

## FALLEN IDOLS

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January 22, 2021 was a sad day for baseball fans. We were greeted with the news that Hank Aaron had passed away in his sleep, two weeks before his 87<sup>th</sup> birthday. He was the tenth member of the National Baseball Hall of Fame to pass away in a ten-month period starting in April 2020. He was the greatest home run hitter of all time, breaking Babe Ruth's career record of 714 home runs in 1974 and holding it until the steroid-aided Barry Bonds broke it in 2007.

Aaron finished the 1973 season one home run short of Babe Ruth's record. During that season and the off-season that followed, Aaron was the recipient of much hate mail and many death threats from those who did not want to see a baseball icon's record broken by a black man.

Aaron tied Ruth's record in Cincinnati on Opening Day, April 4, 1974. Marty Brennaman made the call in the first inning of his first Reds broadcast. Aaron broke the record at home in Atlanta on April 8<sup>th</sup> against the Dodgers. Vin Scully, the greatest baseball broadcaster of all time, made the following call:

"What a marvelous moment for baseball; what a marvelous moment for Atlanta and the state of Georgia; what a

marvelous moment for the country and the world. A black man is getting a standing ovation in the Deep South for breaking a record of an all-time baseball idol. And it is a great moment for all of us, and particularly for Henry Aaron ... And for the first time in a long time, that poker face in Aaron shows the tremendous strain and relief of what it must have been like to live with for the past several months.”

Within three months of starting his career with the Indianapolis Clowns of the Negro League, Aaron received two offers from major league clubs – one from the New York Giants and one from the Boston Braves. The Braves offered \$50 more per month, the only thing that prevented Aaron and Willie Mays from being teammates. In 1976, Aaron’s final season, he was the last Negro League player on a major league roster.

When Aaron retired, he was the career leader in home runs, extra base hits, and runs batted in. He was an All Star 21 times. In his retirement, he served in the front office of the Atlanta Braves and received many honorary degrees and awards, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2002.

Aaron’s passing capped off what had been a sad year for baseball fans. Because of the pandemic, the 2020 season was interrupted in the middle of spring training, and subsequently shortened to 60 games, with no fans in the stands. The rhythm of the year was disrupted for those of us who believe the year runs in two roughly equal parts: baseball, or spring training through the

World Series, and the void, the rest of the year. More importantly, especially for those who enjoy the history of the game, the deaths of ten members of the National Baseball Hall of Fame in ten months added to the grief so many of us felt. Losing these nine ballplayers, and one legendary manager, reminded me not only of my youth, but also of my own mortality. I grew up watching these men play ball. They were part of a bygone era when baseball really was the national pastime. They left indelible marks on the game. These men were the heroes of their hometown fans, and we all want our heroes to last forever.

Never had the Hall of Fame lost as many members in such a short period, and never had it lost a group with such stellar achievements. While less than 20% of all Hall of Famers have been elected in their first year on the ballot, six of the nine players we lost, as well as the one manager, were first ballot Hall of Famers. They were the very best baseball has had to offer for decades.

Al Kaline, known as “Mr. Tiger,” because he spent 67 years with the Detroit Tigers organization, died in April 2020 at 85 years of age. He went straight to the majors from high school, never playing in the minor leagues. At 20 years of age, he was the American League batting champion, the youngest in history, a mark that still holds today. He was the twelfth player to reach the 3,000 hits milestone, played in 18 All Star games and won a World Series in 1968. He played for 22 seasons and was the

Tigers color commentator for almost thirty years following his retirement.

Beloved Mets ace Tom Seaver died on August 31 at 75 years of age, and I will have more to say about him shortly.

Barely a week later, Lou Brock, one of the game's greatest base-stealers, passed away at the age of 81. Brock began his career with the Cubs but was traded to the Cardinals early in their 1964 World Championship season. Starting in 1966 he led the league in stolen bases in eight of the next nine years. In 1974, at the age of 35, he established a new single season modern day record of 118 steals, and he went on to break Ty Cobb's career stolen base record. He was the fourteenth player to reach 3,000 hits, and he played on three Cardinal pennant winners and two World Championship teams.

Then, in a nine-day span from October 2nd to 11th, Cardinal flamethrower Bob Gibson, Yankee legend Whitey Ford, and two-time Reds Most Valuable Player, Joe Morgan, all passed away at 84, 91, and 77 years of age, respectively. As with Seaver, I will have more to say about Whitey Ford shortly.

