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MEMORIES

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MEMORIES and Dreams

The Official Magazine of the Hall of Fame

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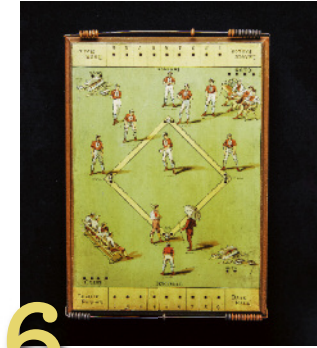
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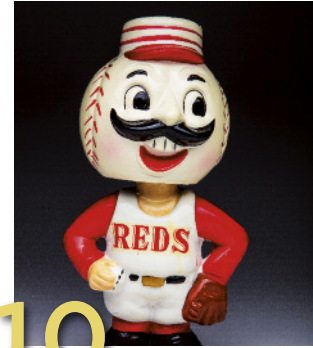
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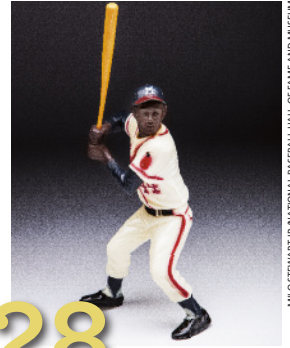
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MILO STEWART, JR. NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM



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

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

ON THE COVER

"Major League Indoor Base Ball," created more than 100 years ago by the Philadelphia Game Mfg. Co., is an early example of a game designed to bring fans of all ages closer to the National Pastime.

FROM THE PRESIDENT > JOSH RAWITCH



I will never forget my first steps in the village of Cooperstown.

They took place in July 2001, and as I walked through the front doors of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum with my dad, I was drawn to the plaques of Jackie Robinson, Sandy Koufax and the countless players I grew up hearing about as a young Dodgers fan in Los Angeles. Twenty years later, when I walked through those same doors as the eighth president of this revered institution, I was humbled in a way that is impossible to put into words.

Like most visitors, I immediately wandered into the Grandstand Theater and watched as one family after another climbed into their seats to view “Generations of the Game,” the unparalleled welcome film that can only be seen inside those walls. The lights went down, the movie came

on and the tears came out. My eyes welling up served as a reminder of how much this game means to me, like I know it means to all of you.

After a quick call to my wife to once again share my excitement for this new adventure, I walked past a Yankees fan holding his young son on their first-ever visit, just as they were paying homage to one of our most recent inductees, Derek Jeter. The photo they took will undoubtedly be a memory they cherish forever, just as I will never forget my first visit – or my second visit, when I returned for Hall of Fame Weekend in 2014, alongside my father, twin brother and nephew to see my

friends Joe Torre and Tony La Russa enshrined.

It was at Torre’s youth baseball camp in the 1980s that my love for the sport blossomed, with visits from Hall of Famers Ozzie Smith, Andre Dawson and many other All-Stars. At that time, I was playing plenty of Earl Weaver



Josh Urdang and his son share a moment at the Derek Jeter graphic on the Museum’s first floor.

Baseball on the computer before creating players like Nolan Ryan and Ryne Sandberg on Nintendo’s Baseball Stars (see page 33). These heroes seemed larger than life then, and in so many ways, they still do.

When I returned to Cooperstown for the 2015 Induction, the honoree we were there to celebrate truly was larger than life. My colleagues from the Arizona Diamondbacks and I had come with 6-foot, 10-inch Randy Johnson, one of the greatest left-handers of all time and one of many Hall of Famers with whom I have had the great fortune to work during 27 seasons with the Dodgers, D-backs and MLB.com.

But my favorite baseball player of all time has never worn a big league uniform – at least not yet. My 11-year-old son, who wears No. 42 to honor Robinson, dreams like so many young boys and girls of one day playing in the majors. It is he who I enjoy watching the most, and it is through his eyes that I viewed the Museum in July, shortly after being named as its latest steward. While our great game evolves over time, it is incumbent upon us to stay relevant and adapt the way we share its stories with my daughter, my son and the next generation of fans across the globe. That is how we will continue to preserve history, honor excellence and connect generations – the guiding principles of the Hall of Fame.

Millions of visitors have shared these experiences over the past 82 years, with many coming back year after year. Others, perhaps, made their first trip during last month’s unforgettable ceremony. The induction of

Jeter, Larry Walker, Ted Simmons and Marvin Miller was two years in the making and was executed with incredible class and care amidst some of the most unique circumstances our world has ever encountered.

It is humbling to now be able to call Cooperstown my home, and the Hall of Fame a part of my family. I am extremely grateful to Jane Forbes Clark and the Board of Directors for entrusting me to represent this institution. Jeff Idelson, who returned to the Hall of Fame as interim president before I joined the team, has been instrumental during my transition

to Cooperstown, and I will forever be indebted to him for his guidance and support.

For those who have yet to make the pilgrimage, I want to personally invite you to check that item off your bucket list and come visit. It would be my distinct honor to welcome you here the way my family and I have been so graciously welcomed by the hard-working staff at the Hall and the kind people of Cooperstown.

With gratitude,

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ALSO WON 10 CONSECUTIVE GOLD GLOVE A
AMERICAN LEAGUE MVP, HOMERED IN EIGH
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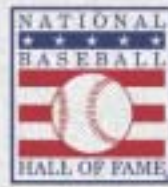
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Roger Maris' 1961 jersey on display at Hall of Fame

The 1961 baseball season, which found Americans riveted to the great “Maris-Mantle” home run race, is being celebrated upon its 60th anniversary with the donation of a Roger Maris Yankees jersey from that season.

A Yankees home jersey worn by Maris in 1961 is now a part of the Hall of Fame collection, thanks to author and former MLB executive Andy Strasberg. Maris’ No. 9 jersey was donated by Strasberg, whose “My 1961” was published earlier this year and recounts his journey as a 13-year-old fan following Maris’ pursuit of the record. The jersey is on exhibit on the Museum’s second floor in the Timeline display dedicated to the 1950s and ’60s Yankees dynasty.

“The greatest summer of my youth happened in 1961,” Strasberg said. “For decades, I have treasured this Maris Yankee pinstriped jersey with the shortened tailored sleeves. But now, on the 60th anniversary of that memorable baseball season, it’s time to share it with fans who visit the Baseball Hall of Fame.”

The Yankees went on to win the 1961 World Series, capping a season in which they won 109 regular-season contests and set an American League standard with 240 home runs. Maris was named the league’s Most Valuable Player after totaling 141 RBI to go with his record-setting 61 home runs.

Relive the game’s historic sounds with ‘Memories from the Microphone’

One hundred years ago, a new technology carried descriptions of the Aug. 5, 1921, Pirates vs. Phillies game beyond Forbes Field and into a few hundred homes with receivers within reach of KDKA-AM in Pittsburgh. It was the

start of an unbreakable bond between broadcasting and baseball.

“Memories from the Microphone: A Century of Baseball Broadcasting” brings to the written page the magic of baseball over the airwaves. The new book, authored by renowned historian and author Curt Smith, takes readers behind the scenes of some of baseball’s greatest moments with the announcers who brought those games to millions of fans.

Featuring rich content detailing iconic moments described by legendary announcers that include Mel Allen, Red Barber, Harry Caray and Vin Scully, the book – published by National Baseball Hall of Fame Books, a division of Mango Media Inc. – is a journey through baseball history via the men and women whose descriptions turned hits and runs into history.

Also included are stories of past Ford C. Frick Award winners and a foreword by Hall of Famer and longtime broadcaster Brooks Robinson. “Memories from the Microphone” is available at shop.baseballhall.org/memories-from-the-microphone.

STAFF SELECTIONS



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

Name: Jen Buckland

Position: Customer service supervisor

Hall of Fame Debut: September 2017

Hometown: Riverside, R.I.

Favorite Museum Artifact:

It is always moving to watch young people stand at the Character and Courage statues in the Museum’s foyer and read that plaque. It helps them understand what it takes to be selected as a Hall of Fame inductee.

Memorable Museum Moment:

My most memorable time at the Hall of Fame so far was watching Jim Thome’s dad on the weekend of [Jim’s] induction in 2018. The love and pride in that man’s face was so heartwarming.

Send us your memories

We love hearing from our readers about their connections to the stories in each issue of *Memories and Dreams*.

Email your thoughts, notes and letters to membership@baseballhall.org.

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TOY STORY

FROM BOARD GAMES TO ACTION FIGURES, THE NATIONAL PASTIME HAS INSPIRED MILLIONS OF WAYS TO ENJOY THE GAME.

BY SCOTT PITONIAK

The ingenious, out-of-left-field idea came to Francis Sebring while visiting an ailing, bed-ridden baseball teammate in Manhattan not long after the conclusion of the Civil War. By designing a table-top game that simulated action on the diamond, Sebring figured he could bring a portable, miniature version of baseball to his sick friend – and numerous others.

The Parlor Base-Ball game Sebring invented in 1866 consisted of a two-foot-wide wooden board cut into the shape of a modern-day home plate. Participants used a pinball-like flipper to bat a pitched coin propelled by a spring. Slots were spaced across the board. If you landed in one, it was an out. If you didn't, it was a hit. Dexterity was involved. Along with luck. Just like in a real game of baseball.

While trying out his new toy with adults and children in the parlor of his Hoboken, N.J., home, Sebring ascertained he might be onto something that tapped into Americans' burgeoning interest in the still-evolving sport. He decided to mass-produce and patent his invention, and market it with newspaper advertisements.

Though it never took off the way Sebring hoped, Parlor Base-Ball proved to be historically significant because it helped lay the foundation for numerous board, computer and video games that followed.

"You could make an argument that he is the 'Father of Fantasy Baseball,' or the 'Father of Fantasy Sports,' for that matter," said Tom Shieber, the Baseball Hall of Fame's senior curator.

Sebring came to realize that fans had a tremendous desire to stay connected to baseball even when they weren't playing or watching it. Over time, toy manufacturers would reach this conclusion, too. And so would baseball, which began gauging its popularity and place in American

culture not only by ticket sales and television ratings, but by the demand for toys with ties to the sport.

Whacking Wiffle balls and Spaldeens, flipping baseball cards, playing with dolls, figurines and bobbleheads, drafting and managing fantasy teams, and manipulating video game joysticks are pastimes involving the National Pastime that cheerfully remind us baseball's story is also a toy story.

"Their popularity definitely reflects baseball's popularity," said Christopher Bensch, vice president for collections at The Strong National Museum of Play in Rochester, N.Y. "And I think toys not only reflect baseball's popularity, but have contributed to it. When you are playing Wiffle ball or a board game or collecting baseball cards or bobbleheads, you are staying personally connected to baseball in ways that help perpetuate the sport's popularity."

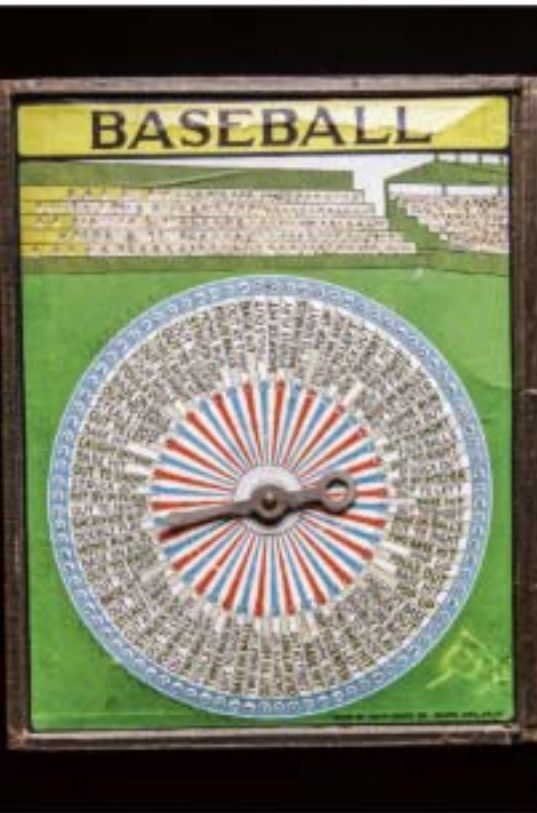
Hall of Fame catcher Roy Campanella reminded us that you have to have a lot of little kid in you to play baseball. It is, after all, even when played by adults for millions of dollars, still a child's game. A game that relies on toys (a ball and a bat) and one's imagination.

As Sebring discerned 155 years ago, baseball can be played on fields both real and fictitious. With 18 participants on a grass field. Or in the company of one on a bedroom floor.

Others would expand upon Sebring's idea, setting the table for today's virtual reality games to become almost as realistic as the ones staged daily in Major League Baseball parks. Clifford Van Beek's National Pastime, manufactured in 1930, was the first attempt to simulate the individual performances of big league players. In every board game previous to his creation, all the players in the lineup had the same chance of hitting a homer or striking out.



From board games to stuffed animals, baseball has inspired millions of toys over parts of the past three centuries. The National Baseball Hall of Fame has a vast collection of these toys that both reflect the game's popularity and have helped it to grow.





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



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

Top: This parlor baseball game, circa 1878, is one of the earliest examples of board games based on the National Pastime. **Above:** Dark Town Battery is a mechanical bank that was an example of an early baseball toy, but also perpetuated negative racial stereotypes. **Opposite page:** Jackie Robinson inspired both board games and dolls that capitalized on his immense popularity after he became the first Black player to appear in a game in modern National League history in 1947.

“Van Beek painstakingly created cards that reflected a player’s statistics, so that Babe Ruth had a far greater probability of hitting a homer than, say, George Sisler,” Shieber said. “It was based more on reality than sheer randomness.”

Sadly, Van Beek’s game fell victim to Great

Depression economics, but it would beget Ethan Allen’s All-Star Baseball in 1941, APBA Baseball in 1951, Strat-O-Matic in 1961, Sports Illustrated (Superstar) Baseball in 1971 and Rotisserie (aka Fantasy) Baseball in 1980. And these games paved the way for ones

played on computers, iPads and cell phones rather than tables.

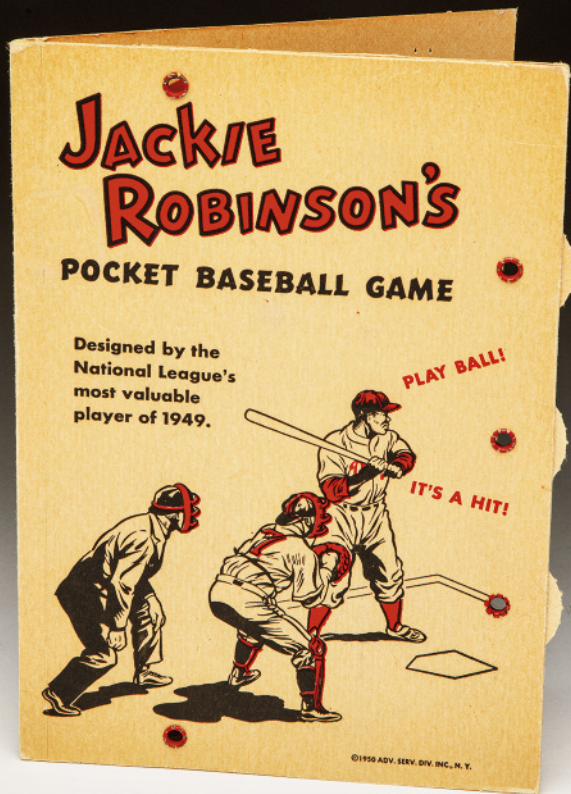
“These subsequent games have employed, in some form or fashion, the basic statistical tendencies that Van Beek introduced,” Shieber said. “He definitely was a pioneer.”

Baseball cards also can tap into the theater of the mind. They first became popular in the late 1800s when inserted in cigarette packs, and have long reflected the game’s popularity as toys and investments.

“Long, long before the introduction of television and the internet, the images depicted on those cards often were the only images fans had of their baseball heroes,” Bensch said.

“The rarer cards have become enormously valuable, especially in recent years, so, in many cases, these have become toys for adults with deep pockets.

“But for the longest time, they’ve connected kids to the game. [Youngsters] would compete with friends in flipping contests to see how many cards they could add to their sets. They would arrange cards, according to positions, and play imaginary games. And some wound up attaching them with clothespins to their bicycle spokes to make motorized sounds when they pedaled.”



Cloth dolls and porcelain figurines also have been baseball toys of choice since the 1800s. And they gave rise to the popular plastic Hartland statues of the early 1960s, the realistic-looking McFarlane action figures of the 2000s and current-day bobbleheads, which have undergone an enormous revival in recent decades, especially as much sought-after ballpark promotional giveaways.

“You probably aren’t going to play with a bobblehead in the same way you might with a doll or figurine, but they all fall into that category of connecting us to an individual player or team,” Bensch said. “Kids could play with Babe Ruth dolls or action figures in the same way they might play with Raggedy Ann dolls or Spider-Man action figures.”

Not all baseball toys have stood the test of time. Take cast-iron mechanical banks, for example, which faded away after being popular in the late 19th century. Some of the more intricate ones involved placing a penny or nickel into a pitcher’s hand and pressing a lever that would propel the coin past a batter to a catcher who grabbed it and deposited it into the bank.

