on Opening Day. So Tepedino lost his roster slot to Blomberg, the top pick in the 1967 MLB Draft, who had not served as designated hitter even once in exhibition games. Right-hander Luis Tiant would pitch for Boston – if a lefty had started, a right-handed hitter, maybe Ron Swoboda or Felipe Alou, might have been the historic DH. (The Yankees obtained righty Jim Ray Hart from the San Francisco Giants several days later to fill that role.)

Blomberg (pronounced BLOOM-berg) batted sixth in the Yankees order. The Red Sox had Cepeda hitting fifth as their DH.

“I didn’t really know how to be a DH,” Blomberg said. “What was I supposed to do between at-bats?”

In the top of the first, with two out, Matty Alou doubled, and that was followed by walks to Bobby Murcer and Graig Nettles. Cue Sherm Feller and his PA announcement. (The term “designated pinch-hitter” had already been

shortened to designated hitter.) History was made.


Blomberg proceeded to walk, driving in a run. Already the DH was creating increased offense.

It was not a moment in which the sellout crowd stood and cheered. Nobody thought to toss the ball four baseball into the dugout for safe keeping. But it was indeed history – the first new position since the nine defensive positions, along with pinch hitters and pinch runners, had been established more than a century before.

After the game, a 15-5 Red Sox victory, Blomberg’s bat was collected and sent off to Cooperstown.

The AL batting average jumped 20 points in 1973. Remarkably, the Angels’ Nolan Ryan set the modern single-season strikeout record that year with 383 – without the benefit of facing pitchers on a regular basis.

Blomberg’s career was brief and injury-riddled, but he became a regular at old timers days and card shows off the strength of his historic moment. He even wrote a book called “Designated Hebrew.” In 2013, on the 40th anniversary of the new rule, the Red Sox brought him and Cepeda back to Fenway Park to commemorate the event.

In the pandemic-shortened 2020 season, the National League employed the designated hitter at home games for the first time. And from his Atlanta home, the 72-year-old Blomberg looked on approvingly. 

*Marty Appel is the magazine historian for Memories and Dreams.*



The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum's collection contains more than 40,000 three-dimensional artifacts - many apparently having little obvious relation to the National Pastime. But dig a little deeper, and you'll find that these treasures connect us to the game in fascinating and unexpected ways. Come inside and examine some of the pieces that appear to be "Out of Left Field."

# Edge of Greatness

Razor blade used by Cy Young a part of the Museum's artifacts collection.