Bob Gibson was one of the fiercest competitors to play the game. Known for his menacing glare, he won 251 games, completing more than half of the games he started. He won two Cy Young awards, given to the best pitcher in baseball, and also won the

Most Valuable Player award in 1968, a rarity for a pitcher, when he set the Earned Run Average record that still stands today at 1.12 runs allowed per nine innings. Major League baseball lowered the pitching mound from 15 inches to 10 inches the following year to give hitters a fighting chance.

Johnny Bench refers to Joe Morgan as the engine of the Big Red Machine. Traded to the Reds from Houston after the 1971 season, he played for the Reds for eight years, earning the Most Valuable Player award in both the 1975 and 1976 World Championship seasons. Known as Little Joe, he was a run-producing force at the plate and on the bases. *The Bill James Historical Baseball Abstract*, a seminal book on analytics, rates Morgan as the greatest second baseman ever. In retirement, Morgan had many business interests and was a fixture on ESPN Sunday Night Baseball.

In the last week of 2020, knuckleballer Phil Niekro died at the age of 81. Niekro had a 24-year major league career, almost all with the Milwaukee and Atlanta Braves, and won 318 games. As the calendar turned to January, we lost Tommy Lasorda, who spent seven decades in the Dodgers organization as a player, coach, manager, and executive. Known for his big personality, he passed away at the age of 93. He won seven division championships, four pennants, and two World Series in his 21 years as a manager. Later that month, Don Sutton, a Dodger pitcher for most of his career, including five years with Lasorda as his manager, passed away at the age of 75. Sutton had a 23-year major league

career and won 324 games. To give you an idea of the Hall of Fame standards, Niekro and Sutton are two of only 24 pitchers to win 300 games, and neither of them was elected to the Hall of Fame until the fifth ballot.

The last of the ten men to pass away in this ten-month period, was “Hammerin Hank” Aaron, the greatest player of them all, leaving only 76 living Hall of Famers.

My love affair with baseball began when I was a kid, and then a young man, growing up in Stamford, Connecticut, and later New York City. Not only was baseball known as the great American pastime, but it was also the country’s dominant sport until at least the late 1960’s. Its heroes were household names. I felt like I knew each of the Hall of Famers that we lost in this ten-month period. I was a passionate fan of the New York teams, and, like Ford and Seaver, they either played for one of my teams or they were very worthy adversaries, sometimes bringing misery to my teams.

My path to becoming a devoted Yankees fan began in 1959 when I was eight and attended my first major league game. The mother of my best friend, Tommy Mandeville, was a baseball fanatic and took us to Yankee Stadium to see the Yankees play the Senators. My first memory of Yankee Stadium is that it was a big place with a very distinct atmosphere – the air filled with the thick smoke of cigars and cigarettes, loud and obnoxious fans, vendors hawking Ballantine Beer at the top of their lungs, and hot dog wrappers

blowing all over. It was an exciting, as well as a somewhat intimidating, experience for an eight-year-old.

The Yankees failed to make it to the World Series that year for only the second time in the 1949 – 1964 period. The first Yankees World Series I remember was the following year in 1960 against the Pittsburgh Pirates. Despite outscoring the Pirates by 55 – 27, the Yankees lost the Series four games to three when Bill Mazeroski hit a game winning home run in the bottom of the ninth inning of Game 7. I call it a game winning home run because the term we use today, “walk-off home run,” did not come into existence until the late 1980’s and only attained widespread use in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Call it what you will, it left me very disappointed.

The Yankees went to the World Series in each of the next four years, beating the Reds and the Giants in 1961 and 1962, and losing to the Dodgers and Cardinals in 1963 and 1964. Our family had moved to Holland for a year towards the end of the 1961 season, so I missed Roger Maris hitting his record-breaking 61<sup>st</sup> home run but I was able to listen to the World Series with the Reds that year on Armed Forces radio. Because of the five-hour time difference, I got to experience World Series baseball at night, ten years ahead of the first regularly scheduled World Series night game. I kept the radio under my pillow and out of my mother’s earshot.