These banks reflected baseball’s status, but there were instances when they also reflected

society’s ills. One of the more notable mechanical banks was called “Dark Town Battery,” which sadly reinforced negative racial stereotypes during the 1880s. The bank depicted three Black players in garish uniforms. Their faces were made to look almost cartoonish, reflecting the bigoted representations of Blacks during those Jim Crow times.

An example of “The Dark Town Battery” is preserved at the Hall of Fame.

“There were many toys – not just baseball toys – from that era that portrayed Blacks in derogatory ways,” Bensch said. “The Dark Town Battery was one such toy. The population of the United States was still predominantly white, and unfortunately many viewed these awful caricatures as humorous and acceptable.”

Seven decades later, Blacks finally would be portrayed more positively, thanks to Jackie Robinson, who not only broke baseball’s color barrier, but a toy barrier, too. In the early 1950s, a few years after the Hall of Famer helped integrate the sport, Robinson endorsed several board games and a doll of him as a Black child wearing a Brooklyn Dodgers uniform.

“This was such a sea change in the world



of toys,” Bensch said. “For the first time, a Black person was being presented with sensitivity and positivity. What’s also significant is that it proved Robinson was a crossover figure; he appealed to people regardless of race. White kids were identifying with him and saying, ‘I want to be like Jackie.’ That was unprecedented. They were buying those board games and that doll.”

Interestingly, the cover illustration for the metal baseball simulation board game bearing his name features Robinson following through on a swing, and six boys standing beneath him playing the game. One of the game-players is Black, which also is believed to be a first.

“We don’t know if Jackie requested that cover design,” Bensch said of the game, which was manufactured by Gotham Pressed Steel Corporation. “What we do know is that this illustrates the power of baseball and the power of toys to bring about positive change.”

Scott Pitoniak is a nationally honored journalist and best-selling author. The Penfield, N.Y., resident’s latest book is “Remembrances of Swings Past: A Lifetime of Baseball Stories.”

TURNING HEADS



BELOVED BOBBLEHEADS HAVE BECOME THE PROMOTION OF CHOICE THROUGHOUT BASEBALL.

BY JERRY CRASNICK

As Dallas Braden navigated the necessary steps in his native Stockton, Calif., and moved closer to a career in professional baseball, he made a checklist of off-field objectives. Once a ballplayer had been feted with his own poster, his own baseball card and his own character in a video game, Braden determined, he could rest easy in the knowledge that he had “made it.”

After a history-making achievement, Braden came to realize there was a fourth pillar to the ballplayer’s Holy Grail.

On Mother’s Day 2010, Braden threw the 19th perfect game in MLB history for the Oakland Athletics. In recognition, the Stockton Ports – a Class A affiliate of the A’s – invited him to Banner Island Ballpark to receive the key to the city. Emboldened by cheers from the crowd, Braden lifted his shirt to reveal a tattoo with Stockton’s area code – 209 – across his stomach.

The Stockton marketing folks took the gesture and ran with it. And their efforts were rewarded when the Dallas Braden Bobble-Belly was named 2011 Minor League Promotion of the Year.



Top: Bobbleheads, such as this one from the Reds, began to emerge on the baseball scene in the 1960s. **Above:** A Willie Mays bobblehead giveaway in 1999 is credited with inspiring similar promotions across sports.

While the anatomical particulars varied slightly in Braden’s case, the lesson was clear.

“Throw a bobblehead into the equation, and that’s pretty much the Mount Rushmore of achievements for a big leaguer or an amateur aspiring to become that big leaguer,” Braden said. “Those are pretty solid boxes to check.”

Every summer, throughout the game – in big league venues with 50,000 seats and minor league parks with a more homespun feel – teams hand out everything from schedule magnets to bucket hats to tote bags to enhance the ballpark experience. But nothing matches the bobblehead as a harbinger of good cheer.

That six-inch-tall tchotchke on your bookshelf with the springy noggin and whimsical expression has evolved into so many things: A promotional tool for clubs, a beehive of activity on eBay for collectors and fans, and a status symbol and morale booster for the athletes who inspire them. Today, more than 1,000 bobbleheads have a home in the collection at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.

“Times have changed, but when I came to the big leagues, getting your name stamped on your bat was a big deal. Getting your name stamped on your shoes was a big deal,” said Raúl Ibañez, a 19-year big leaguer who currently works as an executive for Major League Baseball. “Then the bobblehead was above both of them. It was like, ‘Oh wow, they actually made a bobblehead of me, and they’re going to give them away to the fans.’ I think the bobblehead was the one where you go, ‘Wow, I’ve arrived.’”

Some brief historical background: More than two centuries before bobbleheads became a fixture at venues from Fenway Park to Dodger Stadium, they were stealthy interlopers at Buckingham Palace. In 1765, German artist Johann Zoffany was working on a portrait of Queen Charlotte and her two oldest sons when he included a pair of Chinese nodding-head figures in the painting. In the 1800s, German porcelain factories cranked up production of “noddies” and found a welcome audience of consumers in the United States.

Flash forward to 1960, and Major League Baseball advanced the cause by producing papier mache and ceramic bobbleheads representing all 16 teams. During the World Series, player-specific bobbleheads for Willie Mays, Mickey Mantle, Roberto Clemente and Roger Maris arrived on the scene. But the faces were generic, for the most part, and bobbles failed to capture the public imagination.

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

Through the years, pop culture provided an occasional wink and a nod to nostalgia. During the 1986 “Let’s Go Mets” video, comedian Joe Piscopo taps the heads of four Mets bobbles, then proceeds to tap the heads of Howard Johnson, Bobby Ojeda, Rick Aguilera and Kevin Mitchell, who wobble in response in the dugout. A stone-faced Lee Mazzilli demurs before tackling Piscopo, and a hilarious pig-pile ensues.

A watershed event in bobble history came on May 9, 1999, when the San Francisco Giants were looking for ways to commemorate the 40th anniversary of Candlestick Park. The marketing department conceived a Willie Mays bobblehead giveaway, and a company called Alexander Global Promotions distributed bobble figurines of the Say Hey Kid, which were given to the first 20,000 fans.

“The fans’ reaction exceeded everybody’s expectations, and teams took notice in all sports and started putting bobblehead giveaways on the calendar,” said Phil Sklar, co-founder of the National Bobblehead Hall of Fame and Museum in Milwaukee. “You could equate it to the moon landing (for bobbleheads). It was sort of the light bulb moment.”

Someone had to chronicle all the bobblehead history that’s unfolded since, so Sklar and longtime friend Brad Novak filled the void and opened their museum to the public in 2019. Among the celebrities with bobbles on display: Hot dog-eating champ Joey Chestnut, Sister Jean of Loyola-Chicago basketball superfan fame, Queen Elizabeth II and Pope Francis. But of the 11,000 bobbles in the Sklar and Novak archives, about 75 percent are sports-related. And of that total, more than half are baseball-themed.

As bobbles proliferate, snippets of conventional wisdom accrue. First and foremost: When a bobblehead giveaway is on the schedule, a home team celebration inevitably follows.

“Off the top of my head, I don’t know if I can name a bobblehead night where that guy had a bad night,” said Dodgers first baseman Max Muncy, who homered against the Giants on his bobblehead giveaway in June. “It’s one of those things where when you have a bobblehead, you’re going to do something good.”

Is that a truism or urban myth? A Reddit poster with the handle “Ruth, Gehrig, DiMaggio, Mantle ... Costanza?” did a game-by-game analysis of 2017 bobblehead

MIL STEWART FOR NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM



Hall of Fame executive John Schuerholz was immortalized with a bobblehead in 2016.

honorees and determined that hitters logged an aggregate .316/.390/.465 slash line in 215 at-bats. For sake of comparison, that .855 OPS is just a tick below the number for Hall of Famer George Brett.

Some players who toiled pre-1999 finally got their due through post-career pursuits. Jim Deshaies, whose 84-95 record and 4.14 ERA earned him one Hall of Fame vote and zero bobbleheads in a 12-year MLB career, didn’t achieve bobble immortality until he moved upstairs to the broadcast booth. On June 11, 2011, the Astros gave away a bobble of Deshaies and Houston play-by-play man Bill Brown. A crowd of 32,117, among the largest of the team’s season, showed up in response.

“I don’t remember specifically, but knowing my family, I would say they viewed it as, ‘Hey, you’ve made it. You’ve finally accomplished something with your miserable life. You’ve got a bobblehead!’” Deshaies said with a laugh.

Deshaies was similarly upbeat about his

likeness on the bobble. With the advent of 3D printing and other advances, bobblehead craftsmanship has come a long way in the 21st century.

“I have an archetype – the goatee, glasses and bald head,” Deshaies said. “There are millions of us in this secret society. You walk through an airport and say, ‘That guy is part of the club. He’s a glasses, bald head and goatee guy.’ If they make a bobblehead with that look, it’s going to look like you almost by default.”

Media people and club officials make up an additional bobblehead subset. In 2013, the New York Mets distributed a bobblehead of longtime media relations director Jay Horwitz. Tim Kurkjian, a respected baseball writer and TV analyst for ESPN, has had two bobbleheads produced in his honor. The first came courtesy of a college summer league in his hometown of Bethesda, Md. The second was a giveaway by the Frederick Keys, a Baltimore Orioles’ farm club.

Kurkjian jokes that he looks like Richard



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



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

Left: Ken Griffey Jr. and Ichiro Suzuki shared a bobblehead in 2010. Griffey was elected to the Hall of Fame in 2016, while Ichiro becomes eligible for Hall of Fame consideration in 2025. **Right:** Bobbleheads have been produced to honor many beloved non-field personnel, such as 2018 Ford C. Frick Award winner Bob Costas.

Nixon in one figurine and game show host Chuck Woolery in the other. But he concedes that both bobbles nailed the overall dimensions.

“I’m sure I’m the only person whose bobblehead is actual size,” said Kurkjian, who stands 5-foot-5.

For all the goodwill that bobbles have generated through the years, they’ve landed in the eye of a few storms. In 2013, a truck carrying 18,000 Mariano Rivera bobbleheads to Yankee Stadium broke down while en route from New Jersey. Fans who were inconvenienced received a public apology from the team and a complimentary ticket to a regular-season game in 2014.

During the COVID-affected 2020 season, some glitches were inevitable. In February 2021, ESPN.com reported that an estimated four million bobbleheads destined for MLB ballparks wound up sitting in warehouses – because there were no fans at the park to receive them.

As the promotions people convene and seats start filling up again, lots of players are keeping the faith that their big day awaits. In 2015, while playing for Pittsburgh’s Double-A affiliate in Altoona, Pa., infielder Adam Frazier was honored with a boxing-themed bobble playing off former heavyweight champ “Smokin’ Joe” Frazier. He’s still waiting for his first big league bobble – even after starting for the National League in the 2021 All-Star Game. So what’s the holdup?

“I don’t run the marketing department,” Frazier joked.

Braden keeps his bobblebelly and Oakland A’s perfect game commemorative bobblehead in his office with the pitching rubber from the game and other cherished mementos from his career. Ibañez, who was honored with bobbleheads in Seattle and Philadelphia, has given away some to family and friends and signed others for charity. His personal collection

features bobbles of Jayson Werth, Jimmy Rollins, Adrián Beltré and other teammates through the years.

“We’re all kids at heart,” Ibañez said. “Whether it’s ballplayers from today, 30 years ago, 50 years ago or 50 years from now, one thing we have in common is that we grow up with this dream and have this burning desire to play at the major league level.

“Once you get there and these things happen, I don’t care how cool you are or how great you are, inside there’s a sense of arriving. We’re all huge fans of the game. We love this game. And to have a small part in the history of that game – whether it’s a bobblehead or a jersey that gets sent to the Hall of Fame – it’s almost like an enshrinement forever.”

After three decades as a baseball writer, Jerry Crasnick currently works as a senior adviser for the MLBPA.

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STRAT-O-PHERIC SUCCESS

STRAT-O-MATIC HAS BROUGHT THE BIG LEAGUES TO LIFE FOR GENERATIONS OF GAME PLAYERS.

BY MARTY APPEL

When Bob Costas is interviewed, the Ford Frick Award-winning broadcaster is invariably asked about the most memorable games he has broadcast or witnessed. And he has his list.

But in his mind, there is one that outdoes them all.

“It was the mid-1960s,” he recalled. “I was a teenager and played Strat-O-Matic Baseball against my cousin John Miller all the time. In fact, today, when we get together, we might still pull out the game.

“This one year, I was the Braves, John was the Reds. Game 7 of our World Series. (Don’t ask why two National League teams were in it.) He was up by three runs in the last of the ninth, and with the bases loaded, I sent Gary Geiger (an MLB outfielder with four different teams from 1958-70) up to pinch hit. He had a decent but not great home run probability. I rolled the dice ... and Gary hit a walk-off, pinch-hit grand slam! It doesn’t get any better than that!

“If Gary Geiger’s name comes up while I am on the air – and that doesn’t happen often – you can be sure I’m thinking about that game.”

Strat players would understand. In the golden age of board games, (Monopoly, Clue, Sorry!, Candy Land, et al), baseball had its share of entries. APBA Baseball, All-Star Baseball and Strat-O-Matic were the favorites. But Strat continues to soar to this day, in digital and traditional board game versions, for hundreds of thousands of players. (The first

computer edition was issued in 1985.)

You may call them a cult, and they would take it as a compliment. “Devoted fans” is perhaps a more apt description. Of the many adjuncts to the National Pastime – cards, songs, art, films, books, magazines, etc. – the game category has perhaps the most loyal followers of all. And none more so than Strat-O-Matic, for nearly 60 years.

“The pandemic, tragic though it is, made it a breakthrough year for our company,” said Adam Richman, the company president, whose father, Hal, invented the game. “All over America, people were looking for indoor activities. In many cases, they were introducing their homebound children to Strat and playing it with them. Our sales, both for the board game and the online versions, were remarkable.”

Hal Richman’s story puts him decades ahead of the modern swing to deeper dives into statistical analytics. He was only 11 years old when he created the game. He used 1947 statistics, which had Johnny Mize and Ralph Kiner leading the majors in home runs with 51, and Harry Walker hitting .363 to lead all batters. He took the game to summer camp



Hal Richman was 11 years old when he invented the original Strat-O-Matic baseball board game, which eventually brought simulated MLB play to millions of fans.

COURTESY DOUG DROTMAN

ADVANCED FIELDING CHART

OUT	FIRST BASE (1st base on up to 1-1)				SECOND BASE (2nd base on up to 2-1)				THIRD BASE (3rd base on up to 3-1)				SHORTSTOP (1st base on up to 3-1)			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
2	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
3	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
4	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

GROUND BALLS

1. Batter is out or fly

2. Batter is out or fly

3. Batter is out or fly

4. Batter is out or fly

STEALING

1. Stealing

2. Stealing

3. Stealing

4. Stealing

HIT AND RUN

1. Hit and Run

2. Hit and Run

3. Hit and Run

4. Hit and Run

INJURIES

1. Injuries

2. Injuries

3. Injuries

4. Injuries

18

1

2

3

15

Strat-O-Matic uses dice and probability charts to mimic MLB seasons, capitalizing on the voluminous amount of statistics available from over a century of big league baseball.

and his bunkmates loved it. He felt he was onto something.

Eventually he borrowed \$3,000 from friends to get started.

“We first marketed the finished product in 1962, the inaugural season for the New York Mets and the Houston Colt .45s,” he recalled. “It was the aftermath of the home run race of 1961 between Roger Maris and Mickey Mantle. I was curious to see if on-base percentage and slugging percentage might increase a player’s overall performance. Those statistics were out there, but they weren’t part of the standard annual publications, and they weren’t part of baseball card backs. So, we incorporated them in evaluating the hitters and were very pleased with the product. Fans began to discover us and became regulars with each new season.”

One such fan was young Steve Wulf, who would go on to cover baseball for

S GEORGE WRIGHT

cf-2(-2) e9 / r-2 e9

stealing-D

71% AGAINST RIGHT-HAND PITCHER

Power-W

29% AGAINST LEFT-HAND PITCHER

3-2 HBP

2- fly (cf) B ?

3- popout (2b)

4- gb (ss) A

5- fly (lf) B ?

6- fly (cf) B ?

7- strikeout

8- HOMERUN

9- HR

10- gb (ss)

11- fly (rf) B ?

12- strikeout plus injury

L BIFF POCOROBA

c-4(+2) e4,7,1-3/ 3b-4 e26

stealing-E

92% AGAINST RIGHT-HAND PITCHER

Power-N

8% AGAINST LEFT-HAND PITCHER

2- fly (cf) B ?

3- HBP

4- popout (3b)

5- lineout (2b)

6- popout (1b)

7- popout (1b)

8- gb (ss) A

9- gb (2b) A

10- gb (p) A

11- strikeout

12- foulout (c)

2- fly (cf) B ?

3- popout (ss)

4- lineout (2b)

5- popout (2b)

6- popout (1b)

7- gb (3b) B+

8- gb (1b) B

9- gb (1b) A

10- lineout (2b)

11- strikeout plus injury

12- lo(2b) max

2- fly (cf) B ?