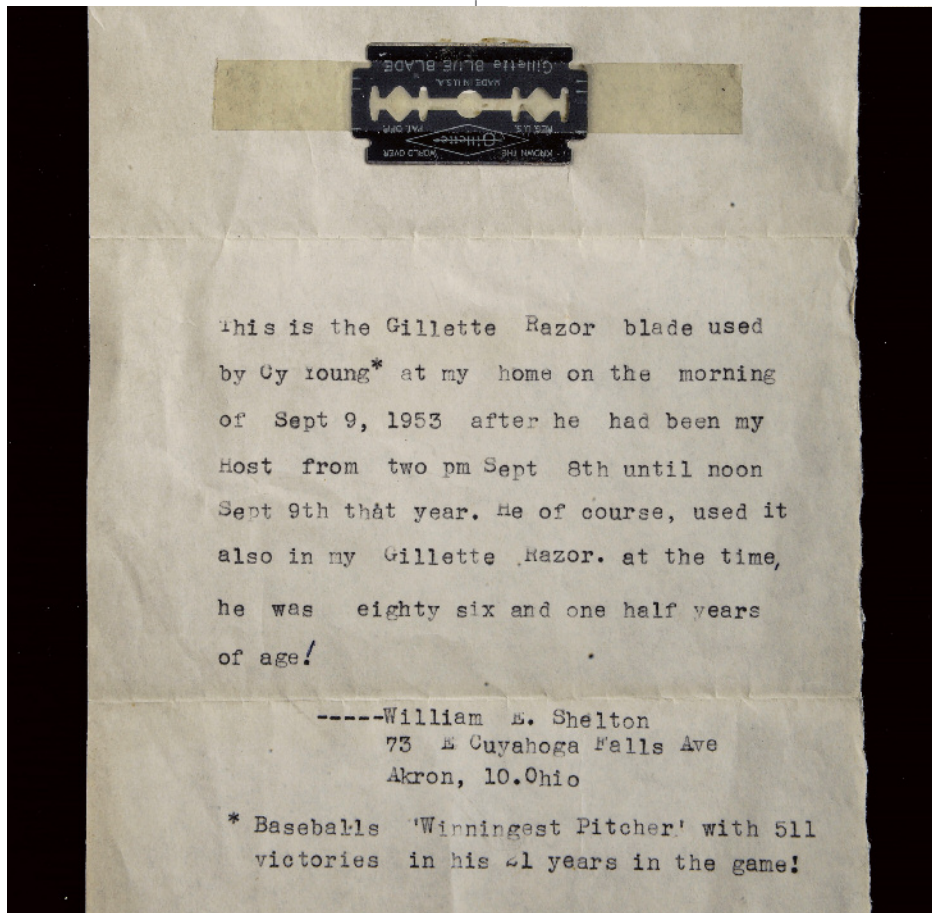
BY CRAIG MUDER

Cy Young dominated two separate eras of play during his legendary 22-year career, leaving totals that are unlikely ever to be matched.

How did he do it? If the science lies in his DNA, the answer might be found in the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum's collection.



PHOTOS BY MILES STEWART / NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM



**Above:** This Gillette razor blade, which Cy Young used in 1953, was donated to the Hall of Fame by William Shelton of Akron, Ohio. **Right:** Young won 511 games over 22 big league seasons with Cleveland, St. Louis and Boston of the National League and Cleveland and Boston of the American League.

As the Museum began to seriously concentrate on adding to its collection in the 1950s, William Shelton of Akron, Ohio, came forward with a unique donation offer. Shelton had hosted Young in his home on Sept. 8-9, 1953, when the Hall of Fame hurler was 86 years old.

Young passed away on Nov. 4, 1955. A little more than a year later, Shelton sent a letter to the Hall of Fame – with a Gillette razor blade taped to the type-written paper.

He wrote, “This is the Gillette Razor blade used by Cy Young at my home on the morning of Sept. 9, 1953...”

The blade, which could still contain fragments of Young’s skin and hair, was used in Shelton’s razor and is a “Gillette Blue Blade.”

Young, who is buried in Peoli, Ohio (about 75 miles south of Akron), remains the big league leader in career victories (511), games started (815), complete games (749) and innings pitched (7,356). A pitcher starting his career today could pitch 25 years and average 20 victories a season and still not reach Young’s win total.