I was fortunate to attend my first World Series game in 1964 at Yankee Stadium, a game the Cardinals won 4 – 3 on a grand slam by Ken Boyer, Cardinals third baseman, and brother of Cleve Boyer, the Yankees third baseman. That Cardinals team included two of the Hall of Famers who passed away in 2020, Lou Brock and Bob Gibson. The Most Valuable Player for the series was Bob Gibson, who had two complete game victories, including a Game 5 ten inning complete game, and a deciding Game 7 complete game on two days' rest.

Whitey Ford who played for all these Yankee teams was an icon to me. He was 91 when he passed away, but his loss was particularly saddening as he provided me with some of the best memories of my childhood. He played for a perennial winner and, when the pressure was greatest, he always rose to the occasion.

Like almost every other Yankees fan, Mickey Mantle was my favorite Yankee growing up. But Whitey Ford was the ace of the pitching staff. When the cagey left-hander was on the mound, you knew it was going to be a good day for the Yankees. Ford surprisingly was not elected to the Hall of Fame until the second ballot, but as a result, he and Mickey Mantle were inducted into the Hall of Fame together in 1974, fittingly the only two members of the 1974 class.

Ford was the quintessential native New Yorker: brash, and full of guile and chutzpah. Baseball cards for the 1950's and 1960's show a completely self-satisfied fair-haired man – hence the

nickname – peering out of the frame with cool, calculating eyes. He was born on East 66<sup>th</sup> Street. His father worked at Con Edison, tended bar, and played semi-pro baseball, and his mother was a bookkeeper at A & P. The family moved to Astoria, Queens when he was six years old. Ford claimed he became a Yankees fan at 5 years of age. He grew up idolizing Joe DiMaggio. Though he lived in Astoria, he traveled an hour by bus to Manhattan High School of Aviation Trades because his neighborhood high school did not have a baseball team. This street-smart wise-cracking kid from Queens was signed by the Yankees in 1947, and after a couple of minor league seasons and a two-year stint in the Army right after his 1950 rookie season, he went on to become the greatest pitcher in Yankees history.

Ford was already an established star when I became a Yankee fan, but some of his best years covered the 1960-1964 World Series run. Whitey was at his best in the World Series. Along with Sandy Koufax and Bob Gibson, he is considered one of the greatest World Series pitchers. Over the course of three World Series from 1960 to 1962 Ford broke Babe Ruth's scoreless innings record, set when Ruth was pitching for the Red Sox, with a new mark of 33 scoreless innings, and he holds the record for pitchers with the most World Series wins.

For 15 years, Ford was the anchor of the Yankees pitching staff. Playing on 11 pennant-winners and six World Series champions, he was known as "Chairman of the Board" for his masterful pitching and big-game brilliance. Among his many career

accomplishments, Ford won the Cy Young Award in 1961 as baseball's best pitcher, and he holds the highest winning percentage of any pitcher with 200 wins in the modern era. Walt Dropo, who edged out Ford for Rookie of the Year in 1950, remembered facing Ford his first season with the Red Sox, saying "He was like a master chess player who used his brain to take the bat right out of my hands."

Off the field, Ford enjoyed late nights out on the town. In the late 1950's Ford, Mickey Mantle and Billy Martin were known as the New York City version of the Rat Pack. Whenever the Yankees clinched the pennant more than a couple of days before the World Series started, the front office would hire detectives to monitor their off-the-field activities. At the Hall of Fame induction ceremony in 1974, Mantle, the country boy from Oklahoma, was asked about his friendship and the chemistry he shared with Ford, who grew up on the streets of Queens. "We both liked Scotch," he said.

Ford retired two months into the 1967 season. He had undergone surgery at the end of the 1964 season, and while he had a good year in 1965, he was subsequently plagued by circulatory and elbow problems. His uniform number 16 was retired in 1974 and he was later given a plaque in Yankee Stadium's Monument Park. He remained close to the Yankees, serving them over the years as a broadcaster, roving instructor, major league pitching coach, spring training instructor, and scout. Stricken by Alzheimer's disease in his later years, he passed away two weeks shy of his

92<sup>nd</sup> birthday at his Long Island home, surrounded by his family, watching the Yankees play the Tampa Bay Rays in Game 4 of the 2020 Division Series playoffs. The Yankees won the game but, without the Chairman of the Board rooting for them, they went on to lose the series.