3- popout (3b)

4- gb (2b) A

5- gb (ss) A

6- gb (3b) B+

7- HR

8- DO** 1-6

9- SINGLE** 7-20

10- SINGLE (cf)

11- lineout (1b)

12- gb (3b) B

2- foulout (c)

3- popout (ss)

4- gb (p) A

5- gb (1b) A

6- gb (1b) B

7- SINGLE (lf)

8- WALK

9- fly (rf) B ?

10- fly (cf) B ?

11- HBP

12- strikeout

2- lo(2b) max

3- fly (rf) B

4- fly (cf) B ?

5- gb (1b) B

6- strikeout

7- WALK

8- SINGLE**

9- fly (rf) B ?

10- fly (cf) B ?

11- HBP

12- strikeout

10- fly (rf) B ?

11- lineout (ss)

12- gb (2b) A+

18

1

2

3

15

Sports Illustrated, Time and *ESPN*.

“I used those game cards to partially write my annual scouting reports for *SI*,” he confessed. “And I would make an annual mid-winter

pilgrimage to the company’s headquarters in Glen Head, Long Island, on their “opening day,” when you could purchase the new edition directly from Hal and his team at the very



COURTESY MARTY APPEL

Adam and Hal Richman continue to produce the beloved Strat-O-Matic baseball game nearly 60 years after the first set.

factory where it was produced.” (Glen Head, a hamlet of 5,000, is 28 miles east of New York City.)

The “opening day” event still happens, and some 800 people showed up for the 50th anniversary in 2012, but perhaps the most memorable opener came at the 40th anniversary, when Hal unveiled a large blowup of Barry Bonds’ card, based on his remarkable 2001 season. When the curtain was pulled back, the attendees collectively ooh’d and ah’h’d over the home run frequency.

For someone like Wulf, it was not his first “ooh-ahh” moment.

“I started buying old timers editions as soon as they started making them,” he revealed, “and the sight of Babe Ruth’s ‘2’ column – 7-HOMERUN, 8-HOMERUN, 9-HOME-RUN, 10-HOMERUN – was dazzling.

“I can’t say for sure if I would’ve become a sportswriter had it not been for Strat-O-Matic, but it certainly didn’t hurt. I just had to squint when I first interviewed Hank Aaron because the amazing numbers on his 1971 card were blinding me from the inside of my brain. And my four children all work in sports today, which I think has something to do with playing Strat-O-Matic with me.”

The soft-spoken, gentlemanly Hal Richman, who like Christy Mathewson and Topps’ Sy Berger went to Bucknell University (where he studied math), is now 84 and the CEO of the

company. He always greets customers with humble appreciation for their support, and will sometimes play a few innings with them. Former Philadelphia Phillies outfielder Doug Glanville once complained to Hal about his fielding rating, and after careful consideration, Hal bumped him up a number in the following year’s edition, after he had a good season in the field.

When Phillies teammate Gregg Jefferies was heckled by fans for being a “5” on defense, Glanville had to explain to Jefferies what a “5” meant.

Over the years, Hal and Adam have added additional seasons to the vintage games available, with all seasons since 1871 available digitally and some 40 editions available in the board game version. When the major leagues were forced by COVID-19 to downsize to 60 games in 2020, the Richmans played the full announced schedule with their 2020 edition, and many media outlets picked up the daily results. An outgrowth of that was the 2021 edition, based on the imagined full season of 2020.

Pitting older teams against each other is a common practice for Strat players. When Don Hoak’s widow recently died (Hoak was the third baseman on the 1960 World Series champion Pittsburgh Pirates), Wulf was inspired to pit the 1960 Pirates against the 2009 New York Yankees. Hoak had an RBI double, but Álex Rodríguez hit a game-winning

two-run homer for the Yankees.

“I was a kid again,” Wulf said.

Games can be played by a single person or against an opponent and take about 20 minutes to complete. Advanced editions factor in lefty vs. righty pitching and ballpark dimensions. The company has also expanded to other sports, but baseball was the root of it all and remains the best-seller.

Hal always wanted to do a Negro Leagues set, but for a long time, the statistics were scarce. Finally, more thorough research, along with assistance from historian Scott Simkus, created enough confidence for him to develop sets. Thus, there are now digital versions going back to 1908. To celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Negro Leagues in 2020, a “Star” set was reprinted featuring 103 different players.

And yes, trades are allowed in Strat-O-Matic, meaning Satchel Paige, Josh Gibson, Oscar Charleston and all the other elite players can be measured anew in competition with American and National League teams.

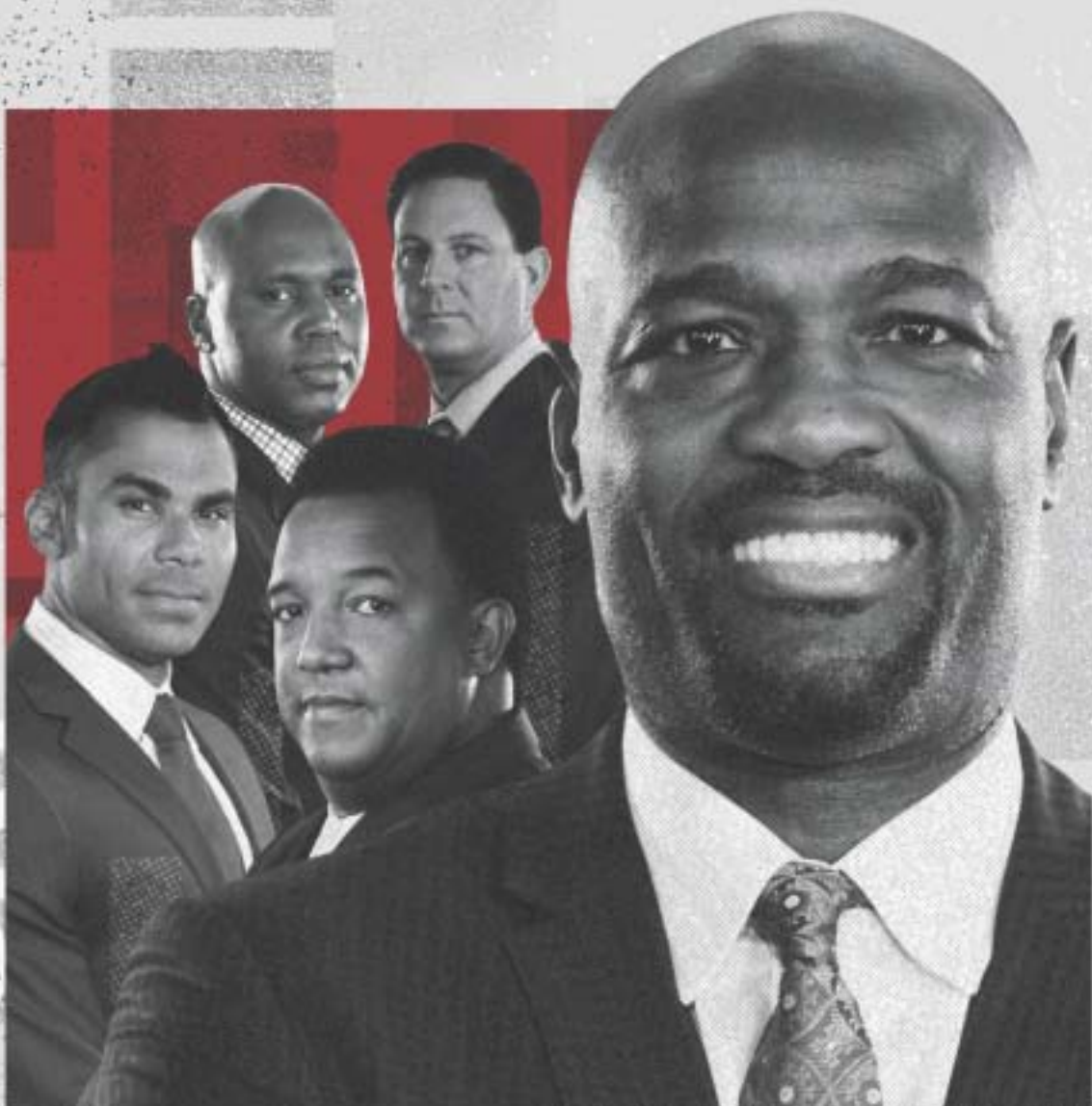
“The Negro Leagues version of Strat-O-Matic has been invaluable in helping raise awareness of the Negro Leagues and the talent of the great players who called Negro Leagues home,” said Bob Kendrick, president of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City. “We can’t thank the Richmans enough for their dedication to the history.”

That history seems to renew itself with each generation. When the Mets’ Lenny Dykstra hit a game-winning homer in the 1986 National League Championship Series, he told the national media, “I haven’t done anything like this since I played Strat-O-Matic against my brother!”

There is also a Hall of Fame set, licensed by the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, featuring every Hall of Fame player, from which customers can create their own teams and play out full seasons as they wish. The statistics for the players are based on each of their best seven seasons, and new methodologies were employed to better measure the very early players for whom modern data is unavailable.

“We have the same mission as the Hall of Fame,” noted Adam Richman. “Connecting generations.”

Magazine Historian Marty Appel’s many books include “Pinstripe Empire,” which in eBook version has been updated through the 2020 season.



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INVENTED IN A CONNECTICUT BACKYARD, WIFFLE BALL BECAME AN ICONIC GAME FOR BASEBALL FANS AROUND THE WORLD.

BY JOHN ROSENGREN

The story of the most successful toy baseball traces its beginnings to a summer afternoon in 1953 when two boys played an improvised version of the National Pastime – using a plastic golf ball and a broomstick handle – in a suburban backyard.

One of the boys, 12-year-old David A. Mullany, liked the movement the ball's perforations allowed him to get but complained to his dad, David N. Mullany, a former semi-pro pitcher, that throwing it turned his arm to jelly. The elder Mullany – who was out of work and had cashed in his life insurance to keep up with the mortgage payments on his Fairfield, Conn., home – saw possibilities, envisioning a plastic ball the size of a baseball that a 12-year-old could make break with ease.

He obtained from a friend some hollow plastic spheres originally intended to package perfume and, along with his son, experimented with various patterns cut into them until they came up with a design that had eight oblong holes on one half. The size of a baseball, it was – at

two-thirds of an ounce – only an eighth as heavy. (A regulation baseball weighs 5 to 5.25 ounces.)

They called it the Wiffle ball for the way it made batters miss (removing the H from “whiff” to make it uniquely theirs).

Today, their invention remains a staple of backyard play – and has a home at the Hall of Fame.

The elder Mullany took out a second mortgage to finance the production of a batch of his proprietary plastic balls, loaded them into the family station wagon and drove over to a local diner, where he set up shop in the parking lot, peddling the original Wiffle ball for 49 cents apiece. The following year, 1954, they moved their sales location into the city, selling the balls from a spot on Canal Street in Lower Manhattan. It wasn't long before Woolworths took an interest and started selling Wiffle balls.

By 1959, the Mullanys were operating their own factory in a small, two-story brick building in Shelton, Conn.

In the '60s, the company produced a black-and-white television advertisement featuring Whitey Ford in his backyard modeling the grips kids could use on a Wiffle ball “to throw a curve like a major leaguer.” A man offscreen marveled: “It curves and it's so safe. ... You can bat or throw it anywhere, indoors or out” (no doubt endangering many a household lamp and annoying an untold number of parents).

The company negotiated deals with MLB players to use old photographs of them on



David J. Mullany (left) and his father, David A. Mullany, are shown at the family's Wiffle ball factory in Shelton, Conn., in 2003. The elder Mullany was just 12 years old when he inspired the plastic baseball's creation a half-century earlier.

The Hall of Fame's collection contains several examples of Wiffle balls and bats. The plastic ball, invented in the 1950s, has become one of the most iconic baseball toys ever produced.





A sign on the right field fence greeted visitors to Appollo Field in Hanover, Mass., circa 1989. Appollo Field was the home of the World Wiffle Ball Association's annual tournament, located in the backyard of association founder Rick Ferroli.

their packaging. Soon faces of the game's stars – including Hall of Famers Lou Brock, Carlton Fisk, Tony Pérez, Jim Rice, Tom Seaver, Mike Schmidt, Willie Stargell and Ted Williams – adorned individual Wiffle ball boxes. Those boxes have become collector items sold on eBay, with or without the ball inside.

A generation of American kids grew up grooving Wiffle balls in backyards, but the game leapt to another level in 1977 when a college baseball player living in Hanover, Mass., named Rick Ferroli began a Wiffle ball league with seven of his buddies playing games in the replica Fenway Park he'd constructed. The league grew to eight teams, then into a week-long tournament hosting teams from outside Hanover and, finally, in 1989, to a national tournament with 32 teams.

Meanwhile, several states away in 1980, Jim Bottorff, a 19-year-old working at a summer camp in Mishawaka, Ind., organized Wiffle ball games for his campers. Seeing the fun they had inspired him to put on an eight-team tournament dubbed the World Wiffle Ball Championship. Its popularity has grown steadily over the past four decades. In 2019, 60 teams traveled from 12 states to take part.

Interest among adults playing Wiffle ball across the country has similarly exploded during that time. While nobody has been able to take an accurate census, estimates put the number of leagues in the country somewhere between 80 and 100. Some of them have been around long enough to have established their own Halls of Fame.

There are basically three levels of Wiffle

ball leagues, each determined by how hard the ball is pitched. Slow pitch dictates that pitches must have an arc, but pitchers are still able to throw sweeping curves and jittery knuckleballs. Batters use the traditional yellow Wiffle bat, which resembles a skinny plastic fungo, and in the absence of called balls and strikes, can wait for a hittable pitch.

"We want to make sure anyone can play, from age 10 to 60, in our tournament," said Nate Hansen, commissioner of the World Wiffle Ball Championship, which is a slow-pitch event.

Medium pitch allows pitches to be thrown up to 50 mph, which increases the tools in a Wiffle ball hurler's arsenal, but still allows for batters using skinny bats (less than 1 ¾ inches in diameter) to put the ball into play. A slightly higher skill level is generally on display from pitchers and batters.

Fast pitch is where Wiffle ball becomes otherworldly. Some leagues allow pitchers to scuff balls (on concrete, with cheese graters, using sandpaper, etc.), which gives them more movement and better control. The balls shimmy, dance, wiggle, jump and dart with such gusto they make an R.A. Dickey knuckleball appear straight by comparison. Thrown from a rubber 45 feet from the plate at speeds occasionally topping 90 mph, they give batters reaction time equivalent to what a major leaguer would have to a 130-mph fastball thrown from a standard mound.

Even for batters using thicker bats (up to 2 ¾ inches diameter) with graphite barrels, many of the pitches are "virtually unhittable," said Tim Cooke, director of the fast-pitch Mid Atlantic

League and the United Wiffle Ball National Championship. Not surprisingly, pitchers in the fast-pitch leagues rack up numerous strikeouts and frequent no-hitters.

While pretty much anybody who can swing a bat can compete at the slow-pitch level, and anybody who can hit a decent curve can play medium pitch, fast pitch tends to attract those whose baseball careers ended before they were ready to give up the game – whether that was after high school or in the minor leagues.

"Their thinking is, 'I want to be challenged like I was when I was in college, facing a guy who's going to throw a lot of stuff,'" Cooke said.

Still, Wiffle ball games at all levels resemble those improvised by kids. In leagues without ump's, disputes must be resolved by the players. There are usually only four or five players to a side, so everyone gets to see more action. Ghost runners and pegging a runner for an out are all part of the game.

"Wiffle ball is a backyard game taken to the next level," Cooke said. "It's the camaraderie and community that bring people together."

And that's all part of the appeal. Hansen, 38, played organized baseball into high school, but at age 15 became more focused on playing Wiffle ball with his childhood buddies. In August, he teamed up with them in his 29th World Wiffle Ball Championship.

"We decided this is going to be our thing, playing this kid's game and having a blast doing it," Hansen said.

While some tournaments offer cash prizes where the winning team can take home as much as \$3,000, for most champions there's only personal glory – and, at the World Wiffle Ball Championship, their name on a trophy shaped like the World Series hardware with Wiffle Bats standing in for the flags.

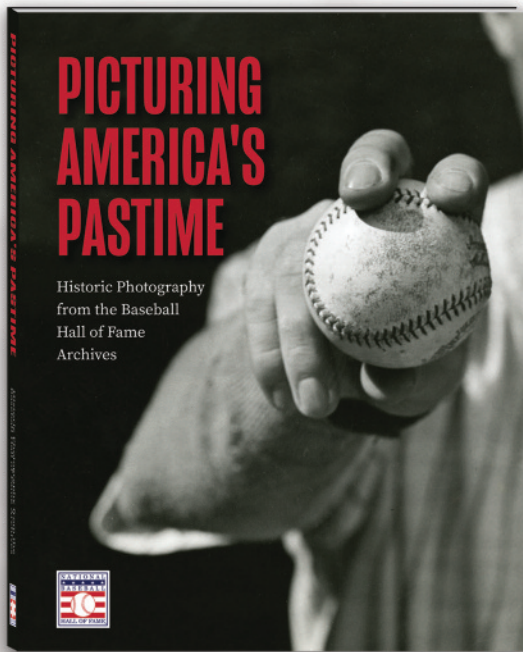
Although Wiffle Ball Inc. remains in the Mullany family – today run by the elder Mullany's grandsons, David J. and Stephen Mullany – the plastic ball with its signature eight oval cuts has come a long way since its inception in the family's backyard. David J. won't say how many Wiffle balls they sell each year other than that it's "millions and millions."