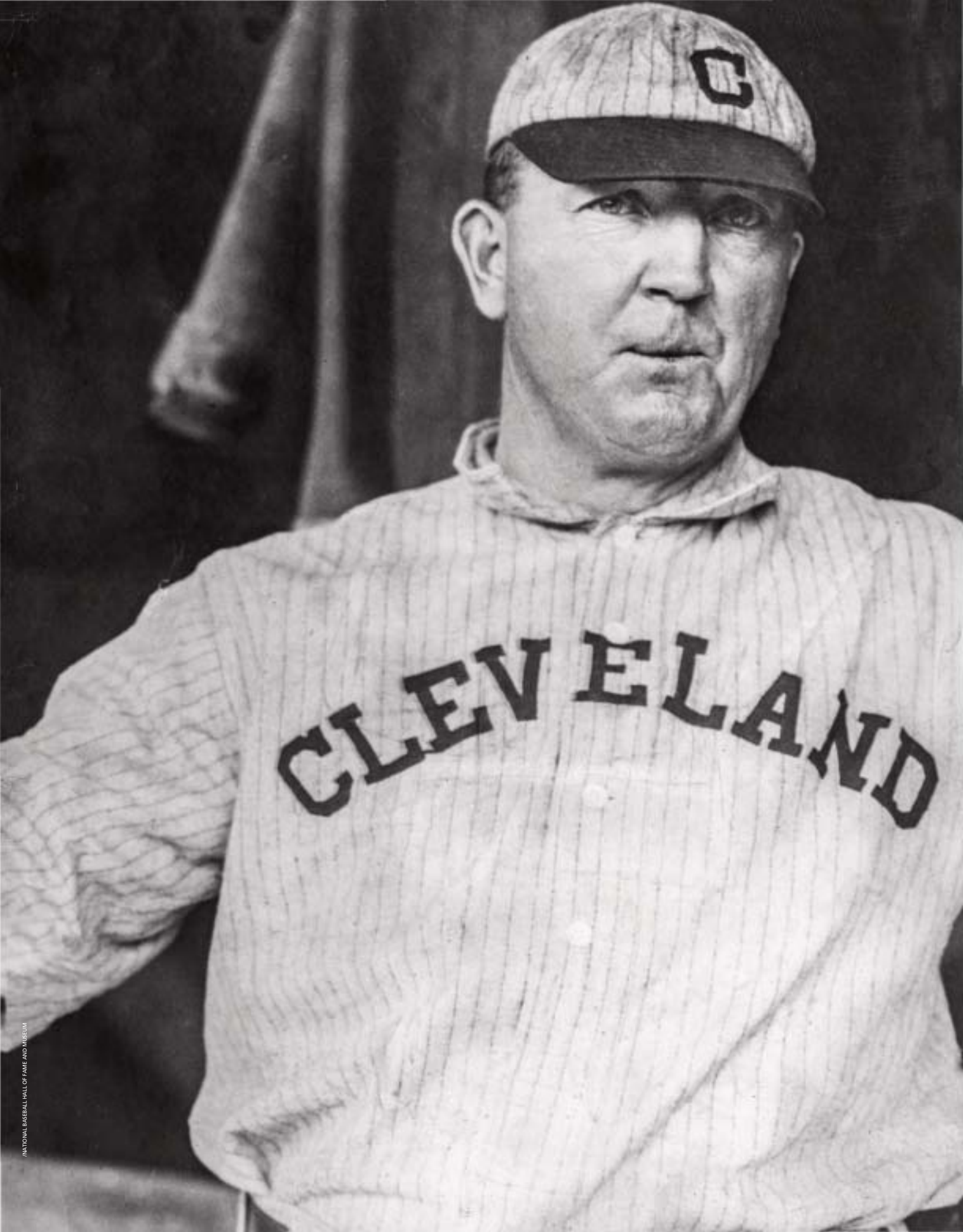
Young’s career earned-run average of 2.63 doesn’t even crack the Top 50 all time, which – on the surface – seems strange considering his success and the fact that he pitched in the Dead Ball Era. But Young’s prime seasons came in the National League with the Cleveland Spiders of the 1890s – a decade that saw record-setting run totals with rules that were different than today’s standards.

Future Hall of Famer Billy Hamilton led the NL with 198 runs scored in 1894, for example, and Young’s 3.94 ERA that year ranked fourth in the league.

But after jumping to the rival American League in 1901, Young quickly adjusted to the new low-scoring ways of the time. He would post the best ERA of his career in 1908 at the age of 41 with a mark of 1.26.

Fifty years later, stainless steel that had once smoothed Young’s face found its way to Cooperstown. Then – as now – it was a sharpened edge that had groomed the winningest pitcher in baseball history. ❶

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



**CLEVELAND**





# 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.

[BASEBALLHALL.ORG/MUSEUMINACTION](http://BASEBALLHALL.ORG/MUSEUMINACTION)

## WHAT WE’VE DONE TOGETHER

### #COOPERSTOWNMEMORIES

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



MILO STEWART / NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM

During these uncertain times, there is one thing that the entire staff at the Museum is

sure of: Together we will continue to preserve the game’s greatest stories – and our own baseball memories.