Growing up in New York, I thought the Yankees had a birthright to reach the World Series every year, even if they did not always come out on top. So, it came as a shock when, starting in 1965, the team descended into three straight losing seasons and failed to reach another World Series until 1976 when they were swept in four games by a Reds team that included Joe Morgan, another Hall of Famer we lost in 2020.

CBS had purchased the Yankees in the middle of the 1964 season. They declined to give Yankee icon Yogi Berra a second year as manager of the team, firing him after the Yankees lost the World Series. Among other notable firings was the famed announcer, Red Barber, who began his broadcasting career with the Reds. His transgression was committed near the end of the 1966 season, when he asked the TV cameras to pan the empty stands as he commented on the paid crowd of less than five hundred fans. Ultimately, CBS realized they were better at running a television network than a baseball team, and they sold the team to George Steinbrenner in 1973.

In New York we were fortunate to have two teams, and while today, fans tend to favor one or the other team, in the 1960's and

1970's it was permissible to root for both. The Mets' inaugural season was 1962 and restored to New York a national league team after the Giants and Dodgers had left for the West Coast following the 1957 season. In their first season, the Mets lost more games than any team since 1899. In their first four seasons, they averaged 113 losses. Casey Stengel, who managed the Mets for their first four years, referred to the team as the "Amazin Mets," because they were amazingly bad. They were also known as the "Lovable Losers," lovable as their popularity resulted in their attendance exceeding the Yankees starting in 1964 until 1976 when the Yankees returned to the World Series.

As Ford's career was coming to an end in the Bronx in 1967, over in Queens the Mets had called Tom Seaver up to the big leagues. The Mets breakthrough was on the horizon, but unlike the Yankees who were supposed to win every year, it would come as a complete surprise, not only to New York baseball fans, but to anyone following the game.

Seaver provided me with many of my best memories in my college and young adult years. Tom Seaver was a man's man. He was smart and he called them as he saw them. He led an underdog team to victory, in what was not only a more unexpected journey, but a more exciting one than a perennial favorite reaching the World Series every year. Seaver's passing hit me harder than Ford's. Seaver was almost a contemporary of mine, only seven years older, while Ford was closer to my parents' age. Like Ford, Seaver was struck by dementia, albeit at

a much younger age, a disease that hits close to home in my family. And, most importantly, when I moved to Cincinnati in 1980, he was here, pitching for the Reds, providing me with an immediate connection to the city.

Seaver was born in Fresno, California. His parents were both athletes, and his father was an executive at a dried fruit producer. Seaver did not make the varsity in high school until his senior year. No colleges recruited him. After a short period working for his father, lifting crates of raisins on to loading platforms, he decided to join the Marine Reserves. He attended boot camp for six months, where he grew three inches and gained 30 pounds. The added bulk added velocity to his fastball, which complemented the junk ball pitches he was known for in high school. He enrolled at Fresno Community College and pitched well enough there, and in a summer league in Alaska, to obtain a scholarship to the University of Southern California, a perennial college baseball powerhouse. After two years at USC and one year in the minor leagues, Seaver made the opening day roster of the Mets in 1967 and went on to be named Rookie of the Year.

While he played for four teams during his career, few players are identified more with one team than Tom Seaver is with the New York Mets. Simply put, Seaver helped turn baseball's lovable losers into champions. One nickname would not suffice. He was both "Tom Terrific" and "The Franchise," but even the two combined do not fully capture what he meant to the Mets, and to their early fans.

Coming into the 1969 season, the Mets had never finished with a winning record. In the middle of August, the Mets stood 9.5 games behind the Chicago Cubs. It has been said that some casinos were offering 1,000 to 1 odds at that point on the Mets to win the World Series, but most stories say it was 100 to 1. The Mets would surge by the Cubs and go on to sweep Hank Aaron's Atlanta Braves three games to none in the first National League Championship Series, capping off the year by defeating the heavily favored Baltimore Orioles four games to one in the Fall Classic.

Seaver led the way. In his last eleven regular season starts, he was 10-0 with an ERA of 1.34. His last eight starts were complete games. He finished the year with a 25-7 record, 2.21 ERA, 18 complete games, 208 strikeouts, and a world championship ring. He won the Cy Young Award and was named Sports Illustrated Sportsman of the Year.