"People play for love of the game," Hansen said. "My wife's my first love, Wiffle ball is my second." 🍷

John Rosengren is a freelance writer from Minneapolis.



National Baseball Hall of Fame Books



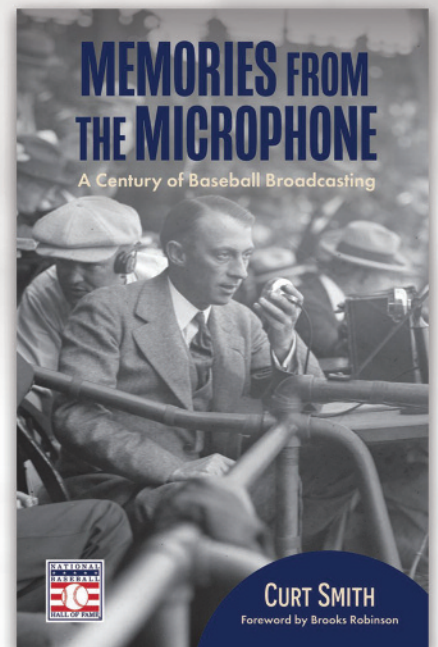
Picturing America's Pastime celebrates baseball through the unique photography collection of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. Selected by the historians and curators at the Baseball Hall of Fame, the book's photos reveal the enduring relationship between photography and the National Pastime. Each image is accompanied by an historic quote and a detailed caption, often highlighting little-known information about the photographers and techniques.

"There's no better way to celebrate the game than pouring through this one-of-a-kind collection from the Hall of Fame's unequalled photo archive."

Rod Carew
Hall of Fame Class of 1991



In ***Memories From the Microphone***, author Curt Smith chronicles the rich history of baseball over the airwaves, sharing stories that cover a century of baseball broadcasting history. Organized chronologically, the book charts the history of baseball broadcasting and the personalities that helped bring the game to millions of fans—from Mel Allen to Harry Caray, Vin Scully to Joe Morgan, Ernie Harwell to Red Barber.



"Curt Smith's knowledge of the history of baseball broadcasting and its foremost practitioners is unsurpassed."

Bob Costas
2018 Ford C. Frick Award Winner



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NAMES OF THE GAME

FOR MORE THAN A CENTURY, FUTURE HALL OF FAMERS HAVE ENDORSED CLASSIC BASEBALL TOYS.

BY STEVE WULF

An elderly gentleman is looking at the Mona Lisa. No, this is not the Louvre. It is the second floor of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, at an exhibit devoted to the sport in the 19th century. What Fred Bruning is looking at is Zimmer's Base Ball Game, a beautiful, exquisitely detailed wooden board from 1893 that Dr. Mark Cooper, the leading authority on the subject, has called "the Mona Lisa of all baseball games."

Pictured on the board are chromolithographs – 19th-century color photos – of nine players who would one day be inducted into the Hall of Fame: Buck Ewing, Amos Rusie, John Montgomery Ward, George Davis, Billy Hamilton, Sam Thompson, Cy Young, Kid Nichols and Ed Delahanty. Behind home plate is a wooden bat on a spring, and just behind the mound is a release mechanism for the ball. Each of the fielders has a claw with which to catch the ball.

Bruning, a former *Newsday* reporter, studies the game for a while, then turns to his son and says, "You know, I had a game just like that when I was growing up in Brooklyn. Carl Hubbell's Strike 3. As an only child who loved baseball, I played it all the time."

From generation to generation, from Amos Rusie to Carl Hubbell to Sandy Koufax, from Buck Ewing to Babe Ruth to Mickey Mantle, baseball has found a place in our homes, thanks to the ingenuity, artistry, idealism and capitalism of game makers.

Many of them caught on early that the magic of a big name sells. The box of the Champion Game of Base Ball, a double spinner game introduced in 1889, is graced by slugger Dan Brouthers on one side and hurler John Clarkson on the other. They are the first two eventual Hall of Famers to be depicted on a game, anchoring a roster of at least 63 players or managers who would end up with a plaque in Cooperstown.

These pastimes from the National Pastime, be they mechanical contraptions, games ruled by chance, tests of accuracy like bowling and darts, or challenges of our baseball knowledge, have unleashed our imaginations with the same spring-loaded force as that bat in the Zimmer game.

Beauty isn't the only thing the Zimmer game has in common with the Mona Lisa. There is mystery as well. DaVinci in this case was a big strong catcher named Charles Louis Zimmer, better known as Chief, who was one of the first catchers to play close behind home

plate and helped nurture Cleveland battery-mate Cy Young, who won 240 games for the Spiders from 1890 to 1898. As Dr. Cooper writes in his 1995 book "Baseball Games," "It is an enigma why Chief Zimmer was chosen to be responsible for producing this masterpiece."

But the onetime carpenter clearly had a lot to do with the 1891 game. For one thing, his picture is the most prominent, right above home plate, with "by Zimmer" on one side, and "the Catcher" on the other. For another, the lineup assembled for the game included his younger brother William, a minor league catcher. And Chief did have an entrepreneurial spirit – he designed a popular catcher's mitt. He would be pleased to know that a version of his game, which was originally priced at around \$7, sold for \$19,975 in 2008.

That was the same year that the Hall of Fame mounted *Home Games*, a special exhibit devoted to Dr. Cooper's amazing collection of games. A radiologist by profession, he had acquired his first game at a flea market in Lancaster County, Pa., in 1983.

"My wife, Lynne, was looking for antique jewelry," he said, "and I came across this wonderful tin game manufactured by Hustler Toys in the '20s. I was hooked."

A diehard Phillies fan, he started going to antiques conventions, connecting with like-minded devotees, scouring trade journals and diving into library files. In a way, collecting is like a game, dependent on a certain amount of luck, but also requiring diligence, a strategic mindset and a competitive nature. At one point in those pre-eBay days, Dr. Cooper found himself with more than 334 games and a different sort of patient base.

"Old men would call me looking for a game they cherished as a child, or their children would want me to find it for their fathers," he said. "I felt a little like Santa Claus. And every once in a while, I would meet them in the lobby of the hospital where I worked to give them the game. They'd open it up right there and start crying. It felt like Rosebud from *Citizen Kane*."

The 2008 exhibit enabled thousands of



Zimmer's Base Ball Game from 1893, which featured nine future Hall of Famers, is on display in the Museum's *Taking the Field* exhibit.

visitors to see the history of baseball through the eyes of a child.

“At the opening, my friends and family wore T-shirts that said ‘Cooper’s Town,’” said the good doctor. “Let’s see, there’s getting married,

the birth of your children and, right behind that, Cooperstown finding a place for you.”

The show also gave him closure – three years later, he sold off most of his collection through Heritage Auctions. But he did donate

nine of his favorite games to the Hall of Fame.

I am looking at one of them.

It is the Champion Game of Base Ball, copyright 1889 by A.S. Schutz. I am on the first floor of the Museum, in the A. Bartlett



THESE HALL OF FAME PLAYERS AND MANAGERS HAVE ENDORSED OR PLAYED ROLES IN HOME BASEBALL GAMES

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Buck Ewing | Roger Bresnahan |
| Amos Rusie | Babe Ruth |
| Dan Brouthers | Ned Hanlon |
| John Montgomery Ward | Connie Mack |
| George Davis | John McGraw |
| Billy Hamilton | Paul Waner |
| Sam Thompson | Lloyd Waner |
| Cy Young | Lou Gehrig |
| Kid Nichols | Dizzy Dean |
| Bid McPhee | Goose Goslin |
| Ed Delahanty | Joe Medwick |
| Charles Comiskey | Carl Hubbell |
| John Clarkson | Jackie Robinson |
| Cap Anson | Bob Feller |
| Tim Keefe | Robin Roberts |
| King Kelly | Willie Mays |
| Rube Waddell | Pee Wee Reese |
| Frank Chance | Warren Spahn |
| Johnny Evers | Sandy Koufax |
| Hughie Jennings | Don Drysdale |
| Home Run Baker | Carl Yastrzemski |
| Ty Cobb | Mickey Mantle |
| Napoleon Lajoie | Yogi Berra |
| Ed Walsh | Hank Aaron |
| Tris Speaker | Tom Seaver |
| Walter Johnson | Johnny Bench |
| Bobby Wallace | Whitey Herzog |
| Christy Mathewson | Ernie Banks |
| Charles Bender | George Brett |
| Eddie Plank | Cal Ripken |
| Joe McGinnity | Jim Thome |
| Honus Wagner | |



Whitey Ford was featured on a Wiffle ball package that is now preserved at the Hall of Fame.

MILO STEWART IN NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM

Giamatti Research Center, and Sue MacKay, the director of collections, has been kind enough to guide me through a selection chosen by senior curator Tom Shieber. Even after 132 years, the colors are vibrant, and so are Brouthers and Clarkson, who represent the Batter's Circle and Fielder's Circle spinners.

My eyes widen at the sight of Big Six, a 1922 Christy Mathewson Indoor Baseball Game. For one thing, it's huge – huge – 23 inches high and 17 inches wide. For another, the picture of Matty on the box top is magnificent. If Zimmer's Base Ball Game is a DaVinci, then this is a Michelangelo. Equally breathtaking is the spinner, around which are placed the line-ups from the 1905 World Series between the New York Giants and the Philadelphia Athletics. The situations are complicated and seemingly infinite: "FUMBLES THROW BATTER SAFE AT 1ST BASES FULL" or "PITCHER THROWS RUNNER OUT STEALING 3rd." In other words, they are a match for Big Six's brilliant mind.

There is a Walter Johnson dreidel-like top game, a Babe Ruth "Witch-E" card game from 1920, a Lou Gehrig marble game and, yes, the Carl Hubbell Strike 3 Game that enchanted Fred Bruning as a child. Jackie Robinson's Pocket Baseball Game from 1950, celebrating the NL MVP from 1949, actually works on the same spinner principle as the gigantic Big Six game.

Then there's the Willie Mays Baseball Game from 1954, a dice game with the cards of such fictitious players as "Obadiah Grange," a first baseman from Toledo, Ohio. A Hank Aaron trivia game. A Cal Ripken Fantasy Baseball game that uses a CD. And, most recently, Jim Thome's Pro Baseball Game.

As Sue MacKay carefully puts the games away for safe-keeping, she says: "Pretty wonderful, isn't it?"

Warren Spahn has just arrived.

The great southpaw passed away in 2003, but here he is, on my doorstep, in the form of the Whirly Bird Play Catch Game that he first endorsed in 1958 (when he won 22 games for the Milwaukee Braves), and that I purchased through eBay. On the package that holds two targets and a weighted, feathered projectile with a suction cup at the bottom, there is a picture of Warren playing the game with his son Gregg, who's wearing a matching 21 Braves uniform.



COURTESY STEVE WULF

The Whirly Bird Play Catch Game featured an endorsement from future Hall of Famer Warren Spahn and was one of thousands of games that benefitted from a connection with a Cooperstown legend.

There's also another photo of a little girl in a dress standing by a fireplace with the target strapped to her hand. "Have fun alone with Whirly Bird indoors," reads the caption. As it happens, one of my own daughters is home for the day, so I ask her if she'd like to play Whirly Bird. But Eve is a grown-up now, and when she sees the garish feather, she says, "I'm not comfortable with this cultural appropriation." I ask her to pretend this is 1958 and not 2021.

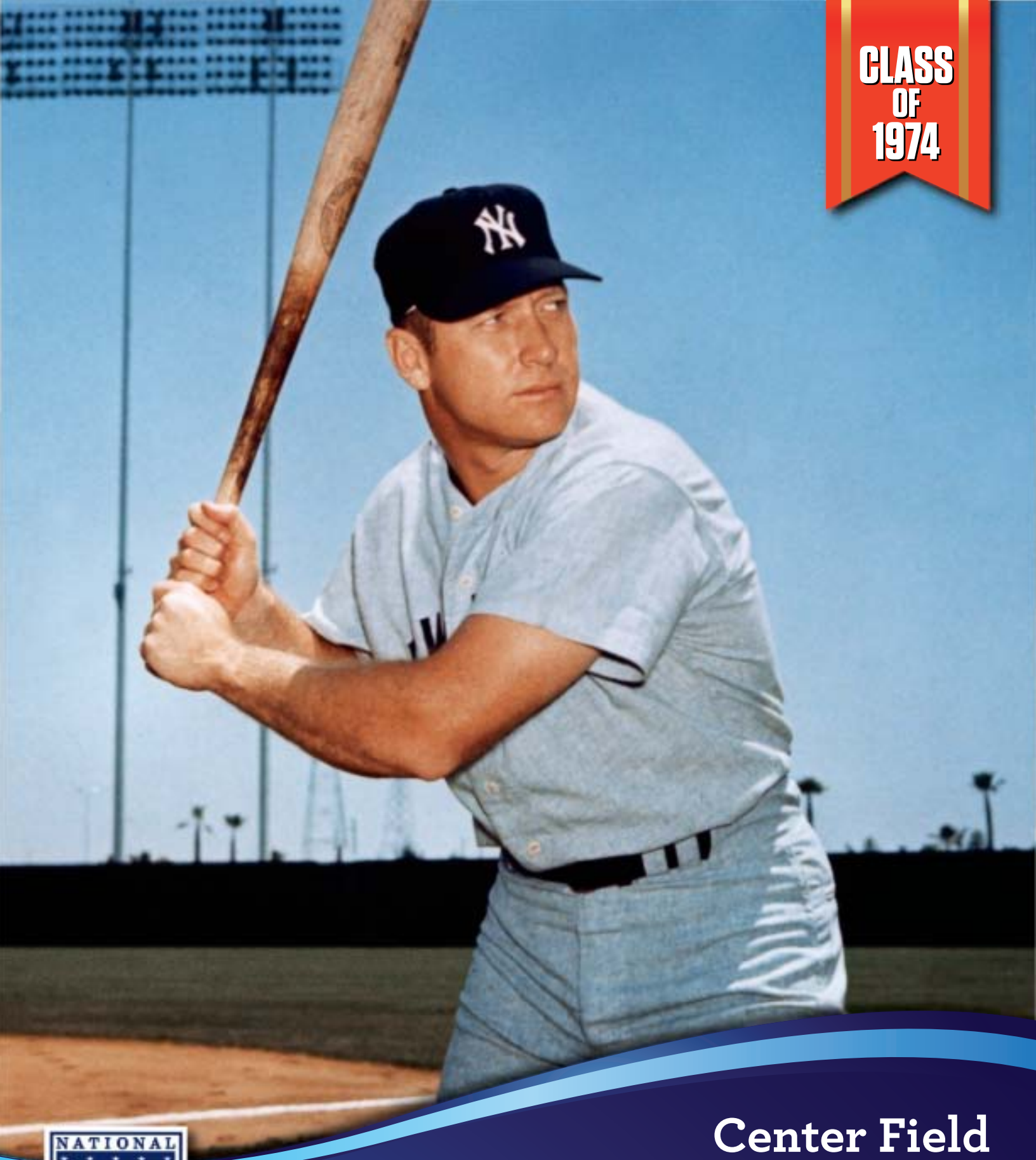
My own worry is that the suction cup won't stick to the targets after 63 years. We go outside and stand the recommended 20 feet apart and commence a game to 21 – three points if you catch it in the center, two or one in the outer circles. Lo and behold, the feathered dart does work.

And so does the magic. She shouts in triumph when she wins 21-6, and we both go back in the house laughing.

Thank you, Warren Spahn. 🍷

Steve Wulf has been writing about baseball since Hank Aaron was active. He lives in Larchmont, N.Y., just up the hill from where Lou and Eleanor Gebrig once resided.