As baseball fans, we all have stories: Our first trip to Cooperstown, meeting a Hall of Famer in Cooperstown, seeing an exhibit that brings our own memories flooding back, stepping into the *Plaque Gallery* and feeling the connection to the game’s all-time greats – the memories are countless.

We would love for you to share your #CooperstownMemories with us.

Simply send an email that includes your story and your name to [development@baseballhall.org](mailto:development@baseballhall.org), and we’ll compile them and share selected ones with our “baseball family.”

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



*When my two siblings turned 60, I treated each to something I thought was special. For my brother, with whom I attend the Indy 500 every year, we both went on a ride in a 2-seater IndyCar. My sister, a fellow quilter, was treated to an out-of-town quilting event.*

*I turned 60 last year, and they put their heads together for a fantastic birthday trip to the Baseball Hall of Fame and to New York City. It was the first time the three of us with our spouses*

*have gone anywhere together. My husband and I flew in from Utah; my sister and her husband flew from Arizona; and my brother and his wife drove from Illinois.*

*My brother, sister and I all spent two full days at the Museum – first in, last out. And it probably wasn’t long enough for us! We come from a baseball family. Our grandfather played in semi-pro leagues around the state of Michigan and made it up to the Toledo Mud Hens for a short time. Our dad also played, in college at Ferris Institute, and was offered a contract by the Chicago White Sox after his first year (he elected to finish school).*

*Visiting Cooperstown is something I’d always wanted to do, and going with all of them made it even more special. Walking into the Hall, seeing all those plaques, was just awe-inspiring. I loved seeing childhood hero Luis Aparicio and Ernie Banks. Seeing Randy Johnson was special, and we remembered how my dad and sister were at Game 7 of the 2001 World Series, cheering the Diamondbacks to victory.*

*One day, I’d like to go back to see things I might have missed the first time through and to see different artifacts on display. And all the new plaques, too.*

*Thanks for all the great memories.*

**Lisa Brothman**  
Member Since 2019



Lisa Brothman and family

COURTESY OF LISA BROTHMAN



### Sunday, July 27, 1986

In July 1986, when I was 11 years old, I went to spend the summer with my grandparents in Stuyvesant Falls, N.Y. First, on the way from Maine, I stopped and went to my first baseball game, which was at Fenway Park on July 13 – missing a Roger Clemens start by a day. Next, I went to New York, where my grandparents took me to the Baseball Hall of Fame on Sunday, July 27. We drove into Cooperstown and parked on Main Street, in front of the Museum. I remember getting out of the car in front of the scores and standings sign. I checked to see how the Red Sox did the night before on the West Coast; they lost, 4-1, to the California Angels and their A.L. East lead shrunk to 4 games.



COURTESY OF ARRAN STEVENS

Arran Stevens and his grandfather during both their visits to the Hall of Fame.

Once inside, I immediately went to the plaques for Babe Ruth and Ted Williams. Those were my must finds. Then I silently walked around recognizing the rest of the names on the plaques. The Gallery allows one to politely roam around quietly taking it all in.

I also remember being fascinated with the Ruth and Williams statues when leaving the Gallery and seeing the Lou Gehrig exhibit, I believe in the next room. We sat in the Grandstand Theater and watched the 1985 World Series highlights. At the time, I had a new interest in the history of the game, so I soaked in everything under that roof.

### Saturday, June 16, 2001

In June 2001, I was lucky enough to return the favor and take my grandfather, who was 83 years old at the time, back to Cooperstown. We had talked about another trip for a while and finally had the right weekend to go. When we arrived in front of the Museum, he immediately found someone to snap the picture of us to go along with the picture from our first visit. Once inside, we wandered around the Plaque Gallery like we had never been there before, reading the plaques and paying closer attention to the new plaques from the previous 15 years.

The best part of this visit was my grandfather telling me of the times he went to New York City and watched games at Ebbets Field and the Polo Grounds. He also talked a lot about Mel Ott, his favorite player to watch. I didn't know any of this until we were there on our three-hour walk through the exhibits. We had a mutual respect for the history of baseball that we each picked up on our own and shared together.