Seaver continued to pitch masterfully over the next seven years, averaging 18 wins a season, an ERA below 3.00 in all but one of those years, and two more Cy Young Awards in 1973 and 1975. The Mets won the National League pennant again in 1973, winning their division with an 82-79 record, the lowest number of games ever won by a pennant winner. As I am sure many of you remember, the Mets defeated the Reds three games to two in the League Championship Series. Once again, to say it was an upset would be an understatement as the Reds had won 99 games during the regular season, 17 more than the Mets.

Pitching was the difference for the Mets against the Reds, as the Mets held the Reds to eight runs in the five-game series. Seaver lost the first game 2 – 1 when he gave up home runs to Driessen in the eighth and Bench in the ninth inning but came back to win the decisive fifth game 7 – 2. That series was highlighted by the infamous Pete Rose Buddy Harrelson fight in the third game, and by Tug McGraw coining the slogan “Ya gotta Believe!!!” to memorialize the Mets season.

The good fortune of Seaver and the Mets did not last. Oakland defeated the Mets in seven games to take the World Series. Seaver started games three and six and gave up only two runs in each, but the Mets lost both games.

Early in the 1977 season Seaver became embroiled in a salary dispute with the Mets front office. The feud was inflamed by Dick Young, an influential columnist for the New York Daily News, who, in the early days of free agency, sided with the owners. He wrote that Seaver was a “pouting, griping, morale-breaking clubhouse lawyer who is poisoning the team.” Seaver was about to sign a rewarding contract extension with the Mets when Young wrote another column suggesting that Seaver’s wife was jealous that Nolan Ryan, a former Met who had been traded to the Angels, was earning more money than her husband. That was the straw that broke the camel’s back. Seaver refused to sign the contract and demanded a trade. And that is how he became a Cincinnati Red.

I think I arrived a few years too late when I arrived in Cincinnati in the fall of 1980. Morgan and Rose were gone, but I was thrilled that Tom Seaver was a Red, and he made it easy for me to switch my allegiance to the Reds. To top it off, in New York I had never been able to walk to the ballpark from my office in five minutes for a game starting at lunch time.

Unfortunately, my first baseball season in Cincinnati was the strike season of 1981. Because of the split season, the Reds, with the best record in baseball, did not go to the playoffs. To make things worse, Seaver, who should have won the Cy Young Award with a 14 – 2 won loss record and a 2.54 ERA, was nosed out by Fernando Valenzuela of the Dodgers. It went downhill from there as Dick Wagner proceeded to dismantle the team and the Reds went on to lose over 100 games in 1982, the only time that has ever happened. Tom Seaver followed his stellar 1981 season with the worst year of his career in 1982 and was traded back to the Mets at the end of the season.

The reunion only lasted a year due to another colossal blunder by the Mets front office. Believing that no other team would want an aging pitcher with a big salary, the Mets left Seaver unprotected in a free agent draft to compensate teams that had lost players in free agency. The Chicago White Sox drafted Seaver, and he had two very good seasons with them. Ironically, wearing a White Sox uniform and pitching a complete game against the Yankees in New York, he became the seventeenth pitcher to win 300 games. The White Sox traded him to the Red Sox in the middle of his

third season with the team. Seaver had requested the trade as he wanted to be closer to his home in Greenwich, and the White Sox could not work out a deal with either the Mets or the Yankees. In another ironic twist, while Seaver was not on the active roster at the end of the season due to an injury, he was in the dugout in Shea Stadium with his Red Sox teammates as the Mets triumphed over the Red Sox in the 1986 World Series, made famous by the ground ball hit by Mookie Wilson that got between Bill Buckner's legs.

In retirement, Seaver worked as a broadcaster for both the Mets and Yankees before moving back to California where he started a winery in Calistoga. Seaver started having memory problems in 2013 and was later diagnosed with Lewy Body Dementia, which combined with complications from Covid – 19, led to his demise at the age of 75. To pay tribute to Seaver, every member of the Mets put dirt on their pant leg in a game later that week to symbolize Seaver's iconic drop-and-drive delivery, which caused his right knee to accumulate dirt over the course of an outing on the mound.

Since Ford and Seaver, and all these departed Hall of Famers, played the game, the game of baseball has undergone many changes. Five of the nine Hall of Fame players who passed away in this ten-month period were pitchers, so I will limit my remarks to pitchers, and specifically complete games and strikeouts.