**CLASS
OF
1974**



NATIONAL
★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Center Field

MICKEY MANTLE

MICKEY MANTLE

Elected: 1974 • Born: Oct. 20, 1931, Spavinaw, Okla. • Died: Aug. 13, 1995, Dallas, Texas
 Batted: Both Threw: Right • Height: 5'11" Weight: 195
 Played for: New York Yankees (1951-68)



FRONT OF CARD: NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM



Year	Team	G	PA	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BB	BA	SLG
1951	NY	96	386	341	61	91	11	5	13	65	8	43	.267	.443
1952	NY	142	626	549	94	171	37	7	23	87	4	75	.311	.530
1953	NY	127	540	461	105	136	24	3	21	92	8	79	.295	.497
1954	NY	146	651	543	129	163	17	12	27	102	5	102	.300	.525
1955	NY	147	638	517	121	158	25	11	37	99	8	113	.306	.611
1956	NY	150	652	533	132	188	22	5	52	130	10	112	.353	.705
1957	NY	144	623	474	121	173	28	6	34	94	16	146	.365	.665
1958	NY	150	654	519	127	158	21	1	42	97	18	129	.304	.592
1959	NY	144	640	541	104	154	23	4	31	75	21	93	.285	.514
1960	NY	153	644	527	119	145	17	6	40	94	14	111	.275	.558
1961	NY	153	646	514	131	163	16	6	54	128	12	126	.317	.667
1962	NY	123	502	377	96	121	15	1	30	89	9	122	.321	.605
1963	NY	65	213	172	40	54	8	0	15	35	2	40	.314	.622
1964	NY	143	567	465	92	141	25	2	35	111	6	99	.303	.591
1965	NY	122	495	361	44	92	12	1	19	46	4	73	.255	.462
1966	NY	108	393	333	40	96	12	1	23	56	1	57	.288	.538
1967	NY	144	553	440	63	108	17	0	22	55	1	107	.245	.494
1968	NY	144	547	435	57	103	14	1	18	54	6	106	.237	.398
18 Years		2401	9910	8102	1676	2415	344	72	536	1509	153	1733	.298	.557

All statistics are from baseball-reference.com • All bolded marks are league-leading totals, numbers in italics led both leagues and career stats asterisks are all-time records
Awards & Records: 20-time All-Star • Three-time AL Most Valuable Player (1956, 1957, 1962) • 1956 AL Triple Crown Winner

DID YOU KNOW ...

- ★ ... that in Mickey Mantle's first eight seasons in the big leagues, the Yankees won seven American League pennants and five World Series titles?
- ★ ... that Mantle's career on-base percentage of .421 ranks third among qualifying players whose career started after World War II?
- ★ ... that when he retired, Mantle's 536 home runs placed him third on the all-time list, behind only Babe Ruth and Willie Mays?

WHAT THEY SAY ...

- ★ "I honestly believe Mantle is the fastest man I've ever seen in a baseball uniform." – HALL OF FAMER BILL DICKEY
- ★ "To us, Mickey Mantle was the New York Yankees. You had to see Mickey day after day, year after year, and watch him play on days when his knees hurt so bad that he could barely walk to fully appreciate his greatness as a player." – YANKEES TEAMMATE TONY KUBEK

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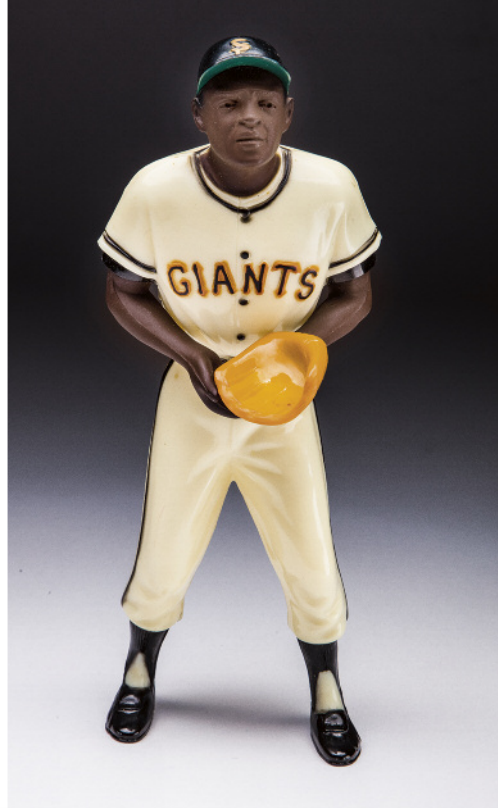
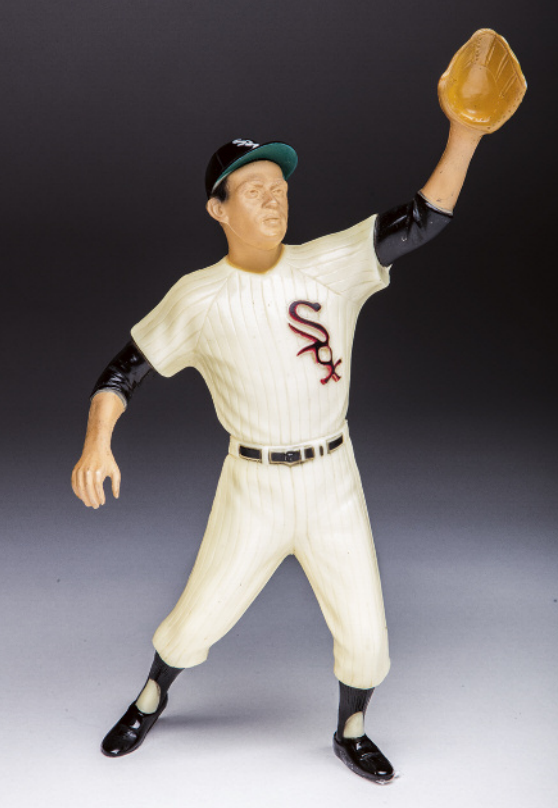


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'HART' OF BASEBALL

HARTLAND FIGURINES HAVE BEEN LOVINGLY SOUGHT AS TOYS AND COLLECTIBLES FOR MORE THAN 60 YEARS.

BY DAVID MORIAH

Throughout baseball's first century, fans who couldn't make it to the ballpark could only view their heroes through photos, baseball cards or the pages of the *Sporting News*. It was a two dimensional world.

Then along came Hartland statues.

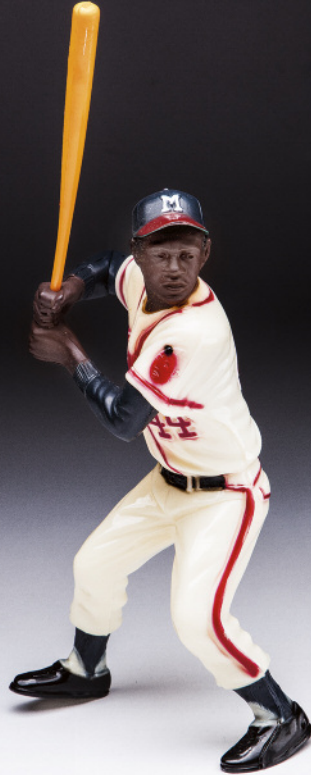
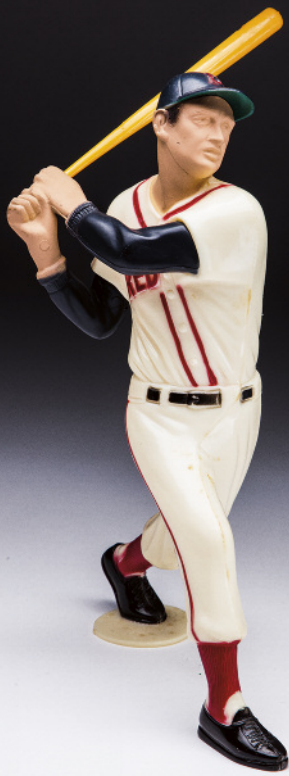
Today miniature figurines of baseball stars abound at ballpark concession stands, department stores, the gift shop at the Baseball Hall of Fame and, of course, in the almost infinite universe of the internet. Companies including Starting Lineup, McFarlane and the Danbury Mint have produced hundreds if not thousands of baseball figurines. But when Hartland Plastics quietly launched a series of

small statues in 1958 depicting baseball players in realistic settings and dazzling colors, they were the only game in town.

The story of the eight-inch figurines and the various companies that produced them under the Hartland name could be a Hollywood movie script. It features an owner who mysteriously disappeared, throwing his business into chaos; a devastating flood that wiped out Hartland's entire inventory; a lawsuit that led to the destruction of as many as 40,000 statues; and various bankruptcies and shut downs. Nevertheless, Hartland statues came back again and again over a lifetime spanning more than six decades – powered by fans' never-ending love of the National Pastime.

Hartland Plastics, formed in 1941, was a modest manufacturing company in the small town of Hartland, Wis. The company's line of plastic products included boat seats for Sears-Roebuck and front grilles for American Motors. They also produced small figurines of popular cowboys such as Roy Rogers and the Lone Ranger along with other historical figures.

In 1958, Hartland introduced a new product that would forever change the landscape of baseball memorabilia. As baseball's popularity soared in the late 1950s, Hartland released a series of 18 miniature baseball figures, sold for \$1.98 at ballparks



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

The collection at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum features 31 examples of Hartland figurines. The beloved collectibles debuted in 1958, with 15 of the 18 players depicted eventually earning induction into the Hall of Fame. Some examples in the Museum's collection include (from left starting on page 28) Luis Aparicio, Willie Mays, Don Drysdale, Ted Williams, Hank Aaron, Yogi Berra, Ernie Banks, a Little Leaguer, Mickey Mantle and Roger Maris.

and places like the once-ubiquitous Woolworths department stores.

The company had exceptional judgement in its selection of players, a factor that contributes to the statues' lasting popularity. They chose 17 active players along with Babe Ruth in the initial set, 14 of whom went on to Hall of Fame careers.

Not coincidentally, the Museum's collection features 32 examples of Hartland figurines – one of the largest examples of any one brand of artifact preserved by the Hall of Fame.

While Hartland's choice of players is one reason the figurines sparked initial interest and have maintained continued popularity, another is the careful attention to detail by artists who hand-painted each one.

Lou Criscione described the craftsmanship in a blog written for the website "Collectibles Central."

"They packed so much artistry that even today's modern technology cannot match. The muscle tone, batting stances and facial features are nearly perfect. The trademark scowl of Don Drysdale, Willie Mays' basket catch and even the chaw of tobacco in Nellie Fox's cheek were not missed by Hartland."

By 1963, Hartland had established itself as a popular product for baseball fans (the word "collector" had not yet entered the

lexicon). Business was good and the company decided to expand its offerings with a tribute to the millions of children enrolled in Little League Baseball.

A five-inch figure of a boy in full uniform with a bat over his shoulder was released as the "Little Leaguer." Unfortunately, Hartland neglected to ask permission from the Little League Baseball Association of America, which sued for trademark infringement. Hartland reportedly destroyed approximately 40,000 units before coming up with the idea of simply renaming the statue "The Bat Boy" for the remaining 10,000.

Curiously, two other well-known three dimensional products entered the toy marketplace in the same era. Mattel released the first "Barbie" in 1959, while Hasbro released "GI Joe" in 1964. Though the products had much in common regarding size and shape, GI Joe was marketed as an action figure and Barbie as a doll. The Hartlands have always been known as statues or figurines.

Hartland Plastics was in its heyday in 1963, booming in popularity and planning new offerings when Revlon Cosmetics purchased the company. Revlon was eyeing its plastic production capabilities for making perfume cases and containers. After the purchase, Revlon abruptly shut down production of the baseball line.

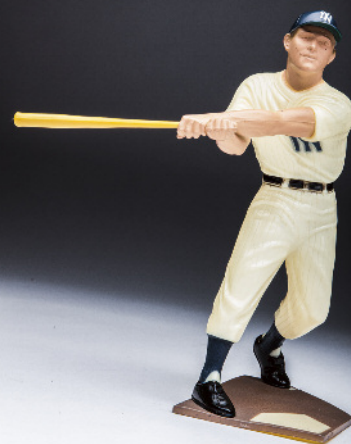
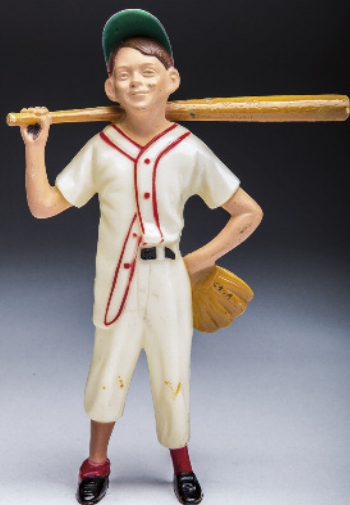
It seemed the death knell for Hartland had sounded. A quarter-century passed by with no signs of new life, although the 1958-1962 products commanded considerable interest in the burgeoning collectors' marketplace of the 1980s.

However, to paraphrase Mark Twain's famous line, reports of the death of Hartland statues had been greatly exaggerated.

In 1987, a Dallas attorney, William Alley, was browsing through a card show when he came upon the vintage Hartlands. Alley was intrigued and purchased the legal rights to produce a 25th anniversary commemorative set featuring the original 18 player statues plus the Bat Boy.

The set was a hit with collectors, and Alley's company looked to the future with plans to create a set of new statues. Seven statues were planned: Six Hall of Famers (Roberto Clemente, Lou Gehrig, Dizzy Dean, Whitey Ford, Bob Feller and Ty Cobb) and a two-person statue titled The Confrontation. The latter dramatized a manager and umpire squaring off in a spirited argument. Though no names were associated, the manager looked suspiciously like Sparky Anderson and the umpire Al Barlick.

With production under way and business booming, Alley left town on a business trip to



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

New York in 1991 and never returned. It's a mystery that is still unsolved.

As days turned into weeks, production was halted and the business descended into chaos. As a result, there were wildly different numbers created for each of the statues in the new set. Fewer than 100 of the Feller and Cobb items were produced, and The Confrontation reportedly numbered only 20 or so, making it the rarest of all Hartland statues.

The next year, Alley's wife and heir to the

business sold it to new ownership and production cranked up again, resulting in a new generation of Hartland statues that included old-timers Honus Wagner, Cy Young and Roberto Clemente, along with then-active pitching ace Nolan Ryan.

On July 8, 1993, the new company's factory in Hermann, Mo., was humming along, turning out a new line of Carl Yastrzemski statues when disaster struck. Rising waters of what is known as The Great Missouri Flood overwhelmed the plant and destroyed its entire inventory of statues. Only an estimated 400 Yastrzemski figurines made it out the door in time.

Once again it seemed to be the end of the line for Hartland. Making it even more unlikely that Hartland would rise from the ashes was the entry of several new rivals in a now roaring memorabilia market.

In 1988, the Kenner toy company released an initial set of 134 baseball figurines under the Starting Lineup label. For the next 13 years, Starting Lineup, later purchased by Hasbro, issued hundreds of player statues until ending its run in 2001. That was also the year McFarlane Toys jumped into the fray with sports figurines marketed under the label McFarlane Sports Picks. McFarlane produced prodigious amounts of statues through the 2019 season.

Nevertheless, Hartland rose again, this time with a burst of creativity and productivity between 2001 and 2009. Incorporated as Hartland of Ohio, LLC, the new owner, Fay Halliwell, was determined to bring Hartland statues back to life.

The company produced and released

the original 18 statues for the third time, generating interest from collectors who weren't even born when the originals came out. New ownership had ambitious plans and moved quickly, creating several new products, including a set honoring greats of the Negro Leagues.

In 2009, the company electrified Hartland fans by creating a statue that was on the drawing board in 1963 when the original company was folded into Revlon. A prototype of a planned Casey Stengel statue had been saved by a Hartland employee as Revlon took over. It served as the inspiration for a new Hartland of the "Ole Pefesser." The Stengel statue, limited to 200 pieces, quickly sold out and is today one of the rarest and most desirable Hartlands of all.

Just as it appeared the new iteration of Hartlands was here to stay, tragedy struck yet again. Halliwell, who had revived the business and was bursting with creative energy, died suddenly and unexpectedly in 2010. With no succession plan in place, the lights of the company went dark once again.

A decade has passed and it appears to be the end of the line for Hartland. Of course, Hartland's obituary has been written before and only time will tell if, like the immortal phoenix of Greek mythology, it will one day rise again from the ashes and create more little statues to delight baseball fans and collectors of the game's mementos.

And if not, there's always that movie script of "The Hartland Story" waiting for Hollywood to call. ❀

David Moriah is a freelance writer from Lawrence, N.J.

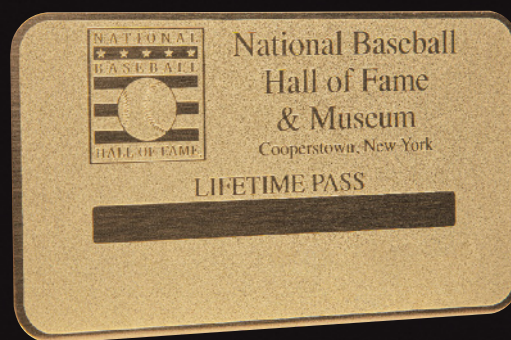


THE FIRST 18 PLAYERS REPRESENTED IN THE ORIGINAL SERIES OF HARTLAND STATUES, 1958-1962

- Hank Aaron
- Luis Aparicio
- Ernie Banks
- Yogi Berra
- Rocky Colavito
- Don Drysdale
- Nellie Fox
- Dick Groat
- Harmon Killebrew
- Mickey Mantle
- Roger Maris
- Eddie Mathews
- Willie Mays
- Stan Musial
- Babe Ruth
- Duke Snider
- Warren Spahn
- Ted Williams

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BY JOHN ERARDI

Los Angeles Dodgers right fielder Mookie Betts' one-motion lunging catch with pirouette and pinpoint throw home in early June 2021 to complete a double play at PNC Park in Pittsburgh was described in digital headlines as a "video game play."