Seven years later, when my grandfather died, I went through a stack of pictures he had saved. Within the pictures was his ticket from our visit in 2001. I took his ticket and keep it next to mine in a photo album that contains every ticket to every sporting event I have been to.

**Arran Stevens**  
Member since 2000

### Photos to be digitally preserved

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

They include:

- **Lee MacPhail** – Thanks to gifts from Dr. Paul Lee and Paul D. Phillips
- **Edgar Martinez** – Thanks to gifts from Robert S. Govero and Marshall G. Most
- **Mike Piazza** – Thanks to gifts from Edward Doyle Jr., Dr. Jonathan Epstein, David Krell, Margaret Murray, Cody Nastasia and an anonymous donor
- **Iván Rodríguez** – Thanks to gifts from Douglas Barnes, Alan Cox, Theresa Griggs and Paul D. Phillips
- **John Schuerholz** – Thanks to a gift from Paul D. Phillips

## WHAT YOU CAN HELP US DO

### Preservation of the *Look Magazine* photo collection

What does a photograph mean to you?

There are many ways to answer this question. For some, it is an “art” that showcases creativity and imagination. For others, it’s an escape to a moment caught in time – rekindling treasured moments or even emotions. However you answer this question, it is clear: Through a single “click,” photographs tell a story and preserve memories.

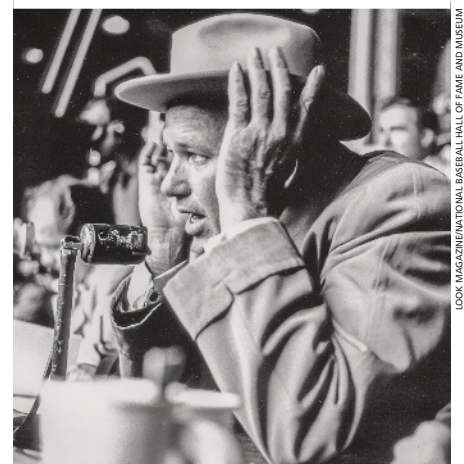


**Take your camera out to the ball game, and you'll both have fun.**

Photography writer Erwin Bach,  
June 20, 1979



LOOK MAGAZINE/NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM



LOOK MAGAZINE/NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM

Hall of Famers Happy Chandler (top center) and Dizzy Dean (bottom) are part of the Museum's collection of *Look Magazine* photographs. These photos are in need of digital preservation.



The Dean O. Cochran Jr. Photographic Archives at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum contains photographs of every aspect of the game of baseball. Our collection depicts the broad diversity of people on the field, the places they played and the action of the game. The 300,000 photographs housed in the Photo Archives document more than 150 years of baseball history; they are a visual record of the game's place in American culture.

As we continue our work to digitally preserve the Museum's photo collection, there is a "hidden collection" within our Photo Archives that we have identified as a priority in these efforts.

Our *Look Magazine Collection* began with the first donation to the Museum in 1954 and has grown with additional donations received through the years. In all, the collection contains 4,108 images in a variety of formats and sizes – the majority of which are negatives.

This nearly unmined collection needs to be reorganized, rehoused and conserved. As each image is rehoused, we will digitize it, which will reduce handling of the original, preventing additional damage and ensuring that it is preserved for years to come.