In the days of Ford and Seaver, you could usually count on starting pitchers to finish what they started. Gibson bridged the Ford and Seaver years and was the greatest complete game pitcher in the modern era, so I will include him here. Collectively, these three pitchers threw 642 complete games, finishing 41% of the games they started, with 10% of their starts resulting in shutouts. For baseball as a whole, less than 25% of starts resulted in a complete game during this period. In the 1968 season, Gibson set the standard, throwing 28 complete games, and 13 shutouts, in 34 starts for the Cardinals.

Whitey Ford described his feelings about complete games as follows: “They gave me the greatest satisfaction and probably meant more to me than any other record. Pitching was always an art form. I never had the velocity to consistently overpower hitters, so I had to be aware of what hitters were looking for and mix it up. As hitters tried to adjust to me, I would stay ahead of them by changing my routine. It was a chess match. And if your team could win it and you could complete it, then your starts were much more satisfying.”

Today, starting pitchers rarely throw complete games. In 2021, one out of every 168 games, or less than 1%, was a complete game.

What happened to the workhorses like Seaver, Ford and Gibson, as well as Sutton and Niekro? All of them were durable starting pitchers with rubber arms and the ability to rack up innings like nobody's business.

What has happened is hard throwers and strikeouts have come to dominate pitching. As complete games have declined, strikeouts have become a much greater part of the game. Strikeouts averaged between 4.5 and 6 per game from the 1960's to the 1990's but increased to nine per game in 2020. Seaver and Gibson were both known as strikeout pitchers in their day, but they each averaged seven per game over the course of their careers, more than 20% less than today's average pitcher.

In recent times front offices have put a premium on hard throwers. Other than Nolan Ryan, no one was reaching the 100 mile an hour mark in the Seaver years. In just the first week of the 2021 season, 84 100-mph pitches were thrown by a record 13 pitchers. Only seven years ago, just one pitch exceeded 100 mph in the same stretch.

But throwing harder renders pitchers more prone to injuries. Coupled with the escalation of salaries, and the need for ball clubs to protect their investments in these players, starting pitchers' pitch counts are now closely monitored and rarely exceed 100 pitches. Starting pitchers are often removed after going through the lineup twice, as statistics show that batting averages against them go up the third time through the lineup. Analytics has driven many of these changes, as Ivy League educated MBA's have risen to top jobs in front offices, replacing former players, and those with player development and scouting backgrounds.

In 2013 no pitcher threw more than 241 innings, prompting Tom Seaver, who threw over 250 innings eleven times in his career, to say the following: “Imagine if these computer geeks who are running baseball now were allowed to run a war? They'd be telling our soldiers: 'That's enough. You've fired too many bullets from your rifle this week!’”

Perhaps a more realistic view than Seaver’s was expressed by A. J. Hinch, currently manager of the Detroit Tigers, who said, “We have a way of trying to evolve as an industry that’s taken out a little bit of the ‘machismo’ that goes with the complete game. I’m not sure if that’s good or bad, but it’s part of the evolution of analytics being applied at a higher rate across the board.”

While the game has clearly evolved, our memories of the game, and its iconic players, are constant. And they have a hold on us. Baseball is the greatest sport for storytelling. To quote Mitch Albom, “Sharing tales of those we’ve lost is how we keep from really losing them.”

Due to the pandemic, the Hall of Fame induction ceremony at Cooperstown was cancelled in 2020 and was postponed from its traditional July date to September in 2021. When the Hall of Famers gathered in the fall of 2021, the absence of these nine players, and one manager, was certainly felt. In anticipation of the 2021 ceremonies, Johnny Bench said “To lose such a big chunk – the backbone of Cooperstown – it’s going to be a big gap the next time we gather. There’s something about these people that were on the pedestals – those were the guys you grew up admiring and

they were bigger than life. There will be excitement – all the joy that will come with the new guys – but my pedestals have been knocked down.”

Johnny Bench could not attend the 2021 induction ceremonies because he had Covid, but he recorded a video that paid homage to the ten departed members of the Hall, and closed with the following lines which, in closing, I’ll repeat, “Yes, even baseball can’t keep you eternally young, no matter how invincible and incredible a player can be on the diamond. But if icons are mortal, their impact on the cities where they played and the imagination of everyone who watched them will nonetheless endure for as long as they play the game.”

## SOURCES

NY Times obituaries on all ten members of the Hall of Fame who passed away between April 2020 and January 2021

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