Life imitating art? You bet. Betts' catch-and-throw certainly looked like something one might see in "MLB The Show 21."

Electronic baseball games – ranging from pinball machines (one of the first was called the Waghter Parlor Baseball Game of 1888) to the hand-held games of the 1970s and the early 1980s to the video games of today – have been flavoring the landscape for more than a century.

A pinball game in 1888? That was only two years after Brooklyn native Joe Start hung up his spikes, and he played against the 1869 Cincinnati Red Stockings, the originals led by Harry and George Wright who went 57-0 from coast to coast and made "base ball" famous.

Hard to believe a pioneer was almost pinballing.

Meanwhile, the dominant baseball video art-maker of today – Sony San Diego Studio – and the art-users – the gamers – will be eager to see Betts' video-game-like play on "MLB The Show 22."

"And Shohei Ohtani has to be on the cover," said 21-year-old gamer Brian Carl, who doubles as the junior-year closer for the Keiser University Seahawks baseball team in West Palm Beach, Fla. "Not to put him on the cover would be like not putting Babe Ruth on the

cover if there was an 'MLB The Show' [in 1921]."

The Babe rescued baseball in 1920 in his first year in New York. He led the league with 54 home runs, the same year eight Chicago White Sox players were banned from baseball for throwing the 1919 World Series to the Cincinnati Reds. Babe was only 25, two years removed from having won two games in the 1918 World Series as a starting pitcher and

having led the league in home runs that year.

Sound familiar? It does if you followed Ohtani in 2021.

During the pandemic of 2020, video game playing surged. On fivethirtyeight.com, here was the headline – "Video Games Are Having A Moment, But Sports Games Are Stuck in a Rut" – and the critical line: "Among the major sports game franchises, only the reigning champion of baseball games, Sony's MLB The Show, has escaped the season with both a sturdy (weighted average of the published critic reviews) and a solid enough average user rating."

"It's a good game," Carl said. "The thing I love about this year's game is I'm a franchise-type of guy; I'm the general manager. I can see the depth chart, not just for this year, but several years down the road. I can release and trade players, bring them up and send them down. I'm always thinking, 'How do I make my team better?'"

Electronic baseball games have been a solid part of the market since the first hand-held unit was introduced by Mattel in 1978 – an example of which is on display in the Museum's *Whole New Ballgame* exhibit. Within 10 years, numerous console baseball video games entered



This Mattel game debuted in 1978 as the first hand-held electronic baseball game. A copy is preserved in the Museum's collection and on display in the *Whole New Ballgame* exhibit.

MILO STEWART / NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM

the evolutionary chain, including RBI Baseball (Nintendo), Earl Weaver Baseball (Amiga, MS-Dos, Apple II) and Baseball Stars (Nintendo).

But here's the point: "MLB The Show" could not have happened without earlier computer games that broke barriers in technology and gameplay.

Weaver's 1987 game was the most layered of the revolutionary late 1980s games. His final year managing was 1986, and he was elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1996. He was a practitioner of sabermetrics before it even had that name. He discussed in depth his strategies with the game's designers (Don Daglow and Eddie Dombrower), which had a lot to do with why the game was so good.

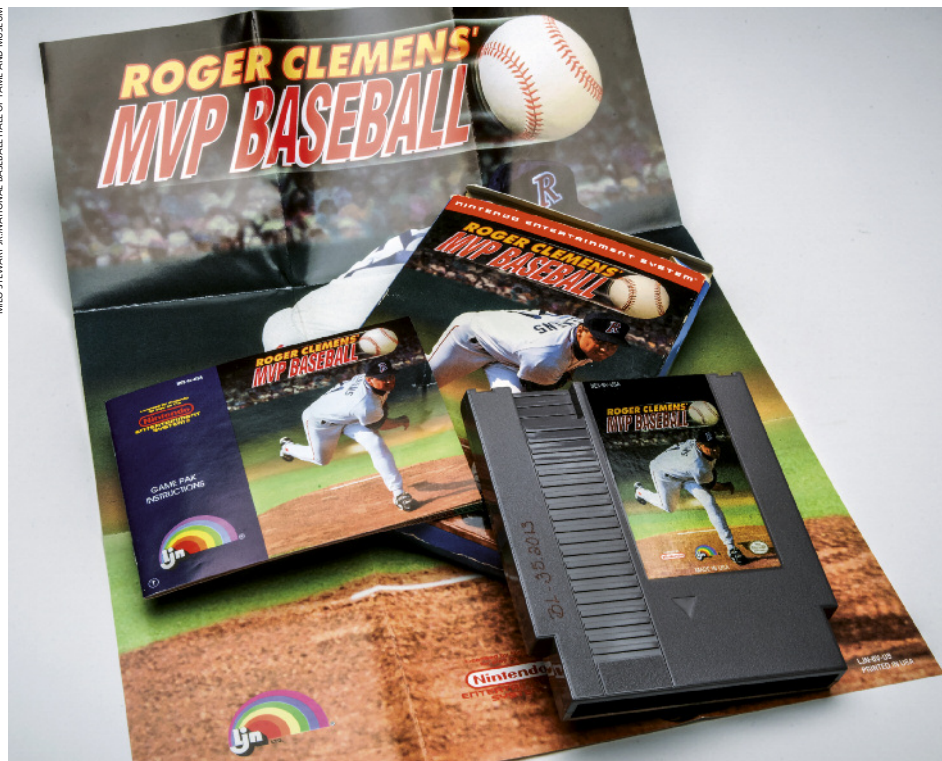
"It was the first interactive [video baseball game]; users weren't merely typing in the data and seeing the results," said Stephen Jacobs, who's a professor at Rochester (N.Y.) Institute of Technology's School of Interactive Games and Media and Scholar-in-Residence at the Strong National Museum of Play. "There are so many different levels of interactive today. You can be the player, the manager, the general manager, the owner. You can be in New York and play a friend in California. You can play in a group. You can play in a league. You can play against yourself."

Daglow's papers and hundreds of examples of electronic baseball games are housed at the downtown Rochester Strong Museum's International Center for the History of Electronic Games. The center also has the oldest known computer baseball simulation (1960), created by IBM programmer John Burgeson, who three years later tried and failed to get IBM to overturn its decision to remove his "novelty type program" from the library of its model 1620 "scientific" computer.

As an English major at Pomona (Calif.) College in 1971, Daglow designed the first interactive computer baseball game, "Baseball." It was the first baseball game that allowed gamers to manage a game as it unfolded, rather than merely picking players at the start.

Burgeson and Daglow were ahead of their time: In early January 2021, MarketWatch projected that by the time the final numbers were tallied, global video game revenues in 2020 would surge to \$179.7 billion, "making the video game industry a bigger money maker than the global movie and North American sports industries combined."

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Roger Clemens' MVP Baseball for Nintendo capitalized on the popularity of console game systems that began in the 1980s.

In 1983, Daglow co-designed "Intellivision World Series Major League Baseball" for Mattel, the first statistics-based simulation game on a video game console.

Among the other games rated highly for revolutionizing the National Pastime's gaming industry are: Ken Griffey Jr. Presents Major League Baseball (1994), Backyard Baseball (1997), All-Star Baseball (1998) and the most revolutionary of them all, MVP Baseball (2005).

And there's no way iconic Strat-O-Matic's computerized game introduced in 2016 can be left out of a discussion about baseball's best electronic products over the past five years.

In 2017, it certainly gave then-34-year-old Jared Scott of Lebanon, Ohio, an outlet. He'd grown up following the 1990 World Champion Cincinnati Reds, but had soured on baseball because of the 1994 strike and turned to hockey.

When the Reds' Scooter Gennett, who is also from Lebanon and attended the same elementary school as Scott, hit four home runs in a game in 2017, Scott said, "Maybe I'll give baseball another chance."

He had skin in the game, which is what most fans want.

The way Scott plays Strat-O-Matic (it takes him only 10-12 minutes to play a game), it's almost a video game. Not only does he have a day or night image of Riverfront Stadium on

the screen, he sometimes puts "a camera on my face that fills up the screen.

"I did it [a while back] with a two-game weekend series we played against the Mets at Shea Stadium in 1990 – those two teams had no use for one another – because I wanted to see and feel the emotion. (The Mets' Tim) Teufel and (the Reds' Rob) Dibble really went after each other in a game in 1989. ... The Mets destroyed my team in both games of that two-game (Strat-O-Matic) series. I was ashamed and embarrassed at the way I behaved."

Professor Jacobs was not surprised to hear of such emotion.

"I think what it comes down to (with computerized games of any kind) is the drive for realism," he said. "The major audience for sports games is people who want to feel as though they are playing or managing or general managing or owning the team in as realistic a setting as possible. They want the whole nine yards."

And they're very close to getting it. 📌

John Erardi's story about the first baseball game in Cincinnati and the Underground Railroad, co-authored with Larry Phillips in 2020, was named runner-up as best magazine sports story in Ohio.



Play Store

Virtually since baseball began, manufacturers have marketed toys that simulate the action.

BY JANEY MURRAY

Joe Torre could never forget the excitement he felt when picking out a brand new Spalden ball. Growing up in Brooklyn, N.Y., he and his brother Frank would collect milk and soda bottles to trade in for money for new balls, then hurry to the store and examine the Spaldeens in hopes of finding one with a hard exterior.

“We’d play with them all the time,” he told the *New York Times* in 1999. “Stickball, one-bounce, boom.”

“We did break a few windows here and there,” Frank added.

Spalden balls are just one example of the many pieces of play equipment that have captured aspiring ballplayers’ love of the game from a young age. Before they shine under the brightest lights as MLB stars, every young player has to start somewhere, whether it’s on a city street, in a backyard or on a diamond.

Spalden balls were introduced to young ballplayers like Torre in the early 1950s, when the A.G. Spalding Company decided to stop disposing of its imperfect tennis ball cores. Instead, they began putting the pink rubber balls to good use, offering them at a discount to five-and-dime stores across New York City, Boston, Philadelphia and other metropolitan areas.

The balls were officially marketed as “Spalding High-Bounce Balls,” while the nickname “Spalden” was a nod to the way Spalding was pronounced in Brooklyn, where the balls quickly gained popularity.

The balls sold for around 15 to 25 cents a piece, and city kids were eager to scoop them

up to play stickball, using broomsticks for bats, Spaldeens for balls and manholes and fire hydrants for bases.

The Spalden balls sparked kids’ imaginations to invent numerous other games as well, such as stoopball, in which one throws a ball against a stoop and tries to catch it on as few bounces as possible, and hit the coin or stick, which involves placing a coin or popsicle stick on the seam between two sidewalk squares and aiming to hit it with the ball and flip it over.

By 1979, Spalding had stopped producing Spalden balls. But after receiving numerous emails and phone calls from nostalgic consumers,

the company reintroduced them in 1999, albeit at a slightly higher price of \$2.

Willie Mays was a frequent user of the Spalden as well – though it wasn’t until he was an adult that he began playing with them.

While a member of the New York Giants in the early 1950s, Mays lived within walking distance of the Polo Grounds in Manhattan. On the morning of a day game, he could frequently be found playing stickball in the streets with the neighborhood kids.

“If you were a 14-year-old aspiring vocalist in the summer of 1941, you couldn’t just grab a couple of tenors, knock on Frank Sinatra’s window and have Frank come join you for a round of harmony. If you were a 14-year-old kid in the summer of 1951, you couldn’t just knock on Willie Mays’ window at 9 o’clock in the morning and have Willie come out and play an hour of stickball with you. Well, actually, you could,” wrote columnist David Hinckley in New York’s *Daily News* in 2003. “Mention Willie Mays to someone who happened to be a kid in Harlem in the summer of ’51 or ’52 and you’re talking about one of their teammates, a guy who knew his way around a mop handle and a Spalden.”

Mays had played stickball as a kid growing up in Birmingham, though the style of play was different in Alabama than it was in New York.

When he joined the kids for a game in the streets of Manhattan, he would frequently



Willie Mays would play stickball with local children, using a Spalden ball, during the early days of his big league career with the New York Giants.

NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM

treat his stickball teammates to ice cream after the game.

“The kids would knock on my window in the morning,” Mays told the *Daily News*. “If we got a day game, I’d be at the ballpark at 12, [so] I’d go out and play about 10.”

Giants manager Leo Durocher didn’t approve of the activity, but Mays believed playing ball with Spaldeens actually improved his play on the field.

“[Durocher] didn’t want me to get tired,” Mays said. “But it was good for me, playing with the kids was good. That’s how I learned to hit the breaking ball. Guys would bounce the ball to you, and you’d have to hit it, and sometimes it would bounce this way, that way. That’s a breaking ball.”

If they weren’t introduced to the game through the bright pink Spalden ball, many youngsters got their start playing ball with a plastic Wiffle ball and bat. As a kid growing up in Montoursville, Pa., Hall of Famer Mike Mussina was an avid Wiffle ball player.

“Before I was old enough to play organized baseball, it was all about Wiffle ball,” Mussina said in his Hall of Fame induction speech in 2019. “Even after I was old enough to play organized, we still ruined people’s yards with Wiffle ball games. There was no travel ball, no fall ball.

“I spent a lot of time reflecting on my journey to Cooperstown. How did a kid from a small town in rural Pennsylvania play enough Wiffle ball to make it to the major leagues and pitch there for 18 years?”

These days, many young ballplayers get their start by hitting off a tee – a piece of equipment now offered in many different varieties, both for advanced players and young children. The actual origins of the batting tee are varied, though some have credited Hall of Fame executive Branch Rickey, one of baseball’s greatest innovators, with its invention.

“Another gadget which had been pretty well abandoned is the hitting tee, one of Rickey’s pets,” *New York Times* writer Arthur Daley wrote in a 1956 story describing the many training tools Rickey used at Dodgertown in Vero Beach, Fla. “This consisted of a stick on a solid base. Atop the stick was a short length of rubber hose, a foot or six inches of it. The ball rested atop the hose. It could be set at any height and placed anywhere in juxtaposition to the plate.”

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This prototype of a practice batting tee, invented by Charles J. Bennett, Claude T. Christie and Peter J. Cuddyre Jr., was patented in 1950 and is part of the Hall of Fame collection. Tees became a staple of the baseball toy market as the game grew in popularity.

The tee is now used at all levels for training purposes, and it also gave birth to an organized sport for players who are too young to throw the ball well or make contact with a pitched ball: Tee-ball. The origins of organized tee-ball are unclear, though reports of games start appearing in the late 1950s.

Many of the other toy equipment pieces that dominate the market today are versions of essential baseball equipment tailored to young players: Toy pitching machines, toy gloves, toy balls and toy bats – all designed to get kids playing the game as young as possible, produced by traditional sporting goods manufacturers

such as Rawlings, Wilson and Franklin in addition to many other toy manufacturers.

From pop-a-pitch machines to velcro paddle toss-and-catch games and every kind of ball imaginable, numerous other, more complicated and advanced products are available on the market for young ballplayers today.

Yet, the toys that seem to stand the test of time the longest and continue to hold space in aspiring athletes’ hearts may be as simple as a pink rubber ball and a plastic ball and bat. 🏇

Janey Murray is the digital content specialist at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.

OUT OF LEFT FIELD

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."

Bump in the Vote

In 1971, the Atlanta Braves pushed outfielder Ralph Garr's quest for an All-Star Game berth with a unique promotion.

BY CRAIG MUDER

Heading into the 1971 season, Ralph Garr had appeared in a total of 70 big league games - 37 of which came in 1970.

But three months into his first full big league campaign, Garr had become a national name - thanks to his hot-hitting ways and a lot of work by the Atlanta Braves' public relations team.

A third-round draft pick by the Braves in 1967, Garr starred at Grambling University before beginning his ascent to the majors. He won the International League batting title for Triple-A Richmond in 1969 with a .329 average and repeated top honors in 1970, hitting .386. But a deep Braves outfield that featured Hank Aaron and Rico Carty kept Garr from claiming a regular job.

Carty, however, suffered a devastating knee injury during winter ball after the 1970 season and did not play at all in 1971, opening a spot for Garr.

Garr started in left field on Opening Day 1971, and by May 1 was batting .411 on the strength of 37 hits in the Braves' first 21 games. He kept up his hot pace through May and was batting .360 as late as June 9. But Braves fans who wanted to send Garr to the July 13 All-Star Game in Detroit found that Carty - not Garr - was listed on the official fan ballot.

So on Sunday, June 27, the Braves staged "Write-in-Ralph" day for their contest against

the Cincinnati Reds, and 15,937 fans at Atlanta Stadium came out to support the effort. "Write In Ralph Garr" bumper stickers were distributed, one of which is preserved in the Library Archive at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.

The National League even went so far as to allow fans to write in "Road Runner" on the ballot - a nickname the speedy Garr earned and one that would count as a vote for him.

Garr, however, did not receive enough votes to earn a spot on the team when balloting ended June 30. Hank Aaron, Willie Mays and Willie Stargell started the All-Star Game in the outfield for the NL, with Bobby Bonds, Lou Brock, Roberto Clemente, Willie Davis, Pete Rose and Rusty Staub selected as reserve outfielders.