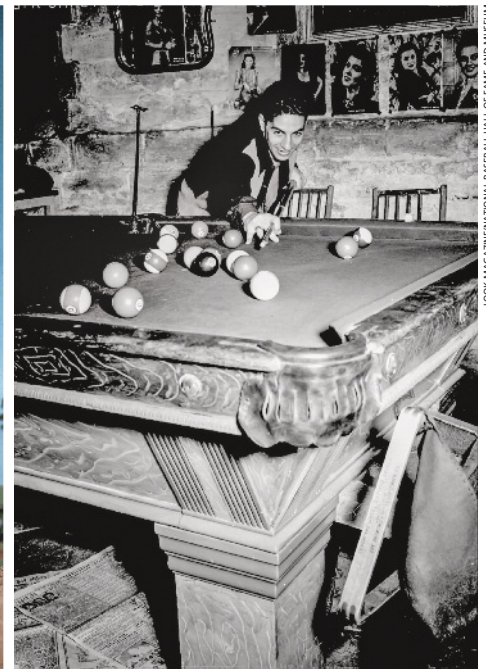
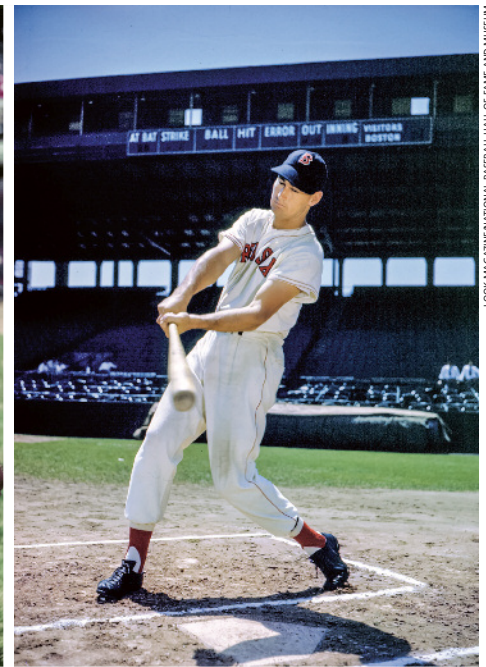
Additionally, digital preservation of the images will make this collection more accessible to fans at our website and will streamline access for our staff for exhibits, research and other projects.

Our team is excited to begin work on this project and to unlock the history within this significant collection. To move this preservation project forward, however, we need to secure additional funds.

Please consider making a gift today toward the *Look Magazine Collection* project to ensure these historic images are preserved for generations of fans to enjoy.

*Estimated balance to preserve the Look Magazine Collection: \$21,225\**

*\* Thanks to a generous donation from R. Zachary Sanzone, we have already secured significant funding to begin this project. Additional support was provided by The Cowles Charitable Trust to fund urgent treatment from a specialized conservation lab for negatives that were in danger of being lost.*



**Clockwise from top left:** The Museum's collection of *Look Magazine* photographs contains more than 4,000 images and includes Hall of Famers Roy Campanella, Ted Williams, Phil Rizzuto and Warren Spahn. These photos are in need of digital preservation.

## Additional projects online

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

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

**[baseballhall.org/museuminaction](http://baseballhall.org/museuminaction)**

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

## Class Action

The July 25 Induction Ceremony, which will feature the Class of 2020, will be broadcast live on MLB Network.

BY CRAIG MUDER

Every Hall of Fame class has its unique makeup and memories.

But for each member of the Class of 2020, the road to Cooperstown has been unlike that of any Hall of Famer.

Derek Jeter, the late Marvin Miller, Ted Simmons and Larry Walker will be inducted on Sunday, July 25, in a television-only event in Cooperstown. Due to the ongoing safety concerns associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the Hall of Fame has announced that all 2021 Hall of Fame Weekend public events have been canceled and the *Induction Ceremony* will be moved indoors.

The 2021 *Induction Ceremony* will also honor the 2021 Ford C. Frick Award winner for broadcasting excellence, Al Michaels; the 2020 Frick Award winner, Ken Harrelson; the 2021 Baseball Writers' Association of America Career Excellence Award winner, Dick Kaegel; the 2020 BBWAA Career Excellence Award winner, the late Nick Cafardo; and the 2020 Buck O'Neil Lifetime Achievement Award winner, the late David Montgomery.

For decades, the *Induction Ceremony* has been held as an unticketed event, free and open to all fans. Since 1992, it has taken place on the grounds of the Clark Sports Center, with estimated crowds approaching and surpassing 50,000 at five of the last six ceremonies from 2014-19.

