



Brooks Robinson

From the time Brooks Robinson made his Major League debut in 1955 until he retired as a player in 1977, Brooks added a new dimension to the position he played. Known as “The Human Vacuum Cleaner”, it has been said that he was the best third baseman to ever play the game. During his tenure, the Baltimore Orioles had the best record in all of baseball. However it was far more than his playing ability that made Brooks Robinson stand out above the crowd.

Brooks Calbert Robinson was born on May 18, 1937 in Little Rock Arkansas. He started his professional career, fresh out of Arkansas, as a second baseman in York, PA in the Piedmont League. It was his manager at York, George Staller, who recommended that Brooks be moved to third base. Later that same year, he made his Orioles debut under Manager-General Manager Paul Richards.

Richards inserted him into the lineup as a replacement for rookie Kal Segrist, who was scratched because of an injury. The date was September 17, 1955 and Brooks went 2-for-4 against the Senators while driving in a key run in the 8th inning. This was just the beginning of a long and successful career as the Baltimore Orioles third baseman.

Those who have lived in the Baltimore area have had the distinct opportunity to see him play for his only team, and to know him better through his community involvement. He has lived in the Baltimore area for over 45 years with his wife Connie. They have four children and eight grandchildren.

American and Major League Records

When he retired, Brooks held major league records for most hits (2,848), most games (2,871), most seasons (23), most chances (8,902), most putouts (2,697) most assists (6,205), most double plays (618), most seasons leading league in games (8), and most seasons leading league in assists (8) for third basemen. He held the American League record for most seasons leading in fielding percentage (11), most games season (163) twice, and most sacrifice flies (114).

All-Star Play

Brooks played in 18 consecutive All-Star games from 1960 through 1974 (including 2 each in '60, '61, & '62), and started in 11 of them. He had a .289 lifetime All-Star average and was selected MVP in the 1966 game at St. Louis. In 1971, he polled more votes than any other American League player.



Championship and World Series Games

In the 1970 World Series vs. the Cincinnati Reds, Brooks was named the Most Valuable Player by acclamation. His defense was virtually flawless and he tied the record for most hits (9) in a five game series. He also contributed six RBI's, two doubles and two home runs. In all, Brooks played in five Championships and four World Series. This added up to 39 games, of which the Orioles won 30 for a dynasty-like winning percentage of .769. Brooks batted an impressive .303 while driving in the game winning run, a club record 7 times.

Major awards and honors

Brooks won 16 straight Gold Gloves from 1960 through 1975 as the best third baseman in the American League. He was the American League MVP in 1964, finished second in the voting in 1966 and third in both 1960 and 1965. He was the MVP in the 1966 All-Star Game, the 1970 World Series, and Most Valuable Oriole in 1960, 1962, 1964 and 1971. He and Frank Robinson were the first to be elected to the new Orioles Hall of Fame in 1977. In 1983, Brooks was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame on the first ballot with 91.88% of the votes.

He was the 1972 winner of the Roberto Clemente Award as the player who best exemplifies the game of baseball, both on and off the field. In 1971, he was awarded the Hickok Belt, emblematic of his selection as the Outstanding Professional Athlete of the Year nationally. In 1999, Brooks was elected to Major League Baseball's All Century Team, honoring the best 25 players in baseball during the 20th century. In 2000, he received the distinguished Congressional Medal of Honor's Patriot Award (past recipients include Bob Hope, Ronald Regan and Bob Dole).

Assorted facts

- Played in 2,896 games for the Orioles
- For 15 years (1960-1974), Brooks played in 98% of all Oriole games
- Along with Carl Yastrzemski, Brooks shares the record of playing the longest number of years for one team (23).
- Hit six grand slam home runs
- Had eight straight hits on two occasions
- Lead the AL in RBI's in 1964 with 118 and a career high 28 home runs
- Hit a home run off of Dodger's Don Drysdale in his first World Series at bat in 1966
- Hit his 268th and last home run in dramatic fashion on April 19, 1977 against the Cleveland Indians. It was a three-run pinch hit in the 10th inning off of Dave LaRoche that gave the Orioles a 6-5 victory.