Garr, who was hitting .325 with 62 runs scored at the All-Star break, was left off the roster.

"It would be wonderful to play in the All-Star Game, but I can understand being left off the ballot," Garr told the *Associated Press* in June. "I was up and down (to the minors in 1970)."

Garr would finish the 1971 season hitting .343 with 219 hits and 101 runs scored, earning back-of-the-ballot support in the NL Most Valuable Player voting. He would get his long-deserved All-Star Game spot in 1974 when he led the NL with a .353 batting average and 214 hits.

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Above: A 1971 campaign to send the Braves' Ralph Garr to the All-Star Game featured a unique bumper sticker now preserved at the Hall of Fame.

Right: Ralph Garr (right) chats with Satchel Paige (center) and Braves teammate Hank Aaron in a Doubleday Field dugout in Cooperstown on Aug. 12, 1974, at the annual Hall of Fame Game.

Over 13 big league seasons, Garr hit .306, scored 717 runs and stole 172 bases - and only 39 players in the game's history posted more 200-hit seasons than Garr (who had three).

An artifact from the first of those seasons never found its way onto a car bumper - but has a permanent home in Cooperstown. **1**

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

ITE
N

Ralph



NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM



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

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 – bringing us together and creating special memories.

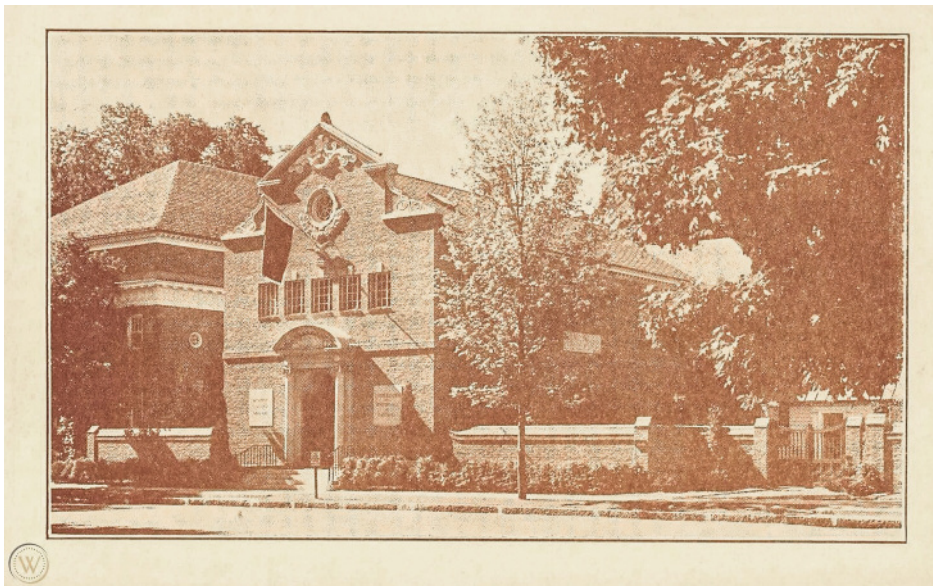
During these uncertain times, there is one thing that the entire staff at the Museum is sure of: Together we will continue to preserve the game's greatest stories – and our own baseball memories.

As baseball fans, we all have stories: Our first trip to Cooperstown, meeting a Hall of Famer in America's Most Perfect Village, 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. As we compile them, we'll share selected ones with our "baseball family."

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



The Hall of Fame opened its doors in Cooperstown in 1939. For more than 82 years, the magic and memories continue to be passed from one generation to the next.



My first awareness of the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York, came from a "history of baseball" coffee table book that my aunt and uncle gave me for my 9th birthday in 1968. Within that book, there was a black-and-white photo of the entrance facade of the Museum that was probably taken around its 1939 opening. I knew that someday I'd visit that shrine.

That day came in October 1987, when I was teaching in New Haven, Conn., and I drove from Connecticut to Cooperstown to see the destination that I had dreamed about since I was a 9-year-old child.

Upon arriving, I found parking within a short walk of the Museum. The fall air was brisk and the wind swirled multi-colored leaves around my feet as I walked up to the entrance.

Before entering, I gazed at the beautiful brick facade of the Museum, much larger than that 1939 photo that had mesmerized me. I will never forget stepping foot into the entrance for the first time and realizing that I was actually in the National Baseball Hall of Fame in bucolic Cooperstown.

Since that first visit, I have returned several times. As many times as I have visited the Museum, I am still as excited as I was that first time I saw that black-and-white photo of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum from 1939.

Kenneth D. Gallegos
Member since 1990



On June 18, 1978, my father took me to Yankee Stadium for the first time. It was Bat Day, and I was 8 years old. I anticipated seeing Reggie Jackson hit a home run. He struck out four times.

On Aug. 13, 2016, I reciprocated on a Saturday afternoon that was honoring the 1996 World Series champions. I anticipated an uneventful and relaxing day of baseball with my father. We watched as rookies Tyler Austin and Aaron Judge hit home runs in their first major league at-bats.

My best friend, Vincent, and I have been planning a trip to Cooperstown since high school. I anticipated visiting the National Baseball Hall of Fame with him for many years. My first visit,

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COURTESY MICHAEL PASTORE

Museum artifacts like the historic bats used by Tyler Austin and Aaron Judge of the Yankees in 2016 connect fans to their treasured memories.

however, was with my lovely wife, Debra, on Nov. 10, 2017. I remember as if it were yesterday how emotional I felt when I entered the main lobby and saw the statues of Lou Gehrig, Jackie Robinson and Roberto Clemente. I also remember Debra and I entering the Locker Room and seeing Tyler Austin and Aaron Judge's historic home run bats on display. I immediately took a picture and sent it to my father. I hope to visit with Vincent one day soon.

The thrill of baseball is in the anticipation. Rarely do the anticipations deliver, but the alternative memories are what make the thrill so special. Thank you for the memories.

"How can you not be romantic about baseball?"

Michael Pastore
Member since 2017

Museum Benches

Thanks to generous gifts from Linda and Peter Hantzis and Paul Pepietro, two new benches have been added to the Museum.

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

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

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

WHAT YOU CAN HELP US DO

Johnny Evers spikes

During the baseball season, Johnny Evers, the scrappy infielder with the Chicago Cubs, displayed stellar footwork while wearing the shoes shown below. His abilities as a top-notch base stealer, fielder and bunter made him the model second baseman of baseball's Dead Ball Era.

In the offseason, Evers supplemented his baseball income by selling footwear. As the owner of shoe stores in Chicago and his hometown of Troy, N.Y., he even threatened to quit playing ball in order to concentrate on his shoe business. Ultimately, however, Evers returned to the diamond, where his skills earned him election to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1946.

In 1910, writer Franklin P. Adams penned the famous poem celebrating the Chicago Cubs' double play trio: shortstop Joe Tinker, second baseman Evers and first baseman Frank Chance. The familiar refrain of "Tinker to Evers to Chance" made the "trio of bear cubs" household names for generations to come. By helping preserve these well-worn shoes, you also can help keep the legacy of Johnny Evers alive.

Estimate for conservation to be performed B.R. Howard and Associates: \$2,000

Donations to date: \$170

Support still needed: \$1,830



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

These spikes, worn by Hall of Famer Johnny Evers, are part of the Museum's collection and are in need of conservation efforts. You can help ensure they will be preserved through your support.



Hall of Famers Heroes Campaign

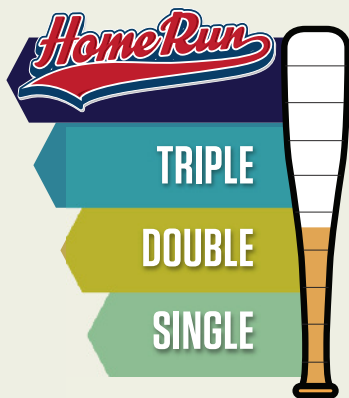
Please consider enrolling today to make a monthly gift through our Hall of Fame Heroes Campaign. Your monthly gift will help preserve the greatest moments in baseball history.

Becoming a monthly donor is easy and a recurring gift of ANY amount – \$10, \$25, \$50, \$75 or more – helps sustain the work we are doing every day to preserve the game.



The Hall of Fame Heroes Campaign is a wonderful opportunity for baseball fans to play a role in ensuring the long-term future of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. It also brings great personal satisfaction and pride.

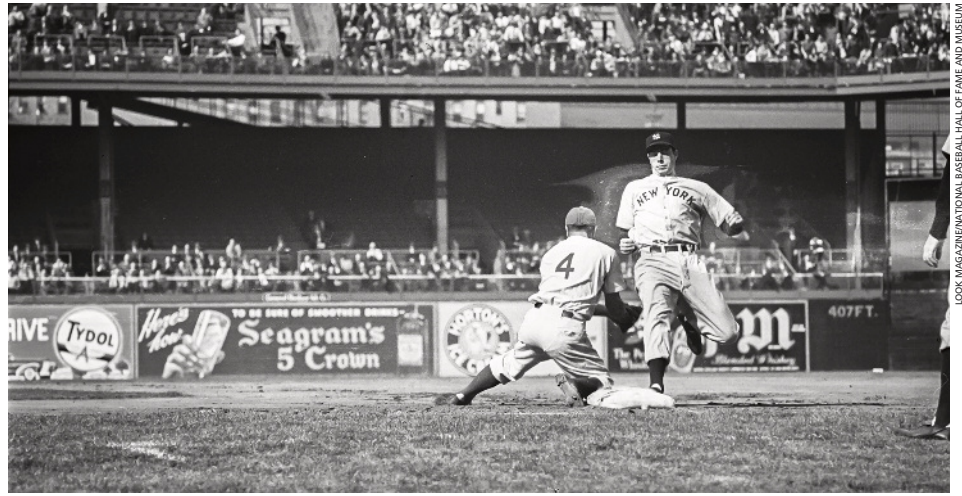
Gail and Joe Bosch
Members Since 1997



Our goal for this urgent need is to have 333 monthly donors, a number that honors those elected to the Hall of Fame.

To learn about this campaign and to see the list of Hall of Fame Heroes, visit baseballhall.org/monthlygiving.

Preservation of the *Look Magazine* photo collection



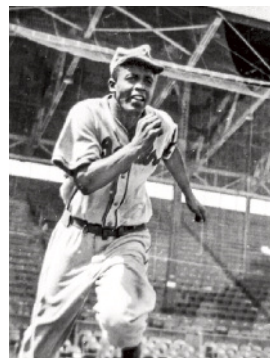
This image from the *Look Magazine Collection*, which was taken during a preseason game in April 1941, features Dolph Camilli playing first base as Hall of Famer Joe DiMaggio approaches the bag. This photo, as well as the many others that are part of the *Look Magazine Collection*, depicts significant personalities and moments from baseball's rich history.

There are more than 4,100 images in this nearly unmined collection, which needs to be organized, rehoused and conserved.

Learn more about this important program and help preserve these historic images at support.baseballhall.org/lookmagazine.

*Estimated balance to preserve the **Look Magazine Collection**: \$18,695**

**More than 40 percent of the total goal has been received as of Aug. 15, 2021*



Left to right: Ralph Kiner led the National League in home runs in each of his first seven seasons, establishing himself as one of the greatest power hitters of his era. Jackie Robinson was captured in action by a *Look Magazine* photographer during a tryout in 1945. Robinson would soon sign a contract with the Dodgers. Bill Veeck's innovative ideas kept fans coming through the turnstiles and produced American League pennants for the Cleveland Indians and Chicago White Sox.

Additional projects online

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

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

baseballhall.org/museumination

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



Jersey Sure

Research reveals Bo Jackson's final Los Angeles Raiders uniform is preserved in Cooperstown.

BY BILL FRANCIS

It was an innocuous-looking football jersey, worn by a famous athlete but with little known backstory.

But after being stored away for three decades, it took the detective-like efforts of an intrepid curator to make an important discovery pertaining to a game-used artifact from one of the greatest two-sport stars the country has ever seen.

Bo Jackson isn't a member of the National Baseball Hall of Fame. But back in the late 1980s with the Kansas City Royals, there may not have been a more famous ballplayer.

Add in the gridiron exploits of the 1985 Heisman Trophy winner with Auburn University, his time with the Los Angeles Raiders as well as his "Bo knows ..." television commercials. And with the ability to run up outfield walls and bowl over linebackers, the future looked bright for the 6-foot-1, 220-pound outfielder/running back.

To put it in perspective, simultaneously playing at a high level in both baseball and football was practically unheard of.

In the midst of Jackson's national popularity, the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum approached the Raiders for an artifact donation. The football team delivered, sending in early 1991 a Raiders signature silver-and-black football jersey with Jackson's name across the back along with his familiar No. 34, but no other details on the undated item's prior usage, if any.

In a letter to Raiders executive assistant Al LoCasale, dated March 4, 1991, Hall of Fame registrar Peter Clark wrote: "On behalf of the staff of the Baseball Hall of Fame & Museum,

I wish to thank you for sending along the #34 jersey worn by Bo Jackson, to be used in our 'Today's Stars' exhibit in the museum.

"I am sure the fans will be pleased to see this memento from Bo's football career, which only goes to prove the immense talent of the man. Together with his baseball career, he is one of the true superstars of our country at this time."

Jackson, the only athlete to be selected to participate in both an MLB All-Star Game and the NFL Pro Bowl, reached his two-sport mastery in 1989 when the Bunyanesque hero

rushed for 950 yards with the Raiders after hitting 32 home runs and driving in 105 runs for the Royals.

The football jersey wasn't the first three-dimensional Jackson artifact in the Museum, as the Royals donated team caps worn by him during both the 1989 regular season and 1989 All-Star Game, in which a first-inning homer helped earn him the Midsummer Classic MVP Award.

Fast forward 30 years after the Jackson football jersey donation and Hall of Fame senior curator Tom Shieber was researching the jersey for potential use in the "Hall of Fame Connections" YouTube series. What he discovered was as shocking as it was thrilling.

"I am certain that this is the very jersey Bo wore in the 1990 AFC Divisional Playoff game of Jan. 13, 1991, in which the Raiders beat the Cincinnati Bengals, 20-10, at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum," Shieber said. "This was the game in which Bo seriously injured his hip and, alas, was the last NFL game Jackson ever played. As far as I can tell, it is the only jersey he wore during that game.

"In short, this is the jersey from one of the most important and influential games in the career of one of the greatest athletes of our time. I believe the jersey was washed after the game, as many grass stains that are clearly visible in pictures taken of Bo during



Hall of Fame senior curator Tom Shieber holds the jersey that Bo Jackson wore during his final NFL game on Jan. 13, 1991.

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



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

Bo Jackson's jersey from the Los Angeles Raiders' Jan. 13, 1991, playoff game against the Bengals features several distinctive markings, including white marks near the "4" on the front of the jersey number, that allowed Hall of Fame senior curator Tom Shieber to positively identify it.

that game are now either gone or faded.

"Nevertheless, there are many unique features seen in photos, such as scuff marks, tears and imperfections, that can also be seen on our jersey."

As Shieber explained, it's common for Hall of Fame curators to further research artifacts prior to their inclusion in an exhibit. After discovering Museum records that left unanswered questions, Shieber attempted to try photo-matching the Jackson jersey with images he could find on the internet from the early 1990s. Early in the process, Shieber came to realize what he had stumbled upon.

"The first thing I asked myself was, 'Is this really a game-used Raiders jersey?' That was the first thing that struck me because it's extremely plain," Shieber remembered. "And I didn't know when the Raiders wore that kind of jersey, but then I thought, 'Let's just go to a game from circa 1991 and see if they were like that.' And, in fact, they were.

"Then I thought, 'Well, maybe I can actually narrow it down.' So I started looking into it, and

I came across a photo from that Jan. 13, 1991, AFC Divisional Playoff game against the Bengals."

Unfortunately, with the 28-year-old Jackson riding high at the height of his athletic prowess, his playing career on the gridiron and diamond took a devastating hit during that late afternoon postseason tilt. In front of 92,045 spectators, which included Magic Johnson, Evander Holyfield and M.C. Hammer on the Raiders sideline, Jackson rushed six times for 77 yards before his day ended with a left hip injury on the second play of the second half after a 34-yard breakaway run down the right sideline. The injury apparently occurred as Jackson planted his left leg and tried to twist away.

"It was a run that went to the left side and I was playing right. I was in backside pursuit when [Bo] broke into the secondary," explained Bengals inside linebacker Kevin Walker. "By the time I got to him, he had built up a lot of groundspeed. I got a hold of his legs pretty good and he was trying to break loose. It was nothing, really. Just an ordinary tackle.

"Once it happened, I got up and he got up

right behind me. A few seconds later, I turned around and he was on the ground again. I thought he was winded or something. I really didn't think anything about it."

Initially, Jackson's hip injury was considered minor, reported at the time to be only a hip pointer, and he was listed as doubtful for the following week's AFC title game versus the Buffalo Bills. Raiders coach Art Shell said that Jackson had a "limp in his giddyup." But the final prognosis turned out to be dire.

The injury in what proved to be Jackson's final football game was a dislocated and fractured left hip. In October, when Jackson failed his Raiders physical, his football career essentially came to an end.