Last year's cancellation marked the first



MLB Network cameras will be on the scene July 25 to televise the 2021 Hall of Fame *Induction Ceremony* in Cooperstown. Due to pandemic protocols, this year's *Induction Ceremony* will be a television-only event with no fans in attendance.


time the Hall of Fame did not hold an *Induction Ceremony* in Cooperstown since 1960.

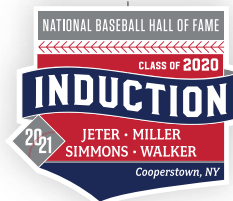
Jeter played 20 seasons, all for the New York Yankees, and led the Yankees to five World Series titles, winning World Series MVP honors in 2000. He was named 1996 American League Rookie of the Year after hitting .314, scoring 104 runs and helping New York to its first World Championship in 18 seasons. A 14-time All-Star who finished in the top 10 of

the AL Most Valuable Player voting eight times, Jeter was a five-time Gold Glove Award winner at shortstop and never played a position other than short in his 2,674 games in the field, which ranks second all time among shortstops.

Miller was elected as the head of the Major League Baseball Players Association in 1966 and quickly turned the union into a powerhouse. By 1970, he had secured the right to independent arbitration to resolve player grievances. Through that arbitration process, Miller won free agency for the players when Dave McNally and Andy Messersmith played out their contracts following the 1975 season. By the time Miller retired in 1982, the average player salary was approximately 20 times what it had been when he took over. Miller passed away on Nov. 27, 2012.

Simmons played 21 seasons for the Cardinals, Brewers and Braves, totaling a .285 batting average, 2,472 hits, 483 doubles, 248 home runs and 1,389 RBI. An eight-time All-Star – and the first catcher to start the All-Star Game for both the National League (1978) and the American League (1983) – he garnered MVP votes seven times in his career and finished among his league's top 10 players in batting average six times. Simmons never struck out more than 57 times in a season, and he is one of only 12 players in history with at least 240 home runs and fewer than 700 strikeouts. His 182 National League home runs were the most by an NL switch hitter at the time of his retirement.

Walker played 17 seasons for the Expos, Rockies and Cardinals. A seven-time Gold Glove Award winner in right field and a five-time All-Star, Walker won three National League batting titles and led the NL in on-base percentage twice and slugging percentage twice. His .565 career slugging percentage ranks 12th all time and his career OPS of .965 ranks 15th. Walker won the 1997 National League Most Valuable Player Award and is one of four retired players in history – along with Hank Aaron, George Brett and Willie Mays – with at least a .300 batting average, 300 home runs and 200 stolen bases. 



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



# CHANGE OF HEART

A scout's ability to identify position changes – and a player's willingness to make that change – can turn good rosters into championship teams.

BY PAT GILLICK

**I**t was the summer of 1978, and Bobby Doerr and I flew out to San Jose, Calif., met up with Wayne Morgan and went to the home of the player we had selected in the fifth round of the 1978 MLB Draft.

I was the general manager of the Toronto Blue Jays, Bobby was one of our coaches and Wayne was our western regional director.

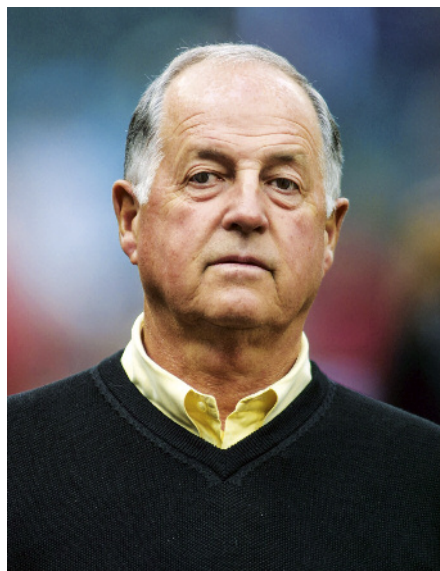
Dave Stieb was the player. At the time, Dave was playing in Alaska after his junior season at Southern Illinois University, where he was a star center fielder. But that spring, our midwest supervisor – Don Welke – had seen him throw a couple innings in a game along with Bob Mattick and Al LaMacchia, who were our national crosscheckers.