The first player in NFL history to record two runs in excess of 90 yards, Jackson played 38 games in four seasons, only joining the Raiders in October when the baseball season was over. He had 515 career rushing attempts for 2,782 yards, averaging 5.4 yards per carry.

In March 1991, one of the most recognizable athletes in the world was released by the Royals

after the team determined his hip injury would not allow him to play baseball that year.

“It knocked me to the floor when I heard about it,” said legendary Royals third baseman and future Hall of Famer George Brett at the time. “I knew the injury was bad because I’d asked our trainers about Bo’s chance to play this year and they’d said, ‘Slim and none.’”

After Shieber’s dogged research efforts concluded that indeed the Hall of Fame was in possession of the Raiders jersey from Jackson’s ill-fated last football game, he shared the exciting news with colleagues.

“I disseminated this information to co-workers in the Museum, which is what I do with other discoveries I make once I feel good about something significant,” Shieber said. “There are many discoveries in which we don’t need to contact people, but every once in a while you make what I think is a pretty significant discovery about an object in our collection.”

Leila Dunbar, an independent appraiser with an expertise in sports who has worked with the Hall of Fame in the past, said of the surprising Jackson jersey discovery: “This 1991 Raiders jersey represents the promise of what could have been and how chance plays such a role in sports. We saw Bo’s greatness on both the baseball and football fields, and in an instant a devastating injury cut short a Hall of Fame career, possibly in both sports. We knew Bo, but wanted to know more.”

Much like such fictional characters as Sam Spade, Sherlock Holmes and Hercule Poirot, Shieber loves the detective story part of his job.

“I research baseball artifacts all the time; it’s just that most of the time you don’t get a really cool story. And I suspect that’s what happens with real life detectives,” he said. “If you don’t do it at all, you’ll never get those moments. But every once in a while you find out something different and it really pays off with quite a ‘wow’ moment.”

“This isn’t just any jersey that Bo Jackson wore; this is the last NFL jersey he ever wore. That is significant for any football player, but for a football player whose career ended in such a tragic way as Bo’s hits different. It’s 30 years later and people are still talking about Bo Jackson. This jersey allows us to tell his really remarkable story.”

Despite the hip injury, Jackson signed a baseball contract with the Chicago White Sox



PETER BROUILLE/GETTY IMAGES

Bo Jackson was a two-sport phenom in the late 1980s and early '90s. In addition to playing eight seasons of Major League Baseball, Jackson was a star running back for the NFL's Los Angeles Raiders before suffering a devastating hip injury.

in April 1991, vowing to return to the ballfield that season.

In spite of the long odds, the athlete with a rare gift came back for the final month of the season and hit .225 with three homers and 14 RBI in 71 at-bats. But the injury only got worse the next spring and he had to undergo a total hip replacement.

After missing the 1992 season rehabbing, he defied logic again and returned to play professional sports with an artificial hip for the ChiSox in 1993 and the California Angels in '94. He retired from the field of play for good after the strike-shortened 1994 baseball season.

In eight injury-plagued big league seasons

between 1986 and 1994, Jackson batted .250 with 141 home runs and 415 RBI.

“There’s no reason for anyone to feel sorry for what happened to me, or what might have been,” Jackson once said. “I didn’t play sports to make it to the Hall of Fame. I just played for the love of sport.”

“I can probably say, if I wanted to be in the Baseball Hall of Fame, I could have been easily. If I wanted to be in the Football Hall of Fame, I could have done that, too. But I can say also that I wouldn’t go back and change a thing.”

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

Wait No More

The Class of 2020 savors their induction experience.

BY BILL FRANCIS

It took a longer time than usual, but the wait finally ended on Sept. 8 for the Class of 2020.

In speeches crafted over two years time, heartfelt messages were relayed, thanks were offered to those who helped throughout the journey and a deep appreciation for the game was conveyed.

Despite some ominous weather forecasts throughout the week, when the National Baseball Hall of Fame *Induction Ceremony* began, it was greeted with partly cloudy skies and temperatures in the mid-70s. In other words, perfect baseball weather.

And seeing their bronze likenesses on a stage erected outside the Clark Sports Center – about a mile south of the Hall of Fame – for the first time were members of the Hall of Fame’s Class of 2020: Legendary Yankees shortstop Derek Jeter, five-tool outfielder Larry Walker and catcher extraordinaire Ted Simmons. A fourth member of the Class of 2020, long-time union leader Marvin Miller, passed away at the age of 95 on Nov. 27, 2012.

Because the 2020 *Induction Ceremony* was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 *Induction Ceremony* took place 780 days after the last induction, on July 21, 2019. So when the time arrived this year, the ceremony got underway with 31 returning Hall of Famers on stage, an estimated 20,000 excited fans in attendance and a national television audience watching via MLB Network.

Attending the induction as special invited guests were former ballplayers Tino Martinez, CC Sabathia, Jorge Posada, Tim Wallach and

Andruw Jones along with NBA legends Michael Jordan and Patrick Ewing.

Soon enough, an empty stage was filled with returning Hall of Famers. With introductions from MLB Network’s Brian Kenny, Mike Mussina strolled out to chants of “Moooose!” Goose Gossage brought a cascade of “Goooose” and Reggie Jackson arrived wearing a Jeter Yankees jersey.

After a soulful musical interlude, with former Jeter teammate Bernie Williams performing on guitar – accompanied by saxophonist Richie Cannata – his interpretation of “The Star-Spangled Banner,” a solemn moment came when the Hall of Fame recognized that since April 2020, 10 Hall of Famers have passed away. The legendary names include Al Kaline, Tom Seaver, Lou Brock, Bob Gibson, Whitey Ford, Joe Morgan, Phil Niekro, Tommy Lasorda, Don Sutton and Hank Aaron.

Amid chants of “Der-ek Je-ter” from a large contingent of the Yankees faithful in attendance, the fan favorite began his speech by talking about writing his speech.

“For the past 20 months, everybody asked me how I was coming with my speech. To be honest with you, for 18 of those months my response was, ‘I haven’t even started yet,’” Jeter recalled. “When I finally began, I had no idea. How do you even start, where do you begin, who do you thank? And, quite frankly, considering the circumstances, who am I going to be saying it to and in front of? What can I say in 15 minutes that can cover my entire career? You want to say something meaningful, impactful and memorable. Finally I just said, ‘You know, stop

overthinking and just write down how you feel.’

“Everyone asked about nerves. They assume it’s because of the speech, what I may say or not say, the number of people in attendance or watching at home. No, no. The nerves are because these guys behind me right now and all of those that are a part of the Hall of Fame family. The great thing about baseball is its history. That’s what makes it so special.”

After thanking those who helped him along the way, sharing stories of his successes and failures, and the positive effect of family, “The Captain” concluded with a message to the players in Major League Baseball right now and the young kids who may be starting out with a dream just like he had.

“This is a game that requires sacrifice, dedication, discipline and focus. It’s a game of failure, it teaches you teamwork and it teaches humility,” Jeter said. “The one common thread with all of us here on stage is that we understand that there’s no one individual bigger than the game. The game goes on. And it goes on because of the great fans we have.

“So take care of it, protect it, respect it. Don’t take the time you have to play for granted. And remember the most important thing, like I said earlier, it’s more than just a game. The greatest to ever play in the Hall of Fame family, they’re all watching. And I personally can’t wait to welcome a few of you on this very stage, just as I have been by so many others. So thank you all once again. It’s been a hell of a ride.”

Simmons, 72, was the rare catcher who could hit for average and power. During a 21-year career that saw him suit up for the Cardinals, Brewers and Braves before retiring in 1988, the switch-hitter compiled a .285 batting average supported by 483 doubles, 248 home runs and 1,389 RBI.

“There are many roads to Cooperstown,” said Simmons, who was elected, along with Miller, by the Modern Baseball Era Committee in December 2019. “One look at this very special group behind me makes that clear. For some it comes quick, and for others it takes some time. For those like myself the path is long. And even though my path fell on the longer side, I would not change a thing.”

After recognizing his family, Simmons ended his speech making special note of his wife and reciting a lyric from The Beatles.

“Maryanne, my partner, my companion,



From left, Derek Jeter, Don Fehr, Larry Walker and Ted Simmons hold Hall of Fame plaques following the Sept. 8 Induction Ceremony in Cooperstown.

my equal,” he said. “She remains the same girl that listened with me, not so long ago, to the lyrics written by some pretty fabulous folks back in the day. And those words: ‘And in the end, the love you take is equal to the love you make.’ Peace and love, sweetheart. We finally got here.”

Walker, born in Canada, would eventually eschew his beloved hockey for another country’s National Pastime. A superb right fielder – he finished with 154 outfield assists – he was also a menace with a bat in his hand. He starred for 17 big league seasons as a member of the Expos, Rockies and Cardinals.

After snapping a few photos of the crowd from behind the podium, Walker, 54, mentioned a unique connection with a fellow Hall of Famer sitting behind him.

“A couple of years ago, I fell short in the voting. I don’t do much on social media, but I did one of those hashtag things on Twitter and it read #FergieNeedsAFriend,” Walker said. “I was, of course, referring to Ferguson Jenkins, the only Canadian in Cooperstown. Today I finally get to join Fergie as the second Canadian in the Hall of Fame and the first Canadian

position player. Fergie, it’s an honor.”

The native of Maple Ridge, British Columbia, finished by saying he’d never considered himself a Hall of Famer at anything.

“Not a thing. I honestly see myself as an average guy, and I’m good with average. I’ve lived my life trying to never get too high and never get too low,” he said. “But to stand on the stage right now and tell you that I’m feeling average would be a complete lie. My feet have not touched the ground all day.

“And I’ll say this again: This honor really doesn’t happen without every single one of my teammates. Doesn’t happen without any of them. And in my eyes, every one of your names are on that plaque as well. I’m truly honored and humbled to be part of the National Baseball Hall of Fame. It is a privilege to be part of this family right here.”

Former Major League Baseball Players Association executive director Don Fehr spoke about Miller, the pioneering baseball labor leader who revolutionized the sport as executive director for the Major League Baseball Players Association from 1966 to 1982.

“It’s because of Marvin’s leadership the union became a symbol of what could be accomplished and the good that could be done,” Fehr said. “It was hard to find unions who reached that goal most of the last several decades. And that is why 39 years after he retired, his name is still on the forefront.

“Last of all, the players I had the privilege to represent, on behalf of them, and I know I speak for everyone behind me, I want to say thank you, Marvin. Baseball was not the same after your years as it was before. It was and is much better for everyone. You brought out the best of us. And you did us proud.”

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

Plan Ahead for 2022

The National Baseball Hall of Fame’s 2022 Induction Weekend will take place July 22-25, with the *Induction Ceremony* scheduled for Sunday, July 24.



Power of 10

Two Era Committee elections and a BBWAA ballot featuring several final-year candidates will determine Hall of Fame Class of 2022.

BY CRAIG MUDER

When the Winter Meetings convene this December in Orlando, Fla, more than 22 months will have passed since a new Hall of Famer joined the ranks of the immortals in Cooperstown.

Perhaps no election cycle in recent memory has been more anticipated – or welcomed.

The consideration of the Class of 2022 by the Early Baseball Era Committee, the Golden Days Era Committee and the Baseball Writers' Association of America is another step on the road back from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Class of 2020 was enshrined in Cooperstown on Sept. 8, some 13 months after originally scheduled.

The Early Days Era Committee and the

Golden Days Era Committee were both originally scheduled to meet in December 2020, but those meetings were postponed a year due to the global crisis. Then in January 2021, no candidate reached the 75-percent threshold in the BBWAA voting necessary for Hall of Fame election for the first time since 2013.

The Early Days Era Committee and the Golden Days Era Committee will meet for the first time this fall following the restructuring of the era committee voting cycles in 2016. The Early Days Era Committee, which meets once every 10 years, considers candidates whose primary contributions to the game came prior to 1950. The Golden Days Era Committee, which meets once every five years, considers candidates whose primary contributions came from 1950-69.

Each 16-person era committee will consider a 10-person ballot drafted by the BBWAA's Historical Overview Committee. The ballots will be finalized this fall and announced in the days following the 2021 World Series.

All era committees are reconstituted prior to each election. The members of the



Curt Schilling won 216 games over 20 big league seasons. He returns to the BBWAA Hall of Fame ballot in 2022 after receiving 71.1 percent of the vote last year.

BRAD MANGIN/NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM



David Ortiz (top left) and Álex Rodríguez (bottom left) are among the first-time eligible candidates who will appear on the 2022 BBWAA Hall of Fame ballot. Ortiz spent 20 seasons in the majors, the last 14 of those with the Red Sox. He hit 541 home runs and drove in 1,768 runs. Rodríguez's 22-year MLB career took him from Seattle to Texas to the Yankees. He clubbed 696 career homers and had a lifetime .295 batting average.

Early Days Era Committee and the Golden Days Era Committee will be named in late fall prior to the Winter Meetings.

The 2022 Baseball Writers' Association of America Hall of Fame ballot will feature 17 players who received the minimum required five percent of the vote to remain on the ballot and who have not yet exhausted their 10 years of ballot eligibility.

Of the candidates not elected by the BBWAA in 2021 who are returning to the ballot, Curt Schilling received the most votes, earning 71.1 percent of the 401 votes cast while falling 16 votes short of election. Schilling will be on the BBWAA ballot for the 10th-and-final time.

Other candidates returning to the ballot include (in order of 2021 vote percentage, with 2022 year on the ballot): Barry Bonds (61.8 percent, on ballot for 10th-and-final year), Roger Clemens (61.6, 10th-and-final year), Scott Rolen (52.9, fifth year), Omar Vizquel (49.1, fifth year), Billy Wagner (46.4, seventh year), Todd Helton (44.9, fourth year), Gary Sheffield (40.6, eighth year), Andruw Jones (33.9, fifth year), Jeff Kent (32.4, ninth year), Manny Ramírez (28.2, sixth year), Sammy Sosa (17.0, 10th-and-final year), Andy Pettitte (13.7, fourth year), Mark Buehrle (11.0, second year), Torii Hunter (9.5, second year), Bobby Abreu (8.7, third year) and Tim Hudson (5.2, second year).

First-time eligible candidates for the BBWAA Hall of Fame ballot for 2022 include Carl Crawford, Prince Fielder, Ryan Howard, Tim Lincecum, Joe Nathan, David Ortiz, Álex Rodríguez, Jimmy Rollins and Mark Teixeira. The 2022 BBWAA Hall of Fame ballot will be announced in November.

The 2022 Hall of Fame *Induction Ceremony* is scheduled for July 24 on the grounds of the Clark Sports Center in Cooperstown. 📍

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

BALL GAME

Video games bring families closer to the National Pastime.

BY JIM THOME

There's no better activity than stepping outside and hitting a few balls with friends, or throwing the ball around for a game of catch. But for a lot of people, especially kids like my son, Landon, baseball video games come close.

I get it. Video games can be a lot of fun. And my favorite video games as a kid were also baseball games. But they've come a long way since I was Landon's age!

When I was in high school, in the mid-1980s, I was playing R.B.I. Baseball on Atari, believe it or not. I absolutely loved playing with the Red Sox and the Cardinals. The Red Sox mashed – Tony Armas and Dwight Evans were



RON VESELO/NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM



JON SHEYAKOFF/NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM

Hall of Famer Jim Thome shares a moment with his son, Landon, at the Field of Dreams site in Dyersville, Iowa.

on that team. And with the Cardinals, I would hit ground balls and beat them out. Those were my two teams on Atari R.B.I.

Right now, Landon's go-to game is MLB The Show 21. He's been playing it for about four years now, and he'll tell you that each year's version of The Show is better than the last, so this year's version, 21, is the best.

What's really neat about MLB The Show is that it has some old players, and a bunch of Hall of Famers who can be added to teams, so I'm in that game, and Landon has me on his team! "He's good!" Landon said one day, as if he were surprised.

It doesn't happen often, but sometimes the two of us will play a game of MLB The Show against each other. He always beats me. My favorite part of the game is the strategy, like how to use my relievers. Landon's great on defense. He catches everything – and hits really well.

Landon loves baseball as much as I do. It's a joy for me to be able to coach him and his teammates on their youth baseball teams. In youth baseball, a lot of kids come up to me and say, "I used you in MLB The Show." It was really a cool kind of thing to know that these kids see me in the games they play today.

People ask me if I've ever played a game of MLB The Show as myself. The truth is, I haven't had the chance! I can't play as myself because I'm on Landon's team, and each player can only be on one team. Every time I play the game, it's against Landon, and because Landon has me on his team's roster, I've played against myself but never as myself.

As a big leaguer, I was never a guy who played video games in the clubhouse. And when my career started, that really wasn't even an option. But toward the end of my career, by 2010 or 2012, guys were playing video games in the clubhouse almost every day – and some of them played the baseball games that were popular at the time.

Baseball video games became a part of the everyday for a lot of ballplayers, and Landon and his friends make me think baseball video games will be a part of the game for the next generations of ballplayers, too. 🏆

Jim Thome was elected to the Hall of Fame in 2018.

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