Stieb only pitched 17-and-two-thirds innings that whole season. But Bob, Al and Don immediately thought that Stieb's future would be as a pitcher rather than a position player.

Dave still wanted to be an outfielder, but we talked him into signing with the commitment that he could play both positions that year – otherwise he wouldn't have signed. So he went to play in the Florida State League in Dunedin, got there at the tail end of the season because he had been in Alaska, and won two games.

He went back to Dunedin in 1979 – this time only as a pitcher – and then we sent him to Triple-A Syracuse. He was a combined 10-2 in 15 starts.

By June of that season, he was in the big leagues with the Blue Jays.



BEV VAN HOUTENSEATTLE MARINERS

As a farm director and general manager, Pat Gillick helped put hundreds of players on the path to the big leagues.

Most of the switches you make with players are from position players to pitchers. It's more of a mental transition than physical. Everybody who has played baseball has a favorite player, somebody they'd like to be like. Shortstops in those days wanted to be Robin Yount; today they want to be Francisco Lindor.

Then, all of a sudden, the player development staff determines that they could be a multiple-position player or a pitcher. That's a difficult change. But if your staff is correct, it allows you to make the most of the talent in your system.

Look at a player like Mark McLemore. We

had him in Seattle. I used to call them "utility" players, but the term they use now is "Swiss Army knife," which means they can play anywhere.

Mark came up with the Angels as a second baseman, but by the time he got to Seattle, he was playing left field, third base, shortstop and second base. Not only do you need four different gloves, you have to know where to be for relays, how to throw the ball with a different arm stroke from each position – and you have to stay sharp, because you usually get inserted into the lineup or moved around in the field in the latter part of the game when there's more pressure to perform.

You are going to work more than anyone else doing that. Mark ended up having a 19-year career because he was committed to making the change.

Dave Stieb, meanwhile, was 8-8 with us in 1979 – the same year he was 10-2 in the minors. Mel Queen and Bob Mattick made the recommendation that we bring him to Toronto; he was throwing strikes in the Florida State League, but more importantly he was a bulldog – a very intense competitor. He used that to win 176 games in the big leagues after barely pitching at all in college.

We had two players on our 1992 Blue Jays World Series team who switched positions: Dave, and Pat Borders, who started out as a third baseman and ended up winning the World Series MVP that year as a catcher.

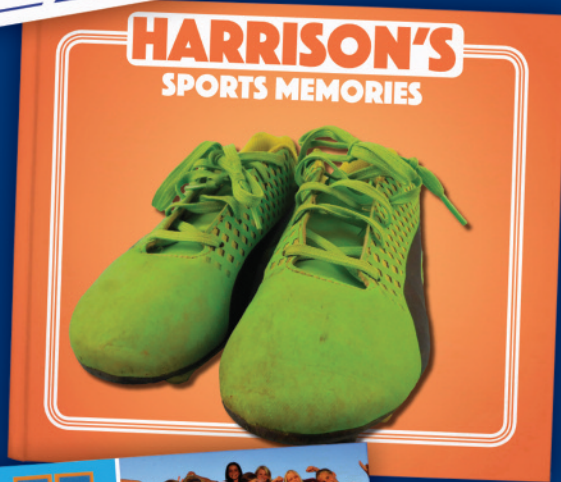
It gives me a lot of satisfaction personally to see things like that, but I feel even better for our player development department. They're the ones who make sure that a player will make the change and be an asset to our organization.

Bob Mattick, Al LaMacchia and Don Welke saw Dave Stieb throw two innings and decided he could be a major league pitcher. Bob changed Pat Borders from a minor league third baseman to a big league catcher.

Those are the kind of decisions that help teams win championships. 🏆

*Pat Gillick helped build three World Series winners as a general manager and was elected to the Hall of Fame in 2011.*

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## AROUND COOPERSTOWN

[cooperstowngetaway.org](http://cooperstowngetaway.org)

The sun rises over the Susquehanna Valley during a spring morning just south of Cooperstown.